Desert Voices

An Oral History Anthology of Marines in the Gulf War, 1990–1991

Occasional Paper

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Westermeyer/Hinman

Cover: *Last Tank Battle, Kuwait Airport* by Col H. Avery Chenoweth. The 1st Marine Division's firefight outside the airport on the night of 26 February 1991 presented a surreal, flaming landscape and involved some of the last armored actions fought by Marines in the Gulf War.

Marine Corps Art Collection

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An Oral History Anthology of Marines in the Gulf War, 1990–1991

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Foreword

The Marine Corps History Division has undertaken for limited distribution the publication of various studies, theses, compilations, bibliographies, monographs, and memoirs, as well as proceedings at selected workshops, seminars, symposia, and similar colloquia, that the division considers to be of significant value for audiences interested in Marine Corps history. These "occasional papers," which are chosen for their intrinsic worth, must reflect structured research, present a contribution to historical knowledge not readily available in published sources, and reflect original content on the part of the author, compiler, or editor. It is the intent of the division that these occasional papers be distributed to selected institutions, such as service schools, official Department of Defense historical agencies, and directly concerned Marine Corps organizations, so the information contained therein will be available for study and exploitation.

In August 1990, Iraqi military forces invaded Kuwait, a much smaller neighboring country that had focused its foreign policy on negotiation and compromise rather than military force; the large Iraqi invasion army quickly overwhelmed the small Kuwaiti armed forces. While Saddam Hussein calculated the military balance between Iraq and Kuwait correctly, he underestimated the willingness of the world community, especially powerful Western nations including the United States and Great Britain, to intervene on Kuwait's behalf. His invasion subsequently set the stage for a military confrontation that was larger in scope than any similar confrontation since the Cuban Missile Crisis. Under President George H. W. Bush, the United States assembled a global coalition of concerned nations, first to defend Saudi Arabia against possible Iraqi aggression and then to eject Iraqi military forces from Kuwait. The operation to protect Saudi Arabia was designated Desert Shield; the successive operation to free Kuwait was Desert Storm. The performance of America's armed forces in this confrontation confirmed that they could not be successfully opposed in traditional military operations by military forces in the developing world.

The Gulf War had the largest deployment of Marines since the Vietnam War. It challenged the entire U.S. Marine Corps warfighting establishment: aviation, ground combat, and logistics forces. A generation of Marines put two decades of planning and training to the test in a desert environment the Marine Corps had not endured since the nineteenth century.

The Gulf War was a successful test of the Marine Corp's air-ground task force concept, and the interviews in this anthology have been organized according to that concept. The first chapter consists of a long interview conducted with General Walter E. Boomer, commander of the I Marine Expeditionary Force and the senior Marine commander in the Middle East during the war, illustrating a broad view of the battlefield. The second chapter contains interviews with the Marine aviators who supported the ground advance. The third chapter includes those Marines whose intelligence and logistical support made the attack possible. The fourth chapter includes interviews with the Marines on the ground who breached the defense of Kuwait and physically liberated Kuwait City.

Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer
Director of Marine Corps History

Preface

During the war, the Marine Corps History and Museums Division deployed five field historians to cover the Gulf War: Colonel Charles J. Quilter, Colonel H. Avery Chenoweth, Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Cureton, Lieutenant Colonel Dennis P. Mroczkowski, and Lieutenant Colonel Ronald J. Brown. In addition to collecting photographs, artifacts, and historically significant documents, they conducted a large number of oral history interviews with Marines deployed to the Persian Gulf. These interviews form the core of the Gulf War oral history collection and are now stored in the audio-visual information repository of the Gray Research Center located at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia.

The oral histories collected by the History Division's field historians cover the broad sweep of the Marine experience in the Gulf. In addition to interviews with the major Marine commanders, the collection includes interviews with pilots, infantry officers, reconnaissance Marines, armor officers, and headquarters and service support Marines. After returning to the United States, the field historians used their collected documents and oral histories in drafting the nine monographs in the History and Museums Division's U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990–1991 series. In addition to the interviews conducted by field historians during the event, History Division historians also conducted interviews with Gulf War veterans to fill gaps in the record and further illustrate the Marine experience in the conflict.

Since the end of the Gulf War, a small number of memoirs have been written and published by Marines. Clifford A. and Cynthia B. Acree wrote *The Gulf Between Us: Love and Terror in Desert Storm*, which tells the story of Colonel Acree's service as an OV-10 Bronco aircraft squadron commander, his capture, and his time as a prisoner of war. Jay A. Stout's *Hornets over Kuwait* recounts the Marine aviation story from an F/A-18 Hornet pilot's perspective. Sean T. Coughlin's *Storming the Desert: A Marine Lieutenant's Day-by-Day Chronicle of the Persian Gulf War* describes the war from the viewpoint of an aviation logistics officer. And Joe and Chris Freitus's *Dial 911 Marines: Adventures of a Tank Company in Desert Shield and Desert Storm*; Phillip Thompson's *Into the Storm*: *A U.S. Marine in the Persian Gulf War;* Buzz Williams's *Spare Parts: A Marine Reservist's Journey from Campus to Combat in 38 Days*; Anthony Swofford's J*arhead: A Marine's Chronicle of the Gulf War and Other Battles*; and G. J. Michaels's *Tip of the Spear: U.S. Marine Light Armor in the Gulf* all describe the author's experiences on the ground during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Alongside the individual memoirs, two collections of Marine veterans' experiences during the Gulf War have also been published. David J. Morris wrote *Storm on the Horizon: Khafji—The Battle that Changed the Course of the Gulf War*, a history of the war's first battle as recalled by the Marines and Saudi soldiers who fought in it. Otto J. Lehrack has continued his long oral history of 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, with *America's Battalion: Marines in the First Gulf War*, recounting that unit's participation in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Soon after the Gulf War ended, *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* published a series of interviews with the senior Marine commanders in the Gulf War, including the commanders of the two Marine divisions, the force service support groups, and the air wing. These interviews were republished by History Division in *U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990–1991: Anthology and Annotated Bibliography*.

The History Division collected more than 150 oral histories from Marines who served in the Gulf War; this anthology presents some of the most informative interviews from that collection. These interviews were edited for clarity and length but are otherwise the authentic voices of Marines who fought in the war. The short duration of the conflict and the need to interview those with a broader knowledge of what occurred introduced a strong rank bias into the interviews; thus, very few junior Marines were interviewed, and no interviews with junior Marines appear in this anthology. The interviews selected were chosen to provide diverse viewpoints, vivid eyewitness accounts of combat, and insights into the planning and conduct of the campaign.

This anthology could not have been published without the professional efforts of History Division staff. The editors would like to thank the director of Marine Corps History, Charles P. Neimeyer; chief historian of the Marine Corps, Charles D. Melson; and senior historian, Charles R. Smith, for their comments, advice, and support. Dr. Nathan S. Lowrey provided invaluable professional advice and support. History Division

interns Borislav V. Chernev, Charles M. Kassir, Nicholas J. Ross, Evan Sills, and Paul R. Zimmerman provided invaluable research assistance on this project.

Our Editing and Design Branch, led by Ms. Angela Anderson, played an instrumental role in transforming the manuscript into a finished, published product. Ms. Jennifer L. Clampet edited the manuscript, and Mr. Shawn H. Vreeland edited the manuscript and oversaw the production process. Maps, layout, and design were provided by Mr. W. Stephen Hill.

•Chapter 1•

Marines in Command

The Gulf War was a test of the United States' ability to quickly organize and dispatch powerful military forces to an overseas region. After decades of deploying battalions, squadrons, and smaller naval forces, the U.S. Marine Corps found it necessary to deploy divisions and air wings. The large formations were under the control of I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF).

Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer

Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer was commissioned from Reserve Officer Training Corps in 1960, and completed The Basic School at Marine Corps Base (MCB) Quantico, Virginia, in January of the following year. Boomer, a captain at the time, saw combat action in the Republic of Vietnam in 1966–67 as the commanding officer, Company H, 2d Battalion, 4th Marines. While serving in command of the Marine Security Guard Battalion at Quantico, he was promoted to brigadier general in April 1986, and later to major general and lieutenant general in March of 1989 and August 1990, respectively. He was promoted to general in 1992. After retiring in June 1994, he worked as executive vice president of McDermott International, 1994–97; president of Babcock and Wilcox Corporation, 1995–97; chairman and chief executive officer of Rogers Corporation, 1997–2004; and director of Baxter International, Rogers Corporation, and Taylor Energy Company, 2004–8.

Lieutenant General Boomer served two roles during the Gulf War, the first as commanding general of Marine Corps Central Command and the second as commanding general of I MEF. By mid-January 1991, I MEF was composed of more than 72,000 Marines. General Boomer was interviewed by Paul W. Westermeyer of the History Division on 27 July 2006. In his interview, General Boomer discusses I MEF's preparations and operations during the conflict as well as his interactions with U.S. Army General H. Norman Schwarzkopf Jr., who was overall commander of the operations and the allied Arab forces.

Boomer: I went to New Orleans where I commanded all the Marine Reserves, which, again, I found really challenging and very useful later on, because I had an understanding of what the Reserves were capable of doing. And when I took over the MEF, I knew where I wanted to use them and where I might not want to use them, but I think more importantly I had a lot of faith in them. So, after I had had that command for two years, I was promoted to lieutenant general. General [Alfred M.] Gray [Jr.] was the Commandant, and it was never clear to me why he gave me that command, because General Gray did tend to have his home team, and I was not on that team. I had never been, or at least I didn't perceive that I was. Nevertheless, I was delighted that he had that faith in me, and I left New Orleans and headed for [MCB] Camp Pendleton [California] to take over I Marine Expeditionary Force.

Westermeyer: Can you be more specific on the dates of that, when you took over the I MEF, if you recall?

Boomer: As I am trying to recollect that date, I'll tell you what happened. We packed up our household in New Orleans, and we had two cars. I drove

LtGen Walter E. Boomer commanded U.S. Marine Forces Central Command and I MEF during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo

one; my wife drove the other with help from another lady who was there. So, we were proceeding across country in a two-car caravan. We were somewhere in West Texas, when I heard on the radio that Kuwait had been invaded.

Westermeyer: So you were actually in the process of moving?

Boomer: I was actually in the car out of communication, so to speak, other than telephone, with the Marine Corps when I heard this. When we reached our planned destination that night, I asked Sandi if she had been listening to the radio or the news, and she said, no they had been talking. She asked, "What happened?"

I said, "Iraq invaded Kuwait." Having been a Marine wife for a while, she looked at me and said, "What does that mean?" I said, "Well, I don't know, but it probably doesn't bode well in that the I Marine Expeditionary Force will probably be involved," and it obviously was.

I assumed command of I MEF on 8 August and found them hard at work. I'd had some thoughts about the MEF staff. I didn't believe that it was a combat ready staff, because despite all the talk, the Marine Corps world still tended to revolve around wings and divisions. I don't know that we ever believed at the time that we were truly going to fight as a MEF. So, that staff was not equipped from a personnel perspective or even from an equipment perspective to be a fighting headquarters. Making them a fighting headquarters was to be one of my goals during my time at Camp Pendleton

I took over that command on the eighth [of August] and I cannot remember what day I got on the airplane and headed to Saudi Arabia, but it was in fact 10 days later.

Westermeyer: Ten days after you arrived. You said your staff was already hard at work, so they picked up right away?

Boomer: Oh, they had picked up right away, and they knew that they were going to be involved. The first involvement was the 7th [Marine Expeditionary] Brigade [7th MEB] out of [Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in] Twentynine Palms [California] led by [Major] General John [I.] Hopkins. So, one of the first things that I did—of course, John was at the change of command—was to get over to Twentynine Palms, talk to John, try to get a feel for what he was doing, if he was ready to go. I had made some notes concerning my first impression of that brigade, and I had known John for quite some time, and they were good. I thought they were as ready as any Marine Corps unit was to deploy. So that was our initial focus, to get them out of town and to Saudi Arabia.

Westermeyer: It sounds like you did not have any time to really get to know your own staff before you took them to war.

Boomer: No, I just inherited a staff, and we packed up and went to Saudi Arabia.

Westermeyer: Did you know any of them?

Boomer: Yes, I knew some of them but not that many. I didn't know Colonel Erik [E.] Hastings, who became my chief of staff. I did know some of the more senior key players. I didn't know [Major General] Royal [N.] Moore [Jr.] that well personally, but I knew of him professionally and respected him. We developed, I think, a good relationship over the course of that campaign. I mentioned that I knew John Hopkins. [Major General James M.] "Mike" Myatt commanded 1st [Marine] Division. I did not know Mike that well; I knew of him but had not really worked with him. I knew [Brigadier General James A.] "Jim" Brabham [Jr.]. In essence, I just parked my gear at the house and was quickly gone. We were working long hours trying to get the 7th MEB moved and then immediately began to flow Marine aircraft into Saudi Arabia.

There were problems, but as I look back they weren't problems that we couldn't or didn't overcome. I have notes in my diary about ultimately having to call [Army] General Schwarzkopf and say, "Look, the [U.S.] Air Force isn't giving us the tanker support that we need. It is in the CentCom [U.S. Central Command] order that they will do this. They're denying that they have to do it," and he caused it to happen. There was a fight for territory in terms of space for aircraft within Saudi Arabia. As this thing began to build, everybody was flowing in aircraft, and there had been little planning in that regard. It was almost a matter of who got there first and planted the flag. Jim Brabham played a very key role at this point, because I sent him to the Middle East early. He had served there earlier in his career.

Westermeyer: In Saudi Arabia?

Boomer: Yes, in Saudi Arabia. He knew the territory; in fact, he had been in Central Command. I said, "Jim, go over there and find us space, find a place for the wing, begin to look at where this MEF headquarters will go. I don't intend to be in Riyadh [Saudi Arabia]." He was vital in causing us to have a relatively smooth flow into the theater. That be-

ing said, the wing was located farther away than I would have wanted them to be, but that ultimately worked out okay.

Westermeyer: By the wing, sir, do you mean the fields for the aircraft were farther from the Marines on the ground, or that the wing's headquarters was farther from the MEF headquarters?

Boomer: Both. The wing headquarters was a little farther away than I wanted, but his headquarters needed to be with the wing. It wasn't critical, but I would have had them a little closer. That being said, we were able to carve out helicopter fields that were close by, again thanks to Jim Brabham, who knew where these fields were, so he just got in there and grabbed them.

Westermeyer: It sounds like with Brabham you were able to get that round peg for that round hole right away.

Boomer: He was perfect. This is a lesson for young officers. Much of this is about relationships; it always is in any endeavor. Jim and I had established a close relationship when we were advisors in Vietnam in 1971–72. So, we knew and trusted each other. I knew I could toss him on that airplane and say "This is what I want you to get done," and it would be done if anybody could do it.

I think that period though characterized much of what this war was about for me. It was about logistics, and whether you like it or not, it usually is about logistics. So, here for the first time in the Marine Corps' recent history, we were moving, actually moving, huge numbers of Marines and huge amounts of equipment. The equipment needed to arrive, and Marines needed to be matched up with that equipment with no time to spare. We didn't know what the Iraqis were going to do.

We thought the Iraqis were thinking, "I've taken Kuwait, that was a pushover. Another hundred miles, I've got the Saudi oil fields, so let's go." Now that was certainly the worst case in terms of our defensive posture and was our worst fear. Saddam [Hussein] had already incurred the wrath of the world by invading Kuwait. Why not take the next step? For a period of time, I believe that most of us felt he might try it. So, it was a deadly serious game that we were involved in. We knew we were tremendously outnumbered. We did not have much knowledge about how good they [the Iraqis] were. We knew they could move and communicate because they had invaded another country, and it had gone pretty smoothly for them. We knew that they had a very large and well-equipped army. I believe at the time it was the fourth largest in the world. That's pretty big. And here we were throwing a little Marine brigade in the breach, and the [U.S] Army's throwing some airborne troops in, and that was going to be it for a while. That was all that any of us could get in right away. We always believed if he did attack we would ultimately stop him but it was going to be one hell of a battle, simply because of the mass they had on their side. Our airpower was critical in our defensive planning. I knew the Marines, and the soldiers too, would fight to the last man to keep Iraq from taking Saudi territory and those oil fields.

Westermeyer: So you already knew that the Marines and the soldiers were better than the Iraqis, you just didn't know how much better?

Boomer: I believed that we were better. I didn't know how much better. We needed to be a lot better, because we were outnumbered by five to one. We had to get everything right.

Westermeyer: Maybe you could talk a little bit about your first impressions of the Saudi Arabians themselves, the officers you worked with, the people? You were there a very long time; you arrived there on 18 or 19 August.

Boomer: [Army Lieutenant General] John [J.] Yeosock could give you much better perspective on the Saudis because he was the one charged by General Schwarzkopf to work closely with them at the theater level.

There is an important point, I think, as pertains to the Saudis in the beginning. Contrary to their very core being, they opened up their country to us. They had to; I don't think they liked it. Nobody would really like it, particularly the Saudis, but they were wise enough to understand that their own existence was in peril and we were the only ones who could help them. So, they were very gracious about letting us go wherever we wanted to go. When we came into a little Saudi naval base or a little Saudi airfield, we came in by the hundreds, and pretty soon it was ours. They went off to some small corner out of necessity. We simply did what we had to do.

We did try, however, very hard, from day one, to appreciate their hospitality, understand their culture, and a lot of time was spent with the troops talking about those issues. So, I don't mean to imply that we took over in an arrogant way. We just simply said, "In order to do what you want us to do, we have to have this space," and they would say okay.

That was my first contact with the Saudis. As [Operation] Desert Shield [dragged] on, there was more and more contact. They began to say, "We've given you all we can give you and you want more?" But we needed space to train, space to fire our weapons, our tanks, so that then became somewhat of a negotiation. Ultimately, they would try to give us what we wanted. Other than that, I did not believe they were going to help me very much.

Westermeyer: In a tactical sense?

Boomer: In a tactical sense. Certainly from a logistical sense, they were crucial. As time went on, we began to work with them in terms of the development of our battle plans. I believe it's fair to say that the Saudis were pretty closemouthed about intelligence and wanted to guard carefully what they knew. For example, as we began to pick up Iraqi POWs [prisoners of war] along the border, they wanted them turned over immediately, so they could interrogate them to find out what was going on. Getting that information back from the Saudis was impossible. It got lost somewhere. So, we began to interrogate them ourselves then I'd turn them over to the Saudis.

There was another issue with the Saudis and that was communications and operations security. I never believed that the Saudis would reveal our plans to the Iraqis. I didn't believe that there were spies within the Saudi force that would reveal to the Iraqi side what we were doing. But I did think because their radio security was so poor that I really needed to be careful about what I shared with them, because had the Iraqis gained knowledge of what we were contemplating they could have shifted forces which would have made the whole attack much more difficult, and I didn't want that to happen. We were going to great lengths to deceive them, as [Brigadier] General [Thomas V.] Draude probably told you about.

Westermeyer: Yes.

Boomer: So, I was very stingy with the information that I gave the Saudis, who by the time we attacked were on my right flank. So stingy in fact that General Schwarzkopf called and chewed me out about not sharing with the Saudis. I explained why, and he understood but said, "God d——n it Walt. I'm sharing with them. You share with them!"

I said, "Yes, sir." And did it, but I always thought it was a great risk for the reason that I mentioned, not that I didn't trust them personally, but we were well trained in terms of communication security, and they weren't.

Westermeyer: They didn't learn "loose lips sink ships."

Boomer: I don't think they thought about the potential that the Iraqis might have had. We weren't sure, but we weren't going to take a chance on them having eavesdropping capability. It would have been relatively simple to listen in on any unsecured radio conversation from where they were sitting. We had secure radio, we had secure telephone, and we used it. In summary, we tried very, very hard to be appreciative of what the Saudis were doing for us, at the same time my attitude was, "We're here saving your rear end, so I don't want a lot of argument about what you can or can't [do]."

Later, in the attack, they were successful in moving up through the coastal region of Kuwait, but they didn't face a tremendous amount of opposition. I had actually proposed to [Saudi] General Khaled [bin Sultan bin Saud]* that he allow us to conduct a breach for the Saudis. They did not have all of the equipment they needed, nor did they have the training. We, on the other hand, had trained day and night to conduct the breach.

So, I asked him if we could conduct the breach for them, allowing them entry into Kuwait. He said, "No, that would not be an honorable thing." They had to do it. Had that minefield and barrier been adequately protected by the Iraqis, I doubt that they would have gotten across. Because the Iraqis had begun to pull back by the time we attacked, particularly on that right flank, the Saudis were able to pick up the mines and put them in a truck and move through. They were lucky.

Westermeyer: And the defense of Saudi Arabia?

Boomer: In the first weeks our entire planning was focused on the defense. Hopkins deployed in good style with the MEB. Was it perfect? No, never is, but overall a good job.

MPS [Maritime Prepositioning Ships] began to arrive. Except for being slow off the starting block, it worked as we had conceived it. They showed up, and they showed up pretty quickly. The biggest problem that we had relative to our early logistics situation was that the ships would come up to the beach or the pier and disgorge a huge amount of stuff. Our Marine Corps system was not ready to deal with it. We weren't ready to pull it off, segregate it, catalog it; so that as the units that needed this equipment came to get it, it was right there for

*Gen Khaled was commander of the Saudi Arabian and allied Arab forces.

them. The front end of the MPS off-load was very, very messy.

So, in the beginning, out of necessity, it was a free-for-all. The MEF needed the gear, so I said, "Go get it." I hope that's something we have improved upon. You must be ready to meet the ships and make some sense out of the huge tonnage they disgorge. For us, just finding stuff in this mountain of gear—particularly after you've had three or four of them unloaded—was a huge problem.

Westermeyer: Were they combat loaded?

Boomer: No, in fact they're not combat loaded. They are loaded to get the maximum amount of equipment material, supplies, in the ships, and I think that's the proper way to load them. You just need to be prepared on the receiving end to deal with it. I don't know that we ever got all that gear sorted out, even by the time we left. Nevertheless, we could not have done without that equipment, and it was too much to be airlifted. We strained our airlift capability to the max, so we would not have had what we needed without MPS. MPS was critical to the success of the entire campaign.

There were command issues beginning to unfold though, about the same time. It became pretty apparent that the entire MEF was going to be involved. We knew it would be a tenuous thing with only the Marine brigade and Army airborne in place. The 1st [Marine] Division began to flood in, and I didn't need a MEB headquarters anymore. Ultimately, the MEB was going to have to be merged into the division. That was always the concept.

One of my early disappointments was the fact that the 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade didn't take very well to the inevitable integration. There was a lot of fighting spirit there. They had led the way from Twentynine Palms and were first on the ground; they didn't take kindly to being integrated into the division. I understood that at one level, but it became a problem that I had to address. I finally just had to say, "I don't want to hear anymore about the 7th MEB. You're done. You're history. It's the way we've always planned for it to occur. Give it up!" Eventually it smoothed out, but my feeling was that there were a lot of field grade officers who perpetuated the problem, and we did not have time for such childishness.

I was then left with what to do regarding General Hopkins and General Myatt. One of them was going to command the enhanced division. Ultimately, I made the decision to give it to General Myatt. It was very difficult for General Hopkins to accept and a tough decision for me to make, because I had known him much longer than I had known Myatt. I felt both of them could do the job equally well. It would have meant relieving Myatt of his division command and giving it to Hopkins. While John, like a good Marine, hated it, he swallowed really hard, marched out, and gave me his total support for the rest of the campaign. I will always be grateful to him for the way he handled it and conducted himself.

Westermeyer: When you say there was resistance in the MEB to becoming part of the division, are you referring to the MEB staff?

Boomer: I'm talking about the MEB staff primarily. The troops are great. If they have good caring leadership, they don't care. I'm talking now about the staff and about the officers.

Westermeyer: Okay. What happened to the MEB staff when they integrated, did they take on roles within the division or did they get sent home?

Boomer: They took on roles within the division and the MEF.

Westermeyer: So, you needed bodies?

Boomer: I needed bodies. I needed bodies desperately. In order to fight the MEF 24 hours a day, I needed a pretty large headquarters, very capable, around the clock. I would say that we left Camp Pendleton capable of fighting maybe 10 or 12 hours a day, if you want to look at it in that way. So, I was continually bringing in people to flesh out the MEF staff. Ultimately, I received some criticism because folks asked, "Why is he bringing in all these colonels?" Well, I had work for them to do. In all cases they were extremely talented, and I needed the talent there. It only helped us, it didn't hurt us, but people have to have something to b——h about.

Westermeyer: Would you say, sir, that it's a fair statement to say that a MEF staff that can run the MEF in the states is a lot smaller than the MEF staff you would actually require to run it in battle?

Boomer: You put your finger right on the problem. We did not at that time have enough people to keep the MEF staffed at a warfighting level in peacetime. I don't think we would want to; they wouldn't have work to do in peacetime. So, the concept had always been that we were going to augment the MEF staff. We worked a lot on this after the first Gulf War, that is, trying to make that MEF staff a competent warfighting staff. At the very beginning of [Operation] Desert Shield, it was not

a competent warfighting staff. Fortunately, we had time to develop it into one.

When I got back, we began the program that's still now currently ongoing, mentored by people like Lieutenant General [George R.] "Ron" Christmas for example who go out and teach the MEF staff how to fight, how to augment, and all the other things a MEF staff must be capable of doing. It's a lot of work. It is the kind of work that you tend to lose sight of in peacetime.

I do not know if the problem is still with us. I don't know. For me, however, it was a big problem, and I solved it, as I said, by bringing in people that I knew, trusted, and were extremely competent. I brought in Colonel [Billy] "Bill" [C.] Steed as the MEF G-3 [operations], because I knew his capability. I knew what I needed to have done. Some of this inevitably caused a little concern amongst the people who were already there, but I didn't have a lot of time to worry about that.

Westermeyer: You were able to build the MEF staff; you had the time once you got to Saudi Arabia to do what you didn't have time for before you left.

Boomer: You're exactly right, and we were fortunate. Sometimes it's better to be lucky than good, and we were lucky in that we had the time.

Westermeyer: At what point did you say to yourself, "We are definitely going to stop them. If they are crazy enough to come across the border now, we have them, and they're done"?

Boomer: Well, when the 1st [Marine] Division got there and we had sufficient air capability, I knew that we could stop them.

Westermeyer: Okay, so that was in the middle of November?

Boomer: Yes.

Westermeyer: So by the time Thanksgiving is coming around, the plan is no longer "how are we going to defend Saudi Arabia?" Because we know we can and that plan's in place.

Boomer: Plus, they haven't moved.

Westermeyer: And they haven't moved, so it is clear they're not coming at that point.

Boomer: They missed their chance. As we continued to build and became confident of our ability to defend, we kept thinking, you blew it pal. You had a skinny chance, but you blew it.

Westermeyer: Now, from what I've seen, intelligence reports show that the [Iraqi] *Republican Guard* was on the border initially after the invasion, but then it pulled back into Iraq. Did you know that at the time that they had moved them?

Boomer: I knew that the *Republican Guard* wasn't right on the border, but we always felt that if any of their forces had the capability to move fairly quickly, it was them. And distances were short, so the *Republican Guard* was always on your mind as a threat. Of course they had armored capability, which was not part of the *Republican Guard*.

Westermeyer: Within the [Iraqi] *III Corps*?

Boomer: Yeah. That was always there to be dealt with.

Westermeyer: So, if that covers the buildup and the defense, do [you] want to move on to the shift to thinking about invading Kuwait and taking it back?

Boomer: Yes. I'm trying to think about the time frame in terms of receiving the mission from Schwarzkopf for the attack. I can't remember exactly, but that's not important. Our own thought process was that as soon as we had this defense covered, so to speak, to begin to think about how we were going to liberate Kuwait. It didn't seem to us, even before we knew that we were going to take it back, that it made sense to leave Kuwait in Iraqi hands. It just didn't seem like something that the United Nations and the free world [were] going to stand for. So, we began to think offensively, not from day one because we were preoccupied with the defense of Saudi Arabia, but from a very early point. Simultaneously, they began to go on the defense. We watched this barrier begin to be built and quite honestly were pretty impressed with the speed with which they did that. They laid a significant minefield and created a significant barrier very quickly. They had a lot of manpower.

So as we were thinking about how we were going to conduct the attack. We were watching a pretty significant barrier being thrown up in front of us, which complicated our planning. We weren't the only ones who were thinking about the offensive. General Schwarzkopf was thinking about the offensive. A group of Army officers were put together to plan an attack for General Schwarzkopf. They worked in secret with no Marine input. I don't believe any of the Army in Saudi Arabia had input either.

Some thought we were deliberately being left out and had no voice at CentCom. Well, everybody was being left out. When the plan was finally presented, I said, "That's not what we're going

Photo courtesy of BGen Granville R. Amos

Gen H. Norman Schwarzkopf Jr., USA, and LtGen Boomer are shown at a briefing on 13 February 1991. Despite differing command styles and the traditional rivalry between the Army and the Marine Corps, the two generals worked well together during the Gulf War.

to do. We're not going to do that." And General Schwarzkopf almost immediately said, "Yeah, that's not what Walt's going to do." End of discussion, as far as I was concerned, but somehow this thing assumed a life of its own. When I discovered that they had done this planning for the Marine Corps, for the use of Marine Corps forces, I was initially upset, but I got over it. And General Schwarzkopf didn't buy the plan; he bought my plan, end of story. It's just amazing to me how things like this postwar seem to become so important.

Westermeyer: Was the initial idea that the Marine forces would have a fixing attack on the Iraqi forces and the Army did a sweep?

Boomer: Yes, but I said, "General [Schwarzkopf], we're going to take Kuwait." It made no difference to me whether it was called the supporting attack and [Army Lieutenant] General [Frederick M.] Franks [Jr.'s][*] corps was going to be conducting the main attack. Actually, it made pretty good sense, because I knew we were going to attack into Ku-

*LtGen Franks was commander of the U.S. Army's VII Corps.

wait and take it. There was never any doubt in my mind that that's what we were going to do. We weren't going to play around with them on the border in some sort of fixing attack. We were going to retake Kuwait, and General Schwarzkopf didn't have a problem with that. And that was the mission we were ultimately given.

So, could that whole episode been done a little bit differently? Sure, but people were reaching out for solutions. Everybody had their own idea about how General Schwarzkopf ought to conduct the campaign. [Secretary of Defense Richard B.] "Dick" Cheney had his own ideas about how it ought to be done, and we listened, but the nice thing about him is he listened to us, as well. In the end, General Schwarzkopf and I did it the way we wanted to, and no one else was involved.

Westermeyer: This is a distinct issue from the Air Force's plan; I think it was originally called Checkmate. They had another set of planning that was separate from the Army's plan that didn't involve ground forces essentially at all.

Boomer: They probably did. I didn't know anything about it. Probably wouldn't have known anything about it if I had lived in General Schwarzkopf's operations center 24 hours a day. Historically, the Air Force has a different idea about how to win the war. We on the ground have a different idea about how to win the war. Ultimately, you come together, and I think that's what happened. Again, I think airpower ultimately did exactly what I hoped they would do. They did a magnificent job. They made our job easier by a factor of . . . well, I've never known how to measure this. If you look at the destruction, and I'm talking now about Marine air, as well, it was awesome. Looking back at what air did for us, I can only say it was truly, truly significant in our success. We were fortunate in that the Iraqis were stupid enough to sit there and take the pounding.

Westermeyer: Well, apparently many of them ran, but that was the plan, right?

Boomer: Yes. Much of their armor they put in the desert and tried to bury. They should have known we weren't going to be fooled by that. Many of them were destroyed.

Now, in terms of the air planning, let's talk about my relationship with the Air Force. [Lieutenant General Charles A.] "Chuck" Horner and I established a very good relationship. It made no sense to me to not allow the Marine air[craft] wing to be used by the joint commander to help prosecute the campaign. That's what our doctrine says will happen. Marines always tended to wrap around the axle here, in my view. Some felt no one could task Marine air except the Marine commander. I don't think that's true, and I don't think it's wise.

What you do is you hammer out a compromise. It's never going to be spelled out perfectly in doctrine what Marine air's going to do in a joint campaign. Their first priority is to support Marines, but they must also support the joint command. But you hammer these issues out. In this case, they ultimately became part of the joint air tasking. If you look at it from Horner's perspective, how could he do anything different? We have a wing plus in theater, and we are not going to let them work for anyone but Marines? That's not realistic. I think we evolved something that worked. Marine air was part of the joint tasking order, as was the [U.S.] Navy. We made it work, and we would always talk, the three of us, Horner, [Navy Vice Admiral Stanley R.] "Stan" Arthur,* and I. It wasn't always real pretty and sometimes people got upset, but the important thing is I believe all three of us had our eyes on one thing, and that was to win that war. I never felt I lacked for air support, and I got air support from the Air Force, from the Navy, and from the Marines. They all three did a magnificent job.

Westermeyer: Would you say that the Marine air-ground team concept within that cooperation and compromise worked?

Boomer: Yes. The Marine air-ground team concept did work. Regarding helicopters, they were never an issue; they were ours. If someone needed our help, of course they would get it, but day in, day out they belonged to the Marines.

Westermeyer: So, the fixed winged assets, primarily the [McDonnell Douglas] F[/A]-18 [Hornets], the [Grumman] A-6 [Intruders].

Boomer: Yes, exactly.

Westermeyer: The [McDonnell Douglas AV-8B] Harriers [IIs] essentially stayed with them [the MEF].

Boomer: We had the Harriers located at a different place from the rest of the Marine fixed wing, as they needed to be closer. Generally speaking they remained more in support of us, and I think if you looked at the data it would indicate that they flew many more missions in support of the Marines than they did in support of the joint force.

Westermeyer: Do you want to talk more about how the plan to invade Kuwait itself was devel-

*VAdm Arthur commanded the U.S. Seventh Fleet.

oped? Were there any events which stick out in your mind?

Boomer: Yes. As I said, we had begun to think early on about how we would liberate Kuwait. Since we were looking right into Kuwait and that is where General Schwarzkopf seemed to want us, it became more and more clear that was going to be our mission. The Army "left hook" was also becoming clearer as time went on. I believe it was a good plan that Schwarzkopf ultimately executed. It took a lot of troops, but we'll talk about that later.

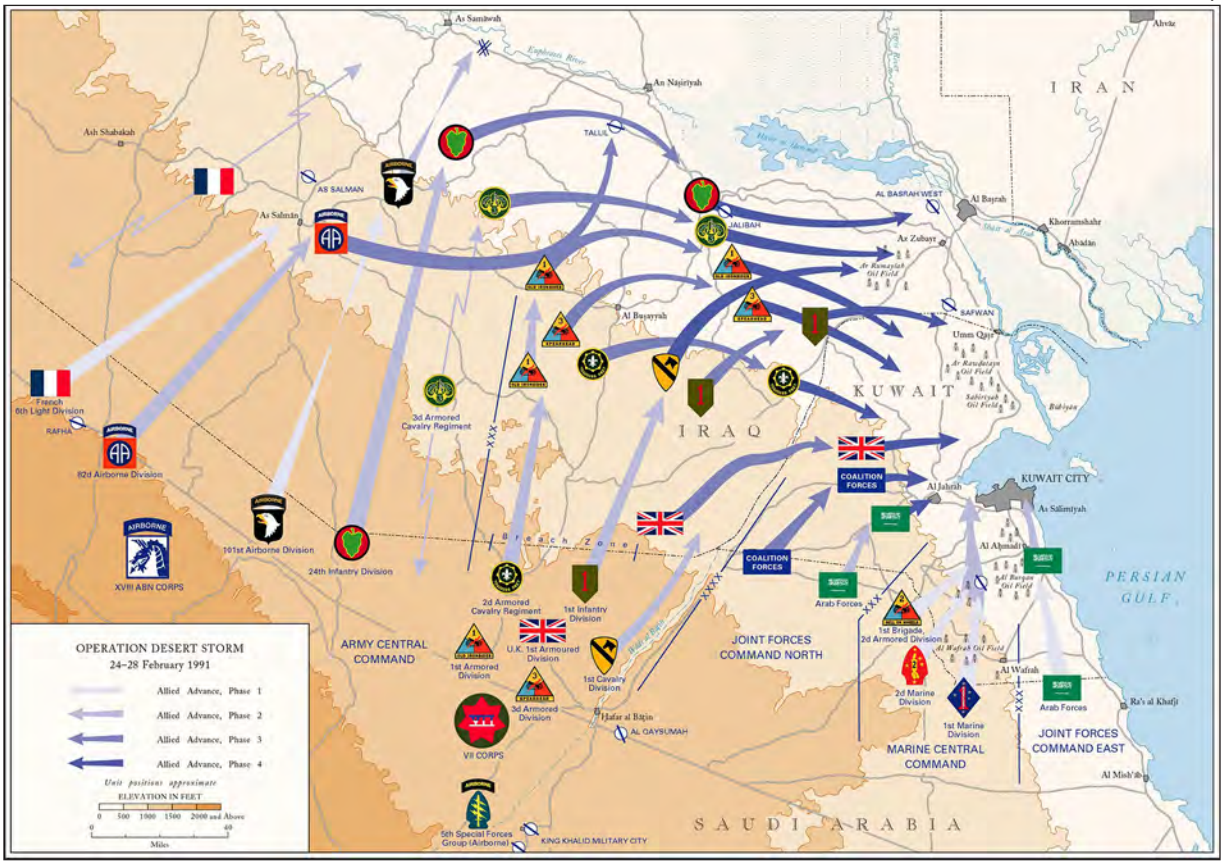
As we began to plan, everything was on the table. In the beginning, it seemed to make sense to use our amphibious capability to come from the Gulf [and] attack Kuwait on the flank while forces from Saudi Arabia drove up, ultimately conducting a link up. We explored that option carefully. Extensive planning went into that concept. There were schemes to attack up north of Kuwait City, into the Basrah [Iraq] area. That line of thinking seemed to be favored by those at Headquarters Marine Corps [HQMC]. When the Navy and Stan Arthur and I really began to explore that concept, it became clear that part of the Gulf did not lend itself to an amphibious operation for a lot of reasons. Going back, there was all this criticism of Army planners working in a vacuum and devising plans, and here we had planners at Headquarters Marine Corps, Quantico, devising plans for us from half way around the world—none of which ultimately made any sense. Admiral Arthur and I gave them as much credence as they deserved, which was not much.

Westermeyer: So, there was sort of the Marine equivalent to the "Jedi Knights" [Army planners]?

Boomer: Yes. Anyhow, we looked at every conceivable course of action. Ultimately it became clear to me that while we were still way outnumbered, the Iraqis weren't going to be as tough as we originally thought. I wrote something about it early on; it says, "I've come to the conclusion that the Iraqis are not going to attack. They missed their chance. We grow stronger every day, and I'm convinced we can destroy his [Saddam's] forces before they reach any vital areas in Saudi Arabia. I've also come to believe that the Iraqi Army is much less capable than originally portrayed. While the *Republican Guard* units are undoubtedly good, I

Operation Desert Storm (illustrated map)

U.S. Army



believe the rest of their army to be very fragile and very susceptible to a well-coordinated attack. I still have concerns about the large numbers of equipment they have, particular attention to the artillery. However, I am convinced that if we plan the battle carefully, strike the first blow, inflict a large number of casualties upon them, they would crack very quickly. I'm not underestimating them, but I think his capability in the beginning was overplayed."

Westermeyer: Well, that turned out to be pretty much exactly what happened.

Boomer: Yes, exactly. So, we began to train to breach the barriers and minefields, because I couldn't see another way to do it. The amphibious option was not off the table at this point, but that in and of itself was not going to be enough to liberate Kuwait.

Westermeyer: You had to breach the barriers.

Boomer: We had to breach the barriers! That should have been patently obvious to everyone. I don't remember his words—he was careful in how he chose them—but as we outlined our preliminary plans to General Gray during a visit, he was less than kind because he thought the plan had no imagination. But no one had a better alternative. It was my command, so I executed my plan.

We came to believe that we could crack that barrier if we trained enough and if we executed properly. Anyhow, we trained day and night to the point that I ultimately backed off from training, because I thought we were wearing ourselves out. By the time we attacked, we did know how to breach that barrier, and the execution was almost perfect.

As an aside, we got some equipment from the Israelis, you probably heard about that.

Westermeyer: I read about that. It was almost a James Bond-type of operation.

Boomer: It was. You probably heard too that Khaled knew about it, which was probably inevitable.

Westermeyer: I don't remember him mentioning it.

Boomer: We didn't want them to know that we were turning to the Israelis for equipment. God forbid that Israeli equipment soils their territory. When he found out about it, and he didn't harp too much, he just wanted some of it for his troops, which I gave him. They didn't know how to use it.

Westermeyer: This is the breaching equipment?

Boomer: Yes.

Westermeyer: It is interesting though that we didn't have enough breaching equipment on our own, or was it the location?

Boomer: This wasn't stuff the Marine Corps has. This was big, heavy stuff, more associated with heavy armor.

Westermeyer: Did the Army have equipment like this?

Boomer: They probably did, but I knew they wouldn't let us use it. It was easier to get it from the Israelis than from the Army. The point is we were pretty well set to breach the obstacles.

Westermeyer: This is when there's a single breach, and then when the Israeli equipment showed up.

Boomer: The Israeli equipment didn't tip scales one way or another in terms of our ultimate plan. If we hadn't gotten it, we would have been okay, but it was just a little more insurance, and if it saved a Marine['s] life, it was worth it.

I do have to admit that the single breach wasn't brilliant. It was just pure power. I wasn't that happy with it, but we spent hours around the sand table trying to think this thing through. I think at the time it was the best concept that we had.

Westermeyer: Was General Draude's Task Force Troy part of the briefing that General Gray got that he didn't think was imaginative?

Boomer: I can't remember if he got that or not. I think he may have.

Westermeyer: Because that particular part has always struck me as imaginative.

Boomer: It was imaginative, and "Tom" Draude deserves a lot of credit for it, because I just said somebody go and do this, and Draude did it. You know, it worked. We moved the equipment, the ammunition, the food, [and] the water to support that plan, and the Iraqis never caught on. Then the 2d Marine Division arrived, and they began to train. They were led by a guy that I would trust with my life, [Major] General [William M.] "Bill" Keys, who is a fighter.

Westermeyer: Is this the same Bill Keys who was an assignment officer for you? You mentioned a Major Bill Keys. Is this the same gentleman later on?

Boomer: It's the same guy. We've been friends for a long time. Navy Cross winner, without a doubt the most solid guy I had in terms of his fighting capabilities.

Westermeyer: And he was the one who came to you and said we want to do a second breach?

Boomer: He came to me and said, "We should do a second breach."

I said, "Can you do it?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "We'll do it." This decision came very late during Desert Shield.

Westermeyer: His particular reasoning was it's too complicated for two divisions to pass through one breach?

Boomer: We had always known that two divisions in trace [were] fraught with difficulty. However, we thought it was the best that we could do and that we could accomplish it. We had worked long enough and hard enough, so I think we all believed that we could do it, and we did know its weaknesses and its strengths.

Westermeyer: This is in January?

Boomer: Yeah. There is no time left for discussion. I think my exact words were, "Bill, you sure you can do the breach?"

He said, "I can do the breach."

I said, "Fine, we'll change the plan." [Brigadier General Charles C.] "Chuck" Krulak was standing off to the side. Chuck said, "You're going to change the plan, holy cow! I gotta know! I gotta know!" So I thought about it for just awhile longer and I said, "Chuck, we're changing the plan."

Westermeyer: With General Krulak as DSC [Direct Support Command] a lot of the initial problems did fall right on his shoulders to make it possible . . .

Boomer: It all fell on his shoulders, because we then had hundreds of tons of stuff to reposition in a short period of time. That's a story in and of itself.

There was considerable risk in changing the plan late, but I felt the risk was worth taking, or I wouldn't have taken it. I thought we had a much stronger plan with a two-division attack than we did a one-division attack with the other division following in trace. We could move much faster, we had that much more ground covered, we were going to kill that many more Iraqis. I had to have faith that we could get the equipment moved. I think that comes from more than just faith. I think that's where experience comes into play. As I weighed that in my head, I thought this is an almost impossible job, but I really believe these Marines can do it, that Krulak and his guys can do this.

Westermeyer: Did you work with General Krulak before this?

Boomer: Prior to that, no. Brabham, yes. They were my two logistics generals. I knew Chuck by reputation and his performance once there measured up to his reputation. So, I really thought the two of them could pull it off. I think this is a key point, because I was at a point in time where I didn't have much to rely on except intuition, experience, and knowledge of Marines, and that's what I based my decision on.

Westermeyer: So a lot of it, you just had to show your faith in those two officers?

Boomer: Exactly. Sometimes that's what it boils down to.

There was another complicating factor. I had to sell General Schwarzkopf on this change of plan. He actually had to have the attack delayed. We had been the ones who were always ready to go, and he was waiting on the Army. Now he finally had them in place, and I said, "Oops, not so fast. I want to change the plan." He bought it, supported me, went back to Washington [DC] and sold it. He could have said, "Too late." It was typical of his belief in and support of the Marines.

Westermeyer: In retrospect do you think that would have made a difference, going with just one breach?

Boomer: It would have slowed us down, just by the very nature of the plan. We wrapped up in about three days; it would have taken six perhaps.

Westermeyer: [Lieutenant] General [Bernard E.] Trainor, in *The Generals' War*, implies that to the extent that the Gulf War wasn't a huge success it was because too many of the Iraqis escaped. They just ran away too quickly. Do you think the Marines were driving them out, or do you think that they were just running anyway so that the breach wouldn't have made any difference because they were already running for the border?

Boomer: That's a very interesting question. The first ones to run were the officers. The troops were left there, and they really didn't have much place to go. While the distance wasn't huge, to cover it on foot while we were bombing them was a daunting task. They stayed. My estimate has always been that 75 percent of them gave up, 24 percent fought. That includes those who came out of the oil field and attacked us on the flank. Had they been supported as they should have been supported, had their officers stayed there, we would have had a tougher fight. I think they felt very alone and isolated. We captured 22,000 of them. That's an incredible number.

It does point out, and this is important, [that] the

young Marine on the ground faced a difficult situation. There were people there trying to kill him and many others who just wanted to give up. To sort that out in the chaos of battle was really difficult. I think they operated in just an exemplary fashion. I am not aware of an atrocity that was committed, and it was ripe for atrocities. They killed those who wanted to fight and captured those who wanted to give up. I have a picture I took with this little camera of a mass of green that must have been a couple thousand Iraqis and a couple Marines with rifles marching them back to a detention center.

Let's go back to the attack. People need to remember that they did have chemical weapons. We knew it, and we knew they had used them against Iran. My greatest fear throughout the planning of the entire campaign was that they would use chemical weapons, a secondary fear, biological. We knew they had both; it's a well-established fact. We were particularly vulnerable as we breached the barrier to a chemical attack. It's my understanding, but I don't know this for sure, that our government warned them not to use those kinds of weapons. I think somehow they got that warning. In every press conference, every press interview that I had, I was always asked about chemical weapons. My answer was "We're training for that eventuality, but if they use them it will be their own worst nightmare. The punishment we will mete out if they use chemical weapons is beyond anything they can comprehend, and we will go to their families, their daughters, their sons, their children, their aunts, and uncles." I was just hoping maybe at least one Iraqi chemical officer would understand that. We actually captured a chemical officer who said that he had the capability, but he had not intended to use it.

Westermeyer: It probably would have had a greater impact on the Iraqi soldiers if they were anywhere near the impact zone. Their defenses were much worse.

Boomer: Yes, they were. They were much less capable of dealing with chemicals than us. I'm sure all of those things played into their not using them. But if you were the MEF commander you couldn't just dismiss the threat. The other significant threat was that we had not taken out all their artillery; there was so much of it you couldn't take it all out by air. They had done a job on it, diminished it considerably, but if they could get their act together well enough to coordinate some artillery barrages as we attacked through the breach, that too would have been a bad situation. So our whole focus was to crack this thing fast, get through it fast, and get deployed on the other side.

Westermeyer: And their experience during the Iran-Iraq War had been primarily defending fortifications just like that.

Boomer: Exactly, we had no reason to believe that they didn't know how to do this. I mention that because now people say, "Well, it was a cakewalk." Well, in some ways it was, but we had planned the attack well. It was executed well. We did not know it was going to be a cakewalk. We didn't think it was going to be anything like we had believed in the beginning, but it still held incredible danger.

In hindsight it did turn out to be easier than we thought in the beginning. Some people don't take time enough to reflect upon the fact that our planning and our preparation before the attack was one of the elements that made it easy. It could've possibly turned out different.

Do you want to tackle some of the questions now?

Westermeyer: Sure, I've been marking the ones that I felt we got done pretty well. I would like to ask while we're talking about the fight, prior to Desert Storm, the major Marine Corps battles had been in Vietnam and Korea, and neither of those was easy. It seems to me that if the North Koreans had been manning those berms there would have [been] fewer Marines coming home than there were. That is part of it. Also, if the North Koreans would have been manning the berms, you wouldn't have had four or six months to prepare for the battle in the first place. So that was really an opportunity to set it up and play it just like a football game—a huddle and a plan and a get up on the line, ready, set, go.

Boomer: That's right, and one of the things that I'm proud of is I believe we took advantage of that time. We took advantage of every minute of that. It would have been easy to sit back and not worked as hard or trained as hard as we did, but I don't think that's the nature of Marines. Your speculation about what it would have been like if we had faced the North Koreans or the North Vietnamese—well, I believe both of them would have been much tougher enemies. I also believe we would have prevailed, because we, I believe, were more in our element than they would have been in their element had they been on the other side of that berm.

Now, if you could have transplaced their mental-

ity into the head of the Iraqi, which is what you're saying, yeah it would have been harder. But here were guys that we know from today's Gulf War [Operation Iraqi Freedom] are capable of fighting if properly led and motivated. One of the things that we had going for us was that they weren't motivated and they weren't properly led. We knew they weren't motivated even by the time [the Battle of] [al-]Khafji occurred, and it confirmed that fact. We were beginning to pick up POWs who, in essence, said, "I don't want any part of this deal. I am down here getting the heck pounded out of me every day. Food and water is short. Why am I here?" They were saying, "I don't want to die here, in this conflict." We were picking up enough of that so that I really came to believe that there was a significant morale problem on the other side.

Westermeyer: Maybe this is a good time to segue into Khafji. We're actually doing Khafji as a separate battle study within the larger conflict that we completed hopefully earlier. So, if you could, talk a little bit about specifics with Khafji. When did you first realize that the Iraqis . . . what were you doing when you realized there was an actual Iraqi push into Saudi Arabia going on? At this point there had already been some artillery raids and some minor reconnaissance events, I believe.

Boomer: When I saw the question, I tried to remember exactly where I was when the Khafji attack began, and I can't remember. Nor can I remember exactly how the word came to me that there was an attack launched into Khafji. What I do remember was that I was not overly concerned. I believe that my feeling was, and I don't have any notes about this unfortunately, that if they're trying that now, they're going to play right into our hands. Khafji had been evacuated, as you know. As a matter of fact, you probably know more about this battle than I do. So, it was an empty town, and far enough up in the northeastern corner, so that we were not particularly worried about it. Now it did become clear later that they were trying to make a major push into Iraq. But as it unfolded, that wasn't clear to us because they didn't execute it very well. Yes, they got into the city, but what the hell; anybody could have driven into Khafji. No big deal.

As it became clear that they were trying to do something of significance, we began to react. I think by that time, the MEF staff was at the point where it could handle this kind of thing without it being some huge crisis. We never looked upon Khafji as an unfolding major crisis, because once he strung his tanks out there on that road for our airpower, he was doomed. Once we got the air cranked up, they just were not going to get past Khafji, in my view.

Now, for the Saudis it became a major embarrassment. "Oh my god, they are on our sacred soil and have taken one of our sacred towns"—which they had already abandoned, so it has to be taken back. Okay, fine. Everybody knew we would retake it. By that time the Saudis had moved to my right flank.

Westermeyer: Khafji, itself, was in their sector.

Boomer: Yes. So, they set out to liberate it, and that was okay. We had the luxury of allowing them to liberate it. I think they did a pretty good job. Would it have been different without our airpower? Absolutely.

Westermeyer: The impression that I got as I've studied the Battle of Khafji is that MEF left [1st Marine] Division alone and [1st Marine] Division left the battalions alone to fight as they saw fit. Is that pretty much how it worked out?

Boomer: I think that's a pretty good way to express it. [Major] General [John H.] Admire* was there, and he was a very capable ground commander. As we watched it unfold we did not view this as a major threat to the Saudis' oil fields. As we saw them continue to pour troops into the town, we said, "That's very interesting." I think from your study of the battle, you will agree they became confused. They didn't execute very well. If they had executed this thing well and really blown on past Khafji, then we may have had a little more interesting situation on our hands, but there's only one road. If you get off that road, you can't traverse because your tanks will sink in some of the places on either side of that road as you head south. It looks like hard desert, but it's treacherous stuff. So, they were going to come down one road single file; it wasn't going to happen.

Westermeyer: They actually had three prongs of attack, but the other two prongs were stopped by the light armored [infantry] battalions so thoroughly that we never realized what they were.

Boomer: I think it happened so well and so quickly that I really didn't know the detail of it at the time.

Westermeyer: Ironically, [the Iraqis] considered the battle a victory.

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*Then-Col Admire commanded 3d Marines and Task Force Taro.

Boomer: A victory?

Westermeyer: They felt that we stopped the war early because we were so impressed with how well they fought at Khafji.

Boomer: It was exactly the opposite, exactly the opposite. I've been quoted many times, and I think I was probably quoted pretty soon after the Battle of Khafji; this was a key piece of intelligence to us. We knew that they couldn't move and communicate very well, because they certainly didn't exhibit it there. Certainly not fast enough so that they could get inside of our loop, and once you really hit them hard, they'd back off. They really didn't want to get real bloodied, and that was obvious to us at Khafji. So, Khafji was a horrible defeat for them, and it gave us more confidence in what we were doing.

Westermeyer: Right. One big controversy after the war was in General Khaled's book; he mentions not being supported early in the battle by Marine air.

Boomer: I can't remember why General Khaled felt that he wasn't getting air support in a timely fashion. Ultimately, it was our air support that turned the tide for them. So, I really don't have a response as to why he didn't get it when he thought he needed it. It was not because we felt we didn't have sufficient air to defend ourselves, the logistics bases, and provide support for the Marines that were engaged, because we did. I think part of the problem was that the situation was confused on the ground. We didn't feel that we could decipher it well enough in the beginning to not risk friendly casualties. To my knowledge there wouldn't have been any communication between the Saudis and Marine air, which would have been a significant problem. I'm guessing that General Moore, if he was slow to react, was slow to react for that reason. I would also say their concern that the Iraqis had penetrated that far was not of the same significance to us.

The friendly fire problem, as you know, was and continued to be a real problem. We had already had Marines killed by friendly aircraft, and we were supersensitive to that danger.

Westermeyer: Speaking of that, in particular the incident with the two LAVs [light armored vehicles], a team called the Tiger Team was formed to investigate fratricide incidents afterwards. Do you recall how that team came about? Was that your idea or was that something that came from lower down the chain?

Boomer: No, that originated with the MEF. Ultimately, we all understood how it happened. What we were trying to do was to prevent it from happening again.

Westermeyer: So, it wasn't so much to investigate how could this thing have occurred but how do we fix this?

Boomer: How do we fix it, how do we make sure we don't kill each other, which is always a significant problem on the battlefield.

Westermeyer: And if LAVs could be misidentified, certainly Saudi armored cars that look like nothing in the U.S. inventory could easily be misidentified.

Okay, I think that covers Khafji fairly well. If you could go back in time a little bit, when you first arrived in the Gulf, you had the British "Desert Rats" attached, but fairly quickly after the decision was made to invade Kuwait, the Marines lost the British and that was primarily initiated by the British—though General Trainor implies in his book that the Jedi Knight planners had something to do with it. They went to the British, and there was some behind the scenes maneuvering. What did you think about losing that division and their replacement by the Army's Tiger Brigade [1st Brigade, 2d Armored Division]?

Boomer: Well, first we were delighted to have them. They were good, well trained, [and] well led, and the British soldiers and the Marines got along fabulously. They took part in our planning from day one; [British] Brigadier [Patrick] Cordingley* was an outstanding commander. In the beginning, he was the senior British soldier on the ground. Then [British Lieutenant] General [Sir Peter Edgar de la Cour] de la Billière** came in.

They took part in the planning. We were working together extremely well. Then they were moved. Now, this move did not occur overnight. General Schwarzkopf talked to me about it and confided that he was getting a lot of pressure to move the Brits. He intimated he was getting pressure even from London [England]. I think we both knew that it was inevitably going to happen. So, between the two of us it was no real surprise when it occurred, just extreme disappointment on my part and I think on his. I'm not aware of anybody else working behind the scenes on the American side to cause this to happen. That could be true, but from my per-

*Brig Cordingley commanded the British Army's 7th Armored Brigade, the Desert Rats.

**LtGen de la Billière was commander in chief of the British forces.

spective it was always a British-initiated move led on the scene by General de la Billière.

When the brigade was moved we had already talked about contingencies. I had said to General Schwarzkopf, "I understand this could be beyond your control and mine. So, what can we do? What can you give me to take their place?" I said, "I needed an armored brigade for my left flank." I considered that flank to be the most vulnerable. He said, "I will give you a unit equal in strength." John Yeosock was in on the conversation, and he said, "We will replace the British with a like U.S. unit," and that was that. There was no acrimony between Schwarzkopf and me or General Yeosock. I think we all viewed it as something beyond our control.

Westermeyer: What about with General de la Billière? Did you have any interactions with him?

Boomer: I was beginning to have some interaction with him but he never said to me face to face what he said in his book. In his book, he said he thought that Boomer [was] hell-bent to take Kuwait no matter what, and, in essence, "I was not willing to risk our precious British forces with these Marines, who have a reputation for hell for leather." He didn't understand.

Now, Cordingley, his brigadier, did understand. He knew exactly what we were planning. I think General Cordingley knew that if he stayed with us, the British forces would have been spotlighted in the world press. They would have taken part in the liberation of Kuwait. I was going to give them a hell of a lot of credit because they were so important to us, and I knew the kind of job they were going to do. As it were, who knows the British were even there. Does anybody? I mean they got lost. De la Billière was wrong. I have a lot of respect for him. He is a soldier's soldier, but I think he just misjudged us, and I really believe there was something else at play. I think they wanted to showcase that Challenger [main battle] tank against our [M1A1] Abrams [main battle tank] for future armor sales and say, "Hey look!"

Westermeyer: That didn't turn out too well for them.

Boomer: They would have been better off leaving them with us. That being said, I harbor no ill will.

Westermeyer: Did you feel like the Army brigade that came in was like for like?

Boomer: The Army brigade that came in was not like for like, but on the other hand they were a very professional brigade led by a very professional leader, and after they got to know us a little, I think they were very comfortable with the MEF.

In the beginning, they had many questions. How am I going to be used? They don't have armored brigades. Are they going to use me properly? What are they going to do [with] me? I think after a week or so when they understood what an important, critical role we had for them—using them as an Army brigade should be used—they just fell right in and did a terrific job.

But there was something else at play here that was very disruptive. My impression was that General Gray was incensed that the Brits had been taken away. The implication being that if we had a larger presence in Riyadh, this would never have happened. That was not true. This was beyond anyone's control in Riyadh. There seemed to be the belief that Schwarzkopf was treating us badly, and I did not have the force or voice in Riyadh that I should have because I was both MarCent [U.S. Marine Forces Central Command] and I MEF. He was wrong.

Westermeyer: So, he was arguing for a split between MarCent and the I MEF commander, to take that one person and split it into two?

Boomer: That's ultimately what he wanted, when we had at the time two very capable major generals in Riyadh. They were well respected, one had even worked for CentCom; he knew all the players.

Westermeyer: Which general was that?

Boomer: That was [Major General Norman E.] "Norm" Ehlert. We couldn't have been better represented. Later on we had another, Brigadier General [Richard I.] "Butch" Neal, there, who later became the Assistant Commandant. There was a tremendous amount of trust, in my view, on the part of General Schwarzkopf for the Marines and our capability. I always felt that he didn't have to worry about us. My impression, and I believe it's a correct impression, was he knew that the part of his campaign that he assigned to the Marines was in good shape.

Westermeyer: It sounds like you had a very good relationship with General Schwarzkopf.

Boomer: Well, I had sort of a love/hate relationship with General Schwarzkopf. He had a bad temper and he would lose it, even with me. Not that I didn't provoke him from time to time, but on the other hand, he gave me a mission, trusted me to accomplish that mission, and generally speaking, left me alone. He trusted me enough to alter the

entire plan of attack because I asked him to, and I appreciate that. So, I can overlook all the rest of the stuff with General Schwarzkopf. I think that we had a very good professional relationship. I think we had a trusting relationship. This was not appreciated in Washington.

Westermeyer: By "in Washington," do you mean the Defense Department or Headquarters Marine Corps?

Boomer: At Headquarters Marine Corps. There was tremendous angst at Headquarters Marine Corps, about the British being taken away. I wasn't happy about it, but I also knew why it happened. General Schwarzkopf and I made the best of the situation.

Westermeyer: It turned out that it didn't make much of a difference operationally?

Boomer: It didn't make much of a difference, and the Army brigade performed really well.

Westermeyer: You were in fact, I have to finish my research to confirm this, but I believe you were the first Marine officer in command of a major Army unit since the General [Holland M.] Smith fiasco during World War II.

Boomer: Probably. I hadn't thought about that.

Westermeyer: We talked a little bit about General Schwarzkopf. Was there any particular time or moment when he lost his temper, or was it just sort of an ongoing thing where it was just sort of give and take?

Boomer: I always had a good give and take with him. A couple times I irritated him, and on one occasion, I did something I should not have done. You can imagine all the pressure that was building up prior to the attack. We get through the barriers and minefields, and there are no chemical weapons used. We have accomplished our mission with little loss of life. The president had made some mention of the Marines fairly early in a speech. So I sent the president a message saying, "You should really be proud of your Marines. They've done this, and etc." I didn't go through General Schwarzkopf, and he got really, really angry with me. A man I considered to be a good friend, [Army General] Colin [L.] Powell,* got a little angry with me as well, because I didn't go through [the proper] channels; it went right to the White House.

Westermeyer: Instead of going through the chairman.

*Gen Powell was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Boomer: Yeah, and I shouldn't have done that, but you know I was caught up in the moment. It was maybe one of those times when I let my emotions get ahead of my brain.

Westermeyer: But as a component commander though?

Boomer: Well, really, I can't defend it. I should've sent it through General Schwarzkopf.

Westermeyer: The routing?

Boomer: I got a nice message back from the president that had been written for him by General Powell that said, "I'm really proud of your Marines and all the Services."

Then, later on, General Schwarzkopf got upset with me because after the battle was over, I had allowed some reporters to roam through the battlefield in order to understand what happened. He didn't like that for some reason. But as time goes on, I appreciate more and more the trust he had in me. I respect his intellect, and I think he did a fine job. I think he appreciated the job the Marines did for him. He made that very clear. I don't think he was as effusive in his praise about any other force there than he was about the Marines.

Westermeyer: You mentioned the reporters roaming through the battlefield and General Schwarzkopf was upset with that, and one thing that I have noticed is that the reporters constantly commented on the difference between Army media relations and Marine media relations—that the Marines handled it very differently than the Army did. Did you want to comment on that? It seems to me that, that must have come directly from you, a MarCent decision?

Boomer: That was a MarCent decision, and one that my commanders understood. We had a much more trusting relationship with the media than did our colleagues in the Army. I think to their detriment. I always believed that Marines were of such caliber that you could turn reporters loose. Let them live with these guys and gals, work with them. And if they had the guts to go to war with them and we were going to be covered fairly, not only was the Marine Corps going to benefit from this publicity, but I also had the belief that people at home needed to know what their sons and daughters were doing, what they're up against and how they're performing. Now, you can play that string out too far for obvious reasons, and I probably leaned further out that way than many, but I think we did get very excellent coverage of our participation in that campaign, almost all of it favorable.

My Army colleagues always seemed to be afraid of that one bad story that's inevitably going to come out. Are you going to run across some disgruntled Marine, he is angry, and he blows off, and it's in the *Washington Post*? Well, you've just got to have faith that that's going to be way down there in the noise somewhere, and all the good that's going to come out of it on the other end makes it worth your doing. We did have a pretty open relationship with the media. Not that we didn't have guidelines for them, but they never, to the best of my knowledge, reported anything they shouldn't have. They had a good sense of what we were doing. It didn't take a genius to figure it out if you spent some time with us. They did not blow our plans, not even a hint of that.

Westermeyer: You mentioned that you probably leaned further towards openness than a lot of officers do with the media. Is that something that you developed from your time in Marine public affairs or was that something that you had developed? I mean did you come out of Vietnam feeling that way?

Boomer: I didn't feel one way or another coming out of Vietnam except that I saw a lot of courageous reporters that I thought they had more guts than they had sense. So, I kind of appreciated that. No, I think it really was born of my experience in public affairs.

For example, I got to know Molly Moore* when I was in public affairs. She seemed to be a very competent, professional person to me. So, when I decided to take some reporters along with me into Kuwait, I extended an invitation to Molly and several others. She was the only one who showed up. The others didn't show up for various reasons. One, they didn't think at the MEF level you were going to see anything, and I couldn't tell them what I was doing. At least one had already committed himself to some other place. So Moore showed up and got the story.

Westermeyer: Let's go ahead and talk about her book. I want to get back to your decision to follow [or] take that MEF headquarters on into Kuwait as early as you did. But while we're talking about Molly Moore, in most cases it's just confirmation. Her book obviously has a ton of your opinions at the time, and so I just wanted to make sure that if I'm quoting from that, that there's nothing in there that you would be unhappy with, that got misquoted or misunderstood.

Boomer: I don't recall anything in there that I'm really unhappy with. I think for the most part she got it right. A funny story about that book. I got a call from the publisher, and Molly had warned me about this, who said, "We're going to title this book 'Boomer's War.'"

I said, "You absolutely will not! I will sue you! You cannot do this!" And the guy, probably a lawyer, said, "I'm sorry, we can name it anything we want to." Then I said, "Please, don't call it 'Boomer's War.'" Ultimately they gave it the appropriate title [*A Woman at War*], because a lot of it's about her and her own personal experience. It was just a more appropriate title. But, Molly was with us the whole way.

Westermeyer: In *The Generals' War*, there was a specific instance when, according to *Generals' War*, General Gray actually spoke with General Schwarzkopf and asked to have your command split, to put in somebody else as the MEF commander and leave you as MarCent in Riyadh. Were you aware of this event?

Boomer: It was the other way around, put somebody else in Riyadh and leave me with the MEF.

Well, there was, as we talked about earlier, this paranoia at Headquarters Marine Corps about the fact that somehow we were underrepresented in Riyadh. It may just be part of the whole Marine Corps paranoia thing, but there certainly was the feeling in Washington, precipitated by the British brigade leaving and the uproar over the Jedi Knights that caused them erroneously to believe that there was a disconnect or lack of respect on the part of General Schwarzkopf for the Marines, or however you wanted to portray it. It was absolutely wrong.

I flew to Riyadh about every 10 to 14 days; talked with General Schwarzkopf on the phone probably every day or every other day. There was no disconnect. We weren't being neglected. We weren't being left out, and I think the facts bear that out. At the same time there apparently was this feeling that maybe we hadn't set the command structure up right, that MarCent and I MEF should be split.

Ultimately, in the second Gulf War, they did that. I think it could be the right solution in some cases, but what I kept saying to them was "Look, this is working perfectly fine, whether you understand it or not." Later on, after the war, I said to those that wanted to listen, "It can work either way, let it be

*Moore was a reporter and foreign correspondent for the *Washington Post*.

situation dependent. You don't have to split those two commands." At the time, I was adamant that it not happen. I won, because General Schwarzkopf was on my side. He didn't see any wisdom in it. Both of us knew that things were working fine.

It was suggested late in the game. It was another case of lack of wisdom, from my perspective. To think that you could come in to a general's theater of operation at the last minute and want to make a major change in one of his component commands did not suggest good judgment.

I knew General Gray had lost with General Schwarzkopf because General Schwarzkopf and I were talking the whole time. I wanted to help him save face. I said, "General, we've got a potential amphibious operation going on. We have a significant number of Marines aboard ship. Why don't we have [Major General John J.] "Jack" Sheehan* come, go aboard ship, and be our liaison with Stan Arthur?"

He looked at me and he said, "You'd really go for that?"

Well, I had suggested it. I said, "Yes, sir."

He said, "Absolutely."

I said, "Okay fine, but you know someone has to convince Admiral Arthur this is a good idea." Again, very late in the game, and you're saying to the Navy three star, "I'd like you to take this Marine two star aboard your ship so he can help you."

So, I said, "Somebody's got to deal with Admiral Arthur."

He looked at me and said, "Oh, would you do that?"

I said, "Yes, sir, I'll do that." Stan Arthur and I had such a great relationship that he had almost a sixth sense about what was unfolding, and he said, "Yeah, I'll do it." Jack is a very bright guy. I have a lot of respect for him, and I think he worked fine with Admiral Arthur.

But all of this wasted my time and mental energy and did absolutely nothing to help I MEF defeat the Iraqis.

Westermeyer: Okay. The amphibious invasion never happened. It became an amphibious faint. I've heard from other people involved at the time that there was a big push to do an amphibious landing. We're Marines; we have to land. Did you feel any pressure from Headquarters Marine Corps on that?

Boomer: I felt some, but it played no role in any decision making. General Schwarzkopf may remember this, one of the first things I said to him very early, because we didn't know each other. I said something to the effect, "General I'm your Marine commander, but my thoughts I believe are the same as yours, and they are we need to do whatever it takes to win this campaign." I said, "I will never recommend an amphibious operation to you just for the sake of conducting [an] amphibious operation. I will only recommend it to you if I think it will help us win." I believed that very deeply. That's how we operated.

In the beginning, it seemed like an amphibious operation might facilitate our victory. Later, it seemed like it would only complicate our chances of winning quickly.

Westermeyer: What were the major problems with an amphibious landing that you can recall?

Boomer: There were two primarily, and these really came to the fore at a meeting that took place on the [USS] *Blue Ridge* [LCC 19] between Stan Arthur, General Schwarzkopf, and I. I think Jack Sheehan was there as well.

We discussed the amphibious operation because at that time it was still very much in the forefront of our planning; however, its value was beginning to diminish in my own mind. The meeting was right after the Navy had hit two mines. We were d——n lucky we didn't lose a ship.

Westermeyer: It would have been worse than the barracks probably that got hit by the Scud[-B] [surface-to-surface missile].

Boomer: The Navy came to believe that they couldn't clear all the mines. We really worked at it, talked about it, had a schedule, and tried hard. When we had the meeting aboard the *Blue Ridge*, General Schwarzkopf said, "I did not come to say that we're not going to do an amphibious operation." He said, "I really need to understand the amphibious operation and what we are doing."

Stan Arthur outlined to Schwarzkopf how long it would take him to clear the mines. They had, as I said, already worked on them. His projected timetable for clearing the mines threw off General Schwarzkopf's entire campaign timetable.

Then General Schwarzkopf asked, "All right, what do you have to do to get ashore? What are you going to take down? What are you going to destroy?"

We showed him what we thought the collateral damage to Kuwait would be. The beaches were heavily defended, and we had to get Marines ashore safely.

*MajGen Sheehan commanded MarCent (Forward).

"So, are you going to destroy quite a bit of stuff?"

"Yes, sir."

He said, "That bothers me a lot, because we've been able to let Kuwait City escape all of this." Some more small talk, and then he looked down at the table at me and his almost exact words were, "Walt, can you accomplish your mission without the amphibious assault?"

I pondered the question for a moment and said, "Yes, sir, I can as long as we continue to hold these forces that are here along the coast on the coast." I said, "The last thing I need is to free up the division that is there and have them move right over in front of me or attack my flank. We must really commit ourselves to a faint that will cause them to believe we're going to come ashore. "If we tie them up, and do it right," I said, "I can accomplish my mission without the amphibious assault."

He said, "Okay, we won't do it." Simple as that, end of discussion.

Westermeyer: So, there was no pressure within the Marine Corps to "no matter what, let's get this amphibious assault done, because we're Marines and we do amphibious assaults," that you noticed?

Boomer: Oh, there was always a little of that, but in my view if that's the only reason you're doing it, you're immoral.

Westermeyer: So it was there, but it was mild enough that it had no real impact on the decision making?

Boomer: Oh no, it couldn't have. I mean there was no amount of pressure that could have made me do an amphibious assault if I didn't want to do it and didn't believe it was the right thing to do.

Westermeyer: Before the ground war kicked off, did you feel like you were getting the number of air strikes that you wanted, and on the targets that you wanted, in Kuwait?

Boomer: Generally speaking, yes. There were some days when I didn't think I was, but I would pick up the phone and talk to Chuck Horner about it.

Westermeyer: And he was responsive when you did that?

Boomer: Yeah. Chuck was an interesting guy. I think we're good friends. One day I said, "Chuck I've got this situation here. You've got these [Boeing] B-52 [Stratofortresses]. I want a B-52 strike right here." He'd say, "Walt, you just tell me what you want accomplished. Don't tell me what kind of airplanes you want. That is my job." I'd say, "Okay, Chuck, but B-52s could really do the job better." He'd get agitated, but we always could work through our problem, and I don't remember a time I didn't get what I wanted. It was some give and take on both sides, obviously.

Westermeyer: From some of these comments and other stuff that I've read so far, that seems to have been a common thing with all the ground commanders, asking for a specific kind of aircraft.

Boomer: Oh yeah, he still talks about that: "Those guys on the ground think they know how to do my job." Sometimes Chuck could be a little arrogant, but I think his air staff did a good job. They came back feeling proud, and they should have.

Westermeyer: Okay. I think we've covered the integration of the Marine air with the combined forces air center. When the invasion actually came down, you decided to create a mobile forward command post and go into Kuwait, not necessarily in the first wave, but much farther forward than your counterpart in the Army did or the British or French. You were right up there.

Boomer: Why not?

Westermeyer: Well, I asked myself that question, and the thing that I thought was well . . .

Boomer: I think that's a strange question to ask.

Westermeyer: In Molly Moore's book, she says that if you had stayed in the rear there were better communications, that you might have had better communications with your forward units and that you did have communication problems.

Boomer: I did have some comm [communications] problems. But that's probably the wrong trail to go down, because I had adequate communications. The important thing was I knew what was happening on the battlefield. I could taste it, I could smell it, and I could see it. Had I been way back in the desert in Saudi Arabia, I would not have had that capability, and my communications would have still been about the same degree of difficulty. I have this deeply held belief that a commander on the battlefield, whether it be a MEF, a division, [or] a brigade, should be as far forward as is prudent.

Every combat commander that I have admired has led from the front. It doesn't mean a MEF or corps commander is ahead of his battalions, but he is as close to the fight as it is prudent for him to be. There is simply no other way to fight and anyone who says there is does not know what he is talking about.

Now, we did have an interesting evening one night. We weren't in any real danger, but I had a division commander who believed exactly as I did,

and he was Bill Keys. This guy is a Navy Cross winner; he understands combat. He's up close. I felt I could pull up close to the division commander and be okay. We may have been a little closer that evening than we should have been.

To reiterate, you cannot fight from the rear in some bunker—Schwarzkopf, perhaps, but no one else. I was often later asked by Marines why I was forward. I never really understood the question. Where did they want me to be?

Westermeyer: Well, in my particular case, I don't have a place where I wanted you to be. I just wanted to understand why you did that and not this.

Boomer: I know, I know. Maybe I'm a little sensitive about the issue, because some intimated Boomer was just sort of grandstanding, you know, to be up there in front. That was hurtful. I was there because that's where I really believed I needed to be and because I could conduct the war better from there.

LtGen Boomer's map of the theater of operations shows the boundaries, in the center, for 1st and 2d MarDivs and the 5th MEB.

Map created by I MEF G-3 section

Westermeyer: Were you thinking in terms of future operations? It occurs to me that the initial breach in the first 48 hours of a plan like this is pretty much set and that to a certain extent your job is to get reports and say, "Yep, keep following the plan."

Boomer: I didn't follow them into Kuwait until they were safely through the breach, and once that was accomplished, anybody could have driven a Ford sedan into Kuwait.

Westermeyer: But if the enemy had kept fighting after that 48 hours, the place to make decisions would have been inside Kuwait?

Boomer: It absolutely would have been.

Westermeyer: Okay. Is that something that was planned in your mind at the time?

Boomer: Yes, I felt that I had given them time to conduct the breach. They're moving forward and now the place for me to be is up there where I can talk to them. In Molly's book, she recounts my commanders and I huddled around a map. It doesn't get better than that in terms of thinking through and planning the next step. We made a couple of important decisions. One was we needed to stop for a while and regroup instead of pushing through all night.

Westermeyer: Were there any particular strengths or weaknesses, actually some of both hopefully, within the Marine Corps, where you thought to yourself, "Wow, we really just nailed this; we did this right" or "This is something we did not get right and we need to fix it" that your experience out of the Gulf brought up?

Boomer: Well, we've talked about the MPS concept, and we've got that right; conceptually it's great. The execution wasn't perfect, but that was a lesson that I hope we have learned.

A point that we haven't talked about is that we had lousy intelligence. It was terrible. When we came back home, there was another blue-ribbon commission appointed to try to figure out why the people on the ground weren't getting the intelligence that they needed. I did actually send two people back to Washington to poke around to try to get us better maps, better intelligence, [and] better photographs, and they found it. Which points out that information was flowing back to Washington and never then really coming back to the guy on the ground who needed it.

The battalion commander, or even the MEF commander, was not getting all the intelligence that we needed, but what made it even worse was some of it existed and we still weren't getting it. The system was broken.

I know there was a lot of work and a lot of attention paid to that after the first Gulf War. I don't know where we are today. I did feel that Marine intelligence had come a long way, but there was only so much that they could do. You know, many of those battlefield assets weren't controlled by them, the so-called strategic assets. Nevertheless, they can be very valuable, and you need to be able to get your hands on that information.

So, we worked for much of the planning period with relatively little, well with not as good of an intelligence picture as we should have had.

I think coalition warfare is something you take on a situation-by-situation basis, and you do the best you can to make it work. In this case, it was awkward at best. To me, the classic example is allegedly there were Syrians on my left flank. I never saw them; never talked to them. So, if I had to swear that they were there; I could not. I was told that they were, and it had a lot to do with our planning for my left flank. I felt it was completely uncovered, and it was. I don't even know how many Syrians showed up in total. Do you? Have you ever read?

Westermeyer: It was 900 maybe, not a very large number.

Boomer: Yeah, ridiculous. Those are the kinds of things that you just have to improvise around and plan for; it's very difficult. I think it's particularly difficult in [the] Arab world.

Westermeyer: Were you happy with the light armored infantry battalions? That was a very new concept; this was sort of their test of fire. What did you think about their performance?

Boomer: Well the LAVs performed extremely well, in some cases very courageously. A lesson that I learned as far as LAVs is concerned is that you've got to stress to them that they need to be careful about what they take on. Part of the problem is that you've got Marines manning them, and they don't think anything can defeat them. They can't go up against armor, and they need to be really careful when they do. So, I think it's just a matter of talking to them about their mission, what you expect of them, and what you don't expect of them. In our case, it all turned out okay, but on a couple of occasions I think it could have gotten a little dicey for them. It's hard for me to fault Marines for being aggressive. So, you've just got to be careful.

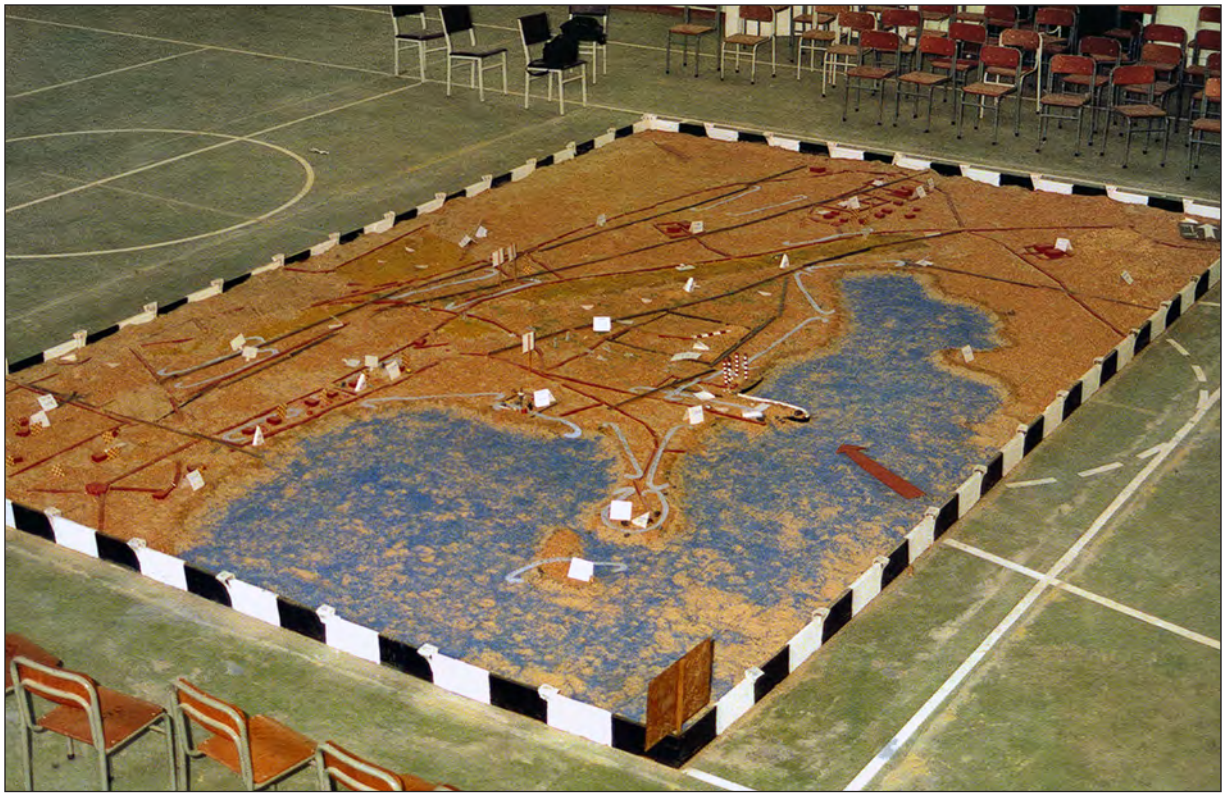

Photo by SSgt J. R. Ruark. Defense Imagery DM-SC-93-05229

This Iraqi sand table was found in the al-Jahra school gymnasium on 12 March 1991 following the liberation of Kuwait. The marked Iraqi positions corresponded to the force's defense plans and indicated how successful the Marines' amphibious deception was at distracting Iraqi attention from the Saudi-Kuwaiti frontier.

But, conceptually it worked well, and the vehicle served us well.

Westermeyer: What about the AAVs [amphibious assault vehicles]? Were they at all useful?

Boomer: You know, the AAVs performed really well, and they performed in a role, in many instances, that they weren't designed to fulfill. We had them, and it was a good vehicle, and we used the heck out of them.

Westermeyer: Was there any[thing] particular, maybe like logistical problems, that came up, any particular item of gear or equipment that was cursed?

Boomer: Well, overall logistically the Marine Corps inherently does not have the transport to fight as far inland as we were fighting without expecting, and having available, significant Army help. I think the Army does view us as part of their mission supply in the theater. We needed a lot of help and a very interesting solution was created, I thought brilliantly, by Jim Brabham. He recruited dozens and dozens of Saudi trucks to help us. I don't know how he paid for them; I don't know how he did any of that, but he's a can-do guy.

He created a truck force out of whole cloth, and they were a tremendous help. The point I'm making is we're very light in that regard. When you're moving two divisions and all of their associated logistics, the rest of the MEF, and all of its associated logistics, it takes a lot of trucks to move it, and we don't have them. So, you really need to think that through carefully. I'm not implying that we should get heavier. What I'm simply saying is you need to make provision for it somehow. Make sure that the Army's lined up to support you with fuel, etc., and because we're a long way from the beach and that stuff has got to keep rolling to you.

Westermeyer: Do you want to talk a little bit about the actual taking of Kuwait City? How you first entered Kuwait City? And the Egyptians?

Boomer: It became obvious that the Iraqis' back was broken, they were done for, and Kuwait City could be entered. We had decided that if possible, we would let Arab forces be the first into Kuwait. We were watching that situation very, very closely

and were prepared to back them up if anything had gone wrong. The city was empty. They were the first ones in the city, and it looked good. They were the first ones in the city, because we said, "Yes, you can be the first ones in the city."

It wasn't without at least one interesting situation though. The Egyptians were supposed to be part of that initial entry, and they weren't coming. I was getting information that the Egyptian commander wasn't going to go into Kuwait City until he had the word from somebody in Egypt. I got involved somehow, I can't remember the degree to which I was involved, but I said, "The plan has always been that you're going to go in. It's perfectly okay. It's safe." I think I called General Schwarzkopf and said, "I don't know what's wrong with this [guy]. He doesn't want to go in, and I can't make him go." Somehow they worked it out.

Westermeyer: The story that I heard was that they had no orders to enter Kuwait City from their national government and that they had to get their permission.

Boomer: I think that's right, that rings true, but what we had been told was that the plan was for them to enter. So, we assumed that they had all the permission that they needed. It didn't make any difference one way or the other.

Westermeyer: Did you take any heat at all about the occupation of the U.S. embassy in Kuwait City?

Boomer: Did I? No. Well, what do you mean?

Westermeyer: Well, my understanding was that the original plan was that an Army Special Forces team was going to liberate the American embassy. When they arrived there was already a unit of Marines occupying the embassy.

Boomer: If an Army Special Forces unit was going to take it, I didn't know that.

Westermeyer: Okay.

Boomer: There actually was a Marine reconnaissance lieutenant who sort of on his own went up and took the embassy, and I was prepared to chew his a——s out when I finally got my hands on him, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. I couldn't. What are you going to say? Here's this lieutenant that's come up the coast, and the embassy is a special place. So, he took charge and occupied it. He didn't have to fight for it.

Westermeyer: Right, there weren't any Iraqis around.

Boomer: So, it was one of those things that happened. We did find, close to that embassy though, a building, which had been used as their indoor map table with mock-ups that were amazing [and] had portrayed their whole battlefield layout. We took pictures of it. It did point out that we were correct in our assumption of how strongly they had fortified the coast. We would have succeeded in an amphibious operation, but it could have been interesting.

Westermeyer: Would you say their coast defenses were stronger than the defenses along the Saudi-Kuwaiti border?

Boomer: I don't know that I can say that, but they were certainly prepared to defend it.

Westermeyer: You're referring to more than the mines they had at sea?

Boomer: Yeah. Now, if they would have stayed there and fought, I don't know. I don't have any reason to believe that they would have been any more courageous than their colleagues in the desert to the west, except that they hadn't been pounded as much.

Westermeyer: Was that intentional?

Boomer: Oh yes, we went to great length not to damage Kuwait City. It's a small country, so it really becomes a suburb of Kuwait City as you go down the coast—high-rises for a long way.

Westermeyer: As the Marine part of the ground war ended, the Army part, in many ways, was just starting to kick off. Did you have any sense that you might be asked to move north, or did you already know it's over; the Army's going to do their thing, but we're not going to be called on to go up there?

Boomer: No, I didn't know, and I really hoped that we might be asked to go a little farther because we were prepared to do so. The last tactical conversation I had with General Schwarzkopf was to tell him where we were, a status report, and I said, "You can see that we're poised to go to Basrah. If you want us to go, just say the word." He said, "Okay," and that's the last I heard from him. The next thing I heard, "done." It was over.

Westermeyer: So, if the war had continued another three or four days, then the Marines possibly, maybe likely, would have gone to Basrah then?

Boomer: Well, we certainly would have headed in that direction. Whether or not we would have entered the city, I don't know; that's doubtful. I don't think we would have, because we probably would have policed up most of the Iraqi soldiers even

before we got there. They were escaping out of Kuwait. We had destroyed most of their trucks and an amazing number of civilian stolen vehicles that they thought they were taking back home, along with everything else they could steal and gather up out of shops. We stopped that exodus, so they had to pile out and run to get out of Kuwait. I would guess that for the first couple of days after we stopped the war the vast majority of them were probably within 25 to 30 miles of the border.

Westermeyer: They were on foot with small arms at best?

Boomer: Yes. I don't think they would have fought at that point.

Westermeyer: You mentioned earlier about taking 20,000 plus POWs. What sort of logistical challenge did that present?

Boomer: The POWs were a big logistical challenge. We had given a lot of thought to how we might deal with them and had made provisions. We had Marines, we had supplies, we had barbed wire, but they overwhelmed us. We didn't think we'd have that many that fast. So, once we got them, we had to feed them and give them water. They were very passive until they began to get really thirsty, and then it started to get kind of ugly. We were diverting supplies to them as quickly as we could. We got them all taken care of and marched them south, and the Saudis took them.

Westermeyer: When you mentioned things got ugly, were there any incidents like riots or just a general sense?

Boomer: Just a general sense of unrest. "Why aren't you giving us water. We surrendered, and we're now your responsibility, so take care of us." But no riots.

Westermeyer: Okay. What were your thoughts about the war ending? Was it the right time? Should it have gone on longer, etc.?

Boomer: As I look back now, and as we mentioned hindsight is always a wonderful thing, we could have pushed forward for 30 miles into Iraq, and I think rather easily captured another 10 to 20,000. I don't know how many there were. General Franks could have pushed for just another couple days, all of this I believe, without entering any major Iraqi city, and we would have finished off the Iraqi armed forces as a viable fighting force. Who knows what the consequence would have been for later times if that army had been destroyed. It's hard to say.

So, I do think we ended it too soon. Another couple of days and it would have been done. In the president's defense, I know there was pressure from our Coalition partners to end it. They had no appetite for Iraq. I believe it goes even deeper than that. They didn't want to see, no matter how horrible Saddam Hussein might have been, a Sunni regime replaced by a Shiite regime. There was that pressure, but politically it's not clear to me why it had to end when it did.

We didn't talk about the "Highway of Death," but that was misportrayed by the media. There was a couple of pretty horrible scenes, but in the scheme of things, relatively unimportant. A couple of buses that had escaping Iraqi soldiers were hit, and they were burned. Most of them were smart enough as they saw vehicle after vehicle stopping in front of them, and the line behind them becoming miles and miles long, and our aircraft methodically picking them off, to get the hell out, and they did. They ran over into the marsh and made their way up the coast to get out of Kuwait. We were stopped at about that time, so they did escape.

I was actually on that highway when the Iraqi truck engines were still running. They were so anxious to get out. They slammed on the brakes, put it in neutral, didn't shut the engine off, and ran. The event got blown up in the media, and it caused undo concern about us piling on. The question that I saw raised was that you wanted them to leave Kuwait, and they were trying their best, and you were killing them as they were leaving. Well, not quite right. They were escaping with their vehicles and their weapons. They were fair game. It wasn't the duck shoot that it was portrayed to be. I think probably there was a feeling in Washington [that] we don't want to be looked upon as butchers or bullies.

I wish we'd have gone for at least another 48 hours maybe 72. I was never a proponent, however, of going into Baghdad [Iraq].

Westermeyer: Continuing on, it still would have been a limited war not a full-out invasion of Iraq?

Boomer: Exactly. At least that would have been my view.

Westermeyer: What was the stand-down like? How did you go about getting your forces out of Kuwait, or did you stay in Kuwait? How did you start just shipping people back?

Boomer: We stayed in Kuwait until there could be some cease-fire arranged. It seemed to me that we stayed in Kuwait longer than we needed to. That

being said, we began to position our people to get out of Saudi Arabia pretty quickly, which was a real chore. You can imagine, we have most of the Marine Corps' gear and most of the Marine Corps there. All that gear, we knew, had to be cleaned up, put back on [the] ship properly, and gotten back ultimately to the units that needed it, or it was going to be a huge bill for us. That took a lot of time and a lot of work. It was almost as hard logistically getting out. It was harder getting out than it was getting in.

Westermeyer: Did you stay in Saudi Arabia during the entire crisis? Did you make any return trips to the states? No. When did you personally feel it was time for you to come back?

Boomer: I'm trying to remember what day I came back. I wasn't the last man out. There was no need for that. I think my feeling was when the majority of the MEF is out I'll leave. I left the rest of the people there to finish the task, and they knew how to do that.

Westermeyer: So, almost two months after the war had ended then, you were still in Kuwait? Were you primarily in Kuwait during this whole time?

Boomer: No, we went back to Saudi Arabia. We got out of Kuwait as quickly as we could. The oil fields were still burning. It was a bad place to be, and there was nothing we could do about that.

Westermeyer: Did you have any role in the peace conference?

Boomer: No. That was very interesting. It's still not clear to me why skilled State Department negotiators weren't parachuted in for that. It seemed eminently unfair to me for a guy who had been involved up to his eyeballs in trying to win the battle and the campaign to all of a sudden have to try to win the peace. It was nothing he [Schwarzkopf] was trained for; temperamentally I'm not even sure he was the right guy. Nobody's ever answered why State [Department] didn't conduct the peace treaty.

Westermeyer: So, you came back in April. You saw some of the parades and everything. How did you feel about the welcome?

Boomer: The homecoming was beyond anything that any of us had imagined. I led the Marines in parade in New York City; led them in a parade in Washington and an unbelievable welcome home in Dallas [Texas]. Everybody seemed very proud at what their armed forces had done.

An interesting thing happened in Dallas. Nothing much that involves the military happens in Dallas without [H.] Ross Perot's finger in it. It's always a good finger. He had arranged for a large number of Vietnam veterans to come and participate in that parade, which was a wonderful thing. We ended up in a huge auditorium there in Dallas. All the Vietnam veterans were sitting together. When they were introduced, all these kids from the Gulf War stood up and applauded them. I think they were stunned, and it was a wonderful thing to see. I'm a veteran of both conflicts; it was just terrific.

Westermeyer: You decided before you left for the Gulf to take a trained court stenographer to sit in on all of your daily staff meetings and take the notes and have those recorded for posterity. Did you know already at that point that this was going to be a big event? Why did you make that decision, when you made it?

Boomer: Well, the Marine Corps had never deployed a MEF as a MEF. It wasn't the way we fought Vietnam. I thought we might be creating some history here by the deployment of a MEF into combat. This seemed to me to be a really easy way to capture what was going on, and I happened to know a good stenographer, hell of a Marine, bull rider, a good guy. So, that's why. Just kind of this off-the-wall idea I had that I thought might help you guys later. I knew that I was going to forget the day-to-day details; because that's not the way my mind works. I never read those notes. It would be interesting to read them.

Westermeyer: If you're very interested, I can get you a copy. There are three folders worth of them on my shelf. I've got them separated and organized by week.

Boomer: Are they fairly interesting reading?

Westermeyer: They're extremely interesting reading. Were those the meetings where the decisions were being made, or was that just sort of a daily public meeting and then there's other, smaller meetings where the real decisions were being made, or somewhere in between?

Boomer: I think those meetings were the foundation for decisions. For the most part, the decision might be made somewhere else with a smaller group, but people could be heard. It was also a way to keep everybody informed as to what was going on, and I could sort of tell them at the time what I was thinking about. They weren't really decision meetings, no.

I saw an interesting note here: CentCom General Order Number 1 prohibits drinking in Saudi Arabia.

It turned out to be the greatest thing that's ever happened. I've been in a combat situation where alcohol was allowed and one in which it wasn't allowed, and I will tell you it's better when there is no alcohol. It's just better. So many fewer problems.

Westermeyer: You mean disciplinary problems within the troops?

Boomer: Yes, disciplinary problems. Marines like to drink, as did I, but we didn't and it was a great thing.

•Chapter 2•

Marines in the Air

During the Gulf War, the Marine Corps deployed every type of aircraft in its inventory. The majority deployed with the 3d MAW; the balance deployed with the various Marine forces afloat. Marine pilots supported the ground forces in their traditional air-ground task force role; additionally, they reinforced the U.S. Air Force's strategic air campaign against Iraq.

Lieutenant Colonel Michael M. Kurth

Lieutenant Colonel Michael M. Kurth served as commanding officer (CO) of Marine Light Helicopter Attack Squadron 369 (HMLA-369) during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. During the ground phase of the war, HMLA-369 provided close air support (CAS) for 1st MarDiv. Lieutenant Colonel Kurth was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions on 26 February 1991. Flying at low altitude and through the smoke of oil fires, control crashing his aircraft on two occasions, he used the forward-looking infrared (FLIR) camera of his Bell-Textron UH-1N Iroquois ("Huey") to direct the Bell-Textron AH-1W Super Cobra helicopters of his squadron to enemy targets.

Colonel Kurth was interviewed by Major John Clennan on 21 February 1996. The interview deals with 26 February only peripherally; instead it focuses on sorties flown on other dates, such as 17 and 29 February, and descriptions of his aircraft's equipment and its use during the war.

Kurth: I was scheduled to deploy with the squadron to the WestPac [Western Pacific] in November of '90, and one of our sister squadrons was at MAG-70 [Marine Aircraft Group 70] during the time of Desert Shield. I think it was [HMLA-]169, but I can't remember.

Clennan: But you rotated every six or nine months, one of you was slated or tasked?

Kurth: Right. Tasked. I sent a couple of officers, though, down to Elgin Air Force Base [Florida] in the spring for [Exercise] Internal Look,* and I had the intelligence appraisal from Internal Look so that formed the basis when we deployed for our intelligence estimates of the Iraqis.

Clennan: Were you notified right away that you were the Cobra squadron?

*Internal Look was a command exercise conducted by CentCom.

Kurth: The second of August, after the news hit the papers, I reported to my group commander that my squadron was ready to go wherever he wanted us to go. I got the nod on the fifth of August. I believe we received our warning order from the MEB on the seventh of August. I reported to Colonel [Manfred A.] Rietsch as I prepared to deploy, and he told me to get ready to go.

Clennan: When was the decision made, and who made the decision to heavy op the squadron with Cobras and light op with Hueys?

Kurth: The decision initially was to give me a 30-plane squadron, to give me an additional 6 Cobras, to keep 12 Hueys and 18 Cobras. There were some discussions about lift, and it was decided to limit me to 24 aircraft. So, that is how that decision was made. The decision was made by [Major] General [Royal N.] Moore [Jr.]. Everybody was interested in getting some firepower out there.

Clennan: Were you originally the only squadron assigned to MAG-70? And when did [HMLA-]367 come up?

Kurth: I was the only helicopter squadron initially assigned. That is the way it typically worked, and we went out first. General Moore rode over on the same [Lockheed] C-5 [Galaxy transport aircraft] with me.

Clennan: You flew out here on the 15th, I think?

Kurth: Fourteenth. We positioned our aircraft on the weekend, which was the 11th and 12th. We were flown out on the 14th as I recall.

Clennan: You flew out with ordnance?

Kurth: Yes. It was a rather ugly scene between myself and the wing ordnance officer and one G-3. Finally, had to call the MAG commander and talk to him about aircraft support and ordnance. There was some talk about not taking any UH-1s at all, and I convinced them that I thought we would need those and that they'd be the most heavily tasked aircraft once we got there initially, because they'd be the major way for getting around. That proved to be fairly prophetic. The ordnance officer was not going to allow me to have any ordnance on the aircraft.

Clennan: Did the Air Force have a problem with it?

Kurth: The Air Force had no problem with it at all.

Defense Imagery DD-ST-91-06378

A Bell-Textron UH-1N Iroquois ("Huey") helicopter from HMLA-369 is secured on the flight line in Saudi Arabia prior to a mission during Operation Desert Shield. Against some opposition, LtCol Michael Kurth, commander of HMLA-369, insisted he would need those helicopters as he expected the aircraft to be the most heavily tasked in the operational area.

Clennan: It was a self-inflicted?

Kurth: Exactly. The word from the ordnance officer was, "It will be there when you get there. It's coming on the [Maritime] Preposition[ing] Ships." And that is a whole other story, but the bottom line was it took awhile before those ships got there.

Clennan: Could you describe the load out and what kind of ordnance you are talking about? I guess you had what, three C-5s or four C-5s?

Kurth: Had four C-5s. I broke my squadron down into autonomous dets [detachments]. I had a mix initially. I had four Hueys and two Cobras on the first, and then I had two Hueys and four Cobras, two Hueys and four Cobras, and then I had six Cobras on the last load.

Clennan: Then you went into Dhahran [Saudi Arabia]?

Kurth: That is correct, and I had a representative person from each of my sections and maintenance teams so that if my C-5s were separated, I would be able to build the airplanes back up, work on 'em and fix 'em.

Clennan: Did they get separated? No breakdowns or anything?

Kurth: No, no problem. We got everybody there. My fleet was pretty healthy the whole time. Interestingly enough, of course, we were never allowed to talk to anybody about what we were doing. We worked probably from 0500 to 2300 for normal people, and of course, they had a night shift. So, we worked around the clock, but prior to leaving we modified all of our aircraft for NBC [nuclear, biological, and chemical] equipment, meaning the AR-5 [rifle] mask hookups and all of that. None of them had it. The UH-1s or the AH-1 [Cobras]. As a matter of fact, we developed the hardware to hook those things up. We also acquired the FLIR systems, which we installed. A gentleman from FLIR Systems in Portland, Oregon, came down. He was a former Air Force helicopter pilot, who had flown on the Son Tay raid [in Vietnam]. His son was an A-6 pilot in the Marine Corps, who I had known.

The bottom line was that he gave me a hundred-thousand-dollar FLIR system with a handshake, and I took that with me to Saudi Arabia.

Clennan: Is this the Night Eagle?

Kurth: No. The Night Eagle was an entirely different system. This was the only one out there. This was completely run-of-the-mill, commercial FLIR that we hooked up into our aircraft. If you read some of the books that guys have written . . . I talked to [Lieutenant] General [Bernard E.] Trainor for about three hours one day, and I don't know what this says about General Trainor and his book [*The Generals' War*], but there isn't a single fact right in his recounting his conversation with me on equipment and what happened and this, that, and the other.

Clennan: What kind of ordnance load out were you able to get on those airplanes?

Kurth: I took . . . a couple of things about the ordnance buildup. First of all, before I left, I made sure that every weapon I had and every weapon system I had was absolutely bore sighted and test fired for every aircraft I had, whether it was an AH-1 or a UH-1. Then I took primarily, a fairly sizeable load of [Emerson 901A1] TOW [2] [tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided] [antitank guided] missiles for a full load and a reload for each of my Cobras. I took a lot of 20mm, which I loaded into cans in the aircraft, and I took, of course, flares and chaff and some rockets but not many rockets, and I don't remember the exact number, although I bet my former ordnance officer or maintenance officer would know the answer to that.

Clennan: No [AGM-114] Hellfires [air-to-surface missiles]?

Kurth: No Hellfires. But when we landed at Dhahran, of course, the [U.S. Army] 82d [Airborne Division] had gotten there a couple days before us, and they had positioned their [Boeing AH-64] Apache [helicopters] up at [al-]Jubayl [Saudi Arabia], where we eventually ended up. When we got off the airplanes in Dhahran, there was a flat bed [truck] that was loaded. It had a hundred Hellfire missiles on it. It was just sitting by itself. Nobody claimed it. So, in order to prevent those missiles from falling into the wrong hands, my S-4 [logistics] officer took protective custody of those hundred Hellfire missiles, and we moved those into a bunker at Jubayl. Some months later, we did find the rightful owners of those misplaced missiles and returned them to them.

Clennan: How long did you sit at Dhahran, sir, and how did we end up getting to Jubayl?

Kurth: I sat at Dhahran and landed there—landed in Germany, [at] Ramstein [Air Base], and then we showed up at Dhahran at 0534. I issued ammunition at 0300 as we came in there, and the ramp was clobbered. It was full of seven C-5s, bunch of [Lockheed] [C-]141s, [Boeing] 747s, [McDonnell

Bell-Textron AH-1W Cobra helicopters of HMLA-369 refuel during Exercise Imminent Thunder, part of Operation Desert Shield. LtCol Michael Kurth divided the squadron into mixed autonomous detachments comprised of varying numbers of Huey and Cobra helicopters. The squadron provided close air support for the 1st MarDiv.

Photo by TSgt Rose S. Reynolds, USAF. Defense Imagery DF-ST-92-06951

Douglas] DC-10s; you name it. By seven o'clock in the morning, it was 103 degrees and 45 percent humidity. It was warm. I got a hold of the guy by the name of Watson, who was [a] lieutenant colonel. He was liaison officer for, I guess, part of the SLRP [surveillance, liaison, and reconnaissance party], and I had a conversation with him about where my destination was going to be, because I couldn't see myself staying at the Dhahran with that ramp filling up.

So, he told me that it looked like we would be going to Jubayl. I never talked to him again. I took off about 1800 and took my boys to Jubayl.

Clennan: All in one move?

Kurth: Well, there were only six of us there because, again, the airplanes were staggered. Two of us had low fuel going there, because we had to wait to get off the ramp. So, we landed short of Jubayl about 10 miles, and one of the other aircrafts brought us some more fuel. That is kind of an interesting story. I and the gunship landed out there and just waited, rather than risk flying any farther. At 2000, we were all in place in Jubayl on the 16th of August.

I tried to get the aircraft commander, the C-5, to fly me into Jubayl, because I knew Jubayl was a bed down site, and interesting enough, I worked through this scenario when I was a student [at] [USMC] Command [and] Staff College. One of my classmates at Command Staff College was Bandar al-Asad, who ended up being the CO of the [McDonnell Douglas] F-15 [Eagle] squadron that bagged the two [Dassault] Mirage [fighters], and Bandar was stationed at Dhahran. So, when I landed there, I finally got a chance to see him. We laughed about the fact that we had already run this whole scenario at Command Staff College. It was pretty funny.

Clennan: When you got to Jubayl, can you talk about that, sir? What'd you see there? Were there any Army guys there?

Kurth: Well, they had a battalion, attack helicopter battalion.

Clennan: Was it the 82d [Airborne Division]?

Kurth: Yeah, the 82d, yes, and they had 19 Apaches; I think, a half dozen [Sikorsky UH-60] Black Hawks. There were a couple of [Bell] OH-58 Deltas [Kiowas] there, too.

Clennan: Saudis weren't making any moves for them?

Kurth: No, we had no problems.

Clennan: Oh, you didn't?

Kurth: We had some discussions with some Saudi officers, but it wasn't a big deal. Big [Major General] John [I.] Hopkins, he wasn't too happy, because he didn't give me direct orders and was watching. . . .

You know, I guess I just heard what Watson said, and the last thing Watson said was, "You are going to Jubayl." That is all I needed to hear, so I went to Jubayl

I talked to Big John when he got up there. That was the first of the 82d [Airborne Division], the Apache battalion. Bob Vincent [*sic*] was the CO.

Clennan: Were you able to bring the ordnance up there with you right away, sir?

Kurth: Oh, I moved my planes right up.

Clennan: Once you got there, sir, pretty limited accommodations? Terminal building . . .

Kurth: Actually, it was pretty nice. We were the only ones there. So, we could go over the whole terminal, and everything else we could get. It was air-conditioned. It was pretty nice to be able to get out of the weather.

Clennan: What about the support?

Kurth: Zero. It was on the tail end. You know, the big concern to get some gun fighters there.

Clennan: When did the rest of MAG-15 or MAG-70 or whatever we called it at that point in time, when did the rest of the helicopters start showing up?

Kurth: Let's see . . .

Clennan: C-5s wouldn't fly in there.

Kurth: They could have, but they didn't. We were joined up pretty much with 7th Marines and Colonel [Carlton W.] Fulford [Jr.] and his bunch and met all the battalion commanders . . .

Yeah, we had comm with him, we met him face to face and there were—Colonel [Donald A.] Beaufait was Manford's [*sic*] XO [executive officer] from MAG-70 came down with a radio vehicle and a high freq [frequency] that we attempted to establish comm with Bahrain. It worked semiokay.

Clennan: Were you running out of gas by this point in time, sir, or were you at least able to get those kinds of supplies you needed?

Kurth: We had fuel. The fuel was no problem, no problem at all. I got 50 AIM-9 [Sidewinder air intercept] missiles from Manfred. He sent me 50 missiles. I told him I felt naked out there without any real good air defense, and I wasn't asking for much.

Clennan: So, really by the 24th, 25th [of August], we had everybody on the ground?

Kurth: I think so, yeah.

Clennan: If I can remember, it took a few days to build back the transports because of the rotor heads and all that kind of business.

Kurth: Right. Well, I had also brought . . . I brought some canvas with me. I think I brought a half a dozen GP [general purpose] tents and one CP [command post] tent. I had enough to sort of house my squadron. Pretty cramped spaces. I believe there were nine GP tents. I don't remember, because I had almost 300 guys in my squadron at that point.

Then some of the canvas started to come off preposition shipping. We kept people sleeping in the supply building for a while. Then everybody was worried, because there was halon in there.

Clennan: Did you get some maintenance space from the Saudi Navy?

Kurth: Yeah. We had to negotiate that, but it was pretty good. I painted my airplanes right after . . . as soon as I got there also. I had been able to find polyurethane IR paint in Los Angeles [California], and I bought it open purchase. I spent probably $50 [thousand] or $60,000 in open purchase money before I left. A good chunk of it was that paint. It was pretty good. You know, we couldn't do any painting before we left California. Those were the rules. We painted everything when we got there. An interesting story is the assistant division commander of the 82d [Airborne Division]—who I think now is a three star and runs whatever the corps is at Fort Lewis [Washington]—he liked that camouflage paint. So, he wanted to paint his humvee [High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle or HMMWV] because the 82d [Airborne Division] had all their stuff in jungle. So, I had my boys paint his jeep. The only problem was it had my squadron marking and Marines painted on it. He kind of liked that.

Clennan: At the end of August, the MAG-16 staff was put together, and put together might be a good word for it. We got people from here and people from there and left half their people back to run a fairly large group in the rear.

Kurth: We offered up to Colonel [Larry T.] Garrett anybody that he needed from our squadron, and I provided a number of guys, particularly to work in operations. I also put a guy liaisoning with the [U.S.] Navy down to the port of Jubayl and as many people as they needed in positions that would have been helpful to the group and myself.

Clennan: What kind of flying were you doing that last week of August?

Kurth: We were flying Cobras; I had them out to be sure they were flying. I was very anxious to get enough ammunition so I could go out and continue to shoot to be sure that my weapons continued to have a battle sight and the like. It pretty much became a big bone of contention as we went throughout the course of the deployment. I had to fly an awful lot of missions, hauling people around in my UH-1s. When we discovered the problems with sand erosion with the UH-1s pretty quick, I put about a hundred hours on each airplane by the first week in September. We had already started to see the delamination of the buckling of the rotor blades.

Clennan: Wing command chronology has 21 September UH-1 and [Sikorsky] [CH-]53D [Sea Stallion] rotor blades were put in to show signs of sand erosion. During that initial, from the 17th on, what were your parameters? Were you told you couldn't fly north of here? Were you doing a lot of VR [visual reconnaissance] missions for the general, that kind of thing?

Kurth: A couple of other interesting things. General Moore, right after I got there, before the group headquarters and everybody got there, I would say two days after I got there, he and General Hopkins came to see me at Jubayl and discussed my mission.

Clennan: Didn't General Moore basically get off the airplane and go to Riyadh [Saudi Arabia]?

Kurth: Went to Riyadh. I got him on a flight to Riyadh, and then he went back to Bahrain, and they set up the headquarters in Bahrain. He came up, and right after General Hopkins found me, General Moore showed up. We were all sitting in the room that eventually became Colonel Garrett's office. General Hopkins laid out a map. The two generals and myself discussed the plan to defend Saudi Arabia right there. And he later got up with the 82d [Airborne Division] guys and went through this in greater detail, but the bottom line was this was on Saturday, the 18th.

Clennan: Any problems with the 82d guys about who is on first, who is in charge?

Kurth: No, they worked that out pretty quickly and pretty smoothly. There were more than enough bad guys to worry about that, that wasn't a problem. It

was funny to watch General Hopkins talk about a concept of defending forward and attacking the Iraqis' blocking positions and keep rolling back and catching them out front with combined fixed and rotary wing aviation and slowly folding back to defend the port. And General Moore told me that I should be in direct support of the 7th MEB and that really was in terms of a maneuver element for 7th Marines, which was Colonel Fulford. So, I basically worked for Colonel Fulford. Colonel Fulford's screening force, or most forward deployed guys, were LAVs, and we put them up just north of Manifah Bay [Saudi Arabia].

Clennan: When did they break out and actually were able to do that? Weren't they stuck in just the Jubayl confines for the first . . . ?

Kurth: Two weeks.

Clennan: So, basically, by early September, they were getting out and heading north

Kurth: That is correct. That is right. We established the temporary site of Manifah Bay.

Clennan: Crews spent a day up there or a couple of days up there?

Kurth: Several days. We built the camp.

Clennan: Airplanes are holding in there pretty well?

Kurth: Airplanes are doing great. We worked the Cobras day and night with the LAVs up there. There was no tasking. We were in direct support. We simply worked out our plan . . .

Clennan: With the people on the ground?

Kurth: Exactly.

Clennan: Who would launch those birds and when?

Kurth: Who had launch authority?

Clennan: Yes, sir.

Kurth: The senior division leader, who I had up there at the time. If I was up there, it was me. If my XO was up there, it was him. If it was one of my other three or four division leaders, it was them.

Clennan: Sir, I am not sure when it all came about, but late September or so we start to get into the concept of a Task Force Cunningham.

Kurth: It was really about mid-September when I sat down with [Major] General [James M.] Myatt and discussed the concept of an aviation-maneuvered task force. I talked to him about how I intended to deploy squadron in support. I had been working with LAI [light armored infantry] on how I intended to do it. And we talked through the basic concepts.

At that point in time, Task Force Cunningham was designed to be an aviation-maneuver element consisting strictly of my squadron of attack helicopters, and that was it. We had some integration of other arms in conjunction with that, but Task Force Cunningham was simply an attack helicopter squadron. That was the original concept.

Clennan: [HMLA-]367 wasn't involved in that?

Kurth: I was really the only guy working in direct support. Again, some of the good things that I can report is, you know, we had no heat casualties, and I had no problems at all with any of that stuff, and I attribute that to the fact we had spent so much time working in the desert. In fact, I spent four years at [Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS)] Yuma [Arizona], and I can't tell you how many times I have been to Twentynine Palms [California]. So, I am pretty familiar with the desert.

Clennan: When did the Cunningham start to grow beyond the initial concept or your . . .

Kurth: Well, in my opinion . . .

Clennan: In early October, I see [Brigadier] General [Granville R.] Amos shows up on the scene. Do you think there was a concern by the wing [3d MAW] that this was getting, not out of hand, but out of line with the way the wing's traditional general support view of itself?

Kurth: Yes. I think General Moore and perhaps General Amos would have some insight, and maybe he could give it to you. But General Moore would have some better insight as to what he had in mind. I had briefed the concept to Colonel Garrett, and I laid it out the way I saw it early on—toward the end of September. I spoke only for my unit, and I spoke only because I had been placed in direct support of first the MEB and then the division.

And, as the general officers came into theater and spoke more and more at a higher level—General Moore came too—his instructions to General Amos in his discussions with General Myatt were that Task Force Cunningham was the entire 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, any airplane that said "Marines" on it was in Task Force Cunningham. But early on, because of the nature of what we . . . the ground we had to defend and the way we looked at defending it, it was a very simple concept. I looked to employ our aircraft along the flanks of any attacking Iraqi force. The intention was to bring fixed-wing aircraft in, in support with us controlling them, and the

idea was to force the Iraqi mechanized formations to deploy. So, the aircraft would run down the long axis of the target and drop bombs, because that is most conducive to the frag pattern of a bomb, and it would cause them to deploy. I would deploy my attack helicopters in groups along their flanks because that is, in fact, where their vehicles are most vulnerable.

So, we basically had a long axis of the target where bombs were dropped all the way along it to make these guys disperse, and then we would take them on the flanks, and then as they came back, they would be engaged by LAVs with TOWs—all those quick mobile assets that we had laying around there—and then back and back until they got to the fixed positions. That was it.

Clennan: Your squadron would respond to the direct tasking of the division commander in that sense?

Kurth: That is correct. And then we tried to exercise it on a couple of occasions. You know, I always had direct comm with everybody I needed to talk to. The way it finally fell out in the first exercise with the division was General Amos was called the Task Force Cunningham commander. I was called the mission commander, and I sat in the UH-1, and I basically attempted to sort out the mess, kind of [a] glorified TAC(A) [tactical air coordinator (airborne)] from a UH-1.

Clennan: Sir, toward the end of October, we did not actually own the air space over our defensive positions until the 25th of December. Before that, we were playing in some kind of netherworld of . . . theoretically we didn't own the air above our ground, let alone the forward of our own positions

Kurth: We had a limitation. You asked me before how far north we could go. We couldn't go any farther than I think it was [Ras] [al-]Mishab [Saudi Arabia]. I had already been up and scouted out the place, and I had already talked to all the Americans that were working out there with . . .

Clennan: Just flew up, landed . . .

Kurth: Drove. Put a British aerospace jumpsuit on, kind of like my "civvies." I wanted to talk to the civilians up there, and I went farther north to [al-]Khafji [Saudi Arabia,] in a vehicle. I went with the CO of ANGLICO [air-naval gunfire liaison company] and visited every one of his SALT [supporting arms liaison team] teams with all of the air forces that were on the border. So, I knew every guy who was on an assault team. I knew all the Special Forces guys up there, and I would get all of their frequencies and all of their call signs and all of their positions. That was in September. We had all that information. My guys were all—you know, some of the guys that were members of ANGLICO were personal friends of the guys in the squadron. So, we knew who they all were and where they were, and we were prepared to support them if in fact somebody asked us to.

Clennan: So, come November, tried to do some things, [of] course.

Kurth: I should tell you, we did work joint ops [operations] with the 82d [Airborne Division], the first* of the 82d. My squadron and the 82d. Because I had no designator for Hellfire missile, they basically allowed me to use two of their OH-58Ds. Those are the bubble top with the laser designator, because they didn't really need them as they are capable of self-designation in the Apache.

Clennan: November was essentially—a lot of transition involved. Max's team is still fighting the whole issue of trying to get more ramp space in Jubayl for everybody concerned. Of course, President [George H. W.] Bush says, "Hey, I'm going to send a couple hundred thousand more guys up there." So, we start looking north at the airfield issue. Do you have any comments on that, sir? You saw what was up there.

Kurth: That was a political issue with the Saudis. Again, whatever their reluctance was, I don't know exactly, but the bottom line was we were prepared to go there in September. We had already worked out a movement plan and everything else. We had been ready to go for a long time.

Clennan: During that time, your UH-1s were still being tasked pretty hard, with a lot of people coming and going.

Kurth: Yeah. As a matter of fact, for whatever reason, our UH-1s had really carried for the group until sometime in January. Our six airplanes had more flight hours on them than all the other UH-1s combined until sometime in January, those six airplanes. They were solid machines, and they just flew, flew, flew.

Clennan: Did you deal much with the British then?

Kurth: Not really. I talked to them a few times.

Clennan: Toward the end of the year, of course, we start moving up north. Didn't you hear much? MAG-26 got to go ahead to move up to Mishab. I

*LtCol Kurth's meaning is unclear here.

think they knew; they got on site the last couple days of December. We waited until the air war started before we were getting clearance.

Kurth: We did not move to Tanajib [oil complex in Saudi Arabia] until the 1st of February.

Clennan: We got in I think January 21st or something like that.

Kurth: I moved my squadron the morning after, having fought at Khafji.

Clennan: Can you talk about Khafji a little bit, sir?

Kurth: Yeah. You know, we had the one false alarm over at . . . let's see, what was that airfield over there by—it wasn't really an airfield. We put the [CH-]53s someplace over there by the port.

They scrambled me one night, because they said they were in the water at Roshoshar [*sic*]. So, I went out and launched on a really bad night—my copilot—because I had the one FLIR airplane. It turned out to be an intramural firefight between the Saudis. It was pretty interesting. It gave me some . . .

Clennan: That was December, wasn't it?

Kurth: Yes. Maybe November, but it gave me some insight as to the amount of confusion that can be generated by misinformation and just exactly how nervous everybody was. Of course, when the air war started, I was pretty well informed as to what was going on, and I knew the air war was going to start on the 17th, and of course, to confirm that General Moore called the squadron commanders and briefed us in the afternoon before they attacked. That was the 16th. And I got called to put a medevac package with an escort together sometime late that evening, which I did.

At three in the morning, they woke me up to tell me they were launching four gunships, because right after the first bombs had gone off and the first aircraft went across the border, the Iraqis started shelling the reconnaissance teams on the border and somebody was shooting a big gun at them. Colonel Garrett let me go up there because I had the FLIR, and so, I got launched and I went up there to join up with our Cobras, who were looking for the tanks, which were allegedly shooting up the recon [reconnaissance] guys. I got up there about 5:00 a.m. It was just first light at al-Khafji; their big storage tank there was on fire. A lot of artillery rounds coming in. None of them appeared to be very well aimed, but there was a lot of artillery.

Rendezvoused with my guys. We tried to find the tanks. We made a few runs on where they told us they were, and there was a pretty significant amount of AAA [antiaircraft artillery] and large caliber guns. There was at least a couple of 100mm guns shooting at us and a lot of 57[mm] and some hand-held RPGs [rocket-propelled grenades].

The [Navy] SEAL [sea, air, and land] [special warfare] team that was up there gave us the coordinates of some artillery positions in Kuwait. We attempted to take those out, and we went feet wet and attempted to come in from the shore, but we just got too much AAA to get close enough to get within range to shoot the missile.

We also had a number of TOW missiles go stupid, which was a large problem we faced the whole time.

Clennan: These are the TOW 2?

Kurth: Actually, they were just basic TOWs.

So, we spent the whole day up there, and basically, we located some of the observers in buildings along the coast and we killed them, and it seemed to stop the shelling. TOW missiles and 20mm using the telescopic sight. I tried to run some [General Dynamics] F-16 [Fighting Falcons] on the artillery positions, but they were low on fuel, and eventually, [North American] OV-10 [Broncos] with my buddy [Lieutenant Colonel Clifford M.] "Cliff" Acree and [Chief Warrant Officer-4] Guy [L.] Hunter [Jr.] came up. I passed the brief [to] Guy, and as the day went on, he ran AV-8s on those artillery positions, and they took them on out. They did a great job.

Clennan: This is during the daytime on the 17th?

Kurth: That is correct. And then he . . . the thing I noticed as the day went on because I was up there most of the day, the OV-10s kept getting lower and lower and flying along the coastal road. They started out feet wet. They got feet dry and started flying the coastal road, because I think the Iraqis were "Winchester"* on their AAA and missiles. They had gotten out of there because we had hurt the Iraqis pretty good.

So, when I went back the next morning, I tried to call Cliff and Guy over at [King] Abdul Aziz [airfield]. In fact, I tried to call them that night, but I couldn't get through, and the next morning, I called and left a message, and of course, the next word was that they had been shot down. And I am convinced that they were shot down because they were over the road and flying the same way they had the day before, and the Iraqis had a chance to reload and they bagged them early on.

*"Winchester" is aviation shorthand for out of ammunition.

Clennan: When did you trade your vanilla FLIR for something that could designate as well?

Kurth: That didn't happen until we were well established at Tanajib. That was in February.

Clennan: The SEALs didn't have anything, and during the whole effort, they couldn't do anything?

Kurth: Well, we used MULEs [modular universal laser equipment]. We did some real interesting things with MULEs. A couple of guys who had been in my squadron were FACs [forward air controllers]. One put together a MULE on top of a humvee, so got a little elevation with it and it worked real good. We worked with 3d Tanks [3d Tank Battalion] and put some MULEs on the turrets of the tanks and that worked real well. As we got transition[ed] from the defensive schemes and offensive scheme, we planned to deploy these MULEs on the outboard platoons on the mechanized columns with the tanks and AAVs so that we would be able to provide some additional support out to the flanks and forward with the designation capability. It worked pretty good. We worked with OV-10s also. That was about it.

Clennan: And did these designate, sir?

Kurth: Yes. Not real good. In fact, I had one go stupid when they tried to designate for me one night to kill a couple of 2S6 [9K22 Tunguska SP AA, also known as SA-19 Grison] guns on the border. I was up there working with ANGLICO. Finally we got a MULE, and they were hand-holding a MULE up on the hill, and they finally . . . we were able to hold a spot on long enough for me to put a couple of Hellfires on it.

Clennan: Now what's the range on the 2S6s, because the Hellfire's got a heck of a range.

Kurth: Eight clicks [kilometers].

Clennan: Okay, so nobody's going to touch you.

Kurth: Exactly right. We whacked those guys pretty good. There was a lot of comical things that happened, you know, between the time I got my FLIR, of course, and the first day of the war. After Cliff and Guy got bagged, we got told we couldn't go into Kuwait anymore; and I, of course, had been into Kuwait a couple of times that day just looking for bad guys. So, we couldn't go across.

We started to put a force shipment at the shop on strict alert. I instructed my guys to always have one pilot in the RPD in their little tent/van there, looking at the screen. On the night of Khafji, my guys were not on strict alert. We rotated that. To this day, I do not know why somebody was not in there observing that column come down the road.

Clennan: Right, because you hear reports of this, and I'm sure there are tapes floating around somewhere.

Kurth: That's right, and the division leader responsible for the force ship that was up there for whatever reason ended up going out to the "elbow" [of the Saudi-Kuwaiti border] and supporting the LAI out there.

Clennan: But I believe that action actually started first, though, sir. Isn't that—that may very well be why. I mean . . .

Kurth: That all may be true, but let me just tell you the sequence of events because I got a phone call from the XO of SRI [surveillance, reconnaissance, and intelligence] who was on the border when the illumination rounds of the Iraqis went off and the mechanized forces started from across the border. He is telling me that they are coming, and he is going to have to abandon his position, and he gives me the call signs for the SALT teams that are still up there and says he has got to leave and I need to get up there. I go tell Colonel Garrett; they clear it to the TAC [tactical air command] center [TACC]. I launch, and I take eight airplanes with me.

When I flew over Mishab, those four airplanes that were supposed [to be] on strip alert had not even gotten off the deck yet. So I passed them up and went to al-Khafji. And I ended up with four airplanes up there. They ended up launching most of the Cobra force that night. When I got to al-Khafji . . .

Clennan: About what time, sir? The Iraqis went in after dark, right?

Kurth: Oh, yes.

Clennan: It wasn't early morning. It was like . . .

Kurth: Twenty-one-hundred or something like that.

Clennan: On, I think, it was the 28th, but I am not sure—29th.

Kurth: Yes. 29th, I think. At any rate, I get up there. I talked to some of the recon guys who were leaving and . . .

Clennan: Were you just holding or . . .

Kurth: I left my Cobras holding on the deck. I talked to the DASC [direct air support center]. I think it was the DASC. They were at Mishab, MEF CP.

I am talking to them. They are telling me that I am cleared into al-Khafji, that there are no friendlies, and I can shoot anything that moves up there. In

Defense Imagery DM-SN-92-03854

A Marine Corps UH-1N Huey in flight in November 1990 during Operation Desert Shield. Flying at low altitudes and through the smoke of oil fires, even control crashing his aircraft on two occasions, LtCol Kurth used the FLIR of his UH-1N to direct the AH-1W helicopters of his squadron to enemy targets.

the meantime, I established contact with "Ghost 1-9," who's a [Lockheed] AC-130 [ground attack aircraft]. He was off the coast. And he was picking these guys off and identifying the targets. I talk to him. He tells me where the Iraqis are. I watch him shoot his big gun. I watch him shoot—picking off positions that they're setting up on the beach. In the meantime, I am back on the southwestern edge of town, and I see vehicles coming through. I see humvees, and I see M60[A1 Patton] tanks. So, I relay it. I just happened to find an air officer from 3d Marines. He has got Qataris, M60 Qatari tanks, and I said, "Do not go into al-Khafji. Wait. Sit right here. You have got airplanes working there." The DASC said there are no friendlies there. I said, "There is no point in going in there and trying to get into the meeting engagement at night with these guys." I called the DASC and told them what was going on. I said, "I am going to go back up there and see what I can find." And I took four Cobras and . . .

Clennan: This was from Mishab?

Kurth: No, this was from al-Khafji. I was talking to them on the radio

Clennan: So you put your airplanes down in Khafji?

Kurth: No, I put them right in the desert, right outside of al-Khafji, and sit watching all the tanks and everybody. I flew up there. I had a FLIR on my airplane. Visibility was pretty shady that night, and a kid working the FLIR in the back trying to talk to me says he watched the screen and the FLIR to tell me what he saw.

Well, somewhere on the outskirts of al-Khafji, on one of the parallel roads, the main paved road, I am about 400 meters from it, and I see vehicles and movement, and I asked him, "What the f——k" —excuse my French. He says, "Yeah, there are vehicles all along the road." So, I quick turn around. . . .

Clennan: This is south of al-Khafji or are you going north?

Kurth: It is west. West and north. I am coming up on the western side to the north to see if I can catch the column still coming across.

I turn around. I call the Cobras. I say, "I have got a column of Iraqi armored vehicles. I am going to roll in and shoot the first one I see." So, I come back and with a UH-1, I got seven rockets. I line up to roll in . . .

Clennan: [With] 2.75[-inch rockets]?

Kurth: Yes, 2.75—to shoot the first guy and nothing comes off my airplane. I roll in one more time, just turn real quick and go back again. Nothing comes off. I said, "Okay." This is the last time. I was going to turn on—I think I had an IR

[infrared] searchlight. I said I am going to hit my IR light. That is where the vehicles are. As soon as I turn off, open fire. I did. They did. They shot up the lead elements of that.

Clennan: Now, how far behind were you [inaudible]?

Kurth: Yeah, about 800 meters.

Clennan: You shot with TOW or . . .

Kurth: They shot 20mm and rockets. That is all. We tried to shoot TOWs in there a little. It just doesn't work. I called it off.

I said let's get out of here. Plan all along had been to suck them guys in waiting for daylight to come and kill with the air anyway. So, when I went back out it really p——d me off because they were in a state of panic at the MEF headquarters, in my opinion. All of the air forces—here was undisciplined fire going on that night. I was shot at by Moroccan ZSU[-23-4] [Shilkas]. I mean, there were people shooting at me, all on the friendly side. Attempting to work my way back in, [I] told them get a squawk, you know, tell them that I am friendly and that was an evolution in and of itself. Anyway, it was a mess.

Of course, Ghost 1-9, he was sharp and [did] a good job. But he went back. He would not go across the border. Of course, his wingman, one of his squadron mates, did the next day and was shot down, sticking his nose up there. It turns out, of course, that the fixed wing got the bulk of the Iraqi *5th Mech* [*5th Mechanized Division*] moving down the road on the other side of the border, which is what we should have done the next day in al-Khafji. But be that as it may, the politics worked out. The Arabs got to go into al-Khafji. They got to declare victory and all that other stuff. But it was a mess. It was confused. Nobody knew the tactical situation. People were launched and told to do things based on the sketchiest information, and nobody was listening to who was out there and actually watching what was going on.

I wished I had gotten out to the elbow when that fiasco went on at LAI, but I am convinced that it went on because probably less experienced crews were out there. Their fangs may have been out a little too far. That is just the way it goes.

Clennan: Wasn't that essentially out of range for you at that point in time to go out that way?

Kurth: Well, we could have gotten fuel at Kibrit [Saudi Arabia]. I spent so much time trying to sort out—I mean, it took forever to sort out what was going on up there. I landed. I talked to the guys and talked to the AC-130 just to be sure that we weren't going to shoot any of our own people and that we knew where the Iraqis were so that when the first light came, we could really—we could hurt them. That was all.

Clennan: About that time, sir, after Khafji, up to that point in time, we had been working up to a large-scale helicopter operation in al-Jaber [airfield in southern Kuwait]?

Kurth: In my opinion, we never worked up to any large-scale operation in anything.

Clennan: The 3d Marines had worked up . . .

Kurth: The 3d Marines were—yes. The 3d Marines were doing pretty good but not large scale, not even a squadron.

Clennan: We never put a lot of birds in the air.

Kurth: I will just say this for the record for anybody that wants to listen to it. People talk about you fight like you train. Well, that is true, and when the way you train in peacetime is to have a frag conference every month that decides on who gets what assets to support them—two helicopters here, two helicopters there supporting battalions based on no standard maneuver, no prioritization—you get what you pay for.

We had monthly frag conferences with the division, and that is how we allocated our training assets. Now, some of us in our squadrons were able to free some time and do some squadron training, which allowed us to get our gunships out and to do some integrated training and employ our assets, but the bottom line was it was piecemeal. There was no coherent plan from the MEF down, and we just acquiesced to it. And I think that is the biggest lesson we should learn from something like that is that if we are going to develop a capability to have a large lift of transport helicopters, we must start early on. We ought to designate the regiment or whatever and practice it.

Likewise, with attack helicopters: if you are going to use them to maneuver, if you are going to use them—and you need to use them in at least fours to have significant impact and momentum—you need to allow them to do that. And we didn't do that at all. And guess what? When we finally got to the ground war, the primary attack helicopter squadrons were put in direct support of the divisions and allowed to work as they should have been allowed to work the whole time they were over there.

Clennan: When was the decision made finally to essentially have direct support task in?

Kurth: Two days before the ground war.

Clennan: Not until then?

Kurth: No. And I didn't even get an order to launch for the ground war to get my aircraft in position until the night before. And, of course, I had to have them in position at 5:00 a.m.

Clennan: At Lonesome Dove?

Kurth: No. From Lonesome Dove to the line of departure on the Kuwaiti border. And, you know, the weather was dog s——t when we got up there. I found Colonel Fulford, who was leading Task Force Ripper across after [Task Force] Grizzly, and the other boys had infiltrated on foot on the flanks.

Clennan: Tiger [Army's 1st Brigade, 2d Armored Division] was . . .

Kurth: Tiger was on the right flank. Grizzly was on the left flank. [Task Force] Papa Bear and Ripper went in line. The 2d [Armored] Division, they basically went through like an amphibious assault and branched out.

Clennan: Were you essentially assigned to 1st MarDiv?

Kurth: That is correct. And [HMLA-]367 was assigned to support 2d MarDiv. My plan was to bring almost all [of] my helicopters out there, put them at a FARP [forward arming and refueling point] site to be on call if we faced an Iraqi counterattack, and if not, then to bring the aircraft up as they were called for by the FACS to support the advancing units going through the obstacle belts because we knew we were most vulnerable from the artillery attack as we got through the belts, particularly between the two belts. They had a large kill zone there.

So, they got through the first one pretty much uneventfully, and I had landed and talked with Colonel Fulford and then his air officer, "his 3" and . . .

Clennan: Did you take a division up and ground while you were waiting for a call for support?

Kurth: I left, I think, at least eight airplanes by themselves marshaled. I took four airplanes with me. I left them. I went by myself, found Colonel Fulford personally, landed by his track, talked to him about how things were going and how everything was laid out, [and] compared my map with his map to be sure we were on the same sheet of music, to be sure we were talking the same—the right facts and everything else. At that time, we did come under artillery attack, and there were a lot of incoming rounds coming in there, but based on what I had seen of those guys, the chances of them hitting me were . . . there was a greater chance of me getting rained on than there was of them hitting me with the artillery.

So, we talked through that, got it together, and took off. As their vehicles started to go through there, they would come to where they were taking fire from some of the dug-in T-55s [main battle tanks] and etc. It was just like clockwork, just exactly like we had trained in the beginning when we were working with the FACS of his regiment. It just went like clockwork.

I would pull airplanes up. I would hand them off to FACS. They would designate from the tanks.

Clennan: So by the time we got to G-day [day the ground war began], that went pretty well, sir?

Kurth: Interestingly enough two days in before G-day, 2d LAI got into a big fight. We weren't supposed to have anybody in Kuwait. No war started. They were in a big fight there. The biggest fight I saw, particularly in terms of our artillery and AAA. I went up and took four ships up there and helped them out because they had some tanks firing on them and giving them trouble. So, it took us about three or four runs to get in there to kill those tanks, but we did. But it was . . .

Clennan: What was the technique you used?

Kurth: We had to offset in order to pick them out because of all the fires and everything. We finally did. We finally ran those guys in there and shot them. That was a kind of subtle, not well-known evolution, but those guys were heavily engaged that day, a couple of brigades of Iraqis.

Clennan: I remember one of the general's comments that I guess Iraqis turned around and reported that at the start of the war, and Boomer or somebody said, "Wait till they see what the rest of it can do." It apparently created quite a stir with the Iraqis. Sir, was it right before the ground war that there was all that helicopter activity, unofficial helicopter activity?

Kurth: It was in February. I don't remember the exact day, and I don't have it in any of my notes. I am not sure why. I guess it is because a strange agency came the next day looking to get all the logs and everything. I watched in the TAC center from the data link—clearly depicted these slow movers (Iraqi helos), clearly depicted F-15s going by, and appeared to be escort. They were coming out of Kuwait into Saudi Arabia, showed them landing. I heard some discussion of it on the radio, and because there was

Photo by LtCol Charles H. Cureton

Marine Cobra helicopters arrive at Kuwait International Airport on 28–29 February 1991. At the height of operations, the Cobras flew day and night in support of Marines on the ground during the Gulf War.

some thought that they were going to send some attack helicopters up to intercept them, and then we never heard anymore of it.

Clennan: Where did they land?

Kurth: They landed in the desert, somewhere between al-Khafji and Mishab, and I think—a personal opinion is the [Iraq] corps commander or somebody at that level defected and with some of his staff, and they got whisked away.

Clennan: The night of G-day, sir, 1st Marine Division mostly stopped in place I think. People were starting to run into a general visibility problem. Were you able to do any flying that night?

Kurth: The first night, we did. We left at the end of the day. We had gotten as far as the "Emir's Farm" [in Kuwait]. Then we were going to finish up al-Jaber the next day, and I left an aircraft at the division headquarters overnight. It had been my practice throughout Desert Shield prior to Desert Storm to kind of take cross-countries in RON [*sic*] with the grunts. I had the approval of Colonel Garret. So, I would spend a night in 3d Tanks [Battalion] and, you know, 2d Marine headquarters. And many times I would spend it at the division headquarters, spent a lot of time talking to the general and the [G-]3 there about how we would fight this thing when we got the opportunity.

So, we kept the airplane at the division headquarters. Of course, I mentioned that my XO—I would fly, and my XO would fly. So, my XO had day two flights. So, he went out there, and he had the four of my aircraft out there and the four from [HMLA-]367 in support of the 2d [Marine] Division—had been released from 2d Division and had been told by the DASC to contact Task Force Papa Bear there because they were engaged and were looking for some Cobra support. That is what happened the day the division headquarters was attacked and saw the largest tank battle in Marine Corps history.

I think it turned out that a total of five Iraqi brigades attacked. Two attacked the 2d Division. Three attacked the 1st Marine Division. I had a couple of flight leaders out there, actually engaged with the Iraqi attack, and the division CP. And they ended up shooting APCs [armored personnel carriers] and tanks at about 300 meters from the division CP, and it was quite a melee.

Clennan: Mostly using Hellfires at this point in time or . . . ?

Kurth: TOWs, some Hellfires but mostly TOWs because of the problem of getting someone to designate.

Clennan: What I had seen coming through the records, I haven't seen any genuine fixed-wing close air support to this point in time.

Kurth: It was impossible. We ran some close air support on day one. When the cloud cover broke a little bit, about midday, on the Emir's Farm, we ran A-6s, and we ran some Harriers forward where we were working, and they worked out pretty well. After that, it was terrible. The third day, of course, was absolutely unbelievable.

The visibility that day and the weather were really gross. The third day everybody was kicking off to move forward and mop up al-Jaber and then move on to the . . . that is eleven o'clock in the morning coming out of the smoke.

Clennan: Yes sir. And the only visibility you have is from the oil fires behind them.

Kurth: That is correct.

Clennan: How well did they show up on FLIRs at this point in time? During the daytime, during the . . .

Kurth: Things would show up on the FLIR pretty well, but the problem was all the oil well fires would blossom across the FLIR and kind of make it impossible to distinguish.

Clennan: And there wasn't too many aspects you could point it in where you weren't going to have that kind of problem?

Kurth: No.

Clennan: Because there were so many different fields on fire.

Kurth: It was all . . . we were attacking completely into the fires. Once we got beyond them and we caught up to the 7th Marines, we were able to use the Night Eagle and designate and shoot. Primarily, we relied on the . . . even then I was reluctant to engage those things because I wasn't sure—I wasn't positive where I was engaging. Instead, primarily deferred to the FACs with 7th Marines to designate with their MULEs.

Clennan: And you would basically fly a set route up to essentially following the breach points to get up and back?

Kurth: Well, it was pretty easy to get up there. From there on, we just kind of followed the tracks of the vehicles. Once I found where I was going, it was pretty easy, although the GPS [global positioning system] was intermittent. I had my copilot, he was real good on the map, and we were able to get back and forth.

Clennan: Now what altitude are you talking about?

Kurth: About five feet.

Clennan: Ground hugging the whole way?

Kurth: Yeah. I would just go forward—relied on those guys to tell me where I was going—and I would watch out in front of me to not hit anything. And then I would get to where I was going and we would . . . we finally broke through at 14. It was about 14 miles thick. Once I got through that, it was clear enough, so I didn't have any problem about letting the Cobras work up there. So, I would just go back and again, turn my lights on, and they would follow me through the smoke and hand them off to a FAC.

Clennan: Because they were flying by, right? You at least had some kind of FLIR capability.

Kurth: Yeah. And, again, I had to have a guy in the backseat to tell me what he saw, because there wasn't . . . the display was on a panel.

Clennan: Was it fixed forward looking?

Kurth: It was flexible and could be moved. So, they could tell me and I would have to tell them what way we were heading, so they didn't get disoriented on where they were—it was an interesting kind of evolution. We did that all day the third day.

We had a chemical attack that day, and I am now at this point down right convinced that there really was a chemical attack. Unfortunately, I did not save the evidence. At any rate, the [XM93] Fox [chemical reconnaissance] vehicles indicated that we had an attack, and it wasn't the first time that happened.

Clennan: This was 2d Marine Division, sir? First Battalion, 6th Marines, breach? Is that the one you're referring to?

Kurth: No. I am referring to the third—the 1st Marine Division, 7th Marine, Task Force Ripper lead elements on the third day, sometime around 1300 in the afternoon. There is an audiotape of this entire evolution that Colonel Fulford has, General Fulford has. You can ask him about it, and I bet he will let you listen to it.

I confirmed what the Fox vehicle said because I had M9 [chemical agent detector] paper from my skids, and I also had it on my dashboard of my own helicopter. M9 papers are almost Marine-proof.

Clennan: Right.

Kurth: Well, it had dots—it changed color, and I had I guess purple polka dots. I forget what

they are, but at any rate I had an indication we were under chemical attack, and we were already in MOPP-4 [mission-oriented protective posture level-4 gear]. We put our AR-5 [rifles] on; we flew like that for an hour and a half until we got the all clear. I am convinced there was a chemical attack.

Clennan: About where were you flying, sir?

Kurth: We were north of the quarry, south of the airfield.

Clennan: South of al-Jaber [Air Base]?

Kurth: No. South of Kuwait International [Airport], north of the quarry because that is where we ran into most of the resistance. East of the "Ice Cube" [a built-up area in Kuwait named after the way it appeared on maps].

Clennan: What time was this, sir?

Kurth: AAA. This is the first day of the war, these pictures. There is artillery going off. There is that big ammo dump that blew up. This is a vehicle that we shot. I don't remember when, sometime on the third day. There is the division CP.

Clennan: Can we use some of these, sir, when it comes time for publication?

Kurth: Sure. Absolutely.

Clennan: This is in the afternoon of day three, sir?

Kurth: Yes.

Clennan: The afternoon of D3 [27 February]?

Kurth: Yes.

Clennan: D plus two [days], actually [26 February].

Kurth: Yes, I got a call from the division CP to go back there. They had an urgent message that needed to be couriered to the division commander. I went back [and] picked it up from the chief of staff, and he gave me this message. I took it forward. I rendezvoused with General Myatt and gave him and the [G-]2 [intelligence officer] the information. The information was that the Iraqis were in full retreat, and that is when they started catching them on the Highway of Death. They were told to consolidate their positions and take the airport the next morning. So, at the end of the day, I wanted to stay but I was told to return to base Lonesome Dove.

Clennan: This is the flight on the 26th.

Kurth: That's correct. So, I get back, have something to eat, hit the rack. [At] 2100, my ops officer wakes me up. "Colonel, they want us to launch." I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "We have been told to. It's a mandatory mission; we've got to send four aircraft to the 1st Marine Division headquarters for the morning assault." I said, "This is nuts." So, I went and that is what they said. Then group three went and found Colonel Garrett and woke him up and asked him what the hell was going on. He said that General Moore said that we had to have aircraft up there, that that was what the division wanted. I said, "I just got back. I know what the division wants. There is no reason for us to send aircraft up there to position by the division headquarters for an attack in the morning. We can launch them here. It is dangerous as hell sending people up there, because it is dark and there are lots of high-tension wires." He said, "Well, I am sorry. It's a mandatory mission." "Well," I said, "I ain't going." So, I went back up there, and sure as s——t. I left my guys at al-Jaber. They landed at al-Jaber. They could barely see getting into al-Jaber. They went and slept in a bunker. I flew up to division headquarters. I could not get to the division headquarters. I landed short of the power lines where the division . . .

Clennan: Where were they this time?

Kurth: They were up north of the quarry. They were up—I think they were in the vicinity of Bravo 37 or somewhere like that, one of the control points. Anyway, I—Bravo 37 or Bravo 38, they were up there somewhere.

Clennan: Very few clicks short of Kuwait International [Airport].

Kurth: There were these big power lines. They were by these power lines somewhere in here, because I couldn't see the power lines and I didn't want to try to run into them. So, I landed. I walked about a mile and a half to division CP. Everybody was asleep. Talked to the watch officer. They said no; they didn't need us. If they needed us, they would call us in the morning. I went back and caught a couple hours sleep at the al-Jaber [airfield] with my guys [and] launched the next morning, and the rest is history because there was first a little bit of a battle. The 1st Marines had a little bit of a fight. [Task Force] Shepherd had a little bit of a fight just south of the airport, but we went in there and it was pretty much secured when I got up there.

Clennan: It was clear by the airport too, sir.

Kurth: Crystal clear. That really annoyed me. Once again, incomplete information putting guys at risk for no good reason. I was annoyed. I recognized the fact that I didn't have all the information, but

since I had seen the intelligence reports and I had been at the division CP, I thought I was as well informed as anybody—particularly a little better informed than those who were 50 miles from the action.

Clennan: By the night of the 27th, of course, word was passed that we were going to do a cease-fire the next day, so we weren't going to press the issue that night.

Colonel Donald A. Beaufait

Colonel Donald A. Beaufait joined the Marine Corps on 5 June 1968. He served in Vietnam from July 1972 to March 1973 as a McDonnell Douglas F-4J Phantom II pilot with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 333 (VMFA-333), flying a total of 102 combat missions. Beaufait was selected to be in the Marine Corps' first Grumman F-14 Tomcat squadron, and reported to Navy Fighter Squadron 124 (VF-124) in July 1975 for training with the aircraft. He was later chosen to be involved in the fleet introduction of the F/A-18 and in 1982 became the first Marine to land the F/A-18 on an aircraft carrier. During the Gulf War, he served as executive officer of MAG-11 and was promoted to its commanding officer in July 1991, soon after the war. He retired on 30 September 1994, after logging a total of 4,700 flight hours.

Colonel Beaufait was interviewed on 8 July 2008 by Alexander N. Hinman of the Marine Corps History Division. MAG-11 participated in both the air and ground phases of the Gulf War, striking at strategic targets within Kuwait and providing close air support for Marines. In his interview, Colonel Beaufait recounts some of his experiences during the war, including a number of sorties, encounters with Iraqi antiaircraft weapons, and descriptions of his equipment and its effectiveness on the battlefield.

Hinman: This is Alexander Hinman, intern with the United States Marine Corps History Division. I'm interviewing retired Colonel Donald A. Beaufait. The date is eighth of July 2008, and the interview will be discussing his time in the 1990–91 Gulf War. Now, sir, when did you arrive—well, first of all, what unit were you assigned to?

Beaufait: I'd reported in from F-18 refresher training; I'd just spent a three-year tour in Germany in EuCom [U.S. European Command]. I arrived in July 1990. I was in MAG-11. I was the XO of MAG-11, but MAG-11 was also dual-tasked as MAG-70, which was the unit I deployed with. I deployed as the XO of MAG-70, and I went to Bahrain via Saudi Arabia very early in August of 1990 to take equipment off the MPF [Maritime Prepositioning Force] ships, off-loaded them in Saudi Arabia, took them down to Bahrain, [and] set up our forward operating base there initially in Shaikh Isa Air Base down there in Bahrain.

Hinman: About the F/A-18, how long had it been part of the Marine Corps arsenal, sir?

Beaufait: It was introduced to the Marine Corps in 1983. Three squadrons went through F-18 initial training in [Naval Air Station (NAS)] Lemoore, California, and then moved down to Marine Corps [Air] Station El Toro [California]. There was the [VMFA-]531, [VMFA-]323, and [VMFA-]314 were the first three squadrons.

Hinman: How many hours had you logged with that particular aircraft at the time?

Beaufait: Oh, I guess I had about 1,100 or 1,200 hours in the Hornet.

Hinman: And how many more did you log during the war, sir?

Beaufait: I don't recall exactly during the war, flew a total of 50 missions. By the time I retired, had almost 2,000 hours in the F-18. I was part of the initial cadre that introduced the F-18 to the [U.S.] Navy and Marine Corps up in 1980 in Lemoore, California. That's how I got so many hours early on in the program.

Hinman: What kind of qualifications did you have at the time?

Beaufait: Well, I'd been in Vietnam. Flown major strikes off of the USS *America* [CV 66] in 1972 and '73 over North Vietnam, and then I'd been an operations officer of three different squadrons before going down to California, to El Toro, as the XO of [VMFA-]323. So I did quite a lot of time, and then I was the CO of [VMFA-]323 on board the USS *Coral Sea* [CV 43]. We did the Libya bombing raid [in] 1986. In between then, I'd been the F-4 tactics instructor on the East Coast in an organization called MAWTULant [Marine Air Weapons Training Unit Atlantic], which was the predecessor of MAWT, and then we put MAWT together, and then I went back to operational flying when we did that. So I had a fair amount of tactical instruction background and a fair amount of operational experience at the time.

Hinman: Could you clarify what MAWT is, sir?

Beaufait: Marine Air [Aviation] Weapons [and] Tactics Squadron 1 [MAWTS-1]. It's the graduate-

level course that we send our aviators through, both fixed wing and rotary wing, to qualify as weapons and tactics instructors in their squadrons. It's out at [MCAS] Yuma right now, is where the squadron is located.

Hinman: Regarding the air war, what did you understand was the objective of it?

Beaufait: Basically our objective was to drive the Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. We had no concerns or any intention as far as I ever understood of going any further than forcing Iraq out of Kuwait. And also, of course, to protect Saudi Arabia and to prevent Iraqi forces from spilling south, once they'd occupied Kuwait, down into the oil region in Saudi Arabia down along the Persian Gulf area there.

Hinman: And do you think the air war was effective in achieving this objective?

Beaufait: Absolutely. When we arrived there, of course, we off-loaded the MPS ships, and then we put up a blocking force of Cobra attack helicopters and that sort of thing. And we were, I think, a deterrent to having any Iraqi forces—had they intended to come down toward Saudi Arabian oil facilities. We wanted to make sure that didn't happen, and then we gradually built up U.S. force. Of course, we ran the air war for approximately 30 days before the ground war began, and I think we'd done a pretty substantial amount of damage to the Iraqi forces before the ground war ever started.

Hinman: So what role did MAG-11 play during the air war?

Beaufait: MAG-11, when we originally arrived there, was given a set of targets for the first night of the war. Then we proceeded over the next several months to replan different targets, everything else. We finally executed the same basic list of eight targets that we had on the first night of the war. Beyond that we did some strategic attacks into Iraq, but principally what we did was soften up Iraqi military forces in the country of Kuwait. We set up pretty much 24-hour, round-the-clock operations there, attacking all the Iraqi armored positions, barracks, infrastructure, anything the Iraqis could use, as well as Iraqi ground forces, when we could locate them, over that 30-day period. Then once the ground war began, we rolled in as close air support operations.

Hinman: Did you have any concerns about Iraqi antiair or aircraft capability—air-to-air capability?

Beaufait: Yes, we did. Originally, as I mentioned, we struck eight targets on that first night, and we were very concerned, as the Iraqis had a huge arsenal of surface-to-air missiles and all sorts of AAA guns and that type of thing, and they had a substantial air force. The destruction of their air defenses was one of our number one priorities, because of course once we did that, we thought we could operate with impunity over Kuwait and southern Iraq, which was what we did. But that first night was very substantial opposition in terms of SAMs [surface-to-air missiles] and AAA and that sort of thing. And we had detailed and intricate plans for suppression of those defenses using radar jamming with our [Northrop Grumman] EA-6B [Prowlers] as well as hard kill with [AGM-88] HARM [high-speed antiradiation missile] missiles and those sorts of things and direct attacks on the facilities. They were part of our plan from the beginning, destroying all those defenses, and we were pretty successful. Within about a week, I'd say we got rid of the surface-to-air missile threat, and we were down to AAA defenses. The Iraqis managed to keep those things going for quite awhile, although they were not terribly accurate, particularly in Kuwait with their AAA. They did put up a fair volume of fire to start with, but that gradually was diminished as we destroyed the facilities ahead.

Hinman: So were you put in danger by those antiair capabilities? I mean, you know, on the first night or afterward, sir?

Beaufait: Oh yeah. We, I forget the number of airplanes we launched, we probably launched about 75 airplanes in that initial strike, midnight to one o'clock in the morning. I didn't fly in those. I was one of the battle staff back in Bahrain, but I fully expected we'd lose several airplanes in that first mission. As it turns out, we didn't lose any but we were pretty well equipped, pretty well trained up, and we'd done meticulous mission planning for every one of those strikes in terms of mission planning in terms of suppression. So, I think our suppression plan was pretty effective. You'll notice that if you look at the history of the war, several airplanes were lost that night on similar targets to what MAG-11 struck. Of course, the [U.S.] Air Force was right in downtown Baghdad [Iraq]; they lost some F-16s and that sort of thing in that effort. We were very successful in not losing any airplanes.

Hinman: Could you describe the course of a typical mission during the war?

Beaufait: Well, it depends on which we're talking about. The deep strike missions we started the first

night, we launched airplanes out, and they would generally hit a tanker and go from there to their target. We had dedicated airplanes that were SAM suppression, AAA suppression, that type of thing, as well as strike airplanes, and early on, until the Iraqi Air Force was destroyed, we had counterair combat air patrol [CAP] airplanes that were MiG-CAPs or target-CAP type planes that were flying escort for the strike airplanes. Once we suppressed the SAM threat, we decreased the percentage of assets we used to do counterair threat and counter-SAM threat and increased the number of planes that were used to drop bombs and strike targets, that type of thing. So by the time we were into the war about two weeks, or I'd say 10 days, we were flying very few combat air patrol missions, and we were mostly executing seek-and-destroy, forward air controller controlled strikes, small packages on Iraqi targets throughout Kuwait.

Hinman: How would one of those, say, deep-strike missions, how would one of those go? What kind of things would you have to do to prepare, what was flying like, I suppose, sir?

Beaufait: Well, the very first ones obviously took a lot of detailed planning, because we had, first of all, to gather the intelligence on where the defenses were. We always wanted to avoid them as much as possible. If we couldn't avoid them, we would come up with a detailed plan to suppress them, and then we'd have a strike leader who would coordinate all of the suppression efforts along with the detailed bomb aim points for each of the airplanes on a strategic target. Then they'd sit down probably three hours before the mission and then start briefing it, so they could brief the overall concept of how it's going to work, with an intelligence brief and that type of thing.

Then each of the elements, whether they were the strike airplanes or the suppression airplanes or the combat air patrol elements, would then break down further and brief their section or their element, division, on what the plan was. And then pretty much everyone would go out, and we'd get started up and take off. They'd have a tanker plan; they would go and refuel. We had huge numbers [of] airplanes, both Marine Corps and Air Force tankers, [McDonnell Douglas] KC-10 [Extenders], and those types of airplanes—[Boeing] KC-135 [Stratotankers], C-130s—refueled the [combat] airplanes prior to going across the border into either Iraq or into Kuwait. So they had a full combat load of fuel, then executed the mission, [and came] back out. And normally there would be another tanker waiting as soon as we got back into Saudi Arabian airspace to be able to refuel airplanes in case we had any combat damage. We'd also have an element of airplanes, which would be designated as a rescue combat air patrol if we had to pick up some pilots that were downed somewhere along the mission. Then we'd land—we had hot refueling pits that were set up with fueling stations at Shaikh Isa [Air Base]—come back, and refuel the airplanes; and then they'd go back, park the jets, go through maintenance control, and come back and have a major debrief with the intelligence on what happened.

Hinman: Are there any really atypical missions that stick out in your mind, sir?

Beaufait: Well we did a lot of armed reconnaissance, trying to destroy AAA sites, that type of thing. Some of the Iraqis did some less than totally smart things. They had a AAA gun on a pier at a naval base that we flew over, and it shot at us. Usually once the gun opened up on you, it was hard to tell exactly where it was, but in this case it was on a big, long pier with a thickened part of the pier exactly where the Iraqis had the gun. So we were able to locate it and turn around. Gave them a little while to get relaxed, then came back and dropped a load of Rockeyes [cluster bombs] on them, and destroyed them.

We had a lot of . . . another mission that was very interesting was when the Iraqis were retreating from Kuwait. Toward the end of the war there, they've got all their forces and their vehicles, and everything's bottled up just to the west of Kuwait City. I guess people would refer to it as the Highway of Death. They've got a big traffic jam there. We were able to call air in on that and pretty much destroyed hundreds, if not at least a thousand, vehicles and troops and everything else who were trying to get back up to Iraq across the border. It was interesting. We drove over and flew over some of that stuff after the war had ended, and it was amazing to us, not just the fact that these were all military vehicles, but there were a lot of cars and civilian trucks and those sorts of things that had been appropriated by the Iraqis that were full of all kinds of goods that the Iraqis were trying to get back out of Kuwait—stolen household goods, you name it—everything else in all these vehicles and take it back to Iraq.

Hinman: In the close air support role, sir, could you describe one of those missions?

Beaufait: Well, one of the problems we had with the ground forces, one of the problems we had with the ground war, when we really got into the close air support portion of it, was that the ground forces were moving so fast that it was hard to maintain fire support coordination lines [FSCLs] and those kinds of things because of the speed with which the ground forces were able to move into Kuwait. So we were constantly revising our CAS procedures, and what we ended up having to do was [to] operate farther beyond the troops than we normally would expect to do in a normal close air support situation. That was due primarily to the fact that the coordination of those efforts was so difficult. Now, we did have a number of Iraqi forces on the right flank of the division advancing up the center of Kuwait at the [al-]Burqan oil fields there, which were on fire.

What the Iraqis did as they retreated from Kuwait, they set the Iraqi oil facilities on fire—put a huge plume of smoke, I mean really, really thick smoke, all over the battlefield. So it was difficult to actually get in and drop weapons really close to the front lines of the advancing troops. As I mentioned, they were going so fast and a lot of armor movement as well. But we did fly out in advance beyond the fire support coordination line, which technically wouldn't be considered close air support, I suppose, but we were searching for any moving vehicles, even jeep-type things, small personnel carriers, and whatever we could find—anything on the move or firing artillery pieces, that kind of stuff. We were just hovering over the battlefield and destroying those as we found them.

Hinman: Did the fires affect your combat operation in any significant way?

Beaufait: It did, in fact. In fact, the most effective way of supporting those Marines there when they were attacked on their right flank there advancing was with Cobra helicopters. This guy named [Lieutenant Colonel Michael M.] "Mike" Kurth—I don't know if you ever heard of him . . .

Hinman: I've heard of him, sir.

Beaufait: Yeah, he received the Navy Cross there for flying very low with his Cobra squadron there and attacking Iraqi armored elements that were on the right flank of the advance. He might be a good guy to talk to about all that particularly. We had been trying to go underneath, and I had in fact been under the plume of the fire there a couple times dropping them. We knew there were Iraqi armored vehicles there. There were self-propelled guns and those types of things, but it was very difficult to

The "Highway of Death," photographed in March 1991, was the road west of Kuwait City leading to the Iraqi border, where Iraqi troops and vehicles were cluttered during their retreat.

Photo courtesy of BGen Granville R. Amos

Photo by MSgt Bill Thompson. Defense Imagery DF-ST-92-07175

A plane captain marshals an F/A-18 Hornet striker fighter aircraft from VMFA-333 onto the taxiway on 1 April 1992. The Hornets were used in a variety of capacities, including fighter escort, air interdiction, close air support, and aerial reconnaissance. As the executive officer of MAG-11, Col Donald A. Beaufait flew a total of 50 missions in the Hornet.

get a targeting solution underneath the fire. I tried one time to shoot an IR [AGM 65] Maverick [air-to-ground missile] at an artillery piece, but there was so much fire on there. After I acquired the self-propelled artillery and fired the Maverick, it actually went toward the target and then turned and went into a burning oil tank instead. So, it was kind of frustrating in that regard, trying to get a good solution on some of that armor that was down there underneath the smoke.

Hinman: Now, regarding the F/A-18 itself, what capabilities did the aircraft bring to the MAG that had not been there before?

Beaufait: Well, the F-18 was a great airplane and still is. It had some advanced targeting sensors that we didn't have in previous airplanes like F-4s and those sorts of things. For example, it had a forward-looking infrared radar targeting FLIR—FLIR pod, which allowed us to basically pick out targets at night and in low-light conditions and actually magnify the target, so we could designate those targets more effectively. One thing it did not have is it didn't [have] a laser designator in it, which we put on later versions of that particular piece of equipment, but we were able to at least find targets and then drop bombs on those targets. It also allowed us to get some battle damage assessment [BDA] based on where the bomb hit, because the FLIR went off target as the airplane came off target, and you'd be able to tell where the bomb hit. So FLIR pods were in great demand on the airplanes. We only had about one for every three airplanes over there, so one of our recommendations at the end of the war was that we procure more of those kinds of pods and that we also incorporate a laser designator into the FLIR targeting pod, which actually happened. So now, standard equipment being used in the Iraq conflict is targeting FLIR with a laser designator and a much better definition capability.

We also had a really good electronic warfare [EW] suite in the airplane, which allowed us [to use] surface-to-air missile warning indications and that type of thing much better than in previous generations of airplanes. We had the addition of the high-speed antiradiation missile, the HARM missile, which we used extensively to attack Iraqi radar sites very effectively. We would target the emitter, and it would shut that down then go and

hard kill some of the sites. Overall the performance of the airplane was excellent. The accuracy with the INS [inertial navigation system] platforms in the airplane allowed us to drop bombs far more accurately than we ever did in other conflicts. It wasn't quite what we have in the current [2008] Iraq conflict, but it was a huge improvement over the kinds of airplanes we [had] in Vietnam, let's say.

Hinman: So it was an improvement over its predecessors.

Beaufait: Oh, absolutely. Hands down better.

Hinman: Did you feel you operated as part of the MAGTF [Marine air-ground task force] in the Gulf War or as part of the Air Force's operations?

Beaufait: Oh, we operated as the MAGTF. You know, we were part of I MEF; make no mistake about that. One of the things that we had to guard against was the Air Force, you know. The air war commander [General Charles A. Horner, USAF] tended to want to use us as his assets. Lieutenant General [Walter E.] Boomer, who was the MEF commander at the time, obviously wanted to maintain control of his assets, so there was constant friction, I would say, there between Riyadh and the CG [commanding general] of I MEF. And we were always arguing with the Air Force that we needed to use the airplanes, most of our missions, in support of the MAGTF, and the Air Force was always saying, "Well, we need to use them for other types of missions." I think that's kind of a natural thing that happens in that kind of evolution, but we were, I think, very successful in using most of our assets, most [of] our sorties, in support of the MAGTF.

Hinman: Now, what kind of challenges did you encounter in terms of maintenance, resupply, and armament?

Beaufait: Well, as I mentioned, I was up where we off-loaded the MPS ships in Saudi Arabia. One of the first things that happened was trying to get enough vehicles off-loaded and dedicated vehicle support [for] the opening of the Shaikh Isa Air Base. We were a little low on things like just transportation. We managed to get enough loaders and big gear, but we had a hard time getting, for example, a car for the group commander so he could get around—a vehicle of any kind, a hummer or whatever; we didn't have any of those. So we actually ended up . . . in some cases, the Air Force units who were down at Shaikh Isa with us, which primarily were F-4 reconnaissance airplanes, gave us some vehicles, so we could get around. Second problem we had was off-loading the MPS ships. All the boxes, the Conex [storage container] boxes on the MPS ships, were all bar coded, but in the process of off-loading we managed to rub off the bar coding. So these boxes were sitting on a pier in Saudi Arabia, and no one could tell with any certainty what was in the boxes. So we had to go open them all up and break out the gear to see what was in there. Another problem we had, which was a constant problem throughout the operation until the very end, was ordnance supplies. We off-loaded the ordnance on the MPS, but you know, we could go through that in very short order with the number of airplanes we had there.

So we were constantly screaming for more general-purpose bombs. At one point, we were down to less than a hundred MK83 bombs, which was the weapon we were using of choice at the time. But when the war ended, there were thousands of those bombs. We'd set up an ammunition dump outside the base [and] had that guarded by a Marine Reserve infantry company. We had thousands and thousands of air-to-ground munitions out there, and the day the war ended, we had to go put them all back in boxes and repack them and send them back. That took a couple months, but initially the large influx of troops we had, maintenance troops and everything, we didn't have any place for them to stay actually.

We didn't have enough GP tents; we had them living in the hangars at the Shaikh Isa [Air] Base there, and then we started, we got a local contract with some Bahraini contractors that came out and started pouring concrete slabs to make hardback tents, and we finally built a huge tent city for people to live in. There were some facilities at Shaikh Isa that helped us a lot. Like I mentioned, there were some hangars and there were some facilities—there was [a] large, brand new bachelor officers quarters. We were able to cram our pilots in there. We were concerned about them living in the 120-degree heat and then having to fly airplanes all the time, so where and when we could we managed to get even 6 or 8 or 10 to a room, a place in there to sleep that was air conditioned to get away from the heat so they didn't get too tired.

Maintenance-wise, we had tremendous issues with sand—sand blowing. The airplanes were all out on the line, and the sand out there in the desert was very fine, like talcum powder, and it would blow and get into the airplanes, into the hydraulic systems and stuff like that. So that was a bit of an

issue when the wind came up. But by and large, once we got up and operating, once we'd been there about two months, I would say, we were into a pretty good routine and the maintenance; airplane availability was good. As I mentioned, the constant worry we had during the entire thing was running out of ordnance.

We were always worried about the number of bombs and stuff we had, because we took all the ordnance we could, the aviation ordnance, off the MPF ships, and then we continued to order more ordnance, which had to be brought into the port of Manamah at the northern end of Bahrain and trucked down to our bomb dump we set up. Outside of Shaikh Isa, we had a major air-to-ground ordnance facility we established where we unloaded the bombs and built them up and then brought them onto the base. We had that guarded by a company of Marine Reserve infantry guys.

But anyway, we were almost out of bombs several times during the conflict, and in spite of the fact that we continued to bring ships in with more ordnance, it took us a while to convince commanders there that we were actually going to use as much ordnance as we did. When the war ended, I mentioned I think we had tens of thousands of bombs in the bomb dump, which required quite a bit of retrograded effort to pack them back up again and send them home. And fuel, which was the other major constraint, we were worried about. The Bahrainis converted one of their refineries to produce jet fuel, and then we were able to just truck it into the base. And we were going through unbelievable amounts of jet fuel every day, so being able to refine it and deliver it to the setup there on the base and put it into our storage platters was one of the big enabling factors for being able to fly as many sorties as we had. If we had been some other place, where there wasn't so much oil, it would have been a hugely different story, I think.

Hinman: Do you think that the war was used as a kind of proving ground for any of your equipment, sort of practical application?

Beaufait: Well absolutely. It was the first major use of the F-18 in combat, for example. We did use it when we did the Libya bombing raid in '86, but that was a one-mission kind of thing. It hadn't really been used much until then. So it proved out the airplane; it proved out the targeting system. As I mentioned, the FLIR pods were a great success, and of course, we've improved those dramatically since those days. The HARM missile was effective; some of the other things we had [were also effective]. The IR Maverick we used extensively with mixed results, I mean, because it was hard to discern the exact target you were using, and the seeker head wasn't very clear. We set to improve those types of things. In general, I think it was a great proving ground for the types of equipment we needed to be able to fight the war far more effectively when it came time to go to Iraq and fight that conflict.

Hinman: And did you have any problems getting any of the Mavericks beforehand?

Beaufait: Well, we had what was on the MPS ships, and we continued to receive them and that type of thing. As I mentioned, we were always a little short on . . . the smart weapons probably hadn't yet been produced in the numbers that were necessary, and I think if you go back and look at the history, you'll see that most of the ordnance we dropped in Desert Storm was unguided munitions. Even though the F-18 and A-6s are fairly good, accurate bombers, it's no substitute for having a laser-guided bomb, for example, of any kind [of] laser-guided bomb. And so one of our after action reports out [of] the conflict is that we needed to have, as I mentioned early, a targeting FLIR that had laser designation capability and do pinpoint delivery of those weapons. At that time we didn't have that capability with our airplanes. The A-6s had them, and they were very effective stopping some armored attacks.

I know they did a wonderful job stopping an armored attack early in the war coming toward the Marine forces that were in Kuwait, but the Iraqis were coming down through Kuwait themselves. I think this was before the ground war had actually started. The Iraqis were actually trying to mount an attack on forces, and the A-6s went up there at night with their laser-guided bombs and destroyed several of their vehicles and basically turned them around. So, the A-6 laser-guided bomb delivery capability was an awesome improvement over what we had in the F-18, in fact.

Hinman: So would you say that MAG-11's role prior to the ground invasion was an offensive one, regarding the Marines, rather than a defensive one, if you see what I mean?

Beaufait: Absolutely. We viewed our mission in that month of air war, prior to the ground war. We viewed our mission as to make it as easy as possible for the ground forces to roll through Kuwait as quickly as possible with minimum casualties. We

viewed our mission to prepare the battlefield for the ground war, and I think we were very effective at doing that.

Lieutenant Colonel William R. Jones

Born 28 June 1947 in Kennett, Missouri, Lieutenant Colonel William R. Jones joined the Marine Corps in 1969. After being designated a naval aviator on 19 March 1971, Jones was assigned to Marine Attack Helicopter Squadron 269 (HMA-269) and received training with the Bell AH-1J Sea Cobra. During the Vietnam War, he served in HMA-369, which conducted surveillance and attack operations in North Vietnam. He was later selected for fixed-wing training and departed for NAS Kingsville, Texas, in November 1975. After serving in a variety of billets, Jones reported to MAG-32 for training/conversion to the AV-8B Harrier II in July 1989. During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, he commanded Marine Attack Squadron 231 (VMA-231), an AV-8B squadron operating out of King Abdul Aziz airfield in Saudi Arabia. He retired on 1 July 1998.

Colonel Jones was interviewed on 21 February 2002 by Dr. Fred H. Allison of Marine Corps History and Museum Division. During the conflict, VMA-231 operated as part of MAG-13 (Forward), flying combat sorties against a variety of enemy targets. Colonel Jones flew in 41 sorties, and in his interview he describes some of these flights and their particulars. He also relates his encounters with antiaircraft fire and the conditions of operating in Saudi Arabia.

Allison: Your squadron was deployed to [MCAS] Iwakuni [Japan], WestPac, when the war broke [out]. Were your people thinking they were going to miss the war?

Jones: The VMA-231 history—by the way, it's the oldest insignia in the Marine Corps. The Ace of Spades goes back to 1919. It was a torpedo bomber squadron, a scout squadron, in World War II early on, [was in] the Battle of Midway and up and down the Solomon [Islands]. One of the phrases that [is] in [the squadron history]: "they flew the backwaters of the Western Pacific during the rest of the war." I thought, here we are again. The war's going [on] in Saudi Arabia, and we'll be flying the backwaters of the Western Pacific.

So, you know, people are taking leave wherever they can. We've got normal operations going. The squadron readiness is very good, the morale. Like I said, from an operational standpoint, people are starting to figure out that, yeah, we really aren't going. We're staying here. Rumors are flying like crazy. We're getting all kinds of phone calls from the wives, and this was before cell phones. The phone system was such that a staff NCO's [noncommissioned officer's] wife could call direct to maintenance control at 0600 on any week morning: "We just heard your advance party's on the way." You know, and it was just crazy stuff going on. Then, of course, they're back there and [VMA-]542's been in Saudi Arabia since mid-August. [VMA-]223's got a det [detachment] out on the boat, maybe two dets out. [VMA-]331 is aboard the USS *Nassau* [LHA 4]. There are a couple of A-6 squadrons [that] are gone. The EA-6B squadrons are gone, and the [C-]130 guys are flying like crazy. They're gone. So you can understand where the rumors are coming from. But it was just kind of nuts. Every time I talked to my wife, she was trying to put rumors to rest.

She really had her hands full. She had a couple of spouses who didn't handle separation from the husband well, and then with all this other stuff,

Then-LtCol William R. Jones, commander of VMA-231, part of MAG-13, flew a total of 41 sorties during the Gulf War.

Photo courtesy of Col William R. Jones

this prewar stuff, it really compounded it, and they were scared. What came across occasionally is almost a personal attack. By that I meant verbal, I should say. It was mostly just fear, and they just didn't know: no control, can't talk to your husband, what's really going on. When we eventually deployed to Saudi Arabia later, there were a couple of wives told Carol later that they were convinced that she had a hotline right to my tent there at King Abdul Aziz air base to talk to me anytime. The things people make up when they're scared and feel that they're out of control—it's really, in some ways, it's funny and some ways it's actually not funny at all.

So the group's CO's wife invites all the squadron COs to a Thanksgiving dinner. A very nice little dinner, just really sweet, because we're all bachelors, geographical bachelors. And this is like a scene out of a movie. We're all sitting there having Thanksgiving dinner, having a little drink beforehand, nice tablecloths, sitting down. This is really good. Then there's a knock on the group CO's door, because he had a nice house there in Iwakuni. And there is a young Marine, and he's got a cheap government briefcase in one hand, opens it up and inside is one green piece of paper. This is when we used to have all the classified stuff was on different color paper. He reads it. He looks at me, and he says, "You guys start packing your stuff." There it was. We had basically 10 days notice that we're packing up and going.

There were other squadrons in [MCAS] Yuma. As it turns out, the night attack Harriers had been all sent to Yuma, but they had a different engine than we did, and they had major engine problems with that, which is one reason they wound up defaulting to us. All the Harriers that went to the desert were all day birds. The night birds would have gone, but they had the 408 engine at the time and the 408s were having massive problems, or else we never would have gone. I'm convinced there was no way we would have gone. They would have sent the night birds.

Allison: So how did you get ready to go in such a short time?

Jones: Basically, everybody just turning to. We had to send a vehicle to the Shin[-Iwakuni] Station there in Iwakuni, the Japanese high-speed train. We had to stop them; people were on their way home. We had to call people and get them at the airport in Osaka [Japan]. They were heading back. Well it was nearly Christmas. My OpsO [operations officer] was back in the states along with three or four other Marines. And, you know, here's these guys with their bags at the Shin station and pretty soon a vehicle rolls up, and [someone] says, "Your leave's canceled. Get your a———s in the car!"

Then, we started working on the pack up. In that same weekend, I had two replacement lieutenants show up from [MCAS] Cherry Point [North Carolina], because [VMAT-]203 [Marine Attack Training Squadron 203] was still kicking out lieutenants. But for some reason the COs that were in Saudi Arabia didn't want replacement pilots.

So we have to pack our stuff. Well that's the big thing; pack the stuff. Get every pilot refreshed in night IFR [in-flight refueling], because when you do long over-water flights, you normally take off at night, early in the morning. The reason for that is safety rules. So then after an 8- or even a 10- or 11-hour day in the cockpit—lots of air refueling—when you land at the other end, they want you to land in daylight. It's safer because you *will* be fatigued.

You want to profile the airplanes. Profiling means that you get the airplane in the right configuration. You fly it for X number of hours, and you take very close records of what is the fuel consumption and maybe other fluid consumptions. In the case of a liquid oxygen aircraft, you'd also track to make sure the loxs [liquid oxygen] fittings are tight so that will last all the way there. The Harrier has an onboard oxygen generating system. You didn't have to do that.

The C-130s were there. We'd go up and do it. So we got all the pilots that were there. We worked them through all this, and then I compounded the problem. I'd told myself many years ago that I was not going to go to war in a green jet. A green jet seen from the ground is a dot that you can see. I said, "We're going to war in a gray jet." So in the middle of all this in December in Iwakuni, I also tasked them with repainting 19 aircraft, and we did it all internally. Technically, and by the book, squadrons don't repaint airplanes. It's not allowed. So we called it a "massive touch-up," and the group commander knew what I was doing. He didn't like it, but he didn't tell me to stop. We got the ghost gray paint from the Hornet squadrons and the EA-6 squadrons, brought those over and they painted the first jet, and it looked like a zebra. It looked awful, because the Harrier, at the time, had two shades of green. There was a dark green and a slightly lighter green. I said, "Look, make this easy. Wipe it down. Get the green off." But you could

still see the camouflage pattern. I said, "I want a pale and just a slightly darker, basically two. I want it mottled looking, very mottled looking." They put too much black in it the first time. The way they were measuring it was they'd take a Styrofoam coffee cup of black, and they'd add that to the gray and there it was, and that was it. Air Station Iwakuni, it was great. It was like they called up Earl Schieb to repaint these airplanes.

Troops worked their own shifts doing something on the jets, and then when they got time off, they'd go over to the hangar next door, which was empty. That squadron was gone. [Marine Corps Air] Station Iwakuni, bless their hearts, because you always expect the base and station folks to not be all that helpful. They ([the] MCAS personnel) cut holes in the ventilation duct work in the hangar to make sure that we had plenty of airflow in there, and we got as much heat as we could in there. They were wonderful. They knew where we were going, and that was it.

So anyway, we flew out with a beautiful paint job on our airplanes. Then they surprised me on the "01," the airplane that normally had my name on it. They put a shark's mouth on the front of it, and they also did a stylized version of my call sign, which is "Venom," so that the V and the M point down like fangs. That paint job held up wonderfully.

The other thing we did—and I learned this from a gent who just made brigadier general, [Major Charles S.] "Steve" Patton. He was the CO of VMA-513, who replaced us in Iwakuni. He had learned from the Brits that that big intake of the Harrier, if you paint it gloss white, not flat white but gloss white, it reflects the ambient light and kills the shadow. So when you look at the Harrier face on, normally you see a dot even three or four miles away. That bright white reflects the ambient light around it, and basically it will disappear even head on. So we also, in the middle of all that painting, I also had them gloss white all the intakes. To this day, I'm just very proud of them for what they [had] done.

Allison: Can you describe the trip over the AO [area of operations]?

Jones: We fly out and meet the KC-10 tankers for the fly out. [We] fly to and spend a night in Wake Island [in the Pacific], spend a night in [MCAS] Kaneohe [Bay] [Hawaii], spend a night in Yuma, and then we go to Cherry Point, basically no breaks in there. Just get up and go.

Now some airplanes started breaking down. One had tanker problems, one flight had to spend the night in Iwo Jima [Japan]. Two birds had some minor problems, spent the night in Midway [Island], and dropped two off there. Some others had some problem getting out of Kaneohe [Bay]. My wingman's probe started leaking. He couldn't take gas. He had to go back to Kaneohe [Bay] and get the probe tip changed, and then everybody just kept on flying from there.

Then some of us, the guys that arrived with me, had I think either four nights or three nights, I forget which, in Cherry Point. Now the troops are an interesting side of this. Some people had one night. The last few jets that showed up, they just take one night, turn them around, and they're gone. Kiss mom and go. The troops were scheduled—obviously on contract flights—and they were going to go through Cherry Point. The way the [U.S.] Air Force had them scheduled was the Marines would only get off for the refuel. They could talk to their wives and kids through the chain-link fence. I'm not lying. I'm not making this up. They've been gone since the fourth of June. Some of them were on their way home and had their leaves canceled, you know. So they've already been teased on this once. Then back on the airplane and go. So when this finally gets to me, I pick up the phone. I call my group commander in Cherry Point, and I said, "Can you do something?" I had no idea what. So bless his heart, Major General [Richard D.] "Rich" Hearney, who had the 2d [Marine Aircraft] Wing at the time—who doesn't have a reputation for being a warm and pleasant kind of guy—but he has a soft spot and particularly when it comes to families. Never mind all the stories you might hear about him, most of which are true. He can be a hard-a———s. But when it comes to families, he is very genuine—if there is such a term—and very caring. He basically made a call over to 2d [Marine] Division, and we swapped out with a battalion. He swapped our people out. So when our folks showed up, they were on the ground for three days. The battalion left three days earlier than they were scheduled to. They get on the jet and go. Three days later when the battalion's jet shows up, our people get on and go. So from an Air Force standpoint, it doesn't matter. They swapped it out. Through his efforts, he got our troops about three days on the ground with their families. Eighteen thousand miles is about what it was from Iwakuni over to Saudi. We got there two days before Christmas.

Allison: Any problems tanking behind a KC-10 instead of the standard C-130?

Jones: Tanking behind a KC-10 is so much easier than a [C-]130 or just about anything else. Sometimes people would stab at the basket, but in the old days of find the tanker or hit the tanker in the middle of nowhere, you don't let your gas get all that low. So what you do is you take lots of little drinks as opposed to taking one big drink every two hours, like every half hour or 45 minutes you'll cycle through the tanker, and it'll top you off. So you've always got a place to go and you're very close to a full load of gas. That philosophy takes a lot of the pressure off the pilot too. Just hitting the basket is not that difficult. You still have to be careful because you can hurt the equipment, but it took a lot of the pressure and a lot of the real pain out of it.

We took off out of [Naval Station] Rota [Spain]. The tankers took off out of Morrón [Spain]. That's where the KC-10s were, and then we met each other later. Conditions were no moon—in and out of the goo [clouds]. It seemed like forever. It was probably maybe two hours, but it was very long.

I got a case of vertigo. I noticed one of the pilots did too, fighting it all the way, and it was very tiring. I was very relaxed when the sun started coming up. [Laughter] You could relax a little bit.

But then we continued all the way to King Abdul Aziz [airfield].

Allison: Upon your arrival there, what was the situation and your impressions?

Jones: Got to the desert, King Abdul Aziz airfield. It's just south of the port of [al-]Jubayl [Saudi Arabia]. An ugly little strip and they used a lot of the aluminum matting to make the taxiway and the parking areas. They pretty much left the runway alone. It was terrible, sun-bleached deteriorating asphalt. It was in terrible shape. But we were very fortunate; as I recall there weren't any significant engine problems due to the rocks and the FOD [foreign object damage].

If you were to see that stuff firsthand, you would be amazed, because the runway was sunbaked asphalt, and it used to come up in entire hunks. You could see it flying loose every now and then. All the matting that was used is for the parking and taxiways. So the matting is where the first 60 and then 66 AV-8s [were parked] and two squadrons of OV-10s, that would be [about] 20. There were two OV-10 squadrons as well.

Then you'd pull onto the runway. The runway was, I want to say, around 7[000]–8,000 feet, but we never used the full length. What we'd do is, because they put the matting together so you could basically go from the matting to the runway no matter where you are, so most takeoff runs were 2[000]–3,000 feet of runway in front of you. So we'd pull out a section of airplanes, and then we'd separate the birds by about a thousand feet, and then of course put the leader on the downwind side, so when they'd go, we'd minimize the FOD hazard that way.

Every takeoff was [a] full load of gas, full load of bullets, chaff, and flares [and a] full load of water for the water injection. Then depending on the ordnance load, we'd be fully loaded or maybe a defensive ECM [electronic counter measures] pod on the centerline. We'd put those on later. So we were very close to max gross design of the airplane just about every takeoff. But it wasn't very hot, so, you know, that was the trade-off. It was quite cool there really. Of course you're fighting the time zone change and all this other stuff.

On the 22d of December, we had 18 birds show up. We were met by the AWC, the assistant wing commander, Brigadier General [Granville R.] "Granny" Amos. He came over to say hello and then [Colonel] John [R.] Bioty [Jr.], he's the CO of MAG-13 (Forward), and [Lieutenant Colonel Theodore N.] "Ted" Herman is the CO of [VMA-]542. Those three gents were all standing there when I shut down.

You could look right at the runway from the air and not see it, because it was so sun bleached. What you could see was the matting, the green matting the Marine Corps put in. It was harder to see the runway. Then in the distance—maybe a half mile away—is this large soccer field. I can't [vouch] for the veracity of this, but the accepted story was that this soccer field had been built by some member of the Saudi royal family for one of his favorite nephews who happened to like soccer. It was poured concrete, multi-tiered, and a big state-of-the-art scoreboard at the end where you could plug into a television and just have the thing play. Then around the stadium were the different squadrons.

VMA-311 from Yuma had been the first squadron to move there, and all their tentage was in the middle of the soccer field, actually on the dirt out there. Not much grass, just dirt. VMA-542, [which] got there second, they took over a large part of the parking lot, so all of their tentage was on top of asphalt. Then you had the Marine wing support squadron [MWSS], the OV-10 squadrons: VMO-1 [Marine Observation Squadron 1] and

VMO-2. Then we're the last ones to show up, so we're a little farther down the hill in the dirt. We're actually near an area that was sort of a nursery of sorts—this was, at one time, a nursery. I mean that's what it was suppose to be is a plant nursery, because there's not much to look at. The reason that's important is because we started getting rain, and we found out that the soil there really doesn't drain like we think of the sand at [Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in] Twentynine Palms [California], where it rains, and it just washes away.

So thankfully though, there were provisions in place with the host nation that they put in concrete pads. So the tents went on top of concrete pads. But it was intended to be bad concrete, because the plan, as I understood it, anything we did there with Saudi Arabia, we had to be able to erase it as if we were never there when you [we] left. So it was cheap concrete, but that was okay. I mean all you wanted was just people to get off of the goo, the same thing with the maintenance tents. There were some very large maintenance tents that went in—they're all prefabbed—and the concrete pads that went down for them were also not the greatest concrete, but for our purposes they were fine.

Then we started having meetings. I mean it was basically just constant meetings. Who's doing what? Who's taking care of this? Have we got all the blood chits [escape and identification tags] issued? Can we get our hands on more desert cammies? We weren't able to get many desert cammies. It was more of a morale thing quite frankly. The guys that needed them were the grunts up front. I mean the fact that we had them was okay. Some troops got them and some didn't. But we asked anyway.

The tan flight suits did show up. I think we had two each per pilot. It wasn't unusual on any given day that the pilots were wearing the turtleneck long underwear—the Nomex underwear—with whichever, a tan or the classic green, flight suit. It was chilly.

Then right about this time frame—here's on the 27th [of December]—I've got a note to myself. We get alerted that the vice president, Mr. [James D. "Dan"] Quayle, is going to visit on or about New Year's Day. That's the same day we [were] issued our personal ammunition.

That night there were a couple of Kuwaiti Air Force [Douglas] A-4 [Skyhawk] pilots who came in to talk about the day of the invasion back in August. They talked about what they did, what they tried to do, and how they were able to fly some of their jets out into Saudi Arabia.

Our office spaces were up in the upper part of the stadium, fully enclosed, very nice. It actually had a carpet, you know, and really nice. [VMA-]311 had gotten there first. They had the press box. But we were on this other area. Well, you know, it's first come, first served. But there was this other wide-open area, which obviously was going to be like the high-price seats where they would have, you know, there were tiers below us, and there was this area probably 30–50 feet deep, and then it went the whole width of the stadium on that one side. So they cubed it up by getting . . . what would the Americans have done? We would have gotten four-by-eight sheets of plywood, right. So obviously the Saudis gave us mahogany, four-by-eight sheets of mahogany. It was amazing. I had my S-4 [logistics] bring some home later. We made little giveaways, little mementos for the officers and staff NCOs. So, we had all these dividers up there. That's how you divided the squadrons. Within the squadrons, you could get the CO and XO, who had a divider, off to one side.

I told you we had all our stuff up in the upper part of the stadium. When our main gear shows up, all the safes [and] all the embark boxes, of course, had to go up two-and-a-half flights of stairs. So, we broke everybody out. We had all the officers and all the S shops carrying all this stuff up there. We didn't want to pull any maintenance folks to do it. They were doing their own humping of gear out by the maintenance tents.

The laser glasses, protective glasses, finally showed up on the 29th [of December]. We issued those. Those are to protect [your eyes] from your own lasers on the ground. Somebody could sweep you. It's just to cut down the chances of you getting a laser burn to the retina.

The only person in the squadron who had flown in combat before was me. The only other person who had seen combat before, besides me, was the sergeant major. He was a lance corporal, as a grunt, in '67–'68 time frame. Then I flew in '72. So he and I were it. To tell you, the sergeant major, he oversaw the defensive positions. He made sure that the camp commandant and the S-4 were getting the support they should be, and everything made sense. Of course, when we say defensive positions, it was basically someplace to go and hide. It wasn't manning an automatic weapon, a crew-served weapon. It was just [to] get some people out of danger.

In fact, he unsuccessfully tried to talk with another unit, which shall remain nameless. They'd

gotten a little carried away and had stacked sandbags on boards, on top of their trench. But they'd stacked them so high that it was going to cave in and sure enough—and he warned them but they wouldn't listen to him—a couple days later it did cave in.

Later we had to shutdown the airfield gates completely for security, so we weren't able to use the port-a-potties, and we're back to the Vietnam stuff—you've got to burn the 55-gallon drums. We had one Marine who was not performing, so the sergeant major had him on this duty. The sergeant major caught him once trying to light the JP [jet fuel] downwind. But I mean, it would have been a bad mistake, and I'm sure it smelled bad anyway.

There was a plan afoot to have the Super Bowl [XXV] and some of the bowl games on the soccer field scoreboard—wouldn't this be great, everybody out there sitting in the dirt and just watch it. The Saudis were, "Okay, I mean we can do this," you know. But when they were hooking the thing up, the channel they wired into was Oprah Winfrey. So with the Saudi officers visiting there, here is the full screen of this black woman talking about the things that Oprah talks about and things she's famous for, and they never plugged the screen in again.

Nintendo [gaming systems] were the favorite of the troops: the hand-held Nintendos, playing Tetris, and all this stuff. And so the coin of the realm was batteries. If somebody lent another Marine their Nintendo, they usually took the batteries out. So the Marine had to slap his own batteries in to play Nintendo.

In the billeting area, a lot of the officers and staff NCOs would build their own furniture, and of course, it was jokingly called "Fred Flintstone furniture" because it was all two-by-fours from scrap lumber. It sort of looks like a chair, sort of looks like a table.

Here's a funny story about life there. The officers, I think there was a max of eight to a tent. We gave them a little extra room in those GP tents, and of course, they had the Fred Flintstone furniture. We had one of the officers—maintenance officer, not a pilot—turns out was really concerned about this Scud missile stuff and this nerve gas stuff, and this was really bothering him deeply. Unfortunately he let his fellow tentmates know about this, and being Marines, they tend to screw with each other's minds. So they got him. One day he's on his rack catching a nap and he wakes up, and everybody else in the tent has got their gas masks on; and they said he just about went through the top of the tent. Of course, they're all falling down laughing. He calls them every name he can think of.

We're told to cut down on our water usage. Let me tell you how good we had it here. This was a soccer stadium. So what do soccer stadiums or any sports stadium have? They have locker rooms, right? Well in the locker rooms you have showers, and you also have porcelain seats, right. [Laughter] So my comeback to any of my Marines who would b——h about "Well we don't have this. We don't have that," I would say, I'll tell you what. If you want to give up your porcelain s——r and your shower, I have a friend up at the 2d Marine Division who would love to take your place for a day. That would shut them up every time. It was great. So, I seemed to use that as a plus.

I mean they had to cut down water usage for a while, because some people were getting carried away. But the desalinization plant was only five miles south of us, as I recall.

By the way, the port of Jubayl's about five miles to the north, and the al-Jubayl airfield, where 3d MAW headquarters was, [was] only about 20 miles into the west. So given the accuracy of a Scud missile, I figure we were about bull's-eye. Because if they tried to hit any of those, you know, they'd probably hit us. We were too small a target to go for. But between the desal [desalinization] plant, the port, and the big airfield, I figure we might catch one by accident.

Allison: When did you get to start flying?

Jones: Then here we're getting into the 28th, to the 30th of December, somewhere in there. We start to look at, now we're actually going to start flying flight schedules. Work out the jets. Get used to the area. Get used to the command and control system. Fly yourself in and out of the airspace. There were some simulated and some actual close air support training being done with the division folks up forward. Those were kind of sporadic. We'd fly with some captive Mavericks [missiles] just to practice with the buttons. Make sure, yep, this stuff works, that stuff works.

On the 30th of December, I got my last two jets. They showed up along with the chase maintenance people. They were following behind them. And then we finally flew some jets on the 30th. We didn't fly during that whole time frame.

Allison: Anything memorable in regards to Vice President Quayle's visit?

Jones: Vice President Quayle visits on the 31st. We also flew some that day with [VMA-]542. [For the]

Vice President Quayle visit, I don't know if you'll find this amusing or not. I find it amusing.

The decision was made that every squadron CO and plane captain would stand by one of his aircraft, and the vice president would visit each one of those and go down the line. Of course, there was a small entourage of media with him, you know. I tried to think ahead if some reporters put a microphone to my face, what I would say about Vice President Quayle and during the Vietnam era or all this kind of stuff or his National Guard [service], and I had some good comebacks ready for those I thought. But I was never asked them.

My brother joined the National Guard in 1969. I said that didn't bother me then. Why should Vice President Quayle bother me now, which was true? My brother is still in the Missouri National Guard.

So they finally get down to the end, and I'm the last squadron. I salute him. "How do you do, Mr. Vice President?" He's being very upbeat, but there's a short pause there, and I said this is who I am. "Sir, you've already seen two other AV-8s. I really don't want to waste your time talking about the aircraft. I'm sure the other COs have already talked to you. Do you have any questions?" Well each squadron had different ordnance loads on the aircraft. So somebody wanted Rockeyes and somebody wanted HEs [high explosive bombs], and so I'm the last guy. So what I had on my jet, we were loaded with napalm canisters and [5-inch, MK32] Zunis [rocket]. And he says, "Well, what are these?" I said, "These are Zuni rockets. We use those to suppress antiaircraft fire or to mark targets with white phosphorus versions, and those are napalm canisters." I just let the question die, because you never know who's standing around you, you know. And he looks right at me, and he says, "What are those for?" I kid you not! It's all I could do to keep my best poker face on, and before I could open my mouth the group commander steps right in. I guess he thought I was going to say something provocative. [Colonel] John [R.] Bioty [Jr.] is an eloquent speaker, but he was losing what to say—and this happens just in a few seconds, all of this—but he was losing it. So he kind of stumbles, and then I step back in, and I said, "Mr. Vice President, these are for soft targets." He looks at me and nods, and he goes, "Ah, soft targets." And that was it, and he walked away.

Allison: Are you anticipating the start of the war or flying combat flights?

Jones: Everything else is a slow ramp-up to the kickoff of the war. I mean, it's everything from some close air support exercises. On the seventh, eighth, and ninth [of January] we practiced some surge operations. How fast can you do? The group commander's looking over everybody's shoulder. Not just us, but I mean this in a positive way. Is the flow right on the field? Is all this stuff really going to work?

We start the discussion on anthrax and nerve agents [and] what's available.

Anyway, it's like I say, it's a small ramp-up. Kept talking to them. Watch out what you put in your letters home. Of course, e-mail really wasn't kicking in by then. There were phones available in limited numbers.

We cut off the MREs [meals, ready-to-eat] on the second of January. The main reason was to—and the reason I was told and it still makes sense to me to this day is—you want to save the MREs for the days you really need them, or you make sure the MREs flow to the front. One, they're expensive, and two, the folks up front may need the MREs just because they're moving around. So they installed some field kitchens into the stadium where the kitchen facilities would have been if this was an operating stadium. So really, they actually had it pretty nice too, a concrete area that the Marine stuff slid in there. So we went to two hots a day, which was really good. We had breakfast and dinner was hot, and then they had usually a small paper cup of soup and a little precooked sandwich, usually on pita bread. That was lunch.

Then the Army/Air Force guys set up a couple of trailers. You actually had food trailers. There was a small Baskin-Robbins [restaurant], eventually. We didn't get those right away. They had a little burger setup, which everybody referred to as "camel burgers," because you weren't really sure what the meat was, the same thing with the Kentucky Fried Chicken. We weren't really sure if this was chicken or pigeons, you know. You could always tell if the food down below in the mess area was good by looking out to the trailer. If the line was long, the food was bad down below. People would decide to go buy a camel burger. If the line was short, then the stuff downstairs is probably okay. Actually we had a couple of Marines, a couple of our staff NCOs, that we had to actually get fairly firm with verbally, because they liked MREs. "Well sir, I like these, and these are easier to get." "No gunny, watch my lips. Stop eating those."

Allison: What about stuff from home?

Jones: When I left—and since I wasn't flying

from Cherry Point to Rota due to a head cold—I carried it with me. I had two boxes of stuff for the squadron that my wife's elementary school gave us. There was little stuff like just a box of cookies, or some of the elementary kids had done some Christmas cards for us that they'd done in school with crayon—just some really sweet stuff. We sent them a little thank-you back. Then later, through the general postal system, we got probably a hundred boxes, a lot of boxes of stuff that came from Nevada, California, wherever. Somebody divided it up and said, "Okay, your unit gets these." Whoever sent this stuff spent some serious money. I mean there was some high-quality college and state sweatshirts. Of course, the troops just were diving for this, and I said, "Sergeant major." I said, "Stop them only long enough to say they can take anything they want as long as they write the thank-you note before they walk out of the tent." So we set up some paper. We had a return address. So, as long as they'd write the thank-you note, a lot of those troops walked out with some really sweet stuff.

Allison: Any contact with the locals?

Jones: I don't think I ever met a Saudi officer when I was there. Now that's the downside. Here's the good side to the story. After the whole thing was over and back at Cherry Point about three or four months, this letter arrives in the mail from the Kuwaiti embassy. A beautiful certificate signed by a member of the Kuwaiti government thanking me as a squadron commander for helping to free this country. So you can say, "Well they don't appreciate us." But I'd say, "No." Many of those folks do appreciate us. It depends on who you talk to on a given day. I got that framed on my wall in my office.

Allison: Any issues with the no-alcohol policy?

Jones: I can remember giving this talk. I was talking to folks specifically about complaining. I was talking about some of the rules on the ground. If somebody sent you a bottle of alcohol, get rid of it because I will enforce [Lieutenant] General [Walter E.] Boomer's rule: There will be no alcohol.

Allison: Any things that worried you about this new environment?

Jones: I wanted to impress, and I was talking specifically to staff NCOs. I had them just pretty much in my front vision. It was kind of a school circle here. But I said one of my real fears, with everybody on edge and everybody walking around with a loaded weapon, is fire control. I said, "Okay, if a round comes in, if there's some bad guy out there, you know, one, you don't know it's a bad guy." It could be just somebody with an accidental discharge. I said, "The first thing I want each of you people to do is to take charge of those Marines around you, and make sure they're not hosing rounds downrange, hurting people, damaging aircraft. We don't need this." I can remember getting, well, for me, fairly agitated just trying to make the point as strongly as I could that we can't do this.

I also talked to them about complaining. I already mentioned before if you don't like what we've got here, and that is all the water you can possibly use and being able to sit on a porcelain s——r once a day, I said, "Well let me know. I will send you up forward and there's a grunt up there who would love to take your place back here."

I found a quote somewhere—I don't know where I found it—supposedly by Albert Einstein that said, "Complaining requires no brains, no courage, and no character." I don't have any idea if that's true or not, but that's what I said to them at the time and that was my theme.

I cautioned them about talking with the press. By that I mean is, feel free to talk to the press. I said, "However, don't speculate. You're going to get questioned about combat readiness." I said, "That's out of your lane. That's out of my lane. You shouldn't talk about that. People are going to talk about women in our area." I said, "Stay away from it. You cannot win that discussion." You know, not in my squadron. At the time there weren't any women in VMAs. But they were in support groups and all around. I said, "You cannot win that discussion. You're going to get misquoted. I recommend you not discuss these points." I didn't tell them not to. But I strongly recommend you [they] stay away from those two subjects, because they're just going to get you all fired up. Got that ironed out. That was about it there.

Allison: Time's moving along, what happened next?

Jones: The 12th of January, we finally got electrical power to the maintenance tents—not to the big hangars yet, but at least the troops had some down there.

The pilots were fitted for the Canadian-designed aircrew's gas mask, which is a different style. It's a whole head mask with a full face. It's got a zip-out plate in case you had to go in the water. You can pull the whole plate off. But that was a fitting that

we had just in case we had to fly with those. We did not, but we were all fitted for them.

We were all concerned about the fact that there were no revetments [embankments] around the aircraft.

It was about a quarter mile from my tent up to the soccer stadium. It was about a half a mile to the maintenance tents, maybe less—quarter mile or a half mile. But since we got there last, my jets were—from my maintenance tent to my first jet was a mile. So, I mean eventually we found some sun tenting and were able to put in a small "catch-crew" tent down there to get those folks out of the weather, out of the sun, or out of whatever—the folks that were all the way down there.

If you had the yellow gear, support togs—that was going the same way you were going—you could jump on and catch a ride. If you recall, some nations in support of Desert Storm provided noncombat equipment. For instance, the Japanese donated a ton of Toyotas, four-wheel drive. So when it was your turn to go fly, yeah, they could run you out there in the back of this Toyota. You'd pile in the back, and that was it. Otherwise you had to walk. I mean it was a long ways away. Oh yeah. The toolboxes, it was really heavy for the mechs [mechanics] to lug the gear, and there weren't that many humvees around, very few.

Now because of that rain, on the 14th a lot of the matting was badly eroded underneath just because the rain just kept coming. It was just a slow soaking rain.

Allison: Are you still flying training missions, any near combat stuff?

Jones: Flying training missions. That's all we were doing, just flying around. Some low-level some simulated close air support [SIMCAS], some, again, just to fly the people in and out of the command and control system.

The aviators have done this a lot and that's where you get, where you internalize this stuff is just getting used to whom you're talking to. Never mind it's a daily changing call sign, and you're on ciphered nets [networks]. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. The fact is you're in and out. You're getting used to the SI [signals instructions]. You really have got to talk to these people, or somebody's going to get excited. In the SI, you've got to talk to these control points, and you get people used to doing that and maybe getting used to things that they can't see. Like flying over Saudi Arabia and Kuwait is like flying over a tan pool table. I mean you really can't see anything. You might as well be over water. I mean there are very, very few things. Unless you're right over a road or right over a small town, yeah, you could see just fine. But as you look out, you don't see much at all. It's the same hazard as flying over water I think, very similar. But people had to get used to it. So it was like flying in the weather, like flying over water, maybe a little more instruments in your scan than you would otherwise be thinking that you would do in a tactical mission just to ensure things are right. Now when the sun's up and it's bright in the middle of the day and you're up at 10[000]–20,000 feet, it was no big deal. You've got a nice clean horizon. But that wasn't always the case.

We started getting ready for the first day's planning. This is around the 15th. You know, "What's day one going to look like? Are we going to do 12 hunting strikes, 6 plane strikes? What's the load out going to be?"

Allison: When and how did you learn that the war's on?

Jones: On the 16th, we spent all morning planning on the day-one strikes. Then Major General [Royal N.] Moore [Jr.] came to visit about noon that day, and he made the comment that it's "game time," that all the waiting is basically coming to an end now, but he still doesn't want to see any hotdogging. It was just his classic prewar pitch. You know there's a difference between combat and operational losses. But we need them all for combat, so don't do something stupid. Don't you people do something stupid for an operational loss. He's telling us here it comes. It's going to happen.

The preplanned targets are moving. He says the Air Force is making some changes with regard to what Harriers are doing, what Hornets are going to do. He didn't say what they [were]. In my note here, I don't recall it.

He talks about [Lieutenant] General Boomer saying that he's depending upon the ACE [aviation combat element] to take the pressure off the GCE [ground combat element], particularly during upcoming breaching operations with regard to close air support. They're concerned about leaks, about when this stuff might happen.

Then later that night, all the strike leaders had to brief, for the first day brief, with the group CO. That's at 1930. Then we also get notified right after that that we're not flying on day one. None of the AV-8s are going to fly on day one. They got scrubbed.

Then the message comes out, "Execute Wolfpack at 1700-0000Z," which would be 0200 local, and that was the kickoff of the air war. Execute Wolfpack. If you recall, the JFACC [joint force air component commander] for [Air Force Lieutenant] General [Charles A.] Horner was [Air Force Brigadier General] Buster Glosson who was a North Carolina State graduate. So that's where the Wolfpack came from. General Glosson's an interesting guy. Let's just put it that way.

So at 0230, we hear the fight's on, but we're obviously not in it. So we were told we're not going to fly the first day. But [VMA-]311 was on a five-minute alert starting at 0800. [VMA-]542 was on a 30-minute alert, and then we [VMA-231] were on a two-hour alert. But this was at 0230 they told us. Later I took myself out of that one. We did fly that day. We would fly till four. I put myself on the two-hour alert right before the first scheduled launch. I thought we'd kick off sooner. I and Capt [John M.] Butterworth were out there waiting, thinking something will happen too soon. As it turns out, my XO got to fly the first sortie.

Then on the 18th of January, we lost an OV-10. That was Lieutenant Colonel [Clifford M.] "Cliff" Acree and Chief Warrant Officer-4 [Guy L.] Hunter [Jr.]. I just had dinner with them that night, the night they launched. I sat there, and we shot the bull before they took off.

Then you started getting into a routine. In other words, I have an AOM [all officers meeting] on that first day. "One more time guys. Stick to the SOPs [standard operating procedures]. Stick to the rules of engagement, all right, because we're going to need the jets later. There's no bad guys in the wire," and I'm basically repeating what [Major] General Moore had said before to them. I said, "There's no bad guys in the wire. There's no reason to be pressing the attack. There's no reason to get down and expose you or your aircraft to damage."

I said, "We're going to pick away at these guys." This is more of a—I wouldn't say mechanical, but it really is—it's more of a mechanical approach than I think Joe Q. Public thinks the aviators go through. That this part of the war really was mechanical, and it was basically go in high and find the target, take it out, go home, come back, and do it again. There's no reason to be down low and doing stupid things.

Anyway, the antiaircraft artillery is increasing. Obviously, there's more targets for them to shoot at, and we're flying all our missions in the daytime. The weather starts, you know, weather goes up and down.

The AAA fire is pretty much below your altitude. Guys were reporting seeing SA-7 [Grail] or SA-14 [Gremlin] [missiles]—some shoulder-fired smoke trails every now and then. But I found it was occasionally confusing when you fire off a flare. Given the right light conditions at that altitude, the flare leaves a small smoke trail. So sometimes, you might think you've been shot at when really it was a flare, your own flare, just some distance away from you. But I remember talking with a gent; a captain in [VMA-]542, two of them were flying in combat spread, and they saw an SA-7 basically peter out right between them. It had run out of energy, and they'd just turned [and] fell down like an arrow going into the air. There's nothing left and whew, right between them. So the missiles were out there all the time.

On the 25th is when the Iraqis started pumping oil into the [Persian] Gulf. Later you could see it. I mean even from 10,000 feet, if you were near the beach, you could see this black junk on the beach. It was pretty ugly.

Allison: Now this was before they set the oil wells on fire?

Jones: That's correct. That's correct.

As we're getting close to the ground war, I wrote a note to myself here that when it's time, we'll be lighting those oil trenches off ourselves—the oil trenches as opposed to the oil slick—we'll try to light those off later.

You keep telling people don't dump your bombs if you don't find something, and you had plenty of chances to find something. You go to a primary target. If there was nothing there or you couldn't find it because of the weather, then you had a secondary target. If there was nothing there, then you went to a kill box and you search the kill box, and then if you're out of gas, then bring the bombs home. We weren't just dumping bombs off.

On the 28th of January, VMA-311 lost a bird. That was blamed on a SAM [missile] just east on the coast up near Kuwait City.

I obviously talked to the [VMA-]231 pilots about [VMA-]311's loss of the aircraft. I stressed again the tactics of day versus night: when you do a re-attack, when you don't; delivery parameters; not pushing things; the use of chaff and flares; [and] making sure you've always got a FAC(A) [forward air controller (airborne)] working with you whenever possible.

Then the Iraqis made an attack at [al-]Khafji [Saudi Arabia] on the 30th. I didn't fly that day, but

a couple of my pilots did, and they were worked on some targets in and around the city itself. I'm sure some of the [other] squadrons did too.

The first week, having been a FAC(A) in Cobras before, I was probably more critical than somebody else would be on them. But I remember a couple of F/A-18 pilots were launching off more than one marking round. Come on—there's not that many of them. But they all came up to speed very, very quickly. There was a week where everybody's kind of feeling their way through it, and I think if you talk to some F-18D pilots, they would say the same. Some of the CAS guys weren't responding as well as they thought they should be too. But it only took about a week and everybody was pretty much up to speed.

Allison: Can you describe the mechanics of typical attacks on targets at this time, before the ground war?

Jones: A lot of the delivery was roll in at 18[000]–20,000 feet, get your nose on the target, use the angle-rate bombing system [ARBS], which is a magnified TV camera in the nose so you could lock on to a dot with the TV camera and then call [on] the TV display in the cockpit, and you could look at it and see is that dot a shadow or is that a truck. Because Iraqis dug their own little revetments in the desert, so sometimes what looked like a truck is actually a shadow from the sand that's piled next to it or maybe there's something under there. You can see there's a tarp, so you might take a chance on dropping on it anyway. Meanwhile, you're coming down at the speed of heat. I mean most of the training exercises in the states you drop at about 450 knots true air speed. We're dropping at 550 [knots] in a 45- to 60-degree dive, and of course, the sensation in the cockpit once you got even past 45, but certainly at 60, you feel like you're actually kind of coming out of your seat.

You do and you're still at 1.0 G [g-force]. That's what the meter tells you on the airplane, but it sure doesn't feel that way. You feel like you're just barely hanging in there, coming straight down. It seems like straight down. You pickle off your bombs and then pull off. Of course, the most uncomfortable thing as you get close to your bomb pickle altitude, you've got your solution set, and you're ready to release the bombs. You take one more look and go, "That's not a target. That's a shadow," or "This ain't right." So you go to safe, and then you go to pull off, and of course, you have all those bombs out there. You're at 550 knots at 60 degrees nose down, so the pull off is really just, "Ugh, how low am I going to go on this bottom out?" Of course that's when you start worrying about getting back up above 10,000 feet and getting the flares off on the climb out, so they don't catch you with a cheap shot on the way out.

But some of the targets just popped up—on a mission we went to the primary target. Saw nothing, went to the secondary target. Saw nothing. This is like the first week of the air war—maybe the second or third day or so. So we've got the kill box. We're seeing nothing, nothing, nothing. Looking at the fuel. It's about time to go home, and then out of the corner of my eye, I see a tractor-semitrailer doing about 60–70 miles an hour. It's one of those things where you do a double take, kind of like a comedy on TV. You do double takes and [say] "This can't be real." You don't just see semitrucks; it really was. This is in Kuwait. So we only had time to do one pass, and we didn't hit him. We ran him off the road though. But we made enough smoke, and there was a [VMA-]542 section right behind us, and so we said, "Okay, you've got the smoke. There's a truck there waiting on you." So they nailed the truck, and they took an SA-7 shot while they were there. There was no hit.

Allison: Did you do some strafing?

Jones: The strafing, per say, not the classic strafing of 10–15 degrees. We were shooting the gun at 50 and 60 degrees and above 10,000 feet, and it was amazingly accurate. I mean I worked one day with an F-18D and the guy in the back's looking at the vehicles through binoculars that we're shooting on, and he's seeing the fluids coming out from below the vehicles we hit, so we either got oil or we got gas, one of the two. They didn't explode and burn on us, but he's seeing oil spread on the sand below us, so we figured that's a kill. It's not going anywhere.

Allison: You lost a pilot along in here. Can you describe that and its effect on you and the squadron?

Jones: The ninth of February—which is my wife's birthday—that's when we lost a pilot, shot down. We got him back. That was [Captain] Russell [A. C.] Sanborn. He was flying as wingman with the group CO and they worked one target, shifted to the second target, and he caught a shoulder-fired [missile] and spent the next, roughly, 30 days as guests of the Iraqis there in Baghdad. His wife's name is Linda, and she is quite a lady. My personal opinion is that he was the least affected

of any of the Marine POWs [prisoners of wars] from that experience. A deep faith, a very strong marriage, and [he was] very self-confident and really handled some pressures very, very well. He was a very popular, respected officer. He worked in maintenance at the time that I recall. His call sign was "Bart" as in Bart Simpson on TV['s] [*The Simpsons*].

I was preflighting an airplane; he'd been only shot down like three or four days before. On the side of an AV-8 by the exhaust nozzle—it's always kind of dark and greasy from the exhaust—and one of the plane captains had written with his finger, "Bring home the Bartman," on the side. I saw that in my walk-arounds. It really got to some of the officers who were real close to him. Of course, I had to take the one who was closest to him and ask him to go inventory his [Captain Sanborn's] gear and box it up, you know, go through it.

Allison: Was there an idea he might be dead, not return?

Jones: The flight leader and the FAC, they were both there and didn't actually see the bird get hit. He wasn't able to get a call out just because the way the airplane handled. But the FAC did see the parachute on the ground—this is later in the evening. I actually talked to the guy myself. Did you see the chute? Yes, he did. Did the chute collapse? He said, "Yes, the chute collapsed right away." So that told me—Russell had been to jump school and had Army jump wings—so that tells me that the guy was okay when he hit the ground because there was high wind on the deck. There were 20–25 knots worth of wind. So if he had the presence of mind to collapse that chute then he's okay.

So the next question, which we didn't know until actually the day after the news release, was that he had actually been released. None of the TV coverage shows him getting off at the bus or the airplane. I got so p——d at the media, because when a woman came off—they pan all the faces as all these former POWs are coming off until one of the women came off—and the camera would lock and stay with the woman, and you wouldn't see the next dozen or so behind her, and this just drove us all crazy. I mean if we had got our hands on any news director, we probably would have collectively bludgeoned him to death. It was like, "Come on, let us see who else is there!" So we found out that he really was there when he shows up on a hospital ship down in Bahrain.

Russell got beat up a couple of times himself. His eardrums were damaged; some of his teeth were still a little loose.

But some of the squadron pilots really had a hard time with it. It's common when you lose somebody in an accident. I did write a letter—I didn't keep a copy of it—to both [his wife] Linda as well as Russell's parents trying to be as upbeat as I could without claiming false hope. I just said that I thought he'd be okay. That's the only one that we had; the only aircraft we lost.

Allison: Were you able to forward base the Harrier?

Jones: The group set up a forward site at Tanajib. MAG-16 had been there for a while, before they moved farther in country, [with] a huge runway, like a 10,000-foot big runway. We only used one end of it for arming and refueling, and we were able to run, I want to say, either six or eight jets through there, and we could do a 20-minute turn on a section [two aircraft]. It was really sweet to watch. You basically unstrap—there was a port-a-potty—you go over there, and take care of yourself. When you got back to the airplane, they had already refueled, rearmed, reloaded the chaff and flares, and reloaded the gun, and you were off and gone. It was very efficient and that was a maximum of 20 minutes flight time to where the front lines were. So you were using that for hot turnarounds. To speed it up, you didn't use the full runway. The birds would come in and do a vertical landing. It was a big concrete runway. It was safe to do a vertical landing next to the arming area. You'd taxi in, do your thing, and then take off. The two birds would taxi down just a couple thousand feet and turn around and just go, you know, with 2,000 or 3,000 feet. So we saved a tremendous amount of time.

The purest anti-STOVL [short take-off vertical landing] zealots that are out there would say, "Well that wasn't fully STOVL operations. You guys really weren't doing STOVL ops," because we had almost 10,000 feet of runway.

Allison: What were some of your more interesting strikes?

Jones: There was one interesting shot on a HUD [head-up display] film, which shows—and it's the wingman and these guys are locked on—it's a circular bunker, and inside the bunker is a jeep-size vehicle. As they're getting closer, you start to see more detail, and you could see there's an Iraqi standing next to the bunker obviously relieving himself, because he's standing next to the sand.

Then you see him run back to his vehicle, and just as he gets there the Rockeye hits and takes out the whole thing. So you see some exciting stuff every now and then.

I've got film of that tractor-trailer I was telling you about early in the war. As you're going down the road, you don't see it getting hit, but you can see the rate of speed this guy's going. He knows he's exposed in the middle of daylight, and he's trying to get the hell out of Dodge.

You might appreciate this. I had one of my lieutenants come up, and he was assigned as wingman on this first-light napalm drop on these trenches—and from the Midwest, a great officer—and he says, "Hey, skipper, I've been flying now, and I want to keep flying, but this napalm thing really bothers me"—what napalm does to people and that kind of stuff. And I said, "Well John, you let me know." I said, "I'll shift you to a different mission." "If it's just the napalm that bothers you," I said, "this is not going to be a professional problem with me. We'll move on." I said, "You think about it. You let me know before we go hit the rack tonight, and I'll shift somebody out." He comes back less than an hour later and says, "No, I thought about it, skipper. I can do it." So he comes back from the mission the next morning, and I'm walking out to fly myself, and he stops me and his eyes are real big and he says words almost to this affect: "Holy s——t, skipper. You should have seen it. It was great! I dropped those [napalm] and looked in my mirror, and I saw that . . ." He's describing in excruciating detail what that firebomb looked like as the fire raced down to the slit trench, you know, full of stuff. So he got over his qualms about dropping napalm after seeing it. But it was kind of interesting. I had no problem with that.

Well [Lieutenant] General Boomer made—I've seen him make that comment on one of his interviews on videotape where he says, when he's talking to the aviators, he says, "I know you want to kill tanks." He says, "But we can take care of the tanks. I want you to take care of the artillery."

One of the best hits I got was a miss. Don't ask me how I screwed it up, because it's such a good bombing system, but I screwed it up anyway. There was a circle of artillery tube positions, and I managed to put a string of MK82 [bombs] right in between two of them but not hit either one. And you're mentally hanging your head as you're pulling off going, "God, is that dumb." And here you are, you're supposed to be this great tactical leader, and you just missed—and then as I pulled off, one of the artillery sites starts popping off like crazy, and I lucked out and put a piece of hot metal into a stack of artillery rounds that were unopened, and they cooked off.

I got a tank one day. During the ground war, we found a tank moving up by an area called the "Ice Cube Tray." There's a series of roads west of Kuwait City and it looks, from the air, like an ice cube tray, and that's how it looks on the desert floor there. We're flying along and say, "Well that can't be right. No fool in his right mind would be driving a tank around in the middle day . . ." But there he was. We X-ed him. I dropped six Rockeyes on one way, and Andrew behind me put six on it, and we stopped him.

On the 25th, [VMA-]542 looses a bird near al-Jaber [in southern Kuwait]. The pilot got out. That was Captain [John] Scott Walsh. He's a lieutenant colonel now. He took an SA-7. You should talk to him to make sure I don't tell the story wrong. But he was working with another FAC(A) than I was working with. We were working a target nearby, and I saw him in flames trying to go back south. He was putting out some flames behind him, and then we told our FAC to go with him. We could work our targets, so the F-18 broke off and escorted him and they went as far south as they could. He jumped out at the airfield at al-Jaber and the friendlies really had not seized that airfield yet. He got there during that transition period when some of the bad guys were still around there and he got there, but he wasn't captured. He was back at home within I think like 24 hours; they got him back. He was flying shortly thereafter. But he got silhouetted; he was hanging around all that cloud cover. It was a broken deck but there was a deck, and the best camouflage job won't do you a world of good if you're a shadow, you know, with a cloud behind you.

[On] the 26th of February, most pilots get three sorties that are unscheduled, four of my pilots got four sorties, and the weather was going down like crazy.

During the ground war, we did a late afternoon—I mean really late, almost last light—under ground FAC control. The weather got really, really bad during this time frame.

Allison: The Highway of Death was always a big deal . . .

Jones: We went to that, the Highway of Death. We hit that one twice that day, the 27th of February. But the weather was worsening just before sunset.

It was basically solid between 6,000 to 33,000 feet. There was no break in this stuff.

When I flew that morning or first time that day—I don't know if it was morning or afternoon—the first time that day, we actually flew above the oil fire smoke but below the clouds. So it was this big sandwich. We just went straight up there, and then we didn't really know why we were going and the FAC says, "Well, it's over there." He couldn't really control us. Then you could see this break in the clouds a few miles away—you couldn't really see Kuwait City, and it was from, I guess from the heat of all the fire—there was this hole that you could look down, and there's all these vehicles on fire, you know. The way I've described it to folks before is it was like a South Georgia junkyard on fire, and that's what it looked like. The question was, "Well, what target?" And the FAC says, "Anywhere in there." So we dropped. We picked some place that wasn't burning, that looked like it was still a viable vehicle that might be useful, and dropped on it. We went back to Tanajib [in Saudi Arabia], refueled, rearmed, and came back [and did the] same thing. Hit it again. Went back to Tanajib. Seriously, it looked like this huge junkyard. But it was one of those things you don't really think about how big it was. It was just kind of amazing like "Holy s——t".

Allison: Was there lots of aircraft working that thing?

Jones: We were sequenced in. There was no traffic jam. They did a nice job of sequencing, and there was no attempt to mark. I mean there it was; it was burning. There was no reason to waste a mark on that. You just find something that wasn't burning and blow it up or set it on fire. We didn't hang around to strafe or anything. You just drop the bombs you had. I think one of us had Rockeyes and one of us had MK83 [bombs].

Allison: What did you do on that third mission for that day?

Jones: When we came up this time, we got sent to a target northeast of Kuwait City. There was some retreating forces, and we had to do a tactical instrument letdown, and we basically offset—there was an island there that had been a, I forgot the name of the island now, just off Kuwait City. We do this (a descent by yourself—something you never do in the states with airways around), and we break out at about 10,000 feet, and it's clear below. You go into the area, and we found an artillery site that was still active and still defending themselves, and even though we were working it under 10,000 [feet], because I knew they could see us too, because there was no hiding there, we were being bracketed. There were some flashes behind me. But we dropped and then he got onboard. We climbed back up and just came back home, and that was it.

That same area was where the last fatality, the last shoot down at Desert Storm was, and that was that pilot from [VMA-]331 off the boat, off [USS] *Nassau*. He probably took an SA-7. I don't know if he ejected or not, but he was still with it.

Allison: Do you remember the ground war starting?

Jones: I carried a laser Maverick all day that day hoping, since with the ground war, I'd get to be able to shoot it—never did. I carried it home.

People weren't walking around like in a movie when you high-five, but the troops knew everything, you know. You get out of the airplane and the plane captain or anybody around you, they want to know what you did. You try to encourage the pilots to talk to their folks on the way back. Tell them what they're doing and send somebody back to maintenance and just talk to them. Through that, people had a really good feel for what was going on. And of course they had access to the ops, you know; there was no working behind a safe or anything. All the troops could come in and basically look at the ops map if they could break loose from the shop. They could see where things were. So I think that communication really helped, and of course, they already knew what they were doing or what we were doing I should say.

Allison: Were you pretty happy with the performance of the Harrier?

Jones: One of the criticisms of the AV-8 over the years has been, well it doesn't have a range. Well, we never used tankers for any of this stuff, and we didn't carry tanks. The only time my guys would use tankers is when they're directed to by the DASC, and that only happened like two or three times and that is the guys getting ready to come home. The DASC says, "We think we've got a target. It's down here at bingo," and they direct you to a tanker. So, I mean, rather than dump the bombs or take the bombs home, they'd keep them up. So we were able to prosecute our targets in the KTO [Kuwait theater of operations] with no tanker and no tanks. It worked out really well.

Allison: The war didn't last long. How did it end for you?

Jones: Basically they shut us down; offensive ops ceased. I've gotten it written down as 0800 on the 28th. The group CO has a meeting and talks about, you know, is this really a cease-fire or what's really going on here. We're going to keep the schedule going. We'll brief and cancel, and we'll go to alert. So in other words, there was a daily flight schedule, but we didn't fly. You'd brief the flights. The birds are armed, but you wouldn't actually launch the mission. You'd just stand down, and then somebody else would take your place. So we always had somebody ready to go.

I talked to my officers saying we've got to keep everybody busy. We've got to worry about postcombat coping. I've got notes that I made to myself about talking to them about [how] they've got to transition from what they've been doing to going back to the way that things were. By that I mean, I tried to do more of a fatherly kind of discussion if you will and, that is, to say, "Look, you have to reconcile a lot of things that have been going on here. I mean between your own ears, you've got to reconcile this stuff. Combat is a very personal experience. But at the same time you're only one cog in this huge machine, and it really is rather mechanical, and somewhere in there you have to deal with that." I said, "You also have to deal with the fact that you've been killing people." And the ready room bar comeback, it was saying something flippant like, "Well, I'm just really good at killing people." That won't work when your favorite aunt or niece asks you this question over a breakfast table sometime in the next two years, because you will not see the question coming. Out of the blue, Aunt Susie is going to say, "Did you really kill people in Kuwait?" And you better think this through because what works in a ready room or among your friends or over a beer ain't going to work with Aunt Susie. You've got to deal with it. I had about 10 points there that had to do with that. That happened to me after Vietnam. Because it was family; it wasn't the classic Vietnam sort of a stigma. I mean it was a close family member who just wanted to know. They're looking you right in the eye. "Did you really kill people?" You have to think about the answer, and you better think about it ahead of time.

We had one guy, a good Georgia boy, Southern Baptist, when he left the squadron, and of course you have a hail and farewell [event]. You give him a plaque. You pat him on the back and say a few nice words. You say, "Anything you want to say?" And he says, "Well yeah, I've got three things." And this is in front of the wives and everything. I couldn't believe it. He says, "Number one, never take off with an empty bomb rack." He says, "Number two, never come home with an unexpended round. And number three, never deny an Iraqi the chance to meet Allah." So he had no problem with this whatsoever. As far as he was concerned, it really was a holy war. It's really true.

At 1600 on the 28th, we had a squadron formation and we had managed to get our hands on Saudi Arabian "near beer"—you know, the fake beer, nonalcoholic. I told them that I was trying to cut down on rumors. We're not going to know how long we're going to be here and a lot of other things. I thanked them for their effort. I told them that some other squadrons and some other aircraft might get more headlines, but I said even though I don't like to use sports analogies, some things really do fit well from sports, and here's one that I thought fit well. I said, "We weren't quarterback of this game, and we weren't even a running back, tight end, not even a pulling guard when you get right down to it. But we were there for every play. We did our job, and since we did our job well enough, we had fewer Marines going home with Purple Hearts." I said, "I take that as a very high compliment that that's what we were able to do." It wasn't a rah-rah speech, a peppy kind of speech, but that's how I approached it and that's what I thought we were doing. So not all that eloquent, but it worked. It worked for me.

Then basically from that point, it's get our stuff together. Get the stuff back from Tanajib. We still didn't know anything about Captain Sanborn. The third of March was our first Sunday off since Thanksgiving. [We had left home] the fourth of June, almost a year—nine months.

We're still in Saudi Arabia and [Major] General Hearney calls, because he's about to be my wing commander again. We're in transit. He's the deputy [I] MEF [I Marine Expeditionary Force] commander, and we go back to 2d MAW, and he never gave up 2d MAW. So he tells me, "Hey, great news. Don't worry about safety," and "You better watch out for contraband," and "I don't want any incidents when you get home," and "If any of your people get some of the contraband, I'm going to. . . . " He really let me have it on the phone, and I'm kind of looking at the phone going, "You know, hey, general, we've already had that talk with the troops, you know." He started off with congratulations, and I've got to give him that.

Allison: Were you going to fly the jets home? How did you get back?

Jones: We find out that we're going to ride home. The one squadron's going to ride home on the [USS] *Saratoga* [CV 60]. Another squadron's going to ride home on the [USS] *JFK* [*John F. Kennedy* (CV 67)]. The whole idea of this was if you could put some Harriers on the carrier then you made more room on the tankers going across the Atlantic. That's two squadrons less [that] they had to translant [cross the Atlantic]. So that was the plan, and which is what we wound up doing.

When we flew aboard the *Kennedy*, there were 99 aircraft on that flight deck. There was no flying during the transit. One F-14 did some kind of mandatory maintenance check ride one day, and that was it. There was no flying all the way across.

Allison: When did you find out about Sanborn, his release?

Jones: The fourth of March, 10 POWs were released. None were Marine Corps. We find out that there were 41 total POWs. We travel to Bahrain, no names; we still don't know.

The fifth of March we're doing a little mock carrier landing practice getting ready for the fly aboard for the *Kennedy*. Still no names as of noon, but then we find out late that night. Then his wife had been notified. I called Carol, my wife. And so a couple of us get in a vehicle and leave. We go down to see those guys down at Bahrain. When we first got there, he was not there. He was seeing a dentist or somebody. We had to wait a few minutes to see him. We saw some other guys. I saw Cliff Acree [and] Guy Hunter. I don't remember seeing [Captain Michael C.] Berryman, but I'm sure he was there.

But then when I saw Russell, I caught him off guard because I gave him a big bear hug, and that's not my style. I caught him off guard. [Sanborn], he was skinny anyway, and he looked skinnier.

But they really set them up nice there. They treated them like kings. They had all the food they could eat. Anything they wanted, they had. They had a 24-hour reefer [refrigerator]. They had it loaded up. All the fruit, you name it. If they wanted it, they could eat anything they wanted. And of course, they ran them through all the little tests.

Then we get ready to fly out, and then the fly aboard the *Kennedy* went really well.

One of the longest flights I had air-to-air refueling was from Saudi Arabia to Rota, Spain, where we hooked up with the *Kennedy*.

We spent two nights in Rota. The first night everybody went to the bar and just caught up on the beer. We had not been drinking. A couple of us—really interesting though—got to the BOQ [bachelor officer quarters] and we sat outside, and this was March now. They were cutting the grass. And a lot of us, I looked around and I wasn't the only one. There was about a dozen officers out there just enjoying the smell of fresh cut grass. [Laughter] It was great.

Then of course, the second night there was no drinking, because we're flying aboard *Kennedy* on Sunday. But the *Kennedy* really treated us nice. A couple of pilots . . . I lost a bunch of weight and a lot of pilots had too, and we put most of it back on because the *Kennedy* had stocked the ship for combat ops for a long time. So on the way across, they had ice cream at every meal; for breakfast, the ice cream machine was set up. The mid-rats [midnight rations] [were] fully stocked to include near beer, pizza, and ice cream every midnight. If you wanted to go down and just stuff yourself silly, you could do it.

I had two of my pilots—and these guys work out a lot too, so I don't want to make them sound like pigs—but this one day, they worked on eggs. We went down for breakfast, and of course it was as many eggs as you wanted and any way you wanted them and bacon, whatever you wanted. And on or about their tenth cup of coffee, the stewards are cleaning up around them and they both look at the clock and they say, "D——n, it's time for lunch!" [Laughter] They didn't have to wait. They went from this huge breakfast right into the lunch line. It was great.

But we're turning jets every two or three days I guess, just to exercise them. They got washed down a couple of times.

Allison: Did you plan on a dramatic fly-in to Cherry Point?

Jones: We planned the flyby, and I made it real clear to everybody that we would do a flyby, but we're not going to do anything fancy.

Allison: How did it work out then?

Jones: We did this rendezvous just off Cape Hatteras [National Seashore in North Carolina]. We check the gas; make sure that this would work; a couple of circles, let the flights behind you catch up. We made it before the turn into the field, they all joined up. I started calling the air traffic control [ATC] off the coast, there at Cherry Point; you're outside their range for a long time. Then usually, we see Cape Hatteras, and it's sure kind of a sweet sight, as you're flying in. And you know we've

been gone since June. And I finally get somebody to answer me, and it's a female operator. I give her our flight information, tell her where we're going, etc., and she said, "Roger, Zero One. Welcome home." And I couldn't say anything. I choked up immediately. All I could do—you know as an aviator when you roger something you can do that by just clicking the mic twice. So I just give her a double mic click, and to this day I hope I didn't insult her, but I couldn't talk. That had more meaning than just about any single welcome home. And knowing that we found Captain Sanborn, that everybody really was home, just for that moment it was quite overwhelming.

So anyway, come to the flyby, we get in a finger-four formation. We get a mile separation using DME [distance measure equipment] so all the flights were exact. Came up the runway at about 300 feet, about 400 knots, just zoom, zoom, zoom, and we went out and then came back to the initial after the prescribed altitude for the break. Put everybody to echelon, and then I break [hard turn to separate from the formation and line up for landing] and set up for landings on the runway. I did either a minute or two-minute separation so there was no bunching up there on the runway. We all taxied in. We got out. Sanborn was there to meet us, and of course, I'm the only one that had seen him since he'd been shot down. None of the pilots had seen him. So he's there. He beat everybody home, and he had this big sign up, and everybody else was behind a rope. They were keeping everybody off the flight line. And he had this big "welcome home" sign up, and it said, "Welcome home," and tears everywhere. Pilots were just hugging him all over the place, and I just shook his hand because I had already seen him and then went over to find my wife. I picked her up, and I think I held her off the ground for probably 10 or 15 seconds. The governor [of North Carolina] was there, the mayor of Havelock [North Carolina], all kinds of folks. I wasn't really prepared for that.

I was going to get some free beer for my troops, and I never told them this but they'd probably be p——d at me. I have a friend who works for Anheuser-Busch, and it took me probably 10 or 15 minutes, but I actually got a line through from King Abdul Aziz air base to St. Louis [Missouri] and was on hold waiting for him to pick up the phone. I started doing the mental math, and I decided I can't control how much these guys are going to drink. So I hung up before he picked up the phone. "Man, this would be great! Everybody gets two free beers from Budweiser." Then I thought, "No, I can't control it. If I can't control, it somebody there would do something stupid." Oh well, it would have been nice if we had some free beers, but . . .

I had to come to work two days later and put together a six-plane det for a Med [Mediterranean] float. The good news is, is we were able to go for volunteers and were able to go through the whole group, so there had been some Marines that had not deployed. One pilot was one of the new guys who joined us in [MCAS] Iwakuni. Like I said, one of them handled it real well and the other one, to this day, he's waiting for me to die so he can spit on my grave. There's no doubt in my mind. But I'm still very comfortable with the decision.

The only regrets I've got: I didn't push some of the awards hard enough quite frankly. On the flip side of that is I put a grand total of five pilots in for Distinguished Flying Crosses. Out of 987 combat sorties, I put in five awards. They were all turned down.

Allison: Reflecting back, what's the significance of all this, your experience in the Gulf War?

Jones: My overall perspective on the war, of course you could never tell your wife or mother this stuff, but some people are proud of it. It's very fulfilling professionally, because you're actually doing what you spent your life training to do. You're actually able to do everything we like to talk and brag and beat our chests about like taking care of those guys. And yes, I killed people, but I killed people who would be killing other Marines, and I don't mean that as a rationalization. I'm very serious about that.

Something I hadn't told you before, but I took a squadron over, in March of '90, in November of '87 I lost my older son to an undiagnosed heart problem. So in many ways, I was still grieving with that as was my wife. So on his birthday, which is in February, during the middle of all this, I was watching myself real close to make sure I didn't do something stupid. Why am I bringing this up? Because some officers in the unit may have thought that I was appealing to them in a little too fatherly way. And to this day, I still think it's the right thing to do to make sure that they knew what was going on. Getting Russell [Sanborn] back was very, very relieving and fulfilling, and I'm not picking the right word here, but it was an amazingly positive closure to actually bring him home.

The highest compliment I got was from one of my officers' fathers. His dad was one of the early jet test pilots in the [U.S.] Navy at Annapolis [Maryland].

We flew a bird up there for a show-and-tell for the midshipmen and put down on a pad in a field, and his son flew it in, and his dad had a couple of us over for dinner. There were two or three other officers there. And he meets me at the door—this World War II/Korea vintage vet—and the first words out of his mouth are, "Congratulations, skipper. You brought them all home."

•Chapter 3•

Marines in Support

Logistics and intelligence are the foundations of successful wars, especially for the U.S. military with its complex equipment and massive supply requirements. The Marines interviewed in this chapter provided those vital functions to the Marines on the ground and in the air.

Brigadier General Charles C. Krulak

Brigadier General Charles C. Krulak was born on 4 March 1942 on Marine Corps Base (MCB) Quantico, Virginia. In 1964, he graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, with a bachelor of science degree in engineering, and in 1973, he acquired a master of science degree in labor relations from George Washington University in Washington, DC. General Krulak served two tours of duty in Vietnam, commanding a platoon and two rifle companies. He also served as commanding officer of 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, from 1983 to 1985. It was on 5 June 1989 that he advanced to the grade of brigadier general, and on 1 June 1990, he assumed command of 2d Force Service Support Group (2d FSSG), which would participate in the Gulf War. He was promoted to general on 29 June 1995; on 1 July of that year he assumed the duties of 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), which he fulfilled until his retirement on 30 June 1999.

The 1st and 2d FSSG were combined for the purpose of the Gulf War, with 2d FSSG operating under the umbrella of the 1st FSSG. The 2d FSSG provided direct support to the divisions and was known as Direct Support Command (DSC) with Brigadier General Krulak commanding, while 1st FSSG provided general support. General Krulak was interviewed by Dr. David B. Crist on 17 October 2000. In the interview, General Krulak discusses, among other subjects, the difficulties of operating the two FSSGs as a single, merged unit; the accomplishments of Marine Corps engineers; the mistaken threat of a large Iraqi mechanized attack on the unit; and difficulties in moving Iraqi POWs.

Crist: Almost two months after you'd assumed command of the FSSG, the Iraqis invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990. The first unit sent was one you certainly were familiar with, the 7th Marine [Expeditionary] Brigade [7th MEB] out of [MCB] Camp Pendleton [California] and their support from BSSG-7 [Brigade Service Support Group 7]. What do you recall about the Iraqi invasion and the first month or so following? The first Marines out of the 2d [Marine] Division was 4th MEB, which were actually supposed to go to Norway.

Krulak: First off, when the 7th MEB went followed by I MEF, II MEF was in a backup role and did very little. I watched that with an aching heart, because I wanted to go. My unit wanted to go; all Marines wanted to go. We watched I MEF go and wished them well. We loved them to death, but we also wished we were there with them

An incident took place early on in Desert Storm that had a major impact on force structure and decisions that General [Carl E.] Mundy [Jr.] and I later made. This related to the MEB concept. When 7th MEB got to Saudi Arabia, one of the first things the MEB commander did was call back to the I MEF commander and ask for all the command, control, and communications capability from the 1st Marine Division. The reality was that the MEB was a deployment organization, not an employment organization. The MEB could deploy, but it couldn't fight because it didn't have the staff or the command, control, and communications capabilities to run a fight. Then, Major General [James M. "Mike" Myatt] was the division commander and replied that it made no sense at all to send his command, control, and communication capabilities. If you need all that, then bring the division over. There was a big discussion early on in the conflict about who was going to go and who wasn't. But the right decision was made and the 1st [Marine] Division went over. But it certainly proved what, to this day, I believe: that simply having MEBs makes us feel good as a Marine Corps, but it is smoke and mirrors. It is intellectual dishonesty, because a MEB can only deploy. The way it's configured today, it's not an employment capability

You were correct; the first [MCB] Camp Lejeune [North Carolina] Marines to head to SWA [Southwest Asia] was the 4th Brigade. They were on their way to Norway. We got word that they weren't going to Norway; they were going to Southwest Asia. They were all packed and ready to go with their winter camouflage gear, their vehicles all cold weather treated. Everybody had their heavy sleeping bags, Mickey Mouse boots, skis, etc., and 96 hours later

they were on their way to Southwest Asia. The CO was Colonel James J. Doyle Jr., and he did a magnificent job of getting his people ready to go. He was BSSG-4's commander, and I can't say enough about him. He did a great job. We had to bring all the MEB's gear back, repack it for the desert, and reissue them with desert gear. Additionally, we had to get the air wing ready to go. Overall, it was a massive effort.

Crist: [Brigadier] General [James A.] Brabham [Jr.] was the commanding general, 1st FSSG, [and] arrived in Saudi Arabia; however, upon arriving one of his first tasks was actually to establish a MarCent [U.S. Marine Forces Central Command] headquarters for which he was well qualified, having been the deputy J-4 at CentCom [U.S. Central Command] in '87–'88 time frame. Did you have [an] indication that as he was now being pulled away from logistics to do some other things that this might impact on 2d FSSG?

Krulak: No. Let me first say "Jim" Brabham is a great Marine officer and a great logistician, and I have nothing but the highest regard for him. When I was the Commandant, I asked him, upon his retirement, to be part of the MAGTF staff training organization. He's just a great man. [Lieutenant] General [Walter E. "Walt"] Boomer made an excellent decision when he told Brabham to get over there quickly and put his flag in the ground as MarCent headquarters. This was brilliant, because he put his flag in the ground at the port of al-Jubayl, which assured that great port facility for the Marine Corps. It was the absolute best move that Boomer could have made, and most people don't recognize that.

Crist: During the fall of 1990, you conducted a number of exercises in CONUS [continental United States] based upon conversations you were having with [Brigadier] General Brabham. One of the key things you saw was the limited command and control assets in 1st FSSG at the time. What do [you] recall about those exercises?

Krulak: Well basically, most people understood, if the war didn't break out over a period of time, that there would be a relief in place with II MEF forces taking over from I MEF forces. Because of that, I began to talk with Jim Brabham and asked him for the location of all of his forces on a template. I took that template and laid it over North Carolina and southern Virginia and ran exercises at those distances. It became very obvious that if we just went with the capability that Jim Brabham had, there was no way we could go on the offensive and cover the distances required. Jim could do what he was doing in the defensive, but there was no way he could operate in the offensive. He didn't have his headquarters, and he didn't have the battalion headquarters with him. He had a mishmash, an amalgamation of forces, but they weren't there with a controlling headquarters or the command and control that comes with such a headquarters.

As we ran these exercises, I became more and more concerned, and I started to raise that concern with anybody that would hear me. The problem was [CMC] General [Alfred M.] Gray [Jr.] used 1st FSSG as his example of the way to deploy. They went light and got there quickly. He was concerned that often units were too worried about command, control, radios, people, and staff. That they were too heavy, too much head and not enough tail. And so everybody was reluctant to tell General Gray that it's all well and good to go in "light," but the reality is that you need some "weight" to be effective. I started to tell people that. I told my boss, General Mundy. I told [Lieutenant] General [Robert J.] Winglass. He came down to visit me at my headquarters, and I can remember sitting on two rickety chairs in a hallway and saying, "Sir, I've got to tell you the truth. I've got to tell you what all of my exercises are telling me, that is, that I applaud Jim Brabham, but he's got a defensive organization. If we have to go on the offensive, he's going to be in real trouble, and you need to understand that, and you need to take the message back to the Commandant."

Crist: The original concept, before the decision was made by the president to take an offensive posture, was the 2d [Marine] Division, 2d FSSG, would deploy as a rotation.

Krulak: That's correct.

Crist: You would replace 1st FSSG. In early November, in your conversation with General Winglass, he seemed concerned for the ceiling of forces imposed by CinCCent [commander in chief, U.S. Central Command]?

Krulak: I think the ceiling in the forces was an issue, but also the belief that General Gray continued to tell General Brabham to keep his numbers down, that was really the way to do it. And General Gray was right at that time, but the reality was if you went on the offensive, he would have been wrong.

Crist: The whole issue about the replacement was rendered null and void with the decision to reinforce the [Persian] Gulf. On 5 November 1990, you

sent a message to General Brabham outlining the options for integrating lst and 2d FSSG which you would later state, and I quote, "The most important thing that transpired was how you get these two FSSGs to fight as one?" In this letter you recommended the formation of a direct support and general support FSSG concept. How did this decision come about? I find this one of the most fascinating aspects to Desert Storm.

Krulak: Well I had a brilliant chief of staff. You can be a mediocre general, but if you surround yourself with brilliant people, things come out well. My chief of staff was brilliant. His name was [Colonel] John [A.] Woodhead [III]. We sat down together and talked through the various ways to structure the command relationship, and he came up with the three ways we mentioned in the message. We sent it to all concerned, and then, I got on the phone with Jim Brabham, and I said, "I really think this is the way to go." Then, I added that I had no preconceived notion of which FSSG would do which mission. I told Jim that he had been there the longest, "pick which one you want to do." Jim did the right thing. He said he would take the General Support Command. He was already in the port [?], he knew the port, and he knew the people. He knew my expertise was infantry and that my knowledge would probably make me better suited to supporting the two divisions as they attacked forward. So we didn't talk long about it. We just thought that this made good sense. Then, it was just [a] matter of selling it to our bosses, selling [it] to General Gray, selling it to General Boomer, and selling it to General Mundy.

Crist: The General Support Command providing the general logistics, port management?

Krulak: Yes. They took care of the supply and maintenance. I took care of Engineer Support Battalion, the Motor Transport Battalion, the Landing Support Battalion [LSB], Medical Battalion; all of the people that were going to support the forces up forward would go with me.

Crist: Was this doctrinal?

Krulak: No, this was, again out of the mind of John Woodhead. And then, once John had roughed it out, Jim Brabham and I said here's whose going to go with whom. It was very interesting, because initially, Brabham had more people. Then as we got closer to the war, the size of the Direct Support Command doubled. Then after the war was over, we were reduced to our original size. It was just a good relationship. Jim was the senior logistician in country, and I had no problem with that. He had no problem with that. I mean, although we were both one stars, I knew how to salute if we ever had a real difference of opinion. If we ever had a difference, we wouldn't have gone to General Boomer. If we couldn't have worked it out amongst ourselves, shame on us. As it turned out, we didn't have any differences of opinion, and we got along very well. We're dear friends to this day.

Crist: Just as an aside, was there any discussion during this period about deploying II MEF and essentially having two MEFs in theater with the two FSSGs supporting their respective MEF?

Krulak: At the very highest levels, obviously, that's what General Mundy would have liked to have done, but it didn't happen and wasn't going to happen. The key was you needed a FSSG to run the ports and the general logistics, and a FSSG to do the direct support function.

Crist: You mentioned the need to sell it to your higher-ups, Generals Gray, Mundy, and Boomer. You had an interesting meeting with the Commandant on this issue in the VIP lounge at Andrews Air Force Base [Maryland] around Thanksgiving. What do you recall about that meeting?

Krulak: Well I was on the plane ready to go on a liaison trip to Saudi Arabia, and I got the word that General Gray was in the VIP lounge and wanted to talk to me. I went into the VIP lounge, and General Gray was in civilian cloths wearing some kind of a baseball jacket. He was there with General Winglass. I figured this was my one opportunity, and I sat down with the Commandant, and I said, "Sir, this is what we need to do. We need to go with the Direct Support Command and the General Support Command. We need to get all the battalion headquarters over there. I understand your concerns, but we need to get the C3 [command, control, and communications] over there." When I walked away, he said, "Fine, tell General Boomer, we're going to do it that way." I went to [Lieutenant] General Boomer, and of course General Boomer had already decided we were going to do it that way. His only issue was he wanted one senior logistician in country. I told General Boomer I had absolutely no problem with that.

Crist: Right. Later on, particularly as the war came closer, did it cause some problems because the I MEF had to talk through 1st FSSG, from Brabham's headquarters, to get to you, their direct support logistics?

Krulak: That was fixed very quickly by having me added on all message traffic. It wasn't just problems

with 1st FSSG; it was problems with understanding what the divisions were doing and what the wing was doing. But it was not a problem with Jim Brabham turning around and keeping me informed. It was a problem of the speed of which events moved and when every second was valuable. It was not a big deal.

Crist: I assume General Boomer's concern about the merger to the two FSSGs was that he wanted to preserve unity of command with his logistics?

Krulak: Yes. That's exactly right. I think he wanted to be able to pin the responsibility on one person and that person was the senior officer. In the case of Jim Brabham, he was two or three numbers senior to me. Also, he was obviously comfortable with Jim, because Jim fought in his MEF. But it was never an issue with me and certainly not an issue with Jim Brabham.

Crist: On 30 November, sir, you briefed General Mundy on your view of I MEF's logistics.

Krulak: Yes. But it was not a brief on what I MEF was doing logistics-wise. It was a total brief on the result of my trip to SWA. I went over to talk about logistics but had the opportunity to take a look at the entire I MEF, and [I] went all over the I MEF AOR [area of responsibility] not just in Saudi Arabia, but in other countries as well. I took a look at how the FSSG was set up to support the I MEF. I was able to make some observations on what I thought were the preparations for combat of the I Marine Expeditionary Force. When I came back, I made some notes to myself and then called General Mundy on the phone and provided him my quick look. I talked about the morale of the troops [and] the eagerness for the arrival of II MEF forces. General Boomer was obviously saying that he was going to do everything to make the integration of the two MEFs a success. He had told all of his people, "I want you to pull out all the stops to make it a success." I remarked on the tremendous training that was taking place both at the GCE and the ACE level but also indicated that I was a little bit concerned regarding the equipment and how much maintenance was being done. I did not want to run the MPF equipment into the ground before we even started the fight. Because, remember, you only had parts of the 1st FSSG there, so that the maintenance capability was not that great. They were breaking gear and not able to get it repaired. I was very honest about problem areas I saw. Again, it was one man's opinion, but it was based on my years of experience as a Marine officer.

Additionally, I said that the I MEF staff was too small to be involved in 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week operations in combat. They were just too small. It had weakness at key points. Here I was not talking about weakness in numbers but weakness in personalities. There was an obvious friction between the 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, the 1st Marine Division, and the I MEF—friction between the "MEF-sters" and the "MEB-sters." Because of the lack of numbers on the staffs, they weren't able to keep a focus on the issues. They had built a large number of camps and a large amount of infrastructure. Many little commands had their own camps that they had built and needed an infrastructure and people to run the camps. As a result, they were slowly but surely draining their manpower by having these far-flung, semiautonomous organizations. I was very concerned about the air wing. Anybody who looked at their facilities and then thought back to the days of Pearl Harbor would have shuddered because there were no revetments for the aircraft, no revetments for ordnance. Fuel farms were outside the perimeter. Just basic security issues that I think needed to be taken care of. I was concerned about the maneuver battalions and where they could train. I mentioned the engineer equipment needed for breaching and how much of an effort that was going to be and how I thought they really needed to start concentrating on that.

Finally, I went back to the whole issue of what an FSSG is supposed to do. There was lack of spare parts, lack of battalion supply, no SASSY [Marine Corps Supported Activities Supply Systems] [System] Management Unit [SMU]; nobody knew where the gear was. There was no way to track it because the SMU wasn't in country. Essentially, the Marines had been over there for months, and nothing had taken place in those areas. The rationale for nothing taking place was what I articulated earlier. General Gray kept on saying what a great thing it was to have such a small footprint with the 1st FSSG. What wasn't realized was that the price paid for that small footprint was lack of command and control and lack of basic capabilities that an FSSG should have, i.e. maintenance and a SASSY Management Unit.

Well, I gave this all to General Mundy, and the next thing I know he called me back and said, "Call General Gray." So I called General Gray and told him the same thing. He had a sense for it, I think, and he thanked me, and then within the next month or two, he went over there to take a look for himself.

Crist: He came to the same conclusions?

Krulak: Yes.

Crist: By this time or shortly thereafter, the decision was made that it wouldn't be a one-for-one swap with 2d FSSG replacing 1st FSSG. I assume with the development of a General Support Command/ Direct Support Command, you went in with General Brabham with the intention that you wouldn't have penny packets of 7th MEB here, I MEF there, the division here. You would start the unity of the logistics effort?

Krulak: And that's what we did. We sat down around a table. Our staffs would come up with their recommendations, and then Jim and I would agree or disagree on the organization of our two commands. There was absolutely no rancor. I cannot think of one thing that we did not agree on. To us, we were down at the tactical/operational level of war. We knew what we had to do. We knew I was going to be supporting the maneuver battalions. We knew that Jim was going to be providing the general support. And once we came to a meeting of the minds on how we were going to do it, then the allocation of forces was very simple and it flowed. During the time of buildup to the actual conflict, 1st FSSG had the majority of the people, because they needed the trucks to move people forward. When it came time to execute, all of those assets came to me and remained with me until we started back-loading, and then they went back to the General Support Command. I'm sure that people would imagine there were some personality conflicts, but they were very, very minimal. And the reality was that what had happened with the 7th MEB and the hard feelings that were between 7th MEB and I MEF had so ingrained itself into the minds of Jim Brabham and "Chuck" Krulak that we were determined not to repeat that and worked hard to ensure an excellent working relationship.

Crist: I noticed in some of the message traffic, there was a lot of concern by Colonel Woodhead and others of taking units out of their historical parent and merging them with different units, but from what I could tell, that was never a problem.

Krulak: That's because one of the real key issues was who would command these multiple battalion-sized units. Who would command 8th Engineer Support Battalion when 8th Engineer Support Battalion had 7th and 6th Engineer [Support Battalions] integrated? So we took some of the commanders who were from I MEF, some from II MEF, some were reserves. And we spread out the opportunities for command, and we spread out the missions, so that there was no sense that either 1st or 2d FSSG was predominant in any role. We had good people, put those good people in critical jobs, and then let them work it out. Plus from my standpoint, and I think Jim did the same thing, we went out of our way to make sure that they understood we were home to them, that we didn't want to take their identity, and [that] they carried their identity with them. However, the bottom line was they were Direct Support Command, and early on they realized that we were going to be the ones up front. We were going to be the warriors of the FSSGs, and so they took a lot of pride in it. And what happened was when we did, in fact, go in front of the two divisions, when we went to Kibrit [Saudi Arabia], it was the FSSGs 100 kilometers in front of any "warfighter." A great deal of pride was derived from that. When we looked to our front, the only people who were in front of us were a screen of troops from Qatar and the Iraqi Army. So I mean the Direct Support Command was the point for the MEF for a long period of time.

Crist: Well, that is symbolic of some of the comments you made after the war that this was really a war of logistics.

Krulak: Yes.

Crist: Who won logistics, won the war.

Krulak: Yes. I have said that 10 years after the war people would look at it for lessons learned from logistics not from the ground combat or the ACE side.

Crist: When you arrived permanently in Saudi Arabia, what was your impression of the degree of planning for the ground war and the logistics situation that you would be faced with? Were you fairly well satisfied with the way things were going so far?

Krulak: Well, the reality was that from the FSSG standpoint, they hadn't done much for an offensive at all. They were in pretty much permanent locations, and so we had a lot of planning to do as we went into the offensive. More importantly the MEF hadn't decided how they were going to fight and that was after months of ongoing tabletop exercises, debates, and arguments.

Crist: What was your opinion of the original plan that one division would go in followed by a second division through the same breach?

Krulak: It had the potential of being a disaster. You would have had one division opening the hole and holding the flanks while the other division passed through. You can imagine 60,000 troops, all in one

location? What a target! There was grave concern that this was not the way to do it.

Crist: I had read that one of the things driving the two divisions through the same breach was the shortage of engineering mine clearing equipment. Is that true, sir?

Krulak: Yes. There was not enough mine breaching equipment to outfit two divisions. So effort at [MCB] Quantico resulted in fast-forwarding a lot of mine clearing equipment out to the MEF. Other efforts were undertaken such as building armored bulldozers that were made out of makeshift armor plating in order to give the capability to go through the minefields with the drivers protected.

Crist: From your point and the logistics aspect of it, could you have supported two divisions simultaneously or it really didn't matter to you, whichever way they wanted to go you could support it?

Krulak: Yes. Whichever way they wanted to go. We were going to put a transfer point up along the Kuwaiti border about 30 kilometers north of Kibrit, and we had already scouted it out, and we had already determined how it was going to work. It probably would have been a lot simpler than what we ended up doing, because you would have had about a day to a day and a half of supplies at the transfer point. Then you would have Kibrit with seven days of supply and then the rest of the supplies at the port of [Ras al-]Mishab [Saudi Arabia]. So you would have had a very short distance to funnel this gear. Literally the funnel would be from Mishab to Kibrit to the transfer point up along the border. As it turned out, because we went to Khanjar [Saudi Arabia], we had to move 14 days of supply at that location and then built the transfer point in Kuwait. We had to wait until we invaded Kuwait to start moving a transfer point up into that country. So it was much more difficult the way we went.

Crist: At your level, were you aware about the disagreement between [Brigadier] General [Richard I. "Butch"] Neal and General Boomer over—General Boomer who was the Marine component commander and also the [I] MEF commander—being forward deployed and not back in Riyadh [Saudi Arabia]? General Neal feeling that there needed to be a Marine there for planning and representation at the CinC's staff. Did you have an opinion on that either at the time or later, sir?

Krulak: I think that at the time I was far more concerned with my mission as a direct support commander and getting prepared than I was trying to figure out whether Walt Boomer was in the right location or not. In hindsight, I believe that we probably needed somebody at the table. Whether it was Walt Boomer, I'm not sure. I think that in many ways the Marine Corps was looked at as kind of an afterthought, a supporting attack. We probably could have been helped by having somebody permanently in Riyadh. We didn't. The bottom line, it didn't change the war. It didn't change the results. But, as an example, it would have given us more warning when we lost the British "Desert Rats" [British Army's 7th Armored Brigade] and got the Tiger Brigade [U.S. Army's 1st Brigade, 2d Armored Division]. That was kind of a fait accompli [something that is done and cannot be changed]. We've lost the Desert Rats. General Boomer got into a debate but after the fact instead of as a part of the decision-making process. But again, you had Marines on the CentCom staff, and you certainly had Butch Neal there. Walt Boomer could get on a helicopter or get on a plane and go to Riyadh awfully fast if need be. And I think he tried to do that. It's just very tough to be the operational commander and a component commander at the same time.

Crist: You had mentioned the British Armor[ed] Brigade that was assigned to the Marine sector initially. From the direct support logistics side, did you have responsibility for them?

Krulak: Yes. We would have helped with their logistics too. We lost them early enough, so that most of my planning was done with the Tiger Brigade, and one of the beauties of the Tiger Brigade is it came with a lot of gear that helped us. I mean refuelers, weapons carriers, you name it. So there is no question that the [U.S] Army has a lot of gear and that a lot of support is inherent in their organizations, but it's heavy. It's very heavy.

Crist: Did you have any difficulties merging your logistics efforts with the Tiger Brigade's?

Krulak: No.

Crist: What about the selection of Ras al-Mishab as a port facility? That was primarily your major port facility. Correct?

Krulak: Yes. Once the decision was made to move the Direct Support Command north, and once we realized that we were going to need to be extremely flexible to meet the various offensive options being considered, the location of Ras al-Mishab became key.

The real guts ball play was the move to Kibrit. In early December, both the 1st and 2d [Marine]

Official U.S. Marine Corps photo

BGen Charles Krulak, right, commander of DSC during the Gulf War, stands with Col John A. Woodhead III, chief of staff of the 2d FSSG. Krulak's biggest challenge as DSC commander was shifting supplies from Kibrit to Khanjar.

Divisions were still located very close to the port of Jubayl. General Boomer called me in and said, "We need to think about logistic support for our forces going through this single breach." I replied that we were going to need to find a support base. We took about six people and two vehicles and just drove up the road to Ras al-Mishab. We took a left at the port and just started crossing the desert. We knew there was a little place called Kibrit, which looked like an abandoned airfield and an old oil site, and we thought it would be a good support base. So we went to where we thought Kibrit was supposed to be—understand that you're in the desert and there are no landmarks at all. We got to where we thought it should be and there were no roads or anything.

We went up on a little hill mass and looked over the hill, and you could see just a faint outline of an airstrip and what looked like three wells. They turned out to be water wells. I went back and told General Boomer that we found a site, and he said, "Okay. We're going to start moving our sup-

port base up there." I said, "Whoa!" Because there were no U.S. troops along the border; there were only some Qatar forces. General Boomer said he was willing to take the chance, and he told me to move to Kibrit. We started moving gear up using our own trucks and an outfit called Saudi Motors. We brought it from Jubayl to Mishab and then from Mishab almost 40 kilometers to Kibrit. Then, we put one or two ships along the pier at Mishab [and] off-loaded ammunition, and by early January we had seven days of supply located at Kibrit.

Crist: And the plan was to get 15 days worth of supplies there. Correct?

Krulak: Yes. It was monstrous. Kibrit was spread over 40 square kilometers, had a 73-cell ammunition supply point. We improved a 3,000-foot airstrip, put in an 18-million-gallon fuel dump on the ground, a half million gallons of water, [and] two field hospitals, just a massive effort with everybody thinking this was where the attack was going to originate from.

Crist: The thing that astounds me was the amount of gear it took to move; I mean somewhere there was a 12- or so-lane improvised highway made just by transporting . . .

Krulak: By transporting. The highway looked like three or four interstates with people moving constantly up and down it. Because we were in front of our friendly troops, not just in front of them by a little bit but in front of them by a lot, every single position was dug in and bermed, every single one. Every tent where people lived was dug in and bermed. The command post [CP] was dug in, bermed, and given overhead cover so that from the air or from any other observation, it was impossible to see the CP. The CP was entirely underground. The construction of Kibrit was a massive effort and a testament to the work ethic of our Marines.

Crist: Early on you took advantage of Seabees [members of naval mobile construction battalions], which you believed had been underutilized?

Krulak: Yes.

Crist: And you pulled them in into the DSC?

Krulak: Absolutely. They all became part of the family, and they helped with road construction. By using them to do road construction, I was able to use all of our dozers to dig in the fuel cells, dig in the ammo [ammunition] storage areas, and dig in the troops.

Crist: Was it all powered off generators, or did you run electricity out there?

Krulak: No. It was all generators. Remember, Kibrit was literally in the middle of the desert. It was literally in no-man's-land.

Crist: Who actually laid it out, sir, decided the fuel is going over here, command post is going here?

Krulak: For Kibrit, it was done by three people, Lieutenant Colonel [Charles O.] "Chuck" Skipper, who was the CO of 8th Engineer Support Battalion, by Colonel John Woodhead, chief of staff of the DSC, and by Brigadier General Chuck Krulak. We literally sat in a tent and did it. Forty square kilometers is an awful big area. Nothing like that had ever been built before.

Crist: You mentioned the Saudi Motors. This was a hodge-podge of vehicles, which you contracted from the Saudi government?

Krulak: Yes. I wish I could take credit for it, but it was Jim Brabham. We were absolutely short of the vehicles needed to do the time-distance effort that we needed to do, and so Jim went to various contractors and contracted Mercedes trucks and heavy haulers. At one time, we had over 1,000 trucks using Pakistani and Third World nationals, who drove the trucks. Although they were paid, we would augment their pay with C-rations and video games and video TV movies running off of little VHS players powered by cigarette lighters in the cabs of their trucks. It was a ragtag group. You'd start a convoy of 100 trucks going up the road, and if you got 80 of them through, you were really doing well. They'd stop and sleep for a day. I'm sure some of them just drove off into the desert and kept the gear that was on the vehicles.

Crist: How long did it take to drive from say Ras al-Mishab out to Kibrit, sir?

Krulak: Eight hours. Saudi Motors took forever. I mean those trucks went about 30 kilometers an hour. But once they turned on to that desert, it was slow going.

Crist: You organized underneath you two direct support groups [DSGs]?

Krulak: Yes.

Crist: DSG-1 commanded by Colonel Alexander W. Powell.

Krulak: Yes.

Crist: Which supported the 1st [Marine] Division, and Direct Support Group 2, commanded by Colonel Thomas P. Donnelly Jr., supported 2d [Marine] Division. What do you recall about the formation of these two commands?

Krulak: Well, I wanted each one of them to fit the comfort level of the command they would support, and so Alex Powell had developed a great relationship with [Major General] Mike Myatt. Mike wanted one big command that had all the gear needed within that command to do what had to be done, a little bit more cumbersome, not as agile. But if they needed something, they knew exactly where to go. Because [Major General William M.] "Bill" Keys* had the largest mechanized force in the history of the Marine Corps; he wanted people who could move with him. He wanted mobile CSSDs [combat service support detachments], and so DSG-2 went with the mobile CSSD concept. These mobile CSSDs used transfer points and support from the main DSC location.

Crist: And each one would have been tailored based upon the division's assets?

Krulak: Yes.

Crist: None of this was doctrinal?

Krulak: No. None of it was in a manual, and so it was all done on the fly. One of the positives of having an infantry background was that I continuously kept in my mind some very simple infantryman's questions. "What will Bill Keys need? What will those regimental commanders need? What will the battalion commanders need?" We tried to give it to them.

Crist: On 17 January, Operation Desert Storm begins, the air war portion of it. What do you recall about the beginning of the air war, sir?

Krulak: Well, I knew when it was going to happen, but my troops didn't. So on the day that it was going to take place, I put them in bunkers and said, "Keep your heads down." It was almost anticlimactic, because that first day they did a lot of deep strikes, and so we didn't hear anything. The only thing that was of concern was the sense that we were going to hit them, and if they were going to respond with chemical or biological agents, now would be the time. Sure enough, about two in the morning, I had finally hit the rack and had been asleep for about 30 minutes when our early detection siren started going off which meant getting into MOPP-4. That was a scary moment. You get up out of your rack. You've been asleep for 30 minutes, and you know that the siren means you're being gassed. You hold your breath and try to put on your entire MOPP suit. It was just unbelievable. It turned out to be a false alarm. But I'll tell you, everybody in Kibrit was in MOPP-4. I rushed to the CP, and everybody who was in the CP was in MOPP-4, and we stayed that way for several hours. Finally, we saw a little dog that was kind of a unit pet, and that dog just kept on running around. A young Marine remarked that if that dog could make it, we can sure make it. It turned out to be a false alarm.

Crist: I also wanted to ask how far you were from any Iraqi forces, sir, in Kibrit?

Krulak: Well, we were, about 30 kilometers from the border, and they were across the border by about 2 kilometers.

Crist: So they were right there?

Krulak: Yes. We were right there. They were a lot closer than the friendly forces. I'll tell you that.

Crist: That begs my next question, sir. It must have been on your mind when that air [war] was started that, "Okay, we're going to hit them. If they come south in retaliation. . . ."

Krulak: Yes. Well, you know, we had our troops. I knew we had to protect the ammo depot; if the ammo was destroyed, it would have really set us back. All the rest, you could move. Ammo is very hard to move, and so we put all of our FSSG security around the ammo depot and just held on.

Crist: Including women too?

Krulak: Yes. Absolutely. Let me just add something about General Gray's comments on no women in the Gulf. When I was preparing to go, General Gray had an edict out saying there would be no women going over. I called General Mundy, and I said, "There is absolutely no way I can go to the desert without my women. They are an integral part of the 2d FSSG. They are interspersed throughout. I've got to take them if I'm going to be effective." General Mundy went up to General Gray and said, "Here's what my commander is telling me, and I support him." So General Gray lifted the ban on women in combat for the FSSGs, and I took 201 women over there, to include my G-2 [intelligence] and my G-1 [personnel]. Both did a super job.

Crist: Did you have a problem with women not being able to make the deployment or coming back early?

Krulak: I will tell you I took 201 with me. We were the last Marines back to the U.S.; we came back in July of 1991. We took 201 over and 201 returned. I did not have a single woman go back home for any reason. The first Marine awarded a decoration by

*MajGen Keys commanded 2d MarDiv.

the I MEF commander for her actions during Desert Storm was a woman Marine. She was a lance corporal from the Direct Support Command who drove a truck through the minefields five times bringing enemy prisoners of war out of the front lines. She was going through the minefields before some of the assault division got through. The women did a great job. We had no pregnancies or anything like that. They pulled their weight and performed magnificently.

Crist: Yes. This is an aside, in your personal papers collection shortly after Desert Storm, you wrote essentially arguing the Marine Corps needed to really rethink the issue of women in the military.

Krulak: Yes. They just did a phenomenal job. I'm not for putting them on point. I'm not for a direct combat role, but I mean the reality of life, a significant part of the Corps, [is] women, and we need to understand that and be prepared to do what has to be done to accommodate their capabilities.

Crist: [On] 29 January 1991, the Iraqi Army conducted a three-prong attack, which became known as [the] Battle of al-Khafji [in Saudi Arabia].

Krulak: Yes.

Crist: Two of these prongs went to the west, and one actually appeared to be aimed straight at your facility at Kibrit.

Krulak: Yes.

Crist: What do you recall about this attack?

Krulak: Well, to this day I believe that one of their thoughts was to hit Kibrit. I mean al-Khafji is important, but Kibrit was the crown jewel. You knock out Kibrit [and] you have stopped the capability of the Marines to move forward.

Crist: Did you have a sense, sir, that they had an idea that you were there?

Krulak: Oh, absolutely. They couldn't have missed us. By then you've got an eight-lane highway leading to Kibrit. I mean there was no question. It was like a big arrow.

When they started breaking through, there was a prisoner of war camp that had been established a little bit to the east of us, and there was an organization out there from 1st FSSG. Well, they started sounding the alarm. They heard things coming. I got on the phone and got a hold of my good friend, Bill Keys, who by that time had come up a little bit closer to us, and I said, "Bill, we got something out in front, and we need some help." We were hearing that it was armor coming. He dispatched a tank unit that swept right across the front of Kibrit. Although they did not engage the enemy, they certainly would have helped if we had had any real problems. The issue was serious enough that the Marines at the prisoner of war compound actually evacuated back into my area and evacuated so fast that they piled all their weapons into one pile and blew them all up! When people say it was nothing, once again, you had to have been there before you start saying it was nothing. I mean people were very concerned. We were out there. We had no real antitank capability. This lst FSSG outfit knew they were in trouble. They had too much gear to carry so they blew it up and came on in through our lines at 0200 or 0300 in the morning.

Crist: Yes, I had heard you were not too pleased with that commander, though.

Krulak: No I was not, but again, never shoot on another man's target.

Crist: On 4 February, you happened to stop by the 2d [Marine] Division CP where you found General Boomer, and he was discussing a possible change to the plan to two simultaneous division assaults. What do you recall about this meeting, sir?

Krulak: I had been down visiting one of my mobile CSSDs. By then, the 2d [Marine] Division had moved up. Still we were well in front of them. It took me an hour to get to their location. I had driven down to see one of our CSSDs. As I was driving back, I thought I'd swing by to see my friend Bill Keys. As you recall, I was his ADC [assistant division commander] for a period of time. When I got to his CP, I saw a helicopter on the pad. It turned out to be General Boomer. I walked into the tent where General Boomer, his G-3 [operations] Colonel Billy C. Steed, and General Keys were leaning over a map. As I walked in, General Boomer looked up and he said, "What do you think about a two-division attack versus the one division?" I said, "I think it's absolutely the right thing to do." I, along with Bill Keys, Mike Myatt, and other generals, had been thinking about this for a long time. We discussed it, but this was the first time that I had an opportunity to discuss this opinion with the MEF commander. So I said, "It makes all the sense in the world and here's why . . . " And I went through all the rationale of how dangerous that one-division breach was going to be. He then said, "Okay. What about it taking place here?" And he pointed way, way, I mean 120 kilometers around on the western side of Kuwait. I said, "Well, I think that would be good." And he said, "Can you support that?" I looked at

it, and it was just one of those times when you hearken back to history and General [Lemuel C.] Shepherd [Jr.], who was asked, "How long would it take for you to put a brigade of Marines and accompanying air forces at San Diego in order to go to the Pusan Perimeter?" Without even asking anybody, he said, "Twenty-four hours." Well, this was a similar kind of the thing. I was asked by the commander, "Can you do it?" And the answer was "Yes." He went back, and all of his logisticians said there is no way we were going to be able to do it. There was no way we could move 120 kilometers, move 7 days to 10 days of supply and then add 4 more days on it and build another Kibrit, no way. I went back to see the MEF G-4, and I said, "Don't shoot on my target. If we say we can do it, we can do it." I then got hold of Jim Brabham and said, "We're going to need everything you got." And Jim said, "Absolutely."

So I went back to my CP, and I talked to my people and said, "Okay. Here's what we're thinking of doing." We did a recon of where this new support base might be located. We narrowed it down to two locations; one of them was a place called al-Qaraah [Saudi Arabia], and another one was much farther to the northwest, called the "gravel plain." Al-Qaraah would have been a good place to go, because we had already started to build a simulated logistic support base there in order to be part of the deception plan being put together by [Brigadier General Thomas V.] "Tom" Draude. It would have been an easy place to go, but the problem with al-Qaraah was that it wasn't far enough to the northwest. So we sent out a recon team to the gravel plain.

By this time, I had been given another colonel, who turned out to be very key to the Direct Support Command and to the war effort. This colonel was a "loaner" from II MEF headquarters. General Mundy sent him over, and his name was [Colonel] Gary S. McKissock. He, along with Chuck Skipper, went out to look at the gravel plain. They came back from this reconnaissance and said, "If we really want to do this right, we ought to go to the gravel plain. It's the best support location, it is the right distance from the border, and there is enough area to spread out. The only problem is there is no water there, but we can start drilling if we get going soon enough." I asked, "How long would it take you to build this base?" And they replied, "About 10 days."

I knew we had a meeting down at the MEF CP, and so prior to that meeting, I had all of the lowboy [semitrailers] lined up along the desert road, and I had all the bulldozers and other supplies needed to build the CSSA [combat service support area] loaded on the trucks. I went down to the meeting

BGen Krulak briefs the DSC staff and commanders on 7 February 1991 at Kibrit. Two weeks later, the DSC relocated to a point three times the distance from the port of Ras al-Mishab and moved more than twice the amount of supplies stocked at Kibrit. The relocation permitted I MEF to launch its attack into Kuwait on a two-division front.

Photo courtesy of Col Alexander W. Powell

where we discussed a lot of things. The meeting went on all morning just discussing little bits and pieces of preparations to go to war. Bill Keys was there and Mike Myatt and Jim Brabham and all the staffs were there. I'm sitting there with all of these trucks and everything ready to go, but no decision was made about the two-division breach. We talked around it, but no decision was made.

So when we broke at noontime, I was very frustrated. General Boomer was walking out of the tent, and I got in front of him, and I said, "Sir, I've got to know what you want to do. I've got Marines and trucks and everything ready to go, but I need to know whether or not you're going to do the two-division breach, because if you are going to do it, I need to start moving people and every minute counts. Forget about every hour; every minute counts." He said, "Chuck, we're going to do the two-division breach. Move them to the gravel plain." My aide was sitting outside the tent. He was in radio contact with Gary McKissock, and I gave him the thumbs-up and he set in motion, with that one radio call, this entire massive effort that resulted in us moving from Kibrit to Khanjar, which was the name given to the gravel plain. It stands for the small dagger that each Saudi boy receives when he becomes a "man." The person who spearheaded that whole effort was then-Colonel Gary McKissock, now Lieutenant General Gary McKissock.

The question of who set up Khanjar, how it was set up, where things were placed—all was done by Gary McKissock. He first did the plan on butcher paper. I eventually got that butcher paper framed for him and gave it to him with deep appreciation for the magnificent job he did. If you looked at a satellite photo of Khanjar, you could see the layout that Gary had put together. When you look at Kibrit and how massive Kibrit was and then compare it to Khanjar, Khanjar was far bigger. Khanjar had a field hospital with 14 operating rooms. It was the third-largest hospital in the [U.S.] Navy hospital system—Bethesda, San Diego, Khanjar. It had an airstrip. The forward ammunition supply point itself covered almost 800 acres. Now, think about that. That's just the ammo dump. The entire complex was over 11,000 acres. It was monstrous, and when General Boomer came up to see it, he said it was the most remarkable effort of the entire war. Khanjar had Lonesome Dove [airfield] on one flank. It had this big C-130-capable airstrip that we built. It was not like Kibrit where you had one already there. We had to build this thing. I mean this was phenomenal. It was a miracle that they were able to do it. Our LVSs [Logistics Vehicle Systems], our dump trucks, our bulldozers, you name it, ran 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We just shifted the people, but we never turned the engines off. It was amazing.

When I was CG [commanding general] of Marine Forces Pacific [MarForPac], I went back out there and Khanjar was still there. I mean those berms are still there. It just was a remarkable engineering feat. I had pictures that were framed, three and four feet long, two feet high, of the ammo dumps and the berms at Khanjar. They hung in the 2d FSSG headquarters for several years, and then for whatever reason, they were taken down. As Commandant, I went down and saw that they were down and asked, "Where are those pictures?" They had them stuck in some closet. I took the pictures, and I have them now. I mean they're huge overhead photographs of this massive facility, and the people who put that together were young lance corporals and PFCs [privates first class], male and female. They were just remarkable.

Crist: Was there anything left at Kibrit when you were done?

Krulak: Yes, but just a shell.

Crist: All that was completed by 20 February?

Krulak: Yes.

Crist: You were set up with 15 days of supply?

Krulak: Yes and I mean that's more than just spare parts. That's spare tanks [and] spare artillery; the float was up there. It was just remarkable.

Crist: And the so-called "Khanjar Expressway" was your supply route to the two divisions?

Krulak: That's right, the Khanjar Expressway. You not only had to build the road up to Khanjar but then to the border itself.

Crist: By the time this was set up, what were your thoughts going through your mind at the outset of the ground war?

Krulak: We were so ready it wasn't funny. I mean we were ready to go. The one thing that we didn't anticipate was the number of enemy prisoners of war. That shocked everybody. I guess we should have known better, but the number of EPWs [enemy prisoners of war] were in the thousands, and when the war began and the 2d [Marine] Division and the 1st [Marine] Division broke through the mine barriers, the Iraqi soldier was so unnerved, and we had done such a job of unhinging his entire defenses, that their cohesion collapsed and

they started surrendering in groups of hundreds. So many that it started to impede the advance of the attacking forces. We had not planned for that number and had intended that all of the collection and all of the confinement would be done by 1st FSSG, because 2d FSSG would still be pushing forward.

Well, I got a phone call halfway through the first day from General Boomer, and he said, "We've got major problems. Can you help?" I didn't know what he was talking about. I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "Prisoners of war. We are really in trouble. We need you to send vehicles up to get them. [The] 1st FSSG is helping, but there is no way they are able to do it all." I had just sent the first major resupply out to both DSG-1 and DSG-2. I had almost all of my major haulers on the road and all of my drivers. I put out a "frost call" to all of the people in the DSC that basically said anybody with a truck license get down to the Engineer Support Battalion motor pool. We were going to get as many drivers as we could and match them up to whatever trucks we had, most of which were stake bed trucks and dump trucks from the engineer battalion. Well, I went down to the motor pool to pump up to troops and to be there when the G-3 gave them their mission. We probably had 100 drivers, and I'd say 60 of them were women. They all had their North Carolina driver's licenses, and they drove pickup trucks not dump trucks! But, by that time, we had no choice, so we threw those women into those trucks and gave them a 30-second class on how to drive a dump truck and then out they went. Like I said before, even before some of the regiments were through the minefields, we had these trucks going up and picking up the EPWs.

Now, the problem is we had to put them somewhere. We either had to drive them all the way back to CSSD-91, near Kibrit, or build an EPW compound at Khanjar. That is what we did. Right outside the northern berm we built a massive EPW compound, and we started bringing thousands of enemy prisoners of war back to that compound. I can remember going out to the EPW compound. This truck, a lowboy, came driving up, and it had this young woman Marine driving it and on the back was a Marine lance corporal with a shotgun. I walked up, and the lance corporal said, "Hey, General Krulak, watch this." I said, "Watch what?" He said, "You'll see. You'll see." And honest to goodness, he got up there and stood up, and he went, "Old McDonald had a farm," and then he pointed at the EPWs, and they all went "e-i-e-i-o." So on the way down he had taught these EPWs how to sing "Old McDonald had a Farm." But I'm real proud of what those Marines did. It shows the flexibility that is the hallmark of the Marines.

Crist: Does that mean that the feeding and providing water now fell to you as well for these thousands of additional bodies?

Krulak: Yes.

Crist: Just to get your observations, I heard General Keys say after the war that the Iraqis sure weren't the North Vietnamese.

Krulak: Yes. If the Iraqis had been the North Vietnamese, we would have been in deep trouble. We would have been in deep trouble. At the same time, I don't want to take away from the bravery of our Marines. At 0400 on the morning of D-day, I was at the minefield, and I was in full MOPP-4, because we thought we were going to get gassed. I remember hearing this clank, clank, clank. It wasn't nighttime, but it was very dark because of the oil fires. There was a slight drizzle, and I heard this sound. The Engineer Support Battalion, under my command, who was supporting the combat engineers, was already there, and I saw this massive armored column come out of the dark, and it was Bill Keys and his mechanized division.

Everybody was in MOPP gear. Nobody knew that the Iraqis were going to surrender. We thought we were going to go into a firestorm from artillery and that we were going to get gassed, but these Marines didn't miss a beat. They went out to that minefield, and they blew the line charges and they started bulldozing mines and we had bulldozers blow up. We called them "Ninja Dozers," the dozers that we had prefabbed. They blew up. The drivers got out of one and picked up another one. We had drivers and engineers picking up mines in their hands and transporting them to the rear. I mean unbelievable bravery that's forgotten, because four days later it was over. It turned out to be a piece of cake, and the Iraqis surrendered and very few rounds were fired in anger, but that does not detract from the tremendous heroism it took to cross those minefields.

Crist: The bravery you saw there was every bit of what you saw in Southeast Asia when you were there?

Krulak: Yes. Or to that of a Marine storming the beaches at Iwo Jima. As you're sitting in that papa boat [landing craft, vehicle, personnel] you don't know what's going to happen. Well, let me tell you, they sat in those bulldozers. They didn't know

what was going to happen, so it was a very harrowing moment.

Crist: What are your views of some of the postwar observations? [Lieutenant] General [Bernard E.] Trainor, for example, in *The Generals' War*, states that everybody should have known the Iraqis weren't going to fight after Khafji?

Krulak: General Trainor is a smart man, but in this instance, he's off the mark. You don't go into conflict thinking that it's going to be easy. You go in planning for the worst case. Did we think that we were going to whip them? Absolutely. Did we think it was going to be as easy as it was? Probably not. Should we have? Maybe so. Would it have made a difference in the way I trained and prepared my Marines? Absolutely not. I mean I had them fired up. They believed. They looked to their commanders, they looked at "Billy" Keys, they looked at me, they saw us in our MOPP gear, and they knew we were serious and they were serious. It is easy to sit back from the hallowed halls of Harvard [University] [in Cambridge, Massachusetts] and shoot on a person's target, but no, I do not agree with him.

Crist: One thing, this is an observation about [you] General Krulak, you certainly lead from the front. Every time I turn around, wherever the action was, you were there.

Krulak: I had such great people operating behind me, particularly John Woodhead, that I believe that my greatest value would be up front motivating my Marines and feeding back to John observations that would make him, as a pure logistician, able to translate my infantry language into logistics language and produce what we needed to get done. So in order to support the two divisions in the manner I would have wanted to be supported, I had to get up there and see what they were doing. So I spent just about 90 percent of the day up forward with either a CSSD or sometimes with one of the DSGs, but normally with a CSSD. On the second day, I literally moved up into Kuwait myself at the transfer point. It was a benefit I think, and John Woodhead, the professional he is, was able to literally translate what I was seeing into action for the FSSG.

Crist: Yes. There are a number of cases where potential problems were solved just by you showing up at a CSSD [and] intervening before it became critical with the EPWs or a POL [petroleum, oil, and lubricant] shortage.

Krulak: Yes.

Crist: Following the seizure of MEF objective alpha, which [was] al-Jaber [Air Base] airfield [in Kuwait], you established this as your transfer point?

Krulak: We put the transfer point at al-Jaber right outside the air base, and it was the pits. It was under a cloud of smoke the entire time. It was like night the whole time we were up there. The very dense smoke left an oil residue on your skin. It was just bad. But we believed that with the speed that the two divisions were moving, we had to get supplies up the road. So we moved the transfer point and kept about a day to two days of supplies at that transfer point.

Crist: Because of the speed that the divisions were going out, did that change any of your timetable at all?

Krulak: It probably moved it up, because we thought we were going to be fighting for a while. As it turned out, Bill Keys and his division could have been in Kuwait City by nightfall on day one. If he had wanted to unleash the Tiger Brigade, it would have all been over. But that would have left his flank uncovered, because the lst [Marine] Division was encountering a bit more resistance and were slowed up. It would have not been the thing to do. I realized we were not going to be able to support both divisions with the round-trip from Khanjar. We needed to get up closer, and that's why we moved to al-Jaber.

Crist: What was going through your mind during the last two days of the war—to the cease-fire [on] 28 February?

Krulak: I just knew we were going to win and win it sooner than later. My people were pushing hard and doing great, and their morale was sky high. As an example, the most senior Iraqi officer captured by U.S. forces was captured by one of my CSSDs. That made us feel pretty good.

Crist: The war ends, and you are faced with an equally difficult task of back-loading the equipment. You were quoted after the war calling this the "Marine Corps shame," which referred to the amount of gear that had just been dumped and now fell to your Marines to clean that up.

Krulak: Yes. The shame was not equipment dumped at the port or anything like that. The shame was the equipment that was left in the desert, and there was a lot of equipment left in the desert. At one point we literally found a tank sitting in the bottom of a hole, and we sent a mechanic in to see if he could repair it. He got in there and hit the ignition, and the tank started up and he just

drove out. It was a perfectly good tank that was just left in the hole. Trucks were left in the desert. Tons of ammunition were left in the desert. The shame was the treatment of the MPF equipment. It was not taken care of. It was not the way Marines normally deal with equipment, and I think that the problem was the Marines didn't accept ownership of the equipment. It was off of the ship; it was going back to the ship. It wasn't their gear, and so they treated it poorly. As an example, in order to get drain holes for the water as they washed down the vehicles, they took axes and literally knocked holes in the bottom of the beds of our trucks and in the beds of our humvees. These were just terrible things. You might say that Marines don't do that, but there seemed to be an attitude that said the war is over and we're going home. The quicker we can go home, the better.

We lost a lot of our discipline, the discipline that you expect of Marines. Marines who should have cared about their equipment and should have wanted to make sure that it got back on the ships. We spent a lot of money repairing equipment as a result of the treatment it received upon the end of the war, not during the war. When we made sweeps up through the two division areas, we needed literally truck after truck after truck to haul back all the gear that was left in various locations. So that was the shame, and my point, when I spoke of that in lectures to the logistics academies and [Marine Corps] Command and Staff [College] [at MCB Quantico], was not to stick my finger in anybody's eye but to learn from this. It was the first time MPF had ever been used at that level and to understand that we need to get into the minds of the individual Marine and in their leadership that MPF gear isn't just a freebie. It is Marine gear. We paid for it, and we've got to keep it up.

Crist: And we may need it again.

Krulak: Yes. Yes.

Crist: I've heard that one of the problems concerned artillery ammunition, where they had dropped artillery ammunition at predetermined spots; it was never used and left there?

Krulak: Well, that is true and was fine if the divisions had said, "You've got ammunition at these locations." They didn't say anything, and as a matter of fact, reported through their chains [of command] that they had evacuated everything. So what we did was just take a cursory sweep by helicopter of the battlefield expecting to see it cleared. We looked down, and there was material everywhere. That's when we got on the ground and started our legitimate sweep.

Crist: And it required the Marines being sent back over to augment you?

Krulak: Yes.

Crist: After all your efforts, we didn't leave much back there, did we?

Krulak: Let me tell you something. Like I said, I went back to Khanjar several years later and the only things that were left [were] sandbags that were deteriorating and old pieces of wood. Remarkable.

Crist: You had some interesting observations about the use of [Marine] Reserves in Desert Storm?

Krulak: I guess like most Marines, two personnel issues surprised me. One was the performance of our women and the other is the performance of the reserves. The reality was 30 seconds after getting to the Direct Support Command you couldn't tell the difference. I mean, they were absolutely phenomenal. They knew their jobs. The leadership was, for the most part, strong. The staff noncommissioned officer leadership was very strong. The young corporals, the NCOs were magnificent. The young enlisted Marines, the young enlisted women and men, were just extremely dedicated. No fumbling around, no sense that they were second-class citizens. I mean they were very, very good, and in fact, some of them were better in some ways than their counterparts because of their thought processes and their capabilities.

The best example of that was the warrant officer who came and ran the ammo depot dump at Khanjar. In the civilian world, he owned multiple lumberyards. When he got to Khanjar, after two days into him trying to organize this 700-plus-acre ammo dump, he got a hold of me and he said, "This is crazy. This is crazy. I could do a better job organizing a lumberyard than I can do[ing] this. I need some computers." I told him I would try to get them for him but that it would take awhile. Well, this warrant officer was a very wealthy man, and somehow he FedExed his computer programs and computers from wherever he lived in Tennessee to Riyadh. The next thing I know, he has computers and a program that tells him where two-by-fours are, four-by-eights, you name it. He translated that program into a two-by-four as a 155 rounds and other ammunition, and all of a sudden he organized the entire ammo depot using his lumberyard software. It was unbelievable. He also busted my chops. He said, "General Krulak, do you know

what I drive around in my lumberyard?" I said, "No, what's that?" He said, "A Mercedes. A Mercedes and you can't give me one d——n humvee?" He didn't have a humvee, so I said, "Okay. I'll get you a humvee." Great people, great capability, and when I became Commandant, because of that insight into the capability of the Reserves, I said, "You can have individual reservists, but we're not going to have Reserve units. Those are total force Marine outfits that are absolutely critical to our winning wars."

Crist: [In an] 11 June 1991 e-mail to your [Lieutenant] General [Robert F.] Milligan in which you mentioned that you'd completed loading your 26th-ship, the last of the I and II MEF supplies, and in it you mentioned that your crews were loading 450 short tons a day, which is no small achievement.

Krulak: Yes. It's interesting to note that I e-mailed General Milligan. As Marine forces pulled out of Southwest Asia and as the generals went home, the title of commander, Marine Forces Southwest Asia [MarForSWA], went down the pecking order until finally the mantle rested on my shoulders. As commander Marine Forces Southwest Asia, I reported in theater to an Army lieutenant general who had taken [Army] General [H. Norman] Schwarzkopf [Jr.'s] position. His name was [Lieutenant] General William G. "Gus" Pagonis, who was the head interestingly enough of the logistics effort for the Army in Southwest Asia. Because I was no longer CG; 2d FSSG [was] reporting to Mundy, but ComMarForSWA, my reporting lines went through MarForPac. And so all of a sudden, I started reporting to this lieutenant general by the name of Milligan, who I had no dealings with at all during Southwest Asia. I would like to note that General Milligan was an absolutely phenomenal officer and tremendously supportive of our efforts and didn't miss a beat when I began reporting to him.

We, in fact, loaded all the combat equipment and supplies of a Marine expeditionary [force] in a very short period of time. We did it with the most phenomenal young men and women that I have ever had the honor of serving with. I mention women. I mean we had hundreds of women working their hearts out day and night, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I think I mentioned earlier, but I would not send one of them, not one went home early. They stayed and they produced. All of the concerns about pregnancies—none of that happened with our Marines. And we ought to be proud of that.

Crist: Just to elaborate on that, at the time, particularly in Congress, they were talking about one of the Navy supply vessels and were calling it the "love boat" because so many of the crew had come back early for pregnancy. What did the Marines do differently that the Navy didn't?

Krulak: Well, first, we had the obvious discipline of being a United States Marine, and that discipline went a long way in helping to ease the raging hormones. I'd be naive to say that we didn't take a few other steps. We absolutely forbade any kind of mixed billeting within tents or within the tent cities. There would be areas where the women slept that were within the major tent city but blocked in one end or the other so that you could control who was going into what tents. All the head facilities were all not just separate but separated by distance. We had military police, fire watches—you name it—walking though the area. But the reality is you had well-disciplined Marines, who for the most part were working so hard that their urges were probably blunted a bit.

Crist: Any last comments, observations on Desert Storm, your role in it, logistics? We will talk a lot more about some of this later.

Krulak: I honestly believe that history will treat Desert Storm as the great logistics war. What the logistics organizations did, what the 1st and 2d FSSGs did during that conflict to ensure victory, was nothing less than miraculous. The Corps ought to be proud of those logisticians because they were phenomenal, and the reality was they were the first on the ground, they were the last to leave, they were the farthest forward, and they were the last to roll back. It was a tremendous effort by tremendous young men and women. And the Corps ought to be proud of them.

Crist: One last question, did the Desert Storm experience impact on the development of the Marine Corps Logistics Command later?

Krulak: Yes. I wish I could take credit for the idea of Marine Logistics Command, but the credit goes to Lieutenant General Jim Brabham. I'm sure that he had thought of it well before Desert Storm, but I can remember an incident where I think it was driven home to both Jim and myself with a sledgehammer. I had come back to the port of Jubayl to discuss with General Brabham a problem we were having with axles breaking on some of our trucks. Commanders in the field came to me as the CG for the Direct Support Command for help. I went to Jim Brabham. Jim explained to me that when this first started happening, he called the [Marine Corps]

Systems Command [MCSC] and asked for help. The Systems Command said they didn't do axles. They indicated that [Marine Corps Logistics Base] Albany [Georgia] was responsible for axles. So he called down to Albany, and the folks at Albany told him that was a Systems Command problem. Here we were in the middle of preparations for war, we got a major problem, and nobody knew how to solve it because nobody had any ownership in it. There was no clear-cut cradle-to-grave owner of Marine Corps systems. The Systems Command brought the system aboard, and at some point in time in its life cycle, they'd throw it over an imaginary wall and hopefully on the other side of the wall would be an individual from Albany who would catch it and become responsible [for it]. But you never could figure out when that time was and how it worked. So Jim said, "What we really need is to have one single individual responsible for the life cycle of a system," and that would be the Materiel Command.

When we got back, I think that we were all overtaken by our normal day-to-day business, and so Jim Brabham lost a little opportunity and steam in that effort, and I certainly did because I was no longer a logistician. But when I became the Commandant, Jim and I revisited that conversation in Jubayl. And the end result was a study group chaired by a superb colonel by the name of [Colonel] John A. O'Donovan, who had served for Jim Brabham before and was my G-3 ops [operations officer] in the desert. O'Donovan headed the study that brought about what Jim and I envisioned as the Materiel Command. Unfortunately, it is not what currently exists. Upon my departure as Commandant, the pressure for a true Materiel Command dissipated, and instead of having a three star located at Albany controlling the focus of Marine logistics, with one foot in Albany, one in [Marine Corps Support Facility] Blount Island [Florida], and one in Quantico with Systems Command, we ended up with a lesser organization that looked like the old I&L [Installations and Logistics] organization.

Major Mary V. Jacocks

Major Mary V. Jacocks was born on 8 March 1950 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and joined the Marine Corps in 1974. She entered Officer Candidate School at MCB Quantico in October 1974 and became an intelligence officer following The Basic School. After serving at a number of different stations, she went to the Marine Corps Command and Staff College in 1987. After graduating the following year and spending two years as an intelligence officer with the 10th Marines, Jacocks transferred to 2d FSSG as an assistant chief of staff for intelligence in the summer of 1990. After the war, she served as the first woman to command a Marine security guard company, studied at the Marine Corps War College, and was a faculty advisor at the Command and Staff College. She has a bachelor of arts degree in health, physical education, and recreation and a master of arts in physical education. She retired as a lieutenant colonel on 1 August 1997.

Lieutenant Colonel Jacocks was interviewed on 27 May 2008 by Paul Westermeyer of the Marine Corps History Division. The 2d FSSG formed the nucleus of the DSC, providing direct logistic support to I MEF, including the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions (1st and 2d MarDivs) and the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing (3d MAW), from its bases at Kibrit and Khanjar in Saudi Arabia. In the interview, Jacocks discusses the accomplishments of 2d FSSG's G-2 and her experiences in the conflict as a female Marine.

Westermeyer: What unit did you serve in during the Gulf War?

Jacocks: During the Gulf War, I was with 2d FSSG, which was the Direct Support Command once it was activated in Saudi [Arabia].

Westermeyer: And what billet did you hold in that organization?

Jacocks: I was the assistant chief of staff, G-2.

Westermeyer: Okay. And what dates did you serve in that capacity, roughly from when to when?

Jacocks: In Saudi Arabia as Direct Support Command, I can't give you the exact date. We arrived in country the middle of December 1990 and left sometime the end of . . . well I left sometime the end of May in '91.

Westermeyer: So you had joined the 2d FSSG in the summer of 1990?

Jacocks: That's right, about in July. So my first weekend—I was the G-2 there—I got called in, in the middle of the night, because of some stuff going on in Liberia. And then once that was taken care of, the following weekend I got called in again, but that time it was because of the Iraqis going into Kuwait. So that's kind of how all that started.

Westermeyer: Was [Brigadier] General [Charles C.] Krulak already in command of 2d FSSG?

Jacocks: He had taken command shortly before I got there, so really it was kind of easy breaking in

as a staff officer on his staff. [I] was going straight into operational-type things and real-world situations, which in my mind worked out to the best. It gave us all something to focus on, and it turned out to be, to me, a very positive experience.

Westermeyer: And you were his senior intelligence officer then for the FSSG?

Jacocks: Yes, I was.

Westermeyer: So the second weekend you were there, you were called in late because of something to do with Iraq. Can you explain that?

Jacocks: Well you know I say the second weekend—it may have been the third—but within the first month. Well what happened—and I can't recall the exact date . . .

Westermeyer: Well that's okay.

Jacocks: . . . that Iraq crossed the border into Kuwait, but it was something that had been being watched, and we were watching it in the traffic, the message traffic. In fact I had already ordered some maps of that area, which turned out to be a good proactive move since maps were hard to come by after that. But we had ours and had enough to be able to provide to some other commands. But the day that Iraq actually crossed into Kuwait, I believe was on a weekend or maybe a Friday night. And so as it is in most commands, you know the call went out for everybody to come in. "This is the situation." We called in essential personnel to man things and follow the situation. At least the 2d FSSG knew that we would . . . at least the MEB would be going, which 4th MEB did go shortly thereafter, and we would have to provide a combat service support element [CSSE] to that. So we were there gearing up from day one.

Westermeyer: So from the very first day that you heard of the invasion you expected that 2d FSSG would deploy in some way, or some portion of it would deploy in relation to that?

Jacocks: Well, yes. I mean we anticipated that we'd at least have some type of MAGTF, whatever size it was, from II MEF going, which meant that 2d FSSG would have elements that went.

Westermeyer: So presumably through the fall, you followed the events in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and Iraq, and when did you find out that you were going to deploy to Iraq, and was there any question about whether or not you would deploy?

Jacocks: Okay, let me kind of get this chronologically in my mind here.

Westermeyer: Okay.

Jacocks: Like I said, from the beginning, we knew that somebody would be going. My first task, because 4th MEB was the first element that went from II MEF, was to decide who to send out of the G-2 to be the S-2 element for the combat service support element of the MEB. So we started with that buildup, but after that, we watched the situation. We kept the maps every day. It would not be uncommon for [Brigadier] General Krulak to be over in our section two [or] three days out of the week, stopping by to look at the situation map even though I was giving briefs at the staff meetings. But he would come over and look at the situation. "Okay, what do you think is happening? Why is this happening? Why are they doing this?" And so on. So we pretty much kept up with the running situation and developing our own estimate from day one, whether we were going to go or not, just to keep the general informed. It was probably, oh I don't know, I'd say during September, early October we probably started getting [hearing] rumblings there was a possibility that we may go, or at least elements, but no details.

As the situation progressed, it became a little bit clearer, and of course the general was getting more information. And in fact at the [Marine Corps] birthday ball that year, he made the announcement that the command had just gotten the word that 2d FSSG was going as a command, so that was the first even though on the staff we kind of knew that's the way it was leaning. But that's where he made the official announcement. Now at that point it was still the policy of the Marine Corps that the women [did] not deploy; however, General Krulak felt very strongly, and I'm sure there were other general officers that felt strongly also, but I know General Krulak felt very strongly that his command had women in critical billets, and in order for the command to be able to carry out its mission, it would need to take its women. And I know that he sent a message to the Commandant relating that feeling in some manner, and shortly after that, it came back and we were told that women filling billets that were required would be deploying. Besides my being the G-2, we had a female as G-1, and the staff sec [secretary] was a female. There were several women as company commanders in critical billets that needed to go, and there were just too many women [in the unit] to have been able to carry out the mission the way we had trained without us. So I can't really tell you the dates of when that happened, but I know that the announcement was

made at the birthday ball, and shortly thereafter, we knew we were going.

Westermeyer: So you knew then in November.

Jacocks: Yes.

Westermeyer: And you deployed roughly a month later then.

Jacocks: Yes, that's correct.

Westermeyer: Okay. What was it like, the deployment? How did it go? Did you fly commercial? Did you ship over on a [U.S.] Navy ship?

Jacocks: No, we flew commercial. In fact . . . of course we went to [Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS)] Cherry Point [North Carolina] to stage and go out. We flew into Germany to refuel, but while we were there, the emergency chute [parachute] on the plane accidently got deployed, and they didn't have another chute. So we had to spend an extra day there while they shipped over another one. So we finally got into Saudi Arabia I want to say 14th, 15th, 16th [of December 1990], somewhere in that time frame.

Westermeyer: Okay. So it was a pretty normal deployment?

Jacocks: Yes.

Westermeyer: Okay. And were you the only woman Marine in the G-2 section or did you have women Marines under you?

Jacocks: I had a female gunnery sergeant and a female, I think she was a corporal when we went over there. She may have been a lance corporal. When we got to theater, because of the way the Direct Support Command/General Support Command split up with 1st FSSG, I left the gunnery sergeant with the 1st FSSG G-2, which had a much smaller G-2 section and had a requirement for her there. By making that trade, it allowed us to keep one of their staff NCOs, which was already deployed with the direct support element forward, so in that way we kind of traded people. Once we deployed forward, within the G-2 was myself and the female corporal.

Westermeyer: And how many Marines total in your section?

Jacocks: There ended up being 14 of us.

Westermeyer: Ah, okay. Can you give me an idea of what it is that the G-2 would do while you're in Saudi Arabia with the Direct Support Command? What were your duties?

Jacocks: Well the intelligence function is always to keep the commander informed regarding enemy activity—also responsible for the effects of weather and terrain on operations. With a combat service support element, of course, you also focus on the logistical intelligence that's required, things like where are the piers, where are our wells, building supplies, MSRs [main supply routes], structures, and things like that.

But there is also a need for the logistics outfits to know the ground situation, because you've got to be prepared, number one, to provide emergency resupply, but number two, you also need to know what's going on around you; because as in our situation, you're out there all by yourself. At the same time, there's the air threat . . . of course you're always prone to an air threat, but we discovered that because we had air from the MAG [Marine aircraft group] sitting close to the field hospitals, that sometimes the pilots would come to us for their air briefs before they flew out. You also must remain apprised of the rear threat and any indications or warnings. So once we got there, we had to work out with the MEF and other organizations how to develop a conduit for that type information, which few people ever thought the logisticians would need. But we did need it, and we worked out ways to get it, and it worked out okay.

Westermeyer: So the intelligence then that you presented, you weren't a collection point for that. You got that from other sources and then presented it to the general as what he needed for the mission, and so forth?

Jacocks: Well yes, we got it from higher headquarters as well as from adjacent commands. Now we did get information by debriefing convoys as they returned to the CSSA. Some route reconnaissance elements were sent out, and we'd get debriefs. Also ANGLICO [air-naval gunfire liaison company] had some forward teams up north of us that would come back to get information from us, and at the same time, we'd debrief them on what they had seen and what was going on, and then, we would compile the information. And of course our function as Direct Support Command G-2 was to pull all that information together and come up with our own estimates of what was going on, what information the general needed to focus on [for] his mission, and what was in front of us.

Westermeyer: Okay. So you were there then for about a month before the air war started, is that correct?

Jacocks: Yes, I'd say that.

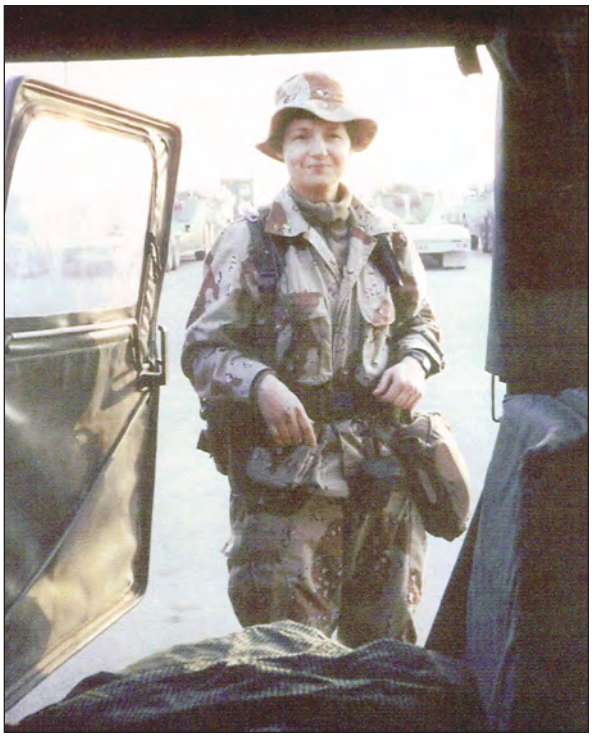

Photo courtesy of LtCol Mary V. Jacocks

Then-Maj Mary Jacocks, assistant chief of staff for intelligence at 2d FSSG, enters a humvee at CSSA-1 in Kibrit in mid-January 1991. The humvees were used primarily for personnel and light cargo transport behind front lines.

Westermeyer: Okay. Can you tell us what that month was like, Christmas in Saudi Arabia? How did the Marines who were in country already react to the DSC as you remember it, that sort of thing?

Jacocks: When we arrived at the port at al-Jubayl, everybody seemed—in 1st FSSG—to be pleased we were there. We stayed there through Christmas, and the only thing I can really remember about Christmas Day is that we only had one staff meeting instead of two.

Westermeyer: [Chuckle]

Jacocks: And most of us went to church that morning. But other than that, it was kind of a same old thing. It was a deployed Christmas, you know.

Westermeyer: Right.

Jacocks: I think no matter where you are, if you're deployed, Christmases are kind of the same.

But then in early January, we started deploying forward to al-Kibrit and got there, I can't recall the exact date, but somewhere in the middle of January. I think the 17th is the official day that everything was set up, and at that point we were forward of all the other Marine Corps command elements. There were some, at that time, LAI [light armored infantry] forward of us and, then like I said, some of the ANGLICO spotters up on the OPs [observation posts] along the border and then a couple of Saudi forces in front of us. Other than that, we were kind of hanging out there all by ourselves.

Westermeyer: Did you feel a particular amount of pressure as the G-2 with the DSC deployed forward like that?

Jacocks: You know I wouldn't say that I felt any pressure. I knew that the general was depending on me to get information and to provide him intelligence, and General Krulak made sure that I knew what information he expected. You know he'd probably, once we were deployed, he spent a lot of time in the G-2 section sitting in front of the map talking to myself as well as the Marines that worked for me, because he wanted to make sure that if he had a question or he wanted a response from them, that there was a rapport between him and the corporals and the sergeants that were there—that they would be able to talk to each other, that the sergeants wouldn't be so intimidated that they wouldn't be able to think. So he would come over and actually work with all of us and kind of set up the situation. So I wouldn't say there was pressure.

We knew what we were supposed to do. We worked hard at doing it. We had a tremendous team. Even though it was a small intelligence section, we had worked at forming a good coherent team, and everybody worked effectively together. We did some really good analysis. We sent out collection requests for things that we needed. We went back to a lot of the good old-fashion[ed] ways of analyzing things and coming up with information and putting it down, and thank goodness we were in a command that didn't care about dog and pony show type things. We could stick a map on the wall, use a pencil as a pointer, and point out what we were talking about as long as we got the information across, which I think invariably we always did.

Westermeyer: Okay. Do you want to talk about anything that sticks in your mind from when the air war began or during the Scud[-B] [surface-to-surface missile] attacks?

Jacocks: Well, I would have to tell you that we didn't really worry about the Scud attacks, because we knew we were so far forward, why would somebody waste a Scud on you when they could reach you with their artillery, and we knew we

were in artillery range at al-Kibrit the whole time we were there. Every now and then you'd have a volley of FROGs [free rocket over ground (missiles)] come in, but they never impacted within the combat service support area. They were normally to our east. Those I did worry about a little bit, because we thought there was a good possibility that the Iraqis knew that there was at least something substantial where we were. They probably wouldn't have known what it was.

However, we knew that their technology was somewhat limited. We knew that their artillery basically used aiming stakes and just set up and fired in the direction, and we knew if they did hit something in there, it would probably be an accident. However, if you were on the receiving end, it doesn't really matter if it's an accident or not. But you know you would occasionally hear the impacts, like I said, to the east. So once the air war started . . . of course at night you would regularly hear the aircraft going over. The night following the invasion into [al-]Khafji [Saudi Arabia], there was a [Boeing] B-52 [Stratofortress] arc light mission in al-Wafrah Forest [Kuwait]. I was working that night and the general came in and said, "Get your helmet, I want you to see something." Because our operations center was underground, we walked up to the top of the tunnel, and he said, "I want you to watch over there," and he told me what was getting ready to happen. You could hear the drone of the B-52 in the distance, and then you could just see the impacts and the ground lighting up, and even though I knew things like that were occurring, it was the first time I had ever witnessed an arc light mission and it was something to behold.

Westermeyer: Well, speaking of Khafji, General Krulak has told us that you were predicting the Iraqi invasion. Could you talk a little bit about that?

Jacocks: The Iraqi invasion?

Westermeyer: I should call it the Iraqi offensive, the Khafji offensive.

Jacocks: Okay, the 29 January event.

Westermeyer: Right.

Jacocks: Well, I wasn't predicting it as far as a date or anything. We estimated that there would probably be a time that there would be a probing attack. Now, when I say we, I'm just talking about the 2d FSSG in our little intel [intelligence] section. That's what we had briefed the general on, but we didn't have a time frame or anything like that. However, on the 29th of January before midnight, I had already secured, and all of a sudden one of my Marines was at the door of the tent calling my name. So I got dressed and went over to the COC [combat operations center], and they told me, I think, that JSTARS [joint surveillance target attack radar system] had picked up the movement of forces across the border heading toward Khafji. That kind of followed what we thought might occur.

However, shortly after that—monitoring the 2d MarDiv intelligence net—we started hearing reports of the incursions from directly in front of us, basically from al-Wafrah and then also from over on the elbow to the west. We never got reports from anywhere else. The MEF never radioed us, never sent us any information. [The] 1st FSSG never sent us any information. So we called in all our G-2 personnel and monitored the nets. Every time we got a report, we plotted where it was and then tried to put together the situation. Because we were situated right [of] the east-west MSR, we feared that there was an envelopment going on. I had never envisioned a three-prong attack at one time as a probe. And, needless to say, listening to the nets from the reconnaissance elements up in Khafji and then LAI directly to our front and to the west, we were listening to reports of the troops in direct contact, of vehicles being damaged, of things being hit, listening to them calling for air support, and in all of that, of course, you don't know how accurate your information is. But hindsight is a great thing, and we later found out that some of the coordinates that were given for contacts weren't quite as far south as the coordinates were that were transmitted over the radio—the fog of war. But as we plotted it and the general asked me what I thought was happening, I did tell him that I thought there was a possibility that there was at least an attempt to envelop us.

At that point, I didn't worry about it because I didn't have time—I was too busy plotting and trying to figure out what was going on—and I kind of left that in the hands of the general and the operations people. But I would say that from an intel perspective, probably monitoring information from that attack and coming up with our own estimate of the situation was in some ways an intelligence highlight for us because of the way we worked, and it gave us a lot of confidence in ourselves because we did work well, calmly assessed the situation, and moved ahead. So that was a situation where I think the general was pleased with what we did, and basically we were pleased. We didn't get any word from the MEF or anybody until the

next day, which was a whole different story on the support side, but that worked itself out also.

Westermeyer: Okay. But would you like to expand on that story then a little bit? I mean that's why we're here. That would be great to hear. [Chuckle]

Jacocks: [Chuckle] Well, of course, we got the reports back and found out what was going on and knew we were there as a subordinate command to the MEF—and doctrinally that's where we should have been getting some of our information from. So on the night of the 30th, the general asked me to "Please call the G-2 watch at the MEF, and remind them that if there is any indication of anything going on, to give us a call right away." And it just so happened that all of the phones were out except for the one in the general's office. So [chuckle], I'd gone into his office and made this call, and the only person I could reach was the staff NCO from the G-2 who was on duty in the MEF COC. And his response to me was that if we needed to withdraw or be evacuated, they would call us. And I kept saying, "That is not the point. We want warning." [Chuckle] We want to know before something is happening, not as it's happening." But we went on until finally this gunnery sergeant says, "Yes ma'am, that's what we'll do." Well, of course, the general is sitting there listening to this whole conversation, so I had to relay it all back to him. [Chuckle]

Westermeyer: Now you had mentioned earlier that you were able to listen in on the net to the various reports coming back.

Jacocks: Yes.

Westermeyer: So did you have any contact either directly or just listening in with the LAI battalions on the border?

Jacocks: Yes, all we did was monitor the nets and that was just kind of luck, because it was probably only a couple weeks prior that we had established that capability. Normally in an FSSG your only intel net is to the MEF going up, and you don't have any lateral nets. However, we never really got a lot of feedback over the net from the MEF. I had talked to the G-6 [communications officer], the chief of staff, and the general, I guess, about how I thought that it would really be helpful if we could at least monitor the intel nets of the divisions. There were a couple of nets free at that time that the general said once the ground war started if things got really hot, he would probably have to take those nets away from me. But he allowed me to have a net to monitor the 2d and 1st [Marine] Division intel nets. However, 1st Division much of the time was out of range, so we couldn't pick anything up. But once we did that, that's basically what we monitored. And then of course, the MEF command net we monitored. Those sources really provided our raw data from which to develop our intelligence.

Westermeyer: Okay, great. Do you have anything else on Khafji that sticks out in your mind?

Jacocks: Not . . . I mean I've got all kinds of notes and things written about it, but it's basically just a time sequence thing from the way that we saw it.

But anyway, as things went on and I told General Krulak that the MEF would call us if they wanted us to withdraw; that really got a stir out of the general. So he sent an e-mail to the MEF G-2, and the next day my master sergeant and I drove back to the MEF CP [command post] and had a conversation with the G-2 and from thereafter our support was much better. The MEF had been oriented on the ground element, and basically as a subordinate element they kind of left us hanging. You know, "If you need something, we'll take care of it." Following Khafji, we really made them aware that "If we're up front, we want some information," and that kind of straightened it out.

Westermeyer: Okay. So would you say that the experience with Khafji enabled you to sort of sort things out that might have been mistakes or had been problems earlier?

Jacocks: Well, yes as far as flow of information with higher headquarters. Yes, that probably did help with that.

Westermeyer: Okay. So after Khafji, then you continued with the plans for the liberation I would expect.

Jacocks: Yes.

Westermeyer: Well, what was your role in that and what kind of role did you play in finding, if any, in finding the al-Khanjar, the "miracle well" [in Saudi Arabia] and all that?

Jacocks: Oh gee, it sounds like the general talked to you about that too. [Chuckle]

Westermeyer: Well no, I'm just aware of the well story.

Jacocks: Oh.

Westermeyer: Anytime somebody calls it a miracle well then you want to get that in the book somehow. [Chuckle]

Jacocks: Well that's true. Basically one thing that General Krulak did was never leave "the 2" out

of the decision making. I would say that when he was looking at decisions of where to go and what to do, he included "the 2" in that and asked for an assessment. He really believed that intelligence drove operations. Before we went to al-Kibrit, he, "the 3," and I and a couple other people drove up to Kibrit, looked around, and got the lay of the land before we deployed and set it up. Now for Khanjar, we did not do that, so I wasn't involved so much in the map study, so to speak, of what to look for. But you know, we were all somewhat involved as primary staff in that, though that primarily was the decision between him and the chief of staff and Colonel [Gary S.] McKissock picking that exact spot.

Now as far as naming Khanjar, the chief of staff called me in and said, "Ginger, we need to find a name for this spot on the map here." He said, "You know it's not like Kibrit that already had a name. We're just going to a place on the map that just says . . ." I think it said, "gravel pit" or whatever it said on the map but it had no name. And he said, "I want you all to find a name that starts with a 'K.'" So I went back to the section and we kind of had this little contest. I told some of the lance corporals and sergeants to look through the Arab dictionary we had there and look at the Ks and "Let's talk about it and find something that starts with a 'K.'" So we went back with probably four or five recommendations, and Khanjar was what was picked.

Now as far as the well, one of the key essential elements of information that the MEF commander wanted was where to find water, and that's a good logistics type EEI [essential element of information]. So we set out right away trying to figure out where to find water. We talked to the Kuwaitis who were there. We talked to people from [Saudi] Aramco [oil company]. Nobody had any idea where there were any wells or any water source. In fact, the Kuwaitis that I interviewed who had worked over in the western part of Kuwait said that all they knew was that water was being shipped by truck out. So we just basically did a map study with the maps we had and looked for dried streambeds—where things might converge, kind of the big hand. You know maybe this is a place where there's water or whatever. We had determined some areas to look at. And then . . . I guess it was a magical well. It was an area that we thought there probably should be some water, but we never envisioned there being a well there already, and sure enough it was found. [Chuckle]

Westermeyer: [Chuckle]

Jacocks: It was there. I mean, so yes, it was magical. I'm not sure what else to say about that.

Westermeyer: But your office did predict that there should be a well there, and then they went out and they found one.

Jacocks: Well I don't know that exactly. We gave them a couple of options, because there were a few places we thought that at least you should be able to drill for water and find it, not knowing what was there. As far as we knew, there were no wells anywhere. So that was just a surprise to everybody.

Westermeyer: Okay. Well can you describe your role in the actual liberation of Kuwait?

Jacocks: Well, I guess you'd just describe it as keeping my commander and his staff and subordinate commanders apprised of the situation so that they could better perform their duties. We worked very closely with the commanders for the engineering battalions that were going to work the breaches—you know as far as diagrams of the breach sites, the width of the minefield, the types of mines that were there. All that information turned out to be very accurate so that they could plan and rehearse.

We also, through map studies, tried to work with the resupply plan. There was emergency resupply set up that had already been determined by the units being supported, what type of emergency resupply units would like at different points in the battle, and a lot of that was prestaged so that it could be delivered either by land or air. So if it was air, the intel section had picked out some spots that could have been used as LZs [landing zones] to go in and put some of those down. Of course, all of that had to be fluid based on the situation of what was going on. But other than that, basically the G-2 role in the actual invasion was keeping people apprised of what was there and what was going on in front of them.

Probably the hardest part of being the G-2 is doing all the analysis and the estimates beforehand. So when things are actually happening and moving ahead, of course, you're trying to see further ahead, but things moved so swiftly in Desert Storm and the Iraqis started fleeing so soon that there really wasn't a whole lot of intel to do. As the red disappeared off the map, so to speak, then our job became more one of looking at various area security-type functions and the exploitation of documents and things like that, what to do with enemy weapons, and things of that nature.

Westermeyer: Okay. Did you actually move into Kuwait itself after the liberation started?

Jacocks: No. In fact, we had an alpha command group identified that was prepared to move forward to the al-Jaber [Air Base] airfield in Kuwait, because we had one forward element that had moved in and set up. We were going to move in on top of that with the idea of setting up another CSSA there, and we were basically ready to go. The general was going with the Alpha Command, so I would go with a few others from G-2. However, the night before we were supposed to leave the next morning, I got called in and that's when the word had come out that they were going to halt operations at 0100 hours, and we would not be required to move forward; so we did not have to do that. Now I did go into Kuwait on some trips but not . . . you know our command . . . I never physically moved forward and worked in Kuwait proper.

Westermeyer: Did you stay at Kibrit, or did you move to al-Khanjar?

Jacocks: I was at Khanjar.

Westermeyer: Okay. So after the miracle well was found, then you moved to Khanjar?

Jacocks: Yes.

Westermeyer: Okay. Is there anything else about the operations or the narrative that you can think of you'd like to add?

Jacocks: No, I can't think of anything. Eventually, we moved back to Mishab and then retrograded back to al-Jaber, and you know everything at that point was mostly security related. In fact like I said, once all the red disappears off the map, intel gets to kind of take a breather. So instead of letting me breath, I became the chief of staff and the general's award writer.

Westermeyer: Ah. [Chuckle]

Jacocks: Also, I was responsible for gathering the foreign weapons and getting the ones registered that were going to go back as historical items and things like that. So I kind of moved into that other realm, you know still with my G-2 hat on, but like I said there wasn't a whole lot going on G-2 wise. So I just became a writer. [Chuckle]

Westermeyer: And then when did you exit the theater? You said in mid-May?

Jacocks: It was toward the end of May. I think most of 2d FSSG got back early June. However, the chief of staff called me in; he probably called me in the middle of May—right before we had deployed, the G-2 section was going to be changing buildings. While we were gone, construction was going on in the building we were going to be moving into, and the chief of staff called me in and said, "All the ground guys are back, and there are people looking [at] your G-2 building." [Chuckle]

Maj Jacocks stands in front of an abandoned Iraqi BMP-1 armored personnel carrier south of al-Jaber airfield in Kuwait several days after the Gulf War cease-fire. The 2d FSSG took on the role of Headquarters and Service Battalion within DSC, providing general logistical support to II MEF, including 2d MarDiv and 2d MAW, from its base at Kibrit.
Photo courtesy of LtCol Mary V. Jacocks

Photo courtesy of LtCol Mary V. Jacocks

Maj Jacocks stands in front of a Czech heavy equipment transport in March 1991 at Khanjar. Provided by the Coalition for the war effort, the transport was later used by the 2d FSSG and DSC G-2 section as the prime mover for an M313 van.

Westermeyer: [Laughter]

Jacocks: He said, "If we don't get people back there and you all get moved in, then you're probably going to lose it."

Westermeyer: You end up with squatters.

Jacocks: That's right. So probably 75 percent of the G-2 section was allowed to leave early with our van. We had an M313 [semitrailer] van that we had with us so that we could have our safes in there and basically the maps and everything that we just rolled out across the desert with us and kind of had a moving office-type area there. So they got us a [Lockheed] C-5 [Galaxy transport plane], and we loaded that, and so we came back about two weeks earlier than most of the FSSG with the deal being that nobody was allowed to go on leave until we finished moving into this new building.

Westermeyer: Right. Well, what was the deal with being a woman Marine in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait? The Saudis had some pretty harsh rules about clothing if I recall. Can you talk a little bit about that experience?

Jacocks: Well, I can talk about my experience. Yes, their rules are pretty stringent. Now, we never really ventured out. Well, while we were at the port was the only time that we may have even encountered anybody out in town, and the only time we were there was driving from one camp to another or something like that. So really, you never really encountered . . . I guess, I'm not sure if it's the correct words but the civilian Saudis.

Westermeyer: Right.

Jacocks: The only men we ever saw were the military guys at Jubayl. Once we were deployed forward, there were some Saudi border guards north of us that after the ground war had concluded came by and spent some time in the camp, and I would talk with them a lot about customs and this, that, and the other . . . or this Saudi lieutenant who had been, he had been to school in the UK [United Kingdom] and spoke pretty decent English. He got upset with some of the women that were PTing [physical training] around the perimeter. Of course, you're out in the middle of the desert, you know. There wasn't anybody else to see you. So I didn't really get too concerned about that. I told the women who asked me about it not to pay any attention to him.

Westermeyer: Would he try to talk to the women in particular, or did he try to take it up with the command?

Jacocks: He tried to talk to the corporal in my section, [chuckle] because you know she would be sitting right there a lot of times when we were there. And I told him, "You know, we came over here." I said, "We're not out in your cities or intermingling with your people, so it should make no difference."

Now once we were leaving and went back to the port—and this doesn't have anything to do with attire or anything—but at the port, we would have to walk through a gate that had Saudi guards on it from the place that we worked over to where the chow hall and everything was. And the guards normally would just not pay any attention as women passed by. You could have probably gone anywhere you wanted in there, because they weren't going to look at you; however, I just stood there until . . . I made them acknowledge me and finally they got to where they would salute me. And the sergeant major walked through there with me one day, and the guards saluted me and he said, "My gosh ma'am, what did you do to them?"

Westermeyer: [Laughter]

Jacocks: "Sergeant major," I said, "I didn't do anything. I just refused to walk through the gate until they acknowledged that I was there." And I said, "Some kind of way gradually, we got to the saluting part." But I said, "I wasn't going to just walk through there and let them ignore me. I've been over here to supposedly help out their country, and they could at least acknowledge that I was there as far as I was concerned."

Westermeyer: Were there any issues with deploying with the male Marines and the female Marines, especially anything that might have been different from what a normal deployment might have been like?

Jacocks: You know, I don't think so, and I think one of the things that I learned and I think many of the men in the command element [CE] was that it really didn't matter if you were male or female. When we had the first NBC [nuclear, biological, and chemical] alarm and had to go into full MOPP [mission-oriented protective posture] gear, when you looked around there and you saw everybody trying to open up those suits for the first time and getting into everything, everybody had the same big eyes and everybody reacted the same and everybody helped each other, and I don't think it made any difference. We had women out manning the machine-gun positions on the perimeter along with the males. Everybody filled their own sandbags and worked. Of course, General Krulak filled sandbags and worked too. So we had good leadership and everybody was inspired to work side by side.

I think one of the things that we found was that we were all Marines, and we were all one family, not necessarily brothers—you know the Marine Corps brother thing kind of went out the window—but I think we were all brothers and sisters. As far as living in the desert, there weren't that many differences, at least when we were out there. We didn't mark the heads for male and female. You kind of waited, and a couple [of] women would go in together, so you wouldn't fill up one whole area and keep the men from being able to use the head or anything. [Chuckle] But you know, I think everybody kind of looked at it as there wasn't really time to worry about that stuff, and I think it worked really well.

The only thing I would say is at that point, you know the Marine Corps had been training women to go to the field for a little while. When I came in, they didn't however. You know, we did a few things out in the field with the men at Basic School but that was it. But as things changed, the Marine Corps never went back and trained the women who were already in higher positions. You just were expected to already know how to go out to the field and do all the stuff. And while we were over there, I know a reporter asked me if I felt the Marine Corps had trained me adequately to be able to live in the field, and I told him, "No, I didn't think they had. However, the Girl Scouts had."

Westermeyer: [Laughter]

Jacocks: And that's what got me through being able to live out there and roam around in the dark and put up clotheslines and pitch tents and do all that type [of] thing. So, I'm not sure . . . all of that has changed, because now everybody gets trained the same, but at that time we didn't.

Westermeyer: So you think it's better now when everybody gets the same training?

Jacocks: Yes, I do.

Westermeyer: Okay. All right, well is there anything else that you would like to add to the interview?

Jacocks: Well the only other thing I would say is that, like any other Marine, I think we all train to be able to go out and do a job in a real-world situation though heaven forbid any of us should ever want to go to war. The women who went out there [and] proved that we could handle ourselves in those situations. And about six months after that, I was deployed to Gitmo [Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba] for six months and lived in a tent that was much more uncomfortable than it was in the desert.

Westermeyer: [Laughter]

Jacocks: But the confidence that I gained by doing that really helped me as I moved on to other intelligence positions and to other billets.

Captain Kathryn A. Allen

Marine Corps Captain Kathryn A. Allen served with the 8th Communications Battalion [8th Comm Battalion] during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Captain Allen was interviewed on 9 March 1991. In her interview, she discusses the difficulties involved in establishing and maintaining the sophisticated communication system used by the I MEF in Saudi Arabia.

Interviewer: Captain, could [you] start out the interview by giving us maybe a little bit of background

[on] yourself and how you personally prepared for this assignment and when did you arrive in country?

Allen: As far as personally prepared, at the time when I was TAD [temporary assigned duty] to [U.S. Army installation] Fort Huachuca, Arizona, and had been out there two days doing research on the interoperability problems they were having in theater, and we had in fact replicated the entire communications system they had here, the pieces of major end items of equipment, to try and resolve the interoperability problems. We'd been in Arizona one day, then [done] all the coordination, and we got a call from a tank commander who said, "You're going to Saudi Arabia. Cancel your 10-day TAD. Come back here, [and] we'll solve these problems in country." And that was on about the first of December 1990. We got on a plane at about 1700 on Christmas Eve at [MCAS] Cherry Point, a commercial [Boeing] 747, and flew over here and arrived on Christmas night. USMC got a new acronym; it's now "You Suckers Missed Christmas" instead of "United States Marine Corps." So the preparation as far as coming over here, there was very little, just basically the background we had. There wasn't much that we could do to get ready for this. The system was already up and operational; we were here as augmentees.

It is the first time that a communications battalion, my communications battalion, 8th Comm Battalion, absorbed a large portion of the 6th Communications Battalion, the reserve communications battalion out of New York City. Before we left the United States, we were reinforced by them, and then we came to Saudi Arabia in the first ever direct support reinforcing role of one communications battalion to another, the 9th Communications Battalion that had already been in country since about the 15th of August 1990. So essentially, what you have here is in support of this whole operation. You had the entire 9th and 8th Communications Battalions, which are two active duty [units]. The 9th is out of [MCB] Camp Pendleton, the 8th out of [MCB] Camp Lejeune. You have easily two-thirds, easily, of the 6th Communications Battalion, and we had a detachment of satellite teams from 7th Communications Battalion on Okinawa [Japan], and we have had times when we've had officers from all four comm battalions, which has never happened before in one place at the same time, discussing issues that had come up in country. A lot of the communications assets support this exercise because it's the most robust, reliable, uninterrupted communications system that the Marine Corps has ever set up in the entire history of the Marine Corps, with every single piece of gear that the Marine Corps has online somewhere in theater.

Interviewer: Did the majority of this come off in the MPS [Maritime Prepositioning Ships] shipping, or did a lot of this come with you?

Allen: We had the assets of three full communications battalions, and then we had the communications assets off of three MPSs—MPS 1, 2, and 3—that were received in country, and I believe it was MPS 3 or 2 that had come in just before we got here. We used the mark vehicles, the mobile radio vehicles, the humvee [High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle or HMMWV] radios, and not the satellite but the terrestrial [over-the-air broadcasting], the GRC-201 [radios], off the MPS ships. So there's a lot of communications, intensive exercise, and not a very good environment to communicate in. It's been very hostile toward communications.

Interviewer: Because of the weather, the dust, the sand, or what?

Allen: Mostly all that, sir. The ground is dry and sandy, loose soil or packed clay right under the surface of the sand, which makes it very difficult to actually ground the equipment, the electronics equipment. The heat causes overheating problems of everything from high-voltage power supplies to computers and word processors. Everything seems to overheat over here. The dust, they finally got down to the point where they were using nylons, women's nylons, as filters on the computers to keep the dust out. The filters that were in the computers were insufficient to keep the dust out of the computers. And even in environments as clean as this one in here, we pulled the cover off of this unit, 248, and found huge dust balls in there. The computer was still operational, but when we pulled it off, we had to vacuum it out with an electronics vacuum. It's just a hostile environment for communications. The dust in the air during the sandstorms is going to interfere with the terrestrial multichannel [radio links], the surface microwaves. And we're prepared for that. We're prepared to back it up with satellite communications when the time comes.

Interviewer: So it's the satellite that's interrupted by the dust?

Allen: The satellite will not be interrupted by the dust, but the terrestrial multichannel, the surface microwave, will be significantly [interrupted]. We have experienced some problems up in Kuwait

with the smoke, the density of the smoke in the air and the terrestrial. But I have a satellite van up there right now that's performing magnificently through the smoke. It's [the satellite is] unaffected by it [the smoke], coming out of the van.

Interviewer: Getting back to a paragraph in which you said this is the best large system that ever existed, was this because of the type of equipment or good planning, good people, or was this an accident?

Allen: It's hard to plan without a mission, and the communications mission has never been clear. I think the day that we get a hard and fast communications mission will be the day that we sit down to write our last after action report. That's when it will be clear what it was we were required to do. It's maneuver warfare, it was in the desert, and everyone had the taunt for safety reasons. It's very easy to lose people in the desert; you have to have communications in order to keep people in touch. We've had the most equipment we've ever invested in a system. We had some extremely talented people that just happened to be in the right billets at the right time to make this thing work.

The Marine Corps, as far as the timing of this whole evolution, it would have been better if it had happened next year, because we would have had a lot of our new TriTac [tri-Service tactical] equipment fielded. We ended up fielding a lot of new equipment out here that would have come in over the next 12 months, but when McCraddock pushed this stuff forward, which we needed to make us interoperable with the other Services. And the people back there, some of those people deserve medals too, for the things that went on here, by pushing equipment out to us. Our training was deficient, but we had great people out here that could run training actually out here. I'm not sure what TISSE [*sic*] stands for, but they're out of Fort Huachuca, they sent a team of about 7 to 10 communicators to help train us [to get us] up to speed with the new equipment that was fielded out here.

The Marine Corps right now in communications is going to be light-years ahead of what we would have been had this not happened, because it was forced upon us. You have an intensive training environment; you've got no distractions. You've got no liberty or anything else to distract you from purely doing your duties. And we've also trained 6th Communications Battalion up to a higher degree than they could ever have achieved just by reserve weekends and two weeks in the summer.

Interviewer: Now did you call it "dry tack"?

Allen: TriTac, sir, T-R-I-T-A-C. I think that's Tri-

Extreme desert temperatures caused some of the communications equipment at the Marine S-3 systems planning and engineering hub at al-Jubayl Police Station to overheat during the Gulf War.

Photo courtesy of Capt Kathryn A. Allen

Photo courtesy of Capt Kathryn A. Allen

Officers with the 8th Comm Battalion, II MEF. From left, adjutant Capt Lisa R. Schade, S-3 Capt Kathryn A. Allen, executive officer Maj Carl E. Rodgers, and commanding officer LtCol Gary R. Bradley. They found communications difficult to maintain due to the extremely dry and sandy nature of the environment.

Tactical Services, I'm really not sure, all three Services for the Army, the Air Force, and the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps really didn't buy in to the big boxes; we ended up boring them out through the 380 line switches, the telephone switches, and the big message switches. We had a 50-line message switch out of Germany, out of the [U.S. Army] 22d Signal Brigade in Stuttgart; they sent that down to us. I believe we should have bought the equipment at the time, but that was 10, 12 years ago when they started this TriTac stuff, and I wasn't even an officer then. I really don't know why we didn't buy into it. It's probably money or sizing. It's really too big for the Marine Corps' needs.

I think coming out of this, we need to change the way we do procurement a little bit. We need to get a little bit more on board with the interoperable stuff. Let the other Services do the experm'ing [experimenting] and the purchasing. Then once they've fielded it and decided it needs certain modifications, we need to take that modified version, scale it down to Marine Corps needs, and then buy it in a hurry and get it fielded before it becomes outdated. There's a lot of lead time on fielding new communication electronics equipment. The timing of this exercise, what started out as an exercise but became an operation, was correct. We had a lot of new equipment right in the pipeline.

Interviewer: So you worked Christmas Eve, Christmas Day. Where did you initially set up? Was it here?

Allen: Right here, sir.

Interviewer: Right here at I MEF headquarters. It looks like a bathhouse next to the police station.

Allen: This was a camel barn. When we came in here, it was filled with hay and other things camels leave behind and camels themselves. The 9th Comm Battalion cleaned this whole place out, got rid of the camels, and made it a very habitable environment, so a lot of help from the Seabees. The Seabees out here have been terrific.

Interviewer: So basically then, your initial mission was [to] get ready for the air war?

Allen: Well, we really didn't know how the war was going to be run. I have to say I have a lot of respect for the operational security that happened when they started the war. We knew it was going to be intensive bombing. What we did is we augmented the 9th Comm Battalion. They already had these systems set up, but we put out more satellite terminals to help the units, the major supported commands of divisions, help them posture in the field and move, actually leapfrog satellite terminals, a new concept.

Interviewer: So these satellite terminals are mobile as supplies move forward, as the division moved forward.

Allen: They take them with them, sir. They're called the GMF [ground mobile forces]. The ones that proved themselves beyond a shadow of a doubt out here is the GMF. It stands for ground mobile forces, and that's the ANTSC-85 and the ANTSC-93 satellite terminals. The 85 is a hub, and it runs 493 spokes that are out around, and they can be maneuvered. You just call in [and] say, "We're going off the air," call the satellite controller, and then shut down, tear down the antenna and move, and come up on the air again. And it provides an awesome communication capability to the commander.

Interviewer: Do these people have any kind of directional, you know like the GS [*sic*], the PLRS [position location reporting system]? Do they have that, so you have a computer screen that pinpoints the location of all these people?

Allen: We're told here where they're going to displace to, and we plot on a map here the latitude and the longitude. We call down to J-6 networks down in CentCom in Riyadh. They contact GMF up in Germany and tell them where that satellite terminal's going to come up on the air again, what kind of data rate is going to be running, which is the same—the program and computer rate is the same. The system works great.

Interviewer: Okay now, for the air war, what were some of the significant things that went on in the air war as far as communication goes?

Allen: The air war was mostly . . . we didn't know exactly when it was going to kick off, and we only thought it was going to last, originally, what we were told here, was about 10 or so days. First they said it was going to be 20 days, then they said 15, then it really extended—I believe it ended at 28 days of bombing. Communications, while the air war was going on, we were posturing the forces for the assault. We were repositioning the divisions and practicing their displacements and displacing to deceive the Iraqis as to where we're going to do the breaches. And from the communications perspective, we have another new concept; we did split MEF CP operations. It's the first time that a fully operations MEF headquarters has displaced, and they did it several times. [The] 9th Comm Battalion did it once in the fall when they displaced the CP from port [of] [al-]Jubayl [Saudi Arabia] up to here, and then it was done from here and that displaced to [Ras] [al-]Safaniya [Saudi Arabia], and they displaced from Safaniya over to what we affectionately call the gravel plain because that's what it says on the map; it says, "gravel plain."

Interviewer: So it became [CSSA-2] Khanjar [Saudi Arabia]?

Allen: Khanjar, yes sir.

Interviewer: That was the I MEF (Forward).

Allen: Well, that was I MEF. We became MEF (Rear) here and this hub did not displace and that's always been a bet. Although we're in a country where betting is illegal, it's always been a bet as to whether or not this node here would ever displace in support of this operation. We kind of expected we'd have to go up to Kuwait if the assault continued on into Iraq. We had a location picked out, and we had done map reconnaissance.

Interviewer: As the FSSG moved forward, your telecommunication people got moved forward with them.

Allen: Yes sir. The FSSG out here did not have sufficient communications to support themselves and the concept that they employed—I've never seen that concept, and it was not doctrinal, but it worked like a champ. They had Direct Support Command; that's the last one. We're waiting for that one to come out right now, out of the gravel plain. They had general support groups [GSGs]; they had two of those at one time, GSG-1 and GSG-2. They had Direct Support Commands, they had a direct support group, they had one of those still up in Kuwait, and we had to provide communications. Because of the distance, normally they wouldn't be spread out that far, but the FSSG does not have inherent communications terminals that will reach beyond line of sight. They can't get a multichannel line of sight based on equipment. It has nothing to do with ability; it has to do with the equipment limitations. They have to rely on the communications battalion to provide anything more than that for them. It spread the communications battalion's assets pretty thin at times. We were down to nothing in reserve to support all of the FSSG and all the wing sites. Wing has more of the longer haul stuff, but they don't have the satellite equipment. Only the ground mobile forces have 'lites [satellites].

Interviewer: So were you involved in the planning of the FSSG Direct Support Command movement and where they would go?

Allen: No sir, they just told us where they were going to go, and we were expected to support them. They didn't really send in advance. We would be told by the G-6 of I MEF what was going to be stood up and where, and we told them how we were going to support. We were just given the mis-

sion: "We require communication for these sites." And we were left alone to figure out how we were going to get the communications there. It worked out okay, but we were taxed. We still ran two full hub-spoke systems. I have ten 93 [satellite communication] terminals and two 85 [satellite communication] terminals online as we speak, and we're waiting for some of these terminals to come down.

Interviewer: So did you ever have an incident, say, that you're moving too far forward and you can't support this move?

Allen: Oh, no sir. We supported whatever they wanted to do. Satellites give you the capability to do that.

Interviewer: Okay, because right outside of the [al-]Jaber [Air Base] airfield, I guess that was the DSC Forward?

Allen: Yes sir.

Interviewer: There were satellite dishes I saw, and I just deduced that they were being reverted back to here.

Allen: Yes, sir. Satellite communications is really the wave of the future. Especially for maneuver warfare, it supports it, and it's a single form of communications that the infantry cannot run. I mean at here, HF [high frequency] used to be a long haul communications. Down here we've had more luck with HF. HF will work if you work at making HF work. But with the satellite communications, there was no more requirement that we work very hard at the HF, so it kind of replaced that out here—the satellites. That was the one that they could not run. We could support them.

Interviewer: So really the modern technology has given really a boost to mobile warfare.

Allen: I'd like to think it had a lot to do with us winning the war.

Interviewer: So this is a key element [we] are talking about.

Allen: Yes, sir. Although you'll get some people that will say it seems like after every exercise or operation they always say, "Chow was good; we won the war; comm sucked." Somebody's going to say that no matter how good the quality of communications is. They've never had a service like this; they've never had these little devices that sit on the desk called a KY-68; it's a digital subsriber voice terminal, DSVT.

The communications system employed in Operation Desert Shield, as pictured at the I MEF headquarters with Camp 5 and the Communications Center in al-Jubayl, was the most robust, reliable, and uninterrupted system the Marine Corps had set up at the time.

Official Department of Defense photo

Interviewer: And is that the LAN [local area network]?

Allen: No sir, no, this is the telephone.

Interviewer: Oh, the green . . .

Allen: Green telephone. The heavy one. Costs about $4,000.

Interviewer: In our office we have one; it gives those phantom phone calls.

Allen: And this phone, you can pick it up, and it goes through a great number of handshake procedures, and the tests—the crypto—it can tell [if] it's the legal user and tell where it's supposed to be. It can connect to another legal user and tell it that it's where it's supposed to be, and it gets [allows] the two of them to talk, and it [the secure telephone] puts a unique variable on there so no one else can intrude on the phone call as long [as] they're both off the hook. And the commanders had this service all the way through this war, no matter where they were. The general staff had this service, so they can talk. The CG of I MEF [Lieutenant] General [Walter E.] Boomer can talk to any of his commanders in secure at any time, and I believe that the first . . .

Interviewer: Now did they have this as a mobile tool in command vehicles?

Allen: The 2d Marine Division, it did, sir. They had a [U.S. Army 1st Brigade, 2d Armored Division] Tiger Brigade with them that I believe that [replaced] the British Army. The British Army brigade [7th Armored Brigade Desert Rats] had the MSE [mobile subscriber equipment]. [The] mobile subscriber equipment that was basically the same thing, and it seems totally different concept, but it basically gave them literally one of these in a car that you could take anywhere you want to go. From what I understand from 2d [Marine] Division, the reports were all over again on this. The Marine Corps did not buy into that program.

Interviewer: Mobile subscriber . . . ?

Allen: Equipment.

Interviewer: So it's like a mobile phone?

Allen: Sir, it's like a cellular phone. It's a similar concept. It's got a little terminal you take out, and you can set up within half an hour, and they provide a relay. Now one of the problems is it doesn't displace forward fast enough for combined arms, for armor attacks; it just can't keep up with that nor can the satellite. They can't keep up with that either. So there's a certain time . . . planning is important, and the offensive commanders have to carry through until I can stop and so does communications again, to receive further instructions or to report back.

Interviewer: So the DSVT connects with a satellite, or is that ground controlled?

Allen: They do go up into satellite; they go into a switch at the site. We're on a nodal concept if you're considering the satellite terminal as [it] provides communications and tree for a node for an area, and then they have a switchboard that would have DSVT telephones hanging off of it, and then they can talk back. So it takes a little bit of time to set up once they displace. But that isn't out here first, and 2d [Marine] Division displaced very well using this. And sometimes, they would displace without telling us, and we would be down here thinking that they were off the air for some strange reason, trying to restore their communications. And they'd have displaced without having said anything. That caused a little confusion.

Interviewer: Now everybody says "a switch." That's basically a computer?

Allen: It's a switchboard, a telephone switchboard. They do have computers in them these days, but it's not like AT&T back in the states except for the major switches that are in big vans. They generally worked out pretty good.

Interviewer: So at Khanjar, the DSC moved up into position then you moved your satellite dishes up very early on to get that set up. Were there good communications between Khanjar and I MEF?

Allen: Crystal clear. Crystal clear, sir. They had a satellite terminal up there, and essentially what was happening was DSC up there had a satellite terminal that was [on] Mike 12 [satellite], and division or the MEF headquarters during the war was 10 miles down the main search road that the engineers built, that the Seabees built. They had a satellite dish that was on Mike 4 [satellite]. They were on two different satellites. [On] Mike 12, [a] person at DSC makes a phone call. It goes up to the satellite, comes back down to MEF (Rear) to Mike 9 [satellite], an 85 van, is strapped across through our switching to Mike 2, comes back up to here traveling 22,000 miles here to the satellite, and then [travels] 22,000 miles back down to place that call, and that subscriber never knows the difference. [Snaps fingers] It's like that; call is connected.

Interviewer: So the I MEF (Forward) was not in DSC.

Allen: It wasn't the DSC, but that the communica-

tions came all the way back through this. The hubs back here were strapped over from one hub to the other hub, went back up to a different satellite, and came down right 10 miles away.

Interviewer: Because the I MEF (Forward) position was not directly in the same location as the DSC command.

Allen: Right, sir. They were about 10 miles apart.

Interviewer: Because the DSC, it was so large?

Allen: It's also not smart to put them too close together; although I'm sure have . . .

Interviewer: And they were on Mike, did you say 10?

Allen: Mike 12 was with the DSC and Mike 4 was with the MEF (Forward). Interesting concept, two separate satellites. All signals have to come all the way back down here before they can be switched over to go back out to them.

Interviewer: Let's say for talking purposes that you had received a Scud [missile] attack here, and your satellite dishes out here in front of the building were hit.

Allen: Sir, that could've happened, and that had a lot of potential during the course of [the] war.

Interviewer: Do you have extra dishes hidden away some place that you could bring them out and put them back up?

Allen: Depending on where you say [the Scuds] hit, sir. It's a bigger crisis if the van takes shrapnel than if the chat satellite dish takes shrapnel. The dishes take quite a bit of abuse before they become inoperable as long as the feed horn, the center element, is intact. It also depends which way it gets it from. If it gets hit from the face of the dish, from the inside of the bowl to the back, being strafed by a .50-cal [.50-caliber machine gun] would have little effect on it. If it got strafed from the back forward with a .50-cal, then you would change the regularity of the dish on the signal on the transmitting and receiving side. So the answer is it depends. We had a spare 85 van that was the 6th Comm Battalion's, and we had an extra satellite dish, a 20-foot dish, the very large dishes, and we also had a couple spare 8-foot ones.

What we had to do is consider if this node here had been taken out altogether, where would we have reconstituted, where would we have come up again. And essentially what we would have to do is go to another site that has a 93 terminal like over at the airport over here at the TAC [tactical air command] center [TACC] and set up the other 85 and start the hub spoke from over there picking off only the key players, because each hub can only have four spokes. We would have been colocated with the TACC. We would have had to have the leg into CentCom. We would have to pick up the two divisions, and the MEF (Forward). Then, all the other FSSG satellites, the other forward, would have had to be off the air, which would have had some effect on the speed of communications, because some of the other terminals for Shaikh Isa [Air Base], down at the bottom of Bahrain, that was where your fixed wing, your F[/A]-18s [Hornets], were flying out of. That one wouldn't have been able to . . . you would have had to [have] GSG-2 during supplies. That one wouldn't have been able to come out of al-Basha [?].

But there were other terrestrial links to link these people together; it just wouldn't have been as responsive, and they wouldn't have had the end-to-end secure telephone, the DSVT, that valuable little piece of gear that helped us with our OpSec [operations security] during this whole thing. They wouldn't have had that capability. So we did have a reconstitution plan [that] we had to keep manipulating with the additional view that was available. And we took our extra big pieces of gear when the war first started up at Manifah Bay [Saudi Arabia]. That was our hideout in the desert for that gear. There could be a combined security by the grunts that were there, and the DSA-1 [Division Support Area 1] stayed there. It's not a big target because there's nothing there. It's [in] the middle of nowhere. We figured what we would do is if the TACC survived, we'd reconstitute over there. If as the TACC got taken out, the airport got taken out, which is a good chance, then we'd have to reconstitute down at the fort with both 1 and 2 [?]. It'd take time; we'd be off the air for a while getting advanced from up there and taking time to set up [a] table of organization [T/O] for the comm battalions, only support a hub and three spokes. We never expected to equip a full hub-spoke system on the air at the same time, let alone two hub-spoke systems with the additional hub-spoke system that we got from the [Marine] Reserves. That system that we got from the Reserves didn't have any operators, because it was sitting in [Marine Corps Logistics Base] Albany. The whole time the reservists, they can't support that level of technical training and keep it up on weekend reserve, and their T/O doesn't have any operators at all. We had a couple of guys that had gotten out of the Marine Corps and gone

in doing other things for the Reserve unit, but very few who . . .

Interviewer: So then the hub-spoke you're talking about, we will draw a picture of what a hub-spoke is, and I will attach the drawing to the tape.

Allen: So, interesting concept. Works well.

Interviewer: How did the Reserve [Marines] work out in your comm effort?

Allen: Real well. We picked up a little over 425 reserves out of the 6th Comm Battalion, and we had one conscientious objector who said, "I'm not going to do this. I want to go home." He got all the way over here too. He showed up for the flight for everything, and then he said, "No." He didn't want to do this. And I think that's pretty good. They had just come off [Exercise] Solar Flare. They had done the same comm training with Solar Flare, with my battalion, ironically, [for] two weeks during July—July '90. So we even knew some of the same faces; we'd recently seen [them], and also they were back for a long period of time.

Interviewer: So the concept, which you did here, was a parallel of what you were doing in Solar Flare?

Allen: We didn't set up. We didn't give them satellite support. We used terrestrial, whatever they had requested. But they did jump CP's practice, but the reservists from 6th Comm Battalion were enthusiastic. They were motivated, eager to learn, eager to help. They all gave up their civilian jobs [to come] out here. Some of them have lost their civilian jobs that didn't work with major corporations. Some have their active duty salary augmented by their companies to keep them the same. A lot of jobs were held based on the enactment of the Soldiers' and Sailors' [Civil] Relief Act [of 1940]. But they pitched right in, and they learned, I'm sure, a great deal. When we got here, not only the comm battalions but the divisions, the FSSGs, and the wing, everyone was short just basic communicators, radio operators, wire men, [and] comms center people.

We took a lot of the reservists and reinforced the two divisions, the FSSGs, and the wing to help them fill their shortfalls with these guys. They generally never got a complaint out of any one of them, out of 425 [reservists]. They all seemed real enthusiastic. Some of them are every bit as anxious as we are to get home, but some of them, I've had some of the staff NCOs tell me that they would stay as long as they needed them, that they would stay well until the rotation part, and they plan on being on active duty for a year or more. This is what they signed up for; they were glad to be here. I've written a number of medals for reservists. I was writing one today on my master gunnery sergeant who performed light-years ahead of my active duty office chief. I had two office chiefs out here: Reserves and active duty. And the Reserve, head and shoulders far ahead of him.

Interviewer: Let's get back a minute to the concepts of the war. What if the war had lasted longer? And we would have had to move north of Kuwait City up into the upper reaches of Kuwait, how would you have supported the . . . I would guess that the DSC would have moved forward; the divisions would have moved forward. How would you have supported that effort?

Allen: We could have supported, with the satellite side of the house, we could have supported them all the way to Baghdad [Iraq] from here. It's an interesting concept, and see the MEF's CG, although it wasn't in the cards for him to do this, he could have run the whole war from back here with the quality of connectivity we could have given him. But I understand him wanting to be forward, so he could influence the battle with his presence—always important for a commander. But we had the backup where we'd have had to start leapfrogging forward with the terrestrial multichannel [system], the super high-frequency surface microwave, and GRC 201s. We would have had to [move] those forward, and we would have been giving up the connectivity in the rear and back.

Satellites could have made the long-haul jump without any problem at all because of the distances and the elevation. We're talking 22,000 miles from here to the satellite, so that wouldn't have made any difference. But the surface multichannel would have had to [have] been [moved] forward, had to [have] take[n] down nets back here, and move[d] them forward to extend forward. But we still [made] good time and in the satellite gear to get back, so it wouldn't have been a problem.

Now where we would have started to have problems would have been if we would have had some of our satellites' vans taken out. We had two satellite terminals with each division to help them leapfrog and their CP forward to it, to the displacements. It does take an hour and a half to two hours to set up the satellite and tear it down. If one of those had taken a catastrophic hit, and a catastrophic hit could be a .50-cal breaking across

the side of the van, that could be a catastrophic hit, taking out the right stuff that we couldn't replace, then that would have given us some problems. We had some spare vans, but we didn't have the spare people, because we were short the trained operators of technical vans, and most of that goes back to the Reserve comm battalion. We got the equipment from them, but there were no people—no generators, no prime movers, no trucks.

Interviewer: I was going to ask you about your truck problems and how you moved this gear forward. Did you rely on Saudi Motors?

Allen: No sir, mobile loaded on Marine Corps green stuff. With that there's an interesting thing we learned out here. Our satellite vans come loaded two ways, either on a CUCV [commercial utility cargo vehicle], which is basically a Chevy pickup with a diesel engine, or on a humvee, which has four-wheel drive, wider tires. Out here in the desert the CUCV, of course, bogged down right away, so we had to put them all on humvees. But we also found out that with jacking up the bed of the truck just a little bit, I think it was like two inches, we could mount the humvee tires on the CUCV. Even though it didn't have four-wheel drive, it would get through the desert. Those are some awesome tires they put on those humvees. With the weight of the van, we could get it out of some tight spots.

Interviewer: So it wasn't four-wheel drive.

Allen: No, sir.

Interviewer: So did you . . . you didn't use Saudi Motors at all to move your stuff around. This was all . . .

Allen: It's mobile loaded on Marine Corps stuff—the communications. Every once in a while, we'd have to use a Marine Corps LVS [Logistics Vehicle System], the tractor-trailer, to move some of the major terminals. When we decided we were going to hide some of this stuff in the desert, we had to use tractor-trailers, because we didn't have the spare trucks to put under the stuff to keep it mobile loaded. Just didn't have the stuff. That's another thing; the comm battalion has more trailers than it does prime movers. It owns more trailers than they can pull. It's an interesting concept when you add up all the generator trailers, the water bulls [M–149 water trailers], [and] then the antenna trailers, and then you have these other trailers.

Interviewer: Can you think of any significant things that we haven't talked about? Some unusual things that occurred?

Allen: It's interesting to be in this country where they have so many restrictions on . . . weekends here are personal freedoms. As far as just living here, I think that it was real good that there was no alcohol over here—no drinking, absolutely not. Certain people violated the regulations and most of them got NJP [nonjudicial punishment] or court-martials. With all these young Marines and all this ammunition and the weapons, I think it was a good thing, personally, that the alcohol was not present. This generally instills poor judgment, and I'm glad that was gone.

I think this is one of the times where we've been stationed for an extended period of time in a foreign country where we have had very little contact with the foreigners. Well, we're the foreigners. We've had very little contact with the Saudis. We don't go out, and there's no liberty out on the town. There's no eating in their restaurants. It's not like an Okinawa tour. An Okinawa tour where your guys [go] on the town drinking, and you can eat in their restaurants. Here, there's none of that. It's not authorized here. I understand it's authorized down at Riyadh, but it's not authorized up here. That's kind of an interesting restriction. We have taken our lives here; although, we only had one Scud explode anywhere close to us. We were shot at a number of times, or shot over, but the Patriot [antimissile missiles] really did their work. I wish I [had] stock in [American defense contractor] Raytheon before this had started. I'm sure they're doing very well. I'm sure they have none [of the Patriot missiles] collecting dust on the shelves right now.

Interviewer: Were there any Patriot batteries near here?

Allen: The nearest ones here were the port.

Interviewer: Port?

Allen: Port [of] Jubayl. I find it an interesting concept that the ideal distance of a Patriot to intercept a Scud or an [SS-1 Scud-B] al-Hussein missile, cause they weren't all Scuds. Scuds only have a 300-kilometer range, and the al-Hussein can reach out to touch somebody at Riyadh. I find it interesting that the idea of radius is 10–50 miles with somewhere around 12 [miles] for the intercept. And we are directly in the gun target line between Iraq and the port, and we figured that they had actually intercepted one that probably would have been right overhead, and we don't know what the fallout of that would have been. So that was an interesting. . . . So far we haven't had any terrorist problems around here, and that

was good. We were expecting more of a problem. I guess he [?] was just a lot of hot air, because we would have made a pretty lucrative target, I would think. But I don't think that they ever really knew what we were. That the MEF (Rear) was here, that this was the main hub of all the communications, that everything came through here, and for that I am eternally grateful.

Interviewer: Did you have much interaction [with] G-2? How was your interaction with G-2? Were they reliable?

Allen: That's interesting. During the war, I tried to check in with the SCIF [sensitive compartmented information facility] twice a day to find out what was going on [and] how it was going to affect communications and locations. I requested intel from them once on a site we were going to. We had talked about displacing the MEF into Kuwait to al-Jaber [Air Base] airfield. And I needed some data to do a site evaluation, because we couldn't actually go there, because it was then behind the defensive positions. Got nothing, got nothing. We didn't displace in there, because once we had actually gotten through the breach, the area was just too hazardous. There were cluster bombs all over the place that were unexploded—we put 'em there—and there were mines all over the place. There was no way we could have cleaned it up. We couldn't have focused the engineer's efforts to clean that up to move a MEF 40 miles. It just wasn't worth the effort. They could have run the war from here, if they had opted to.

Interviewer: So your interface with G-2 was less than perfect.

Allen: I think we still, in the Marine Corps . . . of course, you talk about volumes of information they're getting more information now than they ever have in the past, with the RPVs [remotely piloted vehicles] and satellites and other services. I think the Marine Corps still holds a problem in information fusion, intelligence fusion, coming out with a very useful product. The one thing that sticks out in my mind is that we were told that when we started a ground war they would desert their positions in three days—I'm sorry, in three hours. And that was not true.

It took, by comparison, considerably longer than that. I guess intel did a real good job at PsyOps [psychological operations], at putting the leaflets out, as some of the POWs said that they had collected up one of every kind of leaflet, and they were going to, when they saw the U.S. forces, they always had something white on them. For as dirty as those guys were, they always had something white, so they could surrender. And they'd hold up each pamphlet until they found the one the unit recognized as "surrender" because some of the pamphlets said, "Hold this up, and we'll take you as a prisoner. We won't shoot you. We won't treat you horribly. Resist and we will." It was interesting; some of the pamphlets that the [U.S.] Army put out had a cartoon of a big bad American soldier with the Marine Corps emblem on its collar. That was kind of interesting.

Some of the pamphlets I had seen coming back down. Their communications were pretty good. The Iraqis did a pretty good job as far as wire communications; they were wired in pretty well. We've collected a great number of switchboards and telephones and radios. Everything from . . . there was one American corporation; I saw a radio that had their name on it. That bothered me. There were also a lot of Soviet [Union-era] radios, some built in Iraq. There was one radio that came back, and it was electronic. We took it apart here and looked at it, and it was electronically the same as a PRC-104 HFR [high frequency radio] radio, but it was crude—I mean I could have done that. I could have built those component parts, but it was the exact same replica of our PRC-104. So they knew what they were doing in communications, they knew what radio silence was, and they stayed off the radio. They used wire in the deep fence, and they had good defensive positions and a good communications network. Didn't help them any, though.

Interviewer: Could you speculate why it didn't help them?

Allen: I think they were misled by their own—it's come out already that they were misled by their own people that the Iraqi higher-ups first of all told them that they were going to fight the Israelis, didn't tell them that they were going to fight the Kuwaitis when they took them down there. And then right before the ground war started, a lot of the officers, the Iraqi officers, told their people they were going to a conference, were going to a meeting, and they never came back. So they really [had] no leadership down there [in Kuwait] when we came across. Now some of them did; [for] the *Republican Guard*, I don't think that was the fear. I mean, I have a hard time believing that they're such an awesome force that we have a tank battle, and we take out 187 T-72 [main battle] tanks, the

premier tank of the world, and we don't take one U.S. casualty. I can't believe that they were trained. There were tanks—their T-72s that were found up there, our communicators saw—[that] had never fired a shot, ever. I mean, not even during this war had not fired a shot. They had never been fired. And I find it interesting. What kind of training could the crew have had?

Interviewer: I've crawled in some tanks that had never fired. It was full of ammunition.

Allen: Could have fired.

Interviewer: Could have fired. In your communications mission did you have any KIAs [killed in action] [or] WIAs [wounded in action]?

Allen: Not one. We had, between the two comm battalions, we had no KIAs, we had no MIAs [missing in action], and I really believe we had no WIAs. I don't think either of the comm battalions got one Purple Heart, which I think that's great—I mean, it's good that it went like that.

Interviewer: Well some of your forward elements, the satellite communications people, they saw [?] way out there and close to the border. Who was giving them security?

Allen: Oh no, sir. They were with the CGs [commanding generals] of the units. And they had the protection that the CG had, because they were inside the perimeter. You can't remote the antenna. It's not like you used to be able to remote the HF antenna.

In fact, when I went up to MEF main, up there at the gravel plain at Khanjar, I saw the radio hill remoted out there, and it was proper remoted a mile away, but it was so flat out there I asked the question: "To what avail?" If they could find that, you go and you look inside of the CP, inside of the compound and the SCIF and the intel, they had their antennas up and there were all kinds of antennas inside there, but why do we do that? I didn't see the sense in it. I mean, I can understand if they didn't really know where we were hiding around. I mean the theory, if they fight on Soviet tactics, is to take out a grid square; they would have gotten them anyway, even at a mile away. You saw the DSC, these big berms that they had. Remoting a mile away is nothing, just an exercise in futility. It kept people from stumbling over our antennas in the dark, kept them out of the way.

Interviewer: Did you get involved in the communication with the forward teams? The recon [reconnaissance] and the ANGLICO teams in the Battle of [al-]Khafji?

Allen: No sir. The only thing we did was, in Khafji—and I wasn't there and I'm not criticizing but—we had some ComSec [communications security] suppressions, because stuff was left behind and that was the only thing that affected us. We had to jump key tapes because of some things that we couldn't account for after the battle because they got, the Iraqis came down so fast—and like I said I'm not casting aspersions, it just happened—but we weren't ready for that. We couldn't have done that too many more times.

Interviewer: In other words, you say, some classified gear got left behind.

Allen: That couldn't be accounted for. I can't say the Iraqis had it, but I couldn't say that they didn't. So the procedure is to supersede and go to the next. That's the only thing that affected us. They were our people, because the communications battalion is in the surveillance, reconnaissance, [and] intelligence group, the SRI group [SRIG]. The ANGLICO is in there; [the] force recon company is in there. They affect us that way. They were our people. But they're mostly single-channel radios—swift, silent, and deadly type stuff, not too much the big stuff. They have their own communicators. We support them. When they have a radio that needs to be floated or repaired, then we repair this for them.

Interviewer: Where are you repairing their equipment?

Allen: We have a maintenance facility. If you'd like to see it afterward, I'd be happy to take you over. It's right across the street, within walking distance.

Interviewer: Oh, across the street.

Allen: Across the street, yes sir. It's in Saudi and Gulf block, and we had two full maintenance companies, wait, maintenance platoons out of the comm battalions, and those guys did a real good job. And we also fixed a lot of gear for the Army that was good gear, comm gear, that we had between the two Services. And they did just a super job keeping everything patched up [and] going through the war.

Interviewer: Did you tell them we'd repair their equipment if they'd give us desert boots?

Allen: [Laughs] Some of us still don't have desert boots, sir, and I don't think they had desert boots until after the war was over. Now, we traded a few things. At one point, I needed the modem for one of the satellite bands, one [of] the 85 bands. I needed MD-1026, which enables you to run for the TriTac groups, super groups, large groups of data

communications up, and we didn't have them present in the van, but we found [them] out there in the Army TRC-170 which are all over in the theater. So I found an Army National Guard unit out of Tallahassee, Florida, that had one of their staff sergeants—super guy, enterprising young individual, he's kind of an older guy—he said that they had three complete sets that were hard down or broken. What I did was he gave me the phone number of his CO [commanding officer], who was a captain, and he was prior enlisted, so we had a lot in common. He was out at Log [Logistics] Base Echo, which was way over at ArCent [U.S. Army Forces Central Command], and said, "Hey, I understand you've got some TRC-170s that are down that's got a modem in it that I can take from that terrestrial multichannel van and put in my satellite van and more than double the communications capability of the van." I said, "How about loaning me one of these?" And he says he was more than willing to cooperate; he'd be happy to [saying], "I'll meet you." And we set up a rendezvous at Narsaraia [*sic*] in the middle of [the] night.

We found a town that was half way between [us], and we waited at power lines where we were supposed to meet up with them. And for that $35,000 modem—which greatly expanded our communications capability, it doubled it for each hub—it cost us eight floppy hats and eight helmet covers in the chocolate chip material. So I'd say that was a pretty good trade. I'm not asking for the helmet covers and the hats back, but I have to give them the modem back; but they said I could give it back to them in Tallahassee when we get back to the states and keep it as long as we need it. They've been real helpful that way. And by the same token, they had some TRC-170s that were here linking Army communications in, and we did some repairs for them that we could do because of our maintenance facility here. So everybody, the Inter-Service cooperation was very, very good.

Interviewer: How about the Inter-Service cooperation with the Saudis and the Kuwaitis? Was there any kind of intermixing of communications or ideas?

Allen: No. As far as I know, [it was] totally separate. I honestly don't know how we communicated. Saudis do communications very differently than we do; they're very centralized. We communicate across boundaries and between divisions, and everything of theirs goes up to the center and down. Even their ComSec, they don't talk across because this way they can cut off military coups very fast, because there's no interoperability amongst their services. Everything goes up to the central point and goes back down. So if you need to talk to somebody over here and you're on the left, you have to go all the way through the chain, it goes there, and it goes back down to him. There's no cross talk. Even their ComSec won't interface that way.

Interviewer: That's unusual. So what about the Iraqis, did the Iraqis do the same thing or do we know?

Allen: Sir, I don't know. I saw some captured Iraqi documents—in fact we have them—that had operation codes. They had little threes, fours. I went up and saw our Kuwaiti ladies, went up and had [them] translate them for us. It had some frequencies; it had primary and alternate frequency; it had their communications structure. They had a center hub that went down to what could have been either platoons or companies and then down one more time and splits into two. They had this one [that] talked to two, and each one of these talked to two more. But there were no lateral lines. The frequencies on the paper were the same. It said they had a primary and alternate; it was an HF frequency and the operations codes. They had codes for brigade commanders; they had names.

Interviewer: Where was this captured?

Allen: One of our communicators [who was] picked up knew the airfields and Jaber airfield when we were trying to displace into there.

•Chapter 4•

Marines on the Ground

During the Gulf War, the Marine Corps employed divisions and regimental combat teams for the first time since the Korean War. As the Corps had not fought a mechanized conflict in a desert environment, Marine tank battalions and the new light armored infantry (LAI) battalions were given the opportunity to show what they could achieve in this conflict. Marines in the reconnaissance and infantry units were forced to adjust to terrain very different from the swamps, jungles, and woodlands they were used to operating in. In addition, the I MEF had a U.S. Army armored brigade attached for the liberation of Kuwait, another new and unexpected challenge.

Brigadier General Thomas V. Draude

Brigadier General Thomas V. Draude was born on 25 April 1940 in Kankakee, Illinois, and commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps in June 1962. He served two tours in the Vietnam War, as advisor to the Vietnamese Marines in III and IV Corps of Vietnam and in Cambodia. He was advanced to the rank of brigadier general in October 1989 and served in the Gulf War as assistant division commander of 1st MarDiv and concurrently as the I MEF deception officer. As assistant division commander, Draude worked under and in concert with Major General James M. "Mike" Myatt. General Draude retired from the Marine Corps on 1 January 1993.

Brigadier General Draude was interviewed on 21 June 2006 by Colonel Richard D. Camp, Dr. Fred Allison, and Paul Westermeyer of the Marine Corps History Division. In his extensive interview, Brigadier General Draude touches on many subjects: Task Force Troy, the Battle of al-Khafji, Iraqi defenses and fighting capabilities, environmental issues, and the general nature of Marine Corps warfare.

Allison: I'd like to start off the interview to put this in context; I'd like to ask when you were assigned to assistant division commander for the 1st Marine Division and what your thoughts were upon getting that post.

Draude: I was at the Pentagon. At the time, I was just finishing up an assignment working for the deputy secretary of defense on an item called the [the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on] Defense Management Report. This report was written by David Packer [*sic*] and some others on how to run the department more efficiently, savings, things like putting together an acquisition core, consolidating various depots, and so forth, but basically to manage/lead the Department of Defense [DOD] better with some savings. So I was the implementation officer for that and just finishing up when in August, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, and [I was] kind of watching that for a bit, and I guess it just hit me that with the combat experience that I had in Vietnam that there might be an opportunity to make use of that, to share that with the Marine Corps. So I wrote a letter to General [Alfred M.] Gray [Jr.],* which basically said, "Send me in coach. I don't smoke."

I said, "My work here is very well done," and I had shared with my seniors at the deputy's office that I could be released on a moment's notice and just offered whatever I could to help the cause. So he came back fairly quickly and said, "Okay Draude, you want to go to 1st MarDiv to be the assistant division commander?" Of course, I was ecstatic. But I was ecstatic that I was, you know, one, going to return to the 1st Marine Division where I began in the Marine Corps, but secondly that I was going to have a chance to make a contribution to a major endeavor for the country as well as the Marine Corps. And [Major] General Mike Myatt was the division commander. We had known each other when we both had served at the [U.S.] Naval Academy [in Annapolis, Maryland], but not close friends but obviously knew one another.

Allison: Okay, sir. So you arrived out at [MCB] Camp Pendleton [California]?

Draude: No, I joined in Saudi Arabia.

Allison: Oh, you did? You went directly to Saudi Arabia?

Draude: Yeah, they already had deployed me, so I joined them in Saudi Arabia and got acclimated physically, as well as in the time zone, and whatever we were going about. And of course in those days and the early days, our posture was totally a defensive one. And really we were going to be, I use the term "speed bump," but there was kind of the thought that if the bad guys started rolling

*Gen Gray was the USMC Commandant during the Gulf War.

Photo by Capt D. A. Haynes. Defense Imagery DM-SN-92-03193

VAdm Francis R. Donovan, USN, right, commander of Military Sealift Command, talks with BGen Thomas Draude, assistant commander of 1st MarDiv, while visiting a camp during Operation Desert Shield.

down, we had to ensure that they . . . not just the oil but also the water, for Saudi Arabia was a real concern. So that was kind of the orientation of the defenses in those days was to withstand an assault that would really, might just put a crimp in the style of the Saudis, but possibly bring them to their knees.

But of course with every passing day, the U.S. with the Marines, [U.S.] Army, and so forth was getting stronger and the tide or the balance was shifting against the Iraqis. But early on it was really not a real encouraging situation when you've looked at all the numbers that weren't matching up, and our thought was that if we could just slow them down and bring to bear the other forces and supporting arms and so forth that that would do the trick. But it was clearly a defensive posture, and I may be getting ahead a bit, but until about the time of the Marine [Corps] birthday, so around the 10th of November, I was going around talking the birthday talks and so forth. I guess part of that, we had been told we were going to be replaced by the 2d Marine Division, so it was going to be a rotation situation so many months in and so many months out and back and forth.

Then Bob Simon, who was [with] CBS News—and I always thought highly of him for this—he was interviewing me and asking about the upcoming war, and I said, "Well it'll happen when they come across." So we got all finished with the interview, and he said, "I guess you didn't get the word, but the U.S. forces are going to be reinforced. It's not going to be a matter of your being relieved by the 2d [Marine] Division." So I said, "Gee, thanks for not making me look like an idiot," [laughter] "or more of an idiot than I am." But any event, that's when I found out that we were going to be reinforced, so with that we went from a defensive posture to planning the assault into Kuwait.

Camp: General, when you first got there, how much of the division was there or were they all present, roughly?

Draude: There were still some battalions that as I recall were in Okinawa [Japan]. They were making their way to join us. And of course, what had happened, the naming of the units was interesting. Rather than using regimental designations, we used the task force designation, because depending upon where the units were located and what their assignments were, they would be under basically a regimental commander. So instead of 1st Marines, 7th Marines, and so forth, it was Task Force Ripper,

which was the 7th Marines; Task Force Papa Bear, which was the 1st Marines under [Colonel Richard W.] "Rich" Hodory; and Task Force Taro. And that was the grouping of the various battalions as opposed to being under the 1st Marines, 5th Marines, 7th Marines, etc. Yes sir?

Camp: Were you forward deployed fairly well on the border at that stage or not?

Draude: We were up; I think our farthest most element was up just south of [al-]Khafji [in Saudi Arabia] and to the south of Kuwait, and at that time we were starting to work with the Saudi Arabian National Guard, who were also forward deployed. And we thought it made sense, and it turned out to make a great deal of sense, to start cross-training with them, but probably more importantly to start to gain relationships with them—that they knew us; we knew them. The trust factor came into play very importantly in the Battle of [al-]Khafji when the Saudi Arabian National Guard, SANG, went in to oust the Iraqis who had come across.

Allison: What was your impression of the Saudis?

Draude: We weren't sure in all honesty that they were going to fight. The Saudis let the Americans do the fighting for them. Although the more we saw of the SANG, the more impressed we became. It's just a culture that basically you hire people to do dirty work and things you don't want done. And we weren't real sure as to what they'd do. That was diminished again at the Battle of Khafji when a couple of things took place. The Saudis grew in stature; the Iraqis shrunk in stature. They went from being 10 feet tall, eighth largest army, fought the Armenians, all the rest of it. After Khafji, when we saw that they really could not fight and maneuver, they had lots of control problems and so forth. We became very confident in the Saudis and very, I guess, convinced that we were going to do well in this fight with the Iraqis.

Allison: That sort of leads into one of Paul's questions here talking about coordination with the Saudis and how do you handle that assignment. Do you have any specifics on that?

Draude: First liaison advisor, [Colonel Joseph] "Joe" Molofsky,* here at security battalion, you ought to talk to him.

Westermeyer: He's on my list.

Draude: Okay, he was with them; he would be [a] great one to talk to about this aspect. I guess the big thing was getting our troops to deal with it, and it was strange. I hate to say, well, in order to do that you've got to have linguists. Well, linguists help soldiers understand one another. And just get the Marines with the Saudi Arabian National Guard force, the SANG, put on the poncho liners, and start to disassemble weapons and so forth. And they're kind of making up their own language so to speak. And they're able to communicate in their own way without the aid of a linguist; I guess that was not that surprising, too. I mean, the quality of Marines that we had then [and] that we had now, I mean they're there to help people. They're there to keep the Saudis from losing their country. They're there to fight the bad guys. These were allies, and they were going to do what they could to make it work. And so lots of coordination-type visits, some social aspects, again those things that people would say, "Isn't that kind of a waste of time?" Not really, I think it builds up the trust and knowledge that you're working with a man who has responsibilities, who has character. You know, family men who care about their family, who care about their troops, who is going to be tactically proficient. The exercises and the involvement we had with them seemed to help in that regard.

Westermeyer: You mentioned that the Saudi Arabian National Guard was primarily the force that went into Khafji later on. The Saudi Arabian military is broken up actually. There's the Saudi Arabian Army. And then there's the Saudi Arabian National Guard, which is traditionally more involved with internal security, policing Mecca [Saudi Arabia], etc.

Draude: Pipeline security.

Westermeyer: Right. Did you notice a difference between the two interacting with them, or from the American perspective they were essentially "the Saudis?"

Draude: Our only contact was with the SANG, the Saudi Arabian National Guard. I was told there was a reason for the SANG as well as the Saudi Arabian Army, and it's basically that neither gets too strong in comparison with one another. I guess a pretty good tactic if you're in power in that situation. But we found the SANG not to be liked, not to be good soldiers. Because later on we had a little bit of dealings with the Saudi Arabian Marines and once again, good troops. I think it gets down to if you have good leadership and a reason to fight and a reason to train, you can turn just about anybody into a soldier.

*For more on Col Molofsky, see his interview later in this chapter.

Allison: You shared, have fairly common equipment, weapons with the Saudis, or was that a problem?

Draude: I think it was common enough that we didn't have to become experts in new weapons systems and I guess basic small arms. They had no artillery, so there's not a problem there, but they knew what we had, and the M198 [155mm howitzer] was very, very effective. They sure liked that in the Battle of Khafji, but small arms seemed to be compatible and not a problem.

Camp: Did you have the ANGLICO up and running at that time or had they been disbanded?

Draude: Yeah. No, ANGLICO was up and running and again very effective as well.

Camp: So they were the real liaison?

Draude: Yeah, they were there and Joe [Molofsky], who was a linguist, was an advisor, I think, because of his Arabic speaking capability. But good point, ANGLICO units were there as well.

Camp: What did you concentrate on as the ADC [assistant division commander], general?

Draude: The cross-training [Major] General Myatt* asked me to do. We had both been advisors with the Vietnamese Marines, so there's a commonality that we both had. But we had lots of other things to focus on. He asked me to focus on that, the logistics of being in good shape in that regard, and then later on the deception planning that we put together and that we attempted to execute; so those were kind of the main factors.

Westermeyer: Can we talk more about the deception program? That was Task Force Troy, and usually you're credited with the idea behind Task Force Troy, with creating it, and coming up with the basic concept. Can you talk a little bit about your inspiration and how that came to be, and why you built it the way that you built it?

Draude: I was sitting there one day—my day was normally to go around, visit units, see what's going on, see, and be seen. The things you're supposed to do as [a] general officer. For a reasonable time, observe everything and admire nothing. The problem is if you admire something, then you'll see it replicated throughout, and maybe that's not what you want. You just want to say, "Do this." But anyway I try to get out and about. But anyway, on this one occasion, something inspired me to sit down, I mean, [get a] pad like this, and just wrote up for General Myatt some thoughts on deception. And I said, "I don't see much of this going on, and I know it's not been used a great deal, but I think we're missing a bet if we don't start to think about deception." It's a way of fighting smart; it's a part of the maneuver warfare idea. And I was not a maneuver warfare guru expert or even fan until that time, but General Myatt was, so it resonated with him. But it just seems to me that we, especially as Americans, ought to really be good with deception, because we live with it all our lives; it's called advertisement. And so for us to not use this arrow in our quiver would just be dumb. So [I] wrote the whole thing up, gave it to General Myatt who gave it to [Lieutenant] General [Walter E.] Boomer,* who said, "This is great, Draude. You're now the deception officer." So part of that lesson is come up with a brilliant idea. So, a couple of things we did, one was I guess might have been a bit later when we were really getting focused on the 5th MEB and the amphibious assault that was being planned, and I attended all the briefings. And we just saw it was almost as if we were forcing an amphibious assault particularly with the minds we were going to be in combat with, and then you look at the potential landing sites. I mean, landing in the middle of downtown Kuwait—maybe not that extreme—but there were just no . . .

Allison: Sort of like [the battle of] Inchon [during the Korean War] or something?

Draude: Well no, Inchon really made more sense; at least there was a place to land.

Allison: Yeah, I mean industrial areas.

Draude: Yeah and so anyhow and on this one occasion, I remember it well, because the issue is are we going to do the amphibious assault. And we ran [through] all the primarily cons, but still, yeah, we're going to do it. And I finally just said to the junior guy there, I said, "Why do we feel compelled to do an amphibious assault when it really, from what we can gather here, is not necessary?" Somebody said, "Draude, you don't understand. The political future of the Marine Corps requires that we do an amphibious assault." I guess without thinking, the words came out, and I said, "If we're gong to risk life and limb, Marines and civilians, for the political future of the Marine Corps, we're not worth the stars we're wearing." Whoa. I saw my career flash in front of my eyes.

Westermeyer: [Lieutenant] General Boomer was at this conference?

*MajGen Myatt commanded 1st MarDiv.

*LtGen Boomer commanded I MEF and MarCent.

Draude: [Lieutenant] General Boomer, thank God, said, "Tom's right. There is no need for us to do it." But maybe we ought to continue to make the enemy think that, so that was kind of the beginning of that particular aspect of the deception, and I teach a class now on information operations and part of it is do you lie to the press. And absolutely not, and at no times have we lied to the press that we were going to do an amphibious assault. Now the press was with the Marines as they practiced, as they did rehearsals, saw all the capabilities. The press from that infers certain things, but did anybody to my knowledge say, "Yeah, we are going to do it"? [That] was not the case, and see that's part of the . . . you never lie to the press, because you'll never get over it. But you can certainly give every indication that you're going to do something that you want the enemy to think you're going to do. And that's what came about there.

Task Force Troy was an internal one, actually was a I MEF thing. And what we said was we ought to have this little force that we can use to execute our internal, if you will, our MEF level, and below deception operations. And so I got somewhere in here the notional task organization and then what we actually had. What we wanted to do was get a smattering of some of the ground combat element, the command element, the aviation combat element [ACE], the combat service and support element [CSSE] that would replicate kind of a mini MAGTF [Marine air-ground task force]. And what we wanted to do was through it help in our deception operation particularly in the location of the 2d Marine Division.

Now let me back up a little bit. The 2d Marine Division arrived. Lots of discussion as to how we're going to make the breach [and] where we were going to make it. And we must have changed our plan half a dozen times. One of the things I feel very good about is that we would say is, "Okay it's going to be at this spot." And we went up and down the . . . we'd go to the Marines who were going to be a part of this [and say], "Okay, this is what we're thinking. What have we missed, what are the assumptions, what are the things that you're going to have to execute? So what would you provide to us?" And take that to them, go back, and refine it.

One of the main questions was, is it going to be a side-by-side breach, 2d Marine Division, 1st Marine Division? Or was it going to be a trace? I hate to tell you that I and General Myatt thought it'd be the best in trace—that is, we make the initial breach and then 2d [Marine] Division would come through us. General Boomer, and again I really credit him with the presence of seeing the potential complications of that plus how long the outfit would be when you put two Marine divisions and these elements nose to tail. So with that, the decision was made that the 2d [Marine] Division would breach to the west of us. They were located to the east of us, so one of the first aspects for Task Force Troy was replicate the 2d Marine Division over to the east of our location to make the bad guys think that they're still there as the division pulls out behind us and gets over to the west of us in preparation for the breach.

So I had the Seabees, God bless them, and they made some dummy artillery pieces, tanks and so forth. And as the units of 2d [Marine] Division came out at night, that's when the dummy pieces go in so that the trails would be there—all the things that would be associated with that particular kind of unit. We also had helicopters. I asked them, whenever they're flying anywhere in the vicinity of where the 2d Marine Division had been, they were this Task Force Troy which never got larger than about 200 people. Where they were located, it just stopped down, dropped down, as if you're making a liaison, making a pickup, and so that from the other side of the border, you're watching all the stuff that used to happen with the 2d [Marine] Division while I was there, and now it seems the same kind of business as usual. We really felt good that we were able to pull that off, and again, to replicate the division of over 20,000 with only 200. Again, we were lucky, had great support, but the main thing was the imagination and a quick tutorial here.

A great book I read, it's called a *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor [E.] Frankl. Amazing guy—he was an Austrian Jew psychiatrist who was in Auschwitz, Dachau, just saw the worst in man's humanity. But he had a phrase in his book that says, "If you can understand the why, you can live with the how." And you know afterward, I used that with my civilian crew at USAA [insurance company] and other spots. Whenever we make a change, we get so focused on the how that we say, "Open up your mouth while I cram down the how." Rather than saying, "Here's why we're doing what we want to do. What do you think?" And help me come up with the how, because in the process you'll understand the how and then do a better job of . . . I guess that's what we—I hadn't read the book at that time—but I guess that's kind of what we were focusing on—where we wanted to go, why are we doing all of this, and then to get these individuals to help, I tell you.

Also as I do in my class on deception, you've gotta be careful when you say deception, because as soon as you say that, the strangest people come out of the woodwork. They consider themselves deception experts, and, of course, what makes deception work is realism. Who gets fooled by some outlandish thing that can never happen? You get fooled by what's normal, what you would expect, and then suddenly it ain't there—so that's what we do in short. Another thing with [Task Force] Troy that was really fun was, one day an Army captain shows up from psychological operations. Fortunately, I had in a previous life had been an instructor at [U.S. Army installation] Fort Bragg [North Carolina]. And had taken some classes in psychological operations, so I had a little bit of an idea of what you might be able to do. But the plan began with the captain. "Okay captain, what have you got?" He says, "Well, I've got leaflets, you know, all kinds of leaflets." Well, okay, then I guess we'll use those to some benefit although you've got to be careful that the message you send is what makes sense to the recipient, not what makes sense to you. But anyhow, it sounds like I'm teaching again. And he says, "I've got some tapes." And I said, "Boy, now you're talking. What have you got? Country western? Classical? Rock 'n' roll?" "No sir, no sir. I've got tapes of noise." "Okay, captain, listen, I've got all the noise I need." And he said, "No, no, no, sir. This is noise made by weapon systems." And I said, "No kidding? Have you got any tank noise?" "Have I got tank noise? I've got [M1] A1 [Abrams main battle] tank, and I've got M60[A1] [Patton main battle] tank noise." And I said, well, we had the M60 tank—so again, realism. I said, "Give me your M60 tank tapes, and we're going [to] mount those on loudspeakers, and we're going to run them up and down opposite the lines of where the Iraqis are to get them used to hearing tank noises at night."

Well after we had punched through, we had our interpreters with us, and he picks up the log book, and he says, "You know, this is amazing, the first night that those tank noises ran, these guys went ballistic—'Tank attack! Tank attack! Pull over.'" You know, of course, nothing happened. Second night, "Tank attack! Tank attack!" After about two weeks of tank noises—ho hum. And then one night, they heard tank noises, but they weren't recordings.

Allison: Real tanks.

Draude: And the end of the world came down, because we kind of said how do you fight this war smart? You know? And why don't we make use of stuff like that. So that was the fun part of Task Force Troy was I guess we kind of made it up as we went along. And what seemed to make sense without getting too outlandish or too hokey is the word that I used. Like we said one time, "The objective is to confuse the enemy not amuse them." And sometimes we do such screwball things that you know they're sitting on the other side saying, "Can you believe that they think we're going to believe that they can. . . . " So you know, that was the Task Force Troy's job.

Camp: Did you include in the communications the deception?

Draude: We had some dummy traffic; we were able to get some of that. Again part of the problem with the deception plan—you bring up a great point, because you've got to know who you're trying to deceive. You've got to trigger the guy who makes the decision that will help you accomplish your mission. So for us, it was the Iraqi people in command. So I got the intel guys, not just MEF. They came down from CentCom. I said, "Okay, tell me everything you can about these guys." I want to know what level of sophistication, how much training they had, what's his background, because you can't send a message over his head. And if it's sent too low, then it's gonna be, "What the hell is this guy trying to do." Like Goldilocks, it's got to be just right. I said, "Okay, tell me about this guy. Do you know anything about him? You don't know anything about him, do you? Haven't you been doing the profiles?" He said, "Well, we have, but not on these guys." "Okay, well, then we've just got to guess what would be the right level, but a real deception planner would have said, the commander would have said, "You know, General Schmuckatella, here's his education, here's his background, here's . . . " and then engage accordingly. So instead of being able to shoot with a rifle, it was more of a shotgun. So to answer your question, not much in that regard. I think we attempted to apparently keep up the volume of traffic but of course the 2d [Marine] Division was doing lots of traffic instead of pulling out there behind them as well.

Allison: But you're pretty satisfied with the results? Once you found out, once the war started and everything, [that] they had been deceived.

Draude: Yeah, yeah. That really made us feel good. Maybe we had saved a few lives rather than doing what you know . . . it's really kind of cheap. I mean, what it cost to take the tapes that were there

Photo courtesy of BGen Thomas V. Draude

BGen Thomas Draude, who devised the deceptive strategy employed by Joint Task Force Troy during the Gulf War, talks to Marines.

already and put them on loud speakers and do the Seabees and the great stuff that they've done. And I hope that part of the war is not lost, and some people say, "Well, you know, we're so sophisticated these days. You can't deceive anybody." I mean one of the things that doesn't change is human nature, and that's the advantage that I think we have to take advantage of.

Allison: When you arrived out there, was the—I'm not really clear on this—was the, did you know it was going to be an offensive?

Draude: Oh no, no, when I arrived . . .

Allison: It came along later, didn't it?

Draude: Yeah, when I arrived, it was a defensive posture. We were there to ensure that the Iraqis did not come into Saudi Arabia, and if they did, that they be punished—we use the term speed bump, to settle them down sufficiently to protect the critical areas. So it was, to begin with, totally a defensive posture. It was only when the decision was made that we were not going to be replaced by the 2d [Marine] Division, but reinforced by 2d [Marine] Division, that we got into the defensive mode.

Allison: And then you started doing the planning for the Kuwait invasion.

Draude: Correct.

Allison: What role did you play in that? One of the next, one of our questions there.

Draude: I guess, you know, constantly reviewed the plans, providing kind of a sanity check as to what seemed to make sense.

Allison: You spoke about it, a little bit I guess, with General Boomer's decision to go side by side.

Draude: Push, yeah. Yeah, and we spent . . . quick sidebar here. We had initially with us the Desert Rats, not the real ones, but the guys with the bad teeth and the funny accents and so forth. You know, the Brits.

Allison: The Brits.

Westermeyer: The 7th British Armored [Brigade]?

Draude: Yeah and what a great outfit. One of the things that they had that we didn't was experience in getting through berms, trenches, and so forth. So they had Irish with them and Scots but a great, great group.

I guess we're always trying to find ways to accomplish what we had [to do]. That was like with the pipe that was put on the side of an amtrac [amphibious vehicle], a plastic pipe with explosive bolts that could detonate inside. And the idea was you would—say this was the trench—you'd kind of pull up parallel to it, let go of the explosive bolts [and] the PCP [plastic pipe] would drop out on the ditch. Depending on how deep it was, it'd take maybe two or three of these, and then you had the means to get across the ditch without the bulldozer and all the rest of the stuff that may not have been survivable.

Another one that we tried, and I still think worked, was the big berm. [We] brought out a fire truck with a high pressure hose, to see if that would get into it. It didn't have the results that we wanted, but anyway, we were able to at least give that a try. One that I also won't say is maybe kind of a deception plan, but we also got very much involved in with the artillery raids. As the air campaign was taking place, what we wanted to instill in the minds of the Iraqi soldier was if you fire at an American, you're going to regret it. And so even though we were outnumbered, out-tanked, out-amtracked, all the rest of it, we thought that we could break their will, and we'd have a good chance of succeeding.

So [we] put together these things called artillery raids, and it was designed with two artillery units, roughly a battery apiece. I think maybe four guns as opposed to six guns. One would be the firing, and the other would be the counterbattery. And the idea was to at night, get up close to the border. We always chose a target that made sense. And again, we avoided the hokeyness of saying, "We're going to do this just to look good." It had to be for example on the turret position, command-and-control position, something that made sense for us to go after. The trick was how do you get up there when the Iraqis take ground radar that could pick up the movement. And the intel folks told us the Iraqis and the Brits used the same system. So we said, "Okay, let's give this a try." So we're setting up the radar. Okay, doing the sweep, and put overhead the [Grumman] EA-6B [Prowlers], shooting the electrons at it, jamming it. So we knew we could jam the radar if the artillery was in position.

So that was the first part, was to jam the radar, get the artillery units into position. First unit with fire on the target and the Iraqis they just never caught on. It was amazing. It would automatically fire when they're fired upon, whether or not they had a target or not. What they didn't realize is that we also had our artillery radar that could pick up the exact coordinates as soon as that first round went off, and if that was a little bit too far, we also had, circling overhead, [a] flight of F[/A]-18s. So as soon as they fired, they were setting aiming stakes for themselves and between the F-18 coming in and the counterbatteries that we had. It worked time after time.

Allison: They never figured it out?

Draude: They never caught on. No. And the only thing that we hoped was that after a while they realized, "Look, if you fire on these Americans, then"—I think we had that in one of the leaflets—"if you fire on us, you're going to regret it." One was surrender, or bad things are going to happen. Actually, it was a B-52 drop.

Draude: The next leaflet says, basically, "See, I told you so. Yeah, you ought to surrender." It sounds like, we were making it up as we went [along] and maybe that's the case, but what we're doing is making use of the assets that we had but with a goal in mind. We're going to fight smart. And we're going to break their will. And if we're good, they will give up after minimal fighting. And if we're real good, they'll give up without fighting. And that's what we wanted to accomplish. And in the process, save lives on both sides.

Allison: Was that slowly becoming more and more apparent to you that there was not going to be, they weren't going to put up a big fight?

Draude: Again, the Battle of Khafji helped me a great deal. But maybe these guys weren't as tough and as strong, as dedicated, as they had been made out to be. And seeing things like this where they just weren't very smart. The intel, [Lieutenant] General [Bernard E.] Trainor came to visit us, and he had been an observer in the Iran-Iraq War. I'll never forget, the best intel that we got was from General Trainor. He said, "Let me tell you about the Iraqi soldier." The infantrymen are really not very good, I mean, they will have a sector of fire and that's it. And they're not supposed to move beyond it. The tanks they use as pillboxes, and command and control is not one of their strong suits. Artillery [is] a little bit better. The best units were the engineers. In the Iran-Iraq War, they used the engineers to construct instant berms to hold back the Iranians.

Camp: General, could you [or] how would you classify the Battle of Khafji?

Draude: Well, I think two things. I kind of either mentioned or alluded to one was how good, tough,

proficient were the Iraqis. And before the battle, their reputation was much higher than it was after the battle. Secondly, how good, tough, proficient were the Saudis and their reputation after the battle was in my opinion much higher than before the battle. So we saw the kind of the balance switch, if you will. I guess what had . . . couple of things. The inability of the Iraqis to fire and maneuver was astounding to us and kind of some basic things there. We had some recon units that were in the town that were kind of interesting, hopping from building to building and calling in "Fire!" on the Iraqis and without their realizing where [or] why is this precision fire coming down on us. Without a realization, "Gee, I wonder if they have eyes in the sky or something." Again, kind of a naiveté that was surprising.

The SANG that was given the order to retake Khafji had a great story. [The] commander was named Turki, Colonel Turki [al-Firmi of the 2d Saudi Arabian National Guard Brigade], and he's going over the plans and thought, "Boy these guys are doomed." And just then Colonel [John H.] Admire, Task Force Taro, walked in and said, "Colonel Turki, I'm here to report that all of the assets that I have available, artillery, etc., is available to you." And with that Colonel Turki says, "The Marines are with us. We attack." And we did so, and we took Khafji with relatively little resistance and problems. But I think, and I guess I'd be more inclined toward General Trainor in that assessment, because of the perceptions of our ally and our future enemy and how they changed. I think it was a significant battle.

Over to the west, [at] something called the "elbow," there was another battle about this same time. When a couple of tank brigades came down and the Task Force Shepherd, the LAVs [light armored vehicles] took them on and just tore them to pieces. It was amazing. I went out the next day, because we had word that another large force was coming, going to come down the next day, and I went down to organize some defenses around it. But, I mean these Marines of Task Force Shepherd [TF Shepherd] were just, I mean, sky high. They went out and [took] a look at the battle damages, one tank hulk after another. The [Emerson 901A1] TOW [2] [tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided] [antitank guided] missiles had just really done a job on them. It certainly made us feel better about the preparation we had made, capabilities of our systems, the training elements. And I tried to impress the TF Shepherd guys, I said, "You did a great job, but understand we really don't want you to take on a lot of tanks.

Allison: They had LAVs.

Draude: Yeah. Either you've got this much and go, "Aw, we can do it, sir. Look at . . . " Typical Marine response of, "What does this general know? Look at the results up here." But they really did a job. They were superb.

Allison: So morale was sky high?

Draude: Oh yeah, yeah. I mean it was. When I talked about another attack coming, he goes, "Great, bring it on."

Westermeyer: Sir, can you talk more specifically about your role during the battle and your perceptions as the battle progressed? When did you first hear the major Iraqi offensive was happening? What did you think of that, that sort of thing?

Draude: Intelligence indicated that more was coming down. At that time, I went out with just a small command group because we were really getting focused on the assault. Thought this was just going to be maybe not as bad as was intended. We again [thought] it was going to be a case of our trying to trade you know, space for time. That they did come down. We had again Task Force Shepherd with the LAVs out ahead of us and not much else; all the rest was over in to the east. So it was an interesting night only [in] that [we] weren't sure if the rumors were going to hold true until obviously it was not. But as the ADC, it was the proper place for me to be out there in order to keep General Myatt back where he was with the main force.

Westermeyer: Along the border there, at the police station, the observation posts [OPs] were manned not just by the LAI battalions, but also by Army Special Forces and recon. Were the Army Special Forces within the Marine chain of command, or were they a separate chain of command? Do you recall?

Draude: I think it was a separate chain of command. But whatever, it didn't present a problem of, you know "who's your boss" and "who's your daddy," and, you know, "what do you do" and "who do you take orders from" and so forth. I think at that point there was a great unity of effort without worrying too much what color uniform you were wearing.

Westermeyer: There were two issues with air that popped up during Khafji. One is somewhat after the fact. Saudi General Khaled [bin Sultan bin Saud]* in his autobiography after the event basically

*Gen Khaled was commander of the Saudi Arabian and allied Arab forces.

claimed that the Marine Corps sort of hogged the airpower. That Marine air was supposed to support the Saudis during the initial Iraqi attack, and that because the Marine Corps didn't provide the air that was promised, that was why Khafji was initially taken. Did you have any experience of that at the time, or did you ever get a sense that airpower was being denied to the Saudis? Or artillery?

Draude: No, none at all. I don't know what would cause that criticism, but I know that there was no decision to withhold any support to the Saudis in that endeavor, quite the contrary. I don't know where that criticism would come from.

Westermeyer: I guess some of the comments are that the artillery units attached to 3d Marines and that the air in the Khafji region that there were strikes that were turned down by . . . that the Marines in Khafji called for strikes, and they were told "No," and because [of] that the Saudi Arabians' positions could not be confirmed. It was not certain where the friendlies were, therefore no fire. Do you recall that at the time?

Draude: I don't and I would say that any time you had a forward observer, who's a Marine who says, "I know where the friendlies are, and these are good targets," that there'd be no reason to withhold that. So again, and it sounds like that would have stuck in my mind and how come we didn't, you know, provide the support or where was the breakdown. So I again, we all have a different perception, but that is one of the dramatic enough [events] that I would have remembered, "Gee, I really feel bad because we didn't support the Saudis," quite the contrary to that comment of Colonel Turki, of keeping the Marines with us and no hesitation of attacking to retake Khafji.

Westermeyer: So ANGLICO units really did a good job?

Draude: Oh yeah, yeah.

Westermeyer: Did they use naval gunfire at all?

Draude: I don't think on that occasion, that doesn't ring a bell. Later on and further up in the taking of Kuwait City. We had one occasion, and we'll get into it, but when we were doing a time on target [TOT] on a couple of Iraqi tank brigades that were out in the oil fields, and we had all the artillery pieces in the division you know lined up to do these two time on targets. And the range from the battleship was max.

Camp: Dispersion?

Draude: Yeah, you get that too much and as a Naval Academy graduate, I thought, "D——n!" Here's a chance to use the battleship that I really . . . but it was too, it was one of those things that would have been forcing an issue that just didn't make sense.

Westermeyer: That would have been during the [al-]Burqan oil fields [in Kuwait]?

Draude: Exactly. Yeah.

Westermeyer: The question that I get looking at the counts of the battles and the command chronologies is that Khafji was a battle run at the battalion and regimental level and that the division and the MEF really took a hands-off approach. Is that your impression, and if it is, was that a deliberate decision, part of standard operating procedure?

Draude: Yeah, I think it's a probably fairly accurate [impression] in that, and you reminded me that at the same time we had other things going on. So we had become so focused on Khafji to the detriment of what appeared to be a fairly significant attack over to the west that would not have been very smart. The MEF, as far as—I can't speak for them—but I think 3d Marines, Task Force Taro, was the one supporting the Iraqi soldiers over in the Khafji situation, and we were certainly focused on Task Force Shepherd with the events over in the elbow.

Westermeyer: So there was a sense that these commanders are doing the job that they need to do and we should let them do it.

Draude: Sometimes the greatest leadership trait is to leave people alone. Not every senior officer subscribes to that, but [it] is one that I thought was appropriate more times than not.

Westermeyer: Are there any other thoughts on Khafji before we move on that you'd like to add?

Draude: No. I think we've hit what I consider to be the main parts of it. And I guess again, given the choice between the two perceptions, I think it was significant again because of our perception of the Iraqis, our perception of the Saudis.

Westermeyer: How much of a surprise was it—the battle? Any intel on that or anything that they were moving?

Draude: I guess what surprised us is that they had gotten in as quickly as they had, to answer that part. As far as the results, I guess kind of a pleasant surprise, because we again succeeded with relatively nonscathed. So again, that was a surprise, but a pleasant one. And the same way with Task Force Shepherd, that probably the greater surprise was again the way that this [LAV] vehicle [was] so maneuverable but so lightly armored. It has such

an effect. I mean, we're talking about coming into its own. That's the picture I have in my office, is of all the things that we [captured] during the Gulf War; it's the LAV.

Allison: Wow. What kind of a weapon did they have? What was their main weapon?

Draude: Well, chain gun was their . . .

Allison: That's a 25mm?

Draude: Yeah. That's one that we really got right. I mean, we used to tell stories of being able to keep firing for as long as you can provide the enemy without stopping. That's really good. And of course, the TOW missile proved itself very, very well. So those are the main . . .

Camp: Was there any fallout on the blue-on-blue, [friendly fire]?

Draude: Yeah, yeah. That's a good point. That was just one of those unfortunate things that happens in . . . you know of all casualties that you take, the one that's tough is the friendly fire. And that was just priority trying to figure out if it was disorientation or cleared when it shouldn't have been cleared. And I know the investigation had taken place and all of that, but it is sobering. Without sounding too grisly, it is sobering to see the effects of our weapons system. I was just thinking today, I was at church the other day, and one of the Marines was wearing combat boots and his dog tag. Up until that incident, I had thought that was kind of hokey, wearing the dog tag, you know on the boot. As a result of that incident, and we saw what it did to our troops, that may be the only identification that you can come up with. And so with that, the division ordered from then on out everybody wears a dog tag in the left boot or right boot. I'm not sure which one, but the hope was that if all else fails, that it'd be there for identification. It was, when I say devastating, really hurt to lose them, but it wasn't like things you'd expect and hope. We sat down and said, "Oh God, what are we going to do now?" Well, you do better, you try to make sure that doesn't happen again, but you know you can't walk around with your head down and your tail between your legs. Unfortunately, that can take place. Hopefully, it'll never happen again. But yeah, that was a sobering moment for all of us.

Westermeyer: Ironically, I believe that the only casualties the Marines at OP-4 [Observation Post 4] took were the blue-on-blue ones?

Draude: I think so; I don't think any [were] inflicted by the enemy.

Westermeyer: There was a group called the Tiger Team that was formed to do an investigation into that incident. Did you have any role in that or . . .

Draude: No, not that I remember.

Westermeyer: When did you [or] how did it affect morale in the unit once you—well, we know what it did after the Battle of Khafji but even before that—when you found out that there was going to be an invasion instead of just a defensive brawl?

Draude: Well, it was a shot in the arm. For all Marines, given the choice between attacking and defending, you prefer to attack. And, so the decision that we were going to do something about it—we were going to attack and we were going to liberate Kuwait—was a great shot in the arm. But for all of us—this is what Marines do, we do the tough things, and in this case we were going to do it as smart as we possibly [could].

Allison: Was there a noticeable difference between . . . was it like déjà vu in Vietnam? Or was it a totally different feeling from the previous experience with Marines as they approach combat?

Draude: I had the advantage—it's a good question—being with the first unit of the 1st Marine Division to go into Vietnam in '65, so there was that aspect of going into combat for many of us in that case, for the first time. You know, to be honest with you, there was a tremendous adrenaline, excitement, you know. We were going to be combat Marines. A lot of people would say, "Well, that doesn't make you a poster child for mental health?" If you don't want to fight, stay out of the Marine Corps. You know, that's the reason we become . . . that's what we do. And so there was that tremendous enthusiasm in '65 to do that. I saw the same in '90 as we were getting ready to take on the bad guys under our condition; we were going to be the attacker. He was going to have to defend; he was going to have to react to us instead of the other way around. And again, that's what Marines do better than anybody else in the world. Once again, people were saying what a horrible way to go through life and what a warped personality and all the rest of them.

Allison: So sort of déjà vu there?

Draude: Yeah, I guess. Except I was thinking about this the other day; it's strange. I was talking to somebody about in '65 when we first engaged the enemy. There was a . . . oh, it was an FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] cadet. He was going through the FBI Academy [in Quantico], a former

Marine officer who is an FBI agent. And he was talking about the permission they have of when to fire and so forth. And I said, you know, in '65 there was hesitancy at first on the part of our Marines to fire.

Allison: In '65?

Draude: Yeah. It was almost like you didn't want to be the only guy on the rifle range who fires without permission. You know, because the gunny is going to jump all over you, "Who fired that round?" and so forth. But I think in Desert Storm, fortunately we had gotten beyond that. Our training at [Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center] Twentynine Palms [California], the exercises out there whatever, but I think we were better prepared to engage and when you had a target, you were going to fire. You didn't have to do a lot of "Mother, may I?" It was engage in first round hits.

Camp: Were there some . . . I know a lot of the outfits spent months in the desert. Were there leadership failures, general?

Draude: There were and I have to say that General Myatt—and it's a tough call to relieve somebody before combat—but he did. And the events or the time in the desert beforehand as the troops arrive—tough situation: the heat, the monotony as we were working our way up, going into the attack. It was really a test of leadership, keeping the troops motivated, focused, you know, well trained, etc. It was strange; I had done a paper when I was at [U.S. Army installation Fort] Leavenworth [Kansas] on why people got relieved in Vietnam. And it was my premise that people got relieved because they failed to accomplish the mission. That often time had very little to do with why they got relieved, whether personality, bad timing, perception, Headquarters [Marine Corps], all kinds of reasons. But there, my days in Vietnam, it seemed like a lot of reliefs. The Army had a lot of reliefs. One guy I interviewed talked about the division commander who in his tour, which was a little over a year, relieved 44 battalion commanders.

And I interviewed classmates, majors who had been, as I was, a lieutenant [or] captain. Then a one-year tour went through like five lieutenant commanders. Well, it's complicated by the sixth-month policy you know, only command for six months, so after six months, everybody gets to be chief of staff of the Army someday. So you come in, there's a battalion [commander]; he leaves; new guy comes in [and] gets relieved. New guy comes in [and] gets relieved. New guy does the six months, and then the fifth guy's just starting and says, "Can you imagine it, five battalion commanders in a one-year period?"

Allison: Not a lot of continuity there.

Draude: Yeah, but that didn't seem to be . . . I'm not sure how we got off on this, other than reliefs and General Myatt. Maybe it was tough, but he understood that it was for the good of the outfit, the good of the unit. It wasn't personal; it was simply that it had to be done.

Westermeyer: And there were actually very few, though.

Draude: Yeah. Primarily a lack of countenance that the commander just didn't seem to know what was going on and had a critical role to play.

Westermeyer: The battalion commander or regimental commander?

Draude: Regimental. Then there was the battalion commander also that just seemed like it had gotten too much for him and kind of overwhelmed emotionally, but again the decision was and he had—I won't say it's stable but—he had solid individuals that he could put in immediately, and the situation was going to be better as a result of that rather than worse as a result of being released.

Westermeyer: There was no lack of qualified regimental and battalion commanders waiting in the wings for Desert Shield [and Desert] Storm?

Draude: And right there on either of the staff or so, but I never got the impression that people were, you know, praying at night. [Laughter]

Allison: Going back to planning. You talked about the relevance of training that you'd had before the war that the Marine Corps did, with the CAX [combined arms exercise], Twentynine Palms, and what not. Did you do anything unique for the situation there or was it pretty much in place already?

Draude: We had a couple of exercises where it was a reaction exercise if there was a break for this in the defensive posture situation of responding with the reaction. I was involved in a couple of those, which was quite a feeling, because it was rush to the point of contact with everything that we had. And General Myatt used the expression, "It's kind of like flushing the toilet. Once you pull the handle, there's no calling it back."

And then in the offensive again, it talked about the probing through the minefields was going to be necessary, accommodating the trenches; but the minefields were the primary obstacle that we had to contend [with] ourselves, to get them clearly

marked, and quickly, because in our section especially, we had two minefields. If the sector was to get caught in that sack between two minefields and had that happened that they had good artillery, that would have been, you know, really devastating. So the trick was to get not through just one minefield but both of them quickly so that you could break out and not be confined in that killing zone.

Camp: You did the first one before it actually kicked off, didn't you, general?

Draude: Well, [we] were ready to do so. We had to enter Kuwait to get to the first minefield, and we weren't supposed to. So that was—and in fact, I use that as a means, and I won't say it's a means, but it was an opportunity for me. The Iraqis were given until, I want to say, noon to decide if they were going to pull out of Kuwait, and unless and if they did, then there was all bets were off.

It's strange because I was thinking I hope Saddam Hussein is dumb enough to not do this, because we've got to get to do this. But noon here was like eight o'clock, so I said to General Myatt, and we were told don't do anything irreversible. Irreversible meaning that you couldn't undo it once it was done, so we had to be very careful because we wanted to be up, ready to breach that first minefield, but to do so, it had to be into Kuwait. So I said to him, "Because of the criticality of communication, wouldn't it make more sense for you to be back here able to make the communications for the MEF if there's a change in our plans? And if that's the case, then let me take the division into Kuwait." And he thought about it and said, "Okay, I think you're right." So with that, I had been given the distinction of going in that night into Kuwait and up to the minefield and on through. And then, it turned out that Saddam was not smart enough, and the attack was launched as scheduled. But tricky as you can imagine, suffered the mines, the antipersonnel mines, and the antitank mines. Unfortunately the wind had discovered, or exposed, a lot of the antitank mines.

There's a great story of a Corporal [Gregory R.] Stricklin,* who was a section leader who was going through and the lines had been marked. He's pulling behind him a cart; we had these carts that were prepared to haul stuff in but also to haul bodies out. So he's going through with a cart full of mortar ammunition, and he loses his way in the minefield, and that's not a healthy thing to do. And so he looks around and he realizes all of the antitank mines were exposed. So he thinks to himself, "Well, these are designed to go off if you hit a tank or amtrac or something—I'm not as heavy as a tank or an amtrac, so I'll use these in order to avoid the antipersonnel mines. I'll use these as stepping stones." He did this twice on his 21st birthday. I said, "You know if one of those had been rigged with an antimovement device, you would have been blown to bits." He said, "Yes sir, but my Marines needed ammo." And he was awarded the Silver Star.

That was the challenge. If you could get through the minefields fast, and once we had done that, then we had [a] pretty good feeling that we could maneuver at the far end of it, was very good at. But we couldn't do that until we had those breaches. [The] 2d [Marine] Division on our west had more of just one minefield instead of the two. Ours, the two kind of joined right about where 2d [Marine] Division was, so I think they had a thicker initial line, but once through it, they were clear. They could go.

Allison: What do you recall of that first day? I mean what are your most distinct memories of the day the invasion began?

Draude: Two things that really stick out in my mind. One was it was going so well; what are we doing wrong? The other was—I'll never forget this—a radio operator was with one of the forward elements, who was watching the Iraqi infantry as they were trying to get out of the holes and hold back, were being fired upon by Iraqi artillery. And I'll never forget this voice, the Marine's voice; it was just you know, outraged and shocked, you know. "I can't believe they're doing this. What kind of officers are these? They fire on their own troops." I guess that gave us further reinforcement. "God these guys are really desperate, if that's what they've got to do in order to hold people in position." I think that along with the fact that things were going well, that maybe things are going to go well, which they did, with a few highlights. Just that [al-]Burqan oil fields and the Iraqi tank brigades that were no need to find them because they were out there in the d——n Burqan oil fields that were on fire. Never believed it.

So what happened was really interesting. We had a captain who was with us, we had . . . first of all our command post [CP] arrangement was really neat, and I felt very good about this. When I was G-3 for the division back in 1985, I had just come out of Hawaii. Again, being the troublemak-

*Cpl Stricklin served in Company G, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines.

er, I said, "Why do we have this huge command post?" I mean, it's almost . . . all we needed was the circus pipe organ. That thing was massive. I said, "This thing will never survive the combat." That was one of the things I learned at [Fort] Leavenworth that would kind of sustain the battle, but a forward command post that would fight the battle. And then from there, a jump CP where the CG could get out with a selected few and get things done. So General Myatt and I were with the forward CP, or the jump, and we came to the Burqan oil fields, and again with [me] being a troublemaker, I read Rommel, who said you ought to be close to the battle.

It's really strange, as we came into where we were going to set up the command post. D——n, you hate when that happens. But what happened was, it alerted the Iraqis who started to surrender. Iraqis that we didn't know were there.

I guess it was that night, this intelligence captain comes to me and says, "I've located I think all of the Iraqi units except two tank brigades, and the only thing I can figure out is that they're on the oil fields." And I remembered, "Hey, captain. Come here with me, look at this." I mean, all of the oil fields were on fire, and there was just smoke and gunk, and I labeled it "Dante's inferno." It was like my vision of hell. I mean, here it was on fire. And I said, "Do you really think anything could be out there?" And he says, "Sir, there's no other place they could be." I said, "Okay, I'll endorse it. I think you're wrong, but okay."

Westermeyer: Do you recall his name, sir?

Draude: No, I don't. I wish I did. But I'll tell you who could tell you, that is [Brigadier] General [Richard M.] Lake.

Allison: General Lake?

Draude: Yeah. He's the director of [Marine Corps] intelligence now.

Westermeyer: I've been trying to track down that particular captain for a while. Nobody seems to recall his name.

Draude: And I wish had I called him aside and said, "You really have a calling in the Marine Corps if you're a good intelligence officer." So at any rate, during the night, we get from usually a reliable source of communications that there's these two tank brigades in the oil fields. So, I said, "Okay, that's when we'll do the time on target." I remember it seemed to take forever to get all of the artillery units in position so that they could do this. And then finally, we were ready to go. As I used to tell people, when it hit, I'm sure it took their mind off sex.

Well, what happened was that one of them then attacks Task Force Papa Bear, which was totally invisible because they're off in all the smoke and gunk, and so forth. They retreat and a short while later here are Iraqi tanks and out jumps the Iraqi tank brigade commander, walks over with his pistol, and he says, "I'm surrendering, but I'm not so sure about these guys." And so with that came one of the fiercest tank battles, and it is being carried out by clerks and maintenance management officers. They're knocking out the Iraqi tanks—wild. Meanwhile, the other one decides to attack us.

Westermeyer: The division headquarters?

Draude: Yeah. And gee, [Captain] Eddie [S.] Ray* was the LAV company commander. Eddie Ray had been saddled with CP security. And so we were going to relieve him that morning, and we could not. Eddie is a big, African-American lineman from [the] University of Washington. And I said, "Captain Ray, I can't . . . I know you were promised the lead. We can't do it; you're going to have to stay here with us." And I know he was disappointed, and just saw, you know his whole career down the drain. "I'm in the war, but I'm not in the war. I'm saddled with this d——n CP security." Well, I mean talk about a target rich environment. He received the Navy Cross.

Allison: What kind of unit did he command again?

Draude: It was the LAV company. Once again the TOWs, you didn't see one of the tanks get hit. And it was amazing; the crew chief was in the turret and it hit, and it just popped him out, just like that.

In any event, then, we also had [Lieutenant Colonel Michael M.] "Mike" Kurth,** who was in the helicopters, also received the Navy Cross. He was bringing in flight after flight of Cobra gunship [helicopters]. Here we've got the division's command post defending itself. And I thought to myself, "This is interesting, Draude. You'll go down as the first Marine general to lose the command post because he had to get so d——n close." But it was interesting, my aid straps on the radio, and he's helping out with the division air officer who's calling the air strike.

My driver was a communicator. He's working

*For more on Capt Ray, see his interview later in this chapter.
**For more on LtCol Kurth, see his interview in chapter 2, "Marines in the Air."

and so on, as all of this is going on—because we're fighting the rest of the battle, we've got other stuff going on north, and we've got to keep focus on that. So all of the radio operators are in this tent and, you know, they're going, "What the hell is this?" And then they start seeing LAVs coming back. And I remember saying, "Don't worry about it, this is kind of like kicking a field goal. You get a better angle on the enemy."

I remember I told Sandy [my wife] that "Don't worry about it because I'm an old guy, and they'll keep me in the rear. I won't get into trouble or anything." And I said, "You know, if I die here to today, my wife's really going to kill me."

Camp: So how close were they, general?

Draude: Oh, a couple hundred yards away.

Westermeyer: Sir, there's a story about you during this event that I wanted to confirm or deny. At one point in the battle, you opened up the tent sides so that the headquarters personnel could get a panoramic view of the battlefield as the Iraqi tanks and personnel carriers came under fire?

Draude: Yeah, I guess I did. They were hearing all of this stuff going on, and I was concerned that they would be more distracted to hear rather than to see what was taking place. So I opened the sides of the tent so that they would know where we stood.

It's one of those situations where I thought what's worse, to hear or to be able to see and hear? And if you see, well, maybe not quite that close, but so I can only think that that's what was going through my mind at the time that it made more sense for them to be aware.

Camp: How many tanks were there?

Draude: I'm not sure how many we had, enough to gain our attention. More than I wanted to see in a division command post. But again, the Marines all came through in great shape. And I mean, I never saw anybody who hesitated, seemed to get distracted, whatever. I mean, the focus, the concentration, was just amazing. Despite everything that was going on around here, we had a battle to fight up north. They needed support, you know, coordination and the things you're supposed to do as a command post.

Westermeyer: General, that was part of [the Iraqi] *III Corps*, which was their major counterattack. And it seems to me that it was [a] very innovative idea to hide in that field, and yet they inflicted virtually no casualties on the Marines and suffered essentially 100 percent casualties to those two brigades. Can you explain why that happened that way?

Draude: I think, certainly the time on target had to take a lot of starch. I mean to withstand something like that. And then afterward, you get the word—attack. When you're attacking [an] enemy that can bring that kind of precision, not only by location, but by time, and we're all at the same time on target. I mean, we're all on the same instant, same second, all this hitting; it has got to be mind numbing. So I think that took a lot out of it. And then whatever they had left was expended and was turned back. Again, it gets back to I think the beauty of the Marine training, you know. With Task Force Papa Bear, those weren't tankers or infantrymen; those were the clerks and jerks as they're called at headquarters, you know, who're saying, "It's time to take out my weapon."

And they just did a superb job. So I think maybe those two things. Again, and I guess, God truly blessed us. I mean, there was miracle after miracle in Desert Storm, and I could sit here the rest of the afternoon and tell you about miracles that had taken place. It was just meant to be and thank God literally and figuratively that it happened that way.

Westermeyer: Sir, getting back to the captain who originally came up and said, "Sir, this is where I think these two armored brigades are." Is he the only one who thought they were there, or did he say, "I think they're there; let's go look"? Do you recall how that played out exactly?

Draude: No. He was very straightforward. He said, "I believe that I accurately located all the Iraqi units except for these two tank brigades. The only place they could be is in that oil field." And now, later on when we were in there, we could say, "Yeah, it's not very pleasant, but you could exist in there for a short period of time." Now I say that, and I might as well have this on the record also. I'm not sure what effects all of us have from that time in the oil field when you think the scramble that we go through the United States when there's an oil spill on the highway. I mean for us to have been full of carbons and all the rest of it. I insisted that in every service record and in every medical record notation that this Marine had been in the Burqan oil field and was exposed to the oil flow, because I never wanted another Agent Orange thing to come up. Well, were you really there, and was it really that bad and so forth. But getting back to this, I didn't think the units could be there. And again that was my fault. I should have been smarter, but

he did. He knew his stuff, and I'm grateful that he did.

Westermeyer: Do you recall what assets were used to determine if they actually were in there? I mean, did you send reconnaissance teams into the oil fields?

Draude: No. It was the radio battalion who picked up the signals.

Allison: It must have been so smoky it would have been impossible to see from the air.

Draude: Oh, yeah, it was just hard to describe. Well, one that always bothered me, when the war was over, where were the environmentalists? I mean, why weren't they rushing to the barricades in France, you know, demanding the head of Saddam Hussein for what he [had] done to the air and to the land and to the water? And I asked somebody that one time, and they said, "Good question." The problem was that the war was over quickly, and the media went off to other places. And it just wasn't that big of a story. It's strange, because I remember the Marines, and Marines aren't normally tree huggers. Someone said, "Look at what this b——d did. You know, look at what he's done to this environment."

And this is a Marine lance corporal or corporal who was making an observation, and he was absolutely right. But it was bad enough that I didn't think that anybody could exist in there, but the captain was right.

Westermeyer: Was Burqan the last major engagement that 1st [Marine] Division participated in?

Draude: Yeah. It was all skirmishes farther on out. When you got to Kuwait City, we were held off from going in. That was to be liberated by Arabs. And so we obeyed, and then when we were allowed to go in, it was a great scene, I mean, the Kuwaitis. I went in a day later, and they were still celebrating. The only problem was they'd celebrate by firing off AK-47 [assault rifles].

Quick story, I was outside the American embassy and standing there with my aide and my guard, and there's this Kuwaiti family that was nearby. It was a mother and father, and a little girl about maybe 10, 11 years old, and a little boy 5 or 6. I found out they spoke English, so the mother came up and she said, "I feel so bad about asking you this." And I said, "No, what?" "I just don't know how to." I said, "Please, what?" She said, "My daughter wants to know if she can kiss you." [Laughter] "Boy," I thought, "This is sure different from Vietnam."

Allison: It must have been tremendously rewarding.

Draude: Yeah, it was just so touching to me that that was her way of saying thanks.

Allison: Was there any evidence of like atrocities or anything like that in the city?

Draude: Not that I saw.

Allison: Any word of it or anything?

Draude: Kind of secondhand, and of course, there's always that dispute about the report that was on TV. You know, before the war, the ambassador's daughter or something like that. But the atrocities . . . two things, one was the "Highway of Hell" [also known as Highway of Death] and

Staff of 1st MarDiv during the Gulf War, from left, supply officer, LtCol Julian W. Parrish; communications-electronics officer, LtCol Rodney N. Smith; assistant chief of staff, G-2, LtCol Joseph R. Waldron; deputy, G-4, Col John M. Mack; assistant chief of staff, G-3, Col James A. Fulks; commanding general, BGen James M. Myatt; chief of staff, Col John F. Stennick; assistant chief of staff, G-1, Col Joseph R. Holzbauer; air officer, Col Thomas F. Reath; surgeon, Capt Robert T. Dufort, USN; chaplain, Cdr Stanley B. Scott, USN; and engineer officer, Capt Timothy E. Meyer.

Photo by LtCol Charles H. Cureton

whatever atrocities there were, the looting that had taken place. And what a great job the aviators did on sealing off both ends and then having done that; it was just a matter of time before they were all eliminated. But I mean, that I saw the Mercedes Benz, the jewels, and the fur coats and all the rest of it—really, really pitiful. I remember some were critical of us for having done that. And I said, "They weren't surrendering. If they don't surrender, then they're targets, and they're gonna be treated as targets."

We found this conference table mock-up of the beach, defended by their seven divisions because of the amphibious assault that didn't happen.

Westermeyer: Ah, so that must have felt good knowing that that part of it had worked.

Draude: Yeah. I saw that and said, "Wow." I said, "This is really great. We looped around behind them, and they just collapsed without firing a shot."

Allison: When did you hear that the war was over?

Draude: Yeah, we were at the Kuwait International Airport. It was about seven o'clock or so in the morning. We got word that at eight o'clock, cease-fire. And so I was getting ready for a meeting, and General Myatt the night before had had a long-distance interview with Dan Rather [of CBS News]. They're both from Texas. And I think Dan had gone to the same school that General Myatt had, so I was going to run the division meeting. And so, my driver came up to me and said, "Sir, what's going on? What, you know, there's a buzz happening." And I said, "Yeah, it's going to be announced soon. But at the eight o'clock, the cease-fire is going into effect." And he looked at me and said, "Sir, I might begin to cry." I said, "Well, that makes two of us, because I know d——n well I am." And I think that we achieved what we did [with] a relatively small loss of life. Just miraculous. So we started the meeting. I said, "Before we begin here," you know, the cease-fire was in effect. I said, "We just won one of the most dramatic battles in the history of the Marine Corps and with regrettable but small loss of life, and so forth. So we're going to start this meeting with a prayer of thanksgiving from the division chaplain. And if that bothers anybody, I really don't give a d——n."

And he gave the greatest prayer. So afterward, I said, "Can I get a copy of that?" He said, "I can't remember what I said."

One of the things that bothered me about Vietnam was the awards system. It seemed to take care of the officers, but not the enlisted. It seemed as if a lot of awards that should have been written up and so forth weren't because people got transferred or got lost or whatever. So, as soon as we, I think it was that day of the cease-fire. I said to General Myatt, "Let me constitute the awards board. And what I want to do is get an idea of what kind of awards we're looking at, or the actions, because for those that require a personal witness, if we don't grab them before we start moving, transfer[ing], and so forth, then justice is not going to be done. So we got kind of a smattering of a variety of actions and then started tasking the battalion commanders to get in the award recommendation. Then we had one awards board put in. Some people said you should have had two boards. And I said, "No, I want one, because I want the same set of eyeballs to see every award, so there's a consistency." When we don't have a sliding scale of subjectivity here, but everybody sees it. And what had happened is that we'd have an action from Sergeant Schmukatella and you'd say, "Well, I think we should go forward with the Bronze Star on that." And then we'd have another action from Corporal Riley that was very similar that [had] come in as [a] Navy Commendation. And so a Bronze Star for him, we ought to make this a Bronze Star also. And so there's equity.

And see, the one board could do that. We had so many days, a couple sessions, maybe two hours in the morning and another two hours in the afternoon. Anyway, two things I was really proud of. One was when we had all of those and had them all ready to go, I said, "Okay, now take all of the officer award recommendations and set them aside. The ones that are going to get put in the system are enlisted." So the first awards presentation we had, there were no officers. It was corporals, sergeants, Silver Star, Bronze Star, and that wasn't to denigrate the officers at all, but I wanted to make sure the enlisted were not going to get shortchanged in this endeavor.

I went to the awards board, and said, "Okay, we've got a number of folks who should get an award, but it wasn't necessarily for heroism in combat; it was under combat conditions. So, I think the Navy Achievement Medal would be appropriate. And we've got a number of battalion commanders who did a super job that [get] Legion of Merit, but in each case, with combat 'V.'" Came back, combat "V" is not authorized. I said, "Well, here's the problem. I think one recognized the combat achievements of these individuals. If we give them the award without the combat 'V,' it's just not going

to have that same significance. If we hold to this, then there's going to be a tendency to exaggerate the action in order to justify the Navy Commendation of the combat 'V' or a Bronze Star with a combat 'V' and so forth." So I wrote up a thing for the MEF [Marine expeditionary force], and I was really pleased. They changed one word on it and sent it in to SecNav [secretary of the Navy], and SecNav authorized the combat "V" for the Navy Achievement Medal and the Legion of Merit. And so whenever I saw a Marine with that, I just had to kind of smile. You know, sometimes you just have to fight the system. Because they don't always get it right, and you just have to say, "Hey, this is what makes sense. This is right and proper."

So, what else did we do? Oh, then of course, there was getting everything back and reconstituted, and it was, of course, a different atmosphere. And that was a challenging time, because now that it was over, here everybody wanted to go home. It's going to take a while to get [home], and you know, is it going to be first over, first back and who got ahead of me on the queue and all that kind of stuff. You think, just a week or so ago, or a few weeks ago, we were hoping to keep life and body and soul together. And now, we're squabbling over who's going to get home first.

Westermeyer: Sir, I was just going to ask now that the Gulf War is over, 15 years and plus, have your views on the war changed in any way? Or have you had pretty much a consistent opinion of the event as time goes on?

Draude: Pretty consistent. The most asked question was "Did we stop too soon?"

Westermeyer: But it doesn't really apply to the Marines, though. There wasn't anybody left to fight in Kuwait.

Draude: Well, but should we have gone into Iraq? And my view was no. I think we did the right thing. The main reason is we fought as a Coalition, a Coalition under UN [United Nations] mandate that said, "Eject the Iraqis from Kuwait and establish legal government in Kuwait." It said nothing about taking down Saddam, conquering Iraq, destroying their *Republican Guard*, and all the rest of that. That was the mandate. Now, we had Arab countries fighting with us. The first time, I believe, that an Arab country has taken up arms against another Arab country. The Coalition certainly had a degree of fragility with it. And it would have been really dumb to have said, "To hell with the Coalition" and go[ne] after Saddam even though it was beyond what the UN mandate was. So I think, that was right.

Second, should we have targeted Saddam and gotten rid of him and so forth? Well, in Vietnam, it was interesting. The Viet Cong never created a vacuum unless they were ready to fill it. They never killed a village chief, hamlet chief, whatever, until they had somebody ready to take over. Who's going to fill that vacuum in Iraq, and if we took down all of his forces to defend themselves, who comes in then? Iran? Syria? We ain't gonna occupy—we are seeing that now [in 2006] in spades, certainly. But in those days, that was the last thing on my mind was to occupy Iraq. So for all of those reasons and making a martyr of Saddam, did that really make sense in the Arab world?

I know this isn't the popular notion, but I think President [George H. W.] Bush the senior, made the right call when he said we've accomplished our mission, and we're going to cease-fire. Lots of people wished that we had destroyed more of the *Republican Guard* and all the rest of it. I don't know. Later on in 2003, I don't know if the *Republican Guard* were that much of a factor in our fight there, but could we have saved American lives if we had taken more lives at that time? We hadn't been beaten, and what do we prove then by further death and destruction on our beaten enemy, just to show that we could. So, you asked, do I have any second thoughts? Not, not really. I guess to reinforce it, I think that we did the right thing and stopped when we should have.

Allison: Did you ever worry about chemical attack?

Draude: Yeah, we were prepared for a chemical attack. I mean, we had gone through all the preparations. I'll never forget, it was one of those things that I first arrived at and get back to the MEF and so forth and go through the entire chemical defense process, the suiting up and putting on the booties, which it took me a long time to do all that. And I kept thinking to myself, "I wonder how tough this would be if I was doing it after the alarm had been sounded?" And I said, "You'd better get this done fast." And so I made the recommendation to General Myatt that when we attack, we should be in gear so that the booties were on, the tops, the bottoms—all we had to do was put on the gas mask, and we'd be ready to go. And as it turned out, it was cold at that time, so that helped a bit as well to make it a little bit warmer.

Christmas Eve of 1991, when all of this was over,

I was the duty general officer at Headquarters. And I was tasked to go to Dover, Delaware, to be there to welcome home the remains of Colonel [William R.] "Rich" Higgins, who had been killed by the terrorists in Lebanon.

So I got there early, and I was asked if I would like to take a tour of Dover to see the preparations they had made for Desert Storm. I said, "Sure." So I went to a room about the size of all of our spaces here, and every uniform, every ribbon and badge, patch, [and] all branches of Service were there. Because in the transfer case, or what we would call a coffin, of the remains going home would be, regardless of the condition of the remains, a complete accurate dress uniform. Even to the point that they said on some occasions, as they were ready to send the body home, they would get a message that there's been a posthumous promotion. They would stop, open up the transfer case, and change the rank insignia because it had to be perfect. They then took me to these huge cavernous, like, warehouses where the bodies had been brought in, x-rayed to make sure there was no ordnance within them, positive identification, and all the rest of it. And I was just, I mean, overwhelmed with all of this. And I made the mistake of asking, "How many dead did you expect from Desert Storm?" And they said, "Oh, 50,000."

A friend of mine in Tampa [Florida] was in [Army] General [H. Norman] Schwarzkopf [Jr.'s] operations center. And he said he recalls a message that went back because of the chemical weapons threat that there is a possibility that from Desert Storm, with two Marine divisions engaged, that the Marine Corps would cease to exist as an operating force.

I say this because it's so quick and so easy to say, "The war's over and nobody fought, and there were units that fought. It was so easy," but it wasn't easy. "It was a cakewalk," but it wasn't a cakewalk. Were we lucky? Absolutely, and I'll be the first one to admit that, but we were also I think pretty d——n good, but the anticipated casualties were sobering and due primarily to the threat of chemical weapons.

Allison: Anything we haven't covered that comes to mind, sir?

Draude: No, I guess it's kind of a final sea story. I was sitting when we came back at [MCB] Camp Pendleton. It was interesting. My family was still in northern Virginia, and the division comes back. I told General Myatt, "You go back with the first elements. I'll come back with the second elements and have the chief of staff come back with the . . . " Oh no. Send the chief of staff first until you get the things set up, General Myatt next, and I'd be the last one. Anyway, I came back, having dinner in his quarters, and we were just kind of talking about the war, and I said, "You know, in many respects, we did our country a terrible disservice." And he said, "Tom, how can you say that?" And I said, "Well, we've just won a war in 100 hours, relatively few casualties. I mean, this is kind of a Hollywood version of how things ought to be done." I said, "This will never happen again." But the expectations of the American people were going to be this is what war's about. The bad guy lets you go about your business. And then bomb the hell out of them. And then when you're ready, you fight, and then it's all over, and you come home.

So I think that's going to be the expectation, and I'm afraid in some respects I was right. But having said all that, I wouldn't have traded anything for it. What a great opportunity to serve and make a contribution and to lead Marines again. It was superb.

Officers of the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel Michael L. Rapp, a Glenside, Pennsylvania, native, was born on 18 November 1949. Lieutenant Colonel Rapp took command of the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion (1st Recon Battalion) on 1 January 1991 from Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Kershaw. Prior to the Gulf War, Rapp served as a platoon and company commander and as the operations officer for 2d Battalion, 6th Marines, in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1983. He deployed to Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield as the commanding officer of Headquarters Battalion, 1st MarDiv.

The 1st Recon Battalion's air officer, Captain Carlton A. Gumpert Jr., enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserves in April 1977. He entered Officer Candidate School in October 1981 and was commissioned that December. He earned his wings in August 1983 and retired with the rank of major in June 2001.

The 1st Recon Battalion's fire support coordinator, 1st Lieutenant Thomas P. Simon, was born in Alameda County, California, on 17 August 1965. He graduated from The Basic School in 1987 and joined the battalion in 1991. Promoted to lieutenant colonel, he was assigned as Marine Corps intelligence officer, U.S. Second Fleet.

Also interviewed were two of the battalion's com-

Photo courtesy of LtCol Michael Rapp

LtCol Michael Rapp became commander of the 1st Recon Battalion, 1st MarDiv, on 1 January 1991. One of his first directives was to send Company A to occupy three observation posts, where they provided security and reconnaissance.

pany commanders, Captain Rory E. Talkington of Company A and Captain Mark D. McGraw of Company D. Captain Talkington was born in Spokane, Washington, in 1957. He entered the Marine Corps in 1981 and commanded companies in 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, and 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, prior to the Gulf War. He served in 1st MarDiv during the 2003 invasion of Iraq and commanded the 1st Recon Battalion during a deployment to Iraq in 2004. He retired from the Marine Corps as a colonel in July 2007.

Captain McGraw was born in Fort Worth, Texas, on 25 August 1963. He was commissioned on 14 December 1985 and, after the war, served in multiple billets, including as an exchange officer to the Chilean Marine Corps. He retired as a lieutenant colonel in 2005.

The 1st Recon Battalion manned many of the OPs along the Saudi Arabian defensive berm. Its teams were frequently called on to assess Iraqi defenses and attempt to find paths through the minefield. Due to its proximity to Iraqi forces prior to the start of the ground war, the battalion acted as the first point of contact for enemy offensives. Among these is the well-known 29 January attack on OP-4, during which the battalion's 2d Platoon, Company A, fought bravely against an Iraqi armor offensive.

Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Cureton, a field historian for the Marine Corps History and Museums Division, interviewed these officers on 18 March 1991. The interview mentions the 29 January action, the reconnaissance teams involved in the Battle of al-Khafji in Saudi Arabia, and other aspects of the battalion's experiences in the operation.

Cureton: Lieutenant Colonel Rapp, you took over the [1st] Recon Battalion on 1 January 1991. The pace of operations immediately picked up as a result of increased tensions between the United States and Iraq. Can you please give me some of the background on 1st Recon Battalion activities?

Rapp: Right after the change of command, we sent A Company—minus reinforced—up on the border of Saudi Arabia facing into Kuwait to man three observation posts to provide security and reconnaissance.

So when we took over, we had a very quick OpTempo [operating tempo]. Their mission when they went up on the border and they were part of MarCent [U.S. Marine Forces Central Command] forces, part of I MEF and under the operational and

administrative control of the SRIG (surveillance, reconnaissance, and intelligence group) forward operational base, was to provide observation and reporting on Iraqi activity in Kuwait.

It was interesting that up on the border there were a combination of forces. There were division recon, the air-naval gunfire liaison company, a radio battalion, and force recon. On a division level, the only information we received was from the Marines that we had out there from 1st Marine Division; the three teams, essentially their three teams, reinforced at the various OPs. Their locations, and they were at OP-1, -2, and -3, at that time worked out on our behalf, because we thought we were going to conduct a breach there, so they could tell us where the Iraqi observation posts were or where their LP [listening post] was.

Cureton: OPs 1, 2, and 3 are essentially right along that southern part of the Kuwaiti-Saudi border?

Rapp: Correct. And at that time, the division was looking to make a breach in that vicinity. So that was, I think, of benefit to the division. We could start getting a little ahead of the game, start figuring out what the Iraqis were up to.

There were some sidelines to this. It certainly, for that unit and certainly for the battalion, benefited us from an operational learning point of view, and it benefited our reconnaissance and surveillance procedures. And those Marines, we started building a lot of confidence, which played a key part later on.

About the fourth of January, I had issued some guidance to the company commanders to focus them on certain types of training based on how we saw the mission. Prior to 1 January [1991], it was my belief and my perception that within a battalion only one company at a time had trained of the three companies. At that time, we had two companies from [MCB Camp] Pendleton and one from Hawaii. That company that trained, generally trained with [Task Force] Ripper, and they trained in motorized roll-up garb. When we had looked at the missions, when we had looked at the defensive belts, we looked at how the Iraqis were arrayed. We felt that we needed to start training in helicopterborne operations. We needed to start training on foot infiltration, specifically at night in an environment that is fairly tough operationally, no cover and concealment, you know, no reconnaissance. Traditionally, we rely on a lot of cover and concealment. I think that was good guidance. I think we got started in the right direction.

One of my other concerns early on was that when you look at our structure—you look at our table of organization—we're very light. We don't have a fire support coordinator. We never did. This was probably one of the first times since Vietnam that a reconnaissance battalion had been employed in general support of a Marine division. After Vietnam, traditionally platoons go out in support of the field teams, and every now and then you're lucky enough to get a company to go out to train at Twentynine Palms in support of a MAB- [Marine amphibious brigade] or a MEB- [Marine expeditionary brigade] level CAX. So your typical organization never has a chance to evolve. You don't have the watch officers. You don't have the depth in communications and communications personnel that's really required to run 24-hour operations and to run multiple operations. And as we did, we ran battalion-level operations a number of times throughout Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm.

On the eighth of January, we had a fairly significant event. In elements of Delta Company, the 1st Recon [Battalion], as the advance start[ed] arriving in country, my predecessor had considered taking the 46 Marines from Delta Company—and they were two platoons—and considered breaking that unit up and assigning that to the other companies to increase their flexibility. I resisted that and I'm glad I did, because the company commander had a very good reputation and took the initiative to train each member. When they got here, I talked to the company commander and told him my intention was to make him a motorized company based upon assets, based upon his skill, based upon the talent that he had in company, and I also focused him on some other type of training, and Captain McGraw did a very fine job in that area.

We moved everybody out to the field on 11 January, the battalion command with the exception of six Marines back here that were in security. We started receiving what I call pop-up missions when we were up on the border. Those pop-up missions are missions such as a chance to do a traffic ability assessment, just to update the G-2 [intelligence] operations. What helped us there was we had some engineers. We had five engineers that came over from 1st Combat Engineer Battalion and superb Marines. With that capability, we could then get in our vehicles and do a proper engineering study and do a proper trafficability assessment to benefit the division. When you're forward like that, I think a part of the unit will receive these pop-up missions, because we're there to support the division, which

meant we've got a lot of information requirements, and there's a natural tendency for people to ask us these questions. I'm glad on a lot of occasions we can answer their short-fused requirements.

One area we're going to take a look at, and I think it will probably help us in the future, is to have engineers in the reconnaissance battalion. When we look at the mission performance standards, the task conditions, and standards, I think over the years the reconnaissance community has gotten away from a lot of those route studies, route reconnaissance trafficability, and we needed the amphibious end of it, and we're going to need [it] in operations ashore.

Cureton: So you see the engineers being used primarily for that purpose, to assist in assessing trafficability?

Rapp: And also they just are the best Marines out there to tell you what that fortification's like or what that defensive belt is like or for how much in earnest the bad guy has constructed in those fortifications. It was the infiltration; they'd start telling these things. But the minefields were as extensive as they had been told could be pretty strenuous. I think that's probably the best answer is to have an engineer, to bring him into the reconnaissance unit and then train him for patrolling and communications.

The 15th of January, we made a decision based upon some of the indicators from the fourth—the increase in Iraqi activity—to send another platoon up to Alpha Company. I probably took some heat from that, and at the time it was still under SRIG control. I didn't back off them like I should have, and I'm glad I didn't because on the 17th, as we all know, we started the war and we took a lot of incoming. The answer from the SRIG forward operational base when we sent this additional platoon up was that they could not accommodate these Marines at these observation posts. The Saudis had left the OPs at this time, and the [U.S. Army] Special Forces soldiers were in the process of getting ready to leave. My rationale for sending the additional platoon up there was to give the company commander more capability and give him more depth and to have more security and more eyes on. When you run a six-man team up there, it means there's always two men that have to be up and alert. It just gave us greater depth for the R&S [reconnaissance and surveillance] missions.

Cureton: How have you broken the company among the OPs?

Rapp: At this point, I left it to the company com-

Weapons and equipment used by a Marine reconnaissance team during Operation Desert Shield included, from left, an M998 humvee with an M249 squad automatic weapon (SAW) on top and an M998 with an M2HB .50-caliber machine gun. In front of the hard-roofed M998 is a Marine armed with an M249 SAW. A Marine holding an M16 rifle, equipped with M209 grenade launcher, is beside the M998. In front center is an MK19 40mm automatic grenade launcher equipped with starlight scope flanked on the left by an M60E3 machine gun and a SAW. Modular universal laser equipment and radio equipment complete the display photographed on 24 November 1991.

Photo by GySgt C. Archuletta. Defense Imagery DM-SN-92-01546

mander, and he had a platoon, a platoon minus at OP-1, another strong section at OP-2, and then he had another platoon minus a section at OP-3. I think he made a good decision. He wanted to get the newer Marines balanced in with some of the more senior Marines and bring them up to speed. A lot of lessons learned. Give them the benefit of experience and the wisdom up there, and it helped us tremendously.

He had a platoon, Alpha Company kept talking to me, and one platoon would come out, and then these other platoons were broken up. Our level increased; I figured with the Marines, it really increased what everybody calls as situation awareness.

The 17th we started receiving fire—rocket fire, artillery fire up there—and the 18th we ran strikes with close air support [CAS] from the division. With Cobra [helicopters], we knocked out at least one mortar position, and I know we went after some gun positions and we had some effect on those.

The point I need to make here is the universal spotter concept pertains to us, our Marines in gun training, field training with close air support and assist, and our air officer was very good about setting this training up, and it paid dividends.

We don't have weaponry to be able [to] shoot out 3,000 meters. MK19s [40mm grenade launcher] can only go out 2,200 meters like .50-cal [.50-caliber machine guns], with a range of .50-cals. It's not like an LAV unit with your 25mm. You can't reach out and touch somebody at great distances. So we have to rely on that close air support, and at the time there were no artillery units forward.

Cureton: Did you get any response from running the air on Iraqi targets?

Rapp: We got some BDA [battle damage assessment]. We could see BDA on the mortar position, and you get response by the enemy letting up, and you get response by also some of their counterfire. We also start picking up prisoners at this time, and you could see from some of the prisoners—and maybe they weren't prisoners, maybe they were people that were working to just come across and strike—but the resolve was not there.

About the 22d of January, we started working closely with the division. We were looking at expanding our effort there and going up into OP-4, -5, and -6, working with LAVs, working with PsyOps, and then on the 26th, we had two companies involved in border operations, both of which were motorized.

I've got to put a plug in here for the hardback humvee. I think the hardback humvee suits our purpose very well.

Cureton: How did you employ it?

Rapp: Two per team, basically a six-man team. And when you're up on the border, it gave us the ability to be able to move laterally more under pressure to withdraw. It's a Kevlar body, run-flat tires, so it works out very well for our purposes. I just wish I would have had more of them.

We did a lot of coordination with the LAIs up there, LAIs on the 27th. We'd seek missions instead of a screen line and started assuming responsibilities for the OPs.

Cureton: Have you expanded the number of OPs that you're in?

Rapp: On the 26th, we're now in OP-3, OP-4, OP-5, and just south of OP-6.

Cureton: And why is that? What's happened that caused this recon to shift?

Rapp: On a division level, there was a change of boundaries, a change in the breach site, and also part of the ambiguity operations. So there were three real reasons why we shifted out there.

The 27th, we conducted a lot of coordination with LAIs, coordination on the platoon leader level, the company commander level, the S-3 [operations] level, the comm [communications] officer level, and my level with [Lieutenant Colonel Clifford O.] "Cliff" Myers [III]. We turned over OP-5 and -6 on the 28th. OP-4 and OP-3 could not be turned over because . . .

Cureton: Turned over to LAIs you mean?

Rapp: Turned over to LAIs because LAIs were in the process of still receiving forces, and they needed some additional time.

The platoon we had up at OP-4 on the 29th of January was a platoon that we reinforced, back on the 15th and probably one of the best platoons that I've seen in 18 years as far as a training base leadership and as far as who should come to us from Okinawa [Japan]. A very cohesive [platoon], well led, solid young officer. One of the best staff NCOs [noncommissioned officers] I've ever seen. The sergeants, all three sergeants, were just great and everything they did. They knew what they were doing, from the bunkers they built to their fields of fire [to] how they used their radios.

Cureton: Were they under tight radio discipline?

Rapp: They had good radio discipline. I'm glad

you mentioned that too, because we had a couple points where we used some voice procedures. Most of the time, we used the digital communications terminal. We'd burst our information out.

After the 17th, we were receiving fire if we were using the HF—the high frequency radio—in a voice mode. I think we were being DF'd [direction finding] by the Iraqis, and we would receive more fire. If you can use the burst capability, it's extremely difficult for them to DF you. Since then we went almost exclusively with the burst capability. But very good procedures on that platoon's part, and then the evening of the 29th when we were being jammed, we knew something was up, because we were receiving SALUTE [size, activity, location, unit, time, and equipment] reports just prior to from OP-4, and we were receiving SALUTE reports from OP-3. They were being jammed heavily, and when they spotted the armor coming at them, they took very swift, aggressive action and bought enough time for LAIs so that [the] LAIs could reinforce them. The LAI screen line was about 5,000 meters back.

Cureton: What was the swift action the team took?

Rapp: They did a couple things. They attempted to get comm, and they gained comm with [the] LAIs on the VHF [very high frequency] frequency, and they signaled in backup using pyro, and they deployed to their battle positions to meet the Iraqi advance guard. When the Iraqi advance guard got up to OP-4—the actual police station on the Saudi side—they engaged the Iraqi armor, and they were again under fire. The 203 [M203 grenade launchers], SAW [squad automatic weapons], and M16 [assault rifles]—they engaged them in such a manner that it was a very violent mass use of their organic weapons, and I think it threw the Iraqis for a loop.

I don't think the Iraqis were expecting that much out of our position there. I think the Iraqis were looking at it from the aspect that they'll be able to blow through this OP, and when they had that much incoming fire, it held them up. Then the lieutenant had presence of mind to start working close air support, and that delayed about . . . and then it gave LAIs enough time to be able to reinforce. So I think that was a very good operation. Coordination paid off in training and cohesion and stability.

After that on the 30th, we withdrew, and we went into training and mission preparation for infiltration. We went back up and ran a raid. . . .

Cureton: So you have pulled back from all the OPs now with LAIs occupying that territory, and they've been pulled back to the division main area, is that correct?

Rapp: That's correct, which at the time was down in al-Qaraah, and then we started mission preparation for a raid at OP-4.

Cureton: What sort of preparation?

Rapp: Mostly night work, night movement, night patrolling, small-arm procedures, reviews of call for fire, close air support, movement with the NVGs [night vision goggles], radio classes, immediate action drills, and intelligence preparation. We had our S-2 put together an intelligence-briefing book, which was really a mission-planning folder. It focused not only on the area but what the Iraqis were up to in respect to their defenses. The brief book that the S-2 put together, it was actually turned over to G-2—I should say eventually, a copy over—and it turned out to be a very good product, because a lot of line battalions were able to use that. It spanned enough coverage to where if you wanted a very general answer it could give you a very general answer, and if you wanted some specific information capabilities on radar, it could tell you that. It could tell you how many hits the radar had up until that point in time.

The 10th through the 12th [of February 1991], we conducted a raid at Markaz as Sur [Kuwait], which is just east of OP-4 [at al-Zabr police building in Saudi Arabia]. We had received some information from the G-2 that the Iraqis were using this both for a jamming station or had a listening station, and they had a lot of high-value people in there. We placed surveillance on it, and our surveillance did not really show anybody coming up during the day or night entering into that building. We went ahead with the raid anyway. We left the raid force in there for approximately 24 hours to see if they couldn't capture anybody in there. No Iraqis showed up. There was a large underground bunker in there. It could have been used for their jamming or for their listening. The equipment had been removed, but we did bring back three sandbags full worth of documents and worth of papers and turned those over to the G-2.

This was the first cross-border operation for MarCent, and it was a successful operation. I think it helped us on a confidence curve, and I think it helped us—when you look at some of the situations you face when you first take over with a new commander, you've got a staff that's not use to him—I think it helped to gel us.

We had some assets such as RPVs [remotely pi-

loted vehicles], radio battalion, and we used them well. It was good to work in conjunction with RPVs. The RPVs assisted us in our planning. RPVs do have one or two limitations, and when they're up high, you really can't see the profile or height of the building and [that] the building, which was our primary objective, had actually been flattened, and we really couldn't get into it anyway. Just a limitation and I'm glad we did have the opportunity to work with them.

We went back into that Markaz later on the 16th to observe and to extend the division's security and to facilitate our operations for our infiltration on the 17th through the 20th of February.

The 17th through the 20th of February, we infiltrated three teams: one team to support Task Force Taro's infiltration on the east side of the breach site, one team to support [Task Force] Ripper's assault breach, and one team to support Task Force Grizzly's infiltration. We had received the imagery the day prior to the actual operation, and on the 16th Staff Sergeant Nimick, who was my S-2 at the time, and myself pored over the imagery, and we wanted to focus the team's effort and actually look for the gaps. We had found some gaps. We had found one gap where Taro was going to infiltrate. We had a gap where Ripper was going to conduct its assault breach. We could not determine any gaps in Grizzly's area from the imagery. In determining that, it helped the teams focus.

One of the concerns we had all along was the longer you're out there you're vulnerable. We had not had any recent intel that said there was anybody around that first defensive belt, but I didn't rule that out. I mean I just couldn't. If you've got a defensive belt, you've got obstacles, and it only makes sense to cover them by fire. As it turned out, there were Iraqis in there. When a lot of folks had suspected that the Iraqis had pulled back to the second belt, we were able to tell the division commander and the task force commanders that in fact there were Iraqis there. Those missions went very well. We cut the systems slightly. We came back . . . rather than a formal debrief on the battalion and the division level, we went right to the task force and had . . . we kept people from the task force, the S-2s, the S-3s, and commanders and the major support to commanders, all received the information we had. We debriefed well for the day. I think we helped the division in that thought.

I was concerned about the loads that the Marines had to carry. We tried to pare those loads down.

We had two radios per team—an HF radio and a UHF [ultra-high frequency] radio. They were nonencrypted. We used an execution checklist with some code words on it. We had a [North American] OV-10 [Bronco], and the OV-10s are a very versatile aircraft. The OV-10s would receive our broadcasts on UHF and during the time windows, and we knew essentially things were well. Without the OV-10s, it would have caused us a lot of concern. We had made some antennas to try to boost our capability with the UHF, but I can't say with any degree of certainty that those antennas worked. I think it's the UHF and the OV-10 that proved the key force.

After those operations, we ran one other operation prior to G-day [day ground war began], and that was to go into the Markaz just north-northwest of OP-3 and conduct a raid on that and then establish observation surveillance. On the 22d of February, there were two vehicles around that Markaz, and with a small element, we decided not to send them in but turn that over to [Task Force] Taro so that they could secure that objective later on in the day.

That essentially brings us up to G-day, and at G-day, we found ourselves with two platoons attached to Taro, one of which had been attached since about the 16th of December, one we attached a few days prior to G-day, and we had also attached the team that supported the infiltration. We had a motorized platoon that had worked with Ripper through November and December. We attached them to Ripper, and we provided Sergeant Mitchell's expertise, and Ripper gleaned what they could from Sergeant Mitchell and his team, and then we attached two platoons to Grizzly, the traditional platoon from Okinawa and one of our motorized platoons. The rest of the battalion stayed in general support until missions on the 1st and 2d of March, which were to conduct zone reconnaissance through the division zone, focusing in on the oil fields, looking for Iraqi holdouts in the bunker complexes, and conducting BDA on Iraqis, which we did. It took us about 24 hours to complete that.

And that's about it. That brought us back to Saudi Arabia.

They [?] couldn't find any specific gap. They moved—if my memory serves me correctly—they had to go about 17 kilometers up to the leading edge of the obstacles. They moved about 14 kilometers the first night and built their hide sites and were in position to observe the obstacles. The second night, they started their search and could

not find the specific gap. They looked in an area about a thousand meters. What they could tell us was the extent and composition of the obstacles in the minefield, and they could tell us there was an Iraqi behind it. The gap was actually farther west.

Cureton: Can you describe a "hide site"?

Rapp: The hide sites that we used in this operational environment—essentially the technique we developed—when the patrol halted, if it was a six-man patrol, two men would maintain security, two men would start the digging process, and they would dig their hide into the ground. Essentially, you had two forms of hides. One hide would look like the spokes of a wagon wheel with six individual positions, exact in length of trenches. The other hide looked like a rectangle connected by trenches, which allowed the movement back and forth. Both methods allowed 360-degree observation. Depending upon how long you were going to be in there, depending upon the . . . you run into limestone and rock about two feet down. So we could dig in about two feet and very carefully would move that soil, take a foxtail like broom, and dust it over. Take a piece of burlap, which had been painted essentially this color, and run that over you and still allow people to observe the obstacle belt from behind them. We also could use our fish reels for our long line antenna and try to communicate back HF. That way you blend it in with terrain.

You could stay mobile, and you could observe the enemy, which we needed to do, prior to going in. We had some more elaborate hides, but there's a factor of time involved. I mean you could dig down four to five feet and make a lot of interconnecting tunnels and figure you're going to stay in there for a while, but I bet it takes you a long while. That would allow for about seven kilometers of movement.

One of our concerns was being able to get down there the first night and then really, once we're down there, have the daytime to observe that defensive belt and go in and start getting a lot of information on the extending obstacles. So we figured the less time we spent down there the better off we were. Our brothers to our west did have some problems. One, I think they moved a lot slower, if that answers your question?

Cureton: Yes, it does.

Rapp: If you want, I could go through some of the things that went well and some of the lessons learned.

Cureton: Please.

Rapp: Okay, some of the things that went well.

I think the Marine Corps is definitely on the right track when we look at the training and the training processes we have for our Marines, starting with recruit training, going through the School of Infantry, and then at the various formal schools.

In this battalion, I had a mix of old hands, and I had a mix of young hands, and I'm here to tell you some of the young hands that have not been through all the Ranger schools and everything else did just as well. Sharp, sharp, sharp Marines out of recruit training and out of the School of Infantry and, with the seasoning of some veteran NCOs, did extremely well. I'll always continue to support the formal schools, and I think that does make a difference. Good leadership on a company level.

Cureton: Thank you.

We'll continue in the interview with 1st Recon Battalion. We have Captain Carl A. Gumpert Jr., the air officer, and 1st Lieutenant Thomas P. Simon, the fire support coordinator. [The 1st] Recon Battalion is largely significant from the division prior to the ground offensive, particularly in the workup of some of the plans and the insertion of teams. Can you give me a little bit more of the dynamics of the division from the air officer standpoint?

Gumpert: From the air side, we conducted air training. My job as the air officer is to teach the Marines how to conduct close air support, close-in fire support [CIFS], how to control it, [and] how to acquire and control the air and to coordinate air operations within the battalion. From the time we got here in September through December [1990] and early January [1991], we conducted numerous training evolutions in controlling air in both fixed wing and helicopters, utilizing everything from nothing to mark with to using lasers as a mark. There was some training conducted—recon-insert type of training—just to keep those qualifications current. In those cases, I would work through requesting the air to conduct these missions.

Cureton: And was that parachute drop or just a helo [helicopter] in?

Gumpert: No sir, they were just helo inserts. Once Desert Storm commenced in January, the teams that were up on the border conducting observations up there controlled air.

Cureton: They controlled it themselves, not through the battalion?

Gumpert: No sir, not through the battalion. They went either direct to the DASC [direct air support

center], or they went to the airborne command and control communication, the [U.S.] Air Force ABCCC [airborne battlefield command and control center], which had a Marine liaison officer on it. Those were the two main ways they got air. Also through the OV-10, the TAC(A)—tactical air coordinator (airborne). Those were the main things.

The OV-10 was extensively used. The teams could control fixed-wing air against a couple of targets. They had control of helicopters—Cobras—against a couple of targets.

Cureton: How did they work that? Explain to me the procedure that they would have gone through.

Gumpert: In the instance of the Cobras, OP-2, I believe it was, called in a SALUTE report saying there was an [Iraqi] A-2 mortar position setting up at OP-2.

Cureton: On which day was this?

Gumpert: The 18th [of January] I believe, sir. We relayed that to division with the battalion being colocated with division. I ran it right over to division air with the air support element [ASE] from the DASC being colocated right there. It was handed right to them. Cobras were launched and were up there within 20 to 30 minutes. The Cobras showed up, the team briefed them on where the target was, and the Cobras engaged and neutralized the target. Fixed wing was used the night of the 29th at OP-4 when the Iraqi tanks came in. They went through the ABCCC that night. They came up on the net [network] looking for the airborne DASC. ABCCC answered the radio, sent a flight of [Grumman] A-6s [Intruders] over there and sent an OV-10 in that direction. The MEF had an OV-10 airborne every night throughout the operation. So the OV-10 was sent, and before it got there, the A-6s showed up. They were run on the target. Another flight was inbound and at that time they withdrew, so further operations in that area were not conducted under their direct control. The Cobras, as I understand, showed up in that area that night and ran air.

In Khafji—[in] the same time frame, the 29th through the 31st [of January]—we had a team in Khafji who controlled both air and artillery but those were coordinated through Task Force Taro, because they were under direct support of Task Force Taro. Again, it was Cobras. I think it was all Cobras there.

Cureton: So you were basically listening on that one rather than taking much action on it since they were working through Taro?

Gumpert: Yes, sir. In fact, most of it we found out afterward in the debrief[ing]. We didn't even monitor that, because that was outside of the battalion's direct control. But that was how they utilized the air. From my perspective, other than teaching them and coordinating those couple of missions, everything that went on from the air side was basically planning for the raid mission at Markaz near OP-4 and for planning for the infiltration operations that went on the 17th through the 20th.

Cureton: What aspect of air is there that would require this training? What were you specifically looking for?

Gumpert: For the cross-border operations, the air was mainly helicopters for an emergency extract package that was requested. We had Cobras and [CH-] 46s that were going to provide the emergency extract package as it became necessary, if it became necessary. We also had an OV-10 airborne throughout the whole time frame to provide overwatch with their FLIR [forward looking infrared radar].

Cureton: What's a FLIR?

Gumpert: Forward looking infrared [radar]. The OV-10 FLIR is also bore sighted with a laser designator, so that they could employ themselves as an airborne FAC [forward air controller] if that became necessary.

There's a close air support combat air patrol [CASCAP] that is airborne all the time. We just made sure that they were going to be airborne and that they were going to be available. We didn't go out and request additional air just for our mission.

We had the EA-6B Prowler up to work with the Army PsyOps people up farther north of OP-4 as a diversion. The PsyOps would play their tank noises and their tapes, and the EA-6Bs would jam. Therefore with their radar systems, they could not determine whether or not it was actual tanks or just noise. They were used for a period of about four to six hours during the actual movement of the reconnaissance unit to the Markaz, the police post.

Cureton: Okay, and when you're inserting the teams for their recon in the breach area, pretty much the same scenario?

Gumpert: Yes, sir. We didn't use any electronic warfare [EW] that night. We had the same extract package standby. We actually had the aircrews from the 46s and the Cobras colocated with the division forward where it would be just a matter of telling them, and all their pilots were billeted with

Photo courtesy of Maj Thomas P. Simon

During Operation Desert Storm, then-1stLt Thomas Simon was involved in setting up the fire support coordination for reconnaissance teams.

the battalion COC area so that it was just a matter of quick coordination, and they were on their way.

There were plans being made to do a reconnaissance insert by helicopter between the obstacle belts and up in the vicinity of where TF [Task Force] X-ray was anticipated to go in. The concept of ops [operations] and the plans were drawn up and discussed with some people from the aviation community, but the mission never materialized.

Cureton: Why was that?

Gumpert: Other operational commitments between the obstacle belts were not done because of the B-52 strikes that were scheduled. I think the Task Force X-ray insert did not go because of the threat level that was there at that time.

Cureton: Of course, air doesn't necessarily work completely in isolation with other fire support assets. To what extent did you and the fire support coordinator interact?

Gumpert: On both the cross-border operation missions, the concern we had from the fire support coordination side was how we would cover the reconnaissance units with fire support, some kind of fire support. Lieutenant Simon looked at moving in a heavy battery up there, dedicated to us, so that they could provide fire support while we were doing the extract package. We also looked at the distances that were involved and some of the targets that the intelligence people had given us that may have actually affected the mission. For example, some of the radars, some of the artillery that was outside the range of artillery at that time, that those would have been air targets, and the artillery would have done a closer target or a screening or something like that.

Cureton: Now lieutenant, in setting up the fire support coordination package for these recon teams, at what point were they going to be out of range? What limitations were you dealing with in terms of artillery support?

Simon: The only limitations we had were that the artillery belonged in our task forces, and we had to ask division to have these people tasked to support us. On both operations, we had artillery support. They were right up on the border both times so their fan is covering their entire infiltration and the raid. In fact, the first cross-border operation, which was the 10th of February with the police post, we had two batteries supporting that operation, and when we went to the infiltration, we had a battery from 3/12 [3d Battalion, 12 Marines] supporting that. So both times, we were supported well.

Cureton: Did you have preplanned targets set up for these teams?

Simon: On both operations, we had preplanned targets. The only problem was trying to get real-time intelligence on any locations of the enemy in that area because they're moving around daily. But what we did have, we did plot as preplanned targets. Other than that we had some targets of opportunity on crossroads and checkpoints, the team leaders to adjust if he had to.

Cureton: Once the teams are inserted for the recon of the breach area, did you ever get any calls for air support or for artillery support?

Simon: No, thank God, because we were told when we were going in there that they were going to be in a passive nature, not to engage any targets unless it was in their self-defense, so we didn't call any in. So their mission was a success in that regard.

Gumpert: From the air side, the OV-10s were used during the infiltration of the obstacle belt, in addition to a couple of occasions, to relay information. Because of the terrain and their hide sites, they were unable to talk sometimes directly, so the OV-10 was

there to relay information, and that was about the only thing they were actually used for. On neither mission were they needed for fire support.

Cureton: Once the offense began, was there any occasion to use recon in any particular role or were they out with the various task forces or pulled back to the main?

Simon: We had an "on order" mission to send basically a platoon plus up to screen the east flank of Taro in their battle position by recon overflow. That mission never materialized because we could never get the platoon chopped back from Taro to us. Other than that, basically the battle was run too fast and all the teams and platoons were attached out to the task forces, and we wanted them to be with who needed them the most. We had five platoons attached out in direct support to the different task forces.

And they basically rode the vehicles like everybody else. They'd get a chance at night to go out and do some recon. We had a motorized reconnaissance platoon attached to each, plus a foot mobile with Grizzly and a foot mobile with Taro. The motorized reconnaissance elements utilized the thermal [imaging systems] that they had to do some screening and some reconnaissance ahead of the task forces, but not greatly in front due to the small area that such a large number of people were working in.

Cureton: But your involvement with those teams would have been minimal from a recon battalion standpoint?

Simon: From a recon battalion standpoint, it would have been very minimal at the most, because they were attached to those task forces and they would go to the task forces for any support. We had five platoons with the battalion moving with the division COC in general support, ready to be employed, and it never worked. Those, if we'd had employed them by air, then we would have looked at that or whatever.

Cureton: So really your involvement was pretty much done once you completed training these units?

Simon: Yes, sir. I've been in the area for almost two years now, and the training has been conducted during the whole time I've been there. My predecessors did it, and we just continued it once we got here. [Major] General [James M.] Myatt basically allowed us to let the reconnaissance teams call their own air.

Cureton: Do you have anything you want to add in terms of observations on the task forces in maneuver warfare as it pertains to recon?

Simon: All I could see from my point was that the units that were attached out sometimes weren't attached out in a timely manner to be integrated into that full-scale maneuver for those task forces.

A problem I saw was, in the maneuver warfare side of it, there's not enough vehicular assets to support a maneuver warfare scheme of maneuver.

Cureton: For recon?

Simon: For the division, much less for recon. We had more vehicles here than what our TE [table of equipment] called for, and we still could only employ about half of the people we had.

Cureton: In sending the units to the various task forces, where did you run into problems? What was the nature of the problem? Was it simply the unit it was attached to not fully understanding what the recon could do for it?

Simon: That happened quite a bit, but mostly, it was the timing manner. It was getting the tasking from division to attach them to the task force that put us in a time crunch.

Cureton: When did those units go out to the task forces?

Simon: We had a platoon that was attached to Taro in December and it remained so, because they were working for the heliborne mission during that time frame, during December and January. We had a platoon attached to Ripper fairly early on. Our involvement with Ripper dated way back to when the battalion first sent a company over in direct support of 7th MEB. So that working relationship with Ripper was always there, but they had a platoon attached to them in January. Everybody else was basically attached out within a week of G-day, a week down to a couple of days prior to G-day.

Cureton: How much did the insertion of teams prior to, you know, to look at their breaches, did that slow down the insertion of those other units, or were those teams essentially suckered from this other evolution?

Simon: The infiltration mission that was conducted the 17th through the 20th was completely separate, and those three lanes were the three lanes that the task forces were going to use for infiltration. The teams that actually conducted the infiltration of those lanes in that section of the obstacle belt were attached to those particular task forces.

Cureton: Any other comments or observations that you would like to make?

Simon: I think the overall scheme to employ recon battalion is sorely sidestepped in the overall planning, because they were saying we will send these teams up here to use recon in a certain area and even before you talk to the division FSCC [fire support coordination center]. Well, we're going to do some B-52 strikes in the area. So there's a lot of conflict in that area. We should realize how to use recon for these last-minute missions.

Cureton: But that would have been clear up to the MEF level then, since, in fact above the MEF level, for the timing of B-52 strikes.

Simon: That's who I had to air time about sending us in right to recon the obstacle belt on G[-day] minus two [days], and they're planning to drop bombs on the obstacle belt on G minus two and G minus one. So these missions never came off because of that. They were talking about it before to do that. So I think that overall, [an] integrated scheme should be developed earlier on to employ the reconnaissance we carry with the fire support side working together.

Cureton: Thank you very much.

Okay this is a continuation of 1st Recon Battalion. This is Alpha Company. The company commander is Captain Rory E. Talkington. In the pre-G-day activities of your company, I understand that you played a principal role in some of these activities. Can you give me an account of that?

Talkington: Yes, sir.

December 31st, the company was tasked with occupying the Saudi border police stations on the Kuwait side of the border. January first my company occupied OPs 1 through 3 on the border, and we began reconnaissance and surveillance activities on the berm—what was known as the berm line. That continued up until the 17th of January.

Cureton: How did you organize each of these OPs?

Talkington: The OPs were organized one team per OP working in conjunction with [U.S. Army] Special Forces [SF], ODAs [operational detachments alpha], and the Saudi Border Police themselves.

Cureton: Okay. Now I understand these other two organizations were beginning to fade from the picture as the weeks go on, is that correct?

Talkington: Correct, sir. It's my understanding that the Saudi Border Police may have scheduled to

Then-Capt Rory Talkington, commander of Company A, 1st Recon Battalion, at OP-4 in January 1991. His company conducted reconnaissance activities on the berm of OPs 1 to 3 during the first two weeks of that month.

Photo courtesy of Col Rory E. Talkington

move off. We didn't see that until the war started. The SF teams were going to be moved to isolation to continue missions elsewhere, but until the war actually started, that didn't really happen.

Cureton: Why are the Special Forces teams there when you get there?

Talkington: It was originally their sector of responsibility, and we were moving into their area as the Marine MarCent boundaries were moved from place to place.

Cureton: Okay. Then what did the teams consist of?

Talkington: Each of the teams up there at the time were six-man reconnaissance teams. Basically one platoon up there actively rotating between two platoons.

Cureton: Okay. Where is the company headquarters for this?

Talkington: The company headquarters occupied what was known as OP Refia. It was not originally designed by the division to be an occupied OP. When we discovered that we didn't have enough room at the other three OPs, we moved into the fourth OP, which was not given a number by division, so we called it OP CP. And it was the second OP or castle-type building inboard from the [Persian] Gulf.

Cureton: In these castle buildings, how are the recon team defenses built up? I mean what part did they use and for what?

Talkington: The OPs themselves were used as observation and surveillance platforms. During the daytime, we could see up to seven clicks [kilometers] through the flatness of the land, and we could see pretty much everything within a significant arc from the buildings. During the hours of darkness, the teams patrolled with the Special Forces teams and the Saudi Border Police up and down the berms looking for line crossers. That happened every night that we were there. Line crossers were infrequent, but we ended up, I think, with seven EPWs [enemy prisoners of war] prior to when we started the war.

Cureton: Were there any other actions or threats that evolved during that period that caused a stir?

Talkington: Prior to the commencement of hostilities, no there were not. Just the line crossers, which caused the Saudi Border Police to go racing about wildly with their weapons cocked and disappearing off into the neutral zone and in the berm.

Cureton: What do you mean by line crossers? Iraqi deserters?

Talkington: Correct, sir. The Iraqi deserters coming over in ones, twos, and threes. My company was responsible for seven that I know we had direct contact with.

Cureton: When you got a line crosser, what happened?

Talkington: Normal procedure was they were simply whisked away—apprehended so to speak—by the Saudis, and they disappeared into the Saudi maze of interrogation. It was something we never really found out too much about.

Cureton: Now after the start of the air war, your situation in the OPs gradually changes.

Talkington: Yes that's correct, sir. The first night—actually the early morning of the 17th—we started taking fire, sporadic. I'm convinced it was not well aimed, but nevertheless it was impacting in most of the OPs.

Prior to the outbreak of the war, we had built bunkers into the berms outside of the sheath of fire of a directly laid mission on the OPs, and we were—the night of the start of the war—we were occupying the bunkers with minimal personnel in the OPs still observing. We started taking fire, so pretty much everybody moved into the OPs. We quit mobile patrolling along the berms and just continued to observe from the berms.

Cureton: Were there any incidents that came to note of receiving fire?

Talkington: The OP CP Refia received—I believe—the most fire. That's where the company headquarters and platoon headquarters were located. We received what I believe to be BM-21 [rocket] fire, artillery fire, and there were several FROG [missiles] that landed to our south.

The teams at this time were busy conducting CAS missions on targets that they had identified prior to the start of the war. That occupied most of the first couple of days of the war up until approximately the 19th. At that point the division and battalion wanted us to consolidate as the first MarCent boundary shifted to the northwest.

Cureton: Okay and now what?

Talkington: Did you want me to talk about friendly fire at all?

Cureton: Yes.

Talkington: The day of the 17th, team and OP-1 Ragwah [*sic*] was calling a CAS mission on an enemy mortar position, which was about 4,700 meters away at a two-bird flight of [Fairchild Republic]

A-10 [Thunderbolts]. The team leader was controlling the mission. He had talked the lead bird onto the target, and it had successfully bombed the mortar position. In the process of talking bird two onto an adjustment of that mission, he bombed the OP itself—a friendly OP—resulting in one man wounded and two other men slightly wounded. We had the one [U.S. Navy] corpsman, doc Conner [?], who was medevaced later on that afternoon.

Cureton: What was learned from that? I mean where were you seeing the problem at this point?

Talkington: The problem—and this is my opinion—that the Air Force guys weren't used to working with the Marine Corps in a CAS system the way that the Marines presented the nine-line brief and the way they attempted to talk the pilot onto the target. I just think they weren't used to it. Perhaps the DASH-2 pilot did not "roger" the orange air panels that were on top of the building. I know lead was on target, and I was monitoring the UHF [radio] that he was using at the time, and DASH-2 believed he was on target, but when he rolled in, he was obviously not.

Cureton: Well, exactly what was the distance between what he should have did and what he actually had?

Talkington: It was fairly significant. It was over 4,700 meters away.

Cureton: Then as time goes on in the air war, you're getting involved in a raid?

Talkington: Correct, sir. After we consolidated the company around the so-called "ankle," we occupied OPs 3 and 4. We had both platoons up; the first platoon at OP-3, Hama; second platoon at OP-4 [al-]Zabr. At that time, we had been observing the border for almost a month, and this was on into February. We were relieved by another reconnaissance company, and we pulled back down here for rest, refit, and debrief.

We then moved back up to division forward as a battalion, and at the time the information that we had passed and the stuff that we had observed, the division decided they wanted to get into Kuwait and see what was at the Markaz as Sur, which was immediately adjacent to OP-4, which we had been observing for a couple weeks prior to our moving back to DSA [?] and our battalion. It was believed through the vast amount of intelligence sources that if we were able to take Markaz that we'd have some good observation for continuing missions and be able to see a lot more in the terrain.

We got the mission in the first week of February and began planning at that time, and because 2d Platoon had been at OP-4 and was observing there for us, they were assigned the mission. They were the most familiar with the terrain. The raid actually went down on the 10th. They were, I believe, the first Marine ground unit into Kuwait. The mission started at 1930, and they were into Kuwait about 2100 approximately on the 10th. So the raid went extremely well. There was nobody occupying the Markaz. They recovered some documents and some weapons items, and they were able to observe quite a bit of terrain to the north and east of the Markaz.

Cureton: Did they remain there overnight?

Talkington: They remained there two nights.

Cureton: Did they observe anything, any activity?

Talkington: There were no personnel or vehicular movement in the area. Just prior to the raid there had been some extensive bombing in the area. I think 3/7 [3d Battalion, 7th Marines] used the building for a TACP [tactical air control party] shooter.

Cureton: Why was that building later abandoned and you returned to the Kuwait side?

Talkington: Because the building itself—the Markaz—was only 4,000 meters from friendly OP-4 Zabr, and it remained under observation by my teams during the entire evolution. So not wanting to start the ground war early and consolidating our people, we pulled them back off of there. The building was somewhat trashed by air and other assets, and there was no reason to risk those people out there any longer so we pulled them back on the 12th.

Cureton: What about subsequent operations?

Talkington: After the raid went down so well, we continued to monitor from the berm out into Kuwaiti territory. The remainder of the company got the word to commence planning for a mission to infiltrate the first obstacle belt as given by division. We got that in the second week of February and began planning, numbers-wise, and it was decided to use three lanes, commensurate with the number of task forces we were going to support in the effort. One recon team was assigned to each one of the three lanes. The division wanted us to go in at G minus seven [days], and that's what we did from the vicinity of OP-4 Zabr. We moved two reconnaissance teams from OP-4 Zabr out to Markaz as Sur and launched one team from just northwest of OP-4 on the berm. They generally followed three

Photo courtesy of Col Rory E. Talkington

Capt Talkington stands with fellow Marines in January 1991 during the Gulf War. He went on to serve in 1st MarDiv during the 2003 invasion of Iraq and commanded the 1st Recon Battalion during a deployment to Iraq in 2004.

lanes to the north and east into the first obstacle belt and stayed out there for three nights observing. Their most important task was to validate what all the intelligence assets had been saying about the obstacle belt. Were there indeed mines in this particular configuration? What were the wire obstacles? Were there tank ditches? What was there? They spent an entire night, and in some cases some of the teams spent additional time validating, evaluating, drawing sketches, photographing, and observing in the vicinity of the first obstacle belt. They also utilized their GPS [global positioning system] to get 10-digit grids on each of the locations that the task forces wanted to utilize as gaps.

Cureton: What about the team that was in front of Task Force Grizzly? Didn't that run into some problems?

Talkington: They moved up their lane and noticed at least a company of enemy in the immediate vicinity of where they were tasked to go to on the obstacle belt. So they had to adjust their hide site to get in close to the obstacle belt to deal with the additional evaluations of the obstacles.

Cureton: Were they able to find anything?

Talkington: They were able to find the gaps, yes sir. They were able to locate the gaps for Task Force Grizzly.

Cureton: How did they do that?

Talkington: They did it through observation and sketching, and they got fairly close into the obstacle belt at night, but it was a fairly risky situation. They were able to get up close to it and evaluate it but not actually in it and through it.

Cureton: Unlike that, across from Taro and Ripper?

Talkington: Yes sir, exactly. Those two teams were actually able to pass through different parts of the obstacle belt and take a look at mines and get some identification numbers off the mines and pick out what types they actually were, the Italian mines, etc.

Cureton: Okay. Then what happened after that?

Talkington: After they had completed their mission, they moved back out down their assigned lanes. The two teams that were south and east were picked up at Markaz as Sur by myself and company headquarters and moved back to OP-4. The most northwest team moved back down to the berm site, and they were picked up by their platoon commander and moved back down to OP-4 for debrief.

Cureton: In the end, what were some of the more striking bits of information that came your way by them?

Talkington: The confirmation of what was thought was there was the most important thing I think. We had looked at RPV film and aerial imagery but there is no better way to validate that than actually having a man there on the ground, and that's what we did is validate the gaps and what actually was there from the personal perspective. I think that probably ended up saving a lot of time for the division and saving some lives.

Cureton: Now your company was not involved in anything regarding the second obstacle belt, is that correct?

Talkington: No, sir. We had one team assigned to Taro in a screening mission, and my second platoon was attached to Grizzly screening their flanks; so there was no actual reconnaissance mission on the second belt.

Cureton: Were the teams effectively employed by the task forces?

Talkington: Yes, sir. The platoon that was assigned to Task Force Grizzly had their screening mission to their north and west, and they were employed very well by Grizzly.

Cureton: Thank you very much. Continuing the interview with 1st Recon Battalion, we have Delta Company Captain Mark D. McGraw. Delta Company [had] somewhat of a different role to play in the coverage of the Saudi-Kuwait border. Can you explain that?

McGraw: Our location was—from January 24th to January 29th—our location was up on OP-5 and -6, which is on the north-south portion of the Kuwaiti-Saudi border.

Cureton: Near what's called the elbow?

McGraw: Yes, sir. OP-6 is basically right in the elbow there, and OP-5 is probably about 10 miles south of there, sir. I had a motorized platoon south of each OP.

Instead of occupying the OP itself, which was very easily recognizable and almost surely targeted for indirect fire, we chose not to occupy those buildings although they were pretty good places to observe from, and we just moved down the berm that kind of marked the border. I had my company COC and one platoon probably a thousand meters south of OP-6, and my other platoon was about 800 meters south of OP-5. So we occupied OP-5 and -6 and every day made sure those buildings were clear, but we didn't occupy and observe from those buildings because they were so recognizable.

Cureton: Being a motorized unit, how many people per vehicle? What sort of vehicles are you using?

McGraw: We were using regular humvee vehicles, sir. We had a mix of hardback hummers—I'm not sure what the designation is for them—the hardbacks and the open humvees.

What we pushed for was to have three or four heavy weapons with each platoon. My first platoon was pretty much the MK19 platoon. They developed a little bit of expertise—as much as they could—with that weapon, and they concentrated on employing that weapon. My third platoon was pretty much the .50-cal platoon. Also, we got mounts for M60 machine guns for the open-back humvees, and we operated like that.

The numbers changed a little bit, but normally we had about five or six vehicles per platoon. My company COC vehicle had the radios—both HF and VHF, a GRC-160 hookup and an HF PRC-104—hooked up right behind me so that I had handsets over each shoulder and a map board in my lap. We conducted resupply and command and control from that vehicle. The platoons had five or six vehicles, and between two and four of those vehicles would have heavy weapons mounted on them.

Since I only had two platoons organic to me, I kind of operated at one up, one back, and we practiced our screening and our mobile patrolling in pretty much a bounding over-watch type of setup. Sometimes, we would work on actually observing a force coming at us and practice bounding overwatch, practicing for screening to the front of a force or breaking contact to come back and report to that force what was going on.

We also worked on screening to the flank where we would just set up a platoon in a platoon with the unit, who we were protecting the flank of over here, and as that unit moves up, we would displace a platoon and bound it past another one as the platoons were moving in column, and this platoon would cover the other platoon's movement up past them. It, in a sense, worked pretty well and was very easy to adapt the basic principles of dismounted patrolling to mounted patrolling, because really all the principles are the same. You still have to adhere to all the same principles. It's just your feet don't get as tired in those vehicles, and you have to have a knowledge of the heavy weapon systems, which we had to get up on the step on real quick.

Cureton: Okay. Around the 29th, things began to heat up quite a bit along the border. Are elements of your company getting involved in that?

McGraw: Yes, sir. The night of the 29th—actually

the day of the 29th—we were supposed to be relieved on the border by Alpha Company, 1st LAI [Battalion]. They were supposed to show up in the morning, and we were supposed to head back down south. It didn't happen. There was a change of plans on their end, and late in the afternoon Captain [Thomas R.] Protzeller from Charlie Company, 1st LAI, showed up. He's a friend of mine. We did coordination, and that night we were both going to be up there on the border. Since it was that late in the day and it would take a long time to get anywhere from up there, we decided to go ahead and stay another night up there rather than try to go back in the dark. At about 2100, we started to get indications that it was just . . . things were not as they had been. We heard some mech [mechanized] noise up to our north/northwest as we had heard the night before.

There was a very strong rotten egg smell in the air like a sulfur-dioxide type thing, which I understand from talking to Captain Talkington from his time up there, I understood then to be burning oil, and we could see the flames from Umm Gadair oil field [in Kuwait] up there. It looked like a distance—just figuring distance away from counting the boom to sound or the sound of the boom—you know the flames must have been 20 feet high from the fires up there. It was pretty impressive. There were probably 16 to 18 plumes of smoke across the horizon, and I imagine they were probably getting kind of tired of getting hammered, and that's one of the things that precipitated their offensive.

Then-Capt Mark McGraw, 1st Recon Battalion, and Capt John D. Manza, 1st LAI Battalion, in February 1991.
Photo courtesy of LtCol Mark D. McGraw

But probably the biggest indicator was we had no comm with anybody at 2100 and usually HF comm—we had a good frequency and HF comm was good until one or two in the morning on almost any given night—but HF comm went completely out by 2100. This caused us some concern, and I also lost comm with my other platoon down at OP-5. My radioman, Corporal Martin Gallegos, was scrambling around trying to get comm up, trying to work with different types of antennas, and finally about probably 2230, maybe 2300, we got the word from battalion to withdraw to the south with our whole company, because there was a probable mechanized attack coming our way.

Well, they didn't have to tell us that twice. We were packed up and ready to go anyway, which was fortunate, and we got out of there very quickly. We went down there and policed up the other platoon down at OP-5 and started heading south.

The plan that we had established with Charlie Company, 3d Recon [Battalion], their platoon down there—[First] Lieutenant [Steven A.] Ross's platoon—was to move to a contact point with them if either of us got hit, and together we would all head south to a rally point near al-Qaraah airfield. We were being told to go down south and link up with Task Force Shepherd in the vicinity of the al-Qaraah airfield. The problem was to our northwest, west, and especially down in the vicinity of OP-4, we were seeing a lot of flares.

We couldn't tell if they were being delivered by arty [artillery] or mortars or aircraft, but they were hanging up there a long time. In fact, they were hanging up in the air so long it almost looked like they were fixed on some kind of a mast, and I don't think we really knew what we were driving toward until we actually got down there. When we got down to the vicinity of OP-4 to link up with Lieutenant Ross's platoon, we were seeing a lot of impacts down there, and we saw what looked like an air-delivered missile hit, what looked like an LAV. By the time we got to the LAV, you could hardly recognize it was an LAV anymore. It had burned down that fast. Secondary explosions were going off forward. This was pretty near OP-4. As we moved down to OP-4, we could see the hulks of burning vehicles, and we saw—I didn't see—some of my Marines reported seeing a tank down there, a T-54/55 [main battle tank] that all 12 of our company vehicles went right by. We weren't sure at that point if the platoon from Charlie Company was down there still or not, but we saw the hulks of burning vehicles. We didn't see any of the Ma-

Photo courtesy of LtCol Mark D. McGraw

From left, SSgt William Thom, 1stLt Michael S. Saleh, Capt Mark McGraw, and 1stSgt Steve Sightler at al-Qaraah airfield in early February 1991. The 1st Recon Battalion manned many of the observation posts along the Saudi Arabian defensive berm.

rines from Charlie Company around, so we headed due south from there to al-Qaraah airfield.

When we got about down to al-Qaraah airfield, we called the battalion and said, "Hey, we don't have comm with Shepherd." We couldn't hear them. They couldn't hear us. I said, "I'm not going stumbling into their lines. We'll wait right here until the sun comes up or we get comm with Shepherd." The recon battalion told us to drive back north seven miles, which would put us about five miles away from OP-4, establish a perimeter and really a company-sized OP at that point. We moved up there and established that, and the terrain was so open and so flat there that it was almost like the pioneers circling the wagons. We were trying to get pretty good dispersion and broke out all of our night vision stuff. We spent the rest of the night and most of the next day observing there.

Just as kind of a side note, kind of a learning point, the next morning we could see what looked like initially T-72 [tanks] at the farthest range of our observation. It turned out that they were M109 [howitzers]. But that just shows how people, when they're scared, they assume the worst, and they want to see T-72s, and they want to report that very quickly and get out of harm's way or get help. It turned out they were M109s once we took a closer look at them, which we kind of took some grief for, but you know, sometimes in reporting immediately you're going to report inaccurately. But that was kind of a learning point for us, which was why I was less surprised when during the conduct of the ground war, we got fired on by some tanks from Ripper that claimed they saw BRDM-2s [Iraqi armored personnel carriers]. Humvees don't really look like BRDM-2s, but if that's what you want to see, that's what you'll see. It was just an interesting learning point.

Cureton: Now for the offensive itself, your company is slightly reorganized.

McGraw: Yes, sir. We took 1st Platoon, commanded by Staff Sergeant Brad Delauter, and we had them motorized, and Lieutenant Ross's platoon—the same platoon I referred to earlier—was dismounted. We attached both of those platoons to Grizzly as well as my company COC and detached 3d Platoon, commanded by [First] Lieutenant [Michael S.] "Mike" Saleh, as the motorized platoon attached to Taro. So essentially with Grizzly and Taro on the shoulders of 1st Marine Division's breach, we had a recon company minus. [The] 3d platoon was working with the platoon from Alpha Company, 3d Recon, and they were kind of a provisional company as was our company over with RCT-4 [Regimental Combat Team 4], which was Grizzly.

We showed up and linked up with Grizzly just as they were crossing the berm, which is really far too late to do any kind of planning and coordination. When we caught up with the CO of Grizzly, Colonel [James A.] Fulks, he said, "Hey you're a little late in the game for us to put you in right now, so we need to wait for kind of a break in the action so that I can brief these battalion commanders and let them know that there's going to be a recon platoon or company moving out there to their front." I thought that was very prudent.

So late that afternoon, I had Lieutenant Ross's platoon dismounted, screening to the west/northwest, to the left side of Grizzly's zone. They only had two humvees out there to give them a little bit of mobility if they got in any trouble. I was talking to them with my company COC, which was colocated with the main COC, and about midnight Colonel Fulks wanted to take my mobile—my mounted platoon—and use them to kind of screen forward of his COC as his COC went up through the breach points to catch up with his battalion. At that point, I kind of chopped my motorized platoon to that COC for ease of reporting. If they were going to run into something or see something of significance, it was important that they reported that to the CO of Task Force Grizzly and that I just monitor that on the radio and that we not try to make a big convoluted reporting loop. I kind of had to put [aside] my pride and desire of being in

charge of everything, you know, to let that platoon commander work for that colonel, a system that worked out very well.

They found the first breach point for the task force, actually for the task force's COC—jump CP—and then they'd go in and find the second breach point. They were fired on by Task Force Ripper as they were trying to go through the breach point. They couldn't find the actual breach point for the second obstacle belt, so Staff Sergeant Delauter and Corporal Ben Jones got out of their vehicles and started making their way across the minefield on foot to try to find the breach point. As they're doing this, in the middle of the minefield, they got fired on by arty and tank rounds from Ripper. Sergeant Lou Gregory, who was the platoon sergeant for that platoon, very quickly organized the people that were in the vehicles and got as many people out of the vehicles as he could. Unfortunately, he was not able to get everybody out of the vehicles. One Marine was killed by a sabot round [bullet] when his 6x[6] [truck] was hit. But for the most part, they defused a crisis situation. Staff Sergeant Delauter and Corporal Jones made their way back through the minefield, under fire also, and they were able to call Grizzly and tell them what was going on and get the situation resolved before anybody else got hurt. They moved back to a rally point and then later moved forward and did find the second breach site.

We displaced the rest of the recon company with the main CP, moved up to just south of al-Jaber [Air Base] airfield [in Kuwait], where again the mounted platoon went forward, this time went forward of the entire RCT to find the attack positions for 2/7's [2d Battalion, 7th Marines'] and 3/7's [3d Battalion, 7th Marines'] attack on al-Jaber airfield. So I think they were able to do that, and it was very valuable for them to go up ahead of time, locate the attack positions, make coordination with Ripper, and kind of smooth things over so that those infantry battalions could go up there and do their job.

As 2/7 and 3/7 went from northeast to southwest clearing through al-Jaber, Staff Sergeant Delauter's platoon screened along the southwest or basically along the left flank of what they were doing and, I think, contributed to their mission. By this time, the battalions were moving so fast the dismounted platoon really wasn't doing them a whole lot of good. So we were trying to scare up assets for them to go mounted. All we could get from RCT-4, all they had to give us was four motorcycles and a 5-ton [truck]. So it was a strange mix of vehicles: four motorcycles, two humvees, and a 5-ton for this recon platoon to operate out of. As it turned out, Jaber was secured and they really weren't needed to punch out and do a lot of reconnaissance after that. We did punch the platoons out and make a big circle around the airfield. We cleared bunkers. We made sure that all the rest of the Iraqis had been policed up. But really the game was over by that time, sir.

The next day we detached back to 1st Recon Battalion. Lieutenant Saleh by that time had come back from Taro, from working with them, and after the war was over, he did the sweep. He said they could have spent months out there. There was so much gear and equipment, but they only had a couple of days to do their thing.

And that was pretty much it for us, sir.

Captain Joseph Molofsky

Captain Joseph Molofsky joined 3d Marines in August 1990 after serving with the United Nations in Palestine. Due to this experience, he was assigned as the 1st Marine Division (1st MarDiv) liaison officer to the Saudi Arabian National Guard. He retired in 2006 as a colonel, his last billet being commander of the Security Battalion at MCB Quantico, Virginia. Colonel Molofsky held a master of arts degree in Western thought from Johns Hopkins University. Following retirement, he went to work for the Department of State's Bureau of African Affairs. Colonel Molofsky passed away in September 2008.

The 3d Marines protected the right flank of the 1st MarDiv during the push into Kuwait and operated in close concert with the Saudi Arabian National Guard during the war.

Colonel Molofsky was interviewed by Paul Westermeyer of the Marine Corps History Division on 16 August 2006. In the interview, Colonel Molofsky offers his perspective on Saudi-Marine relations, especially in regard to the Battle of al-Khafji in Saudi Arabia.

Westermeyer: Would you mind just sort of giving a narrative of your memory of Khafji, and how Khafji worked for you—just the battle itself? Your first impression and how you first found out about the invasion and just sort of a narrative of how you remember the events unfolding.

Molofsky: Well, very quickly, I was serving as the 1st Marine Division's liaison officer to King Abdullah's East Brigade, commanded by Colonel Turki [al-Firmi].* In order to do my job, I had been given

*Col Turki commanded the 2d Saudi Arabian National Guard Brigade.

one of very few PSC-3 SatCom [satellite communications] radios. There had been a change in the operations section of the 1st Marine Division, and it was determined by the new operations officer that that radio needed to be sent out to one of the operational units, [it was] too valuable for one of the liaison officers, and I was ordered to bring it back to division. I did so. Division headquarters was about 100 miles from our location, and you know, [I] shot an azimuth and drove across the desert to return the radio.

Westermeyer: That's a two- or three-hour drive.

Molofsky: Oh, it took longer than that. This is cross-country, in the desert, under some pretty tough conditions, I guess. We would spend most of the day doing something like that.

Westermeyer: Is this a humvee?

Molofsky: Yeah, I had been given a humvee and a driver and had the radio, and so I brought it back to the division.

Westermeyer: Do you recall your driver's name?

Molofsky: My driver's name was [Corporal] Tom Cruise. He was a radio operator out of the Communications Company, 1st Marine Division, who had been assigned to me.

Westermeyer: What was his rank?

Molofsky: At the time, he was a corporal and a new corporal, and without any experience, whatsoever, in that sort of independent operation. His Marine Corps career had been really right there in garrison, under the tutelage of a staff sergeant and a platoon sergeant, and all the rest. So, young Tom Cruise was a little bit out of his element as my driver and radio operator, living with an ANGLICO [air-naval gunfire liaison company] unit attached to a Saudi brigade in the middle of nowhere. It kind of zapped his head a little bit.

Westermeyer: I can imagine.

Molofsky: Yeah. He could never get beyond the standard—you, this is me, how do you read me, over. I'd be slapping me on [the] forehead going, "Hey, hey, we're in the bush man. We don't have time for that here." And, he just couldn't figure it out, because that's what he'd been taught at school. So, we had a great relationship, and he was a good kid, and he behaved bravely during the battle. So, we drive back to the division headquarters and I think it was then-Lieutenant Colonel [Jerome D.] Humble, later-Major General Humble, who had wanted the radio back, and he gave me quite a lecture, quite frankly—the young captain that I was—on priorities of communications and all the rest. So, I turned the radio over [and] laid down to get some sleep before we returned.

Westermeyer: Did he give you the lecture because you were disagreeing with the decision to turn in the radio?

Molofsky: Well, one didn't disagree too much [with] then-Lieutenant Colonel Humble. He was a pretty stalwart sort of fella. And I suggested that I wouldn't be able to support [Brigadier] General [Thomas V.] Draude, who was really my handler, without the ability to communicate using just HF, because it was problematic. No matter of the field expedient and it's no matter the atmospheric conditions out there, the ground anomalies made that HF [radio] very difficult, you know. And, I had gotten spoiled because this was state-of-the-art SatCom. Cruise and I had worked out the ability to whip out that low-gain antenna, shoot an azimuth, and get the thing directed, and you were talking clearly as a bell covered to whoever you wanted to. I had really used that to great effect and had gotten used to it and was disappointed to see I was going to lose it.

Westermeyer: You said that General Draude was really your handler that he was the 1st [Marine] Division assistant division commander at the time, is that correct?

Molofsky: That's correct.

Westermeyer: How often did you speak with him? Every day? Every couple of days?

Molofsky: Oh, no. I worked for the operations officer, but General Draude had been tasked I think by General [James M.] Myatt to keep an eye on the Arab coalition, as it were.

That's correct. And so, I would make arrangements for General Draude to come up and see Colonel Turki. And so, I always felt that—although, tactically, on the day to day, I worked with the operations officer—General Draude was watching what was going on, he was assigning missions to me, I guess, through the operations officer, you see, and I was the actual personal contact between him and the Arab King Abdullah['s] East Brigade.

Westermeyer: That's how he described it to me in his interview as well.

Molofsky: What a wonderful officer. I actually—I made a mistake and disappointed General Draude, at one point, which I've just recently, all these years later apologized for, and he wrote off, but at

the time he was a little hot under the collar. So, I had turned the radio back over to Colonel Humble and was awakened by one of the other operations officers, and he told me that King Abdullah's East Brigade had gone into action, that Khafji had been attacked, and I needed to get back to the unit and start to send situation reports as to what was happening.

Westermeyer: So, at this point, you're at the [1st Marine] Division headquarters?

Molofsky: That's correct.

Westermeyer: Roughly 100 miles from the OPs.

Molofsky: Roughly. I don't remember exactly, but about 100 miles off, cross-country. So, they gave me the radio back, and I launched.

Westermeyer: They gave it to you for the duration?

Molofsky: Oh, yeah. Because at that moment, you know, they were relying on what information they could get from 3d Marines, who had reconnaissance teams, two of them, up in the city. And, everybody likes their own personal liaison reporting right back to them—I think it's unfortunate, but that's still the case, and it's problematic. But in any case, they sent me back up there, and so I got back as quick as I could and pulled into our hooch area. I was living with [Captain James R.] "Jim" Braden's ANGLICO team, and I rolled up into the site, and we were colocated with the headquarters of King Abdullah's East Brigade, and of course he had his fire power control teams, [First Lieutenant Paul B.] "Bubba" Deckert and [Captain Douglas R.] "Doug" Kleinsmith, and the rest out with the individual battalions.

Westermeyer: These are the ANGLICOs?

Molofsky: The ANGLICO, run by Captain Jim Braden, had subelements—small teams of radio operators and fort observers and terminal air controllers out with the individual battalions in the brigade.

Westermeyer: All the same battalion? That was Turki's battalion?

Molofsky: That's correct. That's the way they operated. Jim was the advisor and the coordinator for all of those elements at the brigade level, and he had elements with the fighting battalions. So, I pulled up and he said Doug Kleinsmith and his

Then-Capt Joseph Molofsky, 1st MarDiv liaison to King Abdullah's East Brigade, stands with two Saudi nationals.
Photo courtesy of Col Joseph Molofsky

team, which had been assigned duty at one of the border forts, had been overrun, that they had pulled back out of the fort, and there was no communications with them. That he was concerned that they had been killed or captured. That the Iraqis had overrun Khafji. That there were two 3d Marine reconnaissance teams still in the city, and that the Saudi leadership was in a tizzy. I don't know how to describe it. I told him that my mission from the division was to move forward and to provide ongoing situation reports and took my leave and did so. My initial intent was to move forward to one of the battalions and link up with Bubba Deckert, who had reported some mechanized, some armor, fighting to the northwest of the city. And, so I drove north on my own, looking for Deckert.

Westermeyer: Just you and Tom Cruise?

Molofsky: Yeah. Just the way it was, you know. And we drove up to Checkpoint 67, which was on the coastal road leading into Khafji, the forward element of 3d Marines.

Westermeyer: I just want to clarify your capabilities at this time. You have the satellite radio, which gives you great communication with MarDiv.

Molofsky: Division, yeah.

Westermeyer: But, you don't have the ability to call for fire yourself, from either air or artillery. Is that correct?

Molofsky: No. That was not my function. That's why I was looking for Deckert, you see. You know, Deckert would have been able to divide all of that terminal control.

Westermeyer: But, the security for your operation is the M16 [assault rifles] and you and Tom Cruise, basically.

Molofsky: Yeah, we had a couple weapons between us. I think we had a couple of LAWs. I think we had a couple of grenades and enough equipment to destroy the radio, you know, some thermite grenades and that sort of thing. But, frankly, we were, for the most part, very vulnerable.

Westermeyer: Were you fairly confident though as you were driving up that there's Saudi forces between you and the Iraqis at this point?

Molofsky: At that moment, I hadn't any idea what the lay down of the battlefield had become. Jim Braden had also told me that the Saudi Marines that had been in the city—of course, the city had been evacuated for quite some time—had [unassembled] and gone south.

Westermeyer: They had been stationed close there on the beach, correct?

Molofsky: There were flinching Saudi Marines in an organization just established to mirror—in the eyes of not Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG), but Ministry of Defense and Aviation (MODA)—mirror U.S. Marines, but without the training, without the equipment, without the tutors, you see that, subsequent to that, were provided. The Marine Corps took a number of Marine captains, who were out as infantry . . . at the company and battalion level, and formed them into the 1st Technical Assistance Field Team in support of the Saudi Marines.

Westermeyer: Were they there already? This is after?

Molofsky: They were in country. They were prepared to go forward, but they were a couple days after Khafji was over, before they actually showed up. So, their students-to-be were in the city, camped out—basically functioning at a very low ebb. And, when the city was attacked, they did not fight. They went south. I also knew, in Khafji, that there was a 1st SRIG team house led by Lieutenant Colonel [Richard M.] "Rick" Barry, at the desalination plant, north of the city. I had been in there a couple of times, and Colonel Barry was in there with some Special Forces guys, I think some COs [commanding officers] were in there, there were some Marines in there, and they were doing.

Westermeyer: Sir, SRIG? S-R-I-G?

Molofsky: Yeah.

Westermeyer: And, you went to that standpoint?

Molofsky: Surveillance, reconnaissance, [and] intelligence group was an organization that was established about that time to coordinate the activities of radio battalion, intelligence types, reconnaissance organizations, that sort of thing.

So, I knew Colonel Barry was up there, and they were in kind of a tenuous position. They had a team house inside the desalination plant, but certainly not defendable. I mean they had some barbed wire up and had put some vehicles across some of the gates, and what have you but certainly, in my mind, not defendable. I am still not sure what they were doing up there. They had enough radio equipment in there to talk to anyone they chose to. It was my understanding that they were monitoring, in some fashion, the activities along the border, in the different border forts, wide variety of—you name it—rolling around out there. And, I had been told that they were working with

Kuwait resistance, relaying information, that sort of thing.

Westermeyer: So, they're a joint force, meaning that they had . . .

Molofsky: That was a joint force, and maybe combined force, that was the northern most group of its kind on the border that I was aware of.

Westermeyer: So, joint and combined would mean that it had multi-U.S. armed forces involved and international forces.

Molofsky: It was my understanding that the Saudis had some of their special operators roaming through there too. But, Colonel Barry would be the man that would be able to tell you exactly what was going on up there. And so, I guess to synopsize here, I bump into Jim Braden, who is advising Colonel Turki. Colonel Turki is very concerned about the situation and unclear about how to proceed. He thinks one of his teams, at least one, is captured or killed. He thinks that Doug Kleinsmith—he has lost communication with him, because Doug is relying on HF comms, you see, and he is on the move as it turns out. As it turns out, the night before—when his outpost got hit and was about to be overrun—they withdrew into the *sabkha* [salt marshes] behind the outpost, and then, of course, couldn't get comms up, and so nobody knew where they were at until he reappeared later in the day. But, at that moment, the situation was completely up in the air.

Westermeyer: Would you say that it is accurate to say that there were a lot of different, small units—reconnaissance teams, ANGLICO teams, these SRIG teams—that were, everyone felt had to be moving somewhere along Khafji, but no one knew exactly where they were? Is that accurate?

Molofsky: Well, not entirely. I would say that, whenever you are moving around in a battlefield like that, you have to plot your movements with some kind of patrol overlay that's held by a higher headquarters so that fires can be employed without endangering U.S. forces. That wasn't happening. There were a lot of independent operators, you know. But, the team hunt for Colonel Barry's people was certainly plotted at division. All the border forts were plotted at division, you see. King Abdullah's East Brigade . . . I certainly had made sure the division was aware of where all of our units were. Because Jim would have his people GPS in their battalions, and so Jim had built a very comprehensive lay down of where all the Arab units were in our sector. But, having said that, nobody was plotting my movement going forward. And there were other people roaming around that battlefield out there. The [international private military company] Vinnell Corporation guys were out there.

Westermeyer: And, these are mostly the retired Army Special Forces guys who were hired to be advisors for the Saudis?

Molofsky: And still are. Four years ago I was working with the technical assistance field team training Saudi Marines, and Vinnell still has contractors working with Army officers who are assigned to the Office of Program Manager [OPM] for the Modernization of the Saudi Arabian National Guard, just as they did then. Still doing it.

Westermeyer: I think 20 or 30 years before that too. They have been modernizing a long time.

Molofsky: Yeah, perhaps. So, at that point, I get up to Checkpoint 67, and nobody up there has the vaguest idea what's going on. I guess the lieutenant commanded a platoon, you know, in the gas station. There was [a] gas station and a restaurant, and they are manning the outpost and really unclear about what's happened.

Westermeyer: And, this is the Saudi platoon?

Molofsky: No. It's Marines.

Westermeyer: These are Marines?

Molofsky: He is a Marine out of 3d Marines. I don't remember which battalion. It might have been 3d Battalion, 3d Marines.

Westermeyer: At Checkpoint 67?

Molofsky: That's correct. Which was a couple clicks [kilometers] south of the causeway that led into the city. You could see the city from the checkpoint.

Westermeyer: And, that wasn't within the Saudi battle space, Checkpoint 67?

Molofsky: Yeah, it sure was.

Westermeyer: Okay. So, do you know at what point 3d Marines had moved? Were they sent into that battle space, or had they always been there?

Molofsky: I really bore the brunt of the Saudi's angst about the battle space, and negotiated through the division in 3d Marines, to move people around. At one point, an antiair stinger missile unit showed up and moved into a piece of high ground in the middle of the Saudi headquarters, having been told [to move] there, a grid assigned by somebody back at 3d Marines. I am not sure who actu-

ally sent them. And, I suggested that should a Saudi unit drive into the headquarters area perimeter, 3d Marines, and start to set up, there'd be some concern about that and sent them packing.

Westermeyer: This was before Khafji?

Molofsky: Well before.

Westermeyer: But, there had been problems before Khafji with the battle space in Iraq?

Molofsky: Yes. The Marines felt that they needed to get their own eyes on. They couldn't trust the Saudis. The Saudis were insulted that the Marines didn't trust them, you see. That was really the dynamic that General Draude would come up and work with Colonel Turki about.

Westermeyer: Colonel [John H.] Admire was the commander of 3d Marines at the time.

Molofsky: Great man.

Westermeyer: [The] 3d Marines are on the border of the Marines' flank. Did you interact with Colonel Admire in this process?

Molofsky: Often. I had been assigned as the liaison officer from his operations section.

Westermeyer: Okay. So, you've been in 3d Marine operations before they picked you up for the division? I think you covered this.

Molofsky: That's right. And, to tell you the truth, Colonel Admire saw me, I think, as his liaison officer. You see, General—then-Colonel Admire was very pleased because I would report back to his people. I gave him plenty of information.

Westermeyer: Could you contact 3d Marine headquarters with your Sat [satellite] radio also?

Molofsky: Yeah, [I] sure could. And, actually, we're almost up to the point where I use that SatCom radio to put Colonel Admire in contact with General Myatt

Westermeyer: Now, my guess is that Colonel Turki's radios were not always very effective.

Molofsky: No.

Westermeyer: But, you had the satellite radio, and throughout the Battle of Khafji, it worked well for you? You didn't have any problems with it?

Molofsky: Yeah. There were a couple of moments where we could not get comms up, but I think that that radio made a big difference, quite frankly.

Westermeyer: Yes. It sounds as if you and that radio acted as sort of the communications hub for 1st [Marine] Division, 3d Marines, and . . .

Molofsky: I supported that. Certainly, 1st [Marine] Division had all the comms they needed with 3d Marines. Certainly, Jim Braden was able to talk back using HF, which he was permanently affixed with up there. He had pretty good comms back with his headquarters, which was colocated in division headquarters. But, for actual tactical reporting, on at least two occasions, it was that SatCom radio that really infoed [informed] General Myatt as to what was going on.

Westermeyer: Colonel Admire did not have to wait for your reports to go up to 1st [Marine] Division and then back down them?

Molofsky: I was basically, you know, dual reporting. I probably shouldn't have been doing that, but I made sure that his people got all the information that they needed. Because I was coming from the regiment, you see. And, I was a young captain, and I had this loyalty, and all the rest of that.

Westermeyer: So, you're not sure at what point 3d Marines had sent this platoon to Checkpoint 67?

Molofsky: I am not sure. But, it had been some time. They had pushed forward to get eyes on the city.

Westermeyer: I'm sorry, sometime before Khafji or sometime after Khafji had started? They had been there for hours or days?

Molofsky: Well there's two pieces. The first piece is a reconnaissance piece. [Captain Robert C.] "Bob" [Bruge],* not Briedel [*sic*], but Bob, the S-2 of the regiment, had worked out a training gig for his reconnaissance teams to establish OPs in the city well before Khafji was on the skyline and had done that a couple of iterations a day. And had done that without telling the Saudi's that they were doing it, just before Khafji, and there were two teams up there when Khafji happened. Really outrageous.

Westermeyer: We didn't tell the Saudis . . .

Molofsky: I was unaware, Braden was unaware, and the Saudis were unaware that the Marines had reconnaissance teams up in Khafji.

Westermeyer: Do you know at what point you became aware of this?

Molofsky: I became aware of it when I bumped into General Admire on the road, and he told me he had two of his teams trapped in the city.

So, I move forward, having spoken to Braden, unclear about the situation, go through [Checkpoint] 67, find a platoon of Marines there, that I was unaware had been there before, and they tell me they

*Capt Bruge was S-2 of 3d Marines.

don't have any idea what's going on. They might have told me if there were reconnaissance teams up in the city. I drive forward and find one of the French F-3 tanks that belongs to the Qataris broke down right in front of the arches to the city. You've seen the city or the arches in front of the city?

Westermeyer: Right. Are the Qataris still there, or is it just an abandoned tank?

Molofsky: It's a tank with a crew in it. I take the tank commander and put him in my vehicle, because he tells me there's a mechanized fight up to the northwest, and that's where the rest of the Qatari tanks are and that's where he wants to go. And, I am speaking a little of Arabic, so we're communicating a little bit. So, we get to the vehicle, and we drive to the northwest.

Westermeyer: The rest of his crew remains with this broken tank.

Molofsky: They were in the tank. And we drive a couple of miles up to the outboard side of the city, to the west of the city, and I come up on a group of vehicles and Arabs. So, we drive up in there, and as it turns out, they're prisoners—the first prisoners, that I'm aware of, that were taken up to that point—a group of about 20 of them. And they had some Saudi—you know, King Abdullah's 5th Battalion—guards with them, Bubba Deckert's outfit. And I remember walking up on the group, and there was a man on his knees in the sand, and he had his hands behind him, you know—cuffed or flexed cuffed. And he shrank down toward the ground, kind of like a dog, you know. It was clear to me he thought I was going to kill him. And so I told him, you know, "Saddam mashnoon makamuskalah"—[meaning] Saddam's crazy, no problem with me, and all that. And I was standing there, and one of the ANGLICO—guy from a patrol—comes roaring past in a Qatari vehicle with the Qatari commander and hollers, "Take off! Here come the Iraqis!" Something like that.

Westermeyer: What sort of vehicle was it?

Molofsky: It was a Land Rover. The Qatar leadership had Land Rover four-wheel drive SUVs, and I can't remember that guy's name—it will come to me, I think it's in the book. And so he comes roaring past, at speed, and he really hollered something like, "Run, here they come!" Something like that.

Westermeyer: The Iraqis are coming! The Iraqis are coming! [Laughs]

Molofsky: Something like that. It was pretty good humor. So at that point, everybody leaves for their vehicles, and they start driving. The prisoners get put up on their feet and they're walking away—they're being led away. So, it's me and Cruise.

Westermeyer: You were connected with his unit and faded away.

Molofsky: Yeah. And, so I told Cruise to get the radio out, because now I had something to tell the general. I mean, there had been contact. Prisoners had been taken. There were, in fact, Iraqis in the city—it hadn't been confirmed, I guess. And so we get the little green antenna out and about a 1,000 meters away, over a piece of micro terrain, comes an Iraqi APC [armored personnel carrier]. The guy gets up on the hill, and he starts slewing the turn, and I'm thinking, "This is the end of me and Cruise." Because it's up in the humvee [High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle or HMMWV] with the radio. So, Cruise and I do a Keystone Cops thing, and we're grabbing radio gear and antenna, and we leap in the vehicle, and we head south.

Westermeyer: Do you recall what type of Iraqi APC it was?

Molofsky: I probably couldn't come up with that. I mean I wasn't paying a lot of attention because slewed the turns in our direction. I don't think it was an APC; it wasn't a tank. You know, the whole prisoner deal was kind of interesting, but when I got there, these guys, again, were standing around, smoking cigarettes, some of them on their knees, some of them flexed cuffed; the Arabs talking to each other. I mean, you know, they salaam one to the other—they were all brothers; you know what I mean. I didn't see any animosity. They were peasants being put upon by their respective kings; you know what I mean. But, when I showed up—when the *gringos* showed up—it changed the whole tone of the whole atmosphere. Because I think the Iraqis had been told that we were going to shoot them. And I know that the man that I walked up on thought I was going to kill him

Westermeyer: You were saying, "No, I'm not going to kill you"?

Molofsky: Well, I wasn't going to shoot him. I mean, I am patting him on the back, giving him a cigarette, you know, and spoke a little bit of Arabic to him and tried to reassure him that, you know . . . because that just wasn't part of the . . .

Westermeyer: Right. So, you had to hightail it away from the APC.

Molofsky: Literally. Pretty comical. Why the guy didn't shoot us, I don't know.

Westermeyer: A thousand yards . . . tough shot at a moving target.

Molofsky: Well, I don't know if it was a 1,000 yards. It might have been, I am thinking now—it was. He was in range, I will tell you that. He was well within range, and he had a pretty clear shot. There was nothing much else around us. It was ugly. It was pretty ugly. Well inside 1,000 yards. I just came up with that. So, Cruise and I go back south and everybody is scattered now. And there is no sign of Bubba Deckert, and I can't find their battalion. And Cruise and I drive into the sabkha.

Westermeyer: What is a sabkha again?

Molofsky: Sabkha is a patch of desert that has some kind of underlying moisture that causes a thin, mud-like crust to develop on the top, which cracks in the heat, but it's easily penetrated by a vehicle and [is] very soft underneath—you get stuck in it in a huge way. Cruise and I had an adventure one time, where we—I don't know if you want to use that day—but . . .

Westermeyer: Anything interesting is always good for the books.

Molofsky: Well, Cruise and I are going back to the Saudi division at one point to see the Special Forces Bravo Team that was there; [we] drive and sink the truck. I was driving—officer's not suppose to drive, but there's just too much driving, so I drove too. And we were driving across the sabkha, and the only way to do it is once you get in it, you gotta really keep up your speed, because once you lose your momentum, you are stuck. And so I buried this humvee—I mean up to the fenders, you know what I mean. It was really stuck in the sabkha. And we're like 20 miles from the Saudi division and 100 miles from where we're suppose to be, and there's nobody around. So, it's kind of an issue.

So, there was some heavy equipment out there, and so I thought I'd push the humvee out with that. So, I got in it—keys were in the glove box—[and] cranked this thing up. It's a kind of forklift that you gotta climb a ladder to get into it—it's huge, you know. And so I get this thing started. Never been in one before in my life. Get it turned around, you know, and drive into the sabkha, because I'm gonna push the humvee up—and buried the thing. Buried it. I mean that thing would have needed a nuclear explosion underneath it to get it out of the sabkha. Pretty good humor.

In any case, so we're driving back; I am trying to link up with 5th Battalion, and we get into a sabkha. We come up over [a] rise and we're in it, and I think Cruise is driving, and I am thinking, "Oh, man, we're going to get stuck out here." There's nobody else around. There's a war going on. We're going to be on foot, and it's a big problem. And so I said, you know, Cruise and I are just yelling at the truck, "Come on, man!" And we managed to get out of the sabkha, we come up over a rise and come down onto the coastal road. Right in the middle of Colonel Admire's CP [command post], jump CP.

Westermeyer: So, he has moved his CP into the coastal road, and so at this point 3d Marines are basically forming, it sounds like, almost [a] perimeter around the southern part of Khafji.

Molofsky: No. What had happened was that he had reinforced Checkpoint 67 at that point and gone forward, himself, with his jump CP. They were still south of the checkpoint. I'm not sure exactly where they were on the road. They could have been north of the checkpoint, because they had just found out that the two Army supply trucks had somehow bypassed all the Saudi checkpoints, driven past Checkpoint 67, and driven into the city. So, Colonel Admire came forward with jump CP, and his executive officer and a small team had gone forward to look for those trucks and found the one that had gotten stuck, still sticking in the cinder block wall it had crashed into where the two American soldiers had been captured. So, that was what was happening right there. And we come leaping up over the berm and then right down in the middle of this thing. No security out, no nothing. So, I get out. Colonel Admire sees me, and he asks me what I know. I tell him what I know. He tells me what he thinks is going on, and then I said, "Would you like to talk to General Myatt?" Because he is out on the road, and he has no comms to do that.

And, so we get the SatCom cranked up and Colonel Admire, who is the senior military officer in that sector, the regimental commander, who's now got eyes in there, is now talking right back to the division commander. That, I think, was fairly significant. Because Colonel Admire said, you know, this is my position, this is the situation, this is what I think we've got. And, I think that was the first hint that Colonel Admire got that we needed to let the Arabs respond. Because, you know, Colonel Admire is ready to bring the regiment up and just start, you know, blowing through the city. Counterattacking into the city.

Westermeyer: And this [is the] point, when you meet Colonel Admire, also when you first find out,

definitively, that those two recons have been left in the town?

Molofsky: As we exchange information, you know—there's a broke[n] down tank right at the entrance of the city, there's been a mechanized fight out to the northwest, prisoners have been taken, Iraqis are definitely in the city—that's where I find out about the two prisoners—because I wasn't aware of that at that moment, and that's where I find out that he's got two teams in the city.

Westermeyer: Do you think that the Saudis realized that there was something different about these two recon teams compared to the ANGLICO teams attached to them, or did they just sort of think of all of them as American? Did they know that those recon teams were basically not supposed to be there? Did they realize that they were—that the battle . . . ?

Molofsky: I would tell you that Turki didn't know enough about his craft to recognize the full gravity of that—that somebody had put reconnaissance and surveillance teams surreptitiously into his battle space. I mean, if you'd done that to General Admire—he'd [have] gone nuts, you know. And, I think that one of the things the book doesn't portray accurately is this sense of General Admire is going to tell you that, you know, the Arabs counterattacked to recapture the . . . you know, to uncover the reconnaissance teams. And that's not really what happened.

Westermeyer: The book we're referring to is *Storm on the Horizon* by David J. Morris.

Okay, so you don't think that they were going—because [Saudi] General Khaled [bin Sultan bin Saud], in his book, his biography with his time in command at the general forces, says very specifically that they said, "We will go rescue your Marines."

Molofsky: I think that's after the fact. Senior officers, you know, finding a place for them in history—certainly the Arabs had a tremendous vested interest in rescuing U.S. Marines who had come to save the kingdom, you know. I mean, it was reciprocation in the Arab sense, you know—brothers helping brothers. But the fact of the matter was, actually, I know, after this was all over, Abdullah called out by telephone, radio telephone, to the CP—Colonel Turki's CP—and spoke to the officers. And I didn't speak enough Arabic, but I was sitting right there when he called to congratulate them, and so they didn't let me speak to him. But, I am going to tell you that I am convinced that the reason the Saudi's counterattack had nothing to do with the Marines up there; it had to do with Turki being and told the King's . . . the sovereignty in the nation has been violated. You know, that if we allow this, they were going to come down the coastal road, take [Ras al-]Mishab, take [al-]Jubayl, go down, and kill all your women; and the honor of the royal family is now at stake.

Westermeyer: Right.

Molofsky: That is why they counterattacked. Not to recover the Marines. The Marines, the gig with the Marines, was added after, quite frankly, I think, for them to use as a safe, face-saving, kind of respect-building, "Look what we've done for the Americans" kind of a thing. Because they certainly didn't value the individual soldier, I'll tell you that.

Westermeyer: Right. Okay.

Molofsky: You know, losses were not something that they were that concerned with; it seemed to me. So, we get back down—I'm down with Colonel Admire, and he is talking to General Myatt—and I guess the patrol that had gone forward with the XO [executive officer], you know, had been recovered. So, there's a gaggle of us out there on the road—half a dozen vehicles, people walking around really unclear about what's going on. I am pretty convinced that this is the start of it.

Westermeyer: And this is the jump CP of 3d Marines?

Molofsky: Seemed to me, yeah. It was Colonel Admire, himself, and his mobile command post, radio operators, the Three Alpha, that kind of thing.

Westermeyer: But, not a large security detachment.

Molofsky: He had a vehicle full of security with him, you know. There were 20 guys on the road out there—that had included the XO's patrol, me and Cruise and our vehicle, General Admire, and two or three vehicles.

Westermeyer: Now, at this point, are there any SANG or Qatari units around at all?

Molofsky: No, other than the tank that was up forward and what had happened, I guess, between the time I had been told back at division headquarters. . . . See the initial attack had happened the night before, [Captain Roger L.] "Rock" Pollard's situation at west and Doug Kleinsmith being overrun and people pulling back from the border force and the city being occupied and the reconnaissance teams being surrounded. That had all happened the night before. This is now the next day, at midday, 1300 [or] 1400.

Photograph courtesy of Col Joseph Molofsky

Capt Molofsky stands with Saudi Arabian National Guard troops. The Saudi forces played an important part in retaking the Saudi-Kuwaiti border town of al-Khafji from Iraqi forces during the Battle of al-Khafji.

Westermeyer: So, then what happens from this point?

Molofsky: So, General Myatt and Colonel Admire talk, and I think, significantly, it's the first time he's told, "Don't counterattack, support the SANG." And so, I make my way. It's about 20 clicks [kilometers] back down to the shob. So, I make my way back down to the shob, and I go back and find Jim Braden to find out what's going on. Braden tells me that the Saudis have been ordered to counterattack immediately by Khaled—personally calls Turki, so I am told. He says, "You will counterattack and do it now." And, so Turki orders the 7th Battalion to move to Checkpoint 67, coordinate with the Marines, and counterattack into the city. At the same time, he orders the 5th Battalion, with Bubba Deckert—I did bump into Bubba. I guess after I left Colonel Admire, I might have linked with Bubba.

Westermeyer: Before you made it back to headquarters?

Molofsky: That's right. And, I think I was going to stay with him, and then I didn't think that they were going to be the focus of effort. So, I went back to Jim and found out what the Saudis were doing and then drove from the coastal road. I went out into the west, found Bubba, heard that Doug was okay, drove south to get back to the CP where SANG was.

Westermeyer: Now, is this the original CP that SANG . . . have they moved their CPs?

Molofsky: No.

Westermeyer: It's the same one? There's no mobile CP, there's no jump CP? They're in place where they were at the very beginning of the battle?

Molofsky: Yeah. I mean, when the initial invasion came, I mean I think they moved into those positions and stayed there. They just stayed there and then pushed the battalions forward.

Westermeyer: Right.

Molofsky: So, I hear they're gonna, you know, the Saudi battalion's gonna link up at Checkpoint 67.

Westermeyer: This was the 2d Battalion, the SANG, that we're dealing with?

Molofsky: That is the 7th Battalion [2d SANG Brigade].

Westermeyer: The 7th Battalion.

Molofsky: Led by [Lieutenant Colonel Hamid] Matar, and so Cruise and I make our way back, and at this point it's 1800 on that evening, and when we get to Checkpoint 67, you know, Matar's battalion is just really lined up on the road out into the desert a little bit, into Checkpoint 67. It's a beehive. I mean, you got the commanding officer, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, and his staff, his whole staff up

there; you got, probably company, minus Marine infantry, that are manning the checkpoint wall up there; and I was there fairly recently.

Westermeyer: Right.

Molofsky: I told John [Admire]—I went up there when I was with SANG, got arrested up there and all that. So, a lot of people [were] at the checkpoint. And Matar's orders are to attack. And that's it, you know—nothing else. Attack.

Westermeyer: I just thought of a question that I should have asked earlier. Are the SANG battalions at full strength, according to their CO?

Molofsky: I gave a pretty comprehensive force lay down brief to General Draude and a bunch of the regimental commanders a couple of weeks beforehand. And, as I recall, based on their table of organization, they had the men and materiel. But the men were untrained. The materiel was rusted. And I remember briefing all hands that their combat capability was extremely limited for those two reasons, and add the fact that they were poorly led.

Westermeyer: So, they technically had everything they were supposed to, but . . .

Molofsky: For the most part, I mean it was a brigade. They had a Qatar element with a company of tanks, you know, they had with Egyptian advisors. I mean they had three battalions armed with Cadillac Gage V-150 [Commando light armored] fighting vehicles. I mean they had stuff.

Westermeyer: So, you'd be calling it the main armament on the Cadillac Gage V-150?

Molofsky: It had a main gun. I don't remember—I knew all that stuff.

Westermeyer: It was like a 20mm or a 30mm, something like that?

Molofsky: Yeah, something like that. I mean . . .

Westermeyer: Did any of them have TOW [missiles]?

Molofsky: I recall that they had [a] TOW variant; that they had a mortar variant. They had gun vehicles. They had, you know, medical vehicles. It was like an LAV organization, but with this Canadian-built, Cadillac Gage vehicle.

Westermeyer: And, then, is this the very first Saudi counterattack, or was this their first attempt to move back into the town?

Molofsky: That's correct. I am not sure when Turki got the order. I know it took a great deal of time to move people into position. I know there were no contingency plans. There were no standing operations orders. I think, principally, he probably called Muktar and said, "Link up with the Americans on the coastal road and attack into the city."

Westermeyer: Now, at this point, you interacted quite a bit with Turki during the battle, and you've interacted quite a bit with Jim Braden, in the manner of the ambush.

Molofsky: No. Now I spoke with Jim on two separate occasions, since I returned from division headquarters. And Jim was monitoring the situation, talking to his people in the field, and had a pretty good handle. Turki had no idea, other than what Jim Braden was telling him. Jim Braden, quite frankly, was in Turki's hip pocket, giving him the information he needed, because Turki didn't have comms with his people.

Westermeyer: The reason I ask is because, General Khaled, in his book, he says a warrior . . . basically says that the Marine Corps did not provide promised air support during the battle. And, at this point, before this first attack, do you recall either Colonel Turki or Jim Braden ever bringing that up or saying that they've been requesting air [support].

Molofsky: There was a classified [U.S.] Air Force report on the Battle of Khafji that describes the unbelievable airpower that was utilized, which is really the key to success. It certainly wasn't Matar and the 7th Battalion [that] won Khafji. It was U.S. air that just massacred everybody behind the city. You know, Turki wanted the hamburger bomb. All right. Turki had been told that there was a Lockheed C-130 [ground attack aircraft] launched. Massive explosive device that looked like [Little] Boy from Hiroshima [Japan] that was some kind of gas vapor explosive device, and that's what he wanted. All right. He called it the hamburger bombs. "I want the hamburger bomb." And, he wanted [Boeing] B-52 [Stratofortresses].

Westermeyer: Colonel Turki wanted B-52s?

Molofsky: Yes. And, you know, the situation was such that the Americans knew we had teams in the city. Nobody was about to carpet bomb a Saudi Arabian town not knowing who was up in there and what it was about. It was just ill thought out, [a] snap reaction—because we had promised them air. Jim Braden had told Colonel Turki every day that he was up there: "When the time comes, we will run all of the terminal air control that you could possibly need. We will call in the battleships off the coast. We will bring in the American artillery in support of your units." Well, now, in contact, I

guess Turki wanted it all. He just wanted to start leveling the place. And, you know—it wasn't feasible. He got everything he needed, when it was appropriate to give it to him. He just didn't know when to ask for it.

Westermeyer: Okay. So, there was really a question of competence there on the Saudi end. They're asking for inappropriate air resources essentially for . . .

Molofsky: At that moment, absolutely, without question. You gotta have a target for the air.

Westermeyer: But, you do recall, prior to this first push off that Turki had already started asking you for the hamburger bomb and B-52s.

Molofsky: That's right. That was his response to all [of] this.

Westermeyer: So, rather than to send the Saudis in, the initial Saudi reaction had been, "Please flatten our city to the ground"?

Molofsky: I didn't know—that's speculation on my part. The point is that Turki's initial reaction was to Braden, I think, "You have promised me all of this support. Now we need it. Where is it?" And the answer to that is, "It's formed up and ready to go as soon as we build a plan." You know, we don't attack with instructions like, "Go north and kill everything." We built a plan, and it hadn't been done at that point. But the Saudis got all that they needed.

Westermeyer: And none of this is affecting air support on Khafji itself, directly? This doesn't have . . . it has no impact on the air strikes that are going on the follow-up forces?

Molofsky: I don't know that Turki was aware of that. I don't know if Khaled was aware of it. Well, I don't know about Khaled, but I don't think Turki . . . Turki was focused [on] like staring at a map through a straw at the town of Khafji, these battalions. I don't know that he was aware that a massive air effort was taking place north of the city, you know, killing all the replacements that were coming down. So you know, I guess Turki is screaming at Jim Braden for more air, and I am at the gas station with the commander of 3d Battalion, and Matar and the Vinnell guys are no where to be seen (although they show up later), and that Army lieutenant colonel, OPM SANG guy, shows up. Never seen him before. And now he's the advisor to Matar. Good man. Call sign "Coyote."

Yeah, and his—I saw his name some place or another—not hard to come up with, an Army lieutenant colonel, Vietnam veteran, as I recall, OPM SANG guy, showed up and identified himself as the OPM SANG advisor to Colonel Matar. And, that guy ran the counterattack.

Westermeyer: He came up with the plan?

Molofsky: Well there wasn't any plan. Matar said we're gonna attack. But the Army lieutenant colonel . . . once it got going, Matar kind of went into shock. And it seemed to me that he was right there. So anyway, we're at the checkpoint and Matar is really nervous—smoking cigarettes, pacing back and forth. We're all standing around my humvee, it's getting dark, and Matar is under tremendous pressure to attack from Turki, who is being told by Khaled that the king is just epileptic that there's people inside the boundaries of the city. And you know these guys, I mean it's all make or break. You displease your senior, and you're done forever. You make him happy, and he sends you on vacation to Europe—literally. So Matar keeps saying, "I must attack." And I suggested that it would be a really good idea to shoot a preparation fire in support of his attack—you know, some kind of really wild, you know, trying to construct where he moves forward under the support of American artillery, you know.

So, it gets to the point, and I'm talking to our fire support coordinator from 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, and they didn't want to shoot because they don't know exactly where the reconnaissance teams are, which is really ugly. Those teams should have really pinpointed their locations, built the RFAs [restricted fire areas] around themselves as soon as they got inserted. And it wasn't really clear where they were at. And so, I was saying, "Hey, man, you know, [if] we don't support this attack, they're going to attack anyway, and I am going with them, and we're all going to get killed." And so they acquiesce, and they shoot an artillery barrage, which was suppose to hit their arches around there and misses, goes into the sabkha. And then, out of nowhere, vehicles start up and people start driving forward.

Westermeyer: And so there was a barrage, but it doesn't land where it's supposed to?

Molofsky: That's correct. They were shot, without good target—without good location of friendly forces right in the vicinity. Really a departure from the way we operate. But a feature that really got my attention months after the war in a training exercise, where a guy told me that we couldn't do such a thing, because, you know, the tough Ma-

rines would never do such a thing. I said, "Brother, they will in fact do it." It just has to be the right time and the right place. They will shoot without location of friendlies. It just has to be a tough enough situation. So, I got the humvee parked, and the battalion commander leans in the window and he says, "You know, you don't have to go up there." And I say, "Well, I do."

Westermeyer: Which battalion commander is this?

Molofsky: That's 3d Battalion.

Westermeyer: A Marine battalion?

Molofsky: That's right. I'm blank on his name a little bit. But, I had his FAC, [Captain Joachim W.] "Joe" Fack, in the vehicle, I had an artillery forward observer with their radios, and then Cruise and I. We're all in the truck and the prep has been shot and the vehicles are starting up, and he leans in and says, "You know, you don't have to go up there." And I say, "Well I do, because, you know, I had promised him that I would." I mean, my whole gig was, "I'll be right there with ya, and you'll be able to talk to Colonel Admire, and he'll talk to General Draude, and we're gonna help you."

And so that's really the stage that was set. You had the coastal road and the gas station here, and with the tanks lined up in the road, and Muktar about here, and me right behind Matar, and a couple of vehicles in front of us, and vehicles out here, and U.S. Marines, something happened—everybody just started driving north. And that was the start of the initial counterattack at Khafji.

Westermeyer: Impressive.

Molofsky: With a failed prep [preparation] that had ended 10 minutes prior, with no instructions, nothing. I mean, the whole battalion reinforced; I started driving north.

Westermeyer: Did they have the Qatari tanks with them at this point?

Molofsky: Yes. The Qatari tanks were in the front. So, as we drive up this two-lane highway, or four way—I can't remember now, four-lane highway—I think, you know, there's tanks, there's APCs, there's me in a canvas-back humvee. It's just . . . it's all like this, and I'm thinking, "We're gonna get run over on the way up there." You know, because the sides of the . . . right off the road was very soft, and so you couldn't keep up the speed—it was just horrible—just right down the middle of this hard surface road, heading straight into the oriented defense of the Iraqis. I just knew we were going to get whacked.

Westermeyer: And, is that what happened?

Molofsky: Well, we get about three quarters of the way up there, and I notice the tanks pulling off to the side of the road. Their commander had probably said, "Enough. You know, this is ridiculous." So, their tanks pull off the side of the road, and the rest of the 7th Battalion keeps on going. And as we get to the causeway that runs into the city and they have arches, those green arches up there. As a number of our vehicles get through those arches—I am about 50 meters behind, right behind Matar's APC—the whole place lights up. I mean, a whole lot of directed fire, straight down the road, in all directions—all coming south. You know, just a firestorm of tracers, and tank main gun, and all manner. And I notice a V-150 blow up, or it looked like it blew up, about 30 meters off to the side of the road, and I thought, "F——k." So, Matar pulls his Cadillac Gage off the road, it was a little steep off the road, and he went over to the side of it and then down and stopped—just to get out of the main road. And I told Cruise to pull in behind him to provide some cover, you know. And we got hammered, man.

Westermeyer: This was the first time that you were under fire at this intensity?

Molofsky: Of that intensity. I mean, I served in the Gaza Strip, and when you get to finally fire a gun . . . but very few of the other men had any combat experience at all—maybe none of them. None of the Saudis. Although, Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) had fought at Mecca [Saudi Arabia] in 1979, counterattacked to take the mosque, the Kaba, back. But of the Americans? I don't think anybody in there had had any experience. But this was nothing like the insurgency going on in the Gaza Strip. I mean this was mechanized warfare, and it was a massive fire. Awe-inspiring. You know, rooted-to-the-spot volume of fire coming down the road.

Westermeyer: Could you guess—you mentioned tank main guns—how many? Do you think there were like 10, 20, a guess at how many vehicles were firing on you, how many weapons?

Molofsky: I'd have to tell you that there must have been a reinforced company that had been put down to cover that avenue of approach, because the spread of the fire, and the volume of the fire, must have come from 12 or 15 vehicles of one sort or another—it seemed to me. Of course, I could be exaggerating, because, you know, I'm staring at this. It's coming right at us, and I can't imagine why

we're not getting swept off the road. I mean there was an arc of fire.

Westermeyer: But, you did see at least one of the Cadillac Gage vehicles destroyed?

Molofsky: Yeah. It blew up off to the side of us. And of course there were already vehicles through and into the city. I pulled off to the left behind Matar. And we just got hammered.

Westermeyer: Did the Saudis return fire at all?

Molofsky: Yeah, but [it was] very sporadic and limited. I mean, you know, it wasn't . . . they had no SOP [standard operating procedure]. I mean, they just drove off the road, tried to find cover. As I recall, some were returning fire.

Westermeyer: What was the visibility like?

Molofsky: Let me think. It was still daylight; it was getting dark, or was it?

Westermeyer: I guess, specifically, could you recall, could you make out the individual Iraqi vehicles firing on you, or did you just recall the fire of the tracer rounds?

Molofsky: I did not. They were in high positions, or they were in buildings and, you know, shooting through the windows and that kind of thing. It must have been dark at that point, I guess. I think it was. I don't remember at this moment, but I kind of remember it being 2200, so it must have been dark. Yeah, it was dark, because I remember the battalion commander had a cup of coffee, and I said, "Let me have some of that coffee." Pretty bold for a captain to ask a lieutenant colonel. And I remember it was dark. So, it was dark up there, and so when we got up there the visibility would have been limited, and I didn't see the enemy vehicles. I just saw this mass of a tracer coming down the road at us. And, of course, I stop really thinking clearly, you know, as I try to comprehend what was going on. It was dark.

And then those guys got off to the right, we pulled off to the left, and then it got ugly. So we moved farther up to the left, and then I couldn't see where those guys . . . I think they were shooting back. But we didn't in my vehicle. I mean we had a couple of rifles with us. It was an unarmored humvee. It wasn't armored. And, so, we just tried to stay alive. At one point, the Qatar tanks came back up the road and were shooting up from behind and, at one point, the volume of fire got so heavy that we all got out of the truck and took cover in a ditch, and you know the Saudis were shooting TOW missiles up in the air. Once they started shooting, they were shooting. I mean everybody was shooting at the matched rate, and there was fire 360 [degrees around]. I mean a lot of fire coming north to south, they were shooting north, they were shooting east, and they were shooting west. They were shooting missiles up into buildings, you know; it was really outrageous. Really outrageous.

Westermeyer: How long do you think that this lasted?

Molofsky: I recall that it started at 2200 and lasted, intermittently, three or four major exchanges of fire until about 0400. Because, again, you know, there was a number of things that went on. I mean, those guys shouldn't have crossed the road. Finally una——d [unassembled] out of there and came back across, and we linked up. Decided we were all gonna get killed and then moved out to the west and then harbored up at kind of a junkyard for a bit; but, and then I remember I [was] standing out there and just watching the volume of fire, going, "Man!" Hard to believe. And, then we talked about walking in on foot to recover the teams, because I knew where they were, because I used to sneak into the city and have lunch, you know. So, I regret not doing that now. But, my thought process at the time was: I had been told by an old vet [veteran] not to get killed on the first night. I had been told, you know, "You gotta get your feet on the ground. You gotta figure out what's going on." He said, "Don't do any John Wayne b——t and get killed the first night." And, that was my conscience thought.

Westermeyer: Well, it can't be too great a regret. They did make it through Khafji without any casualties on the recon team.

Molofsky: Yeah, they did, but that was pretty d——n lucky. Pretty d——n lucky on their part. At the moment, we just didn't know. And so it seemed to me that maybe one of the options would have been we had a reconnaissance team with us, Baskowski's team. I knew where they were at; we had good comms with them. We were talking to them, you know, VHF radio. But, it would have meant una——g the vehicles and walking in.

We could have walked in and gathered them up and gone out to the coast and called for a pickup, swam out to sea, and all that.

Westermeyer: So, during this initial attack then, you would have seen your Marine officer at the front and basically you had, essentially, a Marine element, or three humvees, a recon team, a gun, and humvees.

Molofsky: In my vehicle, I had 3d Marines fire support group, I had the 3d Marines forward observer from 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, and I also had their air officer who was gonna function as . . . and of course, we talked to some air, but there was no . . . [we] didn't have any targets for it, you know.

So, at about 0430, there was a chain-link fence that ran out into the desert behind us, and Arabs came up and, using the Cadillac Gage V-150s, pulled the fence down and we're all . . . the whole unit, pulled back through that gap in the fence, a click [kilometer] or two, into some defilade [fortification]. And, at about 0400, as the sun was coming up, they got out of their vehicles and started, you know, brewing coffee, praying, and all the rest of that stuff. Very interesting. And, at that point, the battalion commander was still in shock. I don't think that he really [was] capable of making much in the way of decisions, and he couldn't account for a number of his vehicles. The ones that had gone forward, just as the ambush took place, he never rejoined them for quite some time, and so he thought he had lost all those vehicles. So, the situation was really chaotic.

Westermeyer: So, it's possible now that there were SANG units also missing.

Molofsky: Absolutely. That was the impression.

Westermeyer: Which had not been prior to this—all this—there hadn't been any missing Saudi Arabian units in Khafji prior to this first counterattack.

Molofsky: That's correct. And, then the units that got through the arches and into the city before the ambush was sprung [and] had pulled off and hidden themselves in the streets and all that, had not rejoined or withdrawn with us, that I was aware of, and so he thought he was missing a lot of his people.

Westermeyer: The Army lieutenant colonel, who used to be a Vietnam veteran, who was the OP[M] and advisor to the SANG battalion there, he was there throughout this entire firefight?

Molofsky: That is correct. Yeah, at one point during the fight, after the second or third, you know, huge iteration of exchange, I climbed out of my humvee and climbed up on his vehicle, and Matar was staring out into space. It looked like he was in shock. So, I got out of my vehicle and climbed up on his, and we, you know, hugged each other just a little bit because it was pretty ugly out there.

Westermeyer: This is Matar.

Molofsky: No, Matar was in shock. It was me and the Coyote.

Westermeyer: Okay. Coyote—call sign, Coyote. The Army lieutenant colonel.

Capt Molofsky stands in front of an Iraqi T-55 main battle tank following the Battle of al-Khafji in January 1991.
Photo courtesy of Col Joseph Molofsky

Molofsky: And, I advised the colonel that we should attack. I said there is a window of opportunity, you know, everything is really confused, we should just . . . we're already in it. We ought to just move forward. But he couldn't talk Matar into it.

Westermeyer: Ah. And so Matar had had at least one confirmed vehicle lost.

Molofsky: I saw the vehicle blow up.

Westermeyer: Right. And there were others that he thought, I mean, there were additional vehicles that it turns out weren't lost but that, at the time, he thought were lost. So, he probably should've taken in relatively few casualties.

Molofsky: Yeah, I believe so. And, in addition, they called for an ammunition resupply, because they were just shooting up all their ammo. And I guess at two o'clock in the morning [a] convoy truck drives up. There's nobody out there to tell him not to keep driving, so they drive straight into the city and get hammered.

Westermeyer: Ah. Did they have the ammo trucks hit and go off?

Molofsky: I saw an ammo truck at another place, you know, burn and then explode and all that, but I just saw all these vehicles—I think they even had their headlights on, I don't know. And I saw them come right up. I was out to the west, and I saw 'em drive up through the arches, and they got about beyond the arches and in toward the square there, and just get hammered. And it's my impression that the drivers jumped out of their vehicles, and so, by 0400 with the sun coming up, having withdrawn through the fence line, Matar didn't have any idea what the status of his unit was, because there were people all over the place.

Westermeyer: When does the next counterattack proceed?

Molofsky: Well, at that point, actually I've seen about as much as I need to see. And I need to get back and file my situation report, you know. And I've got the FAC with me. So, I decided to take the FAC, and Matar has no words, you know. He's just standing there. And the radio operator, I drive him back to Checkpoint 67. And of course, I haven't slept now in about two days, and so I say, you know, "Where is Colonel Admire? Where's [the] battalion commander?" And, they had replaced a unit that was up there, with another unit out of 3/2 [3d Battalion, 2d Marines], I guess. And nobody knows who the f——k I am or what's going on. And so I make the decision to drive those guys back to where Jim Braden is at, drop them off [at] the headquarters, and find out what's going on and make my report. And that's what I did.

Westermeyer: And this is all going back to that original SANG, CP thing.

Molofsky: That's right. About 20 clicks.

And, at that point, Bubba Deckert, and Doug Kleinsmith, and . . . I always blank on this guy's name. But I forgot to mention that, in the middle of the night, an ANGLICO firepower control team [FCT] came up and joined us too. And [there was a] very capable artillery officer in command, a Marine captain who has all these smaller, mobile FACs, and he sends one up because he didn't know that I had a FAC, or he didn't know I had an artillery observer with me. And so that guy would know, and Coyote would know, how they proceeded from there and how 5th Battalion came in from the west.

Westermeyer: I'm sorry. Is it during the first attack, the four to six hours of firefight, did you call any fire with the artillery? You said there was no air.

Molofsky: The artillery spotter's radio was inoperable. We dissembled and worked it for an hour.

Westermeyer: Was it a PRC-77 [radio]?

Molofsky: It was, yeah.

Westermeyer: That would be twice.

Molofsky: Yeah. You know, there are steps that can be taken, you know he had line of sight. He should have been able to talk back to [Checkpoint] 67 and relay calls for fire, but he couldn't get it up. And, he should [have] op checked—he's a young lieutenant—should have op checked before he got in the vehicle. I should have told him to do so. Joe Fack was talking to air overhead, but they were going north, and we didn't really have any definitive . . . this is before the pinpoint bombing that's going on.

So, I personally did not fire my rifle. There was nothing really to use the rifle against. And, we didn't use the artillery because we couldn't connect with them, and we didn't use air because we didn't have any good targets. But, Kleinsmith and Deckert—I don't know if they used much Marine artillery, if at all, but they ran a lot of close air. They killed—I got up just after that—there were 15, 18, 20 tanks out in the field that Doug and Bubba killed by running air on them.

Westermeyer: How successful, or not, is this second counterattack?

Molofsky: Second counterattack is completely successful. At that point, the Iraqis have withdrawn

Photo courtesy of Col Joseph Molofsky

From left, an unknown Navy liaison officer, Capt Doug Kleinsmith, Capt James Braden, and Capt Joseph Molofsky all played roles in the Battle of al-Khafji during the Gulf War.

from the city or have been pushed out or killed. And you know, by the next day, I join in with the column and drive to the far reaches of the city, past the desalination plant, where [Colonel] Barry and his people have withdrawn from, and the city is cleared. Now, it hasn't been cleared, but it is declared clear. And so, just after that, I go back to 3d Marines. Colonel Admire wants to come up and take a look at it, and so I lead a group of Colonel Admire's people up into the city, and it really hasn't been cleared. We don't know if there are stay behinds, if they're snipers out there, and so Colonel Admire wants to go to the site where the team was harbored up. And so I took them up there, and we went up the ladderwell and up to the roof where the team was.

Westermeyer: Are you there when the team comes out? When they come out for the first time?

Molofsky: They came out that next morning, on their own, and go down to Checkpoint 67, right down the main drag, so I understand. Both teams. Both teams did.

Westermeyer: Well, sir, I just have some questions I would like to ask before we finish.

Molofsky: You can take your time; we'll do it now and be done with it, I guess.

Westermeyer: I guess the big thing that I have left is that in the epilogue, day four says that—in the epilogue to the book *Storm on the Horizon*—that some of the Marines at Khafji took the battle to be a prelude of the slaughter to come. Did you come out of Khafji thinking that the Iraqis were going to be more effective in defending Kuwait than it turned out that they were? Is that how you recall that?

Molofsky: Well, you know, I think that prior to the battle, the reputation of the Iraqis, in the minds of the Marines, was pretty high. You know, the eight-year war, all the veterans, you know, the ruthless tactics, and the gas and all the rest of that. I think that on the operational level Khafji showed definitively that these guys were, in comparison, a shadow of what our capabilities were.

Westermeyer: Is that what you were thinking the morning after?

Molofsky: No. The morning after the battle, my sense was that we got our a——s handed to us. I mean, from a tactical perspective, staring right at it, you know, right there at the goal line, my opinion was that if that's what it was gonna take to get started in the recovery of a small town like Khafji, that we were gonna be involved in a prolonged and bloody struggle.

Westermeyer: And, this is where [you] become . . . and this is from your perspective as an advisor for the Saudis or in general for the whole?

Molofsky: Very focused on my stance of service as advisor to the Saudis, based on the experience of the initial counterattack at Khafji and having gotten beaten. You know we got beat.

You know, we went up. We attempted to get into the city, got hammered, got pushed back, and had to withdraw. And that was kind of eye opening to me, you know. We hadn't seen yet the mass surrenders. We hadn't seen the throwing down of their arms yet. What I had seen was a counterattack that was met with a firestorm of fire, you know. And, I was pretty concerned about it.

Westermeyer: I was gonna talk to you a little bit about the actual invasion of Kuwait. Are there any events from that that stick out in your mind? Anything that you recall as a neat or interesting—you've stayed with the SANG through the invasion of Kuwait?

Molofsky: No, I didn't. There were a couple of things that I thought that might be of interest to you. I went back and was told to attach my self to the Arab unit that would be on the flank in the Marine push forward.

Westermeyer: Oh, it was the opposite flank, the left flank?

Molofsky: That's right. And so I did that. And moved forward with Arabs. I didn't know who I had any connection with, you know. [I] felt very uncomfortable with that and tried to maintain communications to cut down on the fratricide.

SANG was ordered to stand fast. They did not cross the border, as far as I knew. And so once we heard that, I was reassigned. And so I did that. And I moved forward with the ANGLICO command post for a while. We took some artillery fire that looks very much like unusual air burst that I've always wondered what it was exactly. And you know, crossed to both the barrier belts. Very uncomfortable there—having been trapped, as you go through the narrow breach—being trapped in there. Because we had been told that's where they'd—those were fire sacks—where they would hit us.

Westermeyer: But you didn't take any fire.

Molofsky: Not in the breach, no. And, I think the only other interesting thing was we had been ordered not to go into the city with the Arabs, and Cruise and I did anyway. And, I found that very, very interesting.

Westermeyer: There seems to have been an epidemic of Marines going into the city anyway.

Molofsky: Yeah. Well, you know—I guess the command wanted the Arabs to take the credit in all that and minimize our presence, but it was just too much of a temptation for a young guy. We did pull into a school, in the basement of which had a terrain model that depicted the entire Iraqi headquarters of the *11th Division*, I guess. And they had a terrain model the entire way down of the defense of the city, which I reported to General Admire and brought—not General Admire—to the commander of 3d Marines, and brought him back to take a look at that after we'd linked up at Kuwait International [Airport], which I've flown in and out of about a dozen times since.

Lieutenant Colonel Cesare Cardi

Lieutenant Colonel Cesare Cardi entered the Marine Corps after graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1972. An armor officer throughout his career, he held a variety of command billets between 1972 and 1991, among them were tactics instructor at the Amphibious Warfare School and commanding officer of Company B and operations officer for 2d Tank Battalion (2d Tanks). He assumed command of the 2d Tank Battalion in June 1989.

The 2d Tank Battalion was the only Marine unit at the time equipped with the then-new M1A1 Abrams main battle tank, fielding five companies so equipped. They operated within 2d MarDiv as a reserve.

Lieutenant Colonel Cardi was interviewed on 8 April 1991. In his interview, he discusses the capabilities of the M1A1 tank compared to its predecessor, the M60A1, and Iraqi tanks of the time. He also discusses lessons learned during the course of the war and changes he would like to see to satisfy the problems.

Cardi: I would like to start by saying that this particular crisis provided 2d Tank Battalion its first opportunity to deploy as a complete battalion in combat since World War II. That, in and of itself, is of what I believe [to be] pretty historical significance.

The initial plan for 2d Tank Battalion to deploy was with this current table of organization [T/O] and table of equipment, which would have included deploying with M60A1 rise passive tanks. Shortly after the crisis began, planners at Headquarters Marine Corps [HQMC] began to look at ways to enhance the combat potential of forces in Southwest Asia. At a conference that we attended early

in September 1990, we discussed options and requirements as well as concerns with regards to accelerating the fielding of the Marine Corps' newest tank, the M1A1 main battle tank.

That tank initially was not to be fielded to the Marine Corps until the summer of 1991; however, Headquarters Marine Corps planners felt that we had an opportunity to in fact receive at least one battalion set of 60 M1A1s on a temporary basis from [the U.S.] Army if we were able to train Marine Corps crews very quickly and also sustain that particular force.

From the viewpoint of Headquarters Marine Corps at the conference, it was clearly the intent to arm the Marine Corps with the most potent weapon systems available at the time. Considering the intelligence data that we had received prior to that, the primary concern with regards to armor capability that the Iraqis possessed was the T-72 main battle tank. It was unclear whether or not they possessed what we called an export or scaled-down cheap version of the T-72, or perhaps the tank referred to as the T-72 M1, which is a much more sophisticated and more survivable than the earlier model T-72.

The Marine Corps' M60A1 tank quite frankly is of 1960s vintage, and did not provide the Marine Corps armor force with a system that would be comparable to the projected use of T-72s that the Iraqis had. So quite frankly, we, the Marine Corps, decided that M1A1s in the hands of the Marines would be a much [more] viable fighting force, rather than the older model of M60A1s.

On 30 September 1990, the Commandant, General [Alfred M.] Gray [Jr.], approved the accelerated fielding [of] the M1A1, and with it came basically two deployment options for the 2d Tank Battalion. The first was an MPS [Maritime Prepositioning Ships] option whereby the 2d Tank Battalion would deploy with M1A1s that they would receive in Southwest Asia but yet use all the support vehicles, tools, sets, kits, [and] chests that were loaded aboard MPS ships.

The second option would be for the battalion again to receive a new shipment of M1A1s in Southwest Asia, but deploy from [MCB] Camp Lejeune [North Carolina] the several hundred support vehicles and equipment that would be required to sustain the M1A1s in combat. That decision was not in fact confirmed until much later in the planning cycle.

Thirty days after the Commandant approved the decision to field the M1A1s, the first company began its training at Twentynine Palms, California, on 31 October 1990. It completed its training on 19 November 1990, as the Marine Corps' first M1A1 trained company, and that was to be B Company, 2d Tank Battalion.

A Marine Corps M1A1 Abrams main battle tank equipped with a mine-clearing plow crosses the desert in Kuwait during the ground phase of Operation Desert Storm. LtCol Cesare Cardi's 2d Tanks were the only Marines equipped with the then-new tank.

Photo by SSgt M. D. Masters. Defense Imagery DM-ST-91-11619

The remainder of the companies throughout about a two-month period cycled sequentially through the training until the end of December, when the battalion completed its training.

In or around November, with a decision to deploy the 8th Tank Battalion, Marine Corps Reserve tank battalion, the MPS assets, 2d Tank Battalion was ordered to deploy with its own internal support vehicles, as well as its own TOW [missile] company.

On 23 December 1990, our transition training at Twentynine Palms became complete, which ultimately involved a 14-day training cycle to train crews on how to fight the M1A1 tank, and that was approximately 50 percent of the curriculum for the normal peacetime training requirements for training on the tank. Normal training requirements is approximately 30 days. We culminated our transition training with a three-day battalion field exercise and then returned home for a much awaited holiday season with our families.

Meanwhile, I failed to note that the battalion minus, which included the Headquarters and Support Company and the TOW Company, remained at [MCB] Camp Lejeune, while the preponderance of the battalion was training at Twentynine Palms. Its focus became unit training, crew weapons qualification, and the final preparations for embarkation. The battalion thereafter deployed to Southwest Asia between the period [of] 31 December to 3 January, which was short eight days after its return from Twentynine Palms.

Shortly after our arrival, we began deprocessing 60 M1A1s main battle tanks, which we called the DU heavy tanks; DU [being] an acronym for the depleted uranium protection this particular tank provides. We deprocessed those tanks between the period of between 7 [and] 10 January, a period of about four days, when normally the deprocessing period takes approximately 20 days for the same number of vehicles.

After deprocessing, we conducted a road march via hard surface roads to our initial assembly area, which was to be the Thunderbolt Range Complex north of the Port of al-Jubayl [Saudi Arabia]. It was there that we bore sited and zeroed the tanks. And because of the requirement to move as many combat forces forward by the 15th of January, our training was basically limited to bore site and zero. The 15th of January was the date that the president had set for all Iraqi forces to be out of Kuwait.

After completion of our bore site and zero, we again moved our positions forward. We are finally between the period of 23 and 24 January 1991. We linked with major elements of the 2d Marine Division in an area.

The division, along with 2d Tank Battalion, continued to move north into subsequent assembly areas, and the battalion was assigned its mission as the division reserve.

During the period of 6–16 February, we were attached to 8th Marine Regiment. [The] 8th Marine Regiment was assigned security missions just south of the al-Wafrah oil field [in Kuwait] and an area commonly referred to as the orchard area. The security mission coincided with an Iraqi attack—which had been conducted, I believe, just days previous to that—and the intent of that security mission, of course, was to ensure that Iraqis did not penetrate or violate the Saudi-Kuwaiti border along the south, while the remainder of the division was making preparations for offensive operations. We, simultaneously in that role, between the 6th [and] 16th of February, we were assigned as the division's far right flank and also as the 8th Marine regimental reserve.

Along with the division, we moved to our final attack positions between the period of 17 and 18 February 1991, to grid coordinate called Qs Area 2571, which is approximately 30 miles northwest of the heel of Kuwait. Again, our mission became division reserve.

With the G-day or ground day—the day for the ground assault to begin—stated as 24 January 1991, we crossed the line of departure at 0930 as the second element through six breach lanes, which had been established by the 6th Marine Regiment. We followed in trace of the 6th Marines and closed in on the battalion forward line of troops at approximately 1530.

The breach for 2d Tank Battalion was relatively uneventful in that 6th Marines had already cleared the breach site of enemy forces, and had cleared a significant amount of terrain on the north side of the breach to allow security for other forces to pass through.

We established our CP again at QT-6410, just on the north side of the breach lanes, and throughout the night we pretty much had minimal contact but [were] fortunate in capturing 193 enemy prisoners of war. Just after midnight of the first day, about 0040 on the 25th of February, we received a rocket attack and therein had our first WIA [wounded in action]. At about 1200 that same day, the 25th, we continued the attack only approximately four to five kilometers to the north, while 2d Marine Division waited for the 1st Marine Division to

Photo by SSgt M. D. Masters. Defense Imagery DM-SC-92-03658

Marines drive their M60A1 main battle tank over a sand berm on Hill 231 while rehearsing their role as part of Task Force Breach Alpha in Saudi Arabia on 25 January 1991. The tank was fitted with reactive armor and an M9 bulldozer kit.

close on its right flank. The attack was uneventful, again—EPWs captured and no other significant events during that day. Our command post was established again at QT-6014.

On 26 February 1991, again we continued our attack north at about 1200. The attack north was a 25-kilometer march, and again the battalion was assigned a mission as a division reserve. We received an on-order mission to be prepared to attack a T-72 column heading south-southwest out of Kuwait City, but after confirmation by intelligence sources, we found that the T-72s had not in fact traveled southwest or had perhaps dissipated back into the buildup area or even perhaps that the T-72s never in fact existed. That day we established our command post in [the vicinity] of QT-6040.

On 27 February 1991, the next to the last day prior to the cease-fire, the entire division holding generally along the face line there, along a road called the Sixth Ring Road just south of al-Jahrah and Kuwait City. The division pretty much held that position all day long, and the battalion remained in its previous position, that is QT-6040. That day again was uneventful.

At 0800 on the 28th of February of 1991, the cease-fire was announced, and we did some minor repositioning to improve the battalion's location just a few kilometers southwest of the division command post.

I'd like to just briefly touch on the battalion's organization. The 2d Tank Battalion, at the start of hostilities in August and several months thereafter, continued to build from its normal peacetime organization. The parent company of 2d Tank Battalion became the Headquarters and Service Company, Company H, 7th Tank Battalion, which had then deployed with elements of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade: Company B, 2d Tank Battalion; Company C, 2d Tank Battalion; [and] Company D, 2d Tank Battalion.

We also were attached to D Company, 1st Armored Assault Battalion, which was at that point in time on its unit deployment program [UDP], and sitting in Okinawa [Japan] and was thereafter redeployed to Southwest Asia and attached to the 1st Marine Division, and thereafter attached to the 3d Tank Battalion.

Attached to us was B Company, 4th Tank Bat-

talion; C Company, 4th Tank Battalion; T Company, 2d Tank Battalion; and T Company, 4th Tank Battalion. During combat operations, we were attached to B Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, and an armor assault vehicle platoon.

Once we were tactically reorganized, we detached B Company, 4th Tank Battalion, to 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, and detached C Company, 4th Tanks, to 8th Marine Regiment.

I say this perhaps because this is, as far as I know, possibly the largest tank battalion in the history of armor in the Marine Corps. As a snapshot of what we looked like, the equipment that was parent to 2d Tank Battalion exclusive of the two companies which were detached outside of 2d Marine Division, the battalion had in its position eight four-track vehicles, 127 TOW vehicles, 82 assorted jeeps, and 58 assorted trucks.

I would like to take a moment just to talk about some of the lessons learned as a result of Desert Storm. I think these are of historical note, and while I won't go into the extreme details of some of the things that we learned which will result in table of organization or table of equipment changes, I would like to touch on some of the major ones.

First off, I believe that we have validated a requirement for a standard battalion of four tank companies, one TOW company, and one H&S [headquarters and service] company to carry on board 18,000 gallons of fuel. We found that that was about the average number of gallons that we were required on a daily basis. Even in those days when our attacks were not very long, our fuel consumption was low; however, in the course of our movement from al-Jubayl and into the attack, we found that that was an adequate amount to support operations regardless of their nature.

I believe we clearly validated the reliability of the M1A1 main battle tank. Throughout this operation, we were not provided heavy equipment transports, flatbed trailers, to move the tanks during any part of the operation. The tanks themselves traveled over 500 miles across country and across hard surface roads. We rarely experienced any more than one combat vehicle [inoperable] at any one point in time, and then, that defect was repaired within 24 hours.

Clearly, we have established a requirement, a necessity for an A and B command group: primary [and] alternate command groups. We intend to review our table of organization to ensure that more permanent personnel are assigned those particular duties, rather than to use the ad hoc systems that we have had to rely on since the end of [the] Vietnam [War].

I believe also that there is a requirement for permanent command and control vehicles for each of the two command groups. The only command and control vehicle organic to the 2d Tank Battalion are the two battalion headquarters tanks. In today's very complex combined-arms battlefield, command and control radios, and systems organic to those two vehicles are not sufficient to command a battalion as large as the 2d Tank Battalion or any other tank battalion, and also to deal with all the fire support issues that are absolutely imperative in the combined-arms battlefield.

Throughout Desert Shield, we drew or used one command variant of an amtrac [amphibious vehicle], and used that very effectively, as we have been in training for the past five or six years; however, to rely on that particular vehicle when assets are generally limited throughout the division, and you are always dealing with competing requirements. So I believe for a tracked-type battalion such as this, that we should possess a permanent command and control vehicle, much like the LAV has its own organic and peculiar command vehicle.

Unlike one of the things that we have done, and we commenced work on approximately a year ago in anticipation of a reduction in force, we saw that the tank battalion would dwindle from its current four-company organization to a three-company organization. It is not very difficult to imagine that throughout the course of a battle, if a division or even a regiment is in the field, that the requirement for tanks on different parts of the battlefield are pretty easy to envision.

So we saw the tank battalion of the future with only three of its companies having one tank company attached out to another organization and only having two remaining tank companies left—understanding, of course, that we would probably be attached with a mounted infantry company.

However, that does not provide the flexibility that a mobile reserve, which we generally are for the 2d Marine Division, must have. So therefore, I directed that the TOW Company commander review the possibilities of establishing a maneuver company within the TOW Company so that we can use TOW Company en masse in supporting roles to include combined-arms operations. We did this throughout the course of Exercise Desert Storm and provided the TOW Company commander with a few extra command and control vehicles, as well as a forward observer and a forward air controller, and in fact in a supporting role he performed very, very well. I think one important note that we must

remember, however, is that the division itself was not subjected to massive artillery attacks that we had expected.

Perhaps one would question the survivability rate of the soft-skinned TOW vehicle; however, I believe that being judicious in their employment, and used in the supporting role rather than a close with and destroy the enemy role, that they can be an effective fighting force to support any supporting attack, thereby freeing other units to become part of the main attack. I believe also that the M1A1 has not caused us to change our tactics. That was one of the questions that has always surfaced since the introduction of the M1A1 tank. One of the primary differences between this particular tank and its predecessor, the M60A1 tank, is its speed. The maximum speed, you will find, for an M60 tank is approximately 18–20 miles per hour, perhaps as high as 22 miles per hour on a hard packed dirt or hard surface road. The M1A1 has a capability to easily sustain 40 miles per hour.

We found, however, that our tactics do not change, primarily because of the requirements to coordinate and execute combined-arms operations, again, on a complex battlefield. So while our procedures and how we do business in fact have to change to try to speed up the process by which we can coordinate combined arms, generally speaking our tactics do not change.

The primary difference I believe is that we are able to move the entire battalion from one point on the battlefield to another, but once the attack commences, we do business as we have always done in most recent years with regards to deployment of the tank battalion.

Finally, probably the most significant is that it is my belief based on not only with what 2d Tank Battalion has done but all of the major and complex weapon systems throughout the division, it is my belief that the Marine Corps in its current configuration, is not too heavy to be considered an expeditionary force in readiness.

I know that there were many discussions prior to Desert Storm with regards to the Marine Corps' concern about being too heavy to get a battlefield quick enough. I believe that we have validated that

Two Marine Corps M1A1 tanks move across the desert in Kuwait during the ground phase of Operation Desert Storm. The tanks traveled more than 500 miles across country and hard surface roads, proving to be extremely reliable.

Photo by SSgt M. D. Masters. Defense Imagery DM-ST-91-11626

in our current organization. We have the flexibility to go light, to go heavy, and to be on the battlefield when required.

There are some things though that we also took away, which I think we need to take a look at and need a little bit of work. First off, it is clear that the M1A1, while it is without a doubt the best main battle tank in the world today, it needs some improvement with regards to command and control.

I believe all the command and control tanks, which primarily relate to company commander and executive officer's tanks, as well as the battalion commander and S-3's tank must be command configured and incorporate or be able to be incorporated not only the communication systems but also the fire support and fire support coordination systems that allow it to fight and control a unit on a combined-arms battlefield.

We found that our logistics training, recalling back that our support vehicles numbered in excess of 130, that that logistics training or the Headquarters and Service Company needs additional command and control in order to command a unit that large.

We have done some things in terms of communications internal[ly] to enhance the command-and-control capabilities of the Headquarters and Service Company, but it is not very hard to envision trying to maneuver a force that size once you are being hit by either direct fire, indirect, and your inability to communicate down to [a] vehicle section or smaller level.

So, I think we need an improvement in that particular area.

Clearly, I think we validated a need and a requirement for tracked ambulances to operate with other track vehicle units, as wheeled ambulances just simply could not keep up. Also, I think perhaps it is a matter of speculation on my part—based upon the very small number of casualties that the division took—but clearly we had some difficulties with our ground medevac system.

Even with the few number of casualties we had, we simply did not have enough vehicles to ground medevac our people. I think that our reliance on any available lift to medevac people is not adequate if in fact we intend to medevac wounded Marines as quickly as possible.

Clearly, and I think you will hear this from all commands that participated in Desert Storm, electronic navigational aids are without a doubt, a hands-down winner; however, they are needed in much more quantities than what we possessed during Operation Desert Storm.

I believe that our current and most complex system called a PLRS [position location reporting system] should be allocated down to command level. It has a number of capabilities that can be used from [the] company commander right through to the division level; however, I also think that some other navigational system, a GPS or cheaper system, should be used down at the platoon level, and that platoon commanders also have a requirement to ensure their locations on the ground [and] aid in night navigation, especially in featureless terrain such as the desert.

Finally, I see no reason why every vehicle itself should not be mounted with some cheap, inexpensive compass that will at least provide direction. In combination with the odometer, individual vehicles can find their way very easily in the dark, or again in featureless terrain.

While that does not seem to be a very significant requirement, if one considers simply the number of maintenance contact teams, small logistics elements, and things of that sort that must travel around a battlefield and not have other navigational aids, such things as a simple vehicle-mounted compass would be a tremendous help too. Clearly, I think that another area that needs to be looked at is the logistics area as it relates to build up of initial combat power short. It became very, very clear that logistics support was very difficult in the early days, and in some cases so dramatically that it potentially would have caused a stop in combat operations had they continued at that particular moment. These are areas that I'm talking about actually prior to the ground assault day, when the battalion was operating for the first approximately 30–40 days.

I believe to very easily offset would be to allow battalions to carry 30 days of what we used to call "A stocks," common repair items, and perhaps even some secondary repairables, exchange type items that allow it to sustain itself while the logistics is building itself up. I believe that 30 days would be adequate for major support organizations to have those items necessary to support the Marine division.

Finally, I think one area specifically that needs work as I saw in our mission is as division reserve is a requirement for some sort of battlefield management system to track friendly units and to provide rapid coordination of supporting arms. We found ourselves all too often in a position not knowing exactly where individual battalions were—not knowing exactly where individual batteries of artillery regiments were.

To try to gain this information from PLRS, where we can call out different units' locations, took an excessive amount of time. Many times the master station was not operational, and it [was] just too lengthy to try to call on the radio on nets that were already pretty much saturated with communications to try to determine where each and every unit's position on the ground was.

Again, obviously for a division reserve [that] has to be prepared to attack anywhere in any direction on a frontage, which generally averaged about 30–40 kilometers, is extremely difficult if you don't know the position you are [inaudible]. I believe that the sophisticated electronic battlefield management systems do exist, and we should look into those areas as a means, again, to assist in the coordination and the passage of units through one another.

In all then, I think that through the actions of 2d Tanks, I think you can surmise that because of the, I would say, relative ease in which the division attacked through enemy positions, that the battalion itself was not employed to the greatest extent or to the greatest capability they could have been.

However, I think there were a number of lessons learned in the short operation—both through the workup phases, the transitioning of crews, and also in the three-day war—that we can take away as something to be learned.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you very much. I've got a number of questions that I would like to go over with you now, things that I have picked up on from what you have been saying. One of the points that you had mentioned, and seemed quite clearly to have worked out quite well, and indeed you wrote it up as one of your lessons learned, and that was the employment TOW Company as a maneuver element.

You had talked about that to some extent. Can you explain a bit more how TOW Company fit within the organization, and how you would like to see that company used in future operations?

Cardi: The TOW Company, as it exists by organization and equipment within the 2d Tank Battalion, and any other tank battalion, is a separate company of 72 TOW systems and associated equipment. It is commonly referred to as the commanding general's general support TOWs and generally attached, or most of it attached out, to different regiments as the division commander may want to wait for a particular attack. What we experimented basically with in peacetime was the company commander's ability to take a portion of that company. We, through experimentation, found that about a platoon of 24 could be fought as an integrated unit and given the appropriate command and control vehicles, a few more jeeps, and forward observers, forward air controllers, and its associated radio equipment, that you could now take the three sections of eight vehicles within the platoon and, in fact, fight them as if they were three platoons, much like a company.

We played with smaller and larger numbers, and found that 24 is in fact a very solid number not only from a command and control standpoint but also with regards to how much terrain they physically occupy, and that if it gets much larger than that, the distances they must cover in terms of terrain are too broad, too wide, and a company commander cannot control that.

So what we would offer to a division would be the capability to take two of the three platoons, or 48 TOWs, and attaching to units at the commanding general's discretion—based upon where he wanted to weigh the attack—but in fact leave a platoon of 24 to be used by this large mechanized reserve and could be used very effectively again, in a supporting role. I would also mention that one thing I neglected to talk about that TOW Company does provide is that the time a battalion lacks any organic close reconnaissance capability. So for years gone by, we have entered into attacks, basically leading with our chin. The first time we were aware of any enemy contact was when 1st Platoon entered into combat.

So what we have also done—as have the other active duty battalions within the Marine Corps—is to take a small number of assets out of the TOW Company, take them out of hide, and create basically a mounted scout platoon. That platoon, each battalion has a different type of organization that generally equates to approximately 8 to 10 vehicles out of the TOW Company to provide the battalion an organic scout capability, which it does not have.

Interviewer: One point that came up that struck me as you were talking, it was obvious that from the time you all had finished your training back at Twentynine Palms and prepared for redeployment, came over to Southwest Asia [and] picked up on equipment, you were very quickly from your time of demarcation, a very quick training period out to join the division. Except to war sight and battle zero pieces. How comfortable did you feel with that short training period? And were you fairly confident when you were coming back to join the division?

Cardi: There are some tangible and intangible things that probably affected the overall training readiness of the battalion. First off, for those who are not familiar with tanks or armored vehicles, I would say that the transition from an M60A1 tank to an M1A1 battle tank would be much the same as transitioning from the top of single-engine private plane to a [Boeing] 747. That is not an exaggeration, because of the advances in technology and electronics common with the M1A1 tank.

The fortunate thing for us was that the battalion had over a number of years, refocused its energies to try to maximize the benefits of the M60A1. It is a long way of saying that the tank had gone into some pretty sophisticated gunnery techniques as they relate to the M60A1.

So their transitioning to the M1 became much simpler, I think, than most units had experienced simply because we had been talking gunnery tanks and different methods of engagement and things of that sort, so that the transition became one of understanding the hardware more so than understanding different aspects of gunnery that they may find on a battlefield.

But clearly once we arrived in country, my single most concern was that the tank can outperform the crew. That is absolutely the opposite situation with the M60A1, where we were pushing the tank beyond limits to which it was designed. This was a situation where the tank had far outperformed the crews.

At the point where we all but ended our gunnery training because of lack of places to fire, as we continued to move north, I felt confident that the crews were very capable with what we called a full-up system—all systems operational.

I don't believe, however, that the training was adequate to have the crews be able to engage with secondary fire control systems. They just have not had an opportunity to work with the backup systems on the tank. But I'm also a pretty harsh critic when I say that, because I had been with this battalion for four years. I have spent 10 years in this particular battalion, and I have seen it grow from when I was a second lieutenant in this battalion, to a very rudimentary gunnery, to of late being able to engage targets in excess of 3,000 meters with the M1A1, and a significant percentage of the crews [were] able to achieve first-round hits.

So, I'm a pretty harsh critic when I say that my concern was that the tanks out performed the crews, and they do. I guess it was because I know what these particular Marines are capable of . . . because I have seen them grow and achieve some pretty phenomenal things. I draw that comparison and say that we may have had some deficiencies, but I think also that the crews would have adapted and learned had the war continued, as Marines always do.

Interviewer: Following up on that, speaking about adapting and growing, if the war had continued, you brought out the point and very clearly as to what it was taking logistically to keep your battalion going. You mentioned 18,000 gallons of fuel consumption per day.

Considering the fact that this war wound up being extremely short in duration, what do you think would have occurred had it been longer? If we had missions requiring us to go farther both in distance and in time, do you think that the logistics train and the supporting battalion would have been able to keep up with very large, fast moving operations over great distances, or were we just about stretched at the time when the war came to an end?

Cardi: Well, I suppose if one thinks about mechanized operations in the context of what the Army does, that you can easily draw the conclusion that we would outrun our logistics. In fact, the Army I know, in extended peacetime exercises, too often has a tendency to do that; not intentionally, but it occurs.

The Marine Corps is a different sort of animal, so to speak. We are, without a doubt, a light infantry organization, and I, as a tank officer, understand that. So to answer your question, I would say that the tank has the capability in the worst of circumstances, to travel a distance of 60 miles without refueling, opposed to the M60 tank, which can go easily twice that distance.

But I don't see too many attacks of the Marine Corps that are going to cover 60 miles. More appropriately, I would see distances of 60 miles covered as they were in this environment, as movements from one assembly area to the next, and I think that you have adequate time to plan for those kinds of things.

So I don't see a real concern about outrunning logistics, at least at my level. Now perhaps from the FSSG [force service support group] to the division level, should the division continue to move quickly, I know that the FSSG takes a pretty considerable amount of time to displace, and that might be a portion more appropriate to the G-3. But at least at my level, I don't see that as a problem.

I would say, however, that repair parts—had this

war continued for some time—would have been the primary reason it appears that the combat power of the division would have dwindled had not the system been fixed. I don't think that the system perhaps was ever given the chance to be fixed, because things ended so quickly. But we were experiencing a number of problems with trying to get Class IX repair parts, and it was only by doing what Marines do best, which is horse trade amongst ourselves for things that you need, we were able to maintain a kind of reliability that we did.

In fact, my battalion again, thinking back to the numbers of vehicles we were talking about, consistently maintained 96 or better percent ready daily and never fell below that through the course of the workup or the execution of the three-day war.

Interviewer: Very good. That sort of ties in with my next question too. We had a very large [U.S.] Army mechanized force attached to us—the battalion brigade as it turned out—in the course of the operation was working on our left flank. They were the third maneuver element, plus they had the mission of securing that left flank for us, which essentially was open for much of the campaign.

Their organization, their normal method of employment when it differed from ours, and from what we saw actually in the conduct of the division's operation, I would like you [to] just expand on that a little bit—what you saw as differences between battalion brigade, operationally being used, and what they normally would have been used for, in comparison with your own tank battalion.

Cardi: Well, you could probably get into a pretty lengthy discussion on this particular issue, but I would probably discuss type of brigade in two different times throughout the planning and then the execution of Desert Storm. Probably what best describes how they are normally employed, or how they could normally be employed to support organizations such as us, is in the early stages of the planning.

The early stages called for, within the MarCent area of operations, a single breach of the complex minefield along the Saudi-Kuwaiti border conducted by the 1st Marine Division. The 2d Marine Division would pass through the 1st Marine Division, establish quickly on the north side of the bridge, and then rapidly continue a transition to continuation of the attack.

In that plan, it was the CG's [commanding general's] intent to attack with the 6th and 8th Marines forward, with 2d Tank Battalion most probably attached at some point in time to either the 6th or 8th Marines, and then for the type of brigade to become the divisional reserve. In that mission, [U.S. Army's] T [Tiger or 1st] Brigade, [2d Armored Division,] would be launched against the largest of armored counterattacks that were launched against the 2d [Marine] Division.

It is a very firepower intensive . . . T Brigade is a very firepower intensive organization. It can move very rapidly. It had good command and control. In that scenario, T Brigade basically does for the division what 2d Tank Battalion does within a Marine Corps pure organization, and that is become the decisive element on the battlefield when you need it. That is to go after large armored threats to the division. So that is one method of employment of T Brigade.

What eventually occurred was of course there were two breaches of the minefield, one led by 1st [Marine] Division, and one conducted by the 2d [Marine] Division. In this particular scenario, it appeared to me—although I'm sure the G-3 could amplify much better—but it appeared to me that the division's frontage was much larger than it was going to be in the early stages of planning, and thereby, I believe necessitated fighting the division with three regiments forward and forced T Brigade then out of that reserve or counterattack role up on line with the 6th and 8th Marines.

I saw no differences really in missions of the T Brigade in comparison to the 6th and the 8th, although clearly because of their capability, they were placed on the division's left flank, which was the exposed flank, which was one of the two most probable counterattack routes toward the enemy.

So the division commander wisely put them on the left flank, not because the mission was different, but because they had a capability in terms of armored firepower, that the 6th or 8th Marines just physically did not possess.

It was at that point in time of course that the 2d Tank Battalion then slipped back into a division reserve role, again to do to a much lesser extent I believe than T Brigade would have been capable of doing, conducting counterattacks, sealing penetrations, exploiting successes of the lead regiments, and things of that sort. So I think in the end, basically the T Brigade simply became a very potent regiment so to speak, within the 2d Marine Division.

Interviewer: Sort of following up a little further from that then, for the past 10 years approximate-

ly within the Marine Corps, as well as within the armed forces in general, we have begun to develop more and more study of what some have regarded as a philosophy that goes beyond warfare, many different points growing from that.

In this operation, I think we clearly see on the strategic level, the use of principles of maneuver warfare down on the division level. However, the operational level, looking at the development of this campaign, from your perspective, of one who was in the position of being that division reserve, which would have, as you mentioned, either taken that role in scaling counterattacks or exploiting successes. I would like you to develop your thoughts as to the applicability of what we saw in this campaign as it unfolded, to those principles of maneuverable warfare as we have been trying to assimilate them into our thinking over the past several years.

Cardi: Well, since you just sprung that question on me, I would say probably that the first thing that comes to mind as something that has puzzled me often about this particular operation, that I have been asking the same question over and over again, is how the actual three days developed and what opportunities were potentially lost?

I think probably as you clear the breach, I see no better way to do it than to have done it, again at my level, than the way we did it in terms of ground forces. We ran it much the same as an amphibious assault: created lanes through breaches, called waves forward, etc. And it was a very orderly process getting through.

We anticipated that on the first day, based on the intelligence we were receiving, that the forward Iraqi units were not going to be much of a challenge to us, but I think all of us throughout the division were fixed on a very large, mechanized, potent capability beyond the first offensive belt that the Iraqis possessed.

Therein lay perhaps the opportunities that you were alluding to, and those would have occurred about the second day. This first day, I don't think there is any more that we could have done. We forced enough units through the breach to posture ourselves to attack on the second day and just simply ran out of light, and it became a night of absolute zero visibility, where without exaggeration you could not see three inches in front of your face, literally.

On the second day, however, as I briefed my battalion, I told them that the first day was easy, but from here on out we are going to have our work cut out for us. We are going to earn our pay, again, anticipating what intelligence was telling us, that there was going to be a pretty significant fight all the way up al-Jahrah. When the attack commenced on the second day, I can recall a radio transmission from the CO of 6th Marines back to the division within minutes after the attack commenced, announcing again, large numbers of POWs [prisoners of war]. It was at that point in time that I said to myself, "I'm not exactly sure that these guys are here to defend, and perhaps their mission may in fact be delayed."

But I guess I had gotten indoctrinated or brainwashed in anticipation of this large, mechanized counterattack that we had become somewhat fixed on and convinced ourselves that that capability definitely existed.

That day again, as you will recall, the attack was very short, and primarily assigned to provide—the attack being short was designed to allow 1st Marine Division an opportunity to close on the 2d [Marine Division]. As the war went on, it basically became a contest of EPWs, collecting prisoners of war, and pretty much fighting, but probably at the division level, scattered pockets of resistance.

I looked back on that and reflected, and said, you know, perhaps on the first day we could not have done better, but on the second day when it was clear or pretty clear that we had an opportunity to seal the exits from Kuwait of Iraqi forces, that would have been the time to execute a pursuit operation, seize a piece of terrain in and around the al-Jahrah area, and seal off routes of withdrawal. That would have been a very classic pursuit. I think then that that smacks of some of the principles of maneuverable warfare, and that is, when you find a weakness go for it. Don't get fixed on one single thing. Kind of be fluid, and as the situation develops, take advantage of that particular situation.

It perhaps appears as if we got a plan and were sticking to it. I asked that question, because I felt that given those set of circumstances, that would have been a very viable mission for 2d Tanks, for the commanding general to say exploit and seize the crossroads at al-Jahrah and prevent the enemy from withdrawing north along the particular highway.

I discuss at length the G-2 and G-3, in fact talked to the general about it. There were some overriding concerns I suppose. One was that we in fact did have an open and exposed flank to our left [the west], in that the Egyptians had not closed yet, and allowed an approach for a pretty significant mechanized threat.

The second concern was that the 1st [Marine] Division again, had not come up from [the] right [the east]. The other main avenue of approach for any counterattacks was out of Kuwait City, and we would have been in a position to be hit from either or both flanks. I'm told also that not only MarCent but the CinC [commander in chief] had concerns about 2d [Marine] Division's flanks. Now that is hearsay, so I wouldn't attribute that comment myself, but it is hearsay information.

So I started to ask the questions. Well, we obviously missed something here, because at the start of the war we were painting very large numbers of mechanized units, and then in our travels through the division sector, especially my case as the division reserve, I had the opportunity to just kind of peek to my right and to my left as I was treading along. I just [could] not see the numbers of destroyed vehicles that one would have imagined if you believe in all the intelligence.

It seems to me that intelligence-wise we missed something. In fact, we had two or three very terrible days of weather just prior to the 24th [of February], the day the [ground] war started, and potentially much of that [armor] could have escaped and left Kuwait without notice. And so therefore we were relying on intelligence information that [was] no longer valid and were believing that the enemy has a capability that he no longer has.

So that caused us to be a bit more cautious, but I believe also another overriding concern was unnecessary loss of life. There was no rush to the finish line, so to speak, to get to al-Jahrah other than to seal it and to prevent any [Iraqis] from escaping. It was not something that the general prided himself [on], so to speak—and I say that in a favorable sense—to say 2d Marine Division got to al-Jahrah first. That really meant nothing to him compared . . .

Interviewer: The next question that I've got refers to one that you had touched upon in a couple of points, and that is in regard to the effectiveness of our tanks systems against theirs. You mentioned earl[ier], beginning in the interview, that we were trying to judge which one of their T-72s we would come up against—one obviously posing a far greater threat to us than the other. In fact, you are not sure in the end which of those models we may have wound up coming against, but if you could expand upon that.

And also your point of view, as somebody who is a professional armor officer for 20 years, if you could describe what you saw as the effectiveness of our weapons systems against theirs during this operation.

Cardi: First off, what we found in terms of the Iraqi tanks were the straight T-72. The straight T-72 basically has a rolled homogeneous steel, or it may be cast, but it is nothing more than a steel turret. It does not have sophisticated ceramic armors or things of that sort. It does have an upgraded fire control system, more so than the T-62 or T-55 have, but is a capable tank but not as formidable as its later version T-72M1.

The effectiveness of the weapon systems, my personal experiences again, are minimal in that area, because of the relative light contact we came involved in. But I was fortunate in seeing the damages created by our own weapons. I found that the preponderance of tanks that I had inspected en route to our different positions going north, many of them had what appeared to be the .25- or .30-caliber holes that had penetrated generally the hull. I suspect that they came from the A-10 armor-piercing rounds, and I'm not sure of the type. Thereafter, those rounds caused the tank to ignite, secondary explosions, and things of that sort. I did see some tanks which were either hit by antiarmor weapons or tank weapons, and those damages ranged from very clear and easy penetration of the turret to completely blowing the turret off of the tank either as a result of secondary explosions or as a result of the round itself.

So I would say, clearly it appeared to me that there was no weapon system that was not effective within its limits that it was designed to be used. So I think that is good, but I think also from a lessons learned standpoint, we have to be very careful about what we learn from this. We could very easily draw the conclusion for instance, that all we need is a whole bunch of [Emerson 901A1] TOW [2] [tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided] [antitank guided missile] systems, and we can defeat anyone at any time.

We can draw the conclusion that we don't need M1A1s, because the M60 did very, very well. But you have to remember that the effectiveness of your weapons [is] also affected by the enemy's capabilities and what he does back to you. What I mean by that is that considering the vast amount of artillery that the Iraqis had available to them, we did not get hit or fired upon with but only a small percentage of that.

Within at least the 2d Marine Division, I know of no tank or other armored vehicle which was hit by a direct fire, large-caliber weapon. Had that been the case, then we can probably draw conclusions with regards to the true effectiveness of our

systems, of which a very great part is survivability. Clearly the survivability between the M60 and the M1 is as dramatic as its fire control system.

So I think we have to be careful about [determining if] truly the weapons we used were effective, but within the context of this enemy and his capability to respond to what he did do.

Interviewer: The last couple of questions I have are very specific, and I was looking for some additional clarification on some points that you had made. On one of them, you had discussed about the change that you saw as being necessary within the A and B commands of the battalion. You used the terms of "permanent" as opposed to "ad hoc" arrangements. Can you just explain that one?

Cardi: Yes, of course, the A and B commands were nothing more than mirror image command groups that provide you the flexibility to have the battalion commander and his primary staff in one group and the battalion's executive officer and second in command with the secondaries or the alternates or the assistants in the second group. So therefore [if] one command group gets put out of commission for whatever reason, because of mechanical failures or because they were killed, the other can take them in.

There are some things lacking within the battalion's organization that prevents that. For instance, we have no assistant fire support coordinator. We have no assistant air officer, and we lack within our organization an adequate number of forward air controllers to cover each of the companies, or at least three-quarters of them.

So those billets were filled, for instance, by the H&S Company commander. One of the billets was filled by a late-join officer; the battalion is right now in excess of captains that it needs. Much like most organizations here, Desert Shield will get augmentees. Then, we offset the shortage in forward air controller by having sent over the past two years, our company executive officers to school at Norfolk [Virginia] to learn terminal control procedures.

So we have done things internal[ly] to our own battalion to compensate for those shortages; however, each one of those duties then detracts from the officer's primary duty, and I would not think that it would cause the addition of any more than three or four officers to the battalion structure to have a fully capable, permanent command group for both the A and B command group.

Interviewer: Okay, very good. My next question I've got is in regard to a point that you had made about ambulances. Can you explain just more deeply about your ideas?

Cardi: This situation we find ourselves in with regards to ambulances has bothered me for some time. The 2d Tank Battalion basically owns one soft skin ambulance, a humvee variant ambulance. That, in and of itself, appears to me to be inadequate. When we did our research, we found a [U.S.] Navy captain, who apparently—now a Navy captain—who apparently worked with the Marine Corps to determine its ground medevac requirements. I think it is the classic problem of not enough money to do everything. But according to this particular officer, the Marine Corps made a very conscious decision not to buy ambulances in sufficient quantities strictly dedicated to the ground medevac system. But rather their philosophy is any vehicle is a medevac vehicle, which means you download cargo you put wounded on.

That is not a bad philosophy at face value except for the fact that many of those vehicles are loaded with cargo and equipment that is crucial to the success of the operation, but more importantly it is not the best possible solution to a ground medevac system. So if it is a function of "we just don't have enough money, and do you want a gun or do you want a medevac jeep?" maybe the gun wins out. But I'm not so sure that we shouldn't sacrifice just a bit to at least enhance somewhat our ground medevac system.

Then to carry it one step further—and that's a kind of a philosophical statement, because we didn't take the number of casualties that we expected, and so therefore we can't say, "And see we need these things, because any vehicle system doesn't work."

But what we can say is that for the very limited number of casualties that we took, those ambulances operating with track vehicle units, they simply could not keep up. Even speeds as nominal as 10 miles an hour across country, the ambulances could not keep up, because you will find, if you have ridden in the back of [a] jeep that has been traveling behind a tank unit, that the tanks tear up enough real estate, and even depressions of only three and four inches will cause your cross-country speed to be decreased to about five miles per hour.

So it is impossible for that vehicle to keep up. I would say that without question we can say that as a result of this experience, that we need a number of track vehicle ambulances in whatever quantities that the Marine Corps decides that it can afford to purchase, preferably more, but even to substitute

the one we have wheeled for one track would be a far better solution than what we have now.

Captain Eddie S. Ray

Captain Eddie S. Ray served as the commanding officer of Company B, 1st Light Armored Infantry Battalion (1st LAI Battalion) during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Captain Ray was born in Los Angeles, California, on 25 April 1954. He enrolled at the University of Washington in 1973, graduating in 1977. He enlisted to the U.S. Marine Corps through the university's Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program on 27 July 1977. After the Gulf War, Captain Ray would go on to serve with U.S. Southern Command, Panama, special operations planning in 1994. During the invasion of Iraq in 2003, he served as commanding officer of 2d Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion (2d LAR Battalion). He retired as a colonel on 29 February 2008.

Colonel Ray was interviewed by Major Daniel B. Sparks of Marine Corps History Division on 24 November 2006. Company B, 1st LAI Battalion, served as a portion of Task Force Shepherd during Desert Storm. In the interview, Colonel Ray details the actions of 25 February 1991, G-day (the day the ground war began) plus one, and his actions during a major offensive by Iraqi armor on his position. Then-Captain Ray's valorous role in organizing and conducting a defense of his position against a significantly larger force earned him the Navy Cross.

Sparks: When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, things happened pretty fast. How soon did you all get your orders to move on out? Do you remember where you were and what thoughts and feelings you had when you considered that "I'm a young Marine company commander, actually deploying to go into combat"?

Ray: At the time, 3d LAI Battalion was in a unit rotation by companies to Okinawa [Japan]. Bravo Company was the next company to deploy to Okinawa, at the time. We were part of the 7th MEB out of Twentynine Palms [California]. In effect, we were the desert-trained force. We were actually involved in our workup to go to Okinawa. When I found out we were actually going to deploy . . . even though I was aware Iraq had invaded Kuwait, we knew there was an outside chance we would deploy. When I actually found out we would be deployed, we were in the field training—we were actually training and preparing to deploy to Okinawa. I was notified that we were going to deploy, not to Okinawa, but to Twentynine Palms as the first echelon in 7th MEB. We took off, and we got there in August. We were one of the first units to actually hit the ground in Saudi Arabia at the time. When we first landed and got our vehicles, there wasn't much on the ground at all.

Sparks: Did you take your vehicles over, or did MPS off-load when you got there?

Ray: Actually, we had an MPS off-load when we got there. We flew directly in, and we went straight to the port. Within two days we were deployed out on a screen line in a defensive position, near Jabao [*sic*].

Sparks: You said you were deployed on a screen line. At that time, was the prevailing thought that perhaps Saddam [Hussein] will keep driving down into Saudi Arabia, and that with the capabilities that LAI brought to the table, that you would be the trip wire, as it were?

Ray: That's putting it mildly. The prevailing thought was that the LAVs [light armored vehicles] were just going to be there as a, for lack of a better term, a speed bump, to try to slow 'em down somewhat. But, in reality, we were just on the north-south road. We had a defensive position that oriented us toward Kuwait. In the desert, that road was merely a strip that pretty much kept you pointed in the right direction. You could drive all over the desert. It wasn't much to consider that anybody could come around us if they wanted to.

Nobody really had a good feeling about the LAVs. It was an unproven capability. There was a belief that what we would do was actually be a collapsing defense. In other words, we'd take a few shots and back up and keep backing up, and hopefully slow 'em down. Nobody really had the idea that an LAV could prove of any great value.

Sparks: When you say nobody had the belief that LAVs could prove of a great value, was that on the Marine Corps side or was that then, I guess, the CentCom [U.S. Central Command], the Coalition headquarters side over there?

Ray: I think it was within the Marine Corps. At the time, before Desert Storm, anytime a battalion went to a CAX [combined arms exercise] or anytime some of the units trained, you had the feeling how important LAVs were when they didn't ask for you, or if you came in on their training, they'd try to push you aside, put you in the rear security, the flank security, someplace that was just, basically, out of the way. An LAV just didn't have the value that tanks had or the infantry for that matter.

Marine Corps History Division Reference Branch photo files

Two LAV antitank vehicles from 1st LAI Battalion drive across the Saudi desert. The vehicles provided the heavy firepower of the battalion with antitank missiles.

Sparks: Were any tank units there yet at the time, or you said you were just the first ones there?

Ray: We didn't see a tank unit show up for a few weeks after we'd been there. They were there, I'm sure, but it took a little while for them to get geared up.

Sparks: Now, let's fast-forward some more to February of '91, when the ground war actually started. How was it that you were given the assignment to provide the security for the 1st MarDiv CP?

Ray: I think that leap is kind of interesting because having been there for such a long time, keep in mind we got there in August, which it was about 130 degrees. And then by February, it was probably 30 to 40 degrees at night. It was quite chilly. And, so we went from 130 degrees to pretty chilly nights. During that period of time, we completed several missions where we would do raids, artillery raids, and I should call 'em combined-arms raids where we would pull up to the enemy defensive positions, attack 'em, and then take off. We were kind of doing some harassment, simulating that we were possibly going to attack. There were lots of counteractions.

There was a night where the enemy did actually try to attack, and we were called up from a position. We were actually planning another raid, and one of our companies in the battalion got into a situation that ended up causing three LAVs to be destroyed. As a matter of fact, 11 people got killed that day. So, during that period of time, I like to think that my company was probably the most experienced at that kind of warfare, such as it was. We were real familiar with how the desert was. The desert had some interesting anomalies.

How I ended up as the defense is kind of interesting, because we had rehearsed an attack with Alpha Company and Bravo Company, and, quite honestly, I was with the 3d LAI [Battalion]. The 1st [LAI] joined the 3d to make Task Force Shepherd. There was Alpha Company from 1st LAI, Bravo Company from 3d LAI, Charlie Company from 1st LAI, and Delta Company from 3d LAI. It just worked out that way.

Sparks: So, four LAI companies were cobbled together for Task Force Shepherd?

Ray: Exactly. The battalion commander was from 1st LAI. We had been rehearsing, how we were going to conduct the attack. About two days before we were ready to go, the battalion commander decided that my company was going to be the reserve company. At the time, I'll be honest with you, I was a little disappointed. I felt we had worked really hard, and we were the most capable because we were really prepared. We had done some drills. We had done some workups that the battalion was aware of. They had watched it, and they knew how

good we were. We just rehearsed over and over again. The logic was, and I don't know if it's patronizing me or what, you have the best company and we want to make sure that the best company gets the reserve position so that we can use them wherever. Don't know how true that was, but it wasn't the best thing I wanted to hear.

Once getting over that, the TACC [tactical air command center] kicked off and we were in trail of the battalion, but not in trail of division. We were still in fact, ahead of the division. By the end of the first day, the division CP had pushed right behind us. The division commander had troops in 5-tons [cargo trucks], 'cause they were truck mounted. They had a few machine-gun humvees and that was their defense.

Sparks: Who was the division commander at the time, sir?

Ray: [Major] General [James M.] Myatt. "Mike" Myatt.

Sparks: So, you have his staff on 5-tons, and they had their cables and their maps, their radios . . .

Ray: Well, actually their security element was in the 5-tons. The staff was in 5-tons themselves, but they had humvees and the whole CP lash out. Their security element was actually infantry. It looked like an infantry platoon, but reinforced with .50-cal [.50-caliber machine guns]. The jump CP had come up near Task Force Shepherd's CP. They asked for some LAVs to provide security. To be quite honest with you, when I was approached about it, I said, "It doesn't get any worse. First I'm the reserve, and now they're asking me to go guard the division." And, not only that, but I was broken into two large platoons. And, I gave one half of my company to the division, and the other half would stay and provide security/reserve for Task Force Shepherd.

At that point, I decided that I would go with the platoon that was going to the division. I felt at least Task Force Shepherd was a bunch of LAVs, they'd know how to take care of the LAVs. So I went to the division. We rolled over there at night, checked in, and I met Lieutenant Colonel [Raymond] "Ray" Cole, the lieutenant who was the OpsO [operations officer], and another lieutenant colonel by the name of [Jerome D.] Humble, who was the division, the S-3. They gave me a simple lay of the land briefing. "The enemy's over here. This is where we are, and this is where you need to be oriented."

Sparks: Can you describe what the environment was like? Because we have reports that there was a lot of fog, a lot of oil well fires, smoke.

Ray: As a matter of fact, it was quite dark, especially when we got there. The only lights you saw was the firelights from the oil that was coming up from the ground, which was on fire, and it produced black smoke, which was really oily itself. If you wore goggles to protect your eyes, it just got even darker because that smoke was really filled with this oil, and it would just build up on your goggles. You had to wear something over your face. It was absolutely pitch black at night, except for that firelight. If you put on your NVGs to see, they would work for a little while until the oil built up on the lens; you had to clean that. It was a challenge at best. We came into position, and I found the platoon commander. He had a gap in his lines. He had set his position, directly orienting toward where the threat was.

Sparks: And, that's the oil fields? The most logical avenue of approach that the enemy would take . . .

Ray: Through the oil fields.

Sparks: Who—was it the G-2—who said, "That's probably where they're going to come from"? Or did you have a moment of brilliance, and you said, "They'll probably come from there"? Or was it the platoon commander?

Ray: Actually, I guess it was the G-2, the G-3 actually briefed me, but I supposed they got it from the G-2. But, it was the division's assessment that that's where the threat was going to be. But the problem was, when I got into position, it was dark. They had a bunch of troops on the ground. They'd just hop off the trucks and kind of dug in. And, they had a couple of machine guns that they dismounted from the humvees, and they were planted on the ground in the direction that we thought the enemy was going to come from. Problem was, it was also desert; you couldn't guarantee that the enemy wouldn't come from any direction. So, these guys are pointing in that direction, and I decided to take the LAVs and I planted them in intervals, kind of in an arc that joined the people on the ground, but orienting in the other direction.

Sparks: How many LAVs did you have that night?

Ray: I had a total of 8 LAVs, 8 plus 2, that would be 10. But, one was the C2 [command and control], so it didn't shoot. The platoon had eight vehicles with it. So, that's how we broke it up.

Sparks: Did you get any sleep that night?

Ray: Not much, really, because part of the whole premise was to get everybody in position and make sure they understood the situation. After get-

ting everybody oriented, I had to troop the lines. We had quite a bit of space between each vehicle. I went around to all the positions making sure I knew where they were and making sure they understood where they were and what the situation was. At maybe, three, four in the morning, I tried to get some rest. Seems like shortly after that, I sat down on the ground next to the LAV, just kind of bundled up, leaning against the tire and fell asleep. The next thing you know, I wake up, I can hear shooting, and I heard a couple of explosions.

Sparks: Was this the next morning?

Ray: The next morning. I heard some explosions. And my first thought was, "I didn't think the enemy had anything that I was aware of." They were literally in our area. I saw the flashes. I went to my C2 to call the FSC [fire support coordinator] net, and confirm who was shooting and make sure that they understood where we were. Response was [that] nobody was shooting. I said, "What the hell. That's b——t, because somebody's shooting." And that was kind of the beginning of the fight.

I was starting to get to the point, where it's "okay—something's going on." The next thing I heard was some .50-cal from the area where the ground troops were. Then I heard some more shooting. Rather than move everybody, I mounted up my vehicle and the C2, which always followed me, and we rolled over to the direction that I heard the shooting. We got there, and it was a .50-cal position. The first thing that happened is I see a humvee coming from the direction of the enemy's direction. Of course, I wasn't sure what was going on. At the time, I see this humvee barreling toward us as we're pulling up near the machine gun that was shooting.

U.S. Marines had to wear goggles to protect their eyes from the oily smoke and overcast produced by burning oil wells.

Photo by LtCol Charles H. Cureton

All these things are happening at the same time. I look over and there's somebody in the humvee throwing gear out of the humvee and pulling out ammo. I see another humvee, a soft back humvee, rolling from the direction where the .50-cal had been shooting. I see the guy trying to reload his .50-cal, and at that point, I'm trying to figure out what's going on. The person in the humvee pulls up next to my vehicle, says, "They're out there. They're out there." He was at least pointing out what was going on.

Sparks: So, essentially the humvee and the .50-cal crew were in between your vehicle and the direction where the enemy was allegedly coming from. In order for you to engage the enemy, you had to get the Marines out of your way.

Ray: That was the first thing. I had to clear them out. Second, I had to get them covered.

What I didn't make clear earlier was that the position that we were in was the edge of what we were calling the "Emir's Forest" ["Emir's Farm"]. It was actually a cultivated area that had trees in it. It was in the middle of the desert. They must have transported water. It wasn't dense like what'd you see in the United States. But it was literally trees growing all over the place. They weren't connected by brush or anything like that. It was just trees. When we got there, the humvee is coming out of the trees.

Ray: And as he's coming in, the .50-cal has been shooting. I'm trying to figure out what they're shooting at. I see the humvee coming. The guy comes up and he starts yelling, "They're here. They're there." I said, "Okay, get out of the way." They're having problems now with the gun. They need to reload or something. And, shortly after all of this is taking place, and it's near simultaneously, but the next thing I notice is an armored vehicle. It's a BMP [armored personnel carrier]. I know it's a BMP immediately, but the first thing I'm thinking is perhaps it's a Saudi or a . . .

Sparks: A Coalition.

Ray: A Coalition BMP. So, I'm looking at it and it's . . . he's motoring, and I'm looking. I can see the tracks, and say, "You know, [the] tracks are obviously the kind that belong to a Soviet-style vehicle." I'm looking at it, and I'm thinking, "You know, after seeing a friendly humvee, maybe it's a friendly." I keep looking, and it starts to swing around and it starts to move its tube toward us.

Sparks: About how far away was it?

Ray: Probably no more than, I'd say no more than about 200 meters.

Sparks: Now, was it daylight at this time? Was there a lot of fog or smoke? It was still dark.

Ray: It was dawn.

Sparks: Dawn.

Ray: It was shortly after dawn, and it was brighter, but it was still a lot of smoke.

Sparks: So, as it starts to move toward you . . .

Ray: I'm looking at it. So I turned our tube toward it, and he started taking some shots. And, I could sense the rounds hitting the trees.

Sparks: So, he's initially engaged, but not with his tube, but with, I guess, the .762, whatever they have on it.

Ray: Yeah.

Sparks: All crew served.

Ray: I took the override of the gun. I'm just looking over the tube, and I point it in that direction, and I tell the gunner, "Okay, you got an enemy BMP. Fire." Just like that. Just, "Fire." He starts shooting, and I'm watching these rounds hit the armor on this vehicle, and I can see the spark as each one hits. He hits about three or four times, and as he's shooting, I see another one maybe 10 degrees to the left. I said, "Okay, we got another one 10 degrees left." I'm thinking that maybe it is in his field of view. He says, "I got it," and he starts shooting again, and he puts two more rounds into the same one.

Sparks: So, in the first case when he impacted the first one, did the rounds stop it or did it begin to burn, or what?

Ray: Actually it was happening so fast, I quit paying attention to it. I figured we're done if it's not done. And, so I turned to the next one, and he says he's got it. And there was a hesitation, then he starts shooting again, and I see two more rounds going to the same one he'd shot before. I'm thinking, "Oh, no. You don't have it." And this one's still going—getting oriented on us. I hit the override. I said, "No, no. That's not it." I hit the override, and I said, "You're on now." He says, "Got it." And he starts shooting. Right about then, I see a third one off to the right, and by that time, I'm seeing the first one start to smoke. I thought, "Oh, s——t." You know, so he's just starting to engage the first one, so I can't take him off that one, and the third one is starting to orient on us. I gave the order for my driver to break right. I just said, "Break right." And, that means . . .

Sparks: Were you moving at this time or you all were stationery?

Ray: No, we were not.

Sparks: So, you told 'em to break right and . . .

Ray: That means just turn to the right and go. And, he takes off—he breaks right, and we start going. And the gunner's still on the other one and shooting . . .

Sparks: The second one?

Ray: On the second one. He's putting a couple rounds in it, and I'm looking at the third one. I just don't want to give the third one an easy shot. And, at the same time, I'm trying to figure out where we're going to go.

Sparks: And, your C2 was following you.

Ray: Yeah. C2 . . .

Sparks: And they can't defend themselves.

Ray: Yeah. And, well they're backfiring—I had already placed them in a hide position, and as soon as I saw what was going on, I told them as I was telling other people to get out of the way. I put them in a position that was about 100 yards back. And they were—and they're used to it. We had rehearsed this before. They dropped into as much defilade as possible, but they had good vantage at the same time. Matter of fact, now that you mention it, the C2 probably helped identify more enemy coming.

Sparks: So, you break right so that you wouldn't be an easy target.

Ray: And, we start moving. And, I'm looking for a place to hide, and there's nothing but trees there. I said, "Okay, get behind that tree." And of course, we get there, and I'm thinking you know this tree is absolutely no protection. [Laughs]

Sparks: [Laughs]

Ray: But, it was at least a place. So, we stopped. By that time, the gunner had put about three or

four rounds into the second one. We stopped at the tree. I saluted, and I said, "Okay." We got another one. He said, "Okay." "Fire." And he starts firing again. It explodes. The second one's starting to burn, and we're engaging the third one. And I pass the word to the other LAVs to gear up and . . .

Sparks: What was your call sign that day?

Ray: My call sign was "Swamp Thing." I got the nickname from Major [Jeffrey A.] Powers; we were actually in the field at Twentynine Palms. It was raining hard. I had one of these rubber rain parkas on, and coming over the hill . . .

Sparks: And you're pretty tall. How tall are you?

Ray: I'm six [feet], two and a half [inches].

Sparks: And you come over . . .

Ray: I come over the top and all this rain's coming down, and so he looks up and he goes, "It's the Swamp Thing." And everybody starts laughing, and I think they just started calling me that from then on. Then everybody else started calling themselves that. The platoon commanders, calling themselves the Swamp Thing: Swamp Thing One was the 1st Platoon, Swamp Thing Two was the 2d Platoon, and that sort of thing. So, it kind of took its own life after that.

Sparks: So, after you got your hide behind the one tree, you called back for the rest of your company to come on up—the platoon you had.

Ray: Right, because I had them. I told them that my vehicle would be the base vehicle and to put half up on one side and half on the other. At the time the fourth vehicle came up, and we started engaging. And as soon as we started engaging 'em, they actually started dismounting. While we were taking on the fourth vehicle, they scooted their vehicle, stopped, and they opened up the rear hatch. People started getting out and started running toward a ditch. This was all within a couple hundred meters, so I'm looking at this, and I can't do much, because I'm engaging another vehicle.

I'm watching where they go, and now I've figured out it takes three or four rounds and it's done. The vehicle starts burning, blows up. So, I watch where they go, and then we start hitting the ground with HE [high explosive bomb], with our HE rounds. They are in a defilade position. I just start peppering right at that spot, along that trench that I'm sensing they're at. And, that's all we can do. Everybody's coming . . .

Sparks: So, how soon, when you call for the reinforcements to come, in your mind, how long do you think it would take them to get to you? How many minutes?

Photo courtesy of Col Jeffrey A. Powers

Capt Eddie Ray, commanding officer of Company B, 1st LAI Battalion, stands in Manifah Bay after the return to Saudi Arabia. His company successfully defended against an unexpected Iraqi offensive during the Gulf War.

Ray: It's hard to say, but I figured it would probably take them about 5, 10 minutes. I felt like they were pretty good. I said, just drive . . . stay on this azimuth and move and you're going to see us. Kuwait was to the north. . . .

Sparks: So, where you were placed . . .

Ray: They were actually to the east.

Sparks: . . . up on a clock. Where would Kuwait be? Where's the north piece?

Ray: Well, [where] we were oriented was to the west of the oil field. Actually, to the south and west of the oil field, generally speaking. And the threat was coming from that direction. And so, I had them to move. I knew that I could put them on a due north azimuth from where they were—they could push due north, and they would see me. And I told them that if they were going to veer, veer west. "Do not veer east, 'cause that puts you in front of us." As they were coming forward, they started engaging some vehicles; they were kind of meandering through the trees. And they started engaging some troop vehicles; they took on a couple, and they start showing up.

We had rehearsed this time and time again. But, you always try to establish a base vehicle anytime you're doing something. Anytime you have a team maneuver, somebody's the base, and then everybody can orient off that. And so, mine was the base vehicle at the time. We got moving—and once they got oriented, as they were moving in, my C2 came up on the radio, and said, "Hey, the division wants to know if we need reinforcements. What do we need?" And I said, "Cobras [helicopters]. Get us some Cobras." By the time the rest of the troops got there, [the] first division of Cobras* showed up.

Sparks: Had the Cobras been orbiting the area—they were on patrols or were they on strip alert?

Ray: No, I think they were flying some security missions. So, they weren't very far away. It couldn't have been any more than 10 minutes before they were there. As soon as they got there, we oriented them, had them orient right over our heads. But, as soon as I had everybody in position, the Cobras showed up—and we had rehearsed this, to put 'em on our shoulder. That's the rule. Put 'em on our shoulder. As soon as they came in, they started emptying. And the Cobras were done. They'd emptied all their ammo in like a couple minutes, and they were gone. And of course, at that point, I was not aware of much more than what I could see—a couple hundred meters, and that's about it.

As soon as they got there, because their vantage point was higher, [the Cobras] started engaging and reporting, they just took out three, four vehicles, that sort of thing. I'm thinking, "Well gee whiz, if you just took out four, and we just took out four, you probably took out the same vehicles." I'm kind of just dismissing it a little bit.

Sparks: Does that mean that you were dismissing that there were that many enemy vehicles coming toward you? You didn't expect them to mount such an attack?

Ray: Yeah.

Sparks: What led you to believe that?

Ray: I just didn't believe that they could get that close to us. And, that's really the thing. I just didn't think they could get close without us knowing and having some more, better warning than that. I'm thinking "Four. You guys got four, and we got four. Probably only four total." So, then they pulled out, and C2 reported there was another [Cobra] division on their way. I said, "Okay." When the division gets here, we're going to attack forward. We're going to move forward, and they're going to stay on our shoulder and we're just going to roll. They got there, probably 5, 10 minutes later. My FAC puts 'em on our shoulder just as we rehearsed, and we started moving forward. We come over a little bit of a rise, and then I can see more smoking vehicles. And, what I also see is they are in a formation and they're trying to get out of their formation. They're trying to deploy. We came over just in time to catch 'em still in their formation. We just swept the formation. As luck would have it, they were masking themselves a lot already. We went right down their formation.

Sparks: So, you think that you drove your vehicles through the formation where their field vehicles were.

Ray: Through their formation.

Sparks: About how fast were you going when you took that hill, that rise?

Ray: No more than 5, 10 miles an hour at the most. It was slow. We were just kind of moving. We were hitting the vehicles, and then they would start to explode, and we'd have to give it a wider swath because they were exploding—because they had so much ordnance in 'em, you['d] have to duck.

Sparks: So, you were standing in the turret, and when it would blow, you would have to hunker down.

Ray: Oh, yeah. Because you can tell they're going to blow, 'cause the colors—it was kind of, after a while, they'd start smoking this white smoke, and then you'd have different smoke, and then it would get thick for a minute, and then, "Boom!" You get the red and red, green, you know, white smoke kind of thing start to happen, and then all of a sudden and then it would thicken and then, "Boom!"

*A division consisted of four Bell-Textron AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters.

◆APPENDIX◆

Selected Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

AAA—Antiaircraft Artillery
AAV—Amphibious Assault Vehicle
ABCCC—Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center
ACE—Aviation Combat Element
ADC—Assistant Division Commander
ANGLICO—Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company
AO—Area of Operations
AOM—All Officers Meeting
AOR—Area of Responsibility
APC—Armored Personnel Carrier
ARBS—Angle-Rate Bombing System
ArCent—U.S. Army Forces Central Command
ASE—Air Support Element
ATC—Air Traffic Control
AWC—Assistant Wing Commander

B

BDA—Battle Damage Assessment
BMP—Armored Personnel Carrier
BOQ—Bachelor Officers Quarters
BSSG—Brigade Service Support Group

C

C2—Command and Control
C3—Command, Control, and Communications
CAP—Combat Air Patrol
CAS—Close Air Support
CASCAP—Close Air Support Combat Air Patrol
CAX—Combined Arms Exercise
CE—Command Element
CentCom—U.S. Central Command
CG—Commanding General
CIFS—Close-In Fire Support
CinC—Commander in Chief
CinCCent—Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command
CJCS—Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
CMC—Commandant of the Marine Corps
CO—Commanding Officer
COC—Combat Operations Center
ComSec—Communications Security
CONUS—Continental United States
CP—(1) Control Point, or (2) Command Post
CSS—Combat Service Support
CSSA—Combat Service Support Area
CSSD—Combat Service Support Detachment
CSSE—Combat Service Support Element
CUCV—Commercial Utility Cargo Vehicle
CV—Aircraft Carrier

D

DASC—Direct Air Support Center
DME—Distance Measure Equipment
DOD—Department of Defense
DSA—Division Support Area
DSC—Direct Support Command
DSG—Direct Support Group
DSVT—Digital Subscriber Voice Terminal

E

ECM—Electronic Counter Measure
EEI—Essential Element of Information
EPW—Enemy Prisoner of War
EuCom—U.S. European Command
EW—Electronic Warfare

F

FAC—Forward Air Controller
FAC(A)—Forward Air Controller (Airborne)
FARP—Forward Arming and Refueling Point
FCT—Firepower Control Team
FLIR—Forward Looking Infrared Radar
FOD—Foreign Object Damage
FROG—Free Rocket Over Ground (missile)
FSC—Fire Support Coordinator
FSCC—Fire Support Coordination Center
FSCL—Fire Support Coordination Line
FSSG—Force Service Support Group

G

GCE—Ground Combat Element
GMF—Ground Mobile Forces
GP—General Purpose
GPS—Global Positioning System
GSG—General Support Group

H

H&S—Headquarters and Service (Company)

HARM—High-Speed Antiradiation Missile
HE—High Explosive Bomb
HF—High Frequency
HMA— Marine Attack Helicopter Squadron
HMLA—Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron
HMMWV—High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle
HQMC—Headquarters Marine Corps
HUD—Head-Up Display

I

I&L—Installations and Logistics
IFR—In-Flight Refueling
INS—Inertial Navigation System
Intel—Intelligence
IR—Infrared

J

JFACC—Joint Force Air Component Commander
Joint STARS—Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System

K

KIA—Killed In Action
KTO—Kuwait Theater of Operations

L

LAI—Light Armored Infantry
LAN—Local Area Network
LAV—Light Armored Vehicle
LCC—Amphibious Command Ship
LGB—Laser-Guided Bomb
LHA—Amphibious Assault Ship
LP—Listening Post
LSB—Landing Support Battalion
LVS—Logistics Vehicle System
LZ—Landing Zone

M

MAG—Marine Aircraft Group
MAGTF—Marine Air-Ground Task Force
MarCent—U.S. Marine Forces Central Command
MarDiv—Marine Division
MarForPac—Marine Forces Pacific
MarForSWA—Marine Forces Southwest Asia
MAW—Marine Aircraft Wing
MAWTS—Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron
MAWTULant—Marine Air Weapons Training Unit Atlantic
MCAS—Marine Corps Air Station
MCB—Marine Corps Base
MCSC—Marine Corps Systems Command
MEB—Marine Expeditionary Brigade
MEF—Marine Expeditionary Force
MIA—Missing In Action
MOPP—Mission Oriented Protective Posture. Protective equipment for chemical attack consists of a suit made of charcoal-activated cloth, overboots, gloves, and a gas mask with hood. There are four MOPP levels, depending upon the threat of a chemical attack, and each prescribes which items are to be worn. Level 1 consists of wearing the suit (trousers and jacket) and carrying the boots, gloves, and mask with hood. Level 2 involves wearing the overboots in addition to the suit, with the gloves and mask with hood still carried. At level 3 the mask with hood is worn. Level 4 requires the wearing of the entire outfit, including the gloves.
MPF—Maritime Prepositioning Force
MPS—Maritime Prepositioning Ships
MRE—Meal, Ready-To-Eat
MSE—Mobile Subscriber Equipment
MSR—Main Supply Route
MULE—Modular Universal Laser Equipment
MWSS—Marine Wing Support Squadron

N

NAS—Naval Air Station
NBC—Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical
NCO—Noncommissioned Officer
NMCB—Naval Mobile Construction Battalion
NJP—Nonjudicial Punishment
NVG—Night Vision Goggles

O

ODA—Operational Detachment Alpha (U.S. Army Special Forces)
OP—Observation Post
OpSec—Operations Security
OpTempo—Operating Tempo

P

PLRS—Position Location Reporting System
POL—Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricant
POW—Prisoner of War

PsyOps—Psychological Operations

R

RCT—Regimental Combat Team
RFA—Restricted Fire Area
RPG—Rocket-Propelled Grenade
RPV—Remotely Piloted Vehicle
R&S—Reconnaissance and Surveillance

S

SALT—Supporting Arms Liaison Team
SALUTE—Size, Activity, Location, Unit, Time, and Equipment (report)
SAM—Surface-to-Air Missile
SANG—Saudi Arabian National Guard
SASSY—Marine Corps Automated Supply Support System
SatCom—Satellite Communications
SAW—Squad Automatic Weapons
SCIF—Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility
SCUD—Soviet surface-to-surface missile
Seabees—Members of the U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalions
SEAL— Sea, Air, and Land (Naval Special Warfare Team)
SecNav—Secretary of the Navy
SF—Special Forces
SI—Signals Instructions
SIMCAS—Simulated Close Air Support
SLRP—Surveillance, Liaison, and Reconnaissance Party
SMU—SASSY Management Unit
SOP—Standard Operating Procedure
SRI—Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Intelligence
SRIG—Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Intelligence Group
SSM—Surface-to-Surface Missile
STOVL—Short Take-Off Vertical Landing
SWA—Southwest Asia

T

TAC (A)—Tactical Air Coordinator (Airborne)
TACC—Tactical Air Command Center
TACP—Tactical Air Control Party
TAD—Temporary Assigned Duty
TE—Table of Equipment
TF—Task Force
T/O—Table of Organization
TOW—Tube-launched, Optically tracked, Wire-guided missile
TriTac—Tri-Service Tactical

U

UDP—Unit Deployment Program
UHF—Ultra-High Frequency

V

VF—Navy Fighter Squadron
VMA—Marine Attack Squadron
VMAT—Marine Attack Training Squadron
VMFA—Marine Fighter Attack Squadron
VMO—Marine Observation Squadron
VR—Visual Reconnaissance

W

WIA—Wounded In Action

X

XO—Executive Officer

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

HISTORY DIVISION U.S. MARINE CORPS QUANTICO, VA