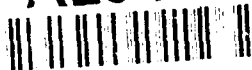


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BATTLE FOR SAFWAN, IRAQ

BY

Lieutenant Colonel John R. Gingrich
United States Army

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**BATTLE FOR SAFWAN, IRAQ
AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT**

By

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ABSTRACT

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On 1 March 1991, the 2d Brigade, 1st Infantry Division engaged Iraqi forces in the vicinity of Safwan, Iraq. The mission of the brigade was to secure the near-by air field and all connecting roadways. The purpose of the action was to obtain a site in Iraq for Central Command to conduct cease-fire talks with Iraqi military officials. The confrontation was led by the 4th Battalion, 5th Field Artillery Regiment and joined by the maneuver forces of the brigade. After several hours of negotiations, demonstrations of force, maneuver by three battalions of the brigade, and powerful persuasion the town was taken without a shot being fired. Numerous lessons can be taken from this endeavor.

INTRODUCTION

During one battle of Operation Desert Storm, as a direct support field artillery battalion commander, I learned that what was a tactical operation to a battalion commander the division and brigade commanders properly assessed as having significant strategic importance. Specific themes learned are the potential magnitude of local incidents in large-scale international negotiations and the responsibility that kind of importance can lay on a lower-echelon commander and his troops; the dependency of U.S. forces in the Central Command region on third-world nationals--who may have agendas inconsistent with U.S. interests and goals--as interpreters in delicate situations; and the importance of ready access to communications and the senior leadership to gain advantage in resolving military-diplomatic situations; and most importantly, the advantage of leader development at all levels within the U.S. forces.

The model used is not just another one of the many war stories of Operation Desert Storm. It is not about the bravery shown by our magnificent forces under fire nor about the heat of the close-in battle with the exchanging of tank main guns rounds. While there were numerous of these significant engagements between coalition and Iraqi forces, this one was unique. Through a series of events, my battalion--the 4th Battalion 5th Field Artillery, began what evolved into a direct confrontation between a dug-in Iraqi company, plus, and the 2d Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. It was a strange battle. The victory was not just tactically gaining territory, but strategically establishing

prestige, power and world opinion. Victory had to be achieved without a shot being fired. When we began our day, on 1 March 1991, we never imagined that events would have such a twist.

Battle for Safwan

Shortly after 0400 hours, Major Tom Hendrix, the 4th Battalion, 5th Field Artillery, S3 (Operations Officer), arrived at Headquarters 6. I was lying there half awake and half asleep, reflecting with amazement on the past four days and with wonderment over the cease-fire. "What did it all mean? What had we accomplished?" kept crossing my mind. The past days seemed more like a dream than reality. I was glowing with my pride in the battalion. Everyone performed remarkably well and I knew only a little of what they had done. Into this blissful world intruded a new mission. Major Hendrix informed me that we were to occupy a firing position about six kilometers north to support the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment (1-4 Cav), with its sweep to and the securing of the airfield.¹ My initial reaction was that he had to be joking. After he assured me that he was not, my thoughts were, "What airfield and why? After all, the cease-fire was 0800 hours yesterday." While sitting up in my sleeping bag, I rapidly fired off several questions trying to figure out what was going on. I was not comfortable with the mission. It was being done on the fly. Far too many issues were unresolved. I did not know the commander's intent. We did not have any graphics nor a scheme of maneuver. We did not have a solid handle on what was going on. After giving Major Hendrix some preliminary

guidance, I got dressed to meet with him in the Tactical Operations Center (TOC).

Major Hendrix and I discussed the mission at some length, conducted a map reconnaissance and wargamed the issues. We felt it necessary only to move the firing batteries. We could leave the battalion TOC and trains in position. The mission, as we understood it, would take only a couple of hours and we would return to this location. While we discussed the plan, the TOC issued a warning order at 0445 hours to the battery commanders.² Major Hendrix and I again attempted to answer some of the disturbing questions. Additionally, I asked, "On whose authority do we fire and who was going to clear fires?" We did not know the answers. To add to my anguish, he pointed out that we did not have updated survey control or meteorological data. We had to use the data we carried from the Line of Departure five days prior, forcing us to check our position locations with the Magellans³ and to assume the survey control carried for 200 miles to be valid. He knew that I did not like the thought of firing in close support without all the conditions of predictable and reliable fires being met. As time was short, I put these thoughts aside for now. I figured once we were in position, I would have more time to find the answers to all these questions. At 0515 hours, using a land line conference call, I discussed the upcoming mission with the battery commanders. We concluded we would conduct this mission similar to our artillery raid. The commanders, a survey team and I would move ahead of the battalion to conduct route

reconnaissance and find a suitable position. The firing batteries would follow in the battalion wedge with howitzers, fire direction center tracks and command and control HMMWVs⁴ only. The wedge had C Battery leading with A Battery on the right flank and B Battery on the left flank. The platoons were in column with the sections forming a diamond. The battalion occupation would be conducted using our artillery raid procedures.⁵ I told them to be at the TOC, ready to go, no later than 0545 hours for an orders brief.

Brigade cleared our proposed grid location to support 1-4 Cav.⁶ The grid was based on our requirement to range beyond the Safwan airfield and not enter Iraq. Between 0520 hours and 0545 hours the TOC coordinated with the 1-4 Cav and sent directives to the batteries.⁷

The battery commanders assembled at the TOC while their batteries prepared. During the briefing, we decided to send out RETRANS to ensure reliable communications.⁸ Everyone reported ready. At 0615 hours the battalion moved out.⁹ The firing platoons movement out of position was ragged. The commanders and I watched in amazement from a few hundred meters away. Since time was of the essence, I was peeved and angrily called the platoon leaders to fix it. As the battalion, the howitzers, fire direction centers and command and control vehicles all maneuvered to dodge bunkers, fighting positions, burned-out vehicles, and power line towers--a huge U-turn was executed to orient the formation correctly. The formation pointed in the correct

direction moved superbly. I remarked to Specialist Brian Mortensen, my driver:

You would think that after fighting and moving for four days, we would do better. But I guess the terrain is more difficult to navigate than any we have experienced previously.

As we headed north the black smoke of the rows of burning Kuwaiti oil wells darkened the sky blocking the sun. You could not help but reflect on the eerie scene of the battalion moving like a large school of vehicles across the ocean of sand under the red-yellow glow of the sun's rays through billows of dark smoke.

The reconnaissance was easier than expected since we used the Magellans to cross-country navigate. We kept the power lines and the major Kuwait-Basra highway to the east. The battalion formation remained visible. In the designated area, I assembled the battery commanders. We laid out the position in a matter of minutes for the occupation which followed.¹⁰

I received a frantic radio call from the Brigade Fire Support Officer (FSO) to report to brigade immediately. Colonel Tony Moreno, the brigade commander of the 2d Brigade [Dagger Brigade], 1st Infantry Division, called an emergency commanders' call to issue a new order. After quickly briefing the battery commanders, I departed. Brian and I drove as rapidly as possible to the Brigade TOC. This time we used the Kuwait-Basra highway. I would have preferred a different route, as the highway was a very disturbing sight. There were burned-out vehicles, the signs of mass destruction everywhere, along with numerous dead enemy

soldiers. As I examined the destructive effects of war, I was so thankful that the battalion had suffered no casualties. Yet my heart went out to the Iraqi people. I asking, "God, why was one man so evil?" when Specialist Mortensen alerted me to our arrival at the brigade TOC.

Colonel Moreno huddled us around the map explaining that the brigade was peacefully to take the Safwan airfield and establish a large show of force. We had to secure the airfield today. The Army Central Command (ARCENT) teams who were to set up the negotiation site would be arriving around dusk. As he was talking, I realized that he did not know his artillery battalion was already moving. He, with a shocked response, demanded to know why. Before I could formulate an answer, thankfully, one of the shift staff officers spoke up. He explained that Division had called Brigade and specifically directed that the battalion move in support of 1-4 Cav. While unhappy about not knowing, he accepted the answer. Our being forward complicated his plan, and forced him to make adjustments. While we were discussing the adjustments, brigade received more instructions for its artillery battalion from division.

Since I had so many details to relay to the battalion, I asked to be excused. On my way out, Major Byron Baker, the Brigade FSO, and I selected a new location using map reconnaissance then he radioed battalion." The Brigade S3 approved the position. The battalion needed to move about 10 kilometers further north in the vicinity of the town of Safwan. I went to

the HMMWV and radioed instructions to the battery commanders. I notified the S3 to be prepared to move the battalion and join the firing batteries at Safwan. This is one of the many examples of the Direct Support Battalion Commander having to do the directing himself. Rarely, during Desert Storm were we permitted the luxury of staff planning and order execution. I would be given the instructions with short fuzed implementation times; therefore, I was forced to pass on the directives myself. That is just the way it was. No sense in worrying about it; we had to move on.

Lieutenant Colonel David Marlin, the battalion commander of the 4th Battalion, 37th Armor, recorded the results of the meeting:

Colonel Moreno gave Lieutenant Colonel Gross [Commander, 3d Battalion 37th Armor] and I instructions for securing area around the town of Safwan and the adjacent airfield. TF 5-16 and the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry were now assigned to the 2d Brigade. We would move up the road, north, with two companies abreast and block off the northern approaches to Safwan. Our line of departure time was 0900 hours.¹²

We were forced again upon the hardtop road. The drive was nearly twenty minutes of racing through what looked like hell. The destruction was complete. The enemy had been totally defeated. The remains of battle were everywhere. One of the surveyors, Specialist Patrick James, later described the scene:

Our route took us across the major highway in Kuwait. It was the link between Basra and Kuwait City. We passed many exploded and destroyed vehicles. The place looked like a junk yard. The road was also littered with Iraqi dead and numerous destroyed tanks, BMPs, and various civilian trucks modified to carry mortars. It spoke of the terrible realities of war and its horrible

aftermath. The dead were scattered all over and flies swarmed over them. My TC [Track Commander, used here to mean senior occupant] rode with his hands over his eyes, peering only through the slits in his fingers. I noticed a dog leaving the area with a human leg in his jaws. The rest of the dog pack was feeding on what appeared to be the intestines of a dead soldier. At that point, I traced the sign of the cross and said a quick prayer thanking the Lord it wasn't me lying there.¹³

I could not make the drive without thoughts of these sights and the violent actions that took place racing through my mind. At the same time, I was attempting to logically sort out my directives for the battalion. Another soldier described his drive:

I'm not completely sure on what day this occurred, but I'll probably never forget. The day the battery left. . . for the airstrip. We ran over some red, mushy, clumps on the road that were once soldiers body parts.¹⁴

I sent instructions over the air as we sped to the new location. Captain Phil Royce, the C Battery Commander, called me to discuss some Iraqi or Kuwaiti personnel in the new area. I inquired if they were having an impact on his occupation. His reply was, "Negative." I directed him to continue with the occupation.

Approaching the new location about 0815 hours, I could see a small town. Not really a town anymore, it was more like the ruins of one that remained after the war and sacking of an occupation. A HMMWV blocked the road. Specialist Cullum, the C Battery commander's driver, was waiting to direct the main body into position. As we turned, we stopped to talk to him. Due to the outstanding reaction of the commanders, the full-up firing battery advance parties were in the new location fifteen minutes

before us. I noticed 1st platoon of C Battery in position. Then, I saw a small group of what appeared to be soldiers just north of the position. I asked Specialist Cullum, "What's going on?" He replied, "They are EPWs (Enemy Prisoners of War)." "OK, not a big deal," I thought, since we had seen thousands of EPWs in the past several days, "and these must be the people Phil radioed about." We drove on. I met with Phil Royce to get a back-brief and status report.

We were occupying an area that had recently been an Iraqi position. The position was disarrayed with trash, the effects of several bombings, and the desolation of an undisciplined army in an occupied territory. Because of the observable, unhealthy conditions, I decided to walk around, just to see what we had gotten ourselves into. Captain Royce, First Lieutenant Scott Johnson, the platoon leader for 2d Platoon, C Battery, and Specialist Brian Mortensen joined me. The area was a network of fighting positions and foxholes. The walk was the most unpleasant of my life. I saw what I had only seen on the "big screen" before--the results of war, again, up close and personal. The Iraqi soldiers were poorly treated and lived almost like animals. They constructed a compound by digging into the sand, building sand walls and then taking all kinds of building material to provide shelter. They had no furnishings, only scraps of wood. The sanitation facilities, for as long as they had been there, were crude to nonexistent. Their personal belongings were very minimal. Yet Captain Phil Royce recalled finding some advanced

military equipment:

We were totally surprised when Scott came out of one of the bunkers with a set of night vision goggles. We were amazed at these soldiers having such a sophisticated piece of equipment. I remembered being briefed that they did not have night sighting equipment. The goggles appeared to be Soviet made and not quite as good as our PVS-7s. I questioned, 'What else did they have that they were not able to properly exploit?'¹⁵

As we continued our exploration of the site, I was struck by the harshness of their conditions. And we wondered, "Why did they not have the will to fight?" During the walk we encountered some very unsettling aspects of death. Parts of human beings were just blown about. The most upsetting sight was to see the dogs. When I think of dogs, I think of the nice "man's best friend." Not this time; these animals were starving dogs, forced to feast on the dead soldiers.

First Lieutenant Scott Johnson described another significant encounter:

As we were walking around several bunkers, we noticed some foreign-national-looking people coming from the direction of Iraq. They appeared harmless, but we took all the necessary precautions. When the group was within talking distance someone ordered them to halt. The battalion commander went over to talk with one of them. The colonel determined that they were Egyptian citizens by their passports and paperwork. He ordered them to return to Iraq. Very excitedly and in very broken English, they explained they were workers living in Kuwait and would not return to Iraq. We allowed them to pass. This is what made our occupation even more difficult. You could not easily determine who the enemy was, nor stop the flow of people around your area.¹⁶

After seeing all this, I directed that we spread out our occupation and place the camp off limits. I did not want any of our

soldiers getting hurt souvenir-hunting. Little did I know, this was not to be the most eventful part of my day.

The walk was cut short. Captain Steve Wickenheiser, A Battery commander, drove into the position and noticed more Iraqi soldiers moving to fighting positions. He notified me of the situation. We immediately returned to our HMMWVs parked near the entrance. As we were walking to our vehicles, I noticed that the "EPWs" were aggressively digging in. I asked Phil Royce, "How long have they been digging in?" Phil replied that no one really paid much attention to them, as "we figured they were recovering [securing items they had left in the position]." Taking a closer look, I saw a couple of crew-served weapons. Some Iraqi soldiers were coming out of neighboring buildings. It was obvious now that they were taking some kind of affirmative defensive or offensive actions to gain the upper hand, because they were picking up their weapons and assuming the prone position. It seemed possible the Iraqis were attempting to surround our little advance party.

Sizing up the situation, I told everyone to move slowly to their vehicles and to get their weapons. I did not want to make sudden moves that would provoke the Iraqis. This situation was definitely not covered in the manuals. The commanders and I discussed our courses of action. We reasoned that even with the recent actions by the Iraqis, we were not in any life-threatening danger. We felt they would not open fire, but might try to provoke us into a fight or to capture us. Our biggest concern

was their reaction to the arrival of the main body. At this time, C Battery was in position, with A and B Batteries waiting movement instructions. The battalion was moving to this location in echelon to maintain firing capability.

I decided I had to do something, but what? Before addressing the Iraqis directly, I called the brigade headquarters.¹⁷ I realized that we were in a difficult position. I did not want anything to jeopardize the cease-fire talks, so I remained unusually calm. Several leaders later told me the tone of my voice revealed something significant was happening. My transmission to brigade began something like, "I've got a problem that could easily develop into an international incident." I went on to explain the situation. I told Colonel Moreno that I was going to go out and talk to them. He replied, "Make them understand we have a cease-fire and the brigade is going through the town."

I called the small group of officers and soldiers together. I told them I was going to talk to the Iraqis. We had roughly five HMMWVs and fifteen soldiers at our location. C Battery was located about 300 meters to the east. I directed Captain Phil Royce to call his platoon leaders, First Lieutenants Don Laney and Scott Johnson, to alert them to have their reaction forces ready, but not to assemble them. I briefed the group on their responsibilities. The signals for them to take aggressive action would be if I hit the ground or if the Iraqis started shooting. To take even more precautions, I directed the soldiers to load but not lock their weapons--and definitely not point them at the

Iraqis. Specialist Patrick James recounts the incident:

The colonel told us to slowly retreat back to our vehicle and let him make a call....After the colonel got through talking, he called everyone together. "I'm going to talk with them," he said, "apparently, they have not gotten the word of the cease-fire." My inner thoughts were, "Is the colonel crazy?" I was told to load my weapon, and the BCs [battery commander] driver [Specialist Cullum] came running over with an AT-4 [hand held anti-tank weapon]. We all spread out, between three vehicles, and I could tell by my partners face that he was feeling just like me, with my heart in my hands. I started to remember my wife, my son, and my parents. What a wonderful life I was having. The big question came to my mind: Why did I join the Army?¹⁸

Specialist Brian Mortensen and I walked toward the Iraqi positions. At first there was no response from the Iraqis. They remained in their fighting positions, manning their weapons. After 30 or 40 meters, we stopped. Discussing what to do next, Brian questioned the wisdom of our actions. I reassured him we were correct while secretly wondering myself after all, what did I expect to accomplish anyway? I knew no Arabic. Just then a civilian car drove down the Kuwait-Basra highway and pulled near the Iraqi positions. A soldier got out and approached one of the Iraqi fighting positions. There appeared to be a lot of excitement. The soldiers stood up and began pointing in our direction. After some discussion, the soldier turned toward us.

I slowly pulled my 9mm pistol out of its holster. I very deliberately raised it in the air and after waving it over my head, I handed it to Specialist Mortensen behind me. I told him to wait there. He protested and insisted on going forward with me. I told him, "If we were going to show good faith, only one

of us should continue." I began walking. I could see Iraqi soldiers in their positions sighted in on us. I still was not sure what I could accomplish, but I had to try. I took about 10 steps when the recently-arrived soldier began toward me. I could see that he was surrendering his side arm. The Iraqis now stood up. They retained their weapons, remained in their fighting positions, and appeared less hostile. We met half way between our positions, about 100 meters out from each. I extended my hand and the soldier, who turned out to be an Iraqi major, took it. We shook. I immediately felt better, but was not sure why. The situation was still very uncertain.

Our exchange was extremely difficult. The major, appearing to be the commander of the Iraqi forces, spoke limited English. When I say limited, I mean only a couple of words. We communicated with sign language and gestures. I gathered his mission was to defend Iraq by not allowing us into the town. The major was very emphatic that we were on Iraqi soil and that he would defend, if we proceeded. I tried to debate with him. I pointed out that we were in Kuwait and not Iraq. Not being sure of how well I was doing, I told him I was going to the radio and call for an interpreter. I offered my hand again. We shook as we departed. Our "conversation" must have been a humorous sight to those watching. It was a poorly-done pantomime.

I called brigade to provide an update. Colonel Moreno said he was on the highway and moving in our direction. During the conversation, Captain Jay Rasmussen called on our command net

asking, "Would you like me to get an interpreter? The unit near my last location had one." I agreed. Jay recalled the event:

I knew that a section from one of the 101st Military Intelligence Companies had co-located in A Battery's position the night before. When I went back, they were still there. The NCO [non commissioned officer] wouldn't release the interpreter without his CO's [Company Commander's] permission. My conversation with the commander was over the radio. Very reluctantly and only after I gave my word that I would get the interpreter back to them, did he release him.¹⁹

Jay then called and reported, "My arrival time will be at least twenty minutes."

I turned to the battery commanders and discussed tipping the scales in our favor by a show of force. I directed Captain Phil Royce to get with Lieutenant Don Laney. They were to walk a howitzer to our location and take up a direct fire position. But first, I would go back and talk with the major. This time Captain Steve Wickenheiser accompanied me. I gave him my weapon and proceeded on. He had the same arguments that Specialist Mortensen expressed. He strongly felt he should go further. Again, I declined. After exchanging pleasantries with the major, I signaled that an Arabic speaker was on the way. While he looked puzzled, he nodded. Shaking hands, we separated. As I was walking back to Steve, I felt very much relieved. I believed that as long as we did not cross into his defensive positions, we would not have a shooting conflict. And we would resolve the situation peacefully--but it might take time. How much time did we have? I was not sure. Steve appeared relieved as I returned to take my pistol. He said, "Sir, the entire time you were out

there I was trying to figure out how I could hit the ground, throw you your pistol and get mine out of my holster." We exchanged knowing smiles. I could see the color returning to the soldiers' faces as we approached.

I reasoned that moving one howitzer served several purposes. It would give us the confidence that we had the upper hand. We recently noticed some type of enemy tracked vehicle across the road. Moving the howitzer clearly was a show of force, gave us superior fire power, and permitted us to evaluate the impact that the occupation of the main body would have on the Iraqis. I felt that, if moving the howitzer did not provoke any significant reaction, we would be able to occupy the battalion without incident. At this point, I was far less concerned with providing fire support to 1-4 Cav, than with avoiding an international incident. We joked about the headlines reading, "Artillery battalion breaks the cease-fire, single-handedly." I knew that, if we fired a fire mission in direct support, we would have to defend ourselves from a ground attack.

Lieutenant Don Laney brought Staff Sergeant Manigo's section into position. The section occupied with a sense of urgency in a very deliberate manner as not to provoke the Iraqis. The section accomplished everything with outstanding speed and accuracy. Staff Sergeant Manigo picked several superb direct fire targets. His section was ready for any situation.

While all this was going on in the battalion, Colonel Moreno was adjusting the brigade's movement as David Marlin recorded,

As we got set to launch, the plan began to receive the first change of a dozen changes. We were put on hold and the line of departure was changed to 1000 hours.²⁰

Approximately 0900 hours, Jay Rasmussen arrived with the first of two interpreters.²¹ The interpreter was a Kuwaiti citizen serving as a sergeant in the United States Army. He was openly pleased that the Iraqis were kicked out of Kuwait. The sergeant and I went to talk with the major. We exchanged pleasantries and the sergeant explained our situation in Arabic. I wanted the Iraqis to move now. He said, "I cannot do it on my own authority." My concern was that he did not fully understand our position. We had sufficient fire power to take the town with just our battalion, let alone the brigade. I did not want to push the point too hard yet, because I had explicit instructions from brigade not to start a fight. Also, the interpreter's understanding of English concerned me greatly. I thought he was not translating my intent to the major correctly. He did not seem to understand me and, more importantly, I could not easily understand him. He had a very heavy accent and a lack of English comprehension. Additionally, it was apparent that the Kuwaiti had a great contempt for the major and his forces. So I curtailed our conversation after we had some clear understandings. First, the major would call higher headquarters to request permission to move. He told me that it would take thirty to forty-five minutes for him to return. I thought that he could be stalling, but had no choice but to agree. Second, everything would remain at the status quo and he would honor the cease-fire,

unless we crossed into his defensive lines. He would defend his town, because of his orders.

On the way back to the vehicles, the interpreter asked me why we just did not kill them. I explained that, for international reasons, we could not be the first to break the cease-fire. I called brigade to give a status report. I asked for another interpreter. To avoid any embarrassment and possibly a compromise, I did not explain the reasons for my request. I wanted to honor this citizen from the country we had just liberated. I thought, "I still might require his assistance." Lieutenant Colonel David Gross offered the services of an interpreter that he had attached to his headquarters. I gladly accepted. He said that it would take about half an hour for him to be at my location. I thanked him.

Colonel Moreno was pushing me to get the Iraqis out of the way. I explained we were making progress and that the major was checking with his higher headquarters to see if they were to move due to the cease-fire. He requested to come forward. I recommended not at this time. It was extremely important that we continue to keep this at the lowest level for as long as possible and use our power players only when necessary. He agreed, but insisted that we make faster progress. He and I could not understand why the major had to keep going to higher for clearance. It was frustrating. The Iraqis did not have any radio communications and were forced to use the telephone. I began to understand why they lost. Everything appeared to have to be

cleared by a higher someone and that no one locally could make any decisions.

David Marlin reported the following events happening with brigade while this was going on at our site:

Then, I was instructed to move forward with Lieutenant Colonel Gross and to link up with Colonel Moreno. The link up point was about 20 kilometers to the north along the road. I took off on my tank and raced straight down the road. When I arrived at the link up point, I noticed a stand off between the howitzers. . . and Iraqi tanks and machine gun positions. I was instructed by Colonel Moreno to bring up two tank companies now. I called A and B Companies and they drove in column, straight down the road. At the link up point, they went on line, pushed to the rear of the howitzers to make their presence known, and halted. I instructed D and C Companies to take positions on the airfield perimeter and to tie in with TF 5-16. Everyone was moving.²²

With the recent round of talks completed, I saw no reason to maintain the show of force. I directed Captain Phil Royce to have Staff Sergeant Manigo return to the platoon. Staff Sergeant Manigo was visibly disappointed in not being able to exercise his section. He had confidence in them and knew they would make the grade. I told Don Laney to tell him, "For us, it is better that you did not have to fire. Your section's presence significantly made the forceful statement of our will." As I was relaying more instructions, I remarked, "What a sense of pride and duty these soldiers have! They truly want to do what is right and are serious about it." I had Captains Jay Rasmussen and Steve Wickenheiser call their batteries forward. I called Major Tom Hendrix to bring the TOC and trains to our location.

Approximately 1000 hours a captain from 3d Battalion, 37th

Armor, arrived with the second interpreter and an Iraqi officer who had been an EPW for a couple of days. The interpreter, as with the first one, was a Kuwaiti citizen who had been a college student in the United States when Iraq invaded Kuwait and now was an Army sergeant. He had an outstanding grasp of English and the negotiation techniques. The leadership and I became quite comfortable with Joe, as we called him. Having the two interpreters and the Iraqi officer greatly assisted us in understanding the minds of the Iraqi officers we were dealing with. The Iraqi EPW provided some great insight. He explained the role and function of the Iraqi "official" negotiators and how they were playing out Saddam Huessin's political will. At times you almost forget that he was an EPW and occasionally were tempted not to fully evaluate his points. Joe was great at providing the balance prospective. From this point on during negotiations, both sergeants went forward, but Joe did the majority of the translating. Having the two interpreters proved to be a significant advantage for us. They were able to observe more and between them accurately analyze each encounter. I also think that the Iraqis were uncomfortable with us using Kuwaiti interpreters, who were non-commissioned officers. This gave us the edge in the war of nerves.

In the next hour several events occurred. The brigade forces arrived just south of the battalion position and halted. Colonel Moreno and the Brigade S3 positioned themselves within a few hundred meters of the town, just behind B Battery and in

direct sight of the negotiations and the Iraqi positions.

Colonel Moreno, receiving pressure from division, was pushing me to convince the Iraqis to surrender. I talked to the Iraqi major twice, trying to speed things up or to have him surrender, but to no avail. He believed that he had the upper hand and was more concerned with Bagdad's reaction to his decisions than our physical presence. In hindsight, I was not as demanding and forceful as I might have been. I was not clear on how much risk I had the authority to take. While I fully understood the eagerness of Colonel Moreno, I remained under the impression that we could not force a fight. So I held back.

I received a radio call from Colonel Moreno telling me that a convoy had passed him on the road and that we were to stop them from entering the town. I reacted but not quick enough. The convoy of about four vehicles sped by our road guard into the town. I took off running toward the Iraqi position trying to get the convoy commanders attention. Specialist Mortensen jumped in the HMMWV and chased after me. He caught me at the first fighting position. The Iraqi soldiers stood there in shock as I jumped into the vehicle and ordered Brian to catch them. Before we could get on the hard top, Colonel Moreno called to say that he could see the Iraqis turning around the convoy. Once the convoy was headed south I pulled in front of the lead vehicle and led them past our road guard. The convoy commander, a captain from the 1-4 Cav, jumped down from his track and strongly inquired, "What did we think we were doing?" After a few heated

words, I ordered him to go around the west to reach the airfield. I understood that the 1-4 Cav was already on the airfield; but we were having difficulties here. Reluctantly, he complied. I called Colonel Moreno and reported the situation, then returned to the battalion area.

By 1045 hours the firing batteries were in position with the TOC and trains following within the hour.²³ The battalion continued to consolidate its position and established an integrated defensive plan. We sent out patrols to investigate the bunker system. C Battery's soldiers conducted a patrol to our left front. One of the soldiers on that patrol, Staff Sergeant York, later wrote:

Five of us set out to patrol the bunkers in front of our position. We searched the first few; nothing remarkable. I had expected nothing. We were an artillery unit, not expected to be the lead element. Maneuver should have had the area swept clean. Suddenly, we made out six shapes in the distance, advancing slowly toward us. They would advance then crouch, advance then couch, and we did the same. Finally, we were close enough to recognize they were Iraqi soldiers. We told them to halt. They stopped. We then told them to throw their weapons down. They advanced. They did not seem to understand what we wanted. Suddenly, one of the soldiers from Detroit ran off a series of expletives that would make the CSM blush. The white flag came out, and all their weapons hit the ground. They understood! A few minutes later the prisoners were searched.²⁴

Around 1100 hours the sergeants and I went to talk to the Iraqis again. This time the major was joined by two officers and a civilian. They were not satisfied to discuss the situation with a mere lieutenant colonel and demanded to talk to a general officer. I flatly refused, but told them that I would get the

Brigade Commander. I returned to the radio and called Colonel Moreno advising him that now is the time for him to come forward, as there were some rather arrogant officers for him to deal with. The two officers were most probably general staff colonels. They wore new, neatly pressed uniforms. Their shoes were highly shined and of noticeably better quality than the major wore. They obviously did not just come from a field site. They were highly educated and apparently very comfortable in demanding things from others. The civilian seemed to be in charge or at least the colonels initially deferred to him and showed him respect. I told the commanders, "We'll now get somewhere as the Iraqis are getting serious."

Colonel Moreno was at the site within five minutes. The two interpreters, Colonel Moreno and I went to meet with the Iraqis. The *Army Times* renders the essence of the events of his first encounter with the Iraqis,

Soon a command car arrived, carrying two generals and a civilian Moreno suspects was a government official from Baghdad. 'I told the senior general, who may have been a division commander or corps chief of staff, that I am bringing my forces through, and we're going to secure Safwan and the airfield,' Moreno says, 'I told him if he continued blocking the town, he was going to prevent the negotiation that must take place.' Moreno's interpreter. . . told the colonel his message was not getting through. 'This guy thought he had us surrounded, and we were trying to negotiate our way out,' Moreno recalls. 'Well, with that, I took the hard line approach and told him he must move. . .that he needed to talk with someone who would give him that authority.'²⁵

On our way back from negotiating with the Iraqis, one of the soldier standing near the B Battery Fire Direction Center re-

marked, "Sir, I thought this only happened in the movies." I replied, "Well, this is not a movie; so, I guess, it happens in real life also!" We both laughed, as this entire situation was nerve racking, yet seemed unreal. You knew you were there, but remained a little detached from the ongoing events.

Colonel Moreno conferred on the radio with the Commanding General, Major General Thomas G. Rhame. He said that he was en route. Once he arrived he received an update from Colonel Moreno, then talked with the interpreters and me. He encouraged us to keep pushing the Iraqis and reminded us that we had to have the road secured today. At this point, I believe that General Rhame being cautious. He was not ready for us to push this into a fight. His gut reaction was to run over the company, but he was balancing the second-order and third-order effects. After sizing up the situation, he returned to his helicopter around 1230 hours to radio the division main the details of the situation.

During the next couple of hours numerous events took place. We held a couple of talks with the Iraqi major attempting to find out what was going on, but to no avail. We impatiently had to wait. During the negotiations and discussion I completely forgot about our reenforcing battalion. Major Hendrix correctly assessed the situation and directed the 6th Battalion, 41st Field Artillery, to move to a position west of us and south of the airfield. The battalion was in position by 1315 hours.²⁶

One of the members of the A Battery, 1st Platoon, Fire

Direction Center, later related, they also had some encounters with Iraq soldiers:

While completing position improvement after occupying just south of a small town in the northernmost tip of Kuwait, a soldier came up to me and pointed out a truck. The truck was traveling on a road that was to our immediate south. We looked at each other then shrugged our shoulders. After all, the truck was coming from our rear. We then noticed that the truck was not stopping, but was heading straight for our guns. We alerted the gun sections to the oncoming truck. The perimeter guards and 10 to 15 soldiers took the brown Mercedes truck by surprise. As the guards came out of their foxholes, the truck locked up its brakes and came to a stop as fast as it could. As soon as it was halted, the truck became enveloped by the well trained 4-5 FA soldiers. Watching from nearby, I could see four Iraqi soldiers emerge with their hands held high in the air. A search of the truck turned up a grenade launcher[some larger calibre weapon and ammunition]. The soldiers were on the way to reinforce a mortar position in the same place that we were. . .

.27

B Battery was busy as well. The 1st Platoon, positioned closest to the negotiations site, had responsible for our security and visitor control. Both were major tasks. First Lieutenant Tom Matsel, the platoon leader, busily prepared an extensive direct fire defensive plan. His platoon had the responsibility for the road and the entrance into the town. Meanwhile at 2nd Platoon, First Lieutenant Will Field and his soldiers were involved in policing up several groups of civilians, reporters, and others who were trying to enter the position for hand-outs. Numerous individuals thought that they could beg their way into the position. The brigade had a policy that we would not allow anyone in our positions and that all humanitarian aid would be handled collectively. A site was already being established about

1000 meters from our position.

Throughout the day, Iraqis would wander into our position from the north to surrender. Several were very hesitant about crossing into our lines, while others walked directly across. A few were strip-searched on the Iraqi side and then let cross. A few Iraqi soldiers took their clothes before letting them proceed into Kuwait.²⁸ Some would start to our side, squat and wait, then return to the Iraqi side. If they crossed into our lines, you would see them drop their weapons and other military equipment before proceeding. Brigadier General William G. Carter III, the Assistant Division Commander for Maneuver, 1st Infantry Division, visited us around 1400 hours. He desired to confront the Iraqis directly, but I persuaded him not to as I did not have the means to guarantee the security of a general officer. He added that he also would not like to up the tables by showing the Iraqis that now we felt required to send in a general officer. Things were progressing along fairly well. He spoke with General Rhame before departing. General Rhame returned approximately 1430 hours to wait the response of the Iraqis. Lieutenant Colonel David Marlin described the scene, as we were preparing to deliver the ultimatum to the Iraqis:

I returned to the standoff site. MG Rhame had landed in his helicopter and BG Carter was also present. Numerous discussions took place between them, the Iraqis and the interpreters. While the negotiations continued at the standoff point, we kept making changes around the airfield. There was confusion over the higher commands intent on clearing and securing the airfield and Safwan and specifically, the entrance to the airfield. As messages got passed to us, they became garbled or unclear. Because most of key leaders

were involved in the discussions at the standoff point, it was hard to get definitive guidance. Eventually, it became clear we were to extend from the airfield to include Safwan. Hence, we were instructed to extend from where we were located to include Safwan. The terrain around the airfield and Safwan was irrigated by numerous berms and the terrain was difficult to maneuver through.²⁹

At approximately 1440 hours Joe and I again went out to discuss with the major. This time the message was very direct. Major General Rhame said, "Tell him, that if he doesn't leave by 1600 [hours], you're going to kill him. You're going to kill all his forces and attack through him." For the first time, I retrieved my 9mm from Specialist Mortensen and hid it in my cargo pocket. I did not feel the least bit comfortable about the confrontation we were about to encounter. In fact, just before departing, I chewed out the spectators who in the lightness of the negotiation had gathered around. I told them to get serious.

After exchanging pleasantries, I said very slowly and deliberately, "I regret to inform you that if you do not leave by 1600 hours, I will be forced to kill your soldiers." There was a surprised look on his face. He immediately responded with "I do not want to fight." I believed him. He, as I, did not see this as a valid cause for the expenditure of life. He just wanted time to get his soldiers out of the way. We exchanged pleasantries and departed. I reported to back-brief General Rhame and Colonel Moreno.

While they were talking, we noticed a car drive up. The two staff colonels got out. It was decided that I would go out to

meet them, while the commanding general and brigade commander continued to discuss the options. We greeted each other, but with much more formality than my exchanges with the major. He was with them and I could see the concern on his face. He was struggling between taking care of his soldiers and meeting the requirements of these two very powerful colonels. They did not want to discuss the situation with me but with the colonel. So we departed to get Colonel Moreno, while they remained standing there. General Rhame again emphasized his order prior to departing for his helicopter.

As we were walking out, I told Colonel Moreno that I had my pistol. His reply indicated that he had his the entire time. I began wondering, "Had I missed the intensity of the entire negotiations?" The following description of our exchange was reported in the *Army Times*. While not completely accurate it does provide a good picture of what transpired:

"The Iraqi general had a prepared statement, and he starts reading it," Moreno remembers. " And I stop him and say, 'Look, I am not a politician. You're not a politician. We're professional soldiers. What we are doing here is negotiating a military issue, not a political issue.'" Moreno then told the general he was going to attack at 4 p.m. and any Iraqi soldiers in front of him would be killed. On cue, Moreno's tanks edged forward.

"His eyes got big," Moreno recalls with a laugh. "One of the tanks got a little eager and moved right up to his command car. He was quite nervous by now and said, 'I can't move my soldiers in one hour.'"

"'You're wasting valuable time,' I told him. 'You need to get your soldiers out of here, because if you don't, you're going to be responsible for their deaths.'"

The general pleaded with Moreno for an extra half hour. The colonel eased the deadline, telling the Iraqi that at 4:20, he was coming through. "Do what

you have to, but I'm coming through then."

The general quickly departed; Moreno's forces waited out the deadline from attack positions outside the town.³⁰

I stood there in amazement while this exchange was going on. I was thinking, "I am witnessing real history being played out. We are such small players. Will anyone ever know what is happening here? How will all this affect the cease-fire talks?" I intensely watched the major during the exchange. He was quite nervous and looking around. He watched his soldiers leaving their foxholes on foot and walking toward the town. Some walked into the battalion perimeter and surrendered. I cannot help but believe that the two colonels also noticed this migration of the Iraqi force. Not only was their position untenable politically; it was obvious that the soldiers would not support a fighting defense. Colonel Moreno dealt with the Iraqis like a true poker player in forcefully bluffing his hand. He had taken control of the discussions. He kept driving home the point that professional soldiers do not waste 'soldiers' lives and do not make political decisions.

As we walked away I was fairly certain that we would end this peacefully and that a great deal of the credit belonged to Colonel Moreno for his forcefulness with the central government representatives. I thought that the Iraqi soldiers and major were ready to leave, and that we achieved our tactical victory earlier during my discussions with the major. However, clearly our strategic aims were met by Colonel Moreno forcing the Iraqi colonels into a humiliating defeat and retreating in the face of

battle.

Captain Beals, A Company, 4th Battalion, 37th Armor, commander, joined Colonel Moreno at the berm for an update:

Colonel Moreno pulled A Co up to the Brigade Net. I met Colonel Moreno at a berm overlooking the enemy positions. He told me that I was facing an enemy force that thought they were winning the war. In fact, I later learned that the Iraqi Commander thought we were trying to surrender because we were surrounded by the Republican Guard. . . . I was standing next to First Lieutenant Michaels, the A Co FIST [Fire Support Team]. He told me the only action they saw was some soldiers moving from door to door carrying sniper rifles and RPG launchers. I was happy they planned to fire up the town with some arty fire first.³¹

At 1500 hours the battalion assumed REDCON 1 and MOVECON 1 for all but C Battery which assumed MOVECON 3.³² I called the battery commanders and the S3 together to give them movement instructions. A and B Batteries were to move as rapidly as possible across the Kuwait-Basra highway. They were to prepare to fire indirect in support of a 1600 hours line of departure time. I wanted them ready to fire no later than 1530 hours so that we could rehearse targets. The S3 was to take the TOC and the trains to the new location as soon as the two firing batteries cleared our present location. C Battery was selected to remain in position to provide direct fire against the Iraqi company. C Battery was chosen because they were forward in the battalion wedge occupation and were far enough to the east to provide overwatch fires for the maneuver company moving on line into the town. I directed my track to move up to the berm. I would go with the brigade commander using my M113 [Armored Personnel Carrier]. Specialist Mortensen in the HMMWV would

follow once the town was secured. I ordered the company fire support track to collocate with the Brigade Commander's track so I could coordinate directly with them. Everyone seemed to be in motion at once.

First Lieutenant Michaels and his crew began a detailed search of the target area using the FIST track's sights. They developed a hasty terrain sketch, lasing targets for accuracy. I directed them to plan a preparation of three to five targets. I verified the targets with Colonel Moreno and Major Pete Lawson, the Brigade S3. The fire support section sent in the targets data to the battalion and developed the hasty fire plan. While this was being accomplished I called Phil Royce to ensure that he and I understood which direct fire targets he was preparing to engage. He replied, "Sir, there is only one major structure standing in the town. We have it targeted with all howitzers."

As previously stated numerous Iraqis were crossing into our lines to surrender. With the battalion moving and the armor company mounted, I called over to my track and had Sergeant Boutin and Specialist Mortensen along with one of the fire support personnel gather up a dozen or so EPW. Joe, the interpreter, helped by persuading them to gather into a group and to surrender all weapons prior to us moving from the berm. When the group got too large, I called C Battery for their reaction force to police these soldiers up. Our estimates are that we "captured" about 100 during the day.

At Colonel Moreno's request, I repeatedly confirmed that

everyone understood that all fires had to be cleared by me personally. I had to have Colonel Moreno's approval and he was waiting word from the Commanding General. This was done to ensure that we did not prematurely engage the enemy. My confidence level kept rising the closer we got to 1600 hours. Everyone responded appropriately to the mission at hand.

While all this tactical excitement was going on, the Brigade Commander was injured. In an attempt to jump from the berm to the deck of his Bradley, he slipped. As he fell, his binoculars flew up into his face as he hit the ground acutely cutting his lip. Blood was shooting everywhere. We attempted to stop the bleeding with first aid kits, but were unsuccessful. In fact, the combat life savers from the fire support track and my M113 rushed to his aid. The cut was too deep for just first aid. I then called the TOC to get with the Administrative Logistical Operations Center [ALOC] to summon the physician assistant. Chief Warrant Officer Sadler came to the colonel's aid. He immediately recognized that stitches were in order. So there, along with the mass confusion of the battle, Tony Sadler calmly performed surgery on the brigade commander. Colonel Moreno was more embarrassed than in pain, but the combination of the two did make for a bit of comical relief in this very tense moment. We all teased him that his binoculars earned him a Purple Heart. Needless to say, the calm, collected commander was not amused.

As batteries occupied the new position, they found conditions worse than where they had just left. The position was

covered with unexploded cluster bomb units [CBUs] and Iraqi munitions, including thousands of rounds of mortar ammunition scattered all around. The area was a maze of dug-in positions and bunkers. The landscape was torn up by months of hostile soldier occupation. The commanding general and brigade commander were very specific in the location. The sense of urgency forced us to be ready to fire by 1530 hours, so we could not go any further away. The batteries did a remarkable job of occupying rapidly. The combat and field trains occupied a position in the center of the formation. The TOC's reaction was especially pleasing, since they had to maintain radio communications and develop the fire plan to support the operation. Once in the new location all, fire direction nets were quickly established, targets developed, data computed, and an abbreviated rehearsal conducted all in record time. I was confident that we could both fire direct fire with C Battery and mass the fires of our battalion, plus those of the reenforcing battalion, on the Iraqis with devastating effects. By 1545 hours, the artillery was ready. Now we just had to wait.

While this was going on with the battalion, David Marlin reported a different view from the far side of the town:

I finally departed the standoff site with my tank for the airfield perimeter. I wanted to help get the crossroad issue resolved. I drove around the west side of the town and found the road I thought would lead to the airfield. I ended up in the town of Safwan where I met Lieutenant Colonel Gross and Major Paul Izzo, his battalion S3. We dismounted and did a map reconnaissance to decide where we were at. Two Iraqi officers approached us. Lieutenant Colonel Gross got involved in a conversation with the officers. I departed to do

a reconnaissance of the road I thought would lead to the airfield. I was afraid it would get dark before we were set. . . . I returned to the road junction in town where I had left Lieutenant Colonel Gross. As I was returning Colonel Moreno called and instructed me to attack through the town with a tank company from the west. He would attack with A Company from the south.³³

As B battery was securing its perimeter around 1530 hours, the soldiers reported a very distressing sight to the battery commander:

As the battalion searched the perimeter in our new position we found about 100 dead Iraqi soldiers west of our position. There was a pack of wild dogs feeding off the bodies. The bodies were all over the field about five to ten meters apart. The fallen soldiers had been there for several days. There appeared to be no attempt by the Iraqis to retrieve the bodies...[a very gruesome sight].³⁴

Jay Rasmussen relayed to me the conditions on his flank. I told him that C Battery would still occupy its position there as soon as Safwan was secure. We needed to support the force on the airfield and that we would revisit the issue in the morning. I directed Phil Royce to have his advance party establish his position.

Just before 1600 hours I asked Colonel Moreno what were we waiting for. He replied, "The go ahead from General Rhame." A few seconds later General Rhame was on the radio with Colonel Moreno giving him the permission, with cautionary words of wisdom. Colonel Moreno delayed as long as he felt he could and still be through the town by dark. At 1620 hours Colonel Moreno directed the armor company to begin its movement through the town. We were making an attack with artillery support readily available. David Marlin recounted:

Colonel Moreno called and said he was attacking through the town with A Company. B Company was still too far away to make the attack from the west. I called B Company and told him to terminate the attack mission. I informed Colonel Moreno I was already on the west side of town. In reality, Lieutenant Colonel Gross and I, with our tanks, were sitting at the main road junction in the center of town when A Company pushed through town, on line. Colonel Moreno's vehicle was with them when they passed through. He stopped at our location and we had a brief discussion on the situation. He was unaware we were so near the center of town.³⁵

My track moved directly behind Colonel Moreno's. I was up observing. The town appeared deserted. We saw no one. I was greatly relieved. The march seemed to take hours, but actually happened in minutes. Captain Beals later recalled,

Colonel Moreno called me on the Brigade net and told me to move out--clear the town. He also ordered us to sweep through the town buttoned up. The A Co's mission was to ensure the town was clear and link-up with the rest of the "Thunderbolts" [battalion] securing the airfield. We crossed the LD [line of departure] on line and began moving toward the town. . . . We linked up at the crossroads North of the town right at dusk. It got dark real quick.³⁶

We pulled up to the intersection of the road to the Safwan airfield and the Kuwait-Basra highway. There lounged David Marlin and David Gross, very relaxed and confused. They were trying to figure out what we were doing in combat formation going through this town. They had been on the north side since early afternoon and were not completely aware of our situation. They had seen the Iraqis pulling out. In fact, they had been talking to the two staff colonels just prior to our attacking through the town. One asked David Gross not to engage his soldiers as they were leaving. While we had spent the day opposing an Iraqi

company, the other forces bypassed the town. Due to lack of good communications on both sides, forces were left in contact and on the verge of battle all day over the establishment of a diplomatic principle. The Iraqis wanted to deny us the highway route to the airfield. We wanted that route to bring in supplies to establish the cease-fire talk site. Most importantly, we wanted the route for a psychological tool. We were going to negotiate from strength in Iraq. The press would be reporting the cease-fire talks "from Safwan somewhere in Iraq." And the Iraqis would be negotiating on their soil.

A few minutes later the two Iraqi colonels joined us at the intersection. Colonel Moreno went over to talk with them. To my surprise, one of the Iraqi colonels thanked him for not killing his soldiers. He then asked for permission to leave some of his combat power within the area to also secure the site. Colonel Moreno snapped back, "Absolutely not!" He abruptly grasped a map and drew his figure across it to indicate to the colonels that they had to clear everything outside of that area. Colonel Moreno said, "Anything in this area tomorrow, and we will kill it. The sun will not rise on your equipment being here." The Iraqi colonels reluctantly agreed knowing it was another defeat.

The rest of the night was very uneventful for me. The brigade consolidated its positions throughout the night, securing the airfield. Several convoys from ARCENT passed the intersection going to the airfield. It became evident that the cease-fire site was going to be quite an event. I gave instructions to

the battalion on securing its perimeter. I directed C Battery to occupy with the battalion. I talked a little with Major Hendrix and Byron Baker about the day and obtained their assessment. I was concerned about our occupation and our ability to respond to calls for fire. Both assured me they had everything under control.

I now had nothing to do but observe the sights around me. As I sat in the HMMWV, I wondered, "What had today really meant?" I did not completely understand our role there. I asked Colonel Moreno, "What had we accomplished?" He replied, "The full impact was yet to be determined; but it appears we quite possibly pulled off the most significant event in this operation." Back at my HMMWV, I decided that the tactical accomplishment was simply the opening of the road and securing the major intersections. More importantly, the brigade had backed the Iraqi government down through the forceful negotiations with the two general staff colonels. The real victory was that without firing a shot the Dagger Brigade successfully secured the airfield, providing Central Command [CENTCOM] the cease-fire talk site in Iraqi. It also permitted the coalition forces the ability to dictate the terms of the cease-fire from the position of strength. Having a reinforced brigade cut the exit routes for all Iraqi forces from Kuwait and surrounding the negotiation site on the motherland clearly was a strategic victory. For the first time, I understood the magnitude of a tactical operation with strategic implications.

Laying there in my sleeping bag, I was thankful that the "Faithful and True" Battalion was able to be a part of this particular piece of history.³⁷ It truly was a good day to be a soldier and again as with motto of the "Big Red One" veterans of World War I: "No mission too difficult, no sacrifice too great. Duty First!"³⁸

CONCLUSIONS

This paper describes the effects on one battalion that unexpected negotiations had as the leaders and soldiers dealt with conflict termination at the tactical level. No one understood the significant of what to do after the fighting stopped. Everything was by trial and error. More doctrine and training needs to be done in conflict termination. The leaders must know what is expected after "ENDEX."³⁹

Because of our lack of language skills and an appreciation for the cultures of the Middle East, at the tactical unit level we were totally dependent on outside assistance. In this case, we had foreign nationals performing as U.S. Army sergeants whose allegiance was at the very least divided. Not being able to understand the language prevented us from conducting negotiations in a very dedicate situation. This is a long-term problem for the U.S. Army. Language training is difficult and time consuming. Also, there will never be sufficient assets to cover all the requirements. Our training should include making leaders aware of these shortfalls so they will appreciate the extent of the problem and be able to address issues with their superiors.

The long lead time in communications to their superiors was a disadvantage to the Iraqis. The time delay permitted us to analysis the situation and appeal to our more senior, experienced leaders for guidance. Our instant communications also aid in the coordination of tactical forces and the advisement on the situation of strategic leaders. Our continued development of reliable, high technological communication is critical in the fast pace of future operations.

Our leader development provided leaders with the understanding to grasp a tactical situation and to vision the strategic implecations. Our formal schools teach leaders to think on their feet. After considerable thought I do not see anything in our training that could have prepared us for this situation. While in Southwest Asia, I felt that I, as a battalion commander, should have been more attuned to the strategic objectives. But with more time to evaluate the situation, I think our focus in leader development is about right. With our reliable communications, it is far more important that our leaders deal with their area of influence. We train our leaders to understand strategic leadership at the Senior Service Colleges which is the right place. The senior leaders with the training were able to correctly influence the situation.

ENDNOTES

1. Department of the Army Form 1594, Daily Staff Journal or Duty Officer's Log, 4th Battalion, 5th Field Artillery, 1st Infantry Division, Operation Desert Storm, dated 1 March 1991, signed by Michael A. Brundage, SGT, RTO, and Ron Steinbach, CPL, RTO, 1-2. Original document is maintained at 4th Battalion, 5th Field Artillery headquarters at Fort Riley, Kansas.

Item no. 11 reads,

0345 hours, Dagger 14X [Brigade Fire Support Section] rpts [reports] that 2BDE [Second Brigade] has been tasked to support fires for 1-4 Cav. He is finding out specifics on wether [sic] or not we need to move to range certain tgts [targets] for 1-4 Cav.

Item no. 12 reads,

0405 hours, Dagger 14X sent whole msg [message]-As of 010300 1-4 Cav is OPCON to Danger 6 [Commanding General]. MSN [mission] is to recon & secure airfield QU550370. This is a possible mtg [meeting] place between Iraqis and Americans for peace talks. At 0615 1-4 Cav will move out w/own AVN spt [aviation support] and AH-64 Co [company] to do recon of area. MSN is to inform Danger 6 if the area can be secured for mtg place. Danger 6 has tasked 2BDE w/Arty spt for this msn. We must be able to range beyond this tgt. Dagger 14X needs to know where we need to move to support this mission.

2. Ibid., 2. Item no. 13 reads, "0445 hours, Called to notify BC to be on Land Line at 0500." Item no. 14 reads, "0450 hours, Called Btry's to change time to 0515 hours for conference call." Not stated was that the SGT Brundage also passed on that we had a new mission.

3. Magallans are an off-the-shelf, commercially purchased Global Positioning Systems using satellites to accurately determine position location with-in an accuracy of 100 meters.

4. HMMWV [high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle] is a wheel vehicle that several years ago replaced the M151 series 1/4 ton vehicle, commonly called the jeep.

5. For speed and survivability [using tracks only], we designed a battalion occupation based on the artillery "hipshoot" concept. A "hipshoot" is a field artillery emergency occupation generally referring to a firing platoon or battery. The occupation is without the preparation of an advance party. In this reference, the battalion was to occupy the same location with all 24 howitzers without an advance party. Additionally, survey control for the six platoons used the same survey data for directional control.

6. Ibid., 3. Item no. 15 reads, "0512 hours, Dagger 14X called w/ clearance west of 570250 grid line. Can go 2 km west."

7.Ibid., 3. Item no. 16 reads, "Put howitzers & FDC [fire direction centers] at MOVECON 4 [our code word for movement condition of taking down camouflage nets and securing unnecessary equipment]."
Item no. 17 reads,

Sent FRAGO [Fragmentary order] to Btrys [batteries]-4-5 to spt 1-4 CAV movement during recon of airfield VIC QU 550370. 4-5 FA will depart at 0615 hrs in a Bn wedge Formation as in Arty raid configuration with no FST [M538 ammunition vehicles]. Also, BCs [battery commanders] to TOC at 0545.

Item no. 18 reads, "Sent REDCON 1 [our code word for full alert and manning] to guns and howitzers".

8.RETRANS is a HMMWV mounted with an AN/VRC 49 radio that permits the retransmission of FM radio traffic on one radio net.

9.Ibid., 4. Item no. 23 reads, "0615 hours, BC are moving out to scout ahead." Item no. 24 reads, "0617 hours, C16 [platoon leader of lead platoon] reports MOVECON 1 [code word for moving]."

10.Ibid., 4. Item no. 31 reads, "0700 hours, Line Btry's setting up vic 559257." Item no. 32 reads, "0702 hours, Retrans reports in place."

11.Ibid., 5, Item no. 35 reads, "0729 hours, ...received word from Dagger 14 [Brigade FSO] to move to grid 570303 to support Dragoon [1-4 Cav] mission."

12.David Marlin, LTC, US Army, Military Studies Project: History of the 4th Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment [draft], March 1992, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 377-378. *Note all quotes from this manuscript are as written during Operation Desert Storm and left untouched for authenticity.*

13.Operation Desert Storm Journal. an unofficial history of the 4th Battalion, 5th Field Artillery during Operation Desert Shield and Storm; June 1991, 86. Original at the battalion headquarters at Fort Riley, Kansas.

14.Ibid., 85.

15.Captain Phil Royce, interviewed by the author, telephonically and written comments, Fort Riley, Kansas, February 1992.

16.First Lieutenant Scott Johnson, written input to the author, Fort Riley, Kansas, February 1992.

17.DA Form 1594., 5. Item no. 37 reads, "0845 hours, LTC occupying defensive position along border (Iraq) Inform 2BDE position occupied by Iraqi soldiers digging in and preparing defensive positions."

18.Operation Desert Storm Journal, 86.

19. Captain Jay Rasmussen, written comments to the author, Fort Monroe, Virginia, March 1992.

20.Marlin, 378.

21.DA Form 1594., 5. Item no. 38 reads, "0900 hours, Interpreter from B Btry brought forward."

22.Marlin, 378.

23.Journal, 6. Item no. 45 reflects the situation reports from the batteries as to having completed their occupation vic 612319.

24.Journal, 85.

25.Jim Tice, "Taking a Town by Shooting the Breeze," Army Times, August 26, 1991, p.18. The generals mentioned in the article were the two general staff colonels referred to previously.

26.DA Form 1594, 6-7. Item no. 47 reads, "1135 hours, Steel [code name for the 6th Battalion 41st Field Artillery, 3d Infantry Division] move to 5627 no further than so they don't get into same situation [sic] we are in."

Item no. 54 reads, "1209 hours, Steel moving to 555297 they are at REDCON 1."

Item no. 60 reads, "1312 hours, Steel three [S3] reports occupying 5554293. Will report when ready and in order."

27.Journal, 86.

28.DA Form 1594, 8. Item no. 76 reads, "1515 hours, Update! Soldiers took clothes, 1 headed towards Kuwaiti border the other went NE [north east]."

29.Marlin, 380.

30.Tice, 18.

31.Marlin, 383.

32.REDCON 1 is the code word for full manning. MOVECON 1 is move immediately. MOVECON 3 is to take all necessary actions to be able to move within 20 minutes of notification while maintaining complete firing status.

33.Marlin, 381.

34.Journal, 87.

35.Marlin, 382.

36. Marlin, 384.

37. "Faith and True" is the motto of the 4th Battalion, 5th Field Artillery Regiment.

38 The "Big Red One" refers to the 1st Infantry Division.

39. "ENDEX" refers to end of exercise. When we train we normally end an exercise before conducting conflict termination.

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