A project of the Combat Studies Institute, the Operational Leadership Experiences interview collection archives firsthand, multi-service accounts from military personnel who planned, participated in and supported operations in the Global War on Terrorism.

Interview with
COL Eric Schwartz

Combat Studies Institute

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

Abstract

In April 2003, the 3rd Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team (BCT) reached the approaches of Baghdad, Iraq, after a record-breaking march from the Kuwaiti border. To test the strength of Iraqi defenses in the capital, 2nd BCT conducted an armored reconnaissance in force into the city on 5 April. An intense firefight ensued which pitted American armor against Iraqi soldiers, paramilitary units and suicide attackers. The armored column completed its mission and withdrew from the city. The presence of American tanks in Baghdad, however, was denied by the Iraqi regime and the press. On 7 April, then, the entire 2nd BCT returned to the streets of Baghdad and secured key government facilities and strongpoints along the route into the capital. Despite strong resistance, the BCT held its positions, conducted resupply and remained overnight – an action that demonstrated the ability of US armor to move anywhere in the city and helped trigger the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. In the process, the 2nd BCT – commanded by Colonel David Perkins – also demonstrated the ability of armored forces to operate in an urban environment and generated a series of changes in training and doctrine that reflected its experiences. The following interview with Colonel Eric C. Schwartz – at the time the commander of Task Force 1-64 Armor – was one of many conducted at Fort Knox by the Armor Branch historian, the purpose being to help comprehend what happened in the streets of Baghdad, capture participants' insights, and ensure that the lessons learned are available to the doctrine writer, the trainer and the combat developer.

Interview with COL Eric Schwartz
21 April 2007

RC: My name is Dr. Robert Cameron (RC) and today I have the have the honor of speaking with Colonel Eric Schwartz (ES) who commanded Task Force 1-64 Armor during the April 2003 thunder runs into Baghdad, Iraq. At the time of the thunder runs, what was the size and basic composition of your task force?

ES: Task Force Rogue consisted of 731 officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers. The actual makeup of the organization was tankers, infantrymen, engineers as well as the associated scouts, mortars, medics, mechanics, cooks and truck drivers. We crossed the line of departure with 30 tanks, 14 Bradleys, 14 engineer vehicles and about 220 pieces of rolling stock, and that included everything from shooters to trailers.

RC: Where did the concept for a strike into Baghdad originate and what was its purpose?

ES: I don't know where the concept for striking Baghdad came from. Regarding your second question about what the intent of the operation was, the answer is really threefold. Gain information about the enemy, destroy defending forces, and finally, send a clear message that coalition forces were in the capital city. First, the mission was intended to gain information that we badly needed. Up to this point, in the five previous battles, we had little actionable intelligence that we could use to our benefit. For the longest time, that bothered me. I felt that going into this as the lead element, I would have access to information about the composition and disposition of the enemy. Instead, we were the reconnaissance-by-fire force, the probe-and-get-information force, but with the speed of our movement, that's the way it had to be. There were no human intelligence (HUMINT) sources that we could keep forward because we were moving so fast that we'd just overtake them. That's the first important note. We were going in to determine what was there, and the attack on the 5th of April – known as the thunder run – was essentially 17 kilometers and two hours and 20 minutes of moving to contact, identifying what was there, destroying it, and at the same time trying to gain an understanding of what the future environment would look like. We knew we weren't going to stay in Baghdad on the night of 5 April, so the idea was to get in there, make some noise and then simply demonstrate that we were there and get out. Understand, identify and destroy, and then move out of the area to link up with 1st Brigade and complete that first day's attack. At the completion of that attack, it was critically important for us to come together and synthesize the information we collected. We wanted to understand what the urban fight was going to be like. 5 April 2003 was the first armored raid into a major city since the Second World War. After the battle, we had little time to rest. I remember thinking, "Okay, we did it. Now let's go figure out how we can do it again." In two days, we would do it again.

RC: What were some of the principal considerations in the actual planning of the thunder runs?

ES: I've been thinking a lot about that question because there wasn't a lot of planning involved in the attack to seize Baghdad. The planning was simple. The thunder run mission was the

simplest of all tasks that we were given. There was no maneuver required. It was simply battle orders followed by battle drills. When we received the brigade order, I remember coming out of the brigade tactical operations center (TOC) with our battalion operations officer, Major Mike Donovan, our intelligence officer, Jason Farrell, and our fire support officer, Mick Kolinski. We walked over to my Humvee and laid out the map. I believe that as a task force commander, I have a vision of how every battle is going to be fought and that translates into a commander's single directed course of action. I would say, "I'm going to tell you how we're going to do this, and we'll work out all the associated pieces of the plan together." At the Humvee I shared my initial commander's vision with the chief planners. My vision wasn't complex. There was nothing bold or dramatic that I had in mind. I ended up saying, "Let's look at the start point and the end point. We have one road to travel and let's just look at all the bad things that could happen on the way." We knew there were going to be some constants. We knew we were going to reach an outer defensive cordon and an inner cordon that encircled Baghdad. We knew we were entering into an unconventional fight. We had seen fighters who were just not your traditional infantry enemy that we'd all studied and trained against. Up to this point, we'd seen fighters dismount out of ambulances and fight us from schools and hospitals. There were great volumes of fire coming out of mosques. We had fighters holding up women and children, using them as shields. I figured that all of these things were going to be magnified as we went into Baghdad. We stepped through a single directed course of action followed by a brief war game, followed by branches and sequels – what would happen if X went wrong. I called forward and had our company commanders and specialty platoon leaders meet us back at the battalion TOC. It was about 1500 hours. I knew we had a couple hours of daylight left and we needed to provide the commanders with enough information so they could get back to their companies, plan, issue orders and rehearse, all before sunset. I asked our battle staff at the TOC to lay out the map board and the micro armor, and instead of writing a five-paragraph field order and going through a deliberate wargaming process – which we didn't have time for – I was issuing a single command directed course of action followed by a brief wargame and concluding with brief backs and a rehearsal.

RC: Was there anything different in the planning for the second thunder run on 7 April?

ES: Yes. We had much more time available. We had enough time to proceed through the formal orders process. However, that process was interrupted the night prior to the attack when an infantry team that was securing the line of departure was moving into position and identified a complex minefield. The minefield consisted of 444 anti-tank mines, 500 meters deep, spanning the entire section of the road. Our formal planning was essentially interrupted by having to conduct a night covert breach of the minefield. I shifted immediately to developing a plan to breach the minefield, but we also needed to continue our planning for the second attack into Baghdad. We had two events going on at the same time. To the credit of the engineer company commander, Captain Dave Hibner – when we identified that minefield, I shot a report up to the brigade commander and said, "We have a complex obstacle here." That got everybody's attention. There was a minefield in the direction that the brigade was going to attack. It was getting late in the evening and I knew we had to have lanes cleared by 0530 at the latest. The conversation on the brigade radio net was chaotic. The radios were squawking. Everyone had great ideas about how to breach the minefield. They were talking about throwing mine clearing line charges (MCLCs) across the road, bringing dozer vehicles up to scoop the mines out, and it was becoming distracting to our planning. Finally I said, "Enough." I walked outside the TOC

for a minute and Dave Hibner followed. Just outside the TOC, he said, "I know how we can do this." He said, "We're just going to do a manual breach." After a brief discussion with Dave, I said, "Okay. You have six hours. I have all the faith in the world in you but just tell me first that you can do it, secondly, that it's going to be safe enough to do, and third that you're going to have enough time to do it in." Obviously he couldn't assure me. Who was I kidding? Safe? No way. But knowing Dave and his company, if it could be done, they would do it. "Go right now and get that minefield out of the way." By 0515 the minefield was cleared, the lanes were marked and we were ready to go. I don't think anybody truly appreciates what the engineers did that night, in the middle of the planning process. That minefield could have ground the second thunder run to a halt. There are a myriad of things that happened during that second attack that are associated with that obstacle. As the enemy showed up in the morning to provide covering fire over the obstacle, we had to destroy them. There was also a berm and wire obstacle as well that we had to breach before we could even get to the minefield. This all happened while we were still planning and preparing for the second attack into Baghdad. That was a complex situation. The engineers went into the minefield and lassoed mines at night. These were anti-tank mines that had an anti-handling device on them. All the Iraqis had to do was turn a switch and they would have been armed. They were fully-armed mines but they didn't have the anti-handling device triggered on them. A smarter enemy would have taken the outer belt of the obstacle and not placed anti-handling devices, and then would have done so on the ones closer in, but they weren't smart enough to figure that out. After our guys lassoed the first two or three belts of mines, they ran out of time so they went out there and picked up the mines one by one and placed them off of the side of the road. There were a lot of mines. The lead platoon leader on that mission was Brian Shadlak (ph) and it took some pretty big balls to execute that mission, and he did a superb job. You don't read much about that, but it was an amazing event.

RC: How important during the planning process was obtaining media coverage of American tanks in downtown Baghdad, particularly in the second thunder run?

ES: Media coverage had strategic importance. But it wasn't that important to me. I was focused on the tactical fight. I appreciated that there was a strategic information campaign that was being executed during that time and I was sensitive to that. And we knew there would be opportunities for us to execute that strategic information component of the fight. For example, on the second thunder run, we shot the Saddam statue at the reviewing stands: the one with Saddam on the horse in front of the viewing stands. That was a critical strategic information message that was going out across the airwaves. We didn't have an understanding of the media environment as we approached Baghdad. We didn't know how the world viewed our actions. When we made it to the Baghdad center square and to the Saddam reviewing stands, Colonel Dave Perkins directed us to shoot the Saddam statue while we were still in the fight for Baghdad. That fight was fluid and was a true non-contiguous fight. Each company had their area they were fighting in. While this was all going on, the call went out to blow up the statue. My first thought was, "Why?" As soon as I said that, though, I realized how important it was going to be. The message needed to be sent to the world that the Americans were in Baghdad. We delivered that message at about 1000 on 7 April when we shot that great statue. Fox News was at the base of the reviewing stands. Greg Kelly and his team were set up and he said, "We're going to go live with this shot." I looked down at his monitor and he had a picture-in-picture. I could see the Iraqi information minister [Mohammed Said al-Sahaf] in the right hand

corner of Greg's screen. He was broadcasting and saying that there were no Americans in Baghdad. After looking at the screen, I knew where he was broadcasting from. He was broadcasting out of a mobile communications unit. He stepped out of the van and was standing on the stairs of a familiar looking ministry building. I said to Greg, "I know where this guy is. If we can keep him broadcasting for a while, we can go get him." He was a high-value target for us. Before I went on TV, I remember talking to Captain Andy Hilmes, one of the company commanders, and I gave him the order to move down the road toward the ministry building. He was getting ready to execute and we went live. One of the Charlie Company tanks shot the statue. As soon as he did, though, we lost the picture-in-picture of the minister of information and he was never seen again on television. We achieved our strategic communications objective by shooting the statue that morning. That was clearly an element of the overall strategic information campaign. Additionally, I hadn't talked to my wife or anyone in the family readiness group for a month at this point, so I can only imagine what was going on in their minds as they were watching this unfold on television. That moment on 7 April, though, standing there in front of the camera on Fox News, I took that as an opportunity to speak to the families. I remember looking into the camera and Greg asked me, "How do you feel about being here at this moment?" There was a lot of euphoria about being in Baghdad, but I wasn't sharing that feeling. I felt like we had just uncorked a tremendous event and it was just about to explode. I remember addressing Greg and saying, "We've arrived, we've arrived en masse and all of our boys are well." I gave Greg a summary of the task force but, in reality, I wasn't talking to Greg. I was talking to everyone's families from the task force. Two days prior we had suffered casualties. Perhaps the news hadn't reached home yet. I had to be careful in choosing my words.

RC: In the days prior to and during the shaping of the battlespace for the thunder runs, what role did the task force's reconnaissance assets play?

ES: In the days leading up to the thunder runs, our scouts played a tremendous role. They were employed as our forward reconnaissance, not as our deep reconnaissance. They constantly scouted forward one to three kilometers ahead of the main body of the task force. During the thunder runs, however, the scouts did not go. The scouts patrolled in 1114 hard-top Humvees. That vehicle gets penetrated by many weapons on that battlefield. During the thunder runs, we only took hard armored vehicles. During our first fight on Objective Rams, the initial contact was made by the brigade reconnaissance troop. Following that, our task force scouts made contact with the enemy and did a solid job of maintaining contact, going to ground, reporting, and then providing that information to shape the environment. The information I had as we approached Objective Rams was that the area was clear of enemy troops. Our task was to confirm that the area was clear. A command post from a higher headquarters was coming in and we had to clear the ground for them so they could safely occupy. I remember talking to the brigade commander and saying, "To me, clearing means I have to get out there and place feet and eyes in every square meter of that ground." And he said, "Technically that's what that means, but what you really have to do is just loop through that area because there won't be anything there." So that was our thought process. "Let's just go there, drive through the area, confirm that it's clear and then prepare for the fight into Najaf." Of course, when we got to Objective Rams in the early afternoon, it was full of Saddam emergency fighters. They were the town militia coming out of Najaf. They pushed out of the town and fought us from trenches, dunes and open areas. There were probably 60 or 70 combatants. We ended up destroying 14

technical trucks. It wasn't a substantial fight when you think about tanks and Bradleys going up against pickup trucks and 60 dismounted infantry, but it was our first fight and we needed to get it out of our way. We didn't excel in that fight. It took us too long. We made some fundamental errors and we weren't synchronized. I was just glad we got it out of our system. If there was any day I'd like to have back, it was that day. Hindsight, though, tells me you need to have that day – and it all worked out. The scouts we used in battles leading up to the thunder run were used the same way each time. They were to move to, identify, go to ground, report, develop and then let us bring the big guns in.

RC: Prior to the thunder runs, did your task force have any experience or training with urban operations at all?

ES: We had extensive training in urban operations in the desert of Kuwait. We were in Kuwait for six months before the ground attack into Iraq. During that time, we built an urban village in Kuwait and trained with a mix of infantry, tanks and engineers. That was critical to our future success. We needed to train infantrymen on how to use tanks and train tankers on how to use infantrymen in the urban environment. Obviously, we couldn't replicate what we were going into, but we did understand and practice in great detail the fundamentals of room clearing and shooting near, through and around buildings. It's an emotional event for infantrymen to be standing on the side of a tank when that tank fires. That'll change your life. That's a trained skill and we were able to do that. How do you integrate the engineers in an urban operation? We trained on that for months. Was it enough for what we were coming up against? I think it was. Our first urban battle occurred on Objective Rams. There were eight to 10 buildings inside of an industrial complex. During this battle we had four fights going on at the same time. The engineers were locked in a battle while trying to emplace a roadblock. Our tank company that was the lead effort was locked in a fight with technical trucks. A tank team was working a multiple building complex. The infantry was dismounted flanking the enemy out of the east. The mortars were firing and close air support was rolling into the objective. There were a lot of things going on. But, when the infantry dropped the ramp on the Bradleys and our dismounts came out, it was a beautiful thing. The squads poured into the buildings. They stack, they clear, they mark and they exit, and all of that training paid off on that afternoon. They took that training base they learned and converted it to combat and it looked exactly as it did in training. They did *extremely* well. We carried that on for the next few weeks. Fundamentally they understood urban operations, how to clear and how to integrate tanks and Bradleys. They did a solid job.

RC: Did the urban environment of the thunder runs pose any special challenges to your leadership and command and control at the task force level?

ES: The fight in the urban environment is a 360-degree fight. It's an asymmetrical fight. It has no borders or boundaries. It's a head-on-a-swivel fight. There's so much information that you have to distill and make decisions based on what's really important. It's not the Desert Storm fight. As a tank company commander in Desert Storm, I was single direction focused. The urban fight on the other hand was just chock full of information. Finding out how all the pieces of information fit together was the greatest challenge. During OIF, our company commanders did a superb job of not just reporting information but reporting information that they knew I had to

do something with to make decisions. If you want to understand battle command, learn it from a very complex urban environment.

RC: How effective was Blue Force Tracker in planning, directing and tracking each thunder run?

ES: Blue Force Tracker is an excellent tracking and information sharing device. We traveled 615 kilometers from berm to Baghdad. Blue Force Tracker was our navigation and communication tool. It is also a component of checking fires. But we never fired based solely on Blue Force Tracker. It was not used to clear fires but was one tool in the kit bag to determine if an area contained friendlies. Blue Force Tracker saved us time, fuel, and it maximized our warfighting potential. For example, after 30 kilometers across the Iraq-Kuwait berm, the tank I was on sheared off the number two right side arm. I jumped off that tank and onto a Bradley. We train that and it's very simple, but what we don't train on is when you jump on that new track, you're on that track for the rest of the war for however long that might be. It's always best to fight off the platform you're the most comfortable with. I grabbed my jump bag and onto a Bradley with Blue Force Tracker. I was communicating with my commanders and staff. I made a relatively seamless jump. I've fought from Bradleys before. I'm not comfortable with them, but I can use them as a command platform. My tank was left 30 kilometers forward of the line of departure and I soon moved out of FM radio range with the tank crew– but you're never out of range with Blue Force Tracker – so I sent them an email and said, "Here's the route we're taking. If you can get the tank repaired within the next few days, follow this route. Keep in touch with me every two hours." I received a message that said, "We got the arm tied up with a chain hoist and we're starting to move. I think we're making pretty good time." I said, "Okay. Follow this route." They crew followed the route, and over the next eight hours they linked back up with our task force. We never would have been able to do that without Blue Force Tracker. I can tell you stories like that about five or six more times with vehicles that became out of action, brought themselves back up, and then through Blue Force Tracker were able to link back up with the task force and get back in the fight. The downside of Blue Force tracker, however, is we didn't have enough of them. I wanted every vehicle to have Blue Force Tracker. There are those that say, "You don't need all that information." True, but I can filter items where I only see a few vehicles. I can manage Blue Force Tracker to make it the tool I want it to be. I know that Blue Force Tracker is populated throughout the battlefield today. I wish we had had that. That said, not everybody understood where I had Blue Force Tracker positioned within our task force. First off, our engineers didn't have Blue Force Tracker. They went on the thunder run, though, and they were positioned in the task force between a tank company and a Bradley team. If you looked at the Blue Force Tracker screen you saw Bradleys and tanks and Bradleys and tanks, and then a gap and then more tanks – and it looked like the column was broken up. If anybody was watching Blue Force Tracker from division, corps or higher levels, they would think that the attack on Baghdad was a split attack and it looked like it was breaking down because the column was breaking up, but that's not how it was. We were tooth-to-tail on that attack. There were a lot of people who wanted to give me help prior to that attack and, since then, a lot of people have come back with a lot of comments that the column was broken. I've read it in books and seen it on television. There was no broken column, though. What we had were vehicles that didn't have Blue Force Tracker.

RC: In each thunder run, what were your greatest concerns?

ES: Protecting the force. As task force commander, my greatest responsibility was the protection, security and welfare of my soldiers. I had absolute faith and confidence in the equipment we were using and I knew it was going to provide the level of protection that the soldiers needed. I wasn't concerned about maintenance and breaking down. I had a maintenance team of geniuses that were led by Major Ricky Nussio and Chief G. They gave me a complete sense of peace about getting from the berm in Kuwait to Baghdad to Fallujah, and as it turned out, it all made it. My concern wasn't breaking down and it wasn't maintenance. It was protection of the soldiers. We didn't have a lot of time to plan the first thunder run, so the time we spent in rehearsals was spent on casualty evacuation. I knew that if someone was going to get hurt or killed, that we wouldn't be able to stop the battle. That's where we placed our planning energies. As it was, it paid off. Charlie 12 flamed up and went catastrophic, soldiers were shot and a tank commander was killed. It was simply a matter of knowing what to do next and doing it. My greatest concern was real simple: protecting my boys.

RC: What was the most surprising development during the thunder runs?

ES: The methods the enemy employed to fight the urban battle. The Iraqis were creative in their employment and use of weapons. We were attacked by soldiers on motorcycles, pickup trucks loaded with explosives, and civilians firing from their homes and places of work. We were attacked by fighters who dismounted out of civilian vehicles, attempted to charge our column and in many cases attempted to mount our tanks. We took high volumes of fire from businesses, mosques, apartment buildings and overpasses. Soldiers fought from ditches that were three and four feet away from your tank. They would pop up in six- or seven-man teams and fire. Our troops kept their heads on a swivel and reacted to this unconventional threat. We sensed a greater level of commitment from the Baghdad defense forces than we sensed from Karbala and Najaf. In the earlier fights, they appeared to be fighting for their town or village, but it wasn't until Baghdad that we found a sense of nationalism. In Baghdad, they were fighting for a greater purpose so they fought differently, and you could sense it. In Baghdad, there was a fanaticism that we hadn't seen before. In Baghdad, we encountered civilians and soldiers who were committed to establishment of a defensive belt around Baghdad and doing everything they could to keep that belt from being penetrated.

RC: How important was momentum to the success of each thunder run?

ES: The momentum of the thunder run was important but not essential to mission success. I wanted to maintain speed and momentum, but I quickly realized that there were going to be moments in the battle when we were going to have to stop and do some things that were going to cause us to lose our momentum. For example, once we penetrated the inner cordon we needed to reload ammunition and perform triage on our wounded soldiers. We could do that on the move and still maintain our momentum, but at this point we had vehicles that were shot catastrophically. We were performing battle damage assessments in order to get them back in the fight. The battlefield conditions, however, indicated that it was an appropriate place to take a short pause and regroup. We paused for 22 minutes and took the opportunity to reload and care for soldiers. That action caused our momentum to slow but what we did during that time was that we reset for the next fight, the inner cordon. We stopped, regrouped, performed casualty evacuation and conducted maintenance, all in 22 minutes. Is momentum important? Yes, but sacrificing certain elements of your plan for momentum is a risky event. During the

thunder run, a tank commander was killed, a Bradley was hit, soldiers outside the Bradley had broken legs and burns, a tank was on fire, and soldiers had been shot. I could tell in the voice of our lead company commander that I needed to make a decision on slowing or stopping the attack so we could regroup. I told him, "Take the time you need. We're not racing." Later he would say that that was a calming response for him to hear. It allowed him to regroup and reset, because he had been taking the brunt of the action. During the thunder run, I learned that momentum is important; however, I didn't feel it was the right time to sacrifice other things for the simple sake of just going, going, going.

RC: What are the most important lessons learned by you about the use of armor in urban environments?

ES: The greatest lesson learned was the importance of integrating combat power between tanks, Bradleys, and engineers in the urban fight. There's a 20-degree elevation limit on an M1, which equates to being able to reach the third story of a building while moving down a narrow urban street. When you're moving through a town or city and have buildings that reach 10 to 20 stories high, the smart fighter will get up in the higher windows and fire at you because he knows you can't reach him. That is where the engineers can be employed during a mounted urban battle. The engineers are the high elevation shooters. Another lesson learned was the survivability and lethality of our weapon systems. Every one of our vehicles was hit with lethal direct fire during the thunder run. One of our Bradleys received five RPG hits during the first thunder run. It couldn't shoot any more but it could still move and we continued to use it during the fights. Tanks were struck with rockets and other large caliber weapons. One tank was struck by an RPG, in the soft spot between the turret and the hull. It was a perfect shot. Except for the smoke and shock, the crew had no indication that they'd been hit by an RPG. The M1 in an urban fight is a proven winner if it's used in conjunction with the combined arms team. It does, however, have some limitations. It's a big gas hog but it's a great platform to fight from. It provides great visibility and it sends a clear message. When you take an M1 into an urban area, you are showing that you care to send the very best.

RC: Are there any other comments or insights you'd like to share at this time?

ES: I'd like to end with a brief comment on the importance of joint power demonstrated at the battalion level. Task Force Rogue had an Air Force air liaison officer (ALO) and a Marine air and naval gunfire liaison company (ANGLICO), as part of the team. They were able to talk to the aircraft and give them directions based upon my attack guidance. I felt comfortable that we had constant air coverage. Joint aircraft was always on call. When we made it to the center square of Baghdad on 7 April, there was a moment when I became frustrated. We seized a portion of the city and there was a sense that something was going to happen next. In the next few moments, the Iraqis took positions where they could observe us and direct artillery fire on top of us. We were being targeted with effective indirect fires from the enemy. They were becoming effective with their fires and they were chasing us as we moved throughout the city. I repositioned vehicles and they'd get hit again. I placed our vehicles in locations where I didn't think the Iraqis would fire on them, but they did. They hit us again and again. I was frustrated with this fire as I didn't know where it was coming from. Our Marine ANGLICO said, "Let me figure it out." The next round came in close to us and exploded. Before the smoke cleared, he ran into the hole made by the artillery round and performed crater analysis. Simply put, he ran

out, threw his map down, did some math, came back to me and said, "Here's where I think they are." I looked at his map and mine for the possible location of the enemy and was hesitant to tell him to work up a fire mission. The area that he recommended shooting into was near a protected site. I made the judgment call to fire the mission. As it turned out, the protected area had been turned into an artillery park complete with caches of ammunition and eight artillery guns. The fire mission silenced the Iraqi guns. Crater analysis is a skill that the Army rarely uses. I believe it should return as a core task.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Jennifer Vedder