



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 LTC Paul Ciesinski



Combat Studies Institute
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

Abstract

Driven by his desire to be deployed either to Iraq or Afghanistan, and believing that his Connecticut National Guard unit would not be sent, in late 2004 Lieutenant Colonel Paul Ciesinski got himself transferred to the US Army Reserve's 80th Division (Institutional Training), which had recently picked up the advisory mission in Iraq. Eventually becoming the military transition team (MiTT) leader working in western Nineveh Province with 3rd Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division - responsible for developing its commanders and staffs as they conducted counterinsurgency and other operations - perhaps Ciesinski's most daunting challenge was recovering from the "poorly planned and insufficient" predeployment training he and his team received. With respect to counterinsurgency especially, he lamented, "That was our mission essential task in Iraq and there was zero training provided on it." Ciesinski, moreover, expressed astonishment over the Army's "lack of official doctrine on advising," which further contributed to his MiTT being "behind the eight ball before we even left the mobilization station." In spite of this rather inauspicious start, though, he recounts a number of in-country successes, particularly those involving area security and cordon and search missions throughout the battlespace: "Initially these were all American planned and executed with the Iraqis in support," Ciesinski explained, "then it was American planned with the Iraqis in the lead. And by the time we were done, they were Iraqi planned and Iraqi executed." In addition, he discusses a wide range of cultural relations issues (including his effective loss of a captain due to cultural shock), the ups and downs of working with partnership units, and the difficulties of teaching systematic approaches and a true military learning process to Iraqi soldiers and leaders. Ciesinski offers a wealth of advice, not merely for those who may fill similar billets in the future, but also for the Army as a whole: "Advisors simply need to be taught what advisors do," he said. "The biggest thing I can take out of my year there was overcoming the bad start we had and the lack of training we received ... and if the Army can fix that now, they'll be able to set their advisors up for success. This is going to be a long term process," Ciesinski concluded, "and we cannot send advisors into country with the level of training we were given."

Interview with LTC Paul Ciesinski

13 October 2006



CI: This is Dr. Chris Ives (CI) with the Operational Leadership Experiences Project at the Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Today's date is 13 October 2006. Lieutenant Colonel Paul Ciesinski (PC) and I will be discussing his experiences during the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) at an unclassified level. If at any time during our conversation we start to move into an area that is sensitive or potentially classified, just let me know that we need to shift the nature of our discussion. Could you state your full name and rank and tell me where you were assigned when you were alerted for duty in the GWOT?

PC: My name is Paul Joseph Ciesinski and I'm a lieutenant colonel currently in the United States Army Reserve. I was formerly a member of the Connecticut Army National Guard. In late 2004 and early 2005 my perception was that the Connecticut Army National Guard would not deploy me into GWOT service but it was something I wanted to do. I believe in what our nation is doing in the current war and I wanted to serve in either Iraq or Afghanistan. So I transferred from the Connecticut Army National Guard to United States Army Reserve's 98th Division because they had soldiers assigned in the advisory mission in Iraq. It took quite awhile for the paperwork to get processed, and it became obvious to me that although we are supposed to be one Army, it was not at all easy to switch from one part of the Reserve Component to another. By the time the paperwork was completed, the 98th was no longer sending soldiers to Iraq but the 80th Division was picking up the mission and they were interested in taking me with them. I was assigned to the 80th Division (Institutional Training), which is a training division currently based in Virginia, Pennsylvania and West Virginia

CI: What was the process of actually getting you to a unit that was going to deploy? Was it just that simple? They assign you to a training division and that puts you in a slot?

PC: Once I got into the Army Reserve, the process was very fast and very efficient. I spent about one week in the 98th Division in the northeast. I personally was in Connecticut. The Human Resources Command at the US Army Reserve did an absolutely outstanding job getting my paperwork processed and getting me assigned to the 80th Division, which was mobilizing at Fort Picket, Virginia.

CI: When you got to the mobilization (MOB) station, what happened? Did you go with a unit? Walk me through your mobilization process.

PC: I was an individual replacement falling in on soldiers from the 80th Division. I personally didn't know how the 80th or any institutional training division got this mission. I can speculate on how it happened but I don't know the real reason. My understanding is that in late 2004 the 80th Division was alerted that they were assuming this mission to provide what were then being called advisor support teams (ASTs) to develop the Iraqi Army's capabilities. They were alerted in December and the actual mobilization occurred in May 2005. I was an individual replacement. My perception was that there was a considerable amount of attrition of 80th

Division soldiers for various reasons and the 80th Division was sorely in need of volunteers from other parts of the Army Reserve, including the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), so when I expressed interest in volunteering they were very receptive to me coming on board. The MOB station was similar to many other experiences in the military when you join a new unit, particularly when you come in as an individual replacement. You're the brand new guy and everybody else already knows each other. I spent four days at the MOB station at Fort Pickett, Virginia, and then we moved to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, where the actual training occurred. Are you interested in what happened in Virginia or what happened in Indiana?

CI: Both.

PC: Okay. There was the standard paperwork processing in Virginia. We were issued TA-50, the individual load bearing equipment, which was obsolete equipment. It was not useful and we didn't use it. Not much else happened there. It was an attempt to get personnel accountability, do a urinalysis, find out who was who and start the initial team building. I was the brigade team leader, which meant I had nine subordinate soldiers on my brigade team and three subordinate battalion military transition teams (MiTTs). We were playing the get to know you game and start some team building. Many of these soldiers never thought they'd ever be deployed to combat because they were in institutional training divisions, so I felt it was important to get them in the right frame of mind. It was important that they realized we were going into combat. Some of us may get killed or wounded. We might have to kill others. We would be shot at. I tried to get them psychologically in the right frame of mind, that they were no longer in a training unit but in a combat unit. I was also trying to point out to them the history of their unit. Most of them had no idea that the 80th Division was formerly an infantry division in World War II and that it had done some very great things in Western Europe. I was trying to motivate them by pointing out that the 80th Division had dealt with a tyranny in 1944 and 1945 and that they were the heirs to that tradition. They would be fighting against tyranny in 2005 and 2006. That's essentially what happened at the MOB station in Virginia. From there we moved to Indiana.

CI: Pick it up at Camp Atterbury.

PC: This is a difficult thing to talk about because my overall assessment of the training at the Camp Atterbury was that things were poorly planned and the training was insufficient. The training staff at Camp Atterbury, in particular the 85th Training Division - a combination AC/RC unit with an AC commander and combined AC/RC staff and subordinate battalions - seemed to have little to no idea of what we were going to be doing in Iraq. They seemed unprepared for us and poorly focused. The instructors were not prepared, the training aids were not laid on, and equipment was either insufficient or not present. It was a very difficult 84 days because it was obvious to just about every soldier on my team and to the teams we were training with that the training was not ready for primetime. An example of what we were dealing with is that we had an Active Component sergeant first class assigned to my training team as an observer-controller (OC). More accurately, he was just someone who was there to guide us and shepherd us through the training process there. During our time there, I would try and identify what training they were going to give us, but this proved difficult because the training schedule only went out 48 hours. I tried anyway and I would ask specific questions like, "Are we going to fire the M240 mounted on a Humvee? Are we going to fire the .50 cal?"

The answers I kept getting back were, "We think so. We're not sure. We're not sure if there's enough ammo." I would come with requests. "I would like an OE-254 to set up" and other things I felt we would need when we went into combat. I remember once I asked the sergeant first class if we could go to the AT4 range and fire. I understood we probably couldn't use live rounds, but I'd like to fire at least the sub-cal AT4s. I saw a look of frustration on the NCO's face and finally he said to me, "You guys are going to be teaching classes to the Iraqis. You're not even going to be leaving the wire. You don't need all this stuff you've been asking me for." I realized then that this man who was assigned to facilitate my training had no idea what we were going to do when we got to Iraq. This was three weeks into the training. This came as quite a shock to me.

CI: Many of the things you were going to have to, first of all, turn around and train Iraqis on – that they were going to have to do live fire with pop-up, shoot back targets – you were not able to train on and team build. You weren't able to polish your presentations or confirm your expertise on. You were not able to do this in the training base.

PC: Right. Our training was in the hands of the 85th Training Division, with the exception of live fire training which was conducted by the Indiana Army National Guard. I think they were the 76th Brigade. Soldiers from one of their battalion scout platoons ran the ranges. In the 85th there was a lack of knowledge of what we were going to be doing over there. They seemed to believe we would be giving classes and presentations, when in fact that was absolutely not what we did. We were essentially staff and combat advisors working with an Iraqi infantry brigade that had already graduated its training program. We were with them to advise on conducting counterinsurgency (COIN) operations, to keep the US chain of command informed as to what the status of this brigade was and its subordinate battalions. We also tried to provide the Iraqi brigade with US combat support and combat service support, things like medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) helicopters, close air support (CAS) if they needed it and attack helicopters. But our trainers seemed to have little to no concept of what we would be doing in Iraq. The training reflected that.

CI: You mentioned another interesting point. When you got there you were advising Iraqi units in contact, not only with the combat arms nitty-gritty of how to do your troop leadership procedures and how to execute a combat mission, but also how to do so in the context of COIN where you cannot automatically default to a kinetic solution. Did you get any sort of training or instruction on COIN techniques, initiatives, issues or doctrine?

PC: Absolutely zero. There wasn't one minute devoted to COIN in the 84 days we spent at the MOB station. In fact, there was a lot of downtime that I perceived as another inadequacy of the training. They packed 30 days training into 84 days. So I would get my subordinates, we would take this downtime and we would plan opportunity training. One of the requirements I put on my subordinates was to read the Army's draft COIN manual, and I provided instruction on it. The entire time I was there I was very lucky to have a long time friend and comrade, Lieutenant Colonel Scott Farquhar, from Fort Leavenworth. He kept a constant stream of doctrinal publications coming to me, including that COIN manual. We were not getting doctrinal publications from my chain of command, less a very few hard copies and a CD-ROM that we got right at the end of our training when it was of minimal use – and this was after I had advocated for months with my chain of command for local reproduction of pubs. Mine might

have been the only training team that trained and even knew what the term COIN meant and what its fundamentals were. There seemed to be no attempt at all in the 84 days we were there to train anybody on what COIN was, its fundamentals or how to conduct COIN operations. That was our mission essential task in Iraq and there was zero training provided on it.

CI: You probably didn't get any more useful equipment at the MOB site either, in terms of getting ready for deployment.

PC: Well, the individual equipment we were issued was standard individual equipment from 2005 and it was outstanding. Everybody had the proper body armor. Actually, we had more body armor than we knew what to do with. When we got to Iraq we couldn't even wear it all and we were storing it under our bunks. You couldn't move wearing all the body armor we were issued. The problem we had in training at the MOB station was that there wasn't a stick of table of organization and equipment (TOE) stuff assigned for us to train on. Each MiTT in Iraq is assigned three up-armored Humvees. We had M1114s. We had two .50 cal and one M240. Each Humvee had a crew-served weapon. Then there were the single channel ground to air radio system (SINCGARS) radios of various makes, various other bits of TOE equipment like the OE-254 and we didn't have any chance to train on this equipment. None of it was provided to us at the MOB station. When we showed up our trainers said, "Where's your TOE equipment?" We said, "It's all in Iraq with the MiTT we're replacing." My perception was that they just shrugged their shoulders and said, "Oh well, we'll get along." I remember looking at a motor pool of Indiana Army National Guard Humvees. I think they were the M996 TOWs. They weren't up-armored but they were Humvees, they had weapons mounted on them, and they could have been perfectly useful for training. I talked to soldiers from my chain of command from the 80th Division and from the 85th Division and said, "Why don't we have TOE equipment assigned to us, and instead of taking a school bus to training, we could convoy to training with Humvees. We could learn to use our radios and mount our weapons every morning. We could do pre-combat checks and pre-combat inspections. At night we could do preventive maintenance checks and services on our equipment and clean our weapons, and every day could be a training opportunity just getting to training." The major from the 85th Division said, "There aren't any Humvees to use." I looked across the street and said, "What about those 25 over there?" All I got was a shrug of the shoulders. I don't know if that Indiana Army National Guard equipment wasn't available or what, but it sat there for the whole time we were there for 84 days. I don't think there was a realization by our trainers of what we were supposed to do. There was also insufficient coordination between the 80th Division and the 85th Training Division on what TOE equipment we needed to conduct effective training, so therefore we did not conduct effective training.

CI: When you deployed, did you go through Kuwait like most soldiers do?

PC: Yes. Without that, we would have really been in big trouble. That training was more effective than the training provided in the Continental United States (CONUS). It was provided by contractors, all Army retirees. That training was useful but there was only about four or five days of it and it was with equipment we were not hanging onto. We had to turn it in at the end of the day. But the training was better than nothing. The tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) we were trained on were more relevant. What we were taught in Camp Atterbury was probably useful in the summer of 2003 but not useful in 2005. What we were trained on in

Kuwait was more up to date TTPs. I'll give an example. We were trained at Camp Atterbury to take down the armored glass windows and fire M4s out the side windows. The concern we had going into Iraq was, "Are we really supposed to do this? Are we supposed to keep our armored windows up to avoid improvised explosive devices (IEDs) or injuries from roadside bombs, or should we have our windows down and return fire?" When we got to Kuwait we found out that the TTP was to close your windows and don't compromise your armor. That was one example of the type of obsolete TTPs we were trained on at Camp Atterbury. There was a lot of wasted time debating that, sitting down with subordinate leaders and trying to decide what TTPs we should execute when we get into theater - because we didn't know if what we were being taught was up to date and relevant.

CI: When you were able to finally bid Camp Atterbury farewell, were there any deployment issues of actually getting into theater?

PC: My memory of that was that it was a very seamless and efficient process. It was well run from the moment we left Camp Atterbury, getting to Indianapolis International Airport and flying into Kuwait. We trained at Camp Buehring. The Iraqi Assistance Group or the Iraqi Advisory Group (IAG), whatever it's called, received us and coordinated for our training with the contractors at Camp Buehring. It was all well coordinated and well done.

CI: So no other issues there?

PC: I could go on about the MOB training in CONUS. I could go on for an hour about that. One thing I'd like to say is that we were also astounded by the lack of official doctrine on advising. We had a little bit of training at the end. There was an attempt at the end of our training in CONUS to train us on how to train Iraqi soldiers, but only about half of us had it. The other half of us were at the joint fires class, which was needed. It was a scheduling issue. It seemed to have been an afterthought that they needed to train us on how to train foreign soldiers. The training consisted of us giving classes to non-English speaking soldiers - and again, that's not what we were doing. We were combat and staff advisors; we weren't giving classes on US rank insignia to Arab or Kurdish soldiers. We were really astounded by the lack of doctrine. At least in 2005 and into 2006 there was zero doctrine on how to advise. This astonished me because our Army - not just the special operations community - from the early 1960s to 1973 advised the South Vietnamese Army. There should have been a lot of lessons learned. I couldn't believe there wasn't any doctrine. There wasn't anybody around to tell us what an advisor even does. That was one of the classes I gave to my subordinates, on what advisors were supposed to do - and I based that on historical example and just common sense. There was nobody there to tell us what advisors do. The impression I had was, "Just go to Iraq and tell them what we think is right." The Army itself had no doctrine so it appeared our trainers didn't think it was important to train us on that. The core of the problem with the training in CONUS was that it was cookie-cutter training. As senior NCOs and officers who'd be performing combat and staff advising, we got the same training as the 1023rd Transportation Company was getting. We were totally different units, our needs were different and there appeared to be no recognition of that.

CI: If you got called back up today, do you think you'd go back to the Reserve training outfit for that MOB training, or do you think they would send your unit out to Fort Riley for what the 1st Infantry Division is doing out there training advisors?

PC: My perception is that we would go to Fort Riley. I hope the after-action reviews (AARs) and the lessons learned have been listened to. I hope the deficiencies that I've talked about from 2005 have been corrected.

CI: Speaking of AARs, was there a hotwash on the training you received at Camp Atterbury? Was there an AAR opportunity?

PC: No, not for us. I don't know if the division-level advisors had an opportunity. I feel that somewhere here I dropped the ball. When it was time to deploy, it was busy and my perception was that I could either work this AAR issue, which was a really good thing to do, or I could prep for combat. My perception of what the chain of command wanted and what I needed to do to keep my soldiers alive was to work the prep for combat issue. Looking back on it, perhaps we should have worked harder on the AAR. I should have. That's my fault. If I'm in that situation again, I think I'll take different approach. I will say that my perception as a lieutenant colonel and a brigade advisor was that there was little to no emphasis placed on a hotwash or on getting lessons learned out of what happened at Camp Atterbury. There was no hotwash. There was no AAR, at least none that officers of my rank and position were made privy to. Nor was there a requirement or a request for written AARs. I think when someone does not make it a requirement, they're sending a message. On the other hand, we went to a place after Kuwait called the Phoenix Academy in Taji, Iraq, which was run by the IAG - again, either the Iraqi Assistance Group or Advisory Group, which led to some confusion about the advisory structure in Iraq. We didn't even know the name of our higher headquarters for the year we were there. I knew it was IAG but I saw it rendered in writing in two different manners. Anyway, when we got to the Phoenix Academy, some of the training was poorly resourced but some of it was outstanding. What I will laud them for was that, at the end of it, there was a formal hotwash where they wanted to hear what we had to say, so I will give kudos to the staff of Phoenix Academy in the summer of 2005. At least they wanted to know how they could make their training better. That did not happen at Camp Atterbury in 2005.

CI: That's an important bit of knowledge, especially since it flies in the face of the direction that Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) has been going since the development of the National Training Center (NTC) and the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC).

PC: I agree. I'm sure if you were to study the documents from the summer of 2005 there would be some type of documentation that a hotwash or an AAR happened. But I was one of the few brigade advisors there and I was not privy to it and I do not believe my counterparts were privy to it either. There was no command emphasis on an AAR process at the MOB station.

CI: By the time you guys moved across the berm from Kuwait into Iraq, how would you assess the overall readiness of your team?

PC: We were not where we should have been. I think psychologically we were where we should have been. I believe we worked hard internally to train on advising skills, cultural preparation and knowledge of COIN doctrine. None of this training was presented by the training staff at Camp Atterbury; it was all internally resourced and presented within my team. But our deficiency when we actually moved across the berm was in individual soldier skills. We were Army Reserve soldiers from an Army Reserve training division. I had not touched a SINCGARS

radio for 15 years. My entire experience with SINCGARS was a single class in the Infantry Officer Advanced Course at Fort Benning in 1990. Then I went back to the Reserve Component and the Connecticut Army National Guard where we used the old VRC-12 and PRC-77 series radios. I served on a state staff and did military support to civil authorities, etc., and Reserve Component divisions don't get that equipment. I'm not saying anything here that everyone doesn't already know. When you're at a low priority level, you don't get that type of equipment until much later than the Active Component or the enhanced brigades in the National Guard. Most of my soldiers had little to no experience on the SINCGARS radio. We had one three-hour poorly resourced class at Camp Atterbury on the SINCGARS series radios. This was after we had to ask for it. It wasn't part of the program of instruction. We stood up on tables and we shouted and stamped our feet and demanded it. We got a few SINCGARS radios, half of them were deadlined, and we got a class on how to run it in single channel, plain text. We got almost nothing on how to fill it with the ANCD. We were not trained in how to operate the radio in cipher text, frequency hop. We had no idea what a load set was. You're supposed to be able to shoot, move and communicate. Well, when we got to Iraq we could hardly shoot, we could hardly move and we could hardly communicate, because we hadn't been trained on how to do these things. It wasn't reflexive. Having a couple hours of non-performance oriented familiarization training on these things is not sufficient. You have to be issued your equipment and train on it day in and day out. You need to learn in backwards and forwards. We could operate our radios if we sat there with the -10 manual, we had as much time as we needed and nobody was shooting at us. Well, that's not sufficient. You have to be able to work it in the rain and in the dark and when someone is shooting at you. I would say about eight to 10 months into it, we knew how to use our radios to the level we should have been able to use them. I'm shocked no one was killed because of it.

CI: Did you pick up an advisory mission from a MiTT in country or were you married up to an Iraqi unit that had just graduated from training and had to take them outside the wire?

PC: We linked up with the Iraqi 3rd Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division. We were their third advisor team. Their first advisor team was led by Lieutenant Colonel McGee of the Australian Army and they were trainers more than advisors. They worked 3rd Brigade through individual training, squad level training. They were not allowed to leave the wire. The first combat and staff advisors the 3rd Brigade had were from the 98th Division, United States Army Reserve, led by Lieutenant Colonel Steven Udovich. We picked it up from his team. They had been with them for almost nine months, from early January 2005 until August 2005. We fell in on an Iraqi unit that was deployed in the field and conducting COIN operations, and that did have an advisor team.

CI: Was there a right seat/left seat ride? How did that go?

PC: That was well executed by Lieutenant Colonel Udovich's team. It took about 10 to 14 days and they took it seriously. They were well under TOE strength; they were about 60 to 70 percent strength. That did hurt. The team we replaced took the right seat/left seat ride seriously. They took us all throughout the area of operations (AO) and they did their honest best to get us to learn our AO and the challenges we would face. We faced different challenges than them. The 3rd Brigade was at a different level when they were advising it as opposed to when we were advising it. They were oriented very strongly on personnel and logistics because those were the

issues the 3rd Brigade was facing at the time and were its greatest weaknesses. But the 3rd Brigade was becoming more and more confident due to Udovich's team, to the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) working with them, and due to an US Army Special Forces (SF) officer who was working with them. He was a wonderful officer named Major Douglas Overdeer. Absolutely outstanding. These three groups - the B Team led by Major Overdeer, the 3rd ACR and Lieutenant Colonel Udovich's team - had really brought the 3rd Brigade far. Our challenges were really being able to transition them from just being able to run a logistics package (LOGPAC) into establishing a workable intelligence system that obtained actionable intel for the commander. Udovich wasn't able to work on that. When he took over, they couldn't even get out the gate in a convoy. They couldn't feed themselves. They couldn't fuel. They couldn't arm. They couldn't pay their soldiers, and that was having major repercussions on retention. But Udovich's team and 3rd ACR worked hard on these things while the operational detachment alpha (ODA) worked strong on squad and platoon level combat skills: raids, cordon and searches and those types of things. We were advising on a very different level than our predecessors from the 98th Division. They were able to help the 3rd Brigade become so much more confident than when they started.

CI: You mentioned a fairly detailed TOE of advisory support that your predecessors had. Was that also the case during your tour? You mentioned a Special Forces B detachment for example. Did you have other resources you could rely upon for advisory support?

PC: The main resource we relied upon was our partnership maneuver unit. There were these things called battalion assistance teams (BATs). These were US Army SF A-teams acting as advisors. They left in December 2005 and then our greatest resource was our partnership unit which, up until February 2006, was 1st Squadron, 3rd ACR. For three months following 3d ACR it was 1-37 Armor of the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division. For about three months after that, we partnered with the 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment of the 172nd Brigade. All three of those units were outstanding.

CI: Three units in that short amount of time, I'm assuming that created its own set of challenges. You've alluded to the uniqueness of working with indigenous militaries. You have to develop rapport and trust and maintain that trust. At the same time, you have to demonstrate your professionalism to them so they know when you're giving advice that it's good advice. Did you have to see that wheel reinvented three times?

PC: We saw it reinvented twice. When we arrived, 1st Squadron, 3rd ACR was in the battlespace. They'd been there since around May 2005. We were the new guys and they were the old veterans. We were in Army combat uniforms (ACUs) and they were in desert camouflage uniforms (DCUs). You could tell at a glance that we were the new guys, and that hurt. Being able to be picked out like that was difficult. It was what it was and that's what every new guy goes through. The turbulence was when we lost 1-37 Armor when they moved to Ramadi. That hurt because the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel V.J. Tedesco, had established a very strong rapport with Brigadier Hassan who was the commander of 3rd Brigade. It seemed that once Lieutenant Colonel Tedesco's battalion really knew the AO and really was getting ramped up to conduct effective COIN operations, that's when they got the order to move to Ramadi. They got the warning order a lot earlier than they actually left but, human nature being what it is, inevitably some people started mentally pulling up their tent

stakes. Lieutenant Colonel Tedesco worked hard to prevent that. I think he did everything humanly possible to prevent it and that task force remained effective up until they left the battlespace. But it definitely affected the effectiveness of COIN operations and it hurt the rapport building, but it was unavoidable.

CI: You've talked about how the Iraqi unit you were attached to had developed its capabilities with the aid of your predecessors. What sort of mission sets were you given by your higher to start conducting?

PC: Our emphasis was to get the 3rd Brigade and its supported battalions - the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Infantry Battalions of this brigade - to the point where they could assume their independent battlespace. When we first started, the 3rd ACR was the prime mover of operations in the battlespace. We were oriented on the clearance of Tall Afar and Operation Restoring Rights. I think this operation had a strategic effect, just like President Bush said it did. The emphasis was on clearing Tall Afar and not so much on Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) development, and it was inevitable that that would be the case. I think it was the correct emphasis. Once Tall Afar was cleared and brought under control, though, the emphasis on ISF development was increased. What we were moving towards was trying to get these guys to communicate and command and control. Our predecessor teams had taught them to move and to sustain themselves to a great degree, or at least taught them to move and got them on the road to sustaining themselves. Our main emphasis was to get them communicating and establish command and control systems so the commander of the 3rd Brigade could get accurate information that he could act on. We were conducting area security operations. We had permanent traffic control points established throughout our battlespace in an attempt to deny movement to the enemy. When we were able to gain actionable intel, we would conduct a cordon and search on that target. Initially these were all American planned and executed with the Iraqis in support. Then it was American planned with the Iraqis in the lead. And by the time we were done, they were Iraqi planned and Iraqi executed.

CI: What sort of personnel turnover issues did you have, either through expiration of enlistment or combat attrition? Were key soldiers in the Iraqi units able to get in place, stay in place and progress? Once you teach a guy, he didn't go home at the end of the month and not come back, did he?

PC: My impression was that retention in the 3rd Brigade of the 3rd Division was much better than the rest of the Iraqi Army, but I can't concretely state why it was better than what I believed was happening in the rest of the Iraqi Army. One reason may have been that the amount of direct fire enemy contact we were making was lower than in certain other places in Iraq, particularly in Al Anbar Province: Ramadi and Fallujah. We had direct fire contacts during the clearance of Tall Afar, but those ended in October 2005. After this, the situation in western Nineveh Province was very similar to what the British faced in Northern Ireland in the '80s: roadside bombs, indirect fire, mortar fire and rocket fire. Guys were getting killed and wounded, but the casualties weren't so high that it caused the soldiers to lose heart. We also had some successes in capturing and killing known terrorists. Success like that makes soldiers stay. My impression of the leadership of the 3rd Brigade was that it was competent Arab and Kurdish leadership. They lead in a different manner than we do. It's certainly different and we would say it's not as effective, but for their culture I think it was competent. We were assisted in

that 13 percent of our soldiers were Yazidis. They are a religious minority that lives in the northwestern part of Iraq. We had a significant percentage of soldiers who lived near their homes, and this made them feel they were up against it fighting the Islamists and that they would lose their way of life if the Islamists won. These Yazidi soldiers were particularly committed. The Yazidis who joined the Iraqi Army tended to gravitate into the 3rd Division and into the 3rd Brigade. These guys looked at themselves as defending their homes and hearths because they were operating in their own villages. We had a lot of Arab soldiers, too, from these villages. Overall I think it was because there was a lower level of enemy contact than in many other areas; but that said, it was definitely higher than in the extreme south of the country or in the Kurdish areas where nothing happens. There was relatively little indirect fire contact. There was good leadership at the Iraqi level. There were also a lot of local soldiers who felt they were defending their home and hearth, particularly the Yazidi soldiers. They believed they were defending their ancestral way of life and that their actions against the Islamists would have a direct impact on protecting their wives and children.

CI: Do you have any sense for how they viewed not only your team but the larger effort of coalition forces in Iraq as well?

PC: To start with the coalition forces, I think they looked at us as a necessary annoyance – certainly not as a necessary evil. The MiTT and the partnership unit were the annoying guys who kept pushing them to do things they didn't want to do, even though it made them better. The brigade had no command post (CP) when we arrived and the 1st Squadron, 3rd ACR cut us some NCOs from their tactical operations center (TOC) to work with us and stand up a main CP for the 3rd Brigade. This was not something the Iraqis wanted to do. When we arrived, the main CP was a TV watching room for Lebanese music videos and soccer games. There was no CP. There were no communications. After about a month or two, they actually pulled the radio out of the CP because it was hard to listen to the TV with the radio going. So we launched a full court press to change that and actually build a main CP. They fought us and resisted because it was hard work and they didn't see the need for it. This was common with the Arab and Kurdish soldiers and leadership. But after we trained them on it and we got it running, it became a point of pride. When visitors would come to 3rd Brigade, the first thing Brigadier Hassan would do is grab them and bring them into the TOC. Sometimes I didn't want it happening because it would raise all sorts of questions that I didn't want raised, things like the fact that the map wasn't updated as much as it should have been. Certainly it was updated more than most Iraqi units had it, but it was just bringing a visitor in and seeing something like that without specific preparation – you're just opening yourself up to questions and getting some rockets fired at you. No visitor would come to the 3rd Brigade and not see that TOC because Brigadier Hassan was so proud of it by the time it was done. We were the annoying guys who would make them do things they didn't want to do, but by the time it was done they would see the utility in it and there was a level of appreciation that we were helping them do the right thing.

CI: What about how they saw the American maneuver units in your sector? You guys were probably pushing them in a direction that the more experienced of them could sense were things they were going to need to do. How did they look on the CAV regiment that was out there?

PC: I think it was very similar. We would coordinate our efforts to make sure we were coming to the Iraqis with a united front. We didn't want any mixed messages: one message coming from the partnership unit and one message coming from the MiTT. I would say that the relationship between the Iraqi brigade commander, his staff and the partnership unit was a little bit more contentious in that the rapport building wasn't as important for the partnership unit. They didn't see it as important to the same degree we did, but they did build rapport. It wasn't as important because the MiTT often came off as the good guys who spent all day with them, ate lunch with them, ate dinner with them, knew their kids names, knew where everybody was from, knew what religion they were, knew their ethnicity and knew the ages of their kids - while the partnership unit was more nuts and bolts and more operationally oriented without that level of rapport. But you have to have that level of rapport. Arabs and Kurds are relationship people and you're not going to get anywhere with them if you don't have a personal relationship, if they don't view you as their friend and eventually as their brother. That was more where the MiTT came in. Not that the partnership units didn't work hard to establish some rapport; they did. The Iraqi leadership recognized that, in the advisory effort, the partnership unit really was the lead agency and the MiTT, while important, was not really the leaders. The partnership unit was the leader. They had the resources. The MiTT for each battalion would be 10 guys; the brigade would have another 10 guys; and we had minimal resources compared to the partnership unit and we were under the tactical control of (TACON'd to) the partnership unit. The brigade and battalion commanders of the Iraqi units realized that I was working for the other unit. Even though there was a division advisor and my rater was Colonel Ken Nielsen, the 3rd Division advisor, they realized that Colonel H.R. McMaster, the commander of the 3rd ACR, had more influence on what was happening than Colonel Nielsen did. There was a recognition that while the MiTT was important and had a very important influence on them at the day to day level, they knew the partnership unit was the lead in ISF development.

CI: That's an important distinction. Were you able to develop among the Iraqis an appreciation for the fact that you have to learn from what you've just done so you don't carry mistakes forward, but you carry the right answers forward? Did you do AARs and things of that nature? Were you able to teach a learning process to them?

PC: We were able to teach a learning process to them in that we were able to teach them that learning is important and that lessons learned are important. To do it in a process was difficult, though. My perspective of the Arabs and the Kurds is that they're not a systems people; they're a relationship people. They don't view systems as natural while we in the West do. We view systemization as important because of the efficiencies it brings. They don't view that as important. Just getting them to conduct AARs was an order of magnitude, quantum shift in improvement in the way they did business. We forced them to do AARs, but they could not be true AARs in the way the US Army views them, wherein a leader can get up and say, "Yeah, I screwed the pooch on that one. I was on the wrong net when I made that report." They couldn't do that. There is no way an Arab or Kurdish commander can or will get up in front of his subordinates and admit that kind of error. As a result, we would often have three different AARs. The first AAR would be between the partnership unit and the MiTT. We would do our own internal AAR where we would talk no holds barred about what we thought really happened. We would try to get some lessons out of that to ensure the Iraqis learned them. Then there would be a joint AAR between the MiTT, the partnership unit and the Iraqis. The

Americans would be on one side and the Iraqi chain of command on the other. We were very kid gloved and sometimes it would get contentious because it's just difficult for Arabs and Kurds to admit they did something wrong. The loss of face issue is huge in their culture. Often we'd do a one-on-one interview between the partnership unit commander and myself. We did this particularly when 1-37 Armor and Lieutenant Colonel Tedesco was in the battlespace. It would be a one-on-one with V.J., myself and Brigadier Hassan. Because he didn't have to worry about losing face in front of his subordinates and countrymen, we'd be able to be more accurate. We could talk more about specific deficiencies without having to dance around things. The presence of the interpreter still caused problems, though. Even though Brigadier Hassan spoke English and he spoke it well, he couldn't communicate complicated concepts so it had to be done through an interpreter. Even just that presence of the translator changed the dynamic.

CI: Let's talk about translators for a minute. Did you guys have to go out and find some? Was there a hand off of translators when your team transitioned in?

PC: The translators were all employees of the Titan Company who, I believe, has the contract to provide translators. It was a difficult and sometimes contentious issue because in my opinion there were translators who I can't see how they even passed an English test. They couldn't speak English and we would have to fire them. Luckily the system was set up so it wasn't difficult to terminate a translator. We inherited translators from Lieutenant Colonel Udovich's team and that was one strength he passed on to me. He had an excellent relationship with his translators, so when we came in there was a very positive relationship between the translators and us. We had translators knocking down doors trying to switch from other units, and the reason was that we viewed them as part of the team. I read one of the Leavenworth Occasional Papers where, in Korea, the translators were part of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army and their allegiance was to the ROK commander and not to the military advisors who presided. I wouldn't want to have to operate that way. The translators had to have allegiance to the MiTT and they did. That's one of the reasons we were successful. We had a fantastic relationship with our translators and I think about them often. I hope to God their way of life is able to continue. Most of ours were Yazidis but there were quite a few who were Sunni Arabs. We basically just treated them decently. We treated them the way you would want to be treated, and not all units did that. We basically just internalized that these translators were part of our team. Another thing we did was to give them six days off a month as opposed to the four days the interpreters got in other units. The biggest thing was internalizing that the translators are as much a part of your team as all your soldiers are, but recognizing also that there may be some things you can't tell them. But we had to recognize that even though none of them had security clearances, there was no way we could do our job without taking them into the Iraqi CPs. They were translating operations orders for us. It was just the way it was. Even though they didn't have security clearances, there was no way we could keep them from certain classified data. We were able to compartmentalize some of it, at least the most sensitive of it.

CI: What was the most negative surprise you faced once the team got up and running in your sector?

PC: The biggest problem we had was our inability to communicate because of the insufficient training we received.

CI: So that wasn't much of a surprise. It kind of proved to be as bad as you thought it would be.

PC: I think the biggest surprise for most of my soldiers was operating in an environment with people from another culture who don't look at things the way you look at things and who don't necessarily value the same things you value. A great example would be when our Iraqis would have a soldier killed in action. I remember one in particular, Sergeant Hussein. We really liked this guy. He was a radio operator in the TOC and we saw him every day. We called him Fat Hussein, the Fat Sergeant. He was jolly. He knew a slight bit of English, but every day it was just great seeing this guy. He was killed and we really took it hard on the brigade team because we liked this guy so much. We were really upset about it. But when I went to Brigadier Hassan and said I was so sorry about Sergeant Hussein, his response was, "We lost many more in the Iran-Iraq War." The impression I got was that it was not an issue. He's dead. It wasn't that they didn't care about Sergeant Hussein; it's just that they're a fatalistic people who believe that God sets the order of things and there's not much you can do about it. You die when your number is up. That is one micro example of what was important to them wasn't necessarily important to us and vice versa. Some of my soldiers had problems with it. For example, during my first week in Iraq I lost a captain for the entire year. He became ineffective. In the first week he was in tears. He couldn't understand how these Iraqi soldiers could sleep on the ground; he felt they should have cots. He was basically in culture shock, and I had warned them all about this. One of my subordinates had gotten an SF contractor-produced, non-doctrinal and unofficial guide on advising; it was the only thing we had on advising. We were the only team that had it so I gave it out electronically to some other MiTTs. There was a section on culture shock. One of my captains, who I thought would be extremely effective because he came from a background that would lend to being particularly effective in advising, within the first week he was utterly ineffective and remained that way for the entire year. He could not adapt to their culture. The second week we were there he saw Arab and Kurdish soldiers sleeping on the floor of the tent. He broke into tears and said, "How can they live this way? I have to fix this." It's not that easy to just come up with 500 cots, and they didn't necessarily want the cots anyway. Then as we started doing cordon and searches in the villages, we started seeing that people just sleep on the floor. It didn't upset *them*. But this captain could not handle the fact that these soldiers were sleeping on the floor, that they were eating the way they did and that they were defecating where they did - which, by the way, was nowhere near as bad as we had been led to believe. The Arab and Kurd soldiers were a lot cleaner than we were led to believe they were. I couldn't see what the big problem was. I'd heard such horror stories, but when we got there the level of cleanliness may not have been what we expect, but when you live that way your entire life, your body is able to handle it. So the biggest surprise my soldiers had was just dealing with people from a different culture who value different things - and we had minimal cultural training in CONUS. None. Nothing for soldiers lower in rank than master sergeant for NCOs and major for commissioned officers, and precious little for those more senior in rank. I made my officers read a book called *The Arab Mind* written by Raphael Patai. I would recommend that anybody who goes to Iraq read that book. It was an eye opener. It helped me.

CI: What about for you personally - what was the biggest surprise?

PC: The biggest surprise for me was just trying to get my counterpart to operate in a more systematic way. He commanded a large, complex organization: an infantry brigade. He would just resist operating in a systematic way. I think the other thing was the lack of directness on the

part of Arab and Kurdish persons. Americans and Westerners want to be direct and we want to get right to the heart of a problem. With an Arab or Kurdish person, though, you're going to have to go through a 45-minute discussion to get to where you could get within three minutes in a conversation with an American or a German. I had known they were going to be indirect because I had read about it in *The Arab Mind*, but when I started dealing with it, it was much more of an issue than I thought. Our partnership unit, particularly the 3rd ACR, they were a good organization and they wanted things done: boom, boom, boom. I don't know if some of the people in that organization knew that, when you deal with Arabs and Kurds, things are going to take a little longer to get your point across, a lot longer to actually get them to sign on, and then there's all the backsliding. For example, when we finally got a working CP going, the electricity would go off and they would say, "Well, there's no electricity. We don't have to run the radios anymore." It took a long time to convince them that the radios needed to be on even if you don't have electricity, even if that means you drive a vehicle up to the CP and turn the radio up loud on the vehicle. But what's more, even though they were supposed to have over 150 vehicle-mounted radios in the brigade, they only had 10 or 13 mounted. They didn't have any mounting kits. I don't know what happened to them. They didn't think it was important to listen to the radio 24/7 and you had to convince them that it was. When the first roadblock came in, they didn't want to take the extra steps. It took months, but one of our proudest moments in Iraq was when the electricity went off in the brigade TOC and one of the NCOs got up, pulled out the generator we had bought them, started it up and got the radios running without us telling him to do it. He didn't even know we were there when this happened, and so we were on cloud nine. We had actually gotten through to somebody. With an American unit, a German unit or a British unit, it just would have happened. Maybe even with certain Asian armies as well. But with these guys it took months of convincing to get to that point, to get them to internalize that the radios need to be on all the time. One of our translators, whose cousin was an NCO in the Brigade Headquarters and Service Company and so had an inside pipeline into what was really happening in 3d Brigade, discovered the biggest single stumbling block as to why they wouldn't run the generator, and that was that the noise annoyed the officers. The electricity tended to go off in the late afternoon when the officers were in their sandals relaxing outside the TOC and they had ordered the NCOs not to run the generator. When, after considerable time and frustration we finally learned this, the fix we recommended was easy. We taught the commo sergeant to dig a sandbagged hole and plop the generator in there. That took care of the noise issue and the officers stopped fighting the running of the generator.

CI: How far into your tour was that?

PC: The next to last month we were there.

CI: Did you hand off to another MiTT when your deployment was over?

PC: Yes. We handed off to a MiTT that was based out of the 108th Division (Institutional Training), US Army Reserve. I think the Army did a better job standing up that team because it wasn't just based out of the 108th Division. It was a mix of National Guard, Army Reserve and Active Component soldiers. There were different guys bringing more to the team. This is a good chance for me to say that I don't know if institutional training divisions can do this mission. We had an extreme challenge getting NCOs who had spent 20 to 25 years in institutional training divisions, who only knew how to shout, "Extend to the left, march" and, "Your, left, your left,

your left, right, left." That's what they did for 25 years. I had a first sergeant who'd spent his entire military career in the Army Reserve in one armory in one battalion. He had joined the Army as a private 25 years ago. He probably cleaned weapons for his first couple years in the Reserves. When he made private first class or specialist he became a drill sergeant candidate, after that he was a drill sergeant. If I needed somebody to run the Weaponeer, he would have been the man for it. But to be a first sergeant trying to operate in a complex environment, cross culturally advising an Iraqi battalion command sergeant major, he couldn't do it. He was basically put in a situation that I think he couldn't even fathom being in. He hadn't been developed for it. The Army did not develop him for it. The Army allowed this situation to occur. When you have a first sergeant with 25 years in the military who was so over specialized that he could not do anything other than his basic training mission, to try and put him into combat, advising cross culturally, was just asking for a substandard performance.

CI: When you did you battle handoff, your sense was that they were better prepared by the Army and by personality, so to speak?

PC: Yes, but I would say only marginally. The addition of National Guard and Active Component soldiers helped them avoid the problem we had that I just described. They still had it, but not to the same extent. The last thing this advisory mission needed was a bunch of officers and NCOs from an institutional training division. They should have been sent to institutional training assignments in the Iraqi Army, not to the field into combat. If you wanted to send Reserve Component soldiers who are fully capable of doing the job, we needed to send Reserve Component soldiers who had done their service in TOE units. I had an NCO who I would serve in combat with anywhere. He was one of my best NCOs. I called him the landing craft guy because he was a landing craft mechanic. His service was in the Army Reserve. He was a mechanic on a landing craft and then he commanded a landing craft. His name was Sergeant First Class Torrence, an absolutely fantastic NCO. A landing craft had next to nothing to do with what we were doing in Iraq, either with an infantry brigade or advising a foreign Army; but this guy learned to lead by commanding a landing craft. He was a true NCO in that he knew how to lead because he had to command a landing craft. It didn't make a damn bit of difference that there wasn't a landing craft for 500 miles between us and the Persian Gulf. But since he had served in a TOE unit, he knew how to lead and he would socialize into operating in a TOE unit. Too many of my other officers and NCOs, though, were completely unsocialized and psychologically unprepared to operate because they had spent their entire careers in institutional training divisions. Does that mean they couldn't be of great value to the Army? No. But we were putting round pegs into square holes.

CI: Were there any issues that came up during your battle handoff to your successors?

PC: I think you would have to ask them. I know they were not happy with their training. I had weekly satellite phone calls to Lieutenant Colonel David Cozzie who we did the relief in place (RIP) with. I remember saying, "Boy, I hope your training was better." He said, "I don't think it was." I know one issue I had from my perspective. One problem was that the RIP was way too short. It was only eight or nine days. They ended up having problems missing flights. I don't know what the air flow problem was. We lost days out of our RIP. Maybe we tried to do too much during that time. It seemed we were on the road 24 hours a day trying to show them the battlespace. We tried to get them to Mosul. There was a concern because Mosul at the time was

having some direct fire contacts. There was a trained sniper – I don't know if he's still there; hopefully he's been killed by now – but he was getting head shots on 172nd soldiers. I know the incoming MiTT was concerned about that, as were we. We used to have to go to the Mosul Army Airfield to draw money. We were part of the Iraqi logistics system. It was very immature, so we would have to draw cash money to buy them things they needed, like the generator that would run the radio in the brigade TOC. To get to the Mosul Army Airfield to get the money, you'd have to drive through Mosul. We knew where the sniper was operating and it was really important to them and to us for them to learn how to avoid the area where the sniper was operating. Mosul is a city of over one million people and they were very reasonably concerned about being brand new to Iraq, being in Iraq two weeks, and driving into a city that large. They didn't want to get lost and they didn't want to get in a direct fire contact. I felt comfortable everywhere in my battlespace if I had to get into a direct fire contact. The only time this happened was in Tall Afar the first month we were there. I would have felt comfortable. I would have known what frequencies to get onto. I would have known where I was. I would have known who my quick reaction forces (QRFs) were, both American and Iraqi. But to go into the 2nd Division Iraqi Army battlespace – and a neighboring US maneuver unit – and have to juggle the radios and get on satellite communications (SATCOM) to talk to them in the concrete canyons of Mosul, I wouldn't have been too comfortable with that. We lost two days when we drove them to Mosul and drove them back. That was an issue. They had been taught some inapplicable TTPs. For example, on our first convoy, I was briefing actions on contact and I said, "If we make direct fire contact, so and so will put down suppressive fire, so and so will maneuver. We're going to report. We're going to chase the enemy down and we're going to kill him, be it the triggerman of an IED or in a direct fire contact." I could see looks of astonishment on their faces. They had been taught at Phoenix Academy that, because they were a MiTT, they were supposed to break contact if it was made. I said, "Why would you do that?" They said, "We're a MiTT. We're a small group. The enemy would be larger than us so we should break contact." I said, "Guys, first off, you're going to be operating with the Iraqi Army most of the time. You're going to be with a platoon-size or bigger force of the Iraqi Army and they will not be breaking contact. They're going to gain and maintain contact, even in a close ambush, even if they shouldn't. So you're not going to abandon them. Secondly, even when you're operating just as a MiTT," which we did often to move from point A to point B for logistics purposes, "the MiTT is not going to move with anything less than three up-armored Humvees. You'll have two .50 cal's, an M240 and the most you'll be up against in our battlespace is two to five guys. You're going to break contact from that?" They were being trained in inapplicable TTPs and I think it was a major psychological shift for them to hear that they shouldn't be breaking contact with the enemy. The enemy is giving us a gift when they make contact with us. Something I liked that Colonel McMaster said early on in the tour was, "If you make contact with the enemy and then you call me on the radio and say you're not in contact anymore, it better be because you've had a heart attack chasing them. You better not break contact with the enemy." In COIN, when the enemy makes contact with you, that is a true gift – and to think that even at Phoenix Academy they were being told to break contact was very troubling to me.

CI: I guess you could say it was not exactly a seamless transition.

PC: I don't think any transition is seamless, but I think it was effective. I think we worked hard at starting the rapport building process. I tried to put Lieutenant Colonel Cozzie forward when we met the local leaders and sheiks. I was leaving in two weeks. They didn't need to see me

anymore; they needed to see him. We tried to give them as good or better a RIP than the 98th Division gave us. I thought the 98th did a good job, giving us a RIP. I think you'll have to talk to Lieutenant Colonel Cozzie and see what he thinks. I'm sure he'd be able to point out certain things that we were deficient on. We're only human. But I think overall it was effective. The biggest thing was that they learned the geographical AO, we got them to the places they needed to go, and we got the rapport building process going. Overall in our year in Iraq, we really worked hard on communications. The biggest improvement we made in the 3rd Brigade during the year we were there was that, when we arrived, they couldn't talk and when we left they could. We're justifiably proud of that.

CI: Were there any redeployment or demobilization issues after you had turned your battlespace over?

PC: There were some issues. We had a lot of issues trying to get officer evaluation reports and noncommissioned officer evaluation reports done and awards processed. I really wasn't sure what was going on at IAG. There wasn't a standard operating procedure that was written on how to do it. Untold hours were wasted submitting, resubmitting and resubmitting again. It would have been nice if we had been told right up front what the standard was so we could have spent more time advising and less time worrying about how we were going to get somebody's Bronze Star approved. That was a real waste of time. We also had a real problem with IAG cutting out my advisory chain of command. We were TACON'd to the partnership unit, but we were placed under the administrative control of (ADCON'd to) IAG. IAG was continuously cutting out my division MiTT and communicating directly with me. That caused all kinds of confusion.

CI: You'd have to go back, read the chain of command in, and I'm sure they wouldn't always be satisfied with that.

PC: Yes. Communications from higher was always an issue. Up until the last couple months we were there, we had next to no communications with my higher. We eventually talked to them by SATCOM. In retrospect, that should have been established right off the bat when we got into country, and it wasn't.

CI: Were there any issues once you got back to CONUS and got demobilized?

PC: No, that was a good process. I had a lot of concerns about the mobilization process but I will say that the 80th Division handled the de-MOB process very effectively. So did the Indiana National Guard staff at Camp Atterbury. They had that down.

CI: We've covered quite a bit of ground. Is there anything you can think of that you'd like to get into the record?

PC: We have to have doctrine on how to advise foreign armies. We've done it in Korea. We did it in Vietnam. The SF did it in El Salvador. How there's no doctrine, then, I don't know. I think I was astounded that some lieutenant colonel wasn't assigned throughout the '70s, '80s and '90s to be the advisory doctrine guy. I guess it didn't happen, so now we're jumping through hoops to catch up. We have to have real doctrine. The cultural training for advisors has to be there.

Not so much language training, but there has to be some of that too. Our language training was utterly ineffective. It was sit down for six hours at a time to do language training, and after about two hours you were tired. We weren't being taught the right phrases and we were not taught any Kurdish, even though we tried to tell them we were going to a unit that was 30 percent Kurdish speaking. We could have lived without that, though, if we had gotten focused Arabic language training. With the amount of language training we were going to get, all we really needed were greetings. In our experience, when you greeted Arabs and Kurds with the greeting of the day - if you said *sabah el-kheir*, or good morning - it really opened up the door with them. It shows that you respect them. You realize you're a guest in their country. Even though you can't speak their language, at least you're saying good morning to them in their language. But we weren't even taught that. Advisors simply need to be taught what advisors do. The biggest thing I can take out of my year there was overcoming the bad start we had and the lack of training we received. We were behind the eight ball before we even left the MOB station; and if the Army can fix that now, they'll be able to set their advisors up for success. This is going to be a long term process. We cannot send advisors into country with the level of training we were given.

CI: Thank you for your time.



END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Jennifer Vedder, 19 October 2006