

Notes for Dangerous History Podcast Interview.

Episode 1

September 2001

- **Attacks of September 11th**
 - Watched 9/11 happen during high school
 - I thought kids were talking about a new movie coming out that had planes hitting buildings
 - The news playing the videos over and over
 - The impact of the planes
 - The jumper
 - Fire Fighters
 - Patriotism
 - All the flags went up.
 - Freedom fries
 - Yellow ribbon magnets (the stolen magnet as well)

- **Jingo's add fear and racism in the proper amounts.**

- The first war that was covered on the Internet and during global communications
- **The statements:**
 - Stand behind the troops or stand in front of them
 - This is a **bully mentality** statement. Which is total bullshit and completely defeats the entire point of our government structure and our “freedoms,” that the military is supposedly protecting.
 - In regards to dropping the bombing Afghanistan "Turn it into a glass parking lot."
 - “We have to kill them there to keep them from coming here to kill us”
 - “I don’t want my children to have to go over there.”
 - Surprise Surprise
- Modern example (Flag story) NFL protests for black lives
- Modern example (stomp my flag stomp your ass)
 - Total bullshit statement
 - George Carlin
 - “I don't get all choked up about yellow ribbons and American flags. I consider them to be symbols and I leave symbols to the symbol minded.”
 - JROTC instructor, “No one jumps on a grenade “for the flag.”
- Terrorist hunting licenses / Infidel stickers
- Stickdeath.com detainee abuse and murder videos
- “Peace through superior firepower” vs. “One shot one kill.”
 - This was nothing but Imperialism and military conquest.

- George Bush wanted forced revenge.

- **The questions that were never asked before we went to war**

- What does winning look like? When is it enough?
- Alternatives to war
 - Targeted killings of lieutenants
 - Disrupt and damage finances
 - Targeting “terrorist,” trainers
- What is the timeline?
- How are we going to handle the cultural, religious, and ideological differences?
- How are we going to help offset the damages that accompany war?
- When have we lost too many soldiers? We have lost more than we lost in the attack.
- How is an occupation not a liberation
 - Just like the official start of Jingoism beyond our own borders once we had wiped out the aboriginals and taken over all the land.
 - Annexation of Cuba

- **When did we go from 9/11 and the Taliban to attacking Iraq?**

- Eventually all the flags had all disappeared.
- The war in Afghanistan was going well. It simply turned into background noise due to the 24-hour news coverage..
 - 12 KIA in 2001
 - 49 KIA in 2002
- 58 KIA in 2003
- Jingoism was pushed heavily on the American people
 - “We are going to bring freedom and democracy to Iraq.”
 - “We are going to liberate the Iraqi people from the Dictator Saddam.”

- **Weapons of Mass Destruction**

Taken from *Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War* by David Corn and Michael Isikoff

- **WMD #1 Niger yellow cake sales claim**

- Former Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson was asked by the CIA to go to Niger to investigate and report back.
 - French own the uranium
 - French control every aspect of the mining operations including logistical transportation
 - Claim that the government of Niger was in on it.
 - The Niger government would not risk international aid which it desperately depended on

- Would be impossible to truck all the uranium across the desert to Iraq
- Wilson concluded in an opinion piece written in The New York Times titled *What I Didn't Find in Africa* on 6 July, 2003.
 - *“Based on my experience with the administration in the months leading up to the war, I have little choice but to conclude that some of the intelligence related to Iraq's nuclear weapons program was twisted to exaggerate the Iraqi threat.”¹*
- **WMD #2 Mobile biological weapon trailers**
 - Colin Powell stood in front of the United Nations claiming Iraq had as many as 18 mobile facilities for making anthrax and botulinum toxin.
 - *“They can produce enough dry, biological agent in a single month to kill thousands upon thousands of people.”²*
 - Never found
 - What was claimed as one the trailer was almost instantly pointed out to be incapable of reproducing laboratory environment
- **WMD #3 The aluminum tubes**
 - Claimed for nuclear centrifuges.
 - Most nuclear scientist and engineers say no.
 - Not strong enough

¹ Joe Wilson. *What I didn't find in Africa*. New York Times. July 6, 2003. [Article link](#).

² Greg Miller and Bob Drogin. *Truck is Tested for Biological Agents*. UCLA. April 29, 2003. [Article link](#).

- Stored in plain sight
 - **Were used for rocket bodies. Thousands of recently made rockets were found in the open with the same tubes being used as their bodies.**
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- **2000 Republican Convention talking points³**
 - *“A humanitarian intervention in Somalia was escalated thoughtlessly into nation-building at the cost of the lives of courageous Americans.”*
 - *“A military intervention in Haiti displayed administration indecision and incoherence and, after billions of dollars had been spent, accomplished nothing of lasting value.”*
 - **Iraq:** The platform is 34,500 words long. The word Iraq is mentioned 20 times in the Republican platform paper.
 - Not a single mention of Afghanistan
 - Democratic Convention platform
 - *“We will react forcefully and unequivocally to any evidence of reconstituted Iraqi capabilities for producing weapons of mass destruction.”*
 - *“Republicans recognize that peace and stability in the Persian Gulf is impossible as long as Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq.”*
 - **2000 Democratic Convention talking points⁴**

³Republican Party Platforms: "2000 Republican Party Platform," July 31, 2000. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. [Article link.](#)

⁴Democratic Party Platforms: *2000 Democratic Party Platform*. August 14, 2000. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. [Article link.](#)

- In 24,000 words the Democratic Policy mentions Iraq twice.
 - *“In Iraq, we are committed to working with our international partners to keep Saddam Hussein boxed in, and we will work to see him out of power.”*
 - *“Bill Clinton and Al Gore have stood up to Saddam Hussein time and time again.”*
 - *“As President, Al Gore will not hesitate to use America's military might against Iraq when and where it is necessary.”*

- **Congressional approval rating 1990, 1991, 2000, 2001 by Gallup Poll⁵**
 - 1990
 - Mid October 1990
 - **28%** approve
 - **65%** disapprove
 - 1991
 - Mid October 1991 (**PEAK**)
 - **40%** approval
 - **54%** disapproval
 - 2000
 - Beginning of January
 - **51%** approval
 - **45%** disapproval
 - 2001
 - October
 - **84%** approval

⁵ Gallus News. *Congress and the Public*. [Article link](#).

- **10%** disapproval
- These numbers are the peak and will continue to fall

- **The Bush invasion speech⁶**

- Just short of 1,800 words. Bush presented his final speech to the American people, the Iraqi people, and the entire world on 17 March 2003.
- **Full of false claims and fear speech**
 - *“Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised.”*
 - *The danger is clear: using chemical, biological or, one day, nuclear weapons, obtained with the help of Iraq, the terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country, or any other.*
 - *Instead of drifting along toward tragedy, we will set a course toward safety. Before the day of horror can come, before it is too late to act, this danger will be removed.*

- **Public opinion based upon CBS & New York Times poll in January 23, 2003⁷**

- The poll found 63% of Americans want President Bush to find a diplomatic solution.

⁶ The New York Times. Text: Bush's Speech on Iraq. March 18, 2003 [Article link](#).

⁷Cosgrove Bootie. Poll talk first fight later. CBS News January 23, 2003 [Article link](#).

- It also found support for military action -- if it becomes necessary -- is still high, but it has slipped from just two months ago -- 64% now compared to 70% last November.
- Americans wanted proof that Iraq is cheating.
- More than two-thirds (77% to 17%) say if inspectors haven't found a smoking gun, they should keep looking.

- **The Coalition numbers**

- **Coalition forces that entered Iraq**
 - **130,000** US service members
 - **4,700** coalitions forces
- **Coalition losses during this time**
 - **172** combined service members KIA
 - **551** wounded

- **Iraqi Army personnel strength⁸**

- The **regular Army** had between **300,000** and **350,000**
 - Two-thirds of the soldiers were conscripts, and the majority of the weapons were outdated
 - U.S. war planners had predicted that many of these troops would surrender quickly.

⁸ Sharon Otterman. *IRAQ: Iraq's Prewar Military Capabilities*. Council on Foreign Relations. February 3, 2005. [Article link](#).

- **Republican Guard personnel strength**⁹

- Believed to have between 60,000 and 70,000 men.
- Compared with the regular troops, it was considered an elite force of mostly career soldiers with better equipment, training and pay, and was expected to put up more of a fight.
- The Guard fell directly under the control of Saddam's son Qusay and was expected to defend Baghdad, Tikrit, and other regime strongholds.

- **Special Republican Guard**¹⁰

- Elite group of soldiers
- Had a force of **15,000**
- Men drawn from the most loyal of the regime's supporters.
- Responsible for protecting the president and his family, VIPs, and presidential installations, the unit answered directly to Qusay. It had its own heavy armored brigade and own air defense command unit.
- To guard against coups d'état from less loyal forces, the Special Republican Guard was generally the only part of the army permitted within central Baghdad.

- **Iraqi military forces KIA**

- Estimates that between **5,000** to **45,000** Iraqi soldiers were killed by April 15.

⁹ "Ibid."

¹⁰ "Ibid."

- At **30,000** that is an average of 750 a day over 40 days.
- Approximately **13,800** were captured by U.S. and British troops.
- Far fewer soldiers surrendered than predicted (only about 7,000 gave themselves up to U.S. forces, compared with 80,000 in the first Gulf War).
- Many more apparently just removed their uniforms and went home; others, especially higher ranking officers, are suspected to have escaped to Syria or other nations.

- **Iraqi military equipment**¹¹
 - Iraq was thought to have between **1,800** and **2,000** tanks in working order,
 - Compared with at least **5,500** before the 1991 Gulf War.
 - **700** tanks were thought to be relatively capable Soviet T-72's, but they were outmatched by U.S. equipment.
 - Lack adequate night-vision equipment
 - They have half the range of an M1A1 Abrams tank, in 1991 hit Iraqi tanks from as far as 1.9 miles away.
 - Iraq was thought to have about **3,700** additional armored vehicles, though the fleet was aging and outdated.
 - U.S. planners believed Iraq also had approximately **2,300** artillery pieces, including some relatively sophisticated anti-tank guided missiles.

¹¹ "Ibid."

- **Iraqi civilian deaths during Invasions**¹²

- Tommy Franks “We don’t do body counts,”
- A WikiLeaks paper made it possible for Iraq Body Count to prove that the Pentagon has, indeed, secretly always known the names and details of how many died,"
- March 2003 saw **4,000** civilian casualties reported. Highest for the year.
- May saw **545** civilian casualties reported
- 2003 would eventually see **12,000** civilians killed.
 - Some place the number as high as 29,000
- Katt Williams on insurgents killed vs. men, women, and children being killed.

- **Initial invasion**¹³

- Britain General Tim Cross was in charge of liaising with the American Office of Post-War Planning.
- Arriving in Washington a couple of months prior to the invasion he was appalled to discover almost nothing had been done.
 - “The major plan for post-war Iraq was that we do not need a plan, that Iraq would resolve itself in effect,” he said later.

¹²Iraqi Body Count. Monthly civilian deaths from violence, 2003 onwards. [Article link.](#)

¹³Richard Sanders. *The myth of 'shock and awe': why the Iraqi invasion was a disaster.* The Telegraph. March 19, 2003. [Article link.](#)

- The invasion was seen as a decapitation exercise. It was assumed the Iraqi state – under the control of returning exiles - would continue to function and would assume responsibility for running the country the day after the invasion was completed.
 - The initial bombing campaign therefore not only avoided civilian infrastructure – it also largely spared the regular Iraqi Army, which, it was hoped, might switch sides.
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- **Iraqi Civilian deaths during the Transition¹⁴**
 - May 2003 until June 2004 **Transition campaign**
 - June 2004 shy of **1,000** civilians killed.
 - Highest during November 2004 would see shy of 1,700 killed.
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- **101st Airborne moves into Mosul. A history of the occupation. April 2003^{15 16}**
 - 101st: Planned to invade from Turkey
 - Turkish parliament refused permission to use its territory for the ground attack and the plan was scrapped.
 - Mosul fell on April 11, 2003, (22 days after the invasion began)
 - The Iraqi Army abandoned the city two days after the fall of Baghdad.

¹⁴ Iraqi Body Count. Monthly civilian deaths from violence, 2003 onwards. [Article link.](#)

¹⁵The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. *Iraq War 2003 - 2011*. Encyclopedia Britannica. December 6, 2017. [Article link.](#)

¹⁶ Eric Hamilton. *The Fight for Mosul March 2003 – March 2008*. The Institute for the Study of War. [PDF] [Article link.](#)

- The Sunni Arabs had dominated the Iraqi government and the city of Mosul in Saddam's time and they stood the most to lose from the war in general
- U.S. Special Forces soldiers and Kurdish Peshmerga fighters entered the city and restored order following widespread looting.
 - Peshmerga (which means "*those who face death*,") are the soldiers of Kurdistan
 - Guerrilla fighters
 - Responsible for identifying Osama Bin Laden's personal courier which was the last piece to locating him. (Haha)
- In April 2003, SF commander in Mosul, tried to keep the Kurdish militias outside of the city and contain their activity, but he was ultimately unsuccessful. Armed Kurdish civilians were seen looting banks, stealing cars, forcing Arabs out of homes, setting up checkpoints, harassing and arresting Arabs.
- **The post-invasion government collapse**
 - The Central Bank and other banks were plundered
 - Mosul University library was pillaged
 - Everything from ambulances to beds and medical equipment from Saddam General Hospital.
 - At various mosques throughout the city, clerics called for unity and opposition to the American presence as former Baathists and military personnel met and began to organize for resistance.
- **Gen. David Petraeus established three local policies**

- **First** prioritized three key areas that contributed to improved public welfare
 - Security within the city
 - Payments to Iraqi civil servants
 - Alleviating the fuel shortage due to unsecure transport and black market looting
 - **Second** reinforce units in the city and make the city the main effort
 - **Third** occupation of the city in platoon and company level outposts in the city
 - **Conclusion:** the efforts put forth by Petraeus are in line with the more effective ways to occupy a city. However, there were simply too few soldiers and not enough resources to make up for the dissolution of the government and the former regime.
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- **Population and Security requirements in Mosul**¹⁷
 - The population of Mosul in 2003 was estimated at 1.7 million.
 - This would require a ratio of **20-per-1000** security-to-population guidelines based upon historical analysis of past counterinsurgency examples such as the British when they were engaged in the Malayan Emergency.
 - To achieve this number, it would require **34,000** troops and police.
 - 101st Airborne Division deployed with **10,000** soldiers, which had a security-to-population ratio of **6-per-1000**.
 - **Conclusion:** despite having a smaller force, 101st was able to gain some control of the city and begin offering goodwill towards the population.

¹⁷ Steven N. Goode, *A Historical Basis for Force Requirements in Counterinsurgency*. March 25, 2010. [Article link](#).

- Side note: Baghdad had a population of 7 million

- **Information gained from the population¹⁸**

- The daily dismounted patrols and interactions with the local population built the trust of the civilians which resulted in the gleaning of information.
 - Targeted black-market operations
 - Criminal activity
- These actions limited the financial assets available to criminal and insurgent groups
- This was possible due to 22 companies being available.
- Locals would provide tips about Imhans that were preaching violence and insurgency.
 - The problem always lies in whether it is truthful or someone trying to take down a rival.

- **Minimum force approach**

- Important to the plan was the minimization of indiscriminate fire. An approach was the minimum force necessary.
- Artillery, mortars, and close air support were not allowed within the city.
 - This showed a willingness to take a risk for the greater good
- The approach worked. There were few civilian deaths through 2003.
 - Apr, June, August, and September saw no civilians killed.

¹⁸ Clark, T., Nielsen, S. and Broemmel, J. (2018). An analysis of counterinsurgency in Iraq: Mosul, Ramadi, and Samarra from 2003-2005. Calhoun.nps.edu. [Article link](#).

- May saw 40 civilians killed due to an air force bombing.
- July had two deaths
- October, November, December, say single digit deaths that were started by an increase in crime and insurgent activities.

- **Financial and infrastructural approach**

- 5,000 reconstruction projects were completed with **\$57 million**.
 - Constructed or repaired schools and medical facilities.
 - Bridges

- **Improving relations**

- As troop strength grew, U.S. forces disarmed and removed Peshmerga forces from the city while taking over security checkpoints.¹⁹
- 3,000 former police officers were rehired and put through an intensive training program by the MP battalion.
- After training, police officers worked with MPs who were spread out into 14 police stations around the city and with other American military forces that regularly conducted patrols with Iraqi police.

- **Uday and Qusay killed. July 22, 2003.**

- After the invasion, Saddam and his sons Uday and Qusay went into hiding.
- The U.S. offered \$15 million bounty for information leading to the capture of each son.

¹⁹Eric Hamilton, *The fight for Mosul 2003-2008*. The Institute for the Study of War.

- An informant told U.S. special operators the neighborhood where the two brothers were hiding.
 - Fierce gun battle, (**Lasted 4 hours**) including an
 - Anti-tank missile
 - Automatic grenade launchers,
 - Heavy machine gun fire.
 - Both sons were killed, along with Qusay's 14-year-old son.
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- **A bad day in Mosul²⁰**
 - Nov. 15, 2003, two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters collided over Mosul and crashed killing 17 troops from the 101st Airborne and injuring five.
 - An Army investigation determined that a rocket-propelled grenade struck one of the helicopters, forcing it into the path of the other.
 - At the time, it was the heaviest loss of American life in a single incident since the Iraq invasion began eight months earlier.

 - **2004 Republican Party platform²¹**
 - Iraq is mentioned 46 times.
 - Afghanistan is only mentioned 22 times.

²⁰ Daniel Williams. *U.S. Chopters Collide in Iraq, Killing 17*. The Washington Post. November 16, 2003. [Article link](#).

²¹ Republican Party Platform. *2004 Republican Party Platform*. June 11, 2004. The American Presidency Project. [Article link](#).

- **2004 Democratic Party Platform²²**
 - Iraq is mentioned 35 times.
 - Afghanistan is mentioned 9 times.

- **November 2004, hundreds of insurgents flooded into Mosul²³**
 - Insurgents triggered an uprising in Mosul as a diversionary attack to draw away coalition assets from the assault on Fallujah.
 - Several hundred insurgents stormed police stations across the city.
 - Instead of confronting the gunmen, all but **200** of Mosul's **5,000** policemen refused to fight and melted away into the population.
 - The insurgents then established themselves in western Mosul and some areas of eastern Mosul.
 - Over a week, insurgents seized one of five bridges over the Tigris River, attacked numerous police stations and overran nearly two-thirds of the city.
 - U.S. troops, were rushed back from Fallujah, managed to regain control after days of heavy fighting.
 - About 200 people were killed in street fighting, including four American soldiers.

- **Dining facility bombing, December 21, 2004²⁴**

²² Democratic Party Platforms: "2004 Democratic Party Platform," July 27, 2004. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. [Article link](#).

²³ Eric Hamilton. *The Fight for Mosul March 2003 – March 2008*. The Institute for the Study of War. [PDF] [Article link](#).

²⁴ Lisa Burges. *Investigation of FOB Marez mess-hall bombing is complete, says general*. Stars and Stripes. August 20, 2005. [Article link](#).

- 22 dead including 14 US forces, 4 contractors
- 70+ injured including 51 US forces
- Highest single incident deaths until that point
- Bomber worked on base for two months. Wore Iraqi Army uniform.
- **Talk about insider attacks.**

- **Basic training for a 19D in 2005**

- Surge.
 - All of basic training was conducted in hastily constructed trailers.
- Still trained in Cold War style tactics.
 - Bayonet charges
 - Last bayonet charge was in the Korean War
 - Lt. Col. Lewis Millet received the Medal of Honor for his actions Feb. 7, 1951. He led Company E, 27th Infantry, in a bayonet charge up Hill 180 near Soam-Ni, Korea.²⁵
 - In the real world, all of our bayonets were locked in a dusty box along with our chemical equipment.
- No real emphasis on counterinsurgency except for the **reclass** soldiers who already deployed.
 - That was only whiteboard training that completely went over everyone's head

²⁵Army.mil. *Hero who led last major U.S. bayonet charge dies.* November 19, 2009. [Article link.](#)

- **1st Squadron 9th Cavalry Regiment**

- Same unit portrayed in **Apocalypse Now**
 - **I was also in 227th Combat Aviation Brigade part of 11th Aviation Group**
- Unit was stood up October 2005.
- We were not at full personnel strength when I arrived right before Christmas.
- Some people were clueless to what they were getting into
 - Inprocessing soldier who didn't know she was going to be deployed to Iraq.
- Living in the hotel
 - Maid service
- Trailers eventually
 - Massive trailer park
 - Chow hall was a tent, just like Iraq would be
- We had **no weapons** or **vehicles** of our own for a few months, we had to **borrow** everything.
- Within 12 months we would be deployed.
- **Conclusion:** El Paso was the perfect training ground for Iraq because there was no difference between the two.

- **National Training Center**

- Typically not realistic²⁶

²⁶Center for Army Lessons Learned. *Initial Impressions Report Operations In Mosul, Iraq*. Stryker Brigade Combat Team 1 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry. December 21, 2004. [Article link](#).

- OPFOR
- “Golden Nuggets.”
 - Hit mortar team = less mortars
 - Not always realistic
 - The unit that we replaced would specifically identify this as a problem. One that my unit already went through.
- Still stuck in thinking about Cold War tactics
- The Army is a large bureaucratic system that resists change until it is far too late.
 - We failed to learn about the repeat of urban and counterinsurgency warfare
- **Overview and history of Iraq**
 - Considered the Cradle of Civilization much of the world's earliest, literature, sciences, mathematics, and philosophies.
 - Part of the Ottoman Empire from the 16th century until 1920.
 - After the fall of the Ottoman Empire following the end of World War I. The area became Mandatory Iraq under British Administration.
 - The Kingdom of Iraq was established in 1933.
 - Iraq controlled by Saddam Hussein from 1979 to 2003.
 - Iraq is about the size of California.
 - The population in 2004 was 26 million.

- **Overview and history of Mosul, Iraq²⁷**
 - Probably built on the site of an earlier Assyrian fortress on the west bank of the Tigris river
 - The fortress and the city are opposite the ancient Assyrian city of Nineveh on the east bank.
 - Mosul succeeded Nineveh as the Tigris bridgehead on the road that linked Syria and Anatolia with Persia.
 - By the 8th century it had become the principal city of northern Mesopotamia.
 - Mosul reached its political zenith under the Zangid dynasty (1127–1222)
 - Famous schools of metalwork and miniature painting arose in Mosul at that time, but the region's prosperity ended in 1258 when it was ravaged by the Mongols.
 - The Ottoman Turks under Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent added Mosul to his empire by capturing it from his rivals.
 - The Ottomans ruled the region from 1534 to 1918, during which time Mosul became a trade centre of the Ottoman Empire and the headquarters of a political subdivision.
 - For 600 years this empire was known as the only one that allowed its citizens to retain their religious, cultural, and ethnic identities.
 - After World War I (1914–18) the Mosul area was occupied by Britain until a border settlement (c. 1926) placed it in Iraq rather than in Turkey despite Turkish protests.
 - The city's commercial importance thereafter declined because it was cut off from the rest of the former Ottoman Empire.
 - In the 1920's oil was discovered and sought out by Syria and Turkey

²⁷ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. *Mosul, Iraq*. July 20, 1998. [Article link](#).

- Built roads

- **Mosul Demographics:** ²⁸
 - In 2004 Mosul was estimated to have 1.8 million residents.
 - Today is is estimated at around 600,000.
 - The population has traditionally consisted mainly of Kurds, along with a large minority of Christian Arabs
 - In the 1970's the Ba'ath Party government began a resettlement plan that increased the presence of Arabs in the city.
 - The overthrow of the Ba'athists in 2003 during the Iraq War led to an eruption of ethnic strife as Kurds sought to reclaim property that they alleged had been expropriated by the government. (We will see more of this later).
 - Second largest city in Iraq.
 - It is about the size of Baton Rouge.
 - Tal Afar had 80,000
 - Qayyarah had 50,000
 - Our overall battlespace was slightly larger than Maryland.
 - 40% Sunni. 35% Kurdish. 15% Shia. 10% other.

²⁸ Eric Hamilton. *The Fight for Mosul March 2003 – March 2008*. The Institute for the Study of War. [PDF] [Article link](#).

- **Prior military population of Mosul**

- Mosul was home to a large Ba'ath Party headquarters and continued to be an important military center.
- The Army drew heavily from Mosul for their officer corps.
- By some estimates, under Saddam Hussein, Mosul and the surrounding areas contributed over **300,000** residents to the military.
- By 2005 there were **7,000** former officers
- 103,000 other former soldiers in circulation in Ninawa province.
- After the fall of Saddam Hussein these officers and soldiers formed the core of the Sunni insurgency in Ninawa.
 - Unemployment was high
 - The number of people just sitting around was large

- **Arriving in the Middle East**

- My unit deployed at the end of October 2006.
- Just a month prior A CBS news report relayed the information that on September 22, 2006
 - *“The latest milestone for a country at war came Friday without commemoration. It came without the precision of knowing who was the 2,974th to die in conflict. The terrorist attacks killed 2,973 victims in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.”*²⁹
- 18 hour plane flight

²⁹Sean Alfano. *War Casualties pass 9-11 Death Toll*. Associated Press. September 22, 2006. [Article link](#).

- Hours and hours of waiting
- Arriving and landing in Kuwait for the first time
 - Sandblaster in a furnace.
 - Everytime I would go to Kuwait it would be the same, horrible rain sand.
- Weeks of classes and waiting and boredom.
- Final departure

- **Arriving in Iraq**
 - Looking back now everything seems completely normal to me, because I am looking at it from the current time. It was a lot different to consider having to look down a year deployment.
 - That first time you finally step into your container house, you realize how many days you are going to be staring at the same house until you go back home.

- **FOB Marez**
 - Located in a complex adjacent to the Mosul Airport
 - Story of Iraqi heros
 - An Army front-end loader, operated by Specialist Curtis Lee Cashion of 877th Engineer Battalion detonated a land mine on post the explosion engulfed the front scoop and hydraulic system. Cashion immediately jumped out of the vehicle and moved to safety. The explosion was immediately reported to the fire department and within 3 minutes a 3-man Iraqi team responded and extinguished the fire. The men, David Salim Mahmoud, Ausama

Amed Ali, and Mahmoud Younis Mahiob, were recommended for the Commanding General's "Hero Program," and were commended by 101st Airborne Division Commander Major General David Petraeus in a ceremony on 23 October 2003.

- CHU
- Gym
- Dining Facility

- **Condition of the city**

- Everything was destroyed
 - Bullet holes in all buildings
 - Craters
 - The roads were damaged or nonexsistant
 - Trash and rubble
 - Burned out semi
 - Haphazard electrical wires
- Unemployment
- Sewage in the street
- Sheep in the street

- **What of the enemy?**

- Invisible
 - Could be any man, woman, child.
- Set up ambushes and coordinated attacks
- Able to bury large amounts of explosives in a short time
- Easily adapts to the new units arriving to replace the old ones
- Limited choices for routes for most convoys
 - They knew where we had to cross
- Bridges were a big target.
 - Focus on targeting logistical convoys
- They were able to take out Abrams MBT with few inexpensive supplies
 - Typically, they found old tank or artillery shells, whether from the old Iraqi Army, or stuff that was just lying around.
 - Homemade explosives
- **War and combat of real life vs. what we think because of Hollywood.**
 - Who is the enemy?
 - Katt Williams, “What are we still doing in Iraq? Can you tell me what the Iraqi uniform looks like. Go ahead, I’ll wait. We are not killing their Army, we are killing them.”
 - Paraphrasing of course
 - **What happens if I shoot this person?**

- Pat Tillman in Friend vs. foe vs. friend. **Afghanistan story**³⁰
 - Pat Tillman: Humvee broken down, they hired local trucker to haul. Team was split up and as they continued on they had communication problems. When one of the groups came under fire, Tillman and Bryan O'Neal went to take the high ground and provide assistance. As they moved in the dark, a squad leader saw an Afghan soldier and mistook him for an enemy and shot at he saw an enemy and opened fire on Tillman's group.
 - The incident was covered up as the fire coming from the enemy.

- **The Marines and the bridge murders**
 - 4th Marine Regiment had a reputation for aggression. Its commander, Lt. Colonel Brian McCoy, led his men from the front in a hard-topped Humvee and was renowned for leaping out of his vehicle in the midst of fighting and throwing hand grenades.
 - The Marines arrived at the bridge over the Diyala River, the boundary to Baghdad.
 - They did not meet the resistance they thought they would encounter.
 - Once across the bridge, the Marines, fearful of suicide bombers, quickly fanned out to form a defensive perimeter.
 - The area was deserted. But this was one of the main routes out of Baghdad and the people of the Iraqi capital had been told by their Information Minister that the Marines were still 70

³⁰ Scott Neuman. *Soldier speaks up a decade after Pat Tillman's friendly fire death*. National Public Radio. April 22, 2014. [Article link](#)

miles to the south. Inevitably a trickle of civilian vehicles began to appear from the direction of central Baghdad.

- The first was a blue Kia van. Inside were three men and two women, heading for their home close to the bridge. The Marines “start to scream ... 800 metres, 600 metres,” recalled Laurent Van der Stockt, a French photographer on assignment with the New York Times. “It’s too close, too close, too close and one starts to shoot and the others start to shoot and everybody is shooting.”
- The van ground to a halt, struck by around 100 bullets, three of those inside dead. The two survivors would sit for hours beside their dead relatives, too terrified to move. The van was followed by more vehicles – a pick up truck, a taxi ... All were halted by the Marines’ guns. An elderly pedestrian, walking with a stick, was also killed.
- Journalists and photographers pleaded with the Marines to hold their fire. The word “murderers” was used by at least two. “One of the young commanders on the ground said that if the Iraqis were dumb enough to drive into their line that was their problem,” recalled Kit Roane. “I said, point taken, but of course they can’t see you. They don’t know you’re here. He just became angry and that was the end of our conversation.”
- The training we received
 - Training vs. reality
 - How it affects to this day
 - Complacency

- Muscle memory

- **What is an IED?**

- Characteristics
- Started off basic
- Through the winter of 2004-05, bombs grew more lethal and bombers more ingenious. Explosives often were "boosted" with propane or gasoline canisters.

- **IED placement**

- When Marines fought to reclaim **Fallujah** in November 2004, explosives experts examining a Euphrates River bridge discovered artillery shells hidden behind the metal base plates of light stanchions, with a triggering wire leading to a palm grove. Other rigged shells were found in drain pipes, flower pots and phony, hollow curb stones made from plaster molds. A Marine regimental commander later recalled wondering, "What are we getting into?"
- A counter-IED field manual compiled by the Army and Marines warned of devices placed in "fake bodies or scarecrows in coalition uniforms." Known to bomb squads as "come-ons," such lures soon used real bodies, including IEDs tucked into the chest cavities of dead Iraqis, whose corpses also were booby-trapped with anti-tampering triggers.³¹

- **IED Detonation Trigger types**

³¹"Ibid."

- Command wire
 - Click the button
- Remote
 - Portable radios, cellular phones
- Pressure plate
 - Similar to standard military mines
 - Depending on the design, either for foot based soldiers or vehicles
- IR sensor
 - Detects heat from vehicles
- **IED Placement**
 - Road: Started out as on top, then under road
 - Curb
 - Fake
 - Trash on the side of road
 - Overpass / Underpass / Bridges
 - Culverts (Sewer operations)
- **IED Countermeasures**
 - Command wire countermeasures

- Visual observation is difficult
- Remote detonation countermeasures
 - Radio frequency jammers
 - They were expensive
 - Time consuming to create, test, deploy in the field, and install on equipment
 - Defeated almost immediately by switching tactics
 - Leaving us expending millions of dollars
- Pressure plate countermeasures
 - Mine rollers are a pain in the ass
- IR sensor countermeasures
 - Heated stick in front of vehicle
- General countermeasures
 - V-shaped Hulls vs flat bottom hulls
 - Reactive Armor
- **What is a VBIED?**
 - Characteristics
 - How to identify
 - Training vs. reality
 - Tactics (multi-vehicle)

- VBIED, which averaged one per week in **Iraq** in January 2004 increased.
- In **121** days, between September to December 2004,
 - **247** "vehicle-borne" IEDs targeted coalition forces, who learned to watch for the sagging automobile suspensions that might indicate a trunk packed with artillery shells
- **Drawback of Counter-IED systems**
 - Typically, did not work. Took a long time to form. Typically defeated shortly after being adopted.
- **Techniques of counter-terrorism**
 - “Left of boom.”
 - The civilian population is key
- **172nd comes home... Not really (side story)³²**
 - 300 Alaska-based soldiers sent home from Iraq just before their unit's deployment was extended last month must now go back.
 - Troops and families thought their service there was finished.
 - 380 returned, but only 300 are being called back
 - Donald H. Rumsfeld ordered the unit to serve four more months.

³² Lolita C. Baldor. *Just-Returned Troops Sent Back to Iraq*. The Associated Press. August 14, 2006. [Article link](#).

- Worst thing ever...
- The unit is now being stationed in Baghdad, one of the most violent parts of the country.
- Most are either infantry troops or cavalry scouts needed for the Baghdad mission.
 - *"From a military standpoint, it makes all the sense in the world,"* said Jacoby
(Commander of Alaska forces)
 - *"The brigade needs these soldiers back."*
- **Combat operations and enemy attacks during my deployment**
 - The number of attacks fell by approximately one-half over the first half of the year.
 - In December 2006, there was an average of 15-18 attacks a day in Ninawa province.
 - In March 2007, this number fell to 10-13 attacks a day.
 - In July 2007, this number fell further to 7-9 attacks.
 - VBIEDs, the most effective of these weapons, were used in attacks 3-5 times a week.
 - **Why attacks fell in Mosul during this time.**
 - **First**, the increasing capacity of the 2nd and 3rd Iraqi Army Divisions led to greater effectiveness in Coalition and ISF operations.
 - **Second**, AQI was focused on the fight for central Iraq and may have shifted reinforcements there.

- **Third**, a great deal of infighting among insurgent groups in Mosul and the surrounding area led to a decrease in the enemy’s ability to conduct attacks.

- **The switch from flailing to Counter-Insurgency**
 - In December 2006 Iraq Study Group released a report to move more soldiers into the training role for Iraq forces, while they take the lead in defending Mosul.
 - Leaders of Task Force Lightning, of the 25th Infantry Division, which heads Coalition Forces in northern Iraq, say that the concept will not reduce combat power in the province, but instead, will increase the capabilities of the Iraqi security forces.

- In early 2007, coalition forces launched a counterinsurgency (COIN) plan focused on Baghdad and the surrounding belts.

- This is when the “surge,” occurred and we were extended to a 15-month deployment
 - Multi-National Division North, lost one of its battalions when the 2nd battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment was deployed to Mansoor district as part of the Baghdad Security Plan.
 - At this point, MND-N had one combat brigade in Ninewa Province, the 4th BCT 1 CD. This unit was composed of three combat battalions, including
 - 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment and
 - 1st Battalion, 9th Cavalry Regiment stationed at FOB Marez
 - 5-82 FA BN at FOB Q-West near Qayarah. These units were supported by the 4th Special Troops Battalion and the 27th Brigade Support Battalion.

- At the same time, the Iraqi Army 2nd Division had redeployed two of its battalions to Baghdad.
 - However, coalition operations in Diyala and Baghdad were forcing insurgents north along the Tigris River valley up to Mosul.
 - Around the same time that AQI migrated north, the 3-4 Cavalry redeployed from Iraq in early September without replacement, leaving only two battalions in Ninawa.
 - The 1-9 Cavalry shifted from a training mission and was given responsibility for the area from Tal 'Afar out to the Syrian border, as well as the Qayyarah area south of Mosul.
 - 2-7 Cavalry remained in Mosul.
- **May 16 2007, a complex attack was conducted in Mosul.**
 - 200 armed gunmen attacked the main provincial jail using 6 VBIEDs, 14 IEDs, RPGs, and assault rifles.
 - At the same time 2 VBIEDs were used to destroy a bridge just west of the city.
 - This bombing will be important again.
- **August 2007 Yazidi communities bombings³³**
 - 800+ Killed
 - 1,500+ wounded
 - Iraq War's most deadly car bomb attack.

³³ Damien Cave and James Glanz. Toll Rises Above 500 in Iraq Bombings. August 22, 2007. [Article link](#).

- Second deadliest act of terrorism in history, following 9-11-01
- Est. 4,000 pounds of explosives
- The attack is the deadliest coordinated assault since the 2003 invasion.
- Residents and officials say a constant flow of burials has filled the streets amid the stench of death arising from mounds of beige brick.
- Tecken Kuli Saleem, 39, said she had stayed alive for 12 hours under the rubble, but emerged without her family.
 - *“I was pregnant in my fourth month and lost my baby in the attack,” she said. “I can’t talk much. The criminals killed my family, and I don’t know where my children are, whether they’re dead or alive. They’re missing.”*
- Yazidis may have been targets because of their proximity to Syria’s border;
- For their beliefs (they worship an angel whose name is sometimes translated as Satan in the Koran);
- As retribution for an episode in April, when some Yazidis stoned a young Yazidi woman to death for marrying a Sunni.

- **Nasty Dump to the rescue**

- To repair the damages to the prison
- Bucket fell
- Dump overheated
- Super slow crawl down dangerous road

- **The September 2007 loss for Alpha Troop**

- Logistical transport from Tal Afar to the prison.
- Bridge crossing
- Lane switch
- IED

- **Sheik Ibrahim**

- First time
 - Almost fall off cliff in humvee
 - “Terrorist,” went over the hill
 - Unsuccessful
- Second time - ?
 - QRF - Huge dust cloud (late start)
 - Blackhawks
 - Distant IED
 - IED
 - No sound
 - Dust

- **November 19, 2007, Operation Iron Hammer**
 - Two-week operation.
 - **79** arms and ammunitions caches had been discovered.
 - 7600 gallons of nitric acid used to manufacture explosives, were discovered at a car-bomb factory.
 - 500 mortar and artillery rounds
 - 500 Rocket Propelled Grenades
 - 50 RPG launchers
 - 100 heavy and light machine guns, and
 - Hundreds of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines.
 - The largest EFP cache ever found in Iraq was also discovered during
 - **EFP - Define**

- **Types of patrols**
 - Route clearance
 - Cellular reconnaissance
 - New antenna and secret squirrel
 - Because many of the newly-promoted operatives were younger and less qualified.
 - More likely to be unaware of how to remain incognito
 - Old data

- Several day operations with no success

- **Cordon and Search**

- Navy SEALs and a big fish
- 4 humvees to cover a spread out village
- SEALs searched and came up empty handed
- Eventually we were released **Night time**
 - Went to leave, drove and refueled
 - SCO ordered us back to do a new search
- Came up empty handed again
 - Hurt SCO's ego yet again

- **Training the Iraqi Army**

- Most are lazy and don't give a shit from the American perspective
 - Inshaallah *'In shā'a llāh* (If God Wills it)
 - Culture is vastly different
 - No real identity more focused on ethnic, religious, and location.
- Training the standard class
 - New combat soldiers are far more knowledgeable than the standard Iraqi
- The Special Forces soldier who told me to shoot him

- Paintball pepper spray
- Lighting the field on fire then drive away
- Level of integration
 - Insider attacks

- **2007 raids in Mosul**
 - July 2007, ISF discovered a large IED factory, an explosives cache, and a military grade bunker system on the outskirts of Mosul.
 - Nearly 10,000 pounds of ammonium nitrate, a chemical used to make home-made explosives, were found at the site along with other bomb-making materials.
 - The next day, in western Mosul, ISF discovered a second IED factory, which specialized in constructing curbside IEDs.
 - On July 11th, 19th, and 30th more large caches found around the city.
 - September 8th, Iraqi Security Forces cleared a large weapons cache and VBIED and IED factory in western Mosul.
 - The cache included three prepared VBIEDs, three partly constructed VBIEDs, and 21 IEDs

- **The final LongKnife deaths October 31, 2007**

- The last deaths for 2-7 Cavalry occurred Oct. 31, 2007, when a massive, buried IED blasted a Bradley armored vehicle. The explosion blew the turret off, claiming the lives of Spc. Brandon Smitherman and Capt. Timothy McGovern.
 - This would bring the total losses for 2-7 at **28**.
 - Col. Welsh would later say
 - *Mosul was a cauldron of IEDs. Welsh recalls July 2, 2007. His Humvee was rolling along a road in Mosul when he heard a boom, felt the vehicle shake as if the ground was about to swallow it. The force of the blast knocked him out. When he came to, Welsh, shrugging off his latest concussion, returned to his troops. A physician stopped him. How many blasts does this make? the doctor asked. Welsh thought. "I don't know," he replied.*³⁴
 - Consider that several acetylene tanks had to be buried in the road, covered up, and never spotted.
 - This occurred because there were far too few soldiers patrolling the city. Combine it with year after years of brutal war.
 - It is insanity to think that this would work
- **Unit problems**
 - The death of children and the abandonment after IED strike on Johnson
 - Draining the Humvee floor board
 - Squadron Commander was an idiot
 - Lost the battlespace

³⁴Mark Davis. *The Colonel's War*. 9 November 2013. [Article link](#).

- **Redeployment**

- Reintegration training was useless
- Medical examinations were hours of waiting only to be seen for a few minutes
 - We were given no understanding of what might be wrong with us
 - No information given to spouses on what to look for
- Told specifically not to identify medical issues because we would be “wasting,” the medics and doctors valuable time.

- **Final thoughts and musings**

- Talk about the culture of the combat soldier
-

End of episode notes
