



MOD-83-0000421-A

RESTRICTED - REL MCFI
2nd Battalion The Rifles
Basrah Palace
Op TELIC 9
BFPO 657



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Reference: 2 RIFLES G1-001

See Distribution

Date: 17 Apr 07

**SHOOTING INCIDENT REPORT (SIR) NO 61 – SMALL ARMS FIRE CONTACTS
DURING OP AREZZO, A BATTLEGROUP OPERATION, IN THE AL QUIBLA DISTRICT
OF BASRAH CITY**

INTRODUCTION

1. This SIR has been raised in order to consider the facts of an incident where shots were fired by members of a Basrah City Battlegroup (BCBG) patrol in the Al Quibla district in response to SAF attacks by AIF against them. 20 hits are claimed as a result of this incident.

OFFICER CONDUCTING THE REVIEW

2. This SIR has been conducted by the Adjt BC BG, [REDACTED] Capt W J D Wells, who was not involved in the incident.

TIME AND LOCATION OF THE INCIDENT

3. The incident occurred between 101400DAPR07 and approximately 101700DAPR07 in the AL QUIBLA District of, Basrah City.

UNIT DETAILS

4. A Coy 2 Rifles, B Coy 2 Rifles and Chindit Coy 2 LANCS deployed on Op TELIC 9 in Oct 06 as part of the 2 RIFLES BCS BG who TOA on 05 Nov 06. They are based in Basrah Palace, Basrah City. As part of their operational duties they conduct framework patrolling to dominate the ground, prevent enemy freedom of movement and protect those assisting in Security Sector Reform, in order to provide security for both the people of Basrah and the MNF call signs operating in the AO. They patrol on foot, in BULLDOG (BD) 432 APCs and in WARRIOR (WR) AFVs. Their duties include counter indirect fire patrols, life support operations, providing protection for police transition teams and other call signs on various taskings throughout the city, guarding Basrah Palace itself and conducting other offensive operations as required.

UK SERVICE PERSONNEL INVOLVED

5. The following UK Servicemen was directly involved in this incident:

- | | | | |
|----|------------|------|--|
| a. | [REDACTED] | CPL | The Investigation has not contacted the 17 soldiers to request further evidence. Any requests for the identities of the soldiers will be considered once the relevant soldiers have had the opportunity to make appropriate representations. |
| b. | [REDACTED] | CPL | |
| c. | [REDACTED] | CAPT | |
| d. | [REDACTED] | RFN | |
| e. | [REDACTED] | RFN | |
| f. | [REDACTED] | CPL | |
| g. | [REDACTED] | CPL | |
| h. | [REDACTED] | CPL | |
| i. | [REDACTED] | RFN | |
| j. | [REDACTED] | RFN | |
| k. | [REDACTED] | SJT | |
| l. | [REDACTED] | CPL | |
| m. | [REDACTED] | LCPL | |
| n. | [REDACTED] | KGN | |
| o. | [REDACTED] | KGN | |
| p. | [REDACTED] | KGN | |
| q. | [REDACTED] | CPL | |

BACKGROUND

6. The threat to MNF at the time of this report was considered to be substantial. There had been a number of recent attacks against MNF forces in the BG AO and across Basrah City as a whole; many of these have involved SAF shoots onto static call signs conducting CIMIC tasks and PTT tasks in the AL QUIBLA district. The Int Assessment, which was passed on to all patrols in daily operations briefs and on pre-patrol orders, was specific to the AL QUIBLA area. Recent incidents in AL QUIBLA have involved significant platoon and company level protracted SAF contacts and it was assessed that the threat from SAF was 'High'.

7. On 10 Apr 07 the BCBG launched a Battlegroup (BG) Operation into AL QUIBLA. The BG consisted of two Bulldog Companies: A Coy and B Coy 2 RIFLES; a WR Coy; Chindit Coy 2 LANCS and an Armoured Squadron of Challenger 2 Main Battle Tanks (CR2) from the Force Reserve BG.

8. Attached at Enclosure 2 is the Op Order for Op AREZZO. This details the Coys' Missions and the BG Scheme of Manoeuvre. The intent of the operation was as follows: To continue the application of offensive pressure on AIF in BASRA by conducting a BG surge into AL QUIBLA to demonstrate that MNF can operate across the City with impunity. Initially the BG will strike known ALPHAs before dominating ground of our own choosing to demonstrate overwhelming capability. If AIF choose to attack they will be defeated.

9. The contacts which ensued as a result of this highly successful operation were complex and numerous. The soldiers who were involved demonstrated in interview that

they had a confused and disorientated perceptive of events during the operation. This is only to be expected in an incident such as this. Often the soldiers involved were unable to state the time or location of the specific incident in which they were involved. It is vital that this is taken fully into account when their statements are read.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE INCIDENT

10. Approximately 20 minutes into the strike on Alpha 1 Cpl [REDACTED] A Coy, who was dismounted covering an alleyway approximately 100 metres from the target Alpha came under accurate SAF. Cpl [REDACTED] identified the firing point and, fearing for his life, returned 3x5.56mm rounds before moving into cover. Once again he came under accurate SAF, striking the walls and ground around him. Cpl [REDACTED] then broke covering, firing a further 2x5.56mm rounds which he saw strike the gunman.

11. During the second phase of A Coy's operation Cpl [REDACTED] was one of the members of the roof team on top of Alpha 1. They came under several SAF contacts over a 40 minute period. During one of these contacts Cpl [REDACTED] was clearly able to identify the gunman firing at him. With the roof team lives clearly in danger Cpl [REDACTED] fired 2-3x5.56mm at the gunman. Cpl [REDACTED] believes that his rounds struck the UKM Gunman in the chest.

12. P20 (Recce Pl) occupied a building at GR QU 6917 7345 in order to provide over watch protection for A Coy. A dark coloured saloon, possibly a vehicle seen already that day, was seen conducting a 'drive-by' tactic moving from south to north across the market road and turning behind a football pitch. Rounds flew over P20 and Rfn [REDACTED] and Capt [REDACTED] observed muzzle flash from the rear-left window of the vehicle: fearing for their lives both of them engaged the vehicle with aimed shots. Rfn [REDACTED] and Capt [REDACTED] believe their rounds hit the occupants in the rear of the vehicle.

13. Rfn [REDACTED] a sniper attached to P20 and also on the roof of the occupied building, saw a gunman at GR QU 6912 7354. He believed that this gunman had just fired at him and endangered the lives of P20 and still posed a threat so he then fired 1 round of 7.62mm at him. He saw through his sight that he hit the gunman in the chest.

14. Cpl [REDACTED] also in P20, was on the East side of the building and saw friendly call-signs being engaged from a rooftop at GR QU 6950 7349. He saw several gunmen moving around the roof top and muzzle flashes coming from that location. Fearing for the lives of those around him he engaged the position with 10 rounds of 5.56mm. The firing continued so he decided to engage the enemy with a UGLHE round. The first round dropped short by 50m, so he reloaded and engaged again. This round landed square on the enemy position and all firing stopped from that location.

15. Cpl [REDACTED] B Coy and part of B10, was top cover in a BD moving NE towards the junction at GR QU 6813 7288 when they came under contact from SAF. He observed a firing point on the roof of the building at GR QU 6809 7283. He clearly observed two gunmen on the roof in possession of LBWs who were fire and manoeuvring along the roof. He, immediately feared for his life as the rounds were cracking over his head, fired one round before he had a stoppage. He therefore fired 1 x UGLHE at the gunmen which over shot the target and so he fired a second which hit the roof. He then cleared his

stoppage and fired 14 rounds at the gunmen, hitting one, but could not see what happened to the other one.

16. Shortly after this B10 moved on, and were contacted again from the left hand side of the vehicle from a firing point which was believed to be in the area of GR QU 6848 7285. Cpl [REDACTED] again, observed a firing point and saw a gunman at ground level firing a LBW over a 6ft wall. He feared that the UKM was likely to kill someone in his C/S and therefore fired 15 rounds at the gunman, but again sustained a stoppage and so fired a UGLHE at the gunman. The 40mm grenade hit the wall and exploded.

17. Sometime later Cpl [REDACTED] comd of a BD in B10 was firm just short of Red 3 waiting for B20, observing arcs to N. He observed 2 UKMs on the roof of a building at GR QU 6695 7261. One gunman had adopted the kneeling position and was pointing a LBW in B10's direction. The other appeared to be spotting for the first UKM and was standing behind him looking at the call sign. Immediately feared for his life he aimed his GPMG at the gunmen on the roof and fired several bursts at them, hitting both of the UKMs. He saw them fall forward and collapse onto the roof. He then ceased fire and B10 moved off south to Red 2.

21. Rfn [REDACTED] was one of the top cover sentries in B10. He is unsure of his exact location when he opened fire; however he was in the HAYY AL MUHANDISN district of Al Quibla. B10 were contacted by an RPG. Rfn [REDACTED] identified the firing point and firer on a roof top and could see the UKM re-loading the RPG launcher with another warhead. Fearing for his life and the lives of his Platoon he aimed his IW at the UKM and fired about 4 rounds at the UKM, hitting the UKM who fell onto the roof and disappeared.

22. Rfn [REDACTED] also part of B10, identified a gunman on the ground beside a house in the area of GR QU 6825 7273. The gunman was firing a LBW in his direction, so, fearing for his life, with rounds passing close to his head, he opening fire. He hit the gunmen with the second burst of fire from his LMG. As his vehicle moved off he could clearly see the gunman lying face down on the ground.

23. B10 moved forward to a junction at GR QU 6845 7268. As they turned the corner they came under SAF. Rfn [REDACTED] was able to identify a UKM on the roof of the building at GR QU 6841 7266 who was firing a LBW at his vehicle. Rfn [REDACTED] fearing for his life, fired 2 - 3 bursts of 10 rounds at the gunman and saw the UKM collapse behind the parapet of the roof.

24. Sjt [REDACTED] was the Pl Sjt of B10 he observed 2 gunmen on the roof of the building in the vicinity of GR QU 6815 7260 and could hear the rounds passing close to his head. Immediately feared for his life he initially fired a UGLHE round in order to suppress the enemy, although the gunmen continued to fire. He then fired about 30 rounds of 5.56mm and eventually saw one of the gunmen fall down clearly hit.

18. Cpl [REDACTED] one of the BD Comds in B20, observed gunmen on the roof of a building at GR QU 6817 7325. His vehicle was at the junction at GR QU 6811 7327. He was in the process of briefing his top cover on the gunmen's location when a gunman popped out again in the same position as he had seen them before and shot at his

vehicle. Fearing for his life he engaged him with 30 rounds from his GPMG. At the same time top cover opened fire. The UKM was hit and fell to the ground.

19. LCpl [REDACTED] was one of the snipers attached to B Coy; he was part of B20 for this Op. He observed a UKM on top of the roof of a building at GR QU 6817 7326. He was holding a LBW in a firing position and was clearly engaging B20. Fearing for his life he aimed his rifle at the gunman and fired 1 shot which hit him in the centre of the chest. He immediately fell backwards below the parapet.

20. Shortly after this LCpl [REDACTED] observed a white car moving NE - SW in the area of GR QU 6841 7288. He saw a muzzle flash coming from the car and so immediately fired at the vehicle. The vehicle turned left and went static just off the road. A UKM emerged out of the driver's door and pointed a LBW towards B20. LCpl [REDACTED] fearing for his life, fired a further shot and this time hit the UKM.

25. C20 were operating as a Platoon providing Force Protection for the strike operations. At approximately 1615 hrs, a BD (D11) came under contact from 2 x rounds RPG fire whilst static in the area of GR QU 695712. Kgn [REDACTED] the gunner in WR C/S C20, identified a UKM at the firing point, in the area of QU GR 692712. Fearing for the lives of D11, he engaged the firer with 150 rounds of 7.62mm, before having a chain gun stoppage. The UKM was still presenting a threat so the vehicle commander, Sgt [REDACTED] then switched to 30mm. Kgn [REDACTED] fired 2 x rounds of HE, which destroyed the UKM.

26. About 15 mins later, WR C/S C22 was stationary at the Al Quibla interface in the area of GR QU 695712. The vehicle was contacted by SAF from a firing point 200m to the north. Kgn [REDACTED] the Warrior gunner, identified 1 x UKM with LBW at the firing point. Fearing for his life he engaged the gunman with 12 rds x 7.62mm chain gun and hit him.

27. C30 were also operating as a Platoon providing Force Protection for the strike operations. At 1520 hrs, whilst static near Orange 2, Kgn [REDACTED] observed 2 x UKMs in the area of GR QU 6948 7344 taking up fire positions to engage other friendly call signs in the area. Fearing for the lives of his colleagues he engaged the 2 x UKMs with his chain gun, hitting one UKM in the chest with a burst from the chain gun.

28. Cpl [REDACTED] platoon, D20, were only contacted during the extraction phase of the operation. They were static at Red 3 to provide protection for other C/Ss. After 10 minutes they came under fire from the South. Cpl [REDACTED] section came under fire from a window about 150 meters to the South-West. Fearing for his life he loaded his UGL and fired 1 round UGLHE into the window: the firing from the window stopped.

OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS

29. The soldier's training record cards contain the following details:

The Investigation			
CPL	has not contacted	22 MAR 07	27 MAR 07
CPL	the 17 soldiers to	22 MAR 07	24 MAR 07
CAPT	request further	02 APR 07	03 APR 07
RFN	evidence. Any	02 APR 07	03 APR 07
RFN	requests for the	25 MAR 07	05 OCT 06
CPL	identities of the	02 APR 07	03 APR 07
CPL	soldiers will be	28 MAR 07	28 MAR 07
CPL	considered once	05 APR 07	06 APR 07
RFN	the relevant	05 APR 07	06 APR 07
RFN	soldiers have had	28 MAR 07	28 MAR 07
SJT	the opportunity to	28 MAR 07	28 MAR 07
CPL	make appropriate	28 MAR 07	28 MAR 07
LCPL	representations.	23 MAR 07	11 OCT 06
KGN		29 MAR 07	08 APR 07
KGN		29 MAR 07	08 APR 07
KGN		02 APR 07	10 APR 07
CPL		09 MAR 07	10 MAR 07

ADVICE SOUGHT BY CONDUCTING OFFICER

30. In compiling this review advice was not sought from SO3 Legal, MND SE, due to the similarity between this incident and many others for which SIRs have been raised by this BG. The 17 soldiers involved fired at the various UKMs which they engaged and hit because they each believed that their own life or the lives of their colleagues were in danger, furthermore, they each stopped firing as soon as they believed that the threat had ceased. 20 hits are claimed as a result of this incident.

REFERAL TO SERVICE POLICE PRIOR TO COMPLETION

31. The initial decision not to refer this case for investigation by Service Police was made by the Conducting Officer (Capt Wells) at 140830DAPR07 as a result of reading the soldiers' statements. Throughout the course of compiling this SIR the decision was reviewed and was upheld.

COURSE OF ACTION

32. I am satisfied that there are no grounds to suspect that a criminal act has or might have been committed by UK Troops and I do not propose that a Service Police Investigation be initiated. I am satisfied that the Rules of Engagement have not been breached. In this case the soldiers believed that there was an imminent risk of injury or death to themselves or to one of their colleagues. They fired at clearly identified targets in accordance with the rules of Card Alpha. I believe that their actions were both proportionate and reasonable.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

33. All the documentation used to support this proposal is enclosed.

JCW Maciejewski
Lt Col
CO BC BG

Enclosures:

- 1. SINCREP NO. 1393A – BC SBG – SAF
- 2. FRAGO 069-07 Op AREZZO Amdt 1
- 3. Statement of [REDACTED] CPL The Investigation
- 4. Statement of [REDACTED] CPL has not contacted
- 5. Statement of [REDACTED] CAPT the 17 soldiers to
- 6. Statement of [REDACTED] RFN request further
- 7. Statement of [REDACTED] RFN evidence. Any
- 8. Statement of [REDACTED] CPL requests for the
- 9. Statement of [REDACTED] CPL identities of the
- 10. Statement of [REDACTED] CPL soldiers will be
- 11. Statement of [REDACTED] RFN considered once the
- 12. Statement of [REDACTED] RFN relevant soldiers
- 13. Statement of [REDACTED] SGT have had the
- 14. Statement of [REDACTED] CPL opportunity to make
- 15. Statement of [REDACTED] LCPL appropriate
- 16. Statement of [REDACTED] KGN representations.
- 17. Statement of [REDACTED] KGN
- 18. Statement of [REDACTED] KGN
- 19. Statement of [REDACTED] CPL

Distribution:

External:

Action:

SO2 J1 Force Support

Internal:

Information:

- OC A Coy 2 Rifles
- OC B Coy 2 Rifles
- OC C Coy 2 Rifles
- OC Chindit Coy 2 Lincs
- Op Record