On 27 July 2004 Vice President Richard B. Cheney stated that the terrorist threat did not represent a “foe we can reason with or negotiate with or appease. This is, to put it simply, an enemy that we must vanquish.”

Flash to Bang Time—Twenty-two Hours:
The 2nd Ranger Battalion’s Assault on the Rawah Terrorist Camp

by James Schroder

On the evening of 11 June 2003, the Rangers from B Company, 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, attacked and killed over seventy Islamic terrorists at a training camp in the vicinity of Rawah, Iraq, thirty miles east of the Syrian border. During a coordinated assault on Objective Reindeer, two Ranger platoons and a company and battalion command element infiltrated via four MH-60K Black Hawks and two MH-47E Chinooks from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), and attacked the camp from the east. A third platoon, with a battalion mortar team, traversed 175 miles overland and arrived simultaneously with the other two platoons, established blocking positions and a mortar position. Additional 160th SOAR assets, AH-6 attack helicopters, provided close air support during the operation. The Rangers’ orders were clear: Destroy all terrorists in the vicinity of the camp in order to prevent attacks against coalition forces—an excellent mission for Army Rangers.

The previous night at 2200 hours, Major (MAJ) John McGinnis (pseudonym), the operations officer and acting commander of Ranger elements in Iraq, and Captain (CPT) Mark Everett (pseudonym), assistant operations officer, received new information that suggested that an attack from the terrorist camp was imminent. Even so, the Screaming Eagles needed several more days to execute the mission. Therefore, V Corps solicited a proposal from the 75th Ranger Regiment, which gave the mission to the 2nd Ranger Battalion. McGinnis and Everett, in conjunction with B Company commander CPT Hunter (pseudonym), developed a concept of the operation that same night. The collaborative planning process—including the company commander to develop the overall scheme—greatly shortened the amount of time that it took to complete troop leading procedures. Hunter devised a simple scheme of maneuver to ensure that no terrorists escaped, and that concentrated fires on the objective would achieve their purpose. Within several hours, McGinnis sent the plan back through command channels to V Corps, indicating that the Rangers could strike within twenty-four hours. Even so, McGinnis thought that the 101st would retain the mission.

Objective Reindeer was a wadi, 500 feet long and 60 to 150 feet wide, with steep rocky sides 35 feet deep, and two smaller wadis channeling into the main creek bed. Reindeer actually consisted of three separate objectives: Dasher, Rudolf, and Comet. On 11 June at 0900, CPT Hunter issued the operations order to his platoon leaders: 1st platoon would insert via heli-
The assault on Objective Reindeer took the Rangers and 160th SOAR personnel far into the deserts of western Iraq. SOAR support was instrumental in the dismantling of the Rawah Terrorist Training Camp.
In spite of his missing leg and shrapnel injuries to his left elbow, calf, and left thumb, Walters emptied a magazine into the grenade position, killing the gunner, all while shouting fire commands to his fellow Rangers.
the enemy fired an RPG round that blew his leg off below the knee. In spite of his missing leg and shrapnel injuries to his left elbow, calf, and left thumb, Walters emptied a magazine into the grenade position, killing the gunner, all while shouting fire commands to his fellow Rangers. Platoon medic Specialist Gomez stabilized Walters, expertly treating his wounds under heavy fire. After Gomez stabilized and packaged Walters for travel, SFC Oscar Weimer (pseudonym) directed several Rangers to move Walters on a “Skedco” (Sked brand rescue sled) to HLZ Sparrow for evacuation. En route, they met 1SG Roemer and SGT Gillis also making their way to the HLZ. Weimer handed Walters’ equipment to the 1SG for accountability, and returned to the fight.

Once Walters was prepared to move, the battalion tactical air controller called in the CASEVAC (casualty evacuation) helicopter that was air loitering nearby, allowing CPT Hunter to focus on the ongoing fight. The helicopter landed within thirty seconds, and Walters was passed into the care of the on board surgeon for the trip to Al Asad, where a medical airplane awaited. Meanwhile, SSG Duncan pinpointed another fleeing RPG gunner with his infrared laser, enabling his squad and SSG Bradley Talbert’s (pseudonym) squad to target and kill the gunner with their M240 machine guns. SSG Burn saw other enemy fighters run into the tall grass, and Korenek decided to clear the grass by fire with M240s and squad automatic...
Several Rangers and Night Stalkers commented that the operation played out just like a multilateral training exercise, and that “everything went like clock work.”