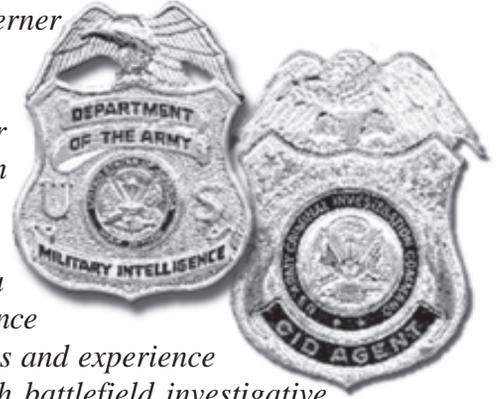

Creating CID and MI CI Partnerships

By Special Agent Ryan Averbek and Special Agent Jim Boerner

When Operation Iraqi Freedom began, an operations officer with the 3d Military Police Group (Criminal Investigation Division [CID]) had a unique idea that many thought outlandish. The idea advocated changing the traditional two-man investigative team, composed of CID special agents, to a partnership of a CID special agent and a military intelligence (MI) counterintelligence (CI) special agent. The concept was designed to leverage skills and experience across the military police and MI communities to accomplish battlefield investigative missions. The commander of the 3d was intrigued with the concept and approved the creation of this hybrid investigative team to handle war crimes and hostile fire death investigations during Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Two special agents were selected to form the team, bringing with them extensive CI experience and a thorough knowledge of intelligence discipline, assets, and reporting methods. While CID and MI CI organizations have different charters, the investigative process proved to be remarkably similar. Evidence collection and preservation, chain-of-custody procedures, sworn statement collection, source management, and interview procedures provided a common ground to begin team integration. Each agent was familiar with joint operations in the past, during which each organization conducted investigations pertaining to its charter and kept the other informed of the results. But until now, neither of the Army’s “gold badge” special agents had been partnered on a permanent basis. However, in Baghdad, the agents soon realized the full scope of each other’s experience and skills.

Testing the Partnership

Investigations of war crimes proved to be the perfect test bed for the investigative team. Each agent approached scenarios and gathered facts and evidence based upon past experience. For example, when a mass grave site was reported, each agent drew from his unique experience and organizational resources to facilitate the investigation. The experience of the CID agent allowed him to focus on crime scene preservation, evidence collection, scene sketches, and interviews to determine the who, what, when, where, and why (5 Ws). CID resources included a forensic science officer to determine the age of the site and the victims’ cause of death. The CID agent also used

established sources to determine suspects, witnesses, and victims. The CI agent focused on using MI resources to gather information, including imagery and measurement and signatures intelligence to determine when a grave site was dug. After a timetable was established, an order-of-battle technician from MI determined which military units were operating in the area during that time period and who the unit commanders were. The CI agent was also able to utilize human intelligence sources to determine the 5 Ws. The added value of this team included the capability to simultaneously harness skills and organizational resources.

As case managers and liaison officers in Baghdad, the team was able to coordinate interviews from high-value detainees. The CI agent assisted in opening doors with MI units running the interrogation facilities, while the CID agent provided the investigative expertise necessary to conduct proper interviews. The relationship between the CID and MI blossomed when the team was allowed to participate in Article V Geneva Convention tribunals. These tribunals are used to determine the status of detainees—prisoner of war or civilian internee.

With the emergence of hostile fire death investigations, the team again provided significant contributions. With access to MI reporting, the CI agent was able to analyze source reporting that named potential suspects involved in the deaths. The CID agent—familiar with homicide investigations, current case status and disposition logs, and assistance requests—was able to forward these leads through

operations to the appropriate investigative agents. The partnership provided valuable leads on several previously cold cases.

The team was able to obtain valuable evidence documentation from the document exploitation team, which falls under the Iraqi survey group. The physical evidence included videos, photographs, and paper materials of war crimes, assassinations, atrocities, and chemical extermination by Saddam Hussein and other regime personalities.

Looking to the Future

The team partnership continues to operate as the 3d Military Police Group prepares to transfer current cases to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad. The partnership process has been long and tedious—involving thousands of military and civilian personnel and countless coalition forces—but has greatly impacted scheme-of-battlefield investigations. Only time will tell the value of this CID/MI team concept, but success in the near term makes us think about how we operated in the past and how we plan to operate in the future.