

**Statement of David Wilson
Former KBR Convoy Commander in Iraq**

I was an alternate convoy commander and a convoy commander for Kellogg Brown & Root ("KBR") in Iraq from November 2003 until March 2004. I arrived in Kuwait at the end of October and went to work in Iraq in the first week of November as part of KBR's sustainer mission, delivering supplies within Iraq under its LOGCAP contract with the military. I ran over 100 missions during my employment with KBR.

While I was in Iraq, I saw problems with KBR's mission. In my opinion, the company did not adequately plan how they were going to do this job. I arrived in Iraq six months after the war and they still did not have the right personnel and equipment in place.

KBR ran two convoys each day, each in a different direction. The convoys usually had 28 trucks with trailers, and 2 bobtails (trucks for recovery), and they went from Camp Cedar II in southern Iraq to Camp Anaconda 300 miles to the north, above Baghdad. We also stopped at Camp Scania, which is a mid-point station between Cedar II and Anaconda. The problem with having only two crews was that if one had problems, there would be nobody there the next day to take its place.

When I arrived at Camp Arafjan ("Truckville") in Kuwait, last November, I noticed that there were about 50-100 brand new trucks sitting there, unused. I was told that KBR brought these trucks into Kuwait to use in the convoys. Five months later, when I came home, a large number of trucks were still there, not being used. These are \$85,000 (or more) Mercedes and Volvo trucks that are marked "KBR-owned assets." I've been told that KBR could not get the right tags to license the vehicles to do business in Kuwait. I don't know if KBR billed the U.S. government for these trucks, but they were not used for a third or fourth crew on the Cedar-Anaconda convoys.

As every other trucker working on these convoys will tell you, KBR had virtually no facilities in place to do maintenance on the trucks. It was like their whole preparation was to buy the trucks, hire the drivers, and let the rest take care of itself. There were absolutely no oil filters or fuel filters for months on end. I begged for filters, but never got any. I was told that oil changes were "out of the question."

The lack of maintenance was a major problem for trucks doing daily runs on Iraqi highways. In addition to being the convoy commander, I also drove a truck. During one convoy, my truck shut down because my fuel filter was completely clogged. Luckily, we were at the mid-point station at Camp Scania, and I got the Army to use a bobtail truck to pull me inside the barriers. At that point, I borrowed a fuel filter wrench from a local Iraqi, I removed the fuel filter myself, I ran gasoline through it to clear it out, and I then found some ether to clear it out further. (After years in the trucking business, I had a few tricks up my sleeve.) At any rate, I was able to replace the filter and at least get the truck going again. But when I got back to Camp Cedar and requested a new fuel filter, they refused. They said, "Your truck's running now, isn't it?" I am 100% certain that if we had been out on the open Iraqi highway instead of near Camp Scania, we would have lost that truck - and all because of a fuel filter.

Sometimes we were not so lucky. For some reason that was never explained to us, KBR removed all the spare tires in Kuwait. So when one of our trucks got a flat tire on the highway, we had to leave it there for the Iraqis to loot, which is just crazy. I remember saying to myself when it happened, "You just lost yourself an \$85,000 truck because of a spare tire."

We lost other trucks too. We lost a truck because we didn't have a \$25 hydraulic line to assist the clutch. Some of the trucks we lost due to accidents, but even these we could have saved if we had some way to tow them. In my time on the road, I saw disabled trucks -- or what was left of them -- abandoned on the side of the road on a daily basis.

Theft from the trucks was also a major problem. KBR had us carry the majority of supplies on open pallets instead of inside containers. Although the flatbeds we drove were designed to carry Conex containers, which are actually easier to load and unload, we didn't use them enough. Just about every person working on the convoys preferred, and specifically recommended, that KBR use more containers, but they did not. So when we traveled through small Iraqi towns at 4 or 5 miles per hour, the local Iraqis would just grab things off the truck.

The Army and KBR employees took things off the trucks going south, although they did not take anything of the truck going north. While the trucks were secured in Anaconda, both KBR and Army personnel would come at all hours of the night and rock the truck while they raided the supplies. It was like rats swarming on cheese.

KBR did not have good coordination about where the cargo was going or when. Sometimes, we would bring supplies into Iraq for a military unit, but the unit was already gone. We would take all these supplies back to Cedar II, and another convoy would take them back to Kuwait, even if there was another unit near Anaconda that might need the same things. If units at Cedar II or Anaconda learned that we were bringing supplies back from Anaconda, they would take what they could get.

I have no idea how KBR or the military were planning these convoys, or how they dealt with all the lost equipment and supplies. As far as accountability, the paperwork I carried had no details about the contents of our cargo. The operation wasn't like in the United States where you have "SLC," or shipper load and count. Basically, all they were looking for was the number of trucks with freight on them.

A related problem was that KBR would run trucks empty quite often. Sometimes they would have five empty trucks, sometimes they would have a dozen. One time, we ran 28 trucks and only one had anything on it. Nobody knew why we were hauling around empty trucks, but it definitely caused extra wear and tear, which just made maintenance a bigger problem. It also didn't make sense for security. We only had three military gun trucks escorting the whole convoy of 28 trucks, which was two miles long. There were several times when we had empty trucks both on the way to Anaconda and then on the way back to Cedar II. I don't understand why KBR would have placed our lives in danger that way for no reason.

Personally, I came under fire myself, including as mortar fire, improvised explosive devices ("IEDs"), and shrapnel bouncing off my truck, so I know from first-hand experience the dangers. Our convoys had rocks thrown through the windshields, and we had Iraqis attack us on the roads. In some cases, our drivers were seriously injured. Mike Stroud, one of the drivers, got hit with IEDs a couple times and managed to drive on through it. That wasn't always the case, however. I lost a good friend of mine, Al Kaden, who got killed driving an SUV for KBR.

In March, my job was terminated. The documents terminating me stated that this was because of a "breach of the code of business conduct" when supposedly I failed to report vehicles in my convoy that ran Iraqis off the road. A problem was that both KBR and the military made clear to everyone that this was what we were supposed to do. They would say, "We can't tell you to do this, but just remember that if you get captured, you will be raped, beaten, raped again, and beaten again. So if you need to put vehicles off the road, that's what you need to do." Although I never witnessed it, I know trucks ran Iraqis off the road because I once heard over the radio someone say, "I had to ease that one to the side of the road." I have documented my response to my termination, which you may read.

Finally, although I was a convoy commander, KBR did not pay me a convoy commander salary, but a regular truck driver salary. I don't have any way of knowing whether KBR billed my time to the U.S. government as a convoy commander.

This information basically repeats the information I provided to the Government Reform Committee on June 2, 2004, when I was willing to testify if required.


David Wilson

6/13/2004
Date