

SWORN STATEMENT

For use of this form, see AR 190-45; the proponent agency is PMG.

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

AUTHORITY: Title 10, USC Section 301; Title 5, USC Section 2951; E.O. 9397 Social Security Number (SSN).

PRINCIPAL PURPOSE: To document potential criminal activity involving the U.S. Army, and to allow Army officials to maintain discipline, law and order through investigation of complaints and incidents.

ROUTINE USES: Information provided may be further disclosed to federal, state, local, and foreign government law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, child protective services, victims, witnesses, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Office of Personnel Management. Information provided may be used for determinations regarding judicial or non-judicial punishment, other administrative disciplinary actions, security clearances, recruitment, retention, placement, and other personnel actions.

DISCLOSURE: Disclosure of your SSN and other information is voluntary.

1. LOCATION FOB BOSTICK, AFGHANISTAN	2. DATE (YYYY-MM-DD) 2009/10/23	(b)(3), (b)(6) 1910	4. FILE NUMBER
5. LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, MIDDLE NAME (b)(3), (b)(6)	6. SSN (b)(3), (b)(6)	7. GRADE/STATUS O4/AD	
8. ORGANIZATION OR ADDRESS HHT, 3RD SQN-61ST CAV REGT, 4IBCT-4ID, APO AE 09354			

9. I, (b)(3), (b)(6), WANT TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT UNDER OATH:

BACKGROUND

I am an infantry officer currently serving as the S3 Operations Officer for 3-61 CAV in Konar, Afghanistan where I assumed those duties on 01AUG09. My background includes earning a commission from USMA and assignments with 101st ABN DIV (AASLT) and the 173d ABN BDE. My deployments include Kosovo, Operation Iraqi Freedom (March 2003 to March 2004) and Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan (February 2005 to February 2006). Upon completion of ILE in Mid-June, I was assigned to 4th BCT, 4th ID and deployed in support of the unit in late July 2009.

I went to COP Keating once in late August 2009 with the Squadron Commander to discuss the possibility of establishing an additional ABP Kandak in Kamdesh with the Kamdesh Shurra as part of our exit strategy out of the District. My initial impression of COP Keating was that it was poorly sited astride the Landay Sin River along the only major "roadway" in the area. The road is actually an unimproved dirt trail. Surrounding the position to the north, south, & west was steep high ground. On my visit to COP Keating, CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) provided me with a short tour of the compound highlighting some the enemy positions where they were attacked from in recent weeks and some of the force protection improvements they were making. He mentioned to me they planned to improve the gate at the entry control point, and he indicated that he was adamant his soldiers moved about the COP in full kit based on extremely accurate direct fire & indirect fire attacks against the compound.

THE MISSION AT COP KEATING

The Troop's mission at COP Keating was consistent with the Squadron's and Brigade's lines of effort – governance, development and security, which supported the overall JTF and ISAF missions. However, the troop's strength, like the squadron, was insufficient to meet both its minimum security requirements at two fixed site locations while simultaneously conducting active patrolling necessary to effectively engage with the populace and take the fight to the enemy.

Recognizing that to be successful the Troop had to conduct active patrolling off of the COP to effectively interact with the locals, pursue the enemy, and execute many of the tasks that were required in a COIN environment, I had a conversation with CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) on the topic. He indicated that he was not comfortable about his patrols venturing too far from COP Keating because he was concerned that a patrol could get quickly isolated and overwhelmed by enemy forces on more dominant terrain. I concurred with his assessment and advised him to take a closer look at the situation and determine what would be required to execute a patrol to some of the surrounding villages. I indicated additional combat forces and resources could be available if that is what it took to get him and his soldiers off the COP and interacting with the local populace but that these additional troops would only be temporary.

10. EXHIBIT	11. INITIALS OF PERSON MAKING STATEMENT (b)(3), (b)(6)	PAGE 1 OF 5 PAGES
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ADDITIONAL PAGES MUST CONTAIN THE HEADING "STATEMENT OF _____ TAKEN AT _____ DATED _____"

THE BOTTOM OF EACH ADDITIONAL PAGE MUST BEAR THE INITIALS OF THE PERSON MAKING THE STATEMENT, AND PAGE NUMBER MUST BE INDICATED.

USE THIS PAGE IF NEEDED. IF THIS PAGE IS NOT NEEDED, PLEASE PROCEED TO FINAL PAGE OF THIS FORM.

STATEMENT OF (b)(3), (b)(6) TAKEN AT FOB Bostick DATED 2009/10/23 (b)(3), (b)(6)

9. STATEMENT (Continued)

KEATING CLOSING

On my unit visit to the Brigade at Ft Carson in April 2009, I was briefed by LTC (b)(3), (b)(6), former DCO, on the Brigade's desire to close the outlying stations such as COP Keating, COP Lowell, and OP Fritsche. The concept was first conceived sometime early in the Brigade's PDSS and Mission planning for the deployment. The idea behind it was that the populace was central to the success of our mission. Therefore, the Brigade sought to focus its efforts on more population centers as opposed to remote areas. I also understand that this is consistent with COMISAF published COIN guidance for Afghanistan.

CLOSURE PLAN

Both the Brigade and the Squadron actively sought approval to close remote outposts. In fact, the Squadron Commander briefed COMISAF, Commander of CJTF-82, and the Deputy Commander to the CJTF-82 on our intentions to close the outlying stations prior to my arrival. The Squadron's plan was that the following COPs/OPs would close: Hatchet, Lowell, Keating and Fritsche. OP Fritsche would be the last outpost to close because it provided the necessary communication retransmission and indirect fire support for COP Keating. Unfortunately, we executed only one part of the closure plan before it was halted. OP Hatchet was closed in August 2009. The majority of the non-mission essentials and some of the mission enhancing items were actually backhauled off of COP Lowell, and consequently had to be flown back into the COP once the decision to halt was given. The remaining COPs and OPs would be delayed until final approval was granted.

ADDITIONAL TROOPS

The intelligence reports and level of contacts at COP Keating indicated an attack of some degree by up to a platoon size element but the reports in my opinion it did not suggest an attack of the magnitude and level of complexity that was seen on 03OCT09 at COP Keating. There were no additional troops sent to COP Keating largely because the Squadron did not have troops to spare within its own task organization. However, as discussed in our realignment plan, we would reinforce the COP with additional troops as we drew nearer to the closure of the COP, specifically Hatchet platoon was tasked with this. There were scheduled to fly in on 04OCT09. I did however discuss with the Brigade S3, Major (b)(3), (b)(6) on several occasions the need for additional troops within AO Destroyer as well as the rotation of the ineffective 6th ANA Kandak. He was supportive and indicated that it could happen but that it would likely not be anytime soon because the resources were not available based on other ongoing prioritized operations across the Brigade battle-space. Overall, due to our small unit footprint, expansive area of operations, and frequent enemy threat, our ability to adequately reinforce any one location was limited without assuming risk in another. In regards to force protection improvement, there were no requests passed through the S3 channels by the unit for engineering support at COP Keating.

MAIN FOCUS PRIOR TO 3 OCTOBER 2009

Our squadron's main focus prior to 03OCT09 was our ability to protect our own main supply route. Our MSR was significantly at risk by the small footprint in the south. The enemy recognized this fact and began to aggressively target the resupply convoys, often striking the unescorted contracted fuelers and jingle trucks. The attacks prompted very deliberate and concentrated operations to secure the routes for resupply and protect the local national jingle trucks. During this same time frame, the enemy ambushed a number of our convoys with greater than platoon size elements. The level of activity was increasing across the area of operations, but up to that point we were sustaining most of our casualties in the southern portion of the AO with only a couple wounded in the Kamdesh District. We therefore focused our targeting efforts to gaining more specific information that would enable us to action against the enemy in the south.

CAS AS A PLANNING FACTOR

Generally speaking, CAS support is very good and very responsive. We could expect CAS on station within minutes in some cases as was the case on 03OCT09 or it could take up to one hour. We requested immediate CAS or imminent CAS requests frequently. On the day of the attack, we received reports from COP Keating requesting CAS around (b)(2)High with CAS arriving on station within 15-20 minutes. However, based on the proximity of the fight to friendly troops, Attack aviation support was probably more necessary initially since it is a more discerning platform. Unfortunately, the AH64s did not arrive on-station until nearly a (b)(2)High and twenty minutes from the initial request.

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USE THIS PAGE IF NEEDED. IF THIS PAGE IS NOT NEEDED, PLEASE PROCEED TO FINAL PAGE OF THIS FORM.

STATEMENT OF (b)(3), (b)(6) TAKEN AT FOB Bostick DATED 2009/10/23 (b)(3), (b)(6)

9. STATEMENT (Continued)

MEDEVAC

There are only two MEDEVAC aircraft in the Brigade's AO, and none of the two are permanently based out of FOB Bostick. The journey from JAF to Bostick is roughly a 35-40 minute flight with a further 15 minutes to COP Keating. Therefore, it could take in excess of MEDEVAC 45 minutes to an hour to get to COP Keating. On the day of the attack, MEDEVAC was wheels up from JAF at 0638L, and arrived quickly but due to excessive enemy contact on the HLZ they were unable to continue to COP Keating. Therefore they were diverted to FOB Bostick. As a result, they remained on ground with blades turning until we gained better resolution. The MEDEVAC aircraft was unable to reach COP Keating until 2007L. Once it was able, the evacuation helicopters extracting the wounded and recovered the dead from the COP.

AMOUNT OF AAF

Our initial estimates revealed upwards of 200+ Taliban and HIG fighters were involved in the attack on COP Keating. Later, after reflecting on it and listening to the numerous debriefs, our estimates did not portray the actual number. There were at least four platoon size elements suppressing the COP with PKM, RPG, and even DsHK fires from the high ground in four cardinal directions. Also, there were likely two to three isolation positions comprised of DsHK and RPG meant to prevent friendly aircraft from assisting in the fight. At least two large assault forces (platoon +) attempted to seize the COP with some of their elements actually penetrating the COP final perimeter defenses. COP Keating also took heavy fire from the ANP checkpoint and police station as well as the Mosque in Urmol. Additionally, there were up to two indirect fire systems used by the enemy in the attack. Additionally, there were also two platoons that suppressed OP Fritsche, and another smaller element that attempted to disrupt activities at FOB Bostick with rockets and mortars while the attack at COP Keating was occurring.

Looking back, his decisive operation was clearly COP Keating as he had taken extraordinary efforts to attempt to isolate it from its support bases. The suppression of OP Fritsche was a shaping operation with a secondary shaping operation being the disruption effort at FOB Bostick. The smaller skirmishes at the COP that occurred in the weeks before the main attack were probably meant to solidify the individual pieces and parts of the plan. The enemy's reconnaissance was detailed and extraordinarily accurate as evidenced by their precision targeting of mortars, crew served weapons, and command & control elements. We received (b)(2)High (b)(2)High that indicated the enemy had spotters along the valley stretching from FOB Bostick to COP Keating providing reports. The enemy's operation was well planned and well rehearsed, and likely had been planned for several months, but only confirmed their plan in the final days before our retrograde was to begin. Again, we formed this understanding only after the contact.

QRF

The Brigade Quick Reaction Force came from TF Chosin. TF Lethal also had an infantry company (-) ready to assist as well. However, TF Chosin was also serving as the Brigade's Nuristan Response Force (NRF). The NRF was formed shortly prior to the exit of US forces from Barge Matal late this past summer primarily but not exclusively to reinforce our ANSF partners in BeM. Soon after the battle began, approximately 30 minutes, I contacted the Brigade S3 and CHOPS and requested that the Ground QRF be made ready but not committed until we had a better understanding of the situation.

The NRF consisted of one infantry company headquarters with two infantry platoons. It was based out of two locations, COP Monti and FOB Wright. Additionally, a second QRF was spun up. It consisted of an AOB with approximately 140 Afghan National Army Commandos. All QRF forces assembled at FOB Bostick as at the time we still did not have a secure HLZ.

Once the QRF elements arrived, I received them and immediately laid out our hasty plan with expected timeline in the Squadron Conference Room. The initial plan was for the NRF to air assault on UH60 helicopters to an HLZ known as the "Link Up Point" to clear the southern switchbacks above COP Keating and establish a platoon support by fire position orienting fires north and west. Following effective suppression by the first platoon, the NRF's second platoon would clear through to COP Keating and link-up with B Troop. The initial plan also called for a third element consisting of one ODA with platoon of Commandos would pass through the SBF and clear Urmol. The remaining Commandos would air assault to clear west through the village of Kamdesh. Our plan was hugely dependent on a secure HLZ, and since our initial HLZ was deemed unsuitable based on enemy threat in the area, we modified the plan to use OP Fritsche as the HLZ.

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9. STATEMENT (Continued)

At roughly 1115L, we determined that OP Fritsche was the best place to set them in, and we were confident we could set the conditions to introduce the reinforcements successfully. The first set of reinforcements was TF Chosin's company C2 and first platoon which arrived at OP Fritsche at 1145L. Unfortunately, after successfully inserting them we then faced bad weather which further delayed the introduction of our additional forces until we received a "weather go" call from the pilots. However, we still pushed the first element to move as quickly as possible to clear the switchbacks in order to relieve pressure off of COP Keating.

The second elements on the ground at OP Fritsche arrived at 1420, and immediately stepped off towards COP Keating to join the rest of their element. The third set of reinforcements to land at OP Fritsche consisted of an ODA with approximately 40 personnel. It was not configured to execute its Urmol mission so it remained at OP Fritsche to reinforce its defenses until the remainder of the ODAs and commandos arrived at 2330L that night. The cause for the second delay was the heightened threat situation to the air frames. It was after those turns that the aviation Squadron (b)(2)High or Brigade (b)(2)High assessed that the threat was too high and any additional sorties would have to wait until nightfall.

It wasn't until 1945L when the initial reinforcements were able to arrive on COP Keating and link-up with B Troop that we were able to establish a secure and functional HLZ capable of accommodating at least one helicopter at a time. Once established, we sent forward the medical evacuation helicopter to evacuate the most severe of our casualties. SPC Mace was one of those casualties. The other two were ANA soldiers. The medical evacuation helicopter was wheels down at COP Keating at 2007L. Following the extraction of the urgent casualties, we then were able to land a CH47 to collect the remaining wounded and dead. Our squadron commander was inserted into COP Keating at this time.

KAMGOWS

The concept of KAMGOWs was an adequate means of re-supply, but only if executed properly. This means that it must be executed at least eight times per month and meet the needs of the unit. However, we averaged a 60-70% completion rate, and were not meeting all of the needs of the unit. Granted there are various reasons as to why these were not executed (Weather, maintenance, illumination, blade hours, and enemy contact) but when the COP is air centric it becomes critically important that they occur. Aviators had a major vote in stopping missions much to the disagreement of the Squadron. The Squadron XO routinely sought ways to work around and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the flights.

REMOTENESS/ KEATING DIFFICULT TO DEFEND

The B Troop Fire Support Officer, 1LT (b)(3), (b)(6) was the best Troop FSO of the Squadron. He was also a Joint Fires Qualified Officer capable of conveying the necessary information to the pilots and to the JTAC to ensure CAS was delivered quickly. I don't think having a JTAC at COP Keating would have made CAS more responsive. Granted there is an added level of coordination by requiring with Type II CAS Control. However, the additional step did not appear to slow the delivery of the ordnance required.

OTHER DISCUSSION POINTS

I along with the other officers in the Squadron did have conversations with our higher headquarters about the problems we had with remote outposts like COP Keating. The Brigade was in agreement with consolidating and focusing our efforts to population centers here in Naray and Ghaziabad Districts. It has been the Squadron's and Brigade's position that we were overstretched and we lacked enough personnel to effectively accomplish our mission prior to and throughout this deployment.

Mortars provide more effective fires than 155mm Artillery at COP Keating largely due to a difficult angle caused by the severely steep terrain surrounding the COP. 155 Artillery can be used effectively on the northern ridgeline to support COP Keating. However, the enemy also realized this after a couple of years of fighting, and as a result adjusted their TTPs accordingly. The enemy ensured that the majority of their positions and assault routes. This made the mortar support from OP Fritsche extremely important. The loss of the mortars support to the effective enemy indirect and direct fire suppression meant that there was not another system to take its place.

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9. STATEMENT (Continued)

Planning for the Nuristan Response Force was handled at Brigade. Since TF Destroyer was not the NRF I was not brought into any planning, rehearsing, or coordination prior to the attack at COP Keating. There was no contingency plan established for the NRF to reinforce COPs/OPs in Kamdesh.

While MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) was the Commander, I did note that his unit did routinely submit operational requirements late (reports, patrol schedules, FRAGO requirements, etc) which prompted conversations and emails from me to him about meeting the suspenses. Furthermore, after having heard several debriefs, I do believe that some of these conditions could have been prevented at the Troop Level, force protection in particular.

NOTHING FOLLOWS*****

AFFIDAVIT

I, (b)(3), (b)(6) _____, HAVE READ OR HAVE HAD READ TO ME THIS STATEMENT WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 1, AND ENDS ON PAGE _____. I FULLY UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS OF THE ENTIRE STATEMENT MADE BY ME. THE STATEMENT IS TRUE. I HAVE INITIALED ALL CORRECTIONS AND HAVE INITIALED THE BOTTOM OF EACH PAGE CONTAINING THE STATEMENT. I HAVE MADE THIS STATEMENT FREELY WITHOUT HOPE OF BENEFIT OR REWARD, WITHOUT THREAT OF PUNISHMENT, AND WITHOUT COERCION, UNLAWFUL INFLUENCE, OR UNLAWFUL

(b)(3), (b)(6) _____

(Sig)

WITNESSES:

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this 23rd day of October, 2009 at FOB BOSTICK AFGHANISTAN APO AE 09354

(b)(3), (b)(6) _____

th)

ORGANIZATION OR ADDRESS _____

CPT

(b)(3), (b)(6)

JA

(Typed Name of Person Administering Oath)

Article 136 UCMJ

(Authority To Administer Oaths)

ORGANIZATION OR ADDRESS _____

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Pages 6 through 7 redacted for the following reasons:

Two pages removed for the following reasons:(b)(1)1.4a, c and g, (b)(2)High, (b)(3) and (b)(6) apply.