

## SWORN STATEMENT

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## 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 Quantico, VA	2. DATE (YYYYMMDD) 20130710	3. TIME 0900	4. FILE NUMBER N/A
5. LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, MIDDLE NAME Gurganus, Charles M.	6. SSN	7. GRADE/STATUS MajGen, AD USMC	
8. ORGANIZATION OR ADDRESS Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, VA			

9. I, Charles M. Gurganus, WANT TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT UNDER OATH.

Q: Please provide a synopsis of your background in the Marine Corps?

A: Okay, Sir, I was commissioned in 1976 as an Infantry Officer. I have primarily worked in the operating forces or in the training environment. I've done a fair amount of that. Both here at MCCDC and later at the Joint Warfighting Center. I served three joint tours, including as the Ground Combat Element Commander in Iraq in 2007-2008. I was also General Sharp's J5 in Korea. So that's it for joint tours. I served as a company commander several times, a battalion commander, and regimental commander. Other combat tours include back to Haiti as the RCT Commander, to Iraq with the RCT, back Iraq as the GCE commander, and then to Afghanistan this tour as the RC(SW) commander.

Q: When did you take command of RC(SW)? When did you relinquish command?

A: Our TOA was on 12 March 2012, and I relinquished command on 28 February 2013.

Q: How would you characterize the RIP/TOA that you and your staff had with LtGen Toolan and his staff?

A: Very professional and very detailed because it actually started as we formed our staff back in Camp Pendleton starting in August 2011. We built the staff in four phases, and we had everyone together before we got to our Warfighting Conference and our Governance and Economics Seminar. We also had a number of our UK officers who were going to be principals and deputies for us, including my Deputy, Stuart Skeates. We had a Mission Rehearsal Exercise, and we pretty much duplicated LtGen Toolan's COC. We also did a PDSS back in September 2011, and I spent almost the entire PDSS almost entirely with the staff going through their TTPs and processes. We started watching their reports and intelligence. We modeled our battle rhythm off of theirs, and the staff sections had constant back-and-forth. LtGen Toolan and I talked frequently, and then we did several battlefield circulations when I got on the ground 28 February 2012. It was primarily to meet key Afghan players and the key commanders. The remainder of the turnover time I spent at Kabul with the IJC staff and a few key members from our Embassy. Then I came back and LtGen Toolan spent a final couple of days, and he provided his final thoughts before he departed. The staff was as comfortable as they could be with the turnover. If MEF was completely transparent and helpful, and they did a very professional job getting us ready, although you never understand it until you have it yourself for a few days.

(U) Please describe any discussions that LtGen Toolan had with you regarding Anti Terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP).

A: Sir, he and I talked about so many things. One of the things we talked about was the entire plan for the Phase II surge recovery. You are well aware of the hits we took. He had already lost some Marines before I got there, and had a plan in place to start the drawdown. We made some adjustments to that based on guidance that came out of ISAF and IJC, but at the end of the day we went from almost 18,000 Marines down to a total of about 7,400.

Q: Were you comfortable at the time that you and your staff had all of the information that you needed regarding AT/FP on the BLS Complex?

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ADDITIONAL PAGES 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.

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## 9. STATEMENT (Continued)

**A:** Yes Sir, we talked about who all was on the BLS Complex and who they worked for. We talked through parts of the national caveats, but it took a while to fully understand all the moving parts with that, to understand the roles the Brits played, and the other national forces that were underneath the Brits. Caveat-wise, we had 9 coalition members, and the Tongans, the Danes, the Estonians, and the UAE were all caveated to the UK. It took a little time to go around and visit and get comfortable with everything.

**Q:** Were you aware of any specific vulnerabilities on the BLS Complex?

**A:** When LtGen Toolan and I talked, the primary concerns at the time were suicide bombers, IDF, and the insider threat, which was one that grew over time as you really started to understand what you had on the base with some of the inspections the force protection MPs conducted on the contractor compounds. They found stuff that made that concern really go to the top of my list. The external threat was suicide bombers at one of the ECPS or somewhere along the way. And then IDF, because we had a rocket box about 10Km to the southeast but that was patrolled pretty regularly.

**Q:** Were you aware that the last higher headquarters vulnerability assessment had been conducted in January 2011 (CENTCOM Joint Security Office Vulnerability Assessment)?

**A:** I was not aware of it when I took command.

**Q:** Upon assuming command of RC(SW), were there other concerns other than the ones you already mentioned for the BLS Complex?

**A:** The ones I mentioned were definitely the top three. As we were there for a bit, one of the concerns that we had, and that is still a concern of mine today, was the encroachment closer and closer to the airfield with the amount of poppy that they were growing literally right outside the perimeter fence. Just to know that with poppy, good things don't come along with it and that was a concern.

**Q:** Did you specifically delegate authority for AT/FP to your AT/FP Officer, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)? If so, was this delegation in writing or was it verbal? What was the scope of this delegation?

**A:** I don't recall the scope of it. The guy I relied on primarily for the protection of BLS was Task Force Belleau Wood (TFBW), in concert with the UK that had the Bastion side of the base. Because (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) job was to take a look at the whole AO, primarily Helmand Province. And we had some rather large FOBs throughout the AO, so my recollection of his responsibilities was to focus on the whole.

**Q:** Did you direct any AT/FP assessments upon taking command of RC(SW)? Please describe.

**A:** Formally, in writing, none that I recall. Force protection was a routine part of business. With any type of threat, any type of indication that we got, it was like "okay, what are we doing to change the look?" Both outside and inside the base.

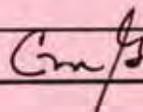
**Q:** What was your guidance to (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) the C-3, if the guidance went to him) for AT/FP? Did you require him to give you updates? What information was included in these updates and how often did they occur?

**A:** I don't recall with any specificity, but (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and I routinely talked about all the operations, and we honestly tried to include force protection in everything we did. I think the concern was as much for our outlying bases based on threats and numbers of Marines, and Soldiers, and Coalition Partners on them, some of those numbers being very, very small numbers and some being large numbers. And (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) attended every one of our staff updates that we had, and he was given the opportunity to express any concerns that he had. At our daily standup meeting in the morning, which included the SOF update from the night before and our Ops&Intell updates, if anything popped on force protection, I'd look at (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) if it was external to the base and I looked at TFBW if it was internal. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) didn't attend these meetings. We typically had various types of indicators, but rarely did they paint a clear picture of something concrete that was going to happen.

**Q:** What guidance did you give (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) CO Task Force Belleau Wood (TFBW), regarding security operations on the BLS Complex and in AO Belleau Wood (AOBW)?

**A:** The biggest thing that I told them was to make sure that our security forces (SECFOR) -- because you are aware of our unique command and control arrangement -- that we were integrated, cooperating, and that I wanted the looks inside the base changed up because of all the local national we had on the base, and that I wanted the looks changed up externally so that nobody had the chance to get comfortable with what we were doing.

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## 9. STATEMENT (Continued)

Q: Did you specifically delegate authority for AT/FP to (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)? If so, was this delegation in writing or was it verbal? What was the scope of this delegation?

A: I think it was verbal. It was understood, and an implied task. They would both come to my office and give me updates with what was going on with TFBW.

Q: Did (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) in-brief you on TFBW's security operations as you assumed command? Did you have any concerns? Did you direct any changes?

A: He did, and I don't remember how long it was after I took command. And he was in my office frequently telling me what he was doing. And I just offered guidance on additional things I wanted or that I thought we needed to be doing.

Q: How often did (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) brief you on TFBW security operations? Please describe those briefings or updates. How often did you provide him guidance on security matters?

A: I routinely got updates on security ops. They had a rep in every one of our morning stand-ups, and if there was anything that was a concern to them, they would bring it up. And I would give guidance on how I wanted them to do things.

Q: Did you have an orientation of Camp Bastion and the flight line prior to taking command? Did it raise any concerns?

A: Yes, Sir. It didn't because I didn't know what to be concerned about. Nothing stood out to me except the proximity of the poppy fields. That stuck out to me.

Q: Did it concern you that there were Marine personnel and aircraft on Camp Bastion on a Camp not secured by Marines? Did RC(SW) understand the doctrine, standards, procedures, and TTPs that the UK utilized to secure Camp Bastion?

A: Not when I took command, I didn't understand all of it. And no, I didn't have any concerns that it was being secured by the UK.

Q: Did the UK use their own doctrine, standards, procedures, and TTPs? How did they compare to those used by the USMC?

A: I don't know exactly. I will tell you this. They were very meticulous with applying airfield rules, to the point of it being painful for me to get clearance to access the airfield to meet a VIP aircraft. Even their air traffic controls were very, very methodical to the point where it would drive the American pilots batty. So I will tell you that the Force Protection Wing they had was very meticulous. My feeling with them was pretty doggone comfortable, Sir.

Q: Did you direct your ATFPO to assist 3d MAW (FWD) with AT/FP considering the Wing's position on a Camp "owned" by the UK? Did you expect him to?

A: Not specifically, but I did expect him too. And the commanders knew that he was available to them.

Q: Were you aware that two of the MAW squadrons ran their own local security on the flight line, but the others did not?

A: I was, Sir.

Q: How often did you get out for battlefield circulation on the BLS Complex? Did you provide guidance on AT/FP based on that circulation?

A: Not specifically to ride the fence line or go look at AT/FP. It was just something where I would see something and wonder why we were doing something this way. If we saw something, we would address it. My (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was awesome about going out and finding answers to different things if we saw an issue. I was out somewhere on the base 4-5 time a week if I wasn't in the battle space or in Kabul.

Q: Did you provide any guidance to MajGen Sturdevant regarding AT/FP of the flight line?

A: Probably not beyond, "Protect our people, and protect our stuff."

Q: What was your understanding of the primary threats to the BLS Complex at the time you took command of RC(SW)?

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## 9. STATEMENT (Continued)

**A:** External suicide bombings and IDF. The internal threat was one that I didn't know what I didn't know. You were concerned about it. We had badging procedures and different things in place, but we realized we had a lot of different types of people on this base. And we had other things happen that made it a concern, you know the Koran burning, the release of the urination video, those sorts of things. Every time you had one of those spikes, you took a hard look internally. The other thing that made the internal threat come up high happened the second day we were there when the Secretary of Defense was coming in. A disgruntled guy with some problems, as you are probably aware, stole a vehicle and came down the flight line and set himself on fire on the edge of the tarmac. I am convinced he had no clue that the Secretary was coming, or that the time had changed, but when you have something like that, you turn internally a lot more. And a lot more went into the counter-intelligence effort.

**Q:** Many interviewees have expressed that the BLS Complex's location "out in the middle of the desert" made them believe that a ground attack was unlikely. Was that your impression as well?

**A:** Yeah, I think there was some of that. Not a sense of security, but it was positional, it was in a pretty good location. What concerned me the most was the creep of the seasonal farmers.

**Q:** Did you inspect the perimeter of the BLS Complex? If so, please describe your impressions.

**A:** I did, Sir. I saw most parts of it. I was pretty comfortable with it. One thing I was not comfortable with, and I know (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) wasn't either until we got it relocated, was the (b)(1)1.4g That was right outside the NW side of the base of the time.

**Q:** Were you aware that approximately every other tower was manned on Camps Leatherneck and Bastion? Did you have any concerns regarding the tower manning? If so, who did you discuss your concerns with?

**A:** I didn't have a particular concern about it, because they had good observation. I didn't go into each tower, so when I found out about it, I asked some questions. For the threat information that we had, honestly, that seemed reasonable at the time. This is not the first time I've seen every other tower manned in other countries as well.

**Q:** Based on the distance between the towers, were you comfortable that they had interlocking fields of fire and observation?

**A:** I was.

**Q:** Many interviewees have expressed that the 50% tower manning was the result of manpower shortages and the lack of threat to the perimeter. Do you agree?

**A:** I would agree with that more if it had been only on the US side of it. On the UK side of, while they did not have a large security force, they were not affected by the drawdowns. I do agree with the part about the threat. We did not see that as the most dangerous or most likely threat given the I&W.

**Q:** Do you know who made the assessment that manning every other tower was sufficient? Do you think that was a reasonable assessment based on what you knew at the time?

**A:** It was the Force Protection guy over on Bastion. I do think it was reasonable, based on the threat and what we knew.

**Q:** Just days after you took command, you experienced the 14 March 2012 local national interpreter's incursion onto the flight line that happened to coincide with a visit from the Secretary of Defense (often referred to as the "burning man incident"). Some members of your staff told us that this incident exposed the bifurcated Command and Control (C2) structure between the US on Camp Leatherneck and the UK on Camp Bastion. Did you know about the C2 structure prior to the "burning man incident?"

**A:** No Sir, not really. I knew we had an MOU, but I did not read the MOU until afterwards.

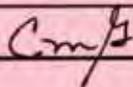
**Q:** An interviewee informed us that, after the "burning man incident," you expressed that the C2 arrangement violated a "flat ass rule" regarding Unity of Command from General Mattis' 5-3-5 card. Do you recall expressing that conclusion? Is the Unity of Command from the 5-3-5 card consistent with other Marine Corps doctrine?

**A:** I do recall expressing that, and yes it is consistent with Marine Corps doctrine.

**Q:** Were you aware of the 2011 CENTCOM-PJHQ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which apparently led to this C2 arrangement?

**A:** I had not read it and did not understand all the implications of it. It was never raised during turnover, so it was not something that I focused in on.

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Q: Did you discuss it with Brigadier Skeates? If so, what were his thoughts on the issue? Was the UK contingent at Camp Bastion opposed to the idea?

A: **We did discuss it, and they were concerned with it too after the incident. Yes, there was probably some opposition to it. But with Skeates working with their security guys, we had pretty good unity of effort and a clear understanding of who did what in terms of responsibilities. The line between Bastion and Leatherneck is not very wide, but there's also a gap.**

Q: (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) your former Chief of Staff, informed us that an attempt to change the C2 arrangement after the "burning man incident" met with "friction" at the IJC or ISAF level. Did you have any discussions with IJC or ISAF about changing the C2 arrangement? Do you recall where the "friction" came from?

A: **I didn't personally Sir, that I recall. I do remember conversations that I had with LtGen Bradshaw. He used to come down to Bastion pretty regularly as both the Deputy of ISAF and the UK NCA. But again, I think the result out of it was that it tightened up unity of effort even if it didn't fully fix the unity of command.**

Q: Please explain the atmosphere and pressure involved with the C2 arrangement on the BLS Complex. Did it cause you to accept a C2 arrangement that you knew was flawed?

A: **No, nobody put pressure on me one way or the other. It was clear that our number one partner there had an MOU that they were comfortable with. They took security and the Force Protection of their people as their responsibility. And quite frankly, I don't think it's unreasonable in coalition warfare to reach a point where you compromise a couple of absolutes to make sure that you have the best arrangement possible.**

Q: Did ISAF, IJC, or you at RC(SW) grant any waivers or other relaxation of AT/FP standards to coalition partners because of differing capabilities or manpower?

A: **I don't recall any specifically.**

Q: (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) also stated that the compromise of not unifying C2 was OP CONGO and the establishment of the CJOC. As you recall, OP CONGO set up a supported-supporting commander relationship for crisis response on the BLS Complex depending on where an incident took place. If an incident occurred on Camp Leatherneck, CO TFBW would be the supported commander and CO Bastion would be the supporting commander, and vice versa. After the 14 September 2012 attack on Camp Bastion, the JRB initial inquiry identified the C2 arrangement between TFBW and CO Bastion as the source of confusion, and stated that "the organization of Op Congo C2 architecture is not fully supportive of command and control of a crisis or USMC reporting requirements." Was this apparent prior to the attack, or only afterwards?

A: **I don't think it was apparent until after the attack.**

Q: (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) informed us that the C2 arrangement prevented him from inspecting the Camp Bastion guard towers and security procedures. Were you aware of that? If so, were you nonetheless comfortable with the perimeter security on Camp Bastion?

A: **I was still comfortable that they were still doing their job on the Bastion side.**

Q: Although there was no unity of command over AT/FP for the entire BLS Complex, what mechanisms were in place to ensure unity of effort with your UK and Afghan counterparts? If you identified an area of concern, did you have adequate means of expressing those concerns and rectifying the situation with your counterparts?

A: **We did have adequate means to address concerns. And you are on to a whole new level of interaction, one that we spent a lot of time tightening up, and that was security of the Shorabak piece, to the point where we could seal off Leatherneck from Shorabak at the Friendship Gate.**

Q: The JRB's Supplemental Review, which you approved in late November 2012, stated that the "burning man incident," "...raised concerns regarding the security of the flight line and its assets and access to critical areas within the Bastion airfield. This incident also demonstrated the need to improve airfield and perimeter security and to institute some level of increased access control to the airfield operating areas." How seriously did you take this concern? Did you direct anything to your staff in response? To 3d MAW (FWD)?

A: **We did some things in response to that, and so did the Brits. But the comments in that report were directed at an internal threat, not from someone coming in through the wire. But we did some things as a result, and also later as a result of the JSIVA. Like berming and ditching on the outside. And we had a pretty big effort placing concertina to limit and direct foot traffic on the airfield south end and east side. The Brits changed completely the way that they handled access to the airfield, and stopped access to it when we had VIPs with guards and barriers along the way. They also moved the gate to place that gave them better control.**

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Q: The JRB Supplemental Review identifies that a request for a perimeter fence around the airfield was denied by both the UK chain of command and by the BLS Executive Steering Group (ESG). Are you aware of the deliberations behind the ESG's decision to deny funding for the fence?

A: I was briefed on it afterwards by the Chief of Staff.

Q: Were the improvements adopted, e.g. a ditch and berm system, responsive to the threat identified by the "burning man incident"?

A: I think some of the ditching and berm addressed the major external threat that we still saw, which was the suicide bomb. And frankly, that was based on some of the attacks that we saw go on in other RCs. We saw it in RC East and RC South and there were some significant improvements in our ECPs. If I recall from the JSIVA, they had several comments about the ECPS, but the overall comment was that it was still adequate, still intimidating enough to make someone think twice about running the gate. As far as internal, we did have ECPs at the south and north end of the road so that you couldn't just access the flight line. We put in some new guard towers where (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) noticed some deficiencies out by the ammunition supply point that was being built out there. There were efforts undertaken (b)(1)1.4g and we eventually moved the Soak Lot. The fence was denied on the UK side, and I think it was cost and length of time to build when compared to the benefit of it. I think that's the same thing that the JFUB and ESG came to. The question was whether we were really getting anything by just adding another fence that we couldn't do with barriers and people.

Q: The JRB Supplemental Review addressed a 3d MAW request to emplace concertina wire to secure vulnerable areas around the flight line and to channelize pedestrian traffic to ECPs, which was approved and completed prior to the attack. There is also an exhibit in the Supplemental Review of a 3d MAW flight line barrier plan request (enclosure 7 of the supplemental review) submitted at the same time (11 May 2012) to emplace over (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4g to protect the flight

line. The request stated, "Without these improvements, the flight line equipment and personnel will remain vulnerable to enemy attack at multiple access points, including numerous high speed avenues of approach." This project was eventually approved after the attack. Do you recall why this request was not approved after the "burning man incident"? Did you discuss this request with MajGen Sturdevant?

A: Sir, I'm sure we discussed it but I don't know why specifically it was approved. We had a lot of competing assets for engineering assets throughout the AO. I'm not making an excuse, but I don't remember why and there were competing requirements.

Q: We've been informed by IJC, ISAF, and MARCENT that they could have supplied RC(SW) with AT/FP resources if RC(SW) had expressed the need. From your perspective, was the process for requesting AT/FP resources responsive to your needs at RC(SW)? What were your primary avenues for requesting resources? Were you ever denied AT/FP resources that you requested from a higher command?

A: I would say that they were responsive. I think if I would have asked for anything, I could get it. The big problem was with additional manpower. We withdrew 10,000 guys out of the battle space between 1 May and 30 September, so we'd taken a lot of hits in a lot of places. But I can't remember a time when LTG Terry or LTG Scaparrotti told me I couldn't have something I needed. Actually, there is one thing that we were denied by higher headquarters, and that's a request for the Active Denial System, the microwave piece. It got shot down at CentCom, I think by Gen Mattis personally. I'm not sure of the reason.

Q: Members of your staff have indicated that the "burning man incident" also highlighted the insider threat that you were already concerned with. What threats were you primarily concerned with? Threats from the ANA? Threats from local national (LN) and third country national (TCN) contractors?

A: Mine initially was the TCN population. Over time the ANA threat increased.

Q: What did you direct during your tenure in RC(SW) to address the insider threat?

A: We did a couple of things, Sir. Routine inspection of contractor living compounds. We enforced rules that I'm not sure were in the past. No electronics and obviously no weapons. Nothing that could record or take a picture. That was absolutely grounds for disbarment. And we disbarred people to be off the base within 24 hours. We also changed up the TFBW exercises and patrols on the base to let contractors know that we were watching. We stepped up the Counter Intelligence. I can't say enough about what (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and his guys did for us on the CI side. Some pretty phenomenal work that helped discourage other insider attacks.

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9. STATEMENT (Continued)

Q: Was TFBW responsible for vetting and security of all contractors, or was it split among the various Camps? If the latter, did you do anything to direct coordination of vetting and security with your UK and Afghan counterparts?

A: TFBW and IMCOM were the badging guys. We had to re-do the entire system, because there was not good control on that. People had expired badges, but TFBW and IMCOM reworked the badging process. TFBW did a good job of catching people with expired badges who were just waiting around to get rehired but were still living and eating on the compound. We tightened up a lot on contractors and badging.

Q: Were you comfortable with the counter-intelligence efforts aboard the BLS Complex?

A: As much as I could be considering the assets we had, Sir.

(b)(1)1.4c

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Q: How concerned were you with the threat posed by (b)(1)1.4c on Camp BLS?

A: I was always concerned about it, Sir. We tried our best to find workarounds for legal issues to eradicate the poppy ourselves. My lawyers went pretty hard on this with IJC and ISAF and the answer that came back was that the Afghans had to do it. We worked with the Afghans to do it, but it moved very slowly.

Q: Do you recall a brief from (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) in early June regarding a proposed operation to clear the LNs from encroaching on the base? What was your opinion on this proposed operation? What held it up?

A: I liked the proposal, but the problem was a legal matter on our side. We couldn't take those measures.

Q: (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) mentioned that he felt the BLS Complex was increasingly being probed? (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) also mentioned that the BLS Complex was always being probed? Did you share this concern? Was it brought to your attention?

A: What brought it to your attention was when you found a hole in the fence. Guys routinely patrolled the fence looking for holes. We had a lot of scrappers, mostly kids on motorcycles. We didn't know what they were doing, but we assumed the worst.

Q: When did you learn that a Joint Staff Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (JSIVA) team (led by Marine (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)) would be conducting an assessment of the BLS Complex?

A: I'm not sure, but we were briefed.

Q: You had been in command of RC(SW) for three months at the time of the JSIVA. How comfortable were you with TFBW's AT/FP Program at that point in time? Do you feel that they had made improvements since you took command?

A: I do feel that they made improvements. I think (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) made improvements starting the day he got there, and (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) continued to do so as well. It's a great credit to those two guys.

Q: Did you direct (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) to provide any assistance to TFBW in advance of the JSIVA?

A: I don't specifically remember, but it would be an expectation of him, and an expectation that the commanders would draw on him.

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## 9. STATEMENT (Continued)

Q: Who briefed you on the JSIVA's results?

A: I know it was the (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and I think (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was in there as well.

Q: The report states that a "vulnerability" is "a situation or circumstance that if left unchanged may result in the loss of life or damage to mission-essential resources." Did you get briefed on all six vulnerabilities assessed by the JSIVA team [flight line access exploitable; ECPs lack AT/FP design features; inadequate IDF protective shelters; no overhead cover for areas of large concentrations of personnel; inadequate or missing sidewall protection for assessed billeting and mission assets; inadequate Mass Warning and Notification System (MNWS) capability]?

A: Yes, Sir.

Q: Did you have any specific thoughts on the vulnerabilities? Did you provide input on where you were and were not willing to assume risk? Did you get involved, or did you direct your staff to get involved in the mitigation of the vulnerabilities?

A: I did get involved. I think the recommendations that the staff brought back to me were prudent, given the assets that we had and the threat that we had. While the JSIVA is good, you really have to weigh the cost against the benefit. They do a great job of finding everything, and the staff gave me great recommendations on where I would and would not assume the risk.

Q: What guidance did you give TFBW regarding the results of the JSIVA?

A: The guidance at that point in time went to the entire staff, because they were the ones oversight of the assets needed to help TFBW, like engineer assets, and the guidance was let's fix what we can fix of these.

Q: What guidance did you give 3d MAW (FWD) regarding the results of the JSIVA pertaining to the flight line?

A: I don't recall any specific direction to MajGen Sturdevant.

Q: Did you discuss the JSIVA with Brigadier Skeates, considering that two vulnerabilities (East Gate ECP and flight line) were on Camp Bastion?

A: Yes, Sir. He sat in the brief that I took as I recall. I think the Brits went back, and then they requested the fence, but I can't remember if it was then or after the "burning man incident." I think Skeates took the concerns back to the Brits as well, and I don't think they ignored him. Like I said earlier, they were pretty meticulous.

Q: (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) indicated that inputting vulnerabilities into the Core Vulnerability Assessment Management Program (CVAMP) is the best way to get visibility of those vulnerabilities to higher headquarters all the way up to the Joint Staff. The Report recommended that the TFBW CO and ATFPO both get access to CVAMP (they did not have access at the time) and input the results of the JSIVA. The Report also recommended that CO TFBW prioritize the identified vulnerabilities, identify mitigation strategies in the Risk Assessment field, and then approve the mitigation strategies in CVAMP. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) informed us that he left the mitigation to TFBW. Did you direct him to be more involved in the mitigation? Did you expect him to be? Do you know whether the JSIVA vulnerabilities were ever input into CVAMP or mitigation strategies developed?

A: The short answer is I don't know if they ever did. And I don't specifically recall telling (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) to make sure they were input. I think you would expect him to do it, but I didn't direct him to.

Q: The JSIVA report describes the flight line access at BLS Complex as an "exploitable" vulnerability and "thus, personnel and equipment are largely exposed." The primary AT/FP improvement recommended after the "burning man incident," namely the airfield perimeter fence, was denied. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) indicated that your staff did not use the JSIVA as new justification to seek flight line improvements, because RC(SW) felt that the ditch and berm project, which didn't get started until 7 September, mitigated the threat. Were you aware of this? Do you agree with that assessment based on what you knew and perceived at the time?

A: I do agree with that, Sir. I fully agree with that.

Q: Based on the vulnerabilities identified by the "burning man incident" and the JSIVA, did you consciously choose to assume risk based on the assessed threat, or did you think you were mitigating the identified risks? Please explain your calculus.

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## 9. STATEMENT (Continued)

A: I think the answer to that question is "yes" to both parts of it. I think the mitigation strategies that were put into place for the major concerns were, based on the threat and based on judgment, and based on the threat that I perceived at the time, were the right ones. And I did assume risk in the overhead cover and the barrier recommendations. I can give you an example from when I was the commander at 29 Palms. One of the biggest force protection concerns that I have is safety, and I had a JSIVA there. They put barriers around every parking lot of the barracks, so all the Marines and Sailors were now parking on the road. There was a hell of a lot more threat that one of them would get run over than it was that we would get a suicide bomber on 29 Palms. So that is an example of how the commander has to weigh the risk after the JSIVA comes through. Another one was a recommendation to fence the entire range impact area. There were 925 square miles of impact area, so unless the JSIVA team came with a check book instead of just advice, that wasn't happening. You have to balance the letter of the law with the threat. Again, I think the mitigation strategies we produced after the JSIVA at the BLS Complex were reasonable against the threat that we were facing, based on my judgment. Some of the projects would have required additional MILCON as we were trying to shrink the base and retrograde. We didn't know what the future of BLS was going to look like. I do remember that we were ordering a lot of T-walls after the JSIVA, but I don't remember specifically how many.

Q: The JRB Supplemental Review seemed to focus on the fact that an airfield perimeter fence, even if completed in response to the "burning man incident" or the JSIVA, would not have presented a barrier to the 14 September 2012 attackers. Even if true, couldn't other measures have been undertaken in response to these assessments? Did you discuss increasing the local security posture of 3d MAW Squadrons (additional ECPs, guards, patrols, lighting) with MajGen Sturdevant?

A: I think there was a continuous effort to improve the security, and I think MajGen Sturdevant got a lot of the right things put in place. Like the access points, even though there was not the other fence. I don't disagree with the conclusion that they could have gotten through another interior perimeter fence. They had already gotten through one fence, it was 0% illumination, and they were wearing US uniforms. There are a lot of "what-ifs" regarding what would have happened if we had built another fence around the airfield. But I think there were still constant looks at security and there were changes in routines, changes in patrols, that sort of thing. I think they were doing the prudent things for security based on the information we had on the threat prior to the attack.

Q: Did that specifically include 3d MAW and the Squadrons underneath? In other words, did Gregg Sturdevant respond to the burning man incident and the JSIVA?

A: I think everybody responded to it, but I can't sit here and give you specifics on everything that they did. We took the burning man incident very seriously, but primarily it made us look more inward than outward, and the external threat was still not what we considered the primary threat.

Q: The JRB Report mentioned that there was no guard force assigned to monitor the dead space between the perimeter guard towers and the flight line. Based on the unfettered access to the flight line and the dead space between it and the perimeter fence, some personnel have described the perimeter fence as a single point of failure. Although this was CO Bastion's area of responsibility, were you aware of this vulnerability? Did MajGen Sturdevant ever raise a concern about it?

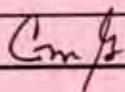
A: Sir, Gregg raised all kinds of concerns with me. I don't recall specifically him and me talking about that. He put security measures in, particularly when we moved people over to LSA 13. They had a guard tower that was not manned, but they had one that could be manned if they needed it to protect the LSA. I think he was taking prudent steps with his Squadrons and people living in the LSA to provide protection on that side for people internal to the Wing. But honestly, I don't know what every one of those steps was.

Q: Did you feel that Camp Bastion had an integrated, layered, defense-in-depth?

A: I did, based on what they were doing outside the wire with patrolling. Another threat we faced was small arms fire to the aircraft, and the UK took that mission very seriously with OP TESSERAL and patrolling the incoming and outgoing routes to the airfield. They also had patrolling inside the wire, and inspections at the wire. And with the patrols run outside of the wire. Based on the threat we knew at the time, in my judgment, I considered that they were doing what was prudent.

Q: Did MajGen Sturdevant ever express an inability of his Squadrons to provide their own internal security because of manpower shortages? Do you think they had enough manpower to do their mission and provide their own security?

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## 9. STATEMENT (Continued)

**A: I do recall him talking to me about the difficulty with being able to fix airplanes and stand guard. He was subject to the manpower cuts too, but we didn't cut from the Squadrons. We sliced aircrew and aircraft together. But he maintained most of what he went over there with. But we did have to cut some capability as time went on, and I know Gregg was in a personnel pinch. But so was everyone else.**

**Q: Your ATFPO, (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) assessed the UK forces as professional, but under-resourced and under-manned. Did this assessment make it to you? What was your own assessment prior to the attack?**

**A: That concern never got to me, either by the UK or by my own people.**

**Q: Did you have any specific concerns about the Tongan soldiers manning guard towers on Camp Bastion? If so, what were your concerns and who did you address them to?**

**A: No, Sir, I did not.**

**Q: Did Brigadier Skeates or anyone else ever express to you that the UK did not have enough forces to adequately protect Camp Bastion? Were you aware of any such shortage of manpower?**

**A: No, Sir, I was not.**

**Q: OP MOLEHILL was a daily security patrol that surveyed the inside of the perimeter fence every day in order to find and repair any breaches. UK forces conducted these patrols. Were you aware of them? Were you aware that OP MOLEHILL had had identified multiple breaches in the wire in the 3-4 months prior to the attack?**

**A: Yes, Sir, I was aware that they found cuts in the fence line.**

**Q: Did you receive the report about a video of an individual who breached the fence at night and looked around inside an empty guard tower. If you received these reports, what was your response to them?**

**A: I did receive the report. He was under observation at the time. One of the legitimate concerns and questions that we had, particularly as we brought Triple Canopy on, but with Marines too is that we wanted the people working the perimeter to know that a lot of these people who were scrapping were kids. And I have to tell you, you have a hard time convincing someone to shoot a kid. So maybe we were too tolerant, but when you shoot and kill a 14 year old kid, that would have a big impact. I think the Marines and Triple Canopy too - they were very professional as well - used good judgment because they knew what that impact could be on the local area and the Afghans. But that guy never should have gotten inside the wire. We had another unfortunate instance after the attack where Triple Canopy rightfully shot and killed a guy climbing over the fence who turned out to be an Afghan Soldier returning from leave.**

**Q: The UK personnel apparently characterized the breaches as scrapping activity. Should this have been investigated more thoroughly, or was it reasonable at the time to assume this was scrapping activity?**

**A: I think it was reasonable judgment that it was scrapping activity. There was a long history of the scrapping. I've been on aircraft where the guys test fired their weapons, and the motorcycles would immediately be on their way to try and get the brass. That's one reason we requested the ADM, to try and stop killing these guys.**

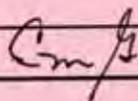
**Q: Any idea why that scrapping activity would occur over on the east side where there was literally nothing in between the fence and the airfield?**

**A: No, Sir.**

**Q: The report also mentions that TFBW with support from the 215<sup>th</sup> ANA Corps patrolled daily outside the perimeter fence. What was your knowledge of these patrols? Did you feel that the SECFOR was trained and proficient?**

**A: Yes, I did think they were trained and proficient. And they incorporated the Jordanians into their patrolling. With the Afghans patrolling, and I recall (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) jumping on that pretty hard when we got there, it gave us Afghan presence and a better level of protection because you had people who could talk to the locals. It was also part of the partnering and training to get them more serious about protecting themselves.**

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## 9. STATEMENT (Continued)

Q: RC(SW) obviously had a significant drawdown in personnel during 2012. Can you again give us an overview of the cuts you faced?

A: There were about 17,800 Marines in RC(SW) when we first got there. Our cut of phase II surge recovery was a little over 10,000, because we were originally mandated to go down to 6,300. The final number was 6,900 and we had exemptions that brought us to 7,400. This had to be done by 30 September 2012.

Q: (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) told us that his patrolling SECFOR (2nd BN 10th Marines) had been cut from approximately 310 to 210, and that they were working 18 hour days at that number. When informed that he would be cut another 100, he recalled informing you that he would only be able to patrol 2-3 times a day at that number. Do you recall this conversation? What impact did you believe the cut in SECFOR would have?

A: I do recall the conversations. The impact of the cut was that you had to assume more risk. But there's something else that needs to be put into context, and that is that we were in the process of hiring and bringing in Triple Canopy. His overall numbers came down, but he had a guard force from Triple Canopy. We also provided a "camp tax" to help him man the internal piece with the chow halls and things like that.

Q: Please describe how you managed the balance between Force Protection and the mission. Would pulling forces from TF Leatherneck or another source to reinforce the SECFOR have negatively impacted the mission?

A: Yes, Sir. We were reducing the battle space and collapsing units, so we were assuming more risk throughout the battle space. Where I was willing to assume the least risk was where I assessed the main effort to be, which was in the northern area. And we were drawing down there as well. We went from three infantry battalions to one in the north.

Q: Do you know whether the TFBW SECFOR number ever dropped to 110 after (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) departure in June 2012? Did you do anything to try and mitigate this loss or risk? Do you know how many patrols were being conducted per day and night at the time of the attack?

A: The number of Marines I'm pretty certain got to 110. We had to do that to get down to our mandated number.

Q: Did you do anything to mitigate this?

A: Sir, I'll reiterate a few things. We had the Jordanians as part of that force. We had more partnering with the Afghans. And we had Triple Canopy to relieve some pressure on the guard posts. But there's no doubt that the numbers caused us to assume more risk.

Q: Do you know how many patrols you were down to?

A: I don't know specifically, and it probably wasn't the same every day, and it definitely wasn't at the same times or to the same places.

Q: We've been told that these external patrols had reduced their visibility to the local populace in the days preceding the attack due to the anti-Islam YouTube video that had sparked violence in the Middle East in the days leading up to the attack. Were you aware of this? Were you ordered to do this, or was it your decision based on the sensitivities involved? Do you recall an order for OP MINIMIZE? Was there any increase in FPCON or other posture on the BLS Complex due to the video? If so, had this been directed from higher or was it your decision?

A: That was across the entire theater. As I recall, there was direction from above to limit exposure. It was prudent at that time. There were a lot of things going on leading us to believe that the threat was internal. The video, the (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) killings, and others. There had been a real spike in the green-on-blue, so that was going on at the time too. We put a lot of focus on this area. We created five teams to address the green-on-blue and they travelled around to all the FOBs, COPs, and patrol bases. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was focused on this, and as I mentioned earlier, he was primarily focused external to the BLS Complex. We were looking for mechanical solutions, we were looking for Science and Technology solutions, and we took a look at the facilities, internal and external. And it was also a training thing between US and Afghans. We lost six Marines during that time, and the UK lost seven I believe. So we were focusing on the whole AO for force protection, but mainly looking inward. The attack was right on the heels of all of this.

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## 9. STATEMENT (Continued)

Q: Did you have an increase in FPCON?

A: I don't recall being told to raise FPCON levels. We did raise ours, and that was at the recommendation of TFBW.

Q: Do you feel that TFBW had enough personnel to conduct its assigned mission both inside the perimeter and outside in AO Belleau Wood?

A: That's a tough one, Sir. No. In all honesty, no. And I'm the guy that approved all of the cuts in the different areas. And I did it based on threat, based on judgment, and based on the number that I had to get down to. And balancing that with the larger mission.

Q: Where were you during the attack on 14-15 September 2012?

A: I was in my Headquarters that night, Sir.

Q: Based on your experience of living and working on the BLS Complex, what were your initial thoughts as the attack unfolded?

A: My initial reaction was indirect fire. We subsequently learned that it was RPGs and aircraft explosions.

Q: Please describe what actions you took throughout the engagement.

A: We got a sight picture pretty quickly. The reaction of the Marine and UK response forces was pretty doggone quick, I thought. What we did not know was how many attackers we had, how many had been killed, how far they had gotten in. The ground attack alarm went off. I was getting pretty regular updates from Gregg Sturdevant as he got them from his Squadrons. My first phone call went to LTG Terry. The second went to LtGen Neller, I woke him up. I think I had even talked to the Commandant by the end of the evening to let him know what we had going on. I was in the Headquarters. I wasn't telling (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) how to move squads around. I wasn't telling the UK what to do. That's what they got paid to do, so I was just getting the updates and I let them do their job.

(b)(1)1.4c

Q: Did you get any specific information regarding how the guards in Towers 15 and 17 missed the infiltration and breach? Did you learn afterwards that only Tower 17 had direct line of sight to the breach point?

A: Nothing specific until you went back out and looked at the breach site. And one of the key factors was that it was absolutely 0% illum that night.

Q: Did you receive any indications and warnings (I&amp;W) prior to the attack? In your post-attack analysis, did you discover a failure in dissemination of I&amp;W?

A: Nothing specific. In retrospect, we went back and looked at the reports and there was one maybe a week to 10 days before where one of our insurgent commanders, one who normally worked further south near Marjeh, had requested some aid to attack a coalition force base or Marjeh. I'm remembering that from some of the work that was done afterwards, Sir.

(b)(1)1.4c

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## 9. STATEMENT (Continued)

Q: Were the UK forces supportive of changing the collection gap out there on the east side?

A: I'll tell you what they did do. They chopped forces from TF Helmand, assuming risk in other places, to beef up their security of the airfield and outside for patrolling.

(b)(1)1.4c

A: Now you've got a newly identified threat, and that we would be subjected to other attempts. One of the propaganda videos released afterwards by the Taliban showed footage taken on the base well prior to the attack. You can tell because the helicopter it shows hovering is a CH-53D, and the last one of those left theater in mid-August 2012. The plumes of smoke in that video were from our trash piles. Somebody had captured that video though with their cell phone or something, but it was taken well before the attack.

Q: The BLS Complex underwent, and is still undergoing, significant AT/FP improvements. What do you attribute this to? (Knee-jerk reaction? Prior complacency? New threat?)

A: In all honesty, now you have a new threat and we didn't think it was going to go away. And we had to look at other bases throughout the AO. I don't think we were complacent before the attack. We had both Marines and UK forces routinely patrolling inside and outside of the perimeter. I just don't think they got complacent. We changed up our looks on the base, we changed up the patrolling, we conducted exercises on the base to address the threat we assessed at the time, we changed up the looks at the ECPs, it was not complacency in my judgment.

Q: RC(SW) established a BLS Complex Force Protection OPT and a Counter-Threat Working Group led by the RC(SW) DCOM in the aftermath of the attack. Did the attack lead you to believe that you had a lack of senior leader oversight on AT/FP prior to the attack?

A: No Sir, it really didn't. There was nothing that caused me to go "if I'd only done this." I've thought about it a hundred times, and I'm not sure given exactly what we knew, exactly what the commanders on the ground knew at the time, that we would have done anything differently.

Q: After the attack in December, you released a FRAGO unifying the C2 structure and making the 3d MAW (FWD) CO the Camp BLS CO. Did the UK agree with this change? Had the attack changed the environment such that this change was now tenable, or did you simply decide that it had to be done regardless?

A: That's why it took until December, Sir. There was a lot of work that had to be done, and the credit goes to Stuart Skeates. There was some reluctance on the UK, but the environment had been changed after the attack. It still required some work, and I still got some push-back, but it was now clear that we were going to have one person in charge.

Q: Did you identify any complacency or lack of discipline regarding Force Protection by US personnel prior to the attack? By UK personnel? If so, what do you attribute this to?

A: Never outside of the wire. Where I did notice some complacency and where I spent a great deal of time with the commanders to address was on the base. People walking around the base not paying attention to what was going on. That was the complacency that we had, and what we did fight. We had good FP in and around our dining facilities. There were a lot of good actions going on all the time. But we did focus on the awareness of the individual Marine. But I don't think the Security Forces ever got complacent or sloppy. I also did not see complacency or lack of discipline from the UK forces.

Q: One interview informed us that the attitude of personnel on the BLS Complex might have been that it was "too big to fail." Do you agree? Do you believe that TFBW personnel displayed this attitude? Did your UK or Afghan counterparts?

A: No Sir I don't, because I know how much energy they put into force protection.

(b)(1)1.4c

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9. STATEMENT (Continued)

A: Yes, it was known, but what was not known was the specific target. And this was a part of the threat I was more worried about, and it was the suicide bomber threat at one of the ECPs to gain access. And that was the TTP du jour that we were seeing. I think RC East had a couple, and I think RC South had one that was a pretty big VBIED. We had seen one of those in one of our own police stations, where three guys with suicide vests were able to take out the guards and get inside. That played into the threat that we were most concerned about.

(b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4d

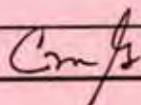
Q: Do you have anything to add?

A: One thing that I'll add about the reaction to the attack. I don't know that I've ever been prouder of a bunch, to include the UK and the Marines who responded to the attack. People reacted like we would expect them to, and it says a lot about how we train Marines and Soldiers. I think the same for the Brits. This could have been a hell of a lot worse. I think there were some true heroics that night. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) no doubt. The Cobra Squadron skipper and his crews who got aircraft off the ground in the middle of this, no doubt. And what we didn't know right away was how quickly they contained this. Ten out of the fifteen of them never made it to their objectives. The reaction to this and how they responded, just to pick up on the fact that they were wearing US uniforms, and the danger that created. I carry it to bed with me every night, and in the mornings when I wake up too, that we lost two Marines that night, and I carry the other Marines that we lost too. None of these go away, but the response that night by the Marines, by the leadership of the security forces, and the discipline that the individuals showed, I have to tell you it makes me proud to be a Marine. Did we do everything that we could have? It's easier to see on this side of the attack than it was on the other side of the attack. I think the UK forces arrived well-trained. And they took dead seriously what they were doing there. They were constantly trying to improve their force protection within the bounds of what was prudent in light of the threat. I think (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and later on (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) I don't think they got into a routine. I think I made some decisions where I didn't give them everything that they wanted, but it was done in the context of the drawdown. My hat goes off to them, because I don't know how many of these they spoiled.

Q: Do you have anything to add that would be relevant to this investigation?

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Q: We have interviewed, or will interview, key leaders in RC(SW) (including subordinate units), IJC, ISAF, and MARCENT. We have also submitted written questions to Lt Gen Bradshaw, Brigadier Skeates, CO Bastion, and CO 5 FP Wing from the UK. Do you have anyone in particular you think we should interview?

A: No Sir, it sounds like you've spoken to the people necessary to give you a good picture of what we had going on there.

Approved for Release

**AFFIDAVIT**

I, Charles M. Gurganus HAVE READ OR HAVE HAD READ TO ME THIS STATEMENT WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 1 AND ENDS ON PAGE 1. 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 INDUCEMENT.

WITNESS

Charles M. Gurganus  
(Signature of Person Making Statement)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this 15th day of July 2013 at (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

10 USC 3104A  
(Authority TO Administer Oaths)

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