



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES COMMAND  
4700 KNOX STREET  
FORT BRAGG, NC 28310-5000

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

AFDC

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

**SUBJECT:** AR 15-6 Interview with (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c  
(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c, Regional Command Southwest [RC(SW)]

1. The investigation team conducted a recorded interview with (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c RC(SW) on 11 June 2013 at Quantico, VA as part of the AR 15-6 investigation into the 14-15 September 2012 attack on the Camps Bastion-Leatherneck-Shorabak Complex in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c has subsequently retired from the US Marine Corps, and he is currently unavailable to sign and return a sworn statement. The purpose of this memorandum is to certify that the dialogue transcribed below is an accurate account of the interview with (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c. The recorded interview is on file with the investigative team.

**Q: Where are you currently assigned?**

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

**Q: What is your current duty position?**

**A:** I'm the (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c of Marine Forces Command.

**Q: What is your background in the Marine Corps?**

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

**Q: What was your duty position at the time of the 14-15 September 2012 attack on the Camps Bastion-Leatherneck-Shorabak (BLS) Complex?**

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c

**Q: What did you feel were your primary responsibilities as (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c of RC(SW)?**

**A:** My duties were typical of a (b)(3), (b)(6); be the eyes and ears for the commander - get out, see the place, drive around, visit the posts, check out the gates that

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separated those three posts – 215<sup>th</sup> ANA Corps on Shorabak, the UK Forces on Bastion, and the Marines on Camp Leatherneck.

**Q: Were you headquartered at Camp Leatherneck the entire time?**

**A: Yes, Sir.**

**Q: How often did you interact with the CSMs at IJC who spanned your time in Afghanistan? On what matters did you generally interact?**

**A: Yes, probably once every 30-45 days or so. Whenever there was any kind of commander's critical incident report, I would always call my higher level SgtMaj's and let them know what was going on in Helmand Province. We also had a weekly report, but as far as personal interaction about every 30-45 days.**

**Q: Where were you when you learned of the attack at the BLS Complex on 14-15 September 2012?**

**A: I was in Norfolk, VA.**

**Q: Based on your experience of living on the BLS Complex, what were your initial thoughts?**

**A: I was actually surprised. Camp Leatherneck was strategically placed in the middle of the desert. That was their number one defense. There was a Combat Operations Center that had Afghanistan represented, that had the UK represented, and also Camp Leatherneck, so everyone on the BLS Complex. Of course, we had our normal GBOSS towers, and our guard towers that were filled. Not all of them were filled, but probably every third or fourth tower. There were all the Marines and Sailors, and all the coalition force members armed all the time; so I was very surprised, quite a bold attack from the word I got on it.**

**Q: Prior to the attack, what was your assessment of Force Protection on the BLS Complex? Did you ever express any concerns regarding AT/FP on the BLS Complex? If so, what were those concerns?**

**A: The isolation plus the normal measures that you take when you're in a defensive position you are going to continue to reinforce and build your position. I felt like that was ongoing. It's normal for all Marines, so I expect that continued after we were relieved in March of 2012. I felt very safe and secure in what we were doing or should be doing.**

**Q: What was your impression of the UK's ability to protect Camp Bastion?**

**A: I don't think there was a real difference between them and us. The impression that I get with the UK Forces is they are very relaxed with their weapons, they know how to handle them, they know how to carry themselves, and often times they were probably more conscience and more alert in their positions then even**

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we were, and of course we take it very seriously, whether it be individual security or group security.

**Q:** Did you have any concerns about Command and Control at the top, in terms of if the base was attacked by an insider threat or externally?

**A:** I feel that they were straight and that we communicated. Again, we had that Joint Combat Operations Center right in the middle of the 3 complexes and there were actually no concerns. If we had a concern we would have talked about it, and we would have seen responses very quickly and we did. For instance, at the Friendship Gate, the gate that separated 215th Corps and Camp Leatherneck, we continually made improvements there.

**Q:** I got the impression that if you can get access to Leatherneck or Bastion, if you are a third country national or local national, that once you got access, you could get access to the whole base, there were no internal check points or boundaries or Leatherneck wasn't t-walled off from Bastion or that kind of thing, is that accurate?

**A:** Leatherneck was walled off or fenced off from Shorabak, as far as Bastion and Leatherneck it wasn't really fenced off, so you could in fact go from Bastion to Leatherneck or vice versa while I was there.

**Q:** (b)(3), (b)(6) while you were there, were you seeing a lot of insider attacks, and can you share your thoughts on that as you look at Camp BLS and what was occurring there? Was there concern about that?

**A:** Always a concern every day, always talked about it. We were always reminding our forces as we got out and travelled throughout Helmand Province. We understood that we had Camp Leatherneck, Bastion and Shorabak with well over 20,000 coalition service members. We would certainly be a lucrative target, so we paid attention to it.

**Q:** Were you and General Toolan focused primarily externally, or did you also feel you and your boss had a rear fight that you had to pay attention to as well?

**A:** I felt that General Toolan was always worried about security at the individual and the group level; after-all he was commander RC(SW).

**Q:** Did General Toolan ever express concern about Force Protection at Camp BLS?

**A:** He and I talked from time to time on runs or just riding together "we need to do this or we need to do that" or maybe things like the main entry point that allowed people on to Camp Bastion/Leatherneck. Again always improving; always thinking what the enemy might do with all that truck traffic coming and going each day.

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**Q: Did General Toolin ever express concern about US Marines, Soldiers, Sailors, or any other US uniformed people not adhering to standards or those kind of things because they were in a FOB environment?**

**A: No Sir not at all. Always armed with weapon and ammunition; always in the proper uniform; no head gear as it is not authorized, always uniform in appearance; adhering to safety regulations when you are driving a vehicle, speed limits all those kind of things that aid drivers. We constantly worked at it. Were we perfect at it? I'm sure we weren't, but we policed it when we saw it.**

**Q: So in your view RC(SW) was not just sitting on Camp BLS managing a fight outside the wire, you were also paying attention internally?**

**A: Absolutely, probably 8,000 Third Country Nationals, the 215th Corps right there, people coming and going all the time; it was a power projection base not some isolated place where the enemy couldn't touch us.**

**Q: Was Task Force Belleau Wood there when you were there?**

**A: Absolutely.**

**Q: What was your relationship like with the [redacted] there?**

**A: [redacted] was the MEF Headquarters Group [redacted]**

**[redacted] was the MEF Headquarters Group Commander. They were very aggressive not only internally but externally patrolling in the Washer District, which is the District in Helmand Province where Leathernecks is. [redacted]**

**[redacted] got a combat action ribbon while he was out on a patrol, and so we were aware of the dangers. And I've done shuras with the local governor there, the district governor. We were aware that we needed to have presence known outside the wire.**

**Q: Did you participate in any Anti-Terrorism Force Protection working groups or meetings?**

**A: I don't think I sat in on any working groups, that was more of a MEF Headquarters Group action, but when these things came up and there were ever any questions, they would come up at the staff meetings or informal meetings and we addressed them.**

**Q: Who in the RC(SW) Chain of Command was primarily responsible for reporting to General Toolan on Force Protection Measures?**

**A: Task Force Belleau Wood, which was [redacted]**

**Q: Was it primarily [redacted] or was it his Task Force ATFPO who did that?**

**A: [redacted] being the commander, but of course he had people who worked for him, his Anti-Terrorism Force Protection Officer.**

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Q: As you moved around and talked to other (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c, did any of them ever raise any concerns to you in regarding Anti-Terrorism or Force Protection?

A: We had many ISAF sergeant majors visit our camp. We had an on-going professional relationship so that we gleaned from each other lessons learned and so on and so on. When they came to our camp I am proud to say that 1: Clean, 2: Uniformity among the personnel, 3: You have security and it looks like everything is in perfect order as it should be.

Q: If they had picked up any concerns how would you have addressed those, did you have some mechanism you used or was it just like most (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c would do, just fix it?

A: We are going to fix it. I would take that as an informal, "hey (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c you need to pay attention to that." I would say "you're absolutely right." Those kind of things are clear to us and as needed, it would have been brought up to the chain of command.

Q: As you moved around did you have any concerns about the AT/FP posture on the Camp Bastion side on the BLS complex, particularly on the flight line where we had that penetration later?

A: No sir, we were there all the time. The only thing we were worried about on the flight line side was that the building for the third country nationals was right there, so there were a lot of people. We had sweeps through there all the time to make sure that we weren't getting any contraband or anything that didn't seem right. But that was a vulnerability, and we knew about it so we were there all the time.

Q: Was General Toolan aware that area was vulnerable?

A: Yes sir, I think, absolutely.

Q: Did you have a Brit Counterpart, someone you interacted with on the Brit side?

A: Not me, but I did interact with the garrison SgtMaj and he was counterpart to

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

Q: How often did you guys meet or talk; was it formal or informal?

A: (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c met with all the (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c that were his counterparts in that area at least once a week or once every two weeks. I would go and just sit in on some of those meetings to just see what was going on and to connect with them.

Q: During those meetings did anybody identify any significant FP concerns?

A: No Sir, again, nothing formal; nothing that we talked about and it was a problem and it was ongoing that we didn't fix or we didn't formally address.

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Q: You and the (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c were pretty satisfied?

A: Satisfied but certainly not complacent.

Q: How much do you know about the local national interpreter's incursion onto the flight line in March 2012 while Secretary Panetta was present on BLS (aka the "burning man incident)? Were you involved at all with any mitigation of risk to the flight line after that incident? If so, please describe. Based on the known and expected threat of attack prior to the 14 September attack, do you feel that the attempted mitigation measures were adequate?

A: That was after we had left. We TOA'd with I MEF FWD on I believe the 15th of March of '12. Hearing about that, which I believe happened in the later part of March, was a surprise. That might have been the result of an insider threat, as I was told, that may have originated at Shorabak amongst that group.

Q: Do you think that incident revealed an insider threat capability that perhaps was underestimated by the Brits and the US?

A: I don't think so. I think that the enemy had to get creative and we've seen that throughout the ground combat. They're not going to stand toe-to-toe with us; they don't have tanks and aircraft and so on. So they're going to fight us the best way they can and hurt us the best way they can. I say surprised because of our mechanisms that we had in place for protection and safety and security but not surprised as in the enemy doing what they can do to hurt us, kill us; not surprised by that.

Q. Some of the folks that we talked to have indicated some concern about the vetting process for the LNs and TCNs. What was your opinion on that?

A: It was difficult. When you start talking about that, and keeping records of who you've seen, the best safety mechanism was the immediate face-to-face. I felt like the coalition forces combined with our UK and US forces, we were doing absolutely all we could to make sure that we had people who were authorized to be on those camps. Many people were turned away. If there was any question or any suspicion of course it was documented, they were turned away, and it was something that we kept records on as much as possible.

Q: Was that vetting done in a central place on Camp BLS; in other words, did the Brits have the same standard for vetting that the US did?

A: I think that the idea was to move on to a standard that was acceptable for everyone but I can't speak directly to that sir.

Q. Did you observe anyone in the RC(SW) chain of command request assistance from IJC or MARCENT regarding FP in terms of "we need more money, people, authorities," any discussion like that with IJC or CENTCOM or MARCENT?

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A: We had a certain number of personnel, as I remember, that we wanted to maintain. We had a reserve battalion that was under Task Force Belleau Wood. There were times where we had to shift forces to augment them; fleet assistance programs and other things. We knew, especially towards the end of our tour, that we were drawing down, but we were still maintaining as much as possible to standards. That kind of comes with the end as we draw down, so they were normal concerns.

Q: Did you ever observe complacency on the part of US personnel, UK forces, the Tongans, Jordanians or anybody else providing Force Protection for the BLS Complex? There's been some concern expressed for example the Tongans and the fact that they sleep in the vicinity of their towers or on their towers, any concerns there?

A: No sir to be honest I didn't have that concern. I don't think that (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c would have tolerated it. I don't think that (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c would have tolerated it. And again, we all got out there and went through that main entry point and I didn't find any complacency. The UK had their military working dogs going through the trucks, working hard. They wanted to do a good job; same thing with the Tongans and the Jordanians.

Q: Did you have a chance to talk to General Toolan after the attack on 14/15 September, and discuss how maybe the chances of an attack could have been mitigated?

A: We haven't communicated at all about that sir.

Q. Can you talk about your transition with (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c what you may have discussed regarding FP, any tips you gave him and things of that nature?

A: During our turnover, which lasted approximately 2 weeks, we walked around. I got him through the main and secondary entry control points. Got him out to see how people were living in the community-type areas like chow halls and look at the back scans to give him a good sense of what we had established for security, so just the normal turnover, knowing that we're turning over not in the garrison environment, but in the combat environment. I just walked him through as much as possible. I feel 100 percent today that I told him everything that I knew about what was important and that he was capable and ready to do what needed to be done.

Q. Was TFBW transitioning at the same time or were they off-cycle to you?

A: The good thing about the way we set it up is that TFBW actually transitioned about two months earlier and so we got (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)c onboard, and they were aggressively doing what we had established in the MEF headquarters group; patrols and so on.

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Q. When you were leaving, how far in the drawdown had you gotten?

A: At one point, American and coalition forces we were approximately 31-32 thousand strong and by the time we left we were sitting at something like 27,500; so it wasn't significant.

Q. But you said at that time not every single tower was filled around the base. You said something like every third or fourth tower, right?

A: That's correct, sir. You've probably seen the layout of the towers; they're very close together. They were established so that you could man those towers had you had an offensive against you. They weren't necessarily designed so that everybody would fill them all the time.

Q. So even when you had plenty of people you just didn't fill every tower because it wasn't necessary because of their location and overlap?

A: Right, it was in the traditional form of primary and secondary defensive positions.

Q. The Marine Air Wing that was on the flight line, they were in the Bastion side basically and the UK was responsible for FP there. Did they ever express any specific concerns to you or do you know if they ever expressed any concerns up to the RC(SW) chain of command regarding that relationship with the UK; any requests for a barrier plan or anything like that?

A: I'm unaware of it and as best as I can remember, it was never expressed. Certainly we would have went out and taken a look at it and addressed it and seen what needed to be done if there was any concern that we weren't maintaining security of our people.

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

A: None sir.

2. Point of contact for this memorandum is my legal advisor, (b)(6), (b)(7)c, at

(b)(6) or (b)(6), (b)(7)c



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