DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HEADQUARTERS, COMBINED/JOINT TASK FORCE (CJTF)-82
BAGRAM AIRFIELD, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09354

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

CJTF-82 19 November 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Interview with (b)(3), (b)(6) Regarding Operations in the Ganjgal Valley on 8 September 2009

1. (b)(3), (b)(6) serves as the Officer In Charge (OIC), of Embedded Training Team (ETT) 2-8. He has held this position since the end of July 2009. (b)(3), (b)(6) participated in the planning of the subject operation and was present in the Ganjgal Valley during the ambush on 8 September 2009.

2. The substance of (b)(3), (b)(6) 17 November 2009 statement is summarized below:

a. The concept of the operation into the Ganjgal Valley on 8 September 2009 was to build on and exploit the success of a similar mission in a neighboring village, Dam Darya, on 3 September 2009. Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) led development, planning, and execution of both missions.

b. At the time of the mission (b)(3), (b)(6) and ETT 2-8 had been serving in Kunar Province for approximately six weeks.

c. (b)(3), (b)(6) is a combat engineer officer with a previous deployment to Iraq. Prior to deployment to Afghanistan, (b)(3), (b)(6) served as Executive Officer of a combat assault battalion in Okinawa, Japan. (b)(3), (b)(6) also served as the acting commander of his battalion for approximately one year when the commander deployed as an ETT OIC.

d. (b)(3), (b)(6) commented that the composition of ETT 2-8 is not necessarily undermanned but that Lieutenants serve in Captain billets. There are (b)(2)High members of (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) ETT, who are assigned to three or more forward operating bases (FOBs). The numbers and composition of his ETT do not affect his mission to train and advise the Afghan National Army (ANA), (b)(2)High to travel in a convoy of (b)(2)High, (b)(3), (b)(6) commented his team members all volunteered for this training/advisory assignment. (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) feels all Marines are riflemen and assigns them to separate FOB's with the ANA Kandak based on their personalities, strengths, and weaknesses.
[Col (b)(3), (b)(6) comment – standard practice within 3d Marine Division to fill their tasked ETT quota's includes screening personnel for proper MOS and/or combat experience, mental and physical suitability, and also for volunteers to serve as embedded trainers/advisors, due to the rigors of this duty.]

EXHIBIT III – 3 A.1

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e. (b)(3), (b)(6) viewed his relationship with TF Chosin (1-32 Infantry Regiment), the battlespace owner, and TF Mountain Warrior (4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division), as mutually supporting relationships. He stated that the ANA conducted independent operations. As their (b)(3), (b)(6) would ensure the ANA's operations were communicated to TF Chosin. He stated that the ANA would not necessarily ask for permission to conduct an operation but would notify TF Chosin of the concept of operations. (b)(3), (b)(6) did not know of any Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement between TF Chosin and the ETT.

f. (b)(3), (b)(6) coordinated the subject operation with the planning team provided by TF Chosin. (b)(3), (b)(6) assumed that the TF Chosin planners would adequately coordinate the operation with TF Chosin. The planners met with him and represented themselves with the knowledge and experience of individuals in positions of authority. Mainly involved in the planning process for this mission was (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(2)High (b)(2)High and CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) the (b)(2)High . CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) made it clear during planning of the mission that dedicated (b)(2)High (b)(2)High , but he asserted they could be diverted easily or directed to Ganjgal if needed. (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that he believed he had indirect fire support, but he also did not (b)(2)High

g. At 0530 on 8 September 2009, (b)(3), (b)(6) was physically located at the rear of the lead (b)(2)High as they headed towards Ganjgal village. The three Marines and Sailor that were later killed were at the point of the lead platoon. (b)(3), (b)(6) cannot say with certainty whether the members of the lead element ever made it into a building, but he does not believe they made it to the village.

h. At 0550 (b)(3), (b)(6) realized that the Anti-Afghan Forces (AAF) were maneuvering on them and the rate and volume of fire was rapidly increasing.

i. At 0630 (b)(3), (b)(6) recognized that the engagement was serious and was a well planned ambush.

j. 0730 was the last time (b)(3), (b)(6) heard from the Marines that were killed.

k. (b)(3), (b)(6) did not have direct communications with the TF Chosin Tactical Operation Center (TOC) during the operation. (b)(3), (b)(6) stated (b)(2)High (b)(2)High would not have been practicable for the mission during their movement into the village, and he did not use (b)(2)High at the vehicle Objective Rally Point (ORP). (b)(3), (b)(6) attempted to use relay communication between his ground unit and the TF Chosin TOC through the (b)(2)High which was positioned for this purpose on an over-watching hill. (b)(3), (b)(6) was able to monitor the relays from the (b)(2)High to the TF Chosin TOC. (b)(3), (b)(6) monitored the ETT radio net for the most part. He stated he allowed (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(2)High to conduct most of the radio

communications to avoid confusion and keep the frequencies de-conflicted. (b)(3), (b)(6) did not talk to the scout element on the high ground himself.

l. (b)(3), (b)(6) was shot in the arm at 0630 but continued his duties for another two to three hours before being evacuated. (b)(3), (b)(6) USMC, the ETT Staff Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge, co-located with (b)(3), (b)(6) suffered a concussion from a Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) at approximately the same time and later became delirious, forcing the decision for both to be evacuated. (b)(3), (b)(6) thought the battle was "out of control" when he was injured.

m. (b)(3), (b)(6) stated he tried to get indirect fire support from TF Chosin, specifically (b)(2)High to clear his element's attempt to break contact. (b)(3), (b)(6) believed the fire support would be (b)(2)High landed in approximately the requested locations of the called fire mission.

n. (b)(3), (b)(6) remembered asking for CCA at least three times. Each time he made the request, communication relayed back to him in return was that (b)(2)High

o. (b)(3), (b)(6) acknowledged the presence of a reporter, (b)(6) during the engagement. (b)(6) was embedded with his team on the order of his Brigade level ANA Advisor. (b)(6) had been with the unit since 4 or 5 September 2009.

p. (b)(3), (b)(6) made the decision to declare the Marines in the point element "missing." He did not recall the time but remembers it was well into the morning.

q. (b)(3), (b)(6) was aware that (b)(2)High provided a platoon as an attack by fire position to maintain awareness of the entrance to the valley to the West of Ganjgal village. The day before the operation it was determined that this platoon would also serve as the Quick Reaction Force (QRF). During the engagement, (b)(3), (b)(6) asked the (b)(2)High platoon to push further into the valley, however, they did not. (b)(3), (b)(6) stated there were ETT and ANA (b)(2)High available at the ORP, equipped with (b)(2)High (b)(2)High

r. During the fight (b)(3), (b)(6) called the ANA Kandak Commander, (b)(6) (1st Kandak, 2D Brigade) on leave in Kabul, on a cell phone to report the situation and request ANA support. The ANA sent a QRF from FOB Joyce which arrived sometime in the morning, engaged the enemy and assisted with casualty evacuation.

s. (b)(3), (b)(6) stated (b)(6) the ANA S3 , (1st Kandak, 2D Brigade) led the ground forces during the subject operation and the U.S. forces' responsibility was to provide support. (b)(3), (b)(6) says the ANA fought well throughout the engagement.

t. (b)(3), (b)(6) spoke with (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(2)High prior to the operation. (b)(3), (b)(6) did not participate in any of the planning meetings for the subject operation. (b)(3), (b)(6) conversations with (b)(3), (b)(6) about the operation did not concern the specific details, rather, they focused on the opportunity to exploit the previous mission's success and the good timing of the operation.

3. (b)(3), (b)(6) offered the following lessons learned, recommendations and comments:

a. In the time leading up to the 8 September 2009 operation, (b)(3), (b)(6) focused on the ANA's planning process, including the preparation of a proper 5 paragraph order for the subject operation, and less on the TF Chosin planning process. In the future, he will focus more on U.S. forces' involvement and to ensure that ANA plans correspond with TF Chosin planners' understanding of the mission.

b. (b)(3), (b)(6) lacks confidence in the coalition's ability to provide his ETT support.

c. (b)(3), (b)(6) now spends more time in the TF Chosin TOC building establishing relationships than he did prior to the Ganjgal engagement.

d. (b)(3), (b)(6) feels that the overall plan for the subject operation was good, and if the

(b)(2)High

4. The points of contact for this memorandum are the undersigned.

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

COL, USA

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

COL, USMC