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 SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) USA, Regarding Operations in the Ganjgal Valley on 8 September 2009

1. Staff Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) USA, serves as a Scout in 1-32 Infantry Regiment, (TF Chosin) and held this duty on the day of the subject operation.

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

a. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) was in the TF Chosin scout element that deployed as over-watch in support of the subject operation. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) used the call sign (b)(2)High on 8 September 2009. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) deployed to the ridgeline with two sniper teams, each consisting of one shooter and one spotter. The scout element had 16 personnel, but were without a platoon leader because he had been removed from his position. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) was very upset about the removal of his Platoon Leader and described him as an excellent leader who should not have been removed.

b. The scout element's mission was to (b)(2)High and to keep a look out for enemy activity in the Ganjgal Valley. Their observation post (OP) was located on the ridgeline between FOB Joyce and Ganjgal Valley. The scout sniper teams could not range Ganjgal Village from their position, but they could range the neighboring village of Dam Darya. The scout element did not have (b)(2)High series Soldiers or a (b)(2)High

c. The scout element was the only means of direct communication between the ground element and the TF Chosin Tactical Operations Center (TOC). The scout team and the ground element were operating on the Embedded Training Team (ETT) net. The scout team was relaying the ground elements radio traffic back to the TF Chosin TOC, using the (b)(2)High tactical net.

d. The primary plan of communication for the operation was for the scout team to be the relay between the ground element and the TF Chosin TOC. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) was not involved in the pre-mission planning but was present for the pre-mission briefing on 7 September. There was discussion of trying to conduct a radio re-transmission but it was decided a relay would be adequate.

e. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that at the 7 September mission brief all elements of the Afghan National Army (ANA) were present along with the entire Marine ETT element, (b)(3), (b)(6) and CPT(b)(3), (b)(6) The ETT led the pre-mission briefing, and the orders brief was thorough. He stated there was no quick reaction force (QRF) representative at the meeting.

EXHIBIT III – 2 C.1

f. The battle initiated with routine small arms fire at 0530. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) relayed several fire support requests to the TF Chosin TOC. At 0550 he relayed to the TF Chosin TOC a request for Close Combat Aviation (CCA) and Close Air Support (CAS). SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) knew the engagement was escalating quickly and that it was a serious situation. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) said he believed he was effective in relaying the urgency of the situation.

g. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) relayed information to the TF Chosin Battle Captain, CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) in the TF Chosin TOC. He feels that the TF Chosin TOC had no sense of urgency in reaction to his transmissions. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) admitted the radio traffic was very heavy and congested, as all ground elements were taking effective fire. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) was adamant that he was asked 20 questions by the TF Chosin TOC every time he relayed a request from the ground element. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) was agitated when the TF Chosin TOC asked for battle roster numbers before requesting air assets. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) felt he adequately relayed friendly force positions and relevant data needed to clear a fire mission.

h. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) understood that (b)(3), (b)(6) the ANA ETT Officer In Charge (OIC), was in charge on the ground, but that (b)(3), (b)(6) later took charge. Although SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) attended the pre-mission briefing, he could not say with certainty who was formally stated as the ground force commander.

i. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) heard the lead element of Marines (later KIA) make an urgent call stating "we are getting accurate fire from the building next to us". He believes they were killed shortly after that transmission. He does not recall the timing of that transmission.

j. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) gave the opinion that the (b)(2)High smoke rounds fired in support of the ground elements were not effective. He reached this conclusion because the effects were too far away from the village and the enemy. The grid coordinates were adjusted several times, and he believes the grid coordinates he passed to the TF Chosin TOC did not endanger friendly forces in the area.

k. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that radio communications were extremely saturated. But, he was positive that he passed information to the TF Chosin TOC that ground elements were "taking fire from the buildings in the village".

l. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) felt that the TOC assumed the contact was ordinary and would be over in 20 minutes.

m. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) remembers hearing the QRF platoon leader (1LT(b)(3), (b)(6) ask to go in and help, and the TF Chosin Battle CPT telling them to move forward.

n. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) remembers seeing (b)(3), (b)(6) and (b)(3), (b)(6) go back and forth numerous times under heavy fire to recover killed and missing ANA and Marines, taking

them to safety and returning to the fight. He says that (b)(3), (b)(6) went back into the fight by himself on several occasions.

o. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) does not believe the absence of the actual Battalion Commander and Battalion S3 had any impact on the outcome of the operation.

p. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) had no reservations about the plan and believed it had worked in the past.

q. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) can only recall one time his unit going into the Ganjgal Valley without receiving enemy contact. He expected some enemy contact during the subject operation, but not the level of contact they in fact received that day.

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

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

COL, USA

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

(b)(3), (b)(6)
LTC, USMC