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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:
CJTF-82

25 November 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: AR 15-6 Report of Investigation into Operations in the Ganjgal Valley, Konar Province, Afghanistan, 8 September 2009

1. Appointment. I was appointed on 4 November, 2009 by Major General Scaparrotti, Commanding General, Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) 82, to investigate the events of 8 September, 2009 in the Ganjgal Valley, Konar Province, Afghanistan, which resulted in the deaths of First Lieutenant Michael E. Johnson USMC, Gunnery Sergeant Edwin W. Johnson USMC, Staff Sergeant Aaron M. Kenefick USMC, Petty Officer Third Class James R. Layton USN, Sergeant First Class Kenneth W. Westbrook USA, and eight Afghan National Army soldiers. This operation, code named (b)(2)High was conducted by elements of the (b)(2)High and the (b)(2)High Afghan Border Police, supported by U.S. Embedded Training Teams and (b)(2)High (b)(2)High I was assisted in this investigation by Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) Our findings and recommendations are found below, with specific directed questions highlighted. All times are local times.

2. You will examine the involvement of (b)(2)High (b)(2)High and Embedded Training Team (ETT) leadership in the planning and execution of this operation. To what extent were these leaders involved in or aware of the operation? Describe the pre-mission planning and coordination conducted for this operation. What information was known by the primary planners for this operation and what information was briefed to the leadership prior to execution? Were the actions of the leadership at each level appropriate?

A. Planning. During the planning and execution phase for Operation (b)(2)High (4-8 September 2009), the (b)(2)High, (b)(3), (b)(6) Commander, LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) was on leave and not present. The (b)(2)High was located in (b)(2)High and not present. The Acting Commander of (b)(2)High, (b)(3), (b)(6) , was not involved in pre-mission planning or coordination. Neither was the Acting Battalion S3 (MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6), the Battalion Fire Support Officer (CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) , or the Battalion Fire Support Noncommissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC), SFC (b)(3), (b)(6) The Battalion S2 (CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) was involved in at least one planning/coordination session, but left most of the (b)(2)High planning effort to CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) the Battalion Assistant S2 and designated "planner" for this operation. The (b)(2)High Team (ETT) Officer in Charge (OIC), (b)(3), (b)(6) delegated planning functions to (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) the Team S2/S3 advisor (2-8 ETT supports (b)(2)High Afghan National Army (ANA)). The (b)(2)High Afghan Border Police (ABP) advisor, (b)(3), (b)(6) was also heavily involved in planning. MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) and MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) did attend an

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"Operations Working Group" on the evening of 7 September 2009, where a general overview of the operation was briefed, along with other pending operations for the week. ETT and Afghan leaders did not attend this meeting.

(1) Although one slide with details of the projected operation was provided to the (b)(2)High Chief of Operations (MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) on 7 September 2009, (b)(2)High staff officers were not involved in planning.

(2) Key leaders at battalion and brigade level were generally aware of the pending operation, described as a planned Key Leader Engagement (KLE) in Ganjgal village for 8 September 2009, to be preceded by an ANA/ABP clearing operation in the village supported by attached ETT advisors. The operation was to be conducted by approximately (b)(2)High ANA and (b)(2)High ABP with embedded U.S. advisors and supported by (b)(2)High (b)(2)High

(3) Pre-mission planning and coordination was conducted by (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) and (b)(3), (b)(6) at several meetings from 4-7 September. The (b)(2)High ANA, MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) also attended these meetings. Of note, although not a combat arms officer by training or position, CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) conducted all fires planning and coordination for (b)(2)High Fires planning was cursory and superficial, a fact primarily attributable to the absence of fire support personnel.

(4) The intelligence assessment presented, as the Most Likely Enemy Course of Action, possible contact from 10-20 Anti Afghan Forces (AAF) and small arms fire upon withdrawal from the high ground behind Ganjal village. This is in fact what occurred in a previous 3 September 2009 KLE to the nearby village of Dam Darya. The Most Dangerous Enemy Course of Action was assessed as a complex engagement by up to 40 insurgents, but did not posit a complex ambush from the village and surrounding high ground. There are minor discrepancies in the statements of the (b)(2)High leaders (who received input from the ANA) on the estimated number of AAF, and when this information was received. (An earlier AR15-6 investigation conducted by MAJ (b)(2)High, (b)(3), (b)(6) reported that an intelligence product warning of an ambush in Ganjgal village was received by (b)(2)High on 7 September 2009; more detailed investigation revealed that this finding was in error).

(5) (b)(2)High

(b)(2)High

(6) During the planning phase, communications problems (b)(2)High was identified as a potential problem due to the intervening high ground between Ganjgal village and the (b)(2)High (b)(2)High No retransmission capability was provided or requested. The 2-8 ETT Officer in Charge did not establish a (b)(2)High (b)(2)High net for direct communications with the (b)(2)High as he expected to be mobile.

(7) Support assets to be provided by (b)(2)High

(b)(2)High, (b)(3), (b)(6)

(8) A sandtable rehearsal/backbrief was conducted on the afternoon of 7 September 2009 at FOB Joyce and attended by (b)(3), (b)(6) CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) and key ANA and ABP leaders. MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) and CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) were not present. The (b)(2)High were also not present, although SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) from the scout platoon did attend. No written order was produced.

B. Execution. During mission execution on 8 September 2009, the actions of key leaders at the battalion level were inadequate and ineffective, contributing directly to the loss of life which ensued.

(1) According to statements from multiple witnesses, from 0530 local time until receipt of a battlefield report indicating mass casualties (6 ANA soldiers killed in action and 15 wounded) at 0810 MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) and MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) were not continuously present in the operations center. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) and CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) did not arrive until 0900. MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) did approve several fire missions in the early phases of the operation, either in his office adjacent to the TOC or during brief visits to the TOC. The "night" battle captain, CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) was therefore the senior officer continuously present in the operations center, until relieved at the (b)(2)High shift change by CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) . The absence of senior leaders in the operations center with troops in contact in the (b)(2)High battlespace, and their consequent lack of situational awareness and decisive action, was a key failure in the events of 8 September 2009.

(2) Battalion leaders, notably MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) and CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) have offered "poor situational awareness" as the primary explanation for the lack of support initially provided to the Coalition and Afghan troops soldiers operating in the Ganjgal valley on the morning of 8 September 2009. However, available evidence demonstrates that

information suggesting a dangerous and worsening tactical situation was available soon after the initial enemy contact at 0530.

(3) At 0537, SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) a scout squad leader overlooking the battlefield and in direct communication with ETT leaders, forwarded requests for indirect fires to suppress enemy positions engaging U.S. and Afghan troops in the Ganjgal valley. At 0550 he requested immediate helicopter support and close air support, an indicator of a worsening tactical situation. Shortly thereafter, (at approximately 0615) SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) a fire support NCO in the (b)(2)High contacted the supporting aviation unit (b)(2)High), the composite Army aviation squadron operating in direct support of (b)(2)High directly with a request to dynamically retask the (b)(2)High helicopters of Scout Weapons Team (SWT) 1, then refueling in Asadabad (b)(2)High minutes away. Shortly thereafter, he contacted the pilots directly with the same request. The Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) present in the TOC, TSgt (b)(3), (b)(6) repeatedly asked the battle captain (CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) if he wanted to declare (b)(2)High (b)(2)High (CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) declined to open the "air TIC", and the request to retask SWT1 was denied by 7-17 on procedural grounds). A 0625 report received in the 1-32 IN TOC reported friendly elements taking fire from the north, south and east.

(4) These events demonstrate that an understanding of the seriousness of the tactical situation existed in the (b)(2)High operations center early in the fight. SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that he clearly communicated the dangerous and escalating nature of the battle to the TOC. He is supported in these statements by SGT (b)(3), (b)(6) a scout NCO co-located with him in the field, by SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) by CW2 (b)(3), (b)(6) (pilot with SWT1) and by leaders in the valley who intermittently monitored SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) radio transmissions to the TOC (b)(3), (b)(6) CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) .

(5) By his own admission, (b)(3), (b)(6) did not continuously monitor the battalion command net used to relay updates and requests for support from the ETTs in the field; instead he relied on junior enlisted soldiers serving as radio telephone operators (RTOs) to pass him information. The failure to monitor a rapidly degenerating tactical situation by the commander and all commissioned staff officers in the (b)(2)High TOC prevented timely supporting fires in the critical early phases of the operation and ensured that higher headquarters did not grasp the tactical situation.

(6) *The first key failure in execution was the lack of effective indirect fires provided to troops in contact*. Unit records show that four indirect fire missions were initiated between 0537 and 0639 (totaling (b)(2)High rounds of 155mm high explosive, 13 rounds of 120mm high explosive (HE), and (b)(2)High rounds of 120mm (b)(2)High . Ground observers later reported that all missions except the first, an immediate suppression mission fired on a pre-planned target, were ineffective. After the 0639 fire mission, MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that he denied subsequent calls for fire for various reasons, including: lack of situational awareness of locations of friendly elements; proximity to the village; garbled communications; or inaccurate or

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incomplete calls for fire. (The next fire mission was not executed until 1615) According to the statement of (b)(3), (b)(6) at least seven separate attempts were made to fire an immediate (b)(2)High (b)(2)High At one point, (b)(2)High provided his initials over the radio, indicating his assumption of full responsibility for the fire mission and also the urgency of need. However, none were fired. Over saturation of the scout radio relay may account for some confusion in the conduct of fires, but in our judgment is not an adequate explanation for the complete absence of fires from 0639 until 1615. The lack of indirect fires, particularly in the absence of rotary or fixed wing support during the first two hours, played a large role in the failure of the mission.

(a) (b)(2)High

(b)(2)High

(7) *The second key failure in execution was the lack of timely air support.* The record indicates that an initial request for rotary wing "Close Combat Aviation" (CCA) was sent by (b)(2)High (b)(2)High and arrived on station over the Ganjgal valley at (b)(2)High As already mentioned, SWT1 was nearby and available, originally flying in support of a sister battalion's mission in the Shuryak valley (b)(2)High (b)(2)High The original request by SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) to dynamically retask this asset was denied by the (b)(2)High on two grounds: because the request was not routed through the brigade; and because SWT1 was missioned in support of another, higher priority operation. Instead, (b)(2)High

(b)(2)High

(a) This decision, while technically correct on procedural grounds, was devastating in its consequences. SWT1 was fueled, armed, and (b)(2)High minutes by air from the Ganjgal valley when initially contacted. CW2 (b)(3), (b)(6) flying with SWT1, states he understood the urgency of the request. The situation in the Shuryak valley at that time was not assessed as serious. More than (b)(2)High minutes were needed to obtain the correct authorizations, alert the Air QRF crews, brief them, and fly to the Ganjgal. From all available evidence, the probability is high that by then, 1st Lt Johnson, GySgt Johnson, SSgt Kenefick and HM3 Layton had already been killed in action. The correct tactical decision was clearly to divert SWT. It is at this point in the fight that experienced, decisive senior leadership was most lacking.

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(b) At approximately the same time as (b)(3), (b)(6) requested CCA, (b)(3), (b)(6) suggested to (b)(3), (b)(6) that an air TIC be opened as discussed above. (b)(3), (b)(6) states that he repeated this suggestion several times. At approximately (b)(2)High (b)(3), (b)(6) contacted the (b)(2)High (b)(2)High and requested that an air TIC be opened on his own authority (although technically the concurrence of the battlespace owner is required). At (b)(2)High F15Es came on station (b)(2)High (b)(2)High

(8) *The third key failure in execution was the decision not to employ a* (b)(2)High *QRF in support of the troops engaged in the Ganjgal valley on the morning of 8 September 2009.* As

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(2)High

(b)(2)High " En route, the platoon experienced a vehicle rollover which delayed the movement. After recovering the vehicle, the platoon resumed its

(b)(2)High

(a) At this point (approximately 0830) (b)(3), (b)(6) contacted (b)(3), (b)(6) first by radio and later face to face, and urgently requested his assistance. (b)(3), (b)(6) the 2-8 ETT commander, also made the same request. (b)(2)High

(b)(2)High

(b)(2)High

(b)(3), (b)(6) states that he asked via radio for permission to go forward three times, but was told (on the third attempt by (b)(3), (b)(6) personally) to remain in place and ' (b)(2)High

(b)(2)High

(b) As previously mentioned, commissioned officers from (b)(2)High involved in command post operations stated that lack of information prevented effective responses and accurate reporting to higher. Several options were available to improve situational awareness early in the

(b)(2)High

(b)(2)High He could have spoken directly to the SWT pilots overhead (on station from 0745 on) on the (b)(2)High . He could have communicated with the heavy weapons platoon leader (b)(2)High positioned in the mouth of the valley, or directly with the ground scout elements overlooking the valley. The record does not show that any of these steps were taken or directed by either MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) or MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6)

(9) With respect to the actions of leaders at the brigade level, once aware of the gravity of the tactical situation, the (b)(2)High Commander and staff reacted appropriately. A 0810 report of six ANA dead and 15 wounded in the Ganjgal valley was the first indication to reach the brigade that a major engagement was underway. (b)(2)High

(b)(2)High

approximately 0900, COL (b)(3), (b)(6) flew from his headquarters near Jalalabad to 1-32 IN at FOB Joyce, stopping en route to pick up the ANA 2d Brigade commander, COL (b)(6) By 1000 he was on the scene personally.

(10) With respect to the actions of (b)(3), (b)(6) the 2-8 ETT Commander, the record shows that he performed capably and courageously. He personally engaged in planning and attended the final order/rehearsal. During the engagement, he was co-located with the (b)(2)High senior leader present (MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) behind the lead element, where he came under intense close range fire and was wounded at approximately 0630. With MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) he helped coordinate the response by the ANA QRF from FOB Joyce. (b)(3), (b)(6) did not leave the battle for several hours after being wounded. In the course of the fighting, he contacted the (b)(2)High on leave in Kabul (b)(3) to request assistance. (That officer later that day accompanied Afghan Commandos into Ganjgal village) (b)(3), (b)(6) communicated most often during the action with his Afghan counterparts, leaving most (though not all) communications with (b)(2)High to (b)(2)High, (b)(3), (b)(6) He also made positive attempts to request assistance from (b)(2)High in the course of the battle.

C. Several key factors impacted the planning and execution of this operation and should be noted.

(1) First, the absence of the battalion commander (on R&R leave) and the battalion operations officer (supporting operations in (b)(2)High) left the battalion executive officer in acting command. The brigade commander attempted to mitigate this by temporarily assigning an experienced field grade officer to the battalion; however, that officer did not play a significant role in this action. The battalion fire support officer was unable to focus on battalion fires due to other assigned duties. The battalion operations sergeant major had recently been reassigned and

his replacement was not yet in place. Additionally, both the scout and mortar platoon leaders had been recently relieved and not replaced. All of these leaders were absent from pre-mission planning and coordination. In our opinion, the absence of key leaders played an important, negative role in the events of 8 September 2009.

(2) Next, an unclear chain of command operated to diffuse command responsibility and inject uncertainty into operations. (b)(3), (b)(6)

(b)(2)High, (b)(3), (b)(6)

of Maj (b)(3), (b)(6) Although all parties acknowledged a requirement to cooperate, no one commander was in a position to direct all units and assets involved in the engagement. None could describe with precision the command or support relationships that applied.

(3) Finally, a close examination of witness statements and of specific events reveals a palpable air of complacency surrounding this event. Much weight was given to the similar operation conducted on 3 September 2009, which resulted in only light, harassing small arms fire. In the absence of hard intelligence suggesting strong opposition, planning was superficial. Execution was delayed and disrupted by the belief, which persisted in the minds of key leaders well into the fight, that this was only a small, localized, routine engagement as before.

3. You will examine the CONOPS approval process regarding this operation. What process was required and was it properly followed? If not, why?

Standing CJTF guidance required that all (b)(2)High (b)(2)High Operation (b)(2)High clearly met the criteria established for a Level Zero CONOP. Although a single slide was provided to the (b)(2)High Chief of Operations on 7 September 2009, the operation was not formally briefed to the brigade commander, although he did have general knowledge of the pending operation. MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that in his opinion, the proposed operation did not meet the criteria established for (b)(2)High and therefore he did not schedule a formal briefing. COL (b)(3), (b)(6) made a similar statement.

4. You will examine the performance of personnel in the (b)(2)High to include battle captains, during this operation. Did they perform to the standards expected of Soldiers in their position? Were they adequately experienced, qualified and trained for the responsibilities they held?

A. The officer on duty as battle captain in the (b)(2)High from the start of the action until (b)(2)High was (b)(3), (b)(6) An infantry officer, he was promoted to Captain on 1 June 2009. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

His statement suggests that only a brief, nominal training period took place before he was placed

on duty as the (b)(2)High night battle captain. His actions on the morning of 8 September 2009 reflected an unfamiliarity with standard operating procedures, lack of experience, inadequate training, and hesitancy and indecision that contributed markedly to the outcome of the battle.

B. At (b)(2)High, (b)(3), (b)(6) was replaced by CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) an infantry officer with 28 months time in grade. A shift change brief was conducted. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) had served in the TOC throughout (b)(2)High rotation and described himself as (b)(2)High The record does not indicate that CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) played a role in any significant decisions or actions after assuming battle captain duties (after the 0810 mass casualty report, MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) remained in the TOC). (b)(2)High, (b)(3), (b)(6)

(b)(5)

C. MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) (S3), CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) (S2), CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) (FSO), CSM (b)(3), (b)(6) SFC (b)(3), (b)(6) (S3 NCOIC) and SFC (b)(3), (b)(6) (Fire Support NCOIC) were not present in the (b)(2)High TOC during the early phases of the action and according to their own statements did not play any significant role. (The battalion operations sergeant major position was vacant on 8 September 2009) SSG (b)(3), (b)(6) the fire support NCO on duty when the action began, took decisive action to provide immediate support to the units in the Ganjgal valley early in the engagement. The USAF JTAC, TSgt (b)(3), (b)(6) acted similarly. Both should be commended for their attempts to generate effective and timely action.

5. What were the actions and reactions of the command posts involved in the operation? Were they appropriate?

A. Command post actions at the CJTF and brigade levels were appropriate given the information available. Interviews with the CJTF CJ3 (COL (b)(3), (b)(6) and the night and day shift directors (Lt Col (b)(3), (b)(6) and MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) show that all events reported from (b)(2)High in conjunction with this event were tracked using a formal battle drill. (The CJTF CJ3 Chief of Operations, LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) was TDY in France on 8 September 2009) (b)(2)High (b)(2)High no CJTF level resources (such as general support aviation) were requested. The CJTF Operations Center contacted the ISAF Joint Command (IJC) and declared a personnel recovery event at 1050. Shortly afterwards, the bodies of the four missing Marines were recovered.

B. The (b)(2)High command post similarly reacted in a timely manner following the 0810 report of mass casualties – the first indication of serious trouble to reach the brigade. Interviews with the brigade commander, brigade chief of operations, brigade assistant S2, brigade fire support officer and brigade battle captains confirm this assessment. Once aware, the (b)(2)High tracked events closely and supported ongoing medical evacuation, CCA, ISR and CAS events. Later in the day, the brigade orchestrated CJSOTF support to push forward into Ganjgal village with Afghan Commandos.

C. At the battalion level, the absence of key leaders in the TOC, the poor performance of the commissioned officers who were present (particularly (b)(3), (b)(6) , an atmosphere of complacency in the headquarters, and a poor standard of training contributed to the overall failure of the (b)(2)High command post to competently track the battle and synchronize effects in support of troops in contact. This failure also prevented higher headquarters from intervening and taking effective action in time to prevent loss of life. A key factor was the physical separation of the battle captain from the battalion command net and other TOC personnel; from his location in the corner of the TOC, the battle captain could not clearly hear transmissions over the net and relied on summaries from junior enlisted RTOs. We also noted a reliance on email communications versus face to face, radio or secure telephone conversations that could convey clarity, urgency, and nuance more effectively. Perhaps most importantly, the absence of an experienced field grade officer and senior noncommissioned officer in the battalion command post at critical times during combat operations contributed directly to mission failure.

6. Did the command and support relationships between the ETT and battlespace owner adversely affect the planning and execution of this operation?

The existing command and support relationships between the ETT and (b)(2)High played a contributing but not decisive role in this event. While some confusion over "who was in charge" was present, all parties acknowledged supporting and supported relationships; that this was an Afghan-led operation; that accompanying ETT members were there to advise and assist, but not command either Afghan or (b)(2)High units or Soldiers; and that (b)(2)High had committed to providing specific assistance if required. The lack of (b)(2)High command emphasis and involvement in both planning and execution was not principally due to lack of clarity with respect to command or support relationships. Rather, it reflected an apparent lack of commitment to support partner units with the same focus and emphasis as organic units. This dynamic was not based on service differences; the units in the Ganjgal valley on 8 September included ANA, ABP, USMC and U.S. Army elements. Multiple witnesses stated that the relationship between Army and Marine personnel at FOB Joyce was close and mutually supportive. Command and command post failures, not confusion about command and support relationships, were the proximate cause of failures in planning and execution.

7. You will examine the perception held by some U.S. participants that the Quick Reaction Force and other responding TF Chosin elements did not adequately support the mission. Were these perceptions accurate?

(1) The perception by USMC and U.S. Army leaders engaged in the Ganjgal valley on 8 September 2009 that TF (b)(2)High elements did not adequately support the mission is accurate.

(2) As noted above, the ANA/ABP involved in the operation and their embedded advisors were briefed (b)(2)High Multiple requests were made to commit this asset. All were denied by MAJ(b)(3), (b)(6) or the (b)(2)High battle captains. The

(b)(2)High platoon leader, 1LT (b)(3), (b)(6) made three requests to move forward and render assistance.
(b)(2)High

(b)(2)High

(3) The delay in committing CCA and the lack of indirect fires has been discussed above. We note that ground participants stated that an Attack Weapons Team (AWT, consisting of (b)(2)High
(b)(2)High

(b)(2)High

(b)(2)High All participants stated that the pilots flying on 8 September 2009 performed skillfully and courageously.

8. Were air-to-ground and indirect fires employed consistent with the ISAF Tactical Directive, dated 1 July 2009?

Our investigation did not reveal any violations of the ISAF Tactical Directive. LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) did take positive steps to disseminate and amplify guidance contained in the Tactical Directive to his subordinates. We note that MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) and MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) stated they did not feel constrained by the Tactical Directive in employing indirect fires. However, that perception clearly existed in the minds of ETT leaders during and after the battle. Based on the available evidence we find that the Tactical Directive did not influence the decisions of key (b)(2)High leaders on 8 September 2009.

9. What recommendations concerning coalition force tactics, techniques and procedures will help avoid similar incidents in the future?

We recommend:

A. That the absence of key senior leaders (Commander, Executive Officer, Operations Officer) be deconflicted such that no more than one be absent from any tactical headquarters for an extended period at any one time.

B. That the organization and conduct of indirect fires in RC-East be reviewed at the CJTF level. This event suggests that fire support personnel may be distracted by other duties; that firing units and fire direction personnel may be too dispersed; and that the absence of a fires brigade headquarters and requirement to mission artillery battalion headquarters as battlespace owners may compromise effective indirect fires.

C. That the CJTF issue written guidance that a field grade officer must be present in battalion and brigade command posts at any time units in the battlespace are in contact.

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D. That formal guidance be published for the selection and training of key command post personnel (battle captains, battle NCOs). The operative principle is that these leaders should be experienced and proven performers.

E. That a written Operations Order (OPORD) or Fragmentary Order (FRAGO) be published for every tactical operation and that it be reviewed and approved by the battalion commander or designated field grade representative. This document should be in text, not slide format; disseminated to all key participants as well as higher headquarters; and archived in unit records.

F (b)(2)High

(b)(2)High

G. That all RC-E units be made aware of the specific provisions of the ISAF Tactical Directive and that additional training in its provisions be required.

H. That guidance be issued reinforcing the requirement to brief and approve Level Zero CONOPs at the brigade commander level.

I. That directives relating to command and support relationships between battlespace owners and Embedded Training Teams be clarified and simplified.

J. That USAF Tactical Air Control parties be fully manned; the absence of USAF commissioned officers in battalion command posts hinders effective coordination with ground counterparts.

K. That Embedded Training Teams be functionally organized with fires, maneuver and intelligence officers, and that leadership billets be filled with required grades. (2-8 ETT was authorized four captains, but was manned with four lieutenants)

L. That the CJTF issue written guidance directing that key positions (for example, Specialty Platoon Leader, Operations Sergeant Major) be manned with qualified leaders at all times.

10. Any other matters pertaining to this incident that you deem relevant.

A. This event highlights the enduring importance of the inherent duties and responsibilities of command. While authorities may be delegated, responsibility cannot. The presence, actions and decisions of the commander are critical in combat situations. Where absent, the success of the mission is always in doubt.

B. The events of 8 September 2009 also reinforce the principle that when in doubt, our bias must be to support troops in contact. Lower level leaders will often have better situational awareness,

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and our command philosophy and standard operating procedures must allow them to exercise initiative and freedom of action within the framework of commander's intent.

C. We also wish to single out for special mention the extreme heroism shown in the Ganjgal valley on 8 September 2009 by (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) Amid many valorous actions performed by both U.S. and Afghan Soldiers and U.S. Marines that day, theirs stand out as extraordinary examples worthy of the highest recognition.

D. We recommend that (b)(3), (b)(5), (b)(6) (b)(5) receive a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand (b)(5)

(b)(5)

E. We recommend that (b)(3), (b)(5), (b)(6) (b)(5) receive a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand for

(b)(5)

F. We recommend that (b)(3), (b)(5), (b)(6) General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand (b)(5)

(b)(3), (b)(5), (b)(6)

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

Colonel, U.S. Army Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps