DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
TASK FORCE MOUNTAIN WARRIOR
HEADQUARTERS, 4TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM
4TH INFANTRY DIVISION (MECHANIZED)
FORWARD OPERATING BASE FENTY, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09310

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

AFZC-BCT-AD 16 September 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: AR 15-6— Telephonic Interview 1stSgt (b)(3), (b)(6)

1. I conducted a telephonic interview with 1stSgt (b)(3), (b)(6) located at Landsduhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC) at 1350 hrs on 16 Sep 09 regarding the enemy attack on U.S.Marine ETTs and ANSF in the town of Ganjgal on 08 Sep 09. He is currently located at the medical center recuperating from injuries sustained in this attack. The following is a summary of our discussion.

2. The initial plan to execute this mission was discussed following the successful Key Leader Engagement (KLE) to the village of Dam Darah on the 03 Sep 09. This was an ANA/ABP led operation from planning to execution and the ETT/BMT's were anxious that they showed initiative. The initial intelligence estimate was for possible enemy SAF as ANSF/CF was departing. 1stSgt (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that he and the ETTs received further intelligence on the day before that more Taliban presence was to be expected (20-40 total). This was briefed by 1st Lt (b)(3), (b)(6) on at least two occasions but no adjustment to the plan was considered because the village elders had pledged their support and invited the ANSF into the village. He stated that the unavailability of dedicated CAS and CCA was briefed to the ANSF but this was discounted and no change to the mission was discussed.

3. On the morning of 08 Sep 09, he and the rest of the ETTs started their S/P at 0300 hrs and established their two OP locations. At about (b)(2)High hrs, they and their ANSF personnel started the ground movement to the village. 1stSgt (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that he was located toward the rear of the ANA formation along with Maj (b)(3), (b)(6) and the reporter. 1stLt (b)(3), (b)(6) was in the rank directly in front of his, while 1stLt Johnson, GySgt Johnson, Ssgt Kenefick, and PO3 Layton were in the front rank with their ANA soldiers from Asmar. GySgt Johnson and Ssgt Kenefick were to establish a Support by Fire (SBF) position at the eastern edge of the village when the enemy contact first started. At (b)(2)High hrs, the first enemy fire was heard. It started initially as intermittent SAF but quickly escalated into heavy, sustained fire from multiple enemy positions located in the village and the surrounding foothills.

4. As the enemy engagement continued, he and his men tried to mark targets with tracer fire but the enemy was well entrenched and difficult to locate. He directed his men to attempt to break contact using covering fire. Ssgt Kenefick, 1stLt Johnson, and CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) all tried to (b)(2)High (b)(2)High but were told repeatedly that none was available. HE fire support was called in for preplanned targets but stated that it had no effect on the enemy disposition. He did not have an estimate on the times.

5. 1stSg (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that the enemy was maneuvering along their flanks and he was injured while retrograding with the ANA from the engagement area. An RPG exploded about 10 meters away from his location, throwing him in the air and rendering him unconscious. Maj (b)(3), (b)(6) was wounded by a bullet ricochet at about the same time. He also remembers SFC (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) sustaining a neck and face injury. SFC (b)(3), (b)(6) received first aid from CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) initially and was carried from the area by 1st Lt (b)(3), (b)(6) 1st Sg (b)(3), (b)(6) recalled that he remained in the Casualty Collection Area (CCA) for an unknown period of time and called CPI (b)(3), (b)(6) and SSg (b)(3), (b)(6) forward to start extracting the wounded. He didn't have recollection of the time since his watch was damaged by the blast. His medical condition continued to deteriorate as he was suffering from hearing loss and early signs of a concussion.

6. He stated that he repeatedly tried to contact the four Marines located with the forward ANA elements with no success but estimated that they had been out of radio contact for at least an hour. Ssgt (b)(3), (b)(6) and CPI (b)(3), (b)(6) arrive at his location and began to extract the dead and wounded personnel. They also continued to attempt to contact and locate the four Marines during their recovery operations. 1stSg (b)(3), (b)(6) was evacuated to a triage location by the vehicle ORP and transported to FOB Joyce along with Maj (b)(3), (b)(6) They accompanied the remains of the four Marine Heroes to Bagram Airfield.

7. 1stSg (b)(3), (b)(6) stated that he had no doubt that the mission had been compromised during the planning process. The enemy was well emplaced and prepared to execute a complex ambush. He did offer some recommendations or lessons learned from the mission that he wanted to mention.

a. Ensure that dedicated air (either CAS or CCA) is available for any mission into a higher threat region. It had been effectively utilized in Dam Darah the week prior and he was convinced that this was the primary reason that they experienced limited enemy activity on that mission.

b. The availability of (b)(2)High is crucial for mission planning.

c. Intelligence estimates should be examined and considered but in this case a sense of complacency existed stemming from previous missions and the promises of safety from the village elders a few days prior.

8. The point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at DSN (b)(6) or (b)(3), (b)(6) @afghan.swa.army.mil.

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

MAJ, AD
Investigating Officer