

~~SECRET//REL TO USA, GBR~~

Major General Votel: TM 1, thanks for joining us here today, and I apologize for the work around here and getting established in here. So thanks for being patient.

Before I begin, I am obligated to remind you that the Article 31 warning that I gave you the either day is still applicable here. You do not - at any time you want to stop answering questions, you can stop answering questions. If you want a lawyer, you can ask for a lawyer. Do you request on at this time?

WIT: No, sir.

Major General Votel: Are you willing to answer our questions?

WIT: Yes, sir.

Major General Votel: Thank you. Am I good to proceed here?

LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. And then also just the reminders about the oath.

Major General Votel: This is recording. This is a sworn statement. The oath that I administered the other day still is in force. TM 1, what we're doing is we're running down additional details here just to kind of make sure we've closed all the loops here that have arisen sometimes in our mind and sometimes from other things.

We got a report yesterday and it involved TM 5 and it was reflective of something that he did on a previous objective, Objective 1.4(a), (b)(2) High which was a couple ago. I think it was two or three before 1.4(a), (b)(2) High that you all executed. And the report is this that TM 5 threw a grenade over a wall without identifying the other side then threw a 1.4(a), (b)(2) High grenade into a small structure that didn't require that level of force. He had not identified who was in the structure which ultimately collapsed 1.4(a), (b)(2) High. TM 5 was verbally counseled for those actions. Do you recall that?

WIT: Yes, sir.

Major General Votel: Can you talk a little bit about what happened with him and the employment of grenades on 1.4(a), (b)(2) High and then what I'm ultimately interested is getting into any of the discussion that took place at the

~~SECRET//REL TO USA, GBR~~

hotwash afterwards with respect to the employment of those grenades.

WIT: Yes, sir. On that objective - that's going to be a hard one to explain.

Brigadier Nitsch: Here, have a paper and a pencil.

Major General Votel: Thank you.

WIT: On that objective, actually as we pushed out, the compound we were going to was actually at the bottom of a pretty good cliff, 50 or 60 feet. Here, I can draw this just to kind of give you an idea. Just to kind of give you the idea, our blocking position, we had a BP and our C2 element were at the top as an overwatch. We actually split off from over in this general area and pushed down. We went low into the valley and they stayed high. They pushed up on top. We came from - I don't remember the bearings. We came from this direction, pushed down, we were hit to building 11. It was actually a larger compound that we had to go by. It was dug out of the side of the cliff. There was a gap, and we were going to push through there. Alpha was pushing between the cliff and the larger compound to get to building 11. As we were getting there, ISR was telling us - also as did the Other TF, there was movement. Guys were moving around. They had a sentry that they ID'd with a weapon. There was people or MAMs inside this compound that we were going to be passing.

As we approached the compound - I don't remember exactly how many guys left building 11, I think it was six or seven. They started moving out. I got word from ISR that they were moving and the other TF got word. They opened fire from on top of the hill. As we pushed in, they were shooting over us at the guys that were moving out and into this compound. I don't remember the numbers of the compounds. Over the top of us, so you can imagine, we're actually - there's kind of a lip and it was dug out and then there was the compound wall. So as we come walking through, I think you're looking at the compound. We're not looking up at the wall. We're actually about head level along that wall to get to our building 11. The other TF was shooting over the top of us at those MAMs. Engaged one of the sentries

that was in here on the roof top. It was TM 3 and myself were up front. We pushed in to the corner of this compound before 11. As we got to that corner, TM 5 put a grenade over into the compound of the roof top of the compound inside this compound. Then after we went there, TM 3 was at this corner held. Here, I can draw this to kind of show you. So as we come in, we're moving this direction. This is the bigger compound. This is building 11 where we were headed. The other TF was shooting over us into this area and out here - the movers went different directions out here. This is all terrace grassed fields. And Bravo pushed to the right, was moving after some movers that were out here. They were going to push around - they actually - and push around and take a small compound that was below.

As we came up to here, TM 3 covered this way. I pushed out this way and the rest - I sent the rest of my guys around this side of the building because it offered cover from anybody that might be shooting back at us from this direction. The initial engagement was from in this compound. This is where he threw the grenade. As we pushed up, I pushed along this side.

Major General Votel: So he threw it over this wall.

WIT: This wall because there was - I never even entered this compound. I don't know how it was shaped but I know there was a MAM on the top of this roof right here that was a sentry.

Major General Votel: Did you observe him throw that in there?

WIT: I did not see him actually throw the grenade, no.

Major General Votel: Okay.

WIT: I was up front pushing us, sir.

Major General Votel: But you knew by the -

WIT: I heard him yell, "frag out," -

Major General Votel: "Frag out, frag out."

WIT: And then as we got to this corner, I pushed up. TM 3 held this direction, and I pushed this way. I sent

everybody this direction to take this building to button hook around this building. I pushed up looking out in this direction, holding here on the back side of this until I got a confirmation that they were on that side using lasers. I pushed up to this corner. There was a door here, here and a window right here. As they went to go past this window which TM 5 was in the lead, there was a MAM inside that started shooting his AK out and it went between us. It started going between us. TM 5 then said, "~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ out." I was, right on. I got on the radio and said "~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ out."

Major General Votel: You concurred with that?

WIT: I concurred - oh, yeah.

Major General Votel: You all didn't - you didn't discuss it or anything?

WIT: No, there was no discussion. It was pretty quick.

Major General Votel: He read the situation.

WIT: He read the situation. He put it in there. I confirmed it. At this point, I go over the radio, "~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ out," because I wanted to get my guys away from the walls because you never know if the thermobaric is going to crack a wall - I mean it took them off its foundation and the entire roof collapsed in and cracked the walls. So you never know if they're going to fall out. So I got everybody away from the walls as quickly as possible. As the ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ went off, I pushed around this wall. I pushed around this wall and had - I believe it was TM 4, I finished clearing this and then I cleared - this is rubble out - It was just basically like a lining of a wall. It wasn't a building and cleared this real fast and then had my guys start pushing down because we knew we had all the MAMs. The other MAMs had started moving into this area. So the two instances you're talking about were here and here.

Major General Votel: Okay. Thanks. That's useful. Frankly, I don't think we're as focused on - the subsequent action - obviously I think you understand what we're interested in, the employment of grenades on an objective. Let me ask you a question, so TM 5 threw both a fragmentary grenade that you indicated right here along a wall.

WIT: Right here.

Major General Votel: And then a ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ grenade. You kind of mentioned that you assessed that the employment of the - at the time, based on the situation that was presented in front of you, you assessed that the employment of the ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ grenade was a proper -

WIT: Yes.

Major General Votel: If he hadn't done it, you might have done it?

WIT: I would - yes.

Major General Votel: Okay. Returning back to the employment of the fragmentary grenade right there, what your assessment on the advisability appropriateness of that particular employment?

WIT: I didn't witness what he saw to be able to say you shouldn't do that. What I went back with him was you need to know - you can't just throw a grenade into a compound or top of a compound. If that would have rolled off a roof or whatever and there was a group of kids or females or whatever, there would have been huge issues. So I said if at all possible, don't do that. This was totally legit. This guy shooting out of this at close range from this proximity, I totally agreed with it.

Major General Votel: And you assessed that his decision to throw the fragmentary grenade in this compound was driven by the fact the Other TF were engaging MAMs in there at that time, the team was moving up along outside of there.

WIT: Yes.

Major General Votel: Were you exposed to - I mean, was there - are you hidden as you're moving along - are you hidden by this wall or are you exposed above the wall?

WIT: No. We're actually exposed to it.

Major General Votel: So somebody inside the compound could see you all moving up along here.

WIT: Yes. We could actually see - I engaged a MAM that was up here on my way through.

Major General Votel: So it is possible that TM 5 reasonably concluded that there were threats to team from in here because there were team members shooting into here. We had Other TF shooting down in there and you were trying to move in this direction?

WIT: Yes, sir.

Major General Votel: I see. Now let me - thanks for that. That's really useful. Now let me kind of push ahead to the hotwash and stuff that happens afterwards. As I understand this was kind of a teachable point or at least a discussion point with the (a) (b) (2) Chief when it came up at the hotwash. Can you talk a little bit about that?

WIT: When we got back to (a) (b) (2) High we went through our debriefing and TSE had us - the team leaders walk through what happened at each one of our positions. He was falling in behind us. He actually, TSE followed in behind us on this objective. He walked it through. When I, when we got to this point, he stopped us. He talked to us about you have to be careful about throwing grenades and I don't remember his exact verbiage but basically saying the same thing I just said about you never know if there's females or children in that area. We have to be cognizant of that.

Major General Votel: Was TM 5 - but was he kind of singled out during that? I mean, was it very clear to everybody that TM 5 had thrown this grenade and the comments were being directed towards TM 5 about exercising care and everything else.

WIT: That would be my assessment.

Major General Votel: Did you perceive that TM 5 was embarrassed or I'm kind of being called out on this? I mean, was it kind of a hard moment for him?

WIT: I don't think so.

Major General Votel: I know that in general the organization is hard on itself and necessarily so but I wonder if he may have felt a little intimidated or embarrassed to kind of be outed if you will in front of his teammates and superiors?

WIT: I'm not - I can't - I'm not sure of that. Any time you get talked about in our community, you tend to take it on pretty hard.

Major General Votel: I think you just answered my question.

WIT: After that, TSE came to me and just wanted me to make sure I reiterated to him the importance of the -

Major General Votel: So after the hotwash, you and TSE had a discussion about it?

WIT: TSE just said to make sure I talked to him about it and make sure he understands.

Major General Votel: And then you and TM 5 also had a discussion?

WIT: Right. And I just talked to him and that's - I told him any time he employed those, he just needed to be careful because the consequences of having - if there was women and children - if that grenade had just rolled off into women and children, there would be huge issues.

Major General Votel: And TM 5's response there?

WIT: Oh, he understood. It came across to me as he understood.

Major General Votel: And your consensus from the hotwash that everybody else kind of got the point as well? It was an evident point made to everybody here about diligence and care of employing into areas where you couldn't necessarily see or you didn't know exactly what was in there.

WIT: Yeah.

Major General Votel: Let me - in your experience here or even through this deployment or your previous deployments, how often does the team employ grenades? Is it every time, half the time? I mean, can you kind of characterize that for me? How often does that occur?

WIT: I've used - just speaking on my behalf; I've only used them I would say a total of probably five times total.

Major General Votel: Over like 11 deployments?

WIT: Yeah, 11 deployments. I don't like to use anything with a pin or a spoon. I don't like explosions. Years ago, I had a friend's thumb blown off and a hole in my back from a faulty crash so I don't use them unless I have to.

Major General Votel: Is that a common - is that your personal thing, or is that - or is that shared by other team (a), (b)(2) High members? I must admit, I am not a huge fan of grenades either. They scare the shit out of me. Is that something that maybe pervades across the (a), (b)(2) High no opinion or -

WIT: I would say most people don't like to use them just for the simple fact you never know what you're going to get. I like point of aim, point of impact.

Major General Votel: I am going to move into a little different area with you here and I really just to get your opinion on and your view point on but before that let me just go to the Brigadier and UK SME.

Brigadier Nitsch: You said some really interesting things actually, TM 1. Just to follow up, they're all quite short but just to follow them up, in terms of the situation that you described so clearly there and the employment of the grenade by TM 5 there, how many parallels would you think it's reasonable to draw with his use of the grenade on (a), (b)(2) High?

WIT: How many parallels?

Brigadier Nitsch: Yeah. How similar do you think the situations were with the delivery of the - his assessment of the situation and the delivery of the grenade?

WIT: I'm sure in both situations he felt like he was protecting everyone at that time.

Brigadier Nitsch: Okay. So he felt the use of it was the same. What about the area into which he deployed it?

WIT: It seems like it would be about the same to me but I'm not sure about that.

Major General Votel: I think saying it another way here. In this instance, I think he employed this fragmentary grenade into an area that he didn't have direct observation on. As you and the team chief cautioned

him on the fact that, hey, you're not exactly sure of what the impact of all that's going to be. When you fast forward ahead to ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~, again, he employs a grenade down into an area where he had seen insurgents coming from but yet he doesn't know everything that's down there.

WIT: The only difference on that is I think he employed this one to the roof top of this building which he could see. The difference is that we wanted to make sure that he knew that if it rolled off, if it went off into the compound; that was our issue with that. Do you see what I'm saying, sir?

Major General Votel: Okay.

Brigadier Nitsch: What I'm trying to work out is whether, do you feel that TM 5 - I know you're feeling he said, "yeah, I understand," which I think I could understand that because it was a fairly easy concept to get. It's a pretty easy concept to get across in his military experience. Do you feel if he'd taken your advice and really absorbed it, he wouldn't have thrown the grenade on ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~?

WIT: Honestly, yes, I do.

Brigadier Nitsch: So he didn't listen to your - okay. Just to nail this home, actually you believed - I know we're looking retrospectively now but you believe if he'd really taken it and got it, fully understanding these are reflex actions rather than necessarily conscious reactions?

WIT: Yes.

Brigadier Nitsch: But he'd really got this set in his psyche, he would have never delivered that grenade on ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~?

WIT: No, I don't think so.

Brigadier Nitsch: Okay. That's great. Thanks, TM 1. Just a couple more questions for you if I could. I think I know the answer you're going to give me but I still want to ask the question if you don't mind. Why was the debrief so much more thorough after ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ then it appears to be after Objective ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~?

WIT: It wasn't any more in depth in the sense that they had - on that one they had a question on that grenade because we knew there was a grenade thrown. On ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~, we thought it was the suicide. We dove into this more because we knew it was something we had -

Major General Votel: If I could just kind of follow up on that, how much, again, I know this is speculation, how much do you, TM 1, perceive the mood going into the hotwash ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ here knowing that as you described the other day that we had this operation which is kind of the premier core operation for the team, a true hostage rescue operation that had not turned out the way that we had - we had not recovered the hostage and, in fact, the hostage had died on the objective. The impression I got the other day was kind of the mood was a profound disappointment of ~~the (a), (b)(2)High~~ and the team. Do you agree with that, kind of how I described that?

WIT: I do agree with that, especially personally.

Major General Votel: And that's how you conveyed it to me. How much do you think that feeling affected that hotwash after ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ as opposed to this one after ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~? If you understand what I'm kind of getting at here. People were just so disappointed -

WIT: That they just wanted to get it over with.

Major General Votel: They just wanted to get it over with.

WIT: I'm sure it had some kind of an effect. I know for myself personally, I really didn't want to talk to anybody at the time. I was kind of a -

Major General Votel: Okay.

Brigadier Nitsch: Just two real quick questions, TM 1. The first one is how frequently is A3 in the lead?

WIT: TM 3?

Brigadier Nitsch: TM 3, yeah.

WIT: I have a patrol order. ~~(b)(2)High~~, ~~(b)(2)High~~. It's our patrol order.

Brigadier Nitsch: He's ~~(b)(2)High~~?

WIT: He's (b)(2)High.

Brigadier Nitsch: Okay. And can you just run me through the rest of the order?

WIT: (b)(2)High.

Brigadier Nitsch: So (b)(2)High.

WIT: Myself.

Brigadier Nitsch: (b)(2)High

WIT: (b)(2)High

Brigadier Nitsch: Yep. Keep -

WIT: Okay. Then it's (b)(2)High.

Brigadier Nitsch: (b)(2)High, yep.

WIT: The (b)(2)High then it's - I have EOD.

Brigadier Nitsch: So that's TM 10?

WIT: No, no, no.

Major General Votel: No, that's the other one.

WIT: It's TM 16.

Major General Votel: TM 8 is the (b)(2)High for the other team.

Brigadier Nitsch: (b)(2)High.

WIT: (b)(2)High

Brigadier Nitsch: Just out of interest, did you call fire teams on Objective 1.4(a), (b)(2)High?

WIT: No. They naturally flow together.

Brigadier Nitsch: That's really great, thank you.

Major General Votel: That's really good. I'm glad you asked that question.

Brigadier Nitsch: Thank you.

Major General Votel: Anything else?

Brigadier Nitsch: Can I ask you one other question?

WIT: Go right ahead.

Brigadier Nitsch: TM 5 took a ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ enade on ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~. He didn't carry a ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ grenade on ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~. Have you got any idea why he - because the way he's described ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ to us as if he was just carrying his normal load.

WIT: Actually when we talked about levels on the building 11 on levels - I just drew a blank, levels of escalation, we talked to him about instead of a ~~(b)(2)High~~ there, a fragmentation and then we wouldn't have had to dig a guy out for two hours or an hour and a half.

Brigadier Nitsch: So actually he did adjust his load you think after ~~(b)(2)High~~ I so such was the instruction that he received from you at the end of ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ that he actually changed the load that he carried, his standard operating load in the future.

WIT: You'd have to ask him. I just told him - I just made it clear about the levels of -

Brigadier Nitsch: Did you say to him you're not to carry a ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ again?

WIT: No.

UK SME: So I assume that he employed his ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ because he'd used his frag grenade essentially?

WIT: Essentially, I would say yes.

UK SME: So what one assumes now is that rather than carrying a frag and a ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ on ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~, he should have been carrying two frags?

WIT: I would assume that but I'm not going to question that on him. Each guy has their own load out. I've been carrying the same for three years. I don't specify to each guy exactly what they need to carry. I probably should have.

Brigadier Nitsch: That's been great, thanks, TM 1.

Major General Votel: UK SME, anything else?

UK SME: Not on this bit.

Major General Votel: I want to just return to a couple of different areas here and I want to return to TM 5 now. What was your - I mean, I recognize he is a young man who has some experience in other TF organizations and this is his - he's been through a train up with the team and with the (a), (b)(2) High and this is his first combat deployment with the team and with the (a), (b)(2) High. What was - kind of going into this as you kind of came into Afghanistan and as you kind of went through a series of well over 20 operations before we got to (a), (b)(2) High there and (a), (b)(2) High, 23 by the time we got to (a), (b)(2) High. What was your assessment of his skills in comparison to other new people that you had seen integrated into the organization?

WIT: He was actually doing really well. I didn't have any issues with him, I mean, just the normal stuff that the new guys coming in.

Major General Votel: An example of which is -

WIT: Other than just basically having to guide them as to where to go on the target. After you've been here a while, you just kind of - you just know. In that sense just like in the first few operations just kind of having to prep him.

Major General Votel: In other words, you considered him to be kind of tactically sound but just not as experienced?

WIT: Yes.

Major General Votel: Now, what about his social, interpersonal skills of kind of communicating, I can imagine as a new guy showing up to, again this is my opinion here and I won't put words in your mouth or in your head, as a new guy showing up there would be a little level of intimidation as kind of the new guy coming into the organization. Whether that's fact or not, can you comment on his kind of interpersonal skills, social skills as you kind of observed him interacting with other team members?

WIT: Social skills, the guy has no problem with social skills. He is very outgoing. Every guy that comes

in, every new guy that comes in, they understand their place. I don't use the new guy thing, I don't like that. I try to bring guys in and let them know that we have a job to do and I'm not here to bash on them. I need them to pick this stuff up quick and everything.

Major General Votel: So, again, you have no, going into ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ ing out of ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~, going into Objective ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~, you have no personal concerns about the performance of TM 5?

WIT: I had no personal concerns.

Major General Votel: He continued to function as a member of what you described here as Fire Team 1, which is essentially your team?

WIT: Yes.

Major General Votel: So, no particular concerns?

WIT: No.

Major General Votel: I'm going to move on to another area but I just want to see if there are any other questions related to that from anybody?

Brigadier Nitsch: No, sir.

Lieutenant Colonel ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~: Sir, if I may.

Major General Votel: Yes.

Lieutenant Colonel ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~: You said you had no personal concerns, did anyone else raise concerns to you?

WIT: Uhm, just TSE talking to me about this situation. Other than that I really had no - other than normal new guy just not knowing how to do things correctly. Other than that, but that's everybody who comes through this.

Major General Votel: Okay. Hey, TM 1, I want to move to another area now and I know we are bouncing between objectives here. We are on Objective ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ now. I want to understand how you, as a team leader, and talking to the ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ commander and ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ chief, other leadership on the objective, how do you communicate to the aerial ISR platforms that are up and over the

objective and watching you and watching the objective? How does that normally work and then how did it work on the evening of Objective ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~?

WIT: Most situations the ~~(b)(2)High~~ way we have inter communication and we also are on the command so we can hear what they are saying. TSE  
----

Major General Votel: So, the aerial platforms are on a command network that is kind of broad and there are a number of people on it?

WIT: Right. TSE is usually communicating and working their assets and talking with them with TCDR, they are the ones that are usually talking to them. The only time that I actually would talk to them is if in a situation where we had persons leaving and I took my team to go find those persons leaving or to locate movers then I would talk directly to the ISR platform to guide me in on where they were at. Other than that I'm just listening to feedback.

Major General Votel: So, in normal mode the ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ Commander and the ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ Chief are talking back and forth up, but you are monitoring everything that is ----

WIT: I'm just listening trying to get a picture of what is going on.

Major General Votel: Unless there is something specific a person leaving or somebody is moving off that your team is directed after, that would be an example where you would go voice to voice with the platform?

WIT: Yes.

Major General Votel: On Objective ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ that evening did you have any occasion to talk directly with any of the platforms?

WIT: No, sir, I didn't talk to them.

Major General Votel: Okay. Going into the operation, I know you had, we did a quick spin up on the evening of the ~~(b)(2)High~~ you know about the potential - we had some information about the potential of going into Objective ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ but ultimately the decision was taken not to do that so we had about 26 or 28 hours before we actually went on and there was some preparation.

What was your understanding, kind of as the lead team leader here, going into Objective 1.4(a), (b)(2)High as to the ISR coverage plan on Objective 1.4(a), (b)(2)High? What was your understanding of what they were looking at on behalf of the ground force?

WIT: Where they were going to be looking at?

Major General Votel: Yeah, where they were going to be looking and what they were going to be looking at? Let me say it a different way. What specific areas where they were looking at, you know, buildings 11, 12, 20 series or whatever, and were you aware that if they had been given any specific information requirements like, "hey, watch for Ms. Norgrove." Or, "look for some particular indicators."

WIT: Not specific in that sense. What they ended up doing is we give them specific sense to, when we get off they will sparkle the main objective like building 11 or just so as soon as we get off we know exactly where we are at.

Major General Votel:

(b)(2)High

WIT: Yes, sir. And then from that point that's TCDR is communicating and all those.

Brigadier Nitsch: Just to develop this thing a fraction more, TM 1, were there any spoken or specific ISR platform instructions given for this operation or was it just a standard ISR package or was it just the standard ISR TTPs for those that you would use for (b)(2)High operations?

WIT: I would say it was a standard, I don't know if we had any extras.

Brigadier Nitsch: But you were not aware of any specific instruction being given to the ISR platforms to look for anything different or to behave in any other way then they would normally behave for a (b)(2)High?

Major General Votel: Because of the potential of hostage rescue?

WIT: No, sir, I'm not aware of any extra guidance. That would have come from TSE and TCDR.

Brigadier Nitsch: Or, perhaps even in the mission preparation process. Have you ever seen them involved in the mission preparation?

WIT: I have seen them before. They are not located with us ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ That is all done here (referring to ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~ Airfield).

Brigadier Nitsch: You have seen them being involved before when you are collocated, have you?

WIT: Yes, I have seen - they came down and the manned ISR crew was there just a couple, I guess it was about a month and a half ago or two months ago. They came down to get feedback from us on how they can better themselves and give us a brief on their capabilities. It was like about two months ago.

Brigadier Nitsch: Okay, thanks, TM 1, sorry.

Major General Votel: UK SME, anything?

UK SME: Uhm, no I don't think on this specific area, no.

Major General Votel: Yeah, I guess before we leave the ISR thing, in retrospect, again, I know we are doing a lot of revisionist thinking here. Having seen that high resolution video, would you have expected one of our ISR platforms to have picked up what we now know to be the movement of Ms. Norgrove and reported that?

WIT: In retrospect? Yes, but in reality would they be able to convey it fast enough? I don't know.

Major General Votel: Okay, so perhaps not fast enough to make any difference but perhaps fast enough to kind of reduce that 8-minute gap between the time the grenade explodes and we actually find her?

WIT: Yes, sir.

Major General Votel: Okay. I do have one question on ~~1.4(a), (b)(2)High~~, I'm sorry I thought about this last night when I was kind of going back to this. After the engagements you moved and you and I watched on the video, you moving back up to 11 and 12.

WIT: Yes.

Major General Votel: If you could remind me, what was your route coming back down, I'm trying to remember how you and I think it was TM 7 linked up on the south side of building 25 when he told you, "hey, I saw a female on the objective"?

WIT: I went up into building 11, ended up I cleared a room right there, but when I came out, I made communication with TSE in Bravo and the still weren't there. So, I knew I had to finish clearing the lower 25, so I called TM 2 and said, "you've got 11 and 12, finish it. I've got to finish down here." As I pushed back out I grabbed TM 7. We went back between 23 and 25 where TM 6, that's where I came up on TM 6. I said, "we need to finish clearing." I grabbed him. We turned that corner and cleared the rest of those buildings. When we got to the end, TM 7, excuse me, came up to me and said, "there's a female back here." I said, "show me."

Major General Votel: Okay. I'm going to draw a picture here and I think I follow you but I just want to make sure I'm clear here. This is building 25, 23; this of course is the draw. 11, 12 ----

WIT: It is actually 12 and 11.

Major General Votel: Okay, good. Thank you very much. So you are in actually up here in (referring to attached diagram).

WIT: These are actually all 1 building. (referring to attached diagram).

Major General Votel: So, you grab TM 7 from up here?

WIT: He was standing out here.

Major General Votel: Okay. So he is standing out here.

WIT: I came back out. I came from right here. I made all my communications. I was standing right here. I grabbed him and said, "we have got to finish clearing 25." I'm looking for guys to pick up.

Major General Votel: Right down through the same ----

WIT: I went right back down through ----

Major General Votel: Down through the same one you went through?

WIT: The same route.

Major General Votel: Around this way and to the back side?

WIT: I grabbed -- TM 6 was here.

Major General Votel: TM 6 was here?

WIT: Yes. I grabbed him. We finished clearing these structures.

Major General Votel: TM 6 is the 1.4(a), (b)(2)High?

WIT: The 1.4(a), (b)(2)High, yes.

Major General Votel: Okay. So, now all three of you ----

WIT: Start clearing. I come in and start clearing, I believe ----

Major General Votel: TM 6 is the one who tells you, "I saw a female"?

WIT: No, TM 7 is. What happened is, TM 7 saw - anytime TM 7 sees EKIA or KIA he starts checking them for explosives.

Major General Votel: Okay.

WIT: In case they pull pins and there are grenades or whatever. He clears bodies. So, at the time I didn't know this because I started clearing rooms, but he started checking the bodies. Cleared the room, come out, he pushes down and says, "hey, we have a female back here." I told him to show me and he brought me back and showed me where she was.

Major General Votel: And then where did you link up with TM 6?

WIT: Down at the bottom. Down in here.

Major General Votel: In the same area? TM 6 didn't give you any indication that he had seen a female or anyone else?

WIT: He is watching this whole area because he's covering out ----

Major General Votel: He's actually covering out this direction?

WIT: Yes.

Major General Votel: All right. I think I got that. Then you and TM 7 immediately return back out here?

WIT: Correct. I told him to show me. He brought me to her.

Major General Votel: You actually unveiled her?

WIT: I uncovered her face.

Major General Votel: Okay. I think you - had you seen a picture of her?

WIT: Yes, we all had a picture, we had a breakdown of her?

Major General Votel: Did you instantly recognize who that was?

WIT: I made sure. I asked if this is her. I said, "get a light on her." I stepped back and called for TM 10.

Major General Votel: Thanks for that. About 02Z in the morning I was trying to reconstruct that. Now, I understand. I couldn't remember how you got down there. Now I remember. I think you had something else?

UK SME: Just a couple of questions, just going back to the ISR, it's a supplementary question to what's been asked so far. Is there any period during the operation where the ISR operators are on minimize? Is there a stage where they are only going to come up on the net if they have got something of absolutely critical importance?

WIT: A stage? No. If they have ----

UK SME: For example, when you are in the contact battles, when you have made contact with the enemy, the ISR operators are still going to report as they would normally report or are they going to minimize traffic?

WIT: No, they are still reporting. It's not going to affect what's happening with us because we have intercommunication on a different frequency.

UK SME: That's clear.

Major General Votel: So your communications that you are carrying, you have kind of a command net that goes across the TF that includes the aerial ISR platforms and you have an inner team communications?

WIT: Yes.

Major General Votel: That is just talking to your guys?

WIT: We call it 1a(a), (b)(2) Highnet.

Major General Votel: That's 1a(a), (b)(2) Highnet and then a command net?

WIT: Yes, sir, and I've got a dual so I can hit either one.

UK SME: The next question is, an area of the operation that might have appeared in time of 2 or 3 seconds which is confusing to us collectively and it may always be and that's the 2 or 3 seconds of your activity before the grenade detonated.

WIT: Yes.

UK SME: When we were talking about this a couple of days ago, you stated that you saw EKIA number 3 effectively from your vantage point on the rooftop. You engaged him successfully. You took a couple of steps back, you said, shots fired, armed men seen. You then move of or you partially move off the rooftop to cover down that defile. Can you just try and describe from this point to the detonation, what exactly are your actions?

WIT: Okay. I'm on that rooftop. The

Major General Votel: Let me just put 23 right here. 25, you know right here, you've kind of got this narrow, deep isle right here. This is the terrace, you know, the stairs are kind of right here. (referring to attached diagram).

WIT: Right here, this doesn't just walk off on to the ground. It was actually a big rock and I have to climb down (referring to attached diagram). But I engaged this - there is also a tree right here. I engaged this as him right here. I step back. I make the COMs. I scan over real fast but as I'm trying to negotiate to get down as well to keep moving. I step out on this rock. This is the only place I haven't seen, I know for sure. I scan down this way, the guy is still moving. I don't know if - where he is coming from or what his story is.

UK SME: So, he is a new guy as far as you are concerned?

WIT: As far as I'm concerned he is a new guy. I engage him. I'm going to go ahead and scan back this direction because you never know if they are still alive or not and if you have ever had somebody that you thought was dead rip off rounds at you, you always check.

UK SME: Yep.

WIT: It will change your world. As I scan back this direction I IDed his face, gun, I go to engage just to make sure and to finalize. That's it. All that is that snapshot where the explosion and everything happens all at that time.

UK SME: So, can you recall, and the answer may be no, but you've clearly seen this guy that you've engaged previously. You've seen the face. You've seen the weapon. You are not sure, you cannot be certain that he is not still posing a threat to you, so you go to engage him. Did you actually engage him before the explosion?

WIT: I believe so.

UK SME: You believe so.

WIT: I believe so. I'm pretty sure I got a round off before it or as it ----

UK SME: Perhaps a single round?

WIT: Oh, yeah, it wasn't more than a single round.

UK SME: Okay, that is really useful.

Major General Votel: That is hugely useful. UK SME, anything else?

UK SME: I've got some questions about post-operational stuff but I don't know where you were going.

Major General Votel: No, I think - I appreciate your clarification. Why don't you go ahead, please.

UK SME: TM 1, just marching forward into the day and a half after the operation. I can appreciate that this was a very difficult period for you and the rest of the team. Can you try to describe - try to recall and describe any conversations that you had, let's say, after you woke up on the Saturday afternoon, after

your first period of sleep. Any conversations that you had with either TM 2, TM 3, or TM 5 or any other team members about this?

WIT: To recall anything. Pretty much everybody just kind of stayed in their rooms. We were all pretty upset.

UK SME: So, you all sort of went individually and ----

WIT: I know I did. Personally I know I was in a world of chaos.

UK SME: So, if I could be more precise. You come off the ground, you have your hotwash, you do your SSE debrief, you then have this conversation with TM 3 and TM 5 when they indicate to you that the grenade is thrown. And then a period of time later, 12 hours or so later you have a separate discussion with the Chief reviewing the low fidelity ISR feeds. Then the next day we are into the brief from the Deputy Ambassador. So, in that period of time, there is no other sort of real - you don't really have any other conversations with anyone in the Team?

1.4(a), (b)(2) High

WIT: No.

UK SME: Okay.

Major General Votel: Hey, just, I'm interested in understanding kind of a little bit on team dynamics here, as a fellow soldier we are always trying to understand exactly how you guys think and do things. What roll does TM 2, the assistant team leader, play for you? How would you describe his - your responsibilities to him in terms of what you are doing for him and in turn what he does for the team?

WIT: What I do for him, is I'm trying to teach him my job so he can take over. As far as what he does for me is he's basically my go-to-guy, my back up as far as getting things done. If I have to separate, he's the one I'm going to leave in charge of the other group.

Major General Votel: Does he play any kind of mentorship rol or leadership roll over TM 3, 4, 5, TM 6(b)(2) High

WIT: We are all supposed to.

Major General Votel: I mean does he play - recognize everybody has some responsibilities but does he have any more and I hesitate to use the word 'formalize' but any more, does he have a great expectation based on the fact that he is the 2IC, he is a more experienced soldier that he grabs a younger guy and works with him or anything. Is there any expectation or does that happen or is it really personality driven or any thoughts on that?

WIT: I don't know how to really answer that one. As far as our team we are so small, and I'm pretty open, most of the guys that have any kind of issues they are going to come straight to me.

Major General Votel: They are going to come to you, I've got it.

UK SME: Have you ever had the roll of the deputy team leader despite you, he just sort of grown up with you if you sort of mean. I mean you must have been a deputy team leader at some stage, TM 1?

WIT: As 'deputy' what do you mean?

Major General Votel: A 2IC?

UK SME: Sorry, a 2IC. Does anybody explain what a 2IC is supposed to do? Is he got a sort of recognized position within the, well, obviously he is being mentored by TM 1, but any other sort of guidance or direction or is it just is as it is?

WIT: I always look at everything, 'it is as it is', but no, there's a leadership. They know they are going to be taking over. Everybody knows that they are supposed to be teaching the guy below them their job because it is going to get passed on. We have individual rolls as far as other jobs that we have to do and qualifications that guys need to keep up on. As far as an actual laid out plan, I'm not sure how to ----

Major General Votel: Yeah, I want to follow up on what you just said there because it is very intriguing to me. First of all I appreciate your views on this here and this is really interesting. You said, 'everyone has the responsibility to train the one below him.'

WIT: Yes.

Major General Votel: So, in other words, TM 1, you train TM 2. TM 2, you know by that theory, TM 3, TM 3 TM 4; TM 4 TM 5. Is that truly how it works? Just in the kind of day-to-day things if somebody, let's just say if TM 3 was or if TM 4 was having some apparent challenges or something then TM 3 would go to him and say, 'hey, this is how you might want to approach that.' Does that actually occur that way or am I thinking too much about this?

WIT: It's because, I don't, in the way we work, I don't think, it's not going to happen exactly that way because if TM 5 knew more about a subject than TM 4 then he's going to help him. We help each other regardless of, it's not a set.

Major General Votel: It's a less formal deal here and it really is on the individual skills and personalities and what everybody brings and it wouldn't be uncommon for a more junior guy to help a more senior guy and vice versa?

WIT: If you are talking about specifics, no.

Major General Votel: It really is about a team where everyone is kind of communicating and helping?

WIT: Yes.

Major General Votel: That's how you would describe it?

WIT: That's how I would describe it.

Major General Votel: Okay. That's pretty useful. Anything else from anyone?

UK SME: Nothing more from me, thank you, General.

Major General Votel: US SOF SME?

US SOF SME: No, sir.

Major General Votel: And (b)(3), (b)(6)

Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6): No, sir.

Major General Votel: Okay. TM 1, again, thank you very much for coming in to talk to us. I really do appreciate it. I know we are hitting around a lot of different areas here as you can tell but, you know, we've had quite a bit of

critical discords on everything we've heard so what we are really trying to do is come back and kind of close, you know, impressions in our own mind and close information gaps and this discussion here today has been very, very helpful. So, I thank you very much for coming in. Again, I especially appreciate your candidness and forthright from this as we kind gone through what I'm sure is maybe a little bit of a schizophrenic trip around the objective and different things that are happening. But, nonetheless it is kind of important for us to make sure we have done that. So, thanks very much.

Before we finish here, is there anything else that you may have thought about since we talked on Sunday evening that you think might be of some benefit for us to explore or talk about?

WIT: No, sir.

Major General Votel: Again, I would just remind you that if something does come up in the wake of this, we are going to be around here and we would immediately reconvene. And, finally, let me just kind of remind you as I did the other day, not to talk or discuss anything that we talked about in here with anybody other than the Chaplain or a lawyer if you have - if you so have the need without discussing it with me and gaining permission first.

WIT: Roger that.

Major General Votel: All right. Thanks, TM 1, I appreciate it very much.

[The witness departed the room.]