

Contemporary Operations Study Team

A project of the Combat Studies Institute, the Contemporary Operations Study Team compiles a history and archives firsthand accounts from US Army personnel and personnel from other American, Coalition, and international organizations who planned, participated in, or supported select Army operations. This interview is part of COST's study of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM covering the period October 2005 through April 2008.

Interview with Colonel [REDACTED]

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

Diamond



Combat Studies Institute
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[REDACTED]
(b)(3), (b)(6)

Abstract

Deployed in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM from May 2007 to August 2008, Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) was the commander of the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team. In this interview, Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) discusses his strategy of "separate, stabilize, and transform" in his area of operation, which was primarily the Konar Province in Afghanistan. He says "that was what we sought to do because I didn't have enough forces to 'clear, hold, and build' in one of my valleys, much less the 10 or 15 that we were responsible for." He also says that they lived counterinsurgency "to the point of living with the population and I firmly believe that those who live with the population care more about the population than anybody else." Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) describes the greatest enemy threat in his area as economic poverty. He points out he thinks that "everything that we fought against could be boiled down to an economic argument and that was why, again, non-lethal effects, money, projects, and messaging, were so important." Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) also emphasized the importance of information operations and the lessons his unit learned in Afghanistan. The catch phrase they coined was, "We don't have to be right. We have to be first and not wrong." Then, the last thing that caused his unit grief, as Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) describes it, was rule of law. He highlights how "until there is rule of law, that is probably the best we can do, disrupt ^{AAF-S} their efforts but not defeat the efforts of all these different flavors of enemies of Afghanistan."

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Interview with Colonel [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) 19 and 20 March 2009

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This is an interview with Colonel [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) on his experiences in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). The interview is being conducted by [redacted] (b)(6) from the Contemporary Operations Study Team (COST) at the Combat Studies Institute (CSI), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. COST is compiling a history of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM covering the period October 2005 through April 2008. The interview dates are 19 and 20 March 2009 and this is an unclassified telephonic interview.

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19 March 2009

[redacted] (b)(6) Sir, I do want to remind you that this is an unclassified interview. So, if I ask you something that borders on classified territory, you can just tell me you can't answer that, if that is okay.

Diamond [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) Okay.

[redacted] (b)(6) For the introduction, could you just please state your name, rank, and duty position.

Diamond [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) I am Colonel [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) I am currently the Deputy Commander of the 75th Ranger Regiment; but, all questions in this interview have to do with my time as commander of the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

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[redacted] (b)(6) What was the time period you were deployed?

Diamond [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) We deployed on 22 May 2007 and the last people returned on 4 August 2008.

[redacted] (b)(6) Now, I know a lot of these questions you already answered in written form; but, if it is okay, I thought we would just go through the same questions and you can add anything you want or just expand on any of your previous thoughts.

Diamond [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) Sure.

[redacted] (b)(6) The first question is just a general question. Could you just describe your area of operations (AO)?

Diamond [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes. We were primarily located in Konar Province, Afghanistan, and we had three districts that went into the Nuristan area. One of those districts that is well known is the Waygal

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District. Our AO was an area that had approximately 80 kilometers of border that was shared with Pakistan in the very rugged, austere, remote, undeveloped, foothills of the Hindu Kush Mountains. The Pech River went from west to east through our area and the Konar River basically traversed from north to south along our eastern border, approximately eight to 10 kilometers from the Pakistan border.

(b)(6) Now, did the ethnic makeup of the population affect your operations?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) Of course, the population can either be confirmed as a decisive point of our operations, as many people do, or the center of gravity and we focused a lot on the population. It was interesting that, despite the tribes and languages throughout, which were very much a challenge, we had the Pashtunwali culture that was predominate through our area; and we had separate elements of the Islamic religion that we had to work with. Many challenges with tribes that were literally within a few kilometers of each other separated by a huge ridgeline. The tribes could choose not to communicate with each other, if they so desired, because their dialects were so different that if they spoke in their native dialect they could not talk to each other. However, for the most part, they had the common language of Pashtun to use when they wanted to communicate. So, it was a very isolated valley with very isolated tribes that have historically fought with each other for hundreds of years and our day-to-day backdrop was Pashtunwali and Islam. DUE AFGHAN COULTURE-PART, ITC (b)(6), ONLY SPOKE DARI - THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE, HE REQUIRED MY INTERPRETER TO TALK AT 3000 HRS. WBU

DE = POPULATION
COG = TRANSFORMED ENVIRONMENT
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(b)(6) Had this isolated region seen much of a Coalition presence before you arrived?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) No; nor had they seen their central government, which was one of the primary things we sought to do - to gain and maintain freedom of action for the Coalition force, which would then bring the Afghan National Security Forces, which would bring the government, and, thus, connect the population to the government, the ANSF, and, ultimately, the international community. So, when we would bring somebody that was viewed as the central government, the district chief or the province governor, into an area routinely we would hear, "This is the first time we have ever seen somebody from the central government." That daily interaction and persistent presence showed very isolated people that there was a better world out there that they had never been exposed to and, in fact, had been lied to about for scores of years if not hundreds of years.

(b)(6) Can you describe your strategy of "separate, stabilize, and transform"?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) We really adopted that from the people we took over the area from. We relieved in place 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, which was part of 3d Brigade, 10th Mountain. They had a similar idea; but, really didn't articulate it to us the same way. After seeing the terrain, we knew that we could not physically do the tactical task of "clear" the ground we owned, we didn't have the force to "hold" it, and "building" capacity was a very, very long-term venture. What we could do is quantify tasks and attack the enemy and the population, lethally and non-lethally. So, what we sought to do was to use information operations (IO), non-lethal effects of many sorts, to "separate" the enemy from the population. This accomplished our objective, so that we could then control the population, again through non-lethal effects, and we could "hold" areas for a small period of time and really "stabilize" them for an extended period of time. We stabilized

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them by separating the enemy out of the village, to the point of the village elders having daily shuras with us, or every other day having meetings with us, and telling us, "There are no bad guys here anymore. There are none within 300 meters of our villages," which meant, "Great. They are separated!" That brought "stability" into the village. It allowed projects to come in and we started transforming their whole culture because they were having daily interaction with not only Coalition forces but ANSF and government officials and the international community, who were trying to put in projects for the population. Contact and projects brought an element of stabilization or normalcy to their life, which allowed for transformation. When they see that, "Hey, it is good to have consistent power and clean water for our kids and medical capability demonstrations and doctors coming and visiting us," that transforms how these people that live in stone huts view the world. So, that was what we sought to do because I didn't have enough forces to "clear, hold, and build" in one of my valleys, much less the 10 or 15 that we were responsible for.

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(b)(6) Right. Now, why was it important to lead with the non-lethal effects?

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(b)(3), (b)(6) Well, really, because non-lethal effects are a very cost effective enabler; they are easier to employ, since you can continuously employ non-lethal effects; and they have a longer term, low cost impact on the population which was the decisive point. Consistent and persistent messaging means squad leaders know the themes on their patrols, platoon leaders and company commanders know the themes when they are meeting with the shuras, and when I'm meeting with the district and province leadership and interacting with the ANSF all are talking about the same thing, a sound bite, "We are invited guests of the democratically elected President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan." So, being invited guests invokes both elements of Pashtunwali to protect us and support us and be kind to us and it also invokes the charitable pillar of Islam. Now, does that mean that everybody bought into it? No. But, after hearing it consistently for hundreds of days in every form, hearing it on the free radios we gave them and on bill boards we emplaced, people started repeating the messages and used the same verbiage, the same way, at all levels, all the time. When these comparatively uneducated people started repeating those same themes we knew we were being successful in our IO campaign; when we would go to a shura and the elders would either bring up our points that we were trying to send or use them in the course of a conversation we knew we were being successful. So, that was why it was important. Non-lethal effects were also frustrating because, as I have said, I could drop a million dollars worth of bombs and nobody would say anything; but, trying to get \$5,000 of non-lethal aid delivered 15 minutes from now was an impossible task.

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(b)(6) Now, it seems to me that the people I have interviewed in the 173d seem to have a really good grasp of Pashtunwali. Did you have someone who came and trained you on that? How did you get your cultural knowledge?

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(b)(3), (b)(6) We had very good interpreters that were passed on to us and I will tell you that our greatest bit of learning was done in the PDSS, pre-deployment site survey. And I have said this for many years, we can have all the COIN (counterinsurgency) conferences we want and we can read all the CSI (Combat Studies Institute) publications we want; but, really, in the first 72 hours on the ground we learn more than in weeks of conferences. If you go in with so much knowledge that you are a danger to yourself and the community, I think that is actually a step backwards.

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So, we went in wanting to learn, 1-32 Infantry was very connected to the population, we fell in on their footprint, and we accepted the same risk and interacted with the population every single day. Each platoon went out on two patrols a day, every day, and the intent of nearly every patrol was a non-lethal engagement, checking on a project, meeting with the business people of a village, meeting with the farmers of a village, meeting with the teachers of a village, or meeting with the political leaders. It was just shura after shura after shura after shura and with that constant interaction you kind of get it. And people are blown away when I talk about this. I have male friends in Afghanistan that I had conversations with exactly as I would with American friends. It is surprising to everybody; but, Afghan men, educated men in leadership positions, are as henpecked as American men. Everybody thinks they have these dour wives. Well, that is BS. Governor Haji Zalmay, who was a Mujahideen warrior leader and was completely respected, educated, and spoke a lot of English, had to be on the road at 1700 hours on Thursday night, and his ass had to be at home by dark. It became the big joke after month two. It was, "Hey, I know I'm cutting into your time because you have to get home," and I was saying this to him since he spoke English and get your skirt on and get all your chores done, sweep the house and stuff, before the weekend," and he would just laugh and laugh and laugh and he would say, "You know that is right," and I would say, "Hey, brother. It is the same in America." So, it was in those daily interactions with people that you could then have honest conversations of culture and I could ask him, "These are the points I want to make to your elders. What is the best way to say this?" After that trust was developed through a lot of bantering, he replied, "Okay. The best way to say this is this way. He would say, "don't listen to so and so - he always complains." Just like in an American town hall meeting!

(b)(6) How did you characterize the enemy in your AO?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) I think the greatest enemy in our AO was economic poverty. I think everything that we fought against could be boiled down to an economic argument and that was why, again, non-lethal effects, money, projects, and messaging, were so important. And we were close to a border; so, it was easy for enemy of different flavors to come into our area. But, they all didn't come flowing across the border. Many of them came up the hardball road because, with no rule of law in Afghanistan, it is pretty hard to interdict people who are carrying ideas, money, or ammunition from one point to another. It is not illegal to have AK-47s and it is not illegal to sell ammunition and there are very few courts and almost no confinement facilities. So, this business about, "Hey, we need more cops," well, we are moving the cops answer from the 80 percent solution to the 85 percent solution; but, we haven't moved the courts from zero to 10 percent and we haven't moved confinement from 10 to 20 percent. My point being, "What is the enemy?" We had a few hyper Islamic radicals rolling through our area and we generally knew where they were because the local population wasn't radicalized. They would get as irritated with these folks (ZAWAS) (b)(3), (b)(6) as we would when a few of those folks would transit the area. We would also get financiers in that could talk people into doing dang near anything and we would get Chechens and Arabs and Uzbeks that would come in and largely intimidate the population and then pay the young men enough that their pride was assuaged so that they would fight the big Islamic jihad, when they really were fighting an economic argument and trying to fight so they wouldn't get killed by these people. So, in our area, no big marauding bands of Taliban, al-Qaeda, or HIG although all of them were up there. In my current job, I know it is a historic sanctuary for a number of the senior leaders of the groups America is trying to dismantle; but, that is because it is a rugged,

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austere, remote, undeveloped area that is in close enough proximity to built up areas and close enough to roads and rivers that they can move in and out and quickly get into areas that are harder for us to access.

(b)(6) How did you adopt your tactics so you could fight this type of criminal enemy?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) When we batched the enemy we would identify enemies of the population, enemies of Afghanistan, and then I didn't care if they were enemies because of economic reasons or ideological reasons. But, how did we adapt our tactics? We led with non-lethal effects. We sought to, at every opportunity, separate the enemy from the population. That allowed us to use our firepower to engage the enemy in the mountains where the population couldn't be intimidated into saying that we had caused major civilian casualties. You can Google search on our unit in our area and there are so few claims and there are no unanswered claims about civilian casualties because Governor Wahidi, the province governor, went and met with President [George W.] Bush, I think, in May [2008] on his world tour. He is a New Zealand dual-citizen, he speaks English, and he told President Bush that no civilians had been killed in Konar Province in five months. I think he may have overstated that a little bit; but, I think his point and his credibility was very key. Well, actually, he said no innocent civilians had been killed in Konar in five months. He conveyed this to the population, "If you break Afghan law and you are against Afghanistan and you harbor those who are against Afghanistan, you are no longer an innocent civilian in the eyes of Allah or in the eyes of the government. So, don't come to me and complain if you are associated with bad people." So, we benefited immensely from good governorship from the district level through the province level.

(b)(6) Now, did you have to adopt your intelligence operations for this kind of threat?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) Well, we went through battalion intelligence team training, ~~(BITT) (military transition team) training~~ and we received POIs (programs of instruction) from 1-32 Infantry on company intelligence team training, and we had different mobile training teams come in and help us build up these teams; but, that largely was morphed on the fly. We realized that each outpost, whether it was a platoon or a company minus, had to develop their own intelligence capability. So, we would try to farm out any extra people that we had, hurt, wounded, injured, or whatever, out to these smaller posts and a lot of them were employed in intelligence gathering. So, with the external resources that we had and the HUMINT (human intelligence) collection teams, they would marry up with some augmentee Soldiers who could put together good link diagrams. Just through interaction with the population, we could identify where the pressure points were on the population and where the pressure points were on the enemy and that would feed back into what our messaging to the population would be. For instance, if they are getting intimidated by foreigners, Afghans are very, very nationalistic, so, by persistently messaging on the radio that foreign fighters that have their families safely sequestered living the good life in other areas, are intimidating your women and your very honorable men and scaling from you - going down some tenets of Pashtunwali and Islam, working those into the messaging and repeating that over and over, every hour for seven days, all of sudden we would start getting more intel because the people would be almost guilted into abiding by Pashtunwali. They would break out of the intimidation of the foreigners and start indirectly saying, "There are foreigners in our valley. We can't meet with you because of the foreigners in our valley," and they would start giving us little

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pieces that we could develop and they could stay loyal to their culture of protecting the guests, the foreigners, in their valley but still let us know that foreigners were there.

(b)(6) Now, could you describe the enemy's proficiency at information operations and propaganda?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) We had a company battle on 5 July 2007, day 30 into our tour, which went on for about 16 hours, and [Specialist Christopher] Honaker and [Private First Class Joseph] Miracle were killed and five other Soldiers were wounded in that operation. The company fought to the point of being out of water and very low on ammunition for a period of about six hours and we brought in all the assets in theater. The company commander was ready to be extracted and I talked to him and asked, "Are you secure?" and he said, "Yes, I'm secure. We are ready to be extracted. We have all of our people and all of our staff." Then I said, "Okay, if you are secure, we are not going to extract you. I'm going to reinforce you and you are going to continue to fight," and there was a pause and then he said, after a hard, hard day, "Sir, we need to be extracted to live to fight another day," and I said, "Well, you are going to live to fight another day; but, it is starting right now and we will do this." My point was that he stayed there and that company lost no more people and killed approximately 80 enemy in the Watapur Valley and we transformed that valley. It was never as contentious as it was on that day. But, as the battle went on, all of a sudden some reports went out that Americans were killing civilians in Watapur. They were calling sympathetic reports, Reuters, BBC, and so on, and telling them this from the battlefield. This was the first time that we were having a tactical victory stolen from us by enemy Taliban propaganda. Even my higher came down and said, "What the heck is going on down there?" and started asking 1,000 questions that were distracting us from the fight. So, as I was sitting there about pulling my hair out. It was at that moment I learned that the Taliban was pretty good at propaganda but they weren't better than us and were not going to steal that tactical victory from us. So, working with the governor and working with our PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team), we flew in national level military and political leaders on Afghan aircraft to come in, see the battlefield, conduct an investigation, and hold a major shura. It was a national level deal and the end result was Arabs in the village cutting the heads off of Afghans and the innocent people were the noncombatants that were killed when the Arabs fired at MEDEVAC (medical evacuation) aircraft and the Apaches engaged the Arabs that were using humans for shields. But we were on the cusp for about three days of basically being dishonored and being told that we were bad people that didn't know how to fight in Afghanistan. That matured and steeled our unit like no other event could. We then went from reactive information operations to proactive and then from enemy-centric to population centric messaging, meaning we were theming to the population all the time, trying to get the credibility of Fox or NBC news, so that when we did put an Afghan political leader or military leader on the radio that the population would believe the first story. So, we coined, "We don't have to be right. We have to be first and not wrong." That was the catalyst of that saying. It sounds trite; but, there was a lot in that sentence, again, meaning that we had to get on the radio, to the point where, many times, in the last half of our tour, we would announce in a general sense, "We are going to be conducting air assault operations in the mountains to target enemies of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan at the bequest of the province governor," because then, anything we did in the province, the population felt informed or warned - they already knew, "The governor and the Coalition and the international community already told us they were going to do that. So, if you are a bad guy

in the mountains or with a bad guy in the mountains and you get hurt, there is no complaint." Because they can tolerate death and they can tolerate injury; but, they really can't tolerate the perception of injustice. That was a point that a senior leader in 3-10 Mountain made to us very early on and it was so appropriate.

(b)(6) Did you have experts with you that knew information operations?

Diamond (3), (b)(6) Yes; but, I'm very arrogant on this point because I fight the Army information people all the time. We did have experts. We had about 900 of them and they were all MOSs (military occupational specialties) and they were all assigned to our unit or attached to our unit. Here is an example. The Wanat Battle occurred at month 14 and a half. It was the biggest battle there with nine Americans killed and 27 wounded and everybody wanted to help. So, the PSYOP (psychological operations) community emailed me in month 14 and said, "Hey, big battle. We are here to support and we are going to do x, y, and z." Until that time, I had not had any effects from them. So, I emailed to everybody, "That is great. I appreciate all the support. I always welcome anybody that is going to help us. I'll track the timeline when your support comes in." Ten days later, I got a watered down ineffective message that they recommended I put on the radio and I emailed back and said, "This is why maneuver commanders don't rely on IO experts. In the time it took you to get this ineffective message to me, I have been in 23 more contacts, done 50 more fire missions, and had this many people wounded and each one of those events required either pre-assault IO fires or post-assault IO fires. So, in the time you ginned up one message, I have done 47." I'm working this in my current job and in my opinion IO messaging is an under-rated effort with grammar school effects when we need grad school effort and doctoral effects. In fact, one of my company commanders, [Captain] (b)(3), (b)(6) who worked a lot with the IO piece for us, is writing a paper right now on IO and it is phenomenal. The paper talks about maneuver commanders owning radio stations, being tied into the local television stations, and working with Afghan leadership to maintain the credibility of the mediums and to have access to them with credible leaders who can consistently theme and do population centric messaging when there is fallout. If you are reacting to the enemy, you are not first. So, it doesn't matter how cool your product is if you are reacting to the enemy.

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(b)(6) Great. Now, did you have a hand in helping stand up more radio stations?

Diamond (3), (b)(6) No. We took the one we had on Camp Blessing and we got more power and a larger antenna so we had larger reach. There was one in Asadabad already and, again, we got more power and reach with that one also. We were kind of a victim of our own success as we shared our techniques and successes, more people wanted radios, which competed with our requests. So, our option, which worked out fine, was to increase the range/capability of what we had.

(b)(6) In your assessment, what factors, if any, contributed to changes in violence levels during your tour?

Diamond (3), (b)(6) I think the first is, when a unit gets in, they have to determine if Coalition forces are the problem. Is there only violence because you are there and you are a target of opportunity? For example, can the enemy come up to a support by fire position, film themselves shooting at the Americans, and get paid for that? In some cases, that was what was happening and that was why

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we were closing down some of our bases and reallocating assets. The positions that were no longer tactically relevant given the new roads or conditions that we had were closed. I think there is inherently a ramp up as units are successful. People are going to come after units to try to disrupt that success and that was what we had in the first five or six months. The use of overwhelming precision firepower to destroy the enemy threat on their own home turf and sometimes in their own house has a transforming effect and that was what happened when we went into the Watapur on 5 July [2007], it happened in ROCK AVALANCHE in October [2007] in the Korengal, and at a very high cost it happened in the Waygal Valley in July of 2008 when we relentlessly and ruthlessly used firepower to destroy and pursue the enemy.

(b)(6): I understand that there were a few areas where the population refused to support the Afghan Government. Did you have any areas like that in your AO?

Diamond (3), (b)(6) Yes. It was really the Waygal Valley –the one area that no matter what we did we were just not effective. I attribute that to having a trafficable road everywhere else all the way to our forces so that we could have persistent presence, connect with the population and wear down their resistance. We could wear down the enemy's desire to hang out with the population and be at risk of being killed or captured. In the Waygal Valley, our predecessors had a great plan to put these outstations in a valley that was helicopter centric only because they believed that they would be able to get the roads built to them in a pretty short time. That didn't pan out; so, we sought to close the air centric posts and pull back closer to the population centers and get out of isolated posts that were largely irrelevant except for being symbolic and thus being targets for the enemy.

(b)(6): Okay.

Diamond (3), (b)(6) And, again, with the lines of operation that we worked on, security, governance, economic development, and information operations, if the only thing we were doing was really securing ourselves, because there was no population out there and there was no government for us to work with and there were no security forces for us to better and there was very little economic activity going on, it was kind of irrelevant to be there. No matter how much IO and interaction we did in walking out to really remote, small villages, we were not going to have a transforming effect. So, in that valley, we wanted to pull back to the district center and that was what we ended up doing. We had a brand new district center that we could go to by road, we had a brand new school and a brand new police station, a bazaar, and we had 1.4 million dollars worth of projects going in. So, it just made sense to collocate Coalition forces and the ANSF there so that we could mentor the government, train the ANSF, bring in economic development, and our IO would be effective and then we could spread back out from there. And that was the valley where we had the Battle of Wanat in the last two weeks we were there and were not able to exploit that transformational battle for a big win. I'm not sure if the people that took over for us have been up there at all since we left.

(b)(6): Could you describe Operation ROCK AVALANCHE?

Diamond (3), (b)(6) Yes. ROCK AVALANCHE was really borne out of frustration that we weren't having any sustainable effects in the Korengal Valley, which we deemed as a very important valley to

stabilizing Konar Province. Korengali timber brought a lot of money into Konar and if we could stabilize that valley we knew we would have second and third order effects throughout Konar Province. Originally, we were getting a lot of flak/suggestions about putting the whole battalion in there and conducting a battalion-size air assault and staying in there until we fixed it. Well, it doesn't work that way in that area. If you put too large of a force in, the enemy just goes to ground and melts away until you leave and then, as soon as you leave, they come back and cause the population grief. So, we opted for a number of company-sized air assaults and, by doing a series of company air assaults on the different ridgelines in a certain order, we were able to funnel the enemy into different kill zones. We would air assault in, anticipate where they would move, and we would generally use different sources to locate, indentify, and target the enemy. And we ruthlessly used the rules of engagement, meaning that our rules of engagement say it is reasonable certainty and not reasonable doubt – and we used that reality – based on everything known at the time, if we determined with reasonable certainty there were enemy there, we would attack them with overwhelming firepower to include attacking houses they were using for sanctuary. We ended up destroying a lot of enemy in that comparatively short period of time. That showed the enemy that we weren't afraid to go into their sanctuaries and we weren't afraid to fight them as hard as we were being fought by them. Now, some people would say, "What is the so what? You go in there and kill a bunch of people and we all know in COIN that killing bad guys isn't the answer." Well, this is the metric of the Korengal. From 5 June to 25 October [2007] before ROCK AVALANCE, that company had seven killed and 27 wounded in the Korengal Valley. After ROCK AVALANCHE, they had zero killed and 13 wounded, 11 of which were returned to duty, and they did three times as many patrols in the second half from October to July [2008]. So, that is an example of a transforming event. They were getting ~~wailed on~~ pretty steadily, we got the conditions set so that we could go after the enemy, we went after the enemy, and that valley was transformed. It wasn't transformed and casualties didn't go down because we sat and hid behind Hesco barriers. So, that is a metric that I used in relation to ROCK AVALANCHE and I could explain that operation in detail with unclassified slides too.

TO INCLUDE IMMINENT THREAT AND/OR HOSTILE INTENT (b)(3), (b)(6)

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THEIR CASUALTIES (b)(3), (b)(6)

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(b)(6): So, which of your companies participated then?

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(b)(3), (b)(6) Although Battle Company owned the Korengal, was the center piece, and lost three killed in ROCK Avalanche, the whole battalion at different times participated. All the companies participated in ROCK AVALANCHE. Literally, from HHC (Headquarters and Headquarters Company) all the way through our forward support company, all our units were holding ground so that other elements could air assault into the mountains and we would rotate the companies that would air assault in for two days. We just kept a rotational schedule primarily with Able, Battle, and Chosen Companies to funnel the enemy into kill zones where we could get after them with firepower and maneuver.

(b)(6) Did the ANSF participate?

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(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes. That is what is interesting about going back over there now. Every one of our bases had ANSF on the base. Many of the bases had both ANA (Afghan National Army) and ANP (Afghan National Police). Every operation we went on had some form of ANSF with each element and, to us, that was just common. That was just the way we operated. We needed those people to augment our forces. We needed to be partnered with them so we could leave a mix of

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Americans and Afghans back at the base to secure the base and, then, when we went out into the mountains, we needed a mix of Americans and Afghans to not only secure the force but to interact with the population. So, it is kind of odd to me that some people act like that is a revelation in, "Hey. We need to interact more with the Afghans." Everybody knows that.

(b)(6) Were they collocated with you on your base?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes. On every one of our bases, the ANA were located on the base and there wasn't a big wall separating the forces. They had their side of the camp or their area and we had ours and there were some dual facilities. There were not a lot of them; but, some dual facilities and they had accepted norms where the people would go and there were off limits areas for both our guys and theirs. But, it was off limits like your neighbor's yard is off limits to your kids. It is not that you necessarily have a brick wall with wire and armed guards. You just tell your kids to stay out of there and have some respect for other people's privacy and property. But, yes, on every base they were collocated and our company commanders were the biggest proponents of improving the facilities for the Afghan Security Forces and population because, in short order, they started thinking that these guys were like their Soldiers, like their neighbors, like their peers, and they should be taken care of better.

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(b)(6) Now, I have a few more questions on the ANSF, economics, and governance; but, I have to do another interview today. So, I think we are going to have to do those on another day, if that is okay.

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) That is fine.

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(b)(6) We left off talking about the Afghan National Security Forces. So, I guess my first question would be if you remember the units with whom you worked.

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) It was the 2d Brigade of the 201st Corps and we ended up with two separate battalions in that organization. So, 3d Battalion, 2d Brigade, 201st Corps, was one of the battalions and the other one was 1st Battalion, 2d Brigade, 201st Corps.

(b)(6) In what specific areas did these units require more mentorship and training?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) Well, it was pretty interesting. Our battalion fight was the same as theirs, early on, I knew I couldn't do everything. We had to focus on a few tasks like command and control (C2), ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance), indirect fires, MEDEVAC, and emergency resupply. I held my Afghan peers to those same criteria and when we peeled back the onion my peer battalions could C2. In fact, there were many times they could talk across the battlespace faster and more effectively than I could and I found that kind of interesting. Now, they didn't have secure communications; but, they have had to figure out how to talk across that rugged terrain for quite some time. Indirect fires were where they needed the most help; but, that was

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primarily because of equipment. They had very old equipment, not maintained, and missing sights on their mortars; but, again, they figured out how to use them. When we would get in enemy contact or we were doing training, the Afghans loved to compete against our mortar men and they would have good quality competitions on who could have first round hits and in combat who would have the most effective fire. So, I was always really impressed. Now, if we could have gotten them better equipment, that would have helped. The real drawback was they didn't have the education to learn how to formally use more advanced systems. Then, going into emergency resupply, they have been supplying themselves in those mountains forever. As long as we can get supplies from their higher headquarters, they have good distribution plans from battalion level and below. It was brigade level and above, due to everything from corruption to lack of distribution system/vehicles. For emergency MEDEVAC, they would use their vehicles, their organic assets, and pull people out of the mountains. When we were doing combined operations or if they were doing independent operations, we would have enough of my guys with them to help them with emergency MEDEVAC and really emergency resupply and fires as required. As far as information operations, that was another element that we worked on at our battalion level and they were very good at IO. When we helped them with the intent or the purpose of doing continuous IO, they became very, very good at it and took the lead in our shuras on many occasions. We talked about themes beforehand and they would deliver those themes in, obviously, a manner that was easily received or better received by the local population.

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(b)(6) When you were talking about artillery, were they using the old Russian equipment?

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(3), (b)(6) Absolutely. Everything was Warsaw Pact, D-30 artillery, and they were good at getting those rounds on target or at least in proximity to the enemy. And then their primary mortar system was really the 82-mm. I don't think they had anything else other than 82-mm mortars. Their equipment is so different – set up on 6000 mils v. 6400 mils – that we have a hard time training them to get better.

(b)(6) Did they have any embedded training teams (ETTs) working with them?

Diamond

(3), (b)(6) Yes. Each battalion had a Marine Corps embedded training team that was augmented with US Army, National Guard, SECFOR, security force. So, you had the Marine tactical and technical mentors that were augmented with US Army National Guard to get them moved around throughout the battlespace. But, the best thing about how the ETTs worked in our area was, about in July [2007], about three months into our tour, an ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) FRAGO came down and made the ETTs OPCON (operational control) to the brigade commander with 12 caveats. There was a gray area in whether the brigade commander was able to further OPCON them to me. He did, in an order; but, again, with numerous caveats and I talked to my two lieutenant colonel Marine Corps professional peers and I said, "Really, I don't care what that order says: What we need to do is come to an agreement to work together and what I can offer you is the support of 1,000-man US Army task force, everything from parts and equipment to gas and ammo and helicopters and every class of supply and what you can do for me is help me professionalize the ANSF and target them to accomplish our shared objectives," because that was what their job was anyhow. So, we called it SWAYCON (sway control) between us. I said, "I don't really have OPCON of you with all these caveats; but, I call

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it SWAYCON because I want to sway you to do x, y, and z,” and they would laugh and say, “Well, we want to sway you to do x, y, and z as well; so, we are all good.” In a lot of areas, there was contention or friction; but, we went through a total of four or five Marine teams and after 30 days of forming and storming we didn’t have friction. We just coalesced pretty quickly and worked together and didn’t have, really, many issues. Diamond

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(b)(6) What were some of the caveats they had?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) I can’t even remember. Quite honestly, I read them and it was at higher levels of where you could target these people, how you could employ them, and what support they needed if they were to be employed. So, quite honestly, I skimmed over the FRAGO and said, “This isn’t going to change the way we are doing business; so, it is really not important to me.” Like I said, a lot of those things are really important to people who are not getting shot at every day. But, for us, we were all about figuring out how to mass our effects on the enemy, lethal and non-lethal, and how to better the lot for our population. Diamond

(b)(6) Now, did you work with the Afghan National Police at all?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes. We had Brigadier General Jalal. He was the Konar Police Chief the entire time we were there and before I was there. He was a Tajik, which is an important point because a lot of people would accuse him of being corrupt and I don’t think he was. I think, because he was less corruptible than others, people would try to levy false claims against him and, because of his nationality and the very small number of Tajiks in Konar, he had to be pretty straight in order to keep that job because there were plenty of Pashtuns that did not want him in that job. But, we had a weekly Provincial Coordination Center (PCC) meeting hosted by our province governor with every flavor of Afghan National Security Forces. The Police Chief, obviously, was instrumental, and the NDS Chief, which is their intelligence service, and the ANA commanders and Coalition commanders and PRT commanders and UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) were all in this meeting discussing last week’s events and upcoming events in as much detail as really we could. And this Provisional Coordination Center then morphed into a 24/7 JOC, joint operations center that was manned by all those flavors of security forces, to include ours, and that went a long ways, obviously, to coordinating operations and getting the Afghans in the lead of many operations.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Now, were there any areas that you didn’t have an ANSF presence?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes; in the Waygal Valley. Again, there were ANP as far forward as Wanat; but, they were empirically corrupted and it was unknown really whether they were corrupted because of intimidation or because they were corrupt. But, really, we had no ANSF presence beyond our reach, if that makes sense. So, if we weren’t in the Watapur Valley, day in and day out, neither were the ANSF. When we would patrol in there, the ANA and the ANP would go with us. Occasionally, the ANP would go up a few kilometers into that valley; but, day in and day out, they didn’t do independent patrolling in that area or other contested valleys. And I could just go all the way around the horn; but, the Asadabad and Jalalabad Road and the Pech River Road were our main arteries and all of the capillary valleys that came off of these arteries were our contested region. One to three kilometers off of the arteries was where we had to fight for the Diamond

terrain and so did our ANSF. So, as we expanded our ANSF into these areas, then the security bubble would push deeper into the valley.

(b)(6) Now, what were some of your reconstruction goals?

Diamond (3), (b)(6) We inherited and took on 1-32 Infantry's idea that roads were the key to really defeating the counterinsurgency because roads allow you to connect the population to the central government and the ANSF and the Coalition forces, basically in reverse order of that, as we talked about yesterday. So, we put a lot of energy in building roads and what we quickly learned was roads don't address a need but they create more needs because once you connect the population and they see something like Asadabad, they say, "Holy smokes. We want more of that. Now that we have a road and we can buy an apple for the same price 23 kilometers along the Pech, as we bought an apple for in Kabul, that is a pretty good deal. We need more consumer goods in here and more vegetables," or whatever. Well, as the markets increased, then they wanted more schools and they wanted more power so we could keep the markets open. So, in order to prioritize our projects, we used the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds, which were for addressing emergency needs. But, then, we were able to bring in what ended up being about 80 million dollars from higher commanders' CERP monies for projects. What we sought to do was build systems such as if we put electrical power in a market we got more than extended markets and some power for homes. What we wanted to do is talk to a Coalition/government friendly businessman and talk him into putting in a flour mill, while, simultaneously, our USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) rep started having farmer shuras. Our USDA rep was probably the most popular interagency person in our area because he was a farmer and farmers like talking to farmers. In a couple of meetings he taught the Afghans how to prevent the 30 percent spoilage that they incurred with every harvest. It was amazing. So, we put money into helping them build these very low cost cement pads, corral looking things, that served like silos to protect their crops. This gave them surplus product to go to the flour mill that we were building simultaneously. Then, we had to make sure the man with the flour mill wasn't gouging the people and that there was some mutual benefit. So, he would grind the wheat and take about a 10 percent cut for grinding the wheat and the rest was returned as flour to the farmer to use or sell in the market. And this is just one example; but, flour was something that really kind of ticked off the population because they are an agriculture based economy and they were shipping all their raw grain out to Pakistan and then having to pay about four times the going rate for the flour to be imported back into town. So, when we started these little micro hydros with mills, associated with USDA, and showing them how to get surplus, the price of flour dropped immensely and that was directly credited to the government. We had great governors who would talk about the international community helping the government to help the people. So, there were some multiple bangs for the buck in those areas.

(b)(6) Perfect. Now, did you have effective PRTs working with you?

Diamond (3), (b)(6) Yes. I will sing the Navy's praise every time on this. The Navy has really done the country and America proud by putting top tier Navy officers in charge of the PRTs they are responsible for. Now, I have to back up. The Konar PRT is a Navy PRT. So, they select guys that are very fast movers, former O5 level commanders, who are targeted to be O6 commanders, and they put them into the PRT positions. These guys are incredibly smart, very gifted at

management, and a lot of them have engineering backgrounds and they build their teams, train them, and come in. I talked to our PRT in Konar probably every day and on the average probably 10 times a week and met with them almost daily in Asadabad. So, physically, face to face, I would be with him five times a week and we would do several joint briefings. For example, we would be at the PCC meeting together. But, throughout Afghanistan, there are four lines of operation, governance, economic development, security, and information operations, and no one really prioritizes those. So, we sat down and basically said, "We are both going to be involved in each one of these lines of operation; but, we can get some efficiency here with who is doing what." So, naturally, we – the maneuver task force – would focus on security, IO, governance, and economic development, really in that order, and we would work those from the individual Afghan up through the province. Day in and day out, my squad leaders and platoon leaders were working with the individual people and the very small villages up to about the district level. So, I would pick up a district and then go to province; but, the PRT, every day, worked in the province governor's compound. So, they would work from the province level down to the population and, again, it was never, "Hey. You are coming into my AO." It wasn't like that. It was just more of a focused effort that we definitely crossed and bled over into each other's area; but, we always talked and coordinated how we were going to do that. And we didn't agree on everything in the priorities of projects and we would have to talk a lot; but, it wasn't contentious. It was just, "Oh, now I understand why you want a road in there," because it is needed for security or whatever. And then the PRT would work the lines of operation from governance to economic development, security and IO and, again, in that priority. In the PRT's case, it was from province to individuals and we worked them from individual to province. So, it was a way for us to cover down on the lines of operation and on our decisive point or center of gravity, the population, because we looked at the population differently as well.

(b)(6) Okay. Do you still keep in contact with your PRT commander and do you have his contact information?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes. I was just in Afghanistan and the last PRT Commander was pulled out of the PRT because they have [unwisely] changed PRT Command to a nine-month rotation and he still has to stay in Afghanistan for 12 months. So, Commander (b)(3), (b)(6), who is the last PRT commander that I worked with, is still in Afghanistan right now.

(b)(6) Do you have his email by chance?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes. I will dig that up and send that to you.

(b)(6) Great; thanks.

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) Then, Commander **Lambda** (b)(3), (b)(6) Commanding Officer USS Mesa Verde LPD 19
Lambda (b)(3), (b)(6) was the first one that I had and I probably have his contact info too. He is a brilliant guy. Both those guys were super effective.

(b)(6) Perfect. Can you describe some of your key leader engagement meetings that you held?

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(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes. We were doing key leader engagements at my level probably three to five times a week. In Kunar our Task Force and the PRT would literally do about 20 to 25 per week and if there was some crisis brewing there might be 40 key leader engagements a week throughout the battalion battlespace. On a normal key leader engagement, the overall objective of the key leader engagement is to engage the population and engage the leaders. Using the Watapur key leader engagement and what that venue would be like as an example - the Kunar PRT built Watapur a brand new district center. So, when we would have something like a new project, we would try to get multiple bangs for the buck or give many people credit for that building or a project in the Watapur Valley. We exploited everything from the ground breaking to the different phases of development and then it was finally open. So, in our first opening, Governor Zalmay did it masterfully. He got 200 elders down there, where they could all squish into our big conference room, and Captain (b)(3), (b)(6), a gifted linguist who could speak Pashtun, would be the first person to be introduced. He was from that area, he was the company commander, and he knew all the elders in the room and he would introduce the topics for the day and he would do this in Pashtun and he would point at different elders and say, "You consistently talk to me about powering your village and you want a school for your girls in that area and you want this and that. We will all talk about these projects; but, at the end of the day, we have many, many more needs than we have capacity to deliver. So, we have to agree to prioritize these," and the long discussion would go on and then he'd be followed by Governor Zalmay, who would talk about what he was capable of doing, because all the funds that we talk about would go through the district governor. So, he would say, "We really have three schools that we can prioritize and three clinics and two roads and then we will take any other ideas that you may have," and that would go on for two or three hours. Invariably, there would be somebody that was mad about something that the Coalition did or the ANSF or the government did; so, you would have the one radical guy who would stand up and he would say his piece and Governor Zalmay, depending on who it was and how credible and how respected he was, he would either slam the guy down or politely address the issue and then we would close with a prayer, being pretty respectful of that, and that would be it. Then, the next week we would come and reconfirm the project list and give them an update of where the projects were. And when I say we, that would primarily be Governor Zalmay saying, "I talked to the Coalition. They accepted our priority. We are working to get funding for these projects, and what I need from you is 12 laborers from your village and six from yours. Make sure they are vetted and I want you to vouch for them that they are good people," and we'd get yet more bang for the same project and employ 18 fighting age males that would be too busy to fight. And then we would get the money and get the approval and we would need contractors. So, we would bring the elders back in and say, "We need recommendations for contractors. You need to get the word out so your local contractors compete for these projects as we are not selling the contracts outside of your area." Then, there was the third step of, "Okay. Now it is time for groundbreaking," and we would go out to the different areas and have a big shura and everybody was happy and the elders would do a groundbreaking the traditional western way. They would stick the shovel in the ground and flip it over and the project would start. When the project would complete, we would have to have a ribbon cutting and a big meal for everyone and have the media out there and the governor out there. That would then be our reason to come back and keep engaging the population, maybe even meet in the school or the clinic for our meeting to check on it, and that was when we would get hit up for the additional needs. They would say, "Well, now we have a school; but, of course, we need a clinic because all the girls aren't healthy enough to go to the girls' school." So, we

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would need to start talking about doing the whole same thing with the clinic. Those were our days, day in and day out, and that was why every time I met with them, if I called them together or the governor called them together, we were culturally obligated to pay the taxi fare to get the outliers in and buy them a meal. That is culturally what we are supposed to do and the most irritating thing to me is our government's inability to understand that. They tell me I need to understand the culture; but, we don't understand the culture enough to understand that I can conceivably spend \$50,000 to \$100,000 a month meeting with elders, getting the right people into the meeting, and it is the most cost effective money we can spend. Americans would shudder to get the whole bill that is a billion dollars spent on lamb and goat and rice and taxi fare; but, it is either that or many billions of dollars spent on ordnance.

(b)(6) Right. And, in one of your documents you sent me, you made a comment that you needed more funding. So, that would be the type of thing you were talking about?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) Absolutely. Key leader engagement funds. We need to have national policy on what we are really trying to do for Afghanistan. Are we trying to make it better than it was when we got there and if so, set a metric on that? Is there some minimal amount of power, clean water, health care, and schools we want to achieve or do we want to make it look like Western Omaha? We really don't know. So, each commander, at brigade and battalion and company level, comes in and, in short order, takes ownership and then gets really defensive about his population and he wants to make it Western Omaha. Well, that is not going happen. But, what we can do is get these self-sufficient people that are very nationalist together and have a meal every week and talk about progress and talk about what they are doing for themselves. You can say, "You have been self-sustaining for 1,000 years. What are you doing?" [Captain] (b)(3), (b)(6), the guy who spoke Pashtun, was masterful at this. He would just order cement. He didn't really do very many projects, other than their self-help projects. So, when village elders would say, "We need a retaining wall," where some less experienced commanders or individuals might say, "Okay. We are going to let a contract for a retaining wall," [Captain] (b)(3), (b)(6) would say, "Elders, I will go back to my boss and see if he will give us the cement for the wall. If he does, you will need to provide the contractors and the laborers to build the wall," and they would say, "Well, who is going to pay for the laborers?" Well, it was really whoever was going to benefit from the wall would pay for the labors or they would donate them. The elders can task all the unemployed young males and say, "Hey. You can either sit there and bitch about your government or you can get out and build a retaining wall." So, (b)(3), (b)(6) was masterful at the self-help projects. If there was a micro hydro going in, he would parse it out so that they would have to build the foundation, because they were very, very good at building rock things with cement. They would have to build all that and get it all set up to the contractor's standards and then we would pay for the component parts of the micro hydro. So, again, it was to keep stretching that dollar until it was screaming and all it did was force engagements with the population and it forced the elders to take responsibility for their area like they had done before the Taliban days and it was pretty neat to watch.

(b)(6) Now, in your assessment, why was it important that the Afghans develop an adequate system of rule of law?

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Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) Because no society can progress without accepted norms of law and discipline. Pashtunwali is an accepted method of rule of law; but, the Afghan Government and the international community are somewhat imposing upon that. We are imposing quasi Western/Islamic standards on these people that have been dealing with their local and legal issues with Pashtunwali for thousands of years, except they have never been able to progress or join the modern day society with just Pashtunwali and Pashtunwali doesn't work with outsiders, insurgents. Pashtunwali is for local village dispute resolution, if you will. So, other than that local village and maybe expanding to the valley, Pashtunwali is not going to work to have a centralized society or a united society that is seeking to progress out of the Stone Age. So, to have rule of law, I could probably pull up our "Early Bird" database of articles and there will be something about needing increased security forces in Afghanistan and that drives me crazy because we can literally train every Afghan, the 33 million Afghans. We can give them a six-week training course, an AK-47, a uniform, a badge, and a salary; but, if those people cannot arrest and detain the 100,000 bad guys in that country and put them in the court system and then ultimately confine them, it doesn't matter how many cops you have. It really doesn't. That is something that is lost with a lot of people right now and has been ignored for quite some time. It goes to the population's perception that the police are corrupt because the police know this guy over here, "Abu Darkness," is a bad guy. Everybody knows he is a bad guy; but, they are not doing anything. Well, why isn't the policeman who makes \$110 a month doing anything? Well, because if he arrests "Abu Darkness," Abu's whole family is going to go after the policeman, to include "Abu Darkness" 96 hours later when he is released. He is going to come after the policeman and harass or kill him and his family for dishonoring and embarrassing him just because "Abu Darkness" is a criminal. So, if you don't take those bad seeds out of the community, it makes the population think that the police are corrupt because they are not arresting them or the government is ineffective because they have no means to control or eliminate "Abu Darkness." So, the points about rule of law go further and we are going to throw Afghan Border Police and American Soldiers along the border to prevent infiltration of bad guys. That became the buzz word for a while. I would ask, "How do we, in a country without rule of law, determine who is a bad guy? If he comes across with five US dollars, is he a financier?" and senior people would scoff, "That is not a financier." Okay, five thousand or five hundred thousand, five hundred million? What is the threshold? There is no rule. Let's go to arms and ammunition. While we are worried about infiltrators bringing in arms and ammunition, there are arms bazaars in Afghanistan. It is not illegal. So, if he comes over with three AK-47s, what about three AK-47s? What about three RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades)? What is the threshold? It gets down to that you just kind of figure that out. Well, if the guy doesn't pose a threat to me and I detain him, I'm going to haul him in, take all of his stuff, his mules and everything, I'm going to bring him closer to central Konar, onto a base, I'm going to give him a medical check, I'm going to make sure he is hydrated and fed well, I'm going to ask him a few questions, and then, within 96 hours, I'm going to release him and he is going to be well rested, well fed, hydrated, and released with all of his stuff, further inside of Konar than he was when I detained him. So, it is very challenging. Certainly, we find ways around that to disrupt infiltrators and disrupt financiers; but, until there is rule of law, the best we can do is disrupt their efforts but not defeat the efforts of all these different flavors of enemies of Afghanistan.

LG: My concluding question is what types of metrics did you use for your success?

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Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) Really, the primary metric was freedom of action. Freedom of action would usually start with freedom of action of the Coalition force, which would lead to freedom of action again of the Coalition force with the ANSF, the ANSF and the government, and then the population. You saw a lot of people in probably November 2007 to January 2008 when we started an IO piece about the enemies of Afghanistan really being ineffective against the Coalition because there was a term called anti-Coalition militia. So, we did a big IO campaign and quit using that term because the anti-Coalition militia was no longer effective against the Coalition. They were effective against the Afghans. So, they were really anti-Afghan forces or AAF. People bought into that and term is still being used over there and our metrics on that were that we have complete freedom of movement. We would go where we wanted when we wanted and our ANSF partners were very credible. They would go with us and go where they wanted. Occasionally, they would get targeted with IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and we would consistently tell our partners, when they went into certain areas, "Go only with us if you are in your vehicle and easily identifiable," and most of them would follow that order. The few that didn't usually ended up having problems. Then, with the government officials, by bringing them in to corners of Afghanistan that had never seen government officials went to freedom of action and if the population was freely moving throughout and not being intimidated then that was another metric. So, we focused on freedom of action and we used the non-lethal effects and lethal effects to maintain and expand our freedom of action and then underneath there was a host of construction projects. We would look for attendance at key leader engagements and people who had never talked to each other wanting to join different shuras so they could hear what the government and the Coalition was saying, which again went to the population and freedom of action. They were no longer intimidated by the Taliban or the rewards for connecting to the government were greater than the threat from the Taliban. So, most of our metrics, if not all, were somehow related to freedom of action or freedom of movement of Coalition, ANSF, government, and the population.

(b)(6) Now, are there any topics that we didn't cover during the interview that you thought we should cover?

Diamond (b)(3), (b)(6) I probably can't remember all the things that we talked about; but, I think you had very comprehensive list of questions. But, again, as our summary points, we honestly believed and lived COIN to the point of living with the population and I firmly believe that those who live with the population care more about the population than anybody else, even though that can open up a whole can of innocent civilian casualty questions. But, those who live with them care for them. Our desire to lead with non-lethal effect and be able to immediately transition to readily available lethal effects was absolutely imperative to gaining that freedom of action, gaining and maintain it. IO was something everybody in our task force left Afghanistan thinking that you have to understand and you have to apply it at a graduate level in order to be successful and really very, very few people understand or employ IO and fewer achieve effects. Then, the last thing that caused us grief was the rule of law that we just talked about. I think we have talked before that the Germans were supposed to do the police and the Italians were supposed to do the courts and no one is holding the international community responsible for that. We are continuing to talk about that in an ambiguous state right now; it is stymieing progress and it will until we have some form of rule of law.

(b)(6) Right; okay. Well, if there are no other topics we should discuss, I think we can end the interview at this point. Thank you for your time and sharing your lessons learned.

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END OF INTERVIEW



Transcribed by (b)(6), 18 May 2009
Contemporary Operations Study Team
Combat Studies Institute
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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1. I, COL (b)(3), (b)(6) Diamond participated in an oral history project conducted by

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(Name of agency)

on the following date(s): 19-20 March 2009

2. I understand that the tape(s) and the transcript resulting from this oral history will belong to the U.S. Government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the U.S. Army, as determined by the Chief of Military History or his representative. I also understand that subject to security classification restrictions I will be given an opportunity to edit the resulting transcript in order to clarify and expand my original thoughts. The Army will provide me with a copy of the edited transcript for my own use subject to classification restrictions

3. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interests in the tape(s) and transcript to the U.S. Army with only the following caveat: (Please initial one)

Diamond

(b)(3), (b)(6) NONE OTHER

I understand that the tapes and transcripts resulting from this oral history may be subject to the Freedom of Information act, and therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the U.S. Army will attempt to honor the restrictions I have requested to be placed on these materials

Diamond

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

DATE

1 Jun 09

ACCEPTED ON BEHALF OF THE U.S. ARMY BY

DATE

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Additional Comments

Subject Re: ISR coverage at Wanat

Diamond From (b)(3), (b)(6) LTC MIL U **Diamond** (b)(3), (b)(6) @us.army.mil **Diamond**

Date Friday, May 8, 2009 19:19

To **Garnet** (b)(3), (b)(6) CIV USA FORSCOM (b)(3), (b)(6) @us.army.mil **Garnet**

(b)(3), (b)(6) **Garnet**

I'm currently back in Afghanistan and don't have many notes with me.

As all know, Afghanistan in 2008 was analogous to the Pacific theater in early 1944 - a holding action while the country focused on winning in the other theater. Afghanistan and RC-East were woefully short of enablers.

Commanders at all levels had to allocate, adjudicate, and re-prioritize resources daily - sometimes several times a day. Daily we anticipated losing resources and daily we fought to keep the resources we had and to get more resources as we were empirically in the most contested province in Afghanistan. This wasn't a try once and quit trying for the day venture; it was a continuous and emotionally charged negotiation as we fought for limited assets - everyday.

That said, I'm very cognizant that Wanat cannot be looked at in isolation. Although establishing Wanat was a very complex operation, our other 13 bases in our Task Force AO and the scores of bases in RC-East did not get a pass from the enemy - we fought the enemy daily and were in several other contacts as we moved from Bella to Wanat and after Bella was closed. Wanat was not in contact from 8-12 July. I don't remember when I found out the ISR/aircraft was leaving but know we consistently fought to get ISR and keep any type of ISR/acft over Wanat as we built it up. With many activities occurring throughout RC-East, ISR was re-prioritized to another area based on all information available - as it was every day we were in Afghanistan.

Hawk (b)(3), (b)(6) is an awesome peer mentor, friend, COIN expert, and warfighter.

WANAT + 13 BASES (SERAY, FORTRESS, JOYCE, MOUNT, ARAD, H-W, ABLE MAIN, MICHIGAN, VEGAS, KORANJAL, OP RESTREPC, OP DALLAS, BLESSING)

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

Diamond

- HAD OTHER OPS BUT NOT VIEWED THE SAME

- FORCE ALSO IN JAWALABAD (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6)

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Diamond

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

Diamond

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Diamond

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

COL, IN
Deputy Commander, 75th Ranger Regiment

DSN: (b)(2)
COM:

Diamond

NIPR: @us.army.mil
SIPR: (b)(3), (b)(6) @us.army.smil.mil

----- Original Message -----

From: (b)(3), (b)(6) CIV USA FORSCOM* Garnet
(b)(3), (b)(6) @us.army.mil> Garnet

Date: Friday, May 8, 2009 18:09

Subject: ISR coverage at Wanat

Diamond

To: (b)(3), (b)(6) COL - 75th Rangers <(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(2)High>

> I'm continuing to progress on history of Wanat.

>

Magenta

> (b)(3), (b)(6) and (b)(3), (b)(6) have both mentioned the withdrawal of Foxtrot
ISR

> assets from CONOP Rock Move on July 12th. I'm curious to hear
your

> take on this action by CJTF-101. When did you learn that you were

> going to lose these assets? Had you anticipated this happening

Gra

> (b)(3), (b)(6) told me this was typical for assets to be re-
> allocated a couple of days into a CONOP)? How did you respond, did
> you try to get these assets restored?

>

> Thanks.

>

Hawk

> PS- (b)(3), (b)(6) visited me this week, he snuck out of pre-command
> course to say hello to me. He said to pass on his regards.

>

Garnet

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

>

Garnet

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

> Military Historian, MPRI

> Research and Publications Team, U.S. Army Combat Studies
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> (913) 684-2861

> Fax (913) 684-4861

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Garnet > E-mail: (b)(3), (b)(6) @us.army.mil
>

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1. Please tell me about yourself, hometown, source of commission, college education and experience, Company command, training and schools, previous deployments if any. Did you previously deploy to Afghanistan, with what unit and when.

SEE BIO and Fact Sheet Attached

2. When did you take command of the 2nd/503rd? 18 June 2006

3. When did you learn that you were going to deploy to Afghanistan. Were you able to focus training on the Afghanistan deployment? In February, 2007 (3 months before deploying we changed from At Tamin, Iraq to N2KL in Afghanistan).

We remained focused on The Big 6 - so the change was a minor blip on the radar:

Big 6

- Discipline and Standards – separate great units from good units
 - Ethics and Army Values – *train/reward full-disclosure*
- Mental and Physical Toughness – aerobic endurance, road march endurance, strength, confidence
- Medical Training – Combat Lifesaver, Emergency Medical Tech, ROCK First Responder – saves lives
- Marksmanship / Livefire – basics / advanced techniques, limited visibility, complex livefires (Squad / Platoon)
- Small Unit Drills (Crew / Battle) – execute instinctively
- Mobility (Airborne / AASLT / Vehicles) – follow standards, set conditions

4 Enablers

- Communication – Clear Intent without ZERO defect
- Safety / Accountability / Maintenance (SAMs)
- OPSEC
- Morale and Welfare

We were doing convoy livefires when we got the word we were going to Afghanistan – that night we FRAGO'd the company doing convoy livefires and in the morning hit 3 platoon dismounted objectives. The Task Force's transition was seamless and without consternation. Training continued and as competence increased, so did confidence.

4. What type of training/combat preparations did you perform for your deployment?

The ROCK borrowed and adopted the Big Five from the 75th Ranger Regiment and drafted the Big Six, which were enhanced by four enablers.

The challenges of commanding in a complex full-spectrum COIN environment were known to be immense. Early in the train-up phase, the battalion mapped out the Task Force "fight", trained to this, modified the map after the Pre-Deployment Site Survey, and then became organizational experts at – Command and Control (C2), Intelligence Surveillance, and

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Diamond

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

Reconnaissance (ISR) Management, Fires Integration and Deconfliction, MEDEVAC, Emergency Resupply, Information Operations, and Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP – targeting non-lethal aid).



The Battalion further reviewed the Mission Essential Task List (METL) and identified key battle tasks, collective tasks, and individual tasks. The task review showed every task could not be resourced, trained, and retrained ensuring every Soldier was to a "go standard" but subject matter experts could be identified for all tasks and each task could be [at a minimum] familiarized to an acceptable portion of the battalion task force – providing the Task Force with the skills requisite to confidently deploy, fight, and win. Detailed analysis and task management was also applied to New Equipment Fieldings, Mobile Training Team visits, and Special Skills training. Understanding training management, analyzing time and resources available, closely monitoring training, and making command decisions provided commanders the opportunity to *train, trust, and support their leaders and Soldiers before and during the deployment*. Sixteen weeks of scenario-driven, multi-echelon collective training – replete with squad through company (minus) convoy livefire exercises – was validated at the Task Force's Joint Multinational Readiness Center Mission Readiness Exercise, the Task Force was well-trained on all requisite tasks and had no deficient areas of training.

The second order effect of working through the training management challenges was highlighting the fact that *leaders have to DECIDE* and acknowledging at all levels that not all decisions will be right but *indecision is always wrong* – indecision is just not as quantifiable. This principle served the Task Force well when deployed as decentralized decisions were continuously needed *at the speed of life*. Inaction proved more detrimental than action and those closest to the action valued immediate action while those farther from the action routinely valued inaction and pontification which equated to no decision, no risk, and no [presumed or accepted] responsibility.

5. Did you feel that your battalion was ready to deploy? Did you feel personally ready to deploy?

Yes – we fought to train when many said we were doing too much too fast; subsequently, we fought to fight when some said we were to aggressive with lethal and non-lethal actions.

Yes – I have always felt trained for the tasks at hand; if I don't feel trained, I study and train until I am confident I can do what is required.

6. When did you arrive in Afghanistan? May 24, 2007

7. Describe the RIP/TOA with the 10th Mountain Division. Who did you coordinate with? How effective was the RIP/TOA?

First we had a very organized PDSS / Leader Development Program led by 3-10 Infantry and specifically by 1-32 Infantry leaders. The Task Force left the PDSS understanding COIN in

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Afghanistan was more complex than Clear, Hold, and Build. Clearing the mountainous valleys was impossible; holding them was problematic; and building capacity was a [very] long term venture. Achievable effects-based objectives include: Separate, Stabilize, and Transform. These objectives formed the framework for the Task Force's efforts as it sought to *lead with non-lethal efforts/effects and seamlessly transition to lethal effects as required* to separate the AAF from the population in an effort to stabilize and then transform the environment.

Our RIP / TOA was equally organized and led by our counter-parts at all levels. 1-32 had 16 months in country – they were experienced, confident, but humble. COL (b)(3), (b)(6) the battalion commander, subsequently went to the Marshall Center and taught COIN. He and I stayed in continuous contact and sought continuity of thought and action – he remained as a friend and mentor who understood the fight, had a strong mind, and time to think and offer advice as he reflected on his actions in Kunar.

Hawk

8. Describe your year's experience (June 2007-June 2008) in the Waigal Valley.

SEE WANAT ATTACHMENT

9. When did you close down Ranch House? October 2007

10. When did you start planning the Wanat Operation? Did you make the decision to occupy Wanat, or was this decision made at Brigade? What factors influenced this decision?

We began thinking of moving Bella to Wanat during our PDSS in March 2007; we sought to move Bella from arrival in country in May/June 2007 as we readjusted our footprint. In the process we worked through the requirements for land beginning in August 2007. We closed or moved four bases in our sector - Narang, Ranch House, California, and Florida. Throughout the ABCT sector other bases were closed or moved and other bases were opened - all requiring prioritized resources.

EFFORTS TO MOVE BELLA BEGAN IN EARNEST IN JAN/FEB '08

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

11. When did you issue the Operations Order? Do you have a copy of that OPOD available?

Diamond

12. How did your briefings to Cdr, 173rd Airborne Brigade & BG Mark Milley, DCG-O 101st Airborne Division go? What were their concerns, and how (if at all) did you adjust your concept of operations as a result of these briefings?

Although the plan was in the works for weeks, I briefed the CONOP to Cdr, 173rd on 6 Jul and BG Milley on 7 Jul. We all had concerns about weather and enabler support. We mitigated concerns by attaching 2 x mortars to the platoon and a TOW, giving WANAT priority of 155 fires from 2 x platoons (4 tubes), placing Co C2 with the platoon, and having echeloned QRFs available.

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

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

Diamond

Diamond

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

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13. When was the OPORD briefed to Chosen Company Command? How did that briefing go, and how (if at all) did you adjust your concept of operations as a result of that briefing?

Closing Bella and occupying WANAT was one operation - the order was done in parallel with Chosen company leadership (parallel planning) and began in May as we finalized the land agreements in WANAT - that included the TF TAC and Chosen CP being ambushed on 26 May and 8 Jun. Supreme Air was shot down/disabled on Bella HLZ on 9 Jun and then enemy activity and reporting dramatically increased through Jun and into July. The order was finalized/briefed on 5 Jul and briefed to Bde and CJTF on 6 and 7 Jul 08. CHOSEN LEADERSHIP WAS IN THESE HOOGIE BREEZE BLENFIND (b)(3), (b)(6)

14. Do you have copies of the Battalion BUBs for 8-12 July available?
No

15. Did you visit Wanat between 9-12 July? No

16. When did you get SA that Wanat was under "A Ranch House Style Attack" as Chosen Six reported? Please discuss your command actions, and actions you directed your staff and subordinate commands to implement, in detail during the 13 July engagement.

I was in the TOC when CHOSEN 6 called saying they were in contact - which was obvious by the background noise. In his initial report he reported 4 KIAs - which immediately steeled all and ramped up activities in the TOC. By this time the Battalion TF had been in over 1000 contacts and the TOC battle drills were well known.

I confirmed all were in the wire - main VPB and OP - and we shot immediate suppression with two artillery platoons as Chosen worked up additional calls for fire. We requested additional support, pushed that support to Chosen, and alerted the QRF(s) to begin immediate movement to WANAT. Simultaneously, we alerted our higher and our ANSF counterparts (adjacent TOC) and began adjusted our IO messaging. We requested and got air and were able to AASLT the Bn TAC to WANAT within a few hours to assist and support. (b)(3), (b)(6)

17. Did you make the decision to evacuate Wanat, or was this decision made at Brigade? How was this decision coordinated (up or down) with 173rd Airborne Brigade and the Units coming in to RIP/TOA with you?

We targeted WANAT for over a year as a place where we could effectively progress along the Lines of Operation (LOOs) of Security, Governance, Economic Development and IO. We would position a base that was in close proximity to a new district center, a new police station, a market, and a population center - and was accessible by air and ground LOC. We had \$1.4 million in projects planned or ongoing in WANAT's area.

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Diamond

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

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During the WANAT attack the district center was unscathed and the police were culpable in the attack leading us to arrest the district governor and CoP - and further disarm a majority of the police. Working the LODs was going to take an incredible influx of resources for security, the district governor was going to need to be replaced, the market was shot up and we were not going to reward the area with \$1.4 million in projects - the conditions radically changed on the morning of 13 Jul 08 and the WANAT population priced themselves out of our desire to assist them at that time.

The incoming unit was not able to assume Bella and was unwilling to assume Wanat (COP Kahler). I supported pulling out of the area, finishing the hard ball road to Wanat, which would allow for safer and routine patrolling into the area, while the governor was replaced and the police were replaced or retrained, and the population was re-engaged. I thought the argument - "we paid too much to abandoned this place" was a [^] ~~DUMB~~ emotional v. logical, tactical, and supportable argument. (b)(3), (b)(6) Diamond

18. When did you return to Italy? When did you change command? 4 Aug 2008; 30 Sep 2008

19. What lessons did you learn as a Battalion Commander based upon your 15 months in Afghanistan? How are you applying these lessons learned to your future career as a US Army Officer and current position?

First is the "uniqueness of Life" - each Soldier, living and killed in action, is an exceptionally unique human being - sounds obvious but when this is exemplified over and over it strikes how.

Some others from the article:

Task Force ROCK Thoughts on COIN

- **Train commanders/leaders, trust them, and support them**
 - *Ethics/Army Values Matter - Train Them*
- **All Units work outside of their METL - all Soldiers work outside of their MOS**
 - Those who live with the population are "the EXPERTS" - *where we operate v. pontificate*
- **Leaders have to DECIDE** - not all decisions will be right - *indecision is always wrong* - it's just not as quantifiable
 - Need Decisions at the speed of life
 - Inaction more detrimental than action; those closest to the action - value action; those farthest from the action - value inaction
 - Fight like a Warrior - non-lethal and lethal

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

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- **Perfection = enemy in COIN**
 - Efficiency v. Effectiveness – balance is required but effectiveness is paramount
 - Equal v. Equitable – all organizations and missions aren't equal
- **COIN Doctrine works** – coalition force must be with the security forces, government, and population
 - Understand/mitigate Risk to Mission, Force, Population
- **No absolutes** – COIN SUCCESS requires continuous thought and re-assessment – no status quo
 - Persistent, Patient, Presence required
 - COIN Operations *proceed at the speed of glacial thaw and not all areas thaw at the same speed – NOT an impatient man's game...*
 - Change is Good – achieves non-lethal and lethal effects
- **Information Operations – We Don't have to be Right – We have to be FIRST and not WRONG**
 - IO turns every Setback into a Victory and every Victory into a Resounding Triumph...
 - Anticipate the Enemy Most Likely IO Course of Action (EML IO COA) and the Enemy Most Dangerous IO Course of Action (EMD IO COA)
 - Non-lethal efforts require leaders with intelligence and endurance to continuously and aggressively wage the non-lethal fight and dominate the IO environment.
- **Dollars (CERP/Projects) are non-lethal effects and "bullets" in COIN**
- **ROE are authorizations to kill with a conscience all must know how they apply**
 - Escalation of Force (EoF) is a process not a pejorative term
 - No Rule of Law – have Cops, no Courts, no Confinement

20. Who else should I speak to from your Battalion regarding the Wanat engagement?

Lime

Lime

CDR (b)(3), (b)(6) (PRT Commander - (b)(3), (b)(6) @us.army.mil); CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) (HHC CDR – integrator of forces and enablers - (b)(3), (b)(6) @us.army.mil); CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) (Co Cdr along Pech – lethal and non-lethal effects integration (b)(3), (b)(6) @us.army.mil); CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) (Platoon Leader along Pech/Korengal Mouth; won huge swathes of human terrain, master of shuras - (b)(3), (b)(6) @us.army.mil); CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) LT (b)(3), (b)(6) (FSO/ lethal fires - Korengal/likely the most experienced CO FSO in the Army – (b)(3), (b)(6) @us.army.mil); CSM (b)(3), (b)(6) (CSM – NCO/leader duties in remote, austere, contested, undeveloped mountainous terrain – (b)(3), (b)(6) @us.army.mil) White

White

21. Could you please identify your Battalion Primary Staff Officers in place in July 2009?

CSM: CSM (b)(3), (b)(6) (complete tour) White
 XO: MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) (complete tour) Red
 S3: MAJ (b)(3), (b)(6) (complete tour) Gray
 Ops SGM: SGM (b)(3), (b)(6) (invaluable - complete tour) Flyer
 S1: CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) (complete tour)

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

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S2: CPT (b)(3), (b)(6)
S4: CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) **Brown**
S6: CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) (complete Tour)

22. When will you be at Fort Leavenworth for me to buy you a beer? INTERESTING
QUESTION FROM
DOUG CURRISSON -
GIVEN HOW HE
PORTRAYED HIM
LEADERSHIP AND
IF ROCK (b)(3), (b)(6) **Diamond**
I'll let you and (b)(6) know

Diamond

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

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1. Do you know what Afghan construction company was supposed to assist at Wanat? NO

Did you get any SA of why they never showed up? They did show up the day after the battle – they were delayed because of vehicle break downs and driver issues. After showing up, they wanted to leave but were kept on sight and their reasons for wanting to leave were mitigated by Chosen company leadership. CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Chosen XO, worked Papa diligently with the contractor to make sure that he moved to Wanat as quickly as possible, despite the contractor's vehicle issues.

Was the contract for this Afghan construction company done through Battalion S-4, or at a higher level? (I'm not sure how you were doing contracting, I know that the 10th Mountain Division would have done this at Brigade or Division level). It was done at Battalion Level through the Bn Engineer and approved at Brigade Level.

2. Was it a Battalion or Brigade decision (or higher) to establish COP Kahler, and then to withdraw from COP Kahler after the 13th July fight? What role did TF Duke (incoming Brigade) have with these decisions.

Wanat was a company recommendation, BN decision, reviewed and approved by Brigade. The formula for putting a base in Wanat (Coalition base located with a GoA district center) had worked in other districts.

We targeted WANAT for over a year as a place where we could effectively progress along the Lines of Operation (LOOs) of Security, Governance, Economic Development and IO. Wanat would position a base that was in close proximity to a new district center, a new police station, a market, and a population center – and was accessible by air and ground LOC. We had \$1.4 million in projects planned or ongoing in WANAT's area.

During the WANAT attack the district center was unscathed and the police were culpable in the attack leading us to arrest the district governor and CoP – and further disarm a majority of the police. Working the LOOs was going to take an incredible influx of resources for security, the district governor was going to need to be replaced, the market was shot up and we were not going to reward the area with \$1.4 million in projects – the conditions radically changed on the morning of 13 Jul 08 and the WANAT population priced themselves out of our desire to assist them at that time. THE TIME OF A LESS CYPABLE / LESS RESOURCES UNIT WOULD REPLACE US AND WOULD

Diamond

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

Diamond

After the fight on July 13th in Wanat, the situation for occupation was drastically changed. No matter how much coalition forces conducted I/O to explain/battle the circumstances for occupation of Wanat, it would be viewed as hostile. The population in and around Wanat had clearly supported the enemy and did not maintain the conditions for coalition force support and projects. ~~Wanat is ideal because of the ground LOC open to the rest of the BN, but that would take significant manpower to keep open~~ (b)(3), (b)(6)

Diamond

The incoming unit was not able to assume Bella and was unwilling to assume Wanat (COP Kahler). I supported pulling out of the area, finishing the hard ball road to Wanat, which would allow for safer and routine patrolling into the area, while the governor was replaced

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

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

Diamond

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and the police were replaced or retrained, and the population was re-engaged. I thought the argument – “we paid too much to abandoned this place” was a ~~DUMB~~ emotional v. logical, tactical, and supportable argument.

TF Duke had a significant role in the decision to leave Wanat. It could have been handed to them, but with significantly more personnel required to hold the ground and expand influence on the population. From my understanding, ~~that is~~ ^{(b)(3), (b)(6)} personnel that they were not willing to put there. After the fight we began to recon positions to build and larger base there and began work. Once the decision was made, we began to collapse the base. ^{(b)(3), (b)(6)}

Diamond

Diamond

3. Did you perform any IO efforts to mitigate the 4th July helicopter attack at Bella? We worked aggressive population-centric IO continuously. When we destroyed the two trucks on 4 July, many of the casualties were brought to our aid station – we had the district governor, Monogay ANP Police Chief, and my Kandeŕk Commander counterpart on the scene. They saw a significant number had gunshot residue on their hands, they knew what was happening vicinity Bella and the Waygul Valley and were immediately on the radio and in the community telling-reporting what the government knew to be the facts. The IO battle waged for a few days, an investigation was conducted by the Afghans and another by the Coalition and the facts showed enemy combatants were killed. Intelligence said so as did the fact that attacks on Bella almost completely stopped.

Before and after the 4th of July attack many locals understood that the CF were trying to keep the area clear of all personnel due to the complexity of the operation (retrograde of Bella) and the enemy situation (recent spike in attacks and report of large attack on Bella). Of the few locals in the area, all communicated to US/ANA forces, that the enemy had caused disruption in the area, and are a threat to local people. Both the PL and Company Commander at Bella talked with locals about the danger of staying in the area because of the saturation of the enemy around Bella. Most of this was conducted before the 4th of July attack.

AS REPORTED BY CHEVAL COMPANY
(b)(3), (b)(6)

Diamond

4. Did you perform any IO or MILDEC in support of the establishment of COP Kahler at Wanat? Again, we worked aggressive population-centric IO continuously. We had continuous nested messages being delivered into the battle space and targeted specific messages within one hour – and generally within 15 minutes/while battles were ongoing. So we had a large IO investment ongoing prior to, during, and after closing Bella and opening ~~VPP~~ Kahler in Wanat.

^{(b)(3), (b)(6)} Diamond

Deception involved the use of messaging and the routes into and out of Bella and the flow of pax and equipment into Wanat.

A significant consideration in our planning for occupation of Wanat, was to make sure the Wanat occupation and the Bella retrograde occurred simultaneously. This would disperse the enemy between the two locations, preventing them from massing at one or the other. This obviously worked because there were no attacks for the last few days we were at Bella. The enemy did mass at Wanat after we had prepared our positions for several days. This was difficult, but would have been worse at Bella, which was isolated by air. The key to the defense of Wanat, was the reinforcement by ground forces in just over an hour after contact.

Other deception operations were planned for future operations in and around Wanat, though we did not have a chance to implement them.

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

Diamond

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Some of your earlier remarks suggested that you were not pleased with IO efforts at Brigade, and performed considerable IO operations at Battalion level.

Brigade IO was reactive slow and of no positive impact – largely ineffective. The decision to go silent on PAO/IO above battalion level for seven days while facts were gathered allowed the press and enemy an advantage as all speculated and made up incorrect stories about Wanat.

5. Did you have a plan to do any Civil Affairs contact, or provide any Medical/Veterinary/Humanitarian support to Wanat in conjunction with COP Kahler. I know you had been to Wanat frequently before, did you perform any CA in Wanat previously? CA and or the PRT went with every or nearly every patrol to Wanat. When either weren't with the Patrol, projects were still discussed. \$1.4 million worth of projects were planned for Wanat. Wanat had a new district center, a new police station, planned and funded OPs for the police, a new school, a renovated clinic was in the works with a new roof on it was going in shortly, a hard ball road was in the works as was a micro-hydro, plus land payments, and jobs constructing then working on the COP would have provided an economic boom to many families. MEDCAPs had been conducted in WANAT as had HA distros.

Wanat was slated to get a large amount of projects, most of which had been discussed in detail with local elders around the village. We were specifically working on refurbishing the walls in the clinic, supporting a Indian NGO trade school in the area with supplies, completed a district center/police station, and did a site survey for a micro hydro for the clinic. (b)(3), (b)(6)

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

Diamond

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Combat Studies Institute
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

Dear Sir,

The purpose of this interview is to collect your lessons learned and experiences with Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). Your input will be incorporated into our next publication, which chronicles the contemporary history of OEF from **October 2005 to April 2008**. The following is a list of questions I would like to ask during the interview. If there are important topics that I've inadvertently left off this list, please feel free to revise and expand. Once we have completed the interview and it is transcribed, I will send you a copy for your approval. Upon receipt, please feel free to edit, change, and delete as you see fit. We will not finalize the transcript until we receive your approval.

Read Ahead Questions for COL (b)(3), (b)(6) **Diamond**

1. By way of introduction and for the record, please restate your name, rank, and duty position when you were deployed to Afghanistan.
2. Could you please state the time period you were deployed.
3. Could you please describe you AO? (boundaries, geography, ethnic makeup, etc.)
4. Could you describe your strategy of **Separate, Stabilize, Transform?** **This is an evolution of 3-10 IN's strategy - (COL Nicholson – now BG) and 1-32 (LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) now COL).** **The environment/geography (physical and human terrain) does not allow you to CLEAR – to vast, rugged, undeveloped, dispersed etc. We didn't have the forces to HOLD. Resources to build a platoon FOB and build local capacity were stretched but we could [positively] transform the environment through a series of efforts. Instead of CLEARING we separated the enemy from the population and then from the infrastructure (LOCs) – we did this through persistent offensive population-centric non-lethal effects and targeted lethal effects. Stabilize – through aggressive non-lethal actions (shuras, project committees, interagency involvement, PRT constantly out, building our ANSF etc.) we STABILIZED (calmed/bettered) the AO (according to the Afghan population). All things leading up to this began transforming the environment – through LOCs, schools, clinics and projects we began transforming the population into a connected, more educated/enlightened, healthy population that had a habit of employment and stuck around and took **provide in their greater communities – read defended them and forced the ANSF OUT!** **PLU** (b)(3), (b)(6) **Diamond**
 - a. Was this a strategy you devised before deploying? **This is an evolution of 3-10 IN's strategy - (COL Nicholson – now BG) and 1-32 (LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) now COL).**
 - b. Was it directly based on a "Clear, Hold, Build"?
 - c. Why was it important to lead with non-lethal effects? **Non-Lethal effects reprogrammed and desensitized our operating environment – an environment that was largely hostile do to AAF lies and propaganda. Persistent Population-Centric messaging verbalized the obvious goodness that the international forces brought to the people; it made what was obvious more obvious.****
5. Your AO contained some of the more dangerous areas in RC-East. In terms of the threat, how would you describe your AO?
6. How did you characterize the enemy center of gravity?

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- a. Which of these entities (insurgency, terrorist operations, or criminal activity) seemed to be the most prevalent problem in your AO?
 - i. What was the nature of the criminal activity in your AO? Was it petty crime, theft, etc?
 - ii. How were criminals able to disguise their actions as insurgent activity?
 - iii. How did you tell the difference?
 - iv. What capacities did the ANSF have to fight crime?
 - b. Did you notice any evolution in tactics or evolution of the enemy (the Taliban, al Qaeda, and criminal elements) during your tour?
 - c. Did you notice an influx of foreign fighters during your tour?
7. Could you describe the enemy's proficiency at IO/propaganda?
- a. How long into your tour did you realize that this was a major problem? **Within 30 days – 5 July Honaker and Miracle were killed in a horrendous extended battle. A Company had a clear tactical victory against insurgents led by Arabs – A Co killed an estimated 80 insurgents. Basic Taliban efforts coupled with abysmal IO efforts from Bde through ISAF began turning the victory into a defeat. I personally REFUSED to allow this and tirelessly working with the local through province leaders, the ANSF partners, and the PRT. We secured the victory and set a template and a mode of operation in action.** (b)(3), (b)(6) **Diamond**
 - b. What immediate steps did you take to counter this?
 - c. What long term steps did you take?
 - d. Did you work with the ANSF or other Afghan government officials to improve their IO ability? **Improving IO was a continuous effort and we very much worked with ANSF and GIRA partners as they were instrumental to our efforts. In small cells they were in the lead on IO.** (b)(3), (b)(6) **Diamond**
8. In your assessment, what factors, if any, contributed to changes in violence levels during your tour?
9. My understanding is that in a few areas, the population refused to support the legitimate Afghan government and you made the decision to pull out and concentrate your efforts on more fruitful areas. Could you describe the factors that weigh into such a decision?
10. COL (b)(3), (b)(6) mentioned in a news article that until October 2007, Soldiers were focused on security and could not fully focus on governance and development. Could you describe the nature of those months where security was the primary focus?
- a. What changes led to your ability to begin a greater focus on governance and development?
 - b. In which areas did the focus need to remain on security without the ability to begin governance and development efforts?
11. Could you describe Operation Rock Avalanche? (What was the mission, how many of your companies participated, did the ANSF participate, exactly what happened, any other details you remember?)
12. The Afghan National Security Forces made tremendous progress during 2007 and 2008. Could you characterize the progress you witnessed on the ground?
- a. With which particular kandaks did you partner and train?
 - b. In what specific areas (logistics, command and control, etc.) did the ANSF require more mentorship and training?

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

Diamond

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- c. Did you work closely with the ETTs in the field?
- i. Do you remember approximately what month the ETTs became OPCON?
13. Which areas in your AO did not have an ANSF presence?
- a. In those areas, how did you compensate for the lack of an ANSF partnership for legitimacy with the population?
14. What were your most significant challenges in convincing the population to support to the legitimate government rather than the enemy?
15. What were CJTF-82's reconstruction goals?
- a. How effective were the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)?
- b. What are the opportunities for improvement in respect to the PRTs?
16. As the Coalition leader for RC-East, you had the opportunity to interact with Afghan officials who were creating a stable government. In what ways did you work with Afghan officials to foster good governance?
- a. Did you participate in Key Leader Engagement meetings or shuras with Afghan officials?
- i. In what aspects would more funding for the KLEs have helped the mission? **We would have had consistently higher attendance and would have been immediately perceived as culturally in tune and respectful of their customs. We would have been more credible and more effective.**
- b. Stable governance at the provincial and local levels was extremely important. In what ways did you see an improvement in governance at these levels?
- c. How well was President Karzai's administration able to reach the provincial and local governments who were a distance from the national center in Kabul?
17. In your assessment, why was it important that the Afghans develop a system of Rule of Law? **The "Cops" are trained and equipped to do the right thing - enforce the Law (cultural norms). When they detain criminals and insurgents - that are almost immediately released, the ANSF are accepting personal risk and putting their family at risk for retribution. In short order, they opt not to put themselves and their families at Risk and instead some seek to profit from their position - shake down the innocent and the weak or seek bribes from the detained until they are released. America has close to 1% of it's population confined. I'm sure AFC has something less than .001% confined - are they more virtuous? ~~100%~~**
18. What types of metrics did you use for success for both security and stability efforts?

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