

1 [The testimony began at 1424, 29 October 2009.]
2

3 **LtGen Natonski:** Alright Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) I am Lieutenant
4 General Richard F. Natonski, United States Marine
5 Corps. I have been appointed by the Commander of U.S.
6 Central Command to conduct an investigation into the
7 facts and circumstances surrounding the combat action
8 of Wanat, Afghanistan, in July of 2008. Major General
9 David Perkins, United States Army, has been assigned
10 as the Deputy Investigating Officer and Lieutenant
11 Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) and Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) **Sigma**
12 (b)(3), (b)(6) are Judge Advocates assigned to the investigation
13 team.
14

15 The testimony you provide today will be recorded,
16 transcribed, and included in a report of the
17 investigation. Based on your testimony, we may also
18 prepare a separate written statement for your review
19 and signature.
20

21 Prior to coming on the record today, you signed a
22 privacy act statement. Is that correct?
23

24 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) That's correct, sir.
25

26 **LtGen Natonski:** Your testimony will be made under oath and
27 you will now be sworn.
28

29 [The witness was sworn.]
30

31 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Please state your full name, spelling your last.
32

33 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Matthew Robert (b)(3), (b)(6).
34

35 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): And what is your current unit and that unit's
36 location?
37

38 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Current unit, Charlie Company, 6th Ranger Training
39 Battalion in Eglin Air Force Base, Florida.
40

41 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Are you currently a Captain in the U.S. Army?
42

43 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir.
44

45 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): In July 2008, what was your unit and that unit's
46 location?
47

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Oscar 1 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) July 2008, my unit was Chosen Company, 2nd of the 503rd
2 Infantry and we were stationed in Afghanistan RC East
3 based out of Camp Blessing, but at several other bases
4 at that time.
5

Beta 6 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): What were your duties with Chosen Company?
7

Oscar 8 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I was the Chosen Company Commander.
9

Beta 10 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Are you an Infantry Officer?
11

Oscar 12 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir.
13

Beta 14 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Prior to coming on the record today, did you have
15 a chance to review a transcript dated 1 December 2008,
16 with Matt Matthews from Combat Studies Institute, a
17 Scabiosa transcript of an interview with Major (b)(3), (b)(6) 2007
18 at the top, a sworn statement dated 16 July 2008, a
19 sworn statement dated 23 July 2008, a sworn statement
20 of 22 July of 2008, and a sworn statement of 17 July
21 2008 made--those sworn statements in part of an AR 15-
22 6. Did you have a chance to review all of those
23 documents?
24

Oscar 25 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. I reviewed all of them.
26

Beta 27 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you have a chance to make any changes that
28 you desired to make to those documents?
29

Oscar 30 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir.
31

Beta 32 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): And did you sign the bottom of each--the first
33 page of those documents?
34

Oscar 35 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. I did.
36

Beta 37 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): And do you adopt those documents as part of your
38 testimony today?
39

Oscar 40 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I do, sir.
41

Beta 42 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) Oscar if you could tell us--when was the
43 first time you learned of a possible move to Wanat?
44

Oscar 45 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I want to say--the move to Wanat was kind of something
46 that we were looking at close to within the first 3
47 months of our deployment. Originally----

1
Beta 2 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you deploy as the Company Commander?
3

Oscar 4 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. I did. So, starting in--when we arrived in
5 country sometime around the end of May of 2007, within
6 the first 90 days we started looking at how to realign
7 our Battle space. And that came from a recommendation
8 from myself to the chain of command that we should
9 look to move somewhere a little bit closer to Camp
10 Blessing, but also a little bit closer to you know
11 Afghan Government entities because currently in that
12 portion of my Battle space, we were not next to any
13 kind of Afghan Government Official, which was
14 consistent with the other part of my Battle space
15 centralized around Camp Blessing.
16

Beta 17 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): What was the Chosen Battle space?
18

Oscar 19 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) The Chosen Battle space, sir, it stretched all the way
20 from originally when we fell in on in Aranus,
21 Afghanistan, through Bella Outpost. So we had those
22 two posts. And then my other Platoon was at Camp
23 Blessing. The Battle space from Camp Blessing
24 stretched west from there where there was a road that
25 allowed us to move about three or four kilometers west
26 and then basically from Camp Blessing north to Wanat
27 and consistently back up to Bella. Now there's some
28 sections of that Battle space that we didn't operate
29 in on the ground because there was distance in between
30 the outposts that really wasn't an area to travel in.
31 Kind of TTP we learned from previous units. So, I
32 only had 2 platoons when I originally started. My
33 third platoon was detached and attached to another
34 Company and they were in a totally separate Battle
35 space underneath a separate Company Commander.
36

Beta 37 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): I am assuming you went up to Wanat at some point
38 before the Platoon moved up there?
39

Oscar 40 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. We had started consistently patrolling to
41 Wanat early on in our deployment. Basically, it's
42 part of the mission from the Platoon at Camp Blessing
43 as they would patrol up the road to Wanat basically
44 because that's where our District Governor was for the
45 Waygal Valley, which was part of the Nuristan
46 Province, whereas my other District Governor I worked
47 with was part of the Konar Province. So we

1 consistently go up there I would say maybe two times a
2 month and then basically it would turn into like we
3 would go visit him and then sometimes he would down to
4 Camp Blessing and visit us. The District Governor.
5 So we had consistently gone there throughout the 15
6 months that we were deployed.

7
8 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you have a unit at the Ranch House?
9

10 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. The lay down for the Platoons was--where we
11 fell in on from 1-32 10th Mountain was they had 1
12 Platoon that was split between 2 COPs. So half their
13 Platoon was at Ranch House and the other half was at
14 Bella. They augmented not having a whole Platoon
15 together by having ANA forces with them so it turned
16 out to be a whole Platoon size element between U.S.
17 Army and Afghan Forces. So they had about a Platoon
18 size element at Aranus, only half being U.S. Army,
19 Platoon size element at Bella, only half being U.S.
20 Army, and then their other Platoon was at Camp
21 Blessing. And that's how we fell in same way.
22

23 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): With Ranch House and Bella, did--is that
24 something that you wanted to sustain?
25

26 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): You know we definitely didn't you know come in saying
27 we were going to make all of these changes. We kind
28 of--it took some time to assess it. But, you know the
29 Ranch House was something that definitely wasn't
30 comfortable for me as far as how much force we had
31 there. It was only half a Platoon and really they had
32 to do so much force protection to do that they didn't
33 have really enough to do any kind of patrolling in the
34 area. And then as far as aligning ourselves with
35 Afghan Forces is it was just one town it was next to
36 in the whole valley. I mean there were 8 other
37 villages that were essentially not getting any kind of
38 attention. So, that coupled with the logistic kind of
39 load that the Ranch House made us consider, it was
40 only UH60 capable as far as what could land there.
41 So, as far as moving forces back and forth for
42 resupply, it was UH60. Now they could sling load with
43 a CH47 there, but it just--it was a great logistical
44 strain on the unit. So I thought if I close that
45 down, I can move them to Bella. They'll be a fighting
46 force as one whole platoon and they can--Bella was a
47 location that was at the intersection at a lot of

1 different kind of smaller Valleys. So, if you were
2 travelling anywhere through the Waygal, you had to
3 pass through Bella based on it was the one road that
4 went through the Valley and they controlled--it was
5 basically a control point that a lot of people pass
6 through and I would go to Bella and I would meet with
7 a lot of people there. There was a small Bazaar
8 there. There was a clinic there. It's kind of a
9 central location so the decision we made was we need
10 to close this so we can be more centrally located. We
11 can be of equal attention to all the different towns
12 in the Valley by being at this location.
13

Beta 14 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) You said close this. You mean the Ranch House.
15

Oscar 16 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Right. Close the Ranch House to locate at Bella for
17 all those reasons I just listed.
18

19 **LtCol Bligh:** At some point, did Bella become a--not a good
20 place to be?
21

Oscar 22 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I think over the time that we were there, Bella, in my
23 mind, allowed us to stay connected to the Northern
24 part of the Waygal Valley. There was some thought to
25 say hey we'll keep Bella and then we'll also move to
26 Wanat and then we'll kind of--you know we'll have a
27 lower or the southern part of the valley. That'll be
28 a connection we have there and then we'll have a
29 northern part of the valley that we have a connection
30 with. But Bella eventually became something that the
31 enemy had--they just had our position dialed in. It
32 was at the bottom of the Valley and it was kind of in
33 a bowl, so it--the risk to aircraft and things like
34 that became greater as the year went on. To the fact--
35 -I mean, the fact was they were getting rockets inside
36 of our wire--landing inside of our wire pretty
37 consistently, like kind of when they wanted to I
38 think--or when they were supplied those things, they
39 could do it. So we had a couple of guys get injured
40 from rockets, I mean inside the TOC shrapnel through
41 and hit guys in the TOC. And so that, coupled with
42 the OP that we had there that was separate from Bella
43 had had--it was only about a five meter perimeter you
44 know radius around and they had shot mortar rounds
45 inside that perimeter. That coupled with aircraft
46 getting consistently shot at was the decision to say
47 you know if something--if something big happens here,

1 our ability to reinforce is really difficult. The
2 communications from Bella, you could sometimes get FM
3 communication from the OP, which was on a piece of
4 high ground, but other than that it was just TAC SAT
5 and then we had an SPOP there. So we had SIPR
6 capability that we could talk on the phone back to
7 Blessing and things like that. But it was kind of one
8 of those things if any of those things go out, then we
9 are kind of on our own. Where we said if we move
10 them, you know we can get an easily reinforce able
11 location that is ground-accessible. So it would be
12 less of a logistical strain. Communications would be
13 better. You could have gun trucks there, would
14 increase your fighting capability. All those reasons
15 were the decision we move Bella.
16

Beta 17 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6) When in the deployment did you say Bella is not a
18 good place to be? Was it before Christmas----
19

Oscar 20 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Well there as a--Bella was--wasn't that bad during the
21 winter. I mean during the winter they were kind of
22 snow-laden. You know a lot of people in NURISTAN
23 during the winter; they pretty much hibernate,
24 including the fighters. So, there wasn't a whole lot
25 going on in the winter. There were a couple of times
26 we found some rockets on timers, things like that
27 pointed. We found one set of rockets on timers that
28 the water in it was frozen, so it didn't go off. So
29 they were kind of--it was almost like the enemy's
30 economy of force mission. They were just setting up
31 things that would only take a couple of guys to do.
32 But as the spring time came, we had increased activity
33 of enemies shooting at aircraft, which was my greatest
34 concern. So our resupply would come every four days
35 and they would consistently get some sort of pop shot
36 at them or you know basically shot at in route that
37 could possibly turn them around or it would decrease
38 the amount of turns they could give to those guys,
39 which made the logistical load start to be a
40 consideration. I mean they had--it was a base that
41 was built up and had tons of days of supply and we
42 would try to do that and maximize you know having all
43 that stuff built up, but, the kind of benefit of
44 having it there had started to go away. I mean the
45 enemy knew we were there. We would meet people
46 occasionally, but it was just kind of--you know we
47 were just there and the locals would have to come to

1 us. We were trying to work some projects for them to
2 improve their way of life. It just seemed like having
3 our forces there and not talking with the government
4 was just ineffective. It just wasn't worth not being
5 able to talk to a district governor who was really the
6 voice of who is supposed to advocate for the people in
7 his district. It's supposed to be the guy that's
8 trying to decide where he wants help and we weren't
9 having that. It was basically us working with the
10 local population, which is what led us to want to do
11 Wanat. So really the decision to move Bella wasn't
12 until later on in the spring when that situation
13 became worse and worse. I mean it was to the point
14 where I think I counted 13 trips of aircraft up the
15 Waygal Valley, all 13 of them got shot at in a row.
16 And I was like it is just a matter of time before a
17 U.S. Army aircraft gets shot down. Now we had had
18 contracted what they call Jingle Air contracted
19 resupply come in and they did get shot down on the LZ
20 at Bella. I don't remember the exact date, but it was
21 probably about a month before we moved. So basically
22 as they flew in, I think rockets came in, shrapnel hit
23 the aircraft as it was landing, and there was a hole
24 in its Fuselage, so it couldn't take off again. And
25 that aircraft sat there for three days while the
26 contractor figured out how to take it out. You know
27 which was a huge concern and we were like you know
28 it's just a matter of time you know if an aircraft
29 crashed on the side of mountain, there's your
30 Afghanistan main effort. You know we didn't want to
31 do that. We wanted to be in an area where we could
32 get ground resupply in to where we needed to be and
33 then that would--that coupled with being with the
34 government, was what we needed to do.

35
36 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you go--did you talk to Colonel Diamond
(b)(3), (b)(6)
37 about, hey sir we need to get out of Bella?
38

39 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. We talked about that and said through the
40 Brigade Commander that you know we think Bella is kind
41 of--it needs to go. Wanat is the place that we need
42 to be and we had been trying to move to Wanat. Like I
43 said, originally I thought hey if I could keep Bella
44 and have Wanat and that can kind of be what my Company
45 was going to do. But, Bella then just got kind of
46 stale and continued to be almost the same kind of
47 problem that the Ranch House was. So then that turned

1 into hey Bella needs to move regardless and Wanat is
2 the right area for us to be to continue to influence
3 that Valley; much more through their government and
4 not so much just through the military, U.S. military
5 forces.

6
7 **Beta** LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Could you have simply left Bella and not
8 established anything else?
9

10 **Oscar** CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I think--you know we thought about that and that was--
11 -that would be a decision different from occupying
12 Wanat because you know with the mission in Afghanistan
13 from the top down was you know you need to align with
14 the Afghan government. You know we need to legitimize
15 the Afghan government including through security,
16 economy, infrastructure, and governance. You know we
17 need to build them up in whatever they're doing. So,
18 moving Bella and not occupying Wanat was a
19 possibility, but then that was basically just you know
20 totally cutting off a piece of the government that we
21 had been with for over a year. And we didn't want to
22 just say we don't have time for you guys anymore.
23 We're focusing elsewhere. We thought that we could
24 maximize our influence of that Valley strictly through
25 the District Government there. That was the way to do
26 it. So moving Bella and not occupying Wanat was--it
27 just really wasn't where the mission was supposed to
28 go. So that was consistent with our mission was
29 occupation of Wanat. Definitely Bella needed to fall
30 off, but we still needed to you know--we didn't need
31 to totally abandon those guys.
32

33 **Beta** LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): When the idea that came up to leave Bella and
34 establish something in Wanat, do you recall what month
35 that was?
36

37 **Oscar** CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I don't want to say it was like a--it wasn't like a
38 decision brief where it was like this is what we need
39 to do. It was more of you know when did our daily
40 **Diamond** updates with Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6), he did periodic updates
41 with the Brigade Commander, it was a you know this is
42 what we're thinking based on these--you know based on
43 these principles of what's happening. And then as the
44 intelligence kind of shaped that Bella was getting
45 worse and worse, then we kind of just started leaning
46 towards that. And I don't remember if it was in a
47 **Diamond** Battle Update with Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6), if I talked to him

1 face-to-face, or it was something that we both kind of
2 understood. But that--another reason that was coupled
3 with that was that we were continuing to push west of
4 Camp Blessing and that really was the main Valley. I
5 mean that's like an extension of the Pesh Valley
6 towards CHAPADARA. And that was the Valley that
7 looped around to go to all the way up in Nuristan all
8 the way to Perunes. And a theme that I consistently
9 was arguing with him--or not arguing but bringing up
10 was you know we need--we need to head west because the
11 provincial government of Nuristan needs to be linked
12 in. They are a province in Afghanistan that has no
13 U.S. Forces with them and that essentially makes it
14 difficult for me to try to build up a District
15 Government that has no Provincial Government support.
16 So, working with the Waygal District, which is part of
17 Nuristan, they had no--they had a provincial governor
18 behind them, but there were not a lot of U.S. Forces
19 that were with that guy all the time. So he was
20 essentially ineffective, which made the District
21 really hard to work with because they weren't well
22 off. It was hard to get them organized. They didn't
23 always get the money that they thought they were
24 supposed to get to supply--you know so he could
25 govern. Whereas what we saw in Kunar was we had this
26 huge base in Asadabad. They had the--you know all the
27 provincial reconstruction team right next to the
28 Governor. And it was pretty easy to work with those
29 District Governors because they had all the support
30 from their Province. So we said you know eventually
31 we need to move west--building a road west. So that's
32 a reason we need to move that. So we need to--if we
33 could focus forces that way, we can kind of get--okay
34 we're established with Wanat, we're moving west to
35 link up their provincial government eventually and
36 then--so then we could start with legitimizing
37 government and their officials.

38
39 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) The site that was actually selected up in Wanat,
40 can you take us through please how that was identified
41 and then acquired?
42

43 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah--whenever we moved up to Wanat--you know land in
44 Afghanistan is sometimes the most valuable thing that
45 people have. So, whether it be farmland, where their
46 house is, you know land that they own that they don't
47 even use where they graze their goats and stuff like

1 that, it's incredibly valuable to them. So we were
2 trying to you know get a decision to be made about a
3 piece of land with the locals. To show that we
4 support them and then to kind of get a hey we're going
5 to be here to help you, we need you to help us to find
6 a piece of land. There was a barren piece of land in
7 the middle of Wanat just by their bazaar, which you
8 can see on the maps which is where we eventually
9 occupied. That was farmland that somebody owned, but
10 they didn't work the land. It was just a piece of
11 wasteland. So, no one really used it for anything
12 because there was a guy from another village that
13 owned it but he had a quarrel with somebody from
14 Wanat, so he couldn't go there to work the land so he
15 just left it barren. So we went in. We worked with
16 some of the local elders in Wanat. We said you know
17 this is where we want to occupy. It will provide
18 security for the District Center, which was in a piece
19 of low ground a little bit further away, maybe 150
20 meters away. So, this will give us our place. We can
21 secure you know this side. The District can secure
22 this side. And we can work together and kind of
23 legitimize them. So basically it was a piece of land,
24 I said this isn't being used. I would like to use it.
25 Then we get kind of the mixed thing, well I know that
26 it's--the guy comes up and he says well I'm the guy
27 that knows the guy that owns it you know and I can
28 speak for him. So there was a group of people--you
29 know the land in Wanat was I think 9 different people
30 owned it, different pieces of it. So there was like
31 five of them that were like yeah you can use my land.
32 I am ready to sign to say I am giving it to you and
33 you are going to--you know the whole land agreement to
34 say I am going to get paid for it. So that was the
35 best piece of land because it was minimal impact on
36 the population with providing the max amount of
37 security and maximize the focus on our mission, which
38 was to align with the government. And that's why we
39 selected that piece of land. It was close enough---

40
41 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): How early on in the process did you say that's
42 the piece of land?

43
44 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I can't give you an exact date, sir. But, I know it
45 was--it was probably--it was definitely earlier on
46 then like Christmas time of our deployment. So like
47 December 2007 and that's kind of a general--because

1 like I said before it wasn't a this is what we're
2 going to do, this is the land we are going to take,
3 and this is where we are going to put the base. It
4 was kind of this is what we are leaning towards, we're
5 still doing a lot of other Battalion Operations, you
6 know we're the--you know I have a Platoon that's
7 available to the Battalion Commander to use and we did
8 a lot of other missions that was part of a bigger
9 Battalion effort. So, it was kind of like in between
10 this is where the Company's moving to in between doing
11 all this--you know helping out the rest of the
12 Battalion battle space.

13
14 **LtGen Natonski:** You mentioned the problem with Bella being a
15 bowl at the bottom of a valley.

16
17 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir.

18
19 **LtGen Natonski:** Isn't that what Wanat was?

20
21 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Well the--its different degrees of a bowl. The land
22 around Bella was basically where an aircraft had to
23 drop you know almost drop down into where the LZ was.
24 Where Wanat, the Valley was much wider to the point
25 where an aircraft could fly and you know kind of be
26 out of--almost be out of RPG range from the side of a
27 mountain. Whereas in Bella, I mean there was--there
28 were times where the aircraft was flying and you were
29 looking at the side of the mountain you know twenty-
30 thirty meters away.

31
32 **LtGen Natonski:** That close.

33
34 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) It was extreme. And that was just because it was
35 farther north of Nuristan and the valley just
36 continued to get high. And not only that, but on
37 their way in it was much tight which was the
38 difference for us.

39 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) When you went up to meet with folks in Wanat,
40 what was the reception like for you?

41
42 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Well when I was--you know when went out to the bazaar
43 and there was a lot of people going in and out. You
44 know depending on who we were meeting with was kind of
45 the--what kind of reception would we get. A lot of
46 times, you know in smaller groups of elders we would
47 get a lot of support. You know they would be oh you

1 know we really need to come here. We need your help
2 here. We need projects here. We need this. We need
3 that. So it was very positive and we had a very good
4 relationship with them. A lot of times when we would
5 have a larger group or a bigger shura with a lot of
6 other people from other villages, then it would--it
7 got kind of like no one wanted to take ownership of
8 anything because there was some sort of split between
9 them that either there was a bad guy of influence that
10 we weren't aware of that was influencing what other
11 people thought because they would say one thing in a
12 big Shura and then they'd say the opposite when they
13 were either one on one or in a smaller group of their
14 own buddies. So it was--it was kind of difficult to
15 gauge. You know we would have really positive trips
16 up there that would be great. We'd sit down and eat.
17 You know we'd talk with people. They'd talk about how
18 great everything was and how they wanted our help.
19 And then we'd go up there and have a larger group and
20 it would be kind of very stale and no one would really
21 say anything. No one would want to be in charge of
22 anything or try to organize anything.

Beta 24 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): When did you actually sign for the land--contract
25 for the land? Was that--how long before Operation
26 Rock Move? Month? Two months?

Oscar 28 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I want to say, sir, that it was up to two months where
29 they'd began to work through the system to try to get
30 it all approved, but it was only a couple of weeks
31 before Rock Move that we knew it was--it was good.

Beta 33 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): That's through the crest Team?

Oscar 35 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Through the Crest Team. There was a point where we
36 said--because I talked with another Company that said
37 you know hey with Able Company and Honaker-Miracle and
38 that whole process, they kind of grabbed the land
39 first and said hey we'll work all the crest team stuff
40 out later. Which was kind of their technique and I
41 think in a lot of ways that was good because then
42 they're already there and you know people--they didn't
43 have a choice, but at the same time they didn't have
44 to take ownership of that. Whereas if we get it
45 approved ahead of time, the land owners could be
46 influenced by other people to say hey you gave them
47 permission to do this. They didn't take it. You know

1 as much as they want to say that. And I think that
2 was almost preferred by local Afghans because then
3 they didn't have to take ownership for anything. They
4 said well I didn't give it to them. They took it.
5 But now that they took it, they're going to pay me for
6 it. So there was a point where I said you know what,
7 we just need to do what they did there and we just
8 need to occupy it. And then after that, you know
9 we'll--if we already occupied and we say hey we have
10 this money we're waiting to pay whoever owns it, then
11 that guy is going to show up. Whereas opposed to if I
12 say I want to meet with somebody and talk about your
13 land, then nobody will show up. So there was a point
14 where we said hey let's just go ahead and start
15 planning for it to do it because of Bella's
16 circumstances and all that other stuff and we thought
17 was essential and I don't remember the exact date of
18 when the Crest team signed it. But----

19
20 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): When you started this planning, whether you had
21 the land or not, just to quote "take it," when did you
22 envision actually executing coming out of Bella, in
23 your mind--you know roughly speaking?
24

25 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Well I think it definitely--I definitely wished it
26 would have happened earlier. But at the same time I
27 understood that there's you know--I have a plan for my
28 Company what I want to do, you know I pushed that up.
29 And Battalion--Brigade--whoever says Roger that's what
30 we want to do, but then they still have to prioritize
31 when they are going to do it. So I think, you know,
32 it was several months in the making that I wanted to
33 do this, but I understood that there was a lot of
34 different priorities that were shifting back and
35 forth. When----
36

37 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you discuss with Battalion the possibility of
38 being able to just seize the land?
39

40 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I did with Colonel **Diamond** (b)(3), (b)(6) and like I said I talked to
41 my buddy in Able Company, Captain (b)(3), (b)(6), and I said--
42 -you know he said, you just--you know this is the way
43 we did it. And you're always going to have land
44 issues with Afghans, so you just need to do what your
45 mission is and all of that stuff will work out after
46 the fact. And so I brought that up with Colonel
47 **Diamond** (b)(3), (b)(6) and he kind of said well yeah that's what they

1 did so that's a possibility. So it's kind of like in
2 my mind I wanted to do the COIN thing and say okay we
3 need to work with the locals and we need to bring
4 everyone together and as the U.S. Military element I
5 can help people make a decision with us so we're all
6 on the same team with it. And that just became too
7 difficult. It just was you know sometimes I had this
8 guy that was supporting me and then the next meeting
9 that guy wasn't there. You know and then another guy
10 showed up and it was very hard to juggle. And that
11 got so bad that we're like okay--let's just go forward
12 and do it. At the same time, still working Crest team
13 and all those issues.

Beta 15 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Now you indicated that your decision on the
16 particular location was kind of driven by this would
17 be the easiest land to acquire because the ownership
18 seemed to be the easiest. If you were going to go
19 seize the piece of property, then deal with the land
20 ownership later, would you have looked at different
21 piece of property?
22

23 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Well we had looked at--we had looked at some other
24 areas that maybe wouldn't have been----
25

Beta 26 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Let me grab the map so you can show the
27 Gentlemen.
28

Oscar 29 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Sure. As you know Gentlemen, north on the map. Now
30 this is our--the area that we obviously eventually
31 occupied. Now, there were some--let me get that other
32 one actually, sir. There were some other areas that
33 we looked at to say hey we can get a little bit
34 farther away from this central location. Maybe
35 farther up here. Farther up in these hills this way.
36

Beta 37 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): To the southeast of Wanat.
38

Oscar 39 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Right, to the southeast--to where we wouldn't be
40 affecting these civilian homes here, but it was all--
41 you know our original plan was so we could have it
42 vehicle-accessible and so there was--it would have to
43 be an extensive plan to try to build any kind of road
44 access to any of these up in this area. Now we did
45 yet--we did think about doing it over here because
46 there was some land that they weren't--this is kind of
47 barren up here and it's open. We were thinking over

1 here. But at the same time that would cause us to
2 have--this river is not passable by anything. So it
3 would cause us to have to do another type of road
4 access or at least improve upon because there was a
5 small road here--so improve upon to put a base down
6 here----

Beta 8 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): You were considering a position to the south of
9 Wanat that would require you to build a road all the
10 up around the----

Oscar 12 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Right. And it would basically have this bridge as
13 being our--you know where you have to enter and exit
14 this way every time----

16 **LtGen Natonski:** Is the bridge required here.

Oscar 18 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yeah. Any of this, sir, is not passable. It wasn't
19 passable by--I mean this is a road that's on the side
20 of a steep drop-off that's probably sixty feet to the
21 ground there and there was no way that we saw without
22 you know extensive planning to--and money to build
23 extra assets across this River, which by the way can
24 swell to be enormous in the winter months and in the
25 spring.

27 **MG Perkins:** So say again, why were you considering other
28 areas than where you put the COP?

Oscar 30 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Well, we had considered other areas, sir, because we
31 didn't--we wanted to be close to the population. We
32 understood that. But at the same time, we didn't want
33 to--you know a lot of these areas was some of the you
34 know suggestion from you know other locals to say well
35 have you thought about here or here when we were
36 saying no we want to put it right here because we had
37 not had all of the land owners to talk to about this--
38 --

40 **MG Perkins:** So the main reason you were looking other places
41 is because of input from them?

Oscar 43 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. And just to--just as to have more than one
44 course of action. You know not to say this is what
45 we're doing, we're looking at other things.

1 **MG Perkins:** Where tactical issues, force protection, anything
2 like that ever a driver in any of your reasons to look
3 other places?
4

Oscar 5 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I think--I think they were for--you know just at the
6 principle of saying hey we want to put ourselves on
7 high ground----
8

9 **MG Perkins:** Understand.
10

Oscar 11 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) But, with the plan of Wanat was you know occupying
12 this ground, but there was also an extensive plan to
13 have observation posts all around. We planned on
14 having an ANA post up here, which is basically the
15 piece of ground they could see--I mean you could see
16 miles down this road----
17

Beta 18 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Is that about a kilometer south of Wanat?
19

Oscar 20 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) That's a kilometer south of Wanat. And then we had
21 already planned----
22

23 **MG Perkins:** Can you see Blessing from there?
24

Oscar 25 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) You cannot see the actual post, sir, but you can see
26 the observation posts around Blessing pretty easily--
27 or at least very close to them. Now we had already
28 planned and we had funded trying to build hard stand
29 observation posts for the police that were to the
30 north, which included around this abandoned building
31 to the northeast and then due north-northwest to
32 basically cover this whole area of the road--valley
33 that goes that way.
34

35 **MG Perkins:** Where was your biggest concern for enemy
36 infiltration? This way? Or this way?
37

Oscar 38 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Well, sir, the biggest--the biggest concern that I had
39 was some sort of indirect fire and rocket attack. I
40 mean that was consistently what we saw you know as the
41 way that the enemy would be able to maximize their
42 assets, get their rockets dialed, get all those----
43

44 **MG Perkins:** So you wanted observation points which could over
45 watch firing positions?
46

Oscar 1 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Basically, so they could see as far as they could you
2 know--if we get a piece of non-standard ISR up here
3 you know an LRAS, then you can control that whole
4 thing and you can see from here. You can see all the
5 way up this low ground. You can see this whole area
6 that included you know a couple other villages up here
7 that you might not be able to see the actual villages,
8 but you could at least see movement in and out of
9 those villages----

Beta 11 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): That's up the Eastern Valley?

Oscar 13 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Off the Eastern Valley, yes, sir. So basically it was
14 to maximize--I mean also legitimize the ANP to let
15 them secure their own area and say hey we have an
16 agreement that you are going to man these two posts
17 and then you know we'll have the ANA really with
18 ourselves because we never just let the ANA do it on
19 their own, but to have this piece of ground to control
20 you know basically to see everything on this piece of
21 ground here and see everything south up all these
22 little draws and everything. So that--I mean that was
23 the basic plan which mitigated the fact that yeah we
24 understand Wanat is in the middle of a Valley with you
25 know not extreme high ground like Bella, but at least
26 a little bit of high ground around it. And then also
27 coupling ourselves with the population would maybe
28 cause the enemy to hesitate whether or not they are
29 going to attack or not because this is their--the
30 bazaar that their brother goes to----

32 MG Perkins: So in essence, actually hugging the population,
33 in your mind, you saw that as a force protection
34 issue--I mean you thought that as a way to increase
35 your Force protection by saying look, if the
36 insurgents attack us, the collateral damage will be
37 too high.

Oscar 39 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, for their decision process, I saw that as a
40 mitigating factor. You know we had seen some stuff in
41 Bella--I mean we were next to a Bazaar in Bella and
42 they would still attack, but I felt that you know that
43 they wouldn't do anything extremely catastrophic
44 because of you know the buddies that they knew that
45 lived down in there or the houses that were there.
46 You know because then if the insurgent's fire and that
47 guy knows somebody, he is going to say something to

1 him. Hey you almost hit my house or whatever the case
2 may be. So that was definitely part of the decision
3 to be right there. Coupled with the fact that we can
4 control this road which would essentially give us the
5 same control that we had at Bella of north-south
6 travel up the Valley for a TCP or what have you and
7 that was all part of it. There was a possibility that
8 we thought of being with the District Center and being
9 down and this was months before, but that was the
10 lowest piece of ground there. I mean they were right
11 on the River and that's what we saw as being you know
12 that was too vulnerable down here because you really
13 couldn't--I mean you had no observation beyond this
14 river bed.
15

Beta 16 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): On the site itself, looking at this little
17 tighter map here, when you came on position you could
18 explain to these Gentlemen, as an infantry officer,
19 what vulnerabilities you noticed, potential risks from
20 that location?
21

Oscar 22 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. I mean like I said before, a lot of--In
23 Afghanistan, a lot of our risk for what you could see
24 of where our bases were at was mitigated by
25 observation posts. So to us it was you know what
26 could we see from our observation posts that was going
27 to allow us to secure here where the reason for this
28 mission was logistically accessible. It's a meeting
29 area, so it's easy to meet with local elders, you know
30 with this Bazaar and with the District Center. And so
31 our security was really in our observation posts. So
32 really when we occupied the observation posts during
33 the firefight was a temporary position that we were
34 going to occupy up here----
35

Beta 36 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): That's OP Top Side?
37

Oscar 38 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): OP Top Side off to the East to basically be able to
39 see this dead space down in here.
40

Beta 41 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Do you know if they could see that dead space?
42

Oscar 43 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): They could see, sir, they could see this immediate
44 ground down in here. Some of these terraces,
45 obviously, there was a little--little places where you
46 couldn't see somebody. Now they could see further up
47 this kind of--all these terraces. But, I asked them

1 about that when I went on the ground and they said
2 they felt too exposed out there. So even if they had
3 a sandbag bunker, they felt that it was basically off
4 on its own. So they wanted to be down here----

Beta 6 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): That was about a hundred meters further east of--
7 --

Oscar 9 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, further east kind of southeast. They felt where
10 they built their position, there were rocks and they
11 felt that they had better force protection and could
12 still a majority of the area across the valley this
13 way, obviously. And then they were just accepting
14 some risk with the very low part of the river bed down
15 this way.

Beta 17 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): And that's the river coming in from the east?

Oscar 19 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) The river coming in from the east. So I suggested
20 that and I say you know there's a lot of dead space
21 and they said well you know we have our claymores down
22 there, you know we have M203s that we think we can
23 cover with that, but it feels better being around
24 something solid that is going to be survivable for us.
25 And I said okay, I understand that. That's a good
26 point and it ended up being that way because I think
27 if they just had a sandbag bunker out there then they
28 you know probably would have got--it just would have
29 got blown up and fall--you know just fall apart.

Beta 31 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): And how about around the----

Oscar 33 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Now most of the----

Beta 35 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): ----COP itself.

Oscar 37 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Now most of the--this area right here, you know from
38 positions that we had within our wire, you know we had
39 around the CP with the Gun Trucks 50 cal you could see
40 all the way down kind of--not in the extreme river bed
41 but you could see across this way----

Beta 43 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): To the south and west.

Oscar 45 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) And you could--all of the threat that where a majority
46 of the threat was is up in the mountains. You could
47 see all of that from farther distance. So, basically,

1 I don't know the exact distance. From here where
2 these guys had their positions, you know they could
3 affect this road--this small road and up----

4
5 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): To the northwest part----

6
7 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) To the northwest. Now, accepting some risk was the
8 low ground here on this side and we thought that was
9 okay because the people that lived here we knew very
10 well. This was the house I went to eat dinner the
11 night prior----

12
13 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): That's the house on the southwest corner----

14
15 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) On the southwest and west. The guy that lived here
16 had spent some time in the States and spoke kind of
17 good English and he was the Gentlemen--the house to
18 the due west that had stayed there the entire night
19 throughout the firefight. So we felt that you know we
20 know these people fairly well. If someone is going to
21 get in there, then we're going to have an indication
22 of that. While our most likely--the enemy's most
23 likely course of action, we had positions that are
24 going to be able to affect them because it is going to
25 be up in the mountains. So all of this, you know,
26 eventually was going to be mitigated as we occupied by
27 further OP positions that were here on this other side
28 and then off the map down this way to the south. So
29 basically if we had an OP here, you know we could see
30 all down this river bed----

31
32 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): The north----

33
34 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) The north OP or the ANP were going to be, then we
35 would have indication of where the enemy would be at
36 if they were in that low ground. The same with the OP
37 to the northeast that they would be able to see this
38 low ground this way, couple with an OP that we would
39 that could see as well.

40
41 **LtGen Natonski:** How would you access those OPs when you got
42 around to building them or establishing them?

43
44 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) They would all be by foot, sir----

45
46 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay, they'd have to walk in.
47

Oscar 1 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. All this--I mean each one of these terraces
2 is about at least 4 to 6 feet high. You know, so
3 you're talking chest-level to try to climb up any of
4 those. Some higher than others, but they would all be
5 accessed by foot.
6

Beta 7 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6) Was it--is it fair to say that you wanted to be
8 in that location? You went to Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6), (d)(5), and
9 Diamond told him this is where you wanted to be?
10

Oscar 11 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. I did.
12

Beta 13 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6) And what was his reaction when you told him that?
14

Oscar 15 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) He had brought some other issues up. You know he had
16 said hey can you secure this side and I felt that that
17 was good. With our OP system in place, I felt that
18 that was all mitigated. But he did kind of ask me a
19 couple questions like do you think you need to be here
20 or there. I don't remember the exact positions he was
21 talking about. But I said, sir, with this plan, we
22 should be able to do it. And then, further refinement
23 on the Platoon level as we had built up there, I felt
24 like that--that it wasn't an issue. But, yeah we did
25 discuss it, sir.
26

Beta 27 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6) Who made the decision it's time to move, start
28 your plan?
29

Oscar 30 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I think--I mean everything that I did, I mean it was
31 a--maybe a decision that I made on the Company Level,
32 but it was always a recommendation to the Battalion
33 Commander and the Brigade Commander. Now I said, you
34 know I can't--I said I can't do this on my own,
35 obviously. There were a lot of times where we would
36 do things and we would kind of use what we could call
37 opportunity air. You know like hey I can use--if I
38 get priority for the Pesh resupply birds, then I can--
39 you know I can move a lot of stuff. But I knew it
40 would be more than that. I said I think we need to
41 dedicate through a CONOP to say this is dedicated to
42 us to make sure that it happens. Because in my mind,
43 I wasn't going to try to mess around and try to maybe
44 get something to where I would leave my element
45 somehow vulnerable because that thing did not come
46 through. So in my mind, I said to him, we should do--
47 it should be a CONOP and it should be dedicated. And

1 a lot of times I would do that through the S-3 and
2 then periodically through the Colonel because he was
3 obviously had a whole battle space to worry about. So
4 that's when we said hey it needs to be a CONOP. And
5 that was always briefed you know at the brigade level
6 and I think usually all the way up to CJTF. But, I
7 never--I was usually always listening to the Brigade
8 Level and then usually not any higher than that
9 because a lot of times they were like well hey we
10 understand. If we were asking for assets that were at
11 their level, that would always part of the Brigade's
12 brief. We could all jump in on Adobe Breeze and
13 listen in if we wanted to. I don't remember the exact
14 time of when we said hey it needs to be a CONOP, but I
15 do remember talking with him, hey it needs to be
16 dedicated to us and we need to have a plan accounted
17 for.

18
19 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Who put the plan together?

20
21 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Well I mean it was a Battalion effort. You know a lot
22 of the logistical stuff was my XO working with--how
23 much Pesh are we going to get or what's going to be
24 available. But it was hey here's my input of what our
25 moving pieces need to be, which included obviously
26 moving Bella. And, so it was put together by
27 everybody.

28
29 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Had you established a COP before?

30
31 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Actually, I have--I had as a Platoon Leader in Iraq.
32 But that wasn't much more than us just occupying an
33 abandoned area and then building it up and that was
34 part of a Company during OIF One in just south of
35 Tikrit, Iraq. So it wasn't the same obviously because
36 it wasn't like building something from bare bones. It
37 was--you know it was already occupying a thing that
38 had walls around it you know and it was a big
39 building. We didn't need to--you know there was
40 running. There was a lot of things we already--you
41 know we already had what we needed. So it was a lot
42 easier than that. I had never established one in
43 Afghanistan.

44
45 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): How did you determine what you needed to
46 establish a COP?
47

Oscar 1 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I think--you know we prioritized you know what--kind
2 of worked with the Battalion Engineer and said what
3 kind of materials do I need if I want to build--you
4 know basically just like a war game. Okay, if I want
5 to build this COP and I want to have you know so many
6 barracks spaces and I want so many--this how much--
7 what my wire is going to look like and I basically
8 told him what I wanted on the ground and then he could
9 compute how much material that would come and turn out
10 to be. We knew it would you know initial occupation
11 where we kind of had to do our own thing and then
12 additional materials would come in once we got the
13 Engineers there in full to do all their building and
14 stuff like that. So we knew obviously it would take
15 time.

Beta 17 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): How much time did you think it was going to take?
18

Oscar 19 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I don't recall saying after so many months, this is
20 what it is going to look like because there are a lot
21 of factors that contribute to that. You know how many
22 Engineers we had and how fast they could build and
23 what the security situation was like. But, we knew it
24 would take--to have a full, livable COP, I mean it was
25 almost something that even at Bella we did constantly.
26 I mean while we were there, we constantly built that
27 thing up, whether improving on our B-Huts and having
28 Engineers come in and fix things. But I knew it would
29 take several months to get hard-stand buildings built,
30 HESCOS filled and all that. We had presented
31 priorities--you know kind of engineered priorities
32 saying like okay the first thing we need obviously is
33 force protection, so fill up HESCOS you know 2 high
34 across from the Bazaar. We need towers--this many
35 towers built and all those things. So it was
36 definitely prioritized. I don't remember the exact
37 number of everything that we wanted, but I know it was
38 a planned process.
39

Beta 40 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): So then--and you submitted that requirement up
41 the chain?
42

Oscar 43 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I sat down with the Battalion Engineer and he said
44 this kind of you know what we're looking at. I said
45 what I wanted on the ground and he said okay this is
46 what it would look like based on what they have that
47 they can build. You know it's just like engineers

1 they just work in kits. Like I can build you so many
2 of this type of tower and this much wire and I can
3 build you this type of B-Hut and it's all--it takes
4 this amount of material. So it was almost like a COP
5 kit that they could piece together based on space
6 available. He came up with a big computerized sketch
7 on some sort of graph paper or something that was
8 actually done up based on our sketch that we just
9 slapped down on like a concept sketch.

10
11 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Then you submit the request if you had to get
12 money for this project?

13
14 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Right, it had to be funded.

15
16 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Once it was funded and came back down, what
17 happened next?

18
19 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't remember exactly once it was funded and came
20 back down what happened next. I know it was like--it
21 was materials were getting pushed forward either on
22 the Combat Logistics Patrol or through some sort of
23 resupply staged at Camp Blessing and then we were
24 going to try to move it forward as we built up the
25 force protection around there.

26
27 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Who is pushing that forward? Was it your XO
28 saying I need this stuff forward or was it the
29 Engineers pushing it up to Blessing?

30
31 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't remember how it was pushed, whether it was a
32 specific request. I know the full request went
33 through the Battalion Engineer, I assume through the
34 Battalion XO, working with the S-4 and things like
35 that. But, I don't remember you know this guy saying,
36 hey this is--I need this--these five bricks and them
37 saying okay we've got five bricks, let's push it to
38 you. It wasn't that clean. It was more like, hey
39 here's our whole project. Start getting this stuff to
40 us.

41
42 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Were you present for the briefing of the CONOP to
43 the Brigade?

44
45 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't remember--I don't remember if I was on--I know
46 was either on Adobe Breeze or I was in the room while

1 they were briefing it. I would do one or the other
2 sometimes because I was on the same base, but----

3
4 **Beta** **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Have you had a chance to review the CONOP before
5 it was briefed?
6

7 **Oscar** **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. At least my portions that I was responsible
8 for.
9

10 **Beta** **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you have any concerns--before the brief was
11 presented, did you have any concerns either with
12 intelligence or logistics?
13

14 **Oscar** **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I think--I didn't have any concerns with the logistics
15 or the assets that we were requesting. I did have
16 some concerns of whether--of the time frame for the
17 CONOP. It was kind of one of these things where we'd
18 waited for it to be decided on and it was a big deal
19 for our Company whether we were going to do this or
20 not. This is something that we pushed forward, we
21 want to do this and it was--I think we briefed it once
22 and then it was kind of he look at these couple of
23 things and----
24

25 **Beta** **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) Battalion briefing the Brigade?
26

27 **Oscar** **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Well, it's the Battalion briefing the Brigade, but I
28 was present, either in the room or on Adobe Breeze.
29 And the time frame was something that was a concern
30 because we had weather and some other things that were
31 part of that. I do remember my biggest concern for
32 the whole thing was Bella itself. I had greater
33 concern with moving away from Bella than occupying
34 Wanat just because it was--I would think thinking what
35 the enemy would do if they attack, regardless of what
36 happens, and we move then that gives the information
37 operations--that gives the appearance that they kicked
38 us out of there. And I thought that would be
39 something that they would want to capitalize on. So,
40 **Diamond** I did request from Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) to push additional
41 forces to Bella as we're closing it down. And that
42 would allow us to have good force protection and have
43 more people available to pack stuff up and pack up
44 sling loads and move stuff away. So he did that and I
45 went up to Bella I think around maybe the 5th of July
46 or 4th of July, so I could be there while we did that.
47 I pushed my Company CP forward with my Fire Support

1 Officer and we basically controlled that whole thing
2 with that Platoon to get them back and then the
3 occupation of Wanat was going to happen on the last
4 day Bella pulled out. It was going to be a
5 simultaneous move. So I did have a few concerns about
6 the time frame in making sure we had the decision so
7 we could move forward with doing. And I felt that
8 they wanted to move Bella and occupy Wanat, but there
9 were just some things that maybe the Brigade Commander
10 or the Battalion Commander was uncomfortable with
11 because of weather and some of the local national
12 support that we needed to do the move. So originally,
13 we thought it was going to be I think the 3rd of July
14 and we had planned for local nationals to be there at
15 that time and then it got bumped because of--I can't
16 remember. It was partially due because of weather.
17 But that also meant aircraft. So.

Beta 19 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Was there an incident on the 4th of July further
20 up the Waygal with the----

Oscar 22 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, what I was talking about before, sir, with the
23 4th of July, that was the day that I--that was the 4th
24 of July that I moved to Bella. I flew--General Milley
25 had given me his aircraft to go pick up additional
26 forces from Battle Company in the Korengal Valley and
27 to fly with them up to Bella to basically reinforce
28 that area. As we're flying in, we get hit with Willy-
29 P mortars, enemy mortar fire, as the aircraft is--
30 basically when I got off, aircraft was taking off and
31 mortars were impacting. As I was moving from the LZ
32 into the CP, that's when the squad leader on the OP
33 saw activity in a vehicle to his south and that's when
34 we had the armed escort for the aircraft that were
35 coming in that I was on, we utilized them to engage
36 that vehicle with the enemy activity on the 4th of
37 July. And then all the stuff that followed that was
38 hey there was enemy mixed with civilians, there were
39 civilian casualties in that whole investigation that
40 occurred. So that was on the 4th of July, so that is
41 the day that I went up to Bella.

Beta 43 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): And so from the 4th to the 8th, you're at Bella and
44 then you focused on getting ready to take Bella down?

Oscar 46 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. We had--we were packing up all the stuff
47 that was up there. All of the supplies that we had

1 built up there, we're moving out. You know the SPOP,
2 that was a big sling load. All the guys and their
3 gear, you know all the stuff in the TOC, moving
4 everything out of there. So that took several trips
5 over several days and that was a concern because up
6 until--up until the 4th of July, was--we had aircraft
7 shot at you know what I said like 13 consecutive trips
8 up there. And then after that engagement, there was
9 no fire on aircraft for the rest of the time coming up
10 to Bella. So we knew that had some sort of effect on
11 the enemy with that--with whatever they were planning.
12 And you know that squad there on the OP, what he
13 thought he saw was a mortar man and you know shooting
14 from the vehicle. Whether he was there shooting and
15 he just go on that vehicle and mixed himself in with
16 civilians, I am not sure exactly what happened. But,
17 it was positive identification of that from the squad
18 leader, you know we utilized the Apaches to eliminate
19 that threat. And that was couple with what happened I
20 think on the 1st or 2nd of July is when they put a
21 mortar round inside the OP. So that became increase--
22 you know in their mind, the guys that were on that OP,
23 they pretty much figured they were dialed and that the
24 enemy could put a mortar round on top of them because
25 our FO Specialist (b)(3), (b)(6) had got basically hit with a
26 mortar round 2 days prior to that. That all--that was
27 all the build up to saying Bella definitely needs to
28 move and we need to move it quickly.

Kite
Beta 30 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): From the 4th to the--when you left on the 4th had
31 Rock Move been approved for execution at that point or
32 were you still waiting on a decision?
33

Oscar 34 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't remember, sir, because I know that we had
35 briefed it initially and there was--there wasn't a
36 decision in the brief on--you know to the Brigade. It
37 was okay let's look at a couple of things and then
38 we'll brief it to CJTF. And then I remember at a
39 Diamond later time, Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) said that we were--you
40 know we were approved to do it or the Brigade
41 Commander supports, all we got to do is brief it--do
42 the final brief, and then we're going to do it. And
43 that's why--I mean really what I was looking at was
44 the specific enemy situation in Bella. You know
45 regardless of whether we moved or not, if they called
46 it off, there was still that threat at Bella that
47 needed attention because we had--we had several HUMINT

1 sources that said hey Bella is going to get attacked.
2 There's going to be a big attack at Bella----

3
4 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) You say big attack. What do you mean by that?
5

6 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) You know you got to take Afghan reporting--HUMINT
7 reporting with kind of a grain of salt. But, it was
8 more than one guy that said you know like 300 fighters
9 are going to attack Bella. You know 200 fighters are
10 going to attack Bella. They didn't really say the
11 specific type of attack or what it was going to
12 consist of, but that had come in more than one time.
13 So we--I was like, if we're going to be vulnerable at
14 Bella, we need to have additional forces up there if
15 we're going to be trying to move it.
16

17 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you get that from Captain **Delta** (b)(3), (b)(6) That
18 information or----
19

20 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Sir, it was in the INTSUM, so yeah that's Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) **Delta**
21 and the S-2 shop put that together. So, I don't know
22 if it was something that they gathered, or it was
23 pushed from a higher level and just put it in our
24 INTSUM, our Battalion's.
25

26 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): So at that point you feel Bella was vulnerable to
27 an attack?
28

29 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir.
30

31 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): So, from the 4th to the 8th, you're at Bella.
32 Who's back at Blessing working the Wanat move?
33

34 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Lieutenant Brostrom was--you know I had prepared him--
35 you know I'd said hey be prepared to do this and we
36 had looked at what the plan was going to be prior on
37 the Platoon level. And then Captain (b)(3), (b)(6), my XO,
38 was back there you know working all the support for
39 that and really trying to marry that up with the Bella
40 move based on what the plan for aircraft was. Now a
41 lot of times the plan for aircraft was you know, like
42 any plan, it can change. So, it was kind of like we
43 need to maximize whatever we're doing. You know trips
44 to Bella, they need to have something--you know when
45 they come up for whatever, they need to make sure that
46 they're taking something back. And a lot of times it
47 would be--we would always have it ready and if the

1 pilot said hey yeah I got time for this, or I got fuel
2 for this, then he would take--you know take the sling
3 load out. Then we did that and that really helped
4 because you know it kind of--it kept it from being
5 like hey we're just going to 20 trips up there and
6 grab everything at once because of the threat to the
7 aircraft. So, it kind of broke it up and it was
8 always--you know usually they had a little bit of a
9 different time so maybe it was--that would change up
10 what the enemy could track us on. But it was Captain
11 (b)(3), (b)(6) and Lieutenant Brostrom were back there.

12
13 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) From the 4th through the 8th, when you are at
14 Bella, are you talking to either one of them regarding
15 the Operation Rock Move.
16

17 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, I would talk to my XO pretty much every day just
18 making sure he knew you know if there were any changes
19 to what aircraft we were getting, you know he would
20 inform us. But, you know I knew--I mean I've worked
21 with the guy for months and I knew he was capable of
22 handling that and I was really focused on the Bella
23 immediately you know in the situation there. And then
24 we had talked about me specifically what I was going
25 to do--you know originally I was going to fly straight
26 from Bella to Wanat, so basically pull one Platoon out
27 and then occupy with the other Platoon and just show
28 up there with them.
29

30 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) Why would you do that?
31

32 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I mean I just--I knew there was a lot of apprehension
33 with those guys. And I knew being near the end of
34 deployment, obviously it wasn't a popular thing that
35 they wanted to do that. I knew that. I told them I
36 knew that----
37

38 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) How did you know that? Did it come up among
39 Soldier----
40

41 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) If you're within two months of redeploying, sir, you
42 know Soldiers' productivity wants to go down. You
43 know they're smelling the barn, some of them we say.
44 And what we really try to avoid. Because it becomes
45 you know increasingly dangerous if you are a guy that
46 isn't focused and motivated on what he's doing like
47 they would be when they first arrived or within the

1 first six months. So, I knew--I mean just going on a
2 patrol was a high-stress event for them, but you know
3 I consistently talked to them. I'd say regardless of
4 what--how you feel right now, you know this is what we
5 need to do. This is the right decision to be made.
6 You know we've always--from Battalion Commander, he
7 would ask us, hey, if you had to stay for six more
8 months, you know what would you do. You know and the
9 answer was always, yeah I would move to Wanat. And
10 that was to keep our Battalion's mission ends, but the
11 Army's mission continues or the Marine Corps' mission
12 continues. And we were trying to keep that as strong
13 as possible handing over to the next unit. So we
14 weren't going to change what we wanted to do just
15 because hey we've earned ours because we've been here
16 for so long. And I told them all that and they
17 understood that. It wasn't popular, but they knew it
18 was the right thing to do. You know some Soldiers I
19 was closer with, they knew that and they told me.
20 They knew that--we understand it's the right thing to
21 do. It doesn't mean it's fun. And I knew it wasn't
22 going to be fun. But, I wasn't going to tell them to
23 do that and then be you know back at Camp Blessing.
24 Even though I knew it was a Platoon mission and they
25 could handle it, you know I said I am going to be out
26 here with you guys.

27
28 **Beta** **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did the XO and First Sergeant here have
29 discussions with them about doing the Operation so
30 close to your return?

31
32 **Oscar** **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) **Victor** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yeah, I talked--you know First Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6). He and
33 I were really close and he would talk to me about just
34 letting the next unit do it, but I knew, you know if I
35 was doing something like that coming in, you know I
36 don't know if I'd--I would think that the previous
37 unit really did what they were supposed to do. And I
38 told him, I said we can't set these guys up to be
39 doing this. Either, they won't do it, you know that
40 would really be going away from what we were trying to
41 do in our 15 months or they'll do it and it will be
42 hard for them because they don't have the experience
43 that this unit has. He said, he didn't and I said
44 well I think it's the right thing to do and then he
45 supported me on it. I didn't really talk--Captain
46 **Papa** (b)(3), (b)(6) and I he didn't really give me any push back.
47 He was very into what his job was you know supporting

1 the company and all the other things that were going
2 on as well. Yeah but First Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) and I
3 talked about it extensively.
4

5 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): You mentioned a Platoon plan you discussed with
6 Lieutenant Brostrom, what was that plan?
7

8 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I mean really kind of like Ranger-School level concept
9 sketch. You know we had both been on the ground
10 several times, so we understood what was going on and
11 we said okay here's the plan for the wire. You know
12 what's your initial occupation plan and he kind of
13 laid that out and said this is what I want to do. And
14 I said okay. You know we talked about the OP and then
15 we talked about additional OPs that we were going to
16 put in and I said you know we need get with the ANP as
17 soon as we can to get them pushed up to where they are
18 supposed to be. You know it was just a concept sketch
19 that he wrote--we wrote down together.
20

21 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): On the 8th when you left Bella, where did you go?
22

23 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) On the 8th, I went back to Camp Blessing. The reason
24 for that was because of the 15-6 investigation that
25 was going on for the July 4th incident and knowing that
26 I would have to provide a statement for that and just
27 to kind of understand the whole implication with that
28 and get all those guys that were coming--get them--get
29 the right people to the investigating officer and all
30 that. And then after that was complete, I was going
31 to go back up to Wanat.
32

33 **LtGen Natonski:** What day was the last day of Blessing?
34

35 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I'm sorry, sir, the last day--my last day at Camp
36 Blessing?
37

38 **LtGen Natonski:** No, not your last day, the last day of its
39 existence? Did you shut it down?
40

41 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) No. Camp Blessing--oh you mean Bella, sir?
42

43 **LtGen Natonski:** Bella.
44

45 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) The last day was the 8th--the night of the 8th.
46

1 **LtGen Natonski:** So you really kind of closed it down and
2 moved?

3
4 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, I was the last guy on the last bird out of
5 Bella, which was moving as the same time as Lieutenant
6 Brostrom and his Platoon was driving----

7
8 **LtGen Natonski:** You didn't want them in two different
9 locations at once. You wanted to shut one down before
10 you started with the other?

11
12 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) What I wanted, sir, was to make sure that the moves,
13 at least the last move was not at the same time
14 because then that would--that would keep the enemy not
15 knowing where we're at; at least their command and
16 control. Because they say okay they're still at
17 Bella, they're not at Wanat and then night falls.
18 They hear helicopters leave Bella, they're not really
19 sure if we're still there or not. And then the
20 morning comes and we're in Wanat and we're out of
21 Bella. And that's essentially what happened. Last
22 flight goes out. They start driving up to Wanat.
23 That was also because as they drive, we had Apaches
24 basically supporting our Company because we are the
25 ones flying. So if anything on their way up, they
26 could utilize them. As well as being at night, they
27 felt that--they were more comfortable moving at night
28 because they really can't command wire an IED at
29 night, at least effectively.

30
31 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) Prior to execution of Rock Move, what was your
32 understanding of the ISR coverage that you would have--
33 -that Chosen would have for the Operation.

34
35 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I understood that in the--in the CONOP brief, it was a
36 request for ISR. And I think in the decision criteria
37 it was hey we at least have to have it for occupation,
38 you know in some form or another. We were kind of
39 easy with--like we didn't say like hey I need a
40 predator to perform ISR. We just needed some form of
41 it, which really in my mind was a lot of the Apache
42 helicopter that was moving back and forth. They could
43 at least watch these guys go up there. And then also
44 part of our ISR plan was the ITAS on the TOW Missile
45 and the LRAS that was part of the Platoon because
46 that's--I mean it's ground based but it's still proven
47 to be a huge advantage in Afghanistan because you know

1 you could see guys from very far away to where they
2 don't necessarily think that you can see them. So
3 having that coupled with the Apache, you know we
4 requested a Predator, but it wasn't going to be hey if
5 we don't get the Predator then we're not going to do
6 it. Just because we know that that's an asset that's-
7 -you know it's hard to take that one thing at such a
8 high level and push it where it needs to be. So we
9 knew we would request it, you know if it was
10 prioritized for us, then great, but--and I knew we
11 would get it at some point because that's what usually
12 happened even if we weren't doing anything. You know
13 if the battalion--if the Predator was available during
14 certain times, the Battalion would get it pushed to
15 them and they would observe for whoever. You know
16 sometimes if I had something that maybe was a concern
17 of mine, I could go to the S-2 and say hey if you get
18 it, can you push it to us, at least initially, so we
19 can just do a quick check or whatever. And a lot of
20 times they would do that. So, in my mind, it was
21 requested but it wasn't essential for us and we did
22 get it for some time. You know we couldn't have them
23 looking up there for days, but we knew during certain
24 times they would check around for us.

Beta 26 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): If you had no Predator, you would have gone and
27 you would have executed?

Oscar 29 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

Beta 31 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): The move to Wanat?

Oscar 33 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir, because I think you know the Predator is
34 great, obviously, and it can see a lot, but a lot of
35 times it can't pick up on things until you know maybe
36 action has already started because even if they're
37 just looking for people moving, it's kind of difficult
38 for them to see them. You know especially a lot of
39 times you know an Afghan fighter is going to sit at
40 the base of a tree and the predator is not going to
41 see that guy necessarily if you are looking over this
42 huge area. So, to me, it's obviously nice to have and
43 I've seen it work well you know in a fight where you
44 can see where the people are at, usually after people
45 are firing, but if you're just trying to pick up
46 people moving around, it's hard to tell even who they
47 are or what they are doing.

1
2 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): What's your recollection of the full-motion video
3 coverage--the Predator coverage that you had from the
4 8th until whenever it was, do you recall did you have
5 it for a day?
6

7 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) How often?
8

9 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you have it for a day? All day? Did you
10 have it for----
11

12 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) It would never be for that long period of time, sir.
13 It would be you know a couple hours at a time, you
14 know if they had it available. I remember early one
15 morning they were out there looking. They would get
16 it and they would push it up to Wanat and they might
17 be looking around Wanat without you know everybody at
18 Wanat being aware of it. You know they would call up
19 and say hey we're looking around your area. Do you
20 have any grids that you'd like us to look at. And a
21 lot of times we'd pass them what we wanted them to
22 check out. And, I know it happened at least a couple
23 of times, maybe for an hour a piece. But, it wasn't
24 like here's your Predator for two days.
25

26 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you get any feedback?
27

28 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) It was mostly hey nothing really going on. You know
29 we can't see anybody. You know I think at one time we
30 had it really early in the morning, like I want to say
31 like two in the morning local. And they kind of
32 looked around and it was just like usual, really
33 nothing going on. I see a goat. You know. Nothing
34 consequential----
35

36 **MG Perkins:** During your entire time in Afghanistan, had you
37 ever got Predator feed that was preemptive in nature
38 and let you do something to prevent something ever?
39

40 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. I mean we would have it--they would even
41 have--I am going to butcher whatever the technology
42 is, but we could go in on SIPR and it had you know all
43 the Predator--I mean you could watch Predator in Iraq
44 if you wanted to. I can't remember what it's called,
45 but we would click on that and we could watch that on
46 our screen. And if they were supporting us, you know,
47 if we had a threat reporting that said hey this

1 activity is going on then we could--they would
2 prioritize us to get it you know throughout--you know
3 where ever they do their targeting board or whatever
4 they did. And yeah we would get it to preemptive.
5 Never was it----

6
7 **MG Perkins:** No. I mean did Predator information--you ever get
8 something, see something and that then drove an
9 operation or let you know ahead of time you are going
10 to be attacked, or you know what I'm saying?

11
12 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I think--I mean I want to say never like on the
13 Company level--like I never meant with like hey we saw
14 this on Predator this day and this on Predator this
15 day, so this means that they're going to attack----

16
17 **MG Perkins:** Yeah, in other words, like oh man it's a good
18 thing I got that Predator feed otherwise we would have
19 got our ass kicked.

20
21 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I don't think it was ever like that, sir. It was more
22 of a--I would say it was more broad like it could from
23 a pattern to the point where Predator would know where
24 to look because like okay, we've seen these guys
25 moving----

26
27 **MG Perkins:** It was never the silver bullet to your force
28 protection?

29
30 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) No. I don't think it was ever like hey you have
31 Predator and we just picked up a guy with an RPG and
32 we're going--you can shoot him.

33
34 **MG Perkins:** Right, right.

35
36 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) It was never like that.

37
38 **MG Perkins:** You never had that experience?

39
40 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) No. And I think a lot of that was due to the
41 difficulty of what they could see in the mountains.
42

(b)(1) 1.4a, c

43
44
45
46 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. And we utilized them before. I can't
47 remember the circumstances, but I think it was when--

1 this is hard to remember, but I know at one point I

(b)(1) 1.4a, c

3 they were talking to each other in support of my
4 Company.
5

6 **LtGen Natonski:** Was that up near Bella or Ranch House----
7

Oscar 8 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) It was in Bella when I was doing that. And it was-- I
9 can't remember it was after a big attack and then they
10 had that asset available. You know they might have
11 been doing another mission and they were on their way
12 back and they said hey you can have him for an hour.
13 So I had both of those----
14

15 **LtGen Natonski:** So, sort of a response to attack--that is
16 how it started?
17

Oscar 18 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) And it was one of those things--it was like the guy in
19 Las Vegas you know flying the Pred talking to the C130
20 FM that we were monitoring. We were all 3 talking
21 back and forth and they were doing checks on each
22 other to see what they could see. If one could see it
23 better than the other and we were looking at the Pred
24 feed.
25

Beta 26 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): What was your understanding of your SIGINT
27 coverage when you were--over that time?
28

Oscar 29 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) It--I mean other than our kind of Platoon Company
30 internal SIGINT, which was an interpreter with an ICOM
31 scanner, which a lot of times we would get a lot of--
32 they could pick up a lot. I can't remember if we
33 requested Red Ridge. I am pretty sure that we did.
34 And that was the same kind of thing as the Predator.
35 Hey, if they're in the area or they're--you know
36 however they prioritize them higher, then they are
37 going to push them to us. And then usually in the
38 INTSUM, when they were looking around, that they would
39 have that available to us to see. Like here are some
40 of the areas that they might have heard some things.
41 Now the hardest part--the hard part about Red Ridge
42 SIGINT for Nuristan is that the local fighters there
43 speak in Nuristani, so there is not interpreter
44 anywhere that could translate it. Now we would get an
45 indication of what type of fighters they were if we
46 had--they would have some Nuristani, they'd write
47 Nuristani cannot translate it and then there would be

1 I had 1st Platoon, which was at Bella, now they were
2 occupying Blessing. So, they had the change of
3 mission again to do all this stuff around Blessing,
4 which they had done before so it wasn't like a whole
5 lot changed. But, it was just kind of like hey give
6 them their focus and their priorities. Do your little
7 refit after moving Bella and then, you know, where
8 they needed patrol. And that at this point, I had a
9 third Platoon that controlled the battle space all the
10 way down to the mouth of the Shurgay Valley, which
11 bordered Able Company's battle space. They're a
12 Weapons Platoon. So, I had you know those guys and to
13 make sure everything was going okay with them, in
14 addition to prioritizing now 1st Platoon.

15
16 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): During the--from the 9th, 10th, and 11th, who were
17 you speaking to up at Wanat? Lieutenant Brostrom?

18
19 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Lieutenant Brostrom and Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) Yankee, both of them
20 depending. You know a lot of times Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) Yankee
21 would be on the radio talking to my XO just to make
22 sure he was getting everything he needed or how--what
23 he was using up and stuff like that.

24
25 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Were you aware that they were having any issues
26 with water?

27
28 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I was aware--I remember them saying like hey we're
29 using a lot of water because we're working up here and
30 I said hey you know we're taking care of that. You
31 know one day it would be hey we got local nationals
32 that are going to drive a HILUX full of water up to
33 you and that was the plan and Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) would
34 work that out with them. It was a contract. They'd
35 take this, whatever it was, take it up to Wanat. Now
36 that was--that was kind of a you know hit or miss
37 because a lot of times these guys would move it up
38 there on their own time. So, either they wouldn't
39 want to move directly from point A to point B, they'd
40 want to go to their house and then move it a different
41 time to kind of change up their pattern or whatever.
42 So, it would be okay I sent 3 HILUX trucks full of
43 water up to you, let me know when you get them. And
44 then it would like hey we got one. Or, we got all
45 three. Or, we didn't get any. And then it would be
46 the next day, he we got two more, but not knowing
47 which guys those were because we sent out three more.

1 So that was kind of difficult. And then--no because
2 this was the period of time where we didn't have
3 additional air I believe to bring things up there. So
4 then when I moved up there on the 12th, I remember them
5 still needing a build-up of water and that they were
6 out of fuel for the Bobcat that was doing all their
7 filling up HESCOS and stuff like that. So, I brought
8 a fuel blivet and water on the aircraft that I flew in
9 on.

10
11 **LtGen Natonski:** Did you ever hear they had gone into
12 condition Black for water? Was it ever relayed to you?

13
14 **Oscar** **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I never heard that. I know that our--kind of like our
15 final plan was that they had water purifiers and they
16 were next to a huge river and that we were--you know
17 we had done that before, periodically, only in kind of
18 dire situations. Some guys probably did it just to
19 check out the water purifier, make sure it worked.
20 But that was kind of like their--you know the final
21 thing that they needed to utilize if they did run low
22 on water. But we were continually trying to work the
23 plan to say hey we just need to keep lifting stuff up
24 there, you know what's priority? Water or force
25 protection? You know we need to do both, so you know
26 local national HILUX truck. We're trying to send
27 water there. You know and then does it get up there
28 or does it not. You know. So if our plan is going to
29 be executed, then there is going to be all kinds of
30 water moved up there because we are sending
31 truckloads. But, you know they might not make it.
32 Or, they hear something locally and then they don't
33 go. So that was all the stuff we were trying to work
34 through. But, I never got the indication that like
35 hey we're--you know I have zero water. It was never
36 zero. And I think a Black status wasn't necessarily
37 being out of water. It was--they were worried about
38 it--you know, really low amount.

39
40 **Beta** **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) Were you aware that they had to reduce their work
41 rate because of the water situation?

42
43 **Oscar** **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I remember hearing that from Sergeant **Yankee** (b)(3), (b)(6). He was--
44 it was more of the like hey we're trying to do this
45 and that up here. We're filling sandbags, but you
46 know the guys are getting really tired. We're trying
47 to conserve our water until we got you know an

1 abundant amount. And so I understood that. I trusted
2 him to manage the time up there and what they were
3 doing. So, it didn't really--it wasn't like a bunch
4 of flags went up. It was just like we understand that
5 we are trying to get you more water and it's going--
6 you know you are going to get smoked trying to dig-in
7 and all that. So, I understood that, but that just
8 reinforced the fact that I needed to go see everything
9 in my mind because I was like I kind of understand
10 what you got going on, but let me go see. Now, I
11 remember getting on the ground, him being like hey we
12 need--we need more of this, we need more of this. You
13 know kind of a face the facts thing and I immediately
14 made a call to Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) telling me exactly what
15 he said. So, and I don't know if this was like--you
16 know he was just being the Platoon Sergeant kind of
17 can do and he was worse off than I really perceived
18 and then he felt more comfortable being face-to-face
19 saying you know we need a lot more water. Because I
20 brought--I mean I internally loaded water in the
21 aircraft, but it was only as much as I could carry out
22 because I knew we couldn't--it wasn't like we had a
23 forklift when we got in Wanat and we could just take a
24 pallet of water and slap it on the ground. So, you
25 know trying to say we don't want to have this aircraft
26 on the ground for you know twenty minutes trying to
27 unload water, so we carried maybe 12 to 15 cases and
28 just kind of kicked them off as we came off the back
29 of the Chinook.

30
31 **MG Perkins:** When you got there then would you say--when you
32 finally got there on the 12th, what was the situation
33 compared to sort of your perception before you got
34 there with regards to water and all that?

35
36 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I don't think it was that far off, sir. I think--I
37 mean I kind of understood--I mean they had maximized
38 their work. I mean they had HESCOS filled and
39 complete mortar pit built----

40
41 **MG Perkins:** So, when you got there for the first time on the
42 12th and you saw what was built and water and
43 everything, was your perception, hey they've done a
44 lot of stuff maybe more than you thought?

45
46 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I would say it was about what I thought they would get
47 done.

1
2 **MG Perkins:** So, it was about--okay, so you had a good
3 situation going on----

4
5 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Now, as far as the water goes, I didn't go and say
6 like well let me see how much water everybody had----

7
8 **MG Perkins:** No, I understand but perception----

9
10 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I understood they needed more, you know with--based on
11 what they were telling me.

12
13 **MG Perkins:** But, in your mind, it wasn't a crisis or----

14
15 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) No, sir.

16
17 **MG Perkins:** So, you never relayed that to the Battalion----

18
19 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) And even talking to the guys, it was never like, sir,
20 I haven't drank water in 12 hours----

21
22 **MG Perkins:** And even once you got face-to-face with Soldiers?

23
24 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Oh yeah. Once I got up there--you know they were--I
25 mean I would almost say they were excited about what
26 they had done. They were like hey look at my
27 position. You know, stuff like that. You know
28 because they had the OP was pretty extensive. I mean
29 they had like a little crow's nest built. They had
30 ample sand bags. I mean, I don't want to say they
31 felt like they needed to show me what they had done.

32
33 **MG Perkins:** No, I understand. I understand.

34
35 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) They were--you know they were--they seemed to be
36 motivated to me. That's my perception of them.

37
38 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) The water purifiers that the Platoon would have
39 had, how to do they work?

40
41 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I couldn't tell you exactly, sir. They are like a
42 pump system that you'd basically like suck water in
43 and then they would push through a filter----

44
45 **MG Perkins:** There's a big filter in it----

46
47 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) yeah a big----

1
2 **MG Perkins:** Charcoal thing and a----

3
4 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, kind of like that, sir.

5
6 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Handheld?

7
8 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. You know it wasn't like electric or
9 anything. It was definitely like you have to collect
10 the water and do the work to pump it through there.

11
12 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): And, did you send your Platoons out with iodine
13 tablets?

14
15 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Not--I don't know, sir. If--they might have had them
16 like in their A-bags and stuff, but that wasn't like a
17 plan we had. I wasn't like hey, just throw Iodine
18 tablets, or do like the drop of bleach thing. That
19 was--the plan was the water purifier. I didn't expect
20 them to do the Iodine tablets. That wasn't like our
21 fourth or fifth level plan or anything.

22
23 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): You mentioned bringing up a fuel blivet, were
24 there any issues once that fuel blivet got there? Got
25 to Wanat? Could it transfer fuel?

26
27 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Let's see. I want to say that you asked me that, sir,
28 that there was a piece of the hand--the fuel dispenser
29 that wasn't working, but they didn't discover that
30 until they got up there. Either it was damaged on the
31 fuel blivet and it wouldn't connect--I recall they had
32 all the hardware they needed, but there was something
33 damaged on the fuel blivet that wouldn't connect,
34 which I recall them telling me later on that evening.

35
36 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you work to get another piece in?

37
38 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I know--I know that Sergeant **Yakee** (b)(3), (b)(6) informed Captain
39 (b)(3), (b)(6) that that was not working to the best of my
40 knowledge. But, I don't remember specifically because
41 I was kind of focused with Lieutenant Brostrom, you
42 know on the perimeter and stuff like that. Sergeant
43 **Yankee** (b)(3), (b)(6) continued to work with the logistics, I mean
44 other than me telling Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) hey this is what
45 Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) told. You know make sure that this
46 happens. And then Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) continued, you know,

1 calling on the radio back and forth with Captain

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

3
4 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): When you got up there on the 12th, do you recall
5 how long the Bobcat had been out of fuel?

6
7 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't remember, sir.

8
9 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did it operate at all while you were up there on
10 the 12th?

11
12 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, it operated on the--actually the morning of the
13 13th is when they started utilizing it again and that
14 morning, even before the attack, they had built a
15 position for the TOW truck, so that it could drive an
16 elevate the TOW missile high enough into the mountains
17 and it was working on a water issue around the mortar
18 pit. Basically some previous irrigation had started
19 to put a lot of standing water on the outside of the
20 mortar pit, so they were trying to basically divert
21 that away with the Bobcat.

22
23 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did they--so after you arrived on the 12th, did a
24 follow-on resupply come up with the piece for the
25 blivet?

26
27 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I was inside the bird that flew the fuel blivet. It
28 dropped off the fuel blivet. Then, it landed and then
29 we just kicked all the water off as we got off and
30 some of the guys grabbed the cases of water.

31
32 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): But, somehow the fuel got out of the blivet and
33 into the Bobcat later that day?

34
35 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know if it was that, whether they rectified
36 that issue or figured out how to like field-craft it
37 in how to work or that the Bobcat didn't want to run
38 completely out of fuel, so they shut it down early and
39 then they--you know that morning they said well we
40 know we are going to get it fixed today so we'll just
41 keep working. I think that was the choice that they
42 made. I don't they think they let--they just ran it
43 until it stopped. They didn't do that.

44
45 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Before you went up on the 12th, you're still down
46 at Blessing; did you hear any issues with the local
47 national construction or equipment--heavy equipment?

1
2 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I mean I knew--I knew that the plan originally was to
3 have them there on the 3rd. And, Captain (b)(3), (b)(6)
4 coordinated with them really through the Battalion
5 Engineer to talk to the contractor or Brigade
6 Engineer, whoever they talked to tell them to show up
7 there on the 3rd and then because of all the weather
8 issues, we didn't show up on the 3rd. So, I think
9 those guys just went back to Kabul, or whatever. So,
10 I can remember originally trying to get them back up
11 there was a several day process. Because they had
12 thought something must be wrong or we're not supposed
13 to be here. We're in the wrong spot. So, they just
14 went back to their company. I don't know if they took
15 their equipment all the way back, but at least
16 somebody went back there to coordinate it. So, then
17 when we said okay, now we're ready, we're here, we
18 need them, it took several days for them to get their
19 equipment, drive it up, etc.

20
21 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): To your understanding, was after the move up to
22 Wanat, there would be within a couple of days that
23 heavy equipment would come up?
24

25 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Right, I mean it was almost like they would call back,
26 hey they haven't showed up yet. You know. And then
27 the next day, they haven't showed up yet or they won't
28 show up or whatever. And that was something Captain
29 (b)(3), (b)(6) was working as well because I think he
30 coordinated to have them meet him at Blessing before
31 he told them to go up there and then they would take
32 the several hours to drive a track you know bucket
33 loader all the way up to Wanat. I still--I don't
34 really know how they got it up there because the road
35 didn't seem like you know they could do it. But, we
36 knew that a lot of times in Afghanistan you tell
37 somebody to show up and you're going to pay them then
38 they do.
39

40 **LtGen Natonski:** Was the plan to have them there at the
41 location of Wanat before the troops came in?
42

43 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) The plan was to have them show up the same day that we
44 were going to be there----
45

46 **LtGen Natonski:** They were going to come----
47

Oscar 1 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) It wasn't like we were like hey go up there and we'll
2 be there eventually. Yeah, they were going to come to
3 Blessing first--I think that's just what they did
4 because Blessing was kind of a big area I mean for a
5 lot of contractors. But, it wasn't like we were
6 planning for them to go up there and then we were
7 going to show when we wanted. It was trying to
8 coordinate it all at the same time.
9

Beta 10 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Were you aware before you went up--were there any
11 issues with building supplies for Wanat? Between the
12 9th and the 11th when you're still down at Blessing?
13

Oscar 14 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) As far as the amount of building supplies or----
15

Beta 16 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Actually getting up to Wanat.
17

Oscar 18 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I know that it was impossible or near impossible for a
19 U.S. truck of some sort to drive that route that would
20 have building supplies on it. A lot of times you can
21 get local national trucks to load it up and they would
22 drive it just because they were more willing to drive
23 something that a U.S. Combat Logistics Patrol wouldn't
24 drive. So, I don't know--I don't think there was an
25 issue with getting supplies, but the issue was how are
26 we going to get it up there. Were we going to airlift
27 it? Were we going to have Jingle trucks drive up
28 there and drop it off? Which eventually happened
29 because these jingle trucks came up and they had some
30 of the rocks for the stone wall. So jingle trucks
31 were getting up there----
32

Beta 33 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): On what day? Was it after the battle?
34

Oscar 35 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I want to say it was the same day--or the 14th. Either
36 the 13th or the 14th they started showing up and
37 dropping off rocks at Wanat.
38

Beta 39 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): The gravel that would go inside of----
40

Oscar 41 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) They were larger rocks to build the stone wall. We
42 had contracted a local national to build basically a
43 stone wall around the perimeter, at least on one side.
44 So that was what that was for.
45

Beta 46 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): How about any issues--were you going to move all
47 the supplies--obviously you weren't going to move all

1 the supplies up by air, so were you aware of a ground
2 convoy that was to go up?
3

Oscar 4 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): I remember there were plans for the Combat Logistics
5 Patrol from our Fusion Company to move up there, but I
6 can't remember how that was balanced with getting the
7 supplies, you know, from Jalalabad or wherever they
8 were coming from to come up there. Like I don't
9 remember the time frame and I don't remember if they
10 were just going to send the jingle trucks up or they
11 were going to escort them. We had been up there with
12 the route clearance package, which was from our HHC,
13 the engineer element that would clear. So we knew
14 that our Combat Logistics Patrol could make it up
15 there, but they had never done it before and we knew
16 jingle trucks could make it but we never had them
17 escorted up there because it would be very slow for
18 them to move that way. But I know there were plans to
19 do that.
20

Beta 21 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): So was there a route clearance package planned?
22

Oscar 23 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Yeah. Usually always they would use the route
24 clearance package to clear and then they would follow
25 them. You know basically the route clearance package
26 would clear for the Combat Logistics Patrol,
27 especially when they were moving on non-hardball roads
28 because that was really where they were the most
29 vulnerable. So like when they would be moved to the
30 COP in the Korengal Valley they would--the route
31 clearance package would go first and then if they were
32 moving like up in through the Chowkay to drop off
33 things and then they would move with the route
34 clearance package.
35

Beta 36 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): But from Blessing to Wanat the U.S. vehicles
37 couldn't go, is that correct?
38

Oscar 39 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): The--I should rephrase that, sir. A U.S. HMMWV, Up
40 Armored HMMWV, could go on that road, but if they were
41 going to try to bring like a HIMET up there, it
42 couldn't make it. So that's why they said we got to
43 use jingle trucks because those guys can do it.
44

Beta 45 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Were jingle trucks planned--you mentioned the
46 rocks, were they planned to bring anything else up?
47

Oscar 1 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Well the jingle trucks that brought the rocks were
2 just part of a contract. So that was coordinated
3 through the contractor and that was guys that he
4 hired. He wasn't connected to us. The jingle trucks
5 that we used were paired with--they were just a
6 contract paired with our Support Company that would
7 escort them. And I know that they were planned for
8 some sort of--you know to bring up the class for stuff
9 like that.

Beta 11 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you know if there were any issues with that?
12 That Class IV getting up there?

Oscar 14 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I don't recall, sir. I mean maybe--like I never
15 thought like it's not going to come. I just didn't
16 know the time frame, specifically when it was going to
17 arrive. So----

Beta 19 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): So when Lieutenant Brostrom went up about on the
20 8th, you weren't aware of when the Class IV would show
21 up to build?

Oscar 23 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I know that there was a plan for it, but the plan a
24 lot of times had--you know it had changed so much that
25 it was like really in my thought I was like hey
26 whenever it gets here, then we'll utilize it. That
27 doesn't change the fact that we're going to have to
28 provide security for them. Because all that Class IV
29 wasn't designed for my guys to build like a bunker.
30 It was designed to build--like for engineers to build
31 a tower or a B-Hut. That's what it was going to be
32 used for. So I knew that our guys were going to be
33 using for their initial occupation they're going to
34 use sandbags and they're going to build up their
35 positions that way. Obviously, some of their force
36 protection would be built by the engineers because it
37 would be HESCOS and things like that, but I knew, you
38 know, we would be relying upon for our force
39 protection that stuff until you know the local
40 national stuff was built up and the engineers.

Beta 42 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): There was an issue of a class IV moving up. How
43 would you know that? Did someone come tell you that
44 supplies haven't moved?

Oscar 46 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, I mean that would be through the battalion.
47 Either they would call up and say, "Hey, we're not --

1 this is not happening today," or "we didn't have time
2 to make it up there because we got into contact in
3 between Jalalabad and Asadabad," or whatever the case
4 might be. They would definitely inform us if it was
5 not happening. Usually through my XO or through the
6 battalion. Sometimes Major (b)(3), (b)(6) would just give us
7 a direct call and say, "This is the story."
8

Beta 9 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Were you aware that between the 9th and the 11th
10 while you were still down in Blessing that the trucks
11 had in-fact not moved and that your XO was attempting
12 to move additional items by air to cover the class IV
13 that had not moved up via ground?
14

(b)(3), (b)(6) 15 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): From memory, Sir? Honestly I don't remember, like the
16 specifics circumstances of like, this many trucks are
17 not coming so we are using this much air to move it.
18 I was aware that he was doing everything he could to
19 make sure that that stuff got up there and I knew that
20 that was a -- we understood that it was combat and
21 things change and that no one person is -- I mean
22 everybody's going to do everything they can to make
23 sure that we at least meet the intent of our plan. So
24 I knew that he was work through stuff like that but
25 wasn't aware of specifically what wasn't happening or
26 what was happening.
27

Beta 28 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): You mentioned that you saw a plan for how
29 equipment and supplies would move up to the building
30 of the COP that were not done. Whose plan was that?
31

Oscar 32 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Can you just ask that again, Sir? Because I don't
33 understand like ----
34

Beta 35 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): What we've seen -- we have CONOP for Rock Move,
36 which is a three day CONOP.
37

Oscar 38 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, Sir.
39

Beta 40 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): It covers the movement of the people and some
41 supplies. Was there a plan somewhere that you saw
42 that said on day one, this amount of class IV is going
43 arrive up there via ground, this type of heavy
44 engineer equipment is going to arrive up there, here
45 are the tasks to be completed between day one and day
46 five and so on? Was there such a plan?
47

1 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I want to say that the plan for occupying Wanat was --
2 I mean there was -- throughout our time in Afghanistan
3 with the way that air operated and the that resupply
4 happened was a lot of the times whatever they planned
5 wouldn't necessarily happen the way any plan like
6 saying "Hey here's our first thing we're going to do
7 and this is what is going to happen next." Very
8 specific. It wasn't that way. It was opportunity,
9 you know, "Hey I'm a going to try to get you this much
10 stuff with air if I get it but you know this resupply
11 got reprioritized for someone else because they need
12 ammo or someone requested in another battalion
13 requested an emergency resupply, so they are the
14 priority and you got bumped." And we understood that
15 that was kind of the way it went. So really most of
16 the times we planned was for flexibility, knowing that
17 we were going to try to maximize all the assets that
18 we had to get stuff to where they needed to go. So it
19 was never like, on trip one you are going get 8 four
20 by fours or whatever it is, because we knew what going
21 up there was going to be a full bird of what we
22 wanted. Now I think, now as far as the plan goes
23 there was a "Hey, here's a priority for what we needed
24 to move." And a lot of the times that wasn't cut and
25 dry either because this air craft can lift -- it can't
26 lift two supplies of class IV which might be the
27 priority but it can lift one supply of class 4 and a
28 fuel blivet, so let's maximize that to where it needs
29 to go. So I'm aware of the tadpole that was like
30 "here how many air craft we are going to try to get up
31 there and here is what we plan to be inside of them,"
32 because we write that underneath. I understood that
33 plan and I understand that my XO gave input on how
34 that was going to go based on what I tasked him to do.
35 But it was never, "at this point you're going to get 8
36 sheets of plywood and that's what going to be on
37 there." It was "Hey, we're going to maximize whatever
38 air we get to get you what you need."

39
40 LtGen Natonski: Everything you're talking about is movement of
41 things; people, equipment, supplies. That's, in
42 general terms that's kind of a phase one, a movement
43 to the objective that takes you from 8 to 10 July.
44 What took you through actions on the objective? Was
45 there something that said, you know, "we're going to
46 build a COP," "we're going to engage the locals,"

1 "we're going to a RIP with 1-62." Where was the rest
2 of the plan?

3
4 Oscar CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I think whether it's in here or not, was the plan for
5 "we're going to build a COP," was done with the
6 battalion engineer. That was like our sketch of how
7 everything was going to go.

8
9 LtGen Natonski: Was that briefed to the battalion?

10
11 Oscar CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir, they were aware of it. It wasn't like,
12 "Hey, here's our slide for this, as part of the
13 CONOP." But it was briefed at a previous time.

14
15 LtGen Natonski: Have you seen a copy of that brief?

16
17 Oscar CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I don't know if it's like a slide show but I know it's
18 like "Hey, we have this on digits."

19
20 LtGen Natonski: There's a schematic somewhere----

21
22 Oscar CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Right, Sir.

23
24 LtGen Natonski: Of the COP, the way the engineers envisioned
25 it. We've never seen that.

26
27 Oscar CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, I don't know. I thought it was in the previous
28 investigation but I haven't--I've seen it but I
29 haven't seen it as part of the 15-6. But I am pretty
30 sure it was in there.

31
32 LtGen Natonski: Okay, so that takes you through the
33 schematics of what the engineers are going to do.
34 What about the troops from your 2nd platoon? What are
35 they supposed to be doing?

36
37 Oscar CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) That really occurred, from me the platoon leader, of
38 "Hey, this is your concept sketch and this is what you
39 want to do." Now as far as me telling him, "your
40 first step is going to be," like a formal op order?
41 That did not occur. I sat down with him kind of on an
42 informal level because the way we really viewed it is
43 we are continuously doing operations. I'm not going
44 to stop and say "okay, prepare to copy your op order."
45 It was more of a working relationship back and forth,
46 "Hey, I need to see your concept sketch from Wanat and

1 we're going to talk about it." So he brings that to
2 me even though it was ----

3
4 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): What about ----

5
6 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Maybe a month before that happened.

7
8 **LtGen Natonski:** What about his plan for RIP or engaging the
9 people? I mean you had to have something that you
10 wanted to turn over to the incoming unit. I know they
11 objective, as you pointed out, better that you set up
12 this COP on your watch with the experience, even
13 though some of the troops weren't necessarily on board
14 but it's the right thing to do. But everything I see
15 is, Okay you're going to get up there and you got a
16 plan to get there for 3 days, 8, 9, and 10 July,
17 you're going to get there. But where is the rest of
18 the story? I mean what if the brigade commander said,
19 "Okay, what's the plan?" If that -- That doesn't
20 exist. I mean the battalion ----

21
22 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Well, I don't that's exactly true, Sir. Because if
23 you are talking specifically the RIP, that was
24 something that I prepared, a brief that I prepared
25 that I gave to the incoming to the unit.

26
27 **LtGen Natonski:** From Wanat?

28
29 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, Sir. For my entire battle space that was
30 something that I had -- I mean I've been preparing for
31 the months prior.

32
33 **LtGen Natonski:** How would Lieutenant Brostrom have known
34 what the plan is at Wanat? You're talking about
35 giving it to the incoming unit.

36
37 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Right.

38
39 **LtGen Natonski:** What about giving it to your own unit? How do
40 you pass that down to your subordinate platoons

41
42 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Of how they're supposed to conduct a RIP?

43
44 **LtGen Natonski:** Yeah. And for example too, one of the
45 purposes of this COP--I think we all are all realistic
46 that this thing was going to take weeks to build. But
47 the purpose of building it was to engage the people,

1 to interface with the district government, train the
2 ANA police, the police down there. Was that laid out
3 anywhere?
4

Oscar 5 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Well I don't want to say that was laid out
6 specifically for Wanat because that really, all those
7 things you're talking about, whether it was handing
8 out RIP TOA or doing a RIP, especially on the platoon
9 level all those things you're talking about engaging
10 the locals, what his plan for the COP was, you know
11 all that stuff together. That was stuff we did, I
12 mean we were doing constantly anyway. So his
13 engagement, engagement of the locals, whether he was
14 in Wanat or whether that was part of the battle space,
15 that was just a continuation of what he was already
16 doing and what I was already doing.
17

18 LtGen Natonski: That's what he was doing but what about the
19 incoming the commander? And didn't the battalion
20 commander want to know what was going to happen? I
21 mean the planning there was pretty detailed but what
22 comes after the 10th of July. I mean the timeline is--
23 When were you expecting to have the initial COP open?
24 I guess not the full-Monty but enough where you could
25 feel comfortable about turning it over to an incoming
26 platoon or were you going to have it still -- I mean I
27 think you probably want an resemblance of some sort of
28 protective, a force protection plan, that would not
29 endanger the troops coming in who are inexperienced.
30

Oscar 31 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Right. Well I mean I knew, Sir, that with-- if all
32 are assets were lined up the way they should have
33 been, if we had the two bucket loaders that showed up
34 the day of the fight, if we had the from the beginning
35 then what we really wanted to hand over, or our goal
36 was, at least have something that's built for them,
37 that they can fight from. Now a lot of the COP mile
38 stones I would say like, if we say "Hey, when is this
39 B hut and when is this wall going to built?" Some of
40 that was based on local nationals. I mean we were
41 going to have HESCOs built up but as far as like
42 milestones for the COP itself was a little bit
43 ambiguous, I mean I could give a SWAT----
44

45 LtGen Natonski: And I know it depends on how many engineers
46 you have and what equipment but what was your mission
47 at Wanat?

1
2 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) What was our company level mission, Sir?

3
4 **LtGen Natonski:** Well Company, I mean what was the purpose of
5 going into Wanat?

6
7 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Specifically, to align our self with the government.
8 All those----

9
10 **LtGen Natonski:** It was to build a COP wasn't it? To do what
11 you're saying?

12
13 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Okay, yeah, the mission occupying Wanat, yeah, was to
14 build a COP.

15
16 **LtGen Natonski:** So, I mean, is there a 5 paragraph order
17 that lays out the tasks that-- and the logistics-- I
18 mean all we have here is 3 days in the history of
19 Wanat. We don't have what the intent is beyond
20 establishing a COP. We have nothing that talks about
21 engaging the people or the building -- what is the
22 engineers section supposed to do? What is platoon
23 supposed to do? What are the ANA supposed to do?
24 This was the main effort of the battalion, I think.
25 And obviously there was a lot of planning but it stops
26 at the delivery of the people and the equipment. What
27 took it the rest of the way?

28
29 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, I mean, I didn't do a 5 paragraph op order that
30 gave tasks to the platoon of what they had to
31 accomplish to build the COP.

32
33 **LtGen Natonski:** I was just thinking, you know, this would be
34 kind of a phase 1, movement and movement to the
35 objective but then actions on the objective, what do
36 you do and how are you going to do it? It just seems
37 incomplete and that's not yours, that the battalion
38 isn't it.

39
40 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, I mean our ----

41
42 **LtGen Natonski:** You provided input.

43
44 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Provided input and they could, you know, they've added
45 some other things that would be consistent with the
46 whole battalion and the battalion's efforts. To be
47 honestly, Sir, the movement itself I think was kind of

1 where my mind set was and including Bella which I know
2 was really my focus. Release my concern the
3 occupation of Wanat beyond the concept sketch level
4 is, there wasn't like "Hey, make sure you have triple
5 strength concertina wire built by the evening of day
6 one." None of that exists. What I was really relying
7 upon is giving intent to my subordinate elements,
8 supervising what his concept sketch was, and knowing
9 that he would execute that.

10
11 **LtGen Natonski:** Did he brief you, Lieutenant Brostrom ever
12 brief you on his plan?

13
14 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) **Oscar** Yes, Sir. I mean it was a-- it wasn't like I made him
15 write something that said it----

16
17 **LtGen Natonski:** He had a prior plan sketch of the COP----

18
19 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) **Oscar** Yes, Sir.

20
21 **LtGen Natonski:** When you got there and he showed you. That
22 got lost in the combat action?

23
24 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) **Oscar** Yes, Sir. I remember it was a yellow pad and he had
25 it all written out and he adjusted that as they
26 expanded. So once they built something up, he would
27 update it, he had asmyth on all his positions.

28
29 **LtGen Natonski:** So like a fire plan sketch?

30
31 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) **Oscar** Yes, Sir. And then we had, separate from that, we had
32 a complete fires overlay where he registered his
33 mortars and made sure what he could observe with
34 artillery. So he went at the platoon level they went
35 through all those checks, supervised by me and
36 additionally why I went up there was to see how we
37 could adjust that. But there never was a formal,
38 "here's your tasks," listed out.

39
40 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) **Beta** To ask you another question. A question that has
41 been asked is, "Did the RIP/TOA get in the way of
42 setting up COP Wanat?" Was that diverting people's
43 attention from the rest of what was going on?
44

45
46 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) **Oscar** At the high level, Sir? Or whoever?
47

1 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yeah, wherever.

2
3 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know. I can't answer that. I don't know
4 what-- you know, I know what I asked for and what I
5 thought, how we were going to utilize that. But I
6 didn't, I wasn't aware of them saying "this is not
7 going to Wanat because we are RIPing over here." I
8 knew it was going on but I still felt confident that
9 we were going to get----

10
11 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Was the battalion so involved in the RIP that
12 they said, "Okay, hey, we got a plan to get them up
13 there. They are on their on after that"?

14
15 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I definitely don't think it was that kind of attitude,
16 Sir. I don't even----

17
18 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Not that they purposely did it but they were
19 overcome by events.

20
21 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I wasn't aware, I don't think I was-- I wasn't aware
22 of who was RIPing or leaving Wanat before we did this.
23 I wanted to make sure it was what we were there
24 before----

25
26 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): When was your Company scheduled to RIP out? Did
27 you know that?

28
29 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I know it began. I can't remember when I was told. I
30 remember hearing the date of 1 August. Meaning we're
31 trying to be completely gone by 1 August. But I
32 didn't hear when X platoon was going to get air to go.

33
34 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): We had heard 21 July, I think, is the date that
35 was thrown out there.

36
37 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I just know, I was the guy to leave and it was on 1
38 August.

39
40 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): But that's after Wanat and things had changed in
41 terms of-- There was no 1-26 coming into Wanat after
42 the battle.

43
44 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): No, because we had left Wanat and then I did the RIP
45 through Camp Blessing through COP Michigan, you know
46 showing those guys out to Chapadara. A lot of
47 decision was kind of on how many troops they had

1 available. It was a joint decision with them and us
2 whether they wanted to stay there or not at their
3 higher level.

4
5 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): At where?

6
7 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): They wanted to stay in Wanat.

8
9 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Was there someone on the ground after the battle
10 they helped make the decision whether----

11
12 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Both Colonel Diamond
(b)(3), (b)(6) and Colonel Delta
(b)(3), (b)(6), Sir, came
13 on the ground.

14
15 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): But that's the outgoing folks.

16
17 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Right.

18
19 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): I'm talking about 1-26.

20
21 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): No.

22
23 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): They were not involved--they asked whether you
24 want to--"What's your thoughts on relieving 2nd
25 platoon"?

26
27 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I gave my recommendation based on the knowledge of
28 what they were coming in with and I knew their unit
29 had less people.

30
31 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): What kind of unit was it?

32
33 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): It was an Infantry Battalion, Sir.

34
35 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Okay.

36
37 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): But I knew, for some reason, they had about 100 guys
38 less than what our Battalion had.

39
40 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): They didn't have Rigger Unit that--

41
42 **LtGen Natonski:** They are a mechanized unit and you're
43 Airborne so--

44
45 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I can't remember, Sir. They came in and I said, "you
46 know, if Wanat in this situation, if, it's going to
47 have to be a company effort, at least right now, you

1 know, if they don't have that available then how are
2 they, are they really going to be to do that?" That
3 coupled with, you know----

4
5 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Who was the company commander that relieved you?
6 Was that because you had, you owned the Waygal Valley?

7
8 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, Sir.

9
10 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): So, did you talk to him? Was he there before?

11
12 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): He wasn't there before we left.

13
14 **LtGen Natonski:** He wasn't there to make a decision on Wanat
15 though?

16
17 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): No, not at the Company level. But this is, they asked
18 me what I thought, Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) and Colonel
19 (b)(3), (b)(6). And I said, "I think we should leave based
20 on all the circumstances of them coming in and what
21 the situation here is now."
22

23 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): So, you think it would have taken a company to
24 hold that position?

25
26 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): At least more than a platoon. For that situation what
27 it was now, what it was at that point--maybe not once
28 they got the COP built up, I don't think it would have
29 taken a company, but the enemy situation there changed
30 drastically and everything with the civilian
31 population. I mean that place was annihilated. So we
32 knew it was going to be a lot of work to try to
33 continue doing that to which would probably at least
34 for awhile be a company. So with that I made the
35 recommendation, "I think we should pull out, since
36 they have less force anyway." They can occupy an op
37 around Blessing that would secure the north side then
38 they can really focus towards Chapadara which is were
39 I thought we should have been moving anyway.
40

41 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Where is that?

42
43 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): That is west of Camp Blessing. Which is down the main
44 valley.

45
46 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): That's not up the Waygal Valley.
47

Oscar 1 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) No, it's not. That is west, the Waygal Valley is
2 north. So based on that they kind of took that
3 information, we continued to improve our position over
4 the next two days then they said it was a joint
5 decision, I think on the division level to say "yeah
6 go ahead and do that."
7

8 LtGen Natonski: Joint between who?
9

Oscar 10 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Between the outgoing and incoming commanders.
11

12 LtGen Natonski: I didn't think the division was rotating at
13 that time.
14

Oscar 15 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I'm sorry----
16

17 LtGen Natonski: The brigade?
18

Oscar 19 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) The brigade level supported by the division. So
20 that's when we left based on that recommendation.
21

Beta 22 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6) Was 2nd platoon up at Wanat, was that your
23 company's focus of effort?
24

Oscar 25 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir.
26

Beta 27 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6) When you had to go back to Blessing for the 15-6,
28 were you told to come back to Blessing to do the 15-6?
29

Oscar 30 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) No, Sir. I made that decision on my own.
31

Beta 32 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6) In retrospect or in hind sight, would you make
33 the same decision today that you did then?
34

Oscar 35 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir. Same decision. I knew that was something
36 that needed to, we needed to make sure that was taken
37 care of. The longer time I'm separated from that
38 incident the less accurate that investigation would
39 have been. So I knew that was the right decision. I
40 didn't have any hesitation about the platoon at Wanat
41 being able to handle that task. I really went there
42 more--for some supervision but to really feel what
43 they were feeling. So I would understand it better.
44 It wasn't like, "Hey, I'm here to inspect, but I'm
45 here to hear what you have to say about what we're
46 doing and what your concerns are." And then to give my
47 input in turn.

1
2 LtGen Natonski?: Just out of curiosity, why were you assigned
3 the 15-6. I mean don't they have Captains on the
4 staff that could have done that?
5

Oscar 6 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) No, Sir. I was being investigated.
7

8 MG Perkins: You were being investigated, you needed to
9 provided----

Oscar 11 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I needed to provide a statement.
12

13 MG Perkins: Who was doing the investigation?
14

Beta 15 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Colonel

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

 Deputy Commander.
16

17 LtGen Natonski: You weren't----
18

Oscar 19 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) No, I wasn't facilitating. I was providing statements
20 to them for information.
21

Beta 22 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Between the 9th and 11th did you, you spoke to
23 Lieutenant Brostrom when he was up at Wanat?
24

Oscar 25 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir.
26

Beta 27 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Did he relay anything regarding the enemy
28 situation to you? Any indications and warnings he
29 saw?
30

Oscar 31 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) He didn't say anything specifically as far as "Hey, I
32 saw this happen or I saw that happen." He gave me--
33 We talked about some of the local traffic that had
34 moved through, he thought it was less than normal. I
35 kind of agree with him for that time. But that is
36 what we expected at least for our initial occupation,
37 we thought, hey, people might kind of might be freaked
38 about it and they would slowly trickle back in. And
39 then we talked specifically more of what his
40 preparations, as far as hey how much fire did he
41 register as mortars and stuff like that. And then
42 anything that he saw, he didn't say anything specific
43 like "Hey, I saw these guys move through," or "those
44 guys move this way," or "I saw people moving up in the
45 mountains over here." He just talked really about how
46 they were preparing their positions.
47

Beta 1 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Is there anything that he told you that made you
2 think that maybe an attack of some kind was imminent?
3

Oscar 4 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) He talked about what one of the locals had told him
5 which is the local we met with that night, (b)(6)
6 (b)(6).
7

Beta 8 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Was that on the 12th?
9

Oscar 10 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) The night of the 12th, yes, Sir. But we both kind of
11 agreed that it's the standard Afghan "you're going to
12 get attacked." I mean everyday somebody told me I was
13 going to get attacked in Afghanistan, a local. You
14 are like, "Understand." But I was never like,
15 specific, "it's going to be this kind of attack." It
16 was just a general, "you might get attack." Which in
17 our mind we thought, "this is going to be some kind of
18 rockets." We would ask him "Is it going to be rockets
19 or is going to be RPGs," and they would be like, "it's
20 going to be -- yes, it's going to be rockets," or
21 "they could do this," or "they could do that." But it
22 was never these guys, you know, it was never specific.
23

Beta 24 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6) When Lieutenant Brostrom spoke to you when you
25 still down at Blessing and told you that did you speak
26 to anyone else in the company or battalion staff?
27

Oscar 28 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) That was what we had talked about when I was on the
29 ground, Sir. But I didn't talk specifically with
30 battalion staff and say "Hey, I think Wanat is, this I
31 going to happen," or "that's going to happen." I
32 initially thought was indirect fire, you know they
33 were going to try to gauge that ground because they
34 had never fired on that ground, at least on us before.
35 That they're going to try to get all their assets
36 before they do something big. So we had talked about
37 that which is why they really -- their priority was
38 digging in because one of my concerns was like we
39 don't have any over head cover. You're going to need
40 to get below ground level if shrapnel comes flying so
41 you guys need to dig holes. And then when I went up
42 there I saw they had done that coupled with kind of
43 being protected by their Up-Armored HMMWVs. But we
44 didn't, as far as enemy threat goes, that was, from my
45 perception was, we both kind of understood that it was
46 going to be some sort of indirect fire.
47

Beta

1 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) Did you recall him telling you that he thought
2 that they were being surveilled?
3

Oscar

4 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I mean that's one of those things in Afghanistan where
5 you being observed all the time. We knew that from
6 all of our experience. We've been on -- we've had our
7 units on terrorist videos of them observing our OPs,
8 so we knew we were always being watched. I don't
9 think it was to the level that they were trying to
10 gather anything as far as their reaction time or
11 anything like that. Because usually what we would
12 see, if they were trying to gather information on that
13 then they would-- it would be like a probing attack,
14 or like a RECON by fire. So they would fire on us
15 pretty minimally and then they would see our reaction
16 and then you know maybe from a distance they would be
17 able to pick up what positions we were at. Other than
18 being surveilled by local people it wasn't-- we didn't
19 think that they were-- that there was anything out of
20 the ordinary.
21

22 **LtGen Natonski:** Did you talk to any of the troops on the
23 position while you were there and get their
24 sentiments-- a number had mentioned they thought they
25 were being actively surveilled by young, military
26 aged, males standing, watching as they went ahead with
27 the preparations of the position?
28

Oscar

29 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, I think-- I remember talking to them about,
30 "Hey, what's the kind of pattern." Because the local
31 area will have a local pattern. "At this time in the
32 morning we always see three ladies walk down to the
33 field and wash their clothes in the river. And then
34 at this time this kid usually walks in front here and
35 there." I never got any indication like, "this guys
36 looking to see what our position looks like." Because
37 they usually wouldn't let them do that. They would
38 tell them to go run off somewhere, if they were doing
39 that. Because really we were right on a road next to
40 a bazaar. They could stand in the bazaar and look at
41 what the perimeter was.
42

43 **MG Perkins:** What about the absence of some of the families?
44

Oscar

45 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) That to us was, you know, standard activity. I mean,
46 that had happened before without anything happening,
47 you know, around Bella. They say, "Hey well we are

1 leaving because we think there's going to be an
2 attack." You know, we're like "okay good, go keep
3 yourself safe," or whatever. And I remember talking
4 specifically with [redacted (b)(6)], him saying, "Hey, I
5 moved my family to," where he was from, which was
6 another village in the valley, but he stayed there.
7 So it wasn't like -- it was what I expected to do with
8 an initial occupation.
9

10 **LtGen Natonski:** Did he survive the attack?

11
12 **CPT**[redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] I believe he did, Sir. I think he-- I mean we never
13 saw his body obviously. I think he either he left
14 prior to or as it was happening.
15

16 **MG Perkins:** Would he have been in danger for having hosted
17 you that night?
18

19 **CPT**[redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] Well, it's not that cut and dry. He was an old time
20 commander fighter. I think there is always a few guys
21 that were so old that -- and they had such a
22 reputation that they could do whatever they want and
23 no one would really care. Either the enemy thought
24 they were ineffective, or he's just a crazy old man,
25 so he's not going to do anything or, you know, he had
26 a reputation that people had respect for so they
27 wouldn't, you ----
28

29 **MG Perkins:** So he felt, at least comfortable, that he
30 wouldn't be in danger by you talking to him?
31

32 **CPT**[redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] No, other than randomly getting hit with something, he
33 wasn't-- he didn't-- I don't think he was in danger.
34 Other than maybe you getting threatened or something.
35

36 **LtCol** [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)]: Before you sent your platoon up to Wanat, you
37 visited there and you had also-- you had a vision of
38 the enemy situation in Wanat. By the time you got up
39 there on the 12th, and spoke with your soldiers and
40 Lieutenant Brostrom, and met with the [redacted (b)(6)], did your
41 assessment of the enemy threat change from when the
42 operation started CONOP Operation Rock Move started on
43 the 8th and now you're up there on the 12th?
44

45 **CPT**[redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] No, I mean, I was still in the mode of kind of what I
46 assessed to be the most likely course of action. You
47 know, what I communicated that was. I still thought

1 that is what it was. I knew there would be an
2 uncomfortable feeling with the local population and
3 with my soldiers on initial occupation. I understood
4 that and I knew that was coming. But it never was,
5 something big is going to go off because in my mind I
6 really thought, you know, and I even got intel reports
7 that they were foc-- they weren't focused on Bella.
8 They were probably there doing their victory dance or
9 whatever in a way. And I got some reports that, "Hey,
10 the enemy did go down to Bella." Then we're like,
11 "okay, we're not there anymore and we understand that
12 was going happen anyway." But we just thought that,
13 "Hey, we're going to start, you know, working with the
14 AMP, getting them where they needed to be, getting our
15 ops put in place, and we have all our targets set up
16 and now we need to start building this thing up." You
17 know, as quickly as possible. There wasn't -- I never
18 questioned and said like, you know, my initial thought
19 was, "Hey, it's going to be rocket fire," at least
20 initially and then maybe some low level probing
21 attacking, so they can, you know, be a consistent
22 plan. Because that is what we had seen from everybody
23 in that valley, you know. The ranch house, how that
24 went down was, not a whole lot of activity, very
25 limited activity then basically everything at once,
26 down to the point where they had, you know, I've seen
27 the terrorist video where they had everything sketched
28 out; a great concept sketch of the base. So we
29 thought it was going to be a very deliberate planning
30 enemy, you know. They are going to make sure they
31 know where we're at. They're going to make sure they
32 have all their assets lined up, have all their support
33 built up. Then they're going to do-- that's going to
34 be the case when they do something big. Not, when we
35 initially come somewhere, you know, that they are just
36 going to come with everything that they have.

Beta

38 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) Was there any time between the 8th and the 12th
39 that you called battalion and said, "Okay, the
40 situation up here is different, it's worse than we
41 expected?"

Oscar

43 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) No, Sir, because I didn't believe that.

Beta

45 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Even after you knew what the Haji----

Oscar 1 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) That was standard for him. He was a guy that always
2 said that in general terms we were going to get
3 attacked. So I didn't report anything because that is
4 not what I thought.
5

Beta 6 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Were you concerned or aware of the ISR coverage--
7 you mentioned initially that you thought there would
8 be some sort of coverage during the initial
9 occupation. How long was that in your mind? Was that
10 going to be two days? One day?
11

Oscar 12 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I mean, I thought that we would get it at least once a
13 day for some period of time.
14

Beta 15 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): For how many days?
16

Oscar 17 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): I mean, we would get ISR every couple of days anyway.
18 ; maybe once a week. And then if we, you know, said,
19 "Hey, we think this is going on," then we would kind
20 of get pushed up the priority list but whenever the
21 battalion would get it a lot of times they would share
22 it or they would have it designated for one company
23 and they would kind of look around and they wouldn't
24 see anything then a tick would off for another
25 company, so they'd push him over there. So I
26 basically understood that, you know, when they got it
27 they were going to give it to us. So if we request
28 it, you know, we might not be the division's priority
29 for Predator but when they -- when we do get it pushed
30 to us, they are going to check things out. But I
31 never was, "I know Predator is going to be coming at 8
32 and it's going to leave at 10." There was never-- it
33 wasn't as clean cut as that.
34

Beta 35 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Was -- The situation in Wanat was different in
36 that you didn't have an established COP that your
37 forces were in----
38

Oscar 39 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Right.
40

Beta 41 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Were you not concerned that your soldiers were
42 more vulnerable than they would have been if they were
43 inside a COP, Bella or back at Blessing?
44

Oscar 45 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Well, I mean, I knew they would be more vulnerable but
46 I knew that that was also the right decision that we
47 needed to do. I knew it was going to be hard and I

1 knew that the battalion knew that and I knew that they
2 would push us -- I felt and I knew that we were
3 priority four Pred, if we were going to get it unless
4 somebody was in a TIC. So they would -- I knew that
5 they were checking the area around there based on the
6 fact that we were not in hard stand COP.

Beta 8 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): How would you get that information that you would
9 have a Predator over head or not? Or if they had any-
10 ---
11

12 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Usually on MERC chat, through my company CP. If we
13 had it, then they would tell us. Or we have the
14 window or and we would talk directly with the S-2
15 soldier that was talking to the Pred pilot. And then
16 they would say, "Hey, we're looking around your area."
17 Sometimes they would ask us what to look at and then
18 sometimes they would look at any eyes that were
19 predestinated around that area.
20

Beta 21 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6) You can get back to the questions on occupation.
22 What time period-- is that a day? Is that a week?
23 For the occupation of the COP? Then the difference
24 between the occupation portion, than the COP is--
25 you've got a secured, at least outer perimeter? What
26 was your thought? How long was that time?
27

Oscar 28 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) From when we occupied to when we had a secure outer
29 perimeter?
30

Beta 31 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6) You initially mentioned as a part of the plan you
32 wanted some ISR for the initial occupation. Why was
33 that in your mind? What was it during the initial
34 occupation that you wanted?
35

Oscar 36 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) In my mind it was as they were moving up there, at
37 least within a couple of hours of them arriving, being
38 able to check the area around them. You know, whether
39 that's a Predator or an Apache, you know, that's fine.
40 And then extending on to their own assets that they
41 could utilize. Now as far a security of a perimeter,
42 in my mind, that occurs as soon as they arrive there.
43 And then if you are talking time frame of when they
44 actually have like a wire perimeter built up and
45 positions built up? You know, I knew that-- I mean in
46 my mind, in a week, in my mind with all the local
47 national engineer support and engineers there, in my

1 mind in a week that would have been something that we
2 could have given over to a follow on unit. At least
3 for them to be able to fight there.

4
5 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): That then with HESCOs filled?

6
7 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, HESCOs filled and actually local nationals doing
8 their work. So HESCO perimeter and then some sort of
9 -- the priority I think was for a CP building and then
10 having OPs establish-- we wanted to have those OPs
11 established within a week to secure, like kind of like
12 outer perimeter. That's, in my mind, that's what was
13 meant.

14
15 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Is there-- ever a time that you got on the phone
16 and said I have to have more ISR?

17
18 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): From Blessing or at any point?

19
20 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): From any source.

21
22 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): No, there was never a time that I said I need more. I
23 always knew I was a priority for it so I didn't think
24 it was like somebody keeping it from me, per se.

25
26 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): But you thought you were the priority for the----

27
28 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): For the battalion at least. The battalion was going
29 to get ISR which I knew they were requesting.

30
31 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): For Operation Rock Move?

32
33 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Right.

34
35 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): From the 8th to the 10th of July you were the
36 priority?

37
38 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): And even beyond that, I knew we were the priority
39 because, like what you said before, that we were
40 vulnerable, at least to get-- other than if someone
41 was in a TIC. You know, it wasn't like they were
42 going to use Pred for us while someone was fighting a
43 TIC. They would usually push it over there so they
44 could be aware of things going on but I-- like I don't
45 know what the brigades priority was. I remember
46 knowing that the battalion and talking to the S-2 that
47 he would give me Predator if he got it.

1
2 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Do you know if he-- how far out he requested
3 coverage for you?
4

5 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I mean that was something that they did consistently.
6 As far as specific to Rock Move, I don't know the
7 specific time he requested it.
8

9 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): So when you went up on the 12th it was your
10 understanding on the 12th it was your understanding
11 that you would get-- you had Predator coverage?
12

13 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, at least some period of time. I mean, I knew it
14 wasn't going to be the whole time we were there for,
15 you know, the whole day or something like that but I
16 knew we would get it periodically to check things out.
17

18 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): When you went up there, you spoke to Lieutenant
19 Brostrom. Had they conducted any patrols?
20

21 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I knew that they had gone and obviously talked to the
22 governor down at the district center, you know, which
23 was only 150 meters down the hill, but I know their
24 priority was force protection. So I don't think they
25 did anything beyond that other than the planned patrol
26 that we were going to do that morning.
27

28 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): And as the company commander, what was your take
29 on the fact that no patrols had been conducted? Did
30 you have a discussion with the platoon leader about
31 that?
32

33 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) No, I knew, I mean, I knew that he was focused on
34 building up his position first and not patrolling.
35 Just because I knew that based on their amount of
36 force they had there going on a patrol was not time
37 utilized as good as-- as much as time utilized
38 building up their position. I never told them
39 specifically, "you need to do consistent patrols
40 there." Because in reality based on what they could
41 see, they could see most of the area around that was
42 going to secure them without patrolling it. Because a
43 lot of times, you know, when they patrol they just
44 increase their vulnerability if there was contact. It
45 would have been really bad if we were out on a patrol
46 and Wanat kicked off because then we would have had
47 separated forces trying to coordinate between the two

1 of them and then them trying to understand what's
2 going on.
3

Beta 4 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): As part of your planning, what did you identify
5 as the biggest risks moving up and establishing the
6 COP at Wanat?
7

Oscar 8 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I mean the biggest risk to me was indirect fire
9 without having a fortified position to be in. You
10 know, at Bella we had hard stand buildings that had
11 sand bags and HESCOs around them and we could really
12 get indirect fire all day and we would be survivable.
13 The same with the OP and everything and I knew if
14 something like that happened then they could pick away
15 at us with indirect fire with them not having
16 positions built in over head cover and that was a
17 concern of mine. I knew that they would have UP
18 Armored HMMWVs which would help, at least from
19 shrapnel and stuff like that. So, that was part of
20 our mitigation but that was I thought in my mind was
21 the biggest risk to the them.
22

Beta 23 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you plan-- so over head cover was a concern
24 for indirect fire?
25

Oscar 26 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yeah, and the only mitigation for that was the UP
27 Armored HMMWVs and digging in below the surface of the
28 ground. Because it wasn't like I was thinking they
29 would get directly hit over head but when the round
30 hits and shrapnel hits through the COP that they would
31 have something to lay behind or in as far as a hole or
32 a dug in position.
33

Beta 34 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): What other-- any other risks or vulnerabilities
35 that you detected in your planning?
36

Oscar 37 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I mean, other than the standard vulnerabilities of
38 when we go out, but I knew that that would be a
39 consideration there. You know, for at least until
40 they had something built up or some sort of HESCO
41 built up. It's kind of like an area where you always
42 have to have your gear on, no matter where you are
43 because you don't have a wall built were you can be
44 behind and have, you know, where you don't need to
45 wear you protective gear. So, like any consideration
46 I would have if they were doing a patrol up there,
47 those were all same kind of consideration. So I

1 thought of an enemy if they were firing they were
2 going to be firing from, you know, 500 meters away or
3 more, or coming over the last, their last covered and
4 concealed position to fire down upon us, was really my
5 concern. And they had ample fire power and really
6 what the TOW missile and the ITAS, as well as the
7 LRAS, that was the mitigation with that risk because
8 they are going to be able to see the enemy from far
9 away and pick up on them and they are going to just
10 keep them back and they are not going to get in on
11 them. Which even that morning when they were looking
12 2 kilometers away through the ITAS they could see
13 people moving up on the hill side and that's what we
14 really wanted. We had learned other companies and
15 from our own company by having the LRAS you can see
16 them as they are moving into their position.

17
18 **LtGen Natonski:** Did they see anyone in the village moving
19 into position?

20
21 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) As far as close in, Sir, or farther away?

22
23 **LtGen Natonski:** Yeah, close in.

24
25 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) I don't remember if people saw. I mean, we had--
26 there was a little bit. We saw one guy waking up, but
27 he was a guy that lived close by and he lived in that
28 house but a lot of them sleep outside for whatever
29 reason. And there was on guy that morning that they
30 had seen that was really close but----

31
32 **LtGen Natonski:** But you didn't see an infiltration moving
33 into the village?

34
35 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) No, other than the guys that we saw way up on the hill
36 side, there was like 5 or 6 people. That was the
37 first thing that we saw.

38
39 **LtGen Natonski:** That was on the 12th?

40
41 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) That was on the morning of the 13th.

42
43 **LtGen Natonski:** After Stand-To's?

44
45 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) During Stand-To's, Sir. I didn't get any indication
46 from anyone, "Hey, I see five guys moving here," "Guys
47 moving here."

1
2 **LtGen Natonski:** Did they scan the village in the morning?
3 The positions that----

4
5 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, I mean that was at 100% security. Everybody was
6 scanning their sectors, they were-- they had guys
7 before Stand-To they had a guy walk around and get
8 everybody up and then all the NCOs would check----

9
10 **LtGen Natonski:** But they weren't asleep all night, I mean,
11 did anyone during the evening see----

12
13 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) No.

14
15 **LtGen Natonski:** See anyone moving?

16
17 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) No, I didn't get any feedback from that we saw.

18
19 **LtGen Natonski:** They would have had to move through that
20 dead space in the valley to get in the village.

21
22 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Either that or behind, like if they were up in certain
23 areas, there might have been small amounts of dead
24 space at a farther range that they could move in and
25 then move into buildings that were like 300 - 400
26 meters away. Maybe we didn't see that----

27
28 **LtGen Natonski:** That would be the hotel, the bazaar, the
29 mosque, I mean there were a number of buildings
30 surrounding the----

31
32 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, they didn't see any activity in there that
33 night.

34
35 **MG Perkins:** So did they see, maybe I'm mistaken from previous
36 testimony. Was there anybody spotted up in high
37 ground on the 12th at all that you recall? The day
38 before?

39
40 **LtGen Natonski:** I recall that, too.

41
42 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I can't remember, Sir. It's kind of hard to remember
43 because we would see people a lot of times. The
44 distinguisher was like, was this guy a shepherd or is
45 it some guy and usually its one guy by himself.

1 **MG Perkins:** Yeah, I know the whole PID thing. Was there--
2 were there any groups, 12th, 13th, wherever up on the
3 hill they were seen there was a discussion of engaging
4 them, either mortars----

5
6 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir.
7

8 **MG Perkins:** Was that----
9

10 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) The morning of the 13th----
11

12 **MG Perkins:** Okay, those guys were on the 13th.
13

14 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) During Stand-To. They were----
15

16 **MG Perkins:** And then where were they. Were they on that----
17

18 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) They were to the west about 2 kilometers on this----
19

20 **MG Perkins:** On the other side of the river?
21

22 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) On that side I mean the terrain was extreme, it was
23 highest point----
24

25 **LtGen Natonski:** It was Philips that was talking about
26 engaging, is that correct.
27

28 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) It was the TOW gunner on the ITAS.
29

30 **MG Perkins:** He saw, he picked them up?
31

32 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) He picked them up. And he was driven in his position
33 where he was elevated and you could see, I mean, he
34 was really like an angle like this, and he said, he
35 told me "I see two guys up in the trees up there like
36 two kilometers away." Because he got the grid off of
37 the ITAS. I said, "Okay, well we've never been
38 attacked in this area before, that isn't necessarily a
39 pattern to me yet. Just keep observing them." This
40 is all during Stand-To. Then he gets up and says
41 "Hey, I see three more guys and there's like two guys
42 moving back and forth from them." So our pattern,
43 anywhere in the mountains, coupled with civilian
44 population saying, "Hey, there's nobody good up
45 there." Coupled with, when we see a Shepherd it's
46 usually one guy by himself. I said, "Okay, those five
47 guys--" He said, "They're looking down on us and there

1 are two of them moving back and forth." I said,
2 "Okay, that's PID." I determined PID based on what he
3 told me, then we were going to go ahead execute a TOW
4 shot with a 120 millimeter mortar munition. As they
5 are dialing in the data and as he is getting ready to
6 shoot that's when everything initiated.
7

8 **MG Perkins:** So, you had decided to engaged them----

9
10 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir.
11

12 **MG Perkins:** And it's just they started the engagement before
13 you guys----

14
15 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Right. And it wasn't the guys that were up there.
16 That was some sort of, I believe some sort of C2
17 element.
18

19 **MG Perkins:** So who were you----

20
21 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) And one of my soldiers----

22
23 **MG Perkins:** I mean that's not who started engaging but that
24 is who you were going to engage?
25

26 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir.
27

28 **MG Perkins:** That's with the mortars----

29
30 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) And a TOW.
31

32 **MG Perkins:** And a TOW. Simultaneous.
33

34 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir. And that when it initiated close in and
35 they shot RPGs and the TOW truck.
36

37 **MG Perkins:** Okay.
38

39 Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): If I could take you back from the day of battle.
40

41 Oscar **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir.
42

43 **LtCol Bligh:** When you're doing planning for Operation Rock
44 Move you've mentioned the risks you identified and
45 mitigation steps you had taken. At some point at the
46 end of July -- end of June, early July you felt, is it

1 fair to say that you felt an attack on Bella was
2 likely or imminent.

3
4 **Oscar** **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir. That's what I felt. Based on, you know,
5 reports that we had gotten, it was more than one.
6 Like three or four reports that, you know, 300 guys
7 were going to attack Bella, which we would always try
8 to pare down based on Afghan numbers. So I felt
9 because it was more than one source saying the same
10 thing that probably going to happen, so either these
11 sources had seen a lot of fighters in the area and
12 they determined that that's what they reported. I did
13 feel like that was a vulnerable time because it was
14 retrograde operations.

15
16 **Beta** **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Then you had the incident on the 4th of July when
17 Bella had been attacked. And then there'd been the
18 attack by the Apaches. Was there a change in the
19 atmospheric in the valley up at the point? Between
20 the planning when you did your initial risk assessment
21 and mitigation steps and now you're getting closer to
22 execution you had your own sense that Bella was about
23 to get hit with an attack and then the Apache
24 incident. Did that change your risk assessment for
25 Wanat?

26
27 **Oscar** **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I really-- I really don't think it did, Sir. I mean
28 for one thing that it changed, because I really
29 thought of Bella and Wanat together, at least the
30 operation, was after that engagement, I felt it gave
31 us breathing room to move Bella because after that
32 engagement there was no more activity. We thought
33 that there might still be and we were planning
34 preparing for that around Bella. All of the sudden
35 air craft were coming and they were not getting
36 engaged, which was the first time that happened in a
37 couple months. So I felt like that had ----

38
39 **MG Perkins:** That had lowered the risk.

40
41 **Oscar** **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, lowered the risk, at least around Bella. I
42 didn't-- I mean in hind sight, I was kind of
43 anticipating something happening and you know it just
44 air craft coming in and nothing would happen. It kind
45 of felt-- that almost validated the fact that that was
46 enemy involvement with that engagement because you
47 know the 15-6 was exploring all this civilian talk and

1 we said the results that yeah, there was probably some
2 civilian casualties but there was also definitely
3 enemy casualties that engagement and it felt like I
4 was being tested and it kind of cleared the air for
5 us, at least in hind sight. So as we move to Wanat I
6 still felt that was part of that, like we had set the
7 enemy back some with that engagement and it felt, at
8 least it felt like we had enough room to kind of get
9 ourself established. I didn't feel like they were in
10 the area any more. Other than locals around Wanat, I
11 think initially being frightened that we were there, I
12 mean that was what I anticipated. I still felt that
13 we were in control of the enemy and we had affected
14 them enough to establish ourselves.
15

Beta 16 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Up to the 12th, when you got there on the 12th, and
17 had spoken to Lieutenant Brostrom and had dinner with
18 the Haji, did you still feel that your risk assessment
19 and mitigation steps were adequate?
20

Oscar 21 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, Sir. I still felt it was the same.
22

Beta 23 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Had anything you had been presented changed that
24 analysis?
25

Oscar 26 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): No, Sir. I thought, you know, based on (b)(6)
27 and the type of person he was, it wasn't different
28 them the way he normally acted. Now the one thing
29 that was different was that his son had shown up but I
30 thought that was just because I had not been in Wanat
31 consistently and so I didn't know maybe his son had
32 shown there some other time but I wasn't there to see
33 him. And he was an interpreter that worked somewhere
34 and he was there I think probably to help move his
35 family. That was the only that was a little different
36 but it didn't change the fact-- my risk mitigation
37 measures. I thought it was the same and I thought the
38 threat, I thought we were still like we had taken care
39 of a lot of the threat.
40

Beta 41 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did he ask you, did that son ask you whether or
42 not you had coverage?
43

Oscar 44 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): He did, Sir. And I thought that was very strange and
45 after talking to him, he said he was an interpreter in
46 Jalalabad and I know those guys see what goes in and
47 out of there and they are much more aware of those

1 things then we would like. And I just said I don't
2 know what you're talking about. Because I didn't want
3 to get into the whole, "you shouldn't even know about
4 that." Or to tell him yes or no, or anything.

5
6 **Beta** **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): And after that meeting with the Haji did you make
7 a report back at all to the battalion?
8

9 **Oscar** **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't recall, Sir. I would of-- well, you know,
10 they would have reported that we were going to do that
11 because we were moving outside the wire, even though
12 it was right there. So it was reported that it was
13 occurring, that we were doing a leader engagement or
14 whatever but after I came back I don't recall
15 reporting and saying this is what happened with him.
16 It was just-- because the information hadn't changed
17 at that point because he had told him earlier in the
18 day the same thing. We were just going to his house
19 to eat.
20

21 **Beta** **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): From the 8th and to when you got back to Blessing
22 up until the 12th did you talk to-- speak to Colonel
23 **Diamond** (b)(3), (b)(6) about Wanat specifically?
24

25 **Oscar** **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): While I was back at Camp Blessing?
26

27 **Beta** **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): At Blessing after you got up to Wanat, did you
28 **Diamond** talk to Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) at all?
29

30 **Oscar** **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't remember if I talked to him while I was at
31 Wanat. I do remember talking to him when I was back
32 at Camp Blessing because we had talked a lot about the
33 engagement that happened previously. How this is
34 still all a part of Rock Move, moving Bella, etc. It
35 was kind of like to sum up what that was all about
36 after the 15-6 and everything. I don't remember
37 talking to him on the radio until the actual fire
38 fight.
39

40 **Beta** **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): The term vehicle patrol base, can you describe
41 what that is?
42

43 **Oscar** **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): We would use the term vehicle patrol base to describe
44 a temporary position. You know, initially I think we
45 felt until we had a perimeter that was what Wanat was.
46 It was a vehicle patrol base. Sometimes we would use
47 that, we would drive out. We would set up a perimeter

1 with vehicles and have some flanking dismounted
2 positions. We would meet with the locals then we
3 would stay there and observe what goes on at different
4 hours then would patrol back at a different time,
5 whether it be in the dark or the next day. So
6 sometimes that's what we'd refer to vehicle patrol
7 base. Now with Wanat, since we were preparing to
8 occupy there we didn't--I think we might have called
9 it that for a couple days then we kind of change over
10 and that's why there was confusion. Some people was
11 calling it, some people were calling it a COP. But
12 essentially it was-- we used that initially until we
13 were going to have at least our perimeter with wire
14 and all that established.

15
16 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): On the 12th, 13th of July what was it? Was it a
17 vehicle patrol base or was it a COP.

18
19 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I would say they probably started calling it a COP at
20 that point because it was-- we had wire up at least
21 and we had the OP supporting it. And the platoon was
22 really into naming it after their Platoon Sergeant
23 that had gotten killed previously over the winter.
24 So, I think they started COP Kahler or they were
25 telling me they wanted to call it that. So I don't
26 remember-- we didn't-- there was no, like, "Hey, now
27 it's a COP," kind of decision or "it's still a vehicle
28 patrol base." I think we were just calling it that
29 initially then we were discussing what we were going
30 to name it.

31
32 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): You mentioned when you pulled up-- when you got
33 off the helicopter that you saw the HESCOs, a mortar
34 pit and had HESCOs up and the HESCOs were full. Was
35 it your understanding that the HESCOs that were
36 erected already were full?

37
38 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6): I know some of them were, I want to say the ones that
39 were a little bit shorter were full and then I don't
40 recall exactly but I don't want say that they were all
41 filled to the brim, you know, standard HESCOs. There
42 was a latrine built with some short HESCOs filled and
43 there were smaller HESCOs that were filled around some
44 peoples dug in positions. But I don't recall
45 specifically if the mortar pits HESCOs were all full.
46

1 **LtGen Natonski:** Was there any go no-- no go criteria for the
2 movement up to Wanat? I mean when would you have said
3 "Stop, you can't go?"
4

Oscar 5 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) I know, Sir, I know it's in this CONOP brief but I
6 don't remember that specifically for the company the
7 information that I put up, I said if we can't support
8 it with a TOW Missile truck then I don't want to go up
9 there.
10

11 **LtGen Natonski:** That was that important to you?
12

Oscar 13 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir. And really that, I mean I knew we had the
14 LRAS but we really kind of wanted the fire power to
15 reach out to the enemy to where they were at. And I
16 really thought that was going to-- I mean we had seen
17 how that had changed the whole dynamic of the Pesh
18 Valley. Specifically the TOW Missile. And being able
19 the engage the enemy----
20

21 **LtGen Natonski:** What kind of warhead was it? Was it----
22

Oscar 23 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) I want to say just a regular TOW 2. That coupled with
24 the ISR, my thought was that hey if we can get some
25 engagements with the enemy, if we could pick them up
26 at distance and start engaging them like that, it's
27 going to change the dynamic of what they're able to
28 do. So, it was that important to me.
29

30 **LtGen Natonski:** Did they employ them in Pesh Valley on
31 vehicles all the time or did they ground mount them as
32 well? I mean say for example you had put one into
33 Bella, you wouldn't have been able to put it in there
34 with a HMMWV, you could put in there on a crown mount?
35

Oscar 36 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, they had utilized it ground mounted because I had
37 a weapons platoon attached to me, that's where that
38 TOW missile truck. They had ground mounted one on
39 almost like a fighting position where they like 360 it
40 around----
41

42 **MG Perkins:** Problem is you might not be able to get the
43 elevation like you can on a HMMWV because you can
44 drive up on a ramp.
45

Oscar 46 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) So they had utilized it like that before, Sir. But we
47 wanted it on a truck so we could move it around

1 because if you have it on one spot then it's all they
2 can see because this is where your set dead space is.
3 But if you move it around you might able to see new
4 angles, move it up and I can see different valleys and
5 stuff.

6
7 **LtGen Natonski:** Any other no go things that were that
8 important to you?
9

10 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I know as far as the company that was the one thing
11 that I wanted. Another thing was the host nation
12 equipment within a certain time frame but I knew that
13 we had it contracted and that it was coming. So that
14 was already part of our plan. It wasn't going to be
15 like, "Hey, the contract fell apart and we're not
16 getting them." Then I wouldn't have gone.
17

18 **LtGen Natonski:** Had you asked for additional engineers? I
19 mean, you had a squad, which isn't a lot to build a
20 COP. Had it gone through the battalion engineer or
21 the brigade engineer and said, "Hey, I could use a
22 platoon with some heavy equipment."
23

24 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, well we know, like the issue with a whole
25 platoon operating heavy equipment was that we knew
26 that we couldn't get U.S. Army heavy equipment up
27 there because they couldn't get an HEMIT up there to
28 tow it up there but we knew the locals could get their
29 stuff up there. So the idea was and eventually we
30 were going to get more engineers but initially they
31 didn't have the material up there so there really
32 wasn't a lot of work for them to do. We had the
33 horizontal engineers and I think their squad leader
34 was kind of horizontal and vertical but he didn't have
35 all his, like, vertical works there yet, another squad
36 because the material wasn't there for them to do any
37 work. So basically he was going to be there and he
38 was going to direct the local national guys what he
39 wanted them to do.
40

41 **LtGen Natonski:** This is the staff sergeant?

42
43 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir. Staff Sergeant Baldwin
(b)(3), (b)(6) I think his name was.
44

45 **LtGen Natonski:** He was kind of the foreman for the
46 establishment of the----
47

Oscar 1 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir, and he had done it before, I think more than
2 once. So he was kind of our guy that knew the plan,
3 he was going to lay out you know how they were going
4 to move the dirt and kind of make it where the LZs
5 going to be, where they're going to put the foundation
6 to put on the buildings.
7

8 LtGen Natonski: Do you think there were sufficient U.S.
9 troops at that position?
10

Oscar 11 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir. From what I thought the threat was, I
12 definitely thought it was enough. Now I know, in hind
13 sight, I think the question of do you want more troops
14 is kind of-- everyone is like, yeah I want more
15 troops. Obviously I can do more with the more people
16 I had. But I felt like our security was good based on
17 the numbers we had there.
18

19 LtGen Natonski: When we talked about that, they had really
20 two functions. One, to establish a fighting positions
21 and two, force protection. And given the heat, I mean
22 they were pretty limited, and you eluded to this
23 before, there wasn't a foot patrol that went out
24 except down to the police district head quarters or
25 the police station about 150 meters away but if there
26 had been more troops, couldn't some have been
27 providing force protection to include patrolling while
28 the others worked on their positions?
29

Oscar 30 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, I think it could have been the same principle as
31 Bella, that we had additional troops that we could do
32 that movement.
33

34 LtGen Natonski: And you brought additional troops you got
35 from Alpha Company didn't you?
36

Oscar 37 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) From Battle Company, yes, Sir.
38

39 LtGen Natonski: So you could have gotten them but that's why
40 you went up there on the 12th to kind of observe?
41

Oscar 42 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir. And really the-- a lot of that was getting
43 complicated because of the RIP as well. You know, if
44 I had an additional platoon up there, providing extra
45 force protection which would have been great to have
46 them. I didn't assess that we needed them but I mean
47 it's not like I would have utilized them----

1
2 **LtGen Natonski:** The platoon that might have ultimately
3 replaced 2nd platoon wasn't there yet?
4

Oscar 5 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) No, Sir.
6

7 **LtGen Natonski:** And Task Force Rock was moving out.
8

Oscar 9 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, Sir.
10

11 **LtGen Natonski:** I mean they were getting ready to leave so,
12 in terms of timing, was this an ideal time to
13 establish the COP?
14

Oscar 15 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) I mean in hind sight, sir, if I am looking from this
16 standpoint and looking at it then----
17

18 **LtGen Natonski:** Well in hind sight, but I mean even----
19

Oscar 20 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Even at the time?
21

22 **LtGen Natonski:** Like you said, the troops in the platoon had
23 reservations about doing it with the RIP/TOA, but with
24 everything else that's going on being able to dedicate
25 the assets that need to go in to the establishment of
26 a COP.
27

Oscar 28 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) I think, you know, from my perspective and a lot of
29 the other reasons that the background that kind of
30 built up to wanting to move Wanat, I thought it was
31 important enough to get that done before the new unit
32 came in. You know and I thought the benefit and
33 really moving Bella being part of occupying Wanat was
34 really what I wanted to do for the next unit. I
35 didn't want them to have to deal with that and with
36 that kind of consideration. I wanted them to have a
37 base where they could drive to, that they could
38 reinforce, that they wouldn't be air centric at, that
39 they could you know be supported in more than one way
40 and that's what I saw as Wanat being and I thought it
41 was important enough to do, for us to initially
42 establish that and then have them continue on with it
43 and I didn't see the risk-- I think it's obvious that
44 it wasn't as ideal as if it was in the middle of our
45 deployment, but it was still important to me to get
46 that done for the follow on unit.
47

1 **LtGen Natonski:** You were on the position in the battle. The
2 performance of M4s, SAWs, what is your assessment of
3 the performance of the weapons that were issued to the
4 troops?
5

Oscar 6 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I think, I've heard some rumors about, and I don't
7 know who wrote this or what information they got but a
8 lot of reading things out of the sworn statements from
9 previous investigation was it was a statement of a guy
10 looking for a weapon that worked. And a lot of that
11 was because of weapons being blown up and not weapons
12 being full of dirt.
13

Sigma 14 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6) Combat damaged?
15

Oscar 16 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Combat damaged to the weapons. Now I've seen in a
17 previous fire fight, I've seen a saw--a bullet go
18 through the receiver of a saw and not hit the bolt and
19 the weapon still worked. And I don't know, I don't
20 think that was consideration that weapons weren't
21 working in Wanat. Now I think depending on the
22 volumes of fire that these guys were firing through
23 their weapons that maybe that had an effect on it
24 later on but I wasn't witness to my weapons not
25 working.
26

27 **LtGen Natonski:** You wouldn't have a reluctance to go into
28 combat using those same weapons?
29

Oscar 30 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) No, Sir. The M4 is a great weapon.
31

32 **LtGen Natonski:** I mean the SAW every now and then people
33 would have complaints because dirt and impact on its
34 performance. But if you keep it clean. There was a
35 case that we heard that just the number of RPGs
36 impacting a sand bag position which was all dirt enter
37 the weapon which I attribute to combat damage.
38

Oscar 39 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) The same with a MARK-19, I've had an ambush were an
40 IED went off in some dirt it, flew up shrapnel on the
41 gunner from the rocks stuff and it got dirt inside the
42 Mark 19 and it caused it not to work and they had to
43 basically dust and clean it out for it to fire.
44

45 **LtGen Natonski:** On your recommendation to leave, you
46 recommended-- The reason you recommended that they
47 pull out of Wanat was what?

1
2 Oscar CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Well, there are several reasons. One consideration
3 was that our follow on unit was coming in with and
4 knowing that the situation there had changed and they
5 would need additional forces, at least for a period of
6 time, that I don't think that they had. Two was,
7 because of that activity and that event, regardless of
8 how many casualties happened on each it had changed
9 the dynamic with the civilian population because there
10 were houses that were occupied by enemy that were
11 annihilated, farm land broken up and basically it was
12 almost a start over type of situation, that we had to
13 start over in that area. And that was something that,
14 I don't think, based on the support that the local
15 people had of the enemy was, if there's all this area
16 in Afghanistan where we are supported and are people
17 that are welcoming us in, why are we trying to force
18 ourselves in this situation, where if we pull away, we
19 say, listen, you guys obviously don't want to take the
20 risk of supporting us that you're allowing all this
21 enemy activity. Because I mean there was a lot of
22 local fighter support of those.
23

24 LtGen Natonski: You don't think that some of those families
25 were just intimidated and forced to leave?
26

27 Oscar CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I think there was definitely that group as well, but I
28 think there was a core of highly trained fighters that
29 conjured up local support of trigger pullers or ammo
30 bearers or whatever and because they do that and
31 they're all willing to say, "Roger that, I'll do it."
32 That is something that doesn't necessarily need our
33 attention when there are people that have secured
34 their area and they say we're welcoming you to help
35 us.
36

37 LtGen Natonski: With the Nuristani, I've heard they are--a
38 number of people have said that they were a breed
39 apart from the norm that you would see. Their
40 presence actually went down south at Wanat away but I
41 don't know how far.
42

43 Oscar CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I mean there was like any border there's kind of a
44 mixture, I had an interpreter that was (b)(6) and his
45 wife was Nuristani. But in Afghanistan, it's almost
46 like a Caucasian and an African American. That is how
47 different they see the Nuristani culture.

1 Historically, they are always the last to kind of to
2 adhere to whatever the rest of Afghanistan is doing.
3 But regardless, that was a reason to say, let's go
4 help--we can help so much more population going west
5 of Camp Blessing. That's really where we think we
6 need to move the unit.

7
8 **LtGen Natonski:** So really in terms of coin operations you
9 didn't garner much success in the Waygal based on the-
10 ---
11

Oscar 12 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Not at that point, Sir. I think eventually that can
13 happen but with what I was talking about before we
14 still have yet to support their province and the fact
15 that we are trying to support a district that doesn't
16 have support from their province is just a frustrating
17 thing for the U.S. Army to have to do because it's
18 basically you to them and not their own government to
19 them. So we thought that if we continue to facilitate
20 the progress in the Konar Valley coupled with they
21 don't have as many soldiers as we do, that's what's
22 going to be best for them.
23

24 **LtGen Natonski:** When the attack began, Apaches responded, do
25 you recall, did you hold them, check them while an
26 artillery mission was going on? That's come up.
27 Whether they were delayed. I've heard the
28 responsiveness was good but that they may have been
29 held south of Blessing until a fire mission was out.
30 That wasn't anything that you----
31

Oscar 32 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) The only thing that I remember, Sir, when I was
33 processing some targets, whether it be aircraft, fixed
34 wing aircraft or artillery, we would hold them, I
35 would hold them like below the 7 - 8 Northern and they
36 were told from the fires desk to stay below a certain
37 level so they can shoot those artillery missions.
38

39 **LtGen Natonski:** Which makes since, I mean ----
40

Oscar 41 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) But I was never aware that like there was a little
42 bullet big sky----
43

44 **LtGen Natonski:** That you were aware of that because----
45

Oscar 46 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) No, not that I'm aware of, sir.
47

1 **LtGen Natonski:** What was the artillery's effect on the
2 enemy?
3

Oscar 4 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I think, it's kind of hard dealing with 155s to say
5 that going to be our----
6

7 **LtGen Natonski:** It's high angle first too.
8

Oscar 9 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, it's not a, it wasn't like a danger close
10 comfortable feeling I would have with an Apache danger
11 close. So a lot of those targets were----
12

13 **LtGen Natonski:** Were they on the other side of the valleys
14 at some of the positions?
15

Oscar 16 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) They were to the northeast and then to the kind of
17 southeast is where I concentrated a lot of them.
18

19 **LtGen Natonski:** Southeast?
20

Oscar 21 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, southeast of the main position. And that was
22 basically because I knew that's the side the OP was
23 getting most of their fire from. I would call these
24 targets where I wasn't thinking that they're going to-
25 ---
26

27 **MG Perkins:** Where did you say? Up on the hill?
28

Oscar 29 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Up on these ridge lines here because I didn't think I
30 was necessarily going to effect the guy in a close
31 fight whatever was controlling him from a distance
32 would be disrupted.
33

34 **LtGen Natonski:** You're talking up here?
35

Oscar 36 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, kind of like-- this goes up in here and then on
37 this side, it's-- the high ground was actually up this
38 way.
39

40 **LtGen Natonski:** Right up in here?
41

Oscar 42 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah.
43

44 **LtGen Natonski:** On the other side of this creek?
45

Oscar 1 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Yeah, on this hill side up here. And you know a lot
2 of that was, I was going to utilized Apaches to the
3 closer in, on the buildings here and then ----
4
5 LtGen Natonski: Where did the B1 hit?
6
Oscar 7 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): The first two hit, Sir, right here because that's
8 where we initially got hit from and it started to die
9 down so my mind set was----
10
11 LtGen Natonski: You first got hit from here and not the
12 village?
13
Oscar 14 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): No, Sir. It was the village but as we were fighting
15 them back with direct fire, it died down and in my
16 mind they were moving out that way, down to the low
17 ground either north or south but I said, "Hey, if we
18 put a couple of drops in here that's going to get a
19 deep reaction from them." Even if it doesn't hit them
20 they are going to be like ----
21
22 LtGen Natonski: What about the F-16s?
23
Oscar 24 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't remember where they came from, Sir.
25
Beta 26 LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): B1s on the west?
27
Oscar 28 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Yeah, I know I was just calling grid targets.
29
30 LtGen Natonski: Did you call anything literally danger close
31 on the village?
32
Oscar 33 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Not with fixed wings.
34
35 MG Perkins: Just the Apaches?
36
Oscar 37 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Just the Apaches. Here and----
38
39 LtGen Natonski: This is the hotel----
40
Oscar 41 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Yeah this is the-- this might be an old picture but
42 the bazaar right here and then--this is part of the
43 bazaar and then this is the hotel and that's the
44 mosque. This is the hotel and we basically did Apache
45 run from here to here and then they also did it
46 basically on this side of the OP because OP was right
47 in here.

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LtGen Natonski: They really brought it up close.

CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, Sir.

LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): On the east side?

CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, Sir.

LtGen Natonski: They marked the positions with smoke?

CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, Sir, green smoke and yellow smoke.

LtGen Natonski: Was it daylight?

CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. And they-- I mean you could tell it was different because normally an Apache you know he can do a gun run from far away and those guys came right on top of us. I knew they weren't trying to--I don't think it was a popular call, you know great but they mitigated it by being really close when they actually fired.

MG Perkins: So as I recall once you went up to Wanat you never personally talked with battalion at all? Battalion XO? Battalion Commander? Anyone like that?

CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Not--No, sir. Not that I recall. I mean I think we were reporting just to the TOC. They were given information----

MG Perkins: Yeah. To the TOC----

CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): But it wasn't like a Commander to Commander--let me give you this----

MG Perkins: And so when's the last time you spoke with Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6)? Was it when you were back in Blessing during the 15-6.

CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): Yeah. I mean I talked to him before I went up there and told him I was going----

MG Perkins: And could you sort of just convey the nature of that conversation?

CPT (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't remember specifically after----

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MG Perkins: So, this was after you pulled out of Bella?

Oscar **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) We pulled out of Bella and I said----

MG Perkins: So you give sort of an update of how Bella went?

Oscar **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6); Yeah. I did, sir, and he knew that there had been no activity since that engagement. I think I recall telling him hey I'm going up to Wanat.

MG Perkins: So probably by the time you talked to him since you were back at Bella Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) and the ground movement had already occurred to Wanat.

Oscar **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir.

MG Perkins: So would you say your general characterization to Battalion was things are sort of going according to plan? I mean more or less.

Oscar **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. I think that's what I conveyed to them. Like hey, Bella is closed down. Now we're concentrating on Wanat where I am going to go see how much they have built up----

MG Perkins: Were there any issues at all that you brought up to him before you went to Wanat? Like hey, you know--
--

Oscar **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I really think because of the nature of the previous engagement and moving Bella, I mean that was really where our focus was----

MG Perkins: So, that was your big concern?

Oscar **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) We were just talking about kind of what happened and the circumstances of it all. But, it wasn't like specifically----

MG Perkins: So, it's accurate to say sort of your last one-to-one conversation with Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) was one of a general update and there are no critical issues at hand? No big challenges?

Oscar **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Right, sir.

1 **MG Perkins:** I mean Afghanistan everyday is a lot to do but--
2 okay. Would you say then once you got up to Wanat,
3 were you talking to Captain (b)(3), (b)(6)? Did you talk to
4 him at all when--once you got up there?
5
6 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) I did. I talked to him within the first twenty
7 minutes of being there, sir. And it was to relay----
8
9 **MG Perkins:** And then was he probably relaying----
10
11 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6); Specifically what Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) said to me and I
12 think it was all stuff that he was aware of----
13
14 **MG Perkins:** What do you think was sort of the nature--let's
15 say on the 12th, would your Company have given sort of
16 an update to the Battalion on the 12th, an overall
17 assessment situation.
18
19 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, and that was because I was only--we only had FM--
20 --
21
22 **MG Perkins:** Understand.
23
24 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) took whatever the Battle Update Brief
25 was that day. He was relaying that.
26
27 **MG Perkins:** So what do you think the nature of that
28 conversation was? Whatever your CUB or BUB or
29 whatever it is the evening of the 12th? What do you
30 think the Battalion's understanding was of what was
31 going on at Wanat?
32
33 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) I think it was a general update that, hey, there is
34 still continuing improved positions. You know we need
35 to get--you know we got fuel up there today and some
36 water. We're still trying to get water up there
37 through local National trucks. And, just a kind of a
38 general the commanders up there----
39
40 **MG Perkins:** Any--so nothing red flagged and no discussion of
41 any Black status on any class of supply passed to
42 Battalion?
43
44 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) I am not aware of whether the XO told him that.
45

1 **MG Perkins:** But, your understanding is no. I mean you did
2 not relay him to tell Battalion we're black on
3 anything?
4

Oscar 5 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) No. I did not say that.
6

7 **MG Perkins:** What--during Rock Move and on the 13th, how many
8 Platoons did your Company have? Because I know
9 earlier on, one of your Platoons had been detached,
10 but how many----
11

Oscar 12 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Oh I had three at this point, sir. Because earlier in
13 the deployment, I had gotten another Platoon from
14 another Company attached.
15

16 **MG Perkins:** So, you had three Platoons and so where were they
17 all then? 2nd Platoon was Wanat?
18

Oscar 19 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) 2nd Platoon is at Wanat. 1st Platoon is at Camp
20 Blessing. And then my weapons platoon, which was also
21 a 1st Platoon, they were at COP Michigan, which was a
22 separate----
23

24 **MG Perkins:** Okay. So they were on COP, so it was just your--
25 back at Blessing you had the 1st Platoon who had just
26 come from Bella, correct?
27

Oscar 28 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir.
29

30 **MG Perkins:** And, what was their mission? I mean any specific
31 mission? Were they sort of doing refit/rearm?
32

Oscar 33 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) They had taken--well I mean they obviously refit for
34 like a day, but they had taken on the mission that 2nd
35 Platoon had previously had and I had rotated my
36 Platoons out of different COPS during the deployment.
37 They would do like a 5 month tour--what I called it,
38 to Bella and then they'd be 5 months at Blessing when
39 they'd switch. So they had previously done this
40 mission at Blessing and they understood that----
41

42 **MG Perkins:** So what was the mission at Blessing?
43

Oscar 44 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Blessing was really concentrated on the area west of
45 Camp Blessing towards CHAPADARA, so there were several
46 towns along the way that had projects working, you
47 know bridges and things like that----

1
2 **MG Perkins:** So they would have had Battle space, I mean----

3
4 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, they had Battle space that they----

5
6 **MG Perkins:** Were they involved at all with the force
7 protection of Blessing?

8
9 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) They--yeah we ran the gate at Camp Blessing. You know
10 and I think it was like three guys at a time that
11 would basically do all the searching of all workers
12 that would come----

13
14 **MG Perkins:** So, I mean basically all of your Platoons were
15 missioned out on the 13th?

16
17 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. And then the secondary mission of the
18 Platoon in blessing was they were available for the
19 Battalion Commander to utilize for a QRF,
20 reinforcement----

21
22 **MG Perkins:** So, if you had come to the conclusion once you
23 arrived to Wanat that you needed another platoon for
24 security or something like that, you would have had to
25 gone back to the Battalion and been relieved of a
26 mission that you had to free up a Platoon? In other
27 words, it's not like you had a platoon hanging out?

28
29 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, I mean they would have had to prioritize----

30
31 **MG Perkins:** Right, I mean you would have had to gone back to
32 Battalion and they would have had to re-prioritize and
33 it was--you did not have somebody that you could just
34 pull without informing Battalion?

35
36 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Right. And really, I mean, the Battalion utilized
37 that platoon, but they didn't necessarily like to
38 because that was the security around Camp Blessing
39 itself.

40
41 **MG Perkins:** No. I mean I understand. But, it was not your
42 decision alone to make--to re-mission.

43
44 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) No, sir.
45

1 **LtGen Natonski:** Where did the platoon that went up to Bella
2 come from when you were closing it down? You
3 mentioned you were reinforced position.
4

5 **MG Perkins:** Is that from Battle Company?
6

Oscar 7 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) That was from Battle Company, sir. From the Korengal
8 Valley.
9

10 **MG Perkins:** And then they went back after that?
11

12 **LtGen Natonski:** And that was--and that had to be approved by
13 the Battalion Commander?
14

Oscar 15 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. I mean I just asked--I asked him for
16 additional forces and then he told me where he was
17 going to grab them from.
18

19 **MG Perkins:** With--As you were kind of going into this CONOP
20 here and taking a look at it, did you spend a lot of
21 time with the Battalion 2, sort of getting his vision
22 of the situation and all that?
23

Oscar 24 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) I mean yeah, we would--it was kind of like a continual
25 thing. I would go see him all the time since a lot of
26 times I was located with him. Or if I went on a trip
27 and I stayed at Bella for like a week, I would come
28 back and I would talk to him. But a lot of his
29 information, I mean everybody was getting because it
30 was in the daily INTSUM. And sometimes I would get
31 like a read-ahead. Like I would look ahead----
32

33 **MG Perkins:** Did you talk to him once you came back from Bella
34 and before you went to Wanat?
35

Oscar 36 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) I don't recall, sir. I want to say I would have.
37 But, I don't know if it was like hey let me sit down
38 with you for two hours and talk about this. I would
39 stop in there all the time and talk to him.
40

41 **MG Perkins:** At what point made--discuss this, one of your
42 concerns was when we were talking about it--TOW
43 missiles and then the contracted construction
44 equipment and so there was a plan and a timeline you
45 need by a certain time, when did you find out that it
46 was not going to arrive at the time that you thought
47 it was going to arrive?

1
Oscar 2 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I know previous to when the mission got changed----

3
4 MG Perkins: What mission?

5
Oscar 6 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Basically like the time frame for it. Because we
7 originally thought we were going to be on there--be
8 there on the 3rd of July--with that's why the local
9 national equipment was lined up to show up that day---

10
11
12 MG Perkins: Does this say the 3rd or is this----

13
Oscar 14 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) That's the updated----

15
16 MG Perkins: Okay that's updated----

17
Oscar 18 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) So, it was like we just got--not that we were going to
19 sit down and do the brief and they said no we're
20 pushing it----

21
22 MG Perkins: When did they change it from the 3rd to the 8th?

23
Oscar 24 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I want to say a couple days before. But I know,
25 basically, the lag time between when we changed the
26 dates because of weather, we could not get the word to
27 the local national chain, whatever their communication
28 was, to prevent them from going up there. So, I don't
29 remember if they actually went up there and then they
30 left again or that they got word in time----

31
32 MG Perkins: Did you get anything, word, about a route
33 clearance mission not being conducted first and that
34 was preventing the contractors from going up or
35 anything like that?

36
Oscar 37 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) No. I don't remember that, sir.

38
39 MG Perkins: So, you were tracking if there was a confusion
40 on--or whatever on the part of the contractor because
41 the time line----

42
Oscar 43 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) And we had to tell them----

44
45 MG Perkins: And you push it back to the right, so is it
46 accurate to say then that when you went up on the 12th,
47 you actually did not expect the contractors to be

1 coming until later because you had already known
2 previously that they had been misinformed? You know
3 what I'm saying?
4

Oscar 5 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Well, it was one of those things where we had wanted
6 them to show up, but it was like day-to-day
7 information. We had told them, you know, the same
8 day--we told them the 8th and then they didn't show up
9 and it was like every day they would tell us hey they
10 didn't show. Hey they didn't show up. And either
11 there was some miscommunication or they weren't
12 getting there somehow and we were trying to figure
13 that out through the contractors----
14

15 MG Perkins: So when you left to go to Wanat on the 12th,
16 you're--to get an understanding of your expectation of
17 the contractors, your understanding at that time was
18 we're having a challenge with this and it's being
19 worked?
20

Oscar 21 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir----
22

23 MG Perkins: But, you didn't know when they were going to----
24

Oscar 25 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I knew that we had our Bobcat internal to the Platoon
26 that was filling HESCOS and stuff like that as much as
27 they could and I knew that it was like every day the
28 contractor was supposed to show. And every day----
29

30 MG Perkins: So, it's like he'll be here tomorrow. He'll be
31 here tomorrow.
32

Oscar 33 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) He'll be there tomorrow. And then they'd call. He's
34 not here.
35

36 MG Perkins: So you get up there on the 12th. You see what's
37 being done. You talk to Lieutenant Brostrom. When
38 you first talk to Lieutenant Brostrom, when you
39 arrived there on the 12th because you haven't seen him
40 for a couple of days, what is the nature of his update
41 to you?
42

Oscar 43 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) I mean we basically--he kind of showed me his CP and
44 stuff and like he was like hey I dug this in,
45 whatever. We looked at his Concept Sketch. He kind
46 of showed me what he had penciled out or whatever.

1 And then we just basically walked the perimeter
2 together.

3
4 **MG Perkins:** Did, and this is kind of sort of a commander to
5 commander thing, which I think is one of those point
6 with these during combat is trying to get their
7 feeling, was it when you get up there did he say, hey
8 sir, you know we've been short on water. I wanted to
9 dig this. I haven't gotten it dug. The contract
10 equipment is supposed to be--it's not here, so there's
11 no way I can defend this thing. We're red. We've got
12 to stop the mission now. Or was it here's what I'm
13 doing. I'm working through this. Like this. I have
14 a handle on it. I know I'm painting sort of two
15 divergent pictures, but I'm trying to get an idea of
16 you as a commander coming on a scene of--you know with
17 a subordinate commander, how did he convey his overall
18 situation: manning, morale, equipment, etc.

19
20 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I mean he was a very "can-do," I'm accomplishing the
21 mission, type thing. Now he did point out that like
22 hey we couldn't fill these big HESCOS because the
23 Bobcat can only reach this high. And, I'm like okay I
24 got that we're going to get these----

25
26 **MG Perkins:** But, that's data. What I'm interested in is his
27 analysis of what that means.

28
29 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) I mean he was motivated and he wasn't--he never said
30 like this is----

31
32 **MG Perkins:** He did not convey that he was in an untenable
33 position or un-needlessly risky position?

34
35 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) No, I mean, we talked stuff that was already in our
36 plan about putting in our OPs and stuff like that. He
37 said, hey I plan on going up there and RECON'ing it
38 tomorrow. I said okay. That's good. Let's get them
39 pushed out there. Let's try to get the ANP up there
40 where they need to be. That was all part of what I
41 thought they were going to be doing.

42
43 **MG Perkins:** Understand. Did he ever convey to you his
44 dissatisfaction that he has been trying to get
45 information to you? He's been trying to get
46 information to the Battalion? No one's paying
47 attention. No one cares what's going. This sort of--

1 you know what I'm saying? That his needs are not
2 being met. Did he convey that to you--that no one's
3 paying attention to him--his needs not being met?
4

Oscar 5 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) He did not, sir. It was a----
6

7 MG Perkins: Did he convey the other end of the spectrum? Did
8 he--when he talked with you, did you get the opinion
9 that you and he are sort of in sync and that this
10 thing is coming together. Battalion is doing all it
11 can. Brigade is doing it's all. Did you ever have a
12 sense the Battalion was not doing all it can for you
13 or Brigade is not doing all it can for you? Or
14 Division is not doing all it is supposed to do?
15

Oscar 16 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Not at all, sir. Never. I mean--I think it was--the
17 feeling that I got is that you know that he was
18 excited to see me because either he felt more
19 comfortable or he was just trying to show me what he's
20 done and kind of his positions and stuff like that.
21 But it was never a, you know, I'm not getting this,
22 I'm not getting that, I don't feel supported. Nothing
23 ever like that. It was--he was always focused on what
24 he was doing and not necessarily what he was lacking
25 in any way. I mean, Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) did say, hey this
26 and this--we need help with this and this and I made
27 that call before I even walked the perimeter to
28 Captain George----
29

30 MG Perkins: And what did Captain Papa (b)(3), (b)(6) say after you sort of
31 articulated what----
32

Oscar 33 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) He said, hey I'm working it. I'm trying to get this
34 water up here with these trucks. You know I'm trying
35 to do that. It was very--you know, I'm--we're working
36 the Pesh resupply and I think he, at that point, went
37 ahead and did like an emergency resupply request for
38 water which would have occurred like the next day.
39

40 MG Perkins: Did Captain Papa (b)(3), (b)(6) every relay to you that
41 Battalion was not doing all they could leaning forward
42 in the saddle and road blocks at division, et cetera,
43 like that?
44

Oscar 45 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) No, sir.
46

1 **MG Perkins:** So you arrived there on the 12th. You take a look
2 at the situation. So, you have a pretty good
3 assessment of what it is and then you're there all
4 throughout the Battle on the 13th and now we have the
5 luxury to armchair quarterback this and look back. If
6 it was a perfect world, and you could have had all the
7 HESCOS filled and the equipment show up, I mean and
8 your 12 Predators, etc. like that, in your mind, what
9 would have made a significant difference on the 13th,
10 looking back at it?

11
12 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) During the actual battle, sir?

13
14 **MG Perkins:** Yeah. I mean just the whole outcome of what
15 happened on that day.

16
17 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) I mean I think obviously if we, in a perfect world, we
18 would have already been pushed up in a better OP
19 location. We would have had the ANP in their OP
20 locations and that would have given us more of an
21 indication----

22
23 **MG Perkins:** So, the OP that you had sort of right outside the
24 wire, if it had been up on different ground?

25
26 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Well, I think we needed to keep that position, but if
27 would have been at the OP that we were leaving to go
28 RECON, then that would have changed the fight. Now,
29 armchair--hind sight, I think is a dangerous place to
30 operate, here----

31
32 **MG Perkins:** No, I know. A lot people have to operate there--
33 --

34
35 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) The other risk, you know I would have had a squad plus
36 on that position if they would have got hit and there
37 would have been casualties up there, then that would
38 have been a whole----

39
40 **MG Perkins:** No, I know. That's the problem that you get----

41
42 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) But, ideally, yeah we would have had more HESCOS
43 built. I think we would have occupied some of the
44 buildings, at least initially. My, you know kind of
45 decision----

46
47 **MG Perkins:** But, that was never your plan, though.

1
Oscar 2 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) It was not, sir. If we're in a perfect world, you
3 know, I would have said let's occupy this. I was too
4 considerate of civilian considerations.
5
6 MG Perkins: Well, you were operating sort of within the COIN
7 philosophy, is that right?
8
Oscar 9 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir.
10
11 MG Perkins: We talked about the five guys up on the hill. So
12 you have previously occupied vehicle patrol bases,
13 correct?
14
Oscar 15 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir.
16
17 MG Perkins: About how long did you occupy those that they
18 were set up?
19
Oscar 20 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) We had stayed at Wanat over night before----
21
22 MG Perkins: And was that literally just vehicles, or did you
23 ever throw a wire or anything like that?
24
Oscar 25 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, they would throw out wire like to control the
26 road. Just a couple spools on the front of the HMMWV.
27 Never like a perimeter. We would just, you know, pull
28 up vehicles. They would have--you know they would do
29 basically kind of like R and S patrols around--during
30 the night and stuff. And then we would do that to
31 change up our pattern. You know if we went to do a
32 leader engagement, sometimes we would hang out until
33 after dark and then go back. Or we'd stay--we'd come
34 there in the middle of the night to kind of see, hey,
35 what's going on at night and then go back in the
36 morning----
37
38 MG Perkins: So, when you establish a Vehicle Patrol Base, I
39 mean it, although much less than in a COP, it is
40 inherently designed to be defended?
41
Oscar 42 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir.
43
44 MG Perkins: I mean Vehicle Patrol Base is not synonymous with
45 not-defendable, correct? So you had basic----
46
Oscar 47 CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) Right. No, it's designed to be defendable----

1
2 **MG Perkins:** Basic SOP, security wire, or something like that?

3
4 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) You know a target set, which it was really kind of
5 already established because we had a big Battalion
6 overlay, but yeah they would--we would do all of that.
7 Put out a Claymore. Things like that.

8
9 **MG Perkins:** Have you ever been contacted by any of the
10 parents of the fallen Soldiers?

11
12 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Other than my relationship with them, like calling
13 them initially within, you know, 24 hours of them
14 being notified, other fallen Soldiers that I have, I
15 **Cypress** have relationships with Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) parents, they
16 actually sent me a letter when this happened, and I've
17 talked with his brother who just graduated West Point--
18 he's actually in Ranger School right now. And,
19 (b)(6), we--she came back to Italy, I mean
20 because that's where she lived, and we had talked back
21 and forth. But, I've never been--I've never had
22 contact initiated by them, even though I gave my e-
23 mail out and I say----

24
25 **MG Perkins:** Is there any sort of guidance you all were given
26 if Soldier get killed in Combat, how you relate to the
27 parents? What if their parents call up and ask
28 questions or something like that? Or--what kind of
29 information do you generally pass and do they--was it
30 SOP that you did a 15-6 on every Soldier killed?

31
32 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir.

33
34 **MG Perkins:** Was that released, generally do you know, to the
35 family?

36
37 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir, they would get briefed--redacted version
38 briefed to them----

39
40 **MG Perkins:** And who would do that? The Battalion or Casualty
41 Assistance Officer?

42
43 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah, usually the Casualty Assistance Officer. As far
44 as when I would call them, I would, you know, offer my
45 condolences and I would ask them if they had any
46 questions concerning their son's death, in any way.
47 And I would answer their questions until they didn't

1 have any more questions. I mean that's obviously
2 good, but in another way, being so close to when it
3 happens, a lot of them might not even remember talking
4 to me. Or they would ask, you know, they would repeat
5 questions, you know, throughout the conversation. I
6 have had very positive reactions and then hysterical
7 reactions.

8
9 **LtGen Natonski:** Were you calling from Afghanistan?

10
11 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir. I've called from Bella on a satellite
12 phone. I'd always try to do it within 24 hours and
13 **Diamond** Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) would always want me to call them
14 before he made his call to them. So I would--we would
15 have a, kind of like a knowledge sheet on each one of
16 them. Where they are from when they were born----

17
18 **MG Perkins:** So, you would all----

19
20 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) And then I'd put my comments in there. I'd talk about
21 the phone conversation I had with their parents. You
22 know how it went. I'd type that up----

23 **Diamond**
24 **MG Perkins:** So, Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) would have that before he
25 spoke to a parent----

26
27 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) And then he would have that and he then he would fill
28 his portion out and then he would pass it further up
29 if people--I guess if additional commanders call.

30
31 **MG Perkins:** Alright. Thanks.

32
33 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. **Oscar** Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) You are ordered not to
34 discuss the testimony you've provided today with
35 anyone other than members of the investigation team.
36 You will not allow any witness in this investigation
37 to talk to you about the testimony he has given, or
38 which he intends to give. If anyone should try to
39 influence your testimony or attempt to discuss your
40 testimony, you are instructed to notify Lieutenant
41 Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) or Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) Do you **Sigma**
42 understand that?

43
44 **CPT** (b)(3), (b)(6) Yes, sir.

45
46 **LtGen Natonski:** I just want to thank you for your service to
47 the United States and to the Army and for what you

1 continue to do today. Appreciate all that you've
2 done. Thank you.

3
4 **CPT**(b)(3), (b)(6) Thanks a lot, sir. Appreciate it.

Oscar

5
6 [The testimony closed at 1741, 29 October 2009]

CERTIFICATION OF VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

Subj: TESTIMONY OF CPT Oscar
(b)(3), (b)(6), USA, GIVEN ON
29 OCTOBER 2009, AT FT. BENNING, GEORGIA

In accordance with section 0214 of JAGINST 5800.7E, I certify
that the subject transcript is an accurate verbatim transcript.

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

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army
Judge Advocate

2 DEC 2009

DATE