1 [The testimony began at 1039, 21 October 2009.]

2 **LtGen Natonski:** Echo Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6), I'm going to read a little
3 script here before we get started. I am Lieutenant
4 General Richard F. Natonski, United States Marine
5 Corps. I've 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 at Wanat, Afghanistan, during July 2008. Major General
9 David Perkins, United States Army, has been assigned
10 as the Deputy Investigating Officer. Lieutenant
11 Beta 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 The testimony provided today will be recorded,
15 transcribed, and included in the report of the
16 investigation. Based on your testimony, we may also
17 prepare a separate written statement for your review
18 and signature.

19 Prior to coming on the record today, you signed a
20 Privacy Act statement. Is that correct?

Echo 21 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

22 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. Your testimony will be made under oath
23 and you will now be sworn.

Beta 24 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Please stand and raise your right hand.

25 [The witness was sworn]

Beta 26 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Would you please state your full name, spelling
27 your last.

Echo 28 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): It is Echo (b)(3), (b)(6), last name is spelled (b)(3), (b)(6)
29 as in (b)(3), (b)(6). Echo

30 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): What is your current unit and that unit's
31 location?

Echo 32 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I am currently the commander of the 2nd
33 Battalion, 502nd Infantry at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Beta 34 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): You are currently a Lieutenant Colonel in the
35 U.S. Army?

Echo 1 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes.

Beta 2 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): And in July of 2008, what was your unit and that
3 unit's location

Echo 4 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I was the brigade executive officer for the 173rd
5 Airborne Brigade. We were at FOB Fenti which is at
6 Jalalabad Airfield in Afghanistan.

Beta 7 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): As the Brigade XO, can you describe what your
8 duties were?

Echo 9 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I had a pretty wide range of things. I was Chief
10 of Staff in many cases, and did a number of different
11 things; primarily focused on synchronizing the staff.
12 I worked future plans. At that particular point this
13 summer, my biggest focus at that point in time was
14 actual redeployment. I was, essentially, had taken
15 that fight on to allow the current ops guys to focus
16 on current ops, near future ops. I was working RSOI
17 for 3/1 and working our rearward move. I had a small
18 cell that was doing that. I had the whole redeployment
19 thing. Also, a lot of my time was spent doing joint
20 visitors bureau oversight. We had a huge number of
21 DV's coming in, and so I kind of ran some oversight on
22 that. Then I worked at long range planning inside the
23 Brigade. And then staff synchronization to make sure
24 the staff was answering the commander's information
25 requirements.

Beta 26 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): You mentioned the cell working the RSO&I piece in
27 retrograde. How big was that cell?

Echo 28 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): We had the four back at Bagram; we had probably
29 two or three people there at Bagram that was working.
30 Then I had two to three people inside the future plans
31 cell out of Jalalabad that was really working the
32 flow. We rarely ran that largely through XO
33 synchronization. Each of the Battalion XO's had folks
34 who are plugged into it. We had aviators that are
35 plugged into it. So we had this RSOI cell. And then we
36 would have internal discussions and meetings and we
37 had also the CJTF 101 staff. They had an RSOI cell. We
38 would do about a weekly--I think it was about a week
39 or biweekly with--with the ADCS out there as far as
40 our RSOI status. We would actually give them a status
41 update in a briefing to the assistant division
42 commander on the status of the flow.

So it was a fairly small cell actually working that piece. We did merge with current ops at times because a lot of the moves were rotary wing and so it was a precious asset over there. We were synchronizing our fixed wing moves and our rotary wing moves and doing that in and around combat operations. What aircraft we did have were dedicated to deliberate operations as we would call them. And those were planned missions and what we could get on the side to facilitate our--the RIP actual flow of movements because some of these FOBs are air only. Sensitive items have to move by air or a secured --U.S. secured ground convoy. So with the sheer number of FOBs and COPs and OPs it's a pretty big movement--moving piece thing. So we did--we tried to keep as few people engaged in that because it was the middle of the summer which is prime fighting season. So we try to keep the minimum amount of staff horsepower. So I took a lot of that on and told the 3; hey, you don't need to worry about RSOI or the CHOPs. Don't even worry about this kind of stuff. We work everything, and, only if we have a conflict, would we really come in and try to ask for assets or current ops focused to solve a problem. Once we got into the day-by-day moves and the aircraft flying, they all had to be tracked within the Brigade AO. And so the current OPs were clearly on it. But, hey, are you putting 20 PAX on this day, 15 PAX on this bird, and who's in what RSOI tents. We took all of that initiative stuff away from the current operations floor. It was kind of done on the backside. That was a large focus at that time. We really started planning that back in--I became the Brigade XO in mid-February, and probably mid to late March we started planning RSOI in some detail.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): You became the Brigade XO. Where did you come from?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I was previously the Battalion S-3 in 1st battalion, 503rd. We were attached to 4th Brigade of the 82nd down in Paktika Province. So I was the S-3 down there. Then I came out midway through the rotation.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you work in their redeployment piece in June, early July timeframe--that was your focus of effort it. Is that fair to say?

Echo

LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): That would be my largest operational focus at that point in time because we had already produced what we call our 90-day letter which is kind of--we have produced, essentially, a FRAGO for the brigade which covered planned operations. What we really call kind of steady state operations from then until the redeployment. So we have focused on staff effort on doing Mangahar Inc., emerging district plans, our police training program. Mangahar Inc. was really a civil military program--huge in scope and concept; Civil Affairs integration, and where we saw planned maneuver operations. And we had issued that, I guess probably in the March/April time frame. I don't remember, but we wrote this pretty lengthy FRAGO and had distributed that, briefed it at commander's conference with all the battalion commanders and really had essentially set the conditions for what we saw as a major scheme of maneuver being up until we--until we departed through RSOI.

And then it became really managing the smaller actions under this big CONOP umbrella, sir, if you will. Brigades can't have--I guess, doctrinally, campaign plans. But that is essentially what the 90-day letter is. It is a long-term overarching FRAGO; gives commanders guidance on a number of various priorities and then subordinate units, obviously, because there is a lot of bottom up. Each of the battalions had different fights in their areas. And they would go ahead and do their plans and CONOPs underneath inside that commander's intent. So we had already issued the 90-day letter which was my staff focus synchronization piece; as far as, getting that piece put together and making sure it was going. Then it was really making sure the staff continued to work those initiatives that were at the brigade level that required a lot of brigade resources and planning. One of those--you know, line items, if you will, inside the concept of operations was the whole RIP/RSOI thing. So, at the time of this, that was my big focus.

Beta

LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Do you recall a line item in the 90-day letter that addressed the closure of COP Bella and the establishment of a new emplacement?

Echo

LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know if it was a line item, but I do know that I came up to the brigade on 12 or 13 February. There

had been discussion prior to me getting up there about force protection. At a number of bases, the fact was, essentially, we had a phrase called being COP'd into inactivity. We had so many combat outposts that you had no maneuver forces. You secured your base and you force protected it. If you wanted to move any kind of size; if you wanted to move a platoon somewhere, you really had to be careful because when you looked at your troop to task ratio of just securing all your different FOBs, you had very full whole maneuver units that could partner up with Afghan forces in considerable size to make sure that you are safe and you could get out and engage and do some of these different missions, whether they be planned as more lethal operations or nonlethal. So we kind of had this COPing yourself in to inactivity. We had to make trade-offs.

It had been a topic of discussion before I came up there. When I came up, the brigade commander was on his midterm leave. So I had 30 days from when Colonel Hotel (b)(3), (b)(6) was the acting Brigade Commander as the DCO at that time. My first 30 days were without Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) Delta in country. So I was learning this brigade's area of operation because I hadn't been there. He came off leave 13 or 14 March. I made a note and I picked out--we had a huge staff stand up. The first thing he did when he came off leave was a big commander's update, battle update, from his subordinate commanders on what was going on. He sat down with the staff pretty much the next day and we held about a five to six hour meeting. I got 68 specified tasks out of that. The number one task was, "What's the way ahead for Bella." So clearly he came off of leave and it was the number one thing on his mind. And so it was, if not a written line item in the 90-day letter, it was certainly clearly communicated to everybody that he was concerned about--I've got it right here--the first thing that he talked about was his number one travel priority was to Bella. His second was to Surey which we got shot at a lot; and then Goscha, which was a newer FOB that we put up. It had not seen many issues at all so he really dropped that one. So it was really Bella and Surey that were his two priorities on 7 March.

His first priority session to discuss the way ahead on Bella; his second priority that he talked about in that was get more LRAS, Shadow coverage, ITAFs up on hills in the areas. He talked about getting more troops for different

OPs that we had. And what he briefed us on was putting together; hey, we need OPs, guard towers, more ASG, HLZs on hills and all that. That was his number one thing. His second thing was start looking at developing our helicopter positioning forward at Asadabad so we could do better FARPing and we could pre-stage helicopters at Asadabad so that they could influence the Pesh Valley, the Konar Valley, and obviously the Waygal Valley would be included in there.

Beta

LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): Where were the assets at that time?

Echo

LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): Generally at Jalalabad. You wouldn't, because of the rocket threat at Asadabad--because it still did take fire, you wouldn't permanently put your aircraft at Asadabad. But we wanted to build, no kidding, good fueling pads there. Usually it is crushed gravel. So we wanted to put, no kidding, concrete down so we could stage more aircraft and expand the HLZ to do that. His third priority right here is that I need a brigade reserve. These were some of the things as he came off EML that he really talked about to us. And so we started a number of different things; whether it was RFFs for additional platoons, whether it was trying to get the theater tactical force which is a battalion that worked in our area. These were all certain staff initiatives that we did. Then we also started looking at our FOBs and our COPs and OPs. Later on, though not in this 90-day letter, I know one of the projects that we put together was a FOB force protection team which was to put the AJT Brigade First Sergeant on it; a couple other individuals; our assistant Brigade Engineer.

And they actually went around and started touring all our FOBs. It was an outside assessment from a Brigade Team on existing FOBs. And this is not with Wanat, but it was all in the scope. How are our towers? Are our walls right? What are our ECPs like? I have my own little checklist of stuff that we ended up building into the force protection assessment team. It was kind of a structure that went out to existing FOBs and started taking a look at it from the outside. It had red team focus. We put somebody from the 2 shop on it as well. We wanted outsiders to come look at the FOBs. Because one of the things--once you live on that thing for a while, you clearly start to look at it and it's your home and that's the way it is. There is outside eyes on it.

The 101st, when they came in, put the division IG--they actually did the same thing. They put a FOB force protection team together to start looking at FOBs and how they were currently manned and equipped.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) When did you guys put that together?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): The FOB Force/Pro Team Concept, 15 April.

LtGen Natonski: And what were Colonel Delta (b)(3), (b)(6) specific concerns over Bella?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): The specific concern on Bella was it was in a very vulnerable position. I have never physically been to Bella. All I have seen is imagery. That was probably to me not serving in that battalion and being outside the brigade area. I was never afforded the opportunity. His was, it was predominately--like many of the FOBs that were establish prior to us coming there and even some that we had before, they are predominately put where the population is which is in low ground. And Bella was a tricky place to fly into, from what I understand, because one way in, one way out. It was a very canalizing terrain area. A couple of areas leading up to it--that we believe--made it a little higher risk for air ambush, sir. You could actually, physically, probably shoot down helicopters as they transited through some of the valleys. So there was always a threat to a dismounted attack.

At the time, from what I remember, is we were more concerned with air ambush, and I don't know why. I don't know if that was the threat screened in the reporting that we had. But, generally, more of the indirect fire attacks, we were worried more of--we were the CJTF when redwings happened in the Korengal and the two 47's were shot down from Amadshaw. I am not sure if we lost another helicopter. We had a helicopter either do a hard landing or got shot-down up in Nuristan up in Sabers AO. So we were concerned about helicopters, sir, primarily. Bella, to get any supply in there, sir, you really had to fly it or it had to be such low priority that you could contract out to locals and then it would--supply would generally get there, but you couldn't really depend on the timing of it. You would push a bunch of supply. You could plan on some of it not making it. It would generally make it there, but it wouldn't be on the

timelines that you really wanted. So you could push your non-sensitive, non-critical stuff. But ammunition resupply, dependable fuel--if you wanted to resupply dependably, all your COMSEC change over stuff would have to go in that way, and any kind of sensitive items or personnel moves for rotations, everything was by air into Bella. And it was because of the closure of Ranch House, which happened before I got there, Bella was the farthest northern outpost in the Waygal Valley at that point in time. So that was the end of the line, so to speak. So he was concerned about it. Was it in a good enough location; was it in the right location? And largely from a, moreover, force protection standpoint, I do believe that we had some threat reporting that there was intent to attack Bella. But there was intent to attack Bella, Chowkay, the Korengal Belt outpost, Monte, any of the FOBs in there, there is persistent threats.

Beta

LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6) When--you talked about working with the CHOPs regarding getting aircraft to execute the RIP, to bring forces in and take forces out. Who had the priority?

Echo

LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): The priority for aircraft--we had kind of--it was really set at the CJTF level as far as what your--we had a Task Force Out Front which was a multifunctional aviation kind of hodgepodge. It's a Cav formation, but they had, I want to say, a company minus of Apaches. We had four 47s; we had some 60s. They were an OH-58 outfit. They cobbled this thing together, and then their maintenance support element was pulled off the two Cavs and somehow composed to operate into all of that; tremendous asset. But we didn't have DS really, as I remember it. We didn't have DS of those aircraft. We had some say into it, but when you look at phase maintenance and you look at timing of aircraft and blade hours and all that other kind of stuff, you are literally managing frames by day, by mission.

And then you--if you wanted assets out of Bagram, you would have to ask for it. So, in general, what we tried to do during the RIP process was use Bagram based aircraft to fly in support of our RIP and use as few task force out front aircraft as we could because we kind of had, almost DS of those aircraft. So those aircraft, whatever was available, and on any given

day, for deliberate operations, you could plan on a 2-2-and 2 package. That was a huge package in Afghanistan; two AH-64s, two 60s, and two 47s. And that was a pretty big package for air. RIP birds, we would get two 47s flying out of Bagram. Or what we would do--or we would fly fixed wing into Jalalabad and do missions out. You also had ring routes which were CJTF controlled by the JLC or the J-4, however their air integration, JLC/J-4 integration was. You had standard ring routes that were used to fly around. So we maximized every single seat that we could on the established ring routes.

And, in some cases, we bumped, you know, we would bump some equipment or something like that off of a ring route to put more packs on. Then we would try to load equipment onto something else. But it was done in conjunction with the JLC which had, you know, through the AMR process. So you would AMR these aircraft and go. You would AMR for deliberate operations and that would get approved, really, at the division level. And then we would AMR for RIP moves as well. Then it was a big balancing act on what took priority and then what the elimination cycle was.

For the most part, most of our day moves were all done with Bagram-based aircraft for our RIP. We didn't do a lot of night rip moves unless it was essential for force protection because they were tricky places to go to. So there are a couple places up in Sabers AO were you really had to, kind of, fly those things at night. So you had to time the illumination cycle as well for when you could fly safely if you had to do a night-infill of troops. So you had just the geography of it. Whose pot of aircraft you were working, where the strategic flow was coming in to man us, and then trans-loading and making sure the C-17s to the C-130s to the 47s and all that was hashed out. You had to do it in timed space, take care of illumination, and make sure you stayed away from deliberate operations.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): When you bumped up against deliberate operations, let's say you wanted to move a hundred packs tomorrow, and deliberate operation needed the assault support aircraft to support deliberate operation, who got the priority?

Echo 1 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Deliberate Op. If you had troops in contact, or
2 you had something that needed to go, we would hold
3 people until all of that. We had RSOI tent space for
4 680, or so people, and we would just stack them up
5 there. We would hold guys at Bagram because of better
6 facilities and a safer area. We would just hold
7 flights. I don't remember us delaying it, and I could
8 go through, and I don't have my little sheets as we
9 went through it, but I do not remember a lot of times
10 where we had to delay. But there were occasional
11 times, for whatever reason, aircraft maintenance, or a
12 TIC or something where escort aircraft would go and we
13 wouldn't fly that RIP mission. We would start going
14 through--and, can we ground load these guys from here
15 to here, and then--because we prefer to fly them by
16 air, but we started looking at, can we bring the
17 convoy back with MRAPS and load extra folks on and do
18 it by ground versus air. We did that in a number of
19 cases with moving some folks by ground instead of air.
20 I think generally more in the Mangahar area with our
21 STB. But deliberate operations or troops-in-contact
22 situations absolutely took the priority with air
23 assets, with fire-support assets, with attention in
24 the talk. That was the clear focus.

Beta 25 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Who would tell you? Would it be the CHOPs?

Echo 26 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): If we were going to bump an aircraft or a packs
27 move or something, then the CHOPs had the authority to
28 do that. It wasn't an issue. (b)(3), (b)(6) and I had Kilo
29 a good rapport. He was a lieutenant colonel when I
30 was a FROC'd lieutenant colonel at the time. But he
31 had command of what was going on on the current OPs
32 floor. He knew where we could make stuff up if we
33 needed to on the RIP. The fact of the matter was, and
34 Delta Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) had said it, hey, if we need to slide
35 our toe to the right because we get behind because of
36 what we are doing, then we will slide it to the right.

37 So there was no pressure to get the RIP done on
38 time or anything. In fact, we had built an aggressive
39 model and shopped it to division where we had built
40 ourselves slack in there. We had preserved 2503
41 because it was the toughest area and had extended the
42 time of the RIP so we could take fewer forces out of
43 their sector than they needed to.

So we frontloaded everybody else, kind of left Rock in there a little bit longer. We thinned the lines a little bit later in the operation to give them more right-seat/left-seat vibe because they clearly had the most kinetic battalion fight. And so that was part of the plan. So, technically, if you looked at their LAD and everything, by the CENTCOM business rules, they might have gone out a couple days earlier than we had them--or maybe a week or something--but we extended that time out with troops and key leaders in task force Rock as far as their redeployment cycle.

The down side, as I remember it, was since we did push them towards the backside, there was a point in time which we did have to make some pretty big moves all at once or over a three to four to five day period where we had cleaned up everybody else deferring to keep Rock in sector. And then it was time to pull Rock out. But as I remember those days, I think they were post the actual TIC at Wanat. It was after the attack when the bulk of their troops had come out. So they had already pulled some ADVON out. But we purposely kept their numbers extremely well and took other, not non-essential, but we took STB, we took BSB, we were pulling those guys to allow Rock to stay in later so that we could actually thicken that force during the RIP as long as possible.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you, on the retrograde, did you ever use task force out front's 47s to affect the RIP.

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I think they flew a couple times. I would have to look at the details of the aircraft. They were built into the plan because you burn so much blade time from Bagram. I mean, it is 45 minutes just to J-bad from Bagram. And then to push up into a valley, you would basically go a crew-day. We could maybe fly out of Bagram, hit J-Bad with one load, pick up guys who had already done their RSOI, and do maybe two shuttles out to different FOBs, depending on where they were, and then get back to Bagram in the crew-day.

I want to say, though, we used more of their UH-60s than their 47s if we used them. I want to say we tried to keep the 47s doing the ring-routes; especially because of the Saber, the Korengal, as I

1 remember it, the Korengal was the ring that went up
2 there. Saber really serviced that one. Some of the
3 rings the folks out at Bagram would fly. But the
4 Korengal I think pretty much fell on Out Front. Some
5 of their aircraft were included into the ring
6 structure that existed. So they were a participant in
7 the logistic ring scheduling as well. So they had
8 those requirements as well as supporting deliberate
9 ops. So they--we would, certainly, if the Cam guy was
10 going and dropping off supplies to Cam Dash Libert
11 Keating, Wanat, all those places up in the northeast;
12 Libert, which was the COP that was just abandoned that
13 was almost overrun or overrun; the most recent one.
14 We would go in heavy with supplies and then we would
15 back all the people on those. So I would say some
16 aircraft were some places, yes. 47s were what you
17 would take up there.

18 If we had spare PAX--we were moving RIP PAX when
19 Bayonet 6 would do a battlefield circulation, it was
20 Bayonet 6 on that aircraft with as many people with
21 bags and baggage. I mean, Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) would just Delta
22 grab another ruck sack and throw it on his lap. He
23 was jammed in there. Even if he was going on a
24 battlefield, we maximized every seat we could. I
25 mean, literally, it was--I was on people if we were
26 busting a seat on a fixed-wing aircraft or a rotary-
27 wing aircraft because you are never going to get that
28 seat back. So we maximized that use. I can't tell
29 you how many times we used Out Front aircraft. I want
30 to say we stayed away from Marines as much as
31 possible. We stayed away from tasking out any other
32 type of aircraft.

33 **LtGen Natonski:** Can I interrupt for just one second. I
34 apologize. Just so I understand the task
35 organization, Out Front was a cobbled together Task
36 Force, aviation task force, which came from----

Echo 37 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6)**:** Correct.

38 **LtGen Natonski:** ----CAB assets?

Echo 39 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6)**:** I am certainly not an aviations expert, so.

40 **LtGen Natonski:** Right.

Echo 1 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): The core of it, the headquarters, was 2-17 Cav.
2 So you have an O-5 commander, and an S-3 XO.

3 **LtGen Natonski:** Right.

Echo 4 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): They had some of their UH-58s. Some of their 58s
5 were working down in Solerno with Task Force No Mercy,
6 which was the other battalion out of that CAB. So you
7 had one CAB there and, I want to say, a NATO support
8 element that was out of Kandahar. And I think, if I
9 remember correctly, they had taken some maintenance
10 out of that, out of Kandahar, some maintenance out of
11 the Bagram and Solerno pieces and put together,
12 essentially--because there is only, what, two
13 maintenance--there is only two DS maintenance
14 companies. I am not an aviator, so I don't know how
15 they are. But they had to build a separate
16 maintenance cell to be able to sustain this battalion
17 because it exceeded the capabilities.

18 Really, you would have had one maintenance cell up at
19 Bagram and one up at Solerno. Those were the two big
20 ones. Then Task Force Out Front was this third thing.

Beta 21 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): They were not DS'd to you guys. They also
22 supported other maneuver brigades?

Echo 23 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): They didn't support any other maneuver brigade
24 because they worked specifically out of Jalalabad and
25 based on flight legs. They would occasionally fly
26 down somewhere into--only in a DB move out of a COP or
27 something out of sector. So they flew in support of
28 the 173. I don't know if the relationship was--well,
29 I guess it would be DS.

30 **LtGen Natonski:** But you mentioned Bagram aircraft, and that
31 was from a different organization?

Echo 32 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Correct. A different organization --

33 **LtGen Natonski:** Is that from a combat aviation brigade?

Echo 34 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): The brigade had control of that. Like their
35 hunter I believe, or their warrior alpha was
36 controlled by the aviation brigade up there.

37 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay.

Echo 1 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): They owned that. But they still could task, and
2 there was tasking within the big airframe utilization.
3 So they would task both Task Force No Mercy and Task
4 Force Out Front to support these reigning logistics
5 routes as part of the allocations of assets. They
6 wouldn't fly all of the assets out of Bagram.

7 **LtGen Natonski:** Out Front's commander, who was his next
8 higher?

Chestnut

Echo 9 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): (b)(3), (b)(6) worked for the--whoever the----

10 **LtGen Natonski:** Aviation Brigade?

Echo 11 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): ----the Aviation Brigade Commander was.

12 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. And your AH for your QRF came out of
13 Task Force Out Front?

Echo 14 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Out of Task Force Out Front, correct, out at
15 Jalalabad.

16 **LtGen Natonski:** Thanks.

Beta 17 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): I am assuming you are familiar with Operation
18 Rock Move?

Echo 19 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

Beta 20 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): When was the first time you learned that there
21 was a "go" decision for the operation?

Echo 22 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't remember the particular date. We had
23 talked about it during commander's updates and the 3 I
24 know had talked because we do some cross talk. He was
25 talking with the battalion commander and the 3 on
26 timing and synchronization; because we had a series of
27 longest mile, rock penetrator, and then a couple other
28 different things. And then Rock Move came up as--
29 towards the end. I would say, usually, we would
30 brief--the CONOP would come up to Bayonet 6 for a pre
31 brief ahead of briefing the ADCO probably 96 hours
32 ahead of execution. It was kind of that we tried to
33 do it in that 96--we would probably go up to Bayonet 6
34 in the 96 hour mark. And at 48 hours out it would go-
35 -we would brief the ADCO. That was standard practice
36 for all CONOPs.

Now, the 3 would get a draft copy of this or would get--would have initial cuts in the timing and synchronization of that. We would know about that, you know, that would be ahead of time. And then we are looking at the illume cycle and looking at, okay, deliberate operations. What operation does Saber have currently planned? What does the STB have planned? Is Pace Setter up here, which is the National Guard Battalion? Do they have a competing requirement? And so that would be in the 234.

But we really lived by the illumination cycles because there is always--just flying at night, you had to have the right moon angle and the right percentage of illumination to do night, air assaults; which is what we would do if we had high risk type missions. So you would really look at, okay, what is our high illumination window. And then you would try to sequence your aircraft packages based on missions and priorities and what the enemy was doing to you at the time inside that illumination cycle.

So you would have on the planning side, at the 3 shop side, the 3 and the CHOPs would be balancing a high illumination cycle at least 20 to 30 days out. They would start projecting what CONOPs are we going to be able to do inside that illumination cycle. And that was--now, I didn't share that kind of Ops Synch kind of meeting. That was more of the 3 and all that. And they would give way down to the boss--usually inside this campaign assessment or within a cub cycle. Like, here is what is kind of on the deck, or we're looking at Rock Move during the high-illume cycle from here to here. And so I probably know that the no kidding CONOP had a name Rock Move, we're going to establish--we're going to do this operation to get establishing a combat outpost at Wanat, you know, 20 days out; unless the commander would come up with a specific concern or issue during a CUB. I had gone through my notes and found one note that said, you know, hey, Rock issue on Wanat. I didn't write down who it was that it could have been; engineering, it could have been timing, it could have been personnel, or whatever.

But if the commander would come up during a commander's assessment which is done at least every 72 hours, they would have that if there was something

that went point to point, I would have visibility if there was point to point traffic between the commanders. But, in general, inside an illumination cycle, I would know it was coming. I don't have any particular note to me that says, hey, I knew. But in early June I would know that Rock Move was going to happen during the next high-illume cycle.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Would you then have to--from your RIP cell, would you then have to adjust your plan at all?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): If there was a competing asset. So I would look at what Rock Move was, what were the assets required for air package-wise. I didn't consume any ISR whatsoever with RIP. It wasn't an issue where day moves, largely admin, unless it was going up into Korengal, which was the night move. And then we had a couple of night things where we would move troops too.

I don't know if you are familiar with the topography, but if you have the Korengal Outpost, you have OP Viamoto and Restrepo. There is a couple OPs that you want to air right into with a 60 for example to move people in. So in those cases, we still would require any kind of ISR. We would have a chase aircraft, AH-64, or something that would go in there. But no I don't remember pulling--we would look at what the deliberate op plan was; we would look at what our steady state aircraft were that would work around it; and then we would lay those requirements out. I don't remember anyone coming back and saying--there is a general grumbling all the time that there is not enough assets. I mean, we briefed Chairmen Mullen when he came that, hey, there is not enough assets. We briefed Com ISAF, General McNeil; hey, there is not enough assets; General Schloesser when he came in; not enough assets; General Loveless when he came in; not enough assets; give us more. We all wanted more. There was a general grumbling with, yeah you want more. Those concerns had always gone, but I don't remember, specifically, I don't think I had any indication--now, Scott Himes, the Battalion S-3, would Theta talk with (b)(3), (b)(6) If they had discussions about, hey, I need more aircraft, or fewer aircraft, I don't know. I know that (b)(3), (b)(6), who was the Rho Battalion XO there, and I would go over the RIP schedule and he would tell us if we needed to adjust it. We didn't have a lot of flexibility because it is

1 really one-body-in equals one-body-out for the most
2 part.

3

4 Although, we could delay stuff, I don't really
5 remember ever talking about anything that was a show
6 stopper; like, hey, we need to talk to the commander
7 about these assets. You pretty much planned your ops
8 knowing that you could get a two, two, and two package
9 isolated. It happened, the same thing, down south.
10 Here is your air package; you would like to do an air
11 assault mission, here is your air package. It is two,
12 two, and two.

13 And then you would have to find the tactics
14 on the scenario and build your operation around the
15 available air versus, hey, I really need 10 UH-60s and
16 I need four 47s and I need six 47s to do this
17 operation the way I want to do it. You would brief it
18 and brief all these assets. You would say, okay,
19 Echo that's great. (b)(3), (b)(6) you're the Battalion S-3,
20 that's great. You get a two, two, and two package.
21 How do you want to alter your plan? Or do you want to
22 use the air at all? Down south on a case, we made a
23 decision that, hey, that doesn't do me much good so we
24 are just going to do all ground. So two, two, and two
25 is a standard sort of package that you would prepare
26 and plan off of.

27 **LtGen Natonski:** Is it fair to say, from the Brigade's
28 perspective, a deliberate op would have a higher
29 priority than the RIP?

Echo 30 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6)**:** Yes.

31 **LtGen Natonski:** And from a Battalion's perspective, if they
32 were conducting a deliberate op, would they routinely
33 get the air they requested to support that op?

Echo 34 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6)**:** No. It is a going joke with everyone that you
35 never get the air that you wanted, and you'd never get
36 the number of days that you would want.

37 Rock had, for example, their template they wanted
38 to do a series of six sequential air assaults
39 throughout their area over a five or six day period.
40 Well, up in Saber we had a mission that they were

1 going to do. So at the 3 level, I would sit there and
2 say, Rock, you can get four days so you can hit four
3 HLZs, and then we have to switch the air over to here.
4 There weren't the aircraft. You could AMR against
5 what was left at Bagram, but you weren't--you could
6 cancel a ring. You could take ring aircraft,
7 essentially. And many times, that was the case. I
8 remember having discussions with (b)(3), (b)(6). Kilo
9 Division would come back and say, okay, you can have
10 those two aircraft, but you are going to cancel the
11 CONOP. What do you want? Do you want to resupply
12 your soldiers, or do you want to do this deliberate
13 operation with all these aircraft that you want.

14 And so then it becomes an issue, especially
15 with that. Hey, what is our fuel status--and this is
16 generally in Saber's AO, not in Rock's--what is our
17 fuel status, how are our boys doing up there, and all
18 that. And, generally, it would be a, hey, look, we
19 have to pare our ops down because we are not going to
20 burn the aircraft and leave the guys unsupplied. So
21 that was traditional. There is always torque
22 straightened, as far as you never got assets you would
23 like to have.

Beta 24 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): According to Task Force Rock's CONOPs, there is
25 two aviation slides on the assets that were going to
26 be required to move out of Bella and move forces and
27 assets up to Wanat.

Echo 28 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Right.

Beta 29 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): It appears that what they planned to use was the
30 ring aircraft, the fresh resupply aircraft, in support
31 of their deliberate operation; vice, as you said,
32 requesting up and then being told no and then
33 adjusting?

Echo 34 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yeah. We control, I mean, we control the Pesh.
35 I mean, it is our own ring. So we can determine what
36 goes on the Pesh. So it is an AMR'd ring. That's
37 standard out there. That is what--that's like the
38 straight op--you could either have the Cam guy or you
39 could do a deliberate op or you couldn't. So in this
40 case, it might have been a frag or the Pesh resupply
41 where they were going to use the Pesh resupply to do
42 that portion of it. And, therefore, there were no--
43 I'd have to look at 9 July, what other aircraft were

doing. How many were in phase maintenance? How many were off the table? Were we running the RIP birds most likely out of Bagram versus using someone else's aircraft, but, yeah, if it truly is as the CONOP says, a Pesh resupply, then what we did is we probably flew a potion of the Pesh dropping at Asadabad, maybe even at Blessing. And then they would go and do the lift out of Bella and Wanat.

So you would have a combo mission as well. So it is not necessarily one or the other. We would go into can you add a leg to the Pesh resupply? How much time available do you have? We were always trying to buy more blade time. You know, we tried to add legs to the resupply. We tried to speed up the ground time; the speed at which we could load so we could possibly get another turn to a place.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Was it common to--you know, this CONOP likely developed several days--for at least 96 hours before, to plan to use the resupply versus --

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): No. Not a deliberate op. A deliberate op, if you were doing Rock Penetrator or if you were doing a combat insertion, an air assault versus an air movement; hostile terrain, possible enemy on an HLZ, a non standard HLZ move, you were most likely going to use deliberate planned aircraft and you were going to go through that. So using a Pesh resupply aircraft to do this move, no; it is more of an administrative kind of flavor than a deliberate op. But if you were--when we were doing air assaults up onto the hills, you would have AMR'd aircraft. It would not be combined with the resupply.

Moving supplies from OPs and different places after an initial air assault, you might frag a resupply bird or something to do that. But this was--if it truly was the Pesh resupply being frag'd to move the stuff, because, you know, Paul has got to establish HLZ. So you are picking up supply. And while you don't have an established HLZ at Wanat, you have a ground force securing it that was there. So you had HMMWV's, you had people, you had pathfinder, you had somebody to receive that aircraft. So it is not a no eyes, no terminal guidance on the HLZ when you're landing. So it is more of an air movement. In which case, it--this would not be out of the ordinary,

but it clearly shows we are conserving airframes for whatever reason. I would have to look at what--and you can pull that. You can look at a AMR for the day. You can pull the record of everything that was flying that day and what it was missioned against. I would have to see that to tell you. But this would not be normal or standard for an offensive operation or a maneuver operation to pull--you know, to rename a resupply ring or frag a resupply ring. You would have dedicated aircraft.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): What was your understanding of what was going to take place at Wanat?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): What the--you know, I didn't have a total build planned. I moved one FOB when I was down at 1-503. We did a significant relocation or establishment of a combat outpost platoon size, platoon plus size, and we were planning another one that ended up executing after I left. So I don't know what 2nd Battalion, I don't know what their detailed plan was per se, or exactly what it was going to look like, or the diagram as far as people or supplies and all that kind of stuff. So this thing is about the window that I got on other than, we are planning on going there. Understand that you were going to secure the initial site. We were going to do--and I don't know the sequence--pull out of Bella first, and turn that over, which I think is what the plan was.

We had initially talked very early on more of a simultaneous kind of thing. You have somebody--Wanat is here, you are pulling Bella out--and I think they ended up just pulling Bella out and turning that over to the locals. I don't even remember the timing with how much time went between completely pulling out of Bella and then going into Wanat. But there was more of a--you know, you got, secure this, and then pull these guys out. The plan, as I understood it, was secure Wanat and the immediate area; secure the HLZ; move in some equipment by packs or by ground; move some packs and equipment by air; and then there would be an actual ground move as well for engineering equipment, additional supply; and then pretty much ground after the initial air was being moved. So I understand at Bella there's certain things that you really couldn't truck out otherwise you would have to secure it. And so we had to pull--you know, you bring

1 the air in to bring out the SI or anything that you
2 don't want to leave behind.

3 So that would be an air move out. I don't know
4 if it was--if stuff was out of Bella, and in the
5 sequence--I would have to look at it--I don't even
6 know or remember if the sequence was; pick it up out
7 of Bella, drop some of it because it was going right
8 into Wanat, or if it all came back to Blessing, got
9 rearranged and then launched back out to establish
10 Wanat. I am not sure of the exact sequence.

Beta 11 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Do you know what the end state of operation Rock
12 Move was from your understanding?

Echo 13 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): The end state was to have--was to have a
14 beginning of a combat outpost. And this gets into
15 the--you know, some of the criticism of what is a
16 full-up combat outpost; what's a FOB; and all that.
17 But it was to have the initial foothold of a base in
18 order to get that presence there to begin a
19 partnership with the district center. You had some
20 religious leadership with the mosque that was there,
21 and you had the ANP that were there--that on again,
22 hot/cold, as I understand from their reports; some
23 days were good, some days not; but a fairly sizeable
24 force. You had police with security forces, you had
25 governance, and you had some religious, and then there
26 was a bazaar there so you had some economic activity.

27 Getting, at least, the combat outpost started to
28 get the presence in there so that 1-26, who took over
29 from them, could continue partnership with the
30 government officials and the security and the
31 governance side; push the economic line of
32 development, and, actually, kind of secure the
33 terminus to where the road was going to go. We had, I
34 think--earlier the contractor had stopped on the road
35 because there were threats. There was issues with
36 enemy contact, et cetera--so complete that road that
37 was being built up in there. And it was--in Colonel
Delta 38 (b)(3), (b)(6) stated objective, and I think that was
39 transferred--I don't know if it came out--Colonel
Delta 40 (b)(3), (b)(6) wanted Wanat to be there because it was a
41 much more easily--once that road was complete, it was
42 ground-walk capable. So it had all other--we would
43 reduce our reliance on air. And the location was such
44 that there really--there was the Waygal Valley, and

then you had a Cross Valley. So it was kind of an important crossroads that, you know, could influence the traffic that would kind of go into the Augment District. That was--you know, some of the reports we had--were small bands of guys walking over.

So it was a long stride, at that point, two major kind of routes. And so it would be a great place to have it; whereas, Bella was too far and we believed that we might have actually probably had a seam that was going on that east-west valley. I don't remember the name of it. It might have some fighter traffic through there. So Wanat, still not a great location where the COP was, but more defendable than Bella; better for force protection for the Soldiers; located with the government population, et cetera. And so it was, get as much built as quickly as possible; but understanding that we had to turn that thing--you know, it was going to be turned over to 1-26 to continue to improve.

And that is the process. It is not like you can build a structure, and then come in and turn T and walk into it. It's constantly improving your fox hole. So I think, realistically, and I don't know that it was get that initial foot hold of security and construction going, and then build that thing up. And then, obviously, conduct all operations; all four lines of op; conduct operations targeting each of those out of it.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Well, once Operation Rock Move was underway and 2nd platoon, Chosen, had moved up into Wanat, were you ever aware of the unit experiencing any shortage of materials or equipment?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I know--I think in one--we might have had one CUB or something that said, hey, there is an issue with the, contracted locals. You know, the battalion was working that.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Do you know what aspect of contracted locals? Was it for a particular supply or a particular piece of equipment?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): As I understand it, it was general--and I don't know the breakdown--but it was FOB construction. There was nothing in the Army inventory, at least in

1 Afghanistan, that will fill up a 7-foot Hesco
2 completely; or that will fill a four-footer on top of
3 a four-footer that will give you an 11-foot Hesco. We
4 don't have anything in the inventory that can do it; a
5 SEE can't do it. A Bobcat can't do it. You don't
6 have the altitude. So you could fill it by shovel and
7 it will take you forever. So you really need a High-
8 Ex, which is a brand name--it is a high lift and
9 bucket loader.

10 Once again, I don't know what their contracting
11 equipment list was. But I would imagine it would be
12 for dig assets because, flat out, the U.S. Army does
13 not have a piece of equipment that I know of that was
14 in country under our control that you could fill the
15 top of a Hesco at 11 foot. So you had to go outside
16 to get that type of piece of equipment.

17 So I would imagine that--and I don't remember
18 seeing an individual line item request; hey, I need X
19 number of Hescos. I know the engineer. We had talked
20 about it. We had pushed in a JFOB request for
21 supplies and materials to support the COP
22 construction. There was funding for it. I don't that
23 they----

Beta 24 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Do you know when that went in?

Echo 25 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know. You would have to go back and
26 look. We started pretty early because it takes you 90
27 days, really, just to get something through the money
28 process. So we would go to the Joint Facilities
29 Utilization Board, nominate the project COP Wanat, and
30 put in the requirements and approximate price tag
31 based on design built by somebody. Sometimes it can
32 be very simple; hey, I need a hundred meters of Hesco.
33 And, if we had it in the Class IV yard at the Brigade,
34 we could do that. But we still would have to FUB
35 money to refill that.

36 So, generally, a deliberate design build there
37 would be a packet that would be done and it would be
38 put into the JFUB process. You could do an emergency
39 request, you know, inside the next 30-day cycle, but
40 that was a board that met monthly that you had to have
41 your stuff into. So I know they probably had funding
42 in at least one month in advance because I don't

remember having to do an emergency funding request to support any kind of stuff.

Now, Task Force Rock had local standing contracts as well because we would write contracts to make sure that guys had access to bulldozers and laborers, et cetera, at each FOB so they could constantly hire locals to improve and build and do force protection things. So if they--I don't know if they had as part of their crew that was going in there--guys that they kind of had on retainer, if you will, at Blessing that was going up to do stuff; or if it was completely outside contracted and not from that location. But I don't know what their exact build list was.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): From the 8th to the 12th of July, did you attend commander's updates?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I did.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Do you recall any discussions or concerns expressed regarding ISR coverage for Task Force Rock?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Not necessarily in a CUB. I take some notes, but I don't think--8 July, I don't see if I--I mean, if it was significant, I would kind of write something down. I mean, ISR is always a contentious issue. We have two Pred lions in the company based out of Kandahar. It takes five hours to fly that Pred from Kandahar just to get up to our brigade AO. So half of your fuel tank is gone before you even get control of the asset. You only had two lines of Preds. Shadows couldn't range; tried to get a relay station, another ground control station, to put forward to extend the Shadow range, but then you still had icing problems. We went through--we probably crashed more shadows than anybody else. I know that S-2 was signing high risk waivers to launch those things. We flew--we flew those Shadows as much as we could. We flew them to the margins as much as we could to get coverage.

But Shadow waivers, specifically 9 July, I have got a--two to three turns; Admiral Mullen came on the 10th I think; so I had Admiral Mullen, I had Senator Obama then right about and during this time. I think he came right after it so we planned his visit as well.

Beta 1 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Well, when Admiral Mullen came to visit, what--
2 how did he get around?

Echo 3 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): He would bring aircraft; four UH-60s and two AH-
4 64s.

Beta 5 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): And did they come out of----

Echo 6 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): They would come out of----

Beta 7 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): ----Bagram?

Echo 8 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): ----Bagram. They would come out of that task
9 force. And I think we--I want to say we stole some
10 seats. I don't think a seat went empty; maybe on the
11 admiral's bird.

Beta 12 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Well, for the return trip?

Echo 13 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): On any infill or anything, we would cop as many
14 seats as we could on that one. But he went to the
15 border patrol--he went to the Korengal. So we--I am
16 sure we put a bunch of stuff on it. He went to
17 Asadabad and the Korengal.

18 Let's see, J authorized synch; re-mission--we had
19 a 130 re-mission from moving RIP to do MEDEVACs. So
20 that was a note that I have on the 10th about us.
21 That was an operational divert of RIP birds.

Beta 22 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Perhaps, at a CUB or not at a CUB, did you ever
23 hear any concerns from Task Force Rock regarding ISR?

Echo 24 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): We--I mean, I know we talked, I know we talked.
25 I am not seeing a CUB. 12 July was--or 13 July was
26 our biggest packs move. We had 450 PAX moving
27 throughout the AO at that time. So there was a lot of
28 stuff flying on the 12th itself.

29 But, no, I don't remember--I know I walked into--
30 you know, I heard it went back and forth with (b)(3), (b)(6) Peach
31 Peach (b)(3), (b)(6), our 2, talking with I guess (b)(3), (b)(6) or somebody; Magenta
32 whoever was collection down. You know, I would walk
33 into the talk and he's going back and forth about ISR.
34 And I don't know what day it was, but any operation,
35 any time Task Force Rock lost any kind of asset, you
36 would definitely hear about it in the headquarters
37 very clearly.

Beta 1 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Would the commander ever call about ISR?

Echo 2 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): He would never call me. Would the commander
3 call? I know he would call the 2 and the 3 pretty
4 regularly. I never had--Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) never called Diamond
5 me for anything. So he would call the brigade
6 commander, he would occasionally call the DCO if there
7 was a, you know, a CERP packet or something or a
8 project that he wanted to go; and he would work
9 directly with the 3 or the 2 on those kind of things.
10 So he never called me. So I know there were
11 discussions about--well, there were always discussions
12 about ISR. You know, what is the priority? Where are
13 you going to get it to look? What else is going on?

14 And then if you got a troop in contact situation,
15 anywhere, if the Pred is flying, from Kandahar all the
16 way up to whatever; if there is a troop in contact in
17 Paktika or in Logar or Wardac or Paktia, it is going
18 to probably get diverted and look at that TIC for a
19 little while and then you might get it back. So
20 sometimes, you know, maybe not on this op; hey, Rock,
21 all of a sudden the asset's not there. Where is the
22 Shadow--can't fly, it's iced. You know, then the
23 commander starts going through his mitigations; hey,
24 do I want to do this operation or not. Because even
25 in the summer we would have icing problems with the
26 Shadow based on the altitudes we were flying over
27 there.

Beta 28 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did Colonel Delta (b)(3), (b)(6) ever call division regarding
29 ISR?

Echo 30 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): We would brief it. I don't know if he would call
31 about an ISR asset allocation. I know he would call
32 the O, and sometimes I would be in the office.
33 Usually, I wouldn't, you know, usually I would be in
34 there if he was going point-to-point on stuff; talking
35 with his boss. But there were times that he would
36 talk assets for things. And, generally, (b)(3), (b)(6) would Kilo
37 come in like, okay, sir, we can't do this. We can't
38 make it work with what we have. You know, (b)(3), (b)(6) Theta
39 Peach would be in there, or (b)(3), (b)(6) would be in there, and (b)(3), (b)(6) Peach
40 would go, hey, we have got to call up. I know there
41 have been times--I don't know about this, but I know
42 there have been times where (b)(3), (b)(6) has gone in to see Peach
43 the boss and say, hey, I need your help on getting ISR
44 priority. And the boss would make the TAMP or the

phone call. I can't tell you if it was in response to this or not. Because, I mean, we were running ops every other day. But if there was something significant, you know, commanders would know and, I was in there a couple of times where Bayonet 6 would call up. He would talk to Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) usually. He Palm might call the chief if it was a--he really worked with the G-3 initially where he called Milley, General Milley versus the chiefs. CMO and some scheduling kind of things, he would call the chief. He would be engaged on that.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): When the battle took place on the 13th, were you in the talk.

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): No, I was not.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did you come into the talk any point during the day?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I think I did stream in. I usually ended up--I worked a later shift than most guys. So I would come in later in the day. I'd come in right before the commander's update in the morning which is really kind of mid-morning. And I worked more of a night cycle because I would get everything the commander would dump before he'd leave. And then I would work on that over the night and go down later.

I was not on the, hey, notify the XO list. If there was a TIC or something like that, nobody was coming and knocking on my door. It was the 3 and the colonel and CHOPs would work on that. And then I would get rolled into it unless the boss specifically asked for me. But I was not on the standard notification wake up list. So I don't--and I don't have any notes--I think I went into the talk, pretty much, I think by the time I got in there, the ground, as I remember, eight 64s were already in and out and a ground convoy had been in. And I think we were working the coordination to get the Rock Task--or to get some battalion leadership onto the objective. And then they were starting to work on how to get Colonel Delta (b)(3), (b)(6) in--into the AO.

But there were still some fire missions occasionally going. But I wasn't there for, really, any of the build.

Beta 1 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): At some point after the battle, were you present
2 for any discussions regarding whether to maintain the
3 position at Wanat or to withdraw?

Echo 4 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes. I mean, I had--that was part of one of
5 those things that I do with the brigade commander. It
6 was me and the 3, the DCO, we would do a normal kind
7 of procedure everyday called a close-out. We would do
8 a stand-up meeting and a close-out meeting. And, so
9 usually I'd end up staying after close-out or during
10 the discussion of close-out. That's where we would
11 talk, you know, essentially, a non-standard targeting
12 session. Okay, what's going on? We would be pretty
13 frank and that kind of stuff as far as making
14 recommendations--you know, I guess doctrinally taking
15 our running estimates and giving those to the
16 commander as far as what we see and what we think and
17 things for him to consider.

Beta 18 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Who, to your recollection, first brought up the
19 concept of possibly withdrawing?

Echo 20 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know. I think Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) Delta would
21 probably be the guy; you know, what's the way ahead on
22 this thing? With many things he would say, should we
23 stay; should we go; what do we think about what's the
24 decision with Wanat? I don't think we had that
25 discussion for--I think it was a couple days. It
26 wasn't hours after this thing. It was all about
27 Soldiers, the troops, and fighting the mission. And
28 probably about 48 hours out, as I remember it,
29 division PAO put out a message that said a combat
30 outpost, 173rd Combat Outpost was overrun. And that
31 came out at about--I don't know--maybe it was 14 to 28
32 hours. And that consumed the boss because he was
33 like, holy cow. This one didn't get chopped with us.
34 Nobody asked us for any input; division PAO big TIC;
35 we're still trying to figure out what's going on; and
36 all of a sudden--U.S. combat outpost overrun.

37 So that was the first thing that he was thinking
38 about as, okay, this is not correct, this mission.
39 And he was like; we need to get our IO going. And it
40 is like, okay, there are people up in the Waygal
41 Valley who don't really do radio or TV. It is all
42 word of mouth so there is not too much IO you can do
43 except for that we now have this thing in the news
44 that we had been overrun. And so, I mean, I did work

with him and the two key talking points about that. And that one of these close op kind of huddles. He wanted to, obviously, take care of the guys there. He wanted to get the record straight as we knew it. And he wanted to, obviously, figure out what was going on.

I don't think--I don't know if he had talked to General Schloesser before we had our meeting. You know, kind of, that was the question. I would imagine that he probably through his numerous discussions with General Schloesser and General Milley had already talked about what was the way ahead. It's all a part of the, what's your branch or your sequel plan to this activity. So I would imagine it came up through that. I don't know the exact timing of it. But what do you think is the way ahead on it.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): What were the two talking points you worked on?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): The two things is, one, it was not a combat outpost at the time of the attack because, when you have combat outpost, it implies; guard towers, walls, an ECP, armored, sandbagged, force protected living conditions, hard huts, pits, established sentries, wire, all that kind of stuff. That is what a combat outpost or a forward operating base--to us, when we here a message; combat outpost overrun; this was not a combat outpost at the time it was attacked.

Sure, it was intended to be a combat outpost. It was the quartering party to establish initial security to begin building. But the boss was concerned with the reputation of that battalion and the brigade because they did not have a combat outpost overrun. Well, number one, it was not a combat outpost. It was, at that time, what we would call a vehicle patrol base that was beginning COP construction.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Well, what is a vehicle patrol base?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): A vehicle patrol base, to me, is a number of vehicles that has done a short halt--or, actually, a long halt on a patrol. They have positioned vehicles and positioned themselves in a manner to self secure in the area; and you put out initial security in that area.

LtGen Natonski: What's the doctrinal----

Echo 1 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): There is no doctrinal term, sir.

2 **LtGen Natonski:** ----of the patrol?

Echo 3 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): It would be a mounted patrol, and it would be a
4 halt, actions at a halt, on a mounted patrol; however,
5 as you--a patrol base is a doctrinal term, sir, which
6 is three pointed triangular structure usually done by
7 a platoon; could be done by a company; which is a
8 tactical assembly area once you call it a company. So
9 a vehicle patrol base is a common term for us which is
10 a patrol based activity. You have stopped along a
11 route. You have stopped along a movement or an
12 operation and you are securing yourself for an amount
13 of time.

Beta 14 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Would they have Hescos at a vehicle patrol base?

Echo 15 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): At a vehicle patrol base? No. You would have
16 wire up if you carried it with you. A vehicle patrol
17 base could be nothing more than four vehicles all back
18 to back; people sleeping behind them, et cetera; it is
19 where they have stopped along the route.

20 Would you have Hescos if you had brought in
21 building material because you are doing a FOB or
22 whatnot? Yes, you would. And as I remember from the
23 photos of vehicle patrol base or the initial
24 occupation, you could probably see two or three
25 Hescos. And some of the Hescos that were up there
26 were blown over because they weren't filled. I mean
27 they started staking out where Hescos would be. So an
28 empty Hesco is not a Hesco. It is certainly not an
29 11-foot, force-protected wall with wire on it and a
30 guard tower and all those kind of things you would
31 associate with being a combat outpost.

32 So one talking point was clarifying that this was
33 not a full-up combat outpost; we were doing the
34 initial quartering for this and we were more at the
35 stage of a vehicle patrol base than a combat outpost.
36 That was the first point.

37 The second one was that we had not been overrun.
38 Yes it had been tough fighting, hand-to-hand, enemy in
39 and among our positions; but the unit had not been
40 overrun which, as that was--because those were the two
41 specific terms in that press release that indicated

that the unit had not held their ground. And from all reports that he had at the time--which was before 15/6 or before anything else, that we had guys, they had an OP, we had everybody as incapacitated or wounded at an OP; but that is not--an OP is not the entirety of the outpost. And that was never--maybe it was occupied by the enemy, but we regained control of the area and held the ground.

So overrun in the sense that we saw it when we read it--and this is obviously looking through our eyes back then--was, you know, we were on Pork CHOP Hill or something and we had been pushed off by the horde. And now we are nowhere there and oh by the way, it was a big base with big walls and towers. And that is what correspondents here--because they go from FOB to FOB--oh wow, you had a FOB with all those big walls and a DFAC and all that kind of stuff; and a weight room; and that was overrun by the enemy? That was not the case. This was a very primitive initial defensive position. And while the perimeter may have been penetrated and that gets into, I don't know what the definitions are. But we certainly felt it was a mischaracterization of the actions as we knew them at the time that they had been overrun.

So those were the two things; hey, it wasn't overrun; tough fighting hand-to-hand; hand grenade range, maybe close; we didn't have all the details. But we were not overrun and we were still holding that terrain. And then the first point was that this was not an established combat outpost.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): And you said to preserve the reputation of the battalion and the brigade?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Correct.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Could you expand on that, please.

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): It is a storied battalion. I mean, it seized Corregidor, OIF I, jump into Northern Iraq. There is a lot of huge history. I mean, you are in the Marine Corps, you know the Marine Corps history. I mean, there is history and traditions. And to have a 173rd unit--no one on the watch of the 173rd would, number one, want the reputation of their unit--and I am not talking about just the protection of our Soldiers

which is paramount, but then you have the protection of the unit's reputation; especially considering the fight that we knew at the time that the Soldiers had engaged in in defending themselves. When we had been previously over there, Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) was the J-3 of Delta CJTF 76. And we had a unit from the 82nd that was pushed off Hill 2911 down in the Spara District, and they, no kidding, ditched their weapons and ran off the hill. So that probably plays into the mind of no one wanting to be that unit. And from our accounts, that was not what had happened in this situation.

So it is, let's get the story straight. It is a tough combat outfit with a distinguished history in Afghan rotation; previously an Iraq rotation and a pretty successful one through 14 or 15 months; a lot of fighting unfortunately; but still a good unit.

So he obviously wanted to preserve that. And that particular press report, in some of the questions that he had been fielded--and I don't know where he got questions from--but he was like, people are questioning the unit fought or something like that which is kind of ridiculous. But it was kind of a concern to him.

So I think then when the discussion should we stay/should we go; hey, we had just fought pretty hard for this terrain. It was not a light decision. It was the same thing with Bella. If we leave Bella, okay, the enemy will probably--locally, because it is not like it's going to go on CNN. You know, the enemy is not going to go on CNN as, hey, U.S. abandons COP Bella at the end of the Waygal Valley. I mean, local people are going to know, but it is not a huge IO event. But how doesn't this put us in the wrong term in this area in changing the dynamic for changing the people to align and support the government. Is leaving Bella helpful? Knowing they can twist it however they want to because they did it with a couple places last time in Zabul Province. We left a base because it was only temporary although we had built some Hescos and all that. It was only for a short duration. So we were aware of enemy IO stuff.

So the Bella decision to move out was stilled weighed pretty heavily with the boss. You know, hey, do we stay/do we go? What is going to be a victory.

Diamond

I know it was a concern for Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) because he was not in favor, initially, of doing Bella because of the potential that it would give the enemy for IO that would be counter-productive to gains that they had reported in security development in the area.

So same kind of thing with the Wanat move; it wasn't something that just--okay, let's just all leave. I know he was in consultation with the CG or at least the ADCO on the decision to stay or go. That wasn't going to be for us to really answer. I mean, we talked about it; what are the pluses and minuses? IO victory--hey, we just paid a pretty big price for it.

But, also, looking at the situation, the RIP is coming. The engineering equipment didn't get there. There isn't much to even leave. There was I think maybe three or four Hescos that were partially filled. They were four footers that had four feet of stuff in them. Other ones had enough to weigh them down so they wouldn't blow over. And there could have been more than fifty meters or twenty five meters of Hesco. So it really wasn't much to abandon there. There was a latrine that was built, a couple of dugout holes; so it wasn't as if we were leaving a big base.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Was the incoming unit's leadership present at that point?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I think we had the ADVON. I know they sent their CHOPs. Villanueva, I think was his name. I would have to look at it. They had sent their CHOPs very early to do, really, to start learning the battlefield. They didn't send him over to really facilitate RIP. We got a little bit behind. They sent their brigade S-4 over to do RIP, but he really wasn't very good. So we ended up running a lot of their RIP kind of stuff for them. But they brought a guy over, specifically to shadow (b)(3), (b)(6) in the CHOPs. Kilo And he also worked--and then they had a guy that went into our future plans. So they started working all that kind of stuff as well.

I don't know if Colonel--I don't know if Colonel Gemini (b)(3), (b)(6) was there or not. I don't think he was on the ground during this time.

Beta 1 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Do you recall them being consulted about the
2 withdrawal?

Echo 3 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't think so. I think it probably--I don't
4 know. I don't know where he was in time and space.
5 If he were present there, he certainly wasn't in the
6 room when I think we had the one discussion that I was
7 involved in which was just a close-out; hey, what do
8 we do. You know, what are your opinions on this and
9 the pluses and minuses of it. I don't think he was on
10 the ground, so I don't know if he was consulted or
11 not.

Delta

12 I want to say, Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) may have been;
13 hey, I need to talk to--it's been a year. I don't
14 know. I don't know if he said, hey, I want to talk to
15 Gemini Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) about this; or that we have stuff to
16 talk about too. I think he was more engaged with
17 division as far as what to do than he was really
18 thinking of the incoming unit and what they were doing
19 or what they were interested in doing.

Beta 20 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Okay. Before the execution of Operation Rock
21 Move, were you aware of any input from the incoming
22 unit, incoming brigade?

Echo 23 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Oh yeah. We had a tremendous amount because we
24 had--they were looking at reallocating the TTF;
25 potentially returning it not from this theater
26 tactical thing, but bringing it up to RCEs. So we had
27 gone through a series of things. Okay, what do we do
28 if we--no kidding, that organic battalion, or the
29 organic battalion--because we were chopped, 1-503 was
30 chopped down to the 82nd. What happens if they get
31 their battalion back? Because they were talking about
32 bringing in this Task Force Cincinnatus or something
33 that was going to be bigger and able to hold some
34 ground. So they might be able to free up a battalion.
35 And get their organic battalion back. So we went
36 through a detailed process with us and then talking
37 with the Task Force Duke on where would we put the
38 force? And we really wanted one battalion east of the
39 Konar River, which would put almost two more companies
40 of combat power into the Korengal, Pesh, Waygal area
41 for 1-26.

42 We started doing plans and started doing designs
43 to build up--they--name is ANA base on the east side

of the river--but to build that into a battalion FOB. We started doing design planning; we put in a JFUB request for it planning on getting an additional infantry battalion that would work for Duke. So they'd actually have their two infantry battalions working for them. We started working the whole plan and consultation for where they would go. We were doing that for them still back in Hood. They would have to go to core headquarters because they didn't have SIPR in their brigade headquarters. They would go to core and we would talk back and forth on where basing would go. And then we would talk about stuff. And I know we did consult them because there was also Combat Main. It was a base called Combat Main that was between Asadabad and it was called a vehicle patrol base and it consisted of a Hesco wall that was a warm base, vehicle patrol base. It had Hescos, it had some semi-permanent facilities, but it was basically nothing more than, probably, I don't know, a speed bump out there on the route that they would go and occupy when you were doing patrols. But it was fairly hardened. And then the ANA kind of maintained security on it as we would roll into it and move on.

But Combat Main would usually have a squad or a platoon minus at it. And we got rid of Combat Main ahead, and that was all done in consultation with Task Force Duke as far as; hey, Combat Main is going away because that is going to free up another almost platoon's worth of combat power for you that you don't have to hold that base now. The conditions around it, when it was done, it was done to achieve a specific effect along that route because of IED threats. IED threat along that route generally went away so we closed that one base down.

We were working with them on their task organization and where they saw themselves going and making sure we were building B-huts at--force protected B huts at different places and we were planning for their success. That was something that me and the Brigade Engineer were heavily involved into. We had to get land rights to expand certain FOBs and COPs because we were planning for success that we were going to get this additional battalion in there. I know we did close one and that was done in consultation with them.

Beta 1 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Do you recall consulting with them about a Bella
2 move and a Wanat establishment?

Echo 3 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Not specifically. It would be under the umbrella
4 of, hey, what are the bases. I know Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6), Gemini
5 and I don't know if it was on his PDSS or after he had
6 come over. But he was not a fan of continuing to keep
7 some of the northern places in Saber's AO. He was all
8 about pulling out of Saber's AO. We had the Afghan
9 government saying, no. We need a presence up here in
10 Kamdesh and, in fact, they wanted it all the way up to
11 Barge Metah which would be completely air only. And
12 they wanted a presence in Barge Metah and the Nuristan
13 government was like, we have to have a presence; have
14 a presence. And division was like, hey, you guys need
15 to plan for putting something in Barge Metah. We were
16 like this is a bad place. I know Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) was Gemini
17 not in favor of that one. It wasn't going to get
18 resolved on our watch. But we included him in that
19 one. It was like, hey, this is another drain on your
20 force protection and your force numbers that is
21 coming. And this is topped down by the government of
22 Afghanistan wanting a presence here.

23 We were real shaky on it. We had done missions
24 there. But it was only temporary and then we would
25 come out. But they wanted a permanent presence. It
26 was--so we had discussions with them. Did we have a
27 specific meeting or anything? No. But in the whole
28 entirety of the lay down and troop to task and number
29 of FOBs and platoons that you could actually mission
30 that weren't stuck on force protection; I know those
31 decisions went on; and because their task organization
32 and their strength was different than ours.

33 We have a rigger platoon because we are an
34 airborne brigade that they didn't have. That gave us
35 a tremendous ability to man guard post and gates and
36 things that that brigade didn't have. We were at
37 about 107% in the brigade on fill. They were
38 deploying at 93 to 95. So they just had a person to
39 foxhole issue. So we were looking really at it. Hey,
40 can we shut bases down just so they could maintain the
41 existing ones because they are coming in here short on
42 people. And that rigger platoon that we have is like
43 90 something people. I mean it is a huge actual
44 platoon. And we weren't doing a whole bunch of air-
45 drop rigging.

1 So they augmented force protection patrols,
2 logistics patrols; we go a truck company to push
3 supply from Bagram to Jalalabad to take away their
4 requirement to have to pull supply from Bagram to
5 Jalalabad to then onward move it. And then division
6 got that chemical unit re-tasked into a truck convoy
7 or combat logistics patrol organization, you know,
8 just for some of those reasons when we are looking at
9 their troop-to-task.

Beta 10 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): I am going to take you back to the talk you
11 pointed to the timing of that. Do you recall, was it
12 the day of the battle?

Echo 13 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Probably 20--it was probably 24 to 48 hours
14 after. It was right after--you could go back and
15 figure out exactly when it was because it was probably
16 6 to 8 hours whenever that division press release went
17 out. It kind of got disseminated and some phone calls
18 came up and said, hey, you guys got pushed off a base
19 and overrun? But, you know, phone calls from the
20 extended family, or on SIPR by people who were former
21 guys or friends of friends asking; what's going on?
22 You guys got a base overrun? So it was probably 6 to
23 8 to 12 hours after that.

Beta 24 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Then how did the Colonel disseminate those
25 talking points? Did you gather the staff and say, we
26 were going to call it a vehicle patrol base?

Echo 27 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): No. It was clearly just for his command. It was
28 his own command information. And what I remember him
29 doing was he called back up to division. He said,
30 hey--because before he went to the press, I know he
31 went and talked to either the ADCO or the CG and said,
32 hey, here is what is not factually correct about this
33 report and you guys are not helping us out with this
34 report. We would like you to clarify the following.

35 And it was very clear at the time of the attack
36 that this was not a full-up combat outpost. And then
37 we were not overrun.

Beta 38 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): Did division put out another --

Echo 39 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know if they did a release or redact it.
40 Now, what I do know is General Schloesser said, okay,
41 contact your guy. We always had Stars and Stripes

guys being a European base issue. Okay. Go ahead and correct the record. I know he got some top down approval for going ahead to correct that record.

And then I wasn't present for the interview. I did not huddle the staff and say, we are now going to call this a vehicle patrol base instead of a combat outpost; however, I did have discussions with people saying that this thing wasn't a COP. We all know it wasn't a COP. Yeah, we were building a COP, but it was not a COP at the time of the attack. And we certainly weren't overrun. And those are all discussions that people had.

But there was no, okay, here is your standard talking point. That was done specifically for the boss because he was interested in what are the--correcting the record, what are the specific things that are inaccurate with that particular press report.

Beta **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6) Thank you.

Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) Sigma

Sigma **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6) Just before we leave that point, would the DCO have been given the same guidance with regard to that talking point?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't--I mean, he would likely be at the close-out meeting.

Sigma **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6) Right.

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): You know, while we were talking about it. But not necessarily; and if I came back with him one on one with Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6), no it might not have been completely disseminated. And I do know that when Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) went to do his engagement, I know that it didn't come out exactly how it was intended to come out because he was pretty fired up, as I remember it, when he was talking. Because I think I was in the room for one of the interviews at least. And I know it didn't come out right. He was not very clear in his terms and his sequencing.

Delta

Delta

And that's why I bring this point up to you. Because very clearly--I am not trying to pull the wool over anyone's eyes--yes, it was a planned combat

1 outpost. It was planned to be permanent to work all
2 four lines of governance. However, at the time of the
3 attack, it was not as it was depicted in that press
4 release. And actions that the division PAO put out
5 made it sound as if the unit had been overrun and
6 pushed off by the enemy in a hardened facility. And
7 that was not in fact the case.

8 So that was up to him and how he relays that. I
9 remember coming out of that and going; uh, okay, the
10 information is there, but it wasn't the clearest and
11 most concise delivery. But, obviously, he is the
12 commander and he just had a number of Soldiers killed
13 in ongoing ops and all that other kind of stuff. But
14 that is the beauty of not being a commander and being
15 able to sit there and be a process observer.

Sigma 16 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) Just to recap a couple things real quick; the 90
17 day letter that you mentioned at the first part of
18 your testimony, was that a FRAGO to the base order?

Echo 19 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): It would be a FRAGO to the base order. Yes, sir.

Sigma 20 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) Okay. Was it planning guidance and commander's
21 priorities? Was it specific task and purpose to units?
22 Or was it kind of both?

Echo 23 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): You would have--some things over there are very
24 conceptual. I mean, you aren't going to go on day X
25 and --

Sigma 26 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) Yeah.

Echo 27 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): -- pass out X number of blankets to so and so
28 people. It would be develop a program to do this.
29 Identify the following sort of priorities in your area
30 and provide feedback to us on operations to achieve
31 those. You know, not effects based, but to achieve
32 these goals or objectives. So some were very specific
33 tasks and purposes; hey, here is the commander's
34 conference; hey, here is going to be the start of
35 this; here is the governor's conference that we are
36 going to hold; your attendance is mandatory; and we
37 are going to do this ribbon cutting. But then the
38 other stuff is hey let's look at these types of
39 projects. Let's look at these initiatives. Let's
40 look at different things like that.

Sigma 1 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) Was Rock Move driven by the battalion from the
2 bottom up?

Echo 3 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): Bottom up.

Sigma 4 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) Okay.

Echo 5 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): I mean, the direction, hey, let's move this
6 thing; and, really, bottom up on location. If Wanat
7 is the right place --

Sigma 8 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) Right.

Echo 9 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): -- based on you being the commander, he probably
10 could have done Bella and never even established
11 anything at Wanat and just beefed up Blessing and
12 conducted patrols to there. Then Wanat was the
13 location that the battalion commander was interested
14 in maintaining control over. So the CONOP says it.
15 Rock Move, if it were a Bayonet type of thing, you
16 would have a Bayonet----

Sigma 17 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) A Bayonet kind of name.

Echo 18 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): type name on it. And it would be--or an
19 operation. So it was a bottom-up driven execution for
20 a top-down task which was move--you know, evacuate
21 Bella, and identify a place to put something in if you
22 need to, or make the recommendation on. Because it's
23 really, can you influence the population; can you work
24 the four lines; you don't have to have--my
25 understanding of the commander's guidance was you
26 don't have to have a fixed facility there. And there
27 was nobody saying, hey, you got to have a fixed
28 facility to have effects with the population. Along
29 any of those four lanes of operation; however, because
30 of this, the commander assessed that it was a good
31 place to do that.

Sigma

32 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) That is kind of where I was going; was whether or
33 not there was anything in that 90-day letter that
34 might have informed or shaped their thinking with
35 respect to how they were going to execute Rock Move,
36 or was the 90-day letter just more kind of a----

Echo 37 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): I would say it would be more of a relocate set.
38 Hey, let's get this move done. It might not have

1 even--I have to look at the 90-day letter--it might
2 not have even been in there.

Sigma 3 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): Right.

Echo 4 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): But in subsequent FRAGOs and targeting
5 discussions and battlefield circulation with the boss;
6 because he probably, you know, made five or six trips
7 at least to meet with Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) in--you know, he Diamond
8 was there at least every two to three weeks; that he
9 physically would go and meet with him, either going on
10 someone else's battlefield circulation or on his own,
11 and would meet with Rock 6. A lot of times he would
12 come and meet with the commander. He would come back
13 and tell us what the Battalion was going to do and he
14 had approved it and sanctioned it.

Sigma 15 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): The red team for FOB security that you mentioned,
16 was that just in--not to pole vault over mouse turds--
17 but was that just for FOBs or was that for COPs as
18 well; all of your facilities?

Echo 19 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): It would be all facilities. Because a COP and a
20 FOB----

Sigma 21 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): That's what I want to know.

Echo 22 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): ----the only difference is size; why you would
23 name one and not the other. There is no standard
24 naming thing. Generally, a COP would be a platoon
25 size, and a FOB would be company or greater.

Sigma 26 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): Right.

Echo 27 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): But there is no universal naming standards. And
28 any attempt to do that over time has never stuck.
29 Every one, because of the placement of these things,
30 many which we inherited from the 10th, were extreme
31 low ground which means you automatically had a number
32 of OPs which in and of themselves could be called--you
33 know, some of the OPs were as large as what you would
34 call a combat outpost in another battalions AO or in
35 another brigade AO. There are some pretty significant
36 fortified OPs that would just protect a combat outpost
37 or a FOB.

38 So it was looking at the entirety of that.
39 What's the COB? What's the security around that COP?

1 If it does have OPs, are they the right OPs? Are they
2 the right facilities? So, yeah, it would be a--all
3 facilities, large and small.

Sigma 4 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): And you said that was 15 April of '08?

Echo 5 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yeah. 15 April we had our first--and I don't
6 know when they actually flew--but 15 April was when--
7 that we had the meeting. We had about a two-hour
8 session with the boss; brought in the team; they got
9 his initial planning guidance; the team went away; I
10 QA/QC'd it. They briefed me back on--okay, here is--
11 what they kind of did was they stopped--okay, here is
12 where the model FOB would be. In a perfect world,
13 here is what we would have; four corner towers, all
14 reinforced concrete, we would have a central tower
15 that was two or three times the elevation, it has a
16 powered weapon--you know, a heavy weapon kind of
17 turret--we have JLENs, or we have a blimp in every
18 single one of those things. We have a PTSD--or PSTD.
19 We have a blimp or a JLENs in each of those. You have
20 this kind of facility for Soldiers. You have MWR. You
21 have this kind of thing. You have a maintenance
22 facility. You have an HLZ that's capable of
23 following. So it is kind of designed around what does
24 perfect look like in concept, and what kind of
25 facilities would you want. So let's go around and
26 look at what we have. Are we making trade-offs?
27 Because we found guys that would say at a FOB--they
28 wouldn't necessarily bring up a concern.

29 I think Asadabad; for example, the water that was
30 running out of the DFAC, the pipe had broken and they
31 were just dealing with it. But there was this whole
32 big grey-water issue. But they didn't bring it up
33 because they were just like, ahh, we'll just live with
34 it. And it's like, no, we have to improve this. So
35 we are taking a look at not only force protection, but
36 the health and safety of the guys as well.

Sigma 37 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Was this in anticipation of the RIP--and where I
38 am going with this--I am just wondering about the
39 timeframe because you guys had been there for almost a
40 year at this time.

Echo 41 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): It was anticipation of making things better than
42 how we got them.

Sigma 1 LTC(b)(3), (b)(6): Okay.

Echo 2 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): And, really--and also complacency. The boss had
3 a campaign against complacency at about that time.
4 Because once you hit twelve months, his battlefield
5 circulation, he would come back and he was like, hey,
6 it looks flat out there. And this was right about the
7 time where we were going to get things energized
8 because we are coming out of the winter seasons so
9 fighting is going to pick up again. And we do have
10 this RIP and we are going to turn this thing over
11 better than what we have.

Sigma 12 LTC(b)(3), (b)(6): Talking about the COPs and stuff, was it--is it a
13 fair assessment to say that most of all or all of the
14 COPs had essentially the same set with regard to
15 enablers, combat power, force protection; in other
16 words, they all had mortars----

Echo 17 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): No.

Sigma 18 LTC(b)(3), (b)(6): ----they all had crew served weapons?

Echo 19 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): No. They are not all the same.

Sigma 20 LTC(b)(3), (b)(6): Okay.

Echo 21 LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): They are fitted to train, number one. And
22 whoever put them in there. We ran into the same
23 problem down south. We did not have--some of these--
24 who know why people put them where they put them.
25 Some were not very good sights. But you had what you
26 had. You had an investment in there. It was better
27 than the alternative, and it takes some time to change
28 those locations.

29 And the enemy changes his TTPs and tactics. So
30 sometimes they were put for one purpose, and then they
31 develop into an entirely different thing. They become
32 a bullet magnet. They actually don't stop the
33 operation, or they get bypassed. So they are not--
34 they are fitted to train, so naturally their physical
35 look is going to be different. The size is going to
36 be different. Depending on what type of unit mans it-
37 -if you have a platoon from a Delta company, a heavy
38 weapons company, they are likely to have more heavy
39 weapons present. They are going to have TOWs because
40 it's on their MTOE. And it's not--excuse me.

We fought pretty hard to get 12 additional LRAS systems for the brigade. I started working those 13 February. My second day that I came up to the brigade, we identified that a unit RIP'ing out would have 12 LRASs that they would no longer need because the unit that was coming in to RIP with them was bringing theirs. And we went to division right away to secure them. We got 10 of those 12. Of those 10 that we secured we gave nine--it was either eight or nine of those. It was eight. I think eight of the nine went to Task Force Rock because they had their FOBs, COPs, and OPs that were getting hit the most.

So every OP did not have an LRAS. Every OP did not have an ITAS system at it. Every OP did not have a Blimp or a JLENSE system. You had different construction for force protected living. They--some had hard huts. We started trying to standardize those so the level of force protection in billeting and some of the different features----

Sigma

LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): Well, part of what your challenge was at brigade then would be to kind of constantly assess who needs what. What enablers do I have available at my level that I can flex to the different outposts, et cetera?

Echo

LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): Correct. The ones--the enablers, once they had been--once they had been cut to the battalions, we took two LRAS systems from the Cav, from 1-91 Cav, who--that was MTO equipment for. We took two of those and gave them to Rock. We paid them back later once we got theses additional LRASs. But taking--the boss was very careful about taking assets from one battalion and giving it to another one.

Now, the battalion had great discretion with how they would array the organic, or the TPE equipment that they would have. What we would get into, we did a complete lay down on our non-standard ISR; blimps, LRAS and ITAS; I had to do a study; had to send that up to the J-3 on where all our systems were and what our requests are. And so we put in for blimps. I wanted five blimps inside the brigade area; and where we could put those. But there is only so many places the big blimps can go because of road trafficability and everything. So we would have to do the study on that. Where would we put artillery tubes because there was not enough artillery to cover everything?

1 Mortars, by intel, you don't have enough. And even
2 if--you know, it's very difficult to procure an extra
3 mortar system if it is not on your MTO. They don't
4 like making a mortar system TPE equipment even if you
5 have the mortar men to man it.

6 So, no. Every facility didn't have enough and
7 there was probably always a trade-off with what could
8 range what. We went through the triple-seven fielding
9 for the 105s. So we changed where we moved stuff, and
10 it was all based on range rings. Our FSO did a great
11 analysis on missions fired, areas covered, where we
12 would need to be able to fire 105s and 155s--likely at
13 the same place--and then we would try to get those
14 Howitzers moved to the right place where they could
15 influence it.

16 And that was a discussion with the battalions as
17 well. Because as soon as you moved the--the boss
18 would move Howitzers and he would move Blimps and LRAS
19 kind of systems between battalions; and that was done
20 in consultation with lower units.

21 Now, what Task Force Rock allocated to be
22 installed at this combat outpost would not be
23 something that the brigade--we would get the data up
24 after them, but it is not where we would be in a,
25 mother may I kind of situation; saying whether their
26 trade-off of taking an LRAS from OP Romano and moving
27 it to there was a good trade or something like that.

Sigma 28 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6) Understanding that you guys weren't really
29 working on a campaign plan model, was there a brigade
30 main effort in July of '08 that you could identify?

Echo 31 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Main effort was RIP TOA. I mean, the boss had
32 said, hey, transitions--its standard--transition is
33 the most dangerous time that we are doing anything.
34 And so getting--as I flipped through it I found
35 something in there--but he was really concerned about
36 getting them in. We had a hectic deployment. We had
37 12 months to transform into a brigade. We switched
38 theaters, but we had a lot of Afghan experience; so we
39 knew the theater flow model of getting it. 3/1 had
40 not a lot of Afghan experience at all. And they were
41 kind of struggling to get over there. And we
42 recognized that pretty early on. And so we did
43 everything that we really could to get them

integrated. And we really looked and said, hey, they are a newly formed unit. And just from the sense of it, they were still really--you know, they were in that storming phase of their formation. And our focus was to really watch this transition and do the most we could to really facilitate them getting in and getting on the ground because we knew it was going to be--potentially--well, we knew it was going to be a tough summer.

Sigma

LTC (b)(3), (b)(6) So when you say, "the main effort was RIP TOA," you're not talking about just the administrative aspect of the RIP TOA? You are talking about setting conditions for success?

Echo

LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): Everything. It was all to set conditions. In the series of operations that lead up to RIP was to get time and space and to really blunt the enemy's initial spring/fall offensive so we could get time and space where we could do this RIP and get 3/1 in--in the best set of conditions. Because when we had RIP'd in--and I wasn't up with the brigade at that time--literally, guys were getting shot coming off the ramp of the helicopters. We did not want that to happen.

So it was--many of the Rock movements up to that point of offensive operations, whether it was Penetrator or Longest Mile or some other operations, specifically, the effects we were trying to achieve was to push the enemy back to create a bubble around as many fixed sites as we could to facilitate the RIP transition; new unit coming in; learning the area without being, no kidding, running off the ramp and having to man the hot gun.

Sigma

LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): Thanks.

Sir?

LtGen Natonski: You mentioned a place called Barge Metah?

Echo

LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Where the Afghan--they wanted a presence up there for what?

Echo

LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): I think--the Afghans will always tell you that Al Qaida is there or whatever. I think what we

Peach

1 determined-(b)(3), (b)(6) the S-2, sir, would be the guy who
2 could correct me--I think there was probably some
3 issues with taxation.

4 **LtGen Natonski:** Was there a population up there?

Echo 5 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): There is a population, sir. It is a population
6 center, sir.

7 **LtGen Natonski:** I was just wondering why the Afghan
8 government dictated a presence--if they wanted a
9 presence, why didn't they put their own troops there?

Echo 10 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Sir, number one, they know that they can't
11 resupply their own troops. And--but I do believe--
12 their general would say, I have a mission to go to
13 Barge Metah. I have been told by my government, but I
14 can't sustain myself. You'll have to provide me fuel,
15 transportation; I need your aircraft. If you would
16 give me six 47s, I will go and establish my presence
17 at Barge Metah. We were like, we don't have six 47s;
18 especially not during RIP. But I think there was
19 something to do with--there was a little bit in there
20 with illegal timber smuggling and gem smuggling.

21 **LtGen Natonski:** I was just curious, Wanat, and the closing
22 of Bella, that initiative to close Bella and move to
23 Wanat originated at the battalion level, at 2nd
24 Battalion?

Echo 25 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know, sir.

26 **LtGen Natonski:** It didn't come from the brigade. Did it
27 come from the division or from the brigade directing
28 the battalion?

Echo 29 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): No, sir. If--I believe that there had been
30 discussions prior to me coming up as the XO. So I
31 can't tell you if it is bottom-up or top-down. What I
32 do know is as soon as I was up there, it was--I think
33 brigade was more in favor of closing--brigade
34 commander more so than the battalion commander. But I
35 don't know --

36 **LtGen Natonski:** Closing Bella?

Echo 37 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Closing Bella, yes, sir. The brigade commander
38 was more--initially, Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) as I remember it

Diamond

1 was not in favor--and I know the two commanders talked
2 in length about the pluses and minuses of doing that.
3 But I know that from my time and the only thing I got
4 from the boss was, I have got to close Bella.

5 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay.

Echo 6 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Because it is not a good place.

7 **LtGen Natonski:** Yeah. It was only an air supporting point I
8 think.

Echo 9 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. Or you could hire Hiluxes; you know,
10 the small Toyota Tacomas to get to it.

11 **LtGen Natonski:** The timing of this evolution during the RIP
12 TOA and closing one COP and starting the construction
13 of another, did anyone consider that RIP TOA might
14 draw assets off? I think we talked about it a little
15 bit. But was it still worth the risk to conduct this?

Echo 16 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know if anyone looked at it in terms of
17 this or that, sir. It was something that we knew.
18 And I don't want to speak for the commander because I
19 can't do it. My opinion, based on what I remember was
20 it needed to get done because it would be better for
21 the new unit coming in.

22 **LtGen Natonski:** To do it on your watch?

Echo 23 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): And we knew the terrain, we had experience, and
24 the battalion said yes. They--I don't think,
25 initially, they certainly weren't happy about doing
26 it. My impression was they kind of kicked the can
27 down the road a little bit on executing it; although,
28 there wasn't a hard, you must execute this. It was
29 the commander's discussion on the timing of that. But
30 I do believe, sir, that ultimately it came down to;
31 hey, is this the right thing to do to set the other
32 unit up for success. Yes, we are better equipped and
33 we know the terrain better to do that. So that to me
34 was more of the driving factor than any other thing.

35 **LtGen Natonski:** And you mentioned that RIP TOA was the main
36 effort within the brigade to make sure that 3/1 got it
37 and got set up for success.

Echo 38 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

1 **LtGen Natonski:** So where did Wanat fall in to--was it a
2 secondary effort or did you kind of lose sight of it?
3 How important was--where did it stand on the radar
4 screen if the RIP TOA was a main effort and a
5 priority?

Echo 6 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I guess it is hard to describe, sir. The
7 priority of effort inside of RIP TOA was achieving
8 effects against the enemy to create the separation to
9 facilitate the physical move itself. The physical
10 move itself took a back seat to the continued combat
11 operations that were going on along all the lines of
12 effort.

13 So it was continue business as normal, get them
14 on their feet, create as much white space as we can;
15 the administrative moves were not the back seat. So
16 it was the effects achieved in a surge in effort
17 across all lines of operation that was intended to
18 make it easy to do the physical piece. The physical
19 piece was not driving the operation itself.

20 So Rock Move would be one of these either
21 deliberate offensive operations designed to create
22 white space, or it was a posturing or a prepositioning
23 move inside the whole thing.

24 **LtGen Natonski:** I think you did mention that the brigade
25 commander would delay the RIP TOA to ensure things got
26 done correctly within the AO.

Echo 27 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

28 **LtGen Natonski:** You talked, I think, a little bit about the
29 Brigade getting out battlefield circulation. Was the
30 3rd Brigade commander there in that time frame? Do
31 you know? Was he sitting down with his counterpart?

Echo 32 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I do not know exactly when he got there. But,
33 yes, the two of them would battlefield circulate
34 together. Many cases----

35 **LtGen Natonski:** The incoming guy.

Delta

Echo 36 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): The incoming would meet with Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6).
37 There was always----

38 **LtGen Natonski:** But you don't know when that was?

Echo 1 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't remember, sir. I can look through. But
2 I do not remember when Duke 6 got on the ground. But
3 they would--they would do some of their own meetings--
4 they would sit through all of our meetings, and then
5 they would go do some of their own internal meetings.
6 It was a cordial RIP. There is always tension when
7 you have two O-6 commanders in an area, but it was as
8 cordial and as productive as any others that I have
9 seen. And I hadn't seen many. But it was certainly
10 not----

11 **LtGen Natonski:** Did Colonel Preysler ever get up to Bella?

Echo 12 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I believe he did go to Bella. Yes, sir.

13 **LtGen Natonski:** He didn't get to Wanat did he?

Echo 14 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't think he ever visited. He would overfly
15 the intended location of Wanat. But I don't think he
16 ever physically went on the ground and had a KLE. But
17 I specifically know he flew some aerial reconnaissance
18 of the area, in conjunction with the move to Bella.
19 Because I know he went up, specifically, to talk this
20 relocation somewhere between April and execution. And
21 I know he and Rock 6 did an aerial over flight; or at
22 least that was the plan. Now, whether there was a TIC
23 or something that diverted--I know he had intended to
24 go up to go to the sight. I don't know if they ever
25 intended to land, but I know that at least they were
26 going to go do an aerial over flight of it.

27 **LtGen Natonski:** You don't know if he did?

Echo 28 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know if that physically happened, sir. I
29 know it was on the schedule, but I don't if it
30 actually happened.

31 **LtGen Natonski:** This is the--Rock Move, this was briefed at
32 the Brigade level?

Echo 33 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir, it was.

34 **LtGen Natonski:** And under the intent it was to establish a
35 COP Wanat. There is no debate that there was going to
36 be a permanently----

Echo 37 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Permanent location.

1 **LtGen Natonski:** ----established location. And it's going to
2 have OPs, fighting positions, force protection walls
3 and bunkers; you mentioned a DFAC, a weight room, and
4 stuff; that is not a prerequisite?

Echo 5 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): No, sir. That is MWR.

6 **LtGen Natonski:** Did COP Bella have a weight room?

Echo 7 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't think so, sir. I think it had an aid
8 station; rudimentary. It had sleeping quarters, and
9 maybe the ability to cook something. It was pretty
10 Spartan as far as--but, again, sir, I have never been
11 there.

12 **LtGen Natonski:** But it was a COP?

Echo 13 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): It was a COP. Yes, sir.

14 **LtGen Natonski:** And when they established Wanat, they went
15 up there in five vehicles I think; five HMMWVs; they
16 set up a vehicle patrol base. Within 24 hours they
17 had additional Soldiers that came up to a total of 45
18 I believe, plus a platoon of ANA, three ETTs, one of
19 those little bulldozers--what do they call those?

Echo 20 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Bobcats.

21 **LtGen Natonski:** Bobcats, plus a lot of Class IV materials;
22 food, et cetera. When does a VPB become a COP?

Echo 23 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know, sir. I guess----

24 **LtGen Natonski:** I don't either.

Echo 25 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): ----I would call it a COP, sir, once you had--
26 there would be two determinations I would use because
27 this is what we used when we built our combat outpost.
28 I would have it be IOC and FOC. And I would call it a
29 COP once it was IOC, initial operating capacity,
30 versus fully operating. Initial op--and this is my
31 term in what we used when we built a combat outpost
32 down south--this could be getting into my decision or
33 my words I guess that I gave to the commander. IOC to
34 me would be you would have a Hesco perimeter up that
35 you could take shelter inside. You would have the
36 resemblance of a front gate, or limited access to
37 that, and you would have perimeter guard towers; guard

capability, whether that be a vehicle positioned at it, but you would have a, no kidding, hardened perimeter. That would be a COP to me, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Okay. But I don't think that Bella had towers, did it?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know what it had.

LtGen Natonski: I think they landed on the roofs so I don't think it could have, but, according to their intent, they did have OPs; they had fighting positions; force protection walls; they did have Hescos; they did have a mortar pit and other Hescos; plus the incorporated walls that were around the position. There were stone walls and there was also some sort of a building--a skeleton of a building. And they certainly had bunkers. It all goes--because there is a lot of discussion about this vehicle patrol base--and I am not doing this to dig. You made the point about reputation. By calling it a vehicle patrol base, there was no way--a vehicle patrol base has the capability of setting up, putting up a perimeter, setting up its quick defensive, but then leaving.

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: By the 9th of July, there was no way they could leave in those five vehicles because they had the ANA platoon, they had all the additional reinforcements that had flown in on the 9th. So it wasn't what I would consider a vehicle patrol base, nor a, really, a full-up COP.

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: And I will grant you that. But I think the perception, at least among certain people, is it was a deception on the part of the brigade to call it a vehicle patrol base when it was more than that. And vehicle patrol base insinuates that it could come and go as required. And I think we all knew, that based on the CONOPs that this was to be permanently established and turned over to the incoming brigade.

And it goes to Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) 15-6. Do you Hotel know if he was directed by the brigade commander to call it a vehicle patrol base in his investigation?

Echo 1 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): That, sir, I don't know.

2 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. Because, once again, there are a lot
3 of people that question the terminology--of course to
4 say it was to protect the reputation, I understand
5 that. But you cannot fault the valor of all the
6 Soldiers that fought at Wanat. But it's almost--it
7 comes across that you're trying to protect the
8 command, not the force that fought there, but the
9 command by using, perhaps, deceptive terminology. And
10 that is why I am zeroing in on this because there are
11 people that question that terminology. And that, of
12 course, was furthered--and believe me, I know when
13 division or higher headquarters puts out a public
14 affairs release that they don't bother checking. And
15 that can really torque people off. And I can imagine
16 the brigade commander when he read that one of his
17 COPs was overrun which was totally inaccurate would be
18 upset. But, once again, using terminology that could
19 be perceived by some that----

Echo 20 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

21 **LtGen Natonski:** ----as a deception--getting back to the
22 evacuation of Wanat, nine Soldiers had lost their
23 lives. There was a reason for putting this location
24 there. It was about eight kilometers up from Camp
25 Blessing.

Echo 26 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

27 **LtGen Natonski:** It was at a district center, there was ANP
28 there. Granted the people left; they were obviously
29 in some coordination with the enemy during the attack,
30 but they could have been moved out at the--under
31 duress.

Echo 32 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

33 **LtGen Natonski:** But who surfaced the idea that, you know, we
34 probably don't want to stay here. The people don't
35 want us. We just may have--a pretty good investment
36 getting bigger--I mean, I think the Afghan contractors
37 showed up on the 13th, a day late. But----

Echo 38 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

1 **LtGen Natonski:** But who said hey, we have to bug out? It
2 doesn't make sense. Was it the brigade?

Echo 3 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know, sir. I don't know--I know, as I
4 said before, the boss had been talking with General
5 Schloesser about the ramifications or the option of
6 moving. I know he had obviously been talking with the
7 brigade commander or the battalion commander. So I
8 don't know the origin of----

9 **LtGen Natonski:** But he, obviously, it was a decision that
10 had to be made at the highest levels. And the
11 decision to probably evacuate Wanat was made at the
12 division level I assume?

Echo 13 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): The Brigade Commander would not have the
14 authority to close a COP on his own without higher--my
15 understanding would be he would not have the
16 authority.

17 **LtGen Natonski:** So Bella was approved at the division level?

Echo 18 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. I would imagine--I don't--he would not
19 have the ability--he could say, "Here is what I would
20 like to do. But if you are going to change the
21 footprint, sir, we would have to go to division to
22 name a place."

23 **LtGen Natonski:** And the Brigade would make the
24 recommendation----

Echo 25 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

26 **LtGen Natonski:** ----but they would make the recommendation
27 based on someone's recommendation, be it the
28 battalion. Did the battalion commander come and say,
29 hey, I'm not sure it's worth the cost to stay here.

Echo 30 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I do not know, sir. I did not sit in a meeting,
31 or I was not privy to any conversations between the
32 Battalion Commander with the recommendation of that.
33 We had our own discussion and our own recommendation
34 to the boss as far as do we stay/do we go. But I
35 don't know what Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) had made as a Diamond
36 commander's recommendation to them.

37 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. Well, we'll track that down.

1 Okay. Hey, thanks.

2 **MG Perkins:** You discussed a number of COPs, FOBs, platoon
3 minus sizes; do you have any idea of sort of the order
4 of magnitude of how many COPS, FOBs, outpost, things
5 that the brigade had at this time?

Echo 6 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): We had a tracker, sir. I don't know the sheer
7 number. We had a lot.

8 **MG Perkins:** Where would that tracker reside? Is that
9 archived anywhere?

Echo 10 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Absolutely, sir. It was on our SharePoint. And
11 what we had--we had a force protection excel
12 spreadsheet that the battle captain kept updated and
13 CHOPs would do. And actually the Ops sergeant major,
14 Giant Sergeant Major (b)(3), (b)(6) kept this thing. This thing
15 showed every FOB. It showed whether it was rotary
16 wing capable, the size of the HLZ, it showed how much
17 fuel we could store at it, it had--some of it wasn't
18 as updated as other things. You know MWR facilities--
19 --

20 **MG Perkins:** So where would you say that is now, today?

Echo 21 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): That would still--it would be handed over to our
22 predecessor, our replacement, sir.

23 **MG Perkins:** So you mean it is in Afghanistan.

Echo 24 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir, unless we kept a copy on a secure
25 drive.

26 **MG Perkins:** Yeah, so I actually would be interested not
27 today, but on the 13th for instance.

Echo 28 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. That would be probably--I don't--
29 because it is a share point server, so I am not sure
30 if that thing gets imaged. Usually it only lasts for
31 14 days before they image over it. I, sir----

32 **MG Perkins:** You were the Brigade XO when you came back to
33 Vicenza?

Echo 34 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I was, sir.

1 **MG Perkins:** Was there any routine, sort of archiving, of all
2 the stuff that went on in Afghanistan as you went back
3 to Vicenza?

Echo 4 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Not afterwards, sir. What we did is we had--we
5 put together a history. That was one of the things
6 that I was kind of in charge of doing. And (b)(3), (b)(6) Packer
7 was our kind of brigade historian who had to put this
8 big history together. So he had a lot of the data to
9 this thing. We also produced PDSS disk that Duke
10 could take back. So that may actually--one of those
11 disk that they have--because that would be burned, and
12 that would probably be a snapshot in time.

13 **MG Perkins:** Right.

Echo 14 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Probably not right at RIP TOA, but it would be
15 before RIP TOA.

16 **MG Perkins:** Yeah. I am looking for, not necessarily a
17 history written after the fact, but the product that
18 was used on that day so if you were in the talk or if
19 you were a staff guy looking at it, what are you--what
20 data are working you off?

Echo 21 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): The best--it wasn't something you would update
22 every day.

23 **MG Perkins:** I understand that.

Echo 24 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): But it was hung on the portal, sir. So wherever
25 the portal history is, it would be there. Sergeant
26 Giant Major (b)(3), (b)(6) might have kept a copy.

27 **MG Perkins:** Was he the Ops Sergeant Major?

Echo 28 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): He was the Ops Sergeant Major.

29 **MG Perkins:** Is he still the Ops Sergeant Major.

Echo 30 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): He is the Command Sergeant Major for 2nd
31 Battalion now. But he owned that spreadsheet, sir.

Giant
32 **MG Perkins:** Is it (b)(3), (b)(6) like (b)(3), (b)(6)? Giant

Echo 33 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, Sir. He is currently the 2/503 command
34 sergeant major.

1 **LtGen Natonski:** Would that history have had one slide that
2 depicted all of this?

Echo 3 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): No, sir. This was a excel matrix. It had links
4 to it and folders that showed imagery, about five or
5 six snap shots, or shadow shots, of every facility --

6 **MG Perkins:** Of a COP? So you could look at all the force
7 protection stuff and then you would have a link to it?

Echo 8 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): You would have some folder files. There might
9 even be some train stuff----

10 **MG Perkins:** So you would go in Bella and boom here is all the
11 stuff at Bella; boom here is a picture of it?

Echo 12 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Big spreadsheet, sir; scroll down by Battalion
13 AO, you'd find all the Battalion things; bed space.
14 It is primarily done to facilitate RIP planning and
15 other things.

16 **LtGen Natonski:** But you didn't have a historical slide that
17 said, hey, this was our AO, and this was all the
18 places we were at.

Echo 19 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. When we would do a RIP, a RIP brief,
20 with 3/1 on their PDSS--we gave a PDSS brief that had
21 a build by location. Hey, here are all of our FOBS.

22 **MG Perkins:** And Sergeant Major (b)(3), (b)(6) would know, maybe, Giant
23 where that is at? That would be a typical sort of
24 power point brief that was done by the staff
25 somewhere? So wherever that resides.

Echo 26 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. That would be the 3 that would put
27 together all those RIP briefs; so one of the guys from
28 the plan cells probably sitting in on a secure drive.
29 I know we--I think we archived most of that stuff. I
30 left the brigade in September. We redeployed, really,
31 the 1st of August. So I PCS'd within the first 90
32 days. We didn't, as far as I know, we didn't touch
33 any data. We did not start bringing up any data from
34 the last rotation in any magnitude before I left.

35 **MG Perkins:** You were talking about RFFs, and when Colonel
36 Delta (b)(3), (b)(6) came back, you were talking about; hey, we
37 need a brigade reserve, we need this, we need that----

Echo 1 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

2 **MG Perkins:** Again, June/July timeframe idea of order of
3 magnitude of outstanding RFFs that you had sent out?

Echo 4 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): A couple different things, sir, we had asked for
5 the LRAS systems, we had ONSs, or----

6 **MG Perkins:** Right.

Echo 7 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): ----thrown into the whole thing. We had an ONS
8 in for--well we had an RFF in for AG development
9 teams, we had one. We had AG development teams
10 requested --

11 **MG Perkins:** How about platoons for QRF or Brigade reserve?

Echo 12 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): We had requested an additional platoon for Task
13 Force Pacesetter.

14 **MG Perkins:** A similar question to the last thing, where would
15 those RFFs reside, copies of them? All of your RFFs
16 and ONS?

Echo 17 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Division would have them and--let's see. Who did
18 our--our force protection was somebody from--Sergeant
19 Bengal Major (b)(3), (b)(6) who is now a command sergeant major in the
20 SCR. He kind of ran our ONSs for all of our----

21 **MG Perkins:** Which SCR?

Echo 22 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): 2nd SCR.

23 **MG Perkins:** 2nd SCR in Germany?

Echo 24 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Over in Germany. Yes, sir.

25 **MG Perkins:** He is Regimental?

Echo 26 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): He is a Command Sergeant Major now. I don't know
27 which Battalion or Command he is. He was our ONS guy.
28 And so --

29 **MG Perkins:** He was in the 3 shop then?

Echo 30 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): He was in the 2 shop. He was in the plan cell,
31 sir. So they had, in our protection cell, our MP
32 would have had all those and a digital copy. All of
33 those went to 5/7. And we requested 50 cals; we

1 requested all the ground based ISR, JLENS for every
2 place, a blimp for half a dozen of them. We requested
3 an additional agricultural development team. One--at
4 least one platoon for the National Guard battalion to
5 get them some additional combat power. We requested
6 the TTF----

7 **MG Perkins:** So that's all--so we just have to track down the
8 archives?

Echo 9 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. We wrote the ONS as well for the new--
10 I mean, I personally wrote the one for the lightweight
11 MWRAP that is now being----

12 **MG Perkins:** Going back to platoons, COPs, et cetera; again,
13 order of magnitude across the brigade space, how many
14 sort of untasked platoons/companies were there?

Echo 15 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know, sir.

16 **MG Perkins:** You know, sort of available to do something?

Echo 17 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know, sir. Not many, sir.

18 **MG Perkins:** You said that Colonel Preysler was willing to Delta
19 move the TOA to the right specifically for Rock, but
20 other things--did that happen?

Echo 21 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): We kept the TOA the same, sir. That guidance
22 came out when he was really talking about, hey, how
23 important this is. What that influenced more so than
24 TOA moving was how we as the----

25 **MG Perkins:** I know the prioritization that you meant that
26 that was not--in other words, we were going to train
27 to standard, not time.

Echo 28 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. Did we--we had a lot of discretion in
29 setting our TOA date as well. As long as we didn't
30 bust the----

31 **MG Perkins:** Okay. You said you had briefed the chairman when
32 he was there, the ISAF commander, division commander,
33 et cetera, about not enough assets. The continual
34 drum beat.

Echo 35 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

1 **MG Perkins:** When you would do that, would you also lay out,
2 because of the lack of assets, here is the risk that I
3 am taking; however it is across your battle space;
4 here is how I would mitigate it. So, in essence, you
5 are notifying your higher headquarters as to the risk
6 you are taking because of the lack of assets. Was
7 that part of the way it was discussed?

Echo 8 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Never done that cleanly. It was, if we had this
9 asset, we could achieve more. Then they implied that
10 they were doing what we can with what we have. We
11 could make end roads here. We could do this, if we
12 had more assets.

13 **MG Perkins:** These briefings that you gave the chairman/ISAF
14 commander about lack of assets, again, are those
15 archived, was it a power point brief, was it just a
16 discussion against a map, or was it sort of like a
17 formalized portion of a brief?

Echo 18 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): It was never--the discussions in there would be
19 talking points as opposed to "here is the slide of
20 additional assets and things we require from you". In
21 some cases, when the AMC commander came, that brief
22 probably laid out specifically; hey, here is some
23 logistical things that we could really--need. But it
24 was more a Commander talking off of the standard ONI
25 briefing. Hey, here is the OPS that we're doing.
26 Here is the intel picture that we see. Here are some
27 things that influence it.

28 And it wasn't the only message that was ever put
29 out. Because Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) was also concerned with Delta
30 getting money to do the development side of the CMO.

31 **MG Perkins:** You said before you had built COPs before, either
32 when you were down in first the 503rd or in the
33 brigade. When you would do that, did you ever do it
34 sort of like a turn-key operation for lack of a better
35 term, contract KBR or somebody where they go build it
36 and you move into it, or was it always the unit who
37 was going to occupy, similar to Wanat, would go there;
38 have a vehicle patrol base or something; but sort of
39 preliminary force protections and build from there.
40 In other words, was it ever a turn-key operation.

Echo 41 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): No, sir. The FOB--the combat outpost that we
42 built in Paktika--we planned it in 20 days. It took

14 days to build. We did a Battalion minus operation to secure the terrain around it. We had a heavy engineer company as a main effort building it. We put a rifle platoon to secure just the work site. And we had eight or nine combat platoons in a six or seven k circle around that thing facilitating its employment and construction.

MG Perkins: Had there been any other COPs built that you know of? I mean that was when you were in first the 503rd?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): That was a different brigade, different terrain --

MG Perkins: Yeah. Do you know of any within the 173rd once you became the XO for instance?

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I do not believe that we--when I took over, we only were closing. We expanded a wall I think at one place. The ANA built some bases. And those were--local nationals would go out and build the base and then they would occupy it. But, no, as far as I know, we did not build one in the 173rd.

MG Perkins: I think you said the Chairman was there on the 10th. When you would get a VIP like the Chairman or somebody else, you said, "using aviation assets came external to the brigade." Of course, I mean, they are from the theater. So what kind of overhead did that entail for the brigade as far as staff time, planning time, force protection, etc., etc.

Echo **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): It was a good bit into it. Because, depending on which trip--the Chairman was there with (b)(6) (b)(6) if you remember that issue with the Korengal. He was back, (b)(6) was back there. He wanted to go back to the Korengal after he had been there before because of the article in the New Yorker or the New York times, whichever it was. So a significant--any time a four-star comes in a significant level of detailed planning and stuff would go on. I think, in this one, I think we had two additional AH-64s that flew because they were more familiar with the terrain. He was flying into the Korengal outpost. Which, you know, it's technically a COP, I guess. But it was called the outpost. But I think we put an additional two 47s on it, and/or local 64 crews. I think we put

1 an additional two 64s on it or local 64 crews flew it
2 because they knew the terrain.

3 **MG Perkins:** The ones that were normally DS to 173rd.

Echo 4 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir, the ones who were normally flying that
5 area.

6 **MG Perkins:** Okay. You were talking about land rights and
7 working through that. Had there become some sort of a
8 standard process for acquiring land to do things?

Echo 9 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): They formed a CREST team, which was the
10 engineers, that would go out and they would start
11 negotiating on behalf----

12 **MG Perkins:** So the SOP had become one of the--negotiating
13 ahead of time to acquire it versus occupy and then----

Echo 14 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Absolutely, sir. Because we had problems that we
15 were still dealing with on land that 10th Mountain
16 units had occupied by force. We were still having--
17 and what I think Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) would say is we were Diamond
18 having problems with our neighbors because they hadn't
19 been paid for their land; they had been promised----

20 **MG Perkins:** So go out and occupy them by force is not
21 necessarily a good solution to--in other words, it
22 creates problems in and of itself.

Echo 23 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): At that stage in the game, sir, it was a greater
24 risk to mission, we were at large with pissing off the
25 locals----

26 **MG Perkins:** Souring relationships.

Echo 27 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Going against counter-insurgency, embrace the
28 population; win the hearts and minds and support of
29 the people by going out and----

30 **MG Perkins:** So you guys viewed it as an anti- COIN way of
31 doing it.

Echo 32 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir, absolutely.

33 **MG Perkins:** Last question; you talk about, again, order of
34 magnitude of things going on; AMRs and all that; are
35 they cataloged anywhere?

Echo 1 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Sir, all the AMRs that would be submitted would
2 go up to the aviation cell up at Bagram. So there is
3 an officer, I believe it was a Major that runs through
4 all that stuff.

5 **MG Perkins:** Did you have an S-3 Air person that did your AMRs
6 --

Echo 7 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

8 **MG Perkins:** In the 173rd?

Echo 9 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

10 **MG Perkins:** Would they have any of those records?

Echo 11 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yeah. The brigade aviation officer would have
12 the listing of all the AMRs that were submitted. And
13 it would have a log of everything that was flying that
14 day; as would the daily logs. You could go back,
15 theoretically, into SDNE and pull----

16 **MG Perkins:** Where do you think that database is?

Echo 17 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): At division headquarters, sir.

18 **MG Perkins:** Yeah. So you----

Echo 19 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): It is a living document, sir.

20 **MG Perkins:** Yea. So, in other words, you wouldn't have a
21 archive of that at the brigade?

Echo 22 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): No, sir, because we don't own that database.
23 That is all division. But all the AMRs and approved
24 AMRs and missions that were approved to fly; now,
25 whether they actually took off or not, you would have
26 to check the SDNE logs and the battle roster to see
27 what was flying that day and what the other missions
28 were. But the fixed wing is on those AMR rosters as
29 well. So you could see the flow coming into country.

30 **MG Perkins:** Okay. Thanks.

31 **LtGen Natonski:** Under a COIN environment, you mentioned it
32 was better to negotiate with people for land. Where
33 would--the perception might be that they are
34 cooperating with the Americans and their preference
35 would be to take the land and just pay us for it? And

1 that has come out during our queries. I mean, I am
2 not sure there is a right answer.

Echo 3 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

4 **LtGen Natonski:** Americans are used to negotiating and paying
5 up front, but we don't have to worry about insurgents
6 in our midst being perceived as being a collaborator
7 with "Satan's forces."

Echo 8 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): It is a concern, but it is also like sexual
9 harassment. No means no. It is the same kind of
10 thing. It isn't a no they didn't really mean no. It
11 is the date rape paradox that you get into. It is a
12 big mess. So the--I don't know what the conditions on
13 the ground are. I would have to refer to the
14 commanders who knew the people and knew how they were
15 acting when they said--if they said no or they said
16 yes. Those conditions are so local and the behavior
17 is so local because it is their land.

18 **LtGen Natonski:** I think you are right. It is kind of based
19 on the local conditions. When you said you were in
20 the first of the 503rd who built a COP; essentially,
21 with a battalion?

Echo 22 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

23 **LtGen Natonski:** What ended up being in that COP? Was it a
24 platoon?

Echo 25 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): We had a platoon, sir.

26 **LtGen Natonski:** A platoon?

Echo 27 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): It was the end state. Yes, sir.

28 **LtGen Natonski:** But, essentially, you used a good portion of
29 a battalion for force protection while you established
30 that.

Echo 31 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

32 **LtGen Natonski:** But you didn't know of any model that the
33 173rd used to establish a COP because there hadn't
34 been one built while----

Echo 35 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): No, sir. I circulated to the engineer some of
36 the stuff or design elements that we used for force

1 protected towers that I think made it into the draft
2 plan for this one. Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) who was the Brass
3 Battalion Commander briefed that mission occupation at
4 a commander's conference through all the commanders
5 inside the CJTF when General Rodriguez, 82nd was still
6 there. He gave a presentation on here is how we did
7 it.

8 That was out there. We did do some terrain
9 studies looking for alternate places----

10 **LtGen Natonski:** When you set up that COP in the first of the
11 503rd, what else was the battalion doing? Did they
12 have to give up COPs to do this? How spread thin----

Echo 13 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): No, sir. We lost a maneuver platoon to do that.

14 **LtGen Natonski:** But you also had--it sounded like the rest
15 of the battalion providing force protection?

Echo 16 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir. To do that, we went to men manning at
17 our other FOB. So a attached troop held two combat
18 outpost, essentially, which freed up a company
19 commander plus one platoon to come out. We pulled
20 platoons from other companies and surged them out.

21 **LtGen Natonski:** And the risk was you could do that given the
22 risk to the mission?

Echo 23 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

24 **LtGen Natonski:** I mean, you could still conduct your ongoing
25 operations without a risk of pulling forces out to
26 establish this new COP?

Echo 27 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): We went, essentially, sir, force protection only
28 for that 14 day surge period. And then we started
29 moving platoons back. So we had no outside the wire
30 patrols when we pulled those platoons.

31 **LtGen Natonski:** Were you based in--you were there for the
32 first of the 503rd and you were there when 2nd
33 battalion was building Wanat. Was 2nd Battalion, do
34 you think, spread so thin that they couldn't have done
35 that? I mean, I don't know--they had a pretty
36 contentious area.

Echo 37 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

1 **LtGen Natonski:** Was the risk too great to siphon off other
2 forces from the battalion to assist in the
3 construction of that COP?

Echo 4 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I don't know, sir. I don't know their day to day
5 manning and what they had and exactly where they were
6 in the RIP. But more is always better, sir. I don't
7 know if they made decisions either not to send more
8 because they didn't have more or not to send more
9 because they had other pressing matters. I don't
10 know.

11 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay.

Beta 12 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): What was your--when you were with the first of
13 the 503rd, what was your job?

Echo 14 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): I was the Battalion S-3.

Beta 15 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): When establishing a new COP, what vulnerabilities
16 did you identify? And to follow on, why did you surge
17 so much power toward that?

Echo 18 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): We were seven K's from the Pak border where we
19 were. The whole purpose of moving that, putting that
20 COP in there was to put--the enemy was shooting
21 rockets at us from a reverse slope onto the Burmel
22 District Center. And, essentially, shooting at us,
23 shooting at the ANA, the district center, the bazaar,
24 the big mosque; you name it. So what we did is we
25 selected a COP location that would put us between the
26 enemy and the population center in the big economic
27 area, astride a number of lines of communication, and
28 in visibility of about 90% of the rocket launch sites
29 that he liked to use. We knew that there was a
30 gentlemen's agreement with the Pak Mil that they would
31 allow insurgents to cross the border and operate from
32 Afghanistan against us but not from Pakistan against
33 us.

34 So by putting the COP where we did, we would make
35 the enemy shoot at us from the front slope and, thus,
36 exposing his positions. And we would take the brunt
37 of it; you know, a force protected FOB. And we would
38 then duel with him artillery wise or CAS-wise and kill
39 him. Or he would have to go and fire across the
40 border from Pakistan which we knew would cause issues
41 and the Pak would probably stop it.

So we took away his advantage by our positioning. And we kept it. So we had 67 rocket attacks in a two month period against Burmel. We moved the FOB, and, after we put that combat outpost in, we took 40 rockets at the combat outpost that was small and extremely hard to hit. Rocket attacks against Burmel went down to two. And, essentially, by the--another two/three months we had zero rocket attacks at Burmel, perception of security and all that kind of stuff was great in that area. Cost to us was one platoon on a hill in a heavily force protected place. The enemy was gunning for us. They did one human wave attack and one stand-off attack to try to take that FOB from us, or that COP.

Beta

LtCol (b)(3), (b)(6): During the actual building time--you said you had a 14 day to build plan--what risk did you see that required that?

Echo

LTC (b)(3), (b)(6): It was a known enemy operating area. I mean, we were going to a place where we could oversee where the enemy has multiple elements that are out there shooting rockets at us; and the possibility of very easy reinforcement from across the border in Pakistan, an enemy controlled AO. So we knew that if we started building something, that it was going to attract attention. One of two things, it would attract some attention and they would just watch it and not do anything. The more force you have in an Afghan society--the bigger you roll the less likely you are to get hit. So more--bigger signature in our case was; hey, we can't hide that we are cutting the top off the hill and putting eleven feet of wall up.

So we went big and we cleared the area between where we were doing it. And, actually, we air assaulted in along X fill routes to trap--kind of to hammer and anvil into it to clear out anybody who we found. And most of them just bugged out and left because of that signature. And then we just ran the patrols.

So it was, really, just the fact that if you are digging and you are building on top of a hill--and it was specifically exposed. You want a position that has great fields of fire and observation which means the enemy can see you and shoot at you too. So, by definition of where we were putting it, it was going

1 to be a bad place for us if the enemy wasn't knocked
2 off balance.

Beta 3 **LtCol** (b)(3), (b)(6): So your forces that were actually building that
4 COP didn't have to focus on force protection?

Echo 5 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): No. It was a heavy engineer company with huge
6 contracted--we had a heavy engineer company minus --

7 **LtGen Natonski:** Was there a road that went into it?

Echo 8 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): We built the road to the site, sir, en route.

9 **LtGen Natonski:** So you had resupply via road and air?

Echo 10 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir.

Echo
11 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6), I have
12 to read a little part of the script here to you.

13 You are ordered not to discuss the testimony you
14 have provided today with anyone other than members of
15 the investigation team. You will not allow any
16 witness in this investigation to talk to you about the
17 testimony he has given or which he intends to give.
18 If anyone should try to influence your testimony or
19 attempt to discuss your testimony, you are instructed
20 to notify Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) or Lieutenant Beta
21 Sigma Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6). Do you understand that?

Echo 22 **LTC** (b)(3), (b)(6): Yes, sir, I do.

23 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. I want to thank you for your service
24 to our country, to the Army, for what you did in
25 Afghanistan, and congratulations on your battalion
26 command. I wish you luck in the future. Thanks for
27 being here today.

28 [The testimony closed at 1313, 21 October 2009.]

CERTIFICATION OF VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

Echo

Subj: TESTIMONY OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL (b)(3), (b)(6), USA, GIVEN ON 21 OCTOBER 2009, AT NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

In accordance with section 0214 of JAGINST 5800.7E, I certify that the subject transcript is an accurate verbatim transcript.

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

Sigma

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army
Judge Advocate

17 Nov 09
DATE