

1 [The testimony began at 1607, 14 October 2009.]

2 **LtGen Natonski:** I'm Lieutenant General Richard F. Natonski,
3 United States Marine Corps. I have been appointed by
4 the commander of U.S. Central Command to conduct an
5 investigation into the facts and circumstances
6 surrounding the combat action at Wanat, Afghanistan
7 during July 2008. Major General David Perkins, United
8 States Army, has been assigned as the Deputy
9 Investigating Officer. Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3),(b)(6) **Beta**
10 and Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3),(b)(6) are judge **Sigma**
11 advocates assigned to the investigation team.

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

17 Prior to coming on the record today, you signed a
18 Privacy Act Statement; is that correct?

19 **Tango**
SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) Yes, sir.

20 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. Your testimony will be made under
21 oath. You will now be sworn.

22 [The witness was sworn.]

23 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Beta** Please state your full name, spelling your last?
Tango

24 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) (b)(3),(b)(6) **Tango**

25 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Beta** What is your current unit and that unit's
26 location?

27 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Tango** I am with Chosen Company, (b)(6)
28 located on (b)(6) **Beta**

29 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Beta** And you are currently a staff sergeant in the
30 U.S. Army?

31 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Tango** That's correct.

32 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Beta** In July 2008, what was your unit and unit's
33 location?

1 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6): July of 2008, I was with Chosen Company, 2/503rd
2 Airborne. We were located in Wanat, Afghanistan. We
3 moved there on July 8th. In Wanat, Afghanistan, we
4 had just arrived early that morning through ground
5 transportation.

6 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6): And in July 2008, what was your rank and duty
7 assignment?

8 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6): I was a team leader in first squad, second
9 platoon, Alpha team leader.

10 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6): Prior to coming on the record today, did you have
11 an opportunity to read a statement you had given as
12 part of the AR 15-6 dated 18 July 2008?

13 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, sir.

14 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6): Its six-pages long. Is there anything you'd like
15 to change about that statement?

16 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6): No, sir.

17 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6): Do you adopt that statement as part of your sworn
18 testimony today?

19 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, sir.

20 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6): What is your occupation field?

21 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6): I'm 11 Bravo.

22 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6): And what is that?

23 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6): I'm an airborne infantryman.

24 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6): In July of 2008, how long had you been with
25 Chosen?

26 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6): I arrived with Chosen Company, 2d Battalion, July
27 6th of 2006.

28 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6): So did you go through the work ups with the
29 battalion?

30 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, sir. We would do all training rotations
31 with them.

1 **Beta**
1 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): During your tour in Afghanistan, were you
2 assigned to any other combat outpost other than at
3 Wanat?

4 **Tango**
4 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): We--well my platoon was assigned to Bella during
5 the winter months. We went there in November, stayed
6 till about March or April timeframe. I worked up
7 there. They had an OP up there as well, so I was on
8 that OP a time or two.

9 **Beta**
9 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Is that an OP outside of Bella?

10 **Tango**
10 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, sir. Just outside of Bella.

11 **Beta**
11 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Could you describe Bella in relation to the
12 terrain around that COP?

13 **Tango**
13 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): With Bella, it was nothing but mountains all the
14 way around it. It was like a big fish bowl. The FOB
15 itself sat down low, right next to the river. There
16 wasn't any ground lower than where we were. The
17 outpost itself sat on a mountain approximately 300
18 meters uphill to the west by southwest of the FOB.

19 **Beta**
19 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And what was the barrier plan? What protection,
20 fortification was there at Bella?

21 **Tango**
21 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): At Bella, well when we first got there, there
22 wasn't very much but by the time we left, we had
23 triple strand C-wire, we had HESCO's filled. The
24 outposts took numerous, numerous types of renovations
25 from sandbags to HESCO walls, plywood. By the time we
26 had left there, we had definitely refortified the area
27 but there were still certain areas that there wasn't
28 very much we could do with just because of the way the
29 terrain was.

30 **Beta**
30 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And when you arrived there, did you inherit it
31 from another platoon?

32 **Tango**
32 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes. When we arrived there in November, we took
33 over for first platoon who had some loss due to 9
34 November.

35 **Beta**
35 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And what was 9 November?

1 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6) 9 November, a squad plus went out on a key
2 leaders engagement. While they were out there, they
3 did their key leaders engagement but on their way
4 back, they were ambushed. And that ambush killed 9
5 U.S. soldiers.

6 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6) The fortifications that second platoon improved
7 up at Bella, you said there was HESCO's by the time
8 you were done. Were there HESCO's when you got there?

9 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6) There were some HESCO's, yes. We had put up an
10 additional more at the gate just to refortify the
11 gate. Again, it was difficult because with where the
12 LZ was, anything that we had put up we ran the risk of
13 possibly getting knocked down by the helicopters when
14 they came in and possibly getting blown over. We
15 refortified all fighting positions.

16 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6) And who was driving that refortification? Was it
17 the platoon or was that coming from--was the Company
18 telling the platoon to refortify that position?

19 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6) No, that was the platoon. That was solely
20 Sergeant First Class Kahler and my squad leader Staff
21 Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) **Scorpio**

22 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6) When did you learn of a possible move to Wanat?

23 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6) We learned of a possible relocation to Wanat
24 within the first four months of being in country. We
25 had heard rumors about possibly building a FOB a
26 little closer to Bella, a little closer to Blessing.
27 With where Bella was located, the only way to get
28 there was by air which meant QRF might come and it
29 might not because you know air is never reliable. So
30 what they had wanted to do is they wanted to put a FOB
31 a little closer where we could drive to it, walk if we
32 have to, and fly in as well so they had picked Wanat.
33 And, again, we had learned about that four months into
34 the country.

35 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6) Had you been to Wanat earlier in your deployment?

Tango 1 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes. We had numerous trips there. We had walked
2 there a few times, mostly drive though just so we
3 could test out the roads. Did a few key leaders
4 engagements and on one night we even--we even stayed
5 overnight and left the next morning.

Beta 6 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): At Wanat?

Tango 7 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6),Tango Yes. At Wanat.

Beta 8 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6),Beta Who was on that trip?

Tango 9 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6),Tango First squad was on that trip which included
10 myself, lieutenant--I'm trying to remember here
11 because we switched lieutenants. I believe it was
12 **Papa** Lieutenant (b)(3),(b)(6) at the time was there with us for
13 that particular trip and a gun team as well.

Beta 14 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) Do you recall when that trip was in relation to
15 when you actually moved?

Tango 16 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) No.

Beta 17 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6),Beta Was it winter time? Was it spring time?

Tango 18 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6),Tan Oh, it was--it was before winter. It was
19 definitely before winter because like I said, in
20 winter we moved to Bella. Most of the things--most of
21 the trips that we had made to Wanat happened before we
22 moved to Bella. So I would probably say it was
23 sometime around the summer.

Beta 24 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) Of 2007?

Tango 25 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) Of 2007, yes, sir.

Beta 26 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) And what was the purpose of going to Wanat on
27 that trip?

Tango 28 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) Again just key leader engagement. We had started
29 late in the evening, drove there, had got a flat tire
30 along the way. So once we got there, we had to change
31 it. While we were there we did a late key leaders
32 engagement. Again, just trying to vary things up.

1 **Beta**
2 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) Do you know if there was a discussion of possible
3 setting up a permanent emplacement during that key
4 **Tango** leader's discussion?
5 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) I do not know exactly what the key leader's
6 engagement entailed. At this point, I was mainly just
7 security. I would assume that every time that we had
8 went there, there was talk about possibly moving in,
9 talk about the land, talk about the locals, but I
10 **Beta** can't verify for sure.
11 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): When you--did you participate in a site survey
12 **Tango** for the actual move?
13 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) Yes, sir. We conducted a site survey. We went
14 out and we took a good look at the land. We took a
15 good look at the bazaar and the village nearby. We
16 were mostly concerned on that particular site survey
17 the landing zone. We were trying to find a suitable
18 landing zone to where if we did put a FOB in there,
19 this would no doubt be a big enough area where we
20 **Titan** (b)(3),(b)(6) could land the helicopter. And I believe Sergeant
21 who was the bravo team leader for first squad,
22 he was path-finder qualified, so he was pretty much
23 the one out there on the LZ trying to make sure it was
24 good enough. The rest of us, we kind of moved up the
25 mountain just a little bit, up the terraces to try and
26 **Beta** get a look and see if there was any dead space
27 anywhere----
28 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And what did you think when you were up on the
29 terraces? You're talking essentially to the east of
30 **Tango** where the position was set?
31 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, that's correct. We were mostly looking--we
32 were maybe--I don't know--50 meters, a little higher
33 than what the OP actually sat. You know, looking down
34 in there, we definitely saw some--we definitely saw
35 some things like, okay, well there's dead space right
36 here, there's a house at the top of this hill, there's
37 a house across the valley, actually all the way across
38 the valley there were numerous houses but just one big
one in particular. Naturally, we started pointing out

1 good and bad things about if we was set up here, this
2 is what we had to look forward to. However, at this
3 point, we weren't sure if we were going to set up. If
4 we did set up, we had no way of knowing exactly where
5 things were going to be put, are we going to have an
6 outpost, is it going to be way out there on the
7 mountains, is it going to be close by. So, again,
8 like I said, it was, okay, this is good, this bad,
9 this is good, this is bad.

Beta

10 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And what were your thoughts as a team leader if
11 you had to set in a--during the site survey if you had
12 set a team out on that hill, what were your thoughts?
13 Was it a good position, a bad position?

Tango

14 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): As far as all the hills, there was really only
15 one place that we could set up which is the actual
16 place where we did set up the OP. The reason behind
17 that, we were able to see into the dead space the best
18 that we could. We were pretty much right there on the
19 edge of the mountain. We had trees and we had rocks
20 that we could use for cover should we need it.
21 Everywhere else along those terraces on the mountains
22 to the east had no other types of cover. So that was
23 without a doubt the best spot. What we had thought
24 was once we get established; maybe we can push out
25 further up this mountain because during the site
26 survey, we didn't go much further than just 50 meters
27 past where that little OP was. We had thought if we
28 could put an OP on one of these mountainsides, that'd
29 probably be the best thing to do because we'd be able
30 to see the FOB and we'd be able to see everything
31 around it. Ideally, if we could put it into a
32 position where we could see into that dead space which
33 was located to the north by northeast of the OP.

Beta

34 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) Did you have concerns about possibly setting your
35 unit in there?

Tango

36 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) We did not have any concerns until we realized
37 how late we'd be setting in.

Beta

38 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) What do you mean by that?

Tango

1 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): Two weeks before we were supposed to leave,
2 that's when we started having our concerns. Reason
3 being, all key leader's engagements had to been done
4 before then. There was talk about us moving there,
5 there was contracts being worked up which meant that
6 if by some chance the village of Wanat or someone in
7 the village in Wanat was bad, now the AAF know about
8 it and they've had all these months to prepare for one
9 particular fight.

Beta

10 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): Did you express those concerns to anybody? Or
11 who were you talking to with about your concerns?

Tango

12 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) Well naturally we talked to each other about it;
13 however, my first line supervisor was SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) and Scorpio
14 I expressed my concerns to him. I can't speak for
15 everybody; however, I do know that there were people
16 who had concerns. Trying to build a remote outpost
17 with two weeks left, kind of demotivating; however, we
18 all knew the purpose behind it.

Beta

19 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6) What was the purpose?

Tango

20 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) Well, again, QRF up to Bella, again, the only way
21 to get there was by helicopters. Rain dependant,
22 helicopters ain't going to fly so if something happens
23 up there, our guys are stranded. So I agree that
24 there should have been something closer. With Wanat,
25 we were able to get there by air, walking, or by
26 trucks. So Wanat was a good place to have one.
27 However, in my personal opinion, I think waiting two
28 weeks before we were supposed to leave country from a
29 15-month deployment, morale was a little low plus;
30 again, the AAF had plenty of time to prepare if we did
31 move there.

Beta

32 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): The unit was getting ready to rotate. Was the
33 planning or actions needed for retrograde, was that
34 taking up your platoon leader's time or your platoon
35 sergeant's time that you noticed?

Tango

36 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): No. My platoon sergeant in preparation for Wanat
37 seemed to be like everything was going fine. He kept

1 on saying, okay, yeah, we're going to have--we'll have
2 water. We'll have this. This is going to come out
3 with us. These guys--these engineers are going to
4 come out with us. Prior to us leaving, the only
5 problem that we ran into was, okay, you're going, no,
6 you're not going, now you're going, no, you're not
7 going.

Beta

8 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): When did that start? When did you initially
9 think you were going?

Tango

10 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): That started right around the 1st of July. That
11 was when we heard the first word, hey, yeah, you guys
12 are going. July 4th, you're going to be moving out
13 there and then we got a little closer to July 4th, it
14 didn't happen. And then after that, it was one day
15 we're going, next day we're not.

Beta

16 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) And do you know why? Were you ever given a
17 reason why you weren't leaving on, like--why you
18 didn't leave on the 4th?

Tango

19 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): If I remember correctly, I believe the reason
20 that we did not leave the first time they said was
21 because all the supplies that we needed hadn't come in
22 just yet. I think they were waiting for more HESCO's,
23 more water, but I can't really be quite sure.

Beta

24 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) If you would please describe when you arrived at
25 Wanat on the evening of the 8th, what actions you took
26 initially with your team?

Tango

27 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Well we got there early in the morning on the
28 8th. We had left Blessing real early that morning,
29 and we took it slow and easy getting up there. Once
30 we got there, it was pouring down rain so all that
31 night, we all stayed in the HMMWV's and pulled a
32 hundred percent security. We had stepped out once or
33 twice to set out claymores and double check the
34 claymores. So we definitely had a tight perimeter
35 within our vehicle patrol base. We worked on
36 rotations for the gunners as well as rotations for the
37 drivers. The--later on that evening, once the sun

1 broke and the rain stopped, we dismounted selected
2 individuals that we had chosen--we had chosen those
3 individuals because we wanted to pull just so many
4 people per truck instead of moving everyone from one
5 truck and leaving that truck unoccupied, we chose one
6 or two people per truck. Up at the OP, there was
7 myself, Bogar, and Phillips which were also in my
8 squad. Phillips was one of my soldiers.

Beta

9 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6) This is OP Topside?

10 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) This is at OP Topside. There was specialist
11 Rainey, Ayers, Zwilling, which was the gun team that
12 Cyan went up there, Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) was up there. And those
13 were the individuals--I'm sorry, excuse me. As well
14 as Specialist (b)(3),(b)(6) who was a part of the gun team as
15 well. Plum

Beta

16 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): On the evening of the 12th of July, the night
17 before the battle, what weapons were up in OP Topside?

Tango

18 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) We had two 240's, we had a SAW, I had a 203, and
19 everyone else had M4's, we also had an LRAS system up
20 there, numerous night optics such as CQBS's, PAS13, we
21 left down at the gate, the patrol base for them to
22 use.

Beta

23 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): And as best you can recall, I know it was very
24 hectic up there for you; did you personally have any
25 issues with your weapon?

Tango

26 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): Once I got hit, I immediately went to the CCP.
27 We had designated my fighting position to be the CCP.
28 That's when I noticed everyone else coming in. Rainey
29 came by at one point in time. He had squared Ayers
30 away on the 240 and Ayers was just--he was rockin' it.
31 He needed no help whatsoever. So (b)(3),(b)(6) came by and Plum
32 asked, hey, I need a weapon. I was like, okay, here.
33 I gave him my weapon. At that point in time, my
34 weapon had no malfunctions at all. My weapon--I had
35 actually just cleaned my weapon the night before. I
36 put a fresh coat of CLP on the bolt and inside the
37 chamber. My weapon worked fine; 203's were in good

1 condition because I had checked them before we moved
2 up there. He took my weapon and about--time, I don't
3 know but shortly after he came back a little later and
4 tossed me an M4. Now the M4 that I had gotten had
5 obviously fell into the dirt because as soon as I
6 charged it back, I noticed that the whole bolt was
7 covered in sand and in dirt.

Beta

8 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6) And did you attempt to fire that weapon?

9 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): Absolutely. I attempted to fire it once. I got
10 Tango one shot out of it before it malfunctioned and when it
11 malfunctioned, it really malfunctioned. That charging
12 handle would not charge back. I eventually had to
13 point it away for me to take my foot and just kick
14 down on the charging to try to get the bolt loose and
15 extract out the bad round. From that point on, I was
16 able to fire out a couple more shots before it
17 malfunctioned again.

Beta

18 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): Do you know--you gave your weapon initially to
19 Rainey you said?

Tango

20 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes.

21 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6) Beta Do you know why he needed a weapon?

22 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): Rainey was a 240 gunner. He had always carried
23 Tango the 240, so all he really had was his .9 mil on him.
24 Now, he had set Ayers up on the 240, that way Rainey
25 who was a specialist, could start moving around
26 according to the battle because Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) and Cyan
27 myself, the two NCO's that were up there, had already
28 been wounded. So him and Specialist (b)(3),(b)(6) took it Plum
29 upon themselves to start taking charge. And to do
30 that, they needed to move around. So, again, he put
31 Ayers on the weapon, on the 240, gave him all the
32 ammunition that he would need up there. At that point
33 in time, all he had was just his .9 mil so he came to
34 me. He also said that they were--the enemy was
35 running in through the dead space. They were coming
36 from the northeast by east down through the dead space
37 going through the village and going through the

1 village, going into the village shooting at our guys
2 down at the vehicle patrol base. He wanted my weapon
3 in particular so he could take my 203's and start
4 lobbing them down there into the dead space.

5 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6): And did you hear him firing that weapon?

6 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6),Tango I did not distinctly hear him fire that or the
7 203. At this point in time, it's a barrage of PKM,
8 240, 5.56, 7.62, RPG's, everything coming in. There
9 was no way I'd be able to hear a 203 going off.

10 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6): Were you aware of any issues with your 240 or
11 SAW?

12 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6): No. The 240's and the SAW were working fine.
13 Bogar was in the foxhole with me and (b)(3),(b)(6),Fig You
14 know, while we're patching each other up and Bogar
15 was, again, like I said, he was right there. He was--
16 he was rocking on that SAW. While we were in the
17 foxhole, there was not a malfunction with the SAW.

18 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6): When you--take you back to the 8th or 9th, when
19 you got up there. What water did you have with you?

20 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6): I had two camelbacks with me. Also we had a
21 truck, and the truck had been filled with MRE's, extra
22 water, I believe, we probably had maybe three, four
23 cases, 24 inside of a case inside the truck. And that
24 was just our truck. I'm not really quite sure how
25 many on the other trucks. I would assume they had the
26 same. We were pretty strict on our SOP's.

27 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6): And what was your SOP?

28 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Our SOP's for the truck was to carry three cases
29 **Tango** water, three cases MRE's, every other truck has some
30 type of tow-bar or tow-strap. We had two additional
31 fuel cans on the back. Because where we were going to
32 Wanat, we had weighed down the trucks heavily with our
33 ruck sacks. They were tied to the back hatch, they
34 were strapped down to the front of the truck. We had
35 loaded in extra--I know in our truck in particular, we

1 had two speed balls loaded with SAW ammo, extra 5.56,
2 hand grenades, smoke.

Beta

3 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6) Can you describe what a speed ball is please?

4 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): A speed ball is basically--it's--we used empty
5 Tango ammo cans empty 48 round MK19 ammo cans. And
6 basically what a speed ball is you take that and you
7 fill it up with ammunition that you or your squad feel
8 you might need. You'll fill it up with NUBSACKS or
9 cases for the SAW. You'll fill it up with the
10 cardboard containers that the 5.56 rounds come inside
11 of. You will put hand grenades inside of, three
12 possibly, if you want to take some extra smoke too,
13 you'll put some smoke in there. You fill it to the
14 top with enough 5.56 ammunition that you can possibly
15 carry. That way, should you run out, you can go to
16 the back of the truck, pull out the speed ball, and
17 start redistributing ammunition from that speed ball
18 carrier.

Beta

19 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): What was your understanding when you might get
20 some more food or water or ammunition? When you first
21 went up to Wanat on the 8th, what was your
22 understanding of how the resupply would work?

Tango

23 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): We were under the understanding that right on
24 July 8th, as soon as the sun broke, we would start
25 getting resupplied. They would be bringing in--they'd
26 be bringing in the ANA. They'd bring in extra water.
27 They'd bring in extra ammo. They would sling load in
28 a Bobcat to help build the HESCO's and we were
29 understanding that if we did not get air every single
30 day dropping off supplies, we would get it every other
31 day. That was the understanding, however, you know,
32 weather permits.

Beta

33 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): And based on what you saw, did the platoon
34 receive the supplies you expected the platoon to
35 receive?

Tango

36 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) No.

37 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): And what did you not get?

Beta

Tango

1 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) We needed more C-wire. We needed pickets to
2 pound the C-wire into the ground. We needed more
3 water. Numerous times, we would not be able to work
4 during the day because we were low on water so we
5 would work early in the morning before the sun would
6 come up. We'd work right when the sun starts going
7 down, you know, at the coolest points in the day.
8 Sandbags, we started running low on close to the end.
9 We started running a little low on those. I don't
10 think we ever had a problem with MRE's. I don't
11 recall ever going hungry. The biggest thing was
12 water. A couple of people made the comment that we
13 could use some more ammunition just to refortify. We
14 just wanted to make sure we had as much ammunition as
15 possible. But, yeah, there was a lack in water.
16 There was a lack in utilities, for example, we had one
17 Bobcat to fill an eight foot--to fill eight-foot
18 HESCO's. And if you've ever filled an eight-foot
19 HESCO, that's a lot of work. That's like an all
20 morning job with four or five guys. For instance, I
21 took some C-wire and wrapped it around the OP. My
22 squad leader had--was real good in putting out C-wire
23 so he'd told me how to do triple strand and everything
24 but we couldn't do triple strands because we didn't
25 have enough pickets. All the pickets that we had were
26 used to go around the vehicle patrol base. They said
27 we'd get some more, they never came. So I had to take
28 rocks and put it at the bottom of the C-wire just to
29 hold it in place and it was just one strand all the
30 way around. I couldn't stack any more on top of it.

Beta

31 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6) Up at the OP, I'm assuming your team was tasked
32 with digging fighting positions. What tools did you
33 have?

Tango

34 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) We had e-tools and I believe probably around the
35 second day that we were up there; we got our hands on
36 an extra--one maybe two actual shovels. But for the
37 most part, we just used our e-tools. It was easier
38 because you could bend the sides of them, use them to
39 strike down into the ground and pull dirt back.

1 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): What was the soil like?

2 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Well obviously after it rained, the soil was
3 pretty easy to dig. Now once that sun broke, for the
4 next five days, that ground was pretty hard. We did
5 the best that we could. We had a pretty good OP, you
6 know, for being there for five days. It could have
7 been better.

8 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): How could it have been better?

9 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Lack of supplies.

10 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And what supplies were you missing besides the
11 concertina?

12 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Well the concertina, water, again, like I said,
13 we were only able to work in certain parts of the
14 morning and certain parts of the evening. That
15 temperature around July would get up to about 120
16 degrees dry heat. When you're working in that type of
17 weather--in that type of weather with limited water,
18 you're risking heat casualty and then that's a man
19 that's off the line right there. So we couldn't work
20 in the middle of the day.

21 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): If you'd had the water--enough to keep your
22 soldiers working throughout the day, what do you think
23 would have been different on the evening of the 12th
24 with your fighting position?

25 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Well we probably would have had more sandbags
26 stacked up a little higher. But the main thing, once
27 July 13th hit, there really wasn't much we could do.
28 I mean, the enemy owned the high ground. Even if we
29 had triple strand tangle foot strapped up all around
30 the OP and the vehicle patrol base. I mean the enemy
31 had gotten to the villagers. From my understanding,
32 they moved in late at night. They occupied the
33 village. They occupied the house across the river.
34 They occupied the whole mountain side. They were--it
35 was basically as a turkey shoot. They were shooting
36 down on us, and we were trying to shoot up on them.

1 **Beta**
1 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) On the 8th, or the morning when you went up to
2 first establish the OP, did you plan on having
3 overhead cover for the OP itself?

4 **Tango**
4 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) We had thought about having overhead cover, but
5 we decided against it because we thought that, okay,
6 if we start getting attacked from higher ground, I
7 don't want to be fighting through, you know, a camo
8 net trying to shoot and see the enemy. So we decided
9 against the actual overhead cover. I mean, that's all
10 it would have been was just a camo net.

11 **Beta**
11 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Did you have plywood if you had wanted to? Had
12 you wanted to make a hardened overhead, could you
13 have?

14 **Tango**
14 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): The plywood that we had was first used for the
15 mortar pit, I believe. I believe they had it down
16 there at the mortar pit encompassing all the mortar
17 rounds inside of it, kind of hide it from the enemy as
18 well as give some type of protection. I don't think
19 we were--I don't think we would have been able to get
20 our hands on any plywood to come out for the OP anyway
21 even if we did, there's not very much overhead cover
22 that you can put up with plywood, especially if you
23 don't have any type of support beams. It's like
24 building a house with a deck of cards.

25 **Beta**
25 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Are you aware whether any of the enemy forces
26 were able to get inside your string of wire?

27 **Tango**
27 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) There was, to my knowledge, one enemy force that
28 came inside the OP.

29 **Beta**
29 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) Did you personally witness that?

30 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Tango** personally witnessed that.

31 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Beta** And where in the OP?

32 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6); Right about the time, just before Stafford and
33 **Tango** myself left, there was an individual inside the OP to
34 the north--there was a boulder to the north and there
35 was one to the south. The boulders to the north is

1 where he was hiding behind just before the drop off to
2 the dead space. He was in there throwing rocks and me
3 **Fig** and (b)(3),(b)(6) trying to trick us making us think that
4 they were hand grenades so we would jump out of the
5 **Beta** foxhole and get shot.

6 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Did he--would that individual have to have
7 negotiated the single strand of concertina wire to be
8 in that location?

9 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes.

10 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Before you moved up to Wanat, what was your
11 understanding of the enemy situation?

12 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Beta** We knew we were eventually going to take contact.

13 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Beta** Why is that?

14 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) Just because of where Wanat was located;
15 **Tango** mountains completely surrounding it, plus we had also
16 heard rumor that while we're out there, there's a good
17 chance we might get hit. So obviously, the threat
18 level was a little higher than usual. But we had a
19 good idea that eventually sooner or later, we'd get
20 hit. We didn't think we'd get hit like that. We
21 figured like most of the fights that we'd encountered
22 down there, these guys will attack us at about 500
23 meters out, shoot up some pop shots, maybe run or, you
24 know, if they've got the guts, they'll stay and fight.
25 And in which case, we've got more than enough fire
26 power to deal with them. We weren't planning on being
27 completely surrounded. We weren't planning on the
28 **Beta** village being completely overrun by Taliban.

29 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Do you have any idea what ISR assets were in
30 support of the platoon when you moved like Predators
31 or any other assets similar to that?

32 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): I'm not really confident as far as what we had.
33 I do know we did have some assets. I know that some
34 days we had them more than others, but----

35 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Why do you say that?

1 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6) Well first, some days you'd hear it circling
2 around. You'd hear the ISR's circling around,
3 especially at night. When the Chinooks would come in
4 and drop off supplies, they'd have Apache's with them.
5 We were able to talk to the Apache's and have them
6 check out certain areas that we thought might be
7 suspicious. Days that we didn't get air, obviously,
8 those were days that we didn't know if we had ISR or
9 not.

10 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6) And that was while you were at Wanat, you were
11 using the Apache's to look at places?

12 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6) That's correct. **Cyan** (b)(3),(b)(6) was pretty much the
13 one who coordinated that because he was at the OP. He
14 was the FO. He switched over to the net every time,
15 called up for the Apache's, asked them, said, hey,
16 yeah. And, of course, obviously talking with the
17 platoon sergeant and platoon leader beforehand as far
18 where he wanted them to go. He'd give them a grid
19 coordinate, a direction, and have them go check out
20 certain areas.

21 **LtCol** **Beta** (b)(3),(b)(6) Are you familiar with the platoon's fire support
22 plan for Wanat?

23 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) I know that we had designated spots, TRP's. We
24 **Tango** had certain TRP's in place, but I also know that we
25 had a, I believe, it was an 82. We had an 80. I
26 think we might have had a 60 as well. This far out, I
27 really can't remember exactly what all we had there.
28 I know we had mortar assets while we were out there,
29 **Beta** and I know we had TRP's established.

30 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) Had you worked with the ANA before going to
31 Wanat?

32 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6) Yes. On a few missions we took them out with us.
33 They'd go out and they'd hand out HA. We did a couple
34 **Beta** of CONOPs with the ANA.

35 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) And what was your impression based on those
36 previous interactions?

Tango

1 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) Compared to the ASG, they were a lot better. The
2 ASG were shady, didn't want to fight a lot of times.
3 ANA seemed to actually want to try to make a
4 difference. How they did that particular day on the
5 13th, I'm not really sure. I didn't--I didn't have
6 eyes on them. I really wasn't concerned with them at
7 that point in time. Some people told me they did
8 good. Some people told me they did bad. I personally
9 haven't had any problems with them wanting to fight in
10 the time that I knew them.

Beta

11 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): Up on OP Topside on the morning of the 13th,
12 what--are there essentially three positions tied into
13 that OP?

Tango

14 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): There were three positions. There was one
15 position facing out to the north just directly over
16 the dead space. We had a 240 set up there. There was
17 a position to the east by southeast. It was a little
18 bit on a little higher ground. We call it the crow's
19 nest. Again, we had another 240 staged out there. My
20 position, which was the CCP, was located to the south
21 of OP Topside, and we were pretty much covering
22 everything else, every other area that we could,
23 mainly to the south. The reason for that, being the
24 reason we only had--the reason we had my 203, an M4,
25 and a SAW pointing in that direct, we already had SSG
26 (b)(3),(b)(6) position down lower than us angling in that
27 direction as well.

Scorpio

Beta

28 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6) Down towards the road?

29 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): Down towards the road, exactly. And further down
30 the road, we had an ANA checkpoint that was down there
31 as well guarding the roads. So we didn't want to put
32 too much fire power over there.

Beta

33 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): On the morning of the 13th, did you do a stand-
34 to?

Tango

35 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) Absolutely. We did stand-to every morning--every
36 morning varying the time as well. In my sworn
37 statement, I put 0345 we woke up for stand-to.

1 Usually we would wake up within 30 minutes around that
2 time, sometimes before, sometimes later. Sometimes
3 we'd be on stand-to for just an hour, sometimes we'd
4 be on stand-to for two hours, but we definitely did a
5 stand-to the morning of. We did a stand-down the
6 night prior as well.

Beta

7 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) What level of security did you maintain through
8 the night?

Tango

9 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) Through the night, we always had two men up. We
10 had one man on the LRAS at all times, and we had
11 another man with the CQB scanning--we had the LRAS
12 pointed out towards the north because that was the
13 farthest distance. We had the guy with the CQB up in
14 the crow's nest guarding, checking everything out
15 along the little ridge line where we were at to the
16 west. In the morning, of course, it was a hundred
17 percent for stand-to.

Beta

18 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And the normal procedure of security would--
19 whoever was up on security would just wake up the rest
20 of the squad?

Tango

21 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Absolutely. The individual who had the CQBS
22 would usually be the one who came down, mainly because
23 the LRAS seemed to be the most practical thing to
24 always keep up. He'd come down, he'd wake one or two
25 people up and then the rest of us would get everyone
26 else up.

Beta

27 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) From the 8th to the 12th, did you spend most of
28 your time at the OP?

Tango

29 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) Absolutely. I spent the whole time up there with
30 going down to the vehicle patrol base once or twice
31 just to grab supplies or wash my face off in the
32 village where they had a little water spicket.

Beta

33 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): You used the term "vehicle patrol base" to
34 describe the emplacement up at Wanat. But what was
35 your understanding of your reason, the platoon's
36 purpose for going to Wanat? What was going to happen
37 there?

Tango

1 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) At this point in time, it was a vehicle patrol
2 base because we had no hard--no hard covers, nothing
3 built, so it was a vehicle patrol base. However, we
4 called it a COP. We called it COP Kahler in
5 remembrance of our platoon sergeant. The actual--but,
6 again, the actual term was vehicle patrol base. We
7 were under the understanding that we will have
8 vehicles staged up here, pointing out in strategic
9 locations and we will start a good ground breaking for
10 the unit that's coming in. And as soon as they come
11 in, they'll take over and finish building. But we
12 wanted to establish a good base for them, at least
13 have good fighting positions up for them while they're
14 building up their FOB.

Beta

15 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6) You said you were wounded?

Tango 16 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, sir.

Beta 17 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6) How early in the battle?

18 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) The battle was initiated by PKM fire. Those were
19 the very first shots heard. Shortly after that, and
20 I'm talking within a matter of seconds, a explosion
21 happened just to the high part of the OP, still with--
22 still with inside the C-wire but maybe 15--10, 15
23 meters from where I was the explosion itself sent
24 shrapnel down my left side and the explosion itself
25 essentially threw me a little ways but, yeah, within
26 the first--within the first minute of the fire fight,
27 I was wounded.

Beta

28 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): And then when you were MEDEVAC'd, were you
29 MEDEVAC'd from up by the OP or had you been moved
30 down?

Tango

31 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) No. I was pretty stubborn that day. Once my
32 head stopped spinning and I had kind of figured out
33 what was going on and where everybody was and who was
34 alive and who wasn't, I started to assess the
35 situation, I didn't want to leave. I didn't. I dang
36 sure did not want to leave the OP, especially knowing
37 that we had KIA's up there. However, because all the

1 M4's had either been damaged or the SAW which later, I
2 think, the bolt--I think the barrel overheated on the
3 SAW, you know, weapon with dirt inside of them just
4 wouldn't fire and we had no type of fire power up
5 there at the OP.

Beta

6 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6) And you said the M4's were damaged by----

7 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) By gunshots, by explosions, dust, dirt. I know

Tango

8 there was one M4 that took a round right to the
9 magazine well and it wasn't allowing any magazines to
10 get up inside there and if the magazine did get up
11 inside there, it wasn't allowing it to feed properly.
12 Specialist Phillips' M14 was completely damaged from
13 an RPG that hit maybe five meters in front of it.
14 Barrels, like I said, the SAW barrel I believe it
15 eventually started to overheat. The 240 that was on
16 the north end, I never could find it. Once the attack
17 happened, I don't know where in hell--I don't know
18 where it went. There was--I'm assuming it was still
19 up there, but it must have fell down or something, but

Fig

20 that's when (b)(3),(b)(6) and myself, we decided that,
21 okay, you know, we need to get out of here. We need
22 to get down to where we can get some more weapons,
23 where we can get some more ammunition. My main

24 concern at that point in time was to get (b)(3),(b)(6) out Fig

25 of there. I had looked around and I could not find
26 anybody at the OP. Specialist (b)(3),(b)(6) had left at one Plum

27 point to go down to the vehicle patrol base, grab more
28 ammunition and working weapons and was going to come
29 back up. However, he got held up once he got down
30 there, they didn't want him coming up by himself. So
31 I looked over the sandbags, down in the little
32 sleeping area which was one terrace below where the
33 fighting positions where, that's where I saw Bogar and
34 Rainey, Phillips, all them were down there and it
35 looks like they had all been mowed down by RPG and PKM
36 fire. Of course, right there where the tent--right
37 there where our little hooches were set up, there
38 wasn't any cover. I know at one point I yelled out
39 for anybody who might have been left up there, no one
40 answered. So the sandbag wall completely to the south,

1 I had knocked it down so me and **Fig** (b)(3),(b)(6) could get
2 out. Stafford stayed up there, right next to the
3 terraces. I hopped down one terrace where I had seen
4 everyone laying and I started to high crawl over to
5 where I saw Rainey. Rainey was the first one that I
6 had come to. I saw him and pretty much confirmed that
7 he was dead. And I was on my way to get to the next
8 one, and we started--I started taking fire. The fire
9 was kind of--picture this right--I'm on the terrace
10 where the hooches are there's a wall right here that
11 leads up to the next terrace. I starting taking fire--
12 I saw the rounds hitting up right against that wall.
13 At that point in time, I moved back, jumped up to the
14 next highest terrace because, again, like I said,
15 there was a boulder there. And that's when me and
16 **Fig** (b)(3),(b)(6) we went along the terrace heading towards
17 the south as soon as we got outside the C-wire that we
18 had emplaced, there was a little drainage ditch that
19 went directly down to SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) position. **Scorpio**
20 **Fig** (b)(3),(b)(6) ran down there, he was mostly wounded from
21 his waist up so he had real good movement in his legs
22 and he could--it seemed like he could walk but,
23 anyway, he got down there before I did. I pretty much
24 had to crawl--at this point, I had shrapnel in my left
25 knee stuck in the cartilage which was prohibiting me
26 to bend my knee so I hobbling most of the time. But
27 we got down there and I continued to fight as much as
28 I could. I found any weapon possible. I remember one
29 time I was pulling security with a 12 gauge shotgun.
30 Other times, I was filling magazines, tossing them to
31 the guys so they could get their stuff straight. I
32 **Fig** administered an IV to (b)(3),(b)(6) Specialist (b)(3),(b)(6) **Mahogeny**
33 **Scorpio** arrived later on at SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) position and because
34 of his prior training with SF, you know, he was in SF
35 to be a medic. He started assessing (b)(3),(b)(6), **Fig** Said,
36 hey, we need to get him down to the choppers. At this
37 point in time, choppers were coming in but they were
38 only coming in to the vehicle patrol base. The
39 choppers didn't start coming into the OP until the
40 reinforcements had moved up there. But I helped him
41 **Fig** carry (b)(3),(b)(6) down to the CCP at the vehicle patrol

1 base, which, again, I continued to fight on as much as
2 I could there. I started filling magazines. I got my
3 hands on a 9 mil so I started pulling security with it
4 and I did not get on the bird until Captain (b)(3),(b)(6),Oscar
5 ordered me to get on the bird, and that was the only
6 reason I got on that bird.

Beta

7 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And you were MEDEVAC'd to where?

8 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) I was MEDEVAC'd to Jalalabad. They had MEDEVAC's
9 **Tango** going to Jalalabad as well as Abad. Again, like I
10 said, most of the MEDEVAC's were landing on the LZ at
11 the vehicle patrol base. However, on my way down, I
12 did see MEDEVAC's landing up at the OP on those small
13 little terraces to try to get the reinforcements that
14 had been sent up there, to try to get them out. Of
15 course, many of them had gotten wounded in the
16 process.

Beta

17 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And where did you end up via the MEDEVAC process?

18 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Tango** Where did I end up?

19 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Beta** Yeah. Did you return to duty or did you go to
20 the hospital.

21 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Tango** went to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center which
22 is where I stayed there, went through surgery to
23 remove the shrapnel from my knee. Pretty much, I had
24 never made it back to Afghanistan after that.

Beta

25 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Did you at any learn the decision to withdraw
26 U.S. forces from Wanat?

Tango

27 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): I learned about taking the guys out of there
28 while I was in Landstuhl----

Beta

29 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And did you feel when you heard that?

30 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): I can see why they did it. I mean, obviously the
31 **Tango** area was not friendly. We couldn't trust the locals.
32 Apparently we thought we could, but we couldn't. The
33 surrounding high ground, you know, didn't make things
34 any easier. So I understood why they did it, however,
35 I, deep down inside, I was kind of wishing that they

1 would have realized that before we even set foot out
2 there.

Beta

Sigma

3 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3),(b)(6)

4 **LTC** (b)(3),(b)(6) I don't have any questions.

5 **LtGen Natonski:** The site selection was dictated by previous
6 surveys and negotiations on that ground. Up on the
7 east there was some structures that were about 120
8 meters to the southeast of the OP Topside. Had you
9 ever considered using that as potential site for an OP
10 later on or moving the COP up there?

Tango

11 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) The only structured site that we had noticed to
12 the southeast higher than the OP was a house, a vondi
13 which was owned by--I can't remember the name but I do
14 remember numerous time Lieutenant Brostrom coming up
15 to the OP and he was like, you know, you guys have
16 done a good job up here, yeah, yep, I'm thinking we
17 might need to move this OP.

18 **LtGen Natonski:** That was to that location?

19 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) There was numerous talks about us moving a little
20 higher up. As a matter of fact, July 13th there was
21 supposed to be patrol that went out to reassess that
22 area a little higher and maybe see if we could find a
23 more permanent OP. They had made it very clear that
24 the OP that we had there was just temporary. I was by
25 no means going to be---

Tango

26 **LtGen Natonski:** Not the COP, strictly move up to a higher
27 ground?

Tango

28 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) The OP, OP Topside.

29 **LtGen** (b)(3),(b)(6) That would have been much farther away from
30 the COP then and I understood that was one of the
31 reasons you weren't put up there in the beginning.

Tango

32 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): To start off with, yes. We wanted to stay within
33 a reasonable distance of the vehicle patrol base
34 should we need to get back down there or people need
35 to come up so we kept it within about a hundred meters

1 apart but, you know, like I said, Lieutenant Brostrom
2 **Oscar** had come up there, Captain (b)(3),(b)(6) had come up, and they
3 had all said, once the new unit gets here, we need to
4 start talking to them about another permanent OP area.
5 But we are going to send out a patrol and see if we
6 can find one for there.

7 **LtGen Natonski:** You got there around the 8th of July. While
8 you were in the area and the COP were you getting
9 indications and warning of an impending attack? Did
10 you see indicators that led you to believe you were
11 going to get hit?

12 **Tango**
13 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) From where I was at the OP, I did not see any
14 indicators, however, yeah, we had received
15 information, you know, hey, you know, listen up.
16 We're getting intel that we might get hit tonight.
17 I'm wanting to say Lieutenant Brostrom even talked to
18 some of the villagers and they might have even said,
19 yeah, you guys are going to get hit any day now.

19 **LtGen Natonski:** Do you know if that information was passed
20 up to battalion?

21 **Tango**
22 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) I don't know if it was passed up to battalion. I
23 know everyone there knew about it. We didn't keep any
24 secrets, especially something like that.

24 **LtGen Natonski:** On the supply situation, you talked about
25 water, concertina wire, sandbags; before the attack on
26 the 13th, had you been resupplied with water?

27 **Tango**
28 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes.

28 **LtGen Natonski:** There was a period where you had run low on
29 water. You had never run out of water. Did you ever
30 use iodine tablets?

31 **Tango**
32 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) No. We never--no, sir. We never got to the
33 point where we had to go to the river and purify our
34 own water or use iodine tablets. We were in the--we
35 were in the red on water. We were running low. We
36 weren't completely out, but we were running low.

1 **LtGen Natonski:** So you curtailed some of your force
2 protection measures during the daylight when it was
3 real hot because you were low on water?
4 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): That's correct, sir.

5 **LtGen Natonski:** But you did get a resupply.

6 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): While we were out there, we did get resupplied on
7 **Tango** water.

8 **LtGen Natonski:** Did you get concertina or sandbags?
9 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): **Tango** I know they had dropped off concertina wire at
10 one point. I know they had dropped off some pickets.
11 I don't know if they dropped any--I can't remember if
12 they dropped off any more.

13 **LtGen Natonski:** So supply was kind of up and down. When you
14 went low, you could count, at least before the attack,
15 that you seemed to recall that you got a resupply of
16 whatever was down low on the initial --
17 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): **Tango** That is correct. I remember vividly going down
18 to the vehicle patrol base to grab more water that
19 they had dropped off from a CH47 that landed earlier
20 that day.

21 **LtGen Natonski:** And you had plenty up at Topside, of water?
22 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): **Tango** We rationed it out between the vehicle patrol
23 base and us. Again, they dropped off but they didn't
24 drop off a whole lot.

25 **LtGen Natonski:** And on the weapons we've talked about this
26 and you've probably seen it in the news but there were
27 claims that the M4's were failing. You seemed to
28 indicate that a lot of them were battle damaged by
29 shrapnel and bullets. Do you know of any weapons that
30 just failed outright because mechanically not anything
31 caused by enemy action?
32 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): **Tango** No. I am not aware of any weapons that failed
33 mechanically due to other--being--the weapon being

1 damaged in combat or dropped in the dirt and dirt
2 being inside of it.

3 **LtGen Natonski:** And your routine within the platoon, how
4 often did you clean weapons?

5 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6) We cleaned--within the five days that we were up
6 there, everybody cleaned their weapon at least twice
7 up at the OP. We would only take one weapon down at a
8 time though.

9 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay.

10 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6) One weapon goes down, you clean it, it goes back
11 up before another weapon goes down and gets cleaned.

12 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. Lieutenant Brostrom, you'd mentioned
13 some of the other casualties at Topside, did you
14 recall when he was hit?

15 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6): I did not see him get hit. People told me that
16 him and Specialist Hovater were on their way to help
17 us at the OP and while they were on their way up, they
18 were coming up the backside, they were shot from a
19 window inside the village.

20 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. So you never saw him at Topside?

21 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6) No. I never saw Lieutenant Brostrom or
22 Specialist Hovater up at Topside.

23 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. Thanks.

24 **MG Perkins:** As you were discussing, you were initially
25 working at the OP and then you were considering maybe
26 other permanent OPs and then you had the vehicle
27 patrol base, in your mind, when you all went to Wanat,
28 what was sort of the end state. In other words, what
29 was this going to be? Was this going to be a
30 permanently fixed something that's enduring and what
31 was it going to look like in your mind?

32 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6) The vehicle patrol base, we knew that any type of
33 fortification that we put there was probably going to
34 be permanent unless the new unit decided, well, no, we

1 don't want that there. We're going to move it. The
2 OP, we knew was just temporary. They had told us that
3 from the moment that we first stepped foot up there
4 where the OP was going to be. They said, set in here,
5 do the best you can, dig in, we'll give you as many--
6 we'll do the best we can to get you the supplies, but
7 this is temporary.

8 **MG Perkins:** Did you ever see any plan or design of the
9 permanent COP like, okay, here we're going to put the
10 mortars here, we're going to have a sleeping area, a
11 latrine, you know, sort of an outline?

12 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6): Prior to us leaving, no, I did not.

13 **MG Perkins:** Did any of the 1-26 infantry, the guys relieving
14 you, did they ever, while you were there, ever come up
15 during their RIP and do a recon or whatever or had
16 they not ever made it there to your knowledge?

17 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6): I was not there for the RIP, sir.

18 **MG Perkins:** So they never came up for right seat or anything
19 like that before the 13th?

20 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6): I was wounded before they got up there, sir.

21 **MG Perkins:** Okay. The enemy that you were talking about by
22 the rocks that looked like he had penetrated the
23 perimeter of the OP, do you know what happened to him?
24 Was he killed or----

25 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6): He was killed.

26 **MG Perkins:** He was killed?

27 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6): He was killed and the reason that I know that I
28 saw a blood spot on the side of the rock when I went
29 to go check for Rainey. Obviously, me going down to
30 that rock is my main focus right now because there was
31 a guy behind there earlier. Probably didn't have a
32 weapon if he was just throwing rocks at us, but he
33 might have. I saw a blood spot on this side of the
34 rock and, of course, the whole time I was there

1 checking for Rainey, I don't recall ever seeing him
2 again.

3 **MG Perkins:** And discussions with any of the other people that
4 were out of Wanat after the fact back now, have you
5 heard of any other discussion about either down at the
6 COP or the OP, any other place having a penetration of
7 the perimeter?

8 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6) As far as the vehicle patrol base, I don't know
9 of--I don't think anyone's ever said that it was
10 actually penetrated. I mean, one could assume if the
11 guys are in the village, I mean----

12 **MG Perkins:** No, I understand. But there was no apparent wide
13 breach in the wire or people pulling through or
14 anything like that?

15 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6) At the vehicle patrol base, no.

16 **MG Perkins:** Next to Wanat was the district center there. Did
17 you all have much interface with them from your time
18 there?

19 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6): My time at the OP, just like the rest of our time
20 at the OP, that's pretty much where we stayed. We
21 stayed up there. Lieutenant Brostrom, if he ever
22 needed to go over there, he would take dismounts from
23 other vehicles and they would go over there; us at the
24 OP, we stayed at the OP.

25 **MG Perkins:** From the day that you arrived at Wanat and you're
26 there working on your positions, what was your
27 assessment of sort of the activity in the town and
28 what did you see the townspeople doing? Was there any
29 direct interface with them?

30 **SSG** Tango (b)(3),(b)(6): Across the valley where the river was and the
31 dead space, that's where we focused most of our
32 attention on. Again, we had a big rock and tree right
33 between us and the village. Across the river,
34 everyone seemed to be doing their normal thing.
35 They'd work in their fields. You'd see the women with

1 their babies and then they're working. It looked
2 completely normal.

3 **MG Perkins:** How about the vicinity of the bazaar area and all
4 **Tango** that next to----

5 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) From where we were at the OP, we could see the
6 bazaar--we could see the roof of the bazaar, that's
7 it. I couldn't see what was going on inside the
8 bazaar. I couldn't----

9 **MG Perkins:** We have spoken about contractor assistance and
10 things like that. When you came into Wanat, was there
11 a discussion about, well, this is what we're going to
12 do and the Afghani contractors are going--this is
13 going to be their responsibility and here's a priority
14 that we got this done before the contractor or did you
15 understand exactly what the contractor was going to do
16 and how that integrated into your priorities of work?

17 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Tango** When I moved up there, no, no, I did not, sir.
18 We had heard that they were going to be contractors
19 coming out there and that there were going to be
20 certain people doing certain things but as far as the
21 fine details on it, you know this is who is doing
22 this, this is who is doing this, this will be done
23 before we get there, this will be done after we get
24 there, no I was not aware.

25 **MG Perkins:** So specifically up at the OP where you were, you
26 were all given the task you need to prepare this place
27 to fight. You weren't waiting for somebody to do
28 something before you continued to dig in, sandbags,
29 concertina; you were just continuing to improve your
30 position?

31 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Tango** Absolutely. Yes, sir.

32 **MG Perkins:** Okay. That's all.

33 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Beta** Just to clarify. You mentioned there may have
34 been a resupply of concertina and pickets, was your
35 squad ever provided any additional concertina or
36 pickets?

Tango

1 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): Prior to the 13th, there was a shipment that came
2 in on a Chinook and it had concertina wire and it had
3 pickets. The vehicle patrol base started using the
4 pickets and started using the C-wire. I was able to
5 get my hands on two, three, maybe four strands of C-
6 wire, enough to go around the OP at least once.

Beta

7 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6) So that was your single string that you laid?

Tango

8 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) That was--that's correct, sir.

Beta

9 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6) That came in on that resupply?

10 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) After that, I was never able to get my hands on
11 anymore C-wire on anymore pickets. Again, and I think
12 the reason behind that was the vehicle patrol base we
13 knew was going to be permanent. The OP, we knew
14 wasn't; so digging in pickets, setting up triple
15 strands of C-wire that's going to eventually have to
16 get taken down. I look back on it now, and yeah, even
17 though it was going to get taken down, I still would
18 have liked to have it up there. But the main priority
19 was the vehicle patrol base. We assumed that if
20 anything go hit, it was going to be that patrol base
21 and they were going to head for every single gun truck
22 that was out there.

Beta

Owl

23 LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6) Thank you. Major (b)(3),(b)(6)?

24 Maj (b)(3),(b)(6) Owl Yes, sir. Just to give us a sense of what you
25 could see from the OP, how far down, the avenues of
26 approach, how far down the hill could you see I guess
27 towards the bazaar?

Tango

28 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) One hundred meters. A hundred meters exactly
29 where SSG (b)(3),(b)(6) s position was. I could see his
30 position. I could see his camo net that he had up
31 there. He was set up right next to the bazaar, so I
32 could see the top of the bazaar and then I could see
33 everything else out past that.

Owl

34 Maj (b)(3),(b)(6) So could you observe I guess, the two bridges
35 over the river?

Tango

1 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): No. I could not. I did not see any bridges.
2 With the way that the terrain was--where the vehicle
3 patrol base was, just at the end before it reaches the
4 river, it slopes down. And as it slopes down, it
5 levels back out where the--where the river is. But
6 from up at the OP, and, again, there's vegetation
7 right there just before it starts to slope down too.
8 We couldn't see any bridge.

9 Maj (b)(3),(b)(6) Owl: Could you see the district center, the ANP?

Tango 10 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): The one to the north?

11 Maj (b)(3),(b)(6) Owl: To the north.

12 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): We were able to see where the ANP had set up a
13 Tango roadblock right there on the road to the north but
14 that was it.

15 Maj (b)(3),(b)(6) Owl: Now you had mentioned that you weren't expecting
16 to--the platoon wasn't expecting to get hit like that
17 when you were talking about the type of attack that
18 you received at Wanat. Were you told or briefed to
19 expect anything?

Tango
20 SSG (b)(3),(b)(6): Absolutely. Going into that, going into that as
21 long as we had waited, knowing that Bella was closed
22 down at that point in time too, you know, they had
23 been getting hit day after day once they started to
24 close down. We knew it was only a matter of time
25 before that enemy force kept moving south and came
26 towards us. We knew that we would eventually reach
27 contact. And they would tell us, hey, make sure you
28 guys are on alert. Make sure you guys are ready.
29 We're going to do stand-to. We're going to do stand-
30 down. Nothing is going to change. If there was
31 anything that came across the net from S2 or higher,
32 they made sure they let us know, hey, listen, this is
33 just come across, possible enemy attack later on
34 tonight, be ready. And if that was the case, they'd
35 have us bump up the security. Instead of two guys up
36 at the OP, hey, we want three. We want four guys up
37 until we say otherwise.

1 **Maj** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Owl** Were you then briefed on a probing type of an
2 attack or just a Ranch House style of attack?

3 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6) When were briefed on any type of an attack that
4 might come in, it was simply, hey, listen, get ready.
5 We just got information maybe x number of guys spotted
6 over in this area making their way over here or just
7 talk with the local nationals and they're saying that,
8 hey, they're hearing that we're going to get attacked
9 any day now.

10 **Maj** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Owl** And then just one last question, when you're
11 talking about the water situation and just the use of
12 definitions, can you explain the difference between a
13 red status or a black status of water?

14 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6) Black means you absolutely have none. You are at
15 one hundred percent zero. Red means you're running
16 extremely low. Amber means that you're running low,
17 but you still have a little bit left and then you have
18 green which means you're good to go.

19 **Maj** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Owl** And is this part of an SOP or where would you
20 find that definition?

21 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6) I'm not exactly sure what SOP you would find that
22 in, sir, but we use it through the whole deployment.
23 We use it when we give our LACE reports, you know, as
24 far as our ammo, our casualties, liquids, you know, we
25 always give a color for specific things.

26 **Maj** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Owl** And who would make that determination of the
27 water status. Who would say we are at black or we are
28 at red; you or would that be the platoon sergeant?

29 **SSG** **Tango** (b)(3),(b)(6) If I was the one doing the assessment, I would be
30 the one that would decide that. For instance with my
31 guys, when I would go and get a LACE report, a liquid,
32 ammo, casualty, and equipment check, I would be the
33 one who gave up that report for my men.

34 **Maj** **Yankee** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Owl** And Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) was your all's platoon
35 sergeant, right?

Tango

1 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): That's correct, sir.

2 **Maj** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Owl** Did you give him a LACE report on your water
3 status?

Tango

4 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): Everyday, sir.

5 **Maj** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Owl** And you would have told him red or black?

6 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6): I would tell him either red or black or I'd give
7 **Tango** him a specific number even. You know, hey, we have--
8 everybody up here has a full camelback plus we have
9 one case of water.

10 **Maj** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Owl** And do you know what you actually reported during
11 the days you were at Wanat?

Tango

12 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) Do I remember?

13 **Maj** (b)(3),(b)(6) **Owl** In other words, did you tell him we're black?

14 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) Some days I--all right, this is how it would go
15 **Tango** when we were up there and we'd be like, okay, yeah,
16 we're red on water. All right. Yeah, can you give me
17 a specific number? Sure, not a problem this is what
18 everyone has. Pretty much at Wanat, Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) as **Yankee**
19 to whether or not he radioed up to higher what status
20 we were at.

21 **Maj** (b)(3),(b)(6) Okay.

Tango 22 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) We were just in charge of making sure he had the
23 best possible account of how much water we do have.

Owl 24 **Maj** (b)(3),(b)(6): Thank you. Nothing further, sir.

25 **LtGen Natonski**: Okay. Staff Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6), you are **Tango**
26 ordered not to discuss the testimony you've provided
27 today with anyone other than members of this
28 investigation team. You will not allow witness in
29 this investigation talk to you about the testimony he
30 has given or which he intends to give. If anyone
31 should try to influence your testimony or attempt to
32 discuss your testimony, you are instructed to notify
33 **Beta** Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3),(b)(6) or Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3),(b)(6) **Sigma**

1 Do you understand that?

Tango 2 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) Yes, sir.

3 **LtGen Natonski:** I just want to thank you for your service to
4 our country and to the Army and also for your
5 performance on the 13th of July and what you did to
6 help your platoon that day. Thanks for coming in and
7 good luck on your next deployment.

Tango
8 **SSG** (b)(3),(b)(6) Thank you, sir.

9 **LtGen Natonski:** Hoo-ah.

10 [The testimony concluded at 1721, 14 October 2009.]

CERTIFICATION OF VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

Tango

Subj: TESTIMONY OF SSG [redacted] USA, GIVEN ON
14 OCTOBER 2009, AT VICENZA, ITALY

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

[redacted]
(b)(3),(b)(6),Owl

Major, U.S. Marine Corps
Judge Advocate

13 Nov 09
DATE