

**Interview with SGT** (b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray  
**21 April 2009**

(b)(6),Garnet My name is (b)(3),(b)(6) Garnet and I'm here with (b)(3),(b)(6) Date from the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Today we're interviewing Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) X-Ray who was the 2nd Platoon radio transmission operator (RTO) with Chosen Company, Task Force Rock in Afghanistan and at Wanat on 13 July 2008. Today's date is 21 April 2009. Let's start with some background like where you're from and how ended up with 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry (2-503).

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray I'm from Westin, Florida, located just on the border with the Everglades right outside Fort Lauderdale. I joined the Army in January 2006. I went to my basic infantry training and graduated in late May. I went to Airborne School and after I graduated I went overseas to Italy where I was assigned to 2-503 on 18 June. I've been here ever since.

(b)(6),Garnet Weren't you guys initially planning on going to Iraq?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes. That was the initial plan, as far as we knew. On one of our training rotations, they pulled us aside and let us know that our orders had been changed and we were redirected to Afghanistan.

(b)(6),Garnet Did that change your training at all?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray When we thought we were going to Iraq, we tried to adapt some things to be more specific to Iraq. We trained more on mounted operations and incorporating vehicles. We did a lot of close quarters combat as well as the normal basic tactics for woodland-type areas. They tried to keep the training as generic as possible so we would be prepared for anything. On top of that, we did specific training for Iraq. Once we found out we were going to Afghanistan, we tried to do more dismounted operations without the vehicles.

(b)(6),Garnet You guys didn't really have any time to do any mountain or rock climbing work, did you?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray No. We really didn't have a lot of time to do that. We were pretty much filled up on training preparing to go. We squeezed in what we could but there wasn't any mountain training at all.

(b)(6),Garnet When you deployed, you said you were the 2nd Squad RTO, correct?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray I was 3rd Squad. I was in Sergeant Garcia's squad along with Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) Yarrow and Staff Sergeant Michigan (b)(3),(b)(6) Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) was there on the 13th. He's now ended his time in service in the military Yarrow. But, I was in 3rd Squad. I was the 3rd squad RTO and (inaudible) did very basic communication and things of that nature. I was also the grenadier for the squad. Sometimes it was even required to be team leader. A lot of the guys jumped around and filled positions accordingly. Sometimes we'd switch it up for different missions and whatever we needed at the time, but I was mostly the RTO and grenadier.

(b)(6),Garnet When did you become the 2nd Platoon RTO?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Right after we transitioned to Bella Outpost, in early November.

(b)(6),Garnet Before that had you been at Ranch House?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray We'd been at Ranch House for about a month. The 2nd Platoon element that went there basically just beefed up the numbers. We were on a separate mission when the Ranch House attack occurred. Once the

quick reaction force element needed to pull out of there to go back to their area of operations (AO), we went in there to plus up the numbers because a lot of guys were injured. We kind of boosted up the security posture and covered down for some of the Afghan Security Forces that weren't exactly reliable.

(b)(6),Garnet I understand that was one of the problems at Ranch House. I heard the Afghanistan Security Guards (ASG) kind of let you guys down out there.

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes.

(b)(6),Garnet When did Lieutenant Brostrom join the platoon?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray He joined the platoon shortly before we transitioned to Bella. I became the RTO right around the same time.

(b)(6),Garnet Shortly thereafter was when Sergeant Yankee became your platoon sergeant, right?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Sergeant Yankee didn't actually become our platoon sergeant until we transitioned back to Blessing. He was in 1st Platoon at the time but when Sergeant Kahler got killed, we had a temporary platoon sergeant. Shortly after that, Sergeant Yankee became our platoon sergeant.

(b)(6),Garnet So you, Sergeant Yankee and Lieutenant Brostrom had had a chance to work together as a team for a fair number of months?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes. As far as the headquarters team, we worked very closely together. Even our living conditions were very close quarters so we did a lot of things together and we fed off each other pretty well. We worked pretty well together. The guys I worked with were amazing guys and they had a lot to offer as far as education and knowledge. I definitely learned a lot from them.

(b)(6),Garnet Was now Sergeant Memphis your platoon medic?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Memphis was a medic who had worked with us at Bella. He wasn't necessarily assigned to us as a medic, but he worked with us in Wanat and a lot when we were at Bella. We worked with him along with Temple (ph), but he wasn't able to come out to Wanat with us.

(b)(6),Garnet So you guys had worked together and were a pretty tightly-knit team by this point?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Definitely. There was just a platoon-size element out at Bella with attachments so we all got sick of each other pretty quickly. We were around each other way too much. We definitely were very close.

(b)(6),Garnet We have videos that Lieutenant Brostrom's father gave us and it looks like Bella was about the size of a postage stamp.

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Oh, yeah. There wasn't a lot going on there,(not referring to enemy activity). We had to entertain ourselves with each other.

(b)(6),Garnet We saw a couple of the platoon impromptu videos that had been made, to include Specialist Hovater's impression of Colonel Diamond

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray He was definitely pretty good at that stuff.

(b)(6),Garnet Why don't you start by telling me what type of person and platoon leader Lieutenant Brostrom was and what it was like to work with him?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray He was a big kid and he was a guy who liked to have fun. He liked to joke around a lot. He made it a very easy working environment. He wasn't one of those leaders who thought he knew everything. He definitely took opinions from anyone who offered them and he made his decisions accordingly by what he thought was best. He was a very positive leader but when we were on a mission or out on a patrol, he was tactically extremely proficient and knew his job. When we got back and had time to relax, he was definitely a good guy to hang out with. He was just a good guy all-around and I never really had any problems with him. Sometimes he liked to poke fun at the wrong times, but he was just a good guy. He was definitely a good leader and a good friend.

(b)(6),Garnet What can you tell me about Sergeant Yankee your platoon sergeant?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Sergeant Yankee was a really good fit. Sergeant Kahler had really been like a father to all of us. After Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) VI, a lot of the old guys left and a lot of new guys came in. There were a lot of new guys who'd never been deployed before. He kind of raised us and taught all the NCOs. He had very high standards and was just an amazing leader. It was definitely hard to imagine who could step in and do that job. He also had such a great personality. He kind of embodied what 2nd Platoon was. Yankee How do you fill that position? Sergeant Yankee came in and he just kind of fit right in. It's hard to explain but he was definitely an awesome fit. I'm glad it was him and no one else. He also came from another platoon in the company so he knew Sergeant Kahler and where we were coming from. He didn't come in and start pissing people off. It was a really good transition. Sergeant Yankee is definitely an amazing leader and very knowledgeable as well.

(b)(6),Garnet Let's focus in on Wanat. I understand you guys had anticipated going out there for a couple weeks or months before you went.

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray As far as I understood it, we were supposed to relief in place (RIP) out in certain sections and every couple days a new group would RIP out. We'd go out there, build this new location, fortify it as best we could, and once the new unit started coming in, we'd slowly rotate out. They would then do with the area what they pleased. There were rumors out there about what they wanted to do with Wanat, but we were just focused on starting it up. Whatever the 1st Infantry Division wanted to do with it was on them.

(b)(6),Garnet Did you guys get a formal operations order from Captain (b)(3),(b)(6) or Lieutenant Brostrom? Oscar

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes. Every major operation we did had an operations order. Sometimes it would be a basic, generic brief from the platoon leader who would pass it off to the squad leaders to brief their sides of the house for what each person was going to do. This was a little bit different because it wasn't necessarily a movement to contact. We were just setting up a new AO. We got briefs and there were lots of changes. We got briefed numerous times, sometimes from Captain (b)(3),(b)(6) all the way down to our team leaders. Oscar

(b)(6),Garnet Did you guys do a standard rehearsal of concept (ROC) drill and things like that?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Not necessarily. It was something we generally practiced a lot. You should be able to set up a patrol base with your eyes blindfolded and your hands tied behind your back. We went over it and talked about what we were going to be doing and how the location was going to be set up. Obviously, once you get on the ground, everything goes out the window. We'd gone back and forth about things and the leadership had discussed where to place the different positions, but you never know what you'll do with the items you have until you get on the ground.

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(b)(6),Garnet As I understand it, you guys had been to Wanat a couple times in the previous months?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes. That was one of our first long-distance patrols when we got into country. We were pretty familiar with the location. There were some gaps in between, i.e., we had gone to Bella and we hadn't been in that area for about five months, but we'd been there before. We generally knew what the surrounding area was like and we'd talked to people before. We knew basic routes, exfiltration routes and things of that nature.

(b)(6),Garnet So you pretty much knew where the different squads and command post were going to go?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes. We had a general idea of that, but once we got on the ground we had to make changes. As far as my side of the house was concerned, Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) and I had to stand up the communications part of it. We had to figure out where we were going to set up the antennae and where we'd put the command post. We had a general idea and then the 11Cs came in with their platoon sergeant and they decided where they wanted the mortar pit. There are general guidelines for every military operation, but when you get out there things change. I would say we actually had a plan but it wasn't exactly what we followed. That happens every time.

(b)(6),Garnet How did your communications link-up go? Did you guys just have standard FM radio back to Camp Blessing?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray We had FM as well as tactical satellite (TACSAT) radio.

(b)(6),Garnet I understand the TACSAT was used as a backup?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes. It was also a good platform that allowed us to talk to different people, like aerial assets for example. It was just good to have for any kind of battle we were going to get into, small or large. If we had to talk an aerial platform and the battalion command post at the same time, we could. It was all backup for times when the weather wasn't good and we couldn't get FM or vice versa. It was just a secondary platform for us to use.

(b)(6),Garnet So you had one radio on the platoon net. Did you generally talk to Blessing on the company net?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes. At each position, we had a radio and the squad leaders each had a multiband inter/intra team radio (MBITR), so we were able to talk throughout on the platoon net. We also had the company/battalion net, whatever we needed to transition to back and forth, and we also had TACSAT. We had the battalion net on there as well.

(b)(6),Garnet Were you out on that Humvee convoy on the evening of 8 July?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes.

(b)(6),Garnet As I understand it, it monsooned on you that night?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Right. Whatever can go wrong, will. We got out there and you could just feel in the air that it was going to pour down on you, but we didn't know when. Obviously the best time for it to start raining was when we were putting up the OE-254, our 20-foot-high antennae. It was probably for the better, though, seeing as we didn't get hit by lightning, because the rain loosened up the soil enough for us to start digging foxholes. That ground was just hard, packed clay that had never been dug up before.

(b)(6),Garnet I know you had a lot of logistical challenges at Wanat and that you ran out of a lot of stuff. I've been told that you ran out of water and basically didn't have any construction equipment. How did Lieutenant Brostrom handle that and who was he talking to in order to get those things fixed?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray He was talking to everybody and anybody. He was just in a situation where his back was against the wall. There were only so many options he had. He called back multiple times a day to request the supplies we needed and all they'd tell them was that they were on their way. The folks in the rear were trying to get air assets to us while the RIP was going on and they were also pulling out troops and replacing them with troops from the new unit. They were trying to send convoys out to us to bring us supplies. Once he saw that it wasn't going to happen, he put us on rest plans. He'd say, "You can only build for this long." He and the squad leaders decided that that was the best option and they just kind of regulated how much work we would do. That kind of hindered the building up of security, but when you have guys passing out there's no point having security if there's no one to pull security.

(b)(6),Garnet Right. There's no point getting hot weather casualties.

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Exactly. He did the best he could. He obviously couldn't drive back there and get it himself, so he tried numerous times to call back and beg, borrow and steal from anybody he could. He did his best but there weren't many options for him to take.

(b)(6),Garnet Were you expecting to link up with other folks to help you build the position out there?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes. The engineers came out to help us and a few days later they were going to bring in the front loader and the backhoe and all that good stuff. Of course we had plans for everything, but it's hard to tell when you're working with local nationals. We were told we were going to get more assets but we didn't expect it. We built our positions accordingly as best we could. If they showed up, they showed up.

(b)(6),Garnet What was the road like between Camp Blessing and Wanat?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray The road definitely improved since before we got there. I don't know if that was because we just got better at driving the route or what. It was definitely not the safest road. It was very hazardous at points and only as wide as the vehicle itself was. That actually assisted us because if the Taliban blew up the road, they couldn't drive it or run supplies on it either. If they wanted to blow us up and blow the road, they'd obviously hurt themselves as far as supply routes and the people's opinion of them. The road went up and down and in and out of draws and spurs. It was really more like a mountain trail. You've seen it. It's not the best thing to be driving on, especially right before you get to Wanat. That is definitely hazardous as far as pulling security. There are cliff faces on one side and a valley across with very good cover on the other side. It definitely posed a threat to us but not necessarily with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), although there were many threats of them and we found evidence of them. There was also a very high threat of the enemy ambushing us, which had occurred prior to us going to Wanat.

(b)(6),Garnet I understand that the last bit of the road was particularly bad?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray You were just right up against a cliff face and there was nowhere for you to go. I suppose the same thing could be said for the rest of the road. It was just the farthest away from Blessing and the farthest away from support, and it was in between another village and Wanat. There weren't a lot of civilians there so if the Taliban was going to hit us, that's most likely where they'd do it. There wouldn't be any civilian casualties out there, because if they started killing civilians that would look really bad for them.

(b)(6),Garnet I was on a couple roads up around Forward Operating Base (FOB) Naray that just amazed me.

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray I have no idea how the guys I rode around with could have possibly driven those roads with the vehicles they gave us. Those vehicles were not made to drive on those roads. They were a good group of guys, battalion-wide.

(b)(6),Garnet What was your feel for the area and the local community once you got there?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray It was hazardous. The best word to use is shady. Things just weren't right. From the photos, you can see that our location was right next to a bazaar. That allowed freedom of movement for any civilian that wanted to walk by. We had to show them that we were pulling security and we switched up our times and things of that nature. They could see everything we were doing. It wasn't close enough to see our ammunition, but they could tell if we weren't walking around with weapons or if we were and what kind of weapons we had. They could see what kinds of mortar rounds we had as well. This was especially true from the higher ground if someone was up there doing observation on us, which I'm sure they did. It was very open and very exposed. The rules of engagement really tied our hands. We'd see guys who weren't doing things we could necessarily take them down for, but you could tell they weren't right. We had to be on our toes at all times. It just wasn't a comfortable place to be.

(b)(6),Garnet Did Lieutenant Brostrom or you call any of that up to the company or battalion?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Definitely. When we started seeing that, we had our interpreter on call all day long. Lieutenant Brostrom would go out and walk in between Topside and Vehicle Patrol Base (VPB) Kahler back and forth. They could see we were moving around and not staying stagnant. We'd also go down to the police station and do random foot patrols to keep them on their toes. There were a lot of guys just sitting around seemingly observing us.

(b)(6),Garnet Did you actually get up to the observation post, to Topside, at all?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes. I was pretty much always on Lieutenant Brostrom's hip. No one ever moved by themselves, so I'd go up there with him, I helped Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) get his communications set because he obviously needed to be one of the NCOs in charge up there as well as be a forward observer and build the position. I went up there with Lieutenant Brostrom to make sure he had everything he needed and the lieutenant would talk about different things, intel reports and things of that nature.

(b)(6),Garnet What did you think of the position?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray They did an amazing job given what they had. They didn't stop working the entire time they were there. 3/4 of the guys would be working and 1/4 of the guys would be on downtime and they would just rotate over and over and over. They built something amazing from nothing, but unfortunately it didn't do what we'd all hoped it would. They still did an amazing job up there. It wasn't in the best of locations but it was what we had to work with. It wasn't the best but it was the lesser of the evils. If we'd pushed farther up the mountain (*inaudible*) resupply (*inaudible*) they'd be cut off. It was just easier to keep them closer.

(b)(6),Garnet Yes. Sergeant Dzwik told me that they talked about moving it further to the east, but they thought guys would be too exposed to walk there.

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes. If we'd pushed it any further out, they could have easily been surrounded. They were almost surrounded as it was, but since they were close they had the backside covered and although it was from pretty close proximity, they were only getting engaged from three sides. If they were out of visual range

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from us, we'd obviously be hindered in trying to support them and freedom of movement between the observation post and other positions would have been compromised as well.

(b)(6),Garnet Were you with Lieutenant Brostrom when you guys chose the position for the observation post and set it up?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray No. I was more involved with building foxholes in the command post area or the tactical operations center (TOC). Lieutenant Brostrom, Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) and I had our sleeping areas right next to the truck and that's where all the radio communications were as well as the .50 cal machine gun on top of the truck. I was making sure the communications were good to go and as reliable as they could be. After that, I started building our positions because obviously Lieutenant Brostrom and Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) had other things they needed to take care of. I also pulled guard on the radio and worked with some logistics people back in the rear. Yankee

(b)(6),Garnet Did you have any contact or coordination with the Afghan National Police (ANP) in town or the Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers at your position?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray We had the Marine embedded training team (ETT) guys out there and they had their own positions set up on the northwestern side towards the bazaar where the river bends. The Marine ETTs kept them under control over there and they didn't come to our location very often. I didn't have much contact with the ANP or ANA guys out there, but the lieutenant and SFC (b)(3),(b)(6) kept up communications with the ETT, which also meant the ANA and he also went down to the police station to talk to the ANP out there in Wanat. Yankee

(b)(6),Garnet I understand that Lieutenant Brostrom went to the ANP and interrupted a *shura* on the afternoon of 12 July.

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes. He went down there to talk to them. They set up a patrol and walked down there, but for some reason I didn't go. I don't know why. Maybe I just wasn't needed at the time. I'm not sure exactly what happened there so I don't want to comment on it.

(b)(6),Garnet Did Lieutenant Brostrom talk to you at all about going down there?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray He discussed that he was going down there and I called up the report about what was going on. Once he came back from the patrol, he just talked to the commander. If I were doing the communications and relaying information then I'd gain information that way, but there was no middleman in this case because he talked to the commander himself. I don't know exactly what happened in this case.

(b)(6),Garnet But you do know that Lieutenant Brostrom called it up to Captain (b)(3),(b)(6) Oscar

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray He discussed it with him, but I don't know exactly when that happened or how. I don't know what he said or what he did, but I'm sure he discussed it with him at some point. Don't want to give any false information

(b)(6),Garnet Did you guys normally work through the company or did you go direct to the battalion, for passing things like intelligence reports?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray We'd go through battalion. Any kind of radio check or information would go to battalion, especially because with the changes in location of the leadership, he was running around doing different things for other platoons in other AOs. Most of our information was relayed over the net to battalion.

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Oscar

(b)(6), Garnet Did you go to that dinner with Lieutenant Brostrom and Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) on the night of 12 July?

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray Yes.

(b)(6), Garnet What can you tell me about that?

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray Any time we'd go into a situation like that, especially when they think we can help them, they were very welcoming. They brought us into their home and went to this little *shura*. Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) RTO and I kind of sat to the side. They discussed a few things but it was very relaxed. They discussed different intelligence, different threats in the area and what they'd heard was going to happen. It was a very basic discussion about what was going on in the area. I say basic because that kind of thing happens any time we're in a static location or we need to get intel from the *shura* leaders. Oscar

(b)(6), Garnet Did you have a feeling that something was going to go down?

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray I definitely knew something was going to happen, but not to the level it did. A lot of guys joked about it a lot and said a lot of bad things would happen. I knew something was going to happen but I anticipated it happening at a much smaller level. Maybe a few 107 rockets, harassment fire or sniper fire, a few bursts of PKM here and there. I didn't expect what actually happened.

(b)(6), Garnet So you just figured it would be the same thing you'd been dealing with at Bella for quite a while - a lot of indirect and harassment fire?

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray Definitely. With the elevated position they had, they could have definitely gotten a better position on us from a higher location and just fired down on us, especially on the western side. There were very steep mountains and had good fortified positions. It would take us a few seconds to get our mortars in on them. I think they were more intimidated by the force we brought out there. All I expected them to do was to probe us and see how we'd react to certain situations.

(b)(6), Garnet Was the population still in Wanat or had they cleared out?

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray It's hard to say. When the sun starts to set, they start clearing out. The bazaar closed down late in the afternoon. There just weren't that many people there and the houses were more spread out. That afternoon, the numbers had changed. They were obviously exfiltrating guys out of there and telling them to leave because they were going to attack us. On the eastern side where the observation post was and where all the terraces were and where they farmed, there were different populations out there during the day. I wasn't up there enough to see a change in the population so I can't comment on that. I don't know if they were telling people to leave or not. Oscar Seattle

(b)(6), Garnet One of the accounts says that Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) or Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) said they actually saw one of the former ASG guys from Bella when they were in the bazaar. Did you hear about that?

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray Yes, I did.

(b)(6), Garnet What did you hear about that?

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray We'd actually seen a guy from Ranch House at Bella and then from Bella at Wanat. We just pulled him aside and discussed what he was doing there. I don't recall him being placed under confinement

(PUC'd). I don't recall him being taken into custody or anything. We just asked him questions. We couldn't really do too much to him.

(b)(6), Garnet I can't think of any reason for you to PUC him unless he was armed.

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray Definitely not. I would have liked to. There were a lot of questions. Why was he there? What purpose does he have? He obviously had a lot of information about us. All those things went through our heads but, like you said, there was no reason for us to put him into custody according to our rules.

(b)(6), Garnet Let's move on to the battle. Were you headed out with Lieutenant Brostrom on patrol that morning?

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray Yes.

(b)(6), Garnet Why don't you tell me how the fight kicked off and your actions during it?

**Seattle** **Yankee** **Oscar**  
JH: We got up for stand-to and I was in the .50 cal gun position on the truck. It was right next to where I slept in my foxhole. With me were Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6), Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray the platoon leader and Captain (b)(3), (b)(6). We were all sleeping in the same area. I took the .50 cal position just to provide cover around the HESCO and the wall in the command post area. The vehicle was facing generally towards the west along with the TOW truck. During stand-to, everyone woke up and put their gear on. I was then relieved by Specialist (b)(3), (b)(6) and I were **Portland** **Memphis**  
**Portland** He got into the gun position inside the turret and I crawled out. Doc (b)(3), (b)(6) and I were complaining about going out on the patrol. We were questioning why we were going out. We were just tired and when we get tired, we get angry and moody. Anyway, I was talking with him and started prepping my gear. I did radio checks, made sure the fill was correct and did pre-combat checks and pre-combat inspections. We were just sitting there talking when we heard two to three pot shots. As far as I could tell, that was the initiation for the rest of the enemy to start firing. We ID'd that it was incoming and I ran to my foxhole. I grabbed my weapon and tried to find out what the situation was. I wasn't in a position to return fire because I was facing towards the center of the patrol base and 2nd Squad's area. Lieutenant Brostrom and I just started trying to find out what was going on.

(b)(6), Garnet Colonel Brostrom, the lieutenant's dad, is interested in knowing when you last saw him and what he was trying to do.

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray We ran to 2nd Squad's location and found out what was going on. We got a hold of Hovater and he ran back to my position with me and Lieutenant Brostrom, and at this point my memory is pretty hazy. A lot of the battle is, because I was just on autopilot. I just did things and made decisions based on what was going on. Please excuse me if I don't remember a lot of things. Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) was completely swamped with the radios. We had three radios set up. One was calling back from the observation post trying to get help. The initial blast was so intense that the casualties started going down. We also started getting radio communications from battalion on different nets. I jumped in there and started assisting him with all that. We went back and forth between giving situation reports to the battalion commander, trying to call for fire missions and getting air assets on station. We worked closely on that for a while in a very small space. Weapons started going down. After the 11C mortar guys exfilled from their position, they ran back to our position. We had two wounded by that point. Abad was wounded as was Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6). All of the 11Cs, some engineers, two wounded, the commanding officer and I were there, and (b)(3), (b)(6) was in the turret. We had guys just crammed in there. Controlled chaos is the best way to describe it. We were actively engaging the enemy but it was completely chaotic, especially in our location because there were so many things going on. People were getting treated, nine lines being called in. Lieutenant Brostrom was on a knee and had heard all the things that were going on at the observation post. I think I was in the middle of a fire mission, but I'm not sure, when he turned to me and said, "Hayes, I'm going to the

**X-Ray**

observation post." I said, "Sir, I'm in the middle of a fire mission." You could just see it in his face. He needed to go get his guys. He wasn't a guy to sit around in a foxhole, be protected and just give orders. He definitely wanted to be in the fight. That wasn't the best location for a platoon leader to be, but that was Lieutenant Brostrom. He needed to do what he needed to do and he needed to be up there to help his guys. He grabbed Hovater and just took off. That was the last time I saw him.

(b)(6),Garnet Was there any particular reason why he picked Hovater to go up with him?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Hovater had run to our location from the 2nd Squad area, and as far as I know there was no specific reason. He was just a guy who had a weapon. A lot of things done that day were hasty. Things needed to get done and actions needed to be taken. It's just how it was.

(b)(6),Garnet Initially you were helping Captain (b)(3),(b)(6) handle the fire missions, the artillery. How effective were those initial fire missions? Oscar

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray The fire missions were effective but the enemy was so close. I know we were dropping guided bomb units (GBUs) on the west side of the river. There were a few houses right there on the edge of our perimeter and then it dropped off into a big river bank, so there was a deviation. The commanding officer had put bombs back there to see if they could kill any supply routes or if there were any guys running ammo, to take those guys out. On the eastern side, the 155s had been dropping, but so many munitions were dropped that day that I can't remember what it all was and where it was dropped. They were effective but only to a certain range because the enemy was so close. That's why we needed the Apache gunships. They were definitely key to helping out the situation.

(b)(6),Garnet I was lucky enough to be able to see the Apache gun tapes. I bet you guys were glad to see the Apaches come in.

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes. There were two reasons. We knew help was on the way and they could give us close combat air support, but also usually when air assets come on station, the bad guys say, "Okay, we're done here. We don't need to mess with these guys." In this case, though, they just kept going. I figured once the Apaches came in things would start calming down, but they didn't. They kept going. I'd never seen these guys fight like this before. Did you say you had the Apache tapes? Can I see those?

(b)(6),Garnet Well, they're pretty sensitive. I'm not supposed to distribute those. I probably have about two or three hours worth of tape but only about two minutes worth of really good data. They're pretty interesting to see. They do a couple good fly-overs, particularly when the first MEDEVAC was brought in. That gave us a really good overhead picture of the combat outpost. We're actually doing cartography and maps here and trying to get Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) at Fort Riley to come over and work with us to make sure we have everything correct. Do you know Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6) Maple

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Yes.

(b)(6),Garnet He's out at Fort Riley. I don't know what he did to get stationed out there. I was there for three years and hated it. Anyway, we've talked for about an hour now. Is there anything else you'd like to add that we haven't covered?

(b)(3),(b)(6),X-Ray Where does all this go?

(b)(6),Garnet I'm putting together a formal study of the fight at Wanat. Right now, I have about 250 pages on paper and we're still trying to answer as many questions as we can. I'll be distributing it to a couple

people for review and eventually the Army will release it. I'll keep you advised on where we are on that and what's going on. We may be talking to you again if we have any further questions. I've actually talked to Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) three different times as well as Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) and Specialist (b)(3), (b)(6) a couple times in order to get questions answered. They've been really helpful. We might be talking to you again, too.

Yankee

Fig

Ivory

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray

Definitely. Whatever I can do to help. There weren't a lot of guys down where I was. A lot of the focus is on the observation post, but a lot of guys did a lot of cool stuff at the VPB as well. Not to take away from anything they did, but a lot of guys did some amazing things down near mine and Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) location, too.

Oscar

Plum

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

Have you heard anything about (b)(3), (b)(6)? How's he doing at Ranger School?

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray

He should be in the Mountain Phase right now and should be coming back here in the next few weeks.

(b)(6), Garnet

Mountain Phase means that he's majorly sucking right now.

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray

Correction. I think he's in the Florida Phase, which is the last of the three phases. As far as we're concerned, no news is good news. If he's doing well in Ranger School, we're not going to hear about it. He'll show back up when he's all done.

(b)(6), Garnet

What are your plans for the future? Are you going to ETS or are you going to stay in?

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray

actually reenlisted and I'm headed to the sniper school at Fort Benning shortly. I'm going to be a cadre for the Infantry Officer Basic Course (IOBC) or something like that, maybe be a Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) guy for a while. Hopefully, I'll then head back to the line in about 12 months or else I'll go to Special Forces training.

(b)(6), Garnet

Fantastic. Sounds like you have some exciting things coming ahead for you.

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray

Thank you.

(b)(6), Garnet

So you enjoy the challenges and hard work?

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray

I do.

(b)(6), Garnet

Thank you very much for your time. We'll send you a copy of this transcript and keep you advised of what we're doing out here. I know Colonel and (b)(6) would like you to keep in touch with him as much as you can.

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray

I will do that.

(b)(6), Garnet

We appreciate all that you do and we appreciate talking to you today. It's made a big contribution to our study.

(b)(3), (b)(6), X-Ray

If there's anything else I can do, just let me know.

(b)(6), Garnet

Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by (b)(6)