Interview with LTC (b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu
3 April 2009

(b)(6), Garnet : My name is (b)(6), Garnet and I'm a historian for the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. I'm interviewing Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu of the United States Marine Corps. He was the embedded training team (ETT) officer in charge (OIC) in Afghanistan in 2008. Today we'll be talking about his experiences with the Afghan National Army (ANA) kandak that ended up deploying a company to Wanat. Today's date is 3 April 2009 and this is an unclassified interview. Why don't you start by telling me a little bit about yourself and your career and how you ended up working on an ETT?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : For the last 15 years I've been a state trooper in the state of Connecticut and I'm a lieutenant colonel infantry officer in the Marine Corps Reserve. I came off active duty in 1992. I was with Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marines for about a year. I was a commanding officer in charge in Plainville, Connecticut, for four years, and for the last six or seven years I've been the training officer for Marine Air Support Squadron 6, Marine Air Control Group 48 in Chicopee, Massachusetts. I've been the training officer, the operations officer, the executive officer (XO) and I'll be assuming command of Marine Air Support Squadron 6 in June. I was asked by Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6) the Regional Corps Advisory Command Amber (RCAC) commander, to go out and be an OIC for ETT 5-3, which was training in Hawaii. My prior experience included having a rifle platoon during Desert Storm as part of Task Force Grizzly Bear, which was the main element that breached the mine belts, which was the left flank of the Marine assault. I was blown up in the first invasion, as a lieutenant. I've had combat experience before. So, Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6), Amber asked me to come out and be on the ETT. I thought the ETT mission was a great mission. I thought it was a great opportunity for a lieutenant colonel to be able to train an ANA rifle kandak. It's independent duty without really any supervision and it turned out to be a greater experience than I ever thought.

(b)(6), Garnet When did you get to Afghanistan?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : We got boots on the ground around 16 March 2008.

(b)(6), Garnet : Where did you operate out of?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : For nine months we operated out of Regional Command-East and we were attached to 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry (2-503) and 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry (1-26), which were co-located on eight different bases within the Pesh River Valley, Korengal Valley and the Waygul Valley.

(b)(6), Garnet : Which kandak of the ANA did you work with?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : We were with the 3rd Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 201st Corps.

(b)(6), Garnet : Did you work with that ANA unit the whole time you were there?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : Yes. They were never rotated out so we had continuity with the ANA soldiers, company commanders and command staff.

(b)(6), Garnet : You said this kandak had been newly formed?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : They had just completed training at Kabul military training and the previous ETT finished training them up at Camp Eggers. They took them out to the Korengal and the Pesh Valley in January. They were

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there January through March. I took over for them in March 2008. They weren't combat tested and 90 percent of the soldiers were relatively young and inexperienced. They were trying to expand the force and sometimes you reap what you sow. The kandak that was out there previously had operated together for over five or six years.

(b)(6), Garnet : You had a habitual relationship with the same ANA unit and the same Task Force Rock unit. Did that unit typically work with the same ANA company?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu Yes. Depending on what time of the year it was, like around Ramadan, we'd have 70 or 80 soldiers at Camp Blessing and their direct action company was at Camp Blessing as well.

(b)(6), Garnet : What was your working relationship with Task Force Rock? How effectively do you feel they worked with the ANA?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : Task Force Rock had (*inaudible*) a lot into the missions they did. We probably did five or six different operations with them. When we got out there, they weren't doing that much because it was the winter time but we really ramped it up going into Wanat. They did their spring offensive and we were doing night inserts and helicopter inserts. They were pushing the ANA out to the front but not so much in the planning phases. Their planning was to pack everyone on the backs of vehicles and just take off. That was something we had to work on. Some of them just didn't have the skill sets. They were good insurgent fighters but my ETTs really put a lot of time in coordinating with the Army. I had a great relationship with Task Force Rock. They worked well together and Colonel(b)(3), (b)(6)actually brought the kandak commander out on many of the missions. They made him get involved in what the Army or the coalition was trying to do. It was the same at Wanat. We were integrated with the Army within Task Force Rock's area. We were able to start building a better rapport, which the Army saw by the time Task Force Rock left and Spader came in. When Spader came in, my ETT had been there for five months working with the ANA and they saw that the ANA was capable. Up in the Korengal, they took over 80 percent of the security for the base. Prior to that, the Army didn't trust them. Their abilities increased dramatically under the supervision and guidance of my captains, staff sergeants and gunnies. We pushed them into independent ops and we did some of the first cordon and searches that were run completely by the ANA. Their skill sets were increasing. Task Force Phoenix said they didn't want the ANA to do independent ops anymore; they wanted to do joint ops again. We didn't really have the ability to do mounted ops. Many of the local patrols were always joint operations. Everything was integrated with Task Force Rock as well as Task Force Spader. It took Task Force Spader a little bit and it was a little bloody during the first 90 days out there. The Army did them an injustice because they stood up that battalion in June 2007 and in July they sent them to the Korengal and the Pesh. It's not that they weren't capable but there was a steep learning curve. They were starting out with a new battalion and there wasn't any historical perspective or battalion knowledge. They had to go from zero to 100.

Diamond

(b)(6), Garnet : And that's unforgiving terrain out there.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : Yes. I like the Army and I had a good rapport wherever I went with them. It was just like the ANA that were sent out there. They were ill-prepared initially to take on what they had to. By the time I left at the end of November, they already had 15 KIA and 100 wounded. Some of them were from improvised explosive devices (IEDs) or firefights. There was an assortment of ways the young soldiers got killed. You hit one vehicle and there's five guys. Up in the Korengal from August to October, there were 120 troops in contact (TICs) up there. In 270 days out there, we had 325 TICs between the Army and us. My ANA up in the Korengal under Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) were leading the patrols and setting the pace. It was mostly done under his guidance because some of the company commanders, they don't match up to Marine Corps company commanders and Army company commanders. They've been at war for 30 years

and they have a different mindset. They know it's a marathon but some of us are still in sprint mode. When Ramadan comes, it's time to throw our heels up. We were able to get them to do many different things. Around Ramadan we knew we couldn't do certain things, so we'd tailor our patrols and combat activities so the guys weren't getting dehydrated and they had plenty of water. We made them hydrate up before they did their morning prayer. We adjusted the schedule to meet their religious needs. Sometimes they'd do some kooky stuff because they just didn't want to go out, but it was nothing different than what the Army of the past in Vietnam had problems with. They don't see the big picture sometimes. They come from small villages and they don't completely understand everything. They're just being told what they need to know.

(b)(6), Garnet : What was the level of literacy among the ANA guys?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : I'd say maybe 25 percent of them were literate, but they were all taking literacy classes once a week as part of their training schedule. We'd go out there and show them what they needed to do. We'd find a couple good NCOs and sometimes they were the ones we really relied on. We had a couple of great first sergeants and sergeants major that kind of ran the show but there was a very silent group of officers who were just always trying to fill their pockets somehow. That behavior would trickle down from brigade or corps, and changing those cultural attitudes is the real thing we have to work on.

(b)(6), Garnet : Property accountability means that you properly account and take a profit from the property.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu: Yes, and they were good at doing that. I couldn't put enough control measures in place to stop it. I had just 18 Marines and three corpsmen. I had a vehicle there but we had to run logistics for them. Every four days we had to do logistics and the proper feeding of everybody up at these air-centric bases. That meant we had to get food and water up there to them. Our ETTs are training them to fight but we also had to work on getting the ANA fed. We had to track things like their cold weather gear so they had it when they needed it. It was just me, a master sergeant and a sergeant doing all that. We had to design operations and worry about logistics and my captains were out there doing things. Everybody worked seven days a week usually from 0700 to 2300 every day. It made the time go quickly, but we were consumed with worrying about food, ammo and dealing with their chain of command. We had to get the ETTs above us to work their major muscle groups on logistics, which is a huge problem over there. It got better in certain areas like ammo, accountability and expenditure reports, but that was only because of tight oversight on our part.

(b)(6), Garnet : Were these guys like a national group they pulled together? Were they raised in a local region or a certain province or district?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : The kandak commander was Pashtun, the XO was Hazara, as was the sergeant major. The ops sergeant major was a Safi from the Waygul Valley, so he knew all the people and players. There was always hearsay that he was (*inaudible*) in, but it was more speculation than any hard facts. The soldiers were a mix of Pashtun, Hazara and Tajik. They were a little bit of everything. They try to offset the command a lot but there were still a lot of Pashtuns. Dari worked with talking to the officers but the enlisted soldiers spoke mostly Pashtun.

(b)(6), Garnet : Did you feel the ANA were capable of doing independent dismounted patrols by the July timeframe?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : Yes, as long as they were with the ETT, because their radio communication was weak at best. They always talked in the clear. They'd go out and do local patrols with the Army and they could fight, but there were still some that couldn't. They'd just hunker down and hide, without that solid guidance or leadership from Marines like Corporal (b)(3), (b)(6), Eli or (b)(3), (b)(6), Aqua telling them, "You have to get in the fight."

Those guys helped the ANA not be scared to put their heads in the hornet's nest when shit's going bad. That's the leadership we were trying to find and implement out there. Did it happen that day in Wanat? I don't know. I think a lot of them hunkered down, but the Taliban in Wanat that day were really trying to kill Americans. That was obvious. There were a couple of the ANA wounded who were out on a checkpoint but that was it. When the attack was initiated, it was 0430 and my guys were already at stand-to. They were taking an ANA patrol out to set up another observation post (OP) and from what I understand, that's when all hell broke loose. We sat down with Corporal (b)(3), (b)(6) and (b)(3), (b)(6) and got them to give us a detailed report of what happened, as did the Army in their investigation. They gave what they saw happen that day from their Marine perspective, what transpired in front of them, how they articulated it and how it was synthesized in their thought processes.

Elm

Aqua

(b)(6), Garnet : I understand that your assessment was that this ANA group was fairly effective and pretty trustworthy.

Burgundy

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu: They didn't run from the fight. I know (b)(3), (b)(6) said they were firing in the air, and they might have been, but the Army guys might have been firing in the air too. From the pictures I have, it appears like they built themselves a hell of a fighting area. The Army only gave them one zone or sector that they were responsible for and that's the way they've done it across the board on these forward operating bases (FOBs). The Army had 40 to 45 guys up there and the ANA had 25 with three ETT members. They were trying to build some stuff up there, but the heavy equipment didn't show up to put in the HESCO barriers. Everybody else knew there could be an attack but no one knew when it would occur.

(b)(6), Garnet : You never know that.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : You don't. The captain was up there and he had a *shura* that night before where he met with the elders. I'd been up there a few times previously and we'd end up with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), the elders would hold them up there and then we attack them. We'd get good intel that they're going to run an attack from my sergeant major and it came to fruition and they put a whooping on them. Every time we went up there, we led with our noses. We'd try to go through the whole land grant and negotiate with them, but they didn't want to negotiate. They wanted us to occupy the land and to save face with the Taliban by saying, "There was nothing we could do about it."

(b)(6), Garnet : That gives the elders something they can actually argue with the Taliban because they can say to them, "Where were you when the mean infidels came in? You were off screwing around somewhere and you left us in bad shape. They took our land." That allows them to be able to play people against each other and I get the idea that that's what they like to do.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : They love that. I know the commander of the provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in Nuristan said we didn't do enough, but we bent over backwards to try and please them. Probably too much to a certain degree. The whole counterinsurgency process of getting out there, doing the meets and greets and providing services for them like paving roads or increasing certain infrastructure for them. They were trying to close down Nuristan because they had the Ranch House incident up there the year before and Bella was air-centric. It's really just a poke in the eye up in Nuristan. It really serves no purpose. Even Wanat was 10 to 12 kilometers due north of Blessing, which was our main base. Bella was 17 kilometers. You could get there but you'd have to go up in a Hilux. Everything was air-centric. We had Kabul air and jingle air and they got shot down up there. The AH64s and the CH47s were getting shot at. Colonel (b)(3), (b)(6), Delta and the powers that be decided it was better to bring it down. They could supply it by ground, it wasn't really air-centric, it's not really serving a purpose. That was the thinking behind it. There was no one up at Bella. It was just a small outpost of Americans and some Afghans.

(b)(6), Garnet : It's not even a proper village. I'd call it a hamlet.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu At best. They enjoyed having the Army up there because they'd bring money and things they didn't have previously, but they closed down Bella. On 4 July mortars were being shot at Bella. The Predator was up and they saw the enemy shoot at our OPs and positions up there. The Predator kept an eye on them, tracked the Hilux and then they brought the Apaches in to do a gun run on them. Of course they came down and said there were 15 doctors in that Hilux and they weren't shooting at us. They have a good information operations program out there, and the Army was a little slow to say what transpired. The plan was to close Bella and then that happened. A week later, we closed everything down and moved to Wanat. We started moving HESCOs up to fortify it and the plans are all in place but there really isn't a base. There is triple-strand concertina wire, dug-in positions for the 120s and the OPs, and everything was waiting for the heavy equipment to actually come in and fill the HESCOs.

(b)(6), Garnet : It sounds like the Task Force Rock guys had worked with this ANA platoon before. There was a level of familiarity with them and your ETTs had obviously worked with Chosen Company in the Waygul before.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : They held their sector. Did they do anything more? I don't know. Everybody was busy. The OP was where they were getting overrun. If you look at the map, you have the main hamlet there, the hotel, the mosque and the Waygul River running to the northwest a little bit. It kind of juts out of the valley a little bit there. There are houses surrounding it, which was a bad spot to try and secure anyway, as well as the people. If you're armchair quarterbacking, it's easy to say, "Why don't we just take the people out and tell them to move somewhere else until we can get the HESCOs up, so at least we'll have some place to fight from." I wasn't in on the planning phases of that. The company commander really had the con on that. Those were decisions he made and he's a pretty smart kid. He got his nose bloody up there and had been fighting up there for 15 months. It was a difficult place. They knew they were going to get attacked but didn't know when, where or how. The elders were constantly talking out of both sides of their mouths all the time. They reassured them over and over again, but the Marines and soldiers dug in deep anyway. Most of the nine casualties and all the KIA were up at that OP. They never breached the interior perimeter, so the ANA must have been shooting at something. The enemy didn't breach over by the ANA side. They might not have been killing people, but they were suppressing people. My Marines said they were pinned down for 45 minutes with PKM fire and AK47 fire, RPGs, so it was a complex attack right out of the gate. I'm not sure what everyone was doing, but they were all returning fire from someplace hunkered down. I'm not sure what the Army guys are saying, who were the eyewitnesses and what they remembered. My Marines ensured the ANA were hunkered down and that they had good fighting positions in case they were attacked in the sector they were responsible for (b)(3), (b)(6) and (b)(3), (b)(6) went up to the OP to reinforce it with ammo and 240 machine guns. That's where they really showed their leather. Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) stayed up there because his responsibility as the senior sergeant was the ANA. Once he got done taking care of some US soldiers, he went over there to see what their status was.

Elm Burgundy Aqua

(b)(6), Garnet : I understand that this ANA company had operated in the Waygul and the sergeant major had grown up in the area, had some tribal, local knowledge. Was there any kind of working relationship between the ANA and the population?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : Sometimes, but sometimes the ANA alienated them. They were kind of brutal with them sometimes. Any time we worked with the Army and did anything, we liked to put an ANA face on it. We wanted the people to see that it wasn't the coalition forces out there but rather the ANA. We put them out front and some people may say we put them out front too much, but the people of Afghanistan want to see the central government. The ANA is a representation of the central government and it's getting them to take responsibility for the area. In October, we did voter registration and they wanted me to go out there to

Chapa Dara to Governor Wahidi, who was the provincial governor. He wanted the ANA kandak commander to go out to Chapa Dara and sit for a month while they did voter registration. I told him, "I'll have the Army take you out, but my ETTs aren't sitting out there for a month." They still had to train the company and I only had two or three. There was a small contingent of 20 or 25 guys out there. We got them out there and they stayed out there for a month. They were able to resupply themselves with the Army every couple of weeks. We gave them as much ammo as we could and hunkered them down with sandbags. My orders to them weren't as much orders as they were guidance. I told them, "Don't waste your ammo. Let them get in tight before you start trying to kill them." Teaching the ANA trigger control is a task in itself.

(b)(6), Garnet : I understand they are prone to the spray-and-pray technique.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : Yes, and that was one of those things that we tried to train the ANA on. We tried to teach them trigger control and how to aim, but it's a progressive process of us teaching them and then them teaching others. We had to work on getting them to stay in front and to also realize that ammo wasn't just going to show up mystically. Getting back to literacy, because they're not literate we couldn't do indirect fire. Most of our 82 millimeter mortars are fired direct-lay. They can usually get them on target within two or three rounds. If they can see it, they can drop it on it. We set up Able (Main), which was at the center of Pesh. Captain (b)(3), (b)(6) had them do an OP to the north, which was all ANA manned. He set up three-point targets, they'd yell them out, we already had grids on them, and either the Army or the ANA would shoot it. There was a National Guard mortar team that trained them up over there.

Osprey

(b)(6), Garnet : Would you say you saw definite improvement and enhanced abilities in the nine months you were there with them?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : Yes. We saw dramatic improvements, but that was from us being tenacious with the ANA. We made them do things like take responsibility and ownership of the bases they were on, as well as the local population in the areas surrounding the bases. Any time we did humanitarian assistance drops, the Americans would never hand anything out. It was always the ANA. We'd give them stuff and work with the civil affairs guys. If there was a cow shot by an American, we'd give them a donation, like a cow or something. Sometimes the Army was too quick to give them things. If the Taliban shot one of the locals, I'd be like, "Don't give them anything. We're not shooting these people. It's the Taliban. They're going to keep coming back for more, but they're not giving you any information." There was a big learning curve sometimes on the Army side.

(b)(6), Garnet : It's a complex cultural environment over there.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : Absolutely. 3BC (*ph*) out in the Pesh – a very conservative, agricultural area. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has gone through and put water wells. It's a very simple thing but now these people can get clean, fresh water right out of the ground. They put in micro-hydro dams and they built schools. My ETTs finished up a clinic out in Managai, but there aren't any midwives or anybody to work there. That's supposed to be taken care of by the international community. Those structures are out there and now it's up to the central government to fill those buildings with relatively qualified people.

(b)(6), Garnet : At least there's a place for them to move into when they show up.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : Correct. It's my understanding that there was an Afghan man up there who was actually an American citizen. He'd go back and forth to the US but he owned or resided in one of the houses up there. Staff

Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6), Aqua has better information about that because he's actually had conversations with that gentleman. Did you get any of that out of him when you spoke with him?

(b)(6), Garnet : No. Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6), Aqua gave me some great information but he was your classic senior NCO and answered questions directly.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : (b)(3), (b)(6), Burgundy might give you some more information. He's more detail-oriented. You obviously didn't get a hold of (b)(3), (b)(6) Elm was a holdover or a backfill for a couple of Marines who had been killed. The RCAC before us split it up between two ETTs. There was a Sergeant Fox who was killed coming out from the Ranch House.

(b)(6), Garnet : That was the November 2007 ambush.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : Right. In December, the doc got killed up near the graveyard in the Korengal. I had one soldier, a young corporal, get shot in the chest early on right after we got there, but he had his small arms protective insert (SAPI) plates on, so no harm, no foul. I had a corpsman lose his lower leg as a result of some confusion with the Army who dropped rounds on him. That incident also killed one of their guys. The problem was they had 777s or 155s firing and 120s. The forward observers (FOs) got confused on the rounds and adjusted the wrong rounds. That's what happened up there. After a while, the ANA didn't want to go out with the Army. There were a couple of incidents where they called an Apache in on some ANA at Vegas in October. That rattled them up a little bit. That was followed by the incident on 16 October, so the ANA weren't real happy with the Army after a while. The Army had some issues. The guys from 1-26 were great but they didn't have the NCO experience they needed to be out there. They weren't doing the simple things like cleaning weapons, and as a result the .50 cals were jamming up in the Korengal. A little more experience with the day-to-day things you need to do in combat would have been helpful for them.

(b)(6), Garnet : I find that surprising.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : This is just what I've heard from my guys who were up there.

(b)(6), Garnet : The Army has NCOs that should be able to do that. I've heard from the 173rd guys…

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : I'm not talking about the 173rd.

(b)(6), Garnet : What I'm saying is that they said their relieving unit was pretty weak and was going to have a rough time with it.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : These are just observations and they were trying to get up to speed. Everybody has a learning curve, but my guys assessed them the same way. A lot of their regular straight-leg soldiers and some of their NCOs didn't have right-shoulder patches coming over. This was their first patch, so they'd never been in combat before. A lot of them were being brought in just to stand up this battalion. They were paratroopers, which are simply a higher caliber of soldier. A brand new battalion stands up in June 2007 but they don't really fill the ranks until October or November. Then they have to go through the training cycle and are in Afghanistan by July. It isn't the fault of the soldiers. A lot of times they were just missing some of the curve. Some of them had been away from it for a while, too. There were a lot of accidental discharges and other issues coming out of the gate. They were getting on it towards the end when we left. I talked to the ETT out there and it doesn't sound like they're having any problems, but I'm not sure Lockton (*ph*) had issues initially. I wasn't there. I caught them on the back half of their deployment when everybody was geared up and focused on the business at hand.

(b)(6), Garnet : The 173rd had been to Afghanistan before and I think they had a lot of NCO leadership that had been there before as well that helped them right out of the gate.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : That's where the Marine Corps and the Army make their money. It comes from those sergeants and staff sergeants telling the young soldiers what they need to do. "You need to clean your weapon. You need to do the head space and timing on that .50 cal. Why is this weapons system broke? Why aren't you caring for this? Why aren't you bringing more water out? How come you don't have all your personal protection equipment stuff on?" It's the nuts and bolts things, the small things that add up to a lot sometimes. I'm not saying it was indicative across the board, but they weren't prepared and they came in fat. The first priority of 1-26 was to bring soda up to the combat outpost. After a while, they banned it. By mid-August the last thing you need is soda. What you need is water and food. They initially had a lot of heat casualties and started out with rubber legs. After 1-26 came in, the ANA were doing all the local patrols. They were getting out there, making sure they were pushing the bad guys out. They were doing night and day patrols and pushing it out as far as they could.

(b)(6), Garnet : It sounds like it was a pretty decent ANA unit.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : They really came around and I'm sure Major (b)(3), (b)(6), Azure (*ph*) who's out there now has taken them to another level. There were issues. My kandak commander would work for four weeks and then take off for two weeks. They'd do the baton switch between the kandak commander, the XO and the operations officer. The sergeant major and some of the company commanders I had were good but some of them were a pain in the ass. A lot of them didn't like to go to the Korengal because there was always a lot of fighting there. It's a decision of the coalition forces whether we're up there and why we're there. Would it be better just to build a dam and flood them?

(b)(6), Garnet : I hear you. You've given me some really great information. I appreciate your time.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : If you have any more questions, feel free to call or email me.

(b)(6), Garnet : What is your personal email address?

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

(b)(6), Garnet : How are things on the streets of Connecticut?

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : I'm just starting to get back into it. I'm working about three weeks and then I'm going on vacation again. When I come back from that, I change command in the Reserves. To be honest with you, the tour for me was fabulous. I ended up picking up a command and was below-zone selected for colonel in the Reserves, which is extremely competitive.

(b)(6), Garnet : Fantastic, congratulations.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : The Marines I had out there did a great job. I couldn't have asked for a better group. Believe it or not, the majority of them weren't even combat arms. I had a fallen angel captain that really stepped up to the plate. I had two infantry officers, comms chiefs, some staff NCOs. Staff Sergeant (b)(3), (b)(6) was an infantry staff NCO. Over at Vegas, I had a Marine air logistics gunny and a data staff sergeant. Aqua

(b)(6), Garnet : One of the things I always admired about the Marines is that everybody is a rifleman first. I think the Army needs to put more emphasis on that, because that has paid a lot of dividends for the Marine Corps.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : I had a young staff sergeant who was an Amtrac mechanic and he did a great job. I ended up with guys getting 16 Bronze Stars with V devices, four Navy Commendations with Vs, four Navy / Marine Corps Achievement Medals with Vs and a Silver Star. They don't give those away in the Marine Corps. I like the Army guys but their threshold is much lower than ours. The awards they give out are completely valid and it's important to reward them by every means, but that was just the caliber of Marines we had out there assisting the ANA.

(b)(6), Garnet Fantastic. That makes a big difference.

(b)(3), (b)(6), Zulu : Absolutely. The two months I spent writing awards for those guys were well worth it.

(b)(6), Garnet Thank you very much for your time.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by (b)(6)