

SWORN STATEMENT

I am SSgt (b)(3), (b)(6), Aqua, USMC. My MOS is 0369 and I am currently attached to 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, MCB Hawaii.

I arrived in Afghanistan in March 2008 and was sent to COP Bella about 10 days after my arrival. On July 2008, I was the senior Marine of a 4-man ETT with the Regional Corps Advisory Command (RCAC), 5-3 based out of Camp Bella and then Wanat, Afghanistan

During my tour in Afghanistan I operated in various locations. I was at COP Bella, Camp Blessing, Korengal Outpost, Vimoto, VPB Michigan, and Wanat. COP Bella was located on the low ground in a fish bowl, with two OP's, of which one was located high above and manned by Army soldiers and the other was also located on the high ground and manned by ANA soldiers. Camp Blessing was located in the intersection between major valleys with OP's in the high ground. VCB Michigan used Connex boxes with Hesco's, and sandbags with wood for overhead protection. The general plan for the different bases was to have 8ft Hesco's, towers, double strand concertina wire, and overhead cover layered with sandbags. All the COP's were pretty much the same regarding barrier protection.

Two days prior to the move to Wanat, I moved from Camp Bella to Camp Blessing to coordinate logistics with 2nd platoon. I had 10 ANA soldiers, along with Cpl (b)(3), (b)(6) with me for this move to Wanat, and Cpl (b)(3), (b)(6), Elm had 14 ANA soldiers. My impression of the Wanat location was that we were going to have limitations on our capabilities due to the terrain.

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I had not been to Wanat prior to the move, and did not participate in the site survey. I thought Wanat was a bad area for a COP. It had houses to the west side of the perimeter, it was in a fish bowl, the mosque was to the north and had several houses located next to it. There was no high ground for us to use to overlook the terrain. I Spoke with Lt Brostrom regarding my concerns about the location.

For the move to Wanat I took a footlocker full of lithium batteries, with adapters, for the 148 radios, chow, and, a full combat load of ammo with extra magazines. The ANA soldiers had AK's, RPK's, RPG's, but never had enough ammo. For most missions we would carry eight magazines, a full camel back, two canteens, a day pack with one or two chows and a bottle of water or two. We only had 2 days worth of water. Both the ETT and ANA soldiers took as much supplies as we could carry, and were confident that a re-supply would come within the first few days at Wanat.

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We were informed that Wanat would be re-supplied within four days of arrival at Wanat. On our first day the ETT ran out of water due to work load and heat conditions and had to get water from the Army gun trucks at Wanat. When 2nd platoon started running low on water on 10 July, we began filling 2 liter bottles with water from the local well that was next to the Bazaar and used our iodine tablets. We did not receive water re-supply until the 12 July 2008, which was the day prior to the attack. Running out of water slowed down building, due to the need to wait for the iodine to work in the local water. The lack of water did not hinder preparation of fighting positions though. The ANA soldiers used sandbags and wood lying around and built overhead cover. We found a limited amount of wood outside the wire.

I feel as though we could have used heavy equipment from the moment of arrival at Wanat. ANA logistics for the move to Wanat was completed by Capt Barrett, the ETT Team OIC. A small group of Army engineers arrived on 9 July 2008 when their surveyors started marking off areas for the perimeter. The only construction equipment we received on 9 July 2008 was a Bobcat, 8ft Hesco materials, concertina wire, and sandbags. On 11 July, the Bobcat ran out of fuel. The ETT brought sandbags, picks and shovels for the ANA soldiers to build their perimeter. The ANA soldiers also had a generator that used diesel fuel, but did not use it.

1LT Brostrom stated heavy equipment was to arrive within 3 days after 2nd platoon's arrival, however it didn't arrive until 14 July 2008, the day after the attack. The equipment that arrived on 14 July 2008 was a non-military backhoe on a lowboy.

Prior to the move to Wanat, we received intel that a large amount of insurgents were going to hit Bella. At the time 2nd platoon was located at Camp Blessing and was expressing concern about enemy forces hitting Bella. When we arrived in Wanat, 1LT Brostrom's priority was to establish defensive positions, set-up a perimeter, and then start patrols.

The only patrols we conducted were to the district center to meet with the chief of police. We talked to the locals while on the patrol, and they would tell the troops of insurgents in the area. The locals would not give details about the insurgents, such as names and locations. Sometimes the locals would come in requiring medical assistance and the ANA soldiers would talk to them. Some other indicators of a pending attack on Wanat were discussions with locals stating that we were going to get hit; however there was no specific intel. The ANA had no organic ISR Assets, and I was not aware of 2nd platoon having any. I believe 1LT Brostrom took the threats seriously reported this intel from the locals back to Blessing.

Planning for Operation Rock Move started prior to my arrival in March 08. The first time I heard word of a move to WANAT was upon arrival at Bella around the 20th of March. I heard the move was originally scheduled for July 2008 then to October 2008, and then at the end of June I was notified of the move to Wanat in July. Wanat would be directed a priority to buildup, then the priority would change, and then at the last minute it became top priority again. I believe one issue for not moving to Wanat on one of the prior dates was an issue between the Army and the elders not being able negotiate a deal to acquire the Wanat land.

During the move to Wanat, I felt some of the troops where focused mostly on RIP/TOA, and were upset about setting up new FOB a couple of weeks prior to departure.

After the Wanat battle, security was re-enforced after the first hour by 1st platoon. On morning of the 15 July 2008, the Co Cmdr sent word of pulling out of Wanat. Learning of Wanat withdrawal was the worst feeling. I felt we gave a victory for the insurgents, and felt like we should have taken the high ground and continued to build the FOB up.

My understanding of a VPB is that it is a setup of vehicles and patrols around the setup utilizing vehicles. A COP is more fortified and established. At the time, I considered Wanat a VPB.

AFFIDAVIT

(b)(3), (b)(6), Aqua HAVE READ OR HAVE HAD READ TO ME THIS STATEMENT WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 1 AND ENDS ON PAGE 3. I FULLY UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS OF THE ENTIRE STATEMENT MADE BY ME. THE STATEMENT IS TRUE. I HAVE INITIALED ALL CORRECTIONS AND HAVE INITIALED THE BOTTOM OF EACH PAGE CONTAINING THE STATEMENT. I HAVE MADE THIS STATEMENT FREELY WITHOUT HOPE OF BENEFIT OR REWARD, WITHOUT THREAT OF PUNISHMENT, AND WITHOUT COERCION, UNLAWFUL INFLUENCE, OR UNLAWFUL INDUCEMENT.

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

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this 8 day of October 2009 at FT. Leavenworth, Kansas

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MARINON

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(Type name of person administering Oath)

(b)(3), (b)(6), Iota MAA FOR COA
ORGANIZATION OR ADDRESS

Judge Advocate
(Authority To Administer Oaths)

INITIALS OF PERSON MAKING STATEMENT (b)(3), (b)(6), Aqua

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