[The testimony began at 0941, 7 October 2009.]

LtGen Natonski: I'm Lieutenant General Richard F. Natonski, United States Marine Corps. I have been appointed by the Commander of US Central Command to conduct an investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding the combat action at Wanat, Afghanistan during July 2008. Lieutenant Colonel (b)(6)(b)(3) beta and Lieutenant Colonel (b)(6), (b)(3) SIGMA are Judge Advocates assigned to the investigation team.

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

Prior to coming on the record today you signed a Privacy Act Statement.

SSgt (b)(6), (b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LTGen Natonski: Your testimony will be made under oath. You will now be sworn.

[The witness was sworn.]

LtCol (b)(6), (b)(3) BETA Please state your full name, spelling your last?

SSgt (b)(6), (b)(3)AQUA

LtCol (b)(6), (b)(3)BETA What is your current unit and that unit's location?

SSgt (b)(6), (b)(3)AQUA 3rd Marine Regiment, Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

LtCol (b)(6), (b)(3)BETA And you're currently a Staff Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps?

SSgt (b)(6), (b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtCol (b)(6), (b)(3) BETA In July 2008 what was your unit and your unit's location?

SSgt (b)(6), (b)(3)AQUA I was part of an ETT and Embedded Training Team in 5-3. In July I was based out of Bella and then moved down to Wanat, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6), (b)(3) BETA And was that COP Bella in Afghanistan?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6), (b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6), (b)(3) BETA In July 2008 what was your rank and your duty assignment in relation to that ETT?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6), (b)(3)AQUA My rank was a Sergeant. I was a senior Marine for a 4-man team, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6), (b)(3) BETA This morning before coming on the record you had an opportunity to review two previous statements that you have made regarding the combat action in Wanat?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6), (b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6), (b)(3) BETA You made a 6-page statement 16 July 2008 as part of the Army's 15-6 investigation and also a 16-page transcript, dated 23 February '09, interview with you from Mr. (b)(6) GARNET from CSI here at Fort Leavenworth.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6), (b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6), (b)(3) BETA Have you had a chance to review both of those?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6), (b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6), (b)(3) BETA And did you sign the first page of both of those documents?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6), (b)(3) AQUA Yes, I did, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6), (b)(3)BETA And do you adopt both those documents as part of your sworn testimony here today?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6), (b)(3) AQUA Yes, I do, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6), (b)(3) BETA What is your occupation for the MOS?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6), (b)(3) AQUA 0-3-6-9, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6), (b)(3) BETA Is that Infantry?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6), (b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, Infantry Platoon Sergeant, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And prior to going to Afghanistan what are the jobs that you've held?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Prior to getting to 3rd Marine Regiment, sir, I was with 1st Platoon, 1st Marines for 3 years. Before that I was a Marine Combat instructor at the School of Infantry. Before that I was with 2/7, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA At the School of Infantry which battalion?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA It was the School of the Infantry, sir. I was with Infantry Training Battalion. I was with Delta Company, sir, in 3-12, the instructor group to teach machine guns.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA How long did you go with the ETT-- when did you get to Afghanistan?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA We got to Afghanistan March 2008, the second week of March, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And were you immediately assigned to ETT? Did you immediately go out to the field with----

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, once we got there, within a week after we arrived in theater we pushed out to our AO.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And was that up at COP Bella?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA COP Bella, yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And were you with an ANA unit at that point?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. I had a platoon.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Was that the same platoon that you would later---

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir, it was a different platoon down at Wanat, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA During your tour in Afghanistan when you were at COP Bella were you in any other COPs?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA After Wanat closed, sir, that's when I moved to some of the other bases, but prior to that just COP Bella.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Could you name some of the other COPs you were

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I was at Camp Blessing for a few weeks, sir, then I moved to the Korengal Outpost. From there I went to Vimoto back to the Korengal Outpost, then I went the last two months of the deployment I went to Vehicle Patrol Base Michigan on the Pech River.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Could you describe the settings of those other ---s in relation to the terrain?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Bella had the low ground, kind of in a fishbowl, but there we actually had two OPs. The Army had one OP, OP 1, which was above COP Bella, then OP Speed Bump was manned by the ANA, so at that COP we actually had two OPs that overlooked the valley and the high ground, sir. Blessing was pretty much in the intersection of the three major valleys in that area. They also had OPs on the higher ground. The COP pretty literally was in the high ground. Vimoto, you could see it from the Korengal outpost. The Vehicle Patrol Base Michigan, there we had one ANA OP that overlooked the base, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Could you describe the barrier plans and the ensive setup at the COPs you visited?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA A lot of them, sir, had the 8 foot HESCOs around them, towers for the OPs, double strung concertina wire above the HESCO barrier, sir, and some kind of standoff.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Was there overhead cover?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. We had on a lot of the buildings that we were living at had overhead cover, had sandbags layered with the roof, so in between the roofs there's sandbags, sir, so we had overhead protection.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA You mentioned you also visited a Vehicle Patrol e.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Would you describe what that looked like, and where was that?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Michigan, sir, and it was called Vehicle Patrol Base Michigan, but it had hardened structures. When we stayed at the ETT we had a CONEX box, we had HESCOs. We put HESCOs in front of it to protect from smaller fire. We had sandbags on the roof for overhead protection. The ANA had wooden structures, but they were fortified with sandbags and HESCOs around them; same thing with the Army, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA The U.S. Army unit you were with at Michigan?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Was there a difference in the barrier plan or fortification that Vehicle Patrol Base Michigan or the other COPS you visited?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir, it was pretty much the same. They all had the HESCOs around the perimeter with the towers that were manned by either the US Soldiers or ANA.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did you or your ANA unit interact with the local populace near those COPS?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. Sometimes we'd get locals coming in that required medical assistance, so we had the ANA talk to them, treated them. The Army Medics would treat them. I would go out on patrols-- when we'd go on patrol we'd interact with the local populace, try to get information, what they needed, how the area was-- if they knew of any insurgents or----

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Would they ever tell you?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Sometimes they would tell us they were in the area, but they wouldn't be specific. Sometimes you might get one or two locals come to the bases and talk to the ANA, let them know, you know, this area there are some insurgents, but they really wouldn't get specific like names or pinpoint locations.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Before you moved to Wanat or even after Wanat were you ever part of establishing a new position?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA When did you learn about a possible move to Wanat?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The first time that I heard of it was actually when I first got up to Bella, sir, talking to Lieutenant Brostrom and their Platoon Sergeant, talking to them. The word was that Wanat was supposed to open and the dates kept shifting. They were talking about June, July. Then they talked about October when the new unit got there to relieve them, so the dates kept shifting, sir, so when we'd start-- when we were going to move, but I kind of had a feeling we were going to move before I left.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA When did you arrive at Bella?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Bella, I got there in March, sir, probably around the 20th, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And almost immediately there was talk of a move to Wanat?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Had you been to Wanat at all before moving up there?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir. No, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did you participate in a site survey?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA What were your thoughts when you saw the site for the first time in Wanat?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA When I first saw it, sir, at the time I thought it was just a bad area, just the location.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Why was that?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA We were kind of like in a fishbowl. We had houses to the left side of the perimeter like probably within 100 meters where our perimeters were going to be at sir. They had the mosque just to the north,

1 just literally just right across the road, and we had
2 the bazaar, so everything was pretty close, sir, and
3 all the dead space that we had. On the other houses
4 there was the dead space from the river.
5
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And is it fair to say you had concerns about the
7 location?
8
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, because we didn't have the high ground.
10 We didn't have any forces on the high ground that can
11 overlook the base or the terrain.
12
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did you express your concerns to anyone?
14
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I think I talked to Lieutenant Brostrom about it.
16 I told him it was probably a bad location, would have
17 been better if we had more forces out there so we can
18 take over the high ground, sir.
19
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Do you recall his response?
21
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir.
23
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did you ever get additional forces?
25
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA We didn't get any until after the attack, sir.
27
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Were you aware that the unit, the 2nd Platoon of
29 Chosen Company, was due to rotate soon?
30
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, I was aware that a lot of the personal
32 effects were already sent home. When we closed Bella
33 down-- we were getting ready to close Bella down; a
34 lot of the guys were mailing their stuff home. I knew
35 that they were two weeks out of rotating and the ADVON
36 for the unit; it was actually there already, sir.
37
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did you go from Bella down to Blessing before you
39 moved to Wanat?
40
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, I went down to Blessing probably two
42 days prior so I could coordinate with Captain (b)(6)(b)(3) and CARD
43 ZULU Lieutenant Colonel (b)(6)(b)(3) what logistics would need
44 or the ANA would need, what we'd need to take up to
45 Wanat, sir.
46
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And 2nd Platoon was at Blessing at that point?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA They were there, sir, and they left the evening or the 8th, I believe, sir, July 8th.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Were you aware the unit was getting ready to deploy?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did you notice members of 2nd Platoon staff, or Chosen Company's staff focusing on the RIP?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Some of them were, sir, but the majority of the platoon there, they were pretty upset that they had to go up there 2 weeks prior to leaving, but they still-- they did their mission that they had to do, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Do you recall some of the comments they made?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Not really, sir. I just know they were pretty upset. They were getting ready to leave. I think some of the talk was "We're getting ready to leave; why are we opening a new FOB? Why don't we let the new unit take over" is what some of the junior Soldiers were talking about, sir.

LtCol (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did anyone express concerns about enemy forces in the area?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA A lot of them did, sir, because we had already had Intel that there's a good size number of insurgents up in that area cause they were supposed to hit Bella before we finally moved out. While we were still closing Bella we were being probed here and there and the insurgents would fire rounds or rockets. Once we got down to Wanat the concern was that we were being observed and that eventually we were going to get hit.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA The Soldiers from 2nd Platoon were down at Camp Blessing were expressing concern about the enemy force might be at Wanat?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA When you were planning logistics for your team, which was you and four of the Marines, correct?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And how many ANA?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Originally I went up there with 10 ANA. Corporal ELM (b)(6)(b)(3) was still up at Bella. He had 14 ANA and once they closed Bella the plan was for him to meet me down Wanat. I went up there with, like I said, 10 ANA and BURGENDY Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) at the time.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA When you were planning logistics you were planning for the entire ANA force but with Corporal ELM (b)(6)(b)(3) overseeing those?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. Most of the logistics planning was already done by Captain CARD (b)(6)(b)(3) so we pretty much knew what the ANA were going to take, what to expect from the ANA.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Who was Captain (b)(6)(b)(3) CARD

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Captain (b)(6)(b)(3) was the captain out of Camp CARD Blessing. He was part of the ETT. He was my team OIC.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA US Marine Corps?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Camp Okinawa?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA He's out of Hawaii, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA So when you returned to Blessing and were preparing to depart do you recall what logistics you had at the time when you departed Blessing?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. Took probably a footlocker full of the lithium batteries for the 148 MBITERs; a footlocker full of those with the adapters. Some were already loaded; tried to take as much chow as we can carry in our bag, took as much ammo as we could carry, full combat load, extra magazines and bandoleers.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did the ETT or the RCAC have a standard load for water, ammunition and food?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Not that I can recall as standard, sir, but most of us carry at a minimum 8 magazines, a full camelback, some of us carry, actually carry day packs with one or two chows in there or extra bottled water in there, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Then how did you plan chow for ANA?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The ANA, they took some of the Hala meals, which are the kosher MREs that they have. We were also given funds in case we needed to purchase food from the local bazaar, but the word we got was that we were going to get re-supplied probably within the next few days. They were going to go up there, some of the ETT from Blessing along with the Army, they were going to go up there and re-supply us.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA The re-supply, do you have any idea of the timing of the re-supply in relation to when you arrived?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I believe it was like within 4 days, sir. They should have been up there within 4 days with a re-supply.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA You were planning to be re-supplied within 4 days of your arrival?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA At any time after you arrived at Wanat did you have issues with water?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes. sir. Originally before we left I asked CARD Captain (b)(6)(b)(3) what the plan was for water, cause like I said, we filled up our camelbacks, canteens, whatever we could fill water with and take some bottled water with us. We were told that on one of the turns the birds were doing that day they were supposed to sling load some water, so we got up there, the ANA brought cases of water with them, so they had water. The first day at the ETT we ran out of water, so we got some from a couple of the gun trucks that were next to us, stopped some of the Soldiers, we got bottled water cause we were originally told that we were supposed to get from one of those turns a sling load full of water, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA So when you arrived you had-- with you personally how many days worth of water based on your planning?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I'd say probably 2 days. I had at least two days, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did you go through that water quicker than you had planned?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, that first day.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Why is that?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Digging our fighting hole, sir. Preparing where we were pretty much going to be living for the next few months before the billeting or the hard structures were going to be up. We were told they weren't going to be up until at least October.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Was it warm?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, it was probably 80, mid 80s, low 90s, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA After you received some water from the gun trucks was there ever another issue with water?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. They were running out of water too. Talked to the Platoon Sergeant when we're going to get water. The word that he got from Blessing was that they were sending the Hiluxes that they hired from the locals. They were going to bring up probably three or four trucks full of water later that day, sir. It never arrived.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA You arrived on the 9th?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And was this the 10th?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The 10th. Yes, sir, it was by the 10th they said that we were supposed to get water, and none of that arrived, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Between the 10th and the 13th did you ever receive additional water?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir. I believe it finally got there on the 12th, sir. The day before the attack we actually received some water.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA From the 9th to the 12th you were preparing your fighting positions?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. We were ensuring the ANA were doing the same thing for their fighting positions.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did the lack of water, did that impact your preparation of your positions?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir. What we ended up doing was filling up the 2 liter soda bottles that we had bought before. After we drank the soda we filled water from the local wells and used iodine tabs to purify the water, sir, or at least for the ETT. The ANA we just had them go and get water from the local well, sir, since they were able to drink it and their chance of getting sick were slimmer than us, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA The well you referenced that you had water for the ETT that you purified, where was that?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Next to the bazaar, sir. There's kind of like a spigot in the bazaar, and that's where we filled up our water bottle. We had our interpreter do that for us.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did you have any equipment requiring fuel as part of your ETT?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Not that I can recall, sir. I think the ANA might have had a generator that required fuel, but we didn't use it.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA What kind of fuel would that use?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA It would've been diesel, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And was that part of your planning at all?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. Well, actually I think we took some diesel, but there was no need for us to use it, so we never used it.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA What would the generator had been used for?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I think it was going to be an alternate power source for the ANA radio, sir, that they brought up there if they needed to use it.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Are you aware of any issues with the fuel for 2nd Platoon?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I wasn't aware of any, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did you see any construction equipment up at Wanat?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The only thing that arrived on the 9th on one of the turns that the helos did was a small Bobcat, and that was all that arrived up there along with 8 foot HESCOs, smaller HESCOs, concertina wire, engineer stakes and some sandbags, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Was there ever an issue with the Bobcat that you're aware of?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The night prior to July 8th it had actually rained, so the 9th and the 10th I remember the Bobcat was trying to fill the HESCOs for the mortar pit. It wasn't able to fill them up because the HESCO are too big and due to the terrain or the ground being wet, sir, and eventually the Bobcat ran out of fuel.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Do you recall when the Bobcat ran out of fuel?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Maybe the 11th, sir. I know it was a couple days after we got there it ran out of fuel.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Do you recall during the daylight hours the Bobcat ever seemed idle because it was out of fuel?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir, I don't remember that.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA After the rain from the evening of the 8th dried was the Bobcat able to operate?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA It was to a certain extent, sir, just because some of the ground surrounding where the mortar pit was supposed to be located at the ground was still wet, so it would sink down. The Bobcat tried kind of building a ramp for itself, filling it up with dirt, but it kept sinking, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Were you aware of any other construction equipment that was to come to Wanat?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA From what Lieutenant Brostrom told me was that the heavy equipment was supposed to arrive within 3 days or 4 days after getting there, sir, so they relied on local contractors to bring up the heavy equipment.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And did that ever arrive?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA It arrived either the 14th, sir, or later on the day of the 13th after the attack, sir, so it got there after the attack.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA What arrived, do you recall?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I don't recall what it was, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Was there a bulldozer or a backhoe?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA It was a backhoe, sir, one of the bigger ones. It was just one. That's all that arrived, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA On a Lowboy?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And was not military?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA As part of your planning to go up there what supplies did you bring to build a defensive position, if any?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA We brought some sandbags, picks and shovels for the ANA. We got them picks and shovels. We brought those pretty much as the sandbags, sir, what we brought.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did you bring any concertina wire?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA All the concertina wire arrived on the bird, sir. They were sling loaded up there.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA When you went up there was the plan for you be inside 2nd Platoon's-- within 2nd Platoon's perimeter?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. When I got up there I got Lieutenant Brostrom and asked him what his plan was, what he had for me. He told me the word that he had got from CARD Captain (b)(6)(b)(3) was that the ANA were supposed to augment on the perimeter defense, so we were given a sector to have the ANA fall in.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA During your deployment ever a time when the ANA and ETT were outside a US Army perimeter?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir, we were all within the perimeter, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA With your background training of Infantrymen and your personal experiences what other supply would you have liked to have had up in Wanat to establish your position?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Definitely the heavy equipment, sir, right from the very beginning the heavy equipment so we can start building, cause the locals were supposed to actually build the wall around it, and the HESCO barriers definitely more water, sir. That was the biggest thing, the water and the heavy equipment, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did the water situation slow you down?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA It did, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA How so?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Because we had to wait I believe it was like an hour or so for the iodine tabs to actually purify the water, so that kind of limited us on what we could do or how fast we could build our fighting positions.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA How would you plan to improve your fighting position, not just the ETT, but the ANA over time? What was your plan?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA That I would have them dig down as far as they could, start filling their sandbags, provide overhead cover. The ANA actually did some overhead covering. For the ETT fighting position we were trying to get ply wood, rocks, something we could stack up and eventually put some overhead covering on our fighting position, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA What did the ANA use for overhead?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Sandbags, and I think they found the wood that was around the area. They put some of the wood on the overhead and started building an overhead cover with the sandbags and the plastic tarps that we took up there to waterproof them.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Was it an option for you to go out and use some of that same wood from outside the wire?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, but it was limited on what the ANA found, so we had them use it.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Limited amount?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Do you know of any Engineers that were part of the 2nd Platoon?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, there was a small group of Engineers that actually flew up there with us on the 9th. I know they had some surveyors out there surveying the area, marking the area with the stakes where the tower was going to be at, the wall for the perimeter where the living quarters were going to be at. They were out there marking it with spray paint and the stakes, little wooden stakes with the little flag on them, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA In a somewhat difficult question, on the morning of the 13th you were receiving fire.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtCol (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA In your opinion would it have made a difference had there been overhead cover on your fighting

position, on the fighting positions that you saw that were uncovered?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir, because the small arms and RPGs were pretty much coming straight at us, not overhead, so I don't think the overhead cover would have done too much for protection, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And what's the primary purpose of the overhead protection? What's that protection from?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Shrapnel, sir, the fallout from the shrapnel, but we didn't have it.

LtGen Natonski: This goes to your background. You were an instructor at the School of Infantry?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: You did two combat tours in Iraq?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: With 1/3?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA 1/1, sir.

LtGen Natonski: With 1/1?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Okay, you had mentioned that you had different platoons of ANA troops.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: How often did an ETT swap a platoon of ANA that's-- you didn't stay with the same platoon for your entire tour?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir. Prior to the time when I got to Bella the platoon that was there, they probably rotated within a month after being--myself and the other ETT being there, sir. We had another platoon and maybe a squad here and there would rotate so they can go on leave and R&R, sir.

1 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay, but that was the normal reason for the
2 annual moving.
3
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.
5
6 **LtGen Natonski:** Would they come back for you after leave?
7
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir. Eventually they would rotate to
9 (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA different parts of the AO along the Pech and the
10 Korengal Valley, sir, so we'd get different companies.
11
12 **LtGen Natonski:** The platoon of ANA that were with you at
13 Wanat were also there with you at Bella?
14
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Just 14 of them, sir, the 10 that I was
16 originally with up there with was a new group of ANA
17 that I was working with, sir.
18
19 **LtGen Natonski:** So then they were new. How did they compare
20 with the 14 that you had had?
21
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I wasn't too used to their working relations,
23 sir. They work and operate a little different than
24 what I was used to with the platoon that was working
25 with for 2 or 3 months, sir.
26
27 **LtGen Natonski:** So, the platoon that you had been working
28 with at Bella for 2 or 3 months was more seasoned than
29 the new men that came in?
30
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA They were about the same, sir, it was just I kind
32 of knew their work habits, how they operated, sir.
33
34 **LtGen Natonski:** You mentioned some COPs you had served on
35 and also a Vehicle Patrol Base called Michigan?
36
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.
38
39 **LtGen Natonski:** In your mind what's the difference between a
40 Vehicle Patrol Base and a Combat Outpost?
41
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA To me the Vehicle Patrol Base pretty much, sir,
43 would be where we'd set up vehicles and from there do
44 patrols with vehicles, have some kind of local
45 security punch out a few vehicles to do either route
46 reconnaissance, counter IEDs, and check the local
47 area, where the COP is more permanent and it's

fortified, sir. The Vehicle Patrol Base Michigan was what it was called, but it was more like a COP because it was pretty built up, sir.

LtGen Natonski: That was my impression when you mentioned HESCO barrier and fortifications, so could a Vehicle Patrol-- did some people refer to a Vehicle Patrol Base and COP as one in the same?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Sometimes, sir, they would.

LtGen Natonski: Did you consider Wanat a COP or a Vehicle Patrol Base?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA At the time, a Vehicle Patrol Base, sir, because the Army had the vehicles up there so we could use the vehicles when we needed to, sir. I mean we had no real fortifications or hard structures, sir. To me that was a Vehicle Patrol Base.

LtGen Natonski: Initially.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Did you know that it was going to be permanently established?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: And when it was permanently established it would be called a Vehicle Patrol Base or a COP?

AQUA **SSgt**(b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA It was going to be a called a COP Kahler, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Okay. You mentioned the location of the COP in Wanat and you said it was not on the best ground. You mentioned this to Lieutenant Brostrom?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Had you looked or discussed alternate locations for the COP in the vicinity of Wanat?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir. The word we got was we were going to get hit that day probably around the 11th or 12th Lieutenant Brostrom gave me a warning order they were

1 going to go recon high ground where the ANA were going
2 to set up an OP, sir.
3
4 **LtGen Natonski:** And where was that OP?
5
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The OP was supposed to be south, southeast of the
7 Vehicle Patrol Base; approximately I'd say maybe a
8 half mile up in the mountain, sir.
9
10 **LtGen Natonski:** Higher and to the south----
11
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Southeast, sir. Yes, sir.
13
14 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay, and there were some structures.
15
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA There was a structure up there. It looked like
17 there was a structure up there. The initial planning
18 was that they were going to sling load two CONEX boxes
19 with HESCOs, concertina wire, sandbags, picks and
20 shovels so we can build that up, sir.
21
22 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. And you had mentioned the timing for
23 the movement of Wanat in your discussions of some of
24 the Soldiers in 2nd Platoon. They were within 2 weeks
25 of their relief in place, is that correct?
26
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. I know some of the actual Soldiers
28 from Chosen Company were already back in Italy, sir,
29 so they actually had some of the forces already out of
30 country, sir.
31
32 **LtGen Natonski:** You mentioned that they had been talking
33 about Wanat since March.
34
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Since I got there, sir.
36
37 **LtGen Natonski:** When they were up at Blessing they had
38 talked that perhaps at some point in time they would
39 move down to Wanat?
40
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, that's the word that I got when I got
42 to Bella from the Soldiers up there, sir.
43
44 **LtGen Natonski:** Do you know the reason why they didn't move
45 before to Wanat?
46

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I know one of the issues they were having was with the elders trying to get their land. I know probably some of the ETT that were Blessing along with the Army that go up and do Shuras up at Wanat, and the biggest issue that I was getting was the land. They couldn't agree on the land and how they were going to get the land. That was the biggest issue from what I understood, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Was the acquisition of land for a combat outpost always negotiated with the elders in the area or did on some occasions the US forces go in, plop down, and then pay the elders for the use of that land?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The word that I got, the way the used to before, sir, that's how they used to do it, just go there and this is what we're taking, and then they'd get with the elders and they'd say, "You need to talk the Afghan government," and then the word I was getting from Wanat was that they were trying to negotiate a deal with the elders on the acquisition of the land.

LtGen Natonski: Did you feel personally that movement to Wanat was being rushed because of the ongoing RIP or was it still planned and performed and executed as per the planning that had been going on for some time?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Personally, I think it was just kind of rushed, sir, cause I know there was other big issues going on where they were trying to get more Army units up there and certain areas had priority. What I was getting was that Wanat was a priority, then it wasn't a priority, and eventually at the last minute we're going up there, sir.

LtGen Natonski: And the intent was for the incoming unit from the 1st Infantry Division to relieve 2nd Platoon, Chosen Company; is that correct?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Do you know about what day that was to have taken place?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir, I did not know a date.

1 **LtGen Natonski:** And there were no Soldiers from 1st ID that
2 went up when you established the position?
3
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir.
5
6 **LtGen Natonski:** You had mentioned that there were some
7 indications and warning of an attack on Wanat even
8 while you were at Blessing?
9
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.
11
12 **LtGen Natonski:** And when you go to Wanat did you have any
13 additional indications that there was going to be an
14 impending attack?
15
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Some of the locals would talk to the Afghan
17 Platoon Commander to let them know that there were
18 some insurgents in the area and we're going to get
19 hit. The ANP would tell them the same thing, that we
20 were going to get hit from the high ground, but they
21 didn't know when we were going to get hit. The word
22 was just "You guys are going to get hit" and that was
23 all we got.
24
25 **LtGen Natonski:** Did you perceive that as just normal talk,
26 or did you truly believe that you were going to get
27 hit?
28
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I thought actually we were going to get hit a lot
30 earlier, sir, probably like within a day or two after
31 getting there.
32
33 **LtGen Natonski:** And when you say "get hit" what type of
34 attack did you contemplate?
35
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I probably thought it would be by rocket, sir. A
37 couple of RPGs, a few small arms, fire, nothing big
38 like the actual attack, sir; more just probing.
39
40 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay, had you ever heard of larger attacks
41 by the anti-Afghan forces?
42
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I have heard of them happening, sir, but not to
44 that scale.
45
46 **LtGen Natonski:** You set up those positions with your Afghan
47 platoon in the northeast corner?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: The position?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, northeast corner and I had three positions on the main road coming up from Blessing. I had a vehicle checkpoint on one side of the road and on the other side I had two or three firing holds there to augment the vehicle checkpoint, sir.

LtGen Natonski: And did you take any local security precautions; listening posts, observation posts in front of you position?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Would that have been put in the village?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, it would have been in the village.

LtGen Natonski: And is that standard or not in operating from a combat outpost or vehicle patrol base?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I don't think it was standard, sir. I mean it would have been good if we had more OPs out, but the terrain where we were at the OPs would have-- or at least where I would have had them they would have been in the low ground. We wouldn't have been able to observe them or support them, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Okay, so there was a danger for them?

SSgt (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: You mentioned that you were scheduled to do a patrol and look for an ANA outpost that were watching the position on the morning of the 13th. Had you put out any patrols before that?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The only patrol we did was to the District Center to meet with the Chief of Police and the governor of that area, sir, with Lieutenant Brostrom and some of the Soldiers, sir.

LtGen Natonski: And that was when you realized there was a Shura going on?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Okay. Had you recommended or discussed putting out other security patrols to Lieutenant Brostrom before the 13th?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir. It was like when I discussed with him what the intentions were and it was pretty much we were just-- the initial planning was we were just going to build up the fighting positions and after those were done we would probably start doing some kind of patrol, sir.

LtGen Natonski: So his priority was defensive positions.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, defensive.

LtGen Natonski: Why was that?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I believe just cause the location of the FOB, sir. It needed some kind of defensive posture and set up some kind of perimeter, and from there on, start doing the patrol, sir.

LtGen Natonski: So his priority was establish defensive positions because of the indications and warnings you were going to be attacked.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, and the thing about our limitation was just the terrain where we were at, if the ANA did the patrols it would be a little bit hard for the US Soldiers to support us in over watch positions just due to the terrain, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Do you know if Lieutenant Brostrom reported these indications? You mentioned your interpreter had gotten indications from the villagers.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: And did you report that to Lieutenant Brostrom?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. It seemed like every day they would say something and I would report it to him and let him know this is what we're getting, that they're talking

about hitting us. I would report it to him and he would report it back to Blessing.

LtGen Natonski: He did report it out?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Did he take these threats seriously?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. I don't know which day it was, either the 10th or the 11th we kind of got indication what area they were going to hit us from, so to sink the base plate for the 120 we had up there by Wanat. He fired in that area, where supposedly we were going to get hit from, sir, and I believe he also had the 155s from Blessing fire up there.

LtGen Natonski: Registration fire.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

SIGMA **LTC** (b)(6)(b)(3) When you were planning for stuff and moved to Wanat how did you--did you just go through the Army? In other words, you said, "Okay, I need X amount of stuff to take with me." Did you work through Marine channels or with the Army guys?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The Army channels, sir. Usually Captain Behr did a lot of the logistical planning for us, sir, and he went through the Army.

SIGMA **LTC** (b)(6)(b)(3) With regard to this particular move up to Wanat did you feel like you got everything that you needed before, or was it a situation where you were real confident that re-supply was going to be coming so you didn't have to take as much stuff initially?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA We tried to take as much as we could carry, sir, and I was also confident that we were going to get re-supply within the following couple days, sir.

SIGMA **LTC** (b)(6)(b)(3) So you took what you could carry and then had a kind of a plan for in the days to come we're going to get X amount more stuff?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, that was the initial plan.

SIGMA **LTC** (b)(6)(b)(3) Just so I understand, the ETT knew responsibility or your-- most of the time when you worked with the Army units were you attached by the Army unit Commander as to what he wanted you to do, or did you have kind of an independent mission?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA We tried to not get tasked by the Army, sir. What we tried to do was have the ANA actually interact with the Army and talk to them, "This is what we can do, how can you support us," or the Army would talk to the ANA, "This is what we want, how can you support us."

SIGMA **LTC** (b)(6)(b)(3) With regard to the weapons systems that the ANA had at Wanat, can you recall what the ANA had?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I know the AKs, RPKs, and PKMs, and RPGs, sir.

SIGMA **LTC** (b)(6)(b)(3) So they had some crew served weapons?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

SIGMA **LTC** (b)(6)(b)(3) Did you feel like you had enough weapons and ammo for those guys when you went up to Wanat?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The ammo was always an issue for the ANA, sir. They never had enough ammo, so we always had to ensure that they didn't use all of their ammo, because that was an issue we would come up. The ANA would fire all the ammo and go black within like the first 10 minutes and the re-supply of the ammo was hard for them to get or for the KANDAK to actually receive from higher, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Major (b)(6)(b)(3) OWL

OWL **Maj** (b)(6)(b)(3) Yes, sir.

Staff Sergeant, if you could just review the different COPs that you were in.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Okay, sir, the first one was COP Bella, sir. After that we went to Wanat, which was also known as COP Kahler. After the attack and we closed down the COP I went on leave, came back, worked out of Camp Blessing for a few weeks, and from there I went to the Korengal Outpost

OWL **Maj** (b)(6)(b)(3) Could you spell that?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA K-O-R-E-N-G-A-L Outpost, and then from there I moved down to Vimoto where it was manned by the ANA and the ETT, so at Vimoto I was there for roughly two weeks, then back to the Korengal, so I spent about a month and a half in that area and then I moved down to Michigan for the last two months of my deployment, sir.

OWL **Maj** (b)(6)(b)(3) You've mentioned the logistics you took from Blessing; a footlocker, lithium batteries for the 148.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

OWL **Maj** (b)(6)(b)(3) And then adapters and something else.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The adapters, picks and shovels, sir, and then whatever ammo we could carry for the 240 that we had, sir.

OWL **Maj** (b)(6)(b)(3) Was the crew served weapon that you had a Dishka?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA We had a Dishka up at Bella, sir, but there was an issue with the Dishka. A lot of time it would go down. A few times we had ruptured cartridges inside the barrel, sir. We'd send it down to Blessing so they could get it fixed, and once we got it back we had a problem with it again, so we never really had a Dishka that long, sir.

OWL **Maj** (b)(6)(b)(3) Did you have it at Wanat

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir.

OWL **Maj** (b)(6)(b)(3) And you said you got to Wanat from Blessing and then Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) brought his ANA from----

ELM

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA That night, sir. Yes, sir.

OWL **Maj** (b)(6)(b)(3) On the 9th?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The 9th, yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Staff Sergeant (b)(6)(b)(3) during the planning were aware of any ISR assets that were to be dedicated to 2nd Platoon? BETA

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir, I wasn't aware of that.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did your ETT have any organic ISR assets?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Are you aware of whether or not 2nd Platoon, Chosen had any?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir, I wasn't aware that they had any.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Are you aware of when the planning for Operation Wanat move actually started?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I know it started before we got there, sir, in March.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA So prior to March 2008?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And do you recall when it was originally scheduled to start?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The dates kept going back and forth, sir. The July timeframe and then it went to October, or earlier than that, or it was on hold, so I never got a solid date when we were supposed to move, sir, until about 2 weeks before we actually moved.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Toward the end of June?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. I went down to Blessing for 4 days. We rotated every 4 days. We would go down to Blessing, take a little break from Bella, sir, and that's when I got the word from Captain (b)(6)(b)(3) and CARD Lieutenant Colonel (b)(6)(b)(3) by mid-June they were ZULU going to be moving to Wanat, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Do you recall any combat operations and including currently in the AO around Bella, Wanat, Blessing?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I don't understand the question, sir.

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

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Were there any attacks by anti-Afghan forces or did US Forces conduct any attacks?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I know there was attacks before I got there, sir, at the Aranus, then the attack before when we going to close down Bella, a couple of attacks that we had there where the Apaches engaged a couple trucks where they were firing mortars from, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Do you recall what happened at that particular engagement?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I know the OP observed a white truck. I don't know if they were spying for the mortar attack or if they actually saw the mortar tube in the truck, sir, I can't recall, but I know the white truck pulled up and that's when one of the Apaches engaged the trucks and the word that we got from the locals was that we killed some of the locals.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA This was when you were up in Bella?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Was there any change in the atmosphere after that incident?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. After that pretty much all the locals from Bella were pretty much told to leave and a lot of them were leaving because the supposed attack that was going to happen by 200-some insurgents.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA So you were told by the ANA Afghan forces?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA After the battle on the 13th what was the security situation in Wanat?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA During the attack, sir, probably within an hour I believe 1st Platoon from Chosen Company went up there to reinforce us. Towards the end of the attack pretty much after it was over I had other elements from other companies go there, so I think eventually we ended up having maybe a company, minus the US Army up there. Later on that night we had the Afghan Commandos, about

1 roughly 50 to 70 Afghan Commandos with their ATTs
2 showed up that night, sir, and they kind of started
3 patrolling the high grounds trying to see what they
4 could find.
5
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA How did the Commandos differ from the ANA that
7 you had?
8
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I think a lot of it had to do with their ethnic
10 background, sir. The Commandos I thought were well
11 disciplined. They kind of did a lot of the
12 independent stuff without their SF ETT, so they did a
13 lot of patrols on their own.
14
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Were you aware of any discussion on the 13th or
16 14th of July about the future of the placement at
17 Wanat?
18
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir, not until the 15th. The morning of the
20 15th we were told that we were pulling out.
21
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And how did you learn that?
23
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I think that I got the word from the Company
25 OSCAR Commander, Captain (b)(6)(b)(3) that was up there. He let me
26 know they were closing down. They were sending jingle
27 trucks up there to put the gear on, and the ANA and
28 the ETT were going to be flown out of there since we
29 didn't have vehicles up there, sir.
30
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did the jingle trucks come up?
32
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, they came up there with the route
34 clearing package and some of the other Soldiers from
35 Blessing, sir.
36
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And do you recall what was loaded on the June
38 trucks?
39
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA A lot of the stuff that was loaded on there was
41 pretty much like the ANA boot gear, like their packs.
42 Some of are non-essential gear that we had up there,
43 water that was left up there. They tried loading
44 HESCOs that we had up there that weren't used, and
45 some of the ammo was loaded on there, which was
46 escorted back down to Blessing with the Army. They
47 were integrated within our convoy.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA How did you feel when you learned of the order to withdraw from Wanat?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I think it was the worst one I ever had, sir. The Army had lost 9 Soldiers. At the time I thought it was 15 wounded. I thought it just kind of gave the insurgents the upper hand, a victory for the insurgents. I thought we should have stayed there, got more forces up there to take the high ground and actually build that FOB up, sir.

LtGen Natonski: You mentioned immediately after the battle a backhoe had come up.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Was that backhoe there at the time to construct fortification or do you think it was sent up there to break down the camp?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA What was going on, sir, it was actually they were building the road towards the OP topside the Army had, so it was my impression it was there to help build up the FOB and get it going again, sir.

LtGen Natonski: But it arrived after the actual battle?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA LTC (b)(6)(b)(3) questions? SIGMA

SIGMA **LTC** (b)(6)(b)(3) No, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Major (b)(6)(b)(3) OWL

OWL **Maj** (b)(6)(b)(3) Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Let's take a 5-minute break before hand.

[The testimony broke at 1037 and began again at 1045, 7 October 2009.]

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The morning of the 13th, sir, probably around 0420--0400, we got up, try to ensure the ANA were ready for the patrol that Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) and Corporal ELM BURGUNDY (b)(6)(b)(3) would take at that time.

1
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And where was that patrol to go?
3
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The patrol was actually supposed to go to the
5 high ground up in this area, sir.
6
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA South and east?
8
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. At that time Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) and myself ELM
10 were actually going to the makeshift head that we had.
11 The TOW vehicle was actually-- probably where that
12 mortar system was at, kind of up in this area. That's
13 where the TOW vehicle was at actually facing up
14 towards the mountains, sir.
15
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA So you indicated that the TOW vehicle was in
17 between the mortar pit and the platoon CP facing to
18 the north, northwest?
19
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, cause this vehicle here was where the
21 CP was located. The TOW truck was probably this area,
22 sir. Like the mortar pit is actually bigger than it
23 was. It's real small and that's where the TOW truck
24 was at. Our location was in this area. That's when
25 we heard on the radio they were observing four or five
26 PAX up in the high ground, the TOW vehicle they were
27 waiting to get clearance to engage the PAX, and that's
28 when we started receiving fire. The house was right
29 here, sir. The TOW truck, the mortar pit where the
30 main focus. None of these HESCOs didn't have that
31 much dirt in there. That's when they had their first
32 KIA from the mortar pit.
33
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And the initial volley came from the west?
35
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, from the tree lined area near the
37 houses. This house and the other two houses that were
38 to the left of it, this blue house is where we took
39 the initial volley of RPGs and small arms fire.
40
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA About how far would you estimate those volleys
42 came from outside the perimeter, outside the
43 concertina wire?
44
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Probably 40 meters, if that, sir. They were
46 relatively close. Probably from my position to there,
47 about 100 meters or so, sir.

1
BETA **LtCol**(b)(6)(b)(3) BETA In relation to you ANA position how far from
3 those positions?
4
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I had one other position here, sir, so about the
6 same, 40 meters. We weren't taking anything from the
7 blue house. Everything was coming from the other two
8 houses.
9
BETA **LtCol**(b)(6)(b)(3) BETA What level of was your ANA through the evening?
11
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA They had about 50 percent and a couple ANA
13 Soldiers up near each fighting hole. They were up in
14 the VCP is the same thing. They had a rotation so it
15 was about 50 percent, sir.
16
BETA **LtCol**(b)(6)(b)(3) BETA When the shooting started what was your alert
18 level?
19
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Up and ready, sir, getting ready for that patrol.
21 It was getting pushed out at 0430.
22
BETA **LtCol**(b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Had you stood to?
24
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.
26
BETA **LtCol**(b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Is that the common practice?
28
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, it was, sir. I was just getting with
30 Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) at the time to make sure he had ELM
31 whatever he needed for the patrol; radios, map, GPS,
32 we get the grid, ensuring the ANA were ready for the
33 patrol and he had done that. The ANA were ready,
34 doing last minute checks on their part and getting
35 ready to step off, sir.
36
BETA **LtCol**(b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And what happened next?
38
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) and I started walking up in this ELM
40 area, right in there where the makeshift head that we
41 had, we were making our way over there and started
42 seeing the fire. We went back to our fighting
43 positions. We started observing where we were taking
44 the fire from and that's when we started fire to the
45 mortar pit, the TOW vehicle, and our fighting position
46 were taking smalls fire and RPGs, and at that time
47 what we were trying to do, get that 240 up, couldn't

1 get it to work for the first 5 minutes. Corporal
2 ELM (b)(6)(b)(3) finally got it up. In the meantime Corporal
3 BURGUNDY (b)(6)(b)(3) and myself, we would fire our M4s into this tree
4 line where we could see the RPs come through.
5
BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA So, west, southwest of your position?
7
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. The 240 was finally up. At that time
9 we noticed the Soldiers from the mortar pit dragging a
10 wounded Soldier, which eventually come to find out it
11 was a KIA. They'd drag him up to the Army VCP where
12 they try to treat him and that's where the other
13 Soldiers were on their way. The TOW vehicle at that
14 time was up in place within 5, 10 minutes after the
15 attack it was up in flames. It was burning so the
16 soldiers in the TOW vehicle, they jumped out with
17 merely what they had on, their Kevlar, their flaks,
18 made their way up to the VCP, the CP from the Army.
19 At that time we heard chatter from our radios saying
20 OP Topside gave reports that they had WIAs and KIAs
21 out there. We noticed one of the Afghan soldiers made
22 his way up here. He came from the VCP. He was
23 wounded. The TOW vehicle was up in flames. We tried
24 to get them to come to our fighting position where we
25 could treat him. For the first 30 or 45 minutes it
26 seemed like we were pinned down in our fighting hole.
27 At that time the TOW vehicle exploded and was cooking
28 off, one of the two missiles actually went down in
29 here. I originally thought it hit one of the ANA
30 fighting holes, cause it knocked the three of us on
31 our ass, just the explosion knocked us down, and
32 ELM that's when Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) noticed that the Afghan
33 soldier had burns to about 30 percent of his body. He
34 BURGUNDY took Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) with him, ran out there, and as
35 they ran out there I provided cover and fire trying to
36 suppress the area where I received fire over my head
37 before while they retrieved the Afghan soldier,
38 ELM brought him in there. Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) started treating
39 ELM him. I gave Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) our Combat Lifesaver bag
40 that we had, whatever medical supplies he needed.
41 ELM Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) started checking the soldier, treated
42 his wounds. He had a few entry wounds to the lower
43 back, treated him there. Radio conversation from the
44 company, we need reinforcement up there. At that time
45 ELM Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) he kind of pretty much said "Fuck
46 BURGUNDY this. Let's go." So he took Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) along
47 with the 240 and about 600 rounds of 7.62 up to the

1 OP. Originally I thought they went to the VCP. I
2 stayed there so I could coordinate with the Company,
3 the Headquarters for MEDIVAC for the Afghan soldier.
4 As I made my way around I kind of went to this
5 position first to try to get some kind of cover.
6
BETA **LtCo**(b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Did the gun truck go through the road?
8
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. That's where some of the Engineers
10 were at too. This is the gun truck. I made my way
11 this way, let them know they had a wounded Soldier,
12 and as I made my way up there I noticed two more
13 Afghan soldiers making their way out there. One was
14 carrying the other one on his back.
15
BETA **LtCol**(b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And that was from the ANA vehicle checkpoint
17
AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, the vehicle checkpoint, so I told them
19 to come in here. They started treating them there.
20 The ones that were doing the treating were the
21 Soldiers from the TOW truck that blew up. One of the
22 soldiers, that's what he was doing, treating a lot of
23 the wounded. I made my way back up there with my
24 terp, told them to get a couple of the ANAs from up in
25 those fighting positions to come up here, help me
26 grab-- for them to grab the soldier and bring him back
27 to the Army CP. At that time I couldn't get a hold of
28 ELM Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) I was trying to get a hold of him on
29 the radio, talking. I wanted to make sure he was good
30 and he was still alive, or making. At that time I
31 didn't get in touch with him, so I took the terp
32 myself and ran this way. We ran across where the VCP
33 was at. The Army had set up there VCP. This vehicle
34 was on this side, a 50 Cal. The 50 Cal was down where
35 it took small arms fire or RPG disabled the 50 Cal.
36 When I got into this VCP, cause everyone was covering
37 ANA down the road, there was two soldiers there. I
38 asked them where the two ETTs were at and they told me
39 they were at OP Topside and that's where I finally got
40 ELM a hold of Corporal (b)(6)(b)(3) "Hey, we're good." So I
41 stayed down there to reinforce the two soldiers that
42 were there, started collecting the weapons that were
43 there from the wounded. They were taken to the Army
44 CP. Started distributing ammo, started loading all
45 the magazines that we had there leftover. I had about
46 like two magazines, two and a half magazines.
47

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Were you able to give out U.S. weapons?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, U.S. weapons, started loading all the ammo, started loading all the magazines because I know the two Soldiers were low on ammo. One of them was wounded. He had an injury to his left hand, so I started loading the ammo for them. My terp, he was back here cause this soldier was telling me that we had insurgents back here and we were taking fire from the bazaar. He told me to stay out of the open area.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA So you were taking fire from the north and you were told you had insurgents to the south?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, we had insurgents in the bazaar and in the south up here in the high ground that were seen. At that time we were still taking fire from across those houses. I grabbed the 203 that was on the ground and fired a couple rounds.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA The house was on the western side of the perimeter where you were still receiving fire?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, not as heavy as we were in the beginning. It had started slowing down. At that time seeing the OP Topside was the main focus of effort for the insurgents. Then the Apaches finally showed up. They were getting talked on to different targets across the river up in this area, sir. We had fixed wings show up. They were dropping bombs. There again danger close. So we were told that they were dropping bombs. What I was hearing we'd get low to the ground to try and take some kind of cover to protect our heads. They had a canopy hangover. We'd hear some of the impacts of shrapnel. I noticed one of the Afghan soldiers coming back from the VCP. I asked him are they good, he said "We're good." He was going up to the other ANA fighting positions to get more ammo to re-supply the VCP. Later on a couple of other soldiers showed up. We were getting calls from OP Topside. They needed more ammo for their 240s, so one of the sergeants went to his vehicle which had 240 ammo in there, grabbed it out. One of the other soldiers that were wounded and myself, we ran up, but before that they told OP Topside to pretty much cover us. Fire to the bazaar and to the south were covering fire. We made our way up the terraces up to the OP

Topside. Once we got up here that's when I noticed some of the KIAs dropped some of the ammo. Corporal ELM (b)(6)(b)(3) was there and Corporal Oakes were in that area. They were actually engaging these buildings right here, and they said there were insurgents in that building.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA And those were buildings just to the north of OP Topside?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, and that was the bazaar and what turned out to be a hotel within the bazaar. Eventually we got reinforcements. 1st Platoon showed up. Later on we had reinforcements from the other companies go up there and reinforce us, so it lasted about 4 and a half hours. By that time when it started dying down I was back at the VCP. A couple more soldiers showed up. At that time I was going around checking each ANA, made my way down the VCP and then down there, check on the ANA. The VCP, that's where I was at, I remember that's the tree we had. On this side is where they actually had their perimeter cause they kind of used some of the rocks over there, so they started building something before. I used some sandbags. My position is here, and I believe there's another one right in this area, so they were kind of trying cover the south, southeast.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Two on the eastern side of the river?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, the one on this side, that's when I noticed some RPGs on the ground. I thought they were from the insurgents and the RPG gunner was telling me that he had a few duds. All the casualties that we got was from the VCP.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Any ANA casualties?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. The casualties that we had-- by that time as it died down, got with the ANA Commander, made sure he got his counts and let me know who he sent on the MEDIVAC, redistribute the ammo just in case a few insurgents decided to engage us again. We redistributed his ammo, check the soldiers to see who we had, who we MEDIVAC'd. I took down the names of who we MEDIVAC'd so I could pass it to Blessing later

through the Army. By then it calmed down, sir, about 4 and a half hours it calmed down.

LtGen Natonski: When the initial attack broke out you had been preparing for the patrol.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: And that northeast corner where the attack took place was the majority of the ANA platoon in those three positions and then you were located behind it?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, I put myself behind them to the center.

LtGen Natonski: That way you can control them.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Control them, yes, sir. And then I had three down here and originally I wanted to send one ETT down there, but I didn't think it was a good idea to separate my forces, so I just tried before the attack to go out there and check on them to make sure they're in doing good, and every hour one of us would go down and check on them.

LtGen Natonski: You mentioned as the fight started there was a lot of fire coming particularly from those buildings over on the west side.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA These houses right here.

LtGen Natonski: Over on the left side.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, on this side.

LtGen Natonski: The Afghan troops in that northeast corner, did they return fire?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Their sectors were pretty much-- our perimeters actually held was actually higher ground, so there were receiving I believe an RPG and small arms fire from that direction.

LtGen Natonski: From the other side of the river?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA On the other side of the river, sir, there's a higher peak up in this area. The terrain is kind of

where it came down a high peak and then it went back down, and where we received fire, had the ANA to engage that area. I told them keep their eyes open, especially in this area in case the insurgents started to flank us from the northwest, sir.

LtGen Natonski: I understood some of the insurgents got very, very close to that northeast corner.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA There were some insurgents in the mosque, sir. We received fire from the mosque. The ANA actually engaged the mosque.

LtGen Natonski: They did?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, and some of those soldiers I believe were in this truck. One of these trucks actually engaged the mosque, sir, cause we were receiving fire from the mosque.

LtGen Natonski: And the amount of ammo left with the platoon in that corner after the fight was over?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, we had enough ammo to try to control their fire and ensure they didn't go black within the first 10 minutes. We kind of told them through the interpreter fire when see-- if you're receiving fire from the engaged area, don't use all your ammo.

LtGen Natonski: Was there any reluctance on the part of the Afghan soldiers to fire because of the intensity of fire they were receiving or were they engaging the enemy in the mosque?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA They were engaging what they saw, sir. Like I said, just trying to control their fire cause I'd seen when we were at Bella they would fire all their ammo and they'd go black in the first fight down there, sir.

LtGen Natonski: I had heard that some RPG gunners were getting almost in front of the mosque firing into the position. Did you see any of that?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir, I don't recall any----

LtGen Natonski: Most of the fire was from covered positions?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, some from here, the bazaar, and from these houses, sir. I didn't see anybody over here. Some of my view was obstructed into where this gun truck was at and my fighting position.

LtGen Natonski: You mentioned you had 24 Afghan soldiers. How many were in the northeast corner and how many were on the vehicle checkpoint?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The vehicle checkpoint, sir, I believe I had 12 down south, sir, at the vehicle checkpoint, and the rest within these fighting positions.

LtGen Natonski: So essentially 12 up front and 12, it was pretty much even scattered?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. I know the actual VCP I think I had 7 and the two fighting positions to the east I split them up, sir.

LtGen Natonski: And how many casualties amongst the ANA?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA There were six wounded, sir.

LtGen Natonski: And they were all down at the----

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Down at the VCP, sir, and one soldier that came from the VCP up towards our location that got burnt, so all my casualties came from the south of the VCP, sir.

LtGen Natonski: And where were they getting fire from at that southern portion?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA The VCP, they were taking fire from the building, sir, these houses right here. There were insurgents were shooting across. They had good fields of fire, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Okay and they were not receiving fire from up on the hill?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Not that I'm aware of, sir. They received some from down in this area. Most of it they received from the houses, cause their field of fire, sir, especially that two-story, they had good eyes on us.

LtGen Natonski: So it appears that you were receiving fire from almost 360 degrees into that position.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: And there's no indications that those insurgents were moving into that position?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir, there was no indication. I didn't have any that they were moving in. The only indication that we had was that morning when the TOW vehicle spotted the five pax up in the high ground.

LtGen Natonski: So they did see five?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. They monitored them. They were trying to get clearance to fire. That's when the initial attack happened.

LtGen Natonski: And you heard no insurgents that were moving up into these positions so close to the perimeter?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir.

LtGen Natonski: And the evacuation at the time by the civilians, were they mostly gone?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Mostly gone, sir. After the fight we ran into that blue house and there was still a family in there. They actually stayed in the house. There was a family that was still staying. It was actually a nice house for Afghan standards. The male there, his two sons were born in America and he freely frequently traveled back and forth and mostly stayed in Afghanistan, and that's how he got his house.

LtGen Natonski: And that TOW vehicle depicted there; was there a ramp built somewhere?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir. The TOW vehicle kept moving throughout the time were out, but eventually the TOW vehicle was somewhere in this area, sir.

LtGen Natonski: Between the mortar pit and the platoon CP?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

LtGen Natonski: And that's where it was hit on the morning of the attack?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir, cause I remember I have a picture right between----

LtGen Natonski: Was there a ramp built so you could look up on the hill?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir. It had good eyes upon the hill, sir. So the only dead space they really had was from the house on down. All this down here was all dead space. We couldn't see and that's where the insurgents made their way up to the houses.

LtGen Natonski: Based on the numbers of Afghan units you worked with in your 9 months in Afghanistan. How did duties compare with other engagements that you may have been involved in?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA I believe that they were a little bit better, sir, compared to other engagements that I had when I was at Bella or somewhere-- when we were in the FOB, so the ANA knew where to go. They had a location on the FOB to man and they did actually pretty decent, sir, for the fire we received.

LtGen Natonski: That would be these here?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA When the shooting started what was the light situation?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA There was some light, sir. It was dusk. We could see the whole surrounding area. The sun hadn't crested the mountains yet. We had good lighting out there, sir.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA You could see throughout the position?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Yes, sir. I could see throughout the whole area. The sun hadn't made its way over the mountains yet, so it wasn't as hot and as bright, but good visibility.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA How about the wind? Was there any wind?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Might have been a light wind. Certainly could have been a light wind. It was clear and I don't recall any clouds that day.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA When you were walking to the latrine could you near other activity inside the emplacement?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Just the radio chatter on the radio that we had, sir, that was it. I couldn't hear anything else; no indications of anybody moving or anything like that.

BETA **LtCol** (b)(6)(b)(3) BETA Lieutenant Colonel (b)(6)(b)(3) SIGMA any questions?

SIGMA **LTC** (b)(6)(b)(3) No, sir.

LtGen Natonski SIGMA Staff Sergeant (b)(6)(b)(3) I'm going to give you an order now as part this. You are ordered not to discuss the testimony you provided today with anyone other than members of the investigation team. You will not allow any witness in this investigation to talk to you about the testimony he has given or which he intends to give. If anyone should try to influence your testimony or attempt to discuss your testimony, you are instructed to notify either Lieutenant Colonel BETA (b)(6)(b)(3) or Lieutenant Colonel (b)(6)(b)(3) SIGMA Do you have any questions?

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA No, sir.

LtGen Natonski: I would just thank you for your service to our country and the Corps and in particular the performance of you and all your troops that day. Well done.

AQUA **SSgt** (b)(6)(b)(3) AQUA Thank you, sir.

[The testimony closed at 1110, 7 October 2009.]

CERTIFICATION OF VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

AQUA

Subj: TESTIMONY OF SSGT (b)(6)(b)(3) USMC, GIVEN ON 7 OCTOBER 2009, AT FT. LEAVENWORTH, KS

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

OWL (b)(6)(b)(3)

10 Nov 09
DATE