1 [The testimony began at 1042, 14 October 2009.]

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

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

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

Bronze 19 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, sir.

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

22 [The witness was sworn.]

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

Bronze 24 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): (b)(3),(b)(6), (b)(3),(b)(6). Bronze

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

Bronze 27 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Current unit is HHC, 2/503rd battalion located at
28 Vicenza, Italy.

Beta 29 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Are you are currently a Sergeant First Class in
30 the U.S. Army?

Bronze 31 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Correct, sir.

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

Bronze 1 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Unit was HHC, 2/503rd infantry battalion located
2 at Camp Blessing, Afghanistan.

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

Bronze 5 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): I was a Sergeant First Class, duty assignment was
6 the Senior Intel Sergeant for the S2, sir.

Beta 7 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And what is your particular OC field?

Bronze 8 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Intelligence, sir.

Beta 9 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Any sub-specialty? Is it a----

Bronze 10 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): No. It's all source Intel--is the proper name
11 for the job, sir.

Beta 12 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): When did you join the Battalion?

Bronze 13 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): I joined the Battalion in May of 2006.

Beta 14 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Did you participate in the work ups for the
15 deployment?

Bronze 16 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, sir.

Beta 17 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And were you with the Battalion throughout the
18 deployment?

Bronze 19 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, sir.

Beta 20 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And work in the S2 shop. Who was the S2 officer?

Bronze 21 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): The first S2 officer at the time was Captain
22 (b)(3),(b)(6) and then followed by Captain (b)(3),(b)(6) during the Magenta
23 deployment.

Beta 24 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): What other officers worked in the shop with you?

Bronze 25 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): The other officers were--from the time that I
26 came to the battalion or just for the deployment time,
27 sir?

Beta 28 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): For the deployment time.

Bronze 29 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): For the deployment time, the other officers were
30 Lieutenant (b)(3),(b)(6) Jade and Lieutenant (b)(3),(b)(6) Black.

Beta 1 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And how many Soldiers did you have working under
2 you--if you don't know exact numbers, that's fine.

Bronze 3 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): There were--there were five directly under me,
4 sir, from the beginning of the deployment and then
5 received an additional Soldier approximately half way
6 through the deployment so a total of six.

Beta 7 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And were the Soldiers analysts?

Bronze 8 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes. One was an 11-Bravo.

Beta 9 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): The information that those Soldiers were
10 analyzing, where did it come from?

Bronze 11 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): The information that they were analyzing came
12 from HUMINT sources, the reports, information received
13 from the companies, information received from higher
14 being brigade, or even higher Division level reports
15 that didn't come directly through us but would come
16 from top down.

Beta 17 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Did you at some point learn of a battalion
18 operation in the Waygal Valley that they executed
19 during July of 2008?

Bronze 20 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, sir.

Beta 21 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Did you participate in the planning for that
22 operation?

Bronze 23 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): No, I did not, sir.

Beta 24 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Did your Soldiers?

Bronze 25 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Not in a direct sense but more of a--they were
26 tasked to give pictures or compile significant
27 activity, historical activity within that area. From
28 my recollection, that's the extent of what they
29 provided.

Beta 30 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And that would be provided to the officers in the
31 S2 shop?

Bronze 32 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, sir.

Beta 1 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Did you give a review the end product that the
2 officers put together?

Bronze 3 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Did I review it, sir? Yes, I----

Beta 4 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Did you see it?

Bronze 5 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, I saw it, sir, yes.

Beta 6 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Based on your understanding of the situation, did
7 you concur with the assessments?

Bronze 8 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): With the assessment of----

Beta 9 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): The enemy situation?

Bronze 10 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes.

Beta 11 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): From the time that the--are you aware that that
12 was made part of a CONOPs?

Bronze 13 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes.

Beta 14 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): For the battalion. From the time that the CONOPs
15 was drafted, was there any other enemy action in the
16 Waygal Valley that you were aware of?

Bronze 17 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): In the area around Wanat, there was no action
18 there. It was in the northern area of Waygal, mostly
19 around COP Bella. And that was just prior to them
20 pulling out and then we had our sporadic activity
21 around Blessing but it was very limited around that
22 area, sir.

Beta 23 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): And what was your understanding of the enemy
24 situation in the Waygal?

Bronze 25 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): My understanding, sir, was that the enemy was
26 moving from the eastern area of a province across
27 north of the Pesh Valley into the areas of COP Bella
28 and specifically around Aranus village trying to push
29 us out and then moving down further down to attack us
30 down at Blessing.

Beta 31 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Did you have a sense for the size of the enemy
32 force?

Bronze 1 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Not initially. And if I recall correctly, there
2 were some reports received that the enemy was massing
3 to conduct a large scale attack against Blessing. I
4 think that was--that tactic had changed because we had
5 moved to Wanat when we pulled out of Bella.

Beta 6 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): You said Blessing before. You meant they were
7 massing for Bella? Were they massing to attack
8 Blessing or were they massing to attack Bella?

Bronze 9 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): They were--if I remember correctly, it was to
10 attack Blessing if I remember correctly. I may be
11 mistaken. I'm not a hundred percent sure. It was a
12 little while ago so----

Beta 13 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): The massing portion though, what did you think
14 for numbers about, just approximate?

Bronze 15 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Off of historical for the duration of the
16 deployment up until then, 50 to 75 was a generous
17 number that I came up. I'm not sure exactly what
18 Magenta Captain (b)(3),(b)(6) had come up with at the time because we
19 hadn't seen anything that big of a gathering of enemy
20 in the area of Waygal except for the Ranch House. But
21 even then, it was a small--it was about 25 for Ranch
22 House.

Beta 23 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Did you estimate 25 for the Ranch House attack?

Bronze 24 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): After the attack, we--from the reports from the
25 unit there, we came up with approximately 25 because
26 not all the enemy was killed so we couldn't conduct a
27 full BDA of that.

Beta 28 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Did you do a similar assessment after the battle
29 of Wanat?

Bronze 30 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes. But that was not done by me. I didn't do a
31 full assessment. That was done at the officer level.

Beta 32 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Information flow within the battalion S2. If
33 information came in and let's say your analysts got a
34 hit on something or they thought something was going

to happen, how would that word pass by both up the chain and down the chain?

Bronze

SFC (b)(3),(b)(6): The word would pass directly to the Battle Captain and Battle NCO and the fire cell if it was something that they needed to know about and then directly to myself or Captain (b)(3),(b)(6) or Lieutenant (b)(3),(b)(6) Jade and if it was something hot, it would go then directly to either the 3, XO, or the colonel.

Magenta

Beta

LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): Did you participate in the preparation of the daily INSUM?

Bronze

SFC (b)(3),(b)(6): The preparation, I would check it for quality to ensure that reports were grammatically correct, comments made sense, the analysts comments and that they weren't way off track. That was pretty much my job description.

Beta

LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): And in July of 2008, were you still doing that on a daily basis?

Bronze

SFC (b)(3),(b)(6): By that time, the analysts had gotten it down pretty good. It had been over a year now, so I would randomly check it here and there throughout the day but doing a full scan from top to bottom, I would have to say no. I know Lieutenant (b)(3),(b)(6), he would receive Jade it at night when it was completed and then pass it off to Captain (b)(3),(b)(6) Magenta, Lieutenant (b)(3),(b)(6) or Lieutenant (b)(3),(b)(6) Black and would pass it off to Captain (b)(3),(b)(6) Magenta.

Jade

Beta

LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): Do you recall during early July and up through the beginning of Operation Rock Move receiving word of any indications and warnings of a potential attack? Any increase in indications and warnings?

Bronze

SFC (b)(3),(b)(6): Like I said before, there was--we had received some reports that from HUMINT talking about the enemy wanting to either attack Blessing or Bella and that's all I can recall.

Beta

LtCol (b)(3),(b)(6): Did you participate in the planning or attempting to obtain ISR for a unit?

Bronze

1 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): The requesting for ISR was done by Lieutenant
2 Black (b)(3),(b)(6). He was the collections manager for the
3 battalion, so I did not partake in the requesting of
4 it. However, if something did happen, if a TIC
5 occurred, I would either get on the phone or contact
6 brigade through MERC to request ISR if the analyst had
7 not done it at the time.

Beta

8 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): When second platoon, Chosen moved up to Wanat,
9 were you aware if they ever had an issue with ISR
10 coverage?

Bronze

11 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): I recall that we had ISR coverage just prior to
12 them moving in and I'm not sure if they were already
13 there and they still had coverage or if it was just
14 before they got there that the coverage was pulled by
15 brigade for something else that was going on within
16 the AO.

Beta

17 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): It was your understanding the brigade pulled that
18 asset?

Magenta

Bronze

19 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): After going through the--talking with brigade and
20 the--Captain (b)(3),(b)(6), we figured out that yes, it was
21 brigade that did pull it for some other reason within
22 the AO. And I can't remember what that reason is.

Beta

23 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): After the battle on the 13th of July or when you
24 learned of the battle, were you surprised at the
25 intensity and the supposed number of enemy that were
26 in the area?

Bronze

27 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes and no. Yes, I was surprised by the enemy's
28 ability to get that close within the blue force or
29 within Chosen Company's locations. And no because the
30 enemy within the other areas of our battle space, they
31 demonstrated the ability to shoot, move, and
32 communicate effectively. And then going back to the
33 Ranch House a year prior, they did the--they did it
34 then and breached the wire.

Beta

35 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): During an operation such as Rock Move, would the
36 S2 change your operations as all or would you--did the

1 S2 focus in on the operation specifically or was your
2 focus spread out throughout the AO?

Bronze 3 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): From what I recall, the focus of the S2 was for Magenta
4 the con op, Captain (b)(3),(b)(6) analysis or assessment of
5 the -- what the enemy would most likely do and their
6 most dangerous was specifically for this area of
7 Wanat.

Beta 8 **LtCol** (b)(3),(b)(6): Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3),(b)(6)? Sigma

Sigma 9 **LTC** (b)(3),(b)(6): I have no questions.

10 **LtGen Natonski:** Sergeant First Class (b)(3),(b)(6), you mentioned Bronze
11 that the estimate of the size of the enemy at Wanat,
12 you didn't throw out a number that I caught. After
13 the attack, did you guys do an assessment of what you
14 think based on rounds found and people walking the
15 ground, what they think the number might have been?

Bronze 16 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): I can't honestly answer that, sir. An initial
17 assessment immediately following the attack, however,
18 if I recall, the reports stated between 150 to 200
19 from----

20 **LtGen Natonski:** I've seen that in the papers.

Bronze 21 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): From HUMINT reporting.

22 **LtGen Natonski:** From HUMINT reporting?

Bronze 23 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, sir.

24 **LtGen Natonski:** You found through sources that----

Bronze 25 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Through sources, correct, sir.

26 **LtGen Natonski:** There were a number of indications and
27 warnings that we've been told of people in the village
28 saying, hey, you're going to get attacked, seeing
29 groups of up to five individuals on the hillsides,
30 seeing young males of military age surveilling the
31 erection of the COP, women and children leaving the
32 village, the police picking up and leaving, with all
33 of that said, there was certainly a feeling within the

1 COP that something bad was going to happen and I
2 believe that Lieutenant Brostrom called through
3 Charlie company and of course Captain (b)(3),(b)(6) was there Oscar
4 on the evening of the 12th to relay their concerns
5 that there was strong indications and warning of an
6 impending attack. We also had been told that the
7 Predator had been pulled but I was also informed that
8 it was a fight at the battalion to try to get it back.

Bronze 9 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes.

10 **LtGen Natonski:** Do you recall who was involved in trying to
11 get the brigade to say, hey, we need this. We think
12 there's an attack. Do you recall the battalion trying
13 to get the ISR back over Wanat because of this fear?

Bronze 14 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): I vaguely recall, sir. I know Lieutenant Colonel
15 Diamond (b)(3),(b)(6) was--if he wanted an asset because he felt
16 that there was imminent threat to any of his Soldiers,
17 he was very adamant about getting on the phone.

18 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. So the Battalion Commander, himself,
19 sometimes would do that?

Bronze 20 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes, he would, yes.

21 **LtGen Natonski:** You don't know who did it in this case?

Bronze 22 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): I can't recall, sir.

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

24 **MG Perkins:** As you would work Intel estimates and some and
25 things like that in the S2 shop, you did you mainly
26 coordinate with down at the company level since they
27 don't have a staff or a 2?

Bronze 28 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): To receive information, sir?

29 **MG Perkins:** Yes, to pass on information to them or to get
30 input from them?

Bronze 31 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): To pass information to them, sir?

32 **MG Perkins:** Yeah.

Bronze 1 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): To the companies, we would send it to their
2 company talks via MERC or through a phone. And who
3 was manning behind the computer, it depended who was
4 on shift.

5 **MG Perkins:** Was there anyone, do you remember specifically in
6 Chosen company, that routinely if there were a face to
7 face back there at Blessing would routinely come in
8 and sit down and kind of have a walk-through of the
9 situation?

Bronze 10 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Captain Oscar (b)(3),(b)(6) would come in and he would do face
11 to faces with Captain (b)(3),(b)(6). Lieutenant (b)(3),(b)(6), now Quebec
12 Quebec Captain (b)(3),(b)(6), he would come in and then Staff
13 Sergeant (b)(3),(b)(6). Solidaster

14 **MG Perkins:** Do you ever remember a Lieutenant Brostrom coming
15 in prior to him going out to the mission and saying,
16 hey, give me a good lay down on Wanat and all that?

Bronze 17 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): He--I don't recall talking to him, and I can't
18 recall if he--I'm sure he did talk with Captain (b)(3),(b)(6) Magenta
19 before the mission, but I'm not a hundred percent on
20 that, sir.

21 **MG Perkins:** How would you say the exchange of information
22 with Brigade and Division, how did that go throughout
23 the entire time there?

Bronze 24 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): At first, it was a little rough, but it did
25 improve greatly. If we received information, we would
26 immediately pass it out if it was something hot either
27 through MERC or through email or through phone and
28 then if it wasn't anything significant, we would
29 publish it in the daily INSUMS.

30 **MG Perkins:** By June or July '08 timeframe, do you have a
31 fairly high level of confidence that the intel that
32 you were generating was making its way to Division and
33 correspondingly anything they had would make it to
34 you?

Bronze 35 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Yes.

1 **MG Perkins:** Okay. Thanks.

Bronze

2 **LtGen Natonski:** Sergeant First Class (b)(3),(b)(6), I've got an
3 order for you here. You are ordered not to discuss
4 the testimony you provided today with anyone other
5 than members of the investigation team. You will not
6 allow any witness in this investigation to talk to you
7 about the testimony he has given or which he intends
8 to give. If anyone should try to influence your
9 testimony or attempt to discuss your testimony, you
10 are instructed to notify Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3),(b)(6) or Beta
11 Lieutenant Colonel (b)(3),(b)(6). Sigma

12 Do you understand that?

Bronze

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

14 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. I just want to thank you for your
15 service to our country and to the Army and for your
16 performance overseas on your last deployment and wish
17 you luck. I guess you'll be deploying here in about a
18 month or so?

Bronze

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

20 **LtGen Natonski:** Okay. Well good luck. Stay Safe.

Bronze

21 **SFC** (b)(3),(b)(6): Hooah.

22 **LtGen Natonski:** Take care. Thank you.

23 [The testimony closed at 1105, 14 October 2009.]

CERTIFICATION OF VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

Bronze

Subj: TESTIMONY OF SFC (b)(3),(b)(6), USA, GIVEN ON 15 OCTOBER 2009, AT VICENZA, ITALY

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

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

Sigma

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army
Judge Advocate

12 NOV 2009
DATE