

The interview of 1/B PLT LDR and 1/B PLT SGT opened at 1840
Zulu, 17 August 2011, at FOB (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

PERSONS PRESENT

INVESTIGATION TEAM LEAD:	BG J. Colt, US Army
LEGAL ADVISOR:	LA
GROUND FORCE SME:	SME-GFA
INTELLIGENCE ADVISOR:	SME-INTEL
CAB CH-47 SME:	SME-CH47
NGB REPRESENTATIVE:	SME-NGB
MH-47 SME:	SME-MH47
ASDAT TM MBR #1:	ASDAT3
ASDAT TM MBR #2:	ASDAT4
COURT REPORTER:	CR2

Derived from: (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

Declassified on: 7 September 2036

BG Colt: Incidentally is the graphic that is up right now, that was all preplanned is that true?

~~(S)~~ (b)(1.4a, (b)(1)) **CDR:** Yes, sir.

BG Colt: Okay, if we can get (b)(3),(b)(6) to talk us through, what we are really talking about now is post-crash actions and I guess when do you take it from your call of FALLEN ANGEL actions and then moving from there?

1/B PLT LDR: Sir, initially there is some confusion wasn't really a clear picture of whether or not EXTORTION had taken RPG fire or whether they had dropped off the PAXs and then got shot down or what exactly that was. Certainly in my mind did not jump to worst case scenario - what was the actual reality of the crash site. So I got on SAT [satellite radio] with the JOC [Joint Operations Center] and tried to clarify whether or not they needed us to push to secure the crash site to assist in any way, or whether or not we were good to just continue on our target as it was. So once it --

BG Colt: When you say the TOC [Tactical Operations Center] or the JOC for clarification is that Team (b)(3),(b)(6) or is that the -

1/B PLT LDR: (b)(3),(b)(6) sir.

1/B PLT LDR: So once it was clarified that EXTORTION had actually been shot down carrying 2 (b)(3),(b)(6) - extremely rapid pull-off target - essentially had already established our detainees in the 10 series [buildings on the objective] that we had - we were done with the ten series essentially, sixty series - so we had everybody pulled out and not really knowing - just told everybody stay where you are don't move until the sun comes up. Got a grid for the crash site and then - this doesn't really show it, but there is a huge spur straight line distance from where we were to the crash site which was about 4 kilometers. So we assessed the fastest way to go was right down route (b)(3),(b)(6), which is this MSR. We got back in our original order of movement and pushed out on down the MSR with our 47 PAXs organically, and like (b)(3),(b)(6) had said happened, one asset kind of talked us - "hey does this road keep going," "what if we need

to cut off this," and there was talk of having AWT lase where to cut off MSR (b)(3),(b)(6) into the wadi. Once we got within 400 meters of the crash site, we pushed up another squad --

BG Colt: Was it pretty obvious to you then based on fire?

IO: Once we got passed that berm, sir, we were still about a click [kilometer], click and a half out. You can just see the flame and the illumination really on the NODS of where exactly we were headed. So again once we got about 400 meters out, we pushed two squads out on the line and cleared through the crash site like you would in any live fire objective keeping the third squad in the reserve as the flanking element of whoever it was. So once we have identified the crash site, cleared through, we quickly set up a 360 perimeter with the two squads that cleared through and that third squad went up immediately to try to recover any sort of bodies or find any wounded in action, sir.

BG Colt: And how long were you on that crash site before you identified the first FALLEN ANGEL, the first KIAs.

1/B PLT SGT: About 90 seconds.

BG Colt: 90 seconds, really?

1/B PLT SGT: Yea, because we had two squads; we had one on the north, one on the south, that were just creating a football shape around the crash and the third squad was in reserve of flying service, went straight up the gut right towards the fire.

BG Colt: Illumination level at that point was?

1/B PLT LDR: We were right at BMNT, sir. We still had NODs down - I had NODs down for about 15 to 20 minutes on the crash site.

1/B PLT SGT: We were NODs up due to the fires.

BG Colt: And you said there were still active fires and active explosions or discharges going off at that time?

1/B PLT SGT: I would say probably for the next hour, we had secondaries going off.

BG Colt: Did I understand you had two guys injured from that?

1/B PLT SGT: Yes sir, we had two guys take some shrapnel from some secondaries, sir.

ASDAT3: I would imagine some of the cook off going off not just small arms, but hand grenades?

1/B PLT SGT: Yea, hand grenades were one of the big ones and then, yes there were some small arms that were cooking off.

ASDAT3: Do we have anything bigger: PG, [R]PG7s, something that sounded like PG, possible rocket motor cooking off?

1/B PLT SGT: There was no - they had breaching charges and thermobaric hand grenades and hand grenades and then small arms. They didn't have anything like a Gustav rounds or mortar rounds or anything inside the aircraft.

ASDAT3: Any demo?

1/B PLT SGT: There were demolitions for breaching.

BG Colt: Any thoughts about the communications and / or link up with Pathfinder element?

1/B PLT LDR: Pathfinder element was great. So we had the call that they had infil'd. We heard their infil assets obviously, acquired then them and as they were coming on we were there when they came up. Did a good link up with Pathfinders and then quickly incorporated them into our perimeter.

IE: There was discussion in the media sir, about talking to an indig - an eyewitness, was that you all-

1/B PLT SGT: We had no contact with the local populace throughout the entire -

SME-CH47: So that was an erroneous report -

1/B PLT SGT: Yes.

1/B PLT LDR: At least an our end. Again, that does not really depict it really well, sir, but the BSO drove that whole convoy and essentially secured this entire village. There had to

~~SECRET~~

have been some sort of interaction between both the ANSF that they brought with them and then - the size of the package they had. Where we were was completely secure each stand-up.

SME-CH47: You just kept everyone away from the perimeter.

BG Colt: And then when it was you and the Pathfinder element, there was inner cordon, and then the BSO did the outer cordon?

1/B PLT LDR: No sir, the first BSO package that showed up was that RCP element with the three platoons, which essentially came down. We loaded it up all 38 [FALLEN] EAGLES into their trucks and then they turned around and escorted the EAGLES and the personal effects back to the ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c~~. So there was never any relief in place until 3/D arrived that evening.

SME-GFA: What time did you actually -- I guess start getting on the wreckage?

1/B PLT LDR: We went "crash site secured" about 2345Z and we were at 38 EAGLES accounted for just after 0600Z.

BG Colt: [inaudible].

1/B PLT LDR: The fire burned down [inaudible] --

SME-GFA: And you guys were pulling security for a while then come the Pathfinders, they're helping with security, waiting for the blaze to burn down?

1/B PLT LDR: Well, it was a continuous effort --

1/B PLT SGT: It was a continuous -- we never stopped working the crash from the time we got EAGLES on it until we got 38 accounted for. We never stopped working.

BG Colt: Acknowledging the obvious difficulty, can you talk me through the identification of the 38?

1/B PLT SGT: Right, sir. We kind of kept running tally through and - just based on the farther we got into it - and it was time for rest, it was 38 skulls and C-spines. That's what we were counting and then my medic was helping me kind of trying to piece the extra stuff back together and make sense of it.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

1/B PLT LDR: That photo we showed up here earlier of the crash site, there's still probably I would say five or six EAGLES in that photo, so just to give you guys a perspective of --

1/B PLT SGT: No, there's more than that. There was like 16 still in that picture.

1/B PLT LDR: That's the type of shape -- the condition that we were pulling out. We had 22 EAGLES accounted for when we took that photo, sir. So, let's separate -- there's 22 EAGLES separated from the crash.

BG Colt: Okay.

SME-GFA: What is the Pathfinder element made up of -- [inaudible]

1/B PLT LDR: 20 -

SME-GFA: Infantrymen?

1/B PLT LDR: Roger, sir. So, most of them were Pathfinder and a CSAR element with tools and all of that.

1/B PLT SGT: They brought a quickie saw and that was about it.

SME-GFA: Led by a lieutenant?

1/B PLT LDR: Captain, sir.

BG Colt: Okay, and what was the decision criteria or the trigger point to move you off and do the relief in place with 3/D?

1/B PLT LDR: That came from higher headquarters, sir.

BG Colt: Okay, and did you -- you got picked up by SOF 47's or what was your mode to get back here?

1/B PLT SGT: Two MH-47s, sir.

BG Colt: Okay.

SME-MH47: Where did they land?

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

1/B PLT SGT: They landed 2.5K to the north of this village, so up here. They were [inaudible] about 1,000 meters from any structure is the one place they would come in and pick us up. It's the same place they inserted the 3/D element.

BG Colt: Was this during the time by the BSO or anybody?

1/B PLT LDR: It was not, sir.

BG Colt: It was not? And, was that a first dark exfil?

1/B PLT SGT: It was BMNT exfil, sir, for us. They inserted just after an EENT, I think.

CR2: I'm sorry; can you speak up just a little bit please?

1/B PLT SGT: The 3/D element inserted just after EENT, walked down to us, and then by the time we made it back up it was BMNT.

SME-GFA: When did the (b)(3),(b)(6) element show up?

1/B PLT SGT: Probably about 0800Z.

SME-GFA: You said three platoons led by a lieutenant colonel, correct?

1/B PLT LDR: A major

SME-GFA: A battalion XO type? They recovered the bodies that were there?

1/B PLT SGT: We were completely done with the recovery process. We were -- We just received the CDS drop with the body bags, and they assisted us putting the remains in the bags and then we all carried the 38 out to the truck.

SME-GFA: They exfil'd?

1/B PLT SGT: Then they exfil'd the remains.

SME-GFA: That entire package left at approximately what time?

1/B PLT SGT: Probably two-and-a-half-hours after they showed up, so probably 1015, 1030Z.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

SME-GFA: And still you guys [inaudible] --

1/B PLT SGT: It was still us and the Pathfinder elements.

SME-GFA: -- and the Pathfinders on the ground?

1/B PLT SGT: Yes, sir.

SME-GFA: So, (b)(3),(b)(6) comes in around EENT?

1/B PLT LDR: Probably around 2300-ish I would say.

1/B PLT SGT: By the time they got to us, yes -- 22 / 2300.

BG Colt: You did the relief in place and then you walked out and they came back in for another exfil so that --

1/B PLT LDR: Correct, sir.

BG Colt: Okay, and they physically left the site when?
3/D - do you know?

1/B PLT SGT: Four days after the crash, sir. So, the 9th, I guess.

BG Colt: Which is two days after you physically left; correct?

1/B PLT SGT: Three days after we left, sir.

BG Colt: Three days. Okay, anybody else?

E-GFA: Is there anything of significance once the (b)(3),(b)(6) element showed up or -- We talked earlier about who was in charge of the scene and all that. As I understand it, (b)(3),(b)(6) was in charge. Do you guys know of any friction points [inaudible] anything like that?

1/B PLT LDR: No friction points at all, sir. I would say the Pathfinder element (b)(3),(b)(6) element and I worked very well. There was never any power struggle between us. I was told over SAT that (b)(3),(b)(6) would be in charge, and so I didn't [inaudible] with him and the way it planned out he had [inaudible] so I just assumed GFC responsibilities.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

BG Colt : Anybody else? Okay, thank you very much. I appreciate it. And, incidentally, when do you two depart theater?

1/B PLT SGT: December, sir.

1/B PLT LDR: Same time, sir. December 15-ish.

BG Colt: You are departing theater this time? Do you understand what I'm asking? When do you rotate your --

1/B PLT LDR: December 15, sir.

BG Colt: December? So, you just got here basically?

1/B PLT LDR: About a month on the ground, sir.

BG Colt: Okay, I appreciate that. Thank you.

~~SECRET~~