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The interview of the PI ACK 65/70 cre at 1408 Zulu,  
18 August 2011, at FOB (b)(3), (b)(6), Task Force (b)(3), (b)(6).

**PERSONS PRESENT**

INVESTIGATION TEAM LEAD: Brigadier General J. Colt, US  
Army

LEGAL ADVISOR: LA

GROUND FORCE ARMY ADVISOR: GFA

GROUND FORCE NAVY ADVISOR: GFN1

SME-INTEL: SME-INTEL

CAB 47 ADVISOR: SME-CH47

NGB ADVISOR: SME-NGB

MH 47 ADVISOR: SME-MH47

GROUND FORCE NAVY ADVISOR: GFN2

ADSAT ADVISORS ASDAT3; ASDAT4

COURT REPORTER: CR

TF (b)(3), (b)(6) CDR: TF (b)(3), (b)(6) CDR

PB70BS: PB70BS

PB70FS: PB70FS

PB65BS: PB65BS

PB65FS: PB65FS

~~Derived from: Task Force 5-35 Manual 380-5~~  
~~Declassified on: 7 September 2036~~

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*All witnesses relevant to the investigation were duly sworn.*

**BG COLT:** What I would like for you to do is, one at a time, introduce yourself. Tell me what crew station, and which PITCH BLACK airframe you were associated with that night. And then tell me a little bit about your experience. And then we are going to start talking about process issues as far as mission planning.

**PB70FS:** I'm [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)]. I was on the gun team. We called ourselves "[redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)]" that night, front CBG station, front seat, with the NVGs. Is that all the questions?

**BG COLT:** How long have you been serving in this capacity?

**PB70FS:** I've been here for about seven months. But I've been a pilot since '08.

**BG COLT:** Are you a PC also?

**PB70FS:** Yes, sir.

**BG COLT:** Both seats?

**PB70FS:** Yes, sir.

**PB70BS:** I was the back seat for [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)], [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)]. We were flying under call sign "[redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)]". I'm [redacted (b)(6)]. [redacted (b)(6)]. I'm a PC also, and have been flying since 2001.

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I've been a pilot for ten years.

**BG COLT:** Okay. For either one of you in Gun 2, any previous OEF tours?

**PB70FS:** Just Iraq, sir.

**PB70BS:** Two OIFs, sir.

**PB65BS:** Sir, [REDACTED]. I was backseat of the Aircraft, PITCH BLACK 65, Gun 1 of 1 BLACK ONE that night. I'm dual-seat qualified PI. Graduated from flight school last September. I have been here about two months.

**PB65FS:** [REDACTED], front seat lead. I've been to Iraq and now here two years, PCHC and I was in PB 65 with [REDACTED].  
[REDACTED]

**BG COLT:** Okay. Can you talk to us about pre-mission planning. How many Team [REDACTED] missions have you supported?

**PB65FS:** I've been on Team [REDACTED] for four to six months. So I supported probably two missions every three days with them dedicated to Team [REDACTED].

**BG COLT:** Okay.

**PB65BS:** I've been on about four or five [REDACTED] missions that night. Now, I've been on about 10 or 12 to this day.

**PB70BS:** I have been on [REDACTED] as long as [REDACTED] has. And so we've -- I mean, rough estimate, maybe 60-plus [REDACTED]

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missions specifically.

**BG COLT:** When you two fly as a team, does he normally fly as the lead aircraft and you as trail?

**PB70BS:** We switch back and forth, sir. We're both AMC qualified. So we take turns at roles. The crews that we have on (b)(3), (b)(6) are pretty interchangeable. So we constantly keep -- so you stay -- you, kind of, keep your skills up in every position. And we switch seats, and we switch duties a lot, so that we all stay proficient in all the duties.

**PB70FS:** Sir, I did it about the same time, probably four to five months since this tour. It's usually been about two missions every three nights or so.

**BG COLT:** Okay. What determines who is AMC in a team?

**PB70BS:** It's on the flight schedule, sir. They usually rotate. (b)(6) and myself are the two AMCs that have been on Logar for a while and we rotate. One night he will do it, and the next night I will do it. It switches back and forth like that.

**BG COLT:** Is there an additional duty responsibility aside from those that will be an AMC in flight that causes the mission authority to alternate the AMC?

**PB70BS:** No, sir. Other than us purely wanting to keep

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each of our proficiencies added, there's nothing else derived in it.

**BG COLT:** Okay. Can you briefly describe for me what you feel those unique responsibilities of being an AMC that have to be kept current are.

**PB70BS:** The main thing is just the preplanning phase of it. The AMC is usually the one that comes over and meets with the (b)(3), (b)(6) planner, either (b)(6) or (b)(3), (b)(6). And we receive the initial WARNO and, kind of, help develop the AWT aspect of it.

**BG COLT:** Okay. It is a planning function as well as a, I guess you would say, a command responsibility function for the team?

**PB70BS:** Yes, sir.

**BG COLT:** Okay. Can you talk us through the planning processes that you normally use in support of a (b)(3), (b)(6) mission?

**PB70BS:** Yes, sir. We normally -- when we come -- our normal show-time in 2000 every night. We come in, and the AMC will immediately call over to the plans shop here, and either talk to (b)(3), (b)(6) or (b)(6) and find out if there's a WARNO, if they're, you know, actually tracking a

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target at that point.

They will then get in contact with the Chinooks, and they will start planning the PZs and LZs and stuff. And we will find out where the target area is going to be at, so we can start ramping up, basically, our scheme of maneuver for the operation.

We are usually in direct contact pretty -- immediately within 30 minutes or so of the WARNO also with the JTAC down at that Logar compound. They will usually call us, or we'll call them and find out exactly how they want to utilize us. From that point --

**BG COLT:** Are those mostly telephonic engagements, or do you normally get together for a face-to-face engagement?

**PB70BS:** It's usually telephonic, sir. We have been down there on different occasions. Some of the nights that we don't have missions, we will go down there and actually talk to them. They have come to the us also because they have been wanting to view our gun tapes. If we have anything that we pick up in reconnaissance, they will come down. But it's normally telephonic. I would say probably 80 percent of the time. That's how we find out what they are wanting

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us to do specifically for that mission because they vary, as far as our hold-off, about every mission, depending on noise abatement and factors they are looking at.

**BG COLT:** Would you say the process over time has been greatly abbreviated, based on this individual planning relationship? The fact that your stable crews and you work regularly with them?

**PB70BS:** I don't know if I would say "abbreviated," sir. It's before we took over the (b)(3), (b)(6) mission, it was a crew out of 4th CAB that was doing that before they ripped out. It's, pretty much, been the same way. I mean, they -- for a short suspense like that when they get fidelity, it's about as thorough as it can be for such a short amount of time. We are also trying to give those guys -- you know, because they are getting their scheme of maneuver together. So we try not to get in their way. So we talk directly to their JTAC, and do plans here for them. I wouldn't think it's abbreviated. It's pretty thorough given the amount of time that we have.

**BG COLT:** Would at least the two PCs -- how would characterize your familiarity with the battle space that (b)(3), (b)(6) operates in?

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**PB65FS:** This has been our battle space for 10 months now. Most of the time, when (b)(3), (b)(6) or (b)(3), (b)(6) or all those rip in, I would go down there and talk to them. I will tell them what our capabilities are, where we can refuel, where we can give them the most help with some of their plans, especially when we are supporting RSOA and everything. When RSOA would have a route in, I could tell them, Hey, you know, four months ago, this happened there, I would stay away, there's an early warning network there. Everything like that. So familiar with this AO and helping (b)(3), (b)(6) with that, I would say we were very familiar this AO. And this is where they operate, is our primary AO.

**PB70BS:** I would agree. The thing about most of our crews, we spent times on QRF shifts also supporting Patriot out here. And we're all pretty familiar with. I mean, all of us could navigate the area easily without the use of any kind of map or anything. We are that familiar with the landmarks.

As far as the Tangi, specifically, I mean, we have spent numerous missions and hours in that valley alone.

**BG COLT:** Okay. When you meet with the JTAC, are you also familiar with the AC130 plans, capacity, its tasking

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purposes for each mission?

**PB65FS:** With the AC130, we are familiar. We have never done a capabilities brief with AC130s, sometimes with DRACO, which is one of their ISR platforms. But with AC130s just by us working with them, we know that their capabilities are for the intelligence portion of it. We know what their munitions do. We know how far we need to push off, what their burn capable of.

So if they do have to engage, we know what we've got to do to allow them to engage to clear out of their air space.

**BG COLT:** For planning purposes, do you share account and fires net with them?

**PB65FS:** Yes. Everything -- the JTAC, usually, their pointman and usually their FO is all on a common fires. And we also stay up a common -- (b)(1)1.4a frequency which is dictated by the COMM. All that stuff is out there.

We talk to all ISR, everything in here including the point man, the FO and the JTAC on FIRES 3. And if at any time, we are working with (b)(3), (b)(6) or the MHs, (b)(1)1.4a is where we share aircraft to aircraft COMMs.

And then if (b)(3), (b)(6) needs to say something to us that's not related to what's going on the ground, he will talk to us on

(b)(1)1.4a

**BG COLT:** Are both of those secure nets?

**PB65FS:** Yes.

**BG COLT:** Have you ever had issues with fills on the plane?

**PB65FS:** No. They use the same fills that we use just for the 1523 Echos. So I mean, it's a standard fill. It's very easy. (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c their (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c that they use is a different field than our (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c. So occasionally we have had problems with that. But with (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c we're just checking into their JOC, and most of the time we can relay through (b)(3), (b)(6) or DRACO, or directly to their JTAC to get COMMs on the net.

**BG COLT:** Okay. And do you do a joint planning cell, or just a joint AMB with the 47s?

**PB65FS:** Their 47s will send a planner initially down there because they will actually talk to them about routes and everything. Due to the time that we stay here, when they do an initial brief, that's really the first time and last time we will talk to the Chinooks until we go out and route the aircraft.

At that point, when we are spinning up aircraft, we will get an update from them. We will get an update from Tyrant

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along with -- excuse me -- the JTAC along with an ISR that has something over head to see if there's any changes to the battle space as it's happening.

**BG COLT:** Both you and your national guard Chinook counterparts operate off the same TACSOP do you?

**PB70BS:** Yes, sir. It's the same TACSOP amongst the brigade.

**BG COLT:** Do you have any questions?

**SME-MH47:** I was just curious. What's your station time for your aircraft?

**PB70BS:** We usually fly [inaudible] for deliberate missions. And then we can push about three hours out of it.

**SME-MH47:** It's a 15-minute flight on station, basically, from here.

**PB70FS:** Are you talking about to Tangi?

**SME-MH47:** Yes.

**PB70FS:** Yeah. That's 10 to 15 minutes.

**SME-MH47:** On the additional actions on (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c infil, I understand you arrived 20 minutes earlier than the lift elements; is that correct?

**PB70BS:** We normally do. We were already on station supporting the initial insert of the (b)(3), (b)(6) Team. They were

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already on the ground. They were further up the valley --

**SME-MH47:** I'm talking very initial --

**PB65FS:** It wasn't 20 minutes. We took off almost simultaneously. We led the Chinooks out, and the Chinooks took them to Baraki, I believe, to pick up -- either Baraki or Sayyid Abad, I can't remember which one to pick up their BSO. At that point, we were no closer than 10k initially to (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c until they started giving us their 6, 3 and 1-minute calls. And that's when we went in.

We were so far out, we didn't have fidelity on (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c LZ because we didn't want to burn the LZ. We were taking everything from DRACO that they had for reporting until the 6, 3, 1-minute calls --

**BG COLT:** Okay. You were sharing a common net for intel early warning with DRACO at that point?

**PB65FS:** Just the Fires net. Every platform has Fires net. And DRACO will usually be the sensor that we use to sparkle the LZ, or they can just put a sensor --

**BG COLT:** I'm sorry. Say that again.

**PB65FS:** The sparkle put --

**BG COLT:** No. Who does that?

**PB65FS:** DRACO.

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**BG COLT:** Okay.

**PB65FS:** Usually they have two sensors. They will keep one on the target, and then sparkle one of the LZs because it's a whole lot easier for the Chinooks to land when they are sparkling, rather than us because we are usually pushing directly in with them.

**BG COLT:** Okay. If I can go back and, kind of, process it, do you normally fly in an attached or detached escort? It sounds like it's detached.

**PB65FS:** We usually take off -- we always take off before them, or right with them. And it's usually detached due to the fact they have a route where they pick up the BSO. And we would usually push off more direct to get eyes on as much as we can in the area where the LZ is.

**BG COLT:** Okay. In this particular case, without pre-assault fires though, you still had TAIs or something that the ground force wanted you to report on it, or they just wanted you to provide area security?

**PB65FS:** We have to take the 47s in on all the LZs. So that's a big reason why we are with (b)(3), (b)(6) every time. We are not cleared for pre-assault fires or anything like

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that.

So our big deal is if it is a red illum night, which prior to this mission we had discussed not shooting illum due to the threat in Tangi, we didn't want an aircraft that was a high mover. We wanted an aircraft to be able to cover the Chinooks when they went in. So we did not provide illum that night. We didn't push over the LZ until we started receiving the 6, 3 and 1-minute calls.

At that point, we had two people that were running. We assessed the situation that they were just running because scared farmers. They weren't --

**BG COLT:** Okay. Before we get into the mission though, let's talk more, and then we will go to the actual execution, what was planned and what was actually done, all right?

What is a normal TTP as far as in route up to {inaudible}.

**PB65FS:** Usually, 1,000 feet 110 knots, and we would just hold the direction that the terrain allows away from the LZ until we are relaying everything for (b)(3), (b)(6).

**BG COLT:** Okay. Do you normally -- in the objective area -- do you normally fly a high/low profile, or do you fly as a team at the same altitude?

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**PB65FS:** We are usually 500 feet stacked depending if they are on our six, or if they are 180 degrees off, just depending on what we are looking at, at the time. Gun 2 will be 500 feet above us and behind us.

**PB70BS:** We also fly if they are requesting illum. We have used them in the past. Gun 2 will go ahead and set up at a higher altitude to be ready at the 1-minute call to shoot the illum. It keeps from having to rock the aircraft back so much in order to get the illum out. So we'll go ahead, and Gun 1 will push in closer to get eyes on the LZ, and Gun 2 will have more of a broad picture. But we set up the illum targets.

**BG COLT:** I'm just asking a question: When you know that you have an AC130 up, you have clear your fires with him and announce that prior to shooting the round?

**PB70BS:** Yes, sir. We give them [inaudible], and we tell them we are going to be are firing illums at the 1-minute call by (b)(3), (b)(6).

**BG COLT:** Okay. In this particular case, my understanding that it's a standard, standing TTP that it can be an on-call shot, right? It doesn't have to be a specifically planned route into the mission. You carry the

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illum, and if he requests it, at the 6-3, you would shoot it at the 1?

**PB65FS:** Roger. Yes, sir. As long as they tell us about the 6-minute call, we can set up for it. With Gun 2 having to climb up and has to set at about 5k away so he can shoot it at [inaudible], they can't just call out one minute, and say I want illum now because we won't be in position to provide it. But at the 6-minute call is where we made all the arrangements.

**BG COLT:** Okay. Any other questions about process or pre-mission planning, anybody?

**ASDAT4:** Going into (b)(1)1.4a, what was the interpretation between your crews and 17? How were they expecting the LZ to be marked?

**PB70FS:** (b)(1)1.4a is the one [inaudible] going to the crash. It marked by burn.

**ASDAT4:** I understand what it was marked by. What did they believe how it was going to be marked?

**PB65FS:** Every brief we do, now that we've -- with (b)(3), (b)(6) being able to burn, we have always told them that we had preferred they take burn rather than illum. So we have talked to them every time.

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If (b)(3), (b)(6) is able to push into Echo 3 on the initial, it's usually hard because they are stationed out (b)(3), (b)(6) to (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) -- or 8 to 10k. If (b)(3), (b)(6) is overhead, and (b)(3), (b)(6) is burn capable, we've always talk to the Chinooks about letting them have burn rather than us shooting illum because it takes one of us out.

So if it was possible, we had already made COMMS with them because we took off earlier than them. It was already relayed that it was going to be marked by burn with (b)(3), (b)(6).

**SME-MH47:** A burn or sparkle?

**PB65FS:** Burn.

**SME-MH47:** They don't burn -- they don't use sparkle?

They burn everything.

**PB65FS:** Well, no. They can sparkle. But for an LZ -- for them landing to an LZ with red illum, a burn is better for them because it allows them to see a whole lot more.

**BG COLT:** And how big is the box when they are doing that?

**PB70BS:** A football field.

**PB65FS:** I would say 500 meters or so. It's pretty big.

**BG COLT:** What the issue is, is how big have they been projecting it.

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**ASDAT3:** How early that they call to the burn is one minute, or 40 seconds asking for it any earlier than that?

**PB65FS:** No. We get the 6, 3, 1. That one-minute call is when we say -- because their -- the 47s are (b)(1)1.4a models. They only have FM. So they are up (b)(1)1.4a, so we can talk to them. And we're relaying on Fires. Gun 2 talks to (b)(1)1.4a to the (b)(3), (b)(6) element. Gun 1 talks to Fires. And we relay on the one-minute call, burn or sparkle on.

**SME-CH47:** I would like to ask a couple questions: Prior to launching your aircraft, did you get an S2 brief as part of the mission planning?

**PB65FS:** Roger. We did during the brief.

**BG COLT:** AMB?

**PB65FS:** Yes, sir.

**SME-CH47:** And what did you think of the S-2 brief? Were you comfortable with it? Did you feel like there's been a lot of SAFIRES in the area recently that it might be a concern there?

**PB65FS:** I mean, with Tangi, we knew it was a bad area. We were prepared for that. The S-2 -- we knew the last time the RSOA element went in there. The last time BARBARIAN, which is what they were called then, went in there. We knew

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what to expect in Tangi.

It was no surprise. The S2 just gave us a recent update on the SAFIRES. And basically, no coalition forces had went in there since we pulled out. So we knew -- it was a good S-2 brief. And we knew exactly what the threat was at Tangi.

**SME-CH47:** The route selected to go into (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, the first route that was planned, and the direction it was planned -- this is probably not a good question for you, but I want to get your thoughts about.

Was that plan based on a threat to come in from, basically, the west to land 02 to your knowledge since your covering it?

**PB65FS:** That was (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c coming from the west. The way it was, yeah. I would say that was a good landing direction due to the fact Tangi was farther to the west. They landed to the east of Tangi, more along Baraki Barak scales. With Baraki, there's more targets of opportunities for their engagements. They are not the attacks that we see at Tangi. So the direction they went in, into the green zone where they are not going to brown out, I would say, yes, that was a good route.

**SME-CH47:** Now, the LZs, both (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c and I believe

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c was a moderate risk or (b)(1)1.4a LZ; is that correct to your knowledge?

**PB65FS:** It was due to being unsecured, which it always is on every initial infil. I believe it's red due to not being secured.

**SME-CH47:** Okay. So you didn't believe it was red?

**PB65FS:** I don't know for sure. But, yeah, I think it was red just due to not being secured by any ground force.

**SME-CH47:** Show time for the mission that day, what time did you show up for work?

**PB65FS:** 2000.

**SME-CH47:** And on your ERAW, was your specific ERAW signed and approved?

**PB65FS:** Yes.

**SME-CH47:** Okay. I didn't see it in the packet that we got. So if we could get a copy of that, that would be good.

**BG COLT:** Do you have your flight routes? I don't believe we've ever seen one.

**PB65FS:** We don't plan a fly route using [inaudible]. When we go to the aircraft, when they get us to the LZ, we will type in the grid, give us a direct so we know how much standoff we are using. And we will usually quad, unless

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there's a [inaudible], we will fly directly to where we need to go, just a straight line.

**BG COLT:** But you know very specifically what the 47 route is, so that we don't create a track in the ground, right? Consciously, if we know where the objective, we maneuver to it, we don't fly to it?

**PB65FS:** Roger. We are familiar with -- when they post up the 47s, we are familiar enough with their route that -- because they only have one FM, we will make ROSS calls for them and everything like that. So I mean, we are familiar with it. We don't directly fly over their route that they're --

**BG COLT:** Is this specified or implied task that you route clearance for them as well if you are in lead of them?

**PB70BS:** Just only based on the air threat, sir. If we are briefed that they are going over an area that has more than a low air threat, we will check the area out in advance level.

But normally, it's low because of the way they plan their routes specifically. I think they purposely choose the low areas.

**SME-MH47:** Okay. What altitude did you fly en route?

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**PB70BS:** En route, Gun 1 is 1,000 feet AGL. And Gun 2, based on if we shoot a loop or not [sic] either we stack 500 feet above that or well on up at around 12,000 MSL if we are anticipating an illum shot.

**SME-MH47:** And then in a target area where do you drop -- where do you go to?

**PB70BS:** It's JTAC dependent. We start off with standoff what they request. It's usually about 7k out that JTAC wants us off the target for noise. As they get closer, they bring us in closer and stage us down. They pull all the assets in at that point. Usually, when they are over the objective, we'll be anywhere from 1 to 3k at 1,000 feet AGL over the target.

**SME-MH47:** Pretty much the whole night. So when you are in the target area, you're about 1,000 feet AGL?

**PB70BS:** Right. We have the best fidelity with our sensors, and we are in positions to fire in a 1 to 3k orbit. We can roll in pretty quickly.

**SME-CH47:** Let me go back to that ERAW again. On the ERAW it lists the amount of illumination and whether to bring yellow or light. And it's green because you have the MTABs I believe.

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**PB65FS:** Roger. The illumination really isn't a factor for us --

**SME-CH47:** All right. Now, you also have a front-seater. Which seat is flying with the night vision goggles? Because I think the goggle box was checked that night. Is the rear seat goggled, front seat is on the MTAB; is that the way it was?

**PB65FS:** The way -- back-seater will usually be up-system because that gives them the best SA. And that's the way we were set up that day. Both back-seaters were up clear. The front seater -- both front seaters was up goggles because we can see sparkles, burns, everything like that. And we are using the TDAK that sets in front of us for targeting and everything like that.

**SME-CH47:** Understood. And does the -- your fighter -- do you have a fighter management spreadsheet that populates the ERAW automatically? Is that the way it works?

**PB65FS:** If you going to have less than 10 hours for fire management, you have to select something different, less than 10 hours of rest. But it was selected that we had greater than 10 hours because I think the night prior we didn't fly, or we were done by 5:00 a.m.

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**SME-CH47:** Is that an automated spreadsheet that you log your flight-time and your duty day time on? And does it populate the ERAW automatically, or --

**PB70BS:** No, sir. It doesn't populate the ERAW automatically. Our safety officer -- our company safety officer, we have a separate spreadsheet. And he checks it daily. And it tracks our duty hours and our flight time for a cumulative 30 day roll-up. He keeps track of that. If you start getting close to one of the limits, you know, he brings it up so they can get a day off or whatever action they're going to take.

**SME-CH47:** Now, when you fill out the ERAW before the flight, and the names are put in the PC and that stuff, and then there's flight times right behind it, now, those are manually entered flight times?

**PB65FS:** Those are by the SP. He updates the ERAW excel sheets. It's not updated daily, but it's updated probably once or twice a week. And we will get a new version that we have to start using for the ERAW to update those hours.

**SME-MH47:** Did y'all hear on the radio or anything from the ground force that they were going to do an IRF? When did you all first hear the IRF?

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**PB65FS:** It was before we broke for refuel. They were -- Striker had said something about they were trying to pull up QRF to get the 280 series squirters that had moved to the west.

At that point when we broke station for refuel, we made COMMs with (b)(3), (b)(6). They already had it loaded up. They already had the route, and they were ready to go. And we held them off, so we can launch again before them so we could be overhead.

So I would say it was probably 30 minutes to 40 minutes before they took off that we heard that they were starting to spool up QRF or IRF assets.

**SME-MH47:** So you were working over the target area with the ground force?

**BG COLT:** The 10 Series targets.

**PB65FS:** Right.

**SME-MH47:** Then you're still on station, and you heard that (b)(3), (b)(6) was looking to perform an IRF, and you had to get back in FARP and get back out in front of the lift element on the way to (b)(1)1.4a. Did you know any fidelity of the HLZ they were going to use? Did you know about (b)(1)1.4a, and then how long?

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**PB65FS:** No. We had not pushed over that far west. There's a spur in Tangi that separates the east and the west. We had not gone over that spur to the west where the squirters had gone. We had only been over the 10 Series and over our engagement area.

**BG COLT:** What would you say the lateral dispersion between the area that you've been working two hours, and that (b)(1)1.4a was?

**PB70FS:** 2k or so?

**PB65FS:** No. It was probably three miles maybe -- three miles from where we were doing orbits to where (b)(1)1.4a were.

**TF KH CDR:** Just to clarify your question there earlier. Were you asking did they have a new LZ when they launched? Was that your question?

**BG COLT:** No. Before they returned --

**TF KH CDR:** Before they returned --

**BG COLT:** -- the JTAC implied that they were knowledgeable of where (b)(1)1.4a was. And I think he communicated to us last night that his situational understanding was that he thought that you had already gone, and surveyed or conducted preliminary reconnaissance of

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(b)(1)1.4a prior to returning to the FARP.

**PB65FS:** No. We had not, and it was just due to the fact we knew the IRF was spooling up, and we were low on fuel. So we wanted to hurry up and have maximum station time for their infil because we have seen infils slide to the right, and if we would have been out of gas, they wouldn't have been able to do anything. So we immediately return to the FARP.

**SME-MH47:** Did you also re-arm?

**PB65FS:** No. Because we had only engage, what, 60 rounds of .30 millimeter. So we still had 240 rounds in Gun 1. And Gun 2 had 300 rounds. So we had enough to fulfill our mission.

**SME-MH47:** FARP time is what? Ten minutes? How quickly can you turn?

**PB65FS:** It was a 10-minute flight back, probably 10 to 15 minutes. So it's probably --

**PB65BS:** 35 or 40 minutes total turnaround time.

**BG COLT:** When you took off the second time, you only FARP'ed once after the initial mission, right, came back, got gas, and then launched out for IRF infil, correct?

(b)(6) *nodded indicating an affirmative response.*

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**BG COLT:** What route did you had take that time to go out to (b)(1)1.4a?

**PB65FS:** Directly north of Baraki, we stayed out of the green zone, and flew directly north over the mountain range directly to (b)(1)1.4a. Because at that point, we were hearing from (b)(3), (b)(6) that the 280 squirters had separated. And that's what we were perceiving as the biggest threat.

**BG COLT:** Okay. I would ask you guys if you could mark that on a map for us after we are done, all right, and then we'll move on. And then from a conscious perspective, you knew the 47s launched, and you knew their intent was to go west, northwest, fly it up, spark it around, call 6, 3, 1 inbound. And that point you had already made a definitive LZ reconnaissance. Just tell us about, in your eyes, what you felt you saw. We, obviously, have the gun tape, so we captured that. But in your own thoughts now, what do you think about the posture of (b)(1)1.4a in the surrounding area? What did you observe?

**PB65FS:** From Gun 1 -- I will let Gun 2 speak. But Gun 1, my biggest threat was the squirters. So I never put eyes on (b)(1)1.4a. I was more worried about finding the squirters that would pose a threat to our guys when they were landing

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or when they were infilling the aircraft.

Gun 2 had made COMMs, and had eyes on the LZ. But I was still trying to get eyes on the threat. I mean, that was up until they started giving 6, 3, and 1-minute calls.

**BG COLT:** Do you ever have any situational awareness through either any of the ISR platforms or a C2 node that the two squirters had linked up with other military-aged males, and occupied or gone to ground in another building?

**PB65FS:** Yes, from (b)(3), (b)(6) was probably our biggest help that night. He give us one grid, which was underneath some trees where he thought potentially two to three squirters could still be at. And then 280 Bravo which were just belonged to that group split up. 280 Bravo had moved further to the west, just south of the road into a big housing structure. And he had saw two MAMS come out, look around and go back in. And at that point that is where I was trying to get eyes on the people that were further to the west in the buildings.

**BG COLT:** When we are done with this, I would like for you to point that out to me on a GRG or something, all right?

Okay. Gun 2, what did you see?

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**PB70FS:** At that point when they started calling their 6, 3, 1, I was looking at the LZ, just trying to make sure that the burn was in the right spot --

**BG COLT:** At what range?

**PB70FS:** Probably about a K or two.

**PB70BS:** 2 K.

**PB70FS:** But I was looking around --

**BG COLT:** All with systems, or with goggles?

**PB70FS:** Both goggles and system. I was using goggles to look down at this for the burn and make sure it was in the right field, right spot. And I was using the T active system to look at the LZ, sir.

The biggest threat that I saw was probably like the tree lines because there was a lot of trees around there. So I was making sure that no one was hunkered down. I was trying to scan around, and trying to give (b)(3), (b)(6) a good LZ brief, just find out there's no obstacles or hazards inside the --

**BG COLT:** Okay. Was there any -- even though we didn't hear anything on the gun tapes, or any kind of proactive response out of (b)(3), (b)(6) did you pass in addition to a CHERRY or ICE call, any kind of verbal description of

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the LZ?

**PB70FS:** I didn't give a description. I gave the winds, and I told them -- I think I told them it was like a mile brown or something. I gave them a brief description. It could have been more detailed than what I gave them.

**PB65FS:** (b)(3), (b)(6) replied with "Roger". And then that's when they said -- I believe they said, "Roger, three minutes."

**BG COLT:** And do you remember a commentary about the sparkle? I believe that there was commentary about "I don't know why he's asking for it so soon."

**SME-MH47:** That's correct.

**BG COLT:** Or words to that effect. Was there ever a one-minute call -- I mean from listening to the gun tape, it sounded like was an incredulous comment that, He just asked for the burn at three, why did he do that? I mean normally, he calls at one." We're not even clear if there was even a one-minute call, or if that was the moment that he was struck.

**PB65FS:** I haven't seen the tape since it happened --

**BG COLT:** I would like to review that with you if I could.

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**PB65FS:** I want to say that it was either (b)(3), (b)(6) -- there's a disconnect because they go H minus 2 a lot of times, which we don't even put the sparkle or the burn down on one-minute call.

So it could have been directed at them. I believe (b)(3), (b)(6) called the one-minute, and that's when they got hit.

**BG COLT:** Here's a question: Did you ask for the burn, or did (b)(3), (b)(6) burn on his own?

**PB65FS:** We asked.

**BG COLT:** Okay. You asked. Did you ask for sparkle, or did he ever sparkle in this mission?

**PB65FS:** I mean, yeah. He sparkled throughout the whole mission. At the whole time as we were working west of the squirters, he was burning -- sparkling squirters as they were moving because it gives us SA --

**BG COLT:** I'm talking about the HLZ specifically.

**PB70FS:** I couldn't tell you if the sparkle hit it. The burn was so bright. The burn was definitely down there. As you were saying that, I do recall a little bit. I'm not 100 percent. I would have to watch my video again. Usually, they always call for burn a minute out and/or sparkle, whatever they were given that night. I think they

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called it out "three-minutes," that's probably what set the confusion off. We never get a call that early for sparkle or for them looking for it -- or burn in this case.

**BG COLT:** Okay. You were fully aware that this was going to be a one-ship landing. Were you aware of where 16 was going to drop off and hold?

**PB65FS:** We weren't exactly aware. We knew they were holding outside the valley --

**PB70FS:** It was like northwest or something.

**PB65FS:** -- because we were inside the valley, and we knew that they were outside the valley. Honestly, they were outside our area. And we were so worried about the squirters and lead that it wasn't that important for us to know exactly where they were holding.

**BG COLT:** Right. What was 17's light configuration when he came inbound?

**PB70FS:** He was dark. He was really hard to see.

(b)(3), (b)(6), is the ones that used to fly. I think they would have the pink light on in the Chinooks or something like that. And they would have their IR strobes on bright. So they were always easy to pick up.

Well, (b)(3), (b)(6) doesn't fly around like that. They were

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actually - they were real hard for us to find.

**NGB SME:** You probably would have saw them on the FLIR because, you know, it's irrelevant under FLIR. He can see no matter what. Goggles, sometimes especially under black illum to pick these guys out under goggles [sic] especially if they are flying with no IR lighting on at all. Those were blackout you believe? No external lights?

**PB70FS:** I don't know if you have like a control on there

--

**SME-CH47:** You can dim them.

**PB70FS:** -- I'm thinking it was dimmed. I'm just taking a wild guess. I'm not 100 percent sure.

**PB65FS:** They were by no means bright. I don't know -- do you all have slime (ph) lights?

**SME-CH47:** That's normally in non-NVG mode.

**PB65FS:** They had some type of lighting. But it was not bright. I mean they weren't glowing -- like, usually, their strobe. If we are looking under goggles, and it's a big glow, there was nothing glowing on 17 when I made I made eye contact with them under goggles.

**BG COLT:** Okay. Can you just lead us through actions on here inside the one-minute call.

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**PB65FS:** Coming in, eyes on squirter --

**BG COLT:** Tell us where you were relative to distance to the target and 17 at that point.

**PB65FS:** We were directly over the squirter, which were to the east of (b)(1)1.4a. We were probably 2k from (b)(1)1.4a. Due to the terrain, we were probably about 2000 feet AGL, just due to the terrain and the spur, the way it came down.

(b)(3), (b)(6) was entering from the west. So we were probably, initially, 6k from (b)(3), (b)(6).

As we were going towards the west, right after the three-minute call, I got eyes on (b)(3), (b)(6). I told my back-seater, Hey, I've got (b)(3), (b)(6), go ahead and pick him up. At that point, Gun 1 starts a slow left turn to pick them up and follow them in the LZ.

At the one-minute call, that's when they got hit. And that's when we immediately came in and searched for survivors.

**BG COLT:** Okay. Can you describe what you physically saw in the 47 itself, as far as, did you see structural decomposition occur, or did you see the light and the next thing --

**PB65FS:** We saw that -- under goggles, because I didn't

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have my system on because I was naked -- or I was under goggles, there was some houses to the south that I saw the initial flash from. It looked like the aft part of the Chinook is where I saw the second flash with the sparks. I distinctly remember seeing the sparks after I watched the video because it just stood out to me. I don't know which way the Chinook immediately turned. It immediately turned. And within --

**BG COLT:** You could see it rotating?

**PB65FS:** Roger. Under five seconds, it was on the ground in flames.

It was on -- it had already hit RP inbound, I believe. So I mean, their altitude was between 100 to 150 feet, and they were slowing to get into the LZ.

**BG COLT:** Okay. Perspectives of other crew members -- tell me what you saw.

**PB65BS:** From the back seat of Gun 1, I was out searching for them under system because they were coming in low next to the mountain, I was having a little trouble breaking them out at the three-minute call. I picked them up shortly after my front-seater got them. He gave me kind of a distance direction. I got eyes on. We started a slow lift

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turning down to come around and pick up their six --

**BG COLT:** Who's on flight controls at that point?

**PB65BS:** I was, sir. We started a slow left turn inbound right about the one minute call. I saw a very distinctive red flash, something that almost looked like fireworks. Then I saw the second hit what appeared to be the rear right of the aircraft, and the aircraft immediately started to spin and descend.

**BG COLT:** Okay.

**PB70BS:** At about the six-minute call, we started moving to the west, sir, towards the mouth of the Tangi where it intersects the Airborne Valley. We were a little bit higher on the ridgeline because we were Gun 2. So we were on the southern ridgeline heading west.

I could see the (b)(3), (b)(6) coming down the valley through FLIR. He was up-googles in the front seat. And right when we got broadside them, we were going to turn and come --

**BG COLT:** Whose on the flight controls?

**PB70BS:** I was, sir, the back-seater. As I saw passed, they were pretty much right beside us to the left. That's when I caught the flash of everything. It was all unaided because it was off my left eye, a distinct red flash. It

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was very short, less than a second. So it had to be a close range. But, you know, I saw it. It looked like it spun. It did a 180 after it hit and then --

**BG COLT:** Can you recollect which degree you saw it spin?

**PB70BS:** I can say at least 180 degrees because it --

**BG COLT:** Which direction?

**PB70BS:** It looked like to the right, sir. It was hard to tell, but it looked like it spun to the right. The aircraft spun right.

**ASDAT4:** Was it clockwise or counter-clockwise?

**PB70BS:** Clockwise. This was all from an unaided perspective. By the time I looked down at my system, I got the PNVs. It was already on the ground at that point, so we continued left.

I didn't descend at all because I knew Gun 1 was lower than I was. So I kept -- stayed at the same altitude, turned left and came around. That's when we started all the calls to try to get some support in there.

**SME-INTEL:** How many points of origin did you observe?

**PB70BS:** I observed one, sir, distinct to the red one. There was a little bit of confusion, but the group of qalats that it appeared to come from was as a result of that

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general area. Everyone was thinking it was a little bit of a different place, but there's pretty significant galats are on the bridge right there.

**PB65BS:** Right on the southern edge of the green zone, there's two in particular off-set a little bit from a larger group. There was the general consensus as to where it came from.

**BG COLT:** Is it a general TTP of yours to engage a POO -- or suppress, I should say, a POO without PIDing the target?

**PB65FS:** Sir, I wouldn't say it's a TTP. I saw when they went down. And if there was any survivors, I wanted suppression fire to be placed where I thought the POO was. I didn't fire at the galats because that was where the POO was right in the galats that I shot directly to the right of. I didn't PID anybody. So I put it down to save a spot that I thought where they were survivors. If there was another attack coming, it wouldn't have come.

**BG COLT:** Okay. To be clear, again, you felt that the POO came from those structures?

**PB65FS:** Absolutely, sir. Between the two guys on goggles in the front seats, and the two guys up system, the two guys with the goggles -- there's two triangle buildings

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directly to the south of the (b)(3), (b)(6) crash site.

That's where it seemed like it came, from us, from our perspective. The guys that were unaided said it was a little further to the east, the next group of galats --

**BG COLT:** We'll have you point to those when we are done --

**PB65FS:** Directly to the south is where they --

**SME-MH47:** Okay. How many rounds did you fire?

**PB65FS:** 100, sir. I'm not 100 percent sure.

**SME-MH47:** We got you down for 70. That's what the story board --

**PB65FS:** Yeah. It was probably 70. Yeah, that's -- it was 70 to 100 rounds.

**BG COLT:** Okay.

**SME-MH47:** And what they shot at, sir, is different than what a line of people are saying as far as the POO what its being assessed as.

**BG COLT:** I understand. And what I take Gun 1's PC to have said was, he selected an area that he felt was clear/safe, and put out a suppression burst, I guess, as a method to deter someone maneuvering to the downed aircraft.

**PB65FS:** Roger. Due to ROE and tactical directives, I

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couldn't fire at the building where I thought the POO was, so I aimed directly to the west of the building --

**SME-MH47:** Okay. I understand now. That's my bad.

**Ground Force SME:** Can you describe -- going back to when you saw the strike. Did the aircraft rotate rapidly or was it a slow rotation.

**PB65BS:** It rotated very quickly, sir. As soon as we saw the second flash, the aircraft started to spin and descend. Immediately, I thought it got hit in the rotor system.

**SME-CH47:** Let me ask this: How much time would you estimate from the red flash from the qalat, to the flash of the aircraft? How many seconds? One second? Three seconds?

**PB70BS:** Less than a second.

**SME-CH47:** Less than a second. And the distance between the two of you, you think, if you were guesstimating?

**PB65FS:** It was probably 100 meters. 200 meters max.

**SME-CH47:** 100 to 200 meters is what you think?

**PB70BS:** It was very close range shot, it appeared to be.

**ASDAT4:** Clarify for Gun 1, you said your two kilometers to the east. So does that mean that (b)(3), (b)(6) was coming almost in, directly towards you so you were looking at the

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front of the aircraft?

**PB65FS:** When they were making their 6, 3 and 1, at that point, we started going outbound from looking for the squirters. We were headed due west on the ridgeline to pick up their six.

So we were probably a little further behind them than Gun 2 was the actual impact hit, and we were starting our left turn to pick up their six as they were coming in.

**ASDAT4:** So you were looking at the side of the aircraft when they took the hit basically?

**PB65FS:** Yes, correct.

**ASDAT4:** So now, looking from that direction, did they take the hit on the side of the aircraft you were looking at or on the opposite side of the aircraft that we were looking at?

**PB65FS:** But it was -- to me, under goggles, it was far enough in the rear of the aircraft where I saw the sparks behind the aircraft as they were moving.

**ASDAT4:** So knowing that the rear blade system turns clockwise, do you believe it would be in the 3:00 o'clock axis with those blades moving through?

**PB65FS:** Roger. I would say that it got hit on the 3:00

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o'clock of the rear of the aircraft.

**ASDAT4:** Thank you.

**BG COLT:** After the aircraft went down, you shot, you reported. What was your situational awareness about who the AMC was then? The on-site AMC, who was it?

**PB65FS:** For the on-scene commander?

**BG COLT:** Yes.

**PB65FS:** For the on-scene commander, (b)(3), (b)(6) called it up. So we -- to me (b)(3), (b)(6) has better SA of all aircraft. So I was going to let (b)(3), (b)(6) do it. Gun 1 was lower, so I didn't have COMMs with battalion. And my primary purpose was getting the ground guys over there, and to make sure no one went to the crash site. That was my whole purpose after the crash.

**BG COLT:** How long and where did you orbit after --

**PB65FS:** We orbited at 1,000 feet until we were bingo and had to refuel. We stayed directly at 1,000 feet 2k over that crash site until we were bingo and had to --

**BG COLT:** And then did you refuel and return --

**PB65FS:** Yes.

**BG COLT:** To the same site?

**PB65FS:** Yes, sir.

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**BG COLT:** And you stayed there how long that time?

**PB65FS:** At that point, we had used our duty day, and we were on our nine-hour battalion extension.

**BG COLT:** Were you aware that 1 Bravo was maneuvering then -- from the vicinity of your original enemy engagement west of the Building 10 complex toward the objective?

**PB65FS:** Yes. There was a little confusion when it first went down. (b)(3), (b)(6) was wanting to know where the -- when we sat the birds down he was trying to get COMMs. And we tried to relay to him the bird has been hit. He then asked where's Lift 2 going to put the QRF. And at that point, I told him there was no Lift 2, everybody was on Lift 1 and it all went down --

**BG COLT:** Who said that?

**PB65FS:** I relayed that to (b)(3), (b)(6) that there was no Lift 2. Lift 1 was it. At that point, I believe he was on command. I don't know because it was a little bit of silence, and he immediately started working his guys up, and they were going to secure the crash site. At that point, I continued to look in the green zone, Gun 2, because they were in the high bird, and they had SA. They got eyes on them, and walked them into the crash site.

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So I believe that before we broke station for our second FARP turn, [redacted] had secured the crash site. It was a matter of 45 minutes to 50 minutes from the time it went down to the time they were on the crash site.

**SME-MH47:** Was the AWT, did you handoff with them? Did you ever at one have four 64s over the site?

**PB65FS:** We did handoff to them, and it was for a FARP turn only. It was 30 minutes and we were back on station. But, yes, we did hand off to them so we could go FARP.

**PB70BS:** There may be been a comment on the tape [redacted] the QRF out of Sharana, came through the area. We commented -- I remember distinctly commenting on what's that other 64. They transited around us because they were coming up for the Fallen Angel. And we didn't have COMMs with them right away. We got a hold of them on air-to-air, and told them to talk to X-ray, and see how they were going to sequence them in. But I do remember commenting on that because it caught us off guard. There was another 64 came by us, and we didn't know who they were for a second there.

**BG COLT:** At any time after the crash sequence, did you observe local Afghans coming out of any of those buildings

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towards the objective?

**PB65FS:** Nobody came towards the objective. There was nobody in the green zone. To the southeast, (b)(3), (b)(6) initially called some pax out, labeled them "1 Charlie," but they stayed internal to the the courtyard area. But I believe there was around 5 pax to the southeast probably 200 or 300 meters from the crash site. There was nobody that came out, nobody that came to the green zone. Nobody had crawled out on the roofs to take a look.

**BG COLT:** What would you judge the distance between the 280 series buildings and where you thought the point of origin came from?

**PB65FS:** A mile and a half to two miles due west -- southwest. The 280 series were to the east. The POO was to the southwest a mile and a half to two miles.

**BG COLT:** Anybody else?

**ASDAT4:** Did you see any subsequent shots whether it was immediately or afterward?

**PB65BS:** No. We never saw any back-seat lead. I had a good naked eye look at the area, obviously, because the aircraft was burning brightly. But there were a lot of secondary explosions from the aircraft caught on the tape.

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We never saw any movement or any fires of any kinds towards the aircraft or the crash site.

**PB65FS:** When we were saying earlier, "the second flash," that was the impact. There was only one flash -- or one shot. But the second flash is the impact that we're talking about.

**ASDAT3:** I want to go back to do some of the geometry. So from Gun 1's perspective, we understand that you are looking at the aircraft, the detonation occurs on the right side of the aircraft, the opposite side of which you were looking at. Detonation occurs somewhere around 3:00 o'clock on outboard deck.

Let's go to the launch site point of origin. Where in relation to the nose of the helicopter from 17? Where is that shot taken from?

I heard earlier 100 to 150 --

**TF KH CDR:** Did you want them to draw it?

**BG COLT:** Yes, absolutely.

*(PB65FS moves to whiteboard uses dry erase pens to sketch the terrain and events.)*

**PB65FS:** You've got the south down range, the north are

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on range and (b)(1)1.4a right there. Gun 1 and Gun 2 are up here respectively. You've got the two triangle buildings that are right here, Gun 1 and Gun 2. (b)(3), (b)(6) is somewhere about right here.

It seemed like it came -- the initial came from the front of the aircraft. And as the aircraft moved, it impacted about right there on the aft portion of the aircraft, is what it looked like.

And then the other buildings the naked -- people that were unaided was right next to the triangle buildings, and that's where they seem to think the POO originated from there. And the guys on the goggles saw it from the two triangle modes.

**ASDAT3:** Okay. So point of origin to detonation on the aircraft probably 150 meters. Can you draw where your suppression fires went?

**PB65FS:** Right there.

**ASDAT3:** During the suppression fires, (b)(3), (b)(6) makes a comment to (b)(3), (b)(6) something registered in the areas of the suppression fires. Do you have any idea what that means?

**PB65FS:** I don't know if they have a system that picks up flashes, kind of, like our PTIDS does. But, yeah, he made that point. And I remember distinctly -- and I have asked

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

if they have some system. I'm not familiar, but he said something registered at the place where I was putting the suppression fire.

**PB70BS:** We are not sure if it was a CMOS or some sort of declaration like that with -- dealing with UV. I do know that there -- our aircraft, their aircraft and the C130 also declared shortly after this. We attributed it to the secondaries of the Chinook as what was setting it off, but we are not sure.

**ASDAT3:** No false declarations or no declarations prior to the event, correct?

**PB65FS:** No.

*(SME-MH47 moves the white board and begins sketching.)*

**SME-MH47:** Could you take a marker and just kind of pretend like that red marker is the Chinook coming down the green zone.

Just go ahead and lay the marker up like this. So it's coming down towards the HLZ, and then it gets hit. Keep going, right about there. And now, it starts to turn. Can you show me how it turned?

**PB65FS:** I was under goggles. I know it turned. I don't

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know if it turned clockwise or counter-clockwise --

**PB70BS:** It looked like it turned clockwise.

**SME-MH47:** So I would like to know how many times did it turn?

**PB65BS:** It made about 180 degrees.

**PB65FS:** If it's coming down, it took the hit 180 degrees and then crashed.

**PB65BS:** Yeah. That's how I saw it. I had -- I kind of, was -- my perspective was a little off. But when I first saw the flash, it drew my attention out to my naked eye to try and see where it was.

I saw the second flash, and I then I concentrated back on my system, and that's when I saw the aircraft was already spinning. It took the hit and then immediately start spinning and coming down. And it look like it hit, just almost back in first, and as it hit, it slid.

**SME-MH47:** Okay.

**PB65BS:** It hit and descended very rapidly. Just instantaneous, it started to spin as it came down.

**PB65FS:** The only continued flight that it had basically was the inertia of it was already going forward because it immediately started descending on impact.

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**SME-MH47:** About what air speed do you think they were hitting?

**PB65FS:** I would say 80 knots or less.

**SME-MH47:** In the past working with other lift elements, have they ever -- as they get in close to their HLZ, do you ever notice them throw on their peak light to confirm HLZ?

**PB70FS:** (b)(3), (b)(6) did it a lot.

**PB65FS:** It's been done. But most of the time it's been done when there's only sparkle out; burned very rarely due to the fact it lights up so good. And illum, I would say very rarely because illum will light up a K or a K+ area. So usually just when we put down sparkle from (b)(3), (b)(6) or something, is the only time I've really seen it. But it could be the only time because it's not light outside.

**SME-MH47:** And these guys -- (b)(3), (b)(6) generally didn't do it -- or they didn't do it that night?

**PB65FS:** Roger. I don't remember seeing it that night. I never -- under goggles, there was no light that was on their aircraft.

**BG COLT:** I realize it's a very subjective question. But in your estimation, he looked like he was in a good attitude in order to make the LZ -- attitude and air speed.

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**PB65FS:** Yes. He was not -- he wasn't flaring it to decelerate or anything. He was at a level attitude continuing his approach to (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c.

**ASDAT4:** For the two front-seaters up front with their goggles, standing off to the east of those guys, you said you had a very hard time picking them out. Looking up the valley to the west and behind them, was there any significant lighting from Juy Zarrin, and are there any --

**PB65FS:** Juy Zarrin --

**ASDAT4:** -- other stuff to backlight them either to the naked eye or to -- you know, with some goggles?

**PB65FS:** Where the point of impact was, Juy Zarrin was directly to the north. And, yes, that could have silhouetted them. We were literally under goggles. It was red alone. We were having a hard time seeing them due to the fact it was dark and they were dark. I mean, there was no --

**ASDAT4:** Right. I understand that. But what I'm asking is: Was there enough light from that village or anywhere else behind them to silhouette even to your goggles?

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**PB65FS:** No. To your goggles a little bit. With Juy Zarrin, as they started coming in, they started lighting up. Because father to the west, there's just very small qalat structures or small villages. There's not anything as big as Juy Zarrin.

As they got closer -- I don't know if it was because we were getting closer to them, or I had finally just seen them, but, yes, they started breaking out easier, and being lit up more.

**ASDAT3:** Did the light level change at Juy Zarrin?

**PB65FS:** Not that I remember, sir. It didn't flash. They didn't turn the lights on -- turn them back on. Nothing --

**ASDAT3:** How about post to that?

**PB65FS:** No. All lights remained on.

**ASDAT3:** From the suspected point of origin there that's elevated ground, you guys came down to the south. Were you able to, kind of, look at that azimuth from the point of origin to where the aircraft laid to Juy Zarrin to, kind of, estimate if there was a backlighting situation there?

**PB65BS:** Later in the day, when we were still pulling security in the area, once daylight had broke, we talked

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about that. That might had been a possibility. Based on where it was, there might have been enough light to silhouette the helicopter to give whoever the shooter was, a better idea of the area to aim at.

But at least unaided, it never appeared that there was a significant light source of any kind that would silhouette a perfect shape of an aircraft. At best, you might get one or two outlines of the body, just based on what I have seen unaided.

**TF KH CDR:** If you look at the breadcrumb trails, it'll tell you the exact altitude that they were at, at that last point, and you can look -- if you take that on a topo map, you can figure out the elevation and all that stuff.

**BG COLT:** Yeah. We are going to fly it in SIM. And incidentally when we fly this at SIM, we are going to want you to try to say, Yeah, that looked like it, all right?

**ASDAT3:** At the point of origin, were there any lights at the point of origin? You know, ambient lighting in around -- they have one light? Two lights? Three lights?

**PB70FS:** It was in the river bed. I don't remember seeing any lights.

**PB65FS:** Are you talking about the point of origin?

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**PB70BS:** All those qalat structures were lit up. I mean, they all had the normal amount of qalat lighting that's easy to see out here.

**ASDAT3:** Okay. And that's what I'm looking for right there.

**PB65FS:** The two triangle qalats, I don't think they had lights on. But the qalats structure that the unaided back-seaters saw directly to the east, those were lit up qalats, the same as a normal qalat would be lit up, no spotlights or anything like that, but just normally lit up.

**PB65BS:** The two triangles ones are kind of tucked in right to the southern edge of the green zone. So if there were any lights on that, based on where we were, we had trouble seeing them or they might have been covered.

**ASDAT3:** Okay. This is an opinion question: You are trained on the fully, dark, adapted unaided eye, you are at the point of origin and your aircraft was 100 to 150 meters away from you, do you think you would be able to see that aircraft prior to the fire?

**PB65FS:** I would say when it comes into Juy Zarrin, you're going to silhouette. Yes, it will silhouette.

**PB70BS:** I would agree.

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**SME-MH47:** Approximately 40 minutes after the crash, there was containment fires in the vicinity of the crash site, the eight that y'all conducted. Where was that in relation to the crash?

**PB65FS:** That was on [ (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c ]. I did that, and that was because they were bringing the [ (b)(3), (b)(6) ] in. Is that what you're referring to?

**SME-MH47:** Yes.

**PB65FS:** They were bringing the [ (b)(3), (b)(6) ] in. And if there was anybody out there that was going to pose a threat -- we didn't see anybody. But I put containment fires or suppression fires directly on [ (b)(1)1.4a ] as the Black hawks were coming in from the southeast. And it was just to keep anybody's that would potentially been a threat or popped up to keep their head down.

**SME-MH47:** And then later on there was four vehicles that were observed moving towards the crash site, and you also fired on those?

**PB65FS:** No. I never fired on any vehicles.

**Ground Force SME:** [ (b)(3), (b)(6) ] did not go in. It would be [ (b)(1)1.4a ] correct?

**PB65FS:** No. It was basically [ (b)(1)1.4a ]. I mean, it

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might have been a little bit off. But they came from a different direction.

**PB65BS:** Definitely the same area that they were going to.

**TF KH CDR:** When we set aside with the [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)], I talked to [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] myself. He was initially reluctant to put more guys on the ground because the rangers were already en route. But when he realized how many more we could put on the ground, with the potential for Tangi erupting, you know, he and I discussed it. And we decided to put the [redacted (b)(3), (b)(6)] down on the ground. We came up with a different TTP. I talked to the pilots directly, had the right pilots to do it. They were going to come in low, fast from the south to the north, and then the Apaches were going to be right behind them to cover left and right. And that's why they put down the suppressive fire too, just to keep their heads down. Because we've notice that anytime anybody gets ticked up out here, all you have to do is put a few rounds, even in close proximity and they stop firing. So that's why we adopted that and put the Pathfinders on the ground.

**Ground Force SME:** From a task perspective, when you left

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your first FARP, what did you understand your task to be?

**PB65FS:** When we left our first FARP, the task was to get eyes on the 280 squirters, those were the threats, and to allow (b)(3), (b)(6) to put the QRF in, so they could move to the east to detain the squirters.

**Ground Force SME:** You knew they were coming in, in (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, correct?

**PB65FS:** Roger. We had the grid. We had already typed it up, and we were going to get handovers from (b)(3), (b)(6) and (b)(3), (b)(6) for the squirters, and we were prepared to -- we were going to go up a different fires net because Uniform 2 was going to control us --

**Ground Force SME:** At what point?

**PB65FS:** At the point that he touched the ground. We had made COMMs with him on (b)(3), (b)(6) before they had taken off. We made COMMs with (b)(3), (b)(6) that we would -- because they were ready to take off, and we told them to wait, let us refuel, and we will push out ahead. At that point, we pushed out. We went out Juliette. They went out Kilo, which would have gave them a more northwest for their route. We went direct, got handovers from (b)(3), (b)(6) with sparkle.

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Gun 2 got eyes on the LZ, and then I got eyes on them as they got hit. But what we were tracking was Uniform 2 was going to control us -- once they hit the ground, we were going to switch up to FD3. Uniform 2 was going to control us. And I don't know how the stack was going to move to help (b)(3), (b)(6)

**BG COLT:** So you'd say that (b)(3), (b)(6) sparkled the LZ 10 minutes prior to arrival?

**PB65FS:** No. We were sparkling squirters. We never sparkled the LZ until it was --

**BG COLT:** I thought you said they sparkled on your way back out.

**PB65FS:** They were sparkling the squirters because we were under goggles, and under the system to get eyes on these squirters because we couldn't find where they were hiding.

**BG COLT:** So they were stationery at that point?

**PB65FS:** Yes. They had split and (b)(3), (b)(6) Alpha was still under the trees. (b)(3), (b)(6) Bravo had moved into the buildings.

**Ground Force SME:** That's what I was going to ask. I know we talked about it before. How early were you guys -- how long prior to (b)(3), (b)(6) TOT were you guys over that

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area?

**PB65FS:** I would say 10 minutes total. We pushed over that spur. And within nine to ten minutes was when they were making their one-minute call and they were down.

**Ground Force SME:** Any issue from your guys perspective on your in supporting an IRF infil controlled by (b)(3), (b)(6) and then switching over to UNIFORM when he gets on the ground?

**PB65FS:** No. No issue with us due to the fact that (b)(3), (b)(6) is the JTAC. We still had COMMs with (b)(3), (b)(6). I mean, at that point until they hit the ground, we really have nothing to do with the JTAC because there's nothing, really, they can control.

**PB70FS:** We --

**BG COLT:** Actually, (b)(3), (b)(6), right?

**PB65FS:** Roger.

**BG COLT:** (b)(3), (b)(6) was still on the ground --

**PB65FS:** (b)(3), (b)(6) --

**BG COLT:** -- you were still working for him --

**PB65FS:** -- and then when (b)(3), (b)(6) --

**BG COLT:** Got boots on the ground --

**PB65FS:** -- we were going to switch up FD2, and he was

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going to take control.

**Ground Force SME:** Thank you.

**SME GFN1:** At any time when you came and checked in and got the handover from (b)(3), (b)(6) or (b)(3), (b)(6) on the squirters, did they talk about the condition of the LZ or the area surrounding it at all?

**PB65FS:** Honestly, sir, I don't think anybody had really looked at the LZ. I mean, at any time if we would have found these squirters, or they would have found weapons, we were -- the way I was understanding it, we were going to be clear to engage due to the fact that they had weapons, but we had to PID them first.

So we hadn't started looking at the LZ yet, just due to there was so much more of a threat to the east with the squirters. I would say that on the three-minute call is when Gun 2 started -- you see a system on the tape -- start looking at the LZ, giving an LZ brief op. I would say that was the first time that we really had eyes on the LZ.

**BG COLT:** Can you describe for me both AMCs, your decision criteria on a (b)(1)1.4a call, what constitutes each in your mind and a methodology for LZ reconnaissance or security?

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**PB65FS:** For mine -- for [REDACTED], when they went into [REDACTED], there was two guys on it. They didn't have weapons. They weren't a threat. They were running for their life because they scared shitless. So to me, that's not a [REDACTED], just due to the fact that they are not -- excuse me -- that is a [REDACTED] because they are not posing a threat. They were trying to the get off the LZ. The only thing is somebody with a weapon or somebody that's hiding, moving tactically in a position to effect the aircraft would --

**BG COLT:** Would constitute a?

**PB65FS:** An [REDACTED] -- [REDACTED] I'm sorry.

**SME-MH47:** What's y'all TTPs if you do call a [REDACTED]? What is the heat lifted? They go into holding until you --

**PB65FS:** We put them in holding. And at that point, it falls in on their ground force commander along with the JTAC who will relay through [REDACTED].

If they want to escalate force, we will go through that way to escalate force. If not, we have held our lift asset off in a three-minute hold, and picked an LZ that was away from the QT tents or any threat that we could have saw.

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**BG COLT:** In this particular case, or in previous (b)(3), (b)(6) mission, had they always or never or sometimes designated alternate LZs? We saw no evidence of any planning for alternates.

**PB70BS:** They usually brief alternatives, sir. They have alternatives for that. I have been on two missions with (b)(3), (b)(6) where we have observed people on the initial LZ on the primary. We called it back to them and the GFC aborted one mission completely because they didn't want to give away, I guess, the element of surprise. And the other, they diverted to an alternate.

I don't specifically remember this mission in particular briefing the alternatives. But I'm pretty sure we did because they usually have alternative LZs that they use. Like he was saying, we observed the two people initially on the LZ. They didn't appear to be acting in a threatening manner. In all, they were obviously -- it looked like they were farming, and they were just caught, and they realized that there were two helicopters coming in. And they were running. I mean, they literally were about to kill themselves trying to get out of the area.

We have seen LZs before where people are moving a little bit

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more suspiciously and it's always been aborted. We have never escalated.

But the alternatives, they are usually always briefed. I don't remember specifically for this mission that they probably were. I just I don't remember that night.

**TF KH CDR:** When you were asking about the alternative LZ, you were referring to the last one with the insertion of the ARF, correct? Not the initial ones; is that right?

**BG COLT:** Both. I never saw an AMB or any of the pre-mission products, anything that designated anything other than (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c And no intent communicated that one of those was going to be an alternate.

**PB65FS:** For (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, that was the only grid we had received. And I mean it was just passed over the radio that this is where the QRF was going to go, here's the grid.

**SME-MH47:** Did both Chinooks land together into (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c or were they separated by a treeline?

**PB65FS:** It was just a big -- basically, a big open field, and they both landed simultaneously or close to simultaneously. I remember that because they both -- all the pax had eyes on the movers that we saw running off the LZ.

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**BG COLT:** Online or in trail?

**PB65FS:** Online. I believe they touched down on maybe echelon right or echelon left.

**BG COLT:** Okay.

**SME-CH47:** What were the conditions of the LZ when they landed? Was it dusty? Dry?

**PB65FS:** It was a green zone. So it wasn't that horribly dusty --

**PB70BS:** There was some dust kicked up, but it wasn't that bad.

**SME-GFN2:** Was this the first time you conducted primary mission planning with (b)(3), (b)(6) and JTAC as opposed to UNIFORM?

**PB70BS:** I can't remember if that was the first mission we did specifically with the (b)(3), (b)(6) Team from when they had ripped out before. I know we did do it with (b)(3), (b)(6) quite often. But I don't recall specifically.

**SME-GFN2:** Was (b)(3), (b)(6) there for mission primarily? I know you -- obviously, you might have talked on the phone. Is there any input from (b)(3), (b)(6)?

**PB65FS:** I don't think on that day. I believe there was a day prior because Tangi had come up a couple days that

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they were going to go in there, and look for these guys. I remember specifically one or two days before, I talked to (b)(3), (b)(6) on what he was expecting from us, what we could help him with, and just a brief

outline of what was going on in this area.

**SME-GFN2:** One more question: So during all this planning, was there any discussions of deliberating using that IRF?

**PB65FS:** No. Not that I remember. It was never discussed until those squirter had moved off to the west, was the first time we had heard that it was on the table. I mean, it has been briefed that QRF, as always the team that doesn't go, but there was nothing specifically for this mission that it was going to happen this way.

**SME-CH47:** Have you ever supported any previous mission which they launched?

**PB65FS:** Not QRF. But, now, they carried 10 pax of IRF with RSOA to have squirter interdiction with the third aircraft. But never with (b)(3), (b)(6).

**TF KH CDR:** We've discussed it at the command level, or during the meet and greets. We discussed the capability of having ARFs. Our main discussion was getting the UH60s out

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there to help support them if those assets were available, and putting either (b)(3), (b)(6), ARF, or even (b)(3), (b)(6).

**BG COLT:** And just for the record, describe the ARF.

**PB65FS:** Aerial Reaction Force.

**BG COLT:** Thank you.

**TF KH CDR:** But beyond the discussion point, we discussed it. I discussed with (b)(3), (b)(6) myself about using that and building that capacity. But it had not been implemented. Actually, it had only been implemented at one time as an SSC for a (b)(3), (b)(6) strike that we did during the daytime.

**SME-GFN2:** There's a little confusion on the terminology because we keep going back from IRF to QRF --

**BG COLT:** Exactly.

**SME-GFN2:** -- this is me, and I'm not saying we don't all speak the same language. But an IRF is a preplanned base contingency. Meaning, if the enemy does this, and we do this --

**PB65FS:** IR --

**SME-GFN2:** [inaudible] for immediate reaction. A QRF is a reaction to an emergency event.

**PB65FS:** Yeah. The IRF is always planned into the

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mission; that was eight to ten guys dedicated on a bird for the IRF, like you're saying, it's planned. If enemies squirt to the east, we're putting down here to do that. The ARF is just an Aerial Reaction Force; and, QRF is the same ground based, or in the air, it turns into an ARF rather than a QRF.

**SME-GFN2:** Thank you.

**Ground Force SME:** Was there any discussion about shooting containing fires to support (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c infil?

**PB65FS:** No. The way Tangi is broken up, there's been no Americans in that valley. So any time there's no Americas, you have got no reporting on threats. Honestly, that western valley, I didn't perceive it as that bad of a threat as than actual Tangi Valley. I knew it was bad because we didn't go in there. But nothing ever happened there because we never went in there.

**Ground Force SME:** Yeah. The way containment fires, you know, shoot at [inaudible] --

**PB65FS:** Yeah.

**Ground Force SME:** I mean, you guys know the deal. I just wanted -- because we heard it yesterday. I'm not sure from exactly who was talking about it, pre-assault fires to

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support is that infil which --

**PB65FS:** That was not discussed. That is something that's happened since then that we're trying to work in the TTPs in hostile areas. But for that, that was not -- we did not see the need due to the fact everything had happened to the east, to draw attention to the west where we have never landed before, ever.

**BG COLT:** In the vicinity of where the aircraft went down you had never conducted a landing there --

**PB65FS:** (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, from what I know of this AO, I cannot name an operation that has went on, an air assault or anything that went on in that area.

**TF KH CDR:** And to get back to your question about pre-assault fires, the ROE and tactical directorate are pretty specific about what we can and can't do.

**Ground Force SME:** From my experience, pre-assault fires are next to impossible. Containment fires, I mean, you guys do it all the time. I'm just wondering if there was any talk about that because, I mean, sometimes just to draw attention. I just wanted to clarify. Thank you.

**ASDAT4:** On your initial insertion into (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c you said you had a few farmers out there. Obviously, you guys were

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looking at those and made the (b)(1)1.4a. How far out was the assault element from landing when those guys noticed they were inbound?

**PB65FS:** When we received the three-minute calls, I think when we got eyes on, Gun 2 was the one that initially got eyes on. I had more of a wide scan. So it was at the three-minute call. Once I got eyes on, which was about the one minute call -- so they were still a K or more away on their approach.

Me being front seat lead, I made the assessment that they weren't a threat; that we could continue with the landing. So they were probably about a K, and K and a half away.

**BG COLT:** Do you expect they were reacting to them, or to your presence?

**PB65FS:** At that time, we were behind the Chinooks. So they were reacting to the Chinooks. And, I mean, they were just scared.

**ASDAT4:** You think they heard them about a K or a K and a half away?

**PB65FS:** Yes. At least that's when they knew that they were coming to their area. I mean they might have heard them before. But about a K or K and a half a little over a

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minute is when they could tell that they were approaching them.

**TF KH CDR:** There's only so much you can do in that valley with sound. You know, by looking at the breadcrumb trails, they tried to stay on the high ground, skirt the southern edge before they were RP inbound just to mask some of that sound. But it's a valley, and sound is going to travel. So you can only do so much.

**SME-CH47:** So I guess the question, for me, is you escorted the Chinooks into (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c from behind -- from further than a click and a half and you joined up to escort them in?

**PB65BS:** We actually -- they started turning RP inbound. We made a right turn in behind them. Because of when we picked them up, we never really got down low to their altitude. That's kind of the TTP we picked up now, is to come down at their at their altitude.

So we were high and behind them. I would say less than a kilometer though. It was probably about 5 to 800 meters. In an area where we needed to implement a weapons system, front-seater had an area where he was cleared then to shoot anything that would have been a threat.

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**SME-CH47:** Is that the TTP -- the standard TTP you use?

**PB65FS:** Roger. Lead will usually follow them in every LZ they went to.

**SME-CH47:** So when they went to the second one, you really weren't in that position --

**PB65FS:** We weren't in position due to the fact of the threat. The threat was to the east, and we were trying to get eyes on a threat that was going to pose -- was going to be the greatest risk to them.

At the point that we picked them up, we attempted to maneuver behind them, but we weren't able to.

**SME-CH47:** Understood.

**TF KH CDR:** And that's usually because they are RP inbound is when they come up behind them.

**BG COLT:** For clarification, you said "that's where the threat was." You are still referring to the (b)(3), (b)(6) Alpha and Bravo. But in your assessment from (b)(3), (b)(6) Alpha and Bravo, those forces at the time could not have applied effective fires against the aircraft on its approach to the LZ?

**PB65FS:** Not the approach. But when they would have been at their LZ, they would have been within -- from (b)(3), (b)(6) Bravo, I believe it was close to 600 meters, maybe closer from LZ

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(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c to (b)(3), (b)(6) Bravo. (b)(3), (b)(6) was probably 800 to a K away.

But those guys -- the reason why we saw them as such a threat is because they had squirted from a place where had just engaged six individuals that were heavily armed moving in a very military manner.

So we assessed that these guys were trained military. They weren't just five guys that picked up a weapon for a weekend of fun. These guys were legitimately, to me, the real thing, and that's where we saw the threat.

Not from the west, which was basically the green zone. But when they hit the ground, we thought that's when they were going to receive fire.

**LA:** With regards to the two farmers, the infil time was what to (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c Do you remember?

**PB70BS:** 1830 Zulu.

**LA:** And I know you've flown a lot of missions. Is it pretty common to see folks out doing those activities?

**PB70BS:** Yes, sir.

**PB65FS:** Even so far in the night that you'd think it's not common, they will be out there working on their irrigation. So, I mean, at all times of the night they work.

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**LA:** [REDACTED (b)(6)], you mentioned that somebody does an air route assessment, and then if it's a high threat, then you guys will do a route clearance; is that correct?

**PB70BS:** We will check a point, sir, that fall within anything other than a low. But we rarely ever have a

[REDACTED (b)(3), (b)(6)] even when we were working with RSOA. They purposely won't plan their route out to go well out of these areas.

If there's ever a point that it has to intersect an area that has other than a low air threat, we will scan it ahead of them just to briefly check it out. But we've -- they are really good about that.

**LA:** Who does the assessment?

**PB70BS:** As far as air threat?

**LA:** Yeah. Who would look at the route and make the assessment?

**PB70BS:** The S-2 usually. They put their input in for the entire AO. They know the areas that are other than a low air threat because of the reconnaissance discussed that we have found out here -- RPGs. So the S-2 always will show the areas that are a moderate or above air threat.

**LA:** And that gets briefed to you when?

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**PB70BS:** During the AMB, sir.

**LA:** Did that happen on this for (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

**PB70BS:** Yes, sir. Every time, the S-2 is really good about briefing us.

**LA:** Did you get any kind of assessment for the inbound to (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

**PB70BS:** That whole valley -- but specifically, like he's talking about, the eastern portion of it, there was an op there two or so months prior to that where, not only (b)(3), (b)(6), but RSOA got a significant amount of RPGs --

**BG COLT:** That's actually southeast of (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c correct?

**PB65FS:** No. It was in Tangi Valley, which was northwest of (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c There's a big spur that separates the Tangi Valley from this valley that's off to the west where (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c was. So all this stuff happened in the east in the Tangi Valley by (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

And for the S-2 portion for (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c no, we didn't receive it because we were on the mission. We received all our updates based on what we knew about Tangi and from (b)(3), (b)(6) that they were ready to go. There was one aircraft going in. Trail was not going in.

**PB70BS:** Historically, the eastern side of spur, that's

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where the COP used to be at before they turned it over and did away with it. But that's historically always been the bad area.

The west side from about Juy Zarrin ran up to where it intersects the Airborne Valley. They moved a bunch of OPs out there, and they can cover in the west side pretty decently with their observation posts out there. So that's --

**BG COLT:** Who is "they".

**PB70BS:** Who is that works out there?

**PB65FS:** Creek element, which is --

**PB70BS:** All of Patriot Brigades, sir.

**PB65FS:** They're ground, coming out of Sayyidabad, Warriors 6s or Warrior Battalion.

**LA:** So they had OPs out that night?

**PB65FS:** They have, basically, OPs to the west. It's a joint ANA; it's a TCP. There's -- overlooking that valley to the west, you have a TCP and two OPs, OP Savannah, and just an OP that's just overwatching the valley. But no one goes into that valley.

**LA:** So -- and I'm not trying to trap you. I just want to make sure I understood you-all SA. You're assessed

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based on what you have been told by your 2, and within all of SAFIRE, your assessment of the inbound route from (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c WAS --

**PB70BS:** We felt it was all right. I mean honestly, sir. I mean, we -- obviously, if we had perceived that kind of threat, we would have been over there and that -- you know, we didn't concentrate on that area. We knew they were coming in for an IRF or QRF type operation.

We still had (b)(3), (b)(6), you know, there was still a lot of activity going on in their sector. So we were trying to, you know, sort of balance both balls at the same time.

That's why we didn't get on to the LZ until about three minutes prior. But even at that, after we observed (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c it appeared to be all right.

It was the whole valley to the west of there, that choke point and stuff where we, honestly, didn't feel like, you know, the threat was that high in that specific area. We thought it was all to the east of there. And that's pretty much it, sir.

**SME-MH47:** In your experience working with (b)(3), (b)(6) and (b)(3), (b)(6), did those aircraft operate significantly different RSOA aircraft?

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**PB70BS:** Not significantly. RSOA, I know they never used illum, ever. The like to go in, you know, significantly blacked-out. [REDACTED], they would run, you know, with a lot dimmer lighting than -- but never blacked-out completely. We could always see them a little bit. As far as their planning and stuff, it did seem fairly similar to what our RSOA went over in the plan.

**NGB SME:** When you say you could see them a little bit though, you are referring to IR, not available light?

**PB70BS:** Yes, sir.

**PB65FS:** Another thing that was different between RSOA and [REDACTED] was due to the limitations of the aircraft, RSOA would get updates from [REDACTED] or the ISR directly. Where we have to relay everything to [REDACTED] due to they only have one Fox Mike. We don't want to -- it's more difficult for them to come up Fires, and if we have to pass an LZ brief and there's actually something going on, so we always push them the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] only. And we are the only ones that are talking to them. We are the ones relaying information to them. To me, that's the biggest difference. And the biggest crutch is RSOA inbound would call up [REDACTED] for a brief, and

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then we are just really there as a check the block for RSOA. I mean, we are still providing security, but we don't provide illum or the security like we would for (b)(3), (b)(6) just how they want us to stand off most of the time [sic]. With (b)(3), (b)(6), we are more hands on, and we are relaying everything to (b)(3), (b)(6).

**SME-MH47:** Wouldn't it make your job easier, and probably make your own situational awareness better if you didn't have to be so much hands-on, and the lift element was, kind of, on its own and he did his thing?

**PB65FS:** It would make it easier, yes. But with (b)(3), (b)(6), if we push them up Fires, if we ever had an engagement, they would be completely, to me -- and this is my thinking -- they would be completely lost. And we would be clogging up the radios talking to them because that would be our only way to talk to them, when we should be focusing on a threat or engagement.

Any time on (b)(1)1.4a, we can tell them to pick up a six-minute hold and push them away, and deal with what we have to deal with. If they were on Fires and Fires only, we wouldn't be able to do that.

**TF KH CDR:** Yeah. We had that issue once, earlier on,

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trying to get everybody up on Fires, and it's just too much. You can't do it that way. What it does do for them though, it gives everybody situational awareness of where everyone is at doing it the way we do. Of course, in the Fox models, they have taken care of that. They've got two Fox mods now. But the way we do it here, it really gives everybody situational awareness, including with the deliberate ops --

**BG COLT:** Helo comes on UHF?

(b)(1)1.4a

**BG COLT:** Anybody else?

**SME-CH47:** Oh, I've got one question. Go back to the ERAW just briefly. A question because I don't know the answer: sometimes I will see an asterisk in the beginning and end of a guy's name on the ERAW. What does that asterisk mean?

**PB65FS:** That's our SP. He puts those in. I don't know

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if he puts those in because they are temporary people, and they are not part of us or what. I really have no clue.

**SME-CH47:** You don't know what the answer --

**TF KH CDR:** What was the question?

**SME-CH47:** On the ERAW, the pilots' names. Some pilots may have an asterisk in the beginning and the end of their name on there. I'm just curious as to what the asterisk --

**TF KH CDR:** That's time in country.

**BG COLT:** One last question, and I promise. And that is: My understanding is that all of the (b)(3), (b)(6) missions are high-risk by definition as a result of planning time allotted. Three hours or less, high risk. How does that apply to you as well? Are your missions high-risk as a routine because the planning time?

**PB65FS:** On our -- going off our ERAW, our risks are moderate due to deliberate. And it's specific, but it's only two to four hours is what we select. But it becomes a moderate due to deliberate operation, and we are less than four hours, is the way it briefs on the ERAW. But it not a high-risk for us.

**BG COLT:** Okay. That's it for me.

**TF KH CDR:** The other thing that makes it high-risk, sir,

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just for explanation is illum. That does not apply to them, but red illum makes it high-risk.

**BG COLT:** Okay. Anybody else?

*Negative response by all members.*

**BG COLT:** Thank you very much for your time. I have a couple products I'm going to ask you guys to produce for me.

*The interview closed at 1552 Zulu, 18 August 2011.*

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