

The interview of the TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c CDR opened at 1835 Zulu, 18 August 2011 at FOB (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

PERSONS PRESENT

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GROUND FORCE ARMY ADVISOR: SME-GFA
GROUND FORCE NAVY ADVISOR: SME-GFN1
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ASDAT TEAM MEMBERS: ASDAT1; ASDAT2
COURT REPORTER: CR2

Derived from: (b)(3), (b)(6)

Declassified on: 7 September 2036

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BG Colt: Could you please give us your assessment on the templates that you have seen in the battle space and thoughts about threat and Tangi and so forth.

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c **CDR:** Okay sir, you want me specifically around Tangi Valley? I will go back a little bit further than our tenure here, we had 3rd Brigade 10th Mountain Division here in Logar and Wardak the first day, they owned some more battle space than the the 173rd Brigade and then we took over for 173rd. About two and a half years ago they built a COP in the middle of Tangi Valley that was after I believe I got the chronology right here after they had cleared the Tangi Valley several times. In the three years that we have had US presence in Logar and Wardak, they have cleared the valley about seven times. In that process my assessment of Tangi Valley is they are mostly isolationist and we have kind of made them that way because we went in and pissed a lot of people when we did these clearing operations. My assessment of the valley is they are mostly isolationists who don't want anybody in their valley - it's a fertile valley. They are isolated from everything else they've never had any government system there. It is the only trafficable pass between Logar and Wardak provinces otherwise you have to down to Ghazni or over to Kabul to go around. In the assessment of--- that place being viewed as a sanctuary of insurgent activity, the Third Brigade 10th Mountain put a COP right in the middle of it. So the valley itself is 10 to 15-kilometers long depending on where you measure it from, they put it right in the middle. With their idea they could project combat power out of that, but like I said, the people there were not interested in security. People were just kinda wanted to be left alone. In the two, two and a half years the COP (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c Was in there we probably maintained about a kilometer bubble around the COP - and that's it. And that was not a permissive environment. Throughout the process of kind of evaluating, talking to 173rd Commander, evaluating it for myself and determining it's a very small population in Tangi Valley compared to the rest of Logar and Wardak. I had a full US Company and ANA Company committed to that COP which was one kilometer bubble around the COP which influenced zero people. So I made the decision that we are going to isolate the valley and start work our way in - because the other thing with the Tangi Valley is it was air centric. We did a couple of ground resupply operations and it was a battalion effort to get into. They probably reduced about 25 IEDs on their way in - in the stretch of four or five kilometers. Lots of small arm fire and

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mostly IED threat because like I said they just didn't want us in there. There's no kind of command and control, there is no army of insurgents in the Tangi Valley that can mass combat power to overrun the COP or do anything other than harassing fire and ambushes when we did patrols from inside. So I made the decision we were going to isolate the valley put checkpoints on either end to control access in and out searching vehicles in and out--- kind of determine whether it was a sanctuary or support zone or somewhere from which the insurgents could export their terrorist activity elsewhere, but really had no indications of that, the only line of communication that I see right now is down to the south into Logar Province into western Baraki Barak. So that's kind of my assessment of the valley - is that it is transitory for some leaders. Every once in a while a high level leader would pop up ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c~~ and that's--we continue to go in there our focused targeting force, our battle space owner who owns it Task Force ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c~~, and with TF ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c~~ guys. So we go out pluck out these leaders if we can get them but that's essentially to stop the facilitation, it's essentially a rest stop for them. And like I said the people there are probably very easily swayed by some money - yeah you can stay at my house that kind of thing. Other than that it was very low level local fighters who just didn't want security forces in their valley. That's the assessment of the valley as I see it.

BG Colt: Did TF ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c~~ do any house clearing at all after the shoot down?

TF ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c~~ CDR: We as a brigade did some because I had Task Force ~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c~~ on the east side of the valley and as a matter of fact I think they killed about 20 bad dudes running around because that took a lot of pressure off the crash site itself. We did some NAI clearances it was not forced. We have done enough pissing people off in the valley itself, so we did some NAI cleara

~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c~~

~~(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c~~

houses, mostly abandoned ones, but they were in the NAI's that I set for them. But we didn't do any large scale clearances.

BG Colt: Okay. Can you talk to the command relationships between you and Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c or Team (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c there? How they operate in our battlespace?

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c CDR: Yes sir. No command relationship obviously but completely transparent, completely. Essentially Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c Team (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c and now (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c here works Logar and Wardak in accordance with my priority we have a --- I have a weekly meeting with their J2, J3 and their commander. I set priorities for the week, they look at those and they say what target decks they have. I give them my (High Payoff Target List) HPTL and they go after that in accordance with my area priorities in accordance with my HPTL. If they don't have something that pops up they will go after something they are looking at but, every single time it is coordinated with me at the brigade level and point to point between the TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c commander and the battalion commander battle space owner. We have said "no" on a couple of occasions and they did not go - they will not conduct an operation without our concurrence. So there's no (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c cut, it is me at the brigade level and the battalion commanders looking at it going, Okay I understand where you are going. We are not around you know -- there will be no conflict with it so we don't officially cut the (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c for them to operate in.

BG Colt: Okay. Anybody else?

SME-GFA: Sir when we go into crash recovery effort who is actually in charge of that, I mean who does that belong to? Is that you or (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c CDR: For this particular instance?

SME-GFA: Yes, sir.

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c CDR: It kind of morphed as time went on, but I took it as mine because I'm the battle-space owner first with--the only people we had on site were Rangers and then Pathfinders. When I sent in Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, the battalion commander was on leave, but (b)(3), (b)(6) was in command. As he came in closer, I said you report to the ground owner until you take over the site. So it was essentially, I guess, the platoon (b)(3), (b)(6) on the ground at the time owned it first and once we got

more forces in because I introduced---I put a lot of OPs on the high ground from one company and another company that was escorting the convoy in, another company that was clearing NAI's, and I had another company from another battalion in the eastern part of the AO. So at that point it morphed up to me after TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c commander established himself on the site, and all along the site, it was his until I introduced other units to it, but then it became my operation.

BG Colt: You assumed it though you were not directed to take it? Is that true? You assumed control within your own battle space of that site as opposed to being directed by any higher authority to go establish force for the specified task and purpose.

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c CDR: Yes, sir and I think that was just kind of an assumption made on everybody's part because as soon as I got woken up it was okay all---- obviously a team effort, but that's when I make the decision here's how we are going to cut this thing. As soon as I had Task Force (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c kind of get his pieces in place and then I told him okay, since it is now a---Once it was confirmed there weren't any survivors and it's a recovery mission and this is mine. That's kind of how I went about it. I never got a directive or order or FRAGO or anything.

BG Colt: What were the conditions in your mind to vacate that space or to move off the crash site when they ultimately did? What conditions needed to exist in your mind?

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c CDR: The first and foremost was that I was directed, was that nothing would be left, so that was number one in my mind and I got down on the ground and verified that everything was -- that all the sites were cleared. And then two, I had established several NAIs that would be cleared before we pulled off the objective, because first of all we wanted to gather any intel that was on the objective that was fresh and two, kind of figure out where it came from, because at that time it was assumed that it was a shoot-down, and we really didn't have a good idea of where that came from so we were trying to figure that out. So, number one, the crash site was cleared and number two was a series of NAIs that I established were clear.

BG Colt: Anybody else?

SME-GFA: I'm just curious, sir; I guess there are two khalats that are suspected POOs. Did those actually get cleared out? I haven't heard anyone talk about that? Do you know, sir?

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c **CDR:** There were actually -- I'm not sure where you're getting --

SME-GFA: The AH's [AH-64s], the pilots that we talked to earlier. I did not ask **TF** (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

BG Colt: This is where the aircraft went down and they think the actual shots came from inside the inside of these two triangles back to back. These two right here.

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c **CDR:** I don't know if the actual khalat was cleared, but I know this was one of our NAIs. So, I don't know if we actually went into that khalat and cleared it, but this was definitely one of our NAIs and that was actually one of the last ones that we cleared because when I got down on the ground, that's what I told the **TF** (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c Commander and I were sitting on the ground with a map and I said, "have we gotten here yet," and he goes, "no, that's the last place we've got to get to." We had -- I think we had four potential RPG POOs and I don't even remember if that was one or not.

SME-GFA: I think our main source of information, sir, is the AH-64's.

IO: Been spending too much time with **TF**(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4d [laughing].

SME-GFA: Any issues with the C2 with the recovery efforts?

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c **CDR:** No, I thought it went extremely smooth. I thought it was going to get a lot more complicated than it was, but I think it was because everybody was talking - because we all knew each other - because we all live right here, it was all very, very smooth. Especially with the layers of ISR and AWT and everything over the target itself I thought it was going to get a lot more complicated than it was but with the open communication here, we didn't find any friction.

IO: Okay. Thanks for that.

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c **CDR:** And then the other -- if there would have been some frictions, then we probably -- I probably would have requested some kind of C2 relationship, but we never established any kind of formal C2 relationship between the Rangers, the Pathfinders, TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c or TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c. What I told the ground force commander, once he got in with the convoy is, "Hey, get everybody together and figure it out." And, they just started talking to each other and you know, "You guys have been on the ground. Tell me what you think." And, essentially, what we had was Ranger Platoon, Pathfinders, and one of my platoons on the site itself clearing it -- clearing the sites and then everybody else in and around in security positions.

BG Colt: How about just one other line of thought here, and that's the QRF. We've addressed that in a number of different discussions. Do you routinely assume a role as a standing QRF or at least somebody that's got to be prepared to -

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c **CDR:** We always do on every one of their missions and that's one of the things that they talk about with TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c commander and the battalion battle-space owner.

BG Colt: Is that a min force or is that what's available with respect to -- Is there any specifications it's a company -- it's a --

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c **CDR:** It's a platoon, sir; and that has -- I mean, in this instance, I mean, there's no way it would have been cued because we'd drive in there and the Pathfinders, obviously being resident here are the first source of aerial QRF. But, there's always somebody identified, especially as we get in or around a lot of other places that they go that we can get to quickly. That's coordinated, but they've never called for it.

BG Colt: Have you had other downed aircraft in your battle space since you've been here?

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c **CDR:** No, sir.

BG Colt: And your TOA guys show up when? October you said?

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c **CDR:** Yes, sir. TOA is 20 October.

BG Colt: And it's just for this relationship here, as far as who is next? Is that the 82nd who is coming here next?

SME-GFN1: I know up in Jbad it's - (b)(3), (b)(6).

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c **CDR:** Yeah, (b)(3), (b)(6). The brigade commander replacing me is actually out of 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division. It's (b)(3), (b)(6).

BG Colt: Okay, well, I appreciate your time tremendously. Thanks for the support that you've provided to this Task Force in this particular effort and we're going to be in country probably for another week and a few days and if we need to come back to you we shall.

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c **CDR:** Yes, sir.

BG Colt: Anything else that we should have talked about that we didn't?

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c **CDR:** No, sir. Any thought to getting out to the site itself?

BG Colt: Well, originally, I wanted to do that, but I was told that this becomes a very deliberate combat operation and my mission at this point really is to find facts without disrupting daily operations and I recognize that this took somebody off task for four days plus, just to do that, so that's my train of thought. Is that comforting?

TF (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c **CDR:** Sir, if you come back and you say, "No, I must get out to the site," the more time you give me the better.

BG Colt: Roger. Okay. I appreciate that.

[The interview concluded.]