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Executive Summary (EXSUM)
19 June 2006

ICW: N/A

SUBJECT: Executive Summary of AR 15-6 Investigation of Incident at FOB ROBINSON
282146ZMAR06

DISCUSSION: I commenced my investigation on 31 March 2006, and concluded 19 April 2006. The primary investigative team consisted of me, COL (b)(7) (USASOC SME), LTC (b)(7) (NCE XO), and MAJ (b)(7).

Based on my investigation, I have made the following findings by a preponderance of the evidence. During an intense firefight under complex conditions and no illumination, friendly fire killed Private (Pte) Costall (Canadian Army) and SFC John Stone (US Army). Friendly fire also injured CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) (US Army), Warrant Officer (WO) (b)(6) (Canadian Army), and Corporal (Cpl) (b)(6) (Canadian Army). ANA Soldier (b)(6) and Pte (b)(6) were wounded by enemy fire. The friendly fire casualties were caused by M-240 fire from the NE corner of the SF compound at BP 2 which either simultaneously or near simultaneously engaged US and Canadian forces at their respective locations. The Canadians had moved into a position outside the SF compound and into the sector of fire of this gun without sufficient coordination, and a gunner at that position fired without knowing they were there. Inaccurate target identification by a gunner at this same corner led him to engage the ETT rooftop in the belief that it was an enemy position. Several other factors contributed to the incident, including C2 issues, poor planning, leadership failures, and fatigue.

I have made the following recommendations: I found insufficient evidence that the fratricides amounted to an offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice; instead, they were the sorts of acts that, while regrettable, are understandable in context of the conditions of this firefight. Next, that better C2 arrangements evolve in order to support future expansion of ANA operations and their concomitant synchronization with US forces. Finally, that Soldiers on the ground, regardless of organization, have and are trained on appropriate state-of-the-art common fielding equipment, especially night vision devices, thermal imaging devices, and laser aiming devices.

WAY AHEAD: This concludes my investigation, subject to any reinvestigation that you direct. The Army Safety Center Investigating Team and CID continue their respective investigations. The Canadian Board of Inquiry has completed its inquiry. The ballistics tests by CID are not complete.

APPROVED BY: C (b)(3), (b)(6)

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
US NATIONAL COMMAND ELEMENT
REGIONAL COMMAND - SOUTH
KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09354

NCE

18 June 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR Commanding General, CJTF-76, Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, APO AE 09354

SUBJECT: Findings and Recommendations - Collateral Fratricide Investigation, Forward Operating Base (FOB) Robinson (formerly FOB Wolf), 28-29 MAR 2006

1. **Introduction.** On 30 MAR 2006, I was appointed as the AR 15-6 Investigating Officer (IO) to examine whether friendly fire caused the deaths and injuries of coalition forces at FOB Robinson on 28-29 March 2006.

2. **Summary.** The investigation reveals the following findings:

- a. U.S. fire killed SFC John Stone (US Army) and Private (Pte) Costall (Canadian Army).
- b. U.S. fire wounded CPT (b)(3), (b)(6) (US Army), Warrant Officer (WO) (b)(6) (Canadian Army), and Corporal (Cpl) (b)(6) (Canadian Army).
- c. Afghan National Army (ANA) Soldier (b)(6) and Canadian Corporal (Cpl) (b)(6) were wounded by enemy fire.
- d. U.S. friendly fire originated from elements of Operational Detachment Alfa (ODA) Team 2062, Charlie Company, 2nd BN, 20th SFG (US) located in the NE corner of the SF compound on FOB Robinson.
- e. The proximate cause of the fratricide was inaccurate target identification, shooting out of assigned sectors, and Canadian troops moving into those sectors of fire without coordination with US forces. Shooting out of sector was a possibility exacerbated by a lack of physical control measures for the sectors of fire and a deficient base defense plan.
- f. Secondary factors include command and control (C2) issues, planning and fatigue.
- g. There is insufficient evidence to support offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

3. **Background.**

- a. At approximately 2146Z on 28 MAR 2006, FOB Robinson was attacked by Taliban forces. An intense firefight ensued. This coordinated attack was conducted under complex circumstances and limited illumination.

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SUBJECT: Collateral Fratricide Investigation, FOB Robinson, 28-29 March 2006

b. Baseline FOB physical conditions. (See Exhibit 54) FOB Robinson is an austere FOB located in the Sangin district of the Helmand Province in southern Afghanistan. It occupies an area approximately 900 meters north-to-south by 350 meters west-to-east. The Helmand River runs generally from the northeast to the southwest adjacent to Highway 611 West of the FOB. The draw that comes off this river to the east is a known enemy infiltration route. (See Exhibit 62) The overall compound has (b)(2)H of concertina wire as a perimeter fence. A three-foot mud-brick wall ran parallel to the northern fence. This wall was being reinforced (b)(2)H Hesco barriers along the northern perimeter wall. The FOB is on a western spur splintering from a generally north-to-south running ridge complex which provides, from the SOF compound, over watch to much of the area, except the south beyond approximately 800 meters. Locations to the east have better overwatch of the entire area. The FOB contains 4 separate inner compounds:

(1) The 'old Mosque' ANA Compound: A small, one-story, mud-walled compound near the northwest corner of the complex. It was (b)(2)H

(b)(2)H

(2) The 'new' ANA Compound: This compound was under construction and was located as a small mud-walled compound near the southern, center wall of the FOB.

(3) The US Embedded Training Team (ETT) Compound: The 207th Corps ETT Reserve Component Advisory Group (RCAG) controlled this small, one story mud-wall complex. It had good over watch to the (b)(2)H but limited overwatch from the

(b)(2)H

(b)(2)H Plunging fire could have occurred from south of the SF compound, although none was indicated. (b)(2)H Hesco barriers existed

(b)(2)H north of the ETT compound.

(4) 'The SF Compound': Team 2062, Charlie Company, 2d Battalion, 20th SFG (US), OPCON to FOB 73, occupied this double height Hesco barrier compound on the southeast corner of the FOB complex. Overwatch from this position dominated the entire area with the exception of the (b)(2)H where the ridgeline tapers off, and the east due to dead space between (b)(2)H meters. Beyond (b)(2)H meters to the east the view was good. During normal conditions, there is clear visibility and line of sight from the NE corner of the SF compound to the ETT compound and to the location where the Canadian casualties occurred. The SF compound had an unprotected wooden tower near its center that had the best overwatch view of the entire area. The center-to-center distance from the SF compound to the ETT compound is approximately (b)(2)H meters.

c. Baseline FOB Manning. The SF compound was normally manned by (b)(2)H of the OI (b)(2)H JOT-A Team (1 (b)(2)H) CCC Team (US (b)(2)H) interpreters. The ETT compound was manned by approximately (b)(2)H personnel from the 207th Reserve Component

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Advisory Group (RCAG), TF Phoenix, 53rd Enhanced Separate Brigade, Florida National Guard, whose mission it is to train the Afghan National Army. Approx: 20 Soldiers occupied the ANA area of the FOB complex. A (b)(2)High Afghanistan Security Guard (ASG) element was on the site occupying a tent on the outside of the SF compound to the Southwest.

d. Baseline FOB defense plan and fire coordination measures.

(1) The ODA commander, CP1 (b)(3), (b)(6) was the FOB commander. The senior weapons sergeant, SFC (b)(3), (b)(6) was responsible for base defense planning and coordination. Much work had already been done to improve the level of force protection at the ETT and SF compounds and on the ANA towers prior to the attack, but it was not complete. (See Exhibits 26, 27)

(2) Prior to 28 MAR 2006, the base defense plan was loosely coordinated and based on verbal coordination between the respective elements that normally existed on the FOB. This consisted of general guidance for the orientation of fires in the case of an attack. It included some discussion with leaders of the respective elements at the different compounds inside the FOB complex to deconflict their fires during an attack.

(3) There was no overall written fire plan or integrated sector sketches for the FOB complex. No physical sector markings existed for fire control for day or night, although features on the ground had been verbally identified and briefed to SF Soldiers. (See Exhibits 49, 50)

(4) The SF compound was defended with direct fire from 3 crew-served weapon battle positions (BP). Each BP had a mounted HMMWV, and the vehicles were backed onto ra (b)(2)High of the camp: (b)(2)High (b)(2)High

(b)(2)High which position was verbally issued sectors of fire and interlocking left and right limits covering an arc from approx (b)(2)High (b)(2)High ces magnetic. (See Exhibits 49, 64) These sectors were integrated with the ANA sectors, which cover (b)(2)High the base cluster, and the ETT camp which cover (b)(2)High The left and right limits of the sectors were clearly visible only by day. Each member of the ODA knew his assigned battle position and rehearsed the battle drill to occupy it numerous times due to recent and numerous low level attacks on the camp.

(5) BP 2 consisted of two mounted M-240Bs. One gun was located in the turret with a 360 degree field of fire; the second gun on the rear of the vehicle had a narrower arc of fire dictated by its position on the rear of the vehicle. The arc of this gun can be described as generally from 90 to 270 degrees of the direction of travel, or the rear 180 degree arc. Neither gun had any optics or night vision mounted; instead iron sights were used. (See Exhibit 50) Neither gun had either traversing or elevation devices. (See Exhibits 26) The fields of fire were inexact and unmarked by stakes or defined sector sketches.

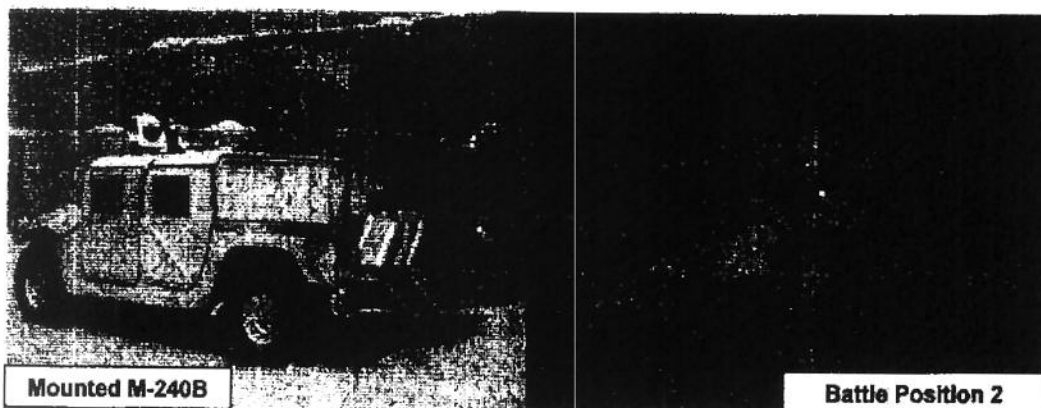
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e. Base-line FOB Analysis. (See Exhibits 49, 50)

(1) FOB Robinson had no doctrinal fire plan or base cluster defensive scheme, nor were there any physical limits on sectors of fire. There was an absence of sector sketches which would have shown exact sectors of fire, prominent terrain landmarks for the gunner's orientation, locations of dead space, location of friendly observation positions, or civilian structures.

(2) The lack of sector sketches extended to the ETT BPs as well, which were even less well defined in terms of their specific location. The lack of crew-served weapons-mounted NVDs was another problem. Crews at the BPs operated under NVGs, and were at possible risk of muzzle flash "white out" from their own guns and disorientation as they turned about to answer radio calls, reload ammo, or other tasks that took their eyes temporarily off the target, and might lengthen the time it would take to reacquire the target once they returned fire.

4. Facts.

a. SFC Stone. A preponderance of the evidence reveals that SFC Stone was killed by US fire from a 7.62mm weapons system. (See Exhibits 7, 18) He was on the roof of the ETT compound in the position shown in Exhibit 63, and was crouched behind a low sandbag wall, rising periodically to fire at the enemy. He was located immediately to C (3), (b) ht, and slightly forward. (See Exhibits 19, 58) His back was to the SF compound. SFC Stone's fatal wound entered his back as he crouched behind the wall on the roof of the ETT compound, traveled up his torso and came to rest beneath the skin in the back of his skull. The round was recovered and the Criminal Investigation Detachment determined it has the characteristics of a 7.62 round. SFC Stone was not wearing his individual body armor. (See Exhibit 23)

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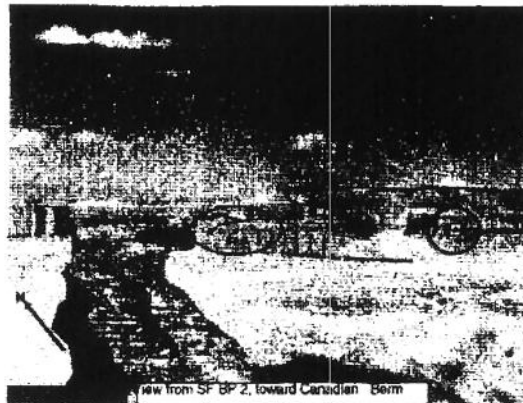


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d. Weather. While weather conditions were generally favorable, visibility on the night of 28 MAR 06 was poor with 0% illumination. Target identification was problematic at best, and targeting was done by firing back at the POO of enemy tracer fire. Visibility, even through NVDs, was very poor. Both 81mm mortar and 40mm M-203 illumination rounds were used, but to uncertain effect. (See Exhibits 14, 50)

e. Additional Forces.

(1) At 1802Z on 28 MAR 2006, an ETT convoy consisting of roughly 80 jinga trucks (contracted trucks operated by local nationals) and 14 gun trucks containing approximately 42 additional ETT personnel arrived at the FOB. (See Exhibit 61) The convoy fought through IEDs and ambushes enroute. (See Exhibit 61) The FOB had no notice that this convoy was arriving on the 28th. The convoy was an ad hoc collection of two ETT teams. ETT personnel were tired, but established priorities of work upon arrival and were positioned in the FOB and integrated into the base defense plan. The jinga trucks were placed in the center of the FOB; ETT gun trucks lined the north side of the ETT compound. (See Exhibit 54)

(2) The TF Aegis ground Quick Reaction Force (QRF) sortied ISO FOB Robinson that night. The QRF was not requested by FOB Robinson and the ODA conducted no prior planning for their RSOL. The QRF arrived at 1602Z on 28 MAR 2006 as reinforcement to the FOB. (See Exhibit 61) They were briefed and emplaced by ~~(b) (6)~~, (b) (6) senior weapons sergeant. (See Exhibits 26) The arrival and emplacement was executed on what was largely unfamiliar ground for the QRF.

(3) Elements of the 207th Corps, ANA, had been at FOB Robinson since FEB 2006; they were reinforced with a unit from the 205th Corps, ANA, on 28 MAR 2006. ANA units were integrated into the FOB Robinson defensive plan. ANA assets remained positioned in the area of the 'mosque,' and received enemy fires from the direction of a prominent hill commonly referred to as 'the castle'.

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f. Time. The attack on FOB Robinson occurred at approximately 2146Z on 28 MAR 2006. The QRF arrived at 1602Z on 29 MAR 2006. The ETT convoy began arriving at the same time and completed the movement by 1802Z. By approximately 2000Z the FOB executed RSOI to the extent that it could, despite the challenges. Security was deployed and at least a skeleton base defense plan employed.

g. Base defense plan.

(1) When the additional ETT forces arrived, they fell in on their habitual firing positions along the perimeter wire on the east side of the FOB overwatching the valley to the east. (See Exhibit 20) They were positioned between the north and east gates and again between the east and south gates, between the respective Canadian teams, oriented generally to the E, NE and SE. (See Exhibit 20) Like the Canadians at the gate ditches, these trucks were positioned within the firing sector of the NE and SE SF compound gun positions. The other ETT trucks were positioned to the north of the ETT compound by ETT personnel. (See Exhibit 20)

(2) The QRF provided gate defense on the north, south, and east gates and had elements outside the SF compound and within the pre-existing sectors of fire. The extent to which those positions forward of the crew served weapons were briefed to the SF members who would man the three gun positions is not clear. (See Exhibits 26, 27)

(3) On the night of the attack, FOB Robinson did not have a detailed schematic or comprehensive base cluster fire plan. Individual fighting positions did not have sector sketches to identify sectors of fire, friendly positions, terrain landmarks, etc.

h. Enemy attack. Enemy forces commenced a coordinated attack-by-fire from three locations to the north and northeast at 2146Z on 28 MAR 2006. (See Exhibit 49) The enemy attack consisted primarily of RPG and small arms direct fire from multiple locations, supported by limited mortar fire before and during the attack. The volume of enemy fire is assessed as medium. There is no indication of supporting enemy maneuver other than positioning of the attacking forces. The exact composition of the attack cannot be determined, but is believed to be comprised of approximately 6 mortar rounds, 10 RPG rounds, and a fairly high volume of small arms fire. Enemy fires came from the following locations: (See Exhibit 67)

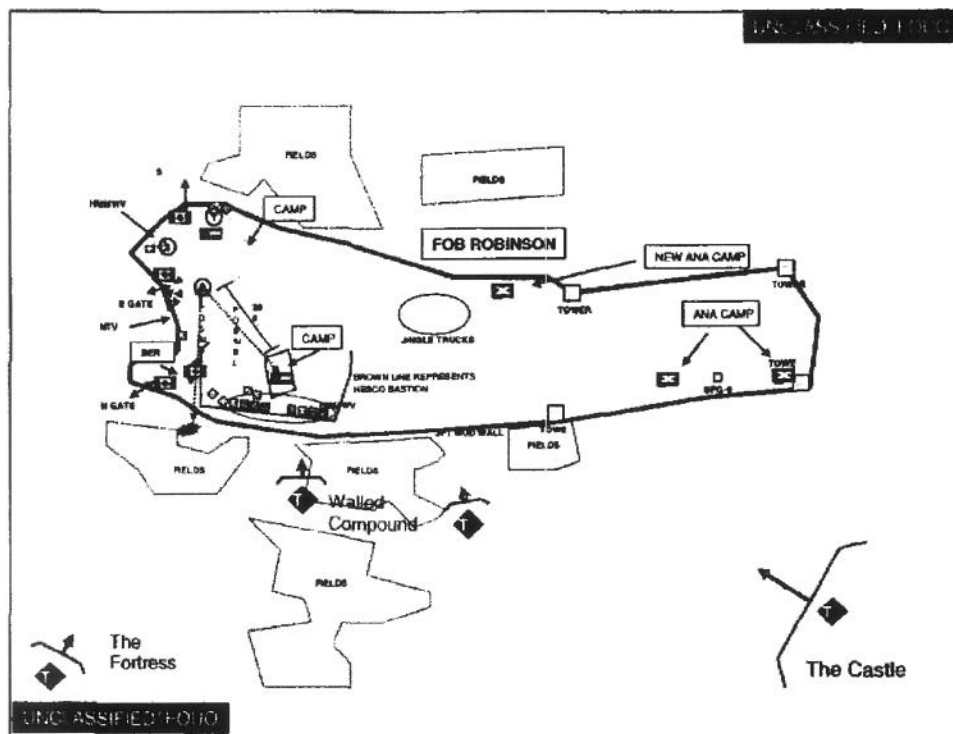
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(1) "The Castle": Most of the small arms fire came from a prominent hill commonly referred to as "the Castle" located approximately 2H meters to the northwest of the center of the FOB complex. An enemy mortar was located to the northwest of this position.

(2) Walled complexes to the north: Limited small arms and RPG fire came from small enemy elements located in a few mud-walled complexes north of the FOB. These are approximately 2H meters from the center of the FOB and are all 2H meters from the perimeter wire on the north side of the FOB, and are located on a spur offering them higher terrain. The waddi system to the north of these compounds could have provided the enemy easy movement routes to these locations.

(3) "The Fortress": Small arms fire was received from a prominent hill approximately 2H meters to the northeast of the center of the FOB, which sits on higher ground than the FOB. The hill was surmounted with a large mud-walled complex commonly referred to as "the Fortress."

i. Sequence of events - SF compound.

(1) General response. SF personnel executed the defend-by-fire battle drill. They manned mortars, which primarily fired illumination. (See Exhibit 50) All 3 BPs were manned. (b)(3), (b)(6) the JTAC mounted the observation tower in the center of the SF compound to

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