



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, MULTINATIONAL DIVISION BAGHDAD  
CAMP LIBERTY, IRAQ  
APO AE 09352

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

AFYB-CS

18 June 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR LTC [REDACTED], Fires Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> ID(M), MND-B, Camp  
Liberty, Iraq APO AE 09352

SUBJECT: Appointment as Investigating Officer

1. You are hereby appointed an Investigating Officer (IO) pursuant to Army Regulation 15-6, *Procedures for Investigating Officers and Boards of Officers*, to conduct an investigation into the 161955JUN06 attack on B/1-502 IN/2-101 AA, resulting in the death of one Soldier and duty status whereabouts unknown (DUSTWUN) of PFC Thomas L. Tucker and PFC Kristian Menchaca.

a. On DA Form 1574, report your Findings and Recommendations regarding the current status of PFC Thomas Lowell Tucker, SS1 [REDACTED], and PFC Kristian Menchaca, SSN [REDACTED], both presumed to be casualties of the 161955JUN06 attack and currently DUSTWUN. This first report will be made part of a package submitted to the Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Center (CMAOC) in accordance with AR 600-8-1, and will include a completed DD Form 2812 for each missing soldier.

b. Conduct an additional investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding the mission of the B/1-502 IN/2-101 AA patrol that was attacked on 161955JUN06, specifically examining why three Soldiers and one military vehicle were on solo patrol at that position, examining SOP, policy memoranda and FRAGOs at all applicable levels of authority in order to reach your conclusions. You will also report who ordered this mission and what preparatory steps the command took before execution, to include risk assessment reports.

c. You will report this second investigation on DA Form 1574 and include the report of your first investigation as an Exhibit.

2. Your legal advisor is [REDACTED] Chief, Administrative Law. Contact [REDACTED] for an IO brief before beginning your investigation.

3. You may speak with any and all individuals that you believe have information pertinent to your investigation. You will obtain guidance from your legal advisor if in the course of your investigation you determine that completion thereof requires examining the conduct or performance of, or may result in Findings and Recommendations adverse to, a person senior to yourself.

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performance of, or may result in Findings and Recommendations adverse to, a person senior to yourself.

4. If during the course of your investigation you come to suspect that an individual you are questioning may be criminally responsible, you will advise that individual of his or her rights under Article 31, UCMJ, or the Fifth Amendment as appropriate. You will administer and record such rights advisements on DA Form 3881.
5. All witness statements will be sworn and, if possible, submitted on DA Form 2832. If circumstances preclude you from obtaining a sworn statement, or if you obtain a statement telephonically, you will summarize such a statement in a Memorandum for Record and swear to the accuracy of your summary.
6. Your reports will be submitted on DA Form 1574 together with all evidence marked as Exhibits, and an Index to said Exhibits. Your Findings must be based on the evidence you include as Exhibits. And your Recommendations must be based on your Findings. You must obtain a written legal review from your servicing Brigade Judge Advocate before final submission to this office.
7. Your complete report will be submitted to this office no later than 24 June 2006. As AR 600-8-1 para 13-3c mandates a CMAOC report within 10 days of the incident, requests for delay regarding the first report (outlined in paragraph 1a) will not be granted. Requests for delay regarding the second report (outlined in paragraphs 1b and 1c) will be routed through the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, MND-B.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

  
COL. GS  
Chief of Staff



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, FIRES BRIGADE  
4<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION (MECHANIZED)  
CAMP LIBERTY, IRAQ  
APO AE 09344-3086

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

AFYB-DA-DCO

28 June 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: 16 June 2006 AIF attack on Jerf Al Sakr Bridge

1. **Scope of investigation:** On the 18<sup>th</sup> of June at 2000 hours, I was assigned the AR 15-6 investigation mission for the 16 June 2006 attack on three US Soldiers from 1st Platoon, B Company, 1-502 Infantry Battalion. The scope of this investigation is limited to the decisions made and guidance given prior to the attack. The part of the investigation involving forensics and the crime scene investigation process that would outline what exactly happened once the attack began will be provided by a separate CID investigation. My analysis of the attack is at Book 1, TAB V.

2. **Summary:** On 16 June 2006, three Soldiers from B Company, 1-502 Infantry Battalion, were manning what is described as an Observation Position (OP) with the task to secure the Armored Vehicle Launched Bridge (AVLB, see TAB P) in order to deny the insurgent forces the ability to emplace mines in the vicinity of their position, to include nearby roads.

At 1949 hours on 16 June, they were attacked by small arms fire (SAF) and possibly indirect fires. Fellow members of their platoon from two separate locations, Traffic Control Point 4 (TCP 4) and the Platoon Command Post at the Jerf Al Sakr Bridge (JSB) Outpost, heard the attack begin. TCP 4 is about 1,100 meters away from the AVLB OP and the JSB Outpost is about 1,300 meters away. At that time, the platoon designated the Platoon Quick Reaction Force (QRF) from the JSB Outpost to start the QRF response drill.

At 1952 hours, the QRF began movement to the AVLB OP location. At 1957 the QRF encountered a possible Improvised Explosive Device (IED) approximately 500 meters away from the AVLB OP. Soldiers from the JSB Outpost QRF dismounted and began ground movement. The TCP 4 leadership began preparations to stand up their own QRF and move to the AVLB OP. Initially the M114 would not start and they transitioned to the M113. They began movement at approximately 2005 hours. They conducted one preliminary stop prior to the AVLB OP to give the Platoon Leader a Situation Report (SITREP) and he instructed them to proceed with caution.

The TCP 4 QRF arrived at the AVLB at 2014 hours. They found one Soldier dead, SPC Babineau, David, and two Soldiers missing, PFC Menchaca, Kristin and PFC Tucker, Thomas. A sketch of that initial scene is provided in Enclosure 1. An extensive search began and the Soldiers' bodies were found by B Company, 2-502 Infantry Battalion, on the 19 June at 1947 hours. See TAB D for more information on recovery of the missing Soldiers' remains.

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3. **Timeline:** Discrepancies exist in the time of the response ranging from 15-25 minutes (Book 1, TAB D). Ten minutes is not a huge discrepancy in time given multiple reports at different echelons. For example, when an event occurs at the platoon level, a report requires several transmissions for receipt up to the Brigade level. However, in this incident, ten minutes is a significant variance given the short period in which the events at the AVLB OP occurred. I used the timelines provided initially by B Company, 1-502 Infantry Battalion, the 2/101 Brigade Blue 1 report, and individual accounts of the events (Book 1, TAB F, SUBTAB 1) to determine what I think was the accurate timeline. Below are those key events and I have included a slide (Encl 2) for a visual clarification as well as a more detailed timeline. Even more detailed timelines of the search for the two missing Soldiers are provided in Book 3, TAB A.

Date:	Time:	Event:
16 June	1949	Both the JSB Outpost and TCP 4 heard an explosion and small arms fire coming from the AVLB OP.
16 June	1952	QRF1 from JSB Outpost leaves to respond to the attack. There is still no communications with the AVLB OP.
16 June	1957	QRF1 encounters possible IED. An NCO and three dismounts begin ground movement.
16 June	2005	The second QRF from TCP4 begins movement in a M113 to the AVLB OP.
16 June	2011	QRF2 stops about 200 Meters before the site of the AVLB OP and gives initial report to PL that he sees no one in the Gunners position in the M1114 at the AVLB OP. The Platoon Leader gives instruction to move on to the position. (Book 1, TAB F, SUBTAB 7)
16 June	2014	QRF2 finds one Soldier dead and two missing.
16 June	2015	Search for the two missing Soldiers begins.
19 June	1947	B/2-502 recovers the two Soldier's remains.

4. **Primary Responsible Cause:** The OP consisted of three Soldiers, one vehicle on an unprotected OP (Observation Post) for up to 36 hours, no immediate supporting fires from adjacent locations, a QRF (Quick Reaction Force) at least 15 min away, and no NCO leadership

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They were attacked by a motivated, coordinated insurgent force using possible indirect fires, SAF, and a fake IED. The AIF conducted a possible rehearsal on 14 Jun, consisting of at least one vehicle and several AIF personnel (Book 1, Tab S).

**5. Additional OP information:**

**a. Time on OP.** These Soldiers were given the OP mission for 24-36 hours at a time (Book 1, Tab F, SUBTAB 6). That far exceeds the 2-4 hour guidance of the FM 7-8 (Book 1, TAB P) for OPs. This is not a direct relationship comparison, but if the unit is calling it an OP, it needs to be somewhat in compliance with OP standards. To expect three Soldiers without NCO leadership in one vehicle to operate a functional OP for 24-36 hours is unrealistic.

**b. No NCO at OP.** The team leader, who would have normally been in the vehicle, was on a Freedom Rest pass. The Battalion Commander's guidance to have a minimum of four Soldiers and one NCO at TCP's was clear. However, that guidance was not clear to the Platoon Leader regarding OP Operations; the Platoon Leader thought the guidance referred exclusively to TCP operations. **Immediate Feedback:** Specific guidance was not provided down to the platoon level. I do not think the platoon understood the guidance as including OP's. Internal solutions existed within that platoon to have an NCO present at the OP.

**c. Force protection and position improvement.** The AVLB OP's force protection was minimal at best. The vehicle was sitting in front of a 2 1/2 foot barrier and was 12 meters off the road. There were no barriers on the road to slow access down or any type of early warning system. From the time a vehicle was seen, it would have been in front or beside the M1114 in a matter of seconds. It is the opinion of several individuals in the platoon that a request had been made to improve the position and it was not approved. The battalion and company leadership had driven over the AVLB and did not direct any position improvement or leverage resources to do so. **Immediate Feedback:** The road the M1114 was on runs back about 50 meters. Moving the OP back with some distance from the road would provide some visual warning and still permit good visibility on the bridge. A vehicle fighting position with protective wires and HESKO baskets should be employed. Also, placing several barriers on the road to limit quick access to the bridge would improve stand-off. The battalion should publish a SOP on OP's and TCP operations.

**d. Risk management.** The Battalion Commander provided very directive guidance in accordance with programs and policies on safety. However, neither the Company nor 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon conducts a Composite Risk Management analysis as part of the mission planning process. The Company and 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon have accepted this mission as "the way we have always done it." By doing so, they limited the manner in which they approached the mission, failed to critically look at their positions, and failed to make improvements to the "way it was always done." The Company commander admits in his statement that the company was complacent because they had been doing this mission for a few rotations (Book 1, Tab F, SUBTAB 9). **Immediate Feedback:** The Company takes a close look at its risk assessment process. At the Company level and below, a fancy power point slide show is not needed, but a document must be created...

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that leaders talk from and reference each day, down to the Team Leader level, in order to identify and acknowledge high risk areas, and identify and implement risk mitigation measures to reduce those risks.

**e. AVL B Mission.** The battalion, company, and platoon all identified the mission at the AVL B was to "Secure." The method by which that task can and should have been accomplished is in question. The FM 3-90 definition of secure is: "A tactical mission task that involves preventing a unit, facility, or geographical location from being damaged or destroyed as a result of enemy action." In the platoon's view, since the bridge had access under it that could not be observed unless the AVL B site itself was occupied, they were required to be there. In the view of the battalion, they had the option to conduct the "secure" mission by various methods such as from the JS Bridge, patrols, and even the top of the JSB Outpost. **Immediate feedback:** The battalion needs to take a good look at the task, purpose, and method of execution of the mission at the AVL B. Taking into account the mission to stop the insurgents' ability to emplace IEDs on the bridge as well as help secure a portion of Route Malibu and Caveman, the platoon's choice of OP locations was limited. Basically, the requirement to secure and deny the enemy the ability to emplace mines forced the OP to be very near the AVL B in lieu of a standoff position due to the access the insurgents would have using the canal going under the bridge.

**f. QRF support.** The platoon did not conduct the proper level of planning or rehearsals that would have clearly outlined the exact procedures and responsibilities in the event that the QRF was needed. FM 7-8 recommends that an OP be within small arms range of another position. If the platoon has to deviate from that standard, the time of 15 min to go 1.2 kilometers is unacceptable. **Immediate Feedback:** The unit must have a rehearsed plan that provides a QRF in an extremely timely manner once the OP is attacked.

**g. One vehicle at the AVL B.** One M1114 at the AVL B OP made the task of successfully deterring a coordinated attack extremely difficult. One vehicle cannot maintain functional 360 degree security at the AVL B OP's location. Even with Soldiers in the vehicle and one gunner observing, the gunner can only look in one direction and from inside the M1114, visibility is limited. The guidance was very clear from MNC-I down to the platoon on the minimum number of vehicles required to move. However, once inside the security area of a TCP mission and then moving to another subsequent location, it is not clear that movement would be unauthorized. **Immediate Feedback:** Establish a standard in the MND-B that absolutely any single vehicle off-FOB missions are strictly prohibited, moving or stationary.

#### 6. Additional Contributing Factors:

**a. Troop Leading Procedures.** No Operations Order (OPORD) was given from the company to the platoon. The lack of mission analysis conducted by the company regarding this mission required the platoon to conduct an internal decision making process with limited guidance and direction from the company level. The other step in the Troop Leading Procedures that was not to standard at the company and platoon level is that of Supervise. **Immediate Feedback:** The Company does not have the ability to conduct an elaborate Operations Order

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but the company must provide the basic information for platoons and give them a hard copy of some type for them to reference. A two page OPORD that covered some key items like mission, risk management, timelincs, convoy, key company and battalion standards, and rehearsals would have been a tremendous assistance to the platoon. Regarding supervision: Platoon leaders have limited experience in setting up a defense and many of the tasks being asked of those young officers require a level of knowledge that they do not possess. To mitigate that risk, company level commanders must be active on the ground and give out very direct and explicit guidance regarding mission accomplishment.

**b. Training plan.** From the time at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to the rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, Louisiana, there is a systemic theme that the crew certification on the M1114, maintenance of the M1114 and lack of training on TCP's and OP's was a problem. This Light Company has one M998 on their MTOE and the Platoon has no vehicles authorized. The platoon was transformed into a motorized formation. This change in MTOE and operations was foreign to them and required more than M998 usage during JRTC. The first experience the platoon had with M1114s was during the Relief in Place/Transfer of Authority (RIP/TOA) phase of their deployment. **Immediate Feedback Recommendation:** A training set of M1114 type vehicles is required at the training centers and training posts to rotate Soldiers through for certification prior to the RIP/TOA process.

**c. IA on JSB Bridge:** At a distance of between 1,100 and 1,300 meters, both the JSB outpost and TCP4 heard and saw shots and tracers in the vicinity of the AVL.B. I find it very improbable that the Iraqi Army (IA) on JS Bridge, at approximately 900 meters away, (in between the JSB Outpost and the AVL.B. see Encl 2) did not see the attack. I think the IA likely did hear and see the attack given their proximity to the AVL.B OP. I believe that they then choose to not become an active participant in the attack on either side. **Immediate Feedback:** Find out who is in charge of the IA forces on the JS Bridge and ensure that the IA on that bridge are active participants in area security. Make sure the IA has a method to get information to CF once the IA observes any suspicious activity.

**d. PCC/PCI's on the M1114 fleet.** In the M1114 that was attacked, B-14, the A/C was not Fully Mission Capable (FMC). The M1114 at TCP4 would not start. In one platoon convoy on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June, I observed a vehicle that had no communications, no seatbelt for the Truck Commander (TC), and the door behind the TC would not open from the outside. I saw two M1114s each filled with six personnel because the platoon had more personnel than the convoy could carry. The platoon needs to take a hard look at its standards and discipline and realize that with a motorized fleet, you are only as good as your ability to conduct proper sustained vehicle operations. **Immediate Feedback.** Conduct a maintenance stand-down and a convoy lane that certifies the movement and standards of the M1114's and crews in the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon.

**e. Platoon Readiness.** During this OIF rotation, First Platoon has lost its Platoon Leader (KIA), a Team Leader (KIA), a Squad Leader (KIA), and a total of seven Soldiers KIA. They have also had five other Soldiers WIA or suffer Non-Battlefield Injuries (NBI). In addition, platoon NCO leadership has thrice been shattered, and an investigation alleging murder and

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sexual assault on a local national family is on-going that implicates five members of the platoon. B Company has had 51 Soldiers (out of 134 total Soldiers authorized) KIA, WIA, suffer from NBI, or moved to another unit (Book 1, TAB L). The company lost all of their personal and Army equipment in a fire at PB Yusufiyah. The company is in an Area of Operations (AO) that is very active in events involving AIF forces. As a snap shot, from 25 May 06 to 24 June 06, B Company reported 102 Significant Actions (SIGACTS) (44 IEDs, 19 small arms attacks, 17 indirect fire attacks, and 22 other events) in their AO (REF TAB M). **Immediate Feedback:** Although the leaders in this platoon care and are staying in the fight, the platoon is frayed. Stand this platoon down IAW the recommendations in para 8 below.

#### 7. Findings:

a. There were not any malicious or specifically punishable offenses by the Chain of Command at any level. The Platoon did not violate an OP standard since it was never clearly outlined to them that the TCP standard is the same as the OP standard. I found no reference at any level that outlined the standards of stationary positions that are not either TCP or blocking positions. This was an event caused by numerous acts of complacency and a lack of standards at the Platoon level. The shortcoming of standards at the platoon level was compounded by Company Leadership that was not engaged in enforcing standards. The Battalion seemed to be an efficient organization that just needs to track specific guidance from the Battalion Commander more closely and track compliance with that guidance. They also need to conduct a detailed Task, Purpose and Method crosswalk of each mission they currently have being conducted. They should also have a forum where issues such as troop management and Engineer support is tracked and feedback given to subordinate units.

b. This Light Infantry organization has recently been transformed into a mounted formation. The company and platoon must be more deliberate in their mission planning. The Company and the platoon need to be much more aggressive in working to learn and understand mounted operations and tactics and the proper level of maintenance that their M1114 fleet requires.

c. I found no facts indicating any nexus between the attack on the AVLB OP and the alleged criminal acts (referred to above in para 6e) that are currently under investigation.

#### 8. Recommendations:

a. That First Platoon, B/1-502, is given a 10 day stand-down time period at the battalion headquarters where they have:

(1) Combat stress reduction time.

(2) Conduct maintenance service on the vehicle fleet.

(3) Conduct refresher training on: convoy operations, TCP's, OP's, risk mitigation, process, drivers training, and code of conduct training.

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(4) At the completion of the 10 day period, have the Battalion Commander develop a certification process to confirm the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon's ability to perform their combat mission.


b. That the Battalion Commander get a Letter of Concern from the BDE CDR on the need for an absolutely clear and concise flow of information down to the platoon level. The Battalion S-3 confirms that detailed guidance from the Battalion Commander, such as one NCO per vehicle and four personnel per vehicle, are in some kind of documented forum such as the Daily Tactical Update or the FRAGO process. The Battalion Commander is engaged and disseminating guidance in reference to risk management and operations. The Battalion just needs to make sure that key guidance is out to subordinate units so there can be no questions as to what is the standard. The Battalion must be very clear in the task, purpose, and end state of each mission they want accomplished.

c. That the Company Commander receive a Letter of Reprimand from the Division Commander to be filed locally for the following deficiencies: His lack of supervision at the platoon level, failure to be an active participant in developing solutions for issues, and not providing hands on guidance to the platoon. Also, the Company Commander failed to have or enforce a functional risk mitigation process at the company level or ensure his platoons were conducting risk mitigation. Finally, he failed to properly provide orders and disseminate guidance to his junior leaders to ensure they understand the mission and the standards.

d. That the First Platoon Leader receive a Letter of Reprimand from the Division Commander to be filed locally for the following deficiencies: His inability to take a critical look at his mission and develop internal ways to solve problems when he had the resources to do so. He failed to conduct any type of risk analysis or risk reduction. Finally, he failed to correct obvious mistakes at the platoon level, or enforce those minimum standards that are required to ensure efficient operations at the platoon level. I recommend this officer is not relieved. He seems to have a good mentality and just needs to be refocused on some basics.

e. That MND-B direct that single vehicle missions off FOB are absolutely prohibited.

9. POC for this memorandum is the undersigned at SIPR E-MAIL:

  
LTC, FA  
Regimental Commanding Officer

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