

PERSONS PRESENT

MAJOR GENERAL KENNETH R. DAHL, INVESTIGATING OFFICER, [I/O];

MR. EUGENE FIDELL, CIVILIAN DEFENSE COUNSEL [CDC];

CAPTAIN ALFREDO FOSTER, DEFENSE COUNSEL [DC];

SERGEANT BOWE BERGDahl, SUBJECT [SBJ];

STAFF SERGEANT BRITTANY RAMSEY, COURT REPORTER [CR].

I/O: Sergeant Bergdahl, what I'm going to do is--I'm going to let you hold on to that [right's waiver form] and I'm going to walk through this with you and, Gene, if you want to follow along that is great as well.

CDC: Yes, that's great.

I/O: Sergeant Bergdahl, obviously I'm reading you your rights warning certificate because I am the investigating officer conducting an Army Regulation 15-6 Investigation. You are the subject of that investigation. Your suspected offenses are absent without leave and desertion. You will also see on the form fraudulent enlistment.

In my appointment orders, which I think you saw also, it asked me to examine circumstances of your short enlistment in the Coast Guard, discharge from the Coast Guard, subsequent enlistment in the Army, and the appropriateness of that. So, frankly, in the abundance of caution, we added that one in there as well.

CDC: Right.

E0003

G-APPELLATE EXHIBIT

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1 Questions by the investigating officer:

2 Q. Tell me as much as you need to tell me about before you  
3 joined the Army that informs, you know, the story.

4 A. Just a very brief touch upon the way I was raised. I was  
5 home schooled so I didn't--I wasn't raised in a very social  
6 environment and my parents raised me in a very strict, very religious  
7 setting. Obviously the Christian religion is a very ethical, moral  
8 religion. My father, despite the fact that he was never in the  
9 military, he was very--his mindset was very military. He raised me  
10 knowing how to shoot weapons. I have probably been doing that since  
11 I was two to three years old. So that has--the weapons and the very  
12 strict and very ethical environment that I was raised in was the most  
13 prominent theme throughout my life. However, it wasn't the best  
14 house to be in.

15 So, what happened was--you mentioned the Coast Guard, yes.  
16 Prior to the Coast Guard I had joined--I went to France to join the  
17 French Foreign Legion. The reason for the French Foreign Legion  
18 was--I'll be honest, it was an adventurous sounding idea. I have  
19 always wanted to travel and I have always wanted to learn languages.  
20 And I have always had that interest of expanding my experience and  
21 understanding of the world. Unfortunately, I went all the way to  
22 Paris. I went to the fort and I tried to check-in. They did a  
physical on me and they told me because of my eyes they wouldn't take

1 me, which was honestly, kind of, a little bit of relief because by  
2 the time I got over there it was way overwhelming. I was there. I  
3 didn't speak any French or anything like that. I was relieved.  
4 Honestly, I was relieved.

5 Q. You gave it a try but--yes.

6 A. Yes, I gave it a try.

7 Q. You get credit for giving it a try. Sergeant Bergdahl, was  
8 this before or after the Coast Guard?

9 A. It should have been before, 2005. Forgive me if I'm--dates  
10 and times have always been a weak point.

11 Q. So it was 2005, before the Coast Guard.

12 A. I went back home. And I have always enjoyed the idea of  
13 traveling, so I did a little traveling. I have always wanted to make  
14 a difference. I am not the type of person that is going to get a job  
15 because it has a good paycheck. I'm not the type of person that is  
16 going to get a job because it looks prestigious. I want a job where  
17 I can see my effort and see that I am making a difference. So  
18 wandering around, yes, that is a lot of fun but the reason why I was  
19 wandering around was because I was looking for what I was going to  
20 do. Because of my education I didn't exactly have the same amount of  
21 options that everyone else knew about. I was very ignorant in that  
22 sense. [The information I lacked,] it was what the world offered,  
23 and how to get it, and how to start in that direction. Growing up the

1 away. This TCP [COP Mest] was 10 to 20 miles away from the FOB  
2 [Sharana]. It was flat ground. I grew up on high altitudes. So,  
3 high altitude doesn't affect me. I can run at high altitude. I can  
4 cover ground. You know, I had the PT down. I was going to go  
5 Special Forces. So, I had the physical ability. So, I was looking  
6 at the environment. Flat ground all the way to the FOB. The idea  
7 was simple. The security at the TCP was crap. There was weak points  
8 everywhere. And nighttime was just, you know, I have been on guard  
9 shift at that place. Your visibility is like next to nothing on a  
10 good day. The whole setup to that thing was just--it was a joke.

11 So, the theory was, what happens if somebody leaves the  
12 wire at the TCP, runs or moves to the FOB? Well, during that time  
13 DUSTWUN is going to be called up. Something is going to happen,  
14 right? That guy disappears. No one knows what happened to him.  
15 That call goes out. It hits every command. Everybody goes, what has  
16 happened? Nobody knows what has happened. People come up with all  
17 their theories and people happily use their imaginations to fill in  
18 all the blanks. But, what is going to happen--what, you know, what  
19 is going to lead the situation is actual events. The actual events  
20 would be, a Soldier disappears. And then a couple of days later,  
21 actual events. DUSTWUN gets called up. An alert gets sent out.  
22 Actual event a couple of days later, or a day later, whatever it is,  
23 24 hours or more, however long it would take me, the Soldier shows up

1 was built on. Special Forces took those guys that were capable of  
2 doing that and they condensed them into a unit, into a team, into a  
3 body so that they could do what they were doing more efficiently.  
4 You know, instead of leaving them in their units, and leaving them to  
5 basically be engulfed by the regular Joe, the regular people that  
6 were there, you were taking that talent, you were taking that ability  
7 you were condensing it and utilizing it for what it was. That was  
8 what Special Forces was built from. And that was their mission.  
9 That is why it is called Special Forces.

10 So, stupid actions, yes. Stupid young man who wanted--I  
11 had always been a failure. The Army was--I knew the Army. I knew  
12 weapons. I knew Soldiers. I knew how to do that. This was my  
13 chance to prove I wasn't just a failure. I wanted to go Special  
14 Forces. I didn't want to show up at the Q-course with some bullshit  
15 Article 15 and say, "Well, I am here, just like all the other guys  
16 that want to be super cool Soldiers." I wanted to show up at the Q-  
17 course saying, "I deserve to be here because I have proven myself  
18 already that I am capable of doing not what Special Forces does now,  
19 but what the real founders, the real guys back in the day did then."  
20 Those guys had no support. They had no maps. They had no  
21 technology. Alls they had was their common sense and their own  
22 skills.

1 Q. Right.

2 A. And I was a little annoyed about the fact that once I got  
3 to my unit and I saw how things were going and I saw how NTC was  
4 going, I was like, good grief, I'm going to have to do a deployment  
5 before I go to the Q-course, and then when I was on Rear D, I was  
6 hearing about all this stuff that was going on and it was like, I'm  
7 going to waste my time doing a year deployment dealing with all this  
8 bullshit when I wanted to go--at that point it was like, I should  
9 just go straight to Special Forces because that's what I want and I  
10 know that's where I should be. Because it cuts out all this  
11 stupidity. So it was like, okay, so I'm going to go waste my time in  
12 this deployment instead of going directly to the Q-course because I  
13 couldn't go to the Q-course because they wouldn't let me go to the Q-  
14 course because they were already short manned. They don't have  
15 enough men to fill in all the positions. So it was like, okay, I  
16 need a commander's, you know, sign off to allow me to go to the Q-  
17 course. And I also needed to have a Specialist rank to go to the Q-  
18 course. So I was annoyed about that. But everybody knew I wanted to  
19 go Special Forces. So the conversation, if I can remember it  
20 correctly, the conversation was in the direction of he was asking me  
21 like what I was going to do. And I wanted to know what he was  
22 thinking because of his glamorized idea of going over to a combat  
23 zone. So I was asking him questions. And the question was--the