



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
US Army Criminal Investigation Command  
Bagram CID Office  
Bagram CID Office Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan  
APO, Armed Forces Africa, Canada, Europe & Middle East, 09354-

WC370A

2015/05/06

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Law Enforcement Report - SIR (Category 1)/1ST Final Supplemental -  
00152-2009-CID369-065293-5K2

1. Offense: Kidnapping (Foreign) (Founded)
2. Dates/Times/Locations of Occurrences: 0800, 02 Jul 09 - 1900, 30 May 14; Unknown Location, Yousaf Khel District, Afghanistan
3. Date/Time Reported: 0800, 02 Jul 09
4. Investigated By: (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)
5. Subjects/Suspects: [CHANGE] UNKNOWN, 2130309-0152-2009-CID369-I; [Kidnapping (Founded)]
6. Victims: [CHANGE] BERGDAHL, Bowe Robert: PFC: XXX-XX (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) Male; White (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) [Kidnapping (Founded)] (NFI)

7. Report Summary:

This is an Operation Enduring Freedom investigation:

This office obtained an open media source, which alleged an unidentified U.S. Service Member, later identified as BERGDAHL, was captured and detained by enemy forces about 2 Jul 09, in the Paktida Province, Afghanistan.

Investigation established probable cause to believe unknown person(s) captured PFC

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BERGDAHL near (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) BERGDAHL is currently being  
detained at an unknown location.

On 1 May 11, coordination was made with (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) was informed and agreed to contact the CID Afghanistan Battalion  
Operations Cell or the Bagram CID Office and was further provided with the e-mail  
address for the USACIDC Operations Cell to obtain investigative support in the event  
BERGDAHL was recovered.

Further investigation revealed BERGDAHL was captured by unknown forces and  
subsequently released.

EXHIBITS/SUBSTANTIATION:

ADDED ATTACHED:

14. Agent's Investigative Report (AIR) of (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) 23 Jul 14.

15. Rolling Stone Article (America's Last Prisoner of War), 7 Jun 12.

16. AIR of (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) 28 Jul 14.

17. AIR of (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) 5 May 15.

ADDED NOT ATTACHED:

None.

The copies of originals retained at the CRC become the original exhibits of record when  
the final disposition of the originals retained by this office occurs IAW AR 254002.

STATUS: This is a 1st Final Supplemental Report. No further investigative activity is  
anticipated at this time. Commander's Report of Disciplinary or Administrative Action  
(DA Form 4833) is pending.

CID Reports of Investigation may be subject to a quality assurance review by CID

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higher headquarters.

8. Unique Circumstances:

Subject Position: N/A

Victim Position: N/A

Relationship: N/A

9. Media Interest: International

Commanders are reminded of the provisions of AR 600-8-2 pertaining to suspension of favorable personnel actions and AR 380-67 for the suspension of security clearances of persons under investigation. Army Law Enforcement reports are exempt from automatic termination of protective markings in accordance with Chapter 3, AR 25-55. In accordance with AR 340-21, AR190-45, and DOD 5400.7-R, information contained in this report is law enforcement sensitive, confidential and private in nature, and any further distribution (forwarding to unauthorized personnel) without the authorization of the Provost Marshal General will be in violation of the UCMJ and USC.

Report Prepared By

Report Approved By

(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

Signature Authority

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DISTRIBUTION:

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10TH MP BN (CID), FSO/AOPS, BAF 10TH MP BN (CID), FSO/AOPS, BAF  
3rd MP GRP (CID), CDR, HUNTER AAF GA CDR, 3d MP Group, ATTN: OPS, Hunter  
AAF, GA 31409

(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

G3, HQ, USACIDC, Quantico, VA G3, HQ, USACIDC, Quantico, VA  
PMO, BAF PMO, BAF  
USFOR-A, PM USFOR-A, PM  
USFOR-A, SJA USFOR-A, SJA  
CDR, 1/501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, Fort Ric

CASE HISTORY:

00152-2009-CID369

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
U.S. ARMY CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION COMMAND  
Bagram CID Office  
Bagram Airfield, APO, AE 09354-\_\_\_\_

03 May 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: CID REPORT OF INVESTIGATION - FINAL/SSI - 0152-2009-CID369-65293 -  
5K2 / 5K1 / ~~5K4~~ 9P

DATES/TIMES/LOCATIONS OF OCCURENCES:

1. 02 JUL 2009, 0800 - 03 MAY 2011, 1530; YOUSAF KHEL DISTRICT,  
AFGHANISTAN

DATE/TIME REPORTED: 02 JUL 2009, 0800

INVESTIGATED BY:

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(7)(E)

SUBJECT:

1. UNKNOWN-2130309-0152-2009-CID369-I ; [KIDNAPPING] (NFI)

VICTIM:

1. BERGDAHL, BOWE ROBERT; PFC; (XXX) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (POB); MALE;

WHITE; (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

[KIDNAPPING]

INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY:

This is an Operation Enduring Freedom Investigation.

This office obtained an open media source which alleged an unidentified U.S. Service member, later identified as SPC BERGDAHL, was captured and detained by enemy forces about 2 Jul 09 in the Paktida Province, Afghanistan.

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Investigation established probable cause to believe unknown person(s) captured SPC BERGDAHL near (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) SPC BERGDAHL is currently being detained at an unknown location.

On 1 May 11, coordination was made with (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)  
(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)  
was informed and agreed to contact the CID Afghanistan Battalion Operations Cell or the Bagram CID Office and was further provided with the e-mail address for USACIDC Operations Cell to obtain investigative support in the event SPC BERGDAHL was recovered.

**STATUTES:**

Article 134; UCMJ: Kidnapping

**EXHIBITS:**

**ATTACHED:**

1. Agent's Investigation Report (AIR) of (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) 28 Jul 09.
2. Enlisted Record Brief of SPC BERGDAHL.
3. Record of Emergency Data of SPC BERGDAHL.
4. Propaganda video of SPC BERGDAHL, 14 Jul 09. (USACRC and file copies only)
5. Photograph Packet of COP Mest, Afghanistan.
6. CD containing original images associated with Exhibit 5 (USACRC and file copies only)
7. Hand drawn sketch by (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) regarding security position on East side of COP Mest, 28 Jul 09.
8. AIR of (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) 2 Aug 09.
9. AIR of (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) 10 Jul 09.
10. Medical records of SPC BERGDAHL.
11. AIR of (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) 8 Dec 10.
12. News article from Associated Press "Video thought to show American held in Afghanistan.

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13. AIR of (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) 9 Apr 11.

NOT ATTACHED:

None.

The originals of Exhibits 1, 5-9, 11 and 13 are attached to the USACRC copy of this report. The originals of Exhibits 2 and 3 are retained in the files of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division (ABN), Fort Richardson, AK 99505. The original of Exhibits 4 and 12 are retained in the files of the Associated Press. The original of Exhibit 10 is retained in the files of Troop Medical Clinic, Fort Richardson, AK 99505.

STATUS: This is a Final (C) Report. Commander's Report of Disciplinary or Administrative Action (DA Form 4833) is not required.

CID reports of investigation may be subject to a Quality Assurance Review by CID higher headquarters.

Report Prepared By:

Report Approved By:

(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

**DISTRIBUTION:**

Dir, USACRC, Ft Belvoir, VA

1 - Commander, 10th MP Battalion (CID), ATTN: BN OPS, Bagram Airfield, APO AE 09354

(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

1 - Commander, 3D MP Group (CID), (ATTN: OPS), Fort Gillem, GA (e-mail only)

(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

FILE

AGENT'S INVESTIGATION REPORT

ROI NUMBER

0152-09-CID369-65293

CID Regulation 195-1

PAGE 1 OF 5 PAGES

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION: About 0800, 2 Jul 09, this office obtained an open media source which alleged an unidentified US Service member was captured and detained by enemy forces about 2 Jul 09 in the Paktika Province.

AGENT'S COMMENT: A review of the RDF 0075-09-CID369 revealed this office was notified by TF Yukon, PMO, that PFC Bowe P. BERGDAHL, (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C)

(b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) was AWOL on 30 Jun 09.

About 0955, 3 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) coordinated with (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) who stated numerous contacts with village elders and other sources reported a request was issued for an exchange for U.S. Soldier, believed to be PFC BERGDAHL, for 15 unnamed Taliban personnel. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) stated it was unclear why he departed from (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

It was believed the Soldier departed (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) with some local nationals, but was uncertain if he left of his own accord, coerced or lured from (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3). It was not believed he was kidnapped. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) stated the Soldier ended up in Anti-Afghanistan Forces (AAF) control, but it was unknown if that meant the Taliban. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) stated (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) an offer for the prisoner exchange was made to U.S. Forces. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) stated he believed the prisoners the AAF was requesting were located at the (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) but he was unsure. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) stated PFC BERGDAHL's next of kin (NOK) were notified of the incident. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) stated unit personnel inventoried PFC BERGDAHL's

belongings and discovered he did not take any protective equipment to include his (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) However it appeared he took a journal, some knives, compass, water and an MRE. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) stated he did not know how the unit personnel determined what PFC BERGDAHL had taken. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) was identified (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) which was organic to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (ABN), Fort Richardson, AK 95505. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) stated all directives were being provided from (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) and higher. A mandatory 15-6 was to be conducted, but will be started at a later date since the incident is still in its infancy stage.

Agent Comment: (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) is located near (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

TYPED AGENT'S NAME AND SEQUENCE NUMBER

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(7)(E)

ORGANIZATION

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

Signature

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

Date: 28 Jul 09

Exhibit:

CID Form

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AGENT'S INVESTIGATION REPORT

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About 1145, 3 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) obtained an information report, with exhibits, from PFC BERGDALH's unit, detailing all search efforts and captured correspondence from PFC BERGDAHL's captors. The report and exhibits were classified secret.

About 1300, 23 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) downloaded and copied to a disc the AAF distributed video interview of PFC BERGDAHL. The interview supposedly took place on 14 Jul 09. Video depicted PFC BERGDAHL in an unknown location and interviewed in the English language by an unknown individual. PFC BERGDAHL had a shaven head, thin build, light skin, beard and mustache. PFC BERGDAHL wore a light blue in color, long sleeve, button up shirt and matching trousers. No injuries were observed. Approximate duration of video was 28 min 30 sec.

About 0930, 28 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) exposed numerous photographs and video which documented (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) and the surrounding area.

About 1000, 28 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) conducted canvass interviews of PFC BERGDAHL's unit; (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) all of B CO, 1-501<sup>st</sup> PIR, Fort Richardson, AK.

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) stated he was PFC BERGDAHL's (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) stated PFC BERGDAHL was a good soldier and eager to learn every aspect of being an infantryman. PFC BERGDAHL would complain about the unit's current mode of operation which was to observe and report. PFC BERGDAHL felt (as an infantry unit) they should be out looking for and engaging the enemy. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) explained, around the unit members, PFC BERGDAHL generally kept to himself; however, often socialized with the Afghanistan National Police (ANP) at (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) PFC BERGDAHL would eat and drink tea with them often. PFC BERGDAHL's hobbies and interests were martial arts and meditation. PFC BERGDAHL did not drink, smoke or have any overt vices. PFC BERGDAHL appeared to practice the Zen religion. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) stated PFC BERGDAHL mailed his laptop to (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) stateside, just before he disappeared and had withdrawn an unspecified amount of money.

About 1000, 28 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) interviewed (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) who provided a verbal statement wherein he related PFC BERGDAHL was originally supposed to come to his squad but was put in a different squad that needed additional Soldiers. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL seemed a little different relating he was more of a loner. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL was a good Soldier, he was always on time for work, his uniform was always squared away and

TYPED AGENT'S NAME AND SEQUENCE NUMBER

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(7)(E)

ORGANIZATION

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

Signature

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

Date: 28 Jul 09

Exhibit:

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AGENT'S INVESTIGATION REPORT

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he conducted PT on his own and without being told to do so. He further related he found it strange that PFC BERGDAHL slept on the floor and when he asked him why he didn't sleep in his bed PFC BERGDAHL related it was better for his back. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related once it was discovered PFC BERGDAHL was missing they searched everywhere for him and conducted dismounted patrols. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related they went in (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) and spoke to (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) who reported he saw a Soldier around 0602 that same morning heading east, sneaking through the woods. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related when he asked the child how he was certain of the time and the child showed him a watch and stated he looked at it after seeing the Soldier. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related he believed PFC BERGDAHL had maneuvered between the Observation Post (OP) and down beside the school so he would not be seen by the ANP. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related he does not believe the ANP saw PFC BERGDAHL because they will shoot anything that moves at night. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL left his assigned weapon which had since been reassigned to another Soldier. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL's personal items were inventoried and contained mostly military items (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related it was the consensus of the group that PFC BERGDAHL took his journal, a compass, camera, and water. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL's sleeping area was a one man tent and could have left without disturbing anyone. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) provided a sketch depicting the security positions on the east side of (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

About 1030, 28 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) interviewed (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) who provided a verbal statement wherein he related he (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) PFC BERGDAHL and had known him since Nov 08. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL was very quiet, a little different, and kept to himself. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL read a lot and was very squared away. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related he thought PFC BERGDAHL would do his time in the Army and then join the FBI or CIA. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL did not have interest in girls or family and related he was not close with his family although (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL was not specific on why he wasn't close to his family. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related he knew PFC BERGDAHL had a friend on MySpace but he didn't know the friends name or the extent of the friendship.

About 1100, 28 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) interviewed (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) who provided a verbal statement wherein he related PFC BERGDAHL didn't have his computer at (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3). He observed PFC BERGDAHL's compass was deliberately taken off its lanyard and 5 bottles of water, along with PFC BERGDAHL's belt knife were missing. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL had always been a gunner and never conducted dismounted patrol. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) recalled a conversation where PFC BERGDAHL related he didn't have tattoos because they made it easy

TYPED AGENT'S NAME AND SEQUENCE NUMBER

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(7)(E)

ORGANIZATION

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

Signature:

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

Date: 28 Jul 09

Exhibit:

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to be identified. The night before PFC BERGDAHL disappeared; he asked (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) what would happen if (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) 9mm disappeared. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related to PFC BERGDAHL, he probably would be in big trouble. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) believed PFC BERGDAHL considered taking (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) weapon, but did not know for certain. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) got off shift at 0400 the morning PFC BERGDAHL was discovered missing and awakened around 0810 and advised PFC BERGDAHL was missing. A dismounted patrol was assembled and executed a search in all ditches and a school. They were approached by a boy who reported he saw an American in the weeds at 0603. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related they conducted a mounted patrol to the east for about 9 hours. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related he was not certain what all PFC BERGDAHL kept in his journal but knew PFC BERGDAHL wrote poems and kept notes from Pashtu phrases he was learning from the ANP. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) recalled PFC BERGDAHL kept his gear on the outside of the tent and slept inside.

About 1130, 28 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) interviewed (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) who provided a verbal statement wherein he related he didn't know PFC BERGDAHL well; however, believed PFC BERGDAHL was friends with (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL was a pretty smart guy that read a lot. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL volunteered for ruck marches and things of that nature. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) explained PFC BERGDAHL was disgruntled with ISAF rules and felt the rules in place made them reactive instead of proactive.

AGENT'S COMMENT: (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) and was evacuated from Afghanistan (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

About 1200, 28 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) interviewed (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) who provided a verbal statement wherein he related he didn't know PFC BERGDAHL all that well but related he recalled he didn't drink or smoke, he meditated and believed he was a Buddhist.

About 1215, 28 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) interviewed (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) who provided a verbal statement wherein he related he recalled PFC BERGDAHL initially stayed behind in Fort Richardson, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) and joined the company in Afghanistan later. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL was mentally and physically tough. He would carry mortar cans two at a time up a big hill. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL was not a talkative person, but remembered after they had finished a .50 caliber class, PFC BERGDAHL expressed he was bored.

TYPED AGENT'S NAME AND SEQUENCE NUMBER

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(7)(E)

ORGANIZATION

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

Signature

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

Date: 28 Jul 09

Exhibit:

CID F

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AGENT'S INVESTIGATION REPORT

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About 1230, 28 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) interviewed (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) who provided a verbal statement wherein he related PFC BERGDAHL was sleeping near him in the same type tent but didn't hear PFC BERGDAHL leave. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related he woke up when he heard the guards looking for PFC BERGDAHL. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related he really didn't know PFC BERGDAHL that well and didn't have anything further to add.

About 1245, 28 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) interviewed (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) who provided a verbal statement wherein he related he was at (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) and sleeping when PFC BERGDAHL disappeared. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL had made friends with the ANP. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related BERGDAHL was frustrated and felt they as Soldier's were not doing enough in Afghanistan. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) related PFC BERGDAHL must have taken a route behind the OP to avoid being seen.

About 1245, 28 Jul 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) interviewed the following members of (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) who did not provide any information pertinent to this investigation:

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

The following members of (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) were not present on (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) when PFC BERGDAHL disappeared and had little to no first hand information regarding his disappearance:

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) ///Last Entry///

TYPED AGENT'S NAME AND SEQUENCE NUMBER

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(7)(E)

ORGANIZATION

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

Signature:

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

Date: 28 Jul 09

Exhibit:

CID Form 9

1 FEB 77

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Exhibit(s) 2 thru 4

Page(s) 000013 thru 000016 withheld:

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pages.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC PACKET INDEX

COP Mest, Afghanistan

0152-09-CID369- 65293

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPH</u>
1	DSC_0005 Establishing photograph of East entrance and PFC BERGDAHLS sleep area.
2	DSC_0007 Establishing photograph of inner perimeter
3	DSC_0012 Establishing photograph of ANP OPs and American OP
4	DSC_0020 Establishing photograph of access path to OPs
5	DSC_0021 Establishing photograph of break in concertina wire
6	DSC_0029 Establishing photograph of North entrance
7	DSC_0042 Establishing photograph of East entrance from American OP
8	DSC_0043 Establishing photograph of inner perimeter from American OP
9	DSC_0044 Establishing photograph of North entrance from American OP
10	DSC_0046 Establishing photograph of North ANP OP
11	DSC_0082 Establishing photograph of North road leading west
12	DSC_0085 Establishing photograph of North road leading east

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EXHIBIT: 5

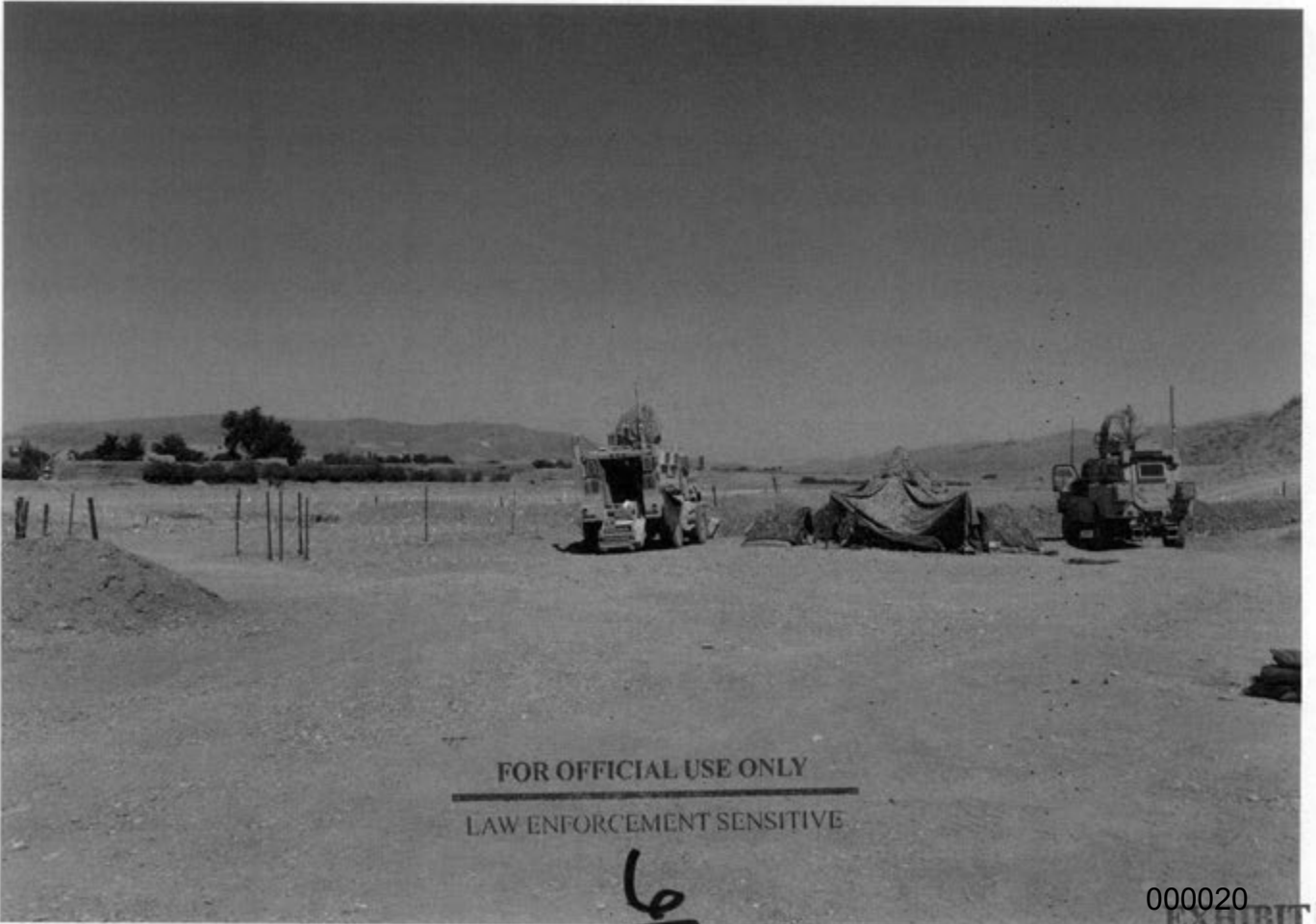
0152 09 - CID 369 65293



000018

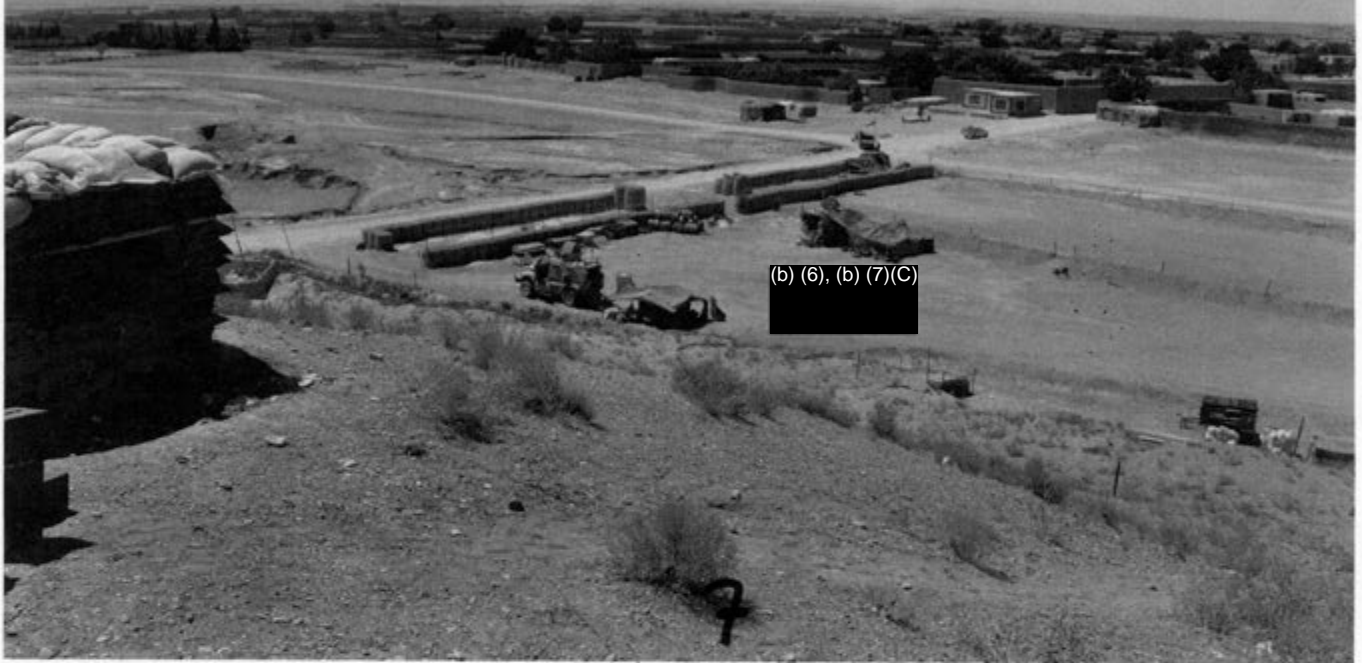
EXHIBIT 5



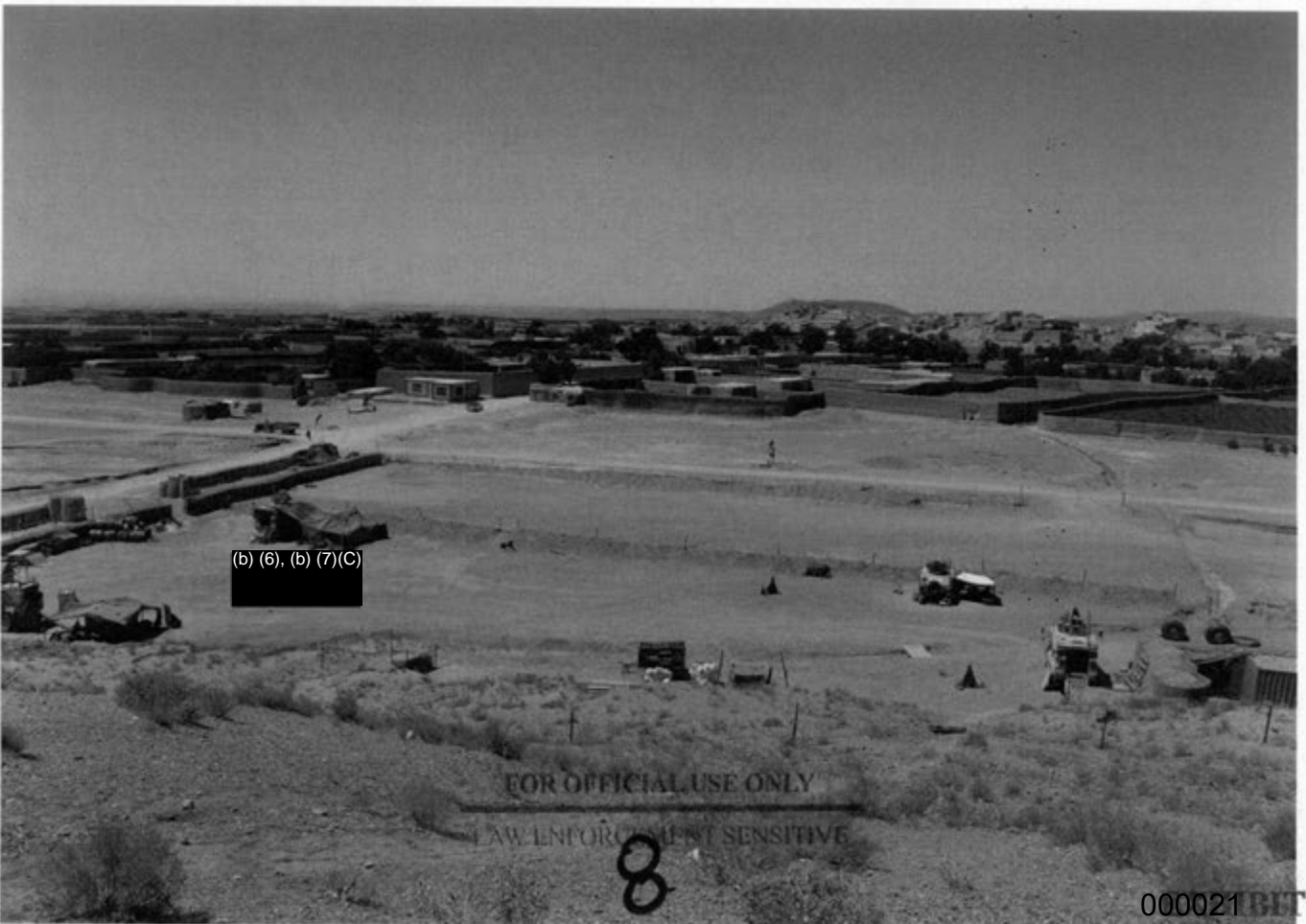




0152 09 - C10 369 65293



(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)



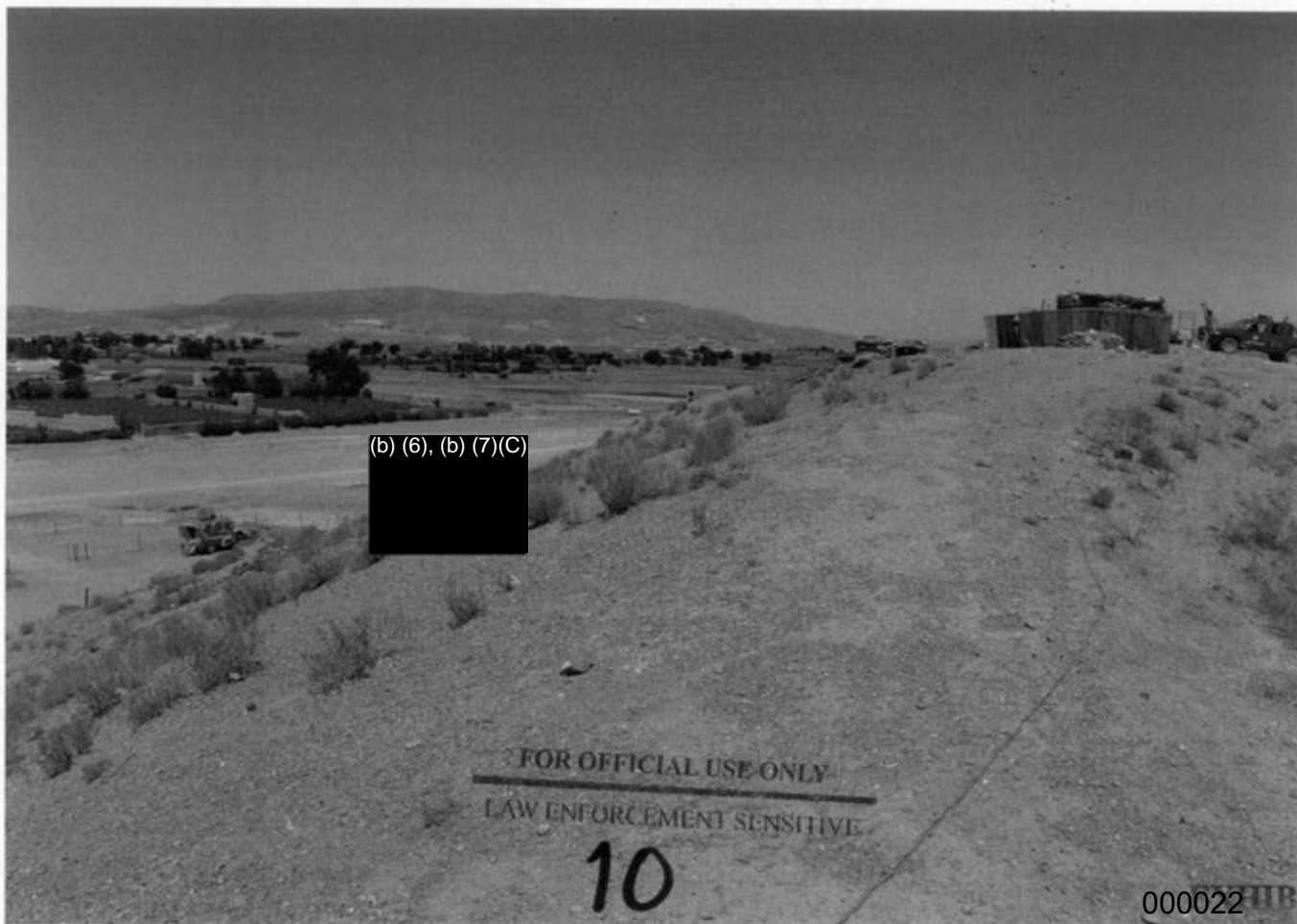
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

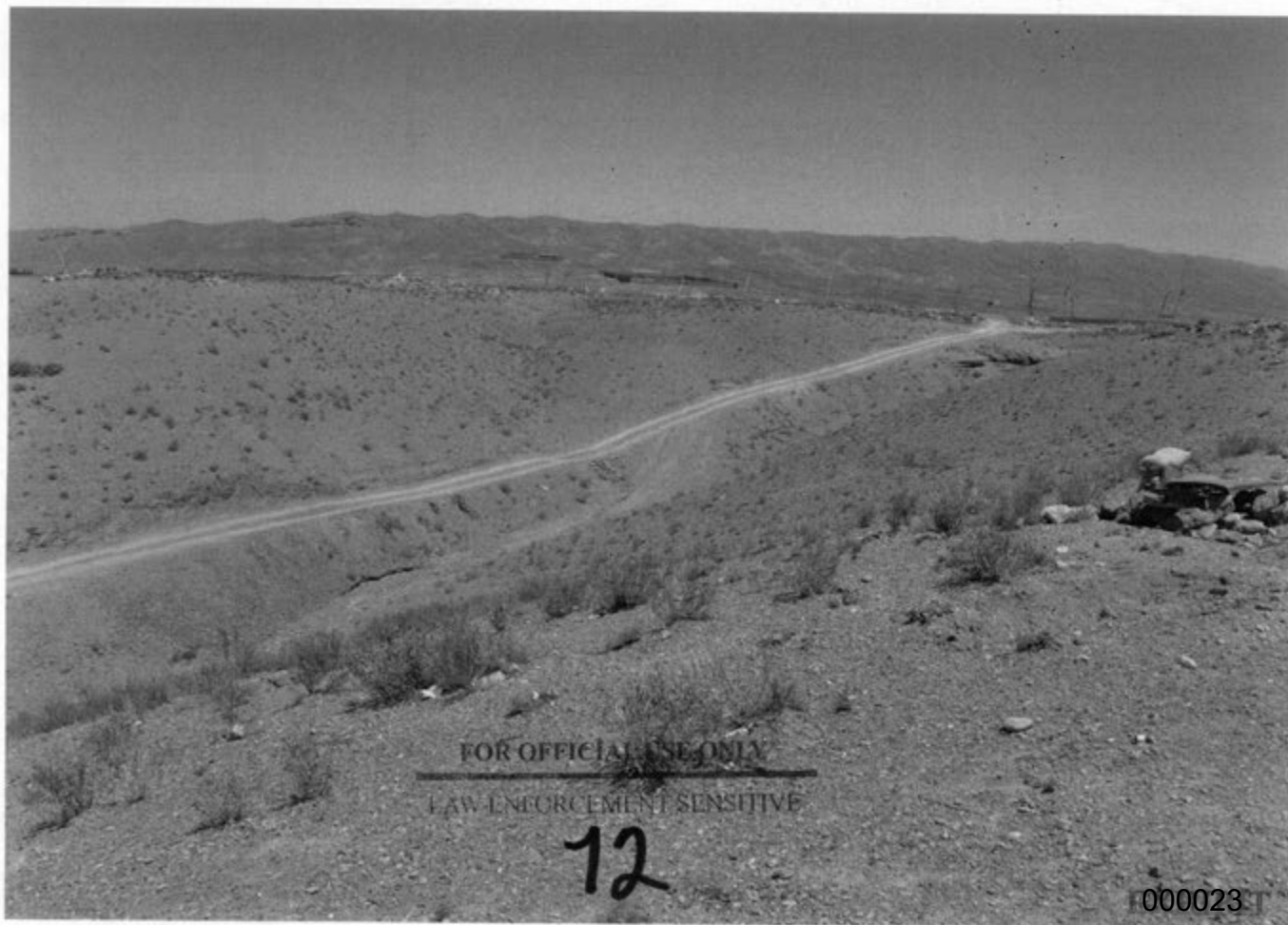
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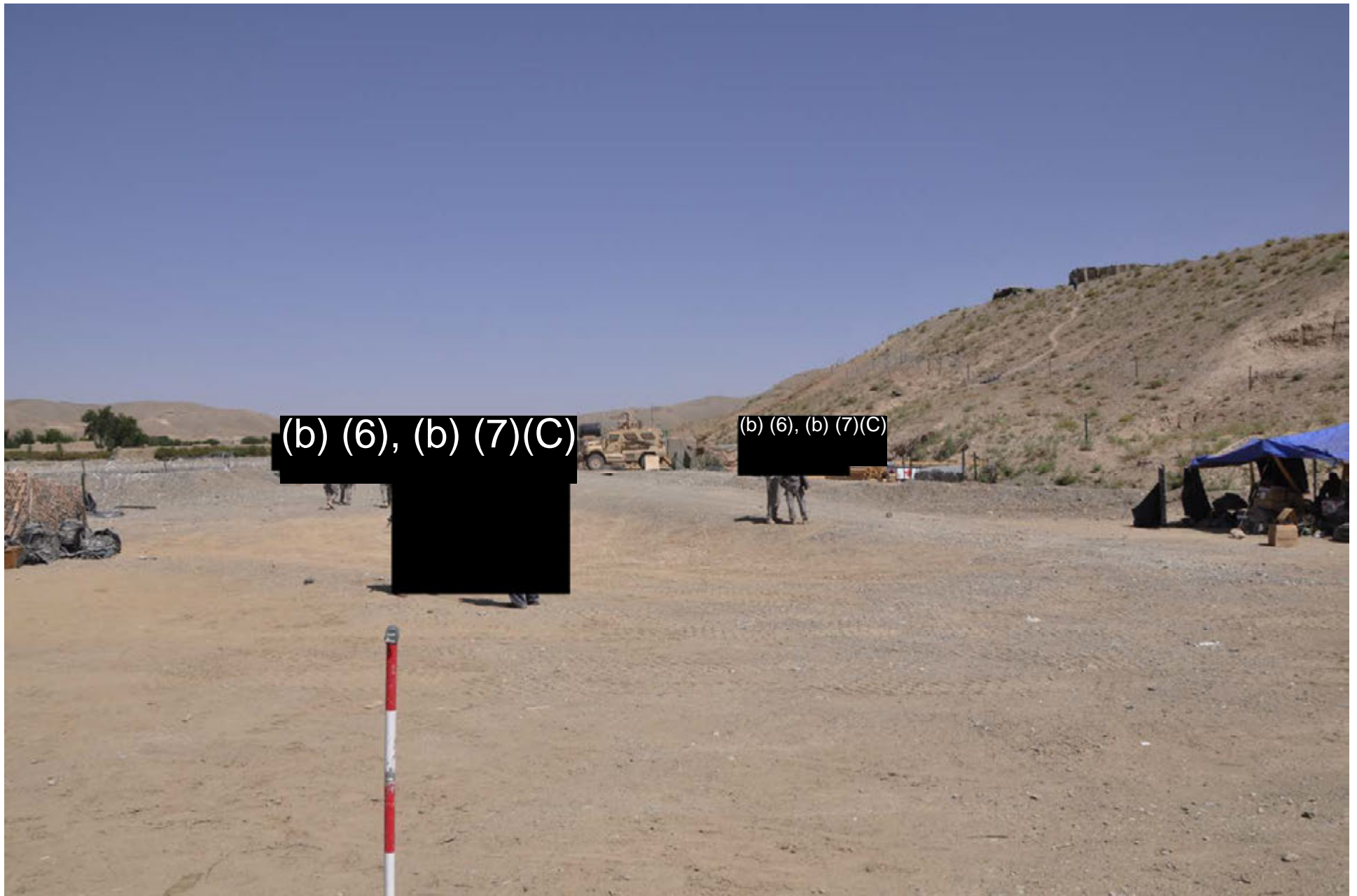














(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)











































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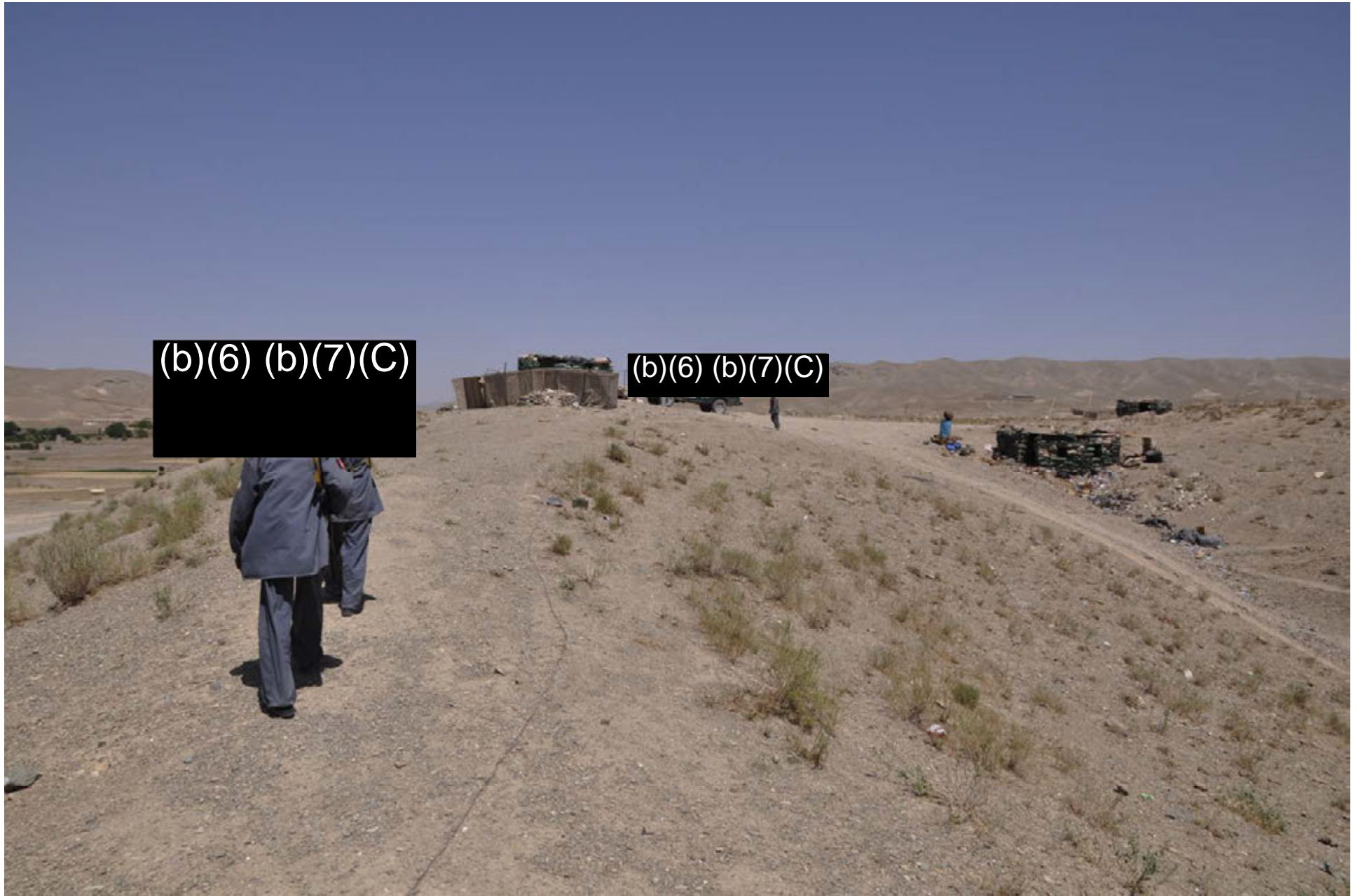






(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)











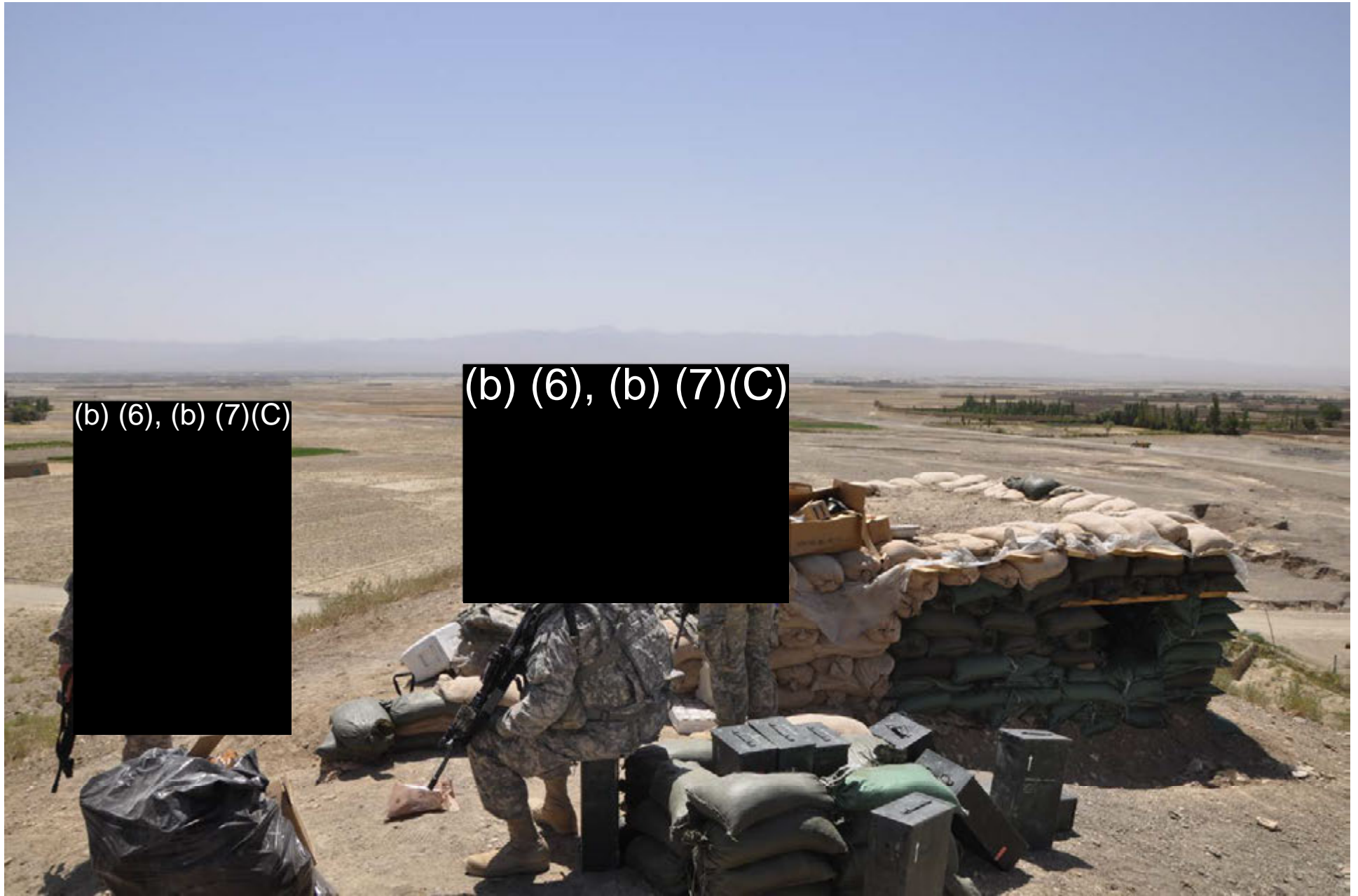




























































(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

























































































































































































































































































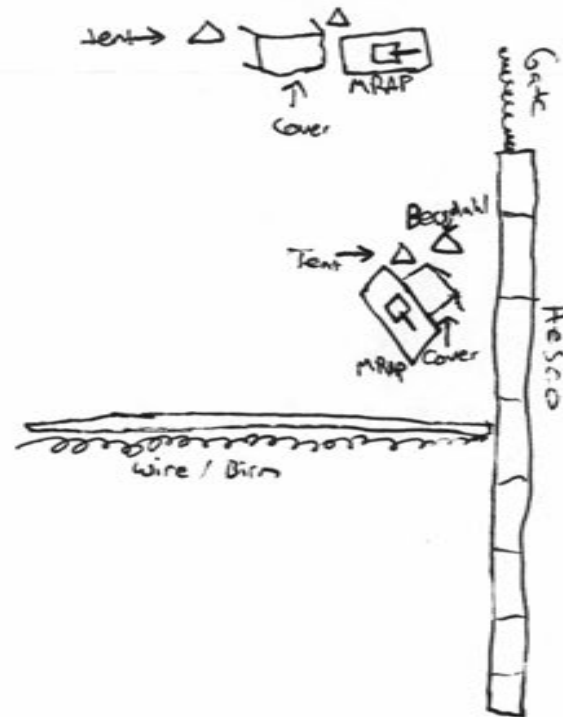




sketched by: (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

28 July 09

Security positions on  
EAST side of OP-  
MEST



Witnessed by:

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

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EXHIBIT: 7

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0152-09-CID369-65293



AGENT'S INVESTIGATION REPORT

ROI NUMBER

0152-09-CID369-65293

CID Regulation 195-1

PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGE

About 1400, 2 Aug 09, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) received final information report 0080-09-CID009 from the Fort Richardson CID Office. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) SPC Bowe P. BERGDAHL, B CO,

1-501<sup>st</sup>, PIR, Fort Richardson, AK. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) SPC BERGDAHL (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

//Last Entry//

TYPER AGENT'S NAME AND SEQUENCE NUMBER

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(7)(E)

ORGANIZATION

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

Signature:

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

Date: 2 Aug 09

Exhibit: 8

CID Form 94

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0152 09 10369 65293

## AGENT'S INVESTIGATION REPORT

CID Regulation 195-1

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ROI NUMBER:

0080-09-CID009-

0128-09-CID369-65293

PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES

## DETAILS

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION: About 0900, 6 Jul 09, this office received Request for Assistance from the Afghanistan CID Office, APO AE 09354, requesting this office determine if PFC Bowe P. BERGDAHL, XXX-XX (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) B Company, 1/501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, Fort Richardson, AK 99505, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

About 0920, 6 Jul 09, SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) coordinated with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and requested (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

PFC BERGDAHL. Mrs. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated she would conducted a check of their records to determine if PFC BERGDAHL was seen by her office and if he was she would provide a copy of all records.

About 0930, 6 Jul 09, SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) coordinated with SPC (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and requested a copy of all medical records pertaining to PFC BERGDAHL.

About 1600, 6 Jul 09, SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) coordinated with SPC (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) who provided this office a copy of PFC BERGDAHL's medical records and medical profile history. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

About 0850, 8 Jul 09, SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) coordinated with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) who stated (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) PFC BERGDAHL (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

About 0900, 8 Jul 09, SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) coordinated with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) FRAK, who stated she would check to see if PFC BERGDAHL (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

About 1400, 8 Jul 09, SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was coordinated with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (3) who stated PFC BERGDAHL (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

About 0900, 9 Jul 09, SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) coordinated with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (3) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (3) and advised this office had completed the requested investigative leads. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (3) stated nothing further was needed from this office.

All requested investigative leads were completed; this request was closed in the files of this office.///LAST ENTRY///

TYPED AGENT'S NAME AND SEQUENCE NUMBER:

SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (7)(E)

ORGANIZATION:

Fort Richardson CID Office,  
Fort Richardson, AK 99505

SIGNATURE:

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

DATE:

10 Jul 09

EXHIBIT:

9

CID FORM 94

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## Exhibit 10

Page(s) 000184 thru 000194 withheld:

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# AGENT'S INVESTIGATION REPORT

CID Regulation 195-1

ROI NUMBER

0152-09-CID369-65293

PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES

## DETAILS

About 1739, 8 Dec 10, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) received information a news article was released on the Associated Press network which detailed a new video depicting a few seconds of footage of SPC BERGDAHL. It is unknown whether the footage was recently taken. (See Printout of "Video thought to show American held in Afghanistan")///LAST ENTRY///

TYPED AGENT'S NAME AND SEQUENCE NUMBER

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(7)(E)

ORGANIZATION

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

SIGNATURE

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

DATE

8 Dec 10

EXHIBIT

11

CID

(Automated)

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0152-09-CID369-65293



Print Close

## Video thought to show American held in Afghanistan

Published December 07, 2010 | Associated Press

A new video released by the Taliban shows a man believed to be the only known American serviceman held captive in Afghanistan, a group that tracks militant websites said Wednesday.

ADVERTISEMENT

Spc. Bowe Bergdahl of Hailey, Idaho, has been held by the Taliban since June 30, 2009, when he disappeared in Paktika province in eastern Afghanistan. It was not immediately clear when the video was made.

The U.S.-based IntelCenter said that along with Berghdal, another man in the video appeared to be the Taliban commander who had once threatened to kill the U.S. soldier. The video, taken in a wooded area, shows Berghdal looking thin in a loose gray top, with bags under his eyes and what appeared to be an abrasion along his left cheekbone.

In July 2009, Taliban commander Mawlawi Sangin's spokesman told The Associated Press in a telephone interview that Berghdal would be killed unless the U.S. stops strikes in Ghazni province's Giro district and Paktika province's Khoshmand district.

The video, which also shows militant attacks in Afghanistan, was released by Manba al-Jihad, a video production group affiliated with the Taliban. The man believed to be Bergdahl appears only briefly in the video and is not the main focus.

The 24-year-old Bergdahl has appeared in three videos the Taliban released prior to this: on July 18, 2009; Dec. 25, 2009; and April 7.

Separately, two NATO service members died Wednesday following an insurgent attack in southern Afghanistan. The coalition did not disclose their nationalities or details about their deaths. So far this month, 12 members of the NATO coalition have been killed in Afghanistan. At least 671 have died so far this year.

The Afghan Defense Ministry on Wednesday condemned a coalition airstrike that it said mistakenly killed two Afghan soldiers on Tuesday afternoon. The ministry said in a statement that three other Afghan soldiers were wounded in the airstrike in Charkh district of Logar province in eastern Afghanistan.

NATO said it was investigating the incident.

On Tuesday, Afghan soldiers killed a suicide attacker who threatened to blow himself up at an Afghan army base in the Gereskh district of Helmand province in southern Afghanistan, the Afghan Defense Ministry said. The ministry did not disclose any other details of the incident.

Also in the south, one child was killed and two men were injured in a homemade bomb explosion in the Shahjoy district of Zabul province, said Mohammad Jan Rasoolyar, spokesman for the provincial governor.

Print Close

### URL

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2010/12/07/official-petraeus-sees-afghan-gains-challenges/>

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**EXHIBIT** 12

000197

3/26/2011



# AGENT'S INVESTIGATION REPORT

ROI NUMBER

0152-09-CID369-65293

CID Regulation 195-1

PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGE

## DETAILS

About 1822, 9 April 2011, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) coordinated with (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) to let her know that CID is closing 0152-09-CID369-65293 (SPC Bergdahl). At the present time we (CID) have exhausted all investigative leads. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) provided her with POC information in the event that forensic assistance is needed if SPC Bergdahl is located, a suspected location of his whereabouts is known or new information is developed and action is to be taken.

### POC Information:

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

NIPR: (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)  
SIPR: (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

NIPR: (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)  
SIPR: (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

////////////////////////////////////Last Entry////////////////////////////////////

TYPED AGENT'S NAME AND SEQUENCE NUMBER

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(7)(E)

ORGANIZATION

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

SIGNATURE

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

DATE

9 April 2011

EXHIBIT

13

CID FORM 1

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000198

# AGENT'S INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

CID Regulation 195-1

ROI NUMBER:

0152-09-CID369-65293 - 5K2

PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES

DETAILS:

About 0830, 3 Jun 14, the Investigative Operations Section, Headquarters, U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command (USACIDC), Quantico, VA, directed this office to re-open this investigation due to the return of PFC (now SGT) Bowe R. BERGDAHL (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (Home Station: Fort Richardson, AK), to U.S. custody. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) provided an article from Rolling Stone Magazine pertaining to SGT BERGDAHL's disappearance and subsequent efforts to retrieve him. (See Article)

About 0735, 4 Jun 14, a review of the Defense Clearance Investigations Index (DCII), U.S. Army Crime Records Center, Quantico, VA (USACRC), and the local files of this office revealed no derogatory information pertaining to SGT BERGDAHL.

About 0930, 4 Jun 14, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) and (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) coordinated with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Personnel Recovery Coordination Cell, U.S. Army South, Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234, who stated SGT BERGDAHL was currently in (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) then introduced (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) and (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) to the three team chiefs in charge of SGT BERGDAHL's personnel recovery: (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) COL (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) U.S. Army South, Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) stated SGT BERGDAHL could not be interviewed by law enforcement until (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) emphasized the fact that his efforts were focused on the time period from the point of capture forward, and he would not be interviewing SGT BERGDAHL regarding his actions prior to capture. (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) had no idea how long it would take for SGT BERGDAHL to move from (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) but stated once he did move to (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) he would be in the charge of COL (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

About 1500, 23 Jul 14, this office received an email from SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Assistant Operations Officer (AOPS), 6<sup>th</sup> MP Group (CID), Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA 98433 (JBLM), wherein he forwarded information from (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated he worked on SGT BERGDAHL's case and believed him to be innocent.

AGENT'S COMMENT: SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was currently assisting with the ongoing AR 15-6 investigation into SGT BERGDAHL's disappearance.  
///LAST ENTRY///

TYPED AGENT'S NAME AND SEQUENCE NUMBER

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(7)(E)

ORGANIZATION:

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

SI (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

DATE:

23 July 2014

EXHIBIT

14



# Rolling Stone

## America's Last Prisoner of War

Three years ago, a 23-year-old soldier walked off his base in Afghanistan and into the hands of the Taliban. Now he's a crucial pawn in negotiations to end the war. Will the Pentagon leave a man behind?

by MICHAEL HASTINGS  
JUNE 07, 2012

*In June 2012, fearless Rolling Stone contributing editor Michael Hastings wrote the definitive first account of Bowe Bergdahl — the young American soldier who was captured by the Taliban and became the last American prisoner of war. Hastings, the journalist who brought down the career of General Stanley McChrystal in these pages, died in a car accident one year later. Bergdahl was freed this weekend. Hastings' incredible story is available in full here:*

The mother and father sit at the kitchen table in their Idaho farmhouse, watching their son on YouTube plead for his life. The Taliban captured 26-year-old Bowe Bergdahl almost three years ago, on June 30th, 2009, and since that day, his parents, Jani and Bob, have had no contact with him. Like the rest of the world, their lone glimpses of Bowe — the only American prisoner of war left in either Iraq or Afghanistan — have come through a series of propaganda videos, filmed while he's been in captivity.

### The Rise of the Killer Drones: How America Goes to War in Secret

In the video they're watching now, Bowe doesn't look good. He's emaciated, maybe 30 pounds underweight, his face sunken, his eye sockets like caves. He's wearing a scraggly beard and he's talking funny, with some kind of foreign accent. Jani presses her left hand across her forehead, as if shielding herself from the images onscreen, her eyes filling with tears. Bob, unable to look away, hits play on the MacBook Pro for perhaps the 30th time. Over and over again, he watches as his only son, dressed in a ragged uniform, begs for someone to rescue him.

"Release me, please!" Bowe screams at the camera. "I'm begging you — bring me home!"

### My Decade of bin Laden, by Michael Hastings

Private First Class Bowe Bergdahl arrived in Afghanistan at the worst possible moment, just as President Barack Obama had ordered the first troop surge in the spring of 2009. Rather than withdraw from a disastrous and increasingly deadly war started by his predecessor, the new commander in chief had decided to escalate the conflict, tripling the number of troops to 100,000 and

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employing a counterinsurgency strategy that had yet to demonstrate any measurable success. To many on Obama's staff, who had been studying *Lessons in Disaster*, a book about America's failure in Vietnam, the catastrophe to come seemed almost preordained. "My God," his deputy national security adviser Tom Donilon said at the time. "What are we getting this guy into?" Over the next three years, 13,000 Americans would be killed or wounded in Afghanistan – more than during the previous eight years of war under George W. Bush.

Bowe's own tour of duty in Afghanistan mirrored the larger American experience in the war – marked by tragedy, confusion, misplaced idealism, deluded thinking and, perhaps, a moment of insanity. And it is with Bowe that the war will likely come to an end. On May 1st, in a surprise visit to Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan, President Obama announced that the United States will now pursue "a negotiated peace" with the Taliban. That peace is likely to include a prisoner swap – or a "confidence-building measure," as U.S. officials working on the negotiations call it – that could finally end the longest war in America's history. Bowe is the one prisoner the Taliban have to trade. "It could be a huge win if Obama could bring him home," says a senior administration official familiar with the negotiations. "Especially in an election year, if it's handled properly."

Bowe Robert Bergdahl was born in Sun Valley, Idaho, on March 28th, 1986 – the same day as Lady Gaga, as his parents like to point out. Bob and Jani had moved to Idaho from California after college, building a small, two-bedroom home on 40 acres of farmland not far from the small town of Hailey, deep in the mountains of Wood River Valley. His father worked construction, his mother odd jobs, living the life of ski bums, nearly off the grid. In 1983, the year Bowe's older sister Sky was born, his parents pulled in \$7,000 and paid off the hospital bills for her birth with weekly \$20 deposits.

Rather than put their kids in the local school system, Jani and Bob home-schooled Bowe and his sister. Devout Calvinists, they taught the children for six hours a day, instructing them in religious thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine. "Ethics and morality would be constant verbiage in our conversations," his father recalls. "Bowe was definitely instilled with truth. He was very philosophical about perceiving ethics."

By the age of five, Bowe had also learned to shoot a .22 rifle and to ride horses. He developed a love for dirt bikes and immersed himself in boy's adventure tales – anything that had to do with sailing and the ocean – as well as cartoons. His favorite was *Beetle Bailey*, the comic-strip antihero who shambles through life in the Army as a permanent fuck-up.

By the time he was 16, Bowe had grown restless with his home-schooling – and his parents. He began to explore the wider world, and became obsessed with learning how to fence. At a nearby fencing studio, which also offered ballet classes, he was recruited by a beautiful local girl to be a "lifter" – the guy who holds the girl aloft in a ballet sequence. He soon moved in with the girl, whose family owned a tea shop in Ketchum, and made it his second home. The matriarch of the household, Kim Harrison, introduced him to Buddhism and Tarot cards. Bowe repaid his new family by doing construction work on their home. "To me, it was the normal path teenagers take," says Bob. "Like going to college – you get into all this stuff."

At 20, Bowe went even farther afield in search of the kind of boy's adventure that had mesmerized him for years: He decided to join the French Foreign Legion, the infantry force made up of foreigners who want "to start a new life," as the legion's recruiting website puts it. He traveled to Paris and started to learn French, but his application was rejected. "He was absolutely devastated when the French Foreign Legion didn't take him," Bob says. "They just didn't want an American home-schooled in Idaho. They just said no way." Bowe pored over a survival and combat handbook written by a former member of the British special forces, and he gravitated toward the TV show *Man vs.*

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US Army CID

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15



*Wild*, hosted by another legendary British soldier. "This became his role model," his father says. "He is Bear Grylls in his own mind."

Returning home from Europe, Bowe drifted for the next few years, working mainly as a barista at Zaney's, a local coffee shop in Hailey. But he kept dreaming of ways to pursue something bigger. In 2008, he spoke to a family friend who was working as a missionary in Uganda about going over to Africa to teach "self-defense techniques" to villagers being targeted by brutal militias like the Lord's Resistance Army. He and his father even fantasized about the creation of a special operations unit to "kill these fucks" in Africa, imagining that "someone needed to run an op with some military people dressed up like U.N. people" to take out warlords in Darfur and Sudan. Before a spot in the friend's missionary program could open up, though, Bowe had decided on a different adventure.

One day that spring, Bowe called his mother. "Mom, I need to talk to you and Dad about something," he said. He stopped by the house that Saturday, when his father was home from work.

"I'm thinking about joining the Army," Bowe told his parents.

"You're thinking about joining?" his father asked. "Or you already signed on the dotted line?"

"Well, yeah," Bowe admitted.

Bowe's mother wished he had enlisted in a different branch, like the Navy, that wouldn't have put him on the ground in Iraq or Afghanistan. His father did what he always did with his son's dreams. "I just tried to be supportive," Bob says.

But what Bowe found in the Army, according to his parents, was a "deception" – one that started from the moment he was recruited. Bowe had been enticed to join the Army, they say, with the promise that he would be going overseas to help Afghan villagers rebuild their lives and learn to defend themselves – "the whole COIN thing," says Bob, citing the shorthand for America's strategy of counterinsurgency. "We were given a fictitious picture, an artificially created picture of what we were doing in Afghanistan."

After 16 weeks of training, Bowe graduated from infantry school in Fort Benning, Georgia, in the fall of 2008. While others in his training unit – A Company 2-58 – used their weekend passes to hit up strip clubs, Bowe hung out at Barnes & Noble and read books. He was already an expert shot from his days firing his .22 in the mountains of Idaho. When his parents attended the graduation, the drill sergeant told them, "Bowe was good to go when he got here." After completing the course, Bowe was assigned to the 25th Infantry Division in Fort Richardson, Alaska, not far from Anchorage. He arrived in October 2008.

At first, according to soldiers in his unit, Bowe seemed to embrace Army life. "He showed up, looked like a normal Joe," says former Specialist Jason Fry, who is now studying for a master's in theology. "When he first got to the unit, he was the leadership's pet. He read the *Ranger Handbook* like no other. Some people resented him for it." Bowe kept to himself, doing physical training on his own. "He never hung out with anyone, always in the background, never wanted to be in front of anything," says Fry. He surrounded himself with piles of books, including *Three Cups of Tea*, about a humanitarian crusade to educate girls in Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as instructions on Zen meditation and an introductory ethics handbook with writings from Aristotle, Augustine, Kant and Hume.

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After a month in Alaska, Bowe and his unit embarked for the National Training Center in Southern California to prepare for war. The NTC is a massive military installation in the Mojave Desert where real life combat situations are simulated under the most difficult conditions, often in extreme heat. It was a brutal experience for the platoon, and Bowe's unit struggled from the beginning. "The first week is incredibly stressful," a second lieutenant in the unit, Stephen Fancey, wrote on his blog. "I get overworked to the point where I start to get sick with a fever."

In his blog posts, which have since been removed from the Web, Fancey detailed a unit that seemed to have almost no discipline. The company's first sergeant, Fancey wrote, "calls the Captain a quitter, then calls me a quitter. Picture a 2nd LT screaming at a 1SG, who is screaming back in broken Puerto-Rican-fied English, and about 5 Privates sitting quietly in terror." As the combat simulations continued, the sergeant's behavior grew even more disturbing. He refused to go to the bathroom, preferring to pee into a Gatorade bottle by his bed, and he obsessed over his desire for a Diet Coke. After one botched operation, according to Fancey's blog, the first sergeant just gave up. "I need a Coca-Cola," he said. Then, upset at how screwed up the operation had become, he tore off his body armor and stormed off to his tent, screaming, "Fuck 'dis 'chit!"

Bowe's behavior, too, seemed odd at times. Fry remembers hearing "all kinds of crazy stories about him." He often came across more like a boy on an adventure than a soldier preparing for war. "My buddy was on an op, pulling guard duty," says Fry, recalling a joke that Bowe played. "Bergdahl was sneaking up on him like he was practicing techniques for the Battle of Wanat, on the other side." The U.S. base at Wanat, a remote village in Afghanistan, had been overrun by the Taliban four months earlier, leaving nine Americans dead and 27 wounded. It was one of the most deadly battles since the start of the war.

Bowe earned the nickname "SF," short for Special Forces – but it wasn't a compliment. "He loved pipe tobacco, didn't drink, smoke cigarettes," says Fry. "He did it more for the look." Fancey, now a captain stationed in North Carolina, recalls Bowe as "quiet. He wasn't one of the troublemakers – he was focused and well-behaved." While other soldiers spent Thanksgiving at the NTC playing PSP and reading *Playboy*, Bowe sat alone on his cot, studying maps of Afghanistan. He was also made a SAW gunner, responsible for providing automatic firepower for the squad, and he did exercises with his cumbersome 15-pound machine gun as though he were curling weights at the gym. "We saw him, and were like, 'Whoa, Mr. Intensity,'" says Fancey.

By the time the monthlong training session ended, the platoon was so notorious for screwing up that it had become a convenient scapegoat. At the firing range one day, another company failed to bring ammunition, and Bowe's unit took the flak. "We were heckled and blamed for not being prepared," Fancey wrote. "All said and done, NTC was an eye-opener and a bit of a disappointing one, at that."

It was also a disappointment to Bowe. He had entered the Army for the adventure, as a substitute for the French Foreign Legion, and here he was, shackled to a bunch of goof-offs. Bowe told Fry he didn't think the other soldiers in the unit were competent to fight. "He wanted to be a mercenary, wanted to be a free gun," says Fry. "He had a notion he was a survivalist, claimed he knew how to survive with nothing because he grew up in Idaho. He had stories of him doing crazy shit out in the woods for weeks in Idaho."

Over Christmas that year, Bowe went home to Hailey for the last time. He talked to his father and gave him his last will and testament. "He wanted to be buried at sea," his father recalls. "Typical. It's just this figment of his imagination. That's how he was seeing himself. This kid, from when he was 18, was hanging out with the elite. That's where his habits came from. He was living in a novel."

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Returning to Alaska after Christmas, Bowe said something that would stick with Fry months later, long after they arrived in Afghanistan. "Before we deployed, when we were on Rear D, him and I were talking about what it would be like," Fry recalls. Bowe looked at his friend and made no bones about his plans. "If this deployment is lame," Bowe said, "I'm just going to walk off into the mountains of Pakistan."

**I**n March 2009, Bowe's platoon arrived in Paktika, a province in eastern Afghanistan. Located on the border of Pakistan, the region is a stark landscape of imposing mountains and crushing poverty. According to the Army, 99 percent of Paktika is rural, and only six percent of households have access to electricity. The violence brought by the war has been equally extreme, with some 134 soldiers – including famed NFL player Pat Tillman – losing their lives in the province since the beginning of the conflict.

By that spring, when Bowe's unit arrived, the entire U.S. policy in Afghanistan appeared to be in chaos from the top down. President Obama had just fired Gen. David McKiernan, replacing him with Gen. Stanley McChrystal, and there was no longer a clear strategy in place.

The prolonged aspect of the war was also forcing the Pentagon to send more and more recruits who were unprepared and undisciplined, like Bowe's unit. To meet its recruiting goals, the Army had lowered its standards for intellectual aptitude, and allowed more waivers for recruits with felony convictions and drug problems. "One of every five recruits required a waiver to join the service, leading military analysts to conclude that the Army has lowered its standards," Col. Jeffrey McClain wrote in a definitive study for the Army War College in 2008, the year many in Bowe's unit joined up.

Bowe's platoon of some 25 men – under-manned by more than a third – was sent to a small combat outpost called Mest-Malak, near the village of Yaya Kheyl, where they were supposed to conduct counterinsurgency operations, attempting to win the local population over to the side of the Americans. Bowe had a serious staph infection in his leg, so he arrived at the outpost late. With his customary zeal, he'd been preparing for the deployment by learning how to speak Pashto and reading Russian military manuals. Almost as soon as he joined his fellow soldiers, he began to gravitate away from his unit. "He spent more time with the Afghans than he did with his platoon," Fry says. His father, recalling that time, would later describe his son to military investigators as "psychologically isolated."

The discipline problems that had plagued Bowe's unit back home only got worse when immersed in the fog of war. From the start, everything seemed to go wrong. In April, Lt. Fancey was removed from his post for clashing with a superior officer. He was replaced by Sgt. 1st Class Larry Hein, who had never held such a command – a move that left the remote outpost with no officers. According to four soldiers in the battalion, the removal of Fancey was quickly followed by a collapse in unit morale and an almost complete breakdown of authority.

The unruly situation was captured by Sean Smith, a British documentary filmmaker with *The Guardian* who spent a month embedded with Bowe's unit. His footage shows a bunch of soldiers who no longer give a shit: breaking even the most basic rules of combat, like wearing baseball caps on patrol instead of helmets. In footage from a raid on a family compound, an old Afghan woman screams at the unit, "Look at these cruel people!" One soldier bitches about what he sees as the cowardice of the Afghan villagers he is supposed to be protecting: "They say like, the Taliban comes down and aggravated their town and harasses them... Why don't you kill those motherfuckers? All of you have AKs. If someone is going into my hometown, I know my town wouldn't stand for that shit. I'd be like, 'Fuck you, you're dead.'" Another soldier laments, "These people just want to be left

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alone." A third agrees: "They got fucked with by the Russians for 17 years, and now we're here."

During the middle of May, Bowe went out on one of his first major missions. He described it in a detailed e-mail to his family dated May 23rd, 2009. What started as an eight-hour mission, Bowe recounted, ended up taking five days.

While another unit was setting up a night ambush in the mountains, an MRAP – the \$1.5 million armored vehicle designed to protect soldiers from the roadside bombs being used by the Taliban – got hit with an IED. Bowe's platoon was deployed to escort a tow truck to get it down off the mountain. But on the way to escort the truck, an MRAP in Bowe's own platoon was hit by an IED. The unit found itself stuck in the mountains for four days, guarding the wreckage while their commanders debated whether to fly in the parts needed to fix the vehicles. Some of the time, Bowe wrote his family, was spent near a village that "was not too friendly to Americans" because it had been attacked by the Taliban. "So the elders were telling us to leave," he reported, "because the Taliban was there, and we couldn't leave because command finely decided that they would fly in the parts (one MRAP needing a new engine) and would rebuild the MRAPs up there."

Once the MRAPs were finally fixed, the unit started to leave the mountains, only to be hit by yet another IED – the third of the mission – and to come under a blistering attack from rocket-propelled grenades. "It was at the point that the guys where beginning to climb into the trucks that the first RPG hit about 30m away from them," Bowe recounted, "and then the RPKs and the AKs began to splatter bullets on us, and all around us, the gunners where only able to see a few of them, and so where firing blindly the rest of the time, up into the trees and rocks. The .50 went down on the first shot on the truck i was in, and i had to hand up my SAW for the gunner to use. I sat there and watched, there was nothing else I was allowed to do."

No soldiers were killed in the ambush, but Bowe blamed the screw-up on his superiors: "Because command where too stupid to make up there minds of what to do," he wrote, "we where left to sit out in the middle of no where with no support to come till late mourning the next day." He concluded his e-mail with a nod to the absurdity of the situation: "The end of the 8 hour mission that took five days, and so here i am. But Afghanistan mountains are really beautiful!"

Over the next month, as he saw more of the war firsthand, Bowe's e-mails to his family lost their sense of absurdity and took on a darker edge. In one heartbreaking incident at the end of May, an Afghan official and four of his children were killed in a Taliban attack. The bodies were moved to Bowe's outpost, along with a wounded Afghan police officer.

In early June, after photographs taken by Sean Smith appeared in *The Guardian*, Bowe's unit got reamed out by its commander for its lack of discipline. Bowe's squad leader, Sgt. Greg Leatherman, was demoted, and two other sergeants in the squad were reassigned. According to Fancey, one was made "a gate guard for the rest of the deployment." As often happens in the Army, senior officers were going unpunished for screw-ups like the MRAP mission, while lower-ranking men paid the price for minor infractions.

The unit, for its part, continued to bungle even the most basic aspects of military duty. During the last week of June, the platoon spent a day resupplying at Forward Operating Base Sharana. When someone in the unit lost his weapon, everyone in the platoon had to drop what they were doing and look for it. To make matters worse, on an earlier trip to Sharana, 10 members of the platoon had been poached to pull guard duty at another base, leaving the unit even more undermanned than usual.

Then, on June 25th, Bowe's battalion suffered its first casualty of the deployment. A popular officer,

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1st Lt. Brian Bradshaw, was killed in a blast from a roadside bomb near the village of Yaya Kheyl, not far from the outpost. Though Bradshaw was in a different company, the 24-year-old's death rocked the unit, shattering the sense of invulnerability that accompanies those who have just arrived in country. Bowe's father believes that Bradshaw and Bowe had grown close at the National Training Center, and his death darkened his son's mood. It was all too much for Bowe. On June 27th, he sent what would be his final e-mail to his parents. It was a lengthy message documenting his complete disillusionment with the war effort. He opened it by addressing it simply to "mom, dad."

"The future is too good to waste on lies," Bowe wrote. "And life is way too short to care for the damnation of others, as well as to spend it helping fools with their ideas that are wrong. I have seen their ideas and I am ashamed to even be american. The horror of the self-righteous arrogance that they thrive in. It is all revolting."

The e-mail went on to list a series of complaints: Three good sergeants, Bowe said, had been forced to move to another company, and "one of the biggest shit bags is being put in charge of the team." His battalion commander was a "conceited old fool." The military system itself was broken: "In the US army you are cut down for being honest... but if you are a conceited brown nosing shit bag you will be allowed to do what ever you want, and you will be handed your higher rank... The system is wrong. I am ashamed to be an american. And the title of US soldier is just the lie of fools." The soldiers he actually admired were planning on leaving: "The US army is the biggest joke the world has to laugh at. It is the army of liars, backstabbers, fools, and bullies. The few good SGTs are getting out as soon as they can, and they are telling us privates to do the same."

In the second-to-last paragraph of the e-mail, Bowe wrote about his broader disgust with America's approach to the war – an effort, on the ground, that seemed to represent the exact opposite of the kind of concerted campaign to win the "hearts and minds" of average Afghans envisioned by counterinsurgency strategists. "I am sorry for everything here," Bowe told his parents. "These people need help, yet what they get is the most conceited country in the world telling them that they are nothing and that they are stupid, that they have no idea how to live." He then referred to what his parents believe may have been a formative, possibly traumatic event: seeing an Afghan child run over by an MRAP. "We don't even care when we hear each other talk about running their children down in the dirt streets with our armored trucks... We make fun of them in front of their faces, and laugh at them for not understanding we are insulting them."

Bowe concluded his e-mail with what, in another context, might read as a suicide note. "I am sorry for everything," he wrote. "The horror that is america is disgusting." Then he signed off with a final message to his mother and father. "There are a few more boxes coming to you guys," he said, referring to his uniform and books, which he had already packed up and shipped off. "Feel free to open them, and use them."

On June 27th, at 10:43 p.m., Bob Bergdahl responded to his son's final message not long after he received it. His subject line was titled: OBEY YOUR CONSCIENCE!

"Dear Bowe," he wrote. "In matters of life and death, and especially at war, it is never safe to ignore ones' conscience. Ethics demands obedience to our conscience. It is best to also have a systematic oral defense of what our conscience demands. Stand with like minded men when possible." He signed it simply "dad."

Ordinary soldiers, especially raw recruits facing combat for the first time, respond to the horror of war in all sorts of ways. Some take their own lives: After years of seemingly endless war and repeat deployments, active-duty soldiers in the U.S. Army are currently committing suicide at a record

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rate, 25 percent higher than the civilian population. Other soldiers lash out with unauthorized acts of violence: the staff sergeant charged with murdering 17 Afghan civilians in their homes last March; the notorious "Kill Team" of U.S. soldiers who went on a shooting spree in 2010, murdering civilians for sport and taking parts of their corpses for trophies. Many come home permanently traumatized, unable to block out the nightmares.

Bowe Bergdahl had a different response. He decided to walk away.

In the early-morning hours of June 30th, according to soldiers in the unit, Bowe approached his team leader not long after he got off guard duty and asked his superior a simple question: If I were to leave the base, would it cause problems if I took my sensitive equipment?

Yes, his team leader responded – if you took your rifle and night-vision goggles, that would cause problems.

Bowe returned to his barracks, a roughly built bunker of plywood and sandbags. He gathered up water, a knife, his digital camera and his diary. Then he slipped off the outpost.

Bowe might have spent his childhood hiking in the mountains of Idaho, but the terrain he now faced was nothing like back home. To get to Pakistan, he would first have to descend some 1,500 feet from the mountain outpost and skirt the village of Yaya Kheyl, a town known for harboring Taliban. At that hour, there would be few people on the main road through Paktiki, dubbed "Route Audi" by U.S. forces. But as dawn broke, a stream of motorbikes and pedestrians would start to pass by. Alone, white-skinned and likely wearing his Army uniform, Bowe would have stood out immediately.

If Bowe made it through town, the next step would be even more daunting: He would have to slog eight miles through deep sand so fine that soldiers called it "moondust." If he was lucky, he might pick up a path used by Kuchi nomadic tribesmen to bring their sheep to market. Along the way, Bowe would pass grave sites: tall stacks of rocks marked by bright flags. Then he'd be forced to climb back up the switchbacks to Omna, where his platoon had been bogged down on its first major mission, traverse the Bermel Plateau, and once again scale mountain peaks to cross the border into Pakistan.

At 9:00 that morning, the acting platoon leader, Sgt. 1st Class Larry Hein, called in over the radio to report a missing soldier. According to sources in the battalion, this was the last thing Hein needed, given all the scrutiny the unit had been under. The men needed a break. Instead, they had to find a member of their platoon. "That was a shitty week for all of them," says one soldier in the unit.

By 11:37 a.m., a Predator drone was on station, monitoring the area with a call sign of VOODOO. At 2:10 p.m., a Pathfinder and a team of tracking dogs arrived at the small outpost. Five minutes later, another Predator drone began circling the area. At 2:42, Guardrail – an electronic intercept plane run by the same clandestine Army agency that killed Pablo Escobar – captured low-level voice intercepts picked up from radio or cellphone traffic. An American soldier with a camera was reportedly looking for someone who spoke English.

The search quickly escalated. No one knew whether Bowe was a deserter, a prisoner or a casualty. At that point he was simply listed as DUSTWUN – short for "Duty Status: Whereabouts Unknown." But either way, the Army wanted him back, fast. At 4:42 that afternoon, Col. Michael Howard, the senior officer responsible for three eastern provinces in Afghanistan, ordered that "all operations will cease until the missing soldier is found. All assets will be focused on the DUSTWUN situation and sustainment operations."

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Within an hour, two F-18s were circling overhead. Afghan forces passed along intelligence that a U.S. soldier had been captured by the Taliban. By that evening, two F-15s – call sign DUDE-21 – had joined the search. A few minutes later, according to files obtained by WikiLeaks, a radio transmission intercepted by U.S. forces stated that the Taliban had captured three civilians and one U.S. soldier. The battalion leading the manhunt entered and searched three compounds in the area, but found nothing significant to report.

The next morning, more than 24 hours after Bowe had vanished, U.S. intelligence intercepted a conversation between two Taliban fighters:

"I SWEAR THAT I HAVE NOT HEARD ANYTHING YET. WHAT HAPPENED. IS THAT TRUE THAT THEY CAPTURED AN AMERICAN GUY?"

"YES THEY DID. HE IS ALIVE. THERE IS NO WHERE HE CAN GO (LOL)" "IS HE STILL ALIVE?"

"YES HE IS ALIVE. BUT I DONT HAVE THE WHOLE STORY. DONT KNOW IF THEY WERE FIGHTING. ALL I KNOW IF THEY WERE FIGHTING. ALL I KNOW THAT THEY CAPTURE HIM ALIVE AND THEY ARE WITH HIM RIGHT NOW."

Then another intercept was picked up:

"CUT THE HEAD OFF"

Later that evening, a final intercept confirmed that Bowe had been captured by the Taliban, who were preparing an ambush for the search party.

"WE ARE WAITING FOR THEM."

"LOL THEY KNOW WHERE HE IS BUT THEY KEEP GOING TO WRONG AREA."

"OK SET UP THE WORK FOR THEM."

"YES WE HAVE A LOT OF IED ON THE ROAD."

"GOD WILLING WE WILL DO IT."

"WE WERE ATTACKING THE POST HE WAS SITTING TAKING EXPLETIVE HE HAD NO GUN WITH HIM. HE WAS TAKING EXPLETIVE, HE HAS NOT CLEANED HIS BUTT YET."  
"WHAT SHAME FOR THEM."

"YES LOOK THEY HAVE ALL AMERICANS, ANA HELICOPTERS THE PLANES ARE LOOKING FOR HIM."

"I THINK HE IS BIG SHOT THAT WHY THEY ARE LOOKING FOR HIM."

A third voice chimed in:

"CAN YOU GUYS MAKE A VIDEO OF HIM AND ANNOUNCE IT ALL OVER AFGHANISTAN THAT WE HAVE ONE OF THE AMERICANS."

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"WE ALREADY HAVE A VIDEO OF HIM."

The next day, American forces had a chance to free Bowe. The battalion operations officer, call sign GERONIMO 3, met with two tribal elders from the nearby village. The elders had been asked by the Taliban to arrange a trade with U.S. forces. The insurgents wanted 15 of their jailed fighters released, along with an unidentified sum of money, in exchange for Bowe. The officer hedged, unwilling or unable to make such a bargain, and no deal was struck. Instead, the Army ordered all units stationed in the eastern half of Afghanistan – known as RC East, in military jargon – to join the search for Bowe.

On July 4th, the search effort got a break: Bowe was spotted in a village in Ghazni, about 15 miles across the mountains to the west. He was wearing khaki, with a bag covering his head, and he was being driven in a black Toyota Corolla, escorted by three to five motorcycles. But by the time troops arrived to investigate, it was too late. That was the last time that Bowe would be seen until the first **propaganda video**, released later that month.

Over the next few months, Bowe's unit would be consumed with trying to find him. When Fancey, Bowe's former platoon leader, heard the news at the base where he had been reassigned, he couldn't believe what had happened to his former private. "I was like, 'What? You're joking, right?' The next few weeks, it was like we were in a movie. It was like, this shouldn't be real."

**B**ack in Idaho, on the afternoon of June 30th, Bowe's mother, Jani, heard her dog Rufus barking. The gate to the driveway was closed. On the other side stood a pickup truck flanked by three men in Army uniforms. They were from the Idaho National Guard, and they'd driven down from Boise.

"Oh," she thought. "Why are they standing there?" Then the panic struck. "No, no, no," she thought. "He just got there."

Jani approached the men. "What do you want?" she asked.

"Is your husband home?" they replied. "Do you have anybody home with you?"

She asked what they wanted.

"We can't tell you," they said.

She told them her husband didn't have a cellphone, so she called UPS, where Bob has worked for 28 years. Then UPS texted him on their internal message system. Bob met Jani and the three officers in the parking lot of the UPS depot, about 10 miles from the Bergdahls' home.

"It's not the worst news," an officer told the couple. "As of this morning, they told me your son has been listed as DUSTWUN. There was a 100 percent accountability muster this morning. Your son is off post. He's missing." Bob got back in his truck and finished his UPS route. It was only another couple of hours, he said, and there was no one around to replace him.

During the first week of Bowe's capture, his parents believed he would be rescued. "We thought they'd get him quickly," Jani recalls. His name hadn't been released publicly, and the couple had only told their close family about his disappearance. At their daughter's Fourth of July party a few days later, they told their friends that Bowe was missing and that it was about to come out in the media.

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On July 7th, after Bowe's name was officially released, the national press descended on Hailey, gathering at Zaney's, the coffee shop where Bowe had worked.

It wasn't long, though, before his parents began to grow frustrated by how the government was treating them in the midst of the ordeal. The Army, they felt, was subtly pressuring them not to speak to the press, and they were required to sign a nondisclosure agreement with the National Security Agency in order to view classified and top-secret material. In addition, Bob believes the military began monitoring their phones in case the kidnappers called – standard procedure in a hostage situation, but one that also enabled the U.S. military to keep tabs on the family.

Things soon got worse. Ralph Peters, an action-thriller writer who serves as a "strategic analyst" for Fox News, took to the air to condemn Bowe as an "apparent deserter." The Taliban, he declared, could save the United States on "legal bills" by executing him. Horrified by such comments, Bob and Jani told their military liaison that they didn't want the Army to mount an operation to rescue Bowe, fearful that he'd be killed – either by accident, or even on purpose, by an aggrieved soldier or the U.S. military itself. There have certainly been soldiers who have joined the drumbeat of hatred against Bowe: A recent Facebook post from one soldier in his unit called for his execution. Worried that any further public attention might put Bowe at greater risk, his parents decided to remain silent, releasing a statement to their local newspaper asking the press to respect their privacy.

In what appears to be an unprecedented move, the Pentagon also scrambled to shut down any public discussion of Bowe. Members of Bowe's brigade were required to sign nondisclosure agreements as part of their paperwork to leave Afghanistan. The agreement, according to Capt. Fancey, forbids them to discuss any "personnel recovery" efforts – an obvious reference to Bowe. According to administration sources, both the Pentagon and the White House also pressured major news outlets like *The New York Times* and the AP to steer clear of mentioning Bowe's name to avoid putting him at further risk. (The White House was afraid hard-line elements could execute him to scuttle peace talks, officials involved in the press negotiations say.) Faced with the wall of official silence, Bob and Jani began to worry that the Pentagon wasn't doing all that it could to get their son back. As Bowe's sister, Sky, wrote in a private e-mail: "I am afraid our government here in D.C. would like nothing better but to sweep PFC Bergdahl under the rug and wash their hands of him."

The first propaganda video of Bowe surfaced in July 2009. It was eventually followed by three others – the most recent from May of last year. Mullah Omar, the spiritual leader of the Taliban, released a statement in September 2010 claiming Bowe as a prisoner – an example, he said, of America's "humiliation and disgrace."

The videos show a steep decline in Bowe's appearance and mental health. In the first two videos he displays a measured calm, a kind of doped-out serenity that is missing from the most recent installments. Each is typical jihadist propaganda, using Bowe to recite lines criticizing American foreign policy. Intelligence reports suggest that Bowe was moved into Pakistan sometime in late 2009 or 2010, where he is being held by the Haqqani network, an insurgent group with links to Al Qaeda that has joined the Taliban in fighting the U.S. presence in Afghanistan. It's also a group that, before the attacks of September 11th, was funded by the CIA. The network, which now has ties to the Pakistani government, is likely living under the protection of the Pakistani intelligence service, as Osama bin Laden and other top Al Qaeda leaders did for years.

Bowe's parents believe that he has been moved repeatedly to avoid the constant drone strikes along the Pakistan border, and is possibly being kept close to high-level leaders of the Haqqani network. For his part, Bowe does not appear to be a willing hostage. Last year, in August or September, he reportedly managed to escape. When he was recaptured, he put up such a struggle that it took five

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militants to overpower him. "He fought like a boxer," a Taliban fighter who had seen Bowe told Sami Yousafzai, a *Newsweek* reporter with legendary contacts among the Taliban. According to Yousafzai, sources among the militants say that Bowe is now "kept shackled at night" and is being moved back and forth across the border to keep his position from being discovered.

The Pentagon insists that it is "doing everything possible" to get Bowe home, and a large photo of the captive soldier hangs in CENTCOM headquarters, a daily reminder to those working to free him. Last year, according to officials close to the negotiations, Bowe's name took center stage during peace talks with the Taliban. The negotiations are being handled by an interagency team comprised of representatives from the State Department, the Defense Department and the White House, who have traveled to Germany and Qatar to meet with the Taliban. (One of Obama's top advisers on national security, Denis McDonough, has been intimately involved in the talks.) In return for Bowe, U.S. officials have offered to swap five of the 3,000 Afghan prisoners being held by American forces. At least one of those prisoners, according to a senior U.S. official familiar with the talks, is more or less a moderate. "I've seen the files, and it's slim," says the official. "Things like, he used to meet with Iranian officials when he worked in the government of Herat. That's nothing."

Officially, Bowe remains a soldier in good standing in the United States Army. He has continued to receive promotions over the past three years, based on his time in uniform, and he now holds the rank of sergeant. Unofficially, however, his status within the military is sharply contested. According to officials familiar with the internal debate, there are those in both Congress and the Pentagon who view Bowe as a deserter, and perhaps even a traitor. As with everything in Washington these days, the sharp political discord has complicated efforts to secure his release.

"The Hill is giving State and the White House shit," says one senior administration source. "The political consequences are being used as leverage in the policy debate." According to White House sources, Marc Grossman, who replaced Richard Holbrooke as special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, was given a direct warning by the president's opponents in Congress about trading Bowe for five Taliban prisoners during an election year. "They keep telling me it's going to be Obama's Willie Horton moment," Grossman warned the White House. The threat was as ugly as it was clear: The president's political enemies were prepared to use the release of violent prisoners to paint Obama as a Dukakis-like appeaser, just as Republicans did to the former Massachusetts governor during the 1988 campaign. In response, a White House official advised Grossman that he should ignore the politics of the swap and concentrate solely on the policy.

"Frankly, we don't give a shit why he left," says one White House official. "He's an American soldier. We want to bring him home."

The tensions came to a boil in January, when administration officials went to Capitol Hill to brief a handful of senators on the possibility of a prisoner exchange. The meeting, which excluded staffers, took place in a new secure conference room in the Capitol visitor center. According to sources in the briefing, the discussion sparked a sharp exchange between Senators John McCain and John Kerry, both of whom were decorated for their service in Vietnam. McCain, who endured almost six years of captivity as a prisoner of war, threw a fit at the prospect of releasing five Taliban detainees.

"They're the five biggest murderers in world history!" McCain fumed.

Kerry, who supported the transfer, thought that was going a bit far. "John," he said, "the five biggest

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murderers in the world?"

McCain was furious at the rebuke. "They killed Americans!" he responded. "I suppose Senator Kerry is OK with that?"

McCain reluctantly came around on the prisoner exchange, according to those present at the meeting, but he has continued to speak out against negotiating with the Taliban. Opposition has also come from Sen. Saxby Chambliss, a Republican from Georgia who won election with a vicious smear campaign against former Sen. Max Cleland, a decorated Vietnam veteran who lost three limbs in the war. Chambliss, according to Bowe's father, has insisted that America shouldn't make a prisoner trade for a "deserter."

Some top-level officials within the administration, including Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, are very wary about making a swap for Bowe. "Panetta and Hillary don't give a shit about getting him home," says one senior U.S. official involved in the negotiations. "They want to be able to say they COINED their way out of Afghanistan, or whatever, so it doesn't look like they are cutting and running." (Both Clinton and Panetta, by law, would have to sign off on any exchange.) As with Vietnam, many in the military are resisting any attempt to end the war. "Even after Robert Bales" – the Army staff sergeant charged with massacring 17 Afghan civilians in March – "they are making the argument that the war is turning a corner," says this official. "They don't realize that the mission is changing. We don't need all those U.S. soldiers there anymore."

Those in the Pentagon who oppose the prisoner exchange have insisted that the deal would send the wrong message to America's enemies. "The Pentagon is making the argument that American soldiers would become targets for kidnapping," says a senior administration official. "We pushed back on that. They already are – the Taliban and Al Qaeda have been using their resources to kidnap Americans for years." Prisoner exchanges take place at the ground level all the time in Afghanistan, and Gen. David Petraeus, now the head of the CIA, has pointed out in discussions about Bowe that U.S. forces made distasteful swaps in Iraq – including one involving Qais Khazali, a Shiite extremist who orchestrated the kidnapping and execution of four U.S. soldiers in Karbala in 2007. Even a hard-line Israeli nationalist like Benjamin Netanyahu has recognized the value of a single soldier: In October, the prime minister agreed to free 1,027 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the release of Gilad Shalit, an Israeli corporal who had been held captive by Hamas for five years. The move was overwhelmingly supported by the majority of Israelis. "The Israelis really care about the value of one life," says a senior U.S. official. "Does the American public?"

Despite the objections to the swap, U.S. officials involved in the negotiations this winter say they were on the verge of completing the deal to free Bowe. The White House had worked up talking points about Bowe, and was ready to go public about the exchange. (According to administration officials, the Pentagon insisted that the talking points note that Bowe had walked off base, to underscore that U.S. soldiers are not an easy target for kidnapping.) But at the last moment, the Taliban themselves balked at the deal, which stipulates that the detainees would not be allowed to leave the country of Qatar after their release. In March, faced with internal opposition over cutting a deal with the Americans, the Taliban abruptly suspended the peace talks. "Bowe Bergdahl has been a topic in any meeting we ever had with the Taliban," says a senior State Department official involved with the negotiations. "The Taliban suspended the talks on March 15th. We have not been in any contact with them since."

In a sense, Bowe represents a threat to anyone who wants to see the war continue – be they Taliban militants or Pentagon generals. Once the last American POW is released, there will be few obstacles

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standing in the way of a negotiated settlement. "It's the hard-liners on both sides who want to keep this thing going," says a White House official. "The Taliban is struggling with its own hard-liners. They need space, and this confidence-building measure could give them space."

There is still hope that a deal could get done – a hope that persists in the White House, in Bowe's old unit, and among Bowe's family. Over Memorial Day weekend, Bob and Jani Bergdahl traveled to Washington, D.C. A POW-advocacy organization called Rolling Thunder had asked Bob to give a speech at the group's annual gathering at the National Mall, the famous park across from the U.S. Capitol that hosted some of the most powerful anti-war demonstrations of the Vietnam War. The parents accepted the invitation out of desperation. Bob has considered going over to Pakistan – he's grown a bushy beard, and he has sent his own YouTube video, directed at the Taliban, asking for his son's release. "I'll talk to them," he says. "I'll bring him home myself."

Bob and Jani had thought they might meet the president during their trip to Washington, but that didn't happen. Instead, Bob took to the microphone to speak directly to America, and, perhaps, to his son. In front of the podium crouched a man in a bamboo tiger cage, a symbolic piece of theater the organization presents each year to remind everyone of prisoners of war from another era.

"My son is not in a cage, but he is in chains," Bob said. "Bowe, if you can hear me, you are not forgotten, and so help me God, we will bring you home. Your family has not forgotten you, your hometown has not forgotten you, Idaho has not forgotten you, and thanks to all the people here, Washington, D.C., will not forget you."

When he was finished, he grasped the hand of the man in the tiger cage. The man looked startled. It seemed like a long time since anyone had stepped forward to acknowledge he was there.

*Matthew Farwell, a former soldier who deployed to Afghanistan, contributed additional reporting to this story.*

*This is from the June 21st, 2012 issue of Rolling Stone.*

<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/americas-last-prisoner-of-war-20120607>

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# AGENT'S INVESTIGATION REPORT

CID Regulation 195-1

0748-14-CID016-

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## DETAILS

**BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:** About 1300, 24 Jul 14, this office received a Request For Assistance from (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) to interview (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)  
(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

About 1018, 25 Jul 14, SA (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) contacted Kent Police Department (PD) non-emergency dispatch and requested a patrol go out to (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) residence and advise (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) contact SA (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) Dispatch related they would contact SA (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) once complete.

About 1202, 25 Jul 14, SA (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was contacted by (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) who stated (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) meet SA (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and SA (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) this office at Starbucks, 1428 W Meeker St., Kent, WA. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)  
(b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)  
(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

About 1430, 25 Jul 14, SA (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and SA (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) interviewed (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) who stated (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) worked (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) on the (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) in Kabul, Afghanistan, (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)  
(b)(6), (b)(7)(C) did not remember what (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) knew it was on JBLM, WA. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) stated while (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) on PRT a lot of documents pertaining to SGT Bowe R. BERGDAHL, XXX-XX (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) Headquarters Support Company (HSC), Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, Army North, Fort Sam Houston, TX, (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)  
(b)(6), (b)(7)(C) thought it was one of the four people working on the PRT, which were (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) and (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)  
(b)(6), (b)(7)(C) did not have any documents pertaining to SGT BERGDAHL. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) stated all the information (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) from the reports that were sent up to the PRT. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) stated there were different stories that people made up about SGT BERGDAHL and his disappearance. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) stated (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) was innocent because (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) experience it was not easy to just go off base in Afghanistan. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) stated while (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and 20 other Soldiers accidentally ran onto Kabul Airfield, Afghanistan, which was considered off base. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) stated someone had told them to never go off base again. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) had a dream in Dec 12, that SGT BERGDAHL had tried to escape from the Taliban. When asked about (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) regarding SGT BERGDAHL's innocence, (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) might have "jumped the gun" on that comment and meant that it would be difficult to prove how SGT BERGDAHL went missing given that many people, such as (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) (NFI), were coming forward to the media speculating his disappearance.

**AGENT'S COMMENT:** (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) the entire interview. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)  
(b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and stated twice "all this is hard to talk about".

TYPED AGENT'S NAME AND SEQUENCE NUMBER

SA (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(7)(E)

ORGANIZATION

44<sup>th</sup> Military Police Detachment (CID)  
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA 98433

SIGNATURE

(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

28 Jul 14

EXHIBIT

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# AGENT'S INVESTIGATION REPORT

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## DETAILS

About 0937, 28 Jul 14, SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) received an email wherein SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) related no further investigative activity was needed from this office.///LAST ENTRY///

TYPED AGENT'S NAME AND SEQUENCE NUMBER

SA

(b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(7)(E)

ORGANIZATION

44<sup>th</sup> Military Police Detachment (CID)  
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA 98433

SIGNATURE

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

28 Jul 14

EXHIBIT

16



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<b>AGENT'S INVESTIGATION REPORT</b> <i>CID Regulation 195-1</i>	ROI NUMBER 0152-09-CID369-65293
<b>PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES</b>	

**DETAILS**  
 About 2100, 5 May 15, (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)  
 (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3) coordinated with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
 Hunter Army Airfield, GA, and discussed the investigation and the attempts at obtain the completed AR 15-6 report pertaining to SGT Bergdahl. The AR 15-6 investigation has been completed and forwarded to the Action Commander; however, due to the sensitive of the investigation the report is not being released. The Action Commander is pursuing charges against SGT Bergdahl for the offense of Desertion as it has been shown that he willfully departed his security position during his tour in Afghanistan. SGT Bergdahl was then seized by unknown terrorist forces and eventually ended up in Pakistan where he was held by the terrorist until his release. The AR 15-6 investigation covered SGT Bergdahls time at the base and his departure and (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)  
 (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)  
 (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)

**AGENTS COMMENT:** Coordination was made between G3 Operation and Group Operations and all other allegations of personal misconduct connected to the kidnapping will not be listed in the Law Enforcement Report (LER) as they were investigated by the appropriate commander under the provisions of AR 15-6.///LAST ENTRY///

TYPED AGENT'S NAME AND SEQUENCE NUMBER SA (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)	ORGANIZATION (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)	
SIGN (b)(6) (b)(7)(C) (b)(3)	DATE 5 May 15	EXHIBIT 17