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HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES FORCES - AFGHANISTAN
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN
APO AE 09356

USFOR-A-CJ3

18 June 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR Commanding General, US Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A)

SUBJECT: ~~(S)~~ Findings and Recommendations for Army Regulation (AR) 15-6 Investigation – Deaths of SGT Joshua P. Rodgers and SGT Cameron H. Thomas in Achin District, Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan on 27 April 2017

1. (U) References.

a. (U) Memorandum of Appointment, dated 28 April 2017

b. (U) Army Regulation (AR) 15-6, Procedures for Administrative Investigations and Boards of Officers, dated 1 April 2016.

c. (b)(1)1.4a

d. (b)(1)1.4a

e. (b)(1)1.4a

f. (b)(1)1.4a

g. (U) USCENTCOM Policy Letter Number 85, Civilian Casualty Policy, 1 September 2016

h. (b)(1)1.4a

2. (U) **Background.** On 28 April 2017, I was appointed by the Commander, USFOR-A as Investigating Officer (IO) pursuant to Army Regulation 15-6 to determine the facts and circumstances surrounding the deaths of SGT Joshua P. Rodgers and SGT Cameron H. Thomas in Achin District, Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan on 27 April 2017.

3. ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **Summary.**

a. ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ On 26-27 April 2017, (b)(1)1.4a

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(b)(1)1.4a

(Exhibit FF).

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

b. ~~(S//NF)~~

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

4. ~~(S)~~ **Overview.** On 28 April 2017, COM RS appointed me to conduct this investigation, with an original suspense of 28 May 2017. I traveled to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan that day, and developed an investigative plan with my legal advisor. From 28 April 2017 through 7 May 2017, I conducted interviews and collected evidence in support of the investigation. As I had not yet received all the evidence necessary for me to reach my findings, on 27 May 2017, I requested an extension until 28 June 2017, which was granted. Between 27 May 2017 and 13 June 2017, while awaiting the remaining evidence, I reviewed the sworn statements and documentary evidence, consolidated and organized the investigation, and drafted my findings and recommendations. I traveled back to Bagram from 13-14 June 2017 to finalize the investigation with my investigative team. On 18 June 2017, I turned in the investigation for legal review.

5. ~~(S//NF)~~ **Summary of Relevant & Material Facts.** The following paragraphs address twelve specific questions directed to the investigative team.

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a. ~~(S//NF)~~ Identify and describe the nature of the mission, to include facts surrounding the development, approval, and execution of the mission.

(1) ~~(S//NF)~~ Background.

(a) ~~(S//NF)~~ (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b) ~~(S//NF)~~ Before the operation was executed, a deliberate conditions check was conducted with specific consideration to balance risk and gain associated awareness with such a (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(c) ~~(S//NF)~~ On 26-27 April 2017, (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit FF). (b)(1)1.4a (b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit FF).
(b)(1)1.4a (b)(1)1.4b
(b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit FF).

(d) ~~(S//NF)~~ (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c (Exhibit FF). (b)(1)1.4a (b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit FF). (b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit A). (b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit A).
(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

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(b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit A). (b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a
(Exhibit A). (b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit A). (b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a (b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a (Exhibits A, II).

(2) ~~(S)~~ Development.

(a) ~~(S)~~ On approximately 22 March 2017, (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit A).

(b) ~~(S)~~ (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a
(Exhibit A).

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

(b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit A).

(d) ~~(S)~~ On 1 April 2017, (b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit A). (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

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(Exhibit A).

(1) (~~SECRET~~) On 6 February 2017, Charlie Company 2nd and 3rd Platoons with elements of the Company Headquarters, 3rd Ranger Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment deployed to Afghanistan as (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a Prior to the deployment Charlie Company completed an extensive pre-deployment training program. "From July 2016 to October 2016 we conducted all of our Company level training to include Team and Squad Live Fires, all required weapons qualifications of all assigned weapons, airborne assaults, air assaults, full mission rehearsals and call for fire." (Exhibit B) The deployment pre-training culminated with 3d Battalion Task Force Training including full mission rehearsals consisting of complex problems including air assault raids in harsh terrain on dynamic targets. Once deployed, (b)(1)1.4a

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Platoons trained and certified the Ktah Khas Afghanistan (KKA) Commandos prior to executing combat operations.

(2) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ At approximately 17 1700D* April 2017 (b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6) issued a WARNO to (b)(1)1.4a While the
deliberate joint plan took approximately 48 hours to complete, several factors delayed
execution for approximately one week. (Exhibit A). (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(3) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ In preparation for (b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

c. ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Provide the specific operational authorities for the mission, i.e., what rules of engagement, tactical guidance, tactical directives, or other operational orders governed the mission, and determine whether they were followed.

(1) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a

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(b)(1)1.4a

(2) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ As the preponderance of evidence in the investigation demonstrates, it is clear US ground and air assets at all times acted in a manner which followed the aforementioned authorities and guidance, and applied discriminate and proportional fires in the defense of US forces and authorized Afghan personnel during the engagement in Mohmand Valley. Since the primary charter of this investigation was to examine the circumstances and causes surrounding the death of SGT Rodgers and SGT Thomas, my analysis primarily focused on the ground-level procedures used by the operators as they came under fire during the operation.

(3) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Importantly, none of the authorities applicable to this operation limit the inherent right of US forces to engage in individual, unit, and authorized Afghan forces self-defense. (Exhibit PP).

(a) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ According to applicable guidance, U.S. Forces will utilize the principles of escalation of force and proportional response when acting in self-defense, and will use the appropriate amount of force necessary to respond decisively to a hostile act. (Exhibit PP). All evidence obtained in support of this investigation indicates USSF personnel at all times properly used proportionate response to suppress enemy forces in self-defense.

(b) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(4) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

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(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(Exhibit A)

(a) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(Exhibit PP).

(b) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ All evidence obtained in support of this investigation indicates all US forces involved in the operation, both ground and air, first established PID prior to engaging enemy fighting positions. (Exhibit D). Operators on the ground, specifically the Ground Force Commander (GFC), Fire Support Officer (FSO), and Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC), exercised constant communication to confirm PID of targets prior to engaging enemy fighting positions with air-to-ground assets. (Exhibit D) Additionally, US Forces exhibited deliberate tactical patience to obtain situational awareness of the battlefield prior to prosecuting targets, despite receiving contact almost immediately upon infiltration. (Exhibits B, D).

(5) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(Exhibit A).

(6) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(Exhibit D)

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(a) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

. (Exhibit PP).

(b) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(Exhibit D).

(c) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(Exhibits A, B,

D).

d. ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Describe the execution of the mission and detail the unit's actions on the objective.

(1) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ The Plan

(a) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a These compounds were the geographical objective for the (b)(1)1.4a raid force.

(b)(1)1.4a

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(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(See Figure 1)

(b) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Given the severe terrain, enemy composition and disposition in the Mohmand Valley, along with the task to properly array combat power to surround the objective (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(c) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ The (b)(3), (b)(5) was (b)(2), (b)(3)
(b)(3), (b)(6) . (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(6)

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(3), (b)(6)

(2) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ The Raid

(a) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ At 2210D, (b)(1)1.4a United States service members and a multi-purpose (b)(1)1.4a rom Team BAF, (b)(1)1.4a and linguists loaded (b)(1)1.4a MH-47s at (b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit HH). The (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

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(b)(1)1.4a

(b) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(Exhibit A).

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit A).

(c) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

. (See Figure 2)

(d) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

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(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(Figure 3)

(e) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ The (b)(1)1.4a and (b)(1)1.4a assault force encountered heavy fire from the moment they inserted and began their movement to the objective. (b)(3), (b)(6) the weapons (b)(2), (b)(6) led the element. "We immediately took small arms fire from several directions as we began our movement towards the target compound. The initial contact we were receiving originated from the 600 and 700 series compounds to the east and the 800/900/1000 series compounds to our south and west." (Exhibit B) (See Figure 4) Traversing multiple terraces, some over eight feet high, which slowed their movement, the element reached a small path between the terraces and continued movement north. "While moving up towards the objective we began taking fire from every direction. Continuing along the path of the squad leaders, we ran into lasers pointing at us, so many of us sent a laze back signaling not to shoot us. As we continued to move I began to hear the cracks of bullets hitting all around us. I immediately hit the ground and noticed the fire seemed to be coming from the lasers." (Exhibit U)

(f) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ As the (b)(1)1.4a and (b)(1)1.4a assault force continued movement north, (b)(1)1.4a also received heavy 360 degree enemy fire as they moved to establish their position. Upon infiltration, the force gathered and traversed down three terraces in route to their established blocking position. (Exhibit I). During this time, BP-S received enemy contact from the objective, compound 10, as well as from the south, southwest, and southeast of their position, approximately 150 to 200 meters away. (Exhibit I). Once established, BP-S conducted discreet repositioning given enemy contact and the constraints imposed by the severely restricted terrain. Traversing south down the terraces inhibited BP-South's observation and fields of fire.

(g) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6) the (b)(3), (b)(6) and (b)(3), (b)(6) the (b)(3), (b)(6) from BP-S, both spotted a military aged male with a white light about 50 meters east of compound 680, which they engaged. (Exhibit K) After learning that the target compound and 30 series compound were secure, the blocking position scanned for targets to the southwest. (Exhibit W). At that point, (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) one of (b)(3), (b)(6) began using his thermal scope to

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scan from compound 670 to compound 550. (Exhibit W). For the remainder of the engagement, (b)(3), (b)(6) issued specific fire commands to his (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) using his (b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit W).

(h) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Given BP-S's sector of fire and the description of U.S. forces from (b)(1)1.4a and the isolation/secondary assault force, I assess fratricide occurred between 23:56* and 00:02*. During this timeframe, both elements were receiving enemy fire from multiple locations and both received enemy fire from building series 680/690. (Figure 4). Vegetation (trees) obscured some of the Infar Red (IR) laser line of sight from (b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit MM). Once (b)(3), (b)(6) realized the potential effects of friendly fire, he communicated on both the both the assault and command radio NETs. Moreover, he utilized infrared laser to mark his position and subsequently BP-S confirmed in a similar manner. During the same timeframe, enemy fighters IVO building series 30 attacked BP-S with a grenade while the assault force breached and subsequently assaulted the objective, compound 10. Following the mechanical breach, the enemy detonating a (b)(1)1.4a in courtyard of compound 10. During the mechanical breach, a Ranger suppressing from a roof fell through the roof. This caused a delay to the assault as fellow Rangers assisted their fellow Ranger and prevented any of the assaulters from receiving the (b)(1)1.4a blast. Multiple engagements occurred in compound 10, including the lethal engagement killing OBJ Nascent Calvia. The original plan called for (b)(1)1.4a to

(b)(1)1.4a

(3) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Assault.

(a) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ As the lead elements of the (b)(1)1.4a (b)(1)1.4a reached the southwest corner of compound 690, with the rest of the element following in trail behind, SGT Rodgers sustained a gunshot wound to the leg. After being shot, SGT Rodgers applied a tourniquet and continued to seek cover. (Exhibit BB). During this time, the volume of fire coming from the vicinity of BP-S increased tremendously. SGT Rodgers, SGT Thomas, and (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) (Exhibit BB). (b)(3), (b)(6) continued to notify the command and BP-S to cease fire because there were friendlies in the area. (Exhibits Z, BB). BP-S did not immediately receive the radio transmission given the sheer volume of radio traffic on the net. At this time, multiple reports and updates were processed from the assault force breaching the target compound and the enemy contact reported from the blocking positions. (b)(3), (b)(6) reported on multiple nets and was able to transmit his report of possible friendly fire to the (b)(3), (b)(6) and ultimately to BP-S. The sectors of fire briefed to BP-S by the (b)(3), (b)(6) were oriented on terrain or target reference points. This sector of fire extended from compound 30 to the

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660 series building to the south. This represented a sector of fire from two o'clock to four o'clock in relation to BP-S. Once the (b)(1)1.4a sector of fire would expand to the ensure 360 degree security. This would represent a sector of fire from two o'clock to ten o'clock. However, within minutes of BP-S's arrival, enemy contact from their seven o'clock, originating from compounds 680 and 690 caused BP-S to return fire, while unbeknownst to them the (b)(1)1.4a was maneuvering towards them from south to north. BP-S's response to return fire towards the enemy in the 680 and 690 compounds was understandable given the threat and right to self-defense. However, the (b)(1)1.4a movement was also in close proximity to the 680 and 690 compounds. The line of sight between BP-S and the (b)(1)1.4a line was impeded by vegetation and elevation of the terrain between (b)(1)1.4a and the (b)(1)1.4a. These factors obstructed their ability to observe some of the (b)(1)1.4a friendly IR markings and lasers.

(b) (~~S//REL TO FVEY~~) Once (b)(3), (b)(6) heard of the casualties on his squad internal radio, he and the lead elements from (b)(1)1.4a At the time, they were taking cover on the north side of a terrace system that provided cover from contact to the south and east, but left them exposed from the north and west. (Exhibit Z). (b)(3), (b)(6) ran across the terrace and found SGT Rodgers floating face down in a river. (Exhibit Z). SGT Rodgers was non-responsive, and (b)(3), (b)(6) had to cut away his weapon and aide bag so he could pull him from the water. (Exhibit Z). The (b)(3), (b)(6) was moving with the (b)(3), (b)(6) and arrived to render aid to SGT Rodgers. (Exhibit Z). After assessing SGT Rodgers' injuries (b)(3), (b)(6) declared him expectant, and moved on to provide aid to the other casualties. (b)(3), (b)(6)

(c) (~~S//REL TO FVEY~~) (b)(3), (b)(6) was moving in the middle of the (b)(1)1.4a formation, immediately behind SGT Thomas, when he received accurate fire from the north. He and SGT Thomas immediately got into the prone position and rolled to the right, falling onto a lower terrace. (Exhibit M). SGT Thomas notified (b)(3) that he had been shot in the face. (Exhibit M). (b)(3) began to immediately treat SGT Thomas, removing his equipment and conducting thorough body sweeps. (Exhibit M). Approximately five to ten minutes after SGT Thomas had been shot, (b)(3), (b)(6) arrived to provide medical care until the MEDEVAC arrived. (Exhibits E,M).

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(4) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **MEDEVAC.**

(a) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ While the Rangers of i (b)(1)1.4a provided aid to the casualties, the command element sent up a nine line MEDEVAC request. (Exhibit A). The tactical patience demonstrated b (b)(3), (b)(6) to set the conditions for a successful MEDEVAC cannot be understated. Under the pressure of having an urgent surgical casualty on the ground, experiencing 360 degree fire on each of his friendly positions, (b)(3), (b)(6) thoroughly prepped the battlefield with air to ground fires prior to authorizing the MEDEVAC helicopter carrying the Surgical Response Team (SRT), piloted by (b)(3), (b)(6) to land. (Exhibit A). Amidst heavy small arms fire, PKM, and at least four RPGs, (b)(3), (b)(6) and the rest of the helicopter crew navigated the aircraft in nearly 0% illumination towards the wounded Rangers, closing to within a few feet of the ground at over 130 knots airspeed. (Exhibit DD).

(b) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Upon landing at the MEDEVAC HLZ, the left side of the helicopter began to receive enemy contact, causing the left gunner and left ramp to respond with heavy suppressive fire. (Exhibit DD). The flight medic and a member of the SRT departed the aircraft, and, along with members of the ground force, loaded SGT Rodgers and SGT Thomas into the helicopter amidst a high volume of enemy fire. (Exhibit DD). Despite the accuracy and effectiveness of the suppressive fire, the enemy demonstrated the capability to replenish their killed and wounded in the surrounding compounds. (Exhibit DD). The environment became so kinetic that, after setting the flight plan for departure, (b)(3), (b)(6) was forced to roll down his window and engage approaching enemy fighters with his organic M4. (Exhibit DD).

(c) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ It took approximately five minutes after landing for the casualties to be secured on the helicopter. (Exhibit DD). The aircraft departed out and to the northwest of the HLZ at a low altitude and increased airspeed, to reduce the amount of accurate small arms and RPG fire it was still taking from the compounds below. (Exhibit DD). After learning that the casualties had succumbed to their wounds, the pilots slowed the aircraft and continued on, without incident, to Jalalabad Airfield (Exhibit DD). Once at Jalalabad, the fallen Rangers were delivered to the Combat Surgical Hospital. (Exhibit DD).

(5) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **Exfiltration.**

(a) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit A).
(b)(1)1.4a
(b)(1)1.4a

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(b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit A).

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(b) (~~S//REL TO FVEY~~) (b)(1)1.4a were in a holding pattern approximately 10 minutes away from the HLZs when the GFC requested exfiltration. (Exhibit CC, DD). They approached the HLZs from the northeast and encountered heavy fire. "I counted no less than four RPGs and a heavy volley of tracer fire that engulfed the aircraft as the ARSOA personnel continued to fight their way to our customers. (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

" (Exhibit CC)

(c) (~~S//REL TO FVEY~~) The aircraft arrived at the PZs shortly before 0330D, touching down in extremely close proximity to each other amidst heavy contact from the 100 and 30 series compounds. (Exhibits A, B). Upon landing, and as the ground force began loading into the helicopters, the gunner from one helicopter began engaging enemy targets in the 100 series compound. (Exhibit B). Once the two helicopters landed on the HLZ they continued to endure hostile fire while the Rangers loaded. "Both NS aircraft were heavily engaged by small arms, MMG, and RPG fire as we fought our way out of the target area and I made defensive calls on the FD Net and the gunners defended the customers and the aircraft with extreme vigilance." (Exhibit CC) Both aircraft took large volumes of enemy fire as they crossed the Mohmand Valley. (Exhibit A). Despite the large amount of contact, they arrived at Jalalabad Airfield without incident with (b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit A).

(6) (~~S//NF~~) Strategic Results.

(a) (~~S//NF~~)

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

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

(b) (~~S//NF~~)

(b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

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(b)(1)1.4a

(7) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Describe the medical treatment provided to SGT Rodgers and SGT Thomas.

(a) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ SGT Joshua P. Rodgers.

(i) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ SGT Rodgers was initially wounded by a gunshot wound to the right leg. (Exhibit E, S). SGT Rodgers informed the other Soldiers in his element of his wound and treated the wound by applying his tourniquet to his leg. (Exhibit E, S).

(ii) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Shortly after applying his tourniquet, SGT Rodgers was shot in the head. (Exhibit E). SGT Rodgers was found lying in an irrigation ditch, face-down by (b)(3), (b)(6) and (b)(3), (b)(6) received assistance from the (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6). (Exhibit E). (b)(3), (b)(7)a noticed SGT Rodgers was completely limp as he rolled SGT Rodgers onto his back and began examining him. (Exhibit E). (b)(3), (b)(7)a cut down SGT Rodgers' equipment and helmet, and punched him in the chest in an attempt to get a physical response. (Exhibit E). (b)(3), (b)(6)

(b)(3), (b)(6) SGT Rodgers' (b)(6) (Exhibit E). (b)(3), (b)(6) was unable to locate a pulse and used the EMMA mask to confirm that there was no RR or CO2 exchange. (Exhibit E). (b)(3), (b)(7)a then diagnosed SGT Rodgers as "expectant," meaning probability of death is likely, and moved on to treat the next casualty. (Exhibit E). Since the examination was conducted in the middle of a firefight, (b)(3), (b)(6) was not able to use visible light and conducted the entirety of the examination using night observation devices (NODs). (Exhibit E).

(iii) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6) from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner conducted the autopsy of SGT Rodgers. (Exhibit N). It was his expert medical opinion that SGT Rodgers died from multiple gunshot wounds. The gunshot wound to the head resulted in fatal injuries to the brain. (Exhibit N).

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(b) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **SGT Cameron H. Thomas.**

(i) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ SGT Thomas was wounded by a gunshot to the face as his element was moving north toward the objective. (Exhibit M). He immediately dropped to the ground and rolled off of a terrace about ten feet in height. (Exhibit M). When he hit the ground, SGT Thomas notified (b)(3), (b)(6) that he had been shot. (Exhibit M). CPL Montenegro then sat SGT Thomas up along the terrace and began to treat his injuries. (Exhibit M). As (b)(3), (b)(6) examined SGT Thomas and checked his vital signs, he (b)(6) (Exhibit M)(b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) checked the rest of SGT Thomas' body and was unable to locate an exit wound. (Exhibit M). (b)(3), (b)(6) estimates that 7-10 minutes later (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) arrived and began treating SGT Thomas. (Exhibit M).

(ii) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Upon his arrival (b)(3), (b)(6) was informed that (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) had removed SGT Thomas' equipment and conducted body sweeps. At which time SGT Thomas's M4 suppressor was lost and it was determined his scope was damaged from small arms fire. (Exhibit E). (b)(3), (b)(6) initial examinations revealed multiple gunshot wounds to the face and SGT Thomas was having difficulty breathing. (Exhibit E). Since SGT Thomas was breathing adequately, yet with difficulty, and able to speak and process conversation, (b)(3), (b)(6) believed that SGT Thomas had a chest wound. (Exhibit E). (b)(3), (b)(6) cut off parts of SGT Thomas' uniform, but was unable to locate any wounds to the chest area. (Exhibit E).

(iii) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6) then moved his examination to SGT Thomas' face. (Exhibit E). He discovered three wounds, one in the right maxilla (Right upper lip), one at the bottom of his right cheek, and one at the right side of the base of his neck. (Exhibit E).

(iv) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Although (b)(3), (b)(6) had been using his red light to examine SGT Thomas' chest and face, the small arms fires his element was receiving became more accurate and he was forced to complete the rest of his treatment of SGT Thomas using NODs. (Exhibit E).

(v) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ At this point, (b)(3), (b)(6) reported SGT Thomas' status as "Urgent/Surgical," which means surgical intervention is required immediately. (Exhibit E). (b)(3), (b)(6) in (b)(3), (b)(6) (under the (b)(6) however SGT Thomas was still having difficulty breathing. (Exhibit E). (b)(3), (b)(6) SGT Thomas (b)(3), (b)(6) however these actions did not improve SGT Thomas' ability to breathe. (Exhibit E).

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(vi) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6) on SGT Thomas and (b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(7)a as he decided what to do next. (Exhibit E). (b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(6) SGT Thomas' difficulty in breathing. (Exhibit E). At
that point, (b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(6)
(Exhibit E). (b)(3), (b)(6) SGT Thomas (b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6) SGT Thomas' difficulty in breathing. (Exhibit E). It did not. (Exhibit E).

(vii) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6) . (Exhibit E). At this
point, SGT Thomas had lost consciousness, either due to his wounds (b)(3), (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(viii) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6)

(b)(3), (b)(6)

(ix) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6)

(b)(3), (b)(6)

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(b)(3), (b)(6)

(x) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ When asked for an update on SGT Thomas, (b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6) reported him as trending toward “expectant.” (Exhibit E). (b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6) (Exhibit E). (b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6) (Exhibit E) (b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6) (Exhibit E).

(xi) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6)
hopes that he would be able to transfer SGT Thomas to the SRT with signs of life.
(Exhibit E). At that point (b)(3), (b)(6),
(b)(3), (b)(6) (Exhibit E) (b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6) ceased conducting CPR at that time and reported SGT Thomas as
“expectant.” (Exhibit E).

(xii) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6) from the Armed Forces
Medical Examiner conducted the autopsy of SGT Thomas. (Exhibit N). It was her
expert medical opinion that SGT Thomas died of gunshot wounds to the head and neck,
all caused by one projectile. (Exhibit N). (b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6)
SGT Thomas. (Exhibit N).

(c) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6)

(i) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6)

(b)(3), (b)(6)

(b)(3), (b)(6) (Exhibit E).

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(ii) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ After SGT Thomas was evacuated, (b)(3), (b)(6)

(b)(3), (b)(6)

(iii) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6)

(b)(3), (b)(6)

(iv) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6)

(b)(3), (b)(6)

(v) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Based on this concern, (b)(3), (b)(6) was evacuated to Landstuhl as a priority within 24 hours. (Exhibit E). He was ultimately discharged from Landstuhl and redeployed to Fort Benning. (Exhibit E).

(8). ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **Describe the injuries to SGT Rodgers and SGT Thomas and determine the causes of death. Include whether the fatal rounds were from enemy or friendly forces.**

(a) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **SGT Joshua P. Rodgers.** SGT Rodgers died from multiple gunshot wounds, the gunshot wound to the head resulted in fatal injuries of the brain (Exhibit N). The wound to SGT Rodgers leg resulted from a penetrating projectile fragment formed after the bullet struck an intermediary target (Exhibit N). Forensic evidence from SGT Rodgers' wounds are consistent with those found in NATO ammunition. (Exhibit QQ). While the bullet fragments recovered were too damaged to determine the exact type of ammunition, all available evidence strongly suggests that the fatal rounds were fired from friendly forces. (Exhibit QQ).

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(b) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **SGT Cameron H. Thomas.** SGT Thomas died of gunshot wounds to the head and neck (Exhibit N). Forensic evidence from bullet fragments recovered indicate SGT Thomas' neck wounds are consistent with those
(b)(1)1.4a (Exhibit QQ). (b)(1)1.4a

(b)(1)1.4a

(9) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **Describe the personal protective equipment (PPE) worn by SGT Rodgers and SGT Thomas at the time of their deaths.** During the mission, SGT Rodgers and SGT Thomas wore the following PPE: Ops-Core Ballistic Helmet, Peltor Ballistic Ear Protection, ballistic eye protection, gloves, ADS Crye Ballistic Plate Carrier, and approved field uniform and mission boots. (Exhibit A). Their PPE was consistent with the equipment worn by all TM BAF operators participating in the mission. (Exhibit A).

(10) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **Determine whether the deaths SGT Rodgers, SGT Thomas, and the injury to (b)(3), (b)(6) were in the line of duty IAW AR 600-8-4.** All available evidence suggests the deaths of SGT Rodgers and SGT Thomas, and the injury to (b)(3), (b)(6) were in the line of duty, IAW AR 600-8-4. SGT Rodgers, SGT Thomas, and (b)(3), (b)(6) were participating in an authorized operation, wearing their PPE, and taking accurate enemy fire from multiple directions at the time SGT Rodgers and SGT Thomas were killed, and (b)(3), (b)(6) was wounded. (Exhibits A, B).

(11) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **Determine whether any equipment assigned to SGT Rodgers or SGT Thomas was lost or destroyed during the operation.** There is no evidence to indicate that any of SGT Rodgers' equipment was lost during the operation. While he was carrying sensitive equipment, those items were collected from his person and secured by US Forces prior to being loaded in the CASEVAC helicopter. (b)(3), (b)(6) Similarly, there is no evidence to indicate that any of SGT Thomas' equipment was lost during the operation. While he was carrying sensitive equipment during the operation, those items were collected from his person and secured by US Forces prior to being loaded in the CASEVAC helicopter. (Exhibit U). Finally, there is no evidence that any of the equipment assigned to any other US Forces participating in the operation was lost or destroyed.

(12) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **Address any other relevant matters pertaining to this incident.**

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(a) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Valor of U.S. Personnel.

(i) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ During the operation on 26-27 April 2017, U.S. military forces performed in an exemplary manner in the face of a well-prepared and aggressive enemy. The Soldiers from TM BAF were under immediate and incredibly intense contact for the entire duration of the mission and the air crews continuously supported the ground force without hesitation despite receiving effective fire. This intensity of enemy contact both contributed to the friendly fire incident and also illustrated the valor of U.S. forces. During the course of this investigation, the team was struck by the mutual admiration described by those involved in the mission and believe ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ provides the best summary: "The performance of the customers, my aircrews, and all of those involved should put fear in the minds of our enemies and comfort in the commanders who send us across the wire. The Rangers will always 'Fight onto the Ranger objective and complete the mission' and the Night Stalkers that I had the privilege of leading would rather 'Die than quit'!"

(ii) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **SGT Joshua Rodgers**, a team leader in second platoon, without regard for his own safety, performed with gallantry and intrepidity in the face of intense and aggressive fires from the enemy. Although he was wounded by a bullet that penetrated through his leg, SGT Rodgers placed a tourniquet on his own leg and continued the fight until he was mortally wounded by a gunshot wound to the head. All consideration should be given to decorating SGT Rodgers with a valorous award.

(iii) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ performed with gallantry and intrepidity in the face of intense and aggressive fires from the enemy. After falling from the rope during the fast rope insertion due to aircraft elevation, ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ took charge of his element and led them through an entrenched and determined enemy. His calm demeanor under fire ensured his wounded Soldiers were evacuated at the earliest opportunity and ultimately resulted in fewer U.S. forces being wounded or killed than likely would have resulted in the absence of his leadership. All consideration should be given to decorating ~~(b)(3), (b)(5)~~ or valor.

(iv) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ performed with gallantry and intrepidity providing extraordinary care to three wounded Soldiers while under intense and aggressive fires from the enemy. ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ distinguished himself as an unparalleled medic by conducting ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ under extreme low light conditions. ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ demonstrated great skill while working almost exclusively under night optical device throughout the enemy contact. Additionally ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ demonstrated a high degree of physical strength as he was the sole CPR provider to

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SGT Thomas for 15 minutes. All consideration should be given to decorating (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) for valor.

(v) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ (b)(3), (b)(6)
directed ground and aerial fires under constant enemy fire. His actions enabled the ground force to maneuver on the objective and set the conditions for a MEDEVAC and the ground force to exfil. Controlling a JTAC and two forward observers, (b)(3), (b)(6) managed an air stack including eleven assets, including, reconnaissance platforms, air weapons teams, F-16's and a AC-130 gunship. The (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) described (b)(3), (b)(6) actions. (b)(7)a in the 1150 and 1000 series compounds, so while under enemy small arms fire, (b)(3), (b)(6) completely exposed himself from our fighting position to work the target handoff with (b)(1)1.4a It took several minutes to get (b)(7)a alked onto the 1000 and 1150, however, there was finally a positive handoff both with visual target designation via IR laser from an IZLID and over the FD1 radio net from (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) bold action set the conditions for suppression on the 1000 series compound and two hellfire missions on the 1150 series from (b)(7)a effectively destroying the enemy fighting positions.”(Exhibit A). All consideration should be given to decorating (b)(3), (b)(6) for valor.

6. ~~(S//NF)~~ **Findings.** This investigation was charged with making the following findings: 1) Determine the cause of the injuries and deaths of US forces, 2) Determine the nature of the medical treatment provided to injured and killed US forces, 3) Determine whether the injuries and deaths of US forces were in the line of duty IAW AR 600-8-4, and 4) Determine whether US forces used force in compliance with applicable laws of armed conflict, rules of engagement, as well as operational and tactical authorities and guidance. 5) Importance of the mission and execution. Additionally, we were charged to address any other relevant matters pertaining to this incident. After carefully considering the evidence, we find the following:

a. ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **Cause of Death.**

(1) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ The witness statements, autopsies, and ballistics evidence all indicate that SGT Rodgers and SGT Thomas died as a result of friendly fire by US forces on 27 April 2017 (Exhibit N). SGT Thomas and SGT Rogers performed honorably and I believe both SGT Rogers and SGT Thomas prevented further casualties based off their performance. Despite this tragic outcome, SGT Rogers and SGT Thomas contributed significantly to the success of this mission and their actions are in the finest traditions of the U.S. Army.

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(2) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ While SGT Thomas and SGT Rodgers were killed by friendly fire, their deaths were not the result of criminal misconduct or gross negligence. Rather, this unfortunate incident resulted from a confluence of a number of contributing factors.

(a) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Immediacy and intensity of enemy contact. Except for the initial minutes after the first two elements were inserted by helicopter, the U.S. forces were engaged with constant small arms, PKM, and RPG fire for the entire duration that they were on the objective. By the time the element with SGT Thomas and SGT Rodgers began FRIES insertion, they were under effective small arms fire, causing the helicopter to take evasive action. Near simultaneously, Battle Position South was engaged by enemy gunfire from multiple directions. At this point and throughout the duration of the mission, the enemy completely enveloped friendly forces. Essentially, the raid target objective was at the center of an enemy circle, with enemy positions in depth, interconnected by trenches and tunnels surrounding the raid force. When the element with SGT Thomas and SGT Rodgers initiated movement north to the objective, they found themselves in the middle of crossfire between U.S. forces at BP South and enemy forces in compounds 710 and 700. Moreover, all three maneuver elements received complex enemy fire from multiple positions.

(b) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Proximity of the enemy to friendly forces. Many U.S. forces, including those forces at Battle Position South, received enemy contact from 360 degrees. This created chaos and confusion on the battlefield, which was only compounded by the lack of separation between friendly and enemy positions. The enemy fired upon SGT Thomas' and SGT Rogers' element from as close as 80 meters. Battle Position South received effective enemy fire from the 10 series compounds to their east, in addition to the south, southeast and southwest. Additionally, Battle Position South was attacked by an enemy grenade from the 30 series buildings as the assault force breached the target compound. Following the assault force breach, the enemy detonated a Personal Borne Improvised Explosive Device inside the target compound in an attempt to kill U.S. forces. Throughout the entire raid, the enemy maneuvered into close proximity of U.S. forces utilizing tunnels and interconnecting trenches. The lack of illumination further complicated U.S. forces' ability to discriminate between friendly and enemy positions. This raid was conducted during a period of zero illumination, which negated the effectiveness of night vision goggles. All of this was further compounded by the fact that vegetation obstructed the view between the two friendly positions. Finally, as Battle Position South engaged compounds 680 and 690, the Surface Danger Zone (SDZ) for weapon system includes the friendly position with SGT Thomas and SGT Rodgers.

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(3) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Further considerations.

(a) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Delayed movement from southern position. The isolation and secondary assault force planned to land on HLZ SIERRA but due to conditions on the ground was diverted south near HLZ SALLY and conducted a fast rope insertion versus landing. However, at the same time, the primary assault force was initiating the breach on the objective, compound 10. This is corroborated by the fact that as ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ element was roping, the primary assault force was initiating the breach on the 10 series. This loss of tempo and increased distance to move to the isolation and secondary assault force positions placed them in proximity to enemy forces engaging BP-S. BP-S returned fire on the enemy, and unknown to them, engaged the isolation and secondary assault force, who at the time should have been forward and to the west of the enemy location in compound 680.

(b) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Volume and effectiveness of enemy fire. Both ground and aerial statements describe effective and sustained small arms (AK47), heavy machine guns (PKM), grenade and anti-tank munitions (RPG) employed by the enemy. While U.S. forces effectively employed direct, indirect, and aerial fires to neutralize the enemy threat, the enemy maintained a heavy volume of fire through the duration of the mission. During the CASEVAC and exfiltration, enemy fire increased in volume as the aircraft approached the landing zones.

(c) ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Limited visibility. ~~(b)(1)1.4a~~ ~~(b)(1)1.4a~~ This protection facilitated tactical surprise and reduced the effectiveness of enemy fire; however ~~(b)(1)1.4a~~ ~~(b)(1)1.4a~~ This, combined with the vegetation between BP South and SSG Young's maneuver element, reduced BP South's ability to observe IR lasers.

b. ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ Medical Treatment. The medical care provided to SGT Rodgers, SGT Thomas, and ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ was not only appropriate, but exceptional, given the circumstances. ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ quickly identified that SGT Rodgers was beyond care and immediately began treating SGT Thomas. The amount of care that he provided to SGT Thomas in an effort to save his life, using primarily night vision goggles as he performed surgical procedures, is nothing short of astounding. Additionally ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ appropriately assessed the severity of ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ injuries in relation to those of SGT Thomas, and managed to also provide him with the level of treatment necessary in order to allow ~~(b)(3), (b)(6)~~ continue with the mission until he was able to receive more extensive treatment at the hospital facility at Bagram Airfield.

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c. ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **Line of Duty.** SGT Rodgers and SGT Thomas were both killed in combat operations while performing their duties professionally and competently. I find their deaths were both in the line of duty. Additionally, I find that (b)(3), (b)(6) injury was also incurred in the line of duty.

d. ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **Use of Force.** The evidence shows US ground and air assets at all times followed the laws of armed conflict, rules of engagement, and tactical guidance; and the GFC employed fires from ADM proportionally to the enemy threat and only in self-defense.

7. ~~(S//REL TO FVEY)~~ **Recommendations.** In view of the above findings, I recommend:

(b)(5)

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(b)(5)

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(b)(5)

8. (U) The point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at SVOIP: (b)(6)
(b)(6) or (b)(3), (b)(6) [@mail.smil.mil](mailto: @mail.smil.mil).

(b)(3), (b)(6)

(b)(6) U.S. Army
Investigating Officer

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Figure 1:

(b)(1)1.4a

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Figure 2:

(b)(1)1.4a

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Figure 3:

(b)(1)1.4a

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Figure 4:

(b)(1)1.4a

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Figure 5:

(b)(1)1.4a