



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

**Mazar-e Sharif Battle Site Survey
Support Documents
(Revised)**

William M. Knarr, Jr.

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PREFACE

This publication supports the Mazar-e Sharif Reconstruction by providing the transcripts and summaries from the battle site survey trip to Afghanistan.

The objective of the Mazar-e Sharif Reconstruction was to “reconstruct salient aspects of a major Afghanistan Campaign [Mazar-e Sharif] in virtual simulation to support historical analysis as well as further research and development.”¹ In December 2001, a team consisting of personnel from the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA), the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA), the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), and Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (SFODA) 595 visited Afghanistan. The purpose was to validate or reconcile on-hand data and collect additional information by conducting a battle site survey and interviews of key participants, such as GEN Dostum, his subcommanders, and former Taliban. This document is different than its original in that the transcripts have been edited to make them more readable (to be used by Joint and Service training centers and schools) and Appendix B, Battle Site Survey Video Logs, has been extracted.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The battle site survey and ultimately overall project success depended on access and opportunity. Many thanks to GEN Franks, Combatant Commander, CENTCOM, his staff, and in particular the J8; the U.S. Special Operations Command; and the 5th Special Forces Group for their support during a time when they were working a multitude of priority actions. In country we could not have collected the needed information without the full cooperation of GEN Dostum, who opened up his house and resources to support our venture.

I would also like to thank John Frost, a team member, for work he did on the transcripts and video portion of the document, Richard Wright for his diligent review, and Tom Milani and Carolyn Leonard for the professional editing. Additionally, thanks to the other team members,

¹ Project Assignment Number DA-3-2150, “Enduring Freedom Reconstruction.”

Captain Mark, Sergeant First Class Bill, Sergeant First Class Vince, Ward Page, Dave Potaznik, George Lukes, and Major Dan Striedieck. The media portion of the project could not have been done without the campaign photographs provided by the Service members.

DEDICATION

This publication is dedicated to the “quiet professionals” of Special Forces Operational Detachment A 595 and their Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps brethren who entered unknown territory in late October 2001 to meet and defeat an enemy that had terrorized the world. This mature, adaptable, innovative, and highly trained group of professionals defined the characteristics of “Transformation” as the rest of the Department of Defense wrestled with the concept. Their courage and warrior ethos set and maintained a high standard for the United States’ initial engagements in the war on terrorism and solidified the country’s sense of pride as Americans.

IN MEMORY OF...

Maybe it was the calm assurance that SFC Bill Bennett exuded when you were with him. You know, it’s the feeling you get that, no matter what happens, you’re with a professional and everything will be okay. You also feel secure knowing the nation has people of this quality defending its freedom. Unfortunately, freedom has its price. SFC Bill Bennett was killed in action on 12 September 2003, in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, of wounds received when his team raided an enemy force stronghold. Bill will be sorely missed, but his legacy of heroism and dedication will live on.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

At the request of GEN Tommy Franks, Combatant Commander, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), a Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency/Institute for Defense Analyses (DARPA/IDA) team reconstructed “salient aspects of a major Afghanistan campaign (e.g., Mazar-e Sharif) in virtual simulation to support historical analysis as well as further research and development.” The reconstruction, and in particular the ground force data reconciliation, depended on quality and detailed data, some of which simply wasn’t available without “walking the ground,” that is, conducting a battle site survey and talking to key Afghan participants.

The Battle Site Survey Team included representatives from CENTCOM, DARPA, IDA, and the original Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (SFODA) that participated in the campaign. GEN Dostum, the Northern Alliance Commander of Afghan forces for the campaign; his subcommanders; and his security force escorted the Battle Site Survey Team through the major battle sites south of Mazar-e Sharif. The battle site survey validated and reconciled on-hand data and collected additional data on team movements, locations, times, engagement areas, battle damage, terrain, etc. To represent all perspectives, the Battle Site Survey Team interviewed the primary Northern Alliance commanders, subcommanders, and former Taliban.

This publication supports the Mazar-e Sharif reconstruction by organizing and publishing the interview transcripts created during the Battle Site Survey Team’s visit to Mazar-e Sharif. Those transcripts, along with the collection prior to the Battle Site Survey and working group sessions following the Battle Site Survey, contain the basic data for the reconstruction and a rich source of information for follow-on analysis. This publication supports other IDA publications such as *Learning from the First Victory of the 21st Century: Mazar-e Sharif (Revised)* (IDA Document D-4015) and *Operation Enduring Freedom Battle Reconstruction: Battle Site Survey and Ground Force Data Reconciliation* (IDA Document D-2925).

INTERVIEWS

There were a total of 32 hours of video and 11 hours of cassette tape. They originally² accounted for 45 transcripts representing 27.75 hours of interviews and discussions. Thirteen of the transcripts were in the original language, that is, from Dari, Uzbek, or Pashtu. For example, one transcript would be of the original interpreter on the tape speaking in English. The second would be of the Afghan speaker. These second “interpretations” were valuable because the proficiency of the original interpretation, in some cases, was very poor; in some cases we may have received the view of the interpreter and not that of the interviewee. Hence, this provided a good double check on the accuracy of the information.

OBSERVATIONS

The interviews, notes, and logs provide unique first-hand perspectives from on-the-ground operators that participated in the fight for Mazar. They include interviews with Special Operations Forces, Northern Alliance commanders, townspeople, and former Taliban. Basic insights included the following:

- Precision weapons were impressive, but without “boots on the ground” they became ineffective; according to General Atta, they were counterproductive: “The bombing [without ground forces to direct it], was having a negative impact on the soul, the morale of my soldiers...”
- Maneuver and fire were both required to defeat an adaptive and committed enemy. In many cases the Taliban learned the cycle time on the overhead B-52 bomb drops and were able to reposition for the next strike. They also learned to keep their heads down until after the bomb strike and then recover quickly to engage the charging Northern Alliance forces. Haji Chari best summarized the commitment of the Taliban: They “didn’t care about the air strikes. Even though...some of them were killed by the air strikes, they didn’t care, they kept coming.”
- Unconventional warfare capitalized on small, agile teams adapting to battlefield conditions to leverage joint and coalition capabilities. It also minimized U.S. presence.
- Information Operations was one of General Frank’s “Eight Lines of Operations.” Although not a primary U.S. activity in the north, the concept served General Dostum well. Minimum U.S. presence allowed General Dostum to conduct a psychological operations campaign of his own. He recruited local Taliban to fight against the Pakistani, Chechen, Saudi, and other “foreigners” that came to

² After reconciling the various “duplicate” transcripts, the final tally was 25 transcripts.

Afghanistan to fight their own Jihad. He exploited this distinction quite effectively to encourage Taliban defections. Had the U.S. presence been greater, however, he would have had a difficult time touting other Asians as “foreigners.”

Other observations included the significance of the Darya Suf to the campaign, the technology gap, and the “warrior spirit.”

Although we knew before going to Mazar that the campaign was the linchpin to the north, it was our hypothesis that the fight in the Darya Suf, in particular in the area of Baluch on 5 November 2001, was the linchpin to the campaign. Interviews confirmed that hypothesis. According to General Dostum and others, the Taliban continued to flow forces down the Shulgareh Valley into the Darya Suf to reinforce Mullah Razzak’s units near Baluch. As General Mohaqiq indicated, once the Northern Alliance defeated the Taliban in the Baluch area, resistance was minimal as they approached Mazar. Per discussions with Commander Fakir, he recounted a radio conversation between a Taliban Commander in Baluch and General Dostum. The Taliban leader, in responding to General Dostum’s prediction that he would capture the village, replied, “If you capture this area that means you capture the whole north.”

An ODA member coined the technology gap between the Afghans and U.S. forces as “the Jetsons meet the Flintstones.” It was not only evident in their mode of transportation, the horse, but also in interview comments, such as when CDR Fakir talks about the first time he saw aerial refueling of fighter aircraft:

What I’m going to tell you is most interesting. I have seen a big plane being chased by five small jets. And I calls Mr. Dostum and tell him that they are hijacking the big plane with five small jets, then...[Mark] said no, the big plane is getting fuel to the jets.

One thing they had in common was the warrior spirit. Courage—the human dimension—served to build trust and camaraderie that fueled the coalition’s advance toward Mazar.

I. INTRODUCTION

At 0200 local on 20 October 2001 (2130 Zulu, 19 October 2001), Special Forces Operational Detachment A (SFODA) 595, or simply ODA 595, landed at Helicopter Landing Zone (LZ) Albatross in Dehi, Afghanistan, 60 miles south of Mazar-e Sharif. Their mission: “ODA 595 conducts Unconventional Warfare (UW) in support of GEN Dostum in order to render UW operational area unsafe for Taliban and terrorist organizations.”³

As CPT Mark’s⁴ detachment stepped off the MH-47E Chinook Special Operations Helicopter, GEN Dostum’s forces greeted them. This linkup would begin the 3-week ground and air operations to capture Mazar-e Sharif, which would lead to the fall of Northern Afghanistan and eventually all of Afghanistan.

A. PROJECT BACKGROUND

GEN Tommy Franks, Combatant Commander, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), in a 28 December 2001 letter to Dr. Tony Tether, Director of the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA), explained that he wanted a reconstruction of events in Afghanistan:

Today we are engaged in a new network-centric war. It needs to be recorded and broken down for further research, development, and historical analysis. Thus my request to you is to reconstruct a view of this war...recommend the right scenario or chain of events for my approval.⁵

In February 2002, the DARPA/IDA team recommended the fall of Mazar-e Sharif as the “right scenario.” In March 2002 CENTCOM approved the recommendation, stating that the Campaign for Mazar-e-Sharif “provides us with a view of a transformational battle that incorporates the application of technology and 21st Century operational fires by Special Forces fully integrated with indigenous opposition forces employing less than modern tactics and logistical support concepts.”⁶

³ Presentation to the Army Resource Management Conference, Denver Colorado, “Special Forces—Operation Enduring Freedom.”

⁴ Naming convention for this paper is rank and first name for SOF military personnel.

⁵ 28 December 2001 letter by GEN Franks, USCENTCOM, to Dr. Tony Tether, DARPA.

⁶ March 2002 letter by LTG Delong, DCINC, CENTCOM to Dr. Tony Tether.

B. PURPOSE

The objective of the Enduring Freedom Reconstruction was to “reconstruct salient aspects of a major Afghanistan campaign (i.e., Mazar-e Sharif) in virtual simulation to support historical analysis as well as further research and development.”⁷ The reconstruction depends on quality and detailed data, some of which simply were not available without “walking the ground” and talking to some of the key participants.

The purpose of the visit to Mazar-e Sharif and the Darya Suf was to:

- Validate and reconcile on-hand data and collect additional data by conducting a battle site survey. An accurate and credible ground picture requires a battle site survey, in this case walking the ground with elements of the original ODA to validate team movements, times, engagement areas, battle damage assessments (BDA), and terrain data; using Global Positioning System (GPS), video, photos, artifacts/remains, and to reconcile ODA team member recollection for record.
- Interview some of the key participants, such as GEN Dostum, his subcommanders, and Taliban/Al Qaida defectors and detainees, and record and present all perspectives.

This publication supports the Operation Enduring Freedom battle reconstruction by organizing and publishing the interview transcripts that were created from the Battle Site Survey Team’s visit to Mazar-e Sharif.⁸ Those transcripts contain the basic data for the reconstruction and a rich source of information for follow-on analysis. This publication supports other IDA publications such as *Learning from the First Victory of the 21st Century: Mazar-e Sharif (Revised)* (IDA Document D-4015)⁹ and *Operation Enduring Freedom Battle Reconstruction: Battle Site Survey and Ground Force Data Reconciliation* (IDA Document D-2925).¹⁰ Those publications place the interviews, logs, and notes from this document in context by providing the reconciliation and analysis necessary to paint a larger, more coherent picture.

⁷ Project Assignment Number DA-3-2150, “Enduring Freedom Reconstruction.”

⁸ Photograph galleries and GPS tables are published in IDA Document D-2925.

⁹ William M. Knarr, Jr. and Robert F. Richbourg, *Learning from the First Victories of the 21st Century: Mazar-e Sharif (Revised)*. Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, January 2010, IDA Document D-4015.

¹⁰ Knarr, William, and John Frost. *Operation Enduring Freedom Battle Reconstruction: Battle Site Survey and Ground Force Data Reconciliation*. Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, February 2004. IDA Document D2925

C. PEOPLE AND PLACES (APPENDIX A)

Appendix A lists the people and places covered in this report and provides some background where appropriate. Titles are also discussed. The following provides the protocol for spelling the names of people and places:

- *Locations*—There are a number of spellings for each location. For standardization and consistency, the first preference for spellings was from the *Afghanistan Country Handbook*, which lists CENTCOM-preferred spellings.¹¹ If the name was not in the handbook, the next preference was to use the spelling from map sheets, such as the 1:250,000 Joint Operations Graphic or 1:100,000 Tactical Maps.
- *Afghan names*—Interpreters¹² provided the majority of spellings for the names of the Afghan people.
- *ODA names and rank*—To minimize team member exposure, only rank (to delineate the military from the civilians) and first name were used during the Battle Site Survey. That convention is also used here. Ranks reflect service convention. For example, Staff Sergeant Chad is SSG Chad, which indicates that he is a staff sergeant in the Army, but Staff Sergeant Matt is SSgt Matt, indicating that he is a staff sergeant in the Air Force.

D. MAZAR-E SHARIF PHASES

To support the reconstruction, the various logs, transcripts, and notes are linked to the following Mazar-e Sharif Battle Phases, from background events before insertion, to the battles of the Darya Suf and Tiangi, to the fall of Mazar-e Sharif, and post events:

- Phase 0—Background
- Phase I—Mission Preparation, Insertion, and Initial Operations (15–20 October 2001)
- Phase II—Building Coalition Confidence and Strategy (21–28 October 2001)
- Phase III—Battlefield: Preparation and Positioning (29 October–4 November 2001)
- Phase IV—Battle for the Darya Suf (5 November 2001)
- Phase V—Exploitation and Pursuit (6–8 November 2001)

¹¹ DOD-2630-AFG-001-02 *Afghanistan Country Handbook*, October 2001, FOUO.

¹² Center for Army Lessons Learned Handbook, Interpreter Operations, Multi-Service Reference Manual for Interpreter Operations, Air Land Sea Application Center, Tactics, Techniques and Procedures, No. 04-7, March 2004 (FOUO).

- Phase VI—Tiangi (9–10 November 2001)
- Phase VII—The Fall of Mazar-e Sharif (10 November 2001)
- Phase VIII—After the Fall of Mazar-e Sharif

E. PUBLICATION STRUCTURE

Figure I-1 shows the structure of this publication and the relationship between chapters, appendixes, and annexes. Chapter I provides the Introduction; Chapter II discusses the Video Operation; Chapter III, Interviews, Transcripts, and Notes; and Chapter IV, Observations.

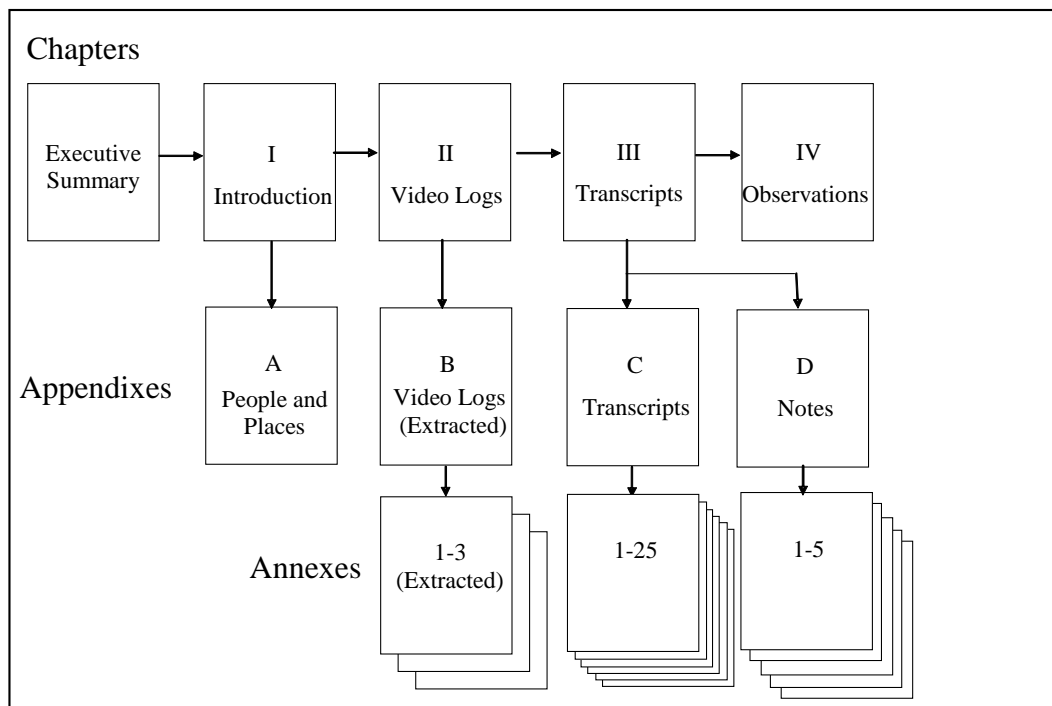


Figure I-1. Publication Structure

II. VIDEO OPERATION

Video was used to capture every aspect of the trip. Linked with the logs, the videos provided a minute-by-minute account of the battle site survey. Although cassette tapes and still photographs complemented the documentation effort, video was preferred because it inherently linked the audio and visual. The linking of photographs and audio had to be accomplished by notebook, which made it cumbersome to organize the data for analysis. Having said that, there were a number of times that the cassette recorder, still camera, and pen and paper were the only tools available to “capture the moment,” albeit not as dynamically as the video camera might have.

A. VIDEO EQUIPMENT¹³

The choice for professional video was the Sony DSR PD-150 camera. With 3 CCDs for better color and the ability to record in the higher quality DVCAM mode, it had everything needed in a camera, the exception being that it only accepts MiniDV tapes, which hold just 40 minutes of video in DVCAM mode. That aside, it was smaller and lighter than other professional cameras on the market, making it ideal for the field. In preparation for the worst-case scenario, a second, identical professional camera was packed in a hard case as a backup. A soft cover was purchased for the main camera to help protect against dust and light rain.

The complete video kit included a tripod and lighting equipment, which were mainly for

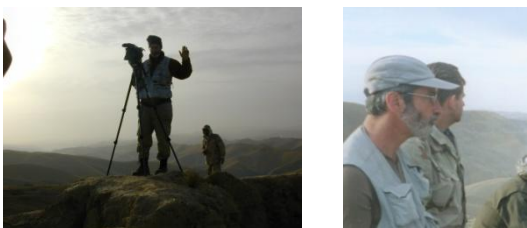


Figure II-1. David Potasznik

use in interviews. Peripherals, such as extension cords, a converter plug, a surge protector, and rechargeable batteries were packed.

In addition, Ward Page, DARPA Program Manager for the Enduring Freedom Reconstruction, brought a couple of smaller Sony MiniDV Handcam type camcorders. They proved a good

¹³ This paragraph is a repeat from IDA Document D-2925 written by John Frost. It is used in this chapter for background.

choice because they used the same type tape as the professional camera; “provided another camera angle”; and on more than one occasion, during those times the Battle Site Survey Team split to survey different sites, provided video capability for the second site.

Two main concerns were portability and the potential for equipment failure caused by the dust. The fine dust of Afghanistan wreaks havoc on professional computer and video equipment, and replacements were not common items at the market in Mazar-e Sharif.

B. VIDEO TEAM

The primary video team consisted of David Potaznik (Figure II-1) and John Frost (Figure II-2) with David on the Sony DSR PD-150 camera and John supporting David by operating a Sony MiniDV Handcam and the backup film camera, a Canon ELPH LT. Ward Page operated the other Sony MiniDV Handcam. SFC Vince used his personal video camera and provided copies to IDA/DARPA upon completion. Bill Knarr used the Nikon Coolpix 950 Digital Camera.



Figure II-2. John Frost

C. VIDEO OPERATIONS

Video operations were virtually continuous, conducted while en route to the various locations in the battle site area, during stops at the various overlooks to cover different perspectives, and during site surveys and interviews. At times the most important feature was the audio to capture conversations and descriptions. See D-2925 for a description of the video operations and interviews during the site surveys.

D. VIDEO LOGS – EXTRACTED – AVAILABLE TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND THEIR CONTRACTORS THROUGH DARPA/IXO

III. INTERVIEWS AND TRANSCRIPTS

Interviews during the Battle Site Survey trip were conducted under various conditions. The initial interviews, before deployment for the battle site survey, were conducted in Sheberghan at GEN Dostum's guesthouse and at the ODA house in Mazar-e Sharif. These were typical sit-down interviews that provided background information on each of the interviewees and their involvement in the battle for Mazar, both before and after 9/11.¹⁴ Post battle site survey interviews were conducted in the same manner, but the team had the benefit of information obtained during the battle site survey, which helped develop subsequent interview strategies and questions.

Interviews during the battle site survey location normally focused on the site visit. The team arrived at a site and recorded the initial site location using GPS, and the site was described for the record in operational terms. For example, "This is GEN Dostum's command post on 8 November. This is where he briefed his commanders on his strategy for Tiangi." Then basic information was asked of each interviewee that operated from that site: What was the significance of the event at this location? What was its relationship to other events and locations? A video camera was preferred for recording the interview; if it was not available; a cassette recorder and still camera were used. The interview started by identifying the interviewee and photographing or videotaping him. In addition, during the interview the camera was pointed in the direction the interviewee was pointing to or addressing.

Video and still cameras, cassette players, notebooks, magnetic compasses,¹⁵ and GPS receivers were all necessary resources to conduct the interviews; however, the most important asset was the interpreter. During the interviews we had access to three interpreters: Esam, Kamal, and Hafiz. As interpreters they were rated as having limited working proficiency (2),

¹⁴ The Northern Alliance was fighting for Mazar-e Sharif long before the U.S. forces arrived. A convenient landmark was the fight before U.S. Forces arrived and after. Although, more accurately there was 7 October when the bombing campaign started and 19 October when ODA 595 was inserted, the Northern Alliance normally referred to their struggle before and after 9/11 (i.e., before and after a U.S. commitment).

¹⁵ The compass on my Garmin GPS only worked when we were moving.

general professional proficiency (3+), and advanced professional proficiency (4).¹⁶ However, only one of the three understood how to work with an interviewer. As an example, two of the interpreters responded in third person rather than first person and allowed the interviewee to drift off the subject.¹⁷ The team also had access to a Phraselator, but rarely used it because of access to interpreters.

Upon return to the United States from Afghanistan, the interviews were transcribed by English, Pashtu, and Dari speakers. This had the obvious benefit of enabling us to compare the original responses with the Afghan interpreters' version. Each interpreter, however, had a different technique for transcribing the tapes and used various spellings for names of people and locations. In addition, some interpreters provided the questions and responses, but most provided just the responses. For example, some responses were merely "yes," without reference to the question. The question was then inserted to give meaning to the answer. Hence, several reviews of the tapes were required to reconcile the spellings for people and locations and clarify responses after reviewing the tapes. Transcription service was provided by Maguire-Reeder.

"Operation Enduring Freedom Reconstruction: Battle Site Survey and Ground Force Data Reconstruction" (IDA Document D-2925) places those interviews and transcripts in context with the sequence of the battle site survey and the campaign. However, events described in D-2925 came from a variety of sources and not just the transcripts, notes and logs contained here. See D-2925 for a more complete description of the campaign.

This chapter provides a short descriptor for each of the transcripts, to include notes. If several transcripts provide essentially the same information, the descriptor consolidates those transcripts into one summary. The transcripts appear in Appendix C, which also provides an index (extract in Table III-1) for the transcripts. The table also:

- Provides an audit to transcriber records and video and cassette tapes.
- Identifies the interviewees.
- Briefly comments on the contents of the transcript.

¹⁶ The author's best guess at rating interpreter language proficiency in accordance with the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILRT) that rates on a scale from 0 (no proficiency) to 5 (functionally native proficiency).

¹⁷ Center for Army Lessons Learned Handbook, Interpreter Operations, Multi-Service Reference Manual for Interpreter Operations, Air Land Sea Application Center, Tactics, Techniques and Procedures, No. 04-7, March 04 (FOUO).

- Rates the quality of the transcript, from 1 (poor) to 5 (very good) in two areas:
The first number rates the clarity and quality of the transcript: Is it clear? Does it make sense?¹⁸ The second number rates the contribution of the information to the reconstruction.
- Indicates which phase(s) of the battle the transcript supports. Phase descriptions are provided in Chapter I.
- Indicates what media the transcript was derived from, such as a video or cassette tape.

Table III-1. Transcript Matrix (Extract)

Transcript # ^a	Interviewee	Remarks	Quality ^b	Phase ^c	Tape ^d
1	GEN Dostum and CDR Lal	7 Dec 02, at GEN Dostum's house in Sheberghan for dinner. Primary interviewee is CDR Lal.	3/3	0,2,6	DV1and2
2 (2and3)	CDR Haji Chari	7 Dec at Sheberghan.	4/4	0,4,6	DV3,4
3(4and5)	CDR Fakir	7 Dec, at Sheberghan—discussions on tactics in the Darya Suf and engagements at Tiangi and Sultan Razia.	3/3	0,3 - 8	DV6,7
4(6)	CDR Ak-yasin	8 Dec, Mazar, CDR Ak-yasin speaks in general about the entire period.	3/3	0-6	DV8,9
5(7)	CDR Ali Sarwar, GEN Morta Sar	8 Dec in MeS—GEN Morta Sar was Hazara—Shia.	4/4	0,2,4,5,6	DV9
6(8)	CDR Abdu	Background on Balkhob and OGA.	3/3	0	DV11
7(9)	GEN Dostum	Tape of dinner discussion on 8 Dec — GEN Dostum with map.	2/2	0,2	C2 Side A

Notes:

- ^a The transcript number corresponds to the transcript in this publication. The number in parentheses refers to the transcript number in IDA document D-2925.
- ^b The quality of the material is rated in two areas. Ratings range from 1 (poor) to 5 (very good). The first number rates the quality of the transcript itself, i.e., Is it coherent? The second number rates the information, i.e., How well does the information contribute to the reconstruction?
- ^c This column indicates which phases (0–8) of the battle for MeS the transcript supports.
- ^d The transcript corresponds to Dave's Video (DV) tape number and/or to Cassette (C) tape number and side.

¹⁸ The author rated transcript quality. The clarity of the transcript was heavily dependent on the clarity and quality of the video and audio source.

A. TRANSCRIPT 1, GEN DOSTUM AND CDR LAL



Figure III-1.
GEN Dostum
(Courtesy of
SOF)

The interview for Transcript 1 was conducted at GEN Dostum’s guest house in Sheberghan. GEN Dostum (Figure III-1) introduced transcript 1, but the primary interviewee was CDR Lal. CDR Lal was one of GEN Dostum’s most trusted commanders.

CDR Lal started fighting the Taliban in the Sar-i Pol area to the west. He primarily conducted guerilla warfare, ambushing the Taliban to seize weapons and ammunition. In 1999 he fought in the Bahmian region and later in the Balkhob area and then moved to the Darya Suf in the summer of 2001 to link up with GEN Dostum.

When asked if he had received military training such as GEN Dostum had with the Soviets, CDR Lal was adamant, “Let me tell you that I’ve been fighting for 24 years so this I think a big school, maybe bigger than any military colleges in the world, so I know how to fight, I know the tactics of war very well!” He also mentioned that, while others may have fled to other countries during the Taliban reign, “I was the only one who stayed in country.” CDR Lal made the point several times that GEN Dostum fought alongside and led his men at war and was very good at briefing his commanders on the strategy and what to expect. When asked the difference between the Taliban and Al Qaida, he said, “There is no good enemy, they are all bad.” Ammunition was the critical supply item. CDR Lal bought it by the weight. The night before Mazar fell (9 November 2001), CDR Lal bought 5,000 rounds. Horses were another critical item. He said that 30 horses and many people died as they fought through the Tiangi on 9 November 2001. When asked about “riding through the smoke and shrapnel of the American bombing of Taliban positions,” he replied, “The horses were used to the bombing and knew it was an American bomb, a friendly bomb.”



Figure III-2. CDR Lal

B. TRANSCRIPT 2, CDR HAJI CHARI

CDR Haji Chari entered Afghanistan in the spring of 2001 with GEN Dostum as



Figure III-3. CDR Haji Chari

one of GEN Dostum's security guards. Later he became a commander. CDR Chari spent the majority of his time with the Tiger 02C element, at Charsu on 5 November 2001, and on the Kafer Qalah on 9 November. He described the fighting on 5 November 2001 from their initial positions near Charsu. After an hour they moved forward and found that "tens of hundreds of Taliban are approaching our position and surrounding us!" He contacted GEN Dostum; CDR Ahmad Khan then opened up a corridor for the team to escape. The Taliban "didn't care about the air strikes. Even though...some of them

were killed by the air strikes, they didn't care, they kept coming."

Finally, he was able to carry the team's equipment on horseback as they withdrew to a ditch. They then made it back to their original observation post. When asked about obtaining intelligence on the enemy, CDR Haji Chari said they "used many methods. The first one was finding out the enemy's plans through radios...we had solved their passwords so we could understand if there was any attack...we [also] had some mobile people who were going alongside the battlefields and coming toward us and giving us their reports." CDR Chari also spoke of working with Tiger 02C on top of the Kafer Qalah on 9 November 2001 as GEN Dostum's forces broke through the Tiangi and entered Mazar-e Sharif. Once inside Mazar-e Sharif, CDR Chari accompanied CPT Mark and others to expel Taliban from the Sultan Razia Girls' School. The significance of this transcript is that CDR Chari describes events on 5 and 9 November 2001 as he escorted/guarded Tiger 02C.

C. TRANSCRIPT 3, CDR FAKIR



**Figure III-4. CDR Fakir
(Courtesy of SOF)**

CDR Fakir worked with GEN Dostum for approximately 14 years. He referred to himself as GEN Dostum’s Deputy or Executive Officer (XO) because after the meetings, GEN Dostum would expect him to coordinate the operations. He was also responsible for reconnaissance of the objective and knowing the enemy forces’ strength and disposition before the battles.

CDR Fakir talked of the strikes and described the precision before the ODA arrived as “throwing the bombs randomly...and there was no coordination from the ground...the targets were hit quite precisely after their arrival.”

He described his impressions the first time he saw an aerial refueling:

What I’m going to tell you is the most interesting I think. I have seen a big plane being chased by five small jets. And I calls Mr. Dostum and tell him that they are hijacking the big plane with five small jets, then Mr. Dostum calls Mark, and asks what’s happening? And then he [Mark] said no, the big plane is getting fuel to the jets.

Concerning Taliban tactics, CDR Fakir said that the Taliban would leave their positions when the B-52s attacked and then after the attack run back to their positions. The Northern Alliance tactic was to attack the other position after the bombardment. CDR Fakir said he could hear the Taliban fear of the B-52s over the radios.

Due to GEN Dostum’s successes, the Taliban moved forces from other areas to support its fight in the Darya Suf. The Northern Alliance exploited its successes by pursuing the enemy into the Keshendeh areas and up through the Shulgareh.

In the Tiangi, GEN Dostum was positioned at the top of the Kafer Qalah to organize the troops and spot the Taliban. He verified that there were “30, 35 soldiers lost” and said, “I can

see [Soviet] BM-21s,¹⁹ they are not mines, these are 21s.” The transcript provides information on the Tiangi engagement.

D. TRANSCRIPT 4, CDR AK-YASIN



Figure III-5. CDR Ak-yasin (Courtesy of Ak-yasin)

GEN Ak-yasin (Figure III-5) is currently the border Commander on the Afghanistan-Uzbekistan border. At the time of the Darya Suf battles, he was a subcommander of Lal and had 40 infantrymen and 60 horsemen. He provided pictures of the early days in Balkhob and the Darya Suf. Ak-yasin fought for 23 years and recalls extreme shortages of ammo. He needed ammo more than water or food, although there were shortages of both. CDR Ak-yasin paid 300,000 Afghanis for buckets of water and drank from the same buckets as the horses. He used to look for ammo on the ground and clean up the rounds for use. CDR Ak-yasin traced the battle from the Safid Kotah area through the Darya Suf. He recalls strong resistance at the Boybe Che and Tiangi areas. He asked that the Americans not leave and forget about them.

E. TRANSCRIPT 5, CDR ALI SARWAR

CDR Ali Sarwar, currently the commander of Le Wa 114 (Division 114), was one of CDR Lal’s subcommanders. He had 40 horsemen and 20 dismounted soldiers during the battle of the Darya Suf. Ali Sarwar repeated what Ak-yasin said about ammo shortages and the basic flow of the battle from the Darya Suf through the Balkh River Valley to Mazar-e Sharif. Although CDR Fakir said that the losses in the Darya Suf were from BM 21s (per GEN Dostum it was the BM-21 and not landmines), both CDR Ak-yasin and CDR Ali Sarwar indicated there were a lot of mines in the Tiangi area.



Figure III-6. CDR Ali Sarwar

¹⁹ A BM-21 is a Soviet made multiple rocket launcher mounted on a truck. The launcher holds thirty-six 122 mm rockets.

F. TRANSCRIPT 5, GEN MORTA SAR

GEN Morta Sar was GEN Mohaqiq's commander in the Darya Suf and is currently the commander of the 38th Division. The significance of GEN Morta Sar interviewing early and then accompanying us to the Darya Suf was that he represented the Hazara people, a minority in Afghanistan. GEN Dostum was very sensitive of the need to include GEN Mohaqiq's people on the discussions since part of his leadership



Figure III-7. GEN Morta Sar

challenge was to bring all the factions together. GEN Morta Sar provided a good account of the abuses suffered by the Hazara Shia under the Taliban rule, saying that over 2,000 homes had been destroyed in the Safid Kotah area during the 4 years before the November 2001 victories in the Darya Suf. He also provided information on the engagements at Beshcam and Chapchal. He said they had attacked Beshcam from several directions and had captured it from the top (north). GEN Dostum's forces

then moved on Chapchal with approximately 1,000 men/horsemen from the back (southwest). He estimated that 1,000 Taliban—mostly Pakistani—were killed or captured.

G. TRANSCRIPT 6, CDR HAJI MUHAMMED ABDU

CDR Haji Muhammed Abdu is currently Mazar-e Sharif Deputy Mayor for GEN Mohaqiq, but he accompanied Mohaqiq during the war. CDR Abdu described the beginning of battles in the Darya Suf. Three anti-Taliban groups were assembled in the Darya Suf: the Jamiat with 1,000–1,500 horsemen; GEN Dostum with 800–900 horsemen; and the Wahdats (Hazara), the strongest, with 2,000 men (4,000 total). CDR Abdu said there were four things that made the missions successful: uniting the people of Afghanistan, taking out the Taliban Air Force, American air support/air attack, and putting U.S. forces on the ground. Commander Abdu related two very important events during the war—both related to precision targeting. The first was the destruction of enemy artillery on a very rainy night before the next day's battle (he couldn't remember the day, but his description seems to be of one of the close air support preparation days for Chapchal). They were impressed that the ground forces could relay the locations and



Figure III-8. CDR Haji Muhammed Abdu

the aircraft could precisely hit the target. The second was the targeting of the bridge at Pole Baraq. He said Taliban morale was very high before the bridge was taken out. The bridge was located in very difficult terrain and they thought it was impossible to destroy. The Taliban were amazed that “someone from the States could come to Afghanistan, not knowing the country or the landscape,” and destroy that bridge with precision munitions. They couldn’t believe it, and “Taliban morale went down, way, way down.” The bridge was over the river on one of their main resupply routes. He added that that was one of the reasons why the Taliban retreated.

H. TRANSCRIPT 7, GEN DOSTUM AT DINNER, MUD HUT SOUTH OF DEHLI, 8 DECEMBER 2002



Figure III-9. GEN Dostum Discussing Strategy

GEN Dostum and CPT Mark discussed the battles at Chapchal and Beshcam. GEN Dostum provided a good pre-9/11 description of his movement to Balkhob and then to the Darya Suf. However, he left forces in the Balkhob area as a diversion to keep the Taliban busy in that area. CPT Mark recalled the first day GEN Dostum took him and SSG Chad (communications sergeant) across the Darya Suf to Beshcam after one of the battles and how reluctant GEN Dostum was to allow Americans so close to the front lines.

I. TRANSCRIPT 8, GEN DOSTUM AND CPT MARK DISCUSSING EVENTS FROM ALBATROSS LZ TO BURRO DROP ZONE

On the morning of 9 December 2002, GEN Dostum took the team to Helicopter Landing Zone (HLZ) Albatross. HLZ Albatross was the ODA insertion point, their base camp from 20 to 31 October 2001, and a drop zone for resupply airdrops. GEN Dostum gathered 5,000 men in the HLZ Albatross area to fight the Taliban. He recalled that during one of the commanders’ meetings, the Taliban had someone inside wearing a concealed radio that enabled them to hear his plans for placing forces and, in particular, where the commanders, such as Ahmad Khan, would locate.



Figure III-10. GEN Dostum at the Base of the Trail Leading to Chapchal

drops and drop zones.

The Battle Site Survey Team stopped at the trailhead from the Darya Suf to Chapchal to discuss the battles for Beshcam and Chapchal, in particular the difficulties GEN Dostum had moving 1,500 troops to the north ridge of the Darya Suf to fight the Taliban. Although a treacherous route, he surprised the Taliban and was victorious. It was so treacherous, increasingly so in the rain, that he told the Americans to get off their horses and walk (we have original footage from GEN Dostum's videographer that shows this). The trail was the only available Northern Alliance route to and from the battle area. At the same time that they were moving soldiers, horses, and supplies up the trail, they were also trying to move the wounded down the trail on stretchers to the aid stations at HLZ Albatross.



Figure III-11. View from the Top—Trail from the Darya Suf to Chapchal

J. TRANSCRIPT 9, CPT MARK AT DROP ZONE BURRO, 9 DECEMBER 2002

On 31 October 2001, the ODA relocated its base camp at Drop Zone Burro, closer to the frontline to shorten the logistics resupply routes. Then, ODC 53, the Boxer element, was inserted at 0200 hours on the morning of 3 November 2001, and Tiger 02, 02B, 02D, and Boxer moved from here to man battle positions for the 5 November 2001 Battle of Baluch. The trail to the south was used to move people and supplies to Oimatan, Shamallak, and Omitak Mountain, located west along the southern rim of the Darya Suf gorge.

CPT Mark said that it snowed and rained while they were there in October-November 2001. Home for ODA members in November 2001 was a series of caves on the north side of DZ Burro.

K. TRANSCRIPT 10, CPT MARK DISCUSSING EVENTS AT KAMAL'S COMMAND POST, CHAPCHAL, BESHCAM AND LAL'S COMMAND POST

CPT Mark was interviewed at the site CDR Kamal occupied on 5 November 2001 for the battle of Baluch. From the command post, CPT Mark provided an orientation, pointing out the Village of Cobaki, Dostum's mountain headquarters to the south; the village of Oimatan, also to the south; Omitak Mountain to the west-southwest; Baluch to the west; and Charsu to the north. The transcript takes us east to the top of the Chapchal trail and then onto Beshcam/Chapchal.



Figure III-12. CPT Mark Describes Events from CDR Kamal's 5 November 2001 Command Post

CPT Mark provided a good description of the Beshcam/Chapchal events in conjunction with Dave's video log for Tape 14. He provided an excellent orientation of the area, including the observation post at Cobaki, from which the ODA initially called close air support. In particular, he described events 21 through 26 October 2001 as the Northern Alliance fought the Taliban in the Beshcam/Chapchal areas and the evening he and SSG Chad accompanied GEN Dostum to the battle-

field. GEN Dostum was concerned that the Taliban were mounting a counterattack and frustrated that his men had not taken the ridge line to the west from which a ZSU 23-2²⁰ was firing on the Northern Alliance. At GEN Dostum's command, the Northern Alliance mounted and charged the ZSU 23-2 from various positions. In an effort to rally forces and maintain contact with the battle, GEN Dostum ran down the hill and up the next ridge line. That evening the Northern Alliance took that ridge line and several others, losing a number of men in the conflict, including a good friend of GEN Dostum's. The fighting carried them through to the ridge lines to the west of Chapchal. Enemy casualties included 123 Pakistanis and 2 prisoners. CPT Mark relays the story of GEN Dostum and his soldiers engaged in the close

²⁰ Soviet-made anti-aircraft weapon with two 23 mm cannons normally mounted on a truck.

fight—within 20 meters of the enemy. They only had one grenade among them. One of the soldiers carried it into the enemy, and the Northern Alliance won. The transcript ends at CDR Lal’s 1–5 November 2001 command post. CPT Mark provides an orientation of the various positions from that location. The site provided a view of CDR Lal’s observation post to the west, the Chapchal area to the east, the Cobaki area across the Darya Suf to the south, and Omitak Mountain to the west-southwest. This is the area where CPT Mark, SFC Vince, and Tiger 02C stayed the night of the 31 October 2001 after departing DZ Burro. On 1 November 2001, 02C called close air support from CDR Lal’s command post into the Baluch area. CPT Mark also visited this area with LTC Max after the Boxer element arrived early on the morning 3 November 2001.

L. TRANSCRIPT 11, CPT MARK AND GEN DOSTUM , BALUCH, 9 DECEMBER 2002

The team was atop a hill south of Baluch overlooking Baluch, and the events discussed took place on the evening of 9 December 2002. GEN Dostum was talking about the fall of Baluch and Esam was the interpreter. Although the camera was pointed at GEN Dostum and Esam’s voice could be heard, CPT Mark’s voice was dominant and the transcriber was recording Mark, not Dostum. This is not on the transcript but on DV tape 14. GEN Dostum talked about the heaviest fighting taking place “at this time of day” (late evening) and provided some of the TTP. This is actually translated as 15R (2d channel).

Transcript 11 presents a radio conversation between CPT Mark and another American team member who was finding his way into the town of Baluch. Intermingled is CPT Mark’s description of the area and the battle that took place at Baluch. He also discusses the potential use of jumpers (HALO and static) into the Tiger 02A area near Omitak. (Although he doesn’t say Omitak, he talks about SFC Bill’s area and the infiltration of another team, probably Tiger 04.)



Figure III-13. Baluch

M. TRANSCRIPT 12, CDR FAKIR, BALUCH, 10 DECEMBER 2002

CDR Fakir was interviewed at the same location where GEN Dostum and CPT Mark were interviewed the night before. He said that the fighting took place outside the town, mostly on the ridge lines and hilltops, and that no fighting took place inside Baluch. He pointed to

the southwest where he approached from Shamallak and to the south/southeast where GEN Dostum's headquarters and Tiger 02D were located near Oimatan. CDR Kamal entered the area from Chapchal and approached from the southeast on the south side of the road.

CDR Lal, with approximately 600 to 700 horsemen, came from the east and through the notch in the ridge line approaching Baluch. CDR Ahmad Khan entered the area from the northeast from Charsu. CDR Fakir said that the attacks started at 0900 hours and that GEN Dostum's forces captured the area twice but were driven out both times. Finally at around 1600 hours, GEN Dostum attacked with approximately 1,500 horsemen. It was chaos; with several thousand enemy forces in the area, it was hard to tell the enemy from the friendly. But most of the Taliban were "Pakistanis who had just arrived. Approximately 300 to 400 were captured. They didn't know what was going on. But the real Taliban and Al Qaeda...they...escaped." CDR Fakir pointed to a bunker/building to the north, off in the distance, where the Taliban had retreated and set up another defensive position.

CDR Fakir recounts the radio communications between GEN Dostum and the Taliban leaders. "Listen Taliban, I'm gonna capture this areas." And the Taliban leaders replied, "If you capture this area that means you capture the whole north." GEN Dostum replied, "I will do that. When I capture it I will say it in the radio." GEN Dostum then led the final attacks on this village. After they captured the village, they moved on towards Keshendeh and then they would go to Omitak (GEN Dostum would meet his commanders at Omitak for a meeting).

N. TRANSCRIPT 13 AND 14, SFC VINCE, CPT MARK AND CDR EZATTULLAH, 10 DECEMBER 2002

SFC Vince described events of that day and explained that SFC Steve B was on the Special Operations Forces Laser and Marker (SOFLAM) and provided distance; SSG Will provided azimuth; and SFC Vince computed locations to be communicated to the aircraft. In addition, SOFLAM duties for laser designation were rotated between the team members, including CPT Mark. SFC Vince recalled several targeting events of the day. In particular, they dispelled any Taliban belief the U.S. forces could not place a second bomb in the crater of a previous bomb by retargeting a cratered bunker where the Taliban had sought refuge.

SFC Vince described how they targeted the various bunker locations (designated 1-4) from the Tiger 02B position, and he provided details on the targets they struck during the day: a primary bunker, a second set of bunkers, troops in the open, and a building with a tent next to it. He then described a fifth target.



Figure III-14. CDR Ezattullah

CDR Ezattullah described how he charged the Taliban defenses, using bounding overwatch in coordination with other Northern Alliance forces. He said that his horsemen, equipped with AK 47s, PK machine guns, and rocket propelled grenades, fired from the gallop. He rode a white horse; the horse colors of his soldiers were a mixture of browns and whites.²¹ He made several attacks during the day, moving from one ridge line to the next; there were approximately six ridge lines with bunkers that they had to capture. Approx-

imately 400 Taliban occupied trench and bunker systems in the area. The charges took place approximately 500 meters from the strikes. Although sometimes within 100 meters of some of the strikes, none of his men were injured or thrown from their horses. SFC Vince described a wave of 50–100 horsemen attacking, with 50 in reserve.

O. TRANSCRIPT 15, CDR HAJI CHARI AT TIGER 02C'S 5 NOVEMBER 2001 POSITION

Transcript 15 provides CDR Haji Chari's account of Tiger 02C operation near Charsu. From the outpost, CDR Haji Chari discussed the sequence of events. Their mission was to attack the Taliban bunkers in the area west of Boi-a nan Village in the Char Su Region.

CDR Haji Chari pointed (mostly west) to areas where the Taliban had moved on 5 November 2001, to the front of Tiger 02C's position, and another group of Taliban moved to the south-southwest to trap Tiger 02C. He related that when he realized they were being cut off he called GEN Dostum for assistance. GEN Dostum ordered CDR Ahmad Khan to clear the route. When the route was clear, GEN Dostum ordered CDR Haji Chari to retreat. With no translator present, Haji Chari was unable to communicate his orders to MSG Paul. CDR Haji Chari ordered CDR Rasheed to pull Tiger 02C cell off the hilltop. CDR Haji Chari picked up Tiger 02C's equipment but, surprised by its weight, fell off his horse. With help from one of his soldiers he managed to pick the equipment up and hang it from his horse as he rode back to the house.

CDR Haji Chari pointed out the area where, on 5 November 2001, the Tiger 02C team slid down the embankment to the valley, as well as their route to the house. On 5 November

²¹ This type of detail is important for reconstructing the event in simulation.

2001, CDR Haji Chari led the Tiger 02C team to that location and then continued on horseback to the house along the path Battle Site Survey Team 2 was traveling. John Frost, the videographer, used the cassette tape and his video to reconcile inconsistencies in the original transcript.

P. TRANSCRIPT 16, SFC VINCE AND CPT MARK AT KESHENDEH-YE BALA BAZAR, 10 DECEMBER 2002

Transcript 16 includes discussions with SFC Vince and CPT Mark in Keshendeh-ye Bala. The ODA (except 02A and 02D, who were still on the Omitak) linked up east of Keshendeh-ye Bala on 6 November 2001 and arrived in Keshendeh-ye Bala on the morning of 7 November. CPT Mark, SFC Vince, and Tiger 02B continued to Pole Baraq and then to Shulgareh. SFC Vince described the linkup with Tiger 02A, explaining that Tiger 02C had bypassed them by truck to the Tiangi area where they were put on horseback and moved to the top of the Kafer Qalah to direct close air support on the morning of 8 November.

CPT Mark described the Keshendeh-ye Bala Bazaar on 7 November 2001. GEN Dostum had left 2,500 horsemen in the bazaar as he rendezvoused with his commanders on the mountain (Omitak). CPT Mark said that the scene was chaotic, with no leaders, only troops, all of them partying in the bazaar without placing security elements. CPT Mark left the bazaar area on mid-day 7 November with the Tiger 02B and the two Gators toward Pole Baraq becoming the lead element for the entire force. Tiger 02B, CPT Mark and SFC Vince only stopped here long enough to resupply water, eat and coordinate with Tiger 02C, Boxer and GEN Dostum.



Figure III-15. CDR Haji Chari Discusses the Battle from Tiger 02C's 5 November 2001 Position

Q. TRANSCRIPT 17 AND 18, CDR HAJI CHARI AND SFC BILL AT KESHENDEH-YE BALA, 10 DECEMBER 2002



Figure III-16. Omitak Mountain—Tiger 02A Location

At Keshendeh-ye Bala, CDR Haji Habib and SFC Bill pointed to places on Omitak where they fought for 2 weeks (26 October to 6 November 2001) against Taliban forces in the Keshendeh areas. SFC Bill described the challenges trying to get off the mountain and link up with the Northern Alliance forces as they bombed a bunker blocking their egress route. The Taliban villagers, under the guise of surrendering, opened fire on the Northern Alliance and drove them out of the town. As Tiger 02A prepared to depart their position on 6 November 2001 and join the ODA, they had to re-strike the bunker complex and Taliban positions to open a path off the mountain.

R. TRANSCRIPT 18, CPT MARK AND SFC VINCE AT TIANGI, 11 DECEMBER 2002

CPT Mark walked us through events of 9 and 10 November 2001. As Tiger 02A and GEN Dostum were caught in the BM-21 attack near Tiangi, Tiger 02C directed close air support from atop the Kafer Qalah, and CPT Mark rode into the pass and linked up with CDR Kamal's forces. In addition, SFC Vince discussed the resupply drop early on the morning of 10 November 2001. The quality of this transcript, especially when matched with the video and still photos, is very good.

S. TRANSCRIPTS 19–21, GEN DOSTUM AT TASHKENDA, SHULGAREH, SOUTH AND THEN NORTH OF TIANGI, 10 DECEMBER 2002

Transcripts 19–21 document the Northern Alliance movement from Omitak Mountain on 7 November 2001 to Tashkenda, through Shulgareh, to Tiangi, and subsequently Mazar. Although they cover some of the same information, they are unique in that one is a composite of CT5A and B and DV tapes 18 and 19 and is a transcript of the interpreters Kamal and Esam. The other two transcripts are of the CT or DV tapes and are completed by linguists who interpreted and transcribed right from the source, GEN Dostum. So they provide a somewhat different perspective and in some cases a more complete picture.

GEN Dostum met his commanders on Omitak Mountain on 7 November 2001, after defeating the Taliban at Baluch. He recalled a radio conversation with a friend at the Turkish Embassy in which he said that he would take Mazar within 2 days. His friend cautioned him from making any claims until he was absolutely positive that he could fulfill them.

On the 7 November 2001 he proceeded to Tashkenda, passing Tiger 02 just prior to night fall as Tiger 02 swam the river with the Gators. He spent the night at Tashkenda and proceeded to Shulgareh on 8 November. He held a meeting at Shulgareh (see Figure III-17) with his commanders and CPT Mark. GEN Dostum held a second commanders' meeting on 8 November following the meeting in Shulgareh. He traveled back south to the vicinity of Pole Baraq in order to meet with Commanders Atta and Mohaqiq, the OGA, Tiger 04 and Tiger 02C. Later he directed CDR Haji Chari to take Tiger 02C to the Kafer Qalah, the high mountain east of the Tiangi overlooking Mazar from the south. He would link up with them on 9 November 2001.



Figure III-17. Commanders' Meeting 8 November 2001 (Courtesy of SOF)

GEN Dostum recalled that by the time his forces reached the pass, on 8 and 9 November 2001, they were exhausted, but fortunately the enemy forfeited the high ground: "I knew that they [the enemy] did not know the strategy of war because in war you should take high positions. They were based mostly in the lowest positions, and it means that they have no knowledge of the war and the strategy. They were just deceived; they were so emotional that they had just come to fight."

GEN Dostum directed his forces to several objectives—some to the hills in the west, a contingent through the canyon, and others to the east to take Hill 732 (he pointed). He launched his attack at 0800, 9 November 2001, and gained control of the canyon, but later in the afternoon the Taliban launched a successful counterattack. A salvo of 160 BM-21s hit the canyon and the adjacent hilltops, including the Kafer Qalah. The Northern Alliance was pushed back to their original positions—and demoralized. He contacted his commanders, told them to regroup, and initiated an attack to the east against the Taliban and Uzbek commander Juma Namangani, a leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, who was mortally wounded in the attack.



Figure III-18. GEN Dostum Discusses the Battle North of the Tiangi

In the meantime, U.S. airpower, directed by Tiger 02C and later by the Combat Control Team elements of the ODC, targeted Taliban positions on the north side of the pass. The enemy began to flee to the northwest toward Sheberghan, toward Mazar-e Sharif, and east to Konduz.

Early that morning GEN Dostum received a call from CDR Lal, who had entered Mazar and contacted him from the Turkmenistan Consulate. As GEN Dostum descended from the mountain in the morning of 10 November, he recalled almost drowning as he crossed the river north of the Tiangi from east to west. He then linked up with his forces and proceeded to occupy Qala Jangi and enter Mazar.

T. TRANSCRIPT 22, CDR HAJI CHARI ON THE KAFER QALAH AND CDR KAMAL AT TIANGI

1. CDR Haji Chari



Figure III-19. CDR Haji Chari atop the Kafer Qalah Describing Events of 9 and 10 November 2001

CDR Haji Chari traveled with Tiger 02C to the Kafer Qalah late on 8 November 2001, arriving at approximately 0200 on 9 November 2001. That morning they started their attack: “we attacked, we start our attack on the enemies forces and on the right of the river were the Taliban and on the left side were the Pakistanis and foreigners, maybe Al Qaeda and Taliban.” In addition to Taliban leadership Mullah Dadullah and Mullah Faisel, the enemy forces included Juma Namangani, a leader of the Islamic Movement for Uzbekistan.

Later in the day GEN Dostum arrived with elements of the ODC. It was a good observation point to see enemy locations. After summoning his troops, GEN Dostum ordered an attack.

CDR Haji Chari provided some insight into the disposition of the Taliban: They “coordinate[d] to find the way out of Mazar-e Sharif. They want to escape from Mazar to Konduz or Samangan.”

2. CDR Kamal

CDR Kamal, now the commander of the 82d Division, provided background information and described events in the Darya Suf on 5 November and later events at Tiangi. CDR Kamal was from the Omitak area; his older brother had fought with GEN Dostum and died in 1999. CDR Kamal had fought with GEN Dostum when Dostum was a battalion commander and rejoined his fight in the Safid Kotah area. CDR Kamal led 240 horsemen during the engagement at Tiangi.

CPT Mark and CDR Kamal discussed the engagements of 5 November, in particular the coordination of the bombing and Northern Alliance cavalry charges. CDR Kamal said that each entrenchment/bunker contained 20 to 30 Taliban with PK machine guns, RPGs, and AK-47s. The trenches were deep, and the Taliban could stay and fight from the trenches all day. They also had tanks, ZSUs, and artillery, but the American air attacks could take out most of them. On the first strike, the Taliban fled, and the bombs struck about 15 meters away from the horsemen. CDR Kamal recalled that he was already past the bunkers when the bombs hit on the afternoon of 5 November 2001.

At Tiangi he had 240 horsemen. The enemy consisted of approximately 1,000 Chechens and Pakistanis. The Northern Alliance's first assault on 9 November was repelled. The Northern Alliance had to contend with landmines, BM-21 rocket fire, and ZSU 23-2s employed in a direct-fire mode against his forces. He lost several men and horses to the mines. But later, after the air strikes, "they [the Taliban] lost their morale, and he attacked their forces and could seize Mazar." CDR Kamal directed 50 horsemen to move through the mountains to the west of Tiangi, and he led the rest of his horsemen through the Tiangi to overrun or capture Taliban positions on the northwest side of the pass.

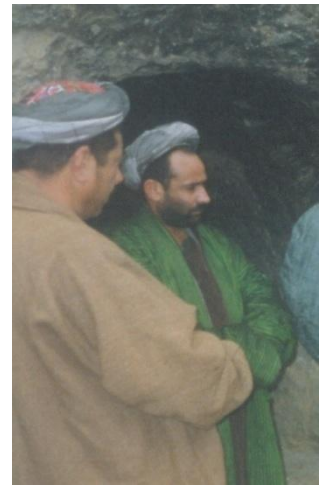


Figure III-20. CDR Kamal

U. TRANSCRIPT 23 GEN HABIB BULLAH, FORMER TALIBAN COMMANDER

GEN Habib Bullah was a general in the Afghan Army, but when the Taliban took power, he was put in prison. Later, at the insistence of his family, he was made a commander in the Taliban forces. He had approximately 40 soldiers under his command and fought against GEN Dostum's forces in the Darya Suf (before the Americans arrived), manning defensive positions in the area. He said that he became a Dostum/Kamal supporter while in the Darya Suf (he made an agreement with GEN Dostum) and somehow was reassigned to Mazar-e Sha-

rif. From there he provided, by radio/radio relay, GEN Dostum with intelligence on the conditions in Mazar-e Sharif, Taliban troop situations in the area, and, in particular, the status of Taliban reinforcements and movements. He overtly defected to Dostum's forces on the eve of the fall of Mazar-e Sharif by meeting up with Kamal in the mountains west of the Tiangi. He helped create an organizational chart of the Taliban forces in the area before their defeat.

V. TRANSCRIPT 24, GEN ATTA



Figure III-21. GEN Atta
(Courtesy of SOF)

General Atta was the 7th Corps Commander and the 1st Deputy Operating Group in the North at the time of the interview. During the summer of 2001, he had been the General Commander of Resistance against the Taliban in the North. For 2 years he had resisted the Taliban and was in charge of both the military and political aspects of the resistance. According to him, all forces in the Darya Suf, Aq Koprak, and Bazarak areas were under his control. He had approximately 2,000 horsemen (various areas).

He talked about his failed attempt to take Mazar-e Sharif from the Marmol area in mid-October. “However, the first attack in the Marmol district, I had no cooperation or consultation with my American friends.” (There were rumors that he had asked for U.S. air support for the attack, but it did not come.) In addition, the United States bombed for “almost 15 days but you have not captured any significant areas.” He said that the bombing, which accomplished nothing in terms of defeating the Taliban, was having a “negative impact on the soul, the morale of my soldiers...I then stopped the war.” To promote a coordinated effort, he ceded command of the Darya Suf forces and campaign up the Darya Suf through Shulgareh to General Dostum. But he also insisted on keeping the front open in the Marmol area where the bulk of his forces were located.

GEN Atta discussed his operation in Aq Koprak. He faced approximately 1,500–2,000 Taliban with artillery, ZSU, BMPs, and BM-21s but no tanks. “They were worried that the tanks would be seized by [Northern Alliance] forces and used on them.” The commander of Taliban forces in the area was Mullah Dadullah, but in Shulgareh it was Mullah Razzak.

The Other Government Agency provided the logistics. The most important items were ammunition and clothes “since it was winter.” Food was found in the areas in which they operated.

After capturing Aq Koprak, GEN Atta met with GEN Dostum south of Tiangi. At that time GEN Atta decided to split his forces. Part of his forces attacked through Tiangi with GEN Dostum's forces, and the other part attacked from the Marmol area through the airport into Mazar. He said that there was very little resistance at Tiangi.

GEN Atta was extremely frustrated about the bombing of the Sultan Razia School, which had been seized by "600 Pakistani Taliban." He said that his forces on the ground in the area had negotiated a surrender—"almost 200 weapons were confiscated and the Taliban were preparing to surrender." Although informed of the plan to bomb, he said that he had not been consulted, and "eight of my men were killed."

This concluded the interview. There was not much detail on his advance through Aq Koprak to Mazar, but he provided good background on his relationship with GEN Dostum, and the operation in general, throughout the entire period.

W. TRANSCRIPT 25, GEN MOHAQIQ

GEN Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq, Chairman, Political Committee, Wahdat, was interviewed at his compound at 1900 hours, 13 December 2002. The translator was Dr. Abdul Wahid Yasa, who was in charge of International Relations, Wahdat. Also present was Engineer Tahir, Deputy Commander, 38th Infantry Division.



Figure III-22. GEN Mohaqiq

GEN Mohaqiq was impressive, not in stature but in his apparent concern for improving the plight of the Afghan people. He wanted to start his story in 1998 because that is when he was forced into the Darya Suf.

In August 1998 "tragedies struck with arrival of Osama Bin Laden, the development of the religious schools, and the aggressive infiltration of the Taliban and the Arabs in the north." GEN Mohaqiq resisted. But Mullah Omar and the Taliban won, decreeing that they would "kill anyone [opposition] in a three day period." During that period 10,000 people were killed, of which 90 percent belonged to the Hazara. They killed Hazaras because they were a religious minority, but they also killed Uzbeks.

On 8 August 1998 GEN Mohaqiq left the city by helicopter and went to the mountains in the Darya Suf. There he organized a force of 2,000 soldiers and set up a front, but he was asked by the community elders to leave because of the danger to the people. He moved from the Darya Suf and set up two fronts, one in Balkhob and the other in the Bamian Province. Later he was able to migrate into the Darya Suf along with GEN Dostum's forces.

GEN Mohaqiq provided background on events in Bamian Province, including the Taliban human rights violations against the people of Yaqolan (500 killed and 5,000 houses destroyed) and the destruction of the Buddhist statues.

GEN Mohaqiq said that the hardest fought battle was in the Safid Kotah area because they had to fight uphill against an entrenched Taliban that had artillery and tanks. Although the U.S. bombardment helped them move forward, it was a hard fight in Beshcam, Chapchal, and Baluch. "After Baluch, they did not resist."

After discussing the fall of Mazar, GEN Mohaqiq discussed the bombing of Sultan Razia School, the Taliban negotiations and surrender at Konduz, and the uprising at Qala Jangi. As the deception plan of the feigned Taliban surrender near Mazar-e Sharif unfolded, GEN Mohaqiq heard Mullah Omar on BBC say that he was going to recapture a northern city. GEN Mohaqiq knew that it was the prisoners who had requested transport to Mazar, so they were diverted to Qala Jangi.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

A. INTERVIEWS

There were a total of 32 hours of video and 11 hours of cassette tape. They originally accounted for 45 transcripts representing 27.75 hours of interviews and discussions.²² Thirteen of the transcripts were original, that is, in Dari, Uzbek, or Pashtu. For example, one transcript would be of the original interpreter on the tape speaking in English; the second would be of the Afghan speaker. In some cases the proficiency of the original interpretation was very poor; in others, we may have received the view of the interpreter and not that of the interviewee. Having the recording of the speaker provided a good double check on the accuracy of the information.

We were fortunate in having access to three interpreters. Although one had limited proficiency, the other two were good, but only one of the three was trained to work with an interviewer. That is, he stayed on track, broke the conversation into manageable portions, and responded in first person (rather than third) as if he were the interviewee.

The video camera provided the best resource for recording interviews, not only because it matched audio with video, thereby precluding the requirement to do that later with a cassette and still camera, but because the audio in DVCAM mode was better quality than that on cassette.

B. MAZAR-E SHARIF CAMPAIGN

The interviews, notes, and logs provide unique first-hand perspectives from on-the-ground operators that participated in the fight for Mazar. They include interviews with Special Operations Forces, Northern Alliance commanders, townspeople, and former Taliban. Basic insights included the following:

- Precision weapons were impressive, but without “boots on the ground” they became ineffective; according to General Atta, they were counterproductive: “The bombing [without ground forces to direct it], was having a negative impact on the soul, the morale of my soldiers...”

²² After reconciling the various “duplicate” transcripts, the final tally was 25 transcripts.

- Maneuver and fire were both required to defeat an adaptive and committed enemy. In many cases the Taliban learned the cycle time on the overhead B-52 bomb drops and was able to reposition for the next strike. They also learned to keep their heads down until after the bomb strike and then recover quickly to engage the charging Northern Alliance forces. Haji Chari best summarized the commitment of the Taliban: They “didn’t care about the air strikes. Even though...some of them were killed by the air strikes, they didn’t care, they kept coming.”
- Unconventional warfare capitalized on small, agile teams adapting to battlefield conditions to leverage joint and coalition capabilities. It also minimized U.S. presence.
- Information Operations was one of General Frank’s “Eight Lines of Operations.” Although not a primary U.S. activity in the north, the concept served General Dostum well. Minimum U.S. presence allowed General Dostum to conduct a psychological operations campaign of his own. He recruited local Taliban to fight against the Pakistani, Chechen, Saudi, and other “foreigners” that came to Afghanistan to fight their own Jihad. He exploited this distinction quite effectively to encourage Taliban defections. Had the U.S. presence been greater, however, he would have had a difficult time touting other Asians as “foreigners.”

Other observations included the significance of the Darya Suf to the campaign, the technology gap, and the “warrior spirit.”

Although we knew before going to Mazar that the campaign was the linchpin to the north, it was our hypothesis that the fight in the Darya Suf, in particular in the area of Baluch on 5 November 2001, was the linchpin to the campaign. Interviews confirmed that hypothesis. According to General Dostum and others, the Taliban continued to flow forces down the Shulgareh Valley into the Darya Suf to reinforce Mullah Razzak’s units near Baluch. As General Mohaqiq indicated, once the Northern Alliance defeated the Taliban in the Baluch area, resistance was minimal as they approached Mazar. Per discussions with Commander Fakir, he recounted a radio conversation between a Taliban Commander in Baluch and General Dostum. The Taliban leader, in responding to General Dostum’s prediction that he would capture the village, replied, “If you capture this area that means you capture the whole north.”

An ODA member coined the technology gap between the Afghans and U.S. forces as “the Jetsons meet the Flintstones.” It was not only evident in their mode of transportation, the horse, but also in interview comments, such as when CDR Fakir talks about the first time he saw aerial refueling of fighter aircraft:

What I'm going to tell you is most interesting. I have seen a big plane being chased by five small jets. And I calls Mr. Dostum and tell him that they are hijacking the big plane with five small jets, then...[Mark] said no, the big plane is getting fuel to the jets.

One thing they had in common was the warrior spirit. Courage—the human dimension—served to build trust and camaraderie that fueled the coalition's advance toward Mazar.

GLOSSARY

AAR	after action review
AB	air base
AC	aircraft
ADA	air defense artillery
AFSOF	Air Force Special Operations Forces
AGL	above ground level
AK-47	small arms rifle, 7.62 mm
Albatross	landing zone where ODA 595 was inserted into the theater of operations
AO	area of operations
ARSOA	Army Special Operations Aviation
ARSOF	Army Special Operations Forces
ATO	air tasking order
BDA	battle damage assessment
B-52	U.S. bomber
BM-21	122 millimeter rocket launcher
BMP	armored vehicle
BSS	battle site survey
C2	command and control
CAOC	Combined Air Operations Center
CAS	close air support
CATK	counterattack
CCIR	Commander's Critical Information Requirements
CCT	Combat Control Team
CDE	Collateral Damage Estimate
CENTAF	CENTCOM Air Force
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CFF	call for fire
CJCS	Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
CJFACC	Combined Joint Forces Air Component Command
CJFC	Combined Joint Force Commander
CJFMCC	Combined Joint Force Maritime Component Command
CJFSOCC	Combined Joint Force Special Operations Component Command
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force

CP	command post
CSAR	combat search and rescue
CVBG	Carrier Battle Group
CVW	Carrier Air Wing
DAP	Direct Action Penetrator
DMSO	Defense Modeling and Simulation Office
D-30	artillery, towed, 122 millimeter
DMT	distributed mission trainer
DoDD	Department of Defense Directive
DSB	Defense Science Board
DZ	Drop Zone
EO	executive order
EFR	Enduring Freedom Reconstruction
ETAC	enlisted terminal attack controller
FAC	forward air controller
FFA	free fire area
FRAGO	fragmentary order
FSCL	fire support coordination line
FSCM	fire support coordination measure
FSCOORD	fire support coordinator
FY	fiscal year
Gator ment	John Deere small, rugged utility vehicle used for transporting equip-
GAZ	Russian truck
GCS	ground control station
GFAC	ground forward air controller
GPS	Global Positioning System
IDA	Institute for Defense Analyses
IMINT	imagery intelligence
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
IPB	intelligence preparation of the battlefield
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
JCAS	joint close air support
JCET	Joint Combined Exchange Training Program
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JDAM	Joint Direct Attack Munitions
JFACC	Joint Force Air Component Commander
JSOACC	Joint Special Operations Air Component
JSOTF	Joint Special Operations Task Force

JSTARS	Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System
JTF	Joint Task Force
K2	Karchi Khanabad, Uzbekistan
LIT	likely and identifiable threat
LOAC	Law of Armed Conflict
LOC	Lines of Communications
LOS	line of sight
LZ	Landing Zone
M&S	modeling and simulation
M4	short barrel M16 Rifle
MeS	Mazar-e Sharif
MEU	Marine Expeditionary Unit
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOUT	military operations on urban terrain
NA	Northern Alliance
NAVCENT	Navy CENTCOM
NCA	National Command Authority
NGO	nongovernment organization
NLOS	non line of sight
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha (see SFODA)
ODB	Operational Detachment Bravo (see SFODB)
ODC	Operational Detachment Charlie (see SFODC)
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OGA	other government agency
OP	observation post
OPORD	operations order
ORD	operational requirements document
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
OSW	Operation Southern Watch
PGM	precision guided munitions
PID	positive identification
POTUS	President of the United States
RFA	restricted fire area
ROE	rules of engagement
RPG	rocket propelled grenade
SA	situational awareness
SAT	satellite
SecDef	Secretary of Defense
SEZ	special engagement zone

SF	Special Forces
SFOB	Special Forces Operating Base
SFOD	Special Forces Operational Detachment
SFODA	Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha, basic tactical 12 man
SF team	
SFODB	Special Forces Operational Detachment Bravo, SF company headquarters
SFODC	Special Forces Operational Detachment Charlie, SF battalion headquarters
SIGINT	signals intelligence
SITREP	situation report
SJA	staff judge advocate
SOCENT	Special Operations Command CENTCOM
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOFLAM	Special Operations Forces Laser and Marker
SOLE	Special Operations Liaison Element
SOP	Standing Operating Procedure
SPINS	special instructions
SROE	standing rules of engagement
STX	situational training exercise
T-55	tank
TCT	time critical target
Tiger 02	ODA 595 callsign
Tiger 02A	3 man sub element of ODA 595
Tiger 02B	3 man sub element of ODA 595
Tiger 02C	3 man sub element of ODA 595, included one combat controller
Tiger 02D	3 man sub element of ODA 595, included one ETAC
Tiger 04	callsign for ODA 534
TF	task force
TF Dagger	Task Force Dagger, during OEF was JSOTF-North
TST	time sensitive targeting
TTP	tactics, techniques and procedures
UAV	unmanned aerial vehicle
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USCENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
USSOCENT	U.S. Special Operations Command Central Command
UW	Unconventional Warfare
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance

VFA	Carrier Flight Attack Squadron–Navy
VFMA	Carrier Flight Attack Squadron–Marines
XO	executive officer
ZSU 23-2	Air Defense Artillery, twin barreled, 23 mm cannons

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Appendix A—SPELLING: PEOPLE AND PLACES

The following provides the protocol for spelling the names of people and places.

Locations—There are a number of spellings for each location. The first preference is the Afghanistan Country Handbook, which lists CENTCOM-preferred spellings. An asterisk precedes these. Spellings in parentheses are alternatives. If an asterisk precedes those, then they are from the handbook too. Subsequent spellings were taken from other common publications, such as the 1:250,000 Joint Operations Graphic—Air (1:250K JOG-A) or the translator that provided the spelling.

Afghan Names—Translators provided the majority of spellings for the names of the Afghan people.

ODA names and ranks—In country, during the Battle Site Survey, CPT Mark requested use of ranks and first names to minimize team member exposure. That convention was retained for this publication because it was used throughout the transcripts.

Ranks reflect service convention. For example, Staff Sergeant Chad is SSG Chad, which indicates that he is a staff sergeant in the Army, but Staff Sergeant Matt is SSgt Matt, indicating that he is a staff sergeant in the Air Force. We follow that convention in this report.

Abdul Wahid Yasa, Dr. In charge of International Relations, Wahdat translated for General Mohaqiq.

Ahmad Khan. Commander, 19th Division, subcommander for General Dostum.

Ak-yasin. Currently commander of troops along Afghanistan-Uzbekistan border, he was a subcommander under Lal.

Ali Sarwar. Subcommander of Lal. Current commander of Le Wa 114 (division 114) had 40 horseman and 20 dismounted.

Aq Koprak. 1:250K JOG-A.

Atta. General Atta, a Tajik, is a member of the Jamiat (or Jumiat) party. General Atta was responsible for liberating Aq Koprak from Taliban control.

*Balkh River. Flows south from Mazar-e Sharif down through Shulgareh.

*Balkhob (*Balkhab [1:250K JOG-A]). Area where General Dostum started in April 2001.

Baluch Village (name of a minority in Afghanistan)—spelling by Esam. The battle for the Darya Suf took place around Baluch Village.

*Bamian (Bamiyan). A province in Central Afghanistan

Beshcam (Beshkam, Bishqab)—1:100K map.

Buzkashi. Afghanistan's national sport. Like rugby on horseback, but instead of a ball, the players use a headless goat.

*Chapchal. Village approximately 40 miles south east of Mazar-e Sharif

Char Su (Charsu)—1:100K tactical map. This was Tiger 02C's operational area on 5 November 2001. The Northern Alliance referred to it as Maksoot.

Chuckmal Pass. Located east of Baluch.

Cobaki (Chobaki). A town in the Darya Suf, one of the first locations the team used to call close-air support.

Dadullah, Mullah (Dadoulah). Taliban leader in the north.

Dallan. A town located approximately 20 kilometers north of Char Su. Taliban force located at Dallan threatened General Dostum's northern flank on 5 November 2001.

Darreh-ye Dadel. Valley adjoining the Balkh Valley area at Shulgareh and running south-southeast. Runs parallel to but north of the Darya Suf.

Darya Suf, *Dar-I Suf (*Darreh-ye Suf, Dar-e Suf) Darya Suf (1:250K JOG-A). "Darya Suf" was used because it was the prevalent form in writing. Darya Suf translates to "the Valley of the Caves" and is located 35 miles south of Mazar-e Sharif.

Dehdadi Airfield. Located near Qala Jangi Fortress.

*Dehi. Town located approximately 45 miles southeast of Mazar-e Sharif in the Darya Suf Canyon.

Eid al-Fita. Feast of Eid.

Esam—General Dostum's interpreter.

Ezattullah (spelling by Kamal). A Northern Alliance commander, he commanded 10 horse soldiers and made the charges on 5 November 2001.

Fakir (Faqir). General Dostum's subcommander/deputy.

Habib Bullah. General, former Taliban provided intelligence to the Northern Alliance and GEN Dostum.

Hafis (Hafiz). ODA team's interpreter; filled this capacity after the fall of Mazar-e Sharif.

Haji Chari. General Dostum's subcommander with Tiger 02C.

Haji Muhammed Abdu. Mazar-e Sharif deputy mayor for Mohaqiq.

Hazara. An ethnic faction (see Hizb-e-Wahdat).

*Hizb-i-Wahdat-i (Islami-yi Afghanistan, also spelled Hezb-i-Wadat). The Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan and is the primary Shi'a party of the United Front. Muhammed Karim Khalili is the Chairman, and Mohammed Mohaqiq is the main commander north of the Hindu Kush. The Hazaras ethnic group provide the strongest internal support.

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). Terrorist group operating in Central Asia from within Afghanistan.

Jamiat (Jumiat). Atta, a Tajik, is a member of the Jumiat party (Jamiat-I Islami: Islamic Society). Composed primarily of Sunni Tajiks. General Ahmad Shah Massoud commanded the Jamiat.

Juma Namangani. Uzbekistan opposition leader fighting for Al Qaida, he died from a wound received during battle of Tiangi.

Jumbish (*Junbish-I). Milli-yi Islami-yi-Afghanistan, or NIMA, the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, is led by General Abdul Rashid Dostum.

Kamal, Commander. General Dostum's subcommander.

Kamal. ODA's contract interpreter.

Kafer Qalah (Kafir Qalah). Kafer Qalah means the mountain east of the pass that Dostum went to on 9 November 2001.

Karshi Khanabad (ONC) (Karrchi Khanabad). Also known as K2. Former Soviet military base located in Southern Uzbekistan.

Keshedneh-ye Bala and Keshendeh-ye Pain. Located approximately 35 kilometers south of Mazar and immediately southeast of Pol-e Baraq.

Kode Barq (heard pronounced Kodee Ba-rak). Area of the fertilizer plant, power electric plant, and General Dostum's other house. The more educated and skilled labor resided in this community.

Lal, Commander. Subcommander for General Dostum.

*Madrasas. Members of the Taliban originate primarily from the Islamic schools (Madrasas) in rural Afghanistan and Pashtun, Pakistan.

*Mazar-e Sharif (*Mazar-E Sharif, Mazar-i Sharif; Mazar)

Maksoot. See Char Su.

Marmol (1:250K JOG). Located southeast of Mazar.

Massoud. Northern Alliance general, “Lion of the Pansjhir. Resisted the Taliban. Assassinated on 10 September 2001.

Meymaneh. Located 90 kilometers southwest of Sherberghan. Provincial capital of Frayob Province, the farthest western province the ODA’s actions influenced.

Mohaqiq (Mohaqqeq), Haji Mohammad. Chairman, Political Committee, Wahdat; Minister of Planning.

Morta Sar, GEN. Commander 38th Division (Mohaqiq’s General).

Mullah Dadoullah. Taliban Commander.

Mullah Faisel (Faizel). Deputy Minister of Defense and commander of Taliban forces in the north.

Mullah Gausidine. 18th Taliban Division Commander.

Mullah Gihaire. Taliban general that General Dostum spoke to over the radio at Baluch. Mullah Gihaire told General Dostum that the winner of the Battle of Baluch would take Mazar and the Northern Provinces.

Mullah Noori. Taliban commander of the Northern forces.

Mullah Satar. Commander, 53d Taliban Division.

Omitak (Almitak, Al-Marrtak, among many other spellings). A mountain range that Tiger 02A occupied to interdict Taliban moving down the Shulgareh to reinforce Taliban in the Darya Suf.

*Panjshir Valley. General Fahim Khan’s operational area in northeast Afghanistan. ODA 555 operated in this area.

Pol-e Baraq (1:250K JOG-A). Town in the Balkh Valley south of Mazar-e Sharif.

Qonduz (Konduz) Town. Major population center between Kabul and Mazar. Provincial capital of Qonduz Province. Easternmost province in which the Boxer, Tiger 02 and Tiger 04 elements directly engaged Taliban and Al Qaeda forces.

Ramadan. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar and is a time of fasting.

Razzak, Mullah. In charge of Taliban forces in the Darya Suf and Balkh River Valley.

*Safid Kotah (Safedkotal, 1:250K JOG-A; Safeed Kotal spelling by Esam; literally white, steep with respect to snow).

Saiforah Neyuzi. Director of Sultan Razia Girl’s High School, she is also in charge of the women’s organization.

*Samangan Province.

*Sar-i Pol (Sar-e-pol, 1:250K JOG-A). Provincial capital of Sar-i Pol Province.

Sayed Noor Ullah. The Minister of Foreign Affairs.

*Sheberghan (*Shebergan). Provincial capital of Jowlzjan Province.

*Shulgareh (Sholgerah, 1:250K JOG-A).

Sultan Razia School. Girl's school located in Mazar-e Sharif. Several hundred Pakistanis barricaded and fought from the school after the fall of Mazar-e Sharif. The school was destroyed by close air support attacks on the Taliban on 10 November 2001. The school was rebuilt with the support of USAID and reopened in October 2002.

Tahir. Engineer, Deputy Commander, 38th Infantry Division, he was present at Mohaqiq's compound.

Tashkenda. Bunker and cave complex located near Shulgareh used by Taliban for command and control of military forces.

Tiangi (translation of Tiangi means pass). Also known as Kuh-E-Al Borz Pass, Cashmeh Pass.

APPENDIX C—TRANSCRIPTS

The attached transcripts are of interviews conducted from 7 to 13 December 2002 in Afghanistan. The purpose of the interviews was to support the recreation of the campaign for Mazar-e Sharif. Hence, some of the detail, such as the color of the horses, is important for the reconstructionist.

In most cases, we obtained two translations, one conducted by the team's interpreters in during the interviews in Afghanistan, and the second by linguists in CONUS contracted through MaGuire-Reeder. This had its obvious benefits of providing a double check on the translations and alerting us to areas we needed to reconcile. In some cases interpretations were complementary and supporting, as a result, some situations are described more than once.

The plan for editing, and in some cases developing, the transcripts was to leave the grammar alone if the sentence made sense. If it needed clarification, I added a note in brackets or a footnote. However, I made multiple changes to spellings of people's names and the spelling of locations, following the baseline spelling convention given in Appendix A. That convention was based on a Country Handbook provided by DoD that listed CENTCOM-preferred spellings. Spellings for people and places not in the handbook were derived from 1:250,000 or 1:100,000 maps or other documents listed in Appendix A.

There are 25 transcripts attached. The following table provides an index to those transcripts. The table also:

- Provides an audit to transcriber records and video and cassette tapes.
- Identifies the interviewees.
- Briefly comments on the contents of the transcript.
- Rates the quality of the transcript, from 1 (poor) to 5 (very good) in two areas:

The first number rates the clarity and quality of the transcript: Is it clear? Does it make sense?¹ The second number rates the contribution of the information to the reconstruction.

¹ The clarity of the transcript was heavily dependent on the clarity and quality of the video and audio source.

- Indicates which phase(s) of the battle the transcript supports. Phase descriptions are provided in Chapter I.
- Indicates what media the transcript was derived from such as a video or cassette tape.

Transcript # ^a	Interviewee	Remarks	Quality ^b	Phase ^c	Tape ^d
1	GEN Dostum and CDR Lal	7 Dec 02, at GEN Dostum's house in Sheberghan for dinner. Primary interviewee is CDR Lal.	3/3	0,2,6	DV1,2
2(2 and 3)	CDR Haji Chari	7 Dec at Sheberghan.	4/4	0,4,6	DV3,4
3(4 and 5)	CDR Fakir	7 Dec, at Sheberghan—discussions on tactics in the Darya Suf and engagements at Tiangi and Sultan Razia.	3/3	0,3 - 8	DV6,7
4(6)	CDR Ak-yasin	8 Dec, Mazar, CDR Ak-yasin speaks in general about the entire period.	3/3	0-6	DV8,9
5(7)	CDR Ali Sarwar, GEN Morta Sar	8 Dec in MeS—GEN Morta Sar was Hazara—Shia.	4/4	0,2,4,5,6	DV9
6(8)	CDR Abdu	Background on Balkhob and OGA.	3/3	0	DV11
7(9)	GEN Dostum	Tape of dinner discussion on 8 Dec—GEN Dostum with map.	2/2	0,2	C2 Side A
8(10)	GEN Dostum and CPT Mark	GEN Dostum speaking from Helicopter Landing Zone (HLZ) Albatross to Burro. Kamal is interpreter. Mark addresses supply drops at HLZ Albatross. Discussions at Chapchal and DZ Burro.	3/4	1,2,3	C2 Side B
9(12)	CPT Mark	9 Dec Burro DZ with Mark.	4/4	3	DV13
10(13)	CPT Mark	9 Dec, Mark at Kamal's CP, Chapchal, Beshcam and Lal's CP.	5/5	2,3,4	DV14
11(14)	CPT Mark and GEN Dostum	9 Dec at Baluch.	4/4	3,4	DV15
12(15)	CDR Fakir	10 Dec at Baluch with CDR Fakir.	2/3	4	DV15 and C3 Side A
13(16)	SFC Vince and CPT Mark	10 Dec SFC Vince and CDR Ezattullah at Tiger 02B 5 Nov 01 position.	4/5	4	DV16
14(17)	SFC Vince and CDR Ezattullah	10 Dec at Tiger 02B 5 Nov position, Cassette 003 side B.	4/5	4	DV17 and C3 Side B
15(18)	CDR Haji Chari	10 Dec at Charsu (Tiger 02C 5 Nov 01 position) with CDR Haji Chari.	3/4	4	C001and JV7 and 8
16(19)	SFC Vince and CPT Mark	10 Dec with SFC Vince and CPT Mark at Keshendeh-ye Bala (KB) Bazaar.	3/3	5	C001 Side B
17(20)	SFC Bill and CDR Haji Habib	10 Dec at KB.	3/3	3,5,6	DV18

Transcript # ^a	Interviewee	Remarks	Quality ^b	Phase ^c	Tape ^d
18(21)	SFC Bill, SFC Vince and CPT Mark	10 Dec, Bill at KB and 11 Dec SFC Vince and Mark at Tiangi.	4/4	5,6	C4 Side A
19(22)	GEN Dostum	10 December, GEN Dostum at Tashkenda, south of Tiangi and north of Tiangi.	3/3	5,6,7	DV18,19 and C5A
20(23)	GEN Dostum	10 Dec Dostum at Tashkenda, Dostum's CP south of Tiangi, and then north of Tiangi.	2/2	5,6	C5B
21(24)	GEN Dostum	10 Dec Dostum at Tashkenda, Dostum's CP south of Tiangi, and then north of Tiangi.	4/4	5,6	C5A,B DV18,19
22(25)	CDR Haji Chari and CDR Kamal	CDR Haji Chari on the Kafer Qalah and CDR Kamal at Tiangi.	3/3	6	DV20 and C4A
23(26)	GEN Habib Bullah and CDR Kamal	11 December GEN Habib Bullah and CDR Kamal at the ODA house. Discussions on Taliban military organization, GEN Habib Bullah's defection, his passing info to GEN Dostum.	4/4	0 - 6	DV21,22,23,24
24(29)	GEN Atta	12 December GEN Atta at his house.	4/4	0,3,5,6,7	DV25,26
25(30-33)	GEN Mohaqiq	Background information, generalities of movement through Darya Suf to Mazar and later the surrender and Konduz and events at Qala Jangi.	3/3	0-7	DV27,28,29,26

Notes:

- ^a The transcript number corresponds to the transcript in this publication. The number in parentheses refers to the transcript number in IDA document D-2925.
- ^b The quality of the material is rated in two areas. Ratings range from 1 (poor) to 5 (very good). The first number rates the quality of the transcript itself, i.e., Is it coherent? The second number rates the information, i.e., How well does the information contribute to the reconstruction?
- ^c This column indicates which phases (0-8) of the battle for MeS the transcript supports.
- ^d The transcript corresponds to Dave's Video (DV) tape number and/or to Cassette (C) tape number and side.

TRANSCRIPT 1: GEN DOSTUM AND CDR LAL AT SHEBERGHAN, 7 DECEMBER 2002

Introductory Notes: These interviews¹ were taken at GEN Dostum's Guest House in Sheberghan. Esam, GEN Dostum's interpreter, and Hafis, the ODA's interpreter, were the interpreters for the initial meetings. GEN Dostum introduces transcript 1, but the primary interviewee is Commander Lal. Commander Lal is one of GEN Dostum's principal and most trusted commanders.

GEN DOSTUM [DV tape 1; time 10:49]: Welcome everybody here and especially Mr. Mark and Mr Bill. We had very, very good, very adventurous, and very enjoyable time.

[Pause for greetings]

CPT MARK: She's back in country, this angel of death and she said she's waiting for a call.

[Pause—Dinner table]

GEN DOSTUM: You know you are with me Mr. Mark. You remember my claim during my interview with international news agency. I used to tell them that once we capture Mazar-e Sharif that means that we have captured the North and that would pave the way for disarmament of Konduz. But most of the international military experts didn't believe me. They were not sure. But happily this came out true.

As myself and as a special representative of Mr. Karzai, I appreciate your cooperation in collapsing terrorism in Afghanistan. We will never forget this and we drink [toast] on behalf of those who lost their lives, both from Afghanistan side and our American friends, in freeing Afghanistan [toast]. [20:30]

[Several things contributed to our success} The B-52s. No one can resist against them. B-52s. And after that the most important factor that led us to success and victory was the unique coordination of Afghans with American soldiers. And our firm decision to defeat Al Qaeda and Taliban. And the Taliban had no social basis among the people. People didn't help them but instead they were with us. They were helping us, we really worked among the people and

¹ This transcript includes DV tapes 1 and 2.

we made a lot of propaganda among the people. So once we approached the cities, people rose up against the Taliban. These were the main points that paved the way for our defeat of the Taliban.

[Transcript starts at DV tape 1, time 24:40 with Commander Lal's interview]

BILL K: For the tape, this is Commander Lal, one of GEN Dostum's subcommanders.

BILL K: Were you born in Afghanistan?

CDR LAL: In Sheberghan in Afghanistan. I'm forty-one, which means I was born in 1961.

BILL K: How long have you been a commander for GEN Dostum?

CDR LAL: More than 15 years.

BILL K: Where were you in May 2001 [trying to determine if he was with GEN Dostum when GEN Dostum re-entered Afghanistan]?

CDR LAL: I was the only person along with Mr. Massoud that stayed in the country so I was one of those two guys. One was Mr. Massoud and the other one was me.

But still Mr. Dostum was our General Commander and we were fighting according to his commands and orders.

BILL K: Where were you located as you were waiting for GEN Dostum?

CDR LAL: Firstly I was based in Bamian after which I moved to Balkhob.

BILL K: Where were your soldiers located?

CDR LAL: Do you mean in the beginning or just before the collapse of Taliban?

BILL K: Before 9/11.

CDR LAL: I was in Sar-I Pol. The area is called Kahlahial. So my soldiers were mostly located there. So we started the resistance with my soldiers from there. Kahlahial is not far from Mazar-e but Balkhob is close to Mazar-e Sharif.

BILL K: To the east or west?

CDR LAL: It's west of Mazar-e Sharif.

BILL K: How many soldiers are under your command?

CDR LAL: Well at the beginning I had just a few people around me and we used to carry on some ambushes against Taliban. We would ambush and seize weapons from the Taliban. So by then I could increase my soldiers to hundreds and after hundreds to thousands.

BILL K: In August of 2001, where did you operate?

CDR LAL: I carried out these ambushes in Dersop in Sar-I Pol, [unintelligible] and Siot, which are very famous because they lost lots of their men. This took me nine months. Of course I was getting the command directly from Mr. Dostum.

BILL K: When did that happen?

CDR LAL: Well it's difficult to give you an exact date, but I had a soldier who used to write down the dates, but still if you really need it I could provide you with exact dates.

BILL K: When did you move to the Darya Suf?

CDR LAL: That was during Mr. Halili and Mark's arrival in Afghanistan. Again I'm not sure about the dates. So after that I moved towards Balkhob and Darya Suf.

So, I fought for three and a half years and I think that my move to the Darya Suf was one, one and a half years before the 9/11. Then, according to Mr. Dostum, I had to go to Bamian and fight there, and after that he ordered me to go to Balkhob after which Mr. Dostum himself came there, too.

BILL K: Have you had any formal military training?

CDR LAL: Well, to be honest, no [he laughed]. But let me tell you that I've been fighting for 24 years so this is I think a big school, maybe bigger than any military colleges in the world. So I know how to fight, I know the tactics of war very well.

BILL K: As you moved from Dehi to Cobaki, what type of aid did you receive from the Americans?

CDR LAL: When Mr. Dostum launched his troops towards Al Qaeda troops to take control of Mazar. We were along with him about one-thousand to one-thousand five-hundred horsemen.

Mr. Dostum admired the Americans, that's why he was the first person to invite them; provided them with all the information and provided them with all the assistance he could.

BILL K: In planning attacks in Beshcam, how did you know where the Taliban were?

CDR LAL: As Mr. Mark knows, he was there before we launched any attack Mr. Dostum himself personally used to get all the commanders and discuss the positions of the enemy in

different locations on the map. So we used to come to plan our direction of attack and how to attack. This was completely and totally under the initiative of our General Commander, Mr. Dostum.

And I would like to say that another factor that worked here was that Mr. Dostum was fighting alongside his soldiers. He was not escaping from the fighting, he was inside the fight.

BILL K: After GEN Dostum brought the commanders together did you then meet with your commanders much in the same way?

CDR LAL: For sure. This was the conclusion we made, you know. That was why I told you I had to tell my junior commanders and let them know about our plans and the details.

[Mark to Bill—Ak-yasin is waiting to see you.]

CDR LAL: I was the only one who stayed in the country to fight the Taliban and Al Qaeda. All these commanders came later along with Mr. Dostum. That was enough for us to just hear his voice. We could sacrifice ourselves just for his voice and his orders.

BILL K: I've drawn a diagram of Beshcam, Chapchal and Cobaki—does this look right?

[End of DV tape 1; begin DV tape 2.]

CDR LAL: Of course the most important factor that worked here was I encouraged my soldiers. I injected morality to them. We knew that if we overcome Beshcam and over this position, that it would pave the way for taking control of other places. I ordered my soldiers to do their best so they didn't care about even their lives. Even though we had a lot of casualties we were successful.

BILL K: I understand you were on horseback fighting against tanks and ZSU-23-2s?

CDR LAL: That's true. Of course I'd like to thank the Americans because it was the B-52s who were bombarding these enemy's tanks and other heavy vehicles. Yeah, I was fighting on the horseback against those tanks.

BILL K: In the battle, how many horsemen did you have fighting?

CDR LAL: About 900 horses under my command. But Americans should not forget Mr. Mark's efforts in Afghanistan. Even though it was raining heavily, he was not sitting still. He was moving around and trying to do something.

BILL K: After Beshcam you moved into Boybe Che, then the Keshendeh and the Shulgarreh—which one was the hardest battle?

CDR LAL: Chapchal. And the Tiangi, canyon.

BILL K: Why Chapchal?

CDR LAL: It was very dangerous fighting because the enemy forces were concentrated in the first line [of defense].

BILL K: You fought against the local Taliban and foreign Taliban consisting of Chechens and Pakistanis. Who were the hardest fighters?

CDR LAL: There is no good enemy. They are all bad.

BILL K: What was your biggest concern as you fought through the Darya Suf? Food, ammunition, American support?

CDR LAL: Ammunition was one of the points that I was concerned about. Mark knows, we used to buy them by weight. And as you all know the night before we launched to Mazar we ran out of bullets so we bought five-thousand bullets. That was machine gun's bullet, that's not [unintelligible] so then we entered and captured Mazar.

BILL K: When you say the night, is that the night of 5 November?

CDR LAL: I don't know the dates. But we had a meeting; after which we launched our forces towards Taliban troops. We were under heavy attack of artillery and heavy [unintelligible] of the enemy so we received lots of casualties at first. About 30 horses died and so many people died as well. All at the beginning of...[he is speaking about Tiangi on the 9 November 2001].

And then after Mr. Dostum himself reorganized the troops, reorganized his soldiers and started another attack on Mazar.

Mr. Dostum allowed me to go to Qala Jangi 'cause we knew that there was no enemy left, they had all fled. And then through satellite phones I contacted all my commanders in different provinces that we had successfully done our mission. And one day after that we found out that there were thousands of Al Qaeda people still in Mazar. And to give you an example one of my soldiers were injured in an ambush carried out by those Al Qaeda Taliban inside Mazar. And one day later Mr. Dostum himself and Mr. Mark came into [unintelligible, crosstalk] the tension was a bit down. So this was a part of a big game. The surrender of those Taliban troops in [near Konduz] was a part of a plan. 'Cause they were planning to kill Mr. Dostum and some Americans especially Mr. Mark after which it would have been very easy for them to re-control north.

BILL K: When you talk about losing people, was that in Qala Jangi?

CDR LAL: That's in Cashmeh Tiangi.

BILL K: Was that the most difficult battle?

CDR LAL: It was a difficult fight. They concentrated all their heavy weapons on one point so since we are moving on a straight line so it was very easy for them to hit us. And Mr. Mark may remember that lots of rockets fell around them and exploded but they survived them. You could have seen Mazar-e Sharif from that area because it was on the high ground nearby Kode barq [south of Mazar].

BILL K: How difficult was it to bring those different factions together to fight the Taliban?

CDR LAL: Maybe this comes from our tradition. If we give our hand to someone we will be with him till the last drops of our blood. So we came together and we promised and we succeeded. Mr. Mark knows Afghanistan even better than me maybe.

BILL K: Please describe the success of airpower—especially at the beginning.

CDR LAL: With one word: with a hundred-percent effectiveness.

BILL K: During the first battle in Chapchal, there were casualties [we are looking at a map]. Where were the Taliban first defenses; where were the most difficult locations?

CDR LAL: There's a river. There are three roads passing through the river. They had planted lots of antipersonnel mines along the roads to prevent us from using that road.

BILL K: Was that during the battle of Chapchal?

CDR LAL: They were planted long before. Mr. Dostum and us captured Chapchal and took two-hundred prisoners there and then we had to step back after.

BILL K: Was this the first time you were pushed back?

CDR LAL: If you look from the point that he climbed, very steep you know, precipice, one-thousand high, you cannot imagine how his men climbed that precipice. Happily our leader has been successful on all his plans that he took during the resistance.

CPT MARK: On 5 November a big attack east of Boybe Che—can you talk about that?

CDR LAL: Yeah. We were the land forces so we attacked and the fighting was going on during the night and into the early morning of the next day. There were B-52s bombing and hitting the enemies. And a night before you were with me you're sleeping in the same place so we could both see the enemy's lines, the enemy's forces from the top. So after we defeated

this resistance line there was no resistance again till Shulgareh. So we talked about that meeting that we held so after the meeting we captured Mazar.

[SFC Bill and CPT Mark—Ref the meeting in Shulgareh—probably 6 or 7 November 2001 in Keshendeh-ye Pain. There was another meeting in Shulgareh right before Tiangi.]

CDR LAL: Yeah, I remember there was also a meeting. There were tens of thousands of Taliban. After control of Mazar the enemy melted away.

BILL K: Do you remember the names of your Taliban enemy?

CDR LAL: I knew these people before the Taliban came in and now they joined Taliban and we're fighting against them. I used to talk to them through wireless sometimes.

BILL K: During the battle, do you remember talking to them?

CDR LAL: Definitely. After the air-bombing I used to call them. "What happened, how are you feeling? Try to save yourself or surrender," I used to tell them this. I used to show Mr. Mark how those Al Qaeda people were escaping. And then we had to give the coordinates to the air forces and they hit the target.

BILL K: Did you talk any of the enemy into defecting or surrendering?

CDR LAL: Yeah. I did lots at first to persuade them to surrender or to leave their weapons down but of course some of them were captured as you know, but these were really hard-liners. It's very difficult to persuade them.

BILL K: When you talked to them after an airstrike, did any of them say where they were so you could target them?

CDR LAL: No. They never used to give us their location, their position. But still you can see them inside the cities because they are mostly the people who are sympathizers of Taliban [ODA 555 reported that the Taliban had provided targeting data during these post-strike conversations].

It was not that difficult to find out the position of the enemy 'cause it was quite obvious and clear where the enemy was situated. We could see them with our eyes. We could see their headquarters and security posts.

[The original transcript stopped at 28:10 but the tape continued for another seven minutes. The following is a gist of the discussion.]

BILL K: How did you know where the Taliban would reinforce in the Darya Suf?

CDR LAL: We knew through the radios. We had people in Mazar that would spy for us.

BILL K: How did you know where to attack?

CDR LAL: We looked for opportunities, but they were coordinated with Mr. Dostum.

Early in the battle we had to take into consideration the Taliban Air Force. So if we moved during the day we had to be wary. But that changed later [when the Americans came].

BILL K: Can you describe the small unit attacks against tanks and ZSUs

CDR LAL: First in Chapchal. We had to make use of a precise second. If we were late we could lose, or if the Taliban were late they could lose. After Chapchal there was another security post where there were 13 Taliban. I personally led the attack where we threw them.

BILL K: Were you ever concerned about American bombs hitting your troops?

CDR LAL: No, never. They were very precise. Unfortunately there is snow or I would be happy to show you [Lal is saying he would take us to the locations; however, because of the snow covering the area, he couldn't. Two reasons: We couldn't get the vehicles in and, the big one, land mines—we couldn't see the markers].

BILL K: Did you have a preference between Joint Direct Attack Munitions [JDAM] and laser guided munitions?

CDR LAL: I was happy with both because they didn't miss.

BILL K: In Chapchal and Boybe Che, how many Taliban did you face and how many were killed?

CDR LAL: Difficult to say—thousands and thousands; lots of casualties. One-hundred fifty to two hundred in each location, maybe 1,600 Taliban killed.

BILL K: In the fight near Boybe Che, there was an occurrence where a bomb fell and horses charged; bombs hit very close to the horses and they overtook the Taliban position—please describe.

CDR LAL: Yes, I remember. The horses were used to the bombing and knew it was an American bomb, a friendly bomb, so they were not afraid.

[End of Interview with CDR Lal and DV tape 2.]

**TRANSCRIPT 2: CDR HAJI CHARI AT SHEBERGHAN,
7 DECEMBER 2002**

Introductory Notes: Commander Haji Chari was interviewed¹ at GEN Dostum's Guest House in Sheberghan on 7 December 2002. Commander Haji Chari escorted Tiger 02C through the Darya Suf and spoke primarily of his work with Tiger 02C on 5 November 2001 in the Darya Suf and 9 November 2001 as they fought through the Tiangi. Esam is the Interpreter.

BILL K [DV tape 3, time 02:20]: You are Commander Haji Chari?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Yes, that's right.

BILL K: During the period Mark was with you, what was your job?

CDR HAJI CHARI: After Mr. Mark's arrival I was commander. I had my troops and at the same time I was assigned to work with three American, three guys from American Special Forces while coordination of the attacks, air strikes and all this.

BILL K: When did you join GEN Dostum?

CDR HAJI CHARI: About 23 years ago.

BILL K: Were you born in Afghanistan?

CDR HAJI CHARI: In Sheberghan.

BILL K: When did you move into the Darya Suf to fight the Taliban?

CDR HAJI CHARI: I flew along with Mr. Dostum from Mashaad [Iran], Badakschan, from Badakschan to Panjshir to Darya Suf

BILL K: When did that happen?

CDR HAJI CHARI: About 9, 10 months before 9/11.

BILL K: How did you fly?

CDR HAJI CHARI: It was a helicopter. It's Afghan helicopter, but it was Russian made.

¹ This is DV tape 3.

BILL K: Who did you meet in the Panjshir Valley?

CDR HAJI CHARI: We stayed in Badakschan for one week; because of bad weather, we could not fly. We then flew to Panjshir and met Mr. Massoud.

BILL K: In the Darya Suf, how many soldiers did you command?

CDR HAJI CHARI: In the beginning, I along with seven other men came with Mr. Dostum as his security guards. However, later on I was assigned as a Commander and controlled about 350 soldiers.

BILL K: In the Darya Suf, what was one of the major battles you fought after 9/11?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Beshcam, Maksoot [Haji Chari is evidently referring to an area we call Charsu because the village of Charsu is located near the area where Tiger 02C marked its location on the map] and Atchapari.

BILL K: On 31 October 2001 you went with Tiger 02C. What did you do and where did you go?

CDR HAJI CHARI: We were really involved in the battle with them. One reason was that we were engaged in fighting in the Maksoot region, and the fighting went on for one hour. I then asked those American men, what should we now do? Should we advance, or just stay put? And they said, no, we should go ahead. But I told them that, that would be a very dangerous move, because that area had been under the control of the Taliban, it was a fragile position for us to stay, giving them [Taliban], the opportunity to surround us at any time. And as we were coordinating the attacks for our forces, some Al Qaeda and Taliban forces began to advance towards us. Because we were on top of this hill, we could clearly see the advancement of tens and hundreds of Taliban approaching our position and trying to surround us. [Haji is talking about Tiger 02C on 5 November 2001] We found ourselves surrounded, and then I contacted Mr. Dostum and he directed Mr. Ahmed Khan and his men to open a corridor for our troops to escape from there [referring to 5 November 2001 in the Charsu area]

BILL K: Were you near Charsu?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Maksoot. Then Mr. Ahmad Khan's men came in and opened a corridor for us to step back [retreat] to save our lives, because the circle was tightening. There were only three American Special Forces people, me and one other, our other men fled, we had to escape. For one hour we exchanged fire with the approaching Taliban and they cut off our path to return. The enemy was only ten meters away when Ahmad Khan's troops launched an attack and opened this road.

BILL K: Did the U.S. bomb?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Yeah, there was an air strike, too. But they didn't care about air strikes. Even though we killed 12 of them ourselves, and some of them were killed by the air strikes but they didn't care. They kept coming. And by the side of this hill there was a deep ditch and this is the road. I told my Afghan comrade who was called Rasheek to take these three Americans to the ditch and take them out of the area. I rode a horse and took all the stuff that Americans had like binoculars and maps and all these stuff, computers. I took horse and I escaped from there. I went back [on horse] and they went back through the ditch.

BILL K: Did they run or were they on horseback? [We are working off a map of the area; it's 16:20 on the tape.]

CDR HAJI CHARI: No, they were on foot. So I came up the hill and again went down to the ditch and came here and meet them and brought them back by horse. And we again got positioned on another hill and at that time this was occupied by Taliban. There were about 30, 40 Taliban and Al Qaeda.

BILL K: How many were killed?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Out of these 30 Taliban and Al Qaeda, 2 of them went out, they tried to block our way to the road, but they were still about 28 of them and we coordinated with the Air Forces so they could launch missiles into the enemy. All 28 of them [Taliban] were killed. We then launched another attack on those two guys [Taliban], but they escaped. We set up another position here, which was on top of the hill, where we would be able to coordinate with Mr. Dostum and other Commanders would be able to launch ground attacks and capture all these areas of land that were previously controlled by the Taliban. We were able to control all these areas up to Chapchal.

BILL K: This was part of Chapchal or Boybe Che?

CDR HAJI CHARI: The different areas, like by Bache, Chapchal, Maksoot, all on the same line.

BILL K: [We are working off a map trying to discriminate between the various area—we appear to be speaking of the same areas as we look at the map and diagram.]

CDR HAJI CHARI: We all knew Mr. Dostum himself had a very firm decision that once we broke the enemy's first lines it means that we'll go to Mazar.

Commanders left for Char Su, Omitak, we went to Keshendeh.

So they followed this direction and Commander Salem, Commander Omur was going to leave before us. They were fighting in another direction. The Taliban did not defend Keshendeh, Ustad Atta in Pol-e Baraq. Besides Pol-e Baraq, where there was a bridge, and a castle, an old castle so they held the meeting in the castle.

This was the last meeting before Tiangi. So we decided that we should control the Tiangi.

[Haji is drawing in my notebook, page 9—24:21.]

CDR HAJI CHARI: Our people were settled in this area along this road. One part of it's called Kafer Qalah. And I and three other Americans...

BILL K: MSG Paul, CPT Mark, and SSgt Matt?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Yes the same three. We had to make our way around the river, and so we had to cross this river and make a U-turn and come out of Kafer Qalah like so.

Haji Habib's men were also present right along with us. We were so close to the enemy, that Taliban forces were dug into their positions here. So, we were here and they were positioned along this side. There was a river that passed through the Tiangi and they could see the missiles and artillery attacks that besieged the Taliban as they were trying to cross [cross talk], and such missiles were hitting our people in Tiangi. We could see the Taliban; we were very close to the Taliban.

BILL K: Rockets?

CDR HAJI CHARI: No, Kalashnikovs and RPGs. I will speak of the heavy artilleries. They [Taliban] were expecting us. So, they [Taliban] had already installed all these heavy weapons like artillery, rockets and BM-21s, three BM-21s in fact. Each BM-21 has 40 bullets; a long bullet that means that around 120 BM-21 bullets hit our position, here. Apart from, and as well as, other tanks and missiles and artilleries.

BILL K: How were the tanks set up? [Taking this lead from Matt's description of the dug-in tanks.]

CDR HAJI CHARI: They dig hole, they have bunkers. You can see just the [the turret]

Then they launched their land attack forces and we had to retreat because they [Taliban] pushed us back and Mr. Dostum had to come up to the position that we held. It was very dangerous...so many rockets dropped near our position, near Mr. Dostum as well, maybe 10 - 15 meters, so there was a bunker and we managed to take him [Mr. Dostum] to it. We gave our coordinates for the air attack, the bombing commenced, and we launched another attack to-

wards these areas and took control of these areas up to Pol-e Baraq. Some of our soldiers went into Mazar-e to Qala Jangi and some of us remained. Mr. Dostum wanted to stay put for another day. The next day, Commander Lal was the first person to enter Mazar-e.

Commander Lal and his troops with Commander Kamal, headed to Mazar-e-Sharif, in the night [cross talk], in another direction, constantly engaged in battle, which is why it took some time to reach Mazar. In the morning of the next day.

BILL K: So on 10 November 2001 you entered Mazar-e Sharif?

CDR HAJI CHARI: We entered and there were hundreds of Taliban positioned at Sultan Razia school for girls. We coordinated an air strike for the school; it was under our control the following day. After that we controlled Mazar.

BILL K: What was your biggest challenge?

CDR HAJI CHARI: The most important concern was the lack of ammunition, because we did not have adequate supplies, the Commanders were giving each soldier five to seven bullets. We carried out the attack on Zareh district with one box of bullets. And during that time, the Americans were not there yet, so it was only after the Americans arrived that we were able to receive more rockets and bullets. But still it was always a problem. So the strongest position of the enemy was located in Safid Kotah. We did not have enough ammunition, not enough bullets, which is why we attacked the enemy in unexpected times and seized their weapons and ammunition and use it against them. We had to destroy enemy tanks and heavy vehicles that we seized from the Taliban, because we did not know how to use them, and we certainly did not [want] the Taliban to get their hands back on them. So we threw it off from the hills [pushed them off the mountain] and...they were very big.

Mr. Mark may remember. He climbed up many horrible precipices and steep hills that even goats could not venture. And all the while, Mr. Dostum was leading the way. We used to tell him all the time, "You're our leader, your our Commander, you should stay clear. If you die, who will lead us?" And he used to say, "No, my body is not more precious than yours." I hope the American stance here will continue, they were along with us during the resistance and greatly helped us and I hope that this will go on after this too. I know that you asked about the dates and all these details but you should remember that we did not have even a pen or notebook to take note and write down dates. All that we had was Kalashnikovs...and I captured six Yemenis, Yemen, and I handed them over to the security office. I got a document for all of them that were handed over, and the American Government declared \$5,000 bounties for each Al Qaeda captured, and I refused to even take it. [End of DV tape 3.]

Note. There was a short break in the interview as the tape was changed.² We are working off a map.

BILL K: How important was the introduction of U.S. forces to the fight?

CDR HAJI CHARI [DV tape 4; time 00:00]: In my opinion, it had considerable importance in breaking the backbone of the Taliban, because we started from here and launched the attacks on key positions of the enemy, where we successfully gained control.

BILL K: How did you know what the enemy was going to do?

CDR HAJI CHARI: We used many methods. First, we tried to find out the enemy's plan through radio interception. We knew their language, and we had solved their passwords so we were able to understand if they were planning attacks through the radios. And furthermore, we had recon people who were going alongside the battlefields and coming towards us and giving us their reports. And then, Mr. Dostum had people inside Mazar, Sheberghan, Fariab, Samangan and other major cities with about 10 to 15 satellite phones inside these cities with our people. So, we used to contact our people and we were getting useful information about the new developments of daily battle strategies...

BILL K: Were you surprised by any enemy activity?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Yes, of course. You know, some of their fighters and commanders were fighting without fear. Such dedication really surprised me, but on the other hand, we were following the orders of our leaders. It was victory or death. We were just listening to our leader, General Dostum, as this was the key factor of our success.

Most of us have not seen our families, children, wife, for many years...

BILL K: Where did your family stay?

CDR HAJI CHARI: From Iran to Buta Kashan, from Buta Kashan to Panjshir.

BILL K: Where did you live?

CDR HAJI CHARI: They escaped to Pakistan. There are many refugees who fled to Pakistan, neighboring countries, Pakistan, and Iran.

BILL K: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

² This DV tape 4.

CDR HAJI CHARI: Yes. I'd like to tell you that I was both happy and sad. I was sad because there was a terrible attack on the castle [World Trade Center] and the Pentagon, but I was happy that I could see the Americans beside me and that they took part in our victory. It was a very dangerous situation for Afghanistan, because dangerous people were living here. They have nothing to do with Islam, what they were doing was contrary to what Islam represents. And know, I am happy that, I am, I am living in a peaceful Afghanistan. I am talking with you under peaceful circumstances.

Even though we had a handicap, there was the language. We could talk through body language with our American friends. We couldn't understand each other that well. We could only speak some introductory phrases and words, but despite this, we gained a big success/victory.

As Mr. Dostum reminded you that he was ready to give a positive answer for any international call to join antiterrorism campaigns and to send his troops. He says, "I am also ready to join these troops, antiterrorist troops, anywhere in the world."

I have a very, very unforgettable impression from our American friends, particularly from Mr. Mark, which in a very short period of time we had a very deep and good understanding of each other, great respect. We were, we had become just like brothers, because we knew we were all away from our families and in the beginning some of the American soldiers could not know, did not know, how to ride a horse. So we helped them. Some of them did not know how to fasten the saddle. So we used to help them. That was an unforgettable impression for me.

BILL K: CDR Haji Chari, what do you do now?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Deputy of Division 82. And I am politically and militarily in charge of Darzab and Pushticab, Bellawankoshfa [phonetic], district.

BILL K: Is there anything else you wish to say?

CDR HAJI CHARI: No. That is all. Thank you very much.

BILL K: It was an honor for me to speak to such a great warrior. Thank you.

CDR HAJI CHARI: I really appreciate that you have come such a long way, and Mr. Mark is my close friend, and you also are my friends. I am at your service. Thank you.

[End of Interview with CDR Haji Chari.]

**TRANSCRIPT 3: CDR FAKIR AT SHEBERGHAN,
7 DECEMBER 2002**

Introductory note: This is an interview¹ of CDR Fakir at GEN Dostum's guest house in Sheberghan on 7 December 2002. Hafis is the interpreter. The translator provided both Hafis's interpretation in English as well as some of his own interpretations of CDR Fakir's account.

CDR FAKIR: For 14 years I have been working with him [GEN Dostum]. We went out of the country together, to Iran, he went to Turkey, and I came to Tashkent [Uzbekistan], and then later I joined him in Turkey and came back to Afghanistan.

BILL K: Where were you born?

CDR FAKIR: In Sheberghan.

BILL K: What was your job?

CDR FAKIR: I was considered a sort of operative deputy of Dostum on the battlefields because I was the one who was going to put into practice theoretical things. I use to go to the fields and put them into practice, all were things discussed in the meetings.

BILL K: What was the most difficult battle after 9/11?

CDR FAKIR: When we began our struggle against these terrorists that had nothing to do with America. We started our struggle even before 9/11. We were fighting on the mountains to free Afghanistan, but it was good that Americans also came and helped us. And to answer your question, I can't differentiate between all these fightings that I had in the Darya Suf because they were all hard fightings.

BILL K: In the Darya Suf, where were you located during the battle of Chapchal and Boybe Che?

¹ This is DV tape 6. This immediately follows the Buzkashi match at Sheberghan. The tape starts with GEN Dostum in the courtyard outside his guest house. GEN Dostum discusses background of the battle of Mazar-e Sharif from his tactical map of the area.

CDR FAKIR: I was the only person that was assigned by the General to coordinate our operations and our attempts together with American Special Forces. So I was the one who was engaged with Americans. And, as I told you before, even though you are not fighting in the front line, at the front, but our job was more dangerous than the ones who were fighting it in the front lines. Because we were the ones who used to go first on and make some investigation of the positions of the enemy and to discover what's going on, if there were mines or how many soldiers are located there, what weapons that the enemies have. Our job was sort of discovery, you know.

BILL K: Were you responsible for reconnaissance, determining the enemy's position? [7:05]

CDR FAKIR: Yes. We used to scout the area, to try to find out about the enemy, and the position they held. We had advanced technology for this. We would then report such findings to Gen. Dostum, and he would determine what course to take based on our intelligence.

BILL K: Mullah Razzak was in one of the bunkers. Who were some of his subcommanders?

CDR FAKIR: Yeah, actually Mullah Razzak, as I told, was the commander of a military corps in Mazar-e Sharif. He was actually the Corp commander. We felt, once we put more pressure on him, we could then determine when to advance, and concentrate our forces for such an advance.

So, as a precaution they brought their forces from other fronts, like Tajah [phonetic] fronts, and the commanders like Mullah Razzak and others concentrated and brought all their forces in our line, which means they weren't quite sure about other fronts, that there are no other resistances, no other anti-Talib forces that could attack on them. And we were only the only potential danger for them.

BILL K: So they moved all of their forces into the Darya Suf to face GEN Dostum?

CDR FAKIR: They tried to block Mr. Dostum, to try and get a hold of Gen. Dostum areas. 2,000 men, encompassed the foundation for such an advance. Chechen fighters, mostly hard-liner Arabs joined them.

BILL K: When you went to recon, were they using trenches and bunkers? [13:49]

CDR FAKIR: Yeah, Afghanistan is a mountainous country, you know. Everywhere is a bunker. And the handmade bunkers were also quite firm and very strong because they used to dig a very big hole and then put different layers of clay and then wood, again clay, leaving just small holes which was very difficult to destroy, apart from using air strikes by B-52s.

BILL K: What was the most difficult part as far as attacking the bunkers?

CDR FAKIR: Since the bunkers were built very strongly and firmly they were very difficult to capture the people among them fighting against you. That was the biggest problem we had.

After we get an order from the General, there would be no one hesitating. We would just move towards the enemy and of course before we moved towards the enemy, we had to think how and what to attack and like, "Should we attack in the night time? Should we attack in the early morning? Or should we attack in the early evening?" We used to calculate the best timing, because in the early mornings they feel asleep and that was the best time to attack.

BILL K: The Americans said they did preparation bombing in the morning and you attacked in the afternoon—did that occur later?

CDR FAKIR: That's a tactic that they used before the Special Forces arrived. They used to bomb some of the peaks and positions of the enemy but that was no so precise bombing, but still it created to us a good opportunity to attack because the enemy had a fear that even if they hear the noise of the plane, they lose their morality. So, that helped us.

But after Special Forces arrival, the attacks and the air strikes were more organized and the targets were hit more precisely.

BILL K: Who was Mullah Faisel?

CDR FAKIR: He was the Deputy of Defense Minister and the General Commander of the Taliban forces in the north.

BILL K: You mentioned you had 2,000 to 3,000 horsemen under GEN Dostum, how many enemy forces? [22:09]

CDR FAKIR: They were maybe three times, four times us and they were not Afghans. They were Pakistanis coming out of the Madrasas [schools] in Pakistan and maybe they were sent by force [forced to come]. Maybe they were deceived and they had the ammunitions, tanks, artillery system, but we had only our horses and the lines between us and the Taliban were about 20 kilometers, which were long lines.

BILL K: Line between who?

CDR FAKIR: Taliban and us. Yes. And they had three, four security belts after each other.

BILL K: Where were you located during the battle of Boybe Che?

CDR FAKIR: Shamallak. It's a high place. It's a high mountainous place where you could see and control the movement of the enemy. In other words, we were closer at Mount Ficus to Taliban, but it was high and we were not in direct fighting.

BILL K: Can you describe what happened with the horse charges? [Describe the shrapnel and smoke.]

SMSgt Bart saw it from down here [Bart was with the ODC south of the Darya Suf with GEN Dostum]. Bart said he could see right before the bombs hit, the horses ride through the smoke and shrapnel. Do you remember? [26:40]

CDR FAKIR: I remember. That is exactly correct, because we could see the enemy from our posts high up on the mountain. Once the air strikes attacked, we would immediately converge on the enemy, because we knew they would try to escape.

I found this tactic used by the Americans very interesting. The bombings would have such a personal effect upon the enemy, it played with their emotions, it demoralized their want to fight, and their will to fight was weak.

BILL K: Were the Taliban listening to GEN Dostum as well? [30:44]

CDR FAKIR: Yeah, that's exactly right because we could see the enemy very, very, very well from the top. And we know the airplanes, the jet, B-52. If they were not flying around, the Taliban used to get the courage to fight against us. But if there was any B-52 flying around, they couldn't dare even to take out their heads up—out—so once the aircrafts struck the positions, we used to launch our men, horsemen to it. That's right.

As soon as there was a bombing. We used to launch our horsemen because we knew that they were escaping. I also got a feel that our American friends found this tactic very interesting.

So, they were scared of B-52s and they also were listening to our wireless, our radios, and that's—we were attacking, 'cause GEN Dostum was giving orders that attack after the air strike. So, it demoralized them. And it worked for us.

BILL K: Were the Taliban listening to GEN Dostum as well? [30:44]

CDR FAKIR: Yeah. They were listening to our radios and we were listening to them. We knew that there was a panic against us, a mind game saying, "Oh we can't resist. We have to leave this position or do that." Of course, this helped us. Later on we found out they used a tactic, that when the B-52s come, they leave their positions and they hide themselves under the rocks, and they scatter around, they leave their position. So, when they, the B-52s bomb, it

doesn't work. And then they come back to the positions. So, we developed another tactic against, as I mentioned. As soon as the bombardment happens, we should attack and seize their position.

BILL K: So, after fighting the Darya Suf through Shamallak and after Boybe Che, did you go to Omitak?

CDR FAKIR: Yeah, as we broke this line and we captured this area, straight away we head to Omitak.

Other parts of our troops were based here and this is a mountainous area. So, we came down from the mountains to Keshendeh—upper Keshendeh—and the rest of our troops approached Keshendeh from the other direction. So, we attacked from two directions. Ahmad Khan and Lal.

Lal was commanding the other troops coming from the side. Ahmad Khan was also here but later our plan changed. He headed to Mazar with his 600 people.

BILL K: Up the Darreh-e Dadel? Ahmad Khan went up to Dallan and in Samangan? [Cross talk here and I don't know if Hafis understood my question.]

CDR FAKIR: So, yeah. That's right. Since this is a mountainous place, we went by horse and since it's very rough and rocky, we lost our way. And there were only five people, three Americans, me, and Mr. Dostum who could find our way and enter this place. Later on our troops came and joined us.

Of course we came down from here and Lal came from here and then we had a meeting.

BILL K: In Keshendeh-ye Bala?

CDR FAKIR: Yeah, In upper Keshendeh-ye Bala.

BILL K: After the meeting in Keshendeh, who met with GEN Dostum?

CDR FAKIR: The fronts are getting nearer and nearer. And all the commanders were participating in this meeting—like Ak-yasin, Kamal khan, Lal Commander, Chari, me. And we knew that the enemy was escaping.

BILL K: If you knew the enemy was escaping, what did you do? [38:08]

CDR FAKIR: Without waiting we launched attacks on Keshendeh, the lower Keshendeh, which is here.

And there was no resistance at all. They had already escaped.

Since they—Pol-e Baraq, which is the name of a bridge right here. Tashkenda.

The bridge here was destroyed by bombings, at Pol-e Baraq, the cars were able to pass along here. Right here. [to the east]

[End of DV tape 6 (41:33).]

Note. This is DV tape changeover to 7. We are speaking about Tiangi and Sultan Razia School. The first question before the tape started concerned the importance of land forces to the fight.

CDR FAKIR: ...it would have been very difficult to come to conclusion to air strikes. Because the land forces, again, at Tiangi were determining factor.

The bridge was destroyed by air strikes, so it was difficult to cross the river. So at the end, after wasting a long time, they managed to cross too. And then they came from the east of the bridge. And then they come to Tashkenda. And then they stay here, they wait here without any resistance. They stay overnight at Tashkenda. And in the early morning, they launched towards Shulgareh.

In the early morning, there is no resistance, they have a meeting. They say that we should march towards Mazar, so then they come to Tiangi, Cashmeh.

So, the Albors Mountains situated on the west of Tiangi...Gordha is located on the east of Tiangi, which is a high place where you can see Mazar.

Of course, then we came to Tiangi, Cashmeh, and then there was a heavy counterattack by the Taliban. There were four BM-21s and other heavy artilleries and tanks so they fired a hand grenade and 160 bullets of BM-21 at once, and we lost 30, 35 soldiers there. And we stepped back. Then Mr. Dostum organized scattered troops and launched another attack. Since they were Special Forces they had contact with air forces. So some B-52s came and bombarded these BM-21s and tanks that were located here, and also bombarded some of the other supplementary or helping troops that were approaching. And n we launched another attack.

Before we launched the second attack, the posts were destroyed, and there were no BM-21s because they were struck by the air force. The second attack was successful.

Lal commander came from the heights, which is located on the east of the river, and Kamal Commander from this direction [the west], and I, with American Special Forces headed to Mazar through the road, main road.

We are at the Amombookree [Emam-Bokree] Bridge...yeah, a mixture of both [Talban and Al Qaeda], but mostly Al Qaeda.

BILL K: Do you know the ratio of Al Qaeda to Taliban?

CDR FAKIR: There were mostly Al Qaeda, and of course since they didn't trust other nations, nationalities, other minorities, Uzbeks, there could be some Uzbeks that were working for Taliban, but they never trusted them. The only faction that they could trust was Pashtun. Of course, they had some reserve troops, and they used to train them, these Al Qaeda people, and headquarters like in Division 18 of Mazar, they had a training center there, and they have reserves of ready Al Qaeda soldiers in every district in every province. So whenever there is a fighting or a danger, they used to send them to the battlefields with heavy ammunition and cars and supplementaries. But you know, after the airports were struck by the air forces, and the tanks were destroyed, and the [unintelligible] were destroyed, they lost their capability.

BILL K: Commander Lal came from the east of the river, Commander Kamal from the west, and you came up the main road?

CDR FAKIR: Kamal Commander...of course, coming this way, he used this bridge again to cross. And then he went to Kode-barq. And Lal Commander entered Mazar Sharif...and he again took control of Qala Jangi.

We returned from this bridge back to Tiangi Cashmeh and went to General Dostum, and there Mark and other leaderships, they came there and we joined and moved towards Mazar, the convoy moved to Mazar. Because we had already been to this route, and we had discovered it was good to go now, for the leader.

Yeah, there are some houses at the other end of this canyon. We were just loading everything up, and supplying ourselves, and trying to go ahead and try to pass this canyon, and they fired all these heavy weapons, and if we had moved just a few minutes ago, they would have hit us, and we would never be here talking to you.

Maybe their plan was to kill us, Americans and me, because of Gen. Dostum, maybe they had some scouts around that talked to them on the wireless, on the radio, that Americans are coming, but they did a miscalculation and hit the other part of our convoy.

We and our American friends thought that they had already planted lots of mines, hundreds of mines in this Tiangi, and then I contacted Mr. Dostum and asked him if it possible that if this true or not, and he said no, I can see, because he was on the top, he said no, I can see BM-21s they are not mines.

BILL K: Where was GEN Dostum?

CDR FAKIR: On this side, yes, the east side, a high place. [Kafer Qalah] This is a very high place, from the top you can see the movements of the enemy, so that's why he told us that, using the binoculars.

BILL K: Let me go back to Chapchal/Beshcam area. The first time the U.S. bombed they were demonstrating the accuracy of the strikes, but the Americans were a little disappointed. What was your perspective?

CDR FAKIR: As I told you before, the first day the jets came, and they were not that precise. But quite close to the targets. The next day, B-52s came and they used another sort of bombing system—throwing the bombs randomly. And even they hit our positions, the second day. And there was no contact and no coordination from the ground.

[Note: We are talking about the bombing before the Special Forces arrived.]

After the Special Forces arrival, I was the one who had the closest contact with Americans on the ground, because I was working with them. The targets were hit quite precisely after their arrival, but still I can talk about some mistakes. For instance, I was nearly killed near Qala Jangi when the B-52 hit...yeah, me, even the Americans were nearly killed. But these are some exceptional cases.

Of course, our friends, our American friends were trying their best to have a precise hit of the targets. So I was the one who used to show them, because I'm an Afghan, and I know what the positions are like. And after that, they used to study the position with binoculars and other calculations, taking into consideration if there were some civilians living around about, so they tried their best to be precise.

I really appreciate Mark's attempts for being precise. Of course, Mr. Dostum himself also warned me that you should be precise, and there might be some civilians or villages living around, so you should not miss the targets. And even after each air strike, he used to call me and ask me the reason of the strike.

When there was heavy fighting between us and the Taliban, and we were losing the lives of our soldiers, I used to shout, in a friendly way to Mark, "Where are the planes?" And he used to tell me, "Wait for 5 minutes or 10 minutes." And precisely after 10 minutes, the planes used to come and hit the targets.

What I'm going to tell you is the most interesting I think. I have seen a big plane being chased by five small jets. And I calls Mr. Dostum and tell him that they are hijacking

the big plane with five small jets, then Mr. Dostum calls Mark, and asks what's happening? And then he [Mark] said no, the big plane is getting fuel to the jets.

BILL K: Are there other examples of how tactics changed during the course of the campaign?

CDR FAKIR: Well, what I told you is the tactic that we used during the battle...you might have heard about the Sultan Razia School, where Pakistani Taliban and Pakistani Al Qaeda were located, and of course we are concerned about how to bomb, and how to hit, and how to take control of this school, because it is in the center of the city, and there are houses, there are civilians living all around. One mistake means it will cost the lives of hundreds of civilians. So they were talking about among themselves, the Americans and Mr. Dostum all together—then Mark told Mr. Dostum, just leave us, give me a commander, we'll think about it. Then I took him to a five-story building which was quite close, 50 meters close to the Sultan Razia School, and we took all of our equipments, the binoculars, and we had a comprehensive study of the situation there. Then we saw the Taliban, the Pakistanis, they making bunkers, putting the sands over each other, trying to make bunkers. I was trying to shoot one of them, Mark said no. Then he gave the coordinates to the air forces, and then the plane came, hit the first target 100% precisely, so around 200 Taliban were killed. And then they hit the second and the third. So after that we surrounded the school, and then most of them surrendered. So we closed the problem, which could have ended in disaster, very successfully.

[End of interview with CDR Fakir.]

**TRANSCRIPT 4: CDR AK-YASIN AT MAZAR-E SHARIF,
8 DECEMBER 2002**

Introductory note: CDR Ak-yasin is interviewed¹ at the ODA house in Mazar-e Sharif on 8 December 2002. Kamal is the interpreter.²

BILL K: I'm now interviewing Commander Ak-yasin. What is your position now?

CDR AK-YASIN: I am the commander at the Fringah [Freedom Bridge] Bridge, the border between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

BILL K: Did you work for GEN Dostum?

CDR AK-YASIN: I worked for GEN Dostum's command, under the umbrella of Gen Dostum.

BILL K: Do you remember the names of the soldiers you worked with?

CDR AK-YASIN: One of them was Mark... the other gentlemen went by Dodecka [the other translation says John Doe], but I don't know his real American name. He was with the U.S. Consulate at Uzbekistan.

BILL K: Were you under Commander Lal or did you work for GEN Dostum?

CDR AK-YASIN: Straight for GEN Dostum.

BILL K: Were you collocated with GEN Dostum when he went through the Darya Suf the entire time?

CDR AK-YASIN: During the fighting, GEN Dostum was in the back, I was at the front line with Commander Lal.

BILL K: Do you remember when the American's first came and the first battles? Can you describe the battle around Chapchal and Beshcam?

¹ This is from DV tape 8.

² Although the text identifies "Ak-yasin" as the speaker, the response is provided by the translator, that is, this is a transcription of the translator; hence the transcription in third person.

CDR AK-YASIN: After September 11th, we were very depressed at what happened at the States in New York and D.C. and all that was very tragic; when U.S. Forces landed we were very excited; I didn't sleep for the entire week due to all the excitement and then later on we moved to Darya Suf.

[At the beginning] the U.S. forces demanded the Taliban hand over Mullah Omar and Bin Laden. I guess they denied US demands; around midnight, the U.S. forces started bombarding the area. Within 10 days the Taliban sort of retreated and we captured the area. Commander Lal and I were on the right, and there were some other commanders on the left. Within the next several days they called Spring Water...about 25 kilometers of Mazar Sharif, on the side of Shulgareh, between the power plant and Shulgareh, there's a Tiangi [Tiangi means pass] there. We came to that area. Then After couple of nights, we arrived at that Cashmeh in Tiangi.

BILL K: Let's focus on the Darya Suf and those first days when the Americans came. [Map] This is Dehi.

CDR AK-YASIN: Dehi. We were up there. [Tracing the map from the LZ to Dehi and onto Beshcam—a copy of the 1:100k map that was used is part of the appendix in D-2925.] The fighting lasted for a week in that area. GEN Dostum was in that point [pointing at Cobaki.] Later on we came all the way through in this area. Yes.

BILL K: How many soldiers were under your command?

CDR AK-YASIN: Sixty Horsemen, forty on the ground, basically walking, yes 40–45 on foot.

BILL K: How many other commanders did CDR Lal have with him?

CDR AK-YASIN: Habib Bala. He was commander for the group, himself with Commander Lal. One of his commanders was Bismala...his second commander was Noor Mohammad...his third commander was Sy Fadid. Also his bodyguard had a lot of commanders...he's very good guy.

BILL K: How many horsemen would Habib Bala have?

CDR AK-YASIN: He would sort of be part of Lal Commander, sort of a subcommander. Bismala was his commander, yes, he was a subcommander; when they were fighting they had radios to communicate with each other...Basically he was giving the commands, so these commanders under him...yeah, these three commanders were under his command and they had these 40 on foot and 60 horsemen.

They basically captured this area with these Taliban. Once they collapsed, Taliban retreat back all the way. That was sort of their main point.

BILL K: Can you describe what happened there, when did they bomb, when did they fight?

CDR AK-YASIN [22:30]: The fighting started late afternoon, all night, so basically the air bombardment was happening while we were doing the fighting, so combination of both. It never stopped, it was continuous...the air attack also stopped Taliban from reinforcing around Shulgareh area, so that way they were confident that they weren't getting any reinforcement. The planes helped them very much.

BILL K: You said that they were bombing in the Shulgareh area, how did you know the Taliban were trying to reinforce through the Shulgareh area?

CDR AK-YASIN: Once we captured these areas, we went to Shulgareh. On the way we saw a lot of cars hit by bombs. They saw a lot of destruction.

BILL K: In the Beshcam area there were a number of engagements...

CDR AK-YASIN: There was a lot of fighting in this area, we went behind White Hill they call it Safid Kotah, [showing on the map – part of D-2925]...Safid Kotah, Beshcam is right there, we went there, there's a big hill there, we went around it.

BILL K: They were concentrated in this area but did you take one hill and then the next?

CDR AK-YASIN: Step by step, one after another.

BILL K: Do you remember how many hills you captured in that area?

CDR AK-YASIN: Fifteen, twenty, there was a lot.

BILL K: Did you have any vehicles?

CDR AK-YASIN: Only horses.

BILL K: Did you attack tanks?

CDR AK-YASIN: There were no vehicles, only horses. I didn't see any tanks. Once the air attacks started, the tanks retreated back.

They had heavy artillery. ZU.

BILL K: I understand after Beshcam you fought in the Boybe Che area?

CDR AK-YASIN: We also fought in that area too.

BILL K: After Chapchal you came to... [on map].

CDR AK-YASIN: Boyvala. That area they had air attacks and heavy fighting. That was their last point when they collapsed. Yes, that was their last area, stronghold area. There were a lot of air attacks in that area too.

BILL K: Can you describe where the subcommanders were...CDR Lal, Kamal, Ahmad Khan...

CDR AK-YASIN: They were all in that area [map near Boybe Che]. Haman Lal was going to join them in this area.

BILL K: Was Mullah Razzak [Taliban Corps Commander] in that area too?

CDR AK-YASIN: Yes, Mullah Razzak was in that area too. On the air attack, he had one of the bunkers, a lot of Taliban got buried underneath the bunker.

BILL K: At what moment in the battle were you able to charge?

CDR AK-YASIN: GEN Dostum gave the order to attack from different sides, find out who was where. Right around this morning, around this time, there was a B-52 or aircraft came, they dropped bombs. He said they could see the bomb within 100 meters from them.

Once we captured those areas, we captured Keshendeh-ye Bala, and then the next day we met in Keshendeh for a meeting in this area...about three to four thousand men from this area people, they weren't armed, they grabbed whatever they could, shovel, pick, anything they could grab, they came they joined the group.

From Beshcam all the way to Tiangi, in this area there was no resistance.

BILL K: I want to focus on Boybe Che. Did the first charge succeed or were you driven back?

CDR AK-YASIN: When they first charged, the Taliban resisted a lot, they held their spot. We were running out of ammo, but we did not retreat back...late afternoon, we got reinforcements and more ammo, at the same time the air attack was going on, the ammo was brought to us by mule, donkey, horses...GEN Dostum, Mark and them they were at the front line, later on they joined them at the front line of the fighting. He said Mark did a lot in that area. He's a really good commander.

BILL K: You said you received ammo, what type and how much?

CDR AK-YASIN: PK rockets, the way we got weapons ammo was GEN Dostum used to buy it by weight. He weighed it, because we had no time to count the ammo, so we had to weigh it. We sort of got the message through the villages, whoever has ammo bring it in, I'll buy it, because we had no time, even though we had ammo in other areas, they were too far away.

BILL K: Did you receive small arms ammo such as AK47?

CDR AK-YASIN: Yes. Small arms, PKs and rockets; we used mostly PKs and rockets.

BILL K: You talked about weight—how many kilos of ammo?

CDR AK-YASIN: We probably used 20 to 30 thousand rounds of combination mixed.

[AK-]47 and rockets.

BILL K: During the time when the bunkers collapsed and your soldiers rode through attacking the Taliban, were some of your soldiers thrown off their horses by the explosions?

CDR AK-YASIN: They were thrown off their horses, five of my horses were killed.

BILL K: You're a very brave man.

CDR AK-YASIN: On the ground the situation and the fighting changes quickly.

BILL K: Did you lose any of your people?

CDR AK-YASIN: Eight people.

BILL K: How did you lose them? Enemy fire? From the bombs?

CDR AK-YASIN: From the enemy. During the bombardment three of my men got injured, but later on, they were okay, they were treated. 99% of the air attack was accurate. Once we captured that area, afterwards, we came back to this village [unintelligible] and had no resistance. In Tiangi area, they had some resistance.

[Note: End of DV tape 8; beginning of DV tape 9. Ak-yasin is looking at a 1:250K map and draws a diagram—page 9 of notes. The 1:100k and 1:250k maps show Bai Becha and Bay Beche, respectively, a little to the west of Baluch. Baluch is not reflected on the map but was located on the ground and noted via GPS. This is the same location that ODA 595 called Boybe Che.]

BILL K [00:00]: Let's draw this [and hands paper and pen to Ak-yasin].

CDR AK-YASIN: This is the river, that's the mountain, that's also the mountain. The river here changes direction...I was right there [we are discussing the Tiangi].

Here is Lal, here was Ali-Sarwar. Kamal-Khan was here...

Right here, we were surrounded and they hit us with three rounds of BM-21...it was 4 rounds, around 200 bullets. They also fired upon us from this point.

The Americans have a airplane that resembles a butterfly. They are beautiful airplanes that are black and look like butterflies. They are not the 52s. These airplanes fired on the BM-21s and destroyed them... These are the airplanes in which the radars cannot trace.

Lal and myself and Ali-Sarwar and there were a few boys from Jamiat and from Wadat. The Talibs were on their trail. They [Jamiat/Wadat], were on foot. They eventually joined our group later. The Talibs were pursuing them [Jamiat/Wadat] and then we were finally able to push them [Talibs] back.

We crossed the river on top of our horses, and my saddlebags got wet and the water was up to here, above the horse's ear.

I have some pictures of the war... I have about 20 to 30 pictures that I can show.... When would you like me to bring them to you?

[Discussion of coordinating phone numbers for picture pickup, etc. those pictures were included in D-2925]

CDR AK-YASIN: Beshcam, Shulgareh, Dosh-an-Ki, Darya Suf, I have pictures of all these areas...

BILL K: Were there any landmines in that area?

CDR AK-YASIN: Right here, a mine exploded under Commander Lal's horse. When we captured the top of the hill, a few mines detonated, a few men were injured and three of Commander Lal's horses died, one man died.

BILL K: What was your biggest challenge—the cold, food, ammo, horses, etc.—as you fought in the Darya Suf?

CDR AK-YASIN: The most important thing was the supply of ammunition; we did not care about food supply or the weather. When we did not have supply of ammunition we suffered tremendously. We used to look on the ground for rusted discarded bullets, clean them with glass and use them again. We were buying water for our horses.

We were paying 300,000 Afghani for a bucket of water and most of the time we could not even find that. My men were drinking from the same bucket of water that our horses drank from. We did not change our clothes for a month.

BILL K: You fought many years in the Darya Suf. Why did you now finally succeed?

CDR AK-YASIN: We were successful this time, first because we had war experience...

Every meter we traveled, we were implementing new war tactics. Every soldier would make decisions for themselves, not waiting for commanders. U.S. Forces were with us, because of our honor, we were fighting harder, and we felt invincible. Our morale was very high, and the air support was extremely helpful.

I have fear of heights, so when our company would traverse to high altitudes, I could not dare look down. When we were climbing these steep mountain passes, I would have to close my eyes, and grab the tail of my horse and feel my way up. I have too many such memories, my men were dying, and I was not able to bring their bodies with us. We did not have proper ammunition supplies, we did not have adequate water supply, we did not have food, my men were dying, and my mind is full of such memories, I have been fighting for 23 years, where shall I begin? Which part should I tell, where do I start, which war should I speak of...the battle in Beshcam. We fought, we retreated, we fought, we retreated...and I am just summarizing for you.

Once, the whole force of my army needed to retreat. We then were able to flank the Talibs, and then we were able to gain superior positioning, we attacked and we destroyed them.

BILL K: Were you born in Afghanistan?

CDR AK-YASIN: Yes, in Sang-Charak. It's a mountainous region

BILL K: Any other questions? ...It's been an honor talking to you. Thank you.

CDR AK-YASIN: Thank you for taking the time to interview me. To think that you found it important to interview me is a great honor.

I hope you won't leave us stranded in the middle of nowhere and that you will stay by our side, and that you will continue to be with us until the very end. If we did good or bad, it is our land, our people will judge us in the end.

[End of interview with CDR Ak-yasin.]

TRANSCRIPT 5: CDR ALI SAR WAR AND GEN MORTA SAR AT MAZAR-E SHARIF, 8 DECEMBER 2002

Introductory notes. CDR Ali Sar War and GEN Morta Sar were interviewed¹ on 8 December 2002 in Mazar-e Sharif. The 1:100k and 1:250k maps show Bai Becha and Bay Beche, respectively, a little to the west of Baluch. Baluch is not shown on the map but was located on the ground and noted using GPS. This is the same location that ODA 595 called Boybe Che.

CDR ALI SAR WAR [DV tape 9; time 14:45]: I am the Commander of Division 114.

BILL K: Can you read a map [orienting the map; pointing Dehi]. Where were the first battles in the Darya Suf?

CDR ALI SAR WAR: I was with the American brothers in Beshcam and in Chapchal region. I was under the command of General Dostum.

BILL K: Where were you located?

CDR ALI SAR WAR: I was in Awezaan, that would be south of Beshcam, close to Cobaki. We had a meeting at Awezaan, with General Dostum. From here, Cobaki, we started the attack.

Then we attacked from this side [east]; it did not give us positive results. We lost some men in this attack; one of them was Commander Lal's General.

We crossed Darya Suf, and we came from the direction of Balkhob.

We were here first and Taliban's were here. After we cleaned up these areas, the main commander posted men to defend those positions, so then the Taliban would not be able to cut us off. At the same time, Wadat was fighting on Safid Kotah. And we came to Chapchal and attacked Beshcam.

We did not attack Beshcam directly, we took another route and we continued our fight until nightfall, we took over Beshcam, and Aslam-Beg.

¹ This is from DV tape 9.

In the morning, the Taliban received more reinforcements, and we had to retreat. We had captured some of their infantry supplies, and then we threw them [the vehicles] off the cliff. It was a very high cliff.

The next day we started the attack again, and we recaptured Beshcam and some of these areas. Yes, we came back and took Beshcam, and Mr. Mark was there too, with other American friends, but I don't remember their names. We were here...

The next day we advanced towards Chapchal, and then we attacked Chapchal. From Beshcam we went to Chapchal. We then captured Chapchal. In Chapchal, we took heavy losses.

BILL K: How many people were in your command?

CDR ALI SAR WAR: Forty horsemen, and 20 foot soldiers...

BILL K: What did you do after Chapchal? Did you move to Boybe Che?

CDR ALI SAR WAR: From Beshcam we went to Chapchal, and the Taliban defended their posts well around Chapchal and Beshcam, very well. And then we moved towards Boybe Che area.

Well, they [Taliban] showed solid resistance around Chapchal. Soon after, however, they digressed in their fighting methods. The American air strikes were destroying Taliban strongholds.

BILL K: What was the most important thing that happened in the Boybe Che area?

CDR ALI SAR WAR: There were rumors that in the Boybe Che area that Mullah Razzak was injured...there were rumors that they captured Mullah Razzak and then Gen. Dostum got suspicious; it could be him, or it could be his deputy.

BILL K: Who was his deputy?

CDR ALI SAR WAR: I forgot the name. The deputy was injured when he was captured, the deputy.

BILL K: After Boybe Che what happened?

CDR ALI SAR WAR: They went to Keshendeh Bala. Gen. Dostum had asked all of them to gather around the top of the mountain in that area for a meeting, probably on Omitak...the meeting took place, from there we came between the mountains on a road bypass.

BILL K: Were you at the meeting?

CDR ALI SAR WAR: Yes, it was in the lower area of Keshendeh, on top of these mountains.

In this area of the mountain, General Dostum was surveying the horizon. We had another meeting and then we went down to lower Keshendeh, and then moved towards Shulgareh.

BILL K: What was discussed?

CDR ALI SAR WAR: We received our orders and proceeded to move in specific directions.

We ran out of ammunition, and shortly after the meeting with Gen. Dostum, we received more ammunition. We were told that we were to advance towards Shulgareh. They divided the groups and Kamal Khan and I took a certain route. Then Commander Lal had orders to take the right side. Other Commanders also had their orders...Commander Ahmed Khan, whose army was at Beshcam.

We were communicating by phone. Commander Ahmad Khan was told by phone to move in this direction. Ahmad Khan was not at our meeting.

I was with Kamal Khan. Commander Lal was with Ak-yasin. And the Wadat group was with Commander Morta Sar.

BILL K: did they expect a fight in Shulgareh?

CDR ALI SAR WAR: Yes.

BILL K: What happened in Shulgareh?

CDR ALI SAR WAR [30:34]: Then we moved towards Shulgareh. There were cars along the way that were destroyed because of the air strikes. The Taliban were nowhere to be found. And we went towards Shulgareh, there was no resistance. Mr. Mark and the others were with us and they were in small cars [ATVs], we were together with Mr. Mark. There was no resistance up to Shulgareh.

We were on horses and they were in these small cars.

BILL K: Did you stop at Shulgareh?

CDR ALI SAR WAR: We stayed one night in Shulgareh and had a meeting.

Commander Dostum requested that the Jamiat group and the Wadat group come to the meeting. Gen. Dostum also requested Ustad Atta to join in as well. So, Ustad Atta was there too, and so was Gen. Morta Sar, and Gen. Lal, and Gen. Haji Chari and Gen. Ak-yasin, and Fahkil-Khan.

BILL K: What was the plan they developed?

CDR ALI SAR WAR: Gen. Dostum again divided our forces, our groups, and Commander Kamal Khan and I took the left side of the road. This is the road to Shulgareh [map]. This is the road, this is the river. We were on the left side of the river, which will be this road.

Commander Ak-yasin and Commander Lal took the east side of the river.

Our plan was that on our way to Tiangi, we were passing through Boda-na-Kalaa The local Taliban had not received reinforcements, and they simply just surrendered. Up to Tiangi, we did not encounter resistance.

In the meeting we were told to pay close attention for them to not get together, once again, by the way Mr. Mark was there too. Our job was to secure the road heading towards Tiangi. Up to Tiangi there was no resistance. Tiangi-Cashmeh.

I arrived in the evening. The others were at Boda-na-Kalaa. All the forces were waiting there. I gathered the men at night and headed towards Tiangi. We wanted to then move to Mazar-e-Sharif from Tiangi. I was told to take this road, and make sure it was secure.

Around 8 p.m., a Taliban convoy came this way. And here was where the battle began. Up until 4 in the morning, the Taliban resisted.

When they retreated, we were able to take over these hilltops.

I was on the left [west] side and Gen. Dostum was on top of this hill [east side].

BILL K: As you moved up the Darya Suf through Shulgareh what was the most important thing that happened?

CDR ALI SAR WAR: Nothing really important happened. During the night in Shulgareh, we fought. Our ammunition ran out, and we radioed for air strikes. Commander Morta Sar provided some heavy artillery.

The next morning, we attacked this place and the air strike cleared the path.

This point, we took from the Taliban. We took this point, but the Taliban outmaneuvered us and they were able to take these points from Gahpaa-Mohtahed group.

When we retreated to this point, we resisted here. And we held on to this point. Here, many, many people died. They had mines here.

It was mines, and also when the Taliban retreated they gathered in this area and attacked us with B-40s.

BILL K: Thank you very much; it has been an honor for me to talk to a warrior like you.

CDR ALI SAR WAR: Thank you very much; we are very happy you came to ask us such questions.

[DV tape 9 ends and tape 10 begins. General Morta Sar (wearing camouflage) and General Aji Muhammed Abdu (wearing white dress shirt) are introduced before receiving a gift. Kamal is the interpreter. Morta Sar is the commander of the 38th Division. Abdu is the deputy mayor. Introduction of GEN Morta Sar and Haji Mohammad Abdu. Kamal is the interpreter.]

CPT Mark: At this time I would like to present a gift on behalf of my unit. This is a picture of the Americans that fought across Afghanistan. It reads Operation Enduring Freedom, Ground Zero—Ground Zero was the place where the Al Qaeda planes crashed into the buildings in New York City. That is shown here with New York firemen and policemen. The building is the Pentagon. There is Task Force Dagger—that was all of the Americans that fought in Afghanistan. Then it says Special Operations in Afghanistan. We have the helicopters...the airplanes that were dropping humanitarian aid, as well as this type of airplane that was flying in—to this was Qala Jangi; the Americans that were in Kabul, you know, Americans that were firing into Taliban, calling into airplanes, just more of the Americans. What I'm proudest of is we were the team that was with you Darya Suf, represented here on horseback in the center of the picture, and again, myself and Bill, the day that Freedom Bridge was opened.

BILL K [5:34]: I want to start with your meeting of the U.S. forces in the Darya Suf.

GEN MORTA SAR: Before U.S. Forces descended to Darya Suf, we were in Safid Kotah.

BILL K: Here is a map [using 1:100k map reproduction] of the area—this is Dehi and this is Safid Kotah [7:33].

GEN MORTA SAR: Yes, yes Safid Kotah

Mak-Sood, Mak-Sood.

Right here was the Taliban forts, right here around Safid Kotah.

Galowong, Galowang-Sang. Ahh, here is Galowong-Sang. We were in Galowong-Sang.

The Taliban were here at Safid-Kotah. There were around 2,000 men. They [Taliban] planted mines around a 3-kilometer area. The Taliban had over 2,000 men. But their main force in this area was around 2,000 men.

We had 400 horsemen and 2,000 men on foot. We fought for three days and nights, and purged the area of the Taliban. We captured 300 to 400 men and hundreds of men were either injured or died. They went to Beshcam.

We had 400 horsemen. We fought for 3 days and nights.

BILL K: Who set the mines?

GEN MORTA SAR: The Taliban. We could not venture this way, because mines blocked it. We detoured, and with our horses, attacked from behind, using this road.

We came from behind with the horses. We started from this point, right here.

We gathered them right in this area...called Dehi. We captured 300 men.

BILL K: What did they do with the Taliban?

GEN MORTA SAR: And many of the captured men, we knew. They were local people from Balkh, or these areas. They were forced by the Taliban to enlist with them.

These were people who were forced to join with the Taliban. Some were from Balkh area.

BILL K: What did you do with the prisoners?

GEN MORTA SAR: We let them go. We stayed in Safid-Kotah for 1 month. After 1 month, the U.S. Forces landed. Mr. Mark and Mr. David...

BILL K: Where were the land mines? OK, right there, and that's why they had to go around.

GEN MORTA SAR: It was in front of them, right in this area. For the past 4 years, 30 of my men have lost limbs in this area.

We lost many men in this area, more than a few hundred. The area was heavily planted with mines.

BILL K: Over what period of time?

GEN MORTA SAR: Four years we fought.

BILL K: Are the mines still there?

GEN MORTA SAR: The mines were cleared by UN mine personnel this year.

BILL K: Why was GEN Mohaqiq in this area?

GEN MORTA SAR: Because my tribe live here, the Hazara people. They live in Gavon-Saroui. Even though the Taliban forces burned down the villages, the villagers were defending their farms, because they needed to harvest their crops.

BILL K: What people lived in the other areas?

GEN MORTA SAR: Mr. Ustad Atta's groups. And later Jumbish came from Balkhob area and joined them.

BILL K: Was there much conflict in that area?

GEN MORTA SAR: In 3–4 years of fighting, about 2,000 of our homes were destroyed by the Taliban. Ustad Atta was not here, and General Dostum was abroad. Only the Hazara people were fighting, and the Taliban in Darya Suf surrounded us. And after 3 years of fighting, then Ustede Atta and General Dostum came back to this area to join in the fight.

GEN MORTA SAR: Once the U.S. forces came, they had a meeting in Dehi.

BILL K: Were you there?

GEN MORTA SAR: Yes, I was at the meeting, Mohaqiq, Ustad Atta, General Dostum and General Ahmed were there as well. They said that they would send the picture to President Bush, to show him that we are united. We were told that there were rumors that we did not get along. They were taking our picture to show that we were united.

Yes, we were told that the picture would be sent to President Bush, the very next day.

BILL K: So this picture included GEN Dostum, Atta, Mohaqiq, Morta Sar, Ahmad Kahn? What happened next?

GEN MORTA SAR: We prepared for the attack. Our attack had four stages. Yes, from four sides. We were attacking Beshcam, second was Chapchal, the third was Baluch area, Bai Becha. The fourth and final place was Cashmeh [Tiangi]. And from there we attacked Mazar-e-Sharif.

We came to Shulgareh, from Bai Becha. General Dostum went to upper Keshendeh, and we went to Shulgareh.

BILL K: Let's go back to Beshcam...How were your forces used to take Beshcam/Chapchal?

GEN MORTA SAR: United, we attacked Beshcam at night. General Atta, General Dostum, General Hakiq, and the rest of the lower ranks were there as well. General Dostum went down through Dari-Zaar, and General Atta attacked through Keshendeh from the west [reviewing map].

We started the attack to Beshcam from the top, Dostum came from the other side, and Mr. Atta came from the west. General Dostum mounted the attack from this side.

GEN MORTA SAR: General Atta attacked from the west, from here. On the west side of this river. Yes, from Shamallak...

Ustad Atta came from this side. And we came from this side.

General Dostum went up to Awazan. And then we came from up here and liberated Beshcam. And the Taliban had many casualties. Fifty of them were captured, and hundreds killed. And among them was one of their most important commanders.

BILL K: Do you remember the name of the commander?

GEN MORTA SAR: No, I do not remember. And from this area we captured two antiaircraft weapons. Two large Komats trucks. And two Russian jeeps and one cannon 76 mm Saha. They captured many new and old weapons. There were many hundreds of different types of weapons we captured.

BILL K: Did they use this captured equipment? And that artillery we used to capture Chapchal and Baluch [Bai Becha]...

GEN MORTA SAR: One, we captured and the other two we brought along with us. Then there were three.

BILL K: What happened after Beshcam?

GEN MORTA SAR: At Beshcam we had a meeting, and Mr. Mark was there...General Dostum came to this meeting, and we decided to begin the battle the next day for Chapchal...

We then moved towards Dehi, and we used antiaircraft weapons from the top of this hill against the Taliban. The Taliban then began to retreat. Our horsemen went behind Baluch [Bai Becha], and then destroyed the Taliban by out-maneuvering them. About a 1,000 Taliban casualties was the result.

Most of the dead Taliban were from Pakistan. After the war, we checked the dead, and the majority were from Pakistan.

BILL K: This was in Chapchal?

GEN MORTA SAR: Chapchal. Around 12 midnight, we seized Chapchal.

BILL K: What happened after Chapchal?

GEN MORTA SAR: We were in that area for 1 week. After 1 week, we moved towards Bai Becha. At this time we had much air support from the U.S. forces.

BILL K: What was the plan of attack on Boybe Che?

GEN MORTA SAR: The first plan was the air strike, and after this, the infantry would advance into the area. Third plan was the horsemen would attack. The infantry encountered heavy resistance, and retreated. We had many casualties there. One reason for such a defeat was because we fought in darkness, it was night.

It was the third attack, and we started the advance sometime during the midday. [28:50]: Twelve noon.

On top of the hills, we placed the anti-aircraft artillery and aimed it towards the Taliban stronghold. And General Dostum participated in this as well. I was with the first line, and General Dostum was behind us on top of this hill. We surprised the Taliban, because they were unaware of our ability to use heavy artillery against them. They [Taliban] were shielded by heavily fortified bunkers. Using our heavy artillery weapons, we were able to destroy these bunkers. We knew that Baluch area was the last Taliban stronghold in Northern part, and the Talibs knew this as well. Which is why they resisted so violently. We took over four of their strongholds rather easily, with the constant air strikes and infantry support. During dusk, we were able to enter Bai Becha. And it was not until the next day that we were able to secure the area.

This is Bai Becha, and it has this valley. [He is using a diagram (page 22 in Notebook 1) to discuss the battle.]

There is this street. This street winds up these hills, it is a hilly area.

We brought the heavy artillery on top of this hill. It was very close to the enemy stronghold. General Dostum and some of his forces and some of our forces went behind this area.

This is a wide area, about 4 to 5 kilometers. [30:40]

Some of General Dostum's men joined me, and we moved to this area.

Once we started firing upon them, their resistance stopped abruptly.

In this area, this Taliban post would not give up. They violently resisted and if you wish, we can show this area. [31:20]

My forces were within 15 to 20 meters of this place.

And finally, this Taliban post was attacked via U.S. air strike.

Twenty men were killed and captured two. This stronghold fell into our hands. After this stronghold fell, then Baluch was in our hand. We call Bai Becha/Boybe Che, Baluch. On the

map it says Bai Becha, but we call it Baluch. From Bai Becha, we captured 122 mm cannon.
[32:40]

We took another 76 mm cannon from that place.

Our commanders took many weapons from this place. The Taliban left behind stockpiles of ammunition, and my people helped themselves to it.

BILL K: Did you have any casualties?

GEN MORTA SAR: Yes, one of my men died and the other was injured.

BILL K: How would you describe the accuracy of the bombing and the integration with the maneuver of your forces?

GEN MORTA SAR: I saw it with my own eyes, my men were only 15 meters from the designated air strikes on the Taliban post. Sometimes, we felt we were in danger of such air strikes. We had to retreat. But we heard that U.S. air strikes were very precise, which was why some men were not afraid to be so close to the targeted area.

BILL K: What happened after Baluch?

GEN MORTA SAR: After we captured Baluch, my forces moved towards Keshendeh, where General Dostum was in Keshendeh-ye Bala. My forces searched the area for Taliban. There were many vehicles hit by the air strikes. We were also able to seize many weapons and ammunition. There was much destruction around and in Keshendeh-ye Pain.

I came to Pol-e Barak around 10 o'clock [38:10] and my forces entered Shulgareh after lunch. Around 2 o'clock we captured Shulgareh. After we arrived in Shulgareh, I found out that General Dostum and Mr. Mark were in Darya Suf, somewhere near Keshendeh-ye Bala, and I mentioned that I was already in Shulgareh. I mentioned I was in the Governor's house in Shulgareh. I had a hard time convincing them I was already in Shulgareh. In order to prove I was in Shulgareh they asked me to find this friend in Shulgareh, and allow him to speak with them on the telephone. Luckily, this friend was close to me and they were able to speak to one another.

He was very happy. Very happy.

[End of interview with GEN Morta Sar.]

TRANSCRIPT 6: CDR MOHAMMED ABDU AT MAZAR-E SHARIF, 8 DECEMBER 2002

Introductory note. CDR Abdu was interviewed¹ at Mazar-e Sharif on 8 December 2002. CDR Abdu is also Hazara, of the Wadat group. Kamal is the interpreter.²

CDR ABDU: Welcome to Mazar e Sharif.

BILL K: I'm trying to figure out the month he is describing, the 17th month of Assad of 1377 which this area collapsed and these people went back to Darya Suf. I'm trying to figure out which month is it in our standards. Four years ago. Month of June. June 17th, 1377.

CDR ABDU: All the Mazar-e Sharif, the forces, they gather there, so they can fight against the enemy. This is after Mazar collapsed. When the Taliban gained control.

[In most cases Kamal interprets, hence, "he is saying...": He is saying after the fighting escalated and the Darya Suf and Bamian area fell, then Mohaqiq was in that area.]

CDR ABDU: Ustad Mohaqiq and General Dostum regrouped so they could have more people, then they regrouped themselves again so they can attack Mazar again. This didn't take place, and Ustad Mohaqiq went back to Balkhob area.

Ustad Mohaqiq landed at Balkhob area. From there we spread the word to different cities over the North, so we can gather all the forces. That was only place in which we were holding at the Balkhob area. Every other place had collapsed.

From Balkhob area we regrouped and then went to Darya Suf. From there we started to fight the enemy.

The very first group who was assigned to go, I was there as representative from Ustad Mohaqiq.

¹ This transcript is from DV tape 11.

² Note the transcription; Kamal interprets in third person.

Okay, the second representative from Ahmad Shah Massoud called Mowlana Qorban from the Jumiats. We had meetings from the Darya Suf areas from which we gathered people, students and so forth, we decided, we were going to go as one group, against the enemy.

BILL K: Yeah, February 7th, 1377, was the very first aggression.

CDR ABDU: Thirteen is the Afghan calendar which is like 4 years back. Right now, it is 1380 here.

We had one group in Darya Suf and one group was in the Balkhob area.

BILL K : Okay, that brings us up to October 2001. What was important to you in this battle? You've given us good background. Our re-creation is focusing on the engagements that led up to the fall of Mazar. What can you add to what the General has spoken to, that happened in this battle?

CDR ABDU: Okay, the other group started in the near Hazaret area, the Yekaowlan area. Yeah Bamian. It was 3 years' duration. After the incident happened; on New York and Washington, on September 11th. The very first aggression took place.

Kamache and Darya Suf. That's one of the places for Mr Atta, Ustad Mohaqiq.

The very first group of eight, who came in two helicopters. They landed at mid night.

CDR ABDU [DV tape 11, time 10:00]: Mr. Boba-jaan was one of them, another was Mike, another was David.

He was the representative from Hezbe Bahdat a consul for General Dostum. They were together, his brother and General Dostum. He was from his brother representing General Dostum. He was there at that meeting. The very first group of people who landed there.

BILL K: Right. What day was that?

CDR ABDU: I don't remember. I recall it was midnight, when the helicopters took off. General Dostum and I were there.

BILL K: The bombing started 7 October. When did they have this meeting in relationship to the bombing. In relationship to the bombing of 7 October, when did these people land?

CDR ABDU: At that time the bombardment was going on in Mazar-e Sharif and other areas. We were told by attacking the districts or the posts within Mazar, or any other place we were heading, was not going to do any good. It was better that the fewest forces could come down on ground in the Northern Alliance and that way the Taliban posts or districts were behind the

pickup truck and the radio communications were in the pickup truck and wherever the pickup truck goes, that's their post, basically. That way, when the U.S. forces come, they could observe it with their own eyes. They see it and from there on, they could relay the message to their superiors and they could hit the pinpoint.

BILL K: So the U.S. forces had not yet come?

CDR ABDU: They were attacking the cities at that time; bombarding the cities.

BILL K: The forces were not on the ground. How much time between when this group of eight came and then Commander Mark came?

CDR ABDU: A week to 10 days, yeah, between the eight people and Mark's plane landed. When the U.S. forces were here, the eight people were from the Embassy, they came from Uzbekistan. A week to 10 days the military forces landed. From thereon, they made their assessments in terms of checking the place. They had to be precise in terms of air attack. That helped them a lot, that's why they were so accurate when they were dropping the bombs to different posts or wherever they were to be dropped at. In the past 3-1/2 years, Hezbe Wadat, my people, were the ones who were doing the fighting in the area. We suffered a lot. That's why we were the first ones who accomplished all of this, you know, from the start up to now.

Bill K: When the Americans came, when the group of eight came, I understand there was a General Mohaqiq, yes? General Dostum and was General Atta there? Those three were there.

CDR ABDU: Yes. There were three groups when we assembled in the Darya Suf, there were Jamiats and Wadats.

CDR ABDU: The main players were there, the Wadat, because that was their area and they were the most powerful in their area because they had all the weapons, whatever they had, compared to the other two. General Dostum had roughly around eight to nine hundred horsemen. That was his main group, and from the other side, Ahmad Khan.

Mainly Jamiat around 1,000 to 1,500 men, Jamiats, yes, Mr Atta's group.

Facing the area of the Wadats or Hazara, there were the most strong of the whole fighting.

There was roughly around 4,000 men all together. A group of 500 would be in the front line and another group of 1,000 would be in the backup so they could go forward and release the other 500.

At the point between these two groups, it was a good thing the Americans were there. They were ones who were assessing, who was doing what, and who is in charge and who was doing

most of the work. I'm not saying that this Hezbe Wadat was there just because I am Wadat, because they were the ones who were observing. That was the most important thing that the Americans themselves were there, they were seeing the whole situation.

CDR ABDU [DV tape 11, time 21:13]: The air attack was so precise. One night there was this heavy artillery. The next morning when the sun shined, it was going to be a problem for us. It was a rainy night, so somehow they got the distance where they were to set up. They relayed it to the aircraft, the aircraft came and hit the target so precise.

BILL K: You were talking about the weather though. You mean the next day?

CDR ABDU: The same night, it was raining. They had the coordinates, yeah. That's why they were so precise in terms of from ground support to air support.

The second most important thing was the bridge. When they took out this bridge at Pol-e Baraq it hurt the Taliban morale. The Taliban's morale was very, very high, before that bridge was taken out. They never thought that anybody could take it out. After they took out that bridge, the Taliban morale went down, way, way down, because somebody from the States could come to Afghanistan and not knowing the country, not knowing the landscape. And if they come here, take out that bridge, it is impossible. From there on, their morale fell. That was one of the big things, that is why they retreated back. It was mainly one of their main supply routes, too. Once that got taken out, this bridge right here; if you guys go, you'll see it. It's been fixed up right now. It connects the main road in that area.

BILL K: Okay. That was good. We hadn't heard that before.

CDR ABDU: That's another thing that the Taliban, you know, they were sort of camouflaging their vehicles, themselves, whatever they want, so they could not be targeted, they could not be seen by the U.S. forces.

There are several things that made this mission successful.

The second was to take out the Taliban's air force basically their air support, which made the Northern Alliance a lot more stronger and effective.

The most important thing was the air support or air attack. It was so precise, and the frontlines, especially on the front lines, you know being so close to the ground forces.

The fourth thing is that the U.S. forces being on the ground was big thing. It had a lot of effect on the war, so they could coordinate the targets and tell the aircraft what to do. If they were not on the ground, it would have been impossible.

BILL K: Right, I understood that from when he first started to talk, that they were bombing different locations and it was uncoordinated. They came and it was a coordinated attack. Okay, good, all four points.

CDR ABDU: Again, thank you guys very much for intervening, and that the U.S. forces came, and aiding the Afghan people, sort of like delivering the Taliban and Al Qaeda forces from this country, the terrorists, even though the U.S. had some casualties, here and combined with the Afghans, and we want to thank you guys very much for writing this as a history, so that future generations can learn what really happened here and what took effect and who was involved and who came for assistance.

CDR ABDU: During 23 years of fighting, I have never left the country. I have been here the whole time, and saw it all from the start to the end! Now it is liberated.

BILL K: We thank you for all the support.

[Background talk in the courtyard as they set up the convoy for trip to Darya Suf. End of Interview with CDR Abdu.]

TRANSCRIPT 7: GEN DOSTUM AT DINNER SOUTH OF DEHI, EVENING OF 8 DECEMBER

Introductory note. This transcript¹ records discussions primarily between CPT Mark and GEN DOSTUM. Hafis was the translator. It takes place at a mud hut near Dehi. Where it reflects GEN Dostum speaking, it is really Hafis translating and speaking in third person; it's been converted to first person.

WARD: What did you expect before Commander Mark? Did you expect the U.S. forces, Special Forces, B-52s, or did you expect the kind of warrior spirit that Commander Mark brought?

GEN DOSTUM: It was the first U.S. military forces that came to me. I hoped I wouldn't lose anybody as I pushed forward, the steep mountain we came down in that area the same night to capture Mazar.

WARD: Just a great accomplishment, which may be almost as great as the accomplishment of convincing General Dostum to come to the Darya Suf in middle of winter.

CPT MARK: I'm very honored that you would take the time to come with us. When we were making the plan to come here, I knew you was very busy and my plan was to come and see you first, and ask you to send Fakir, [200] Haji Habib, or Lal with 20 men to escort us here to the Darya Suf. I did not expect you to bring the entire Army.

Remember the night that you first took me and Chad to the Darya Suf near Chapchal. I remember the day that you [CPT Mark is referring to GEN Dostum. During this conversation CPT Mark is alternately talking to GEN Dostum and then the rest of the group] first took me and Chad across the Darya Suf to Beshcam, then we came back to Chapchal and you went forward to the front line and you were very upset with the men and called them on the radio to attack, to attack, against a ZSU, and they did, and you went running over the hill after them. I felt Chad and I had to go with you. The horseman then captured that ZSU within minutes and their momentum kept them going into the next village. I needed to go back to Cobaki to coor-

¹ Transcribed from Cassette 002 (Dinner) Side A and part of Side B.

dinate the next day's attack. I remember you [GEN Dostum] came back late that night and there had been this tough battle in that village. It wasn't until this trip that, when you said how close the fighting was, within 20 meters and that you searched all amongst you and you only had one grenade. The night that happened we were upset that you had gotten very close to the fighting after we left you. Chad and I had eight grenades between us, the two of us, and after learning of this, I guess I'm upset that I did not stay with you [GEN Dostum] because what would we have done if you had been injured?

I had to make a tough decision at that point because I wanted to stay with you but didn't bring the radios that would allow me to talk over great distances. We needed to coordinate the attacks for the next day. That's why I had to decide to stay with you or go back and make sure that we didn't get attacked the next day. I have to tell you now, as you were very protective of the Americans, we were also under orders to be protective of you and not allow you to become injured.

GEN DOSTUM: All nationalities living in Afghanistan so that they are given basic equal rights. That's what I am fighting for. I hope that we can succeed and we can do something. That's what Afghanistan needs. [367]

CPT MARK: In capturing Mazar, the main cities of Mazar, Kabul, and Kandahar, there were only 100 Americans with all of the Afghan fighters. It wasn't until we began to move towards Konduz that more Americans came in.

GEN DOSTUM: While we were approaching Konduz, disarmament of Al Qaeda and Taliban, we were about to move to Konduz to disarm the Al Qaeda and Taliban troops, it was according to you or your people, your guys, I'm not sure, as if American Special Forces and me are going to take the control of Kabul as well. If I had done it this way, and had to gone to Kabul things would be going according to our wish, our way.

CPT MARK: I'll tell what was happening there, the little bit that I know. The Special Forces with Fahim Kahn tried to get Fahim's troops to move forward, but they would not. Finally he said, "Look, Dostum is coming and with the American team and they will capture Kabul, are you going to let that happen?" Suddenly, Fahim Kahn's forces captured Kabul in 2 days.

[Note: A break and now Esam is the interpreter.]

GEN DOSTUM: I was prepared to build an airport, it was flatlands, and...the other thing we needed was professional guys, who were mostly living outside the country, and we wanted these helicopters to bring these professional guys to that plane, to that airport. Of course, we

ourselves had two, M32 planes. Some of [cross talk], some of my professional people was located in Termez. I had about 100 special people, who were well trained in Termez, and asked them to bring helicopters to those places, Darya Suf and Balkhob.

The other alternative I raised was that just, the, the plane could fly...from Kohl-Hop and bring it to Balkhob.

But everyone was saying, OK, we'd do this we'll do that, it never, it was never realized.

I moved toward Balkhob...

Yeah, that was my plan, your planes came, and your people landed in Darya Suf, and that plan was put into practice, successfully.

So you can, you can squeeze me as much as you want [for information], only for tomorrow, because I have to be back before twelve, because I have a ceremony at Mazar [A memorial for Mike Spann].

[End of Interview with GEN Dostum.]

TRANSCRIPT 8: GEN DOSTUM AND CPT MARK AT ALBATROSS, DEHI, TRAIL TO CHAPCHAL AND DZ BURRO, 9 DECEMBER 2002

Introductory note. This is an interview¹ of GEN Dostum and CPT Mark. The Team starts at HLZ Albatross and proceeds through Dehi to the trail leading to Chapchal. Kamal is the interpreter and is primarily speaking in third person as he interprets. It's been converted to first person.

GEN DOSTUM: Five thousand men from here charge against Taliban terrorists at this point. We started from this point [HLZ Albatross]. The reason I had them over here was that they had were from the mountains, and they had antiaircraft guns, heavy artillery. After the meeting was held we charged against the enemy, captured prisoners, and we held the prisoners here until we captured Mazar-e. [Note: He's referring to the 28 October 2001 meeting with the area commanders held at the house on the north side of Dehi.]

When I talked to my commanders, there was somebody inside from Taliban, in the meeting, they had a radio, they had the radio on so the others could hear what he's talking about in terms of setting up his groups for Ahmad Kahn or for the other commanders. How many should go with whom to where. The Taliban inserted somebody into the meetings [Taliban spies]. We found out that later.

The US could not land here, because my forces were right here and the Taliban were on the other side. If they were to land they would be attacked, so I swept the whole area. There's a path in between those mountains. Once we swept the area, secured the area, the planes were able to land the helicopters. Any supplies they had later on they unload them in this spot. I will show you later on the resupply depot. When Mark and them landed here, I was back at the front line fighting with the enemy. When I heard that Americans were here, I came back on horseback with 50-60 of my men. Mark was surprised to see him on horseback. He met them. I think OGA was here and told us that the American military is here now.

GEN DOSTUM/KAMAL: [65] Mr. Atta's forces, and that tank only had two rounds to fire at them. We were short on oil so we found this oil. Tanks burn a lot of oil and my men were saying what are we going to do with this tank it doesn't have any rounds in it. It eats up so much oil. I said just take it and get whatever it needs. Use much as you can, even if it fires one

¹ Cassette 002 (Albatross Dehi Burro) Side B.

round that is sufficient enough for us. Then we rode up to here and then it broke down and we couldn't go any further with it.

GEN DOSTUM: We set up these posts and the helicopter, the resupply area was here. This was the landing zone. It became a central point for rations or anything they needed was resupplied from this spot. If we had a meeting, it was right on this spot.

BILL K: This is a big, open area.

GEN DOSTUM: We came from that direction and they air dropped the other side of town. A lot of argument, in terms of grabbing the resupply, the humanitarian aid, wherever it landed, people would want claim, this is my territory, and this is my territory. Computer, that sort of stuff, communications.

BILL K: The ODA lived here from the 20 through the 31 October 2001, DZ Albatross.

GEN DOSTUM: Behind this spot, they are saying that another people [humanitarian] C-130 drop occurred.

CPT MARK: We had a C-17 drop come in over there [pointing]. These were mainly C-130 here because we were worried large number of bundles coming down on this drop zone would hit people's houses. So we wanted to find a place that was more open. The other reason was the drop zone was swarmed with people here because they knew we were dropping here and that's why we had an alternate drop zone. We were better able to recover the supplies and get them immediately redistributed.

We had another one set up just to the west of Dehi that we had a pure humanitarian aid drop coming in; we would drop it to the local populace. These down here were mainly Dostum's troops. Some of them worked [122] for a mixture of team equipment, aid specifically for Dostum's troops, and humanitarian aid for the locals. Those became difficult trying to separate the bundles and [we] tried to separate the drop zones.

I would be honored if I could take a picture with the man that lives here now and his family? Me, my men, and this man.

GEN DOSTUM: It was really something, there was no water, dusty, living conditions was very, very bad at this post. We used to get to the front lines and come here for meetings. Once we coordinated everything we would go back to the front lines. First time on top of the mountain, The enemy post was right in that area. You could probably see the post. Right up there as you come along. That was their post, enemy post. I will show you later. We have

another post right in that area. The enemy was up there. And my people were right here in this area.

We had groups of two or three so that the enemy would not recognize them as the whole group, we sort of spread out.

From this area around this mountain I rode horseback all the way and captured the enemy posts down the mountains. The roads are very, very, bad. We were on this side of the pass, those areas are the enemy. All of those were the enemy. I will show you where I assembled 1,500 hundred horsemen in the pass. Then we attacked Beshcam.

Due to the drought there was no water in the river. Down to Keshendeh area, so I had some of my men block off the waters, so the water can flow all the way down to the Keshendeh area because we needed water for the horses, and for ourselves in that area. We just passed by the big rock, it is called Sangabreeda, and the area is called Sangabreeda. It should be on the map. I assembled 1,500 horses, I'll show you later on, without the enemy having a clue of what's going on. That's a lot of horses, assembled not knowing was going on. If they had known, they would have attacked by air and by ground. The enemy was on the higher elevation. I used to come with some of my men and make the plans for the attack, without the enemy knowing. [General Dostum cautioned us not to stray beyond the rocks, there are the mines.]

BILL K: The red rock marks mines.

GEN DOSTUM/KAMAL: [Located at the bottom of the trail to Chapchal] The enemy was right at the peak. Here with 1,500 horsemen I went along the trail along the top of this mountain. At the same time when we were lining up along the top with the horsemen, the moment the aircraft came from the air strike. That was my command post from there on, and I launched 1,500 horsemen. I captured most of the enemy. Can you see a person coming up on the top? Right up there, that little dot moving. That's a trail going up on top of the mountain. We brought a lot of casualties along this trail as I was reinforcing going up the hill, Mark was at the bottom at that time [302].

Basically, we used this as a stretcher [one of the large scarves], for the wounded, wounded were taken here and...[GEN Dostum shows us a blanket/thick scarves and how it was used as a stretcher.] They used these as a stretcher. For wounded, we had 50–60 men up on the top, they were stuck, they were wounded, one of my commanders was hit on the head, and we could see his brains. Even though I was on horseback riding up the hill and the wounded were coming down, I commanded my men to go up as fast as they can, even though the wounded were injured very seriously. They were sort of making a way for me to go up the hill. I felt

sorry for them; the wounded were being carried on the big stretcher using the big scarves as I showed earlier. They were so desperate to come down they held the way so I and new forces could go up and attack the enemy. They were really bad shape. From that night on the enemy moral went down, that was their worst defeat from the top of this mountain. Everything was going downhill. From there on I turned around and went on top of these mountains to Beshcam and then on the other side, Baluch. From there on we captured the whole headquarters.

Between us and the enemy, there was like distance of 800–900 meters. Molesafa was one of their commanders. From there on we regroup in different locations and then one came from one side, one came from another side. It was way on the other side of the mountains as they were regrouping. I was in the center. Once we attacked from all different directions, the enemy collapsed and we moved all the way to Tiangi. Imagine if there were 1,000 horses in this area right now, it would be really something for you to see. Military tactics would not allow you to take 1,500 horsemen to the top. My men on horseback started going up the hill and the enemy got surprised. Five, six men, we started coming up and all of sudden we got more reinforcements. They were really, really, caught by surprise in that area. We had some casualties, but overall we succeeded. It is a very dangerous road. I almost rolled over. The horses, they were slippery. The tracks were very bad.

From that night on, the enemy morale went down. That was their worst defeat, from this mountain.

From here we, on top of these mountains, we went to Beshcam...from there we captured the whole headquarters.

Mullah Safaa. He was one of their commanders. Yes.

CPT MARK: Fakir was there?

GEN DOSTUM/KAMAL: Fakir and also Haji Chari. One his way to Omitak, there is a pass that was very deep, on top of the mountain, my horse sort of slipped. When I went down I was on top of the horse, stuck. Imagine, I hear rocks going down, but it took a long time to reach the ground. If I [390] would have fallen down, I would have been in pieces. Once I slipped I told you guys to get off the horse and walk instead of riding the horse because it was so dangerous.

[DV tape 13, time 32:57—14:09:01:00 on cassette.]

GEN DOSTUM: Can you imagine, our headquarters, my headquarters was on the other side of this Cobaki. And there was an artillery called 82 [82mm mortar], it called artillery 82,

okay, it kept firing on the enemies position, kept them busy, but can you imagine how 1,500 horses can climb all this way and come and just rush and catch the enemy unprepared and unready, you know, yeah, it was an unexpected operation. Which was a successful operation.

[We are now at DZ Burro.]

GEN DOSTUM/KAMAL: I never saw so many bad days, terrible days actually. Muslim culture, Muslim ideas, there is an old saying, just like you know when you're going to die. You could die on the street, it could be in a war zone, and you never know when death is going to come. Helicopter landing and air drops [here]. Their main headquarters was in Baluch, that was the only stronghold for the Taliban. They used to command Keshendeh and all their places. They captured Chapchal and all the other areas from this side [north side]. They were secured. So they had to regroup and go back to capturing Baluch area. That was one of their strongholds.

You see this trail right here; they went all the way up to Baluch area. About 200 horsemen. I will show you later. They are going up there with the cave where they spent a few nights. Heavy rain the 3 or 4 days, nonstop. Taliban reinforcements from Mazar [coming down through the Shulgareh and Keshendeh to Baluch] were being taken out along the way by air attacks. So they can now reach their final destination. Big mountain. We set up two groups. One on this side, on top the mountain, so they can view the area and sort of get rid of the enemy. I think Andy was the commanding officer.

BILL K: By SFC Bill.

GEN DOSTUM: He was to go through there. That area.

BILL K: This was home for Mark for a while. Looks like we have people up in the...SFC Bill is taking a picture of his old house

GEN DOSTUM: At the very top here is called Shamallak. My command post was right up there on the left. As you can see on your right the enemy forces were in this area, along these hills. Beshcam was under his control on the right. I had a meeting right on this spot. The enemy fired upon us. We came back through these ruins on your left. Although the enemy was way up on the other side. They came step by step up to this point. That's where the most of the fighting was happening.

BILL K: Beshcam is on the other side of the mountain?

GEN DOSTUM/KAMAL: From Beshcam you can see the other side also. We set up one group along this pass right here. Along the top of those mountains, and Akmat Kahn came

from the other end of the mountain. When the horsemen came around. Do you see the tallest mountain? From there on they sort of went on top of Baluch. They would have passed between the mountains. I had most of my forces go through there. There was a lot of fighting that night. The same night the enemy retreated back and they made their way through the village. I had the forces charge forward and they retreated back for a little while and I went with them after a lot of fighting. Went through the village. The enemy retreated and regrouped. We reinforced the area. I told my people to full force, charge, full force. Go run over the enemy, basically the headquarters [he pointed it out for the video camera].

[End of interview with GEN Dostum.]

TRANSCRIPT 9: CPT MARK AT DZ BURRO, 9 DECEMBER 2002

Introductory note. This is CPT Mark talking¹ at DZ Burro on 9 December 2002.

CPT MARK: We moved up here, I believe on 31 October, we lived here until 5 November when we moved out for the coordinated attack. From here, right about the spot we're standing in, we set up an aid station. The OGA fellows also lived near this area. You can see where Vince is walking up over here, you see these caves up, up on the hill; that's the cave we lived in for that period that we were here. We got some heavy snowfall, or some snowfall, probably a half inch to an inch of snow that did remain for a couple of days; it rained, it was quite cold while we were here. Very miserable. But every day, we rode out with Gen. Dostum up this road—you can see the trucks on that go out of the canyon here—up to the top. We rode out to Commander Lal, Commander Kamal's position, Lal's position, and Ahmad Khan's, all the way up to Charsu, we rode out everyday and back. Some nights we spent up there.

The ODC came in helicopters and landed right here on the other side, where these trucks are parked. And a couple MH-47s on the night of 2 November, early morning of 3 November, actually, I think it was 2 a.m. local. They come off with eight men, and two John Deere Gators, and they spent the night here also. The morning of 3 November at this location, we had our initial meeting between Gen. Dostum and LTC Max. From there, we rode out for the first time with the LTC to those positions. The morning of 5 November, if you scan to your left [directing the cameraman], you see, come over this direction, on 3 November, we were able to get the Tiger 02D element—it was Pete, Chad and Steve—we were able to get them matched up with Commander Fakir, and they went by horseback up this trail that you can see to the south rim, and they moved west all the way to Oimatan and set up an observation post there, and they began to interdict the Taliban with close air support. They did have to return back, they had some communication problems after they were gone about a day, day and a half. And got to camp on 4 November. On the morning of the 5th, the ODC and General Dostum went up that same trail and moved to Oimatan and co-located with Tiger 02D.

¹ Tape 13 from 33:57.

SFC VINCE: This here's a cave where half a team, or nine guys from the team lived for about four days between the big meeting and the start of the big attack on 5 November.

[End of Interview with CPT Mark at Burro and end of DV tape 13.]

TRANSCRIPT 10: CPT MARK AND GEN DOSTUM AT KAMAL'S CP, CHAPCHAL, AND BESHCAM ON 9 DECEMBER 2002

Introductory note. CPT Mark is talking¹ at CDR Kamal's CP on 9 December 2002.

CPT MARK: Standing on Kamal Khan's command post we're looking to the southeast towards Dostum's mountain headquarters where we called our initial close air support on the village of Beshcam on the north rim of the canyon. As you scan to your right along the ridge we have the Darya Suf between us from where we're at now and looking south you start to see several villages. The second village there on the high ground, is the village of Oimatan. Just to the south of that on the high ground is where our observation post was on 25 and 26 October when we destroyed the 50-plus armored vehicles. That vantage point at Oimatan allowed us to see deep into the rear of the Taliban positions. You see the Omitak Mountain itself. That is where the Tiger 02A element then moved into and got up on Omitak mountain with Haji Habib. [We] had several small unit engagements and also called close air support deep on enemy targets near Keshendeh-ye Bala, Keshendeh-ye Pain. You can see the visibility today is just outstanding. From Omitak Mountain the Tiger 02A element could see all the way north to vicinity Pol-e Baraq, and we verified that yesterday when we drove in here.

All right, now you're looking towards the west through the Darya Suf canyon. If you look just to the left of the canyon, [do] you see the two little hilltops that stick up? When we were at Oimatan we got a radio message of someone calling asking where Dostum was. He replied that he was on those mounds and within about 30 minutes D30 artillery was impacting on that hilltop. So we were very concerned about them intercepting our radio messages as well.

The Darya Suf, you can see runs west. Kamal's positions were on this high ground to our front about probably 5 or 6 kilometers forward of us. As I said, this was his command post. We rode through there each day.

If you scan more to the right I think you're looking at the nearer high hills that you can see here. That was the observation post in the center that we used to support Lal and Khamal's forces. Tiger 02C element initially called close air support from there. From 1-3 November

¹ This starts at 02:37 DV Tape 14 with Dave at Kamal's CP on 9 December 2002.

before they moved further north and then again on 5 November Tiger 02B and myself co-located at that position for the biggest attack on 5 November. We'll visit that later today.

As you scan to the right you see a village up here. A little village—that is Lal's command post, which we'll visit later today.

Are you doing any zoom-ins on Omitak Mountain at all?

And look how clear it is. You can see the ridge clear to the west of the Balkh Valley.

CPT MARK: This is the best visibility I've ever seen. From the time we were here, rarely could we see that. You see the high ridge, that's the east side of the Balkh Valley. Rarely could we see that and never were we able to see that one that's on the [unintelligible] attack right along the road there that we drove up through here on from Keshendeh. [7:37 Tape 14]:

From here on until we got to Keshendeh I was never on the main road. We were always off to the right with Lal's guys. [Unintelligible] Kamal's forces we're going right down the road, which is the road we drove in here on.

GEN DOSTUM [Esam is interpreter]: My headquarters was just on the other side of this [area]. That's called Cobaki. And there was artillery 82 [Note: 82mm mortar. SFC Andy spoke of the mayor of Cobaki who brought out an old 82mm mortar and started firing against the Taliban]. Just kept firing on the enemy's position [unintelligible]. But can you imagine how 1,500 horses can climb out and come and just rush and catch the enemy unprepared and unready? Yeah, it was an unexpected operation which was successful.

Bill K: What is this village over here?

ESAM [9:47 Tape 14]: The beginning of Chapchal.

CPT MARK: We're standing at the northwest side of the village of Chapchal. The camera's looking towards the east. As you span partway right you can see the Darya Suf Valley where it hooks south and runs down towards the village of Dehi. This mountain to your right is where Dostum's initial command post was located and where we called CAS from. Still cannot see the little village of Cobaki but from Cobaki we could actually see the villages...I'm sorry there is Cobaki [11.29]. Look right towards the people that are standing in front of us...the people that are standing in front of us on this ridge. Go up and left slightly to the buildings and then just keep going up, straight up and you're going see it in the snow over there. That is the village of Cobaki, if you can zoom in on that.

That is the village we called CAS from to support the very first attack on Beshcam and on to Chapchal. So from Cobaki up and right in terrain is where Dostum's headquarters was. It's about an hour horse ride back to the south from Cobaki.

Cobaki is where we split out the Tiger 02A element, if you pan it to your right over this terrain it was a 9-hour horse ride back to the village of Oimatan which we filmed in another little segment.

CPT MARK: You're looking/going towards Oimatan and Omitak Mountain. If you pan it back to your right you see some mountains I pointed out to you earlier where artillery had impacted shortly after someone called on the radio asking where Dostum's position was located. They were told it was on one of these small mountains.

All right, this next little hilltop right down here is where General Dostum, when arriving in this location, was upset that there was a counterattack coming in here and he jumped on the radio and hollered on the radio at all the horsemen. The horsemen were on this ridge and this next ridge line to the west here. Some of them were resting, sleeping. Some of them were eating, some of them were actually up firing towards the Taliban, and suddenly all the horsemen—as far as we could see in here on this ridge to the south of this position and looking back over the one we're currently standing in—suddenly [they] jumped up and onto their horses and went charging off over the hill and captured the ZSU that was holding us up. Dostum then ran down to the low ground, back up to the high ground to this position right over here. Chad and I followed him and by the time we got to that position the horsemen had captured the ZSU that we could see. We saw the horsemen flank it basically from the right. They came up out of the low ground and took the ZSU 23-2 which had been firing on us.

If you pan to your right you will see a little village up over there. That is Lal's CP, on 5 November as well. Not visible from here, but off to the north to the right there is Charsu where Ahmad Khan's forces were. As you continue to scan back right you will start to look back towards the east towards Beshcam. We will drive over to Beshcam next.

Yeah, all the trucks where the guys are sitting up there. That's Beshcam.

And then up and to your right was Dostum's headquarters where he first brought us on horseback. We're not able to get to there obviously because of the terrain but at least we got some shots so you can see what the position looked like.

[Tape stops and restarts.]

CPT MARK: ...From where exactly I do not know, but the horsemen kind of took the low ground through it and flanked it from the right. They came out of the low ground and took it at less than a hundred meters from the ZSU and they had it. It was incredible.

From there, that's the point where Chad and I turned back. Because I needed to get back to make coordination for the attack the next day and we rode back over...Chari escorted us back to the top, sent us down the trail just the three of us—Chad, LeCott and myself—down the trail where Fakir met us at the bottom back and towards the Cobaki trail head and then took us back up the south rim of the Darya Suf to Cobaki. And that's what he's been reiterating to us the story here of after we left. You know, their momentum carried them on to the next little village and they got into the close fighting in the built up area and supposedly within 20–50 meters of each other and that is the location where they killed approximately 123 Pakistanis and captured 2. Somewhere back over here to the west. I think that's near Baluch or right up close to it, where the enemy had never fought so hard, and Dostum lost several commanders and we find out now that he was up close in the fighting himself. That story he relays about having one grenade among them and that man ran in and killed the Taliban and they finally won. [Note: Dostum rode back to Cobaki late that night. Upon arrival woke up Mark and reiterated the same information: The death of one of his commanders, severe fighting, the Taliban refusal to surrender, and the Northern Alliance fighter taking a grenade among the Taliban fighters. Dostum has also made a request to medevac one of his commanders to Uzbekistan.]

GEN DOSTUM [Esam is interpreter—DV tape 14, time 19:57]: We established a commission of elders of these villages.

GEN DOSTUM/ESAM: So what do you think, what's going to happen? What should we do? You know that they declared a jihad against America so don't you want to join us for this? So let's get united. You're a Muslim, I'm a Muslim, and you're an Afghan and I am, too. So let's unite, get united against the enemy.

CPT MARK: This was the first place we bombed from...there should be a B-52 crater down over this way where...you see the two soldiers standing? Should be one down in there somewhere.

CPT MARK: All right, we were standing at the location known as Beshcam. It's the first Taliban position that we called close air support on, or rather that we bombed from a B-52. That close air support was called in from Dostum's mountain headquarters to our south [south of Cobaki]. I'll point that out here shortly. Right now you are looking to the east back towards the village of Safid Kotah. That is where the horsemen...we attacked on 21 November, would attack from Safid Kotah towards Beshcam coming towards us. If you'll pan to the right some you'll see the Darya Suf Canyon. The Darya Suf Canyon right about where it turns or where the two canyons come together, rather than the main Darya Suf, continues and turns south into the village of Dehi. As you can see to pan right, you can see to our full front where the vehicles are sitting there was actually an artillery piece, a D30 artillery piece, that was destroyed when we got up here. But they had a trench line as you can see, all the way down the ridge where these troops are currently standing, from right where we're at here, running to the south as far right along the ridge, as far as you can see to the two soldiers standing down there.

In the distance across the Darya Suf Canyon is where Dostum's headquarters would be on hilltop 186, just to orient you. From where the two soldiers are you'd be across, up and right. Then again as you pan right... you can't see the village of Cobaki from here because it's back down in the low ground, closer to the south rim of the canyon. You continue to pan right that will take you back towards Oimatan again.

All right, we're filming again from the hilltop known as Beshcam. We're standing on the west side of it and we are looking south, southeast towards the village of Chapchal, just to orient you. We are looking south generally across the Darya Suf Canyon. All right, we'll continue to pan west, to your right. From there you can see the terrain that we had to traverse on horseback with the Tiger 02A element all the way to the village of Oimatan if you continue to pan right. You're about to it. To reorient you back there is the village of Oimatan. Oimatan 1 and 2, I believe, is what they're designated on the map. So that's where the Tiger 02A element went. It took approximately nine hours to move there by horse and by foot. It was Oimatan.

All right, from Oimatan continue to scan right, you see the twin peaks as they're referred to. If you keep scanning to the right you see a small village. From Beshcam that village was held by Taliban and that later became...come to your right...looking right over the troops with the two trucks, the troops in the small village there. You on it? Okay. From there, Beshcam, there were enemy positions about half the distance between here and that village and they were also in that village. I said we're in here in Beshcam, and we still had to continue to push them back. The village that we're looking at right now later became known as—in the period 1–5

November—as Lal’s command post. So we did push forward to there. Just to reorient you keep pushing them to the west.

From the village you’re on there, if you scan more to your right, keep coming to your right. You can start to see—well, you can’t really see it—you can see a sort of yellow-colored ridge line that kind of runs off. That is where Ahmad Khan’s troops were positioned on the day we came here to Beshcam. Ahmad Khan’s troops held the line generally north along the ridges and Ahmad Khan’s troops were on that ridge that you can see some sort of [unintelligible] trench line that continues to run down to the north. [Tape stops and restarts.]

CPT MARK: Yeah, this is the ridge we were talking about here. The line we held on 22 October when Chad and I came over here with General Ahmad Khan’s troops held this ridge line running north from Beshcam. Right now with the light it has kind of a yellow tint to it and you can see some sort of [unintelligible] on another little peak over there along the ridge.

If you continue to scan to your right, the mountains in the far distance, that is the Marmol district up in there where Commander Atta’s troops had gotten pushed back into in his failed attempt on Mazar. As you can see to scan to the right, you’re starting to look towards the northeast, and that is the main way to the northeast that Ahmad Khan brought his troops in from Samangan province from Aybak, the city of Aybak [provincial capital of Samangan].

Okay, the northeast—it was the location Haji Chari was in with my men, up with Ahmad Khan.

We’re looking west towards Commander Lal’s command post on 1–5 November. We are going to that location. If you scan to the right Ahmad Khan’s position with this man right here, Haji Chari, who is with the Tiger 02C element with Paul and Matt and Mike, he will take us later over to that location.

All right. We’re looking right here at Lal’s Command post, this little village area right here. That was his command post when we arrived in here on the night of 31 October when Vince and I rode up here with the Tiger 02C element. We spent the night here. The next day the Tiger 02C element was taken out. They began to call CAS from here on the Taliban positions to the west. We’ll show you those in a moment. Then they moved to an observation post during the day and would come back to this location at night. They were in this area gathering intelligence and protecting the flank to the north and for calling CAS from 1–3 November. That was the Tiger 02C element. As you scan... Right here we also had several meetings with commanders on 3 November when LTC Max arrived. We had a big meeting here as well, in

the same place where you can see those men standing on the roof, and on up on that little mound up there where the men are standing on the ridge.

As you scan to your left you're looking more northeast, I'm sorry, north...you're looking more northeast across the Darreh-ye Dadel Gorge. As you continue to scan to your left you can see the plain that leads north towards the Tiangi Gap or the Shulgareh Gap north towards Mazar-e Sharif. The mountain you're focused on now is the Marmol area. As you can see as you scan to your left, that's the low ground, the plains that run north towards Mazar.

You're now looking at the ridge line that is the west side of the Balkh Valley generally, and as you focus on the two villages, those two there, that is north of the Darreh-ye Dadel Gorge. Those villages were Taliban controlled. Further to the north there was the city of Dallan that we knew was an enemy armored force. We were concerned about them counterattacking into our flank.

As you scan to the left you see two villages close together. That is actually the village of Charsu where Ahmad Khan's command post and Ahmad Khan's forces were arrayed on the ridges to the west. As you look at the village of Charsu, it [Charsu] is on a 346-degree azimuth from where we are currently standing [Lal's command post].

From the villages as you continue to scan west, about three of the fingers that reach towards us is the approximate Tiger 02C location which we hope to visit later today or possibly tomorrow, where Tiger 02C was calling CAS from on 4–5 November; as we broke through their main defenses and began to push west they pushed west from there.

As you continue to scan left, you see the canyon of the Darya da Del farther in the distance, midrange. As you look at these handsome gentlemen right here to our front, right behind them you see we are now looking to the west. You see in the distance that ridge, the highest point that's in our foreground, that is the OP where Tiger 02C called CAS from 1–3 November. On the morning of 5 November the Tiger 02B element and I went to that same location and continued to call CAS on the Taliban positions in support of the coordinated attack.

As you continue to scan back to the left you see the mountain of Omitak back to the southwest. And these other handsome gentlemen that are here, these guys are local militia that are with Haji Habib's faction. They look pretty much like our fighters did last year. None of them had these uniforms like Sitar Han has on now.

[End of Interview with CPT Mark and DV tape 14.]

**TRANSCRIPT 11: CPT MARK AND GEN DOSTUM OVERLOOKING
BALUCH ON THE EVENING OF
9 DECEMBER 2002**

Introductory notes. This transcript¹ starts with CPT Mark atop the hill south of Baluch on the evening of 9 December 2002 and then includes interviews with CDR Fakir and GEN Dostum at the same location. In addition, Fakir starts on the morning of the 10th. A second channel is used to record GEN Dostum on the evening of 9 December discussing the battle overlooking Baluch.

CPT MARK [talking to other members trying to link up with us]: We're in just west of a village called Baluch. We're up on a hilltop right now and about 8, 10 vehicles total on the west edge of the village of Baluch. We're with Dostum and about another six, eight trucks to the south, closer to the Darya Suf looking over some Taliban defensive positions.

Grid 318959. They're with a bunch of blue trucks...green trucks. And they're on the hilltop somewhere.

[Note: Background conversation with Dostum and Esam is interpreter overlooking Baluch.]

RADIO: We put you into our GPS; you're about a kilometer south of us.

CPT MARK: Gotcha. I think we got eyes on you. Between you and us in the valley is the village and about a dozen of Dostum's trucks that are setting up camp for the night.

RADIO: Roger.

CPT MARK: [6:25] Now, this is key. This is what broke them, right here. It was the dudes on this side...Yeah, this was Taliban. All through here, through this ridge line and on that ridge over there coming this way. All to the right side of this road that we drove down. And then

¹ This is DV tape 15. The evening of 9 December actually starts with GEN Dostum atop a hill overlooking Baluch from the south, but the transcriber is not picking up that conversation at the beginning of the transcript and instead finds it as "15R" on the second channel located at the end of Transcript 14. This is a good example why the original translations were kept. The transcriber initially picks up the conversation between CPT Mark, MSG Woody, and someone on the radio; hence the attribution to "RADIO." RADIO was another team in another vehicle that was trying to find us. GEN Dostum is actually a second track.

Fakir and some other dudes that were dismounts and some cavalry flanked them over here. They flanked up into here and that's what broke it.

Yeah. That's what broke it on them. So I was not over here. I was over there with Lal and Dostum was over here. Well, Fakir was. He says Dostum says he was, but he wasn't, he was on the south side of the gorge with the Boxer element [LTC Max]. But Fakir and another dude were up in here and then they linked in with Kamal and that's what broke this. Right about the same time that we bombed some strong points that were on the east side and the horsemen swept through them.

You see that building on the ridge, the intermediate ridge? We bombed up there and that was their last defense along that line. Up here, I remember them being along those walls when we finally rode up next to them. They were using them as cover.

WOODY: Why were they defending this out here? Why didn't they concentrate in Mazar or somewhere just to...you know...

CPT MARK: Well, number one they knew they had to stop Dostum here. They had to stop him here.

WOODY: Before he ever got up... [to Shulgareh and Mazar]

CPT MARK: Yep. And they started way back when we were fighting at Beshcam. They started reinforcing this thing and the ones that got in with having Bill and those guys back over here on the mountain, they didn't...we just kept chewin' 'em up. 'Cause once they got... these guys in here got isolated. Their moral broke. We were getting radio intercepts that their commanders had been ordered to shoot soldiers who refused to fight, because they were defecting big time, every day. I mean we witnessed as the battle was starting to unfold the frontline dismounts would start running forward, but they didn't have any weapons, you could tell. They dropped their weapons and were running forward towards the Northern Alliance like something out of the movie *Braveheart*. They ran forward to each other. We were seeing that happen time and time again. They would run out but the hardcore dudes would not give them any heavy weapons. So all the frontline Joes had was just like most of these guys...AKs, RPGs, and PKs. And all the ZSUs and the artillery and BMPs and tanks were all with the hardcore dudes.

We [the team] were scattered all over and Vince and I really were the only two that hit near every position. Vince and I rode all over, visiting all the positions over here except for Bill's [Tiger 02A]. Only they can talk about what happened up there which was just phenomenal,

and they were trying to downplay it once we were done, and as we're going back and really sitting down and talking to him they'd start to drop a little bit here or there and you're going, "Wait a minute. What do you mean you were IMT-ing, you know, into this village with these dudes, you know. What do you mean you were right up 400 meters away from a building ready to call CAS on it and it exploded because the adjoining ODA fired over the mountain into that village?"

CPT MARK: Yeah, all three of those guys were low key, you know.

RADIO: Are we supposed to meet you on the hill or are you going to meet us here in town?

CPT MARK: Meet us down in town. We're about done up here, I think. Our light's about gone even from up here.

Hey, look towards our position. We're going to flash. Identify the color.

RADIO: I see green. Over.

CPT MARK: All right, how about now? Do you have a color?

RADIO: I see red. Over.

CPT MARK: Yeah. We'll be down shortly.

CPT MARK: The guys were a HALO team and they wanted to jump in. I said if I can find a place I will. But then it come down from the JSOTF headquarters back to us saying, "Hey, you've got this resupply drop zone up on the side of that mountain...Bill was there, he can describe it you. Bill's a HALO guy. Bill said, "You want me to what? No, those guys aren't jumping in here. You'll kill them." Combat equipment at night? No way.

Then they brought them in there in a helo. Those guys, talking to them later, they supposedly took off like three or four times and tried to infil and then turned back because of the weather. They were getting frustrated trying to get in. They were trying to push them in starting 23 October, and they never really arrived until 28 October. But then back up here in that same terrain, back over here in Dostum's area, well, in that same area that I just told you about they wanted to static line the C team [Boxer element] into there. [Mark's channel on Tape 15 stops here at 14:56.]

[End of DV 15L; begin DV 15R. This part is Esam interpreting for GEN Dostum—it matches the DV on 15 second channel. This on the evening of 9 December 2002.]

ESAM: Lal Commander attacked from the gap through there.

DOSTUM/ESAM [2:59]: The Taliban had a special tactic when B-52s used to bombard the bunkers that belonged to the Taliban. When the Taliban heard the sounds of the airplane they used to rush into the villages and leave their bunkers. And when our infantry was approaching them, they used to launch another counterattack which was quite effective from their point of view.

Their strongholds were hit by B-52s. They received some casualties and their tanks and other vehicles were destroyed so they got sort of demoralized and meanwhile we launched our infantry and horsemen so we could do the job, then take control of this area.

[6:07] After we finished we cleared this area from enemy. Mark and other Commanders went to upper Keshendeh by car [John Deere Gators], through the roads. And I along with my other troops went up to Omitak.

Taliban forces were commanded by a very senior Taliban commander all the time.

The heaviest fighting happened just this time of the day.

BILL K: Right before it got dark and in the dark? Did the B-52 continue to bomb?

DOSTUM/ESAM: No, while I was attacking they didn't bomb. They were bombing you know, 5 kilometers, 10 kilometers further away. [Note: They shifted fire to targets deeper in the objective, to the west.]

Because American friends were all the time with me. They used to contact them and give them the coordination and our location that we were here and the enemy is there.

Sometimes there were misunderstandings. When one bunker was hit by B-52, my infantry, my soldiers, used to attack from the land. And then of course after the first bunker, the B-52 used to make another round, circle, and hit the second bunker and since our guys were not that proficient they used to attack the second bunker and occupy. But the plane they didn't know that it was occupied and captured by our people. They even bombed our people. Yeah, my men were trying to approach where there was smoke. It meant that that area is bombed and everyone is killed or injured.

This village was deserted. But now, slowly people are coming back.

That's Shamallak. And Mark and some of his colleagues were based there to have a better observation of the enemy's movement. But later enemy found out that they were Americans based there so they launched artillery and the tanks attacks. They were nearly killed and I ordered them back.

These places Safid Kotah, Chapchal, and Baluch. Three battles.

But the people who resisted Cashmeh, Tiangi. They were mostly Pakistanis who had just arrived. They didn't know what was going on. You know, with the motivation that they were fighting for Islam. But the real Taliban and Al Qaeda we knew who could feel the danger, they had all escaped. Already left.

BILL K: In this area were there a lot of Chechen, Pakistani, or local Taliban?

DOSTUM/ESAM: They're mixed Afghan, Pakistani, and Arabs, Chechens. He's [we were joined by one of the local townspeople that was formerly Taliban] talking about the local Taliban from this area. Because he's one of them. Before Mr. Dostum's arrival they were fighting along with Taliban, but after his arrival they left Taliban's rank and joined.

BILL K: And why did he do that?

DOSTUM/ESAM: Because we were under sort of pressure from that side and we knew that Taliban were not doing good things. And more importantly we admired Mr. Dostum himself, his personality. That's why we joined.

And the other factor why he was with Taliban was that they had some internal problems. This village has a problem with the other village. One village was working with Taliban but the other is the opposite. So they were looking for some alternatives so that they can defend themselves and Taliban was an alternative for protection.

BILL K: OK, they used the power of the Taliban to defend against other villages.

DOSTUM/ESAM: Yes, other rivals.

When most of the local Taliban joined they were [unintelligible]. I can give you examples, hundreds and hundreds of them.

After I [Esam is referring to one of the townspeople that is with us] left Taliban's rank and joined Mr. Dostum's forces, they massacred my villages. Twenty people. After they left and they burned their houses.

[End of Interview with GEN Dostum.]

TRANSCRIPT 12: CDR FAKIR AT BALUCH, 10 DECEMBER 2002

Introductory notes: This is an interview¹ of CDR Fakir south of Baluch on 10 December 2002. The interpreter is Kamal. As indicated before, Kamal interprets in third person, e.g., “He said...,” but we converted it to first person for Fakir.

[Note: Only half the tape was transcribed, and it was a difficult job. But the last part of the tape is pretty good, and it lays out the area with directions to Dave on the camera—so it should be a good detailed 360-degree description of the area.]

BILL K [DV tape 15, time 17:48]: First of all, I would like to describe this area. To the north we’re looking at Baluch. To the south we’re looking at Oimatan. To the southwest is Shamallak. Now, where were you before the battle started?

CDR FAKIR/KAMAL: When the war first started I was in Shamallak.

BILL K: Yes. Let me add something here. Commander Fakir was the coordinator for the forces that attacked this area. He was with General Dostum before they attacked here and he was in the Shamallak area. What time did the attack start?

CDR FAKIR/KAMAL: I was in the Shamallak area with General Dostum. We started the battle at 9:00 in the morning. We captured this area twice and also lost it.

BILL K: Let me go back to the first attack. You said 1,500 horsemen all around this area. How many horsemen were under your command?

CDR FAKIR: I was General Dostum’s special envoy.

BILL K: So at 9:00 a.m., on the first attack, General Dostum had subcommanders. He had Commander Lal. Where did Commander Lal come from?

BILL K [repeating what the Kamal interprets]: Behind the mountains off to, directly towards east, is where Commander Lal came from? You say Kamal came from the south? Where was Ahmad Khan?

CDR FAKIR/KAMAL: Dallan.

¹ Originally logged as 003 (BALUCH) SIDE A, and DV tape 15.

BILL K: You say you were in this village but couldn't take it over? Do you mean that you couldn't take it on the first attack so you withdrew?

CDR FAKIR/KAMAL: Yes.

BILL K: Where did you retreat? By the way [to the interpreter], if you could take this in little bits and feed it back to me. He [Fakir] is saying an awful lot of stuff. I'm afraid if you give me one sentence after he's talked for five minutes then we will miss a lot.

CDR FAKIR: Before we went to Omitak General Dostum had 600–700 horsemen to take this village. CDR Kamal was on this side, to our right, south.

BILL K: Which side of the Darya Suf was CDR Kamal on?

CDR FAKIR: Commander Lal on the other side, Commander Kamal from this side [north side]. They came through this area. They could not take control, there were too many enemy forces.

BILL K: Did Lal come through that area? Where did Lal come from?

CDR FAKIR: Right, from that area you are pointing at. Ahmad Khan was on the other side.

BILL K: On the other side in Dallan. You said Dallan area? You had Kamal coming up this pass?

CDR FAKIR: Chukmuk Pass. The area was so big, Commander Lal and Commander Kamal they each have subcommanders. They basically had 600–700 people. So they travel for several days through Chapchal to this pass.

BILL K: Where's Chukmuk Pass?

CDR FAKIR: North side of the Darya Suf and next to the Darya Suf.

BILL K: He came up that side to make the attack. So CDR Kamal came up that side to make the attack. It's right behind us here, is that correct? Can you point to which mountains you are talking about?

BILL K [repeating what the interpreter said]: When the attack occurred, they withdrew at 9:00 attack, they charged again at 12:00. They timed the charging for 12:00, something led General Dostum to believe that he could succeed at 12:00. What circumstances led him to then lead the charge at 12:00?

CDR FAKIR: General Dostum he wasn't here by himself, he commanded his forces to go to this area and capture all surrounding the village. The Taliban had been reinforced by Mullah Razzak. That's why General Dostum retreated back.

BILL K: Because of their reinforcements?

CDR FAKIR: Dostum wasn't here himself. After they went back and gathered most of his people, then General Dostum with reinforcement and they had a lot of ammunition they arrived back to this area.

BILL K: So General Dostum with more forces arrived back. Made the next attack about 3:00 or 4:00 p.m. Where were you at that time?

CDR FAKIR: I was with General Dostum.

BILL K: During the first attack, where were you? You say General Dostum wasn't here, were you here?

CDR FAKIR: I was in the Shamallak area.

BILL K: You were in Shamallak area when the attack started at about 3:00 p.m. Can you tell me the sequence, one step at a time?

CDR FAKIR/KAMAL: The General ordered his commander and me, CDR Kamal and Commander Lal, "You have to take over this village tonight or otherwise you will be sort of shamed. You cannot take over area then I'm going to with my own forces."

BILL K: First attack on that hill. That hill from this position is 060 [direction]. The next step please. [214]

CDR FAKIR: Second part was we were ordered to fighting. It was chaos with 3,000 or 4,000 enemy forces and they had 1,500 of their own forces it was hard to recognize as the enemy. It was so bad afterwards, the enemy had retreated to that house. The house on top of that hill...

They had the air attacks at that time but they were not dropping bombs because of residential and people in the houses.

BILL K: I'm looking at that house right there.

CDR FAKIR: Actually, look right up there.

BILL K: Oh, that one! That's way off [we got a photograph]. You really got those guys to move. That is really due north. It's that one. You see which one he's talking about Dave [the videographer]? See that house. Mark, can you do a diagram of this place, these maps are lou-

sy. I need to let him do that. It doesn't even show a hilltop on our map. [Mark provided a diagram.]

CPT MARK: You want a diagram of it?

BILL K: Of just this area. With the town in the center, with Darya Suf there, and the routes that we're in and everything else. The map doesn't show any of this stuff. Kind of a general cartoon type of thing.

[Note: End DV tape 15 and begin DV tape 16.]

BILL K: I understand you [CDR Fakir] had Ahmad Khan coming from the Dallan area, Lal coming through the gap, Kamal coming from the east, and you came from Shamallak attacking this area first. What was GEN Dostum doing?

CDR FAKIR: He [GEN Dostum] was communicating with the Taliban leaders and he was telling them, "Listen, Taliban, I'm gonna capture this area." And on the return the Taliban commanders replied, "Listen, if you capture this area that means you capture the whole north." And then General Dostum replied, "I will do that. When I capture it I will say it on the radio that I captured the north." And he captured this little village.

BILL K: Who was he talking to?

CDR FAKIR: Mullah Guhaire, the Taliban commander.

BILL K: What was Lal attacking?

CDR FAKIR: We could not take over any of the villages. General Dostum himself he showed up in order to capture that village. So Commander Lal, he was taking step by step most of the posts, Taliban posts, along the mountains here on the other side in the back, and Commander Kamal was coming from the other end with his forces. Basically they surrounded this village from all directions. The Taliban they were surrounded and they had their main command post in this village also. That's why they retreated; they resisted a lot in this area.

CDR FAKIR: Commander Lal came from over there, where those shepherds are, where those sheep are walking around?

BILL K: The sheep are at 060 degrees. What happened where those sheep are?

CDR FAKIR: Taliban were just on the other side of those hills and Commander Lal's horses came from that direction. And Commander Lal's troops came through this pass all over those hills basically attacking enemy posts.

CDR FAKIR: The horsemen came. The Taliban, they were hiding in those houses because of direct air support, you know, air attacks.

BILL K: Can you tell me which houses?

CDR FAKIR: Because of the air attack they were hiding in all of these houses so we cannot pinpoint one house.

BILL K: Which houses were hit with the air attack?

CDR FAKIR: The houses were not hit. They would hit the outskirts, surrounding it.

BILL K: Was this area, where we are standing, hit?

CDR FAKIR: This mountain was not hit because it was so close to the houses. This mountain wasn't hit. It was bombarded further away distance-wise. Because they bombarded, not the houses but way out. The areas that were hit were over there [he points to the east and north], where the Taliban were hiding and as soon as the aircraft came the Taliban figured they would be killed once they tried to escape. And the horsemen, they were right around there, they were the ones who captured them, so that was another thing which succeeded the war air attack and the Taliban ran away from their posts.

BILL K: So the posts were on the outside of town and then the Taliban ran inside the town. So the fighting took place outside the town?

CDR FAKIR: Outskirts, yes.

CDR FAKIR: There were a lot of prisoners captured in this area so whenever the Taliban left their post, 50 or 60 horsemen were standing there right beside them or hiding. As soon as they left their post they were captured by them and they were hit. That's why they flee into the villages and the aircraft would not come and bomb the village.

BILL K: So the attack took place at 1500, what time were the attacks over?

CDR FAKIR: The same night after three or four of the attacks started, same night they took over this village and the Taliban retreated way back to that house I pointed out.

CDR FAKIR: 11:00 o'clock, around 11:00 o'clock once they captured this village, secured it and then they went back to their own posts. Prior until around eleven o'clock they were in this village and once they secured the area they cleared everybody and they had set up posts surrounding the village and then they went back to their own posts so they could make more coordination.

CDR FAKIR [11:15]: They basically came with all their personnel so basically Commander Lal and Commander Kamal did not go on personally themselves, their forces were in this village. They did not go back to their CPs. Their objective was to go forward.

BILL K: So on the next morning on 6 November 2001 where did they go?

CDR FAKIR: They returned the next morning around 0700 in the morning to this area again. At that time they had coordinated air support, the aircraft came, they bombarded because, as I said earlier, all the Taliban they retreated back in the top of their posts. The aircraft dropped three bombs on that post. That was a big resistance for them. Once they collapsed from there, the only reason the Taliban retreated up there was they got stuck on their word because they said if they somebody capture this area, they're gonna capture the north. And that was why that was the most resisted area when the aircraft came, they dropped bombs and they collapsed and from there on they had really little resistance all the way towards Mazar area.

BILL K: So it's 0700 the next morning, they dropped bombs on that area, then where did they go?

CDR FAKIR: There's another little village, it's called Okchuppa and in that village they captured. They were basically pushing back the Taliban as they were going village by village and they went to Okchuppa village and captured them. Mullah Daod was there. He was Taliban commander there and from there they rested up a little bit, they rested their horses and their men and slowly they went to Keshendeh.

BILL K: How many forces did Mullah Daod have?

CDR FAKIR/KAMAL: I do not know, he [Daod] was injured when they captured him [the ODA has a picture of him being treated by the Special Forces medic]. He was one of the leaders. I do not know how many men he had although Taliban suffered a lot. They lost around 300–400 men in this village when they captured.

Afterward we went back to Omitak with the 9 – 11 U.S. personnel. We arrived at Omitak mountain around three in the morning. By that time they had the air support in terms of re-supplying them in that area. Once they re-supplied, we coordinated in terms of attacking the other villages from there on. By the time they were doing those things the people from here, the forces from here were also moving towards Keshendeh, so they came from southern directions to attack the next village.

BILL K: I understand that the attack on the next villages went very quickly?

CDR FAKIR: This was their most strongholds. Just like they said on the radio, when you captured this area you will capture the whole north; they had people from Pakistan, Chechen, Uzbekistan, most of them were here, this was one of their big strongholds, that's why they have no resistance in other villages.

Because they were afraid of the people living/surrounding this village. They knew once this village was gone, afterwards the other villages would favor General Dostum—they would join him in terms of attacking them—that's why they fled and they resisted as much as they could. Once they knew they could not resist anymore, they fled all the way to Mazar. The villagers, they captured a lot of prisoners, too.

Hopefully, I described the area in the detail you want it to be. I learned all this area, the landscape, by fighting basically because this area belongs to Samangan province. For example by car we got here within an hour but on horseback probably took five or six hours because I'd get lost here and there.

BILL K: [DV tape 16, time 20:45:15 as Dave pans the area with the camera to identify landmarks for future reconstruction.] We are looking at a house due north from our location. Our GPS location is marked as F2. The house is where the Taliban moved to after they retreated from Baluch. The notch is 030 degrees from our position. That is where Lal's forces came through. Next [the road is 060 degrees], Commander Lal's horsemen came down that road as he attacked the village. The hill [at 080 degrees] was highly fortified by Taliban. Along the road [at 090 degrees] Commander Kamal's forces came from those hills near Chapchal down through the gap along this road. This gap is 310 degrees, and it takes the forces into Keshende-deh-ye Bala. From our position we are looking at Oimatan Village, which is south of the Darya Suf. From our position it's 190 degrees. Pointing down the Darya Suf, 160 degrees, to see how the Darya Suf winds from Oimatan. We've moved from 140 to 120 degrees to get the rest of the site and then back to the road which is 100 degrees. We are currently again looking at Oimatan and panning to the west 220 to 240 degrees to Shamallak where Fakir was located before the battle. Now we are panning to the west to the same road that led them to Keshende-deh-ye Bala.

[End of Interview with CDR Fakir.]

TRANSCRIPT 13: SFC VINCE AND CPT MARK AT TIGER 02B
5 NOV 01 POSITION, 10 DECEMBER 2002

Introductory note. This transcribes¹ an interview with SFC Vince and CPT Mark at Tiger 02B position on 10 December 2002.

BILL K: Let's lay out the terrain and forces. Where are we?

SFC VINCE [DV tape 16, time 29:31]: We are forward of Commander Lal's command post which is 2 kilometers to our east—to our rear. [The direction is 120 degrees from Tiger 02B 5 November position]. To my right [facing west] about 4 km was Tiger 02C, and to my left was Oimatan where Tiger 02B was located. Tiger 02A was on Omitak Mountain, they had overwatch on the enemy rear. We had Ahmad Khan's forces to the northeast. And we got some of the laser target codes and the laser target lines that we used to get to these targets here. At 300 degrees is an enemy stronghold. Another group of buildings and all along that ridge line were Taliban walking about. They were in black so they were easy to see. The cut is at 310 degrees, and behind the cut is another bunker location at about 7 km, at 315 degrees, about the limits of our SOFLAM because of the dust and haze. Come down three ridge lines and there was another complex, maybe mud huts. [Vince is pointing out the single hut we spotted from the last interview with Fakir, the one he mentioned that the Taliban had retreated to.] This is a good example of the difficulties of trying to talk a pilot onto a target. We had to use the gorge a lot as a reference point. We got up here between 0930 and 1000 on 5 November 2001. As soon as we got up here we had Aircraft overhead. Commander Lal kept telling us to get down. We had no idea we were that close until we saw bullets overhead and realized we were within machine gun range. Friendlies were one the first ridge line in preparation to charge the next ridge line when the time was right. The horsemen were positioned on the reverse slope.

BILL K: What were your first targets in relation to the gap [the same gap or notch that Commander Lal's forces had charged through]?

SFC VINCE: In relationship to the gap come five fingers to the left—people were milling about. The flat area with multiple buildings—that's where we were getting fire from. Se-

¹ This is DV tape 16.

quencing of targets was from left to right 1 through 4. [Vince is referring to a diagram]. Number two was the bunker. We used a JDAM on it, but it didn't work. We had a compass for azimuth and used 4,200 feet for elevation but the altitude had to be pretty precise or we can be hundreds of feet off. But there we could talk them on to the target. As an example we could say, "From the last JDAM 300 meters to the east."

[Note: DV tape change to 17.]

SFC VINCE: The sequence of events, the best that I can remember them on our first target there, the CAS started out very slowly because it was hard to basically get our bearings, get situational awareness as far as exactly where the enemy was. And it wasn't until after lunch that morning that we actually got some good impacts. To go back here to the first target from the left, that was later on that evening, I believe, that got hit and they had good success with the lasers at that point, with the SOFLAM, and got some laser target codes and lines that we used to get to these targets here.

We used JDAMs at first which were somewhat successful. They're more successful when there are troops in the open, because you can use them on proximity fuse. They don't have to be that close because it's 2,000 pounds JDAM on proximity. Within a hundred meters of you you're going to feel it and might not die, but you'll be down enough that you will eventually die, especially out here in these conditions. And we got some good impacts on this one target about 3:00 p.m. I'd say 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

BILL K: Let me change the order on you. I think you were right, I said left to right, but you're right, let's do them in sequence.

SFC VINCE: Our first target we hit that day was the bunker complex which is the second target from the left. And why we picked that was because we were drawing PKM fire from there and we could actually see troops firing weapons at us so that became...that's our closest threat so we're going to take that out first. That wasn't hit until right around lunch. We had first hit, got some JDAMS on it, and they missed. It went on the far side, because we could see the smoke coming up from the far side of that. We tried to adjust from that to the east about a hundred meters and it happened that that first strike was figured at a hundred meters to the west so the second JDAM also missed. He checked out Winchester [needed fuel], and we had an F18 check in with GBUs. We had our SOFLAM set up, and we were hoping that he could use our laser mark, our laser spot to drop/guide the bombs in on it. And that was... I think we had two successful...the first one Steve was controlling the SOFLAM. He had the laser spot on, it hit just to the left of it...the laser spot...the laser spot sometimes they reflect,

they bounce off buildings and the laser sees, the brightest spot, that's where it's going to go. And that was fused on impact. Most of the guys in the building I guess figured out that the bomb was coming at them next because it was basically bracketing them. So they came out and went into the bomb crater as Steve had the laser spot on the building. This is on the second pass. Actually it was the number two aircraft, because I was flying twos. As he finally let the bomb loose, Steve saw the people inside the bomb crater or running to the bomb crater. He slowly shifted the spot from the bunker from the building to the left of it, where the crater was, and that's where the bomb impacted and took all those people out. That stopped the PK machine gun fire from that direction and greatly relieved the people up here because they could walk about without getting shot.

After that, we just started slowly working on the targets to the right or the left. I'm pretty sure he went deeper; he got the ones to the right. This first bunker to the left up here is closer, but I'm not sure we were drawing any kind of fire. It was pointed out to us that that was Taliban, that was enemy. We relied on the Northern Alliance soldiers to give us intel on what exactly is happening because they know better than we do, obviously, because we just showed up.

There are numerous targets, there are numerous areas where we had troops in the open and for that we used JDAM as best we could. I guess we thought you didn't have to be exact and pinpoint with the proximity fuses on those. On the second bunker it was kind of like the first bunker, it was slow at first trying to get him on to it, and I believed it was JDAM that actually suppressed enough that these guys were happy it was destroyed. I can't really remember all the minute details as far as, you know, where the bombs hit these last few times because we were switching off between who was radio manager, who was spotting, and who was observing. Then we were going down there eating lunch and then trying to get other stuff done. So—I know you wanted a whole bunch in depth—I'm just trying to remember as much as I can.

BILL K: What else was going on around you at that time?

SFC VINCE: Mid afternoon a captured ZSU 23-3 pulled up behind us on this hill and Northern Alliance soldiers started shooting to our north on the knoll next to us. There was an enemy ZSU in front of us that we were trying to hit. At the same time we had troops staying at Dostum and Lal's CP that came up to this cut and [were] preparing to charge. After taking out the position, I heard cheers and Lal's forces had taken the positions, and they said we were on our way to Boybe Che. I believe when the bomb that hit, that just broke their back. But the next morning we had to hit some of the same targets, the ones to the right, and then Mark and I took off to see Tiger 02C on 6 November.

BILL K: So then the next morning you met Paul and took him some supplies.

SFC VINCE: While we were up there. Right. We had some water and some food that we had to pass on to them because they were down to nothing over there. But then we came back and struck some of the same targets from 5 November 2001.

CPT MARK: Yeah, we saw it from here...Vince and I were in that position and we saw a target that was destroyed but controlled by Steve from back here. Mike was mad because that was his first target as soon as the aircraft were checked in that they were going to strike, so...[Note: this was an overlapping area of the teams' sectors—between Tiger 02B and Tiger 02C.]

SFC VINCE: Oh, it was about 8:30, it was early. Might be 9 o'clock on 6 November.

You're going to have to talk to one of the Northern Alliance guys as far as what happened on the attack of the night of 5 November. I couldn't tell you all the details of what happened, how far they got and where they stayed that night.

About mid-morning on 6 November, as we pulled back over here, they were finishing up with the CAS and they had enough targets destroyed where these guys started moving forward and that's when Mark and Will took off on horses for Boybe Che while myself, Steve, Chief took off on two John Deere Gators and attempted to go down through here and try to move up with them. That was about lunch time on 6 November and we linked up with them at one of these bunkers over there...

The damaged equipment to the left, maybe about three fingers to the left of the damaged equipment [Mark is pointing out the bunkers using the equipment as a reference point].

SFC VINCE: They did attack on the evening, late evening on 5 November.

CPT MARK: The camera is focused on the area where from here we observed the Taliban counterattack kind of come out of what we believed to be the center of their line and move down the ridge, walking, 40 to 50 guys in a line walking along the ridges and then moving out to the north.

They came down, they disappeared, appeared as they went through the terrain, but then they kind of gathered up where the camera's pointed now. They all kind of ran out across that area and at that same time the truck-mounted ZSU 23-2 came out of hiding that we could see and went across with them. We didn't have any CAS overhead at the time to strike them, since ZSU 23-2 was a higher priority target, so we had interpreter here through our local guide. We had the ZSU 23-2 that's positioned about a hundred meters away from us. They saw them al-

so; they got excited and they opened fire in that direction. We didn't hit anybody; we just hurried them on along. They then disappeared...That Taliban force then disappeared back into the terrain. We called up Tiger 02C to let them know that they were headed pretty close to their sector; we believe it was the same group that counterattacked into Paul Evans' position.

SFC VINCE: The second target from the left was the primary bunker that we were drawing fire from and was the biggest threat to Lal's forces, 293 degrees magnetic. The second is 302 degrees. The third target was troops in the open, near the building. We called in JDAMS and they dispersed—283 degrees magnetic.

This target, a single building bunker with a tent set up behind it, is azimuth 316 degrees magnetic [30:01]. This here was like target number five [can't tell whether this statement goes with this target or the next one].

For this target we were able to hit because of the distance and visibility, azimuth is 309 degrees. The Taliban bunker with troops in the open, around, and outside it was the last target we hit. This happened the evening of 5 November.

This bunker complex is 326 degrees, [it] was attacked on the morning of 6 November with laser-guided bomb. This was basically the last Taliban element that hindered the NA troops from going into Baluch and Bai Becha.

This is Charsu location which Tiger 02C used to protect our right flank. Azimuth to Charsu is 5 degrees north. Lal's CP was 125 degrees from this OP.

[Recording route out #39 on GPS, 40 at crossroads to Baluch.]

CPT MARK's comment on the way out: "I've heard Baluch before but I didn't know what they were saying. What I want to know is, where is Boybe Che? Maybe they mean Bai Becha, which is on the map."

[41:19 Dave is taking pan shots of Baluch as we enter from the northeast. Lesson Learned: Although we didn't know enough to do full scans until the end they may have been preferable at the beginning because of the weather. In this case, the haze set in at the end of the session. [End of Interview with SFC Vince and CPT Mark.]

**TRANSCRIPT 14: CDR EZATTULLAH AND SFC VINCE ON
10 DECEMBER 2002 AT TIGER 02B'S
5 NOVEMBER 2001 POSITION**

Introductory notes: I'm talking¹ to Commander Ezattullah and SFC Vince at Tiger 02B's location. This is a great transcript on what happened from the Tiger 02B position on 5 November. The interpreter is Kamal.

BILL K: [To the interpreter Kamal] Please write his name down here for me.

We're here with Commander Ezattullah, and he was one of Commander Lal's commanders here at the battle from Commander Lal's position. How long was he in this position?

CDR EZATTULLAH: Twelve to fourteen days.

BILL K: We are keying in on the 5th of November, when they had the big attack. When did you attack? Were you on horseback?

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: I was on horseback also.

BILL K: How many men were in your unit?

CDR EZATTULLAH: Ten.

BILL K: All were on horseback?

CDR EZATTULLAH: All of them had horses.

BILL K: Where did you position yourself? Were you down in this valley?

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: Right on this spot.

BILL K: Where was your horse?

CDR EZATTULLAH: Horses would be at the bottom of the hill.

BILL K: About what time did you attack on the 5th of November?

¹ DV tape 17 and Cassette 003 side B, originally logged as 003 (Vince) Cassette side B.

CDR EZATTULLAH: Eleven o'clock.

BILL K: Did you only have to make one attack, or did you attack and then have to come back, and reattack?

CDR EZATTULLAH: One attack, move forward, one attack, move forward.

BILL K: How close to the bombs were you when you attacked?

CDR EZATTULLAH: Five-hundred to six-hundred meters roughly.

BILL K: I understand people were knocked off their horses because they were so close. Were any of your people knocked off their horses? Or did you see anyone?

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: None of my guys.

BILL K: Did you see anyone so close that you were concerned?

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: I saw other groups, Haji Chari's guys.

BILL K: Haji Chari's. Now Haji Chari was up with 02-Charlie.

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: I was going from this direction and Haji Chari was on the other side. [36]

BILL K: What type of weapon do you carry?

CDR EZATTULLAH: AK-47.

BILL K: And your soldiers?

CDR EZATTULLAH: Combination and mix of RPGs, PKs, and AK-47s.

BILL K: Were you firing your AK-47 from the gallop?

CDR EZATTULLAH: Yes.

BILL K: How about the RPGs?

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: We were firing rockets also.

BILL K: When you attacked, were you charging a bunker system? Were there troops? What were you attacking?

CDR EZATTULLAH: The enemy?

BILL K: What did you see? What was in your sights? Was it a bunker system? Were your targets people out in the open or bunker systems with people in them?

CDR EZATTULLAH: The enemy was visible when I was firing.

BILL K: How many people were there?

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: All these bunkers were full of enemy forces, about 400 of them or so. We captured around 70 of them.

BILL K: Where were the ones that you were attacking, were they in bunkers?

CDR EZATTULLAH: They were in their bunkers.

BILL K: How many attacks did you make? What I mean is...you attacked, you captured a bunker system, and did you move forward and attack again?

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: We were going step by step. Capture one bunker, and then go to the next one, the next one, even though they were fleeing.

BILL K: How many times did that happen? What I'm trying to do is establish how many times you were at one ridge line, captured it, the next ridge line, capture it, until you got into Baluch?

CDR EZATTULLAH: Six or seven bunkers.

BILL K: Does that also mean six or seven ridge lines?

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: Commander Ahmad Kahn was on the other side; roughly around 10 ridge lines for them and they already had 7 or 8 ridge lines. [66]

BILL K: So you had about six ridge lines?

CDR EZATTULLAH: Right.

BILL K: What color horse do you have?

CDR EZATTULLAH: White.

BILL K: We are trying to recreate this. If you had a white horse, we'll put you on a white horse. What about your soldiers?

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: A combination of mixed colors, there were some white, several different colors.

BILL K: What I'm trying to do is, if you could tell me exactly, I know this will be hard—we know where some of the targets are across those ridge lines—can you tell me which ridge line you hit first?

CDR EZATTULLAH: Do you know the name of the village on the other side of village, they mentioned something?

BILL K: Bai Becha

CDR EZATTULLAH: Right behind on the other side of this antiaircraft gun was a ridge line we captured.

BILL K: Is it the first ridge line right after the antiaircraft gun?

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: Yes. From there on we captured the others, five ridge lines.

BILL K: Did you go into Baluch at all?

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: We bypassed Baluch and went to the other village by Bai Becha.

BILL K: How many soldiers, Northern Alliance soldiers, were on your left side as you were taking your soldiers towards that target?

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: There were other groups around 300 on the left. Ahmad Kahn to my right, somewhere around 400. Commander Lal and I thought we were in the center.

BILL K: You had 10 men, as we portray this, do we need to show groups of 10, or are we going to show 100? When you looked across there [pointing], did you see what seemed to be visible groups of certain sizes? Or did they just look like a mass charge?

SFC VINCE: It wasn't a mass charge. There were these ridge lines, they used ridge lines as cover, they would have different echelons of 50–100 horsemen. [113].

That evening they were all happy, they were cheering. I assumed that was when they captured the town, not when they did the big attack.

BILL K: I guess what I'm trying to establish is, you've got groups of 50 behind different areas. Did they all attack at the same time or did they then come together as a group? Or did they stay and split up in those 10–50 soldiers together?

CDR EZATTULLAH: Out here?

BILL K: Yes. Did all of them charge the same time?

CDR EZATTULLAH: Commander Lal took the first charge, and then the others came.

BILL K: Did Commander Lal launch all his forces the same time or did he overwatch, you launch one, they take a position, and then the next one comes up. I'm just curious, did they overwatch, or did they all simply take off?

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: Sequence. When they captured one post, Commander Lal had his guys set up at that post and from there on they would go to the next post; once they secured that post, they would set up more guys.

BILL K: A tactic is called a bounding overwatch. Where you charge one and you keep the other back, and they are firing on the position, and all of a sudden they get set up, and they charge the next guys. I'm wondering if you did that, or when Commander Lal said "charge," everybody charged.

CDR EZATTULLAH/KAMAL: We did how you described it. By the time we got to that post or near by it, the group bounding overwatch, they kept constantly firing on the enemy so the other group could get up there.

MAJ DAN: Was the visibility like this?

CDR EZATTULLAH: Yes.

BILL K: Today's a good day for that?

CDR EZATTULLAH: Yes. It was like this or even worse.

BILL K: Did you have any of your comrades killed?

CDR EZATTULLAH: No.

BILL K: I think that's it. Thank you very much, I'm honored to be able to talk to a warrior like you. [158]

BILL K: We just need those pictures. Let me get the coordinates, at least the azimuth on it. I'm looking directly north about where the...Kamal, could ask them...so it's from 326 degrees. The notch is where the horsemen had ridden up and the LGM was coming in, and that's where he saw the horsemen being knocked off their horsemen. About how many horsemen?

SFC VINCE: Three or four, with the lead horsemen going up the hill.

BILL K: How many horsemen all together?

SFC VINCE: About 50 of them went over the hill, the lead ones got knocked down, and rolled back down the hill, then they got back up and none of them were injured.

BILL K: Were those, from that notch, were they Lal's or...?

SFC VINCE: I believe they were Lal's, because he was right here and we asked him [if] he called and he said no, that everybody is all right.

BILL K: You saw another set, that were also...were they from Ahmad Khan's? You saw another one—you say that one was the first one—but you said on another ridge line...?

SFC VINCE: The ones right here were Lal's.

BILL K: At the notch? [197]

SFC VINCE: Right. The horsemen charging through the debris cloud were right here at those targets, and those were Kamal's guys coming in along the road, those were Kamal's. Then Ahmad Khan pushed on to that highest hill you could see, kind of intermediate. Over there is where Ahmad Khan's guys pushed, pretty much flanking Baluch from the north.

BILL K: This really brings it together. I'm glad you mentioned that.

SFC VINCE: Right before it got dark on 5 November we observed a ZSU deeper, like west of Baluch, and we had no CAS to put on it, the horsemen took it. We watched through the SOFLAM, horsemen deeper in the battlefield charged down that ZSU.

BILL K: So it's right through, you say its west of Baluch, if I were to sight in it would be right through this target one...

SFC VINCE: Exactly, it was right through, see where the BDA is? Then go to the left, and those buildings are target two.

SFC VINCE: Go straight up from them in the terrain and you see the next big little hill with the white thing that's in a notch? That's where it is. I think that's where the road goes through. I think that's where it happened. I could look through the SOFLAM and know that the ZSU was going to chew us up. Its going to stop the horsemen, before we could even really coordinate and get some CAS the horsemen charged. You could look through the SOFLAM and see the bodies getting hit. I'm talking the guys on the ZSU. The AKs, the rounds hitting them. They were slumping over. You could see it through that SOFLAM. [224]

[End of Interview with CDR Ezattullah and SFC Vince.]

**TRANSCRIPT 15: HAJI CHARI AT THE TIGER 02C,
5 NOVEMBER 2001 POSITION, 10 DECEMBER 2002**

Introductory note: The following was recorded¹ on 10 Dec 02 at the Tiger 02C, 5 November position. The principal interviewee is Haji Chari (translator: Hafis). To help reconcile events described in the original transcript, John Frost, the interview videographer, used the original cassette transcript and reconciled it against the audio on the video and provided numerous corrections and observations on the sequence of events.

GEORGE: Where's the hill? Where's the village that we... Give us a couple minutes to get ready.

CDR HAJI CHARI: Taliban, when they were in fighting position we came back and we went down to this hole, and I put American friends on the horse and came this way. American friends were in the canyon. After that I took their stuff to that village and came back by horse and took American friends down this hole.

GEORGE: So we were going to walk the egress route looking down so that the horse trail is our path. Looking down into the ravine is where the Americans came out on foot. The equipment then came up the hill and into the house where we just started. From the OP we can see the village by Nann.

CDR HAJI CHARI: Over here, we were fighting, but some Taliban came from this way.

GEORGE: Taliban came from the north?

CDR HAJI CHARI: I'll explain again for you.

GEORGE: We were walking towards the Taliban bunker up on the hilltop. I don't know, it's about a half klick up from the village, overlooking the village. Bill describes this as a typical operation, typical geometry where the Taliban uses the village for resupply and logistics and support.

¹ The original logging is (10 DEC 02_OP-02C_5 NOV) SIDE A. Also includes reconciliation with John's video tape #7 and 8.

SFC Bill. First [thing] I want to know is, [asking Haji Chari] Where was his OP?

CDR HAJI CHARI: General Dostum had men in a nearby village and after that he ordered us to come here. Me with Mr. Paul, and other American, and Afghan friends came to seize this bunker. At that time Commander Lal, Commander Kamal, Hamrah, Ahmed Khan, Abdrehim Pal-Won, had a mission to attack the Taliban bunkers in this area. And I suggested to Mr. Paul we shouldn't go very far ahead because Taliban will attack us. Mr. Paul said, "No, we should go ahead and see who comes near." That time when we arrived here, Taliban retreated and divided themselves between this hill and the valley [points west]. [70]

In that time some of our soldiers went to that valley and chased by Taliban and they came back this way [points north]. At that time when we were here, the Taliban attacked from two sides. About 50 Taliban came straight from this way [points west], and some of them went to that side [points south-southeast] and blocked our way. That time, me, Mr. Paul with two other Americans and some of my soldiers were here with Commander Rasheed, and we killed 12 Taliban, but the Taliban didn't stop. They attacked on our forces. And we fought for more than an hour, and the Taliban blocked our way.

I suggested to General Dostum, as soon as possible you should open our way because we were finished. That time Ahmad Khan came and helped us and opened the way. Two soldiers of Ahmed Khan injured, wounded, and General Dostum ordered me to come back and retreat. That time we didn't have interpreters here and we didn't know each other's language and just we could point each other. I told Mr. Paul several times, "Mr Paul, let's go back!" and I ordered Commander Rasheed pull them to the valley [points east].

I put everything on my horse like laser telescope and other equipment. I went by horse on the way and fell down in the valley. And interestingly, that is stuff is very, very heavy and suddenly I fell down from my horse. I couldn't hold everything. And one of our soldiers came and helped me and we hauled that stuff up and hung it on the horse saddle like...you saw, Buzkashi. It was a very big box [the SOFLAM] and hung it on the saddle and went to that village, where we just parked our vehicles [points south-southeast].

I came back from that place [points south-southeast] and took my American friends and my soldiers. We went to another hill and we can see from this place [looks southeast], and after that we tried to give coordinates for bombarding. I got everybody which was with Taliban; they were Pakistanis, they were devoted people. We give coordinates to aircraft, and 3 cruise rockets came and explode, and they were 30 guys and 2 of them escaped and survived and they went over there, and 28 of them were killed here. We start again our movement and our

attack and me and Mr. Paul came to that valley, top of it, and that hill. You can see the top of it [points southeast]. After that Commander Lal, Commander Kamal, and Hamrah, Abdrehim Pal-Won came and attacked very strongly on Taliban forces and they captured this area and Taliban ran away and you can see that bunker very far from them, behind, they went behind that bunker [points west]. After that we seized this area and we went toward Chapchal, Chapchal is another place, and this area is called Char Su and it has different villages. Elvon [points south-southeast], and Boi-a-nan [points north at village below], and other villages and very big wide area called Char Su. Our distance between us and Taliban troops were about 30 minutes [172].

At that time, we killed 12 of them, but they didn't stop and they attacked on our force. He saw the valley called Dadel and he goes, one side of them it goes to Pol-e Baraq I mentioned Haji Habib near the bridge. Bridge is called Pol-en Teri and other side goes to Samagohn. After that village and village we call Shodion. If you have any questions?

GEORGE: Let's try to work this on the map [rustling map, can't hear sentences].

Here's the area Darreh-ye Dadel. We are here. This is the route down the ravine that, we believe, the guys went through in the valley? Your route with the horse is on the higher ground. Can we identify the route where that Taliban came from? We only show one route here and this is a guess. Can you show where the Taliban came from two directions? Either here or on the map can we catch that in?

CDR HAJI CHARI: They came and blocked our way. Another way is here and they attacked straight ahead.

GEORGE: Do they have any idea what route they used to come in to do that blocking, what route they used?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Taliban. The blocking place which the Taliban used was that way.

GEORGE: How did the corridor get cleared?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Commander Ahmed Khan came and attacked on the Taliban and opened the way.

GEORGE: Do we have an idea of his route? Here's the house, here's us.

CDR HAJI CHARI: Where we are now? If we are here, maybe they blocked here.

GEORGE: As we walk back, point it out and we'll get the coordinates. We could do that.

We still want to talk about the strike targets. From here calling in fire, can you locate some of the targets? Taliban targets that were bombed?

CDR HAJI CHARI: [points west] I think that is the Taliban compound or headquarters. After the aircraft bombard their compound everybody escaped and they dropped another big bomb. We were here and fighting and a bomb came and exploded and that bomb gave a lot of smoke. That side was also bombarded [points north-northeast].

GEORGE: Now, looking over the village.

CDR HAJI CHARI: Here were some caves here and...

GEORGE: Craters left from bombing caves on the village side of the OP.

CDR HAJI CHARI: Mr. Paul and other American friends went down this way and up the valley. [293]

CDR HAJI CHARI: When we were fighting it was like infantry fighting, not tanks, not trucks, not equipment, just our vehicles were horses and our weapons are AKs and PKs.

GEORGE: We heard Taliban used pickup trucks. Did they use horses as well?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Yes. I can show you the antiaircraft location.

GEORGE: Going back up the top of the hill.

CDR HAJI CHARI: There were two antiaircraft guns on the truck.

GEORGE: ZSUs?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Yes. One of them was on the top of the hill [points west]. You can see they look like bunkers. One of them was in the valley. Sometimes they came on the hill and fired. After that went back to the valley.

GEORGE: So it was mounted on a GAZ truck?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Yes. We call gauze, 66 GAZ, Russian. At that time there had been a lot of rumors and propaganda against the U.S. General Dostum held a big meeting and ordered us in 15 days we should capture and seize everywhere, otherwise all of us would be killed. Radios announcing a lot of rumors and making propaganda against U.S. They said the Americans killed a lot of innocent people in Afghanistan, and we know it's no true. Taliban try their best during bombarding. They left their bunkers and fighting positions and they went to the houses and your airplanes couldn't bombard houses. If General Dostum didn't decide steadfastly it was difficult to seize everywhere and to seize Taliban bunker and headquarters. Tali-

ban had very strong advisors like Pakistanis, Arabs, Chechens, Imus, Ajebs, and Yemeni. General Dostum said as soon as possible we should go and seize Mazar-e Sharif. He mentioned also after Mazar-e Sharif believed we could seize five provinces in the north and the whole Afghanistan should have freedom.

GEORGE: That does it very well. Thank you Haji.

CDR HAJI CHARI: Thank you very much that you came here and asked questions and you want to know where your American and Afghan friends were fighting against Al Qaeda and Taliban. I'm very sorry that we made you come here and the trouble. First time while Mr. Mark came here [390] we shake our brother's hand with Mr. Mark. We are still your friends, and your brothers, and we never forget. Please give our regards to everybody in the U.S. from Mr. George Bush to all the soldiers. We are General Dostum's soldiers. If you need us wherever and whenever and that we can go against terrorism and side-by-side can help you and fight against them.

GEORGE: We are going to wrap up with some panoramics. About 10 minutes while we take some photos and then we are done.

Paul Evans and the Americans ran off the OP shortly down the trail and then dropped off the side into the ravine. I marked it on my GPS as TRS Bollo 9, 3.9.

At that time there were some bunkers over here. Taliban came from this valley...[from the south].

CDR HAJI CHARI : ...and took the bunkers here and up that hill and they [Taliban] blocked our way. And after a while I called General Dostum. General Dostum ordered Commander Ahmed Khan and he came up and fought Taliban and Al Qaeda and almost he was injured at that time and 12 soldiers wounded he cut open the way and the Taliban escaped. That was here. [Sounds windy.]

GEORGE: Here is the blocking position; I'll mark as waypoint 10.

CDR HAJI CHARI: Mr. Paul doesn't know, I don't know English, and I'm drawing line on the ground. Taliban blocked the way and I don't know, I think he said I don't know in English. It's very interesting because we didn't have any interpreter. If we didn't know English that time, but without language we were very close friends together and our language was pointing.

GEORGE: It's Tuesday, 10 December. This concludes the track. The staff walk out to OP Tiger 02C on 5 November, an interview with CDR Haji.

[End of Interview with CDR Haji Chari.]

TRANSCRIPT 16: SFC VINCE AND CPT MARK AT KESHENDEH-YE BALA BAZAAR, 10 DECEMBER 2002.

Introductory note: This is an interview¹ of SFC Vince and CPT Mark at the Keshendeh-ye Bala Bazaar on 10 December 2002. The following is more of a gist than a transcript because the transcript and tapes were so fragmented.

SFC VINCE: We came in from the east; Mark and I believe three of Dostum's men. We came and then the trucks came down. Northern Alliance horsemen came in through there and basically in a full gallop went through the town. All the townspeople were out cheering us on and waving. We got to this point through the Bazaar here and waited for an hour. [477]

We linked up with Tiger 02C, Paul, Matt, and Mike. The Gators caught up with us. The Bazaar was totally crowded. They were just in here with Sarzur, the guys, and we went down to the river and got our horses fed and watered. We bought some horse feed and got the Gators up, and basically we went north while all the big leaders, Lal, Fakir, Dostum had a big meeting up on Omitak, back on the south side of the Keshendeh-ye.

So we continued and we were trying to keep up with the retreating Taliban at that point. Setting up kill boxes in front of us. Keshendeh-ye Pain is north of here, that was our next stop. We went there, no Taliban, all the townspeople were happy; the mayor said they had left earlier that day.

We stopped for the night at the big river crossing. At that point I got up and again pushed north. At that point they got with Dostum. At Shulgareh, they had a big meeting. After Shulgareh we stopped a little for the night. That's when Tiger 02C passed us up and went to the Tiangi Gap. The next morning they were calling air strikes on Taliban positions until we caught up to them just south of the gap.

We left Keshendeh-ye Bala that morning of 7 November, and we were setting up kill boxes, just trying to get as many of their trucks as we could, that seemed pretty successful. We received good BDA back from the pilots as far as vehicles—five or six vehicles killed. [524]

¹ Cassette 001 side B. Originally logged as (10 DEC 02_OP-02C_5 NOV) SIDE B.

I think it took about 20 minutes [from the hill east of Keshendeh-ye Bala to the Bazaar]. It's a chance of a lifetime. How many times do you get to be first in a town that just got liberated on horseback at a full gallop? I'm just sticking to Mark and these guys. If I were a horse I would want to run, too.

GEORGE: Give me an idea on time. You went down from here to Bazaar, down to the river to feed and water the horse and get some chow or something. Then how long were you here before you headed back north again?

SFC VINCE: We stayed here about 2 hours. We got here about 9 or 10 and left out about lunchtime. We had the Gators and the horses, and the horses were walked all the way to north of Pole Baraq.

When we first came in town there were some people there and just like it was today. Kids and people are in the streets, in spots. When we got here they came up. Everybody in town wanted to see the Americans and Dostum's guys and they were all happy. It was neat!

Dostum's guys were with Lal's guys. I said Dostum's but it actually Lal's group. We were traveling with Lal's group at that point. Dostum came through just after us and came up to the mountain up there to talk with a group. They wanted a big meeting before they started heading north to set up. They discussed ground fires between Atta, because there was some conflict there, they wanted to ensure there was no fratricide among those guys. They left later on that day. Probably about a couple hours. They caught up to us at the river crossing. Dostum and about 300 men. They looked back and [564] we were looking back and just being impressed by the sheer number of forces coming at us. Dostum was toward the front and center, impressive. Then he kept going after that. We stopped just north of Pole Baraq and the next day we caught up to him, where he was staying, and we linked up in Shulgareh. It was Mark, myself, Bob, and Will and Steve at that point. Tiger 02C was still behind us and so was Tiger 02A and Tiger 02D. Except the next day, we pushed towards Shulgareh, got about 10 klicks past Shulgareh, and that's when Tiger 02A and Tiger 02D caught up with us after that big long walk down the mountain all the way up to Shulgareh.

During that night sometime, Tiger 02C moved by truck past us to the Tiangi Gap where they were put on horseback. Then they went up to the mountains looking down on Mazar-e Sharif. Basically...they went to call CAS starting the next morning.

We caught up with GEN Dostum about mid-morning that day [9 November]; they had a meeting in that house just south of Tiangi Gap. I stayed behind [at the house south of Tiangi—GEN Dostum's CP] to cover down on a resupply drop. Tiger 02A went east, and now Captain

Mark, and we all combined with Tiger 02D that pushed up on the left-hand side. They seemed to have pretty good converging views to tell what was left of the Taliban positions.

Then at the night, we did the resupply drop and the next morning got into the Gators and rode into Mazar. [622]

[CPT Mark at the Bazaar in Keshendeh-ye Bala.]

CPT MARK: The guys we rode all the way from Dehi with to here. This was the gallop down. What Bill is getting, is that all the commanders left and went up this ridge, this little spur right here, up on top of the mountain somewhere to have a meeting with General Dostum, and it left all these 2,500 horsemen in here without the main commanders. About 100 commanders went up the hill.

Yes. [These are Atta's guys and Mohaqiq's guys and] Lal's, Kamal's, Ahmad Khan's, everybody, all the main brigade or large unit commanders were here. All those main names of people we knew as commanders left. About 100 of them rode up the hill to have this big meeting with Dostum, because we just came so far so fast to make plans to moving on to Shulgareh. That left all the horsemen here exhausted. They were lying around, they were partying, slapping high fives, you know, doing the squat, laying on the blankets, sleeping and eating, feeding the horses and stuff. Nobody was out on security. Nobody was up on the hill out on the road here or anything. I called LTC Max and he didn't know where Dostum was. They had already split. LTC Max was somewhere on the south side of the Darya Suf. I don't exactly where. Dostum had already ridden from him, and he didn't [30] know where Dostum was at, and had no way to contact him. We did use the lower level commanders that we had here, or the guys here that had radios, to call Dostum to find out where he was. LTC Max gave permission to push on forward if we took Afghan security guys with us. We called Dostum and tried to get some security guys, couldn't get him on the radio and nobody down here, none of the commanders would make a decision that were here, because no one of authority was here to send troops with us as security force. Garful, our bodyguard, managed to get a couple of guys to go with us. So we went with Garful and two other Afghans, myself, and Will on horseback. Vince, and Steve, and Bob, and Shofee, the four of them were riding on the two Gators. We pushed out from here and became the lead element of the entire army that we had here and would remain that way until we got the river north of Pole Baraq. Then all the horsemen caught up to us late that afternoon just before dark, maybe an hour before dark.

We were trying to coordinate air support and open and close kill boxes. We, Garful and I and Afghans, would just push forward and kind of clear a corner, leave the Gators back in over-watch and just kept pushing corner to corner through these twisting roads up here through the mountains. Nobody really knew where the Taliban was really at or how close they really were.

We weren't getting any resistance. As we started to ride in to the small villages, we'd send Garful up ahead and maybe one other Afghan, and I would stay back with the other Afghan and cover him while they rode on into town. Then we kept the Gators back from our little four-man element. The locals [59] would come out and tell us the Taliban just fled, hours before. We would just ride on through and keep pushing that way.

We're at the area north of Pole Baraq near the area we crossed the river.

[End of Interview with CPT Mark and SFC Vince.]

TRANSCRIPT 17: CDR HAJI HABIB AND SFC BILL AT KESHENDEH-YE BALA, 10 DECEMBER 2002

Introductory note. We are in the village of Keshendeh-ye Bala. At the beginning we took video of Omitak and Katch Gardan where SFC Bill was located. The translation starts with the interview¹ of Haji Habib who was with SFC Bill, Tiger 02A, on top of Omitak. The Translator was Hafis. We are joined by one of the villagers.

CDR HAJI HABIB: Eight or nine enemy soldiers were taken out in that area.

BILL K: I heard they received word that the people had sent a message to them, "Come on down, we will surrender," and so forth.

CDR HAJI HABIB: Right. They had the message going up to their post, "Come on down, we will surrender." Once they got the message they did come down thinking that it was friendly but they fought back with them. They retreated and afterward the aircraft came, bombarded them the next day.

BILL K: Was this a deception or a miscommunication?

CDR HAJI HABIB: Yeah, they were really close into town when they got fired up against them.

BILL K: Was there any indication that the people had weapons?

CDR HAJI HABIB: Our people were visible when they walked into the city.

BILL K: What I'm trying to determine is whether it was a deception and they were trying to ambush them.

CDR HAJI HABIB: Okay, once they walked into town they pretended that villagers are surrounded, you know, so that they've given up. And then they figured that, you know, they still haven't surrendered and they fought back and they retreated.

BILL K: Did you lose any people?

CDR HAJI HABIB/HAFIS: We had one injury.

¹ This is from DV tapes 18.

BILL K: How long was it until you called in the bombs?

CDR HAJI HABIB/HAFIS: Within an hour we had air support, we were outside the village and then the aircraft came bombarded the village.

BILL K: How many bombs did you call in on the village?

SFC BILL: Five bombs, but...we didn't go after the village. We bombed the bunker again, which is where their reinforcements were. We had to get the bunker before we could get off the mountain. And it was the next day...I don't know about the next hour, we bombed it that night, but they took it the next morning. He told me that they had lost it...the villagers had lied to them and that the next morning before we could come off the mountain because we had to bomb that village 'cause that was the only way we could get off the mountain.

So the next day we bombed that bunker, and he went in and took it again and then we came off the mountain.

BILL K: So you bombed the bunker, the day before, on 5 November?

SFC BILL: That's the mensurated coordinates [the coordinates provided by the Predator had to be mensurated at the CAOC before they dropped bombs to preclude hitting the nearby village].

BILL K: That's when he charged the bunker with his forces. The next day they went down to Katch Gardan, and the villagers lied to you about surrendering?

SFC BILL: That night they hit the bunker. You've got the bunker and the village. The bunker...we pretty well leveled that thing, but I guess we pulled back to the CP while his people went down there and did that, and that's where we're told, you know, we took it but then they fake surrendered. So the next night, or that next morning, we went back down there again and bombed the bunker.

[Note: SFC Bill talking about CDR Haji Habib. He was the commander in the CP but he wasn't the commander leading the charge.]

SFC BILL: So the next day he [Haji Habib] took it and we went down into the valley.

BILL K: What happened in this area.

SFC BILL: He would probably remember the tank that was fired on us every night. Do you [Haji Habib] know where that tank was located?

CDR HAJI HABIB: The area is called Bakatel. Where the tank fired up on the...One tank and heavy artillery was down there, and the one tank, it was up here.

SFC BILL: There was another one right up there. It was one tank that would move back and forth.

CDR HAJI HABIB/HAFIS: It used to fire on the Omitak area.

SFC BILL: It's the one you can see on the way out [we got a photo of the tank], it's up on the side of the hill. There are a lot of bunkers on this side. A lot of the Taliban bunkers are on the mountainside.

BILL K: How far was it firing?

SFC BILL: A long way. You'll see it on top of the hill.

CDR HAJI HABIB: Combination of both people and tanks go back and forth [on top of the hill].

A trench [there were also trench lines on top of the hill].

SFC BILL: They [bunkers] surrounded this area. Most of them that I saw, the biggest ones [bunkers]...see where the road, the water kind of washes up into there? On this side of it, they were huge. All around there. On the other side of the...they surrounded Keshendeh-ye Bala. The Taliban surrounded Keshendeh-ye Bala .

CDR HAJI HABIB: As you can see that mountainside—they were hit by aircraft. This area right in front of us was the CP for the Taliban.

SFC BILL: I don't know if he was one of the guys that would come up; ask if he's the one that used to walk up to Omitak.

They would tell us that there were tanks inside the trees.

KAMAL: He said he had a lot of people; they have communications back and forth. He was the Chief Commissioner. [We are joined by a villager.]

BILL K: The Taliban in this area—were they Afghans or foreigners?

CDR HAJI HABIB: Chechens...it was mix.

BILL K: Were there more foreigners than Afghans?

CDR HAJI HABIB: More Afghans.

BILL K: Were there a lot of surrenders in this area?

CDR HAJI HABIB: Foreigners did not surrender, but the local people who live in this area, they surrendered.

BILL K: Did a lot surrender before 5 November or after?

CDR HAJI HABIB: They surrendered before and afterward. When the aircraft took this area they surrendered a lot more.

BILL K: When did this happen?

CDR HAJI HABIB: Before they entered Keshendeh they had bombed this area.

BILL K: Did they hit that house before or after 5 November?

SFC BILL: We hit this house long before 5 November.

CDR HAJI HABIB: They hit this area and then after a day later they came to this area.

[End of interview at Keshendeh-ye Bala. Note: We video the area 27:00 to 29:00. It's 200 degrees to Omitak. 145 degrees and 155 degrees to the hill they were bombing in the same direction as the Taliban CP. Path up the valley down the ridge line. At 350 degrees is the valley where some of the villagers were killed. At 295 degrees are the bunkers and tanks. These can be plotted from our location at Keshendeh-ye Bala. Next stop is at the tank that moved across the side of the hill (29:35). See Dave's logs on Tape 18 to fill in gaps between Keshendeh-ye Bala and Tiangi. The next stops are at Keshendeh-ye Pain, 35:33, where Mark crossed the river with the Gators; GEN Dostum at 37:11; at Dostum's CP near Shulgareh, Kamal is the interpreter; at 40:37 Mark asks if we can pull into Tashkenda. Video of house where they had their meeting on 7 November. End of DV tape 18.]

TRANSCRIPT 18: SFC BILL AT KESHENDEH-YE BALA, CPT MARK AND SFC VINCE AT TIANGI, 10 DECEMBER 2002

Introductory note: This is a good transcript¹ of Keshendeh-ye Bala and Tiangi. Most of the input is from SFC Bill and CPT Mark.

SFC Bill discusses events of 5–7 November as he and 02A attempt to get off Omitak mountain to link up with GEN Dostum's forces and Tiger 02 as they start to move through the Darya Suf to Shulgareh.

SFC BILL: They tell me they have to still be careful, so they go down and finish up the bunker. Then they rolled down into the city, the little village down below, and that's where they got run out. The next morning we go back down there. That night Haji Habib got into a yelling match about the village; that's another story.

BILL K: What, go ahead?

SFC BILL: It's all in aggravation, as in the village, he kept telling us to don't mess with it, and [the village] tries to kill us, we spent all this time trying to get off the mountain. Wasted all these bombs and everything else to go take this village and his men go down get overrun and get pushed back out.

BILL K: This is the one that he didn't want you to hit?

SFC BILL: This is another one. This is the Katch Garden area. There is a whole lot of encrypted stuff going on here. I was getting kind of aggravated. I see the village as evil. The village has gone bad. It's a safety hazard to Americans, and all of us are going to go by there. So he begs, and pleads, don't blow up the village. So I wasn't going to. I dropped a couple of bombs on the bunker. The same coordinates [used the day before with the Predator and the B-52] were not near as accurate. I fed him the same exact coordinate. The B-52 flight path affects the accuracy. They are flying that exact angle, altitude, everything. The bomb will miss by 50 meters. If you have elevation change...

¹ Originally logged as 004 (KAMAL TIANGI PASS) SIDE A.

BILL K: When you dropped it a second time, this is what you're talking about yesterday, that they had gone down, they repelled, and now you have to hit the same bunker again? Is that correct?

SFC BILL: Yes. They go back down in the village. The second day was more of a show of, "Don't mess with us again." They should probably surrender, so they did. They surrendered and then the next morning is when we roll off the mountain. 5 November is when we almost bombed Dostum's guys. They came into Keshendeh-ye Bala so quick. They rolled onto a bunker that was a Taliban bunker. We had a B-52 flying from west to east and gave him five different coordinates, targets to bomb. He was bombing them sequentially. He was hitting the number one target when Andy sent down a piece of paper saying, "Don't bomb." We ended up going on the radio and as they are dropping bombs, don't drop bombs on this target. The guys that were on this marker, which we thought was the Taliban running up there because they have done that before, to check out the damage. It was actually Dostum's guys up there. They called Andy, and they told Andy don't bomb us. We almost bombed them the time before, we missed. [The] B-52 was coming back around for another drop again; we're giving them better coordinates. Andy couldn't get a hold of us on a radio, so they set out a runner out to us. We ended up stopping the B-52 while it was enroute.

BILL K: It looks like a lot of stuff has been cleaned up [SFC Bill was speaking of the debris/BDA that was removed since he was there in 2001].

SFC BILL: They're very quick.

BILL K: I'm absolutely amazed. Even bunker systems and stuff. It seems like they are simply destroying stuff and covering it over. All the plowing done in the fields simply amazes me.

SFC BILL: Ward saw this one bunker that they are filling in up there. I think they are trying to say the war is over.

BILL K: Yes. I think that makes sense. This disarmament thing...we didn't hear very much during Eid, did you hear much gunfire during Eid? [This refers to the Feast of Eid—at the end celebratory fire is common.]

SFC BILL: This time. No.

[Note: It's 11 December and we are now at Tiangi. Tiangi photo one is taken first to the south...(Bill K's tape, describing photos taken at Tiangi), and then to the west, then to the north, where the bridge had been dropped. The new bridge had been put in since then. Mark's

been here. Then to the east, a cave on the east side. Then another shot more to the south, more on the southeast side. Tiangi photo two is taken south of the pass.] [68]

BILL K [talking to CPT Mark]: So you were back there, and you were looking up towards the pass, what did you see? About what time of day was it?

[It's windy and the microphone is picking it up.]

CPT MARK: [This links with Tape 19, 11 Dec 02 1:48:11AM]. I'm going to guess it was around 1400–1500 in the afternoon. My Tiger 02A element left and had enough time to ride into there [Tiangi]; I thought they were killed. What it looked like was a big series of explosions and that whole area just erupted through there. There were clouds, dirt, and debris, and everything else. I thought for sure that our three guys from our team had been killed. I knew that General Dostum had come here very close to it as well as LTC Max. We got together as fast as we could back here. Pete and I rode on horseback up here with Fakir on horseback. Shafi, one of our translators, and then Will, Chad, and Steve T. We had to leave the second Gator with Vince, Bob, and Steve B. to get a resupply drop that night.

When I had that meeting, it was his last command post there, we were going to ride up here and cross the river and go around to the east side. He wanted to go where Paul's team was, where Tiger 02C was located, high on their OP on the east side of the pass. He wanted to go there, so that was the plan all along. To the best of my knowledge he did not go anywhere on the west side. He [GEN Dostum] was always on the east, so as we were getting ready to ride out [to go with GEN Dostum after the meeting at the CP south of Tiangi], LTC Max showed up and said he was going to go. We gave them horses and then we had to find some more horses. We were specifically up here, and the actions that went on I can't talk to you [about] because I wasn't there. Bill will give you a much better idea of where precisely the volley hit.

Riding up here from where you can see this little cave up here to the left, it's kind of burnt; from there up to the point, where the rocks are, there were hundreds of soldiers up there taking shelter up in the rocks from the volley. As they saw us coming on horseback, Pete and I, and the Gator, they came down and lined both sides of the road, for several hundred meters there. Some on foot, some of them on horseback. As we rode through on horseback, they rode behind us and followed us through the pass on up, and all the way in until we stopped to get a look to see what was going on in the pass. It was just chaos. [106] There were destroyed vehicles, blown up horses and men in there. The Taliban fired ZSU 23-2s that ricocheted off the walls, it wasn't effective, but morale was coming down. Pete and I were amazed. We found CDR Kamal in that position in the rocks near where the critical position was at. They didn't

want us to go any further forward. We did. Steve T called in an air strike to the far side to suppress and we pushed through to the other side of the pass where the mines were. While that was going on, that's when Tiger 02C, Paul's team, had been up high. They were calling CAS on the far side on Taliban defensive position so we were over on the far side of the pass. When we went through here, we only called CAS one time. Steve, from my element, stopped halfway through the pass, Steve called in a target.

CPT MARK: We were held up that night before going up to Mazar.

BILL K: The night before? That was the night of 8 November. The night of the 8th?

CPT MARK: It was the night Mazar fell.

BILL K: It was 9 November.

SFC VINCE: The night of 9 November Mazar-e Sharif fell. From that evening, a horse stepped on a mine up the road here. They brought the guy back to here. The horse is cut in two. The guy's left leg is broken. The guy's ankle is almost all blown off. From there they shipped him back to Shulgareh. Then at night we had no MREs left, very little water, little fuel. We had to stop and get the resupply. The DZ was right off here to the rear about 180 degrees, and it was about 2:00 a.m.

BILL K: Where?

CPT Mark: See this big open area? Right back here?

BILL K: To the west then.

SFC VINCE: We were staying in the vegetable storage room across here. Dostum stayed in a room right here. We walked out and had to go to Dostum's room, about 2:00 a.m. He was still awake. He had found out that Mazar fell that night. Dostum's men were all happy. We walked out to the DZ and marked it, we always marked them with IR strobes. Saw the C-130 coming and you could see a silhouette and you hear it. I call up: "I got your visual strobe on." [145] He dropped it about 600–800 meters that way on the other side of the river. I just remember thinking, this going to be, there was three bundles out there, it's going to be an easy resupply, pack up the bundles and put them on Gators. Park and go back to bed again until 5 or 6 a.m. No one slept that night. We had one bundle on the riverbank and basically it was mostly in the trees and to the right [SFC Vince pointing], it was kind of like rice patties, irrigated fields. They were in there and one was down on the river's embankment. We set up horse feed, fuel, water, MREs, the real heavy stuff. We had about three or four dusters to give us a hand, so I gave them a couple cases of MREs.

BILL K: How long did it take you to cross the river to pick that stuff up?

SFC VINCE: It wasn't across the river; it was on the other side of the street here. On this side of the river, you can see that river is actually pretty far. It goes down, it has rice, it has fields, it goes down a bluff about 15–20 feet, and there are more fields up to the river.

BILL K: We are talking about the night or the day before when they stayed in the house here with the LZ off to the west, the pass off to the north. Vince had stayed with General Dostum in this house here and it was the night that Mazar fell.

CPT MARK: From this vantage point here in the middle of the pass, we are looking at the scene as it came through here later in the afternoon of 9 November. It was chaotic; the Northern Alliance, troops mainly from Kamal's forces, were hiding, taking shelter from the artillery up here in the rocks. There were destroyed vehicles on the road from where the bridge way-point was, forward to the far side of the pass. I remember there was a bus that was right on the road that was actually blocking the road. There were some destroyed ZSU trucks in the road that had been burned. Some of them had been blown off the road down towards the water. There was a destroyed tank, I believe, that was blocking the road further to the north. It was just chaotic. There was still some firing going on from a ZSU-23 somewhere, firing down in this direction into the canyon. You could hear machine gun fire from down there that was probably friendly forces trying to fire back towards them.

On the far side of the pass, where we had already been, I showed you where the horses were blown up, where the mines were [185], where the mines were placed in the pass. About six of the horsemen had been killed by mines from the horses stepping on mines; it was quite chaotic. The horsemen had tried to attempt to cross the river. There were mines in the river crossing down there. There were dead horses in the water and troops. There were casualties. Dostum says he had about 30 troops that were killed here all together. I know all that afternoon and morning before we came up into here ourselves, Steve had been treating wounded that had been brought back out of the pass by their buddies back to that command post. I know Steve conducted several amputations back there. The road from here, we rode on forward and actually found Kamal up in these rocks taking some shelter down there. He was right up near the decisive point in the engagement where they had been stopped because of the mines. He was very upset that I was up this close and that Pete and I rode down there on horseback. We left the Gators back here at this point to begin working up a call for fire mission to put CAS on the far side of the pass to support a final push through. Pete and I road down on horseback to find Kamal, and, like I said, we found him up there on the left. He was extremely upset that

we were that close in the fight and wanted us to turn back. We had all these troops with us and we came back and got the guys with Gators.

TSgt Steve T called in that CAS on the far side, I don't remember what time that was, but it was probably an hour before dark. We rode through, and the local commander up there by that building, that's on that north side of the pass, he got very upset that we were right there because that's where the mines were. They were still firing. There was some PK gunfire being exchanged back and forth. From the left of that building that we are talking about, up on the west side of the road, Paul's team evidently put a bomb right on there, because there were probably 30 bodies that had been killed. The bodies were thrown all over that little hill there. Once we got the Americans with the Gators on horseback right to that point and got into an argument—basically that local commander wanted us to go back. We kind of moved off to the side of the road and all these horsemen that were with Kamal, and Kamal himself, just kind of went on past us on the road and got them through the pass and kept on going. Then it was dark.

BILL K: I'm going to take some photos. It's going to be waypoint Tiangi Pass photo No. 3. [226]

CPT MARK: We were in that position so they could shoot into this. Horses started right here in front of the truck, through here, around the corner, where it makes that other little loop.

BILL K: You said down here is where they crossed?

CPT MARK: Yes. They attempted to cross there. I don't know how successful they were, but by the time we got in here, there were probably two or three horses that were blown up and lying in the water down there. You could see bodies lying on the near side and the on the far side in here.

BILL K: Dostum said he tried to cross down through there. He had made it clear up to this point, and he thought he was going to drown in the river.

[End of Interview with SFC Bill, CPT Mark and SFC Vince.]

TRANSCRIPT 19: GEN DOSTUM AT TASHKENDA AND NORTH OF TIANGI, 10 DECEMBER 2002

Introductory note: This appears to be an interpretation¹ and transcription.

GEN DOSTUM [DV tape 18; time 39:00]: I came to Omitak, and then we went to Shulgareh. We got together and went down, and we moved out at around two in the morning. The horses began to get tired, Mark's cars [Gators] got stuck in the water. We rested here at Tashkenda. In the morning, we all started moving toward Bazaar-Shulgareh for a meeting with Mark and other commanders. I split up my men and told them to head towards the right of the river. I wanted them to get to the highest point of Mazar...Mazar-e-Sharif, Khodowar [phonetic], Gharee [phonetic], Kafer Qalah, this way. Some of the horsemen came like this, and rode up. We then had infantry pass through this valley, and the horsemen traversed the Alburz mountains.

I went with them and Mark's men to help coordinate the air strikes and oversee tactical operations. When we were finally situated, we could finally see Mazar-e-Sharif. Here we had to climb. Then we started moving; all the while, the horses and men were becoming fatigued. We searched the area, and it seemed calm, there was no fighting, so I myself moved out around one in the morning. Two a.m., we arrived and I gathered the men. They were exhausted! I sent them to climb here, and the other group of 200, 300 fighters advanced towards...I sent another group to the valley where the fighting had started. When Omitak fell, I told the Americans that I can capture Mazar-e-Sharif in two nights. The Americans contacted Washington, D.C. They told them that General Dostum would be able to capture Mazar-e-Sharif in two days. They were very happy, and told me to go ahead with this strategy. It was a very long distance, and the Taliban were retreating. The Taliban were not fighting.

[General Dostum switches to Pashtu.]

GEN DOSTUM: We seized Kafer Qalah and the Alvoraz mountains. From these vantage points we could see Mazar. The Taliban were ready to attack with four BM-21s, rockets and

¹ End of tape DV 18 and beginning of DV 19. This is an interpretation and transcription contracted by MaGuire-Reeder.

began to fire upon us. The Taliban group was comprised of Pakistani, Punjabi... I decided to leave for Kafer Qalah with Mark and some of my American friends. Everyone called me and asked me to come back. I told them, listen, come back and attack, we should not go back, we should advance ahead. Mr. Mark went ahead, with Commander Lal behind him along with 30 horsemen advancing towards Kode Barq. There were explosions, mines that the Taliban planted, they had timers. Six of Commander Lal's men were dead because of this act. After this, the fighting ended, and we seized Mazar.

We will see this area tomorrow. [DV tape 19; time 08:56] I was in Kafer Qalah and listened to radio transmission from the Taliban. They requested all their commanders for a meeting. I called my American friends and asked them for air strikes in that area. I knew that there was no meeting; it was a ploy for escape. When the bombings began, they had over 600 guns, vehicles, and they could have easily escaped.

Commander Lal phoned me from Turkmenistan consulate. I notified all the major broadcast outlets, and told them that I could seize Mazar-e-Sharif in two days.

Immediately, there was a gorge, in a river. I was afraid because I could not swim. Lucky for me, my horse was very strong, and we got through.

After we seized Mazar, we received information that Pakistanis were inside the Sultan Razia School, they came for Jihad. Some of my men, passed this school and were fired upon. I sent more troops and bombarded the area in order to drive them out.

We are not just fighting against Al Qaeda or Taliban, but other factions or groups as well. Big countries had a significant stake in this country; Afghanistan, like Iran and others. Mr. Mark knew these areas were our rivals.

I will answer more of your questions tomorrow, when we visit the areas I spoke of today. There will be other cabinet ministers there as well. They understand that the United States is serious about Afghanistan.

I don't want to mention his name, but when I asked for his help against the Taliban, he refused. I said the Americans are supporting me, for 20 days, I beat and toppled the Taliban. If the Americans supported me... [End of Field interview with General Dostum.²]

² Interview with CDR Fakir moved to 4.

TRANSCRIPT 20: GEN DOSTUM IN SHULGAREH AND TIANGI 10 DECEMBER 2002

Introductory note: This is an interview¹ with GEN Dostum enroute to the Tiangi and north of the Tiangi on 10 December 2002.

GEN DOSTUM: Well, we want to leave Omitak. I called my American friends and told them to send a message to Washington D.C., "We can seize Mazar-e Sharif in two days." And said, "Okay, I'll send the message." He was surprised about my prediction and he sent a message and Washington, D.C., General Dostum says he can capture Mazar-e Sharif in 2 days from Omitak until Mazar-e Sharif. It's a long distance.

I knew about the Taliban situation and morale because I had my radio contacts in the Shulgareh on the condition of the Taliban. And I asked every time, "How is your morale? How is your situation?" and I receive message that they are very worried, they are disappointed and some of them have one shoe and one leg and no food, and another group who don't have any shoes and their head is nicked and doesn't have hat like turban. And I got it announced we can seize Mazar-e Sharif in 2 days.

BILL K: Who did you tell this to?

GEN DOSTUM: I have a Turkish friend in Turkey and one night he called me and every day he called me and told me, "General, don't announce your situation, and don't say we can seize Mazar-e Sharif in 2 days." After you seize Mazar-e Sharif, you can announce your situation. [Laughs] And to say, "Okay, I never announce if I can't do anything."

And I start moving toward Shulgareh and I called everyone by radio and there was no answer. And I arrived in Shulgareh and saw everyone is gone or asleep. They were tired. All the horses were tired. I called Commander Lal and others. They were behind me. I went in front of them and I called and they came immediately. And we made other groups to go toward Al-

¹ This transcript was originally completed by Kerrie from Cassette 005 (Tiangi); this transcript was completed by a linguist contracted by MaGuire-Reeder. This is an original interpretation/transcription of GEN Dostum.

borz, which is a high mountain, and it is where in the East Alkaprakalef [phonetic], another mountain, and we want to seize them.

While we seized Kafer Qalah and Alborz Mountains, and we go to see Mazar-e Sharif and Dehdadi, the airfield in Dehdadi. And Taliban attacked. And they had a lot of BM-21 strikes and there were some Pakistanis and IMU Juma Namangani. And they fired four BM 21 rocket [volleys] against us again. And everybody was scared. And I had just left for Kafer Qalah with Mr. Mark American's friends. And everybody called me, "General Dostum please come back. General Dostum, please come back."

I told them, "Okay. I can see Mazar-e Sharif from this area and this mountain. I said we shouldn't go back. We should go ahead."

And Mr. Mark was on the road and I sent Commander Lal behind with 30 horses behind troops toward Kode Barq. I saw and heard an explosion and the Taliban, I think, put some had placed mines. Commander Lal's six soldiers with horses and there was nothing left from them. But after that there was no fighting and we went to seize Mazar-e Sharif.

You can see that area tomorrow and Commander Kamal.

At that time I was in Kafer Qalah and I heard the Taliban radio contact. They called everybody—every commanders, "Please come, we have a meeting." And I said to my American friends, "They don't have a meeting. They want to escape. Please call some jets and aircraft to bombard them."

And jets came. They had more than 600 trucks and they caught them from Mazar-e Sharif and I heard a new contact that said, "What about new guests?" They have some new guests from Pakistan and they said, "Okay. Leave them. Leave them and escape yourself."

We were Bombing them near Konduz and near Erganeck [phonetic]. And another train [convoy] of them near Ibok [phonetic]. And I saw by my telescope there were lights, and then a lot of them didn't use light at night. After a while Commander Lal called me and said, "I am in Turkmenistan Consulate. There is no problem in Mazar e Sharif." After that I started moving and to call BBC, CNN, and Turkey and it became true that I could seize Mazar e Sharif in 2 days.

As we moved toward Mazar-e Sharif, someone said, "This is the way to go." One horse crossed the river and another crossed the river. Immediately I was in a very deep place. And I was up to here [armpits] in the river. I couldn't swim. And I thought, "After our victory...I

will die here.” Fortunately, my horse was very strong and he could swim across the river. After that we seized Mazar-e Sharif.

There is a school called Sultan Razia School, and there are new guests [foreign fighters] that came from Pakistan for Jihad in Mazar-e Sharif. And it took several days before we knew about them. They were in Sultan Razia School in Mazar e Sharif. And while some soldiers tried to cross the road, the Pakistanis fired against them. There were troops of the Taliban in the school. The Pakistanis came to help Taliban in Mazar-e Sharif, and after bombarding them we seized them.

Mr. Marks remembers, I mentioned that time we once could make a plan, a fighting plan, against our enemies, and I told, “We are not fighting just against Al Qaeda and Taliban, we have other enemies too.” They wanted to block our way. They don’t want to help us in fighting and some big countries like Iran and others, they wanted to—fighting was a long time in Afghanistan, and I thought if we can’t be important place in the North, the fighting should last a long time. And maybe Mr. Marks remembers that we don’t say enemies, they are our rivals.

They didn’t want to help us during fighting, and I captured some Taliban. They were again from the first line to fight against me in the North. And there was no fighting in Tefford [phonetic] and other areas of other friends. You know, and just they wanted to [fight] against us.

[End of Interview.]

**TRANSCRIPT 21: GEN DOSTUM AT TASHKENDA, AT HIS CP
SOUTH OF THE TIANGI AND THEN NORTH OF THE TIANGI,
10 DECEMBER 2002**

Introductory note: We are initially located at a house in Tashkenda where GEN Dostum spent the night of 7 November. Kamal is initially the interpreter. We switch from third person to first person as I talk to Kamal and then later talk to General Dostum. We then travelled through Shulgareh to GEN Dostum's CP south of the Tiangi. Esam is the interpreter.¹

KAMAL: The General was saying that he was at Omitak Mountain, from there he came down to Keshendeh-ya Bala, Keshendeh-ya Pain. He arrived real late in the evening and stayed in this house [Tashkenda] where there were no windows. Right now you can see they set up windows. The man he had talked to contacted Washington to tell them that we were going to take over Mazar-e in 2 days. That was reason that GEN Dostum was rushing all the way through from Oimatan to Keshendeh, and then to Mazar. From here, the next morning, they had a meeting around 7:00 and then left this area and went through Shulgareh to Tiangi and arrived around 1:00 PM. [CT5A 300; DV tape 18, time 37:47] The next morning they took over Mazar. After 2 days passed, they have taken over Mazar.

BILL K [DV tape 18, time 38:16 and Kamal is the interpreter]: Where was he when he made the commitment that in 2 days he would take Mazar?

ESAM: He was in. Omitak.

BILL K: He had a long way to go.

ESAM: Yes. That's why he had to rush. [CT5A 318]

BILL K: Who did he tell that to?

ESAM: Several of his guys and there was a Colonel that told him he was going to capture all the way to Mazar in 2 days.

BILL K: He told the U.S. forces that?

¹ Starts at C5A1, feet 288 or DV tape 18; time 37:09 with GEN Dostum at Tashkenda.

KAMAL [DV tape 18, time 39:30]: He said it could be the OGA, he doesn't remember. He's saying that nobody could believe that he came this far in 2 days. One of his best friends from the Turkish Parliament had told him to capture the area first and then give the speech about capturing Mazar.

[DV tape 18, time 40:00, we are at Tashkenda. We move to GEN Dostum's CP south of the Tiangi and now Esam is the interpreter and DV tape 19 starts.]

BILL K: Where did he have the meeting?

GEN DOSTUM [DV tape 19, 0:0]: Where the meeting took place from there on we proceeded to the Tiangi. Imagine from here to Tiangi on horseback. There was some resistance on the way but we made it all the way.

[CT 005A, 352] You saw the house on the way back? So we held the last meeting up there. As I told you, all the commanders were overtired and quite exhausted and left behind. So I gather them all and had the meeting and launched them to three directions [DV tape 19, time 01:43:27]. I sent some of them through this way [GEN Dostum is pointing to the west and then up to the Tiangi as if some are going over the mountains to the west of the Tiangi]. Which is very difficult to climb, such a mountain. This high [he is now pointing to the east side of the Tiangi to the Kafer Qalah] is called Kafer Qalah. In ancient time it seems to be sort of military headquarters, still you can find some antique things. I sent 1,000 of my troops down there [pointing to the east of the Tiangi]. Lal Commander, Kamal Commander, and some other guys advanced through the valley. Mark and another colonel [Max] were just at the entrance of this Tiangi, but I was positioned up there on the Kafer Qalah.

We launched the first attack at 8:00 a.m., and we could control the whole canyon, but as I had told you they had launched a counterattack and they fired lots of heavy weapons like the BM-21 so we had to step back. They pushed us back to our previous positions. One-hundred sixty BM-21 bullets at the same time. You can imagine what sort of explosion it made. Not only along through this canyon but on our positions over there, too [east side]. All the guys that surrendered to me were local Taliban. They surrendered and joined me. [CT5A 407; DV tape 19, time 04:40]

They had escaped, they were scattered. Again I brought them together, particularly those guys that they had an active role in the fighting in the Chapchal and the other areas up there. They had more experience than them, so I re-attacked, through this canyon and from that side [pointing east]. From the other side of this mountain [CT 005A, 413].

Some of my commanders, because I was positioned there and it was a good target for the enemy artillery, insisted that I move down off that [the Kafer Qalah]. But I told them, "No." I can see Mazar from here and we want to capture Mazar, why should we give up at the end. So this is not only the reputation of the resistance, but meanwhile the reputation of the Special Forces. If we step back we will give morality to the enemy so I said we should capture Mazar tonight even if we die.

At the same time I was on the top, there was heavy fighting going on alongside this canyon. Just at this time of the day we could break the first line of the enemy, and we penetrated into Mazar.

[DV tape 19, time 08:22]: The enemy lost its morality, particularly when we captured one of the more key positions at the other end of this canyon. They were demoralized and I could hear that through the radios, apparently they were saying that they were trying to gather their commanders as if they were having a meeting. I knew this was not a meeting. They were trying to make a plan for escape, so I told the American guys that you should let your Air Forces know that these guys are escaping. Once they get out of the canyon, the airplanes should bombard them. The same thing happened in the late night, I remember hundreds, hundreds, and hundreds of vehicles were escaping towards Balan and Konduz. Air fighter in Samangan hit one part of this convoy and the others were hit in Konduz. They were escaping that way.

After I talked on the phone, the satellite phone to Commander Lal, who was based in Mazar at the consulate of Turkmenistan, I talked to him to be sure that Mazar was really controlled by my forces. Only after that I announced officially that Mazar had been captured.

As I previously told you, I had already sent some of my troops, my commanders, in different directions to Samangan, Sar-I Pol, and Sheberghan. At the same time that we were about to capture Mazar they were entering those cities. It means that five provinces were captured at the same time.

GEN DOSTUM: What I claimed came true. I told them that when we captured these cities, all these [CT5A 529; DV tape 19, time 11:439] Al Qaeda/Taliban forces would accumulate in Konduz. Once if we disarm them, they surrender, that means that there is no other strong resistance in any part of Afghanistan. And the same thing happened. I knew, I fought them lots of time, I know that the most hardliners are Chechens based in the north. Once they are sorted out there would be no resistance. [it was getting dark and Dostum wanted to make one more stop and we move to the north side of the Tiangi.][CT 005A, 542]

GEN DOSTUM [CT5A, 553]: These three bunkers are what I was talking to you about. The one up there, and the one on this high, and the one in the middle of this mountain. Once we controlled these three bunkers. I had sent Commander Lal with 30 horsemen back there, but they had already planted some computerized mines there. [DV tape 19, time 13:01] I saw the bodies of my soldiers and some horses; they were flying in the air. I thought that all of these 30 men were killed, but no, only some of them were killed there.

[CT 005A, 583; DV tape 19, 13:15]: I was very upset and worried if Commander Lal was also killed there. He was the only commander I love very much. Because I couldn't have any contact for 15 minutes, but after 15 minutes when I contacted him, we know each other's language, it's a special sort of military language; I asked shall I send you a car? He said no, it means that he was not injured or killed. I was very happy.

They were based along this road, the Pakistani/Taliban forces. You can see those bunkers there. I knew that they didn't know the strategy of war because in war you should take high positions. They were based mostly in the lowest positions, and it means that they have no knowledge of the war and the strategy. They were just deceived; they were so emotional that they had just come to fight.

BILL K: We also noticed that they were on the wrong side. They were on the reverse side and not taking advantage of the high ground [CT 005A side ends].

[CT 005B starts; DV tape 19 at 16:00]: This is the place, location, I came down off this mountain. I came this way and it was difficult. I tried to cross the river somewhere up there. Once I got in the river, I was about to drown, I was about to sink, then I thought myself, "You are not killed in heaviest fightings, but you're going to die in this water!"

Juma Namangani, he was one of the senior commanders, and he was in opposition to Uzbeki's government. He was Uzbek. Uzbekistan. He was fighting with Al Qaeda. As you know they are from different nationalities. He was injured there [pointing to the north east of the Tiangi] and his men were killed in that bunker. So he was injured there and he was taken to Logar and died in Logar. This was the end of the enemy, so we could capture Mazar and Qala Jangi.

BILL K: I've got to get the cameraman to catch some of this kind of quick. Dave, if you can, see this three bunkers, right in front of you here, at the top, there was one there, there was on about halfway down the mountain, and there was one over on this mountain to your right.

GEN DOSTUM [DV tape 19, time 17:51]: It's good to mention that Juma Namangani was very famous.

BILL K: I want you [Esam] to write his name down, and I also want you to write the name of this place [Kafer Qalah]. Dave, let me repeat some of things he said so you can capture it on film. What he did is, he came down off the top of the Kafer Qalah, rolled around to the left, if you start turning, turn towards that mountain over there, he went around that way, down and tried to cross the river right down in here and he thought, "I make it through the heaviest part of the fighting and now I'm going to drown in the water." If you are able to pan clear around, he also had the bunker systems and stuff up here. It seemed that they had indicated that they really didn't know what they were doing because they already gave up the high ground, and they come down in the low ground to defend, and that they didn't have a strategy, they had the commitment but not the strategy to do it [DV tape stops here but cassette tape continues].

GEN DOSTUM: This is Kafer Qalah. Juma Namangani is big son of opposition leader fighting for Al Qaeda. He was killed in that battle. He was injured there and he was taken to Logar. Logar is another province of Afghanistan. [CT5B 37]

BILL K: This is it right here?

GEN DOSTUM: That would be marvelous if you could climb there.

BILL K: I would like to, I would like to go up there.

GEN DOSTUM: What I can see on the other side of this bunker, there is another bunker over there. That was the central. Tomorrow there is... How many horses do you need for tomorrow? They will bring 20 horses tomorrow at 1000. [62]

[End of Interview with GEN Dostum.]

**TRANSCRIPT 22: CDR HAJI CHARI AND CDR KAMAL AT TIANGI,
11 DECEMBER 2002**

Introductory note: The first part of the interview¹ is with Haji Chari on the Kafer Qalah. Hafis is the interpreter. The second part is with CDR Kamal at the cave on the west side of the Tiangi.

CDR HAJI CHARI [DV tape 20, time 09:20]: We were lost in the Kundura and we couldn't find the way, and we found an old man and asked him about the way and he helped us and brought us straight here. And we dug this bunker with my American friends, Paul, and others. [Note: Although translated this way, Paul and Haji did not dig that bunker they occupied. Paul indicated there was already a squad positioned in it. They occupied it and may have helped improve it but did not dig it.]

BILL K: You were here with Paul?

CDR HAJI CHARI: We are out here at 2 o'clock at night and the weather was very bad like this, the weather, rain.

Yeah, and we dug the bunkers here with American servicemen [Note: see above note.], and Paul was with them and gave the coordinates for air attacks from this location.

BILL K: Okay, this is that location!

CDR HAJI CHARI: The next morning we attacked, we start our attack on the enemy forces and on the right of the river were Taliban and on the left side were Pakistanis and foreigners, maybe Al Qaeda and Taliban. [Wind is bad, audio bad.]

That time we go to seize the Taliban and enemy's hiding positions and after that, Mullah Dardullah, Mullah Faisal, and IMU Juma Namangani with a lot of troops. And attack our troops and they could push back our forces and...

BILL K: Where were your forces? You say, push back on your forces.

CDR HAJI CHARI: Now we cannot see [weather was setting in].

¹ This starts at 9:20 on DV tape 20.

BILL K: Okay, but our forces?

CDR HAJI CHARI: And later, General Dostum and the enemy start firing BM21s. There were forty BM 21 rockets, and started firing at the targets from the bottom of canyon and this location.

And here, General Dostum summoned his troops and he collected here, all the commanders and ordered them to attack the enemy's troops, and Commander Lal, Haji Habib, Kamal and there they started their action. They are seen from this way and they are seen behind the mountain, and this valley [CT4A, 342 feet]

They set mines, and suddenly one of CDR Lal's horses stepped on the mine, and it exploded, and it blew up, and it killed six soldiers of Commander Lal, and there was nothing left of the horses and soldiers.

They came under Commander Lal and others. Khode Barq, Qala Jangi, Mazar.

BILL K: What about the Dehdadi airfield?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Same thing.

We heard the Taliban and some of them called the others. We had a meeting here, and General Dostum conducted the meeting. He said there was no meeting between the Taliban. And I know from military experience that they [the Taliban] wanted to escape outside Mazar-e Sharif.

BILL K: He explained that yesterday. He said that he heard it on the radio, he heard there was a meeting, but he knew it was not a meeting; it was an escape.

CDR HAJI CHARI: After that, we seized Qala Jangi, we seize Mazar-e Sharif, and five provinces were seized by local people and our troops.

Four died on the way, they were Pakistanis, Chechens, Arabs.

BILL K: Were there any Afghan Taliban, or was it mostly Pakistani and Chechens?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Mostly foreigners.

BILL K: I'd like to go back and get some detailed times. What time did you get up here and what day did you get up here?

[Inserted from C4A transcript to fill in the gap:] Did you get here in the afternoon? You said something about 2:00.

CDR HAJI CHARI: Two o'clock at night.

BILL K: You mean after midnight/early in the morning?. Did you go down with General Dostum?

CDR HAJI CHARI: Yes. I went down with General Dostum and the next morning we went to [the CP south of Tiangi].

BILL K: On 10 November. I know the dates. How did you go down?

CDR HAJI CHARI: There was no bridge at the time we crossed the river.

BILL K: General Dostum said he almost drowned. Was it easy for you to cross the river?

[Note: Transcriber cannot hear. Sound of horses. Static in foreground, inaudible. Can hear talking far away. Group is moving on horseback. 18:30.]

[We are leaving the Kafer Qalah and move to a cave on the west side of the Tiangi to speak to Commander Kamal.]

BILL K [25:12] We are talking to Commander Kamal, the division commander of the 82nd division. Were you [CDR Kamal] born in Afghanistan?

CDR KAMAL: Yes.

BILL K: In what province?

CDR KAMAL: In Serbical town, in Ser-I Pol province.

BILL K: When did you start fighting with General Dostum?

CDR KAMAL: When General Dostum was the commander of a battalion, I was with him. My big brother called Abdul Sheikh, he was with General Dostum and I was a small guy at that time and we started to fight beside General Dostum.

BILL K: When you arrived here, how many soldiers, or how many horsemen and dismounted soldiers did you have?

HAFIS: 240 horsemen; no dismounted.

BILL K: Is that all? [Laughter. CDR Kamal talked for several minutes. Although Hafis provided the answer, CDR Kamal talked about much more than what was asked.]

BILL K: I'm sorry, he [to Hafis the interpreter] just did a lot of talking there.

HAFIS: I told him, just talk about this. We can talk later.

BILL K: Okay. Did you meet with General Dostum the night before the battle here at Tiangi Pass?

CDR KAMAL: Yes.

BILL K: And from that meeting, then how did you deploy your horsemen? Where did you move them to in this pass?

CDR KAMAL: After our meeting with General Dostum, I came through the canyon with my soldiers. The Taliban re-attacked. They pushed us back and I came here, and General Dostum again collected every soldier and start their action. After that I started my action through canyon and behind canyon [to the west]. I sent some soldiers toward Mazar and to work there.

BILL K: Okay, so you were back here behind this mountain. Did you get back here by going over the mountain? Or did you come through here and up on the mountain?

CDR KAMAL: Some of my people went through canyon.

BILL K: How did you split them up? Did you send half your men around and then the other half through here?

CDR KAMAL: Fifty horses went behind and others were beside me.

BILL K: When you came through here, you initially had resistance. What happened?

CDR KAMAL: The Taliban started their very strong action, very strong effect on our troops. We had to stay here and after awhile, airplanes came and we can see airplane. They bombed them and lots of them were killed at that time. They lost their morale and we attacked their forces and could seize Mazar-e Sharif.

BILL K: At first, you said they had very strong action against you. What kind of action was that?

CDR KAMAL: The started with the BM-21, and actually they start to attack our troops and I lost my soldiers, and they killed my soldiers and I had to come back here.

BILL K: Did you run into land mines?

CDR KAMAL: Two horses and three soldiers were killed.

BILL K: When you made your attack, did the attack make it through, were you attacking positions, were there certain positions you were attacking? Enemy in bunkers, anti-aircraft weapons? What did you attack when you went made it through the pass?

CDR KAMAL: We didn't have any big weapons, our big weapons were RPGs and PKs and we were on the horses and with horses we attacked straight ahead against his troop.

BILL K: Were you firing your RPGs and weapons as you were riding?

CDR KAMAL: Yeah, when we attacked straight ahead, we attacked enemy positions. I mean like a ZSU 23-2 or something like that. You must remember that we captured a lot of ZSU and the weapons on the way with the tracks and trucks, some soldiers and guards, and artillery, and...

BILL K: Were their positions mostly on the West side of the mountain here, then?

CDR KAMAL: Yeah, on the left until they crossed the Amommakey bridge into Mazar.

MARK: You mentioned who was killed. Can you revisit that?

BILL K: You had mentioned the Mullah that was killed in here. Can you say who that was again. Can you write his name down for me?

CDR KAMAL: Mullah Satar.

BILL K: What was his role in the Taliban enemy?

CDR KAMAL: He was the commander of the 53rd division.

BILL K: By the way, who was Mullah Razzak?

CDR KAMAL: Mullah Razzak was the commander of the corps.

CPT MARK: How many Taliban, how many soldiers were you fighting?

CDR KAMAL: I was on the mountain, and from the mountain, I saw there were more than 1,000 Taliban.

BILL K: He said they switched sides. Why did they switch sides to join Commander Kamal?

[End of DV tape 20. Interview with CDR Kamal and GEN Habib Bullah to continue at house.]

TRANSCRIPT 23: CDR KAMAL AND GEN HABIB BULLAH, 11 DECEMBER 2002

Introductory note. CDR Kamal and GEN Habib Bullah were interviewed at a cave¹ on the west side of the Tiangi and then later at the ODA house on 11 December 2002². The translator was Kamal at the house.

BILL K [DV tape 21, time 00:00]: This is General Habib Bullah, and he currently is a Division commander?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: I was a General before the Taliban era. Before the Taliban, and during Taliban, when Commander Kamal went to the mountains with his brothers and other soldiers, the Taliban put me in prison. After prison my relatives wanted me to work with the Taliban so I became a Commander of the Taliban.

HAFIS: It was because of his relatives. And the Taliban sent him in front of troops to fight against Commander Kamal and General Dostum.

BILL K: When did you change over and why did you change?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: After the Taliban seized Mazar-e-Sharif, I spent some years in my relatives' house, and after that some of the Taliban came and captured me and took me to Manyazidid, a very dangerous Governor, he was the Governor of Mazar-e-Sharif, of Taliban. He put me in jail, about 2 months, and after that some of my relatives and some other people asked about me and he gave me back to my relatives and I went to Chemp-Taal and the people wanted me to be a Commander, to that village, and I became Commander to Taliban.

BILL K: Why did you then switch back to General Dostum's side?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: As General Dostum was outside the country, we contacted our friends in the mountains, and after that General Dostum came to Afghanistan, and I changed my idea, my idea was with General Dostum.

BILL K: When did you change over?

¹ DV tape 21.

² DV tape 22.

GEN HABIB BULLAH: I had my radio contact and all my friends. General Dostum's forces came in the mountain, and CDR Kamal, officially his troops came, and I was in front of them and I joined them and started my fighting.

BILL K: And when did you start your fighting with CDR Kamal?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: I can't say the date, but that night while they were in the Tiangi, I joined them.

BILL K: So you fought in the Tiangi Pass with Commander Kamal.

GEN HABIB BULLAH: I was on the mountain with Taliban Commander, and one of Commander Kamal soldiers came and I joined him. I had this contract with them and joined them.

CPT MARK: When did you make the radio contract [we all understood Habib Bullah to be saying "radio contract" not "contract"]—when we were still in the Darya Suf? .

GEN HABIB BULLAH: While we were in Cobaki ...we had this contract.

CPT Mark: And at that time, you were ordered to come into Mazar?

KAMAL: Right, so he was one of the spies inside Mazar.

BILL K: And then, when he was still a Taliban Commander, is that the way you understand it?

CPT MARK: Yes.

BILL K: So when they fought in the Darya Suf, did you fight down there?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: I was in with Taliban and Haji Chari ordered me to go back to Mazar-e-Sharif, and I went...

BILL K: Okay. And then, when did you join Commander Kamal, the day they fought Tiangi Pass?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: First night while Commander Kamal arrived here, he sent his soldiers and the others with me and I was in front of them and I joined them.

BILL K: You joined them here [we are at a cave inside the Tiangi].

GEN HABIB BULLAH: Not on the mountain, behind the mountain.

BILL K: Okay, so you did not fight each other.

GEN HABIB BULLAH: No.

CDR HAJI CHARI: He was with us when we went to Mazar-e-Sharif. Joined us and helped us.

BILL K: Okay, I understand. You fought against us [the Northern Alliance] in the Darya Suf. What was that like, you know, from your perspective about the horsemen. I'd just like your perspective about how we [the coalition] were fighting, how you were deployed and how many troops you had, and I'm giving you five questions because I know you can handle them. Your withdrawal, what was that like, coming back, all that way to here?

GEN HABIB BULLAH [10:20]: In Darya Suf I had just 1 bunker and 10 soldiers, and the soldiers were my relatives, and before the American friends came Chari ordered me to come back to Mazar-e-Sharif.

BILL K: What location in Darya Suf, were you?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: A commander called Ahmad Muhammad, and I was with them in Chapchal fighting...

BILL K: Now did you move back into Mazar-e Sharif before the Americans came?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: Yes

BILL K: You did, so you were not out there fighting when the Americans were there.

GEN HABIB BULLAH: No, I was in Mazar. [12:00]

[End of Outside interview with GEN Habib Bullah. Start of the interview with CDR Kamal and GEN Habib Bullah at the ODA house, DV tape 21, time 19:20; Kamal is now the interpreter.]

CPT MARK: We are here because one, to come visit my Afghan friends and two, to play Buzkashi. And I got to come with these men who are studying the battles through the Darya Suf and the bulk of the campaign to capture Mazar.

KAMAL: We were very happy to see you guys again.

CPT MARK: They want to discuss this battle because they believe it was very significant and important to the defeat of the Taliban.

KAMAL [Talking to Habib Bullah]: So they have some questions about the activities and what you know and how you commanded your troops in that campaign.

GEN HABIB BULLAH: Yes...

CDR KAMAL: Very good, please go forward.

BILL K: Mark is being modest. We think this battle is more than just significant. We think that these battles led to the fall of Mazar-e Sharif, led to the fall of the North, and then led to the fall of Afghan Taliban. I want to take you back to when you entered the Darya Suf and fought with General Dostum. Can you tell me approximately when you started fighting in the Darya Suf?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: Yes...

CDR KAMAL: Before Mark and them arrived at Darya Suf, there were two attacks over the Taliban bases. We had captured some of their ammo, a couple of their Datsuns, two artilleries, heavy artilleries, and some other artillery. Since the Taliban attacked them, we were active, they pushed us back. After Mr. Massoud's death on 8 September 2001, what happened on 11 September, you guys came over afterwards and then they resettled, reassembled, and made plans to attack, in Shamallak area they were at that times, up there.

BILL K: Can I show you the map?

KAMAL: He is not familiar with the map.

BILL K: Okay, we will see if we can use it.

BILL K: Shamallak is here. Chapchal, Beshcam, Baluch, here is Dehi, and this is Safid Kotah.

BILL K: Did you attacked from Safid Kotah towards Beshcam?

CDR KAMAL: Yes. We attacked from Safid Kotah, towards Beshcam... We captured most of Safid Kotah, the Taliban only had one post left over, and there should be an area by the name of Nawazan. From Safid Kotah they came up to Nawazan, then they came to Beshcam, they captured Beshcam.

BILL K: Nawazan, okay [on the map]. I know later on that you had 240 soldiers. How many soldiers did you have fighting with you at that time?

CDR KAMAL/KAMAL: I had a total of 1,500 men, but under my command, I had 240 that I used to give out the orders to myself.

BILL K: Okay. If you've got 1,500 men, but only 240 under your command.

CDR KAMAL: No, 1,500 all together, combined with General Dostum and everybody.

BILL K: Oh, 1,500 with General Dostum. Who are the other commanders underneath you, Lal? Khan? Were they all commanders in the camp?

CDR KAMAL: Yes.

KAMAL: Ak-Yazin, Sahlwar, Hadji Mohamed, Fahir, yes...each one of these commanders they had 40 to 50 men under their command.

BILL K: Well, it's interesting, because they have so many subcommanders. I have a feeling they all came in and worked for General Dostum.

We say three to six people for span of control, but General Dostum had many people under his command, which was interesting.

CDR KAMAL: These were the main commanders, but each of these commanders had sub-commanders, you know, smaller groups of 10 to 20.

GEN HABIB BULLAH: Commander Hazim was one of them, Raiz Hata-Khan, Samat Khan, Commander Isuf, Hadji Jurha, Doctor Kendja, Gul-Ahmed, Mohamed Wali, Commandant Samur, Khadir, Mohqtar, who was martyred on the Tanagai,

BILL K: And how many people did each one of these command?

CDR KAMAL: Twelve to fifteen.

BILL K: How did you communicate with your subcommanders?

KAMAL: They had radios.

BILL K: How did you communicate with General Dostum?

CDR KAMAL: General Dostum was on top of the high hill, high elevation, from there on they used to communicate with him wherever they were at, with different frequencies, of course.

BILL K: In these battles, that took you up to Beshcam, how were you normally positioned? Was there a certain posture you always used when you fought?

CDR KAMAL/KAMAL: By order of General Dostum, we used to attack at the same time, when the Commander General Dostum gave the order, let's say, for example, at 10 o'clock, they all used to charge at the same time, CDR Haji Habib was from the Omitak area, and we three were from the north, they pushing forward.

BILL K: Okay. I know you don't know much about the map, but if I can point out some things, can you tell me how you lined up to do this.

CDR KAMAL/KAMAL: I and Commander Lal captured Beshcam and the Taliban resisted, and up until 2 o'clock, but we could not push them back, right around 4 o'clock we captured that area, then we moved forward to Chapchal.

We went to Baluch first, we captured Baluch, from there on we and Fakir went to Omitak Mountain. When we came to Baluch, we met up with Mark and them, in Baluch area, him and commander Lal's forces. We spent one night on top of the hill with you guys [talking to Mark]. From there on we went all the way to Keshendeh. At Keshendeh we had a meeting with General Dostum. We were going to coordinate in terms of capturing the bridge, the Pole Baraq, we heard that the bridge was taken out. From there on we coordinated to move through the Tiangi. We were controlling both sides of the road; basically, we came along with the road...towards Mazar. The Hazaras came along to sort of help out.

BILL K: Yes. You are talking about after Baluch fell.

CDR KAMAL: Yeah, right.

CDR KAMAL/KAMAL: Controlling both sides of the road, basically I came along with the road towards Mazar.

BILL K: I'd like to go back to Baluch. End of tape...

[DV tape 22, time 1:06]

BILL K: Mark has praised the commanders on what they did, now we would like to hear from you.

GEN HABIB BULLAH: Great, please go ahead.

BILL K: As they [the Northern Alliance] were coming from east to west towards Baluch, I understand Baluch was very difficult.

CDR KAMAL/KAMAL [DV tape 22, time 3:40]: On that day when we attacked, we charged towards Baluch around 2 o'clock, there was heavy fighting from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., there was one post that my forces could not capture. We moved forward, and then we went forward again. We captured one of the key posts and I lost one man at that post. At the post there were two dead Taliban soldiers. From there on there were six other posts that we captured simultaneously, one after the other. Basically we fought throughout the night and captured Taliban posts in our area and post outside our area where the Taliban had fled. We each had our own area of operations but this was in Commander Lal's area. General Dostum showed up at that point and told us to capture another post, otherwise the enemy would regroup and push us back. At the same time it was about morning hours and we had air support. When the air sup-

port came, we took that post out and we started to push everybody out of Baluch. We killed hundreds killed, and captured a hundred or more prisoners.

BILL K: When you talked about capturing posts, did you capture one and then the next?

KAMAL: Yes. Once they [speaking of CDR Kamal] captured that very first post; that was their main stronghold. Afterwards, all the other five, six posts, the enemy fled.

BILL K: Were subsequent posts on subsequent ridge lines?

CDR KAMAL: Yes.

BILL K: Were there any close calls?

KAMAL: [speaking for CDR Kamal] That was the very last post, when all the Taliban fled, went back. It was around four in the morning, the air support came, hit that post, dropped the bombs. His forces were like 15 meters away from that post when they dropped, but luckily his forces did not get injured. The point where the bombs were dropping was in Ahmed Khan's area. Ahmed Khan pushed the enemy back, and somehow the enemy resisted, they regrouped, they pushed Ahmad Khan's forces backwards, and at that time the air support came towards Ahmed Khan's area when they were dropping bombs. The Taliban were killed, 40 to 60 of them were killed when the bombs were dropped, and then later on they pushed back their lines.

BILL K: Was the enemy in a trench or bunker system when they fought?

CDR KAMAL [DV tape 22, time 9:15]: They [the Taliban] were very organized; they set up trenches. Most of them were covered up. They were standing up to shoot the enemy.

They were in there most of the time, when the bunkers were set up. They were deep. Like the ones we saw at Commander Lal's place yesterday... on top the hill.

BILL K: How many enemy soldiers were in each of these outposts?

CDR KAMAL: Roughly around 20 to 30 Taliban were on each post. Their weapons were mostly PKs and RPGs.

BILL K: Were there any tanks?

CDR KAMAL: They had tanks, they had ZSU's, heavy artilleries, when the air attack came, and the next morning, the aircraft took out all those tanks.

BILL K: Do you know who the enemy commanders were in your area?

CDR KAMAL/KAMAL: Mullah Razzak, Mullah Dadoullah, Mullah Faisel. They had captured Mullah Tahaire and one other commander. He was injured.

KAMAL: Yeah, Mullah Tahaire. He was injured after Baluch.

BILL K: How did you get intel? How did you know what the enemy was going to do?

CDR KAMAL: The Taliban's main point was to capture the whole country, that's why they had their main post in Darya Suf area. From there on, they could do whatever they wanted to. In terms of how we got Intel, we used to get messages that the Taliban are arriving by 50, 100 to 200, vehicle reinforcement, from Mazar. Once they get to that point, either alive or dead, or injured, they used to send their injured back, so they could, you know, get refreshed men, and basically they were reinforcing their guys, on the way, by vehicles. Mr. Habib was the one who was relaying the messages to me, "Hey, listen, 50 guys who are coming in this vehicle, or other cars are coming, so be prepared."

CPT MARK: We bombed several positions that were very close to your horsemen. Were you part of that charge?

KAMAL: He was there on that bombardment raid, that air raid. He had gone forward a lot more on the same day... Yeah, his guys were like, ahead of where the bombs dropped afterwards. They were so close, but luckily none of them got injured or thrown off their horses. They went forward. That same day, they captured Baluch area, they spent the night on that same day, in the town, Baluch.

CPT MARK: From a distance we saw your horsemen carrying ZSU-23-2s . . .

KAMAL: [speaking for CDR Kamal] They had captured the ZSUs at that time, and you [to CPT Mark] and General Dostum showed up. You had asked him what happened, he had told them, yeah, we captured one, and it was in a really deep ditch. They could not take it out, but they ordered them to take it out. So they took it out in parts. They had two of those ZSUs, they used it as parts for those other two.

CDR KAMAL: Thank you very much.

[End of interview with CDR Kamal and beginning of interview with GEN Habib Bullah, DV tape 22, time 20:40.]

BILL K [to Habib Bullah]: Did you call CDR Kamal from Mazar to Chapchal?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: Yes, when we talk on the radio, it was from Mazar.

GEN HABIB BULLAH /KAMAL: His [CDR Kamal's] name was Talwar, his [GEN Habib's] name was Mazar, on the radio, and it was code words, basically.

GEN HABIB BULLAH /KAMAL: Talwar.

BILL K: CDR Kamal, how many other people called you with information?

CDR KAMAL: A lot of them. I had people in Qoual-Ghorz [phonetic], which was one of the mountains. We used to get reports from Chintal to Qoual-Ghorz; from Qoual-Ghorz they used to relay to Darya Suf.

BILL K: Where is Chintal?

KAMAL: Within Mazar.

BILL K: Where is Al-Borz?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: It's about [a] 2-1/2-hour drive north of Chintal, to Al-Borz.

GEN HABIB BULLAH & CDR KAMAL: They are saying this was their main, Chintal, which is in Mazar area. From there they went to Al-Borz; from Al-Borz, they relayed to Darya Suf.

BILL K: I'm asking that question because you are relaying radio communications.

KAMAL: They used to get up on a high elevation, on top of something, once they were on a high elevation, they relay to each other without any problems.

BILL K: How many people were involved?

KAMAL: He says General Dostum. But one or two before General Dostum was in the country, after General Dostum entered the country...

KAMAL: After General Dostum entered the country, there were hundreds of people would report to him.

BILL K: GEN Habib Bullah—line and block chart. Mullah Razzak was the corps commander. [See notes, to include line and block chart at the end of the interview].

GEN HABIB BULLAH: Mullah Satar was in Sheberghan, he was the 53rd division commander.

Mullah Razzak was in Qala Jangi at the fort. Mullah Razzak was the corps Commander. Division number 18 in Dehdadi at the airfield. Mullah Gauzidine was the commander.

He was martyred, then. He died, he passed away. Division number 8. Galgarie. In Shaw-diyaan here in Mazar. Right now it is called number 7. Ghargarah, he was the commander of the division.

BILL K: What others?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: Division's number 30. There was a bread factory there, they call it Silou. Division number 82, in Sar-I Pol. Their post was in Baliau-Sar. Mullah Ayatollah was the commander.

BILL K: Any more?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: That's it. Five divisions total.

BILLK: Was Gauzidine the only one that died?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: Mullah Satar was killed in Ergonaak [on the way to Konduz].

BILL K: Mullah Noori—who was he?

GEN HABIB BULLAH /KAMAL: He was the commander of the Northern Forces.

CDR KAMAL: He was the commander in the Northern zone; he was also the mayor.

BILL K: Who was Mullah Faisal?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: He was Deputy, Deputy of Ministry of Defense.

BILL K: How many men did these divisions have?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: They varied.

BILL K: Can you give me an idea? How many people? Tanks? Artillery?

KAMAL: It was hard to count the number of people; for example, if there were one mosque in the area, they had one person, the...

KAMAL: Mosque, that mosque was accountable for 1 person, if there were 500 mosques in that area, they were accountable for 500 men to be in that area.

CDR KAMAL & GEN HABIB BULLAH: Each division had 60 people guarding it, and when something happened, they used to gather people from the area, from the villages, to be ready and send them.

GEN HABIB BULLAH: For example, if they needed 5,000 men to go forward on one mission, they used to order 1,000 men from each province, and the province divided the 1,000 men onto that different mosque in those villages, or those towns. Basically, those towns were

responsible for gathering those men, and have the 1,000 men to the province, and from the province, and they used send them to the central.

BILL K: Would they then fill one division or several divisions?

KAMAL: They used to divide into different divisions, depending on how many each needed.

BILL K: Did they have a standing army?

KAMAL: No, they didn't have standing men ready, no. They were not ready to go.

BILL K: Were any of these divisions designated armor or infantry?

HABIB & CDR KAMAL: When the Taliban came, they captured all the weapons. They locked them up. From there on, whoever is in charge in that area, Mullah Razzak or Mullah Faisel, they used to give, depending on who made it, 5, 10, or 15, weapons, they used to hand it to them. Coming back to the point, once those people were assembled, they were brought into these divisions, or they were divided up onto these divisions, from there they would arm them from the depots. So, nobody was armed, they didn't have any armor, you know, against groups or battalions. [End of DV tape 22.]

BILL K [DV tape 23; time 00:00]: In a division who operated the heavy equipment?

CDR KAMAL: A combination of both Afghans and foreigners.

BILL K: How did they maintain their training if they were simply recruited out of the villages?

HABIB and CDR KAMAL: Whenever we needed assistance, we would call upon the villages by phone, and we had a Datsun. We also had 10 men. We did not need tanks or heavy artillery for small-scale battles. Whenever we deemed it necessary, in certain designated areas, we then asked for tanks or artillery as a backup. When they needed a lot [of] men they would go to the mosques.

BILL K: How do you define Taliban, are they both Afghan and foreigners?

CDR KAMAL: Combination of both Afghan and foreign soldiers were Taliban. The foreigners stayed back with their communications with the commanders and mayors, while the Afghan locals were put on the front line, the local people. The foreigners were brought in as the last resort as a reinforcement.

BILL K: How do you define Al Qaeda?

CDR KAMAL AND GEN HABIB BULLAH: Twenty years ago, Afghans fled this country because of the war here. Over 2 million of them. They went to Pakistan, which were funded by Osama's funding. These schools were used as boot camps that trained these kids to become terrorists. Years go by and they come back, brainwashed by Al Qaeda. So he considered them as Afghan Al Qaeda; they worked under the rules of Al Qaeda. What really happened with the collapse of the Al Qaeda here, they fled back. Afghan and foreigners encompassed the Al Qaeda organization.

GEN HABIB BULLAH: We heard news that at one point, Al Qaeda trained 3,500 Afghans, from the Northern part of Afghanistan. They would remain in the northern part, training under one school. Those same people ended up being in the north area after they finished their education.

BILL K: What division were you [GEN Habib] in?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: I was with Commander Ahktar. It doesn't have a number. I was on the border line. Sara-Dei. The name was Sara-Dei, which means "border," but has nothing to do with the border.

BILL K: Was the rest of your division deployed into the Darya Suf?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: Once we set up the front line in Darya Suf, we were constantly fighting with the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. We established a post between each other.

GEN HABIB BULLAH: From then on until the end of the fighting, the division in Sara-Dei had up to 500 men.

BILL K: Were other divisions involved in the Darya Suf?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: From Division 8, Division 30, and Sara-Dei. Those three divisions.

BILL K: How many total men did the Taliban have down there?

GEN HABIB BULLAH AND CDR KAMAL: Roughly, around 200 from Division 30, from Sara-Dei Division there were 200 men, and the rest of the 300 came from another area.

BILL K: Do you know how many Taliban were in the Darya Suf with him?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: Roughly around 1,000. Up to Keshendeh, from Safid Kotah to Keshendeh area. That was their front line.

BILL K: How were you paid?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: We received cash. Every 15 days we used to receive money. And from there on we purchased whatever.

BILL K: So you used to purchase food from the local area?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: They used to allocate money from two separate locations. We used to send men to purchase goods from different areas, and some came back here to Mazar.

BILL K: How did you get your ammunition?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: We had a depot in Mazar-e-Sharif. We used to purchase ammunition from there.

BILL K: Who did you purchase the ammunition from and where?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: When the Taliban were in power, they disarmed the Uzbeks, Tajiks, and the Hazaras, however, they would not disarm the Pashtun. They used to buy from the Pashtun, in Pashtun-controlled areas such as Balkh area.

BILL K: Did you have ammo cached in certain areas?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: No, we used to buy in small quantities. Small arms. Artillery, we would purchase from different locations. The heavy artillery we used to get from Government depots.

BILL K: What type of communications did you have?

HABIB & CDR KAMAL: We had radios that would cover long distances. The name of these radios were called Kodas [Kodon]. We were really prepared.

We used to use foreign agency vehicles for communication once they seized them, like the UN or NGOs.

BILL K: Did you use SATCOM communications?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: No, not familiar.

CPT MARK: What Taliban units were located between Keshendeh and Mazar?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: We went as a group, not only from the 18th Division, but from all the groups, which is why they were able to resist for such a long period of time.

BILL K: Was the whole corps involved?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: Yes.

CPT MARK: How many were there in the corps?

GEN HABIB BULLAH [23:49]: They came from Herat province and from Tahaar province. It was not just from one area.

CPT MARK: Do you have any records of this?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: I don't have records of this, no. I would document, everyday, convoys of 50, convoys of 10, or 100 vehicles would pass by. I used to relay messages from the top of a hill to the next command post. The message would then be relayed to General Dostum.

GEORGE: Was the Taliban defense of the Darya Suf set up before the death of Massoud?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: The front line for the Taliban defensive was set up before Massoud's death. It was a group of five that actually started the aggression against the Taliban. Two of my brothers were killed up there, and grew from 5 to 12. The villages heard about this aggression and decided to assist, so from 5 it grew to 500. When General Dostum arrived, the word grew, and more people joined from Sar-I Pol and Meymaneh, and we were able to topple the Taliban and their strongholds.

GEORGE: Before 11 September did the Taliban have confidence in their defenses?

GEN HABIB BULLAH AND CDR KAMAL: Before 11 September, the Taliban had begun to set up their front line, as a defensive line. They knew their enemies would be weak, they were confident that they would be able to take control and move onto Panjshir, which was the last stronghold for the Northern Alliance. That was way before 11 September. When General Dostum came to the Darya Suf, from then on, the Taliban's strategy changed, they feared him, and if he were able to gather strength and plan the attack, they were not confident. General Dostum would always have contact with most of his commanders from all over the country by his cell or satellite phone. The Taliban began to wither in their confidence.

GEORGE: Your supplies, getting cash every 15 days—how did that affect the availability of your food and ammunition?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: We used to get plenty of cash every 15 days, and we would be able to purchase ammunition and anything else that would be important.

GEORGE: This afternoon you mentioned the radio contract [yes, contract; not contact] to change allegiance from Taliban to GEN Dostum, how did that work?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: I contacted General Dostum through very powerful radios, and we were able to spread the word. He got his frequencies from his friends. From then on, people

were aware of General Dostum's arrival. The strength and size of people who joined the fight grew from day to day. So did the people's confidence.

GEORGE: You said GEN Dostum gave you orders to go back to Mazar, but you [Habib Bullah] were responsible for a bunker and people, how did you manage to just go back to Mazar?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: I was in Darya Suf area before the war started, General Dostum gave orders to go to Mazar and gather people for the fight. We took out major strongholds, such as the airport, radar sites, and in Tiangi, three to four hundred people were killed...

[End of DV tape 23.]

CPT MARK [DV tape 24; time 00:00]: They were providing information that would allow us to succeed.

GEN HABIB BULLAH/KAMAL: [Kamal is speaking of Habib] He is saying he is one of Dostum's officers way back as he has been fighting against his enemies. Whatever he was, when General Dostum came to this country he was very happy. From there on, there were any other officers who were under his commander who were loyal to him. They were all very happy from there on helping Mr. Dostum with cell phones or cash so they could kind of keep themselves ready to join his forces. From there on he says he was very proud of doing his duty. That's what we sort of made the war go forward from all different directions.

CPT MARK: So he had a previous relationship with GEN Dostum. Did he have a previous relationship with CDR Kamal?

GEN HABIB BULLAH [DV tape 24, time 04:50]: First, Kamal's brother was in charge; one of his brothers whose name was Abdul. He got killed afterward when General Dostum came to the country. Right after that Commander Kamal took over that place. Ever since then, I've been working under his command. He is a commander of Sar-I Pol area right now, and I've known him for such a long time, basically within the family.

CPT MARK: While you were here in Mazar and sent reports to GEN Dostum, you saw these Taliban fighters going into the Shulgareh to the Darya Suf, what were the people thinking about at the time?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: These people were very worried. They were very depressed when they saw the Taliban sending reinforcement to that area. But when General Dostum captured a number of posts, he knew by the time the news arrived here the people would get excited. They would be happy about it. The Taliban forces basically were worried. They were thinking that, all these forces are gone, thinking that something might happen to them, or they might

get pushed back. By the time when they were captured, the news would turn around and the people would change and be happy.

CPT MARK: Were there any Taliban forces that escaped the Darya Suf back to Mazar-e Sharif?

GEN HABIB BULLAH: As they came over to Tiangi area, as we showed you today, most of the Taliban set up their stronghold up there. And the Northern Alliance came from different directions in terms of attacking them, plus air support, against Taliban. The Taliban fled to Rakab area, and they came back close to Kode Barq. They could not resist. Division 18 was up there, too. From there they fled most of the way to Qala Jangi and then went to the Sultan Razia School which is in Mazar. Some of the Punjabis Pakistanis took shelter there. The American called in air support; some of them escaped; some of them got killed. The ones who fled the city to the Konduz area were being bombarded by air support along the way. Wherever they were going, they were hit.

CPT MARK: Can you estimate how many Taliban troops escaped from the Darya Suf and Balkh valley?

GEN HABIB BULLAH [DV tape 24, time 14:09]: The ones who were captured were on their way to Konduz area. The Taliban had a plan in terms of getting back into the city so they could stir something else up. And those who were captured in Konduz had different plans. Those who were brought from Konduz into Mazar were taken to Qala Jangi. When they came there, several of them had hand grenades. They exploded...the hand grenade. They would throw the grenades at some of the guys, they got killed. From there, what they did was they took all the prisoners, and transported to some other prison.

Those at the Sultan Razia School, some of them were hiding for several days. They didn't have the opportunity to come out until they were threatened by air attack. Those in Konduz that were captured were also brought in, and they basically...once those bombs went out at the Qala Jangi the authorities, or whoever's in charge, they kind of become alert in terms of searching them more tightly and disarming them so this incident does not happen within the city or anywhere else. We brought everything under control in a short time.

CPT MARK: Do either of you have anything else to add?

CDR KAMAL: They had plans in Qala Jangi when the prisoners were here General Dostum had talked to them, to their big commanders, Mullah Faisel and Mullah Noori who were there. GEN Dostum said he can only protect some of them but those whose names are popular are

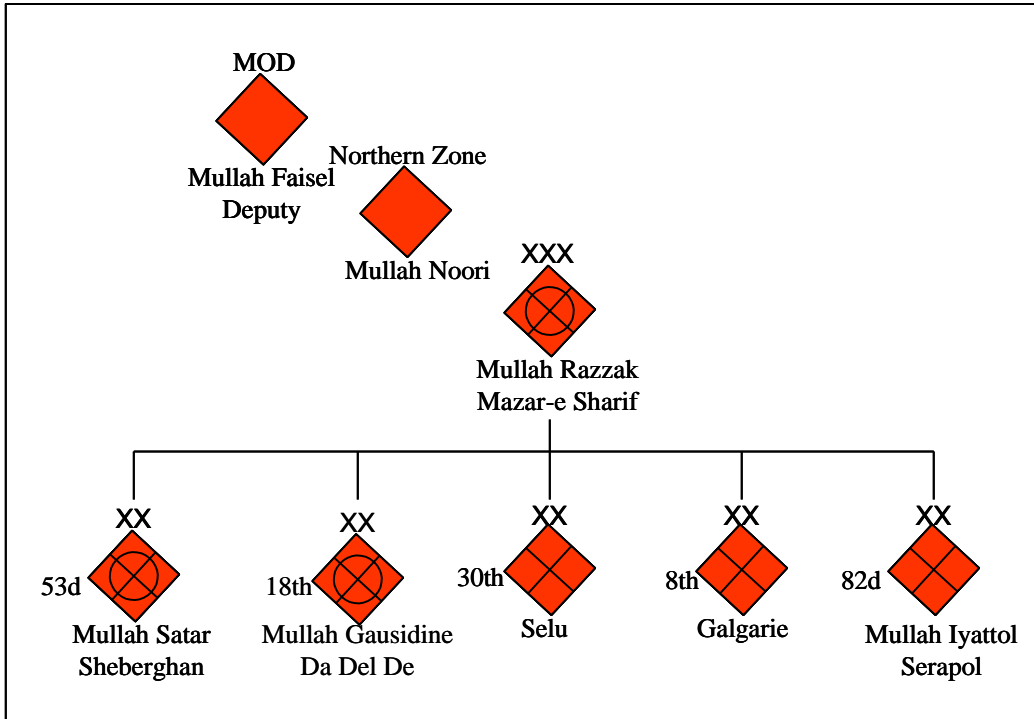
known as Al Qaeda and have to surrender. So they went back to Konduz in order to bring some more people from there, some more prisoners and they went back there, they assembled a group of 600 hundred men pretending to change by putting the picture of Mr. Massoud or General Dostum on their vehicles. They then planned to travel all the way to Mazar-e Sharif to start something. They came all the way through to one of the checkpoints near the airport. There is a big checkpoint near the airport. From there on I think somebody within them had passed a message to Mazar area to the Northern Alliance informing of what's going to happen. What they did, they took all those people and brought them back to the Qala Jangi. But disarming them all the way, but they brought them straight back in here instead of letting them go. That was one of their plans.

The other plan was that people set up in Balkh area. In Balkh area, there were 100 men already set up there. And so was General Dostum and American forces were in Konduz area. That was another plan. Their whole plan was to start something in Qala Jangi, start something in Balkh, and start something up there to take General Dostum out. Once he was taken out then there will be nobody to lead. What these forces did they disarmed Balkh area completely so nobody can stand up and attack them. And same thing happened in Qala Jangi. Although they tried something, they could not succeed, and so on in Konduz area on the way back here. And so is the school, the Sultan Razia, where they were hiding for several days. After that, people found out there were still enemy hiding there and they were raided by air bombardment. So in a way that they could not succeed. They did have a plan, a second chance, even though they were beaten in the Darya Suf, they attempted to try different methods but they failed.

CDR KAMAL [DV tape 24, time 25:47]: Later on General Dostum had ordered us to bring the prisoners to Qala Jangi, which is one of the forts he is responsible for, they are under his control. At his order, prisoners were disarmed but they were not searched or strip searched. What he did was to gather big containers, a number of them. They had made holes so they could breathe. He had loaded all of them up on those containers. Along the way some of them were injured; some of them had hand grenades or whatever. They were brought in on the way to this prison some of them died, like in each container five, six, or seven. Total number he's saying roughly around 200 passed away due to injuries. He was not ordered to search them. But they were disarmed. He said they still had some more in the prison, and there were some at the Sultan Razia School back then. Some were captured; some were killed along the way.

[Dave's battery is dead, Interview DV tape 24 stops at 27:03, next part of video is at Qala Jangi.]

1. Notebook 5 starts with discussions on 11 December 2002 at the ODA house with CDR Kamal and GEN Habib Bullah, former Taliban. GEN Habib Bullah lists the commanders, both Northern Alliance and Taliban. The Taliban include
 - Mullah Sattar, 53rd Division CDR, Sheberghan
 - Mullah Razzak, Corps Commander
 - Diagram, page 11, re-created below
2. Talks about the 3,500 Afghans sent to Pakistan to school



**TRANSCRIPT 24: GEN ATTA AT MAZAR-E SHARIF,
12 DECEMBER 2002**

Introductory note: GEN Atta¹ is interviewed² at his office on 12 December 2002. He provided his own translator.

GEN ATTA [DV tape 25, time 11:30]: For the first time, when the American friends entered, in Darya Suf, they started the attacks against the Taliban, only from one approach, in which would lead the forces to Keshendeh from Darya Suf. At that time, I was not in Darya Suf, when I came here, I told the American friends, please, stop the fighting. I have responsibility for this place, and these places are under the rule of my forces. Better than you, I know the strength of the enemy, and what is our strength, and this kind of attack against Al Qaeda and Taliban would have no advantage. Let's negotiate and cooperate with each other against Taliban. And after that, I stopped with the fighting, with the American bombers and our American friends, and cooperated with each other.

Before this battle, I myself attacked against Marmol district, and I captured Marmol. At the time, the unit in Marmol was located 7 kilometers from Mazar-e Sharif. [We are looking at a map—GEN Atta can read a map—on DV he points out the hills to the south east of Mazar.]

GEN ATTA: The hills on the airport.

Bill K: Do you remember when you did that?

GEN ATTA: Of course, this was without the assistance of the American forces, of the bombers. American forces were busy, in an area located 150 kilometers away from Mazar-e Sharif, a place called Keshendeh.

Bill K: I understand this was before the American forces were brought in?

¹ Although the interpreter is very good, the translation appears to be of GEN Atta. This starts at the beginning of the interview which is 11:30 on the tape. There are no questions at the beginning. GEN Atta asked that I hold my questions to the end. Every break reflected is that of GEN Atta allowing the interpreter to translate.

² This transcription is of DV tapes 25 and part of 26.

GEN ATTA: My forces were stationed in Darya Suf and Keshendeh, along with General Dostum, and General Mohaqiq and were busy with the Americans in Keshendeh, but the Americans did not assist me with attack on Marmol.

I announced and stated that I was against this fight.

The American in charge with authorities and also the Ambassador in Tashkent spoke to me. The authority in charge of American forces in Panjshir, also wanted to speak with me. He asked me why I stop fighting, and why I was against it.

Since I have the responsibility of this area, then you have to advise and consult with me. Then I stopped the fighting. I then moved from my base in Khoran, and moved to the center of Darya Suf. I made decision with General Dostum, General Mohaqiq and with the Americans.

And also among the American military, Commander Mark was responsible. From CIA, I don't know his real name, but we called him Boba-jaan. I told them I was against the fighting.

I told them, "Since you have been bombing for almost 15 days, but you have not captured any significant areas yet." This would have a negative impact on the soul, the morale of my soldiers and the American soldiers, as well. This would have been a positive for Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

Even in the political level, politicians, from this country, who were once quiet, were now against this type strategy used by the Americans.

America is a large country, enormous wealth, and strong foreign policy. It has the attention of many countries in the world. It would have been very bad foreign policy for the Americans to continue with such bombing.

BILL K: I have some questions.

GEN ATTA: Yes, you can ask, but, please allow me to finish.

First, I would like to tell you all the things worth mentioning. I suggested, please get the plans from us, and get the logistical support and bombing from your side.

Since, if you take action against the Taliban, you will satisfy premature intentions, but we know the characteristics of ourselves, and our enemies. Finally, our friends, Mr. Mark asked me of my intentions.

I told them, let's expand the fighting and the battle, so the enemy could not reach or support their forces. I told them one front should support Keshendeh.

My forces, which were in Darya Suf with General Dostum and General Mohaqiq and with the American forces, should move all together.

I suggested one other front should be open in Aq Koprak, and I myself would be responsible for Aq Koprak. One front would be in the Zurey [phonetic] district.

These three fronts should be very strong.

One more front should be in Marmol district, that I myself will send forces.

And one more front around Samangan province.

I suggested that a group of Americans should separate and head to Bamian. The center of Bamian had many Talibs. I told the Americans that there was a great number of Talibs there, and that we should defeat and destroy them completely.

The capture of Bamian had two advantages. If we could capture Bamian, Hoff, the highway of Hoff, of Afghanistan, Northern provinces would be blocked, and they would not have been able to reinforce their battalions in the Northern provinces, by way of Kabul.

We started the attacks on Keshendeh, Aq Koprak, Zurey [Zaree?] and in Marmol districts. The first hours my forces captured Marmol district and also the hills around the airport. My forces captured Zaree district. My forces also captured Al Koprak. After a length of time, we secured Keshendeh.

The proposal I suggested was that one force should move to Al Koprak, and the other to Keshendeh, and converge in Pol-e-Baraq reservoir.

These two forces came together in Pol-e-Baraq. When the forces arrived in Pol-e-Baraq area, I did not stop them, I suggested they continue and proceed ahead. The first line was Tiangi Cashmeh.

This was the result and the conclusion of the plan I gave them in order to expand the front, against Al Qaeda.

Of course, I did not blame the American forces, because they were not familiar with the area. A well thought out plan was not given to them [American forces]. We were responsible for giving them an accurate and correct plan.

GEN ATTA: Now, you can ask me your questions.

Bill K: In Marmol, did you expect any type of close air support or bombing in support?

GEN ATTA: Yes, of course, we suggested that the American assist us in this way. But they did not. Because they were busy fighting the battle in Keshendeh. In fact, once, we were defeated in, in Marmol, and we suggested they bomb from the American side. But since they were busy, they could not assist us.

BILL K: Did you think you were going to get bombing support when you attacked?

GEN ATTA: Yes, we were confident there would be bombing, it would help us. However, the first attack I had in Marmol district, I had no cooperation or consultation with my American friends. In order to have a warning signal for the Taliban, in order to inform the American friends that we have a center that could defeat Taliban as fast as possible. I wanted to inform my American friends of what we could accomplish in that area.

During the first battle in Marmol, some of our commanders were killed, and five of them arrested and were brought into Mazar-e Sharif, and they were hanged, they tied the rope around their necks and pulled them with cars, in the street, by the shrine, everyone witnessed this.

West of the shrine of Hezratalli [phonetic], the place where there hangs a picture of Ahmed Massoud.

Bill K: I understand when you returned from Marmol you stopped the war?

GEN ATTA: Of course, the first time I attacked Marmol, I then stopped the war. In order to come to Keshendeh and have a session. And make a general plan.

Bill K. I understand the general plan would include a front around Aq Koprak . . .

GEN ATTA: Yes, and Zaree around Samangan province, Marmol. Also one other province I had was Bamian province. Because, I had the plan in Bamian Province... These districts told me they would assist me and help me, and I trusted them. During these battles they announced their cooperation. And they blocked the highways that were used by the Taliban.

I, myself, was not in Marmol district, but my forces were in Marmol district. I was in Kohran district. I had a supreme force stationed in Darya Suf, Kohran district, Marmol district, Al Koprak, and Keshendeh.

BILL K: Where is Kohran district?

GEN ATTA: Khoran is located in Samangan province.

Bill K: Who then commanded the forces in Marmol?

GEN ATTA: This area belonged to my subcommander Mullah Mir Ahmed Reza.

BILL K: When did you leave to go to Aq Koprak to lead them in battle.

GEN ATTA: After I had the meeting with General Dostum, and GEN Mhiaqiq, Mark, and Boba-jaan, the day after that I went to Al Koprak.

BILL K: CDR Dean then joined you in Aq Koprak, what type of support did you receive, logistics, ammunition?

GEN ATTA: When I went to Aq Koprak, Commander Dean came to Al Koprak. When I went back to Mazar-e Sharif, he was cooperating with me. Of course, we received his good support, and also ammunition, and also air strike support.

Regarding logistical support, the ones who were in charge of the CIA, they were involved with providing logistical support.

[Changing tapes to DV tape 26.]

GEN ATTA: What I am explaining to you bears no exaggeration.

I want to make statement with a few words. Areas that were not controlled by the Taliban were controlled by me. We cooperated with General Dostum, and I respected him, because he was a great man. I told my forces to cooperate with him and frequently sent General Dostum's forces with reinforcements from my battalion.

I was able to control such expansive areas, because I established the fronts against the Taliban almost 3 years ago. And General Dostum arrived just 2 months before 11 September. I don't mean to say General Dostum had no role in the war, of course he did, he had a great impact against the Taliban from one side, from Keshendeh, with my forces and the Hazara forces.

BILL K: How many forces did you face in Aq Koprak?

GEN ATTA: Fifteen hundred to two thousand Taliban.

BILL K: What type of equipment did the Taliban have?

GEN ATTA: They had ZU23s, and different artilleries and BMPs, BM-21s. No tanks in Aq Koprak. They were worried that the tanks would be seized by forces and used on them. Before 11 September, the Taliban brought some tanks into Darya Suf, and I was able to capture all of them.

BILL K: Was the enemy located in bunkers or trenches?

GEN ATTA: They had parapets, yes.

BILL K: What Taliban commanders did you face?

GEN ATTA: Their General Commander was Mullah Dadullah, he was in Shulgareh district and in Mazar. But in Shulgareh it was Mullah Razzak. Sometimes he was in Keshendeh and Aq Koprak.

BILL K: When the Americans came to help, were they accurate with the bombing when they first started?

GEN ATTA: Unfortunately, at that time I was in Khoran district, when they started to fight in Keshendeh, I was not available. But my forces told me they were accurate. Since the fighting was specific, Taliban on one side, good guys on the other, it made it easier for such accuracy in the air strikes. The bombing around the Keshendeh areas, from what my soldiers were relaying back to me, was very accurate. When we were in Aq Koprak, we gave coordinates to Mr. Dean and this resulted in accurate bombing.

However, the constant barrage of bombings in Keshendeh was too specific, we had hoped to proceed and have air strikes in other areas. We did not wait for the bombings, so we took the opportunity and advanced upon the area to capture the enemies—alive, if at all possible.

BILL K: What items did you need most?

GEN ATTA: The most important supplies were ammunition, clothes such as jeans, shirts...since it was winter. Ammunition, for obvious reasons.

Food was found in the area.

Our forces were diehard and used to being without many things.

It was an opportunity for our people. We told the world for 5 years that the Taliban were terrorists, smugglers. The Americans arrived, the world finally listened. Because of this fortune, we wanted to cooperate with the Americans.

It was unbelievable to the world, and we proceeded to get rid of the Taliban. After I made the plan in several sites, in about a week, we captured all the North. It was unbelievable. Even the Defense Ministry in America thought the war would drag out for much longer.

BILL K: When you defeated the enemy at Aq Koprak did you have a meeting with GEN Dostum in Keshendeh?

GEN ATTA: Yes, we had a meeting.

BILL K: What plan did you make to proceed up the Shulgareh?

GEN ATTA: The forces should move up to Tiangi. Then in the Tiangi area, we had another meeting and decided that the forces should be separated, divided.

Some of the forces should go together from Tiangi...A part of my own forces should come from that side, from the mountains, and come to Mazar-e Sharif [GEN Atta is drawing on my 1:250,000 map].

A part of my forces should come from the hills, enter through the airport, and into Mazar. Other forces just belonged to me [from the Marmol area]; only these forces belonged to me and General Dostum.

BILL K: Did you have any resistance when you moved through the Tiangi?

GEN ATTA: No resistance. No resistance in Tiangi. Outside Tiangi, there was a little resistance. Bombing had the best effect in that place.

Until we entered Mazar-e Sharif, there was not that type of resistance.

Around the airport there was resistance.

When we entered Mazar-e Sharif, a part of Talib forces were in Sultan Razia school, and they were unaware of the falling of Mazar.

I myself entered Mazar-e Sharif, but was unaware of this as well.

Part of my forces from Marmol and from the streets besides Sultan Razia were fired upon.

Then they realized that the enemy remained there and they surrounded the school. They thought the enemies that were sheltered inside the school remained, and that they would surrender. Almost 600 Pakistani Talibs remained in that school. Even the townspeople were unaware, and they were fired upon from the Talibs. Fighting continued.

Izbhi-Wahdat and Harakat Islamic forces participated in the fighting. Almost 30 persons of my forces died there. Some of these Talibs were arrested by my forces. And some of the Taliban gathered together, while concealing hand grenades, and wanted to kill themselves.

We wanted to keep them surrounded. And negotiate with them, and talk to them, and eventually, arrest them. Or at least starve them out. General Dostum sent a message to me indicating that he was sending the Americans to bombard the school. I told them that they should not bomb the school, because it was located inside the village. And the local people would decry such an act. Additionally, the school was well surrounded by my forces. Commander Dean and the rest of his colleagues were inside this compound. If I needed anything, I could simply ask them.

They did not consult with me. I told them they shouldn't bomb that place. They went with the Americans to the school and climbed some buildings and bombed the school.

Since I was opposed to the bombing, I thought that any decisions about such a decision would come through me. I told my forces to keep the school tightly surrounded. We had negotiations with the Taliban there. Almost 200 weapons were confiscated, and the Taliban were planning to surrender.

Unfortunately, the school was bombed. The detainees who were outside the school were killed. The weapons were also destroyed. Among my own forces, eight of my men were killed. There was no cooperation, so this happened.

As the case with history, please do not tell any of our friends about these matters. Do not broadcast. It was just a mistake. Then I complained to Boba-Jaan.

BILL K: How many enemy troops and friendly troops were killed in Aq Koprak?

GEN ATTA: From our side, almost 17 to 18 persons. But we did not have an estimate on enemy casualties, more of them died, however,

More of the enemies were arrested, alive. 800 persons surrendered alive.

And their leader or commander was Mullah Ahmir Mohamed, and Commander Jalaal. And also the surrender of Mullah Ahmir Mohamed, in Aq Koprak, broke the spirit of the Taliban. Mullah Ahmir was the Governor of Aq Koprak district.

BILL K: How did you know what the enemy was going to do?

GEN ATTA: We had recon inside all of the provinces. In Aq Koprak and in Mazar.

BILL K: Were you able to listen to their radio communications?

GEN ATTA: Of course.

GEN ATTA: Thank you very much...

Note: Not indicated here but picked up in notes: In Marmol he had 1,500 men with 300 horsemen.

[End of Interview with GEN Atta.³]

³ DV Tape 26 stops at 30:34. The rest of tape 26 is used to complete an interview with GEN Mohaqiq.

**TRANSCRIPT 25: GEN MOHAQIQ IN HIS OFFICE AT MAZAR-E
SHARIF, 13 DECEMBER 2002**

Introductory note: GEN Mohaqiq was interviewed⁵⁵ at his office in Mazar-e Sharif. Mohaqiq used his own interpreter.

GEN MOHAQIQ [00:00]: I will mainly concentrate on last 3 years of resistance.

First of all I would like to welcome your guests to my poor house. I welcome you.

Secondly I'm very glad that I'm with the people who were concerned with the Afghan interest and the history and the people.

Another important point is that you are American and our friends. We are glad and grateful American friends came at the very exact time to save Afghanistan from more tragedies.

We have a saying that any good thing which you are going to do with any person is always good, but when you help somebody when he's bleeding, it is not forgettable.

The Taliban are fighting with their foreign supporters, their terrorist supporters, they suppress the people so much that the people of Afghanistan were counting their last breaths.

And that's what we never forget, that the American forces, they entered into the scenario in a very good time and they did this good thing to our people; it is non-forgettable throughout history.

In August 1998 it's very important in the history of Afghanistan, especially northern Afghanistan when a series of tragedies come on the people of the northern Afghanistan.

[06:20]: Taliban forces which were comprised of the Pakistani, Madrasas students, the Arabs, the Chechen, Uzbekistan, these people were very aggressive in the north.

And I am one of those that very much resisted the Taliban at that time. But at last, unfortunately, we could not resist and we were defeated by the huge invasion of the international terrorists. And the same city of Mazar-e Sharif where you are now, Mullah Noori decreed to his

⁵⁵ DV tape 27.

soldiers that for 3 days you can kill anybody that you want. So Mazar-e Sharif was a slaughterhouse for 3 days, and around 10,000 of the people were killed, slaughtered by the Taliban, and you can still find mass graves around the city. And around 90 percent of all those people who were killed and massacred by the Taliban belonged to the Hazaras. And one big reason they were killing us in a very cold-blooded way was that we belonged to a religious minority. They also killed Uzbeks.

And it was 8 August when I left the city by helicopter and I went to the mountains and I started a fight with the Taliban from the mountains. Eight August is the date when Mazar-e Sharif fell in 1998.

BILL K: Where in the mountains?

GEN MOHAQIQ: Darya Suf.

GEN MOHAQIQ: And there we all collected and reorganized around 3,000 of my forces and again I made a front line there in front of Taliban. And we fought very well against the Taliban for a few days there. Unfortunately, another group of the Taliban attacked and captured Bamian. And when the center of Afghanistan, Bamian fell, and the north was already gone, it was not safe.

So then I collected the elders of the Darya Suf and their tribal chiefs. So what should we do? Now are you going to a consultation? Bamian is gone, the north is already gone. What should we do? Then the people of the Darya Suf were very scared and they said that if I come the Taliban would come and they will massacre all of them. So if I could leave this area even for a few days it would be good for them.

[11:10]: Then I divided my forces into two groups. The major groups and all of my political figures who were with me, I sent all these forces along with those political figures to Balkhob.

And the people whom I sent there were distinguished figures. Among those were Mustadiasin, commander of our forces, and Hadji Abdul, he was my political deputy and Mr. Salviki, he was the logistical head of our party. We sent all of those people to Balkhob.

And then I told them we are going to discuss it with Mr. Khalili and our party so we should take a common stand. So what should we do in this situation?

BILL K: You discussed it with whom?

GEN MOHAQIQ: With Mr. Karim Kalih. He is now Vice President.

So I go report that to Khali and he already left the ground by two helicopters he flew to Panjshir and from Panjshir to Tajikistan.

And then I started finding all these leaders, General Dostum and Mr. Kalid. I started calling them and I found they were in Iran. They took asylum in Iran, General Dostum and Mr. Kalid, both of them urged that I should come at once for some advice and consultation.

Then I told them that I couldn't come because the entire area was controlled by the Taliban. In any direction at least 300 kilometers I would have to pass Taliban which is not possible. So then the pilot was General Abdul, a very good pilot of the north. He landed in the night and we lighted the runway by the lights of the vehicles. He landed and I flew from Shibartu to Mashid where Kalid and General Dostum were located.

BILL K: Where did you fly from and to?

GEN MOHAQIQ: Shibartu to Mashid. Mashid is one of the cities of Iran. General Dostum and Mr. Kalid were there.

And it was then that we consulted each other. And General Dostum had an idea that we would start from Islamkila which is the border here between Iran and Afghanistan. And from Heratan enter into Afghanistan. But I was not sure that they would allow us to use their territory. And it is the same thing, both of the countries, they did not allow us to use their territory.

I was 26 days there. I was in Mashuut, but then I came back to Afghanistan. I flew back to Afghanistan on 22 October and I landed in Dahar.

And then I had a chat with Massoud so he was also very busy in war because all the other territory was already captured by the Taliban. He was facing a really huge takeover by Taliban from all over the area. He was very worried.

Then, when I told Mr. Massoud we could not fight the separately in front of the Taliban because they had huge logistical support from the Pakistan army and a lot of Al Qaeda Arabs forces with all of their resources behind them. So if we fight alone we will be defeated. So my idea is that we should divide our fronts and we should keep the Taliban busy somewhere else. I will go to Balkhob and I will start from the back side⁵⁶ of the Taliban.

⁵⁶ Mohaqiq continues to refer to "back side." His people, the Hazaras, were located in Balkhob, east of the Darya Suf but west of the Pansjhir. His reference to the back side is to attack or protect those areas that are unprotected from the Taliban. As an example, so they couldn't penetrate from the east to west (Pansjhir to the Darya Suf) or vice versa.

So then Massoud told me, he said it is not possible because the Balkhob is already surrounded by the Taliban and the city is closed, and it is very difficult for you, and I don't think that something will come out of this move. So I told him this is very simple. I will go there. If the people of the Balkhob will not support me, then they can tie my hands and feet and hand me over to the Taliban, so what will happen? Nothing will happen. But if those people do stand by me, I can extend the front.

Then when I flew from Panjshir around 300 kilometers with a helicopter, and I landed in a narrowly besieged area of Balkhob, my soldiers were there. And the people, they did a really heroic welcome and they supported me. Then around 500 of their youth volunteered to fight against the Taliban. I didn't have anything. I had only 1 Kalashnikov and 10 rockets which I brought from Panjshir.

It was after November 1998 when I landed there, so the mountains were full of snow, and we were militarily and naturally besieged.

The mountains around Balkhob around 4,500 meters altitude. So and they started with a very bad season, the winter.

Then it was really good time for me. So around one month I had a very good preparation. I collected all of my forces, collected more forces and I started my plan to attack Sangcharaq. They're to the north. It is in Sar-I Pol province.

[25:10]: Then I learned one thing which was really important. They said that if I would start alone fighting against the Taliban, it will be very easy for Taliban to catch us because it would be very difficult for us. So, I contacted Ahmad Shah Massoud and I requested that he please send Hadji. He is one of the Tajik commanders. He was with Ahmad Shah Massoud, I requested him. And he was from Sar-I Pol province so I requested him to send Hadji. So these forces would not be just Hazara forces. So by helicopter he was sent.

And then I also requested, please send engineer Daod to the battle and from the Jihad, he was one of my good friends. So I requested Ahmad Shah Massoud to send him.

When I got these two men with me I changed my tactic. I started fighting two directions. One on my back side to central Afghanistan and around five [unintelligible] of the troops which were with me I sent to Sanchal. It was a good collective force and they went there and captured the majority of Sanchal with a lot of ammunition and a lot of other resources which they had. It was the end of December 1998.

We could not hold Sanchal for a long time and the Taliban recaptured that area, but the main advantage of this move was that around 2,000 of the other soldiers belonged to the ethnic Uzbek and the Tajik joined our anti-Taliban forces.

Then after 4 months, again we made two moves. One toward Bamian and the other toward Darya Suf. And 400 of my troops are sent to Darya Suf and the commander who was Mr. Jahany [he spelled]. And the people of Darya Suf were very worried but warmly welcomed our soldiers. They captured Darya Suf 27 March 1999.

And toward Bamian we sent the forces; the commander was General Abdu Hazara, a very good commander.

[31:11]: And our forces headed by Abdu Hazara went toward Bamian, and their move was very successful. Some of our forces from Balkhob captured Ahkolon at the time when Abdu Hazara captured Bamian. It was April 1999 when we captured Bamian. And Abdu Hazara is still alive, and so if you have some time you can also meet him.

A plane landed on 21 March. I requested General Dostum that he send Samangani, who is still alive, and Commander [unintelligible]. So I requested General Dostum send Ahmad Khan to me. He will come to me to thru Aholon and to Balkhob, then I will send him to Samangani where the Uzbeks population is. So he will be a very effective man in this area.

And it was a flight which landed with Ahmad Khan and some other commanders of General Dostum [Jumbish].

[34:50]: And then it was after the landing of Ahmad Khan and the Jumbish commanders. It was May 1999 when Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was still alive, arrived in the Darya Suf.

And before the landing of Ustad Atta, the commander of our Jamiat friends, was engineer Daoud. But he was injured in some battle there and he was shipped back to Panjshir.

Then I sent Ahmad Khan from Balkhob to Darya Suf to meet Ustad because the Tajiks and the Uzbeks were there in the Samangan province. So these two men had influence on the Tajik and the Uzbek. So I sent Ahmad Khan to meet Ustad. So they met together and there was some consensus on some issues, and they started attacking on some various points of Samangan province. So this new friend was very, very helpful and very successful. It was several fronts which was opened against the Taliban from a besieged area. First Sanjura, second Bamian, and third Darya Suf Samangan province.

So now Bamian was in our hands but it was really shocking for the Taliban that Bamian, a province which was in the heart of the Taliban area in those days, was taken from them and it

was being used by the anti-Taliban forces to supply all of other areas. So they prepared a large force for a big attack on Bamian, to recapture Bamian.

They attacked toward Bamian and we didn't have so much resources. So we were defeated from the Bamian. And once again the same thing happened. The Taliban started killing the local people. Again there was slaughter of the innocent people, killing the people in their houses and burning the houses.

And it was middle of the May 1999 when we lost Bamian once again.

[End of DV tape 27.]

GEN MOHAQIQ [DV tape 28, time 00:00]: After capturing Dadetoof [he spelled], 25 kilometers from Darya Suf], our forces retreated to Yakolah, but the Taliban got behind our forces in Yakolah. They collected the forces from uh Jallalaput, from Kandor, from all the southern eastern part, and they collected the forces [around 10,000 of their troops], and they moved toward Sallafud, which they were controlling. They arrived in Sallafud, and they tried to crush Malhok. It was the headquarter for the resistance at that time.

In this fight which had started in May 1999, the most cruel people among the Taliban, they participated. Faisel Dadoullah and Jalal Utinhaqani [he spelled].

A figure in the eastern part—he was also in that force. He was one of the commanders in chief of Taliban. He was administrator for the frontier. And they captured all of the places in Sancharra, around 600 houses were burned by the Taliban, and they advanced towards Balkhob.

And a lot of people started contacting me, and giving me advice to leave the area because the Taliban will capture the area because they had a very strong force, so it is better for me to go and take asylum. But I said no, it is very difficult for me to leave this area because this is my last, my last point. So I cannot leave like a refugee with my family. I am going to stay.

And I started planning how to defend the headquarters. So next day, at 9:00 in the morning, a very huge attack of artillery started towards our base. It was very huge fighting, hundreds of their artillery were fired at us. So I was planning what to do after the attack and then we heard a message by the wireless that Taliban are running back to this area.

And then the people of Talrissa, they requested help. And then all of my good fighters, which were trained then in Mahat, in our bases, I sent and the commander for Stardussi, to Darya Suf.

Yazin was the commander of the Hazara forces in Darya Suf.

The Taliban burned thousands of the houses of the people, and hundreds of people were killed. It was not real easy, it was just like a miracle that we resisted against the Taliban forces in a besieged area.

And in that 13 months, the intensity of the war in the Shamali Plains was very much decreased.

I think that we should also pay some attention towards the center, the Darya Suf, because there was a lot of rumors that the Taliban were going to seize the positions on the back side. So I was thinking that Darya Suf, which was one of the very important fronts against the Taliban, to keep this front alive, so we need to activate our fronts in the center. So I told him that I'm going to send people to the Darya Suf.

It was December 2000 when we flew from Panjshir and landed in Darya Suf.

GEN MOHAQIQ: I arranged around 1,000 caravan horses for a stop early, and they moved toward the center of Gunaston, at a time when it was very impossible to move. There was I think around...100 centimeter snow, so it was very difficult to move with these 1,000 horses towards Ekaulin.

It was 22 December at the peak of the winter when our boys trudged into Ekaulin and they captured Ekaulin.

Then in one day we started once again planning to attack Yakawakang [he spelled]. The Taliban captured Yakawakang. That was another tragedy, when the famous massacre of Yakawakang took place and more than 500 people were killed there. They collected the people, massacred them and burned more than 5,000 houses and more than 1,000 shops.

Then I was in touch with the international community. I wrote a letter to Kofi Annan, I wrote a letter to the Security Council, I wrote a letter to Lord Robinson of the NATO, the leader of the NATO, I wrote a lot of letters to the various human rights organizations that Taliban that Azalas should be taken in the shelter of the international community, and they should support Azalas.

And after few days, they attacked the second part of Ekaulin to the main Ekaulin headquarters. And they captured Ekaulin.

Then we were thinking that we should have a supply line, too. So we were thinking we should assemble at Shivartu [he spelled].

Around 700 of Caribee forces, of Jumbish forces, and Matah forces, I collected and I sent to capture Shivartu. The commander of Jumbish, Lal was killed later on, and Horan, commander of Hizdabadah, I send all these lead forces, Mr. Halee was there in Yakonan.

Then I wrote more than 300 letters. I went to the Security Council and to Kofi Annan, and I proposed that the banner should be the city of the peace. And we are willing to withdraw our forces from the vicinities of banner, and Taliban should also withdraw. It was March 2001, 19 March.

And it was late 2001 when, after consensus it was decided that Gen. Dostum should come, and we should open a new front in that area. It was late 2001 when Gen Dostum was sent from Panjshir and Khallili in Balkhob to do a front, and to reorganize and to open an effective front. So all those Caribee forces which were there they came back to join Gen. Dostum.

GEN MOHAQIQ: Balkhob is a very strategic area, very important area to the resistance. And the people of Balkhob, they warmly welcomed, they warmly received, cordially received, all visitors.

Then after some time there was another decision, that we should join forces, one front. Better chances of success.

Gen Dostum came to the Darya Suf with 1,000 Caribee forces. The people of the Darya Suf, they very warmly welcomed him. Due to consecutive years of drought, those people, of the Darya Suf could not really feed the soldiers or their horses; those were very difficult days.

Then the Taliban forces returned to Lemauk and completely controlled Bamian, they destroyed the statues, again, there was a massacre of the people, so I was feeling very sad, so again I started writing to the many agents, and I told that Taliban are killing our people.

One man, he's working at the United Nations, his name is Michael Sample, he's one of the men you might know, Michael Sample.

So he was working with UNICEF at that time, and he was bringing food materials, that we eat and other things to the areas that were affected by the drought.

I like him very much, because he helped and I told him Mr. Michael you have done so many good things to us, I want you to do one more, please if you could, if you could explain my wants to the world...

GEN MOHAQIQ: You see that...this is the very big sector of the terrorists, so we cannot fight against them by ourselves, we need help from the international community. There should

be a very strong line of defense against this invasion of terrorism. It was past December 2000, then I officially requested of Security Council, I requested please send the forces inside Afghanistan and help the people of Afghanistan; otherwise, the war will go beyond the borders of Afghanistan.

[End of DV tape 28.]

GEN MOHAQIQ [DV tape 29, time 00:00]: Michael Sample promised that I will respect the rights throughout the world, where I can, and I promise that I will try my best even to send this tape to the White House, to the President of the United States, that this type of demand also exists that people want a peacekeeping force in Afghanistan....

Then there was a very unfortunate event. The assassination of Ahmad Shah Massoud, an explosion and Ahmad Shah Massoud was martyred in that explosion...Our people wanted Ahmad Shah Massoud to be strong, alive, and support us from our back side, because we were besieged there...so often there were assassinations, but now it is very difficult for our friends to defend in Takhar and Panjshir. After his death, we were afraid we are going to be defeated in the besieged area. So I met a lot of old and trusted people. I called a very big meeting in Darya Suf, the Darya Suf clergies, with the tribal heads, the elders, the youngsters. I asked them, Ahmad Shah Massoud is now dead, so now what is the decision of your people? Will you support me to fight against the Taliban? ... Then the people told me that we fought against Taliban so many, so long. The Taliban will come and they will massacre our people and they will burn our houses. So even if Panjshir and Takhar will be fallen, we will fight there, and we will not surrender to Taliban.

My meeting was continued with the elders of Darya Suf, the telephone came, and I was informed that this heart-wrenching event of 11 September is taking place in New York. It was very difficult to analyze how it is possible [for] such a big event in United States. Because personally, I had seen the Twin Towers in 1996, I was there in New York. It was very difficult, we wanted to believe, because that was not a military area, and how brutally somebody will go and can do this. After that event, the contacts between our elders and the United States officials started. Gen. Franks contacted General Fahim, Gen. Dostum. Then, Robert Sentulee, I believe he's working with congressman who usually visited Afghanistan. So he also contacted me from United States, and he asked me what is your point of view, what do you think about what is going on in the UN, Afghanistan, and the war against terrorism? So I stated that I was one of the people who declared on behalf of the political view of our political committee of Wadat Party. I declared that we are one of the supporters of this war. After few days,

Gen. Dostum came to my house in Darya Suf. He asked me that what is your views? Gen. Franks he has said that a special group is going to land in Darya Suf. I told Gen. Dostum we are very important, we welcome, depending on when they are going to come, we will receive them very warmly, because they are coming to help us.

Then it was decided that they will land just in front of my base, in Danitor, where my house was there, my military base was there. So then as a signal we would light 14 bulbs. But it was very difficult in that area, because there was no electricity. I erected the 14 bulbs in front of my base, in Danito. There was a person that was leading that special group, his code name was Babajan. I took them to my headquarters, and they had lots of tea. And with a few vehicles which I had in those days, I loaded all their cargo in their vehicles, I sent all them to General Dostum's base in Hassani Pass. After few days, we send them from Hassani Pass to the front line in Dehi. Then, a special military group landed after few days, headed by Mark. After that, the infantry attacks, and the aerial bombardment—really coordinated moves—started. On the ground, there were ground forces, cavalry forces with General Dostum, Hezbe Wadat, Master Atta on the ground, the Special Forces, they were coordinating with the jets, and the planes, and they were bombarding the enemy, so the advance started.

After 1 month of bombardment, we realized the last resistance power of the enemy was going to be broken; we believed that the enemy is going to fall. The forces which I have, most of those people lost at least one of their family members, against Taliban, those people had been massacred by the Taliban. These forces are full of a sense of revenge so I know tragedies will take place, and a lot of people, mostly Pashtun, will suffer if these forces go into the north with this feeling. I, General Dostum, and Atta, we collected commanders and for three consecutive days' meeting. We requested our commanders only fight those men who had the weapons and were fighting against them. If somebody lays down their weapon or stops fighting and will start walking to his house, don't fight him. Nobody has the right to hurt any civilian. Hazaras, Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbek, we are all brothers. Fight only those who are fighting against you.

A lot of commanders they started crying "Why are you telling us? They killed our fathers, they killed our brothers. It is not possible." I told them, look, they were foreigners, or they were headed by the foreigners. They were Arabs, they were Chechens, they belonged to the Central Asian countries, they were Pakistanis. They were foreigners, they didn't think about our homes, about our country. And the people that were coming from the south, from the east, for them and the future of our countries, is not very much important, but for us, we have to

live in this country. We have to live with all that incidents inside this country. We will have to deal like an Afghan with them. And we should not show any act of revenge.

This psychological work on commanders had a very good result when we started advancing toward Mazar Sharif. Mostly we hurt only those people who fought against us. Mostly they were killed or arrested. Otherwise, nobody hurt any civilian or any person who surrendered. In that same city, only 3 years before, around 10,000 people were killed, and 90% of them were Hazaras; Tajiks were also killed. Uzbeks were also killed, but when we turn into the city, there was no massacre, nobody hurt because of being related to any specificity, nothing happened here. Only some Pakistanis who came to Mazar Sharif recently, for Jihad, for fighting against American against the North—and even they didn't know Taliban—ran away, they left the city. And there were strangers to this city, they were in Sultan Razia School, high school, the girls high school, so they started fighting with us. All of them were Pakistani, and they were very ignorant. The people who came to fight against the Americans, against the people of the North, so we were requesting them to surrender. But they were not surrendering themselves. That is the Jumbish forces, Jamiat Wadat forces, they were on the ground fighting with that troop, and the American forces they were bombarding that school from air. So they killed there.

Then the war was in Konduz. Mullah Dadoullah, Mullah Faisel, Mullah Noori, they send the messages to their own people there, there was a person there by the name of Rogghousoddin. He sent the message that they wanted to surrender. I, Gen. Dostum, and Gen. Atta went together and there was a general consensus. We announced that if they will sign, nobody then will kill you. And at Qala Jangi, Mullah Faisel and Mullah Noorii, they came to talk to us. Along with some other people...then when we went for talks, it was really strange. We were watching those people, with headdresses like domes. And it was very strange when we watched those people [Gist: the same people who had committed atrocities and cut throats, the same people now come to us with bent heads...] with the dry lips, and all of them were very shameful, so it was very interesting to see that scene...then our promise that no one will kill you, now you are safe if you will surrender.

I was given the charge of the security council of the city, the defense of the city, my troops were in charge of the city. Gen. Dostum and Gen. Atta went to disarm the Taliban. I think, when Mullah Faisel and others went back, they changed their mind [and decided not to surrender – this is consistent with other interviews]. All of a sudden, a really strong bombardment started, but this time there was a new type of plane, an AC-130. So many holes, a lot of

holes came from that plane. So after the bombardment, they changed their mind, and they announced that we are going to surrender.

GEN MOHAQIQ: I thought they were going to Konduz. But, the big force of the Taliban consists of many hundreds of foreigners, Uzbeks, Pakistanis, Arabs, these people, many hundred people, they started marching towards Mazar Sharif, and they reached the outskirts of the city. So there was a plan [that he discovered later] that these many hundreds of people would return into the city, and they would destroy, killing everybody who will come in front of them. They would once again try to recapture the city. I heard from the BBC, early in the morning, that Mullah Omar, the Taliban chief here, was announcing that very soon his forces would recapture a very important province of Afghanistan.

It was my sixth sense. I'm feeling, that this major city must be Mazar Sharif, because I was the head of the security division. I told General Nader Ali Khan, don't let these people come near the city, disarm them, and collect them around 15 kilometers from the city. There was talk there by that clan called Marmot, and they were asked to drop their weapons. But they were not handing over their weapons. Then our people asked them, "If you are going to surrender as you have announced, why don't you hand over your weapons?" They were saying "we are going to the city with our weapons, we will surrender." We said we cannot accept this type of surrender that you are not laying down your weapon and you are going to surrender. Their vehicles were in a line. All of them were suicide bombers and suicide squads, so there was an understanding with the Americans that we need air support. So there was B-52s flying overhead, so if don't surrender, start bombarding them.

After two or three flights of B-52s they start realizing the danger and started to lay down their weapons; they surrendered. But the hand grenades and the minor guns which can be hidden under their cloaks remained with them.

The next question was, "Where should we keep these many hundred people? At the airport, to the university?" But there was also discussion if they should be scattered from inside the cities, then no one can collect them, this is very dangerous. All of them are terrorists, they are foreigners. So then it was decided to send them to Qala Jangi.

When they were there, the body search started; they dropped grenades. General Nadir Ali Khan [this is spelled out for interviewer], he was one of the very best generals, he was really well qualified, he was very old, from Afghan army. He had a very good role throughout the 3 years of resistance, he was killed there. There was another commander, Sayed Assad All, he was also good commander, he was killed there. Another man, who was the first who con-

quered that Bamian Hazra he was seriously injured. I sent him to Uzbekistan and he was treated there. Then that body search process was stopped there because it was dark and it was very difficult.

So the people who were in charge of this task, they started locking them up into the prison of the basement. So the next day, when they started writing the details of those prisoners, the body search started. So in between, they attacked the soldiers there, and the fight started. Sayed Kamal, in charge of security, he was injured. Our friend Mike Spann, was killed...may God bless his soul, he was a very good man, he was my friend. It was very bad. They were very dangerous people, and the fighting started; they were even killing themselves. Very voluntarily, five, six of them, they were embracing each other, and they were exploding them with hand grenade, they were very fanatical people. John Walker is one of the prisoners.

[End of DV tape 29.]

BILL K: When did you defeat the Taliban in the Safid Kotah?

GEN MOHAQIQ [DV tape 26,⁵⁷ time 30:34]: I don't know, maybe about 15 days before starting operation against Beshcam.

BILL K: Did they counterattack and recover some of the lost area?

GEN MOHAQIQ: We defeated the Taliban. We did not lose ground.

BILL K: Where were GEN Atta and GEN Dostum?

GEN MOHAQIQ: Ustad Atta's forces were in Aq Koprak. And General Dostum's forces came from Qara Jangel [4 kilometers west of Cobaki] and our forces from Safid Kotah.

We joined General Dostum's forces in Chapchal. We came from the east and they came from the west.

There was one important thing. Many times the forces fought hand-to-hand. But when one of our forces captured one place it remained ours. We did not lose ground after capturing an area.

Then after advancing from Safid Kotah we fought in Baluch.

BILL K: What was the hardest fighting from Safid Kotah to Mazar? What was the most difficult area to capture?

⁵⁷ We ran out of tape and had to use the end of DV tape 26.

GEN MOHAQIQ: Safid Kotah was the most difficult.

BILL K: Was that because you had to capture Safid Kotah by yourself?

GEN MOHAQIQ: Yeah, it was very strategic and really high altitude. And a lot of the area was mined.

BILL K: So in the Safid Kotah area you had 2,200 people, of which 500 were horsemen?

GEN MOHAQIQ: Was a very, very good attack we were crawling up then it was hand-to-hand fighting. They were injured by antipersonnel mines. It was easy for the Taliban to defend the area because it was very high and our forces were low. Because we had to climb and they were fighting us from high altitude. It was very difficult to capture.

BILL K: Were they in bunkers and trench systems?

GEN MOHAQIQ: Yes. Trenches and bunkers. Many, many bunkers. More than 200 bunkers.

BILL K: Did they have tanks?

GEN MOHAQIQ: Yes. They have tanks and artillery.

BILL K: How did you defeat the tanks?

GEN MOHAQIQ: It was hard. There was a famous commander cooperating with the Taliban, his name was Galgede, and his brother was also engaged in military activities. His name was Matoo. So they already exchanged of talk between our commanders on the wireless sets. So they would come in on the same line. Matoo was telling one of our commanders that if he captures this mountain he [Matoo] will give his wife to him. Because they were completely sure that nobody can capture this mountain.

Then after that again they came on the same line on the wireless so then he told Matoo, "We captured this area so now what do you say?" So then Matoo said that Mullah had advised them to retreat.

BILL K: Which way did his forces go?

GEN MOHAQIQ: Along this route toward Mazar [Beshcam]. To Beshcam and they started to reattack against our forces.

BILL K: How many forces did they have in the Safid Kotah?

GEN MOHAQIQ: More than 5,000. Because they had forces in Safid Kotah in the same time in Beshcam and Chapchal and Baluch.

BILL K: So the most difficult campaign for you was in Safid Kotah? Did Chapchal go easier?

GEN MOHAQIQ [38:00]: No. It was also very difficult to capture Baluch and to capture Safid Kotah and Chapchal. But the bombardment helped.

BILL K: Once you moved through Baluch was it easier to move through Pole Barak to Tiangi?

GEN MOHAQIQ: After Baluch they did not resist.

BILL K: What about Tiangi?

GEN MOHAQIQ: They stayed there very brief resistance was there. In 24 hours.

BILL K: Why do you think they only stayed 24 hours?

GEN MOHAQIQ: [Back in the Darya Suf] When they were defeated there [Safid Kotah and Chapchal] they retreat to Baluch. Reinforcements were coming from Takar to help these forces of Taliban. Then B-52 got them. And they had a very exact target and where we were coming [through Shulgareh] we saw a lot of pieces of hand, head, feet so we were finding them.

It was very interesting for me during this operation the aerial bombardment of the United States forces was really impressive. There were no civilians hurt and their target was very correct and they hitting only the enemy.

And the house which was just beside that, any military headquarters the house owner was quite confident that he will not be hit.

[End of Interview with GEN Mohaqiq and DV tape 26.]

Appendix D—NOTES

The attached index and Notes summarize discussions and interviews that may have taken place without the benefit of recording for later transcription or may simply summarize the interview or notebooks that were used outside the interview process. They represent Notes 1 through 5:

1. Interviews with Capt Black, the “Angel of Death,”
2. Interviews with SFC Bill,
3. Interviews with GEN Mohaqiq,
4. Summary of Notebook 1, and
5. Summary of Notebook 2.

Both notebooks were used during the Battle Site Survey to record various events.

Interview Notes # ^a	Subject	Remarks
1	Interview Notes—Capt Black and LtCol Morrow	5 Dec interview. “Angel of Death”—Capt Black & LtCol Morrow are AC130H crewmembers and flew missions in Konduz and Qala Jangi 25–27 November 2001.
2	Interview Notes—SFC Bill B, 11 Dec	SFC Bill discusses Tiger 02A's movement from 8 November to link up with CPT Mark, meeting with GEN Dostum, movement to the Kafer Qalah, the BM-21 strike, and movement east.
3	Interview Notes—GEN Mohaqiq	GEN Mohaqiq discusses the various Northern Alliance fronts. He also indicated that the Darya Suf elders were adverse to Mohaqiq and Dostum initially moving into the Darya Suf because of the number of Hazaras killed previously—see transcript
4	Notebook 1 ^b	Starts with discussions with Capt Black (referred to as “Angel of Death”) in Turkey and ends with Gen Dostum (Esam translating) north of Tiangi. Provides various spellings, diagrams, and coordinates, most of which were published in IDA Document D-2925

^aInterview Notes are referenced within the publication as N#, e.g., N1, N2, etc.

^bA summary of each notebook is provided. The notebooks are on file in the IDA Simulation Center.

NOTES 1. CAPT BLACK AND LTCOL MORROW, AC-130 CREW MEMBERS

On 5 December 2002, at the PAX Terminal, Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, we (the Battle Site Survey Team) met crew members of the AC 130Hs that supported the SOF teams and Northern Alliance forces in Konduz. They were enroute to Karchi Khanabad, and we were enroute to Bagram via Karchi Khanabad. One of the crew members later supported U.S./Northern Alliance troops during the uprising at Qali Jangi. Both of the crewmembers were located at Karchi Khanabad and flew missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from 25 November until 19 January 2002. See 5 December interviews.

Captain Black is a navigator with the AC-130H and assigned to the 16th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Florida. Captain Black arrived in Karchi Khanabad on 25 November 2001 and immediately after crew rest received a mission to support ground teams in the vicinity of Konduz, Afghanistan. Karchi Khanabad is approximately 50 miles from the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan border (north of Mazar-e Sharif). Konduz is 70 miles east of Mazar-e Sharif. Captain Black indicated that they had fired 100 rounds of 105 mm and 400 rounds of 40 mm during the engagements at Konduz. On the 27th of November, her aircraft was missioned to assist in suppressing the uprising at Qala Jangi Prison.

LtCol Bob Morrow is a Fire Support Officer with the AC 130H and assigned to the 16th SOS at Hurlburt Field, Florida. LtCol Morrow also arrived in Karchi Khanabad on 25 November 2001 and flew in a second AC 130H in support of ground forces at Konduz on 25/26 November 2001. I asked both Captain Black and LtCol Morrow about rules of engagement during Operation Enduring Freedom—what were they initially and how they evolved. I also asked if the rules of engagement were ever confusing. LtCol Morrow said that after crew rest and before their first mission they were briefed by the lawyer and commander on rules of engagement. The first rule concerned self-defense. They could return fire if fired upon. In most cases they linked up with a ground forward air controller, and it was the controller's responsibility to ID targets and then direct them on target. Sometimes they would be prebriefed interdiction missions. In those cases they would receive four corners of a box (kill box or engagement zones) in which they were allowed to engage anything within the target area. As an example, they used the kill box in Tora Bora.

Both Captain Black and LtCol Morrow indicated that it wasn't always easy to make a link-up with a team. Sometimes they had to search frequencies, and sometimes the signals were barely audible.

I also asked about training—how were they able to recognize whether ground fire was directed at them or not. They said that pilots and others took direction from the door gunners and other crewmembers when alerted to threat situations. They practiced avoidance measures as crew drills, and the “spotters” trained on tapes that provided the threat signatures on ZSU fire, S60 fire, small-arms fire, missile firing, etc.; hence, they learned to discriminate.

NOTE 2. SFC BILL DISCUSSES TIGER 02A ACTIVITIES ON 8–10 NOVEMBER 2001

On 8 November 2001, SFC Bill, along with SSG Pete, SSG Chad and TSgt Steve T with Mak Dume (or Mock Doom, both are phonetic) and several Afghan soldiers, SFC Andy, and SFC Steve K departed Omitak Mountain. He spent the night of the 8th in the Shulgareh area where he linked up with CPT Mark and the rest of the team. This was approximately a 30 mile (CPT Mark's estimate) walk (the horses carried the equipment) from Omitak to Shulgareh.

He, along with the rest of the ODA minus Tiger 02C (who already deployed to the Kafer Qalah), arrived at General Dostum's command post south of the Tiangi at approximately noon on the 9 November 2001. General Dostum wanted a team to move farther to the east of the Tiangi to interdict any fleeing enemy—his team, Tiger 02A, was assigned the mission. On 9 November 2001 he had a horse and rode most of the time except for periodically walking the horse as they traveled in the mountainous areas east of the Balkh River and Tiangi Pass.

SFC Bill was supposed to link up with Haji Rakasara (now the Mayor of Balkh) to the east of Kafer Qalah in the high ground south of Mazar-e Sharif. SFC Bill said it could have been Hill 1730 to the north of 1970 (1:100k map) but wasn't sure. Again, his mission was to strike the enemy fleeing their defensive positions on the north side of the pass (fleeing to the east); the commander's intent was to take the De Dadi Airfield south of Mazar-e Sharif. Haji, however, did not show up, and SFC Bill's team, unsure of landmine or enemy locations, found cover and concealment for the night. Note: This tactic of deploying a team deep to interdict either enemy reinforcements or retreat was also used in the Darya Suf—recall the deployment of SFC Bill's team to Omitak Mountain in late October to interdict Taliban Reinforcements deploying to the Darya Suf area.

On the early afternoon of 9 November 2001, SFC Bill's team approached Tiangi from the south on the west side of the Balkh River. Approximately 300 meters south of the current bridge (waypoint Tiangi Bridge) SFC Bill's team crossed the river and headed east on the south slope of the Kafer Qalah. He was approximately midslope as he walked; at approximately 1400 the enemy fired about three BM21 Barrages in the Tiangi and on the Kafer Qalah—probably targeting MSG Paul and CDR Haji Chari's position at the top. There were

three rocket barrages. They occurred with just a couple of minutes between each, and there were 10 to 15 rockets per volley. The accuracy of the fire increased with each barrage. Several of the rockets struck approximately 100 feet from where he was walking; SFC Andy was thrown from his horse. It was confusion as each sought cover from the rocket attack. No one was hurt, and they regrouped and proceeded east; as he approached the east-west ridge line from Kafer Qalah, he remained near the ridge but in defilade. He spent the night in a rocky area probably southwest of hill 1730. The next morning, the team made its way up to the high ground for situational awareness and then proceeded down the terrain toward Kariz Kalan (1:100k map) and then north to Qala Jangi. It was by chance that everyone was there.

BILL K: On 9 November, who was with you and what type of transportation did you have (who had horses, what were the horse colors, who was walking, who had horses but were walking, were there any mules?)

SFC BILL: Everyone had a horse. They were brown or white. The team was forced to walk at times due to rough terrain and weakened horses. They also had a mule.

BILL K: How long was the horseback ride on 26 October 2001 as you moved from Cobaki to Omitak, and who was with you?

SFC BILL: I moved with SFC Andy, SFC Steve, and CDR Haji Habib to Omitak Mountain. It was an 18 hour horseback ride.

[Interview by Bill Knarr.]

NOTE 3. GENERAL MOHAQIQ PROVIDES BACKGROUND PRIOR TO THE U.S. ENTRY INTO AFGHANISTAN

On 13 December Bill Knarr interviewed Mr. Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq, Chairman, Political Committee, Wahdat, at his compound at 1900. The translator was Dr. Abdul Wahid Yasa, in charge of international relations, Wahdat. Also present was Engineer Tahir, Deputy Commander, 38th Infantry Division.

I was impressed with Mr. Mohaqiq. He seemed very honest, patient, and concerned with telling the story. He wanted to start his story in 1998 because that's when he was forced into the Darya Suf. See separate interview in transcript 25.

In August 1998 tragedies struck Afghanistan with the arrival of Osama Bin Laden, the religious schools, and the Taliban and the Arabs aggressively infiltrating the north. I resisted. But Mullah Omar and the Taliban won, and he decreed that they could kill anyone in a 3-day period. During that period 10,000 people were killed, 90% of the people belonged to the Hazara—they killed them because they were a religious minority; however, they killed Uzbeks too.

On 8 August I left the city by helicopter and went to the mountains in the Darya Suf. There I organized 2,000 forces and set up a front. I organized a second front to capture Bamian.

I collected the elders of the Darya Suf and asked what we should do, and they asked that we leave the area because of the danger to the people. I formed two groups, one in the Balkhob area and the second near Bamian.

Fahim Kalili, Vice President, flew to Panjshir and then to Tajikistan. Then I found the leaders, Gen Dostum was in Elam (Iran). I flew from Shibartu to city of Elam to meet with Habib and Dostum. I was then 26 days in Mashat. On 22 October 1998, I landed in Dahar. Massoud was worried. I told Massoud the Taliban were supported by Osama Bin Laden and the Pakistan Army, so we divided our fronts. I would go to Balkhob and start on back side of Balkhob. On 8 November 1998, I flew from Panjshir to Balkhob to meet the soldiers. I had 100 Kalashnikovs and 10 rockets. The mountains were at 4,000 to 5,000 meters altitude and had snow. We attacked Sangcharakj in Serepol Province to the North. I asked Massoud to send the Tajik Commander Haji Haliso [so] it wouldn't be just Sunni versus Hazara. With 500 men I cap-

tured Sancharak in December 1998. They recaptured, but then we had the advantage with the 2,000 Uzbeks and Tajiks that joined our anti Taliban forces.

After four months I went to Bamian and then with 400 troops under CDR Jahany went to the Darya Suf; they welcomed us.

On 27 March 1999 we captured the Darya Suf and moved toward Bamian. CDR Abdul Hazara, a good commander, captured Bamian in April 1999. In May 1999 General Atta landed in the Darya Suf.

We then established three fronts—Balkhob, Bamian, and the Darya Suf.

The Taliban recaptured Bamian and massacred the people—they put people in their homes and then burnt the homes.

My headquarters was in Dane Toor, 25 kilometers south of Dehi. I moved to Sar-i Pol and the Taliban tried to crush Balkhob—the center of the resistance. On 8 May 2000, three Mullahs were focused on the north—Mullah Faisel, Mullah Dadullah, and Mullah Brother.

The Darya Suf requested help so I sent my fighters to the Darya Suf. CDR Hausine, commander of the Hazara, was in the Darya Suf and fought for 13 consecutive months. The Darya Suf repelled hundreds of attacking Taliban. Hundreds of Hazara were killed.

It was a good time for Massoud to reorganize forces in the area. During the winter there was 80–100 cm of snow.

On 22 December 2000 the Taliban captured Yakawalong and massacred townspeople. In early 2001 I was in contact with various authorities and told them that the Taliban were doing ethnic cleansing and that the Hazara should be taken under the shelter of the United Nations.

[End of discussion with Bill Knarr.]

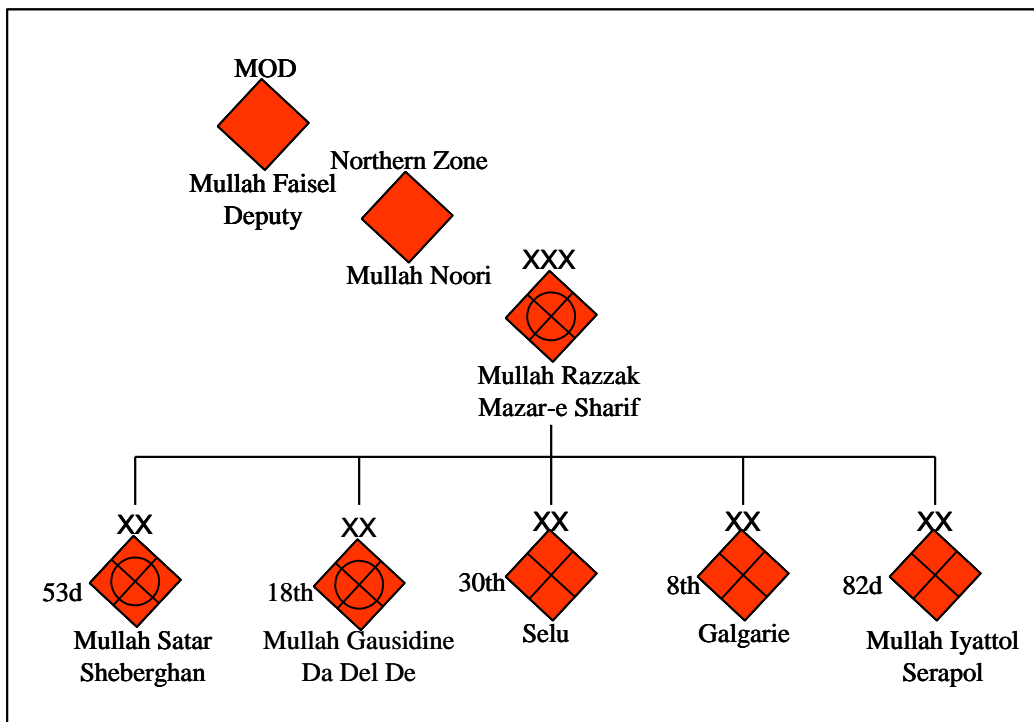
NOTES 4. SUMMARY OF NOTEBOOK 1

1. Starts with discussions with CPT Black (referred to as “Angel of Death”) in Turkey [see notes 1 above].
2. Interviews in Sheberghan (Note: all diagrams were redrawn and published in IDA Document D-2925)
 - Tiangi Diagram page 9.
 - Ak-yasin diagrams page 18; Ali Sarwar diagrams page 19.
 - GEN Morta Sar and Haji Muhammed Abul, Deputy Mayor, pages 20–24. Discusses bridge at Pole Baraq and states that four things were significant: (1) assembling the Afghanistan people (bringing Dostum, Mohaqiq, and Atta together), (2) taking out the Taliban air support, (3) precise U.S. air strikes, and (4) U.S. forces on ground.
3. CPT Mark (page 25) provided coordinates 10761204 for where they stayed the night of 7 November after crossing the river.
4. CPT Mark notes on page 27 the coordinates 42SUE 39808596 as the trail head to Cobaki from the Darya Suf (these are different than waypoint 14).
5. 9 December 2002, page 31, GEN Dostum says there were three battles that won the Darya Suf—Esam’s handwriting
 - Safeed Kotal (white snow steep).
 - Beshcam—Chapchal.
 - Baluch (the name of a minority in Afghanistan).
6. Page 32/33:
 - Interview with CDR Fakir; Mullah Gahaire; Oattchapper Village, Mullah Doud, “When you capture this village you will capture the north” (see transcripts of Baluch).
 - Diagram of area by Mark
7. Page 34, Tiger 02B’s position; diagram of the area.
8. Page 35, waypoint 039, Mark’s route from Tiger 02C and then out—waypoints 041, 042, 043.

9. Page 36, Keshendeh-ye Bala Commissioner Mullah Mohammad Haschim:
 - 200 degrees to SFC Bill's.
 - 195 degrees to village.
10. GEN Dostum discusses his conversation with the Turkish embassy U.S. colonel.
11. Page 39, north of Tiangi, Juma Namangani, Uzbekistan Opposition leader, fighting for Al Qaeda, taken to Loagar when he was injured and died there. Kafir Kala (all in Esam's handwriting).

NOTES 5. SUMMARY OF NOTEBOOK 2

1. Notebook 5 starts with discussions on 11 December 2002 at the ODA house with CDR Kamal and GEN Habib Bullah, former Taliban. GEN Habib Bullah lists the commanders, both Northern Alliance and Taliban. The Taliban include
 - Mullah Sattar, 53rd Division CDR, Sheberghan
 - Mullah Razzak, Corps Commander
 - Diagram, page 11, re-created below
2. Talks about the 3,500 Afghans sent to Pakistan to school
3. Page 17, starts discussions with General Atta. In Marmol he had 1,500 men with 300 horsemen—the transcripts do a good job of capturing the discussions.



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