SME-GFA: So they engaged five--- like eight pax at this point kill six, two keep going and a couple more come out of the 280 series.

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: Well no there is not even a 280 series; we just label these the 280.

NAVIGATOR- Yea, the JTAC actually labeled them 280 just because they were going northwest.

SME-GFA: Ok got it, so that's a follow on label?

NAVIGATOR: Yes sir.

SME-GFA: Ok.

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: And there is the time line, they proceed down this road---

NAVIGATOR actually they were moving tactically through the trees here the whole time.

SME_GFA: And the crowd continues to build as they go along?

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: You've got it; here they pick up two more, they move to three, move to five and you can see the time stamps on their route

TELEVISION SENSOR OPERATOR: [inaudible] [paper rattling] compound they were waiting on the outside and people would come out and meet up with them and run, and tactically move again and they were hiding under a bridge at one point and then more pax met up with them , I think that were ----

SME-GFA: Did you guys see weapons, did you get PID on the weapons?

TELEVISION SENSOR OPERATOR: No we didn't see any PID weapons.

SME-GFA: So --somehow you find out that the IRF is spinning up, but you never knew what the actual mission of the IRF was?

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: to interdict the squirters is what we assessed.

SME-GFA: So you got that?

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: Yes sir.

SME-JSOAC: But that was not given to you, you assessed that through your internal cockpit comms.

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: It was all moving in that direction because the JTAC, [____(b)(3), (b)(6)____], when these guys were farther and farther west into the north, we say 'ok, they're going to use these as a follow on objective.' So, that's the only positive communication and we knew, 'ok they are going to launch and what we have seen in the past they will launch someone else to go and interdict these squirters.' I don't know if it was "Okay attention on the net, this QRF is launching to interdict these squirters, here is the TOT ---

SME-GFA: You say you don't know that ?

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: That was not broadcast but what was broadcast over the net was that we are going to use this as a

follow-on objective and then on helo common we start picking up. Ok, this is what's going on, [(b)(3), (b)(6)] traffic for the Team [(b)(3), (b)(6)] on that objective---

SME-GFA: [(b)(3), (b)(6)] is who?

SME-GFN1: [(b)(3), (b)(6)] is the (TF) [(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c] officer.

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: And that traffic was spinning up, saying 'ok, these guys are going to this HLZ,' but I think we've got the MIRC logs.

IO: At the time of the aircraft downing, you had the pax count at 8, is that right?

TELEVISION SENSOR OPERATOR: Sir, yea there was 8 in the tree line ,

NAVIGATOR: They stopped underneath; the terrain here is actually pretty significant, probably about a 20ft drop off from the road down to the tree line where they stopped. When we came back to these guys, we initially passed them off to [(b)(3), (b)(6)], they maintained eyes on in the area, we came back this was after the [(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c] element moved to interdict the 1/A/1 and 1/A/2 squirters. Those were the additional squirters that were in the area, we basically swapped sensors with [(b)(3), (b)(6)]. So, we went looking for the 1/A/1 and 1/A/2 and [(b)(3), (b)(6)] had the 280 squirters. After [(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c] pushed through]

IO: Incidentally, did they ever find and/or engage them?

TELEVISION SENSOR OPERATOR: Negative, sir.

IO: Negative? I didn't think so. Okay. So, (b)(3), (b)(6), at this point now, is watching the eight MAMs [military age males] in the elbow of the road --

NAVIGATOR: Yes, sir.

IO: -- in the tree line.

NAVIGATOR: Yes, sir.

IO: Okay.

NAVIGATOR: When we brought our sensor back, IR got on the position and we watched three of the 280 squirters move off to the west and then up to the north to this next compound; this next little village up there. That's when we labeled them 280B, so the 280A was still a group of five --

IO: --five?

NAVIGATOR: Right; and then the 280B went up to these buildings; this big one right here and then there was another small building off to the west.

IO: Okay, and where was this pole like object that was referenced?

NAVIGATOR: [Looking through documents.] The 280B squirters were down here about 500 meters to the southeast of HLZ(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c and the turret that we saw --

IO: I'm with you -OK, I understand

NAVIGATOR: -- where the people were was much closer to where the crash site was --

IO: I'm absolutely clear.

SME-GFA: [(b)(3), (b)(6)] was looking at something in the wood line. Do you guys have any idea what they were looking at?

SME-GFN1: He said there looked like there was something --

SME_GFA: There's a tower. It's sitting in the middle of the trees.

SME-GFN1: -- like a tower in the wood line.

NAVIGATOR: Which line were you looking at?

SME-GFA: I don't know. You look at the feed, it was all in lat/long. But, it looked like a group of trees with a tower and --

NAVIGATOR: We never saw that.

SME-GFA: It looked like a big turret kind of tower. So, did somebody tell you to go look at HLZ [(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.?]? I think you said they did; right?

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: Well, no. Not specifically.

IO: Did you take it as an implied task to be prepared to burn HLZ [(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.?]?

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: That's normally what we do, and that's why we establish COMs with the helos prior to their infil, when we hear they are spinning-up and we asked them, "would you like us

to put the burn down," and they said "affirmative, one minute out," we said "we got it."

SME-GFA: Did you guys get a launch time, a TOT (time on target) time?

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: We got a TOT, and the original TOT –

NAVIGATOR-in the initial traffic we were passed the grid for HLZ (b)(3), (b)(6) as it's depicted on the product, sir: VC8067064160. We were passed: "There's 30 PAX. 280 land heading on HLZ (b)(3), (b)(6), GU2 is going to be the primary JTAC on that bird." The initial infil time we were passed was 2150Z and they were going to be operating on FD3. So, like we talked about, there were significant delays getting Extortion into the HLZ. I talked with (b)(3), (b)(6) about the issue with (b)(3), (b)(6) We pushed everybody to (b)(3), (b)(6) so that was no longer an issue.

SME-GFA: You talked to (b)(3), (b)(6) when?

IO: I'm sorry, say --

NAVIGATOR: That was while they were in bound.

SME-GFA: In bound?

IO: Say the original TOT again.

NAVIGATOR: The original TOT that we were passed was 2150.

IO: Okay and 2209 --

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: This is an important fact too, in my mind, was the initial run-in - let's see

SECRET

IO: -- Right, it's about a 120, but you said he was going to land 280?

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: Right, they were originally going to come in something like this and it ended up -- We saw their feed, their BFT tracker and they're initially coming here, and then they're like, "well, I don't know what's going through," you know their comms but they end up coming through and switching it.

IO: Did you know that? Or, did you assume that based on a land heading of 280 because the route did take them out to northwest, and Chalk 2, (b)(1)1.4a,(b)(1)1.4c did fall off at the six-minute point, approximately, entered left hand holding oriented toward that objective, but lead continued around with the intent to land 280? My understanding was that he was going to approach from the northwest, make a pedal turn and --

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: We did not get that from the flight. We assumed with their landing heading that they would be coming in from that direction, so --

SME-JSOAC: But you were tracking their BFTs as they [inaudible] --

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: No, we weren't.

SME-JSOAC: You were not?

SECRET

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: This is after the fact, because we were like, "Why was there that large delay," because we heard them call 3 minutes out, and then we're like, okay, we've got like 2 minutes before the call for the burn and there was a significant amount of time. Several minutes had passed from when we anticipated hearing that 'one minute out' call. We had a discussion whether or not to call the helos and see what the delay was. We're like, "Well, they could be in a critical phase of flight here. We don't want to bug them. We'll see what boils down. We'll give them a little more time." Then, we heard the 'one minute out' call and then we but the burn down [inaudible].

SME-GFN1: Now, there was some discussion -- people questioning, whether there was a request for a burn or a sparkle much earlier than one minute out. Do you guys -- can you guys speak about that?

IO: I think the request for sparkle was actually the (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) elements that where asking to sparkle it and that was so they could slew their TADs --

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: **to the 280 Bravos.** Yes, sir.

SME-GFN1: Okay.

IO: Actually, it was to slew their TADs to (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4. As they came back out they asked for sparkle and you can see it in their

TADs they're searching for it. They asked to sparkle and he
locks up on what I presume to be your --

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: -- our laser.

SME-GFA: Any COMs traffic with GU2? Any taskers in there or is
it just COMs check type stuff --

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: This is a COM check -- he was having
difficulty talking to [(b)(3), (b)(6)] just in general and I think
that was probably due to terrain and -- at the altitude we were
at we had good COMs (communication) with him. The only thing
that he had asked us to do was to make sure that [(b)(3), (b)(6)]
knew that we were going to be operating on FD2. So both JTACs
were on the same freq when they got on the ground.

SME-GFA: But your understanding was you're getting tasked from
GU2 once it hit the ground?

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: We've -- Yeah -- I don't remember exactly
who was going to be tasked to which JTAC. I know the discussion
was had, but I can't remember exactly who [(b)(3), (b)(6)] --
how they had worked out the allocation of assets.

SME-GFA: I guess going back to the post-RPG launch. Did you
guys put out a net call, "Hey POO, did you slew a sparkle to
that area?"

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: [inaudible] -- we told them. Yes, sir --
that there was -- we had RPGs.

NAVIGATOR: Yeah, AWT immediately called it on the helo common and then we got our sensors in the area. And initially, when the IR moved to the location of the crash, personally it was -- the strength of an idea. I didn't believe that was a helicopter because there was nothing. It was just a fire ball. So, we kept searching in the area, and then finally went back to it, and realized that yes, that was actually the helicopter and then on the AWT tape you can hear about 20 seconds after the helo actually went down is when I told [(b)(3), (b)(6)] that Extortion had been hit by an RPG.

SME-GFA: Yeah, I guess the reason I'm asking is because AH's (attack helicopter) is saying POO in this area up here. You guys are saying down here --

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: We saw them engage right away.

SME-GFA: Yeah, I mean, he shot his gun [inaudible] up here pretty quickly, but I think they were tracking all along for both the POO from this area right here and I'm just --

IO: You're absolutely right. That's what he kept articulating yesterday. You guys were clear on the tape, it was on a turret type building, and as a matter of fact, after he had made his shots and he continues to work the area, you can see him begin to pick up on that and he starts looking at the turret area very specifically.

SME-GFA: I think someone came on and clarified that it was actually south of the crash site.

NAVIGATOR: Right; and 1 believe that ⬛(b)(3), (b)(6)⬛ (ref. A-10 Thunderbolt Aircraft ---nickname ⬛(b)(3), (b)(6)⬛) was the one that actually clarified. We were tracking the crash site. We were tracking the POO and with everything that was going on. All the activity that we were watching on the ground with the folks, that was a misspeak on my part, but we were definitely in contact with both-- the supposed POO-site and the crash site.

MSE-GFA: When did ⬛(b)(3), (b)(6)⬛ come on station?

NAVIGATOR: 45 minutes to an hour after the helo went down.

IO: And who is that?

IE: [several speakers]. ⬛(b)(3), (b)(6)⬛. (A-10 aircraft)

SME-GFN2- Did you ask them to come over?

NAVIAGTOR: I believe that was all worked through G87 and through the Task Force. To get assets on-station. Basically, we didn't request anybody. We were passing all the information that we were seeing and then the C2 elements were working on getting more folks

SME-GFA: Okay, so from your guys' crew who all saw the three RPGs?

TELEVISION SENSOR OPERATOR: I saw one of them, sir.

IO: I'm sorry?

SME-INTEL: I don't know who picked it up specifically, but it's from the message traffic from the MIRC [inaudible].

IO: You got it documented?

SME-INTEL: Yes, sir. It is. I have it.

IO: Can you guys talk us through a little bit of the confusion here then for the launch of the Pathfinder element?

NAVIGATOR: We had heard on, I believe it was SAT, that the Pathfinder element was ready to infil on ▢(b)(3), (b)(6)▢, but were being held. I don't believe we actually ever got a launch call, however, we did see the IR strobe of the ▢(b)(3), (b)(6)▢ flight coming up from the southeast towards HLZ(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1),4c This was already after the --

IO: --▢(b)(3), (b)(6)▢element. Right. The 1B.

NAVIGATOR: Yeah, the Rangers moved up. They basically came up here almost due east of the crash site and then cut across this field. They were already -- The majority of the Rangers on the ground were in the vicinity of the crash site by the time ▢(b)(3), (b)(6)▢ came into the area. Basically, we watched ▢(b)(3), (b)(6)▢ come in and land.

IO: And you think he landed where?

NAVIGATOR: I believe it was in this general area of HLZ(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1),4c but even after we watched the Pathfinder get out of the helicopter and we could see them, but we had absolutely no

contact with them and were unsure if the assault force on the ground actually had contact with the Pathfinders either.

IO: Did you quickly understand though that they were relaying through the AWT? They had commo with them.

NAVIGATOR: No. No, sir. I did not.

IO: In fact, they would have been talking to them on Fires.

NAVIGATOR: We never heard [(b)(3), (b)(6)] or the Pathfinders on Fires, sir, on FD2

IO: Okay.

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: We had CSAR-A (combat search and rescue-afghanistan) up as well. I heard nothing -- no traffic on that. We were trying to pull up any frequency that we think they might have been on and we didn't have any joy

SME-GFA: As the on-scene commander, they are required to check in with you guys; check-in and check-out; right?

IO: I don't think they could have known that yet.

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: Yeah, they probably didn't know that we had established that, but I don't know [inaudible] --

SME-GFN1: Only the people that were COMs with you at the time would have known that unless it got passed positively -- [inaudible] [several people talking]

SME-GFA: But this is -

SME-JSOAC: Was there a ROZ established at this point?

that and talk about what you saw, what your geometry was on the target, where you were sitting in the aircraft.

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: **(I was)** the aircraft commander on [(b)(3), (b)(6)] (b)(3),(b)(6)that night. We were on (the) southern part of the orbit, and we were essentially [performing a] 1.5 nautical mile radius wheel, counter clock wise around the helicopter landing zone (HLZ) at the point when I saw the rocket propelled grenade (RPG0. Now the helo was calling one minute out and we set up a contract to put down our burn, which is actually just a football (field) size flash light,infrared flashlight that you can see on NVGs. We put that out and then approximately a few seconds had passed when we put that down (our burn), which was roughly here [pointing at map]. The helos were coming from the northwest, so it was quite a ways away, the distance was over a click [1KM]. I say we were about right (here)[pointing at map], (in) the portion over the southwest to the south, when I saw three fairly rapid succession RPG shots, they went south to north from what I saw. What we talked about yesterday, I didn't see any obstruction in the line of the flight path of that RPG. It was very readily identifiable to me as a RPG shot: I saw a bright flash, followed by a comet like stream of sparks leaving the RPG shot. It was one, two, and then a slight pause, and then a third shot; and from my perspective, I could definitely tell

TELEVISION SENSOR OPERATOR: At one point, too, we also tried to get [(b)(3), (b)(6)] eyes back on them to re-PID them and [(b)(3), (b)(6)] (b)(3),(b)(6))didn't want to do that because he didn't want to burn those individuals because he knew he was going to bring the QRF to engage those individuals.

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: [(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(3), (b)(6)]

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

SME-JSOAC: They are linguists that fly on just to listen in.

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: And that was one thing that may have facilitated figuring out all the activity that was in the area, because these guys had moved off target quite a ways --

IO: But [(b)(3), (b)(6)] was on the target. Is there a different asset that you have that allows him to do that?

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: Well, let's see. We've got [(b)(3), (b)(6)], that's up there that can monitor that stuff and I don't know what traffic they were pushing.

SME-INTEL: Sir, the issue would be is the [(b)(3), (b)(6)] allows them real-time intel versus having to process it back [in the rear].

IO: Okay, my bad.

TELEVISION SENSOR OPERATOR: Okay, most of the time, too, [b)(3), (b)(6] [b)(3), (b)(6] what they're usually tasked to do is just to put buzzer on so individuals can't do push-to-talk or GSM or anything like that.

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: But it seems like there's a lot of coordination going on in the area. So, with these individuals who were monitoring and then another group that --

IO: What was the LIMFAC on you guys having that guy up with you that night?

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: Just availability and then resource allocation. A lot of them are going to just -- assets for re-supply missions on our M28s that are going into different areas and that's one of the primary defenses [inaudible] --

TELEVISION SENSOR OPERATOR: Because right now we're sharing two DSOs for our asset, the Talons, and then the Whiskeys down in Kandahar.

SME-JSOAC: The M28s are a new small air lift platform, unarmed, that goes around and resupplies the VSO sites. So having the DSOs on board there is really about Aircraft Survivability Equipment listening in so that's why they probably allocated it on the M28.

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: That would be a nice asset to have onboard.

IE: -- [inaudible] so, it couldn't have got on the air craft anyway. There's only three DSOs here.

SME-MH47: The TOT you had was 2150 initially? Was that ever updated or did it just go event-driven?

AIRCRAFT COMMANDER: It was updated. They actually passed -- I think it ended up being 2210.

IO: Okay, it's going to be pretty close to 2210.

NAVIGATOR: Yes, sir.

SME-INTEL: When you said three DSOs available, is that for all Afghanistan?

IE: No, three DSOs available to CJSOAC (Combined Joint Special Operations Aviation Command) here, and there are about three or four down at Kandahar and then you have your TSO and possible some manual capability on the U-28s but I'm not sure about that.

[The interview was concluded]