

at a mobile medical imaging company. Rebecca was also enrolled at the Community College of Aurora and had been working toward an associate of arts degree. She was known to family and friends as a “gentle, sweet, beautiful soul.”

When I came to the floor a decade ago, I said that scripture tells us “not to be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” That is what the people of Aurora have done for the past 10 years. Today, we recommit to not remember July 20 for the evil act that day.

We choose to remember the beautiful lives lost and the loved ones they left behind.

We choose to remember the 70 wounded survivors, whose resilience in the years since is a testament to humanity’s resolve.

We choose to remember the heroic acts of everyday citizens, our first responders, and medical personnel who saved lives that otherwise surely would have been lost.

And we choose to remember the profound generosity of the Coloradans and Americans who donated blood in record numbers and raised funds to support the survivors.

A decade later, Colorado and the country continue to draw strength from the example set by the people of Aurora. And we recommit to ending the American scourge of gun violence—unique among industrialized nations—that has cut short too many innocent lives in our communities.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, following my submission yesterday, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the next part of an investigation directed by the U.S. Central Command concerning the Abbey Gate bombing in Afghanistan in August 2021.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ACTS—SCK—DO

SUBJECT: Findings and Recommendation—Attack Against U.S. Forces Conducting NEO at Hamid Karzai International Airport on 26 August 2021.

(3) Gate Operations.

(a) Occupation of Abbey Gate. At approximately 0800 on 19 August, Golf Company, reinforced by Fox Company platoons, arrived at Abbey Gate and found U.K. and other foreign forces standing in the inner corridor (exhibits 77, 89). Golf Company attempted to open the gate to process evacuees and enable U.K. Forces to move to the Barron Hotel (exhibits 77, 89). This attempt failed because the large and desperate crowd in the outer corridor nearly breached the gate and forced Golf Company to stop in less than an hour (exhibits 77, 89). On 20 August during the period of darkness, Golf Company, reinforced by Fox Company platoons, moved the crowd approximately 150 meters south passed the entrance of the Barron Hotel (exhibits 77, 83, 89). 24th MEU engineers emplaced several shipping containers to form an obstacle, known as the Chevron, in the road (exhibits 77, 83, 86, 87, 89). The Taliban were employed to man the outside of the obstacle and con-

ducted initial screening and crowd control (exhibits 77, 83, 89). Later on 20 August, crowds in the canal breached the southern end of the fence separating the canal from the outer corridor (exhibits 83, 172). Marines identified the need to clear the nearside of the canal and keep crowds on the opposite side (exhibits 53, 76, 77, 83).

(b) Steady State Gate Operations.

(i) After the establishment of the Chevron and clearing the nearside of the canal, 2/1 established a steady state operation of screening evacuees and movement to the PAX Terminal (exhibits 53, 77, 83, 89). Steady state was between 21–25 August. Marines on the canal would search for persons with documents (passports, immigration forms) meeting the current eligibility requirements for evacuation (exhibits 77, 83). Marines at the Chevron would do a similar screening (exhibits 78, 79). After pulling them into the outer corridor perimeter, they would conduct a cursory search of the potential evacuees, and place them into the holding area (exhibits 77, 83). 2/1 Marines established the holding area in the outer corridor traffic lane, against the HKIA exterior wall (exhibits 57, 60, 61, 77, 83). When DoS Consular officers were available, Marines would escort evacuees from the holding area to the search area in the inner corridor (exhibits 57, 60, 61, 77, 83). After thoroughly searching the potential evacuees, Marines would escort them to an area further into the inner corridor to be screened by the Consular officer (exhibits 57, 60, 61, 77, 83). The Consular officer would determine if the evacuees met the eligibility criteria and approve moving the evacuees forward to the PAX Terminal, or reject them, and the Marines would return them to the canal (exhibits 56, 57, 60, 61, 77, 79, 80, 82). The FST would assist in the searches and the escort of rejected civilians back to the canal (exhibits 77, 83, 107). Corpsmen were staged a CCP in the inner corridor and treated casualties at the canal or Chevron (exhibits 77, 83, 98).

(ii) U.K. Forces conducted NEO from the Barron Hotel, but also provided personnel for security on the canal and the Chevron (exhibits 53, 56, 76, 77, 127). U.K. support to steady state gate operations reduced as the NEO progressed (exhibits 77). Other partner nations provided no assistance with security at Abbey Gate (exhibits 56, 57, 60–63, 77, 79–88). Partner forces utilized Abbey Gate to escort their own consular officers or to pull evacuees from the crowd (exhibits 77, 79–89). Partner nations often did not coordinate their activities with Marines at Abbey Gate, and did not adhere to the established processing or security procedures (exhibits 79–89).

(c) Increased Crowds and Attack.

(i) On 25 August, Echo Company recognized an increase in the size and desperation of the crowd (exhibits 53, 56). The Echo Company [TEXT REDACTED] was concerned with the crowd pushing past the jersey barriers at the base of the sniper tower and not having space to operate (exhibit 56). In response, Echo Company cleared the crowd on the nearside of the canal (exhibits 56, 60–62). Echo Company positioned Marines approximately 150 meters down the canal, running northeast, to maintain control of the nearside (exhibit 56, 77). At approximately 1600, Golf Company relieved Echo company and assumed the same positions along the canal, the outer corridor, and inner corridor (exhibit 77) [TEXT REDACTED] received several updates concerning SVIED attacks at gates and determined the positions down the canal presented unacceptable risk to force and isolated Marines from support, to include CASEVAC (exhibit 77). Golf Company withdrew the Marines back down the nearside of the canal and crowds backfilled the space almost immediately (exhibits 77, 83). [TEXT REDACTED] stopped the flow of

evacuees and took the defensive posture previously mentioned (exhibits 77, 83).

(ii) The next day, crowds were even larger and more unruly (exhibits 53, 56, 77, 83). Golf Company was forced to push additional Marines to the canal to keep them from crossing the jersey barriers at the base of the sniper tower (exhibits 53, 76, 77). Echo Company assumed inner gate responsibilities so Golf Company could maintain the positions on the canal (exhibits 56, 57). The crowds grew so desperate, they began to crush people against the sniper tower walls and jersey barriers (exhibits 53, 75, 77, 105). Golf Company Marines consolidated at the base of the tower in response (exhibits 53, 76, 77, 83, Brit Video). At 1736, the single explosion occurred, and detonated directly across from the platoon gathered at the base of the tower (exhibits 5, 53, 76, 77, 83, 89). Shortly after, Abbey Gate closed, the 1/82nd IBCT took over security of the Gate, U.K. Forces passed through for the final time from the Barron Hotel, and gate operations ended (exhibits 53, 56, 77, 124, 127).

(4) Preventability of the Abbey Gate Attack. The attack was not preventable at the tactical level without degrading the mission to maximize the number of evacuees. Given the priority of effort, time, resources, partner nation requirements, and terrain restraints, the only mitigation possible would have jeopardized the flow of evacuees and potentially risk mission failure.

(a) The priority for the Marines at Abbey Gate was maximizing the flow of evacuees through the gate to the ECC (exhibits 11, 15, 18, 56, 77, 88). Any time spent emplacing obstacles was time not spent searching and screening civilian evacuees. Additionally, many force protection measures that could have been implemented, such as additional T-Walls or HESCO barriers, would have inherently reduced the flow of evacuees. Closing the gate was also not an option because of U.K. efforts to conclude evacuation operations at the nearby Barron Hotel (exhibits 18, 54, 121, 127). Closing the gates would have isolated U.K. Forces and jeopardized the JTE force flow and timeline, potentially initiating renewed armed conflict with the Taliban (exhibits 15, 18, 21, 23, 125).

(b) Leaders at Abbey Gate on 26 August made frequent decisions (multiple times daily) to increase the force protection posture. Electronic countermeasures were already emplaced to prevent enemy coordination and radio controlled device use (exhibit 65). Several times during the 18 hours prior to the attack, the company commander stopped the flow at the gate and had Marines take covered positions (exhibits 77, 83, 84). Medics were consolidated in the inner corridor to ensure their safety and quick reaction to any attack, and additional medical assets were surged forward (exhibits 66, 77, 98). An Afghan interpreter was recruited to pacify the crowd using PSYOP capabilities (exhibit 107). ISR was increased and the Taliban were tasked to screen for the specific threat (exhibits 18, 125). Leaders struck the balance of protecting the force and maximizing the flow of evacuees as best as possible under the circumstances.

D. READINESS

(1) Key Findings.

(a) Most units that deployed to HKIA in support of the Afghanistan NEO, with the exception of USFOR-A FWD and JTF-CR, had adequate manning levels for the assigned mission. USFOR-A FWD and JTF-CR staffs were task-saturated due to the nature of the NEO. The effects were further exacerbated by the fact that many of their personnel were forced to expend significant energy trying to find specific evacuees, or groups of evacuees, at the gates of HKIA, on behalf of

various U.S. government officials, senior military officers, or special interest groups.

(b) All units deployed to HKIA in support of the Afghanistan NEO had trained on their respective mission essential tasks (METs) prior to deployment. In some cases, this included NEG-specific training, while in others it did not. Leaders at all levels stated no training could adequately prepare them for what they experienced at HKIA.

(2) USFOR-A FWD.

(a) Manning. USFOR-A FWD, led by RADM Pete Vasely, USN, Commander, USFOR-A FWD, and Brigadier Thomas Day, United Kingdom, Deputy Commander, USFOR-A FWD, was originally task organized and manned as a SOJTF in anticipation of taking over the NSOCC-A mission. In June 2021, they transitioned into Diplomatic Assurance Platform-Afghanistan (DAP-A), with a focus on the medical, flight, and security requirements of USEK (exhibit 20). In July 2021, RADM Vasely took command from General Miller, and assumed the functions of Resolute Support Headquarters (RSHQ) and USFOR-A, albeit with a drastically reduced footprint due to a reduced boots on the ground (BOG) force cap of 650 being implemented. In addition to USFOR-A FWD's organic staff, they had TACON of one company from 2nd IBCT, 10th Mountain Division, and two companies from 3rd IBCT, 10th Mountain Division (exhibits 20, 21).

(b) Training. USFOR-A FWD trained to deploy as a SOJTF, and did not train to assume the role of RSHQ and USFOR-A, nor did they train to conduct a NEO. While deployed, USFOR-A FWD participated in the 28 June Operational Planning Team (OPT) at USEK, focused on pre-NEO planning. USFOR-A FWD then participated in the CENTCOM-led NEO tabletop exercise (TTX) on 29 June, and a National Security Council (NSC)-led NEO TTX on 6 August (exhibits 20, 21).

(3) 82nd Airborne Division.

(a) Manning. 82nd Airborne Division HQ, led by MG Christopher Donahue, initially deployed with a small team of six staff members, and arrived at HKIA on 18 August. The remainder of the Division HQ staff arrived on 20 August, bringing the 82nd's total manpower to 106 personnel (exhibits 125, 152). The 1st IBCT, 82nd Airborne Division (1/82 IBCT), led by [TEXT REDACTED] deployed as part of the IRF, began to arrive at HKIA on 15 August, and had roughly 1000 soldiers on hand by 16 August. The number of personnel TACON to 1/82 IBCT would swell to 2360 throughout the NEO (exhibits 130, 152). The 1/82 IBCT HQ was comprised of 65 personnel, and it had TACON of elements from 1/504 PIR (515 personnel), 2/504 PIR (378 personnel), 2/501 PIR (504 personnel), 3/319 Artillery (257 personnel), 307th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) (56 personnel), 127th Airborne Engineer Battalion (24 personnel), 50th Expeditionary Signal Battalion (4 personnel), 16th Military Police Brigade (150 personnel), and 1/194 Armor Regiment (412 personnel) (exhibits 152, 153).

(b) Training. The 82nd Airborne Division HQ is trained to deploy rapidly, as part of the IRF, and did so in support of the NEO. While deployed to HKIA, the Division HQ participated in MASCAL TTXs and Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) drills, as well as Rules of Engagement (ROE) ROC drills with subordinate and adjacent units (exhibit 125). 1/82 IBCT began its IRF preparation training in March 2021 during its Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation. During the IBCT's time at JRTC, units rehearsed civic engagement, conducted mock interagency engagements, utilized role players, and trained on entry control point operations. They did not train on crowd control or NEO (exhibits 121, 123). The 1/82 IBCT conducted Leader Professional Development sessions,

where they executed tactical decision games focused on NEO (exhibits 121, 123). The brigade also trained to secure airfields (exhibits 121, 123, 124). 2/501 PIR executed three deployment readiness exercises (DREs), where they practiced deploying out of Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina (exhibit 123).

(4) JTF-CR.

(a) Manning. JTF-CR activated in anticipation of the Afghanistan NEO, and initially had a joint manning document (JMD) with 187 personnel associated with it. The JTF sent three Liaison Officers (LNOs) forward to Afghanistan in May 2021 to coordinate with USFOR-A, USEK, and HKIA. Additionally, the JTF sent a quartering party comprised of three Marines to HKIA to begin preparations for receiving the JTF in the event of a NEO (exhibit 15). On 19 July, JTF-CR sent an EEAT comprised of 49 personnel to HKIA to assist DoS with processing SIV applicants for travel to the U.S., and to continue preparations for receiving the JTF at HKIA in the event of a NEO (exhibits 15, 18). By the third week of July, JTF-CR had 55 personnel on the ground at HKIA, and would send an additional 28 personnel forward from Bahrain on 4 August (exhibit 15). By 26 August, the JTF-CR staff was back down to 59 personnel, as some staff members had redeployed. JTF-CR staff personnel were chosen for their versatility, so they could multi-task, and the JTF opted to place a heavy emphasis on planning ability, due to the anticipated requirement of multiple, competing planning efforts throughout the execution of the NEO (exhibit 15). When the NEO began, the JTF-CR was forced to employ most of its staff as a security force, due to multiple breaches in the HKIA perimeter and a limited number of security forces being on deck at HKIA (exhibits 15, 18).

(b) Training. JTF-CR was certified as a JTF in 2019 (exhibits 15, 18), and again in 2020 (exhibit 18). In addition to its certification via exercises and training, the JTF had activated three times within the past year, to include its planning response to the Beirut Port explosion in August 2020, and its deployment in support of Operation OCTAVE QUARTZ off the coast of Somalia in the spring of 2021 (exhibit 18). JTF-CR participated in NEO TTXs with CENTCOM at the end of June, and the NSC on 6 August, but JTF-CR staff members considered both to be ineffective, due to faulty planning assumptions (exhibits 17, 18). During NEO execution at HKIA, JTF-CR conducted MASCAL rehearsals with the Role II clinic and USFOR-A FWD, which ultimately paid dividends on 26 August (exhibits 15, 16, 18). Multiple leaders from JTF-CR stated that no training could have truly prepared service members for the tasks they executed at HKIA throughout the NEO (exhibits 17, 18).

(5) 24th MEU.

(a) Manning. The 24th MEU, led by [TEXT REDACTED] began sending Marines into HKIA as part of its quartering party in mid-July, and its CE began flowing into HKIA on 15 August. At full strength, the MEU had 1249 Marines and Sailors at HKIA, the bulk of which resided within BLT 1/8 and CLB-24 (exhibits 100, 101, 104). BLT 1/8 deployed 996 Marines and Sailors across three rifle companies, a weapons company, an artillery battery, a light armored reconnaissance company (-), an engineer platoon, and a reconnaissance company (-) (exhibits 100, 104). CLB-24 deployed to HKIA with 225 Marines and Sailors, task organized to support 24-hour ECC operations, with roughly 70 Marines supporting three, 8-hour shifts each day. CLB-24 personnel provided combat service support to other units across HKIA, when they were not operating at the ECC. CLB-24 also task organized a FST, comprised of 35 female Marines and Sailors, with augmenta-

tion from BLT 1/8. CLB-24 had SPMAGTF's Combat Logistics Detachment-21 (CLD-21), and Marine Wing Support Detachment-373 (MWSD-373) attached to support ECC operations (exhibit 101).

(b) Training. 24th MEU completed the standard pre-deployment training program focused on the MEU's 13 core METs, including NEO (exhibits 100, 101, 104). The unit conducted an additional, four-day NEO training package, sponsored by Expeditionary Operations Training Group (EOTG) in January 2021, which included DoS and civilian role player participants (exhibits 100, 101, 104). In June 2021, while ashore in Jordan, 24th MEU's CE and BLT conducted embassy reinforcement and NEO training at the U.S. Embassy in Amman (exhibits 100, 104). In July, the MEU offloaded in Kuwait to posture for a potential NEO in Afghanistan, and throughout the month of July and into August, the CE, BLT, and CLB trained daily on various aspects of NEO, to include embassy reinforcement, fixed site security, ECC operations, and NEO Tracking System operations (exhibits 100, 101, 104). Additionally, the FST Marines and Sailors trained on proper search techniques to be employed at an ECC or ECP (exhibits 101, 107). MEU leadership agreed that the NEO training they conducted did not adequately train their Marines and Sailors for the conditions they faced at HKIA (exhibits 100, 101, 104).

(6) SPMAGTF.

(a) Manning. The SPMAGTF deployed a "heavy package" to HKIA with components of the GCE, comprised of 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines (2/1), the Logistics Combat Element (LCE), comprised of CLD-21, and Aviation Combat Element (ACE), comprised of MWSD-373. Additionally, the SPMAGTF "heavy package" included an STP and two EOD teams (exhibits 55, 65, 66). 2/1 deployed its entire battalion, with the exception of one platoon from Golf Company, which provided escort security aboard SPMAGTF flights to/from HKIA, two platoons from Fox Company, which remained at the Baghdad Embassy Complex (BEC) in Iraq to provide security, and their Combat Engineer Platoon, which stayed at the BEC to support force protection improvements there (exhibits 53, 54, 55, 56, 77, 78, 79, 81). As a result of the Engineer Platoon not deploying to HKIA, 2/1 was forced to depend on CLD-21's engineer section, whose focus at HKIA was ECC operations, and the BLT's Engineer Platoon, whose focus was supporting the BLT at North and East Gates.

(b) Training.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING RANDY "R.D." KINSEY

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of R.D. Kinsey who passed away on July 11, 2022, at the age of 69. Mr. Kinsey was a husband, father, veteran, civil servant and beloved leader in the State of Arkansas with a reputation for wisdom and compassion.

A native of South Florida, Kinsey moved to Arkansas after his service in the U.S. Air Force. After he was honorably discharged in 1972, he realized his passion and desire to uplift and advocate for his fellow veterans.

Stepping into a new platform of service with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Kinsey spent much of his time counseling combat veterans even