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**Statement by ██████ CPL Ben Roberts-Smith
Patrol Commander G2
Redacted**

During the period 14– 15 July 2012, G2 and 3 conducted a Special Reconnaissance (SR) patrol within ██████. At the completion of the SR phase of the patrol the FE was tasked to place blocking positions on likely egress routes around compound ██████.

Subsequent to the placement of these positions a Close Target Recon (CTR) was conducted at around 150400DEJUL12. ██████ (G22) and TPR Person 10 (G23) were tasked with investigating a possible secondary blocking location along an aqueduct to the south. ██████ and TPR Person 10 during this task physically identified the location of G3 and their IFF which was an IR strobe. G2 callsigns were briefed in patrol orders about the locations for the potential blocking positions and all G2 callsigns were made aware of the direction/location of friendly forces whilst on the ground.

At around 150430DE JUL12, I identified that the patrol was exposed around the blocking location and decided to use an empty stand alone building to conceal the patrol before I would move the patrol back out to posture in the block as the assault force inserted. The small building was located on the North East corner of compound ██████. Once secure inside the room at around 150450DEJUL12, I passed a LOCSTAT to G3 and 2 Oscar who read back figures and acknowledged the transmission.

At 150605DEJUL12, when the HAF became audible, G2 moved out of the building and fanned out along an aqueduct running NW to SE with our most southerly flank being located north of ██████ and the most northerly being 70m off the east of ██████. At 150605DEJUL12, shots were heard on our left flank and on further investigation the information passed back to me was that our far left flank had been engaged. I made the decision at that point to task my 2IC to hold the block on the creek junction. I then moved with my patrol scout TPR ██████ (G25) to the left flank to gain some situational awareness (SA). Once in location on my left flank north of ██████, I radioed G3 to ascertain what the situation was. G3 informed me that they had seen an armed FAM on the southern side of ██████ coming out of a doorway. I looked inside the compound from the north and only observed 1 woman and numerous children. At 150610DE July 2012, I was concerned that the patrol was going to be out manoeuvred. Therefore I, TPR ██████ (G25) and G23 tactically moved east towards compound ██████ across approximately 80meters of sparse orchard to ensure the ground behind the patrol was clear. As we arrived on the South Western corner of ██████, I was leading the advance followed by G25 and then G23 behind him, spread over no more than 30 meters.

While observing to the East suppressed gunfire erupted behind me and on turning around I saw G23 engaging with no less than five bursts of minimi fire to the south, I was yelling at G23 to give me a target indication but received no reply. I then observed G23 conduct a stoppage drill at which time I again requested a target indication and told him to remember that there were friendly positions to the south. I continued to repeat myself with no response from G23. He then re-engaged with two

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more bursts before finally acknowledging me by looking directly at me. At this time I again asked him what he was shooting at and still received no response. At that moment it was evident that G23 was visibly overwhelmed and did not understand what he was doing. I made G23 bound to me and asked him again what had caused him to open fire. He was so overwhelmed that he could not answer me and initially offered up no response apart from looking visibly shaken as it was obvious that the situation was now becoming clear to him. The remainder of the patrol had now blocked up on our position to support us and were in the vicinity of 50 meters South of [REDACTED]. G23 was then again asked by G22 what he had been engaging and G23 responded with a broken sentence saying he saw a couple of heads pop up in the aqueduct, and that was all the information he could offer. At the same time G3 had thrown a blue smoke grenade to mark their location which at that point was around 150 meters to our West South West. Subsequently I then impressed upon G23 that he had probably seen G3 patrol members as there were no other FAM's between G3 and our callsign. From that point I moved the patrol back to the original blocking position and began providing commentary to the assault force.

BEN ROBERTS-SMITH

CPL

PC G2

FE-A

SOTG XVIII

July 2012

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