



NEWS RELEASE

Executive Summary of Army Regulation 15-6 Report on Death of Khpalwak

On 28 July, 2011 insurgents initiated a complex attack in the city of Tarin Khot, Uruzgan, Afghanistan. The targets attacked included the Provincial Governor's Compound and the Radio Television Afghanistan (RTA) compound.

At the RTA compound two insurgents armed with small arms and suicide vests used a vehicle-borne IED to destroy the gate and section of the wall to gain access to the compound. They entered the RTA building and exchanged fire with uniformed Afghan forces in the immediate vicinity.

When US forces arrived at the compound they began to receive small arms fire from the insurgents. US forces first responded with small arms fire, and then with crew-served weapons. The unit was informed by uniformed Afghan leadership at the scene that two suicide bombers were in the RTA building; they were not aware of any civilians present.

Additional US forces arrived at the scene and one Soldier was wounded by small arms fire. When forces were not able to neutralize the insurgents with ground-based fire, the unit directed AH-64 engagements with 30mm gun on the building. After the last engagement with 30mm gun the firing from the building ceased.

As a significant proportion of ANSF forces were committed to the fight at the Governor's compound, US forces led a building clearing operation to confirm the insurgents no longer posed a threat. Upon US Soldiers entering the RTA building the two suicide bombers detonated their explosives, collapsing the front walls of the building and trapping members of the clearing team under heavy brick debris.

While some Soldiers rushed to the aid of the injured, others remained in overwatch to provide security. While those operations were ongoing, a small team of Soldiers was directed to continue clearing the remains of RTA building.

During the clearing operation a Soldier in an overwatch position, outside the building, identified movement of a young adult male in the building through a large hold in a broken wall. The room the man was in was immediately adjacent to the room where one of the suicide bombers had detonated his suicide vest IED, and across the hall from the other suicide vest detonation, just minutes before. The Soldier then heard a shot that he perceived came from the man's exact location. It is probable that the shot he heard was actually fire by a Soldier inside the building during the building clearing.

The Soldier in overwatch assessed the individual he observed to be enemy and fired a single round which did not strike him. In the stress and urgency of the moment, it is highly probable that Soldiers in the courtyard outside the building incorrectly perceived that shot as having been fired by the man in the building. Multiple Soldiers believed he was shooting, and called out warnings.

A Soldier was directed to move up to the broken wall where the man was seen. As the Soldier approached he observed a young adult male with a beard with something clinched

in one of his fists and reaching for something on his person with his other hand. Based on the events of the events of the preceding minutes the Soldier assessed the actions as those of a suicide bomber who was taking steps to detonate an IED that posed a lethal threat to numerous Soldiers in the immediate area. He shot the individual with his M-4, killing him.

Because of the danger posed by unexploded ordnance, the US Soldiers withdrew from the building as soon as friendly forces were extracted from the rubble of the IED blasts. Afghan forces removed the body from the building; it was that of Ahmad Omid Khpalwak. He was unarmed; no weapon was found nearby. It appears that all the rounds perceived as coming from his location were instead fired by US Soldiers.

In summary, Ahmad Omid Khpalwak was killed in a case of mistaken identity. He was shot by US forces who believed he was an insurgent that fired on them with a weapon and was subsequently taking action to detonate a suicide vest IED.

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