

Office of Naval Intelligence
Office of Internal Affairs
Beta Delphi incident
OPERATION NIGHTHAWK
23 June 2530
Times and dates in Zulu time.

This report is in reference to the battle of Beta Delphi and three violations of policy by 405th regiment combat personnel. These violations consist of:

- 1) The use of cryostasis chamber 0253-01331 by unauthorized personnel.
- 2) Improper use of radio frequencies by improperly encrypted radio broadcast.
- 3) Failure to secure Artificial Intelligence from aircraft.

MISSION OVERVIEW:

On 30 September 2529 OPERATION NIGHTHAWK was given the go ahead by Admiral Persoen. Operation zero hour scheduled 0000 hours Zulu, 17 October, 2529. The operation goals were to establish a foothold on Beta Delphi and attempt to retake the planet from Covenant control. The mechanics of the operation revolved around a deployment stage which involved a central landing point and rapid deployment of combat units to key areas, a settlement stage during which friendly forces were to fortify the ground and air defenses, and an infection stage during which special intelligence teams were to poison local perception against Covenant forces on the planet.

Central to the deployment stage was the utilisation of "blue team", a branch of the SPARTAN II program. SPARTAN units were to be deployed at strategic forward operating bases (FOB) and lead front line efforts to eradicate enemy forces from the area.

Radio frequencies were determined, equipment encrypted, and "blue team" was assembled, with the exception of one SPARTAN, who was on another detail. This SPARTAN was confirmed by UNSC staff as en route from that detail to the operation command cruiser "In midnight Awake" with estimated arrival time (ETA) of 16 October at 1630 hours when technicians would wake the SPARTAN up and they would attend last minute briefing before deployment.

COMPLICATIONS

at 0847 hours on 16 October 2529 a message was recieved by cruiser "In gentle care" stating due to a minor emergency the ETA of the SPARTAN had to be pushed back five hours.

Admiral Persoen and staff was notified of the emergency and modified ETA. Under orders from Admiral Persoen, Captain Englebourne was placed as Officer In Charge (OIC) and issued instructions for how to proceed.

DEPLOYMENT

Captain Englebourne, under direction of Admiral Persoen, ordered the deployment proceed as briefed with the following modification: cryostasis technicians and intelligence personnel be deployed to FOB Mahogany in preparation for SPARTAN arrival. Once on the ground at FOB Mahogany, the SPARTAN would be woken up, briefed, and prepared for immediate deployment, instead of being deployed from "In Midnight Awake". Priority was given to the SPARTAN, code name "Project Blue" was applied to the SPARTAN, and a detail of 2 Orbital Drop Shock Troopers (ODST) were briefed and prepared for escort detail thereof. 405th infantry, Mountain regiment, under the command of Staff Sergeant Sam Bricker, was divided into two with the larger part arriving at FOB Mahogany to prepare for "Project Blue" and the other part left behind to accompany "Project Blue" to FOB Mahogany where they would deploy under the command of the SPARTAN. Both ODST personnel were temporarily reassigned as members of the 405th mountain under the command of SSgt Bricker.

"Project Blue" arrived at 2154 hours on 16 October 2529, hangar 3 on board D-77-TC Pelican tail number 8762, callsign E24. Upon landing, E24 was refueled and loaded with ammunition, weapons, and equipment to fortify FOB Mahogany. At 2345 hours the crew of E24 was ordered to be relieved and replaced with a fresh

crew previously slated for the mission. Due to special circumstances regarding "Project Blue", these orders were remanded two minutes later, at 2347 hours. The crew consisted of pilot, Lieutenant Andrew Simms and copilot, Lieutenant Jerry Montgomery. At 2352 hours the pelican was loaded with 405th Mountain regiment soldiers and positioned to take off at zero hour. At zero hour, 0000 Zulu, E24 took off along with the first wave of UNSC landing craft. E24 took its place in formation to allow for landing 25 minutes after the preliminary FOB Mahogany personnel had landed and prepared for "Project Blue's" arrival. Arrival was scheduled for 0036 hours.

At 0022 hours enemy forces were encountered in numbers nearly five times those estimated. At 0024 hours communication with E24 was lost. E13 confirmed that E24 had been hit by a large plasma blast that severely damaged its starboard engines and sent it off course into the clouds. This blast killed copilot Jerry Montgomery. Further follow up from E13 was impossible because E13 was destroyed by several banshees and all on board were killed.

E24 was located 3 miles from the drop zone at an altitude of 21,000 feet by a flight of longsword fighters callsign Stingray. Stingray flight diverted from its assigned combat air patrol to escort E24 and provide information regarding crash location. Stingray flight engaged 10 banshees before E24 crashed approximately 32 miles west-north-west of FOB Mahogany. E24 was hit by one other plasma burst from enemy banshees.

IMPACT AND CRYOSTASIS CHAMBER ACTIVATION

Due to the skill of pilot Lt. Simms, the pelican survived the impact and was immediately besieged by Covenant ground forces. SSgt. Bricker, acting as OIC, led a resilient defense against the enemy onslaught while Lt. Simms initiated an unauthorized emergency warm up of the cryostasis chamber, potentially endangering the life of the SPARTAN.

Lt. Sims was questioned regarding his reasoning for thawing the SPARTAN in this manner. Lt. Simms reported that he and SSgt Bricker formulated a plan in which the 405th would provide cover fire for Lt Simms while he activated the emergency thaw on the cryostasis chamber. In Lt. Simms own words:

"Prior to the mission I was taught the basics of how the cryo tube [cryostasis chamber] works. Parameters for safe transport and loading, and was shown the emergency protocol for warmup.

"When we were trained on the cryo tube I did confirm we were not supposed to touch the thing, and the technician said 'that's correct, unless it's an emergency.' I knew once we hit that ground that if we wanted to stay alive we would need some heavy firepower. If i didn't act, we would all have died. In my mind that is as emergency as it gets. So i used the code I had seen the technician use, loaded two assault rifles, one for me, one for the SPARTAN, and waited for the cryo tube to open."

Project Blue reached a successful termination when the SPARTAN emerged unharmed from the cryo tube.

A firefight ensued in which the 405th personnel and the SPARTAN engaged an estimated 120 Covenant ground units. These Covenant forces were comprised primarily of elites and grunts. During the firefight three of the 405th mountain rangers and one of the ODSTs were killed and all others wounded.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE NEGLIGENCE

The Covenant forces retreated after a brief barrage in order to allow a wraith tank to bombard the crashed pelican. During the time they took to retreat to a safe distance, the SPARTAN took command of the surviving members and ordered a tactical retreat further to the west.

Lt. Simms prepared the pelican for self-destruction, as per UNSC policy, but did not attempt to secure the ship's Artificial Intelligence. Lt. Simms justified his behavior in the following manner:

"When we got hit the first time, the AI computer shot sparks and went dead. I couldn't get it to respond. When Sergeant Bricker came up to see what was going on i asked him to check the computer, but he wasn't able to get it to respond either. I activated the self-destruct on the pelican, and part of that system automatically destroys the AI, so I made the decision to keep up with the group, rather than be left behind with all that Covenant around. I knew the AI couldn't fall into enemy hands, but I could. So I hit the destruct, tossed an incendiary [grenade] into the bay, and ran.

"And if all that didn't work, the Covenant wraith sure did a good job. There was nothing left of the aircraft when I looked back."

Lt. Simms did not attempt to find the AI computer card or salvage the wreckage for it.

RADIO NEGLIGENCE

As the events were unfolding on the ground, 22nd ODST squad were reassigned by administration to divert from the drop zone at FOB Cyan and help reinforce the SPARTAN and the 405th infantry. Colonel Gneiting led six of the 22nd's other troopers to within twelve feet of the SPARTAN, unloading ammunition and medical supplies. Even with the addition of the 22nd ODSTs, no one on the ground was able to establish radio communications with FOB Mahogany. Later investigations revealed Mahogany was having radio problems due to faulty battery packs.

At this time the SPARTAN initiated a broad VHF unencrypted radio broadcast, detectable by every radio in the area of operations, disclosing their identity along with their location to non-privileged and enemy personnel alike. The message was:

"This is Sierra 051, on the ground with the 405th mountain infantry. Situation untenable. Requesting immediate emergency medical evac. These men don't need to die."

Interviews of the SPARTAN and their reasoning for their behavior are further classified and not contained in this report. An investigation was conducted regarding this matter and is disseminated only on a need to know basis.

ADMINISTRATIVE INVOLVEMENT

This improper broadcast prompted Captain Englebourne to make the decision to send a second SPARTAN to the area, one who was serving on Admiral Persoen's staff on board the "In Midnight Awake". This second SPARTAN dropped to the area in an ODST drop pod, destroying the enemy wraith that was pursuing the 405th and 22nd ODST, and aiding in suppressing Covenant forces.

As the second SPARTAN made contact with the 405th, radio communications were established with FOB Mahogany, along with a perimeter that allowed D-77 pelicans to pick up the 405th personnel and transport them to FOB Mahogany without further incident.

CONCLUSION

It is the finding of this investigations office that the three violations of policy have been adequately investigated. The findings of the investigation are as follows:

- 1) The use of cryostasis chamber 0253-01331 by unauthorized personnel.

It is the belief of the administrators of this office that Lt. Simms acted according to his believed authority as Pilot In Command to activate the cryostasis chamber in order to prevent loss of life. As stated in his personal report the technician who trained him on basic cryostasis chamber function said "only in emergencies", Lt. Simms believed he had the authority and training to activate the emergency defrost function of the cryostasis chamber, and did not act knowingly or recklessly. The technician responsible for this statement has been confronted and formally written up for his thoughtless words.

- 2) Improper use of radio frequencies by improperly encrypted radio broadcast.

This part of the investigation is further classified and shall only partly be discussed, as needed. The SPARTAN, having not been briefed on radio frequencies, did not act negligently in regard to choice of communication.

- 3) Failure to secure Artificial Intelligence from aircraft.

Lt. Simms did not take as careful consideration for the computer hardware of the Artificial Intelligence as it is believed he should have. Although it is acknowledged that the situation was delicate, and the threat to life extreme, it is the opinion of this office that Lt. Simms was negligent by not removing the Artificial Intelligence computer chip prior to crash-landing D-77-TC Pelican tail number 8762 in a known combat area.

Recommendations of this office, considering the whole of the circumstances, are a formal reprimand of Lt. Simms for the negligent care of the Artificial Intelligence, and a commendation for his actions under extreme circumstances. It is further recommended that the Lt. not be reprimanded for the improper use of the cryostasis chamber.

This office holds no authority to voice opinion on the recommendations of the SPARTAN, due to the nature of the SPARTAN division and limitations from joint chiefs.

Recommendations of this office regarding SSgt. Sam Bricker are that he be released from all liability in this incident. It is the opinion of this office that SSgt. Bricker be commended formally for his bravery and leadership under hard circumstances, leading directly to saving the lives of 5 other men and the safety of Project Blue.

End of investigations report

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