



## Sergeant Bergdahl's Vanishing Before Capture Angered His Unit

Monday, June 2, 2014 | Eric Scmitt, Helene Cooper, and Charlie Savage, The New York Times

WASHINGTON — Sometime after midnight on June 30, 2009, Pfc. Bowe Bergdahl left behind a note in his tent saying he had become disillusioned with the Army, did not support the American mission in Afghanistan and was leaving to start a new life. He slipped off the remote military outpost in Paktika Province on the border with Pakistan and took with him a soft backpack, water, knives, a notebook and



writing materials, but left behind his body armor and weapons — startling, given the hostile environment around his outpost. That account, provided by a former senior military officer briefed on the investigation into the private's disappearance, is part of a more complicated picture emerging of the capture of a soldier whose five years as a Taliban prisoner influenced high-level diplomatic negotiations, brought in foreign governments, and ended with him whisked away on a helicopter by American commandos.

The release of Sergeant Bergdahl (he was promoted in captivity) has

created political problems for the Obama administration, which is having to defend his exchange for five Taliban detainees held at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, but it also presents delicate politics for Republicans who are attacking, through surrogates, America's last known prisoner of war.

The furious search for Sergeant Bergdahl, his critics say, led to the deaths of at least two soldiers and possibly six others in the area. Pentagon officials say those charges are unsubstantiated and are not supported by a review of a database of casualties in the Afghan war.

"Yes, I'm angry," Joshua Cornelison, a former medic in Sergeant Bergdahl's platoon, said in an interview on Monday arranged by Republican strategists. "Everything that we did in those days was to advance the search for Bergdahl. If we were doing some mission and there was a reliable report that Bergdahl was somewhere, our orders were that we were to quit that mission and follow that report."

Sergeant Bergdahl slipped away from his outpost, the former senior officer said, possibly on foot but more likely hiding in a contractor's vehicle. "He didn't walk out the gate through a checkpoint, and there was no evidence he breached the perimeter wire and left that way," the ex-officer said. It was not until the 9 a.m. roll call on June 30 that the 29 soldiers of Second Platoon, Blackfoot Company, learned he was gone. "I was woken up by my platoon leader," said Mr. Cornelison, who had gone to sleep just three hours before after serving watch from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m. "Hey Doc," his platoon leader said. "Have you seen Bergdahl?" Platoon members said Sergeant Bergdahl, of Hailey, Idaho, was known as bookish and filled with romantic notions that some found odd. "He wouldn't drink beer or eat barbecue and hang out with the other 20-year-olds," Cody Full, another member of Sergeant Bergdahl's platoon, said in an interview on Monday also arranged by Republican strategists. "He was always in his bunk. He ordered Rosetta Stone for all the languages there, learning Dari and Arabic and Pashto."

The soldiers began a frantic search for Sergeant Bergdahl using Predator drones, Apache attack helicopters and military tracking dogs. The most intense search operation, leaked war reports show, wound down after eight days — well before the deaths of six soldiers on patrols in Paktika Province in late August and early September. But, complicating matters, some soldiers contend they were effectively searching for 90 days because of clear orders: If they heard rumors from locals that Sergeant Bergdahl might be nearby, they should patrol the area.

Mr. Full, then a specialist, said he and other platoon members grew increasingly bitter at the time they were spending looking for Sergeant Bergdahl. "He had sent all his belongings home — his computer, personal items," said Mr. Full, now 25. He said Sergeant Bergdahl used to gaze at the mountains around them and say he wondered if he could get to China from there. Other platoon members said that Sergeant Bergdahl wrote Jason Bourne-type novels in which he inserted himself as the lead character.

The anger toward Sergeant Bergdahl increased exponentially after Sept. 4, when they learned that two members of Third Platoon, which routinely went on tandem missions with Second Platoon and who they believed were also searching for Sergeant Bergdahl, had been killed in an ambush. Pfc. Matthew Martinek

**Next Generation Sunshine State Standards** adapted from [floridastandards.org](http://floridastandards.org). Standards specifically addressed in this edition are strategically aligned with state standards and annotated adjacent to the respective inquiry.

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and Lt. Darryn Andrews, both of them friends of Mr. Cornelison, died in the ambush. A Defense Department official said it was unclear whether the two men were killed directly because of the search.

Some soldiers have also contended that the Taliban, knowing the units were out searching extensively for Sergeant Bergdahl, chose July 4, 2009, to attack another combat outpost, which was nearly overrun and several soldiers were killed. But American military officers said they saw no evidence that the Taliban started the attack on the outpost because they thought everyone would be out searching for Bergdahl.

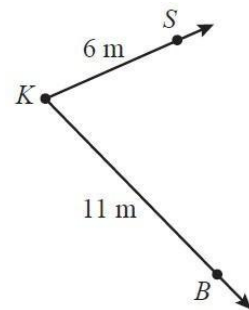
Another senior military officer, also briefed on the Bergdahl investigation, said there was no direct evidence that diversion of surveillance aircraft or troops to search for Sergeant Bergdahl encouraged the Taliban attacks, or left other American troops vulnerable. "This was a dangerous region in Afghanistan in the middle of the 'fighting season,'" the officer said in an email, adding that although the search "could have created some opportunities for the enemy," it is "difficult to establish a direct cause and effect."

A review of the database of casualties in the Afghan war suggests that Sergeant Bergdahl's critics appear to be blaming him for every American soldier killed in Paktika Province in the four-month period that followed his disappearance. Mr. Cornelison and Mr. Full both said they wanted to see Sergeant Bergdahl court-martialed as a deserter. "I'm not going to speak on the political, but I think that now that he's back, he needs to be held accountable," Mr. Full said. Mr. Cornelison echoed Mr. Full. "I won't get into the politics, but now that he's back he needs to be held 100 percent accountable," he said. "For putting myself and 29 other people in my platoon in hell for 90 days."

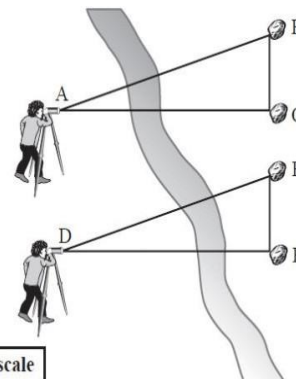
Rear Adm. John F. Kirby, the Pentagon spokesman, said: The American military does not leave soldiers behind. "When you're in the Navy, and you go overboard, it doesn't matter if you were pushed, fell or jumped," he said. "We're going to turn the ship around and pick you up."

- In appropriate paragraph form, compare and contrast the moral, legal, and political ramifications synonymous with deviation from traditional policies as it pertains to negotiating with terrorists. Thoroughly explain your reasoning and provide specific artifacts and evidence *not* limited solely to article above to support your response. Create and illustrate a Venn Diagram to effectively explore relationships and patterns and to make arguments about relationships between sets. **(LA.910.3.2.2; LA.910.1.6.2; MA.912.D.7.2; MA.912.A.10.1)**

- Sergeant Kryptonite identifies two enemy insurgents, codenames Birddog and Silicone. Kryptonite at point *K* in the diagram and discharges two rounds from his government-issued 5.56 mm, magazine fed, gas-operated, air-cooled, semiautomatic, hand-held, shoulder-fired weapon. Birddog escapes and evades fire at point *B*, which is 11 meters (m) from Kryptonite. Silicone strategically avoids being struck at point *S*, which is 6 m from Kryptonite. If *KSB* forms a triangle, which could be the length, in meters, of segment *SB*? **(MA.912.D.4.7)**



- Civilian contractors assigned to Afghanistan acquired preliminary assessments across a narrow body of water, as identified in the adjacent illustration. In the diagram,  $AC = DF$  and  $AB = DE$ . The surveyor determined that  $m\angle BAC = 29^\circ$  and  $m\angle EDF = 32^\circ$ . Which of the following can he conclude as invalid?  $BC > EF$ ;  $BC < EF$ ;  $AC > DE$ ;  $AC < DF$  Explain your reasoning. **(MA.912.D.4.7)**



- An overseas government contractor designed an outdoor staircase utilized as an emergency exit for an administrative building. The relationship between the height of the steps and the length of the tread is modeled by the equation  $57x - 95y = 0$ . Identify the slope of the equation? **(MA.912.A.3.9)**
- Using contextual clues only, determine the most complete and accurate definitions of following italicized terms: *disillusioned*, *remote*, *outpost*, *whisked*, *surrogates*, *unsubstantiated*, *breached*, *exponentially*, *tandem*, *ambush*, as obtained from the passage above. Additionally, use each word in a complete sentence to demonstrate further comprehension. **(LA.910.1.6.3; LA.910.1.6.1)**

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6. Identify and thoroughly support your reasoning regarding which of the following that best describes the author's attitude toward the exchange of one American soldier for five Taliban prisoners: flippant disregard, mild frustration, passive resignation or an informed citizen. Explain the intended purpose of this article and identify any indicators or supporting evidence, which suggest the author may possess a bias for or against the swap. Provide an inference terrorists may derive from this material. The point of view employed throughout the passage is best described as first person, second person, third person, or a combination of first and third person. Explain specifically how the image above contributes to the validity of the aforementioned passage. **(RI.9-10.1 – 10.6)**
7. **SAT WORD-OF-THE-WEEK** Provided the fact that the passage is incomplete, create a concluding paragraph aligned with the passage above incorporating the italicized term: *Aphorism* – general truth expressed in concise saying. **(LA.910.1.6.1; LA.910.1.6.5)**

*Vive les Daughtry Times. C'est tout. | Due Monday, June 2, 2014*