

From: s47E(d)
To: s47E(d)
Cc: s47E(d)
Subject: FW: Content review of MAJ (Retd) Garth Callender's draft book "After the Blast" to be published Late Apr 2015 [SEC=PROTECTED]
Date: Friday, 27 March 2015 11:05:09 AM

SOCAUST,

Sir, Army has just reviewed the content of the subject book. While there is little related to SOCOMD (I have already provided feedback incorporated by s47E(d) below), I thought you would appreciate being abreast of some of the wider cultural and reputational concerns for Army highlighted below.

Regards,

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s47E(d)

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From: s47E(d)
Sent: Friday, 27 March 2015 10:43
To: s47E(d)
Cc: s47E(d)
Subject: RE: Content review of MAJ (Retd) Garth Callender's draft book "After the Blast" to be published Late Apr 2015 [SEC=PROTECTED]

~~PROTECTED~~

s47E(

thank you. The factual errors should certainly be advised to him. I agree that there appears to be little threat to any OPSEC matters. I agree that we may have to deal with questions about conduct and particular events but given that he is a free agent in this and that he did submit his draft for scrutiny there is probably very little we can do.

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s47E(d)

LTGEN

Chief of Army

From: s47E(d)
Sent: Friday, 27 March 2015 10:30

To: s47E(d)
Cc: s47E(d)

Subject: Content review of MAJ (Retd) Garth Callender's draft book "After the Blast" to be published Late Apr 2015 [SEC - PROTECTED]

~~PROTECTED~~

Gentlemen,

As discussed with s47E(d) late last year when Garth formally advised that he was writing a book, I have reviewed his manuscript which is being processed through final editorial efforts during the next few weeks. IOT meet his publisher's timeline he has requested any return from the ADF NLT 03 APR 15.

I have reviewed the manuscript only and am unsighted as to any imagery he may be submitting in support of the book less the proposed cover of the book.

Garth's book covers his time with SECDet 5 (late 2004) when he was wounded in an IED strike in Baghdad and the subsequent medical treatment he received, through to his time as XO of the Jake Kovco SECDet in 2006 and the associated issues with that incident through to be the OIC of the WIT in Tarin Kot during 2009 and finally his decision to discharge from the Army. The book is very personal and offers an insight into the psychological impact on young commanders and their families.

My comments on the draft are broken into three areas; OPSEC, factual errors and reputation.

OPSEC: Action Area CJOPS. Noting that these ops have now ceased and their associated OPSEC plans are no longer 'live', CJOPS was the authority for release of information considered an EEFI within those plans.

In both Part 1 (2004 SECDet) and Part 2 (2006 SECDet) Garth confirms Kuwait as the location for RSO&I. While well known, this has not been officially disclosed at the request of the Kuwaiti Govt. It remained an EEFI for the entirety of the FALCONER/CATALYST deployment. Our preferred terminology was "a Middle Eastern country near Iraq."

Recommendation: Given the time lapse and the fact it has been public on several other occasions, including s47E(d) death, I would recommend we do not seek a firm editorial change in this case given Garth is no longer serving. We should advise IP Div that it will refer to Kuwait as a staging location.

In Part 3 Garth describes the discovery of a No-Metal Content IED trigger in 2009 and the subsequent efforts to analyse its function (including the accident that left a US tech with severe hand wounds). During Op SLIPPER we protected from public disclosure the fact we had discovered this trigger and understood how it worked. While it was regularly on display at the IED training in AMAB from 2010 onwards we always sought to remove it from imagery or specific reference to it. Journalists on embeds were also requested to not release details of this trigger type.

Recommendation: Given the trigger is now at least six years old and we no longer have forces operating in Uruzgan, the risk that disclosure of this information will impact on FP Australian or Coalition troops is very low. I would assess that the US has disclosed this information in the intervening period.

In Part 3 Garth describes his relationship with USSF personnel operating from TK and refers to one of the individuals as being from "Delta Force".

Recommendation: While our corporate knowledge believes that only USSF (OD-B and OD-A) and Naval Special Warfare elements operating under CJSOTF-A worked permanently from Tarin Kot, on OPSEC grounds alone the references to "Delta Force" should be replaced with

US Army Special Forces.

Factual Errors: Action Area HQJOC SO1 IO

In Part 2 Garth gets his own marriage date wrong - 2015 vice 2005.

In Part 3 Garth refers to briefing CJTF633 on several occasions. During 2009 CJTF633 was s47E(d) s47E(d) but Garth names him as s47E(d).

Recommendation: Advise Garth to re-check this fact as dates do not match personalities (ie the death of s47E(d) was not in s47E(d) tenure).

In Part 3 Garth incorrectly describes a 40mm grenade launcher as M204 vice M203.

Reputation: Action Area Army/StratCom/HQJOC J09. Please note the following are possible reputation issues from the book. The ADF has little ability to influence these aspects but I believe we should be ready for them when the title is published.

Part1 (SECDet 2004)

Garth provides his observations of the SECDet he replaced and is critical of their aggressive driving in Baghdad leading to the damage to civilians and their equipment. He advises that he was required to order his troop to be less aggressive following the HOTO period. In this area of the book he also alleges the previous troop commander routinely fired 9mm from the turret as warning shots in contravention of AS ROE. The issue came to a head when the previous Tp Comd claimed he had been fired on and used a bullet strike on a smoke discharger as evidence which Garth assessed as being fired from the Tp Comd's own weapon. In this part of the book he also criticises DFAT personnel at the Aus Embassy for having a morning BBQs of bacon and eggs out in the embassy grounds during Ramadan.

Part 2 (SECDet 2006)

Garth is very critical of the way those in SECDet were treated as part of the Inquiry process following the death of s47E(d). He is particularly incensed that "soldier 17's" testimony was given so much credence by the inquiry and that his lies were allowed to be disseminated so widely without check by the ADF hierarchy. He is critical that the continuing mission of SECDet was not recognised by those focused on the inquiry, particularly the impact on the OC, who eventually was discharged and still struggles with PTSD. The lack of punishment to the then s47E(d), and s47E(d) subsequent promotion, is highlighted as something that he and his soldiers could not understand and made a mockery of the discipline system. The ADF discipline system, particularly the power of lawyers, is criticised through the book. In this section of the book he is again critical of DFAT, particularly the unnamed Consul General, for drinking etc. He highlights a conversation with the "obviously drunk" Consul General who called him an idiot for returning to Iraq after having been wounded on his previous tour.

Part 3 (Afghanistan WIT 2009)

Garth highlights one of his 'character JNCOs' who was renowned for some indecent acts, including urinating in his own mouth etc. It is likely this will draw comparisons with the similar NRL incident and may call into question ongoing cultural issues. In this section of the book he is critical of s47E(d) s47E(d) (aligned with Dutch criticism) and offers some criticism of the Dutch and their leadership of TF-U. The most significant issue in this part of the book is a second-hand account of the disposal of a suicided bomber's body by ADF personnel based at FOB Mirwais in AUG 2009. In the account AFG authorities would not collect the body and ANA partner elms wanted to "feed it to the dogs" leaving the OC to dispose of the remains within the boundaries of the adjacent range. The OC was forced to dig a shallow hole, hack the remains with a shovel to make them fit and when that proved futile, set fire to the remains and then covered what was left with rocks. Highly likely this aspect will be picked up in any review of the book by the media and is reminiscent of the "Gumbad Incident" in Sth AFG during 2005.

This is a relatively short book that highlights the impact of operations and command on young

Australians. Overall the tone is that Garth was happy in his service but made a choice to leave because his family circumstances changed. It will be a valuable addition to the written record of our operations but does pose some reputational risk for Army and the ADF.

I am yet to respond to Garth and seek your comment on the proposed response action as detailed above.

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