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USAF Lt. Adam Cohen is currently serving on active duty. Lt. Cohen deployed three times for Operation Enduring Freedom, flying over 40 combat missions in Afghanistan.

Lt Cohen is an example of a failed system, a system that permits the weakest within it to suffer manipulation and castigation for having the temerity to come forth with an allegation of sexual assault. According to Lt. Cohen, for years he suffered blackmail, at the hands of his assailant and his assailant's friends, designed to keep him from coming forward with his allegation. When he finally came forward, he was initially ignored by Air Force law enforcement. Pressing his claim further, he was punished by investigators and manipulated into providing evidence that was meant not to hold his assailant accountable, but rather to prosecute him. Through the actions of the Air Force, Lt Cohen's alleged assailant (still on active duty) is statutorily barred from prosecution, while Lt Cohen remains the subject of a constitutionally suspect prosecution. He has been retaliated against, attacked and denied an expedited transfer. Upon learning the expedited transfer was denied, SVC Major Bellflower has asked the commander to provide a safety plan. If we are to make any headway in curbing sexual assault in the military, we must act to protect those that come forward by ensuring that the system does not punish them for doing so. (SVC Counsel, Major John Bellflower's redacted report is attached with his permission. Also attached with permission is Lt. Cohen's background and statement.) There should be a DOD investigation of the entire matter.



SPECIAL VICTIMS' COUNSEL AIR FORCE LEGAL OPERATIONS AGENCY JOINT BASE ANDREWS, MARYLAND

May 17, 2013

Maj John W. Bellflower Special Victims' Counsel 500 Fisher Street, Suite 227 Keesler AFB, MS 39534

Nancy Parrish President, Protect Our Defenders 20 Park Road, Suite E Burlingame, CA 94010

Dear Ms. Parrish,

Thank you for your inquiry into the plight of my client, Lt Adam Cohen, as a victim of sexual assault. I have read through the material my client provided you in seeking your assistance and the material from various individuals within the Air Force that relates to my client. At my client's request, I provide the following facts, circumstances, and observations for your consideration.

I must say that, although disheartened, I am not surprised by the responses from Air Force channels. Much of what appears to be "stone-walling" on behalf of the Air Force is the result of my client's dual-status as a victim of sexual assault and as an accused in a criminal case. Quite simply, the fact that Lt Cohen is facing criminal charges results in an absolute refusal of Air Force authorities at his current base of assignment to view him as anything other than a criminal. Indeed, all attempts to get authorities to investigate his sexual assault and the threats that flow from that sexual assault have been met with resistance and requests to supply evidence that could only be used in his criminal proceeding. The myopia encountered thus far is, in the least, a systematic failure to recognize his status as a victim and, at worst, an attempt to exploit that status to further a criminal case. Either way, the system is failing Lt Cohen.

The various replies by the Air Force contain many inaccuracies and omissions. I confine my responses to assertions regarding my client's sexual assault and related harassment and threatening behavior toward him. My concerns are addressed individually below:

(1) *Initial Report and Investigation*: In a letter dated 4 March 2013 to Representative the Air Force asserts that an investigation into Lt Cohen's allegation of harassment by two Air Force members eventually turned into an investigation of Lt Cohen for

harassing these same members. As it is with many assertions by McConnell authorities, this is only partially correct and fails to tell the whole story.

Lt Cohen first made a report to the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI) at McConnell AFB, KS in October 2011. During his interview he asserted that he had been repeatedly harassed and threatened by Major **Constitution** and Captain **Constitution** both of the US Army, and Captain US Air Force, and asked if OSI could simply "make them stop" rather than file charges. The interview was conducted by Special Agent **Constitution**, OSI, and Investigator **Constitution**, Security Forces Office of Investigations (SFOI). Although Lt Cohen was extremely uncomfortable discussing the sexual assault by **Constitution**, he did bring it up to give them the context in which the threats and harassment arose. This was overlooked by the investigators, who simply gave him a business card and told him to call if he wanted to file an official report.

Although I certainly understand the investigators' reluctance to open an investigation into harassment and threatening language given that my client was then disinclined to file an official report, I am astonished that they did not attempt to follow up with any questions regarding the sexual assault. As you may know, victims of sexual assault are often hesitant in coming forward and making an initial public disclosure is an enormous step psychologically – yet Lt Cohen's disclosure was ignored. After nearly two months, Lt Cohen once again complained of harassment and threats to an investigator at MacDill AFB, FL in December 2011. While this did result in an official investigation, the case was transferred back to the McConnell OSI Detachment – to the very agents that ignored him the first time. To say Lt Cohen's confidence in the McConnell OSI Detachment was undermined is an understatement.

McConnell AFB initiated its investigation on or about 18 Jan 12, after MacDill AFB transferred the case to investigators there. In a subsequent interview, my client once again disclosed the sexual assault and, this time, proffered evidence of the assault's violent nature (i.e. a guitar with blood spatter). The investigator declined to accept the blood-stained guitar into evidence and never followed up on the sexual assault portion of the investigation. Shortly after this interview, my client deployed to support combat operations overseas. While deployed, he continued cooperating with McConnell law enforcement personnel in what he thought was an investigation into his complaints of sexual assault, harassment, and threats. He was mistaken as to the focus of the investigation.

In mid-February, Investigator and SA and conducted a "group interview" of two of the "suspects," **and for any** along with one of their friends. It certainly does not require extensive knowledge of law enforcement investigative techniques to understand the severe negative impact this has on an investigation. The potential for collusion and the opportunity for "suspects" to get their story straight during a group interview are obvious. In dealing with several law enforcement officials, including OSI, I have yet to find a single agent that supports such an interview technique. Moreover, the agent conducting the interview even permitted a friend of the two "suspects" to sit in during questioning. Perhaps the rationale for this lay in who was considered a suspect at the time. On questioning during the initial Article 32 Hearing, Investigator first indicated that Lt Cohen was a suspect from the beginning of the investigation. She later changed her position to say that he became a suspect after the group interview. Indeed, Investigator testified to a conscious decision not to read Lt Cohen his rights after he became a suspect - instead determining that simply not asking incriminating questions while continuing to accept information from a suspect that believed he was being treated as a victim was sufficient to protect Constitutional rights and the integrity of the investigation. It is incredulous to claim that this investigation was anything other than patently unfair to a victim merely seeking to have law enforcement assist in stopping harassing and threatening behavior related to a previous sexual assault. Investigators deliberately used Lt Cohen's belief that he was being helped as a victim to collect evidence against him. It would not be a stretch to conclude that Lt Cohen is being punished for coming forward.

About the time my client became a suspect in the eyes of investigators, McConnell law enforcement was provided a copy of an email he received from stating "We will keep filing charges against you until you stop all investigations. There are four of us and one of you...who do you think their [sic] going to believe???" Ignoring evidence of collusion by those harassing Lt Cohen, McConnell law enforcement acquiesced by taking Lt Cohen into custody immediately upon his return from deployment. After a fourteen hour crew day, including a final eight-hour flight from RAF Mildenhall, UK to McConnell AFB, KS, Lt Cohen was escorted from the plane directly to OSI. As Investigator testified, "It did not matter that he was tired," - investigators had their target and they engaged. He was patted down, had his belongings confiscated, was denied a restroom break, and was read his rights (for the very first time). It was not apparent during his months of cooperation with investigators, as they purported to investigate the crimes against him, but it was certainly obvious to Lt Cohen now that he was a suspect. Realizing that he could not receive a fair investigation into his sexual assault or the collateral harassment and threats, he made a restricted report to the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator so he could at least obtain some form of assistance. It was not until he was assigned a Special Victims' Counsel that he felt comfortable to once again give law enforcement a chance to fairly evaluate his claims.

The astonishing laziness with which this investigation was conducted (whether resulting from incompetence or malfeasance is unknown) shocks the conscience. A second Investigating Officer at a second Article 32 Hearing, noted the "several major missteps during the investigation of this case, including the failure to read rights to various parties during the investigation and SFOI's decision to conduct a 'group' subject interview of CPT and Maj

SA **Section** SSgt **Section** and SSgt **Section** testified that the information flowing in throughout the investigation was confusing, inconsistent, and overwhelming." However, rather than seek assistance from more seasoned investigators or increase their efforts in discerning the truth, investigators took the easy way out and charged the victim – likely because, as threatened Lt Cohen, there were four of, them and only one of Lt Cohen. Investigators sacrificed the truth in a numbers game. What message does it send to future victims when they read of Lt Cohen coming forward with a report of sexual assault, harassment, and death threats only to be turned into a suspect and prosecuted based on a faulty investigation? How will future victims come forward when they've learned that investigators will manipulate them into providing evidence for a secret case against them? Why would any victim come forward after learning that the system seeks to punish them?

(2) *The Ramifications of an Inadequate Investigation*: It bears noting here that, once again, Lt Cohen is attempting to have his sexual assault, and related harassment/threats, investigated. However, given the obvious bias of the law enforcement authorities at McConnell AFB, KS, who are after all prosecuting him, he is attempting, through counsel, to have non-McConnell investigators conduct the investigation. The mishandling of this case by McConnell AFB has caused irreparable damage to the case against Lt Cohen's assailant. It is for this reason that McConnell authorities accused Lt Cohen of not cooperating. This is a classic "catch-22" situation: Lt Cohen knows that any evidence or statement he makes will be used not to investigate his tormentors, but rather, will be used against him. Yet, he is accused of non-cooperation when he requests different investigators or acts through counsel.

Lt Cohen was sexually assaulted by Major (then Captain) while residing in Atlanta, Georgia on or about 2 June 2007. A photo of this assault was taken by Maj mand purportedly shared with some of his friends. Lt Cohen was not on active duty at the time, but was seeking a commission. Lt Cohen's plan to commission during a period when "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) was still in effect is the basis for using the sexual assault photo to harass and threaten Lt Cohen as homosexual conduct (a claim of consent would presumably be made) was then a bar to military service.

Since Maj was on active duty at the time, his conduct is punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice provided he is arraigned on charges within five years of the offense date. This so-called statute of limitations expired on 1 June 2012. Lt Cohen first came forward with an allegation of sexual assault on October of 2011, just after DADT ended, and did so again in December of 2011. Additionally, he provided details of the sexual assault, including his assailant's name, to investigators in January and February of 2012 and to a representative of the base legal office in February and March of 2012. In other words, the Air Force was put on notice regarding the sexual assault in sufficient time to assist the Army in prosecuting a case against Maj was.

Cohen's claims dictates that the statute of limitations has run and Maj

In an 11 April 2013 letter to Representative, the Air Force attempts to foist blame on my client's defense counsel by asserting that a failure to make Lt Cohen available for interviews was the cause of the case being closed. However, the Air Force alleges this occurred in August of 2012, after the statute of limitations had already run, approximately ten months after first learning of the sexual assault and eight months after learning the assailant's name. Lt Cohen told at least three investigators and one military attorney about his sexual assault and who assaulted him; he offered forensic evidence (blood-spattered guitar) which could at least corroborate the physical attack portion of the sexual assault; he provided an email from

indicating collusion against my client; he provided evidence of threats and harassment made against him; and, finally, the Air Force had nearly eight months to coordinate an investigation. Indeed, Special Agent indicated that Lt Cohen was extremely cooperative. Yet he ended up being prosecuted while his assailant gained immunity. What message does this send to future victims?

(3) Failure to Investigate Threats: Over the course of many years, beginning shortly after the sexual assault, Lt Cohen has received threatening email, voicemail, instant messages, and Facebook posts. All of this material has been provided to investigators and legal personnel at McConnell AFB, KS. A review of these threats reveals a systematic approach to harassing and threatening my client, all orchestrated by **Generative**. Evidence of this lead role is found by comparing the email **Generative** sent to Lt Cohen and his admission, under oath, to making all of the harassing/threatening language contained in two videos posted to YouTube by Lt Cohen in an attempt to document and expose the vile behavior he was subjected to while the Air Force looked on. Those videos can be found at <u>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2J0SldD17D0</u> and <u>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pswl-JD7g_Q</u>.

It should be noted that also admitted, again under oath, to fabricating texts and emails that appeared to be sent from third parties to various individuals, but were actually being sent from to Lt Cohen and other people. Thus, in turning over documents to investigators, Lt Cohen was actually giving, unbeknownst to him, documents that had already been falsified. Investigators declined to uncover the truth in a case they admit was "very confusing" with a lot of "inconsistencies" in the evidence (perhaps attributable to the ?). Instead, Investigator indicates that neither falsifications perpetrated by she nor any other investigator followed up on information indicating that sent emails impersonating Lt Cohen. Nor did she or any other law enforcement officers investigate the second of the two main perpetrators of the harassment and threats against my client. In a massive understatement, Investigator concludes "that it looks bad to not follow up on " Instead, the investigation reflects a comedy of errors in evidence against

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misleading Lt Cohen as to his actual status in the investigation while continuing to collect questionable (in light of actual status) evidence against him.

This treatment of a victim of sexual assault by Air Force authorities is reprehensible. Rather than conduct a proper investigation, Air Force authorities chose to skirt proper procedures and blame the victim. Investigator **source** so own words, under oath, summarize the government's position: "I admit that some of our actions might look odd because some of the things we did are opposite from what we normally do. I cannot say for sure what actions we took to confirm Lt Cohen's allegations." If the lead investigator in a case such as this cannot articulate the actions taken to investigate claims of sexual assault, harassment, and threats then it is unquestionable that the Air Force has failed that victim. This failure is compounded by the fact that every effort to ensure the victim's safety is thwarted by McConnell authorities intent on prosecuting the victim for alleged crimes that their own investigators admit are confusing and by an investigation that is admittedly improper.

(4) Safety Issues: On 5 October 2012, Lt Cohen pleaded with his command for a transfer under the Threatened Person Assignments Program. At the time, he knew he was the target of a concerted effort by and others to have him falsely convicted of harassment. He had also received a death threat via voice mail. Based upon his previous interaction with the believed the voice to be that of the and relayed this information to law enforcement. Interestingly, this voice mail was left shortly after was interviewed by OSI. Despite this evidence, Lt Cohen's commander denied the request citing Lt Cohen's failure to provide any information to either him or law enforcement that would warrant a transfer. No indication was given that the commander thought a safety plan was needed; just a terse, threesentence letter insinuating that the language communicated to Lt Cohen was not significant enough for action.

On or about 13 January 2013, Lt Cohen was physically attacked while at his unit. While turning a corner coming from the squadron gym locker room, an assailant approached Lt Cohen from around a corner and struck his head hard enough to knock him unconscious for a period of time. Although Lt Cohen did not report the incident through his chain of command at the time (due to his distrust of McConnell authorities resulting from the investigation discussed above), he did report to the base medical facility for treatment. In February of 2013, Lt Cohen obtained a Facebook discussion wherein the model of the treatment of assignment. Additionally, Lt Cohen also received an instant message from account name "stanandkyle2010" via Yahoo Instant Messenger stating that a soldier was coming to McConnell "to shoot you in the back. You wont [sic] make it to court alive." Despite having information in their possession from a previous subpoena to Yahoo Inc. linking this account name to a phone number believed to belong to one

of the individuals harassing and threatening Lt Cohen, McConnell authorities have refused make any inquiries regarding this threat.

On 11 April 2013, on behalf of Lt Cohen, I submitted a request for transfer under the Expedited Transfer Program. This Department of Defense Program establishes a presumption in favor of transferring a service member following a credible report of sexual assault. In an effort to demonstrate the potential danger to Lt Cohen, I provided the commander with a letter outlining the threats made against Lt Cohen, to include those mentioned in this letter, and that such threats were related to an incident of sexual assault. My understanding is that this was the first time the commander was made aware of the physical attack against my client. I also spoke at length with the base legal office to explain the connection between the sexual assault and the threats.

Our request for expedited transfer was denied on 13 April 2013. Before getting to the rationale behind the denial, it is important to note that the initial decision authority regarding expedited transfer is the commander, the very person that preferred additional charges against my client. Irrespective of whether these charges have merit, there is the fundamental issue regarding conflict of interest. Having preferred additional charges against Lt Cohen, the commander has lost his objectivity and, without doubt, views Lt Cohen as an accused. His inability to see my client as the victim of a sexual assault predisposes him to deny the request. Indeed, this predisposition can be seen in two of the three rationales given for denial.

The commander denied our request on three grounds: (1) that the program fit within the Humanitarian Transfer Program thereby making my client ineligible due to his pending courtmartial, (2) his assailant was not assigned to McConnell AFB, and (3) he had not made a credible report of sexual assault. It is revealing that the commander chose to build upon his initial, procedural rational for denial. Pointing to what he believes to be a governing regulation was simply not enough – he felt the need to attack Lt Cohen's victim status. The commander contends that Lt Cohen has not provided "a shred of credible evidence" to support a claim of sexual assault and that law enforcement has closed their investigations. As explained above, we contend (and the Article 32 Investigating Officer agrees) that no credible investigation was ever conducted – rather, a sham investigation was conducted to gather evidence to use against my client. Also outlined above is the evidence provided, but ignored by the commander.

The first rationale for denying an expedited transfer request by a sexual assault victim is even more problematic given its potential systemic application within the Air Force. Upon receipt of the denial letter, I immediately contacted the Air Force Personnel Command legal office to ascertain whether it was Air Force policy that the Department of Defense Expedited Transfer Program be subsumed within the Humanitarian Reassignment Program thereby subjecting it to the same rules governing humanitarian transfers. This was confirmed. As a result, I had no true avenue of appeal as the appellate authority would also be bound by this Air Force policy.

Applying the rules governing humanitarian reassignments to expedited transfer requests by victims of sexual assaults eviscerates the Expedited Transfer Request Program. Victims of sexual assault may now be denied transfer to a safer location for nearly 12 different reasons, including a pending court-martial or ongoing investigation, receipt of a referral performance report, or even failing a physical fitness test. The message being sent is that all but the most stellar airmen can be denied an expedited transfer by the very commander that is considering disciplinary or administrative action. In other words, the victim's status as a victim is either being ignored or punished.

I do apologize for the length of this letter. It is, however, very necessary to more fully explain the travesty that is being perpetrated against a victim of sexual assault. I do agree with investigators on one specific point – this is an extremely complex and convoluted case. It is made more so by the defective investigation conducted at McConnell AFB. While I have assisted Lt Cohen in getting the investigation of sexual assault reopened, McConnell authorities have taken away any chance at prosecuting the offender. Their insular approach to this entire case has compromised any faith Lt Cohen has in McConnell AFB authorities to conduct a fair and impartial investigation into his sexual assault. Indeed, by any objective standard, the actions of McConnell authorities have irreparably damaged the integrity of any investigation and have shaken the very core of Air Force assistance to victims of sexual assault.

Should you require additional information, or need me to clarify any statements made in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience. You have my gratitude for your concern regarding my client's safety and welfare.

JOHN W. BELLFLOWER, Maj, USAF Special Nictims' Counsel

Background:

I completed graduate school at Georgia Tech from Fall 2006 through Spring 2008. I completed a dual master's program in City & Regional Planning and International Affairs. Our City Planning program would meet at a local bar, Manuel's Tavern at "First Fridays." I first met CPT

at the bar that night (I believe September 1, 2006) (although he was in my International Affairs program, not City & Regional Planning). was a helicopter pilot (58-Ds) with crosstraining as an intelligence officer from Ft Huachuca working on a master's program in the Army's Advanced Civilian Schooling (ACS) where the army would send senior CGOs to civilian school for graduate studies. Shortly after first meeting, he and I became friends, traveled together and took classes together. At one point, he gave me a guitar and was teaching me how to play. When we and a pilot friend of his from Ft Rucker flight school (CPT found out about my personal life they began harassing me, which consisted of text messages and voice mail. I kept a log of this harassment. I began to get messages like "meets a blow job call him."

June 1, 2007: There was this bar near his apartment that we would frequently hang out at. It changed names a few times, but I believe the last name was "Top Floor." On June 1 2007, contacted me. He was going to show me some stuff on the guitar and wanted to go out. I drove over to his apartment at Savannah Midtown, parked in the garage, brought the guitar up to his apartment and we walked down the street to Top Floor where we started the evening. The bar and all of the tables were full. We met these two random girls out front, sat down at their table and began to drink and order appetizers. The girls had friends (a gay couple) with a lavish condo around 9th and Peachtree. They wanted to hang out at their friends place so we all went over there, continued drinking. At the end of the evening, the group disbanded; and I went back to his apartment.

I remember **weighted**'s apartment very distinctively. It was a fifth floor corner unit at Savannah Midtown. When you walked into the apartment there was long hallway leading to the family room a coat closet on the left, a laundry closet on the right. In the family room there was a tan/beige leather lazyboy sofa against a wall of windows with a matching chair against the master bedroom wall. Beside the sofa was an end table with a lamp. There was not a coffee table rather, but two folding wicker/iron side tables placed side-by-side in place of where a coffee table would go. A top of that were two small ceramic vases, one orange and one yellow. Directly opposite of the sofa was the guest bathroom. Along that wall was a dark wood television console table with a small Westinghouse flat screen television. On one side of the family was the master suite and on the other side was dining room (with a bank of bay windows), kitchen and guest bedroom/study. In the dining room there was a round glass table

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with three wicker and iron chairs. The fourth chair was visible and in the study in front of a small desk. The kitchen was an L-shaped galley style kitchen with a high bar counter that faced the family room. The refrigerator and stove shared a wall with the guest bedroom and the sink faced the family room.

When we got back to his apartment, he got hungry and started making eggs in the kitchen. I sat down in the living room in the leather lazyboy chair and began to play on the guitar. To the right of the chair was a small tri-pod style guitar stand. If finished cooking in the kitchen, came into the living room, I placed the guitar next to the chair and stood up. He handed me the keys to his Kia Sorrento SUV and told me to drive. He had gotten a divorce and was returning to court with his ex-wife over a monetary dispute. He thought that his ex-wife was out of town, and wanted me to drive him to his ex-wife's house in Marietta. I did not know it at the time, but he planned entering her residence using the programmed homelink remote in his SUV, go inside her house and get financial records or documents. At the time he wanted to "show" me his ex's house but I later found that this was not his intent. Because we had been drinking earlier in the evening, I simply refused to drive him.

When I refused, he got really angry and picked up one of the small ceramic vases off one of the two tables in front of the sofa. He hit me over the forehead with it and began to wrestle me to the ground. When he got me to the ground, he put his knees over my arms so I could not move. There was a bedroom pillow on his sofa; he reached for it, and covered my face and began to suffocate me. While he had the pillow over my face, he began to undo his belt and unbutton his jeans, pulling out his genitals. He then removed the pillow tossing it aside; I began coughing gasping for air. As I did that, he leaned forward began ramming his penis down my throat. He didn't ejaculate and stopped when I started to throw up stomach acid. Then he started to slap his genitals in my face, pulled out his cell phone and started to take pictures of his genitals in my face, laughing, claiming to be emailing the photos to himself from his cell phone. He started to insert his genitals in again, but I got an arm free and reached behind me for anything I could grab. I grabbed a small iron candle lantern that was sitting on the floor next to the chair and the guitar stand and hit him over the forehead. I recall a fair amount of blood splattering all over the guitar which was behind me. He started cursing covered his forehead and went to clean it up. At that point, I fled with the guitar in hand.

June 2, 2007: The next day, I contacted the DeKalb Rape Crisis Center and was met at a local clinic for medical care. I don't recall where it was at or her name, but I remember it was a slightly stocky woman (I believe of Indian or Latin decent). I know that night he came over to my place wanting to talk and I would not answer him. Within about two weeks, at some point, I don't know if it was from calling around, but he did find out that I had sought medical care

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following the attack. He got really nervous about me pressing charges or filing a police report. He began texting and calling me with threats against my life - things like 'prepare to die' - or 'I'm going to kill you.' At one point, he even sent a death threat to my government cell phone, in which Federal Protective Services were notified and investigated.

We ran into each other periodically in the company of other students in our graduate program. At one point, late summer when school was starting up again, **starting** had found out from other students that I was applying for Officer Training School, and indicated to me that he was going to show the pictures he had taken to the Air Force. He claimed he was going to tell them about my private life and say it was consensual; and that because the pictures did not have anything identifying of **starting** (other than his genitals), he claimed he could do it anonymously and keep me from commissioning under the guise of Don't Ask Don't Tell.

So sayeth Adam P. Cohen this 15th day of April 2013.

ADAM P. COHEN, Lt, USAF

