

[REDACTED]

~~OFFICIAL~~

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE (MDP)

NEWS BRIEF

DATE: Friday 30 November 2012 [Latest update: 12 August 2014]

SOURCE: [REDACTED] (MDP CID)

MDP PRESS OFFICER: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BACKGROUND [REDACTED]

On 29 November 2012, MDP detectives arrested a 30-year-old former member of the RAF on suspicion of theft, money laundering and possession of firearms components. Officers also searched his home address in [REDACTED], Leicestershire. He was taken to a police station in Leicester for questioning before being released on police bail pending further enquiries. His arrest is connected to an MDP investigation (originally an RAF Police investigation but handed over to MDP detectives) into allegations that more than 50,000 tonnes of aluminium mobile forward operating platforms, originally used for the Harrier jump jet but now used as mobile helicopter landing pads, was stolen from the MOD and sold for scrap (original value to the MOD over £550k). The suspect is also believed to have stolen other MOD kit and SA80 assault rifle component parts. He left the RAF on Thursday 8 November 2012 and the allegations all pre-date his departure.

The items are thought to have been stolen from RAF Wittering.

The suspect was bailed to report back to police on 27 February 2013, and then re-bailed several times pending further enquiries until 9 September 2013, when he was charged with two counts of theft (value over £560k) and one Firearms Act offence (possession of component parts of SA80 assault rifles). He was bailed to appear before the Loughborough magistrates on 9 October 2013 for first court appearance, and then remitted to Leicester Crown Court on 20 February 2014 for plea and case management. On 19 June [REDACTED] pled guilty to all three charges.

Media are likely to be present in court on 11 August 2014 for sentencing. [REDACTED] is likely to receive a custodial sentence.

Detectives have initiated proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act to recover some of the value of the stolen items.

[REDACTED]

Lines To Take (to be used if asked)

- MOD Police can confirm that on 29 November 2012 detectives arrested a 30-year-old man, a former member of the Armed Forces, at an address in the [REDACTED] area, in Leicestershire, on suspicion of theft and related offences.
- He was taken to a police station in Leicester for questioning, then bailed and subsequently re-bailed several times pending further enquiries.
- On 9 September 2013, [REDACTED] was charged with two counts of theft and with one offence under the Firearms Act (possession of component parts of an SA80).
- On 19 June 2014, [REDACTED] pleaded guilty to all 3 charges. On 11 August 2014, he was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment on the main charge, to 6 months for theft of tools and 6 months for possession of firearm component parts, the sentences to run concurrently.

Post-conviction comment (police):

[REDACTED], the MDP investigating officer said: **“This was a substantial theft of key front-line equipment, by a man who abused a position of trust to steal on a large scale. Our investigation was long-running but thorough, and has resulted in a criminal conviction”.**

“This should send a clear message to those who think they can defraud the MOD that such behaviour will not be tolerated, and they risk a prison sentence if they try.”

Q&A

Q. Why is the MOD Police carrying out this investigation?

A. The MDP has a responsibility for the policing of the Defence Estate and this investigation falls within its remit.

Q. What was stolen, and where from?

A. The items stolen included a large amount of aluminium used in the construction of forward operating platforms for temporary helicopter landing pads (valued at over £550k). The stolen material was sold for scrap.

Q. Are any firearms or explosives involved?

A. [REDACTED] pleaded guilty to a charge of possessing component parts of SA80 rifles.

Q. Does this mean security at MOD sites has been compromised?

A. Security at MOD sites is kept under constant review and all allegations of theft are dealt with robustly. In this case, suspicions were followed up and a thorough investigation followed, resulting in a criminal conviction.