



Ministry  
of Defence

Army Secretariat  
Army Headquarters  
IDL 24 Blenheim Building  
Marlborough Lines  
Andover  
Hampshire, SP11 8HJ  
United Kingdom

Ref: FOI2016/12639/78109

E-mail: ArmySec-group@mod.uk

Website: www.army.mod.uk

[REDACTED]  
E-mail address: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

20 January 2017

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 21 December in which you requested the following information:

[REDACTED], *COLin David Adamson (DOB 20/9/50) was murdered in Celle, Germany on the 18th December 1983 in Celle, Germany [REDACTED]. Due to the murder taking place near a British Army BAse, the British Military Police were involved in the investigation but the crime was never solved.*

*I wondered if it may be possible to have access to any of the records of this case or any further information surrounding the case as I would like to look further into everything that happened.*

*Any information or even advice on where/who/what to see or do next would be greatly appreciated".*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held by the Department.

Under 16 of the FOIA and in order to be of assistance to you, it might be helpful if I begin by offering some context. You may be aware that your father's death was investigated by the German Civil Police, who held primacy in the case. The Ministry of Defence no longer holds a copy of the German report. In order to obtain a copy of the investigation you may wish to approach Police Scotland or the German Chief Prosecutor, Celle. I believe the former obtained a copy of the German police investigation into your father's death and that the case file number was Q/CID/8216. You should write to the following addresses:

FOI Central Processing Unit  
Information Management Unit  
Police Scotland  
Clyde Gateway  
2 French Street  
Glasgow, G40 4EH

Leitender Oberstaatsanwalt (LOStA (Chief Prosecutor))  
Gerhard Berger  
Im Werder Str. 5  
29221 Celle

In terms of information held by the Ministry of Defence, I have attached a copy of a briefing note prepared for a Defence Minister in 2009, which provides a resume of the case, and the Royal Military Police involvement, which you may find helpful. I would add, however, that the location of the car stated in paragraph three of the brief was incorrect, it was in fact found in a wooded area in the outskirts of Celle. Some of the information is exempt from release under section 40 of the FOIA – Personal information and has, therefore, been redacted. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test in making a decision to withhold the information.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <https://ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,



Disclosure and Litigation Leader

D/PM(A)/111/38/36

18 Sep 09

DPM(Inv)

Copy to:

CO SIB (G) RMP  
HQPM(A) – SO1 Sec

**THE MURDER OF MR COLIN ADAMSON**

**Issue**

1. Concerns raised by [REDACTED] regarding the support provided by RMP in 1983 and since to the German Civil Police (GCP), who investigated the murder of Mr Adamson, a UK national who was visiting Celle, Northern Germany, at the time of his murder

**Recommendations**

2. That you note that:
- a. the original investigation has been subject to a detailed review by Grampian Police, RMP, the Public Prosecutor for Celle and the GCP;
  - b. that two men who featured in the original investigation, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were both eliminated from the original enquiry. No new information has come to light which would lead us to question this decision;
  - c. we are not aware of any concerns being expressed by the German authorities about the RMP support to the investigation, which was extensive;
  - d. there are no new lines of enquiry to be pursued; and
  - e. that a meeting is to be arranged with [REDACTED] by Grampian Police, which will be attended by OC 70 Sect SIB (G) RMP.

**Background**

3. On 18 Dec 03, Mr Colin Adamson, a civilian who worked in the petroleum industry and who was visiting Celle in Northern Germany, was found dead in a burned out car in the car park of the hotel where he had been staying. The cause of death was blunt trauma to his head, sustained before his body was placed in the car, which was then set alight. There was

evidence that he had been entertaining person(s) unknown in his room before his death.

4. The GCP had jurisdiction for the investigation and because Celle was the location of a large British Army Garrison, the support of RMP was obtained. Indeed, the provision of this support was a treaty obligation under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). The case remains unsolved.

5. Since 2002 [REDACTED], has raised a number of concerns to her local MP regarding the investigation into the murder of [REDACTED]. In consequence, the matter was referred to Grampian Police, who acted as a point of liaison to the GCP. Grampian Police were able to address most of the concerns of [REDACTED], but 2 matters remained unresolved:

a. what action had been taken by RMP to eliminate [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] ?

b. whether there is any evidence to support a statement apparently made by a GCP officer, to the effect that the RMP had been obstructive and were hampering the progress of the investigation.

6. The original investigation file has been reviewed by [REDACTED] of Grampian Police and the results were then further reviewed jointly by SIB RMP, the Public Prosecutor for Celle and the GCP. It was noted that in 2004, the material recovered by the GCP in Mr Adamson's hotel room had been resubmitted to a forensic science laboratory to determine if advances in technology, specifically DNA, might provide new investigation opportunities, but this proved negative. Additionally, fingerprints recovered from the room have been submitted to speculative searches on National databases, but these have also proved negative. The Review has therefore determined that there are currently no new lines of enquiry.

7. With regard to the specific issues raised by [REDACTED] :

a. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were ex-soldiers who were then resident in Celle and were known to the GCP. They were the subject of investigation by the GCP, because information was received that 2 English men had visited a local garage on the day of the murder, where they had obtained petrol in a can using British Forces Germany Fuel Coupons. SIB RMP found that some 540 fuel coupons had been used at the garage in the preceding week. They eliminated 527 by virtue of date, and the remaining 13 users were traced, interviewed and eliminated. The garage attendant could not provide any information relating to the coupons used, but did describe the men who used them and in particular one of them had a distinctive tattoo. Neither [REDACTED] nor [REDACTED] matched the descriptions and there was no other evidence to implicate them in the murder.

b. The Head of the GCP Criminal Police is not aware of any obstruction by RMP. Whilst he would not comment on the opinion of any individual GCP officer who may have been in contact with [REDACTED], German law does provide significant powers to deal with anyone who fails to assist with GCP enquiries. Additionally, the Public Prosecutor does have recourse to both the German Lander and State governments, for any breach of the British Army's obligations under SOFA.

#### Next Steps

7. [REDACTED] is arranging a meeting with [REDACTED] in Oct 09, possibly in the presence of her MP. This will be attended by [REDACTED] who contributed to the reviews conducted in Scotland and Germany. It is intended that [REDACTED] is afforded the opportunity to ask any questions she may have in order to allay any further concerns she may have that the RMP did not cooperate fully with the GCP in 1983. [REDACTED] will also be reassured that the enquiry remains open, but there are no active lines of enquiry. Should any new evidence come to light which suggests any serving or former soldier is involved, SIB RMP will, of course, undertake any action required by the GCP with diligence.

[REDACTED]  
Lt Col  
SO1 Investigations and Policing  
161 Up [REDACTED]

