



MOD-83-0000145-A

RE: Investigation into the death of Mr. Nadheem Abdullah

From: "Army PersOps-Dir (Lowe, Matthew Brig)" <ArmyPersOps-Dir@mod.uk>
To: ben.dustin@iraq-judicial-investigations.org
Priority: Normal
Date: 15/01/2015 12:25

Ben

I understand. We are getting into the detail of tactical behaviour here. In essence there will come a point at which someone conducting a VCP will ask vehicle occupants to get out of the vehicle. Clearly this will be easier to communicate if the language of the vehicle occupants is being used. There are then two possible outcomes. The individuals either get out of the vehicle voluntarily, or they decline to do so. If they decline to do so the people running the VCP will reasonably assume they are non compliant and will need to get them out of the vehicle.

The mechanics of this are difficult as the door and its frame represent a physical obstacle, a defence and potentially a threat. So the door needs to be kept open and the occupant has to be extracted against their will. Space is tight and there is little scope for purchase or leverage. So in simple terms the non-compliant individual has to be pulled out, and if they are resisting or holding on then force has to be used, and it is likely that some degree of damage will occur-one might expect to see abrasions to the occupants fingers/hands from holding on to the car or bruising where the body has met the door frame.

There is undoubtedly very real value in practising the mechanics and the tactical detail of how to remove non compliant occupants from vehicles with the minimum of damage to both the soldier and the occupant. I do not know how this was affected during this specific incident and therefore cannot judge how effectively it was done. But yes, soldiers who are tasked with running VCPs should, wherever time allows, know and rehearse the associated drills for doing so.

I hope that helps.

Matthew

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From: ben.dustin@iraq-judicial-investigations.org [mailto:ben.dustin@iraq-judicial-investigations.org]
Sent: 15 January 2015 11:06
To: Army PersOps-Dir (Lowe, Matthew Brig)
Subject: RE: Investigation into the death of Mr. Nadheem Abdullah

Matthew

Thank you for your email. It has remained a slightly open question for the Inspector as to whether oral evidence is required from you. On balance it is probably not going to be necessary but the Inspector needs to draw your attention to paragraph 16 of your witness statement where you state "From memory, what is said to have happened in the incident is said to have occurred when Mr. Abdullah was out of the vehicle. I therefore do not think that the way in which VCPs were conducted is relevant to the issue of how Mr. Abdullah died. What is at issue is what happened to him after he got out of the vehicle".

This is not the evidence available to the Inspector. There is first hand evidence that soldiers forcibly removed Mr Abdullah and the driver from the front of the vehicle and in so doing may have caused injuries. The training question thus should be addressed by reference to the benefit which training might have provided had soldiers some experience in training of removing resisting occupants from a vehicle. It is of course right that there are circumstances to be considered which point to injuries being inflicted whilst the persons were out of the vehicle. But your comments would assist the Inspector, if you have them, on the significance of training in the circumstances we have just set out. For your consideration there is evidence that there was an inevitable prospect of confrontation which could have arisen from Mr Abdullah resisting the request to get out of the vehicle which when force was used inflamed his resistance the more and could be part of the explanation for that which occurred when out of the vehicle. The Inspector is conscious that you have covered a confrontational position like this in general terms in paragraph 14 of your statement. There may not be much more for you to say but the Inspector leaves that to you.

If you can assist in this regard then you can take the position to be that you will not be required to give oral evidence.

Kind regards

Ben