



MOD-83-0000452-A

RESTRICTED

Number: [REDACTED] Rank/Status: LCpl Surname: SO71  
Forenames: SO71  
Unit: 32 Engineer Regiment  
Trade/Occupation RE ('X' box) Male: X Female:  
DOB: [REDACTED]

I am being investigated for an offence of Manslaughter, allegedly committed against a Mr Sa'eed Shabram on the 23rd May 2003.

I deny this offence in the strongest possible terms and state the following:

On the 23rd May 2003 I was in Iraq.

The 23rd May 2003 was a maintenance day for 26 Armoured Engineer Squadron. As a result we had to wash the vehicles down.

I was aware that the day before some other lads had washed down their vehicles at the dock near to the camp. [REDACTED] Spr SO72 was the driver of my vehicle.

We picked up some kit and followed Lt SO70 ([REDACTED]) and [REDACTED] Spr SO75 in their vehicle and set off for the dock.

When we arrived we all got out with the exception of Spr SO75 who remained in his vehicle on comms.

Myself and Spr SO72 started getting the kit out to wash the vehicles down when we realised that we had the wrong pump.

I told Lt SO70 and he agreed that I and Spr SO72 should go back to the camp and bring back the correct pump. After a short time we returned to the dock with the correct pump.

Lt SO70 informed me that a tanker had caught fire. He stated that he either had reported it or was going to report it, I'm not sure which.

He then said that he was going to have a look around for something to try and put it out.

When Lt SO70 left myself and Spr SO72 washed the vehicles down. Some of the local children were trying to help. Spr SO75 remained on comms, in his vehicle.

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A short time later Lt SO70 came back with 2 locals, he said that they had been stealing some cable.

A crowd had gathered around Lt SO70. I couldn't really hear what was being said as the pump was so noisy.

I think the children were shouting "Ali Baba, Ali Baba". This is something they would often do so I took no notice and carried on cleaning the vehicle.

My attention was then drawn to a man swimming across the dock. I saw him grab a rope hanging off an anti aircraft gun and pull himself out of the water.

I thought nothing of it, as others had been playing in the water whilst we had been there.

Then I saw Spr SO72 strip off and jump into the water.

Lt SO70 told me that someone had gone into the water and to get on the radio and request divers and medics. I couldn't get through on mine so I had to use the radio in Lt SO70's vehicle.

I spoke to the duty signaller and then to Capt SO76 and reported the position to him. He wanted to speak to Lt SO70 who was by this time also in the water.

I shouted to Lt SO70 who then climbed out of the water. I'm not sure if Spr SO72 also climbed out or stayed in the water. He spoke to Capt SO76 and then he and Spr SO72 went back into the water.

By this time a crowd had gathered and were becoming hostile. As a result I retrieved my rifle from my vehicle. I called for assistance and was told that SSgt SO77 was on his way.

When SSgt SO77 arrived the crowd started having a go at him. I felt threatened for my own safety and that of the other soldiers.

By this time Lt SO70 and Spr SO72 were out of the water and looked exhausted.

The crowd were becoming increasing hostile a man tried to grab my rifle and I had to push him away.

Due to the hostile situation the decision was made to extract, which we did.

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At no time that day did I see any animals in the dock complex.

At no time did I see either of the lads pushed or thrown into the water.

At no stage did I see any person restrained, struck or abused by either myself or any other soldier.

At no stage did any of the locals attempt to assist the lads.

At no stage did I hear the lads swimming ability discussed or mentioned.

At no stage was I crying or did I see any of the other soldiers cry.

At no stage did I hear the question of compensation discussed or raised.

The death of the man was completely out of our control. We did everything we could to save him. Whilst tragic there was nothing we could do.

It is on this basis that I categorically deny this offence.

Signed: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SO71

LCpl  
RE

Date: 23-06-04