



MOD-83-0000693-A

Dated: 30 March 2023

In the matter of an investigation into the deaths of Radhi Nama and Mousa Ali

and

In the matter of an investigation into the death of Ahmed Jabbar Kareem Ali

Inspector: The Rt Hon Dame Anne Rafferty DBE

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WITNESS STATEMENT OF  
SO25

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I, SO25, of [REDACTED],  
[REDACTED], say as follows:

**A. Background**

1. I served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Irish Guards for 22 years, starting as a Guardsman and leaving in 2012 at the rank of Warrant Officer Class 2. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].
2. I have read my statements dated 11 February 2004, 28 July 2004 and 17 May 2006 and confirm their contents are true. I have nothing to amend or clarify from those statements although I cannot now remember much of what was detailed in those statements.
3. In May 2003 I was a Platoon Sergeant in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Irish Guards based in Basra. I was made Platoon Sergeant in March 2003 prior to being deployed with the Regiment to Iraq. We were initially deployed to Kuwait on a war footing and crossed the border in March 2003 but shortly after we arrived the war ended, and our role became more of a policing role. My role as Platoon Sergeant was to report to the Platoon Commander and to oversee welfare, discipline and morale within the Platoon.
4. When we deployed to Iraq, I could not speak Arabic.

## **B. Training and instruction**

5. Prior to deployment on Op TELIC we did receive training on the Rules of Engagement although I couldn't now say what that consisted of. We all carried a card setting out the Rules of Engagement and we had done training prior to deployment for the war fighting phase. While our role changed quickly after we arrived, my understanding was that the Rules of Engagement did not change just because we were no longer on a 'war footing'. I don't recall being given any training on how to deal with looting specifically for Iraq, although, we had previously been provided with training on keeping law and order in relation to our previous tours in Northern Ireland. I can't remember receiving any training regarding the detention of individuals, the use and dangers of water during detention, the use of restraint techniques, prisoner handling, the processing of detainees and requirements for a medical examination or any training on my specific role at the Gymnasium.

## **C. The Gymnasium**

6. The Gymnasium was Number One Company location. It was effectively a Forward Operating Base, separate from the main Headquarters and used as a place to work out of when carrying out patrols in Basra. I can't remember how far it was from the main base. I can't recall that it had any specific prisoner handling facilities.
7. Whilst located at the Gymnasium I would report to my Platoon Commander, [REDACTED] and my Section Commanders would report to me.
8. I don't recall having any dealings or relationship with 1 Black Watch while in Iraq. I had nothing to do with them and as a Platoon we operated completely separately.
9. As far as I can remember I don't recall detainees ever being taken to the Gymnasium.
10. As such, I also cannot recall any orders being given in relation to when, how or why detainees would be taken to the Gymnasium, who would be responsible for them, any mis-treatment of detainees or other procedures in place to provide food and water. I simply cannot remember ever seeing detainees at the Gymnasium.

## **D. Group Orders**

11. The Platoon Commander would usually attend Group Orders with the Company Commander and he would then come down and pass on those orders to myself and the other Section Commanders. This would be routine stuff, such as who was to go on patrol, when and where we would be moving to, who would be staying at the base etc. I don't recall anything more specific.

12. The issue of looting was probably discussed as there was such a lot of looting going on because of the vacuum caused by the Police abandoning their roles as soon as the war ended. The city was in total chaos with looting everywhere. However, I can't recall any specific order or information given from Group Orders passed down to me about looting.
13. There were probably many incidents where we would have caught looters and not had the capacity to deal with them, which was frustrating. A Warrior could only hold 9 individuals and so if there was a large group of looters, we would not have been able to deal with this. I personally can't remember ever picking up any looters while on patrol.
14. We would have received orders passed down to all NCOs from Group Orders about how troops on the ground should deal with looters as it was such a big problem, but this length of time after the event I can't remember specific details about what we were ordered to do or how we were supposed to deal with them.
15. I can't remember any specific practices we were supposed to use with looters if detained, particularly as I can't recall ever detaining looters myself. Our role was more about trying to secure buildings to prevent looting rather than detaining the looters. It felt as though the looters were trying to take everything they could get their hands on, in particular air conditioning units, but otherwise anything metal and shiny and we were mainly trying to prevent this.
16. I certainly don't recall any suggestion or mention that troops were putting looters into water or that this would be sanctioned by Group Orders.
17. Similarly, I don't believe that we were ever given any orders to use water as a deterrent from anyone outside of the ordinary chain of command (from where such orders would have come, if there had been any.)

#### **E. Post-war phase**

18. After the combat operations ended the situation in the city was chaotic. There was a complete vacuum of authority with no police or law and order, and the civilians looked to us to try to provide that law and order in the city.
19. In particular looting was a major problem. I remember an instance at the University where looters were lifting air conditioning units out of the building and stealing everything and just running past us and we couldn't stop them because there were so many of them. We just didn't have the manpower to deal with the level of looting going on. As a result it seemed that our main role was to try to protect buildings as much as we were able to, to stop the looting, but not to detain the looters as such. It

sometimes felt as if they were trying to pull the city apart and we were just trying to stop them.

#### **F. Deaths of Radhi Nama and Mousa Ali**

20. I was not aware whilst in Iraq of the deaths of Radhi Nama and Mousa Ali.

#### **G. Culture in Regiment**

21. I would say that in May 2003 the culture in the Regiment was one of well-disciplined professionalism. We had all been excited but also obviously nervous and worried about deploying to Iraq, but the Regiment was very close, and we all knew and trusted each other well.
22. From my experience, our Company always treated Iraqi civilians well. We had some sympathy for them as they had been a repressed society under Saddam Hussein, and in Basra particularly so. However, we were angry and upset at the way that the looters behaved at the end of the war as Basra was a nice city and it felt as if they were determined to destroy it.
23. I don't recall any detainees being kept at the Regiment.
24. 'Beasting' is a military slang term used when a soldier is being punished. It usually involved lots of fitness or being put into physically stressful positions. While we might have done this in the UK for discipline amongst the soldiers, I can't remember it being used in Iraq, either on soldiers or Iraqis.
25. As I don't recall that we ever had any detainees, I certainly can't recall any mistreatment of detainees or civilians.
26. Similarly, I cannot recall any incidents of mistreatment.
27. I never saw any threats being made to detainees, including specifically that they would be made to get into water.
28. As I didn't see and was not aware of any incidents of mistreatment, I don't think that I considered how any mistreatment would be considered by other British Military personnel. The issue simply didn't come up.
29. As well as my own personal experience, I also don't remember ever hearing other troops complaining about the treatment of detainees or civilians.

30. In my statement dated 28 July 2004 I detailed a briefing given to the platoon about the way in which we were supposed to treat detained looters, with the guidance coming down the chain of command. I can't add much to my original statement. The briefing came down the chain of command as a general briefing, and not as far as I was aware, in response to any specific incident. The briefing was a result of general observations and directed to all of the Regiment, not just our platoon or company. I think this was in response to a general frustration at some of the looters who we felt were ruining the city with their behaviour. In using the term 'too much force' I think I was referencing manhandling or aggressive handling of looters, but I can't recall specifically what I meant now after this period of time. It was a briefing which I believe was provided to all units, not just ours and in response to a general observation of behaviour, rather than a specific incident. I think there was a recognition that we needed to shift our response from a war footing, where it was acceptable to be more aggressive, to a less aggressive approach. We did understand that the looters were just trying to get by and get something better for themselves, and we just needed to try to stop them going into the buildings. This didn't need to be as aggressive as when we were fighting the war.
31. As I set out in my previous statement, I was not aware of any concerns regarding [REDACTED] SO15 [REDACTED] As the Platoon Sergeant I was responsible for instilling discipline into the platoon and telling them what they could and couldn't do. We all needed to make a transition from viewing the civilian population as being out there to kill us, to civilians just trying to get by and get on with their own lives and that they now needed to be treated differently. However, I can't remember any call sign specifically being singled out.
32. Within our platoon, every Warrior had a section of 9, with a Section Commander and Section 2IC and we then had the warrior sergeant who would have oversight when dismounted. I think we would have known if something was going on as each NCO knew their own section well. At Platoon HQ we would get feedback from the Section Commanders, plus there was always a commander on the ground. Platoon HQ might not always go out with the lads, depending on what their task was, but I felt that I knew what was going on within the platoon.
33. However, we didn't try to micro-manage the Sections. The NCOs or patrol commanders were trusted to be commanders of their Sections and the reality was that they were in charge when they were in that Warrior. Discipline came from the vehicle commander but it was not a dictatorship and ultimately we trusted the chain of command.
34. In my view all of our NCOs were influential within the Platoon. They were all young men, who had come out to IRAQ, and the Platoon had lost 2 lads shot dead and 2 injured in the war. The boys were there to carry out their duties professionally and all the NCOs were influential in making sure that they did so.

## **H. Existence and awareness of 'wetting'**

### ***a. 'Wetting' generally***

35. Whilst in Iraq I had not heard the term 'wetting'. Since then, as a result of other hearings and on TV I have heard of the term, but to my knowledge it was not used when we were in Iraq.
36. I never saw detainees being placed into water, being threatened with being placed into water, or being transported to other bodies of water.
37. I cannot see any reason why detainees would have been transported to or placed into bodies of water and am not aware of this happening.
38. As such I cannot comment on any suggestions about what might have happened if detainees were placed into water.
39. I cannot recall any incidents when soldiers on patrol would put detainees into the Shat Al-Arab River.
40. Similarly and following on from my previous paragraph, given that I cannot recall any incident when detainees were put into the water, it follows that I did not see any restraining devices being placed on detainees.
41. Similarly and as above, I did not see any force being used on detainees whilst they were being placed in water, as I did not see detainees being placed in water.
42. Finally, and as above, as I did not see detainees being put into water, I cannot comment on whether, if there were detainees placed in water, they would have been in danger.
43. I am not aware of the practice of placing detainees in water taking place for any period of time.

### ***b. Reporting of 'wetting' incidents***

44. As I cannot recall any incidents of detainees being placed into water, and it was not a practice which was used, it follows that there was no requirement to report incidents.
45. To my knowledge and to the best of my recollection, there was never any mention of reporting 'wetting' incidents up the chain of command, as it was not something that we came across. As a result, there was no guidance available on how incidents such as that should be dealt with.

46. I cannot recall any reports any incidents of wetting, regardless of the fact that no official guidance had been provided and so I cannot comment on how this would have been dealt with.

*c. Chain of Command*

47. I don't believe that senior commanders had any awareness of water being used on detainees, mainly as I don't recall this happening in any event.

48. To the best of my recollection we never received any direction on the use of water as a deterrent to looting.

49. Neither was any direction given by commanders about the use of water on detainees or placing detainees into water.

**STATEMENT OF TRUTH**

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest believe in tis truth

Signed: SO25 [REDACTED]

Printed Name: SO25 [REDACTED]

Date:30/03/2023