



MOD-83-000582-A

Witness Name: SO83

Statement No.: 1

Exhibits: 0

Date: 08.06.2022

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 Karim Ali

Inspector: Baroness Heather Hallett PC DBE

WITNESS STATEMENT OF SO83

I, SO83, will say as follows:-

1. I am making this statement for the purposes of the investigations into the deaths of the above named individuals.

A. Background

2. I joined the British Army on 4 December 1985 as a Private in the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) attached to the Royal Artillery in the Hebrides. I was subsequently deployed to Ireland as a searcher, before transferring to the Royal Military Police ("RMP") in November 1988, where I carried out general police duties. I later spent two years at the Army Training Regiment as a recruit instructor and undertook a number of operational tours, including being deployed twice to Bosnia and once to the Falklands.
3. In May 1999, I transferred to the Special Investigations Branch ("SIB"). I worked as an investigator for three years. In 2002, I became a fraud investigator. At this time, I held the rank of Staff Sergeant ("SSgt").

4. 

5. I was deployed to Iraq between 20 June 2003 and 18 October 2003.
6. In 2004, I worked as the Police Officer Manager at Bulford in the out of area police office. I was responsible for collating and archiving all case files relating to operational theatres and out of area exercises for General Police Duties (GPD) and SIB, including all associated evidence and exhibits.
7. I was initially instructed that all SIB cases were Category 1 and records were to be kept for 30 years. This later changed to records being kept indefinitely, but I cannot recall exactly when this was. Anything classified as 'secret' was initially held by me and then transferred to the Specialist Crime Team at Bulford. The radio logs for several investigations were classified as 'secret', but I do not know if the logs in the investigations into the deaths of Mr Radhi NAMA and Mr Mousa ALI were.
8. I was in this role until I left the Army on 14 December 2010.
9. I previously gave statements in relation to the deaths of Mr NAMA and Mr ALI on 21 January 2013 and 27 July 2016. I confirm the contents of these statements, however I wish to clarify the situation surrounding my recall of my interview with Mr NAMA's two daughters.
10. I cannot, nor have I ever been able to, speak Arabic. Therefore, when interviewing Mr NAMA's daughters, I was assisted by an interpreter. Audio and video of these interviews were captured and subsequently sent to a translation consultant in Salisbury. On review, which occurred at a later date although I cannot recall exactly when, it became apparent there were problems with the translation provided by the interpreter; what I was being told by the interpreter was not the same as what the interpreter was being told by Mr NAMA's two daughters. This was not the only incident of such issues, the problem with interpretation being widespread.
11. I have been asked by the investigation to detail my role and regiment in May 2003, however I was not deployed to Iraq until 20 June 2003. I will therefore focus on my role at this time.

12. I was deployed to Iraq on 20 June 2003 on Operation TELIC 2. I held the rank of SSgt and deployed from Bulford with 61 Section SIB.
13. The SIB section was made up of: the Officer Commanding Captain ("OC Capt") [REDACTED]; Warrant Officer Class 2 Sergeant Major ("WO2 Sgt Major") [REDACTED]; SSgt [REDACTED] and myself; and Sergeants ("Sgts") [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. We comprised two investigation teams, each with a Ssgt and three Sgts. I was in charge of one of those teams, consisting of Sgts [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Sgt [REDACTED] was the team's Crime Scene Investigator.
14. OC Capt [REDACTED] and WO2 Sgt Major [REDACTED] deployed two weeks before myself and Sgts [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to allow for a handover period with the OC and WO2 SIB on Operation TELIC 1. SSgt [REDACTED] and Sgts [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] deployed one week before us. Our acclimatisation period of 5 days was cut short as six members of the RMP were killed at Al Majar Al Kabir on 24th June 2003.
15. On arrival in Iraq, we were based at Shiabah Logistics Base, located approximately 40 minutes from Basrah. I recall being based there for over half of our deployment, but cannot recall exactly when we moved to Basrah Palace, where we were co-located with the RMP. I do not know why we moved locations.
16. On a day-to-day basis, we were given investigations from either WO2 Sgt Major [REDACTED] or OC Capt [REDACTED]. They would receive investigations from the Brigade Provost Officer (BPO) Cell HQ 1 (UK) Armd Div, based at Basrah International Airport. The Battalions would go through the 1 (UK) Armd Div to report incidents. We did not receive jobs directly from either the Battalions or the RMP Provost Companies.
17. Communications coming into the SIB office either went to WO2 Sgt Major [REDACTED] or OC Capt [REDACTED] as SSgts and Sgts were based out on the ground. Within the office, we used land lines for communications, and, when out and about, we used mobile phones and satellite phones. We did not have radios at the SIB office, but used the radio systems when visiting Battalion locations if necessary.
18. The cases we dealt with predominantly concerned issues such as: deaths; serious injuries; rapes; sexual assaults; attempted suicides; and allegations of bullying.

However, we also dealt with any other issues identified as requiring investigation by OC Capt [REDACTED]. We inherited several investigations carried out by those deployed during Operation TELIC 1 which remained open.

19. Each member of the team, myself included, was responsible for their own investigations, but we assisted each other. We held case file conferences where each member of the team briefed the whole of SIB Sect on their investigations. We used these as a way of keeping the OC up to date with ongoing work.
20. As part of our investigations, we carried out site visits and interviewed those involved in the incidents under investigation. If we had to go out on an investigation, we would deploy as a team, with additional staff from the RMP if we required further assistance and they had the resources available. However, whether we could leave the base to carry out an investigation, would depend on the security state at the relevant time. We only had soft skinned vehicles, which we were sometimes unable to use because of a heightened security risk. When this happened, we either required those involved to come to us to be interviewed, or we required an escort from a local infantry unit.
21. On conclusion of a case, each Sgt wrote a report, which was checked by the team SSgt. Once I was happy with it, I passed it on to WO2 Sgt Major [REDACTED], who checked it and passed it on to OC Capt [REDACTED]
22. I have been asked to identify the chain of command at Camp Stephen. I only visited Camp Stephen once during my deployment and I am therefore unable to comment on the chain of command there.

B. Training and instruction

23. I have been asked to confirm whether I received any training, briefing or instruction in relation to the following areas:
 - a. *The Rules of Engagement in the post-war fighting phase of Operation TELIC;*
 - b. *Maintaining law and order and the prevention of looting;*
 - c. *The detention of individuals;*
 - d. *The use and dangers of water during detention;*
 - e. *The use of restraint techniques;*
 - f. *Prisoner handling;*
 - g. *The processing of detainees and the requirements for medical examination; and*

h. Training, briefing, or instruction specific to your role at Camp Stephen.

24. Prior to deploying to Iraq, I undertook Operational and Training Advisory Group training in February 2003. This training lasted for a few weeks and took place at Plymouth and Bulford in the UK. I cannot recall the details of the training, but I believe we covered the Rules of Engagement, the Geneva Convention and all topics related to theatre. We focussed on those aspects relevant to the police, for example scenes of crime and using GPS to navigate.
25. I received SIB specific training concerning the police arrest and detention of suspects. However, I did not receive any training covering the detention of detainees or prisoners of war. I have never received any training, guidance, orders or instructions on the detention and treatment of prisoners of any category. I did not have any role in the handling of prisoners in the course of carrying out my job.

C. Deaths of Mr Radhi Nama and Mr Mousa Ali

a. *Mr Radhi NAMA*

26. On 23 June 2003, I received the case file of Mr NAMA from WO2 Sgt Major [REDACTED]. This investigation concerned the death in custody of Mr NAMA, who had been in the custody of C Company, 1 Battalion the Black Watch ("C Coy 1 BW"). This investigation had initially been conducted by SIB on Operation TELIC 1, but left in theatre for completion.
27. The only task for me in this investigation was to interview the two daughters of Mr NAMA, Fatima Radhi Niema Al-SARI (the youngest daughter) and Afaf Radhi Niema AL-SWARI (the eldest daughter). Along with Sgt [REDACTED] and our interpreter, I was escorted to their house by 1 BW and, with the help of the interpreter, asked them to attend Basrah Palace for an interview. When they arrived at Basrah we collected them from there and took them to Shaibah, where I interviewed them on 26 June 2003 in the presence of the interpreter. Audio and video of the interviews were captured. The tapes were subsequently sent back to the UK for translation.
28. My recollection of the youngest daughter is that she was illiterate and therefore had the family lawyer present. The eldest daughter was more intelligent, could read and

write, and was very happy to speak to me alone. She was more co-operative and forthcoming with her account of events leading to the arrest of her father.

29. I remember the interview situation being difficult due to the language barrier with poor interpreters (as mentioned at paragraph [10] above).
30. After the interview, we dropped Mr NAMA's daughters on the outskirts of Basrah as they were afraid to be seen with Coalition Forces.
31. The day prior to these interviews, 25 June 2003, I attended Camp Stephen as part of my investigation to visit the scene where Mr NAMA was allegedly detained. This area was known as the EPW cage. I cannot remember who I was escorted by, but it would have been someone from 1 BW.
32. I handed the case file to WO2 Sgt Major [REDACTED] on 3 July 2003 for checking. The file was checked and amendments made on 6 July 2003. The file was given to Major [REDACTED] on 8 July 2003 for final checking, as OC Capt [REDACTED] was absent from duty. Once this had been done, I would have signed and dated my report ready for distribution. After the report was signed off, it would have been distributed out according to the list on the back of the report. The Casefile itself and all supporting evidence would have been returned to the Central Police Office in Bulford.
33. When I was interviewed by IHAT in June 2013, my recollection was that the elder daughter informed me that Radhi NAMA was on medication for a heart problem and that she also mentioned that when leaving the house he tripped and fell. I was interviewed again in July 2013 and shown the statements provided by the daughters of Mr NAMA. I accepted that they both stated that MR NAMA had no problems and was no medication. I can only say that when I made the statement (in June 2013) it was an honestly held belief from the conversation during the interview I cannot recall whether I had been told about a heart problem by anyone else.

b. Mr Mousa ALI

34. My only involvement in the investigation into the death of Mr ALI was to escort the investigator to the local hospital where the deceased had been taken to try and locate the doctor and recover the death certificate. Therefore, I cannot make any comment regarding that incident or investigation.

c. General Considerations

35. My experience of the Iraqi system during my deployment as a SSgt in the SIB was that no medical records of any description were ever kept or produced. The issue of medical records was always considered, and they were always asked for, during our investigations. It was also a common occurrence for Iraqi doctors to quote "Cardiac Arrest" as a cause of death without any evidence to substantiate it. They did not carry out post mortems and rarely examined the bodies. Bodies were buried within 24 hours in accordance with Islamic custom.
36. My recollection is that exhumation was considered in all cases of unexplained deaths, and therefore would have been considered in the cases of Mr NAMA and Mr ALI. Decisions would be based on the guidance contained within Air Commander ("Air Cmdr") ██████████ Memorandum of Good Practice, which detailed the criteria for exhumation. Advice would have been sought from Air Cmdr ██████████ in conjunction with Legal and any decision to exhume would also have depended on whether permission was gained from the family.
37. If a body was exhumed, it could not be done for 40 days after burial, in line with Islamic custom, to give the soul time to reach Allah.

D. Detainees at Camp Stephen

38. I have been asked to comment on the circumstances surrounding detention at Camp Stephen. My role as an SIB investigator meant that I had no contact with detainees. I do not know how detention worked in practice at Camp Stephen, nor who was responsible for detainees there.

E. Culture at Camp Stephen

39. I have been asked about the culture at Camp Stephen. Having only attended there once during my deployment, I am unable to offer any comment on this. During my one visit to Camp Stephen, I did not witness any mistreatment of detainees, nor was I aware of any mention of the same.

40. I have been asked to explain my understanding of the word 'beasting'. My understanding of the term is, during PT sessions in basic training, we would be 'beasted' by the Physical Training Instructor (PTI) would make an exercise harder if he deemed we weren't working hard enough . I do not know what the term 'beasted' means in the context of conduct at Camp Stephen.
41. I have been asked how detainees were treated in the EPW cage. As part of my investigation into the death of Mr NAMA, I attended Camp Stephen and visited the EPW cage to produce a sketch plan, but I do not have any knowledge of how detainees were treated in there. The sketch would have been recorded in either the casefile or in my police notebook, both of which were taken by IHAT.
42. I have been asked to describe the influence of WO2 SO101 [REDACTED] and Corporal SO102 [REDACTED] within Camp Stephen. I do not know, nor was I ever aware of, either of these men and therefore cannot provide any comment.

F. Existence and awareness of 'wetting'

a. 'Wetting' generally

43. I have been asked what I understand by the term 'wetting'. I do not know what this term means.
44. I have been asked about detainees being (i) placed into water, (ii) threatened with being placed into water, and/or (iii) transported to bodies of water. I never witnessed any incidents of this nature, nor did I ever, to the best of my recollection, investigate any incidents involving detainees and bodies of water.

b. Reporting of 'wetting' incidents

45. I have been asked whether there was a requirement to report incidents of detainees entering or being placed into bodies of water. I do not know if there was a requirement to report incidents of this nature. I am aware, but cannot recall any details of, a couple of incidents where soldiers were investigated for allegedly placing people into the river. I would expect that this was because those people died as a

result. However, I was not involved in any of these investigations as they were pre-run by the team deployed on Operation TELIC 1 and therefore concluded before I arrived in Iraq.

46. I am not aware of what the process was for the reporting of incidents. However, I would expect an incident to have been reported up the particular unit's chain of command (noting that every unit had their own reporting requirements and briefings) through the commanding officer. The commanding officer would then have reported to the Brigade. The Brigade would have reported to the SIB OC, who would then have deployed the SIB team if required. This process would have taken time.

c. Chain of Command

47. I have been asked if Major SO88 [REDACTED] had to intervene to stop detainees being placed into the stream outside Camp Stephen. I do not know, nor was I ever aware of, Major SO88 [REDACTED] and therefore cannot provide any comment.

d. 'Wetting' at Camp Stephen

48. I did not witness, nor was I aware of, any incidents of wetting at Camp Stephen. Having only visited once, I cannot comment on whether there was a stream outside of Camp Stephen.

I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed: SO83 [REDACTED]

Date: 8 June 2022