

Witness Name: Neil Tillotson

Statement No.: Final statement

Exhibits:

Dated: 2009-10-26

THE BAHA MOUSA PUBLIC INQUIRY

Witness Statement of Neil Tillotson

1. I am currently serving as a member of her majesty's forces my regimental staff number is [REDACTED] and I am a member of the Second Battalion the Duke of Lancaster's regiment (2 LANCS). I am presently posted to Support Weapons School (SWS), Land warfare centre (LWC) in Warminster, Wiltshire. My current post is the Divisional Sergeant Major (DSM) of Javelin Division within SWS and I am a Warrant Officer class Two (WO2) with a substantive seniority of 2006-06-30.
2. In 2003/2004 I was a member of First Battalion the Queens Lancashire Regiment (1 QLR) during the battalions deployment to Iraq on Operation TELIC 2. My sub unit was Burma Company (Coy) who was stationed close to Battalion head quarters (BHQ) which if my memory serves me right was at the 'old state building' in Basra. My role within Burma Coy and my and day to day job during this operational tour was that of the Coy Intelligence Officer (IO).
3. Some of the duties that myself and my second in command (2 i/c) was responsible for, was briefing the daily patrols from Burma Coy on the current threat in relation to the general topographical area they would be working in as well as recent intelligence gained from higher Intelligence sources briefed to us from the Battalion (Bn) Intelligence (Int) cell regarding specific threats to their patrols. Any specific operations planned

by the Battalion such as search operations would not fall under our remit and these would be planned by the Battalion Int cell.

4. I would however be present at the coy commander's orders for any operation and indeed every night at coy orders groups (O groups) and would conduct any further planning/ intelligence gathering he required. I or my 2 i/c (dependent which one of us was on duty) would report daily to the Battalion Int cell at approximately 1900hrs where a meeting of all sub units IO's or representatives would take place chaired by either the Bn IO or the acting Intelligence Officer (A10). During this meeting the A10 would be given an electronic copy of the sub unit daily Intelligence Summary (INTSUM) and any other information gained from the patrols and in exchange they would pass down any relevant intelligence from battalion and brigade to the sub division IO's or representatives.
5. The Coy duty Intelligence officer would be responsible for the content of the INTSUM which detailed the activity and events of patrols and/or incidents/operations which had taken place in the last 24 hours. At Burma Coy location there were two duty IOs myself and my 2 i/c who was an attached Territorial Army (TA) soldier, a fusilier whose name I have forgotten. The medium used for transferring information to and from the Bn Int cell was a USB stick which was classed as secret and was kept in the possession of the duty IO at all times.
6. Throughout the whole operational tour my duties as Coy IO and the fact that I only had one other member of staff, resulted in me remaining in the company operations room (Ops room) for the majority of the tour. I did however deploy on a number of occasions on specific operations or when the Officer Commanding (OC) Maj John Lighten required another member for his 'rover group' (OC protection group when deployed).
7. Having read the attached statement which I received (ref letter 09-016) I identified this as being written by **S038** who was a unit search

advisor (USA) within 1QLR as a senior member of Support Coy based at BASRA Palace. For the purpose of this statement I will relate to him as WO2 S038 as this was his rank at the time. WO2 S038 was involved on numerous search operations undertaken by Burma Coy and I do remember giving him and his search teams ground and threat orientation briefs prior to them operating within our coy area of operations (AOR).

8. WO2 S038 speaks of a specific search operation in his statement and I can confirm now that I was a member of the OC rover group for this operation. Initially I was not sure that I had in fact deployed this day but after reading the statement I distinctively remember the OC at the time giving orders for all troops to take cover prior to WO2 S038 'pulling' the Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) which he states in his statement. This has enabled my subsequent recollection of certain events.
9. Throughout the deployment on this search operation myself and the other members of the rover group were part of the inner cordon and remained in the vicinity of the OC and coy sergeant majors (CSM) vehicles. At no time during the initial search operation did I personally see the derelict building, any search team action, any arresting team action (including attached RMP), any munitions or prisoners. The OC and CSM WO2 Darren Leigh MC (deceased) did on occasion move forward with a protection party to liaise with individuals throughout the operation and during the initial phase of the operation we were made aware that there was indeed a significant find made as well as that prisoners had been taken.
10. The prisoners would have been arrested by either the rifle platoon detailed to make entry to the building, the Royal Military Police (RMP) detachment attached to BURMA Coy or possibly the search teams themselves however as I was not present I can not verify. I also do not know if the OC or CSM had any dealings with the prisoners or even saw them when they moved forward to liaise with other commanders.

11. I do expect the prisoners would have been plastic cuffed following their arrest and during their transportation back to the Coy base location as this was the procedure that was always carried out but who conducted this and how they were transported I have no knowledge of and therefore can not elaborate further.
12. On completion of the operation when the Coy arrived back at its location I entered the Coy Ops room as this was my general work place. I can not say for definite who was present but personalities I would have expected to be present would be; Capt John Harker 1 QLR (BURMA Coy 2 i/c), the duty IO (Fusilier?), Lt Kevin Callaghan 4 QLR (G5 officer), and a duty signal man (manning the radio net) name not known. Other personalities such as the OC, CSM, Platoon Commanders, coy clerk and WO2 S038 and others would have been coming in and out throughout the immediate aftermath following the company's return.
13. I can confirm that shortly after our arrival a large amount of weapons, munitions, bomb making equipment (BME) and other items were unloaded and laid out in front of the Coy Ops room and there was a large amount of BURMA Coy soldiers in the vicinity while this was happening. I can not say for sure who was unloading this equipment but it would have more than likely been WO2S038 's search teams.
14. I can also at some stage confirm seeing prisoners kneeling down who were under escort underneath the sun shade canopy directly behind the area where the munitions were being laid but again I can not confirm who was guarding them. The prisoners were still plastic cuffed at this stage
15. I can give 100% confirmation that a picture was taken of the equipment with the prisoners present and in shot, as well as many members of the coy including the OC rover group. I can not recollect whether or not this picture was taken prior to or after the commanding officers visit. I do remember the officer on top of the Ops room taking the picture and

believe that it would have been Lt Callaghan our G5 officer. I remember the photograph clearly as I reviewed it on numerous occasions in the weeks and months following the operation as it was a successful and prestigious find conducted by Burma Coy. I do not recall seeing any other photographs at any time other than this Coy photograph and have no recollection of any of the search team photographs that WO2 S038 states Lt Callaghan took. Having said this though the three rifle platoons involved in the operation would have had issued cameras and may well have taken other photographs throughout the operation as would have the search teams also. As a matter of course mobile phones were confiscated during the tour to prevent information relating to soldiers being injured being sent back to the United Kingdom without going through the proper chain of action. Personal cameras however would not have been confiscated.

16. I can confirm that at some stage the commanding officer Lt Colonel Mendonca did visit BURMA Coy location in the immediate aftermath of the operation but I did not see him until he entered the operations room where he spoke with several of the officers present. If WO2 S038 was present at this time he may well have spoken to him as well although I can not confirm this.
17. Having read WO2 S038 s statement I feel it necessary to clarify on the following points: I do remember seeing blood splatters on at least one of the prisoner's garments which I believe were white coloured dish dash type robes these were evident on the coy photograph taken. I can not say how old these were and how or when they occurred and I believe I noticed them while viewing the picture rather than at the time. I do remember hearing an accusation regarding the female RMP present on the operation as having lashed out at the prisoners but I can not say for certain how long after the operation it was i.e. hours, days etc. I can not remember who stated this and as I was not present at any such occurrence can not verify whether it actually did occur or if it indeed did, whether it was during

the arrest phase or subsequently at a stage after the prisoners were plastic cuffed.

18. I do remember at some stage following the search operation the OC Maj John Lighten bringing into the operations room the female clerk (attached) whose name I can not remember, telling her to calm down and telling her something along the lines of " I will deal with you later". I do not know the actual events of what occurred or what action was taken but I do recall being told by somebody some time later whom I can not recollect that she had slapped a prisoner. Once again I can not say for certain exactly how long after the operation I was told this.
19. I have no recollection whatsoever of WO2 S038 coming into the operations room stating that he had just witnessed the CO hitting a prisoner. Nor have I heard any such accusations in the elapsed years following this operation until the day I received and read his statement.
20. I categorically have no recollection of WO2 S038 coming into the operations room and complaining to me about photographs that he has stated were loaded onto a laptop. He may however have spoken to either Lt Callaghan or my 2 i/c fusilier but to the best of my recollection it was not me for the following reasons, firstly the intcell worked off a stand alone computer where the main coy photograph I have spoken about was uploaded, not a lap top although the Int cell did have use of a lap top as well as all other personalities in the ops room it was for restricted information only and was mainly used by the G5 officer Lt Callaghan or coy 2 i/c during their duties as well as others. Secondly WO2 S038 was a close colleague of mine at the time and as fellow senior non commissioned officers (SNCO's) he would not have spoken to me in the manner he states in his statement. Thirdly if indeed he had spoken to me in that manner I would have put him in his place for doing so and would undoubtedly remembered any such conversation which I can not. Finally there would have been no reason for me or my 2 i/c to purposely wipe off

photographs regarding an operation which BURMA coy had successfully uncovered a major arms and munitions dump as well as a possible bomb making factory, it makes no sense, as I have already stated I can remember seeing the main Coy photograph on numerous occasions after the operation during the course of my duties which was loaded on the main stand alone INT computer.

21. I have been asked to explain those responsible in handling and dealing with the prisoners both on the operation in question and throughout the tour. In all cases an arresting soldier was identified as the individual who physically makes the initial contact with the prisoner as well as any witnesses these in most cases are private soldiers or junior non commissioned officers (NCOs') from the relevant rifle platoons on that particular patrol. On planned operations the arresting soldiers may be attached RMP detachments outlined to carry out that particular task. The arresting soldier and witness accompany the prisoner back to either the coy location or straight to the Battalion detention facility (BDF) dependent on particular circumstances. They would have an amount of paperwork filled out which accompanies them. After taking the prisoner to the BDF the arresting soldier and witness would hand in consolidated statements to the attached RMP detachment. During any stage detailed above escorts may have been involved in moving prisoners. The coy CSM may well have got involved in the processing of certain prisoners especially on planned operations but his input would have been small as the process was well established and understood by all ranks. I do remember as a matter of course that at the start of the operational tour prisoners were hooded and plastic cuffed certainly in the area of base locations due to the threat of them being suspected insurgents and possibly gaining intelligence of the inside of the bases. Towards the end of the tour direction was given from Battalion Headquarters to refrain from hooding prisoners and ensure prisoners were only plastic cuffed to the front of the body. I can not recollect the exact date this was given.

22. All the material collected electronically on the computers were classed as secret and as such would have remained on the stand alone computer handed over to the company taking over our location this would have included all previous INTSUMS and photographs to aid the incoming Coy IO and his staff. I believe the coy was an attached arm (possibly royal artillery or engineers) from 2 Royal Welch Battle Group (but can not be certain).
23. An electronic copy of all daily INTSUMS and pictures were given as previously stated to the Battalion INT cell each night. I am not in a position to confirm their accounting procedures or whether or not they kept copies. I remember the OC Maj Lighten asking me if we could keep a copy of the INTSUMS to take back to the UK to keep for prosperity, cataloguing the operational successes of the tour. However due to the fact of their secret classification this was not possible and no records were kept by Burma Coy to my knowledge.
24. On completion of the operational tour I returned to duty as a platoon sergeant within BURMA Coy 1 QLR at Catterick Garrison North Yorks.
25. In the interim between these events and the current time I was transferred to the first Battalion the Kings Regiment in December 2005 as part of the preparations for the amalgamation into the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment.
26. Over the years I have had contact with some of the soldiers mentioned in my statement including WO2 **S038** (then Mr) and at no time has any of the above events stated by him arisen in conversation.

27. During the writing of this statement I have purposely not spoken to any other person either mentioned or otherwise to ensure that my true recollection of events are written down to the best of my knowledge given the time span since 2003. I can confirm that I have never been previously questioned about matters relevant to the enquiry prior to this statement request.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed _____

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the witness.

Dated 2009-10-26