

MOD-83-0000272-A

Witness Name: Raymond Ernest Wright

Statement No.: 1

Exhibits: X

Dated:

**In the matter of an investigation into the death of
Mr Muhammad Salim**

**WITNESS STATEMENT OF
RAYMOND ERNEST WRIGHT**

I, Raymond Ernest Wright, will say as follows:-

1. I have been asked to provide a statement setting out what I can remember in relation to an incident that occurred on 5 and 6 November 2003 in Basra City, Iraq, resulting in the death of an Iraqi male whom I now know to be Mr Muhammad Abdul Ridha Salim.
2. At the time of the incident I held the rank of Corporal ('Cpl') and was Second Commander ('2 Cmdr') in C Company ('C Coy'), 1st Battalion, 1 King's Regiment ('1 KINGS'). I was based in Camp Cherokee in Basra.
3. I recall that on the 5 November 2003 we went on an operation to a local house, not far from Camp Cherokee, which could have been as a result of information provided by a 'walk-in'. A walk-in refers to the situation in which a local civilian comes to our base to provide information that we would act on. This happened quite frequently in Iraq at that time. I recall that in this instance that the walk-in was involved in a family feud with the person that was killed in this incident, and had played us off against his family by giving us false information.
4. The house that the walk-in gave information about was out of our Area of Responsibility ('AoR'), and so the Officer Commanding ('OC') who was Major

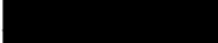
Routledge asked the Brigade ('Bde') if we could deal with the op. They agreed and the OC put an op in to the house.

5. We went down to the house in a Landrover. I can't remember if there were also armoured vehicles which went down to the house. When we got there I was part of the cordon of soldiers that went in at the back of the building. An op like this always had a cordon in place, and we as the cordon would make sure we were in position before the op went in. Iraqis were very curious about events involving British Forces and many hadn't seen Westerners before so every time something happened they would come and see what was going on, and so we would put in a cordon to stop potential hazards. My team's task as the cordon was to stop any potential threats escaping or any insurgents approaching the op from the rear. I do not remember who else was in my team because people switched teams very often.
6. I remember that as the op was moving towards the building and the main soldiers approached the house, someone on the roof opened fire. I remember seeing green tracer fire from the roof. AK-47 fire and variants of that weapon have green tracer, whereas the tracer of the rifles used by the British Army was red. It was a substantial burst of firing, enough for me and my team to take cover from. I didn't see anyone on the roof, I just saw the tracer.
7. The firing from the roof died down, and the op then went inside the house, and I remained stationed at the back in the alley. The alley was a long way from the back of the house, and the house itself was like a mansion, and so I couldn't hear anything from inside the house. I didn't hear any shots or voices from inside the house. The only firing I heard was the firing which came from the roof.
8. After the events in the house occurred I remember being called to the front with my team to join the op at the front of the building. I went into the house and saw the wife of the man who had been shot sitting on the couch crying. She was offering refreshments to the lads in the building. The man that had been shot had already been taken to the nearest hospital which was the Czech hospital when I went inside the house and so I never saw him. I didn't see any Iraqi men when I went inside the house.
9. I don't recall seeing any weapons when I went inside the house. Some of the lads from my platoon were in the house when I went inside and were with Maj Routledge. I remember also Company Sergeant Major ('CSM') Joe Jordan was outside the house, but I don't know whether or not he went inside, and he wasn't inside the house at the time I went in. When an op goes in, the CSM should stay away from the OC for tactical command reasons in the event of anything unfortunate happening. A lot of the lads were coming in and out of the house.

10. Afterwards, we went back to Camp Cherokee, and on a debrief that night or the day after it came to light that we had been played off against the family by the walk-in who had provided us with false information.

Statement of Truth

I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true

Signed ... 

Dated 05/01/2016