



MOD-83-0000268-A

Witness Name: SO14

Statement No.: 1

Exhibits: None

Dated:

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

**WITNESS STATEMENT OF
SO14**

1. SO14 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 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. In November 2003 I was a Class 1 Combat Medical Technician ('CMT') in the Royal Army Medical Corps ('RAMC') and held the rank of Corporal. I had attended a Battle Field Advanced Trauma Life Support course and I also had regular in-unit training after I finished my qualifications in 2002. My parent unit was 9 Army Air Corps and I had volunteered to go to Iraq in place of a medic who didn't want to go. I was seconded to C Company ('C Coy') 1 KINGS.
3. I left the Army on 22 October 2014 after serving 23 years and 3 months with the RAMC.
4. I arrived in Iraq in April/May of 2003, after having been in Kuwait for 2 weeks beforehand.

The shooting incident

5. Most of our tour had been fairly quiet. However, in Basra City the insurgency was starting to pick up and in the last 6 weeks of our tour the situation seemed to be more serious. There had been sniping at the British Forces and some drive-by shootings.
6. I do not remember the exact date on which the incident resulting in the death of Mr Salim occurred, but I do remember that it happened near the end of my tour. We were based in Camp Cherokee on the outskirts of Basra City at the time.
7. The Company Officer Commanding ('OC'), Maj Routledge, called us in to the Ops Room for a quick briefing about a 'walk-in', that is, a local man who had come to the base that afternoon or evening and who had said that a large number of armed men had gone into a house near our base. We had recently been taking periodic small arms fire at the camp so this was obviously a threat that we took seriously. I should say that I did not see the walk-in myself.
8. I remember that Sgt Maj [REDACTED] SO12 was present during the briefing, as he then went out to do a quick 'recce' of the house in a civilian vehicle afterwards. I am not sure who he went out with; perhaps it was the Iraqi shopkeeper on the camp. I do remember that [REDACTED] SO12 went out wearing a borrowed dishdasha over his uniform.
9. We were told to get ready while the recce went ahead and it was dark when we left. We drove in convoy to the target house and I believe we drove without headlights. I think the whole Company was involved. I remember going out with Maj Routledge, Sgt [REDACTED] SO11, and perhaps Lt Calunniato. I was in the back of a soft-skin Land Rover. I do not recall a Warrior going out with us; I think a Warrior would have made too much noise and this was meant to be a stealth operation.
10. When we arrived at the house, which was not far from Camp Cherokee, it was very dark and there were not many working streetlights. Power was quite intermittent at that time. It was very quiet. We parked around the corner from the house and I took up position with another soldier under our vehicle, lying in a prone position while facing across the road. I think I was around 20 or 30 metres away from the house.

11. I was across the road until we heard gunshots, coming from around 20-30 metres away and around the corner. I first heard the sounds of AK-47 shots, which were followed by the sound of 5.56mm SA80 fire in return. I am able to recognise and distinguish between the two different types of fire as they both produce a very distinctive sound. I remember recognising those rounds from the time that I was an army medic in Bosnia.
12. Almost immediately I remember someone - I think it was Maj Routledge - shouting "Medic", to which I jumped up and shouted back, "Who's been hit?" As I ran through the gate into the small courtyard of the house, I saw Maj Routledge there, shaking his head.
13. I entered the house and I remember seeing the casualty directly in front of me at the bottom of a set of stairs, lying on his back on the first one or two steps. There was an Iraqi woman in hysterics to my left hand side. I threw my helmet onto a L-shaped sofa because I was very hot, and I took my med-pack off and went to look at the man's injuries.
14. I remember that Sgt SO11 was in there and was holding an AK-47 which he was unloading. There was another one or possibly two soldiers in the room, but I don't remember who they were. They would have been part of a 'breach team' which was trained to search houses. I recall one soldier restraining the hysterical lady. I don't recall seeing another Arab man further up the stairs or any other Arab man being there, nor do I recall seeing any other women.
15. I examined the body, and saw that the injured man had received one gunshot wound to his abdomen, and I saw that there was an exit wound in his back. There was significant organ displacement through the exit wound. He was alive and was writhing around in pain, but I ascertained that he had been shot through the liver, and the outcome did not look good. We didn't have the advanced equipment that we later had in Afghanistan; we just had the old field bandages, so I gave him 10ml of morphine using a syringe, applied some pressure, and then tried to get intravenous (IV) access, but I couldn't because he was suffering from shock and the heat was not helping.
16. I immediately asked for my ambulance, as I did have one back at camp, but there was a problem with getting that to us. Our hospital was in Shaibah and I wanted to get him there, so I repeatedly asked for an ambulance and a doctor to be sent to us from the

Regimental Aid Post ("RAP"), which was based at the 1 KINGS HQ at the Shatt-al-Arab Hotel. This was a significant abdominal wound and, as far as I was concerned, we had a duty of care to give the injured man the best care possible.

17. I was getting aggravated because the ambulance didn't seem to be coming and there appeared to be a breakdown in comms. I remember holding the man while we were waiting for an ambulance, and he was speaking to me at that time. I remember hearing him say to me: "Why, Mr Bush, why?"
18. I remember people coming and going, but I don't remember who they were because I was concentrating on the victim. I was screaming, "Where's my fucking ambulance?". Eventually all I received was my ambulance from Camp Cherokee, driven by a medically unqualified soldier who was extremely clumsy. I would say that it took about 40 minutes from my first treating the injured male to getting him into the ambulance.
19. Four soldiers would have carried the injured man out on a stretcher, of which I would have been one. I think Sgt Andrew Price was one of those of us who went with the injured man. There was confusion as to where he should be taken. I was of the opinion that he should have gone to the hospital at Shaibah, but in the end we drove him to a local hospital in Basra.
20. We carried him into the local hospital and were informed that there was no surgical facility, but we were able to gain IV access thanks to the help of a local doctor. We were then told that there was a Czech army hospital which had been set up for treating civilian (but not military) patients, so we took the man there. I remember that a Czech surgeon who met us was not very happy but took the injured man in. He then told us to leave because the casualty was going into surgery.
21. There may have been a debrief after this incident but I cannot remember one now. I did not make a statement about the incident at the time but I would have recorded my treatment of the injured male on a medical card and handed that card over with the patient at the Czech Hospital.
22. I heard the next day that the man had died.

23. I delivered a live patient to the Czech hospital. My thoughts afterwards centred on the frustration at no doctor being called and that no decision was made by the OC to take the casualty to Shaibah. My belief is that a doctor could easily have been called from the RAP as it had in other occasions, or I could have taken the casualty to Shaibah in a snatch with a Warrior escort.

Statement of Truth

I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true

Signed

Dated