

Gist of Witness Statements of Monica Grenfell (“MG”) and Exhibit MG/3

First Witness statement of Monica Grenfell - dated 18 July 2023

This witness statement was made having contacted the Inquiry directly.

During the COVID 19 pandemic, MG began writing a book about what she experienced whilst working with UKSF between 2015 and 2018. Before the book was published, she sought permission from the Ministry of Defence (“MOD”) and the Defence and Security Media Advisory Committee who insisted on a significant number of redactions. After almost a year, the book was approved and it was finally published in March 2021. She was both the first female and first civilian to receive approval for publication.

MG worked in the training camp as a mess hand in the kitchen. One unit was based on the training camp and would speak to her as there was very little else to do.

Prior to working in the training camp, MG had been a journalist and had written a health column for a national newspaper. She had left this role in 2007 and as the people on the training camp were aware of this, they would ask her about it.

MG did not like the atmosphere on the training camp, as it was coarse and feral. There was a lot of swearing and inappropriate language and behaviour. In 2016, a job came up in the main camp which she applied for and was successful at interview. MG’s new role was as a storeman.

When MG became a storeman, she had a line manager [NAME1]. He had been given the role of looking after the civilians. MG recalls her line manager was charming and what he said went, however, he had a temper. MG recalls having a stand up argument with him about people stealing from the store. People were taking fridges, expensive batteries and other high value items. UKSF soldiers would have others drive up in vans and just take the items. These thefts would be issued off. This was despite the fact that the UKSF soldiers were paid well and given lots of free items such as high performance jackets and different cars to drive so they would not be identified or recognised.

Her line manager had served with UKSF and she believed him to now be an officer. *MG understood that NAME1 was offered a more senior role before becoming an officer but turned it down.* MG initially thought that this was for family reasons but was later told it was to do with something he had done. When he had left the SAS in 2018, he did not have a leaving party and nobody seemed to know where he had gone.

MG was later told by another person [NAME2], with whom she had a friendship, that NAME1 was under investigation for war crimes. NAME2 had come to visit MG at her house and as they were preparing to leave NAME2 asked MG whether she wanted to know why NAME1 had gone. MG recalls that NAME2 had said *“war crimes, had to pack him off. He’s suspended under investigation for war crimes. I was there with him, it’s all true.”*

MG was aware NAME2 had an outside interest which was not allowed and he was worried about it being exposed. At one stage NAME 2 sent MG some WhatsApp group chats that NAME2 was a part of and asked if she knew anyone at the Daily Mail. The content of the chats was racist. MG asked NAME2 why he stayed in these groups and

NAME2 said that he had no choice and did not want to call this out.

MG states that the atmosphere on camp was corrosive. The Special Forces portray themselves as a band of brothers but she believes that they are not, the two main units hated each other. There was a jealousy between them that went beyond professional rivalry. There was a sense of fear amongst the men on camp, it was all about what they had on someone and how it could be used against them; for example if somebody was having an affair or in respect of NAME2, the fact they had an outside interest. Status was everything and it was often a question of who had the loudest voice. However, within the individual Sub-Units, it was different, there was a huge sense of loyalty and the men would close ranks to protect a member of their own Sub-Unit.

MG met [NAME3] before MG worked with UKSF. He was a member of a support unit and told MG that he had served in Afghanistan and Iraq. He talked about the way that prisoners would be treated in Iraq. The witness specifically recalls NAME3 telling her that they would put prisoners on a forklift, raise it up and drive very fast so that they fell off. NAME3 said that they behaved the same way in Afghanistan. NAME3 said there was not much to do in Afghanistan and that he did this for fun. NAME3 was not well liked and the men at camp would say that NAME3 was *"the only person they would wish harm on"*.

In 2012, MG met [NAME4], they were suspended due to something that happened in Afghanistan. She thinks that NAME4 knew something or passed something on. Around the time that Marine A was in the news, NAME4 asked MG how they could get the newspapers to do something. NAME4 seemed afraid of his own position. MG went to his house and recalls that he was worried and upset and did not appear well. NAME4 seemed like he had been caught and did not know how to get out of it. NAME4 told MG *"well it's all down to tapes not being locked down, of course it's all rubbish"*. NAME4 was ultimately subjected to administrative action. Around the time that NAME4 was suspended there was a series of messages between MG and NAME4. There was a fear amongst the soldiers that they would be sent back to their units. They were terrified of this.

[NAME5] (a UKSF soldier) told the witness that *"we're all under investigation from this Afghanistan thing"*. MG has since been told by NAME5 that the whole Sub-Unit was under investigation. NAME5 left UKSF and went to ground. MG does not believe that NAME5 left by choice. The general feeling was that NAME5 was bigger than this and so no investigation would get very far. Everyone was leaving and nobody would talk. It was felt that although there were rumours, there was no proof of any wrongdoing. NAME5 returned 6 months later to the training camp and burnt stuff.

MG met [NAME6] whilst working with UKSF. One day she met him, he looked unkempt which was unusual. NAME 6 revealed that he had been dismissed due to taking medication. He told MG that he was under investigation and that he struggled after Afghanistan. NAME6 did not like the culture out there and was disturbed by this. He said there were some bad apples and people were not the same – he could not get on with the men. NAME6 was intimidated and scared and said that the worst thing was being sent home under investigation. There were two or three people NAME6 did not want to let down but people did what they were told as there were promotions coming up.

MG subsequently stopped working with UKSF in 2018.

Gist of Second Witness Statement of Monica Grenfell – dated 2 July 2024

On 11 April 2022 (around a year after the book was published), MG received a letter from the MOD (UKSF) informing her that she was being considered for Exclusion by the UKSF disclosure function due to the publication of the book: MG/1. This was despite having obtained express prior authority in writing from UKSF.

The effect of being excluded was that she would no longer be entitled to attend the base in any capacity, including as a guest. MG was given the opportunity to, and did, provide mitigation. On 30 May 2022, MG received a Censure Notification (MG/2) but was not excluded.

Since providing the first statement, MG had found a day book she had kept when working at UKSF, extracts of which have been provided to the Inquiry (MG/3). [NAME7], a storekeeper, was allowing people to take things from the store that they were not entitled to take. He would do this in exchange for favourable treatment. MG started keeping the day-book, on her own initiative, as she was concerned that nobody was logging calls or requests, and wanted to ensure a record was made of requests.

People would dump things outside the store, e.g. large bags of spent batteries. In summer 2017, MG recorded in the day book that four computers had been dumped outside the store. MG spoke to NAME1 about this and he told her to ask NAME7 to put them in a skip. MG was concerned that this would not be compliant with security protocols. The computers were large and appeared to have come from an operations room. After speaking to NAME1, MG spoke to NAME7 who said that he would move them to his container and then take them to the tip. MG does not know whether he did this or not.

MG made two corrections to her first witness statement.

- Regarding people stealing expensive items, MG does not believe that those taking the items would have viewed what they were doing as theft. There was a sense of entitlement amongst members of UKSF which was not challenged.
- Details of second correction.

GIST of relevant daybook entries of 10 August 2017: MG/3

15.45 4 computers dumped outside the roller door. Went to ask NAME1 who said ask NAME7 and he can put them in a skip.

15.55 NAME1 came over re computers. I said I was on my own and it wasn't right to dump stuff. He wanted a brew and a chat.