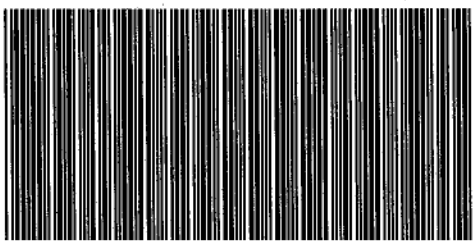
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**Witness name: Tina Stitson**

**Statement Number: 2**

**Dated: 13 August 2026**

**Exhibits: 0**

**INDEPENDENT INQUIRY RELATING TO AFGHANISTAN**

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**WITNESS STATEMENT OF MAJOR (RET'D) TINA STITSON**

**DATED 13 AUGUST 2026**

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## A. INTRODUCTION

1. I, service number Major (Ret'd) Tina Stitson formerly of the Royal Military Police ("RMP"), am making this statement in response to a request from the Inquiry as to my response to extracts of WO1 Deborah Hayes' witness statement. The first statement I made was in response to a Rule 9 request dated 12 November 2024. This is the second statement that I have provided to the Inquiry.

2. In my first statement, dated 30 June 2025, I explained the role that I filled under Operation Northmoor ("Op Northmoor") between May 2016 and April 2018. The purpose of this second statement is to assist the Inquiry in relation to concerns, and comments, put by WO1 Hayes. The Inquiry provided me with extracts of WO1 Hayes' witness statement and it is on these extracts that my responses are based.

## A. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3. In order to provide the Inquiry with some relevant context for a number of the points raised, it would be helpful for me to provide more detail as to my role as the Officer in Command of Op Northmoor ("OC") and the roles and responsibilities of the chain of command there.

4. I have explained my OC role in more detail in my first witness statement at paragraphs 12-30, however, as the OC, I was effectively the overall Commander on the ground for Op Northmoor. The Headquarters ("HQ") was the over-arching authority for the investigative teams that sat beneath it. However, the structure under which we operated Op Northmoor on was somewhat different to the kind most of us had experienced before. This was due to the fact that a bespoke Unit had been drawn up for the investigation. The Unit was rank heavy, by which I mean that there would ordinarily be 1 x WO1 and 1 x WO2 in a Unit, however, within Op Northmoor there were several WO1 and WO2. This was because we required their knowledge, experience and expertise for the investigation. The result was that, whilst rank would normally determine seniority within a Unit, within Op Northmoor it was the role or the position held that determined seniority.

5. Within the very early stages of establishing the Unit in RAF St. Mawgan, this caused tension within the Warrant Officer cohort in particular as sometimes the Deputy Senior Investigating Officers ("DSIOs") strayed outside of their role by trying to fill the responsibilities normally undertaken by the HQ. It was completely understandable that they would try to do this as, in any other Unit, they would normally sit in the HQ rather than an investigational team. However, as the Unit increased in personnel, such straying out of their designated roles ceased.

6. WO1 Hayes' role was the Team 3 DSIO and she was not a member of the HQ. WO2 McKenna was the Warrant Officer that filled a role within the HQ and therefore, by appointment, was senior to WO1 Hayes. I am aware that initially this did not sit well with the DSIOs when the Company first arrived at RAF St. Mawgan, prior to my arrival. However, I was led to believe that it became less of an issue as time progressed and it became clear that the HQ personnel and DSIOs had very different roles. All of the DSIO were Special Investigations Branch personnel ("SIB"), whereas WO2 McKenna was General Police Duties ("GPD") and, as the investigation was the focal point, I could see how it might have been initially difficult for the DSIOs to see the need for the HQ to have a separate Warrant Officer. However, with the influx of personnel, the realisation of the scale, and myriad of tasks that were being done by the HQ, both to facilitate the investigation and to establish and run a military unit, the Warrant Officers understood their various assigned roles and how this fed into the overall running of the unit.

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7. Op Northmoor had two chains of command operating:

   (a) An investigation chain. This consisted of investigators, DSIO, Senior Investigating Officer ("SIO"), SILVER, GOLD, AH Northmoor, and PM(Army); and

   (b) The usual RMP command chain. This consisted of a Non-commissioned Officer ("NCO"), Senior Non-commissioned Officer ("SNCO"), Warrant Officer ("WO"), Officers, Officer Commanding, Commanding Officer, HQ PM (Army), and PM (Army).

8. Investigation matters only went through the investigation chain, everything else went through the RMP command chain. This system applied to all members of Op Northmoor.

9. As OC, the initial management style that I adopted for Op Northmoor was to enable more direct access to myself than I believe I would have implemented if I had been given command of any other RMP unit. This is because the Unit was a hybrid Unit, of SIB and GPD, and it had not yet been fully established at this point. As I mention in more detail at paragraph 9 of my first statement, this was not something that had been tried before. In addition, I fully recognised that there were those in the Unit with skills, knowledge and experience greater than my own and I wanted to be able to draw on their expertise directly in order to make informed decisions and establish the Unit in a manner that progressed the investigations as swiftly as possible.

10. I was conscious that the unique nature of Op Northmoor, along with the isolated location in which we were operating, provided significant challenges which required a bespoke management style from me. As my tenure as OC progressed, and the Unit became more established, I felt that my management style adapted to the needs of the role and of the personnel.* [redacted]

*Stitson provides examples of how she obtained information about personal issues within Op Northmoor

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## B. WELFARE AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION

11. In relation to how matters of personnel welfare were handled during Op Northmoor, initially, Captain Moorcroft was the Unit Welfare Officer. This was a secondary role for him. I believe that he had completed the necessary course and was able to fill this role. We were also able to link in with the Regimental Welfare Officers who were personnel dedicated to the provision of Welfare, however, they were unable to provide close support to personnel due to our location in RAF St Mawgan. RAF St Mawgan had also retained the services of a Soldiers, Sailors and Air Force Association ("SSAFA") worker for a limited period and Op Northmoor personnel were able to utilise this. I do, though, recall this SSAFA worker was facing significant demands by RAF St Mawgan too and therefore the Op Northmoor chain of command, as well as the Station GP, were the main avenues for personnel to raise welfare concerns. However, the ability to assist was in some cases very limited due to the large numbers and variety of requests from personnel and this meant that we would often have to prioritise the support given.

12. Welfare was routinely discussed with the HQ, SIOs, Regimental HQ, the Station GP, the allocated Unit Welfare Officer and sometimes the Station HQ when appropriate. Difficulties with welfare were not unique to Team 3, it was across the Company. As per my initial statement (see for instance paragraphs 35 and 39(e)), I tried to focus more on the personnel than the investigation as without the investigators the investigation would falter. Some of the welfare issues may have been historic or ongoing issues experienced by individuals before they were assigned to Op Northmoor. As the Unit became more established, and particularly when we were subordinated to the SIB Regiment, we were then able to address some of the welfare issues in different ways i.e. using the compressed working mechanisms which I set out in my first statement.

13. I note that, at paragraphs 87 and 109 of WO1 Hayes' statement, she suggests that I prevented her and her team from arranging and undertaking team building events. I do not recall preventing or cancelling any team building events that the personnel wished to undertake that were within Army policy and that did not impact on the progress of the investigation. I was aware that the teams planned and conducted various team building activities throughout my tenure such as surfing, sea-fishing, quiz nights, and BBQs to name a few.

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14. In relation to staffing decisions at Op Northmoor, I am aware that WO1 Hayes stated, at paragraph 53 of her statement, that "*HQ were making unilateral decisions about staffing*". From my perspective, this is not accurate. Staffing issues were discussed between the HQ, Silver (when he was in place) and the SIOs as a minimum. More often than not the Regimental HQ or Gold would be involved in such discussions depending on what the issue was. Staffing was not routinely discussed with the DSIOs as any input they had should have been pushed through the SIOs in the first instance. DSIOs would only attend staffing meetings in the absence of their SIO.

15. To the extent that there were disagreements between myself and WO1 Hayes, this did not impact upon promotion decisions for Team 3. The SIO/DSIOs would hold their own Order of Merit Boards for their team personnel, there would then be a Company-wide Order of Merit Board which would feed into a Regimental Order of Merit Board. During my tenure, I think that there were circa 30 personnel that were promoted from reports that I had written. This was over a quarter of the entire Company. When you remove personnel that were not eligible to promote within the timeframe of my tenure, for various reasons, the success rate on promotion boards for the company rises considerably.

16. In regards paragraphs 76 – 82 of WO1 Hayes' statement regarding disciplinary action being taken for an [individual] on Team 3, it appears to me that there is a misunderstanding of my role and obligations when dealing with an RMP [individual] who has been [arrested by civillian police] I was not the lead on disciplining the individual and I would never hold such authority due to [redacted] and the nature of the conviction. I recall that I was pleased that WO1 Hayes had been asked to be the Assisting Officer for this individual as, at that time, I believed that she had the right knowledge and steady temperament to assist the [individual] in what was going to be a very difficult period. Whilst completing the paperwork, post-conviction, I too had difficulties in dealing with how restricted my input in this process was. I spoke with Lt Col Forsythe about it and whilst she was sympathetic, she also put me in touch with a Legal Officer to assist me in completing the documentation and explained the entire process and my role within it. Lt Col Forsythe was keen to ensure that everything was completed correctly and that all of the information was presented to PM(A) who would make the final disciplinary decision. The Legal Officer helped me to complete the required documentation before I forwarded it on to Lt Col Forsythe for her to complete her parts. A total disciplinary package, from a variety of agencies, was placed before PM(A), including medical records, in order to assist him in making

his decision. Within the Army, any outstanding disciplinary matters are dealt with prior to applying for medical discharge. It is also accepted that in some disciplinary cases, medical issues can be a significant contributing factor and are therefore taken into consideration when deciding outcomes. The decision by PM(A) was that a medical discharge was to be sought for the individual as opposed to a purely disciplinary discharge. Whilst waiting for the discharge process to come into effect, I was arranging MASH (Multi Agency Support Hub) meetings in order to assist and support the individual as much as possible. These meetings saw a number of professionals from inside and outside of the military come together, including myself, to discuss how best to support the individual and their family. Whilst the individual was awaiting discharge, they continued to receive support from the Unit. I do recall receiving a visit from the individual in my office after they were discharged and they told me that although they were still angry that they were no longer serving, that anger was aimed at the system. After a conversation about our families and the future, that individual wished me all the best for my next assignment.

17. At the time that this was occurring, I understood that WO1 Hayes was very supportive of the individual and seemed annoyed at the process and the system, rather than at me as I had not been in post for very long before this incident occurred. She voiced to me that, in her opinion, a medical discharge was the best outcome and that should be pushed for. Whilst I agreed with her, it was not in my gift to award this. As a conviction had been awarded by a civilian court, I was obligated to report the court's findings to the chain of command for their consideration as to whether any further action is to be taken. I did not get a choice to try and apply for a medical discharge instead. WO1 Hayes was well aware that if the individual was discharged from the services on disciplinary grounds that they were likely to lose their pension and support for their recovery. I have no doubt that she found this particularly upsetting as many of us that were involved in this process did.

18. I was aware that the arrest of the individual created some tension within the Company. Whilst the individual was a popular member of the Unit, the nature of the offence created contradictory feelings. Some tried to be supportive of the difficult situation that their colleague/friend was now going through, whilst others found it difficult to come to terms with what the individual had done. As RMP, personnel would be aware that there were certain processes that had to be followed when military personnel are found guilty in a civilian court. The majority of the Unit personnel were unlikely to know the exact details of the processes to be followed as such

responsibilities would normally fall to the OC and Commanding Officer with advice from Military Legal Advisors. This would especially be the case if the matter was to be escalated up the chain of command. However, I do not recall there being any impact between the rest of the team and myself as a result of this as it was just perceived that I was following a process and doing my job as the OC.

19. Generally, in relation to disciplinary matters, as Op Northmoor was a military unit, it was also subject to military discipline and regulations. The lowest rank within the unit was an NCO, there are no Private rank equivalents within the RMP and only minor mis-demeaners tended to be dealt with at a Company level. The Army General Administrative Instruction 67 (AGAI 67) system was employed and the records from this were routinely checked by the Company HQ and the Regimental HQ. The more senior the individual, or the more severe the offence, the higher up the military chain of command the disciplinary powers sat. The Station Commander also has powers of discipline that can be invoked if an incident occurs on their Station that involves Station personnel, especially if they are senior in rank. If the incident also involves multiple units on their Station, then the Station Commander will often speak to the various Commanding Officers to determine the discipline chain and who is best placed to deal with what aspects. I would often brief my Commanding Officer on any emerging issues that may result in disciplinary action beforehand so that they were aware of the situation and were better able to provide guidance when, and if, required.

## C. RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC POINTS RAISED

20. I am aware that, at paragraph 84 of WO1 Hayes' statement, she states that our relationship had "completely broken down". From my recollection, the working relationship between WO1 Hayes and myself became very tense only in the latter part of my tenure. I would argue that this break-down was due to a combination of her [redacted] and her frustrations at me for what she perceived to be a lack of assistance [redacted] by not always adhering to her demands. I felt that I was the focal point in which she could direct her frustrations, and I was content for her to direct this at me rather than other members of the team. The catalyst, I believe, was the incident that occurred at the Station Ball in 2017, which is mentioned in WO1 Hayes' statement but which I did not attend. I did, however, have to deal with the consequences of this incident which caused significant tensions with the Station personnel, with whom we had built up good working relations, and I was summoned to the Station Commander's Office several times as they pursued disciplinary action against WO1 Hayes due to her behaviour. The

Station Commander also discussed the matter with Lt Col Parke-Robinson on more than one occasion.

21. I do not agree with WO1 Hayes' allegation that I bullied her. Paragraph 74 of WO1 Hayes' statement details that she was told by Major Matt Cox that she had criticised my leadership in front of others. The reason for disciplinary action against her, by the Station, was also for criticising and undermining personnel that were in positions of authority who made decisions that she did not agree with. The Summer Ball incident was done very publicly. The criticisms she made were not constructive and were seen by those on the receiving end, or who witnessed it, as WO1 Hayes trying to assert her authority in situations where she did not have any, and an attempt to overturn and discredit those that did.

22. The meeting mentioned at paragraph 89 of WO1 Hayes' statement was, I believe, a meeting where WO1 Hayes had AGAI 67 paperwork served upon her as a part of the disciplinary process. This sanction was awarded after consultation with Lt Col Parke-Robinson. Major Cox was asked to attend this meeting to independently witness that the process was completed correctly and WO1 Hayes agreed to his presence. WO1 Hayes makes mention of a Formal Complaint being raised against me. When a formal complaint is raised, the individual subject to the complaint is made aware. At no time was I informed by anyone that WO1 Hayes had raised a formal complaint against me.

23. I have no recollection of an August 2017 meeting as described at paragraph 90 of the witness statement of WO1 Hayes. However, all meetings that dealt with the structure of Op Northmoor would have been discussed with Silver and the SIOs to ensure that it did not have a detrimental impact on the investigation. How the information was disseminated would also have been agreed upon collectively by the HQ, Silver and the SIOs to prevent rumours and to ensure that there was a baseline of knowledge that was given to everyone. As a part of any centralised brief I gave, I would inform the audience whether I would take questions or where any questions should be directed. This is normal practice when delivering briefings or presentations. If any of the SIO's wished to brief their DSIO's prior to a centralised brief, then that was their decision and I would not be privy to such discussions.

24. At paragraphs 92-96 of her witness statement, WO1 Hayes describes an email being sent by Captain Pete Knight. My only recollection was that something about this was briefed to me upon my return from leave, although I cannot recall the details of what the email contained or to whom it was sent, save that it was sent in error. As to the reference to legal claims mentioned at paragraph 97 of WO1 Hayes' statement, I recall that I was contacted by someone in Army HQ approximately 2-3 years after I had left Op Northmoor asking if I had any information of any kind regarding WO1 Hayes. [redacted] States why she was approached regarding Deborah Hayes [redacted]. I was never approached or informed by anyone at any time during or after my service with the Army that WO1 Hayes had raised any complaints against me.

25. I am now aware that, at paragraph 153 of WO1 Hayes' statement, she states that "*it felt obvious in October 2017 that they were already thinking about closing down Op Northmoor*". As an OC, I did not have the authority, or power, to change the structures within the overall RMP and definitely did not have the authority to close down the investigation. These decisions would have been made at HQ PM(A) level, but would have had input from the investigative chain of command. Everyone was aware that Op Northmoor was not going to run indefinitely and would only continue if there was evidence to indicate that it was required to do so. The number of personnel being assigned into the Unit had significantly dropped by October 2017, but this was against the background that much of the work conducted by Team 2 was near completion, so this was not surprising to me.

26. Initially, WO1 Hayes demonstrated that she had a wealth of knowledge and experience that was of use for such an investigation. This situation changed in the latter part of my tenure. WO1 Hayes also seems not to have had a full understanding of what powers and authority an OC actually has, particularly when dealing with a bespoke unit like Op Northmoor. However, this is understandable as nothing like this Unit had been generated before. When the IHAT was stood up, the SIB and GPD elements were not as integrated as they were with Op Northmoor, this is possibly as a result of a lesson learned. The GPD element was a platoon that was borrowed from the local RMP Company in its entirety and they moved location to the SIB UK HQ and operated from there. My rudimentary understanding of the chains of command for the IHAT was that the GPD and SIB Companies and Regiments retained control of their own respective personnel as opposed to Op Northmoor which was a single Company under the command of a single Regiment.

27. WO1 Hayes' recollections also seem to imply an "us and them" situation between the GPD and SIB components. Whilst I cannot comment on what this was like when the investigation was first stood up, I can state that during my tenure, whilst there were some differences, the SIOs were exceptional in finding and exploiting the strengths between the different components. As an RMP Officer, I was able to switch between the GPD and SIB components throughout my career. Those that were not commissioned officers had to choose between either following a GPD or a SIB career pathway. This meant that SIB personnel had little to no knowledge or experience of working closely on a daily basis with GPD personnel and vice versa. However, after a 12 month period with Op Northmoor, I was able to witness the cross-pollination of skills between RMP investigators that were beneficial to all and the overall investigation.

## D. CONCLUSION

28. Overall, I have set out in my first witness statement the challenges I faced as OC and the challenges faced by the progress of Op Northmoor generally.

Statement of truth

I believe the contents of this statement to be true.

Signed: T. Stitson

Dated: 13 August 2026