



RMP-221-0006877-A

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Witness name: TINA STITSON

Statement number: 1

Dated: 30 JUNE 2025

Exhibits: 6

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY RELATING TO AFGHANISTAN

WITNESS STATEMENT OF MAJOR (RET'D) TINA STITSON DATED 30 JUNE 2025

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 Rule 9 request dated 12 November 2024. The purpose of this statement is to explain the role that I filled under Operation Northmoor ("Op Northmoor") between May 2016 and April 2018.

B. TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

2. I served in the military for 20 years from January 2003 to January 2023 and the RMP was the only cap badge with whom I served. Throughout

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my service, I deployed on operations to Iraq on three separate occasions (Operation TELIC 3, TELIC 5 and TELIC 10). I also deployed as a United Nations Peacekeeper to Cyprus in 2018 during which time I was the Force Provost Marshal (the senior military police officer) in command of the multinational military police unit.

3. I have served in Germany and in the United Kingdom in various roles, for instance, I have served in appointments at the Company, Regiment, Brigade and Divisional levels. I have been the OC of 32 Section Special Investigations Branch (“**SIB**”) who are the personnel who deal with serious criminal activity within the Army such as sexual offences, fraud and deaths. This is not something that all direct entry officers had been able to do. I also commanded General Police Duties (“**GPD**”) who are the uniformed personnel who deal mostly with low level and volume crime. Prior to my role in Op Northmoor, I did not have experience on homicide investigations. However, as OC of 32 Section SIB, I was involved in a number of investigations that are considered “major incidents” such as an investigation into a stolen weapon on Families’ Day. During this investigation not only were we able to recover the weapon within 24 hours, but over the course of the subsequent investigation we narrowed the suspects down to four people and then to two out of the hundreds of military and civilian persons who could have taken it. Ultimately, we believed we knew who was responsible but the evidence was not quite strong enough for criminal charges to be brought against the individual. I have also previously closed down a Regiment’s HQ and entire G4 (Logistic) Department, following an investigation into an individual who was believed to have been stealing large quantities of fuel from the military and selling it on for profit on numerous occasions. I utilised a Company of RMP whereby I planned and executed the initial search to recover key evidence, however, I had to step away as I went on a

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promotional course after the search took place. I have also previously investigated an accidental stabbing involving service personnel whilst they were on a Range.

4. I completed the Military Police Officer Course (“**MPOC**”), the Level 3 Investigation Course (“**L3IC**”), the Case File Management Course (“**CFMC**”) and the Senior Investigating Officer (“**SIO**”) Course. I have also been on attachments with the SIB. I have completed a number of further mandatory training and leadership courses that were required in order for me to progress to the rank of Major. I did not complete any further training whilst in my role on Op Northmoor as I did not have the time in light of all of my management responsibilities.
5. It was in late 2015 that I was assigned as the Officer in Command (“**OC**”) of Op Northmoor and I was informed that I was due to take up my position in May 2016 upon completion of my assignment with 3 (UK) Division.
6. Applications for postings are done by way of a Posting Preference Proforma (“**PPP**”) which is submitted to the Command Board who are a panel that sit each year and determine what officers will be assigned to command the various Companies within the RMP. RMP Companies tended to consist of between 100-125 personnel for GPD and approximately half of that number would be the size of an SIB Company. It is my understanding that this was a competitive process in which the Command Board would usually aim to have at least three candidates in the running per command position. The number of command positions available varies each year and all candidates have to meet set criteria in order to be put forward for consideration. The purpose behind the submission of the PPP was to find the best candidate for each command appointment.

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7. When I submitted my PPP to the Command Board in 2015, I did not include Op Northmoor as one of my posting preferences and so I was surprised to have been awarded this posting. I do not even recall it being a possible option for selection on the Command List. None of my cohort seemed to know much about it either. I made enquiries with my desk officer (the point of contact for such assignments) to obtain more information and establish why I had been given this appointment. Prior to this point, I understood that the role had only been held by Late Entry Officers i.e. individuals with over 20 years' policing experience who had worked their way through all of the ranks before obtaining commission into the officer ranks. Upon making my enquiries I was told that I met the criteria and I recall I commented that I had been selected from a cast of one as I knew that (a) I was not the top performing officer in my cohort (b) many others on this command board had undertaken deployments to Afghanistan and therefore were discounted due to conflicts of interest and (c) they did not have an SIB Suitably Qualified and Experienced Person ("**SIB SQEP**") of the requisite rank available at the time so were using the Command Board as the mechanism to get the role filled. I was also aware that the predecessors to my role had much more experience than I did. I found that the responses to my enquiries were non-committal and felt that it reinforced my belief that there was a limited number of people who were able to fill this role. However, the desk officer was also clear in stating that I would not have been given any command appointment if I was not capable of filling the role.
8. I consider that my experience and training was adequate to fulfil my role as OC but I felt that SILVER needed to have more of an understanding of why this appointment was utilising a slightly different investigation and command structure to the norm, especially as the OC role already had the additional responsibilities of re-locating and establishing the unit. The

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use of a structure in which there is a GOLD, SILVER and BRONZE was not common in routine RMP investigations for incidences covering deployments as far as I was aware, as we tended to use RMP structures and hierarchy rather than a civilian structure. However, it was clear the role of SILVER was suited to those who had deployed on operations before because life, policing experience and knowledge of operating within those environments was needed which would usually come with being on previous operational deployments. In my mind, that might explain why Op Northmoor usually used Late Entry Officers for my role prior to my posting.

9. Before I took up my role on Op Northmoor, whilst I was still serving with 3 (UK) Division, I happened to be on exercise in RAF St Mawgan in early 2016 and I took the opportunity to visit Op Northmoor. I learned that the outgoing OC, Major Moira Penman, [REDACTED] had been dealing with personal issues [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] I was not going to receive a handover from her. At some stage, I saw Major Penman in passing whilst she was on her way to a medical appointment and she wished me good luck. I also discovered that the Op Northmoor personnel had only recently been relocated to RAF St Mawgan and the majority of them had still not yet taken up assignment and the Company was essentially still being built despite Op Northmoor running for 18 months at that stage. Op Northmoor was to be a bespoke hybrid Company consisting of GPD and SIB and this had not been attempted before on such a scale. I found that Op Northmoor was top-heavy with regards to rank and it was still in the process of achieving SQEP. As stated, it had an unusual reporting chain and there were tensions with the RAF Station Commander who attempted to task the RMP with additional station responsibilities and tried to use us as a means to get additional funding for the station. I also met with the Company Sergeant Major (“CSM”) WO2 Brandy McKenna and the

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Second in Command (“**2IC**”) Captain Daniel Moorcroft. It was apparent to me that these two individuals were expected to establish this hybrid Company and I was impressed by what they had managed to achieve in the time that they had.

10. It was clear to me that the investigation itself was the priority and that it had been evolving over time. This resulted in the increased demand for resources in order to investigate effectively. My first impression was that, whilst the additional needs and requirements had been clearly identified, not as much thought was given to the people that would be conducting the investigation. It was left to the 2IC and CSM to deal with the personnel and resource issues and ensure that the investigation could continue. This was an extremely complex task as there were conflict of interest issues to be considered, specialist training and Security Clearance requirements to arrange, to name just a few of the factors that needed to be considered. This would in turn reduce the amount of personnel resource that could be called upon to conduct the investigation.

11. WO2 McKenna and Captain Moorcroft formed the Headquarters (“**HQ**”) element of the Company but they were not the most senior or the most experienced. Those who were the most senior and experienced individuals were being used on the investigations which meant that they were only able to provide limited support to establishing and building the unit.

C. ROLE AS OC

12. I arrived in post in May 2016 and I was expected to cover all of the Army G1-G9 spectrum as part of my role. I spent the first couple of months trying to understand the scale and scope of the investigations but I also

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had to deal with the influx of personnel and their most basic needs. For instance, some assignments had to be delayed due to a lack of accommodation and issues with the provision of medical care. It became very apparent to me that it was not possible to fully take on the role of SILVER, and therefore make the policy decisions involved with a complex, classified and highly sensitive investigation, as well as establish a hybrid Company of up to 125 personnel from the position that I had taken it over in. In order to make sure that the investigation could progress, I decided that I needed to prioritise the people as the investigation would almost definitely fail without them. The process of relocating personnel, then ensuring they were up to speed with the investigation, that they had the requisite SQEP and **clearance** to conduct their roles, and that the unit could deploy personnel overseas if required, were the most pressing issues that needed to be addressed.

13. This was particularly evident to me when I discovered that less than 50% of the personnel assigned to Op Northmoor were considered to be medically fit for the role. Many of these health issues were temporary such as an individual requiring shoulder surgery, whereas others were permanent such as back or knee injuries that prevented sustained weight bearing. There was a disproportionate number of personnel with significant injuries though that required rehabilitation or treatment, for instance, there was a WO2 assigned to Op Northmoor that I did not see during my entire tenure as they were off sick for 2 years. These medical conditions had an impact on the investigation as personnel had to take time away to attend medical appointments.

14. Within the boundaries of medical-in-confidence, I would also have briefings with the station and numerous meetings with the doctor due to issues within the RMP team. The doctor offered to put herself through

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required clearance

as she felt it may make the personnel feel that they were able to talk more openly with her. In my view, there was initially a significant mental health issue amongst a number of personnel due to a variety of reasons which needed to be addressed. I did not consider that the level of skill and experience of all personnel on Op Northmoor was always adequate to fulfil the specified roles as we were continuously training the investigators whilst I was in role. They all had basic investigatory skills but some needed more specialist training such as the Covert Liaison Enforcement Manager qualification ("**CLEM**"). However, after a period of on-boarding and additional training, personnel better understanding the investigation, why they were doing it and what their role was, which in turn alleviated some of the mental health and stress issues that were being experienced.

15. I recall that there were between 30 to 40 personnel on location when I took over the Company and this number increased to approximately 114 during my tenure.

16. A further priority was to ensure that the infrastructure was appropriate and able to cope with an investigation at the higher classification that the large volumes of sensitive material involved. This was key to ensuring that the investigation was able to progress.

17. Very little was known about Op Northmoor outside of the unit, which was appropriate given the nature and classification of the investigation, and this meant that being assigned personnel that were not necessarily appropriate for this very bespoke investigation was always going to be a risk. For instance, management of **Security Clearance** and conflicts of interest was key when assigning personnel to the unit. This alone would have

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prevented a proportion of RMP personnel from having any involvement with the investigation as they may have been deployed in Afghanistan within the timeframes that Op Northmoor was concerned with. As there are not large numbers of RMP investigators in the first instance, this further restricted the pool upon which Op Northmoor was able to draw from. I also found that assumptions had been made within the wider RMP community that the necessary support systems for Op Northmoor were already in place and that the Company was more established than it actually was. During the first few months of my tenure, I reached out to my desk officer again, with regards to my appointment as I felt that I was given a poisoned chalice and was to be scapegoated as it was not possible to fill the role of SILVER and build a Company with the limited resources that I had. For an RMP Company of this size, there would usually be a HQ element that would consist of the following: an OC (Major), a 2IC (Captain), an Operations/Training Officer (Captain), a WO1 RSM, a WO2 CSM, a SSgt and Corporal within the G4 department, a Training SSgt/Sgt and 2 Clerks. When I arrived at Op Northmoor, the HQ element consisted of an OC, 2IC, CSM, SSgt (G4) and Corporal (Training), i.e. half of what is required to run an established Company of this size.

18. In my view, if the Company had already been established and was at Full Operational Capability (“**FOC**”) then it would have been possible to be SILVER and OC at the same time but the situation that I had inherited was approximately 12 months away from that point. Personnel were still arriving at the unit in groups of around a dozen or so at a time. Ordinarily, the movement of personnel would be on an individual basis which is much easier to absorb as personnel are gradually brought up to speed and on boarding is on a smaller scale. The desk officer was surprised when I

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explained this as he had also assumed that the establishment of the Company was further along than it was.

19. In order to ensure that the investigation continued to progress, I decided to rely more heavily than would be normal on the teams' SIOs and Deputy SIOs ("DSIO"). Once the Company was more established, my plan was that I would then be in a position to take on more of the SILVER aspects. Due to the high profile of Op Northmoor, details or actions were demanded from the RMP at short notice [See RMP-221-0006855-A]. The demands were mainly related to things like media queries or as a result of the findings of boards/panels or working groups. Whilst we were able to answer most of them swiftly in general terms, the sheer size of the investigation meant that it could be difficult to answer requests if significant detail was required as it would involve searches being conducted through a variety of databases and systems and sometimes even manual searching through casefiles. This was time consuming and could also be labour intensive. It would also draw investigators and command elements away from their primary roles to ensure that the responses provided were appropriate and timely. GOLD would try and ensure that such queries were kept to a minimum but the additional scrutiny that appeared to be applied to Op Northmoor, and anyone involved with it, added to pressures. I felt that there was little understanding by those that had no involvement with the investigation that, not only had Op Northmoor not been running for anywhere near as long as the IHAT investigations, but the volume of data involved was vast as it involved multiple instances over protracted periods of time. This meant that significant amounts of time were required to even process, organise and analyse what was held.

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20. I attempted to stem the influx of personnel that were unsuitable for Op Northmoor by inviting all of the Regimental Sergeant Majors (“**RSM**”) from each of the RMP regiments to visit Op Northmoor. At the end of the visit I received apologies from the RSMs (WO1 ‘Geordie’ Williams was particularly vocal) who said that there were certain individuals that would not have been put forward for assignment had it been known what the situation was. The visit was helpful in that it increased the communications regarding incoming personnel which helped to limit additional strain on resources as the Company continued to establish.

21. Shortly after my arrival at Op Northmoor, I received my initial briefs from the investigation teams. I then travelled to Andover to visit the HQ Provost Marshall (Army) office for further briefs. At this stage I had a very rudimentary understanding of the investigation itself and lacked the knowledge and experience to make informed decisions as SILVER. Yet, I felt that this was what was being demanded of me by the investigation teams and by Lt Col John McAllister who was filling the role of GOLD at the time. Lt Col McAllister, seemed to understand the challenges that I was facing with regards to setting up the Company but he was also clear that I was to get on with being both OC and SILVER. It felt to me that my predecessors had not lasted very long in the role, and that they had left the role as soon as they were able, despite being more senior to me in policing experience, knowledge and military command. From our first meeting I was left with the impression that GOLD had been shouldering more than expected with regards to investigative responsibilities and understandably he now wanted to hand those off.

22. GOLD was aware that I had never been deployed on operations in an SIB role, nor had I investigated UKSF but he told me that I would pick it up

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and that I should not worry as I had a strong investigation team to support me.

23. It was clear that I was to report to GOLD for any investigative issues but anything outside of the investigation was to be addressed to the Special Operations Regiment ("**Spec Ops Regt**") as I was initially under their Administrative Control ("**ADMINCON**"). As a result of the ADMINCON, the Commanding Officer of Op Northmoor, Lieutenant Colonel Belinda Forsythe, was very limited in the support that she was able to provide. Usually, units are under Operational Control ("**OPCON**") or Operational Command ("**OPCOM**") to their Regiments which provides Commanding Officers with more authority to support their units. In brief, OPCON means that the Commanding Officer is not able to change the mission of the unit, but they can task them. OPCOM means that the Commanding Officer is able to change the mission of the unit as well as task them. By being ADMINCON, Lt Col Forsythe had minimal influence on the unit functions as she was only able to provide support in administrative processes when requested to do so. There also appeared to be personality frictions between Lt Col Forsythe and others, in particular GOLD and Provost Marshal (Army) ("**PM(A)**"). I felt that this put me in an awkward position as I did not feel able to seek advice and guidance from my Commanding Officer in the same way that other OC's were able to.

24. I was supposed to put everything that effected the investigation through GOLD but unfortunately Lt Col McAllister was not always available. He subsequently went off for a prolonged period and did not return to the role following which Colonel Rob Morris was drafted in to provide support but he was also filling a separate role within HQ PM(A) at the time. The result was that, during my first few months, I was operating in an isolated and remote position with little top cover as either OC or SILVER despite the

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best of intentions. I raised my concerns that I would not be able to achieve what was being demanded of me and that I did not have sufficient support. PM(A) swiftly sought to address the situation.

25. It appeared that, as a result of the concerns that I raised, PM(A) made the following changes:

- a. Col Morris was made AH Northmoor ("**AH NM**").
- b. The Company was resubordinated to the SIB Regiment with OPCON status with Lieutenant Colonel Julia Parke-Robinson as Commanding Officer.
- c. Lieutenant Colonel John Harvey was appointed as GOLD. This appointment was made when it became clear that Lt Col McAllister was not going to return to the role of GOLD from his prolonged absence.
- d. Major Matthew Cox was put in place as a dedicated SILVER.
- e. Two civil servants were put in place, Miles Tooke and Andy Denison;
- f. A military clerk was appointed to work full time.

26. The clerk role was a key role within the Company and normally for a unit of this size, there would be a dedicated Senior Non-Commissioned Officer ("**SNCO**") and a Non-Commissioned Officer ("**NCO**") providing this function. Prior to the addition of a full time clerk, the position was filled only remotely and with gaps. This increased the burden on me, the 2IC and the CSM as we were already taking on multiple tasks within the

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Company HQ since the HQ element of Op Northmoor was already a slimmed down version of what would usually be in place in a GPD or SIB unit of a similar size. Therefore, the increase and changes made to the personnel had a huge impact and enabled this bespoke unit to be established effectively. It is my belief that this level of support should have been in place prior to locating to RAF St. Mawgan. I have no doubt that, if these changes had not been made, the establishment of this bespoke Company and therefore the investigation itself would have stalled. In my view, the upper echelons of the investigation including the Company HQ element would have hit burn-out in a short period and this would have had a detrimental impact on the ability of the investigators to be able to fill their roles and progress the investigation. I am not sure if the Chain of Command had been made aware of the difficulties and limitations by my predecessors or if they did not experience them therefore they did not feel the need to raise anything.

27. The enhanced dedicated leadership structure implemented by PM(A) also contributed to the smoother establishment and day-to-day running of Op Northmoor. Both the SILVER and OC positions now had appropriate access to support from higher personnel to assist with dealing with issues that required escalation as required. PM(A) was able to inform, where required, at the highest levels, to try and ensure that the actions that were being conducted by investigators were not being unnecessarily hindered.

28. AH NM was able to provide technical and strategic advice and guidance across the spectrum seeking to ensure that appropriate resources and policy held at the higher levels were in place and adhered to, but without unnecessary interference to the investigation. For example dealing with the Media Cell or direct queries that were made regarding the

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investigation by those external to the RMP who felt that they should know certain information. The AH NM role acted as an additional filter layer that needed to be satisfied before other departments could link in with either GOLD or SILVER. This was to preserve the integrity of the investigation and ensure that only those that needed to know or be involved were informed and that it did not become a “free-for-all”.

29. In the first part of my tenure, I found that I had to have an open door policy for the team which I did implement. The 2IC (Captain Moorcroft) was not happy about it but I felt that the morale needed to be improved and therefore I needed to allow the team to be able to air their grievances or concerns to me candidly. In normal circumstances, they should have gone to their team lead first and then another senior member of the team before escalating to me as OC but I found that the team were open to speaking directly to me and would come forward to discuss issues directly with me. My aim was to break down the barriers and make the hybrid teams operate cohesively. As I had experience at both GPD and SIB at a variety of levels, I was at the time one of a very small number of Company personnel that was able to understand and appreciate the different ways of working and how to try and bring them together. When Pete Knight (the 2IC) and Andrew Heron (the WO1) joined, they made a point of speaking to all personnel and encouraging them to speak to them instead of coming direct to me. Both Pete and Andrew were very approachable and I found that personnel were happy to speak with either them or myself when needed.

30. In my view, my arrival provided an outsider's view and an extra pair of hands to help to establish the Company. I spent two years in my role on Op Northmoor which is the usual duration for an ordinary posting and

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then I was reassigned in 2018. For my next assignment I was seconded to the United Nations for 2 years and I was deployed to Cyprus as a UN Peacekeeper.

D. TEAM AND LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

Leadership Structure

31. Something akin to the GOLD, SILVER and BRONZE structure exists within the RMP without the need to make them a separate leadership structure as was done in Op Northmoor. In theory, the CO would be able to give you the resources and policy guidance that you need. GOLD in Op Northmoor, Lt Col McAllister and Lt Col Harvey, were not in a position to provide personnel or other resources as they had to make requests to others to obtain what was required. It seemed to me that the RMP, with regards to Op Northmoor, were trying to replicate where possible the Home Office Police Forces in terms of investigation structure, training and utilisation of key systems such as the HOLMES system. Home Office Police Forces had significantly more experience in the running of large complex investigations which spanned over longer periods of time than the RMP had, so it made sense to adopt these ways of working for Op Northmoor.

32. In my view, the division of responsibilities for the different roles (GOLD, CO, SILVER, and OC) was made clear to all personnel and a central brief was held explaining this. This was to prevent personnel trying to play one off against the other, especially for areas such as discipline.

33. Upon my arrival the structure was just the Teams and then GOLD whereas it should have been the Teams reporting to SILVER who then reports to GOLD. This was ultimately put in place in investigative terms

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and stayed in place during my time on Op Northmoor. I did consider alternatives for the investigation, such as reporting in to the CO instead but, along with the team leaders, we agreed that this structure with dedicated SILVER and GOLD worked best for the investigation.

34. As I have already referred to elsewhere in this statement, I felt as though a Home Office Police structure was placed upon the RMP but it is important to acknowledge that the RMP are not resourced in the same way. The RMP have to balance military and policing responsibilities and the purpose of SILVER was to make sure the investigation was resourced with suitably qualified personnel. I am asked about covert policing but I did not have the knowledge or authority to deal with such matters. Anything covert is held at a much higher level in PM(A) HQ so, in my view the National Crime Agency (“NCA”) construct does not map directly across to the military. The covert policing aspect is just one example of this.

35. As I have explained, I did not consider it possible in the circumstances to fulfil the role of OC as well as SILVER and, in my view, the role of SILVER was properly implemented when Major Cox joined the team. He was then able to provide oversight and pathways to be taken with regards to the investigation. This enabled for Op Northmoor to not only continue to fully establish itself but areas of the investigative process that had been lacking due to the absence of a focused SILVER were now being addressed. I welcomed Major Cox’s appointment and whilst we were both of the same rank and seniority, we were able to very swiftly differentiate the different areas of responsibility and who had primacy. Any investigational decisions/direction would come from SILVER and I was responsible for all other matters which would aid in the facilitation of the

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investigation such as welfare and wellbeing of personnel and their families, career development, military training, infra-structure and deployments to name but a few.

36. In the end, my understanding of the leadership structure with regards to the investigation for Op Northmoor was that it had AH NM and his team who would deal with strategic level issues and provide a link into PM(A) if required. He would also link in directly with GOLD. GOLD and possibly AH NM would also link in with the legal team and Operational Offending Team (“OOT”) to ensure that we were being provided with the legal advice and guidance as required. Then there was GOLD, SILVER and the Teams (SIOs). When I joined there was no AH NM team and this was only implemented several months after I started. The Independent Advisory Group (“IAG”) or OOT, I can’t recall which, were already in place prior to my arrival and I believe had been in place for some time and had been providing advice for the investigation. I do not recall having too much interaction with these individuals due to the pace at which I was operating at the time coupled with a variety of issues that I was dealing with. Otherwise the structure stayed the same. I felt that these were very positive changes that were needed.

37. Bringing the Company under the control of the SIB Regiment had significant benefits. Op Northmoor had a large number of SIB personnel and some very niche skill sets that the SIB Regiment was able to call upon to boost its own capacity and capability. As an example, Op Northmoor had to have a team ready to deploy at short notice to Afghanistan or anywhere else in the world in order to recover evidence. Initially this was not easy to achieve as many personnel arrived with physical injuries or constraints that would prevent them from deploying.

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However mid-way through my tenure, those issues had not only been resolved, but we were able to put personnel on a rolling, rotational, basis for deployment and aligned that with the overall SIB deployability capability, therefore bolstering the numbers significantly.

38. We also had personnel qualified on establishing and maintaining a Major Incident Room (“**MIR**”) and whilst the SIB Regiment also had one, it was much smaller in size and did not have the qualified personnel like Op Northmoor did. Whilst Op Northmoor would send personnel to operate the SIB Regiment MIR, enhancing their capacity, it had added benefit for Op Northmoor as we were able to re-locate personnel who had welfare issues closer to where they needed to be whilst filling a role that would ensure they were competent in the specialist role Op Northmoor required of them. If there were any welfare issues, once these had been resolved, they were able to return to St Mawgan.

39. I am asked to specifically explain my understanding of the roles of various leadership positions within Op Northmoor; the persons who occupied those roles; and whether or not those persons performed those roles to an adequate standard. My views are as follows:

- a. PM(A) was initially Brigadier Warren but he was an outgoing PM(A). He was getting ready to handover when I arrived to Brigadier David Neal. Brigadier Neal, in my view, was supportive of Op Northmoor when he came into post but for some reason he was not able to be briefed fully on Op Northmoor. I am not entirely clear on what the issue was but I seem to recall that not long after Brigadier Neal took up the appointment of PM(A), I was informed by Col Morris that clarification had been received that Brigadier Neal could be brought up to speed with all

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aspects of the investigation where appropriate. There had been a potential area of concern but this was subsequently identified as being another Officer who had no involvement at all with Op Northmoor and was not going to in the future. This provided me with immense relief as we were able to disclose what was deemed to be appropriate and necessary regarding the investigation to PM(A) without hindrance.

- b. The Assistant Head was Col Morris. I did not really hear from any of the Assistant Heads as they were kept away from Op Northmoor until Col Morris started. In my view, his addition was positive and needed as he provided guidance and support for that bespoke operation.
- c. GOLD was initially Lt Col John McAllister who I suspected at the time to feel frustrated and tired as he seemed to have a heavy workload and much was being asked of him. Due to this, I believe that is why he was absent for a prolonged period. It is the role of GOLD to write policy and provide high level investigatory direction. Lt Col McAllister was expected to have very clear oversight of everything, at all levels, due to the absence of or limited SILVER support which, in my view, was a very unfair expectation. Lt Col John Harvey took over from Lt Col McAllister. Lt Col Harvey did have a dedicated SILVER in the form of Major Cox and they linked in a lot. I found that Lt Col Harvey was able to provide the oversight and insight required and he was a good sounding board for SILVER. AH NM and Lt Col Harvey worked closely together to ensure that policy and guidance was implemented and adhered to, but also to ensure that there was an air gap between the investigation and higher levels to prevent inappropriate influence being placed on those that were doing the investigating.

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- d. SILVER was originally Major Gary Ward. I do not know much about him but it appeared that he quit the role after about 6 months. After this it was Major Moira Penman who held the role for, I believe, around 9 months but she was dealing with [personal issues] for much of that time. I do not know who fulfilled or covered the role of SILVER whilst Major Penman was absent although it is possible that Captain Jason Wright stepped up to help with some aspects when there was no SILVER as he was the most senior person in the investigation. In my view, Major Penman was not able to undertake all her responsibilities as either SILVER or OC as she was in the process [Details of personal issues].
- [redacted] Technically, I was expected to undertake the role of SILVER alongside my OC responsibilities until I requested a dedicated SILVER. This was Major Cox who joined around February 2017 and he had worked with the SIB regiment before. I did not have any problems with Major Cox as SILVER and felt that he inherited a difficult task that he tried to sort out.
- e. Major Cox and I collaborated closely to ensure that any factors that impacted on the investigation were clearly understood and that neither of us undermined the other. If there were areas of contention, we would discuss this between us and find the best resolution to the particular issue that would minimise any detrimental impact on the investigation, but also ensure that various regulations and policy were adhered to. This was particularly pertinent when dealing with personnel poor performance or medical/welfare issues. For example, allowing personnel to conduct a flexible working pattern for stated periods of time for welfare reasons. Whilst this fell within the OC domain, I would always ensure that SILVER was content and there was not a detrimental impact to the investigation if a flexible working pattern was implemented,

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particularly if the individual concerned was filling a specialist role. I would have discussions with SILVER to understand how best to meet the needs of the investigation as well as that of the individual.

- f. As explained, the role of OC overlaps somewhat with the explanation for SILVER above and the previous OCs were Major Ward, Major Penman and me. There was no dedicated OC after I left in 2018 as I know that someone applied for my role but they were turned down. I believe that Major Cox took over both roles because at this stage they were looking at drawing down the Company as the Team 2 work was mostly complete by then.
- g. The SIO for Team 1 was Captain Jason Wright. He was a very experienced SIB investigator and Late Entry Captain. He was willing to seek guidance as he had a mentor from Greater Manchester Police (“**GMP**”) and he was willing to look outside the box. In my opinion, Captain Wright was very good.
- h. Team 2 was led by WO2 Zoe Duce. If I recall correctly, Zoe Duce left on promotion. She was meticulous and had quite a big team to deal with and in my view she was probably the most successful SIB commander. I felt that Zoe Duce was good for dealing with volume work. Chris McManus took over from Zoe Duce after she was assigned to work alongside the Royal Navy SIB. I cannot recall how long he was in post before I left but felt that it was a short time as I was not able to get to know him very well. I believe that he had worked with Major Cox previously and so was known to him.

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- i. Team 3 was led by Lt then Captain Joshua Stribling. He was very junior within his RMP career and so his experience and knowledge was limited, but he was very sharp and picked things up very quickly. Joshua Stribling appeared to have good capacity for work unlike some others that I have encountered at such a junior stage. Captain Danielle Smith replaced Joshua Stribling and I considered that she was a very steady pair of experienced hands. Joshua Stribling laid the foundations for her to continue and progress which she did and I felt that she was very good.
- j. The DSIO for Team 1 was ^{N73} [REDACTED] who I believed was a very good pair of hands who had deployed numerous times with the SIB and made a good team with Captain Wright. ^{N73} [REDACTED] was replaced by WO2 Mark Dempster, who also seemed to work well with Captain Wright, and then by WO2 Delme Williams who was a much quieter personality but very sharp.
- k. Staff Sergeant Sean West was also on Team 2 and I believe he was very good. Sean West transferred into the SIB quite late and he may have been qualified with regards to scenes of crime. He worked with Zoe Duce and they made a good team.
- l. WO1 Debbie Hayes was the DSIO of Team 3 and I seem to remember that she started off by struggling to fit and stick with what was required of her as she always seemed to want to do more, but without completing other set tasks. Although she had a wealth of experience and knowledge, sometimes this could be a hindrance as the investigation

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was very different to anything that had been undertaken before. [REDACTED]

Details of Personal Issues

[REDACTED]. I also recall that there were some disciplinary matters that I had to deal with regarding WO1 Hayes.

- m. Staff Sgt Tom Carey was running the four man team in Collingwood and I recall that he too was very good in that he was a good operator and he could be trusted to manage expectations and let the teams know what was actually within the art of the possible within the timeframes provided. This team were responsible for conducting a variety of searches across a number of different systems and databases.
- n. The Warrant Officer in Command was based within the Company HQ and was the senior Warrant Officer within the Company. As the structure of the Company was not like that of any other RMP unit, where normally there would be only one individual that held the rank of WO1 and WO2 rather than multiple which is what we had within Op Northmoor, the Company HQ element provided seniority and authority in terms of post rather than rank. This provided some much needed structure and prevented dissent amongst those that held the same rank. This role was held by Brandy McKenna first and then Andrew Heron. Brandy McKenna came from PM(A)HQ and established the Company. Their roles were to be Sgt Major of the units (i.e. the most senior soldier within

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the Company) to work with me. I felt that they were both very good at the roles they fulfilled.

40. There was a person who held the role of CLEM, Staff Sgt Kiddie, who was assigned as he had specific qualifications but in my view he was an example of an individual who should not have been assigned to a remote unit such as Op Northmoor at the time as the appropriate support systems were not in place that would allow this individual to thrive. He was moved to another location under the SIB Regiment and eventually re-assigned but this did have an impact on the investigation team as they needed to identify, and get qualified, another individual to fill the role of CLEM.

41. In my experience, the leadership structure was better after that first 6 months. I cannot say whether the structure was as effective as it ordinarily should be as the multiple senior ranks and bespoke nature of the investigation make it difficult to make direct comparisons to anything else that I have experienced. Although I can say that if it was to happen again, I would likely amend some of the ranks involved and would seek to implement the full structure of a Company HQ rather than a slimmed down version. This would prevent burn-out and reduce the single-point-of-failure risks by providing some redundancy in the system.

42. I want to be clear that, although I have been specifically asked to consider the individuals named above, I did not have concerns about them save for Debbie Hayes and Stuart Kiddie for the reasons I have set out above. Overall, many people struggled to more or lesser degrees at various points due to the demands of the investigation and the remoteness and isolation that came with operating across multiple locations and nature of work that was being undertaken. Debbie Hayes and Stuart Kiddie stood out to me not only

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because they were both very experienced and competent individuals who filled specialist roles, but the rate and level of decline seemed rapid and the loss of these individuals impacted on the Company as others had to be identified and brought up to SQEP in order to ensure that the roles and responsibilities were still being filled.

Team Structure

43. As may now be clear, the actual structure of the investigation itself was compartmentalised with three investigation teams each of which fulfilled a distinctive role.
44. The leaders for each team within Op Northmoor were referred to as the SIOs for their respective teams with their deputies being the DSIOs. Each of the team leads, and their deputies, appeared to be very clear on what their roles and responsibilities were for their respective teams. The SIOs and DSIOs would report in to either myself as OC or to SILVER as required.
45. The SIOs and DSIOs would have intimate knowledge of the investigation area that was allocated to their team and would follow their Terms of Reference (“**ToRs**”) to prevent mission creep. If anything arose that fell outside of the ToRs, but was believed to still fall within the mandate of the RMP for investigation, this was raised to SILVER and GOLD to determine the best course of action. This could include passing the details to another RMP unit to investigate if there was potential that criminal activity had occurred. They could then either initiate a separate investigation or negate the need for a separate investigation once the full circumstances surrounding the activity were known.

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46. There were at least two WO1s and two WO2s within the investigation teams and then there was also a Warrant Officer within the HQ element. Normally, there would only be one of each of these ranks within an RMP unit, similarly, there would normally only be one Major, but to ensure that the investigation had the best chance of being investigated effectively and in a timely manner, larger numbers of these individuals were assigned to the unit.
47. Team 1 dealt with allegations of unlawful killing and the more serious allegations that had been made during Deliberate Detention Operations on the ground.
48. Team 2 dealt with allegations that had been made regarding the ill treatment of detainees whilst they were held in Allied Forces custody. This had a significantly large volume of allegations (circa 800 allegations, **[see RMP-221-0006856-A , attachment Op NORTHMOOR Team 1 caseload as at 25 May 16 on page 4]**) as it covered all detainees, not just those that were detained in British custody. This team had to determine which detainees the British Forces were responsible for in the first instance and then investigate the allegations that involved those individuals. I believe it was determined that around 80 detainees that made allegations were not under the jurisdiction of British Forces.
49. Team 3 included the MIR and disclosure. Op Northmoor was trialling a prototype of a classified version of the HOLMES system used by the Home Office Police Forces. There was also a small team of approximately four personnel located within Collingwood under the command of WO2 Tom Carey who would conduct searches on specific IT systems to provide data as required by the investigation teams (a temporary IFDHC). All teams were a combination of GPD and SIB.

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50. Team 1 tended to operate at a higher security classification whereas Team 2 tended to work within normal policing classifications. The MIR and Disclosure teams were supporting both Team 1 and Team 2 and all personnel were cleared as they may at times have been required to be flexible between teams.

51. The HQ was responsible for all administration, information and deployability requirements, logistics, planning, communications systems such as bringing the FDHC online, ensuring that we had sufficient IT, liaising with the Media Cell, training (military as well as specialist policing requirements), community and station engagement etc. This structure was already decided prior to my arrival and I did not alter this during my tenure as we were already operating a slimmed down structure and therefore there was no room for re-structure.

E. TERMS OF REFERENCE

52. The ToRs were discussed at a meeting and GOLD stated that I needed to ensure that the investigation adhered to them in order to prevent mission creep. I did not have any involvement in drafting either the original ToRs or the amended ToRs. I was told that if anything came to light that fell outside of the ToRs then I was to raise this with GOLD in the first instance. There was a discussion about potential amendments to the ToRs in or around July 2016 with GOLD but I recall that, at the time, I did not fully understand what he meant by systemic issues as I was still new to the investigation and I was told that further amendments were possible if it was deemed appropriate. I was not involved in any further formal meetings with GOLD regarding amendments to the ToR systemic aspects that I can recall. I have a vague recollection that the systemic

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adjustment was made as a result of learning from the experiences of the Iraq Historical Allegations Team (“IHAT”), the Systemic Issues Working Group (“SIWG”) and possibly legal advice.

53. That said, I could understand why the systemic aspect of the ToRs was adjusted as, in my opinion, the timeframes that the investigation was to cover according to the ToRs was so narrow that it was not possible to conclude that a practice was systemic as we were only looking at a snapshot as opposed to looking at all of the deployments conducted by UK Forces in that theatre or other areas of operation.

54. During my initial meeting with Col McAllister, not long after I had first arrived in post, he suggested that finding and recovering sufficient evidence to corroborate allegations that there were specific systemic issues that amounted to criminal behaviour would be time-consuming and labour intensive due to the large volumes of data that needed to be processed. If I recall, it was the November 2016 amended ToRs that stayed in place for the remainder of my time on Op Northmoor. The ToRs were very specific as to what the team were to investigate and Col McAllister was clear that the team did not stray beyond the limitations of the ToRs. I did consider that the ToRs were very exact and wondered why we were only looking at specific issues within that timeframe although I appreciated that Op Northmoor was not intended to be a fishing trip.

55. My understanding was that Team 1 would have used the Murder Investigation Manual and the MIR was looking at making sure they were compliant with it. It was a fully established MIR, the size of which was unusual for the RMP.

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56. I recall that the systemic issues to be investigated leaned more towards Team 2 and the allegations of detainee abuse. The allegations would include things such as a Qu'ran being placed by a toilet. Team 2 therefore operated in a more regulated environment and it was very process and system driven (i.e. the circumstances of controlled detention). Therefore, 'systemic issues' would have been easier to identify. Team 1 on the other hand was investigating what had occurred in much more kinetic environments that had involved fatalities and therefore identifying 'systemic issues' in this regard is much more difficult as there are considerably more factors in play that influence the outcome.

F. RESOURCES

Personnel

57. As stated above, there was a disproportionate number of unit members that were initially not the best fit for their assigned roles, which was a challenge particularly in the initial stages. I believe that almost 15% of the overall Company strength were receiving medical intervention for mental health issues which, in my view, was disproportionate to the size of the Unit. The support that was provided to them via the DCMH was geographically located over an hour's drive away and often the individual would need to be driven by another member of the unit. For a couple of individuals undergoing treatment, it was highlighted to me, during an open door discussion that these individuals tended to also vent to the driver during the return journey to base which was having a detrimental impact on the nominated driver. I felt that I was able to take action, such as expanding the pool of drivers and limiting the number of driving details of this nature that the drivers would conduct each week, and therefore limit the overall impact on the unit this essential activity was having.

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58. During the Climate Assessment, which is an inspection of a unit's culture and the operational effectiveness of the unit and is undertaken by outside observers approximately 12 months after an individual takes command, it was found that I had achieved my original purpose behind the "open door" policy that I initiated.

IT and infrastructure

59. With regard to the infrastructure and IT systems employed by Op Northmoor, these seemed to have been identified and approved by PM(A) prior to my arrival and most of it had been implemented, save for the FDHC which I have addressed elsewhere in this statement.

60. States that the investigation was done from within the building, and that they were kept separate from the rest of the station

[REDACTED]. This facility was managed by a UK Civil Servant called IIA613 [REDACTED] and he dealt with any modifications which were required to the facility.

61. The information contained within [REDACTED] the building was highly classified and subject to stringent controls both physically and in terms of policy. The physical barrier ensured that any visitors to the investigation were strictly controlled and regulated and that the evidence was kept in a very secure area in line with the classification of the investigation.

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62. [REDACTED] Details of how HOLMES was set up within the building

63. Op Northmoor was trialling a prototype of the HOLMES system to operate at a higher security level and was integral in forming the training package for this and for trouble-shooting some of the issues that arose. I was briefed by those that operated the system that it was a useful tool for the investigation and that they could not think of another system that would be better suited.

FDHC

64. The FDHC was purchased prior to my arrival after a need for such a system had already been identified by elements of PM(A)HQ. I believe that Major Phil Hacker led on this and was an integral part in securing this as a new capability for Defence. [REDACTED],

[REDACTED] Details of the type of system and other jurisdiction believed to have it

65. I understood the FDHC to be a repository to hold all of the information and data that Op Northmoor obtained. For instance, looking at potentially storing the data from approximately [REDACTED] NG hard drives from PJHQ related to Torchlight and Varsity data. Data would be input into the FDHC and that would be how the material would be accessed going forward. This system was due to be housed in [REDACTED] the building, however, although the actual equipment physically arrived during my tenure, it was not built or running by the time that I left.

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66. WO2 James Priddin was the point of contact and the individual who I was to link in with on the RMP side to try and bring the capability online. I was involved in a couple of meetings with him throughout my tenure as he was the Cyber lead for Op Northmoor.

67. My understanding at the time as to why the system was not brought online was that this was due primarily to security concerns. [REDACTED]

Details of the security concerns explained

[REDACTED]. There was also a requirement for additional infrastructure building work within the building that needed to be completed to house the FDHC. During my tenure, this was delayed significantly. [see RMP-221-0006857-A]

68. There were also concerns raised by WO2 Priddin regarding the accreditation of the FDHC. These concerns related to the Company Name 1 specialists required to build such a system and whether there was anyone qualified within the RMP who could carry the responsibility for maintaining and running this new capability. [see RMP-221-0006858-A]

69. I would also routinely link in with IIA613 to ensure that any adjustments that we were making to better enable the investigation were acceptable and did not impact on the overall integrity and security of the facility [REDACTED].

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70. I seem to recall that in July 2016, as a part of bringing me up to speed on the investigation, being informed that the Director of Special Forces (“DSF”) had still not informed the RMP where all of their Afghanistan Electronically Stored Information (“ESI”) was held. This meant that we were not able to clearly identify what could be recovered or when, or if it was even relevant data for the investigation.

Facilities

71. IIA613 had been responsible for turning what appeared to be a large old room into a modern office space with the appropriate IT for the investigators. This included building separate rooms to house the more secure IT systems and to give investigators areas where more discrete discussions could take place. These areas needed to be secure and suitable for storing exhibits and also holding a separate secure rooms to house the MIR. This was not a small undertaking and achieving this in a highly secure and sensitive area brings its own complexities. As IIA613 had operated the building for a number of years, he had built up a strong network of appropriate personnel and systems that allowed him to complete the works Op Northmoor required effectively.

Housing and accommodation

72. Securing housing and accommodation for the unit was an ongoing challenge. This was because much of the station was no longer in use and therefore some areas had fallen into a state of disrepair.

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73. Due to the nature of the investigation, most of the Company that were in Single Living Accommodation were housed far away from most other inhabitants of the station. In addition, those that were entitled to live within the SNCO, WO and Officers Mess were not permitted to live there by the RAF Station Commander as it was deemed that there was not sufficient room and it would unduly impact on the other regular activities that the station conducted. Therefore the decision was made that WO and Officers were permitted to live in the Mess accommodation and all other personnel would be housed in blocks designated for RMP personnel only. Initially, this caused significant anger amongst personnel as other units' SNCOs were permitted to live in the Mess and the state of the accommodation that we had been allocated was below that of other units who, despite being significantly junior in rank, enjoyed much better accommodation. Op Northmoor personnel were not charged at the full rates for their accommodation and due to its poor state they were declared as living in Field Conditions. This alleviated some of the tension and, over time, the personnel made the best of what had been allocated to them and it was found to be a way for the unit to further bond.

74. When Operation Northmoor personnel would come across members of UKSF,

A professional and respectful distance was maintained between us as both units were highly cognisant of the detrimental impact should the integrity of the investigation be compromised.

75. For those personnel that had their families with them, the state of the housing outside of the station was no better and widely considered to be below what was expected. These personnel were also not required to pay

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the normal levels of rent as the accommodation was considered so poor. Whilst it was difficult to find school places for all of the children, the local authority was very helpful in trying to allocate children within their preferred schools.

76. There were additional pressures to personnel, many of whom were not used to living in such a remote area. Factors such as wraparound childcare and the fact that you had to drive everywhere to complete necessary day to day tasks had an impact on morale too.

77. There was a small medical centre on site which was staffed by a civilian GP and nurse. The influx of medically downgraded personnel caused significant strain on this centre and the next line of support was at RNAS CAULDROSE which was an hour's drive away from St Mawgan. This was also where service personnel had to go to attend routine physiotherapy appointments, dental care and anything that the GP was unable to deal with. For the families, finding space at a GP surgery was difficult and there were long waiting lists for dental services.

G. MORALE

78. I was constantly monitoring personnel for signs of burn-out due to them operating at pace and under intense scrutiny. The poor state of the accommodation along with the restrictive work place meant that there was little reprieve for personnel. They would work in a windowless building during the day and then return to poor accommodation in the evenings which was not conducive to maintaining morale. Due to the age of the accommodation it was not unusual to lose hot running water or

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heating for periods of time and there were periods where one of the cook houses would be closed for weeks due to rodent infestations.

79. As time progressed on the investigation, the other units on the station became more accepting of the Op Northmoor personnel which eased tensions. I also felt that the intrusion of the media highlighted to the station personnel the scrutiny and pressure that the Op Northmoor investigators were facing and, as a result, station personnel became increasingly proactive in respecting the investigation and would be understanding rather than take offence when investigators would decline invitations to participate in some station activities. This bolstered morale amongst the Company personnel and made for a better working environment.

H. EXTERNAL GROUPS

80. In order to provide advice, or perhaps a sounding board to investigators, external agencies such as the NCA provided support by way of a mentor role for the SIO of Team 1.

81. As we were trying to utilise a Home Office approved system (i.e. the GOLD and SILVER structure) which is role specific, rather than the military Chain of Command which is rank specific, onto a military system, there were some issues as this did not always marry across neatly.

82. Within the Civilian Police GSB system, GOLD is responsible for the strategic aspects of the investigation and Silver is responsible for the tactical side. Within Op Northmoor, AH NM was also conducting some of the activities that would ordinarily fall within GOLD domain. Whilst SILVER was co-ordinating the tactical aspects of the investigation

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primarily with the investigators, he also had to seek authority from GOLD and above to facilitate certain factors. An example of this is the covert strategy. Within the military, the authority to co-ordinate and deploy such tactics is held at PM(A)HQ level, not SILVER or GOLD.

83. To try and navigate the Civilian Police system and better understand how it could apply to the Op Northmoor investigation was key and a reason why a mentor from the NCA was requested.

84. It was my understanding that DSI Paul Williamson had experience of working on high profile cases and was able to be a sounding board for Captain Wright. Although this relationship was established before my arrival, Captain Wright informed me that DSI Williamson was unable to maintain the role of mentor as he was being utilised on an investigation of his own that required his full attention.

85. Whilst I was aware of others from external agencies who also provided advice such as Philip Jones (Independent Review Team), Cliff Evans (Independent Review Team), and Andrew Cayley (Service Prosecution Authority), I personally had very little to do with them as they tended to deal with the team leaders such as SILVER and GOLD.

86. My understanding was that these individuals were brought into the investigation in order to gain specialist advice and transparency. It was very easy for allegations of a cover-up to be made against the military, particularly by those who have limited understanding of the environment in which they operate and the rules and regulations by which the military must abide. Utilising independent advisors also ensured that what we were doing was also in accordance with recognised policing practices and would stand up to scrutiny in any court, whether civilian or military. I

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was not aware of any concerns that any of the teams, SILVER, or GOLD had with any of these external agencies.

I. RELATIONSHIP WITH UKSF

87. During my time on Op Northmoor, I do not recall any issues that would be considered outside of the normal frustrations felt by investigators being raised regarding the relationship between those on Op Northmoor and UKSF. In my view, if it was felt by investigators that UKSF were hiding something or being obstructive then Major Cox, as SILVER, would have been informed. During the initial part of my tenure, I got the impression that there was a desire to fully understand the allegations that were being made so that they were able to explain what had happened from their perspective. They were well versed in the protocols that the RMP implement when dealing with incidences involving UKSF. I considered that these protocols were appropriate in the circumstances. I did not see any particular deference to UKSF as we, at the RMP, just see them as part of the military community.

88. The RMP does not give information out and the downside of this can be that it can cause rumours and conjecture and I was alive to the fact that members of UKSF would talk among themselves about the investigation.

89. If the RMP wanted anything from individuals in the UKSF, we would have to speak to the Disclosure Officers. Normally, it was not possible to even speak to UKSF soldiers without the Disclosure Officer. However, the majority of the police often do not have enough clearance to receive some of the information that could be imparted as part of a conversation with UKSF and so, in my view, the Disclosure Officers were there to make

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sure everyone stuck to what they were able to discuss within these boundaries. I do not know who the Disclosure Officers were that were involved in the interviews for Op Northmoor but I recall that the parameters of their role is set out within the SF Protocol. I did not have any concerns about the Disclosure Officers as part of Op Northmoor.

90. My involvement with regard to UKSF and the Team 1 investigations tended to be more around receiving briefings from Captain Wright and WO1 Priddin on any of the hurdles that they were experiencing and ensuring that these were raised to seniors.

91. I recall being informed that there were issues with recovering evidence from the ITS1 server. These issues were mainly in relation to the initial recovery and also how the evidence was going to be stored. **[See RMP-221-0006859-A]**

92. I have reviewed an email I received from WO2 Priddin in July 2016 which details that they were awaiting information from DSF as to where data was stored on the server along with considerations of what to do with the recovered material. As indicated above, NG hard drives would be required to be uploaded to the FDHC once it came online that had been recovered from PJHQ and were linked to Torchlight and Varsity.

93. I recall that there were concerns surrounding the timing of the recovery of the server but that a decision was taken to delay the recovery of the entirety of the server as it was about to be upgraded and therefore the ITS1 system would have been made redundant. As this was a live server, taking this system offline without the upgrade being available

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would have had significant security implications. Accessibility to the information held on this server was important to the investigation as it was clear that some of the allegations that Op Northmoor was investigating covered events that were not stored in just one area of the server but across the whole system and therefore in order to prevent such evidence being lost, the only option was to recover the server in its entirety. **[See RMP-221-0006860-A]**

94. In addition, the information could also be used to corroborate other evidence that was obtained from elsewhere. I seem to recall being informed briefly by WO2 Priddin that some information relating to **SFHQ(A)** had already been secured prior to my taking up post but I cannot recall anything further.

95. I also seem to recall that whilst we were forensically interrogating some of the ESI, investigators came across inappropriate material which may have met the criminal threshold. I cannot recall exactly where this information came from, in other words, whether it was from the **ITS1** server or from another source. As this was a criminal offence, but fell outside of the ToRs of Op Northmoor, it was passed to GOLD. GOLD would consider whether to open up a separate criminal investigation and if such an investigation was initiated outside of Op Northmoor, who was best placed to conduct it, although it is likely that this would be the SIB Regiment. I do not recall the outcome of this. However, when allegations were made that pertinent evidence for the Op Northmoor investigations had been deleted, I believe that such an allegation was taken extremely seriously, as it is with all criminal investigations, but I am not sure how it was dealt with as this would have fallen into GOLD's domain.

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96. I was not surprised to see media reports that the UKSF were allegedly covering things up as not much is known about the inner workings of this organisation and so conspiracy theories often surround them. This can be a double-edged sword as UKSF can utilise mystery and vagueness to their advantage. If material had been deleted, I believe there would be traces of this which the investigators and forensic teams could have potentially uncovered, so I assume GOLD would have provided some form of investigation guidance dealing with this matter but I do not know this for sure.

97. In terms of evidence, in particular imagery material, this was requested from international allies, predominantly the United States of America. I was aware that there was significant difficulty in gaining access to this. I do not know if the obstacles were ever overcome but was very aware of investigators' frustrations as the process seemed to be very time consuming and required significant effort.

J. INVESTIGATIVE DIRECTION

98. With regards to investigative direction and meetings that dealt purely with this aspect, upon the arrival of Major Cox, I was not privy to them and would only be informed of any outcomes that required my action. For example, organising specialist courses to ensure SQEP or that key personnel were fit to deploy.

99. Prior to Major Cox's arrival, I would attend meetings and minutes would be taken providing updates and direction on various aspects of the investigation. There were occasions where I was not always able to hold these meetings due to other commitments which took priority.

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100. GOLD meetings were headed up by Lt Col Harvey and he would visit the unit in person on a monthly basis. I believe that the SILVER meetings were headed up by Major Cox and were held on a weekly basis. However, as previously stated, I was not involved in them.
101. I would hold regular weekly meetings to keep the commanders up to date on all issues, save for the investigation. I also held monthly Unit Health Committees where all unit personnel were discussed with the station doctor, within the limitations of medical confidence, and any other specialist medical personnel as required. I attended weekly station meetings on behalf of the unit and I would SIB Regiment meetings as required in Bulford.
102. In terms of record keeping, the Company HQ would hold the following: discipline (AGAI) records, unit health committee notes, clearance status records of all personnel, personnel files ("**P Files**"), logistics records, training and development records for all personnel, unit orders, station orders, and records of any classified documents held.
103. Records that were held by the investigation teams included individual policy books, exhibit logs, disclosure logs, minutes of various meetings and records of any investigative direction received. In addition, investigations that had been conducted under the SIB Regiment, such as Op CESTRO were also held by the investigation teams. Whilst I did not have involvement with investigations such as Op CESTRO or Op PAVO, my understanding at the time was that they were brought to Op Northmoor with the intent that they would be fully reviewed to determine if there was anything within these investigations that fell under the Op Northmoor remit. I do not know if these investigations were ever fully

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reviewed or used in this way and therefore I am unable to provide any further comment.

104. In order to obtain relevant data and digital and media evidence in relation to allegations of extrajudicial killings, the RMP recovered data pertaining to [SFHQ(A)] from a server which took place before I got into role. Jim Priddin and his team were responsible for obtaining relevant media/cyber evidence and I understand that there were some issues obtaining evidence from Allies' assets. From my perspective, I am not aware of any investigative steps that ought to have been taken in respect of this line of enquiry that were not taken. Imagery analysis in relation to dropped weapons was not within my role but I recall that it would have gone to the Special Operations regiment as they deal with imagery.

105. During my time on Op Northmoor, I understood that the [ITS1] system was a UKSF server and, I think, that [ITS1] was also a server and was potentially the name of the replacement, but I am not sure. These were important to the investigation as examination of information on there showed that, in relation to some allegations of extra-judicial killings, it was not British troops on the ground at the time relevant to the allegation. The [ITS1] server was used to corroborate which force was involved in the allegations and therefore it was a primary source of information from the theatre.

106. It was not within my role to determine whether to "link" the investigations. I cannot completely remember but I believe it would have been a collective decision between GOLD, SILVER and Captain Wright as SIO who dealt with this as it was his team.

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107. The possibility of a UKSF cover up was considered as, in my view, that is why there was an investigation. However, I was not of the impression that the deaths were covered up particularly since the UKSF declared how many they killed but they could be a bit vague on the detail. Investigating the possibility of a cover up would have been done as part of the normal investigative process. The investigation team would have looked into corroborating the deaths and numbers. I recall that Command Responsibility was being considered by Jason Wright and his team who were going through and looking at the orders made for the DDOs and similar matters such as looking at whether the relevant reports were filled in and submitted as they should have been.

Leggatt Test

108. My understanding of the Leggatt Test is that currently there is a requirement for the Armed Forces to abide by all aspects of the ECHR, even when deployed on overseas combat operations outside of Europe and as such the detention policies as laid down in Joint Doctrine Publication 1-10 (“**JDP1-10**”) were not compliant with this. Therefore, personnel would be liable for prosecution under civil law. This is particularly problematic when dealing with planned detention operations on overseas military deployments as such operations by their very nature should not be carried out at all as they are in contravention of ECHR. However, this provides a significant security risk to deployed personnel as well as potentially to the wider environment and communities in which they are operating, particularly if the rule of law is not functioning effectively or requires support from foreign forces to ensure stability. In the absence of any alternative, it is unclear what should be done to reduce these risks particularly in the instance of hybrid warfare.

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Joint Case Review Panel ("JCRP")

109. In relation to the Joint Case Review Panel ('JCRP'), my understanding is that it was for the Team 2 investigation and it was an independent process whereby the panel would review each of the files compiled by Team 2 that dealt with the allegations surrounding detainee abuse.

110. I understand that the panel would look at what evidence was available and advise on whether further investigation was required to prove or disprove the allegation. The panel would also advise if the investigation should discontinue. My understanding at the time, as I recall, was discontinuance of an investigation was advised only if it did not meet the threshold required for it to be considered a criminal offence under either civilian or military law and there was no prospect of gaining further information that would meet the criminal offence threshold. Each file was dealt with individually rather than the investigations being taken as a whole. By looking at each file through a purely legal lens it ensured that boundaries and standards were set so that outcomes could be reached for appropriate reasons.

K. OTHER MATTERS

111. There were a number of briefings and meetings that took place during the course of Op Northmoor but I was not part of all of them. For instance, Major Cox and Captain Wright would have the meetings with UKSF and DSF and I did not have any meetings with DSP although it is possible that someone from SPA did come down to Op Northmoor at some stage but they did not engage with me directly. It was Miles Tooke, as part of the PM(A) Northmoor team who would speak to Government

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Ministers. It is possible that there was another person who worked with Miles Tooke but I cannot recall.

112. The requests for information received would often have a tight turnaround and the AH NM and GOLD was always keen to ensure that such requests were kept to a minimum. The profile of Op Northmoor had dramatically increased when the unit re-located to St Mawgan which may have been as a result of activity surrounding IHAT, as well as the influx of Army personnel onto an RAF station. When senior officers would visit St Mawgan, as the largest lodger unit on the station, I was often called upon to brief or represent lodger unit's perspectives. Whilst some visitors, such as Officers from Air Command that were responsible for RAF St Mawgan, would ask pointed questions and try to push the boundaries as to what exactly we were doing, others were more willing to just accept the very generic brief provided. Provides details on the experience of providing generic briefs to

the visiting Senior Officers

113. At the time I felt that Op Northmoor was a deeply unpopular investigation with those that observed it from a distance, and that they perceived that the RMP were actively trying to discredit UKSF. Although I had encountered, on rare occasions, discreet low-level hostility before as an RMP officer, which I imagine most police officers encounter, this was on a very different level. For instance, I attended a TELIC 10 reunion dinner a few months after taking over command, and the Head of Army Media Cell made a point of approaching me to make pointed comments about the investigation. Before I could respond, a fellow RMP Officer who

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was of more senior rank and who had recently retired from military service, very quickly stepped in which resulted in the Media Officer walking away and ignoring us both for the remainder of the evening. I recall that this made others feel uncomfortable. However, there were senior officers that also attended the dinner with whom I had served at various times in my career who made a point of pulling me to one side to speak to me. It was made very clear to me that they fully supported the investigation and wanted me to find the truth. It became much easier to ignore any hostility that arose, knowing that there was support from others who were operating in the highest echelons.

114. General Patrick Sanders was also at the reunion dinner and he was supportive of me. The fact that General Sanders felt the need to take me to one side and reassure me that I should keep going gave me the impression that the general attitude toward Op Northmoor was unpopular in some circles. It made me wonder what effect this was having on my investigators but as previously stated, there was also respect for the investigation and what it was trying to achieve. I felt that the Op Northmoor team likely felt they could not talk to anyone outside of Op Northmoor but I do not think it impacted the progress of the investigation.

L. OVERALL IMPRESSION

115. In order to state whether Op Northmoor was a success or not, a metric with which to measure it against would need to be given. My overall view of Op Northmoor is that it was completely unique and there is nothing I have experienced that I am able to compare it against.

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116. The complexities surrounding it, such as: not being able to deploy to speak directly with Afghan witnesses to pursue enquiries and not being able to share information on other nations' operations or their detention of detainees other than to state that British Forces were not involved which then fed theories of cover-ups added to frustrations.
117. I am not able to comment on the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the investigations themselves as, whilst I had some knowledge of them, I did not have the in-depth knowledge required to make such an assessment as I came into the investigation after it had already been established for over 18 months and then I left prior to the conclusion.
118. I was also not involved in some of the key decisions made regarding the conduct of the investigation. The "lifed" term to conduct the investigation was also a considerable constraint as it placed significant pressure upon investigators. I believe that the investigation was constrained in terms of timeframe, therefore wider context and understanding were limited, however that constraint was required in order to establish boundaries so that a practical and effective investigation could be conducted.
119. In my view, a lot can be learned from Op Northmoor and errors were made that should be learned from such as the ensuring that the correct tools are available and if not, then the investigation needs to reflect what is in the art of the possible. Sometimes, I wondered whether the RMP were a means to an end in that people would try to make allegations to the RMP for their other agendas. It is unclear to me what the alternative would have been to Op Northmoor. I do not think there could have been an alternative. We were subject to reviews, including by

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GMP MERT, and we were always asking our Home Office police colleagues for advice. It is unclear what more could have been done within the RMP capabilities such as they were at that time.

120. In my view, everything was in place, that is to say that we always had people ready to deploy to gather the evidence as required. I feel that effectiveness was hindered by factors beyond RMP control, probably factors outside of UK control, for instance, the Afghan witnesses were hard to get in touch with. There was the added issue that some of the detainees were not detained by British Forces but we could not just say who they were detained by because there are treaties in place to stop this kind of information sharing.

121. Essentially, Op Northmoor was an international investigation and I do not know if a Home Office police force would have been better or not. Considering the volume of material that each team had to deal with, I do feel that the investigation progressed expeditiously in the circumstances. I believe that some of the lessons that had been learnt from the IHAT were implemented, such as the investigation being conducted at a higher classification level, the provision of enough resource and SQEP to deal with the allegations appropriately. For instance, operating at a Company size rather than platoon size and having a dedicated team within PM(A)HQ to provide the strategic advice and engagement. The RMP also had experience of dealing with UKSF, the environment in which the alleged criminal activity took place and an understanding of the military laws, rules of engagement employed within the operational theatre, processes and systems. However, the lack of the FDHC and the hurdles involved with obtaining evidence from various sources coupled with the remoteness of St Mawgan also had a significant impact on the outcome

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of the investigation. That being said, I do not know what viable alternative there could have been. Serious allegations had been made and finding a way to address them that would satisfy all involved was, in my opinion, always going to be very difficult to achieve.

122. I want to highlight that the RMP is a military organisation and not a Home Office police force. As such the RMP operates in a very different way. In some ways this was good because we understood the language, what people were doing and what happens on the battlefield. Whereas civilian police would not have known. Op Northmoor was a one off, we knew something had to be done and we tried to do it in a way that satisfied all involved. I am unsure if it is being suggested that “success” would mean that the investigation would have ended in prosecutions but, ultimately, if there is no material to form the basis of an arrest, then the RMP cannot arrest. Op Northmoor was an impartial police investigation that was a response to serious allegations that had been made against members of the UK Armed Forces whilst deployed in Afghanistan. The desired end result was to either prove or refute the allegations made based on the evidence.

Statement of truth

I believe the contents of this statement to be true.

Signed: T Stitson

Dated: 30 June 2025

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