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## Transcript of the Inquest

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2022

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Name of witness	Sworn, Affirmed, Promised or Read	Page
Mr Robert NODDLE	Affirmed	4
Mr John Thomas HIPSON	Affirmed	43
Mr Barry RUSHTON	Read	82
Mr James COOPER	Read	89

**CORONER:** Good morning, everyone. We have moved to Court 2 because I'm afraid we have some issues with the recording equipment in Court 3, which- we are hoping the company who supplies the service will be involved later today, but then we can't do it immediately.

It also has meant that the videolink will not function properly in order to record. That being so, I have taken the decision that although we were due this morning at 10 o'clock to hear from Mr Alexander FINDLAY ... Thank you very much. We were due to hear from Alexander FINDLAY, I have taken the decision that I will postpone that. What I don't want to do is to call a witness on the videolink and only then later to discover that it hasn't recorded properly. So I'm sorry to Mr FINDLAY, because I know it has caused him considerable inconvenience, but I'm afraid there's nothing I can do about it.

But it is important though today please, because I think there is maybe a slight problem in here too, it's important that when people are speaking that they speak up and speak clearly so that we can achieve the best recording that we can. Thank you very much.

Mr SANDERS, this morning I think, bearing in mind what I've just said about Mr FINDLAY, we are then dealing, are we not, with two live witnesses, and then I think is it two statements to be read as well?

MR SANDERS QC: Yes, that's correct, sir. So it is Mr NODDLE and then Mr HIPSON live, and then the read statements.

CORONER: Right. Thank you very much. So we'll start this morning ... I think we are starting with Robert NODDLE. Is that right?

MR SANDERS QC: That's correct, yes.

CORONER: Thank you. Mr NODDLE, can you ...?

**MR ROBERT NODDLE (affirmed)**

CORONER: Thank you very much, Mr NODDLE. Do sit down, please.

MR NODDLE: (inaudible).

CORONER: If you could bring that chair as far forward as you can.

MR NODDLE: Is that okay?

CORONER: That's lovely. So can I ask you- first of all, can you give me your full name, please?

**MR NODDLE:** It is Robert NODDLE.

**CORONER:** **Thank you very much. Mr NODDLE, I am going to pass you over to Mr SANDERS in a moment. He will be asking questions of you on my behalf. Just listen to the questions if you would. Just restrict your answers to answering those questions. If we need to ask anything else we will. One of us will.**

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, no problem.

**CORONER:** **And your voice is nice and loud, so just keep going as you are.**

**MR NODDLE:** Righty-o.

**CORONER:** **Thank you.**

**MR SANDERS QC:** Good morning, Mr NODDLE.

**MR NODDLE:** Morning.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Could you please start by- you don't need to give us your full address, but if you could confirm where you are living now?

**MR NODDLE:** 11 Broad Street ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** There's no need to give your postal address. Just the town.

**MR NODDLE:** Pontypridd.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Pontypridd.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. And are you retired now or are you working?

**MR NODDLE:** Retired.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. I just need to start by taking you to the police statements that you made at the time of the Guildford pub bombing.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And they are going to appear on the screen to your left. So the first is at 20-59. And do you see there there's a handwritten statement, statement of Robert NODDLE?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** 18 years old, occupation Recruit Trooper.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And it gives your address as Caterham Company, Household Cavalry at Pirbright.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, that's correct.

**MR SANDERS QC:** 6<sup>th</sup> October 1974. And is that your signature underneath it?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, that's my signature.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. And then there was another statement that you made, which is at 20-63, and that's 14<sup>th</sup> October. See that. And there again your signature at the top?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, that's my signature.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And then at the bottom as well, I think? If we just go down. There.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. And I think you've had an opportunity to reread some typed up versions of these statements ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, I did.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... to refresh your memory? And can you confirm that the contents of those statements are true?

**MR NODDLE:** As far as I can remember they are, but, you know, it is 48 years ago. Things, things have been locked away and I'd rather not ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** You try not to think about it too much?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No, that's understandable. No problem, Mr NODDLE. But just at the time you made the statements you would have been doing your best to give the police your full and honest recollection. Is that correct?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes, thank you. At the time of the bombing, so 5<sup>th</sup> October 74, you were 18 years old. Is that correct?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, that's right.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And can I just start just to take you back to 1974. I'm going to show you a picture of yourself. So this is at 4-277. On the right that's you there. Is that correct?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, I think so. Yes, it is. Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. And you were a Recruit Trooper?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** What was your unit, your regiment?

**MR NODDLE:** I was signed on to join the Blues and Royals, but then, because we were in training, we were all Caterham Company.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And Caterham Company, was that a training company ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... that included people from different units?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Very well. So Blues and Royals, where are they based?

**MR NODDLE:** At the time they were based in Windsor.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you did your basic training at Pirbright ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... and then went on from there to Windsor to join your unit?

**MR NODDLE:** Well, Catterick for trade training as a Scorpion Driver, and then from Catterick to Windsor to join A Squadron First (inaudible).

**MR SANDERS QC:** Of Blues and Royals?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And what's a Scorpion?

**MR NODDLE:** It's a light combat reconnaissance vehicle. They are a tracked reconnaissance vehicle. It's not a tank as such, but it is tracked.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Very good. Thank you. So you remained in the Army after the bombing?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** How long did you serve with the Armed Forces?

**MR NODDLE:** About five and a half years.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And then you left and went on to other things?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. Had you done anything before you enlisted?

**MR NODDLE:** I worked in factories. I had a little stint in the mines, and I worked (inaudible) and I joined the Army.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. And you say in your statement, or one of your statements, that you enlisted on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 74.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, that would be about right.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And were you stationed at Pirbright from then on, from the August?

**MR NODDLE:** We did an induction in Sutton Coldfield. I think it was Alexander Barracks. I'm not certain of that. And then I think there was a bit of time off and then we were to report to Pirbright.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So do you have any idea roughly how long you'd been at Pirbright by the time of the bombing?

**MR NODDLE:** I think we were in about our fourth week of training.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And what was overall, the basic training the programme? How long would you have been at Pirbright for?

**MR NODDLE:** I think, till I passed out, I think it was 12 weeks.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So 12 weeks Pirbright and then on to Catterick?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And so you were about a third of the way ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... through? Thank you. And you were stationed at Pirbright. You were living in a barracks there?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And that was a dormitory type ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... facility?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes. (inaudible).

**MR SANDERS QC:** Did it have a hole in the wall?

**MR NODDLE:** Sorry?

**MR SANDERS QC:** Did it have a hole in the wall?

**MR NODDLE:** (inaudible) the hut we were in didn't have any holes in the wall.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Well, that's positive. We've heard yesterday they were quite basic accommodation.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes. It wasn't exactly the Ritz.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. And Pirbright was about six or seven miles from Guildford.

You remember that?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** I'd just like to ask you about your training. Now, obviously you stayed in the Army for five years or so.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** But I want to focus on where you'd got to at the point of the bombing. So that first period of your training. So you had the induction at Sutton Coldfield.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** What was that? What did that comprise?

**MR NODDLE:** That was just, they check your exam papers and they give you an idea of which regiment or corps that would welcome you, and because I liked the colour of the badge, because it was black, I said, "Blues and Royals, please." And they said, "Yes, no problem."

**MR SANDERS QC:** And had you already proved your basic fitness by then, done your PULHHEEMS test and so on to ...?

**MR NODDLE:** I don't think they were invented then.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Really. And so that induction was an administrative ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... induction. You weren't being taught anything about ...

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... being a soldier or ...?

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So then when you went on to Pirbright, what were the topics you covered in that training? What did you do?

**MR NODDLE:** Well, after the second week, which was like, you know, everybody is friendly towards you, you know, in your first week of training, which was an eye opener to say the least. So we were basically trained in drill, weapons training. Even though I was cavalry, I still had to do infantry drills. I still had to do guard foot drill, and that was it. Regimental history and who is what and where's where.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you did drills as in marching?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And assault courses, things like that?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, yes. It was military training.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Were there any classroom sessions?

**MR NODDLE:** Not that I can remember as classroom sessions. We did go into the cinema for some sort of lecture, but I just can't remember what the lecture was about.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Never mind. That's understandable. Do you remember being given any training about security matters, or in particular the threat from the IRA?

**MR NODDLE:** Not that I can remember, no.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And when you say you can't remember, do you think you might have been and you've forgotten, or do you think that there wasn't anything like that?

**MR NODDLE:** Like I say, I just cannot remember that, not in the Guards' Depot.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Sorry, I think a bit of feedback there. When you say not at the Guards' Depot, do you remember training along those lines later on in your service?

**MR NODDLE:** Well, once you got to the Regiment then as soon as you walked through the gate at Combermere Barracks there was a notice board there with warning colours. BIKINI Black was more or less everything is all right. BIKINI Amber was be aware. And BIKINI Red was something is going to happen they think.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And do you remember that between BIKINI Black and BIKINI Amber there was BIKINI Black Special?

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No. And so where were you when you saw that sign?

**MR NODDLE:** That was Combermere Barracks in Windsor.

**MR SANDERS QC:** That was once you'd been to Catterick and you'd got to the ...

**MR NODDLE:** To the Regiment, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... Regiment? And do you remember having later on training about checking under cars or checking letters bomb?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, that was done on your first (inaudible). We had this like mirror on wheels and we were shown how to use that and where to look for unusual objects.

**MR SANDERS QC:** But that was once you'd got to Windsor?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, that's once I'd got to the Regiment.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And you don't remember anything along those lines in the Pirbright base?

**MR NODDLE:** No, I think the trained staff did all of that.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. Obviously, you wouldn't expect to remember all the details of your time at Pirbright after 48 years. That seems quite understandable. Do you remember as a recruit being given any advice or guidance about being vigilant when you went out of the camp or anything like that?

**MR NODDLE:** Not that I can remember. I do know that we were not allowed out of the camp in uniform.

**MR SANDERS QC:** I think it might be some feedback between my microphone and yours. Do you remember what the rationale for that rule about wearing uniform was?

**MR NODDLE:** Well, if you were seen out in uniform you were targeted.

**MR SANDERS QC:** As in a target for the IRA?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** That is what you understood it was about?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Was there a sense in which you, if you were out with your mates from Pirbright, that you would be recognisably soldiers in any event?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, because of our haircuts.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes, particularly in the early 70s.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. But apart from the uniform rule, you don't remember anything about, any guidance or advice about keeping an eye out for things when you were out or anything like that?

**MR NODDLE:** No, no.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Given that you were blown up by the IRA quite early on, do you think that if you had have been given guidance that you would have connected that with the incident or thought, "Well, that is expected," or ...?

**MR NODDLE:** I've got no idea. You know I couldn't say. It's just is it official or isn't it official? You know it's a ... I wouldn't have a clue.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No, sure. Was the camp at Pirbright, do you remember how secure it was? Was it fenced? Did you have to sign in and out?

**MR NODDLE:** No. We had to sign in and out the Guardroom, but there was a road that ran through the actual camp, and that road went to other barracks, and I'm pretty certain it was a public road. It wasn't a military road.

**MR SANDERS QC:** One of our witnesses yesterday, Stephen COOPER, described it as quite "open plan", quite an open camp?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, very, very open. Very, very big as well.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Very big. And were you aware when you were there that the IRA had attacked the camp at Pirbright the year before?

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** That wasn't mentioned?

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And when you were off duty and allowed off the camp, were there any rules or restrictions about what you could or couldn't do, or where you could or couldn't go?

**MR NODDLE:** Not that I remember, but we were only allowed off camp on Saturday afternoon, and we had to be back in camp by 2200, I think. I'm not certain on the time, but we had to be back in camp by a certain time on the Saturday.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And if you weren't back, would you then be put on a charge or ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... something like that? Right. And was it only Saturdays that you were allowed off the camp?

**MR NODDLE:** As I remember, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** You don't remember going out to pubs during the week or anything like that?

**MR NODDLE:** No, no. Well, I did once and that's because my parents and sister were stopping in the Brookwood (?) Arms, and they got in touch with a Lieutenant LANE, who was the Household Cavalry Liaison Officer, and he said, "Right, you've got three hours. Go and say hello to your mother and father. Be back by 9 o'clock."

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you had a special permission for that?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, and that was the only time.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And was there an early phase of the basic training at Pirbright where you weren't allowed out at all? Say three weeks where ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And what do you remember about that?

**MR NODDLE:** Not a lot really. It's just you were training. You were bulling your boots and cleaning kit.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So they were just getting you indoctrinated into the military life?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No free time?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. "You are in the Army now".

**MR NODDLE:** Mmm hmm.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. Do you remember anything about Part I or Part II Orders or having to look at notice boards?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes. You had to read Part I Orders and they were posted up on Caterham Company Office, which was just behind the barracks, and Part I Orders were always on top, and then underneath was Part II Orders, which were like Company Orders. Part I Orders was the main thing, and Part II Orders were the Company Orders from Caterham Company Commander.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. And were there any security standing orders or instructions on the notice boards?

**MR NODDLE:** I can't remember to be honest.

**MR SANDERS QC:** I just want to focus in now on the day of the bombing. So this is the 5<sup>th</sup> October, which is a Saturday.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Do you have any memory, any recollection of what you were doing that day before the evening?

**MR NODDLE:** Well, Saturday morning you'd drill on the square. Then, if it was up to standard, the RSM (inaudible), Sergeant Major (inaudible) would send you off the square, and then once your kit was squared away, up until like I think (inaudible) 10 o'clock, the time is yours. You more or less do what you want.

**MR SANDERS QC:** As long as the drill was up to standard?

**MR NODDLE:** As long as your drill was up to standard and your locker was tidy, your bed (inaudible) was tidy.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And if it wasn't you'd be kept on the camp?

**MR NODDLE:** You'd be politely asked to do it again.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. So you have an incentive to do it properly?

**MR NODDLE:** Oh, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. So this wasn't the first Saturday that you'd had free because you'd been at Pirbright for a month or so?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes. No, I think it was the first Saturday that we were allowed out, I think. Not certain. No, it wasn't, it wasn't, because I remember going, me and this Scouse lad, I can't remember his name, we went to watch Spurs versus Everton at the old White Hart Lane on a particular Saturday. So it might have been the second time we were allowed out.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Well, I'm sure, if necessary, we can check when Spurs played Everton at White Hart Lane. But was this your first trip into Guildford Town Centre?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. And can I just go back? The Blues and Royals was part of the Royal Household Cavalry, is that correct?

**MR NODDLE:** No, they were a separate Regiment.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So what was the connection with the cavalry you have mentioned?

**MR NODDLE:** There was two parts to the Regiment. There was the ceremonial part, which is the one you see on the horses who guard the Queen, and then there's the other part, which were the frontline troops.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And so was the ceremonial part connected to the Royal Household Cavalry in some way?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes. They were all, it was all one Regiment, but it was Blues and Royals Mounted Squadron ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right.

**MR NODDLE:** ... whereas we were the Blues and Royals Regiment.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. And when you were on the basic training course you mention that there were Scots Guards. I think we've also seen Irish Guards and Welsh Guards doing the same course.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Were you all mixed in together or ...?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you were just intermingled?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, because it was basic training.

**MR SANDERS QC:** There was no need to ...

**MR NODDLE:** The (inaudible) have to do the basic training. They went on to do their own sort of training, which would be infantry, (inaudible) and their ceremonial training.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. And, in your later career, did you serve in Northern Ireland at all?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And so you would have then had more involvement in awareness about the IRA and so on?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. So just going back to the Saturday in question. You say in the your statement that you left Pirbright with three others, and I'm just going to, if I can, just show you photos of them to try and take you back to that time and refresh your memory a bit. So we will start with Barry RUSHTON. He's at 4-293. On the left there, holding up a piece of paper saying Barry RUSHTON.

**MR NODDLE:** I'm not sure.

**MR SANDERS QC:** He doesn't ring ...?

**MR NODDLE:** He doesn't ring a bell.

**MR SANDERS QC:** The face doesn't ring a bell?

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Obviously, it was a very long time ago and some of the people who were going onto other regiments you wouldn't have spent much time with at all?

**MR NODDLE:** No, no.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And then the next is Alex FINDLAY, and we've got two photos of him. One at 4-215. There he's quite badly burnt there in hospital, and there's another one at 4-217.

**MR NODDLE:** No, just ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** On the left. That doesn't ring a bell?

**MR NODDLE:** Vaguely. But, you know, if he was to walk past us I wouldn't, I wouldn't recognise him straightaway.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No. Well, I'm sure you both look very different now in any event.

**MR NODDLE:** A lot older.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. And then Brian SCANLAN is at 4-305. There on the left.

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No. So the four of you leave Pirbright and then you meet a group of the Scots Guards at the bus stop.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And I'm going to show you photos of them. So two of them were obviously the Scots Guards who were killed in the pub. And the first of those is John HUNTER, who I think you refer to as Jock in your statement?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And he's at A78 in the other album. I've double checked the numbers, but if you have a look, Mrs NIN, before you put it up. There, that's John, or Jock as you knew him. Does he look familiar?

**MR NODDLE:** No. I say it's been that long ago and, you know, I've lost a lot of things in my head.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. No, absolutely and I don't want to unnecessarily get you to revisit anything traumatic. It's just to try and get a sense of the people there and ...

**MR NODDLE:** No, I just can't, just can't remember.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No, okay. Well, can we just do the other three Scots Guards that you- very quickly, that you met up with? So the next one is Willie FORSYTH, who was the other Scots Guard who was killed in the pub, and he's at A74. There with fair hair.

**MR NODDLE:** I'm not sure. I'm not sure.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No, no. That's absolutely fine. And it's helpful to get an idea of what you do and don't remember and the strength of your memory. So there's just two more, Mr NODDLE. The first is Jimmy COOPER, who is at 4-567. That's him in a hospital bed there.

**MR NODDLE:** I think I might- I think I might remember. I'm not sure if I went to visit him.

**MR SANDERS QC:** In the hospital?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. All right. And then one more which is Steve COOPER, who is at 4-199. On the right there.

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No.

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So there's a big group of you at the bus stop, eight of you. Do you remember that, being in a ...

**MR NODDLE:** No, no.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... big group? No. But they were all fellow recruits in the same ...?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes. We were all in the same platoon.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. You say that you were at the bus stop when you decided to go to the Seven Stars and the Horse and Groom in Guildford.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** How did you come to that decision or how did you know which pubs to go to?

**MR NODDLE:** Well, we were told.

**MR SANDERS QC:** By?

**MR NODDLE:** Other recruits that had been there longer than us.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Just the word on the grapevine?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And you took a bus to Brookwood train station, and then a train via Woking to Guildford?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Do you remember being on the train at all?

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No. You arrive in Guildford about 7.15 you said in your statement at the time. So ...

**MR NODDLE:** Possibly.

**MR SANDERS QC:** It doesn't matter. I'm not expecting you to know every detail. It's just to go through the narrative ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... including as you set it out to the police. So this is your first time in Guildford, so it's obviously your first time at either of these pubs?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And you have a quick drink in the Seven Stars and then you go on to the Horse and Groom?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Do you remember being in the Seven Stars? Do you remember going to two pubs?

**MR NODDLE:** I remember there was somebody saying that the beer was cheaper in the Horse and Groom, and that's why we went there.

**MR SANDERS QC:** That was enough of an incentive to ...?

**MR NODDLE:** Well, we were, I mean we had £7 a week, and out of that you had to get training kit ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes.

**MR NODDLE:** ... and sundry stuff.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. So you made the sensible decision to go where the beer was cheaper?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And that wasn't very far away. I think we've heard evidence it is 250, 350 yards away.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you go up to the Horse and Groom, and I think at this stage you are with John HUNTER and Willie FORSYTH, Jimmy COOPER and Steve COOPER.

**MR NODDLE:** I believe so, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** I just want to ask you about the pub. Obviously, you only went there once. Did you ever go back?

**MR NODDLE:** What, to the pub itself?

**MR SANDERS QC:** Well, either to the outside, back into Guildford and saw the pub, or did you ever go back to the pub itself?

**MR NODDLE:** I did go back to Guildford a couple of years ago, but the pub is no longer there.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No. So you never ...

**MR NODDLE:** But I never, I mean after the bomb blast I never went in there again.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No. If you don't mind, I'm just going to show you a couple of photos of the outside and the inside of the pub. These are obviously taken after the explosion, so they're not exactly as you would have seen it when you first got there. But the first photo is at 4-555.

**MR NODDLE:** I've seen these photos online.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. So you will see on the right-hand side of the photo there's the Horse and Groom sign hanging down.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And there's a bus stop. And then underneath the balcony on the left is the main area of the pub and that's where ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... the entrance was. And there's one just showing that area slightly zoomed in, and that's at 7-1352. There. And you will see that it's a Courage pub and there's the entrance there under a ... I think that's, is that a Courage sign?

**MR NODDLE:** It's a Courage sign, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. And so that was the front. So that's taken after the bomb has gone off. And then just in terms of the interior. If I could just start with the layout of the pub and just see how much of this you remember. There's a plan that's coming up at 1-3. Yes, go down. Yes. So we don't need the story. So at the bottom of the screen that's North Street, the pavement where those ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... photos were taken from. You go in through the door there. Can I just pause and ask you does this rough layout, does this accord with your recollection?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, I can remember the shape of the bar was like that, a semi-horseshoe shape. I remember that.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes.

**MR NODDLE:** But as far as the floor plan goes, I've got no idea.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No. I'll just very quickly just take you through it and what we can see on the plan. So just on the right-hand side of the door there's a fruit

machine, and then if you turn right and walk past the fruit machine there was an area that was a sort of snug on the way to the gents' toilets. And then on the left, coming through the front door, turn left, there's a smaller alcove with an L shaped bench going around the corner. And then going into the bar there's a larger alcove with a juke box in the top right of it, and then a fireplace and then a C shaped bench seat going around it. And I think that's where you spent most of your time in and around that alcove and the bar?

**MR NODDLE:** Quite possibly, but that is ... I just can't remember.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No.

**MR NODDLE:** It is ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** So the top left there was the ladies. Next to the bar do you see there are two squares in the middle of the floor?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Something written there. That says, "Pillars." And I'm just going to show you some photos of the pillars and of the bar, just to see if this helps jog your memory. So the first one is at 7-1349. So this is taken a few paces inside in the front door, and you see the bar there, which is, you said, a sort of half horseshoe, but almost a kind of dog-leg ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... bend in it. And then you see the two wooden pillars there ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... next to the bar. And then looking at those pillars but from the other angle. If we could just look at 4-680. So you've got the bar there on the right, and then in between the two pillars is the juke box, and then to the left, far left of the picture, is the fireplace, and that was the main alcove where there was a bench seat running round it and where you were that evening.

**MR NODDLE:** No, I just can't remember.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No. And one more is a photo from inside the alcove, and this is at 7-1351. So there's the juke box in the foreground, and you can see behind the juke box the kind of stable like partition.

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No.

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** That's absolutely fine, Mr NODDLE. Do you remember that there was a bench seat running around the alcove?

**MR NODDLE:** Vaguely.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Vaguely. No problem if not, but do you remember if it was solid or if it was hollow and there was space underneath it?

**MR NODDLE:** I haven't got a clue. No, I think there was a space underneath it, because I do remember stretching my legs and there was some sort of (inaudible) a piece of wood that when I stretched my legs I kicked it and it moved.

**MR SANDERS QC:** But that was under the bench?

**MR NODDLE:** Under the seat, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you were on a stool or a chair facing the bench?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And put your legs out and kicked something?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. I think you describe in your statement that that's a sort of panel or ...?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, yes, that's it. It was some sort of, it had holes in, I remember that. So it might have been some sort of heating panel or something like that, like they've had hot water pipes running under it. You know I'm just surmising now.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes, that's fine. So just going back to your account of the night in your statement, and I'm sure you don't have these, you won't have these timings at your fingertips now. But you get to the Horse and Groom about 7.45. And so you are in there for about an hour before the bomb goes off.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes. Must have been, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Does that sound about right to you?

**MR NODDLE:** It could well be. It might have been longer, I don't know.

**MR SANDERS QC:** But it wasn't just a few minutes after you'd got there?

**MR NODDLE:** No, no. It was a couple of pints after.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes, a couple of cheap pints later. And you go in. I think you are with John HUNTER, Willie FORSYTH, Jimmy COOPER and Steve COOPER. And you say in your statement it was pretty busy. Do you remember it being quite busy?

**MR NODDLE:** I remember there was a birthday party. I think it was a young lass' 18<sup>th</sup> birthday party, but somehow we got involved in that.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. She was a girl from the WRAC, Women's Royal Army Corps.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** One of the recruits there. It was her- as you say, it was her 18<sup>th</sup> and she's there with her parents and a friend, and then lots of her friends from the WRAC.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, I believe so. Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. So it is quite busy. Did you get a sense of whether it was mostly soldiers and WRACs or ...?

**MR NODDLE:** I think there was- it was mostly military, but there was civilians there.

**MR SANDERS QC:** But mostly military?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Did you understand that the Seven Stars and the Horse and Groom were  
‘Army pubs’? That they were the pubs that ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, yes. I knew that, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... the squaddies went to? You produce some plans, or you produce,  
you marked up some plans when you gave your police statement, and  
I’m just going to ask you to have a look at those. The first is at D206.

**MRS NIN:** That’s the document.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Oh, sorry. 3-123. Apologies, Mrs NIN.

**CORONER:** **Sorry, what was the number again?**

**MR SANDERS QC:** It is 3-123.

**CORONER:** **Yes, thank you.**

**MR SANDERS QC:** So we’ve got here a plan that you produced that shows where people  
were around 7.45, so when you got to the pub. And you will see that’s  
the alcove. And can I just go round it with you? So the fireplace is at  
kind of 12 o’clock, and if we got anticlockwise left you will see there’s  
the girl who is having the birthday ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... and then her parents, older woman and older man.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And then coming down vertically. What does that say? Civilian ...

**MR NODDLE:** “Civilian man not described.”

**MR SANDERS QC:** Not described, and then civilian man, another civilian man, and then there's a row of kind of five girls ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... who were from the WRAC. And then next to them there's some guardsmen not known, and then you. Your group are standing between the alcove and the bar with your drinks.

**MR NODDLE:** I don't remember it.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No. And then after that you go to sit ... You see where the five WRAC girls are?

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** You go and sit in that area opposite the fireplace. Do you remember that?

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No. And then some of the other people that you left with come in and join you. And you meet up with someone who is referred to as, "A Welsh chap, Jeff," who is Jeff NICHOLSON. Do you remember ...?

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No. And then if I just show you, you did another plan for later on in the evening. This is at 20.30. And this is at 3-165. So this is about 15, 20 minutes before the bomb goes off. And if we just do the same exercise, we start, her girl is having the party, the older woman and the

older man are still there. And then can you see who's next to the older man? What does that say?

**MR NODDLE:** FORSYTH, I think it says.

**MR SANDERS QC:** FORSYTH?

**MR NODDLE:** Yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Oh, so there's a girl between, older man, then girl ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... with blonde hair, then FORSYTH, then another girl, not described.

And then coming round the horizontal bottom side of the alcove, three girls believed to be WRACs. Then, can we just go move the image up? Go down a bit. There, we've got Alex FINDLAY, Steven COOPER, Jimmy COOPER, three more WRACs, and then at the tables there's Barry RUSHTON sitting at one table, and you're on the right.

**MR NODDLE:** Yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you're at the edge of the alcove towards the bar.

**MR NODDLE:** (Inaudible 48:00), I cannot remember this.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No, but if this is what you were doing your best to help the police at the time, that's what you told them, then presumably we can take it that that was what you remembered then.

**MR NODDLE:** Must have been, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. And at the time of the bomb explosion, you say you were talking to a girl about football and talking about Liverpool Football Club.

**MR NODDLE:** Quite possibly.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Which team did you support?

**MR NODDLE:** At the time, Everton.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Ah, so you were speaking favourably about Liverpool no doubt.

**MR NODDLE:** More than likely, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you're talking about Liverpool, and then the bomb goes off, and you've got two descriptions of the bomb, which I'll take you to, but what do you remember now about what happened?

**MR NODDLE:** I think there's one, I don't even know if it's real or if I've just made it up, that I was above everything, watching it all happen, and the jukebox, which must've been (inaudible), yeah, because the jukebox is in there, I remember the jukebox flying across the room. And the other one I've got is that I stood up and I could feel a burn on the side of your face, or gas. And because I couldn't smell the gas, I probably (inaudible) for the rest of the lights and fell and hit us. And that's it.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you felt it was possibly an electric burn.

**MR NODDLE:** Well, that's what I thought at ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes.

**MR NODDLE:** ... the time, the last thing that went into my mind was the bomb.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Sorry about that. The last thing that went through your mind was the bomb.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. Can I just ask you to look at the descriptions you gave the police just to see if this helps? Apologies, I think I've given the document reference number, so I'll just ...

**MS KUZMENKO:** I'll give you the reference number ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah. So it's S283.

**MS KUZMENKO:** (Inaudible).

**MR SANDERS QC:** Ah great, yes. So if we just go ...

**MS KUZMENKO:** (Inaudible) S233.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Sorry, S233. I think it might be that it's Page 283, it should be '2-283' actually. I think I've written 'S' instead of '2'. Can we go to 2-283? Sorry, 2, the Caselines- yeah, that's it. So just go down a bit so we've got the paragraph that says, "It wasn't too long after this that the bomb went off. I was sitting here with the lads, I was talking to a girl about football. I was facing towards the bar, and there was a terrific bang and a flash. I was knocked off of my seat as if someone had hit me in the back with a table or something and landed on the floor. I was aware of sparks on my legs, and dust and smoke. And I cannot say for sure where the blast came from, but it felt as if it was from behind me. As I started

getting up, I was trying to get my senses back. At this time, I wasn't aware that a bomb had gone off." Do you remember a bang and then a flash?

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Do you recall it? Do you remember if the lights went off before or after the bomb?

**MR NODDLE:** I remember it was dark, after everything had, sort of, like, calmed down, I remember it was dark.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Were you knocked out? Did you lose consciousness at all?

**MR NODDLE:** I've no idea.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No. So when you, sort of, became aware again, it was dark. And can I just ask you about one more description, see, because you gave two statements? The other one's at 2-287. A bit- down a bit. It's the same again. "So at the time that the explosion occurred, I was talking to the WRAC girls sitting on the bench seat directly opposite me, talking about Liverpool Football Club and football in general. My recollection of the actual explosion itself was firstly of a flash, which came from somewhere on my right. This was immediately followed by a loud bang." So in this statement you remember it the other way around, flash then bang. Are you able to help with that?

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No. “I then found myself lying on the floor, still in the alcove, picked myself up. I don’t remember seeing anybody else in the pub. I could see the light from the door, and I walked outside.”

**MR NODDLE:** No, I just ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** No.

**MR NODDLE:** ... I can’t remember that at all.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Were you aware of a hole appearing in the floor? Of the floor collapsing into the cellar?

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Possibly behind you. No. You say in your statement that you helped Barry RUSHTON and a girl ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... and then you tried to go back into the pub to look for Alex FINDLAY, and he was ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** (Inaudible).

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, I remember that. I think it was a policeman and fireman that stopped me from going back in. Apparently, he’d lost his kneecap. I’m not certain, but yeah. Yeah, I remember trying to go back in, but being stopped by a fireman and policeman.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Do you remember any gap in time between the explosion and the emergency services arriving, or do you just remember them being there straight away?

**MR NODDLE:** No, I just- they were there.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah. And then you say in your statement you go outside, and you go first to the bus stop, which I think we've looked at ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... and then you were taken to hospital by an ambulance.

**MR NODDLE:** Yes, yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And can you remember how badly injured you were? What you suffered?

**MR NODDLE:** I had a burn on the side of my face. Cuts to the back of my head. Knicks. A couple of little scars on my face. I had cuts on my back, and then the back of my legs.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So quite badly hurt ...

**MR NODDLE:** (Inaudible).

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... relative to some. Not ...

**MR NODDLE:** It was ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... the worst.

**MR NODDLE:** I got out better than most.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah. And you were taken to Cambridge Military Hospital, which isn't in Cambridge, I think Aldershot ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... and discharged later on. On the Sunday, you had some stitches and then discharged.

**MR NODDLE:** Yeah, I ended up in the medical centre in (inaudible).

**MR SANDERS QC:** In the infirmary.

**MR NODDLE:** In the medical camp, yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** How long were you in the medical centre for?

**MR NODDLE:** About two, maybe three years.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. And then what happened after that? Was it just back to square bashing and ...

**MR NODDLE:** Yes. I was actually more concerned about being back-squadded. That means: I had six weeks training, if I was back-squadded, I go back to a squad that's only done five weeks training. And I was more worried about that happening than anything else or- as soon as I could, I went straight back into training.

**MR SANDERS QC:** You didn't want to have to repeat any of it ...

**MR NODDLE:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... because not very pleasurable.

**MR NODDLE:** No, it's not a lot of fun.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Alright, well, Mr NODDLE, that's been very helpful, thank you very much. I don't have any more questions for you. If you just wait there, and then the coroner might have some questions, and the other applicants as well.

**MR NODDLE:** Yeah, no problem.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you.

**MR NODDLE:** Thank you.

**MS BARTON QC:** I have no questions, thank you, sir.

**MR PLEETH:** No thank you, sir.

**CORONER:** **Nor do I, thank you. Thank you very much, Mr NODDLE, that's been really very helpful. It's just helpful to have- I know that some of the memories are very vague for you now, obviously. On the other hand, it's helpful to me to have that sort of insight from someone ...**

**MR NODDLE:** Yeah.

**CORONER:** **... who was there, so I'm very grateful to you. Thank you very much.**

**MR NODDLE:** Well, thank you very much anyway.

**CORONER:** **You're free to stay or go, it's entirely up to you. Thank you.**

**MR SANDERS QC:** Sir, I'm in your hands. Whether you want to break or ...

**CORONER:** **No, I think ...**

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... carry on, is ...

**CORONER:** Let's press on. So we'll call to ...

**MR HIPSON (affirmed):**

**CORONER:** Thank you very much. Do sit down, please. Could you give me your full name, please?

**MR HIPSON:** John Thomas HIPSON.

**CORONER:** Thank you very much, Mr HIPSON. As before, you are nice and loud, before I say, just please keep as you are, and that will be really helpful to us.

**MR HIPSON:** Yes.

**CORONER:** I'll pass you over to Mr SANDERS, who's going to ask you some questions on my behalf.

**MR HIPSON:** Okay, sir, thank you.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. Good morning, Mr HIPSON.

**MR HIPSON:** Good morning.

**MR SANDERS QC:** You've obviously seen Mr NODDLE give his evidence. It's going to be a very similar ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... set of topics. So if I could just start, please, to look at the statements that you've made at the time, just to confirm that they're yours.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So the first one is going to be on the screen to your left. It's at 20-29.

And do you see there, "Mr John Thomas HIPSON, 23 years old, Guards Depot, Pirbright"? And then further down, I'll go to your signature.

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah, I ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Can we scroll down? Oh, sorry – 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1974, and is that your signature there?

**MR HIPSON:** That's correct, it is, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** We think that the date must be wrong, because the 5<sup>th</sup> of October was the evening of the bombing ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... and it's unlikely you would've made this within an hour of the bomb ...

**MR HIPSON:** Mmm hmm.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... so this is maybe in fact the next day. And you're interviewed by Hampshire Constabulary. Would you have any idea why that might have been that it was Hampshire who interviewed you?

**MR HIPSON:** To be honest, I couldn't really remember talking to them, if I'm honest.

**MR SANDERS QC:** That's fine, but that's your signature. And then there's another statement that you made that says, "16<sup>th</sup> of October '74" and that's at 20-31. Again, is that your signature there at the top?

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, it is, yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And if we just go down to the bottom, I think we'll see your signature again. Yeah, down to the very bottom.

**MR HIPSON:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** That's just below- there's a description of you, I think. Anyway, so that's your statement.

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, I remember that one.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Ah, good. And you've had an opportunity to reread, I think, typed up versions of ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, I have, yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... both statements to refresh your memory, thank you. And can you confirm, please, that the contents of the statement are true.

**MR HIPSON:** As far as I know, they are true. That's (inaudible) straight after the bombing.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And at the time, you were obviously trying to do your best to help the police ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... for recollection. You were a bit older than Mr NODDLE at the time, 5<sup>th</sup> of October '74, you were 23.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And I think we've got two photos of you. One is at 4-233. There, that's you on there ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah, I see.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... on the left. And there's another one, which I know you've seen,  
which is at A-90, which is you in a car ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... after the bomb, with blood. Just get that in the other sensitive photos,  
A-90.

**MRS NIN:** (Inaudible).

**MR SANDERS QC:** Oh, well don't worry, because I spoke to you outside and you'd seen  
that ...

**MR HIPSON:** I've got a copy here anyway, so it's ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Oh, very good.

**MR HIPSON:** ... not a problem.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. I'd just like to ask you a bit about your military career ...

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... so your time in the armed forces. You say in one of the statements  
that you'd in fact been in the army from October 1966 to November  
1967.

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, a boy soldier. I joined up the Scots Guards as a junior recruit in  
1966.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So how old would you have been then as a boy soldier?

**MR HIPSON:** 15.

**MR SANDERS QC:** 15.

**MR HIPSON:** Mmm hmm.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Because I don't think they have boy soldiers anymore, is that ...

**MR HIPSON:** They do.

**MR SANDERS QC:** They do still?

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, (inaudible) 16.

**MR SANDERS QC:** 16.

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah, 16 now, I think.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you went straight from school into the army for a year.

**MR HIPSON:** I held a job for about two or three months until I was cleared by the  
Recruit Office, (inaudible).

**MR SANDERS QC:** But you only stayed for just a year, I think you mentioned, for personal  
reasons you left.

**MR HIPSON:** Personal reasons – my father had an accident, and I was the eldest one  
in the family, so it was seeing me out a job and start helping.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. And then you re-joined 20<sup>th</sup> of May '74.

**MR HIPSON:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And then how long did you stay in the army for?

**MR HIPSON:** 23 years, and a month and two days.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you did more than the full 23 years.

**MR HIPSON:** More than the full, that was my boy service as well. I had to go into that as well.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. And then what did you do after leaving the army?

**MR HIPSON:** Trying to get work, but people just don't accept you because you were placed in the army. They think they're total lunatics, some of them, like, you know, it's a case of you've got to earn bread to put on the table. I just took a job as a security officer in ICI, which were the explosives factory. I was more at home there anyway, and also they (inaudible).

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. And are you retired now?

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, I have.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And no need to give your full address, but where are you living at the moment?

**MR HIPSON:** I've been in North Ayrshire.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Ayrshire. So long journey down for this.

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you very much for coming and for your attendance. What sort of training were you given when you were a boy soldier? What were you doing in that year?

**MR HIPSON:** The exact same as they're doing now in the Guards, this whole (inaudible) being the basis of obedience, (inaudible), and education was a big thing as well for a boy recruit. (Inaudible) plus a lot of tactics out

in the ground, (inaudible) signs (?) and things like that. So we did it all, weapons, and tactics.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah. At that point, 1966 to '67, the Northern Ireland Troubles hadn't started ...

**MR HIPSON:** Mmm hmm.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... and the British Army hadn't been deployed to Northern Ireland. So you wouldn't presumably have had any training about the IRA.

**MR HIPSON:** None at all. I mean, they never had, to be quite honest with you.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Presumably you'd heard about them by the time 1974.

**MR HIPSON:** Certainly, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. Did you, during – and you must have done – but during your service were you in Northern Ireland for any periods?

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And May '74 up until October '74, so you'd joined in May, you were a recruit guardsman in the Caterham company, Scots Guards.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Were you at Pirbright from May to October, or what were you doing?

**MR HIPSON:** Pirbright from May to October.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So that's five months.

**MR HIPSON:** Five months' training, yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And were you coming to the end of your time at Pirbright?

**MR HIPSON:** I'd one month to do. I should have passed out in mid-November. (Inaudible) did it 24<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, I passed out, and went to the (inaudible) just up the road.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. So you were coming to the end of your course, and what had you been doing during your basic training?

**MR HIPSON:** The exact same, weapons and tactics. More tactics this time, out in the ground, and a lot of weapon training, and a lot of range work to get you ready to go to the battalion, because with Northern Ireland coming up, a lot of exercises, Canada, Kenya, and places like that, the battalions would expect to be (inaudible). So they had to get you up to par to get to the battalion, otherwise you would suffer when you went into the battalion, obviously, you know?

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. So physical fitness is obviously an important ...

**MR HIPSON:** We've always had physical fitness, yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Do you remember much classroom training or any talks in the cinema or anything like that?

**MR HIPSON:** There was quite a few, yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And did any of those cover the threat from the IRA or security issues like that?

**MR HIPSON:** It covered in general all security issues, and there were a few lectures, not mainly pointed at the IRA, but to do with terrorism at the time. The

reason being was because the second battalion had just come back from Belfast, and the area around Pirbright, because we're looking at heightened alert, and as you (?) say, the year before that, the attempt is to do something at Pirbright Camp. (Inaudible) expecting something to happen, I think, in the camp area, so everybody was a little bit tense, as far as I knew at the time. (Inaudible) quite a few fast and furious at the time.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And so you were aware of the attack the year before.

**MR HIPSON:** I had heard about it. I didn't know about it in the paper or anything like that. I had actually heard about it through hearsay.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. So you were given briefings and education about security, can you remember what that covered or what you were taught?

**MR HIPSON:** There was loads of things, from searching, searching people coming through the camp area, and we had to do search, how to search. (Inaudible) searching cars, with a diagram shoved up on the board, what to look for, in cars, where to look, and how many hiding places they could have in cars behind various bits of items, or explosives in the cars. And bikini, bikini (inaudible), and things like that. What they were at the time, and how they initiated them.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And do you remember anything about checking of packages for incendiary devices sent in the post and things like that?

**MR HIPSON:** Well, we never actually checked any packages, some of the packages come through the post office. Any packages that we'd seen would've been dumped in the ground or something like that. And they have them on the camp, searching the area, they never really found anything, but I remember people saying if you see anything suspicious, don't touch it, report it straight to the guard room, and they'll take action on it.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah. And in terms of this aspect of your training, can you remember at what point in the training this came? Did you cover a certain amount of basic stuff and then get the security training, or was this at the very outset?

**MR HIPSON:** Being honest with you, I can't remember. I know we were given it, but when exactly I don't know. It could've been mid-way, it could've been when battalion came back from Belfast in March through Pirbright up to the camp. I just don't know. But I know it was implemented, I was there.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. And was the focus of this what would be happening at the camp and while you're on duty, or did it also cover what you might be looking at for when you were off duty and in civilian areas?

**MR HIPSON:** In camp and off-duty, both of them.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And so you were advised to stay vigilant and ...

**MR HIPSON:** Stay vigilant at all times.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. Did that guidance cover being careful or being aware about going out and getting drunk?

**MR HIPSON:** Oh yeah. There was a few cases of that, yeah. I think it stemmed from two or the three young brothers, or three guys that would show up in the Scottish Regiment, and (inaudible) at the time, and it came from there. Watch what you're doing when you go out, speaking to women, and getting drunk, going to parties and things like that. That was all taken on board by everybody. Whether we took into that or not, I don't know, because squaddy full (?) of squaddies, and you all go out, and with a pint in front of them, they'll go for it, you know what I mean? So we all went out and had a few drinks, and took my chances.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes, absolutely. So you were stationed at Pirbright, and you were living in a barracks at Pirbright.

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And what do you remember about when you were allowed off the camp when you had a night off or a day off?

**MR HIPSON:** I'd never been out on a Friday night, because there was always (inaudible), because it was Friday, it was normally either inspection day by the common man or whatever, and by the time Friday night came we were too tired, and just (inaudible), had a couple of beers and went to the bed. He kept talking as he came in, (inaudible), and it's Saturday

night. And the (inaudible) which we call the in (inaudible) parade, was on, on a Saturday morning. And once you passed through that, the rest of the day we do nothing.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And so you went off the camp then and went to various places.

**MR HIPSON:** Normally people would go out to have lunch, have lunch and then just disperse. You, like, go to your bed, have a couple of hours sleep, and then downtown, and stay out for a bit. Either in Woking, (inaudible) or Guildford, and Guildford being the favourite.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And the camp was about six or seven miles from Guildford.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you'll get buses and trains in.

**MR HIPSON:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So the night of the bombing, you'd already been into Guildford a few times to the pubs.

**MR HIPSON:** Mmm hmm.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And was it well known which were the army pubs, which were the pubs you would go to?

**MR HIPSON:** Every pub except one, and that was the Greyhound, was the one near the station, nobody went there, because it was a dour-faced bartender that ran it ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right.

**MR HIPSON:** ... and there was nobody in it. And the rest of the pubs, The Three Pigeons, and The Seven Stars, and the Horse and Groom, they were all, kind of, handy pubs.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. And do you remember, I mean, there were lots of pubs in Guildford, did you go into the Spread Eagle or the Surrey Arms or any of those?

**MR HIPSON:** No, they're too upmarket for me.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Too upmarket. So was a feature of the army pubs that they had reasonably priced beer?

**MR HIPSON:** That's how they attracted their customers.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Sure.

**MR HIPSON:** Put down the price of a pint by five pence, and they've got my attention.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Just let me find my place in my notes, sorry. Just before we get into Guildford, I just want to ask, you do you remember the camp itself, Pirbright, being quite large and quite open?

**MR HIPSON:** It's very large and a very open camp, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So not, sort of, perimeter fences ...

**MR HIPSON:** There's no perimeter fences, unless you got to near somewhere in the range area, and you might get a perimeter fence around an ETR range, which is a an Electronic (?) Target Range, or something like that. But that's about it.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And that would obviously be because the people are firing ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... rounds, yes. Were there any restrictions on where you could or couldn't go, or what you could or couldn't do when you were off duty on your Saturday nights, or was it just up to you to decide?

**MR HIPSON:** The world were your oyster. You could go where you want. If you had the money, you could take a train to London if you wanted, and come back, as long as you were back in time.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah. And were you subject to any rules or guidance about drinking, getting too drunk, anything like that?

**MR HIPSON:** Well, yes, uh-huh. Drink moderately, you were always taught to drink in moderation. It was a six pint (inaudible), you know what I mean, because you were (inaudible), you know? But we went out and did our best anyway, and some of us come back drunk, some of us come back practically sober, by bus, taxi, and train.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. And was there a curfew? A cut-off time you had to be back by?

**MR HIPSON:** Midnight ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Midnight.

**MR HIPSON:** ... for me, yeah, but I know Mr NODDLE has said 22 or 23 hundred hours ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah.

**MR HIPSON:** ... but it was midnight. (Inaudible) by 23.59 hours.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. And when you got back, was the NAAFI still open, or do you then ...

**MR HIPSON:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... just went to bed?

**MR HIPSON:** (Inaudible).

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. Do you remember rules about not wearing uniform when you were off camp?

**MR HIPSON:** Yes. You weren't allowed out of camp with a uniform.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And was that not just Pirbright, that was your whole army career, was that the case?

**MR HIPSON:** When I got to Germany, it relaxed slightly. You could wear combat trousers and denim if you also wore a civilian top, and if you were driving a car ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right.

**MR HIPSON:** ... and that's as far as it went.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And did you connect the rule about uniforms with the threat from the IRA or the ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** But was it also the case that you were obviously recognisably squaddies because you had short hair, and this was the early '70s?

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, a lot of us had short hair. And a lot of regiments, (inaudible) guards, (inaudible) guards didn't let the guys own jeans. They had to wear a collar and tie, and they had to wear their best trousers. So they kind of looked the part- quite a way soldiers- where those other folk were letting them out in other regiments like, (inaudible), you know, everybody kind of, it was like a big game, who can dress better than the Scottish Guards ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right.

**MR HIPSON:** ... who had the better Regiment, things like that. And that's, kind of, how it went round that area. And you had to go out reasonably tidy, you know what I mean, when you went out.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes.

**MR HIPSON:** But you were recognised, yeah, quite a bit, do you know?

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah. And also, you were from all round the country in Surrey. You didn't have Surrey accents, you had Scottish accents and ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, I had Scottish. Welsh, Irish, and ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** So going to the 5<sup>th</sup> of October, so the day of the bombings, do you remember what you were doing during the day or after the rat-race before you went out?

**MR HIPSON:** I didn't attend the rat-race. It was Friday night, I was on my guard with Robin MCPIKE, and both of us come off on the Saturday morning, and

we went to the cook house and got breakfast, and then we showered, and both of us obviously stayed in the same room, and both went to bed, and woke up at four o'clock in the afternoon. And our day kind of went from then.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right.

**MR HIPSON:** Went for another shower. I had made arrangements to go out and I think Mr MCPIKE and another guy called Mr SHOLES were going out with me. We were all in the same room, and we all got dressed, and I think about half past five we got a bus down to (inaudible) and went to a Chinese restaurant and bought a Chinese carry out and ate it on the platform, and got on a train and got myself into Guildford.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Very good, thank you. So you went with, I think it's Colin SHOLES

...

**MR HIPSON:** Colin SHOLES, yeah, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... and Robert MCPIKE.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Can we just have a quick look at their photos. 4-311 is Colin SHOLES.

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah, that's Colin on the right.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And then Robert MCPIKE is 4-269.

**MR HIPSON:** And that's Robert.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Did you serve with them going on after the bombing, or were they just people you knew at the time of your training?

**MR HIPSON:** I served with Robert all the way up until we come back to Chelsea, and I served with Colin up until 1976 when we come back from Londonderry for an R&R ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right.

**MR HIPSON:** ... then he was trying to (inaudible) in Germany and that was the last I seen him.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. So they were your pals at the time.

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah, we were mates, yeah, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So, you've decided to go into Guildford to go to the Horse and Groom. You get the bus and the train, the Chinese takeaway, and I think you say in your statement you arrive at the Horse and Groom at about 6.25.

**MR HIPSON:** That's correct, yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Oh, sorry, apologies, you arrive at Guildford, 6.25, and then walk into the Horse and Groom at 6.30.

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you're in there for about two hours, twenty minutes, before the bomb goes ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... off. And can I just show you again the same photos as I showed Mr  
NODDLE?

**MR HIPSON:** Mmm hmm.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So the exterior of the pub showing the bus stop, this is at 4-555. That's  
familiar, that's the Horse and Groom there.

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah, I was sitting just at the window under the balcony which has  
collapsed.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes, so where we see the railing ...

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... drooping down, that's where you were in that corner. And you  
obviously, went to the Horse and Groom a few times before the bomb,  
so you were more familiar with the pub.

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Did you ever go back, not to necessarily to the pub, but back into  
Guildford afterwards?

**MR HIPSON:** I did a drive-by in 1980. I was on a patrol course (?), did my response  
at the Guards Depot, and I mentioned it to one of my mates out there,  
and he said, "Right, we're going back there on Friday night," and I said,  
"No way, I don't want to go back." And he actually drove (sic) me  
back in there. He said, "You've got to face it, get in." And I had two

pints and couldn't take it anymore and (inaudible) to go back. But I touched it again, (inaudible), quite honestly.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And when you were in there, I think after it was repaired, it looked very similar to how it had been the night of the bombing, is that correct?

**MR HIPSON:** Well, again- no, it was all open plan at the time. I mean, the two pillars were still there. The bar in the same shape, and where the, kind of, cubicles were, you could still make out in your mind's eye where the partition was in between, do you know?

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes.

**MR HIPSON:** And for me it was still there. And it was still going, and when I looked about, I could virtually see everyone that night sitting in their places, and then straight after the bombing. And that's what threw me, because I seen people lying on the floor, and I thought, "Nah, forget it," and I drunk my pint and went out the building.

**MR SANDERS QC:** We've got an ITV documentary from 1989 ...

**MR HIPSON:** Mmm hmm.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... about the people who were in the pub. And that shows what you've described. The bar's the same ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... but the saloon is open plan and there's a pool table in there.

**MR HIPSON:** Oh yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And then just up front, if we can just look at photo 7-1352. We see that  
the courage sign ...

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... above the door, and it's that window on the far left in the corner,  
that's where you were sitting.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. And I just want to just take you to the floorplan, and this is  
at 1-3. And we just go down, because I knew you were here for Mr  
NODDLE's evidence, but the entrance on North Street, there's the door  
there, and on the right there's a smaller alcove, a snug area, with the  
gents at the end, and a fruit machine ...

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... just there. The left is the smaller alcove which you were in ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... primarily. And then up in the middle on the left is the larger alcove  
where the bomb was. And then the bar on the right, and the two pillars  
marked there. Can I just ask you, as someone who went to the pub a  
few times, do you remember if the squaddies tended to congregate in a  
particular area in the pub, or was it the whole of the pub?

**MR HIPSON:** That'll depend on.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right.

**MR HIPSON:** Normally, you probably find normally the first cubicle on the left-hand side was the kind of area they went, because as soon as they came in the door, they hoped to go right to the bar, got their self a pint, and it was normally people in that area they knew. Once they've settled down, they'd then move round to the jukebox area, and they'll settle themselves down there.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah. There's some evidence that we have and that we're going to hear as well that the snug area on the right of the door was more for regulars, and the other two alcoves were more where the military personnel went.

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah, well, it could've been. I mean, I've sat in the alcove on the right a few times, and I haven't actually seen any civilians in it, you know, so I cannot say who it's for.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Sure. Alright, and we've got the jukebox and the fireplace in the larger alcove. And I just want to, if I can, just look at those photos again, so the first one is at 7-1349. There, there's the bar on the right, and the two pillars on the left. And you can actually see on top of the bar in the foreground – it's piled up with all handbags that have been collected ...

**MR HIPSON:** Mmm hmm.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... from the floor after the bomb explosion's gone off. And at the very far right of the picture you can see the bar hatch where the staff would

go in behind the bar and come out to collect glasses and so on. That's familiar to you?

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, very familiar, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And then the next photo's 4-680. Taken from the other side, again the two pillars, they've got some horse irons on them. Between the pillars there's the jukebox with the partition behind it. And then on the left beyond the jukebox there's the fireplace there. And you can see just in front of the fireplace where the hole is ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... where the floor collapsed. And then one more, which is 7-1351, apologies. And that's taken from the other direction, so this is inside the alcove, if we just go down a bit, looking towards the bar, the jukebox on the left. And so between the person taking the photograph and the jukebox is the hole in the floor.

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah, mmm hmm.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Do you remember the bench seats in the two alcoves ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... that ran round the edges?

**MR HIPSON:** I do, yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Do you remember if they were solid or if they were hollow underneath?

**MR HIPSON:** Hollow all the way round.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you could put things under there.

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Just going back to your statement, that- this is picking up your account of the night in question. You obviously talk about meeting and chatting to various people and moving around, and we don't need to worry too much about every blow-by-blow detail. You've produced lots of plans with arrows about your going here and there, zigzagging around. But you start off in the first alcove and you're sitting for about half an hour with Alan MILLAR, who's a Scots Guard, and Jillian LE-GRYS, who's a WRAC.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And I'll just show you 4-273, it's Alan MILLAR.

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah, Alan MILLAR on the left.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah. And then 4125 is Jillian LE-GRYS on the right.

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah, that's her.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah. And I think, so Jillian LE-GRYS is a WRAC, and it's her who tells you about the birthday party ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... that it's Carol BURNS, who's ...

**MR HIPSON:** Mmm.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... another colleague of hers, is having an eighteenth party and is there with her mum and dad ...

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... and a friend, a civilian friend, who is the civilian who dies in the explosion. And how busy was the pub in that first phase? Do you know when you got there was it busy or ...

**MR HIPSON:** It was actually quite busy. It never actually died down all night. It seemed to get busy, and then it would, kind of, lull away, but people were sitting down. There was all the rush at the bar to try and get a drink at the bar, four and five deep ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah.

**MR HIPSON:** ... at the time.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So it was a busy night. I think you say they were, in the first alcove on the left where you were, you think about 30 people ...

**MR HIPSON:** About 30 people sitting in there, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... all military.

**MR HIPSON:** Mmm hmm.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And then we'll move on, so you're there for half an hour, and then there's a period where you're moving around and talking to various people, people you know, and you see a couple of Teddy Boys ...

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Was there a regular group of Teddy Boys in the Horse and Groom that you remember?

**MR HIPSON:** (Inaudible) that day, there was two Teddy Boys with me there. So there must have been a, kind of, Teddy Boys affiliation around somewhere, you know?

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes.

**MR HIPSON:** Where, I don't know.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes, I'm not sure if there were Teddy Boys in Surrey or, but so most of the time you were in that alcove on the left, is that correct?

**MR HIPSON:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Then there's a time when you go to the bar and you're joking around with Alan and a WRAC who's called 'Sam'.

**MR HIPSON:** Sam, yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Was that Sammie PARROTTE? Does that ring any bells?

**MR HIPSON:** I just knew her as 'Sam'.

**MR SANDERS QC:** 'Sam'.

**MR HIPSON:** I haven't a clue.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Uh-huh. And then you buy a drink for Carol BURNS on her birthday.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Did you know Carol BURNS?

**MR HIPSON:** I knew Carol for weeks ... in fact I knew Carol a week after she joined up at the (inaudible). And they'd introduced her as the youngest member of the WRAC at the bar when we were buying a couple of drinks. I think she was only 17, 17 and a half at the time. Oh, obviously not for 18, but at the time like, you know?

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes. Well, I'm not going to read you a warning about incriminating yourself for buying drinks for a minor.

**MR HIPSON:** No (inaudible).

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you bought a drink for Carol BURNS. And at just at this point you saw Billy FORSYTH and Jimmy COOPER in the alcove where the BURNS birthday party was.

**MR HIPSON:** Yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And we have looked at the photos of them and I think we now get to about 7.45 there's further to-ing and fro-ing and then we get to the point of the explosion. So just before the explosion, so this is about 8.35, 8.45 and Willy FORSYTH buys you a drink.

**MR HIPSON:** Well, no, technically speaking no. I see Wally going to the bar, we're shouting him, and he looked over and I said, 'You going for a pint?' He went, 'Yes.' 'Well get me one in.' And he shouted back, 'Only if you get me one in.' But anyway what I did was, he come across and I

gave him I think it was 60, for a pint, and a half pint of cider in those days cost 65p.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right.

**MR HIPSON:** It was a lot of money, you know? So 65p, I gave him 65p, we took a couple of drinks and we spoke a couple of words, 'Hello' and 'How you doing?' 'Yeah, no problem, on my way back to my pal.' He went back to his table, and I sat where I was, that was it.

**MR SANDERS QC:** That would have been the last time you saw him?

**MR HIPSON:** That was the last time we spoke to him, yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And then you, he went back to the (inaudible) but you couldn't see him, I think.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And I just want to ask you about the explosion itself. Perhaps if you start just by telling us what you remember about the explosion and the bomb going off.

**MR HIPSON:** When I sat down at the time, I reckon myself it was around about that, my head says ten minutes behind (?), probably after ten minutes maybe, I don't know. But I remember picking up my pint pot to have a drink and all I remember is a loud pop and a flash in front of me. And I don't know how long, but I was quite concussed, I was slumped over the bench seat down, half on the floor and half on the seat when I came to.

And it was just, as Mr NODDLE said, blindness, smoke and the smell of gas about the place. (inaudible) I don't know, I thought a gas explosion at the time and then when I looked in front of me the partition wasn't there, the partition had come down and it fell this way into the first alcove. And it was covering up some of the people that were actually sitting (inaudible) up there. I couldn't see a hole on the ground because of the darkness and the dust and the partition had been raised up a little bit. I couldn't hear a thing. I was totally deaf. At the time I'd picked up (inaudible) and then made my way to the door. There was a queue at the door. I don't know what happened, maybe somebody fell out the door. There was a queue of about 30 people at the door trying to get out. We eventually got out and I think the blast that made the pop, my hearing started to come back a little bit. And I know (inaudible) was covered in blood. So myself and Paul SHOLES who at that time had (inaudible), but certainly some of us had come back across when we heard the explosion- had gotten outside and we were round the corner and we were giving first aid to (inaudible). And during the first aid Paul said, I could hear him shouting 'Stop, stop.' And (inaudible) he said, 'It's blood what's coming from you' So I was bleeding profusely because I split a few arteries in my hand and my arm and that, and he got me wrapped up (inaudible) we got out to the

ambulance. There was a lot of queues for the ambulance, people were getting picked up, ambulance were going away dropping them off and then coming back. And at the time there was a lot more people, I thought, more badly injured than me and I was pushing them in front to get in the ambulance. And I thought to myself in some crazy way, I mean (inaudible) somebody's night, you know. I made my way down the road to go to the bus station and two nice police sitting in a police car they come out the car and, 'Oh, where are you going?' I said, 'The bus station, I'm going to get a bus to the hospital because all the ambulance are busy.' 'Don't be silly, in the car,' so they put me in the car. And obviously after the photograph (?) came in and the police car, the police were sat in the police car at the time. (inaudible) this guy (inaudible) you know what I mean? But that was it, it was just, oh, and my head was all kind of mixed up and I thought to myself, 'I'll be alright (inaudible) I'll go get myself to hospital. I got (inaudible) ambulance and what not, they couldn't (inaudible).

**MR SANDERS QC:** So the police drove you to hospital?

**MR HIPSON:** The police drove me and dropped me off, yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. One thing you mention in the statement, in your statement, is that you think that the pop and the bright flash that came from the other alcove.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And you also say I think in the first statement that you think it came from under an unattended jacket, do you remember that?

**MR HIPSON:** I vaguely, vaguely remember a jacket sitting on the bench seat which was in front of me, which probably would be in line with the jukebox going that way. And I honestly thought (inaudible) jacket (inaudible) there was a few people there, that it moved away from the bar. I wasn't actually concerned about it being a bomb or anything, that never crossed my mind. It was just a case of, 'Oh, who's pinched the jacket?' And I didn't want the guy who owned it to walk out the pub. And I had asked, I shouted across to a few people, 'Whoever owns the jacket (inaudible) you know, do you know who the jacket belongs to? Take it with you.' But otherwise nobody would bother. I didn't bother with it until I was talking to Jimmy COOPER through the partition at the other side of it and (inaudible) dropped in talking and (inaudible) it off quickly. And then I think we spoke about the jacket and he said, 'Who's jacket is this?' I said, 'I wouldn't worry, it's here like, you know.' And that was it with the jacket.

**MR SANDERS QC:** But was it the case that you thought the bomb had been under the jacket? Or just that the bomb had been some way behind the jacket and that was just ...?

**MR HIPSON:** I thought the bomb had been on top of the jacket. When the police had mentioned- I mentioned a jacket and (inaudible).

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah.

**MR HIPSON:** (inaudible) timeline and I thought maybe there was something wrapped up in that jacket itself, you know.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah.

**MR HIPSON:** But ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** So you describe it as, 'An unattended jacket, smoky grey-green shiny cloth similar to a gabardine, light with brown silk, white pointed lapels, the sort that goes well with bellbottom trousers.'

**MR HIPSON:** (inaudible) bellbottoms and they tried it on.

**MR SANDERS QC:** But that was near the partition. Can we just go back to the plan at 1-3, and then just go down there? You think that was sort of around the partition between the two alcoves?

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah, where the middle table is in the second alcove if you look down and go through the partition it was sitting probably around about there on the bench.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Within the main alcove or within, on your side?

**MR HIPSON:** On my side.

**MR SANDERS QC:** On your side.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And the partition, do you remember this was, went sort of halfway up to the ceiling and then there were railings?

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, (inaudible) sure, yes, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So it was a kind of stable effect because ...

**MR HIPSON:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... the Horse and Groom pub, in keeping with the theme. Did you see the hole in the floor by the fireplace or ...?

**MR HIPSON:** No.

**MR SANDERS QC:** No.

**MR HIPSON:** I couldn't because when the partitioning came down it was on top of the tables and had risen up on the bottom end like that like a blocked area ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah.

**MR HIPSON:** ... and it was pretty dark and smoky in that area.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Sure. And you were concentrating on getting out and getting ....

**MR HIPSON:** Getting out the door, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... MISS LE-GRYS out as well.

**MR HIPSON:** Mmm hmm.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And can you just tell us what your injuries were? So you were bleeding, what injuries did you suffer?

**MR HIPSON:** There was a lot of extensive shrapnel (inaudible) facial and right shoulder going down the right arm until the right hand where it was quite an open cut ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah.

**MR HIPSON:** ... but on the hand. And there was a couple of little ones on the chest and (inaudible) bleeding from the left ear (inaudible). Slightly deaf in my right ear and I've had tinnitus since it.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Due to the blast?

**MR HIPSON:** Due to the bombing, yeah.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** And you were taken by the police to the Royal Surrey County Hospital and ...

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... they, you were, you had your lip, and your right hand were (inaudible).

**MR HIPSON:** Mmm hmm.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Do you remember how long you were in hospital before you were released?

**MR HIPSON:** Probably a couple of hours (inaudible).

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right.

**MR HIPSON:** There was quite a few queues, and they were dealing obviously with the most injured first.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah, and did you then have a spell at the infirmary when you got back to Pirbright or were you straight back to ...?

**MR HIPSON:** Well, to be honest with you, I don't know if we went straight from there if the queue was going through hospital because (inaudible). And said (inaudible) Cambridge Military hospital where he'd been suited up. And it's an Army hospital, and straight back to Pirbright to the medical (inaudible) station (inaudible) remember.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right.

**MR HIPSON:** But I know I ended up at the MRS infirmary at the time and I was in there for about five days and ...

**MR SANDERS QC:** Right. What does MRS stand for?

**MR HIPSON:** Medical Reception Station.

**MR SANDERS QC:** MRS, right.

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, sorry.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you. If I can just- we've got a plan of the whereabouts of more or less everyone who was in the pub and ...

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... I just wanted to check- we've got your location at the time of the explosion. So this was at 4-69. Just go down a bit, okay, keep that

there. You will see there's probably more than 100 numbers there, each person has a number. But if we go down to the- zoom into the bottom left-hand corner the alcove that you were in just there. Your number on this chart is 186, does that look about right for where you were when that ...?

**MR HIPSON:** That's about correct, yes.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yeah, alright, thank you. Alright, Mr HIPSON, I don't have any further questions, thank you for coming such a long way.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR SANDERS QC:** I'll hand you back to the coroner, the other applicants might have questions if you just wait there.

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, fine.

**MR SANDERS QC:** Thank you very much.

**MR PLEETH:** **Thank you very much.**

**MS BARTON QC:** I don't, thank you sir.

**MR PLEETH:** Thank you sir, just a couple of questions. Mr HIPSON, I ask questions on behalf of the Ministry of Defence.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR PLEETH:** You have already helpfully assisted us with explaining about the lectures and training you received in relation to security whilst you were

at Pirbright. Do you recall anything about Part One or Part Two orders, does that mean anything to you?

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, Part One orders, and Part Two orders were always displayed on the notice boards in the camp. The (inaudible) yes, they were up and obviously they were up as well in the Battalion areas as well. And (inaudible) to do with security (inaudible) all the laws of do's and don'ts in the army when the department bought (?) two others.

**MR PLEETH:** And do you remember what they said about security even in the broadest terms?

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, (inaudible) watch out obviously where you go to. And if you don't touch anything that looks suspicious, report it right away. And we had BIKINI amber states to be aware of that were obviously close to (inaudible). And everybody had to (inaudible).

**MR PLEETH:** And was the BIKINI alert state something which featured in either Part One or Part Two orders?

**MR HIPSON:** Yes, it featured in Part One orders, yes.

**MR PLEETH:** And was that telling you about the system generically or was that saying what the alert state was at that time?

**MR HIPSON:** It would tell you generically what they were and what they were for. And you mentioned part two (inaudible) details, they would give you

the name of state on that (inaudible) BIKINI amber, BIKINI red, BIKINI (inaudible) state.

**MR PLEETH:** So the Part One orders would be the high -evel policy type instructions

...

**MR HIPSON:** Yes.

**MR PLEETH:** ... explaining what the system was.

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR PLEETH:** But if you went to the Part Two orders which were daily, were they?

**MR HIPSON:** Uh-huh.

**MR PLEETH:** They would tell you what the alert was as of that very day.

**MR HIPSON:** That's correct, yes.

**MR PLEETH:** And how were those orders published? Or how was it ensured that everyone was reading those orders?

**MR HIPSON:** What would happen is, you had four companies in the Battalion and each company had what they called a sergeant (inaudible) which would be a duty sergeant. That duty sergeant or sergeant (inaudible) had to attend even if the orders were (inaudible). The (inaudible) would dictate the daily detail and the (inaudible) would scribe it down in his book, then he would take it back and that would be handed over to the company clerk. The company clerk would then type it out, but then go

in front of the (inaudible) correct and obviously looked at before they get published on the wall to the (inaudible).

**MR PLEETH:** And would that include the BIKINI alert state?

**MR HIPSON:** It could yes, uh-huh.

**MR PLEETH:** And you mentioned about alert state being posted in the guardroom, explain what happened in relation to them being posted?

**MR HIPSON:** Outside the guardroom there was a board where you would see a board (inaudible) battalion welcome to the (inaudible). There was a board with big white letters – BIKINI states. And underneath it there would be a sliding board and you could pick any colour you wanted, in black, you could put it in orange, you could put it in red and sign it. So every day it was under scrutiny. Now, with a BIKINI red it meant it was an attack, if they had a good idea where it was going to be it was imminent. If it was orange there was going to be an attack, but they didn't know where it was going to be. Or if it was black there could be an attack coming at any time to be aware for. There was another one that was in my (inaudible) days which went to BIKINI black alpha. I can't remember where BIKINI black alpha went, but the alpha was moved to (inaudible) for a reason, you know what I mean? (inaudible) I just can't remember.

**MR PLEETH:** Understood. Yes, thank you, Mr HIPSON.

**MR HIPSON:** Thank you.

**CORONER:** **Mr SANDERS?**

**MR SANDERS QC:** Definitely sir.

**CORONER:** **Mr HIPSON, thank you very much, I have no questions for you. That has been very helpful, very enlightening. It was a long journey for you, safe journey home.**

**MR HIPSON:** Thanks.

**CORONER:** **Thank you very much for coming down.**

**MR HIPSON:** Thank you sir, you are welcome. Sure.

**CORONER:** **Mr SANDERS, I think that leaves two statements to be read. I don't know how you've decided who's reading what.**

**MR SANDERS QC:** We're doing them by gender, so Mr FLINN is reading any male statements and Miss KUZMENKO female.

**MR HIPSON:** That's fine.

**MR SANDERS QC:** So it doesn't sound peculiar.

**CORONER:** **Thank you.**

**MR FLINN:** Thank you very much, sir. So this is Barry RUSHTON's statement, document reference S260 for the first statement, and the Caselines page reference is 2-377. Now, it might assist IPs to have in front of them the floor plans which were prepared by Mr RUSHTON, and which relate to these statements. The document reference for that is D211. And the

particular plan relevant to the first statement I believe can be found at Caselines page reference 3-131 which is the second page of that document. The statement reads as follows, 'At about 1900 hours on Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1974 I left the barracks of Pirbright to go out for the evening. There were four of us when we left, they were Brian SCANLAN, Alex LINDSAY, Robert NODDLE and myself. On the way to Brookwood Station we met William FORSYTH and HUNTER, I don't know his first name, and Stephen COOPER. There were a couple of others, one whose name was AINSLEY, I think. There were, in all, about nine in our group. We caught a train to Guildford arriving around 1930 hours. We went straight to the Seven Stars Public House. We all went straight to the counter at positions A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and I and bought a drink. We stayed there for about a quarter of an hour. There weren't many people there at the time, I would say about 14. I saw a couple of squaddies, but I cannot describe them. We had been there about five minutes when three girls came in. Two of them stood at positions J and K and the third went almost immediately to the bar at position L and bought some drinks. While she was there she was looking at the jukebox as if she was going to put some records on. The next time I saw them they were all sitting in the corner on the bench at positions LL, JJ, and KK. They were still there when we left.

I would describe the girl at position L as 16 years old, five foot four, slim build, black wavy hair, fairly long, just off the shoulders. She was heavily made up. I think she was wearing trousers with a black fur coat. I cannot remember a thing about the other two in positions J and K. The persons at D, E, F, G, H and I, left, saying that they were going to the Three Pigeons Public House. The three that were left were FINDLAY and SCANLAN and myself. We went over to a table at AA, BB and CC, I stood up because there wasn't enough chairs and the others sat down. I played the machine at M and returned to AA. While I was there I noticed some other servicemen, but I couldn't describe them. There were about five of them and they were chatting to the three girls at LL, JJ, and KK. We then left the pub. We walked up to the Three Pigeons but didn't buy a drink. FINDLAY went to the toilet. We then walked to the Horse and Groom, the time then was about 2015 when we arrived. We three then went to the bar for a drink at positions A, B, C and then went and sat down. I was in position AA at the table, SCANLAN was near the jukebox at position BB and FINDLAY was at position CC sitting down. There were a lot of blokes from our barracks, HUNTER at D, Willie FORSYTH was at E, William COOPER at F and Steven COOPER at G and one named AINSLEY at H, I don't know his first name. There were two girls who were obviously together at

positions I and J, they were shouting over to each other. I would describe the one at position I as 19 years. I don't know how tall, but she seemed to be between five foot six to eight inches, plump build and a fat face with a double chin, dark blond hair, straight and long just past her shoulders. I can't remember what she was wearing. She had a high-pitched voice which I'm almost certain was with an Irish accent. I remember that a soldier from our group, I think it was SCANLAN, was talking to her. The other girl that she was with at position J, I would describe as 18 to 20 years, five foot eight to nine inches. She was neither fat nor thin, jet-black hair short at the front and a centre parting, I think. The hair at the side was close to her head and tapered off to the back of her neck and small waves passing just below the ears. I think her nose rounded at the end. She was dressed in all black as though she was going to a funeral. I think it was black slacks and maybe a waistcoat, she may have had a coat, but I didn't see one. She was standing quite close to me slightly behind and to my right. I looked round at her because she was standing on her own with her back leaning against the fireplace with arms folded. She looked at me and said, 'Don't you think I'm human?' in an Irish accent. Although I could not tell whether it was a northern or southern Irish accent, but it was a different Irish accent compared with her friend at I. I was annoyed at

that and couldn't understand why she had said it. I just turned away. I was talking to my mates and a few minutes later FINDLAY spoke to her and said, 'What part of Scotland are you from?' I thought, 'Scotland, she doesn't come from there.' And I again looked at her. She mentioned to FINDLAY that she was from a certain place and while she was talking, I noticed that she was trying to disguise her voice and not making a very good job of it. She was talking in a half Scottish and half Irish accent. I wondered what she was trying to do because there were 18 blokes in our squad who were Scottish, and I can tell a Scot's accent. We had a couple more pints and I noticed the girl who spoke to me at J go to the girl at I and bend over and talk to her. This girl then got up and the girl at J helped her to put a coat on. Just as they were both moving past me someone I don't know who asked them where they were going. The girl I spoke to at J said that she was taking her friend to the Seven Stars Public House because she had never been there before. SCANLAN later told me that these two later came back for about five minutes. The girls at K, L and M said that they were WRACs from Guildford, two of these were Irish. The one at K, I would describe as 18 or 19 years, five foot four to five inches, well built, plump in the legs, dark brown hair straight and collar length wearing a white jumper, a short dark coloured skirt and grey tights. She had an unusual

coat, but I can't describe it. The one at L, I would describe as looking about 35 years in the face, but I don't believe she was really. Five foot five inches, fairly thin, short frizzy fair hair. I can't remember what she was wearing. She spoke with an Irish accent. The girl at M, I would describe as 22 years, five foot three or four inches, plump build, straight mid brown hair collar length. I can't remember what she was wearing, but she too had an Irish accent. I have since learned that one of these girls was named Marian and was with the Fourth Platoon of the WRAC stationed at the training camp Guildford. I am certain that these three were there when the bomb went off. The bomb went off about 20 minutes to half an hour after the girls at I and J had left. I don't remember much about the explosion except feeling as if I had been hit by something and buzzing in my ears. I ended up in the cellar and I remember looking up and seeing a man looking down at me, he pulled me out and guided me outside, I think. I was in a daze, and I remember going back in to look for my mates. Sometime later, I don't know how long, I saw one of the three WRACs sitting on the pavement outside, this was the English girl at K mentioned before. There was another girl with her, it may have been one of the Irish girls L or M, but I am not sure. I was taken shortly after to hospital at Guildford. I was later transferred to Cambridge Military Hospital and while I was there the

three WRACs at K, L, M called in at ward ten to see us. This was about at 20.30 hours on Monday the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 1974. They spoke to Billy COOPER first, then Alex FINDLAY also BRUCE and possibly GIBB, they also spoke to me. They were all going on leave and Marian who was I believe at M said she was going to the New Lodge Road Northern Ireland to see her parents. I noticed the English girl K looked like she had injuries to her neck, but the two Irish girls L and M seemed okay.’

And sir that was signed and dated the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 1974. There is then a second statement from Mr RUSHTON, unique reference number S260A and the Caselines page reference is 2-380. I believe that the first page of document D211, Caselines page reference 3-130, is referable to this second statement. ‘I have been asked to clarify part of my statement, in my statement I refer to two girls at I and J. I have shown their relative positions on the map as I remember at this time. The girl at I on my first map which I will call A on my second map was shouting across to the girl who was J on my first map which I have called B on my second map. This was sometime before the bomb went off at 20.30 hours. I can’t recall them being in any other position, but I wasn’t watching them all the time. Just before they left at about ten minutes to a quarter of an hour before the bomb went off the girl at B moved to BB and spoke to the girl at A. They then split up and the girl at BB went

back to position B. About two minutes after this the girl at B returned to BB, the girl at A got up and joined her and they left that position. I cannot say if they left the pub as I paid no more attention to them and never saw them after that. After this I was talking to the boys in the group. I also recall speaking to one of the three WRACs who were sitting at position C, D and E. I spoke to the one at C. This is all I can add. Shortly after the girls at A and B had left, I went to the bar. It probably took me four or five minutes to get served. I only bought a drink for myself and returned to my old position.' And Sir that was signed and dated the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 1974. So there are two final statements from a Mr James COOPER. The first statement for him that I will be reading has document reference number S191 and Caselines page reference 2-119. Once again, there are some floor plans from this witness, they were all in portrait mode unfortunately, but the document reference number is D148. And the Caselines page references start at 3-52. 'On Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1974 I arrived at Guildford at seven or 7.15pm. I was in company with Wally FORSYTH, John HUNTER, Steve COOPER and three lads from the household cavalry, NUDLEY a Welsh boy and two English lads. We went straight to the Seven Stars Public House, had one pint each and left. We then went to the Three Pigeons, but the upstairs bar was closed so we came out and

went to the Horse and Groom arriving at about 7.45pm to 8pm. We managed to get a seat in the far corner opposite the fireplace. I was in fact sitting on the bench seat right opposite the fireplace and Steve was sitting on my left. Wally and John were sitting on two chairs with their backs to me. They were sitting at a table talking to two females who were sitting right in the corner on the bench seat that Steve and I were sitting on, but about six to ten feet away. Two of the household boys were sitting on chairs opposite me and one on my right. After a few minutes the two girls Wally and John had been talking to got up to leave having refused Wally's offer of a drink and they left. I was busy talking to the Scots girls on my right and didn't pay a lot of attention. After about two or three minutes after those two girls had left, I went to get up to get a round of drinks in when there was an explosion to my left. There was a terrific heat and a blast which took me off my feet, carried me some 12 feet throwing me out of the window into North Street. My clothing and my hair were on fire, people were pulling my clothes off and I was wrapped up in something. I was later taken to Guildford Hospital in a police car and then taken to Cambridge Hospital at Aldershot where I was detained. My injuries consisted burns, bruises and cuts to the left side of my body, back and head. The two females that were sitting opposite Wally and John had left immediately before

the explosion I would describe as one, a brunette with frizzy hair quite long, slim build, good looking, dark eyes, five foot nine inches between 19 and 21 years. She was dressed in a jersey with cream and brown stripes, I can't remember if she wore slacks or a skirt, but it was dark in colour. And number two, blonde hair, I think it was dyed, shoulder length, close to the head with a fringe, straight nose, aged about 25 years. Slim build, shorter than the other, about five foot six. A fair bit made up, appearing to look younger than she was, dressed in dark clothing, looked a bit brass. I think I would recognise the blonde if I saw her again. I have not seen any of the lads I was with since the explosion.' And sir that is signed and dated the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 1974.

The second and final statement is another statement from Mr COOPER. Document reference S191A and Caselines page reference 2-121. 'I'm a trainee soldier attached to the Scots guards at Pirbright. I enlisted and joined the depot on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 1974. I arrived at Pirbright with Wally FORSYTH and John HUNTER and a few other recruits from Scotland. This was the first time I had met either of them. We did our initial training together and became friends. After the first two weeks of training, I had a Saturday night pass which I used and went into Guildford with some mates from our company. They had been training before us and knew their way around. We went into Guildford

and visited the Horse and Groom and Seven Stars Hotel. FORSYTH and HUNTER did not come with us on this occasion as money was a bit tight. The following Saturday i.e., the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1974 we had a pass and decided to go into Guildford together. There was FORSYTH, HUNTER, Alec FINDLAY, Barry RUSHTON and Robert NODDLE all from Caterham Company. I should add that Steve COOPER was also with us. We caught a train from Brookwood at 6.20pm and went into Guildford. Wally FORSYTH was dressed in a pair of white trousers, skimmers, or Oxford bags, a white shirt, open neck, and I think a white pullover or jumper. He was wearing platform shoes, I don't remember the colour. Wally had a dented skull above his right eye. This was noticeable and scar marks under his chin. This was the result of a car accident in Scotland before he joined the army. I think he had a tattoo on one of his arms. John HUNTER was dressed in a sports jacket checked which belonged to Corporal McQUARRY of the Barrack Corporal. He had a cardigan or jersey underneath. He had a shirt on as well, but I cannot remember what colour. I know that he had a plaster on his chest which covered his back as well, this had been put on at the medical centre at the camp as he had complained of a bad back. He was strapped up to support his back. I think that Wally FORSYTH had a sports coat on as well. Upon arriving at Guildford, we walked to

the Seven Stars Public House and had a pint each. We were in the lounge, and it was quiet so we only stayed about 15 minutes. We arrived at the pub at about 7.15pm. We left at about 7.30pm and walked to the Three Pigeons Public House. The upstairs bar was closed so we came out and walked to the Horse and Groom Public House arriving at about 7.45pm, I didn't think it was any later than that. All of us were still together, I ordered a round of drinks which came to £1.50. We all went and sat down. After ordering the drinks we looked around and saw a few spaces in an alcove on the left hand side. There were some tables in the alcove and a number of people sitting down. I saw two girls, a blonde, brunette sitting at a table on the left-hand side of the alcove on a bench which ran the whole length of the alcove. Wally FORSYTH and John HUNTER sat down at the table opposite them and started talking to them. Steve COOPER sat next to the table, Alex FINDLAY was next to him, and I sat next to Alex. We were all sitting on the bench with our backs against the partition. There was a table in front of us with our beer on it. Barry RUSHTON sat on the opposite side of the table. A Welsh boy called Jeff who had been standing by the fireplace when we sat down came over to us and sat at the table next to RUSHTON. I noticed when we sat down that opposite us and to our left there was four people sitting at a table in the corner. I saw an old

man sitting right in the corner, an old lady sitting next to him and a young girl and a civilian bloke. They were all together and were talking amongst themselves and laughing and drinking. We sat down and started talking amongst ourselves and drinking. About 15 minutes later three WRAC girls came in and sat down next to us on the bench, I think they were English, Irish, and Scots. I think they had a table in front of them. I have been shown a sketch of the alcove in the public house and I have marked the position of where everybody I had mentioned was sitting. I produced this sketch plan as exhibit number JC1. The sketch is right but does not show how close and compact we were sitting together, we were all squeezed up. I remember seeing a couple of people near the fireplace, but they were just shapes. I remember a young fair-haired bloke sitting by the jukebox, he looked a military type as he had short hair. We were all talking and drinking. Wally FORSYTH bought the second round as he made a mistake with the order and bought two bottled beers instead of draft beer, these were for Steve COOPER and NODDLE. I have just remembered that NODDLE was sitting at the table on RUSHTON's right and FORSYTH had his back to him. From the position I was sitting in and how closely packed we were if anybody other than our group went into the corner I would have seen them. I remember that two other friends who had been seen

sitting on the opposite of the partition when we went into the pub came around to see us. They spoke to us and tried to find out who we were chatting up. They were Callum BRUCE and Alan MILLAR both soldiers from Caterham Company. They only stayed a short while and went away, I think they went back to their seats as I saw them later on and they had been injured in the explosion. Sometime during the evening I saw Wally FORSYTH and Alex FINDLAY walk towards the toilets together. Wally came back a few minutes later and stopped next to me before he sat down. He said something like, 'I'm fixed,' meaning that he had got off with the girl. I asked him if they were WRACs, he said, 'No, I think they're civvies.' Before Wally went to the toilet, I saw the brunette girl get up from the table and walk to the fireplace. She leaned up against it with her back to us for about a couple of minutes, she seemed to be looking around. She got up from the table a couple of times and did this as if she was not interested in sitting down. I saw her go to the bar once and come back with a couple of drinks, she gave one to her mate. I saw that they were shots and I think one looked like brandy, the blonde girl had that. I had the impression that the brunette was not interested in Wally or John, but the blonde never moved from her seat. I did not pay much attention to the blonde or brunette as I was busy chatting to the three WRACs. What I have

described to you is the glimpses I caught of movement. One of the WRAC girls, the Scottish one, came and saw me in hospital and gave me her name and address. She was W454515 Private MACRAE, Four Platoon, first training company WRAC Centre, Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Guildford. She was the girl sitting furthest away from me on the bench, this bench went all the way around the alcove. We had been in the Horse and Groom for about one hour when I heard the blonde say to Wally, 'No thanks.' They both stood up, I mean the blonde and brunette and walked towards the door. I didn't pay much attention to this but was surprised to see them go as Wally had told me he was fixed up. Wally FORSYTH went to the jukebox and put some records on, I heard his favourite record "Long Tall Glasses" by Leo SAYER and thought he must have put it on. It was still playing when the bomb went off. I remember seeing Wally walk back to his seat and suddenly the bomb exploded, I think Wally was still standing, but he was near the table. John HUNTER, I think was also standing because I had the impression that both FORSYTH and HUNTER were moving into the seat occupied previously by the two girls. Steve COOPER and Alex FINDLAY were standing as I was trying to get to the bar, and they were letting me out. I was half crouched as I was getting up from my seat when the explosion hit me. The blast hit me from the left and to the

back of me, it blew me through and over the partition straight through the window and out into the street. I don't know what happened to my mates. The three WRAC girls were still sitting next to me when the bomb went off. The blonde and brunette had only left the pub a matter of five minutes before the explosion. I was taken to the Royal Surrey Hospital and then to the Cambridge Military. My injuries are all to the left side of my body and back. I have burns to the left side of my face and ear. My hair was burnt. I have burns, cuts and bruises to my left arm and side, ribs, shoulder etcetera. The left side of my back is burnt. My left leg is burnt and bruised. I was detained. I am positive the explosion came from my left and from my back. I described the two girls sitting with FORSYTH and COOPER as follows. First number one aged 25 but made up to look younger. Plain longish face, blonde straight hair to the nape of the neck, it was skull fitting and close to her head. She seemed smaller than the other girl, stoutish build, dressed in dark clothing which emphasized the whiteness of her face. She was brassy looking, her hair was bleached or dyed and looked false. A straight nose. Number two aged 19 to 21, five foot nine inches, slim build, very attractive, fuzzy afro hairstyle, dressed in dark coloured trousers and a blouse or jersey, I don't remember the colour. Dark eyes. I think I would recognise them again but would need some assistance

to make a photofit resemblance.’ And sir that was signed and dated the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 1974.

**CORONER:** **Thank you very much. Mr SANDERS I think that concludes the evidence for today. We are going to have to think about Mr FINDLAY and where we are going to fit him in, but we can do that. On Monday there are four witnesses to be called, I think that is right. And then followed by ...**

**MR SANDERS QC:** Three statements to read.

**CORONER:** **Three statements.**

**MR SANDERS QC:** Or the statements of three witnesses to read.

**CORONER:** **Yes.**

**MR SANDERS QC:** That’s right sir, and it’s possible that Mr FINDLAY could be dealt with on Monday, I don’t know. But this is all subject to ...

**CORONER:** **Right, this is subject to ...**

**MR SANDERS QC:** ... sorting out the IT.

**CORONER:** **Yes, they are coming in about midday so they will be here hopefully shortly to try and sort it out. In which case, if it is sorted, I think we will be back on track.**

**MR SANDERS QC:** Yes, because Monday is two video link witnesses and two live witnesses.

**CORONER:** **(inaudible). Alright, well, hopefully they get all that sorted out.**

**MR SANDERS QC:** Fingers crossed.

**CORONER:** I mean it has worked in the past perfectly well, it is just (inaudible) glitch. (inaudible) problem (inaudible). So ten o'clock on Monday.

**COURT USHER:** All rise please.