

WITNESS STATEMENT

Criminal Procedure Rules, r27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5b

Statement of: BARKER, COLIN

Age if under 18: (if over 18 insert 'over 18')

Occupation: POLICE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 3 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: PC BARKER

Date: 22/08/2017

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded ☐ (supply witness details on rear)

On the morning of 14th June 2017, I was on duty as the Tactical Flight Observer (TFO) in a National Police Air Service (NPAS) ECI 45 helicopter call sign NPAS44.

I was in company with PC FRANKLIN who was the front seat TFO and Pilot Capt SWEETING. As a result of CAD 482 14JUN17, we attended GRENFELL TOWER, GRENFELL ROAD, LONDON, W11 ITQ, to reports of a flat on fire. On our arrival at about 0144hrs, I could clearly see that $\frac{3}{4}$ of both the East and North faces of the tower were on fire from the lower half of the block to the top floor. It appeared that the fire was on the outside of the building. I noticed that there were London Fire Brigade (LFB), London Ambulance Service (LAS) and police vehicles on scene in and around the surrounding roads of the tower. Using the aircrafts on board video and thermal imaging cameras, PC FRANKLIN captured an overview of the developing situation. This footage was being streamed live into the Police control room.

My role as the Mission Commander of the aircraft at a major incident like this is to give an overview and updates of the situation to Police commanders on scene and in the control room as well as our partner agencies the LAS and LFB, as well as assist with cordon placing, access routes, RVP locations, assist managing the situation, and to facilitate any requests to give certain views of the situation requested by the Police/Fire/Ambulance commanding officers.

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Signature witnessed by:

While on scene I gave updates via the aircrafts police radios, to the extent of the fire and what we could see with our cameras. During our attendance I saw numerous people at open windows within flats in the tower including the upper floors of the South and West faces of the block. At this time these faces of the block were not on fire.

This information was passed to the police control room and also the LFB control room through our radio link with them.

During the flight, I noticed that there lots of cars stopping with their hazard lights on the A40 Westway. This is an elevated section of a dual carriage way. I was concerned for their safety as I believed that they were stopping to look at the fire while other traffic was still driving along the road in both directions. I first requested that the vehicles were moved on by a traffic unit via the police radio to prevent a Road Traffic Collision (RTC) and then shortly requested that the road be closed from the junction of A3220 West Cross Route to Paddington in both directions to prevent further traffic from stopping to have a look and become a potential RTC.

I requested that a separate radio channel be set up at the main control room to take over the running of this incident as it became quite apparent very early on that the local talk group was not coping with all the different requests and information that was being passed by various units on scene. I then requested a further channel to be set up so that we could separate the dealing with the fire onto one channel and the dealing with displaced persons onto another channel.

Throughout our time at the location the fire spread around the building. As we came towards the end of the amount of time we were able to remain on scene I liaised with our control room for another NPAS aircraft to come and take over from us.

At about 0245 hrs, the aircraft developed a fault that required us to leave the scene. As we departed the scene I could see that the fire had now spread onto the upper floor of the South face. While on our way back to our base at Lippitts Hill, I liaised with the crew of NPAS13 and gave them a brief of what was happening at the scene. The incident was recorded onto a compact flash card using the aircraft digital recorder.

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On our return to base at Lippitts Hill, PC FRANKLIN removed the flash card from the recorder and transferred the footage onto the Air Support Unit Digital Video Recording Server (ASUDVRS), as per the units SOP.

As our aircraft was now out of service another NPAS helicopter an EC135 call sign NPAS64 attended Lippitts Hill and I became the Mission Commander of that aircraft with PC PEARCE (front seat TFO) and Capt JAYPALAN (Pilot). At 0422hrs we made our way to Grenfell Tower to take over from the crew of NPAS13.

While on our way we received a briefing from the crew of NPAS13 and arrived on scene at 0440hrs. Once on scene we continued to provide images for the Police, LFB and LAS commanders and give any views requested and gave any appropriate updates of what we could see from our aspect. The fire had now fully engulfed the upper floors of all four (4) sides for the tower.

We remained on scene until 0613 hrs. This was recorded onto a compact flash card using the aircraft digital recorder. On our return to base at Lippitts Hill PC PEARCE removed the flash card from the recorder and transferred the footage onto the AIR SUPPORT UNIT Digital Video Recording Server (ASUDVRS), as per the units SOP.

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2017

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