

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: LUNDQUIST, MARCUS

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

Occupation: FIRE OFFICER

This statement (consisting of 12 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: MARCUS LUNDQUIST

Date: 27/10/2017

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

This statement refers to my attendance at the Grenfell Tower Fire on Wednesday 14th June 2017. Whilst making this statement to police I have referred to notes that I made at Paddington Fire Station immediately following leaving the fire. I produce these notes as exhibit MLU/01.

I am Marcus LUNDQUIST, a firefighter on Red Watch at Battersea Fire Station. I have been a firefighter for fifteen years and based at Battersea for the last nine (9) or ten (10) years. Before that I was based at Old Kent Road Fire Station. As well as being a firefighter, I am a Fire Rescue Unit (FRU) specialist and also an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Specialist. The FRU carries specialist equipment for use in major incidents such as Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) and airbags that can lift fifty (50) tonnes. I have been trained to work on the FRU and use EDBA for approximately the last eight (8) years and have regular training for this. EDBA gives double the amount of air to that of Standard Duration Breathing Apparatus (SDBA), allowing you to be in smoke logged area for longer. Every FRU specialises in different areas and has different attributes. Battersea FRU specialise in line rescue and water and powerboat rescue. I have monthly line training for line rescue at Battersea Fire Station and we have regular live training for water and powerboat rescue. In addition to this I also receive monthly training for USAR and receive lectures most shifts on various topics when we have time. These lectures are normally delivered by either the Watch Manager or crew manager and within the last year we have had a lecture on high rise tower blocks.

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In general, we do try and do on drills every tour but this depends on what calls we get and how busy we are. We do get time as Strategic Resource, when we are allocated training time unless there is a major incident we need to attend. I have taken part in high rise training drills in the yard at Battersea Fire Station this year before the fire at Grenfell Tower. We practised ladder drills, water relay, hose management and using our breathing apparatus (BA) set. Everyone gets given a task in these drills like they would be at an actual fire. Full personal protective equipment (PPE) is worn during these drills. There is a four (4) floor tower in the yard at Battersea Fire Station for this training.

I have previous experience of firefighting in high rise tower blocks having attended quite a few throughout my career. I attended quite a lot whilst based at Old Kent Road on the estates that are covered by that station. These were mostly either bin chutes fires where the paladins or bins at the bottom of the bin chute have caught fire or flat fires which are mostly started by cooking accidents.

The way that high rise fires are generally fought is that everyone gets given a specific task by the officer in charge. Once given a task, each firefighter will make sure that they have the equipment to complete the task, for example if you are a BA crew going in to complete search and rescue you would take breaking and entering equipment to make sure that you can gain access to premises that you are going to search. Before going into the fire area you go to the entry control point and see the entry control officer. They are responsible for the safety of the firefighters going in to the fire. Before going in you confirm your brief with the entry control officer so that he will know where you should be if you need assistance. The entry control officer also has an electronic board in which each firefighter who goes in plugs their tally from their BA set. This will then tell the entry control officer how much air the firefighter has left and the rate that they are consuming air. The board also alerts the entry control officer if the firefighter activates the distress signal on their set or if the set senses that the firefighter has been inactive for twenty (20) seconds. When a firefighter leaves the fire, they come back past the entry control officer and remove their tally from the board.

There is no different training for if compartmentation is breached as the way that you fight the fire is the same if one flat is on fire or if several are on fire.

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Grenfell Tower is not in the area covered by Battersea Fire Station and I had never been to the tower before the 14th June 2017 or anywhere in that patch. I am not aware of any specific firefighting plan for Grenfell Tower. I have attended visits to different buildings on my patch. The watch Managers have to complete 7.2D visits to buildings within their stations area and the crew will accompany them on these visits. A 7.2D visit is a premises inspection which is conducted by the officer in charge. Whilst the inspection is taking place, we look at entry and exit points of the building, where the stairwells are, if there are any firefighting lifts, how many floors there are, how many flats on a floor and anything else that we need to know about the block if we were to attend a fire there. Buildings are visited repeatedly but I do not know to what schedule as this is arranged by the officer conducting the visit.

On Tuesday 13th June 2017, Red Watch were working the night shift and I started work at 20:00 hours at Battersea Fire Station as normal. I was posted to the FRU with the call sign H276. Also in unit were CM DIANA in charge, FF NELSON driving, FF CHART and CM MAYNE on the back. I was the duty firefighter in the Watch Room than night which meant that I was responsible for answering the phones, getting the message sheets from the printer and giving route cards to the driver. A route card is a pre-printed A5 card which contains information about the route that the driver needs to be aware of when approaching the building/incident ground.

There had not been any calls that night and I went to bed at 0100 hours on Wednesday 14th June 2017 but was still awake at 0130 hours when the station call lights came on and the automated alarm system went off notifying us that there was a call. The system announced "Mobilise for H271" which was the pump ladder appliance based at Battersea Station. I went and collected the information sheet and read that H271 was being sent to a twenty (20) pump fire a Grenfell Tower. I gave the necessary information off the printed sheet to the crew that were setting off. I cannot remember for certain but do not think that I gave a route card to the driver as it is very unlikely that we had one for a building so far off our patch. H271 went out about one (1) minute after the call to mobilise came out and I went back to bed but again did not go to sleep.

We did not get any further calls at the station until 0216 hours when again the station calls lights came on and the system made an announcement of "Mobilise for H276." I collected the message out of the printer and saw that we were being dispatched to Grenfell Tower as the response was being increased to forty

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(40) pumps. The fact that forty (40) pumps were being sent signalled that it was clearly a big incident. The crew mobilised and I put on my PPE and got into the rear of the fire engine, in the seat behind the driver. We made it out of the station in about one (1) minute of getting the call to mobilise.

The journey took approximately fifteen (15) minutes and I spent the time thinking about different procedures and what equipment I might need to get off the FRU upon our arrival. I thought it was highly likely that we would be deployed in EDBA as the majority of crews are not trained in this and do not carry it. CM DIANA was looking at the Mobile Data Terminal which would have provided information about what we were going to but I cannot remember if he said anything or not about it.

I first saw Grenfell Tower approximately thirty (30) seconds before we parked up and it was well alight from about the fifth (5th) floor up to the top of the tower. It looked like the whole building was alight and I found the extent of the fire shocking and wondered how we would deal with a fire this big.

The route that we were taking towards the tower was for some reason blocked. I do not know the name of the road or exactly where it was but the road that Dean was trying to drive down was blocked with road works or something similar. In the end we followed an ambulance that was also going towards the tower and parked as close as we could get in a housing estate at just after 0230 hours. From where we parked the tower was on the right, at a forty-five degree (45°) angle to us. We were about one-hundred (100) metres from the tower and I could see the front and one side. This was the closest we could get to the tower and to walk to the tower we had to go back on ourselves in the direction that we had come. I have drawn a sketch of where the fire engine was parked in relation to the tower and the route that we took to get to it from the engine. I produce this sketch as MLU/02. I cannot remember where the ambulance went but I think that there were other fire engines parked near us but that we were the furthest into the dead end of the road. When we went back later to the fire engine we were completely blocked in with other emergency service vehicles. The roads on the approach to the tower had been quite narrow with cars parked on both sides of us but the road that we parked on was quite wide.

I could see the tower a bit better when we parked up and both of the sides that I could see were well alight. The fire appeared to be on both the outside and the inside of the building. This was quite alarming as generally the outsides of buildings do not burn. There was thick black acrid smoke coming off the

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tower and you could smell it in the air. Debris was falling off the tower and, as I did not know about the cladding, it looked like the outside of the building was falling down. I cannot remember if the debris falling down was on fire or not.

We put on our EDBA as we knew that we would committed into the tower and the majority of firefighters there would just be carrying SDBA. With EDBA we would have about one (1) hour air where as SDBA only contained about thirty (30) minutes worth of air. These times depend on each firefighter and how the activity that they are doing; the greater the physical exertion, the shorter the time that the air supply will last for as the wearer will be breathing heavily. I would estimate that the average firefighter gets about forty-five (45) minutes worth of use from an EDBA set. When we are trained in using BA we are told about regulating our breathing but, in the training that we do, we do not normally wear the EDBA for more than fifteen (15) to twenty (20) minutes so whilst we do conduct gauge checks, there is no real concern about the air supply running out. The EDBA was the only kit that we took with us from the fire engine and it took us about two (2) minutes to get kitted up before we walked towards the tower.

CM MAYNE would have also had a radio on his BA set but the radio channels were very busy and you could only broadcast if you had something important to say, we did not even broadcast to say that we were bringing casualties down. We were not using body worn video cameras or thermal imaging cameras.

As we got closer to the tower, I could hear the fire crackling and see the black remains on the floor of the debris that had fallen. It varied it size and some of it was as large as a car roof. From what I could see of the fire, I knew it would be a big job and lots of people would need rescuing. As we walked towards the tower, there was lots of members of the public on the streets. Some offered supportive comments towards us, wishing us luck and telling us to do our best. Quite a few people seemed very distressed and some were talking on the phone. There was a police cordon that we had to go through to get to the tower, I think this was marked with police cordon tape but also with a solid barrier that we had to go around. This cordon was being staffed by police officers but I am unsure how many. The walk to the tower took a few minutes and we approached it from the front. As a crew we went to the command unit to give in our nominal role board with our crews details so that they knew we were on scene. There were several command units at the incident. The command units look different to normal fire engines, they have command unit written on the side and they sometimes leave their blue lights on so that those attending

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can see where they are easily. The first command unit that we found told us that they were not the one to hand the nominal role boards to and sent us to one further away from the tower around the bend on the road that they were on. I have drawn a bird's eye view of the tower showing where the command units were in relation to the tower. I produce this as exhibit MLU/3. We made our way to the second command unit and I handed them our nominal board. We asked them what our task was but they told us to go to the tower and see the officer in charge. They were situated about eighty (80) metres away from the tower and were clearly very busy.

After we had handed in our nominal board, we made our way back towards the tower and as we neared the main entrance, under a covered walkway, we came across an officer who I do not know. They were surrounded by bits of paper containing Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) notes. Fire Survival Guidance notes are details of a caller to the fire brigade who is trapped in the fire or by the smoke and contains details of where the person is and how many people they are with. The officer was surrounded by about twenty-four (24) different notes. Either he or another firefighter who was with him was on a mobile phone to what appeared, by the nature of the conversation and what the officer was saying, to be someone who was inside the tower. The phone call stood out because firefighters are not allowed and do not use mobile phones on fire grounds. I cannot remember exactly what was being said. I asked the officer what he wanted us to do and he replied "Not now, in there" and motioned to inside the tower.

We entered Grenfell Tower through the rear door and I could see about fifty (50) firefighters congregated in the lobby area. As we entered, the pane of glass next to the door was being smashed by a fire fighter. I do not know why this was happening and there was another pane of glass on the other side that was also being smashed. I had paired up with CM MAYNE and am not sure if the other two in crew entered the tower with us or not. I saw Watch Manager (WM) Glyn WILLIAMS from G35 Fulham writing details of FSG calls on a wall in the lobby. Firefighters were carrying people out of the tower that they had rescued and as they left WM WILLIAMS was shouting out asking where they had been rescued from so that he could cross that floor or flat off the wall as rescued. Various entry control boards had been set up in the lobby as well for officers to put their BA tallies in. The firefighters waiting to go up the tower were stood over on one side to let those coming out with casualties past quickly. There were numerous people being brought out by firefighters. In the time it took us to go in to the lobby and get our brief, six (6) or seven (7) minutes, about ten (10) people including children were carried out of the tower.

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The lobby did have some wispy white and grey smoke in it. Visibility was still fine though and you were able to breathe in there without wearing your mask. A designated safety officer told us to go to the front of the queue as we were EDBA, to get deployed straight away. CM MAYNE and myself went to the entry control boards and spoke to Divisional Manager (DM) Pat GOULBOURNE. The first task that he gave us was to go to Flat one hundred and thirteen (113) to search for and rescue a mother and baby or small child. This was immediately changed before we had even gone up the stairs and we were retasked with going to the third (3rd) and fourth (4th) floors to search for and rescue any persons up there and if needed, to allow us to perform the search and rescue, to firefight as required. We were told that there was a branch on the third (3rd) floor that had been left there by a previous crew. A branch is what we a nozzle on the end of a hose which can squirt water at a variable rate and is shaped like a pistol. Just before I went up the stairs, I saw Danny Cotton, The Brigade Commissioner, who would have been incident commander. She came into the lobby and said to us that it was an incident like no other, that she was proud and for us to carry on and be careful.

We gave in our tallies and donned our breathing masks before going up the two (2) flights of stairs in the lobby. Once we had ascended those we walked across the balcony that goes across the top of the lobby from the stairs to a room that takes you to the main stairwell. We entered this room, opening the door that separated it from the balcony and it was filled with thick grey acrid smoke. There was water coming down the stairwell at a rate of slightly more than a trickle which I think must have been from the firefighting operation that was going on upstairs. There was another firefighter in this room. I do not know what he was doing but he was not wearing any BA.

We started to ascend the stairs. The higher up we got the thicker and darker the smoke became but you could see through it. The lighting in the stairwell was on and you could see well enough to make out another firefighter across a flight of stairs which was about five (5) metres but not well enough to see who they actually were. I could hear noise of water dripping down the stairs but other than that the stairwell was eerily quiet. The stairwell was approximately one point five (1.5) metres wide, wide enough for two (2) firefighters to walk side by side on it but it was made more difficult by the amount of hose lines on the stairs. There was a handrail in the middle of the stairwell but I cannot remember if there was one on the outer wall. Firefighters who had been up before us had written the floor number for each floor on the wall

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of the stairwell in chinagraph but it was not always possible to make this out through the smoke.

On our way up the stairs, just before we got to the third (3rd) floor, we came across a crew of two (2) firefighters carrying an unconscious male casualty down the stairs. The man was white with tanned skinned, about fifty (50) years old and slightly overweight. I think he was about average height but it was difficult to tell as he was not standing up. He was completely naked and they were struggling to carry him down as he was wet. I think the firefighters carrying him down were Dean NELSON, the driver of my crew and Aldo DIANA who may well have been in my crew as well but I cannot remember for certain. Aldo has now retired but was another firefighter based at Battersea Fire Station. I said to them "Leave him with us" and they hand us the lifeless male. We took him straight down the stairs, I held the legs and went down the stairs first, with CM MAYNE following behind me carrying the male by his hands.

[REDACTED] It took us about one (1) minute to get down the stairs and back to entry control with the male. An officer saw us come out onto the balcony with the male and rushed up the lobby stairs followed by another firefighter. They took the male from us and I told them that we had been handed him in the stairwell by the third (3rd) floor. After handing him over, we turned around headed straight back up to the third (3rd) floor.

It took us about twenty (20) seconds to get up the stairs to the third (3rd) floor and when we got there we and opened the door into the lobby area on that floor, having identified the floor by the writing in chinagraph on the stairwell wall. The lobby was clearer than the stairwell. CM MAYNE had picked up a branch either from the stairwell on the third (3rd) floor or within the lobby area, I cannot remember exactly which. We were the only firefighters on the third (3rd) floor and began to search, starting with the flat to the left behind the entrance to the stairs meaning we had to make a u-turn to get to it. I cannot remember if the door to this flat was open or shut but I remember that the majority of doors to all the flats were either open or burnt off, leaving only the hinges on the door frame. It was like this on all the floors that I went on. I would not be able to say the numbers of any of the flats that we went in to.

We went to from flat to flat on the third (3rd) floor, quickly searching each one for any people, shouting "Fire brigade" as we went in to try and attract attention for anyone who might be in there. We used the light from our personal torches on our tunics to light up each room we entered. We did not find anybody

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in any of the flats. I could tell that the flats had previously been well alight and the fire in each was now in decay with small pockets of flames but the majority of the fire had now died down. The majority of the items in the flats had been burnt to the ground and were now ash and cinders. Moving through the flats was like walking through a bonfire that had started to go out. A lot of the windows had gone, either smashed by the residents or knocked out by the fire and, in some cases, the frames were also gone.

The fire was still going in rear right flat and when CM MAYNE opened the door he was met with a wall of fire. He used the branch to fight the fire and after two (2) minutes of doing this we had only progressed two (2) metres further into the flat. We shouted "Fire Brigade" into the flat on the chance that someone who was inside might hear us but there was no response. The chances of them hearing us over the crackling fire were very slim and it was unlikely that we would hear a faint cry in reply. It seemed like the whole flat was on fire and I thought that the chances of finding someone alive in there were zero. We were having very little impact on the fire and it seemed fruitless to continue fighting the fire when there were more flats to go and search. CM MAYNE said to me let's move on to the next flat and we went on to search the fifth (5th) flat on that floor. Other than the flat that was still on fire, we went in every room in each flat to look for people. Some of the partition walls had gone so you could see right through the whole flat. The searches we conducted were very quick and we only spent three (3) or four (4) minutes on the third (3rd) floor. We went back through the lobby of the third (3rd) floor and into the stairwell. The conditions in there were the same as they had been before and we made our way up the stairs to the fourth (4th) floor. CM MAYNE left the branch on the third (3rd) floor. The hoses weigh a lot and are difficult to get around bends and corners like that of those in the stairwell in between flights. It was fruitless firefighting in these conditions and our primary focus was on searching for and rescuing anyone who was still inside.

I do not think we saw anyone on the stairwell as we went up. The conditions on the fourth (4th) floor were very similar to the third (3rd) in terms of smoke and visibility. We searched all of the flats but did not find anyone and I cannot remember anything specific about that floor. It is difficult to say if any firefighting had occurred prior to us going up there and I could not say which flats I went in specifically as most of the doors were burnt off. Once all of the flats had been searched we opened the door on the lobby and went back into the stairwell. I could hear the noise of a struggle above us and shouted "What's up?" up the stairwell. I heard a voice that I recognise as Dean's shout "Give me a hand." I do not know if

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this was directed at us but knew that something was going on so we went up to help.

We climbed up one (1) flight of stairs and saw Dean dragging a girl down the stairs by himself but her arm had got stuck in the bannister. She was a young girl, about twelve (12) years old, with tanned white skin like she was from the Mediterranean and black frizzy hair. She was of a slight build and wearing shorts and a crop top that had ridden up leaving her torso naked. I have seen her since on the television with her father, mother and sister and know from seeing that her mother lost a baby.

Dean was trying to free her arm which was stuck on the corner and both CM MAYNE and myself went to help. Dean was able to free her arm and Aldo appeared. I am not sure if Aldo was part of the earlier rescue but am certain he was with us for this one. The four (4) of us carried the girl down the stairs; me and CM MAYNE held a leg each, going down the stairs first, and Dean and Aldo each held an arm following us. We were able to walk down the stairs in pairs with the girl in between us.

The adrenaline was still pumping and I did not feel fatigued in anyway. It took us about one (1) minutes to get her down the stairs. Water was coming down the stairwell and it felt relatively cool in there.

Once we got to the balcony of the ground floor lobby area a man who I know to be her father was waiting with his arms up in the air. At the time I did not know who he was and we barged past him to get the girl out of the tower. He also looked like he was from the Mediterranean and had a shaved head with stubble. He was of a slim build and looked about forty (40) years old. He did not say anything to us but looked panicked and followed us after we had gone past him. Some firefighters came up the lobby stairs and we handed the girl to them. Dean told me later that he had seen the man up the stairs and he had said to him that he had lost his daughter.

By now we had been in the tower for about twenty (20) minutes. We had not run out of air but had completed our brief so we went back down to entry control and collected our tallies before going outside for some fresh air. I cannot remember which exit we took out of the tower but as we left the lobby was still rammed with firefighters waiting to go through entry control and the smoke was not particularly bad. I am not sure if Dean and Aldo left with CM MAYNE and myself.

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We went outside and dropped our BA sets in an alleyway to the left of the tower which I have drawn on exhibit MLU/02. There were lots of other firefighters dropping their sets there and having a rest. I drank about three (3) litres of water before going back to the truck to get a snack. I knew I would go into the tower again so we wanted to relax, cool ourselves down and eat before going back in. There were still lots of distressed people who seemed in shock and again there were a lot of people on mobile phones. I rested at the truck with CM MAYNE, and Firefighter Leon WHITELY for about twenty (20) minutes. There were about four (4) or five (5) fire engines parked up around us, one of which was Croydon's FRU and I briefly spoke to the crew as I know them. One of the machines wanted to get past so I moved our engine forward and round to the right, further into the dead end.

A black man then came up to me with his friend and asked if I had been to the ninth (9th) floor. I said "No I've been up to the fourth (4th). Why?" He said "See the flat on the corner of ninth (9th) floor, my Dad's in that flat." I said to him "My colleagues are up there trying to get people out." The man replied "Look at it, it's one hundred (100) percent alight. He's gone." I did not really know what to say so I said "Look I'm sorry, we're trying our best."

With EDBA you are only expected to do one (1) wear. You can be asked to do a second (2nd) wear but it is your choice whether to or not depending on how you feel. If you are clearly too exhausted or unwell to do it then an officer can also stop you from doing a second one even if you want to. Two (2) wears is the absolute limit though and you cannot even volunteer to do more wears than this. CM MAYNE and I discussed it and both said that we felt fine to do a second wear of the EDBA and made our way back to the tower which was still well alight with debris falling off.

There were loads of ambulances around the tower and a triage area had been set up in the alleyway at the rear of the tower for casualties from the tower to be taken to. A lot more police officers had also arrived and some of them were using their riot shields to ferry firefighters to and from the tower to protect them from debris.

We went back to where we had left our BA sets, CM MAYNE's was still there but mine was now missing. I had a quick look around the immediate area but it was not there. This annoyed me as it was stopping us from being re-deployed into the tower and CM MAYNE and the other firefighters from my crew were left waiting around for me to find it. In the end I went to the Operational Support Unit that was

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on scene and got a new set from outside the Leisure Centre, where boxes of BA sets had been put. I cannot remember where I got the cylinder of air for the tower from. I then had to unpack the set and perform a Fire Ground A Test. An A Test is a check on equipment that is done when you receive new kit to make sure that it is working properly. It is normally performed at a Fire Station in the BA room but when you have to do it at the site of a fire it is called a Fire Ground A Test. It took me about twenty (20) minutes to get the kit and get ready to go back in to the tower.

I formed a four (4) man crew with firefighters from my Station including WM Stuart BROWN, Firefighter Adam YAMIN and Firefighter Ricky NUTALL. We went into the tower from the leisure centre side. As debris was still falling from the tower, I grabbed a police riot shield that had been left to one side and held it above my head so that I could get into the tower safely. I used it from the area underneath the walkway all the way up to the door of the tower. I have drawn a sketch of the walkway and the tower including the ladder that was going between the two. I produce this as exhibit MLU/04. Someone from my crew, but I am not sure who, followed behind me under my shield. Nothing hit the shield on the approach to the tower and once we had gone in I put it down by the door for someone else to use if they were leaving the tower.

Upon entering the lobby it was more smoke and water logged than before. The water was now ankle deep, about half a foot deep. The smoke was still white and grey but it was thicker than it was before. There were fewer firefighters in the lobby than earlier and we went through to the rooms where the lifts were to wait to go up. As we went through the lobby into this room I saw my Station Manager from Battersea, Nick MYATT, helping out around the entry control boards. In the room where the lifts were someone had put some chairs, although it was a separate room, about four (4) by five (5) metres wide, the smoke and water conditions were the same as the lobby. We waited in this room for about forty-five (45) minutes which was annoying as we were having to breathe in the smoke as we were not wearing our masks as we had still not gone through entry control. There were thirteen (13) of us waiting in this room; eight (8) sitting down and five (5) standing, in various different teams. They would come in and ask for a team and the next team would go, but generally they were asking for teams of two (2) so we waited for a request for a team of four (4). The radio was still as busy as ever.

I cannot remember who gave the order, but eventually we got given instructions to go and perform search

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and rescue on the twelfth (12th) and thirteenth (13th) floors taking a branch from the eleven (11th) floor to commence firefighting on those floors. We went back through the lobby and handed in our tallies at entry control before going up the stairs in the lobby and into the main staircase. The visibility in the stairwell had reduced and it was now only possible to see about one (1) metre due to the thick smoke. The walls in the stairwell were blackened and it was not possible to see the signs or chinagraph writing of which flat they were. The stairs were not particularly hot and there was no noticeable noise.

When we had ascended the stairs to the ninth (9th) or tenth (10th) floor we came across a very large white woman, approximately fifty (50) years old who appeared to be deceased. She was lying face down on the last two (2) to three (3) steps of the flight of stairs that she was on, with her head on the bottom of the flight. I could not see her face which was in the water going down the stairs that was about one (1) inch deep at this point. There was a firefighter there who said to us that she was dead but he was unable to move her having tried. She was lifeless and I wondered if she was dead or not but the way she was lying with her face in the water meaning that she had probably drowned already if she was not already dead when she came to be in this position. I did not think that there was anything we could do for her. I felt awful as we had to climb over her to continue going up the stairs and we had to step on her to get past as there was no other way round. She was tangled in the hoses which were also going up the stairs. I cannot remember seeing anyone else other than the woman and the firefighter on our way up the stairs.

About two (2) minutes thirty (30) seconds after we had entered the stairwell, WM BROWN found the branch on the eleventh (11th) floor but it was so tangled that we could not move it. We even tried going down the stairs to try and untangle it. We spent about three (3) minutes struggling with it but were only able to move the branch about two (2) metres further up the stairs. We would have needed a firefighter on each corner of the stairwell to have been able to move it properly so WM BROWN made the decision that we should leave it and go up the stairs to conduct the search and rescue.

We continued up the stairs to the twelfth (12th) floor and went onto the lobby, I cannot remember if the door to the lobby from the stairs was open or shut. Every flat on the twelfth (12th) floor was completely incinerated, you could make out metal objects like mattress springs but everything else was rubble. The chances of finding anyone alive were very slim but we conducted a systematic search of each flat, one firefighter going to search one flat to get them done quickly. As I went into the flats I shouted "Fire

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Brigade” to try and attract the attention of anyone who was in there. The fire was mostly in a state of decay but there were still pockets of flames in the charcoal and embers that remained. We searched the whole floor in about two (2) minutes and, as we did not find anyone, we went up to the thirteenth (13th) floor.

There was more smoke on the thirteenth (13th) floor in the lobby area but your visibility was about three (3) metres. There was no fire in the lobby but the flats were all a lot more on fire than the twelfth (12th) floor. As we had not been able to bring the branch up there was not a lot that we could do. We could not firefight without any firefighting media or anything to extinguish the fire and we could only really get about halfway into each flat before the fire was too much for us to search. I shouted “Fire Brigade” in all of the flats that we went to but there was no response and again we did not find anyone. All of the doors to the flats on this floor were burnt off. After a couple of minutes, we came back out of the floor on to the stairwell and WM BROWN went upstairs to look at the fourteenth (14th) floor to see if we could perform search that floor for people. He came back down after opening the lobby door and said that the floor was well alight and it was pointless going up to it without the firefighting media. I did not see the fire on that floor myself. WM BROWN then said that we should go back down the stairs.

I cannot remember how much air we had left when we went back down the stairs but it would have been less than our first wear due to the physical exertion that we put into trying to move the hose. We went down the stairs and had to go back over the lady who was still in the stairwell. I saw two (2) firefighters in the stairwell doing things but I cannot remember exactly what they were doing. It took us about the same amount of time to go down the stairs as it did to go up them and the conditions in the stairwell were the same as on the way up.

Once we got to the ground floor we collected our tallies from entry control and went out of the building using the same door as we had entered from, again using a riot shield to get away from the tower safely. We dropped our BA sets and sat on the wall outside the leisure centre, having something to eat and drink. An officer came up to us and asked what we were doing and we said that we were resting following two (2) wears of EDBA. The officer replied “That’s you done then, you should go back.” The officer took our call sign and some other details and then left. We stayed outside the leisure centre for about forty-five (45) minutes waiting for the whole crew to assemble and so that we were refreshed from our EDBA wear.

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Once everyone was together we walked back to our engine as a group. The tower remained alight whilst we were outside the leisure centre and was still on fire when we left but not quite so much debris was falling as had done earlier. Whilst we were outside the tower, My colleagues took a few photographs of the tower. I produce these as exhibits MLU/05 and MLU/06.

Once back at the truck we had to wait about twenty (20) minutes for other engines to move before Dean was able to move ours. There were a lot more people on the streets by this time and journalists asked if we wanted to give statements to which we replied no. We were told to go to Paddington Fire Station for a de-brief before going back to our base stations. At the de-brief we were told that we had to make a statement and this is where I made the notes that I exhibited as MLU/01. We were asked how we were feeling and had to do a mini counselling session but we were so tired we did not stay for that. There were a lot of fire engines at Paddington, the road was lined with them and the crew of each was being dealt with separately. We were at Paddington for about two (2) hours. After that we went back to Battersea where we were released from duty at 1400 hours.

I have seen fire spread like that before but not on that scale. As a general rule if you have a fire in a flat they are compartmentalised as long as doors are shut. This fire did not remain in any rooms, it just engulfed the whole building. In this situation there were no compartments, the flats were just voids.

I have been asked about the stay put policy. This is a policy that if someone is trapped in their flat by fire or smoke they are told to stay in that compartment until the fire brigade come in and rescue them. It is safer for us to take people out through smoke log than for them to try and get themselves out. On the night of the fire I was not given any direction as to what the FSG advice was. I knew that FSG was going on but not what was being said so I would not be able to say if residents were told to stay put or not. I did not give out any FSG and the advice that was being given was not relevant to what I was doing.

I did not see any sprinklers or a dry riser, none of my tasks related to them so I was not looking out for them.

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Three (3) days after the fire, I went back to the tower for USAR. When I went back, in the lobby I saw a control panel for the smoke vents in the stairwell and they were switched off. The smoke vents should always be left on and this would have contributed to the smoke log in the stairwell on the night of the fire.

[REDACTED]

I have been asked if there was anything that I think could have assisted on the night of the fire or that could have been done better. We managed to go into the tower and do things like we would normally do. I did not really think on the night about anything that should be being done differently, I was focussed on doing what I was tasked with. Without knowing the full details of what went on with the fire it is difficult for me to say what could have assisted us further.

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