

PROCEEDINGS IN TERMS OF SECTION 29

HELD AT
The logo for the South African Security Agency (SASA) is positioned behind the text. It features the letters 'SASA' in a stylized, bold font. The 'S' and 'A' are larger and more prominent, with the 'S' on the left and the 'A' on the right. The 'S' and 'A' are connected at the top. The 'S' has a circular element at its base, and the 'A' has a triangular element at its base. The logo is rendered in a light, semi-transparent grey color.
DURBAN

ON 13 NOVEMBER 1996

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PROCEEDINGS RESUMED ON 1996/11/13

CHAIRMAN: Apologies for the late delay. This is as I have said an investigative inquiry in terms of section 29 of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act. The inquiry will begin as soon as the first witness has been sworn in and will continue until the witness has satisfactorily answered questions that'll be put to him by this panel. We've set aside most of the day to hear this evidence but we may adjourn the proceedings and we may resume at a later stage and there will be appropriate breaks during the course of the day. After we have sworn in the interpreters and the transcribers and the witness, I will give more detail of the various duties, obligations and rights of both parties - that's the witness and the Commission - in terms of the Act. So the first thing then I would like to do is to swear in the transcribers - sorry, the people who'll be doing the recording. If there is a necessity to have translation we will swear in the translators as well but for the moment we'll just swear in the person doing the recording.

RECORDING MACHINE OPERATOR DULY SWORN IN

CHAIRMAN: I think we'll have the translators to take the oath as well.

TRANSLATORS DULY SWORN IN

/FRANKS

FRANK SANDY BENNETTS (Sworn states)

CHAIRMAN: This is an investigative inquiry in terms of section 29 of the Act, Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act. The Commission believes that you are in possession of information which it requires in order to fulfil its obligations in terms of the Act and for this reason a notice has been served on you, calling on you to come here and to answer certain questions. I want to stress that this is an investigative inquiry and that no finding is going to be made to your detriment or otherwise at this hearing. In terms of the Act you are obliged to answer questions even though they may incriminate you and if you refuse to answer those questions you may be compelled to answer them in terms of mechanisms granted to us under the Act and if you refuse thereafter to answer questions you may be in contempt of the Act and you may be prosecuted for a criminal offence. In terms of the Act, any evidence which you give here today is not admissible against you in any criminal proceedings. Do you understand that? ---

Yes, I do.

Except if you are charged with perjury arising out of you giving different or conflicting versions of an incident. --- I understand that.

And that brings me to the next point which is that you are under an obligation to be truthful and honest with the Commission in your answers and that if you are not, you may be charged with perjury. Do you understand that? --- I understand that, Sir.

You also have the right to legal representation

which I believe that you are aware of and that for the
/purposes
purposes of this hearing you have waived that right.

--- I have. I do understand my rights and I have waived that right.

Is there anything that you wish to say before we proceed with the questioning? --- Yes, two things.

First of all, I would like my wife to be present in the hearing. She's waiting outside the door. My request in this regard is that I feel I would like an independent witness of my own if required later on to be present during the entire proceedings here.

Okay. In terms of the Act, if this is to be an investigative inquiry, no person other than the person subpoenaed or called upon to appear and members of the Commission staff may be present, but we understand your request to have your wife with you. If we permitted her in at this stage, this being a section 29 investigative inquiry, we would be in breach of the Act but we are at liberty to convert these proceedings to an investigative hearing - it's a subtle difference. I'm not going to go in to it - which means that she can be part of a general audience. It also means that other members of the public may also be present, I have to warn you of that. --- I've got no objection to that, Sir.

Okay, then we can ask your wife to come in then. Do you want her to sit with you on the stage or do you want her to sit in the audience? --- No, it's not necessary. She can sit in the audience.

She may sit with you if she wants to but she may be more comfortable ... (incomplete) --- No, I

think she can sit at the bottom. It's not a problem.

MR GOVENDER: Mr Chairman, may the ruling be made that

/ the hearing

the hearing is now a hearing not an inquiry.

CHAIRMAN: Ja. This will then proceed not as a section 29 investigative inquiry. It will proceed as a hearing in terms of section 29 of the Act. --- I understand that, Sir.

Mr Govender?

MR GOVENDER: Mr Chairman, ... (inaudible) ... before I proceed I want to place on record that the subpoena has been properly served and there has been no objections to that.

QUESTIONED BY MR GOVENDER:

Now, Mr Bennetts, it's been explained to you by the Chairperson of the panel your rights and your obligations to speak the truth and to answer the questions that are being put to you. Before I begin, Mr Bennetts, I want to say that - to sketch a background of your personal life - details of that. The importance of that is that it will assist us as we go along if we have on record your personal details that we don't have then to refer to them each time we go through the procedure of asking questions. Is that acceptable to you? --- That is acceptable, Sir. Before proceeding, I would just like to make enquiry into something here, is that I have, during the course of my career signed a copy of the Official Secrets Act and I'd like to know how that is going to affect my testimony here.

CHAIRMAN: Ja, that - you did mention that to

Mr Govender before the inquiry started - or the hearing started and, as I have already mentioned, nothing that you say here today is admissible in any court of law

/other other than if a charge of perjury arises out of what you have said where you contradict yourself or you offer two versions. But if - I think you did request that you be given a letter to that effect. We can do that after the hearing and I give you an undertaking that I will let you have a letter to that effect.

--- Thank you, Sir, then it's acceptable. I'm prepared to continue.

MR GOVENDER: Mr Bennetts, what are you presently doing, Mr Bennetts? I'm presently self-employed.

Self-employed. As? Private investigator.

Private investigation. You served with the SAP for a long time. Is that correct? --- That is correct, Sir.

When did you commence your service with the SAP?

--- I can't give you an exact date. It was during July of 1981.

July of 1981. --- That is correct, Sir.

And in which section of the SAP did you serve at?

--- At that point I was currently at Voortrekker Hoogte undergoing my basic military training and we were approached by members of the South African Police Service at the army camp asking for volunteers to do their national service in the SAP as opposed to the military. I was one of the number that did volunteer and we transferred to the police college. So at that

point I was at the police college in Pretoria at some stage during July of '81, yes.

That's in 1981 when you commenced? --- Yes, that is correct, Sir.

And where were you posted after the college?

--- After college I was posted to C R Swart Square in

/Stanger

Stanger Street here in Durban.

Stanger Street. Which branch did you work in?

--- Uniformed branch. I was on the patrol van attending complaints, working and cells.

For how long did you do that type of work, Mr Bennetts? --- Approximately 18 months I would say. Maybe a bit longer. At that point I was still a national serviceman as well. In December of 1982 I then joined the SAP as a permanent member and I was sworn in again then as a permanent member.

And still in the uniformed branch? --- Still in the uniformed branch, yes, Sir.

And you were stationed still at C R Swart? ---

Still at C R Swart, yes, Sir.

How long did you spend in the uniformed branch?

From '82 ... (incomplete) --- Possibly till about '85 or '86.

And where did you go then? --- From there I went to the riot unit.

Which riot unit was that, Mr Bennetts? ---

The Durban-based riot unit. I think it was riot unit No 8 or No 9, I'm not sure, but it was the Durban-based riot unit.

Yes. Where were they based? --- At what used

to be the Point prison.

Point prison. Who was your commander then of the riot unit? --- I think it was a Major van der Merwe who was in charge of the entire unit, yes.

And as a member of the riot unit what activities did you engage in? --- Basically riot control, working in locations.

/Locations.

Locations. And which locations did you work at?

--- Numerous. Lamontville, Chesterville, KwaMashu, KwaMakhutha, Ntuzuma.

Where were you stationed from '85/'86? ---

Well, we were all stationed at the unit there. We went out and worked in different locations.

Did you work in Chesterville? --- I did, yes, Sir.

What period did you work in Chesterville from?

--- I'd say about 18 months or two years during the same period.

That's from '85/'86? --- I'd say from about - I'm speaking under correction but I think from about '85 into early '87.

Now, within the riot unit, Mr Bennetts, was there a sub-unit that you were part of? --- I don't understand what you mean by that, Sir.

Was the riot unit itself broken up into different sub-sections or sub-units as such? --- Ja. Yes, it was. Obviously what they did was the areas were divided up and we worked in specific areas.

And the areas that you were working in as a sub-unit? --- Well, moved around. Mainly in was Chesterville, yes.

Mainly Chesterville. Were you based in Chesterville, Mr Bennetts, or were you based in the Point area? --- By what you say "based" we worked from the old beer hall in Chesterville but we were still based at the unit in Point.

When you say "worked from the beer hall" what does that mean? Can you just explain that? --- Well,

/they they set up a sub-station at the beer hall after it had been burnt down. It was administered, from a crime point of view, by Cato Manor SAP. We also set up a base from which we operated at the same location and also the military, the army, based themselves at the same location as well during the period that they were there.

This was at the burnt-out beer hall at the in Chesterville? --- At the burnt-out beer hall in Chesterville.

Where exactly was that beer hall? --- It was in Road 1 in Chesterville. I can say almost directly opposite where the municipal offices were.

Are those premises still there? --- I believe so, yes.

Are they still being used by the SAP? --- I don't know. I haven't been there in years.

Okay. When did you leave the SAP? --- In January of this year.

January of this year. Did you buy a discharge? --- I did, yes, Sir.

Now, I want you to tell us, Mr Bennetts, about your activities with the riot unit, as such, operating

from Chesterville.

CHAIRMAN: Sorry, can I just interrupt, Mr Govender.

Just to complete the picture of Mr Bennetts service with the SAP. After the riot unit you went to the security branch, is that right? --- That's correct, yes, Sir.

When was that? --- I was still based or stationed at the riot unit for some 18 months or so. A group of us went across to the security branch and we assisted with investigations of suspected persons having /- who were - who were suspected of having left the country to undergo military training outside. After the 18 month period, myself and some of the other members that were with us with that investigation unit were transferred permanently over to the security branch.

Okay. Any who was your commanding officer there?

--- During which period? Before or after, Sir?

Before or after what? When you were in the security branch. --- There was - there was - the senior officer of the branch here in Durban did change but I fell under a specific section most of the time who is now Colonel Andy Taylor, was then Major Andy Taylor.

Okay. And you were in the security branch until you purchased your discharge? --- No, Sir. In 1991, if I'm not mistaken, I at my own request went back to uniformed branch. I took a transfer - or for some few months while I was waiting for a transfer, final transfer, I worked at Malvern again and thereafter I went to Thornville SAP out in the Baynesfield area and it was from there that I took my

discharge this year.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Sorry, if I may just confirm something, please. Mr Bennetts, you've indicated that you worked in a particular section. What section was that? --- At the security branch, Sir?

Yes. Maybe you could just explain to us ... (intervention) --- The section referred to as C Section. It was the terrorist section.

What were the other sections, just for the record, so we can get a picture? --- A, B, C, D and E if I remember correctly.

And what was the differentiation between them?

/--- C Section
--- C Section investigated - we were responsible for the investigation of the terrorists, the training of the terrorists, the ~~explosions that~~ took place, acts of terrorism. A Section in particular was responsible, if I - I'm speaking under correction here, Sir, it's some years back - A Section was responsible for information and disinformation.

And B? --- If I tell you what it is, I'd be lying but I seem to recall that B Section investigated organisations which was then the UDF, churches, all this sort of thing, the Black Sash.

And then what would D and E and F have been?

--- One section dealt specifically with recording, tapping of telephones, that sort of thing. I think that was D. I could have D and E mixed up. I'm not sure.

All right, and the other two? --- It was just - one of them was the administration as far as I

recall. I think we ended at E.

At E? --- Ja.

Okay. Who would have done things like interception of post and all that sort of stuff? ---

That would have been this D Section. I think it was D Section.

D Section? --- Ja.

Now, who was your other commanding officer before Major Taylor at that time? --- Major Taylor was my direct commanding officer of C Section from the time I got there.

Right. --- At some point Colonel, who was then a Major, Waring ... (intervention)

Warey? --- Waring.

Waring? --- Waring - took over the C Section /table
table from - there was a big restructuring at one point and he took it over and Colonel Taylor left.

How do you spell Waring? W-A-R-I-N-G? --- I think W-E-A - I'm not sure, Sir. I think W-E-A-R-I-N-G.

Thank you, Chairperson.

MR GOVENDER: Mr Bennetts, just again, the security branch - when did you commence? --- When did I commence?

Yes. --- I think about - round about 1987.

'87. And you say you were in C Section? ---

Yes, Sir.

And you were in charge of terrorists. Is that correct? --- I was not in charge of ... (intervention)

C Section was actually responsible for that type

of investigations. Is that correct? --- That is correct.

Explain to us what that type of work entailed.

--- All right. Well, from the top, the investigation of the criminal dockets into the explosions and things that were occurring, acts of terrorism. The arrest, the tracing, the arrest, the interrogation of suspected or known terrorists as they were called at the time. Also the following up on information pertaining to persons who had left the country for training. Serving warnings on their family, their immediate family, attempting to get photographs of these guys or females and compiling of report to this effect for centralised training - publication by Pretoria - or printing, not publication. That's the wrong word, I'm sorry.

/Is that

Is that it? --- That was basically it in general, ja.

Now, during the period from '87 you were based in Chesterville, that's right? --- Prior to '87 I was based at Chesterville, yes.

Prior to '87. During your service with the security branch were you ever based in Chesterville?

--- No, we worked from C R Swart and we worked large areas all over the place.

During the time at Chesterville did you come across a group called the A-Team? --- Yes, I did, Sir.

What do you know about the A-Team, Mr Bennetts?

--- The A-Team were a group of, at that time, Inkatha supporters. They lived mainly in Road 13 in

Chesterville. There were however a few of them scattered elsewhere. They obviously had conflict with the then UDF or the ANC supporters in the township.

Well, what was the relationship of the riot unit with the A-Team? What was the relationship? --- We made use of them for informers and for identification purposes.

Who made use of them? When you say "we", who ... (intervention) --- Just about everybody that was in the police force in Chesterville at the time.

Did you sub-unit use them? --- Yes, we did.

Yes. When you say "made use of them", can you explain to us the extent at which you made use of them and how you made use of them? --- Yes, certainly.

Basically they were used for identification of perpetrators of other offences. For example, if we had a suspicion that a person may have been the person whom

/we were we were looking for for a certain case, obviously when you picked this guy up he denied who he was and we would take him up to the police station, pick up some of these guys. They would come through with a balaclava on and peep through a little hole or something and positively identify the guy for us. It was not done as a proper ID parade is done, legally, but it was sufficient for us to identify the guy and give us reason to detain him.

Did you personally know members of the A-team?

--- Yes, I did, Sir.

Did you know the leader of the A-Team at that time? What was his name? --- I'm not sure if he

was the leader but the guy I presumed was the leader was a guy by the name of Pops or Poppin. I don't know his surname.

Poppin? --- Ja, Poppin. I think his name was Poppin. They just called him Pops.

Did the - did your unit pay members of the A-Team for their services? --- No, Sir.

Not at all? --- Not that I'm aware of, no.

Did the ... (intervention)

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Sorry, Chairperson, before we move away from this issue, what other members of the A-Team do you know - are you able to identify for us? --- I knew another guy by the name of Face.

Face? --- Face, ja. I just knew him as Face. They actually went around using these nicknames of - you remember the old A-Team that used to be on TV?

Yes. --- There was this Colonel and them. They used those same names, so - I don't know. Who were they? There was Face. I can't really recall the names

/of the of the old A-Team on that TV series. Those were the four main guys. Was Face, Poppin was supposedly the Colonel, as far as I recall. But they based it on the characters of the A-Team series.

Clearly there were more than four people involved in the A-Team. --- Yes, there were, Sir.

And are you able to tell us who those other people were? Do you know any of their names, apart from their ... (intervention) --- As I sit here, no ... (inaudible) ... I cannot recall names.

Apart from the noms de plumes they have used or their aliases. --- I cannot recall names, Sir.

Okay. Just before we move away from that aspect, do you know when the A-Team was formed and who helped form it or how it got formed? --- No, Sir. I'm not sure. When I arrived in Chesterville, they existed.

What did the A-Team themselves do? --- I don't know ... (intervention)

You say you used them but they existed already as a separate organisation and what were their activities? --- They were, I believe, Inkatha supporters, Sir. We made use of them for identification purposes. We offered them protection to the extent that we put extra patrols into the street where they lived, gave them escorts in and out of the township if and when they required it. They basically lived in a single street in the middle of this township under threat most of the time. And from our point of view just in the riot unit they were prepared to come forward and assist with identification, pass on information, which they regularly did as well.

/The point

The point I'm asking though is what sort of activities were they involved in within the township?

--- There was a conflict going on. They were attacking the other side. The other side was attacking them - on a regular basis.

In terms of their attacks on the other side and the other side's attacks on them, what sort of attacks were these? --- Attacks. Houses were burnt down.

People were shot. People were necklaced.

What sort of weapons were used? --- I don't know. Anything from bloody bush-knives to axes, petrol bombs, tyres.

You said people were shot. --- People were shot, ja.

Firearms? --- Firearms were used.

What sort of firearms? --- I presume most of the time were home-made firearms. I presume. I don't know. At that time there weren't very many manufactured running around.

Carry on, Mr Govender.

MR GOVENDER: Thank you. Mr Bennetts, the activities that the A-Team were involved in, were they criminal activities? --- Strictly in the sense of the word, I would say some of them certainly. Some of them were prosecuted.

How were you introduced? Who introduced you to the A-Team? --- I can't give you a name. Upon our arrival in the location we were told by the guys that were there before us - I speak for myself. Upon my arrival in the location I was told by the members that were already there that this is the crowd, this is where /they they are, this is where they live, this is what they do.

These are the A-Team itself? --- The A-Team itself.

So you were introduced to them in that manner?

--- In that manner, yes, Sir.

Did you have recourse to using them personally in your work in Chesterville or anywhere else? ---

Yes, I did.

And how did you use them and on what occasions did you use them? --- Mainly for identification and for obtaining information.

Identification of who? --- Of other perpetrators of offences.

What? Criminal ... (intervention) ---
Criminal offences, yes.

Were they not used for identifying political activists? --- No, not in the strict sense of the word, no. I wasn't at that stage involved in any of the political activists' activities.

You were involved purely, say, in criminal investigations? --- In criminal investigations.

Okay. --- It developed in Chesterville - in other areas as well, but you can almost call the area - it developed into a no-go zone for the normal CIDs and things. So I would liaise on a regular basis, or we would as members in Chesterville with the local CIDs at Mayville, everywhere else. They were looking for suspects: They would give us names, for example.

We would go and speak to the A-Team guys and the A-Team guys would tell us where these guys stayed, where we would find them, where they were hiding. When we picked /them them up, they would identify the guy for us. We would then go and detain him and the CIDs would carry on with him.

Mr Bennetts, I want you to explain to us what was the work of the riot unit in Chesterville. Were they involved in investigating individual crimes? ---

Not - I said primary investigation, yes.

What do you mean by primary investigation? ---

Primary investigation is that normally we were the guys that were first on the scene.

Yes. --- In which case you would make your primary inquiries, your primary investigation and escort the CIDs in to come and take over.

And the identification of perpetrators, was that part of your responsibility in terms of the primary investigations? --- It became part of our responsibility because the CIDs couldn't get in and do it on their own. They would have been attacked and shot at, which they were on a regular basis.

So essentially you formed a support to the CIDs.

Is that correct? --- That is correct. If I can out it that way, yes.

And the main task of investigating and identifying perpetrators was really the task of the CIDs. Isn't that correct? --- It was, yes.

So if anybody had recourse to using the A-Team for identification purposes, it would be the CIDs.

Isn't that correct? --- I think they did use them as well, yes.

To what extent were you required as a member of the riot unit to identify and apprehend perpetrators using

/the A-Team?

the A-Team? --- I don't believe I was required to do so.

Yes. --- They became a tool that assisted in our functions.

In your functions as doing primary investigation, is that right? --- As my functions as a police

officer to investigate crime.

But essentially as a riot unit member and as a riot unit sub-unit you were responsible for doing what primarily? --- Maintaining peace. (Side A of tape ends. Side B begins mid-sentence)

... that road? --- I've got no idea.

You've got no idea? --- They were there when I got there. There were some scattered around and during the period I was there others came and joined them. Abandoned other houses and joined them in the road.

In the road? --- They took up the road almost - you can call it almost as a castle for want of a better word. It became an area where they would look after themselves and protect themselves in a small area.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Sorry, Mr Govender, I'm a bit confused here. I'm a bit confused about something. If I could just ask ... (Break in recording) ... --- Yes, Sir.

Whose houses were those? --- There were A-Team people already living there and they came in and moved into the existing houses with the existing members of the A-Team.

So they moved into houses already occupied by the A-Team members? --- Yes, Sir.

What other people lived in that road? ---
Males /and females
and females presumably all supporters of the A-Team.

Ordinary people? --- Ordinary people.

Were they obviously A-Team supporters ...
(intervention) --- Obviously, ja.

... or IFP supporters? --- No, obviously A-Team/IFP supporters, yes.

Did they move into any unoccupied houses in that street? --- I don't believe that at any stage there was an unoccupied house. I don't recall, no.

Okay. Thank you.

MR GOVENDER: So you say that when you got to the unit the A-Team were already living at Road 13 in a house. Is that ... (intervention) --- Predominantly, yes. Not in a house, in the entire street.

In the entire street. And in every house lived members of the A-Team. Is that correct? --- Almost every house as far as I recall. I can't say every house.

And you don't know how they came to occupy those houses? --- I've got no idea, Sir.

No idea at all? --- No idea at all. I presume they entered them like everyone else.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: How many houses were in that street? --- Can I just try think about this a minute?

Sure. --- It's been ten years. (Pause) I'd say about 16 to 20 houses on both sides of the road, ja.

Do you have any idea how many people lived in each house on average? I'm just trying to get a sense of how many people there were involved. --- Possibly about five, eight in a house. You see, the thing is they

/didn't

didn't all live in a house. What they would do is the

males, the young males, that were physically involved in protecting themselves and their families, would sleep in houses at the end of the road or in the middle of the road where there were footpaths and things running off. Sleep? I don't even think the guys slept most of the time at night. They sat up looking after themselves. You could drive down there at 2 o'clock in the morning and find their guard out sitting at the end of the road under the trees.

Thank you.

MR GOVENDER: You say - did any of the members of the A-Team's families live in these houses? --- Ja, to begin with, yes.

To begin with. --- To begin with, yes.

When did they stop and why did they stop? ---

Because of the constant attacks.

Constant attacks from whom? --- From the rest of the people in the location.

The rest of the people in the location. ---

Ja.

Now, in relation to those houses, where was your unit stationed in the burnt-out beer hall? ---
Pretty close to the one end of the road.

In the same road? --- No, not in the same road. Road 13 basically runs parallel to Road 1. It's a block away. So it's two houses away and I'd say maybe 100 metres, 150 metres from the gate to the police station to the beginning of the road.

So you were quite close to Road 13? --- Quite close to Road 13, that's correct, Sir.

How many men were stationed there at any one time? /--- From

--- From the police alone?

From your unit. --- From the riot unit?

The police and the army. --- Riot unit, I'd say about 30, 40.

At one time? At any given time? --- Ja. It varied but I'd say that's a good - reasonable average, ja.

Was the security branch active in that area during the time that you were a member of the riot unit? --- I believe they were, yes.

Did they have any people stationed at that sub-station? --- No, not stationed there, no. There was one chap who was basically responsible for the information in Chesterville, Carl Durr was his name, if I remember correctly. He was then a sergeant.

How, do you spell the Durr? --- D-U-Double R.

He was a member of the security branch. Is that correct? --- That is correct.

Now, you said that the A-Team assisted you in mainly identifying perpetrators and so forth. --- That is correct, yes, Sir.

Any other activities that they assisted you with?

--- No, just basically what I've said.

Just with investigations? --- Yes, that's correct, Sir.

And were they rewarded in any way for their assistance? --- No.

Nothing at all? --- Not financially that I know of, no.

Well, how were they rewarded, if any? --- By getting a bit of extra protection from us and escorts,

/like

like I said.

So your unit was responsible for protecting the A-Team. Is that correct? --- No, we were not responsible for protecting the A-Team, no.

You did in fact. --- But we did do so, yes.

And how did you protect them? --- By escorting them in and out of the township and ensuring that we responded when they had a problem in their area where they stayed in Road 13.

So whenever they were attacked by anybody from the rest of the township you would come to their assistance? --- That is correct.

And were there any such attacks? --- There were a few that I recall, yes.

Were you involved in any of those - in defending any of those people during your stay there? --- The attacks on the A-Team, no.

No? --- I do recall, however, one incident but it occurred while I was off-duty, so I can't give first-hand information on it but there was actually information that was received that there was a pending attack and we organised soldiers to lie in the gardens and wait for these guys and the attack did take place and quite a few people got shot.

You organised soldiers to lie - could you repeat that please? --- To lie ambush in one of the gardens in Road 13.

Yes. And you say a lot of people were shot? --- Ja. An attack on the A-Team did take place and the soldiers and policemen responded with firearms and quite a few people were shot, ja.

/And who

And who were the people that were shot? From which side of the ... (intervention) --- From the opposing side - the ANC, UDF.

Do you remember what year that was - the date of that incident? --- Sir, no, I do not recall the year or the date but it was pretty near the beginning of my starting work in Chesterville.

That's round '85, '86? --- I would say about then, ja.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Where would the soldiers have come from? --- They were based at the base with us. At that time ... (intervention)

What unit were they? --- Commandoes mainly. It was - at that time it was mainly made up of the white guys that had been called up to perform camps, two-month camps at a stint. There were occasions when they were relieved by PF guys, by 121 Battalion. The soldiers in the location rotated on a pretty regular basis. They weren't there very long.

Now, these commando or people doing their camps, what units would they have been from? They're all specific units. --- No, it's all - I think it's all mixed up units. You could have guys from six side or from five side but they're all back at home and they then fall under, I presume, Natal Command or one of the local commando units. Group 10, I think, was one of the main ones where they came from and they would be called up.

Group 10, would that have been the main group that would have dealt with Durban and surrounds? ---

I presume so. There was based in - most of my time that

/I was at

I was at Chesterville there was a youngster from Group 10 who was also their intelligence officer. Not an officer. He was a rifleman, if I remember correctly or lance-corporal or something.

What was his name? --- I honestly do not recall, Sir. I can tell you he drove a Mini in and out of the place, his private car. He was at the time - he wasn't a PF guy, I can tell you that as well. He was a national serviceman doing his two-year stint. He was based with intelligence here at Group 10 and he was based in Chesterville specifically. He had more dealings with the A-Team than we did. He was there longer than I was. He was there upon my arrival in fact.

And was he still there when you left? --- I think probably, ja. I can't - I'm speaking under correction. I think so, yes.

What colour was his Mini? --- A little white one.

So Group 10 was based at Natal Command? --- No, Group 10 was based at the old Smith Street police station, next door here.

Did you know any of their officers or people in charge? Did you have any dealings with them? --- Yes, there was a captain. (Pause) I'll try and think of his name during the course of the morning. I do recall a captain that was there who used to liaise on a regular basis with our Captain Hunter who was our commander from - our immediate commander from the riot unit. I don't recall this captain's name. It was a guy from the defence force. I believe he's now -

well, the

/last

last I heard, a few years ago, was officer commander in infantry school in Oudtshoorn.

This chap who was captain at that time? ---

This chap that was here in Group 10, yes.

What was the purpose of having the riot unit there and the defence force there at the same time?

What was the defence force's role? --- Sir, you haven't been in that area when you start to get attacked. Primarily, extra back-up, extra fire-power, primarily.

Who would ensure that the - I mean, on what basis would the SADF people involve themselves in activities? Who would give the command? How was that command structure operated? --- There was always a commander of their own present at the base, sleeping with them there.

But as I understand the law, generally, the SADF would only operate on instructions of the police.

--- That is correct.

So how did that liaison happen? --- This officer would liaise with the senior policeman on duty at the time. Your normal run of the mill things were obviously well planned a day or so in advance where they would plan to set up a road-block or anything like that but when an incident occurred that required immediate action, they fell under the senior SAP member at the scene.

Now, what sort of vehicles or patrols or whatever did these soldiers use in the area? --- Buffels mainly, Buffels.

And your riot unit, what vehicles did you use?

--- Casspirs, Land Cruisers, Safaris. At one stage we had a riot bus there for a while.

/Did your

Did your duties entail patrolling this township?

--- General patrols when nothing was happening and we weren't looking for suspects, yes.

And so the SADF people would only come in if there was a crisis? --- No, they also patrolled.

Did they also patrol? --- They also patrolled.

What sort of reporting functions would you have been required to make at that time? --- Incident reports.

Were you in radio contact with one another? ---

Ja. Wait, I think we're speaking on different things here at the moment.

No, I'm just saying in general. --- In general with the vehicles patrolling?

Yes. --- Unless anything happened, no reporting really. I'm not sure how the army did it. I think they reported on a regular basis. We didn't.

Okay. So you had incident reports. What other sorts of reports? --- In so far as any ammunition, tear gas, anything was used or an incident occurred, the senior member on duty was responsible for the completion of an incident report. All right, this would be radioed or phoned at some later stage. No, I'm speaking under correction. We didn't have a phone at Chesterville. It was radioed through to the main ops room down at Point and the written incident reports were taken through on a semi-regular basis

where they were, I presume, filed.

Who would have been responsible for doing the written reports? --- The man who used to do the equipment, the tear gas or his immediate commander, his sergeant of his section.

/Did you

Did you have to book vehicles when you used them an all that sort of thing? --- Yes, Sir.

Where would those records be? --- I presume also at Point if they still exist.

Where was the main radio control? --- For the riot unit?

Ja. --- At Point.

Were you integrated with the rest of the police system or did you have a separate ... (intervention)

--- We had a separate channel.

What other reports might you have been require to complete or ... (intervention) --- There was an occurrence book. Obviously records of members coming on and off duty in there.

So it would have been like a duty sheet? --- No, an actual occurrence book.

Okay, that's like in the normal charge office.

--- A charge office OB. The same thing. And naturally the good old pocket book.

Where would the charge office OBs have ended up?

--- Either at Cato Manor or at Point. I'm not sure.

Now, you indicated that there were ordinary uniformed branch from Cato Manor that were also at that point that you were at the beer hall. ---

That is correct, Sir.

And what would their duties have been? ---

Attending to members of the public that came in there.

Your normal run of the mill charge office duties. Commissioner of Oath stories, opening of dockets, your normal domestic sort of hassles. There developed a need for it because you couldn't really turn members of the

/public

public away from there. You have a police base there and they wanted a service as well.

They would have kept their own OB? --- Their own OB, yes, sir.

Would all offences that occurred within Chesterville then have been routed through that occurrence book, generally speaking? --- Generally speaking, yes. If the report was made to the Chesterville charge office, or if you want to call it that. You did have incidents where the people went directly to Cato Manor. But bearing in mind that those members were just a sub-group of Cato Manor SAP.

So at the end of the day everything would have ended up at Cato Manor. The CR - the then old CR crime register numbers and things would have all been given from Cato Manor.

Okay. So if we needed to go back and check up particular events and particular offences we would pick it up in the CR registers at Cato Manor? ---

At Cato Manor, nowhere else. The entire Chesterville location at that time fell under the jurisdiction of the Cato Manor police.

Who liaised with Cato Manor police station between your riot unit and the uniformed branch? ---

Our immediate commander in Chesterville.

And who was that for most of the time you were there? --- A warrant-officer, I think, Gouws.

Would it be O-U-W-S or O-U-S? --- No, G-O-U-W-S.

Any idea where he is now? --- No idea, Sir. No, I'm lying to you. It wasn't Gouws. It was Roets. R-O-E-T-S.

/He was

He was a warrant-officer at that time? --- He was a warrant-officer at that time.

Where would he be now? Any idea? --- No idea, Sir.

Still in the police force? --- No idea. Ten years ago.

Okay. Thank you, Mr Govender, you can continue.

MR GOVENDER: Mr Bennetts, you say that you - well, let's put it this way. Do you know of any criminal activities that the A-Team were involved in? --- Yes, I do, Sir.

What activities? --- I know of a group of them being arrested and convicted on a murder count on a house that was petrol-bombed.

Do you know when this incident took place? ---

I seem to recall it was the latter part of one of the years, which year I'm not sure.

Okay. Well, which house? Do you know the location? --- I know where the house is. I can't give you the address. I can go and point it out to you.

You can point out ... (intervention) --- I can point that house out, yes.

A little bit more detail about what happened.
What circumstances was the house petrol-bombed? ---

I remember being called out that night. The house was on fire. A few of my members that worked under my direct command at that time - when I say the house was burning, it was burning. I was one entire flame inside there.

Okay, whose house was it? --- And - I can't recall whose house it was. I know where it is. I can describe to you where it is. It's right at the one end

/of Road

of Road 13.

Is it one of the houses belonging to the A-Team people? --- No, it was a house that was attacked by members of the A-Team. They went and petrol - I presume petrol-bombed it.

And did you investigate that matter? ---
Well, I got there on the scene. My members went in and pulled babies out of the house. Kicked doors down. This is unbelievable that it was, the bloody owners of the house even had the audacity to moan at us for breaking the door but it's their own children we went and pulled out of the house. We got ambulances out. We organised the escort in there. Organised the CIDs out. I believe some of the children at a later stage did die, two or three of them. I also do not recall. The ambulance attendants actually didn't do anything for the children. Just left them to lie in the ambulance to die there on the scene. I recall that as well. I mean, that's enough to drive anybody round the bend, man, but when you've

go and approach the guy, he says the best thing is for them to die. They are so badly burned. The CIDs from Mayville CIDs who used to do the Cato Manor investigations did come out and from what I recall from the incident or even at later stage there was a jacket, a partially burnt jacket recovered at the scene with a name in it which belonged to one of the A-Team guys and he was convicted for it. I don't know, I think he got life. I don't know. I really don't know. It was just one of many incidents.

Who did the investigations for that? ---
Well, we did the primary investigation obviously there at the

/scene

scene but we immediately called out the CIDs on duty.

So did your unit recover the burnt-out jacket?
Is that ... (intervention) --- I cannot recall who recovered it.

But you say that the perpetrator was identified by that jacket. --- By the jacket.

And the perpetrator was convicted? --- Was convicted, yes, Sir.

Now, did you unit ever supply the A-Team with any financial assistance, with weapons, at any time? ---

No, Sir, not that I'm aware of, no.

Did the security branch - are you aware - did the security branch supply the A-Team with weapons and finance at any time? --- Well, as far as financing goes, I cannot comment on, no. As far as weapons go, I don't believe they were supplied with weapons but do believe they were supplied with some shotgun ammunition.

Shotgun ammunition? --- Ja, but it wasn't given - I don't believe directly by the security branch. I think it was done by the defence force.

By the defence force? --- Ja, not the security police.

Okay, when you say ... (intervention) --- There were rumours at the time that their ammunition was being supplied by this youngster who was so-say the intelligence officer from Group 9.

Of the army? --- Of the army.

Yes. --- Was supplying shotgun ammunition to them. I never recovered any. I never saw any.

Who's this young man? --- I don't recall his name, Sir.

/Is it

Is it ... (intervention) --- I'll give it some thought when we ~~break for tea or~~ something. I'll really try and think of it.

Is it the rifleman that you mentioned earlier? --- The rifleman with the Mini. Yes, Sir, that same one.

Did the security branch - my question was did the security branch supply weapons or finance or money to the A-Team at any time. You said you don't know about money but about weapons, do you know anything about that? --- What I was saying was that the ammunition was supplied by the defence force, or so we heard ... (intervention)

By the defence force. --- The security branch, no, not that I know of.

Now, apart from this man - what's his name? Durr, is it? - that you identified as a security man

that visited your unit - was in your unit as such as some time, was there any other security branch personnel - did any of them visit your unit or have contact with anyone in your unit? --- Not that I know of, no. Durr was on occasion visited - accompanied by a couple of black members - other white members whom I didn't know.

Now, what did Durr do when he came to your unit?

What did he do? --- Well, I believe Durr's main function was to just gather information himself for the branch's purposes as to what exactly was going on.

He used to phone me regularly at night, in the mornings, at home. I presume when he got to work he used to phone me when I got home in the mornings and just ask me what had /happened happened during the night and we kept him just updated on all the incidents.

So you kept him updated all the time? ---

Personally on some occasions, ja. I presume he spoke to the commander there as well.

What information did you give him? --- It was just pertaining to incidents that may have occurred during the night or over the weekend.

I see, just incidents that occurred? --- Just incidents that occurred, ja.

Did he acquire information about the A-Team at any time? --- No, not that I recall, no.

Do you know if the security branch had any dealings with the A-Team? --- I would presume so, ja, but not that I know of personally, no.


Why do you presume so, Mr Bennetts? --- Well, just about everybody that had anything to do in

Chesterville had dealings with the A-Team.

When you say anybody that had anything to do in Chesterville had dealings with the A-Team, could you explain that, Mr Bennetts? --- Well, it's like I say, we were using them. This chap from military intelligence was seeing them on a daily basis and compiling his reports on their reports to him. I can't see anything otherwise than the security police would also have made use of them. I mean, why go and find a totally separate informer when you've got these guys just willing to sing.

So are you saying that the A-Team was used purely for information? --- As far as I'm aware, yes.

You're not aware of any incidents where the A-Team

 /was used was used to commit atrocities against activists - political activists in Chesterville? --- I can't say where they were used but the A-Team and the other guys, they were attacking each other on a regular basis, man. We were picking up bodies all over the place.

Yes. My question to you is simply did any of the security forces, including your unit, use the A-Team at any time to commit atrocities against people living in Chesterville? --- What you're asking me, Sir, is am I aware of anybody having given them an instruction to go and commit a specific offence?

Well, whether it was ... (intervention) --- An instruction or a request. As far as that goes, no.

You're not aware of any of those? --- I'm not aware of anything like that, no.

Well, would you be in a position to deny that they were used? --- No, I could not deny they were used either.

You couldn't. --- Look, let me put it this way. I don't believe the A-Team just happened. I don't believe that they were just a happening all on their own. I believe prior to my arrival there somebody must have orchestrated it.

When you say somebody, who do you suspect? ---

I would suspect more than likely the military intelligence crowd.

The military ... (intervention) --- But you guys are losing the perspective here. There's another -or there was at that time another whole party involved in what was happening all the place and that was the - now, what did they call themselves? It was a military

/based based organisation. I cannot remember the name of the specific operation. That's something I'll also have to try and think about. I didn't realise it was all going to come out here today. I would have given it some thought. But the military made use of the public and paid them. Everyone from post office technicians to you name it.

To do what? --- To actually - well, what their cause was, what they were up to, I've no idea. At that time I wasn't involved in the branch so I've got no idea but I do know you had two youngsters that were so-say with the old development and services board which later became the NPA who were based in Chesterville. So-say as the township superintendent

or supervisor or what have you.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Who were these two youngsters? --- It was two white chaps.

Do you remember their names? --- Man, I do not recall. Sir, I honestly - I'm not being funny here. I just do not recall. Well, the one was quite a big guy. I think Johan, I think. They were based at - or their main office was at Mayville where the NPA - I don't know - I presume it's still the MP offices are down in Mayville. Bureau - I think just off Bureau Crescent, if it's not Bureau Crescent. That is where their main offices were. And they were responsible so-say from the NPA point of view to administer the townships. Now, I can't swear to this but my belief at the time was that these guys were the guys running - mainly running the entire situation in the townships from the military point of view.

/You said

You said these people were from a military based organisation. --- From the SADF funded is what we presumed at that time, ja.

Would this be a CCB type operation? --- That is it. That's exactly what I'm talking about is the CCB. Civil Co-operation Bureau.

How do you know that? --- It's been mentioned in conversations and things since my departure ... (intervention)

Conversations with who, sorry? --- With friend, with ex-colleagues and things since my departure from Chesterville.

Could you tell us who you spoke to about these things? Just names, people? --- Sir, it's just -

it's - no, I can't give specific names. It's just, I mean, since then I've met up with guys that we worked with at the time. All this sort of thing and in conversation things have been commented upon which have led me now to believe that the chap, the supervisor in Chesterville at the time was paid by the CCB.

So he was the supervisor. Was he the township manager? --- Township manager, whatever you called him. Ja, he was the white guy in charge of Chesterville from the NPA. Give me a name or show me a picture, I'll tell you if it's the guy. As I sit here now, I firmly believe that he was the chap who was responsible for the whole A-Team to begin with.

You've said his name was Johan. You don't remember his surname. --- I do. I think it was Johan. I don't recall. He was a big guy. He was a good six inches taller than I am.

/And the

And the other person? --- The guy who came and flitted in and out with him on occasion but this Johan, if it was Johan, was the guy responsible for Chesterville itself.

Okay. Where were they based? Apart from being a Mayville, did they have an office in the township?

--- They had an office in the township ... (Side B ends. Following tape begins mid-sentence)

... by the NPA in Chesterville? --- Yes, there were.

Were they involved in the A-Team? ---
Probably as involved as we were, ja.

Did they live in Chesterville, these municipal

policemen? --- No, as far as I recall, no. Bar one at a later stage.

Who was that one? --- Ja, it was - let my try -that was - actually now - you see it was another member of the A-Team whose name I now recall. His name - or we knew him as a guy by the name of Phemba.

He was all along a member of the A-Team and at some stage, how it came about I don't know, but he became a member of this NPA "kits konstabels", whatever you want to call them, at the time. When they were absorbed into the SAP, he became a special, or this assistant special constables, and I believe he is to this day still a member of the SAP somewhere. Where, I don't know.

So the municipal police later became incorporated into the "kits konstabels" and then subsequently became special constables? Special constables and now permanent members of the SAP and he was one of the A-Team members originally.

/You don't

You don't know his surname? --- I just knew him as Phemba.

Thanks, Mr Govender.

CHAIRMAN: May I just interrupt you. Mr Bennetts, I think you're being a bit coy about the A-Team. Evidence has been given in a couple of public hearings in Durban and the picture that has been painted there by a number of witnesses was that this group conducted a literal reign of terror in Chesterville township over a number of years. That they occupied houses illegally in that block. They burnt houses in order to make a safe area for themselves. That they pulled

in people from other townships to bolster their support and that their sole aim in Chesterville township was to identify members of youth organisations, UDF linked organisations and to eliminate those people and that they did so fairly often and they did so with the active complicity of the SAP including the riot unit and the security police. That information has been given time and time again at public hearings. It's practically knowledge that is in the public arena. People talk about it. I was involved in Chesterville in that time. I'm aware of the sorts of allegations that were made against members of the A-Team in Chesterville. You worked there for a number of years. You're painting this picture of this group of chaps living in Road 1 just protecting themselves, people committing atrocities against each other. I think you're being disingenuous and I'm asking you to be absolutely frank with this panel right now. --- No, look, Sir, I'm not trying to paint any other sort of picture.

/Well,

Well, it sounds as though you are. --- Well, honestly that is not the impression I'm trying to bring across here. The thing is it appears to me here that - I'm trying to get - or it appears to me that I'm being pushed into a corner to turn around and to say, did I pay these guys, did I train these guys, did I do anything like that. I did not do that. What I'm saying is these guys existed. They were an entity that existed. Ja, they were involved in attacks and things but the questions being put across to me in such a way, am I personally aware of any of them. I'm

aware of one. Do I believe they were involved in the rest of the stuff? Ja, certainly. Certainly. They wrecked half of that township. But am I personally aware of it? No, I'm not. I don't know if that assists you in any way with what you were saying. Personally did I fund these guys? No, I did not. Personally did I hand them petrol? Did I give them petrol bombs? No, I did not. Did they have the stuff? Did they burn the houses? Certainly. Did they necklace people? Certainly they did it but not to the extent that I knew of it at the time. If I did, I would have certainly taken some sort of action against them.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: You've told us that you were aware of one incident. --- I was aware of one incident in which an arrest was made, ja. That's ... (intervention)

Is this the one where the three children died?

--- Yes, Sir. Now, that is one that I know of for a fact that they were guilty of. For the rest, I suspect they could have been, ja. There was talk that they

/might might have been, ja. I was there. I had allegations thrown at me like you can't believe either.

What sort of allegations were thrown at you?

--- All sorts of things, man. That I was ... (intervention)

Let's be a bit more specific. --- ... (inaudible) ... that I was necklacing, that I was electrocuting, that I was drowning. I had all those sort of allegations thrown against me. I spent half

my time in Chesterville there trying to defend myself - or, not defend myself, basically being told I will go and do the - how would you say? How would you word it now? Applications were made - I'm thinking of the correct wording for this now. Restraining orders, Supreme Court interdicts were made against us.

Against you personally? --- Against me personally on occasion, ja. One I recall was a chap by the name of Shakespeare Mbili. I recall the name.

To this day I've never laid eyes on the guy. To this day, as I sit here, I could not tell you what he looks like. The entire - the problem was with the entire Chesterville location - the situation in Chesterville almost became an entity on its own. It was at one stage totally uncontrollable.

What needed to be controlled that was uncontrollable? I mean, you just need to explain.

I'm not from this area. I'd like to know. --- All right, let me put it to you this way, Sir. I had a youngster with me who started work from police college he probably spent about a week or two down at C R Swart somewhere and he was then sent to the riot unit and he came and joined me and he was half an hour in the

/location location when the first shot went through under his poop-all under the seat of the van. Well, needless to say, he became an alcoholic about two weeks later, close to. But, I mean, there you've got situations with a youngster out of police college chucked into a situation where he's not even 20 minutes - it's the first location he's ever seen in his life and he's

getting shot at. Holes through the door where he's sitting. We drove through that place. We were shot at on a regular basis. We had wires put up, telephone wires, washing-line wires put up just at the perfect height that an oke could come round a corner and take a shot at the police van. Jump out and chase him. He runs round the corner. He knows where the wire is. He put it there. He would duck and take you out in the throat. I had soldiers there with thoats almost cut off with wires. It became - let met put it to you this way. It became in Chesterville a war, if I can call it that, involving numerous little parties, no one actually maintaining some sort of control as to what was going on. You had the UDF/ANC conflict on the go. You had the police - the riot unit in there and the army. I'm talking about your - just down to earth, your uniformed guy who was there to go and patrol. Them getting shot at on a regular basis. Every road in that location basically, bar two, is a dead-end road. Drive in there some time and try and turn a row of two or three Casspirs around. Guarantee you've got things thrown at you. The situation for us as the members working inside there came to the point there when you went to work tonight you didn't know whether you were going home tomorrow. You just had no /idea.

idea. The situation ... (intervention)

Sorry. I understand that there's this sort of open warfare going on and you paint a picture of constant

stress and pressure and you're involved in a war.

--- Basically, yes, Sir.

Who did you see as your allies as being in that war apart from the SADF and your colleagues in the riot unit? --- My colleagues. I trusted no one besides the guy sitting next to me on a seat.

And who was your enemy? --- Just about everybody else out there, the entire situation.

Surely the A-Team weren't your enemy? --- Well, look, when I walked into that road I always had my gun cocked on fire. I didn't trust them either.

Now, you said earlier that you gave protection to the A-Team. You came out when they were attacked and you supported them and so on. What happened during attacks on other people by the A-Team or by other elements? Did you respond ... (intervention) --- I responded in the same way.

... with equal vigour? --- I can't say with equal vigour, no. No, most certainly not I would say under most circumstances.

So it's quite possible there were occasions when you didn't bother to respond at all? --- No, I can't say that I never ever responded. I would have responded, yes, certainly but extremely cautiously bearing in mind that just because a house is on fire doesn't mean it's not just a trap to pull us in there.

Well, that's precisely my point. Why would you respond if your enemy was under attack? If you saw that

/there there were UDF houses that were burning and you suspect they might be traps for you, surely you'd wait until the house had burnt down and the thing had quietened down and then go and have a look? ---

No, I would have waited till where I felt we had sufficient people there together to go in as a group.

You see, at one stage we were driving around there in a van - a Land Cruiser.

A soft vehicle? --- A soft vehicle, ja. If I come round the corner and see smoke, there's no way I'm going up the hell in that thing. I'm waiting until the Casspir catches up with me. Shame, the okes burn, they burn. I wasn't paid enough to die there.

You see, the impression you give is that you were completely impartial in the way you operated and the accounts we have from all sides, from other people like yourself, so far, that you weren't impartial. You did a job. You sided with one particular side in the conflict. That's open information in the public domain. --- All right, no, look ... (intervention)

And so I'm flabbergasted that you're giving this impression that you were impartial when in fact the public information at our disposal is that you weren't. --- Sir, I'm sorry. You're getting an impression which is incorrect. Okay. No, I certainly was not impartial but until the time that I began to work at the old mobile unit and later on the riot unit, I was apolitical. I came out of that lot hating everything that's black no matter what side they were on. I was the oke picking up those burned bodies. I was the oke having to load those things into the van.

I've shot a number of people in my life, ja. Let me put it to you

/this
this way. Your normal oke - I've watched these guys in America, man. These guys that came back from

Vietnam and go "bot". When I shot my first person that I shot dead I felt that much for that person, that much. And what worried me was not the fact that I felt nothing for that person - or put it this way. What worried me was the fact that I had no feelings for a person I had just shot dead. I'd heard of my colleagues sitting there and going "bot" that night, getting drunk, having nightmares. I've never suffered a problem like that. We became hardened to the point where eventually it just didn't matter whether that person burning lived or died. It didn't matter what side he was on. My interest there was to go home tomorrow morning and that was it.

Is that why you eventually asked for a transfer out of there? --- No. No, I didn't ask for a transfer out of there.

Why were you transferred out of there? --- We were transferred to the security branch.

Surely you would have made a choice to go to the security branch? --- No, Sir. We were recruited - put it this way. We didn't apply to go to the security branch, okay. We were as a group from Chesterville and a group from Lamontville called in, asked to go and report to the security branch to Major Andy Taylor. We were not told what we would be doing there or anything else. We walked in there. The first thing he did was chuck down this copy of the Official Secrets Act. We all signed it. He then told us they were looking for a group to assist with follow-up information - or to follow up information on persons who had left the

/country

country for military training. Would we be prepared to assist? We continued doing so making use of the same riot unit vehicles, the marked yellow vehicle with all our riot unit equipment and guns and tear gas and whole cases of the stuff to continue going into the locations. We were trained and we were equipped to be able to go and do it as a group. And we did that for some 18 months before we actually were transferred across as permanent members. At that point, ja, I then did make an application which was later on approved.

So you did actually apply to join the security branch? --- I applied but I was already working with them although still, in the strictest sense of the word, still stationed at the riot unit.

Now, when did this take place, this calling in by Andy Taylor and where you then as it were in a much more formal sense worked with the security branch?

--- We began immediately to work with them but in so far as these "landverlaters" as we called it - "landverlater" files.

Yes, a person who leaves the country. --- Who left the country, yes.

So the point is up until this point in time you've given us the impression that you were working for a riot unit, that you weren't working directly with the security branch at all, that in fact you were working with the CIDs assisting them with investigations and that you did primary investigation only. Is that correct? That's the impression you've given us so far. --- That is correct, up until that point, yes, Sir.

And that was for what period of time before you
/then
then became involved with the security branch? ---

Possibly two - probably two and a half years in the
riot unit, ja.

So you'd already been in the riot unit for two
and a half years when you were then called in to Andy
Taylor? --- Yes, Sir. I don't know if it was
quite that long but, ja.

Well, approximately two years. --- Some time,
ja.

Chairperson, should we not take the tea break at
this stage?

CHAIRMAN: All right, we'll take a 15 minute tea
break. Please be back ... (Recording terminated)

SHORT ADJOURNMENT



ON RESUMPTION:

(Recording recommences mid-sentence)

CHAIRMAN: ... will not resume. The transcribers and
the translators and the witness are still under oath.
Mr Govender?

FRANK SANDY BENNETTS (Warned still under oath)

QUESTIONED BY MR GOVENDER: Mr Bennetts, you've just
painted a picture as a result of the Commissioner's
questioning that you were under great pressure as the
security force in Chesterville because it's a war
zone. Is that correct? --- That is correct, yes,
Sir.

And you were fearful all the time. You and other
members of your unit were fearful all the time of
possible attacks on yourselves. --- Yes, Sir.

Is that correct? --- That is correct, Sir.

And you had to be vigilant all the time. Is that
/correct?

correct? --- That is correct, yes, Sir.

And you were afraid to walk down even the street
that the A-Team were housed in. Is that correct?

--- That is correct, yes, Sir.

And that you had your gun cocked all the time
whenever you were in the township. --- Not
wherever I went, no. When I felt I was going into a
dangerous situation, yes.

Well, did you consider the A-Team area a
dangerous area? --- Yes, I did, Sir.

Why did you consider it to be a dangerous area?

--- I considered the entire location to be a
dangerous area.

Yes, so in the entire location, as you put it,
was a danger zone as far as you were concerned. ---

Yes, Sir.

And you had your gun cocked all the time. ---

No, Sir.

In which areas did you not have your gun cocked
in the location? --- While travelling in a vehicle
for a start where it's dangerous to do so, in and out
on the main road. If driving myself obviously I did
not do so.

Yes. So whenever you were in a vehicle you
didn't have your gun cocked. Is that right? ---
That is correct, ja.

But whenever you walked around the township you
had your gun cocked? --- Yes, certainly, yes.

Now, this feeling of insecurity, did all the

members of your unit feel this way? --- I believe so, ja.

And they were apprehensive all the time, weren't they? --- /they? --- Yes, Sir.

They were on tenterhooks, weren't they? --- Most certainly, ja. I'm speaking for myself here, ja.

And you had to create in this atmosphere a certain amount of safety for your members and yourself, isn't that so? --- I don't know what you mean by create.

Well, there had to be - you had to be on your guard all the time, isn't that so? --- Yes, that is correct.

Now, correct me if I'm wrong, Mr Bennetts, but in those conditions as a man trained in military ways you are taught often it is better to be on the offensive rather than on the defensive. Is that correct? ---

No, I don't believe I was taught that, no.

Well, did you believe that was correct? --- I believed that, yes, certainly.

So you were a man that believed you'd rather take the offensive than be on the defensive? --- Ja, I presume you can put it that way, yes.

And you regarded most of the area as potential danger areas where people in this area present some sort of danger to you and your men at any given time?

--- Ja. Well, obviously certain areas more than others, ja.

And during that process and during that course you identified certain groups and certain peoples that lived in the township that would and can present that

danger to you and your men. --- That is correct,
yes.

And did you believe that it was better to take
the offensive against those people rather than to wait
for the offensive against you? --- By offensive,
if you're presuming that I went in advance and decided
/let's
let's go an assassinate somebody, no.

Well, I haven't put it quite that way to you.
--- But I can see that that's what you're leading up
to.

Not necessarily, Mr Bennetts, but what I'm saying
is that if you had a report of a possible threat from
any particular area, what would the reaction of your
unit be, including yourself? --- For myself, avoid
it.

You wouldn't take the offensive? --- You see
"offensive" is not exactly a word that's going to
cover what I think you're leading up to here, Sir.
The way I see "offensive" is, are you going to shoot
me tomorrow. I'd must rather come and slap you today
and take your gun away. If that's what you mean by
"offensive", ja. If you're going to shoot me tomorrow
so I'm going to shoot you today, no.

You wouldn't go as far as shooting or destroying
the potential threat to you. Is that right? ---
Shooting or destroying, no.

Now, in those circumstances and given the
atmosphere of the picture you've painted for us, it
was important that you had allies in the township,
isn't that so? --- I believe so, yes.

Apart from the security forces with the army and

the SAP, the A-Team also provided that sort of allies to your unit. --- No. I don't believe in the way that you are wording it, no, Sir.

Okay, in what way do you - what way was it ... (intervention) --- Well, it's as I've already said. The A-Team provided assistance in so far as identification of targets, information on what we could

/expect

expect in the near future. Not always 100 per cent accurate but worth looking into.

So they co-operated with the security force. Is that right? --- Certainly, yes, Sir.

But you say that was limited purely to information. --- From my personal point of view, from my personal experience, ja.

Any other experiences, not from your personal, that you'd like to tell us about? --- Well, this is the whole thing. I don't know if I can - if I can ask you people a question here because a lot of what I've heard is hearsay. If I can give evidence on hearsay, certainly, then I can start talking.

Well, tell us about it, yes. --- Right, well, hearsay certainly. The A-Team were involved in attacks, numerous attack on houses, on people, necklacing, killings. All hearsay.

Now, okay ... (intervention)

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Just - if I can come in there, Mr Govender. It's one thing to say hearsay and it's one thing to make a proposition that's based on hearsay. The issue for me is do you believe the nature of those allegations, hearsay or otherwise.

--- Do I now believe it?

Yes. --- I certainly do.

And then if you say you do, on what basis do you come to that conclusion because that's important for us to understand. It's important for us to make ...
(intervention) --- All right, let me ...
(intervention)

Let me explain to you what I'm saying. We want to

/hear

hear everything you can tell us, hearsay or otherwise but at the same time we will have to, at some point, weigh up what you've told us and try and decide how much probative value we want to put on what you've told us and, in order to satisfy ourselves, we must understand why you recognise certain evidence which has been told to you or which you heard about as being valid, as being true. The fact that it's hearsay is irrelevant for

these purposes. What's important is why you believe it. --- Well, in general, if I can put it this way, in general, okay, during my time in Chesterville I can basically say we looked in general at most incidents as individual incidents. Sitting here now with hindsight and looking at the whole, entire scenario in Chesterville and thinking back as I often, often do, ja, I believe, as I sit here now, that, first of all, most of the A-Team's activities were probably orchestrated by somebody from outside. So let's get that point across. All right? Personally I was not involved in such orchestrations or anything like that. I believe the A-Team would not have

existed for very long without any sort of outside assistance. Financially they were not very sound on their own. I mean, this Poppin or Pops, as far as I recall, was the only chap who was employed amongst them.

Where was he employed? --- At - I don't know what the name is - ACA Assurance or Insurance Company.

ACA? --- ACA. I don't know what it stands for. I cannot recall what it stands for.

Is it an insurance company or an insurance brokerage? --- It could be either. I don't know.

/I just

I just remember most of the guys in the A-Team ran around with white caps on with ACA on them that he supplied.

Please carry on. Okay. Being an individual with a salary which presumably would have been average, I can't see him having supported an entire street of people food-wise, energy source-wise, petrol-wise, ammunition-wise and otherwise and in fact the A-Team continued to exist as an entity. So looking back, yes, I believe that somewhere from someone they were being supported. I would believe, again only my own opinion, is in all likelihood it was done directly via the CCB.

Just on the issue of the CCB, just so that we don't - it's occurred to me that there may be some confusion here. The CCB was a separate operation - the Civil Co-operation Bureau based primarily in Gauteng. There was, however, a different structure - and this is where there may be some confusion - called

the Joint Management Committees which operated in every single town in the country, in every area in the country - a joint management centre. It was part of the security apparatus of which Brian Mitchell, amongst others, gave us a great deal of insight to during the last hearing at which he was - his own amnesty application. From Stratcom and the Security Council downwards, it devolved into small committees at every level at which, for example, in the Chesterville area would have included maybe the headmaster of the local school, township manager, maybe the postmaster. People who could be trusted, in some form of authority, and who could then determine what security needs were in the area. --- /Ja, that Ja, that is correct. As we used to refer to it, it was the old JOC meetings.

JOC meetings? --- Ja, J-O-C. JOC meetings.

That is correct.

And that's different to the CCB. ---

Certainly, yes.

Okay, so there's no confusion in your mind when we talk about the Joint Management Centre and the mini JMC which would have operated for that area, and which you clearly bear knowledge of ... (intervention) ---

I do bear knowledge, yes.

... and then the CCB which is a separate operation. --- Ja. I see a clear distinction.

I just wanted to clarify that. --- I see a distinction. From my understanding of the CCB was that they were funded by the intelligence section of the South African Defence Force. They comprised of persons in positions, for example, the manager of

Chesterville, the superintendent, whatever you want to call him, who'd presumably be paid for his services, be allocated a certain amount of money for use, not indiscriminately. Basically I believe that this is how the A-Team were funded, looking back. But again, it's my personal belief.

I just want to go back to something we were talking about just before the tea break. You mentioned that your team from Chesterville, that's how you put it. You said, "Our team from Chesterville and the team from Lamontville" of the riot unit were called to Andy Taylor's unit and then signed the Official Secrets Act and the necessary undertakings in terms of that Act and

/then
then were instructed to work for the security branch at that time? --- Yes, Sir.

Now, who were the chaps - who were the team from Lamontville. Obviously you guys would have had contact with each other. --- All right. I recall some of them. There was a Bernard van der Berg, nickname or alias "Budgie". With him came a youngster by the name of Mark Hagar who has since been killed in a car accident.

What would Van der Berg's rank have been? ---
Sergeant, full sergeant.

Was he a sergeant? --- He was a sergeant, ja.

Who would have been their commanding officer?

--- In Lamontville? I've got no idea. I cannot recall. But they would have also fallen eventually under Captain Hunter, Vernon Hunter, the same as we did.

You said you'd think during the tea break about the SADF liaison person who was a captain as well. Has it become any clearer to you? --- Sir, man, I can picture his face right in front of me but I just cannot recall his name.

Okay. But Hunter was Vernon Hunter, was it? --- Was Vernon Hunter. He was with the SAP. I believe he's now a colonel or a director, brigadier. I don't know. The ranks have all changed recently. And I believe he's still based at the riot unit. I had a Warrant-Officer Kruger, who was the commander, if you want to call it that, of my unit. I worked directly under him in Chesterville.

Was this Kruger subsequently transferred to Pietermaritzburg? --- No, I believe he's at - or he

 /was, some was, some time back, at Jan Smuts Airport.

Jan Smuts Airport. Okay. So you only can remember two of the Lamontville people? --- No, I hadn't finished yes, Sir. It was Hagar, young Hagar, Bernard. I seem to recall there was another youngster that came with him with the surname of Thomas. Digby Thomas, I think. Then there was two blacks that came with them. The one his surname is Phiri, P-H-I-R-I. (Side A ends. Side B commences) Hagar probably stayed with us a couple of weeks only and he had prior to this applied for a transfer to the dog unit. He went to the dog unit and he was subsequently killed in a car accident while on duty down at Port Shepstone somewhere. Budgie van der Berg stayed on as a permanent member of the security branch as well and he

subsequently received training for some time in Pretoria somewhere. I couldn't tell you where, but he became one of our technical guys involved with the bugging and everything else. From my side, Warrant-Officer Kruger did not go with us. It was myself, Sean Fourie - who else went with me? (Pause) Johnny Graaf who came from Chesterville with me. There were two other guys that worked in Chesterville but I can't recall if they came across with me or not. One was Marius van Loggerenberg, he being the same person I mentioned earlier who was shot at and the bullet went through under the seat.

He became an alcoholic. --- No, he began to drink quite seriously after that. He did not become officially an alcoholic in the true sense of the medical terminology of the word. And I had one other youngster with us by the name of Sean Porter who actually ran away /one weekend one weekend to England. I recovered his equipment from his mother.

So he deserted? --- He deserted, ja. We managed to pull a few strings that he wasn't prosecuted on it. He is currently back in the country and he's now a fireman at Durban Fire Station. Or last I heard, he was. I've had no contact with these guys for some time.

Okay. Just to - before we move on and before I hand back to Mr Govender. After you had been called in to Andy Taylor's unit and ordered to then act as SB people as well while you were still in the riot unit and still using your same equipment, right, how did the nature of your work change? --- We were no

longer limited to Chesterville location. We no longer took instructions directly from our own unit at the riot unit. We took instructions from Colonel Taylor or one of the other persons on the C Section. Basically we worked all the areas from Umlazi, KwaMashu, all over the place, where we were given files. Files of persons suspected to have left the country - names and addresses. Go and follow it up. Go and confirm it. Make use of interpreters. There were letters that we handed out the exact wording of I cannot recall. But basically what it boiled down to was a warning to the family that should this guy make contact, you are compelled to inform the security branch, failing which, you'll be prosecuted. While we were there we looked for photographs of this guy, tried to recover his ID book. That's what I say and then whatever we recovered - the names and the photos and things were then sent on to Pretoria eventually. And a book was printed with all

/the photos

the photos in them with a number which was then later used for identification purposes.

So you were still based in Chesterville though, at the riot unit? --- No, I was right out Chesterville. We were based then at C R Swart. We reported to C R Swart daily.

That was about two to two and a half years after you started in the riot unit which was in '87? ---

No, I think it was about '87, '88 that I started doing these "landverlater" files.

It was about '88. Do you remember when in that year roughly? --- I cannot recall, no, Sir.

So you in fact had nothing more to do in Chesterville after that or did you still work in Chesterville? --- I think we still had - I had a couple of files that I did in there, ja, but I never ever went back in in the true sense of riot duties or that that we'd been doing previously, no.

Did you still have contact with the A-Team while you were doing your new security branch duties? ---

I ran into them once or twice but not specifically. I didn't go to Chesterville to do and see them.

Did you use them while you were in Chesterville in the sense that you indicated previously? --- Do you mean after I'd started with Andy Taylor?

Yes. --- No, Sir.

Who in the security branch would have had contact with the A-Team then if you guys didn't? --- I presume Sergeant Durr, Carl Durr, I presume. He was the guy - well, we were under the impression that he was the guy looking after Chesterville.

/The point

The point I'm making is, once you became a member of the security branch and you were working more actively with them, surely you would have been party to more information about what Durr was up to. ---

No, Sir. Durr was not in our section.

What section was he in? --- I think he was in A Section or D Section.

A or D? --- Ja.

Thanks, Mr Govender.

CHAIRMAN: Before you go on. Evidence has been given at public hearing and you yourself have said that a number of restraining orders or interdicts were

brought against the police in Chesterville. ---

That is correct, yes.

I know about those as well. I wasn't aware that any had been brought against you personally but you mentioned that yourself. Do you still confirm that?

--- Yes, Sir.

What were the allegations? What sort of allegations were made against you? --- Making use of shocking devices, assaults.

Is this in your capacity as a security branch policeman with the riot unit or before? --- No, with the riot unit before I went across.

Okay. Ja, carry on. Making use of shocking devices, torturing people? --- Torturing people, ja, tubing people, as they used to call it. Making them ride aeroplane. The usual ... (intervention)

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Sorry, what's "ride aeroplane"? --- Ride aeroplane was a thing that the CIDs used to make use of when they were interrogating a

/suspect suspect was that they would handcuff his hands and feet. Can I just stand up a second and just demonstrate? Right, they would handcuff his feet together round the ankles and handcuff his hands behind his back and then place him on his stomach with his feet in the air and put a broom stick or quite a strong plank of wood between his ankles and then through his legs coming out the top here and pick him up and hang him between two desks like that. The result was similar to crucifixion. It pulled all your muscles. It closed up your chest. You couldn't

breathe. Leave the guy there long enough, he's going to talk.

CHAIRMAN: Okay, and who were those - do you remember who those actions were brought by? --- By numerous. I recall one was a chap by the name of Shakespeare Mbili and that sticks in my mind because I honestly did not know the guy.

So are you saying that they identified you as a person - as a key person against whom they were bringing an action in order to embarrass the police? What was the point? --- Can I just give you a little bit of a history here because we've lost a little bit of my own involvement here. We as unit, myself, Sean Fourie and the rest of my guys, actually at one point, pretty soon after our arrival there, began to become quite effective in so far as we recovered quite a bit of stolen property for the CIDs, we recovered firearms, we recovered ammunition, and I developed or I obtained a nickname in Chesterville as Sergeant Frank. All right. The locals knew me there as Sergeant Frank. All right. I don't know how any of them even knew my surname. I don't

/know.

know. From my personal point of view the unfortunate result was that every second policeman in Chesterville, every time he picked someone up, would tell them that he was Sergeant Frank. And suddenly I was being - I don't want to be said held responsible for, but I was being implicated by my name and my name alone in numerous incidents in which I was not involved. I didn't run around to go and correct this because at the end of the day the result was that when

people walked in, my mere name struck a fear up in them in that on numerous occasions we just knocked on the door and the guy would say, "Come in. I've got a gun" and hand it over to us. I was handed an R1 like that but a school teacher. Because of the effect it was having, I never ever put a stop to that. But like this thing of Shakespeare Mbili, I don't know the guy.

There was incidents where we were charged, where the guys named me, they know me. We went on to an ID parade. They couldn't identify me, because it was not me that was involved. There was incidents where I was at home, off-duty, sleeping, drunk, whatever I was doing, where I was so-say implicated in cases, where I was no even there. The result, at the end of the day, was that the residents of Chesterville ran around presuming I was responsible for just about everything going on when in fact I was not.

Are you saying that you don't know any members of your riot unit who were involved in this? --- In torture?

Ja, the sorts of allegations which were made in interdicts and restraining orders. --- I myself was involved, yes, Sir.

/In what

In what way? --- I did make use of a shocking device.

What? In order to extract a confession from somebody? --- Not a confession. I knew that it was never going to be admissible.

But, I mean, in order to get information. ---

If I got the gun out of the location - if I got the gun out of the way that could possibly be used, as far

as I was concerned I'd - the result was sufficient for me, put it that way.

Okay, and where was that sort of thing available from, the device that was used? --- Oh, they were available from anyone at Telkom. I can go fetch you one now.

And were they kept at the beer hall in Chesterville, or kept in your vehicle ... (intervention) --- No, the individual people had their own devices which they just hung on to.

How would they be rigged up or generated? ---

It was an old crank telephone.

And they would be plugged in? --- No, it wouldn't be plugged in to anything. It was the old crank type telephone and you'd take two wires - well, the best one was just two keys, I presume, was the best way to do it. Just a normal key with a hole in the top. Tie a key on to each wire. The guy's got a hood over his head. Dangle them so that they touch the palms of his hands. When the first shock goes through his hands close and he can't open them again.

While you keep turning the handle, he can't let go of it.

So are you saying that that sort of thing was used

/as a matter as a matter of course during investigations and during law enforcement in Chesterville? --- All over.

MR GOVENDER: Mr Frank, you've give us quite a graphic ... (intervention) --- Mr Bennetts.

Mr Bennetts, sorry. I'm actually assuming that nickname of yours also. I'm sorry. Mr Bennetts,

you've given us quite a graphic account of the methods of torture that was used. The aeroplane, or flying an aeroplane and the method with the telephone. So you have first-hand knowledge of those methods? ---

Yes, I do, Sir.

You used those methods? --- I never used the aeroplane method but I had seen it used, ja.

And did you use it extensively? --- Not extensively, no. Let me put it to you this way. Where we felt that the information was to the extent that the result might be the recovery of a firearm or of a hand-grenade or of whatever, ja.

Were these just used for recovering items or were they also used for getting confessions out of people?

--- Well, I never ever made use of it for getting confessions out of people. I've heard that the CIDs, murder and robbery and that did, ja. I never did.

You didn't use them? --- No. And in fact I would say it was about half-way - I'm speaking under correction - but during the course of my time at Chesterville, it actually became known that a test, a blood test could be done which could in fact prove beyond doubt whether a person had been shocked or not ... (intervention)

Tell me something ... (incomplete) --- ... and

/I then I then stopped using it. My device is lying in Durban harbour.

Tell me, was this approved as an acceptable method within your unit? --- Approved, no. Approved in so far as what you're saying, did somebody

stamp a piece of paper and say do it, no. Did somebody give us instruction to do it, no. Were they were aware of us doing it and nothing was done about it, yes.

Did your commander of the unit know that you were using these methods? --- Which commander? Warrant-Officer Kruger?

At the time that you were using them. --- Warrant-Officer Kruger, yes. Roets, no. Hunter, no.

I see. Mr Bennetts, I'm not clear still on the question of the A-Team and I want you to clarify this.

You say that you - and as you allege through hearsay - have information about how the A-Team was used. Okay? Now, I want you to tell us firstly how they were used. Can you tell us that? --- I don't know - can I just ask you by who?

By whoever you think they were used or whatever information you have about who is the A-Team, how they were used. --- All right. The A-Team, I believe, were a group of Inkatha supporters. All right. I believe again - well, let me just say this once, okay?

These are all my personal beliefs looking back with hindsight and from incidences that I did witness and that. All right, I believe the A-Team were a group of Inkatha people probably scattered in the location who became targets and who banded together for their own protection.

/Now, just

Now, just on the question of banding together. Did they band together themselves or were they assisted in this? --- I believe primarily they banded together themselves, but that is my personal

belief.

Your personal belief? --- My personal belief.

But I believe that pretty soon after them banding together and I'd say while still in the process of getting together, somewhere along the line somebody in the security forces saw an opportunity that they took an advantage of in so far as they could then make use of this group of people.

And how did they do? How did they assist? ---

Well, look, let me out it to you this way, Sir. If I sat here as an Englishman with a total, total hatred of the Indian nation, all right, and we got into a conflict situation, all right, and we as a group of ten white people were outnumbered by a couple of thousand Indians, surely we would get together, us whites, to try and look after ourselves. We've got nowhere else to go to because the same situation exists no matter where the hang you go to, whether it's Umlazi, KwaMashu, you've got this conflict on the go. All right. If, at the end of the day, myself and you were in conflict and somebody came along to me and said, "There's a gun. There's some ammunition. There's some food. There's some money. Just carry on doing what you're doing," I'm going to take it.

And did that happen? --- I believe so, yes.

Why do you believe that, Mr Bennetts? --- As I said earlier, these guys could not have survived without any sort of outside support.

/Is that

Is that the only reason you believe that? ---

That is my primary reason for believing that, yes.

What are the secondary reasons? Do you have

information to make available to us why you ...
(intervention) --- Ja. Secondary - secondary to
that is obviously the fact that certain of the group
managed to get housing in Mtuzuma area and in Umlazi
area - M Section, Umlazi.

Yes. --- They went and stayed there but they
kept on coming back to Chesterville and spend a night
there. There would be an attack on the UDF during the
night and they would be gone the next morning.

So are you saying they were provided those houses
by who? --- I don't know by who.

But in your estimation you believe by who? Do
you ... (intervention) --- Well, I was told that
the one in Umlazi was owned by Poppin. The one that
was a M Section, if I'm not mistaken, was owned by
Poppin.

And you don't know who provided those houses for
them? --- I've got no idea. Whether he bought it,
I don't know.

Who do you suspect provided those houses? ---
I honestly don't know, Sir.

Do you think that the security branch had a hand
in that? --- Man, probably yes, probably no.

Well, it's either yes or no. --- You see, let
my try and explain this. Again, it's just my own
perceptions. Presuming here for a minute that the
security branch were making use of the A-Team. Okay,
they were supporting them, they were providing them
with their ammunition, with their guns, with money,
with

/everything
everything they needed in Chesterville, why move them

out?

You tell me. --- You see, this is what I'm saying. Why move them out? You've got a tool that is working for you. Don't take it and move it elsewhere where it's no good. There again, maybe the A-Team - this is why I say yes and no. From my point of view, I wouldn't move them out but if they then came around and said to me, "Listen, we'll carry on doing what you want us to do but we want a safe place for our family and things outside." So I'd say, in all likelihood, "Okay, if you're doing to carry on, we'll find you a house outside."

So, Mr Bennetts, do you think that the second option is likely to have happened? --- I would say it's likely to have happened, yes, Sir.

Do you have strong beliefs that the security branch had a hand in that? --- Again I don't know if it was the security branch. I'm more inclined, my personal belief, to believe it was military, not security police.

Did your unit have a hand in providing the A-Team with any resources whatsoever, be it weapons, food, finance? --- From a government point of view, no.

Okay, from a unit point of view. --- I mean, from official monies point of view, that sort of think, no.

And from an unofficial point ... (intervention)

--- From a personal point of view, ja. Man, I recall an incident where - let me just try and think where it was now. It was somewhere on the South Coast. There was some sort of a thing going on in one of the

/locations

locations there as well and the International Red Cross came in with a whole lot of money and food and blankets and tins and tin openers and all this sort of thing which they gave to us to go and distribute down there.

Sorry, Mr Bennetts, I'm not asking you about humanitarian provisions ... (intervention) --- No, no, no, but what I'm saying to you is we skimmed a lot of this stuff off the top and brought it back to the A-Team. This is what I'm saying. From that point of view, we provided, but there was nowhere where we put official claims in for them, obtained money and put it in. We skimmed where we could skim and we made a plan where we could make a plan.

And the reason why you provided them with these resources? --- They were assisting us.

They were assisting you. --- Ja.

Okay. And they were, as you said, an Inkatha supporting group. --- I believe so, yes. I still believe so, yes.

And you say that there was a conflict in the area between Inkatha, UDF/ANC? --- Yes, Sir.

So, if they were you allies in those circumstances, is that right? then the enemy was the UDF/ANC? --- That is correct, yes, Sir.

So you were involved - you, as a riot unit, were then would I say correct in saying partial in terms of your activities in Chesterville? --- I was definitely partial, yes.

You were partial to? --- To the A-Team.

To the A-Team and any political organisation?

--- And Inkatha.

/Inkatha.

Inkatha. --- Ja. Well, I can't say that. I was at the time - I was - I can't say I was a member of but I was a supporter of the National Party.

Yes, but the ... (intervention) --- But I saw the Inkatha group as being useful as well. And, yes, I supported them both. Not that I voted for them. You couldn't vote for them at the time.

But your unit's activities were such that it actually advanced their cause, protected them or what?

What did it do? --- Definitely we advanced their cause. Definitely we gave them protection. Definitely we escorted them in and out of the locations.

Now ... (intervention)

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Mr Govender, can I just pick up on something there before you move on? Mr Bennetts, you've told us that you escorted these people in and out of the location. You've also told us that they at a certain stage they moved - most of them moved out of the location and they would only come in for operations. --- Not most of them. Some of them, yes.

The fact is they would have come in with your protection. --- Yes, Sir.

And would have left with your protection. --- Yes, Sir.

And the fact is that they would come in, an incident would happen, as you told us, and the next day they'd be gone. --- Yes, Sir.

But of course that wouldn't be a surprise to you

because your people would have ferried them in and ferried them out. --- Ja, but now always me or my /group.
group.

But your unit in some way or other. --- Ja, other members of the 30 or so there plus the soldiers, yes.

Yes, but the point is, you would have known about that. I mean, there's a small group of 30 guys. You all talk. You're all on duty together. You're all under the same pressure together. --- Ja.

You all know what's going on. --- Ja, we know what's going on.

You share that information. --- Yes, Sir.

So the point I'm trying to make is ... (intervention) --- Should we have put two and two together and said that attack was the A-Team?

No, not even a question of putting two and two together. You knew it was the A-Team. It wasn't a question of putting two and two together. I mean ... (intervention) --- Knew it or strongly believed that 99,999 per cent, certainly. Even so far as to say 100 per cent, certainly. But there was also that little bit of doubt where the UDF guys wiped themselves out along the line. Specifically where they suspected a guy might be an informer and he got himself necklaced. So there was always that slight possibility that certain of the incidents may not have been the A-Team. There were occasions when they came in and out when nothing happened.

But by and large ... (intervention) --- By and large if it was a UDF guy who got hit, it was the

A-Team. Who the hell else was it. Sorry, excuse the language.

/The point

The point I'm trying to make goes further than that though. And it's based on the notion - two notions arising out of your evidence so far. The first is that you said many of the A-Team's activities were orchestrated. You've told us that already this morning earlier. The second is that you've said that you escorted these people in and out. Now, if some of them and particular their leadership - this chap Pippin, Pops, whatever you call him, was in your mind their leader. You believed him to be the leader.

--- Ja, I did, yes.

He would have been a major player, is that correct? --- That is correct, yes, Sir.

Now, if he was coming in for a specific purpose and going out immediately afterwards, I'm putting it to you in the sense that it's a logical inference from that that one can only come to conclusion that many of those incidents were pre-planned. --- I would believe so, yes.

And that your unit facilitated some of those attacks. --- I don't know what you mean by "facilitated".

Well, you brought them into the area. You took them out of the area afterwards. --- Ja.

You knew there was probably going to be some sort of an attack, not you personally, but members of your unit and occasionally probably you personally. Is that correct? --- That is correct, yes, Sir.

Thank you, Mr Govender.

CHAIRMAN: It's also correct that at that time a stage of emergency was in operation, isn't it? ---

Most of /the time,
the time, yes.

Ja. Now, from what we've heard at public hearings, as I said earlier on about the A-Team, that there was literally - they conducted a reign of terror in that township. Now, is it not correct that if the riot unit and anybody else who was meant to be investigating crimes there - if they wanted to, they could have in fact detained the entire block 13. ---

In terms of the emergency regulations at that time, ja. I don't know why they weren't detained.

Well, I'm sure you know why they weren't detained. Because they were doing - they were basically doing your job for you, isn't that correct?

--- Exactly, Sir.

That's why they weren't detained. Do you agree with that? --- I agree with you. At the time there was definitely sufficient cause to detain them.

And is it not correct that if they had been detained, it would have very substantially lowered the incidence of violent crime in Chesterville? --- In Chesterville. Or put it this way, it would have cut out everything but the attacks on the security forces.

That's my belief. You may have still remained with a couple where again they believed there was an informer. But, ja, the incidents would have been reduced by over 99,99 per cent.

Mr Govender.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Just - sorry, before you - just one other thing I want to pick up before it

gets lost. You spoke about the only other incidents and attacks being possibly one or two isolated incidents where UDF people took out other UDF people.

--- Yes, /Sir.
Sir.

But it's also quite well known that quite often your unit or the security branch or military intelligence would have a UDF person taken out by making that person appear to be an informer. ---

That is correct, yes, Sir.

So you'd arrange for someone to be seen delivering something to that person's house or be seen to be in conversation with you or somebody else. ---

That is correct, yes, Sir.

It's quite a well-known method of burning someone, let's put it that way. --- That is correct, yes, Sir.

Can you give us some examples of that, that you know about? --- Ja, I can.

Please go ahead. --- All right. I'm trying to think of the road name now. I can't think of the road name. A chap was burnt in the circle, him and his car right behind the Chesterville high school at the dead-end road. Okay, he was a UDF/ANC activist, whatever you want to call him. I, along with Warrant-Officer Kruger, delivered an envelope which I believed at the time contained cash - a couple hundred rand, I cannot be sure - to his house knowing he was not at home and it was handed to a female whom I believe was his sister and she was asked to give it to him. Next afternoon he was dead. Problem solved. I was under the impression at the time via Warrant-Officer Kruger

that this had come from the security branch. I don't know personally about that, no. The other members in my unit, Sean Fourie and them, as far as I know knew nothing about that either. /He handed

He handed the envelope over. I accompanied him must to make sure he didn't get himself shot at the house. But I knew what was going on.

Who would that money have come from? --- I presume from the security branch. I don't know. I really don't know. He arrived with an envelope ... (intervention)

What did Kruger say to you? --- Just that it had come from higher up.

Did he ask you to accompany him ... (intervention) --- He asked me to accompany him, ja. Our entire group went to a point and myself and him walked from the vehicle to the house and back.

This person that subsequently died, who was he? Do you know? --- I believe a school teacher. I don't know. I cannot remember the ... (intervention)

From that area? --- He stayed - the house that we delivered it to was in Road 24. Sorry, I'm just - I'm also trying to remember back ten years here ... (intervention)

We understand that. --- Road 7. Ja, Road 24. One of the houses on the left-hand side in Road 24 about half-way up.

Do you remember what year this was or what month in that year? --- No, Sir.

Roughly? --- Roughly, I can't even estimate a guess. I can't even estimate a guess. But it was like 24 hours later his car was burnt and he was

necklaced.

And clearly it was designed that someone would see him - would see that happening and act on it?

--- Well, clearly his sister would have been the one to have /dropped dropped him in the dwang. Go and hand her an unmarked envelope and say, "Give this to your brother. Don't tell anyone." I guarantee you she opened it. The common knowledge is that - I must be careful. I'm going to offend somebody here - but if you want to get to someone in a location, do it through a female.

That was one incident. What other incidents can you tell us about?

CHAIRMAN: Sorry, can I just interrupt there? Who ... (Side B ends mid-sentence) (Side A of subsequent tape commences mid-sentence) --- ... I recall, nothing ever came of it. It was just written off as another riot incident.

So Warrant-Officer Kruger and yourself then would have prevented the matter from being properly investigated in that you did not advise the Mayville CID that this was a ... (intervention) --- We never told anyone we took the envelope there, no.

So it was covered up? --- Ja. If you want to put it that way. We kept quiet, ja.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Would there have been a CR opened at Cato Manor and then the investigation would have been done at Mayville? --- Ja, Cato Manor did not have their own detectives. Mayville detectives investigated all cases in Mayville and Cato Manor.

Okay. Now, I was busy asking you about ...

(intervention) --- Any other incidents.

... other incidents. --- Ja, there were a couple where we didn't specifically take away - take money and that across. I can't give you specific incidences here but say, for example, I had information

/that that a certain person had a firearm. All right. Now, without actually having to go and grab that firearm to make it known how I would know, what I would do is go and pick up another person who's an activist. Just load him in the vehicle, keep him for half an hour, take him with us to go and recover the firearm and drop him ten minutes later. Guaranteed he's not going to make it through the weekend either. Specifically if we make sure he's seen with us. And we start to recover firearms and we start to make arrests and then we drop him off and he's not detained. There's no paperwork on the oke. It solves a big problem.

How many people, as far as you can remember, did you implicate, in inverted commas, in this way? ---

A hell of a lot.

Ten, 20, 30? --- A couple of hundred.

And how many of those people died as a result of your actions? --- Quite a few. Quite a few, Sir.

That I know of specifically, I'd say about five. But a lot just vanished just never to be seen again. Whether they were necklaced and unidentified in another location, I don't know.

So they either died or fled the area? ---

Yes, Sir.

Now, I just want to go back to one last thing

before I let Mr Govender continue. You were telling us about methods of torture that you used. ---

Yes. Sir.

And you basically described electric shocking.

--- Yes, Sir.

What other forms of torture did you personally use? /--- Pushing

--- Pushing ice-blocks up someone's anus.

Carry on. --- I believe the effect of that is similar to having a red hot iron rod pushed up there except it leaves no traces. There's no burn marks. The old wet bag story. Canvas bag over the head and wet it. Just sufficient air so that the oke doesn't pass out. Carry on long enough, he'll also cooperate. The wet bag then goes along with the old car tube, the inner tube of a motor car. Again, just splash water on the guy's face - it just helps seal it properly - grab a strip cut out - how can I put it this way? You end up with a ring, a piece of the tube. Pull it over his face, grab it at the back and twist it. It covers his face and eyes up. He can't breathe at all. The art of it is watching the oke so that he doesn't have a heart attack or drop dead on you.

Did anyone ever die while you were doing that to them? --- No, Sir.

Or did anyone ever die while you or someone else was doing that to them in your presence? --- No, not in my presence, Sir.

What other forms of torture were you involved in or that you know about? Or let's talk about firstly what you personally were involved in. --- Well,

that's about it as far as I go personally.

What about physical assaults? Give someone a good clout? --- Oh, ja. Yes, of course, ja. Well, that goes without saying. Ja, that goes without saying.

What sort of assaults are we talking about here? Hand, with a firearm, with a stick? --- Hand. No, not with a firearm. You can't hit someone with a /firearm firearm or a stick ... (intervention)

Well, why not? --- ... it leaves too many marks.

Too many marks? --- Ja. You hit with a flat hand preferably on the back just above the kidneys. A good tight slap there. Three or four of those. Okay, it leave a bruise certainly. It doesn't draw blood and it hurts like hell for a long time afterwards.

So this was really part of your regular way of operation ... (intervention) --- Yes, Sir.

... in terms of being a very effective policeman, as you put it earlier? --- In the time of the riot unit, yes.

Did you assist with the arrest and detention of people? --- Yes, I did.

Activists? --- Activists or criminal cases, ja. Activists? Yes, ja, I presume so, yes.

How would you know who was wanted? --- From the detectives' point of view?

No, I'm saying if they were political activists, how would you know who they were? --- Well, if we came across literature or things like that, we would just get hold of the radio room, they would get hold

of the guy on call, he would meet us at Cato Manor.

If they wanted them detained, they'd detain them.

So you never specifically had instructions from the security branch to go and pick up person X? ---

No.

Or person Y. --- No, not while I was in the riot unit, no.

And what sort of criminal incidents did you arrest people in respect of? --- Rapes, burglaries, thefts, /robberies. robberies.

What you call normal crime? --- Ja, normal run of the mill crime.

Thanks, Mr Govender.

MR GOVENDER: Mr Bennetts, do you know or do you believe that some of the atrocities, or most of the atrocities committed by the A-Team, was planned by any unit of the security forces? Do you know of that?

--- I don't know of it but I believe in all likelihood that is the case, yes.

Your unit, for example, did they ever plan attacks with the A-Team or for the A-Team? --- No, not that I'm aware of.

You're quite sure about that? --- Ja, I'm pretty sure about that.

You're pretty sure about that. Any planning of attacks or any planning of operations in the townships, who was that done by in your unit? --- You mean operations from out point of view?

Yes. --- By Warrant-Officer Kruger, my commander. In his absence, myself.

You would plan? --- Ja.

Now, from what you told us in evidence just now, is it correct to say that, because you were partial as a security force in the Inkatha/A-Team on the one side and UDF/ANC on the other side, that a number of atrocities that were committed by the A-Team were covered up by your unit and the other security forces?

--- Covered up, no. I don't believe it was actually necessary to cover it up. All you had to do was just ignore evidence. If that's what you mean by cover up, ja.

/But was

But was there a need in any of those incidents for you guys to actively cover up? --- No.

Never? --- No. I mean, it was common knowledge it was probably the A-Team, but there was never anybody - in the incidences where guys were specifically identified they were prosecuted, they were arrested, they were detained. But in most cases it's 2 o'clock in the morning. You see nothing, you hear nothing, you're fast asleep, a petrol bomb comes through your window. It's the A-Team, but who? Don't know. What can you do then?

Okay. Do you remember an incident that took place at Road 8 and 13 in Chesterville in January 1987, the 8th of January to be particular? --- Road 8 and Road 13? Tell me some more about it?

Where houses of so-called Comrades were burnt by the A-Team. --- I think that's the incident that I referred to earlier where there were babies burnt.

Yes, is that the incident you were referring to?

--- It must be, ja.

And did you attend the scene of that ...

(intervention) --- You say Road 8 and Road 13.

Ja, ja, Road 8. That's correct, yes.

And did you attend that scene? --- I did, yes.

Were you the first policeman, if you want, that was at the scene? --- My group as far as I recall, yes.

Do you know, Mr Bennetts, perhaps where the A-Team had got the petrol that they used for that incident? --- No.

You don't? --- No, Sir.

You don't know whether your unit was involved in
/supplying
supplying that petrol to the A-Team? --- I don't believe so, no.

You don't believe so. Were you not perhaps involved in that? --- Supplying of petrol to go and burn the houses, no.

You were not involved in that? --- No, Sir.

You're quite sure about that? --- I'm certain of that, yes. I never supplied petrol to go and burn down houses, no.

This was the incident where those three children were burnt. --- I think it was three, ja.

Did you have advance knowledge of that incident? Before it took place. Did you know it was going to take place? --- I knew an incident was going to take place. I did not know where or what.

You knew that there was an incident going to take place and the target wasn't identified to you? --- As far as I recall, no.

How did you know that an incident was going to

take place? --- It's difficult to try and explain this one now. I haven't thought of that incident for some time. That specific incident was, I believe, I heard from Warrant-Officer Kruger, I believe a retaliation by the A-Team against something else that had happened with these Inkatha - ag, with the UDF crowd. We knew there was going to be a - I did know it would be that night. I didn't know where it would be.

But you knew ... (intervention) --- But I had heard that there was going to be a reaction pertaining to some other previous incident and it would have been in the near future.

/Ja, but

Ja, but the question is, how did you come to know about this? --- From Warrant-Officer Kruger.

He told you? --- Ja.

And did he perhaps inform you how he came to know about it? --- No.

No. Can you remember what he ... (intervention)

--- The thing is with - what you've got to understand with Warrant-Officer Kruger is he came in there on a few occasions with firearms, with foreign firearms, with - on one occasion he came in there with diamonds, a bag of diamond. But at the end of the day - all right. He never told us what the hell was going on but he told us that he was working and acting on instructions from the security branch and we were simply just to follow through. We never questioned it. It seemed the right thing to do at the time.

Yes. What did he do with those firearms and diamonds? --- He brought them just to convince us.

We didn't actually believe this guy to begin with.

We did not believe ... (intervention)

But to convince you of what? --- ... or put it this way, it was not that we did not believe him. There was doubt ... (intervention)

What did you not believe him? --- ... from our part - that he was acting on instructions from security branch.

So he had to prove to you that he was working for the security branch? --- Ja.

And in order to do so he brought foreign firearms and diamonds to show you? --- Yes, that is correct.

And did he perhaps tell you what he did with those

firearms? --- Nothing. He took them away again. /firearms?

And those diamonds? --- Took them away again.

And did he tell you perhaps where and how he got those firearms? --- From the security branch.

For what purposes? --- He did not say.

He did not say. You were not curious about that?

--- I think at that time it was best not to ask too much.

Do you think that - it is likely that he would have supplied those firearms to the A-Team? --- Those ones, no. Those were all fully automatic firearms he brought in.

Did he supply any firearms to the A-Team? ---

That I know of, no.

You don't know of? --- Not that I know of, no.

Did Kruger supply anything, any resources, to the A-Team? --- Not that I recall, no.

You don't recall? --- By "resources" - I don't know what you mean by "resources". You mean like ... (intervention)

Well, money, food and stuff like that? --- Oh, yes, of course. Yes, we gave them food and stuff like that. I've already said that.

Did he give them money also? --- I don't know if he gave them cash. I mean, we would, on occasion, take out a few rand where the oke was broke or he needed petrol to get to town or he wanted to go to Umlazi. Ja, I took money out of my own pocket for that. So did the other guys with me.

It's your personal ... (intervention) --- Personal money out of our pockets, ja.

/So you

So you don't know of any occasion where your unit was responsible for supplying the A-Team with weapons or money. Is that what you're saying? --- No, I'm saying weapons, no.

Your unit, not your individuals, your unit. ---

The unit as - this is what I'm saying to you. Money that was supplied came out of our own pockets. It was supplied, ja.

I'm asking you, Mr Bennetts, if the unit as such, did they ever supply money or weapons to the A-Team?

--- As a unit?

As a unit, yes. --- From higher up in the bureaucracy?

No matter from where, yes. --- Ja, we supplied them with money. I've already said that.

This is apart from the individual members contributing from their pockets. --- No, I'm talking about the individual members. That's what was contributed.

Apart from that, you know of no other occasion?

--- I know of no other occasion.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: That includes weapons, home-made weapons and the ingredients to make bombs of any sort. Do you know nothing about you or your ... (intervention) --- The ingredients to make bombs - I've never given them petrol as an ingredient to make a petrol bomb.

You gave them petrol to make petrol bombs. ---

I had taken them to buy petrol for cars not to make petrol bombs with, no.

So you know of absolutely no time or stage when you /or any or any members of your unit supplied the A-Team with weapons, either regular weapons or confiscated home-made weapons or petrol bombs or the ingredients. ---

Petrol, that's the only thing I can think of, ja.

Okay. Did you ever tell any one of our investigators here that you or members of your unit had in fact supplied those things - weapons and/or petrol bombs - to the members of the A-Team? --- No, sir. I presume you're referring to Mr Singh(?). He's the only one I ever spoke ... (intervention)

You never told him that? Never told him that? You're quite sure? --- Not that I recall. Not that I recall, no.

So if he tell us that you did tell him that, he's lying to us, is that right? --- I wouldn't say

he's lying. I'd say he's incorrect.

Well, if he tells me ... (intervention) ---

If he's incorrect, ja, then he's lying.

... that you told him that you made those things available to the A-Team, he is lying, okay? and you're not lying. --- I'm not lying.

Are you quite sure about that? --- I'm quite sure of that, yes, Sir.

Remember you're under oath. --- I do remember that, yes, Sir.

Okay.

MR GOVENDER: Mr Bennetts, you said that your unit provided petrol for the A-Team for their cars. Is that right? --- I remember a couple of incidences, yes.

And did the members of the A-Team have their own cars? --- Ja.

/How many

How many of them had their own cars? --- I remember about two or three cars.

And they were their personal cars or were they provided by any of the security forces? --- Personal cars.

Personal cars. And you supplied petrol to them for what purposes? --- We didn't supply petrol. What I'm saying is I recall on an occasion or two where I took them - where we transported them to go and get petrol.

You transported them? --- Ja, to go and get petrol at the station at Cato Manor.

Under what circumstances ... (intervention) --- Because there was no petrol in the car. They wanted

to go back out to Umlazi or what have you.

So you just merely assisted them by going to the garage and allowing them to purchase their own petrol?

--- Ja.

Did they purchase this petrol in containers?

--- In containers.

And they took them back to the township? ---

Back to the - dropped them off back by the car, ja.

Now, this was during the period where a number of petrol bomb attacks were taking place in the township, isn't that so? --- That is correct, yes, Sir.

And the A-Team were involved in much of that, isn't that so? --- That is correct, yes, Sir.

And it probably crossed your mind at that time that the petrol was not - all of it was not - or most of it was not going into the tank of the car. ---
Likely, ja.

/Right.

Right. You knew, perhaps, that some of the petrol was being used to make petrol bombs. --- I suspected, yes.

You suspected. Did you ever confront the A-Team about that? --- No, Sir.

You never did? --- No, Sir.

Why not? --- Like I was saying that didn't matter.

It didn't matter because as far as you were concerned they were an ally and what they were doing was quite okay. --- That is correct, yes, Sir.

So you condoned that sort of activity? --- I did, yes, Sir. Personally I did, yes, Sir.

So you say you never supplied them personally

with petrol for ... (intervention) --- I never supplied petrol to make a petrol bomb with, no.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Mr Govender, can I just come in there? How do you make a petrol bomb, Mr Bennetts? --- Various ways. The proper way of the Molotov cocktail, as it's called, is a combination of petrol, some other slower burning substance, either oil or diesel, and beach sand, a wad of cloth in the top and a match.

What other ways are there of making petrol bombs?

--- Straight petrol with a cloth. You need some sort of cloth to burn.

Did you ever instruct people in how to make petrol bombs? --- No, Sir.

Did anyone in your unit ever instruct people how to make petrol bombs? --- Not that I'm aware of, no.

Did you ever have petrol bombs lying around in the

/area area where your unit was, that you'd picked up or caught people with? --- We recovered petrol bombs, ja.

What happened to those petrol bombs? --- I think in some cases where there were prosecutions pending they were photographs and handed in. Others, they were destroyed, poured out, bottles thrown away.

What happened to the firearms that your unit recovered? --- They were handed in.

To who? --- To the SAP13, the exhibit register or recovered property, whatever it was at the time - 13A or 13B.

Were there ever instances where home-made firearms and weapons or that nature, that you knew you could probably never prove was a real firearm, in the normal sense of the word, were simply kept by your unit? --- We kept mementoes, ja. Ja, I kept mementoes.

What sort of mementoes? --- Of home-make firearms. This sort of things.

And what did you do with them? --- Later on I've got rid of them, destroyed them.

Didn't you give any of those to the A-Team? --- Never, Sir. I've never ever, as I've said earlier, supplied the A-Team with a firearm or any ammunition.

Did anyone in your unit give them to the A-Team perhaps? --- Not that I'm aware of.

And that you suspect? --- I think possibly some of the members in my unit could have supplied them with ammunition but not that I'm actually aware of, no.

And home-made firearms? --- No, I don't believe so.

Carry on, Mr Govender.

/MR GOVENDER:

MR GOVENDER: Mr Bennetts, the incident that you described earlier on where a sum of money was handed over to the school teacher who was subsequently necklaced, you were approached by Kruger, is that right, from the security branch? --- That is - no, Kruger was my boss.

Your boss. And he asked you to accompany him to this house? --- Yes, Sir.

And did he explain to you what the purpose was?

--- Not in advance, no.

He didn't? --- No.

What did he explain to you? --- He said we're going to drop off an envelope.

Yes. So you accompanied him purely to drop off the envelope. Did you know what the scheme was, what the idea behind that was? --- Yes, I did.

You did? --- Ja.

Before you went? --- Well, on the way we discussed it briefly on the way up the road, not in detail.

So you knew what the repercussion would have been from that? --- Ja, I believe so.

That incident took place at night or during the day? --- At night.

At night. And were there other people present when - apart from the sister when the envelope was ... (intervention) --- Not that I recall, no.

Did you attend the scene of the subsequent necklacing? Were you one of the officers? --- No, I don't think I attended the scene.

You didn't attend? --- I don't think I did.

I

/don't don't recall. I remember seeing the car. I remember seeing the car burnt out some time later and became aware of what had happened, ja.

Do you know what type of car it was perhaps?

--- I can't recall. The scrap remained there for some time - months.

Okay. Mr Bennetts, you've mentioned the name of Sean Fourie. --- Yes, Sir.

Now, who was Sean Fourie? --- Sean Fourie was a constable that worked under me in Chesterville.

In the riot unit? --- Yes, Sir.

Do you remember any incident involving Sean Fourie that you'd like to tell us about? --- We were involved in quite a few incidents. I don't know what you mean. Something specific?

Well, in an incident rather maybe I should say to you on his birthday. --- On his birth - you're talking about on my birthday.

On your birthday, yes. --- On my birthday he shot a chap.

Tell us about that incident, a bit more detail, Mr Bennetts. --- It was a guy who was believed to have been recruiting and taking people out of the country. It was information that we picked up. In fact it was with Warrant-Officer Kruger, he was present at the time. I recall the incident because it was on my birthday. Went into the house, the guy hid away in the house. I was carrying an HMC, I think. Sean was carrying a pump action shotgun. At one point, while we were searching the house for the guy, he took a break and ran. If I recall correctly, I had an injured leg at /the time, the time, and I ran out of the front - one door of the house - front or back - Sean ran out of the back after this guy and I heard a shot go off. When I came round the corner the guy was rolling backwards down the bank and Sean had hit him below his one buttock with the shotgun. In fact, what I recall about that incident too, was the first time I met Andy Taylor because he was one of the officers who came out and attended the

scene.

I see. But just go a little back. Did you and Sean Fourie and Kruger plan this - well, what was it going to be? Was it going to be an arrest or were you going to visit this guy? What was the reason ... (intervention) --- It was going to be a search of the house and probably a subsequent arrest.

But was this discussed between yourself and Sean Fourie and Kruger? --- Yes.

Prior to going? --- Yes.

At your sub-unit's headquarters or ... (intervention) --- Yes, or in the vehicle.

Is there anything special about that conversation that you'd like to tell us about? --- Yes, that in the incident - not specifically pertaining to the incident but being my birthday, Sean Fourie had said, "Let's see if we can get you a birthday present. Let's see if anyone gives us the opportunity to shoot them."

Did he put it just like that? --- Along those lines. I can't say the exact words he used.

Come on, Mr Bennetts, perhaps you'll be a bit more honest with us. Did he actually put it that way?

How did he put it? --- Like I've said. "It's your birthday. If we get an opportunity, we'll get you a

/birthday

birthday present and shoot somebody".

"We'll get you a birthday present and shoot somebody"? --- Ja.

He didn't use any derogative terms or anything, no. --- Sure, of course where were but I'm not

going to repeat those now.

So he didn't quite put it as the way you are putting it? --- Well, he used the word "kaffir".

So the intention was that Sean Fourie would take you out and as a birthday present get a kaffir, in inverted commas, for your birthday to shoot one of them. Is that right? --- No, that's not right.

What was ... (intervention) --- What I'm saying is that we would carry on as normal and hopefully the situation would arise in which he would shoot one - someone, yes.

And the person that was shot, was there any justification for Sean Fourie to shoot him? --- He would have got away if he - well, I don't know. I presume he would have got away if he didn't. Like I say, I did not see the actual shot fired. I was limping. I had an injured leg.

You had an injured leg. --- And by the time I came around to the back of the house, he had already been shot.

What happened to that man eventually? --- Eventually, I don't know. I don't think I was ever called to testify in that case.

You say that Andy Taylor attended that scene. Is that correct? --- Yes, that is correct.

And he - was he taken away by Andy Taylor's unit?

/--- I think

--- I think he was taken away to hospital.

Yes. And do you know what happened to him thereafter? --- No idea whatsoever.

You don't. Where's Sean Fourie at the moment, presently? --- Still stationed in the police here

in Durban.

In Durban. Now, Mr Bennetts, I want to move on to your period with the security branch. You've said earlier on in your evidence that while you were with the unit - the riot unit itself you had done certain work on behalf of the security branch. Is that correct? --- With these - pertaining to these people that left the country, yes.

Yes. Could you give us a bit more details about the nature of the work that you conducted on behalf of the ... (incomplete) --- It was monotonous, monotonous paperwork basically.

Yes. --- Receiving a name and address, driving, finding the address, inevitably unmarked, making enquiries, tracing the home of the person, enquiring as to his whereabouts, establishing that he hadn't been seen for some time, asking if the person had been reported missing or not, establishing along the lines not reported then obviously the family had some sort of idea what had happened to him.

So you did this while you were still a member of the riot unit? --- That is correct, yes.

And you were still based in Chesterville? ---
No, I was not based in Chesterville.

Where were you based? --- At C R Swart at that time.

/C R Swart.

C R Swart. So you then physically moved from Chesterville to C R Swart but you were still part of the riot unit. Is that correct? --- That is correct.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: May I come in here.

There's something that's really bothering me. I don't understand this. You were an effective unit. ---

Yes, sir.

You were combatting crime. You were being effective in assisting the A-Team. You were being effective in ensuring that activists in the area were being dealt with in one way or another. You were called specifically by Andy Taylor because of that effectiveness. Both you and the other unit from Lamontville, correct? --- I don't know why. I presume that's why he called us, ja.

But you said to us in your evidence earlier that you were effective and that's why you were called there and we covered that earlier. --- No, I said we were - we were sent there by Captain Hunter. We had to report to ... (intervention)

Because he saw you as an effective unit and he's obviously reported to Andy Taylor how effective you were. --- I don't know what happened between him and Andy Taylor. All I know is we were called in by Captain Hunter and told to report to Andy Taylor, which we did.

Please, Mr Bennetts, let's not be naïve here. Here you are as a very effective unit and for that reason you are recommended to Andy Taylor? --- I would presume so, yes.

Yes. It's pretty obvious, isn't it. --- Right.

And instead of carrying on with your very effective /work work you get put into doing the most mundane work around. That doesn't make sense. --- Well, the

quantity and the numbers of people leaving the country had gone up hell of a lot.

Well, surely your duties entailed much more than just monotonously following paperwork? --- And visiting - physically visiting the houses, as I said.

Ja. --- That was it.

I mean, for someone who'd come from the environment you'd been in, it must have been boring as anything. --- Not really, no. It gave us the opportunity to spend a good amount of time having a good couple of piss-ups and bar lunches and playing around all over the place. Fishing.

So how were you being effective then? Surely that was your ... (intervention) --- Effective in what sense?

In your work. --- Effectively I wasn't physically involved any more in combatting the problems in the location.

Were you relieved about that? --- Ja, honestly, I was. Honestly, I was.

Ja. --- To get out of it on a - I'd been - I mean, it was almost two years of non-stop stress situation. To be able to now go in when we wanted to go into an area to go and make enquiries at our discretion, made a hell of a difference.

You see, what I don't understand is - and it really doesn't make sense to me, why would they take a unit like yours that was incredibly effective at what you were doing and then suddenly transfer you out of the

/area
area basically to another unit where you were involved

in much more mundane work, less activity, not directly involved in the conflict that was going on at all?

--- Sir, that I can't answer for you. But suffice to say that at the end of the day the security branch pulled the strings.

Thank you, Mr Bennetts. --- If a request came from them, I can presume that's why we were called. If it was just the riot unit that were approached to supply members, why they chose us I don't know. That would have to be a question of Captain - Colonel Hunter as to how we got to be the ones that were chosen.

Thanks.

MR GOVENDER: Mr Bennetts, you must agree, and you've said earlier on, that you were getting quite a reputation. They called you Sergeant Frank. Is that right? --- That is correct, yes, Sir.

And that's because, as you said, is your effectiveness in getting things done. (Side A ends. Side B begins mid-sentence) --- ... presume so yes.

And the reason that they want a person like you is because they have a similar sort of tasks or duties for you to perform. Isn't that so? --- No, Sir.

Because were you're known for your great skills, you're doing paperwork and doing routine detective work? Were you known for those skills? --- No, Sir.

You were not. You were known for a more aggressive style. Isn't that so? --- That's correct, yes, Sir.

So the requirement from the special - or the

security branch was that they'd need a man of that calibre to continue that sort of work. Isn't that so?

/--- No, Sir.

--- No, Sir.

Why not? --- The situations in the townships had developed to the point that they needed a group of people with the equipment who were prepared to go in their and make the enquiries. Your normal oke in your little 2-litre Toyota Corolla could not go and do it any more.

But you were the tough guy that could go into the area and you would take no nonsense from anybody.

Isn't that so? --- That is correct, yes.

And that's why you were chosen. --- I believe that's why I was chosen, possibly. I don't know.

You could get things done. --- I was not afraid to go into any location, no.

Yes, and you'd earned a reputation and you invited many interdicts and so forth against you and your unit. Isn't that so? --- I'd invited some, not all.

And the allegations were made that you tortured people and you choked people and so forth which you have now conceded. Isn't that so? --- That is correct. Some of them again, not all.

So some of those interdicts were then justified. Isn't that so? --- Some of them possibly, not all.

So it's not correct to say that wrong accusations were made to you generally. Isn't that so? --- I don't understand that.

As you said earlier on that you'd been accused of

many atrocities or torturing. --- Yes, right.

But some of them there's a basis for truth in them. --- Some of them, yes.

Now, Mr Bennetts, let's be honest with ourselves /that that as a security branch of this thing and the requirement in terms of an individual who has certain abilities and certain skills like yourself, must surely mean that you were required to do a similar sort of work with the security branch. Isn't that so?

--- No, I was not required to do a similar sort of work with the security branch.

Now, while - okay, let's move on ... (intervention) --- While with the - let me put it to you this way. I'll answer you straight out. While I was with the security branch doing with "landverlater" work I was not involved in one incident where it became necessary to use - torture anybody. Not one.

But did you have recourse at any point in time to break into people's houses, to shoot people, as a result of your investigations while with the special branch in this period? --- Yes.

Did you? --- Yes.

Tell us about that. --- I don't know whether it was this period while I was with the "landverlaters". It was - you see - let me - look, can I back up here a second?

Yes. --- We seem to have made a cut-off here that this happened and then that happened. It didn't quite happen like that.

No, you can go back, yes. --- While we were

doing this, we slowly got more and more involved in the investigation side of the C Section. For example, the McGoo's(?) car bombing here on the beach front, we assisted there with all the - with quite a number of the monotonous statements where every single oke who'd had

/a window a window broken in a flat had to make a statement. "I lost three windows." "I lost two windows." We went and started with that monotonous sort of thing and gradually developed to the point where, because we had the equipment and because we were trained in that sort of respect, we began to assist with the follow-ups on trained people back in the country. Primarily that was our function. The reaction unit based at the riot unit were specifically trained for that purpose. We went along and provided additional back-up and back-up only.

And the reason for that, Mr Bennetts, was that you had experience in the field. Isn't that so? ---

In the field, in the locations, with the equipment, yes, Sir.

Okay. --- Right. As I can say our relationship then with the security branch permanent force members evolved we, in turn, became more and more involved in what was going on to the point that we started to develop our own informers and things as well. One incident I recall while I was stationed there was at - I'm trying to think. It's near a sugar mill up here on the North Coast somewhere, Stanger area - where we had information on AKs in a kraal and I, and if I remember correctly, I alone was the only

guy from the security branch who went with the reaction unit for the kraal to be searched. A firearm was recovered in the dark. It was brought to me. At the end of the day I would have sat with that docket.

At that point we were actually investigating the petty dockets. Possession of a single hand-grenade, possession of a Makarov pistol. The suspect and the firearm were brought to me to my vehicle /- I was - I was then driving an E20 Kombi. We got to the vehicle and I was handed the firearm in the dark. I hadn't even identified the thing yet and the guy took a - tried to grab this guy with me from the reaction unit's firearm, missed and ran. I ran round the corner and shot him with an R1 and I hit him though the head. It turned out afterwards it was a pellet gun.

Do you know when that incident took place? If you could put a date on that? --- No, I'm not sure. The guy survived. He actually survived the incident, the shooting. Greenhill something. Green something. Something Green. Show me a map then I'll show you where it is. But there's a sugar mill up there on the North Coast. That's where we drove the guy to because we had no radio contact even for an ambulance.

What was the need for you to go when you're work, in inverted commas, with the security branch at that time, what was the need for you to go with the riot unit to recover weapons? --- Because the information was it was AK47s and any foreign weapon at that point, that docket was carried by the security branch not by the local CIDs.

I see. And the reason for that was there must have been a political motive attached to the possession of those weapons. --- No, straightforward that the security branch would have then investigated that docket and taken that thing right through the court procedure.

So that illustrated then, Mr Bennetts, that you were the suitable guy to do those investigations and actually provide some sort of support in terms of your skills in incidents like that. Isn't that so? ---

/Ja, by

Ja, by that point I was carrying petty dockets if you can call them petty as opposed to the McGoo's car bomb.

Why do you call them petty dockets? Because they are just what, recovery of firearms and so forth?

--- Ja. Your normal straightforward Makarov, Tokarov, explosives.

And you were also involved in people leaving the country and coming back trained. Is that correct? You were investigating that, weren't you? --- I think at that point we'd got beyond that.

Well, to what point did you get to? --- That I was now at this point carrying dockets.

Carrying the dockets for what? --- Like I've said, these - the petty normal handgun, single AK47, single round of AK47 ammunition, that sort of thing.

Any of your work during that period involve people leaving the country or returning trained? ---

Ja, well, we were still assisting where we could with these "landverlater" files.

Okay. When did you commence permanently with the security branch? --- 1989/1990, I'm not sure.

So now you were already at C R Swart, isn't that so? --- We were already there, yes.

You were based at the security branch unit premises. Isn't that so? --- That is correct, yes, Sir.

You were under the command of Andy Taylor. --- I think so still at that stage, yes.

At that stage. --- Yes, Sir.

When you say at that stage, do you mean Andy Taylor was - when did Andy Taylor cease to be commander of the

/unit?

unit? --- At some stage Colonel Wearing took over.

Now, I cannot recall if it was my transfer there permanent occurred before or after Colonel Wearing took over. I think it could have possibly been after.

I don't know.

Well, did he take command after Andy Taylor or before Andy Taylor? Was he in command ... (intervention) --- He took over from Andy Taylor.

From Andy Taylor. --- Yes, Sir.

You don't remember when? --- No, Sir.

And do you know what happened to Andy Taylor then? --- Yes, he went to the farm.

The farm. What farm is this, Mr Bennetts? ---

It's a farm that the security branch hired at Umlaas Road.

Umlaas Road? --- Yes, Sir.

Whereabouts is that? --- Between Camperdown and Pietermaritzburg.

Now, you say the security branch. --- Yes, Sir.

They hired that. Who in the security branch hired the farm? --- Andy Taylor.

Andy Taylor. Was it a farm that was to be used for security branch activities? --- Yes, Sir. Not all activities, limited activities.

Do you know who signed the lease for that farm? --- Yes, Sir. Andy Taylor did, I believe.

And do you know who it was leased for? From, sorry? --- From, yes. Franklin - I think, Mr Franklin, if I'm not mistaken.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Peter Franklin. --- Peter Franklin, that's it, yes, Sir. That's correct.

/An Australian

An Australian or a New Zealander? --- New Zealander, that's right, Sir.

MR GOVENDER: Now, you say that Andy Taylor had moved onto this farm? --- Yes, Sir.

Was he permanently based on the farm? --- Well, he operated from the farm, yes, Sir.

As what? --- Running the show there. In charge of the farm.

Was he still a member of the security branch. --- Yes, Sir.

In what capacity? --- Okay, let me back up here a second again, if I may. Right. At the time that Colonel Wearing took over C Section, I think I mentioned earlier this morning in my evidence, there was a restructuring of the branch per se. A lot of the sections fell away. They became unnecessary. All right. The guys were made use of in other sections.

Also was the big change where a region, if I can call it that - it became a region - a regional headquarters was formed here at Boland Bank Building. All right, and at the time Colonel Taylor and along with myself after my transfer had taken place were transferred and fell directly under the regional office of security branch. In other words we worked KwaZulu/Natal, no longer C R Swart and limited to the C R Swart area. So if that answers your question, he then fell under region.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Who would have been your commanding officer at that time, yours and Colonel Taylor's commanding officer? Who would you have reported to? --- Colonel Steyn. Well, I would have reported to ... (intervention)

/Which

Which Steyn is that? There're a number of Steyn's in the police force. --- Prior to going over to regional headquarters, to the regional thing, the officer commanding the entire security branch was Colonel Steyn. I don't know anything more than that. I met him like on such - so few occasions, it was not true.

And then after that you went to - you don't know if it was Colin Steyn or Bertus Steyn or ... (incomplete) --- No, Sir, I don't know.

No idea? --- No idea.

Afterwards you went across to Andy Taylor's unit.

--- Well, I was with Andy Taylor at C R Swart.

Yes, but you went across to the unit that was now working from the farm. --- From the farm, yes, Sir.

And who did he report to then within regional headquarters? --- I'm not sure who. I think Colonel Steyn was still the regional commander. I'm speaking under correction. I don't know, Sir.

Well, the reason I'm asking is didn't any senior officers ever come out to the farm? Surely they would have. --- Ja, they did. The same Colonel Steyn visited on occasion. I know, because I fetched him in Durban and drove him there.

And who else? --- From Durban, or from ... (intervention)

Yes, from Durban or from Pietermaritzburg or from Newcastle, wherever. --- All right. Hell, let's back up again. Officers stationed on the farm. Can I just tell you who the staff were?

Sure. --- If that's going to solve the problem

/for a

for a start.

Sure. --- As far as I recall. Okay, on the farm, running the entire farm was Colonel Andy Taylor. Directly below him - all right. Sir, can I just back up?

Yes. --- Okay. Major Andy Taylor - he was at that time still a Major.

Right. --- Okay. Below him was Captain Vorster who came from Pietermaritzburg security branch offices.

What was his first name? --- I'm not sure.

Was it Vorster or Vosloo? --- Vorster.

Okay. --- Okay? It was Colonel Vorster and ... (intervention)

Is he now a colonel - Vorster? --- Ja. I'm sorry, he was a captain at the time ... (intervention)

No, that's fine. --- ... when we started there, okay, it was Major Taylor, Captain Vorster and Lieutenant Basson who came from the Newcastle office.

Okay, just before you go on. --- All right.

Vorster's now a colonel, you say? --- Vorster is now a colonel.

What's Basson? --- The last I heard also a colonel. I'm not sure.

Also a colonel. Stationed where to the best of your knowledge? --- I believe now everyone of them except myself went off on medical pensions.

They've all been boarded? --- They've all been boarded. I believe.

Okay, who else was then after Basson? --- Okay, so let me do it this way then. Right, okay. So those were the three white officers, commissioned officers, on /the farm. the farm. All right. Each of them brought along a black member from the station or from the offices that he came from. With Andy Taylor - I mustn't say brought with because it sounds incorrect. I only got to the farm at a later stage - but with Andy Taylor was accompanies Warrant-Officer Myeza, Spyker Myeza, Spyker being his nickname. With Colonel Vorster, or Captain Vorster at the time, was Simon Makai, also, I believe, a sergeant from Pietermaritzburg and I cannot recall the guys name who came with Wouter Basson. He was also a sergeant, spoke fluent Afrikaans, biggish guy, wore glasses, thick glasses. Then the other staff on the farm included a Warrant-Officer Smit,

Japie Smit ... (intervention)

Where did he come from? --- From C R Swart as well. All right, he was responsible for the looking after of the gardens and what have you there on the farm. Sergeant then Barry Hanton who came originally from Vlakplaas. He was the explosives expert, or an explosives expert, not the one. Myself and two general labourers and then the askaris.

Okay, before we go on, you've said Hinton(?) was an explosives expert but not the only one you implied.

Who else were explosive experts? --- On the farm - no, what I mean is - I want to correct myself. He is not the only explosives expert at security branch but he was the only one at our farm, on this farm.

Was he the explosives expert that worked in your operations? --- That worked within us there with Colonel Taylor, yes, Sir.

And presumably you had reason to work with

/explosives

explosives and you did work with explosives on a number of occasion. --- Me, no. I know nothing about the damn things, but he did, yes.

But the people on the farm, your unit. ---
Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir.

Just before we move away from the farm per se and the setting up of that farm, how did Taylor get to know Peter Franklin? --- I would presume - I don't know, because that all occurred before I got to the farm. But I would presume that occurred through Mr Vorster, Colonel Vorster.

But Franklin knew what you operation was about.

--- I believe he knew, ja.

He presumably came to the farm from time to time?

--- He did visit the farm. He did braai with us on the farm, yes. I don't think he knew the exact details but he knew it was a security branch operation.

And he was paid handsomely for the use of the farm. Is that not so? --- From what I heard, I wouldn't have minded renting it out for that price. I think he paid the bond off in about 18 months.

But he was paid a pretty high rental. --- A couple of thousand rand a month, ja. More than double what it would be worth to rent the farm to farm.

Now, did any farming actually take place on the farm? --- No, Sir. Besides a normal vegetable garden, nothing.

Let's - let's then - Mr Govender, if you'd carry on with the askaris and that sort of issue please, before anything else.

MR GOVENDER: Ja, I ... (inaudible) ... that it may be

/time

time to take the long adjournment.

DISCUSSIONS ENSUES WITH REGARD TO ADJOURNMENT (Mainly inaudible as microphones appear to be turned off)

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Let's just find out - ja, we'll start at 2.00. We'll break in a couple of minutes. Tony Fernandez, he was explosives as well wasn't he? --- At a later stage, ja.

At a later stage? --- He wasn't on the farm with us.

Not on the farm? --- No, Sir.

Where was he? In town? --- At C R Swart.

But he worked within your unit under Taylor as well? --- Here, yes, Sir.

MR GOVENDER: The layout of the farm, can you just describe the layout of the farm in terms of its buildings? --- Buildings and things?

Yes. --- It's on the district road 354 about a kilometre from the Dardanelles road on a dirt road. The road does a 90 degree turn to the right, you carry straight on up the driveway.

Does one have easy access to it from the main road? --- Certainly, ja. Straight up the driveway.

Is it visible to the main roads? --- Yes, Sir. As you drive up the driveway on your left-hand side there's a shed and another shed, a house with a swimming pool, a little car port thing on the one side. On the other side was another house that was used as an office. Behind that, a house that was occupied by the askaris. Below that about ten compounds that were unused. That's about it basically.

And who all lived on the farm? --- On a permanent permanent basis?

Yes. --- When I say permanent, more than a couple of nights a week, myself and the askaris.

And Mr Taylor, did he live on the farm? --- No, he went home.

Did he had an office on the farm? --- Ja, he had an office. I said there was an office. The one house we used as an office block ... (inaudible)

That was Mr Taylor's office? --- Yes, Sir.

And that's where all the office work of that unit was conducted from. Is that right? --- Yes, Sir.

It was regarded as a separate unit under the regional command. Isn't that so? Of the special - of the security branch. --- I think so, yes.

What was it - what was your sub-unit called? The one that operated from the farm? --- C1 or C2.

C1 or C2. Which - you don't remember which ... (intervention) --- I don't recall which, no.

Okay. And the commander of that unit was Taylor? --- Was Taylor.

And the people involved were the people that you've named here? --- All worked directly under him, yes.

Now, you said there were askaris also on the farm. --- Yes, Sir.

Who were these askaris? --- I can give you some of the names. I can't give you all.

Okay. --- One I knew as David.

David. --- One I knew as Philemon.

Surname, David? --- Don't know. David - I don't even believe it was his - the names that I knew them at I think were their MK names.

/Was he

Was he an MK ... (intervention) --- They were all MK.

All of them? --- Yes, Sir.

Had you any other details about him, did you?

--- I believe he's now somewhere in Imbali. I can't help you.

But you lived on the farm with him, isn't that so? --- I lived in a separate house, ja, on the

farm.

Yes, but you had daily interaction with him.

--- Yes, Sir.

If there any other information about him that you could tell us? --- I recall he mentioned that he had a daughter.

He had a daughter. Where was his daughter? ---

Here in Durban somewhere. I don't know where.

You don't know where. --- I think KwaMashu, Umlazi, I don't know.

Did he visit his family or did his family visit him during his stay on the farm? --- No, no, uh-uh. There was no visitors from outsiders there.

Was he in contact with his family? --- Ja, I believe so.

You believe so. How do you - why do you believe that? --- Because there was often comments about his daughter needing to move schools with her and this sort of thing.

So he discussed his daughter's schooling arrangements with you? --- No, he didn't discuss them with me but you would pick up in conversation that he required time off or I'm going through to Durban, drop him off when you go through to Durban because he

/has to
has to go and sort something out with his daughter's schooling or something like that.

So they were allowed off of the farm, were they?

--- Oh, yes, yes.

The next person is who? --- I recall him as Philemon.

Surname? --- Also so idea.

No idea. Any other information about Philemon.

--- Philemon - he was greying, had a beard.

He was grey? Do you mean old? --- Going grey, greying. He had a beard.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Where was he from? ---

I've no idea where he was from but I believe him and David left the country together because they were wanted for burglary or robbery or something. So they just ducked out on the police and went and joined the ANC. So I heard. And were now prepared to be co-operative. In other words they became the two that you could really trust. You didn't mind turning your back on them so much.

MR GOVENDER: Anything else about Philemon that you'd like to tell us? His family? --- Nothing, sir. No idea.

No idea? --- No idea.

Nothing at all? --- Nothing.

Okay. The next person? Sorry, is Philemon still alive, do you know? --- I don't know ... (intervention)

You don't know what happened to him? --- ... I presume so. I don't know.

The next ... (intervention)

/UNIDENTIFIED

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Sorry, just - you implied that David and his family were from Imbali. --- Now.

Do they presently live in Imbali? --- I believe so, yes, Sir.

Okay. You don't know where they came from before

that? --- From either KwaMashu or Umlazi.
Somewhere here in Durban.

Okay. So Philemon and David both left together and were involved in the same activities before they left ... (intervention) --- I presume they must be from the same area.

Probably from those areas. --- Probably, ja.

Okay, thanks.

CHAIRMAN: We'll stop now for a short ...
(intervention)

MR GOVENDER: May I just get all the names and then we can stop. --- There's only another four. It won't take long, Sir.

CHAIRMAN: Okay. --- All right. Okay, it's David, Philemon. There was a total of six guys. Ben - Ben was one of them.

MR GOVENDER: Ben - surname? --- I cannot recall, Sir. He actually came from Vlakplaas and joined us and had a bit of a drinking problem and a big mouth and was sent back there.

Sent back to Vlakplaas? --- Ja.

After how long? --- He was with us a couple of months. All right. Then there was a Coloured chappie by the name of Neville.

Do you know his surname? --- I'm not sure, Sir.

Was he with some kind of ... (inaudible) ... by any /chance?
chance? --- I think it could have been. I don't know.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Where was he from - where was this Coloured person from? --- From what he

told me, I'm not sure here but Mozambique originally.

He was married to a Mozambican girl. His wife was Mozambican, put it that way.

MR GOVENDER: Did you meet his wife? --- Yes, Sir.

Personally you spoke to her? --- I spoke to her, yes, Sir.

Do you remember her name? --- No, I don't.

You don't. Anything else about this ...
(intervention) --- Yes, I do remember her name.
Her name was Celeste.

Celeste. Anything else about this Neville that you remember? --- Hell, man, his wife was staying and kids were staying in a flat in 'Maritzburg that was organised by the branch.

Organised by the branch. You mean they provided the ... (intervention) --- They paid the rent and that, ja. There was problems trying to get her citizenship and this sort of thing. I mean there was endless hassles with that and at one stage she - he wanted to - he, not she, he wanted to go back to Mozambique to make himself some more head money because he ... (intervention)

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Some more what, sorry?
--- Head money. Money - money. There were paid a flat rate for either an arrest or for a shooting of a known wanted ANC terrorist. A hit fee for want of a better word.

/How much

How much would that have been? --- A couple of thousand rand a shot.

What's a couple? Ten, five, twenty? --- I

think about eight - probably about eight. Probably, I'm not sure. When I say I'm not sure, I just cannot think right now, but it was a good eight maybe ten thousand rand a time.

The others? --- Right, then there were two others. I just - I cannot for the life of me remember names. I think one of them could have been a Sifiso or a Sipho. The sixth one, I cannot remember, but I know he was killed at some stage. Stabbed.

MR GOVENDER: Do you know what happened to Neville? Is he still alive? --- I don't know, Sir.

You don't know? --- I've got no idea.

The sixth one you can't remember? --- The sixth one, I know, died.

Died? --- Ja.

Do you know how he died? --- He got stabbed in a location somewhere. Just a normal shebeen story, I think.

Okay, I think that's it.

UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: Just one last question before we stop for lunch. This chap Sifiso or Sipho as you refer to him, where was he from? --- I don't know, Sir. I didn't like the guy, didn't trust him, didn't speak to him.

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We'll adjourn until 2 o'clock.

Please be back at 2.00.

LONG ADJOURNMENT

----- /ON RESUMPTION: