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**TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
TRANSCRIPT-IN-CONFIDENCE**

**INSPECTOR-GENERAL AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE
INQUIRY INTO THE CRASH OF A MRH-90 TAIPAN
HELICOPTER IN WATERS NEAR LINDEMAN ISLAND
ON 28 JULY 2023**

PUBLIC INQUIRY

**THE HONOURABLE M McMURDO AC
AVM G HARLAND AM CSC DSM**

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Counsel Assisting**

**LCDR M GRACIE, representing CAPT D Lyon
SQNLDR I CASHA, representing LT M Nugent
LCDR M TYSON, representing CPL A Naggs
SQNLDR C THOMPSON, representing WO2 J P Laycock
COL N GABBEDY, representing MAJGEN Jobson
COL S THOMPSON, representing BRIG D Thompson
LTCOL D HEALEY, representing BRIG J Fenwick
SQNLDR T SCHMITT, representing COL D Lynch
SQNLDR M NICOLSON, representing D10
CMDR B JONES SC, with LCDR M HAY, representing D19
MAJ M BARNES, representing D146 and LTCOL A Norton
LEUT R CLUTTERBUCK, representing D147
MR G O'MAHONEY, representing Airbus
MS K MUSGROVE, representing the Commonwealth**

1000, WEDNESDAY, 26 MARCH 2025

DAY 41

TRANSCRIPT VERIFICATION

**I hereby certify that the following transcript was made from the sound recording of the
above stated case and is true and accurate**

Signed	Date	(Chair)
Signed	Date	(Recorder)
Signed	Epiq Australia Pty Ltd	Date	07/03/25	(Transcription)

.MRH-90 Inquiry 26/03/25

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MS McMURDO: Yes, FLTLT Rose.

FLTLT ROSE: Good morning. The first witness we are calling this morning has a pseudonym of D147. So I call D147.

5

MS McMURDO: Thank you.

10 LCDR GRACIE: Ma'am, while that's happening, can I apologise for something that occurred yesterday? I missed a very basic bit of the evidence. I asked some questions based on a misunderstanding of the exact nature of those operator logbooks and I just want to apologise to the Inquiry for that. I had thought, given the name "Operator Logbook", that the logbook travelled with the operator, being CAPT Lyon in this case.

15 FLTLT ROSE: There was information led in a private hearing, which we're now in a public forum. So I understand you can say apologies, but perhaps not go into the details of what was discussed in the private hearing.

20 LCDR GRACIE: I'm not doing that, I'm saying that I misunderstood the name.

MS McMURDO: Yes. I think there's no problem just mentioning an Operator Logbook, is there?

25

LCDR GRACIE: Sure.

MS McMURDO: The term "Operator Logbook", I don't think - - -

30 FLTLT ROSE: I wasn't sure where my friend was going.

MS McMURDO: Yes. Well, LCDR Gracie, please be mindful of that warning.

35 LCDR GRACIE: I will. Thank you, ma'am. But what it did raise for me was an issue about whether or not DFSB, who engaged DSTG, who engaged CASG, to do that audit.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Sorry, I think that evidence was cleared up. DSTG is not connected to that witness yesterday.

LCDR GRACIE: Well, DFSB engaged CASG to do this audit. The only audit they did was on the HMSD of the two pilots of Bushman 83, as far as I can see, based on the evidence.

45

FLTLT ROSE: I think perhaps I could have a conversation with my learned friend in private to see where this is going so that we can ensure ourselves that we're not breaching the non-publication direction in this public forum.

5

MS McMURDO: Yes. Well, let's do that. There was a witness all ready to come in. let's do that, just to make sure that there's no more misapprehensions and that it's all sorted. Thank you.

10

<D147, Sworn

<EXAMINATION-IN-CHIEF BY FLTLT ROSE

15

MS McMURDO: Please let me know if you need a break at any time. Okay?

20

D147: Will do, ma'am.

MS McMURDO: Thank you. Yes, FLTLT Rose?

25

FLTLT ROSE: Could you please look at the pseudonym list in front of you and confirm for me that you are the person who's been assigned the pseudonym D147?

D147: Yes, ma'am.

30

FLTLT ROSE: I note there is a support person sitting next to you. If I hand the witness a piece of paper, could I ask the support person just to write their name on the piece of paper? And if needs be, you've got a pen, thank you. Including your rank. I tender the name of the support person for D147.

35

MS McMURDO: Exhibit 163. Thank you.

FLTLT ROSE: D147, what is your rank?

40

D147: [REDACTED]

FLTLT ROSE: Are you in the Royal Australian Air Force?

D147: Yes.

45

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FLTLT ROSE: Could you confirm that you received a section 23 Notice requiring your appearance today?

D147: Yes.

5

FLTLT ROSE: An extract of the Inquiry's Directions?

D147: Yes.

10

FLTLT ROSE: A copy of my appointment as an Assistant IGADF?

D147: Yes.

15

FLTLT ROSE: Frequently Asked Questions Guide for Witnesses?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: A Privacy Notice?

20

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you prepare two statements for the Inquiry?

D147: Yes, I did.

25

FLTLT ROSE: I'll hand the witness two documents. Now, is there one statement at the "Official" level?

D147: Yes.

30

FLTLT ROSE: Can you confirm that's seven pages?

MS McMURDO: Sorry, that last exhibit was 162.

35

#EXHIBIT 162 - NAME OF SUPPORT PERSON FOR D147

FLTLT ROSE: 162, thank you.

40

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Is it signed on 24 March 2025?

45

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Then there's a second statement that's
"Official: Sensitive" level, three pages?

5 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: That was also signed on 24 March 2025?

10 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: If you go to the "Official" statement, paragraph 16. Do
you wish to make a correction to the date in the second line so it reads
"28 July '23"?

15 D147: Yes, I do.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you have a pen? I'll just ask the witness to make that
change, and then, if you can just initial next to the change?

20 MS McMURDO: Sorry, what is the change in paragraph 16?

FLTLT ROSE: It's on the second line, it should be "28 July 23" instead
of "25".

25 MS McMURDO: Yes, thank you.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you wish to make any other amendments to either of
your statements?

30 D147: No, I do not.

FLTLT ROSE: I tender the statements.

35 MS McMURDO: The "Official" statement will be 163A and the
"Official: Sensitive" statement will be 163B.

#EXHIBIT 163A - "OFFICIAL" STATEMENT OF D147

40

**#EXHIBIT 163B - "OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE" STATEMENT
OF D147**

45 FLTLT ROSE: Can I please ask you to be mindful of your security

obligations throughout your evidence today? If I or anyone else asks you a question that you think the answer to which is at the “Official: Sensitive” level or higher, just to let us know and we won’t explore that in a public hearing.

5

D147: Yes, ma’am.

FLTLT ROSE: I’ll start with your background and qualifications. When did you enlist in the Air Force?

10

D147: My Air Force transfer was 2 August 2021.

FLTLT ROSE: Were you in a different service prior to that?

15

D147: Yes. I was in the Army.

FLTLT ROSE: When did you originally enlist in the Army?

D147: 24 March 2014.

20

FLTLT ROSE: 2014?

D147: Yes.

25

FLTLT ROSE: Were you in any other service prior to Army?

D147: No.

30

FLTLT ROSE: If you go to your “Official” statement, start at paragraph 1, you’ve worked in the ALS trade since your enlistment?

D147: No.

35

FLTLT ROSE: You started in a different trade in the RAAF?

D147: No. So Army, I was Infantry.

FLTLT ROSE: And then you remained as Infantry throughout your Army career?

40

D147: For the start of it, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And then you transitioned to a different trade?

45

D147: Yes.

- FLTLT ROSE: What was that?
- 5 D147: Life Support.
- FLTLT ROSE: Life Support. And then you transferred across to Air Force?
- 10 D147: Yes.
- FLTLT ROSE: You remained in Life Support?
- D147: Yes.
- 15 FLTLT ROSE: So when it says “ALS”, is it Aeronautical Life Support or Aviation Life Support?
- D147: Aeronautical Life Support.
- 20 FLTLT ROSE: So what year did you commence in your Army Life Support trade?
- D147: August 2016.
- 25 FLTLT ROSE: So you’ve been working in Life Support from 2016, so essentially nine years?
- D147: Yes.
- 30 FLTLT ROSE: You have been both a tradesman and a supervisor in the Life Support area?
- D147: Yes.
- 35 FLTLT ROSE: If you go to paragraph 2, you have a Certificate IV in Aeronautical Life Support Equipment?
- D147: Yes, I do.
- 40 FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 3, on 28 July 2023 you were posted to 6 Aviation Regiment in Holsworthy?
- D147: Yes.
- 45 FLTLT ROSE: You were the Acting Senior Non-Commissioned Officer

Aeronautical Life Support Supervisor?

D147: Yes.

5 FLTLT ROSE: And also the authorisations for Aeronautical Life Support Error Capture Supervisor?

D147: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: What did each of those roles entail, starting with the Acting SNCO Aeronautical Life Support Supervisor?

15 D147: So at the time I was – in 2023, July, I was Acting Sergeant and I did all Sergeant-required roles for a Life Support Fitter. So that includes forecasting maintenance, shift work, all that kind of Sergeant stuff for Life Support.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Just so I can understand the structure. So you're a RAAFie, but you're posted into an Army Aviation unit.

D147: Yes.

25 FLTLT ROSE: And you have a particular role in Life Support, you've had training for that for a number of years?

D147: Yes.

30 FLTLT ROSE: You work with colleagues who are also Life Support tradespeople?

D147: Yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: In terms of the structure, there's a Sergeant's role, which you were acting in; is that correct?

D147: Yes, I was Acting Sergeant, yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: But there was no Sergeant currently posted to that position?

D147: No, not for 2023.

45 FLTLT ROSE: Then there would have been the [REDACTED] role, which you originally would have been posted into?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And then there were tradespeople below you that you were supervising?

5

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Were they all Air Force personnel?

10

D147: They're all Air Force personnel, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Is that a general rule, anyone who's Life Support, ALSE trained, are Air Force?

15

D147: Yes, that's the general gist.

FLTLT ROSE: In terms of the ranks higher than Sergeant, were there any other persons supervising the Sergeant's position?

20

D147: There was one Flight Sergeant posted to 6 Avn.

FLTLT ROSE: Can I ask the witness please be shown Exhibit 159?

MS McMURDO: Yes.

25

FLTLT ROSE: Do you see that name there? Is that the Flight Sergeant who was in 6 Avn at the time?

D147: Yes.

30

FLTLT ROSE: Did that person have the title of Aeronautical Life Support Section Head?

D147: Yes.

35

FLTLT ROSE: That note can be taken back. Was there an officer overseeing your workforce?

D147: Yes.

40

FLTLT ROSE: Can you look at the pseudonym list and let me know if that person has a pseudonym? One of the lists should be alphabetical by last name.

45

D147: Yes, they have a pseudonym.

- FLTLT ROSE: What's the pseudonym?
- 5 D147: D89.
- FLTLT ROSE: A [REDACTED].
- D147: Yes.
- 10 FLTLT ROSE: Was there an Officer Commanding above the [REDACTED]?
- D147: Yes.
- 15 FLTLT ROSE: Can you look at the pseudonym list and let me know if that person's been assigned a pseudonym? If they're not there – are you struggling to find their name?
- D147: Yes.
- 20 FLTLT ROSE: What I might do is hand you a piece of paper and you can write the name down, and rank. Do the best you can for now. If it's a first name or last name, that should be sufficient, and it may come back to you during the course of your evidence.
- 25 D147: Yes.
- MS McMURDO: So what was the role of this person whose name is being written down now?
- 30 FLTLT ROSE: Officer Commanding – I could clarify. Is it of the Support Squadron within 6 Aviation Regiment?
- D147: Yes.
- 35 FLTLT ROSE: So there's 171 Squadron, 173 Squadron and the Support Squadron?
- D147: Yes.
- 40 FLTLT ROSE: It was the OC within the Support Squadron?
- D147: Yes, that's my Chain of Command.
- 45 FLTLT ROSE: If you can't think of it for now, you can let me know if

the name comes back to you in due course.

D147: Sweet. Can we hold off for now?

5 FLTLT ROSE: Yes. In terms of Chain of Command, just to close the loop, above the OC of Support Squadron was the CO of 6 Avn?

D147: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: If you can confirm on the list, was that D19?

D147: Yes, D19.

15 FLTLT ROSE: I was asking you before, your role, and we were talking about being the Acting Sergeant for Aeronautical Life Support Supervisor in 2023?

D147: Yes.

20 FLTLT ROSE: So was it the entirety of 2023 you filled that role?

D147: No.

25 FLTLT ROSE: What periods of time?

D147: From start of July 2023 to December '23.

30 FLTLT ROSE: That's because there was no one posted to that position in that period of time, so you acted in the higher rank?

D147: That's correct, yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Did that involve you managing the rest of the tradespeople in the Life Support Team?

D147: Yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Then you said there was another authorisations for Aeronautical Life Support Error Capture Supervisor.

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: What does that mean?

45 D147: So a supervisor is more of a [REDACTED] level authorisation. Error

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Capture is you start going into independent inspections, which is usually for Sergeants and above.

5 FLTLT ROSE: So you inspect the equipment on your own, without Supervision, and make assessments on that equipment?

D147: When an independent inspection is required, yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: How long had you been a [REDACTED] by the time that you were in this acting role at the start of July '23?

D147: Since 2 August 2021.

15 FLTLT ROSE: So about two years.

D147: Yes.

20 AVM HARLAND: Was it normal to have vacancies where you needed to step up into a more senior role?

D147: No, sir.

25 AVM HARLAND: What effect did that have on the operation of the section?

30 D147: It was very stop-start, I guess you could say. So there was no passage of information from Flight Sergeant to a Sergeant level, and then the Sergeant would disseminate the work. It was the Flight Sergeant talking directly to the Corporals and then the Corporals would share all Sergeant responsibilities to a level. And then someone was picked by him to then act as a Sergeant, which was me.

35 AVM HARLAND: So is it fair to say that it didn't run as smoothly as normal?

D147: No, it didn't run as smoothly.

AVM HARLAND: Thank you.

40 FLTLT ROSE: How many Corporals were there in the team?

D147: Three.

45 FLTLT ROSE: How many lower ranks were there, tradespeople, leading aircraft men or women?

D147: Seven or eight.

5 FLTLT ROSE: So it was a team of around 10, plus the Flight Sergeant.
Would that be a fair assessment?

D147: Yes. And then a few civvies.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Civilians?

D147: Yes, civilians employed.

15 MS McMURDO: So was there any more support given because you
didn't have the Sergeant? Did you have more civilians helping or more
Corporals helping?

D147: No, we only had, in total - - -

20 MS McMURDO: It was the same team.

D147: Same team, yes, ma'am.

MS McMURDO: You were just one person down.

25 D147: Yes, ma'am.

MS McMURDO: Thank you.

30 FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 4 of your statement, you said that you
worked with and flew with each of CAPT Lyon, LT Nugent,
WO2 Laycock and CPL Naggs?

D147: Yes, ma'am.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Did your role require you to fly in the aircraft often in
2023?

D147: No, ma'am.

40 MS McMURDO: Could you just tell us how long you were one person
down in the team?

D147: For all of 2023, there were no Sergeants inside the section.

45 MS McMURDO: Thank you.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Are you aware of efforts that were made to replace that Sergeant? Or were they, in terms of the OC and the CO, satisfied that you were fulfilling that acting role?

10 D147: I'm not aware of anything else, it was just the regular posting cycle they brought a new Sergeant in.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Were you still in 6 Avn by the beginning of 2024?

15 D147: Yes, I was.

15 FLTLT ROSE: Did you then go back to your [REDACTED] role?

15 D147: Yes.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Where are you posted to now?

20 D147: Posted to RAAF Base Wagga Wagga, RAAFSTT.

20 FLTLT ROSE: You're still in Life Support?

25 D147: I'm in a Life Support position, but not a Life Support Technical Maintainer.

25 FLTLT ROSE: And you're in the [REDACTED] role?

30 D147: Yes.

30 FLTLT ROSE: So does that mean you still maintain your authorisations as an Aeronautical Life Support tradesperson or supervisor?

35 D147: After my posting to RAAFSTT, if I get posted to a Flying Squadron or Unit, I have to get re-authorised again.

35 FLTLT ROSE: I want to ask you some questions now about Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2023. So you deployed to Proserpine, I take it, with 6 Aviation Regiment?

40 D147: Yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: You led a team of Aeronautical Life Support Fitters?

45 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Can you look at the pseudonym list and confirm to me that you deployed with a person called D146?

D147: Yes, I did.

5

FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 5 of your statement you note that Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2023 was D146's first exercise with the Regiment.

D147: Yes, it was.

10

FLTLT ROSE: Was it her first exercise in total or just with the Regiment?

D147: From my knowledge, just with the Regiment.

15

FLTLT ROSE: If you look at the pseudonym list, did you deploy with D148?

D147: Yes, I did.

20

FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 5 you note that he had been on multiple exercises previously with the Regiment.

D147: Yes, with the Regiment.

25

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know if he is still in Defence?

D147: No, he's discharged.

30

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know when he discharged? What year?

D147: 2024.

35

FLTLT ROSE: If you go to paragraph 6, you yourself had been on multiple exercises by that stage with 6 Aviation Regiment?

D147: Yes.

40

FLTLT ROSE: Had you ever deployed on TALISMAN SABRE before?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: In another Regiment or with 6 Aviation Regiment?

45

D147: Well, with 6 Aviation Regiment.

FLTLT ROSE: Was that in 2021?

D147: That was 2018.

5

FLTLT ROSE: 2018. If you go to page 7 and the last bullet point on page 7 – sorry, the numbering's changed. I can't find it at the moment, but I think it's on page 6. It's one of your bullet points on page 6. I'll put it to you and see if you recall this. You state that:

10

Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2023 was 6 Aviation Regiment's first major exercise since COVID had started.

D147: Yes.

15

FLTLT ROSE: Is it fair to say that even though you'd been on many exercises before, including an Exercise TALISMAN SABRE with the same Regiment, this was your first exercise in at least three years because of COVID?

20

D147: First major exercise, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: If you go back to paragraph 5, you state that you all – meaning you, D148 and D146 – reported to a person who's been given the pseudonym D47.

25

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Was D47 on site at Proserpine?

30

D147: Yes, he was.

FLTLT ROSE: Was this your usual command structure, that you report to D47 somewhere in the chain, when you're back at Holsworthy?

35

D147: No, it wasn't.

FLTLT ROSE: So this was the first time you'd worked under D47?

40

D147: Not the first time, but yes, for this exercise.

FLTLT ROSE: Was D47 in the Support Squadron?

D147: No, he was not.

45

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FLTLT ROSE: Was he in 173 Squadron?

D147: Yes.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Was he a maintainer or engineer of some sort?

D147: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Had he had experience in Life Support Equipment?

D147: No.

15 FLTLT ROSE: So what was the reason for him supervising you and your colleagues on Exercise TALISMAN SABRE?

D147: He was to ensure that all maintenance-type activities, so work hours, workdays, any work extensions, anything major that happened that stopped the aircraft from flying, he would be notified and he'd push that upward and action it.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Was he in Operations, was that his background? You said it was maintenance.

D147: No, he was an artificer.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Artificer.

D147: Yes.

30 FLTLT ROSE: If you go to your bullet points on page 6, it states that in terms of your shift structure you and D146 and D148 worked staggered night shifts on TALISMAN SABRE?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

35 FLTLT ROSE: And the day shift was from 12 noon until 2000, so 8 pm at night.

D147: Yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: And then there was another shift from 1800 until finish flying.

45 D147: Yes.

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FLTLT ROSE: Which could be anywhere in the early morning the following day.

D147: That's correct.

5

FLTLT ROSE: So there was an overlap then of two hours, was there, between 6 pm and 8 pm at night when you would work with another colleague on shift?

10

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So you'd be alone for a portion of the shift, there'd be a crossover period, and then the next person would be alone for the completion of their shift?

15

D147: That's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: If you go to paragraph 8, in terms of your accommodation on the exercise, you slept in a stretcher in a tent?

20

D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: You state that you moved four times during the exercise.

25

D147: That's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: I take it that wasn't willingly?

D147: No.

30

FLTLT ROSE: So you were asked to move to four different types of tents, sleeping tents?

D147: Yes.

35

FLTLT ROSE: Was that you and D146 and D148, together?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

40

FLTLT ROSE: So you went from a tent that was for day shift personnel, originally?

D147: Yes.

45

FLTLT ROSE: Then you were moved to a spare tent?

- D147: Yes.
- 5 FLTLT ROSE: Did that spare tent have an allocation of shift?
- D147: That spare tent just had leftover personnel.
- FLTLT ROSE: So it was a mixed group of mixed shifts?
- 10 D147: Yes, it was a mixed group.
- FLTLT ROSE: Then you were moved to a night shift tent?
- D147: Yes.
- 15 FLTLT ROSE: And then you were moved to another night shift tent?
- D147: Yes.
- 20 FLTLT ROSE: Were these tents all in the accommodation rows at Proserpine?
- D147: The first three, yes, and then the second – the last night shift move, everyone from night shift moved to a different tent.
- 25 FLTLT ROSE: If I understand from your evidence, there was an attempt to keep the shifts within the same tents, so night shift there, day shift there?
- 30 D147: Yes.
- FLTLT ROSE: But in reality, were these tents actually just right next to each other? A day shift tent could be right next to a night shift tent?
- 35 D147: Yes.
- FLTLT ROSE: So you would hear people on their other shifts up and about, getting ready, talking to each other?
- 40 D147: Yes, that's correct.
- FLTLT ROSE: So did you have disrupted sleep on the exercise?
- D147: That's correct.
- 45

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MS McMURDO: What was the rationale in moving you from tent to tent each night?

5 D147: Life Support works aircrew hours, so we can't work with day shift and we can't all work with night shift. We were constantly shuffled around to try and find the best position so everyone could get at least some sort of good sleep.

10 MS McMURDO: I see.

FLTLT ROSE: Was there an acknowledgement that your sleep was being disrupted and so there were attempts made to improve the sleeping environment?

15 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Who was aware of that? In terms of the pseudonym list, could I ask you, was D47 aware of this?

20 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Was he instrumental in changing the tents?

25 D147: Yes. He tried to help us as much as possible.

FLTLT ROSE: If you look at the pseudonym list, D13, the Camp Commandant, was she aware of this?

30 D147: I don't know.

FLTLT ROSE: Was there anyone else you'd like to let us know on that list who was aware of issues you were having sleeping and involved in the attempts to remediate that?

35 D147: So D48.

FLTLT ROSE: Is that a man or a woman?

40 D147: Man.

FLTLT ROSE: Is that someone who's involved in the flight line?

D147: Yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: An engineer or maintainer?

D147: Maintainer.

5 FLTLT ROSE: And had a role that was in the Chain of Command higher than you?

D147: That person worked night shift.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Just a night shift worker.

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Similar rank to you?

15 D147: Equivalent rank to a Sergeant.

FLTLT ROSE: But was instrumental in trying to improve your sleeping environment.

20 D147: Yes. So all the Sergeants on exercise as well as D47 tried to come up with multiple plans to try and make sure everyone has least disrupted as possible.

25 FLTLT ROSE: In any of these tent moves that you had, did you ever share a tent with any of the aircrew?

D147: No.

30 FLTLT ROSE: Were you in a tent next door to them at any point?

D147: Yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: In your experience, because you were in a tent next to them, would they have had similar disruptions to their sleep that you had?

D147: Most likely.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Are you aware of anyone in the Chain of Command trying to assist the aircrew to improve their sleeping environment?

D147: Not to my knowledge.

45 AVM HARLAND: When the Sergeants, as you've described them, were working to improve the sleeping conditions, were you assisted by the more senior people on the Base, or it was a self-run initiative?

5 D147: I think everyone – well, on the whole Base, I think it was sorted, because night shift was put onto the furthest tent possible. So during day activities, the least amount of noise would get disrupted by them.

AVM HARLAND: Yes.

D147: Is that what you mean, sir?

10 AVM HARLAND: Yes. I guess I'm just trying to get a sense of whether you were given a sleeping plan and then you had to fix it yourselves, or whether you were getting assistance from the Chain of Command at the Base at Proserpine.

15 D147: Yes, we were getting assistance, sir. Just we were moved multiple times to try and least disturb night shift, because they'd sometimes work two or three hours longer than us, Life Support.

20 AVM HARLAND: So the initial plan when you arrived, collectively you didn't feel was working?

D147: No.

25 AVM HARLAND: And it needed remediating and you didn't have any barriers to remediating that, and you basically got the best conditions that you could. Is that a correct statement?

D147: At the time, yes.

30 AVM HARLAND: Thank you.

35 MS McMURDO: I was just going to ask if you could tell me, when you went on Exercise TALISMAN SABRE, do you remember how you worked day shift, night shift, day shift, night shift? What was the order of it, do you remember?

40 D147: So we tried to keep it to one person stayed on one shift, so it's not interchanging. Otherwise, it'd start affecting your 12-hour rest cycle as maintainers.

MS McMURDO: Yes.

45 D147: So D148 worked day shift and D146 worked night shift. I was in the middle, so I tag-teamed both day shift and night shift as an independent Error Capture Authorisation. So if anything happened or

maintenance needed to get done on an Error Capture level, I'd be able to cover it all.

5 MS McMURDO: So you were doing day shift then night shift, day shift then night shift. What was your order? Because as you say, that is more difficult when you're having to – your body doesn't get into the rhythm of doing one shift or the other.

10 D147: So I covered pretty much right in the middle, and then – but our day shift was predominantly 12 to 8 and then night shift was 6 to whenever.

15 MS McMURDO: Were you in the same shift, in between, the whole time on Exercise TALISMAN SABRE, or did your hours move around?

D147: I predominantly worked day shift during TALISMAN SABRE.

MS McMURDO: Mostly day shift.

20 D147: Yes.

MS McMURDO: But you were moving tents almost daily. Was that not because of changes in shifts?

25 D147: No, that was just us getting told to move.

30 MS McMURDO: And you were getting told to move. Did you understand that was entirely because they were trying to improve your sleeping arrangements each time, or because they had to improve someone else's sleeping arrangements, or what was the story?

35 D147: It was to try and improve our sleeping arrangements as well as not disturb other people's sleeping arrangements. Because night shift for us would come in, in the day shift tent, and we'd sometimes wake up a few of the day shift guys getting ready for bed.

MS McMURDO: Understand.

40 D147: So we were moved into the night shift. So then when night shift came in, they didn't disturb 20 people, they only disturbed three.

MS McMURDO: And were you one of the three that was disturbed?

45 D147: Yes.

MS McMURDO: Thank you.

5 FLTLT ROSE: You said before that there was an area at the FOB which was for night shift tents. Was that closer to the flight line or closer to the fire station?

D147: Fire station.

10 FLTLT ROSE: In terms of your fatigue, I want to understand whether there was any accounting in the planning processes for TALISMAN SABRE about fatigue management. Do you recall discussions prior to deploying?

15 D147: No, I do not recall.

FLTLT ROSE: The Inquiry has heard some evidence in relation to fatigue levels for maintainers generally across who were working on the MRH-90 platform. Are you familiar with concerns there were for maintainers?

20 D147: Yes. There were concerns for the two FRTs that were on exercise, yes.

25 FLTLT ROSE: The FRTs?

D147: Technical teams, so day shift and night shift.

FLTLT ROSE: And they worked on the MRH-90 in the flight line?

30 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And there's just two of them?

35 D147: So FRTs is a team of maintainers, up to eight personnel. It can go higher. So that's essentially one FRT is a day shift and one FRT is a night shift. And then sometimes on some exercises there's a third FRT that rotates through for fatigued personnel. That's essentially what an FRT is.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Were there sufficient personnel deployed to Proserpine to fulfil that, to have a day shift, night shift and a rotating shift of FRT?

D147: There was a day shift and night shift, yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: But there wasn't that spare third set?

D147: No.

5 FLTLT ROSE: So was it your understanding that the maintainers were quite fatigued because they didn't have that additional rotating personnel?

D147: No one brought their concerns to me.

FLTLT ROSE: Were any of the tents that you slept in air-conditioned?

10 D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: If you go to paragraph 5 of your statement, you said that the Aeronautical Life Support tent was next to the flight line.

15 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And the flight line was a tent in itself, wasn't it?

20 D147: Yes, it was.

FLTLT ROSE: You state that the Aeronautical Life Support Tricon was located next door to the ALSE tent.

25 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: A Tricon is a container?

D147: Yes.

30 FLTLT ROSE: And it was where you packed the equipment?

D147: Yes, for the exercise.

35 FLTLT ROSE: That faced airside?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And airside meaning where the MRH-90s were parked.

40 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: In this Tricon or container, what equipment was stored in the container for the duration of TALISMAN SABRE?

45 D147: Pretty much all our spare Life Support equipment that could not

be fit into the Life Support tent.

FLTLT ROSE: Was there also the HMSDs, were they stored in the container?

5

D147: They were stored in the container overnight, yes.

MS McMURDO: So was the container air-conditioned?

10

D147: No, the container was not air-conditioned.

MS McMURDO: Thank you.

FLTLT ROSE: Was the ALSE tent air-conditioned?

15

D147: The ALSE tent was air-conditioned, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Was the air-conditioning in the ALSE tent turned off at certain times?

20

D147: So when night shift finished, we'd turn off the air-conditioning and then when we woke up the next morning, day shift would walk to the Life Support tent, turn it on, and then start the regular morning routine before shift started at 12.

25

FLTLT ROSE: Is that because it was run by generator?

D147: Yes.

30

FLTLT ROSE: And it was quite noisy.

D147: Yes.

35

FLTLT ROSE: And the decision was made to turn it off overnight when no one was in the tent, to reduce noise.

D147: Yes.

40

FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 5 you list your responsibilities during TALISMAN SABRE, which included ensuring that the aircrew had all their gear?

D147: Yes.

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FLTLT ROSE: By “gear”, do you mean their personal Aeronautical Life Support Equipment?

5 D147: Yes, that’s correct.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you also include the platform Aeronautical Life Support Equipment?

10 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: You weren’t responsible, though, for aircrew’s personal items, such as pilots’ iPads they might have used?

15 D147: No, that’s not our responsibility.

FLTLT ROSE: And you weren’t responsible for their uniform?

D147: No.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Does the personal Aeronautical Life Support Equipment include their TopOwl helmets?

D147: Yes.

25 FLTLT ROSE: So that’s the basic helmet?

D147: Yes, that’s the basic helmet.

FLTLT ROSE: Does it also include the HMSD?

30 D147: Yes, HMSD.

FLTLT ROSE: Image Intensifier Tubes?

35 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Does it include the aircrewman’s HGU-56P helmet?

40 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And all of the attachments.

D147: Yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: Does it include Air Warriors?

D147: Yes.

5 FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 10 you state that you only worked with the pilots' night-vision devices when you were on TALISMAN SABRE.

D147: Yes, that's correct.

10 FLTLT ROSE: So D146 and D148 weren't responsible for the HMSDs?

D147: No, they also worked on that.

15 FLTLT ROSE: They did as well. So when you say you only worked on that, does that mean that you had a specific focus on the night-vision devices?

D147: So we only worked on the HMSD night-vision devices, not aircrew night-vision devices. So aircrew by loadmasters.

20 FLTLT ROSE: So you only worked with the pilots' HMSDs.

D147: Yes.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Did the aircrewman have to work with their own goggles?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

30 FLTLT ROSE: Did they store those in the Tricon container at night as well?

D147: No.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Where were they stored?

D147: I don't know.

FLTLT ROSE: So not in the ALSE tent?

40 D147: Not in the ALSE tent, no.

FLTLT ROSE: So what about their basic helmet, did they take that back to their accommodation tent or did they leave it in the ALSE tent?

45 D147: That stayed in the ALSE tent.

FLTLT ROSE: But the goggles went with them.

5 D147: Yes, the goggles that loadmasters used, they stored it somewhere else.

FLTLT ROSE: Is there a reason why you were responsible for the HMSDs though, and for storing them?

10 D147: ALSE is responsible for HMSDs and before-flight and after-flight them. So it was us.

FLTLT ROSE: You don't have any before-flight, after-flight checks for night-vision goggles?

15 D147: No, not for loadmasters.

FLTLT ROSE: What about the platform Aeronautical Life Support Equipment such as life rafts and life-preservers, where were they stored?

20 D147: Spares were stored inside the Tricon and then one life raft was left in each jet.

FLTLT ROSE: In each tent?

25 D147: In each aircraft.

FLTLT ROSE: So the life rafts didn't move for the duration of the exercise?

30 D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: What about the Epheses, Ephese respirator?

35 D147: Epheses were stored in the ALSE tent.

FLTLT ROSE: So they were taken out and put back after flying?

40 D147: Yes, it was part of their gear.

FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 9 you refer again to the air-conditioning that was in the ALSE tent. Do you know what temperature the ALSE tent was at when the air-conditioning was on?

45 D147: Approximately 21 to 23 degrees.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know what temperature it got to inside the container during the day?

5 D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know what temperature it got to at night-time?

10 D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: There was no thermometer to monitor the temperature in the Tricon?

15 D147: No, there was not.

FLTLT ROSE: So you would store the HMSDs and the Image Intensifier Tubes, both of them together?

20 D147: Yes. The Intensifying Tubes was the one that needed to get locked up.

FLTLT ROSE: But the HMSDs just got locked up anyway, did it?

25 D147: Yes, they just got locked up for ease of base service and after-flight.

FLTLT ROSE: Why did the IITs have to be locked up?

30 D147: Because of security reasons.

FLTLT ROSE: Because of their cost?

D147: Yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: They're the more expensive part of the kit?

D147: Yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: So when the pilots needed to use those items, they would come to you or your colleagues and ask them to check them out, essentially. And you would get them from the Tricon?

D147: Yes. So we'd take them out the Tricon, before-flight them and then leave them in where they're supposed to be, and then aircrew pilots

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would roll in and be like, “Hey, we need one or two”, and then we’d give them their stuff.

5 FLTLT ROSE: So how many sets of HMSDs and IITs were there in Proserpine?

D147: 12 HMSDs were taken on the exercise.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Do you before-flight them every day, whether or not 12 pilots are checking them out?

D147: So we before-flighted 10 every day.

15 FLTLT ROSE: In terms of your before-flight checks, what do they involve?

D147: We’d before-flight it in accordance with the Airbus IETP or IETM – I can’t remember what it’s called.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Yes, I’ve forgotten the acronym. IETP, potentially.

D147: Interactive Electronic Technical Manual, or Publication.

25 FLTLT ROSE: That gave you certain steps you had to follow to before-flight the devices?

D147: Yes, that’s correct.

30 FLTLT ROSE: How long would it take you to do that per device?

D147: Five, 10 minutes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: So you took them out of the Tricon. You conducted the before-flight checks, I take it, in the ALSE tent?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: You left them on a table somewhere?

40 D147: Yes, we just leave them on the ground, leaning against each other, in the ALSE tent.

45 FLTLT ROSE: Then the pilots would come and say, “I need a set”, and you would give them the Operator Logbook?

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D147: Yes. So the logbook would be on top, so they can just pick whichever one they wanted. They'd sign the Operator Logbook, do their before-flight check, and then take it.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Was their before-flight check different to the before-flight checks you do as a maintainer?

D147: It was essentially the same thing, yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Did you have to conduct a resolution check?

D147: No.

15 FLTLT ROSE: Did you have to conduct a contrast check?

D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you have to conduct an alignment check?

20 D147: Only if aircrew came back from a flight and complained about headaches, blurry vision or symbology not being aligned, we'd do a 15-minute alignment check.

25 FLTLT ROSE: You had some sort of 50-metre board with you up at Proserpine to conduct an alignment check?

D147: Yes, we did.

30 FLTLT ROSE: Did you use it?

D147: No.

35 FLTLT ROSE: So no one complained to you during the exercise of headaches, blurred imagery?

D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: But you could do it if you needed to.

40 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: That was a job the maintainer did, not the pilot?

45 D147: Yes, maintainers did that, not the pilots.

FLTLT ROSE: Is that because it was an on-condition requirement to check alignment by 2023?

5 D147: The HMSD was on-condition by 2023, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Is it your understanding that it was a different system at some stage prior to 2023, where it was necessary to conduct alignment checks every time you used an HMSD?

10 D147: Previously to that, there was a base service requirement to a specific number of days for every HMSD, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Then at some point that reduced to on-condition.

15 D147: Yes, that got changed to from having a base service requirement to on-condition.

FLTLT ROSE: Were you in service working with HMSDs throughout that change period?

20 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: How did you think that affected, first of all, your workload, the pilots' workload, but then safety as well?

25 D147: Our workload decreased. But it increased the risk of HMSDs, because out of five HMSDs we'd service, two of them would have to get returned for alignment re-calibration.

30 FLTLT ROSE: In the past, when you were conducting your regular alignment checks, you would find two out of five needed re-calibration.

D147: Yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Once it was the pilot's responsibility to let you know when something was potentially misaligned, was it a similar level? Were you getting informed by them that about two out of five were misaligned?

40 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So of the 12 sets that you took up, was it unusual in that week-long period that nobody complained to you about a misalignment?

45 D147: No, it wasn't unusual.

FLTLT ROSE: If one needed to be calibrated though, you couldn't do that at Proserpine?

5 D147: No. We had two spares, so we'd replace it with a serviceable spare for the duration of the exercise.

AVM HARLAND: But could you confirm the misalignment through that 50-metre check you had available to you?

10 D147: Yes, we could confirm that.

AVM HARLAND: Were you aware that heat and humidity can affect the alignment of a TopOwl IIT?

15 D147: No, I was not aware of that.

AVM HARLAND: Thank you.

20 FLTLT ROSE: How were the HMSDs stored back at Holsworthy?

D147: HMSDs were stored in one of our backrooms in our section. The IITs, the night-vision devices for the HMSD, were stored inside of a safe, locked up.

25 FLTLT ROSE: And was that inside a building?

D147: Yes, inside a building in our section.

30 FLTLT ROSE: Was that an air-conditioned building?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Was that air-conditioning on all the time?

35 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know what that temperature was, roughly?

40 D147: Temperature ranged from 20.9 degrees to 23.3.

FLTLT ROSE: Was there any consideration in the planning stages that you or colleagues took as to the fact that the HMSDs, when they were regularly stored in temperatures between 20 and 23 degrees, were now going to be stored inside a container which was going to be exposed to the

elements at Proserpine and that was likely to increase the temperature that they were stored in?

5 D147: So that was raised because all of our ALSE gear has to be stored in air-conditioning environment. But there was no locking-up solution for the HMSDs. So overnight they'd stay inside the container and then during the day they'd be taken out and put inside the ALSE tent.

10 FLTLT ROSE: So your first shift, though, started at noon.

D147: Yes.

15 FLTLT ROSE: So would the first activity that whoever was the day shift person do, was take those HMSDs out of the container?

D147: So it'd be before that. So as soon they wake up and had breakfast, they'd go and turn the ALSE tent on and move the items.

20 FLTLT ROSE: So roughly, what, 8 am in the morning?

D147: 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So they were stored mostly in the container overnight?

25 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: But there was a period of time during daylight, from 6 am or 8 am, that they were still in the container.

30 D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: And there wasn't an actual thermometer checking the temperature at any point?

35 D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you notice when you opened the container that it was hotter than being inside the – or outside or within the ALSE tent?

40 D147: Couldn't really tell. Everything was hot.

FLTLT ROSE: So it was hot in July 2023?

45 D147: Yes, and humid.

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FLTLT ROSE: Who made the decision that the HMSDs would be stored in the Tricon throughout the exercise?

D147: I did.

5

FLTLT ROSE: Did you discuss it with any of your superiors? You said before it was raised before as an issue, because all your ALSE equipment should be stored in air-conditioned environments. Who did you speak to about that concern?

10

D147: I spoke to D47 about those concerns.

FLTLT ROSE: Prior to deploying or on deployment?

15

D147: Prior to and on deployment. And the best solution was the Tricon, since we couldn't actually move a physical safe down there.

FLTLT ROSE: So there was a priority put on their safety, in terms of security, should I say, rather than the temperature they were stored in?

20

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Had you had experience of people stealing the IITs?

25

D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: So really, where did that concern come from, that somebody might take the kit?

30

D147: It's more of the classification level for the item.

MS McMURDO: They're expensive items too, aren't they? Isn't each helmet fitted to the - - -

35

D147: So each basic helmet is – so each pilot has a laser-cut foam liner, and then that foam liner gets installed into either a basic helmet or a basic large helmet. And then that helmet gets fitted to them. And then the HMSD goes on top of that TopOwl helmet.

40

MS McMURDO: So the helmets weren't in the Tricon, or were they?

D147: No, the helmets were stored inside the ALSE tent.

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MS McMURDO: They were stored inside the ALSE tent, yes. So they were very valuable, the helmets themselves, because they'd been laser cut to each individual pilot so they'd be expensive to replace.

5 D147: From what I've been told previously, a laser cut usually costs about three to five grand.

MS McMURDO: Three to five grand?

10 D147: Yes.

MS McMURDO: So you understood that the night-vision devices that had to go into the Tricon were going in there because of the classification of them if they were stolen?

15 D147: Yes. And they were, like, a quarter a million a pop.

MS McMURDO: Right. Thank you.

20 AVM HARLAND: How big is a HMSD that you had stored in the Tricon, just roughly?

D147: So we had HMSD-specific trunks designed for their transport. So they'd be stored inside the HMSD trunk and then they'd be stored away inside.

25

AVM HARLAND: Was there any reason that trunk couldn't be put inside the tent, locked up?

30 D147: You couldn't really lock a tent with a lock and a key.

AVM HARLAND: You can lock a trunk, though.

D147: You could, but you wouldn't be able to fit them all in.

35

AVM HARLAND: Be able to, sorry?

D147: You wouldn't be able to fit it all.

40 AVM HARLAND: Thank you.

FLTLT ROSE: The Inquiry has heard evidence that if a HMSD and the IITs are stored in hot temperatures, that it will possibly change the alignment or affect the alignment of that device. Have you heard that before?

45

D147: No.

5 FLTLT ROSE: So no one from the Defence Science Technology Group has ever spoken to you about this risk?

D147: No.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Were you aware that the Defence Science Technology Group conducted tests in respect of HMSDs being exposed to hot temperatures and cold temperatures?

D147: No.

15 FLTLT ROSE: Have you ever been told, even now you're posted out of 6 Aviation Regiment?

D147: No, I haven't.

20 FLTLT ROSE: In terms of practising or training for the deployment, did you conduct any exercises or go through a desktop exercise where you would talk with you and your colleagues and your superiors about the process of storing the HMSDs at Proserpine?

25 D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you do any sort of pre-deployment practices?

30 D147: No, we did not.

AVM HARLAND: Just a question regarding the HMSDs, is there any guidance in your publications that talks about the storage of HMSDs and what sort of conditions they should be stored in?

35 D147: I don't remember.

FLTLT ROSE: Before you said that D47 was someone that you spoke to in your Chain of Command about this as being a concern of yours?

40 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Was there anyone else in the Chain of Command?

45 D147: D89.

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FLTLT ROSE: Was D89 on deployment?

D147: Yes.

5 FLTLT ROSE: What role did D89 perform on deployment?

D147: He was the overall member that looked after all maintenance personnel.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Did you speak to the OC of the Support Squadron, whose name you can't recall?

D147: No, I did not talk to the OC Support Squadron.

15 FLTLT ROSE: Was there a solution provided to you by D89 or D47, or was the solution, which is what you did, which was store them in the Tricon?

D147: We just stored them in the Tricon, yes.

20 FLTLT ROSE: You said it was before it was – obviously there's an expense element to it; they're expensive pieces of kit. But there was also a security classification to those IITs, in particular.

25 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And that, in a sense, is it fair to say, took priority over any other concerns you had about requirements to store the kit in air-conditioned environments?

30 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Were you comfortable with that?

35 D147: At the time, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Now?

D147: No.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Why do you say that?

D147: Due to consequences of actions taken.

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FLTLT ROSE: You're saying because of the crash, you have concerns that the HMSD - - -

5 D147: There is a few decisions that I would change, if I could go back now, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: What decisions would they be?

10 D147: Find a way to move a safe to the location, because that's the best storage solution for that item.

FLTLT ROSE: Sorry, I didn't quite understand that.

15 D147: A safe.

MS McMURDO: Move the safe to the location.

D147: Yes.

20 MS McMURDO: Do you mean inside the tent?

D147: Yes.

25 MS McMURDO: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So they could be air-conditioned?

D147: Yes.

30 FLTLT ROSE: Have you read something or been trained in a different way since this incident occurred that's taught you that?

D147: No.

35 FLTLT ROSE: This is just your thinking?

D147: Yes, just my self-reflection.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Was there any other decisions?

45 D147: The way I handled shift work could have been done better. That's about it. More items could have been packed. The way the items were packed inside the Tricon could have been done better. More accurate tracking of items of aircrew equipment. All that kind of stuff.

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FLTLT ROSE: Have you had a lessons learned breakdown with your team following this incident?

D147: No.

5

FLTLT ROSE: So these are just your thoughts?

D147: Yes, just my thoughts.

10

FLTLT ROSE: Just going back to the misalignment issue, if a pilot did suspect the HMSD was misaligned and you could confirm that, was that a no go for flying?

15

D147: No, that was just for that item. So what would happen is if they suspected a HMSD was out of alignment, we'd get one of the spares out, base service – not base service – before-flight that item, have the pilot take that one instead, since that was a serviceable item, and then the one that he said was whatever his concerns were, we'd do the 50-metre test and then we'd go from there, if it was a go or no go.

20

FLTLT ROSE: So it was a no go for the kit, not obviously for the flight because there's a spare?

D147: Yes, no go for the kit because we had spares.

25

FLTLT ROSE: But if there was no spare or no appropriate spare that was aligned, then that's a no go for flying, I take it?

D147: Yes, pretty much.

30

FLTLT ROSE: Because you can't fly at night without the HMSD and the IIT?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

35

MS McMURDO: And there are only two spares that had been brought?

D147: We only took two spares.

40

MS McMURDO: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: You state at paragraph 10 that you conducted the before-flight and after-flight test during the day, when visibility was highest?

45

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Were your after-flight checks the same as your before-flight checks?

5

D147: Essentially, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So if they finish flying at 3 am in the morning, that's night-time.

10

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So you wouldn't do the after-flight straight after the flight, you'd wait till the next day.

15

D147: Whoever was on night shift would make sure they're stored correctly and then get back to bed, and then day shift would come in and we'd do all the after-flights and before-flights ready for that day.

20

FLTLT ROSE: But if your after-flights and before-flights are essentially the same, were you just conducting the same tests twice in a quick succession of time?

D147: Yes.

25

FLTLT ROSE: What's the rationale for having an after-flight check?

D147: I don't know.

30

FLTLT ROSE: In terms of is it to pick up on issues with the HMSD sooner and quicker, as soon as the flight has finished, so that potentially it could be sent off for calibration or some other sort of deep servicing?

D147: Essentially, yes.

35

FLTLT ROSE: So if you're putting the after-flights and before-flight checks together, is that a redundancy in a sense?

D147: Yes. So a before-flight is a redundancy to an after-flight being conducted.

40

MS McMURDO: Would you like to have a short break now, or are you happy to continue?

45

D147: I'm happy to go.

MS McMURDO: Thank you.

FLTLT ROSE: Sorry, what was the result of the question?

5

MS McMURDO: Happy to go, happy to continue.

10 FLTLT ROSE: I'm just trying to get my head around the before-flight and after-flight, the purposes of it, the rationale. I know you said you don't know, so perhaps if I put something to you, you can confirm or deny that you've heard this before. So is the after-flight checked by the maintainer to confirm that the pilot hasn't done anything to the kit that means it's not serviceable anymore and potentially could talk to them about it and confirm with them, "Look, you've given this kit back to me and there's something that's not quite right with it. What did you do with it mid-flight?" Is it a conversation moment?

15

D147: Yes. That's essentially what would happen during an after-flight, yes.

20

FLTLT ROSE: At Holsworthy do you conduct the after-flights as soon as the pilots get back?

D147: Yes, so pilots get back and we conduct the after-flights.

25

FLTLT ROSE: So even if it's 3 or 4 in the morning?

D147: We don't fly that late at night at 6 Avn, back at home base.

30

FLTLT ROSE: So at night-time, though. So say they got off the sortie at midnight, you would do the after-flight at midnight?

D147: Yes.

35

FLTLT ROSE: And you would have those conversations with the pilots?

D147: If they were still around, yes.

40

FLTLT ROSE: So what was the reason why you waited at Proserpine to conduct the after-flights until daytime?

D147: Because there was no light.

45

FLTLT ROSE: So at Holsworthy there's artificial light from the lights within buildings that you could use?

- D147: Yes.
- 5 FLTLT ROSE: Was there lighting in the ALSE tent?
- D147: Yes, there was.
- FLTLT ROSE: Was it dim or - - -
- 10 D147: It was more dim light, but there was light in the ALSE tent, yes.
- FLTLT ROSE: Could you have done an after-flight check in that dim light?
- 15 D147: I wouldn't be confident in doing it, no.
- FLTLT ROSE: So there was limitations on your ability to conduct the after-flights because you didn't have the facilities on deployment?
- 20 D147: Yes, that's correct.
- FLTLT ROSE: Then the before-flight check is to check that the item is serviceable again, therefore available to be checked out by a pilot?
- 25 D147: Yes.
- FLTLT ROSE: So to go back to my question before, by running the after-flight checks just before you do the before-flight checks, there's that lost opportunity for discussions with the pilots.
- 30 D147: We'd still know who the pilot was that signed out the HMSD due to the name and signature on the HMSD logbook. So if there was an item that had particular damage or problems with it, we could go find that pilot and ask them questions.
- 35 FLTLT ROSE: Do you recall any such discoveries?
- D147: No.
- 40 FLTLT ROSE: We're talking about the Operator Logbook. Is that a paper-based booklet?
- D147: Yes.
- 45 FLTLT ROSE: You've worked in other units, I take it, other than

6 Aviation Regiment?

D147: I've only worked at 6 Avn Regiment.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Have you always worked with paper-based booklets in terms of the Operator Logbooks?

D147: HMSD logbooks, yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Have you heard of other units, instead of paper-based, they have computer-based systems to monitor?

D147: No, I have not.

15 AVM HARLAND: Have you heard of CAMM2?

D147: Yes, sir.

20 AVM HARLAND: Is that a computer-based maintenance system?

D147: Yes, but not for HMSDs.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Did the Operator Logbook stay with the HMSD and the IITs?

D147: For storage, yes. But after being signed out by the pilot, the logbook would stay behind.

30 FLTLT ROSE: Would stay behind?

D147: Yes, like, in the ALSE tent, while they took that physical item.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Right, of course. So the pilots weren't taking the logbook with them into the aircraft?

D147: No.

40 FLTLT ROSE: So just so I can envision, right, there's some sort of bag or case that the HMSDs sit in?

D147: Yes. So they had a grey digicam bag that the HMSD would be carried in, yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: There was the logbook sat inside that case?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Where did the IITs go?

5 D147: IITs went inside of a black storage case that got stored with the item as well.

FLTLT ROSE: So all together in the same kit?

10 D147: Yes, so it was like one kit.

FLTLT ROSE: Was there a test for the IITs, separate to the testing that you did for the HMSDs?

15 D147: We wouldn't do a test on an after-flight or before-flight, we'd just check the serviceability and cleanliness of the item.

FLTLT ROSE: Of the IIT?

20 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did the pilots conduct before-flight checks on the IITs?

D147: If they wanted to, yes.

25 FLTLT ROSE: They had a system whereby they could do that, did they?

D147: Yes.

30 FLTLT ROSE: Was there a logbook for them to write down the results of those testing?

D147: That was the HMSD logbook.

35 FLTLT ROSE: So it catered for both testing – so when they tested for contrast resolution and alignment, it would be with the full kit on, the HMSD plus the IITs, working together?

D147: Yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 5 you state that you were responsible for ensuring the serviceability of equipment that was transported to Proserpine?

45 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So every HMSD and IIT kit that went to Proserpine was serviceable?

5 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did any of them become unserviceable during the exercise?

10 D147: Only one.

FLTLT ROSE: So there was, in effect, 11 available by the time that one became unserviceable?

15 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So you had one spare.

20 D147: So we had one spare at the time, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: But you couldn't send that particular kit off for servicing until you got home from Proserpine?

25 D147: Yes, we wait until we got home and then we'd box it up and then transport it to wherever it needed to go.

FLTLT ROSE: Was that a concern of yours, that you only had one spare at some point during the week?

30 D147: No.

AVM HARLAND: What was the maximum number of aircraft that would fly at any one time on the program during TALISMAN SABRE?

35 D147: Four.

AVM HARLAND: So that means you'd use eight HMSDs?

40 D147: Yes, and we had essentially four spare.

AVM HARLAND: And you had two others that were before-flighted?

D147: Yes, we had two others before-flighted, as immediate spares, in case one failed when they were doing their aircraft before-flight and

connection. So then they'd come and do a hot swap with HMSDs. And then we had two spare in storage as well.

5 AVM HARLAND: Yes, that you could BF and use should you have needed.

D147: That we could BF and use straightaway, yes.

10 AVM HARLAND: Thank you.

FLTLT ROSE: In terms of the deep servicing of the HMSDs, do you recall who was authorised to conduct that servicing?

15 D147: Life Support personnel.

FLTLT ROSE: So the Life Support personnel could do some servicings, but in terms of the deeper maintenance, who was unauthorised to?

20 D147: Airbus. So we sent it back to wherever it needed to go.

FLTLT ROSE: That's because they're the Part 145 Maintenance Operator?

25 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did they, Airbus, issue a TMP in relation to the servicings of HMSDs? Do you know what I mean by that?

30 D147: You mean, like, maintenance procedure?

FLTLT ROSE: Some sort of Technical Maintenance Plan, or Program, or Publication.

35 D147: There was, yes. And then it was changed to on-condition.

FLTLT ROSE: But it was Airbus that issued guidance on how maintainers were to conduct those servicings of the HMSDs.

40 D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: So let's go back to the process here. Once the pilots had accepted the HMSDs and IITs and signed the Operator's Logbook, they would then take the kit and use it in sorties?

45 D147: Yes, they'd take it to the aircraft.

FLTLT ROSE: You said it was standard practice for one pilot to sign for both HMSDs while the other pilot started the aircraft?

5 D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: Was it usually the Aircraft Captain who signed out the HMSDs or could it also be the co-pilot?

10 D147: Could be either/or.

FLTLT ROSE: So when you're stating that there's a responsibility for a pilot to conduct the before-flight checks and sign the Operators Logbook, it was suitable and within Standing Instructions that a pilot could before-flight check an HMSD that he or she was not going to actually use themselves?

D147: I don't know if it was in Standing Instruction, but it was standard practice.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Was there anything in the Standing Instructions that said you had to before-flight your own HMSD?

D147: I don't recall.

25 FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 11 you state that:

Ex TALISMAN SABRE was the first time that the MRH-90s had been deployed to a field environment.

30 D147: With 6 Avn, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did it feel like you were still learning how to conduct an exercise appropriately because it was the first time with MRH-90s? Were there lessons that you were learning on the job?

35

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did it feel a little bit disorganised or somewhat unorganised because you noticed some issues?

40

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you share those concerns with your Chain of Command?

45

D147: At the time, yes.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Who was that? Was that D47?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Was that D89?

10 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And the colleagues, 146 and 148?

15 D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: Anyone else?

D147: The Life Support Section Head at the time as well.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Was that that person whose name was shown to you on a piece of paper before?

D147: Yes.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Just remind me, they did deploy at Proserpine as well?

D147: That person did not.

30 FLTLT ROSE: So you were communicating your concerns via phone?

D147: Straight to D47 and 89, because they were on exercise.

35 FLTLT ROSE: And they would call the person whose name – the Flight Sergeant's name.

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And he was back at Holsworthy, I take it?

40 D147: Yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: Was the reason why that person didn't deploy because 6 Avn was still conducting some flights from Holsworthy at the same time as TALISMAN SABRE was ongoing?

D147: And other reasons as well that's Sensitive.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Did you feel like you had enough personnel with you to undertake all the duties you were required to perform at Proserpine?

D147: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: But you realised when you were there that perhaps some – you would have planned slightly differently or conducted operations slightly differently once you got up there?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

15 FLTLT ROSE: In terms of the alignment range, we talked before about this 50-metre board that you took up with you to Proserpine.

D147: Yes.

20 FLTLT ROSE: How did you conduct the alignment checks back at Holsworthy?

D147: With the same board, because we have four.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Does it have to be in a darkened room?

D147: Not a darkened room, but it's got to be in a low light area.

30 FLTLT ROSE: Were the pilots aware that there was an alignment board available in case they needed it?

D147: Yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Are the resolution and contrast checks that the pilots undertake done using a Hoffman 20/20 test?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: What does that test set look like? How big is it?

40 D147: It's a light grey box, about 30-centimetre cube-ish.

FLTLT ROSE: It's mobile?

45 D147: Yes.

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FLTLT ROSE: And where was it stored at Proserpine?

D147: In the Life Support Section in the dark room.

5 FLTLT ROSE: At Holsworthy?

D147: Sorry. In the Holsworthy Life Support Section in the dark room.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Sorry, I misspoke there. That was my apology to you.
So it was in a darkened room. Attached to a wall?

D147: Just a shelf, so it was at eye level, so the pilots didn't have to
duck down when doing their tests.

15 FLTLT ROSE: So they were wearing their kit, they'd walk up to this
box, look inside it, conduct their tests and sign the logbook to say they'd
done it.

20 D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you take a Hoffman 20/20 test set with you to
Proserpine?

25 D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: What was the reason for that?

30 D147: There was only one Hoffman available in the section at the time
and they were still conducting night operations at 6 Avn at the time of
packing.

FLTLT ROSE: The Inquiry has heard some evidence that there were
three Hoffman test sets available at 6 Avn. Is that incorrect?

35 D147: To my knowledge, I've only ever known about two.

FLTLT ROSE: And where was the other one?

40 D147: I don't know. So one was in the dark room and one was away
getting calibrated, and that's all I know.

FLTLT ROSE: So how long does it take to calibrate a Hoffman?

45 D147: It can range, depending on the time.

FLTLT ROSE: Days, months, years?

D147: Weeks, months.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Weeks, months. So you could effectively be down to your single Hoffman. Was that usual at Holsworthy, that you had one available?

10 D147: Usually there was always two, but then sometimes there'd be one available for a certain period of time, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And it just so happened that at the time of Proserpine, TALISMAN SABRE, there was just one?

15 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did Airbus have the other?

20 D147: I don't know where it goes.

FLTLT ROSE: So that's not your responsibility, to send it off for re-calibration?

25 D147: No, someone else in Airbus who handles ground equipment come and collect the Hoffman when it's time for calibration.

FLTLT ROSE: So you're not trained, as part of your expertise, to check the Hoffman, service the Hoffman?

30 D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Whose decision was it to leave the Hoffman at Holsworthy and not take it to Proserpine?

35 D147: It's standard practice for a Hoffman to always be available at 6 Avn while flying operations are being conducted.

40 FLTLT ROSE: So did you know that there was only one Hoffman available and that it wasn't coming to Proserpine prior to deployment?

D147: Yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: Did you inform anyone of that issue, that there wasn't going to be a Hoffman at Proserpine?

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D147: Yes, I notified my section head.

FLTLT ROSE: Is that the name of the person who – the Flight Sergeant? Let's just call that person "the Flight Sergeant".

5

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So the Flight Sergeant knew. Did D47 know?

10

D147: I do not know if I remember telling him.

FLTLT ROSE: Did D89?

15

D147: I don't remember.

FLTLT ROSE: What did Flight Sergeant say to you when you had this discussion about the fact that you wouldn't be taking a Hoffman to Proserpine?

20

D147: So, essentially, we had the conversation that only one was available. A decision was made that we'd leave it here because night operations was still conducted, and they were doing training sorties. And it was standard practice for half the time that aircrew don't even use the Hoffman, so we didn't take it.

25

FLTLT ROSE: What do you mean by that, "half the time the aircrew don't use the Hoffman"?

30

D147: It's aircrew's responsibility if they want to do the contrast test or not.

FLTLT ROSE: So it's not a go/no go requirement for them to do those contrast resolution checks?

35

D147: No, it's not.

FLTLT ROSE: Is it not in Standing Instructions that they should conduct a Hoffman test?

40

D147: I don't remember.

FLTLT ROSE: Did the pilots ever talk to you about the reasons why they may choose not to conduct a test?

45

D147: No.

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: Did they ever complain to you about the HMSDs being out of resolution or outside of contrast?

5 D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Was there any training that you're aware of, that you participated in, about the purpose and reasons for pilots using a Hoffman?

10 D147: Not that I remember, no.

FLTLT ROSE: So what did you think the Hoffman was there for?

15 D147: I understand what the Hoffman does in trying to – with contrast calibration. But it's more of a personal opinion on how the pilot's eyes match with the device.

FLTLT ROSE: So the pilots would put the HMSD on their heads and if they thought it looked good, that would be good enough for them to go flying?
20

D147: Yes, essentially.

FLTLT ROSE: But only if they were concerned about the resolution and contrast would you then see them using the Hoffman?
25

D147: Yes.

MS McMURDO: When did you find out that there wasn't a Hoffman available to go to Proserpine? How long before you deployed?
30

D147: So off memory, the Tricon had to be packed and ready for pick-up on the Tuesday, and it was on the Monday night where I stayed back and I was doing DG paperwork for our ALSE Tricon, and that's when I noticed that we only had one. Had the conversation with the Flight Sergeant and then - - -
35

MS McMURDO: The same time. As soon as you found out, you had the conversation with the Flight Sergeant.
40

D147: Yes.

MS McMURDO: And you discussed it and the two of you decided, well, you just have to make do without it.
45

D147: Yes.

MS McMURDO: Thank you.

5

FLTLT ROSE: Did you speak to any officers in the Chain of Command about the fact that you wouldn't be taking a Hoffman?

D147: I don't recall.

10

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know if the Flight Sergeant spoke to anyone about this issue?

D147: No.

15

MS McMURDO: Given that your team was one person down, did you feel the tempo of your team was high at this time, pre-deployment and during the deployment?

20

D147: Yes.

MS McMURDO: Because you had a new person on as well, didn't you?

25

D147: In the past few years, at the time, we'd only be getting trainees, so we had a massive training burden. So trying to train people up and keep up with all the maintenance requirements, and then Airbus giving us more maintenance requirements in regards to more Life Support items, definitely put the tempo up on us.

30

MS McMURDO: We have heard from some witnesses that the MRH-90 platform was a very high maintenance platform, very demanding maintenance-wise. Was that the position from your aspect of ALS?

35

D147: Yes. That's my opinion as well, yes.

MS McMURDO: While I'm asking you a few questions, one other question, you mentioned this technical – TLM, I think, Technical Manual from Airbus. And originally the HMSDs were checked every 30 days; is that right?

40

D147: There was a base service requirement on the HMSDs. But I can't remember what amount of days it was. But then during that period, whilst they were still in service at 6 Avn Regiment, it changed from having a base service requirement into an on-condition requirement.

45

OFFICIAL

MS McMURDO: To an on-condition, which meant that you'd only do it if there was some problem notified to you. Now, you said that Airbus changed that. Do you know whether it was Airbus that changed that or whether it was something within Army Aviation?

5 D147: I don't know.

MS McMURDO: You don't know for sure?

10 D147: No.

MS McMURDO: Thank you.

15 FLTLT ROSE: Just to understand the dates. When did you deploy to Proserpine?

D147: July.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Was it prior to the aircrew arriving in the MRH-90s?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So a couple of days before?

25 D147: So, from memory, the Tricons arrived a few days before, and then the aircrew arrived a couple of days after that. And we arrived via C-130 or C-17 on the day that the aircrew got to Proserpine.

30 FLTLT ROSE: So you might have arrived at – so we've heard evidence the aircrew arrived on 24 July, which was a Monday.

D147: Yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: So the Tricon arrived a couple of days before that?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: It was sitting in the sun for those couple of days?

40 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And the HMSDs were in the Tricon?

45 D147: No, they ASD'd with the aircraft.

FLTLT ROSE: So they came with you on the 24th?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

5 FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 18 you state that maintainers do not conduct risk assessments?

D147: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Are you aware though that other people within 6 Aviation Regiment do complete risk assessments in respect of flying operations?

D147: Yes. I'm just a [REDACTED].

15

FLTLT ROSE: Sorry?

D147: I'm just a [REDACTED], I don't make risk assessments.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Understood. So officers are making risk assessments?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

25 FLTLT ROSE: And within your team there is an officer that you mentioned, D89?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So would he be conducting risk assessments?

30

D147: I don't know. For any maintenance things? I don't know.

FLTLT ROSE: But you've not been involved in or asked to give opinions on information that's needed for a risk assessment?

35

D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: Did it occur to you the fact that you weren't taking a Hoffman test to Proserpine should have been informed to pilots or someone responsible for risk assessments for operations at Proserpine, so they can incorporate that into their risk assessment?

40

D147: They probably should have been informed, yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: At the time you didn't think of that?

D147: No.

5 FLTLT ROSE: You're saying now you think they should have been?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: How have you come to that?

10 D147: The aircrew could have had the decision that whilst they were packing the aircraft for ASD, to also pack their own Hoffman.

15 FLTLT ROSE: When you mean "their own Hoffman", as in "the Hoffman"?

D147: Yes, the Hoffman.

20 FLTLT ROSE: So if you had told some of the pilots or the aircrew that, "Look, we're not packing a Hoffman in our Tricon", you think maybe they would have just gone and grabbed it and put it with their kit?

D147: Yes, probably.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Had you seen that being done on previous exercises?

D147: On previous exercises with MRH, I never packed the Hoffman.

30 FLTLT ROSE: But a Hoffman had sometimes been on exercise when you were with the MRH-90s?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: So someone else had packed the Hoffman?

35 D147: Yes, because aircrew handle any NVG devices – so by "aircrew" I mean loadmasters – use NVG devices, and they will take a Hoffman whilst they use those.

40 FLTLT ROSE: But you don't recall talking to any loadmasters about packing the Hoffman?

D147: No, I don't.

OFFICIAL

AVM HARLAND: Can you satisfy the servicing requirements and the before-flight check requirements for a HMSD without the Hoffman 20/20 box?

5 D147: Yes.

AVM HARLAND: So effectively within the publications there's a way for you to release them and there's no firm requirement to do the Hoffman 20/20 resolution test or contrast and resolution test?

10

D147: Yes, from what I remember, that was not part of the before-flight or after-flight checks on the HMSD.

AVM HARLAND: So there's no requirement to do it?

15

D147: No.

AVM HARLAND: Thank you.

20 FLTLT ROSE: You don't recall the Operator's Logbook and what the pilots had to fill out when they accepted the HMSDs?

D147: No, not from memory.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Could I have the witness be shown – I'll just check the exhibit number – it would be 158B, page 42. I've only asked you to be shown this singular page. Do you recognise that as a page out of the HMSD Operator's Logbook?

30 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: If you look at the right-hand side of the pages, the figure in 6.2 is a little bit clearer to read. You see it says, "Night-aided operations," and it's the, "Maintenance Before Use Servicing", the heading there at the top on the right-hand side?

35

D147: Yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: And then there's a name, I won't read that name, but is that D148's name?

D147: Yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: Then you see "Operator acceptance/running chart change" underneath that name?

D147: Yes.

5 FLTLT ROSE: And then it says, "Alignment check required only if misalignment suspected".

D147: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: And then it's got a box for "Resolution, contrast and alignment checks".

D147: Yes.

15 FLTLT ROSE: And there's a squiggle through it.

D147: Yes.

20 FLTLT ROSE: So if it was in the Operator's Logbook, is the requirement for the pilots to complete it before signing?

D147: From my knowledge, no.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know why that's in there then?

25 D147: No. I think – because the day-aided operations doesn't have that resolution and contrast, but the night operations does in case the checks needed to be carried out.

30 FLTLT ROSE: But how did you know if you needed to conduct a check?

D147: What do you mean?

35 FLTLT ROSE: So when and in what circumstances would a pilot conduct a contrast and resolution check if they're not required to do it then? Would there be a reason why they - - -

D147: I don't know.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Just put that to the side for the moment. Had you ever seen CAPT Lyon using the Hoffman at Holsworthy?

D147: Yes, I've seen him use it sometimes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: Did you ever see LT Nugent use the Hoffman at

Holsworthy?

D147: Yes, he's used it sometimes.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Had you ever seen Warrant Officer Class 2 use the Hoffman at Holsworthy?

D147: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: How about CPL Naggs?

D147: Yes.

15 FLTLT ROSE: You said in the absence of a Hoffman – and this is about paragraph 15 of your statement – some pilots used a different alternative test.

D147: Yes.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Was that some sort of field test?

D147: Yes, similar to the ANVIS-9 field test, essentially.

25 FLTLT ROSE: What does that look like? What test kit do you need to conduct those field tests?

D147: You don't need a kit at all.

30 FLTLT ROSE: Is it just looking off into a distance?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Focusing your - - -

35 D147: Yes, focusing on a distance that's – on an item that's at a long distance, and then contrasting it to your eye.

FLTLT ROSE: That's permitted, is it, in the ANVIS-9 Operator Manual?

40

D147: I can't say for certain, because I don't know.

FLTLT ROSE: But you did see both pilots and aircrewman doing a field test?

45

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you see them doing that at Proserpine?

5 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you see CAPT Lyon doing that at Proserpine?

10 D147: No, because he just signed the book and then walked away and took his aircraft.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you see LT Nugent conducting those field tests at Proserpine?

15 D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: So go to paragraph 16, I'll just pick up on what you just stated then. You state that CAPT Lyon was the only pilot to ask you at Proserpine where the Hoffman test set was.

20 D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: You stated he asked you about this on 28 July 2023?

25 D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: Did he tell you why he wanted to use the Hoffman test set?

30 D147: No, he just asked if there was one available.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you infer from that, that if there was one available, he would have used it?

35 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: What was your response to him?

40 D147: We didn't have one.

FLTLT ROSE: And what was his response to that?

D147: I don't recall.

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MS McMURDO: We might have a 10-minute break now. We'll just have a 10-minute break, a comfort break.

D147: Yes.

MS McMURDO: Thank you.

HEARING ADJOURNED

HEARING RESUMED

MS McMURDO: Yes, FLTLT Rose.

FLTLT ROSE: D147, just prior to the break you were recounting a conversation that you had with CAPT Dannel Lyon at Proserpine on 28 July 2023?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And you state that he asked you where the Hoffman test was?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And you told him you didn't bring a test set?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you tell him that was because it was being utilised back at 6 Aviation Regiment?

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And you state that CAPT Lyon didn't respond to you in any way that you can recall?

D147: Yes. He said something but I don't remember it.

FLTLT ROSE: Did he look annoyed, frustrated?

D147: I don't remember.

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FLTLT ROSE: Did he direct you that you arrange for the Hoffman to be sent up to Proserpine?

D147: No. I don't recall.

5

FLTLT ROSE: Did he state that he would complain to someone in the Chain of Command about there not being a Hoffman?

D147: No. Not that I'm aware of.

10

FLTLT ROSE: Did you see CAPT Lyon use that alternative field test on his HMSD in lieu of using the Hoffman test?

D147: I don't recall.

15

FLTLT ROSE: Do you remember what time of day that you had this conversation with CAPT Lyon?

D147: About 1300, 1400, somewhere around there.

20

FLTLT ROSE: Is that when you understood their duty day was starting?

D147: Yes.

25

FLTLT ROSE: The Inquiry's heard evidence that the sortie on 28 July didn't take place until later in the evening, sort of post 7 pm.

D147: Yes.

30

FLTLT ROSE: And if you were having this conversation with CAPT Lyon at around 1300, is that when the pilot normally took the HMSDs out from the ALSE tent or checked them out from you?

D147: Yes.

35

FLTLT ROSE: So where did they put the HMSDs when they're not being used?

D147: They'd store it inside the aircraft, after accepting it.

40

FLTLT ROSE: So it could be inside the aircraft for a number of hours prior to being used?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

45

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FLTLT ROSE: And the aircrafts, are they air-conditioned when they're not turned on, when they're stationary?

D147: No.

5

FLTLT ROSE: So the HMSD – do you know how hot it gets in an aircraft in the middle of the sun in Queensland?

D147: Pretty hot.

10

FLTLT ROSE: And so the HMSDs are sitting in that hot aircraft prior to being used?

D147: Yes.

15

FLTLT ROSE: And there's no further checks that the pilots are required to do once they've checked them out, because they've done their before-flight checks on the moment of checking them out?

20

D147: Once it's accepted, it's their responsibility.

FLTLT ROSE: Are you aware of anyone formally, or even informally, complaining about there being a lack of a Hoffman test at Proserpine?

25

D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 19 of your statement you state that you're no longer at 6 Aviation Regiment because you're in Wagga; is that correct?

30

D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you deploy with 6 Aviation Regiment after Proserpine, after TALISMAN SABRE?

35

D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Were you still in the unit when the Squadron started flying Black Hawk?

40

D147: Yes, I was.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know if the Black Hawk pilots used the Hoffman test to check their night-vision devices?

45

D147: No, I do not.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Do you know if there have been any changes at 6 Aviation Regiment post TALISMAN SABRE about the use of checks for night-vision devices?

D147: No, I don't.

10 FLTLT ROSE: I want to change topics now. At paragraph 20 you recall LT Nugent asking you about the pins in his helmet connector on 28 July '23.

D147: Yes.

15 FLTLT ROSE: And he told you they were getting bent.

D147: Yes.

20 FLTLT ROSE: And you told him that you would fit him with a spare helmet the next day.

D147: Yes.

25 FLTLT ROSE: If you go to page 6 of your statement, the ninth bullet point? This is where you refer to the laser-cut foam linings within each pilot's helmet.

D147: Yes.

30 FLTLT ROSE: So when you were saying that you would fit him for a spare helmet the next day, what did you mean by that, noting that each helmet is laser cut to a particular pilot's head?

35 D147: So by that, you would remove the foam liner from the helmet and then insert the foam liner into a spare helmet that we brought, and then we'd do the check test fit procedures and then it'd be his from then on.

FLTLT ROSE: And that was an easy thing for maintainers to perform?

40 D147: Yes, 15 to 20 minutes.

FLTLT ROSE: And the pins that LT Nugent said were bent, they were a connection between the helmet and the aircraft?

45 D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: So that was on the basic helmet, not the HMSD?

5 D147: Yes, on the basic helmet.

FLTLT ROSE: Were they connection pins used for communication purposes?

10 D147: I don't know.

FLTLT ROSE: You were confident to be able to – you weren't confident to repair the pins themselves?

15 D147: No, we're not allowed to repair the pins.

FLTLT ROSE: And you don't know what the pins are for?

D147: From memory, it's for the speakers and microphone in the helmet as well as the motion sensor in the helmet.

20 FLTLT ROSE: And what's the purpose of the motion sensor in the helmet?

D147: I don't know what it is, but it's a motion sensor in the helmet.

25 FLTLT ROSE: But he was having some issues then with hearing or speaking or communicating via his microphone using that particular helmet?

30 D147: No, he didn't tell me any of that.

FLTLT ROSE: But he did want – the pins were bent?

D147: Yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Why is it that you had to wait until the next day to give him a new helmet if it only took 15 minutes to move the foam liners over?

D147: Because this was right before he was about to go flying.

40 FLTLT ROSE: In your mind, was it a go/no go issue?

D147: He took the helmet out – I told him, "Do a check test on the Helmet", which is what we do when we fit a new one. If he has issues and it doesn't work, come back to me and we'll replace it. He didn't come

45

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back because he checked his helmet and everything was working fine, as normal.

5 FLTLT ROSE: And is that an assumption you made because he didn't come back to you or did he do the check in front of you and told you, "Yeah, good to go"?

D147: Yes, he came back and told me.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Is that written down anywhere? Do those checks need to be recorded in any logbook?

D147: No.

15 FLTLT ROSE: And that was right before he went flying, so by night-time?

D147: Yes.

20 FLTLT ROSE: And you state that it's Airbus's responsibility to realign the pins in the helmet?

D147: Yes, because you've got to take the connection apart and then put it back together, and we don't do that.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Back on page 6, the last bullet point there, you state that:

Maintenance was only to be conducted at 6 Aviation Regiment in Holsworthy.

30 Is that correct?

D147: Yes, that's an ALSE reassurance thing.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Sorry, say that again?

D147: That's a last Life Support reassurance thing.

FLTLT ROSE: I can't hear you, sorry?

40 D147: That's a Life Support reinsurance thing.

FLTLT ROSE: Reinsurance thing?

45 D147: Reassurance, sorry.

- 5 FLTLT ROSE: Reassurance thing. So you can't conduct any maintenance at Proserpine or on deployment because it would go against a maintenance policy or instruction.
- 10 D147: No, we can. It's just, instead of packing enough spares for anything and everything that could be US upon doing an overhaul inspection or a base service inspection, we pull everything off early so that all the spares are at home base, so at 6 Avn Regiment at Holsworthy Barracks, so that if anything is broken and needs to get replaced, it can get replaced. So instead of packing another three or four trunks full of spare bits and pieces, we'd do everything before. And then everything's served and good to go for the whole duration of the exercise.
- 15 FLTLT ROSE: If you needed though spares, could you have them flown up from Holsworthy?
- D147: We packed in small individuals, like ones and twos of spares, yes.
- 20 FLTLT ROSE: Are you aware if LT Nugent continued to have any difficulties with his pins, whatever they were affecting – the head motion or the microphone and speakers – in his helmet, in the aircraft prior to lifting?
- 25 D147: No.
- FLTLT ROSE: What about during the sortie?
- D147: No.
- 30 FLTLT ROSE: You've heard the term "continuous charge"?
- D147: Yes.
- 35 FLTLT ROSE: What do you understand it to mean?
- D147: Continuous charge is upon aircrew conducting their before-flight, and accepting their gear, it's continuous charge of 90 days commences. Then it's, essentially, aircrew take responsibility for that gear for the duration of that continuous charge.
- 40 FLTLT ROSE: Was the personal ALSE that was taken to Proserpine all on continuous charge?
- 45 D147: Most of it was. But there were, I think, some bits and pieces were

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fixed, so we released gear, AF'd it, then aircrew BF'd it and accepted their gear again.

5 FLTLT ROSE: And in the HMSDs, were they on continuous charge?

D147: No.

10 FLTLT ROSE: No. Because you had to before-flight and after-flight them every day.

D147: Yes.

15 FLTLT ROSE: So they weren't on continuous charge. What about the Air Warriors?

D147: Air Warriors were on continuous charge.

FLTLT ROSE: And the life-preservers?

20 D147: LPYs have their own base servicing schedule.

FLTLT ROSE: So that's outside a continuous charge?

25 D147: Yes, that's outside a continuous charge.

FLTLT ROSE: What about the life rafts?

D147: Outside of continuous charge.

30 FLTLT ROSE: What about the Ephese respirators?

D147: Inside.

35 FLTLT ROSE: So were they on continuous charge at Proserpine?

D147: If the aircrew accepted it, yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: If they'd accepted it prior to deployment, then it was on continuous charge throughout the deployment?

D147: Yes.

AVM HARLAND: The mechanism for going to continuous charge, do the aircrew sign off and say, "I'm taking this on continuous charge", or do

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they just sign off it as they normally would on acceptance, and then they can keep it for 90 days should they wish?

5 D147: On acceptance, that's when the 90 days starts.

AVM HARLAND: Like, do you check the gear to make sure there are no servicings required in that 90 days on the gear?

10 D147: Yes. So we do a whole maintenance forecast for the whole exercise. And then we pulled everything forward, so everything was clear for that amount of time.

AVM HARLAND: And your expectation would be that the aircrew would keep their gear for 90 days and look after it themselves?

15 D147: Yes, look after it themselves for 90 days. If they had any problems, they'd come to us.

20 AVM HARLAND: And during that time, there would be no maintenance arising as it would require a servicing, because you'd cleared all of that for the 90 days?

D147: Yes.

25 AVM HARLAND: Yes, okay. Thank you.

FLTLT ROSE: In your experience, did some of the aircrew keep their personal Aeronautical Life Support Equipment for longer than the requisite 90-day period?

30 D147: Sometimes, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And what would happen to them if that was found out? Would they have a talking to?

35 D147: Yes. We'd constantly email them to return their gear to the section because we'd need it for base servicing requirements.

40 FLTLT ROSE: And now you're a [REDACTED] - - -

D147: Yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: - - - acting in a Sergeant's role. Would they listen to you? The officers listen to you? How would they respond to your emails?

D147: They're pretty good most of the time. But some of them just don't check their emails because all they do is come in, fly, go home.

5 FLTLT ROSE: And if you didn't get a response, an elicited response, from them soon enough, who would then go speak to them about their failure to comply with a maintenance requirement?

10 D147: I'd push it up through their relevant Squadron SSM.

FLTLT ROSE: What does "SSM" stand for? Something Sergeant Major?

15 D147: Squadron Sergeant Major.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you remember having to chase CAPT Lyon?

D147: No.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Do you remember having to chase LT Nugent?

D147: No.

25 AVM HARLAND: Could they go flying if they'd gone beyond the continuous charge? Was there a mechanism to stop them going flying because their equipment was technically not serviceable?

30 D147: There was no mechanism to stop them from flying if they had gone past the 90 days' continuous charge.

AVM HARLAND: Was that because it was paper-based rather than in the main maintenance system?

35 D147: Yes, that was because it was paper-based, yes.

AVM HARLAND: Yes, okay. Thank you.

40 FLTLT ROSE: In your opinion, were aircrew in 6 Aviation Regiment in 2023 over-utilising the continuous charge process?

D147: No, not that I remember.

45 FLTLT ROSE: If you just look at the pseudonym list there, I want to go back to the Hoffman question. The question about the Hoffman test kit. Can you look at D10 ?

D147: Yes.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Do you know who that is?

D147: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Do you know if D10 was aware that there was no Hoffman test set taken to Proserpine?

D147: Not with certainty.

FLTLT ROSE: Can you look at D19? Do you know who that is?

15 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know if he was aware that there was no Hoffman test set taken to Proserpine?

20 D147: No, not with certainty.

FLTLT ROSE: D10 is a pilot. He was flying during TALISMAN SABRE in Proserpine?

25 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did he ever ask you where the Hoffman test kit was?

30 D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Casting your mind back to July 2023, did you think it was a safety risk by not taking the Hoffman test set to Proserpine?

35 D147: No, I didn't.

FLTLT ROSE: And that's because you didn't think that the pilots regularly used it, or because you didn't think they had to, according to Standing Instructions?

40 D147: They didn't regularly use it, no.

FLTLT ROSE: I want to turn now to the events of 28 July 2023.

45 D147: Yes.

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FLTLT ROSE: So if you go to page 4 of your statement. Now, it's the bottom of page 4, it starts there. You and D148 started shift in the early afternoon?

5 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So you started shift together?

10 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Now, you've said before that that worked slightly differently in terms of there was this day shift/night shift and you crossed over in the middle?

15 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Or did you always work day shift and start at 12 or noon?

20 D147: So, on the day, it was the – our sixth day of work, so technically we had to get a work extension, which was put through. So we only did – 148 and myself – while 146 rested so that that person's maintenance rest cycle could continue the next day.

25 FLTLT ROSE: So I want to understand, really, how you filled your time during your duty periods. Because you've talked about before-fighting and after-fighting the HMSDs.

30 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And that they took about five to 10 minutes, each one, and there were 10 of them that you would do.

35 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: What else did you do during your day?

D147: Just waited for aircrew in case anything happened.

40 FLTLT ROSE: So you'd sit in the ALSE tent, essentially, on a reactive post?

D147: Yes. So we'd sit in the ALSE tent or we'd sit in the flight line tent.

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FLTLT ROSE: Which was also air-conditioned, was it?

D147: No, the flight tent wasn't air-conditioned.

5 FLTLT ROSE: So you weren't servicing, say, for example, the Air Warriors?

D147: No.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Or helmets or other kit that was stored in the ALSE tent?

D147: No, not unless aircrew came and told us something was wrong.

15 FLTLT ROSE: So it wasn't a particularly active deployment for you?

D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Is that fair to say?

20 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So there was a bit of activity in the mornings, a bit of activity before a sortie or after a sortie, but otherwise you were sitting in a tent. Is that a fair assessment?

25 D147: Yes, that's a fair assessment.

FLTLT ROSE: Or moving accommodation tents?

30 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So back to 28 July 2023, you and D148 opened up the Tricon and conducted the after-flight and before-flight checks on the HMSDs and the IITs?

35 D147: Yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: And, as you've explained, you conducted the after-flight test first because you couldn't do them after the sortie the previous evening because you needed the daylight to do those tests.

D147: Yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: And then after the after-flight checks, you did the before-flight checks?

D147: Yes.

5 FLTLT ROSE: And then the aircrew came to check out their HMSDs?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

FLTLT ROSE: And that was at around 1300, you think?

10 D147: Yes, 1300 to 1400, from what I remember.

FLTLT ROSE: Were you present when the aircrew had their orders, mission orders?

15 D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Was that conducted anywhere near the ALSE tent?

D147: In the Ops tent.

20 FLTLT ROSE: At the Command Post?

D147: Yes.

25 FLTLT ROSE: And it was at that stage that CAPT Lyon and you had this conversation about the fact that there was no Hoffman test?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

30 FLTLT ROSE: So then you remained on duty in the ALSE tent for a number of hours, until darkness fell, and the aircrew began preparing to fly?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

35 FLTLT ROSE: And then LT Nugent had a conversation with you about his pins and his helmet?

D147: Yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Did you remain on duty with D148 during the mission sortie?

D147: Yes.

45

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FLTLT ROSE: Both of you staying in the ALSE tent or flight line?

D147: Yes, we stayed in the ALSE tent or in flight line, yes.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Is that where you were when Bushman 83 crashed?

D147: Yes, we were all sitting in flight line waiting, and then stuff happened.

10 FLTLT ROSE: In terms of that “stuff”, you say at page 5 that D47 came to tell you that Bushman 83 had crashed?

D147: Yes.

15 FLTLT ROSE: Is that because there weren’t any radios in the flight-line? You couldn’t hear the conversations, the mission.

D147: No, there’s no radios in flight line, so we don’t hear anything.

20 FLTLT ROSE: And D47 collected your mobile phones?

D147: Yes.

25 FLTLT ROSE: That was because Army didn’t want any personnel telling anyone about the incident before the families had been informed?

D147: Yes.

30 FLTLT ROSE: Where did you go, once you heard the news of the crash?

D147: So we stayed in flight line and in vicinity of the ALSE tent for when aircrew landed. We can still receive their gear.

35 FLTLT ROSE: The HMSDs?

D147: Yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: You then state that D48 conducted aircraft down procedures.

D147: Yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: So D48 was a maintainer in the flight line?

D147: Yes, he was technically our maintenance manager of that shift.

FLTLT ROSE: Did D48 quarantine any items in the flight line or the ALSE tent?

5

D147: Yes. So we gave him the two HMSD logbooks for the pilots and two ALSEMRs with the aircraft documentation. And then we found LT Nugent's ALSEMR later and was quarantined as well with the aircraft equipment.

10

FLTLT ROSE: So ALSEMR is Aeronautical Life Support Equipment Maintenance Record?

D147: Yes.

15

FLTLT ROSE: What do you mean by "quarantined"? Did you mean you put them all on a particular table and then left them there? Or how was that quarantined?

20

D147: Yes. From my knowledge, I gave them to D48, doing the aircraft down procedures. And then that was sent over to the Ops building – Ops tent and that was quarantined at a location in there somewhere.

25

FLTLT ROSE: Did you keep a track of who was going in and out of the ALSE tent from that point on?

D147: Yes, who were not aircrew dropping off their gear.

30

FLTLT ROSE: There was a list that you were keeping, an In and Out List, was it?

D147: Yes. Just so no one who I wasn't familiar with went inside that tent to do anything.

35

FLTLT ROSE: What were you worried about?

D147: I don't know. It's just something that we do.

FLTLT ROSE: You do it as a matter of course?

40

D147: Yes. Caution, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: It's not just because it was an aircraft down procedure, you actually do that every time?

45

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D147: Yes, if there is - - -

FLTLT ROSE: On every duty, every shift?

5 D147: Not for every shift. It's only for like aircraft down procedures. Just so anyone who goes in there doesn't – if we later find that they've tampered with their ALSEMRs or something like that.

10 FLTLT ROSE: You also gave some Aeronautical Life Support Equipment to CAPT Szczudlo for the Combat Search and Rescue operations?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

15 FLTLT ROSE: And he was the Medical Officer at Proserpine for the exercise?

D147: Yes.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Were you involved in the search and rescue in any other way?

D147: No, I only gave him his gear.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Did the aircrew of Bushman 84 return their ALSE to you when they landed, or the HMSDs and IITs?

D147: Yes. So we just packed it straight in the truck and I locked it and then their gear was dropped off in their peg locations.

30 FLTLT ROSE: In their what locations?

D147: Locations within the ALSE tent.

35 FLTLT ROSE: So they took off their helmets, they took off their Air Warriors, they took off the jackets, something like that – and flying uniform?

D147: Yes, whatever they had, and put it inside the ALSE tent.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Was that quarantined as well?

D147: Yes. So as soon as something happens, stuff gets quarantined as soon as they drop it off.

45

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FLTLT ROSE: You state that all the trades people were sent to bed at 0300 on 29 July '23?

5 D147: Yes, around that time we were sent back to our tents to get some sleep.

FLTLT ROSE: So that included yourself, I take it?

10 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And D148?

D147: Yes.

15 FLTLT ROSE: Was D146 up at that stage?

D147: She was woken up and notified about the incident, yes.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Sorry, I couldn't hear what you just said?

D147: D146 was woken up and notified about the incident, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Notified about the incident.

25 D147: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Okay.

30 D147: Because all phones were quarantined.

FLTLT ROSE: Who sent you to bed? You can use the pseudonym list if you need to?

35 D147: D89 with D47.

FLTLT ROSE: Had Bushman 81 and 82 landed by the time you were sent to bed?

40 D147: I can't remember. But there was one aircraft in the air still conducting operations.

FLTLT ROSE: So who was there to receive the crew of that aircraft's HMSDs when they landed?

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- 5 D147: The key was left in flight line, so that when aircrew came they were to open up the Tricon, put the HMSDs in, lock it up and then take the keys to Ops and the rest of the gear was to be put in the ALSE tent for quarantine.
- FLTLT ROSE: So there was someone that was trusted with the keys in the flight line. Was it D48?
- 10 D147: I can't recall.
- FLTLT ROSE: When did you leave Proserpine?
- D147: The next morning, afternoon sometime.
- 15 FLTLT ROSE: Did you leave on the same RAAF plane that the aircrew of 6 Aviation Regiment left on?
- D147: It was a C-130. I don't know if they were taking all of us on the same - - -
- 20 FLTLT ROSE: So it was sometime on the 29th?
- D147: Yes, the next day.
- 25 FLTLT ROSE: Were you given a self-administered interview form from the DFSB to fill out on 29 July about what happened on 28 July?
- D147: No, I don't recall.
- 30 FLTLT ROSE: Did anyone ask you just to write your recollections on a piece of paper?
- D147: No.
- 35 FLTLT ROSE: Did you see anyone else being asked to write their recollections down?
- D147: No.
- 40 FLTLT ROSE: Have you been interviewed by the DFSB about what occurred at Proserpine?
- D147: Not by DFSB, but I have by ALSMU.
- 45 FLTLT ROSE: So it was someone from – you understood they were

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from the ALSMU, the Aeronautical Life Support Logistics Management Unit?

D147: Yes.

5

FLTLT ROSE: And was that in April 2024?

D147: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Have you heard anything from the ALSMU about the incident since you gave this interview?

D147: No, nothing.

15 FLTLT ROSE: Did anyone from the DFSB or the ALSMU provide you with a copy of the investigator's report?

D147: Only when I received my S23.

20 FLTLT ROSE: So when you received your section 23 Notice from this Inquiry - - -

D147: Yes.

25 FLTLT ROSE: - - - you were sent a copy of the ALSMU's investigator's report?

D147: Yes.

30 FLTLT ROSE: And that was the first time that you've seen that report?

D147: Yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Had anyone briefed you, though, about the contents of the report prior to being sent that by the Inquiry?

D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Those are my questions.

40

MS McMURDO: Could I just ask you one thing? If I could take you to your statement at page 4, down the bottom, "Night of the Incident" – just in that paragraph there, at the end of that paragraph you say?

45

D148 found a bent HMSD, so we replaced it with a spare.

D147: Yes.

5 MS McMURDO: You only had the two spares. So did you have any spares left at that time or was that the first of the spares you used?

D147: That was the first of the spare that was used.

10 MS McMURDO: So one spare was used.

D147: So we still had, technically, three extra spare if there was only four aircraft flying.

15 MS McMURDO: Sure. But one of the two that were brought up was still a spare. Yes, thank you. Applications to cross-examine, please?

AVM HARLAND: I just have one question, Ms McMurdo.

20 MS McMURDO: Yes, of course.

AVM HARLAND: Just regarding the continuous charge, and if I'm to understand correctly, the aircrew deployed with generally on – had their equipment, their Air Warrior, the Ephese and their basic helmet on continuous charge. Did I hear that correctly?

25 D147: For pilots, regularly they'd only have the basic helmet, Air Warrior and CLEV, on continuous charge. With aircrew, they'd have the 56P, Air Warrior, CLEV and Ephese, if they were qualified, on continuous charge because then they'd – I think they have their own re-authorisation for Ephese and sometimes they have to fly with it. And some of the aircrew were doing that whilst on TASLISMAN SABRE.

30 AVM HARLAND: And you indicated that your primary role was to service the HMSDs during this time. So it wasn't a really heavy workload.

35 D147: No, it wasn't.

40 AVM HARLAND: Is there any reason why you wouldn't just do the normal maintenance procedure on the Air Warrior and the basic helmet while you were there?

45 D147: Sometimes an Air Warrior, if everything is right, it can take 45 minutes to an hour. But if everything goes wrong with an Air Warrior and everything needs to get replaced, it could take up to three or

four hours to do one servicing.

AVM HARLAND: Is that like a deeper level servicing or, like - - -

5 D147: Yes, that's, like, taking all the contents out, servicing the item, servicing the radio as well, which we didn't have. Which we don't take because the base service 2 on the radio can sometimes take 40 minutes by itself and then sometimes the deeper level maintenance on the radio, a base service 3, can take up to an hour, an hour and a half by itself.

10

AVM HARLAND: And if I heard you right, you indicated that you had done all of those servicings on the equipment before the aircrew took continuous charge to go to TALISMAN SABRE?

15 D147: Yes, a few weeks up to a month before we ensured that all servicings were only due after the end of the exercise.

AVM HARLAND: So you wouldn't have needed to do those servicings. But what about after-flights and before-flights? Was there any reason you couldn't have done the after-flights and before-flights?

20

D147: So with continuous charge, once accepted by aircrew, it's their responsibility to maintain the serviceability of their own gear. So even though it's not written down in ALSEMR, they're supposed to conduct after-flights and before-flights every single time they fly.

25

AVM HARLAND: Does that happen when they're back in 6 Aviation Regiment as well? Do they just have it on continuous charge?

30 D147: Yes, that's correct.

AVM HARLAND: So you don't have any function to perform in terms of after-flight servicing and before-flight servicing. You rely on continuous charge, whereby the aircrew vouch for the serviceability of their own life support equipment?

35

D147: Yes, that's correct. And if anything goes wrong and they find anything that they're not certain of, serviceability-wise, they bring it to us and then we give it further inspection and we make that determination if it needs to go US or not.

40

AVM HARLAND: So it effectively, for all intents and purposes, reverts to an on-condition check and if the aircrew don't find anything wrong, then nothing gets done for up to 90 days?

45

D147: Yes, that's correct.

5 AVM HARLAND: Why wouldn't you do an after-flight, given that you're the experts on life support equipment? Why wouldn't you do an after-flight or before-flight given you have the capacity to do that?

10 D147: We do that now. So after the incident and Black Hawks starting flying, we started doing that. But that was more of a reflection from the accident before. So it was standard practice due to our low manning and constant high work rate that we really utilised the 90-day continuous charge to then help us offload a lot of that work and put it on aircrew before their flight and after their flight.

15 AVM HARLAND: So the accident you're talking about, is that the Lindeman Island accident or is that the Jervis Bay accident? When did the change come in?

D147: After July.

20 AVM HARLAND: After July. Okay.

D147: Yes.

25 AVM HARLAND: And your understanding is the reason that continuous charge was used so much was to moderate the work rate for the life support fitters of 6 Aviation Regiment?

D147: Yes, that's correct.

30 AVM HARLAND: Yes, okay. Thank you.

FLTLT ROSE: Just something that just arose from that. You were saying "CLEV". What is that?

35 D147: So CLEV 2 breathing apparatus is the compressed bottle of air that's installed and used by the aircrew.

FLTLT ROSE: And are you aware if the 90-day continuous charge period has been reduced?

40 D147: No.

FLTLT ROSE: It's still 90 days, as far as you understand.

45 D147: As far as I understand, it's still 90 days.

MS McMURDO: Yes, applications to cross-examine. How long
LCDR Gracie?

5 LCDR GRACIE: Ma'am, with your pertinent question about page 4, the
bottom of page 4, it's reduced by 30 per cent to only two questions now.

MS McMURDO: How many other applications to cross-examine,
please, just so the witness has some idea of what – yes.

10 SQNLDR NICOLSON: About five minutes, ma'am.

MS McMURDO: Yes. It's only those two applications? Thank you.
Yes, LCDR Gracie?

15

<CROSS-EXAMINATION BY LCDR GRACIE

20 LCDR GRACIE: [REDACTED] my name is LCDR Malcolm Gracie.
I represent the interests of CAPT Danniell Lyon. Thank you for coming
today. I just want to ask you two matters as I've flagged. The first is this:
you talked about ongoing night operations at 6 Avn while TALISMAN
25 SABRE was underway. You have got six aircraft up at TALISMAN
SABRE and does that leave – I don't think it's a national secret; it's on
Wikipedia – does that leave six MRH-90s back at Holsworthy?

D147: At the time, yes.

30 LCDR GRACIE: Were they doing any night full ship formation flying
in that period, to your knowledge?

D147: I did not know, no.

35 LCDR GRACIE: The next matter I just want to ask you about – so that
was the first – over at page 5 of your statement you talked about the two
HMSD logbooks and two ALSMRs - - -

40 D147: ALSMRs, yes.

LCDR GRACIE: Thank you. ALSMRs quarantined. And you
mentioned in your evidence that either 81 or 82 were still doing SAR
when you went to your rack at about 0300.

45 D147: I don't know if it was 81, 82 or 84. It was just there was an

aircraft up still doing operations.

5 LCDR GRACIE: Have a look at the pseudonym list, please, if you don't mind, and I just want to ask you something about D5. Do you recall any conversations with D5 either before he took out the HMSD or on its return in relation to whether he had any issues with it?

D147: No.

10 LCDR GRACIE: Is it possible you had any discussions with him?

D147: I don't recall having an in-depth conversation with him.

15 LCDR GRACIE: Was there any conversation – this might jog your memory – as to whether or not his symbology horizon was higher than the actual horizon that he experienced once he started flying?

D147: He didn't tell me, no.

20 LCDR GRACIE: Would that be something that should be reported back to you at the end of flight, if a pilot was experiencing a vector telling him that he's descending below the horizon when in fact he's not?

25 D147: Yes, that'd be something that he'd tell us because then we'd check his alignment on his HMSD.

LCDR GRACIE: And you don't recall that happening?

30 D147: No, he didn't tell us.

LCDR GRACIE: All right, thank you. No further questions, ma'am.

MS McMURDO: Yes.

35

<CROSS-EXAMINATION BY SQNLDR NICOLSON

40 SQNLDR NICOLSON: Good afternoon. SQNLDR Nicholson. I appear for D10. I've just got a couple of questions about some procedures about the maintenance issue. You were asked some questions about the continuous charge for the helmet. As I understand it, is there a test box in the ALSE tent that can connect to the helmet to make sure it's operating?

45 D147: Which helmet are you referring to?

- 5 SQNLDR NICOLSON: The helmet to do with the pilots?
- 5 D147: The basic helmet?
- 5 SQNLDR NICOLSON: Yes, the basic helmet.
- 10 D147: There is no test box for the basic helmet.
- 10 SQNLDR NICOLSON: In terms of the aircraft that travelled up to Proserpine, I understand the evidence is there was six aircraft travelled to Proserpine.
- 15 D147: Yes.
- 15 SQNLDR NICOLSON: So each aircraft would have had two pilots with two HMSD per aircraft.
- 20 D147: Yes.
- 20 SQNLDR NICOLSON: And there would've been two spares in addition to the six aircraft?
- 25 D147: Yes, they got packed up with the aircraft.
- 25 SQNLDR NICOLSON: So there was about 14 HMSDs that were on site in Proserpine. Is that your recollection?
- 30 D147: From recollection, there was still 12. So we would've packed empty boxes for those HMSDs.
- 30 SQNLDR NICOLSON: And the third question is, in terms of, as a maintenance crew, you operate on endurance hours?
- 35 D147: Yes.
- 35 SQNLDR NICOLSON: And did you operate within those rules at the time on the exercise?
- 40 D147: At the time of the exercise, yes.
- 40 SQNLDR NICOLSON: Thank you.
- 45 MS McMURDO: Any re-examination?

FLTLT ROSE: No.

5 MS McMURDO: Thank you very much, [REDACTED]. We really appreciate you coming and giving the evidence to the Inquiry. We appreciate it can't have been easy for you, these very difficult recollections for you to have to remember and talk about. You know that assistance is available, and I urge you to take advantage of that. Thank you very much.

10 D147: Thanks, ma'am. Thanks, sir.

MS McMURDO: Yes. You're free to go.

D147: Sweet.

15 <WITNESS WITHDREW

20 MS McMURDO: Yes, FLTLT Rose?

FLTLT ROSE: I call the next witness, D146.

25 <D146, Affirmed

<EXAMINATION-IN-CHIEF BY FLTLT ROSE

30 MS McMURDO: Please help yourself to water and let me know if you need a break at any time. Thank you.

D146: Okay.

35 MS McMURDO: Yes, FLTLT Rose?

FLTLT ROSE: Can you please look at the pseudonym list that's in front of you and confirm to me that you are the person with the pseudonym D146?

40 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: What is your rank?

45 D146: [REDACTED].

FLTLT ROSE: And you're in the Royal Australian Air Force.

D146: Correct.

5

FLTLT ROSE: Can you confirm that you received a section 23 Notice requiring your appearance today?

D146: Yes.

10

FLTLT ROSE: Did you receive an extract of the Inquiry's Directions?

D146: Yes.

15

FLTLT ROSE: A copy of my appointment as an Assistant IGADF?

D146: Yes.

20

FLTLT ROSE: A Frequently Asked Questions Guide for Witnesses?

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And a Privacy Notice?

25

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: I note that you have a support person sitting next to you. If I give you a blank piece of paper, can I ask your support person – I think there's a pen on the table – just to write their name and rank on that piece of paper? I tender the piece of paper of D146's support person.

30

MS McMURDO: Thank you. Exhibit 165.

35

#EXHIBIT 165 - NAME OF SUPPORT PERSON FOR D146

FLTLT ROSE: Did you prepare two statements for this Inquiry?

40

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: I'll hand you the documents. Sorry, I'm just going to re-adjust the staples, so they're separated. There's an "Official" statement and an "Official: Sensitive" statement; is that correct?

45

OFFICIAL

D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: Could you look at the Official statement and confirm for me that's five pages?

5

D146: There's five.

FLTLT ROSE: And you signed it on 19 March 2025?

10

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And then there's the "Official: Sensitive" statement is also five pages?

15

D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: And signed on 19 March as well?

D146: Yes.

20

FLTLT ROSE: Do you wish to make any amendments to your statement?

D146: No.

25

FLTLT ROSE: I tender the statements?

MS McMURDO: The "Official" statement will be Exhibit 167A; and the "OFFICIAL: Sensitive" statement, 167B.

30

#EXHIBIT 167A - "OFFICIAL" STATEMENT OF D146

35

#EXHIBIT 167B - "OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE" STATEMENT OF D146

40

FLTLT ROSE: Can I please ask you to be mindful of your security obligations throughout your evidence. So if I, or anyone else, asks you a question the answer to which you think is at the "Official: Sensitive" level or above, to let us know and we won't explore that in a public hearing.

OFFICIAL

So I'll start with your background and qualifications. And if you just turn the Official statement up for the moment and look at paragraph 1. You enlisted in the Air Force in 2017?

5 D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: That's after you completed the RAAF School of Technical Training in 2018. After which, sorry, you completed technical training?

10

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 2 you got a Certificate IV in Aircraft Equipment and Furnishings.

15

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 3 you posted to 6 Aviation Regiment in 2023.

20

D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: And that was in a role as an Aircraft Life Support tradesperson?

25

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: What month did you post into 6 Aviation Regiment?

30

D146: January 2023.

FLTLT ROSE: January 2023. At paragraph 4 you knew, or you knew of, CAPT Lyon. Is that correct?

35

D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: And of LT Nugent?

D146: Correct.

40

FLTLT ROSE: And WO2 Laycock?

D146: Yes.

45

FLTLT ROSE: And CPL Alex Naggs?

- D146: Correct.
- 5 FLTLT ROSE: But you didn't work closely with them?
- D146: No.
- FLTLT ROSE: And you don't think you flew with any of them?
- 10 D146: Yes, I don't think I flew with any of them.
- FLTLT ROSE: But you do recall conducting LT Nugent's initial fitment of his Aeronautical Life Support Equipment?
- 15 D146: Correct.
- FLTLT ROSE: Is that because he also posted into the Regiment at the beginning of 2023?
- 20 D146: Yes.
- FLTLT ROSE: Are you still posted to 6 Aviation Regiment now?
- D146: I am.
- 25 FLTLT ROSE: Are you still an Aeronautical Life Support Fitter?
- D146: Yes.
- 30 FLTLT ROSE: Is it the same role that you were in as in 2023?
- D146: Same role.
- FLTLT ROSE: The same posting cycle?
- 35 D146: Yes.
- FLTLT ROSE: I want to ask you some questions now about Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2023. You deployed to Proserpine with 6 Aviation Regiment?
- 40 D146: Correct.
- FLTLT ROSE: And you were one of three Aeronautical Life Support tradespersons that deployed on the exercise?
- 45

D146: Correct, yes.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Can you look at the pseudonym list for me and confirm that the other tradespersons you deployed with was D147?

D146: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: D148?

D146: Yes.

15 FLTLT ROSE: Was this your first deployment on an exercise since posting to 6 Aviation Regiment?

D146: It was my first exercise. I did have a three-day tasking prior, but this was the first exercise.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Had you deployed with MRH-90s before - - -

D146: Only on - - -

FLTLT ROSE: - - - in other units?

25 D146: Not with other units.

FLTLT ROSE: And so when you say – was it with this tasking, the three-day tasking, is that the other deployment you did?

30 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Was this the first time you deployed to TALISMAN SABRE?

35 D146: Yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 5 you state that you were primarily taken on Exercise TALISMAN SABRE '23 to fulfill your role as a tradesperson, but also to learn the processes and working routine when deployed?

D146: Correct.

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 6 you had had previous experience deploying on exercises as an aeronautical life support member, though with other units?

5 D146: Correct, at my previous unit.

FLTLT ROSE: You had one previous unit?

10 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Was that an Army Aviation unit?

D146: It was an Air Force unit.

15 FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 5 you reported to D147 on the exercise?

D146: Correct.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Did you report to him at Holsworthy as well?

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So he was your direct manager, direct supervisor?

25 D146: On both exercise and at home, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Now, just by reference to that pseudonym list, I just want to make sure I've understood the Chain of Command. Could the witness please be shown Exhibit 159?

30 MS McMURDO: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know that person?

35 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Now, we're not saying that person's name because I understand they have protected identity, but we can say the rank. So Flight Sergeant?

40 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And was that Flight Sergeant in your Chain of Command?

45

D146: At 6 Aviation, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So did it go – just to get it right, you’ve got D147?

5 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And then above D147 was it that person, that Flight Sergeant?

10 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: But there was no Sergeant in the middle?

15 D146: Not at the time, no.

FLTLT ROSE: We’ve heard some evidence that there was no Sergeant posted to that position for the whole of 2023. Is that your understanding?

20 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And so D147 was acting as Acting Sergeant?

D146: Yes.

25 FLTLT ROSE: And then above that Flight Sergeant was – if you look at the pseudonym list – was it D89?

D146: I can’t remember exactly the Chain of Command from 2023.

30 FLTLT ROSE: Are you familiar with the person who is D89?

D146: But I’m familiar with the person, yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Do you recall reporting to D89 at any points in your posting?

D146: I’m not 100 per cent sure.

40 FLTLT ROSE: If you can look at D47? Do you know who that person is?

D146: Yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: Did you report to D47 whilst you were at Holsworthy?

OFFICIAL

D146: On Exercise TALISMAN SABRE, yes. But not much at 6 Aviation.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Is there an officer that you do recall was in your Chain of Command as at July '23? And if they're on that list, could you say their pseudonym?

10 D146: I can't recall exactly who was the Chain of Command from July 2023.

FLTLT ROSE: So it's not that they're not on the pseudonym list, you actually can't recall their name in general?

15 D146: Correct. I just don't know exactly who was in my Chain of Command and where they sat at the time.

FLTLT ROSE: So in your day-to-day experience, was it that you just reported to D147?

20 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 5 you said you all came under the direction of the flight line MM when you were at Proserpine.

25 D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: What is "MM"?

30 D146: So that is the Maintenance Manager.

FLTLT ROSE: And who was that? Looking at the pseudonym list, who was that?

35 D146: Again, I can't remember exactly from the time, but I have seen the names on this list. I just don't know exactly who was fulfilling which role.

FLTLT ROSE: Was it D47, or was he in a different role?

40 D146: I reported to him, but I can't be certain if he was the Maintenance Manager or if he was a step above or below. But we reported roughly to him.

45 FLTLT ROSE: And D48, does that ring a bell?

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Is that the Maintenance Manager?

5 D146: I can't recall if he was the Maintenance Manager or not.

FLTLT ROSE: But they were a Sergeant, as far as you remember?

10 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Back to paragraph 5, you assisted with the preparation of the Aeronautical Life Support Equipment prior to deployment.

15 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So when you say you "assisted with the preparation", did you conduct servicings on all of the equipment that was to be taken on deployment?

20 D146: Not necessarily conducting servicings. If they were serviceable items we would've checked that they had life-ing enough that we could take them on the exercise with us and they wouldn't expire or require servicing. So that's, I'd say, what the main thing was, checking that things were serviceable so that we could take them and they would last the
25 duration.

FLTLT ROSE: Were you also involved in packing the container with the equipment?

30 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you call that the Tricon?

35 D146: I did call it the Tricon. I do believe I changed the name because I didn't know how to explain Tricon.

FLTLT ROSE: But it's a container of sorts?

40 D146: It's a shipping container, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you help set up the ALSE tent once you arrived at Proserpine?

45 D146: The tent was already set up once we arrived in location, but I helped set up, internally, our equipment.

FLTLT ROSE: In terms of racking and stacking?

5 D146: Yes, we had racking that we brought, that we set up.

FLTLT ROSE: What date did you arrive at Proserpine, was it 22 July '23?

10 D146: The best I can recall is – I believe it was the 22nd.

FLTLT ROSE: And do you remember when the aircrews arrived in the MRH-90s?

15 D146: I believe they arrived the following day.

FLTLT ROSE: Was the ALSE tent next to the flight line tent?

D146: Yes.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Was the ALSE tent air-conditioned?

D146: Yes.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Was the flight line tent air-conditioned?

D146: I don't believe so.

FLTLT ROSE: Was the container, or the Tricon, air-conditioned?

30 D146: No.

FLTLT ROSE: With the air-conditioning in the ALSE tent, was that on 24/7?

35 D146: I can't recall.

FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 8, in terms of your sleeping arrangements on TALISMAN SABRE, you slept in a stretcher in an 18-person tent, or in a five-person tent?

40 D146: Both.

FLTLT ROSE: You state that you had to move tents almost every night.

45 D146: Yes, correct.

- 5 FLTLT ROSE: So if you arrived on the 22nd, and the incident was on the 28th, that's roughly six nights of movement. So you moved every night?
- D146: Yes, so we either moved, or if we stayed in the same tent, other people were moving in and out of our tent, so it just wasn't the same sleeping arrangement every night.
- 10 FLTLT ROSE: Wherever you were though, did you share the tent with D148 and D147?
- D146: Yes, I believe so.
- 15 FLTLT ROSE: And D47?
- D146: D47? Not every night.
- FLTLT ROSE: Sometimes?
- 20 D146: Yes.
- FLTLT ROSE: Did you ever share a tent with the aircrew?
- 25 D146: One night I might have shared a tent with one of the pilots, but I wasn't sure what role they were fulfilling, if they were there as a pilot or in a different role.
- FLTLT ROSE: Were any of these sleeping tents you were in air-conditioned?
- 30 D146: No.
- FLTLT ROSE: Did you struggle to sleep well on the exercise?
- 35 D146: Yes.
- FLTLT ROSE: What were the reasons for that?
- 40 D146: It was quite hot. They were stretchers. There was a lot of people, and a lot of movement in and out, especially with shift timings. So if we were sleeping during the day, the day shift team would be in and out of the tent, and at the same time when we would come back at night-time, day shift would be in and out, so there was a lot of movement when we
- 45 were in the larger tents.

5 FLTLT ROSE: The Inquiry has heard some evidence that attempts were made to improve your sleeping conditions, which is potentially why you were moved from various tents. Is that why you understand you were moving?

D146: I believe so. Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Did it help?

D146: Some nights it did.

FLTLT ROSE: And others not.

15 D146: But I don't know if it actually helped, really.

FLTLT ROSE: Would you say you were fatigued to a certain extent on exercise?

20 D146: Potentially.

FLTLT ROSE: Are maintainers asked to keep a record of their fatigue levels, or to report fatigue levels before a shift?

25 D146: Yes, if we are feeling fatigued then we can report it. There is a fatigue report, but I haven't personally done one.

FLTLT ROSE: Even though you were fatigued on TALISMAN SABRE?

30 D146: Yes, correct.

FLTLT ROSE: Is that because you didn't want to raise it as an issue or was it because everyone else was fatigued and so you thought you should carry on?

35 D146: At the time I might not have thought that I was fatigued enough to think I should report it.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Have you had any fatigue training since 2023 that's made you more aware of this?

D146: Yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: And do you think you're a better judge now of your

fatigue than you were two years ago?

D146: Yes.

5 FLTLT ROSE: And that you'd feel more confident to speak out now if you were fatigued?

D146: I think so.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Has any of the publications changed that require you to be more vocal about fatigue levels?

D146: I'm not sure about any publications, but we do fatigue management training.

15 FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 9 you say the ALSE tent had air-conditioning, lighting and power.

D146: Yes.

20 FLTLT ROSE: And that was unusual for the tents at Proserpine?

D146: It was. Well, the accommodation tents didn't have the same amenities, but in the working tents – I can't remember exactly, but I don't think we were the only one – the working tents, but the accommodation tents didn't have the amenities.

FLTLT ROSE: So they didn't have air-conditioning?

30 D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: They didn't have lighting?

D146: I can't remember about other tents having lighting, but we brought our own lights.

FLTLT ROSE: And they didn't have power, the accommodation tents?

D146: Correct.

40 FLTLT ROSE: You said before that you brought racks and pegs with you up from Holsworthy to put the equipment on.

D146: Yes.

45

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: And the aircrew had their jackets on the pegs; is that correct?

D146: Yes.

5

FLTLT ROSE: And then their helmets sat on the floor underneath their peg.

D146: I don't believe they were on the floor.

10

FLTLT ROSE: Tables?

D146: There would be two hooks on the peg, so one for a helmet, one for the jacket.

15

FLTLT ROSE: Were the aircrew's jackets considered Aeronautical Life Support Equipment?

D146: Yes.

20

FLTLT ROSE: Why is that? When you're saying "jackets", just to be clear, are we talking about jackets or Air Warriors?

D146: Air Warriors.

25

FLTLT ROSE: So we had the helmets and the Air Warriors hanging on pegs?

D146: Correct.

30

FLTLT ROSE: Are those terms interchangeable in your line of work?

D146: Yes, it's very common for the Life Support to call Air Warriors or the – yes, we would call them "jackets" occasionally.

35

FLTLT ROSE: And they were all on continuous charge during TALISMAN SABRE, the jackets and – the Air Warriors and the helmets?

D146: As far as I know, yes.

40

FLTLT ROSE: So you weren't required to do servicings of those items at Proserpine?

D146: Not unless it was required.

45

FLTLT ROSE: So it was on-condition, in essence.

D146: Correct. It was, yes, on-condition.

5 FLTLT ROSE: When the Air Warriors weren't in use, were they stored in the ALSE tent?

D146: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Was that overnight, even when you weren't working in the ALSE tent?

D146: Yes.

15 FLTLT ROSE: Is that the same for the basic helmets?

D146: Yes.

20 FLTLT ROSE: But the HMSDs, were they left in the ALSE tent unattended?

D146: They were secured in a container.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Why was that?

D146: The security requirements for the HMSDs were that they needed to be locked away or secured.

30 FLTLT ROSE: When you say "the security requirements", is that because they were very expensive pieces of kit?

D146: I'm not sure. As far as I know, it was the security that came with the item.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Was the container air-conditioned, or the Tricon?

D146: No.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Was there a gauge, or a thermometer, inside the container that you could check to see what the temperature was at any given time?

D146: No.

45 FLTLT ROSE: Did it get hot in there during the day?

D146: Yes.

5 FLTLT ROSE: And you could feel that because you would open the door sometimes to get equipment out?

D146: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: And it was hotter in the container than it was outside?

D146: As far as I can remember, yes.

15 FLTLT ROSE: The Inquiry has heard some evidence that if the HMSDs and the IITs are stored in hot temperatures, that it could change the alignment of the equipment. Have you heard that before?

D146: No.

20 FLTLT ROSE: And it can actually become misaligned if exposed to hot temperatures over time. You haven't heard that?

D146: No.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Are you aware if anyone from the Defence Science and Technology Group has ever spoken to you about alignment issues with the HMSDs?

D146: No.

30 FLTLT ROSE: Were you aware that the Defence Science and Technology Group were conducting tests on HMSDs to see how they reacted exposed to hot temperatures and cold temperatures?

D146: No.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Is it the case that the HMSDs, they were stored in their container when they weren't in use? Correct?

40 D146: The whole assembly was stored in the bags that we brought them up in. So they weren't in a box, they were in their bag.

FLTLT ROSE: Within the container.

45 D146: Within the container, yes.

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: What time of day did you get them out of the container?

D146: It would vary, depending on what the tasking was.

5 FLTLT ROSE: So it could be morning, it could be afternoon.

D146: Correct.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Once you took them out of the containers, did you do the before-flight or after-flight checks?

D146: They would've already been completed, the checks.

15 FLTLT ROSE: Did you have to do the checks in daylight though?

D146: No, not necessarily. We didn't have to do them in day.

FLTLT ROSE: So you could do an after-flight check at midnight, when the sortie had completed.

20 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Then you'd put them back in the container.

25 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Then whatever time you had to get them out the next day, you would get them out and do a before-flight check.

30 D146: No, we signed the before-flight check the night before.

FLTLT ROSE: So you did the after-flight check and the before-flight check in the evening.

35 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So you did them at the same time, essentially.

40 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Is that doing the same types of checks, the after-flight checks and the before-flight checks?

45 D146: They are similar, but they're not exactly the same.

OFFICIAL

5 FLTLT ROSE: For the next day you've already done – so you've already been after-flighted and before-flighted. You come potentially 12 hours later. You get the HMSDs out of the container, hand them to the pilots, and you can say, "We've before-flighted it", even though it was 12 hours ago?

D146: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Then they do their own checks.

D146: I imagine so. Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: You don't watch them do their checks?

15 D146: No, I don't know what they actually do with them once they've been accepted.

AVM HARLAND: What's the validity period of a before-flight check?

20 D146: 24 hours.

AVM HARLAND: 24. Okay. Thank you.

25 FLTLT ROSE: So, essentially, the pilots – when do they fill out the Operator's Logbook that comes with the HMSD?

D146: They would sign that out when they collect it from Life Support.

30 FLTLT ROSE: So you see them filling out the logbook?

D146: Yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: But you just said you're not sure what checks they do on them.

D146: I see them accepting the books, but I don't witness them. I see them, that they are signing the book, but I don't know exactly what it is that they're doing at the time.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Where does the Operator's Logbook go once the pilots are walking towards their aircraft?

45 D146: I believe the best that I can remember is that we would keep the books in location on exercise, so we'd keep them with the Tricon or where the other HMSDs are.

5 FLTLT ROSE: To cast your mind back to Holsworthy now – this is prior to July ‘23 – did you see pilots conduct tests on the HMSD in Holsworthy?

D146: No.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Are you aware that there was testing facilities available for them at Holsworthy to conduct before-flight checks?

D146: No.

15 FLTLT ROSE: So there’s not a way that they can, for example, test their alignment at Holsworthy?

D146: There are ways, but I just haven’t personally seen them conducted.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Is there a way that they can check their contrast and resolution?

D146: At the time, in 2023, I didn’t know of any.

25 FLTLT ROSE: If a pilot did conduct checks and they said there was something wrong with their HMSD, would they come back and tell you?

D146: Yes.

30 FLTLT ROSE: What would occur then?

D146: We would quarantine the set or keep that set separate, and we would give them a new set.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Would you check it again, do your own checks?

40 D146: We would have a look at it to see if we can replicate the fault that they found, but it would be – there wasn’t much that we could do, so we would set it aside because it will have to be sent back. So we’d replicate the fault if we could.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you have any equipment up there to test, for example, for alignment?

45 D146: No.

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: Did you have any equipment up at Proserpine to check for contrast and resolution?

D146: No.

5

FLTLT ROSE: Have you heard of the Hoffman 20/20 test set before?

D146: Yes.

10

FLTLT ROSE: What is that, in your understanding? What is that test for?

D146: That is the test for the contrast and resolution testing.

15

FLTLT ROSE: Who, in your mind, uses the Hoffman? Is it you, as the maintainers, or the aircrew?

D146: The aircrew.

20

FLTLT ROSE: At Holsworthy, was there a Hoffman 20/20 test set?

D146: There is one at Holsworthy.

FLTLT ROSE: Where was it, casting your mind back to 2023?

25

D146: In the Life Support Section.

FLTLT ROSE: So you would see the Hoffman every day during your work day?

30

D146: It was in a separate room within Life Support.

FLTLT ROSE: Is that a room that you just didn't go into?

35

D146: Correct, yes, I didn't go in.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know what the Hoffman looks like?

D146: Yes.

40

FLTLT ROSE: How big is it?

D146: I don't know exact dimensions. Larger than this A4 piece of paper, but smaller than these two A3s.

45

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: Was it a mobile piece of equipment? You could pick it up and move it?

5 D146: I'm not sure about the one that's currently in Life Support, but they are portable.

FLTLT ROSE: Had you seen pilots entering that room with the Hoffman test, but you just didn't see what they did in that room?

10 D146: I can't recall if I've seen pilots going into that room.

FLTLT ROSE: Aircrewman?

15 D146: Aircrewman, I can't recall exactly, but I think I've seen some of them in and out occasionally.

FLTLT ROSE: How many sets of HMSDs were taken to Proserpine?

20 D146: I don't know.

FLTLT ROSE: Were there sufficient enough to have some spares?

D146: I believe that there are now, but I don't know about 2023.

25 FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 5 you state that you and D147 and D148 had various tasks at Proserpine, and we've talked about some of them, which was doing after-flight and before-flight checks on the HMSDs.

30 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So you did them yourself?

D146: Yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: And you had been trained, prior to going to Proserpine, how to do them?

D146: Yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: And you felt confident conducting those checks?

D146: Yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: Did you have to conduct them under the supervision of D147?

D146: No.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Then you assisted aircrew to sign out the HMSDs?

D146: Yes, we would prepare the sets for them.

FLTLT ROSE: Then you prepared additional equipment as required.

10 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you recall what that meant?

15 D146: If the tasking required extra role equipment, which we would have had in our container, we would assist them bringing that out.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you also rectify any issues with any Aeronautical Life Support Equipment that arose?

20 D146: I can't recall if there were any faults.

FLTLT ROSE: In terms of your shifts, you worked swing shifts so that you could work together or overlap.

25 D146: Yes, we would work together.

FLTLT ROSE: So there would be two of you on duty at all times?

30 D146: Three.

FLTLT ROSE: You'd all three work the same shifts?

D146: Yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Did you ever have a rest day?

D146: I had a rest day, the others did not.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Was D148 more experienced than you in terms of working in 6 Aviation Regiment?

D146: Yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: And generally as an ALS fitter?

D146: He has six months' seniority on me.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Paragraph 10, that's where you refer to the pilots checking out the HMSDs, filling in the logbooks, and then conducting their own tests, but you just gave evidence that you didn't see them conduct those tests.

10 D146: My paragraph – I believe I've only said that they complete the logbook.

FLTLT ROSE: Sorry, so they complete the logbook, and you don't know whether or not they've conducted tests.

15 D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: On previous postings in different units, had you deployed with a Hoffman test set before?

20 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: So you did know what Hoffmans look like because you'd used them in other units.

25 D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: And you state that it's standard practice in your other unit that you worked in – this was a RAAF unit - - -

30 D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: - - - Aviation unit – it was standard practice to take a Hoffman on exercises.

35 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Was it your responsibility, as one of the maintainers, to pack that Hoffman?

40 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Was there ever any reason why you wouldn't take a Hoffman in your RAAF unit?

45 D146: It would depend on what the taskings were.

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: So if there was, say, for example, no night flying, maybe would that be a reason not to take a Hoffman?

D146: Correct.

5

FLTLT ROSE: The Hoffman is to check the night-vision device.

D146: Yes.

10

FLTLT ROSE: So you'd need it if you weren't night-flying.

D146: Yes.

15

FLTLT ROSE: Were you aware that there wasn't a Hoffman packed in the container prior to arriving at Proserpine?

D146: I am sure at the time it – I can't remember exactly what we took or what was on the list, but I can't remember if we had one packed or not.

20

FLTLT ROSE: Do you remember having any conversations, for example, with D147 or D148 about the fact that you weren't taking a Hoffman?

D146: No.

25

FLTLT ROSE: When you got up to Proserpine, did you realise there was no Hoffman available?

D146: No.

30

FLTLT ROSE: So it didn't concern you at any point during TALISMAN SABRE that there wasn't a Hoffman on deployment?

D146: No.

35

FLTLT ROSE: Because you didn't realise there wasn't one?

D146: Correct.

40

FLTLT ROSE: Whose responsibility is it within 6 Aviation Regiment to pack the Hoffman for exercises?

D146: I don't know.

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: Now, you are still in 6 Aviation Regiment. I take it you've been on exercises since TALISMAN SABRE?

D146: No.

5

FLTLT ROSE: If you were to go on an exercise, do you consider it part of your responsibilities or your team's responsibility to pack the Hoffman?

10

D146: I don't know if it's a Life Support responsibility because we don't – currently I'm not sure who would be responsible.

15

FLTLT ROSE: In your experience, you've worked with the HMSDs. You've done the before-flight and after-flight checks on them. That's correct?

D146: Only at this unit, yes.

20

FLTLT ROSE: Have you ever come across an HMSD where the resolution or the contrast is unbalanced?

D146: No, I haven't.

25

FLTLT ROSE: Or misaligned?

D146: No.

30

FLTLT ROSE: In previous postings in your Air Force unit, if you were considering not taking a Hoffman test set on exercise, would you have raised that with the Chain of Command to let someone know that you weren't taking one?

35

D146: I don't believe there was ever a time I didn't take one, so I don't know.

FLTLT ROSE: Now, I take it that you don't do risk assessments as a maintainer.

40

D146: Not currently, no.

FLTLT ROSE: Ever?

45

D146: Not a formal risk assessment through web forms. I haven't created one myself, but I've seen them.

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: Have you contributed or provided some information to someone else who is creating risk assessment for a particular flight operation?

5 D146: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you consider it part of your responsibility, for example, to inform whoever's job it is to create risk assessments for flight operations to let them know if certain pieces of equipment are or aren't going on deployment?

10 D146: Yes.

AVM HARLAND: So if you felt something was unusual, or potentially a safety issue, would that be something you'd raise with your Chain of Command?

D146: I believe so, yes, if I knew about it.

20 AVM HARLAND: In doing so, you would contribute to the management of that hazard or issue.

D146: Yes.

25 AVM HARLAND: Okay. Thanks.

FLTLT ROSE: Sorry, I didn't - - -

AVM HARLAND: I was just asking if the witness saw something which was unusual or potentially unsafe, whether they would report that to their Chain of Command and, in doing so, contribute to the management of risk.

FLTLT ROSE: And your answer was "Yes", I take it?

35 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: When you posted into 6 Aviation Regiment, were you given a duty statement that outlined your roles and responsibilities?

40 D146: I can't recall, but I imagine there would be one.

FLTLT ROSE: So it's not something that you have to hand or have saved on your computer somewhere, that you know that exists for your role?

45

D146: I can't remember.

5 AVM HARLAND: Could I perhaps just expand on that a little bit? I note that in your statement you talked about being posted to 37 Squadron previously, an Air Force unit. I'm assuming the life support equipment they use there was different to what's used on the MRH-90. Would that be a correct assumption?

10 D146: They are different.

AVM HARLAND: When you were posted into 6 Aviation Regiment to commence your new duties in that role, what training did you get so you could understand how to maintain the equipment on the MRH-90?

15 D146: I had to complete repetitions, both direct and routine, so have direct supervision and also routine, so that would just mean I didn't have someone watching every step of the way, but I had to have steps completed to say that I can maintain this equipment.

20 AVM HARLAND: Did you do any courses on that or was it just an on-the-job training, and was that documented and signed off?

25 D146: There was one formal training for the ITP and basic helmets, but I do have the logbook of my workplace journal that I've got my repetitions.

AVM HARLAND: So some formal course work and also on-the-job training that was signed off in your technical logbook.

30 D146: Yes.

AVM HARLAND: Thank you.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Just going back to the Hoffman test, how many test sets were available at Holsworthy?

D146: I don't know.

40 FLTLT ROSE: So there's the one in the room that you didn't go into.

D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: But you don't know of any others.

45 D146: I have since learned that there are three.

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: So you're still in 6 Aviation Regiment. Where are those other two?

5 D146: As far as I am aware, the avionics workshop would have them.

FLTLT ROSE: We've heard some evidence that often one is sent away for calibration. Is that what your understanding is as well?

10 D146: Yes, that would make sense.

FLTLT ROSE: So there may be one, there may be two, there may be three, you're not sure at any given time?

15 D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: Are you familiar with the contents of the operator logbook for the HMSDs?

20 D146: It has been quite some time, but I believe I've seen them before.

FLTLT ROSE: Was it part of your role, and also 147 and 148's role, to complete a portion of the Operator Logbook to say you had done the before-flight or after-flight checks?

25 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Then the rest of it was for the pilots to fill out?

30 D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: And did that have a table in it that said, "Resolution/contrast alignment", and it had space for them to fill out the checks that they had done?

35 D146: I can't remember exactly what they look like.

MS McMURDO: Will you be a little bit longer or - - -

40 FLTLT ROSE: Yes, it might be an appropriate time.

MS McMURDO: I'm just conscious of the time. Yes, you'll be a little bit longer?

45 FLTLT ROSE: I will.

OFFICIAL

MS McMURDO: Okay. We will adjourn now until 2 o'clock. Thank you.

5

HEARING ADJOURNED

HEARING RESUMED

5 MS McMURDO: Yes, FLTLT Rose.

FLTLT ROSE: D146, you mentioned earlier in your evidence about the after-flight and before-flight checks on the HMSDs.

10 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: How long did it take to conduct an after-flight check?

D146: Combined with the before-flight, about five minutes.

15 FLTLT ROSE: What were you actually checking for?

D146: Physical damage – so scratches, dents – the visors and the prisms.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Do you turn the set on and put it on your own head and look through it?

D146: No.

25 FLTLT ROSE: So it's a physical visual check.

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And that's the same for the before-flight checks as well?

30 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Both the same types of checks?

35 D146: I would have to look at the procedure to see exactly where the differences are, but roughly the same.

MS McMURDO: So, basically, it's just checking to see if there's any obvious damage or anything of concern that would need to be explored further?

40

D146: Yes, ma'am.

MS McMURDO: Thank you.

5 FLTLT ROSE: So once you've done those physical visual checks, and you've handed them over to the pilots and they've signed the logbook, if the pilots don't do any actual checks by putting on the headset themselves, then essentially when are the HMSDs fully serviced, to check for things like alignment or misalignment?

D146: They are on-condition. So I don't believe that there would be a specific time.

10 FLTLT ROSE: So could it be, in your experience, that a pilot would check out the HMSD and actually not put them on their heads and check the symbology, or the brightness, or the contrast, or resolution, until they were sitting in the aircraft?

15 D146: Potentially, because I've never used them before, so I don't know what exact tests they do.

FLTLT ROSE: You referred before to the continuous charge process.

20 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Is this still in use in 6 Aviation Regiment today?

25 D146: Not to the same extent, but we still use continuous charge.

FLTLT ROSE: What is the extent that it's used now?

D146: 30 days.

30 FLTLT ROSE: So the time period is reduced.

D146: Yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Can you use continuous charge whilst at Holsworthy for regular flying operations?

D146: Yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: You can also use it on deployments?

D146: I would say so, yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: So there's no distinction at the moment between deployments and regular use at base.

D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: It's just that the time period has been reduced. When was that change made?

5

D146: I believe it was January this year.

FLTLT ROSE: Was that an Aviation Command-wide change, or just a 6 Aviation Regiment change?

10

D146: As far as I know, it's Aviation Command, not just 6.

FLTLT ROSE: Does that only apply to Aeronautical Life Support Equipment?

15

D146: As opposed to what, sorry?

FLTLT ROSE: So as far as you're aware, continuous charge is a process that only applies to the Aeronautical Life Support Equipment?

20

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: You're not aware if it applies to any other types of equipment.

25

D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 15 of your statement you state that the aircrewman conduct their own tests on their night-vision goggles when they sign them out.

30

D146: As far as I know they should, yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And they use an ANVIS-9 night-vision device.

35

D146: I believe that's the type, but I couldn't be a hundred per cent sure, now that I've - - -

FLTLT ROSE: Do you have any responsibilities to before-flight or after-flight their night-vision devices?

40

D146: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know if they use the Hoffman test set?

45

OFFICIAL

D146: That's the test equipment that I believe is meant for the NVGs.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know if there's an alternative test available, like a field test?

5

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Is that available as an outdoor adjustment procedure to accomplish focus adjustments?

10

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And that's permitted in the ANVIS Operator's Manual?

15

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you see any aircrewman using a field test at Proserpine?

20

D146: I can't be sure what they would have done with their equipment.

FLTLT ROSE: So you didn't see them. Because you didn't handle their equipment, you didn't see them conducting any tests; is that correct?

25

D146: Correct.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know if any of the pilots who used the HMSDs conducted this alternative field test?

30

D146: No, I don't know.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know if they're allowed to?

D146: I don't know.

35

AVM HARLAND: Who manages the ANVIS-9 then, if Life Support fitters don't?

D146: I don't know exactly who does that at 6 Avn, so I'm not sure. I can only guess from my experience of who would look after them.

40

AVM HARLAND: Okay. Thanks.

FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 16 you state that none of the aircrew asked you where the Hoffman test set was during TALISMAN SABRE.

45

D146: Correct.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Did any of them ask you for the 50-metre alignment test set?

D146: No.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Do you know if that one was brought to Proserpine?

D146: I don't believe it was.

15 FLTLT ROSE: At paragraph 19 you state that Aeronautical Life Support has not been involved in any exercises with 6 Aviation Regiment since TALISMAN SABRE '23.

D146: Correct.

20 FLTLT ROSE: But that in future exercises you would ensure that if aircrew are taking their night-vision devices, that a Hoffman test set is always taken.

D146: Yes.

25 FLTLT ROSE: And that's because it's always been your understanding that a Hoffman test set should be taken on an exercise if there's night flying involved.

30 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: And it's your understanding that the aircrew used that Hoffman test to conduct their resolution and contrast checks, or you're not sure?

35 D146: I'm not sure if they do it every time, but I know that some have occasionally, yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Can you look at the pseudonym list, and look at the name for D10. Are you familiar with that person?

D146: Yes.

45 FLTLT ROSE: Did you see D10 doing any flying during TALISMAN SABRE at Proserpine?

OFFICIAL

D146: I can't recall. I don't remember.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know if D10 was aware there was no Hoffman test set at Proserpine?

5

D146: Not that I know of.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you see the name for D19?

10

D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know who that person is?

D146: Yes.

15

FLTLT ROSE: Do you know if D19 was aware there was no Hoffman test set at Proserpine?

D146: I don't think they would know.

20

FLTLT ROSE: Did you see D10 conducting any testing of his HMSD at Proserpine?

D146: No.

25

FLTLT ROSE: If I take you now to the events of 28 July 2023, you were on a rest day on that day. Is that correct?

D146: Correct.

30

FLTLT ROSE: So you weren't rostered on to work at any stage during that 24-hour period of 28 July?

D146: I'm not sure, a hundred per cent certain, about the 24-hour period of midnight to midnight, but that was the night for my rest.

35

FLTLT ROSE: Does that mean that D147 and D148 were working in the ALSE tent on 28 July '23?

D146: Correct.

40

FLTLT ROSE: When were you made aware that Bushman 83 had crashed?

D146: Sorry, can you rephrase?

45

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: So I'll ask you two questions. Answer them in whichever order you prefer. Where? And when?

5 D146: I was at the flight line tent, so I was made aware with – sorry, I'm not sure if I was made aware of the crash, but I was made aware of something has happened at the time.

10 FLTLT ROSE: So even though you weren't necessarily on duty, you were still in the flight line tent?

D146: Yes.

15 FLTLT ROSE: Was that because it was air-conditioned?

D146: That's because that's where everyone else was, so instead of being in my tent, by myself, I was on rest during, like, lunch breaks or dinner breaks.

20 FLTLT ROSE: So, in a way, you were there because there was nothing else to do (indistinct).

D146: Correct.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Do you remember who came to tell you about the Incident, that something had happened?

D146: I believe so, yes.

30 FLTLT ROSE: If you look at the pseudonym list, was it D47?

D146: I believe it was D113.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Was that person in the maintenance team?

D146: Yes.

40 FLTLT ROSE: And they were somewhere else at the FOB, and they came to the flight line to inform everyone in the flight line that an incident had occurred?

D146: They were on the flight line desk, so the flight line tent.

45 FLTLT ROSE: So they had some communication on a mobile phone or a radio that informed them?

OFFICIAL

- D146: It must have been. I'm not sure how they were told.
- 5 FLTLT ROSE: Did anyone come and collect your mobile phones?
- D146: That's who collected my phone. That's how I knew something had happened.
- 10 FLTLT ROSE: Did you understand why they were collecting your phones?
- D146: At the time, I had an understanding of what collecting phones would have meant, but there was no confirmation of anything.
- 15 FLTLT ROSE: Where did you go, once you heard the news?
- D146: I was asked to find someone, to alert them, and to bring them to the flight line tent.
- 20 FLTLT ROSE: The Inquiry has heard some evidence that a number of aircraft down procedures were then instigated. Were you in the flight line tent or the ALSE tent when those aircraft down procedures were conducted?
- 25 D146: I don't believe so. I was asked to find the person. I can find their pseudonym.
- FLTLT ROSE: Please do.
- 30 D146: D35. So I was asked to go and find D35 and, from there, to go back to my tent.
- FLTLT ROSE: What role was D35 fulfilling?
- 35 D146: I can't recall exactly.
- FLTLT ROSE: Maintainer or aircrew?
- D146: With the maintenance team, but high up in the - - -
- 40 FLTLT ROSE: In the Chain of Command?
- D146: In the chain, yes.

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: Did you assist with quarantining of any equipment in the ALSE tent?

D146: No.

5

FLTLT ROSE: Were you aware that was occurring?

D146: Yes.

10

FLTLT ROSE: When did you leave Proserpine?

D146: The following day, so I believe the 29th.

15

FLTLT ROSE: The Inquiry has heard some evidence that a number of the maintainers were told to go to bed at about 0300 on 29 July. Were you part of the personnel sent to bed?

20

D146: I was sent to bed sort of immediately because I wasn't on shift, so they didn't want me in flight line, so I was told to go back to my tent. So I was there the remainder of the night.

FLTLT ROSE: Did you leave on a RAAF plane with the aircrew from 6 Aviation Regiment on 29 July?

25

D146: I can't recall exactly who else was on the plane, but I think they must have been on the same flight as us.

30

FLTLT ROSE: Did you take the HMSDs with you back to Holsworthy, or were they part of the quarantined equipment?

D146: I can't remember exactly.

35

FLTLT ROSE: To go back to the procedure in respect to the HMSD, there's one other question I wanted to ask you. Once the pilots had checked out the equipment – what time of day did they usually check it out?

D146: It would vary, depending on what the tasking was.

40

FLTLT ROSE: Could it be hours before the flight, though?

D146: Potentially. I'm not too sure, depending on what the tasking is. If they had time to – if they would do certain legs and have time to come back and sign out extra gear, or if it was – if they would sign it out

OFFICIAL

immediately, and hold onto – but, yes, I think they would sign it out, most likely.

5 FLTLT ROSE: So if they had signed it out and there was a period of time before they actually went flying, where would the pilots put the HMSDs, the kits?

10 D146: I'm not sure where they would – they would take them, the kits, with them.

FLTLT ROSE: To the aircraft?

D146: Yes.

15 FLTLT ROSE: So potentially the HMSDs could be sitting in the aircraft for a number of hours before a flight was commenced?

20 D146: The different prisms were – I believe, if I can remember correctly, the day prisms would be used during the day, and they'd swap out for night prisms. So one would be used, but one would be waiting in the - - -

FLTLT ROSE: In the Tricon?

25 D146: I believe it would be kept with set.

FLTLT ROSE: So wherever the set was. It could be Tricon. It could be ALSE tent. It could be aircraft.

30 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: Were you ever given an instruction to write down your recollections of what occurred on 28 July immediately following the incident, or even on the aircraft home?

35 D146: No.

FLTLT ROSE: Have you been interviewed by the DFSB about what occurred at Proserpine?

40 D146: Yes.

FLTLT ROSE: When was that?

45 D146: I can't recall, but it was quite some time ago, I believe.

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: Was it last year?

D146: I think so.

5 FLTLT ROSE: Does April 2024 sound familiar?

D146: Yes.

10 FLTLT ROSE: Were investigators from the ALSMU, or the
Aeronautical Life Support Maintenance Unit, in the room when you were
being interviewed by the DFSB?

D146: No.

15 FLTLT ROSE: So it was just DFSB investigators?

D146: I believe so.

20 FLTLT ROSE: Have you heard anything from the DFSB since this
interview?

D146: No.

25 FLTLT ROSE: Did the DFSB provide you with a copy of any reports
resulting from your interview?

D146: No.

30 FLTLT ROSE: Had you received a copy of the Aeronautical Life
Support Unit's investigator's report prior to your engagement with this
Inquiry?

D146: No.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Had you been given a briefing about the outcomes of
that report at any stage?

D146: No.

40 FLTLT ROSE: Was the first time that you read the Aeronautical Life
Support Maintenance Unit's investigator's report when you received a
copy from this Inquiry?

45 D146: Yes.

OFFICIAL

FLTLT ROSE: Those are my questions.

MS McMURDO: Thank you. Applications to cross-examine. Yes,
LCDR Tyson.

5

<CROSS-EXAMINATION BY LCDR TYSON

10 LCDR TYSON: Thank you, ma'am.

D146, my name is LCDR Matthew Tyson. I represent the interests of
CPL Alex Naggs. I just have a handful of questions. Could you go,
please, to your second statement, please. I think it might be called
15 Exhibit 167B.

MS McMURDO: Yes, actually I should correct that. I was ahead of
myself. It should be 166A and B.

20

#EXHIBIT 166A - "OFFICIAL" STATEMENT OF D146

25 **#EXHIBIT 166B - "OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE" STATEMENT
OF D146**

LCDR TYSON: Thank you, ma'am.

30 So just your second statement. I think it might have "Addendum" on the
top of it.

D146: Yes, the "Official: Sensitive" statement?

35 LCDR TYSON: Yes, please. I just wanted to ask you about
paragraph 16.

FLTLT ROSE: If it's an "Official: Sensitive" statement, we can't do that
in a public hearing.

40

MS McMURDO: Well, it depends how it's done, I suppose, but you
need to be extremely careful.

LCDR TYSON: All right, I will do my best, ma'am.

45

OFFICIAL

Well, when “role equipment” is used in relation to aircrew signing, that phrase refers to items such as a life raft and an Ephese; is that correct?

5 D146: Yes, those are the types of items.

LCDR TYSON: That’s the terminology. And the phrase “role equipment”, is that equivalent to the phrase “platform role equipment”, in your mind?

10 D146: It could be referred to as that.

LCDR TYSON: But drawing a distinction between items that might be personal to an individual, such as their helmet or Air Warrior, as opposed to an item that might go on a particular airframe?

15 D146: Not exactly. So if it was a personal item, that wouldn’t be role equipment, that would be a personal fit equipment. I think I’ve seen reference here.

20 LCDR TYSON: Yes, but you’d certainly be – you’d agree you’d be content with using the phrase “platform role equipment” in relation to items such as a life raft and an Ephese?

25 D146: Yes.

LCDR TYSON: Would you agree that if a loadmaster had accepted on his or her individual ALSEMR a particular item of platform role equipment, there is an advantage of doing that, that the Aeronautical Life Support Section could contract the item, for example, could tell when it’s returned and, for example, whether there are unserviceabilities in the item?

30 D146: How do you mean, sorry? So it’s signed out?

35 LCDR TYSON: Yes. So I understand the phrase is “accepted”.

D146: Yes.

40 LCDR TYSON: Accepted on an individual ASLEMR. There is an advantage to that, isn’t there?

D146: I don’t understand what you mean by “advantage”.

45 LCDR TYSON: Well, to track an item such as a piece of platform role equipment, such as a life raft or an Ephese.

D146: Yes.

5 LCDR TYSON: If that's recorded on an individual's ALSEMR, there's an advantage to that, would you agree? So that you contract the item, you know the particular item that's been taken by the particular loadmaster.

D146: Yes, correct.

10 LCDR TYSON: And it's recorded then on the individual's ALSEMR. Correct?

D146: Yes.

15 LCDR TYSON: And, for example, in your section you can track that item.

D146: Yes.

20 LCDR TYSON: And you could tell, for example, when it's returned.

D146: If they release it back to us, that would indicate that it's returned.

25 LCDR TYSON: Yes. And the form could also be used to record an unserviceability in relation to that item.

D146: Yes, there is space.

30 LCDR TYSON: Now, would you agree that during packing or preparation before a deployment, so where loadmasters are preparing equipment, that loadmasters would not necessarily know which particular items of platform role equipment might end up being assigned to a particular airframe that might be used in the subsequent course of the deployment?

35 D146: I suppose that's true.

40 LCDR TYSON: And I don't know whether you're able to agree or disagree with this, but the only way that you could record a particular piece of role equipment was going to be assigned to a particular airframe, the way that that could be done, the only way that could be done, was through using the CAMM2 Maintenance Program.

45 D146: I'm not sure what CAMM2 transactions would have occurred for role equipment.

OFFICIAL

LCDR TYSON: But there's no collective or group ALSEMR form, is there?

5 D146: Correct.

LCDR TYSON: Where, for example, platform role equipment could be recorded.

10 D146: The ALSEMR has space for miscellaneous equipment, so that's where role equipment normally goes, but there's no platform-specific sort of assigning it to the aircraft.

LCDR TYSON: Yes, and when you say there's a space on the form to
15 record it, you're talking about the individual's ALSEMR?

D146: Yes.

LCDR TYSON: And that happened commonly, to your knowledge,
20 didn't it?

D146: Yes.

LCDR TYSON: I just want to ask you if you can explain this. So the
25 Inquiry has received some evidence that the particular life raft that was recovered from the wreckage of Bushman 83, it had not been accepted by any of WO2 Laycock, CPL Naggs, CAPT Lyon - - -

MS McMURDO: Yes, I think this might be going a bit too far because
30 this does refer to evidence yesterday, doesn't it, that was given in Private Session yesterday?

LCDR TYSON: It does.

35 MS McMURDO: Yes. Ms Musgrove was on her feet.

LCDR TYSON: Thank you, ma'am, and I'm grateful to Counsel
Assisting.

40 Just assume it was the case that there was a Taipan aircraft that was located on a particular day, and there was a life raft that was associated with that aircraft. The fact that it had not been accepted by any of the individuals who were involved in flying that aircraft, can you explain how that situation could arise?
45

D146: It's possible that it was accepted before the exercise, and as taskings change and other role equipment is required if an aircraft isn't needed, they could use the equipment that's been on that aircraft, and use it on another aircraft.

5

LCDR TYSON: And that would be an ordinary thing to do for platform role equipment, to be moved between different aircraft during a deployment or exercise?

10 D146: I'm not sure I have enough experience on this platform to be able to say what would have been normal on deployments.

15 LCDR TYSON: If it were the case that, say, an individual loadmaster had accepted, say, two items of platform role equipment on a particular day, your expectation would be that that equipment would be used when that loadmaster flew but on, say, the next occasion, but not necessarily five or six days later?

20 D146: I'm not sure I understand.

LCDR TYSON: If, for example, on 23 July a loadmaster had accepted two items of platform role equipment, you wouldn't necessarily expect that that loadmaster, if he's involved in flying on other aircraft over the next, say, five or so days, would then sign for those pieces of equipment on 28 July?

25 D146: Correct. He would've already accepted that equipment.

30 LCDR TYSON: But if it was accepted, say, on the 23rd, would it be your expectation that that would then apply to the next time he travelled in a Taipan airframe?

35 D146: I'm not sure I know how to answer. So when they accept the equipment, they've accepted that piece of gear, and what they do with it in between releasing it back to us, my understanding is it's sort of up to them. So if they use it on one aircraft and they move it to another aircraft, they've still accepted that equipment.

40 LCDR TYSON: But the fact that it's not then – that equipment is found on another aircraft five days later, there's nothing unsurprising about that to you?

D146: No.

45 LCDR TYSON: Thank you. That's all, ma'am, sir.

AVM HARLAND: Could I just ask some follow-on questions for that, please? In your previous experience in a RAAF Squadron, in 37 Squadron, would you sign out the life rafts for that aircraft to the
5 aircrew or would that be assigned to the aircraft?

D146: The life rafts specifically, they're fitted to the aircraft, but we would have our own role equipment section that we would assign to a specific aircraft. But if they were on exercise, we would be able to
10 exchange them between the aircrafts because it's been accepted, but as long as they all come back as the one kit that we've signed out.

AVM HARLAND: Yes, but that would effectively be assigned to an aircraft rather than an aircrew person, and that way you'd know that piece
15 of kit was on a particular aircraft?

D146: Yes, it's more aircraft at my previous unit than to a person.

AVM HARLAND: In the method that we've talked about for MRH-90 where an aircrewman or loadmaster, as we've been variously calling them, will sign out a piece of role equipment, then that role equipment is under
20 their charge. But it's not really under their charge, is it, because it just floats around to wherever it's needed? How does anyone vouch for the fact that that piece of kit is properly configured, is correct, and is
25 serviceable, when it's floating around between the different aircraft?

D146: I might need a moment to think about how to answer that.

AVM HARLAND: I guess the concern that I'm expressing is that once
30 the aircrewman signs out that life raft and then it goes into the greater pool of role equipment for a deployment, there's no one really looking at whether that's serviceable. You know, for example, has it been used and opened, or anything like that. It seems to be that someone has signed for it, and they've taken responsibility for it, but it's actually not really
35 happening.

So I'm talking about the process here, not about the individual. This is about the process. It seems somewhat confusing to me, and when you fit them to an aircraft, then there are weight and balance considerations and
40 the like that would need to be gone through. So, yes, I'm curious as to why 6 Avn would do that.

D146: I'm trying to recall what we would have done on exercise if we knew that they weren't going to need the role equipment; if they would
45 bring them back to Life Support for us to store and we would have a quick

glance over to make sure that the tack ties, or the security ties, haven't been broken. But you're right, I don't think there's a set check of serviceability when it's floating in a pool of role equipment.

5 AVM HARLAND: Would you acknowledge that there's potential for the configuration and serviceability of that article to be questionable because it's not really properly tracked?

D146: I think that's fair to say.

10

AVM HARLAND: Okay. Thank you.

MS McMURDO: Yes, any other applications to cross-examine? No. Any re-examination?

15

<RE-EXAMINATION BY FLTLT ROSE

20 FLTLT ROSE: Just one following on from AVM Harland's questions. In 6 Avn today, is role equipment still checked out to an individual rather than to a platform?

D146: That one is a little trickier to answer as not a lot have been
25 approved for use yet, but that would be the process.

FLTLT ROSE: Is that, when it's checked out, it's on continuous charge?

D146: Yes.

30

FLTLT ROSE: So it's for 30 days?

D146: Effectively, yes.

35 FLTLT ROSE: Those are my questions.

MS McMURDO: Thank you very much for coming to the Inquiry and assisting us with your evidence. We greatly appreciate it. We know it's very difficult for you to recall this terrible time, and could I encourage you
40 to take advantage of the assistance that's offered to you, if at all you think it could help.

D146: Thanks, ma'am.

45 MS McMURDO: Thank you very much.

AVM HARLAND: Thank you.

D146: Sir.

5

MS McMURDO: Yes, COL Streit.

COL STREIT: Thank you, Ms McMurdo.

10

MS McMURDO: Yes, you are free to go now.

D146: Okay.

15

<WITNESS WITHDREW

20

COL STREIT: Ms McMurdo, I call MAJ Gavin Lewis, and he is the last witness for today. I suspect he'll be quite short. The live stream video is in the process of being reconnected for this witness.

MS McMURDO: Of course.

25

<MAJ GAVIN JAMES LEWIS, Sworn

<EXAMINATION-IN-CHIEF BY COL STREIT

30

MS McMURDO: Please, Major, let me know if you need a break at any time.

MAJ LEWIS: Sure, certainly.

35

MS McMURDO: Thank you. Yes, COL Streit.

COL STREIT: Thank you, Ms McMurdo.

40

MAJ Lewis, I'll just ask you through some preliminary questions, if I can, please? First, can you please state your full name?

MAJ LEWIS: Gavin James Lewis.

45

COL STREIT: Did you receive a section 23 Notice to be here today?

MAJ LEWIS: I did.

5 COL STREIT: Did that notice also contain some questions which required you to answer in the form of a Witness Statement?

MAJ LEWIS: It did.

10 COL STREIT: And with the 23 Notice, did you receive a copy of a Frequently Asked Questions Guide for Witnesses?

MAJ LEWIS: I think so. I can't recall specifically.

15 COL STREIT: With the section 23 Notice, were there some attachments?

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

20 COL STREIT: Was also one of those attachments a Privacy Notice, do you recall?

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

25 COL STREIT: Was there a copy of the Inquiry's Directions?

MAJ LEWIS: For the Privacy Notice?

30 COL STREIT: No, with the section 23 Notice, was there a copy of the Inquiry's Directions?

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

35 COL STREIT: Was there a copy of an Instrument of Appointment of an Inquiry Assistant?

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

40 COL STREIT: Now, I'm just going to orientate you, MAJ Lewis. In front of you are two pages containing names and pseudonym numbers. One is in order of pseudonym 1, 2, 3, 4. The other is in order of alphabetical surname, and then the associated pseudonym. If, during the course of your evidence, you need to refer to somebody who you think has a pseudonym, or even if you're not sure, can I just ask you to check first the document in front of you and if that person has a pseudonym, to then
45 just let me know, and use that pseudonym number?

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

5 COL STREIT: Thank you. Now, can I just show you a document? Just take a moment, MAJ Lewis, just to have a look at that document. I'll ask you some questions. Just hold on to that document for the moment. I notice you've got some other materials in front of you.

10 MAJ LEWIS: Just my copy of the document.

COL STREIT: If you could just put those materials to one side, so they're not confused with anything else? MAJ Lewis, the document you were provided by the Inquiry Assistant just a few moments ago, is that a copy of your witness statement made 14 February 2025?

15 MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: The statement comprises four pages; is that correct?

20 MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: And 17 paragraphs?

25 MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: Thank you. It also contains, in one part, a redaction made at the bottom of paragraph 4; is that correct?

30 MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: Are there any amendments or additions you wish to make to your statement? I'm not suggesting there are. I'm just asking whether there are any amendments or additions.

35 MAJ LEWIS: No, not at this stage.

COL STREIT: Thank you. Ms McMurdo, I tender the statement of MAJ Gavin Lewis of 14 February 2025.

40 MS McMURDO: Yes, that will be Exhibit 167. Thank you.

#EXHIBIT 167 - STATEMENT OF MAJ LEWIS

45

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COL STREIT: MAJ Lewis, I'm going to take you through your statement, refer to particular paragraphs, and then I'll ask you some questions. First, you commenced your career in the Australian Defence Force in March 1991; is that correct?

5

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: You transitioned through Infantry in the Army, and undertook pilot training in September 1995; is that correct?

10

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: You completed various courses in the period '95 through to 2007; is that correct?

15

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: You ultimately, in 2007, at paragraph 4(f), identify you were a Qualified Flying Instructor on MRH-90 in 2007; is that right?

20

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: Did you qualify that year or were you qualified earlier?

MAJ LEWIS: That year. That was the first year that we started flying the MRH-90.

25

COL STREIT: You started life, did you, as a pilot flying Black Hawks at 5 Aviation Regiment?

30

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: And then you transitioned, did you, to the MRH-90?

MAJ LEWIS: That's correct.

35

COL STREIT: Now, in 2016 you were the Standards Officer at 16 Aviation Brigade; is that right? 2018.

MAJ LEWIS: Correct.

40

COL STREIT: And presently you are a Qualified Flying Instructor where?

MAJ LEWIS: At part of a School of Army Aviation Detachment at

45

OFFICIAL

Holsworthy, flying the Black Hawk helicopter.

COL STREIT: The new Black Hawk?

5 MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: You have indicated at paragraph 4(j) that you are a Unit Maintenance Test Pilot; is that correct?

10 MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: Is that on the new UH-60M Black Hawk?

MAJ LEWIS: That's correct.
15

COL STREIT: Were you a test pilot in relation to MRH-90?

MAJ LEWIS: Yes, I was Maintenance Test Pilot for that.

20 COL STREIT: Maintenance Test Pilot. Can you just explain very briefly to the Inquiry what a Maintenance Test Pilot is?

MAJ LEWIS: A Maintenance Test Pilot conducts routine and irregular inspections of the aircraft post-maintenance. For MRH-90, it was a little
25 bit more different than the Black Hawk. The MRH-90 had a series of pre-determined tests which are called test cards, and you just had to complete the functions in a sequential manner. The Black Hawk, it's a little bit more exploratory, and certainly the degradation of the systems with the Black Hawk, when you're doing maintenance test flying, is of a
30 greater degree.

COL STREIT: Just very briefly, you set out at paragraph 7 your flying hours; is that correct?

35 MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: I should also observe at paragraph 6 you set out your tertiary qualifications, including a Bachelor of Science, a Diploma of Aviation, and a Diploma in Quality Auditing. Is that correct?
40

MAJ LEWIS: That's correct.

COL STREIT: In terms of paragraph 7, you have set out your hours for both flight, Aircraft Captain, and instrument and night-vision device; is that correct?
45

MAJ LEWIS: Yes, that's correct.

5 COL STREIT: Insofar as MRH-90 is concerned, you have 601.9 hours of flight, 360.4 hours as the Aircraft Captain, 263.1 hours on instruments, and 121.8 hours on night-vision device.

10 MAJ LEWIS: Sorry, that INST is "instructor time", not "instrument time".

COL STREIT: I see. Thank you. So 263.1 hours as a Qualified Flying Instructor on MRH-90.

15 MAJ LEWIS: Conducting instruction. That's correct.

COL STREIT: Now, 121.8 hours NVD, is that in relation to TopOwl?

MAJ LEWIS: That's a combination of TopOwl and ANVIS.

20 COL STREIT: In terms of the latest version of TopOwl you used, did you use TopOwl version 5.1?

MAJ LEWIS: Yes, I did.

25 COL STREIT: Did you use the preceding version 4.0?

MAJ LEWIS: Yes, I did.

30 COL STREIT: You have also listed your hours in relation to operating a simulator; is that correct?

MAJ LEWIS: That's correct, a synthetic flying device.

35 COL STREIT: When you use the phrase "synthetic device", is that a reference to a simulator?

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

40 COL STREIT: I understand from information I received this morning that you attended – well, travelled to France, did you, and were trained on the MRH-90?

MAJ LEWIS: That's correct.

45 COL STREIT: When was that?

MAJ LEWIS: 2007.

COL STREIT: How long was that training for?

5

MAJ LEWIS: I was at Regiment – sorry, the Resident Project Team in France from May until November that year.

10 COL STREIT: What I will be doing, for the assistance of the Inquiry and Counsel representing, is I won't be asking you any questions in relation to your training on MRH-90, or your experiences in France, or what you did when you returned back to Australia, because I don't have that information. We will seek from you an addendum statement after your evidence today to address those matters.

15

What I will do now is turn to this area of your statement. Turning to paragraph 7, you say:

20

I was posted at the 16 Aviation Brigade Standards Office from 2018 until 2020. During this posting, I reported to the S3, and then LTCOL Doug Maddox as the Senior Standards Safety and Airworthiness Officer. In 2019, I reported to the Brigade Standards WO.

25

What does the "WO" stand for?

MAJ LEWIS: Sorry, that was I was reporting on the Brigade Standards Warrant Officer.

30

COL STREIT: Reported, sorry. You reported on the Brigade Standards Warrant Officer?

MAJ LEWIS: That's correct.

35

COL STREIT: The Brigade Commander at the time was MAJGEN Jobson in 2018/2019. Correct?

MAJ LEWIS: Correct.

40

COL STREIT: And he was BRIG Jobson at the time?

MAJ LEWIS: Correct.

45

COL STREIT: After BRIG Jobson, MAJGEN Hafner became the Brigade Commander; is that right?

MAJ LEWIS: That's correct.

5 COL STREIT: At paragraph 9 you say – I'll just pause there for a moment. As the 16 Aviation Brigade Standards Officer in 2018 until 2020, can you just explain in broad terms what your role was?

10 MAJ LEWIS: Essentially, as the Standards Officer for the Brigade Commander I was their Airworthiness representative, and I sponsored a lot of orders, instructions and publications on his behalf. So I drafted many of these things for him on his request and his direction, and that included things like Standing Instructions, Standard Operating Procedures, Brigade Training Assessment Programs, et cetera. As part of that role, I also had other interests in the development of the aircrew stream, and that's when the Brigade Standards Warrant Officer came in, and also Aviation Safety.

COL STREIT: At paragraph 9 you were asked a question:

20 *State whether MAJGEN Stephen Jobson ever asked you a question to the effect of where you thought the next safety event would be in 16 Aviation Brigade.*

I'll repeat that. At paragraph 9 you say you were asked a question:

25 *State whether MAJGEN Stephen Jobson ever asked you a question to the effect of where you thought the next safety event would be in the 16th Aviation Brigade.*

30 You answered "Yes". Correct?

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: At 10 you were asked:

35 *What was my response, and what was MAJGEN Jobson's response?*

You say:

40 *(a) I replied that I believed it would occur at 6 Aviation Regiment during an MCT activity. This was not a reactive remark. There was no specific event or pers that orientated my response, [REDACTED]*

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] in 16 Aviation Brigade.

What I just read out is your evidence; is that correct?

5

MAJ LEWIS: That's correct.

COL STREIT: When you say "MCT activity", what does MCT stand for?

10

MAJ LEWIS: [REDACTED]

COL STREIT: You were asked at question 11:

15

Was anyone else present during this discussion?

You answer:

Cannot recall.

20

Correct?

MAJ LEWIS: No, I can't recall.

25

COL STREIT: At paragraph 12, you were asked:

State whether, to your knowledge, MAJGEN Stephen Jobson took any follow-up actions as a result of my comments, and whether any changes were made to decrease the risk of such event occurring.

30

At (a) you say:

I am not aware.

35

Is that correct?

MAJ LEWIS: That's correct.

40

COL STREIT: At 13 you were asked:

If not, to the best of your knowledge state why no action was taken.

45

At (a) you say:

As there was no direct element to my comment, and the continuous treatment of risk through safety education oversight, through event monitoring continued.

5

Is what I've read out correct?

MAJ LEWIS: Correct.

10 COL STREIT: Coming back to the question asked of you, you say – by MAJGEN Jobson – and then your response, you say:

I replied, I believed that it would occur at [REDACTED]

15

[REDACTED] So is that a reference to an Aviation activity in the [REDACTED]?

20 MAJ LEWIS: Yes, with further elements of a ship [REDACTED]

25 COL STREIT: When you say MAJGEN Jobson asked you to the effect of where you thought the next safety event would be in 16 Aviation Brigade, you believe, you say, at 6 Aviation Regiment during a [REDACTED]. Why did you say that to MAJGEN Jobson?

30 MAJ LEWIS: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MS McMURDO: Excuse me a moment.

35 MS MUSGROVE: I'm sorry, could the feed please be cut?

MS McMURDO: Yes, all right then.

40 MS MUSGROVE: The last answer gave too much information that can't be played in a public forum.

MS McMURDO: Could you just help the witness with exactly the information that can't be given publicly, please?

45 MS MUSGROVE: I'll take some instructions. Anything beyond the title of [REDACTED] is actually not appropriate in this setting, [REDACTED]

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██████████, anything along those lines, cannot be discussed in a public hearing.

5 MS McMURDO: All right then.

LCDR GRACIE: Does that mean we need to rewind the cut then, because there was a discussion about ██████████ prior to when you called "Cut"?

10 MS MUSGROVE: That would be preferable. We had hoped we wouldn't need to do it, but - - -

MS McMURDO: We'll have a short adjournment, I think, to get this sorted.

15 MS MUSGROVE: Yes.

MS McMURDO: Then we can resume with the live feed.

20 MS MUSGROVE: Thank you.

MS McMURDO: Thank you.

25 **HEARING ADJOURNED**

HEARING RESUMED

30 COL STREIT: Thank you for that time, Ms McMurdo. What I'm proposing to do is just ask this witness a few more questions to conclude an aspect of his evidence. I'll then be asking – or applying, rather, for the witness's evidence to be adjourned in chief to another date in the
35 meantime, and during that period Counsel Assisting will issue a further section 23 Notice with some questions for the provision of an addendum statement, or some relevant information.

MS McMURDO: Thank you, COL Streit.

40 COL STREIT: Thank you.

MAJ Lewis, before the short adjournment, I was asking you some questions in relation to paragraph 10 of your statement. Can I just take
45 you to that paragraph again, please? The information contained at

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paragraph 10 in relation to what you say was your conversation with MAJGEN Jobson, when did that conversation occur, are you able to say?

5 MAJ LEWIS: I can't recall the specific dates of it, but I believe it was in late 2018, early 2019.

COL STREIT: It was in that 2018/2019 window; is that right?

10 MAJ LEWIS: Yes, that's correct.

COL STREIT: In terms of 6 Aviation Regiment, which is the unit you mention in 10(a) of your statement, what was the aircraft that 6 Aviation Regiment were operating at that time?

15 MAJ LEWIS: They had a mixed fleet back then for Black Hawk and MRH-90.

COL STREIT: Do you recall what period of time 6 Aviation Regiment had been operating MRH-90 in 2018 and in 2019?

20 MAJ LEWIS: I can't recall the date they started flying MRH-90 and, in fact, it could have been after that date as well.

25 MS McMURDO: Do you know, when you had the conversation, whether MRH-90 were in the fleet at that time?

MAJ LEWIS: No, ma'am. It was type agnostic. As in, that risk didn't change, whether it was an MRH or Black Hawk.

30 MS McMURDO: I see. So you're saying that had nothing to do with the risk that you were forecasting.

MAJ LEWIS: No, ma'am.

35 MS McMURDO: Even so, I'm still asking you at the time you had the conversation was MRH-90 part of the fleet in 6 Aviation?

MAJ LEWIS: I don't believe it was, ma'am.

40 MS McMURDO: You don't think it was. You think it was just the pre MRH-90.

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

45 MS McMURDO: Okay. Thank you.

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MAJ LEWIS: I think they were starting to work their training teams at Oakey to start with the transition to MRH-90.

5 MS McMURDO: Thank you.

COL STREIT: Your recollection is, at least at that time, 2018/19, the aircraft to which paragraph 10(a) refers was the Black Hawk at that time?

10 MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: Can I take you now to a couple of other matters in your statement? In relation to Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2023, did you participate on that exercise?

15 MAJ LEWIS: No, I did not.

COL STREIT: Just in relation to CAPT Lyon, LT Nugent and WO2 Laycock, CPL Naggs, I'll just read out some information that's contained in paragraph 14 of your statement, and then I'll ask you to confirm if it's correct. You were asked to state whether you knew and, if so, if you ever posted with, and ever flew with, CAPT Danniel Lyon, LT Max Nugent, WO2 Joseph Phil Laycock, and/or CPL Alex Naggs. You say this: you didn't know CAPT Lyon. In terms of Max Nugent, you say:

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25

I met LT Nugent in passing when he was an MRH-90 student at the School of Army Aviation, Oakey.

30 In relation to WO2 Laycock, you say:

I knew WO2 Laycock, and I believe I had flown with him previously. At the time of the accident, I hadn't spoken with him for several years.

35 In relation to CPL Alex Naggs, you say:

I knew CPL Naggs, and I believe I had previously flown with him.

40 Is what I read correct?

MAJ LEWIS: Yes.

COL STREIT: You weren't interviewed by the DFSB, were you, or

Queensland Police, or Comcare, in respect of any investigation of the crash of Bushman 83? Is that correct?

MAJ LEWIS: That's correct.

5

COL STREIT: Ms McMurdo, that concludes my questions of this witness at this stage. I apply for his evidence to be adjourned in chief for the purpose of obtaining an addendum statement.

10 MS McMURDO: Yes, unfortunately it seems that we've found out only today that you have some other information which could assist the Inquiry, so unfortunately for you, we'll need to adjourn your evidence and take another statement and get you to come back probably at another time.

15 MAJ LEWIS: Okay. No problems, ma'am.

MS McMURDO: It's regrettable that that's happened, but sometimes these things happen. In the meantime, could I just remind you that if you need any assistance arising out of giving evidence at an Inquiry like this, you know help is available, and I encourage you to use it if needed. Thank you.

20

MAJ LEWIS: Certainly, ma'am.

25 MS McMURDO: Thank you. You are free to go now.

MAJ LEWIS: Okay, ma'am.

MS McMURDO: I think we've just got a few technical exhibits to tender and sort out, so they won't concern you. Thank you, Major.

30

MAJ LEWIS: Thank you.

35 <WITNESS WITHDREW

COL STREIT: FLTLT Alexandra Rose will shortly make some submissions to seek the tender of some items. I might just observe, although we may have an early mark today, tomorrow will be quite a long day in relation to evidence from Defence Science and Technology Group, and will incorporate private hearings as well. So for those listening on the live stream, just to be aware that that matter will impact tomorrow's evidence.

45

MS McMURDO: Yes. So most of tomorrow's evidence we expect to be in a private hearing.

COL STREIT: That's correct.

5

MS McMURDO: Will we start in a public hearing?

COL STREIT: Yes.

10

FLTLT ROSE: About two hours.

MS McMURDO: Two hours of public hearing.

COL STREIT: Yes.

15

MS McMURDO: Two hours of public hearing, and then probably the rest of the day in private hearing - - -

COL STREIT: That's right.

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MS McMURDO: - - - is what we anticipate. Okay.

COL STREIT: Yes, thank you.

25

MS McMURDO: Yes, FLTLT Rose.

FLTLT ROSE: I propose to tender two different documents. The first is a bundle of documents.

30

MS McMURDO: Can we just sort out Exhibit 164 first, just so we get our numbering right?

FLTLT ROSE: I understand there was – for D147, he began to write a name and couldn't recall the name, but the piece of paper contains a rank, I understand. I'll tender that piece of paper with the rank on it.

35

MS McMURDO: Yes, all right. Well, I had intended to tender it as 164. So we've actually kept a record of it as 164, so we'll keep it as 164, and I understand you might be adding something to that at some point.

40

FLTLT ROSE: If I can supply the name.

MS McMURDO: If it's possible, but that document will be – the name of the Officer in Charge of the support system, I think it was.

45

FLTLT ROSE: Support Squadron, yes.

MS McMURDO: Support Squadron. Yes. I can't read my writing.
Support Squadron. That's Exhibit 164. Thank you.

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#EXHIBIT 164 - NAME OF OFFICER IN CHARGE OF SUPPORT SQUADRON

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FLTLT ROSE: The first bundle of documents contains a Letter of Instruction and enclosures that the Inquiry sent to Dr David Walker, a medical specialist, dated 24 January 2025, seeking an expert report. The second - - -

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MS McMURDO: Wait on. So that's one bundle of documents?

FLTLT ROSE: It perhaps should be A, B, C, within a single exhibit.

20

MS McMURDO: Okay.

FLTLT ROSE: This would be A.

25

MS McMURDO: Yes, all right. Well, that will be 168A.

#EXHIBIT 168A - LETTER OF INSTRUCTION AND ENCLOSURES SENT TO DR WALKER

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FLTLT ROSE: Then as item B, it would be three documents which actually go together. So a cover letter to Dr Walker's expert report dated 7 February, and his expert report, and his CV.

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MS McMURDO: That will be 168B.

#EXHIBIT 168B - BUNDLE OF DOCUMENTS RE DR WALKER

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FLTLT ROSE: I tender the bundle. I will provide a very brief summary of the material. The Inquiry asked Dr Walker to provide a report about a medical condition concerning CAPT Danniell Lyon that was being managed by Defence's Joint Health Command. Dr Walker concluded that

the medical condition was being appropriately managed by the ADF, and would have met standard of care.

5 Dr Walker also believes that the certification for CAPT Lyon to continue flying was appropriate, based on the medical advice the ADF had received. And he states that it was highly unlikely that CAPT Lyon experienced any medical event associated with the condition, that would have caused him to become distracted or in any way affected his flying role immediately prior to the helicopter accident.

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MS McMURDO: Thank you.

15 FLTLT ROSE: The other document is an addendum statement of Senior Sergeant Callaghan dated 30 September 2024, and it contains four annexures, but it can be in the same exhibit.

MS McMURDO: The addendum statement of Detective Inspector Ritchie Callaghan and the four Annexures will be Exhibit 169.

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#EXHIBIT 169 - ADDENDUM STATEMENT OF SENIOR SERGEANT RITCHIE CALLAGHAN AND ANNEXURES

25 FLTLT ROSE: Senior Sergeant Ritchie Callaghan is the State Disaster Victim Identification Coordinator for Queensland Police Service, and he gave oral evidence to the Inquiry on 19 June 2024 in Brisbane. The Inquiry asked Senior Sergeant Callaghan to provide evidence of any testing that was completed on CAPT Lyon's remains to determine cause of death. However, the autopsy reports provided indicate that CAPT Lyon's cause of death is not determined.

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35 The Inquiry also asked Senior Sergeant Callaghan whether any testing could be conducted on CAPT Lyon's remains to determine if the medical condition that Dr Walker opined upon had any impact on CAPT Lyon's cause of death. Expert advice that Senior Sergeant Callaghan received was that it could not.

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That's the conclusion of that evidence.

MS McMURDO: Thank you. So that's all we have now until tomorrow. The witness tomorrow, we need to finish his evidence tomorrow, don't we?

45

FLTLT ROSE: We do.

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5 MS McMURDO: So we're going to have another 9.30 start tomorrow, but seeing as we're having an early day today, I'm sure no one is complaining. All right then, thank you. We'll adjourn until 9.30 tomorrow morning.

**PUBLIC INQUIRY ADJOURNED UNTIL
THURSDAY, 27 MARCH 2025 AT 0930**