

Day 11 – Saturday, 28 November 1964

CHAIRMAN: This session is now called to order.

BASIL HENRY ROBERTS is sworn in and he states as follows:

RAMSAROOP: You are at present stationed at Mackenzie, and you are a lieutenant of “D” company, B.G. Volunteer Force?

ROBERTS: Yes.

RAMSAROOP: On the 25th May, 1964 at 0800 hours, what would that be?

ROBERTS: Eight o'clock in the morning.

RAMSAROOP: As a result of the general breakdown of law and order in the Wismar-Christianburg area on the 25th May, you were summoned by Major Langham to report for duty immediately along with your entire company?

ROBERTS: That is right.

RAMSAROOP: What was the strength of your company?

ROBERTS: The entire strength was ninety-seven.

RAMSAROOP: You reported for duty and subsequently reported to headquarters?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: You received special instructions from your O.C. that you afterwards passed on to all ranks?

ROBERTS: I did so.

RAMSAROOP: The instructions you received were to have every member of the force place one round of .303 ammo in his breach, after having loaded his magazine with ten rounds .303 ammo in readiness on encountering any riot, mobs, rioters or arsonists. You carried out these instructions?

ROBERTS: I did so.

RAMSAROOP: Your term of duty began about 0930 hours, that is, 9.30 on the 25th May and ended around 5.00 a.m. on the 26th May. And during your term you were engaged in numerous duties from rescuing men, women and children, saving buildings from being destroyed by fire and seeing the refugees were safely transported from Wismar police station to Demba trade school. Is that right?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: A total of approximately thirty-one adults and twenty-nine children were rescued by your patrol alone. Some of these people were hidden in swamps, their houses and sometimes in a neighbour's home. Is that correct?

ROBERTS: That is correct.

RAMSAROOP: After seeing the plight of those people who were mostly in the One Mile and Half Mile area where is that area?

ROBERTS: Way back of the Wismar Housing Scheme; a little way back into the bushes.

RAMSAROOP: As a result of this, you were forced to concentrate on saving lives rather than property?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

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RAMSAROOP: You are now saying that as a result of the presence of your troops most of these evacuees were able to collect a lot of their belongings before being escorted to the police station.

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: The operation of which you spoke was done through rain, sun, swamp and dense bushes, up hill and down hill with nothing to eat or drink on the part of your troops?

ROBERTS: That is true.

RAMSAROOP: Lieutenant, you are saying that you are completely satisfied with the manner in which your men handled themselves in the situation under those conditions?

ROBERTS: I am, sir.

SHEPHERD: You are now expressing the opinion shared by your answer that Major Langham was with you in the thick of things.

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

SHEPHERD: Lieutenant Roberts, let me get the time right on the 25th. You were on duty from 9.30 which was the Monday, and to 0500 hours which was the Tuesday the 26th, the total period of something like thirty hours. Did you have any sleep?

ROBERTS: No sir.

SHEPHERD: Did you get anything to eat? Did you feed your men? How were your troops fed? Were they brought back for food?

ROBERTS: It was difficult for me to say. I do not think anybody had more than a cup of tea.

SHEPHERD: Were they fed by voluntary aid?

ROBERTS: I think so; wherever it could be provided.

SHEPHERD: Did you personally have nothing but a cup of tea for thirty hours?

ROBERTS: I certainly had, sir.

SHEPHERD: So far as your petrol was concerned, could you remember the exact number of persons that were rescued by your patrol?

ROBERTS: No.

SHEPHERD: You didn't keep an accurate record?

ROBERTS: It wasn't possible to do that at the time.

SHEPHERD: From your personal knowledge you are unable to say how many persons were rescued by other patrols?

ROBERTS: I am, sir. The other officers and men would have this.

SHEPHERD: You say some were rescued in neighbours' homes. Who were they? Who rescued them? Were they all Indians?

ROBERTS: All races. Amerindians, Africans and East Indians.

SHEPHERD: Did all these people help you rescue the lives of all the unfortunate people?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

SHEPHERD: Lieutenant Roberts, complaints have been made about you and your men. Do you know what these complaints are?

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ROBERTS: So far as I can say, sir, they are not true, but are irrelevant to the members of the Volunteer Force.

SHEPHERD: Lieutenant Roberts, have you heard of Mohamed Hackim?

ROBERTS: He lived at 38 Silvertown, Wismar. Yes, I know a man by the name of Hackim, but I don't know if he is the man.

SHEPHERD: What race is he?

ROBERTS: Indian.

SHEPHERD: What sort of business did he have?

ROBERTS: He had a liquor restaurant.

SHEPHERD: What happened to his restaurant?

ROBERTS: It was destroyed by fire.

SHEPHERD: Were you anywhere near the restaurant at the time?

ROBERTS: No. About 350 yards away,

SHEPHERD: Were there any patrols near the restaurant?

ROBERTS: Yes.

SHEPHERD: What happened when you were 350 yards away?

ROBERTS: I saw the building on fire.

SHEPHERD: Was it the only building on fire?

ROBERTS: No, there were several others.

SHEPHERD: Were you with your patrol?

ROBERTS: I was with my patrol at all times.

SHEPHERD: How many?

ROBERTS: Six of them and myself.

SHEPHERD: Were there any police?

ROBERTS: None.

SHEPHERD: What did you do when you saw Hackim's place on fire?

ROBERTS: Nothing.

SHEPHERD: What were you doing?

ROBERTS: I was assisting in rescuing and transporting people to Wismar police station. I was away up the hill and I had a pair of binoculars. It was with the aid of this pair of binoculars that I observed Hackim's building and several others on fire.

SHEPHERD: At the time you were engaged in rescuing other Indians?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

SHEPHERD: Do you know a man by the name of Inshanally Khan who is a tailor?

ROBERTS: Maybe I know him, but not by name.

SHEPHERD: He was living at 125 Wismar.

ROBERTS: I still don't know him.

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SHEPHERD: Can't you remember? He had a dry goods store there.

ROBERTS: Probably.

SHEPHERD: Are Mr. Wishart and Sergeant Archer here?

ROBERTS: Lieutenant Wishart is now at Mackenzie. Sergeant Archer is here.

SHEPHERD: Was Sergeant Archer on patrol with you?

ROBERTS: He had his own patrol. We met only on occasions.

SHEPHERD: Were you with Sergeant Archer at any time when an Indian spoke to him about saving his property and Sergeant Archer replied that there was no time for that, only time for saving lives?

ROBERTS: I cannot remember.

SHEPHERD: Now, Lieutenant Roberts, is it true that your instructions were to save lives and not to save property?

ROBERTS: After observing the situation that is what I resolved to do.

SHEPHERD: Do you know a man named Richard Bholai? He owns a grocery and is about sixty-seven years old. He is also called Richard Lowe.

ROBERTS: I heard the name but I don't know him.

SHEPHERD: This man has given evidence that while he was being rescued by a policeman he saw a volunteer breaking windows and doors. Did the volunteers at any time break windows and doors?

ROBERTS: Not to my knowledge.

SHEPHERD: If they saw houses on fire and thought that people's lives were endangered, what would they do?

ROBERTS: Obviously they would try to get into the building by smashing doors and windows.

SHEPHERD: Did you after the 25th May work with the British Army?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

SHEPHERD: Do you remember Lieutenant Thomas?

ROBERTS: I do.

SHEPHERD: Did you meet Lieutenant Thomas?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

SHEPHERD: Could you say if you met him on Monday 25th?

ROBERTS: I can't remember. Probably I did.

SHEPHERD: If there were rumours going around that police and volunteers were taking the side of the rioters would you have agreed?

ROBERTS: I would never have agreed with it.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Where do you live?

ROBERTS: 395 Mora Street, Mackenzie, Demerara River.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Before the 25th of this year, where did you live?

ROBERTS: Same place.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: What work did you do?

ROBERTS: I am a professional photographer at the Demerara Bauxite Company.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When did you first hear of the incident at Wismar?

ROBERTS: To be truthful, on Sunday evening, on the 24th.

PRATAP N. SINGH: This was the first time you heard it?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Prior to Sunday 24th did you feel any tension in the city?

ROBERTS: I wouldn't be able to answer that.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you feel it?

ROBERTS: I didn't feel it.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You felt that everything was going right and calm? When did you first realise that there was trouble?

ROBERTS: When it started, sir. On the evening of the 24th.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Tell me something. Are you and your men trained to deal with situations such as you dealt with at Wismar?

ROBERTS: Not fully trained, sir, but almost trained.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What exactly does that mean?

ROBERTS: Not in comparison with the British troops.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What about the Police Force?

ROBERTS: Our duties were quite different.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How often did you go into training?

ROBERTS: Once a week, one hour to one and a half hours, one afternoon per week.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Now you are trained under whose command?

ROBERTS: Well, exactly, I do the training.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What does Major Langham do?

ROBERTS: He supervises.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When you are given these men training, is Major Langham there?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Are you directly under Major Langham?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: No one else?

ROBERTS: We have got another officer, Lieutenant White.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You are the same rank?

ROBERTS: We are all the same rank.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When were you alerted to be embodied?

ROBERTS: Approximately at eight o'clock on the 25th May.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: At eight o'clock in the morning? When were you exactly embodied and committed?

ROBERTS: Around 9.30 to 10.00.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many of your platoon were committed?

ROBERTS: I wouldn't be able to say.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many of your men were committed by 9.30?

ROBERTS: I wouldn't be able to say. We were despatched at the trouble spot.

PRATAP N. SINGH: But surely you were there at 9.30? At that time how many men were embodied?

ROBERTS: I don't know, sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What were you doing?

ROBERTS: I was getting busy to see how many men I could get.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What did you mean getting busy?

ROBERTS: Getting busy dressed to go across to Wismar.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you know there was trouble at Wismar?

ROBERTS: I knew there was trouble at Wismar.

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SHEPHERD: He didn't. He picked up six men and went across to Wismar.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you use the word busy just now? In relation to what? Collecting men?

ROBERTS: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many men did you collect? At what time?

ROBERTS: Six men, between 9.30 and 10.00.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Between 8.00 and 9.30 what were you doing?

ROBERTS: Getting dressed to report to headquarters.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Where did you say you lived?

ROBERTS: At 395 Mora Street, Mackenzie.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How far is that from headquarters?

ROBERTS: About half a mile.

PRATAP N. SINGH: So between 8.00 and 9.30 where were you?

ROBERTS: I wasn't home all that time. I was receiving orders from Major Langham.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What were the orders you received?

ROBERTS: That there was trouble at Wismar and I was getting men out of their jobs and getting as many men as possible.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You say when you got over to Wismar. What time did you get there?

ROBERTS: 9.30 to 10.00.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You say you were up on a hill and could see your men in operation because you had the use of binoculars?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: When you say your men you mean your platoon?

ROBERTS: Not platoon, sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: I am sorry. How many men did you have under your command?

ROBERTS: Six men.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You said you were about 350 yards away up on a hill and you could see your men in operation because you had the use of binoculars? When you say you had six men under your command you did not include yourself in that number?

ROBERTS: The six and myself.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Were all six doing rescuing work?

ROBERTS: The six men were with me all the time.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When you spoke of your men you mean all the members of the Volunteer Force?

ROBERTS: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You said in your evidence at the time when the liquor restaurant was being burnt your men were 350 yards away.

ROBERTS: My patrol was with me all the time.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Now, what did you do to save the liquor restaurant?

ROBERTS: I was not there.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You said that you were 350 yards away. You said that it got to such a stage that your primary concern with the saving of lives and removal of people who were burnt out. Now your original orders were to save property and life?

ROBERTS: Our orders were, sir, to try as much as possible to save as much as we can.

PRATAP N. SINGH: By whom? Who gave those orders?

ROBERTS: Major Langham.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Major Longhorn told you to save lives and properties?

ROBERTS: No, he didn't, sir. He told us to get across to Wismar, but when we reached there we saw fire.

PRATAP N. SINGH: At 9.30 in the morning you did not know what was happening?

ROBERTS: I saw fire and people were being taken from Wismar.

PRATAP N. SINGH: And who were the persons you saw coming across the river?

ROBERTS: I don't know them.

PRATAP N. SINGH: I mean what race?

ROBERTS: East Indians.

PRATAP N. SINGH: At any time you were told to save lives and properties?

ROBERTS: No sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Was Major Langham across the river? What time was it?

ROBERTS: I saw him on the hill at 11 o'clock.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Can you say what time the Volunteer Force was fully embodied and committed?

ROBERTS: About three o'clock in the afternoon.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: I do not want to interfere; I just want the evidence. Besides standing on the hill with your men, what did you do?

ROBERTS: We were rescuing people who were hiding.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How long were you living at Mackenzie.

ROBERTS: Approximately eight years.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You know Wismar-Christianburg well?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What time did you get over?

ROBERTS: 9.30 to 10.00 o'clock.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You must cross over before you could have gotten where?

ROBERTS: One Mile and Half Mile, sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Between 9.30 a.m. and 3 p.m. did you see anybody being beaten?

ROBERTS: I saw that the people were beaten.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you see anybody setting fire to any building?

ROBERTS: No sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you recognise anybody in the crowd?

ROBERTS: I did not sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You did not? Did they look hostile?

ROBERTS: No sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Why are you lying? They looked peaceful as if they were going to church?

ROBERTS: I don't know, sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you see Bibles in their hands?

ROBERTS: I can't remember.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Why are you lying? You would not impress anybody.

ROBERTS: I am trying to answer you.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Do you know what is a Bible?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you see them with any books in their hands?

ROBERTS: I do not know.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did they have cutlasses or bicycle chains?

ROBERTS: I can't remember.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you have guns?

ROBERTS: Rifles and sten guns?

PRATAP N. SINGH: What are the names of the men in your command?

ROBERTS: I will try.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: I hope you will.

ROBERTS: I will.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Do you know that you were going to give a statement today? Did you prepare for this?

ROBERTS: I did expect that.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Yes?

ROBERTS: Lance Corporal Simonds; Private Stevenson, “J”; Private O. Boston, “C”; and Lance Corporal Bacchus, “O”.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You are doing well.

ROBERTS: I can’t remember the other two names for the moment.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Only six men and you can’t remember the other two names? How many stens were there?

ROBERTS: Two.

PRATAP N. SINGH: And who were in charge of these guns?

ROBERTS: Myself and Lance Corporal Simonds were in charge of them.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you know that the stens – do you know that one was lost or stolen?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Was a report made to you about it?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Tell me something. It was in your possession at the time when it was missing?

ROBERTS: It was at the headquarters.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What was the number of the sten gun?

ROBERTS: I would not be able to say.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you know that your sten gun was found under a bridge at Kitty?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You have lived in the area for eight years?

ROBERTS: Yes sir, about eight years.

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DRAYTON: You have lived well with the people? You have lots of friends?

ROBERTS: I should think so.

DRAYTON: Are any of them Indians?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

DRAYTON: And you moved along well with them? You did not have any quarrels with them before, no hostility?

ROBERTS: No sir.

DRAYTON: Prior to the 24th you said you saw no sign of tension?

ROBERTS: No.

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DRAYTON: You and your Indian friends got on well prior to that? You heard no rumours that there was going to be any trouble in the area?

ROBERTS: Well, there were rumours that there was going to be trouble in the area.

DRAYTON: From whom?

ROBERTS: Well, from these fellows who were employees of Choo Kang's over at Mackenzie. One told me that there was going to be trouble in the area.

DRAYTON: The men in your patrol were at all times with you at Wismar?

ROBERTS: Yes.

DRAYTON: So Lance Corporal Simonds was at all times with you?

ROBERTS: Yes.

DRAYTON: In the course of your answer to Mr. Pratap N. Singh just now you said that at no time while you were at Wismar did you see unruly crowds?

ROBERTS: Hostile crowds.

DRAYTON: What is the difference between hostile and unruly crowds?

ROBERTS: Hostile crowds are people who are attacking and unruly crowds are people who can't be controlled.

DRAYTON: Well, hostile in what respect?

ROBERTS: Well, they could not be controlled.

DRAYTON: Were they around?

ROBERTS: No sir.

DRAYTON: Well, in what sense were they unruly?

ROBERTS: They were moving up and down.

DRAYTON: As a matter of fact, in answer to Mr. Pratap N. Singh you said that they were moving so slowly that they were looking as if they were going to church. But yet Corporal Simonds fired two rounds of ammunition to disperse unruly crowds? Were you present at that time?

ROBERTS: No sir.

DRAYTON: But you told me you were. That was not on the 25th?

ROBERTS: No sir. Probably the next day. There was a break and enter at the Mackenzie market square.

DRAYTON: No, this is an account of ammunition expended in military operations and it states where the circumstances under which Lance Corporal Simonds fired at an unruly crowd, so it wasn't Mackenzie. This was at Wismar.

ROBERTS: The weapon used was a sten gun?

DRAYTON: We can check that of course, but at no time was a shot fired?

ROBERTS: Not with my patrol. They never fired a shot.

DRAYTON: You did not see any cases of people being raped?

ROBERTS: No, I saw a woman come running to me in the nude out of the bushes.

DRAYTON: Where was this woman?

ROBERTS: At One Mile, Wismar.

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DRAYTON: Do you know this woman?

ROBERTS: No sir.

DRAYTON: Did you find out her name?

ROBERTS: No sir.

DRAYTON: Did you go down by the riverside, you and your patrol at any time? Were there any crowds there?

ROBERTS: Yes.

DRAYTON: What were they doing?

ROBERTS: They were in front of the police station watching what was going on and being dispersed all the time.

DRAYTON: How long have you been a member of the Volunteer Force?

ROBERTS: Since 1953.

DRAYTON: Thank you.

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MOOTOO: You said you rescued several people. How many?

ROBERTS: It was approximately about thirty-one adults and twenty-nine children.

MOOTOO: Where did you rescue them from?

ROBERTS: From the sand crying out for help, because some of them were beaten.

MOOTOO: You saw them being beaten?

ROBERTS: No. They were hiding out in houses.

MOOTOO: What else?

ROBERTS: We took them down.

MOOTOO: What else did you rescue them from?

ROBERTS: From swamps. I had a report that there were people hiding out in swampy areas and I took my patrol to go and rescue them.

MOOTOO: Was the atmosphere tense when you were there?

ROBERTS: Yes. People were lying about the place, and buildings were being destroyed.

MOOTOO: Three houses in Georgetown can be on fire, and yet the atmosphere need not be tense.

ROBERTS: Well, I term this as tense.

MOOTOO: I can see a house on fire and I can sometimes look at the crowd and say it is not tense.

ROBERTS: Well, after seeing so many people we realised that something was going on, so I decided that the situation was tense.

MOOTOO: But you did not see anybody being beaten or anybody being raped?

ROBERTS: No.

MOOTOO: You did not see anybody running about with bottles or sticks and yet you say it was tense?

ROBERTS: I saw people running, going and coming.

MOOTOO: You say you were looking through a pair of binoculars?

ROBERTS: At that time it was Hackim's store on fire.

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MOOTOO: But if you were busy at the time how could you look through binoculars?

ROBERTS: Where I was looking from was close to the police station, and there were people all around and I could not leave them there.

MOOTOO: Why were you looking at them?

ROBERTS: Members of the Police Force were there.

MOOTOO: Did you have a drink from Mr. T. Prashad's shop?

ROBERTS: Not on the 25th. I don't know who is T. Prashad.

MOOTOO: Did anybody give you a drink?

ROBERTS: No.

MOOTOO: Did you see a woman by the name of Shirley Mohammed? Did you see her with three children?

ROBERTS: I probably know her, but not by name.

MOOTOO: Did you see a woman with three children and with her clothes torn, calling out to the volunteers for help?

ROBERTS: I cannot remember.

MOOTOO: Thank you very much.

DRAYTON: Now, I have referred to Exhibit "P" presented by your commanding officer which shows on the 25th and not on the 26th that Corporal Simonds was equipped with a rifle and not a sten gun, and that he fired .303 ammunition to disperse an unruly crowd.

ROBERTS: What Major Langham said was wrong

SHEPHERD: I object, sir. Officer Langham keeps his own records and this witness cannot be questioned to the manner of how it is kept.

CHAIRMAN: The witness has told us that Simonds could not have fired the shot on the 25th, because he was with him all the time.

DRAYTON: When you were looking through your binoculars and saw Hackim's shop burning, you had the members of your patrol with you, all of them armed? Couldn't you send two or three members of your patrol to save Hackim's shop? You kept all of them there with you?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

DRAYTON: You didn't think of sending two of your men to save the shop?

ROBERTS: No, sir. There were other members of the Force getting rid of the crowd.

SHEPHERD: They were looting on the 24th at 8.00 a.m.?

ROBERTS: It was on the 25th, sir.

SHEPHERD: On the 25th, the Monday, twenty-four men had already been called in but before the rest were alerted and came in dribs and drabs. Your total strength was ninety-seven, and how many in the area were committed?

ROBERTS: The entire ninety-seven.

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SHEPHERD: In answer to a member of the Commission, there were crowds and I think you used the term “unruly.”

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

SHEPHERD: Is this your opinion that if you had shot into the crowd the situation would have got worse?

ROBERTS: I probably think worse.

SHEPHERD: In an answer to a member of the Commission, when you saw Hackim’s place burning were other places burning at the same time?

ROBERTS: Yes sir.

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DRAYTON: How many other places would you say were burning at a guess?

ROBERTS: Well, about five.

DRAYTON: You rescued a lot of people. When you saw the fires why didn’t you go to put them out?

ROBERTS: If I had left them there, by the time I had returned I might have found them dead or beaten.

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CHAIRMAN: Did you have any training in dealing with riotous crowds?

ROBERTS: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: Would you say that all the Indians were evacuated from the Hill?

ROBERTS: Not on the same day.

CHAIRMAN: Now to come back to the unruly crowds. How did you handle them?

ROBERTS: Well I never encountered any of them.

CHAIRMAN: Do you know a woman by the name of Shirley Mohammed?

ROBERTS: No.

CHAIRMAN: Do you know a man by the name of Ramnaresh?

ROBERTS: Perhaps I saw him but I don’t know the name.

CHAIRMAN: Do you know whether your patrols were near the shop and were seen drinking beer?

ROBERTS: My patrols were at no time near a shop. There was no shop nearby.

CHAIRMAN: Did your patrols pass by and see any house being pulled down?

ROBERTS: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

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ROBERT ARCHER is sworn in and he states as follows:

RAMSAROOP: Your full name is Robert M. Archer?

ARCHER: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: And you are Sergeant 1342 of “D” company of the British Guiana Volunteer Force?

ARCHER: Yes.

RAMSAROOP: On Sunday, 24th May, 1964, at about 1500 hours, at about 3 p.m., you were embodied at Mackenzie following an outbreak at Wismar?

ARCHER: Yes sir.

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RAMSAROOP: You were in charge of twenty-four men made up as follows: three corporals, three lance-corporals and eighteen privates?

ARCHER: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: These men, having received their orders from Major Langham who was in charge, drew their rifles and ammunition at 1900 hours. That would be 5.00 p.m.?

ARCHER: No, 7.00 p.m.

RAMSAROOP: On the said day, 24th May, the first detail of twelve men arrived at the Wismar police station. Your men were divided into four groups and placed under the supervision of a uniformed armed policeman and you returned to barracks and resumed your guard duties. The second set of twelve men left for Wismar at 2345 hours. That would be quarter to twelve.

ARCHER: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: On the morning of the 25th you received a telephone message from Major Langham. When?

ARCHER: About 9.30 to quarter to ten.

RAMSAROOP: You received a telephone message from Major Langham that you must take every available man to Wismar immediately because there was breakdown of law and order.

ARCHER: Yes.

RAMSAROOP: On arriving at Wismar police station you were instructed by the officer-in-charge?

ARCHER: By the sergeant.

CHAIRMAN: Could you define the sergeant's name?

ARCHER: Sergeant Chalmers.

RAMSAROOP: You were instructed by Sergeant Chalmers to have two troops to patrol independently?

ARCHER: Yes.

RAMSAROOP: You took control of one group and 2608 Blanchard took charge of another group?

ARCHER: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: The men under your control left with you for Silver Town. Is that Silver Town, Wismar?

ARCHER: It would be Half Mile and One Mile. The area is divided up into sections. Silver Town is one section and Half Mile is upon a hill.

RAMSAROOP: Did you, while patrolling, observe a fire at Half Mile and saw a dwelling house on fire? Can you particularise it?

ARCHER: On patrol we asked whose house was burning and nobody seemed to know and we couldn't do anything because we didn't have any fire equipment.

RAMSAROOP: In Silver Town? And you saw no lights in the house and the house was completely locked?

ARCHER: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: Not so far away you saw another fire and there were crowds of people shouting. People of what race?

ARCHER: They were made up mostly of Africans.

Transcripts – Day 11

RAMSAROOP: What were the shouts?

ARCHER: The normal shouts of a disorderly assembly, a riotous assembly.

RAMSAROOP: On reaching there you found the house of Walter Bholai on fire and both himself and his wife beaten and stripped. At Silver Town?

ARCHER: No. At One Mile area.

RAMSAROOP: Sergeant, you then cordoned off the area and dispersed the crowd aided by your men. While you were in that area your patrol rescued several persons including Ameer Khan Samaroo who was reported beaten, Mohamed Issak of the Valley of Tears. He was also beaten. Is that correct?

ARCHER: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: And several other families ran to you for assistance and you, in company of your men, escorted them to the Wismar police station.

ARCHER: Yes.

RAMSAROOP: In Silver Town you picked up one Joe Persaud of One Mile?

ARCHER: Not One Mile. I picked him up in Silver Town. His residence at the time was at One Mile.

RAMSAROOP: Joe Persaud was beaten and robbed?

ARCHER: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: Persaud gave you ninety-five dollars for safe keeping?

ARCHER: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: Did he get it back?

ARCHER: The next morning Corporal Theirens and myself took the cash back to Persaud. He was at the trade school.

RAMSAROOP: These men were rescued in your party – Persaud, Sankar and several people from the Silver City area?

ARCHER: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: These were taken to the Wismar police station where they were given protection by your “D” company?

ARCHER: Yes. The nature of the protection, there were people outside the police station where the rescued were taken. We stationed armed guards around to prevent the people from surging into the compound.

RAMSAROOP: Were there people keeping watch?

ARCHER: Yes, there were.

SHEPHERD: Sergeant Archer, was it your duty to protect these people? When did your tour of duty start? Was it on Sunday or Monday, the 24th or the 25th May?

ARCHER: On Sunday the 24th at . . .

SHEPHERD: What time?

ARCHER: At three o'clock that day.

SHEPHERD: Did it finish on the 25th or the 26th?

ARCHER: Tuesday the 26th.

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SHEPHERD: During that time you had much sleep?

ARCHER: Not very much, sir.

SHEPHERD: How much?

ARCHER: To be correct. I had on the 24th to 25th two hours sleep.

SHEPHERD: What happened on the 25th and 26th?

ARCHER: Two hours and a half sleep?

SHEPHERD: How did you and your men take it?

ARCHER: The situation was very tense and we just had to be on the go.

SHEPHERD: You said that you found Walter Bholai beaten and stripped. How did you see him?

ARCHER: He was lying in his yard.

SHEPHERD: What did you do for Walter Bholai?

ARCHER: His wife asked me to give him some water to drink and we sent for transportation to take him to the hospital.

SHEPHERD: Were you satisfied with the service that your men performed?

ARCHER: Yes, I am.

SHEPHERD: How many years of service do you have in the Volunteer Force?

ARCHER: Fourteen years.

SHEPHERD: How long have you lived in Mackenzie?

ARCHER: Since 1956.

SHEPHERD: You know the people well at Wismar? You know Hackim Khan at 38 Silver Town? Was his place burned down?

ARCHER: Yes, it was.

SHEPHERD: Where were you when it was being burnt?

ARCHER: I was not there.

SHEPHERD: Did you see it?

ARCHER: I saw it Sunday night. It wasn't burnt when we were passing through Silvertown going up to Half Mile, One Mile, nor when we were passing back.

SHEPHERD: Were you told of saving lives and properties?

ARCHER: At all times we were told to save the lives of people.

SHEPHERD: Which came first?

ARCHER: Lives.

SHEPHERD: Did Hackim complain to you about your men?

ARCHER: No.

SHEPHERD: Did you know Inshanally Khan? He is a tailor and businessman at Silver City?

ARCHER: Yes, I know him.

SHEPHERD: Did he say something to you about his property?

ARCHER: I can't remember. Several people told me about theirs.

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[Two typewritten pages of the transcript with about 20 questions and answers are missing here.]

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you ask?

ARCHER: In all cases, when persons reported to me that they were beaten I asked them if they could identify the man or woman who beat you, do you know the name, but they didn't say.

PRATAP N. SINGH: From 9.30 to 10.00 next morning, although you patrolled the entire city, would you agree with me that during the patrols you saw a lot of people behaving in a disorderly manner? You agree with that?

ARCHER: Yes, they were.

PRATAP N. SINGH: And during this patrol of yours from 9.30 to whenever it was the next morning, you saw nobody being beaten, and nobody lighting houses afire?

ARCHER: That's correct.

PRATAP N. SINGH: These crowds you saw numbered about what?

ARCHER: The largest crowd I have ever dispersed at one time numbered about 150.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Having dispersed them, did they go elsewhere and gather?

ARCHER: Yes, you dispersed a crowd here, saying get away, go to your home; they removed from one area and went to another area.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Let us put it this way – your patrol was not able to cope with these crowds?

ARCHER: No, we could not have coped with the crowds.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You live at Mackenzie?

ARCHER: Yes, I do. I live in the Housing Scheme at Wismar.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many years have you been living there?

ARCHER: Since 1961.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you recognise any persons in those crowds?

ARCHER: Yes, several.

PRATAP N. SINGH: And you said that having dispersed them here, they would go there and assemble?

ARCHER: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you arrest any of them?

ARCHER: Not for assembling.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What for?

ARCHER: I made arrests of people with articles that might have appeared to be looted stuff.

PRATAP N. SINGH: I see. But tell me, wasn't one of your duties to disperse crowds and make sure that there were no gatherings of people on the road?

ARCHER: Yes, that was one of our duties.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Well, if you told a person to disperse and they didn't disperse what would you do?

ARCHER: I would have them arrested.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: Well, if you told them to disperse here, and they went to the corner and gathered again what would be your duty?

ARCHER: I would have them arrested.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you arrest any?

ARCHER: No, I did not.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Why?

ARCHER: Because whenever I gave an order to disperse, people would move promptly.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you recognise if it was the same crowd you told to disperse? Would you recognise any of the people?

ARCHER: Yes, I told you I would recognise some of them.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Now, how did these people appear to you?

ARCHER: They appeared to be calm. Some were just walking.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you find out why they were gathering?

ARCHER: No, I didn't. My duty was not to disperse crowds but to see that they didn't commit any offence.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Who gave you the orders?

ARCHER: Major Langham.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What were your orders?

ARCHER: My orders were to go over with other responsible men we have to Wismar because there was a breakdown of law and order.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Sergeant Chalmers gave you the orders when you arrived?

ARCHER: He told me to divide my men in two groups. Sergeant Chalmers told me that people were lighting fire to people's houses and people being beaten.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Yet you say the crowd was peaceful?

ARCHER: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you see them with any weapons?

ARCHER: No sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you feel that your forces were able to cope with these emergencies?

ARCHER: Yes sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How often do the volunteers have training?

ARCHER: We have parades one time per week on the average.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What about the recruits?

ARCHER: They do two parades per week.

PRATAP N. SINGH: The sten gun which was issued to you, could it be used with a .45 bullet?

ARCHER: No. It uses 9 mm ammunition.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Could any sten gun be used with .45 bullets?

ARCHER: Not that I know of.

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Transcripts – Day 11

DRAYTON: You say you lived at Wismar for eight years. You got on well with the people?

ARCHER: Very well indeed.

DRAYTON: You were friendly with both Indians and Africans?

ARCHER: Yes.

DRAYTON: When did you become aware of the tension of the possibility of serious trouble?

ARCHER: The morning of the 24th.

DRAYTON: No time before?

ARCHER: A couple of weeks before there were rumours around the area that persons wanted to poison the water.

DRAYTON: Sergeant Archer, why did you only have two hours sleep between the 24th and 25th?

ARCHER: That was because the number of men was inadequate.

DRAYTON: Where were you on the night of the 24th?

ARCHER: I was in the guard room at Mackenzie, on duty.

DRAYTON: Now, in the course of your evidence – correct me if I am wrong – you said that some of the crowds were riotous, and you described others as a peaceful assembly.

ARCHER: Some were just chatting, and they were walking in groups and making noises.

DRAYTON: Is this riotous behaviour? What is the difference between that crowd and the others? When I asked you what is a riotous crowd you told me that they were making noises. Isn't this so?

ARCHER: Yes.

DRAYTON: Any such crowd you would describe as riotous?

ARCHER: Yes.

DRAYTON: What were the other crowds doing?

ARCHER: They were just standing by the roadside looking about.

DRAYTON: Were they making any noise?

ARCHER: No.

DRAYTON: So that the difference between a crowd and a riotous crowd is that the riotous crowd is noisy. Have you been trained to deal with a riotous crowd?

ARCHER: No, we have had no such training.

DRAYTON: What were orders for dealing with riotous crowds before you left Mackenzie?

ARCHER: We were told that if we encountered people trying to attack the civilians or other people, we were to open fire.

DRAYTON: You said that on two occasions you had encountered riotous crowds milling around somebody's property. What did you do?"

ARCHER: We had them dispersed.

DRAYTON: How?

ARCHER: We formed extended lines and told the people to go to their homes.

DRAYTON: But you said that you were ordered to shoot at such times.

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ARCHER: Only if the crowds tried to attack us or endanger the lives of the people.

DRAYTON: Do you consider that those two riotous crowds were trying to endanger the lives of civilians and members of the public?

ARCHER: No, not at the time.

DRAYTON: Yet they were riotous?

ARCHER: They were noisy.

DRAYTON: So a riotous crowd is a noisy crowd?

ARCHER: Or disorderly.

DRAYTON: I am trying to understand what you mean by a riotous crowd.

ARCHER: They were disorderly.

DRAYTON: Many times in Georgetown there are crowds of people making noise. Would you describe them as riotous?

ARCHER: They could be described as disorderly.

DRAYTON: What I am trying to get from you is why you did not fire into the two riotous crowds you saw having been given orders to do so before you left Mackenzie?

ARCHER: If and only if they were trying to endanger the lives of people and property or attacking the civilians, and they were not.

DRAYTON: Thank you.

MACDONALD: Sergeant, would you like to change “riotous” to “disorderly?”

ARCHER: Yes.

MACDONALD: You have lived in Wismar for about three years and should know the people. Would you say that they are excitable or volatile?

ARCHER: Not in my opinion.

MACDONALD: Are they calm?

ARCHER: I believe they are.

MACDONALD: Have you lived on the coast?

ARCHER: Yes. I have lived in Georgetown and New Amsterdam.

MACDONALD: Would you say that the people at Wismar possess a greater quality of roughness about them than the people of Georgetown at normal times?

ARCHER: Yes.

MACDONALD: Do you know Lieutenant Wishart?

ARCHER: Yes.

MACDONALD: Do you know if he opened fire at any time?

ARCHER: Yes, I heard that on one occasion he had cause to open fire. At that time there were two others who fired – one police officer and one volunteer corporal.

MACDONALD: I understand that Lieutenant Wishart has left the district. Do you know of the reason?

ARCHER: I do not know. I heard that he was transferred to Georgetown.

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MACDONALD: Did you hear of threats?

ARCHER: No.

MACDONALD: Would you say, Sergeant, that knowing the people and knowing their nature would make your position in this terrible situation somewhat more difficult than the position of the British troops that came later? In other words would you say that as a person involved in the community that this added a large amount of difficulty to your work than would have been the case of a perfect stranger?

ARCHER: No, I do not think so.

MACDONALD: So you were in the same position as a sergeant of the Devon and Dorsets?

ARCHER: Yes sir.

MACDONALD: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Do you know Prashad's shop?

ARCHER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Were you seen drinking at that shop at any time during the 25th May?

ARCHER: No.

CHAIRMAN: Were you and your men seen drinking at Ramnaresh's shop situated at Half Mile Wismar?

ARCHER: No sir. We could not do that.

CHAIRMAN: There is an accusation that volunteers went by while one Mrs. Barker, an East Indian woman living with an African, was stabbed. She started to scream for help, and was ignored by a volunteer. Do you know of this?

ARCHER: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: Do you know a man called Banga Mary?

ARCHER: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: Did you see him that day in the crowd?

ARCHER: Yes, I saw him patrolling in the streets.

CHAIRMAN: Was he part of your unit?

ARCHER: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: He was carrying on his own patrol?

ARCHER: Possibly.

CHAIRMAN: Did any of the evacuees make any accusations about Banga Mary to you?

ARCHER: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: Did your patrol rescue one Mrs. Gopie?

ARCHER: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: You did not rescue anyone named Gopie in a jeep?

ARCHER: No sir. I did no mobile patrols.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

SHEPHERD: There are nine volunteers here to make statements.

RAMSAROOP: We intend to call some of them.

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OSWALD BACCHUS is sworn in and he states as follows:

CHAIRMAN: Lance Corporal Bacchus. What Bacchus?

BACCHUS: Oswald Bacchus.

RAMSAROOP: On the 24th May, 1964, you with twenty-four others were embodied at Mackenzie around 2.30 p.m. under command of Sergeant Archer.

BACCHUS: Yes.

RAMSAROOP: Your duties were read to you by your O.C. of the "D" company and rounds were then issued to you?

BACCHUS: Yes.

RAMSAROOP: And to everyone of you, rounds of ammunition?

BACCHUS: Yes.

RAMSAROOP: On the said Sunday, twelve of you reported at the Wismar police station to duty. The Sergeant then in charge of the station detailed two volunteers and one policeman to do patrol in the district. You and one other volunteer along with Corporal Joseph patrolled One Mile area until 5.00 p.m.

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: You thought everything then was calm?

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: On the 25th May around 10.00 a.m. you were called out to assist the police at Wismar. You got to the station around 10.30 a.m. and at that time houses were being burnt and people were at the station asking for help.

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: What type of help was requested?

BACCHUS: To assist them in bringing their things to the station in order that they will be saved.

RAMSAROOP: Lieutenant Roberts got to the station about 10.40 a.m. About 10.45 you received a report from an Indian woman whose name you can't remember. She reported that men had beaten her at Half Mile area and that she had to run with her nine-months baby in the bush. At that time the rain was falling?

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: Where was the rain falling?

BACCHUS: At Wismar.

RAMSAROOP: You recalled that Mr. Roberts took six men and went in search of the child but did not find any trace of the child. You and others in your company made inquiries but to no avail. You with your men continued to patrol, rescuing people in the Half Mile and One Mile area.

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: In the Half Mile area an Indian man reported to you that some men were setting fire to his house which was a concrete building. Yourself and Lieutenant Roberts, Major Langham and two other privates went to the man's assistance, where you saw no one at the place you referred to. You checked around the building and windows were broken and bottles were strewn over his place.

Transcripts – Day 11

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: Lieutenant Roberts asked the people there if they would like him to take them to the police station to which they replied “Yes,” but they would like to take a few things with them?

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: Yourself, and one other private whose name you can't recall. . . . you were detained by Lieutenant Roberts to watch these people and after they had finished packing you took them to the Wismar police station?

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: The families comprised of four. Is that correct?

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: An hour later the house was burnt. Was it the house that you were detailed to watch?

BACCHUS: It wasn't the house, sir; we were told to watch the people.

RAMSAROOP: When you were finished watching you then reported to the police station around 5.00 p.m. Everything seemed calm at the time?

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: About 5.30 p.m. yourself and Corporal Roberts rescued Lalta Paul and his family of three; also Barbara Jack and family – a family of five.

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: On the 26th May this year around 8.00 a.m. were you posted to One Mile area with Devonshire and Dorset soldiers?

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: And around 10.00 a.m. on that day you received a report from a Negro woman that her son's girl was locked in a house for two days and was afraid to come out and was asking for help to get across to Mackenzie at Dr. Klautky's residence where she was working?

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

RAMSAROOP: Her son's girl's name was Betty Hamid and she was having a young baby. She was just at the point of delivery?

BACCHUS: No sir.

RAMSAROOP: At about 3.00 p.m. you got another report and you went to the assistance of three Indians who were hiding at a Negro man's place. You couldn't recall his name?

BACCHUS: No sir.

RAMSAROOP: About 3.30 p.m. you reported back at the Wismar police station where one Ross from the One Mile area called you and asked you to wait on.

BACCHUS: Yes sir

RAMSAROOP: From where did this man call you? Was it in his house? You went to him. He said that he was afraid and he was hiding for three days. His wife was a Negress. You took both of them subsequently to the Wismar police station?

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

SHEPHERD: No questions.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you know Hackim's residence? Oh, by the way do you know Hackim Alli known as Khan? Could you possibly see from where you were to Hackim's residence?

BACCHUS: No sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Now, how far away you were?

BACCHUS: One mile.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You were in company with Lieutenant Roberts at that time, and you were 350 yards and saw Hackim's house at the time.

BACCHUS: We were not at that time together.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You said that you were with him and you never left him.

BACCHUS: I was not with him all the time.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When did you leave Wismar?

BACCHUS: I can't remember. Early the next morning.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many crowds you saw?

BACCHUS: I did not take a check.

PRATAP N. SINGH: About how many in a crowd?

BACCHUS: About one hundred.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You saw crowds? What were they doing?

BACCHUS: They were gathering on the road chatting. Some were singing.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What were they singing?

BACCHUS: I can't remember.

PRATAP N. SINGH: They were not by any chance singing, "We shall not be moved?"

BACCHUS: I can't remember.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You did not try to disperse the crowd?

BACCHUS: Yes, I did my best to break the crowd.

PRATAP N. SINGH: If you saw one hundred people would you try to disperse the crowd?

BACCHUS: I tried.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When you went to disperse the crowd did they bother with you?

BACCHUS: No sir.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When you saw fire did you call the crowd to assist you since they were loitering in the streets?

SHEPHERD: He did not say anything about putting out fire.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you call the people to help you? Why?

BACCHUS: Because I believed they were only keeping noise and they were not making trouble.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you recognise anybody in the crowd?

BACCHUS: Well, I can't say no.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Give me the names of one or two.

BACCHUS: I cannot remember the names.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Were they men or women whom you recognised?

BACCHUS: They were men, women and children.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you find that when you dispersed a crowd here, they would go somewhere else to gather. Did you go behind them and disperse them again?

BACCHUS: We hadn't time to go and disperse them again.

PRATAP N. SINGH: About how far did they go and gather?

BACCHUS: Sometimes when you go and disperse a crowd here, they would go somewhere else.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Let us say that you dispersed a crowd at point A. You say that they would go somewhere else?

BACCHUS: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What did you do them?

BACCHUS: You cannot do them anything because they are peaceful.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Well, if you think they are peaceful why did you trouble them in the first place?

BACCHUS: Because a fire was going on.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Wasn't it one of your duties to disperse crowds?

BACCHUS: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: So, you did not serve any purpose at all?

BACCHUS: Why did you say so; it was my orders that I was carrying out.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Were any guns fired at them?

BACCHUS: I cannot remember.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you have a lance-corporal in your group by the name of Simonds?

BACCHUS: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Your group was gathered at that time?

BACCHUS: Yes sir. We were working up the hill.

PRATAP N. SINGH: And Simonds carried a gun?

BACCHUS: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you at any time hear Lance-Corporal Simonds discharge a gun?

BACCHUS: No, sir, because I did not work with him.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How many men were there in your group?

BACCHUS: About six or seven. I cannot remember exactly because it is a long time.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How come you cannot remember? Did you know that you were going to give evidence today?

BACCHUS: Yes, but I do not have a book of the notes to check.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: If your patrols had fired, would you have made a note of it?

BACCHUS: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When would you have made a note of it?

BACCHUS: When we got back to the guard room.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you hear Lance-Corporal Simonds say that he had discharged a gun?

BACCHUS: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You did not discharge any?

BACCHUS: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you see anybody being beaten?

BACCHUS: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: And you were patrolling the One Mile area, and during the course of your patrol you saw no one being beaten and so the place was peaceful?

BACCHUS: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Thank you.

DRAYTON: Lance-Corporal Bacchus, who were the people who were with you on patrol at that time?

BACCHUS: There were six of us in the group, and we were on top of the hill.

DRAYTON: Continually on top of the hill?

BACCHUS: Yes, we were rescuing people. Our job was to rescue people.

DRAYTON: Were you as a group together all the time?

BACCHUS: Yes, we were patrolling.

DRAYTON: Who were the six people in your group?

BACCHUS: I cannot remember the names.

DRAYTON: You cannot remember any of the names of the people who were working with you to this day?

BACCHUS: I can remember Lieutenant Thomas and Major Langham.

DRAYTON: Major Langham was in your group?

BACCHUS: Yes, but not all the time.

DRAYTON: Who else?

BACCHUS: Lance-Corporal Stevenson.

DRAYTON: Was Lance-Corporal Simonds with you?

BACCHUS: As far as I can remember he wasn't with us.

DRAYTON: Was Lieutenant Roberts with you?

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

DRAYTON: Who is responsible for the issuing of ammunition and guns of various descriptions?

BACCHUS: We have an armourer.

Transcripts – Day 11

DRAYTON: When you were embodied who was the person responsible for issuing individual members of your unit with arms?

BACCHUS: Sergeant Archer issued rounds of ammunition.

DRAYTON: What about weapons?

BACCHUS: Sergeant Archer did that.

DRAYTON: And they had presumably a record kept of what particular type of weapon was issued to a particular individual?

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

DRAYTON: Could you tell us why a person is issued a sten gun, and another a rifle?

BACCHUS: All the N.C.O.'s were issued with sten guns.

DRAYTON: How long did you live in this area?

BACCHUS: Seventeen years.

DRAYTON: At Wismar?

BACCHUS: Mackenzie.

DRAYTON: What is your job when you are out of uniform?

BACCHUS: Technical man. Sampler at the Demba laboratory.

DRAYTON: Did you get on well with both ethnic groups?

BACCHUS: Yes.

DRAYTON: For how long prior to the 24th May did you become acquainted that there was a possibility of trouble in the area?

BACCHUS: I never had the idea of there going to be any trouble in the area.

DRAYTON: Well, then only on the 24th did you become aware of this trouble?

BACCHUS: I did hear rumours of buildings being bombed. I heard people speaking these rumours.

DRAYTON: Thank you.

—
MACDONALD: Where have you been living?

BACCHUS: 456 Bulletwood Street.

MACDONALD: In your statement that you have mentioned, what was the general impression at Wismar-Christianburg side? You were on top of the hill most of the day?

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

MACDONALD: Was there a lot of smoke on top of the hill?

BACCHUS: Yes.

MACDONALD: When you glanced down into the Valley of Tears and the flat land near the river, what did you see?

BACCHUS: There was a lot of smoke and fire.

—
MOOTOO: In your opinion would it be harder to see down below?

BACCHUS: Yes.

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MACDONALD: Did you say when you were on duty the night of the 24th that everything was calm?

BACCHUS: I saw no fires where I was on patrol.

MOOTOO: Sergeant Bacchus, you said you didn't see anybody being raped or beaten. Would you say that the damage was done before you arrived?

SHEPHERD: I object to that question.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Shepherd, I think that members of the Commission have a right to question this witness.

MOOTOO: Did you feel that all the trouble had taken place when you arrived?

BACCHUS: I said that when I arrived some of the houses were already on fire. The people were not looting at that time.

MOOTOO: Does that mean that you were summoned too late, and you couldn't have prevented any damage? From what you said you arrived too late.

BACCHUS: I would not say that.

MOOTOO: You didn't see any damage done before your eyes?

BACCHUS: No, I didn't.

MOOTOO: You were rescuing the people who had already been beaten, but doesn't it mean that you arrived too late?

BACCHUS: When we arrived the damage had already been done, and some of the houses were burning.

SHEPHERD: When you say "I arrived too late", do you mean that you were too late to save these houses?

BACCHUS: Yes sir.

SHEPHERD: You did not mean that you were too late to do some good?

BACCHUS: No sir.

SHEPHERD: Thank you

CHAIRMAN: We will now adjourn for the day.