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STATEMENT OF WITNESS

STATEMENT OF RUTH LEONARD

DATED THIS

DAY OF

2008

I, RUTH LEONARD, declare that this statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that if it is tendered in evidence at the Inquiry I will be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

1. The Inquiry has disclosed a number of documents to me. Where I make specific reference to a document in my statement I have given the number of the relevant page.
2. In April 1997 I was the Control Assistant on duty in the Southern Division Ambulance Control in Craigavon. I worked under the instruction of Sue Morrow at that time, who was the Control Officer. Sue was ultimately responsible for the deployment of ambulances. Whilst I could be asked to give out calls if Sue was busy on the radio or with other calls, I would always check with her before doing so. We worked as a team.
3. On the night of 26 – 27 April 1997 my shift began at midnight and ended at 08:00. It was a busy night; night duty is invariably busy and a Saturday night is the busiest night duty of the week. Sue Morrow and I were the only 2 people on duty in the Control Centre, and we were solely responsible for covering the 6 ambulance stations in that area for the duration of the shift.
4. I received the 999 in connection with this incident and I despatched an ambulance (call sign 322). To my knowledge the records show just one emergency call for an ambulance in relation to the incident at Market Street / Thomas Street in

Portadown, which was taken at 01.49. The receipt of the 999 call is recorded on "Form ASI" containing page numbers **08153** to **08514**. There is a section which shows "Caller's name RUC Portadown", and this was taken by myself, "R Leonard" at "Time 01.49". All of the information in Form ASI is not recorded at the time of the call, but a record was kept for the duration of each shift. At the initial receipt I would record the address of the incident or emergency, the time of receipt, the times of arrival for the crew and departure / arrival at hospital. Clear times would be put in as these events happened, as would any names regarding patients lifted from the emergency. To my knowledge I filled all of this information that night.

5. There is also a transcript of the Ambulance Control emergency call tape, at pages **09338** to **09339** which just refers to "0148". I can confirm this relates to the same call. The request was made on this occasion from RUC Portadown, but I do not recall to which officer I spoke. It is quite possible that a name was not given, because they would identify themselves as "Police Portadown", or whichever police control room was running the response. To the best of my recollection, all I was told was that there was a fight at the top of Woodhouse Street, Portadown. I was not given any details about the incident at that time or how many people were injured at the scene.
6. The ASI shows that a call was given to the crew, on the transcript, at 01.50. The crew then went to the location at 01.52. I have been shown a copy of an A3 ambulance log sheet that we used during that shift containing page **00006**, which has been reduced to A4 size. At that time this log was kept as a record of crew going out and crew arrival, and of hospital time on emergency calls or doctors' urgent calls for the duration of the shift. I have circled where it says "999 0152" and underneath, "Portadown". "0152" refers to the time that the crew went mobile on the call to Market Street / Thomas Street. To the left of where I have circled, the log refers to "0139". This relates to a totally separate call.

7. I can confirm that once I had received the call, I was the officer who dispatched the ambulance. This is possibly because Sue was busy dealing with other situations at that time, such as other emergency calls. To be honest, I cannot recall whether the words "Ruth, dispatch this ambulance" were actually said. But the crew were in the location of Craigavon Casualty at the time the call came in, so if Sue was tied up on another phone call I would just immediately ring the crew and dispatch them to the scene.

8. We were guided by the police as to the best of way of approaching the incident, because of the barrier across the junction of Market Street and Thomas Street. The barriers were the police's domain. If the barriers were all closed then the ambulance would have to be on the other side of the barrier and the crew would have to walk. But normally in any situation a barrier would be open. The most important thing when an emergency call is taken is to get the crew on route. The crew did ask me, "How do where get down to it?" The transcript at pages **9338** to **9339** shows that I actually rang the Portadown police barrack and asked them for the best way to approach the scene. I asked the police, "Is the town open for them to go straight through?" I held on momentarily, and then they gave the answer that we needed to come down Edward Street. Since the ambulance was already mobile, the information the police gave was passed to the crew over the radio.

9. According to the AS1 at page **08153** the ambulance arrived at the scene at 01.58 and left again at 02.02. The AS1 then refers to "Arr" and below it says "0209". This records the arrival time at hospital being 02.09. Then "Clear" and "0210" means that the crew left the hospital at 02.10.

10. On the AS1 the details "*4pts*" and "*1 uncons, 3 walking wounded*" appear. To my knowledge this is my writing on the AS1. "*4pts*" means 4 patients, so 4 patients in total required attention; of those, "*1 uncons*" means 1 unconscious patient and "*3 walking wounded*" means 3 walking patients. That information would have come from the ambulance crew, but the names of patients would not be known until the

crew were at hospital clearing at casualty. Casualty would have been informed in advance by me of the number of patients coming in and a brief outline of their condition as noted on the AS1. Page 2 of the AS1 at page **8154** shows 'CAH' which refers to Craigavon Area Hospital and the time "2.03" with my initials appearing below.

11. The first page of the AS1 at page **08153** records the names of 3 patients as '*Rbt Hamill*', **D** and '*Colin Hull*'. This information would have been given by the ambulance crew who would usually call in, upon completion before they cleared casualty and made themselves available for the next call or returned to base. The names of only 3 patients are given. This possibly could have been because only 3 names were known at that time; there may not have been any identification on the other patient. I cannot say whether a 4th patient was in fact carried by the ambulance. I would not normally receive any information about what treatment the ambulance crew had given to patients. To the best of my knowledge I was not given any details of the injuries of Robert Hamill or the treatment administered to him in the ambulance.
12. A second ambulance was requested at 02.02 hours, which is recorded on the original AS1 docket, at page **08154**. Then the AS1 reads "No". This means that there was no vehicle available to send, and I am not aware of any second ambulance being sent. I have been asked whether I at any point tried to clarify with another member of staff the issue of the second ambulance being dispatched. I cannot remember whether the question ever arose, or whether anyone asked me again to dispatch another vehicle; I do not believe so.
13. I can confirm that the only contact I had with the police that night was the original emergency call and the call I made to clarify what way the crew had to approach the scene. I honestly do not know whether I spoke to the same person during each of those calls.

14. Following the incident I made one statement to the police, containing page **00316**. I would have just been asked to provide a statement regarding the emergency call that I took. I do not think that the police would have given me any information; they would not go into the details of a case and I was not given any information regarding Robert Hamill's injuries.

SIGNED: R. Leonard
RUTH LEONARD

DATED: 27.3.08