

Scottish Criminal Records Office

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what information it is able to provide on the names of all the fingerprint experts from the Scottish Criminal Records Office or other Scottish fingerprint bureau who were involved in expert examination related to the Lockerbie investigation, on what material each worked on, and on what their findings were.

(S2W-20010)

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what information it is able to provide on the names of any Scottish fingerprint experts who were cited as witnesses at the Lockerbie trial or were precognosed in this connection.

(S2W-20013)

Colin Boyd QC: Fingerprint examination was carried out in the Lockerbie investigation in 1991 and 1992 by officers of Lothian and Borders Police, who compared fingerprints taken from Maltese immigration documents, hotel registration cards and other documents. The officers involved in this work were cited as witnesses in the Lockerbie trial at Camp Zeist.

Some of the documents were in the name "Abdelbaset Ali Mohmed Al Megrahi" and some in the name of "Ahmed Khalifa Abdusamad".

It was later established in the Lockerbie trial that Megrahi entered Malta from Tripoli on the evening of 20 December 1988 and left for Tripoli on the morning of 21 December 1988, at a time when the improvised explosive device was placed on an Air Malta flight to Frankfurt, using a false Libyan passport in the name of "Ahmed Khalifa Abdusamad" issued on the instructions of the Libyan Intelligence Service. The fact that this false passport belonged to Megrahi and was used by him on these dates was accepted by the defence.

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what information it is able to provide on whether Chief Superintendent Harry Bell of Strathclyde Police and later head of the Scottish Criminal Records Office was involved in the Lockerbie investigation and, if he was, on what his duties were, over what period he performed them and what domestic and foreign agencies he liaised with in this connection.

(S2W-20011)

Colin Boyd QC: Chief Superintendent Harry Bell, now retired as Head of the Scottish Criminal Records Office, was a Chief Inspector in Strathclyde Police at the time of the Lockerbie bombing and was sent to Lockerbie in the immediate aftermath of the bombing as part of Strathclyde Police's assistance to Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary.

He was initially involved in the supervision of part of the crime scene in Lockerbie and then took part in the criminal investigation which led to the conviction of Abdelbaset Ali Mohmed Al Megrahi, a Libyan intelligence agent, in January 2001.

His work on the criminal investigation involved enquiries in Japan to identify the improvised explosive device, in the United States of America in connection with the forensic evidence and in Malta to identify the purchaser of clothing which was part of the improvised explosive device and was recovered from the crime scene. In all of these countries he worked closely with the local law enforcement agencies as part of the investigation and in the United Kingdom worked closely with all law enforcement agencies involved in the investigation.

His work with the investigation came to an end in 1992 when he returned to duties at Strathclyde Police.

He later gave evidence in the Lockerbie trial at Camp Zeist in connection with his work on the investigation.

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what information it is able to provide on the names of the Scottish Criminal Records Office personnel who were involved at any stage of the Lockerbie investigation and their duties.

(S2W-20012)

Colin Boyd QC: I will provide a full answer to the member in due course once the records of the Lockerbie criminal investigation have been examined.