

Mon - 6.23pm. ?

[Redacted] - 8.14. Jill

Tues 9.15am Jill

Tues Code A Kates mobile.

12.28pm. Code A



HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY

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Your Ref.

28th January 2004

Mrs L Richards

Code A

Code A

Park gate direct
→

Dear Mrs Richards,

There have been reports in the media recently regarding the investigation being conducted into a number of patient deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. In particular, comment has been made in respect of the selection of Detective Chief Superintendent Steve Watts to attend the Strategic Command Course at Bramshill in Hampshire.

From the onset of this enquiry we have firmly held the view that we had to commit our best officers to this investigation. The selection of Detective Chief Superintendent Watts to attend the Strategic Command Course in furtherance of him holding higher command in the Service is evidence of this.

It would be wrong to suggest that Detective Chief Superintendent Watts' attendance on this course in some way indicates that the Constabulary is no longer dedicated to the investigation. Detective Chief Superintendent Watts is regarded as a national authority in respect of investigations such as this and the fact that he has chosen to remain in charge of the investigation is evidence of his commitment. An excellent and experienced team of officers are working on this case, the independent medical experts and advisors that we have engaged are of the highest standing, and the investigation is being conducted in accordance with national best practice.

Yours sincerely,

Code A

I.R. Readhead
Deputy Chief Constable



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Your Ref.

28th January 2004

Mrs L Richards

Code A

Dear Mrs Richards,

I have asked that this personal letter to you be included with the latest newsletter that the team have prepared to update you on the progress of Operation Rochester.

I wanted the opportunity to clarify some issues, that may be of concern to you.

Firstly, I know that some of you are becoming more concerned about the length of time that it is taking to give you information as to whether the treatment received by your relative gives rise for concern.

We are mindful of the need to get this information to you as quickly as possible, but as I said at the last meeting, we've got to get this right. The quality assurance process has validated the analysis of the clinical team. I really do hope that very soon, we will be able to give you more information, including an indication of the status of your loved one's case, based upon the analysis of the material available.

I am also aware that there are concerns regarding the condition of the medical records. We have done all that we can to recover all that is available from Gosport War Memorial Hospital and the feeder Hospitals. There are some missing documents so where possible we have filled the gaps in information by seeking out other more general records in addition to those particular to your relative. It does not appear at this stage that there is anything sinister in those deficiencies in the records.

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With regard to the taking of statements, there does appear to be some confusion over this issue. Statements are formal documents that are used to place evidence before a Court. At this stage in the investigation we have focused on an initial analysis of the medical records by our team of medical experts. This has allowed the patient treatment to be graded. Thereafter, the quality assurance process has taken account of the information that has been provided in respect of your concerns. This information has been recorded in writing and retained but it was not necessary to take a formal witness statement at this stage to progress this investigation.

I therefore decided that the important issue was to get the information and leave the formal recording of evidence to a later phase.

Finally, I know that some of you are concerned regarding the fact that I am due to embark on a 'Strategic Command Course' and the effect on my ability to direct the enquiry.

I am committed to this investigation, I have an excellent, dedicated team working with me. The Constabulary have given the investigation the highest priority.

I am determined to keep my promise to you, in conducting a thorough, impartial, ethical and professional investigation. I would like to be able to do that more quickly, but it is not possible to do so without introducing error and superficiality.

Operation Rochester is being conducted in accordance with the national best practice, those that we have briefed, including the Crown Prosecution Service are content that we are doing the right things.

Thank you for your continued support, for my part I undertake to continue keeping you up to date with progress.

Yours sincerely

Code A

**Steve Watts, MSc, DPM, MIMgt
Detective Chief Superintendent
Senior Investigating Officer
Operation Rochester**



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2nd February 2004

Mrs L Richards

Code A

Dear Mrs Richards,

I am writing to you as promised in Bulletin No 4. During the visit you received from DC **Code A** you indicated that you would be content to be informed by letter of the category your loved one's case fell into.

We therefore intend to contact you in the near future in this manner. If, however, you have for any reason changed your mind as to notification, I would be grateful if you could let me know directly. We fully appreciate that irrespective of the news you will receive, it may well prove to be a distressing matter. We would like again to draw your attention to the services provided by the Victim Support Service, specifically Judith Cousins on Gosport

Code A Alternatively you can ring Hampshire Victim Support Service HQ at Eastleigh on **Code A**

Yours sincerely

Code A

Code A

Nigel Niven
Deputy Senior Investigation Officer

Operation ROCHESTER

Family Group Members Investigation Update Bulletin No. 4 – 28th January 2004

Visit by DC [Code A]

By now all of you who wished to see our Family Liaison Officer, DC [Code A] [Code A] have been visited by her and have been given the opportunity to be updated on any information which you previously provided to us. She will also have discussed with you the various methods that we are considering of informing you of the clinical teams findings in respect of which category your loved one falls into. Copy patient records have been provided to those of you who requested them.

Notification of Clinical Team findings

All of you who were seen by DC [Code A] have indicated your preferred method of notification of the clinical teams findings. I will be writing to you very soon in order to confirm this and to be sure that you have not had a change of mind. Once that has been done we will be in contact with you again to inform you which category your loved one's case falls into.

Media

You may be aware of recent publicity in the local media regarding the Operation ROCHESTER investigation, which highlighted concerns that some of you have. The Deputy Chief Constable, Ian Readhead, and the Senior Investigating Officer of the enquiry, Detective Chief Superintendent Watts, have both prepared letters which are attached to this bulletin and are intended to provide you with reassurance and clarity as to the conduct of this investigation.

Investigation

In the meantime, the investigation is being conducted professionally and as expeditiously as possible. This is a complex investigation and we have said from the onset will take time to complete. We have had, and will continue to have, meetings with the Crown Prosecution Service in London. During these meetings the strategy we are pursuing in respect of our investigation has been discussed and agreed.

Code A

Nigel Niven
Deputy Senior Investigating Officer