

**WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**



**CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA**

**THE WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

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**VERBATIM REPORT  
OF THE PROCEEDINGS**

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**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2014**

**WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

**WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

**29<sup>th</sup> Hearing**

**09:37hrs**

**25<sup>th</sup> August, 2014**

**Commissioners:**

Sir. Richard L. Cheltenham, K.A., Q.C., Ph.D – Chairman

Mrs. Jacqueline Samuels-Brown, Q.C.

Mr. Seenath Jairam, S.C.

**Secretary to the Commission:**

Mrs. Nicola Pierre

**Counsel to the Commission:**

Mr. Glenn Hanoman

Ms. Latchmie Rahamat

**Administrator of the Commission Secretariat**

Mr. Hugh A. Denbow

**Attorneys for the People's National Congress (PNC):**

Mr. Basil Williams

Mr. James Bond - (Absent)

## **WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

### **Attorneys for Working People's Alliance (WPA):**

Mr. Christopher Ram

Mr. Moses Bhagwan - (Absent)

### **Attorneys for the Guyana Trades Union Congress (GTUC):**

Mr. Brian Clarke - (Absent)

Mr. Selwyn Pieters - (Absent)

### **Attorney for Dr. Patricia Rodney, Asha Rodney, Shaka Rodney and Kanini Rodney:**

Mr. Andrew Pilgrim, Q.C.

### **Attorney for Donald Rodney:**

Mr. Keith Scotland - (Absent)

### **Attorneys for the Ex-GDF (Guyana Defence Force) Association:**

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Joseph Harmon - (Absent)

Mr. Leslie Sobers - (Absent)

### **Attorney for Captain Gerald Gouveia:**

Mr. Devindra Kissoon - (Absent)

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

### Witness:

Lt. Col. Sydney James

### Officers:

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Mr. Kristoffer Sundar	-	Assistant Editor
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## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

### CALL TO ORDER

*[Lt. Col. Sydney James entered the witness box and was sworn in]*

*(Technical glitch in audio)*

**Lt. Col. Sydney James:** ...2007, Sir.

**Counsel to the Commission [Mr. Glenn Hanoman]:** 2007?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Would you agree with the suggestion that when you became the Head of the branch you became also, the ultimate custodian of documents at that branch?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is records pertaining to, or in the custody of the G2 branch, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes, that branch.

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** And when you became the Head of that branch in 2007, there was a handing over of all the documents from your predecessor?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Okay, would it be correct for me to suggest that the Army has a duty to keep an accurate and comprehensive written record of the guns and ammunitions, and accessories in its possession?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Do you also agree that every firearm collected by the Army would have a unique serial number?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman [Sir. Richard L. Cheltenham, K.A., Q.C., Ph.D]:** Is that collected, or....

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, but is it collected via, or in the custody and control of the professional army?

**Mr. Hanoman:** I am grateful for your guidance. Do you agree also that everything that you collected and had custody of, and distributed would have a serial number?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** And that serial number is unique to each particular weapon?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** And there are records kept with respect to each individual weapon – sorry about the repetition- just to be sure the individual records are kept, but each specific weapon and accessory?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** And you would agree with me that the record keeping process is a continuous process at the GDF (Guyana Defense Force)?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** You also agree with respect to *[inaudible]* ...keep a written record of a particular weapon, a note would be made with the unique serial number of that weapon?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Can you tell us about the various records that would be made with regards to the receipt and issuance of weapons?

**Lt. Col. James:** Once a weapon comes in to the Guyana Defence Force, or the GDF purchases a weapon(s) it is entered into the relevant ledgers at the unit that is responsible for the weapons and ammunition in the GDF. It might be referred to previous names in the past, but the current

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

unit is the five, service, and support battalion. A copy of those records is also kept by the G2 branch, Sir.

**Commissioner [Mrs. Jacqueline Samuels-Brown, Q.C.]:** I am sorry, I missed that name...

**Lt. Col. James:** Okay...

**Mr. Hanoman:** First of all, the ledger that you spoke about; does it have a special name - a specific name - the ledger?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes. There are several ledgers, but one of them is the AB -Alpha Bravo 56 - which documents a weapon on its entry into the GDF. It also documents an entry if a weapon is issued – let us say- to another unit as is customary. That unit would also have an AB561.

**Mr. Hanoman:** So, there is a general ledger for the whole GDF, and then each unit would have a separate ledger?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct. That is correct.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Apart from ledgers, when weapons and accessories and ammunitions are issued, is there any other document that you make a written record on?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir. It is issued on an issue voucher.

**Mr. Hanoman:** You have already told us that you gave some investigations to missing weapons. Did your investigations cover the period 1976 to now?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Can you say whether these issue vouchers were in existence and being used since 1976?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Can you tell us what were the ledgers being used then, if they are the same or different?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, the ledgers that would have been in use would be the AB561, and the special stores register.

**Mr. Hanoman:** The army still uses these issue vouchers, as well as the AB561....

**Lt. Col. James:** And the special Stores Register.

**Mr. Hanoman:** So from 1976 to now, it has been the same....

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** ....written records being produced and maintained.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** So these records are being made in the normal course of everyday business?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** That voucher that you spoke of is also known as [*Inaudible*] ....form 67?

**Mr. Chairman:** Which voucher, Counsel?

**Mr. Hanoman:** Sorry, you had spoken of an issue voucher.

**Mr. Chairman:** I think I know what you mean, but I want to make sure we do not lose the listening public.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Col. James, I am looking at some vouchers here... there is a number on it, GDF number 67. Can you tell us if this is the same issue voucher that you spoke about?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Sorry, the microphone is off.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** May I ask, the vouchers you are referring to, are they in evidence?

**Mr. Hanoman:** Two of them are already in evidence. I am guided, please.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** ...for the benefit of other Counsel who are here, other Counsel.



## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could I... yes...

**Mr. Jairam:** I think we have SGJ 2A and SC 2B.

**Mr. Hanoman:** These would have already been shown to the other participants, please, Madam Commissioner. Could I ask you to look at those vouchers there? Do you agree with me that, written on the voucher, there is referred to a GDF number 67?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Please put your microphone on?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** We seem to be having trouble with the microphones. When I put mine on, his comes off. We only have on mic on.

**Mr. Chairman:** We need to draw that to the attention of our expert technician. *[Laughter]*

**Lt. Col. James:** I was saying...

**Mr. Chairman:** He assures us that it is alright now, okay.

**Lt. Col. James:** I was saying that is correct, Sir, with an explanation.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could you explain?

**Lt. Col. James:** My explanation, Sir. You see on the old voucher it has number 67, but, overtime, this numbering was changed thereafter, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** It was changed to what?

**Lt. Col. James:** We changed all the numbers on the vouchers; all the vouchers in the Guyana Defence Force, overtime, Sir, the numbering...

**Mr. Hanoman:** The forms have basically remained the same; it was just the numbers that were changed?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** But when exactly was the numbering changed? Do you know? “Overtime” but when was the commencement of that process?

**Lt. Col. James:** I cannot say, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** But is it after 1980?

**Lt. Col. James:** It would have been after the 1980s, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Now, you spoke about a “weapon issue voucher” but what you are looking at there, on the face of it, is referred to as an “issue and receipt voucher.” Is it one and the same thing that you are speaking about?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you saying that that is the same as the weapons voucher?

**Mr. Hanoman:** That is what the witness is saying, yes, Sir. Do you agree with me that on that very voucher there is a space provided on that form for the name of the consignee to be recorded?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** There is another part of the form that is set up for the consignee to sign when they receive the weapons. Do you agree with that?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Now...

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not want to be anticipating you but I was just wondering whether the time has come for us to put to him the evidence with respect to weapons going to the House of Israel? We have documentations about that.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Very well. I am guided, please.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** It just occurred to me, I believe to all of us here, that if indeed there was that weapon transfer from the Army to the House of Israel on request of the People's National Congress (PNC), according to the form that we have here, that is important evidence.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I understand...

**Mr. Chairman:** I thought you were laying the foundation now to put that document to him and to get his comment. I thought so. I am sorry if I have crossed you and interrupted you...

**Mr. Hanoman:** Not at all, please, Sir. I am guided always.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thought that was what the foundation was about and for, but I might be wrong. You get ahead.

*09:52hrs*

**Mr. Hanoman:** From your research in 1976 and onwards, the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with regards to the distribution of weapons within the Army and outside of the Army was the same, from 1979 to now, 1976, sorry?

**Lt. Col. James:** I am not certain I understand that.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Let me be more specific in 1976, in order to give weapons to a non-military organisation, the procedure was the same then as it is now?

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I think you have asked your question based on an assumption. The Witness's evidence up to now speaks to issuing within different sections of the Army. I think we need to, first of all, even though I think it may have been covered before, but I am of the view consider whether or not the procedure here told us of here is the same if weapons are issued outside of the Army or were in 1976 and if the procedure and record keeping were the same.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Thank you Madame Commissioner. The procedure for issuing arms and ammunitions and other accessories outside of the GDF, to the persons outside of the GDF would entail the usage of the same forms that you described to us already?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, as far as I am aware, the issuance of weapons to units within the Guyana Defense Force and to external organisations is generated by a formal request to the Chief-of-Staff who either approves or disapproves. If I suspect the request is for an external organisation the Force would have to receive guidance from the Defense Board with issuance to external organisations. Once approval...

**Mr. Hanoman:** This is very important and just for clarification you are speaking about what obtains now or what was always obtained since 1976?

**Lt. Col. James:** As far as I know since 1976, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Thank you.

**Lt. Col. James:** And if I might be allowed to continue, Sir...

**Mr. Chairman:** Forgive my intervention; I just want to get it clear. There was a police as early as 1976 more from issuing arms to units within the GDF as well as the outside organisation.

**Lt. Col. James:** External organisation and as I was saying that once approval is gives to the Chief-of-Staff or the issue of weapons either to units within the force or to external organisations, the Chief-of-Staff will so direct the issuing unit, in this case there are 5 Service Support Battalion in writing and once the Commanding Officer of the 5 Service Support Battalion would have received those written instructions, he would so direct the issuing authority who is the person in charge of the weapons bond and they would prepare the issue on the issue voucher, and also make records in the special Stores Register and the AB561, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** We have seemed to miss something. Who would be responsible within the GDF for approving the request either from outside or within the Army itself, would be responsible to give that instruction?

**Lt. Col. James:** I did say the Chief-of-Staff, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** But did he also say he would have had to have had authorisation from the Defense Board?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** Ma'am that would be with respect to the issuance of weapons to external organisation.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Yes, we are dealing with issuing of weapons to external organisation. As I understand, a request comes in if it goes directed to the Chief-of-Staff, the Chief-of-Staff would have to refer it to the Defense Board.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Once the Defense Board gives permission.

**Lt. Col. James:** One minute, please, Ma'am, that is for request to external organisations.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** [*Inaudible*]

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, because the request within the force is normally routine request.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** No, we are only now dealing with requests from external bodies and so after the GDF approves it, it communicates back with the Chief-of-Staff.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Who then communicates with the Commanding Officer...

**Lt. Col. James:** ...of the issuing unit or the unit where weapons and ammunitions are lodged.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And lit is in writing?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And based on those written instructions, the Commanding Officer will then complete the relevant voucher and or ledgers?

**Lt. Col. James:** He would not do that the persons working with him; let us say in the weapon bond, there is a procedure where they will write up the record, for example, the issuing vouchers and also the accountability ledgers, the AB561 and the special stores registers.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay, thank you and then it goes out?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** Then the collecting unit organisation will collect them.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Thank you very much and they have to sign for it in collecting them?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

**Mr. Hanoman:** And from 1976 to now the Defense Board would normally comprise of what type of [*inaudible*]

**Lt. Col. James:** [*Inaudible*] comprise the President and Commander-in-Chief, the Minister of Home Affairs, the Attorney General, Chief-of-Staff, Commissioner of Police and other person as may be designated from time to time to attend the Defense Board, sorry, I missed the Secretary to the Defense Board.

**Mr. Chairman:** The President and Commander-in-Chief, it is important that we get that, Attorney General, the Commissioner of Police, Secretary to the Defense Board.

**Lt. Col. James:** The Chief-of-Staff and the Minister of Home Affairs

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you.

**Lt. Col. James:** And I was saying other persons who may be co-opted from time to time to be part of the Defense Board based on some circumstances, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** The Secretary to the Defense Board would normally be drawn from the Government of the day or from the Army?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, the Secretary of the Defense Board, in this case, is the Head of the Presidential Secretariat, Dr. Luncheon and I would assume in those days, it would have been the same, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Since you became the Head of the G2 Unit in 2007, well I am not sure if you are willing to answer this, but is it a routine or is it normal to be given to external organisations?

**Lt. Col. James:** No Sir, weapons have been issued to Joint Services organisations like the Police Force, the Guyana National Services, the Guyana Prison Service among others, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Let me just ask you, if I may, are there established guidelines, protocols or policies going back to 1976 for the issuance of weapons to external bodies as far as you are aware?

**Lt. Col. James:** Not that I am aware of.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** So it would be assessed is I am understand you on a case by case basis by the Defense Board?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is my understanding.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Chairman:** Just before we go further. Could you help me by giving me some examples of the sort of organisations, outside organisations, that were outside the GDF that could make an application of weapons? I was distracted; I was focusing on something else.

**Lt. Col. James:** Do you still want me to answer the question, Sir?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, I was distracted, I am sorry.

**Lt. Col. James:** Based on my own research, Sir, and what I have seen over the years, I know that weapons were issued to a number of other joint services organisations and some para-military organisations, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** You could be more specific?

**Lt. Col. James:** Okay Sir, I did mention the Guyana Police Force, we had the Guyana National Service which is now disbanded, we had the Guyana's People Militia which is now disbanded, we have the Guyana Prison Service, we had the Guymine Constabulary which is now disbanded, we had the Customs Anti-Narcotic Unit (CANU), Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you.

**Mr. Hanoman:** What about Ministries, since you became the Head of the G2 branch in 2007 are you aware of weapons been given by the GDF to Ministries of the Government?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** Not since 2007, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** It is an organisation, a record, were you to find any evidence of weapons being given to Ministries before 2007?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** You have found that?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** Particularly in the period that is the focus of the Inquiry, 1978 to 1980?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is Correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Which Ministries?

**Lt. Col. James:** Ministry of National Mobilisation, in those days, Sir, I have to refer to the record for the specific dates.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, feel free.

**Lt. Col. James:** 10/08/79 Ministry of National Development, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Do you mean the 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1979?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

**Lt. Col. James:** Ministry of National Development, Sir. Similar issues same date 10/08/79.

**Mr. Chairman:** On the same day, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1979.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

**Mr. Chairman:** To another Ministry? Was there an issuance of weapons to another Ministry other than the Ministry of National Development?

**Lt. Col. James:** Not based on the records that I have, Sir.



## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** So I understand to be saying there are more than one voucher indicating issuance of weapons to the Ministry of National Development on the 10/08...

**Lt. Col. James:** No, there are other dates other than the 10/08/79.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** There were other dates.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is right.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Could you find two vouchers with the 10/08/79?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, it is more than two vouchers for that same day.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** For the 10<sup>th</sup> of August?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I know you mentioned the second voucher so I just want to be clear and it is the same date to the same Ministry.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct

**Commissioner [Mr. Seenath Jairam, S.C.]:** We need to put them in.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes, before we get to putting in. I will attempt to put in each voucher individually in a few moments, but before we get to that during your investigation with regards to this missing weapons and so on, besides that Ministry of National Development in the 70s, in 1979 and I believe in 1976, have you ever seen a written record about any weapons been given to any Ministry, any other Ministry during any other period?

**Lt. Col. James:** No other Ministry but to other organisation Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Get the details for the records.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Very well, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** I want to know the nature of the weapons, I want to know the name of the other organisations, get all of that Counsel, sorry.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** If I can answer your question Sir, it is reflected in the statement I gave at paragraph 15A to RR, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** The public does not have access to your statement and so that is why it is important that we get it on the record, it is a public inquiry.

**Lt. Col. James:** Okay Sir, if you wish, I can go through to...

**Mr. Hanoman:** I will tender the document now. Just for the record we have already tendered two sets of vouchers the exhibit numbers assigned to the two vouchers are SCJ 1, SCJ 2A and SCJ 2B. Now you have brought the original vouchers that are in your custody to the Commission today?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

*10:07hrs*

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could I ask you to look at them please, do you have a voucher with respect to 15 M70 assault rifles in your possession?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Can you tell us a little bit about that voucher?

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Before you go any further, is that one of SJ 1 or SJ 2 A or B?

**Mr. Hanoman:** No, please.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** It is a new document?

**Mr. Hanoman:** It is a new document.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Because you see you just mentioned SJ 1 and SJ 2 A and B.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Those were tendered already.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Already, so we are now moving on to other documents.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes, please.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** Can you read aloud for us what you understand is contained in that voucher?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir. On this voucher dated 10/08/79...

**Mr. Hanoman:** This is the 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1979?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir. "15 M70 assault rifles along with 15 rifle grenade launchers, 15 launcher springs, 15 adopters for blank ammunition, 15 accessory boxes, 15 cleaning rods, 15 strands, 15 oil cans, 15 slings, 15 magazine bags and 75 magazines were issued allegedly by a W one King and Staff Sergeant Caesar to a Comrade Skeete of the Ministry of National Development. The authority for issue was FHQ9COORD11059879."

**Mr. Hanoman:** What does that mean please?

**Lt. Col. James:** Which one Sir?

**Mr. Hanoman:** The authority for issue.

**Lt. Col. James:** This would be the correspondence that authorised the bond attendants, in this case W one King and Staff Sergeant Caesar, to issue the weapons to the named individuals, Sir. That is the procedure...

**Mr. Hanoman:** So those letters are reference number on a document?

**Lt. Col. James:** It is a file reference for a document, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I see.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Are these weapons and the voucher referred to in the witness's statement?

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes please, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Could you just assist us and the Counsel as to which section of the statement it is referred to?

**Mr. Hanoman:** This would be paragraph number 15C.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Thank you.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Were you able to find that reference document during your investigations?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Do you also see a signature there that appears to be the name “Skeete”?

**Lt. Col. James:** I would assume so, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could I please ask that that document be tendered into evidence at this stage.

*[Inaudible]* Eleven, I believe...I believe it is ten sorry, number ten.

**Mr. Chairman:** Counsel as best you can, you must keep the story clear. You seem to be concentrating on some details about the voucher and the number of the voucher; that might be useful in terms of support. The Witness has done his investigations, which are the names of the outside organisations; in particular we have evidence about People’s National Congress (PNC) and House of Israel. Given the nature of the inquiry, that is important if you can establish it, so we want the names of the outside organisations particularly that is within the timeframe that is the focus of the Commission. If there are supporting documents then you put in that, but let us get the story clear that everybody can follow it.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Thank you, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** And then the nature of the weapons and the amount.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** These are the categories of emphasis.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Thank you Sir. Just for clarity, the voucher you have just spoken of, that was issued to, according to the document, a Comrade Skeete from which organisation?

**Lt. Col. James:** Ministry of National Development, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** And with respect to the weapons, the guns, on that voucher, I think you said it

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

was 15 M70 rifles, is that correct?

**Lt. Col. James:** And accessories.

**Mr. Hanoman:** And other accessories. Could I ask that that voucher be tendered and marked as Exhibit SCJ 2C. Now, Witness you have spoken at paragraph 15D of your witness statement about guns and other accessories, namely five M72 guns etcetera, could you find the corresponding voucher for that?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Can you read from and tell us what is happening on that voucher? Explain to us what...

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, on this voucher dated 10/08/79?

**Mr. Hanoman:** Ten? Please call the whole date, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1979.

**Lt. Col. James:** 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1979, the voucher documents an issue of five 7.62 M72 light machine guns allegedly issued by W one King and Staff Sergeant Caesar to a Comrade Skeete of the Ministry of National Development. There is a signature and there are a number of accessories along with this issue, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could I ask that that voucher be tendered and marked as Exhibit SCJ 2D, please.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** That is at page what...?

**Mr. Hanoman:** Page 11 in the bundle. Could I ask you to look at the items that you described in paragraph 15 E of your witness statement which has to do with the date 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1976?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir. This issue voucher was issued to a Comrade Skeete, 11 HK, 11 light machine guns, four among other issues, Sir, and there is a signature for collection.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** *[Inaudible]*

**Mr. Hanoman:** The 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1976. Are there any other weapons on that voucher?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could you tell us please?

**Lt. Col. James:** There are eight G Three rifles, eight Beretta nine millimeter semi...

**Mr. Hanoman:** Let me ask you something, can you describe for us what is a G Three rifle?

**Lt. Col. James:** A G Three rifle is a combat rifle.

**Mr. Hanoman:** A combat rifle?

**Lt. Col. James:** A combat rifle is something similar to the AK47. Instead of using 7.62 by 39 millimeter like the AK47 or M70 rifle. It uses 7.62 by 51 millimeter ammunition. The ammunition is different, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Is this the type of gun that is sometimes used with a tripod?

**Lt. Col. James:** This one, the HK 11 that is correct Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** The HK?

**Lt. Col. James:** 11.

**Mr. Hanoman:** 11.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** How many of those guns were given out?

**Lt. Col. James:** Four, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Four of these guns were given out to Comrade Skeete?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes.

**Mr. Hanoman:** This is the type of machine gun that usually operates with a tripod?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir. It is a light machine gun, not a machine gun, a light machine gun.

**Mr. Hanoman:** You can think of any reason why a Ministry would want a gun like that?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I am sorry Counsel, it does not say it went to a Ministry, it says it went to Comrade Skeete.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Very well.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And in this case it did not say Comrade Skeete of a particular Ministry.

**Mr. Hanoman:** That is indeed correct.

**Mr. Chairman:** You are making assumptions in the absence of the evidence; let us get the evidence in.

**Mr. Hanoman:** You can think of any reason why Comrade Skeete would want such a machine gun?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Okay, so you spoke about the four light machines guns that are on the tripods and the eight G Three rifles. Any other guns?

**Lt. Col. James:** Eight sub-machines guns and 15 SLR 7.62 by 51 rifles, Sir, among other accessories.

**Mr. Jairam:** The SLR, is it Self-Loading Rifle?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could I ask that this issue and receipt voucher which is at number 12 in our bundle be tendered and marked as Exhibit SCJ 2E. I wish to refer you now to 15 sub-paragraph F of your witness statement.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Before you leave Counsel, permit me once again to disturb your flow. Could we go back to that document because it is a little different from the others that you had referred to earlier and I think it is important to note the differences? For example, every form has a box for issued by. On the previous SCJ 2C and D there was a signature there but on this form

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

in 1976 there is no signature for issued by. Am I correct?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And is it also so for the box marked authority for issue. Is it so that on this document unlike the ones previously admitted into evidence there are those signatures there?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Thank you. To the extreme left of the document, there is a space for signature see footnote. To the extreme left of the document underneath voucher must accompany stores, to the top, right where your thumb is where I can see, just below that there is a section marked see footnote, do you have that?

**Lt. Col. James:** Ma'am, which voucher are you referring to?

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Well no see footnote is on the 1976 one but there is a space marked signature. On the same one that was just put in Exhibit SCJ 2E. At the top left hand corner of the document, what is written there?

**Lt. Col. James:** Standard unit code number stamp.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And what is written under that, the next box?

**Lt. Col. James:** Signature.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** That is where I am talking about. There is a signature there, am I correct?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** This is the signature for the recipient, the issuer or someone else?

**Lt. Col. James:** This seems to be the signature for the recipient, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** For the recipient?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Ma'am.



## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** So if it were...in fact it is similar to the one on the previous form?

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Could you...sorry Mr. Chairman.

*10:22hrs*

**Mr. Chairman:** Could you on the second document recognise the signature?

**Lt. Col. James:** This signature seems to be ...

**Mr. Chairman:** ... Wilfred Jack, Skeete? ...

**Ms. Rahamat:** Skeete.

**Lt. Col. James:** ...the signature for the last Exhibit I spoke about, Sir?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, SCJ...

**Lt. Col. James:** The signature seems to be similar for the other issues to the Comrade Skeete...

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Comrade Skeete, thank you.

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Another difference between this form and the others is that on this one it says, "Issued to Comrade Skeete", but there is no additional notation that he is attached to a particular Ministry?" Am I correct?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay, is there anywhere on the form that you see any notation of who would have issued or authorised the issuance of this particular set of weapons? You are more familiar with the form than I am and down to the bottom of the page, anything?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay, thank you very much Counsel.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Another difference on this form ...

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** Which form are you talking about?

**Mr. Hanoman:** ...the one you are looking at, the ...

**Ms. Rahamat:** SCJ ...

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** SCJ ...

**Mr. Hanoman:** SCJ 2E, which is the long form ...

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** ...that we are presently dealing with. Do you know that the signature of the recipient, well I suppose the recipient, is the first name of Skeete is mentioned there? Could you make out the first name of that signature?

**Lt. Col. James:** It seems to be Wilfred, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Wilfred Skeete?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** The signature of the later documents which was put in as SCJ 2A, SCJ 2C and SCJ 2D, the signature appears to be W. Skeete ...

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** ... where as in this document, the latest one, the name in full?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Chairman:** Counsel, do you attach any significance to the difference in the signature?

**Mr. Hanoman:** No, it is the first time we are hearing the first name being mentioned of Skeete.

**Mr. Chairman:** Normally, people signed their names the same way each time unless they have reasons ...

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Jairam:** Overtime, peoples' signature ... [*inaudible*]

**Mr. Chairman:** ... the signature may look different, but if a person signs 'John Brown' then to put 'J. Brown', it would be a departure from the norm.

**Mr. Hanoman:** That is a valid observation, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** It may or may not be significant, but at least it should be put on the record because this case may not be the only thing that seems to be a departure from the norm. Sometimes you get record ... who is the authorising officer, sometimes not. Sometimes the signature spells out the first name, sometimes not. These cumulative departures from the norm may be of significance, so I think you should get them on record.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Thank you, Sir. Let me ask another question. The form you are looking at is a long form and the others have a different shape as well; a shorter form. Do you agree with me that the space provided for the signature is less in the short form than in that long form where the full name is spelt out?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, the long form was used in 1976 ...

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes.

**Lt. Col. James:** ... the short form was used in 1979 and I supposed there might have been a change in the design of the form. That is the explanation I can give.

**Mr. Hanoman:** No, what I am asking you, is that in that space that is allotted for the signature, do you agree that in 1976 older form the actual space provided for that signature is longer than the space provided for in the other forms?

**Lt. Col. James:** It seems to be about the same, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I did a measurement; it seems to be the same.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Very well, I think we have already tendered this document as 'E'. Could I ask you to look at the voucher that you spoke about in your statement at Letter 15 F. Can you look at your original voucher and tell us what is contained there?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** This voucher is dated 18/05/1976, issued to Comrade R. Corbin. P. S. OPM, issued by Force Quarter Master Department, Authority for Issue Commander, there seem to be a signature, R. Corbin and seven Smith and Wesson pistols are issued, Sir, among other accessories.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Those letters under Comrade R. Corbin, P.S. OPM, they have any meaning to you?

**Lt. Col. James:** Based on the year it seems to be the Office of the Prime Minister, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** What would the P.S. stand for?

**Lt. Col. James:** It seems to be Permanent Secretary, Sir or Parliamentary Secretary.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Do you know of any Comrade R. Corbin that held a position such as that in 1976?

**Lt. Col. James:** I do not have such a recollection, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Can I ask that this voucher be marked and tendered as SCJ 2F?

**Mr. Chairman:** Lt. Col., did you come across as one of the outside agencies requesting arms, the Prime Minister's Office after that?

**Lt. Col. James:** This is the first such designation, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Did you find subsequent, designation request of the Prime Minister's Office for arms from the Guyana Defense Force (GDF) or is that the only one?

**Lt. Col. James:** This is the only one I found, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Jairam:** Lt. Col., on my copy, I see the word "Restricted" at the bottom.

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** What does that mean in this context?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** That is a security classification for documents used in the Military, Sir. “Restricted” is the lowest classification. You have “Restricted”, “Confidential”, “Secret”, “Top Secret”, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** In this case of the document being requested from the Prime Minister’s Office, did you see the authorisation of the Defense Board?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, on the document has “Authority for Issue Commander” and I assume the Commander was the person who gave the authority for the Issue at that date and time, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Would that not have been a departure from the norm to the extent that you are not issuing it to a Unit within the Defense Force, would there not be need for the Authority to come from the Defense Board?

**Lt. Col. James:** I cannot answer the question, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thought that was consistent with the protocol that you laid out for us?

**Lt. Col. James:** I cannot answer for this document. I cannot give an explanation.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am only asking you whether on the document ...

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** ... do you see any evidence that the Defense Force was requested to provide the permission?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** That is all I am asking.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay, if I may follow up with that. Mr. Chairman. because I am grateful you raised that because we had omitted to note for the record both oral and otherwise that the other exhibits which were put in since this morning did have the name, apart from the one that you indicated, there was no endorsement in the boxes, but they did have the name of the person who issued the weapons and the Authority for Issue, we have established that. For example, if we can go back to the first one this morning, if you can go back to it, SCJ 2C, I think is the first

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

one we put in this morning? Could you just look back at it and tell us, it was issued by whom in the Army?

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Assist him please, the date and so on of the ...

*[Court Marshall handed over document to Witness]*

**Lt. Col. James:** The Authority for issue in this document, Ma'am, SC James 2C was FHQ, it seemed to be 'Q' COORD 11059879, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Could you tell us what those abbreviations mean, FHQ?

**Lt. Col. James:** FHQ is Force Headquarters; the name has been changed to Defense Headquarters, now. It is just the main Unit in the Guyana Defense Force, the Headquarters of the Guyana Defense Force. It has had several name changes throughout its history. In 1979 it was "Force Headquarters". It is now "Defense Headquarters".

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Thank you and if everything were regular and in acCOORDance with the procedure you have outlined it would mean that the Guyana Defense Board would have communicated with the Commander-in-Chief who would then have communicated with, the Chief-of-Staff, sorry, would then have communicated with the Commanding Officer of that particular section?

**Lt. Col. James:** Ma'am, what this FQH COORD means to me that there was a document authorising the issue of these particular weapons.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay.

**Lt. Col. James:** There was a Correspondence indicating the acceptance of the Issue of the weapons as listed on the Invoice, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Issued by WO1...?

**Lt. Col. James:** "WO" Warrant Officer, Class I King and Staff Sergeant Caesar.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay, so they would have been acting under authority of what is containing in the box beneath it?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay, but on the last form that we looked at which is now SCJ 2F unlike in the previous forms, there is no name inscribed or endorsed in the section marked 'Authority for Issue', it just says "Commander", so we do not know who is the actual Office Holder at the time ...

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** ... authorised it? What about "Issued By"? Again do you see any name there? There is something that is not so legible on mine, SCJ 2F. The one issued on the 18<sup>th</sup>, I think of year 1976, Comrade R. Corbin, P.S. OPM, that is the one we are looking at.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Smith and Wesson pistols, do you see it there?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Is there a name under "Issued By" or in the block marked "Issued By"?

**Lt. Col. James:** Under "Issued By" there is the Force Quarter Master Department.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Right. Force Quarter Master ...

**Lt. Col. James:** Department.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** ... department, so again there is no name, no name of any specific officer as was in the case of the previous form?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay. So far as we have been able to see the 1979 forms contains greater particular in terms of name than in the 1976 forms?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Thank you.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** On the same form, “Commander” there, do you have any idea it would be which Commander that is being referred to?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, I would have to do research to find who would was Commander ...

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** At the time.

**Lt. Col. James:** ... at this time, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** This would be the ...

**Lt. Col. James:** This would be the “Force Commander”, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** ...the Force Commander?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could I ask you to look at your paragraph in your statement 15 G?

**Lt. Col. James:** 15 G?

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes, could you tell us what is recorded there, please?

*10:37hrs*

**Lt. Col. James:** What is recorded in this receipt voucher dated 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1976, issued by the Force Quarter Master Stores to Comrade R. Corbin, National Development, Authority for Issue, it looks like Q ... I cannot make out if it is a ‘U’ ... instructions from GSO1 COORD SAFQM ...

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes.

**Lt. Col. James:** ... 9 Smith and Wesson 9mm pistols and accessories. Under the Standard Code, there is a record in 404 and there is a signature purporting to be R. Corbin, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Explain to us who has the authority for issue, what those letters mean. First of all, GSO1 COORD ...

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, that is General Staff Officer 1, it means that it is the Senior Coordinating Officer, well now, Defense Headquarters, in those days it would have been Force Headquarters



## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

and at the bottom, SAFQM, I am not certain but it seems to be the Force's Quarter Master, I am not certain about the two letters before SA, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** Just for clarity, Colonel, you said accessories, but I am seeing description of items below the nine Smith and Wesson pistols, you have magazines.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is what I referred to as accessories, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** The 18 magazines would signify what?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir, this is two magazines for each pistol, 18 magazines and 7 cleaning rods and brushes, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** So, the magazines would have contained live ammunition?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir, live ammunition would be issued separately.

**Mr. Jairam:** I see.

**Mr. Hanoman:** On this voucher, there is a block above where you see, "Issued By" they have an account, some written account and something written opposite that, you can tell us what ...

**Lt. Col. James:** This seems to be the standard accounting department or sub-unit ... the G1098, is like a store that deals with weapons ... G1098 ... for example, if it is a ration store, it would be ration and this seems to be AB404.

**Mr. Hanoman:** What does that mean?

**Lt. Col. James:** It seems to be this is how that account or where their weapons were issued, that was the account through which it was accounted for based on this ...

**Mr. Hanoman:** So, this is the storage place?

**Lt. Col. James:** ... that actually did this issue.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I see. Just to make a connection here, could I ask first of all, that this voucher be tendered and marked as SCJ 2G, please?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** Just to do some comparison, please, Lt. Col. James, on the previous voucher, the day before, the 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1976, guns were issued to Comrade R. Corbin and underneath that the letters P.S and perhaps Office of the Prime Minister was issued, right?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** On this form, maybe it is a day after the 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1976 is the next day.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** What is written underneath R. Corbin is National Development. Do you agree?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Neither on the face of the form, 1976 nor on the following day 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1976 do we see it stated explicitly or at all that the Defense Board authorised the issue.

**Lt. Col. James:** If I could say again, Sir, on the 18<sup>th</sup> the authority as written reflected to Commander and on the 19<sup>th</sup>, it reflected the GSO1 COORD who based on my own experience, seems to be two different persons, Sir. One is the Force Commander as it refers to the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> the General Staff Officer 1.

**Mr. Chairman:** You are with respect, ignoring my question and my question is according to the protocol that you laid out for us ...

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir?

**Mr. Chairman:** ... an organisation outside of one of the units of the Defense Force requested arms of the Defense Force, so that request would have to be approved by the Defense Board and communicated to the Defense Force.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** So, I am asking you, whether in relation to the issues of arms from outside of one of the units of the Defense Force on the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> May, if there is any evidence from the form that the Defense Board authorised the issue.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** If that is the answer, thanks.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** You did tell us though that there was written communication between the Defense Board ... the Commander of the Army and the Commander of the Department before any issuance of arms took place, remember you told us that?

**Lt. Col. James:** Not the Commander of the Army, the Chief-of-Staff.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Sorry, the Chief-of-Staff.

**Lt. Col. James:** From the Chief-of-Staff to the Commanding Officer of the issuing ...

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** So, there should be some other record indicating written instructions given?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** But that is separate from the form.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** But you do not ...

**Mr. Chairman:** That is assuming that the Defense Board did authorise.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Proceeding on that premise.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Did you search for those records?

**Lt. Col. James:** I did search, Ma'am, I did not find it.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** You did not find it?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay, thank you, very much.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I think the last Exhibit has been tendered already? Can I ask you to look at 15(h) in your written statement?

**Lt. Col. James:** 15(h)?

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes, it speaks to 50 Browning pistols. Have you been able to find the original voucher...

**Lt. Col. James:** One minute please, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** ... that you mentioned in your statement? It is at page ... well you do not have your ... you have not found it?

**Lt. Col. James:** Let me just check it.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Would the date help you? 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1978.

**Mr. Chairman:** Commission Counsel, you have as I understand it, thousands of people both here and abroad listening and I think we need to be making it clear what is it we are doing now and what you are referring to ... 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1978, what is that?

**Lt. Col. James:** If I can say, Sir, I was looking for the original document.

**Mr. Chairman:** No, I am not talking to you, I am talking to Counsel.

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Let us turn now to the voucher dated 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1978 which relates to a further issue of arms ... if I was listening outside, I would have turned off. I am not following what you are doing, man. Bear the public in mind.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I am guided by you.

**Mr. Chairman:** It has to make sense! Do not only be guided by me, man! We are trying to follow the thing clearly.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** I was just attempting to help the witness to find it quickly, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am concerned with those who are outside of this room, those who are following us.

**Lt. Col. James:** If I can answer your question, Sir, the voucher for 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1978 refers to the issuance of 50 Model 10, 9mm Browning pistols, allegedly issued by Staff Sergeant Ceasar of the Ordinance Stores to Comrade Skeete for National Development, the authority is a reference Q /1105 FHQ/COORD/1105 and the authority for issue also is the officer commanding the Ordinance Stores and it is allegedly signed by W. Skeete and the serial numbers for the 50 pistols are listed in the vouchers, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Now, those letters that you called out there Reference Q/1105 that relates to a document that would have ...

**Lt. Col. James:** That seems to be referring to the authority for this issue along with the Officer commanding the Ordinance Store, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** But you have never been able to locate that specific document?

**Lt. Col. James:** I have never been able to locate any references, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could I ask that this voucher be tendered and marked SCJ 2H, please?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, it would be received and so marked.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I would like to ask you to turn your attention now to the next voucher that you have referred to in your written statement, dealing with the issuance of guns and other accessories at 15 (i) of your statement.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Is that on the 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1976?

**Mr. Hanoman:** And is dated 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1976?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir. The voucher I have states, issued by Force Quarter Master stores on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1976, issued to Comrade Skeete, the Authority for issue SAFQM and there is a

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

signature for W. Skeete and allegedly 6 .22 rifles, 6 .30 carbines and 6 .303 rifles were issued, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** A pity Counsel that was not organised in years, so that they are going from 1976 to 1978, then back to 1976 and so on. It is a pity that you did not bring all the 1976 and then 1978 together, but then again, I am talking too much. I leave it to you.

**Mr. Hanoman:** For ease of reference, we wanted to follow the same order that the witness located it and it is stapled together in one order that is the reason we are doing it like this.

**Mr. Chairman:** There is no reason why, having found them in that order, they should be further organized to go chronologically, 1976, 1977, 1978, you have us jumping about the place as it were.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Very well, Sir. Could I ask that that be tendered and marked as Exhibit SCJ 2I, please?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, it is so received and so marked.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Thank you. Could you turn your attention to the next voucher in your file which is dated the same date, 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1976?

**Mr. Chairman:** Even though it is clear, I think you should have in on record that there is no evidence here that the Defense Board approved this issue according to the protocol laid out by the Witness. The records should speak to that and his testimony should speak to it.

**Mr. Hanoman:** With regards to the previous ...

**Mr. Chairman:** Unless you do not think that it is significant.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Well, perhaps I can ask a general question at the end of the whole exercise on that issue, please, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** You are sure that you do not need a specific question in relation to each one? Do you appreciate how grave a departure it is from the norm and from the protocol established?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** I will try to ask questions now and then, please. In any of the vouchers you have brought, there is no evidence ... do you agree that there is no evidence that approval was granted by the Defense Board for the issuance of these weapons on the face of the record?

**Lt. Col. James:** I cannot say, Sir.

*10:52hrs*

**Mr. Hanoman:** No, we are speaking about the physical voucher that you are looking at. Is there anything recorded on any of the vouchers that you brought that definitely states that these weapons are being issued by authority of Defense Board?

**Lt. Col. James:** I did refer to, Sir, a number of the vouchers that had the authority for issue. On that basis, Sir, I would want to say seemingly, the procedures were followed in those instances, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Are you speaking of those instances where there is a reference number...

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** ...to a document?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** But you do not know which document it is, or issued by whom?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Let me ask you another question to put this at rest. Is there providence on this form for any note to be made when approval is given by the Defense Board? For instance, even now, when approval is given by the Defense Board; would such information be recorded on a voucher such as this; specifically that approval has been given by the Defense Board?

**Lt. Col. James:** The references should be reflected in the authority for issue, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Your knowledge of how the system works, once there is a reference number, you would assume that that is approval from the Defense Board?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** If I may be of help going forward. The question that you are asking is specific to each voucher. I think you should avoid getting a general question in relation to all the vouchers.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes, thank you, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** It is a specific question in relation to each voucher.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Some have a reference number, some do not.

**Mr. Chairman:** Some have reference numbers, some do not.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** But the way you asked the Witness the question, he would have to go back to each one. Every time you deal with a voucher, you ask that question.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Very well, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Provided that it is not arms being distributed within the Force.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Are you suggesting that I go through all the other forms before now, please, Sir? To clarify which have reference numbers and which do no?

**Mr. Chairman:** Counsel, I do not want to be trespassing on you. General discretion and so on, but...

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could you go back to the 15I that you mentioned, which deals with the 6.22 rifles, and so on?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.



## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** Do you agree that in this particular case there was not any correspondence that would have permitted such an issuance?

**Lt. Col. James:** In this particular case, Sir, for the voucher issued dated the 13.10.76, the authority for issue seems to have been appointed, Sir. The person who was acting as the SAFQM, Sir. There is no correspondence to support this issue, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** The lack of correspondence would suggest that there was no approval from the Defense Board?

**Lt. Col. James:** I cannot say from where I stand, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** But on the face of the voucher, there was no correspondence that authorised the issuance?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Very well. Could you please refer to the voucher dated the 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1976, that you referred to in your written statement at paragraph 15J? That deals with 15SLR weapons?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir. This seems to be a similar circumstance where the 15SLR rifles issued on the 13.10.76, the authority for issue was again the person that appointed the SAFQM, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** You said already that you do not know what the "SA" stood for, but you believe that the "FQM" would be Force Quarter Master?

**Lt. Col. James:** I suspect that this was the Force Quarter Master, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I see. In this particular case, also, on the face of this voucher, it does not appear to be any written correspondence authorising the issuance of these weapons?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** These weapons were issued to whom?

**Lt. Col. James:** The one for the 157.62 was issued to Comrade Skeete and the one 6.22 rifles and six carbines, and 6.303 rifles were again allegedly issued to a Comrade Skeete, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** And you see a signature the purports to be a signature of W. Skeete on that form?

**Lt. Col. James:** On both vouchers, that is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could I ask that this voucher be tendered and marked as SCJ2J, please?

**Mr. Chairman:** Received. The document is received and so marked.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could I avert your attention to the voucher that you referred to in your written statement at paragraph 15K, which deals with the issuance of G3 rifles?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir. This voucher is dated the... there seems to have been a change in the date... it seems to be 14.10.76 issued by the Force Quarter Master store allegedly to a Comrade Skeete. There is a signature purported to be W. Skeete. The authority for issue stated "Instructed by GSO one Chord" and at the bottom it is signed the SAFQM for the issuance of six G3 rifles on that date, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Again, there is no reference to any correspondence authorising this issuance?

**Lt. Col. James:** In this issue, Sir, I think the person who was in the capacity, the SAFQM, did write that he was instructed by the person in this appointment, the GSO1 COORD, to issue these weapons, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could you remind us what that stands for? "GSO1 COORD."

**Lt. Col. James:** General Staff Officer One, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** And what does the "COORD" mean?

**Lt. Col. James:** Well, he is the Coordinating Staff Officer at the Defense Headquarters now. I suspect that in those days it would have been the Force's Headquarters, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Counsel, I believe you are concerned with whether the Defense Board gave instructions for this to be issued outside of the Defense Force.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** Is there any indication in the face of this document that the Defense Board gave approval for the issuance of these weapons to Comrade Skeete?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, based on what I have seen on the voucher, I would say no, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could I ask that this last voucher be tendered and marked as SCJ2K?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, the document is received and so marked.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Now, besides these vouchers, you also obtained other unofficial documents with regards to other weapons. Is that correct?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Before you leave that, I just want to be clear Lt. Col., I had asked because I want to be sure that your answer was in relation to what vouchers, if it was in relation to all or some. Is it so that you carried out searches for supporting document which would have related to authority of issue from the defence board through the head of the army, and you were unable to find any for all of these vouchers. Am I correct? Or is it just some?

**Lt. Col. James:** You are correct with the issues to allegedly, either Comrade Skeete, Comrade Corbin, or the Ministry of National development, Ma'am. I also carried out searches with respect to all issues of weapons to external organisations, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Did you find – in relation to these documents that are in evidence - I just want to know- any supporting documentation apart from the vouchers which suggested or indicated that the defence board had approved?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay, thank you.

**Mr. Hanoman:** All of this information you gathered, as you have said before, because of an investigation in January, 2008, with regards to some weapons that were found....

**Lt. Col. James:** Mahaicony that is correct, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** ...at Mahaica.

**Lt. Col. James:** Mahaicony, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Oh, Sorry, at Mahaicony. Did you submit for the purposes of that investigation, a written report?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir. I did submit a written report to the then Chief-of-Staff, Rare Admiral Gary Best, it is dated 2008.01.11, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Do you bring that Report here with you?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** The Report is fairly short, please, Sir, and I am hoping that you would allow the Witness to read the report, because it is a summary of what we have just gone through. Please, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Before we go to that, Counsel, remember the evidence here in this case so far; the House of Israel got arms on more than one occasion from the GDF.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Very well, I am guided, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** It would appear that from the evidence given so far, that that is a matter of some significance.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Very well, I will deal with that now, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** It would appear on the evidence thus far.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** But you have not helped us as the Commission.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I will attempt to deal with that now, please, Sir. Now, Col. James, a document was tendered to us through a previous witness that purports to be a document that has issued guns to the House of Israel that was chargeable to the PNC. I now wish to show you that form, which has already been tendered as LJ-SBWPA 1. If you could look at it and...

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** *[Inaudible]*

**Mr. Hanoman:** LJ-SBWPA1.

Ms. Rahamat: At page 74.

**Mr. Hanoman:** It is at page 74. Could I please show that exhibit to the witness?

*[Court Marshall handed document over to Lt. Col. James]*

**Attorney for the People's National Congress (PNC) [Mr. Basil Williams]:** Mr. Chairman, could I have a look at that, too? Is that the McPherson document, what the chief of staff said it is not McPherson's signature? Is that the document?

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes.

**Mr. Williams:** Well, what purpose is it that you are showing it to him? He was not there in that era. The man who was in the era answered that question already about that document.

**Mr. Chairman:** The fact that he was not in that era is not relevant to what he can say. He was given a charge to go and investigate. He went back before his time. He went back even to the most recent period. There are a lot of questions he can answer with respect to the form; whether it is one that he has seen in the course of his research; whether it is an unusual form and stands out as a kind of oddity. There are a lot of questions he can answer.

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If that was in the mind of your Counsel, I have no objection.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Well, it is an exhibit in the case. Have you come across that form before during your investigations?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir, I have seen this form before.

**Mr. Chairman:** What does it purport to say on the surface of it? What does the form say?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, what I know, is that this form was previously used by – in those days- the Ordinance Battalion, which is now...

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Ordinance?

**Lt. Col. James:** Ordinance, which is now changed to the 5 Service and Support Battalion, Sir. It was a form used to submit to the finance department, charges for officers and soldiers who would have lost kit and equipment.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** *[Inaudible]*

**Lt. Col. James:** Ma'am?

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Could you just pause?

**Lt. Col. James:** Okay, Ma'am. It was sent from the ordinance in those days, now 5 Service Support Battalion, to the finance department for surcharge of Officers and other Ranks who had lost kit, and equipment, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** But on the surface of the form, it seems to be playing a different role today.

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Well, tell us what roll.

**Lt. Col. James:** If I can analyse the form, from top to bottom...

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, spend a minute...

*11:07hrs*

**Lt. Col. James:** The date seems to be the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1979, to open. In Army procedures, you would not have an open date, Sir. Again as I told you, this is not the form that will be used for the issuance of the articles that is reflected here. The unit tends to be the Intelligence Unit; we would not as far as I know, the Intelligence Unit would not be involved in issuing...

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, but you are speaking in euphemism, you said it does not appears to be the form used for the issuance of articles. What articles you are referring to?

**Lt. Col. James:** Well the articles that are listed here, Sir, are 19 G3 Rifles serviceable, 19 G3 Bayonet Sniper, 1,500 rounds, 7.62 ammunitions, 10 Bronwyn Pistols, I am not certain of the

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

exact figure, it seems to be 5.00... I am not certain, the next two figures seem to be ...1.0, 9 mm long, last item Sir. As I said Sir, the Military would normally use this form for the surcharge for kit and equipment. It has 9142 Major McPherson. Sir, as far as I am familiar, if it refers to then Major McPherson, his number was 9129. It has chargeable to PNC. Again Sir, as I did tell you the form will refer to the payment for lost kit and equipment.

**Mr. Hanoman:** If you were to loose guns...

**Lt. Col. James:** I am not finished, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Sorry.

**Lt. Col. James:** And it has a date 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1979 Thomas Lands and a signature purported to be G. McPherson and this signature is not the then Major or Colonel G. McPherson, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** In a situation where a Soldier was to loose guns issued to him, would a form like this be filled out?

**Lt. Col. James:** No Sir. If a Soldier was to loose gun, he would be Court Marshalled, Sir, and this form would have no relevance; it will be a judicial process, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** When you say it is used for the issuance where a Soldier looses equipment, what equipment are you referring to?

**Lt. Col. James:** The kit and equipment I am talking about for example, clothing and the equipment could be a compass, nestings, a spade, an axe, etcetera not weapons.

**Mr. Chairman:** Now that form relates to the request for arms by users outside of the Defense Force or it related to the issuance of arms?

**Lt. Col. James:** This form, Sir, the form that I was just showing you?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Lt. Col. James:** This form does not relate to arms and ammunitions, if you look at the form, you will see it is an accounts form.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** I am not talking about what it should; the purpose it should play if everything is going normally, what is the purpose it is played there?

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** What does it purporting to do?

**Lt. Col. James:** This form purports to show the issuance of weapons and ammunitions from, it seems to be the House of Israel to a PNC account man.

**Mr. Chairman:** Have you ever come across that from being used for that purpose anywhere in your research?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Except on this occasion?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Please continue Counsel. Do not let me to ask all the questions, I am only the Commission's Chairman, you ask the questions, you lead the...

**Mr. Hanoman:** I have no further question to ask on this form.

**Mr. Chairman:** So this turns out to be an exception in terms of the role it purported to play?

**Lt. Col. James:** This form, Sir?

**Mr. Chairman:** The substance is what is in it that is not a form that should properly be used...

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** ...for the issuance of arms and ammunition. You are making my work too hard, come clearly.

**Lt. Col. James:** My apology, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** In other words, it is a deviation from the norm and stand at procedures.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.



## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** That is what it would represent if it was accurate.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Let me ask you something. The signature of Store, is it “Accounts Officer” at the bottom. Do you see that? Signed signature of Store...

**Lt. Col. James:** The signature and this is from my own...

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** No, the designation there is a provision...

**Lt. Col. James:** This signature of the store “AC” is “Accounting Officer”.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Right, so there so there is a provision for that signature there?

**Lt. Col. James:** On the form.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And there is actually writing in that section?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Are you able to recognise either the name it purports to be or the signature it purports to be?

**Lt. Col. James:** This signature seems to me and I could be very wrong something “R...” It seems to be Beckles for Head, it looks like PLSS.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Are you familiar with such an acronym or abbreviation in the Army?

**Lt. Col. James:** No.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** But on the face of this form it appears to be arms request by the PNC, but for the House of Israel. Had it not appeared to be so on the face of the form?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is Correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Counsel, why do you not take care of the witness?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** I was momentarily distracted, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Have you ever come across any form in which a request was similarly made by the PNC to the Defense Force for arms that was then issued to the House of Israel?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** This is the first time?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Now, under the 10 Browyn Pistols there is another amount of weapons of which I am not clear, under the Browyn Pistols, is 500.

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, that is ammunition, the 500 refers to 9 mm long, the normal terminology would 9 mm standard, Sir, because there are standard and there are... ammunition.

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not think we are talking about one of the same thing, 9 mm long?

**Lt. Col. James:** 9 mm long.

**Mr. Chairman:** What is that?

**Lt. Col. James:** We would not refer to long we would say standard, Sir, this is standard 9mm ammunition as opposed, for example, to 9 mm short which is a shorter ammunition.

**Mr. Chairman:** But that has to do with the nature of the weapon?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir, this is purely ammunition, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay, but under quantity there is a reference there to 500?

**Lt. Col. James:** It seems to be 500, this seems to be RD which is short for round.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay, that is why I was concern about quantity.

**Lt. Col. James:** 500 Sir, 9 mm long, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** And two spaces above that is 1,500.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** 1,500 rounds, 7.62 ammunition.

**Mr. Chairman:** And 19... is that G3 Bayonet?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, it is 19 G3 Bayonet, but it is also referred to as sniper.

**Mr. Chairman:** And for the man outside the Army, what does that mean?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, we do not have Sniper Bayontt. We have G3 Bayonet.

**Mr. Chairman:** But that is what is written there.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is what is written there.

**Mr. Chairman:** But the sniper seems to be in brackets after. "G3 Bayonet (Sniper)."

**Lt. Col. James:** We have G3 Sniper rifle, but we have never had sniper Bayonet, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** That is a kind of miss-description then?

**Lt. Col. James:** Based on the form, it would seem so, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** It is a class of weapon which the army does not recognise.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** What about the first one, 19 G3 riffles serviceable?

**Lt. Col. James:** It just means that the weapon is working...

**Mr. Chairman:** Now, if you look at the far side of that form, there is a serial number 7 what does that relate to?

**Lt. Col. James:** I cannot say, Sir. I am not certain, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Do you recognise the signature of the Commanding Officer?

**Lt. Col. James:** No Sir, it seems to be a G. McPherson but that is not McPherson signature, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** Do you found this document among the records of the GDF?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** I remember reading somewhere that a Former Minister of the PNC Government denounced this document as a forgery or falsity, some press release to the public, I remember reading somewhere, I cannot remember, I try to recall as you were speaking.

**Lt. Col. James:** I do not know, Sir, what I know is that this is not Colonel McPherson's signature, the deceased Colonel McPherson's signature; I am familiar with his signature, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Officer, from what you are saying, the document both in form and content is not in keeping with Army procedures and issuance of weapons that are in the Army. Is that what you are saying? The document, on the face of it?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Now, this came to us through the Police Force, the Special Branch of the Police Force. Is there, during your searches did you ever come up with any inquiries made of the Army in relation to this document, historically, that is before the Commission started was it brought to the Army's attention for example by the police were there searches or inquiries carried out pursuant to any such inquiries?

**Lt. Col. James:** In my research, I have never seen a file indicating that there was an investigation which was shared between the Guyana Police Force and the Guyana Defense Force with respect to this matter.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And I believe, tell me if you can confirm that in 1979 there would have been collaboration and cooperation between the Guyana Police Force and the Guyana Defense Force. There was some joint services organisation?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** If weapons such as these were issued to or by a body such as the House of Israel, that would have been a matter of national security concern, would it not?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And that could have been a matter which could have properly fallen within the remit of the Joint Services?

**Lt. Col. James:** The Joint Services.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** It would have properly fallen within the remit of the Joint Services?

**Lt. Col. James:** I would say, yes.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Is McPherson what purports to be McPherson's Signature, purports. You do not recognise it as is but it seems to be an attempt of his signature. I do not think your testimony can go further than that. But do you recognise any other signature there on that document?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir. As I did say there is a signature that seems to be a P. Beckles, but I am not so certain.

**Mr. Chairman:** Do you know him to be a member of the Army at that time?

**Lt. Col. James:** No Sir, I do not know a P. Beckles to be anyone in the appointment to be finance related, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Now, if indeed these weapons came into the hands of the House of Israel that would have been a security issue as you have indicated, but what became with the PNC because on the document it is written total chargeable to a PNC. What do you understand that to be?

*11:22hrs*

**Lt. Col. James:** Well based on what is written on the document Sir, they propose that the PNC had a weapons account with the Guyana Defence Force. I do not think that is accurate, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** But did you investigate it?

**Lt. Col. James:** I did investigate, Sir. I did research at the 5 Service Support Battalion and all the records and there was no indication of such an account or record, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** No indication. Do you recognise the signature of the Store Officer that appears to be Beckles?

**Lt. Col. James:** Based on my observation of the document, that seems to be the signature, but I am not familiar with it, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** You never inquired whether there was a Beckles in that capacity at the time?

**Lt. Col. James:** I did not investigate that, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Is it too late to inquire?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, I can make further inquiries, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Very well.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Mr. Chairman, before the Witness is invited to refer to that report, he had made a comment in his evidence which I wanted to with your permission inquire into, the all the vouchers you have referred to in your evidence and which have become exhibits in this matter refer to the issuance of arms and you refer to accessories.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** In the course of your evidence, you noted that they did not relate to the issuance of ammunition. Remember you said that would be different.

**Lt. Col. James:** I just want to...

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** To double check?

**Lt. Col. James:** Double check before I answer you.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Yes, but you certainly said it in relation to at least one of the forms and I took it to apply to all.

**Lt. Col. James:** There is one issue of ammunition, Madam.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Pardon me?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** There is one issue of ammunition.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay. Could you remind us which one it is please?

**Mr. Hanoman:** It is on the voucher dated 18-8-76 with respect to the seven Smith and Wesson pistols. I do not know what is your reference, Sir, but on the bottom of those issues you have 177 nine millimeter ball ammunition, Madam.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay.

**Mr. Jairam:** That is SCJ 2M.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Right I have it here. Thank you. So it would not be improper if ammunitions were issued at the time when the other fire-arms were issued to have noted it on the same form. It would have been appropriate?

**Lt. Col. James:** No Madam. That is improper Madam.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** You should have a separate form for that?

**Lt. Col. James:** it should be issued separately on a separate voucher, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** That is what I understood it to be saying earlier, so this is a bit of irregularity that you just pointed out to us.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Madam.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I see. If the 'rmy is issuing ammunition to external bodies, there should be a proper record of this as well?

**Lt. Col. James:** Well there should be the same procedure, the approval from the Defence Board to the Chief-of-Staff to the accounting unit and the ammunition issued on a separate voucher and accounted by the issuing unit, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And you did not see any additional forms relating to the issue of ammunition to external forces during this same period?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** No Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Tell me something, in Guyana, the bodies that are entitled to have in their possession and/or to issue ammunition legally are the Army and the Police?

**Lt. Col. James:** Well the Army and the Police in the main and also I say persons who are authorised to own, private citizens who are authorised to own and possess arms and ammunition, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And they would import the ammunition? You have an agency that imports it for private citizens who are licensed holders?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes Ma'am and they can make purchases from those private agencies also, private citizens.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay, but you would have to have a permit to do so?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** So these arms that were issued, as it relates to the exhibits that we have apart from the one voucher which you referred to which we see that some ammunition was also issued, you would not be able to say whether ammunition was sourced for these arms and/or the source of any such ammunition?

**Lt. Col. James:** No Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Just want to round off an issue that we had explored, looking back at this form, the very one that is before us now, which says Total Chargeable to PNC and you said you interpret that to mean that on the surface that seem to suggest that the PNC had an account and that would be for arms and ammunition?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is what is on the face of what...



## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** That is what the face of that would suggest.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Now, would that not fall in the same category as if these arms went to the House of Israel, would that not be a serious security issue?

**Lt. Col. James:** I said before yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** You said it in relation to the House of Israel but in relation to the PNC would that have raised a serious security issue if indeed true?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I am sorry Mr. Chairman; there is one other question I want to note. This document which is from the Criminal Investigations Department (CID), the Special Branch files is dated the 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1979, you noticed that?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And on your evidence given in this proceeding several arms were issued in 1979 if you look at your 15B, 15C, 15D, 15X, 15Y and 15Z, those were related to arms issued in 1979 as well?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mr. Chairman:** And what to outside organisations?

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** To outside or external organisations, thank you Mr. Chairman. And in relation to those I have just highlighted A, B, C, D, X, Y and Z, the standard forms were used.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** As contrasted to the document we have from the Special Branch file where you say this is not the form used for the issuance of weapons to external bodies?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I just wanted to be clear on that.

**Mr. Chairman:** Now, for the benefit of the public, what is the difference between arms and ammunition?

**Lt. Col. James:** Okay Sir, Arms relate to any type of weapon, it can be small caliber like a pistol, it can be large caliber machine guns, several categories of machine guns like light, medium, heavy and it can be high trajectory weapons like cannons, anti-aircraft weapons, etcetera, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** The anti-aircraft weapons would be a variant of what you call the large weapons?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you. I think that relates to arms what you just told us relate to the different categories of arms, but what about ammunition?

**Lt. Col. James:** Again Sir, the ammunition really is by caliber, you would have small arms ammunition and this is for use by pistols and rifles and you can have large caliber ammunition for example anti-tank weapons, anti-aircraft weapons and those are the categories of ammunition we would have in the inventory of the Guyana Defence Force, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Colonel West, when last...sorry...

**Lt. Col. James:** You said Colonel West, I am not Colonel West.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Colonel James, sorry, you had introduced this written Report that you had prepared for the purposes of that investigation and with the permission of the...

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** Counsel, I had proposed, I am seeing 11:30hrs now, I had proposed that we take the morning break now.

**Mr. Hanoman:** As it pleases you, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, I think Lieutenant Colonel James has been testifying now for a good two hours and I think he too might be in need of a break so we will resume at noon.

**Mr. Hanoman:** At noon, thank you Sir.

**Hearing suspended at 11:33hrs**

**Hearing resumed at 12:28hrs**

**Mr. Chairman:** We apologise for a late start, but we had some emergency house-keeping matters which we dealt with in the break, but we need to resume in a minute or two, Commission Counsel are you ready? Please proceed Counsel.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Colonel James, just before the break you spoke about a written Report that you had prepared that led to all these investigations and vouchers coming to your attention. Did you bring that original Report with you?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** And the report is signed by you?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** With permission of you Mr. Chairman, it is a very short Report and I would wish for the Witness to read from this Report so that everyone can get an idea of what it is about please. Could you read from the report starting from the heading and the date?

**Mr. Chairman:** You have any concerns about the disclosure?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes Sir, with the permission of the Commission, Sir, I just wish to do a correction for paragraph four D, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Four what?

**Lt. Col. James:** Four D, Ma'am.

**Mr. Hanoman:** What is the correction please?

**Lt. Col. James:** The correction, Sir, is issued to Comrade Skeete.

**Mr. Hanoman:** So instead of...

**Lt. Col. James:** Taking out Minister R. Corbin and inserting Comrade Skeete and changing the date to 1978-07-06 and nine Smith and Wesson pistols, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Now, paragraph four...

**Lt. Col. James:** Four D, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** You are seeking permission at paragraph four D.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** To make a few corrections?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Now, what is the correction? Let us take them one by one. Four D.

**Lt. Col. James:** It is issued to; I am deleting Minister R. Corbin, Sir, and inserting Comrade Skeete.

**Mr. Chairman:** Rather than Minister R. Corbin, to Comrade Skeete

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

*12:32hrs*

**Mr. Chairman:** From the Ministry of National Development?

**Lt. Col. James:** The second correction, Sir, is deleting 1976/05/19...

**Mr. Chairman:** Let us go on it again at it, methodically, you just corrected 4 D...

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** No. The first line I have corrected, Sir, I am going to the second line. I am deleting 1976/05/19, 50 x M10 Pistols, Sir...

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, I am with you.

**Lt. Col. James:** ...and I am inserting 1978/07/06, 9 x Smith and Wesson pistols, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** Nine?

**Lt. Col. James:** Nine Smith and Wesson pistols, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Do you want now to turn to C or do you not have any corrections to C?

**Lt. Col. James:** No Sir. At paragraph seven, line four, Sir... It is at paragraphs four, five and six, Sir. Those are the corrections, Sir.

**Mr. Williams:** Just a second. Paragraph seven, fourth line, you said?

**Lt. Col. James:** Paragraph seven, line four, Sir. At paragraphs four, five, I am just correcting, I think it is B there ...

**Mr. Williams:** I have it corrected here as six.

**Lt. Col. James:** ...four, five and six, Sir ...

**Mr. Chairman:** It was corrected already.

**Lt. Col. James:** Commissioners, if I can begin, "Commodore J. R. Bess, MSM, Chief-of-Staff 080111 recovery of weapons at Mahaicony, East Coast Demerara, on Wednesday 2008/01/09, property of the Guyana Defense Force.

**Mr. Chairman:** I think you are speaking a little too quickly.

**Lt. Col. James:** Sorry, Sir. I am reading now, Sir, under "General". "On Wednesday 08/01/09 at approximately..."

**Mr. Hanoman:** Let us just be clear on that date please. Would that be the 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2009?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, this is the 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2008, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** Very well.

**Lt. Col. James:** We put the year in front, the month and then the day, Sir. “On Wednesday 2008/01/09 at approximately 13:30hrs, three weapons, a M72 gun serial number 27589, Beretta submachine gun, serial number 20125, and a Ducktown Tn 9mm submachine gun, serial number 940024066, were recovered by the Police after a shoot-out with criminal elements in the Mahaicony Creek area. Based on the make and serial numbers of the M72 gun and Beretta 9mm submachine gun recovered and given similar holdings by the Guyana Defense Force, a check of the Guyana Defense Force’s inventory was done to ascertain whether they were ours. A check of the weapon list of weapons issued to external agencies by the G 2 Branch showed the following: (a) Beretta submachine gun, serial number 20125, also was on the Guyana Defense Forces’ inventory and issued to that same agency.”

**Mr. Hanoman:** Which agency are you referring to here?

**Lt. Col. James:** The agency would be at the voucher, Sir, Ministry of National Development.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Just to sum it up, the Beretta submachine gun that was found at Mahaicony had in fact been issued by the GDF to the Ministry of National Development?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Would you be able to point us to the actual voucher that refers to that particular gun?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you talking about the Beretta submachine?

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes, please.

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Please help him.

*[Court Marshall handed over document to Witness]*

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** The serial number is 20125 according to him.

**Mr. Jairam:** Go to SCJ/2E.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I think this would be on the long form.

**Lt. Col. James:** It is on the long form...

**Mr. Jairam:** Yes.

**Lt. Col. James:** ...it is in the last line, the third entry.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you.

**Mr. Hanoman:** According to the Voucher, that particular Beretta submachine gun was issued on the 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1976 to Comrade Skeet, is that correct?

**Lt. Col. James:** Based on the original Voucher, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Counsel, these long papers that you referred to were not specifically referred to this morning, am I correct?

**Mr. Hanoman:** No, this was tendered and marked as SCJ/2E.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Right, because this is the coordination we need to make.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Thank you. I think we can move on to the second item on paragraph three of your report?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir. M72 gun, serial number 27589, was on the Guyana Defense Forces' inventory and issued to the Ministry of National Development and I have C Flag 'A', Side Flag 2.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could you refer to the voucher that speaks to that speaks to that M72 serial number 27589? I am instructed that it has already been tendered as SCJ/2D.

**Mr. Chairman:** Counsel, are you sure we are not repeating ourselves by note of testimony given this morning?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** This is dated the 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1979, Sir. It is the second issue of weapons on that voucher, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** According to that voucher, that particular M72 gun was issued to whom?

**Lt. Col. James:** This was issued to Comrade Skeet, Ministry of National Development.

**Mr. Hanoman:** It was issued when, according to the voucher?

**Lt. Col. James:** This was the 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1979, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** 1979?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Now, because of your investigation, would it be correct for me to suggest that these guns that have been issued to Comrade Skeet had never been returned to the Army at any point?

**Lt. Col. James:** Among others, yes, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Among others?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Attorney for Dr. Patricia Rodney, Asha Rodney, Shaka Rodney and Kanini Rodney [Mr. Andrew Pilgrim, Q.C.]:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Hanoman:** I think the Witness had said “these too, among others, had never been returned”.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Paragraph eight covers it.

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not know how fair it is that we formulate it that it was issued to Comrade Skeet because, though he was the agent, it was really issued to the Ministry of National Development. He was just an agent there, a servant.



## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes, so you had earlier said, not today but before, that in your opinion it was not issued to the individual when Skeet's name was mentioned but it was issued to the Ministry of National Development, both of those guns.

**Lt. Col. James:** Based on the original vouchers I had, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** That is correct?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Do you agree that that is very abnormal for guns to be issued by the Army to an external organisation and for it to show up, as it showed up, many years after?

**Lt. Col. James:** Not necessarily to an external organisation because we would have issued, as I did mentioned before, to joint services organisation, Sir, but in this instance this was a bit of an anomaly based on my own research and investigations, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Perhaps, I should ask another question at this stage. In a situation where guns are issued by the GDF to an external organisation, are these guns permanently given to that organization or is it normal for those guns to be on loan and later returned to the GDF?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, to the best of my knowledge, again based on the research, some of the issues would have been permanent because there were to, I would say, Joint Services organisations such as the Police Force, the Guyana Prison Service, the Guyana National Service and the Guyana Peoples' Militia, however, based on a number of circumstances the Guyana National Service was disbanded, the Guyana Peoples' Militia was amalgamated into the Second Inventory Battalion and those weapons should have been returned to the Guyana Defense Force. With respect to issues to the Guyana Police Force some were permanent, as far as I know, and some were on loan, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Is there any evidence that those weapons that were loan were ever returned to the Lender?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, I would have done a comprehensive audit of all the weapons which were loaned to both the Ministry of National Development, the person named as R. Corbin or Robert

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

Corbin, issued of weapons to several external organizations including the Guyana Police Force, Guyana National Service, Guyana Prison Service, the Customs Anti-Narcotic Unit, Guymine Constabulary, among others and a number of weapons have not been returned based on the information which suggested that they were issued, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** According to your records, any weapons that were on loan, were any of them ever returned to the lender?

**Lt. Col. James:** I have a record reflecting return of weapons loaned to the Guyana Prison Service, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Prison Service?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir. I also have on record some weapons which were issued to, again, Ministry of National Development, Comrade Skeete and again the Robert or R. Corbin were returned but again...

**Mr. Williams:** Mr. Chairman, just at this point, on paragraph 4 C you have Minister Robert Corbin, is that on the document you are talking about, the voucher, Minister R. Corbin?

**Lt. Col. James:** Which one is that, Sir?

**Mr. Williams:** 4 C. Paragraph 4 C, front page of your report.

**Lt. Col. James:** Let me just check please, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** The very bottom, "issued to the Minister R. Corbin".

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** What was is the question?

**Mr. Williams:** If the voucher has "Minister".

**Lt. Col. James:** It is my mistake. It had "Comrade R. Corbin, National Development". It is my mistake, Sir.

**Mr. Williams:** So you need to delete "Minister".

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** The voucher had Comrade R. Corbin, National Development and that is my mistake, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Delete “Minister” and substitute “Comrade”.

**Mr. Chairman:** Was “Comrade” the “Minister” at that time?

**Lt. Col. James:** I would say, yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Very well.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Before you make that correction, which Voucher are you looking at to make that correction, please?

**Lt. Col. James:** The voucher with 9 Smith and Wesson, 9mm pistols.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Can I ask you to look at a different voucher that deals with 7 Smith and Wesson pistols which is tendered and marked SCJ/2F?

*12:47hrs*

**Lt. Col. James:** This voucher that you refer to, Sir, is issued to a Comrade R. Corbin, P.S, OPM, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** So, the correction you are seeking to make... Do you agree that that voucher refers to that paragraph 4 C there? Just double check and make sure.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir, this one refers to “Comrade R. Corbin, P.S, Office of the Prime Minister”.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes, so, the correction should be “P.S, OPM”, instead of “Minister”?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** “Comrade R. Corbin P.S, OPM”. You had earlier said it is either Parliamentary Secretary or Permanent Secretary.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** Of the Office of the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Chairman:** They are two different offices so we cannot confuse them. A Parliamentary Secretary is different from a Permanent Secretary.

**Mr. Hanoman:** The witness is unaware of which one is the...

**Lt. Col. James:** I said so earlier in my testimony, Sir, that I am not certain exactly what it meant.

**Mr. Chairman:** Perhaps at the appropriate time, you will introduce the evidence by way of some record...

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** ...from official documents...

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes, Sir, we intend to do that.

**Mr. Chairman:** ...of who held what position at what time.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes, Sir, there are documents from Parliament that has that information contained in it. Could I refer you to paragraph 4 of your report...?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** ...by way of continuation.

**Lt. Col. James:** "Further checks revealed the following issues to external agencies and weapons returned to the GDF as follows:

- (a) Issued to the Ministry of National Development in 1979/08/10, 50 x M10 pistols, 20 x Beretta submachine guns, 15 x M70 Rifles and 5 x M72 Rifles."

**Mr. Hanoman:** And this information is contained in voucher...

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** SCJ/2B, 2C and 2D.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes, do you agree with that? That this information that you have referred to here is in SCJ/2A, B, C and D?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** Lt Col., you said “returned to the GDF”, do we have a date when they were returned? Do your records reveal that?

**Lt. Col. James:** I do not have a date when they were returned, Sir. I would have a supplementary document which indicates that they were returned and physical checks reveal that those weapons are back in the Guyana Defense Force’s inventory, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** In the same way that you have an issued voucher, when you refer to the supplementary document, is it a standard document issued by the Army?

**Lt. Col. James:** The supplementary documents I have referred to, Ma’am, was the Special Storage Register which documents I would say the life of any weapon in the Guyana Defense Force, when it came into service and where it was issued to.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** So, it would have the date when it was returned but you have not brought that date for us.

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Ma’am, the Special Stores Register did not reflect any date.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** The date.

**Lt. Col. James:** It just reflected return...

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Okay.

**Lt. Col. James:** ...or the location of the weapon, Ma’am.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could you...

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Sorry, does this Register have dates on it, completed when endorsements are made?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** The Special Storage Register that I checked, Ma'am, did not have that information. It just had "returned" or where the weapon was located and it would say when the inventory was done.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** No, that is what I am asking you. Not the date of the return but would it have any date which would indicate when the entry was made?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** So, this is just a Register with no dates in it.

**Lt. Col. James:** With no dates just the information as to the location of the weapon.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** So you would not know if this entry was made in 1978, 1980, 1990, there is nothing in the Register to tell you when the entry is made in the Register?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I see.

**Mr. Hanoman:** But is it not also correct that in the very Register that you speak about there is a provision for a date to be entered in that Register?

**Lt. Col. James:** I would say, Sir, that there is not a provision for the date in the Register, however, I would say that normal procedure would suggest that the date, when it was returned, should be included.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Sir, do you have an extract from the Register here?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I personally would like to see it.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I am hoping to conclude this part and then tender this...

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Yes, I am just indicating.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Thank you. Could we move to paragraph 4C please?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** Lt. Col., just help me for a moment. This Special Stores Register, does it have the record of when a weapon came into the use of the Defense Force?

**Lt. Col. James:** It should have it, Sir, but the documents that I retrieved did not have it.

**Mr. Chairman:** If lent out to whom, is there such a record too?

**Lt. Col. James:** If I can say, Sir, I just want to correct what I am saying.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Lt. Col. James:** I am saying the Special Stores Register which I examined, did not have that information, however, there is another document or a ledger, the AB – Alpha Bravo – 561 which should document when the weapon came into the Guyana Defense Force’s Inventory, Sir. I do not have a copy of that document, Sir, but it is available.

**Mr. Jairam:** You need to get it for us, please.

**Lt. Col. James:** Sorry?

**Mr. Jairam:** You need to get it for us, please.

**Lt. Col. James:** Very well, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Where would there be a record of if the weapons were lent out to whom or to which organization? Is there such a record in which that would be found?

**Lt. Col. James:** As I mentioned, Sir, you will find the records in the issue vouchers at the Issuing Unit of the Issuing, the Five Service Support Battalion and the vouchers... You would also find that information in the Special Source Register maintained by the Five Service and Support Battalion, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** To be fair to the witness, we do have copies of the Special Stores Register that we can refer to again later.

**Mr. Chairman:** Where would you find a record of when returned, if returned?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, as I did indicate, ‘when returned’ should be in the Special Stores Register, this document, but I did indicate to you that that information is deficient from the records.

**Mr. Chairman:** Now, that is assuming that the system is working properly.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** That is always the assumption.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** There is evidence that a lot of those documents that were on loan, a lot of those weapons, were never returned.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir. May I continue, Sir? I am not certain which... “(b) issued to the Ministry of National Development in 1976/05/19, 4 x HK11 guns, 8 x G3 rifles, 4 x general purpose machine guns, 20 x Beretta submachine guns and 15 x SLR rifles. (c) issued to Minister R. Corbin on 1976/05/18, 7 x Smith and Wesson 9mm pistols...”

**Mr. Jairam:** But you had corrected that to read “issued to Comrade R. Corbin, PS OPM”.

**Lt. Col. James:** No, that is on the next page. That is (d), Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** No, I am talking about (c).

**Mr. Williams:** You corrected it at (c) too; I raised it. You had corrected it at (c) too.

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, that is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Williams:** And you have the voucher.

**Mr. Hanoman:** What you are reading at (c) is reflected in the voucher SCJ/2F, is that correct? It speaks to seven Smith and Wesson 9mm pistols. Does that voucher speak to that?

**Lt. Col. James:** This voucher is... I am not certain the designation of the exhibit.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I understand.



## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** This is in relation to seven Smith and Wesson pistols, issued to Comrade R. Corbin on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1976.

**Mr. Hanoman:** So that voucher dated 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1976 relates to what you have at letter (c)?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** For the purposes of the record that voucher have been tendered and has been identified as SCJ/2F. Could we proceed to sub-letter (d), please?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, “issued to Comrade Skeete, Ministry of National Development on 1978/07/06, 59 x Smith and Wesson pistols.

**Mr. Hanoman:** That is reflected in voucher SCJ/2H, is that correct? This is the voucher dated the...

**Lt. Col. James:** This is the voucher dated...

**Mr. Hanoman:** Do you see the date is 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1978 that speaks about 50 9mm Browning pistols?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, I changed that, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** I do not think he is following.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Can we go back to your statement, please, Colonel James? If you look at 15 (h) of your statement...

**Lt. Col. James:** 15...

**Mr. Hanoman:** ...(h)... No. Not the report. Your witness statement, sorry. Do you see that in 15(h) of your witness statement, you speak about 50 9mm Browning pistols?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** And this is the same 50...

**Mr. Williams:** He changed that already this morning.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** No, what I am concerned to know is whether the changed were accurately done. What you have in paragraph (d) of your report is reflected in which voucher?

**Lt. Col. James:** This is reflected in the voucher dated 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1978 which refers to 50 Browning pistols to Comrade Skeete for National Development.

**Mr. Hanoman:** So what would you like for paragraph D... How would you like for that to be read?

**Lt. Col. James:** Well I suspect, Sir, there was an omission of the nine Smith and Wesson pistols in this report. There was an omission of the nine Smith and Wesson pistols issued to Comrade Skeete but the 50 M10 pistols, as reflected in the voucher, was also issued to Comrade S. Skeete so there should be an addition to my report, Sir, of August 2008 to reflect that.

**Mr. Chairman:** And that total number issued to Comrade Skeete of the Ministry would have been what?

*13:03hrs*

**Lt. Col. James:** It would be 50....

**Mr. Chairman:** Plus nine?

**Lt. Col. James:** 50 M10 pistols plus nine Smith and Wesson pistols.

*[Commissioners were in discussion]*

**Lt. Col. James:** If I can go to the dates, Ma'am...

**Mr. Hanoman:** This issuance was issued on what date?

**Lt. Col. James:** The 50 nine MM Browning pistols.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Right.

**Lt. Col. James:** Were on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1978.

**Mr. Hanoman:** And it was to Comrade Skeete for National Development?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** For National Development, yes, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Okay.

**Mr. Jairam:** But Lt. Col., I am a bit confused. This issue and receipt voucher, which we have received into evidence as SCJ 2H, speaks about Browning pistols nine mm model ten. Your written report at paragraph four D, as you have corrected, would now read, "Issued to Comrade Skeete, Ministry of National Development on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1978 nine mm Smith and Wesson."

**Lt. Col. James:** Smith and Wesson pistols, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** But is Smith and Wesson not a different weapon from Browning?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir, but the Smith and Wesson pistols were issued on the voucher dated 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1976, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** I see, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1976.

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Which is what...

**Mr. Williams:** So you are talking about two separate vouchers?

**Lt. Col. James:** Two separate issues, Sir.

**Mr. Williams:** So Browning is on one voucher...

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Williams:** And the nine mm...

**Lt. Col. James:** Is on another voucher.

**Mr. Williams:** Of course, because they have separate dates.

**Mr. Chairman:** Let us get it right.

**Lt. Col. James:** Okay, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** The nine Smith and Wesson, were they issued in April 1978, or on the 6<sup>th</sup> July?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir, that was issued separate, Sir. That was issued on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1976...

**Mr. Jairam:** So, your original date was correct?

**Lt. Col. James:** The original date was correct, Sir.

**Lt. Col. James:** The typed date was correct?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And that is what Exhibit, Counsel?

**Mr. Hanoman:** G, please.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** SCJ 2G?

**Mr. Hanoman:** 2G, yes, please.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Thank you. So, paragraph four relates to two vouchers, which are Exhibits SCJ 2G and SCJ 2H.

**Mr. Jairam:** No, Counsel, I think that is wrong, you know? It is SCJ 2E. Is it this long one you are talking about?

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir, this is the short...

**Mr. Jairam:** But I am only seeing one dated 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1976. The 2J is the 13<sup>th</sup> October; it looks like 1976.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I think you may have written J but it is G that is being referred to, please, Mr. Commissioner. Okay, there is some confusion, please Witness, just clarify paragraph four D; what voucher should we be looking at, that relates to that.

**Lt. Col. James:** You should be looking at two vouchers, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Two vouchers.

**Lt. Col. James:** The first voucher is the issue of 50 nine millimetre Browning model ten pistols to Comrade Skeete for National Development. This date would have been 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1978, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** I think we have already corrected the date for the 6<sup>th</sup> July.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** So, for the purposes of our marking, that reference should be to Exhibit number SCJ 2H.

**Mr. Jairam:** No.

**Mr Williams:** That one has to be now independently tendered because he is referring to two separate dates under D and only one had come up before so if he is introducing the other one that has to be tendered separately now. That has to be another Exhibit.

**Mr Chairman:** Counsel, guide us if you can.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Well I will try. I think both had already been tendered as G and H. SCJ 2G and SCJ 2H.

**Mr. Jairam:** Right.

**Lt. Col. James:** And the second voucher, Sir, refers to an issue of nine Smith and Wesson pistols on the 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1976 to a Comrade R. Corbin, National Development, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And that is SCJ 2G?

**Mr. Jairam:** Yes.

**Mr. Hanoman:** That is SCJ 2G. The information that you have on your report at paragraph four D, are you saying that it is contained in two separate vouchers?

**Lt. Col. James:** I might have had amalgamated it. I will just have to look at the vouchers.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Please look at it and so we could clarify what should be in paragraph four D after you refer to...

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** Alright if I can go to the vouchers for 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1976, you have an amalgamation of vouchers or more than one voucher. On the first voucher would have 6 .22 rifle 6 .30 carbines and 6 .303 rifles.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Hold on we are dealing with D still you know Colonel James we are not going on to E yet. We just want to settle on what should be in paragraph four D. You have mentioned already about 50 Browning pistols right?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** And you have seen that in the voucher that we have recorded as SCJ 2H. The voucher dealing with the Browning pistols given to Comrade Skeete dated 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1978 okay?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** There is another voucher just before that one dated the 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1976 that refers to nine Smith and Wesson nine millimetre pistols. Did you include that in your Report?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is what I am saying there was an omission, I did not include that in my Report.

**Mr. Hanoman:** So it was an omission?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is what I said Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Do you wish to now include it in your report?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** So if we can get...

**Mr. Chairman:** But Mr. Williams had earlier suggested to you no need to have or leave which you asked us to grant to put the document into evidence.

**Mr. Hanoman:** We have tendered this voucher already, but he had omitted to include in his report.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** But it is in evidence?

**Mr. Hanoman:** It is in evidence in voucher form.

**Mr. Chairman:** Very well.

**Mr. Hanoman:** You would agree that your report has omitted the nine Smith and Wesson pistols to Corbin?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels- Brown:** Which is the subject of Exhibit?

**Mr. Hanoman:** Which is the subject of exhibit SCJ 2G.

**Mrs. Samuels- Brown:** Right.

**Lt. Col. James:** If I can proceed Sir at E issued to the Ministry of National Development of 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1976 six by .22 rifles, six by .03 carbines, six by .303 rifles, and 15 by SLR rifles.

**Mr. Chairman:** Carbines are what ammunition or?

**Lt. Col. James:** No Sir these are weapons Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Weapons?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** To again Lieutenant Coronel when you took at SCJ 2I, I hope I am not confusing you.

**Lt. Col. James:** I do not have the specific exhibit.

**Mr. Jairam:** This one.

**Mr. Hanoman:** With the .22 riffles.

**Mr. Jairam:** The same items you have just read about six rifles six carbines six .303 riffles. It says "Comrade Skeete" full-stop, but you have in your E here issued to the Ministry of National Development.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** Well that is my mistake again, Sir.

**Mr. Jairam:** Right so would you like to correct it?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** What is the mistake when you say Comrade Skeete?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, the mistake is issued to Comrade Skeete six .22 rifles six .30 carbines and six .303 rifles that correction is not issued to Ministry of National Development that should be stuck out, it is issued to Comrade Skeete, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** So what is now correct?

**Lt. Col. James:** What is correct is that the issuances of the three items were to Comrade Skeete and not Ministry of National Development, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** So you precede on an assumption that Comrade Skeete was the Ministry of National Development, the agent?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is my assumption and mistake Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** But the record speaks to Comrade Skeete only?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Now the information sorry.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Just to clarify that they are other vouchers which have him as Minister as connected to the Ministry of National Development but they are different dates. And just one clarification the date on that voucher is what date?

**Lt. Col. James:** It is 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1976.

**Mrs. Samuels- Brown:** Thank you I asked because the photocopies are not so clear and I figure that Counsel may want to know it.



## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** Just to further clarify that point the information that you have referred to in four E of your written Report, is it not true that it is contained in two separate vouchers? If you can look at...

**Lt. Col. James:** It is contained in two separate vouchers.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes.

**Lt. Col. James:** The .22 riffles the .30 carbines and the .303 riffles are in one voucher.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes. For the record the witness is referring to the Exhibit SCJ 2I.

**Lt. Col. James:** And the 15 7.62 SLRs are on another voucher Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I see, so you are referring to two Exhibit there SCJ 2I and SCJ 2J both dated the 13th October, 1976?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct Sir. And F...

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes.

**Lt. Col. James:** Issued to the Ministry of National Development on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1976 six by G3 rifles which were issued on the...

**Mr. Jairam:** I think the mistake is similar the issue and receipt voucher says Comrade Skeete. It does not say Ministry of National Development.

**Lt. Col. James:** Again that is correct Sir, Ministry of National Development should be struck out and Comrade Skeete inserted, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** What are the two dates which weapons were issued to him in his personal capacity?

**Lt. Col. James:** Well for the last three I would have mentioned, Sir, on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1976, we had two sets of issues. We had the six G3 rifles, six .30 carbines...

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** No I do not need the weapons. I just want the dates when the issues were for him seemingly in his personal capacity?

**Lt. Col. James:** Well those issues were one Sir. We also had a similar issue of 15 SLR rifles on that same date.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am just interested in the dates.

**Lt. Col. James:** 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1976.

**Mr. Chairman:** 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1976.

**Lt. Col. James:** And we had on the 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1976.

**Mr. Hanouman:** And I believe you should add to that 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1976 as well, which is the long sheet and the Exhibit number is SCJ 2E. The reason you have been referring the Ministry of National Development, when the voucher has the name Comrade Skeete, you are referring to the Ministry of National Development in your report when the voucher just has the name Comrade Skeete is because you made a connection between the two entities.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct Sir.

**Mr. Hanounman:** I see. And you have seen the name Skeete connected to the National Development in several other vouchers?

*13:18hrs*

**Lt. Col. James:** If I might continue Sir, at paragraph five there are supporting documentation for the issues all weapons on the SSR, SSR refers to the Special Stores Register (SSR) listing the weapons by serial numbers.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Now, if you have extracts from the SSR register with you?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** Can you explain for us briefly, I think you may have done it but just for further clarification this special stores register is it correct to say it is a list of the weapons by serial number?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** In relation to the vouchers that you have tendered today, you have managed to correlate the serial numbers on the vouchers to that in the Special Stores Register?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct. If I can explain the use of the Special Stores Register, Counsel.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes.

**Lt. Col. James:** At the receiving and issuing minute which is the 5 Service Support Battalion or in the previous past, the Ordinance Score, they would keep two master inventories of weapons on charge or coming into the Guyana Defense Force. One, is the Alpha Bravo 561 which list every weapon that come into the service of the Guyana Defense Force. The Special Stores Register which is this document list subsequent issues to units, or I would have to say now organisations outside of the Guyana Defense Force and that records the movement of weapons either to units within the Force, if they were issued to units or organisations external to the Guyana Defense Force and if they were returned to the Guyana Defense Force. So at any one time, you should be in a position to you to the 5 Service Support Battalion and verify the location of any weapon based on their examination of AB561 and the Special Stores Register.

**Mr. Chairman:** Do you refer to two sets of documents which between them which should tell you at any time who have which weapon?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** One is the SSR and the other is the...

**Lt. Col. James:** ...Alpha Bravo AB561.

**Mr. Chairman:** You would call that a register?

**Lt. Col. James:** I have an idea of both register, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, but would you call AB561 a register?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes Sir, and the other one is a Special Stores Register.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Mr. Chairman, I have a number of pages from that register, I think it will take a lot of time for me to tender these pages individually and I wonder if I could tender them in block.

**Mr. Jairam:** I notice you did not tender the Report.

**Mr. Hanoman:** We are still going through this report, Mr. Commissioner, this was come up in the middle of that.

**Mr. Jairam:** Well the proper thing is that we should put it in first before you go through the report.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Very well, could I ask that this report that is signed and produced by this witness to become part of the evidence and marked SCJ 3?

**Mr. Chairman:** let me understand clearly what you are saying it is a report dated the 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2008 in relation to the recovery of weapons at Mahaicony.

**Ms. Samuels-Brown:** Perhaps you should add “as amended”.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Thank you Madame Commissioner.

**Mr. Chairman:** You want to?

**Mr. Hanoman:** I am asking for this report to be tendered and marked SCJ 3.

**Mr. Chairman:** Report of recovery of weapons at Mahaicony East Coast Demerara?

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes please.

**Ms. Samuels-Brown:** As amended and perhaps you should put the date to it.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Dated the 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2008.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, I receive it as amended... thank you.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** Thank you Sir. The extract from the Special Stores Register that you brought with you today you are in the position to certify that there are accurate records?

**Lt. Col. James:** True and accurate.

**Mr. Hanoman:** True and accurate?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I think we have already that all the serial numbers of the arms that are on this register can be found scattered among the vouchers we have tendered?

**Lt. Col. James:** The vouchers and documents... the vouchers I recovered with respect to issues of the Ministry of National Development or to Comrade Skeete and R. Corbin, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Can I ask that this bundle of documents...

**Mr. Chairman:** You are still on this report?

**Mr. Hanoman:** The Special Stores Register.

**Mr. Jairam:** Counsel, my copy seems to be a summary.

**Mr. Hanoman:** No, I am at this point only referring to that copy of the Special Stores Register.

**Mr. Jairam:** That is all?

**Mr. Hanoman:** That is all. It will be page 33 to page 40 of the bundle that we have shared out.

**Mr. Chairman:** Eight pages?

**Mr. Hanoman:** There are eight pages and we are hoping to have it tendered SCJ 4 1 to 8.

**Mr. Chairman:** Can we have some descriptive account so that those who are following us on the radio can understand what is happening now?

**Lt. Col. James:** Okay Sir, if I can just elaborate a little bit. I said before once a weapon comes into the inventory of the Guyana Defense Force is documented in two ledgers the first one is AB561 –Alpha Bravo 561 – which is a mass inventory that would have come into the inventory

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

of the Guyana Defense Force. From time to time weapons might be issued, weapons might be destroyed and become unserviceable and whatever is the detail for the entire life of that weapon in the Guyana Defense Force is documented in that ledger. There is also a second ledger, Sir, the Special Stores Register, again this ledger is maintained by the issuing unit. At this particular time there were 5 Service and Support Battalions, they were responsible for weapons and weapon issues however, Sir, what is the normal procedure is that weapons would be issued from time to sub units and sub units of the Guyana Defense Force and we will have to say based on the invoice I have seen to external organisations those issues, firstly the master list of weapons in the Guyana Defense Force inventory is documented in this second Special Stores Register and their movement are again affixed in the ledger so for example, if there were issues of unit in the Guyana Defense Force, those weapons by serial numbers once they would have been issued are recorded again in the Special Stores Register. So we have two master inventories to determine the where about of any weapon at any point in time. The first one is the Alpha Bravo 561 and the second one is the Special Stores Register and if I can go a little bit further, at every unit or sub-unit of the Guyana Defense Force two ledgers are also maintained with respect to weapons. The First one is the AB561 that is also down to the unit or sub-unit lines and also the Special Stores Registers so at any one time any weapon is issued down to the unit lines it became unserviceable it was lost or it was destroyed based on its serviceability status that is recorded in the two ledgers at the sub-unit lines.

**Mr. Chairman:** What about weapons? As far as you know, neither lost nor destroyed or simply lent out and never returned?

**Lt. Col. James:** I would have to say Sir, based on my own research and knowledge, all weapons that were issued out for whatever reason to any unit sub unit or organisations outside of the Guyana Defense Force as far as I know is recorded in the Alpha Bravo 561 and also the Special Stores Register. If for example, Sir, you look at this Special Stores Register you will see at the side some notation with respect to exactly where that particular weapon is or were. If it was not return, you will see annotated it was not returned, if it was return you will see the exact the exact location where that weapon can be found as at now, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** So I understand you to be saying the movement, whether lost, found, loaned or given away is to be tracked.

**Lt. Col. James:** Tracked.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Through these registers.

**Lt. Col. James:** If not at the issuing unit because it might be issued to a unit at the unit lines span.

**Mr. Chairman:** Would it be true that a lot of the weapons on loan or sent to the Ministry of National Development were not returned?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, once formally a weapon was lost, if for example from a unit lines their records both at the unit and also the intelligence unit which would dictate the circumstances under which the weapon might be lost or misplaced, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not think you are answering my question. We are like two trains going in opposing directions in the dark, man. Try to meet me, I am asking you would your records reveal that several weapons, either on loan or sent to the Ministry of National Development on request were not returned?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** You only have to listen carefully.

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** That is correct?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** You have any idea where those weapons would be now?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, as part of my own investigation, I have an inventory of weapons which were issued again to Ministry of National Development or to Comrade R. Corbin or Mr. Skeete, Wilfred Skeete, which were not returned to the Guyana Defense Force, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** Is that not of concern that those weapons are just out there?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, as reflected in my report of August 2008 those concerns were documented and raised with the then Chief-of-Staff, Sir, it is reflected in the report, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Just by way of illustration and to be specific, can we look at what would not be SCJ 41 page 33. If Counsel could help the Witness because I do not think he has a copy.

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, I have a copy.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Thank you. Very helpfully in the extreme left hand column there is a numbering which shows that there are 38 weapons listed on that page, am I correct?

**Lt. Col. James:** Which one of the pages Ma'am?

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I thought Counsel had shown you, page 33.

**Mr. Hanoman:** The first page.

**Mr. Chairman:** On that page 33, it is revealed here that there were 38 weapons listed.

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes Sir, but this goes over into...

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** No, I am just dealing with the first page.

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Of those 38 items, see if you can do the arithmetic with me; am I correct that there are 23 weapons not returned?

**Lt. Col. James:** No Ma'am, if you look in the right hand column there is a reflection of the status of every weapon. I am not certain if you can see it clearly.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I can see it clearly.

**Lt. Col. James:** For example if I was just making an example, the first weapon was not returned.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Yes, so let us do a count in the extreme right hand column how many weapons are not returned there?



## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** Well Ma'am, I have a summary. I have a document...

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** For the purposes of my question now can we deal with that now? I counted 23 I am trying to see if on this page there are 23 not returned?

**Lt. Col. James:** Ma'am this entry refers to Model 10 Browning pistols. I have a document which can tell me the amount of Model 10 Browning pistols which were not returned.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Yes, but I do not want you to do it that way Lieutenant Colonel, just bear with me.

*13:33hrs*

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Just in terms of the document I have.

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I have a page with 38 weapons listed and when I did my quick count just for this page alone, I am not talking about the general summary...

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I getting 23 weapons not returned so I am just checking to see if my counting is correct.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Thank you, that is all I wanted.

**Lt. Col. James:** Okay Ma'am.

**Mr. Chairman:** 23 of 33 on that one page.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** 23 of 38.

**Mr. Chairman:** ...of 38, that is high you know.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Thank you.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Now, what Madame Commissioner just referred to, the guns not returned, are those the same serial numbers that are reflected on SCJ/2A and 2B? On the first page, if you can just do a quick check to see if some the numbers there that were given to the Ministry of National Development. If you look at your vouchers, the first and second voucher that you tendered.

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, I would have done a reconciliation exercise and the document is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** No, we are just correlating. I am suggesting to you that the guns not returned on the first page that you just referred to are contained in the very first voucher that we tendered – SCJ/2A and 2B which are dated 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1979... Both dates are the same. Do you see those vouchers there?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, I would have to do a correlation because for this particular type of pistol, there were two issues of 100 and the amount that were not returned is in excess of “seventy-something”, Sir. I would have to look at number by number to tell you what from the first page is reflected in, lets us say, the first voucher.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Alright, I know that it is going to be a tedious exercise so maybe we can sum it up. So you agree that many of the guns that were not returned are guns that were issued in the vouchers that we have tendered already?

**Lt. Col. James:** In the two vouchers, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Yes.

**Lt. Col. James:** It is two sets of 50, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** Now, by my calculation when you put together all the guns that were given out to the Ministry of National Development, Skeete and Corbin there are over 150 guns that have not been returned, would you agree with that?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, I did prepare a document which I distributed to the Commission which gives the exact number of weapons by type which were not returned, Sir.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Do you have that document with you?

**Mr. Chairman:** Do you have that document with you?

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** It is here.

**Mr. Chairman:** If you could just consult it and ... We have it here but...

**Mr. Jairam:** May I see that?

**Mr. Hanoman:** The document you are referring to is headed up Ministry of National Development and is hand written by you.

**Lt. Col. James:** This is a separate document that was typed, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Do not get impatient, Sir. I wonder if you could answer some broad questions...

**Lt. Col. James:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** ...meant to be fairly specific. Can you tell us how many weapons were issued either to Melvin Skeete or Corbin intended for the Ministry of National Development and over what period?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, I did not do that calculation, but I have the records available.

**Mr. Hanoman:** Could I ask that the Witness be allowed to look at his records that he has walked with?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, I invited him to do that.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Hanoman:** Please look at the record that you have brought and...

**Mr. Williams:** Mr. Chairman, I believe the documents relating to Skeete alone should be dealt with for Skeete alone and not Skeete for National Development because Skeete could have been, whoever he is or was, could have been on a frolic of his own.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, that is one way of looking at it. It might be more specific for a particular institution but we would not know that. We are not to speculate but we agree with you and we had just discussed that among ourselves that those issues with Skeete alone, personally, and not with Skeete as an agent of the Ministry of National Development should also be dealt with and separately. I also would like to know, when the witness can focus on that, whether there was any system in the Defense Force having leant out weapons to follow up every six months and also say, "Look Mr. Z we leant your organization on the 10<sup>th</sup> January, in a particular year, 200 weapons. Are you ready to return them to us?" It seems that it is a very serious thing for weapons of that caliber to be leant out to institutions and there is no rigid follow up to make sure that they are returned.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I also had that question in mind, Mr. Chairman, because is the Defense Board is authorising the loan of weapons to external agencies, I am wondering if it would set conditions including stipulating the purpose for which it is authorising the loan and secondly the timeframe of the loan. I had meant to ask if that would be recorded in the Defense Board deliberations or the letter from the head of the Army giving the authority.

**Mr. Chairman:** Your country cannot be secure internally if weapons were being leant out to external agencies that are outside of the Force and there is no strict control as to the return of those weapons and so on.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** If I might answer the question now, Sir. Based on the vouchers I have to the Ministry of National Development, Corbin, Skeete. I have M10 Browning pistols 100, M70 rifles 15...

**Mr. Pilgrim:** Do not go too fast.

**Lt. Col. James:** Sorry, Sir. M10 Browning pistols - 100, M70 rifles - 15, M72 guns - 5, Smith and Wesson pistols - 16, HK 11 LMGs - 4, G3 rifles - 14, general purpose machine guns - 4, Beretta sub-machine guns - 40.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** How many?

**Lt. Col. James:** 40, Ma'am. SLR rifles - 33, .22 rifles - 6, .30 carbines - 6, .303 rifles - 6.

**Mr. Pilgrim:** Carbines were 6, sorry?

**Lt. Col. James:** Carbines were 6, Sir, and we would have had an earlier entry annotating I think it is some ammunition, 175 rounds 9 mm ball ammunition, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** What you have given there is the category and number of weapons...

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** ...that were lent to external organisations?

**Lt. Col. James:** No Sir, this was only to National Development. I had a document which would detail all weapon issues to all external organisations other than the three National Development, Comrade Skeete or Corbin. I would have just address, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** As well as OPM because one of the documents said Office of the Prime Minister as well.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Alright.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** But traditionally, that is when we started the exercise, we were talking about agencies outside the units within the army itself, the Defense Force. All weapons not given to units within the Defense Force we categorise as to external agencies.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** But now you are denying that by saying that National Development you are not categorizing as an external agency.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** No.

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir, I have a listing of those weapons which were issued to all the external organizations, Sir. I taught you wanted just for the Ministry of National Development, Office of the Prime Minister, Comrade Skeete or Corbin but I have records, not vouchers, which indicate issues to all organizations, Sir. It is available at the Commission, Sir.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** As I understood, through your evidence earlier, you made a distinction between these so called, if we could call them, civilian agencies and the paramilitary/police agencies, am I correct?

**Lt. Col. James:** Not necessarily, Ma'am. In my statement you would see I reflected all the issues, I just started with the Ministry of National Development, whether it is the Office of the Prime Minister, Comrade Skeete or Corbin because that seemed to be the focus of the Commission of Inquiry.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Yes but in your evidence this morning you were careful to note that weapons were either loaned or given to military or policing type agencies and you named them, National Service, Police and Paramilitary, remember you did that this morning.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is right, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Right.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** It was listed in my statement.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Right, thank you.

**Mr. Williams:** The problem here is though, we just mentioned you should isolate...

**Lt. Col. James:** Well, Sir...

**Mr. Williams:** ...the references to Skeete alone...

**Lt. Col. James:** Well, Sir...

**Mr. Williams:** ...but you have not done that in this one.

**Lt. Col. James:** I have it Sir; at the Commission's... I can read it out for you.

**Mr. Williams:** Okay, thanks.

**Lt. Col. James:** I have it in my statement.

**Mr. Chairman:** You have slightly... Perhaps it is my fault. There has been a lot of evidence and I do not know whether I missed that but my understanding was that all weapons not given to units of the Defense Force, different units, were regarded as being given to outside or external agencies and I reckon among them the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of National Development, they are all external agencies.

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am happy to hear that that is correct because I thought you were denying.

**Lt. Col. James:** Well Sir, I have it in my Commission's statement. As I said before I can reflect and read it out for all the other agencies at your disposal, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** What you have not worked out as yet and you are due to continue tomorrow, is the amount of weapons given to Skeete in his individual capacity.

**Lt. Col. James:** No, I did not disaggregate, Sir.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, because the records seem to be very clear when it was for the Ministry of National Development given to Skeete but he seemed to have gotten some in his own capacity.

**Lt. Col. James:** Again, at the discretion of the Commission I can engage in that exercise, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** But we would want to know too whether any of them were returned so you have some work to do overnight.

**Lt. Col. James:** That I understand, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** And I do not know whether it is putting too much on you but what percentage of weapons given for non-defense force units, what percentage was ever returned?

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, I will have to do the correlation and I would be in a position to...

**Mr. Chairman:** I am not suggesting that you answer that now...

**Lt. Col. James:** I understand, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** ...but it would be useful to have that sort of evidence. It is very difficult to police a society in which there are so many weapons at large you know. That is a separate matter.

**Mr. Hanoman:** If I may there is also a register that the witness has referred to, AB561, that I believe he has said he can get his hands on and if I assume correctly and we are about to take an adjournment I am hoping that the witness can be asked to produce that tomorrow as well.

**Mr. Chairman:** What I wanted to know, given this policy of lending out weapons to external agencies, was there any policy in place for following up on the loans? That is, "I lend you money two years ago. I have my secretary following up: "Lieutenant Coronel what about that loan that you were given. Is there record of any repayment?""

**Lt. Col. James:** Sir, as far as I am aware the Guyana Defense Force has knowledge of the organisations which were issued weapons and...

**Mr. Chairman:** You have dropped your voice and you lost me.



## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir, I did not drop my voice. I am saying that as far as I am aware the Guyana Defense Force has knowledge of the whereabouts or where weapons were issued from that organisation. With respect to the follow up activity, I cannot give an answer to that, Sir.

*13:48hrs*

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Mr. Chairman, I have another question which relates to it. When did the Defense Board approved the loan of weapons by the Guyana Defense Force to external agencies particularly civilian external agencies not to the Police, does it usually stipulate or does it ever stipulate the period of time for which loan is to exist?

**Lt. Col. James:** Ma'am, thanks for your question. As far as I know there are several categories of loan. For example, there might be a short-term loan to the Prison Service for three months or ...

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** No, I am going to ask you to leave out the Prison Service, leave out the National Service, and leave out the Police. Let us deal with strictly civilian agencies.

**Lt. Col. James:** Okay, Ma'am. As far as I am aware that is an unusual issue, Ma'am, if I can say that.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** And if it is unusual then you would expect that they would be very careful to set out the conditions and the parameters that should operate?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am and I suspect that it would be contain in the reference document that is listed in some of the issue vouchers sent from, I would say, the Office of the Chief-of-Staff to the Commander of the Issuing Unit. I think it would be specific as to how the loan is to be effective.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** You said you have searched for and you have not found those issued documents?

**Lt. Col. James:** That is correct, Ma'am.

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** I see.

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Williams:** Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, are we proceeding on the basis that there is no presumption of due regularity?

**Mr. Chairman:** [*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Williams:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not think at this point we are proceeding on any assumptions. We are trying to proceed on evidence and the evidence related to the questions posed does not seem to exist, at least he has not been able to put his hands on it.

**Mr. Williams:** That is the issue, so should not the presumption due regularity arises in the absence of evidence to the contrary?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, but we have not reached that point. The evidence is tentative so far because we are not finished to point to departure from due regularity. That is the tentative position on the evidence he has been given.

**Mr. Williams:** I understand, but there is no evidence that there has been any departure , there is no evidence that the Defense Board did not gave its approval, there is nothing like that forthcoming [*inaudible*].

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not know whether you were not here this morning. On the documents he gave, very explicit evidence that in some instances the evidence is clear that on the record that there is no evidence of permission being given by the Defense Board.

**Mr. Williams:** I was not here. I was listening before I came too. The Vouchers do not disclose that. He is saying to you that the references could be to Defense Board authorization, but we do not have the documents. He said he could not find any documents to that effect so we are all in realm of speculation but [*inaudible*].

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** Would the absence of those documents be regular or irregular?

**Mr. Williams:** That is the point. Could we accept that is what it means?

## WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

**Mrs. Samuels-Brown:** What he had said is that there should be documents. We have not yet had an explanation why those documents cannot be found.

**Mr. Williams:** It is just food-for-thought. When I cross-examine him I would be able to deal with it more.

**Mr. Chairman:** Is it difficult to come to firm conclusions at this point in response to your specific questions because we are not yet finish not even with his testimony.

**Mr. Williams:** I understand that but I just raising it because I see we are proceeding as though ...

**Mr. Chairman:** No ...

**Mr. Williams:** ... something could be wrong, I am not sure.

**Mr. Chairman:** ... it is an interesting question ...

**Mr. Williams:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** ... and relevant too, but we have not reach the point where we have to apply the presumption. Counsel, can you carry him any further today.

**Mr. Hanoman:** I would be grateful for an adjournment at this stage, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Lt. Colonel, it appears as though you would be obliged, God willing, to keep our company tomorrow.

**Lt. Col. James:** Thank you very much, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** You seem not be to objective in keeping our company ...

**Lt. Col. James:** No, Sir.

**Mr. Williams:** [*Inaudible*]

**Lt. Col. James:** It is familiar surroundings, Sir.

## **WALTER RODNEY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

**Mr. Chairman:** We stand adjourned until tomorrow at 09:30hrs. Commission Counsel, is there any specific issue you wish to give him by way of homework?

**Mr. Hanoman:** I will speak to him at the adjournment on that, please.

**Mr. Chairman:** Very well. Thank you.

**Hearing Adjourned at 13:52hrs**