

UNDER

THE INQUIRIES ACT 2013

IN THE MATTER

A GOVERNMENT INQUIRY INTO OPERATION
BURNHAM AND RELATED MATTERS

Brief of Evidence of Michael Andrew Thompson

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1. I am Michael Andrew Thompson. I am the Director (Asia) of the International Branch at the Ministry of Defence.
2. Before my appointment at the Ministry of Defence, I had an extensive career in the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF). My most recent appointments include: Director of Strategic Commitments at Headquarters NZDF (2005 - 2006); Chief of Joint Operations at Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand (2006 - 2008); and Deputy Chief of Staff in the Office of the Chief of Defence Force (2009 - 2012).
3. I completed a number of operational tours as the Deputy, then Chief, Military Observer to the United Nations Mission in Haiti; Deputy Chief of Operations, Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai; and served on two United States Headquarters in Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan.
4. I have a Bachelor of Arts from Canterbury University (1977), and a Post Graduate Diploma in International Relations from Victoria University of Wellington (1999).


IAT report

5. I understand that, in 2014, when the NZDF was responding to a number of questions raised by Jon Stephenson, the Director of Coordination at the NZDF at the time, Chris Hoey, found a bundle of relevant documents in his classified safe at work in the NZDF national headquarters in Wellington.
6. I understand that one of the documents in the bundle was a report prepared by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Incident Assessment Team, which had been tasked to investigate allegations of civilian casualties arising out of an operation conducted in Baghlan province on 22 August 2010 (IAT report).
7. I have been told that, in the course of preparing for this hearing, Chris Hoey reviewed the Classified Document Register (**Register**) in his safe and made a photocopy of one of the pages. The Register, if maintained properly, records when a classified document is placed into the safe, and whether it is subsequently removed, archived, or destroyed.
8. I refer to the Bundle at pp 191-192, which is the extract from the Register. What it shows is that, on 7 September 2011, the bundle containing the IAT report was placed into the safe.
9. On 7 September 2011, I was the Deputy Chief of Staff in the Office of the Chief of Defence Force, and had responsibility for that safe. I can confirm that the handwriting

in the Register on that date is mine. This means that it must have been me who placed the bundle containing the IAT report into the safe, and duly recorded it.

10. I have never read the bundle, including the IAT report. I believe that someone must have asked me to put it in the safe; in other words, my safe was simply used as a classified repository. I cannot recall who that person may have been. And, in the absence of any sort of covering note, I cannot speculate as to where the IAT report may have come from.



Michael Andrew Thompson


Date

