

Alan Hopkins states:-

1. I am employed as the Deputy Chief Metropolitan Ambulance Officer for SYMAS.
2. My date of birth is 

DPA
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3. I am trained in ambulance aid and, every five years, I attend a two week refresher course in ambulance aid. I have attended management and supervisory courses. I have attended major incident courses and been involved in major incident exercises.
4. SYMAS covers the areas of the district health authorities of Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster. Every year we hold a major exercise in one of those four areas. This involves principally the emergency services for that particular area but will also include the emergency services from the other areas. If I am involved in an exercise. I am not told that an exercise is taking place.
5. I joined the Sheffield City Ambulance Service as an ambulance man in 1967. In about 1973 I was transferred to Longley Station. In early 1974 I was appointed the Superintendent at Corporation Street and Lodge Moor Stations. In 1974 a reorganisation of the National Health Service took place and it was at this time that SYMAS was

established. Shortly after that I was appointed Assistant Divisional Officer (Operations) at SYMAS. In 1987 I was appointed the Divisional Officer (Operations) for Number 1 Division (which covers the Sheffield and Rotherham areas). I was subsequently transferred to the post of Divisional Officer (Control and Communications). In 1988 I was appointed the Deputy Chief Metropolitan Ambulance Officer.

6. My normal official working hours are 0900 to 1700 Monday to Friday but outside those hours either Mr Page or myself are on call. The on call rota runs from 0900 on Monday to 0900 the following Monday morning. During the week commencing 10th April 1989 Mr Page had been on call, but I had agreed that I would do Mr Page's on call duty on Saturday 15th April because he was attending a course. It is not at all unusual for he and I to reach such an arrangement.
  
7. I have now had sight of the South Yorkshire Police memo dated 9th August 1988, from Inspector Sewell to the Chief Superintendent 'F' Division. The meeting which took place on 9th August 1988 was called by Inspector Sewell on him taking over from Inspector Calvert and the arrival of Superintendent Murray. The meeting was arranged by David Jones, and I attended along with Jones and Inspector Sewell. The existing arrangements for SYMAS attending Hillsborough were discussed, which were:-

- (1) 2 season tickets for all home matches.
- (2) No tickets for F.A. cup semi-final matches.
- (3) The gymnasium was to be the designated casualty clearing point. The Police Officers appreciated the necessity of getting ambulance vehicles into the gymnasium area without difficulty. The police also agreed to keep Penistone Road clear so as to allow access and egress of ambulance vehicles as quickly as possible. If any parts of these areas were blocked the police agreed to clear the areas for our ambulances.

*At the same meeting Superintendent Murray confirmed to David Jones and myself that the police had already had sight of our Hillsborough plan, although it appeared that Inspector Calvert (Inspector Sewell's predecessor) had misplaced their copy. Off*

8. Approximately two weeks prior to 15th April David Jones, the Assistant Chief Metropolitan Ambulance Officer (Operations) had sought my approval for two ambulances to be deployed specifically for the F.A. Cup Semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest. This was in addition to the two liaison officers who would be at the game anyway. I discussed this request with Mr Page and subsequently told Mr Jones of the approval. One ambulance was to be stationed inside the ground and the other at Middlewood Ambulance Station which is approximately one mile to the north west of the ground. We had arranged for the same ambulance cover for the ground for the identical match the previous year and there had been no problems.
9. When on call I carry a bleep and in addition there is a telephone and radio in my car. All messages to me come from

ambulance control at Moorgate Road, Rotherham.

10. When on call it is only necessary for me to be contactable and to be reasonably near to ambulance control.
11. Although I was only on call I took my vehicle up to the M1 motorway to Junction 33 because if there was to be an incident at that time (lunchtime) it was likely to be on the motorway. Nothing happened there and so I went to control.
12. I arrived at control at 1410 . I had a cup of tea and took a couple of calls relating to routine admissions to hospital. At 1430 a call came in from the liaison officers (Eason and Higgins) to say that they had arrived at the ground.
13. At approximately 1506 I saw the police line light up. There is a direct line to control from the police headquarters at Snig Hill in Sheffield. Superintendent Clark took the call. I heard him say something to the effect "What is it. We've got liaison officers there" but he did not seem to get a satisfactory reply. He put the phone down and told me that the police had said that they wanted a fleet of ambulances at the Leppings Lane end of the Hillsborough ground. I commented that ambulances could not get into that end of the ground and I questioned why they would want them. The police line then lit up again and this time Control

Assistant Cath Lines took the call. I heard her say something like "What do you want ambulances there for, what's happening". She did not seem to get a satisfactory reply. I contacted the ambulance which was on standby at Middlewood and instructed it to go to the Leppings Lane end of the Hillsborough ground to report what was going on. The call was made at 1508.41 (Track 12 page 2). I knew that the liaison officers inside the ground would have difficulty getting out to Leppings Lane and so would not be able to report on what was happening there. I then told Superintendent Clark to contact the liaison officers to see if they had anything to report and I then immediately left.

14. As I left the control building Mr Morley was arriving in a marked Range Rover. He was the duty officer that day and had been on the M1 carrying out a similar roll to that which I had carried out at Junction 33. I told him that there was an incident going on at Hillsborough and we did not know what it was. I drove the Range Rover to the Ground.

15. As we drove to the ground we could hear the conversations from control to various vehicles, but not the responses from the vehicles. That is quite normal operational staff can only hear the control end of each conversation. Control were clearly sending more and more ambulances to the Leppings Lane end of Hillsborough. I knew the ambulances could not get access into the ground there and I remember

commenting to Mr Morley that if any ambulances did try to get in there they would be damaged.

16. The reason why ambulances cannot gain access at the Leppings Lane end of the ground is that the entrances are not sufficiently high to permit access. I knew there had been an incident some ten years earlier when ambulanceman Moger was driving an ambulance and had tried to gain access to the ground from the Leppings Lane end and the top of the ambulance had been damaged.

17. I told Mr Morley to radio to control for all Trent ambulances to be made available as soon as possible. He did this at 1517 (Track 19 page 7) and I heard the message transmitted from control by S. Machin who finished the message by adding "particularly Sierra mobiles". This was a reference to vehicles in the Sheffield area. This would put all ambulances on standby and would authorise control to bring ambulances in from other areas to cover for the ambulances in our area.

18. We arrived at the Penistone Road end of Hillsborough at 1523 (Track 19 page 10). We went there because I knew it was the only access into the ground which ambulances could use, and according to the Major Incident Plan, my station would be the gymnasium area. Attached to this statement is a plan. I parked the Range Rover in the position coloured

yellow. In the position coloured green was the ambulance which had been stationed at the ground but the ambulance men were not with it. I do not recall seeing either of the ambulance men or the liaison officers at that time although I have subsequently been told that one of the liaison officers spoke to me then. I told Mr Morley to stay with the vehicle and not to move and I went onto the pitch to see what was happening in order to provide full details to Control.

19. There was a line of police across the ground roughly in line with the edge of the penalty area in front of the goal at the Leppings Lane end. The police were standing two or three deep. They were letting people through and there was a lot of people on the pitch on my side of the police line with injured people on hoarding. As I came onto the pitch people started grabbing at me and shouting at me to help; they were all spectators who were helping injured people. I ignored them. I knew that the injured were coming from the Leppings Lane end of the ground as a result of messages coming over the vehicle radio and that there were several ambulances at that end of the ground and I thought that they could not get access to the injured. The most important thing for me to do was not to provide immediate help to the injured immediately around but to supervise the whole of the ambulance operation. I went through the police line and the scene looked like a battlefield. There were people lying on

the pitch and I saw others behind the fence with their faces pressed against it. I only stayed there for a few seconds and ran back across the pitch towards the area where I had left Mr Morley and the Range Rover. I believed that the ambulances at the Leppings Lane end could not get to the incident from where they were and I had to get them round to the Penistone Road end of the ground.

20. When I ran through the line I saw a police officer carrying a little girl in his arms. He stumbled, I took the child from him and continued running towards the area where the Range Rover was parked. I got to the ramp between the north stand and the cop and looked at the girl who was quite obviously dead. The policeman then caught up with me and I told him to take the girl's body to the gymnasium which I knew, from our standard plan for Hillsborough would be the mortuary/patient treatment area.

21. I went over to the Range Rover and contacted control at 1529 (Track 16 page 3) and told them "Majax vehicle at the original location there's a lot dead. I need the Majax vehicle and as many mobiles as possible". I also asked him to tell control to try to contact Mr Page at his home. The major incident vehicle is a communications centre and a mobile store. It contains dressings, triangles for slings, tubes for intubation, stretchers, helmets, protective clothing, body bags, and road cones amongst other things.



22. I then went to the gymnasium. Outside the gymnasium were a group of St. John's ambulance people. They were aged about 14 and were clearly extremely upset. I went into the gymnasium where the scene seemed to be one of chaos. There were police officers in there and already some bodies laid on advertising boards. I had gone in there to see if any of our staff were there; there weren't. There was nothing I could do in there and so I went back to the area where the Range Rover was parked to find that our ambulances were starting to arrive.
23. The yard was full of police vans which had also been there when I arrived and these hampered vehicles entering the yard. In fact, the entrance marked on the plan as "main police access" could not be used because it was blocked. There were also police horses in the yard. I could not see a senior officer in uniform to request him to clear the area.
24. The first ambulance which I saw arrive was driven by Mr Vevers with Mr Edwards as the attendant. I told them to get their ambulance onto the pitch because I thought this would help to calm down the crowd who would see that the ambulance services were present and also, of course, be able to take some of the casualties away.

25. Meanwhile Mr Morley was lining up ambulances which were arriving outside the ground. The drivers stayed with the vehicles and the attendants came into the ground, onto the pitch to help bring injured people off the pitch into the yard area.

26. I sent another ambulance onto the pitch driven by Mr Wadsworth. Station Officer Higgins then reported to me, he is one of the liaison officers. I told him to find the crew of the ambulance which was parked in the yard which had been the ambulance originally assigned to the ground. The cots were not in that vehicle and I presumed that its crew had gone onto the pitch, to the Leppings Lane end to help with the injured. I told him to find the crew of the ambulance, to get it loaded up and off to hospital. The ambulance itself was full of dead and injured people who had apparently been brought there by the crowd. Someone was trying to get into the cab and seemed to be looking for the keys. I told him to get out and he did so. I began to unload the back and was assisted by Station Officers Eason and Higgins and the two crew who had then come back. We put casualties in the ambulance and took the bodies to the gym. The ambulance went off to hospital. They would have known to go to the Northern General Hospital. The emergency procedure is that all casualties are taken to the nearest hospital (in this case Northern General) until instructed otherwise.

27. I recall that when we were trying to get Mr Vevers' vehicle onto the pitch a St. John's ambulance appeared at the bottom of the ramp. I had not seen the St. John's ambulance previously but I presumed that it must have been on the pitch when I was there. The St. John's ambulance became wedged against the stanchions holding up the fencing on its right. Our vehicle was backed off the ramp and then pulled forward to let the St. John's ambulance out. The St. John's ambulance forced its way off the stanchion and up the ramp. It left the ground.
28. I only saw two of our ambulances go onto the pitch, although I now know that three went onto the pitch. All the further ambulances were reversed into the yard so that they could be quickly loaded with casualties before going off to hospital. This was because by this time all casualties were being brought to us across the pitch by fans, police and fire brigade. In any event because of the restricted access it was a matter of bringing the ambulances into the yard and then drive off once casualties were loaded.
29. The last occasion which I had been at the ground was a year before when the same match had taken place. I had attended then simply to speak to the liaison officer. Since then a wheelchair access ramp had been put on the ramp which went from the yard on to the pitch. The wheelchair ramp was

evidently to get wheelchairs into the north stand. The presence of this wheelchair access ramp had considerably restricted the width of the ramp down to the pitch which had caused difficulties both for our ambulances and the St. John's ambulance.

30. I was then approached by Alan Hornsby (the Assistant Chief Fire Officer). He told me that he had forty men and that he had deployed them to help bring casualties onto the pitch. He asked what else they could do and I believe I told him to continue what he was doing. By this time ambulances were arriving all the time. I only saw those ambulances which were actually coming into the yard and I did not know how many there were outside the ground.
31. I do not recall when the ambulances came off the pitch.
32. I was then approached by Leading Ambulance man Boyington at the top of the ramp from the pitch to the yard. He is a trained paramedic and was the first one that I had seen. I sent him to the gymnasium where I knew there were already a number of injured as well as dead. I told him to check all the injured, do what he could do for them immediately and decide upon the priorities for getting them to hospital.
33. I then went to the Range Rover and spoke to control to find out where the major incident vehicle was. I was told it

would be there in three minutes. They also told me that Mr Page was on his way to control. The major incident vehicle arrived shortly afterwards. I understand that it had been directed by police off Penistone Road onto the service road round towards the Leppings Lane end of the ground. I was also told that the police had been in the road to prevent a disturbance between rival fans who were, by then, leaving the ground.

34. I instructed the driver of the major incident vehicle (Station Officer Bettison) to position the vehicle in the position marked in blue on the plan attached to this statement. I took some body bags from the major incident vehicle and was on my way to the gymnasium when I met Mr Jones who had apparently come round from the Leppings Lane end of the ground. I was very pleased to see him. I told him to take control of that area and to be responsible for getting the ambulances in and out.

35. I am not sure whether I took the body bags to the gymnasium or whether I gave them to someone else but at about that time I was approached by a Doctor. He had been in the crowd and said he had three other doctors with him. I do not know who he was but he was 45/50 years old and was wearing a short coat. He said that they did not have any gear. I saw a Leading Ambulance man nearby (I do not remember who) and told him to take the four doctors to the gymnasium and

introduce them to leading ambulance man Boyington who had his paramedic equipment with him. I told him to tell Boyington to take the doctors names. Mr Morley then approached me with four or five ambulance station officers (not from SYMAS) who had been in the crowd. I asked them to help and bring casualties from the pitch. Mr Morley gave them all yellow ambulance jackets and sent them onto the pitch. I do not recall seeing them again.

36. I then went back to the gymnasium and saw Chief Superintendent Addis. He was the first senior police officer I had seen in the gymnasium area. I needed to speak to him to ensure proper liaison between the ambulance and police services. He told me that he had just spoken to the coroner (I think by telephone or radio). He told me that the coroner had said that the bodies should be taken to various locations. In fact, the coroner subsequently changed his mind about this. Whilst in the gymnasium talking to Chief Superintendent Addis I noticed that there was a medical team present and I was told that they were from the Northern General Hospital. I am not sure how many people were in the team but I recall that a coloured doctor was in charge and I also remember seeing two or three nurses holding saline drips. At this time we had just started moving the injured out of the gym.

37. By this time the police vehicles which had been hampering

entrance and exit from the ground had been moved. Mr Jones and Mr Dale had ensured a clear passage for ambulances. Mr Jones came into the gymnasium and told me that he had ten ambulances on Penistone Road and five outside the ground with a further twenty five in Herries Road bus garage, which was the pre arranged overflow site. He told me that he was aware of eleven bodies on the circular road at the Leppings Lane end of the ground although I was not clear as to whether he meant inside or outside the ground. I sent Mr Higgins with three ambulances to the Leppings Lane end of the ground to collect the bodies which Mr Jones had told me about. By this time we had ambulances to spare.

38. The last ambulances took the injured away before 1630 hours.
39. At about this time Chief Superintendent Addis told me that the coroner had now decided that he wanted all of the bodies taken into the gymnasium. I arranged for a number of bodies to be brought back from the Northern General Hospital and one from the Royal Hallamshire; I believe that these were all people who had died in hospital or en route, with the possible exception of the people who had been taken to hospital by the St. John's ambulance.
40. Some time later the coroner arrived and we discussed with Chief Superintendent Addis the question of what to do with the bodies. The coroner decided that the bodies would be