

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MOZ

Support person present: No

1. My name is MOZ. My date of birth is 1969. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before Fort Augustus

2. I was born in Dundee and brought up by my mum and dad. My dad was in the army. I had two brothers, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. When I was very young, we moved to Kirknewton near Edinburgh. We then moved to Hong Kong. In 1974, when I was about five years old, we came back to Colchester in England. My father worked at the Glencorse Training Depot.
3. My upbringing at home was good and my parents were loving. We had normal discipline and no physical or any other abuse. We didn't see a lot of my dad, but mum looked after us well. She also worked in various jobs at different times.

Carlekemp Priory School, North Berwick

4. The Army had a scheme where the military would pay for army children to attend boarding school and my parents took advantage of this. As a result of this, I attended Carlekemp Priory School in [REDACTED] 1977. Carlekemp was a feeder school to Fort Augustus Abbey, which was a school ran by Benedictine monks in Inverness-shire.

5. I was treated well at Carlekemp. I was not due to go to Fort Augustus until I was eleven, but Carlekemp closed down after I'd been there for a year or so. I was therefore transferred to Fort Augustus at the age of six or seven and remained there until I was fourteen. When I had been at Fort Augustus for about a year, my brother [REDACTED] also started at the school.

Fort Augustus Abbey School, Inverness-shire

Staff

6. The staff I can recall at Fort Augustus are Ian Keith and [REDACTED] MZV who were teachers and wore civilian clothes. Ms Onni or Oggi was an Italian lady in charge of the lodge where the younger boys and dormitories were. She later left to become a nun.
7. The monks wore black habits with hoods. I can remember Father [REDACTED] MFC who was the housemaster in charge of Calder House. He was also a [REDACTED] teacher for the younger boys. Father [REDACTED] MRQ was in charge of Lovat House and Father [REDACTED] MFG was in charge of Vaughan House. Father [REDACTED] MFC took over this role when Father [REDACTED] MFG died. Father [REDACTED] MER took over at Calder House whilst I was there. I was in Vaughan House.
8. There was an [REDACTED] lady who was the [REDACTED]. She lived upstairs in the lodge, which was a separate building for the junior school. I can't remember her name, but she was in her fifties or sixties, small and stout with brown curly hair and she had an [REDACTED] accent.

Pupils

9. The other pupils I can remember are [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

██████████ and ██████████. I was particularly friendly with ██████████ and ██████████.

10. Fort Augustus had a strong religious theme and we attended church all the time. I was one of the candle bearers for the services. We went to confession from the age of eleven or twelve. We were encouraged to talk about "impure thoughts" at confession, such as masturbation.

Abuse at Fort Augustus

Physical abuse

11. Father ██████████ MFC was one of the youngest monks at the school, but he was one of the more senior ones, probably ██████████. He had an aggressive demeanour and most of the boys, including me, were scared stiff of him. He was in his forties, six foot tall, well-built and had a bald head. He wore glasses.
12. I have early memories of Fort Augustus from when I first got there at the age of six or seven. Some of my early memories of Fort Augustus were when I was brushing my teeth with ██████████, ██████████ and ██████████. We were making a noise. Father ██████████ MFC became very aggressive and said that he would "hit us and hit us bloody hard". Some other early memories were that if we spoke in the dormitory, we would be made to kneel down in the corridor by Father ██████████ MFC and others. It was very humiliating as we had to kneel down and face the wall whilst other children would be walking past.
13. Between the ages of seven and eleven, I was regularly sent to Father ██████████ MFC's office to get the belt. His room was situated at the main staircase to the first floor. You went through the double doors, turned left and it was the second door on the right. Inside the office there was a roll top desk. Father ██████████ MFG and Father ██████████ MRQ also had offices on that floor. Father ██████████ MFC had the belt hanging down from the desk, out of sight.

14. You could be sent to see Father [MFC] for any reason at all, such as talking in class. You could be sent there by a prefect or another brother as well as by Father [MFC] himself. On each occasion, you would be given a minimum of three strikes of the belt on outstretched palm of each hand, changing hands when he gave you the signal to do so. Sometimes, it could be six strikes on each hand.
15. Sometimes, Father [MFC] would hit you in quick succession, raising his hand to shoulder level. Sometimes, if he was in a bad mood, he would use more force, raising his arm above his head to hit you. The strikes would sting my hand and leave red marks. I would try not to cry, but sometimes I did.
16. You could get the belt at lunchtime, in the evening and at the weekends. Father [MFC] took me for [REDACTED] but there was no physical abuse during lessons as everybody behaved because they were scared stiff. The frequency of the abuse was two to three times a week. Sometimes, there could be nothing for a week and then it would start up again. It was more frequent when I was between seven and eleven years old. It had tailed off by the time I left at the age of fourteen, but it still occurred.
17. I recall a matron called Mrs Uttley being in charge when I was a senior pupil in the lodge. She was in charge of waking everyone up for breakfast. I think I was about ten years old at the time. There was a boy named [REDACTED] who was mucking around in the line. I told him to get to the back of the line. I did this in front of Mrs Uttley.
18. When I got to breakfast, Father [MFC] was sitting at the head of the table, on the tables above ours. I had to report to his room after breakfast. Father [MFC] was shouting in front of Mrs Uttley. I could not believe that she wasn't telling Father [MFC] what had really happened and that she had witnessed [REDACTED] misbehaving.
19. I was terrified when I went to Father [MFC]'s room after breakfast. He immediately went for his belt. He would never tell you how many strikes of the belt you would receive. He started belting one hand and you had to let him do it until he told you to change hands. I remember that I got three on each hand on that occasion. I had

received the belt from Father [MFC] before, but this time it was different. He had never given me the belt so ferociously before. This time he was very angry and he was hitting me with all his might, raising his hand above his shoulder.

20. When I was nine or ten, I was punished for being cheeky to a prefect. The prefect's name was [REDACTED]. When I was sent to Father [MFC]'s office, I explained that I had been cheeky. By this time, I realised that Father [MFC] was in a particularly bad mood. This was one of the times that he beat me severely with six strikes on each hand.
21. I regularly saw other children being physically abused. This added to the frightening nature of the place. It meant that I was always scared and on edge about what might happen next. It was like walking on egg shells all the time.
22. There was an occasion when my brother, [REDACTED] had been fighting with a boy called [REDACTED]. They were sent to Father [MFC] for the belt. [REDACTED] told me that whilst he stood and took the punishment, [REDACTED] was terrified. He dropped to the floor and grabbed Father [MFC] by the legs, trying to get him not to belt him. Father [MFC] went mad and proceeded to belt [REDACTED] all over his body as [REDACTED] fell onto his legs, sobbing and pleading with him.
23. Another incident I recall is when [REDACTED] gave [REDACTED] a kicking. I was reading a book at the time and recall seeing [REDACTED] with black eyes and his face cut. Father [MFC] was there and went mad. He took the boy away. It was later rumoured that he gave him a severe beating with the belt.
24. I recall Father [MFC] beating a boy up at a social event. These events happened once a week. There was an event where we got to go to the housemaster's office for tea and toast. While we were in Father [MFC]'s office, a boy had been sent up for misbehaving. Father [MFC] started to belt the boy but he would not take it and fell to the floor in front of us. Father [MFC] then proceeded to lay into him whilst he was on the floor. I remember being absolutely terrified, watching this. Afterwards, Father [MFC] carried on as if nothing had happened.

25. On one occasion, I got the belt because I had been fighting with my brother over a rugby ball. We had been outside and Father [MFC] had seen us from the window. He shouted at me to get up to his room. He accused me of bullying my brother and he belted me. I knew I had to stand and take it. I had witnessed first-hand what happened to boys when moved their hands away. I knew he would lay into me if I moved.
26. The last occasion I can recall getting the belt was when I was thirteen or fourteen. I had just returned after the school holidays. The third years did not have their own common room. A common room was only available for the older fourth year children. My friends and I decided that we would make our own common room. We put tea and coffee in it. Father [MFC] found out about this and told us that we were not to use the room. Somebody else then used the tea and coffee in the room. Father [MFC] went mad. He thought that we had disobeyed him. Four of us were summoned to his office, [REDACTED], a guy called [REDACTED] and myself.
27. Father [MFC] was shouting. We knew by the way he grabbed his belt that we were going to get it. He was uncontrollable and raging with anger. He belted [REDACTED] first. I knew it was going to be bad and it was. I was left with terrible marks all the way up my wrists and arms. I think Father [MFC] must have known that he had really hurt me on this occasion.
28. About ten days later, I was caught smoking. There was a set punishment for smoking, which was six strikes on each hand, a £1 fine and a letter home to our parents. I was terrified of facing Father [MFC] and decided to run away with [REDACTED]. We didn't get very far and were picked up by the police a few hours later and returned to the school. Father [MFC] took us up to his room. He said to [REDACTED] that he was a very good friend for sticking up for me. He said that [REDACTED] would not be punished as he had only run away because he didn't want me to be by myself. I thought I was going to get completely hammered. However, on this occasion he deliberately gave me the softest belts ever. I think he realised that he had gone too far the week before and was afraid that I would tell my parents.

29. In the village, I would regularly see Father [REDACTED] MRQ fighting with a man called Joe. Joe had been shouting at boys going past. Father [REDACTED] MRQ also dished out canings or punishments with the belt in his room. I never experienced this but was told by other lads that they had been caned.
30. I was also being bullied by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], whose fathers were higher ranking officers than my dad.

Sexual abuse

31. I experienced sexual abuse at Fort Augustus when I was about eight years old. I wet the bed whilst I was having a dream that I was playing and burst into the toilet. When I woke up, I realised that I had actually wet the bed. The [REDACTED] came into the room in the morning. She realised that I had wet the bed and she said so in front of all the other boys. She told me to report to her room before going to bed that night, once I had my pyjamas on.
32. I reported to her room, which was upstairs in the lodge. She was sitting at her desk. She told me to take my pyjamas down, which I did so I was naked from the waist down. She then started to touch and fondle my penis and testicles, whilst saying to me, "Do you know what this is for?" and, "Do you know what these do?" She was rubbing and fondling my penis so that I got an erection. I told her that it was for weeing wee out of. She was grabbing and fondling my testicles. The whole thing lasted for about thirty seconds. I was terrified and thought she was doing it purely for punishment because I had wet the bed. I therefore never told anyone about this as it brought more embarrassment than having wet the bed. I kept it to myself. During the incident, I was mortified and totally embarrassed and confused. I didn't know it at the time, but looking back I look upon it as an incident of sexual abuse.

Reporting of abuse at Fort Augustus

33. During my time at Fort Augustus, I felt as if there was nobody to talk to about what was going on. All the staff were afraid of Father MFC, as were the Brothers.

Leaving Fort Augustus

34. I left Fort Augustus when I was fourteen, as my parents could no longer afford for me to stay there. I had also had enough of the school by then anyway, particularly after the coffee incident.
35. I went to a normal school in Dundee, St. John's Secondary School. It was totally different. It was nowhere near as severe as Fort Augustus. There was no physical abuse. I used to wonder why anybody complained about anything at school, as they had no idea how different my experience had been at Fort Augustus.

Life after Fort Augustus

36. I changed after Fort Augustus and turned into what I would describe as a "little shite". I was disruptive in school and generally not doing what I was told. I was cheeky and would talk back to my parents and teachers. There was talk of me being expelled from school because of my behaviour, but I stayed on and did my O'Levels. I then left school at the age of sixteen and went on Youth Training Scheme in joinery for six months. I joined the army in 1987 when I was seventeen. I remained in the army until 1991 and was posted in Berlin and Belfast.
37. At the end of this period, I had a breakdown when I was drunk. I was placed in an army jail in Northern Ireland. I tried to hit a platoon sergeant and my hand went through a window, cutting my hand. I then punched my other hand through the same window, cutting that one as well. I was in hospital as a result and my hands were in plaster.
38. I brought myself out of the army and I worked with my dad in his army surplus shop. During this time, I got married. I then re-joined the army eighteen months later and

was posted in Hong Kong. After a year, I came back and was again posted in Northern Ireland. When I came out of the Army for a second time, I had my own army surplus business in Aberdeen for two or three years, but it wasn't successful.

39. I moved into sales jobs and started selling gas and electricity. I worked for my dad again in his shop and then we emigrated to Australia in 2007. There was an opportunity to do well out there, because of the de-regulation of energy. However, this was not a successful time for me and I came back to Scotland. I am currently working as an energy adviser to companies.
40. Going to Australia is typical of how I move from job to job at the drop of a hat. I have never had long term jobs and am always jumping at other opportunities. I was diagnosed with depression in Australia. I saw a psychologist at the time, but I never mentioned anything about what had happened all those years ago at Fort Augustus. I had attempted to block it out of my head.
41. I'm still married and we have twin daughters.

Impact

42. When I was in the Army, I was posted to Northern Ireland. I didn't want to go because I didn't trust my wife to be faithful. I had a lack of trust in people because of Fort Augustus. In relationships, I was always nervous around the subject of sex. It caused issues within my marriage. I'm not sure, but that could stem back to what happened with the [REDACTED]
43. When it comes to my daughters, I'm always worried that I will turn into a bully like Father [MFC] I have a fear of this because of my past.
44. I started to drink heavily. I couldn't just have one or two drinks, I had to drink until I was completely drunk. I did that frequently. I'm not sure of the exact reason for this, but looking back it might have been to block out my childhood. My drinking has got

gradually worse over the years. I have a weekend cocaine habit, which I have had since I came out of the army. I feel as though I have never dealt with my problems properly and got to the root of them. I think that keeping it to myself has not helped this.

45. My sleep has always been poor. I've had several periods of depression in my life, particularly since 2010. I have been receiving therapy for my depression. I have terrible times when I am feeling down and I will be driving along the road and have thoughts of suicide. I have also taken overdoses in the past.
46. I have a recurring dream that we are having a school reunion at Fort Augustus. Everyone is there and knows that I have spoken to the police about Father [MFC]. Father [MFC] comes into the room and puts his hand on my shoulder and speaks softly in my ear, which terrifies me.
47. I was in my father's shop in 2014 when a man came in who looked exactly like Father [MFC]. He had a bald head and glasses. I had a complete panic attack and was struggling to breathe.
48. Until recently, I never told anybody about my past as I was too embarrassed. I felt guilty and that it might have been my fault. I didn't want to tell my parents as they would feel guilty for sending me there in the first place. I didn't want to hurt their feelings. I thought it was my stuff and I had to deal with it.
49. Since being in Fort Augustus, I have believed that if I am bad, something terrible will happen as that is God's way. For instance, when I was younger I would believe that if I had a bad game of football, it was because I had been misbehaving. Even now, as a grown up, I believe that something terrible will happen if I have done something wrong. I have issues of not being good in pressurised or confrontational situations, either at home or at work. I tend to beat myself up and get down and blame myself very easily.

Reporting of Abuse

50. In 2013, I saw a programme called *Sins of our Fathers*. It was about Fort Augustus. It was a complete shock to me when I saw it. My dad approached me and asked what had gone on at the school when I had boarded there. I told him that I would just get belted and nothing more. At the time, I hadn't even told my wife what had really been going on. I built up the courage to tell my mate and then I realised that I had to tell my parents and my wife. I did tell them.
51. There is a link to a police investigation. I have phoned the police in Inverness off my own bat. I gave a statement at Bell Street Police Station in Dundee. I then began to find out more and more information about Fort Augustus. I went to see a support worker at Victim Support through the police in Dundee.
52. Whilst going through the process with the police, they told me about compensation that I would be entitled to. I was more interested in getting it off my chest and trying to deal with the issues of drinking and depression that I had. However, I went to a firm of local solicitors called Bells. They recommended Switalskis, who are dealing with the case.
53. The police have told me that Father [MFC] is currently in Canada and that they are trying to extradite him [REDACTED]. My case at Switalskis has been put on hold until that occurs. I am hoping that a successful conclusion to the case will help me to take steps towards feeling better about myself and moving on with my life. I think that the more I speak about it, the more I am able to cope better with my life as I am still being affected by Fort Augustus to this day.
54. I came forward to the police as an opportunity to get things off my chest and try to take steps towards moving on. However, since coming forward, I am still suffering from recurring nightmares and flashbacks. I sometimes get suicidal thoughts. I think coming forward has helped me. It has made me feel more open about things, now that other people know, especially my parents and wife.

55. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

MOZ
[Redacted Signature]

Signed.....

Dated..... 16/6/19