

REGULATION 28: REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS

NOTE: This form is to be used **before** an inquest.

	<p>REGULATION 28 REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS</p> <p>THIS REPORT IS BEING SENT TO:</p> <p>1. Military of Defence Defence Inquest Unit (DIU) Directorate of Judicial Engagement Policy MOD Main Building London SW1A 2HB</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>2. Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace) House of Commons London SW1A 0AA</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>1.</p>
1	<p>CORONER</p> <p>I am Mrs Samantha Marsh senior coroner, for the coroner area of Somerset.</p>
2	<p>CORONER'S LEGAL POWERS</p> <p>I make this report under paragraph 7, Schedule 5, of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and Regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013.</p>
3	<p>INVESTIGATION</p> <p>On 22nd November 2021 my predecessor, Mr Tony Williams, commenced an investigation into the joint deaths of husband and wife, Stephen Roy Chapple and Jennifer Chapple. Inquests were opened and adjourned on the 9th December 2021.</p> <p>Upon Mr Williams' retirement, I took over conduct of the above cases on 01 April 2022</p> <p>The investigation was suspended under Schedule 1 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 on the basis that an individual was charged with their murder.</p>
4	<p>CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DEATH</p> <p>Stephen and Jennifer Chapple lived on a residential housing development in Norton Fitzwarren. They became involved in a parking dispute with their neighbour, [REDACTED]. It would appear that [REDACTED] took umbrage at Jennifer, in particular, parking her vehicle in a particular location and manner</p>

within the development. She was perfectly legally entitled to park how and where she did; [REDACTED] simply didn't like it and took petty action of moving his bins to block spaces and/or parking his own vehicle in an inconsiderate manner to cause a nuisance.

There were some instances of police involvement, but this was largely either deemed to be a civil matter or verbal harassment by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who embarked on a course of conduct designed to intimidate or frighten Mr, but more particularly Mrs Chapple.

On the 21st November 2021 at 09:45am [REDACTED] telephoned Avon and Somerset Constabulary and informed the call-taker that he had stabbed his neighbours, Mr and Mrs Chapple. They suffered significant wounds and were sadly pronounced deceased at the scene.

The IOPC Report concluded that the Police acted appropriately to the incidents reported at the time and there was no indication from the previous conduct that physical violence and/or a double homicide offence was even a remotely foreseeable possibility.

[REDACTED] was charged with the double murder and after a trial was sentenced at Bristol Crown Court on the 21st June 2022 to a fixed minimum custodial term of 38 years.

5 **CORONER'S CONCERNS**

During the course of the investigation my inquiries revealed matters giving rise to concern. In my opinion there is a risk that future deaths could occur unless action is taken. In the circumstances it is my statutory duty to report to you.

The **MATTERS OF CONCERN** are as follows. –

The murder weapon was a ceremonial dagger that had been presented to [REDACTED] following his retirement from the British Army. [REDACTED] was in the British Army was 2002 – 2017 (Royal Engineers) and, on leaving, he was presented with the ceremonial dagger as a commemorative token of his service.

The dagger was not a blunt replica, it was a fully functional weapon capable of causing significant harm, injury and sadly in the Chapple's case, death.

Please reconsider the appropriateness of providing anyone leaving the British Army, regardless of rank or status, with what is (to all intents and purposes) a deadly weapon. Such presentation/gifting has essentially put a deadly weapon in the community (where I understand it sadly remains, having never been recovered as it was removed from the scene prior to police attendance) and I am not persuaded that this is appropriate.

During the trial, evidence was adduced by [REDACTED] defence team to allude to the poor mental health of [REDACTED] because of combat and tours of war-torn countries. This is not an uncommon feature of those serving in and/or leaving the Army and adds further weight to my concerns around the appropriateness of such items (whether ceremonial or not) being issued in the first place, but secondly being issued to those who may have a propensity for mental health issues.

6	<p>ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN</p> <p>In my opinion urgent action should be taken to prevent future deaths and I believe you have the power to take such action.</p>
7	<p>YOUR RESPONSE</p> <p>You are under a duty to respond to this report within 56 days of the date of this report, namely by 25th April 2023 , the coroner, may extend the period.</p> <p>Your response must contain details of action taken or proposed to be taken, setting out the timetable for action. Otherwise you must explain why no action is proposed.</p>
8	<p>COPIES and PUBLICATION</p> <p>I have sent a copy of my report to the Chief Coroner and to the following Interested Persons I have also sent it to the Chief of Avon and Somerset Constabulary who may find it useful or of interest.</p> <p>I am also under a duty to send the Chief Coroner a copy of your response.</p> <p>The Chief Coroner may publish either or both in a complete or redacted or summary form. He may send a copy of this report to any person who he believes may find it useful or of interest. You may make representations to me, the coroner, at the time of your response, about the release or the publication of your response by the Chief Coroner.</p>
9	<p>28th February 2023</p> 