

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
INTEROFFICE MEMO**

**DATE:** 06/30/99  
**DIVISION:** Ranger

**TO:** Chief Bruce Casteel, Texas Ranger Division  
**FROM:** Sergeant George L. Turner, Texas Rangers Co. F, Cleburne  
**SUBJECT:** Branch Davidian Evidence

As per your instructions, I submit to you this memo in regards to a particular piece of evidence I recovered during the search of the Branch Davidian Compound after it was destroyed by fire on April 19, 1993.

I was initially assigned to the investigation of the Branch Davidians immediately after the failed execution of the search and arrest warrant by the Bureau of Alcohol and Tobacco. After the above described fire I was assigned as a Team Leader of Team #2. Our mission was to conduct a thorough crime scene search and locate any and all evidence that would assist Federal prosecutors in the successful prosecution of the surviving Davidians. Texas Ranger Gary DeLosSantos was assigned to my team as the Recorder.

On Thursday, April 22, 1993 my team began the search of what is described as Sector E. This sector encompassed an area generally from the northwest wall of the large underground fort and northwest of the Compound's curtilage. This sector was gridded into 45 individual grids within an area measured at 160 feet by 480 feet. Forty of these individual grids measured 10 feet by 20 feet and 2 of the grids measured 80 feet by 80 feet. Two of the grids measured at 80 feet by 100 feet and one grid measured 160 feet by 200 feet.

Sector E grids were individually marked for identification beginning with EA1 through EA8, EB1 through EB8, EC1 through EC8, ED1 through ED8, EE1 through EE8, EF1 through EF8, EG1 through EG2 and EH1. All were numbered, excepted as noted; one through 8 in a northwesterly direction.

This sector would eventually yield 43 separate Ranger exhibits. They consisted mostly of bullets, bullet fragments and cooked off cartridge cases. In this sector was also located 6 automobiles, a tractor and a 16 foot trailer.

On April 23, 1993 the actual evidence collection began. The previous days had been spent in the gathering of the necessary equipment and the gridding process. Assigned to my team at that time were DeLosSantos, Special Agent(FBI)Kevin Ashby, Special Agent (FBI)Jose Rodriguez, Special Agent(FBI)Jan Bray, DPS Photographer Michael Holle, DPS Latent Print Examiners Danny Carter and Oscar Kizzee, DPS Chemist Irma Rios and DPS Criminalist Dottie Collins.

At approximately 2:15PM while operating in Sector EC1 I located and collected what would later become evidence item Q1237. This exhibit (Ranger Exhibit #17 of RF093021-BB-27) was a spent 40MM metallic cartridge. This item was found among 28 plastic Ferret Rounds that had contained CS Liquid Gas. There was also found in this grid 2 cartridge box containers of the Ferret rounds. The metallic cartridge and the plastic Ferret rounds were in the same pile to the best of my memory. I have never seen a photograph of this exhibit. As stated above there was a photographer assigned to my team on this date. However, there were not enough photographers to have one assigned to each team and they were moved from team to team as necessary. Therefore, I may have been unable to have this item photographed at the time of its retrieval. Neither myself or Ranger DeLosSantos were familiar with the nature of this metallic cartridge.

At approximately 5:22 PM of that date I carried the collected exhibits to the collection point where all evidence was being turned over to evidence technicians and ultimately to Ranger Jim Miller. While waiting to submit these gathered exhibits, I showed the metal cartridge to Ranger Charles Brune and Ranger Joe Peters, both of whom were military veterans. Both Brune and Peters stated that the cartridge was that of a "Thumper Round." Not being familiar with the term I inquired farther. Both Rangers stated that the cartridge fired a high explosive round. It was submitted as an exhibit at that time with the 28 plastic Ferret cartridges.

At some point later I spoke with Special Agent (FBI) Rick Crum who was in charge of FBI personnel at the crime scene. I told him about the spent cartridge and that Ranger personnel had described it as a "Thumper Round." Agent Crum told me he would make an inquiry about it and let me know his findings. I am not sure but I believe I let Agent Crum look at the item and obtain a lot number from it. I am not positive on this though. The fact that I had discovered this item was made known to Ranger Captain Byrnes who was in charge of Ranger personnel at the time.

On Saturday, January 8, 1994 I traveled to San Antonio. The trial of the US Government versus the Branch Davidians would begin on Monday, January 10. Testimony actually began on the afternoon of January 12, 1994. I did not take the stand to give testimony until the morning of Thursday, January 13. I would testify again on February 2 and February 10. On my first day of testimony I presented all evidence that I had collected from Sectors E, I and J. Prior to my testimony of January 13 I was contacted by Agent Crum who was also in San Antonio for trial purposes. Agent Crum told me that he had checked the lot numbers of the item in question and that the round did belong to the FBI and that it had been fired by them. He continued by saying that the Agents who were dispensing the CS gas into the Compound on April 19 had fired the round after obtaining permission to do so. I do not know who gave the permission. According to Agent Crum the projectile had been fired at a door near that portion of the building in an attempt to knock it down, so the gas could

be dispensed. I remember no further conversation with him about this item. I did not inquire if any examinations had been conducted on the cartridge. I was about to enter the courtroom or something similar and did not have a lot of time to continue the conversation.

To the best of my memory I admitted the exhibit containing this item and the spent plastic Ferret cartridges. These 29 separate items had been placed in a clear plastic bag and sealed. There were no questions asked me by the defense about this particular exhibit.

On Friday, August 21, 1998 I traveled to Austin and met with Ranger Lieutenant's Coffman and Miller. We went to the location at DPS Headquarter where the Court Exhibits from San Antonio are stored. At that time we met with a documentary film maker who had requested visual inspection of certain exhibits. One of his requested items was that of the "thumper round". Prior to this meeting I had been faxed a photograph of what I believe to be the cartridge in question. This photo had been taken at the FBI Laboratory in Washington, DC. I have never seen the original photograph but believe it to be in the possession of Captain Brune, however, I am not certain of this only that he faxed it to me. During the search for the requested items, we could not locate this exhibit. After discussion with Coffman and Miller the possibility existed that the item had not been submitted as a Government's Exhibit during the trial as I had believed. If that was the case it would mean that the exhibit would be currently stored at a warehouse in Waco with the other non-trial exhibits. However, it was still my belief that it had been entered during my first day of testimony.

After being unable to locate the item in Austin I returned home. I searched the Internet and found a location that contains the trial testimony of many of the witnesses that appeared in the San Antonio prosecution. My testimony is among these. In reading my testimony, particularly when exhibits of my Sectors are being admitted, I found no mention of a plastic bag containing 28 spent plastic cartridges and one spent metal cartridge. I do not know if the transcripts I was reading from are complete or not.

It is now my understanding that at the time of this writing the exhibit has been found at the Austin storage site. This would seem to indicate that it was admitted during trial but would not necessarily mean so. I do not know if the plastic bag that contains the cartridges is affixed with a yellow Government Exhibit marking or not. This information would definitely clarify if it was admitted or not.

I never came forward with the information that would seem to indicate that an explosive projectile was fired on April 19, 1993 other than stated above. But I was never asked the question. If I had been I would naturally responded with the truth. Be it on the witness stand or elsewhere.

I know that Lieutenant Coffman contacted then Senior Captain Cooke and Captain David Byrnes before they were to testify before the Senate Sub-Committee in Washington and reminded them

of the possibility of an explosive round having been fired. I believe this to have occurred during the Summer of 1995 while I was on a seven week sick leave having had my heart repaired.

Respectfully submitted,

George L. Turner  
Sergeant  
Texas Rangers Co. F  
Cleburne

CC:Captain Kirby Dendy  
Lieutenant Ray Coffman