

de un etarra en un control



Helicópteros de la Guardia Civil colaboraron en las tareas de búsqueda del presunto terrorista huido. La Policía Local apoyó a los efectivos en el reconocimiento del terreno.

establecieron controles en todos los accesos a la población, así como a lo largo de la N-340, que se mantuvieron hasta media mañana del viernes 20 de julio. Al día siguiente el ámbito de la búsqueda se amplió a los términos municipales vecinos, aunque desplazándose hacia el sur. Más de 500 agentes peinaban la zona rural de Alcossebre,

Torreblanca y Cabanes, mientras en el casco urbano de Torreblanca se mantenía una discreta vigilancia, apoyada por un helicóptero que durante toda la jornada sobrevoló el perímetro del cerco policial. Los medios de comunicación desplazados a Torreblanca habían tomado el aparcamiento del Miramar como base de

operaciones, desde donde se habían hecho durante la noche las conexiones en directo con los informativos.

La presencia de los periodistas el viernes ya fue más discreta, aunque todavía permanecían varios equipos de televisión y periodistas en la localidad.

Minutos antes se supo que el etarra había entrado en España

Al cierre de esta edición las Fuerzas de Seguridad del Estado continuaban la búsqueda de dos etarras, identificados como Ander Múgica y Aitor Zubillaga. El primero de ellos fue el que cogió el taxi que después abandonara precipitadamente en Torreblanca, mientras que al segundo se le sitúa en el entorno de la Estación de RENFE de Castelló despidiendo a Múgica. En un principio la Guardia Civil trabajó la identificación del sospechoso mediante un retrato robot elaborado a partir de las declaraciones de los testigos, principalmente del taxista que lo llevó de Castelló a Torreblanca.

Minutos antes de su intercepción en un control frente al Hotel Miramar de Torreblanca, el servicio de información de la Guardia Civil advirtió de que Ander Múgica había entrado a España desde Francia, iba armado y era peligroso. La información llegó a las 12:13 minutos, 17 minutos antes de que a las 12:30 huyera de la Guardia Civil.

La Guardia Civil mantiene un discreto dispositivo de búsqueda, aunque según fuentes de la lucha antiterrorista este se ha visto reforzado por la presencia de agentes de paisano camuflados, con la esperanza de que el presunto activista de ETA no hubiera abandonado la zona cercada por las fuerzas de Seguridad.



Izquierda: Retrato robot elaborado por la Guardia Civil en base al testimonio del taxista.

Derecha: Fotografía de Ander Múgica de 2002

Contenido de la bolsa abandonada en el taxi

En una primera inspección ocular los agentes de la Guardia Civil tras examinar el contenido de la bolsa de deportes observaron algún efecto con anagrama de ETA y posibles componentes de artefactos explosivos, por lo que procedieron a requerir la presencia de los TEDAX.

Posteriormente, y en la inspección llevada a cabo por los servicios de desactivación de explosivos se localizó lo siguiente:

- **Fiambrera de color blanco en cuyo interior se encontraban 6 detonadores.**
- **2 temporizadores del tipo lapa, preparados con ampolla de mercurio.**
- **1 bolsa de plástico que contenía polvo blanco. (Posiblemente pentrita).**
- **1 bolsa que contenía cordón detonante.**
- **Diversos enseres personales pertenecientes a un hombre.**

Todo este material habitualmente utilizado por la banda terrorista ETA, fue estudiado por los especialistas.

EL 7 SET ENGLISH - by Brenda Cundell

Terrorist alert in Torreblanca after a member of ETA takes flight during a routine inspection

On Thursday 19th July, the presence of a person, presumed to be a member of ETA, in Torreblanca shattered the summer peace in the town and put it in the news and in all the papers in Spain.

The film of the events all started in the taxi stand at the RENFE station in Castellón, where the terrorist got into a white Citroen Xsara Picasso, driven by Rafael, a Castellón taxi driver with just one year's experience. The passenger, according to what the taxi driver told the Guardia Civil, asked to be taken to the Juan XXIII Hospital in Tarragona where he said there was a relative of his. The journey was without incident until they arrived at Torreblanca. There, on seeing a Guardia Civil control on the N-340, the terrorist became visibly nervous and asked the driver to stop in the Restaurante Miramar car park. According to various witnesses, when the vehicle stopped, the passenger fled down the access ramp towards the Restaurant's car park in Calle San Antonio.

The taxi driver immediately alerted the Guardia Civil officers who were on control duty to the fact that his passenger had escaped on seeing them. On checking the baggage which the terrorist had abandoned in his precipitated flight, the Civil Guard officers found clothing and a deadly load of items including a timing device for making limpet bombs, fuse wire, detonators and pentrita, a powerful explosive used in limpet bombs. From this moment the unprecedented deployment began in the town to surround and arrest the suspect. It was 12:30, at mid-day, on Thursday 19th July and from then on began the most frenetic 48 hours that Torreblanca had ever known.

As the officers who were reinforcing security at the Benicassim International Festival were so near, this enabled rapid deployment of the operation. From the beginning, check points were placed at all accesses to the town and at various points along the N-340. A Guardia Civil helicopter joined the search, reinforced by the presence of the Head of the Local Police in the crew to assist with the search because of his knowledge of the municipality.

At around 14:00 hours teams of trackers joined in from the Guardia Civil Dog-handling Brigade with two trained dogs. After picking up the scent from the clothes found in the fugitive's baggage, the dogs picked up a trail which took the officers from the Restaurante Miramar car park down the ramp to the alley with leads to the calle San Antonio and from there across the calle San Antonio down the embankment towards the fields of almonds and oranges in La Foya.

This was the beginning of operation "Jaula" which is put into operation automatically in the event of a terrorist hunt. At 16:00 the officers of the Rural Security Group appeared. They began by deploying and following the trail marked by the dogs, later going through the town almost house by house, searching homes and interrogating the residents about possible signs or the presence of anything strange in the area. Behind the officers dozens of journalists, television and photo crews were dashing about, following the developments of the Guardia Civil at the same time as they were interviewing residents, as their curiosity brought them to their doors.

The spectacular operation more than shocked the population, with officers clutching weapons to search some streets or the anecdote that

some immigrants, possibly in an irregular situation, had fled when they saw the Guardia Civil arrive, which led then to them being followed by the Security Forces and identified, which was all a false alarm.

From the time the news hit the television screens, the Guardia Civil started to receive calls from people who said that they had seen the fugitive or someone who fitted the description. Leads received ranged from suspects in Oropesa, in Peñíscola or walking along the AP-7, all of which were received with reservation until they could be proved.

Other spectacular scenes of the hunt were seen at the Castillo de Albalat. An El Pardalero resident gave the alert that there was a man who fitted the description of the suspect, running towards the Castillo de Albalat. The forces hurried to the area, where they searched various abandoned houses thoroughly. In spite of the pictures of officers getting close to the huts with due precaution, no signs of the fugitive were found.

At night-fall, check-points were set up at all the entrances to the town, as well as along the N-340, and they remained until mid-morning on the Friday, 20th July. The following day the extent of the search increased to the neighbouring towns, although going south. Over 500 police officers combed the rural area of Alcossebre, Torreblanca and Cabanes, whilst in Torreblanca town centre a discreet watch was kept, supported by a helicopter which as the day went on flew over the perimeter of the police search area. The communications teams which had come to Torreblanca had used the Miramar car park as a base, from where during the night they made their live reports with the news.

By Friday the journalist presence was already more discreet, although various television crews and journalists still remained in the area.

The Guardia Civil in Torreblanca knew only a few minutes before that the member of ETA had come into Spain

As this paper was going to press, the State Security Forces were continuing the search for two members of ETA, identified as Ander Múgica and Aitor Zubillaga. The first-mentioned was the one who took the taxi which he later abandoned suddenly in Torreblanca, whilst the latter stayed in the area around the Castellón RENFE Station seeing Múgica off.

At first the Guardia Civil worked on the identification of the suspect through a Photofit drawn up from witnesses' statements, mainly those of the taxi-driver who took him from Castellón to Torreblanca. Minutes before his interception at a check-point in front of the Hotel in Torreblanca, the Guardia Civil's intelligence service had told them that Ander Múgica had entered Spain from France, was armed and was dangerous. The information arrived at 12:13, just 17 minutes before he fled from the Guardia Civil at 12:30.

The Guardia Civil is maintaining a discreet team on the search, although according to the anti-terrorist forces this has been reinforced by the presence of camouflaged plain-clothes officers, in the hope that the suspected ETA activist has not left the area being covered by the Security forces.

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