

## Mumbai terror attacks: Commando describes Taj Mahal siege

An elite commando involved in the siege at the Taj Mahal Hotel has spoken of how he was shot by terrorists as he searched for survivors.

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Sunil Kumar, of the Black Cat Commandoes said room-by-room searches took place in a bid to locate hostages.

He also told of the moment a gunman hit him with three rounds as he tried to drag a hotel employee to safety.

In an interview with Sky News, Mr Kumar said: "Things were bad. Everyone was scared. Nobody knew what was happening. Our commander assigned special tasks to get us through. We were just focused on the terrorists.

"We were working in two teams, combing the hotel top to bottom. We cleared the sixth floor and roof without incident. Then the fifth. Then the fourth. By the time we got to the third floor, it was too late. There were simply too many rooms."

He continued: "Many wouldn't open, even with the master key. We had to enter by force to get people out who were too scared to evacuate."

"I wasn't afraid though, I've spent five years fighting militants in Kashmir."

The commando told how he was shot at trying to save a guide who was gunned down.

"We had a guide with us, a hotel employee, a hostage himself, to lead us through the hotel. He was the one who was opening each room and stepping aside.

"On the third floor a door swung open and he was gunned down. He wasn't wearing a bullet-proof-vest. I dragged him out of range of the shots, but as I did I received three rounds to my back."

Another survivor of the terrorists attacks has described how he was saved by a brass buckle.

Police officer Baburao Gavane was despatched to Cafe Leopold as the city came under attack.

He said: "I was driving to the scene and was shot just as my van turned into Colaba. The bullet

hit my belt buckle - it saved my life.

"At that exact moment, there was a loud explosion and I tried to reverse the van. Then I was shot three times in my thigh and twice in my stomach. They shot 15 rounds at the van."

He managed to call for back-up and was rescued, the policeman said.

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