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Title: Copy report of a visit to Pomeroy, County Tyrone made by Martin Burke of the Department of Foreign Affairs to investigate the killing of Patrick McElhone there on 7 August, 1974. Includes covering letter from Gearóid Ó Broin of the Department of Foreign Affairs to Dermot Nally, Assistant Secretary in the Department of the Taoiseach.

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ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
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1. Mr. Mulcahy
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For file on Incident involving
British Army (not British Army) Border incidents) 16/8/74

15 August 1974

Dear Dermot

I attach a copy of a report on a visit to Pomeroy made on 12 August 1974 by Mr. Martin Burke of this Department in which he investigated the killing there of Patrick McElhone on 7 August.

Yours sincerely

Gearóid Ó Broin

Mr. Dermot Nally
Assistant Secretary
Department of the Taoiseach
Government Buildings
Dublin 2

Visit to Pomeroy on 12th August 1974

During a visit to Pomeroy I spoke to Fr. Faul and to the family of Patrick McElhone who was shot by the British Army on 7.8.74.

Although there has been very little IRA activity in the area the British Army were very active in Pomeroy for the two weeks preceeding the shooting. On the day the shooting took place Patrick McElhone had been working at hay in a field near to the McElhone home. He was the only member of the family who lived at home besides the parents. One brother, Barney, was in England, Michael worked for a building contractor and stayed at home on occasions and Mary is married to a man called Michael McCourt who incidentally sold the bar he owned in Trillick to Mr. Kelly who was recently murdered, after he had received threats to his life.

The soldiers questioned Patrick McElhone in the hayfield at about 3.00 p.m. and at 5.00 p.m. requested permission from his father to search the outhouses. Permission was given and in his presence all were thoroughly searched and nothing was found.

At 6.00 p.m. Patrick McElhone returned to the house, passing by the soldiers on his way. Shortly afterwards two soldiers called to the house and took Patrick out and as related in the press appeared to threaten him. Two soldiers then brought him about fifty yards down the road. One opened a gate into a meadow and made Patrick stand in the field while the soldier returned towards the gate. There were at least ten soldiers covering Patrick at this stage from the road and one from the yard at the McElhone home. Mr. McElhone senior had, at this stage, come down the road and was within 20 yards of the gate to the field with a clear view of his son standing alone in the field, 17 yards from the gate. At this stage a shot rang out and Patrick McElhone fell dead.

As related in the press Mr. McElhone received much abuse from the

soldiers and was forced for his own safety to return to the house.

Fr. Faul
11/11/71

I attach a statement made by Fr. McGirr and Fr. Faul on this shooting. Fr. Faul also took statements from a man who passed at this time (a Mr. McAleer) and from the father of Patrick McElhone. He has promised to forward copies of these statements to me. It is interesting that Mr. McAleer was stopped by the soldiers before the shooting happened and out of sight of the field. The soldier said to Mr. McAleer when the shot rang out "that's one of your mates gone" and made a remark to the effect that the soldier in question would get £200 for it. He expressed no surprise at the shot and seemed indeed to have expected it.

It would appear that the soldier who shot Patrick McElhone was the one who pushed him into the field as the police have told Michael McElhone that the shot entered the side of his chest at his right arm and came out through his heart at the front and he fell forward away from the gate.

Fr. Faul has heard from a confidential Army source that the whole affair was supposed to be a bluff planned by the group of soldiers. According to this they were going to tell Patrick McElhone that they would execute him if he did not give whatever information they were seeking and that they went through with this plan but that it back-fired when one of the soldiers accidentally shot him. It is not plausible however that a trained soldier could take deadly aim and then accidentally pull the trigger.

It is hard to understand why these soldiers became so interested in Patrick McElhone. He appears to have had no involvement with politics or the IRA and indeed was slightly backward, this being the main reason why he, of the three brothers, was kept at home to look after the farm and the parents. The cottage they live in has no television, electricity or even a radio. It is possible that it

may have something to do with Barney McElhone, his brother, who departed for England three weeks before the shooting and who has the reputation of being a bit of a "hothead." However this is only a suspicion on my part and has no bearing on the facts of the incident.

The R.U.C. apparently behaved in a very sympathetic manner and stated that the case against the soldiers would be pursued vigorously.

The local people and the parents feel that all the soldiers involved should be charged as accessories as the whole incident was orchestrated by all the soldiers. This is unlikely however.

Paddy Duffy, the SDLP man, has been engaged as the family's solicitor in this matter and they say that regardless of compensation they wish to see justice done.



Martin Burke

13.8.74.