

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



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AN GARDA SIOCHANA

Any reply to this communication should be  
addressed to:

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OIFIG AN CHOIMISINEARA,  
BAILE ATHA CLIATH.

and the following number quoted:

5C/396/68(B).

**SECRET**

The Secretary,  
Department of Justice.



I am directed by the Commissioner to forward herewith  
memoranda (4) in connection with events, etc. in the  
Six Counties, as observed by members of the Force who  
were in the area for a period recently.

*J. Malone, Chief.*

*Assistant Commissioner.*

MEMORANDUM RE VISITS TO SIX COUNTIES

## 1) AREAS: Newry, South Down and South Armagh.

The traffic checks, which were being carried out by the 'B' Specials have ceased. They are guarding the Courthouse, Telephone Exchange and the Post Office at Newry. This duty is performed at night only.

The 'B' Specials are organised on a County Basis, the Headquarters for Co. Down is Newcastle and for Armagh County, Armagh. The County is in charge of a County Commandant, assisted by an Adjutant. Both these posts are full time and pensionable. Next in the chain of command is the sub-district Commandant, known as the "S.D.C.". He is in charge of a Platoon consisting of fifteen to twenty men. A number of Sergeants are also attached to each Platoon. The SDC is not on a full time basis. In each Police sub-district, there may be two or three "Special" sub-districts, depending on the number of volunteers. A number of Sergeant Instructors are appointed for each Police District. There are two attached to Newry Police Station. These posts are full time. The Sergt. Instructor is responsible for the training of the Specials, and is in charge of the issue of arms and ammunition.

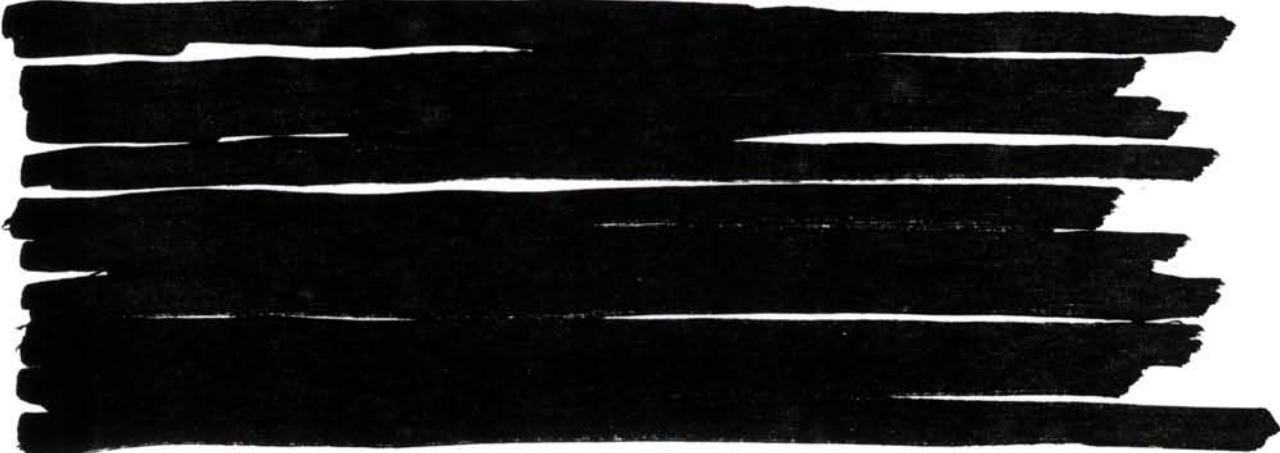
Each Special is issued with a .303 Rifle and 100 rounds of ammunition, which he takes home with him. Some are issued with a Sterling sub-machine gun. It appears that the only qualifications necessary for entry into the Specials are - (1) An applicant must be a Protestant and (2) he must be a staunch Unionist. A prospective candidate presents himself to the local SDC who would know the candidate personally. He is then sent to the Sergt. Instructor and is given a dictation test in his local Police Station. He is also required to present a Certificate of Fitness from his local Doctor. If found satisfactory, he is enrolled. Meetings are held about twice a month in Special Drill Halls, where weapons training is given. Occasionally, a lecture is given by a Police Officer on law and police procedure. Specials are taught how to fire the sub-machine gun, .303 rifle and .45 revolver. Range practice takes place during the Summer months, the range for the Newry area is located in the townland of Dysart near Rathfriland.

The people in Newry are pleased that the G.O.C., Northern Ireland Command, is now in charge of security, and see the fact that the Specials in the Belfast and Derry areas have to hand up their

Over.....

weapons when returning from duty, as the thin edge of the wedge, towards total disarmament, and the disbanding of the Specials altogether. This may present problems, however, as militant Protestants may resent it and further escalate the present trouble.

The recent statement by Cathal Goulding, on the eve of the Northern Premier's visit to Downing St., was greatly resented. It was felt that the timing of this statement was bad. It would seem that the Prime Minister was in an embarrassing position going to Westminster, and he was then presented with an excuse to justify the retention of the Specials. Some people will go so far as to suggest that Goulding was paid to make this statement by a representative of the Northern Government.



As regards the recent Security Council Meeting, and Dr. Hillery's speech therein - a lot of people simply did not understand the implications of these diplomatic moves, and the value of world opinion. Many feel that the mission may have been somewhat of a failure. This attitude could be due, in part, to the fact that while the Security Council meeting itself got blanket coverage from the news media, the outcome of the meeting and the impression made by Dr. Hillery's speech on the member countries, was not fully gone into. Some people also felt that the Irish Government were contemplating a token act of aggression against the Six Counties, thereby creating an international incident and giving the Security Council a reason for discussing the problem. It is interesting to note here that this view is shared by the Rev. Ian Paisley as indicated in speeches.

British Army helicopters are seen almost daily in the Newry area, flying reconnaissance flights along the Border, and some people allege that they sometimes cross into the Republic. Many people are surprised that the Irish Government have not made a protest to the


Over.....

- 3 -

British Government about this. Single engined planes are sometimes used for this work.

The social and business life of Newry is slowly returning to normal, but the people are still loth to go out at night, and streets are fairly deserted and entertainments generally are poorly patronised. A lot of the people feel that there will be more trouble and the shop fronts are still boarded up in anticipation.

Tension in South Down and Newry has eased considerably however, and it is expected that the position will further improve as time passes.



British military are patrolling border roads of South Armagh and they are also using helicopters over the area.

A Catholic RUC member in South Armagh has said that the police and 'B' Specials are under orders not to patrol the Border areas. They did not even make a routine enquiry concerning the attack on Crossmaglen Police Station. This member also said that there are no persons attached to the 'B' Specials in that area who reside in the Republic, but he said he knew of such residents from the Donegal area being in the 'B' Specials. Members of the RUC did not approve of Mr. Lynch's intervention or of Cardinal Conway's statement. The press, in his view, gave a very biased view of general affairs of recent times.

A Doctor, a native of the Republic, who works in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, is living in fear after having heard of a Paisleyite plot to have him removed from his post. Other professional men find themselves in a similar position.

Contact has been made with a number of people working in other areas of Co. Down and, except for some caution on the part of

Over.....

- 4 -

Protestants, things are quite normal. There is really no panic in this area and people are accepting the presence of the British military. In some areas relations between Catholics and RUC are not unduly strained but 'B' Specials are most unacceptable to the Catholic population.

Each night a complement of approximately thirty soldiers arrives at Newry and remain overnight until the following morning when they return to their camp at Ballykinlar, Co. Down. During each night a platoon performs patrols around Newry town and surrounds. Overnight accommodation at Newry is at the Territorial Hut, situated on the Belfast side of Newry.

Each night approximately ten soldiers arrives at Forkhill from their camp at Armagh and are accommodated overnight in the RUC Station at Forkhill,, Co. Armagh. They return to their camp every morning. They are not known to perform patrols from Forkhill.

On the morning of Thursday, 28/8/69, two lorry loads of military were seen outside the RUC Station at Forkhill. The time was about 11.00 a.m. and the total number seen was between 40 to 60. No further information available.

At approximately 11.00 p.m. on Saturday, 23/8/69, about eight 'B' Specials were engaged on a traffic check on the Newry/Omeath Road about one mile from Newry. They were armed - types of weapons not known - and they were travelling in a jeep.

On Tuesday, 26/8/69 at approximately 11.00 p.m., two armoured cars loaded with 'B' Specials were on the back road from Jonesboro' to Newry. This road runs parallel to the main Dundalk/Newry Road and the position of the Specials when seen was about a quarter mile on the Newry side of Jonesboro'. They were armed but no further details available.

## 2) AREA : Armagh.

On the night of the 21st-22nd August, 1969, approximately 200 British troops were flown into Gough Military Barracks, Armagh, by helicopters. These soldiers are equipped with landrover jeeps and armoured cars, all of which are equipped with radio transmitters.

A helicopter is based in Armagh and is on continuous surveillance over Armagh and adjoining Border areas.

Two soldiers were observed on foot patrol duty in Ogle St., Armagh, armed with sub-machine guns. Military patrol the town and surrounding areas in landrovers, jeeps and armoured vehicles. Two armoured vehicles, with a lorry load of soldiers containing approx. 20 men, were seen near Keady, Co. Armagh. They were heading for the Border.

All street lighting in Armagh is left on continuously during the night. This started on the 19th August, 1969.

Vital installations are guarded by 'B' Specials. Electricity power stations in vicinity of Armagh are lit up during the hours of darkness.

Tension in Armagh and surrounding areas has eased. People are happy with curbing of 'B' Specials and are adopting a wait-and-see attitude. Statements in connection with recent shooting of John Gallagher in Armagh have been handed to the police. These will indict 'B' Specials as being responsible. A local priest present on the night of the shooting states that only for his presence further bloodshed would have occurred. He heard an R.U.C. Sergeant urge on his men to attack the Catholic area of Banbrook Hill. Opinion of this priest is that Catholic attitude is to wait and see how Unionist Party reacts to curbing of 'B' Specials. Catholic people have been advised by local clergy to remain calm.

Hoardings on shop windows are being taken down and things are returning to normality.

Traffic during hours of darkness is very light, even on main roads. Vehicles and people on foot are being constantly checked by R.U.C. patrols. In vicinity of Armagh, they consist of four men in a patrol car.

One Catholic traveller, who sells tomatoes grown in North Dublin, has found a re-action from Protestant areas in Antrim and Ballymena against Irish goods.

Hand bills, by Derry Young Socialists, were put through the letter boxes of Catholic house-holders on the night of 21st August, 1969.

Help by the Irish Army in Border areas is appreciated, but any cross-border intervention would not appear to be welcome, except in extreme circumstances, i.e., conditions of mass murder of Catholics. People are disgusted with recent statement by IRA, which hindered rather than helped matters. It gave Unionists help in their propaganda.

The Cardinal's statement is much admired by local people and is seen as pressuring Stormont to face facts regarding 'B' Specials.



## 3) AREA: Belfast.

A person crossed the Border at Killeen Customs Post at about 6 p.m. on Friday, 22nd August, 1969. He saw no police, 'B' Specials or troops until he reached the end of the M.1. motorway at its junction with Donegal Road. The time was about 7 p.m. There were a number of troops on duty there and in the course of erecting road blocks. He was not stopped by them. He drove via Falls Road and Grosvenor Road to the City centre. All streets leading to Catholic areas were barricaded. The city centre was normal. A few policemen were to be seen, some in land-rovers and some apparently on beat duty. The windows of the land rovers are now covered with mesh wire.

The troops have now removed the road blocks in the Falls and Ardoyne areas and vehicular traffic can now proceed along the main thoroughfares there. The troops are spread over a larger area of the City and usually operate in pairs. No police or 'B' Specials have entered the Falls or Ardoyne trouble areas since the troops arrived. There are no police or Specials on duty there. Licensed premises still close at 6.30 p.m. in the greater portion of the City; a publican stated that the reason for this is that if a row developed he had no business sending for the police as they would not enter the Catholic areas at present for something as trivial as a public-house row. Most dance halls and places of entertainment still remain closed. Cinemas have altered their time-tables and most are closed by 9.00 p.m. Public transport in the trouble areas ceases at about 9 p.m.

As darkness falls, the troops erect road blocks and all traffic entering and leaving the trouble areas is scrutinised. Troops were not seen to search vehicles. The barricades in the side streets are also manned by civilians from darkness until about 5.00 a.m. These barricades are stronger and better than they were last week.

It was on Friday, 22nd August, 1969, that Sir Ian Freeland announced that the weapons of 'B' Specials would be lifted and put under central control. The unofficial barricades were heavily manned on Friday night as the Catholics feared reprisals from militant Protestants over this announcement.

Friday night was quiet; few policemen were seen in the City and no 'B' Specials.

Radio Free Belfast, The Radio of Revolution, was on the air on Friday night; it had been operating for two or three days previous to this. This is a pirate radio station operating on 240 to 245 meters on the Medium Wave Band. The radio is on the air twenty-four hours a day. It has been set up by the Peoples' Democracy and the Belfast Citizen's Defence Committee. The transmitter is situated in the Catholic, Falls Road, area and has a radius of about 4 to 5 miles. At times it is blotted out for long periods. The announcer said that it was set up to boost the morale of the men manning the barricades and urged them to make the barricades higher and thicker. It plays requests for these men and appeals for food and necessities.

Radio Free Belfast makes four demands off the Stormont Government :-

- (1) To release the men interned in Crumlin Road Prison and revoke the Special Powers Act.
- (2) To disarm and disband the 'B' Specials.
- (3) Disarm the R.U.C. and sack its Senior Officers.
- (4) Suspend the Stormont Government.

The Radio dwells mostly on the interned political prisoners and states that there are about 30 in Crumlin Road Prison. The requests played are a mixture of 'Pops' and 'Patriotic Songs', i.e., 'Sean South', 'Boys of Wexford', etc.

The radio also transmits messages such as the numbers of privately owned police cars operating in the area with the names of the police officers in same. It gives details of property lost and found and transmits messages to parents and relatives of refugees in the South. It is manned by an English Disc Jockey at night and by men with Northern accents in the day-time.

On Saturday evening, 23/9/1969, there was a message read over Radio Free Belfast from the National Solidarity Committee, Gardiner Place, Dublin. It called on persons from all walks of life in the 'Free State' to force the 26 County Government to take further action in regard to the problems in the Six Counties.

There are two other pirate radios operating in the Belfast area at the moment. These are "Radio Peace" and "Radio Ulster". They are believed to be in operation in the Protestant Shankhill area and are very amateurish in comparison with Radio Free Belfast.

On Saturday, 23rd August, 1969, a 'B' Special was seen carrying a .303 rifle and walking unaccompanied in the Dundonald area. This is adjacent to Stormont Castle and he may have been on Protection Duty there. It can be accepted that there are few, if any, 'B' Specials on duty in the Belfast area at present.

On Sunday, 24th August, 1969, Radio Free Belfast announced that a meeting would be held at Leeson St. at 5.30 p.m. It invited everybody to attend. Leeson St. links Lower Falls Road and Grosvenor Road and is predominantly Catholic. A crowd of about 600 gathered for the meeting. A Catholic priest from nearby Clonard Monastery spoke to the Organisers and at about 6.00 p.m. the crowd dispersed. There was no speech made. Some locals stated that the priest advised them to call the meeting off for security reasons and there was also talk of speakers from Dublin having failed to turn up.

On Monday, 25th August, Radio Free Belfast announced that an Open Air Ceili would be held in Leeson St. at 7.30 p.m. on that date. A crowd of six or seven hundred gathered for this ceili and a Tricolour was hoisted on the Falls Road end of the street. At about 8 p.m. a few musicians climbed onto a lorry and commenced to play music. Mr. Paddy Devlin, M.P., was on the platform. There were no loudspeakers and, up to 9.30 p.m., there was no speech made. I left the area at that time as some T.V. cameras arrived there. On the way out of the street a person was stopped by two youths of about 18 years of age. They enquired where he came from and asked for identification. He told them he was from the South and produced a slip of paper with a Drogheda address on it. They accepted this and were just checking on all strangers in case someone from the 'Other Side' got in.

The Peoples' Democracy and Belfast Citizen's Defence Committee have their own newspaper, 'The Citizen News', circulating. A copy of this paper has not been procured.

There is still nothing to indicate that the IRA have taken any active part in the Belfast troubles. Some people manning the barricades are not aware of any IRA involvement and very much resent the statement of Cathal Goulding that IRA units are in the North.

They do not want any IRA intervention at this stage and add that when they were needed most - on the 14th & 15th August, they were not to be found.

All Catholics are, of course, pleased that the weapons of the 'B' Specials are being placed under control. They still want to see the Specials disbanded. They regard this as the first and most important step towards a lasting peace. Most Catholics appreciate that the 'B' Specials cannot be disbanded overnight, because they fear that Mr. Paisley and the U.V.F. will then take to the streets.

Few people heard Dr. Hillery's full address to the United Nations Security Council. A few heard part of it and many more knew a little about it. However, there is no doubt that the Catholics of Belfast fully appreciate that the Irish Government brought the troubles in Northern Ireland to the notice of the world at large. They say that but for the action of the Irish Government, the Unionist Party would have endeavoured to brush these troubles under the carpet. Belfast Catholics, with a few exceptions, have little interest in Partition and have no desire to see a 32-County Republic. If given a choice, they would prefer to be governed by Westminster. Many feel that the Irish Government has taken advantage of the present troubles in Northern Ireland to further their own claim to the Six Counties. They now feel that the Irish Government should leave the matter sit.

Protestants argue that all this trouble has been brought about by a small minority of the Catholic population. One Protestant, who is a Government Official, admitted that there was some slight discrimination against Catholics in the matter of Housing and Job allocation. He argued, however, that the Catholics do not know what they want. They would like to live under the Irish flag but with British standards of living.

Business is normal in most areas with the exception, of course, of business premises which have been destroyed.

Windows are boarded up, day and night, in Catholic areas. Indeed, the City is far from being back to normal; there are vast areas of the City still barricaded to such an extent as to prevent all traffic entering. In other areas, traffic is only allowed to enter after it has been stopped and scrutinised by civilian vigilantes.

A person visiting Belfast from 23rd to 30th August, 1969, travelled extensively through the City and Suburbs at night. At no stage was he stopped by police or 'B' Specials. He was stopped on many occasions by the troops but was not searched or questioned.

It was noticeable that the G.O.C. of the British troops, Sir Ian Freeland, is most acceptable to all concerned.