Reference Code: 2005/7/662
Title: Report of the killing of Patrick McElhone in Pomeroy, County Tyrone, on 7 August, 1974, signed by Father Michael McGirr and Father Denis Faul.
Creation Date(s): 8 August, 1974
Level of description: Item
Extent and medium: 2 pages
Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach
Access Conditions: Open
Copyright: National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.
Parochial House
The Diamond
Pomeroy 80 Tyrone
8 August 1974

Death of Patrick McElhone, Limehill, Pomeroy, on 7th August 1974.

The father of the deceased is Peter McElhone, a man over in his 70s, Peter has a farm of about 20 acres of poor hilly ground at Limehill, Pomeroy. His wife, Margaret, is in her 60s. They have 4 of a family, 3 single boys and a married daughter.

The deceased, Patrick, aged 23, was the youngest son and was very dear to the family; he stayed at home and worked on the family farm. He was a small, lightly-built young man of an extremely quiet disposition. His chief interest, indeed his only interest, was playing the accordion in the local band. He went to an occasional dance. He was inclined to be backward and sheepish in conversation. He had absolutely no interest in politics of any kind.

In the recent two weeks a new regiment, believed to be the Life Guards from Armaph, have been very active and provocative in the Pomeroy area. Similair movements like spying on certain houses for days and harassment of the people generally create a climate of foreboding and fear.

On Monday 5th August there were saturation searches in the Limehill district. On Wednesday these searches were continued in the Limehill district; the soldiers went to a number of small farms and harassed the people with their foul language and threatening behaviour. They spoke to the deceased Paddy McElhone as he was cutting hay in a field. At 5 p.m. they searched the out-houses at his home but found nothing. Paddy McElhone came into his house for tea shortly after 6 o'clock. He was sitting at the table while his mother boiled the kettle, and after about 3 or 4 minutes two soldiers knocked at the open door and said: "Come out here young man, we want to have a word with you." Paddy went out and the soldiers closed the door on the father and mother. The mother went to a room window where she had a view of the road and saw a number of soldiers gathered around Paddy on the road. She heard one of them say: "You are not doing much to help the Army." Then she saw soldiers shaking him severely. They then took his further down the road. Then Mrs McElhone told her husband, Peter, "Go out and see what they are doing, to Paddy. I think they are going to arrest him." Peter went out and up the road after them. He saw his son being led up the road some distance ahead of him towards a steady one of his own hay fields. He saw a soldier crouching behind some bushes, below river level, at the opposite side of his own house. The soldier was looking through the hedge into the hayfield. He may have been the man who fired on Paddy.

Then Peter heard a shot and saw his son fall in the hay field. Peter screamed, "Why have you shot my son? He has done nothing." The soldier replied: "Get into the fucking house, you slobber you." Peter screamed to his wife: "They have shot Paddy" and he said to him: "Come into the house or they will shoot you too." Then Peter asked another soldier: "What was this for?" and he replied: "I am the Chief, and I don't know what it is about" Peter again attempted to approach the body of his son. A soldier told him: "Get back into the house, you fucking shot or we will shoot you too."
Fortunately I was doing a sick call in the Limchill district, and so when informed I was on the scene before 6.40. I was stopped by the soldiers and I asked permission to administer the Last Rites to the dead youth. The soldiers passed the word from one to another until an Officer came and said: "You want to administer to the dead bloke". I said "I did" and he said, "Follow me". I then administered the Last Rites. I observed that the body was lying against the slope of the ground, face downwards. Then the army doctor arrived. He turned him over with his boot, and I saw a gaping wound over the deceased's heart.

When I came out of the field I stopped talking to some local men and I overheard the soldiers using foul language and referring to "the fucking bastard in the field. All the soldiers were in a highly nervous state. One in particular, who was continually pacing up and down the road, talking to himself and shaking his head a nervous mannerism. The local people were terrified of him. All the soldiers had their faces blackened. The people are fearful and terrified, and want these soldiers removed from the Pomeroy district immediately.

Signed: 

[Signature]

Dear Paul