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McElvenna Case

There were two shooting incidents on 9 June near the border village of Keady, Co. Armagh involving members of the Northern Ireland security forces and members of the Provisional IRA. The first incident came after a British Army foot patrol spotted three men "acting suspiciously" beside a cattle truck. When they were about 60 metres away all three opened fire. The soldiers shot back and two gunmen escaped towards the border in the truck. The soldiers did not, apparently, give pursuit. Before reaching the border the occupants of the truck were involved in a second shooting incident when they stopped at the home of an off-duty prison officer and opened fire on him. The prison officer fired at the truck which caused them to break off their attack and crossed the border into Monaghan, eventually abandoning the truck near Ballybay about seven miles from the South Armagh border. The three members of the PIRA involved in the shooting were Peadar McElvenna (24), Desmond O'Hare (20) and Eugene McNamee (20). McElvenna was dead on admission to Monaghan hospital some two hours after the shooting incident and O'Hare and McNamee were admitted with gunshot wounds. McElvenna and O'Hare had been acquitted by the S.C.C. in Dublin only months ago of an attempted murder of a British Army officer at his wedding in Trim Church, Co. Meath in August 1978

Last week O'Hare was released from hospital following which he attempted to retrieve his car from the local Garda station. On being refused the car he scuffled with one of the local Garda; he was arrested, charged and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment. No charges in relation to the 9 June incident have yet been preferred against O'Hare or McNamee.