

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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Collected from Press Reports

Killing of Mrs. Mary Doherty on 13 April 1980 - main points

1. Mr. and Mrs. Doherty were driving back from their Silver Wedding anniversary dinner in the Castle Hotel, Co. Donegal within one hour's drive from their home in Ashgrove Park, Strabane.
2. About 150 yards from the British Army border checkpoint at Lifford Bridge, Strabane a bullet passed through the windscreen and killed Mrs. Mary Doherty as she sat in the back seat between her son and sister-in-law.
3. Mr. and Mrs. Doherty, his brother William and William's wife Harriet and John Doherty's 16-year-old son Richard left the hotel at about 1.30 a.m. About 2.00 a.m. with John Doherty driving and William Doherty in the front passenger seat they approached the permanent checkpoint at Lifford Bridge, Strabane.
4. The incident appears to have occurred well away from the checkpoint. [REDACTED] Mr. Doherty was driving very slowly going over a ramp when the windscreen shattered with a loud bang. He thought it was a stone but noticed a bullet hole in the middle of the screen. He then saw his wife (aged 53) dead in the back seat - the bullet hit her in the middle of the face. It must have passed between his brother and himself seated in the front seats of the car.
5. Mr. Doherty (aged 55) said he tried to alert people at the checkpoint by sounding the horn but nobody came near them. He then proceeded to the checkpoint and told personnel there what had happened. He then went back to the car and the ambulance and police doctor came. He said that nobody at the scene gave him any explanation as to what had happened.
6. At a special court in Strabane on 13 April a 19-year-old British soldier, Robert Reed Davidson of the Argyle and Southern Highlanders, Ballykelly, Co. Derry was charged with the unlawful killing of Mrs. Doherty. He was remanded in Army custody until 26 May.

7. Mrs. Doherty was a staff nurse at Strabane District Hospital and retired in January 1980 because of ill health. She started her nursing career at the Regional College, Galway.

8. The ~~incident~~ shot came from an observation tower at the approach to the checkpoint.