

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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### Trial of three RUC Members

1. The three RUC men, Sergeant Montgomery and Constables Brannigan and Robinson, were acquitted on 4 June of murdering Eugene Toman outside Lurgan on 11 November 1982. Toman had been travelling in a car with Gervaise McKerr and Sean Burns, which the RUC claimed had accelerated towards a policeman who had waved at the car to stop, striking him and knocking him down. The RUC press statement at the time said that this officer was treated in hospital for bruises.
2. The three were, according to RUC statements during the course of the court case, known to the RUC as members of the Provisional IRA. They were acknowledged as such by the PIRA when they received para-military funerals.
3. During the course of the trial it emerged that the three accused opened fire on the car as it went past them, firing an estimated 109 bullets. The police denied shooting at the vehicle after it had stopped though spent shells were found beside the car. The three men shot were unarmed.
4. The killing of these men, followed by the killing in early December of Seamus Grew and Roddy Carroll, gave rise to a belief that the security forces in Northern Ireland were engaged in a shoot-to-kill policy. (These shootings took place at a time of an increase in PIRA activity in the North Armagh area, culminating in a land-mine explosion in which three RUC members were killed less than two weeks before McKerr, Toman and Burns were shot.)
5. It now emerges that these three RUC men who were acquitted, as well as Constable Robinson who was acquitted of the murder of Grew and Carroll, were all members of a Special Mobile Support Unit within the RUC which had been trained to (in the words of Lord McDermott) use maximum fire-power in dealing with terrorism.
6. When the Minister for Foreign Affairs raised the alleged shoot-to-kill policy with Mr Prior at their meeting in London

on 1 February 1983, Mr Prior denied that there had been any change in policy. He accepted that incidents such as these damaged the relationship between the minority and the police and said he was worried. As regards the individual cases, Mr Prior repeated the remarks made in the police statements made after the killings, one of which, in the Grew and Carroll case, is now known to have been untrue. We also have information from the British which would indicate that allegations of a cover-up might have been raised during the case of the three RUC members. In the event, no such allegations were made.

When he spoke with the Minister on 25 May last Mr. Prior said that very murky waters would be plumbed during the course of the trial. Because of the speed of the judge in dismissing the case for the prosecution none of this emerged.

D. O Ceallaigh  
6 June 1984