

Subject:- Fatal Motor Accident in Bogside, Londonderry, on 24th July, 1971, involving Military Vehicle.

ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY
"N" DIVISION
- 9 AUG 1971
SUB-DIVISION OFFICE
VICTORIA

Chief Superintendent,
'N' DIVISION.

Submitted. I have to report that Inspector Gilbert has outlined the facts of this case correctly in his report. I was present during the whole incident and was in charge of the operation. I decided that if possible the fatal accident must be properly investigated so that false allegations and demands from an enquiry etc. would not be made. We were successful in getting this done.

This accident occurred in the heart of the Bogside and once the Army abandoned the lorry there was never a hope of getting it out intact. I hoped to get it out by road testing it but the A.P.U. Vehicle, the two Sergeants and myself were held as hostages until it was road tested and brought back to Westland Street. It was impossible to allow the Army to attempt to come into the area to retrieve the vehicle whilst we were carrying out the accident investigation because: -

- (1) The lives of the Policemen on the scene would have been put at serious risk.
- (2) The accident investigation would not have been completed.
- (3) The lorry would probably have been petrol bombed before the Army could have got near it.

It was my intention to direct the Army to try and take the lorry out as soon as the police were on their way out of the area, however, this was not possible because when the lorry was brought back it was immediately set on fire. The crowd then turned on the police who eventually escaped as described by Inspector Gilbert.

I consider that the proper action was taken and that the policemen involved showed a remarkable devotion to duty and it is my intention to submit an application for a favourable record in respect of this duty. I might add that the local Army Commander agreed fully with the police action.

L. Forbes.
Superintendent.