

LISBURN
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HEADQUARTERS
NORTHERN IRELAND,
LISBURN,
CO. ANTRIM.

(32)

NISEC 11/1 ←

31 January 1972

Ministry of Defence

EVENTS IN LONDONDERRY ON 30 JANUARY 1972

Lead-Up to the NICRA March

1. The intention of NICRA and others to defy the Government ban on marching, by staging a mammoth march on Sunday, 30 January 1972 from the Creggan and Bogside to the Guildhall Square for an anti-Internment meeting, first became known on 13 January. It was heavily publicised thereafter with figures of 12,000-15,000 marchers predicted.
2. In the two weeks prior to the march, the IRA was particularly active within the City and the Security Forces were fired on in 61 separate incidents and had a total of 52 nail bombs thrown at them. Security Force casualties during this period were two killed and three wounded. Two features of the IRA tactics in these attacks were the deliberate use of crowd cover (demonstrators or the general public in shopping areas) and the use of the hooligan elements in creating suitable opportunities for attacks against the Security Forces. A reliable and detailed intelligence report received during the week preceding the march confirmed earlier reports by including the forecast that the IRA would be using the crowd and hooligan cover technique during the march on 30 January to provide opportunities for attacks on the Security Forces.
3. The Joint Security Committee agreed on 27 January that the march would be stopped just inside the exits from the Bogside/Creggan. It was recorded that the operation might well develop into rioting and even a shooting war, and it was accepted that it was to be primarily an Army operation.

The Army Plan

4. 8 Infantry Brigade was reinforced by two and a half additional battalions (1 PARA, 1 KINGS OWN BORDER and 3 RRF less two companies) to a total of six and a half battalions. Three of these were to man barriers inside the perimeter of the Bogside and Creggan to block all exits from it. A fourth battalion, 1 PARA, was to maintain a Brigade Arrest Force, to be launched only on the orders of the Brigade Commander. The other battalions were in reserve or on Brigade tasks elsewhere.

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5. The concept of operations was to take no action against the marchers unless an attempt was made to breach the blocking points or violence was directed at the troops. Since it was anticipated that the march organisers would have no control over the hooligans, the arrest force was held back centrally behind the blocking points to be launched in an arrest operation if necessary. A Commanding Officer was to fly over the area in order to advise the Brigade Commander personally if and when the marchers had moved away far enough from the hooligan element for the arrest force to be launched safely at the latter.

The Main March

6. The Civil Rights March assembled in the Bishop's Field, Creggan from about 1400 hrs onwards. By 1447 hrs when it had grown to approximately 800 it set off via Linsfort Drive, Cromor Gardens, Rathlin Drive, Southway, Lonemoor Road, Brandywell Road, Lecky Road, Westland Street, Lonemoor Road and Creggan Road arriving at the Security Forces barricade in Williams Street at 1537 hrs.

7. During the march the crowd had gradually built up to a strength of some 3,000. Throughout it was well marshalled and great efforts were being made to prevent it degenerating into a rabble.

8. After arrival at the barricade there was a brief discussion between the march leaders, the Army and the RUC. However after two minutes the stewards lost control and the hooligan element took over. Attacks by rioting crowds throwing a variety of missiles, including some CS, developed at several barriers in the Williams Street area. At 1546 hrs a water cannon was used and the bulk of the crowd, some 2,000 in number, moved back to the waste ground around Rossville Street, leaving the rioters in the area of the barricades. At this stage Security Forces used CS gas and baton rounds against the rioters. By 1604 hrs the crowd in Rossville Street area dispersed down Westland Street, leaving some 500 in Rossville/Fahan Street where they were addressed by a speaker. By then there was clear separation between the rioters at the barricades and the remnants of the marchers.

Launching the Arrest Operation

9. At 1607 hrs, the Brigade Commander accordingly gave verbal orders to 1 PARA to launch the preplanned arrest operation. They were instructed to arrest as many rioters as possible in the area of the junction William Street/Rossville Street, and to conduct this operation without getting drawn into a confrontation with the NICRA marchers who were withdrawing peaceably.

10. By this time, two gunmen had already fired at troops and subsequently two shots had been fired at a nail bomber (details at Annex). No specific orders were given about opening fire during the arrest operation since these were covered by the 'Yellow Card'.

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The 1 PARA Arrest Operation

11. Three companies of 1 PARA were launched at 1612 hrs with clear-cut routes and tasks. 'A' Coy advanced into ~~Lisburn~~ Road and turned East into Williams Street to assist Sp Coy in their task of arresting rioters at the Williams Street/Rossville Street junction. This caused rioters to their front to run in the direction of Sp Coy where some were arrested. 'C' Coy advanced up Williams Street and made 22 arrests. Neither of these companies were directly involved in a gun battle, although both clearly heard bursts of fire and individual shots coming from the area of Rossville Flats, including the fire of low velocity weapons and M1 Carbines.

12. OC Sp Coy of 1 PARA, which played the major part in the operation, describes events as follows:

- " 1612 hrs The Coy was ordered to deploy down Little James to arrest rioters in William St. Due to the regrouping of the Coy, the Coy did not move until 1615. On arrival at Barrier 12 there was a delay while the barrier was opened. The rioters anticipated the ensuing action and began to withdraw towards Rossville Flats. The company followed them on to the open ground east of Rossville St and north of Rossville Flats. The leading pl, the Mor Pl, finally stopped in the car park area east of the northern most block of flats.
- 1617 hrs Three rounds struck the second pig of the Mor Pl. My veh stopped on Rossville St/Pilot Row junction in the close vicinity of two rioters. The crew of my veh debussed to arrest these men. At this time a burst of approx 15 rounds of .45 calibre SIG were fired at my crew, but the rounds struck the ground 20m in front of the soldiers.
- 1618-
1635 hrs By this time the Coy had all debussed and were arresting rioters. The Anti Tk Pl was West of Rossville St and the Composite Pl was either side of Rossville and Behind the leading pls. A total of 23 arrests were made over a period of a few minutes. During the arrest phase the two forward pls were subjected to SA fire from the area of Rossville Flats and Glenshade Park. Two gelignite bombs exploded in the Car Park 20 m from the leading soldier of the Mor Pl. Acid bombs were also thrown from the top storey of the flats, striking two soldiers on the legs. During the next 10 minutes or so, the engagements listed at Annex A took place. The stone throwing rioters had withdrawn from view except those beyond the Flats numbering some 300. During this phase 51 rubber bullets were fired at rioters, apart from those aimed 7.62mm rounds fired at gunmen, nail-bombers, and petrol bombers. The apparent disregard for the use of cover by these terrorists was very surprising.
- 1635 hrs approx The situation had stabilized and although several more high velocity rounds were fired at the coy, no shots were returned as no targets were positively identified. "

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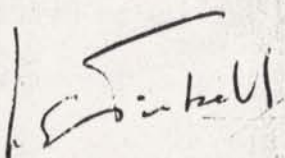
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13. Other shooting incidents During the same period, 1600-1700 hrs there were six other shooting incidents in which 1 R ANGLIAN and 22 Lt AD Regt RA were involved. These are listed at Annex A. They add further emphasis to the fact that the IRA were determined to fire at soldiers at every opportunity which the NICRA march gave them.

Conclusion

14. Statements have already been taken from all soldiers who fired and claim that they hit someone. These and the statements from Commanders confirm that the arrest operation itself was fully justified and carefully staged, and that the subsequent casualties were all caused by a fully justified response to armed attack on the soldiers. It is suggested that the following points can usefully be emphasised in public:

- a. That investigations confirm that all Army shooting was at identified targets, within the terms of the law, i.e. in self-defence or defence of others threatened.
- b. That the IRA fired first.
- c. That at no time did the Army fire indiscriminately, least of all "into a peaceful crowd".
- d. That exchanges of fire involving units other than 1 PARA doubtless accounted for some of the casualties.
- e. That ~~all~~ those hit were men of "military age", which would have been remarkable had we fired into a crowd.
- f. That we had reliable intelligence prior to the march that the IRA in Derry had plans to use the crowd as cover from behind which they would engage troops.
- g. That the "peaceful crowd" was well separated from the hooligans before 1 PARA's operation to arrest them was launched.


M E TICKELL
Brigadier
for General Officer Commanding

Annex A: Shooting Incidents Londonderry 30 Jan 72

DATED 31 JANUARY 1972

SHOOTING INCIDENTS LONDONDERRY 30 JAN 72

1. 1551 hrs. 2 x HV shots were fired at BRANDYWELL Tac Loc from KILDOWN Gdns area. No cas and no fire returned.
2. 1555 hrs. One high velocity round was fired from the direction of Rossville Flats at a 1 PARA wire cutting party in Queens Street. The shot struck a drainpipe on the East Wall of the Presbyterian Church approx 4 ft above the heads of the wire cutting party. The drain pipe is holed. A few moments after this a member of the MG Pl observed a man preparing to ignite a nail-bomb at the corner of the building GR 43251699 on the South side of Williams St. The Pl Comd then gave orders to a Cpl and a soldier to open fire as the bomber prepared to throw. These two soldiers did so and the man was seen to fall and was dragged away by his comrades.
3. 1617 - 1635 hrs (1 PARA Gun Battle)
 - a. One nail bomber at GR 43291683 shot from GR 43321684. Hit in thigh (Back of houses in Chamberlain St).
 - b. One petrol bomber at GR 43281679 shot from GR 43291683. Apparently killed (Car Park).
 - c. One bomber at GR 43261683 (top floor of flats) shot from GR 43281684. Apparently killed.
 - d. One gunman with pistol at GR 43321678 behind barricade at end of Chamberlain St shot from GR 43271686. Hit.
 - e. One nail bomber (bomb had lighted fuse) at GR 43281683 (Car Park) shot from GR 43271686. Hit.
 - f. One nail bomber at GR 43281675 (Car Park) shot from GR 43271686. Hit.
 - g. 1 gunman with pistol fired 2 rounds at a soldier armed only with a baton gun at GR 43231688 (Alleyway). Soldier fired one baton round and withdrew swiftly.
 - h. 1 nail bomber at GR 43251698 (William St) shot from GR 43271711. Hit.
 - j. 3 nail bombers at GR 43201685 (Glenfada Park) shot from GR 43241687. All hit.
 - k. 2 gunmen with pistols at GR 43181686 (Glenfada Park) shot at from GR 43231687. One hit, one unhurt.
 - l. 1 sniper in toilet window at GR 43191683 fired upon. Not hit.
 - m. 1 gunman with pistol at GR 43261684 (3rd floor of Rossville Flats) shot at from GR 43261692. Possibly hit.
 - n. 1 gunman with rifle at GR 43241680 (ground floor of Rossville Flats) shot from GR 43261692. Hit.
 - o. 1 gunman with rifle at GR 43231682 (barricade) shot from GR 43261682. Killed Body recovered.
 - p. 1 gunman with rifle at GR 43231682 (barricade) shot from GR 43261682. Killed. Body recovered.

4. Other Shootings not involving 1 PARA

- a. At 1617 hrs 4 shots were fired at a 1 R ANGLIAN foot ptl in LONG TOWER STREET by BOGSIDE INN from GR 43061657. 1 rd was returned. No mil cas. The gunman was hit.
- b. At 1630 hrs 3 shots were fired at a 1 R ANGLIAN foot ptl at BRANDYWELL TAC LOC from GR 42231603. 1 rd was returned. No hits or cas.
- c. At 1641 hrs 2 LV shots were fired at a 1 R ANGLIAN foot ptl in BARRACK ST from GR 43021633, one hitting a soldiers flak jacket. 2 rds were returned. 10 more rds were fired at the gunman at GR 43011629 a minute later. No hits or cas.
- d. At 1645 hrs 1 burst of auto shots were fired at BRANDYWELL TAC LOC from GR 42531589. 1 rd returned. No cas or hits. **Unit involved 22 Lt AD Regt.**
- e. Between 1600 - 1700 hrs 5 shots were fired at a gunman by K2 at GR 42571625 and he was hit. **Unit involved 1 R ANGLIAN.**
- f. At 1656 hrs 1 shot was fired by 22 Lt AD Regt at a gunman at a factory at ABBEY ST/WILLIAM ST Junction and he was hit.
- g. At 2257 hrs 3 shots were fired at a 1 COLDM GDS OP at BLIGHS LANE. 2 rds returned. No hits or cas.