



File

Mr L. Gough

FROM: D McMULLAN
DIRECTOR OF PRISON OPERATIONS
10 DECEMBER 1991

cc: PS/SofS (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
Mr Ledlie - B
Mr Steele
Mr Daniell
Mr Maccabe
Mr Ginn
Mr Treharne
Mr McNeill

PS/Minister of State (B&L) - B

BOMB EXPLOSION IN HM PRISON BELFAST ON 24 NOVEMBER 1991

Cecil Walker MP wrote on 27 November 1991 regarding allegations that there were delays in the admission of ambulances to HMP Belfast following the bomb explosion in 'C' Wing dining hall on 24 November 1991.

2. The explosion occurred at 17.16 hours and as soon as the location was established, at 17.17 hours, the emergency services, including ambulances were summoned. The first ambulance arrived at 17.22 hours, and after a cursory search to establish that there were no unauthorised persons in the vehicle, it was admitted to the prison.

3. Immediately after the ambulance entered, a fire brigade was admitted, and once it had manoeuvred through the front gate and the forecourt, the second ambulance was admitted, at 17.30 hours, and the third, at 17.32 hours, after cursory searches. There was therefore no avoidable delay in the admission of the ambulances.

4. The ambulances left the prison, with the victims, as follows:-

- (a) First ambulance left at 17.37 hours ie 15 minutes after admission.
- (b) Second ambulance left at 17.39 hours ie 9 minutes after admission.



DRAFT LETTER FOR SIGNATURE BY THE MINISTER OF STATE

2.

A Civil Servant JP MP

1. Myself and Lord

Carroll

Mr. Walker

Mr. Walker

Mr. Walker

(c) Third ambulance left at 17.42 hours ie 10 minutes after admission.

5. The allegations to which Mr Walker refers in his letter appear to be unfounded, and there is no evidence to suggest that Caldwell's death was in any way attributable to any delay in the admission of the ambulances. A draft reply is attached.

D. McMullan

D McMULLAN

DRAFT LETTER FOR SIGNATURE BY THE MINISTER OF STATE

A Cecil Walker JP MP
1 Wynnland Road
Carnmoney
Newtownabbey
Co Antrim
BT36 6RZ

You wrote on 27 November 1991 regarding allegations about delays in the admission of two ambulances to HM Prison Belfast on 24 November 1991 following an explosion in the prison.

Immediately after the bomb explosion in 'C' Wing dining hall, the emergency services were summoned. The first ambulance arrived at 17.22 hours, 5 minutes after being summoned.

It was subject to a very quick search, necessary for security reasons, and admitted to the prison without delay. Further ambulances were admitted, again after very quick searches, at 17.30 hours and 17.32 hours.

Between 17.22 hours and 17.30, a fire brigade was admitted, and was required to manoeuvre its way to the scene of the explosion.

The ambulances left the prison at 17.37 hours, 17.39 hours, and 17.42 hours.

I am entirely satisfied that none of the emergency services were unduly delayed in entering the prison, and that only essential

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searches, consistent with the security of staff, inmates and the establishment, were carried out.

With regard to the death of Mr Caldwell, which is to be very much regretted, I am not aware of any evidence to suggest that this was in any way due to any delays attributable to the prison.