

THE BLOODY SUNDAY INQUIRY

I, Betty Curran of

will say that:

1. I had always intended to go on the march on 30th January 1972. The march was about civil rights and we thought it was going to be a big, jolly march, which apparently it was. I had understood that the march was going to Free Derry Corner. It was in the papers and word goes round very fast in Derry. My husband and I had arranged a baby-sitter to look after the little ones so that we could go on the march. Unfortunately, we had to go to the funeral of my husband's cousin first, at 2.30pm. We left the cemetery after the ceremony via the Lone Moor Road gate.
2. We walked across the Lone Moor Road and on over Elmwood Terrace, thinking that we would be able to meet up with the march at the top of Westland Street. However, by the time we reached there, we saw that the march had passed and therefore we went on over Marlborough Terrace and saw the tail end of the march in the distance at St Eugene's Cathedral.
3. By the time we reached the tail end of the march, we were at the top end of William Street at the junction with Francis Street. We joined on at the end of the march and walked on east down William Street. As we did so, people were jolly and I could hear some singing further down William Street.
4. I first saw soldiers when we were at the back of the march, near the junction of Francis Street and William Street. The soldiers were up Francis Street, at the Great James Street end (grid reference D01). I saw at least one Saracen and probably ten soldiers, maybe more. I am not sure about what uniforms they were wearing or their hats. However, they were wearing riot gear, visors etc. They were definitely not paras - I know the red berets which the paras wear. Apart from that, all soldiers looked the same to me. Each soldier had a rifle or a gun in his hand but they were not doing anything in particular - they were just standing about. We just walked on.
5. I remember that we stopped near the waste ground opposite Ritchie's Factory. The point where we stopped is marked A on the attached map at grid reference K07. The next thing I saw was some people in front of us turning round and running back up William Street in the direction they had come from, towards us.
6. From where I was standing, I could see gas in the air and assumed that this was why people were running back towards us. I didn't know for sure why they were running back. Some ran on past us and we stood to the side, on the south side of William Street, to find out what was happening. There was a lot of noise and I also heard people shouting "They're firing gas". I never thought to ask why.
7. I had seen movement in the Old Bakery marked B on the map (grid reference J07). I do not know what attracted me to it. I could see two soldiers and one rifle. They were on the ground floor, at the gable end. They had pulled the corrugated iron back from one of the windows at the corner of the building and were peeping out - I could only see their heads and shoulders. They were pointing the rifle at the people in William Street and

were looking straight out across the road to where I was standing. I could see them full face on. They were not wearing visors. I am not sure whether they were wearing hats but both soldiers were white skinned. I do not remember the colour of their hair or the style of it. One was slightly hidden behind the other. I could see about six inches of the rifle pointing out of the window.

8. I had previously also seen some soldiers on the flat roof of a building behind Ritchie's Factory nearer Great James Street. They were lying on the roof flat on their stomachs. It was not a very big roof. There were four of them and they were spaced out in an area about 20ft wide. These soldiers were wearing helmets and visors and all had guns. They were pointing these towards William Street. I had not given these soldiers a second thought. It was the soldiers in the bakery who had caught my eye and made me wonder what they were doing.
9. I was not paying much attention to time, but I think it must have been around 3.30pm when I saw the soldiers, given the distance we had walked from the cemetery. When the people in William Street started to run back past us because of the gas, we had walked to the southern side of William Street and so we were on the opposite side of the road from where the soldiers were.
10. At about this time, I saw two or three wee lads opposite where I was standing (i.e on the north side of William Street). They were throwing a few stones across at the soldiers on the flat roof. Their position is marked C on the map (grid reference K07).
11. After they had thrown a couple of stones, the lads turned and walked towards us. As they were coming towards us, I heard a shot. Damien "Bubbles" Donaghy was shot. I did not know him at the time, but learned his name later. He was only about 14 or 15 years old. I remember he had a lovely head of curly hair. He was wearing jeans. He had only been dandering across the road. He was facing me when he was shot, walking to my right hand side as I was facing him. He had just about reached the footpath on the side where I was standing. I just saw his body falling. He was only a few feet away from me when he fell. I think he fell face down. I remember that he fell onto a piece of ground which had originally been part of a small porch leading into a derelict house because I remember the black and white tiles on which he fell. It had clearly been someone's hallway. I didn't see where the bullet hit him at the time. I saw it bounce off the tiles though, and I realised that it was not big enough to be a rubber bullet. I heard two shots, one straight after the other, and they were the first two I had heard that day. I recognised them as live because I saw one bullet bounce off the black and white tiles and I saw Damien Donaghy fall. I would not have known about the particular type of ammunition otherwise. I heard no further shots after that for 10 or 15 minutes.
12. I did not see Damien Donaghy throw any stones towards the soldiers and, as he came towards me with his fellows, there was nothing in his hands. I remember this quite clearly because he had his hands down by his sides and not in his pockets. My husband, who helped carry Damien Donaghy into a house in Columbcille Court, told me afterwards that he had been shot in the leg. I cannot remember if I knew this before he told me.
13. I subsequently heard that Mr Johnston had been hit too. He had been running over to Bubbles when he fell. I did not see Mr Johnston shot and I did not know him.

14. My husband said to me that we had better get out of there because they were firing rubber bullets but I said " its not rubber bullets, it's live bullets" - I had seen the long narrow darkish object hit the ground and bounce back up again and at the same time Damien Donaghy had fallen to the ground. I began to tremble, I was very frightened.
15. My husband and the other two men carried Damien Donaghy to Bridget Shiels' house in Columbcille Court. They took him straight across into an alleyway or porchway between two buildings and into Columbcille Court.
16. I ran out into the middle of the road towards the soldiers with their heads peeping out of the derelict building, because that is where I thought the shots had come from. I yelled at them "Why the bloody hell, you bastards, have you shot that fellow? He wasn't doing anything". I kept repeating this. I was extremely angry because I thought that Bubbles could have died. I noticed that when I shouted at the soldiers from the middle of William Street, the rifle had gone from the window, but apart from that there was no reaction from the soldiers.
17. After I had run into the road, I began to panic and thought of my small children and the fact that I needed to get home. I therefore turned and followed my husband and the other men through into Columbcille Court with the intention of going home as soon as possible. By this time, my husband had left Damien Donaghy with a priest and a Knight of Malta. I think the priest may have been either Father Carolan or Father George McLaughlin, but I did not see either of them that day. I did, however, know of Mrs Shiels, who was well-known. I had heard that that was where they had gone. I met my husband coming back from Mrs Shiels' house . He was looking for me.
18. We ran down the alleyway between Columbcille Court and the buildings which face on to the south side of William Street and turned left into Abbey Street. We intended to go to Frederick Street, across the Old Bog Road, up to the Little Diamond and home. I could hear shooting then. I did not know what sort of shooting it was or where it was coming from. There were a lot of shots, one after the other. It was quick fire. I could also hear shouting.
19. We were heading for home when three men came running up the main road, the Old Bog Road, and shouted at me "For Christ's sake Mrs, get down, they're firing from the walls".
20. There was nothing that I could see which suggested to me that the firing was coming from the City Walls but it was definitely coming from the direction of Free Derry Corner towards us. We had by about this time reached a point beyond the Credit Union building and we went across the road to my left and hid behind a small wall which bound a little car park at the side of the road. That point is marked D on the map (grid reference G12). I remember some people opening the back door of a house nearby but we just got down on the ground behind the wall until the firing died down. I felt secure there because the wall was between me and where the firing was coming from. We were probably at that spot for five minutes or perhaps a bit longer. When there was a lull in the shooting, we both got up and ran through Abbey Park down to the Old Bog Road (Fahan Street West). I was too frightened to do anything other than go home.
21. I heard no nail bombs all day. I only heard two shots when I was in William Street. Later, when the other shooting started, we had just got to the start of Abbey Street (grid reference H09).

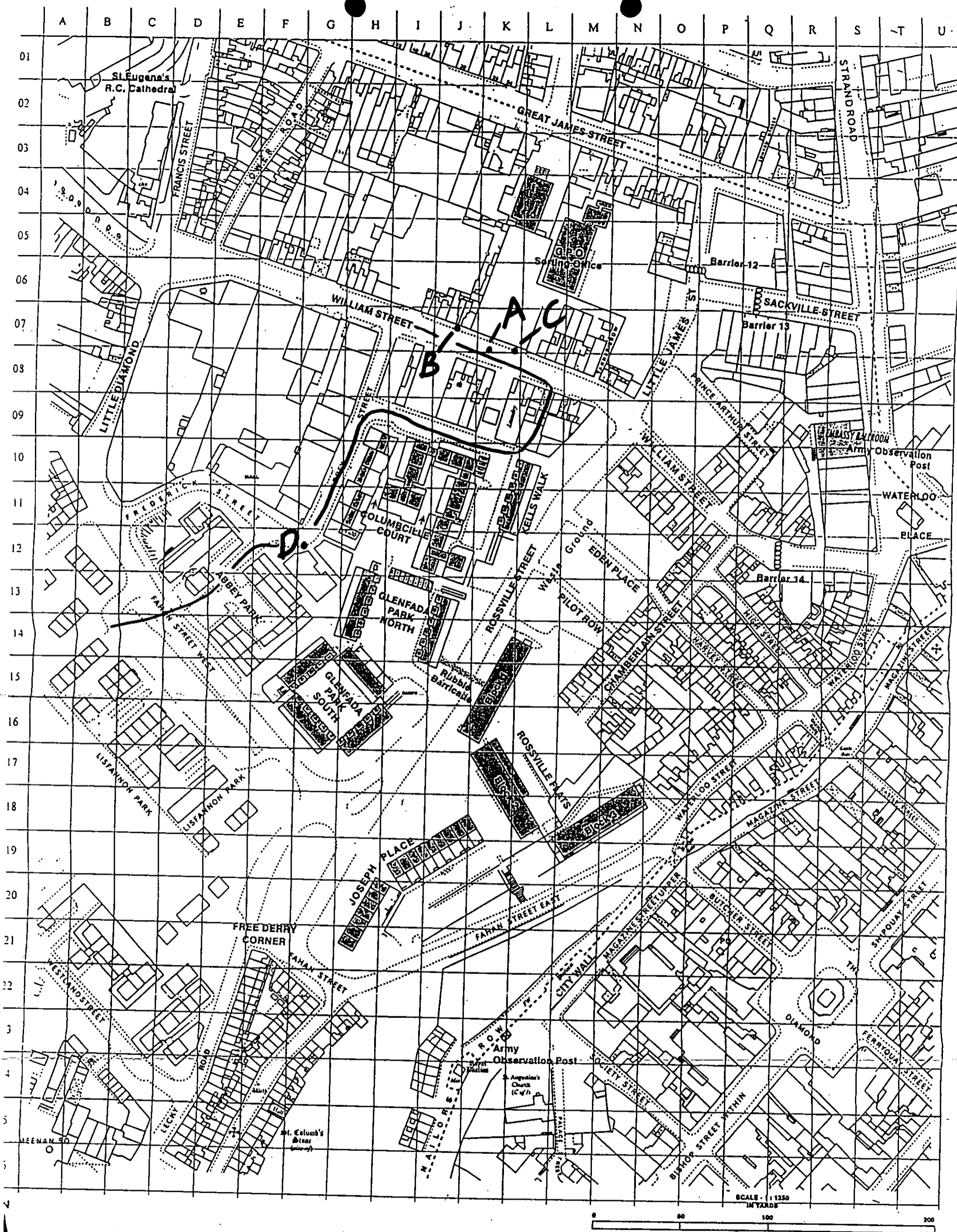
22. Eventually, we were able to make our way up onto Westland Street and on home. What has been eating my heart out of me for the last 25 years is that I remember when I got home that my daughter was having a birthday party. All I wanted to do was to turn on the television and listen to the news. I heard about so many people having been shot and that there were so many nail bombers and gunmen, and that made me very, very angry. I was there, and there were no civilians with guns or nail bombs. It makes me very emotional now. I keep thinking that all those people who were shot were innocent and that it could have been me, my husband or anyone.

SIGNED

Mrs. Betty Curran
Betty Curran

DATED

1 - 6 - 1999



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AC130-5

Name	BETTY CURRAN
Date Completed	