

Case Ref. No.

Royal Military Police

STATEMENT FORM
(Military)

STATEMENT OF: 140

Surname * Marital Status

Christian/Fore Names

Regt. No. and Rank * Height

Regt. or Corps * Build

Unit and Location

Type of Engagement ... Date of Birth

Unit Employment Place of Birth

Home Address Date due to leave Theatre

..... Run Out date

..... * Complete where applicable

Who states:

I am a Lance Corporal of 30 Field Squadron Royal Engineers at present stationed in BFPO 801.

At LONDONDERRY on the 30th January 1972 I was taking part in the erection of a barrier in LITTLE JAMES ST. The barrier was being constructed to stop any civilians of a Civil Rights March from passing our position.

At 1500 hrs I was standing behind the barrier when I saw the march coming past the junction with WILLIAMS ST, there was also a crowd approaching along ROSSVILLE ST. towards the junction, singing and shouting and waving a large banner.

The march continued down WILLIAMS ST. towards WATERLOO PLACE where another barrier had been constructed.

After a few minutes I saw smoke coming from the barrier and knew that CS Gas had been fired by the troops down at the barrier.

Then I saw a lot of the crowd return to the junction and the waste ground holding handkerchiefs and scarfs over their faces.

Not being able to get to WATERLOO PLACE they began to advance towards our barrier, shouting as they came, then just before they reached us a hail of stones and bricks plus assorted missiles were thrown at our positions.

As the crowd were getting out of hand, the members of 22 Lt RA were ordered to open fire with rubber bullets from behind our barrier.

First of all they fired at the ground in front of the crowd, the only effect.

SIGNED SIGNATURE WITNESSED BY

805890 126/2m 1 71 FPC

STATEMENT CONTINUATION FORM
(Civilian and Military)

Statement of: 140

Surname.....

Christian/Forename(s).....

Continued

Being to halt them for a few moments. Again they started to advance and rubber bullets were again fired, this time directly at the crowd. The main body of the crowd then dispersed mostly into ILLIAMS ST. but some moving into ROSSVILLE ST.

The crowd that still remained started to build barricades on the waste ground. I was then called, together with the RUC. to hold back a crowd of observers that had gathered at the LITTLE JAMES ST/GREAT JAMES ST junction. This lasted for about an hour, I then returned to the barrier.

About twenty minutes later I opened up the barrier to allow eight Army Vehicles of the Parachute Regiment to pass out barrier, then going along ROSSVILLE ST.

Then a further half an hour later some of the Paratroopers returned passed the barrier into SACKVILLE ST. with several prisoners which were then put into a 4 Ton Army Vehicle.

We then dismantled our barriers taking about two parts down when I felt dust hitting my face at the same time hearing a loud crack from a high velocity weapon.

Our work party immediately took cover and then proceeded to dismantle the remaining part of the barrier at different intervals until totally dismantled. During this period of dismanteling I heard several bangs but I was unable to say what caused them.

* This statement, consisting of pages each signed by me, is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Dated the 4th day of FEBRUARY 19 72

Signature.....

* (.....) being unable to read the above statement, I..... of read it to him before he signed it.

Dated the day of 19

Signature.....

The above statement was recorded and signature witnessed by me at 1925 hrs on 4th FEBRUARY 1972 at (Place) LONDONDERRY

Signature..... (Investigator)

* Signed.....

Signature witnessed by.....

* Delete if inapplicable

THE BLOODY SUNDAY INQUIRY

I, Soldier 140 will say that:

1. On 30th January 1972, I was a Royal Engineer with 30 Field Squadron. We were part way through a four month tour of Northern Ireland which had commenced in November 1971 and was scheduled to end in February 1972. We had gone to Northern Ireland from Germany. I was a Lance Corporal at the time, second in command of a section of 8 to 10 men. We were based in Ballykelly but we worked all over the Londonderry area.
2. As Royal Engineers, we were trained as soldiers first and foremost but our main job was as engineers. We used to build protection for the soldiers. For instance, we did a lot of work at Fort George and we spent a lot of our time clearing the barriers which the civilians used to construct in the streets from fallen down trees, telegraph poles and such like. They annoyed their own people more than us.
3. As a Royal Engineer, I had very little experience of riots. I had experienced riots on only a minor scale; young kids calling us names and swearing at us or, at most, a handful of people getting annoyed with us. As long as they didn't do anything physical (which they never did to me) we just had to stand there and take it. Often, it was the little 7 year old girls swearing at us that upset me the most. I used to try and think it was the uniform they were swearing at, not me as a person, but I couldn't help be surprised that these little girls knew more swear words than I did.
4. My memory of the actual day is now fairly vague given the time that has passed. I was sorry to leave the Army. I can't remember the names of people. After I left the Army I tried to put the whole thing behind me, including my memory of that day. I didn't go to reunions.
5. I remember preparing the day before the march. We were told that there was going to be a civil rights march in Londonderry on the Sunday. I don't think it was one of the annual marches. I understood that the marchers were to make their way down from the Creggan, through the Bogside and possibly across to the Waterside. I knew there were Catholic areas and Protestant areas. I can't remember attending a briefing but there would have been a briefing; we used to have a briefing once or twice a day. We were told what we had to do. We were there to keep the Protestants and Catholics apart, to contain the march and to keep the peace. The information we would have been given would have been fairly brief; just what we were going to do; where we were going and what equipment we needed to take. Briefings took place at different levels and the information would filter its way down. I was only a Lance Corporal which is why I had the briefest of information. I didn't know what to expect from the day.
6. I remember going out from Ballykelly to Londonderry early in the morning on the day itself. I can't remember the exact time but I think it was just coming light. I remember it was very cold. I don't believe we went straight from Ballykelly to the location of our Barrier; I believe we must have grouped up somewhere close to where we were going to be deployed, as was usually the case.
7. We had all been given different streets in and around the area we called the Little Diamond. Our job was to set up barriers to contain the march and we took the barriers

with us. I was in Little James Street. I remember the street looked like a disused street. Ahead to the left was a street called Sackville Street. We built the barricade about halfway up Little James Street and stood behind it facing south towards the Rossville Flats. In front (to the south) was some waste ground and a building with a flat, grey roof. Although I could see towards the Rossville Flats, I didn't have a great view and I couldn't see any other barricades in the area. It felt quite isolated.

8. After constructing the barrier, we just had to stand around and wait. Setting up was very quiet, smoothly done. It was cold and boring. There was just my Section there. I cannot remember the names of any of the men. I cannot specifically remember there being any RUC officers there with us but I expect there would have been; we were always accompanied by RUC officers. We knew that there was protection in the area and something tells me that it was being given by soldiers in the Light Air Defence Regiment. However, we did not know where the protection was. It was unusually quiet for a Sunday and I don't have any memory of there being civilians around. I can't remember receiving any updates over the radio.
9. The next thing I remember, around midday or just after, is hearing lots of noise; shouting and singing. A lot of people then came into view. They were heading towards us, north. I believe they came down Rossville Street although I have since heard that some came along William Street from west to east. As they came towards us they seemed to converge. There were lots of them, hundreds, maybe thousands. I have no idea, it just seemed a lot. When they got down they must have known there were barriers and they were not happy about it. There was a lot of discussion and shouting. I was very apprehensive. I had been involved in minor skirmishes before, but this was different. Most of the crowd was going on to my left. After about 20 minutes, all hell let loose. I still do not know why. Something sparked off mindless violence. I'd never seen anything like it before. They were shouting and screaming and throwing anything they could get their hands on; stones, bottles, palings, pieces of metal. It is my opinion that they brought many of these things with them. I can't imagine there were that many stones in the area. I now know that most of the trouble happened around William Street.
10. We were fairly well protected behind our barrier. We were wearing our combat uniforms, steel helmets with visors, boots and (I think) flak jackets and some of us had shields. We were young and quick. We were all carrying our SLR weapons and our ammunition pouches. Nevertheless, I was extremely frightened. They were throwing a much larger quantity of objects than I believe was normal.
11. The rioting seemed to last a long time but I can't remember how long. It seemed to be concentrated over to the left hand side as I faced south, in and around William Street. It was just mindless violence. I believe we knew by that time that there were paras in the area but they were not in view. I then remember receiving an order to open the barrier. We didn't have to cut any wire to do that. We just had to open the barriers as if they were a gate. However, we had to do it smoothly and quickly and I remember we were just about able to open it in time to allow the first vehicle to go through. Several vehicles passed through. I think there were three tonners and a couple of Pigs. They were travelling at about 15 or 20 miles per hour. I don't remember any soldiers following them on foot. It was only as the vehicles went through that we saw that they contained paras. I think the vehicles themselves had been kept out of the way until then, in back streets.
12. The para vehicles travelled about 150 yards and, as they stopped, paras came bailing out

of the back of them. Some of the vehicles deployed to the sides. Most of the paras were armed with batons. I don't recall any of them having SLRs. As the paras went in, most of the crowd scattered; I think most people wanted to get away. The Paras were not in covering positions. There looked, however, to be a hard core who were prepared to take the paras on. We assumed the paras were acting as a snatch squad. I thought they were there to identify the ringleaders and pick them up and that is what they started to do. They were not heavy handed about it. They did not seem to adopt defensive positions or firing positions.

13. Soon after the paras went in, I heard shooting for the first time. It seemed to be coming from a long way off, I cannot say precisely where but it was somewhere in front of me (ie south of my position). There were, I think, a couple of shots and it sounded to me like small arms fire whereas most of us carried SLRs or SMGs (only some of the officers carried pistols). I knew instantly that the sound I could hear was the sound of shooting. It was not a car backfiring. I did not see anyone reacting to the sound because I was reacting myself. I think we all felt very threatened and I ducked down behind the barricade. We stayed with the barricade. Our job was to continue to contain the march and that is what we did. We may have closed the barricade when the paras went in; I cannot now remember. I remember seeing very little as there was a line of para vehicles in front of our position but my other memories become vague at this point. I just remember people running about.
14. The next thing I remember is hearing a very loud crack which sounded to me like an outgoing shot. It sounded to me to have come from very close to our position, possibly from one of the buildings in the area where protection was. I cannot, however, be precise as to where the shot was fired from save that it was from somewhere to my right (west) as I faced south. I heard other shooting at around this time. Then, everything went quiet. It seemed as if we had been there for hours.
15. I refer in the attached witness statement which I gave to the Royal Military Police in 1972 (and which I deal with in more detail below) to seeing paras returning to the area of our barrier with prisoners. I didn't actually remember this until I read my Royal Military Police statement. Having read my statement, I do have a very vague memory of this but I cannot recall any detail. All I can say is that I don't think the paras were bringing the prisoners to our barricade. I think they took them down Sackville Street. Our view was like a tunnel.
16. I also see from my Royal Military Police statement that I said then that after everything had quietened down I heard a loud crack, felt dust hitting me in the eyes and later found out that we had been fired at. Again, I didn't remember this until I read my Military Police statement and my memory of it now is strangely enough very, very vague. I think it was beginning to go quiet and that we were in the process of dismantling the barrier at the time. I also think that the shot was a high velocity shot. I find it strange that I did not remember this until reading my Royal Military Police statement, but I can't explain why this is. Perhaps I have tried to wipe it, I don't know. I heard that the incident was in a report. The detail of this shot is all from my statement but I do now remember the fact of the shot.
17. I don't really remember dismantling the barrier. I don't think it was dark at the time but I think it may have been dark by the time we got back to Ballykelly; it may have been dusk when we were dismantling the barrier. I didn't know at that stage that anybody had

been killed or injured. I hadn't been able to see what was happening from my position.

18. We would have had a debriefing, but I can't remember it. The only thing I remember about being back at camp that evening was that it was thought that someone had lost his weapon and we all had to line up for our weapons to be checked. It turned out that the weapon had not been lost at all - it hadn't even been taken out of camp. I think it was that evening that information started to filter through about injuries but it was only the next day that we learned the full extent of the casualties.
19. The news of the deaths filtered though late into the night. I felt we were trained to do a peace keeping role. I don't know whose fault it was – what happened. We were all extremely shocked and sad about what had happened and we got very drunk that night maybe to put it out of our minds. It was one of the worst days of my life. I don't think there was anyone there, army or civilian alike, who was not frightened. I remember going to a club some time after the march. There were lots of Irish people there both Protestant and Catholic and a lot of the girls said they hadn't really wanted to go on the march at all, that the organisers had been drumming up support and dragging them out of their houses. I don't know if that is true.
20. I certainly don't remember the attitude of the civilians changing after the day. The ones who had been friendly to us were still friendly and the ones who had been hostile were still hostile.
21. I refer to the attached Royal Military Police statement bearing my name. I don't actually remember giving a statement to the Royal Military Police. I am amazed how short it is. I have no reason to think it is wrong. I don't now remember there being CS gas in the air, the civilians wearing handkerchiefs to cover their faces or rubber bullets and gas canisters being fired although I have since been shown photographs. I don't now remember the civilians building barricades, nor do I remember leaving the barricade with the RUC to hold back a crowd of observers. I know the RUC were there but I do not remember leaving the barrier. As I say above, the statement does prompt in me vague memories about the paras coming back towards us with prisoners and the incoming shot which was fired when everything went quiet.
22. We all hoped that when the crowd came down from the Creggan and were stopped by the barriers they would stop and go back. No one wanted what had happened to happen.

Signed
Soldier 140

Dated 22 July 2000

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Royal Military Police

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Dated the 4th day of FEBRUARY 1972
Signature _____

* (_____ being unable to read the above statement, I _____ of _____ read it to him before he signed it.

Dated the _____ day of _____ 19____
Signature _____

The above statement was recorded and signature witnessed by me at 1925 hrs on 4th FEBRUARY 1972
at (Place) LONDON DERRY

Signature _____ (Investigator)

* Signed _____
Signature witnessed by _____

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