



# SHOOTERS

Britain's Military Reaction Force  
and Operation Everson, Part 1/2

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The Kitson Experiment

Britain’s Military Reaction Force

The Military Reaction Force (MRF) was a covert British military unit deployed on the streets of Belfast by counter-insurgency expert, General Sir Frank Kitson (right), when he was the Brigadier in charge of 39 Airportable Brigade covering Belfast and Greater Belfast in 1971. MRF teams then operated in 3 Brigade and 8 Brigade areas.

The MRF was formed around a nucleus of British Army specialists garrisoned in Palace Barracks, Holywood, and was designed to be the cutting edge of Kitson’s low-intensity war against the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Kitson wrote of this battle on December 4th 1971:

*“It is likely that having fined down the enemy organisations to the extent we have done, future successes will be increasingly hard to achieve from an operational point of view, unless we are able to make our own organisation very much more efficient... As you know we are taking steps to do this in terms of building up and developing the MRF”*

The MRF’s role in simple military terms was two-fold:

- (1) Covert intelligence-gathering and agent-handling (surveillance, reconnaissance);
- (2) Armed contact (reaction).

The MRF left in its wake, though, a trail of dead civilians and agents.



“

*“We were not there to act like an army unit, we were there to act like a terror group...”<sup>1</sup>*

“

*“... a legalised death squad”<sup>2</sup>*

One alleged member told BBC Panorama in 2013 that “We were not there to act like an army unit; we were there to act like a terror group.”

Another was quoted by the British state’s broadcaster that the Military Reaction Force was quite simply “a legalised death squad.”<sup>2</sup>

This report regards the second of these roles - armed contact, and the SHOOTERS of the MRF.



“

*Paper Trail has linked Britain's Military Reaction Force (MRF) to multiple murders and attempted murders of civilians in Belfast in 1972.*

# Paper Trail

## INVESTIGATION

**Paper Trail has linked Britain's Military Reaction Force (MRF) to multiple murders and attempted murders of civilians in Belfast in 1972.**

Secret British military documents prove that the MRF was indeed guilty of a catalogue of murders and attempted murders of unarmed civilians - including teenagers - in Belfast between May and September 1972.

The archival evidence accounts for every single one of those listed by the Legacy Investigation Branch (LIB) of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) when it launched Operation Everson<sup>3</sup>, its inquiry into the Military Reaction Force, in December 2015.

Nevertheless, Paper Trail is investigating many more serious, unprovoked attacks on civilians, which LIB has not included in Operation Everson, including the shooting of several unarmed teenagers shot in separate incidents in North Belfast during the summer of 1972.

Our evidence also includes files discovered by our research colleague, James Kinchin-White, which prove that an undercover unit of the Kings Own Scottish Borderers, led by then Lieutenant Julian "Tony" Ball, shot the brothers, John and Gerry Conway, in April 1972.

To-date, PSNI has failed to arrest any British soldiers for the attacks and only sent a file to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS)<sup>4</sup> subsequent to Paper Trail submitting our evidence to former Chief Constable Jon Boutcher whose team is investigating the murder of Jean Smyth-Campbell<sup>5</sup> on June 8th 1972.

Following a Freedom of Information request by Paper Trail in February 2020, PSNI could not tell us how many man/woman hours had been spent investigating Operation Everson in over 4 years or how much the inquiry had cost until then.

# THE MURDER OF

## JEAN SMYTH-CAMPBELL

**F**iles that we discovered prove that Jean was killed by the British Army and the Military Reaction Force claimed "a hit" in the same area.

Jean's family fought a historic battle in court against the PSNI and its failure to investigate the murder of Jean. In 2019, an Appeal Court in Belfast ruled that the PSNI's Legacy Investigation Branch was not "practically independent" and could not offer an investigation sufficiently compliant with Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The PSNI is fighting this ruling in the Supreme Court, re-traumatizing Jean's family once more, but, in the meantime, has passed the investigation to former Chief Constable Jon Boutcher's Operation Kenova team as a remedy for an independent investigation.

In December 2015, as PSNI forced Jean's family to fight in court for an independent investigation, the PSNI's Legacy Investigation Branch (LIB) launched an appeal for information relating to the MRF.

The LIB did not include Jean's murder in its list for investigation even though the MRF recorded "a hit" in the same area.

Jean's family and Paper Trail considered this LIB inquiry as window-dressing<sup>6</sup> at best and, at worst, a cynical ploy to



JEAN SMYTH-CAMPBELL, MURDERED 8TH JUNE 1972

delay a proper investigation into the criminal activities of the Military Reaction Force and the subsequent cover-ups by the British Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Many other families do not believe that LIB is independent and can offer an Article 2-compliant investigation in any legacy investigation, especially those perpetrated by the British state or involving state agents/actors.

“

*It is moot whether the failure of Operation Everson and the PSNI to arrest or convict any MRF killers is an indicator of this lack of independence.”*

It is moot whether the failure of Operation Everson and the PSNI to arrest or convict any MRF killers is an indicator of this lack of independence.

On behalf of Jean’s family, therefore, Paper Trail researched the Legacy Investigation Branch’s list of incidents and can now prove which undercover British military unit perpetrated each attack on the unarmed civilians.

Individual MRF operatives are named in some of the files we have presented to Boutcher’s team including a Sergeant of the MRF who is named in at least 6 of the shootings. He is connected to many more.

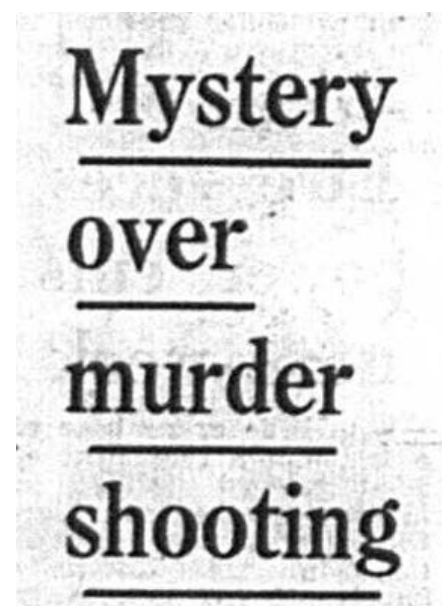
Nevertheless, Paper Trail is only depicting small sections of these files and redacting names of British Army MRF operatives as legal cases are ongoing.

Paper Trail continues to work closely with the families’ legal teams whilst it examines many other unclaimed murders and attempted murders.

Civilian witnesses, including the surviving victims, strongly refute the narrative of the British Army reports in these files below.

In each case, the police found no trace of gunshot residue when it carried out tests on living and dead victims.

In some cases, not only has the British military refused to admit that its undercover units were involved, but also claimed at the time that the attacks were sectarian Loyalist shootings, Republican own-goals or motiveless, feeding the fear of the local community.




# OPERATION EVERSON

**Police Enquiry**  
**Military Reaction Force**  
**Appeal for information in relation to :**

- The fatal shooting of 44-year-old Patrick McVeigh and wounding of four other men in Riverdale Park South, 12 May 1972.
- The fatal shooting of 18-year-old Daniel Rooney and wounding of an 18-year-old man in St James Crescent, 26 September 1972.
- The shooting of two brothers, 19 and 30 years of age, on the Whiterock Road, 15 April 1972.
- The shooting of an 18-year-old man on the Glen Road, 6 May 1972.
- The shooting of a 15-year-old boy outside Oliver Plunkett School, Glen Road, 7 May 1972.
- The shooting of an 18-year-old man in the Slievegallion area, 12 May 1972.
- The shooting of four men at the Glen Road Bus Terminus, 22 June 1972.
- The shooting of a 34-year-old man in Silvio Street, 26 May 1972.
- The shooting of a white Austin Morris vehicle CO18368 at Kashmir Road, 9th May 1972.

**If you have any information that can assist this enquiry please contact Detectives at Legacy Investigation Branch on 028 92589128, Mobile 07585228283 or [LIBEnquiries@psni.pnn.police.uk](mailto:LIBEnquiries@psni.pnn.police.uk)**

Keeping People Safe 

**DATE: 6th May 1972**

**Shooting Incident: 18-year-old male shot on the Glen Road**

An MRF patrol on the Glen Road alleged it saw three gunmen (one with a rifle and two with pistols) at the back of Glenveagh Drive (not Glenmore as first recorded). The MRF claimed “1 definite hit”, and

further alleged that a gunman fired two shots at the patrol.

The secret military logs name a sergeant of the MRF patrol but we have redacted it.

87	2135	39 Bde	2112 hrs. MRF ptl Glen Road at Q. Plunkett School saw three men at back of Glenmore Drive. 1 with rifle 2 with pistols. 4 x 6 shots bursts at gunmen. 1 definite hit 2 shots by gunman. No hits.	(14474) D4.916
120	2130	2 Fd	MRF Sergeant Named GLEN RD opp OLIVER PLUNKETT School. 3 gunmen seen in houses at back of GLENVEIGH DVE at back of school. Fired 24 rds SMG at them. 1 Hit, definite, 2 rds returned. One man with rifle, 2 with pistols.	HQ NI. RMP.



DATE: 7th May 1972

Shooting Incident: 15-year-old boy shot outside a disco at Oliver Plunkett School, Belfast

A two-car MRF patrol on Glen Road alleged that they were fired upon, their cars were hit and an MRF operative was injured. They claimed two hits in return.

Nevertheless, the MRF had actually shot a 15-year old boy who was admitted to hospital 15 minutes later. The boy had left

a local disco and was walking home along the Glen Road when he was shot from the passing car. No intelligence trace (NT) linked him to paramilitarism or criminality.

The attempted murder of the boy remained unclaimed by the British Army in the press.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
104	2335	✓	MRF	2 cars in A'TOWN been fired at, 1 car MPH slight injury. GLEN RD/FALLS RD chap in back fired SMG, 2 hits claimed. (1 def and 1 poss).
2	0103		39 Bde	After ambush 3 shots at Lardrover. No cas. MRF. Re MRF incident. 3 x HV shot at two cars. 2 hits on door of first car. Hit on SMG and ricocheted into leg. 1 x Verrey cart at second car. On Glen Rd East of OP - school. Two gunmen involved.
2	0315		39 Bde	shot at by youths from car. No cas. 2350 hrs. Victim's name (15) (NT) Victim's address admitted Mater Hosp GSW arms, leg and stomach. In Theatre. Not in danger. He states he was walking in Glen Rd at 2330 hrs when shot at from car.

### Another week-end of riots, burnings and blasts

Belfast Telegraph reporters.

**FOUR PEOPLE** were shot, troops claimed hits on several gunmen and a land-mine ambush on an R.U.C. patrol failed in another week-end of strife.

In other incidents, a malicious fire at the home of a Co. Armagh Vanguard member destroyed over 10,000 birds, and bombs damaged a health centre at Rathfriland and premises in Knockloughrim, near Castledawson.

The Army reported a total of 47 shooting incidents in Belfast in the 48-hour period up to this morning, including several in which the Army were not involved. Troops claimed hits on at least four gunmen.

**BELFAST** — First of the week-end shooting casualties was 24-year-old John McBurney, of Carnreagh Bend, Rathcoole, a Protestant. He was leaving a friend's house in Mayo Street when a gunman

Early yesterday morning, police reported clashes between opposing factions in the Duncairn Gardens area after a Roman Catholic crowd threw stones. Two youths wielding knives, entered a Roman

towards Road.

**TANDRAGEE** — More than 10,000 poultry died in a fire at the home of Mr. William Black, a local Vanguard member. The fire, believed to be malicious, was discovered early to-day

**RATHFRILAND** — There were three explosions at the almost-completed new health centre in John Street early on Sunday morning. A fourth bomb exploded as an Army expert was attempting to defuse it but he

**KNOCKLOUGHTRIM** — A car-bomb caused slight damage when it exploded early to-day. There were no casualties when the 15lb. bomb went off.

**LONDONDERRY** —

# 4 WOUNDED AS BULLETS FLY IN BELFAST

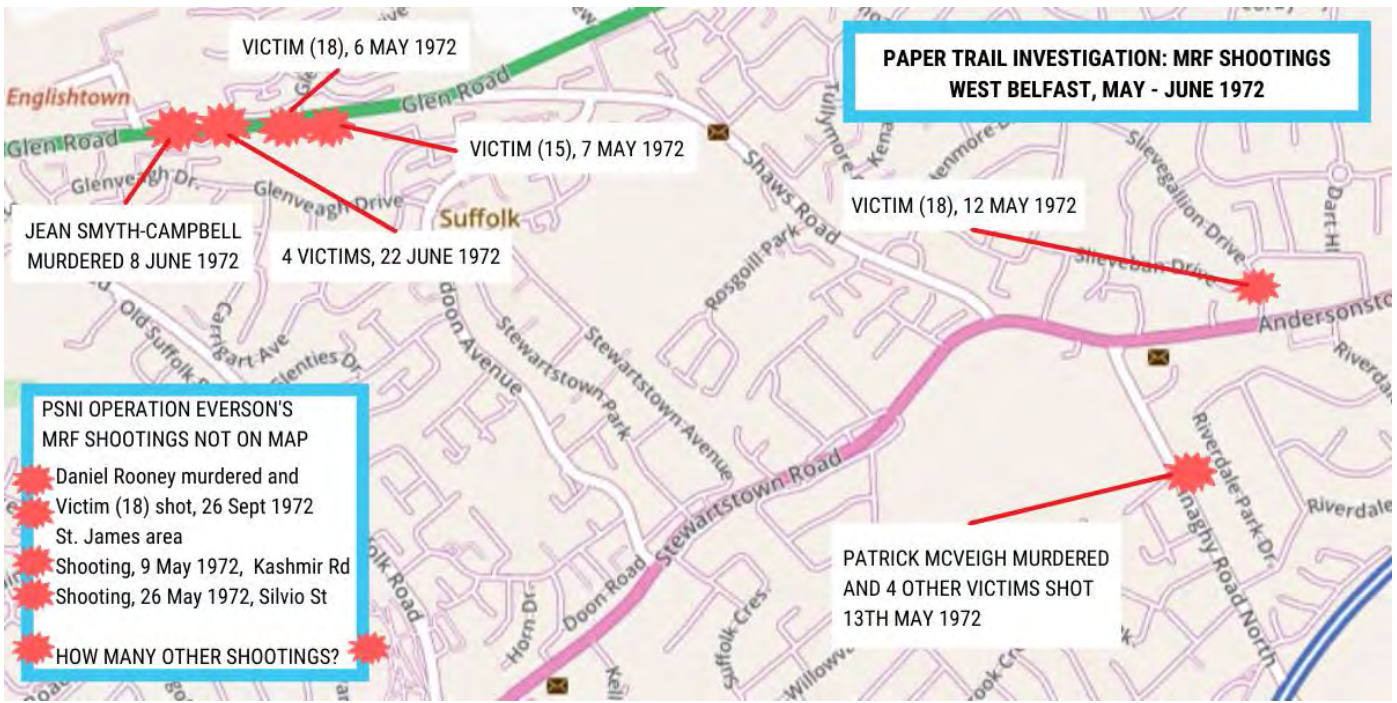
DATE: 9th May 1972

Shooting Incident: Van shot at on Kashmir Road, Belfast

The MRF unit (Vehicle C) alleged it was pursuing a hijacked vehicle and the occupant produced a weapon. The Military Reaction Force Sergeant in charge of the

unit - whose name we have redacted - fired two gunshots at the vehicle which hit the rear windscreen, causing the van to swerve.

8	1510		39 Bde	1450 MRF veh(C) persuing hi-jacked Austin 1100 saw weapon produced at junction Clonard Gdns/Kashmere. 2 x 9mm fired at car. Hit car, MRF by hi-jackers. No hits claimed.
MRF				At 1440 whilst travelling North along the FALLS RD. Hijacked 1100 noticed. It was just in McQUILL ST, opposite DUNVILLE PK, stationery with the man in driving seat. The ptl turned round in CLONARD ST, came back south to have another look. The car had now gone so MRF went on south down FALLS RD to look for it. Near Our Lady's hosp the car passed them going N with 3 men on board. A U turn was executed. They then crossed junc S'FIELD/FALLS RD. The veh then turned NW down CLONARD ST hotly pursued. They had by this time realised that they were being followed. An attempt to stop the car and just before junc CASHMERE RD/CLONARD GENS 1st MRF Cw pulled alongside. MRF Sgt named, car comd-sitting in front passenger seat looked into the vehicle. The man in the back passed a pistol, type unknown. At this stage our car stalled and the chased veh accelerated. MRF Sgt named DISMOUNTED and at a range of 8 yards having ascertained his field of fire was clear, fired 2 x 9mm at man in back through rear windscreen; both did hit windscreen. The car swerved slightly and carried on and turned into LEUVILLE ST. He ran back to Q car but further chase revealed nothing. No hits claimed.





DATE: 12/13th May 1972

Shooting Incident: 18-year-old male shot in Slievegallion, Belfast, around midnight.

MRF (Vehicle G) alleged a high-velocity round was fired at the unit when it was passing a road-block manned by local people and a car was backing away from it. MRF returned 13 rounds (8 from a sub-machine gun and 5 x 7.65 mm).

Makeshift barricades and vehicle checkpoints were manned by local people in communities across Belfast at this time as they feared paramilitary and/or British Army and RUC attacks.

MRF recorded that an officer from 8 Brigade (which covered Derry and the surrounding area and not Belfast) was "armed with a Walther pistol from MRF" so it would appear it was not the officer's standard issue, personal weapon. It should be noted that this make and calibre of pistol was used by British Servicewomen too at the time.

Although MRF claimed no hits, an 18-year-old was admitted to hospital with a gunshot wound to the left arm.

The victim reported he was getting out of a taxi at Slievegallion when he was shot from a passing car.

Interestingly too, the British Army alleged it later discovered a loaded Armalite rifle close to the Slievegallion barrier and arrested the local men there, including British soldier, Ranger Louis Hammond. We now know Hammond subsequently became an MRF agent or "Fred".

Paper Trail discusses Ranger Hammond's involvement with the MRF along with other agents in the Part 2 of this research called *FREDS*.

0125	MRF	1. 0010 hrs. 2. Target Car Ser G. 3. 1 x HV. 4. From <del>XXXXXXXXXX</del> RD Block 20 men N of junc SLIEVEGALLION/ANDERSONSTOWN RD. 5. As mil. 6. Fire returned 8 x SMG, 5 x 7.65. 7. Follow up nil. 8. No hits claimed. Offr 8 Bde pers att armed with WALTHER pistol from MRF. Continued.	HQNI - RMP
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(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
Continued from 03			Car made 3 passes to confirm details of road block. Had to slow to avoid car backing away from road block. Man at road block lit by headlights fired one shot at car.	✓
22	0130	2 Fd	0121. 7 x HV shots heard in SPAWS RD area. SF not involved.	HQNI

0208	KINGS	0130. Victim's name [redacted] admitted to RVH aged 18 of [redacted] Victim's address [redacted] - GSW left arm received - SLIEVEGALLION DVE after he had got out of taxi - fired at from passing car!	HQNI
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DATE: 13th May 1972

Shooting Incident: Patrick McVeigh killed and 4 males aged 18, 25, 25 and 41 injured in Riverdale Park, Belfast

Minutes later, MRF alleged it returned fire (after being fired upon) on seven gunmen with three bursts of four submachine gun bullets and six from a 9mm pistol.

The MRF unit was not attacked and the victims were not gunmen. The MRF shot four men standing near a junction, killing Patrick McVeigh and wounding the others. The unit also shot and injured a fifth man walking on the other side of the street.

The British Army admitted no responsibility to the press or at the time.

Indeed, the local parish priest corrected initial British Army reports in the news that there was a "gun battle"; then, British Army PR told the media that the attack was "an apparently motiveless crime."

British Military Intelligence found no trace (NT) linking the deceased to any paramilitarism or criminality whatsoever.

Patrick McVeigh was married with six children. Only many weeks later did the RUC admit that the British Army shot all of the victims.

0018	2 fd	negative. MRF has fired 12 automatic at seven gunmen FINAGHY RD North/RIVERDALE PK. No unit cas but 4 gunmen shot. Sub unit investigating. 3 x 4rd burst SMG - 6 x 9mm pistol. No follow up. Were fired at first.	HQNI - RMP
CASUALTIES ADMITTED TO RVH			
[REDACTED]			
5. Dead man JOSEPH McVEIGH (60) RG [redacted] all - N/T shot junc RIVERDALE/FINAGHY RD 0030 hrs			



Patrick McVeigh, murdered 13th May 1972



Daniel Rooney, murdered 26th September 1972



DATE: 26th May 1972

Shooting Incident: 34-year-old man shot in Silvio Street, Belfast

MRF alleged it had tailed a suspect vehicle and then gave chase. When it had stopped the vehicle, the MRF alleged its operative had produced an identity card and the vehicle took off again. When it stopped the vehicle a second time, the MRF alleged that two of the passengers in the back seat produced pistols and the MRF operative

fired one bullet at the car as it again took off. Local people then accosted the MRF unit, which had to be rescued by a uniformed patrol of the Royal Regiment of Wales after a police patrol allegedly refused to help it. Each member of this MRF unit is named in these files but we have redacted them.

43	1350	X	1 RRF	Do you want INCREP on SILVIO ST? Yes!	
44	1310		RRW	MRF opened fire in SYLVIO St. Crowd of 150 being pacified. 3 mil men now out of car, negotiations in hand to recover car.	
45	1315	✓	MRF	At 1240, MRF car saw 4 yobs (25-30 yrs) collecting mil uniform from a shop near Glenravel St and loading it into a car which then drove NW in Crumlin Rd. At the Agnes St t/c lights the yobs realised they were being followed and they drove off very rapidly. They went into JAFFA St and then into a blind alleyway off Jaffa St. The MRF drove past the end of Jaffa St and stopped. 3 of the 4 yobs in the yobs car, a bronze Ford Cortina, was standing at the alley entrance. One MRF man approached them and produced his ID Card and all 3 men then ran back to the veh and the chase continued into Upper Carrigill St. The MRF car managed to pull in front of the yobs car, which went in towards the pavement and stopped next to a white VW. MRF personnel approached and the 2 rear passenger produced pistols. MRF men shouted 'Clear the street' and fired 1 x 9mm shot at the two men. The yobs car went off at speed towards the Shankill and turned N. A crowd gathered very quickly and the RUC arrived at Carrigill St. (They were asked to assist extricate the MRF men from the area but they allegedly refused) The MRF men were then kicked and punched by the Prot crowd. Mil ptl then arrived and managed to get the 3 MRF men out. They were taken to Flax St (one badly beaten up, two slightly injured) One wmn lost (MRF Sgt named 9mm pistol)	CHARENILLE

55	1427	X	1 RRF	Outside Robertsons Garage 7 - 17 Oxford St. No. of cars not yet known. More later.	
56		✓	RRW	1st call from MRF ptl in U Carrigill St at approx 1228 hrs, asked for assistance. 3 R Ang drove into, agreed to send ptl. 1229 - RUC report of gunmen detained in Silvio St. Mil ptls in Silvio St at 1233 and 1234. OIC could see one man beaten up by the crowd - MRF Cpl named. RRF Cpl charged crowd and got MRF Cpl named. Already back in pig, MRF LSgt named. Car MRF reg was surrounded by 1 RRF ptl with RRF Captain in charge. Inside car was one man - Sgt MRF Sgt named considerable facial damage. RRF Captain asked Sgt MRF Sgt named if anything of importance in car, he said Pye radio. Mil ptl took out radio. MRF Cpl named and MRF LSgt named to RUC Stn. 2 RUC detectives with lorry took car to Tennent St. Capt RRF Capt then withdrew ptl, having recovered 2 pistols.	

74		✓	PRO	Search of building found bomb in Jaffa St. Press Release. A mil ptl on surveillance duty and wearing civilian clothes had caused to check a suspicious car containing 4 men in Jaffa St. One of the soldiers identified himself in the normal manner at which the men drove off at high speed. The ptl gave chase and managed to stop the veh in area Silvio St/Upper Chanceville St. Two men in the car immediately produced pistols, one of the sldrs shouted 'clear the street' and fired one rd, but does not claim a hit. The car then managed to escape at speed up the shankill. An angry crowd, apparently not realising the ptl was from the security forces gathered around and set about kicking and	
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DATE: 22nd June 1972

Shooting Incident: 4 males aged 18, 19, 21 and 28 shot on the Glen Road, Belfast

This shooting on the Glen Road occurred at the same bus terminus as Jean Smyth-Campbell's killing two weeks previously. It has been widely reported, including by Paper Trail (Paper Trail Pro Podcast<sup>7</sup>) and Pat Finucane Centre.

A British Army spokesperson originally told the Belfast Telegraph that "Our men were not involved in this shooting at all."

The British Army denials began to unravel within hours and Army PR then told reporters that "A group of men standing at the bus terminus opened fire" on a British Army "mobile patrol wearing plain clothes and on surveillance duty." It claimed that the covert unit "returned fire."

These were again lies. Four unarmed civilians were hit and lucky to escape with their lives. An infamous court case ensued in May 1973.

The MRF shooter was named in court as Sergeant Clive Graham Williams. It was subsequently proved that he had fired a non-standard issue Thompson submachine gun (then favoured by the Irish Republican Army).

This gun belonged to Captain James Alistair McGregor, leader of the MRF at the time, who was also in the vehicle. The bullets for the gun came from RUC police stores.

Despite the facts of the case, civilian witness testimony and a litany of previous MRF attacks recorded in British military and police logs, charges of unlawful possession against Williams and McGregor were dropped. Williams was then acquitted of attempted murder after a pitifully brief trial.

Defence Brief below discovered by Justice for the Forgotten/Pat Finucane Centre.

1230	39 Bde	3 or 4 rifle shots from bus terminus on Glen Rd opposite Oliver Plunket School. NoSF cas, 8 x 9mm retured, 2 likely hits.	PR
1239	RUC	3 men admitted to RVH with GSW within the last half hour.	

1.	The Director of Public Prosecutions, on the advice of the Attorney General, has instructed the Chief Constable RUC to bring a number of charges against Sgt Williams in connection with an incident last year which involved a patrol in civilian clothes on 22 Jun in Glen Road. The Army issued the following version of the incident at the time.  "Shortly after midday a mobile patrol wearing plain clothes and on surveillance duties was driving eastwards on Glen Road. A group of men standing on the bus turnabout opened fire on the patrol shattering a rear window and narrowly missing a soldier. The patrol immediately fired back and men were seen to fall. Since the incident we have heard that four men have been admitted to the R.V.H".
2.	At the hearing in a Magistrates Court in Belfast on 3 May 73 the Director of Public Prosecutions, Northern Ireland, directed that the charge against Capt J A McGregor (whose Thompson SMG was alleged to have been used by Sgt Williams in the incident) for being in possession of a machine gun and ammunition should be withdrawn. A similar charge against Sgt Williams has been also dropped; he was remanded on bail until (a date to be notified in June) on the following charges:  attempted murder causing bodily harm malicious wounding

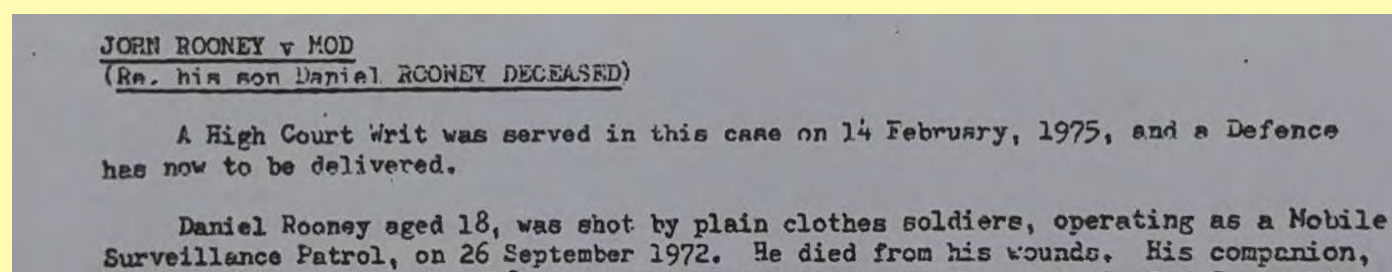
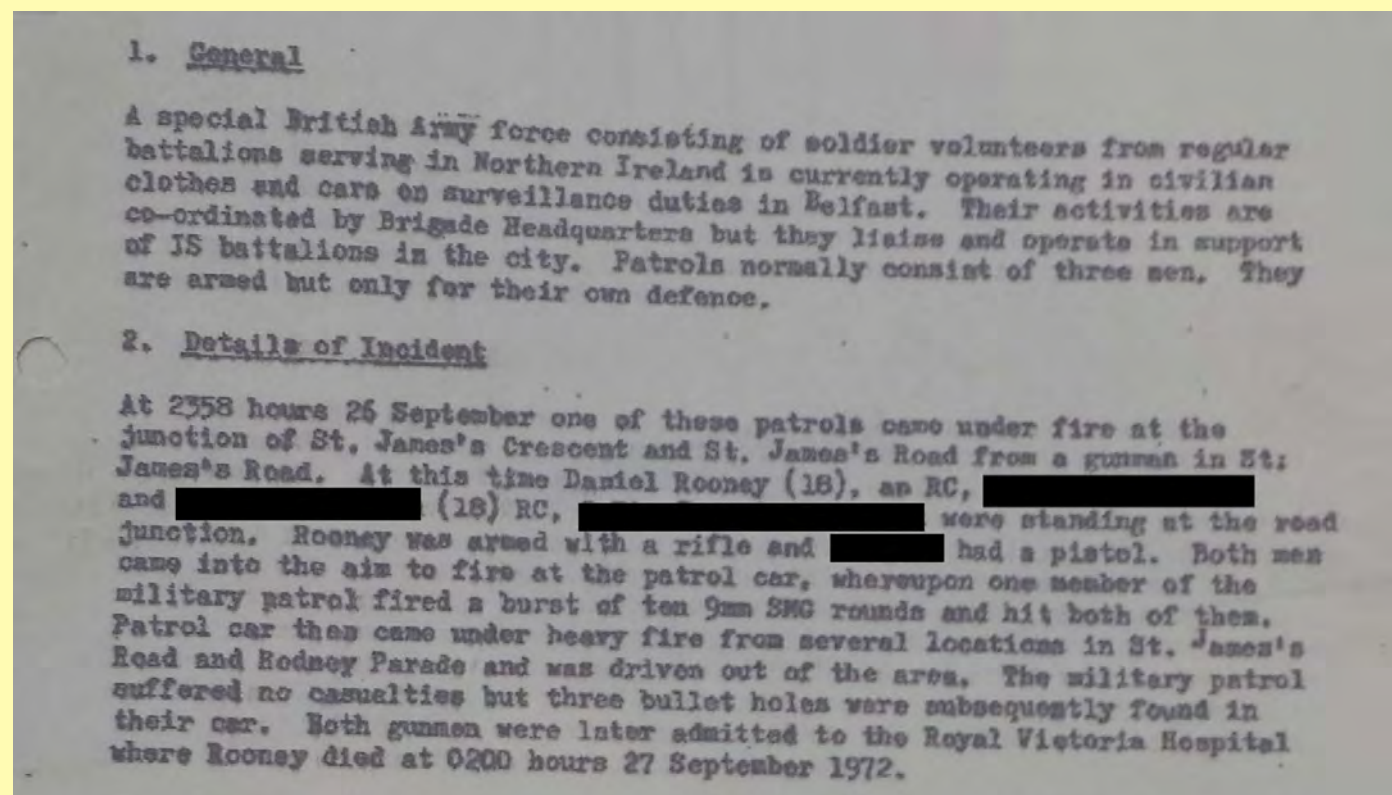


DATE: 26th September 1972

Shooting Incident: 18-year-old Daniel Rooney killed and 18-year-old friend injured in St. James area, Belfast

Our research colleague, James Kinchin-White, discovered the documents below. Again, the soldiers of the British undercover unit alleged it was fired upon and it returned fire, injuring one teenager and killing another teenager, Daniel Rooney.

Again, local witnesses denounced the allegations that the teenagers were armed or had fired on the unit. This document does not name the MRF but affirms that the unit was recruited, deployed and controlled in the same way as the MRF at the same time.



A later Ministry of Defence file (above) prepared for the MOD's legal defence team in July 1975 records that the undercover unit was operating as a Mobile Surveillance Patrol.

As well as this new evidence, Paper Trail can provide the details of closed logs, which will help the families' legal representatives in this particular case. These archives should help to clarify whether the shooting was perpetrated by the MRF as inferred by the former document or a surveillance unit of the resident British Army battalion, the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Green Jackets.

DATE: 15th April 1972

Shooting Incident: Conway brothers shot in Whiterock area, Belfast

This document is from a Watchkeeper Log of the Kings Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB), which was discovered by our research colleague, James Kinchin-White.

It confirms British military logs discovered by Paper Trail that a quick reaction, undercover unit of KOSB led by Lt. Julian Tony Ball attacked the civilian Conway brothers.

The archive proves that Ball's unit deployed when an RUC officer allegedly sighted local IRA leader, Jim Bryson, early in the morning.

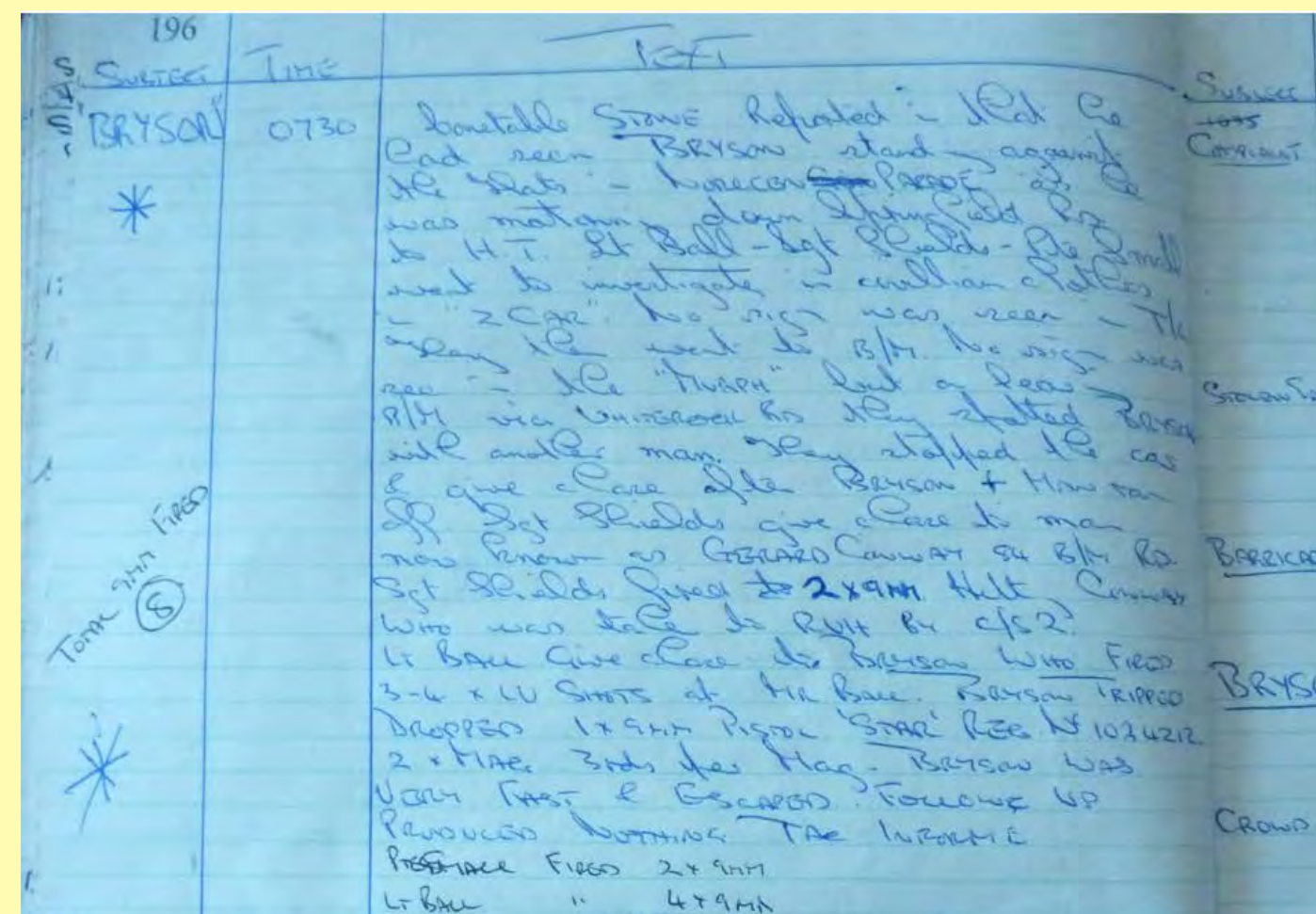
It was not Jim Bryson, though.

Instead, the undercover KOSB unit attacked and shot two unarmed brothers who just happened to be on their way to work.

The undercover KOSB unit alleged that the soldiers were shot at by Bryson and it subsequently recovered a Star pistol at the scene. This is clearly reported by the British Army shooters and recorded by the Watchkeeper as a Star 9mm, serial number 1034212.

Civilian witnesses refuted all of these allegations and the retrieval of a weapon disappeared from the narrative when the British Army realised that it had targeted and shot two civilians and not IRA volunteers.

This incident has been mistaken for an MRF attack because Lt. Ball's covert unit deployed in a similar way, it acted with impunity and the British Army never denied it; but the British Ministry of Defence will soon have to account for this in court.





# SUMMARY CONCLUSION

These archives prove that all of the incidents involved the MRF or an undercover, mobile reaction unit of the resident British Army battalion acting in a similar role.

The incident that did not involve a named MRF unit, involved a quick reaction unit of the King's Own Scottish Borderers, which was in plain clothes, in an unmarked car and operated in a similar way to the MRF.

This operation was either a botched arrest or assassination resulting in the near-death of two brothers. The covert unit also recorded the discovery of a gun at the scene, which subsequently disappeared from any investigation (which was, by any standard, limited).

This leads us to one of two conclusions:

(1) That the gun (a Star 9mm, serial number 1034212) was planted by the British military unit and then removed when the would-be assassins realised they had shot the unarmed brothers;

(2) That the gun was removed to avoid proper scrutiny of the covert unit for not following Yellow Card Rules of Engagement and shooting unarmed civilians.

These incidents left two civilians dead and 15 injured including a 15-year-old boy. The Military Reaction Force could have killed or injured many more civilians in these particular attacks.

Witnesses in each of these incidents contest the reports by the British military that the British soldiers were shot at or were in fear for their lives when the

victims were shot. Local residents accosted a unit after the shooting in Silvio Street, fearing it was a paramilitary attack.

The archives represent the British military's reporting of the incidents but the circumstances are completely disputed by civilian witnesses and surviving victims in each case.

In some cases, the British military released information to the media, which conflicted with its own records, including allegations that paramilitaries were guilty of the attacks when it knew its soldiers were involved.

Furthermore, none of these victims were ever convicted of any shooting incident alleged by the MRF and, of course, the PSNI says it is investigating the MRF's actions in each case.

These archives illustrate how covert British military units shot and killed civilians at the same time as Jean's murder and in the same area.

In fact, the archives prove that the Glen Road where Jean was killed and the surrounding locale under 2 Field Regiment (2 FD) control was a macabre hunting ground for MRF during 2 FD's tour of duty.

The Military Reaction Force shot four civilians in the exact area where Jean was killed and a number of other civilians along that same stretch of road.

Paper Trail has given police investigators the details of the closed British military logs, which could prove whether the MRF was indeed also guilty of Jean's murder. We await their retrieval.

In the meantime, our research of the Operation Everson list of cases exposes not only the modus operandi of Britain's killer gang, the Military Reaction Force, at a time that our society hoped for peace; but also the continued failure of PSNI's Legacy Investigation Branch to bring the killers to justice.

These are no "vexatious claims" or "witch hunts"<sup>9</sup>; just hard evidence from the British Army's own secret files.

At a high-level NIO/MOD meeting on 2nd June 1972, the British Ministry of Defence continued "to deny that any soldiers are operating in Northern Ireland in plain clothes as 'assassination squads'".

It does so to this day.

But secret archives in our possession show it discussed expanding the role and activities of the Military Reaction Force the following month.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

8. The Ministry of Defence are continuing to deny that any soldiers are operating in Northern Ireland in plain clothes as "assassination squads".

Indeed, Paper Trail is examining many other murders and attempted murders of unarmed civilians during the same period which bear the hallmarks of MRF attacks and cover-ups.

When this author tracked the leader of the MRF to his home in Broadstairs, Kent, in 2010 to ask him about MRF operations in Belfast in the 1970s, Brigadier James Alistair McGregor (retired), did not wish to engage.

Whilst it may be difficult to imagine that the British state and its police would sanction a covert British military unit to shoot and kill unarmed civilians on the streets of Bradford or Bristol, they did exactly this in Belfast; and the police - past and present - have failed these civilian victims and their families.

How can these families today trust the police to offer a fair and just investigation?

## Further Information

Read some of our other research into the activities of the MRF on the Paper Trail website<sup>10</sup> and in the books, *The McGurk's Bar Bombing* and *Trope: Essays and Articles*<sup>11</sup>, both by Ciarán MacAirt

James Kinchin-White also publishes his work in collaboration with author, Ed Maloney. Read some of it on the Broken Elbow website<sup>12</sup>

Download Margaret Urwin's *Counter-Gangs*<sup>13</sup> via Justice for the Forgotten/Pat Finucane Centre.



# About The Author

Paper Trail (Legacy Archive Research) is a registered charity that offers free and independent advocacy and training to victims and survivors of the conflict in Ireland and Britain.

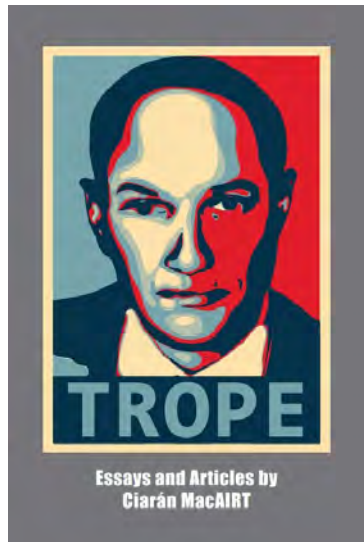
Paper Trail is also a social enterprise that offers specialized and targeted legacy archive research to the legal profession.

Ciarán MacAirt is founder and manager of Paper Trail.

Paper Trail evolved from forensic research into his own grandmother's murder during the conflict and his support of other families who lost loved ones.

He is also an activist with the families of the Time for Truth Campaign.

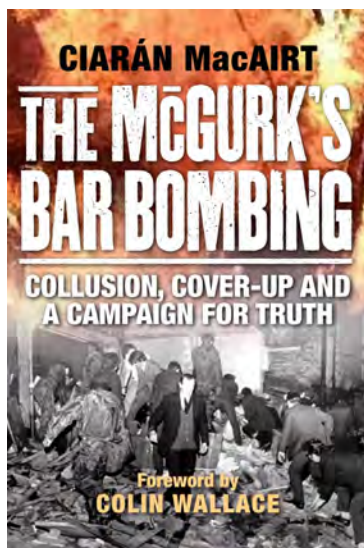
He is author of the critically acclaimed book, *The McGurk's Bar Bombing*. His second book, *Trope: Essays and Articles*, is out now, with all proceeds going to the charity, Paper Trail.



***Trope: Essays and Articles:*** One recurring theme of this collection by Irish author, Ciarán MacAirt, is that war is a dirty business and we are diminished by the death of each and every victim.

Another is that behind the horror, behind the terror, are human love stories but those who are left behind are starved of truth – the very basic, human need to know what happened to their loved ones.

MacAirt is an award-winning writer and human rights activist. These essays and articles represent a personal journey and find him trudging from the killing fields of World War 1 to the back-streets of Belfast where death-squads roamed.



***The McGurk's Bar Bombing:*** On December 4th 1971, pro-state, British extremists of the Ulster Volunteer Force planted a no-warning bomb on the doorstep of a family-run bar in north Belfast, killing 15 men, women and children; before the families had buried their loved ones, the British state buried the truth.

Ciarán MacAirt's grandmother, Kitty Irvine, was one of 15 civilians murdered in the McGurk's Bar Massacre.

His painstaking, meticulous research has uncovered historic documents hidden in archives which cast a cold light on collusion and cover-up by the State. It is a paper trail that goes to the highest levels of the Government, police and military and proves that society must learn from the lessons of the past.

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# SHOOTERS

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and Operation Everson, Part 1/2

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