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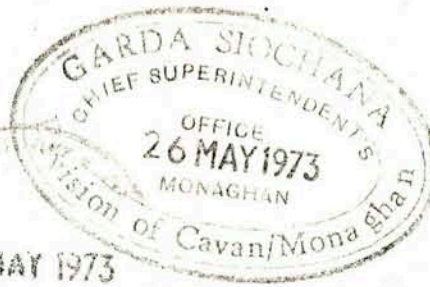
MC. 16/73

CONFIDENTIAL

Commissioner "C",
Section 3.

26 MAY 1973

3/38/73



Detention of Six members of the British Army at Clones
on the morning of the 25th. May, 1973.

As may be seen from the second page of Sergeant McArdle's report I./Bombardier Forsythe stated that the personnel in the van were on duty on the occasion from 11.00 p.m. to 2.00 a.m. and that their function was to perform a series of check-points and hold up passing traffic. To accomplish this mission it would be necessary that the party be properly equipped with advance warning signs and effective hand torches.. They were not in possession of any such warning signs and had only one, poor quality hand torch. It is difficult to visualise an Army, particularly the British Army, setting out on such a mission, without being properly equipped. One thinks of an Army as adopting a regimental or uniform approach to all matters of a routine nature. In view of the foregoing it seems doubtful if this were a truthful account of their assignment on the occasion. This suspicion is somewhat reinforced with a further statement made by the same soldier that they had not in fact performed any check-points on that night and had not stopped any vehicles.

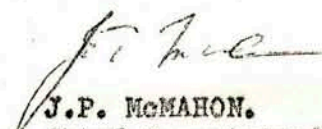
It seems evident that it was the same British Army unit that called to the home of Francis McMahon of Cloncorick, Newtownbutler, Co. Fermanagh at approximately 1.00 a.m. on 25.5.1973. To visit McMahon's house necessitated an incursion into the State. It is submitted that one would need to be very credulous to accept that the Unit visiting McMahon's house were unaware that they had travelled through the State to reach the house, particularly when one takes into account that a deliberate incursion to the same house was made on 12th. December, 1972. In connection with this latter incursion please see this office report, dated 22nd. December, 1972, under caption "Detention of Francis McMahon Cloncorick, Newtownbutler, Co. Fermanagh on the 12th. December, 1972".

For some unknown reason Clones has acquired a certain notoriety in Northern Ireland as a town for harbouring gunmen. There are no grounds, however, for such views and indeed it might be said that Clones is one of the most difficult towns along the Border for subversive elements to penetrate. There are check-points in operation at two points in the town, over a twenty-four hour period, following the bombing incidents which occurred there some time past. Any member of a subversive organisation or a person having sympathies therewith is subjected to very close scrutiny when passing these check-points. In view of the notoriety associated with the town and there is reason to believe the British Army share these views, it is considered possible that the British Army unit in question made a deliberate visit to the State. It would seem that they must have had a good local knowledge of the area as McMahon's house, which it seems they visited, is not easily located. In addition there are clearly defined road markings on the entrance to the State all along the border on the Northern side. These markings were placed there in the first instance as a guide to the British Army to ensure that they would not cross the border in error. Seeing that this unit had to travel through the State to call at McMahon's house it is

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to call at McMahon's house it is/
apparent that they were not over concerned about making other
incursions in the area.


J.P. McMAHON.
Chief Superintendent.