



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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*By hand*  
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AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2  
DUBLIN 2

20 July, 1987

Mr. Dermot Nally  
Secretary to the Government

*M. H. O'Leary*  
*mentioned Co*  
*Taoiseach*  
*2/7*

*Taoiseach*  
*To see it*  
*20/7*

Dear Dermot,

The Taoiseach phoned me this morning about yesterday's events in Belleek and he asked me to contact him again if there were further developments.

In fact there is not much more to add - from here at least. I am, however, enclosing two notes which cover developments up to mid-afternoon today (Monday) and which may be of interest.

As I told the Taoiseach on the phone, the word from the Secretariat this morning was that

- (1) The British raised a question - politely - about news media reports from Dublin today which suggested that whether or not the shot was fired from our side of the border has still to be established. Their understanding, based on contact between the respective police forces, was that we had already accepted that it was.
- (2) The British for their part have told us that the patrol in question was not a regular or "planned" one and they accept that they had not asked for cover from our side. Accordingly there is no suggestion of any "inefficiency" on our part.

Yours sincerely,

Noel Dorr  
Secretary

*W O'Leary*  
*Registry*

*205 16557*

*→ 522537*

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cc: PSM

PS S

les O Taitheir

Belleek Shooting

*Cl*

Reference Taoiseach's phone conversation with the Secretary.

As of 1 p.m. today, there are no developments of which we are aware. The matter continues to be under Garda investigation. The Taoiseach may wish to be aware that an officer of the Department visited Belleek last Friday at the request of the local SDLP.\* The SDLP wanted to draw attention to the behaviour of the Green Jackets Regiment which has 40-50 soldiers housed in the local RUC barracks. The Regiment is new and has provoked local anger over the past few weeks. The principal complaints were that shoppers in the town have been frequently put up against walls and frisked and that the soldiers have behaved aggressively to tourists in the area. It is also believed by locals that anti-Catholic signs recently painted on walls in Belleek were the work of the soldiers. We have told the British through the Secretariat of this local feeling.

Summary of Events

The soldier was killed at 2.05 p.m. on 19 July by a single high velocity bullet. It was believed by police on both sides of the border that the shot was fired from high ground (an old fort) in the townland of Clyhore some 200 yards away on the southern side. A preliminary Garda search of the area revealed a green soccer holdall, a yellow duster, a four stone paper bag, and an eight stone fibre (jute) bag. The preliminary search did not locate a cartridge case. The scene was preserved to await further examination.

The Secretariat was informed that it was also believed on our side that the shot had come from our side of the border. A phone call was arranged between the Tanaiste and Mr. King who

*\* (separate report attached)*

wanted, first, to say that he had been in contact with the Tanaiste directly and, second, to ask that we do everything possible on our side. This call took place shortly after 9 p.m. The Tanaiste and Mr. King agreed that the facts appeared the same on the southern as well as the northern side and he gave Mr. King an assurance that we would push ahead with our investigations. The Tanaiste informed the Taoiseach of the call and the Department kept in touch with the Taoiseach's private secretary. The Department informed the press, in response to queries, of our concern about the incident and of the contact between Ministers.

#### Unionist Reaction

The Unionist security spokesman, Ken Maginnis, gave interviews to the Good Morning Ulster (BBC) and Morning Ireland (RTE) radio programmes this morning. He claimed that there was no overtime available for the Gardai and that if the Gardai were unable to work in the area then the Irish Army could not operate there either. He said there was a strain on financial sources on the southern side. He said the one area in which both sides could co-operate was in the passing of information on intelligence. Beyond that, the resources were not there on either side of the border to deal effectively with the problem of cross-border security. Speaking on RTE Morning Ireland, Mr. Maginnis accepted when asked, that it was possible that the shot had not been fired from our side of the border and also accepted that the gunmen could in any event have escaped into Northern Ireland. He went on to make it clear that he believed security to be very inadequate on the northern side of the border and that his principal criticism was that both Governments were claiming that security had improved when in fact it had not.

*Declan O'Donovan*  
25/12/87

Declan O'Donovan

Anglo-Irish Section

Mr. O'Donovan,

cc: Mr. Hill, Belfast.  
para 1, 2 may have had a bearing on  
Sunday's shooting. It might be mentioned  
in the Secretariat that we are aware  
of this background. Or

25/7

cc: PSS

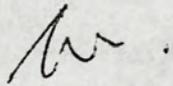
In O'Connell  
Section

1. I visited Belleek last Friday at the request of Tommy Gallagher, Chairman of Fermanagh/South Tyrone SDLP Constituency Council. Mr. Gallagher asked to see me regarding local incidents involving the British Army. In the light of yesterday's shooting in Belleek, it may be helpful to give some observations on the security situation in the town and on the geographical location in relation to the shooting.
2. Belleek, which has a population of around 500, has 40-50 soldiers housed in the RUC barracks. The present regiment has provoked considerable local anger by their behaviour over the past few weeks. Shoppers in the town are frequently frisked against the wall and soldiers regularly cock their rifles, in a way that was not the case before on corners of the main street. An incident two weeks ago when soldiers walked between the audience and the stage at a Feis in Belleek Pottery Grounds caused a lot of irritation. There has also been considerable irritation caused to local tourists, notably in Carlton Cottages. This is complex of chalet flats, mainly for Swiss and German fishermen. The owner, whom I met, complained of soldiers patrolling the grounds and standing outside chalet windows. He recently had a complaint from a British lady that she woke up in the morning to find a soldier standing outside her window. A Swiss Travel Agent, who acts in a co-ordinating role in the chalets over the summer, has complained to the management about these incidents. Mr. Gallagher told me that there have also been anti-Catholic signs painted on walls in the town and most local people believe that soldiers are responsible. In summary, there is extensive local resentment at the behaviour of the present regiment over past weeks. For example, the manager of Belleek Pottery has complained to Mr. Gallagher about the effect on visitors going into the pottery museum. Soldiers have needlessly and

aggressively taken up a position at the entrance to the museum and the manager believes that several tourists have decided against making a visit once they saw the soldiers in position.

3. I spoke to Mr. Gallagher this morning and he said that most local people have no doubt that the shooting was carried out from the Southern side. The Carlton Hotel joins the main street with a large car park at the back of it. Beside the car park is Carlton Cottages which has fairly extensive grounds. The RUC barracks in turn joins the back of Carlton Cottages and there has been an arrangement with the owners for soldiers to exit regularly through the grounds of the cottages rather than going out from the barracks into Belleek. The soldiers would then go through the car park and on to the main road. A river adjoins the carpark with a steep hill immediately on the other side (Southern). The river forms the border and I have no doubt that any soldier walking in the car park or standing in front of the hotel would be perfectly visible from the top of the hill (which has also considerable gorse on it). There is a house on the top of the hill which would also form a good security clearance for a sniper. Mr. Gallagher made the point this morning that this was an incident waiting to happen given the regular movement of soldiers around the Hotel and through the car park and Carlton Cottages. There is a Garda check point about half a mile outside Belleek on the road to Ballyshannon (at Cloghore crossroads). It would not have been necessary, however, for snipers to pass through this checkpoint and Gallagher pointed out that a sniper could simply have climbed a hill from the Northern Ireland side and would probably have been undetected. Equally, there is a small road (with about 6 houses on it) on the Southern side and a car could easily have driven up this without having been detected. In summary, as long as the soldiers were so obviously positioning themselves around the Carlton Hotel and using the car park, this was an incident that would have been predictable to anyone with any security

sense. As regards Provisional IRA activity in the area, Gallagher told me that the Provisionals have declined substantially over the past two or three years and there is virtually now no republican activity in the town. He estimates that Beleek itself would have voted 80% for the SDLP in the recent general election.



G. Corr  
20 July, 1987

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