

MAGILLIGAN - SAT 22 JAN

On 22nd January, 1972 an Anti-Internment Demonstration was held at Magilligan, Limavady, Co. Londonderry. It was organised on behalf of N.I.C.R.A. by the North Derry Civil Rights Association.

Supporters of the Demonstration began arriving at the Assembly Point at the Golden Slipper Ballroom, Magilligan from 1.30 p.m. onwards from various parts of Northern Ireland including Belfast and Londonderry. By 2.15 p.m. between 600 and 700 persons had assembled in that area.

Chief Superintendent R. G. N. Spears, Coleraine, Lt. Col. P. M. Welsh, 2nd Royal Green Jackets, Shackleton Barracks, Ballykelly and Chief Inspector W. S. Irwin, Limavady contacted Mr. Ivan Cooper, M.P. at the Assembly Point. Following discussions Mr. Cooper indicated that the Demonstrators intended to travel to Magilligan Camp via a laneway which was alongside the Golden Slipper Ballroom towards the beach and then along the beach towards Magilligan Camp. At this time the following police and military were deployed just on the Magilligan camp side of the Assembly Point:-

Police	-	1 Inspector	5 Sergeants	30 Constables.
Military	-	1 Platoon of 2nd Royal Green Jackets in Armoured Vehicles.		

The assembled persons were addressed by Mr. Finbar O'Kane, Glenullin, Garvagh who is the Chairman of the North Derry Civil Rights Association. O'Kane indicated over a loudspeaker that the Demonstrators would travel by the laneway on to the beach. Some of the Demonstrators were hostile at this stage and a few stones and bottles were thrown at the Police. However, the demonstrators were persuaded by the Organisers to move into the grounds of the Ballroom where they then formed up and moved off at 2.30 p.m. in a procession along the laneway towards the beach. Observation was kept on the Demonstration by Helicopter during their march along the laneway and beach.

At 3.41 p.m. a small number of the demonstrators had reached the dannert wire fence erected on the beach by the Army at the start of the prohibited area near to Magilligan Camp. The main body of demonstrators stopped at a distance of approximately 200 yards short. A small number came forward including Mr. I. Cooper, M.P. who was told by Chief Supt. Spears that the Demonstrators would not be permitted beyond the wire fence, as the ground to the North of it was a prohibited area and the property of the Ministry of Defence. When speaking to Mr. Cooper Chief Supt. Spears was along that portion of the beach between the end of the wire and the sea itself, and it was made quite clear to Mr. Cooper that the line which was being referred to was that running straight down from the end of the barbed wire to the end of the sea itself. Mr. Cooper left to join the main body of demonstrators and someone then addressed them by loudspeaker. Instructions were given for the Demonstrators to link arms and move forward towards the wire. This they

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did in abody. In the meantime about 50 persons had detached themselves from the main body of demonstrators and some stones were thrown at the Army and Police behind the wire fence who withdrew out of range. The usual obscenities were also being directed at the Army and Police.

The tide had gone out and there was a gap between the end of the wire fence and the sea. The main body of demonstrators went towards this point. Stones were still being thrown at the Police and Army. The main body of Demonstrators came past the darnert wire at 4.8 p.m. and the Army fired rubber bullets at this stage and followed this up with a batton charge. The Demonstrators were driven back out of the prohibited area. Stone throwing by demonstrators and the firing of baton rounds by the Army continued. At 4.16 p.m. matters had quietened down considerably, and by 4.30 p.m. some of the demonstrators had commenced to move back along the beach towards the original assembly point. A hard core of approximately 300 demonstrators moved along the perimeter fence inland in the direction of Magilligan Camp. As the Army prepared to move in demonstrators withdrew, and in so doing set alight one hut during their retreat.

Shortly after 5.00 p.m. all the available Police, about 25 and one Platoon went down towards the Golden Slipper Ballroom to await the return of the demonstrators. When the demonstrators returned to the vicinity of the Ballroom they crowded round the building and threw a large number of missiles towards Police and Army from out of the comparative darkness. Shortly after this they set the building alight and caused very considerable internal damage.

The Golden Slipper Ballroom was set on fire at 6.13 p.m. and at that stage the Army called up two further Platoons and at 6.34 p.m. moved in in conjunction with the Police to clear the area. The Fire Brigade arrived shortly afterwards and succeeded in putting out the fire. At 7.30 p.m. the area had returned to normal. No further incidents took place.

It can be stated quite categorically that there was no breach of the Government Ban on Processions, by the demonstrators on this occasion.

When speaking to the organizers at the beginning of the demonstration both of us were prepared to do all in our power to co-operate with them, consistent with our duty of ensuring that there was no breach of the Ban, and this attitude was maintained throughout the afternoon.

The area surrounding the Internment Camp had been declared a prohibited area under Reg. 34 and 34A of the Civil Authorities Special Powers Act, and we understand that an Order to that effect has been published in the Belfast Gazette. The area included the fore shore (definition of which we understand to include all that land down to the low water mark).

No arrests were made at foot of any of the incidents occurring during the afternoon. The various situations which the Security Forces found themselves in did not lend themselves to the making of arrests and it was felt, in fact, that the making of arrests, in the circumstances, might only inflame the situation and might have resulted in an attempt to breach the Ban.

MAGILLIGAN

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REDEPLOYMENT 1500 HRS

