



Policy Legacy FOI Team
Headquarters 38 (Irish) Brigade
British Forces Post Office 825

E-Mail: 38X-PolicyLegacy-FOI-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk



Reference: FOI 2021/02634

Date: 22 April 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE DEATH OF WILLIAM MARCHANT ON 28 APRIL 1987

I can confirm that your request has been considered under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI (A)), and the process is now complete.

You stated the following:

"I am writing to, concerning the murder of Mr William Marchant - 28 April 1987. I would request all information held by the MOD, in relation to the Weapons Intelligence Section's taskings and findings, in relation to the above mater. This should include minutes of tasking meetings, liaison meetings and correspondence with outside agencies; and any finalised reports and a list of those furnished with such."

I can confirm that the MOD holds some information relating to the death of William Marchant. Please find attached at Annex A a copy of 2 Section Weapons Intelligence Unit report dated 28 April 1987. I can confirm that we do not hold the photographs referred to in the report.

Thank you for clarifying in your e-mail dated 8 March that you required all reports relating to the Weapons Intelligence Sections tasking meetings, liaison meetings and correspondence with outside agencies and any finalised reports and a list of those furnished with such. I can confirm that we do not hold any such documents, bar the report copied at Annex A.

Some of the information you have requested could be exempt under Section 23(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, which relates to the bodies dealing with security matters, although it is also possible that the information relates to none of the bodies dealing with security matters. Sections 23(1) and 24(1) are being cited in the alternative as it is not appropriate, in the circumstances of the case, to say which of the two exemptions is actually engaged so as not to undermine national security or reveal the extent of any involvement, or not, of the bodies dealing with security matters. Section 23 is an absolute exemption and, if it were engaged in this material, the MOD would not be required to consider whether the public interest favours disclosure of this information.

Any information that is not exempt from disclosure under Section 23(1) could be exempt under Section 24(1) of the FOI(A), which exempts information from disclosure if its exemption is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security. We cannot say which of the two exemptions is actually engaged, but to the extent that S24(1) might be engaged. We acknowledge the public interest in openness and transparency, but we consider that there is a stronger public interest in protecting national security.

All Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) cases remain open and if new evidence comes forward the PSNI will reinvestigate. Release of these documents must be carefully considered under Section 31 (Law Enforcement) of the FOI(A).

I have completed this consideration through a public interest test including consultation with the PSNI who have advised that release of some of the information could adversely impact on any investigative process and may jeopardise any future prosecutorial process. On this basis I am withholding some of the information under Section 31 of the FOI(A).

Section 38 (Health and Safety) is a qualified exemption and we have conducted a public interest test to determine whether the information should be released or withheld. The factors for this public interest have determined that whilst disclosure would demonstrate openness and transparency this is outweighed by the detrimental effect disclosure could have on those mentioned in the documents, or their family members and friends. I have concluded that whilst disclosure may be of historical interest, the health and safety of individuals must be taken into account. Some information has therefore been redacted under Section 38 of the FOI(A).

Additionally, some of the information contained within the disclosure constitutes personal information, such as names and addresses. Under FOI(A) this information is exempt under Section 40 (2) by reason of the first condition under Section 40 (3) (a) (i), as disclosure would contravene data protection principles under the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). This is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test to be conducted in order for this information to be exempt from disclosure. Therefore, all personal information has been redacted.

I appreciate that this incident took place 33 years ago and the passage of time can be a factor in diminishing the applicability of exemptions to information. However, in this instance the passage of time is less relevant as the PSNI continue to investigate Troubles-related deaths and the overall balance is in favour of partial exemption.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the FOI(A). Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely

38 (Irish) Brigade FOI Team

Encl:

Annex A - 2 Section Weapons Intelligence Unit

Box 7/87 pos 6

5 pages



2 Section

Weapons Intelligence Unit

REF NO

WIA/35/5/49/87 / D 403186

INCIDENT

SHOOTING - MDR MARENANT

LOCATION

STANLEY RD.

DATE/TIME

28 APR 87 / 1505 HRS

DEALING

[REDACTED]

RUC STN

TOWNHNT ST

SF UNIT

N/A

~~RESTRICTED~~

INITIAL :
BELFAST VISREP
SHOOTING

REFERENCE: WIU/BF/S/49/87

INVESTIGATORS: [REDACTED]

DATE & TIME

281505 APR 87.

LOCATION & GRID

Pavement outside
D. STEWART Butchers,
200 Shankhill Road,
Belfast.

TARGET

Possibly Mr William
MARCHANT (Deceased).

GR: 3270 7478

DATE OF REPORT

28 Apr 87.

DETAILS OF INCIDENT

1. On Tue 28 Apr 87, about 1505 hrs, a gold Mazda 626 VRM: [REDACTED] drove at speed along the Shankhill Road in the direction of Woodvale Road. As the car passed the Progressive Unionist Party office unknown person(s) opened fire in that direction fatally injuring William MARCHANT.
2. The RUC were called to the scene where they found MARCHANT laying on the pavement with an entry wound to the chest and an exit wound in the neck. He was still alive at this point and subsequently he was taken to the RVH where he later died.
3. Also injured in the attack was a [REDACTED] who was inside the Progressive Unionist Party office. She sustained a minor flesh wound to her left leg.

ITEMS RECOVERED

4. [REDACTED] recovered from the scene were four, spent [REDACTED]

CASUALTIES

5. Mr William MARCHANT
DOB: 9 Aug 47
43 Sugarfield Street
Belfast.
[REDACTED]

~~RESTRICTED~~

6. [REDACTED] - NSI
DOB: N/K
[REDACTED]
Belfast.

PERSONS ARRESTED

7. Nil.

INVESTIGATORS COMMENTS

8. PIRA carried out the assassination of William MARCHANT in retaliation to the murder of Larry MARLEY. William MARCHANT was a large figure of a man and easily recognised. He spent a lot of time along with other UVF men standing around outside the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) office which made it easy for PIRA to find him.

9. It would appear that 5 shots were fired at MARCHANT as 3 strike marks were found on a lamppost which he was stood next to, and 2 strike marks were found on the metal shutters to the PUP office. As the vehicle sped away several more shots were fired into the air some of which hit the top floors of two buildings.

10. The description of the vehicle might be wrong as the vehicle trace on [REDACTED] came back as a [REDACTED] belonging to [REDACTED] of [REDACTED], Belfast.

11. The last incident in which [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

INITIAL CONTRIBUTION: PIRA
MILITARY UNIT: N/A
ATO C/S: N/A
RUC STATION: Tennent Street.
SOCO: Tennent Street.



Cpl
for OC

Annexes:

A. Photographic supplement.

Distr:

External:

Info:

HQ WIU
FESA HQNI
HQ 39 Inf Bde
39 Inf Bde Int Det. (B)
ATO
E Det FRU
Unit IO's
WERC
NITAT UK
NITAT BAOR
SSI OTC
TCG (B)
RUC Ops & Planning
RUC OTU - Palace Bks
RUC OTU - Gough Bks
RUC OTU - Limavady
RUC OTU - Enniskillen
No. 5 DMSU N Queen St

Internal:

Info:

File



APPENDIX A TO
WIU/BF/5/53/87
DATED MAY 87

2 Section Weapons Intelligence Unit

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX

Reference: WIU/BF/S/53/87

PHOTO No	DESCRIPTION	ITEMS MARKED
1.	Contact Point	
2.	Overall scene	
3.	Strike marks	