

# British Army and Police Lie to the British Government about the McGurk's Bar Massacre

Archive discovery by Ciarán MacAirt



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## How the British Army and Police Lied to British Government about McGurk's Bar

Newly uncovered British Ministry of Defence files prove how the British Army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary lied directly to British ministers and Number 10 about the McGurk's Bar bombing less than two weeks after the massacre.

15 civilians were killed including 2 children in the McGurk's Bar attack on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1971 - at the time, the greatest loss of civilian life in a single bombing in Ireland since the Nazi Blitz of Belfast. 16 other civilians were injured. Today (Wednesday) is the 48<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atrocity.

The report – marked secret and dated 15<sup>th</sup> December 1971 – is from Defence Secretariat 10 (DS10), an important division within British Ministry of Defence which provided information and policy advice to Ministers and British military staff during the conflict in the early 70s. Addressed to the Minister of State for Defence, copies were sent to the British Prime Minister's office (10 Downing Street) and the Assistant Secretary of the Home Office as well as key British military staff and MOD offices.

The report records blatant and deliberate British Army and RUC lies aimed at blaming the innocent victims of the attack for the massacre and undermining an eye-witness to the atrocity.

Serial 4 [PDF 4] records the heinous lies:

*"RUC forensic experts and Ammunition Technical officers both agree that the blast occurred inside the building, though with the disturbances caused to the site by heavy technical equipment involved in the rescue operation they are not sure quite where. But apart from the pattern of debris, initial examination has shown that 5 of those killed were killed directly by blast, not debris."*

We now know for a fact that the Ammunition Technical Officer at the scene reported within hours to Headquarters Northern Ireland (with RUC HQ privy to the report):

*"ATO is convinced bomb was placed in entrance way on ground floor. The area is cratered and clearly was the seat of the explosion."*

### **Reference [Bomb Expert Informed Army HQ McGurk's Bar Was Attacked](#)**

Forensics were not completed till February 1972 and in March 1972, the State Pathologist Dr Marshall informed RUC:

*"All the injuries to the bodies we examined could be accounted for the collapse of the building and the burning of the rubble. There were no injuries... specifically due to the bomb..."*

We now know too for a fact that General Sir Frank Kitson (then Brigadier) and the RUC colluded to push the police "line" within 4 hrs:

*"... that the bomb in the pub was a bomb designed to be used elsewhere, left in the pub to be picked up by the Provisional IRA. Bomb went off and was a mistake"*

The police to this day have not been able to substantiate this lie as it was fabricated.

**Reference [General Sir Frank Kitson Implicated in the McGurk's Bar Cover-Up](#)**

In the meantime, the RUC sought to undermine an eyewitness to the atrocity whose testimony was vindicated when one of the UVF murderers confessed in 1977 [Serial 3 PDF 4]:

*"3. The RUC have interviewed two witnesses whose statements support the theory that the bomb was placed outside, or just inside, the bar by a man who got out of a car. The RUC are however unconvinced by these stories. One of them is from a small boy whose account was published in the press: when the RUC saw him his father and solicitor did most of the talking."*

**Read more [Undermining the Eyewitness to the McGurk's Bar Attack](#)**

The secret archives were discovered by author Ciarán MacAirt, a grandson of two of the McGurk's Bar victims. He said:

*"These documents prove how the British Army and RUC deliberately misinformed British Ministers and departments including the Prime Minister's Office using Defence Secretariat 10 as a conduit for their lies. Even after 48 years we are finding new evidence of the British state's cover-up but the redaction [Serial 6, PDF 4] shows that even after 48 years, the British state is still withholding evidence of the McGurk's Bar massacre from our families. I will fight for the release of that information over the coming year."*

Family legal representative Niall Ó Murchú of Kinnear and Co. Solicitors said:

*"It is testimony to the dignity and industry of the McGurk's Bar families that they continue to discover critical evidence relating to the atrocity and its cover-up nearly half a century later. It is also testimony to the British state's failure to acknowledge its part in the McGurk's Bar massacre that it is still withholding evidence from the families, denying them truth and justice to this very day."*

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PS/Minister of State.

Copies to: APS/Secretary of State.  
PS/US<sup>2</sup> of S (Army).  
PS/PUS.  
MA/CGS (2).  
DGI.  
DHO.  
AUS (GS).  
CTR.  
DPR (Army).  
BGS (Int).  
IO 3.  
DI 1.  
C2 (AD) - Mr Elkins-Daukes.  
D. Maitland, Esq, 10 Downing Street.  
J.T.A. Howard-Drake, Esq, Home Office.

McGHEE'S BAR EXPLOSION.

1. You asked to be kept informed of developments.
2. Investigations are not yet complete, and inquests have not yet been held.
3. The RUC have interviewed two witnesses whose statements support the theory that the bomb was placed outside, or just inside, the bar by a man who got out of a car. The RUC are however unconvinced by these stories. One of them is from the small boy whose account was published in the press: when the RUC saw him his father and solicitor did most of the talking.
4. RUC forensic experts and Army ammunition technical officers both agree that the blast occurred inside the building, though with the disturbance caused to the site by heavy mechanical equipment involved in the rescue operation they are not sure quite where. But apart from the pattern of debris, initial examination has shown that 5 of those killed were killed directly by blast, not debris.
5. Evidence given at recent explosives trials has linked the North Queen Street area with the transfer of IRA bombs between those who make them and those who use them.

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7. The incident continues to excite public interest in Northern Ireland. Certain Republican newspapers have supported the theory described at paragraph 3 above. In some versions the SAS are implicated.

8. It was suggested at PUS's morning meeting on 14th December that the Minister of State might wish to consider answering an arranged written question (picking up his assurance to Mr Rafton Pounder, MP, on 6th December (c. 936)). We cannot be definite: the most we can do is reinforce the remarks the Minister of State has already made, and I do not believe we can go beyond the line of the attached (which I have cleared with the Civil Adviser to the GOC and with C2 (AD)).

15 December, 1971.

*CHH*

C H Henn  
Pcpl DS 10  
MB Ext 2237.

Minister of State

I think that a Question and Answer on the lines attached might be helpful; but I agree with DS 10 that we cannot go further than this.

*Atkinson*

*Ans (65)*

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15 Dec 71