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RETURNED BRITISH DEFECTOR

DONNELL, KIM MATTHEW

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DATE: 7 Jan 99  
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DATE: 20 Jan 99  
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Vol II 7 VII

As of JUN. 05 1980 all material  
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Christine Laxton JUN. 05 1980  
(Signature) (Date Signed)

CHRISTINE LAXTON 5  
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Subject:- Returned British Defector

'A' Detachment  
309 Field Security Section  
British Forces Post Office, 45

BERLIN : 93-4384  
'A' DET : 93-4206

309/6/2/414

14 Jan 56

To : Officer Commanding,  
309 Field Security Section,  
British Forces Post Office, 45.

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PART ONE

1. PREAMBLE

At approx 1700 hrs 7 Jan 56, it was reported to this Section from 247 Pro Coy RMP that a returned British defector 22814800 Spr DONNELL of 27 Fd Engr Regt together with his wife and one child was being picked up from MARTENFELDE Refugee Centre by the RMP.

Spr DONNELL was handed over to this Detachment for interrogation by the BERLIN DET, 89 Sec SIB/RMP, at approx 2100 hrs 7 Jan 56. The interrogation finished at approx 2000 hrs 12 Jan 56.

PART TWO

2. PERSONS CONCERNED

(a) Subject:-

Number	:	22814800
Rank	:	Sapper
Name	:	DONNELL, K.M., Matthew.
Date of Birth	:	8 May 34
Place of Birth	:	LONDONDERRY, N. IRELAND.
Marital Status	:	Married, see under sub-para (b).
Next of Kin	:	Father
Name	:	Matthew DONNELL,
Address	:	4, SOCIETY ST, LONDONDERRY, N. IRELAND.
Date and Place of	:	
Enlistment	:	Jul 51, MALVERN.
Engagement	:	22 years Regular.
Regt/Unit	:	27 Fd Engr Regt RE
Religion	:	Church of Irela
Civilian Occupation	:	Apprentice Brick

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Date Defected : 3 Mar 54, from MCE BIELEFELD.  
Date Returned : 7 Jan 56, from BAUTZEN colony.  
Arrest/Investigation at  
time of Defection : NINE months detention in  
MCE BIELEFELD for previous  
absence and misuse of WD  
property.

## PERSONAL DESCRIPTION

Height : 168 cms      Hair : Light brown  
Weight : 112 German pounds.      Eyes : brown  
Build : Thin      Nose : Straight  
Complexion: Fresh      Distinguishing  
Marks : 2½" scar on left  
palm.

### (b) Subject's Wife

Name : DONNELL, nee HILSCHMANN, Ingeburg,  
Hannelore.  
Date of Birth : 15 Jun 31  
Place of Birth : MERSEBURG.  
Occupation : Cashier/Accountant in the  
RUNDfunk und FERNFELD TECHNIK,  
BAUTZEN, then worked on  
LPG No 5 at CANITZ CHRISTINA.  
Nationality : German  
Last Address : Kr BAUTZEN, CANITZ-CHRISTINA,  
LPG No 5.  
Present Address : c/o BMH BERLIN, BRITISH FORCES  
POST OFFICE, 45.  
Parents : Father  
HILSCHMANN, Joseph.  
Living in : HAMBURG-HARBURG.  
Mother  
HOFFMANN, Gertrud, (divorced  
and remarried)  
Living in : LEUNA bei MERSEBURG.  
Children : ONE BOY  
HAROLD, (An illegitimate child  
by SCHULTZE, Gerhard)  
Age 2½.  
Mrs DONNELL is expecting to  
have another baby (by Spr DONNELL)  
between 12-20 Jan 56.  
Documents : Mrs DONNELL has in her possession  
her marriage documents and  
sundry other documents,  
concerning herself and her  
husband.

### 3. CASE HISTORY

(a) An account of subject's career was brought up as follows:-

8 May 34 Born in FLORENCE STR, LONDONDERRY, N. IRELAND.  
1940. Started education at CLOONEY Public Elementary School.  
1945 Went to CLOONEY Public Elementary School.  
1948 Left school and was employed as an apprentice bricklayer  
with EAKON-building contractors and later PLATT building  
contractors. 223  
1951 JULY " Joined Army on a 22 yr Regular engagement at  
MALVERN, where he continued to do FOUR weeks basic  
training, and was posted to ELGIN in SCOTLAND.

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1952 Went to CHATHAM for bricklaying tests and then posted to MINDEN, GERMANY, in February.

1953 September. Sentenced to NINE months detention in the MCE BIELEFELD for two previous absences of THREE and THIRTEEN days, and misuse of WD property (took WD motorbike for his own use and crashed it).

1954 3 Mar 54 Went, absent from MCE BIELEFELD.

26 Mar(approx) Arrived in BAUTZEN defectors/deserters colony, where he lived in Clubhouse, and went to languages and politics school six days a week.

April Moved to flat at 22 ARNDTSTR.

MAY Moved to HOLZMARKT 6.

June Attempted escape by railway. Arrested at DRESDEN.

July Started work as an apprentice mechanic in the LOWE factory. Continued attendance at political and language school on every Monday and Tuesday.

21 Aug Married Inge HILSCHMANN at BAUTZEN STANDESAMT (Registry Office), and moved to her home at WETTELSTR 22.

10 Oct Moved to TASCHENBERGSTR 10.

1955 February Finished attending the political and languages school. Finished as an apprentice, and began work as a turner in LOWE factory.

Mar Was elected local FDJ vice president. This appointment lasted for two weeks when he was relieved of the position for not attending meetings.

May Began work at the EFA Factory as a repair mechanic.

July Moved residence to CANITZ-CHRISTINA, LPG No 5, and worked here on the farm mostly as tractor driver.

November Arranged escape with ROBERTS (see appx 'A'), attempt failed by Sfs.

December DONNELL's economical situation was becoming strained and so he began plans for third escape attempt.

1956 3 January DONNELL moved to the Clubhouse again to look for chances to escape.

6 January Observed an LPG truck parked in BAUTZEN, dipped the tank, and got the drivers of the vehicle drunk in a cafe.

7 January At approx 0200 hrs collected his wife, in the LPG truck, from CANITZ-CHRISTINA and drove to BERLIN. 224

8-14 January Admitted to Bismarck Detention Ward for treatment, expected back injury.

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- (b) DONNELL's account was enlarged upon from the day he went absent, ie 3 MAR 54, when he was employed as a driver for military personnel, while still serving his 9 months detention at the MCE BIELEFELD. On the day in question, he states that he took a WD Volkswagon 04 ~~4~~ XH 44 (its tank was full, 40 litres), and of his own accord drove to BREMEN, then to HANNOVER and then to a forest outside HELMSTEDT where he abandoned the vehicle, and wandered on foot over the Russian Zone boundary.
- (c) On walking into a nearby village, subject stated that he was surprised at being arrested by the VOPO. However he was taken to a house where two Russian officers (SBs : TWO vertical gold stripes and star, on gold background. Small tank insignia) asked him where he came from and how he got there. One of the officers then departed with some Russian soldiers and pushed the Volkswagon back to the village.
- (d) One of the Russian Officers then ordered DONNELL to drive him and two Russian soldiers to a barracks on the Russian Zone continuation of the Autobahn he had used originally to get to HELMSTEDT. On arrival at the barracks DONNELL was ordered to take off his uniform, and on doing so was given a Russian Officers greatcoat and a meal. He then drove them on to MAGDEBURG and stopped the night there.
- (e) The next morning, 4 Jan 56, a man dressed like an American, and who spoke like one, and whom DONNELL knows as 'GEORGE' (see Appx 'A') came and questioned him as follows:-
- Q. "Why did you come over?"  
A. I don't know.
- Q. Where are you stationed?  
A. Minden.
- Q. What is the name of your CO?  
A. I don't know.
- Q. What is your Regt?  
A. The Engineer Regt.
- (f) After these questions, another civilian came in who spoke good English and proceeded to interrogate DONNELL along the following lines:-
- Q. What is the strength of the British Army of the Rhine?  
A. I don't know.
- Q. How many divisions are there?  
A. I don't know all the divisions in Germany, only the one round Minden.
- Q. Which division do you belong to?  
A. Twenty-ninth.
- Q. Don't lie to me, you might belong to BAOR 29, but not to the 29th Division'.  
This civilian then showed DONNELL a large and varied collection of British formation flashes, presumably taken from battledresses.
- Q. "You come from the 6th Armoured Div'."  
A. Nothing said.
- Q. "How is Lt Col TOMLINSON doing?"  
A. Alright as far as I know. (DONNELL stated that Lt Col TOMLINSON was then CO MCE BIELEFELD).

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Q. Which division do the Military Police belong to in BIELEFELD?  
A. I don't know.

Q. Have you ever been in the RMP, HQ?  
A. No, never.

Q. Do you know any of the SIB there?  
A. I don't know any, but have seen some.

Q. Do you know a little grey haired man with a moustache in the SIB at BIELEFELD?  
A. No.

Q. As you are Irish, how are you treated in the British Army?  
A. There's no difference. Everyone's treated the same.

Q. Are there many Irish Officers in the Army?  
A. Quite a few.

Q. Have you ever had anything to do with atomic weapons?  
A. No.

The civilian then showed DONNELL a placard with illustrations of British mines on it.

Q. Are there any new mines? Have the British any atomic mines yet?  
A. I haven't heard of any.

DONNELL states that the interrogators then went on to tell him about Russian atomic weapons, radio-controlled rockets, and anti-tank guns.

Q. Has the Army ever told you anything about the Russians?  
A. No.

Q. What are the British soldiers feelings towards the Russians? do they want war with us?  
A. Nobody wants war if they can help it.

Q. That's now true!  
A. Well, I don't want any war'.

Q. War may not interest you, but it interests some people?  
A. Nothing said.

Q. The Russians don't want war, but they are prepared to fight if necessary!

Q. How many British soldiers are punished for rape? (DONNELL states this question arose several times throughout the interrogation).

Q. What is the punishment for rape?  
A. It is severe, that's all I know.

Q. Do you know any cases of rape?  
A. Yes one, he got a dishonourable discharge.

Q. Were there many dishonourable discharges?  
A. Only a few, not many.

Q. What is the morale like in the British Army?  
A. Pretty good.

Q. Is the discipline very strict?  
A. It has to be strict, or we wouldn't have won the war.

Q. Well we won the war too, you know'.

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Q. Do you have any political difficulties?

A. No! I don't bother with politics.

Q. You are foolish there. If you had bothered with politics you wouldn't have been in the British Army?

(g) In conclusion to this interrogation the civilian interrogator lectured DONNELL about capitalist countries, and how the workers were pushed under. Finally DONNELL was told to write a statement to the DDR Government saying that he wished to stay there and work, or risk being charged for spying. DONNELL made the necessary statement.

(h) DONNELL was then taken to some Russian barracks in POTSDAM, and kept there for two days. On the third day, he was blindfolded with welders dark glasses, and taken to a large house surrounded by a big wall. While he was in this house he was put in the same room as Tommy WOODS, a US Army defector (See Appx 'A'). He also saw another American there by the name of HENRY, whom he thought was an officer, and heard a third person whom he believed was an Englishman. During his stay here DONNELL was issued with civilian clothes.

(j) On approx Tuesday 23 Mar 54, WOODS was taken away from the house to BAUTZEN as DONNELL learned on Friday 26 Mar 54 when he was also taken there by car. On arrival in BAUTZEN he was handed over to Heinz SCHATTEL who was in charge of the Clubhouse then. (The Clubhouse has taken the function that Hotel Stadt Bautzen used to fulfill ie reception and boarding of defectors. It also offers many indoor games for their amusement. The political and language school is also here).

(k) SCHATTEL allotted DONNELL to a room in the Clubhouse which he again shared with Tommy WOODS, and who subsequently became his best friend while in BAUTZEN. DONNELL was given a sum of money and three days in which to settle himself in.

(l) On the next Monday, which was approx 29 Mar 54 DONNELL stated, he started the customary three monthly period of education, for new arrivals, at the political and language school, six days a week. In April he moved from the Clubhouse to ARNDTSTR 22, and then in May moved to HOLEMARKT 6.

(m) In June he attempted to escape from BAUTZEN by the railway. He thinks this attempt was foiled by an informer, for on arrival at DRESDEN station he was immediately arrested. He was taken back to BAUTZEN and put in the prison for persons awaiting trial, for three days. At the end of the three days he was questioned by Russian officials in the following manner:-

Q. Where did you want to go? 227

A. I wanted to go to DRESDEN.

Q. The train had [redacted] in DRESDEN for three minutes,



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Q. That's for your own safety to stop some one trying to get you back to the West!

Both of them then went out and bought DONNELL a new suit, and returned him to the Clubhouse.

(n) In July he started work as, an apprentice mechanic in the LOWE factory (See Appx 'B') and continued his lessons at the political and language school every Monday and Tuesday. On 21 Aug 54 he married his girl-friend HILSCHMANN, Ingeburg, Hannelore, who already had the above mentioned boy HAROLD by SCHULTZE, Gerhard. They had to ask permission of the authorities first, and DONNELL was told that if he had been married before and didn't say so he could be sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment for bigamy. HILSCHMANN was then working as a cashier/accountant in the loans bureau of the Rundfunk and Fernmeld Technik. They were married in BAUTZEN STANDESAMT (Registry Office) on 21 Aug 54, and two of HILSCHMANN's German friends witnessed the wedding; (the documents were brought over with them). After their marriage they lived at the wife's home - WETZELSTR 22.

(o) On the 10 Oct 54 they moved their address to TASCHEBERGSTR 10. In February 1955, DONNELL finished his education at the political and language school, and his apprenticeship at LOWE. He then became a turner at LOWE. In March he was elected vice president of the FDJ, but was removed from this position after two weeks for not attending FDJ meetings. In May 55 he left the LOWE factory and went to the EFA Factory (See Appx 'B') where he worked as general repairs mechanic. In July 55, DONNELL again moved both house and employment to CANITZ-CHRISTINA, a small village outside BAUTZEN, LPG No 5 (LANDWIRTSCHAFTLICHE PRODUKTIONS GENOSSENSCHAFT - collective farm No 5), and took up tractor driving.

(p) In November, he discussed escape plans with ROBERTS (See Appx 'A'). When they observed a truck in BAUTZEN which they proposed to steal, DONNELL rang his wife up in CANITZ-CHRISTINA and asked her to meet him at a place in BAUTZEN with their child. After waiting for approx THREE hours, and still his wife hadn't arrived, he went home to see what was wrong. He found his wife and the police waiting for him. He was questioned closely by the police as to why he wanted his wife and child in town, and he managed to satisfy them with a story that he wanted to take his wife to one of the American's birthday party (fact). He concluded that the police had monitored his telephone call. As ROBERTS was with him, he invited him to stay the night at his home. The next day DONNELL found 50 marks missing, presumably stolen by ROBERTS. ROBERTS was later beaten up by a Spaniard for stealing some more money from the Puerto Rican, AVAREZ (See Appx 'A').

(q) On 3 Jan 56, having previously planned to escape again by stealing a lorry in BAUTZEN, with the excuse that he had to see the doctor each day about his back (fact), he moved back to the Clubhouse in BAUTZEN. On the night of 6 Jan 56 he observed an LPG three ton truck parked in BAUTZEN, dipped the petrol tank with a piece of string and a weight, and found that it was full. He later discovered the driver and mate in cafe LIEBMAN and proceeded to get them drunk. At about 0200 hrs 7 Jan 56, he stole the truck and drove back to CANITZ-CHRISTINA, picked up his wife and child and drove back through BAUTZEN to the Autobahn going to BERLIN. He passed through DRESDEN and KONIGSWUSTERHAUSEN outside BERLIN, and reached WILDAU near the ROC border.

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Here he stopped the truck and enquired checkpoints of an old woman, explaining that he had lost his Ausweis. He abandoned the truck (belonging to a BAUTZEN LPG) outside an LPG near WILDAU, and walked with his wife the few kilometres to EICHWALDE where he quickly flashed the inside of his Ausweis (with RED cover as opposed to BLUE) at the station checkpoint.

- (r) At EICHWALDE having successfully passed through the checkpoint, DONNELL and family bought tickets for FALKENSEE. They caught the S-Bahn to OSTKREUZ in the ROS, where they changed and caught a West bound train. DONNELL says that he then started looking for "COCO-COLA" signs, for when he saw one he would know that he was in the West Sector. Using this method, they arrived in the West Sector and detrained at LEERTER BAHNHOF. He then reported to the nearest Police Station (Pol Rev 28) and tried to explain that he wanted the British Military Police. The police at this Police Station telephoned the British Headquarters, but contacted the wrong number. The Police were informed to send DONNELL to the MARIENFELDE Refugee Camp, so DONNELL, with his family, went there, and on reporting managed to explain the situation clearly to a policeman who contacted 247 Pro Coy RMP. RMP then collected DONNELL and delivered him, and his family, to BERLIN Detachment 89 Sec SIB/RMP who in turn passed them to this Detachment for interrogation.

PART FOUR

4. COMMENTS

- (a) Throughout the interrogation, DONNELL proved to be most helpful, and gave all the information he knew. There is some doubt, however, as to the real reason why he decided to defect to the Russian Zone, and not remain locally absent. He professed that he did not know that he was in the Russian Zone until arrested by the Volkspolizei at the village mentioned in para 3, sub para (c), of this report. It was because of the long hours he had to keep while employed as a driver at BIELEFELD, entailing considerable loss of sleep, that made him decide to go absent in the first place.
- (b) His attempts to escape from BAUTZEN were made because of the ridiculous propaganda which was encountered everywhere. In the Clubhouse there were posters; the papers that were available spoke of nothing but supposed atrocities initiated by the Western powers ie. cases of rape, destruction of houses, property and crops etc on manoeuvres, and the suppression of the working classes. The Sfs (State Security Police) were everywhere, dressed as civilians, and behaving as such, until one dare not say anything to a friend in a cafe, or make a telephone call, or go anywhere that wasn't in one's normal daily routine. There was an informer in the No 5 LPG where DONNELL worked, who used to telephone the police if he was late from work or went anywhere unusual.
- (c) In addition to the above, DONNELL's economic position was becoming a strain, as he only had 27 marks a week for working on the LPG, and he had a wife and child to support. Prices were too high for his income eg. 1.04 EAST MARKS for a black loaf of bread, 1.20 EAST MARKS for a small pot of jam, besides communal contributions.
- (d) In the course of planning to escape, DONNELL stated he became fairly friendly with the proprietor of the Cafe LEHMANN (WENDISCHSTR BAUTZEN) whom he states used to pass on names and addresses of people who could help BAUTZEN residents to escape back to the West. DONNELL actually quoted a taxi driver by the name of SCHMIDT, HAUPTMARKT 4, who would drive an escapee to West BERLIN for the sum of 250 marks.

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- (e) DONNELL is, in the interrogator's opinion, of above average intelligence, and was pleasant in his attitude throughout the interrogation. His only wish is to carry on in the Army and considers that he would be prepared to go through another long term of detention at BIRLEFIELD to do so.

PS-E/MID

INTERROGATOR.....*Stafford Hill*.....  
(P. STAFFORD-HILL)

Rank Sgt.

Unit INTELLIGENCE CORPS  
'A' DETACHMENT  
309 FS SECTION  
BRITISH FORCES POST OFFICE, 45.

DATE OF INTERROGATION

7 Jan 56 - 12 Jan 56.

PLACES OF INTERROGATION

- (i) 309 FIELD SECURITY SECTION, BRITISH FORCES POST OFFICE, 45.
- (ii) DETENTION WARD, BRITISH MILITARY HOSPITAL,  
BRITISH FORCES POST OFFICE, 45.

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