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Legacy of War

Experiences of members of the
Ulster Defence Regiment

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Legacy of War

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“The whole gist of the thing is that I was off work for nearly a year. My knees which are still bad, and my shoulder affects me, and my ears have tinnitus constantly. I talk to you now and I can hear whistling in the back. Times it gets switched on, it could drive you crazy. I have to put the wireless on to get to sleep.”

Undiagnosed PTSD affected home and work in the ensuing decades. By 1999, ‘B’ had trouble coping day-to-day.

“Everything was mixed up in my mind, I couldn’t think straight. Even at work my boss even took me off site work, out of bases and that. I’d been welding for him, making steel reinforcements for the police station, and that. Then he moved me into aluminium, which is a cleaner environment, which I enjoyed, I mean, I love my work. It just got that I couldn’t, I couldn’t trust myself to go cut it, for fear. I just lost all confidence in myself.”

Only now is he receiving PTSD treatment.

“Seroxat seems to be the only thing that works. Of course, Dr Hanley diagnosed PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder. I couldn’t understand this. I says to him, I dream at night and I’m dreaming of things that happened in 1970. He says, (xxx), part of your brain is, it only kicks things out now and again, they come out in your dreams. I was waking up soaking, sweating. And that still happens. Not as often. I’ve got treatment now, what is it, EMDR.”

Concerns exist that many more sufferers are not getting any help with their stress and /or their traumatic experiences.

Extract of an interview with ‘I’

And we went up and we had to go into the hospital to get the key because the morgue was locked and the boy came across and opened the morgue door and pushed it open and walked away. And we went in there and it was just one in there, and I went over and pulled the sheet down and it was the cub – 32 years of age, ten rounds in him, funny, nine, nine of them wouldn’t have done him a lot of harm just one went in there, under his armpit and into his heart and that one killed him. The rest had laced him back and front, he was sitting in the car, he had come out of his work

Family Member Needs and Issues:

- Need exists for a family/widow group
- Need exists to address the loss of pension for re-married widows
- Need exists for more research on family impact from service years
- A Legacy of families never receiving emotional support exists
- Stress and worry experienced during and after service years

Extract from an interview with ‘C’:

They shot him through the glass panel in the door. He had no chance. My father died in my arms that morning -- I was 15 years old.

After the murder, I didn’t go out much. On my first day back at school people seemed to be talking about me, behaving differently towards me -- I didn’t go back. I’m not aware of anyone from the school calling or writing to see why I wasn’t there. I sat no examinations and received no qualifications.

There didn’t seem to be anyone there to help us deal with the trauma of what had happened -- we just had to cope in our own way.

The Government, the Northern Ireland Office and the Army all failed the families. They failed to do all they could have done to protect the UDR and their families.

Extract of an interview with 'T'

Comment on the shooting dead of his brother

How did you feel at that time, 'T'?

Ah, (pause) do you know, there was always the anger that boils inside your head, it still does and you know, being in the forces, you knew a lot of them. We knew who was involved in the IRA not them all now but a fair few and it would have been so easy and I would say it would be a lot easier to have went and took vengeance than to do what we did which was to hope that the law would look after it. But the law let us down, the churches let us down, everybody let us down but it would have been so easy. I remember the day we brought him up out of the morgue they were sitting cheering on the bridge in Strabane as we were coming past, a group of boys sitting cheering on Strabane bridge as we came past, and you know I can still see them ...

Extract of an interview with 'T'

Commenting on the murder of two UDR members, one a Greenfinch.

And there he was, going ranting and raving around his own house, his son blew to pieces on the border. You know, he went round half the world fighting for Britain and there on his own doorstep, his own son blew to pieces. Like, how can you tell that man there, how can you talk to that man or calm him down or you know, what do you do for somebody like that? I went up the road, another couple of mile up the road and I went into another house, and there was the Greenfinches father sitting, the tears running down his face. What do you do, what do you tell people like that? How do you explain that to people?

And how did you feel after... ?

Oh, sick and you always hoped, one murder after another, you always hoped that right, they are going to come in and stop this, they are going to do something about this, somebody has to, because funny, in the whole thing, we never went down the road of retribution, revenge,

Extract of an interview with 'D'

"With regards to service personnel, there are also needs with their families, because unknown to me my kids suffered. There has to be a provision put in there somewhere for them as well."

Extract of an interview with 'E'

Memories of that period of the early eighties. It was when the Troubles were still pretty hot, and I can remember watching the television during the time of the Hunger Strikes, which was 1981. Mum's absence, with her duty, meant that I was growing up with my Dad in many respects. My mum was away most weekends at that period, on duty. So I was worried sitting listening to the news on the television and the radio.

I was worried for her safety at that particular time. Having sleepless nights waiting for Mum to come home. That whole sense of safety and security and feeling isolated and I suppose perhaps a little bit jealous of what other kids had, their parents were around and my Mum was somewhere else.

I can remember the saddest moment of that period and it was when one of my Mum's friends, colleagues, was shot dead, and she wasn't on duty that particular weekend. I can remember being with Mum driving to go to a friend's family's house, and starting to feel rage in my stomach. I didn't know the man. But I could see it and feel it that my Mum was upset. Asking my self questions, why did they shoot him, and loads of associated questions. At that moment in time I had a rage in relation to what had happened. There a sense of fear with regards to potential of something happening to my Mum at that time. At that particular incident, that death of my mother's colleague, that murder, gave me a greater appreciation of those fears, those fears were real that day the fears I had as a young boy and up through the years. It wasn't just the article in the paper or on the news, it was real life, it was happening to me and my family at that stage.

Extract of an interview with 'I'

He got up to go to his day's work up at the border, got out of the car, he stood talking into the youngsters, and his wife, Xxxxxxxx, she heard the shot. She heard a bang, she said, I didn't know it was a shot, like, and she says I looked over and she says, Xxxxxxe, you're swaying, get back from the car, and he just swayed and folded and fell onto the ground. And she says, I didn't know what had happened, and she says, the next thing, I heard a wild roar, and I happened to look in the mirror and there was a boy coming up the street from behind, from behind the car, and he had a machine gun, and she says, all I can see and if I close my eyes, I can see it yet, is a flame, a blue flame came out of the front of it, and that was the roar she heard, the boy coming up with the machine gun up the yard just riddling him on the ground. And the boy just raked one side of the car, raked the other side of the car, the other boy came up round from upstairs where he had been, who had shot him with the first shot, he had shot him with a rifle from the upstairs window and the two of them got into Xxxxxxxx's car, and drove off and left her sitting with the two wee'un's in the car, the youngest just under three, and the other boy a couple of years older. I remember Xxxxxx many's the time saying to me, you know, I'm packing it in, 'I', we all said that over the years, you know, because we were getting no support from anybody and we used to laugh to each other when we were saying this, and I mind the time his wife was expecting with the youngest and he says to me, I'm packing it in. That other cub's growing up and he says I never seen him, growing up, and that's not going to happen. And he left, just before the wee boy was born, and three years later, the wee boy pulled himself up to the table in front of me and looked over at me, and says, hi, a bad boy shot my daddy, he says. That's what he said to me across the table. And I tell you, that was hard. He was there, how do you ever take that out of a wee'un's mind?

Security consciousness not only pervades ex-service members as part of a psychological legacy, but became the habit among families as well, instilling a general fear and mistrust directly altering the norm of family and neighbourhood life.

Extract from an interview with 'B':

"Well, I lived at that time in an area which was very close to a Republican area, so my house was easy access for a terrorist if they wanted to come and have a go at me. So I would have had to put in extra locks on the doors. I got bullet-proof glass put in my back door which would be easy accessible; put window locks in. I also had the children trained not to open the door, to stand to the side of the door and shout "Who's there" before they would open the door. They also wouldn't put the light on until the venetian blinds were closed. If the phone rang, they were never to tell anybody that Mummy was away to work. They were just to say Mummy was in the shower, can she phone you back. They were never to tell anybody where I was, or what time I would be coming home at. Just things you took really for granted, you had to change your whole way. The same when you were going shopping. If you had seen a patrol out on the street and you knew somebody, you had to walk past them as if you didn't know them, especially if you were in a bad area. Just so many things, it's totally unbelievable..."

"When they were young you actually didn't realise just how much of a change it made to their lives. It was only when as they were growing up, and the so-called peace had come in, you could see your family starting to do and say things that you used to say when they were young. Like my son one night, 'Oh, don't put the light on till you close the blinds.' My grandson, even now, and he's only eleven years of age. Now his father is an ex-soldier, an ex-regular soldier. Christopher's just turned eleven and when you go to Christopher's door, he'll shout out 'Who's there?' He'll not open the door until he finds out who's there."

"So all of those things are internalised now within the family?"

"Yes."

"The security legacy of the service years."

"And they'll probably pass it on to their children. Maybe not realising. Like my kids..."

Psychological Legacy:

- Fear of interaction with people
- Ex-service Personnel still as security conscious now as when they were serving
- Some ex-service members avoid family members
- Constant reminders of service years through behaviours still being practised
- Members had been trained to not trust while in the service but no deprogramming on return to civilian life
- Advice should be made available for ex-service and families on transforming embedded security consciousness measures from duty time to civvy street
- Ex-members need training to relax and break habit of work, work, work, a habit that exists as a legacy of service years and not being able to relax

Extract from an interview with (I)

'coming more into the late 70s, early 80s, they were a bad time for us because a Castleberg Unit. At one time, in Rockwood, when the statistics were sorted out, you would have had one chance every year, one chance in 40 of being killed. And now, statistics, it doesn't sound much, but you think of that, one was going to disappear out of every 40, and we had 140 odd men in the camp and one out of every 40 was going to disappear each year. Sad statistics to live under, but that is what we lived under.

How did that feel?

Extract from an interview with (I)

Bad, and it doesn't go away. Like, inside, you know, in the middle of the troubles, I went on up through, up through the ranks a bit, and I was running a section, running a platoon. And we had a first class burial party in our platoon and that wasn't because of practice or anything else, it was because we were doing it that often. You know, and we buried our own. There was five out of my platoon, you know, got killed and we were burying other people out of other platoons as well, simply because they knew we had a good outfit, good tight fellows, and they were good at it, but it wasn't easy. I maintain that every coffin we lowered in there, you know, you buried a bit of yourself along with it. There is bits of me in a lot of holes in the ground because I feel I lost a bit of me every time I buried a coffin in the ground, and we carried..., in fact, we carried two in one day which was a fella and girl, and I knew them that well, close, as close as brothers to us. But we were like a family, we were that close to the whole group there.

Extract from an interview with 'D':

"...I worked in a health centre and I've seen people coming through the doors who were ex-service personnel and seeking the help of mental health. But they did express to me their worry about who they were talking to and what they could say. Even that, to me, is a basic need. Regardless of financial need or anything else, to me that's a basic need to know that you are in a secure environment where you can open memories, but they're stored there somewhere in their mind, Martin. One day, they're going to erupt. There's not enough because--people are still doing it, they're holding those feelings, you know, it's better not to think about there being not enough mental health agencies out there to help in this thing. I think what they--you know, you mentioned a few services there--I think what they should be doing is seeking funding where they can have a centre totally for ex-service personnel."

Whether through public or private commemoration, or even just day-to-day awareness, 'F' notes that there is no escape from the memories.

Extract from an interview with 'F':

"What about intrusive thoughts and memories of past experience, would there be occasions whenever you would have that today?"

"I would have those regularly. Because I find that in my own personal life, different incidents happened around times of personal memory -- so every time I was either on holiday, or had a birthday, there was a shooting incident, or something. So I find that every month, more or less, there is something."

Extract from interview with 'J'

Coming on scenes of horrific devastation left a mark, that's something yet to be resolved.

Part Time Ex-Service Issues:

- Financial needs to be addressed
- Assistance needed with run-down businesses
- Help in overcoming effects of boycotts
- Overcoming lost income because wife had to stay home for home security

Pensions for p/t service remain a contentious issue.

Extract from an interview with 'B':

"Is there any pension available to you?"

"No, because-- we only just heard last night. We went to the Regimental Association meeting last night, and we were talking to a couple of part time soldiers, and something came up about pension, and he said, oh but when I joined the UDR which was away in about 1972 I was told you get your bounty every year in place of a pension. And everybody sort of, oh, I wasn't told that--were you told that? No, I wasn't told that. Apparently this is the latest thing, it has now come from the UDR, well not the UDR because they no longer exist. But this is the latest thing that has come out that the part timers or anybody that was regarded as part time at that time when you joined weren't entitled to a pension because they got a bounty every year and that was in place of the pension. Now, I will have, when I reach sixty, I will have a small pension, so I will, because I went full time for a while."

Employment Issues:

- 'No-go' employment areas exist
- We were unemployable because of transfer of threat to fellow employees
- Skills and re-training needed for unemployed ex-service
- Experiences of discrimination on ex-service members when seeking employment

Ex-Service Benefits & Financial Support:

- All Northern Ireland uniformed service time should be counted towards state benefits
- Consideration should be given for one-off financial support (tax-free) payment
- Development of Trustees group for a central support agency needed
- Grants to support annual holiday scheme for ex-service personnel should be made available
- There exists a religious imbalance amongst funding bodies, Catholics outnumber Protestants in these organisations; accept this is by default
- Creation of specialist government funded package for ex-service for acquiring premises, building training programmes, etc., should be a priority
- Too many organisations exist with remits for ex-service personnel but fail to deliver an appropriate service

- A separate fund for security ex-service members should be created, i.e. different from what is available to former terrorists and their families
- All ex-service agencies must improve funding for local training in Welfare Provisions

Some ex-UDR feel deliberately excluded from ex-service benefits.

Extract from an interview with 'D':

"I can't even remember someone coming to me and saying there's an application for the ex-service association. I do know two ladies on the Shankill Road that would go to the ex-service association. But, to me, there should have been follow-up. At that time you did have a welfare officer, and to me she should have been coming—I never had one visit when I was out sick from the sergeant, the welfare officer or anyone else."

Extract from an interview with (K)

"I find it unacceptable that an amount equal to the value of my war pension should be taken from my old age pension."

Extract from an interview with 'A':

"Hopefully, now I'll get a bit more relief with this EMDR. Oh, it's just been a hell of a time. Not knowing what was wrong with you, and basically no help. Even to get my pension sorted out, to get a war pension, it was a fighting match. Nobody wants to help you, no matter who you asked. You were hitting a brick wall. All these things that you think you're entitled to, we had to find out about them ourselves!"

Extract from an interview with 'C':

It was extremely hard financially too. I remember my mum needed to buy us new uniforms for school but she could not afford them. A friend of my dad, who was also in the UDR told her the UDR had money set aside to help widows in this situation so she went along and spoke to a Captain in the UDR. He refused her request for help and she felt humiliated. She never approached the UDR again.

Extract from an interview with (K)

"The first, and most important, point I would like to raise is that concerning a pension for UDR members. Throughout its entire existence the UDR was on "active service", a point that should not be forgotten as this is unique in the British Army. The fact that regular soldiers get a pension and yet had spent considerable periods not on active service suggest to me that it would be only fair for such an entitlement to be given to us. We served our country proudly and loyally throughout our service, and we feel that we should be given what we deserve and have earned."

The feeling of a lack of respect and recognition ranges from financial benefits to military decoration.

Despite 12 years in the security forces.

Extract from an interview 'D':

"With regard to my service in the UDR, I don't have anything,"

Though service provision has improved through the recent years, the lack of support has left a bitter taste through generations.

Extract from an interview with 'D':

"Has there ever been any support for any member of your family, resulting from your service years?"

"No."

"None whatsoever?"

"None whatsoever... This is one thing that really does bother me. Because my father was in the Irish Guards, then he was in the Rifles, he was in the TA, he was in the UDR, and he didn't have a military funeral. My mother nursed him with our help for seven years in the house and not once did anybody come to our house and offer assistance."

Extract from an interview with 'C':

No one from Army welfare came to see how we were coping financially or emotionally.

Legal Issues:

- No backing regarding past offences prosecution
- No support for any legal assistance required for future cases
- Complete lack of faith in legal system

Extract from an interview with 'F':

When asked what kind of support might benefit ex-service personnel today, 'F' recalls having to testify as a murder witness during the Troubles as being particularly harrowing and without UDR support.

"Well, I think for people who have witnessed something, you should be called to do an interview type thing, without anybody else knowing about it and they could ask you do you need any help. Because that day I went to the court. I'll tell you the truth. I very rarely drank, and I couldn't get up that road to go to that court. I was on the gates at the time, and my knees were shaking. I got Valium tablets off one of the girls because I couldn't make it to the court hardly. But everybody just took it for granted I wasn't going to say I'm nervous or anything... Going up there in the civilian searches uniform was bad enough. Whenever I had my first experience of court... if you had have even somebody coming with you..."

Church-Related Issues:

- Difficulty with Church of Ireland minister in Kilkeel who prohibited flying of Regimental Colours in local church
- Difficulty with Presbyterian Church position at time of Long March, i.e. memo stating no support to be given to victim's groups
- Other Church of Ireland Ministers questionable support given by them
- Ex-service representatives should have on-going influence with senior church representatives towards recognition of sacrifices made by UDR and families--could be an annual ceremony of remembrance

Extract from an interview with 'G':

Speaking about a meeting with a minister of the Church of Ireland.

I am here to talk about the refusal on your part to accept consecrated colours by Her Sovereign Lady Her Majesty the Queen as regards the regiment that was raised in this area, 3 UDR. Regimental Colours, sir, not flags. Flags are covered by the law, we are here to discuss the colours of our regiment, Co Down's Regiment, 3 UDR, nothing more and nothing less... I just looked at him and I thought to myself, (xxxx) 21 and lying in a pool of blood? Maybe it's

better that the colours weren't lying in a place where this boy walks through the door because (xxxxx) wouldn't have been happy with that, he wouldn't have wanted them in that place maybe. So maybe the men of Killinchy and the people of Killinchy, and the Meeting House where they are, maybe God saw fit to put them there

Media and Communication Between Ex-Service and Wider Community

- Media training to develop communication skills
- Need for UDR story to be told by ex-service personnel
- Media training will help get the message across
- Address the demonisation of ex-service in N.I throughout Peace Process, and at national and international levels
- Establishment of a body capable of refuting ongoing denigration of the UDR, and confront government, and media agendas, etc.
- Develop positive attitude for the group 'members' and confront negative media commentary on daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis
- Release statements supporting memory of UDR

'Action' Group Needed:

- Some form of 'action group' outside of UDR Association
- Lobbying of groups like British Legion, government agencies, etc. about lack of facilities, resources and specialist funding opportunities
- Organise a funding day
- Action needed about the intimidation faced by families at education/training centres
- Formal and informal interaction desired between ex-service members
- Lobby group to identify funders and encourage them to widen their remit to include ex-service family members
- Ex-service members should be influencing senior council representatives towards ongoing recognition of the UDR and their families sacrifices
- Ex-service members should be continually influencing government for ongoing recognition at local and national levels for those who fought as government agents in the armed forces

Radical Investigation into Services Management:

- Benevolent Fund:
 - a) questions around assessments
 - b) questions around advantages and disadvantages of a central agency
 - c) accessibility to local officers questioned, example given of a local Benevolent Fund Officer not being able to find WTV in Newtownstewart
 - d) not sensitive to ex-service needs
 - e) should develop local support clinics
 - f) lack of communication with, and proactive sourcing of their client base
 - g) secrecy regarding accounts, creates suspicions and not reflective of a charitable organisation
- NI Memorial Fund:
 - a) concerns around staff vetting and potentially compromising security with assistance for applications
 - b) insufficient advertising
 - c) PTSD claims being supported by a G.P. assessment but not accepted by qualified clinical counsellor should be challenged
 - d) Questions around children living in interface areas who do not qualify for assistance as it is based on experience of violence in those areas
- Combat Stress:
 - a) understaffed
 - b) referral system should be widened to include peer referral
 - c) 'take it or leave it' attitude to present mental health services is unacceptable

- d) safety concerns for statutory delivery of mental health services make it unacceptable
 - e) insufficient awareness in client base of Combat Stress' existence
 - f) Conflict of interest perceived within the organisation about challenging gov't for greater services while accepting current funding
 - g) trust issues between staff and clients
 - h) insufficient inclusion of families in services provided
- UDR Benevolent Fund should be used to assist education programmes--retraining ex-service members and families; school leavers have little or no support nor any safe places to follow a trade training
 - Welfare staff should be fully trained for any issue likely to arise
 - Need for groups to have Outreach Support Officers for ex-service needs

Extract from an interview with 'A':

'A's wife had been employed in an RUC office for over twenty years, but with her husband barely receiving the support he needs, spouses like her remain untouched by the inadequate spouse support and inadequate civil servant support.

"Even as far as my wife is concerned. She would be a civil servant. And what do I think, all the same talk about peace now, looking for PTSD, I think she, who's on as many nerve tablets as I am, down through the years, I mean she should have been looked after by the civil service of the RUC, but you know, but I don't think they were looked after either."

Unsuitability of some welfare provision officers prevents service access on several levels.

Extract from an interview with 'B':

"The families, well, we did have a welfare officer within the UDR, though he was not really a UDR soldier, he was a civilian, which I think at the time was wrong, because I don't honestly think that a civilian can have the same feelings about a family. I mean they're a stranger to that family. Whereas if you are in the UDR, you know the family, you've probably known the children since they were born."

Communication and Co-operation Needs Among Services:

- Communication and information needed for all ex-service personnel
- Centralised system to co-ordinate provision of ex-service services, e.g. web-site information
- Co-operation between armed services and victims groups
- A new group, central office, should integrate within framework of established innocent victims groups

'H' spent much of her service as a welfare officer and continues in similar capacity with the Regimental Association.

Extract from an interview with 'H':

"What's the relationship with the Regimental Association and the Battalion Welfare, is there a relationship between the Regimental Association and former members of the UDR?"

"Yes, I believe the relationship between the two was very good. However, what it is today, some people would like you to believe that it's, oh, all hunky dory, but from the Regimental Association view in my branch they couldn't care less about us. You go into the mess, you feel like a stranger, as if you had never been there... There's no--maybe in the country battalions its better but certainly not in the Belfast battalions, we had to fight near enough to get a meeting

with the battalion to try to get relationships going. I wrote to the CO and said I want a meeting. I feel we're getting further and further apart from the family that we are supposed to be a part of. Eventually, we got a meeting. We had two a year, just for any points that we wanted to bring up."

"So the Regiment's expectations were that the Regimental Association will look after the ex-service personnel and have they lived up to that responsibility?"

"Well, under the Battalion Officer's role, he or she is meant to look after the ex-service. But, we never see them, and I actually had to ask for training from them and we now have a training, but for the last years there had been no training going on for the association people. And if I had wanted new people to join the welfare team for visiting and that, there had been no welfare training. And then the last year I asked for training, so we've now got some. It's as if we didn't exist. And if you say anything, you're the worst in the world."

Extract from an interview with 'J':

There was virtually nothing, nothing offered to me at any stage. There was almost an expectation that you had done your bit and now 'on you go'. I don't think that from when I left I ever received even a phone call from any person in a working capacity in the regiment. Nothing in a context of an official call asking if there was anything I needed, nothing. I don't know of anybody else that I served with who received any post regiment help. Nothing offered. It's ironic that I could not have told you during all my years service who the Welfare Officer was.

I know widows from my period who would say the Welfare done a magnificent job and were irreplaceable for them. Some of the widows would tell you that the work that they did was irreplaceable it was fantastic. It would be unfair of me not to state that. But in my own case and the case of the serving soldiers that I know I don't know of anybody that received any help at all.

Wider Community Support & Recognition

- Lack of gov't and community recognition of ex-service/veterans roles in the conflict; roles both past and present
- Concerns for how the UDR will be portrayed in history lessons in schools
- Belief that already there is a distortion of events by those more sympathetic to nationalist cause
- Greater appreciation of Benevolence to include: preservation of, respect for and protection to be afforded to former UDR personnel
- A need to work towards appreciation of service years and gain wider respect within the community
- Greater connectivity at local level
- Local culture of stigmatising mental difficulties is a barrier to service access by clients in need

Isolation is a major issue for ex-service personnel.

Extract from an interview with 'D':

"I married an ex-soldier and to me we were cut off completely socially whenever I came out of the army because there was nowhere we felt safe, not even in our own community. Even to this day I wouldn't have a drink in my own community."

Some ex-members recall ill treatment as coming from all sides.

Extract from an interview with 'D':

"I remember putting the child in the pram and the mother just hackling and spitting in my face. We had been

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warned that this could happen and we were told that should it happen, you were not allowed to lift your hand up to wipe the spit from your face in case it would be portrayed that you had struck the woman. I remember saying to myself, would you please hurry up and go away so I can get this off my face, you know. I think it was at that stage that I realised that not everybody liked what was happening... Now that was a nationalist person, but I remember on my own community, my sister and I were walking down the street, and a leading member of the UDA at the time, (xxxxx), was walking behind us, and there was another guy with us, with him, and... it's really uncanny, because (xxxxx) lived at the back of my mother's house. My mother lived in Crossland Court and her house backed onto his. I remember walking down the street, he didn't say anything to me but he said to my sister, look at that f-ing blanket. Right, they referred to you as being a blanket for the British Army, or whatever. And he did spit at her feet. Not on us, now, but they constantly spat at our feet."

Security Concerns:

- Lack of confidentiality for ex-service members in various Gov't and NGO organisations
- Security issues around seeking employment
- No recognition of ex-service security needs
- Threats exist within loyalist sector to members
- Preference for Musgrave Hospital as a secure place for health services
- Belief that other hospitals will compromise file security
- Generally no trust in general hospital staff

Security concerns range from precise details of information changing hands to an overall sense of unease.

Extract from an interview with 'D':

"Do you feel safe now? We're in, you know, a transition with regards to a peace process."

"Do I feel safe now?"

"Do you feel safe now as a former member of the UDR?"

"I wouldn't say so, no."

"Where do you think a threat's coming from? Is it a general sense--"

"I think it's just a general sense of something that's been instilled in you."

Extract from an interview with 'J'

The biggest impact on my life was having to move into a town area from a rural area for safety, and that continues. I can't live a normal life even 20 years after having left the regiment.

UDR Service Years:

- Lack of information given upon discharge
- No financial aid given for members intimidated out of their homes
- Regular army members given no help to set up home (that is relocate in N.I.)
- Withdrawal of personal weapon at discharge left ex-members feeling vulnerable
- Security was often breached when requesting duty leave from an employer
- Security breached during application process to join: G.P. had to do medical and record would be on file

Extract from an interview with 'H':

"One of the most disturbing things I found was when I went to welfare and a soldier was moved out of his home under threat, what we called HMSG, House Move on Security Grounds. I had to put that soldier into a metal portacabin in Palace Barracks, him and his family. I found that very disturbing. To me, it's bad enough you have to

leave your home under threat, but then to be stuck in a portacabin, and for many people, particularly the UDR, we were used to living in our own homes and surroundings. We're not used to moving from camp to camp like the British Army do. To move a family from the normal civvy life into the barracks and then into that portacabin, I found that very disturbing for them. It was an issue that I raised with the powers that be. One was the conditions they were forced to live in, in that metal portacabin. There was plenty of houses lying empty, or flats, in the married quarters areas, and yet our soldiers were being treated near enough better or worse than animals in Palace Barracks. It was a big issue that I felt very strongly about and fought hard at conferences to get it changed. Eventually we did get them proper housing, but it did take a while."

"Moving house. If there was a house move on security grounds, there was a certain amount they were allowed to have. Initially they had to bring in receipts for everything that they bought for the new house. So if they bought a curtain wire they had to bring me in a receipt to get it refunded. I totally disagreed with this, for it was degrading for the soldiers. And also, I felt that the trauma they had experienced, maybe getting lifted out of their beds at two in the morning, maybe with three kids, and getting dumped in a metal portacabin was not, to me, humane.

"In the end I fought long and hard to get that changed as well. Eventually, it was agreed that a lump sum would be paid into the soldier's pay... It wasn't a great deal, by any means. They were expected to use carpets from one room to do another room in the new house. So if a bedroom carpet fitted the kitchen, you put it in the kitchen in the new house. That's what they were expected to do, trying to make things do, curtains and all, which to me, they wanted to leave those memories of the house perhaps behind."

"Sadly, I left the regiment not very happy at being sort of dumped as it were. Especially when you're told keep your nose clean, have good reports, you will have a career, and then somebody takes a dislike to you and you don't have a career... When I left I have had no calls from the regiment to ask me how I am or anything else"

Support was not integral to the security force structure and debriefings were rare. Coping with death and maintaining a sense of duty were much the same thing.

Extract from an interview with 'H':

"For the question "are you okay?". We all said yes, not thinking or realising to what extent it (a hotel bombing in Belfast) would have affected us. I know the rest of the afternoon the conversation in the patrol was all about the previous incident that day, but it was like, get your-self a cup of tea and go back out. That was it."

Issues & Suggestions for Government:

- Desire exists for the government to appreciate that they (UDR, vets, ex-service) 'haven't gone away', and that a threat still exists.
- Special consideration should be given for Personal Protection Weapons
- Should construct designated training centres in safe, user-friendly areas

Terminology:

- Classification of 'disability' needs to be reviewed in relation to impact of war in N.I.
- Feelings that the words 'war' and 'terrorist campaign' should be used to describe their experiences
- Bloomfield definition of 'victimhood' should be reformed
- Need for appropriate language to differentiate the circumstances of those impacted upon by the war

Additional Miscellaneous Points

- Patten Report did nothing for security personnel
- Situation has improved since the years of no welfare support but it has a long way to go

The UDR Story: Memories and Acknowledgement

- Their story won't be told unless they tell it
- Desire to tell the story for those killed
- 'We're not going away!'
- Still have 'far too many memories'
- Some memories cannot be forgotten
- UDR 4 case; legacy needs to be addressed
- 'Lost' memories exist, buried; talking brings some back
- Memories of being spat on and assaulted
- Great patience of UDR soldiers in times of adversity needs to be acknowledged
- Happy memories also exist and should also be recorded
- Camaraderie is what kept many in the service
- Warm, close, family-type experience; have made us great friends
- Facilitation needed for story telling for ex-service members
- Publish a book as a record of experiences of ex-service members and families
- Photographic record of service years
- Anger management help needed in order to best participate with sharing memories experiences
- Times of memory recall, deliberate or around commemorations, need special support structures for the reopening of wounds
- Support personnel needed to assist with 'timeline' procedures for ex-service members telling their story
- Support for affected members and families throughout the time of their life journey
- Suggestion of 'stroll down memory lane' type exhibition

Extract from an interview with 'B':

'B' discusses the desire to have the UDR stories told and the problems related to communication for ex-service members.

"Oh yes, definitely the story should be told. There's loads and loads of incidents. I'm sure, if you were to speak to a hundred ex members you would get five hundred stories, because everybody has not only one story, but half a dozen stories."

"Would there be a benefit to those members that are telling those stories of getting that off their chests, of getting some kind of acknowledgement for their experience, of getting some kind of recognition for their dead comrades. Would there be any thoughts about that?"

"I find that once you actually come out of the UDR it's very hard to talk to somebody the same way as you could talk to somebody you have served with. Most UDR guys think of themselves as big strong soldiers. They don't want to make themselves appear weak by talking to strangers. Plus, there is the security aspect of talking to strangers. I think it would be very beneficial if there was even some sort of drop-in centre that had ex-members there who had been through it themselves, who know what these guys are going through. Even if it's only somebody to talk to." 'B'

Extract from an interview with 'H':

The best that can be done is to promote coping skills and respect.

"It'll never remove their memories; nothing will ever do that."

Neutral Space/ One-Stop Shop Needed:

- Safe and neutral place for advice on benefits
- Identified centre, a place to meet

- Existing services should be under one roof
- Staff should be ex-service
- Funding permitting, there should be satellite offices in all counties
- Counselling services needed
- Special facilities and arrangements needed for job applications and access to employment information
- Consolidated system is needed to identify and refer those in need towards sources of assistance
- Improve information about needs and services available
- Support structure needed to address emotional strain on spouses/partners during time served and afterwards
- Support structure needed for those who turned to alcohol and drugs as an escape from stress resulting from service years
- Support structure needed where family members may connect, share experiences and be informed about the legacy of the service years and how to alleviate it
- Respite breaks, coffee mornings, day trips, quiz nights, barbecues, sporting events, pantomime excursions, concerts, clay pigeon shoots, Burns night gatherings, meals out, theatre visits for small or large groups all or some of these activities to enable connectivity, problem-sharing and communication between like-minded people

Many ex-service members interviewed thought that a centralised agency devoted to covering and coordinating ex-service needs was the logical solution to the needs and problems identified.

Extract from an interview with 'H':

"I think that 'a one-stop shop', sometimes I think would be better, in that someone is referred to one place, and from there on it is co-ordinated what sort of help they need. If I come across someone, I might refer them to Combat Stress, or I might refer them to Trauma Management and Recovery, whatever, but that's only me. Visiting wise, I could be out tomorrow seeing a young lad but at the same time Combat Stress could be there, or somebody else. So I think we need, what I would say, is a one-stop shop, where the ex-service has one point to go to and they can be farmed out in whatever direction or route they need to be to be best served for their needs."

Support and Services Today: General Thoughts

Extract from an interview with 'D':

"I think that when someone leaves the services they should at least be contacted. Especially in Northern Ireland due to the trouble, people do move about quite a bit. But to me, you're still trackable by your social security number or whatever. I still feel an effort should be made to contact everyone that served in a battalion, in a company, to get them all together, to ask them what their needs are. Because we're in a transition period here, and a lot of people can't talk to people they don't trust. You need to be in that secure environment to do that. If someone could contact you and ask you what your needs are. I mean, it doesn't have to be financial needs. It could just be someone to turn to, or lift the phone to and say, 'Look, I'm a wee bit disturbed about this, could I speak with you?'"

Extract from an interview with 'H':

"I'm glad that that the research is taking place. There's a lot of people out there who served in the Ulster Defence Regiment who feel very much let down by the regiment and by the government. The Ulster Defence Regiment was unique in that it served the local community from which it drew its membership. Therefore they lived, served and slept with the local community and we were maybe even set up by our own neighbours. So we are unique. And we don't seem to be given an awful lot in return. That makes a lot of people who served very bitter in the sense that they feel "What For?" and they feel that terrorists are being better looked after than they have been or ever will be. The research, I find, I'm glad its happening and certainly with taking part in it I have come across a lot of lads who have

confirmed what I thought all along, that there is people out there who still live in fear of what may erupt again and who will never be able to switch off because they lived in more troublesome areas than I did. Therefore they lost maybe a lot more than what I have experienced."

"Do you feel that there is a need for some kind of counselling in the present day for ex-service personnel, because of all they have experienced in service? And also very much because of this period of transition that the country is experiencing, where there are former terrorists sitting, or potentially sitting as government ministers. It would be useful to talk through that, rather than them being bitter about that."

Extract from an interview with 'B':

"Well, I do, because what you've got to remember is that there was a lot of the ones who were actually serving the same time as myself, they now have families, and a lot of that bitterness is going to be passed on to their family. And I feel at the time if they had been appreciated enough for somebody to say, look, I think you should talk to a counsellor, you know what I mean? It would be the first thing, if somebody was bereaved, it would be the first thing you would say to them, look, I think you should talk to a counsellor, it's going to help you. If an incident happens in a school, where one pupil commits suicide, the whole school is offered counselling. You think how many have gone through that regiment, how many have been killed, how many of their friends and families were offered absolutely nothing, just told, right, get on with it, get back out and do your duty. At the time you can cope with it, but there actually does come a time when you start thinking about it and it's then that it hits you. Like the xxxxxx incident. I'm just sitting here and suddenly that came to mind. It will probably stay with me now for weeks. I'll think about that, I'll think about xxxxxx, I'll think about his blood and guts in the hall, and I'll think about those poor fellows that had to go and clean that up... And I think this has happened to a lot of fellows. I mean there's an awful lot of service members that have seen their comrades die, blown to bits, or shot to bits. And to my knowledge, I don't think anybody has been offered counselling. Nobody I know of has ever been offered counselling. There's another friend, xxxxxxxxxxxx. Sure, she's a UDR widow, she has two small children. She's never been offered one penny's help. She's never been offered a holiday. She has never been offered any help whatsoever, and she served her time too."

Extract from an interview with 'H':

"I feel the need for support, because when you were with the regiment you were like part of a big family, and then suddenly you're out on your own. You always knew that you could go and talk to someone in the family, as it were. Now you're out on your own, there isn't the same support outside. Maybe not support, but people that you can talk to. I would say for counselling. Ppeople don't like opening up to people that they don't know, and there is always that fear. And it's very frustrating when you're trying to explain military terms to people who are civilians, because they don't know what you're talking about and therefore it leads to more frustration."

Desired Outcome (s)

The men and women who participated in this research process have, for the first time, shared their experiences of life in and after, service with the Ulster Defence Regiment. They have identified areas that need to be addressed, including:

Emotional Support;

Psychological Support;

Financial Assistance; pensions, etc.

Communal Support;

Family Support;

Connectivity;

Respite opportunities;

Employment Support;

Recognition/Acknowledgement.

The thinking within the group was to form a number of self-help type groups based on a model that included a Management Committee, a Services Coordinator, a Welfare Officer, an in-house Counsellor, at least two Outreach Officers, and a Research Assistant. The services to be developed to include all areas mentioned above and in other parts of this research; with legal and financial support and advice being prioritised for members who have now reached or are approaching retirement age.

With this publication no longer is it acceptable for the British Government and/or other service providers to claim ignorance and thus ignore the needs of what has been estimated to be 58,000 Ulster Defence Regiment ex-service personnel, along with what must be another 250,000 family members. Approximately three hundred thousand people abandoned. Ultimately, the men, women and their families have a desire to see their experiences acknowledged. I hope this document contributes to this desire and highlights the need for a beginning of a healing process for human beings enlisted into their country's service during time of war.

Final comment from a 25 years service veteran:

There was no support like over the whole, like every time, like, that something happened, as I said to you, by going out on duty after burying our own, there was no support of any kind, there was no counselling offered, no nothing, it was get on with the job and keep your head down. Another thing was, keep quiet, don't say anything, and we were the silent, they talked about the silent majority, or minority, whichever way you wanted to look at it, but we really were the silent minority, we were ordered not to talk. On this occasion he talked, his comrades have now also talked, will your humanity allow you to be compassionate enough to act on his/their words.

Supporting Information

197 UDR Soldiers killed between 01 April 1970 and 30 June 1992.

A further **61** Ex-soldiers were killed after they had resigned from the Regiment.

A further **5** UDR Soldiers who transferred into the Royal Irish Regiment were killed after the merger on 01 July 1992 with The Royal Irish Rangers.

Thousands of visible and invisible wounds linked to service in the UDR, either with soldiers and/or family members.

Interviewees' personnel identities withheld, by request, on security grounds:

- A= UDR Soldier, Cookestown
- B= UDR Greenfinch Soldier, N/W Belfast
- C= Son of murdered UDR Soldier, Bangor
- D=UDR Greenfinch Soldier, West Belfast
- E=Son of UDR Greenfinch, now living in England
- F=UDR Greenfinch Soldier, West Belfast
- G=UDR Soldier, Kilkeel
- H=UDR Greenfinch Soldier, Newtownards
- I= UDR Soldier, Castleterg
- J= UDR Soldier, Lurgan

House of Commons – Northern Ireland Affairs – Minutes of Evidence 6th April 2005

BBC Television, Panorama Programme, Shock Troops, Sunday 17th July 2005.

Useful Contacts:

Conflict Trauma Resource Centre (CTRC)
Northern Whig House
3-10 Bridge Street
Belfast
BT1 1LU
N. Ireland

Tel: 02890926060
Fax: 02890926144
Email: snoddon-martin@utvinternet.com

The Assistant Regimental Secretary (UDR)
The ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT
Benevolent Fund
St Patrick's Barracks
Ballymena
Co Antrim
BFPO 808

Tel: 028 2566 1381
Fax: 028 2566 1378
Email: udrbfund@royalirishbregiment.co.uk

UDR Regimental Association
Tel: 028 25661386
www.udrassociation.org

Ty Gwyn
Independent Hospital, North Wales
Telephone: 01492 544 081
The Army Widows Association
www.armywidows.org.uk
The Army Families Federation
<http://www.army.mod.uk/aff/>

Combat Stress
Welfare support team
N. Ireland
Tel: 02890 233894
Email Address: bfws@combatstress.org.uk

SSAFA Forces Help Office,
Northern Ireland War Memorial Building,
9-13 Waring Street,
Belfast, BT1 2DW
Tel: 028 9032 7740

Veterans Agency
An Executive Agency of the Ministry of
Defence
Telephone Helpline on 0800 169 22 77
Textphone on 0800 169 34 58
Fax number 01253 330561

Royal British Legion
General Enquiries Helpline
08457 725 725

The Northern Ireland Veterans Association
PO Box 318
St. Helens
WA10 4WZ
BRITISH VETERANS
FREEPOST NAT15489
Ipswich
IP7 5BR



The Colonel Commandant
The Ulster Defence Regiment
requests the pleasure of the company of

Mrs N. F. ...
at a Garden Party
at Hillsborough Park
on Saturday 6th August 1988
to celebrate the 10th Anniversary
the enlistment of Women into

R.S.V.P.

Legacy of War

Conflict Trauma Resource Centre (CTRC)

Northern Whig House
3-10 Bridge Street
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CTRC

Conflict Trauma Resource Centre

2.30 p.m.



Supported and funded by the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation through Community Foundation for Northern Ireland.

Introduction

One group that has been conspicuous by their absence from the Peace Process has been those former members of the security forces, particularly those former service men and women of the Ulster Defence Regiment. What has been their experience since serving Queen and Country?

Thoughts on the need of doing research on circumstances being experienced by former members of the home service regiment of the Ulster Defence Regiment had been evident to CTRC for quite sometime. In August of 2004 CFNI agreed a small grant to enable this research to take place in a structured manner and with the support of a number of organisations presently working in what has been described as the 'victim sector' in N. Ireland. For their participation in both the steering group and as active participants in the research I would like to thank the following groups: HURT, West Tyrone Voice, Newry & Mourne Memorial Trust, Cookstown Old Comrades Association, The Coleraine branch of the UDR Regimental Association, Stewartstown Victims Support Group and FAIR. It is important that other individuals receive the recognition they are due for the work they have contributed to this project, they include: Teena Patrick, Rosemary McCullough, Yvonne Ritchie and Sandra Murdock. Other organisations consulted during the course of this research include Combat Stress, The UDR Benevolent Fund, The UDR Regimental Association, The Northern Ireland Memorial Fund and a representative of the Northern Ireland Veterans Association (NIVA) based in England.

The research is a combination of a series of advisory group meetings, one-day workshops, a residential and a number of individual interviews. The findings of this research period warrant attention by all those in whose service these men and women sacrificed so much of their time, energy, personal and family security. Statistics highlight the number of dead but fail to record all those wounded, either physically or mentally, or of the wounds inflicted upon family members. We hope that this is a starting point for services to be developed to address the needs that exist for this significant number in our society. Evidently various individuals and agencies need to examine their strategies.

It has been both a learning experience and a pleasure to facilitate all through this research process.

Research and Facilitation by Martin Snoddon
Centre Director CTRC.
October 2004 - October 2005.

*Experiences of a Military Psychologist in Northern Ireland
1987 to 1994*

Ranald Scott Mackinnon MB., FCRPsych.

The above dates do not accurately reflect my overall involvement with the military community in Northern Ireland. They do however cover the period during which I was able to play an increasingly active role in establishing an appropriate psychological support service for the Army in Northern Ireland.

As a Royal Navy psychiatrist I started to carry out clinics there in 1970, following the onset of civil disorder and terrorist attacks. I was abroad for the period 1973 to 1974, having already asked that I take on responsibility for the clinics in Northern Ireland after my return from Hong Kong. As a Royal Navy psychiatrist I was surprised that no Army psychiatrist wished to take on the responsibility. I relinquished this post at the end of 1978, when I took early retirement from the Navy (thereby ceasing strictly speaking to be a military psychiatrist) but then went to the QEMH in Woolwich (an Army hospital) as a civilian consultant for two years, during which I again found myself with the responsibility for Northern Ireland. I was eventually appointed to a consultant post in the NHS at the end of 1980, and I ceased visits to Northern Ireland. After a period of working in the NHS and two years in Canada, I returned to England in 1987, and to a civilian post with the MoD (Army) based in Aldershot. This again involved me in visits to Northern Ireland, initially on a fortnightly basis. For a number of reasons, the Army eventually decided that there should be a resident psychiatrist in the province, having until then been resistant to any kind of psychiatric involvement other than one of conducting out-patient clinics in the Military Wing of Musgrave Park Hospital in Belfast.

In July 1990 I was asked if I would fill the new post and I was very pleased to do so. By that time I had a fairly clear idea of what would be involved in establishing and running the kind of service that I considered necessary and appropriate, and I had to make clear the conditions on which I would accept the appointment. These were agreed by the then Director of Army Psychiatry, and I started at the beginning of July 1990. After almost four years I left in March 1994. By this time I had a significant number of patients in on-going and fairly long-term care that had been invalidated out of the Army. These were mainly ex-members of the Ulster Defence Regiment, whom I was concerned would receive no further support following my departure. Following discussion with the relevant people I was able to transfer immediately to being the Regional Consultant for the charity The Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society (Combat Stress) in Northern Ireland. That role continued with further increases in the service provided until September 2000, when my role as psychiatrist to the military ceased altogether.

I was not involved with the Ulster Defence Regiment until 1987, but from that point on I increasingly felt that it's members and their families were the ones most in need of support and help and I will enlarge on this point later. This may be an appropriate point at which to dedicate this account of my experiences to all those who served in the UDR from its formation in 1972 until its merger with the Royal Irish Rangers to become the Royal Irish Regiment in 1992. Inevitably the dedication is especially to all those UDR soldiers and their families with whom I became involved between 1987 and 2000. I shall always feel privileged to have met and worked with all of them during their very traumatic and difficult times.

As far as my own background is concerned, although I was not originally from Northern Ireland, I was educated there, with four years at school in Belfast and six years at medical school at Queen's University. I never lost my attachment to the place and my early experiences certainly helped me with my later work in the military. I left after graduating in 1957, but returned for a brief visit in 1960 as a medical officer on board HMS Owen during my National Service in the Royal Navy. The latter covered a period of three years. Followed by a period in the NHS and then by a return to the Royal Navy to train as a psychiatrist. Without being entirely clear about it at the time, I had a vague idea of becoming a "military" psychiatrist as opposed to a civilian psychiatrist in uniform, who was only expected to diagnose and treat mental illness. Unfortunately for me, it was just such a role that seemed to be required by the services, and my early attempts to explore the possibility of a different role (at least in Northern Ireland) were discouraged by the Army. In retrospect, this seems likely to have been the result of a complete ignorance and/or

misunderstanding of the causation and nature of stress, and the effects it could have on an individual's health and effectiveness.

Moving onto the first stage of my involvement, this began in the early 1970s when I shared responsibility for outpatient clinics at the Military Wing of Musgrave Park Hospital in Belfast. This involved flying into Belfast on the first flight of the day and returning later the same day. This continued until I was posted to the BMH in Hong Kong for a year in June 1973. After my return in July 1974, I assumed full responsibility for the clinics in October 1974 and thereafter continued with weekly visits to Northern Ireland. By this time I felt that it was appropriate and necessary for me to have first-hand experience of what the troops there were called upon to do. I requested familiarisation visits to units based in Northern Ireland which the Army authorities were very happy to arrange. I cannot recall the number of visits that I made but they covered every part of the province and most of the units based there (apart from the UDR at that time). They involved a close inspection of living quarters and accompanying patrol, both on foot and in vehicles and on occasions by helicopter. Later on, I also took trainee Royal Navy psychiatrists on similar visits. By that time, however, my attempt to explore the possibility of regular liaison visits to units had already been rebuffed and it was made clear to me that the visits I made were felt "... to be for my benefit rather than that of the unit." For the remainder of this initial stage of my involvement I was limited to the usual weekly outpatient clinics. Nevertheless, in the course of these I felt increasingly that most of the soldiers referred for a psychiatric opinion were not suffering from any recognisable psychiatric disorder. That they had a problem could not be disputed, and that problem was the reason they had been referred by their Commanding Officer. In the early 1970s and '80s, "stress" was not really recognised, but I increasingly felt that this must be the problem these young men were experiencing and demonstrating. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder had not yet been heard of and therefore could not have been identified as a possible cause for the referral.

Unfortunately, in the course of my training as a psychiatrist, there had never been any reference to combat psychiatry or to the experiences and the lessons learned by military psychiatrists during previous wars, including the 1939-45 war. The army clearly was very sensitive to any mention of stress, which at that time appeared to them to be an indication of personal weakness, or "lack of moral fibre". It was not until my period of working in Canada between 1985-87 that I became acquainted with PTSD and I shall never forget the first person in whom I made that diagnosis after I returned to England in 1987. Appropriately enough he was a member of the UDR who was referred to me with a diagnosis of depression that was not responding to treatment with an anti-depressant. Now having at least some idea of what to look for, it was an object lesson in diagnosis, and having asked the right questions I was left in no doubt that he was suffering from PTSD. The right questions were not leading questions but were basically those that enabled me to obtain the information that people with PTSD are least likely to reveal spontaneously. The PTSD resulted from an incident in which he was ambushed and nearly killed by terrorists outside his house. Shots were also fired at his house but fortunately neither his wife nor his children were injured. He and his wife later became founding members of the PTSD support group that I established. Sadly, he was later blown to pieces by a car bomb as he went to move a car that had been delivered to his work premises by a woman terrorist on the pretext of having the exhaust replaced. I still remember my shock as I watched the TV news that reported the incident and I realised of whom they were talking. From then on my involvement was with his family, both as a group and later with one individual member.

In what was by now the second stage of my involvement in Northern Ireland I became increasingly aware of what the effects of the experiences suffered by soldiers there could be. While the period 1987 to 1994 was a very busy one in terms of terrorist activity, this cannot by itself explain the increase in the number of referrals of soldiers who were basically showing signs of stress and of traumatic stress. It was only after a report by the Senior Chaplain at Headquarters in Northern Ireland in 1989 expressing concern at the number of suicides in the military that a committee was set up under the chairmanship of a senior Staff Officer at HQNI to consider the problem. I was asked to sit on this committee which eventually produced the recommendation that the post of a military psychiatrist in Northern Ireland be created. This was approved, and somewhat to my surprise (as a civilian – albeit with a military background and not inconsiderable experience of Northern Ireland) I was asked if I would fill the post. I made my conditions clear, they were accepted and I eventually started work on the 1st of July 1990. By this time I had the

background knowledge of life on the ground in Northern Ireland and (even more importantly) what could happen to soldiers and their families in the course of that life (and death). The second part of this second stage was to attempt to at last do something to help soldiers and their families deal with the relevant events and their often disastrous effects. Because of the unique situation of the soldiers and their families, they were to require more of my attention than that required by soldiers in Regular Army units in the province.

I was still very conscious of my earlier experiences of rejection by the military, but I was now very much clearer in my mind and stronger in my conviction about what was needed. I think that I also succeeded in convincing the Commander Land Forces at the time of the fact that stress was not a mental illness. This was in the course of an extremely short briefing that I gave him. I also knew that if I did not have the acceptance and support of Commanding Officers for what I proposed then my attempts would be doomed. One of the first things I did was to make a point of visiting the Commanding Officers of all the UDR battalions to explain what I intended. By this time there was already a well-established welfare system within the UDR, so there was perhaps a greater awareness of the stressors and their effects on the soldiers and their families – at least within the UDR. Apart from one battalion, which indicated that they did not have any stress problems (and therefore did not require my involvement on a regular basis), all the other COs were happy to accept my proposals.

Basically, the proposals included the establishment of a Stress and Trauma management service which was eventually based in premises inside Thiepval barracks in Lisburn and close to Headquarters Northern Ireland. I felt that it was important to have a presence in such a location rather than within a hospital. The service also included a routine monthly visit to each battalion, including their commanding officer and welfare staff, and discussion of any stress-related problems. It was also established that I would be informed as soon as was appropriate after any terrorist or other traumatic incident, and that I would interview those personnel involved for a psychological debriefing. Vulnerable and affected individuals would be identified, including – possibly – family members, and ongoing reviews and support would be arranged as appropriate. Basically, the same service was offered to regular Army units, who should have been made aware of the system before they arrived for their tour of duty in the province. The take-up rate was perhaps inevitably greater by the UDR. During the period from 1990 to 1994, I probably attended two incidents a week, at least. An important additional aspect of the work was that of supporting UDR welfare staff that had clearly experienced great pressure in terms of the cases that they had to deal with. I count myself fortunate that I had what appeared to be such a good working relationship with the UDR battalions. Perhaps inevitably, this declined to some extent after the various amalgamations and the later disbandment of the UDR in 1992. By the time I left in 1994, the ceasefire was already in effect and remains in force. While this meant an end to the attacks on UDR soldiers, they have remained under significant pressure.

Although my services were for the regular soldier as much as for the UDR, the latter were significantly different from their regular counterparts in several respects. The soldiers in regular battalions lived in guarded barracks and served in the province for a limited period – two years at most. The UDR soldier was constantly under threat, not only in operations, but also at home and while going about family business in the community where members lived and worked. Of the 197 members of the regiment murdered, the great majority were killed off duty. Many served ten years or more, including some who served throughout the full twenty-two years of the regiment's existence. Even after leaving the regiment they remained at risk and a further 58 members were murdered by terrorists after they had left the regiment. Those who live in rural areas, such as farmers, and anybody working in a fixed routine – bus drivers, tanker drivers, postmen – were especially vulnerable. It is hardly surprising that Combat Stress has some 400 ex-members of the UDR on its books.

It would be wrong to describe individual cases here. The right to privacy of such people I have met is great, and I could not take the risk to their security of their being identified from anything that I might write. Nevertheless, I want to try to convey to others the magnitude of the distress suffered and the destruction of lives that has resulted from their experiences. I have shared in that distress to an extent and witnessed that destruction for myself, but I could still not say to that person "I know how you feel", because I do not fully know at all. In fact, that is the last thing that should be said to a traumatised person, because nobody really knows how they feel except, possibly, another equally

traumatised person. Many of the traumatised people that I met in Northern Ireland became long-term patients, although it was not the clinically detached, doctor-patient relationship that might be expected.

Boundaries and limits still had to be observed, but relationships inevitably became closer in a sense. The grief and the anger and the generally raw emotion expressed by fundamentally healthy individuals who had been profoundly traumatised made for a new experience for me. I think of the mother, whose soldier-son had been blown to pieces and burned beyond recognition in a land-mine explosion; the young wife whose husband died in the same explosion; the soldier whose youngest child was almost blown up by a booby trap bomb attached to her pet sheep; the family of the soldier I described earlier; and the wife and two children who witnessed the husband she drove to work one morning being gunned down by terrorists waiting in ambush for him at his work-place. There are also examples of great courage and fortitude, as in the case of the young, part-time UDR soldier who was kidnapped and tortured by the PIRA for fourteen hours with the constant threat of being shot had he revealed his identity as a member of the UDR. Although his life was largely destroyed by the experience, he resisted and survived his abduction, unlike his colleague who was abducted in the same incident but was murdered. A further example is that of a very quiet and unassuming man (a part-time UDR soldier), who was ambushed by three terrorists in a remote spot. He had taken his personal protection weapon with him and was able to defend himself successfully, killing one of the terrorists in the process. He was badly injured and eventually evacuated to a civilian hospital in Belfast where I first met him. I shall never forget the fear on his face as I walked into the ward where he was being guarded. His fear was that the terrorists had come to finish him off. Nor can I forget his distress and guilt feelings about the young man that he had killed, even though in self-defense.

There are many other examples that I could quote, but my aim is only to try to convey to those who could not possibly know, but who might care if they did know, the suffering experienced and endured by people who have never really been given their due recognition. I do believe that recognition and understanding are two things much needed by victims of trauma. Sadly, both have been very much lacking.

I hope that I have managed to convey some idea of the suffering experienced by soldiers and their families resulting from terrorist acts in Northern Ireland. I have not been able to do the same for Regular Army soldiers as I have done for the Ulster Defense Regiment, because the same extended contact was impossible. I suspect that there must be many in a similar condition, with many of them probably undiagnosed and unrecognised, and therefore untreated (in the widest sense of that term).

This is an appropriate point at which to review what I have said so far. Stage One (1972-1980) was when I experienced for myself how soldiers in Northern Ireland lived and worked. It was also when I did not have the training or knowledge to detect the possible effects of how they lived and what their work entailed. Stage Two (1987-1994) was the period during which I was able to apply the knowledge gained and to detect what must have been previously undetected - the psychological effects of trauma and, more specifically, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Albeit still in the face of obstacles and difficulties, I was increasingly able to educate others and to intervene in the aftermath of the many traumatic events occurring in Northern Ireland. It was a sort of watershed for me when I arranged to see as a group, a number of the survivors from a terrorist attack on a bus carrying regular Army soldiers back from leave in England to their unit in Omagh. The sight of eight young men, literally bruised, battered, bewildered and distressed was something that I shall not forget. I think that experience made me really determined that I was going to press as strongly as possible to establish a system that would recognise and attend to the needs of such individuals, both in terms of prevention and treatment of psychological disorder. While local difficulties remained in terms of resistance to any psychiatric involvement, this could no longer prevent action.

In March 1994, Stage Two came to an end and I immediately went into Stage Three. This was as the Regional Consultant to Combat Stress in Northern Ireland, and it arose to a large extent from my earlier contacts with the Society. This had involved my examining and reporting on a number of their clients in the context of War Pension claims. My concern in 1994 was in relation to the considerable number of, by then, ex-members of the Service for

whom I had retained responsibility, having myself recommended that they be invalided from the Army. Almost without exception they were ex-members of the UDR, and I was very aware that for a number of reasons they would not receive the ongoing help that they needed in the civilian community. There seemed to be little, if any, understanding within the civilian medical community in Northern Ireland of PTSD and the experiences suffered by members of the UDR and their families. In addition, soldiers were understandably reluctant on security grounds to reveal relevant information about themselves within the context of a GP surgery or a hospital out-patient clinic. By taking on the Regional Consultant role, I was able to maintain and develop the service for these individuals and their families. This was done initially by a monthly visit to Northern Ireland but later done twice monthly and included PTSD support groups for the ex-soldiers and a second group which also included their wives. The latter group clearly benefited from finally getting some understanding of the changes that had taken place in their husbands which, in many cases, had been present for a number of years. This arrangement continued until I left in September 2000. While the referrals during this period were basically similar to those in the past, there was one very important difference, and this is why I have designated the period as Stage Three. The difference here was that the referrals were of people with chronic PTSD problems, many of them going back to incidents in the 1970s and 1980s, who were now being diagnosed for the first time and who had never received any of the recognition and understanding I was referring to earlier, never mind a diagnosis. I was now seeing the effects of nothing being done after what had clearly been extremely traumatic experiences.

Although this article is written very much in the context of Northern Ireland and my experiences there as a military psychiatrist, I have since that time interviewed many other victims of trauma and what I have written should be read as a plea on behalf of all victims of trauma – civilian and military. This article has been very much about my personal experiences. It was never my intention to say much about PTSD or the arguments about its existence and how to deal with it. It has been long known that in any war situation, a considerable proportion of battlefield casualties will be psychiatric ones. Although Northern Ireland never involved any battle as such, soldiers there clearly suffered different, perhaps even more stressful, conditions.

In conclusion, the Third Stage completes for me the circle that began in the 1970s. Perhaps though, that is the wrong phrase to use because it might suggest that we are back to where we started. I sincerely hope that we are not, but history and my own experience suggest that there is always a risk of that happening. I certainly learned some very important lessons, but history shows that these can so easily be forgotten. Lacking the early training and knowledge that should have been provided for Service psychiatrists certainly made it even more difficult for me to confront the Army with the need to consider the psychological risks of soldiering in Northern Ireland. Looking back, I shall always wonder how many cases of stress and traumatic stress were left undetected in that period of time, and what happened to the large number of soldiers I had to return to duty with the statement that they had no psychiatric disability. Whatever the reasons for that, it is difficult not to feel that a lot of young men may have been badly let down...

The above was a published report, do his findings reflect the present day experiences for former members of the home service of the British Army, namely the Ulster Defence Regiment.

What follows is a combined report from a series of workshops across N. Ireland. Kilkeel, Draperstown, Newtown Stewart, and Belfast all hosted workshops for former members of the UDR. Supporting the findings of the workshops are the personal interviews of former members; extracts from these interviews are given as supporting evidence of issues raised in workshop sessions. These citizens, male and female and from all parts of our province, for the first time allowed to be documented their thoughts and feelings about their experiences resulting from joining the Security Forces to defend the citizens of N. Ireland in a terrorist war.

Reports & Workshops on Issues, Concerns & Needs of UDR Ex-Service Members

Categorised points arising from workshops

Major Themes/ Consistently Raised Concerns:

- Gaps in service provisions
- Lack of co-ordination of existing services
- Greater communication among service providers and a need for a full client database, including families
- Need for a safe place, a centre
- Need for the 'Telling of the UDR Story'
- Investigation into service providers service
- Need for a major overhaul of service provider infrastructure

Disability Issues:

- Help for disabled who fall through 'Disability Living Allowance net'
- Help with travel, in-home mobility and home improvements needed for/by disabled ex-service members

Extract from an interview with 'A':

"What about Combat Stress, the UDR Regimental Association, the Benevolent Fund or the Memorial Fund? They're all organisations that would say they are there to help former members, or they have a remit to help former members of the security forces."

"Well, all I can say is that's a lot of baloney. I have a friend who was badly injured whilst he was serving in the UDR, (xxx) has a little bit of brain damage which has left him very, very slow, he sort of staggers, you'd think he was drunk, but this is all because of the brain damage which happened within the UDR. I went with (xxx) and made arrangements with different people for (xxx) to see, off my own bat, because they were so uncaring, their attitude was just totally uncaring. They just didn't want to know. We eventually got in touch with a lady who was actually the welfare end of the UDR. That would have been eleven, ten years ago, and (xxx) only got his disability pension two years ago so he did, so he had all those years from when that accident happened. They couldn't even help him, for to adapt his house, they couldn't even take the time help him to get in touch with the Housing Executive and say, look, this man can't live in a house, he can't climb stairs, he needs a bungalow. I think all that Combat Stress, all those sort of agencies, I think, to be honest with you if they're actually run by the army, they don't give a damn. Now that's only my feeling."

Health & Medical Issues:

- Hearing loss should be recognised and compensated
- Education and training for those with PTSD
- Trauma experience more wide-spread than is understood: evidence of the existence of secondary traumatic stress disorder; evidence of the existence of intergenerational trauma
- Trust issues exist with health services, GPs clinics, etc..
- Not enough people getting the help they need. Lack of desire for ex-service personnel to get help due to lack of confidence, safety and confidentiality concerns

Extract from an interview with 'B':

'B' still suffers the physical affects from being in close proximity to a bomb blast in 1989.