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Thursday, 30 October 2008

As controversy rages over Sunday's planned British Army parade through Belfast and a Sinn Fein protest against it, the Orange Order said it was calling for thousands to come out and welcome home the troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The British Army, meanwhile, is asking all those who attend to recognise the parade does not have undivided support and has reminded them it will not be a celebration of war.

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The Orange Order said it delights in showing its support for the returning heroes and it will ignore the Sinn Fein protest.

What are these?

The Parades Commission has appealed for all sides to redouble their efforts to reduce tension.

Major General Chris Brown, General Officer Commanding the British Army in Northern Ireland, said the parade should not be an excuse for deepening friction and weapons would not be carried.

The SDLP has appealed to people not to join the protest while the DUP said the police must ensure Sinn Fein protesters are kept well back.

Jean McBride, the mother of a Catholic teenager murdered by British soldiers, said she was outraged by a British Army march taking place two miles from her home.

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 HCarroll - Are you also aware that the first Saint Patrick's day parade was held in America in 1700s by Irish regiments of the British army, protestant, catholic and dissenter?

Posted by Paedar | 31.10.08, 09:14 GMT

 ORANGE ORDER STAY OUT OF IT - you are falling into the trap set by Sinn Fein to turn this into a sectarian streetfight, so they can bring down the Assembly. The servicemen from the Catholic community would no more welcome the Orange Order support than Sinn Fein's protests. This is not about religion or nationality -it is a march of recognition for the contribution of Irish regiments from the British army in fighting the Taliban. Sinn Feins dream would be thousands of Orangemen turning up so can label it anti-catholic, sectarian etc.

Posted by Paedar | 31.10.08, 09:02 GMT

 Just an opinion here so please don't bash me, but shouldn't such a parade be about celebrating current events like surviving the war in Iraq & Afghanistan and NOT about something totally different that has come to an official end?

Going back about 140 yrs in history with this but when our Civil War ended one of the ways the two sides finally began mending the "fence" was to have parades TOGETHER. There are pictures of men grown old but wearing proudly their blues or grays for the North or South... proud that they fought for what they thought was right at the time and prouder still that they were able to march together in the end... unlike the near 620,000 who didn't make it.

Belfast is an amazing place and I loved it there so much... the people are wonderful and I don't think there should be

anything wrong with families celebrating the safe return of their soldiers. It's not a celebration of war... none of us like this war... but by God be happy they made it home at all.

Posted by HCarrollUSA | 31.10.08, 01:47 GMT

People like Tandy who express their "disgust" about British troops parading the streets of "their" city on this site should perhaps bear in mind that if it weren't for the sacrifice of British soldiers in WW2 they would not be in a free to do so.

Posted by Attilathehun | 30.10.08, 22:07 GMT

Welcome home Brave Guys .What on earth were they thinking putting both Parades on at the same time Cant they take place on different weekends?? PROUD of Our Troops

Posted by Proud of Our Troops | 30.10.08, 22:06 GMT

I think this event is a great event in the history of the North of Ireland as an oppurtunity to bury our differences and support the troop coming back to ireland.
Faugh a Ballah

Posted by GK | 30.10.08, 21:25 GMT

Hi Graham. Don't worry mate. It is simply the vocal minority giving us a bad name. Most of us, as you know, don't give a toss and just want to get on in life. Most of us, as you know, don't care about petty sectarian politics and religion. It annoys me that these people give us such a bad name at home and abroad. Things have changed dramatically here and I love living in Belfast. It is fantastic.

Posted by ProudBelfast | 30.10.08, 21:19 GMT

Reading all the provocative, spiteful and downright childish comments on this issue (from both sides) just makes me more certain than ever that I was right to get out of Norn. Get stuck into each other boys, sure you all love it anyway. Just do the rest of us a favour and make sure you hit each other.

Posted by Graham, London | 30.10.08, 21:09 GMT

Paul Douglas. Yes. Unbelievable. Imagine soldiers from Belfast parading through BELFAST! Shocking!Some people would need to start and get over themselves. The hypocrisy of the attempt by Sinn Fein and others to deny these brave men and women the right to parade through their home city is unbelievable. I personally am disgusted at people like Sinn Fein in government due to their support of the IRA` s murder campaign. I am disgusted at a lot of things, but as time moves on I have to learn to accept it. It is something that you should do too and let the Army parade in peace. Sinn Fein have had their rallies in the City Centre without hindrance. End your anti-British bigotry and move on.

Posted by Cliff | 30.10.08, 21:00 GMT

Welcome home to Ulser our brave fighting men.
You have done us proud during the troubles both at Home and Abroad.
When the Sinners and any enemies of Ulster and our beloved British Isles try to block the way - remember the Motto - FAUGH A BALLAGH. (Clear The Way)

Keep The Heads High and The Flags Up.
Play On Killaloe!

Until Sunday
GSTQ!

Posted by Ex Rgr 7925 | 30.10.08, 20:50 GMT

A parade welcoming men and women back from Iraq and Afganistan from all sides Catholic and Protestant seems like a well deserved right. The families and friends are just overjoyed they are back. Don't make this one sided, Northern Ireland needs to move forward and grow together. Stop looking to the past, the city has come so far and I'm so proud to say where I'm from.
Welcome home to all the troops!


Posted by Tara, Manchester | 30.10.08, 20:49 GMT

Who planned this? A parade by a group/organisation overwhelming supported by one side of the community. Where do they decide to hold it? In Belfast city centre. The mind boggles. It is clear that this is divisive and could provoke trouble. Why not hold it somewhere else? Have a ceremony at an Army barracks, invite the soldiers' families, friends and whoever else wants to come along. Problem solved. It isn't that long ago that soldiers were in Belfast fighting in a war. This is just insane. Soldiers? On parade? In BELFAST? What on earth.

Posted by Paul Douglas | 30.10.08, 20:25 GMT

Keep it handy Tandy!

Posted by DM5 | 30.10.08, 20:08 GMT

 I don't care what regiments they are from - I am disgusted by British troops parading through my city.

The British Army has been responsible for atrocities not just in Ireland (north and south) but also the third world countries they have invaded overseas - in recent times and throughout history.


It has been said that these people are Northern Irish and from both sides of the community. I fail to see the relevance. But an 'endorsement' from the Orange Order would do little to entice Catholics to any parade.

I also remember the photographs of up to 100 RIR soldiers posing with a banner supporting Drumcree back in 2000. That really shows how inclusive that regiment is - doesn't it?


In 2007 Irish Guards based in Basra, donned Orange sashes and formed the 'Rising Sons of Basra flute and drum band' then they marched through their base. That was nice wasn't it?

But I digress. The people responsible for allowing knew this would be divisive.

Posted by William Tandy, Belfast | 30.10.08, 18:58 GMT

 i agree with ian! last i checkd northern ireland was in the uk and these are british soldiers! i dont see any problem with men who have fighting for their country parading! what is sinn feins problem!

Posted by adam | 30.10.08, 18:41 GMT

 lets hope that the true irish people from the 6 counties and even our fellow country men from the 26 counties will turn up to protest against this parade. of course the orange order back this parade sure dont they love parades.

Posted by sean from co down | 30.10.08, 18:37 GMT

 GROW UP SINN FEIN THATS ALL I SAY.

Posted by IAN | 30.10.08, 18:00 GMT

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