

[Register](#)

[Sign In](#)

[Drag this link onto your Home button to make us your homepage](#)

[Help](#) [Sitemap](#) [Home](#) [Skip Navigation](#) [Contact Us](#) [Disability Statement](#)

# Derry Journal



- [Home](#)
- [News](#)
- [Sport](#)
- [Community](#)
- [Your say](#)
- [Newspaper](#)

site    web

[Search](#)

[Slideshows](#)

[Motors](#)

[TV Guide](#)

[Quiz](#)

[Guestbook](#)

[Links](#)

[Blogs](#)

[Inishowen Notes](#)

[Letters](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Archive](#)

[Site Help](#)

[Subscriptions](#)

[Forums](#)

[Gift Shop](#)

[Pixel Page](#)

[Looking for a friend or relative?](#)

[RSS](#)

[Video](#)

Thursday, 13th September 2007

- [Email a friend](#)
- [Print article](#)
- [Increase text size](#)
- [Decrease text size](#)
- [2 comments on this article](#)

- **Published Date:** 07 September 2007
- **Source:** Journal Friday DER Edition
- **Location:** Derry

## Premium Article

exclamation mark

To read this article in **full** you must have registered and have a Premium Content Subscription with this site.

[Subscribe](#)

## Registered Article

exclamation mark

To read this article in full you must be registered with the site.

[Sign In](#)

[Register](#)

# Former British Army chief admits: Bloody Sunday 'most tragic' event of Troubles



Click on thumbnail to view image

Click on thumbnail to view image

Click on thumbnail to view image

Click on thumbnail to view image

[« Previous](#)

« Previous

[Next »](#)

Next »

[View Gallery](#)

By [Sean McLaughlin](#)

A FORMER head of the British Army has singled out Bloody Sunday as the "most tragic" and "deeply shocking" episode of the Troubles.

General Sir Mike Jackson - who served as a captain with the Parachute Regiment in Derry on Bloody Sunday - makes the admission in his new autobiography, "Soldier", which is due to be published next week.

In the book - which has been seen by the 'Journal' - Gen. Jackson also reveals that, in the wake of the Bogside killings, Colonel Derek Wilford, the commander of the Paras' battalion responsible, felt "bruised, battered and worried" about what had happened that day.

The retired Army chief - who twice gave oral evidence to the Lord Saville-chaired tribunal into the January, 1972 incident - also takes the opportunity to again reject claims of a "breakdown in discipline" among paratroopers on Bloody Sunday.

"I found the charge that the Paras had 'run amok' on 'Bloody Sunday' difficult to accept," he says.

In the book, General Jackson repeats much of the evidence he gave to the Saville Inquiry in 2003.

However, for the first time, he reveals how the events of that day affected him personally: He says: "I was deeply shocked because, although the British Army had shot a number of persons in the past, there had never been deaths on this scale," he writes. "To this day it remains the most tragic such episode in the whole sad history of the Troubles.

"I was left with some very mixed and worrying feelings. I imagine that others in the battalion felt the same. I hated the thought, as some commentators would state straight away, that our soldiers might have lost control... I knew these men and I knew their quality. So far as I was concerned, the Paras were tough, but they were disciplined. I found it difficult to accept that there could have been any mass breach of discipline."

He also acknowledges that it was a "terrible thought" that the army may have killed innocent people - "whatever the stress of the moment and whatever the provocation", adding: "The question remains whether the response of some of our soldiers was proportionate or not, considering the nature of the threat."

General Jackson - who retired from the army last year - also reveals details of an episode following Bloody Sunday in which Col. Wilford met with his superior, Brigadier Frank Kitson, to discuss the army operation.

He says: "Shortly after we got back to Belfast, Kitson came to see the Colonel... Kitson has a very distinct nasal voice, so it would have been difficult not to overhear what he was saying even if I had been trying not to. 'Well, Derek,' Kitson began, 'you'd better tell me what happened'. So I heard the Colonel describe the snatch operation across the containment line into 'Free Derry'.

'Bloody mess'

"Kitson was generally supportive, but when Wilford had finished, he offered a trenchant comment. 'What I don't understand is why, having got that far in, you didn't go on and short the whole bloody mess out'."

Jackson concludes: "Kitson expressed himself pretty brutally, but he had a point.

Last Updated: 07 September 2007 9:35 AM

Page 1 of 2

[Next Page »](#)

Prev

1

Next

[1](#)

**michael campbell,**

micheal campbell@hse .ie 07/09/2007 14:04:56

Sir as with all retired military personnell when it comes to the question of Ireland Col. Jackson talks in terms of regret and quotes the intelligence guru Frank Kitson asking Col. Wilford why he didn't go on in and take the no go area after the murders in Derry on the 31st of January 1972. This is the very crux of the military and securicates argument when it comes to dealing with the Irish Question. From the time of Elizabeth the 1st when she referred to "the mere Irish" this train of thought still exists as does the paternal attitude when it comes to discussing what happened in Derry on Bloody Sunday. I would put it quite simply to Col. Jackson and any other military person who is suffering from selective amnesia about what happened on the day. The forces of the state sent a battle hardened attack force into confront a civil rights demonstration . This attack force " ran amok" and murdered 14 people and wounded many others. Now if this had happened in some other part of the world -the British Military establishment would have been the first to codemn them in the loudest terms. As it happened the British State decorated those within this attack force that murdered civilians in Derry on that day. Now before all those who see themselves as British and would ask the question put by Kitson why not go on ahead into the no go area and finish the job in terms of the mere Irish mindset - ponder this- the whole concept of the british police force was in direct result to the Peterloo Masacres whereby the British Militia Hussars ( fore runner to the British Army) killed 4 unarmed demonstrators who where protesting for workers rights such was the out cry that Robert Peel formed the unarmed british policeforce. Now to all those who would say that the people shouldn't have been marching that day and they bore part of the responsibility for what happened - take a look at what this attack force( The Paras) did weeks previously on the Shankill Road at Tennants Street. Its al

[Report Unsuitable](#)

[2](#)

**AvidIrishReader,**

07/09/2007 21:03:40

I would go one step further. The British army (note the lower case for 'army' - there is more than one army in the world) did set out to 'teach' the rioters of Derry a lesson, and the only thing that got out of hand was the lesson. People should remember that many involved in Stormont at the time were alive during the War of Independence, and had also lived through WWII. The tendency, unlike today, was to resolve such issues in military terms - hence the introduction of internment. The only problem the British army encountered on that fateful day was the presence of the media. Just as in 1968 when the Duke Street march was captured on camera, society saw the bare, brutal face of unionist/British justice. The only thing that surprised me about Bloody Sunday concerned the number of people executed: how such a well-trained unit only managed to kill 14 people is baffling. The people of Derry should refrain from buying Jackson's book and prevent him from profiting from the day - it simply adds insult to injury.

## [Report Unsuitable](#)

Prev

1

Next

## Comment on this Story

In order to post comments you must [Register](#) or [Sign In](#)

[RSS Feed of this article's comments](#)

Delivery formats: [RSS](#), [Atom](#), [Javascript & Email](#)

## DerryJournal.com

- [About Us](#)
- [Journal View](#)

## News

- [Derry News](#)
- [Inishowen News](#)
- [County in Focus](#)
- [Strabane](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Around the courts](#)
- [News in brief](#)
- [News Forum](#)

## Sport

- [Derry Sport](#)
- [Sport Columnists](#)
- [Sport Forum](#)

## PA News Feeds

- [Irish News](#)
- [UK News](#)
- [UK News Video](#)
- [UK Sport](#)
- [UK Sport Video](#)

## Journal Business

- [Business News](#)
- [Gerry Murray Writes](#)

## Features

- [Journal Interview](#)
- [Jed](#)
- [Columnists](#)
- [Friday's Child](#)
- [Feature Articles](#)

## Entertainment

- [Northern Beats](#)
- [Journal Entertainment](#)
- [Music Forum](#)
- [Showbiz news](#)
- [At The Movies](#)

## Interactive

- [Looking for a friend or relative?](#)
- [Letters to the editor](#)
- [Email the editor](#)
- [All Forums](#)

## Community

- [Blogs](#)
- [Inishowen Notes](#)



[What's this?](#)

## More News:

- [Derry hopefuls have the X-Factor](#)
- [Business park jobs boost](#)
- [Pet ashes](#)
- [Deputy Mayor concerned at X-cert films for 12-year-olds](#)
- [Derry Free Presbyterians tightlipped on Paisley](#)
- [Grieving mums reveal impact of suicide](#)
- [Profit in factory sale revealed](#)
- [Derry could return to days of Springtown Camp - claims Hassan](#)
- [Road and rail links to Derry are a joke - Pat Ramsey MLA](#)



- [Smoke alarm saved Strathfoyle man's life](#)
- [Council gets update on natural gas](#)
- [Exam success for Derry's An Gael](#)
- [Irish language activists challenge Poots](#)
- [Busy times ahead for Greater Shantallow Community Arts](#)
- [SuperValu week of fun marks Big Bus birthday](#)

[More News](#)

## Features:

COLUMNISTS

[All your Journal columnists in the one place](#)



[Action shots from the Candystripes](#)

## Today's Vote


Do you think children living in Donegal should be allowed to attend school in Derry?

Yes.

No.

[Vote Now >>](#)

## Featured Advertising

- [Contact us](#)
- [Help](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Terms & Conditions](#)
- [Archive](#)
- [Our sister newspapers](#)
- 

All rights reserved ©2007 Johnston Press Digital Publishing  
Sister Newspapers:



[Donegal](#)