

The True Story of South Armagh

This booklet is dedicated to all the brave civilians, and Security force members who lost their lives in order to maintain our existence in South Armagh. Those who stood firm in the face of utmost evil.

"Greater love has no man than this, that a man would lay down his life for another"

REASONS FOR FORMATION OF F.A.I.R.

- 1 To create a permanent remembrance of what 25 years of Irish Republican death squads have brought upon our Protestant community without justification or reprisal .
- 2 To try and reverse the undeniable fact that good has now become evil and right has now become wrong by the appeasement of Republican terrorists by both British and Irish Governments.
- 3 To help remove fear, build confidence and restore dignity to an area decimated by evil Irish Republican death squads.
- 4 To tell our stories and ensure that lessons can be learned for the future so that no community should ever have to suffer such acts of inhumanity.
- 5 To create a society in South Armagh where we can learn to love our neighbours and not fear them.
- 6 Create practical and financial help to families who have struggled to exist due to the evil visited upon them.
- 7 To remove feelings of isolation and establish a common bond with those other innocent areas and people similarly afflicted and to remove overwhelming in-justices .
8. To reverse the attitude of our Government who have succeeded to totally de-value human life and human sacrifices given to restore law and order.
- 9 To further our overwhelming quest for justice and for justice to be seen to be done.
- 10 To ensure that all of our friends and families did not die in vain.
- 11 To be able to attend our Sunday worship in South Armagh without fear and an armed security presence in the area.
- 12 To remove years of isolation, exclusion and marginalisation of our community in South Armagh.

We hope to integrate all our ideas and aspirations into a centre which will have several themes including private memorial garden or area where people can identify with all we have suffered and we can come to terms with the tragic events in our lives.

Accommodation where people from throughout the World can come and see what life in South Armagh is really like.



Reatha Hassan Chairperson

Served 21 years with the Ulster Defence Regiment was awarded Campaign Service Medal, Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Medal, Good Conduct Medal, and G.O.C. commendation for outstanding service.

"I have attended 68 funerals of colleagues murdered by Republican terrorists, many very dear friends and neighbours. I had on many occasions to break the terrible news to their families. Sometimes there was nothing left of the bodies to identify them or to bury. I have now dedicated myself to

ensuring that these families truly receive what they deserve and that their sacrifice is not forgotten and that their names are carved in gold"



Willie Frazer Vice Chairperson

Has suffered greatly at the hands of Republican terrorists losing five members of his family including his father Robert in 1975. They had had their home wrecked with bombs on numerous occasions. He grew up in Whitecross in South Armagh but as a protestant attended a Catholic school and played Gaelic and soccer alike with his school friends.

"I was brought up to respect my fellow neighbours. We were not allowed to talk about religion and were brought up to identify the difference between right and wrong. Now however when I look back at what my family suffered and how murder has clearly paid how can I teach my children that right is still right and wrong is still wrong"



Brian McConnell Secretary

Currently lives in the heart of South Armagh on a remote farm outside Newtownhamilton. Has witnessed a member of his family being gunned down beside his mother at their farm in cold blood by Republican terrorists. He grew up with countless neighbours being murdered almost on a daily basis.

"Living in South Armagh you can never escape the feeling of being under siege because of the helicopter gunships patrolling the skies and heavily armed troops on the ground. Every time you hear a bomb go off or hear gunfire it reminds you of exactly who your neighbours are and what they are capable of doing."

HISTORY OF 30 YEARS OF REPUBLICAN TYRANNY IN SOUTH ARMAGH

During the past 30 years South Armagh has become synonymous throughout the world when one speaks about the present Troubles in Northern Ireland. It has within its boundary villages such as Crossmaglen, Forkhill and Newtownhamilton to name but a few. It is idyllic countryside with tourist attractions like the Ring 'O' Gullion which is ironically in what's known as an Area Of Natural Beauty as designated by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. But to everyone throughout the world it should be known as "Bandit Country"

Beneath this beautiful facade however lies untold misery, bloodshed and the pain of a community who have been under siege for the past 30 years. This community is not Irish Catholic as one would naturally assume from years of outlandish Republican propaganda, but the community is Ulster Protestant.

During the past 30 years only commitment to our existence, coupled with unequalled bravery and a belief in God has resulted in the Protestant population not becoming extinct at the hands of a carefully orchestrated campaign to "ethnic-cleanse." We have resisted wave after wave of attack whilst showing little or nothing in the way of retaliation and have continually held out the hand of reconciliation only to have it cruelly cut off time and time again.

To bring the worlds attention to the realities of what life is like in South Armagh we will have to record with some discomfort the types of barbaric deeds carried out "in the name of Ireland", and without any moral justification by the IRA.

Three of the worst massacres carried out in South Armagh during the period 1970's-1990's were Tullyvallen, Kingsmills and Darkley Gospel Hall. These massacres were totally indiscriminate sectarian attacks which typified the fanatical nature of Republican death squads.

Now after all this pain and suffering caused by these ruthless terrorists we are forced to accept the "Godfathers" who masterminded these attacks into our Government. Daily we see these unrepentant terrorists walking the corridors of power, gangsters disguised as democrats.

Imagine if you will then how after such attacks you would feel if you lived in the USA and the Oklahoma bombers were sitting in Congress and walking the corridors of the Whitehouse or if you live in England and the mass child murderer Myra Hindley was a Government official sitting at 10 Downing Street briefing the Prime Minister on the Health Service or Education.

TULLYVALLEN MASSACRE

Republican terrorists were again to show that tolerance of a section of the community in South Armagh was and still is zero.

On 1st September 1975 one of the worst atrocities was carried out at Tullyvallen Orange Hall one mile from the Irish border where five innocent men were cowardly cut down whilst carrying out an act of worship.

These men were to be "lambs to the slaughter" as they had no protection and met on the same night every month for their lodge meeting a fact which would have been known by their Republican neighbours in South Armagh.

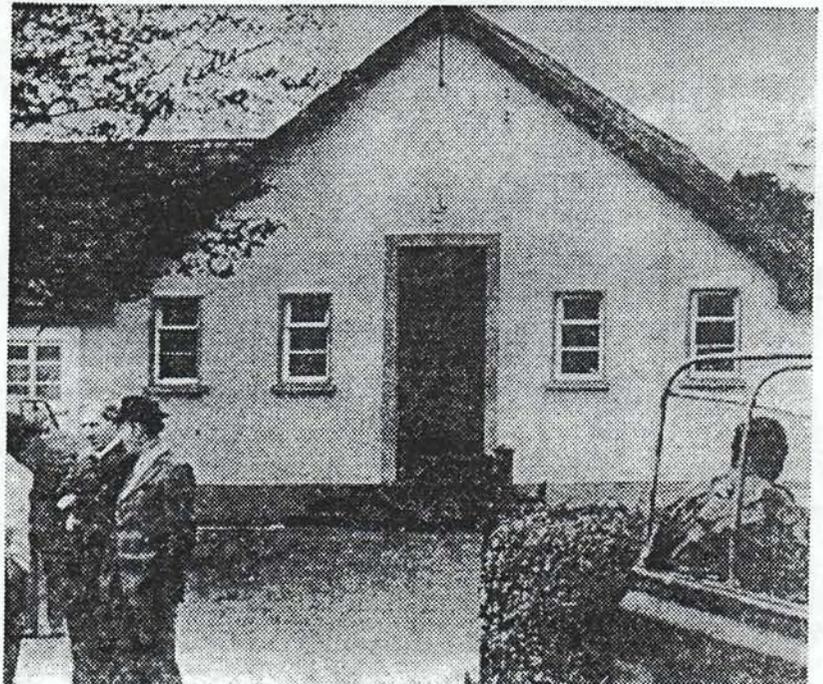
The killers entered the hall and began to fire indiscriminately cutting down all that stood in front of them. There was utter chaos as men dived for cover to try and save themselves from the psychopathic killers. Fortunately one member in the hall who was an off-duty member of the security forces had his gun and when he fired a shot the cowards then fled still firing through the windows leaving a trail of devastation behind.

All the men murdered in this attack were committed Christians and devout family men. They were highly respected local citizens with some aged over 70 and 80. Such was the thirst for blood that Republican gunmen tried to carry out another murderous attack at the same time. Gunmen were lying in wait to mount an attack on the funeral home of Corporal Robert Frazer who was murdered two nights before the Tullyvallen Massacre nearby by the IRA when they were spotted by the security forces but fled before they could be apprehended. This was the depths they were prepared to stoop in South Armagh when they were even prepared to visit a home already in grief to inflict further pain and suffering.

The local community has been numbed ever since this attack which was totally unjustified and the fear which emanated from this attack is still very evident today and has never been removed due to a continuation of the daily actions of Republicans in South Armagh

The hall today still stands as a permanent reminder of what happened that terrible night and that the same may well occur in the future such is the sign of little change in the attitudes of those who carried out this attack.

It did not take brave soldiers or courageous volunteers to carry out this attack but bloodthirsty, evil gangsters who were faceless, gutless and heartless. The only thing this attack succeeded in doing was to convince everyone as to the exact nature and objectives of what Irish Republicanism really stands for.



KINGSMILL MASSACRE

All they wanted to do was carry out their normal lives, but even that is not possible as demonstrated by the Kingsmill Massacre in January 1976.

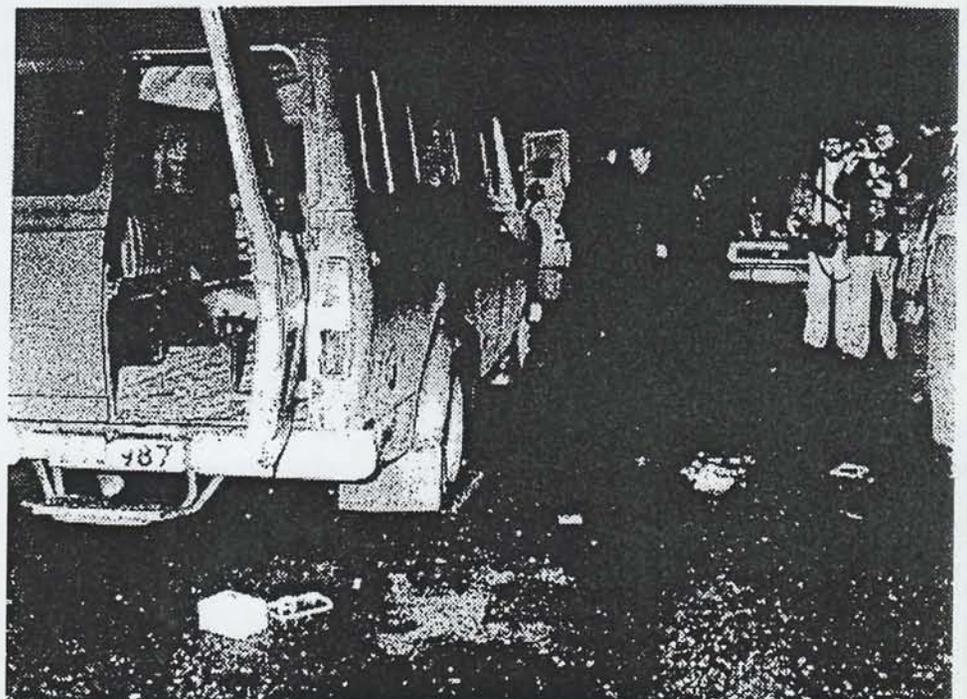
Ten innocent Protestant workmen were taken out of their mini-bus at gun point and lined up along the road where they were cut down mercilessly in a hail of gunfire. They were left lying in pools of blood with their lunchboxes strewn all over the road while their killers drove off cheering and triumphant at a job well done. The youngest victim was only a boy of 18, others included a Missionary and a Church Sunday School teacher.

How anyone could carry out such an attack is beyond the realms of any right minded thinking person. This attack is even yet the largest most savage attack ever carried out using gunfire such is the gravity of the attack. One has to question how anyone could even try to justify this senseless, unprovoked murder against humanity.

However, crazed, psychopathic and bloodthirsty killers sanctioned this attack which is glorified within Republican folklore. This attack shattered a community where Protestant and Catholic live shoulder to shoulder. Trust and confidence has never been re-built since this outrage such was the impact it had on the local community. Everytime one travels this road a cold shiver runs down the spine as you pass the murder scene you cannot begin to imagine what took place that awful night.

The slaughter of innocents stands as a constant reminder to Protestants in South Armagh as to the depths of depravity Republican death squads are prepared to stoop to "In the name of Ireland."

In the words of a Protestant Archbishop at the time "Better to be shot and die than to shoot", these words live on.



DARKLEY MASSACRE

Anywhere in the world one should feel safe and without threat within the sanctity of a place of worship or church. However this is not the case in South Armagh as demonstrated on Sunday, November 20th 1983 when evil Republican terrorists entered a rural church outside Darkley and murdered three church elders carrying out their act of worship.

This murder shocked the world and showed that nothing is sacred in the eyes of Irish Republicans in South Armagh. The church was filled with men, women and children who at this time every Sunday evening came together to pray and give thanks to God.

As the congregation broke into singing the first hymn, two gunmen opened fire on the congregation killing three elders at the doorway who were warmly welcoming people to the service.

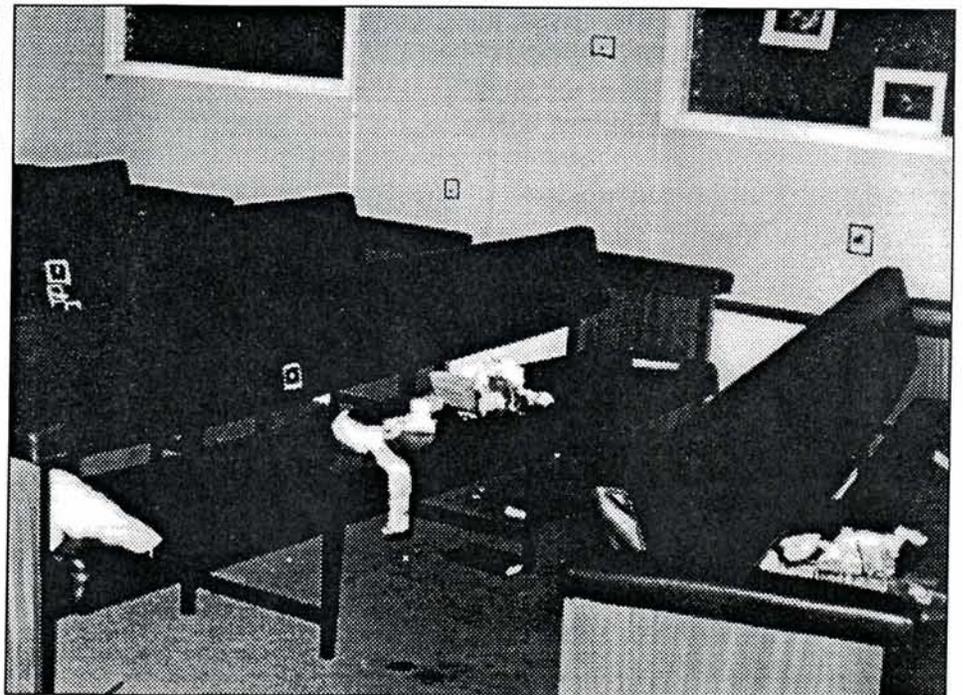
Pandemonium followed instantly. The killers calmly stepped over the bloodstained helpless bodies already cut down and began firing at the congregation of mainly defenceless women and children. Fathers dived over their young children, and one man covered a 7 month old baby such was the indiscriminate nature of the attack.

Children were screaming hysterically calling for their mummys and daddies who were lying among the upturned pews, prayer books and bibles. All begged and pleaded for mercy as the gunmen stepped through the bodies and made their way outside. Such was their murderous intent, that they reloaded their guns and sprayed the exterior of the wooden church hall before cowardly disappearing into the sanctity of the local countryside.

Three dead- seven injured, how can anyone ever try to justify such an attack on God's people. Even today we still have to conduct our worship in South Armagh under the watchful and mindful eye of armed security forces such is the fear and reality that such an attack could happen again.

We still are mindful every Sunday when we worship, this attack was not a mistake or random incident by a crazed individual but was sanctioned and orchestrated by Irish Republican death squads.

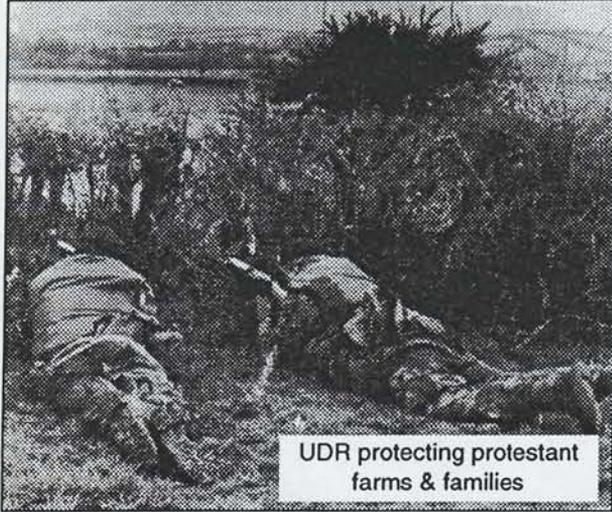
Where in the free world would such an infringement and denial of a basic human right such as carrying out Sunday worship be tolerated.



GLENANNE

ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT BASE

The Republican terrorists continued their murderous campaign into the 1990's with another massacre attack in South Armagh.



UDR protecting protestant farms & families

They used their biggest ever device to kill three members of the UDR at a security base in Glenanne on 31st May 1991. The bomb containing a massive 2000lbs of explosives was packed into a lorry and rolled down a hill overlooking the base. It exploded by remote control after it had burst through the perimeter fence. The terrorists watched with baited breath as the devastation unfolded.

Miraculously only three UDR men were killed however fourteen others were injured including four civilians. The explosion could be heard over 30 miles away and the devastation was widespread with nearby homes destroyed.

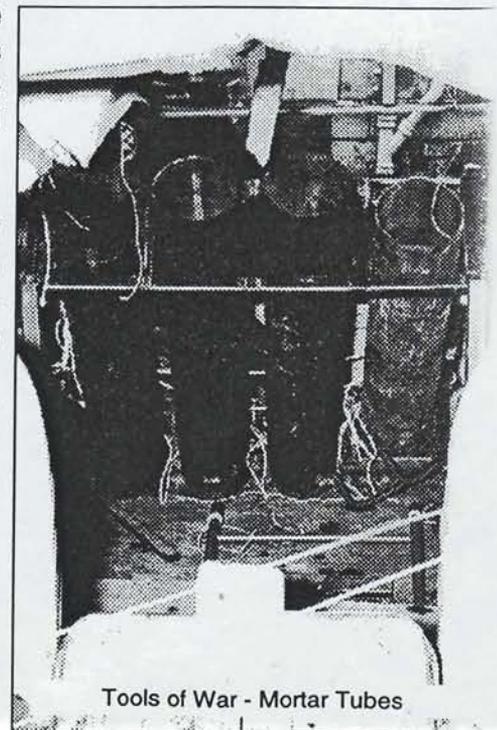
This was the fifth time that year that the local council had to adjourn as a mark of respect due to Republican violence. Young families were again left without a parent, all devoted to their fathers. In reality the families had nothing left to bury such was the extent to which these men were decimated by the huge blast, enabling families to give their loved ones what any human being deserves, a decent Christian burial.

The scene of carnage was a graphic reminder to the Protestant community the evil that was hidden just beneath the surface but willing and able to rear its head when Republicans felt their futile cause needed to impose itself once again.

These type of security bases such as Glenanne protected the law-abiding community and were seen as the wall between evil Republican death squads and the innocent local community and were manned by local part-time soldiers, fathers and sons alike.

Once again the protectors of life and guardians of law and order were to pay the highest price for Republican hatred and terror. However, after this atrocity this base was not only flattened but was never re-opened. The way is now open for the Republican terrorists to drive freely into the heart of our community now that we are afforded no protection. The local population are very aware of the situation and have no doubt the death squads will exploit the situation when it suits their cause.

All that remains in the spot where law and order once stood firm is a small memorial stone. We hope and pray that we will never have to add further names to the roll of honour.



Tools of War - Mortar Tubes

TORTURE OF VICTIMS

Such is the extent to which Republican terrorists were prepared to go to there are certain methods used which even people familiar with the methods of terror

groups in the twentieth century would find incomprehensible.

It is quite clear that with every murder by Republican terrorists in South Armagh the attacks seemed to become more and more sadistic, brutal and medieval.

As you will appreciate we cannot delve too deeply into the exact nature of all cases as many families have never come to terms with just what their loved ones suffered

during such acts of inhumanity. There are many families in South Armagh with horror stories almost too graphic for words.

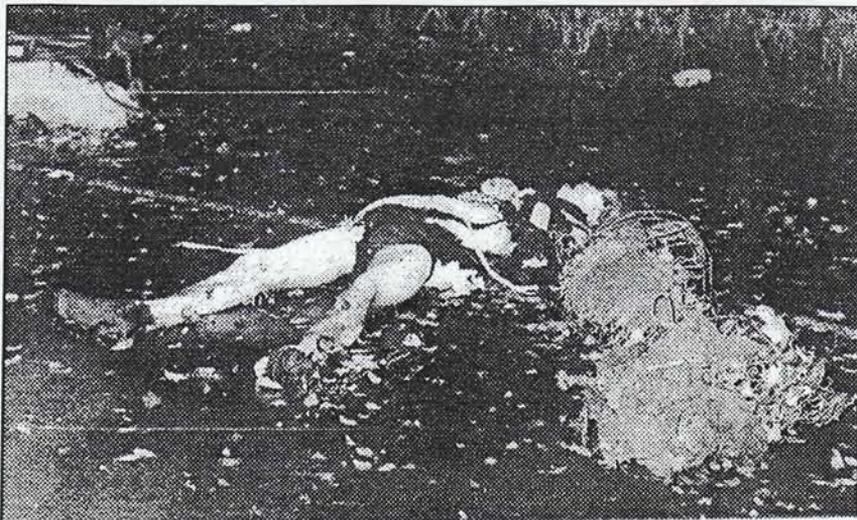
Examples of force used were cases of human beings having their teeth pulled out, their fingernails plucked out. Tattooes removed from their body with a knife, genitals removed and forced into their mouths. Others had concrete blocks dropped on their body to break and crush limbs, Beaten with sticks with six inch nails embedded in them.

In many cases the victim was force fed drugs in order to keep them conscious so as to prolong the suffering and when they could psychically stand no more they would be riddled with gunfire to at last put an end to their misery. Bodies were often left stripped naked by the side of the road, some boobytrapped in order to prolong the suffering of the family and try and kill others.

It is beyond any explanation why the Irish Republican movement allowed such acts to happen and why they sanctioned such attacks against their fellow neighbours who only wanted to live in peace and enjoy normal family life.

How can we reconcile or be expected to reconcile with people of this calibre stalking our countryside and prepared to carry out such atrocities again. We do not have any safe haven in South Armagh, this is our home.

Human Rights has never been on the Republican agenda in South Armagh and now we know exactly why.



SECURITY IN SOUTH ARMAGH

South Armagh has undoubtedly suffered more at the hands of terrorists than any other community in Northern Ireland so it may come as a surprise that in the minds and views of local law abiding people the security afforded to them is virtually non-existent.

The only visible security in South Armagh are Helicopter gunships patrolling the skies remarkable you might say when we are supposed to be in a "Peace Process". The reality is that peace has never visited this corner of Northern Ireland and if so why do we not have normal security patrols by vehicle like any normal society where peace exists.

In South Armagh all we see is Republicans masterminding devastating bombs like Omagh, holding onto and indeed building upon an already huge arsenal of weapons. On the otherhand we see the dismantling of Security bases, downscaling of troops and amnesty for evil murderers. We feel that we are being isolated and "thrown to the wind." There is no protection left in South Armagh and where in the world do the Police Traffic Branch operate from a gunship but in South Armagh.

Republican terrorists mount their own checkpoints with frightening ease and regularity a point not lost on our community they are telling us "We rule South Armagh"

If we look at a typical example of a murder in South Armagh we can see where our worries and anxieties come from. Widows and young children have in all too many cases had to comfort their dying father or husband for over one hour before security help could arrive. How can we believe in peace and a new way forward when we are forced to live under such conditions without any line between our life and our certain death.

All the worst atrocities in South Armagh were carried out during Republican ceasefires something of which the world at large is not aware. Our future must be built on our past. We beg those who are supposed to be the defenders of our futures not to leave us defenceless and exposed to these ruthless neighbours who are only interested in peace at a price, that price may be our lives.

Please allow us to be able to sleep in our beds at night not caring what tomorrow brings instead of waking up in the morning with a huge sigh of relief that we are still alive such is the reality of being a Protestant in South Armagh.



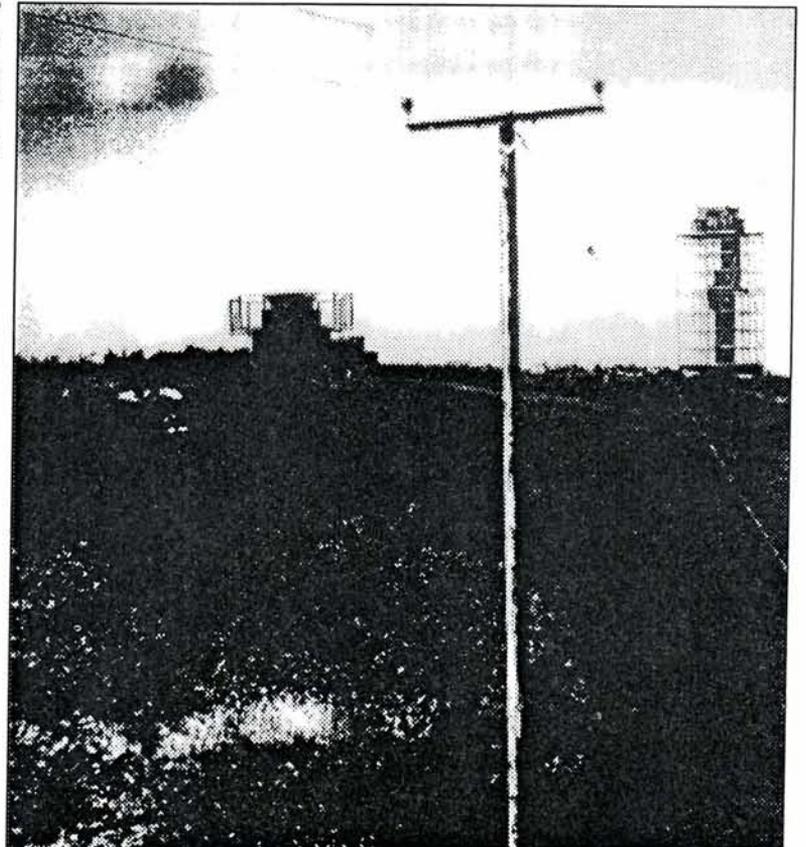
LIVING IN SOUTH ARMAGH

As you travel the roads within South Armagh you cannot help but feel isolated and excluded due to the well documented history of the bloodstained countryside. In this area the evil live alongside the good. We yearn in this part of Northern Ireland to love our neighbours and not fear them.

Our fear emanates from the fact that no security vehicles but helicopter gunships still patrol our skies and heavily armed troops patrol our countryside even in so called peace times such is the threat and cloud of imminent danger that still hangs over us. When we close our doors at night we pray that there will not be a knock at the door or that our dogs will not bark out a warning. We pull our curtains and draw our blinds before night falls and in many cases sleep with the light on such is the trepidation and fear we still have.

There has been a ruthless campaign of ethnic cleansing and genocide which the Government seemed reluctant or powerless to prevent to erase our section of the community from this area. When we walk or drive through our local villages the hatred is so visible and we see people who undoubtedly have bloodstained hands and are only interested in confrontation and not accommodation. Our villages are decorated with Republican propaganda designed and orchestrated to leave our community in no doubt as to what they feel about our presence in the area, ' Brits out', "IRA sniper at work", "Free Ireland", "Ready for War" and cardboard cut-outs of gunmen.

"Parity of esteem" is one of the most common used words in Northern Ireland by Republicans but however it may be a fine concept but in reality in South Armagh it means Republican intimidation, fear, and marginalisation. We have no freedom of speech, are denied basic fundamental principles, our freedom of movement is restricted and no diversity is respected. There should be no areas within South Armagh as part of the United Kingdom where we cannot go free and unhindered. Trust, and confidence are the elements that are needed to create a genuine peace process but whenever there is a situation such as this within South Armagh the words of scripture ring true " They cry peace, peace, but there is no peace"



Outpost guarding the law abiding community in South Armagh. We hope they are never removed until there is genuine peace

OUR FUTURE IN SOUTH ARMAGH

We are determined that we will have a future given what we have endured in the past to secure our existence. Our views and voices must be listened to and our experiences respected if we are to forge a genuine peace in South Armagh.

We are the people whose bodies and lives have been shattered but whose spirit lives on. We are a constant reminder of exactly what a campaign of genocide stands for. Our aim is to ensure that the great sacrifice of the Protestant community in South Armagh will never be forgotten nor should it be forgotten.

We aim to create a permanent centre of Remembrance which will incorporate many facets to ensure that we can regain our dignity and begin the long road to recovery. All the world needs to be able to visit hear and understand what being a Protestant in South Armagh is really like and what price we have paid to stand for our faith.

This was no great colonial war as portrayed by so many but a community decimated with fear, murder and evil without any moral justification. Innocent Protestants and Catholics slain in order to retain control within a vile and vicious campaign.

It is up to F.A.I.R. to ensure the truth and stories are told and also pave the way for both Protestants and Catholics to live in perfect harmony in South Armagh.

Please help to fulfil our dreams and help us secure a better future.



Some of the 500 strong group within
F.A.I.R. who look to the future

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

The flowers on the graves may fade and wither and have to be replaced but the innocents - slaughtered by Republican cowards can never be replaced - nor will their memory ever fade but must continue to grow.

The Protestant people of South Armagh have endured so much without any justification. So many people - decent upright innocent law-abiding citizens have had their lives robbed by evil Republican death squads.

F.A.I.R. hopes that through their organisation people can start to live again and enjoy companionship and support denied for so long. Nothing however can ever remove the suffering and great loss inflicted on our community and nothing can ever replace loved ones.

The evidence of a three decade long Republican campaign of terror and brutality in South Armagh is evident in almost every Protestant household with empty spaces never filled.

It is an undeniable fact that there is not a church graveyard in the area that does not offer a safe resting place to those butchered by these faceless cowards.

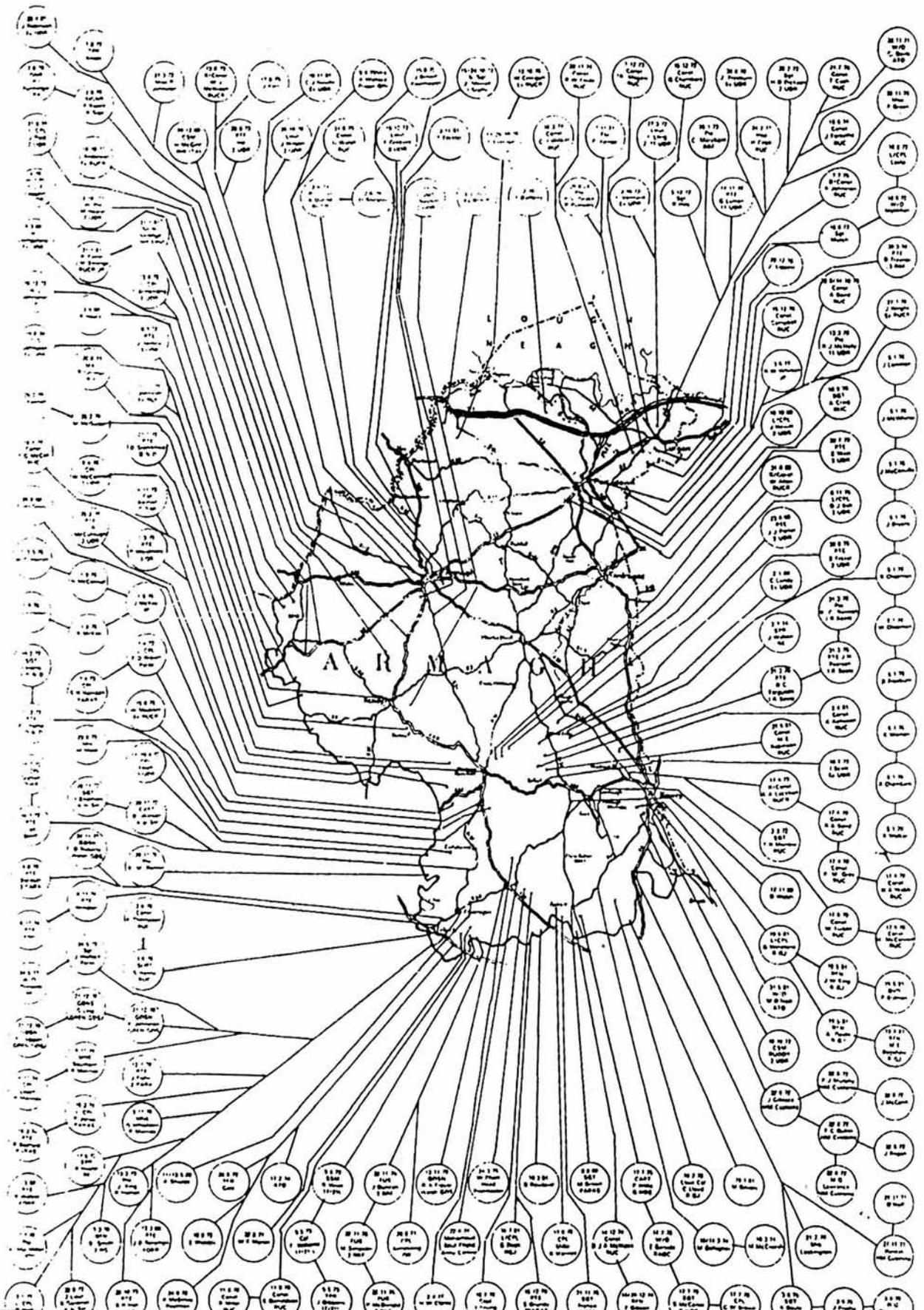
The Protestants in South Armagh are coffin -weary too many families left to grieve. Together we all share the grief which still exists. Time can help to dry the tears but nothing can heal these wounds.

"Why?" is the question on the lips of everyone but no-one seems to know the answer. Bombs, bullets, torture and butchery have taken their toll on our community in an attempt to erase it from this part of South Armagh but they will not succeed such is the resilience, courage and faith of our people. To allow this to happen would be a gross injustice, and an unforgivable insult to those slain by these evil murderers.

Together, we will always remember them, and we hope and pray that no other community should ever have to suffer such acts of inhumanity as those carried out by Republicans in South Armagh.

COUNTY ARMAGH 1970-1981

Murders attributable to republican terrorists
most of which remain unsolved



EPILOGUE

This small edition is only a selection of some of the worst murders in South Armagh. Within F.A.I.R. at present we have over 70 members alone from the local community. A much larger publication will be produced where all will be included without exception. A very important point which must be stressed is that very few people have been convicted for the murders in South Armagh and within our own organisation we have over 60 unsolved murders carried out by Republican terrorists in South Armagh. Justice therefore has never been done nor has it been seen to be done.

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