The Ulster Defence Regiment: A Strategic Analysis

PhD Politics & International Relations

Daniel Chesse

2024

Acknowledgements

This thesis could not have been completed without the support and efforts of so many people. I am particularly appreciative of the fact that I could not have gotten to this point without them. A special thanks to the many friends and family who have given me their support and free therapy whilst I underwent my many rants about the PhD. Their support and encouragement cannot be commended enough. Another thanks to all those who have guided my academic and personal development – particularly Rachel and Wayne and all those from the CYT who helped me grow from a shy and reserved boy to having the confidence to begin and present on such a project as this. Thanks must also be given to my peers, mentors and colleagues from my time at Cardiff University – particularly Dr Eleanor Leah Williams and Dr Giada Lagana for the help, support, advice and tips over the months and years that continues to prove invaluable. Particular thanks and praise must of course be given to my incredible supervisors Dr Thomas Leahy and Dr Huw Bennett for inspiring me in so much of this project and guiding me through this incredible journey and development that has been this thesis.

I wish to also thank all of my interviewees for their time and patience in our discussions. Particular thanks must go to the former members of the UDR for entrusting me with their stories and experiences. I hope that you feel heard through this thesis.

A heartfelt thanks must also go out to my paternal grandmother Pat who has encouraged and supported me to so many achievements. You are one of my biggest and most beloved supporters. Of course, a special thanks must also go out to my mother without whom in so many ways I would not be here today. I truly appreciate all that you have done for me. There are many late relatives, not least my Nana, who I wish could be with us to celebrate my achievement as a result of their love and nurture. During this project I also lost my grandfathers John and Stephen to whom I must give thanks for inspiring me and for nurturing my love of history and military studies. I will always cherish the chats and trips that you have taken me on, and for my inspiring me to pursue my passions. I hope that I have made all of you half as proud as me as I am to be your son and grandson.

Finally, the most heartfelt thanks must go out to my beloved fiancée Jess without whom I would never have gotten this far. She has been my rock and my light through everything, and words cannot express how much it means to have had her support and love throughout.

Abstract

This thesis explores the Ulster Defence Regiment and its strategic value and purpose as part of the Northern Ireland conflict. The regiment has come under particular scrutiny due to its association with collusion and deviancy in the 1970s, and this alongside their high rate of off-duty casualties has come to characterise and define discussions of the regiment. This thesis challenges this narrative by noting UDR nuances that go beyond this reductionist narrative and that can also prove beneficial to future Local Defence Forces. This thesis first notes that UDR recruitment had a number of issues – including a potential lapse in vetting that may have permitted subversives entry, and the continuation of the services of "Specials" which would have further damaged its public image. The thesis then explores the idea of deviancy within the UDR to note that whilst there was an issue of deviancy within the UDR, this was regionalised and localised, and the statistics indicate that the problem does not warrant further attention pending archival releases. The thesis then explores the concept of training within the UDR to further note the issues of the regiment and to re-affirm a core theme of the thesis that many of the UDR's problems were the result of external decision-makers. Finally, the thesis explores the purpose of the UDR and why it was retained despite all of its issues and concludes that its main function was as a "vent" on Protestant frustrations to limit the risk of a dreaded two-front war. The thesis then concludes by noting the nuances of previous chapters and how these can be improved upon in future Local Defence Forces, whilst acknowledging the importance of conflict legacy to discussions of the UDR and vice versa.

Abbreviations

ALP – Afghan Local Police

COIN - Counterinsurgency

DUP – Democratic Unionist Party

GOC – General Officer Commanding in Northern Ireland

HQNI – Headquarters Northern Ireland

IRA – Irish Republican Army. Refers to the Provisional IRA unless stated otherwise (e.g. Official IRA)

LDF – Local Defence Forces

MOE – Measure of Effectiveness

NCO – Non-commissioned Officer

NI – Northern Ireland

NITE – Northern Ireland Training Establishment

Regulars – Full-time regular British Army soldiers

RUC – Royal Ulster Constabulary

RUC SB – Royal Ulster Constabulary Special Branch

SAS – Special Air Service

SDLP – Social Democratic Labour Party

UDA – Ulster Defence Association

UDR – Ulster Defence Regiment

UVF – Ulster Volunteer Forces

Contents

Introduction 7

- Literature Review 10
- The use of Surrogates and Proxy Forces 28
- Local Defence Forces 31
- The Thesis 34
- Methodology 40
- Terminology 45
- Structure 46

Chapter 1 – Making the UDR: Recruitment, Vetting and Establishing a New Regiment 48

- Who was the UDR designed and intended to recruit? 49
  - Vetting 57
- What could have motivated individuals to enlist with the regiment? 67
- Why did the percentage of Catholics in the UDR rapidly decline in its early years, and why did it never recover? 72
- Can the concurrent boom in Protestant recruitment be considered a matter of concern? 97
- Conclusion 103

Chapter 2 – The Deviant Defence Force? The UDR Examined 110

- Criminal & Sectarian Activities – The Narrative 112
- Military Culture 117
- The Framework 118
  - Rotating Officer Class 121
  - Masculine Identities 125
  - Differences and “Exceptionalism” 127
  - Incorrect Training 139
  - The Strain of COIN and Peacekeeping Operations 143
  - The Influence of “Just Completing Orders”? 145
- The Issue of Criminality 148
- The Statistics 150

Discussion 154

Assessing the UDR 158

Military Reputation 166

Conclusions 168

Chapter 3 – Training......172

The Concept of Training 173

Contemporary British Military Practice 175

Local Defence Forces (LDFs) 180

Parallel Forces 182

1970-1972 187

1973-1978 194

1979-1985 201

1985-1992 206

Conclusion 213

Chapter 4 – The Hammer, the Vent, and the Shield......218

Framework 219

The UDR – An Evolution 220

The UDR on the Offensive - The “Hammer” 222

The UDR as a Defence for the British - The “Shield” 233

The UDR as a Safety Valve on Militant Loyalism - The “Vent” 250

The Final Days 262

Conclusion 268

Conclusion 270

The Lessons for LDFs 276

Additional Areas for Future Research 282

Contested Legacies 284

Bibliography 285

Introduction

In 1992, the British Army conducted what was a defining moment in the history of the conflict in Northern Ireland. The Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), once one of the largest infantry regiments in the entirety of the British Army, and had the longest continuous deployment of any British regiment since the end of Napoleonic Wars in 1815.[1] It was merged into the newly founded Royal Irish Regiment (RIR), and the UDR would never again patrol the streets, towns and hills of the Northern Ireland. Its history had been, simply put, turbulent.

The UDR was brought in to replace the notoriously sectarian Ulster Special Constabulary, commonly known as the "B Specials".[2] This collection of special constables had historically engaged in brutal exemplary and sectarian violence.[3] In January 1969, an infamous civil rights march mainly consisting of students from Queen's University Belfast, was met by an angry Unionist mob at Burntollet Bridge. The mob armed with clubs and cudgels viciously attacked the peaceful marchers. This mob was later found to contain dozens of serving and former Specials.[4] The Specials were also known for opening fire during riot incidents due to a lack of restraint and training – such as at Tynan in August 1969.[5] The regiment was homogenously Protestant Loyalist, and was seen as thus overall being overtly or implicitly hostile towards the Irish nationalist community.

It should come as little surprise therefore that as violence began to spike again in Northern Ireland in 1969, the UK government on August 26th 1969 established the Hunt Committee on to advise on the role of policing in the region. The resulting Hunt Report concluded that the Northern Irish police force – the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) be disarmed, that the B Specials be disbanded, and that this should be replaced by a volunteer police reserve, and a locally recruited part-time force.[6] This locally recruited part-time force was the UDR. As an MoD official recalled at the time: '…the purpose of such a recommendation is simply to bring the B Specials under Westminster control and to provide a means of instilling proper training and discipline'.[7] Whilst some nationalist leaders reported that the regiment was seen as simply a rebrand of the hated specials, others saw it as a clean break from a history of security force sectarianism.[8]

---

[1] Chris Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment: An Instrument of Peace?* (London: Methuen London, 1991), pg. 144

[2] John Potter, *A Testimony to Courage: The Regimental History of the Ulster Defence Regiment*, (Barnsley: Leo Cooper 2001) pg. 12-13; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 1, 29-30

[3] Gearóid Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*, (Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 27:5, 2015), pg. 840

[4] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage,* pg. 7; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 24-25; Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*, pg. 841

[5] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage,* pg. 8-9; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 26-27

The UDR was quickly activated and in March 1970 it was tasked to '…protect key installations and other tasks as might be necessary to guard against the threat of armed guerilla-style attacks' and '…to support the regular forces in Northern Ireland … to undertake guard duties at key points and installations … and in, rural areas, to carry out patrols and to establish check points and roadblocks'.[9] By 1980, it became the primary military force in 85% of Northern Ireland.[10]Throughout its 22 years and 91 days of service, the UDR lost nearly 200 of its members to hostile action, and by 1991 the British recorded 41 on-duty, 154 off-duty, and 45 ex-UDR deaths– leaving behind 120 widows and 2 widowers; a further 158 children lost their father, and one their mother due to actions against the UDR.[11] There were also some 405 wounded or injured UDR alongside those bearing the mental scars of the conflict and their experiences.[12]

The UDR paid the highest price of any single regiment during the Troubles. Of the 697 British soldiers who were killed, the UDR accounted for 197 of these deaths.[13] The effects of stress led to at least a further 45 members of the UDR taking their own lives.[14]

---

[6] Baron Henry Hunt, *Report of the Advisory Committee on Police in Northern Ireland* (London: HMSO, 1969), Chapter 10

[7] NAUK: DEFE 24/868 – *Future of the B Specials,* No Date

[8] NAUK: CJ 4/4800 – *A Policy Appraisal of the Ulster Defence Regiment* [SP(B) 20/114/03], 1981; UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021

[9] NAUK: DEFE 24/868 - *The Army Board: The Formation of the New Northern Ireland Local Defence Force* [Army Board Secretariat – Paper No. AB/P(69)38)] 24th October 1969; *Draft White Paper: Formation of the New Northern Ireland Defence Force*; *The New Defence Force for Northern Ireland: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Defence* [OPD(69)57], 29th October 1969

[10] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment: An Instrument of Peace?* pg. 101

[11] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage,* pg. 1, 383; NAUK: CJ 4/10328 – *Fact Sheet: The Ulster Defence Regiment,* 1991

[12] NAUK: CJ 4/10328 – *Fact Sheet: The Ulster Defence Regiment,* 1991

[13] British Army, *Operation Banner: An Analysis of Military Operations in Northern Ireland* (London: Ministry of Defence, 2006), pg. 2-12

[14] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 145

	Number
UDR killed by hostile action	197
Ex-UDR killed after resigning (inc. those killed in RIR)	58 (+5)
UDR who received wounds	444
UDR who lost at least one limb	35
Former UDR receiving support for stress or PTSD	228

Table A - data taken from Potter (2001, pg. 383)

This thesis seeks to explore the UDR further to “correct” the record that has consistently overlooked this fundamental element of the Northern Ireland security apparatus. Of particular concern is, as indicated by the title of this thesis, the “strategic” purposes of the UDR and its retention – particularly as controversial and subversive incidents came to light. Specifically, how the UDR was constructed, and how this impacted its security contributions, shall be examined through each chapter of this thesis. Through this, I forward that the UDR provided a basic but crucial part of counterinsurgency operations through “holding the line” and providing other basic aspects of security. Through this I argue that the use of the UDR throughout the campaign, and thereby its strategic value, lay in this crucial element.

This introduction shall first explore the existing literature and where the UDR sits within the discourse, particularly highlighting the limitations of the existing literature on the UDR, before exploring the concept of Measures of Effectiveness within warfare. I then shift to a discussion of “proxy” forces and Local Defence Forces (LDFs) to contextualise the UDR and how it sits within the use of such forces, as well as the potential lessons it may hold. The introduction the finishes with a summary of the structure of the thesis and the core themes of each chapter.

Literature Review

To begin, the UDR is an often-overlooked element within the literature. There are but a handful of texts that deal with the UDR with any substance – and rarely are texts overtly pro-UDR. One such text comes from Major John Potter, the former Regimental

Secretary of the UDR and an individual who had served in the UDR for most of its history.[15] Naturally, this text serves as a favourable "regimental history" but also acts as a significant record of the experiences, struggles and tribulations of those who served in the UDR. As expected, the text is overtly pro-UDR. We are always shown events from the UDR perspective, leading to a kind of confirmation bias. Potter makes no efforts to hide his natural bias and is consistent in his comparatively glowing presentation of the UDR. Potter summarises the regiment as: '…an unqualified success … a time when the army as a whole was seriously over-committed, successive GOCs emphasised that without the UDR the British Army would have been unable to contain the violence of the terrorists.'[16] This thesis adopts a softer position but agrees that the regiment overall enhanced security in Northern Ireland, with some caveats. Potter however often downplays negative elements in a way that this thesis shall not. For example, despite a discipline regime relying upon requests rather than orders amidst various other forms of non-conformity – Potter concludes that this '…did no harm.'[17] In contrast, this thesis highlights that lax training and discipline created intolerable volatility within unit conduct and efficacy.

Potter, as this thesis shall confirm, was correct to highlight that collusion with Loyalist paramilitaries was far more limited than often feared or depicted.[18] This thesis follows the De Silva definition of collusion:

i. Agreements, arrangements or actions intended to achieve unlawful, improper, fraudulent or underhand objectives.
ii. Deliberately turning a blind eye or deliberately ignoring improper or unlawful activity.[19]

Therefore, where collusion is mentioned, it is this that is being referred to. However, it was more impactful than Potter records. Potter advocated that the media and other groups were often so keen to take up a complaint that they failed to check its validity or the details – leading some to be so vague that it proved nigh on impossible to follow them up.[20] Rather, Potter believed that incidents such as the unnecessarily public arrests of 28 UDR soldiers in 1989 as part of the Stevens Inquiry (the vast majority of whom were later released without charge) caused permanent and lasting damage to the regiment's reputation.[21] However, this is illogical given that, as this thesis shall show, the regimental reputation was damaged very quickly in the early 1970s. Furthermore, collusion was not just a sporadic issue alongside an otherwise strong record of good conduct. Collusion fundamentally diminished UDR abilities to draw from across the communities by damaging relations with Catholics, whilst also enhancing the abilities of illegal Loyalist forces – as can be seen in the infamous Miami Showband Massacre (July 1975). Potter essentially finds no problems with the UDR, and that it has been demonised due to a few "bad apples". I have already spoken on the deviancy issue, and will do so further in the next chapter, but also challenge that the UDR had some innate problems, particularly related to training, that undermined the regiment – but as I shall stress many times throughout this thesis these often appear to be the fault of decision-makers in Westminster and Whitehall. Potter also expresses a number of other problematic views – not least his belief that the B-Specials were not inherently anti-Catholic, but rather that the security response to Republican paramilitarism and a lack of Protestant threat was misinterpreted as a policing of the nationalist community.[22] This is quickly undermined by even his own account of how one ex-Special when handing command over to a Catholic denounced the man as coming from '…the inherently disloyal section of the community', and how the Specials adopted a policy of not recruiting Catholics.[23]

---

[15] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*
[16] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 373
[17] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 30
[18] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 377
[19] De Silva Report, *The Report of the Patrick Finucane Review* (London: HMSO, 2012), pg. 31

Potter's book should ultimately be seen through the lens of the regimental historian – whose job is to praise the regiment and extol its virtues whilst glossing over the more troubling incidents.[24] The book may even fall into what Howard would class as a "nursery" history – a text designed not to inform but to sustain morale and convey a core message to those who are unfamiliar with war – which in this instance is to counter a popular narrative of the UDR as an overtly sectarian and collusive organisation.[25] The text is also one of the few to record in detail the personal difficulties and struggles of being in the regiment.[26] Potter focuses on the personal cost and risks to service, such as the death of the first Catholic UDR soldier, Sean Russell, who was shot at home in front of his young children – one of whom was wounded by the same shot that had killed their father.[27] Few texts dedicate such a considerable time to documenting the difficulties of service – Ryder dedicates a single chapter, whilst others overlook the UDR experience in favour of examining particular elements of the regiment.[28] Potter's work stresses the numerous finds and contributions of the UDR over its 22 years of service, and all whilst facing a torrent of abuse.[29] The text forwards that it should not be surprising that individuals snapped and responded with physical or verbal abuse – but that there were so few incidents of this. Soldiers faced individuals they knew or suspected of IRA activities, including individuals who may or may not have been involved in attacking or killing friends, colleagues and loved ones.[30] Potter cited one such incident of a soldier coming face-to-face with an individual who had just completed a sentence for driving the car involved in the murder of that same soldier's father. Potter also stresses that subversion and deviancy within the UDR has been overrepresented in popular narratives of the UDR – this thesis also supports this position through examining the statistics and noting that convictions for serious and violent misconduct is far more limited than popularly believed.[31] Overall, this internal perspective reveals much about the difficulties of service but is also focused on evangelising the reader.

---

[20] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 297-298
[21] Ibid. pg. 330-333
[22] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 16
[23] Ibid. pg. 5, 29, 44
[24] Michael Howard, *The use and abuse of military history* (The RUSI Journal Vol. 138:1, 1993), pg. 26-27

Another overtly pro-UDR text came from Herron in 2014 – the first academic to examine the UDR directly.[32] Herron studied the impact of violence upon those who served in 2 UDR in south Armagh, and highlighted the particular exposure and fear experienced by UDR soldiers – many of whom were unable to form patterns or habits as these often led to the individual being assassinated.[33] This often damaged familial relations as birthday celebrations and important milestones had to be skipped, bringing a significant familial cost alongside the already enhanced burdens of service. Within the study Herron particularly noted that despite being responsible for one of the smallest areas, 2 UDR went up against some of the most violent IRA operators – earning it the respect of many of its peers.[34]

---

[25] Howard, *The use and abuse of military history*, pg. 27
[26] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*
[27] Ibid. pg. 60
[28] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage;* Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*
[29] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage,* pg. 158, 378
[30] Ibid. pg. 158
[31] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage,* pg. 97-98, 270
[32] Stephen Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, (Queen's University Belfast: Unpublished Thesis, 2014)

The text also highlights the policy of keeping the UDR separate from the rest of the army – particularly during training.[35] The consequence of this Herron noted was that the UDR did not identify as professional soldiers. Additionally, UDR soldiers became reliant upon their personal skillsets and local knowledge to fill in any gaps in training or culture.[36] Of particular note was Herron's focus on the impact and experience of trauma – including one individual who as part of the full-time "Spearhead Battalion" of the UDR had been deployed to several hotspots and experienced numerous traumas, including watching one comrade being burned alive.[37] The stigma of the time did not allow for the necessary support or recovery, and this was reinforced by the continued ethnic tensions of Northern Ireland post-conflict.[38] This development expanded upon Potter's records of the UDR experience, by highlighting underpinning psychological and sociological processes. However, it was limited in its scope and study – confining its examinations to particularly one battalion of the UDR, and the impacts of their trauma. Whilst this expanded our understanding of the UDR, it did not deal with a number of key questions – not least the issue of deviancy.

Robinson's *"We have long memories in this area": Ulster Defence Regiment place-memory along the Irish border,* records the experiences of UDR soldiers through a series of interviews and how their experiences of the conflict shaped and continue to shape their lives.[39] Disturbingly Robinson recorded that several stories ‘ from ex-UDR participants where the details of the slaying are so unsettling that I have no coherent response to them either as a scholar or a human being’ – including one where a local abattoir had been warned of that ‘…two fat [surnames were] ready to be collected]’ and that later their funeral cortege had been blocked by a chanting and jeering throng of school children.[40] This short and overtly UDR sympathetic text is both limited in scope and neglects much of the controversy surrounding the UDR. It is also the last overtly pro-UDR source to be widely published.

---

[33] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 12
[34] Ibid. . 31-33
[35] Ibid. pg. 73, 78-80
[36] Ibid. . 81-84
[37] Ibid. pg. 194
[38] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 206, 218

What is even rarer is to find a broadly neutral discussion of the UDR. Chris Ryder, a journalist who spent decades in the region reporting on related matters and gaining some access from the UDR, is one such author.[41] Written in 1991 his work has its obvious limitations – first, its publication a year prior to its final days and merger in 1992 prevents it from viewing the UDR in its entirety. The second issue was acknowledged by Ryder himself, in that he received no official cooperation from the UDR and was thus limited to a few volunteers and mostly non-UDR sources.[42] This both limits his work but also frees it from the distortion of overtly pro-UDR bias. As an outsider and a journalist, Ryder’s work serves mostly a recollection of events intended to provide a broad history of the UDR. Ryder opened his book with an expression of admiration for the UDR and its mission within the Northern Ireland conflict – although with a tacit admission that he had come to perceive the regiment negatively during his time as a journalist in Northern Ireland.[43]

As a journalist, Ryder’s priority is to tell a compelling and intriguing story – and his work is somewhat prone to sensationalism. Whilst his criticisms were based on valid concerns, these are often exaggerated or focus on limited data that is undermined once a broader examination is undertaken. For example, he declared that the regiment admitted that by March 1979, over 30 UDR soldiers had been convicted of ‘serious terrorist offences.'[44] However, I can find no such reference to such an admission and as the next chapter shall demonstrate the evidence does not support this. Furthermore his work is outdated – as evidenced by his citation of the Irish Information Partnership that between 1985-1989 the crime rate per thousand individuals in Northern Ireland was 5.9 for Civilians, 1.7 for the Army, 0.9 for the RUC and finally an astounding 9.1 for the UDR.[45] However these statistics have been proven to be distorted given that the UDR consisted mostly of young men who are statistically more prone to anti-social behaviour and resisting authority as Bryant noted.[46] Adjusting for this the rate of civilian crime for the period 1985-1989 jumps from 5.9 to an astounding 23.[47] Finally, despite the press and attention given to collusion, the statistics reveal that the reality was far more tame – a 1977 investigation revealed that of 7,700 UDR soldiers around 200 had any form of connection tenuous or otherwise to Loyalist paramilitaries, and that only 27 seem to have actively engaged with them and were immediately discharged.[48]

---

[39] Joseph Robinson, *“We have long memories in this area”: Ulster Defence Regiment place-memory along the Irish border* (Memory Studies Vol. 15:5, 2020), pg. 1000-1010
[40] Robinson, *“We have long memories in this area”*, pg. 9-10
[41] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*
[42] Ibid. pg. XVIII
[43] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. XVII-XVIII

Another of his flawed criticisms was that the UDR and the British Army at large fail to adequately record UDR criminality and wrongdoing.[49] Ryder provides the example of one John Todd, who he accuses of being a private in 10 UDR (Belfast) until his death in 1972. Todd was never recorded on the UDR Roll of Honour, but was recognised by the Loyalist paramilitary force the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) who gave him a pseudo-military salute by their armed members during his funeral.[50]

The Sutton index of deaths records Todd as having dual membership, though dying as a member of the UDA.[51] Regardless, the claim that there was a passive or active effort not to record UDR criminality is preposterous. The National Archives of Ireland provide several such lists – all of which were created from data supplied by the

---

[44] Ibid. pg. 183

[45] Ibid. 184

[46] Clifton Bryant, *Khaki-Collar Crime: Deviant Behaviour in the Military Context* (New York: Free Press 1976), pg. 39, 42

[47] Steve Bruce, *Red Hand: Protestant Paramilitaries in Northern Ireland*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1992), pg. 225

[48] William Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army: 1854–1992* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pg. 132-133

[49] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 182

[50] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 58

[51] Malcolm Sutton, *An index of Deaths from the conflict in Ireland*, 17th October 1972

British government.[52] The NIO similarly had its own records for UDR convictions.[53] Whilst the Irish suspected that some individuals resigning prior to their convictions would be redacted from such figures[54] - this demonstrates Ryder's sensationalist tendencies as his work indicates that any figures were the tip of the iceberg rather than a representative sample. He condemned efforts to expel undesirables and deviants as having '…a distinct lack of vigour', which as I shall demonstrate in Chapter 1 is a distortion.[55] Potter also acknowledged and responded to Ryder's "lack of vigour" comment. Potter noted that Army regulations did not always allow for the speedy expulsion of undesirables, and that this process was long and left suspects within the regiment where they were often resented by their colleagues. Furthermore, vetting was never under UDR control, and thus it had to accept the soldiers who passed the necessary standards and vetting teams checks.[56] Potter scoffed at the notion that Loyalist paramilitaries possessed either the numbers or the influence within the UDR to even remotely turn the Regiment – particularly as the majority of these individuals who were discoverable were inevitably purged.[57] Citing the three initial commanders of the regiment, alongside several other senior officers, Potter highlighted that there was no warning of an organised effort to subvert the UDR.[58] This author wishes to highlight that there remains no evidence to support the existence of such a plot.

Ryder finally portrays the UDR as possessing a form of victim complex that left them prone to withdrawing and turning inwards rather than responding positively to criticism.[59] Once more, Ryder's claims do not stand up to scrutiny. By the mid-1980s the UDR took great effort to provide transparency to its critics. The UDR invited and conducted briefings on the regiment to Northern Ireland's main political parties as per

---

[52] NAI 2012/59/1690 – *Ulster Defence Regiment* [DFA Report], April 1980; NAI 2019/101/2291 – *Background Note: Collusion between members of the Security Forces and Loyalist paramilitaries* [Anglo/Irish Division: Dept. of Foreign Affairs], 4th October 1989

[53] NAUK: CJ 4/6791 – *Serious Civil Offence: Murder* [NIO Record], 1985; *Serious Civil Offence: Manslaughter* [NIO Record], 1985; *Serious Civil Offence: Assault* [NIO Record], 1985

[54] NAI 2019/101/2291 – *Background Note: Collusion between members of the Security Forces and Loyalist paramilitaries* [Anglo/Irish Division: Dept. of Foreign Affairs], 4th October 1989; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment: An Instrument of Peace?* pg. 182; Michael Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, (Co. Kildare: Merrion Press, 2022), pg. 216

[55] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 98

[56] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage,* pg. 25

[57] Ibid. pg. 97

[58] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 97

[59] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 197

HQNI's request.[60] Furthermore, it offered talks to Seamus Mallon of the SDLP when he complained of poor community relations between the UDR and the local Catholic population of Armagh City – an offer which he did not take up.[61] The UDR even resorted to offering night meetings to allow Catholics to clandestinely express and discuss their concerns with the regiment.[62] This does not reflect his claims, and further undermines some aspects of his criticisms, although his work still highlights a number of key debates regarding the UDR – particularly concerning deviancy and collusion.

Ryder however established that he was not anti-UDR – indeed he supported their continued existence as a cost-effective and critical component of NI security.[63] My thesis agrees with Ryder's support for the continued existence of the UDR, and in noting that criminality and terrorism was naturally part of the UDR story – but I however limit this to the statistical rather than "narrative" value of these incidents. To detail every incident would be to make these dominate the thesis, and since an "absence" of an issue cannot be detailed in the same way, the only balanced and academic approach to determining the extent of deviancy within the UDR would be to explore archival data and statistics. I highlight that the problem has been somewhat exaggerated and certainly overemphasized in discussions of the UDR, who often had little to do with causing these incidents.

It is more common is to find texts that are critical of the UDR. The most significant of these is *UDR: Declassified,* which shares a number of Ryder's criticisms of the UDR.[64] This book was authored by Michael Smith, an associate of the Pat Finucane Centre (PFC) which itself has its own short UDR text.[65] Both fundamentally argue that the UDR was a sectarian regiment facilitated by the British state.[66] The PFC's *The Hidden History of the UDR* utilised recently released archival examples – including one which suggested that between 5-15% of the regiment were possibly also Loyalist paramilitaries – to make its case that the regiment was a dangerous element that should never have been tolerated.[67] It also cited the recently published De Silva report into the murder of Pat Finucane that concurred that for the period 1987-1989 around 27% of intelligence leaks came from the UDR, with a further 41% having an unknown security force source, as evidence of the inherent corruption and malice of the UDR.[68] From this the PFC pronounced:

---

[60] NAUK: CJ 4/8930 – *UDR*, [Letter to Secretary of State (L&B])

[61] NAUK: CJ 4/8930 – Letter from CO UDR to Seamus Mallon RE: 2 UDR relations in Armagh City

[62] NAUK: CJ 4/8871 – '*Briefings on the Regiment – 1990'*

[63] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 244-245

[64] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*

[65] The Pat Finucane Centre, *The Hidden History of the UDR: The Secret Files Revealed*, (Pat Finucane Centre, 2014)

[66] Smith, *UDR: Declassified;* The Pat Finucane Centre, *The Hidden History of the UDR: The Secret Files Revealed*

> …the UDR was never intended to protect both communities and that it was yet another manifestation of the British state's addiction to subverting the rule of law and democracy in its various colonial outposts by arming one section of the community (whose aims and objectives coincided with its own) against another…[69]

The text mostly serves as a record of recent archival releases that supported its position on the UDR, and is not particularly balanced. I differ from the text substantially in that UDR deviancy and misconduct is not the focus of this thesis – I seek to understand the value of the UDR and how it applies to LDFs, and to highlight that deviancy is not the dominant theme of the UDR. I therefore explore elements like purpose and training that are outright neglected by both Smith's and the PFC's text.

UDR: Declassified examined the UDR in greater depth. The book presents a number of new archival additions to explore the regiment. The text claims to not condemn nor demonise the UDR but to 'narrow the permissible lies' and attack the British.[70] This thesis agrees that most of the faults of the UDR were caused by British decision-makers in Westminster and Whitehall – however Smith spends so much time discussing individual faults in the UDR that his criticism of the British state become secondary to his criticism of the UDR. The book contains several valuable publications of recently released archival material, such as a letter from a 1984 Irish official by the name of Coulson in which he questioned whether it was external intimidation alone that drove down Catholic participation in the UDR, and that more likely internal prejudices and sectarianism (especially considering the presence of former Specials) also played a part.[71] However, in other places it makes several overreaches by utilising data or evidence to make for larger claims than the evidence supports in an attempt to condemn the UDR. Smith attempts to draw a connection between the savagery of the British colonial conflicts of the UDR, and that the first three of its commanders had also served in some of these conflicts, as evidence of nefarious British decision-making.[72] Given that the British had not fought a conventional war since Korea, the book seems to advocate that the UDR should not have received veteran commanders but officers who had not seen active deployment for some 17 years.

---

[67] The Pat Finucane Centre, *The Hidden History of the UDR*, pg. 20-21
[68] Ibid. pg. 31
[69] Ibid. pg. 6
[70] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 4-5

Similarly, the text contributes to the field by examining and detailing the serious 1978 investigation into 10 UDR and the possibility of financing and supplying "terrorists". The investigation into financial irregularities initially indicated that around 70 members of the regiment possessed some form of Loyalist links, with 15 alleged to be part of the proscribed Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), and the financial irregularities indicated that funding and materials were being supplied to Loyalists by these individuals.[73] However, the resulting investigations concluded that 7 individuals should be discharged – three for administration or disciplinary violations, with a further individual being retained following his commander's advocacy, one for non-security reasons and just two for on the grounds of security concerns.[74] A further 14 were placed on a watchlist with quarterly reports for a year.[75] Finally, it was determined that the allegation of passing funding to the UVF was 'never substantiated'.[76] Smith presents and highlights a serious and credible charge against the UDR, then proceeds to undermine this position with counter-evidence. This is a logical position to hold – but Smith follows this up by then trying to claim that the initial figure of 70 individuals with Loyalist links indicates that a 1975 figure putting the statistics of such links at around 200 individuals across the regiment as 'clearly an underestimation'.[77] This again is further undermined by his previous acknowledgement that only two individuals of the 70 were found to be a security risk, with a further 17 placed on watchlist or released due to a violation, on the previous page would suggest that the majority of these links were not substantial nor threatening. It is this stressing of negative elements, even amidst counter-evidence, which leads this author to have some issues with some of Smith's claims.

---

[71] Ibid. pg. 40
[72] Ibid. pg. 191-193
[73] Ibid. pg. 155-158
[74] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 160
[75] Ibid. pg. 160
[76] Ibid. pg. 160
[77] Ibid. pg. 161

Smith will accept a source as a reliable witness when convenient, and then undermine their reliability when it is not. For example, the same Irish official named Coulson is treated as a credible source on page 40 when he indicates the likelihood of some elements of prejudice and sectarianism being present among UDR soldiers, yet describes Coulson as engaging in 'diatribe' and how he was noting the SDLP's 'cheek to complain' when he was reporting that the SDLP's overzealous reporting of UDR offences were aiding the IRA and its message.[78] Similarly, when the internal security division DS10 noted that an alarming 1973 report into UDR subversion and collusion did not come as a surprise, Smith treats it as a professional source.[79] Yet he almost immediately accuses it of minimising and aiming to 'reassure the political class...' when it placed the figure for such individuals at around 200 in 1975.[80] Smith appears to support the sources if it falls in line with criticism of the UDR, but then seeks to undermine them when they do not support this view.

Thus, the text is a valuable record of recently released archival information which sheds a light on aspects of the UDR – not all of which are positive. It also follows the trend of previous texts in dedicating a section to the bravery and dedication of its soldiers amidst immense suffering and difficulties.[81] However, whilst acknowledging that the dichotomy within the literature between UDR advocates and those who demonise the regiment are part of a broader legacy issue that can be seen around the world that 'poisons the debate', Smith similarly falls into this issue.[82] By making UDR conduct the primary discussion Smith diverts attention away from his criticism of the British, and makes the UDR and its soldiers the problem.

---

[78] Ibid. pg. 176-177

[79] Ibid. pg. 96

[80] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 96

[81] Ibid. pg. 142-152

[82] Ibid. pg. 153

Meanwhile Ó Faoleán noted that efforts appear to have been made to undermine the Hunt recommendations as indicated by allowing the mass recruitment of Specials (particularly into command roles), the creation of essentially a Unionist advisory committee and even the choice of the regimental title of "Ulster" (a Protestant/Unionist term).[83] My own recent article examines the UDR in a similar light – but also directly involved the UDR in this discussion.[84] My own work has determined that Catholic UDR killings were primarily motivated by the need to eliminate state forces from the Catholic areas from which the IRA operated.[85] Indeed, it appears that the IRA were more often motivated by a sense of ruthless pragmatism than malice.[86] Naturally, this as an article only explored one segment of the UDR whilst building upon wider research from this thesis.

The UDR otherwise feature as minor characters in histories and discussions of the conflict – many of which dedicate as much or even more time noting the regiment's controversies than providing substance. Richard English's own IRA text *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* depicts the UDR as a minor element given its brief feature on three pages of the text.[87] White examined the UDR within the context of IRA violence, but its focus was primarily on the implications that these reveal in response to an ongoing discussion of IRA violence and sectarianism – such as that the IRA were targeted due to their security force role, a matter only exacerbated by the expansion of this under Ulsterisation.[88]

---

[83] Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment,* pg. 842-844, 846
[84] Daniel Chesse, *Hunting the Watchmen: The Ulster Defence Regiment and IRA strategy* (Small Wars & Insurgencies Vol. 35:4, 2024),
[85] Ibid. pg. 558-559
[86] Chesse, *Hunting the Watchmen;* Steve Bruce, *Victim selection in ethnic conflict: Motives and attitudes in Irish republicanism*, (Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 9:1, 1997), pg. 62; White, *Provisional IRA Attacks on the UDR in Fermanagh and South Tyrone*, (Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 23:3, 2011),
[87] Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* (London: Pan Books, 2012 Reprint), pg. 174, 255, 380
[88] Robert White, *Provisional IRA Attacks on the UDR in Fermanagh and South Tyrone: Implications for the Study of Political Violence and Terrorism*, (Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 23:3, 2011), pg. 333-335, 337

A number of texts purely discuss the UDR as part of broader studies of British collusion or coercive policy. I have already noted Smith, who frames the UDR as a “counter-gang” akin to the colonial “death squads” of previous conflicts.[89] Ellison & Smyth whilst discussing state policing in Northern Ireland often make but passing reference to the UDR, but when they deal with the regiment with any substance it is to depict them as a nefarious “pseudo-gang” and “death squad” of the British state.[90] Urwin briefly discussed the UDR as part of collusion with the UDA and other Loyalist paramilitaries by British forces and agencies.[91] Cadwallader’s similar though perhaps less aggressive assertions of the UDR framed them as a proxy of the British state’s dirty war, along with the notorious Loyalist death squad the “Glennane Gang” which contained members of the UDR.[92]

McGovern in his discussion of collusion advocated that the UDR were utilised to create an acceptable system of “low-level terror” from the potentially dissident energies of Protestant malcontents.[93] McGovern also noted the colonial undertones of the “Redcoat” Regulars and the “Native Levies” of the UDR and Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), and the connection to the infamous Glennane Gang.[94] His text when discussing the UDR pays particular attention to the increased harassments by the regiment of murder victims in the days and weeks leading up to their death – such as that of Francie McNally who had been interrogated, detained and received death threats from members of the UDR, before his home had seemingly be reconned by UDR soldiers and he and his vehicle stopped repeatedly on the day of the actual murder.[95] The weapon used to kill McNally and others was also found to be among the list of lost or stolen UDR weapons, and all of this clearly indicated collusion and participation of the UDR in murders.[96] Finally, McGovern noted that it should come as little surprise that the UDR was infiltrated and subverted by Loyalist paramilitaries given that both overwhelmingly recruited from the same parts of Protestant society.[97] There is an element of truth within the inevitability of Protestant recruitment, particularly as it can be difficult to prove membership or clear association with paramilitaries in some circumstances. However, I outright reject the concept of creating a system of acceptable "low-level terror" – not least because there is no archival support for this and if a regiment it to take part in a "dirty war" then surely its members would have to be fully aware of this. I explore this further in Chapter 4.

---

[89] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 4, 190

[90] Graham Ellison & Jim Smyth, *The Crowned Harp: Policing Northern Ireland*, (London: Pluto Press 2000), Chapter 8

[91] Margaret Urwin, *A State in Denial: British Collaboration with Loyalist Paramilitaries* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2016)

[92] Anne Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Ireland* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2013), pg. 16, 162-267, 347-358

[93] Mark McGovern, *Counterinsurgency and Collusion in Northern Ireland* (London: Pluto Press, 2019), pg. 28

[94] Ibid. pg. 28-29

[95] Ibid. pg. 136

[96] Ibid. pg. 137

Such limited or critical discussions of the UDR are also found in generic histories of the conflict. McKittrick & McVea's *Making Sense of the Troubles*, intended to be a comprehensive and linear history of the conflict, makes but passing reference to the regiment.[98] The regiment first appears in a brief reference to its early Catholic exodus, followed by a slightly more detailed discussion of how it was increased by Ulsterisation.[99] If anything, more time is spent mentioning how its members were targeted and killed, than what these soldiers did, and discussions of the regiment itself are entirely absent.[100] Meanwhile, Trigg's recent regional history of the conflict does feature the UDR with some substance.[101] However they are once again relegated to a mostly passive role and sidelined in the narrative – appearing most often as witnesses or to provide a perspective.[102] Again, the connection between serving and former members of the UDR and the infamous Glennane Gang are also highlighted.[103]

Taylor's *Brits: The War Against the IRA* is one of the paramount comprehensive histories of the conflict, but again relegates the UDR to brief discussions of the losses of state forces or their leaking intelligence to Loyalist paramilitaries.[104] Similarly, Brendan O'Leary's comprehensive three-part treatise on the conflict minimises the

---

[97] Ibid. pg. 61, 120-131

[98] David McKittrick & David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: A History of the Northern Ireland Conflict,* (London: Viking, 2012 Revised Edition)

[99] Ibid. pg. 83, 143-144

[100] Ibid. npg. 150, 175, 177, 199

[101] Jonathon Trigg, *Death in the Fields: The IRA and East Tyrone* (Newbridge: Merrion Press, 2023)

[102] For example see Trigg, *Death in the Fields*, pg. 30, 36-37, 42, 102, 150

[103] Trigg, *Death in the Fields*, pg. 220

[104] Peter Taylor, *Brits: The War Against the IRA* (London: Bloomsbury, 2002)

UDR.[105] Despite O'Leary initially describing the UDR as a core and vital element of the security apparatus any such mention thereafter is overwhelmingly as a criticism based on incidents or perceptions of sectarianism. Coogan's history of the conflict *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace* similarly reduces the UDR to a few isolated appearances, though it does mention that UDR squads received training from the SAS – the only such reference that I can find on this issue.[106] This pattern is repeated throughout other texts with the UDR featuring mostly as they are killed or when they are colluding.[107] There are even histories of the conflict in which the UDR is entirely absent.[108]

Another theme within the literature is the interest in the brief Catholic participation and then exodus from the UDR. In 1970, 28% of the UDR were Catholics, yet by the end of the decade the figure stood at just 2%.[109] Ó Faoleán notes that the issue of Catholic participation in the UDR is difficult to measure given the British appear to provide contradicting figures depending on how the context suited them.[110] The first such transgression to begin driving out Catholics came with the Falls Road Curfew of July 1970, and despite the UDR not directly participating in the raids on Catholic homes its manning of roadblocks and patrols elsewhere facilitated the operation.[111] However, there is a consensus that the introduction of internment (mass detention without trial) of mostly Catholics in August 1971 was particularly damaging for the UDR.[112] By supporting these operations, the UDR were publicly aligning themselves with the coercive policies of the British state – resulting in the rescinding of an IRA ban on killing UDR.[113] Thus, for Catholic UDR, membership became an increasingly contradictory part of their experiences.

---

[105] Brendan O'Leary, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland Volume I: Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Brendan O'Leary, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland Volume II: Control* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Brendan O'Leary, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland Volume III: Consociation and Confederation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)

[106] Tim Pat Coogan, *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace* (Warwickshire: Arrow Publishing, 2015), pg. 589

[107] For examples see: Jonathon Tonge, *Northern Ireland: Conflict and Change* (London: Routledge, 2002), pg. 46, 87; Imren Borsuk, *From War to Peace: Northern Ireland Conflict and the Peace Process* (Uluslararası İlişkiler Vol. 13:50, 2016), pg. 47, 50; Fionnuala Ni Aolain, *The Politics of Force: Conflict Management and State Violence in Northern Ireland* (Blackstaff Press Belfast: Transitional Justice Institute Research Paper No. 12-05, 2000); Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* (London: Pan Books, 2012), pg. 255-380; Huw Bennett, *Uncivil War: The British Army and the Troubles 1966-1975*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023) pg. 107, 142, 152, 154, 156, 180, 198, 205, 257

[108] For example, see Michael Cox, *Northern Ireland: The War that came in from the Cold* (Irish Studies in International Affairs Vol. 29, 2018)

[109] NAUK: DEFE 68/916 – *Catholic Membership of the UDR (as a percentage)*

[110] Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment*, pg. 845

[111] Ibid. pg. 844

[112] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment,* pg. 44-45; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 56; Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment*, pg. 844

This was exacerbated by the perception that Protestants, and particularly ex-Specials, were promoted over them whilst some experienced being cold-shouldered or shut out by their comrades.[114] Throughout Ryder forwards that the British state and the UDR failed to take active measures to gain the support of the minority community, and instead favoured short-term gains.[115] For example, Ryder tied the brief tolerance of joint UDA-UDR membership as announced on national television as coming the wake of a series of sectarian murders, and as a result '…the government and army extinguished all hope of meeting the impartial ideals which had been set for it'.[116]

An overlooked feature of the literature is the regionality of the UDR and its experiences.[117] As Leahy noted, regionality is a significantly overlooked aspect of the conflict in general and, as I also pointed to in my recent article *Hunting the Watchmen*, characterises not just the UDR but also organisations such as the IRA.[118] Ryder noted how battalions had to behave and respond to regional IRA strategies – for example 4 UDR was forced to deploy by helicopter outside of its operational centre at Enniskillen due to the risks of ambush and attack on the roads, whilst 6 UDR avoided the roads of Tyrone and moved cross-country to avoid mine and IED attacks.[119] Potter noted that UDR regionality, a factor significantly influenced by how many Specials and/or Catholics the battalion had recruited, led to a joke among senior staff officers that should the seven battalions be asked a question, they would return with seven completely different answers.[120]

---

[113] Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment*, pg. 844

[114] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment,* pg. 44-45

[115] Ibid. pg. 47, 58-61, 197-198

[116] Ibid. pg. 58-61

[117] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 29; Chesse, *Hunting the Watchmen*

[118] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020) pg. 6; Chesse, *Hunting the Watchmen*, pg. 555-557, 563

[119] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 191

[120] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 29

In summary, much of the literature considers the UDR to be insignificant outside of their deaths or transgressions. This is nonsensical given that the UDR were at one point the largest infantry regiment in the British Army.[121] Even where the literature does discuss the UDR, it is often only to highlight negative elements of the regiment. As this thesis shall demonstrate – the evidence does not support on overtly hostile perception of the UDR, and it was never intended to be a nefarious element. Furthermore, to overlook or reduce such an outsized unit would be to overlook much of the day-to-day elements that are at the core of counterinsurgency warfare and the Troubles, and which hold vital lessons for future conflicts.

The use of Surrogates and Proxy Forces

The UDR arguably satisfied the role of a "surrogate" or "proxy" force – a unit which was created for dangerous, undesirable or possibly even illegal tasks. I have previously noted those who forward that it was designed to satisfy the latter element. This thesis fundamentally challenges the concept of the UDR having an inherently nefarious design – the evidence does not indicate a conspiracy, nor would it be reasonable to assume that forming a local unit would entail it engaging in organised extrajudicial activities that would be both desirable and not working counter to broader strategic objectives without its members being aware of this.

There is however a vast literature on these interchangeable concepts. Fox defined the proxy structure as two or more actors collaborating towards a common goal within a hierarchical relationship of a principal or dominant actor working by, with, and through another to accomplish an objective.[122] Hughes in his influential book defined proxy wars as conflicts in which 'belligerents use third parties as either a supplementary means of waging war or as a substitute for the direct employment of their own armed forces.'[123] While some such as Bar-Siman-Tov limit the definition of proxies to interstate conflicts,[124] the vast majority of the rest of the literature appears to view proxies as capable of being both state and non-state actors.[125] As Hughes highlighted the use of proxies has been noted by ancient authors such as Thucydides, medieval scholars like Machiavelli and military strategists like Clausewitz – so it is hardly a modern phenomenon.[126] Furthermore, this strategy is logical when states seek to minimise the physical and economic costs of war, particularly in conflicts where public and legislative support is not guaranteed.[127] This thesis shall make the case that this was at least partially a factor in the establishment and use of the UDR.

---

[121] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 133; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment,* pg. 144

[122] Amos Fox, *Conflict and the Need for a Theory of Proxy Warfare* (Journal of Strategic Security Vol. 12:1, 2019), pg. 49

[123] Geraint Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy: Proxy Warfare in International Politics* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2014), pg. 2

There are also some which seek to separate "proxies" from "surrogates" – such as Hughes & Tripodi who defined proxies as third-party actors in conflicts in which deployment of a state's forces may be deemed undesirable - such as against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s - whilst surrogates are local actors and forces within a conflict in which the states own forces are deployed.[128] The UDR would thus only be surrogates, and for the sake of simplification where it is relevant I will utilise this definition. That is not to say that this is how Hughes & Tripodi would view it, as they stated that no surrogate force was raised to fight the IRA given their limited numbers – instead the UDR more likely conformed to their definition of "indigenous auxiliaries".[129] I would argue that the UDR could easily conform to either definition, but that the term surrogate is more appropriate given the context. Surrogate forces are not a modern phenomenon. Even the ancient Romans utilised "barbarian" auxiliaries to compliment the skills and abilities of their legions. The British empire similarly leveraged colonial forces for its own survival.[130] Thus the UDR was simply the latest edition of a tried-and-tested tactic.

---

[124] Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, *The Strategy of War by Proxy* (Cooperation and Conflict Vol. 19:4, 1984), pg. 265

[125] For examples see Fox, *Conflict and the Need for a Theory of Proxy Warfare,* pg. 49-50; Huseyn Aliyev, *Strong militias, weak states and armed violence: Towards a theory of 'state-parallel' paramilitaries* (Security Dialogue Vol. 47:6, 2016), pg. 501; Jentzsch et al. *Militias in Civil Wars* (The Journal of Conflict Resolution Vol. 59:5, 2015), pg. 755-756; Andrew Mumford, *Proxy Warfare and the Future of Conflict* (The RUSI Journal Vol. 158:2, 2013), pg. 40

[126] Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, pg. 2

[127] Ibid. pg. 4

[128] Geraint Hughes & Christian Tripodi, *Anatomy of a surrogate: historical precedents and implications for contemporary counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism* (Small Wars & Insurgencies Vol. 20:1, 2009), pg. 3-4

[129] Ibid. pg. 10

There is a clear consensus within the literature that the main principle underpinning the use of proxies or surrogates is that of plausible deniability.[131] Such outsourcing and externalisation of violence through these agents provides the state an avenue to pursue a "dirty war" whilst denying all prior knowledge and control. This is why such forces have been so attractive for democracies, who are often limited by democratic principles of oversight and accountability.[132] However, some such as Eck highlight that militia violence against civilians is closely tied to the state's own record of doing so – undermining plausible deniability.[133] Nevertheless, such forces fundamentally reduce the physical and political costs of war.[134] I have already noted Ryder's support for the UDR given their cost-effectiveness.[135] Mumford highlighted that proxy wars also allow for "insurance policies" where a state can intervene in a conflict where it is willing to accept the risk of failure without suffering the "kinetic" effects of warfare.[136] The same principle applies for the UDR.

It is also known that states such as Britain and in recent times Iran in Iraq have used proxy forces as part of establishing, preserving or enhancing their influence within a region.[137] Such intervention by proxy caused Syria to spiral out from its initial rebellion into a proxy conflict between Russia and NATO[138] – and one that spawned the Islamic State and further regional instability. States have also been known to engage in practices and strategies designed to reduce their own deaths at the cost of proxy lives.[139] There are also additional reasons as to why a proxy may be established such as spreading ideology or avoiding devastating direct confrontation such as during the Cold War, but these are less relevant within Western COIN warfare and the UDR context.[140] The expansion of the UDR and RUC's roles post-1976 and Ulsterisation would however certainly comply with many of the stated elements. Eck noted that surrogate forces are incentivised given their access to intelligence and local knowledge – something that this thesis shall and my recent article does highlight significantly applies to the UDR.[141] As Mumford highlighted, the recent decline in conventional interstate conflicts (at least until the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022) and the tendency to quickly move on from COIN and proxies post-conflict makes the necessity to draw lessons from such conflicts and the use of proxies before they are forgotten and have to be re-learnt in the next COIN war – particularly with the rise of potential proxies of "rogue states" and the rise of Private Military Corporations.[142]

---

[130] Andreas Krieg & Jean-Marc Rickli, *Surrogate warfare: the art of war in the 21st century?* (Defence Studies Vol. 18:2, 2018), pg. 116

[131] Aliyev, *Strong militias, weak states and armed violence,* pg. 501; Carey et al. *Governments, Informal Links to Militias, and Accountability* (The Journal of Conflict Resolution Vol. 59:5, 2015), pg. 869; Krieg & Rickli, *Surrogate warfare*, pg. 114; Jessica Stanton, *Regulating Militias: Governments, Militias, and Civilian Targeting in Civil War* (The Journal of Conflict Resolution Vol. 59:5, 2015), pg. 902; Andrew Mumford, *Proxy Warfare: War and Conflict in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), pg. 100

[132] Aliyev, *Strong militias, weak states and armed violence,* pg. 501; Carey et al. *Governments, Informal Links to Militias, and Accountability,* pg. 869

[133] Kristine Eck, *Repression by Proxy: How Military Purges and Insurgency Impact the Delegation of Coercion*, (The Journal of Conflict Resolution Vol. 59:5, 2015), pg. 928

[134] Carey et al. *Governments, Informal Links to Militias, and Accountability,* pg. 851-852; Stanton, *Regulating Militias,* pg. 901; Mumford, *Proxy Warfare and the Future of Conflict,* pg. 41-42; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, pg. 4; Mumford, *Proxy Warfare,* pg. 100

[135] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 244

[136] Mumford, *Proxy Warfare,* pg. 100-101

[137] Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, pg. 31

[138] Mumford, *Proxy Warfare,* pg. 98-101

Local Defence Forces

Scheipers noted that using "native auxiliaries" (LDF's) is a critically understudied topic despite its recent and historical prevalence.[143] Ucko noted that COIN requires collaboration with local partners and forces – otherwise security and important local and regional developments can only be provided so long as external forces are present and quickly collapses once they are withdrawn.[144] The importance of LDF's was further drawn out by Jones & Munoz who noted: 'By tapping into tribes and other communities where there is already grassroots resistance, local defence forces can help mobilize communities simultaneously across multiple areas.'[145] LDF's can thus create

---

[139] Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, pg. 25; Krieg & Rickli, *Surrogate warfare*, pg. 124-125

[140] Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, pg. 25-26

[141] Chesse, *Hunting the Watchmen*

[142] Mumford, *Proxy Warfare,* pg. 4-5, 8-9

[143] Sibylle Scheipers, *Irregular Auxiliaries after 1945* (The International History Review Vol. 39:1, 2017), pg. 14

[144] David Ucko, *Beyond Clear-Hold-Build: Rethinking Local-Level Counterinsurgency after Afghanistan* (Contemporary Security Policy Vol. 34:3, 2013), pg. 534

[145] Seth Jones & Arturo Munoz, *Afghanistan's Local War: Building Local Defence Forces* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation: National Defence Research Institute, 2010), pg. 74; Colonel Kevin S. MacWatters,

"cascade" or "tip" moments against the enemy when enough weight of the population has been turned against them to prove too powerful to resist, whilst tying the interests and efforts of remote or rural areas with those of central government.[146] The central principle of LDF's is '…is to free troops that would otherwise be tied down to patrolling villages and providing local security, so that they can be used to conduct offensive operations against insurgents.'[147] This was the UDR's central role, and is why it has been overlooked by many histories – this is not the flashy, cinematic versions of war that attract interest, but are the gritty and mundane tasks of war that are so vital within COIN. The Kenyan Home Guard were utilised in this way by the British to patrol more controlled zones to allow Regular forces to directly engage the insurgents.[148] Finally, MacWatters highlighted that the breakdown of trust between civilians and local security forces, such as between the Iraqi population and police in 2006, inevitably leads to personal violence to safeguard their interests and security – whilst the "Sahwa" LDF of Anbar provided a successful model for countering such decline and restoring security and trust in central government.[149]

Another key facet of LDFs is their ability to gather greater intelligence from the population. Civilians are often reluctant to provide intelligence to external COIN forces given these forces will inevitably withdraw and leave them to the mercy and likely retaliation from the insurgents.[150] LDFs provide a constant source of security and local touch that draws additional intelligence from the population.[151] Furthermore, these forces isolate insurgents physically and politically from the LDF recruits' community through their service and retaliatory violence against them.[152] So effective are these forces that states that utilise LDFs actually increase their likelihood of defeating the insurgency by 53%.[153] Even the Nazis were forced to utilise LDFs to combat partisans in

---

Home Guard, Police, and the Social Contract (Carlisle: US Army War College: US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2011), pg. 2, 10-11

[146] Jones & Munoz, *Afghanistan's Local War,* pg. 74-75

[147] Ibid. pg. 76

[148] David Anderson, *Making the Loyalist Bargain: Surrender, Amnesty and Impunity in Kenya's Decolonization 1952–63* (The International History Review Vol. 39:1, 2017), pg. 51

[149] MacWatters, *Home Guard, Police, and the Social Contract*, pg. 8, 11

[150] Goran Peic, *Civilian Defence Forces, State Capacity, and Government Victory in Counterinsurgency Wars* (Studies in Conflict & Terrorism Vol. 37:2, 2014), pg. 165-166

[151] Ibid. pg. 166

[152] Ibid. pg. 163, 167

[153] Ibid. pg. 178

occupied territories under the Wehrdorfer project – which proved to be a rare Nazi success.[154] However, Peic noted that LDFs do have a number of common issues such as comparatively poor training and local autonomy which can result in crime and deviancy, and the loss of arms through combat, defection or sale.[155] The UDR exhibited all of these elements from gathering additional intelligence to further isolating the community from the insurgency – attacks on the predominantly Protestant UDR would have made the concept of Protestant nationalists even more difficult to sustain.

Scheipers noted that post-1945 we have seen the rise of LDF's introduced on political as well as military merits. For example, in Vietnam the creation of irregular auxiliaries was not only to assist in disrupting insurgent networks, but to create a "Loyalist" network amongst the population.[156] In Malaya, the British used the local "Home Guards" of ethnic Malay and Chinese to similarly bolster popular support and resistance against the insurgency, whilst also sapping insurgent morale.[157] Notably – these groups also had the lowest "kill to contact" of any military force, a factor shared with the UDR.[158] There were also the Regional Forces and Popular Forces of South Vietnam who whilst being comparatively underequipped and under-trained, they were useful in countering and absorbing Viet Cong violence – again in a manner not dissimilar to the UDR.[159] Finally, the Kenyan Home Guard also fostered a culture of Loyalism but were also used to engage in brutal surrogate "counter-terror".[160] This thesis shall make it clear that the UDR as an organisation cannot be said to have engaged in such practices.

The concept of Loyalism has emerged as the core principle of many LDF's post-1945.[161] Such forces have also typically been underequipped, under-trained and under-resourced – again not too dissimilar to the UDR as I shall demonstrate.[162] Historically such forces were prized more for their political importance than their military capabilities, as evidenced by the lack of investment and development of such forces.[163] By presenting a clear "Loyalist" image they bolstered the state's image and connections to its population.[164]

---

[154] Ibid. pg. 176
[155] Ibid. pg. 177
[156] Scheipers, *Irregular Auxiliaries after 1945*, pg. 19-20
[157] Ibid. pg. 20
[158] Ibid. pg. 20
[159] Ibid. pg. 22
[160] Ibid. pg. 20-21
[161] Ibid. pg. 24
[162] Ibid. pg. 24

Other LDF's also provide additional depth and comparison for the UDR – whilst also demonstrating the value of this analysis in drawing out lessons and significance for future conflicts. For example, many lessons and examples from the UDR would likely be applicable to the Afghan Local Police (ALP). The community-based police force was designed to combat local insurgents and criminals.[165] Whilst being a "police" unit they were mostly militarised with limited police training and no arrest authority.[166] Much like the UDR there have also been stories of localised corruption and abuse by the ALP.[167] This indicates that such issues may not be specific to any particular LDF, but rather the concept. However, despite its issues the ALP has also demonstrated the importance of using LDF's to provide a legitimate avenue for security participation – again much like the UDR.[168] Therefore, this thesis shall seek to determine what can be drawn for contemporary and historical LDF's like the ALP, and what should be considered when building future forces.

The thesis

This thesis deviates from previous literature by taking a comprehensive and academic examination of the UDR in the context of the conflict. The thesis seeks to understand: "How and why the UDR was utilised in the conflict, and if and how it benefitted the British state and army strategically". This is significant as it helps us to understand the UDR beyond its controversy and contested history, and what can be learned for future local defensive forces. The core research sub-questions are thus:

---

[163] Ibid. pg. 24

[164] Ibid. pg. 24

[165] Jones & Munoz, *Afghanistan's Local War,* pg. 55; Robert Hulslander & Jake Spivey, *Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police*, (PRISM Vol. 3:3, 2012), pg. 125

[166] Jones & Munoz, *Afghanistan's Local War,* pg. 55; Hulslander & Spivey, *Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police*, pg. 133

[167] Hulslander & Spivey, *Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police*, pg. 136-137

[168] Jones & Munoz, *Afghanistan's Local War,* pg. 74-76

1. Why was the UDR formed and what was its intended purpose?
2. Was the UDR a particularly collusive or undisciplined regiment?
3. Why was the UDR retained, even after allegations and incidents of collusion and criminality came to light?
4. How did the UDR contribute to security within Northern Ireland?

Through this I shall demonstrate that the pattern of neglecting and overlooking the UDR beyond a brief (or occasionally extensive) criticism is to the detriment of not only those who served in the regiment with honour, but also denied the field some valuable concepts and ideas that may be of use in future conflicts and the broader literature of the Northern Ireland conflict. I shall highlight nuanced discussions and precedents that can be utilised to create more efficient, effective, and sustainable LDFs. The thesis also serves to help highlight that deviancy within the UDR has been a subject of too much focus within the literature. Previously such discussions have mostly hinged upon discussion of particular incidents and more limited statistics than what is discussed here. What is noted is that LDF training is of the utmost importance for ensuring good discipline and efficacy during a conflict, and that LDF's have a dual political-military role.

To fully understand the UDR and its role, it is important to compare it to other similar groups and forces and weigh it against other aspects of military studies. One of the most fundamental and crucial of these is finding the right Measure of Effectiveness (MOE) by which we will assess the effectiveness of the UDR. Batcher et al. noted the origins of MOE in measuring the effectiveness of machinery and the difficulties in shifting these from the binary processes of machines to complex systems of the military which are built on similarly multiple and subjective variables and values.[169] This system has thus allowed militaries to monitor and measure their success and adapt accordingly. As Major Douglas Jones of the US Army noted:

> Measures of effectiveness that accurately indicate operational success assist commanders in making accurate and timely decisions. In contrast, poorly constructed measures of effectiveness can lead a commander or policy maker

---

[169] Batcher et al. *On Measures of Effectiveness* (Phalanx Vol. 28:4, 1995), pg. 8

> to make inappropriate decisions that can result in a multitude of negative effects.[170]

Thus, as Jones highlights, the correct MOE can help a commander understand the situation and respond accordingly through providing a clear measure of success. In contrast, an incorrect measure can lead to disastrous decisions. Dunn provides a credible formula for identifying the correct MOE: identify your objectives, identify alternatives, compare these, apply your judgement following an assessment, act on your decision, and then follow up.[171] The MOE is vital given its implications for military decisions – initial indications during WW2 suggested that supplying AA guns to merchant vessels was proving inadequate given that they only destroyed around 4% of attacking aircraft despite the logistical burden of supplying the guns and their crews. However, upon shifting the MOE to fleet survival, it was discovered that only 10% of ships with AA guns were lost compared to 25% without the protection.[172] Had decision makers followed through with their initial assessments (and thus ignored the importance of finding the relevant MOE for the mission of ensuring supplies reach Allied forces) additional ships would have been lost. Similarly, numerical superiority does not translate to an immediate military advantage as many counterinsurgency (COIN) operations prove. Dunn advances the Whitley bomber as another WW2 example, with the obsolete bomber being produced until mid-1943 at six times the original order – most if not all of which never left their storage units.[173] Similar principles also apply to the UDR – as this thesis shall demonstrate, the number of UDR soldiers and kills by the regiment overlooks numerous complex aspects of the regiment which would be obscured if one purely examines their low kill count.

Keeney provides a key observation that often our measurements and thinking are prioritised in responding to the thinking of others, particularly in the form of alternatives, and that we should avoid simply listing our objectives.[174] Objectives should instead be separated into “strategic objectives” (our broadest aims and goals), “fundamental objectives” (the aims by which achieve the previous) and finally “mean objectives” (the actions that achieve our intended outcomes).[175] Therefore the MOE for the UDR must satisfy these key factors. Jones pointed to the Philippine–American War where he noted an unused but ultimately effective MOE would have been to monitor the ability of the insurgency to procure reliable weaponry amidst the American blockade – particularly as the unreliable and inferior weaponry of the insurgents is what allowed US forces to operate in small and dispersed units.[176] This satisfied the strategic objective of winning the war and restoring American control, and the fundamental objectives of crushing the insurgency whilst reducing their ability for future violence. Finally, it particularly monitored how the fundamental objective interfaced with the mean objective of the blockade and the ability of the US forces to operate in smaller units against the insurgency.

---

[170] Maj. Douglas Jones, *Understanding Measures of Effectiveness in Counterinsurgency Operations* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College AY 05-06, 2006), pg. 2

[171] Ben Dunn, *Analysis for Military Decision Makers* (Naval War College Review Vol. 37:4, 1984), pg. 73-74

[172] Ibid. pg. 74-75

[173] Ibid. pg. 74

There is also the need to take onboard lessons from previous conflicts – the US ignored the lessons from the French Indochina war among which included: ‘poor intelligence, underestimating the enemy, lack of a positive political program, a defensive-minded attitude, reluctance to get into the jungle, and undue reliance on air support’.[177] Furthermore, it was even noted by the chief intelligence officer to the US Commander in Vietnam that the French had made no effort to win over the Vietnamese people – and in rejecting all these Daddis summarised that ‘the U.S. Army categorically rejected any insights the French might have offered into measuring effectiveness in Indochina.’[178] However, US officers going into Vietnam read generic summaries of previous COIN warfare without engaging with much substance as to what made these successful or unsuccessful, as Daddis summarised:

---

[174] Ralph Keeney, *Value-focused thinking: Identifying decision opportunities and creating alternatives* (European Journal of Operational Research Vol. 92:3, 1996) pg. 537-538

[175] Keeney, *Value-focused thinking: Identifying decision opportunities and creating alternatives,* pg. 538

[176] Jones, *Understanding Measures of Effectiveness in Counterinsurgency Operations*, pg. 41-42

[177] Gregory Daddis, *No Sure Victory: Measuring U.S. Army Effectiveness and Progress in the Vietnam War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pg. 24

[178] Daddis, *No Sure Victory,* pg. 24

> Advice to remain aggressive against insurgents offered little meaningful insights when doctrine admitted the primacy of political action in revolutionary war. Perhaps most importantly, none of the army's field manuals or professional journals provided counsel on how to gauge success in a war without fronts. Perspectives from the French and British experiences went largely unheeded. In a real sense, the army was unprepared intellectually to consider the problems of measuring progress and effectiveness in a counterinsurgency environment.[179]

The input of Secretary of Defence, Robert McNamara – a systems analysis expert who prioritised quantitative measures, reinforced an emerging trend that bigger numbers and datasets such as enemy killed ("body count") were a strong MOE.[180] The result was that US officers remained confused and ineffective as their data failed to provide an effective measure for the war.[181] An aggressive mindset came up against the fact that the US were repeatedly ambushed by the insurgents and being forced to act as bait to draw the enemy in when moving through the jungle resulting in a heavy psychological toll for the soldiers, and 'in a prodigious use of repower that tended to alienate the population and ignored the problem of countering the Vietcong's political infrastructure.'[182] Daddis summarised the inevitable effects of this overly militarised and overly aggressive approach:

> The ramifications to the political side of the war were immense. The abundant repower that resulted in high body counts also destroyed the countryside, created thousands of refugees, and weakened an already fragile economic and political system. From a strategic standpoint, MACV had made little progress toward attriting the enemy. Hanoi quickly replaced its losses from within, and the destruction of the South Vietnamese countryside served as a valuable recruiting tool for the Vietcong.[183]

As Daddis noted: 'After years of data collection and statistical analysis, Americans in Vietnam were no closer to understanding the true nature of the conflict then when they started.'[184] By the time of the US withdrawal the US still believed that they had been successfully waging their war in Vietnam – by one estimate by the end of 1972 the insurgency could still access two-thirds of the population, and was still able to fight on.[185] There is a clear need to integrate the political aims of COIN, namely winning over the population and thus strangling the support and lifeblood of the insurgency, with the military aims – otherwise '[military] means soon become irrelevant.'[186] This dilemma of effectiveness within COIN remains an issue – as Hazelton noted in 2021, the COIN missions in Afghanistan starting in 2001 and in Iraq in 2003 were intended to create stability but 'have achieved success in neither theatre, while political violence and disorder have spread in the region and beyond.'[187] For Hazelton COIN operations, democratisation and regional stability are not synonymous, and we must anticipate that smaller states will pursue their own interests during such conflicts (as happened in Northern Ireland as well) and will not inevitably fall towards democracy and civil rights.[188]

---

[179] Ibid. pg. 37-38
[180] Ibid. pg. 36-38, 41, 85-86, 91
[181] Ibid. pg. 41, 60-61, 85-86
[182] Ibid. pg. 95, 100
[183] Ibid. pg. 107

The MOE for the UDR must accommodate the strategic British goals of ending the conflict, and the broader fundamental objectives to reduce violence and quell the paramilitary threat. The means by which this was achieved is more nuanced than it may at first appears. Any local militarised force could have conducted UDR tasks – and the ability to mount guards and patrols alone would have almost certainly resulted in the mass reform or disbanding of the UDR once it became controversial. The UDR's purpose was thus not purely in its militant actions. A significant factor was clearly their local knowledge – but again this did not necessitate the UDR specifically.[189] Another key element was their ability to divert potentially militant Protestant energies into a more disciplined and legitimate form of participation in the security crisis.[190] This would marry up the political and military aims that Daddis highlighted needed to be intertwined to ensure success. Thus, the MOE for the UDR must be based off of its aid in containing the IRA threat and violence, creating a legitimate avenue for participation in the crisis that drew support away from Loyalist paramilitaries, reassuring the Protestant Unionist population, and satisfying core basic counterinsurgency tasks. This will be simplified as an MOE of "holding the line" to allow the British Army to conduct the task of tackling the intense IRA violence and hotbeds elsewhere.

---

[184]Ibid. pg. 61

[185]Ibid. pg. 219

[186] Daddis, *No Sure Victory,* pg. 86

[187] Jacqueline Hazelton, *Bullets Not Ballots: Success in Counterinsurgency Warfare* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021), pg. 1

[188] Hazelton, *Bullets Not Ballots*

[189] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 100-101, 373; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 86; Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 69, 83

[190] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Northern Ireland*, pg. 36; Paul Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq* (The Journal of Strategic Studies Vol. 32:3, 2009), pg. 467-468; William Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army: 1854–1992* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016) pg. 133

This is in line with the British government's design. The only specific tasks that the UDR was given upon its founding were 'protect key installations and other tasks as might be necessary to guard against the threat of armed guerilla-style attacks' and 'The task of the new force will be to support the regular forces in Northern Ireland... To this end it will be required to undertake guard duties at key points and installations ... and in, rural areas, to carry out patrols and to establish check points and roadblocks'.[191] These basic but vital military tasks once performed by the UDR freed up the Regulars to focus on more "contested zones".

Methodology

Thompson, the veteran oral historian, noted the importance of interview research given 'reality is complex and many-sided'.[192] In this thesis I made use of the semi-structured interview. Unstructured interviews consist of naturally flowing conversations without set questions, whereas structured interviews utilise a set of verbatim questions which the interviewee is expected to respond to.[193] Semi-structured interviews meanwhile allow for follow-up questions and responses to the set questions – this flexibility was important for exploring aspects of the UDR.[194] Given the limited literature on the regiment, many testimonies comprised aspects of the UDR's "hidden history" that required further probing or detail. Semi-structured interviews allowed for these relevant discussions, whilst also ensuring that UDR interviewees felt that they were able to tell their stories how they saw fit – a key issue as many UDR sources believe that their story is often told by often critical outsiders with little compassion or understanding of the regiment and its soldiers.

---

[191] NAUK: DEFE 24/868 - *The Army Board: The Formation of the New Northern Ireland Local Defence Force* [Army Board Secretariat – Paper No. AB/P(69)38)] 24th October 1969; *Draft White Paper: Formation of the New Northern Ireland Defence Force*; *The New Defence Force for Northern Ireland: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Defence* [OPD(69)57], 29th October 1969

[192] Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pg. 22-24, 90, 122-123, 134-137, 213

[193] Anne Mueller & Daniel Segal, *Structured versus Semistructured versus Unstructured Interviews* (The encyclopaedia of clinical psychology Vol.1:7, 2014), pg. 1

[194] Mueller & Segal, *Structured versus Semistructured versus Unstructured Interviews*, pg. 2

However, the influence of contemporary values upon a sources, interpretation of the past must also be acknowledged.[195] The inherent biases and ideologies of the sources will influence their testimony – for example, UDR interviewees have a naturally vested interest in improving the image of their former regiment and this may influence the way they present the regiment's contributions to security or how far collusion impacted the regiment. However, this also goes for the regiment's critics, who may also wish to highlight its controversies to confirm their views and assessments of the UDR, and to justify the way that it has been treated within the literature. To counter such influences and other biases, I cross-referenced oral sources with archival material.[196] However, cross-checking in reality is vital for all sources – not just oral accounts.[197] Thus where UDR sources made claims regarding UDR deviancy and criminality, these have been weighed against statistical data where possible. Nevertheless, as the veteran oral historian Portelli noted, even if oral accounts remain unverifiable they likely remain "psychologically true" for the source and the roots of this belief are worthy of examination.[198] Therefore, where accounts of the UDR are too favourable or critical of the regiment, I have accounted for the cause of such beliefs. There is the inherent methodological issue for interviews regarding the Northern Ireland conflict that as the collapse of the Boston College oral history project demonstrated, there is no amnesty for academic projects. The Boston College project had intended to utilise interviews with paramilitaries to uncover hidden histories of the conflict – with the understanding that the relevant material would only be released following the death of that individual. In reality, once the first such material was disclosed it led to a series of arrests and charges that has resulted in additional restrictions on what potential interviewees may feel comfortable discussing.[199] Therefore, there is the potential that certain rumours or incidents were not described in sufficient detail by interviewees for fear of implicating or drawing attention to peers or former colleagues.

---

[195] Trevor Lummis, *Structure and Validity in Oral History* (in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson [eds.], 'The Oral History Reader', London: Routledge, 1998), pg. 276

[196] Lummis, *Structure and Validity in Oral History,* pg. 274-275

[197] Ronald Gerle, *Movement without Ain: Methodological and Theoretical Problems in Oral History* (in Perks and Thomson, 'Oral History Reader'), pg. 40-41; Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 11-12

[198] Alessandro Portelli, *The Order Has been Carried Out: History, Memory, and the meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pg. 3-20

As previously noted, this thesis utilised archival material to both cross-check interviews and to explore the UDR. There are of course limitations to this as well. There is the issue of inherent bias even within archival sources. As shall be noted throughout the thesis, the interpretation of events from Irish and British civil servants and politicians often differed – with Irish officials even calling into question British statistics and accounts at times. Where this occurs the same principles that apply to oral histories apply here – that such accounts must be cross-checked with other material, and where this is not possible must be examined as "psychologically true" for the author(s). However, there remains significant material on the UDR that remains classified, particularly those on convictions of UDR personnel many of which have been retained by the relevant government departments or will not be released for decades due to the inclusion of personal details that could expose or place individuals at risk of harm.[200] Similar principles apply to battalion records, and a number of redacted extracts from other files. Many of these have been closed for a period of 75 to 100 years, and thus we can expect a potentially radically different view of the UDR to emerge in the final decades of this century. Oral histories help to combat this by providing some substance of what has been classified or redacted from archival releases whilst still remaining within what can be discussed within the public domain. However, these retentions within the archives do limit what can be discussed. For example, whilst the thesis discusses violent UDR misconduct, it does not discuss UDR harassment or intelligence leaks in detail due to limited material. Any statement on this issues would be based on limited data and would be conjecture not analysis. However, this gaps should not restrict us from trying to examine and gain insights from the UDR. We should seek to understand what we can from the current data, and accept the reality that there will be gaps left for future researchers to investigate further.

---

[199] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 12-13

[200] For examples see: CJ 4/9688 - Convictions of Ulster Defence Regiment personnel [Retained by department]; CJ 4/8629 - Complaints against Ulster Defence Regiment [This file is scheduled for release in 2072]; CJ 4/8631 - Complaints against Ulster Defence Regiment [This file is scheduled for release in 2069]; CJ 4/8630 - Complaints against Ulster Defence Regiment [This file is scheduled for release in 2060]; CJ 4/5419 - Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR): incidents, complaints and security [This file is scheduled for release in 2070]

Nor is this unprecedented – there have been a number of significant texts on sensitive topics where information has been withheld or remained classified. For example, Thomas Leahy and Aaron Edwards have both written on intelligence operations in Northern Ireland despite the sensitive and still classified nature of some of the topic.[201] Similarly, Richard English wrote his book on the IRA in the early 2000s – long before significant archival material was released.[202] Regardless, these texts have furthered our understanding of these issues and even acted as key texts within the discourse. To the best of my knowledge, I am the first academic to undertake such an extensive, cross-referenced examination of the UDR. It is my hope that I similarly will be able to provide a foundation for future discourse on the UDR and associated elements.

This thesis encountered its own particular set of problems. First, the outbreak of the Covid Pandemic significantly impacted the amount of time that could be spent at the archives for a considerable period of time, and limited contact with interviewees. Lacking a guide on how to conduct research during a global pandemic, progress significantly declined, and my research was setback considerably by the pandemic and its aftereffects. The probability is that additional in-person research trips to the archives would have allowed for additional archival searches for semi-related matters that could have yielded some intriguing results, whilst additional trips to the region would have allowed me to gain access to older, less technologically literate members of the UDR. However, the pandemic limited these visits, and the personal risks for elderly former members of the regiment would have been considerable and acted as a barrier to participation. Second, and most importantly, there is a considerable reluctance on the part of former members of the regiment to talk to outsiders about their experiences. Having interviewed former members and attended a UDR event in Belfast in September

---

[201] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA;*

[202] English, *Armed Struggle*

2023, it was made clear that there is a significant scepticism regarding external interest in the regiment – which many concluded was often motivated by an interested in further exploring and highlighting the regiment’s controversies to further demonise them. Therefore, there has been significant difficulties in finding willing ex-UDR interviewees, even when supported by the participation and encouragement of other former UDR. Thus, I am incredibly thankful for the participation of those who did consent to interview. Future research into the UDR will have to consider the need to gain the trust and consent of participants, and how to do so relatively quickly as these participants age and we lose the earlier parts of the regiment’s story.

This thesis cross-references archival and interview sources. The thesis uses various documents within 22 British and 3 Irish archival files, alongside 13 interviewees including 3 Republican, 1 victim advocate, 1 academic, 1 academic ex-RUC officer and 7 UDR sources. This approach utilises recently declassified material on the UDR to explore factors such as its purpose, establishment and “disbandment” which have thus far been overlooked. This allows for an expansion into overlooked elements and modernises the debate through introducing previously unseen material alongside existing literature. It also allows for an understanding of the UDR from a Westminster and Whitehall perspective. The limitations of this are of course that we are limited to what has been declassified and put into the public domain. This leaves some elements “out of bounds” for the analysis – such as the statistics on harassment by UDR soldiers. This also naturally allows for some valid criticism in that the “worst” of the record may remain hidden within classified documents.

The thesis also makes use of interviews with relevant figures to discuss their views and experiences. I have talked with Republicans who have previously voiced their supported for the provisional IRA, alongside former members of the security forces and academics. This can somewhat overcome archival limitations, whilst also allowing us to understand the UDR experience alongside opinions of the regiment and certain developments. Much of the literature, such as Ryder, Smith and McGovern, talk about the UDR rather than to them.[203] This thesis thus overcomes such limitations of UDR literature through including their voices. However, this has its own limitations. Interviews are heavily influenced by the experiences and explicit or implicit bias of the source and are therefore partnered with supporting statistical or archival evidence where possible in this thesis. Regardless, such views are still useful in understanding the perspectives of certain groups regardless of the accuracy of their claims. A similar principle applies to British archival material which reflects British interests and perceptions, and can distort the record accordingly. This thesis has utilised Irish National Archives material to try to somewhat balance this issue, whilst also revealing their own interests and perceptions. Ultimately, it is the combination and cross-checking of all stated sources that yields a more accurate and representative view. This mixed-method approach has been widely accepted as a credible method of research and has been utilised by the likes of Richard English, Martin Frampton and Catherine O'Donnell amongst many others in the course of their own research.

Terminology

The thesis avoids using the term "terrorism" where possible. This is a loaded and pejorative term typically used by states to legitimise or delegitimise armed groups.[204] Where the term is used it is done so as part of quoting a source. I utilise the term Counterinsurgency (COIN) to describe the British response to the security crisis for similar reasons. Insurgency is utilised and defined as 'an internal struggle in which a disaffected group seeks to gain control of a nation' and COIN refers to the state's political, economic and military response to this.[205] I avoid using terms associated with occupation for the same reasons that this thesis avoids terms associated with terrorism – to avoid making inflammatory remarks.

---

[203] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment;* Smith, *UDR: Declassified;* McGovern, *Counterinsurgency and Collusion in Northern Ireland;* For further examples see: Ellison & Smyth, *The Crowned Harp: Policing Northern Ireland;* Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies;* Urwin, *A State in Denial*

[204] Brannan et al. "*Talking to Terrorists": Towards an Independent Analytical Framework for the Study of Violent Substate Activism* (Studies in Conflict and Terrorism Vol. 24:1, 2001), pg. 3-4, 11-12, 18; Bryan et al. *The failed paradigm of 'terrorism''* (Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression Vol. 3:2, 2010), pg. 83-85

[205] Peter Neumann, *Britain's Long War: British Strategy in the Northern Ireland Conflict 1969-98*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2003), pg. 3

Within the PhD I utilise the terms “Unionist” for those who supported remaining part of the United Kingdom, and “Nationalist” for those who supported a united Ireland. This is in line with conventional uses of these terms. I however utilise the terms “Loyalist” and “Republican” to denote those who supported militant action in support of the previous terms respectively. The term “Loyalism” should not be viewed as connotating total loyalty to the union and crown – it is overtly conditional. As Moloney noted: ‘the citizens and the state are bound together by a contract in which the citizens agree to support and defend the state only as long as the state defends and supports them’.[206] “Loyalists” often pursued their own interests even when these ran counter to British political and security actions. It is also worth noting that Unionism would not have been viewed as “moderate” by Westminster given the Ulster Unionist Party’s adherence to ethno-nationalist ideologies which centred around Protestant domination.[207] As the civil rights era and NICRA emerged Unionism favoured incremental reform at best, and otherwise feared threats to their domination and culture – most of which centred on Ian Paisley and his breakaway Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).[208] Paisley would later warn of the threat of ethnic cleansing and of Protestant cultural and political genocide.[209] All of these ideologies were mixed in the Protestant communities of Northern Ireland, with political moderates living doors away from radical militants. “Republicans” meanwhile as Tonge noted is an evolving and amorphous term but has clear associations with those who support Sinn Fein – which has its origins and connections in the same movement that created the IRA.[210] The use of these terms stems from their clear association with paramilitary action. Republicans also blamed the violence on the partition of the island by the colonial British Government, whereas the SDLP and the Nationalists that tended to support it recognised that the north-south split of the island reflected the Protestant-Catholic divide.

---

[206] Ed Moloney, *Voices from the Grave: Two Men's War in Ireland* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 2011), pg. 324

[207] Linda Racioppi & Katherine O’Sullivan See, ‘“This we will maintain” gender, ethno-nationalism and the politics of unionism in Northern Ireland’, (Nations and Nationalism Vol. 7:1, 2001), pg. 93-94

[208] Ibid. pg. 98-99

[209] Ibid. *,* pg. 101

[210] Jon Tonge, *A Campaign without End?: ‘Dissident’ Republican Violence in Northern Ireland* (Political insight: Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom Vol. 5:1, 2014), pg. 16

Structure

The thesis begins by exploring the creation of the UDR and who joined the regiment. There is also a discussion of the mass exodus of the Catholics in the early years of the UDR. This chapter notes the issues of patriotism and duty that attracted individuals to enlist, but also how these can be a push factor for nationalists, and that vetting was not only flawed but also was beyond the UDR's control. Chapter 2 challenges more critical presentations of the UDR through a cultural and statistical examination of the UDR. Within this analysis I forward that collusion was often committed by subversives who joined the UDR with the express intention of abusing its resources and access, and that deviancy was ultimately a regionalised not institutionalised problem. The implications of this are the need to guide and nurture LDF's – particularly in their initial years. Chapter 3 then explores the issue of training in the UDR. I argue that the initially poor standards of training within the UDR undermined its effectiveness whilst increasing the likelihood of deviancy and "venting" – a key concept for future LDF's. Chapter 4 then explores why the UDR was retained and notes how its political considerations were closely intertwined with its military and strategic benefits. This is a factor that will likely be common within many LDF's and has gone underappreciated within discussions of the UDR and the broader conflict. Finally, in my conclusions I note how conflict legacy and reconciliation measures have often gone against the wishes of former members of the UDR, whilst drawing out further the significant lessons from the regiment and its experiences to determine the purpose of the UDR, its strategic benefits and how it can contribute to future COIN and LDF warfare.

Chapter 1 – Making the UDR: Recruitment, Vetting and Establishing a New Regiment

The Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) was intended to serve as a clean break from the sectarian taint of the B Specials. This new dawn for the security forces drew over 40,000 recruits over its 22-year history.[1] However, among those who enlisted would be undesirable, criminal, and even sectarian elements. Consequently, as was lamented by former UDR members, the regiment failed to recruit Catholics in sufficient numbers as the regiment's reputation was summarily tarnished:[2] 'It was always the intention to recruit Catholics, but thanks to events and the IRA, that wasn't possible.'[3] In 1970, 28% of the UDR were Catholics, yet by the end of the decade the figure stood at just 2%.[4] To ignore this decline and the composition of the regiment would be to ignore much of the UDR. This chapter therefore seeks to understand these elements and explore several important questions in succession: Who was the UDR designed and intended to recruit; What motivated individuals to enlist with the regiment; Why did the percentage of Catholics in the UDR rapidly decline in its early years, and why did it never recover; Can the concurrent boom in Protestant recruitment be considered a matter of concern; and finally how rigorous was the vetting process for the UDR?

From this we can understand the UDR, its history and seek to understand how it became almost homogenously Protestant despite its design as a cross-community regiment. My work accepts Potter's belief that IRA harassment and targeting of Catholics led to a Protestant-dominated UDR, but also Ó Faoleán's article on UDR recruitment that subversion and the perception of subversion by Loyalist paramilitaries could not by ignored and were thus another significant factor driving down Catholic recruitment. [5]

---

[1] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 97

[2] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021

[3] UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021

[4] NAUK: DEFE 68/916 – *Catholic Membership of the UDR (as a percentage)*

[5] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 375-376; Gearóid Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment: 1970–1972,* (Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 27:5, 2015)

This chapter explores and argues that through a series of decisions the UDR was skewed from being a cross-community regiment. The decision to recruit ex-Specials, and particularly to name and frame it as overtly “Unionist”, undermined its neutrality – laying the groundwork for events to further undermine the regiment. The conclusions drawn from this are that states must be clear as to who they wish to recruit, and act accordingly and with this in mind.

The chapter will move through UDR recruitment and vetting to highlight the lack of control that the UDR had over who was admitted to its ranks. Furthermore, this system may have lacked the nuance and local knowledge to accurately remove potential deviants. Secondly, the chapter will explore the motivations of those who enlisted in the UDR. I shall demonstrate that UDR enlistment motivations were significantly based on ideals such as patriotism and duty. The chapter then shall explore how and why Catholics left the regiment en-masse within only a few years, particularly as a result of coercive British military policy that not only limited the Army’s ability to conduct effective COIN but also the UDR’s design as a cross-community regiment. Finally, the chapter shall link all of these within a discussion of a “post-internment boom” of Protestants that likely included a number of individuals with sectarian motives that slipped by an inadequate vetting system – thereby affirming a key theme of the thesis that a significant part of the UDR’s problems were the fault of decisionmakers elsewhere rather than the UDR itself.

1. Who was the UDR designed and intended to recruit?

In March 1970, the UDR replaced the Ulster Special Constabulary (USC), colloquially referred to as “B Specials”. For the sake of clarity, I will use the terms B Specials and USC interchangeably. The Specials were controversial, not least for their recent participation in sectarian and undisciplined violence – including at Tynan in August 1969 where untrained, panicking B Specials had opened fire into the Nationalist crowd.[6] Specials also took part in the infamous riot at Burntollet Bridge in 1969, where civil rights marchers were attacked by a mob that included members of the security forces.[7] Such was their misconduct that as Ó Dochartaigh noted they acted ‘essentially as a local Protestant militia’, and were used a threat to potential marchers or threats.[8] As McKeown stated: ‘The B Specials had become untenable. They had become too involved in killings and brutalities, so they just had to be stood down’.[9] The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) had made their disbandment a cornerstone of their civil rights programme.[10] For any hope of cross-community support, the USC had to go.

---

[6] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 24-27; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 7-9

The Hunt Committee was established in 1969 to revolutionise security provisions for Northern Ireland given the security crisis, and made several recommendations – not least that the USC should be disbanded and replaced by a reserve police force (RUCR) and a local part-time military force under British Army command – the UDR.[11] The UDR was to serve as the break from the USC. I forward that even the numbering system of the UDR (e.g. 1 UDR, 2 UDR) was in direct contrast to the divisional structure of the USC (e.g. USC Belfast Division 1) – reflecting this intention. This early period of recruitment was particularly good for the UDR – receiving a total of 1,345 applications in just its first 3 weeks, 25% of which were Catholics.[12]

A month after activation, a third of the UDR were Catholics – a marked difference from the USC who had quickly ceased recruiting Catholics.[13] However, as this thesis reveals regionality is key – Tyrone appears to have always had issues with Catholic recruitment, though this may have been influenced by higher Specials applications.[14]

	Applications	***Accepted***	***USC***	***Accepted***
Antrim (1 UDR)	575	221	220	93

---

[7] Niall Ó Dochartaigh, *From Civil Rights to Armalites: Derry and the birth of Irish troubles* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pg. 35

[8] Ó Dochartaigh, *From Civil Rights to Armalites,* pg. 35

[9] Dr Laurence McKeown, interview with author 18th October 2021

[10] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 5; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 23

[11] Baron Hunt, *Report of the Advisory Committee on Police in Northern Ireland*, Chapter 10

[12] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 27

[13] Ibid. pg. 5, 29

[14] The Irish Times, *Disappointed at Catholic UDR applications*, 6th March 1970

Armagh (2 UDR)	615	370	402	277
Down (3 UDR)	460	229	195	116
Fermanagh (4 UDR)	471	223	386	193
Derry (5 UDR)	671	382	338	219
Tyrone (6 UDR)	1187	637	813	489
Belfast (7 UDR)	797	378	70	36

Table A – UDR Recruitment Statistics (Ryder 1991, pg. 39)

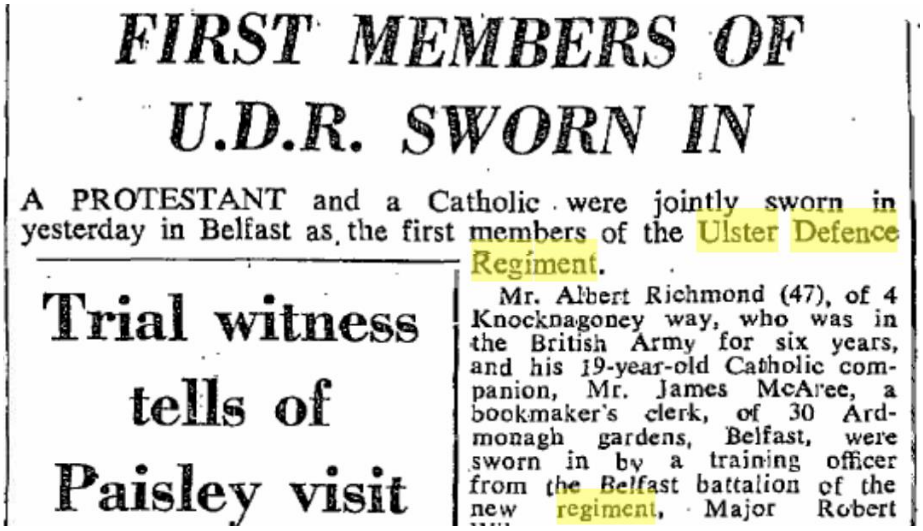
Many such as UDR 1, an interviewee who agreed to talk on the condition of anonymity, had enlisted to alter the culture and composition of the security forces, and believed that the UDR's success would be a key part of reconciliation in Northern Ireland: 'I very much believed in the replacement of the B Specials... if the UDR was going to be something new, then people like ourselves who were not part of the B Specials had to go into it.'[15] Moderate Nationalist Stormont politicians, such as John Hume, Ivan Cooper, and Austin Currie, were even initially supportive of Catholic participation in the new regiment. Hume stated at a party meeting in Birmingham on March 25th that 'Catholics must move into the UDR, make it a neutral force and prevent its being taken over by the B Specials'.[16] Great fanfare was made of the swearing in of the UDR's first soldiers – one Protestant, and One Catholic.[17]

---

[15] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021

[16] Renagh Holohan, *Hume urges Catholics to move into UDR*, (The Irish Times, 26 March 1970)

[17] The Irish Times, *First Members of UDR Sworn In*, 19th February 1970



FIRST MEMBERS OF U.D.R. SWORN IN

A PROTESTANT and a Catholic were jointly sworn in yesterday in Belfast as the first members of the Ulster Defence Regiment.

Mr. Albert Richmond (47), of 4 Knocknagoney way, who was in the British Army for six years, and his 19-year-old Catholic companion, Mr. James McAree, a bookmaker's clerk, of 30 Ardmonagh gardens, Belfast, were sworn in by a training officer from the Belfast battalion of the new regiment, Major Robert

Trial witness tells of Paisley visit

Image 1: The Irish Times, *First Members of UDR Sworn In*, 19th February 1970

Catholics went on to serve and lead with distinction in the UDR, such as Brigadier Denis Ormerod and Brigadier Harry Baxter, the second and third Commanders of the Ulster Defence Regiment respectively – though there is no evidence to suggest there was anything irregular with their appointments.[18] The regiment was never intended to be homogenously or even majority Protestant, but events soon outpaced goodwill.[19]

As several ex-UDR soldiers highlighted, the regiment was intended to serve as a legitimate outlet for individuals to respond to the security crisis.[20] UDR 2, an interviewee who agreed to talk on the condition of anonymity, noted: 'something needed to be done, and the UDR was a way to do what was right'.[21] John Robinson, one of the longest serving UDR soldiers and formerly of 2 UDR (Armagh) also joined at the start of the conflict: 'I joined… along with many other law abiding people of all ages, to do my bit to try and prevent the situation escalating further.'[22] A similar sense of duty drew in Noel Downey, formerly of 4 UDR (Fermanagh), years later: '"…let's try and do our bit here" – so we joined the UDR'.[23] Richard Edgar, an ex-soldier of 11 UDR (N. Armagh) was a still a youth at the start of the conflict, but was drawn in by a similar sense of duty in the mid-1980s: '[I] wanted to play an active part in bring about the end of Troubles in this country'.[24] David Crabbe, a former officer of 7/10 UDR (Belfast) summarised that while the recruitment pool was intended to be broad, the regiment was to recruit '*Good men and true'*.[25]

---

[18] Nor is it anticipated that such evidence will be forthcoming – there are no archival records for military appointments for the post-1945 period.

[19] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

[20] UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[21] UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021

[22] John Robinson, interview with author 27th July 2022

[23] Noel Downey, interview with author 31st August 2021

The UDR was to be representative of Northern Ireland. This is reflected in the extensive advertising and the ease of the application process, which for many was simply cutting and mailing a coupon out of the newspaper.[26] Calls to join the UDR were spread via print, radio and TV, with forms available at Post Offices, libraries, police stations and Army bases.[27] This author can find no evidence to suggest that advertising was tailored or targeted – however it should be noted that SDLP MP Ivan Cooper stated that the very framing of the UDR and its advertising made it unpalatable to the nationalist community.[28] As for what can be found it supports a non-partisan approach – for example, Crabbe cut his coupon out of the Dublin-based *The Irish Times* – a paper not likely to be associated with Protestant Unionism.[29] Meanwhile, this author found a similar advertisement in the Derry Journal, a paper associated with Catholics and Nationalism.[30]

---

[24] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[25] David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

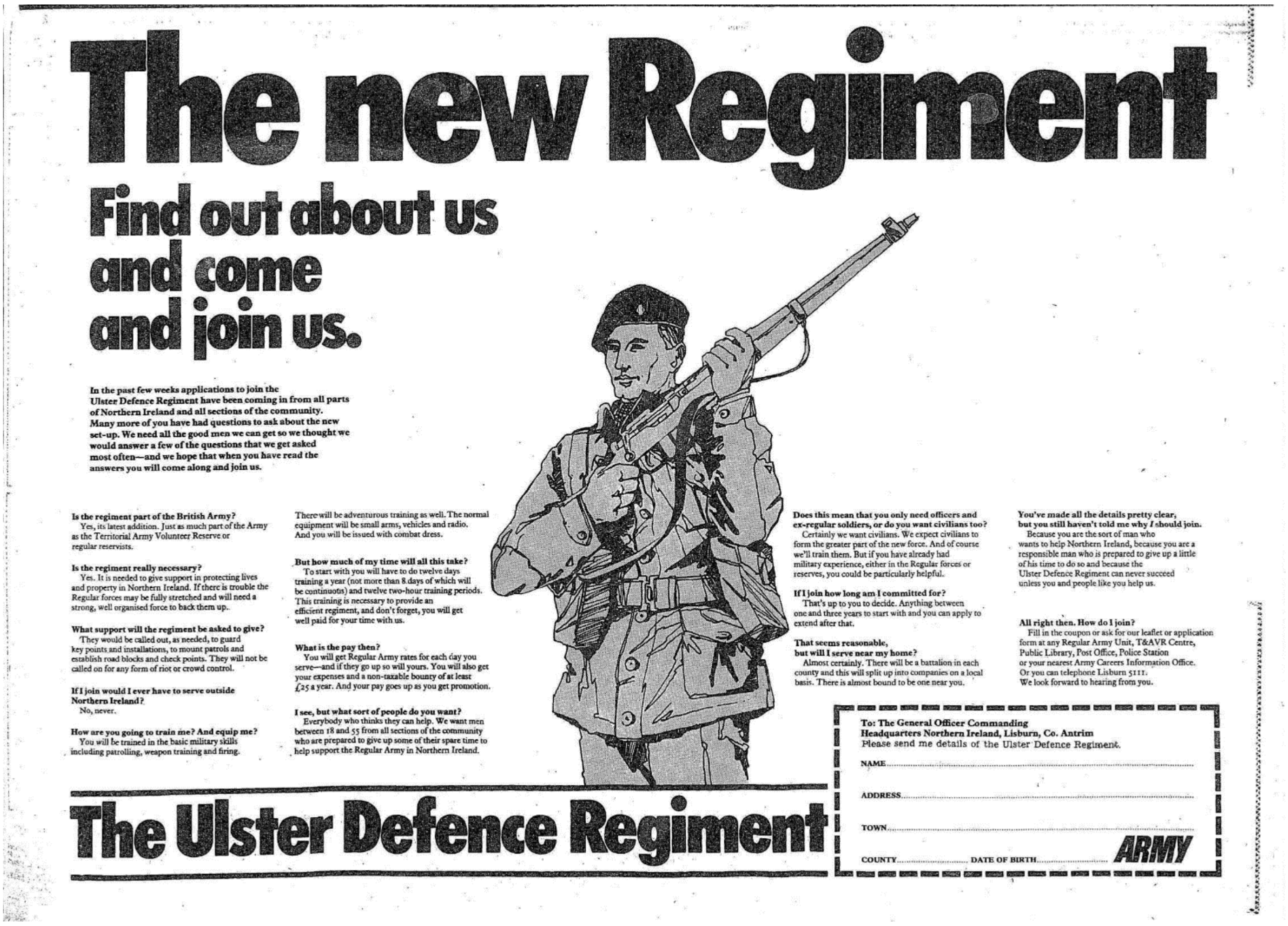
[26] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021; UDR 1, interview with author 25th February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021

[27] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 25; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 35

[28] Ó Dochartaigh, *From Civil Rights to Armalites*, pg. 125

[29] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

[30] *The Derry Journal* (1970), UDR Advertisement on pg. 5, February 20th



The new Regiment

Find out about us and come and join us.

In the past few weeks applications to join the Ulster Defence Regiment have been coming in from all parts of Northern Ireland and all sections of the community. Many more of you have had questions to ask about the new set-up. We need all the good men we can get so we thought we would answer a few of the questions that we get asked most often—and we hope that when you have read the answers you will come along and join us.

Is the regiment part of the British Army?
Yes, its latest addition. Just as much part of the Army as the Territorial Army Volunteer Reserve or regular reservists.

Is the regiment really necessary?
Yes. It is needed to give support in protecting lives and property in Northern Ireland. If there is trouble the Regular forces may be fully stretched and will need a strong, well organised force to back them up.

What support will the regiment be asked to give?
They would be called out, as needed, to guard key points and installations, to mount patrols and establish road blocks and check points. They will not be called on for any form of riot or crowd control.

If I join would I ever have to serve outside Northern Ireland?
No, never.

How are you going to train me? And equip me?
You will be trained in the basic military skills including patrolling, weapon training and firing. There will be adventurous training as well. The normal equipment will be small arms, vehicles and radio. And you will be issued with combat dress.

But how much of my time will all this take?
To start with you will have to do twelve days training a year (not more than 8 days of which will be continuous) and twelve two-hour training periods. This training is necessary to provide an efficient regiment, and don't forget, you will get well paid for your time with us.

What is the pay then?
You will get Regular Army rates for each day you serve—and if they go up so will yours. You will also get your expenses and a non-taxable bounty of at least £25 a year. And your pay goes up as you get promotion.

I see, but what sort of people do you want?
Everybody who thinks they can help. We want men between 18 and 55 from all sections of the community who are prepared to give up some of their spare time to help support the Regular Army in Northern Ireland.

Does this mean that you only need officers and ex-regular soldiers, or do you want civilians too?
Certainly we want civilians. We expect civilians to form the greater part of the new force. And of course we'll train them. But if you have already had military experience, either in the Regular forces or reserves, you could be particularly helpful.

If I join how long am I committed for?
That's up to you to decide. Anything between one and three years to start with and you can apply to extend after that.

That seems reasonable, but will I serve near my home?
Almost certainly. There will be a battalion in each county and this will split up into companies on a local basis. There is almost bound to be one near you.

You've made all the details pretty clear, but you still haven't told me why *I* should join.
Because you are the sort of man who wants to help Northern Ireland, because you are a responsible man who is prepared to give up a little of his time to do so and because the Ulster Defence Regiment can never succeed unless you and people like you help us.

All right then. How do I join?
Fill in the coupon or ask for our leaflet or application form at any Regular Army Unit, T&AVR Centre, Public Library, Post Office, Police Station or your nearest Army Careers Information Office. Or you can telephone Lisburn 5111. We look forward to hearing from you.

The Ulster Defence Regiment

To: The General Officer Commanding
Headquarters Northern Ireland, Lisburn, Co. Antrim
Please send me details of the Ulster Defence Regiment.

NAME……………………………………………

ADDRESS……………………………………………

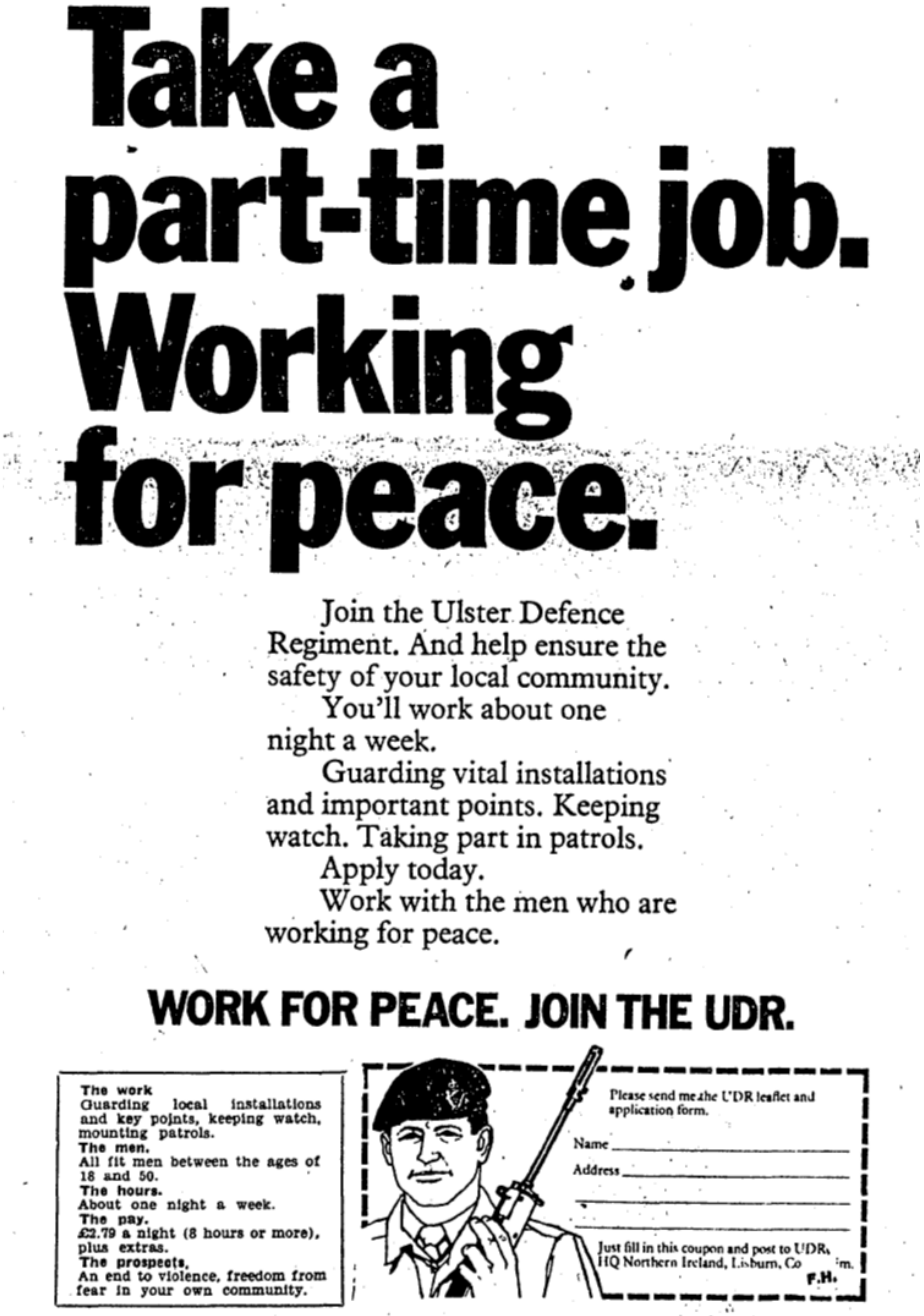
TOWN……………………………………………

COUNTY………………… DATE OF BIRTH…………………

ARMY

Image 2: *The Derry Journal*, 20th February 1970

The ad features the cross-community element prominently, as can be seen above. Institutional appeals seem to have dominated early UDR advertising, as can also be seen below in an ad from 1972.



Take a part-time job. Working for peace.

Join the Ulster Defence Regiment. And help ensure the safety of your local community.

You'll work about one night a week.

Guarding vital installations and important points. Keeping watch. Taking part in patrols.

Apply today.

Work with the men who are working for peace.

WORK FOR PEACE. JOIN THE UDR.

The work
Guarding local installations and key points, keeping watch, mounting patrols.
The men.
All fit men between the ages of 18 and 50.
The hours.
About one night a week.
The pay.
£2.79 a night (8 hours or more), plus extras.
The prospects.
An end to violence, freedom from fear in your own community.

Please send me the UDR leaflet and application form.

Name ______________________

Address ______________________

____

____

Just fill in this coupon and post to UDR, HQ Northern Ireland, Lisburn, Co m.

F.H.

Image 3: *The Fermanagh Herald*, 20th May 1972

There was however a clear preference for those who possessed previous military experience – particularly early on. As Potter noted, there was no time for recruits to go through extensive training prior to activation at the end of March 1970, and therefore experienced soldiers and commissioned officers had to be sought.[31] The reasons for this are not immediately apparent, as the conflict had yet to escalate into a full-blown security crisis. However, it may have been feared that a temporary gap in the security forces may have been exploited by the IRA – and there was a clear political consideration as shall be discussed further in Chapter 4.

The easiest place to find these experienced officers was within the Specials. This was not entirely surprising – the then-*Times* defence correspondent highlighted this inevitability in 1969: 'An initial deterrent to the recruitment of Roman Catholics may arise from the fact that most of the officers and NCOs are likely to come from the B Specials, by virtue of their previous experience'.[32] The impacts of this outside of the operational effectiveness of the UDR will be explored later in this chapter. Many ex-Specials became initial UDR platoon commanders and in the case of Regulars-turned-Specials – battalion commanders. Whilst they lacked military experience and training, they filled the vital leadership gap.[33] Whilst Hunt had indeed recommended barring such officers from enlisting, and despite the controversy and impacts on Catholic perceptions, without ex-Specials the UDR simply could not have become operational by March 1970.[34]

Regular officers were also brought in to head up companies, and later battalions. 7 UDR (Belfast) had 11 ex-Regular and Territorial officer's join.[35] 3 UDR (County Down) was soon headed up by Lt. Col. Dion Beard, an influential figure in the early UDR.[36] Regulars were also drafted for other key roles – not least as Training Majors picked for their ability to monitor and challenge the ex-USC Commandants turned UDR battalion heads.[37] This practice of ex-Regular Training Majors was maintained throughout.[38]

---

[31] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 30

[32] Douglas-Home (1969) 'New Ulster Force' *The Times*, November 13th

[33] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 30; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 37; HC Debate 1st December 1969

[34] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 29; Douglas-Home (1969) 'New Ulster Force', *The Times*, November 13th; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*, pg. 843

[35] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 31

[36] Ibid. pg. 45

As ever, there was an inherent regionality. 5 UDR (Derry) had less than a third of what its old USC brigade could muster despite Catholic support.[39] The reforms here were clearly not widely welcomed – the proportion of Catholics in the Derry battalion was lower than in the rest of Northern Ireland.[40] 6 UDR (Tyrone) was by far the largest on establishment due to many ex-Specials (around 75%) enlisting.[41] Following 6 months, the UDR had a total strength of 3660 soldiers, with most battalions at 82% capacity – with only 5 UDR (Derry) doing marginally better and 3 UDR (Down) doing substantially worse.[42] The inherent regionality of Northern Ireland not only shaped UDR recruitment, but also culture. For example, Crabbe highlighted that 10 UDR (City of Belfast) was known for being a little less polished and disciplined than their 7 UDR (E. Belfast) counterparts serving in the more affluent areas. [43] 'When I moved I found a different kind of soldier, still a professional soldier but they were tuned differently, shaped by different experiences… [7 UDR] were seen as having an easier time maybe, that we had less of a "hard" edge.'[44] The results and other dilutions of the Hunt reforms that shall be discussed in this chapter led to '…even Catholic moderates never felt happy with the UDR, believing it represented a reform gone wrong, twisted out of shape by the Stormont government' and the British state in hopes of also pacifying Protestant tensions.[45]

Vetting

UDR vetting is an overlooked yet crucial element. It features little even within UDR literature, and what has already been noted is of limited scope. Pre-conflict British vetting was dominated by Negative Vetting procedures. Negative searches consisted of searches in departmental records, Mi5 and criminal records and residency requirements.[46] These searches looked for "character defects" that make an individual unreliable or exposed to blackmail – which at the time included drunkenness, drug addiction and homosexuality.[47] By 1952, the emergence of a new Positive Vetting procedure emerged for certain departments as a result of the dawn of the Cold War and fears of civil servants emerging under the influence of a foreign state.[48] Positive Vetting seeks to ensure that the individual is of good moral character, has no close links with individuals with negative traces, and the conducting of further checks such as residency and employment history.[49] Fears of foreign influence were often tied into contemporary racial prejudices.[50] However, this system had proven successful. In the period 1945-1982, the US purged 9,500 federal civil servants whilst an additional 15,000 resigned whilst under investigation for security concerns – the UK dismissed just 25, re-assigned 88 to non-sensitive work and had 33 reinstated.[51]

---

[37] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 19, 44
[38] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022
[39] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 28
[40] Ó Dochartaigh, *From Civil Rights to Armalites*, pg. 126
[41] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 29
[42] Ibid. pg. 42
[43] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021 & 7th March 2022
[44] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021
[45] Ó Dochartaigh, *From Civil Rights to Armalites*, pg. 126

A 1981 review of vetting procedures revealed however that the vast majority of positions, including all but the 17,200 members of the Armed Forces who had access to top secret information, were subjected to Negative Vetting alone.[52] It is worth noting that this would have barred the necessary vetting to remove subversives who lacked such records. Thus, as shall be proven, even though the UDR received a comparatively enhanced vetting through the "two referees" system, overall the system lacked the detail of the necessary and arguably vital investigations of the Positive system.

Vetting for the UDR was conducted by dedicated British Army Security Vetting Units (ASVU). However, initial ASVUs often had little to no experience or knowledge of

---

[46] Daniel Lomas, "*Crocodiles in the Corridors": Security Vetting, Race and Whitehall, 1945–1968* (The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History Vol 49:1, 2021), pg. 152

[47] Ibid. pg. 150

[48] Ibid.

[49] Peter Hennessey & Gail Brownfield, *Britain's Cold War Security Purge: The Origins of Positive Vetting* (The Historical Journal Vol. 2:4, 1982); Lomas, "*Crocodiles in the Corridors",* pg. 153-155

[50] Lomas, "*Crocodiles in the Corridors",* pg. 152

[51] Hennessey & Brownfield, *Britain's Cold War Security Purge,* pg. 970, 972

[52] Daniel Lomas, *Security, scandal and the security commission report, 1981* (Intelligence and National Security Vol. 35:5, 2020), pg. 738, 742

Northern Irish society – a major flaw that limited their ability to understand and therefore conduct Positive Vetting.

> In a community such as Northern Ireland, a more complete understanding of the realities of community life amongst those who gather information for security vetting purposes is crucial. Poor quality intelligence, and a failure to understand the complexities of the minority community, have previously been attributed as significant factors in some of the most noteworthy failures in security policy in Northern Ireland. [53]

This was exacerbated by a lack of a formal vetting system within the unique confines of Northern Ireland to build upon – thus leading to a comparatively ad hoc system that, as already noted, would be incapable of conducting the necessary Positive Vetting to eliminate sectarian influences.[54] As McEvoy and White highlighted, vetting in Northern Ireland has also long prized "loyalty".[55] Admittedly, this mostly concerned civilian roles but such influences may have made themselves felt directly or indirectly within UDR vetting – particularly in the early stages of the conflict when Stormont largely directed security policy. Potter noted how initial vetting consisted of typical background checks and two referees, with time constrains often leaving the early UDR only deeply vetting borderline cases.[56] The rate of 80-100 applications a day left the vetting team lagging. On April 1st 1970 the UDR became active with only 1066 enlisted soldiers from 4000 total applications.[57] This was turnaround was unlikely to have been sufficient given the circumstances and lack of established good practice to constitute sufficiently rigorous vetting in the circumstances.

It is no surprise that the system was initially flawed and ill-provisioned. Battalions were often established in ramshackle buildings, 3 UDR (Down) was considered to have better accommodation than most as it used army bin lorries as guardrooms, with purpose-built structures not appearing until 1973.[58] The UDR was not given logistical and administrative priority, and thus support would have been spartan considering the scale of the problem. There is clear evidence that this system was further weakened, even compromised, when under pressure. Potter observed that the 1972 boom (the same year that UDA/UFF violence and numbers also began to spike – indicating growing sectarian tensions) placed great strain on the system and, and this could only have led to a lapse in vetting standards.[59] Ryder clarified that his research indicated that the whole enlistment process was reduced to just 2 weeks during this period.[60] This would explain how the UDR was infiltrated and compromised. An initial, expanded 23 vetters were unable to keep up with initial UDR applications - the few now remaining would have been pushed past their limits.[61]

---

[53] Kieran McEvoy & Ciaran White, *Security Vetting in Northern Ireland: Loyalty, Redress and Citizenship*, (Modern Law Review Vol 61:3, 1998), pg. 355

[54] Ibid. pg. 347

[55] Ibid. pg. 343, 346-347

[56] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 26

[57] Ibid. pg. 27, 31

[58] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 27, 99-100

My own work greatly expands upon the literature. For example, we can see how vetting was strained even before activation in a February 1970 letter urgently requesting additional vetting staff: 'An urgent requirement exists to place officers on temporary duty in Northern Ireland to assist with the security betting of volunteers applying to join the Ulster Defence Regiment...'.[62] To be clear, and as highlighted in a memo, UDR vetting was "enhanced vetting" – 'This procedure is more thorough than the standard vetting process which normally does not include interviewing referees'.[63] Little surprise that the vetting staff was facing unexpected strain However, a month later the situation had improved enough to discuss drawing vetters down from 23 to 13.[64]

The UDR's limited vetting system took several weeks to complete and required referees of authority and good standing – such as soldiers, doctors, or clergy.[65] The applicant's close relatives were then checked under police and Army intelligence records. Applicants would be blacklisted if they were deemed unsuitable or questionable either by source or reputation – one document even cited certain Specials as examples:

---

[59] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 88; Wood (2006), pg. 7-8

[60] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 50

[61] NAUK: DEFE 70/10 – Untitled letter to Head of AG Sec. [D Sy (A) from PS to Minister of Defence for administration], 23rd January 1970

[62] NAUK: DEFE 70/10 – Untitled letter from MOD to Regional Commands, February 1970

[63] NAUK: DEFE 24/875 – *Ulster Defence Regiment: Vetting*, [Lt. Col. for GOC to MOD], 11th June 1974

[64] NAUK: DEFE 70/10 – *Ulster Defence Regiment – Vetting Arrangements*, [Memo from Director of Security (Army)] 13th March 1970

[65] UDR 1, interview with author 25th February 2022; UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

> It has also been decided that individuals who are "notorious" even though they may be innocent should as a general rule be excluded. For example, members of the Tynan platoon and those who were known to be at Burntollet would prima facie not be suitable.[66]

By October 1970 of 7,143 applications, 629 were rejected on security grounds, although this was more likely due to security records than interviews – especially as interviews were only conducted after these checks.[67] Referees were mostly theatre to stress UDR impartiality, and it was clearly causing unnecessary strain given it was later recommended that they move to a limited vetting staff reading written referee statements.[68] This led to discussions of dropping it on such grounds in October 1970 '…I doubt that any have been turned away solely on the basis of the single referee interviewee. This is, and always been recognised as being an exercise in public relations.'[69] It was dropped entirely in the mid-1980s – 'experience showed this to be ineffectual and the practice was abandoned.'[70]

As this thesis shows, the core UDR narrative is one of constant, incremental improvement. The length of background checks and investigations clearly grew over time as both UDR 2 and Crabbe (who enlisted in the early 1980s) reported the process taking a few months, whilst UDR 1 who joined in 1970 reported the whole process must have taken fewer than six weeks.[71] 'It did get better as lessons were learnt and by the later years I think the record speaks for itself – we did not have the incidents of earlier years.'[72] By February 1985, both the Army and RUC separately vetted candidates and presented their findings for decision – and this seems to have been effective considering in the previous six months: of 803 UDR applications 239 were rejected, with 85 subversive and 95 criminal rejections.[73] A letter dated August 1991 even reveals a practice of re-vetting individuals at appropriate intervals, though this was likely introduced in the wake of the 1972 boom given it was not used as a talking point at this time.[74]

---

[66] NAUK: DEFE 70/10 – *Ulster Defence Regiment – Vetting Procedures* [Memo from J 2 Division, Home Office], 30th January 1970

[67] NAUK: DEFE 70/10 – *Vetting of Ulster Defence Regiments Volunteers*, [Letter to AG Secretariat, MOD from Security 1(A)], 22nd October 1970; *Instructions for ASVU Vetting Team Northern Ireland* [Memo from Director of Security (Army)], 27th January 1970

[68] NAUK: DEFE 24/875 – *Ulster Defence Regiment – Vetting,* Undated Memo to PS/US of S(Army); *Vetting of UDR Applicants*, [DD SY(A) to DASD], 12th July 1974

[69] NAUK: DEFE 70/10 – *Vetting of Ulster Defence Regiment Volunteers*, [Letter to Head of AG Secretariat from R. Thomas], 26th October 1970

[70] NAUK: ZCJ 4/5524 – *UDR – Vetting of Applicants and Public Relations Training*

[71] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; UDR 1, interview with author 25th February 2022

The Stevens Inquiry (1990) showed both the systems flaws and its strengths. The investigation into possible collusion saw the RUC hand over a list of 1,315 UDR applicants (1986-1989) with adverse RUC reports. The intention was to reveal flaws in UDR vetting, but the Army noted that 968 were either screened out or withdrew their application – and of the remaining 347 only 12 had explicit recommendations, whilst the rest had vague statements of "criminal" or "subversive" traces.[75] Some of these (a review discovered 776 total) were found to be particularly minor offences – including underage drinking or driving, that would not typically bar enlistment. Only 75 were found to be of significant concern warranting interview, and only five of these had been recommended for dismissal.[76] Those with significant and relevant criminal traces, now prohibited under new recruitment standards, did not have their engagement renewed. This document is a prime example of the consistent improvements made to the system, and the efforts that the UDR undertook where possible to remove undesirables. The Irish archives include one file which includes "adverse reports" between January 1980 and May 1982 – the summarising brief complains of the UDR as a 'source of concern to the minority community' and 'even within the RUC there is some disquiet at the lack of appreciation of the sensitivities of the minority shown by UDR units'.[77] This is a reduction from the periods of infamous incidents, and the document reports how the British reported that those dismissed as being "unsuitable" for various reasons totalled just 1,413 soldiers – a decline from 18% to just 2% of the regiment.[78] However, it is worth again noting the sample of 900 leavers from November 1972 – May 1973 which found a majority (232) left for “Failure to attend for duty”, or an earlier Irish report which found more collusive activities in the mid-1970s.[79] As I argue in Chapter 3 such undisciplined conduct is a failure of training.

---

[72] David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

[73] NAUK: CJ 4/5524 – '*Notes of a Meeting held on March 12th to discuss the UDR*', [Attended by Sec of State, GOC, UDR CO, MA to GOC, Mr Scott, PUS, Mr Buxton, Mr Gilliland, Mr Daniell], 12th March 1985

[74] NAUK: CJ 4/10328 – '*Royal Irish Rangers/UDR Merger*', [Letter from NIO to BIS, NY], 9th August 1991

[75] NAUK: DEFE 24/3119 – '*Visit by Kevin McNamara to 6 UDR's Annual Camp*', 2nd August 1990 [Loose Minute]

[76] Ibid.

[77] NAI 2012/59/1690 – '*Ulster Defence Regiment*' [Brief from Department of Foreign Affairs], April 1980

The system’s flaws were acknowledged during the UDR’s lifetime. 10 UDR (City of Belfast), a battalion which previously had a relatively high discharge rate, established their own vetting system under their Training Major in the mid-1970s – this proved to be more effective whilst enhancing battalion quality and discipline.[80] Similarly in November 1984, a UDR man was acquitted after an accidental weapons discharge killed a Catholic youth. However, the trial revealed the soldier’s pre-enlistment convictions for assault and disorderly conduct – convictions that the vetting unit clearly believed did not bar service.[81] Furthermore, Potter highlighted a further serious flaw that the system ‘…allowed Regular soldiers to transfer to the UDR without first being put through the same vetting as civilians applying to join the Regiment’.[82] This did have consequences, such as the very murder that led to the Stevens Inquiry.

The system was not totally ineffective – it did reject candidates. Ryder’s comment that the system was largely a veneer given those viewed as a risk by the RUC were regularly accepted, does not stand up to even his own findings.[83] In 1975-1976, a total of 10,000 candidates were screened out, and there was an overall 44% rejection rate in the lifetime of the UDR.[84] A “veneer” system would not have this mass screening out of candidates. Furthermore, Ryder acknowledged that the RUC, whom he cites for much of his criticism and who in previous archival examples were often UDR critics, were keen to push the Army and the UDR out so that they could takeover security for the region.[85] Whilst it may be true that individuals with adverse police vetting reports had enlisted and gone on to commit criminal offences, this would not constitute a “veneer”, but a flawed system.[86]

---

[78] NAI 2012/59/1690 – *Ulster Defence Regiment* [Brief from Department of Foreign Affairs], April 1980

[79] NAUK: DEFE 24/835 – *Minutes of the 41st Meeting of the UDR Advisory Council* [22nd June 1973]; NAI 2016/22/2025 – *Evidence of involvement by UDR members in criminal activities* [Report from David Donoghue], January 1976

[80] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 94

[81] Ibid. pg. 272

[82] Ibid. pg. 325, 378

[83] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 87

[84] Ibid. pg. 98, 205-206

Ryder’s claims of vetting “theatre” appears skewed towards the failings in 1972 and took this as representative of the whole. This is unsurprising, given in hindsight one would notice the glaring incidents of collusion compared to the mundanity of successful vetting. Had this simply been a “veneer”, one cannot see how the UDR would not have assisted Loyalist paramilitaries to enforce the UWC strike or enlist en-masse in Loyalist paramilitaries when the UDR was disbanded and sending the conflict into a new violent phase. Such events did not occur – and the government accepted reassurances from Brian Faulkner that the UDR of County Down could be relied upon.[87] This assurance likely stems from Faulkner’s brother holding a command in 3 UDR, and it appears that doubts were only raised by Oliver Napier of the Alliance Party.[88] One major remarked that despite the rest of the country grinding to a halt amidst fears of Loyalist violence, his entire company turned out for duty.[89] The evidence is that the UDR proved to be reliable throughout the strike – even Irish records only recount two convictions or reports of UDR impropriety, in the form of two 10 UDR (City of Belfast) soldiers who were sentenced to 5 years each for the intimidation of Catholic families during the strike.[90] Furthermore, a report on the UDR from 1986 recalled that ‘the Regiment’s impartiality was clearly demonstrated during the 1977 Ulster Workers’ Strike’.[91]

However, it must be acknowledged that both Crabbe and UDR 2 stressed that the lack of local understanding and knowledge hampered ASVUs, and the RUC therefore should have played a part in vetting to compensate – somewhat supporting some of Ryder's claims.[92] As UDR 2 recalled: 'They didn't know the areas like we did, they didn't know the people or the places... so perhaps the RUC should have played a part.'[93] Crabbe forwarded a similar position: 'They lacked nuance – they could make those broad based judgements... maybe they were not a risk to the Army as such. But if someone was involved in the fringes of a paramilitary organisation or something like that they would not have had that nuance.'[94] This was implicitly acknowledged when a dedicated vetting team for the UDR was established in late 1989.[95]

---

[85] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 206

[86] Ibid. pg. 236

[87] NAUK: CJ 4/1148 – *Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the Chief Executive of Northern Ireland at Chequers at 12:30pm on Friday 24th May 1974*

[88] Ibid.

[89] Arthur, *Northern Ireland,* pg. 100

[90] NAI 2016/22/2025 – *Convictions of UDR Members or Former UDR Members for Criminal Offences 1974-76,* No Date

[91] NAUK: CJ 4/7446 – *Essay: The Ulster Defence Regiment*, 1986

The RUC were distrusted by the government due to fears of subversion and collusion. There were several such incidents, including lawyer Rosemary Nelson who was harassed and intimidated by the RUC – the ensuing inquiry could not rule out individual collusion in her murder.[96] Institutional rivalries additionally made vetting collaboration unlikely.[97] Deciding who was enlisted and who was not would have been a significant tool to wield as institutional influence. The RUC were permitted a minor role through record checks in vetting.[98] By February 1985, it appears that greater RUC involvement was being considered over Army vetters who lacked such local insight.[99] I acknowledge there would have been a risk of subversive and collusive elements allowing each other to pass into the regiment. However, uninformed vetters could have missed local nuances (particularly when under strain such as during the boom), and similarly facilitated subversion. However, if one reads McGovern's latest article on collusion, you can see that RUC Special Branch (who would have had a far more select and limited list of vetters) appears to have been responsible for a significant element of

---

[92] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

[93] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022

[94] David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

[95] NAUK: DEFE 70/2208 – Untitled Memo from HQNI to Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, 24th September 1989

[96] Police Service Northern Ireland, *Operation Greenwich* Report (Belfast, 2022); Sir Michael Morland, *Rosemary Nelson Inquiry* Report (London: HMSO 2011), pg. 465-466; Graham Ellison & Jim Smyth, *The Crowned Harp: Policing Northern Ireland* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), pg. 134-135, 147-148; Mark McGovern, *Inquiring into Collusion? Collusion, the State and the Management of Truth Recovery in Northern Ireland* (State Crime Journal Vol. 2:1, 2013)

[97] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 142

[98] NAUK: DEFE 70/10 - *Instructions for ASVU Vetting Team Northern Ireland* [Memo from Director of Security (Army)], 27th January 1970

[99] NAUK: CJ 4/5524 – *UDR – Recruitment and Training*, [Letter from R.J. Andrew to A. Stephens], 1st February 1985

RUC collusion.[100] Concerns were even raised to the Irish Government by former Independent Nationalist MP Frank McManus in 1989 of an "Inner Circle" controlling deviant elements in both Special Branch and the regular RUC.[101] Perhaps a hybrid system of RUC or local vetters and ASVU's would have yielded better results.

As has been shown and as all UDR respondents firmly stated, it would be naïve to say that this system was perfect.[102] Instead, ex-UDR believed that the system removed the most egregious and clearly unsuitable candidates, but those with clandestine involvement in criminal or sectarian activities could slip through. UDR 2: 'Unless somebody has a past record, it is very difficult to say what way they were going to turn out'.[103] Crabbe summarised that: '...there are always going to be criminals and undesirables in society, the UDR was no different'.[104] This was also acknowledged by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in February 1985:

> Until early 1984 it had been the practice to interview one referee, but this was found to be costly in manpower terms and it had never been the case that an interview had resulted in a change of mind about a candidate's suitability; the practice therefore had been dropped ... paper checks would weed out potential recruits with records subversive or criminal; but they would not necessarily identify the hot heads and people with sectarian beliefs who could so easily cause trouble...[105]

No vetting system can be perfect, referees will always be selected that benefit the candidate, and particularly in the post-internment rush the pressures clearly resulted in unsuitable candidates being cleared.[106] The UDR was under-resourced in its early years, and it had no say in its vetting system or its standards. Furthermore, as Edgar highlighted: 'at the very start the government was in panic mode – "if people want to join, let's take them". Unless you were known as a very bad person you were in... but as it progressed, they were very keen to ensure “no bad apple” got in’.[107] This may have compounded any initial vetting issues, and may explain the infamous deviant incidents of the early to mid-1970s. The fault therefore for any shortcomings with this system lies firmly in the hands of the British Army and state.

---

[100] Mark McGovern*, Legacy, truth and collusion in the North of Ireland*, (Race & Class Vol. 64:3, 2023)
[101] NAI 2019/101/2291 – *Meeting with Mr Frank McManus, Enniskillen, 4th October 1989*
[102] UDR 1, interview with author 25th February 2022; UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022
[103] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022
[104] David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022
[105] CJ 4/5524 – *Note of a Meeting Held on 12th March to Discuss the UDR*
[106] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 377-378

In the early years the UDR had a Negative Vetting system focused on eliminating adverse traces. This was partly a factor of limited vetters and partly due to time and resource constraints. When one marries this up with the vetting lapse during the boom, then we can see how vetting failed to adequately bar individuals. The Army should have prioritised genuine positive vetting, with informed vetters who understood what traces and subtleties to look out for. It is not like the Army was incapable of this – as Lomas highlighted the British state had leveraged Positive Vetting systems before to exclude ethnic minorities.[108] Again, we are likely looking at British under-resourcing of the UDR, an all-too-common feature as this thesis shall prove, and perhaps a reluctance to “rock the boat” with Protestants.

2. What could have motivated individuals to enlist with the regiment?

What motivates individuals to enlist is well-studied. Lawrence & Legree in their literature review of the mid-1990s concluded motivations for enlistment could be summarised into eight categories: Long-term interest –typically stemming from exposure or family history; Self-improvement; Job/skill training – acquisition of skills and experience; Money for education; Lack of direction, with enlisting even being spontaneous; Time out – service as a break and time to plan; Escapism; and finally as “No other prospects”. [109]

These could be exhibited in isolation, or in combination – such as self-improvement and the acquisition of experience and skills. As their review demonstrated, the literature is heavily dominated by studies on US forces.[110] Pliske’s survey of US enlistees heavily supports their summary – finding that self-improvement, skill acquisition, money for college, serving their country and unemployment were the most cited motivations respectively. [111] Recruits significantly favoured the first two (more personal) options, with a drastic decrease thereafter.

---

[107] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[108] Lomas, “*Crocodiles in the Corridors”*

[109] G. H. Lawrence & Peter Legree, *Military Enlistment Propensity: A Review of Recent Literature* (United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioural and Social Sciences, 1996), pg. 1-2

[110] Lawrence & Peter Legree, *Military Enlistment Propensity*

However, this author would argue that Lawrence & Legree's list is insufficient.[112] It has been acknowledged that the literature has underestimated the prevalence of patriotic motivations – with it also being absent from the stated studies.[113] Vogelsang's study of veterans noted how the biggest motivators for enlistment were educational benefits (70% rated as influential), followed by patriotism and travel opportunities (64.4% – with 48.7% and 44.7% "very influential" respectively). [114] Meanwhile, Woodruff et al. in their study of US combat troops discovered that those with patriotic motivations were far more likely to enlist. [115] These however are not mutually exclusive.[116] As this chapter shall establish, this was a significant enlistment factor for many UDR – with interviewees expressing motivations that do not even touch upon the latter six categories of Lawrence & Legree's model. [117]

A more appropriate framework would be Moskos', who roughly divided motivations into two models.[118] The institutional model covered motivations such as patriotism, duty, honour, and morality. Occupational motivations were based on incentives, self-interest, and other such free-market trends. Moskos charted a shift in military organisations from institutional model to occupational trends in the 1970s, driving militaries to behave like any business – including using financial incentives as a

---

[111] Pliske et al. *Towards an Understanding of Army Enlistment Motivation Patterns* (US Army Institute for the Behavioural and Social Sciences, 1986)

[112] Lawrence & Peter Legree, *Military Enlistment Propensity*

[113] Segal et al. *Attitudes of Entry-level Enlisted Personnel: Pro-Military and Politically Mainstreamed* (in Feaver, P. & Kohn, R. (eds.) Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil Military Gap and American National Security, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), pg. 207

[114] Claudia Vogelsang, *Propensity for Military Enlistment: A Descriptive Study of Motivations* (Thesis: Smith College, 2013), pg. 26-27

[115] Woodruff et al. *Propensity to Serve and Motivation to Enlist among American Combat Soldiers* (Armed Forces & Society Vol. 32:3, 2006) pg. 360-363

[116] David Segal, *Measuring the Institutional/Occupational Change Thesis* (Armed Forces & Society Vol. 1:3, 1986)

[117] Lawrence & Peter Legree, *Military Enlistment Propensity*

[118] Charles Moskos, *From Institution to Occupation: Trends in Military Organization* (Armed Forces & Society Vol. 4:1, 1977)

"pull" factor.[119] The relevance of Moskos' model on the UDR is seen in Potter, who charted similar shifts from institutional to occupational motivations in UDR advertising and enlistment.[120] However, it has been argued that these are not binary, and that often a military has elements of both.[121] This was seen in Helmus et al.'s study of US Army recruits whose motivations for enlisting were mixed but demonstrated a clear preference for occupational motivations.[122]

Certainly, all volunteer forces rely on attracting individuals who would otherwise remain in civilian life, revealing the inevitability of occupational influences in modern Western militaries.[123] However, a relatively good rate of pay was not particularly influential for enlisting – and studies have shown that institutional motivations often are more powerful motivators.[124] I use the revised version of Moskos' models as established by Woodruff et al. that institutional motivations are those driven by duty, patriotism, morality, and honour – trumping personal reward.[125]

Finding an adequate comparison for the UDR is difficult. The regiment was both a predominantly part-time force, and a frontline unit. This mixes what would otherwise be typically Reservist and Regular elements – complicating any analysis. Therefore, one must also include rare studies on Reservist enlistment. Bury's Royal Logistics Corps reservists study concluded that not only were reservists more likely to enlist for institutional reasons (with a full 16% difference between the most cited institutional and occupational motivations), but those with institutional motivations were significantly more motivated to deploy.[126] Gorman & Thomas noted a similar trend, with institutional motivations increasing chances of transferring to the Regulars – again showing a higher motivation to deploy. [127] Finally, Kolesnichenko et al.'s study of the National Guard of Ukraine, a gendarmerie unit that undertakes operations and utilises a significant Reserve component, revealed that the most operationally effective troops were those with institutional motivations.[128]

---

[119] Moskos, *From Institution to Occupation*

[120] Moskos, *From Institution to Occupation*; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 221

[121] Charles Moskos & Frank Wood, *The Military: More than Just a Job?* (New York: Pergamon Brassey's International Defence 1988), pg. 3-14

[122] Helmus et al. *Life as a Private: A Study of the Motivations and Experiences of Junior Enlisted Personnel in the U.S. Army* (RAND Corporation 2018), pg. 25-33

[123] Ian Bellany, *Accounting for Army Recruitment: White and Non-White Soldiers and the British Army* (Defence and Peace Economics Vol. 14:4, 2003), pg. 284

[124] Bellany, *Accounting for Army Recruitment*, pg. 285; Patrick Bury, *Recruitment and Retention in British Army Reserve Logistics Units* (Armed Forces & Society Vol. 43:4, 2017); Mark Lennon, *"Strengthen the Nation": Exploring the Motivating Factors Leading to Irish Defence Forces Recruitment* (The Journal of Military History and Defence Studies Vol 1:2, 2020), pg. 54-60; Paul Sackett & Anne Mavor, *Aptitudes and Aspirations of American Youth: Implications for Military Recruiting* (Washington DC: National Academies Press, 2003); Todd Woodruff, *Who Should the Military Recruit? The Effects of Institutional, Occupational, and Self-Enhancement Enlistment Motives on Soldier Identification and Behaviour* (Armed Forces & Society Vol. 43:4, 2017)

[125] Moskos, *From Institution to Occupation*; Woodruff et al. *Propensity to Serve and Motivation to Enlist among American Combat Soldiers*

Motivations for joining the UDR were myriad. For those like UDR 1, the UDR was a chance to make a change, particularly with regards to security.[129] No doubt this similarly motivated Catholics to enlist, though many as Crabbe noted: 'there has long been a Catholic tradition of serving in the armed forces'. [130] Noel Downey recalled how the death of his friend sparked his call to duty:

> I met a guy called Ronnie Graham. Ronnie was one of three Graham brothers that were murdered... The IRA had shot Ronnie when he was on his day job as a delivery driver... That struck a chord with me. It really, really did. It annoyed me an awful lot, so it was me and two or three mates of mine who decided – "*look let's try and do our bit here*". So, we joined the UDR...[131]

Such a story is not unique, a similarly tragic event led to Crabbe enlisting in Belfast:

> A friend and colleague was murdered... I remember at his funeral, the priest said: "He lost his life standing up, doing what was right". I just thought "*Who else is prepared to stand up? Maybe I should do something that's right*." [132]

Kenny Donaldson of the victims and survivors umbrella organisation Innocent Victims United (IVU) stated that a sense of duty motivated enlistments in the border regions of Fermanagh (4 UDR) and Tyrone (6 UDR). [133] Meanwhile, simple military aspirations and careers attracted others – 'I had hoped to serve in the Regular forces ...eventually I ended up joining the UDR'.[134]

---

[126] Bury, *Recruitment and Retention in British Army Reserve Logistics Units*
[127] Linda Gorman & George Thomas, *Enlistment Motivations of Army Reservists: Money, Self-Improvement, or Patriotism?* (Armed Forces & Society Vol. 17:4, 1991), pg. 595-597
[128] Kolesnichenko et al. *Content, Hierarchy, Intensity of Motives and their Possibility to be Implemented in Servicemen with Various Levels of Effectiveness of Service Activity* (BRAIN: Broad Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience Vol. 12:4, 2017), pg. 404
[129] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021 & 25th February 2022
[130] David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022
[131] Noel Downey, interview author 31st August 2021
[132] David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022
[133] Kenny Donaldson, interview with author 31st August 2021

These motivations are distinctly institutional, with little care or consideration for occupational motivations. Unlike other forces, the UDR was permanently on active duty. They served and faced dangers within their own communities. Individuals would have had to be more highly motivated to endure the increased risks, indefinite deployment, and off-duty killings. Respondents listed the strain that UDR service placed upon them - and yet all interviewees (with the exception of UDR 1) had long military careers.[135] As UDR 2 recalled: 'We never opened the door to anybody unless somebody identified themselves. We knew about keeping our curtains pulled, and never putting the lights on. These are all the things that as children, I grew up with.'[136]

I hypothesize that institutional motivations are more resilient and enduring than occupational motivations. This explains Kolesnichenko et al's observation that institutional motivations were linked to higher operational effectiveness, and Bury's conclusions that institutional motivations were also associated with an increased motivation to deploy and extended service. [137] Simply put, when risks are high and the threat indefinite, occupational motivations would be insufficient to motivate an individual to enlist or continue. Given the circumstances, it is therefore unsurprising that all 7 UDR respondents to this author listed institutional motivations for enlistment – particularly broadly patriotic.

> As you were maturing and growing up, you started to realise that there were bad things going on. You wanted to be a good citizen and bring an end to that. It is easy for people to go "Why did the security force not do this?" or "Why did they not do that?". Well, why did *you* not do anything is my point.[138]

---

[134] UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022

[135] UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; Noel Downey, interview author 31st August 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; John Robinson, 4th November 2022

[136] UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021

[137] Kolesnichenko et al. *Content, Hierarchy, Intensity of Motives and their Possibility to be Implemented in Servicemen with Various Levels of Effectiveness of Service Activity*, pg. 404-406; Bury, *Recruitment and Retention in British Army Reserve Logistics Units*

[138] Richard Edgar, 8th July 2022

Patriotism may have also been an indirect "push" factor for Catholic recruitment. If patriotism is a particularly attractive theme of UDR service, then Catholics may have found it difficult to consider serving a state they felt did not serve them.

3. Why did the percentage of Catholics in the UDR rapidly decline in its early years, and why did it never recover?

In the UDR's first year Catholics accounted for 28% of the UDR, and while this declined by 3% in 1971 it was roughly stable and in line with typical wastage.[139] Yet the Catholic contingent soon went into freefall, and never returned to initial levels.

Year	**UDR Catholic membership**
1970	28%
1971	25%
1972	16%
1973	8%
1974	5%
1975	2%
1976	1.8%
1977	1.9%
1978	1.8%
1979	2.1%
1980	2%

Table B – Catholic membership of the UDR 1970-1980 (CJ 4/3467)

There were several issues that led to this decline. These worked both independently and in concert to create a situation that drove Catholics from the regiment. These can be summarised as:

- USC participation in the early UDR
- UDR initial identity

---

[139] NAUK: DEFE 68/916 – *Catholic Membership of The UDR (as a percentage),* No date

- British military actions and mistakes in the early stages of the conflict

The combination of these events crippled the UDR’s core function as a reconciliation regiment of the Northern Ireland security apparatus.

USC Participation in the Early UDR

Including ex-Specials at first appears to be an act of self-sabotage. The USC developed an unofficial policy of not recruiting Catholics, whom they perceived as traitors more loyal to the IRA or the Republic.[140] Ó Faoleán noted that many Specials were openly hostile to Catholics and that the inclusion of Specials in the UDR, particularly their leadership of battalions upon activation, was in violation of Hunt’s recommendations for an impartial force.[141]

However, beyond replacing the USC and placing control under HQNI, the recommendations neglect the regiment. Of 47 recommendations, 46 of them concern the governance, operations, and standards of the RUC.[142] Thus, whilst I agree with Ó Faoleán that the report likely would have not recommended allowing Specials to apply - there is also no direct statement barring this.[143] Nevertheless, this would have affected Catholic recruitment. Indeed, a November 1969 statement from the Belfast Central Citizens’ Defence Committee, a group focused on defending civilians from state and non-state violence, denounced the regiment on these grounds – stating that it violated the accepted principles of the Hunt Report.[144]

> We view with shock and dismay the proposal that not only should the existing district commandants of the B-Specials be retained as local area commandants in the new force... This makes a complete and utter mockery of the desire of having an expressed inter-denominational force.[145]

---

[140] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 5

[141] Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*, pg. 842-843

[142] Baron Hunt, *Report of the Advisory Committee on Police in Northern Ireland*, Chapter 10

[143] Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*, pg. 842-843

[144] The Irish Press (1969), ‘New Force is Unacceptable’, 14th November

[145] Ibid.

Republican 1 believed that the real intention was to bring ‘as many of that potentially volatile force as was possible under the control of the British Army’.[146] To Republican 1, the latent threat of the demobbed, disaffected USC was simply too great for the state to ignore, who thus sought pacification – ‘The USC had been armed and had an organisational structure which could possibly have threatened the rolling out of any reforms…’[147] Dixon advanced a similar position:

> …another argument in favour of the [UDR] was to prevent the part-time ‘B Specials’ from going underground. The theory was that it was better to bring disaffected Protestants into the official state security organisations, where a degree of control and discipline could be exerted than that to allow these undisciplined and potentially violent people to become involved in paramilitary organisations.[148]

This is certainly plausible, “professionalising” the force by bringing it within British Army control in the short-term whilst reforming it long-term makes strategic sense. Consider the very real threat that disaffected quasi-military veterans could pose. Their acceptance was a matter of concern – as evidenced by the then-NI PM issuing a statement that Unionists and Specials would eventually get behind the regiment: ‘It may take a little time to digest but given time it will be accepted’.[149] Bernadette Devlin raised the matter in the Commons: ‘…the reason why the regiment was formed was that the Government could not deal with the force of 8,500 armed B Specials in Northern Ireland who did not accept their authority.’[150]

Whilst I forward that the UDR was intended to replace the Specials – it cannot be denied that it was also intended to “rebrand” them. One undated MoD memo noted that the real for reason for the merger was to establish greater control of the Specials alongside avoiding future political fallout:

---

[146] Republican 1, interview with author 2nd March 2022

[147] Ibid.

[148] Dixon, *“Hearts and Minds”?* pg. 467

[149] The Irish Independent (1969) ‘Unionists Will Accept New Force’, November 13th

[150] HC Debate, 12th March 1970

> …the purpose of such a recommendation is simply to bring the B Specials under Westminster control and to provide a means of instilling proper training and discipline: that is, it is made not on its military merits, but in order to pull Home Office and Stormont chestnuts out of the fire.[151]

However, the memo also concludes that the Specials failed to satisfy the MoD's second major reflection – the need for an effective anti-IRA and guard role, not least because the Specials could not recruit across the communities.[152] This should be expected. The reforms came as a result of a failing security system, and the UDR would be replacing the Specials and taking on their recruiting sources whilst ensuring 'proper training and discipline'. Therefore, it would always be on some level a "rebrand". The memo's conclusions focus on and ultimately reflect this second concern as a more pressing matter – not the political "rebrand".

Recruiting Specials however played into IRA narratives regarding state oppression. Some Specials even canvassed against the new regiment, and one officer even refused duties to any who applied to join the UDR – instead advocating that his men should join the proscribed UVF.[153] There were also British fears of a "bloodbath" if the news was not delivered carefully, and that the Specials needed to be occupied or else they would join the ranks of paramilitaries.[154] When future UDR Commander Brig. Scott-Bowden made numerous speeches to Specials advocating UDR enlistment, he recalled in some rural regions the reception was '*far from friendly*'.[155] This is not to say that all Specials were disorderly thugs. I spoke with those who served alongside ex-Specials, and the vast majority I was informed were disciplined professionals.[156] As Crabbe noted: 'they were disciplined, experienced soldiers…'[157] Of course, criticism of including the Specials would also be a criticism of the UDR – and thus their support of the measure must be taken with a little scepticism.

---

[151] NAUK: DEFE 24/868 – *Future of the B Specials*, Undated MoD report

[152] Ibid.

[153] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 28

[154] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 16-17

[155] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 28-29

[156] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021 & 25th February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

[157] David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

By March 1970, 55% of Specials had applied to join the UDR.[158] There were however regional variations. A sense of duty drew in many Specials in the border counties – which Potter put down to experiencing the 1950s cross-border IRA raids.[159] In Tyrone (6 UDR) around 75% of Specials volunteered to join the UDR given their regional militarised culture – the local ex-commandeer had been a former Army Brigadier.[160] As the table below demonstrates, such regional variations influenced battalions. Furthermore although 6 UDR was the most "Specialised" UDR battalions, their previous militarisation may have cancelled out undesirable influences. However, it is worth contrasting this with its statistically lower Catholic recruitment rate – which may indicate that the two are somewhat mutually exclusive. If one compares Table A to the deaths during the conflict, we find interesting correlations.

Battalion	**Deaths**	**Off-duty Deaths**	**Ex-UDR**	**Total Killed**
1 *(N. Antrim)*	0	0	0	0
2 (S. *Armagh*)	28	21	17	45
3 (*Down*)	20	10	5	25
4 (*Fermanagh)*	20	15	4	24
5 (*Derry*)	27	24	12	39
6 (*W. Tyrone*)	32	23	7	39
7 (*E. Belfast*)	2	2	0	2
8 (*E. Tyrone*)	32	30	6	38
9 (*S. Antrim*)	5	5	0	5
10 (*City of Belfast*)	12	11	1	13
11 (*N. Armagh*)	9	5	7	16
Training Cadre	1	1	0	1
7/10 (*Belfast* 1985-1992)	8	6	1	9

---

[158] HC Debate 4th March 1970

[159] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 29

[160] Ibid.

4/6 (*Border* 1991-1992)	1	1	0	1

Table D – Deaths by Battalion. Data from Potter (2001, pg. 384-392); Roll of Honour, UDR Association – available at: https://www.ulsterdefenceregimentassociation.com/roll-of-honour

Those battalions with a higher Special's acceptance rate suffered a higher death toll throughout the conflict. This may play into IRA regionality as I argued in *Hunting the Watchmen,* with local IRA being influenced and motivated by different factors.[161] One East Tyrone IRA volunteer recalled how he saw local forces as part of a history of Protestant suppression.[162] It appears therefore that the initial acceptance of Specials whilst providing security continuity and initial operational stability may have heightened threats against the UDR, and once operations against them were "green-lit" local IRA operatives released their pent-up hatred of the Specials and historical sectarian violence on the UDR. Therefore, it is not just military design that can shape LDF's and their experiences – perceptions can come to be just as relevant.

However, not every Special who applied was accepted – around 1000 were rejected, mostly on age or fitness grounds.[163] This initially appears dubious given previous Special sectarianism. However, as has been pointed out to the author – local social mixing would have brought sectarian and security force elements into close proximity, and unless it can be established that there is an active connection, it is almost impossible to determine someone's true nature.[164] This is why the aspersions of some such as Ellison & Smyth that the fact that the UDA recruited from the same regions as the UDR casts doubt on UDR reliability or legality is unsatisfying.[165] These areas were stereotypically Protestant, stereotypically Unionist and stereotypically anti-IRA – Loyalists were hardly going to recruit from areas that were not sympathetic to Unionist/British interests (and thereby more likely to enlist in the security forces). But by that standard, *any* security service in Northern Ireland was dubious and should not have been deployed.

---

[161] Chesse, *Hunting the Watchmen*

[162] Trigg, *Death in the Fields*, pg. 39

[163] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 29

[164] McEvoy & White, *Security Vetting in Northern Ireland*, pg. 356; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022

[165] Ellison & Smyth, *The Crowned Harp*, pg. 139

By the end of its first month in March 1970 the UDR totalled 2,440 soldiers, including 946 Catholics and 1,423 ex-Specials.[166] However, a significant element of Specials were from 6 UDR, which had been led by a former Regular brigadier (and therefore were likely to have experienced increased standards and discipline), with the remainder scattered across the rest of Northern Ireland. As ex-UDR members highlighted, the UDR was reflective of regional communities.[167] Particularly Catholic areas would have had a comparatively higher number of Catholics than majority Protestant areas, and vice versa.[168] 5 UDR's (Derry) first two companies were around 50% Catholic, and particularly Catholic Newry had the highest rate of Catholics of any UDR company.[169] Bernadette Devlin MP (a prominent Nationalist) revealed in the Commons that for the areas of 2 (Armagh), 4 (Fermanagh) and 6 UDR (Tyrone) the rate was around 70-75% Specials in contrast to the 4% conversion around Belfast, 'Does [the Minister] accept that this is not a well-balanced force, and will he stand by his promise to the House that until it was a well-balanced force it would not be used in Northern Ireland?'[170]

Concerns over heavy USC involvement were logical and fed by reports of application form distributions both by and to Specials. One such report in the Commons was met with the response that the first such distributions of "Application Forms" were USC-led: 'This so-called application form was initiated by the staff officer of the USC, not to recruit members for the new forces, but essentially to enable an impression to be formed of the numbers of USC members who would be interested in applying for membership of the two forces'.[171] Regardless, such documentation indicates an organised movement at least within the USC to transition as many Specials as possible – a matter further compounded by NI PM Chichester-Clark's public plea for Specials to *'Join up'*.[172] Labour MP John Mendelson in November 1969 made accusations in parliament that this was done to pacify both Specials and

---

[166] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 38-39

[167] UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

[168] Ibid.

[169] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 29, 35

[170] HC Debate 4th March 1970

[171] HC Debate 19th November 1969

[172] Ibid.

"extremists" that this force was to be the USC by another name – just as Republican 1 forwarded.[173]

> Because Major Chichester-Clark was under very great pressure from the extremists, he decided that the only way to reassure them—after all, they did not like either the giving up of their arms or the disbandment of the B Specials was to go as near as possible to giving the impression that this would be a continuation of the USC without saying so.[174]

That an English MP was noting the overwhelming USC presence and its ramifications speaks volumes as to the evident risk and impact that such recruitment would and did have. The *Irish Press* condemned the UDR:

> Major Chichester-Clark and the British Minister for the Army, Mr. Richards, are gravely mistaken if they really believe... that the oath of allegiance will not keep Catholics out of the [UDR]. What is the difference between the soon to be "defunct" B Specials and the not yet created Ulster Defence Regiment if the new force is to consist largely of men at present serving in the Specials?[175]

The USC as an institution was viewed unfavourably by members of the security forces – including those who served alongside honourable ex-Specials in the UDR.[176] As UDR 1 recalled: 'The B Specials were decidedly discredited following a series of incidents and investigations.'[177] Crabbe voiced a similar assessment: 'The B Specials were effectively seen as the armed wing of the Orange Order almost, and they were hated...'[178]

Therefore, the decision to include significant elements of the USC damaged the reputation and the credibility of the UDR in the eyes of the very communities that it was intended to win over. Nor should this have come as a surprise – when it emerged that papers had been distributed encouraging Specials to enlist, there was outrage in

---

[173] HC Debate 19th November 1969
[174] Ibid.
[175] *The Irish Press* (1969) 'Shades of the Specials', 13th November
[176] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021 & 25th February 2022; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021 & 23rd February 2022; Noel Downey, interview author 31st August 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021
[177] UDR 1, interview with author 11th January 2023
[178] David Crabbe, interview with author 11th January 2023

Stormont from the party of non-violent Irish Nationalism, the SDLP, when MP (and future party leader) John Hume, accused the government of giving priority recruitment to the USC.[179] As highlighted, this had already sown the seeds of doubt and distrust of the UDR in the eyes of many Nationalists, even before activation.

It has been advocated that the initial operational capability of the UDR was only possible due to USC enlistment.[180] However, I also wish to draw attention to the fact that it was noted prior by *The Times* that whilst necessary this would negatively impact Catholic recruitment.[181] Kevin McNamara MP even highlighted that whilst most Specials served honourably, the numbers applying to enlist would statistically also include officers and individuals of poor ability or sectarian character.[182] The UDR was intended to serve as a break from the USC, and such recruitment only served to muddy the waters.

Whilst it would be difficult to chart and track the Catholic community's perceptions of the UDR, the likelihood that the inclusion of significant numbers of former Specials damaged its reputation is particularly high. We know that the UDR was welcome upon its announcement in Stormont, and a letter to the Irish paper the *Donegal Democrat* in 1970 commended it as purging the Specials (and now the UDR) of undesirables. [183] This is not to say that it was universally welcomed – some traditionally Nationalist groups, such as the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) were opposed.[184] By August 1971 the UDR was denounced as sectarian by imprisoned members of NICRA: 'The branch said the B Special were disbanded to be replaced by an equally sectarian Ulster Defence Regiment'.[185] The statement issued in the weeks following the dawn raids of Operation Demetrius (explored in detail later in this chapter) that were overwhelmingly targeting Catholics should come as no surprise. After Bloody Sunday we see the opinion section of the *Ulster Herald* state that 'the sectarian B-Special Force has been replaced by the sectarian Ulster Defence Regiment.'[186] By September 1972 we see the first reports of UDR collusion in the nationalist paper the *Irish Times*, followed by its first mention in the Commons by Devlin just 11 days later – though she had been querying such matters in letters since September.[187] The period of goodwill for the UDR in Catholic quarters was over.

---

[179] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 21

[180] *The Times* (1969) 'After the B Specials', November 14th; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 29; HC Debate 19th November 1969

[181] *The Times* (1969) 'After the B Specials', November 14th

[182] HC Debate 19th November 1969

[183] *The Belfast Newsletter* (1969) 'New Forces Welcomed By Opposition', November 13th; *The Donegal Democrat* (1970, pg. 10), February 6th

[184] *The Irish Independent* (1970) 'GAA does not condone the UDR', March 2nd

[185] *The Irish Independent* (1971) 'Prisoners Hit White Paper', 26th August

> I am informed that the Secretary of State is unaware of collusion between the Ulster Defence Regiment and the Ulster Defence Association... The Secretary of State tells me that he does not know of collusion. I have given him the names... all of whom are members of the Ulster Defence Association, all of whom are members of the UDR in my hometown. I can produce evidence to show that all these men are members of the UDA. There is evidence that people are prepared to produce in open court, but the Secretary of State does not know about it. British military intelligence knows about it and I know about it, and the people who have had their homes shot up and burned down know about it, and the Secretary of State must have been informed about it.[188]

The possible fallout for UDR legitimacy was noted in the Lords by the Earl of Longford: 'I am afraid... that great harm, perhaps irreparable harm, has already been done...'.[189] There was not sufficient distance or training (as shall be explored in a later chapter) to de-"Specialise" the individual, and thus the taint of the USC was drawn into the UDR. I argue that this was not entirely necessary. The USC was not stood down until 30th April 1970 – nearly 2 months after UDR activation. There could have been a phased introduction, with support from the USC and other units that would not have necessitated sacrificing credibility. In November 1969 Liberal MP Eric Lubbock even forwarded calling on resident veterans to serve – an interesting concept that if explored could have resolved the need to use Specials by supplementing them with disciplined ex-Regulars.

---

[186] *The Ulster Herald* (1972) '*As the man says*...' Section, February 12th

[187] HC Debate 13th November 1969; *The Irish Times* (1972) 'Miss Devlin Queries Whitelaw on the UDR, September 4th; *The Irish Times* (1972) 'UDR helping to arm UDA says Cooper', September 30th; *The Irish Examiner* (1972) 'Figures for Whitelaw', November 2nd

[188] HC Debate 13th November 1969

[189] HL Debate 8th December 1969

> A force of this kind was essential in the Northern Ireland situation. My concern tonight is to see that we get the right kind of force... I do not see why the Minister of Defence for Administration should say "of necessity" the new force has to be drawn entirely from [Specials]. Why, indeed, cannot we look to the large numbers of ex-Service men who must exist in the Province of Northern Ireland who have been trained in Her Majesty's Armed Forces… It must have been a very much larger number than [the Specials] who reached military age while conscription was in force in the immediate post-war period and who would still be young enough to come within the age limits specified in the Bill. So I do not accept at all the Minister of Defence for Administration's statement that it is a matter "of necessity" that the majority of this force should be recruited from former members of the U.S.C.[190]

The UDR's unique value lay in its ability to serve as a break from the USC, to draw in Catholic recruits, and to act as a reconciliation force in Northern Ireland. The decision to include ex-USC in such high numbers jeopardised this mission. Decision makers in Whitehall, Stormont and Westminster may have at best limited and at worst compromised the strategic value of the UDR in favour of relatively short-term tactical capability. More blame lies with British decisionmakers. Stormont's shortcomings had arguably led to the security crisis, and relying upon their guidance guaranteed repeating their mistakes. By recruiting Specials, decisionmakers risked undermining the impartiality and "clean break" that this regiment was to represent. There was a clear need to ensure that the initial identity of the UDR thus clearly satisfied this requirement, or else it would further undermine the Hunt reforms and the promise that the UDR held.

The initial identity of the UDR

The UDR was not a successor regiment, and as such had no clear identity or cultural tie that would attract or detract recruits. Unless of course, decision makers chose to immediately skew the balance. Unfortunately, this is exactly what happened when the title of the "Ulster Defence Regiment" was selected. The controversy was apparent before even activation, in November 1969 inside the House of Lords Lord Brockway noted the Unionist connotations of the chosen name and its impact on the Nationalist community.[191]

---

[190] HC Debate 19th November 1969

> There is no doubt at all that the name "Ulster" evokes emotive resistance from a large section of the population whom we wish to bring into harmony… It is in the name of the Ulster Defence Committee… the Ulster Protestant Volunteer Force… the Ulster Special Constabulary. The first three of those organisations… exclude any Catholic from being a member… can it be surprising that the minority Catholic community in Northern Ireland have this emotive response to the term "Ulster"?[192]

Whilst there was pushback in these debates that "Ulster" was a general term, Lord Brockway was right to note its connotations. "Ulster" has long been associated with a Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist connection – particularly as for Nationalists it lay claim to counties within the Republic. Westminster MPs highlighted its usage by extremist groups.[193] In November 1969 Labour MP Kevin McNamara stated: 'Our Gracious Sovereign is Queen of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, not Queen of Great Britain and Ulster ... the tradition of Ulster volunteers, "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right" and all these other connotations…'[194] In a pivotal debate about the UDR's creation in the House of Commons in December 1969, Labour MP Niall MacDermot noted other issues:

> It is not the word "Ulster" by itself, it is not the word "Defence" by itself, which is offensive. It is the combination of these two words, "Ulster Defence", which has certain associations which are highly charged politically in Northern Ireland, and that is why it is important to change the name.[195]

---

[191] HC Debate 19th November 1969; HC Debate 1st December 1969; HL Debate 8th December 1969

[192] HL Debate, 11th December 1969

[193] HC Debate 19th November 1969; HC Debate 1st December 1969

[194] HC Debate 19th November 1969

[195] HC Debate 1st December 1969

Bernadette Devlin in her statement that day denounced it as a '*sectarian gibe'* and that '...in the minds of people in Northern Ireland "Ulster Defence" means, "Kick the Papists"'. [196]

There were however several opposing voices. Some stressed the traditions of the "Ulster" name in social and military contexts.[197] UUP MP Henry Clark vehemently denied any negative connotations on the historical grounds that: *'We have always been Ulstermen, we are proud to continue to be Ulstermen, and the country in which we live is Ulster.'*[198] These Unionist politicians often identified themselves in similar terms as Clark, and the presence of such diehard "Ulstermen" (a traditionally Unionist and Loyalist identity) likely skewed decisions, such as the name and inclusion of Specials, that suited Unionists. As I shall demonstrate in Chapter 4, the UDR was partially to provide Unionism and Loyalists with a legitimate outlet and response to the crisis. Therefore, this likely factored into the decision to give it such a skewed name. However, I also advocate that Unionist leaders at this time favoured the status quo that was their political domination. Therefore, they wanted this regiment's name to reflect *their* worldview.

As Republican 1 highlighted, Catholic participation in "Crown Forces" was always vulnerable: 'Catholic membership was never high and slumped after internment and Bloody Sunday...'[199] To many this name placed the new regiment firmly in the Protestant camp, in direct contravention of its purpose.[200] The post-conflict police, the Police Service Northern Ireland, replacing the Royal Ulster Constabulary may reflect an acknowledgement of this. In December 1969 Lord Hunt, the man who had led the commission that had recommended the creation of the regiment, publicly denounced the name in the Lords:

> Given that the role of the new force is to protect not one section of the community from another, but all decent citizens against attacks by violent and

---

[196] HC Debate 1st December 1969

[197] HC Debate 19th November 1969; HC Debate 1st November 1969

[198] HC Debate 1st December 1969

[199] Republican 1, interview with author 2nd March 2022

[200] Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*, pg. 843

> fanatical men... given that this role should commend itself to anyone and everyone... I regret that this force has been given a name... anathema to many Catholics, who might otherwise be disposed (perhaps they will, nevertheless) to do their civic duty and join the force.[201]

Such a title was unnecessarily provocative. Whilst some in Parliament were correct that the word "Ulster" has been used by other regiments, such as the Royal Ulster Rifles, what was overlooked was that its use in these contexts was in furtherance to and as a reminder of Protestant hegemony. The Hunt Report reforms sought to redress the issue of Protestant domination, and even quasi-homogeneity, within security forces. Any deviation or misstep whilst seemingly minor to some had serious ramifications. The army made similar connections and noted that HQNI should reconsider as '*the title is very important'*.[202] The Army noted that the UDR title had two problems: 'A. It fails to differentiate sufficiently between the new force and the USC which it replaces. B. It could prove a bar to Catholics joining the force.'[203]

The UDR title was a clear late addition as one Draft White Paper listed the new force's name as "The Northern Ireland Defence Force" (NIDR) as late as November 3rd, 1969.[204] Amidst the attached commentary we find a note: 'Would "The Ulster Defence Force" or "The Ulster Defence Brigade?" not be preferable?' before making notes on the historical use of "Ulster" (Royal Ulster Rifles, Royal Ulster Constabulary etc) in the region. The grounds for the name change were on the basis that should it ever be granted the privilege of the "Royal" prefix, '...the title "Royal Northern Ireland Defence Force" could be rather cumbersome'.[205] This is a clearly weak argument – more likely it was that "Ulster" played into the dominant Unionist worldview, and as Bennett noted: 'The Home Office wanted to ignore Lord Hunt's advice to have "Northern Ireland" in the regiment's title, fearing it would be seen by Protestants as pandering to Catholics and the Irish Republic.'[206] The army and the Vice Chief of the General Staff had recommended "NIDR", and therefore any alteration was against military advice.[207]

---

[201] HL Debate, 8th December 1969
[202] NAUK: DEFE 70/7 – *The Army Board: The 82nd Meeting: The Formation of the New Northern Ireland Local Defence Force* [AG Secretariat], October 1969
[203] NAUK: DEFE 70/7 – *The Army Board: The Formation of the New Northern Ireland Local Defence Force* [AB/P(69)38], 24th October 1969
[204] PRONI - MIC 686/79, CAB 4/1489 – *Draft White Paper: Formation of The Northern Ireland Defence Force*
[205] Ibid.

Then NI Minister of Home Affairs, Robert Porter, discussed the name with the UK Minister of Defence for Administration, Roy Hattersley in late 1969. His notes revealed the bias and partisanship of the Stormont government within the conflict:

> Mr Hattersley said the feeling existed in Whitehall that if the word "Ulster" were to be used, Roman Catholics would not join the new force. I said I did not accept this and, in any case, where it proved to be correct, the person would not, in my view, be a suitable recruit in any event.[208]

Recruit suitability appears to be framed as those who comply with the Ulster worldview – a highly partisan position, particularly given this was framed as the *reasonable* option. '[The UDR title] would not inhibit reasonable Catholics from joining, whereas the use of "Northern Ireland" would be likely to lead to difficulty.'[209] This is just another indicator of sectarian bias in Stormont at the time. One could argue that this dogmatic view had contributed or even led to the current security crisis. Whilst Porter defended the latter comment on the grounds that it could demonise the USC or spark trouble from those fearing a "sell out", this prioritised Protestant perspectives over Catholics and contradicted the advice coming from Westminster and Whitehall. I forward that the NI government at the time was actively or subconsciously pursuing a maintenance of antebellum conditions that suited and empowered them. A neutral force and an arguable symbol for change was less desirable than one which would refer to and reinforce a Unionist worldview.

As a note following the meeting records, Stormont did not expect Westminster to agree to their demands.[210] Meanwhile both the Home Secretary and "Secretary of

---

[206] Bennett, *Uncivil War*, pg. 61

[207] NAUK: DEFE 70/7 – *The Army Board: The Formation of the New Northern Ireland Local Defence Force* [AB/P(69)38], 24th October 1969

[208] NAUK: CJ 4/283 - *Notes on Meeting between Minister of Home Affairs and MoD for Administration*, Undated

[209] NAUK: DEFE 24/868 – *Note for the Record: Northern Ireland Defence Force – White Paper* [D/Min(A)RH/211]

[210] PRONI - MIC 686/79, CAB 4/1489 – "*Note of Outcome of Minister of Home Affairs" Discussion in London with Mr Hattersley, the Minister of Defence for Administration, on the Points Raised by the Cabinet in Relation to the Draft White Paper*

State" favoured "NIDR" like the Army, though the Secretary was open to accepting "UDR" if Stormont pressed for this.[211] Secretary of State for Defence, Denis Healey, made his position clear – the force should be titled "Northern Ireland", not "Ulster".[212] The connotations of the title were acknowledged, as within one file contains not only numerous discussions of the regimental title, but also a list of "Extreme Protestant Organisations" all of which contain the "Ulster" prefix.[213]

Westminster however folded easily. In a November 1969 cabinet meeting the government acknowledged the inaccuracy of the "Ulster" title, with three of the historical nine counties of Ulster in the Republic, and the title's '*associations that may arouse Roman Catholic hostility'*.[214] The cabinet however decided that the concession would be 'of form and not of substance', and pointing to the Royal *Ulster* Constabulary, granted the "Ulster Defence Regiment" title. Once again, Westminster's previous lack of interest in Northern Ireland led to disaster. Had they paid attention, they would have noticed that the RUC was hardly perceived to be "pro-Catholic" and was more part of the problem than the solution.

The bill was excoriated in parliament. As previously noted, it was viewed with suspicion and event outright hostility. In November 1969 Kevin McNamara independently suggested a rebrand that would be amenable to Nationalists – such as '...the "Northern Ireland Territorial Force", the "Northern Ireland Defence Regiment"'[215] However, once again the "Ulstermen" (though this time in parliament) strongly backed "UDR", leading to an eventual final showdown in the Lords. The vote to change the name failed at 29 to 30.[216]

This immediately skewed the UDR as "pro-Unionist", and significantly limited Nationalist participation. This suited Stormont, but fundamentally undermined the Hunt Report and its intentions. In combination with the significant inclusion of ex-

---

[211] NAUK: DEFE 24/868 – *Northern Ireland – New Defence Force* [MO 19/3]

[212] NAUK: CAB 129/145/25 – *New Defence Force for Northern Ireland*, [Memorandum by Denis Healey (Sec of State for Defence)], 4th November 1969

[213] NAUK: DEFE 24/868 – *Extreme Protestant Organisations*

[214] NAUK: CAB 128/44/53 – *Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet Held at 10 Downing Street, 6th November 1969 at 10am*

[215] HC Debate 19th November 1969

[216] *The Irish Times* (1969) 'UDR Keeps Name by One Vote in Lords', December 12th

Specials this was damning. The message, intentional or not, must have been to Catholics that this regiment was not *for* them. This is unsurprising – given the contested legitimacy of Northern Ireland and its historical dominance by unionist political forces, those acting in the security forces were inherently acting in defence of a pro-unionist status quo. Indeed, one Corporal remarked: 'I always tell them when they join that they have to be a loyalist. Loyalist is considered a dirty word now. It's not. If you join the [UDR] you're here to defend Ulster against its enemies, You have to be a loyalist, loyal to the Queen'.[217] However, note that at this juncture, little to no influence has been exerted by the UDR or its members – a common thread as shall be detailed throughout this thesis. Events largely outside of its control forced the regiment to deal with the fallout amidst a spiralling security situation, as part of the British policy of appeasing Stormont and its backers in hopes of avoiding a Unionist revolt and a two-front conflict.[218]

British military actions and mistakes in the period 1970-1971

The UDR's first major action came in July 1970 when it deployed to help man checkpoints and guards following riots. The operation lasted from June 28th-July 19th, with 80% of the regiment responding to the call-out.[219] By placing the UDR in a major support role in policing incidents and mounting checkpoints, it was essentially constructed as the face of occupation in the eyes of Nationalists. The UDR would be the unit most frequently encountered outside of the few "no-go zones" (heavily Catholic areas such as parts of Derry, West Belfast etc), and therefore the UDR would thus have been the element of the army intervening most in daily life. This made it the face of the British Army, of occupation and of increased militarisation. This already made the regiment somewhat controversial.

However the first serious test for Catholics and the UDR came in July 1970 with the Falls Curfew.[220] To Potter the incident ended the period of goodwill between the Army and the Catholic community – though this is debatable given the army was already conducting similarly “heavy” activities.[221] The Falls Road had long been a Republican, and by proxy IRA, stronghold in Belfast.[222] The British Army’s decision to search the Falls led to the discovery of a significant number of weapons, but also to riots and gun battles with the IRA, and the establishment of a military-imposed curfew to permit further searches. Warner highlighted that whilst the finds were significant: ‘No fewer than 3,000 troops were involved and the scale of the fighting is indicated by the fact that, during the night of 3/4 July 1970, they fired 1,452 rounds of ammunition… used 218 CS gas grenades and 1,355 CS gas cartridges.’[223] 6 civilians were killed and a further 57 wounded whilst troops vandalised property and assaulted non-combatants.[224] It was a strategic disaster.

---

[217] Arthur, *Northern Ireland*, pg, 229

[218] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 17, 27; Bennett, *Uncivil War,* pg. 10, 67

[219] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 40-41

[220] Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*, pg. 844

As Campbell & Connolly summarised, the operation was the result of using a conventional “war” model that prioritised territory, and failed to account for the backlash and sense of victimisation that emerged in the Catholic community – a major strategic flaw.[225] For all the Army’s trouble, whilst significant quantities of weaponry were recovered, the operation was unlikely to diminish the overall threat and came at the cost of significant and lasting damage to the legitimacy and long-term strategy of Operation Banner. The Army itself concluded that the incident:

> …handed a significant information operations opportunity to the IRA, and this was exploited to the full. The Government and Army media response was unsophisticated and unconvincing. The search also convinced most moderate Catholics that the Army was pro-loyalist. The majority of the catholic population became effectively nationalist, if they were not already. The IRA gained significant support.[226]

As Ó Faoleán highlighted, the UDR’s participation in manning roadblocks and patrols during the Falls Curfew came at significant cost to its legitimacy and reputation - ‘To a large extent, mistrust or even resentment of the UDR among Catholics can be traced to this event'.[227]

---

[221] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 41
[222] Ibid. pg. 40-41
[223] Geoffrey Warner, *The Falls Road Curfew Revisited* (Irish Studies Review Vol. 14:3, 2006), pg. 326
[224] Warner, *The Falls Road Curfew Revisited*, pg. 326-327
[225] Colm Campbell & Ita Connolly*, A Model for the “War against Terrorism”? Military Intervention in Northern Ireland and the 1970 Falls Curfew*, (Journal of Law and Society Vol. 30:3, 2003), pg. 372-373
[226] *Operation Banner* Report, Point 217-218

This began the Catholic exodus from the UDR.[228] The seeds of doubt had been sown, and the brief period of goodwill was shattering. The failure to include more Catholic officers barred the possibility of an internal rally. By the time of the Curfew of 180 officers only 9 were Catholic.[229] This is significant, given that Catholics accounted for around 28% of the UDR at this time, but just 5% of its officers.[230] Potter stated religion did not factor into promotion decisions and that most Catholic recruits lacked previous security experience making rapid promotion unlikely. [231] Those promoted with previous experience would have mostly come from one place – ex-Specials. The PR damage in the circumstances cannot be understated. Efforts should have been made to encourage the promotion of Catholics to balance the force.

The introduction of internment under Operation Demetrius (9th August – 10th August 1971) further accelerated the decline of Army legitimacy in Northern Ireland. Detention without trial had been utilised on three prior occasions (1922-1924, 1938-1945 and 1956-1961) with particular success in its last incarnation against the IRA.[232] However, there were serious doubts. The Army had significant reservations, believing that they could defeat the poorly armed and limited IRA without internment.[233] Stormont meanwhile had been advised through a series of RUC reports in 1970 that internment should not be implemented at this time, that there were several significant Loyalist suspects as well and that there was a high probability of backlash.[234]

---

[227] Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*, pg. 844

[228] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 42

[229] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 42; Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*, pg. 844

[230] NAUK: DEFE 68/916 – *Catholic Membership of the UDR (as a percentage)*

[231] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 58

[232] Martin McCleery, *Debunking the Myths of Operation Demetrius: The Introduction of Internment in Northern Ireland in 1971* (Irish Political Studies Vol. 27:3, 2012), pg. 414

[233] Martin Doherty, *Tackling the Terrorists: The Experience of Internment Without Trial in Northern Ireland* (Journal on European History of Law Vol. 6:1, 2015), pg. 77-78; McCleery, *Debunking the Myths of Operation Demetrius*, pg. 415-416

[234] McCleery¸ *Debunking the Myths of Operation Demetrius*, pg. 423-424

A *Guardian* article from the time records the chaos and violence - with gun battles, rioting and fires breaking out.[235] By November 1971, 980 individuals had been arrested, of whom 580 released and a further 69 detained pending decision.[236] Total estimates concluded Operation Demetrius detained 58 officers and 101 volunteers of the Provisional IRA, and 36 officers and 38 volunteers of the Official IRA.[237] However, much of the intelligence was outdated and useless for getting at the leadership.[238] As Bennett recently noted:

> At Special Branch headquarters officers noticed inaccuracies in the names and addresses, and the inclusion of people 'in no respect a threat to peace', whose only offence was to oppose unionism. Only a very few Protestants had made the list. Brigade and battalion headquarters possessed enough intelligence of their own to correct the lists to a certain extent... The Home Office only examined the identities of the internees afterwards. The internment orders, signed by Faulkner, contained hardly any information about the reasons for detention and no supporting evidence. Some simply accused the suspect of stirring up "anti-Northern Ireland Government feeling".[239]

A blanket approach further undermined the operation with arrests of members of NICRA, opponents of Stormont and any adult males at a raided address – meanwhile PIRA was able to undermine the operation by instructing many of its members to stay away from home.[240] I concur with Leahy that given that NI is seen as different from the mainland, it encouraged and facilitated a heavy-handed colonial mindset and approach.[241] There was also a fear that not placating Unionism and Stormont could lead to a Protestant revolt.[242] As Bennett summarised: 'Internment aimed to placate unionists, gather intelligence on the IRA and intimidate the Catholic population as a whole'.[243] By the time of internment, Catholic UDR were already becoming disillusioned at how Protestants, particularly ex-Specials, were being promoted and given key positions over them.[244] When Catholics were overwhelmingly arrested as part of internment, this only exacerbated this. After the initial dawn raids of Operation Demetrius, the entire regiment was mobilised for the first time – manning checkpoints to facilitate the raids.[245] As Potter highlighted, internment proved to be a major win for IRA propagandists and succeeded in accelerating the Catholic exodus from the UDR.[246] Moderate Catholics began withdrawing their support, placing greater social pressure on those who remained.[247] Worse, internment led to the Provisional IRA rescinding the ban on targeting the UDR, and that same day the first UDR fatality occurred in west Tyrone.[248] As O Dochartaigh highlighted prior to internment local forces had so little to fear that RUC men holidayed over the border in Co. Donegal, and UDR men still lived in Creggan and Shantallow – but all that was radically changed by internment.[249]

---

[235] *The Guardian* (1971) 'Internment introduced in Northern Ireland', 10th August
[236] Doherty, *Tackling the Terrorists*, pg. 79
[237] Doherty, *Tackling the Terrorists*, pg. 79
[238] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 56
[239] Bennett, *Uncivil War,* pg. 104
[240] McCleery, *Debunking the Myths of Operation Demetrius*, pg. 416
[241] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 21
[242] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 17, 27; Bennett, *Uncivil War,* pg. 10, 67
[243] Bennett, *Uncivil War*, pg. 103

It took two years for the first Loyalist to be interned, and ultimately internment saw 1,981 detainees of which only 107 were Protestant.[250] The British government believed taking on Loyalists risked isolating and turning the Protestant community on the British, that it would be difficult to draw up arrest criteria and especially since unlike Republican forces, not all Loyalist paramilitaries were proscribed organisations.[251] Such decisions prioritised maintaining control over dealing with the ongoing violence, clearly skewing government policy in favour of Unionists, and thereby Loyalist, organisations.

Both the Falls Curfew and Internment came at the direction of Unionists in Stormont, who cared little for Catholic perceptions compared to maintaining the status quo.[252] This aided the IRA and their narratives. Whereas before the IRA were seen as violent individuals, Catholics could now identify and sympathise with the organisations.

---

[244] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 45-46
[245] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 44
[246] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 56
[247] Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*, pg. 844
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ó Dochartaigh, *From Civil Rights to Armalites,* pg. 259-260
[250] Doherty, *Tackling the Terrorists*, pg. 80
[251] McCleery, *Debunking the Myths of Operation Demetrius*, pg. 425-426
[252] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 20

Internment allowed paramilitaries to depict their internees as “suffering for the cause”.[253] The IRA benefitted from British mistakes and the Army’s struggle to adapt to internal security operations.[254] Their actions eroded state legitimacy and drove support for and toleration of PIRA activities.[255] As one internal NIO letter recalled:

> The initial relatively high proportion of Catholics in the UDR reflected the perception… that the role of the British Army was… to prevent sectarian strife… this perception changed very quickly as the army became engaged in anti-terrorist activities – largely against Nationalist groups. Although the UDR was not directly concerned in these activities… it nevertheless suffered the backwash of the change in the perception of the British army by the minority community.[256]

To reflect “general” military policy, my analysis here has excluded atrocities such as Bloody Sunday or the Ballymurphy Massacre, where numerous civilians were killed by British soldiers. This is intended to show that even when one gives the most favourable analysis, the Army implemented a series of operations that fundamentally undermined their legitimacy. That these coercive tactics played a significant role in the Catholic exodus from the UDR is borne out by the stats – Catholic UDR enlistment peaked at 14.9% in January 1971, after the Falls Road Curfew (July 1970) but before the worst atrocities, and rapidly declining thereafter.[257] Then-PM Edward Heath’s decision to prioritise IRA defeat over reducing violence in this period fundamentally undermined state legitimacy and further drove a wedge between the security forces and the Catholic community.[258] Furthermore as an army memo for the foreign office from October 1971 records ‘…intimidation is rife throughout the Catholic population’.[259] In my recent article *Hunting the Watchmen: the Ulster Defence Regiment and IRA strategy*

---

[253] Sissel Rosland, *Victimhood, Identity, and Agency in the Early Phase of The Troubles in Northern Ireland*, (Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power Vol. 16:3, 2009), pg. 306-307

[254] Edward Burke, *An Army of Tribes: British Cohesion, Deviancy and Murder in Northern Ireland* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), pg. 77

[255] Campbell & Connolly¸ *A Model for the “War against Terrorism”?*, pg. 373

[256] CJ 4/5524 – Letter from P. Coulson to Buxton [Law & Order Division], 15th November 1984

[257] Edward Burke, *Counter-Insurgency against “Kith and Kin”? The British Army in Northern Ireland, 1970–76*, (The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History Vol. 43:4, 2015), pg. 660, 662; Bennett, *Uncivil War*, pg. 6; NAUK: DEFE 24/835 – *Statistical Analysis of UDR Wastage and Recruitment*, 6th June 1973

[258] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 19

[259] NAUK: FCO 33/1486 – *Military Appreciation of the Security Situation in Norther Ireland at 4th October 1971*

I similarly note how intimidation through assassination was another key factor that drove down Catholic participation in the UDR.[260] To be a Catholic in the UDR was becoming for many unbearable moral and physical risk.

British strategy in this period was an unadulterated disaster, the strong-arm tactics of the British Army mostly succeeding in turning Catholics against the British.[261] Whilst some grasped the complexity of the situation, GOC General Tuzo pushed for more brutal colonial approaches, reflecting the colonial experiences of many senior officers at the time.[262] It is little surprise that in times of uncertainty they reverted to "tried and tested" methods. The effects were never erased nor reversed. It is also interesting that as this disaster unfolded that the UDR's next commander was Brigadier Denis Ormerod, a Catholic officer whose maternal family hailed from the Republic, along with two Catholic deputies.[263] His replacement, Harry Baxter, was not only Catholic but an Irishman as well.[264]

By bringing on board not one but two Catholic leaders consecutively, the regiment could legitimately cast aspersions on claims and perceptions of the UDR as sectarian. Claims the regiment was hostile to Catholics would be more difficult to establish when its commander was a Catholic, especially an Irish Catholic. The *Irish Independent* and *Irish Press* simply noted Ormerod's appointment, with the later flagging Ormerod's religion in its title.[265] Meanwhile, the *Irish Examiner* highlighted Baxter's Irishness upon his appointment: 'A Kilkenny-born veteran of the '56-61 IRA campaign on the border has been appointed the head of the [UDR]'. [266] Such appointments may have had considerations on winning over Catholics or at least stemming the bleeding – but there is no evidence to support these claims.

The major flaw in British Army strategy at this time was not only in its gross errors but also that it failed to conduct a public information and relations campaign in their wake. Bennett highlighted that the Army failed to accept the necessity of winning over Catholic support.[267] Instead, the Army concluded that most Catholics were troublemakers and IRA supporters. It is hardly surprising then that its troops went on to abuse and kill Catholics. The prejudices and ignorance of senior officers in the early years both damaged British efforts and fed into prejudices on the ground.[268] Bennett examined claims by the Army that most allegations were IRA propaganda – concluding that whilst there were many false allegations, out of court settlements reveal that the Army demonstrated a level of paranoia and neglected to accept the reality that its troops were engaging in abuses and infractions.[269]

---

[260] Chesse, *Hunting the Watchmen*

[261] Huw Bennett, *"Smoke Without Fire"? Allegations Against the British Army in Northern Ireland 1972-5* (Twentieth Century British History Vol. 24:2, 2013),, pg. 276-277; Burke, *An Army of Tribes*, pg. 76

[262] Burke, *Counter-Insurgency against "Kith and Kin"?*, pg. 660, 662

[263] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 62

[264] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 69

[265] *The Irish Independent* (1971) Front Page, July 15th; *The Irish Press* (1971) 'New UDR Commander a Catholic', July 15th

[266] *The Irish Examiner* (1972) 'Kilkenny man is new head of UDR', November 29th

> What these civil cases prove is that military discipline prevented the government from realising its goal of winning over Catholic support… They were, however, willing to err in the army's favour on "borderline' cases" — including alleged murders. Fewer than ten per cent of killings and assaults committed by soldiers were prosecuted, because the DPP and his senior personnel had all served in the army…[270]

As Dixon highlighted, public support and cooperation is essential for any insurgency (or counter-insurgency).[271] Instead of diminishing the IRA's capabilities or decreasing violence, the Army's actions led to increasing violence and Catholic alienation.[272] The pursuit of such coercive tactics over a "Hearts and Minds" approach was a total strategic failure. 1980s polls revealed that even one in five Protestants believed that the UDR treated them better than Catholics.[273]

This was compounded by the failure of British propaganda (controlled information intended to support or damage a particular cause). The Information Research Department (IRD), the UK government's propaganda unit, was encouraged by then-PM Heath and NI Secretary William Whitelaw to target the IRA.[274] The IRD first attempted to create and exploit internal IRA divisions, and to demonise the IRA as "violent", "dangerous" and "ruthless" to cripple its logistics and support.[275] Most of the propaganda was thus focused on short-term benefits.[276] As Cormac highlighted, propaganda requires a positive message to be truly effective – and this was entirely absent.[277] Instead of leveraging propaganda to espouse British virtues in comparison to IRA vices, the system focused on anti-IRA attacks.

---

[267] Bennett*, Smoke Without Fire"?*,, pg. 279)
[268] Burke, *An Army of Tribes*, pg. 11
[269] Bennett, *Smoke Without Fire"?*
[270] Ibid. pg. 303
[271] Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds"?*, pg. 454
[272] Leahy, *Intelligence war against the IRA*, pg. 17-20
[273] Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds"?*, pg. 461-462

This was therefore a two-phase catastrophe – first, undertaking coercive actions over "Hearts and Minds", and secondly, the failure to take significant and sincere action to correct its course, such as removing those unsuited to peacekeeping or attempting to repair and rebuild Catholic relations. As the Operation Banner Report concluded:

> Information Operations were generally poorly conducted; they were ill-coordinated with other government bodies; they were reactive; and often missed significant opportunities. The absence of a government information line was often exploited by the terrorist, sometimes with operational or strategic consequences. Constant criticism in the republican media, notably the An Phoblacht newspaper, was not seriously challenged by Government, IO or Army Information Operations.[278]

Such costs were suffered perhaps to no greater extent than by the UDR – who now would bear the stain of its own transgressions and that of the broader military. Without the broader infrastructure of an Army-wide PR machine, the regiment was unlikely to rid itself of the taint of these early failures, and what came next.

---

[274] Rory Cormac, *The Information Research Department, Unattributable Propaganda, and Northern Ireland, 1971–1973: Promising Salvation but Ending in Failure?* (The English Historical Review, Vol. 131:552, 2016), pg. 1084-1085

[275] Cormac, *The Information Research Department, Unattributable Propaganda, and Northern Ireland, 1971–1973*, pg. 1089-1091

[276] Ibid. pg. 1095

[277] Ibid. pg. 1100

[278] *Operation Banner* Report, Point 716

4. Can the concurrent boom in Protestant recruitment be considered a matter of concern?

Whilst Catholic numbers plummeted, the UDR found itself with a sudden influx of Protestant recruits. Potter believed this was the result of hesitant and ambivalent Protestants seeing the government acting against the IRA, and seeing the UDR as an effective way to participate.[279] In the regiments first 18 months, it averaged around 40 applications a week, but internment saw a rapid spike. The week after internment had 72 applications, a week later it was 169, then 376 and by the end of September 1971 there had been a total of 1290 applications for the UDR – leading to the creation of 8 (East Tyrone), 9 (South Antrim), and 10 UDR (City of Belfast) as the regiment expanded to over 6000 soldiers.[280] This led to the ceiling for UDR recruitment being raised first to 8,000 then 10,000 soldiers, alongside the introduction of modern weaponry and military vehicles.[281]

To this author this is an alarming turn of events. As already established internment was perceived as partisan, led to an observable increase in violence and was followed by reports of abuse and torture by British troops. Whilst there would have been many who applied prior to and without knowledge of these events, it is impossible that all 1290 applicants post-internment were unaware of the partisan application of recent military strategy. There were at least some who were motivated to enlist by seeing Catholics policed by coercive and strong-arm tactics. This is not covered by Moskos' institutional-occupational framework for enlistment, so I forward these motivations fall under their own category – Sectarian.[282] Such motivations are partisan, sectarian, and often oppressive. Those who joined the UDR under such motivations were seeking to oppress and police Catholics for partisan gain including through collusion. I define "Collusion" in line with the definition used by the Smithwick Tribunal – namely that it is the commission, omission, or failure to act which succeeds to

---

[279] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 62-63
[280] Ibid. pg. 63
[281] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 49
[282] Moskos, *From Institution to Occupation*

‘conspire, connive or collaborate’ with an illegal force.[283] This was accepted by the security forces given they assisted the tribunal and its investigation into IRA-Gardai collusion.

The state’s failure to tackle Loyalist violence such as during internment would have only heightened perceptions of sectarianism . Many Protestants had feared that the UDR would not be “their” force like the USC, yet this rapid recruitment suggests that these doubts had been removed.[284] Furthermore, Ó Faoleán and I find this to be clearly causal for UDR infiltration by Loyalist paramilitaries. I forward that given the most infamous and egregious collusion incidents occurred in the early years, that a significant number of these colluders came in during this period with Sectarian motivations. Certainly, some joined later or colluded for personal or criminal gain, but the timeline is too close to be entirely coincidental. As Ó Faoleán highlighted, in the years following this boom there were clear indicators of such infiltration – like July 1972, when Willie McCrea, future MP and Lord, gave a speech for the United Loyalist Front flanked by a masked, uniformed member of the UDR.[285] Similarly, in 1977 UDA leader Andy Tyrie, boasted that UDA members were joining the UDR to gain access to weapons training.

There are also clear links between this recruitment phase and the infamous “Subversion in the UDR” report.[286] This report found clear evidence of UDR subversion and collusion and is often cited as to why many Catholics and Nationalists condemn the UDR. The report detailed how November 1972-July 1973 saw a total of 73 UDR men discharged and a further 20 resign due to UDA affiliations, whilst another 35 were placed on a monitoring list – mainly in the newly formed and neighbouring 9 UDR (South Antrim) and 10 UDR (City of Belfast) battalions.[287] The report highlighted that subversion was not treated as a major intelligence priority, making it very difficult to ascertain who was or was not involved in subversive or illegal activities – particularly in Protestant areas where social mixing and participation in paramilitary organisations were not unusual or considered worthy of mention.[288] As McEvoy & White highlighted, Northern Ireland's culture has such close social and family ties that barring those with any trace or association with terrorism shows no understanding of cultural reality.[289]

---

[283] Peter Smithwick, *Report of the tribunal of inquiry into suggestions that members of an Garda Síochána or other employees of the state colluded in the fatal shootings of RUC Chief Superintendent Harry Breen and RUC Superintendent Robert Buchanan on the 20th march 1989* (Dublin: Smithwick Tribunal, 2013)

[284] Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*, pg. 845-846

[285] Ibid. , pg. 846

[286] British Army, *Subversion in the UDR* report (London: HMSO, 1973)

[287] *Subversion in the UDR* report, pg. 3; NAUK: DEFE 24/835 – *Statistical Analysis of UDR Wastage and Recruitment* [6th June 1973]

A clear example of this was 10 UDR, who recruited from heavily Protestant areas of Belfast. As ex-7/10 UDR Crabbe highlighted – the society in such densely Protestant areas makes it impossible for an individual to socialise in an area where individuals suspected or known to have paramilitary links would not.[290] Crabbe even served alongside individuals with personal UDA links, '…never significant or threatening, though they often didn't last long [in the UDR].'[291] One link even included a set of two brothers – one UDR, one UDA – both long-serving who on paper sounded like a credible security threat, until one noted that the two despised each other and were long estranged.[292] Such close social mixing can also be seen within interview examples. Crabbe himself once detained a leading Loyalist paramilitary leader. A week later he was informed by a soldier of an overheard pub conversation where individuals, likely paramilitaries, discussed how this leader had identified Crabbe and where he lived.[293] Protestant society was quite homogenous and involved social mixing. Association and involvement were thus a fine line. UDR battalions drawing from these communities were likely to draw individuals with sectarian "links" that were not credible threats, and also to find some undesirables slip through due to this same social ambiguity. As I shall demonstrate through this chapter, vetting was never controlled by the UDR, and could have been enhanced further (along with training as I argue in Chapter 3 to limit these.

The *Subversion in the UDR* report also found evidence that extremist groups tried to infiltrate the UDR, such as one incident in March 1973 where six applications to 11

---

[288] *Subversion in the UDR* report, pg. 3-4

[289] McEvoy & White, *Security Vetting in Northern Irelan*, pg. 356

[290] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

[291] David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

[292] Ibid.

[293] Ibid.

UDR (North Armagh) were flagged as having known UVF links.[294] Of particular concern was the estimation that between 5-15% of the UDR may also be members of Loyalist paramilitaries – explaining the numerous UDR armoury and weapons raids which made it the greatest source of weaponry for Loyalist.[295] Several raids involved significant collusion.[296] Disturbingly, the report also flagged:

> It goes without saying that the first loyalties of many of its members are to a concept of "Ulster" rather than to HMG, and that where a perceived conflict in these loyalties occur, HMG will come off second best. So far this division of loyalties has not been seriously tested but already disquieting evidence of subversion is available.[297]

This disturbing report was also somewhat sanitised, as one military intelligence letter ordered the removal of a reference to an "iceberg" of subversion.[298] I however would highlight that at this time available archival evidence does not support such a view, and even the *Subversion in the UDR* Report highlights that it lacked the necessary information to provide an accurate account – 'The discovery of members of paramilitary or extremist organisations in the UDR is not, and has not been, a major intelligence target'.[299] Subversion did occur within the UDR, but not to such an extreme extent. One could even argue that given the presence of paramilitaries, that guarding against infiltration and subversion should have been a priority for British intelligence given they ran UDR recruitment and vetting.

The 1972 rapid expansion of the UDR did let in subversive individuals.[300] Potter noted half of these never completed their engagement (this is also supported by archival data) and acknowledged that this spike placed a heavy load on vetting teams leading to a damaging lapse in vetting standards.[301] As already forwarded, I believe that this led to admissions of Sectarian or subversive elements. Potter noted 2000 soldiers left the regiment between November 1972 – January 1974 of their own accord or by discharge, and at least some would have been UDA sympathisers.[302] This matches the *Subversion in the UDR* report.[303]

---

[294] *Subversion in the UDR* report, pg. 4-5

[295] *Subversion in the UDR* report, pg. 5-7

[296] Ibid. pg. 7-10

[297] Ibid. pg. 12

[298] NAUK: DEFE 24/875 – *UDR – Brief for US of S (Army)* [Letter from to BGS (INT) DS7 from Brig. Bayley BGS (Int) DIS], 13th March 1974

[299] *Subversion in the UDR* report, pg. 1, 3-4

[300] Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*

[301] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 88; NAUK: DEFE 24/835 – *Minutes of the 41st Meeting of the UDR Advisory Council* [22nd June 1973]

Loyalist sympathisers had a brief window in which they likely felt welcome in the UDR. In mid-1972, then-Commander UDR (and Catholic) Brigadier Ormerod stated in a televised interview that joint UDA-UDR membership was not prohibited. He later clarified that this was not encouraged, and was even banned in the case of officers, but that disciplinary action would only be brought should participation rise to the level of an offence.[304] The *Belfast Telegraph* condemned the decision, highlighting that '*membership of a British regiment should be totally incompatible with membership of a sectarian organisation'*.[305] It is worth noting that the UDA was not proscribed until 1992, which complicated the issue.

Dual membership was not universally accepted within the UDR, 3 UDR's (Co. Down) commander, Dion Beard, issued an unequivocal order that this would not be tolerated and stated that this should be official UDR policy.[306] At the end of November 1972, rules were amended to dual membership should not interfere with duties, but as Potter stressed this should never have been tolerated.[307] That same month joint UDA-UDR membership was given further credibility when it was supported by a Northern Ireland minister.[308] It was not until January 1973 that a total ban on dual membership with sectarian groups was introduced.[309] But the damage was done. As Ó Faoleán recognised, this played a significant part in the Catholic exodus.[310] Ryder noted that: 'By failing to abide by the Regiment's self-proclaimed standards, the government and army extinguished all hope of meeting the impartial ideals which had been set for it'.[311] To many former UDR, this was one of its most damning and regrettable sagas.[312] Such misinformed guidance was not repeated. In 1990, a letter from the GOC listed the exact grounds for rejection on counter-terrorist grounds. Even having a close friend, relative, housemate or partner who had known paramilitary links would result in rejection – including the as yet non-proscribed UDA.[313]

---

[302] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 93
[303] *Subversion in the UDR* report (1973), pg. 3
[304] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 58-59; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 89-91
[305] *Belfast Telegraph,* 9th November 1972
[306] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 90-91
[307] Ibid. pg. 92
[308] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 60
[309] Ibid. pg. 60
[310] Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*, pg. 851
[311] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 61

The regiment would spend the rest of its history rooting out "bad apples" – by the late 1980s, this was the responsibility of battalion officers.[314] Ryder noted this was a significant factor behind the dip in numbers in the mid-1970s.[315] A sample of 900 leavers from November 1972 – May 1973 found a majority (232) left for "Failure to attend for duty", with a further 35 leaving for "Political views" and 44 for "Termination of engagement".[316] Another 137 respondents provided no reason for leaving. This could leave up to as a many as 216 forms (24%) of this sample leaving for reasons related to "bad apples" in this brief sample period. Expanding this statistic to cover the 1646 soldiers who left at this time results in up to 395 "bad apple" discharges.[317] This shows the extent of the problem, and I would link this again to the noted premature departures of many who enlisted in the "surge".[318] This may also explain why there are less infamous incidents of subversion post-1970s, which saw such events as the Dublin-Monaghan Bombings (1974) or the Miami Showband Killings (1975).

---

[312] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[313] NAUK: DEFE 24/3119 – *Criteria for Assessing Results of Counter Terrorism Checks (CTC)* [Annex A to D/DSy(A)/9/2/47], September 1990

[314] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 215

[315] Ibid. pg. 102

[316] NAUK: DEFE 24/835 – *Minutes of the 41st Meeting of the UDR Advisory Council,* 22nd June 1973

[317] Ibid.

[318] Ibid.

Certainly, as the table below shows, there was a concerted effort to do so.

	"Terminations of Engagement"	Percentage of study
November 1972 – May 1973	44	4.89%
September 1973	28	12.5%
January – April 1974	24	5%

Table E - 41st and 44th UDR Advisory Council Meetings (1973) and 'UDR Wastage and Recruiting' (1975) – DEFE 24/835; DEFE 24/836

An 'Overview of the UDR' document noted that a policy was introduced in November 1972 to weed out poor attenders and undesirables – demonstrating the scale of the problem, but also that the UDR did not take this matter lightly.[319] Later Advisory Council Meetings appear to have moved away from the problem – this may have been when responsibility for "pruning" devolved to battalion commanders.[320]

In summary, the post-internment boom was a significant issue for the UDR and contributed to its poor reputation. In this author's mind this was one of the biggest factors that led to collusion, as this provided a window for easier sectarian infiltration. Taking root this could have allowed paramilitaries to use the UDR for intelligence, weaponry, and training. However, it is worth noting that across Advisory Council Meetings and documents on "*UDR Wastage and Recruitment",* most wastage came from poor attendance, followed by employment related issues – showing that whilst the process to draw out undesirables was prolonged and quite extensive, undesirables continue to make up a minority of the UDR even in the wake of the boom.[321]

Conclusion

This chapter serves to highlight the avoidable as well as the inevitable problems of UDR recruitment. As has been shown, it is unreasonable to expect a perfect vetting system –

---

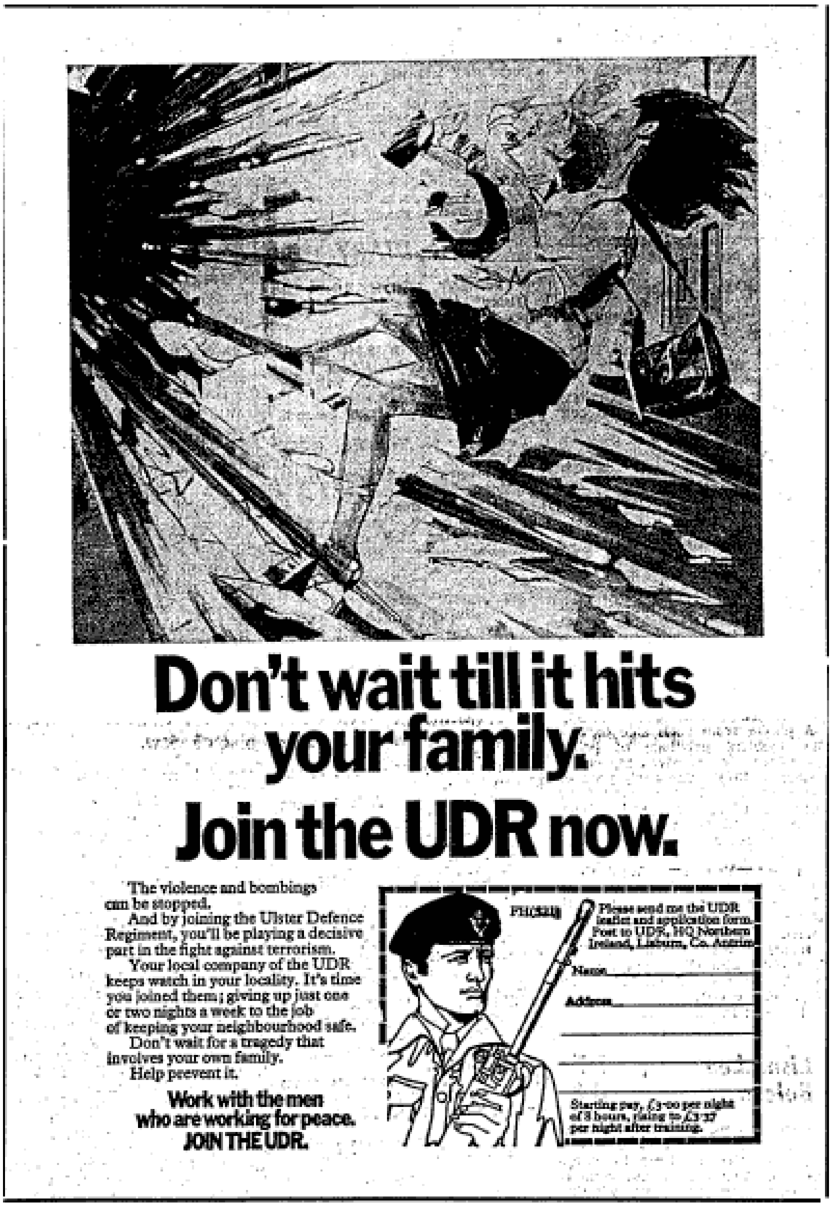
[319] NAUK: DEFE 24/835 - *Overview of the UDR,* No date

[320] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 215

[321] NAUK: DEFE 24/835; NAUK: DEFE 24/836

especially in the light of the rapid and ill-provisioned establishment of the UDR. Therefore, isolated instances of collusion and/or criminality should be expected. However, there were several moments where decisions by those in senior Government and Army positions failed the UDR, its mission and the wider Northern Irish public.

The UDR was almost immediately channelled into becoming a regiment with a Protestant identity as reflected by its name, and despite hopes to make it a turning point in NI security, the decision to recruit ex-Specials almost en-masse almost immediately tarnished this – even if this was for operational necessity. One could easily locate this as part of the series of errors in the early phase of the conflict in which Westminster gave Stormont Castle far too much precedence. Furthermore, whilst the majority of UDR recruits enlisted for institutional reasons, the additional strain of the pressed vetting service in 1972 led to recruits who likely had sectarian motivations for joining. This jeopardised the strategic purpose of the UDR as a cross-community regiment, and yet was mostly outside of regimental control. The British Army similarly doomed the regiment when it undertook coercive, strong-arm operations that not only undermined the basics of counterinsurgency, but by using the UDR on the fringe during these operations, similarly tarnished them too. The end of idealism may be seen in UDR advertising, from the mid-1970s ads focusing on the threat as their core advertising.



Don't wait till it hits your family. Join the UDR now.

The violence and bombings can be stopped.

And by joining the Ulster Defence Regiment, you'll be playing a decisive part in the fight against terrorism.

Your local company of the UDR keeps watch in your locality. It's time you joined them; giving up just one or two nights a week to the job of keeping your neighbourhood safe.

Don't wait for a tragedy that involves your own family.

Help prevent it.

Work with the men who are working for peace.
JOIN THE UDR.

FH(32)

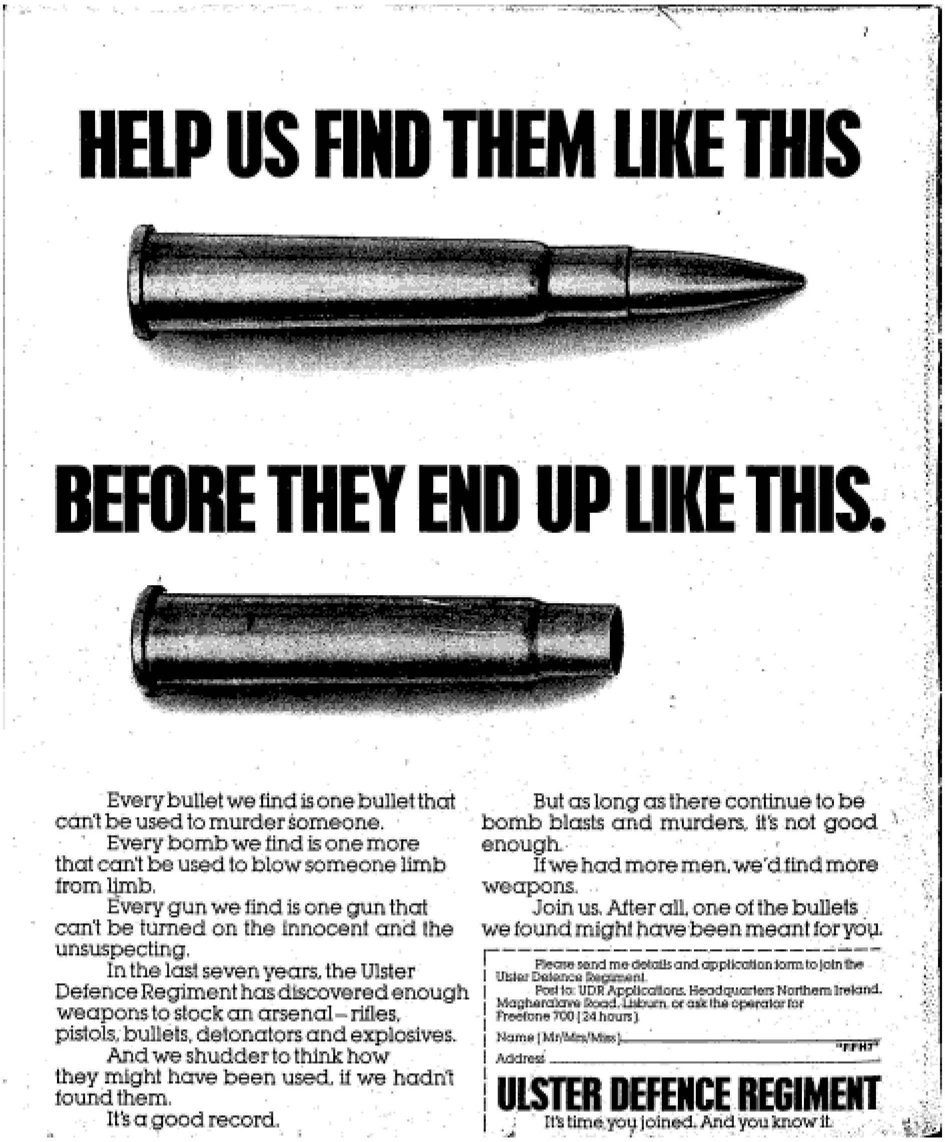
Please send me the UDR leaflet and application form. Post to UDR, HQ Northern Ireland, Lisburn, Co. Antrim

Name________________

Address________________

Starting pay, £3·00 per night of 8 hours, rising to £3·37 per night after training.

Image 4: *The Fermanagh Herald,* 16th March 1974



HELP US FIND THEM LIKE THIS

BEFORE THEY END UP LIKE THIS.

Every bullet we find is one bullet that can't be used to murder someone.

Every bomb we find is one more that can't be used to blow someone limb from limb.

Every gun we find is one gun that can't be turned on the innocent and the unsuspecting.

In the last seven years, the Ulster Defence Regiment has discovered enough weapons to stock an arsenal – rifles, pistols, bullets, detonators and explosives.

And we shudder to think how they might have been used, if we hadn't found them.

It's a good record.

But as long as there continue to be bomb blasts and murders, it's not good enough.

If we had more men, we'd find more weapons.

Join us. After all, one of the bullets we found might have been meant for you.

Please send me details and application form to join the Ulster Defence Regiment.

Post to: UDR Applications, Headquarters Northern Ireland, Magheralave Road, Lisburn, or ask the operator for Freefone 700 (24 hours).

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss) ____________________

"FFH3"

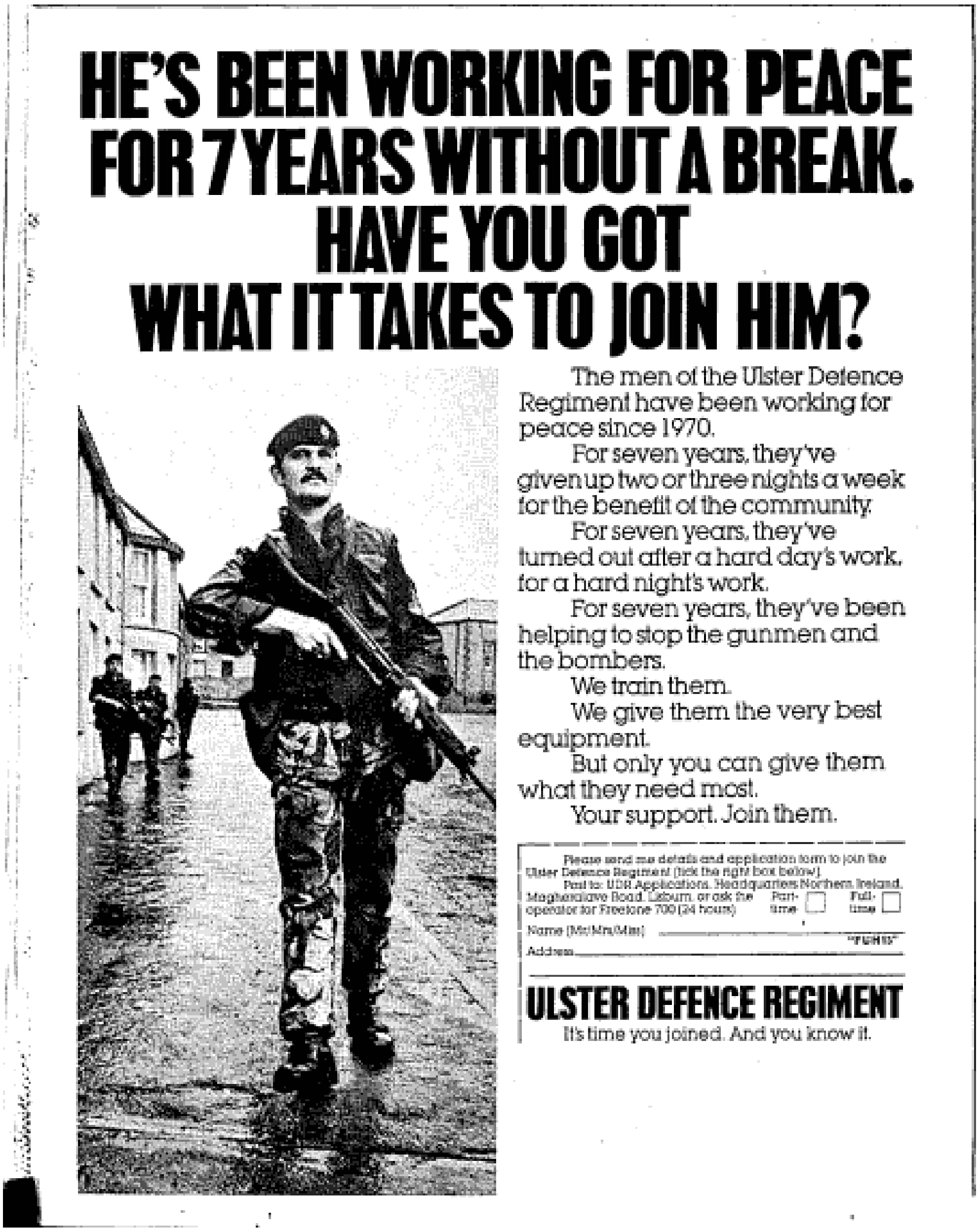
Address ____________________

ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT

It's time you joined. And you know it.

Image 5: *The Fermanagh Herald,* 3rd September 1977

From 1978, we see a return to more institutional appeals to enlist. The motivations for this may reflect the Ulsterisation shift – as the British settled in for a long war, they may have recognised the need to attract troops with motivations that would sustain them.



HE'S BEEN WORKING FOR PEACE FOR 7 YEARS WITHOUT A BREAK. HAVE YOU GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO JOIN HIM?

The men of the Ulster Defence Regiment have been working for peace since 1970.

For seven years, they've given up two or three nights a week for the benefit of the community.

For seven years, they've turned out after a hard day's work, for a hard night's work.

For seven years, they've been helping to stop the gunmen and the bombers.

We train them.

We give them the very best equipment.

But only you can give them what they need most.

Your support. Join them.

Please send me details and application form to join the Ulster Defence Regiment (tick the right box below).

Post to: UDR Applications, Headquarters Northern Ireland, Magheralave Road, Lisburn, or ask the operator for Freefone 700 (24 hours)

Part-time ☐ Full-time ☐

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss) __________

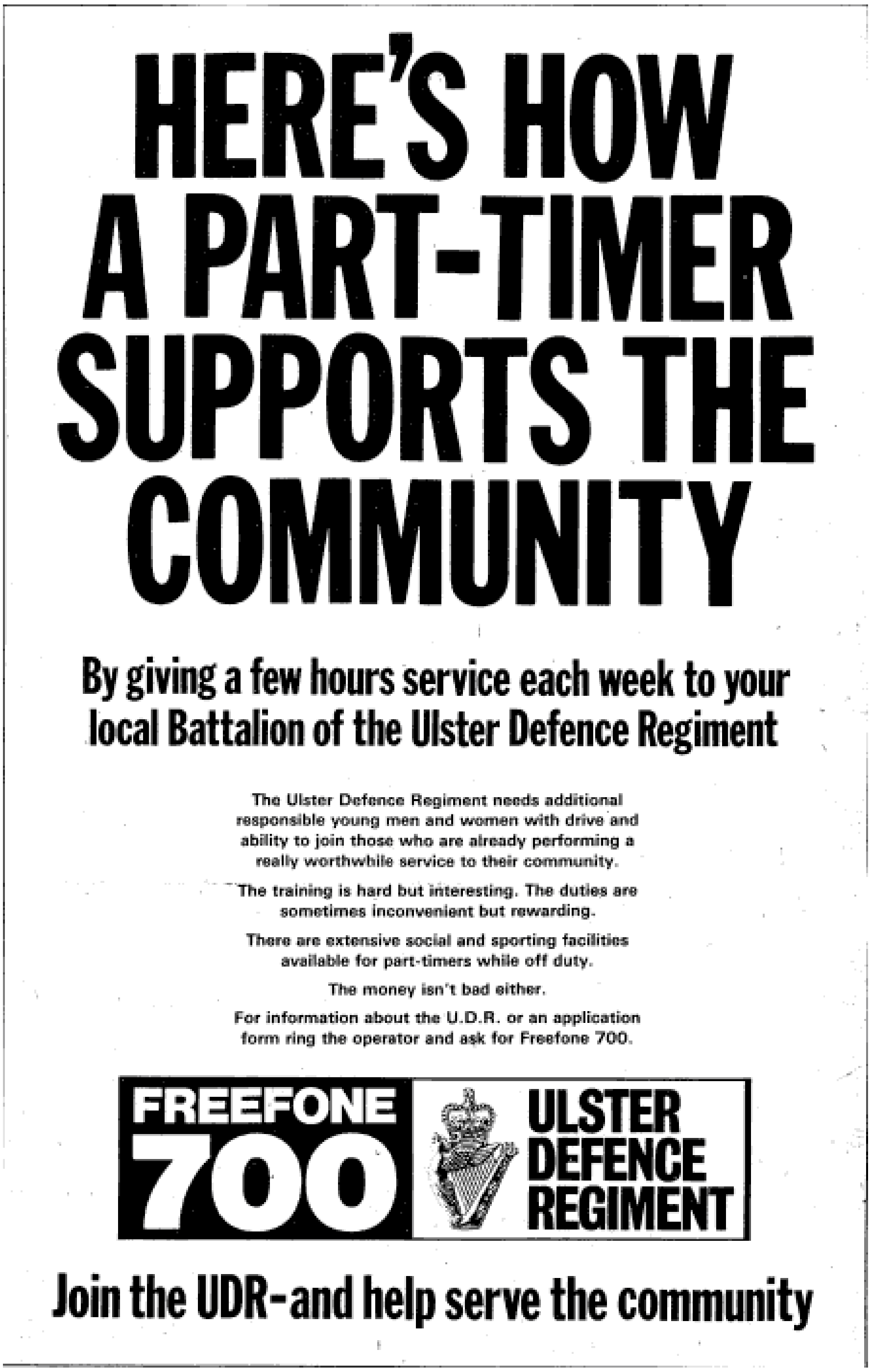
"[illegible]"

Address __________

ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT

It's time you joined. And you know it.

Image 6: *The Ulster Herald*, 21st January 1978



HERE'S HOW A PART-TIMER SUPPORTS THE COMMUNITY

By giving a few hours service each week to your local Battalion of the Ulster Defence Regiment

The Ulster Defence Regiment needs additional responsible young men and women with drive and ability to join those who are already performing a really worthwhile service to their community.

The training is hard but interesting. The duties are sometimes inconvenient but rewarding.

There are extensive social and sporting facilities available for part-timers while off duty.

The money isn't bad either.

For information about the U.D.R. or an application form ring the operator and ask for Freefone 700.

FREEFONE 700

ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT

Join the UDR-and help serve the community

Image 7: *The Ulster Herald* & *The Fermanagh Herald*, 1981-1982 UDR Campaign [featured weekly starting January 1981]

Meanwhile, Ryder believed that there was ‘a distinct lack of vigour’ in rooting out “bad apples” - despite the 1,000 dismissals and 10,000 rejections in the period 1975-1976 alone, and indicates that this was the fault of senior Army officers using the regiment to channel Loyalist energies.[322] Certainly, the fact that UDR commander Bray over a decade later was still weeding out “bad apples” is a significant indicator of the scale of the problem. Potter believed that Ryder’s condemnation was overstated, but did accept that there was a regionality issue – with some battalions being far firmer than others.[323] 3 UDR’s (Co. Down) early commander Dion Beard’s unequivocal battalion order banning UDA-UDR dual membership, in which he compared such organisations to the IRA, demonstrates this.[324] He was the loudest and one of the earliest internal voices calling for a ban. Whilst we still lack the full statistics, I hypothesise that regions with strong professional leadership (like Beard’s) would not tolerate any hint of “bad apples”, those with less professional and perhaps more threatened membership would.

---

[322] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 98

Potter cited how one battalion dismissed three soldiers on allegations alone, whereas another allowed a soldier to continue despite being on RUC Special Branch’s radar for paramilitary activities.[325] Such regional variations only complicated the matter of removing undesirables. I believe that the UDR had a twofold problem. It wished to be a cross-community regiment, and yet needed to purge its ranks of undesirables. These appear to be complimentary, but it meant that the UDR could never take responsibility for subversion or undertake covert but decisive actions to purge its ranks. Any highlighting of dismissals would simply flag sectarian elements in the UDR, and this could be utilised by its critics as supporting claims of collusion. One could see the merger into becoming the Royal Irish Regiment as the final reconciliation between the two competing priorities by allowing filtration as troops were transferred over and “undesirables” contracts quietly terminated as part of RIR formation. The UDR had always wanted these individuals out, but Westminster’s and Whitehall’s attentions were focused elsewhere – maintaining control of Northern Ireland, as shall be explored in a later chapter.

The result of these missteps and failures was that in less than three years the regiment was no longer capable of being a cross-community regiment, with significant and lasting reputational damage. Whilst there were always a few Catholics who would enlist, these would now be mainly former soldiers living in peaceful cross-community areas, whilst the rest of the community as the anti-IRA Cardinal O'Fiaich summarised in 1978 viewed it as the B Specials in a new form.[326] Such a stain even led to Lord Hunt, the very man who had helped establish the UDR, publicly calling for its removal in 1990: 'The distrust of the minority population in Northern Ireland in the Special Constabulary — the B Specials which the UDR replaced — had been inherited by its successor...'[327]

---

[323] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 93
[324] Ibid. pg. 90-91
[325] Ibid. pg. 93

---

[326] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 68-69, 211

[327] *The Irish Examiner* (1990) '"Disband UDR" says man who helped form it', February 23rd

Chapter 2 - The Deviant Defence Force? The UDR Examined

After examining the statistics and proving that the problem of UDR deviancy has received sufficient attention until new archival data has been released. Furthermore, when deviancy should be discussed in future it should be done to contextualise and explore the UDR rather than to define it within discussions.For some however the question may still remain as to whether the UDR fostered a deviant culture. There is no doubt that for some critics the infamy of those early deviant incidents such as the Miami Showband Massacre mean that regardless of the statistics an argument can be forwarded that the UDR had a low-level deviant and sectarian culture that made it a wonder that further deviancy did not occur.[1] Using Winslow's work into the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) I examine the UDR to determine whether it was the progenitor of deviancy or the inevitable victim of circumstances.[2] Deviancy can be propagated or spread in the right conditions, and these stem from the regimental culture. By examining pre-existing criteria identified and proven by Winslow, and applying these to the UDR, I shall prove that the UDR was not a culturally deviant regiment.[3] This chapter directly challenges the presentation of the UDR as inherently deviant or collusive that is common in the work of individuals including Smith and Cadwallader.[4] External forces infiltrated the regiment for their own ends, or individuals unilaterally turned, but these were not encouraged or spread within the regiment.

This analysis is valuable in that if further frames criticism of the regiment in a more accurate and academic light, and highlights a potential recruitment issue for LDFs – namely that once we recruit from within the population, we can risk militarising partisans. As this and the next chapter will demonstrate, the importance of vetting cannot be overstated in LDF recruitment. What may be determined is the need to guide a regiment and its culture, as there is significant evidence that even the most elite and

---

[1] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 152; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment: An Instrument of Peace?*, pg. 80-81; Anne Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Northern Ireland*, (Cork: Mercier Press 2013), pg. 99-101

[2] Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*

[3] Ibid.

[4] Smith, *UDR: Declassified;* Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies*, pg. 16, 321

"regimented" of units can be warped into becoming fertile breeding grounds for dangerous, lethal deviancy. Cultural notions of "exceptionalism" driven by uncontrolled aggression, common factors of such units, produce deviancy. This chapter first examines intrinsic then extrinsic factors noted by Winslow to examine whether the UDR had a problem with deviancy or infiltration.

The regimental culture is one of the greatest influences upon the recruit. It shapes their identity, and by proxy their actions.[5] Whilst there are variations between units within a regiment, they broadly conduct themselves within the cultural "doctrine" of the regiment. As shall be shown throughout the thesis, the UDR's own regimental subculture is unique. The UDR through threat (primarily from Republican paramilitaries) and its structure was what I would term as an "organic" culture. This is due to its lack of a founding mythos. The UDR was an entirely new regiment, having not come about due to a merger (as is often the case in the modern era) or a revival of a previous regiment. Summarily, it lacked a traditional mythos to draw from. Whilst the UDR was intended to replace the B Specials, its designation as a military unit under HQNI control deviated it from what came before. The mass admission of ex-Specials threatened this aspiration, as explored in Chapter 1, however there is no evidence supporting a "Specialisation" of the UDR. The Specials for example ceased recruiting "disloyal" Catholics very quickly, and openly participated in numerous sectarian acts including a mob that attacked a civil rights march in 1969.[6] The UDR never engaged in nor desired such tactics, and thus did mark somewhat of a break from the past.

The regiment was left to form its own identity. This presents space for deviancy to develop – as without established norms, practices that can be deemed deviant can develop as the regiment and its soldiers seek to establish their own identity. The importance of maintaining the equilibrium between a culture of control and a culture of distinct regimental pride and honour during this process cannot be understated. The UDR thus serves as an example of how deviancy can form and how it also can be averted. The UDR has furthermore been accused of several deviant acts and trends, some of which are well founded. An examination of the regiment is thus required.

---

[5] Clifton Bryant, *Khaki-Collar Crime: Deviant Behaviour in the Military Context* (New York: Free Press 1976) pg. 57; Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 69-70; Donna Winslow, *Misplaced Loyalties: The Role of Military Culture in the Breakdown of Discipline in Two Peace Operations* (Canadian Review of Sociology Vol. 35:3, 1998) pg. 355

[6] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 5, 7, 29

Criminal & Sectarian Activities – The Narrative

The UDR is often branded as sectarian or as being rife with collusion - all of which can be considered as military deviancy.[7] This is due to a number of infamous and shocking incidents of UDR collusion in the early 1970s when the regiment was in its infancy. To find a regiment quickly become embroiled in such criminal and sectarian activity is shocking, but it is worth remembering that its recruits were not "fresh-faced" – these were "native" individuals who had connections to the relevant criminal or paramilitary organizations that likely pre-dated their service.

The earliest public accusations and incidents of collusion came in mid-to-late 1972. *Fortnight* magazine first reported a series of criminal trials of UDR soldiers that included firearms charges and attempted murder and warned that it was becoming associated with its B Specials predecessor and that it would 'only take a few more charges similar to the ones outlined above to discredit the UDR completely'.[8] SDLP leaders meanwhile accused the UDR and the broader British Army of arming and training the UDA.[9] Armoury raids were surprisingly common during the UDR's early years. The dawn of Loyalist armoury raids in October 1972 included suspicions of UDR collusion aiding or facilitating these raids.[10] When such suspicions were confirmed by the British in the mid-1970s the UDR became associated with collusion.[11] The Irish Examiner stated that: 'Yesterday's raid showed obvious collusion between the UDR and Loyalist paramilitary organisations.'[12] Such revelations and incidents only inflamed SDLP criticism of the UDR and broader military policy. After one raid Ivan Cooper, a British-Protestant and nationalist SDLP MP, denounced the UDR as being 'in the pocket of the Loyalist paramilitary organisations…' and that the incident proved the 'obvious disloyalty' in the ranks.[13] Rumours of UDA-UDR associations only encouraged such positions despite Army denial and condemnation.[14]

---

[7] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Northern Ireland*, pg. 16, 321; Smith, *UDR: Declassified*

[8] Fortnight, Issue 47, pg. 4

[9] Evening Herald, *"Army is training UDA" Claim denied*, September 30th 1972; Derry Journal, *Collusion between UDR and UDA, Hume alleges*, October 24th 1972

[10] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 90

[11] Irish Press, *Rees "in whitewash of UDR arms raid",* July 3rd 1975; Sunday Independent, *Stolen arms recovered by SDLP tip-off,* June 22nd 1975

[12] Irish Examiner, *Collusion theory in U.D.R. centre arms raid*, June 17th 1975

Furthermore, the SDLP often highlighted and reported UDR infractions. One Dungannon SDLP councillor was stopped at a UDR checkpoint and reported that the soldiers vandalised his car.[15] This same councillor noted that the UDR were permitted to hold political roles unlike their police counterparts, including one particularly bigoted local politician who also served as UDR captain.[16] Austin Currie similarly reported that a constituent was harassed by the UDR, who had mocked the constituents' stammer and threatened to use the potatoes in the back of his car to stuff his mouth whilst threatening that the man would not live past forty.[17] Harassment was a particular problem with the UDR, although current archival data does not allow for an accurate or broad assessment as to the extent of the issue. That it was not isolated was acknowledged by one Irish official who also experienced vandalism of his vehicle by a UDR checkpoint near the border, some of whom appeared to be intoxicated.[18] The protestant Bishop of Meath and Kildare similarly recalled a particularly unpleasant experience with the UDR when they mistook him for a Catholic priest.[19] Meanwhile in Portadown, a UDR patrol in a nationalist area mocked Catholic youths for having ash on their foreheads during Ash Wednesday.[20] Even the NIO in 1990 clearly reflecting upon the UDR's now 20 years of service noted that UDR conduct could depend on who their officers were.[21]

However, it was overt incidents of violent collusion that ensured that the UDR became synonymous with collusion. Whilst these were rare, they were controversial. The most infamous of these was the Miami Showband Massacre (1975) – where individuals belonging to the proscribed Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) within the UDR aided fellow paramilitaries in setting up a fake checkpoint to ambush and kill members of the Irish folk group the Miami Showband.[22] That same year both the UDA and UVF claimed to have planted loyal men within the UDR and had gained access to weaponry, training, and intelligence as a result.[23] The UDR did have an infiltration problem. However as former UDR officer David Crabbe highlighted, such popular narratives also led to incidents of simple criminality to be branded as sectarian – 'it can be very difficult to tell a criminal act from a sectarian one. But those early incidents created a narrative that was parroted [by critics]'.[24] One such incident occurred in 7/10 UDR (Belfast) whilst Crabbe was serving and involved one NCO stealing and selling weapons to settle personal debts: 'He had gotten himself into a lot of financial trouble … and went out and sold the guns to the UVF.'[25] However, this was widely reported as an incident of sectarianism – not criminal opportunism. Therefore, one should be cautious given what may initially appear to be sectarian can sometimes be born out of personal greed or opportunism. This is not to say that it is not a problem, but it is however one that has seemingly been overlooked by other authors.

---

[13] Irish Independent, *Says UDR allowed Loyalist gang to seize arms*, June 17th 1975; NAI 2016/22/2025 – *Evidence of involvement by UDR members in criminal activities* [Report by D. Donoghue], January 1976

[14] Evening Herald, *"Army is training UDA" Claim denied*, September 30th 1972

[15] NAI 2017/4/89 – *Meeting with Anthony McGonnell, SDLP Councillor, Dungannon, 9 October 1987* [Memo from B. McMahon, First Secretary], 13th October 1987

[16] Ibid.

[17] NAI 2017/4/89 – *UDR Incident, Dunganno*n [Memo from B. Scannell], 3rd March 1987

[18] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 114-115

[19] Ibid. pg. 114

[20] NAI 2017/4/89 – Letter from D. O Ceallaigh to D. Donaghue [Anglo-Irish Division, DFA] 19th May 1987

[21] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 114

Finally, the UDR was damned by a study by the Irish Information Partnership (IIP) that found that between 1985-1989 the crime rate per thousand individuals in Northern Ireland was 5.9 for Civilians, 1.7 for the Army, 0.9 for the RUC and finally a severe 9.1 for the UDR.[26] The IIP in 1985 found that of the seven killings by the UDR 70% were of Catholics, and that 2.6% of UDR and Army soldiers since 1970 face serious criminal charges versus just 1.7% of the RUC and 0.7% of the civilian population.[27] This study also concluded that the UDR engaged in a higher rate of crime than the general population at 1.3% to 0.6% respectively.[28] Such statistical evidence only furthered anti-UDR positions.

---

[22] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 152; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment: An Instrument of Peace?*, pg. 80-81; Anne Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Northern Ireland*, (Cork: Mercier Press 2013), pg. 99-101

[23] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 156-157; Irish Press, *UVF admit a UDR connection*, September 1st 1975

[24] David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

[25] Ibid.

[26] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 379

[27] Hugo Arnold, *Crime, Ulsterisation and the Future of the UDR* (Fortnight Magazines 7th October 1985), pg. 4

The interest in UDR deviancy was only reignited by the declassification of the 1973 British investigation that led to the “Subversion in the UDR” Report. This report concluded that between 5-15% of the regiment in some areas were Loyalist paramilitaries, and that as a result its loyalty and reliability would be called into question should parochial interests come into conflict with those of the British government.[29] However, this same report highlights that subversion and infiltration were not an intelligence priority, and thus much of the report was speculation. Regardless, this kicked off a firestorm of press interest, with the Irish News announcing the declassification in May 2006 and focused on how it revealed ‘…not only the scale of collusion, but also that government was aware of it early in the Troubles.’[30] Other papers led with titles such as ‘*15pc of UDR ranks drawn from loyalist paramilitaries’* and ‘*Thatcher ‘knew of infiltration’’*.[31] Since then, we have seen a rise in critical literature – such as Cadwallader and Smith.[32] Therefore the narrative became again dominated by criticism and focus on UDR deviancy, and hence the need for this chapter to examine the issue with contemporary evidence.

However, these studies can be challenged, as this chapter endeavours to do. There are a number of elements to be aware of before conducting an analysis of UDR regimental cultures. Firstly as Potter highlighted we should expect Regular Army crime figures to be lower given that they deployed for limited periods and retired to the safety of barracks – with often minimal interaction with civilians beyond patrols.[33] The UDR meanwhile lived among the community and therefore had more opportunities to engage in criminal activity, and more motive given the psychological strain of the conflict and losing comrades to paramilitaries who often escaped justice.[34]

---

[28] Arnold, *Crime, Ulsterisation and the Future of the UDR*, pg. 5

[29] British Government, *Subversion in the UDR* Report (London: HMSO, 1973)

[30] Irish News, *Subversion in the UDR*, May 2nd 2006

[31] Irish Independent, *15pc of UDR ranks drawn from loyalist paramilitaries*, October 5th 2006; Belfast Telegraph, *Thatcher ‘knew of infiltration’*, May 3rd 2006

[32] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Northern Ireland*; Smith, *UDR: Declassified*

[33] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 379

[34] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 379

Furthermore, the high off-duty casualty rate and the lack of regular civilian duties kept UDR soldiers in a constant state of combat stress. Secondly, these statistics were distorted given that the UDR consisted mostly of young men who are statistically more prone to criminal or violent acts.[35] Adjusting for this, the rate of civilian crime for the period 1985-1989 jumps from a comparatively low 5.9 compared to the UDR's 9.1 – to an astounding 23.[36] Finally, as Bruce highlighted despite the press and attention given to collusion, the statistics reveal that the reality was far more tame – a 1977 British Army security investigation revealed from 7,700 UDR soldiers that some 200 had any form of connection tenuous or otherwise to Loyalist paramilitaries, and that only 27 seem to have actively engaged with them and who were immediately discharged.[37]

This chapter first explores the concept of military cultures and studies of deviancy to lay the groundwork of its examination of the UDR. The examination then moves through elements noted by Winslow in her foundational study of deviancy, and moves through intrinsic to extrinsic elements to determine their influence. I add the element of COIN operations and peacekeeping given their prevalence within deviancy incidents, before questioning whether some UDR subversives saw the missions of the UDR and Loyalist paramilitaries as aligned, and whether some UDR soldiers may have "turned" and decided to align with these individuals as a result of complex stress and trauma. I then finish with an exploration of newly released statistics to demonstrate a core argument of the chapter – that whilst UDR deviancy appears to have been a regional rather than an institutional issue, it also does not warrant the attention and focus that it has received within discussions of the UDR.

---

[35] Steve Bruce, *Red Hand: Protestant Paramilitaries in Northern Ireland*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1992), pg. 225

[36] Bruce, *Red Hand*, pg. 225

[37] William Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army: 1854–1992* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pg. 132-133

Military culture

Winslow defined culture as '…a social force that controls patterns of organisational behaviour', whilst Langston et al. stated that 'culture provides the unwritten rules that inform and shape expected behaviours'.[38] I follow Langston et al.'s definition given its relevance to deviancy. Military culture has values of self-sacrifice, uniformity, and duty compared to civilian ideals of freedom, egalitarianism, and individuality.[39] Soldiers are socialised into conforming to military ideals, including accepting orders regardless of personal cost, as part of conditioning for future combat.[40] Training shifts the individual from civilian individuality to military compliance. Military discipline is instilled, revered, and reinforced throughout military life to impose order in battle and to ritualise the act of violence.[41] Training goes beyond mere practice and rituals. It creates new social bonds, isolates recruits from the outside world, and creates an incredible sense of loyalty – making recruits more likely to die for one another, respond more violently, and to resist external scrutiny of their unit.[42]

There is very little interaction between the civilian and military world, and the media becomes the only way for civilians to understand the military – a source considered by many soldiers to be biased and unreliable. This creates a sense of unease and even contempt for civilian society within the military, who feel that civilians do not understand them and their struggles.[43] The military becomes all that the individual knows, and the regiment and its subculture become the family, heritage, and norms for the soldier. Once a soldier is fully accepted into the regiment and its culture, they often become its zealous advocates and defenders.[44] Regimental "indoctrination" starts early, as new members are given the regimental history.[45] As one Colonel highlighted, whilst "indoctrinating" new recruits is not encouraged or official policy, it almost certainly happens.[46] It is little surprise that soldiers often display a high degree of identification with their unit – adopting its culture, values, and norms.[47] The infamous Standford Prison Experiment, in which students were separated into "prisoners" and "guards" revealed how our need to conform can lead to subservience in the case of the prisoners (even to their own detriment) or deviancy as evidenced by some guards engaging in physical and psychological abuse of the "prisoners".[48] Intriguingly, Zimbardo also connected the behaviour he witnessed in his experiment to the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib in 2004.[49]

---

[38] Winslow, *Misplaced Loyalties*, 347; Langston et al., *Culture: What Is Its Effect on Stress in the Military*, (Military Medicine Vol. 172:9, 2007), pg. 931

[39] Christopher Dandeker & James Gow, *Military culture and strategic peacekeeping*, (Small Wars & Insurgencies Vol. 10:2, 1999), pg. 60; Lynn Hall, *The Importance of Understanding Military Culture* (Social Work in Health Care Vol. 50:1, 2011), pg. 5; Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 14

[40] Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 15, 19

[41] Hall, *The Importance of Understanding Military Culture*, pg. 22; Charles Kirke, *Orders is orders… aren't they? Rule bending and rule breaking in the British Army* (Ethnography Vol. 11:3, 2010), pg. 360

[42] Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 62

[43] Ibid. pg. 42-44

[44] Antony Beevor, *Inside the British Army*, (London: Chatto & Windus Ltd., 1990), pg. 27; Edward Burke, *An Army of Tribes: British Cohesion, Deviancy and Murder in Northern Ireland*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), pg. 39

The Framework

I expand upon the work of Winslow's criteria for deviancy through exploring the prevalence of COIN and peacekeeping operations within deviancy incidents, whilst also utilising Bryant's influential concepts of "Khaki-collar Crime" to analyse the UDR.[50] Bryant produced a masterful study on military deviancy, defining numerous types and patterns within the context of the US military. [51] Bryant noted how deviancy was neglected within academic studies and created three categories of what he dubbed 'khaki-collared crime' (khaki is associated as a military colour, often found on colonial uniforms and as part of modern camouflage):[52]

- Inter-occupational crimes (between militaries).
- Intra-occupational crimes (between colleagues).
- Extra-occupational crimes (against civilians).

---

[45] Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 69
[46] Beevor, *Inside the British Army*, pg. 227-228
[47] Bryant, *Khaki-Collar Crime*, pg. 57
[48] Zimbardo et al. *The Stanford Prison Experiment* (1971)
[49] *'Skeptically' Episode 49*, Skeptic Magazine (July 4th 2017)
[50] Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*; Bryant, *Khaki-Collar Crime*
[51] Bryant, *Khaki-Collar Crime*
[52] Ibid. pg. 7-18

Lesser deviancy is not anathema within the military. Kirke, a former British artillery officer, highlighted that "secondary adjustments" (rule bending for beneficial purposes) were part of army organisational culture – particularly when it came to "buckshees" (surplus kit).[53] However, such "appropriations" of military equipment vary –around 45% of Allied supplies for the Italian front during WWII were stolen and sold on the black market.[54] Some form of rule deviation must be expected, but when this goes to extremes, like the killing of non-combatants, it warrants examination.

My primary focus is on extra-occupational "military deviancy". This inherent moral issue of killing civilians, as well as their legal protection under the laws of war, jeopardises counterinsurgency operations and undermines "Hearts and Minds" (COIN strategies for winning over the locals).[55] For this examination we are reliant upon scholars like Winslow whose work for the inquiry into the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) identified several "deviant" elements and has become a cornerstone deviancy study. The first deviant element Winslow identified was a "rotating officer class" that led to the creation of a parallel, clandestine NCO-led authority system within the CAR.[56] The minimal socialisation between the enlisted and officer class leaves most day-to-day interactions with troops to NCOs.[57] As a result soldiers often tend to see officers, given their control and discipline roles, as a type of internal opposition and are more likely to identify with sympathetic and influential NCOs.[58] These same NCOs also tend to the "gatekeepers" and informal historians of regimental culture, allowing overly-influential NCOs to cultivate the culture as they see fit – often to the detriment of good order and discipline.[59] The CAR had a literal "Airborne Indoctrination Course" which was often run by NCOs.[60] The inquiry linked many CAR issues to overly empowered

---

[53] Kirke, *Orders is orders... aren't they?*

[54] Clive Emsley, *Soldier, Sailor, Beggarman, Thief: Crime and the British Armed Services Since 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pg. 91

[55] Paul Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds?" British Counterinsurgency Strategy from Malaya to Iraq*, (Journal of Strategic Studies, Vol. 32:3), pg. 454-455

[56] Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 5

[57] Ibid. pg. 13, 20

[58] Hockey, *Squaddies*, pg. 144

[59] Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 59

[60] Ibid. pg. 91-92

NCOs, and the weaker officer class failing to enforce discipline or the rules of engagement seriously.[61]

The second element was hypermasculinity. Winslow noted warrior identities are prevalent within the military, but only became an issue when individuals became hyper-invested, exhibited a heightened combat-centred identity, and showed a diminished ability to relate to outsiders.[62] At this point such identities encouraged brutality and a rejection of non-conformists.[63] Each CAR Commando unit adopted aggressive symbols, with the deviant 2 Commando adopting the "Black Devil", Zulu Warrior and the Confederate Battle Flag – often hung in private quarters in "defiance of a regimental ban" as part of an "anti-authority" subculture.[64]

The third noted element was "exceptionalism", which was closely linked to the "warrior" identities previously noted.[65] The CAR felt that it was superior and thus not bound by conventional limits and procedures – including failing to observe basic protocols of saluting officers from other units.[66] Finally, Winslow noted inadequate training led to poor outcomes. As one interviewee reported to Winslow: '*the Airborne are trained to kill'*.[67] The deployment to Somalia was ill-conceived given the CAR lacked the appropriate training, were insufficiently briefed on Somali culture, had little idea what to expect and given the shift to a more aggressive "peace-making" format many took this as an opportunity to revert to what they trained for – war.[68] Its murder of a teenager in hindsight was no surprise.

I expand upon Winslow's work by noting the overlooked factor of COIN operations on unit behaviour. Both the CAR and UDR appear to have been heavily influenced by their deployment within COIN and peacekeeping operations, and this will particularly be enhanced within LDFs. The five aspects of deviancy that this chapter will explore therefore are:

---

[61] Siver, *The Dark Side of Peacekeeping*, 107; Canadian Government, *Dishonoured Legacy, Executive Summary*, 22

[62] Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 85-86

[63] Ibid. pg. 101, 120

[64] Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 106, 108; Sandra Whitworth, *Militarised Masculinities and the Politics of Peacekeeping: The Canadian Case*, in Booth, K. (Eds.) *Critical Security Studies in World Politics*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), pg. 14

[65] Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 213

[66] Siver, *The Dark Side of Peacekeeping*, 109; Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 129, 132

[67] Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 65

[68] Ibid. pg. 193-195, 200

1. A rotating officer class.
2. Masculine culture/identity – also linked to notions of soldiers as “warriors”.
3. A feeling of being “different” – even within the military.
4. Incorrect training for the theatre.
5. Deployment within Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations.

I have added this final element due to the prevalence of the issue within deviancy, which leads me to hypothesise that this is actually an inducer and an accelerator of deviancy. For a regiment to be deviant, it must have each of these characteristics and convert fresh recruits to conforming to a subculture that engages in deviant activity. Through this I will demonstrate that the UDR was not a deviant regiment, but suffered what many LDFs will experience without adequate guidance and vetting.

Rotating Officer Class

Many of the Ulster Defence Regiment’s (UDR) senior officers transferred in from the regular British Army – particularly at the battalion level.[69] This is not surprising given the regiment was mostly comprised of part-time soldiers for much of its history. Furthermore, traditional sources of officers failed to enlist due to UDR rank progression being capped at major - leading to senior ranks being filled by British “Regulars”.[70] This led to a cultural divide between the UDR on the ground, who faced the dangers, threats, and fears, and those in Battalion HQ who had limited experiences of Northern Ireland in their 2-year term. Whilst no doubt some of these officers came in with previous experiences of the region, NI-related experience would have been something that became more common as the conflict progressed – perhaps further reinforcing why there was a decline from the infamous deviancy and collusion for the UDR in the 1970s to seemingly lower-level deviancy later. The effects of this divide can be seen in later officers' shock on finding a very relaxed approach to discipline in the UDR – including calling each other by first names in subversion of typical military protocol.[71] Such fundamental discipline issues are anathema to most regular soldiers and raise questions as to regimental discipline. However, it must also be noted that this author could not find any sources from these battalion level officers, and thus in all sections where they are discussed this is by mostly their subordinates and may only reveal their own perceptions.

---

[69] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 104-105; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; Noel Downey, interview with author 31st August 2021; UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021

[70] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 325-326, 380; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; Noel Downey, interview with author 31st August 2021; UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021

These battalion officers did not understand the areas, communities, and regional contexts in the way that UDR soldiers did. They were not raised among the civilian population and were comparatively unaware of the nuances, peoples and developments of an area. Whilst officers would have gathered a significant element of this knowledge in their 2 years – the rotation of most of these officers resulted in a partial loss of institutional and personal knowledge and relationships. As with other units, the lack of a steady officer class at battalion level may have limited any monitoring of ongoing issues, particularly as they developed. This would have provided space for some deviant elements to remain unchallenged or unnoticed. Individual battalion officers may have been unable to separate what would constituted regional quirks, and signs of broader deviancy.

Ex-UDR and Royal Irish officer David Crabbe however forwarded a more positive view of officer rotation:

> ...initially I think it was needed. I think you had to have that rigor ... you did need that sense of rigor, what it takes to command a battalion, what it takes to be the quartermaster of a battalion and look after logistics and all of that. So, I think that experience was needed, and I don't think you could have grown that as quickly as it would have been required.[72]

Crabbe also highlighted that among the battalion officers, the second-in-command was always a local UDR soldier to provide local guidance and knowledge. Crabbe however also highlighted how the battalion saw themselves as only having to deal with these officers for a relatively short period of time –a particular bonus when these individuals were perceived as being harsh, ineffective, or disruptive:[73]

---

[71] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 30

[72] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021

> There was also suppose a comfort in the fact that we're going to change after two years. They're only here for two years. You could just get on with it after two years. So, there was that kind of element too. We put up with them for two years and all that.[74]

This indicates a conceptual divide between Battalion HQ and those on the ground – an "us" and "them" mentality that provides space for company-level cultures to emerge. One warrant officer noted the disruption that this caused:

> Every two years we get a new commanding officer and RSM (Regimental Sergeant Major) in the battalion and we have to readjust to their way of thinking. They come fresh from their regiment and it's always someone we haven't had before, who will have his own ideas. This can be frustrating, because one man can be really dead keen on something and you live with that, and the next guy comes along and he's not so worried about that. There are advantages to this system because you can get fresh, good ideas.[75]

This disruption would have been mitigated in some areas but good local leadership, but in other areas it may have inadvertently given rise to localised deviancy. Indeed, UDR 1 reported how in some companies the one in charge was often not the officers but '*…the loudest voice in the back of a Land Rover'*.[76] This may however also explain how the regiment was not significantly deviant. While battalion officers rotated, things were far more stable at the company and platoon level.[77] This is the "coal face" of discipline in any regiment, and David Crabbe spoke repeatedly of directives that he and fellow officers gave their troops on public relations and discipline:[78]

---

[73] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021

[74] Ibid.

[75] Arthur, *Northern Ireland,* pg. 238

[76] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021

[77] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; Noel Downey, interview with author 31st August 2021; UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021

> I was always of a school and many others who served too to of: “kill it with kindness”. Far better to step back with a smile, and it's going to annoy them a hell of a lot more than pushing them up against a wall and searching them.[79]

UDR 1 believed that stable and strong company leadership solidified his company in 2 UDR (Armagh) whilst the absence of such leadership led to poor standards and deviancy at nearby Glennane – which included the notorious Loyalist death squad the Glennane Gang. [80] UDR 1:

> [Our CO] was a proactive guy, decent guy, and he wanted a good platoon, and he therefore was being proactive and being a good officer ... when [he] was the officer and [Billy] was the sergeant, we had a platoon that was very well run and there was no nonsense ... [our CO] was an extremely good officer and was a much better officer than the officer in Glennane who didn't do very much.[81]

This was acknowledged by the NIO in 1990 who noted that regionally UDR behaviour depended on who were their senior officers – ‘Some had very bad records indeed; some were an absolute “dream”. It all depended on the attitude of the Major ... and ultimately on the Commanding Officer’.[82] UDR 1 was warned by Corporals not to go out with Glennane platoons, and particularly about their NCO’s as ‘*...you might be in more danger from those behind you than those in front of you’*.[83] UDR 1 summarised that upon reflection, were it not for the leadership and stability provided by his NCOs and Officers, he would likely have encountered the Glennane Gang.[84] It is not clear why no action was taken against these individuals, though from my discussions with UDR 1 it seems likely that fear of retaliation played a significant part. The presence of strong and stable leadership from officers at company and platoon level compensate for rotating officers at the battalion level. Where this was not the case, such as at Glennane and its eponymous Loyalist death squad, we see the rotating officer class issue play out in full.

---

[78] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

[79] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021

[80] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021

[81] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021

[82] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 114

[83] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021; UDR 1, interview with author 22nd July 2022

[84] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021

In summary, a rotating officer class was present within the UDR and whilst this was seen as beneficial by Crabbe, it may have contributed to the deviancy noted by UDR 1. The risks of this are apparent throughout history and contexts. The Brereton Report into Australian SAS (ASAS) deviancy found that unlike the ASAS, 2nd Commando special forces did not exhibit the same deviancy issues due to their structures allowing for greater officer control.[85] The inquiry into the CAR, which was disbanded for several violations including the torture and death of a Somali teenager, linked many of its issues to overly empowered NCOs, and the weaker officer class failing to enforce discipline or the rules of engagement seriously.[86] Similarly, the wanton violence and opportunism of elements of the ALP in Afghanistan in some areas, and the discipline in others, sounds like an issue of officer control.[87] Strong officers controlling good NCOs in 2 UDR allowed deviancy to prosper in one area, but clearly barred it in another. Weak officer control, a by-product of rotating officers, here led to deviancy.

Masculine Identities

This element was almost entirely absent within the UDR. From interviews I could find no evidence of the concept of the UDR as "warriors" or any masculine tropes. As Crabbe highlighted repeatedly to his soldiers: 'We joined to do ourselves out of a job.'[88] Former UDR Colonel John Robinson was one of the first to join the UDR in 1970 and summarised his role in three words: 'Anti-terrorist soldier'.[89] Crabbe noted during his service the differences between companies and battalions:

> I found a different kind of- still a professional soldier who did the job that they were there to do, but they were kind of tuned to a different intensity… and

---

[85] Brereton Report, *Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force: Afghanistan Inquiry Report,* pg. 32
[86] Siver, *The Dark Side of Peacekeeping*, pg. 107; Canadian Government, *Dishonoured Legacy, Executive Summary*, pg. 22
[87] Jon Strandquist, *Local defence forces and counterinsurgency in Afghanistan: learning from the CIA's Village Defence Program in South Vietnam* (Small Wars & Insurgencies Vol. 26:1, 2015), pg. 95
[88] David Crabbe, interview with author 11th January 2023
[89] John Robinson, interview with author 4th November 2022

> obviously had their own local knowledge as well around that. So, yeah, there were certainly differences in different places where you served … the social experience fed into what would become the local battalion traditions or that kind of thing. Not huge differences, but just noticeable differences. But they still did the jobs and still did what we had to do.[90]

Meanwhile, Richard Edgar of 11 UDR (N. Armagh) serving in Portadown described the UDR role as:

> Peacekeeper. I remember the old adverts when I was a young child, and it was: "Work with the men who are working for peace". And that's what the role was. The role wasn't to be abuse anyone, hurt anyone or do anything bad to anyone. The role was to bring peace to Northern Ireland.[91]

Similar sentiments were expressed by UDR 2 and Noel Downey of 4 UDR.[92] This is in stark contrast to deviant regiments, for example the Australian SAS (ASAS) was found to have: '…embraced or fostered the "warrior culture" … Special Forces operators should pride themselves on being model professional soldiers, not on being "warrior heroes."'[93] This ethos lead to the execution of civilians as part of "blooding" new SAS recruits. There are connections between this pattern and incidents in Northern Ireland such as Bloody Sunday when British soldiers favoured aggressive actions and the shooting of civilians over counterinsurgency ambiguities. There was even a practice in Northern Ireland of deviant units of labelling regiments as "Players" (espoused renegades) or the more derogatory "Crap-hats" (conformists).[94]

The UDR lacked such aggression. Potter, a former UDR soldier and regimental historian, framed the UDR in his history of the regiment as persisting despite the struggles and attacks.[95] This was reflected in its title – *A Testimony to Courage*. The archival and oral evidence similarly does not support a "masculinised" image of the

---

[90] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021
[91] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022
[92] Noel Downey, interview with author 31st August 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September
[93] Brereton Report, *Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force: Afghanistan Inquiry Report*, pg. 33
[94] Edward Burke, *Counter-Insurgency against 'Kith and Kin'? The British Army in Northern Ireland, 1970–76*, (The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History Vol. 43:4, 2015), pg. 667
[95] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage: The Regimental History of the Ulster Defence Regiment*

UDR. The regiment seems to have taken a position of professional soldiering or as peacekeepers depending on the source, and therefore this primer for deviancy was most certainly absent. As to why this was the case, I forward that many "Player" regiments such as the Parachute Regiment are essentially prestigious – they are high-danger roles often immortalised in cinema and other media. There is a clear link to this prestige and elevated status to the concept of exceptionalism. The UDR meanwhile lacked this prestige and would thus not have attracted individuals who were trying to prove their "masculinity".

Differences and "Exceptionalism"

There is a clear connection between elite forces, superiority complexes, and military deviancy. In Northern Ireland this manifested in the SAS as Big Boys' Rules" – an ethos that they had their own rules of engagement that they defined and determined, regardless of the law.[96] Prior to the deviancy in Somalia, the CAR perceived themselves to be superior, manifesting itself in several ways – not least in arrogance.[97] This exceptionalism can easily be expanded to become exceptional even to the rules of war. A similar exceptionalism appeared in Kenya among the Home Guard units: 'Loyalists [like the Home Guard] condemned the rebellion's supporters for their apparent refusal to labour virtuously and their failure to obtain land, freedom or self-mastery. [The] Mau Mau came to be portrayed by loyalists as criminal delinquents.'[98] This would have played into the abuse, murder and theft from the population and suspected Mau Mau sympathisers by the Home Guard – who may have seen themselves as morally and societally superior, and thus able to commit these acts with impunity.[99]

There is a clear indication that the UDR perceived themselves as different from conventional forces. The UDR was always treated as separate and held at arm's length by the British Army. This lack of guidance and access from experienced soldiers led to the UDR struggling to identify with the rest of the army,[100] and summarily 'failed to identify themselves as fully fledged soldiers.'[101] In the absence of a direct connection between itself and the established British military, the mythos of the regiment was left to form independently of military traditions. Already one can see how this falls into similarly concerning patterns, particularly when regarding feeling superior or different, and how this may have affected the internal UDR culture. That the regiment was not broadly deviant is miraculous.

---

[96] Urban, *Big Boys' Rules*, pg. 73

[97] Siver, *The Dark Side of Peacekeeping*, pg. 109

[98] Daniel Branch, *The enemy within: loyalists and the war against Mau Mau in Kenya* (The Journal of African History Vol. 48.2, 2007), pg. 293

[99] Ibid. pg. 303-304, 307-308

The UDR, at least for a time, referred to fellow soldiers by their first names – in direct contradiction of military convention and discipline.[102] Although this may sound trivial, it fundamentally breaks down intrinsic military hierarchies and structure. Furthermore, UDR soldiers were known to sport long hair and the occasional beard in defiance of military regulations.[103] Such infractions represent a defiance against military order, structure, and authority.[104] In other units, such conduct would have resulted in disciplinary action, yet in the UDR this was clearly not the case.

As shall be noted repeatedly throughout this thesis, regionality shaped the UDR. UDR 1 noted that during his time in 2 UDR (S. Armagh), there were some who saw themselves as being "above" Catholics when in uniform: [105]

> ...instead of acting as neighbours because they were now wearing a uniform, were operating in a position of power to them. From my knowledge on vehicle checkpoints and people were stopped that were known, particularly local Protestants who were known, it was: "Oh hello, Jimmy, how are you tonight? On you go then". If it was [Catholic] Seamus, it was: "Can you produce your driving license? Where are you going?" Well, in fact, tomorrow morning you might be walking into the newsagent shop to buy the paper and it would be "Good morning Seamus how are you?".[106]

---

[100] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 78-81
[101] Ibid. pg. 80
[102] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 30
[103] Ibid. pg. 225-226
[104] Bryant, *Khaki-Collar Crime*, pg. 137-138
[105] UDR 1, interview with author 22nd July 2022
[106] Ibid.

The Irish Government received similar reports and descriptions from their own sources.[107] A November 1984 reported noted that: ‘Nationalists are often heard to plead that “these fellows grow up with us and went to school with us, the difference now being that they have guns.”’[108] The document presented the matter as a common complaint. Such discrimination was also a factor behind McKeown joining militant Republicanism.[109]

UDR 1 identified that such behaviours also occurred in areas around west Belfast (10 UDR) where he later lived.[110] The UDR was barred from the “hard” Nationalist areas such as west Belfast which were left to the Regulars but those areas surrounding them were again primarily patrolled by the UDR. Such superiority complexes and the low-level deviancy that UDR 1 witnessed he identified as being present in areas of ‘historically high tension between the communities’ and now high IRA activity such as West Belfast and South Armagh.[111] This was reinforced by a ‘class issue’ with companies drawing from the working class areas of these communities drawing on ‘…the less skilled, because the more skilled would have gone into the RUC Reserve’[112] As previously noted, there is an association between better education, and thus higher skills, and being less prone to violence.[113] Where companies were almost homogenous, UDR 1 witnessed low-level deviancy which mostly consisted of harassment and unnecessary searches.[114] Social mixing of classes and communities barred this, as UDR 1 connected this to why Newtownhamilton company of 2 UDR (S. Armagh) lacked the deviancy of Glennane.[115]

---

[107] NAI 2016/22/2025 – *The Ulster Defence Regiment – Reasons for Disbandment* [Report from Northern Ireland Section, Dept. of the Taoiseach], 16th November 1984

[108] Ibid.

[109] Dr Laurence McKeown, interview with author 5th July 2021

[110] UDR 1, interview with author 22nd July 2022

[111] UDR 1, interview with author 22nd July 2022

[112] Ibid.

[113] Østby et al. *Does Education Lead to Pacification? A Systematic Review of Statistical Studies on Education and Political Violence* (Review of Educational Research Vol. 89:1, 2019)

[114] UDR 1, interview with author 22nd July 2022

[115] Ibid.

The Irish Archives also support UDR 1’s hypothesis, as one handwritten page (likely from the mid-1980s) listed the UDR’s “Bad Barracks” – likely areas of higher deviancy:[116]

1. Enniskillen -> Boad Island; Clonelly (Mea + O’Kane)

    4 [Battalion] – A, B + D [Companies]

2. Omagh -> Carrickmore, Greencastle, Gortin △ (Haughey)

    6 Bn – D +F Cos

3. Clogher -> Aughnacloy, Clogher, Ballygawley △ (McGonell)

    6 Bn – C Co.

4. Aughnacloy -> “ “ “ “

    8 Bn – A Co.

5. Portadown -> McGonnell

    11 Bn – A, C, D +E

6. Magherafelt -> Drapestown Incident (M McSorley)

    5 Bn – A + F

Question Marks (No hard info, but suspicion)

- Castlederg
- Garrison area?

Recreation of NAI 2016/22/2025 – ‘List of “Bad Barracks”’ [Handwritten note], Undated

It must be noted that the triangles as copied from the original document likely indicate the presence of a “triangle” of activity between the three stated locations. UDR 1’s list also mirrors areas of IRA violence, and therefore can be associated with the “frontline” of the conflict.[117] These areas were also known for violence and historical tensions. White meanwhile noted divides in regions such as Belfast that led to violence and retaliation cycles.[118] Whilst both summarise that the IRA was never truly sectarian, public or UDR perceptions of sectarian violence and tensions certainly could have fed unto unprofessional UDR conduct. If soldiers felt that their “soft” approach was not achieving the intended results or stopping IRA violence, they may have felt that they had the right to take matters into their own hands against Republicans and anyone they suspected of directly supporting the IRA.

---

[116] NAI 2016/22/2025 – *‘List of “Bad Barracks”’* [Handwritten note]

[117] *Operation Banner* Report, pg. 2-13

This regionality is also logical, as Ignatieff noted a soldier’s war is a very limited geographical space, and it is the events, relationships and grievances within this space that become triggers for deviancy.[119] The deviant companies around Clogher and other areas of Tyrone, particularly 8 UDR (E. Tyrone) would have faced the infamous East Tyrone IRA. This brigade mounted numerous daring operations against the UDR – including the rocket and mortar attack on Clogher UDR base that devastated the site and killed the first female UDR soldier in May 1974.[120] This brigade was notoriously ruthless, with one member known for having risked capture by remaining at the scene to shoot the dog of their retired military victim.[121] Trigg connected its ruthless and notorious reputation to the reason why it was systematically targeted by the British state in the latter stages of the conflict.[122] This brigade viewed the local UDR with disdain, particularly given the mass initial recruitment of Specials which to them provided sectarian continuity:[123]

> The [Protestants] used to keep us down with border reivers and they’re still around ... The poorer Prods would join the UDR ... while the more middle-class ones joined the RUC Reserve, cleaner there you see, you wouldn’t get your hands dirty.[124]

---

[118] Robert White, *Provisional IRA Attacks on the UDR in Fermanagh and South Tyrone: Implications for the Study of Political Violence and Terrorism* (Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 23:3, 1997), pg. 21-22, 30-31

[119] Michael Ignatieff, *Handcuffing the Military? Military Judgement, Rules of Engagement and Public Scrutiny*, (in Mileham, P. & Willet, L. (Eds.) *Military Ethics for the Expeditionary Era*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001), pg. 25-33

[120] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 127; Trigg, *Deaths in the Fields: The IRA and East Tyrone,* pg. 47-48

[121] Trigg, *Deaths in the Fields: The IRA and East Tyrone,* pg. 47

[122] Ibid. pg. 250, 254

[123] Ibid. pg. 39

[124] Ibid. pg. 39

This reaffirms the need to train individuals – there is a link between education and lower rates of political violence.[125] We cannot presume the motivations of those who enlist, but with proper training militaries can ensure higher rates of discipline and control that can limit and even expose the worst excesses. The appearance of unprofessional conduct, whilst inexcusable, is somewhat expected. UDR 1 never saw an incident of outright abuse, criminal or sectarian violence – and was unable to recall an incident rising to that level but was aware that there were likely efforts to fall just below this threshold by deviant element:[126]

> It was worse in Belfast than it was in [Co.] Armagh … regular abuse at road checks and hauling people out of cars and manhandling people, low level abuse and use of power. Abuse of power…

Author: So, a case of "I'm going to treat you in a way that falls just short of an offense"?

UDR 1: Yes, that's right.

Therefore, where the IRA was most active or effective in regions of historically high community tensions – "bad barracks" emerged. Regional actions could reflect local tensions, or a desire from deviant, Loyalist-sympathetic elements to "supress dissent" or "control" a turbulent security situation. "Exceptionalism" therefore in these regions did not express itself as the UDR being an elite force – but as the defenders of the community with the right to abuse what they deemed to be "undesirable" elements.

However, this was not universal. Ex-UDR members elsewhere displayed an enhanced culture of "otherness" based on consistent threat both at home and on-duty (a significant deviation from the typical soldier's experience, who when off-duty would be safe within barracks, and face threat only whilst on deployment), and strategic socialisations with other UDR as a means of limiting personal danger.[127] Edgar noted the stark warning that was provided by their Training Major upon their arrival:

---

[125] Østby et al. *Does Education Lead to Pacification? A Systematic Review of Statistical Studies on Education and Political Violence* (Review of Educational Research Vol. 89:1, 2019)

[126] UDR 1, interview with author 22nd July 2022

[127] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Noel Downey, interview with author 31st August 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

> "You can leave now. You can go now, son, and I'm not going to say anything bad to you. That's your choice. But once you join this regiment, you can never leave." And I was going "What do you mean you can never leave?" But when you joined, you got into a hole – because of the situation in Northern Ireland, all of those who volunteered and all of those who served tended to socialize. Their whole world revolved around that little battalion and company ... in social life. "You can't go here, you can't go there, you can't go there". So, everything revolved, your whole life, around the regiment.[128]

This major then reinforced the message by showing them a coffin, and informing the soldiers of what could happen if they remained.[129] The social aspect was affirmed by other UDR.[130] This "enhanced" the culture and such reinforcement, via socialisation and threat, is itself quite unique. Crabbe noted how this dominated their lives and created a new culture and way of life.

> We had to be careful about where we went and where you lived. You had to be careful what route you took, [no] setting up a pattern and things like that. You couldn't talk about things, made sure your kit was dried indoors and all those sorts of things. So, it affected your family very much as well. So, the family really served too ... You had to hide the uniform away and you had to tell [the children]: "No, you can't bring somebody home", or "you can't do this, you can't do that" ... I mean, going to work wearing a bulletproof vest underneath your shirt and a sidearm tucked in your belt isn't normal. It's not the normal way people live. But you just did. You just got used to it ... it became a total way of life.[131]

One sergeant made a similar remark to Arthur whilst he was gathering soldier testimonies:

> My wife has got used to it, she's quite tough really. I think it's made my eighteen-year-old very bitter because he's seen what's happened to us. You see, we don't

---

[128] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[129] Ibid.

[130] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

[131] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021

> really live a normal life. My children can never walk into Armagh, they always have to be cautious.[132]

The psychological toll was thus shared by families, and the responsibility for their safety given the risks of inadvertent killings by the IRA made service even more difficult for UDR soldiers.

This is obviously not itself deviant, but as zealous advocacy could certainly lead to deviancy if provoked. The regiment's soldiers were consistently under threat, and it does not take a significant leap to see how acting to eliminate any threat to the in-group could be justified. Indeed, "Group Defence" has been noted as a factor within war crimes.[133] There is no clear evidence that this motivated sectarian or collusion related incidents in the UDR, but it is practically a certainty. Edgar recalled how one Captain had been killed off-duty and his family harassed by girls from a known local IRA family:

> We were driving along on patrol and one of those girls was sitting on her own ... and one of the guys in our patrol who would have been a close friend of [the killed Captain] kept saying "We have to respond." He didn't do it, but was coming close to because of provocation.[134]

Another UDR man recalled to Max Arthur how he had narrowly escaped being murdered only to be harassed nightly by a phone call during the early hours that always had the same female voice and message – 'we'll not miss you the next time'.[135] UDR soldiers believed that incidents of common assault when on or off-duty were likely the result of incredible strain and could thus be branded as "venting".[136] Crabbe framed it as:

> So, the verbal abuse ... they were a damn daily part of it. And you just learned to deal with it in that way. And occasionally, yes, the line was crossed, and occasionally human nature stepped in or whatever. And although I personally didn't witness it, I'm sure there was the odd [assault].

---

[132] Arthur, *Northern Ireland,* pg. 239

[133] Lois Presser, *Why We Harm* (New York: Rutger University Press, 2013), pg. 40-41

[134] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[135] Arthur, *Northern Ireland,* pg. 113

[136] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

UDR 2 made a similar connection: ‘It wasn’t right, but it was human. You cannot expect people to face constant danger and attacks, and not expect some kind of desire to respond.’[137]

From my research I forward a novel idea that has yet to be raised but I believe is an unrecognised element of extrajudicial violence against civilians and deviancy. Specifically, that there are two categories – deviancy, and venting. Deviancy is a cultural process that has been recognised within the literature as a non-compliant, anti-authority culture that exhibits and glorifies aggressive tendencies that inevitably lead to violence against and violations of civilians. Venting differs from this in that it is a factor of mental health – with individuals not acting out of malice but as lashing out as they experience a mental breakdown. For some they then turn to extrajudicial violence as a coping mechanism, and as a means of providing some security to recover within. This does not mean that these are entirely distinct from each other, and there certainly lies a path to deviancy through venting as individuals evolve into becoming more comfortable with their extrajudicial activities. I forward that this should form part of future examinations of deviancy to truly identify the prevalence of venting compared to deviancy – and even how often trauma becomes a pathway. The psychological underpinnings of this can be seen in the statement of one “Greenfinch” (female UDR soldier) following the death of her peers:

> The day she was killed I blamed everyone in my hometown for knowing about it and I blamed every Catholic in the town. It is only now, two years later, that I’ve come to my senses again, and I don’t think everybody is exactly the same.[138]

This individual’s initial blanket condemnation of Catholics would have left her suspectable for mobilisation by paramilitaries (given the local nature of the conflict) or to taking unilateral violent action should she have been pushed into a scenario in which she felt that something had to be done. This reinforces the need for good military discipline and control to limit and remove such possibilities, but reinforces the need to provide sufficient mental health support to soldiers to ensure they do not enter such "black and white" thinking.

---

[137] UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021

[138] Arthur, *Northern Ireland*, pg. 235

Venting may explain some of what UDR 1 witnessed, but other incidents fall beyond simple venting struggles into outright deviancy.[139] However, all UDR interviewees condemned such actions as unprofessional and worthy of disciplinary if not judicial procedures. This may somewhat explain the increase in assaults by the UDR from six between 1972-1979 to 85 by 1985.[140] Given that as I shall demonstrate in Chapter 3, the UDR's training improved and even former militant Republicans like Dr Laurence McKeown noted '…an improvement by the mid-to-late 1980s … [with] less collusion and sectarianism.'[141] Soldiers may have over time found the pressures built, particularly as the casualties and deaths of friends rose, and that this led to an increase in unprofessional venting. However, I wish to stress that it is impossible that the entirety of the increase came as a result of this – deviancy would have accounted for some of these incidents from the beginning.

There is a clear regionality within UDR conduct, where areas of high violence and historical tensions this led to similar deviant effects within the UDR. South Armagh was an area of incredible violence, as Leahy noted: 'The South Armagh Brigade was the IRA's most formidable unit and was leading the organisation's campaign by the 1990s'.[142] Miliary and police officials found the brigade to be "risk-averse" and only operating when backed by plenty of intelligence.[143] The brigade by the end of the 1970s had dominated its area so effectively that the police were forced to operate with military support at all times in fear of attack, and it had killed more British soldiers in 10 years than many rural IRA units would across the entire conflict – and all with clear support from the local community.[144] Such was the violence that the SAS were first deployed to the region in the early 1970s to counter the spiralling security situation.[145]

---

[139] UDR 1, interview with author 22nd July 2022

[140] NAI 2012/59/1690 – *Ulster Defence Regiment* [DFA Report], April 1980; CJ 4/6791 – *Serious Civil Offence: Assault* [NIO Record], 1985

[141] Dr Laurence McKeown, 7th July 2021

[142] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 165

[143] Ibid. pg. 173

[144] Ibid. pg. 169

[145] Urban, *Big Boys' Rules*, pg. 3

This was the IRA that UDR 1 was operating against whilst he witnessed harassment and abuse by UDR men, and where the collusive Glennane Gang emerged. For some UDR no doubt their actions were out of frustration and possibly hatred, but whilst for others it would have been motivated by a desire to bend the rules to “get the job done”. The irony was however that as one wife of a local SDLP councillor recalled at the time, the harassment and poor conduct of British soldiers only caused further unrest.[146] A similar (though reduced) cycle of violence in the northern regions of Co. Armagh also saw Private Geoffrey Edwards lose 15 of his closest friends and colleagues, resulting in Edwards turning in the early 1980s and attempting to kill six individuals he suspected of having personal or familial Republican links. Edwards was eventually arrested and imprisoned for executing a Sinn Fein worker as he was walking in Armagh town.[147]

UDR 3 , a female ex-UDR soldier who agreed to talk on the condition of anonymity, recalled one former colleague from 3 UDR (Co. Down) “Jim” who had a similar story. “Jim” had been brought up as a Protestant in a majority Catholic area and told her of his harassment as a child – which included verbal abuse and stones being thrown at him and his school bus.[148] “Jim” joined the UDR and escaped multiple attempts on his life by the IRA, including one where UDR 3 witnessed his car: ‘…it was just like cheese grater. It was absolutely riddled … “Jim” and his wife were out driving in the car and there was an ambush, because he had joined regiment.’[149] “Jim” would survive a further two attempts on his life, and despite relocating after every attack the IRA proved capable of identifying and locating him. UDR 3 recalled:

> …he'd become involved with loyalist paramilitaries. Yeah – judge this man, he was wrong. So, it's quite shocking. But one evening I was out with my then-husband and another couple. We bumped into “Jim” in the pub, and he came up and he told me about a murder attempt on Provisional IRA members from the area that he'd been moved … But he saw the look of abject horror on my face – I can't defend one murder attempt and condone another. He said to me: “if this gets repeated, I know who it was repeated it. And I know where you live and I

---

[146] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 172

[147] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment,* pg. 158-160; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage,* pg. 275-276

[148] UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

[149] Ibid.

> know, more importantly, where [your husband] lives." … [but] I still reported him to Special Branch.[150]

UDR 3 connected his trauma and experiences to his defection to Loyalist paramilitarism. For myself, Jim sits at an ambiguous place between deviancy and venting given his threats to silence UDR 3 – which are more akin to cultural deviancy than venting. Therefore, we may find that sectarianism in some instances may not have been motivated by sectarianism, but by a twisted process that stemmed from the trauma and pressure of the conflict. However, we may also find that some convert to deviancy through venting, and that regardless it can be very difficult to distinguish between the two as individuals will always seek to justify their actions. Nevertheless, it is worth examining some of the issues of the UDR through this light. For example, the De Silva report discovered that the UDR were responsible for 27% intelligence leaks for the period 1987-1989.[151] It is also worth noting that the contemporary Stevens inquiry found that most leaks were due to mishandling of material, and not collusion.[152] Regardless this remains of course a problem, whether it be mishandling or malice, but as the report also noted the RUC broadly aided Loyalists in equal measure. Most of the material leaked to Loyalists was targeting information for hitting suspected Republican paramilitaries – which could be a factor of seeing their goals as aligned, and also include some individuals who amidst the pressure were deciding to "fight fire with fire".[153] The UDR's "otherness" therefore manifested for many through a shared sense of duties and righteous suffering, but for others in areas of high violence and sectarianism manifested as deviancy.

The archival evidence supports such conclusions. Of the 34 criminal convictions of UDR members between 1974-1976, 10 had noted overt or suspected sectarian motives whilst the remainder were criminal and often opportunistic in nature.[154] Of these four were in 10 UDR (Belfast), three were in 8 UDR (east Tyrone), two were in 2 UDR (south Armagh) and 9 UDR (south Antrim) respectively with the final sectarian conviction occurring in 5 UDR (Derry). Furthermore, a report for the Irish government noted a particular centre of sectarian and non-sectarian murder around Drumadd Barracks, 2 UDR.[155] These largely reflect the nature of the conflict, with some exceptions.

---

[150] Ibid.

[151] De Silva Report, pg. 254

[152] David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022 & 11th January 2023

[153] De Silva Report, pg. 253

[154] NAI 2016/22/2025 – *Convictions of UDR Members or Former UDR Members for Criminal Offences 1974-76*

Overall, for the concept of "otherness" the analysis determines that it was a mixed element. Some regions reported or evidenced exceptionalism whilst others lacked this and the deviancy rates that came with it. This reinforced the accuracy of the criteria, whilst also indicating that the stresses of the conflict may have had a part to play within UDR deviancy. This shall be noted again later.

Incorrect Training

Deficient training has been associated with deviancy. In moments of uncertainty units will devolve back to their training. This was noted during the inquiry into the CAR, where it was concluded that in the absence of sufficient preparation and briefing combined with a shift to the more aggressive "peace-making" format many took this as an opportunity to revert to what they trained for – war.[156] The SAS during the Troubles repeatedly devolved to their training, which called for firing into an enemy torso until the enemy is "neutralised".[157] Thus when in Gibraltar in 1988 when the IRA they were tailing acted suspiciously, fearing an explosive device the SAS eliminated the group.[158]

Unlike these regiments, the UDR were not elite or special forces and did not operate as "shock troops". However, one can draw links between their own training and the deviancy experienced within the regiment. In the early years, the only basic training given to new recruits consisted of firing their weapon – forcing the regiment to informally fill in the gaps in their skillset over the years.[159] This largely centred on local knowledge – the very expertise partially for which the UDR had been raised. Overtime its training was altered to reflect this as the British army became reliant upon their local knowledge to counter the IRA.[160] A further breakdown of the limits of initial UDR training and how it evolved over time to finally enhance the unit can be found in Chapter 3.

---

[155] NAI 2016/22/2025 – *The Ulster Defence Regiment – Reasons for Disbandment* [Report from Northern Ireland Section, Dept. of the Taoiseach], 16th November 1984

[156] Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 193-195, 200

[157] Urban, *Big Boys' Rules*, pg. 6-7

[158] Tony Geraghty, *Who Dares Wins: The Special Air Service – 1950 to the Gulf War*, (London: Time Warner Paperbacks, 2002), pg. 283-285, 295, 305-308

[159] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 79; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 45-56

This chapter has already acknowledged the rather lax style of discipline within the regiment. Soldiers were known for calling each other by their first names in contravention of traditional military behaviour.[161] Furthermore, the Regimental Sergeant Major for 6 UDR (West Tyrone), an ex-Regular, remarked that his men could not be ordered but had to be asked to conduct any task:[162]

> The biggest problem for me was adapting from the very high standards of discipline in the Irish Guards and at the Military Academy at Sandhurst. I found if you asked a UDR man to do something, he would jump off his tractor to assist you, but if you said "You will", he would put his two fingers up at you ... Nevertheless, the discipline was there ... If you came under fire they would support you, they would not back down. Under fire they were very highly disciplined; it was self-discipline.

Regardless, by failing to comply or openly resenting military protocol, these men were fostering an environment for deviancy. This likely stemmed from the initially lax and poor UDR training that focused on lethality over other military aspects. This shall be furthered reinforced in Chapter 3. Whilst training provisions drastically improved over time, the British Army and government had set the regiment up for future problems. The UDR were permanently on active duty, and as Herron highlighted it could not be stood down to allow for necessary training, forcing the officers to utilise training in the most efficient manner and focus on combat operations.[163] As noted by several individuals involved in early UDR training, the British Army was preparing itself for conventional warfare against the Soviet Union, not the COIN operations of Northern Ireland.[164] This was not unusual – Dutch units deployed to Bosnia as part of UNPROFOR were largely trained and prepared for this scenario as well.[165]

---

[160] Ibid. pg. 81-83
[161] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 30
[162] Ibid. pg. 164
[163] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 79-80
[164] Ibid. pg. 74-75

Such a doctrine would explain the initial general confusion over the general aim of the military campaign in Northern Ireland prior to a 1972 clarification, and General Tuzo's realisation that total military victory was not possible.[166] However, this did not become British Army policy – as evidenced by senior officers making it clear they saw no value in peace talks and that they favoured total military victory during the IRA ceasefire of 1974-1975.[167] This explains Tuzo's advocation for the suspension of many elements typically associated with COIN operations, namely strict rules of engagement and adherence to conventional legal limits.[168] In short, the Army lacked the vision and the desire to shift over to the type of warfare and training that the UDR required – which was to drill in a strict adherence to the law and to patrol and mount checkpoints much more akin to a gendarmerie.

This explains the initially poor training that the UDR received. Its initial phase was heavily focused on aggressive action, and we should therefore expect to see a relatively high death count and violent responses. This, however, does not reflect the record. The UDR throughout its entire history killed only nine individuals whilst on-duty – by far the lowest total for any branch of the security forces.[169] There were however a not insignificant number of less-than-lethal incidents involving UDR members. The period from 1985 – October 1987 saw 11 UDR court martial convictions, of which 9 involved assault or wounding.[170] This same letter refers to an attached list of UDR civil court convictions, but this is absent. There is however a Civil Conviction list for assaults covering 1978-1983 which reports 91 civilian convictions or fines for UDR soldiers – with only one other case being dismissed.[171] Furthermore, as previously noted a number of these could be explained by "venting" – a matter which would be complicated when insufficient training removed additional control and restraint from the individual. This could have reduced a number of incidents of harassment and rough treatment noted by UDR 1. Misconduct and mistreatment of civilians are a by-product of poor training, and incidents following years of relatively good conduct and service are likely the result of pressure building leading up to the "venting" incident. As already noted, the inability to stand troops down for retraining limits opportunities for retraining that would bar such "venting". This therefore whilst being a deviant incident does not stem from a deviant mindset – and would cover a number of seemingly deviant UDR incidents of violence or even petty harassment and mistreatment.

---

[165] NIOD, *Reconstruction, background, consequences and analyses of the fall of a 'safe' area*, pg. 1224
[166] Huw Bennett, *From Direct Rule to Motorman: Adjusting British Military Strategy for Northern Ireland in 1972* (Studies in Conflict & Terrorism Vol. 33:6, 2010), pg. 514-515
[167] Niall O Dochartaigh, *Deniable Contact: Back-Channel Negotiation in Northern Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2021), pg. 135; Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 58, 64-65
[168] Bennett, *From Direct Rule to Motorman,* pg. 516
[169] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 379-380
[170] NAUK: DEFE 24/3228 - *UDR Service Convictions* [Letter from HQNI to MOD], 16th October 1987
[171] NAUK: CJ 4/6791 – *Serious Civil Offence: Assault,* Papers attached to Draft Telegram to Dublin

Furthermore, poor training may have been a factor in some on-duty UDR lethal incidents. In July 1983, a foot patrol from 2 UDR (S. Armagh) faced off in Armagh town with local youths.[172] A soldier raising his weapon to defend himself experienced a weapon misfire with the safety off – resulting in the death of a youth. The Sutton index of deaths records this coming as the result of an "altercation".[173]

The ensuing trial saw the soldier acquitted.[174] Enhanced training, particularly under pressure, may have presented this – though as Potter noted cocking a weapon as a warning was reasonable in these circumstances.[175] These were high-stress situations, and it is not unreasonable that soldiers would rely on their basic training, and when the training is deficient one cannot blame soldiers for responding deficiently. It is the soldiers' duty to ensure that his weapon is rendered safe when not in use, but insufficient training would lead to bad habits. It is worth noting however, that these lethal incidents were not "deviant". It is only in cases of assault where deviancy may have played a role in on-duty behaviour – a pre-requisite for truly "deviant" regiments.

---

[172] The designation as "South Armagh" refers to the area to which they were attached. Between 1970-1972, 2 UDR was responsible for all of Co. Armagh however from 1972-1991 the newly formed 11 UDR was responsible for the northern half of the county.

[173] Malcolm Sutton, *An index of Deaths from the conflict in Ireland*, 30th July 1983

[174] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 271-272

[175] Ibid. pg. 272

The Strain of COIN and Peacekeeping Operations

The uncertainties of COIN and peacekeeping operations appear to exacerbate deviant tendencies and draw them out to violent ends. Once again, the inquiry into the CAR connected the strains and difficulties in maintaining the necessary restraint of peacekeeping to the regiments violent conduct in Somalia.[176] In fact, no modern peacekeeping mission has gone without violence from peacekeepers against local populations.[177] COIN warfare and peacekeeping thus exposes elements such as unit aggression, "exceptionalism" and inappropriate training, and brings the pent-up aggression of soldiers into close proximity with civilians.

The UDR experienced counterinsurgency on an extreme level. As previously noted, the UDR were on constant active duty. However, such prolonged and unending service is not unique – it is inherent within Local Defence Forces. From the Malay Regiment during the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960) to the Afghan National Army or the Kurdish Peshmerga in recent conflicts, one can see local soldiers exposed to almost indefinite service. Thus, an examination of the UDR within this context is valuable for not just British forces, but all militaries. The UDR bared the harsh realities of COIN warfare. 79% of its casualties came whilst off-duty often in sight of friends and loved ones, with a further 60 ex-members murdered after resigning from the regiment.[178] With the exposure of troops whilst off-duty, it became pragmatic and even logical for the IRA to target them.[179] Soldiers were forced to secure their homes from attack, avoid busy urban areas and even check vehicles for explosives.[180] One interviewee, Noel Downey, was the victim of such an attack that led to the loss of his left leg. UDR soldiers were encouraged to socialise together to increase security.[181] The UDR were forced to repeatedly issue guidance that busy places such as shopping centres were “out of bounds” for security reasons.[182] ‘“Don’t go here”, “You can’t go there”, the list of limits that you had for your protection. It ran your life’.[183] Children were discouraged from bringing friends over or telling them that their family were in the UDR.[184] As David Crabbe summarised: ‘*we taught our children to lie’*.[185]

---

[176] NIOD, *Reconstruction, background, consequences and analyses of the fall of a 'safe' area*, pg. 1180
[177] Sheren Razack, *Dark Threats & White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pg. 53
[178] Operation Banner Report, pg. 3-6
[179] Daniel Chesse, *Hunting the Watchmen: The Ulster Defence Regiment and IRA strategy* (Small Wars & Insurgencies, 2024), pg. 6-7
[180] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 79, 255, 301, 315; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Noel Downey, interview with author 31st August 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021
[181] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 61

Such risks transcended the typical threats of military operations and brought the war home. Edgar recalled having to help pull a colleague away from approaching an individual who had harassed and taunted the widow of a murdered friend and colleague.[186] Such events would be unheard of within conventional warfare, but COIN brings LDFs into unique scenarios with unexpected traumas and dilemmas. Furthermore, as Crabbe noted: ‘You have to remember that [UDR deviants] had greater opportunities, motives and chances for [deviancy].’[187] Regulars returned home from the difficulties and trauma of war – the UDR continued to live it. The motives for revenge would have been there, but so would the opportunities. Even then, Regulars engaged in similar conduct – Burke noted how pressure and revenge motivated punitive and retributive violence against civilians at the hands of Regulars.[188] As this thesis shall show, when combined with a series of poor decisions from senior government and Army officials, and the increased opportunities from living in the community, this is likely the root of the deviant elements within the UDR.

Deviancy in LDFs is elevated in comparison to conventional forces. Their local knowledge – the very thing for which they are often sourced for, allows them to target elements they deem a “threat” and identify where known or suspected enemy sympathisers cluster or reside. This may have influenced the Loyalist death squad the “Glennane Gang” (which contained deviant UDR and RUC members)[189] to conduct the May 1974 Dublin and Monaghan Bombings. By targeting the capital of the Republic and its surrounding towns, the gang struck what they likely viewed as “IRA sympathisers” (Irish Catholics) and to prevent Irish interference in the North.[190] This may have also motivated the truly deviant incidents of assault and harassment that inevitably occurred during the numerous UDR VCPs.

---

[182] Ibid. pg. 315
[183] UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021
[184] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021
[185] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021
[186] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022
[187] David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022
[188] Edward Burke, *An Army of Tribes: British Army Cohesion, Deviancy and Murder in Northern Ireland* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), pg. 336
[189] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies*, pg. 165, 216, 224; McGovern (2019), pg. 28-29, 64

COIN certainly encouraged deviancy within the UDR from minor “venting” to intentional targeted harassment and assault of Catholics. Therefore, this element was present within the UDR, and may have induced deviancy within some individuals. However, the pressures of COIN that the UDR faced would have made service very difficult, and the restraint required from the UDR whilst their enemies picked them off with seeming impunity may have been too much for same to bare. Indeed, UDR 3 connected this to why “Jim” who had until that one fateful night seemed to have shown no prior malice or paramilitaries had gone over to the UVF.[191] The multiple attempts on his and his wife’s life had led “Jim” to snap. This is a difficulty that must be acknowledged that all LDFs will face, and states must prepare for this. Collusion thus may have been encouraged by the circumstances, as soldiers decided to buck restraints and the shackles of legality in favour of “completing their orders” by other means. Unfortunately, at this time there is insufficient data to determine whether collusion increased over time.

The Influence of “Just Completing Orders”?

As shown in Chapter 1, the UDR was partially created to occupy ex-Specials. The UDR was intended to replace and reform this element of the security forces. However, again as that chapter will show there was a troubling lax in vetting post the introduction of internment (1971-1972) that likely admitted deviant and subversive elements. As I argued in that chapter, the sudden influx of willing individuals following a series of oppressive acts against Catholics would have certainly included sectarian, deviant individuals.

---

[190] The Irish Times, *Barron Report: Conclusions* (11th December 2003)

[191] UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

These individuals may have interpreted their orders very differently to their peers. With a broad remit of aiding "the RUC in the maintenance of law and order",[192] to some this could have been securing the state from potential dissidents, disloyal individuals, and anyone suspected of IRA sympathies. This is not to say that this was organised within the regiment, indeed any orders would have had to have come from external paramilitaries based on current evidence, but rather that the broad mission of the British state could be warped to match their sectarian ideology in their minds. To these individuals, the purpose of the regiment would have been almost indistinguishable from that of the B Specials or paramilitaries – to secure the state and Protestant interests. This author wishes to stress that these individuals are not representative of the UDR, its membership or its actual mission based on contemporary evidence and interviews. However, when "Jim" revealed his participation in UVF raids he seemed somewhat shocked at her negative response.[193] UDR 3 believed that "Jim" had expected support from her for his crimes, despite this standing at odds with what the UDR believed that they represented – law and order.[194] This would explain how those who turned, or those who enlisted within the UDR from paramilitaries to pervert its actions, justified and framed their activities. These individuals were not betraying the UDR but were guiding it to its "rightful" mission. This "gloves off" approach had many advocates – not least the DUP.[195] This had led other military figures to remain outside the UDR and form their own paramilitaries, such as the Down Orange Welfare (DOW) to safeguard their interests.[196] It does not take much to see how those struggling with the realities and limits of being a counter-insurgent operator, and those who wished to subvert the UDR for their own sectarian interests, could believe that by taking their favoured approach they were "completing the mission" of defeating Republican terrorism and the IRA.

That they largely failed to turn the UDR, or to attract significant numbers of its members is a testimony to their character and their dedication to law and order. The

---

[192] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[193] UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

[194] UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

[195] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 240, 362

[196] Edward Burke, *Loyalist mobilization and cross-border violence in rural Ulster, 1972-1974*, (Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 34:6, 2022), pg. 1062

British government did little to guide the mythos (the founding myth or internal legend of the regiment) of the UDR and this left the door open to this being manipulated and/or shaped by deviants. The reasons for this are unclear, however it is likely that the British government did not prioritise the UDR, as evidenced by the poor training and resourcing in the initial years, and believed that the regiment could soon be altered or dissolved once the security crisis was "quickly resolved".[197] This could have led to disastrous results. Republican 1 recalled the common criticism of the Ulster Defence Regiment: "In defence of what?".[198] To many critics, and even some "misguided" admirers, this was the concept of Ulster – the concept of Protestant domination.[199] Those who believed this and joined the UDR likely hoped to steer it thus, but failed thanks to those who served the UDR's intended purpose as a professional anti-insurgent force.

I still forward that these deviants made up the minority of the UDR, but that they nevertheless posed a significant risk to the public and to the UDR itself. The Subversives would have been those who according to UDA leader Andy Tyrie were infiltrating the regiment to access weapons and training.[200] However, both elements would have been motivated to leak intelligence – a particular issue for the security forces as recorded by the Irish Government.[201]

This element works in concert with the difficulties of COIN warfare. Local paramilitaries will opt to seize resources and training where possible, and place individuals who have yet to become known paramilitaries within LDFs to do so. Meanwhile, LDF members who are unable to cope with legal restraints against an enemy not bound by such niceties may seek to join or aid paramilitaries in their efforts to "fight fire with fire". One could even connect this to previously noted areas of high tension or violence, where such temptations would only have been greater. COIN warfare increases the likelihood of both "venting" and collusion – as individuals with good reasons for enlistment are pushed beyond their breaking point, they can end up joining more nefarious elements in acts of violence and colluding with illegal forces. For the UDR, this is likely to be the single greatest reason as to why it has an association with collusion.

---

[197] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[198] Republican 1, interview with author 7th July 2021

[199] Ibid.

[200] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 156-157; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 97,

[201] NAI 2019/101/2291: *Background Note: Collusion between members of the Security Forces and Loyalist paramilitaries,* [Anglo-Irish Division DFA] 4th October 1989

The Issue of Criminality

It must be stressed that the loss of weaponry or even intelligence is not necessarily driven by sectarianism. As Crabbe highlighted: '*Sometimes, how can you tell the difference between collusion and criminality*?'.[202] I would agree with Crabbe's assessment, whilst there certainly were subversive and collusive incidents, some individuals simply seized opportunities for criminal and personal benefit. The example cited,[203] was that of the sale of weaponry by a Colour Sgt. in 7/10 UDR (Belfast) to the UDA in 1987.[204] Whilst this incident does initially appear sectarian given familial links to Loyalist paramilitaries, the disgraced soldier was also a heavy drinker with financial difficulties:

> I left, and the next day heard this news that at around half-seven the following morning, he had taken a minibus down ... He had rights of access to the armoury because he carried out checks and all the rest. So went in, opened the armoury up, loaded all the rifles and a few pistols into the back of the van and drove out the gate unquestioned, and those were sold ... he had come into financial trouble ... He was not a covert brigadier to the UDA or whatever. He was just somebody who found himself in circumstances and obviously because of where he lived in the community, knew how to make contacts with the organization.[205]

This is a prime example of how something in support of "sectarianism" could just as easily be criminality. Similarly, among Ryder's list of collusion there were many he labelled "collusive" which could just as likely be criminal in nature.[206] I would argue that some authors such as Ryder have previously tried to tie the criminality of some of the UDR to the subversive and collusive actions of others. When one separates these, as the literature rarely does, we see the extent of collusion may be far more limited than it at first appears. An Irish government list of UDR convictions during 1970-1985 contains a number of serious crimes – but if we were able to remove those with a criminal motive, we naturally would see a reduction.[207] For example, one armed robbery of a Belfast pub in 1976 had no known sectarian links, whilst a 1984 burglary could just as easily have been for personal greed as for sectarian funding. Similarly, between 1974-1976 there appear to have been a number of thefts and robberies that could also be pure criminal opportunism.[208]

---

[202] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021

[203] Ibid.

[204] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 293

[205] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021

[206] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 173-181

There is however a tendency to view any UDR criminality or deviant as characteristic of a broader malaise. It was found upon review (as per RUC demand) of 1,315 applicants in the period 1986-1989 that the RUC flagged with "adverse reports", there was a significant difference between what was initially flagged and what was later deemed as dangerous.[209]

Type	**Number**
Rejected or did not enlist	968
Criminal	272
Subversive or Subversive & Criminal	63
Not Traced	12
Total (exc. Rejected and did not enlist)	**347**

Table A – figures from DEFE 24/3119 – 2nd August 1990, Visit by Kevin McNamara to 6 UDR's Annual Camp [Letter to Armed Forces' Minister]

As one can see from the table, most individuals were screened out or withdrew of their own accord – and of those who did manage to enlist, the majority were criminal traces. This same letter details how only 12 of these 347 traces were accompanied by specific recommendations to reject the candidate, with the rest merely unqualified statements of criminal or subversive traces – with some upon further examination recording petty crimes such as disorderly conduct or criminal damage. This supports the view that a significant number of incidents were criminal rather than deviant in nature. It is always worth remembering that the UDR did not have a say in vetting, and therefore the fault lies with Army vetting standards and oversight.[210]

---

[207] NAI 2016/22/2025 – Untitled list of UDR criminal convictions, [Letter from D. Donaghue to Assistant Secretary Lillis], 29th July 1985

[208] NAI 2016/22/2025 – *Convictions of UDR Members or Former UDR Members for Criminal Offences 1974-76*

[209] NAUK: DEFE 24/3119 – *Visit by Kevin McNamara to 6 UDR's Annual Camp* [Letter to Armed Forces' Minister], 2nd August 1990

The Statistics

After completing the cultural analysis of the UDR, to further reiterate my point about UDR deviancy receiving too much focus and attention I shall now examine a series of newly released archival data that will shed light on the true extent of the issue. The Irish collated statistics on the UDR during the course of the conflict – a number of which have only recently been declassified. The first of these collated statistics were presented to the Irish government by the British, and covered the period 1972-1979.

	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Murder/Attempted Murder	-	-	-	-	3	2	1	1
Manslaughter	-	-	1	-	-	-	5	-
Illegal possession of weapons	-	3	5	3	8	3	1	-
Bombing offences	-	-	3	-	3	-	1	-
Assault	1	-	1	-	-	2	1	1
Robbery	-	-	1	11	3	2	3	5
Miscellaneous	1	1	3	3	2	1	2	2

Table A: UDR criminal convictions 1972-1979, data from NAI 2019/59/1690 – 'Ulster Defence Regiment' [DFA Report], April 1980

The same report notes the dismay of judges sentencing these individuals that they had ever been admitted to the UDR. Meanwhile, an additional series of figures in the Irish Archives covers on-duty offences over the following 7 years:

---

[210] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 378

Security Force	**Fined**	**Fined and Suspended Sentence**	**Suspended Sentence**	**Conditional Discharge**	**Absolute Discharge**	**Imprisonment**
UDR	5	2	3	3	0	0
RUC	8	0	0	5	4 (1 overturned on appeal)	5
Regular Army	30	0	0	4	0	Illegible figure

Table B: Data from NAI 2019/101/2291 – *Numbers of members of the Security Forces in Northern Ireland convicted of offences whilst on duty 1980-1987* [DH 4611]

The Irish also conducted a number of discussions with local politicians in the late 1980s. Within this we see discussions of harassment – a particularly difficult problem for this author to measure as there currently is insufficient data. Intriguingly within these discussions, one nationalist Fermanagh politician reported that whilst the UDR were the worst for harassment, such incidents were ‘sporadic’.[211] Nor was this limited to Fermanagh, in county Tyrone it was reported to the Irish that harassment was not a particular issue at all.[212] This would indicate that harassment was also not endemic. There were of course a series of such incidents across the years,[213] but this was clearly not institutionalised. Nationalist politicians could often be some of the UDR’s biggest critics as has been established, yet these local representatives report little signs of the harassment that often characterises and precedes sectarian activity – even in particularly difficult areas such as Tyrone where the UDR were facing some of the most dangerous IRA in the entire nation.[214]

Overall, UDR soldiers did participate in criminal acts but not at an extreme rate. The NIO for example reported in 1985 a total of 9 murders, 6 manslaughter convictions, and 84 assault convictions for UDR soldiers.[215] Again it must be stressed that these are tiny minority compared to the 32,000 soldiers who had served in the UDR by 1985.[216] Later records such as a 1989 Irish government "background note" on the UDR totalled 130 serious convictions including 16 for murder and a further 7 for manslaughter from its inception.[217] However this same note cites concerns that UDR members were forced to resign to disappear from the British Army crime statistics.[218] There is a trend that the British Army played down criminal activity. Bennett noted that between March 1972 – September 1974, of the 502 criminal cases brought against the army and UDR, only 56 were prosecuted resulting in 17 convictions.[219] Furthermore, the Army also favoured civil compensation over criminal prosecutions even in the face of lethal incidents – which would remove some incidents from these statistics.[220] However even if the previously noted 1985 statistics were multiplied by a factor of 20 to cover the remaining years and to compensate for the removed incidents, this would represent just 6.5% of those who served in the UDR. A letter from 1989 details that the Irish Government that year had only reported about half of the actual complaints against the British military – with the UDR receiving 79 complaints against it or 37.6% of all complaints.[221] This same document also notes that the UDR accounted for 40% of all forces in Northern Ireland, and thus was not over-represented in any concerning statistics. It is also worth noting that these complaints were not noted as being serious or violent in nature. As can be seen from Table B – on-duty UDR soldiers committed crimes at a lower rate than their Regular counterparts.[222] Furthermore, even when compared to its local police counterparts, the UDR in the period 1980-1987 did not see multiple cases warranting discharge or a prison sentence – but the RUC certainly did.[223]

---

[211] NAI 2018/28/2803 – *Meeting with SDLP Councillor John O’Kane, Irvinestown, Co. Fermanagh*, 23 May 1988 [Memo from T. O’Connor] 26th May 1988

[212] NAI 2018/28/2803 – *Meeting with Fr. Rooney, P. P. Omagh, Co. Tyrone, 9 March 1988* [Memo from T. O’Connor, Anglo-Irish Section], 14th March 1988

[213] For examples see: Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 114-115; NAI 2017/4/89 – Letter from D. O Ceallaigh to D. Donaghue [Anglo-Irish Division, DFA] 19th May 1987

[214] Trigg, *Death in the Fields*

---

[215] NAUK: CJ 4/6791 – *Serious Civil Offence: Murder* [NIO Record], 1985; *Serious Civil Offence: Manslaughter* [NIO Record], 1985; *Serious Civil Offence: Assault* [NIO Record], 1985

[216] NAI 2016/22/2025 – *Transcript of Desmond Hamill on "News at Ten"*, 30th August 1985

[217] NAI 2019/101/2291 – *Background Note: Collusion between members of the Security Forces and Loyalist paramilitaries* [Anglo/Irish Division: Dept. of Foreign Affairs], 4th October 1989

[218] NAI 2019/101/2291 – *Background Note: Collusion between members of the Security Forces and Loyalist paramilitaries* [Anglo/Irish Division: Dept. of Foreign Affairs], 4th October 1989; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment: An Instrument of Peace?* pg. 182; Michael Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, (Co. Kildare: Merrion Press, 2012), pg. 216

[219] Huw Bennett, "*Smoke without fire?": Allegations Against the British Army in Northern Ireland 1972–5* (Twentieth Century British History Vol. 24:2, 2013), pg. 288

[220] Bennett, "*Smoke without fire?"*, pg. 295

[221] PRONI: CENT/3/147A – *Complaints Monitoring Committee* [Letter from J McKervill, Security Policy and Operations Division, to P Bell & PS/Secretary of State (L&B)], 24th October 1989

[222] For the ratio of UDR to Regular see Peter Neumann, *The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland*, (Studies in Conflict and Terrorism Vol. 26:5, 2003), pg. 373-374

Archival records are yet to yield the final totals, but UDR regimental historian and former soldier Potter records 18 murders (14 of which were sectarian or terroristic in nature) by some 17 soldiers, with a further 11 convicted of manslaughter including one which was motivated by sectarianism and two involving mishandling of a personal protection weapon.[224] It is even unlikely that assaults grew significantly more from the 1989 serious crimes record given the regiment only lasted 3 more years and without significant controversy. Furthermore, as I previously forwarded the rate of increase would have had to be extreme to hit even 3.25% of the UDR.

It is also worth noting that there is no evidence that the UDR at any point demonstrated a tolerance for deviant activities or individuals. A sample of 900 leavers from November 1972 – May 1973 found a majority (232) left for "Failure to attend for duty", with a further 35 leaving for "Political views" and 44 for "Termination of engagement".[225] Another 137 respondents provided no reason for leaving.[226] November 1972-July 1973 saw a total of 73 UDR men discharged and a further 20 resign due to UDA affiliations, whilst another 35 were placed on a monitoring list – mainly in the newly formed and neighbouring 9 UDR (South Antrim) and 10 UDR (City of Belfast) battalions.[227] Between 1972-1977 the UDR received 17,323 applications of which 3,451 were rejected (20%), and of those admitted a further 1,413 were discharged as "unsuitable", which could range from lack of attendance to sectarian suspicions, between 1974-1977.[228] These figures all came from internal UDR reports, or from British Army investigations – these were not intended to reassure the public, but to guide senior decision-makers. As can be seen from the above examples, sectarian deviants accounted for a fraction of the UDR. This is further explored in Chapter 1, but serves to highlight that focusing on deviancy within the UDR has distorted reality. Regardless, it is worthy of examination to determine whether the UDR converted individuals into deviants, or attracted deviants who hoped to be able to manipulate and hijack its resources.

---

[223] NAI 2019/101/2291 – *Numbers of members of the Security Forces in Northern Ireland convicted of offences whilst on duty 1980-1987* [DH 4611]

[224] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage: The Regimental History of the Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 379

[225] NAUK: DEFE 24/835 – *Minutes of the 41st Meeting of the UDR Advisory Council* [22nd June 1973]

[226] Ibid.

[227] *Subversion in the UDR* Report, pg. 3; NAUK: DEFE 24/835 – *Statistical Analysis of UDR Wastage and Recruitment* [6th June 1973]

[228] NAI 2019/59/1690 – *Ulster Defence Regiment* [DFA Report], April 1980

Discussion

I argue that the evidence indicates the problem of deviancy and criminality within the UDR has been a matter of too much focus. The statistics support a view that whilst such incidents did indeed happen and should be taken seriously, they do not account for an alarming or over-representation of the UDR. The question therefore is why this narrative emerged. .In 1984 one NIO official recorded that despite UDR misconduct:

> …that does not mean that we should not attempt to counter the effects of Mr Mallon's propaganda attacks upon the UDR. It must be clearly recognised that, although his methods may differ, his aims are complementary to the IRA. On the one hand the IRA are carrying out attacks on members of the UDR, and particularly off-duty members, with the intention of provoking a loss of morale and discipline in the Force and also creating an anti-nationalist reaction which at best might manifest overt antagonism towards the nationalist community and at worst in crimes being committed against that community … Mr Mallon, by exploiting any overt signs of this reaction and any lapses from discipline in the UDR, is complementing and assisting this process of alienation, and there can be little doubt that he and his political colleagues are fully aware of this … if [the Irish Government's] response to this propaganda assault is to clamp down on the UDR we would be in danger of exacerbating rather than diffusing the anti-nationalist reactions in the regiment.[229]

To summarise constant SDLP reports and publications as a 'propaganda assault' demonstrates the extent to which at least this individual from the NIO (who as noted elsewhere do indeed criticise the UDR) felt that the popular narrative was unfair. The NIO had access to the relevant statistics and studies, so this individual is making an informed assessment. Mallon famously accused the UDR of acting as ‘a paramilitary wing of unionism’.[230] Meanwhile, this same Irish official denounced another of Mallon’s statement as ‘diatribe’ and noted:

---

[229] in Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 176-177

> Mr Mallon cited a number of criminal acts which had been committed by the UDR members as proof of the Regiment’s undisciplined and bigoted nature. He went on to claim that the regiment was anti-Catholic and would have no role to play in the creation of a just and stable solution.[231]

It is worth reflecting upon this and the opening of this chapter where I noted how a narrative of UDR deviancy emerged. The SDLP were a significant player in noting UDR infractions – even if as this NIO official argues this sometimes goes beyond reasonable accusations. There are other examples that support a position of at least occasional anti-UDR zealotry. For example, upon reviewing Seamus Mallon’s claims that individuals in 2 UDR (S. Armagh) possessed serious criminal records, the Army discovered that of six named individuals: one was not in the UDR, one had no adverse traces at all, one had admitted to pre-enlistment assault and bodily harm convictions but had been reviewed and accepted, and one was a political member of the Vanguard Unionist Party which was associated with paramilitarism.[232] The two with credible allegations included one who attended a meeting of a proscribed organisation and had been fined for rioting (which was absent from RUC records), whilst the other was an unconfirmed but possibly active Loyalist paramilitary.

Such was Mallon and some of the SDLP’s disdain of the UDR that the Irish requested that a token 50-100 UDR soldiers be withdrawn from Mallon’s constituency area of Armagh and replaced with other security forces – a compromise they deemed would aid Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA) negotiations.[233] The Irish had initially requested a considerably larger reduction in UDR deployments, demonstrating their own issues with the UDR, but the importance placed on placating Mallon indicates the issues that they were having with his reports. Finally, it must be noted that during AIA negotiations it was noted that Mallon and his faction's vendetta against the UDR risked splitting the SDLP.[234] This does not invalidate SDLP concerns or reports, but does mean that we should potentially view them similarly to the Irish and NIO – that elements of the SDLP were known to obsess on negative elements of the UDR. However, as shall be demonstrated the Irish eventually also concluded that the UDR had to go.

---

[230] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 171

[231] in Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 171

[232] NAUK: DEFE 24/875 – *2 UDR – Members alleged criminal records* [Letter to US of S for Army from AAG for Head of AG Sec], 2nd May 1974

[233] NAUK: CJ 4/5808 – *Ulster Defence Regiment* [Letter from Sir Robert Armstrong, Head of the Home Civil Service to Sir Clive Whitmore, PS to Ministry of Defence], 11th October 1985

It must be recognised that the SDLP had a fiduciary duty to report any claims or concerns. In a normal civil society reports of military harassment or abuse are a matter for the police – however in a divided society like NI, the police were also not always trusted by the nationalist community, and nor was the state and its idea of "justice". In this context, the only natural place to lodge a complaint or concern would have been with moderate Nationalist parties like the SDLP – with the exception of Republicans who bad the 1980s lodged their complaints with the newly legalised Sinn Fein. The SDLP were thus aiming to be their community's advocates – and failure to act would have only further legitimised the IRA's position. The Irish were bound by a similar duty. To not petition the British government, would have only boosted support for the IRA. Without progress or clear evidence of advocacy, members of the nationalist community would have been pushed further into the arms of radicals and militants. There was also the issue that the UDR's reputation would have only exacerbated the underlying tensions that pushed the nationalist community away from conventional civil means of recompense. The Irish therefore needed to tackle the issues of the regiment both as a means of reducing tensions in the North that always risked potentially spilling over into the Republic, and as an issue that could potentially act as a hurdle in the path of any potential peace in the region.[235]

---

[234] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 206

[235] Patrick Mulroe, *Bombs, bullets and the border: policing Ireland's frontier, Irish security policy: 1969-1978* (Co. Kildare, Ireland: Irish Academic Press, 2017) pg. 225; Henry Patterson, *Ireland's Violent Frontier: the border and Anglo-Irish relations during the Troubles* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pg. 23, 38, 64, 82, 92

This can be seen within Irish Government reports and memos in which they state their problems with the UDR. For the Irish the significant issues were the UDR's inability to draw Catholic recruits and participation (which impacted their ability to fairly police the communities), and the reports of collusion, poor conduct and particularly harassment complaints from Catholic clergy and SDLP sources.[236] Peter Barry, then Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, noted his sympathies for the many "decent" UDR and their struggles – but stated that the UDR's record damned it in the eyes of Catholics and as a result '…the UDR has become more of a hindrance than a help to security in Northern Ireland'.[237] This clearly motivated criticism of the regiment, and the petitioning of the British government to alter or remove the UDR. The Irish position was that ideally it would have the UDR replaced with a new regiment that could draw upon Catholic recruits and bar one community policing the other.[238] However, they also recognised that this was not reasonable so long as the security crisis and violence continued. This was also recognised on the ground by moderates. Then Alliance Party leader John Cushnahan noted that whilst he could not defend the UDR, publicly calling for disbandment would legitimise PIRA murders of UDR, enrage Unionists who see the UDR as their defence against IRA, and almost certainly drive some into the arms of paramilitaries.[239] Cushnahan favoured RUC accompaniment 'it is far better to have them controlled by the RUC. He agrees that they should not be allowed to stop traffic without an RUC presence and they should not go into strong nationalist areas' – a logical suggestion given the UDR's primary role to support the police.

Thus, the Irish had to walk a difficult tight rope at times of balancing any hope for peace in the region with fulfilling a very critical need to advocate for the Catholic cousins in the north. However, from 1989 the Irish began calling for the disbandment of the UDR in public once more as they now saw it as an obstacle on the path to peace.[240]

---

[236] NAI 2016/22/2053 – *The Ulster Defence Regiment – Reasons for Disbandment* [Northern Ireland Section, Department of the Taoiseach], 16th November 1984

[237] NAI 2016/22/2053 – Untitled letter from P. Barry, Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs to B. Coey, 14th February 1985

[238] NAUK: CJ 4/5807 – *The RUC and the UDR* [Memo from Goodison, Dublin to Immediate FCO], 29th March 1985

[239] NAI 2017/4/89 – *Meeting with John Cushnahan, 25 March 1987* [Memo from L. Canniffe, Anglo-Irish Section], 26th March 1987

Assessing the UDR

This chapter has sought to draw a clear line on the longstanding issue of whether the UDR was a deviant regiment by examining individual elements and newly released archival data. The following may be concluded: First, a rotating officer class was present within the UDR at the battalion level. Whilst not so extreme as the SAS whose entire officer class works on rotations, this did provide some space for deviancy to go initially unchecked. However, it must also be noted that over time the regiment was increasingly staffed at senior levels by UDR and ex-UDR officers.[241] Nevertheless, connections can be made to a weaker officer class in the UDR, and deviancy as noted by UDR 1 in the context of the Glennane Gang.[242]

Next, there is no evidence to suggest that the UDR saw themselves as masculine warriors. UDR culture was instead centred on a shared sense of duty, struggle, and identity. Most flagged culturally was a shared sense of danger and working to end the security crisis that would have increased group identity, but not necessarily group aggression.[243] This culture does flow somewhat into the next criterion – "exceptionalism". However, this in the UDR appears not to have manifested as regimental superiority but was instead centred on danger and risk. By living within their own communities outside the safety of the "wire", the UDR faced enhanced threats.[244] Naturally this would lead some to forward that soldiers should have operated outside of their local area – however this would reduce the vital local knowledge component of the UDR, and Afghan Local Police demonstrate that LDFs tend to behave better inside their own communities than when they police elsewhere.[245] That there is a comparative lack of reports of UDR abusing Protestants in the same way they did Catholics implies the same holds here. Where the UDR did patrol Catholic communities in areas of historically strong communities divides and high violence, we see a rise in superiority complexes and deviancy. There is a reasonable if not always practical argument therefore that LDFs should be limited to their own communities. However, This also would have placed further strain on Regular forces in Northern Ireland, limited the involvement of local "experts" and only encouraged further assassinations of Catholic members of local forces. Therefore, more merit may be placed in partnering LDFs with Regulars, or even better local police (or another trusted local force) at all times when deploying to an area outside of their own communities – as was a core part of Operation HERRICK for the British Army in Afghanistan.

---

[240] The Belfast Newsletter, *Talks stuck at UDR block*, 19th October 1989; Evening Herald, *Tensions grows as UDR row deepens*, 22nd September 1989

[241] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[242] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021; UDR 1, interview with author 22nd July 2022

[243] UDR 1, interview with author, 6th July 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Noel Downey, interview with author 31st August 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[244] Ibid.

The next criterion, incorrect training for the theatre, was certainly present for the UDR. Whilst the exact training for the UDR will be examined and assessed in a later chapter, it must be highlighted that in its initial years it was severely deficient. Furthermore, as Herron highlighted it could not be stood down to allow for necessary retraining – meaning that those individuals who initially enlisted had to rely upon their experience and personal skillsets to offset any limitations.[246] Dandeker and Gow noted back in 1999 that modern militaries fail to adequately prepare for COIN operations, instead favouring more conventional approaches.[247] Thus taking this and previous notes into account, whilst the training was always unlikely to be appropriate for the theatre the initial training was severely so. Whilst not shifting to lethality as expected, it likely contributed to an increase in "venting", harassment and other unprofessional behaviour.

Finally, deployment within COIN operations was particularly influential within UDR conduct. The UDR was intended for COIN warfare, and with limited training its experiences would have only been more influential upon the regimental culture and conduct. Whilst as I argue this largely saw them shaped by institutional influences such as preserving law and order, it also shaped them through their shared dangers. For some, this would prove too much to handle, and with limited dangers and (particularly in violent areas) potent threats, led them to take matters into their own hands.

---

[245] Jones & Munoz, *Afghanistan's Local War,* pg. 76

[246] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 79-80

[247] Christopher Dandeker & James Gow, *Military culture and strategic peacekeeping*, (Small Wars & Insurgencies Vol. 10:2, 1999), pg. 58

Overall, I forward that deviancy within the UDR was not so pervasive as with truly deviant regiments. The UDR lacked the broad permission structures for deviancy such as "Big Boys' Rules" in the SAS which justified and encapsulates deviancy.[248] Similarly, they lacked the prestige and permission structures of these deviant paratrooper or special forces regiments. What I wish to highlight here is that there appears to have been a comparative lack of regimental ideology in comparison to these other units. The UDR regimental culture's unique factor if anything was its experience of danger both on and off-duty.

> [UDR] were never off-duty, and we were trying to explain this to some Regular English regiment. We said, "You come for a three-month, six-month tour and leave and they send you off to Cyprus or Germany or somewhere to get over [it]. Our tour never ends, it goes on and on."[249]

Similar sentiments were expressed by other UDR.[250] Other than this and their local service, I can find no unique cultural aspect to the UDR. What I forward is that the UDR did not "convert" individuals to a regimental ideology compared to the units noted in this chapter. Its culture seems to be far weaker and less zealous. Why this may be is unclear, though I suspect it may have something to do again with their local service. The UDR, in contrast to these other regiments, was never in one location. Whereas the SAS were drawn together in Hereford, or the CAR in Petawawa, the UDR were never condensed into one location and thus perhaps were unable to truly identify what separated "us" from "them". Therefore, whereas many deviant regiments have a regimental culture that fosters and encourages deviant subcultures, UDR deviancy was isolated because it lacked a central ideology. The UDR was not one culture, but several regional cultures. This may be a benefit of LDFs in that the inability to centralise and form a cohesive culture (except over prolonged periods) may limit deviancy. Yet this may also be a con in that one does not have to contend with barring deviancy in one culture, but several. The only certainty is that LDFs will be drawn from those who see value or benefit in service to the state – which limits the ability to draw from nationalist communities in the Northern Ireland context, and other marginalised communities elsewhere who do not grant the state full legitimacy. The UDR were part of the broader security apparatus that held up and defended a state with contested legitimacy against forces who in response to historical persecution sought to bring it down by force – the IRA. Therefore, at its core one of the few core elements of the UDR was the inherent unionist undertone to its existence and purpose, and thereby the inherent appeal to unionists over nationalists.

---

[248] Urban, *Big Boys' Rules*

[249] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[250] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

This explains how some UDR went their entire career without witnessing deviancy, whilst UDR 1 became aware of this in south Armagh very quickly. It also explains the UDR "Bad Barracks" as noted by the Irish Government.[251] Furthermore, I hypothesise that much of the paramilitary collusion came from individuals like those that UDA leader Andy Tyrie claimed were entering the regiment to access weapons and training.[252] This would explain the numerous such incidents in the early 1970s such as the numerous armoury raids.[253] As I shall demonstrate in Chapter 1 the barring and removal of such elements was improved over time – as evidenced by a lack of infamous incidents of collusion in the 1980s and onwards. Nevertheless, there were thus many coming into the UDR with hidden paramilitary associations who were not being converted to deviants, but were pre-existing deviant Subversives. The remainder, such as "Jim" and Geoffrey Edwards, appear to have been turned not by the UDR, but by the conflict itself. Their deviancy did not stem from a UDR ideology, but from the difficulties of COIN warfare. Whilst they may have attempted to justify their actions as fighting the same enemies, this deviancy would have occurred whether it was the UDR, the RUC or any other organisation on the ground – but may appear more within LDFs due to their extended service.

---

[251] NAI 2016/22/2025 – 'List of "Bad Barracks"' [Handwritten note]

[252] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 156-157; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 97,

[253] Irish Press, *Rees "in whitewash of UDR arms raid",* July 3rd 1975; Sunday Independent, *Stolen arms recovered by SDLP tip-off,* June 22nd 1975

[253] Irish Examiner, *Collusion theory in U.D.R. centre arms raid*, June 17th 1975

[253] Irish Independent, *Says UDR allowed Loyalist gang to seize arms*, June 17th 1975; NAI 2016/22/2025 – *Evidence of involvement by UDR members in criminal activities* [Report by D. Donoghue], January 1976

No former member of the UDR denied that deviancy occurred.[254] UDR 2: 'I am not so foolish to claim that [deviancy] didn't happen. We know it happened, and it was wrong.'[255] Crabbe made similar remarks:

> Were individuals giving information to paramilitaries? Yes, it happened. I have no doubt that it happened. I mentioned I was based in Girdwood [barracks] – it happened there, and it wasn't protestant paramilitaries it was republican. It was IRA.[256]

Even where soldiers snapped in the moment and harassed or assaulted individuals, the UDR highlighted that whilst this was "human" there is no justification or excuse for poor discipline.[257] As Dr Rory Finegan highlighted the UDR was not institutionally sectarian, and most acted within the law even in the most trying of circumstances.[258] There is simply a lack of evidence to support a claim of UDR institutional sectarianism, and therefore regionality and evolution over time appears to explain how some areas became known as "Bad Barracks" and why we see such infamous collusion in the early-to-mid 1970s that quickly drops off in volume and breadth. For example the deviancy within the Tyrone area where they faced off against an IRA unit that was so ruthless as to warrant an apparent SAS targeted killing programme in the latter stages of the conflict.[259] There was even an acknowledgement of this regionality by the government at the time who noted that UDR deployed within their own regions were influenced by their local knowledge, and that this made it difficult at times to be even-handed when encountering certain individuals.[260]

---

[254] UDR 1, interview with author, 6th July 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Noel Downey, interview with author 31st August 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[255] UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021

[256] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021

[257] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021

[258] Dr Rory Finegan, interview with author 25th October 2022

[259] Trigg, Deaths in the Fields: The IRA and East Tyrone, pg. 250, 254

[260] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 115

The UDR however should not be seen as pro-Loyalist. Crabbe recalled how such an association led to a familial rift.

> A senior rank I remember, and his brother was a senior UDA man. They didn't talk. They hadn't spoken in 20 years, but they were there. He subsequently left without a stain on his career or character ... But am I my brother's keeper? He hadn't seen or spoken to his brother in 20 years, and his brother didn't appreciate the fact he was in the UDR, and he didn't appreciate the fact that his brother was in the UDA...

On paper there would have been a significant link to paramilitary activities – but as Crabbe noted, what would be missing is their estrangement. The UDR also faced hatred, hostility and even attacks from Loyalist paramilitaries – an often-overlooked matter.[261] UDR 2 recalled 'The hostility. We were no friends to them, and then there was the odd bullet.'[262] Edgar noted that personal risks went beyond Republicans:

> You would have Loyalist paramilitaries as well. The first soldier killed in my battalion [11 UDR] was killed by a Loyalist paramilitary. They never said they did it because obviously it would be negative against them, but they did. And I know one ex-member of my battalion was also shot by a Loyalist paramilitary ... [They] wouldn't have been too keen on security forces either, because while people say: "they're all out against Republicans", there were lots of loyalists in jail and someone was putting them there.[263]

Crabbe meanwhile earned the personal ire of Loyalists.

> From the kind of mid 70s into the 80s, when we were confronting protestant paramilitaries, they really didn't like that. And I suppose a lot of people serving were living amongst them and did get a hard time from them. I know I was living in east Belfast in my early days ... I remember I lifted one of the leading loyalist paramilitary leaders at one stage and brought him up to Girdwood to be interviewed. So, I arrested him, brought him up to be interviewed and screened

---

[261] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021

[262] UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021

[263] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

> … Long story short, about a week after that, one of my soldiers came to me and said: “Did you arrest [Named Loyalist Leader] the other night?”. I said “Yeah. How'd you know that? You weren't there.” He says: “Yeah, I heard about it in the pub … the description fitted you, he knows where you live…”

As Crabbe noted, some individuals remained silent out of fear of Loyalist reprisals, on top of the already heightened IRA threat.[264] However, Crabbe also recalled many who took great personal risks and reported their concerns to the authorities. The UDR thus faced greater personal risk in combatting deviancy, as this social aspect brought danger from multiple factions – another key lesson for future LDFs.

Why the UDR became associated with Loyalism is clear. The mass recruitment of ex-Specials tarnished the regiment in the eyes of many nationalists early in the UDR’s existence. Some ex-UDR who served alongside honourable former Specials were also keen to highlight that despite never personally encountering it they were not so naïve as to think that there were not UDR who harboured anti-Catholic sentiments and plans.[265] There were also the infamous collusion incidents, as well as a steady stream of these thereafter. There were also a number of terrible PR incidents. Additionally, there was a brief open policy of tolerating UDA-UDR membership following a public declaration by then Commander UDR Brigadier Ormerod.[266] This was reversed not long after but still showed a tolerance for vigilante Loyalism by the UDR. This would only have been cemented by the infamous incidents of collusion, and by later incidents such as during a 1990 Panorama when then commanding Brigadier Ritchie stated that the UDR’s operations were almost exclusively against Republican paramilitaries.[267] However, it is worth noting that operational priorities and directives on which forces are to be targeted are not at the discretion of regimental commanders – otherwise warfare would not be one campaign but several mini-wars raged by separate regiments and their commanders. Such directives came from senior officers at HQNI and Whitehall, as well as the political priorities of the government.

---

[264] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021

[265] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021; UDR 1, interview with author 25th February 2022; UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

[266] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment,* pg. 58-59; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 89-91

[267] William Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army: 1854–1992* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pg. 182

These directives were never going to allow the UDR to clamp down forcefully. Bennett summarised the British position as:

> Without denying [collusion] existed in places, fear counted a lot more in British military attitudes towards loyalism ... The army persisted with the fiction that a distinction existed between the radical UVF and the moderate UDA, despite knowing better, because the thousands in the UDA's ranks were too terrifying a prospective foe.[268]

A similarly "soft" policy was also adopted for the UVF, as evidenced by the release of their entire leadership post-arrest in fears of joint UVF-UDA violence leading to a civil war.[269] Even when pulling down barricades in the initial phase of the conflict, directives were issued stating that Loyalist groups such as the UDA should be given preferential treatment.[270] Bennett highlighted that the British Army and Government actively avoided a direct confrontation with militant Loyalism, and due to limited intelligence and a fear of a UDA-led civil war took a comparatively soft approach.[271]

Therefore, the UDR were unable to be deployed against the organisations within their communities about whom they were best informed and arguably the best prepared. What actions were undertaken were done so on the local level by soldiers and officers closer to the ground such as Crabbe. Furthermore, I hypothesise that British desires not to rock the boat with the UDA and militant Loyalism generally limited UDR responses to subversion. The UDR would have been unable to take a hostile line on the UDA publicly and to condemn them – not least because the organisation was not proscribed until 1992. In fact, the UDR may have been privately encouraged not to do so, and this may have motivated Brigadier Ormerod to give his disastrous UDA-UDR memberships speech in 1972, though currently we lack evidence regarding his motivations at this time.

---

[268] Bennett, *Uncivil War,* pg. 205
[269] Ibid. pg. 208
[270] Ibid. pg. 188-189, 197
[271] Ibid. pg. 272-273

Regardless, the UDR were not given large coordinated operations against Loyalists. Most encounters, such as Crabbes, were done by individual soldiers and checkpoints where UDR soldiers challenged suspicious individuals whom the British state may have preferred that they did not impede upon. Furthermore, as explored within Chapter 1 they were not able to control the vetting, and thus the Subversives that the UDR suffered from were handed to them – not selected or reared. In fact, it was not until late 1989 that granting the Commander UDR unilateral powers to dismiss individual for security reasons was even considered.[272] Prior to this, an undeniable case had to be made and go through the necessary procedures – barring many borderline cases or those with strong suspicions but lacking undeniable evidence. Thus, the UDR was forced to receive undesirables and deviants, and unable to eject them until the necessary case was made. Finally, it must be reiterated that the statistics do not indicate that where deviancy was present that it was particularly frequent. With the exception of harassment, which cannot be ruled on due to insufficient data, the data indicates that violent misconduct was likely limited in comparison to numerous examinations of specific incidents such as the Miami Showband Massacre.

Military Reputation

It is worth acknowledging before concluding that the military itself was not even universally pro-UDR. Regulars also reported similarly negative views of the UDR. One former Crew Chief in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) who deployed to NI in 1985 and again in 1992 reported a widespread perception of the soldiers he met and served with that the UDR and RUC were '…all [colluding], but we didn't care – it kept us safe'.[273] There was a widespread belief that by "fighting fire with fire" and taking extrajudicial actions against illegal IRA activities – more British and civilian lives were saved.[274] REME 1 was also sympathetic to the struggles of the UDR, noting that psychological strains of service and the incredible violence that soldiers witnessed made some form of local collusion an inevitability – especially when considering the historical and cultural background.[275] A former private of the Royal Regiment of Wales (RRW) who deployed to NI from 1983-1984 and again in 1985, similarly respected the struggles and bravery of the UDR but summarised that: '…although all boots on the ground help up to a point, after that [The UDR] became a liability'.[276] This was however due to what he saw as poor training – not collusion:

---

[272] NAUK: DEFE 70/2208 – Untitled Memo from Tom King [Secretary of State for Defence], 17th October 1989

[273] REME 1, interview with author 5th May 2021

[274] Ibid.

> I didn't take much notice of the allegations that were flying around like bird shit at the time. I was too interested in looking after my colleagues and my own safety. I am sure that the UDR would have had a certain amount of paramilitary infiltration, but this was just like any other organisation in Northern Ireland at that time from the Boy Scouts right up to the Police. It was part and parcel of what we were working with, and we accepted it, didn't worry about it and just got on with our own jobs.[277]

These sympathetic if somewhat critical assessments of the UDR stand in stark contrast to senior officer assessments of the regiment. Major General Nicholas Vaux, formerly of 42 Commando Royal Marines, voiced his belief that by the 1990s the Police with UDR support had made 'enormous strides forward' in improving the security situation in Northern Ireland:

> I think all of us have an enormous admiration for the UDR – I certainly do. These are citizens who voluntarily risk their lives in the community interest … I think it is particularly impressive when you realise that we tend to go for a short, concentrated period to somewhere where we don't actually live and return for some rest and recreation – but they are there all of the time. I believe that the future of Northern Ireland in the long-term is manifested by the contribution and self-sacrifice of people like that.[278]

---

[275] Ibid.

[276] RRW 1, interview with author 27th January 2024

[277] Ibid.

[278] Nicholas Francis Vaux, IWM interview 23rd October 1992

Vaux had also made a number of UDR contacts during his time in Northern Ireland – several of which were later killed.[279] Major General David Woodford, former commander of 3rd Infantry Brigade and later a staff officer in HQNI, reported from his time commanding UDR units that he found the UDR to be : 'Admirable people … wonderful [the UDR] were. I am still lost in admiration for them – I am appalled that they were disbanded.'[280] What is of interest here is that the individuals who had practically no contact with the UDR, REME 1 and RRW 1, have a broadly negative view of the UDR and its security contribution – whilst Major Generals Woodford and Vaux, both of whom served with or over the UDR, have glowing reviews of the regiment. Woodford also would have notably been privy to high level reports that would have measured UDR deviancy, and he was more than capable of weighing this against their military merits. Yet, Woodford speaks in only admiration of the regiment and laments their disbandment.

Conclusions

It is worth noting that the UDR was not the only unit to have issues during the conflict. It has already been noted that the SAS had their own rules of engagement and conduct within the conflict.[281] The RUC faced its own serious incidents included collusion into the murder of Pat Finucane in 1989 and the killing of Rosemary Nelson in 1999.[282] Meanwhile Special Branch and the Army's Force Research Unit (FRU) facilitated agent misconduct.[283] The sectarian Loyalist killer Robin "The Jackal" Jackson, a significant player in the Glennane Gang, was said to have worked for RUC SB and British military intelligence alongside other significant players – allowing him to dodge numerous charges and arrests throughout the 1970s and 1980s.[284] There are also several tales of rioting Regulars, such as 3 PARA at Coalisland in May 1992 or when UDR 1 was informed that the Royal Marines were rioting in Turf Lodge, and that the RUC were unable to control the situation.[285] Regiments were known to categorise the British Army into "Players" and "Gentlemen" (whom the Players mocked as "Crap-hats").[286] Soldiers referred to "Paddybashing" when serving in areas of high sectarian tension, in which they often operated with contempt for the locals – the Scots Guards in 1972 even provoking a riot and fought with the locals in order to vent.[287] The UDR never engaged in acts of mass violence. Its members viewed any subversive elements with hostility.[288] One former head of the UDR Memorial Trust once stated: '*If I had known* [who was colluding] *at the time, I would have taken charge of the firing squad'*.[289]

---

[279] Ibid.

[280] David Milner Woodford, IWM Interview 18th November 1999

[281] Urban, *Big Boys' Rules*

[282] The De Silva Report, *The Report of the Patrick Finucane Review*, pg. 353-355, 440, 462, 465; The Morland Report, *The Rosemary Nelson Inquiry Report*, pg. 105-110, 358-359, 465

[283] Leahy, *The Intelligence War against the IRA*, pg. 141

[284] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies*, pg. 328-329

Throughout I have highlighted that the evidence does not support claims of UDR deviancy through a number of factors – not least statistical and cultural. As also noted, the data that is currently available is in contrast to the attention that UDR deviancy has received. UDR deviant violence was marginal in comparison to the attention drawn to this element. There is a lack of statistics currently on UDR intelligence leaks, but I hypothesise that if there is deviancy within the UDR then it is here that we should see this play out. Passing intelligence allows for greater psychological distance than an act of violence, and thus would be easier to rationalise. Furthermore, there would be a reduced risk of discovery than with active participation.

Overall, a number of important lessons may be drawn. First, that there was an anticipation of local "loyalty" – as evidenced by the apparent shock of investigators that some in the regiment had a greater loyalty to "Ulster" than the Crown.[290] This completely overlooked issues with colonial "loyalism", which often pursues parochial interests first and foremost, as well as issues of regimental culture. Burke highlighted that regional recruitment is the core of the British Army, creating a sense of unit identity – not necessarily on service to king or country.[291] That the UDR did not fall to temptations as noted was largely due to the character of its soldiers – but repeating such risks is unwise, and this clearly did not hold everywhere. Therefore, all LDFs require a guided mythos to ensure the necessary discipline and conduct.

---

[285] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021 [incident undated for anonymisation]
[286] Burke, *Counter-Insurgency against 'Kith and Kin'?*, pg. 667
[287] Burke, *Counter-Insurgency against 'Kith and Kin'?*, pg. 669-670
[288] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Noel Downey, interview with author 31st August 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022
[289] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021
[290] *Subversion in the UDR* Report, pg. 12
[291] Burke, *An Army of Tribes*, pg. 40

By keeping the UDR at arm's length from the Regular Army, this created a vacuum in the unit's mythos that was filled by its members and their skillsets. Again, this is how some areas resisted deviancy, whilst others became periodically defined by it. This was worsened by the external vetting system and the initially poor and lacking in a pass-or-fail training regime as shall be explored later in this thesis. By drawing from the same communities as Loyalist paramilitaries, which was inevitable in the binary of Northern Ireland society, this was a great risk and set the UDR on a collision course with future problems.

That the UDR did not become truly dominated by deviancy is somewhat miraculous. Feelings of exceptionalism, hypermasculinity and other elements could and even should have emerged given the circumstances, separation, and threats that the UDR faced. This author can find no reason as to why it did not other than the integrity of those who enlisted and believed in the UDR. However, I reject the "bad apples" defence which Urwin branded as delusional.[292] There were entire rotten branches as demonstrated by the "Bad Barracks" – though it is worth nothing that a "bad apples" defence is a common response from militaries and states to limit their culpability, and excuse previous and even future inactivity.[293] This is allowed to continue and fester because of decisions by those in authority, such as during the investigations into William McCaughey, a former member of the RUC Special Patrol Group and a semi-open UVF and Glennane Gang member who had been involved in a series of sectarian murders and attacks, to limit their exposure and reputations at the cost of possible effectiveness, and the lives and safety of others.[294] Nevertheless, a significant proportion of UDR weapons were kept at home – providing a significant private arsenal.[295] As Dr William Matchett formerly of the RUC SB highlighted: 'If the UDR had wanted the IRA dead they could have done it in a single night'.[296] Whilst hyperbolic, this does reference the ability of the UDR to conduct an organised campaign of assassination, a real “shoot to kill” crisis, if they so wished. The fact that no mass campaign of terror emerged again appears to be mostly due to UDR integrity.

---

[292] Urwin, *A State in Denial*, pg. 12

[293] Erella Grassiani, *Soldiering under occupation: Processes of numbing among Israeli soldiers in the Al-Aqsa Intifada* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013), pg. 1

[294] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Northern Ireland*, pg. 289-292

[295] Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army*, pg. 40

[296] Dr William Matchett, interview with author 22nd April 2022

Many of the problems noted in this chapter were handed to the UDR. External parties dictated the limits of training, vetting and operations that effectively gave the UDR its reputation. Thus, we should see UDR deviancy and infamy partially as a factor of regimental actions – but more importantly as further evidence of British errors during the conflict. Furthermore, it can be drawn that there is a significant need to monitor the mythos of any fledgling regiment, particularly those recruiting local during violent unrest, to prevent the emergence of “Warlord” cultures and deviant elements – and that training reinforces this both positively and negatively. Next, that assumptions should not be made as to the motivations and culture of those who enlist. Deviancy can be brought into the regiment, either actively or latently. Whilst these were rooted out of the UDR over the years, the public image damage was already done. Finally, that the process by which militaries safeguard against deviancy is an active and constant process and must be maintained.

Chapter 3 - Training

In this chapter I explore the UDR's training. Training is a vital part of any military organisation as it establishes standards and capabilities whilst instilling military discipline. I shall demonstrate that the UDR's initial training was insufficient and undermined their initial capabilities and strategic value. Over time this was consistently improved until the UDR became a capable anti-insurgent force. When this was partnered with their local knowledge, the UDR as part of the Northern Ireland Training Establishment (NITE) training facility assisted in training incoming soldiers and battalions on what to expect whilst on deployment. Enhanced training such as this is vital to ensuring not just military capabilities but good discipline. In Chapter 1 I noted the importance of "De-Specialising" the individual, and I build on this here by highlighting how it can suppress and remove subversive and "undisciplined" elements. I begin with exploring the concept of training and its importance, before exploring how Local Defence Forces are used and trained. I contextualise the UDR within contemporary British training before exploring the UDR's training and its development, including the significance of this, throughout the years. Through this I demonstrate not only the UDR's training enhancements, and the transformative nature of such training.

The training of the Ulster Defence Regiment was a tale of continual improvement, with substantially different training by the time of its 1992 merger. However, one cannot overlook the fundamentally deficient level of training recruits received in the UDR's early years, and how this may have influenced events including potential deviancy. Throughout this chapter I shall chart key developments in UDR training, and their implications. It is worth noting that there is a dearth of literature on this topic. We are reliant upon the work of Potter in particular, and interviews with ex-UDR members alongside what limited archival material has been released. However, this element requires extensive examination given its implications on UDR conduct, and on LDF's and their efficacy. However, there is no specific literature on the effects of LDF or reservist training on military capabilities. The importance of training for military readiness was highlighted by Laanepere and Kasearu's study on Estonian reservists and by Adamson for US reservists.[1] However, beyond this the literature is sparse to non-existent.

The chapter first explores the concept of training and contemporary British practices, before moving on to LDFs to provide adequate foundations and comparisons for UDR training. The chapter then progresses through UDR training by dividing these up into phases which are defined by significant developments, such as an expansion of training facilities, which mark a clear progression away from the previous phase's training regime. This chapter builds upon my previous discussion of deviancy by noting the risk that improper training can pose for unit efficacy and discipline. Furthermore, it notes additional issues within the UDR that again were caused by decision-making at Westminster and Whitehall – not within the UDR. The chapter also notes the overlooked role that the UDR played within enhancing aspects of NI-related training, and how this played into its strategic value.

The Concept of Training

As discussed in Chapter 2, the purpose of military training is to drill recruits into military conformity, the acceptance of legal orders no matter the personal cost, and preparation for combat.[2] This thesis has discussed the transformative nature of military training. King noted the centrality of training to combat effectiveness, as evidenced by professionalised militaries.[3] It also impacts unit solidarity and internal cultures.[4] Training is key for platoon and company leaders, as it in these sessions that they learn their craft – including matters such as troop discipline and control.[5] Soldiers returning from deployments such as Afghanistan noted the ability to conduct key movements and operations was dependent on training – particularly complicated movement or firing actions.[6] Emotional discipline, being necessary to responding appropriately in combat, is also a factor of training.[7] Good training thus translates into good soldiers, and vice versa. As Colonel MacWatters noted in the context of police forces: ‘how we organize to conduct the training is just as essential as how those forces are recruited and manned’.[8] Therefore, poor and inappropriate training should be viewed as compromising and potentially deviancy-inducing by undermining unit effectiveness and discipline.[9] This is exemplified by the association between higher attendance at the US’ “School of the America’s” military training facility and incidents of deviancy.[10] However, this institution was established to support the US’ Latin American allies – some of whom belonged to authoritarian regimes, and was often staffed by Vietnam veterans whom as noted in Chapter 2 were known to participate in deviancy.

---

[1] Taavi Laanepere & Kairi Kasearu, '*Military and Civilian Field–Related Factors in Estonian Reservists' Military Service Readiness*', (Armed Forces & Society Vol. 47:4, 2021), pg. 691, 692, 703; Nathan Adamson, '*The Role of Reserve Forces in US Military Strategy*', (US Army War College, 1974), pg. 4-6

[2] Bryant, *Khaki-Collar Crime*, pg. 56; Winslow, *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia*, pg. 15 + 19

[3] Anthony King, *The combat soldier: Infantry tactics and cohesion in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pg. 266, 273, 278-280, 325, 328

[4] Ibid. pg. 273

[5] Ibid.

Given the UDR’s context as an LDF it is hard to find an apt comparison to set the standard for its training. However, I opt to use the contemporary US Army’s Reserves. These reserves evolved to become an active part of US military capabilities and doctrine from 1973.[11] US reservists were given 8 weeks basic training – the same as their Regular counterparts.[12] Reservists also receive 8-10 weeks of Advanced Individual Training for their specialism (infantry, medical, armour etc), and can expect to repeat their training on a company level when this is newly formed or undergoes a rapid change in personnel to foster unit cohesion.[13] Some may argue that the UDR were simply mounting checkpoints and guards with some patrolling, including its contemporaries: ‘The part-time soldier is training for a specific and limited task, which does not require the full range of military skills’.[14] However, I disagree. The nature of COIN warfare brings soldiers into close proximity with both insurgents and civilians, and the need to maintain discipline and discriminate between the two is vital. Soldiers were eventually expected to be able to engage in firefights, engage in basic policing action and arrests, and mount patrols, search and checkpoints – all whilst adhering to the rules of engagement. This requires more training than just a few weeks, and as I shall demonstrate, the failure to acknowledge this is unsurprising. The UDR full-timers were the only ones to reach parity with this standard – and this only occurred in the mid-to-late 1980s.[15] For part-timers 8-10 weeks consecutively is implausible – it is known that employers are not always supportive of their service due to its disruptive nature on their civilian role.[16] Half of this training period would have been an enhancement, as this chapter shall demonstrate, and both part and full-time soldiers should have matched the training regime of their Regular counterparts like US reservists – perhaps with full-timers also undertaking additional advanced training.

---

[6] Ibid. pg. 274-276, 280-281

[7] Ibid. pg. 302, 325-326

[8] Kevin MacWatters, *Home Guard, Police, and the Social Contract* (U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2011), pg. 7

[9] MacWatters, *Home Guard, Police, and the Social Contract*, pg. 8-9

[10] Katherine McCoy, *Trained to Torture? The Human Rights Effects of Military Training at the School of the Americas* (Latin American Perspectives Vol. 32:6, 2005)

[11] Adamson, *The Role of Reserve Forces in US Military Strategy*, pg. 4; Shima Keene, *The Effective Use of Reserve Personnel in the U.S. Military: Lessons from the United Kingdom Reserve Mode*l, (US Army War College, 2015), pg. 2

[12] Ibid. pg. 6

[13] Ibid. pg. 7

[14] NAUK: CJ 4/7446 – *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, No date

Contemporary British Military Practice

Several individuals involved in early UDR training highlighted that the British Army was preparing itself for conventional warfare against the Soviet Union, not COIN operations in Northern Ireland.[17] This focus on conventional over COIN warfare is still an issue.[18] Ledwidge highlighted that the British Army continued to be too aggressive in Afghanistan and Iraq during the 2000s, and that the system rewarded aggression through using movement as its Measure of Effectiveness, and awarding medals for aggressive actions – regardless of their efficacy. [19] Whilst it must be acknowledged that British forces had not mounted significant COIN operations since the ceasefire in Northern Ireland (NI), and thus many troops lacked experience – it also indicates an institutional practice of reversion back to warfighting mindsets. A similar problem occurred in Northern Ireland.[20]

---

[15] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 225

[16] Keene, *The Effective Use of Reserve Personnel in the U.S. Military: Lessons from the United Kingdom Reserve Mode*l, pg. 12-13

[17] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 74-75

[18] Christopher Dandeker & James Gow, *Military culture and strategic peacekeeping* (Small Wars & Insurgencies Vol. 10:2, 1999), pg. 58-59, 64; J.D. Fletcher & P.R. Chatelier, *An Overview of Military Training* (Alexandria: US Institute for Defence Analyses, 2000), pg. III-11; Frank Ledwidge, *Losing Small Wars: British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan* (Padstow: TJ International Ltd., 2011), pg. 141-146

[19] Ledwidge, *Losing Small Wars*, pg. 141, 144-146, 179-181

Contemporary British training consisted of 12 weeks basic (Phase 1) training, before individuals moved on to 10 weeks “trade training” (Phase 2) for infantry soldiers – taking overall training to just under 6 months for Regulars.[21] British training focused on developing the soldier’s individual and collective skills through a series of drills and tests that escalated in intensity and difficulty.[22] Whilst the recruit would have begun by firing and “grouping” shots on ranges (Stage 1), he would soon be firing from a range of positions, including from his back in case of ambush, and at a range of targets that simulated difficult, moving and even fleeing targets at different ranges (Stage 4).[23] By this stage troops would also be working on defending themselves including from ambush, conducting patrols, and drilling on close quarter battle. Troops then finished by conducting section and platoon attacks with all arms.[24] Throughout, troops had to meet standards to pass through to the next stage of training[25] – as shall be demonstrated, this was not the case with early UDR training.

Military training has consistently prioritised warfighting over COIN capabilities.[26] Therefore, soldiers would have relied upon their experiences fighting colonial conflicts where “Hearts and Minds” (winning over the population) and training local forces to be effective and capable was not prioritised. The Army was not prepared nor trained sufficiently for Operation Banner – Brigadier Peter Morton reflected that the deaths of some his men in 1973 could have been avoided with adequate training that reflected the nuances of COIN than the aggressions of conventional warfare.[27] However, it is worth considering that Morton may be deflecting responsibility for the casualties his men endured during their deployment.

---

[20] Burke, *Counter-Insurgency against “Kith and Kin”?* pg. 668

[21] RRW 1, interview with author 27th January 2024

[22] IWM – Infantry Training: Volume 3, Ranges and Courses: Pamphlet No. 35, *Training the Battle Shot (Provisional): Annual Range Courses and Battle Shooting (Stages 1 to 5),* 1966, pg. 1

[23] IWM – Infantry Training: Volume 3, Ranges and Courses: Pamphlet No. 35, *Training the Battle Shot (Provisional): Annual Range Courses and Battle Shooting (Stages 1 to 5)*, 1966, pg. 1

[24] Ibid.

[25] IWM – Infantry Training: Volume 1, Pamphlet No. 11, *Battle Handling (All Arms)* 1969, pg. 1

[26] Dandeker & Gow, *Military culture and strategic peacekeeping*, pg. 58-59

[27] David Pearson, *Low-Intensity Operations in Northern Ireland* (in Soldiers in Cities: Military Operations on Urban Terrain, US Army War College 2001), pg. 116

Thus, regardless of the quality of UDR training in comparison to its peers, it was always likely to be deficient given contemporary doctrines. The focus was on conventional conflicts fought at the company level and above, with large numbers of troops engaged in combat at once. This is in stark contrast to The Troubles, where the rapidly shifting nature of COIN warfare forced initiatives down to platoon level – leading senior officers in Northern Ireland to dub it "The Corporal's War".[28] Thus had the UDR received the best available training (which it did not), it still would have been unprepared for operations. It took until 1972 for the Army as an institution to recognise the need for NI-specific training regimes and establish the Northern Ireland Training and Advisory Team (NITAT) for regiments deploying to NI – and even this excluded the UDR.[29] Training would be on trends from within the conflict – such as combat indicators, or positions from which the enemy could fire.[30] The state went so far as to even expand NITAT to act as a cover for the Special Reconnaissance Unit (SRU – a clandestine intelligence unit), but still not to cover the UDR.[31] As Ryder summarised: 'Training for the special circumstances of Northern Ireland was an exacting, time consuming task'.[32] Units often combined their NITAT training with in-house pre-deployment training – for example the 1st Royal Hampshire Regiment with a week NITAT training followed by another week on battalion and company level training at barracks and study days for officers and senior NCOs, and then finally a final week of NITAT training at Hythe with a final battalion exercise.[33] Clearly, it was judged that this could not be provided for the UDR – likely due to speed at which it was activated, and then the inability to stand the unit down for retraining.[34] Edgar believed that such rushed training was motivated by the crisis and the need to get boots on the ground.[35] It should be noted that this meant that Regulars were receiving pre-deployment training which, as shall be demonstrated, constituted more time and resources than part-time UDR, and for a significant period even full-time UDR, ever received

---

[28] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 62-63

[29] Bennett, *"Smoke Without Fire"?*, pg. 518

[30] Bennett, *"Smoke Without Fire"?* pg. 524-525; Pearson, *Low-Intensity Operations in Northern Ireland*, pg. 116-117

[31] NAUK: PREM 16/154 – *Defensive Brief D Meeting between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach 5 April 1974 Army Plain Clothes Patrols in Northern Ireland*

[32] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 62

[33] Bennett, *Uncivil War,* pg. 225

[34] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 79-80

[35] Richard Edgar, interview with author 15th July 2022

The British had prepared doctrine on “Counter-Revolutionary” operations which contain a number of relevant points for the UDR.[36] The manual notes the need for guarding key points, but particularly that such duties should be done by civilian forces to free up the military for offensive tasks elsewhere.[37] Whilst the UDR were not a civilian force they conducted this role. They also conducted the various additional tasks such as searches, patrols and checkpoints that were vital to this type of warfare.[38] Finally, the doctrine recognised that police intelligence was likely to be ineffective given that it had already failed to control the violence, and that military intelligence with ideally less overt intelligence gathering would therefore be necessary.[39] The UDR and their part-time contingent allowed for passive intelligence gathering that whilst low-level became a significant enough problem for insurgents to warrant their relentless targeting by the IRA.[40] UDR 2: ‘They could not tolerate [UDR in or near their communities] ... to them we were the eyes and ears of the state’.[41] A similar sentiment was expressed by a UDR Colonel to Max Arthur: ‘It is difficult for a Catholic to serve because they know eyes are on them, and their families.’[42] Tommy McKearney, a former Republican, detailed the insurgents viewpoint:

> Whether on or off duty, these men acted not only as the eyes and ears of the regular army but actively supported it logistically and militarily . . . Employed as school bus-drivers, postmen, refuse collectors and every other position in the workforce, they had a perfect ‘cover’ for travelling covertly through Republican districts, not only to observe but often to monitor.[43]

---

[36] British Army, *Counter Revolutionary Operations, Part 2 – Internal Security* (Land Operations Vol. III, 1969)

[37] Ibid. pg. 23

[38] British Army, *Counter Revolutionary Operations*, *Part 2,* pg. 42, 49

[39] Ibid.pg. 40

[40] Chesse, *Hunting the Watchmen*

[41] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022

[42] Max Arthur, *Northern Ireland: Soldiers Talking* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd., 1987), pg. 224

[43] Tommy McKearney, *The Provisional IRA: From Insurrection to Parliament* (London: Pluto Press, 2011), pg. 117

Local forces provide passive intelligence combined with local knowledge – a potent element if wielded appropriately. Another section of the British Army's 1970 counter-revolutionary operations doctrine concludes that whilst utilising local forces carries risks:

> ...the maximum use should be made of loyal military and para-military local forces ... Effective use of local forces is dependent on a close understanding of local commanders, their motives, customs, habits, religious attitudes and superstitions, as well on the standard of training and morale ... Local forces can be invaluable for the following:
>
> a. Providing topographical information and guides.
> b. Gaining information.
> c. Providing local knowledge of the habits and methods of the insurgents.
> d. Taking over the defence of controlled areas.
> e. Watching and protecting borders.
> f. Providing liaison officers to British units.[44]

Similarly, the manual notes the need for a reserve to ensure "cleared areas" remain clear, and that: 'The garrisoning of cleared areas, preferably with local para-military forces, who should also carry out mopping-up operations when the insurgent movement has been broken up.'[45] Again, this is a role that LDF's like the UDR are well-suited to, alongside supporting search teams and clearing areas.[46] The RUC was not suited to these tasks, and blending them into this role would have only muddied the clear "civilian/military" divide that the Hunt reforms had clearly intended.[47] The additional intelligence that the UDR provided only enhanced its military role, whilst also providing an additional route for de-escalation post-conflict as these "eyes of the state" were withdrawn and civilian policing further took over. Some form of LDF was therefore required in Northern Ireland. Such forces do not require training in anti-armour and other conventional tactics, and thus require an altered training programme with these elements removed.

---

[44] British Army, *Counter Revolutionary Operations, Part 3 – Counter insurgency* (Land Operations Vol. III, 1970), pg. 8-9
[45] Ibid. pg. 24
[46] Ibid. pg. 29
[47] Baron Hunt, *Report of the Advisory Committee on Police in Northern Ireland*, Chapter 10

Local Defence Forces (LDFs)

How “irregular auxiliaries” (non-regular local military forces) are and have been utilised is an understudied and under-examined element despite its ubiquity.[48] Such forces are historically undertrained and under-resourced.[49] Whilst no clear reason is provided for this, it likely stems from the emergency nature of such forces – they are raised during crises, serve during crises, and then regularly disbanded once these crises are resolved. The hope of peace being just a few months away likely undermines calls for additional LDF resources. Scheipers noted how this inevitably undermined unit effectiveness and linked this to their intention to be a political rather than military asset. I prove this is the case with the UDR as well in Chapter 4.

The practice of recruiting local forces to assist in COIN operations is characteristic of the British approach.[50] This was pioneered in the colonies, and as Killingray summarised: ‘British colonial armies had three roles: the defence of the territorial frontiers, to provide aid to the civil power, and to aid a neighbouring colony if requested.’[51] For colonial forces officers were drawn from the Regulars - just like the UDR.[52] I shall examine some examples and draw comparisons to the UDR – another LDF.

The Malay Regiment was founded in 1933 to help defend the British protectorate of Malaya from internal and external threats. Its training was reasonably comparable to its Regular British light infantry counterparts and consisted of five months of intense drill.[53] This, as shall be shown, was considerably longer than UDR basic training. Furthermore, unlike the UDR, as WW2 broke out the Malay Regiment was given the same specialist training and weaponry as the Regulars.[54] Admittedly this could be due to the Malay Regiment's conventional warfighting role (something the UDR was never expected to do – its task was to help defeat the IRA and documents suggest that it was unlikely to survive without significant alteration past this), but its five-month basic training during a comparatively peaceful 1933 far outpaced the provision for the UDR during its constant operations.[55]

---

[48] Scheipers, *Irregular Auxiliaries after 1945*, pg. 14

[49] Ibid. pg. 15

[50] Daniel Branch, *Footprints in the Sand: British Colonial Counterinsurgency and the War in Iraq* (Politics & Society 38:1, 2010), pg. 24

[51] David Killingray, *The Maintenance of Law and Order in British Colonial Africa* (African Affairs Vol. 85:340, 1986), pg. 429

[52] Dol Ramli, *History of the Malay Regiment* (Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society Vol. 38:1, 1965), pg. 206-208; Killingray, *The Maintenance of Law and Order in British Colonial Africa*, pg. 430

The British colony of Kenya's own Kikuyu Home Guard (KHG) were raised in 1953 to suppress a Kikuyu tribal revolt. These lacked the training of the Malay Regiment – given one senior official described them as '*an undisciplined rabble'*.[56] This is interesting given that this was therefore a British unit, not an allied regiment like the Malay Regiment – and is more in line with the early UDR than the Malay Regiment. Despite their poor training, the KHG were responsible for half of Mau Mau casualties and, despite of and even due to their notoriously violent and oppressive tactics,[57] were a significant factor in the insurgency's defeat.[58]

The Aden Protectorate Levies (APL) were the LDF for the Aden protectorate during 1928-1967 – with a similar "Regular" officer component[59] like that of the early UDR. The regiment worked alongside the RAF Regiment, who took over control and training for the ADL post-1947 following a series of riots in which the levies committed extrajudicial killings.[60] The APL were also withdrawn in 1955 for 3-months rehabilitation and retraining.[61] This is unlike the UDR who were never granted the same close Regular association nor the luxury of comprehensive retraining. Instead, as this chapter shows, this was a slow, grinding process that by its completion was far too late to alter the regiment's public image.

---

[53] Ibid. pg. 208-209

[54] Ibid. pg. 215-216

[55] NAUK: CJ 4/4800 – '*Security Policy Metting: The Ulster Defence Regiment'* [Memo from I. Burns, NIO], January 1981; *'A Policy Appraisal of the Ulster Defence Regiment'* [SP(B) 20/114/03]; NAUK: CJ 4/2165 – '*Security Forces' Capability: Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)'* [SP(B)1/395/04]

[56] David Anderson, *Making the Loyalist Bargain: Surrender, Amnesty and Impunity in Kenya's Decolonization, 1952–63* (The International History Review Vol. 39:1, 2017), pg. 53

[57] Huw Bennett, *The Mau Mau Emergency as Part of the British Army's Post-War Counter-Insurgency Experience* (Defence & Security Analysis Vol. 23:2, 2007), pg. 155, 157-158; Branch, *Footprints in the Sand*, pg. 24-25; Anderson, *Making the Loyalist Bargain: Surrender, Amnesty and Impunity in Kenya's Decolonization, 1952–63*, pg. 53

[58] Branch, *Footprints in the Sand*, pg. 25

[59] Huw Bennett & Edward Burke, *The Aden Protectorate Levies, Counter-insurgency and the Loyalist Bargain in South Arabia, 1951-1957* (in Curless, G. & Thomas, M. (Eds.) Oxford University Press Handbook on Insurgencies, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), pg. 5-6

[60] Ibid. pg. 6

The UDR was thus more closely trained to KHG standards than those of the Malay Regiment. Nor was it afforded the luxury of a period of genuine retraining. I link this with Bennett & Burke's note that collaborations with native military forces hinge on the delicate balance between power and interests, and should one sway in the favour of either side then a redress or even military withdrawal is likely.[62] I forward that we may view this an indication that the UDR was not seen as worth the investment, and that in the wake of the *Subversion in the UDR Report* that the British feared such investments may be wasted or used against them. [63] It is also possible that LDFs can be seen as "expendable" – particularly as Edgar highlighted, they were almost certainly seen as a temporary emergency measure.[64] Furthermore as I shall detail in Chapter 4, the primary focus of such forces may be to keep local parties occupied through legitimate and disciplined forms of security participation.

Parallel Forces

One can also consider police as parallel forces, even LDFs given their role in COIN operations. I accept that they work in concert with LDFs and thus must be examined to see how their training compares. Pre-WW2 British African police officers received 6-months training in Lagos followed by 3 years' probation - far outpacing even the most extensive UDR training.[65] It also appears that "abuses" were rarely committed by these officers, though in the context of "sanctioned" versus "unsanctioned" violence.[66] This indicates significant discipline, likely instilled by training, given their restrained use of violence outside of sanctioned operations. Jamaican police meanwhile were utilised as a *gendarmerie*, a militarised police force, and their training prioritised weapons, drills, and barrack life.[67] As I shall demonstrate in the context of the UDR, no COIN force should rely on such skills.

---

[61] Ibid. pg. 12

[62] Bennett & Burke, *The Aden Protectorate Levies, Counter-insurgency and the Loyalist Bargain in South Arabia, 1951-1957*, pg. 1

[63] *Subversion in the UDR* Report (1973)

[64] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[65] Martin Thomas, *Violence and Colonial Order: Police, Workers and Protest in the European Colonial Empires, 1918–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pg. 56

[66] Ibid. pg. 54-57, 283-285

From the interwar period the British utilised their local police as an extension of an LDF, particularly when one considers their coercive tactics. British colonial forces (both police and military) were told to focus on lethality and the use of exemplary violence such as killing ringleaders of illegal gatherings.[68] Therefore, whilst the UDR were not utilised so coercively, their focus on lethality mirrors colonial traditions.

In the post-war years we see examples of failures to adequately train police in the early phases of a crisis. Malayan police were initially plagued by corruption, insufficient training, and limited resources.[69] Eventually more time and resources were allocated to the local police – resulting in the purging of 10,000 corrupt and a compulsory four-month retraining course for those remaining.[70] Hack noted that these adequately trained local forces (and the ensuing increased performance) ended the stalemate and led to the insurgency's defeat – again demonstrating the importance of training in order to be able to confront armed groups.[71] LDF's cannot be rushed into service.

When one shifts to Northern Ireland, the contemporary RUC (whom the UDR operated in support of) also received more extensive training. In 1986, RUC recruits received 14 weeks of basic training, which Pockrass noted could be reduced by a week once one removed kit and uniform distribution, paperwork, and drill.[72] Pockrass criticised this basic training for not focusing on more relevant and prescient policing matters. Training was then enhanced through seven additional weeks of specialist training, though again Pockrass highlighted this was insufficient in the circumstances.[73]

---

[67] Ibid. pg. 212

[68] Thomas, *Violence and Colonial Order*, pg. 212

[69] MacWatters, *Home Guard, Police, and the Social Contract*, pg. 10

[70] Karl Hack, *The Malayan Emergency as counter-insurgency paradigm* (Journal of Strategic Studies Vol. 32:3, 2009), pg. 9

[71] Ibid.

[72] Robert Pockrass, *The Police Response to Terrorism: The Royal Ulster Constabulary* (Police Journal Vol. 59:2, 1986), pg. 155

[73] Ibid. 5

Only one week was spent on the use of firearms. By 1998 recruits received a total of 25 weeks training focused on drill and other less practical elements of policing.[74] The British assessment was that this training was outdated and prioritised less important matters. Evidence also showed that despite 8% of their training consisting of "community awareness", this seemed to have little impact on recruit prejudices as it failed to directly challenge them.[75] The UDR did not receive community training outside of community relations training on NCO and officer courses.[76] Battalions were however heavily encouraged to undertake community relations projects with both communities – resulting in 7/10 UDR in 1990 winning the prestigious Wilkinson Sword of Peace for its community work.[77]

Comparing RUC training to the UDR – these far outpace even the longest UDR basic training periods (10 weeks). This is somewhat concerning given that both RUC and UDR could expect to use their training in the field almost immediately. It is worth noting that policing can range from petty theft and assault to complex murder and organised crime, and thus requires more extensive training. However, given COIN operations are conducted in civilian areas, the need to train to and operate within civilian limits is paramount. Soldiers are trained to respond to uncertainty with violence, when COIN circumstances require a totally different, more restrained approach.[78] Initial UDR training, as shall be evidenced, was grossly inadequate. The UDR's greater focus on firearms was appropriate, but the initial absolute focus on this reflect British colonial practices, and undermined UDR capabilities. LDF's operating with COIN operations should be trained as gendarmerie – militarised police, not as irregular soldiers.

Having compared the UDR against their civilian counterparts, it is worth noting their military peers. Crabbe recalled several discussions with Regular officers both during and after the conflict on training. Regular soldiers of the 1970s received an 18-week basic training period which consisted of fitness, weapons handling (ranging from rifles to small arms) and "basic soldiering" such as drill.[79] This was then followed by "Specialist to Arm" training which was normally another few months to specialise soldiers for their regiment such as an Infanteer for the Royal Welch Fusiliers or a Gunner for the Royal Tank Regiment.[80] Thus, Regulars were significantly better trained than their UDR counterparts – including the full-time Permanent Cadre.

---

[74] British Government, *Northern Ireland Affairs - Third Report* (London: HMSO,1998), Points 77-81
[75] Northern Ireland Affairs - Third Report, Points 81-83
[76] David Crabbe, interview with author 10th July 2024
[77] Northern Ireland Affairs - Third Report, Points 81-83
[78] Dandeker & Gow, *Military culture and strategic peacekeeping*, pg. 58-59

The UDR could not have achieved parity with its Regular peers. Herron noted that instead of traditional British Army training where the UDR drew upon the experience and skillset of Regular Army trainers, the UDR was trained separately – forcing them to draw upon their own knowledge and experiences to compensate for the limited training regime and provisions.[81] The creation of distance between the regiment and other units could have propagated deviancy. This should have been a particular matter of concern given as already highlighted within Chapter 1, there were a significant number of ex-Specials within the UDR – undermining their design as a cross-community regiment and tainting them by association. Training should have been viewed as an opportunity to professionalise this element whilst fostering a strong, well-trained security force branch. UDR training should have been longer than the initial 2 weeks and focused on more than just weapons handling – particularly on elements such as the Rules of Engagement and legal requirements given the policing elements of their role. Ideally these later stages should have been conducted alongside Regulars conducting pre-deployment training to "de-Specialise" the individual and to dilute risks of deviancy.

The initial failure to adequately resource, train and professionalise the UDR may have proven costly. That one Special recalled his expectation that on ranges the soldiers would receive scores needed to pass, and that not only was this absent but alongside radio training was all that he received before promotion to Sergeant – indicates that Specials likely received more thorough training than the initial UDR.[82] Given that the Specials were replaced for their unruly, sectarian and inadequate conduct, this is a disturbing indication. Furthermore, the importance of UDR training was recognised by the Irish government and became a cornerstone of their Anglo-Irish Agreement programme.[83] To them, a better trained UDR, and one who avoided deploying to strong Nationalist areas, was an acceptable compromise for as long as the conflict continued – and pressure to remove the UDR ramped up again in public from 1989.[84] Therefore, UDR training had an additional incentive that was not initially realised.

---

[79] David Crabbe, interview with author 20th April 2023

[80] Ibid.

[81] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 73

[82] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 37

I have divided up this analysis into four sections: 1970-1972, 1973-1978, 1979-1985, and 1986-1992. These I believe represent the foundation, evolution, revolution, and consolidation phases of UDR training. Each sees a radical change for the UDR that ultimately impacts their effectiveness as a regiment and as an LDF. 1970-1972 sees the British state set the UDR up with training and measures which indicate that they did not anticipate maintaining the regiment – likely because they did not anticipate the conflict lasting long. Therefore, expediency and putting boots on the ground seems to have been prioritised. The period 1973-1978 meanwhile reflects the beginning of training overhauls that significantly improve the UDR, including access to specialised training in the mainland. The period of 1979-1985 sees the UDR be given access to specialised training areas in Northern Ireland for the first time, where they will also assist with Regular pre-deployment training, and the period 1986-1992 reflects the period in which all of these elements are established and the UDR moves towards its final days. Through this the chapter will argue that UDR training was a story of constant improvement from a state of being grossly inadequate to training an adept and experienced counter-insurgent force.

---

[83] NAUK: CJ 4/5807 – *The RUC and the UDR* [Telegram from British Ambassador to Ireland, Alan Goodison, to Immediate FCO], 29th March 1985; *Anglo-Irish Talks: Session at Barretstown Castle*, 21/22 July 1985; PRONI CENT/3/147A – *"Annex A" to Negotiations with the Irish on the Anglo-Irish Agreement concerning the UDR* [Memo to PS/Secretary of State (L&B) from B. Blackwell, SIL Division], 14th March 1990

[84] The Belfast Newsletter, *Talks stuck at UDR block*, 19th October 1989; Irish Examiner, *Dublin watches UDR man*, 24th July 1991

1970-1972

As this thesis has already established, the UDR emerged from the Hunt Report's recommendations for a replacement for the sectarian "B Specials". The UDR became active a mere 6-months later, forcing several decisions upon the UDR. As has been established in Chapter 1, the decision to include a significant number of ex-Specials, particularly at battalion and company command level, reflected the necessity to establish a force capable of taking over security. The reality that new regiments requires recruits who require training forced a level of expediency upon the UDR. Edgar believed that this rapid activation and expediency was the cause of poor training and vetting in the UDR's early years – something Dr Rory Finegan, an ex-Irish Defence Force officer, also believed was possible.[85] The UDR committed its first Public Relations (PR) error – the heavy presence of Specials who carried a sectarian reputation. This error has been briefly discussed in Chapter 1, but I wish to draw attention here that this error was forced due to the quick turnaround between the Hunt Report and UDR activation leaving insufficient time for satisfactory training for mass enlistment. However, the fact there was no comprehensive "retraining" programme for the ex-Specials to "de-specialise" them and prepare them for their new role was likely a mistake given the revised role, ethos, and mission. This was not prioritised as:

> ...the purpose of such a recommendation is simply to bring the B Specials under Westminster control and to provide a means of instilling proper training and discipline: that is, it is made not on its military merits, but in order to pull Home Office and Stormont chestnuts out of the fire.[86]

Therefore, "de-Specialising" individuals or preparing the regiment to perform was not as important as simply getting it activated.

This would not be the only initial training error. This period was best summarised by Potter who stated the early UDR were '...almost alarmingly under-trained'.[87] Instead of training alongside other soldiers, the UDR were sent several Training Majors to run separate courses. These ex-Regulars' primary responsibility was to train and organise the regiment. These men were reportedly chosen for their ability to monitor and challenge the ex-Specials battalion commanders.[88] HQ UDR ordered that training should be prioritised for those with previous military experience, then the 25% of fresh recruits, and then finally the ex-Specials.[89] UDR Basic Training initially consisted of just 6 days training, with an additional 12 days and two 12-hour annual training periods, with basic primarily focused on weapons handling and firing on the ranges, with fieldcraft skills such as map reading and VCP training thrown in.[90] This rudimentary training stands in stark contrast to the UDR's mission. This mission was to support initially the Army, and later the RUC, in the fight against terrorism to restore law, order and "normality".[91] This limited and aggression-focused training was not conducive to these aims. A report justifies these limitations as operational requirements necessitating rapid deployment, but it is foolish to send "retrained" Specials alongside barely trained recruits into a highly contentious and volatile security situation.[92] This is made worse by the fact that this could be (and often was) completed over evenings and weekends and did not have to be a condensed course - thereby diluting the training.[93] For skills to be acquired practice and repetition are paramount, by spacing these repetitions out one weakens the ability to hone and learn the craft. Indeed, this risk of dilution was noted by the MoD who concluded that it 'would not enable proper training to be given'.[94]

---

[85] Richard Edgar, interview with author 15th July 2022; Dr Rory Finegan, interview with author 25th October 2022

[86] NAUK: DEFE 24/868 – *Future of the B Specials*

[87] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 373

Their adversaries in the IRA received rudimentary but dedicated training in firearms and explosives.[95] Training began with pistols and sub-machine guns at the recruit's home, before the organisation moved them to dedicated camps for proper training.[96] However, as McKearney noted:

---

[88] Ibid. pg. 44

[89] Ibid. pg. 35

[90] NAUK: DEFE 70/3324 - *Annex A to A/BB/9638*, 21st October 1970; Potter 2001, pg. 36-37, 44-46; Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 79; David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022

[91] NAUK: DEFE 70/241 - *The Army Board: The Future Organisation of the Ulster Defence Regiment* [MOD Memo: D/DMO/91/M04], 27th July 1978; NAUK: CJ 4/3467 – *A Policy Appraisal of the Ulster Defence Regiment: Note by NIO;* Richard Edgar, interview with author 15th July 2022; NAUK: CJ 4/1664 – *DRAFT: The Role of the Army*, Defence and External Affairs Subcommittee: Army Operations in Northern Ireland [Undated]; NAUK: CJ 4/9682 - *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, January 1990

[92] NAUK: DEFE 70/3324 - *Annex A to A/BB/9638*, 21st October 1970

[93] NAUK: DEFE 24/835 - *The Peacemakers – Men of the UDR*

[94] NAUK: CJ 4/283 - *Notes on Meeting between Minister of Home Affairs and MoD for Administration*

[95] McKearney, *The Provisional IRA*, pg. 76

> In order to prevent new and untested people acquiring too much potentially compromising information about its personnel at a very early stage, the IRA tried not to have people from different areas training together in camps in the Republic. In practice, this meant organising numerous sessions in many different locations.[97]

This came at the cost of standardised training which was only corrected later once camps were forced further into the Republic and were more prone to security breaches.[98] The training was limited – explosives training consisted of explaining circuits, and rarely were recruits shown real explosives at this stage.[99] Due to limited ammunition recruits were also lucky if they were able to five 5-10 rounds before being sent out on operations.[100] Future IRA leader Brendan Hughes noted that most of his training really came from informal chats with young British soldiers in pubs – many of whom were more than happy to explain how their SLRs worked and operated.[101] IRA man John Kelly received a similar but more detailed session on how to use a machine gun from a British intelligence officer – though did note that he suspected the officer was trying to assess how much the IRA knew about weaponry.[102] The element of surprise was, as historically been the case, the deadliest element in the insurgent arsenal. To combat this, the UDR merely needed to provide the basics plus some training on the law and how to operate within it – yet event this simple task was failed.

Robinson, one of the longest serving members of the UDR, recalled spending a total of 12 hours over a number of evenings on weapons handling – which constituted the majority of his training.[103] This reflected the part-time nature of the UDR, since many held full-time day jobs. However, a condensed training period was possible as reflected by later annual training camps. The training was inadequate given some were still unable to read their map – not a problem when operating in their local area, but problematic when deployed elsewhere.[104] This rushed training reflected that the UDR was likely a temporary emergency provision, and one expected to be downsized, disbanded, or significantly altered once the conflict ended.[105] The ex-Specials also needed to be occupied – the latent threat of a demobbed, disaffected USC was simply too great for the state to ignore.[106] Furthermore, to Brendan Hughes it was clear that the Army did not take the IRA as a credible threat at the time – recalling that once during training at a home in the lower Falls, a well-known British officer briefly opened the door and asked 'What weapons are you training on tonight lads?'.[107]

---

[96] Ibid. pg. 76-77
[97] Ibid. pg. 77
[98] McKearney, *The Provisional IRA*, pg. 77
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid. pg. 77-78
[101] in Peter Taylor, *Provos: the IRA and Sinn Fein* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998 revised edition), pg. 72
[102] Ibid.
[103] John Robinson, interview with author 4th November 2022

A focus on lethality is not suited to a support unit akin to a gendarmerie. Whilst training changed substantially throughout the UDR's history, this initial training was fundamentally lacking and potentially dangerous. Given the focus on the weapon, it is a wonder that the UDR were not involved in more lethal incidents. Often when units face a volatile and uncertain scenario, they revert to their training. In this period, this would have resulted in the UDR's lethal discharge of their weapon. However as noted this continues to be a problem – as King reported that the British Army was still too focused on aggression in 2013.[108] It appears therefore we still are not sufficiently preparing for COIN operations.

Consistently, it seems that initial training encouraged unsuitable and inappropriate responses that would have almost certainly undermined British security efforts in Northern Ireland. One ex-Special recalled before his promotion that the only training that the UDR had provided consisted of firing 10 rounds down range without a pass/fail score.[109] Meanwhile another recorded that during the 2 weeks that were provided for officers at Ballykinler (which covered more conventional platoon commander skills such as leadership, fieldcraft and tactics) how his blood ran cold at the idea of charging the enemy inside the “killing ground” of an ambush.[110] Such conventional infantry tactics utilising barely trained men was a recipe for uncoordinated disaster, as was the reliance upon the only thing that the men had been trained to do – kill.

---

[104] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage* pg. 36

[105] NAUK: CJ 4/3064 – *The UDR Today;* CJ 4/5524 – *The 1984 Security Review: The Future of the UDR* [1111/19 G3/GG5]; NAUK: CJ 4/5524 – *The Ulster Defence Regiment;* CJ 4/4800 – *Security Policy Meeting: The Ulster Defence Regiment,* January 1981; Richard Edgar, interview with author 15th July 2022; Dr Rory Finegan, interview with author 25th October 2022

[106] Republican 1, interview with author 2nd March 2022; Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds"?* pg. 467

[107] in Taylor, *Provos: the IRA and Sinn Fein*, pg. 71-72

[108] King, *The combat soldier*, pg. 319

[109] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 37

A focus on aggression is widespread within the pre-UDR context, and French noted several such examples across colonial conflicts ranging from rioting troops to senior staff officers calling for the lifting of restrictions on combat.[111] Furthermore, as French detailed these appear to have been tolerated or even outright sanctioned by the army. British colonial forces (both police and military) were consistently told to focus on lethal responses, and a reliance on the use of firearms can be similarly observed in their training.[112] Therefore, it comes as little surprise that the UDR were similarly conditioned. As previously noted, it is only by luck that UDR culture did not rely upon aggression – as this appears to have been the only significant barrier from such incidents.

All this was if men even showed up for training. During early phases there was “poor turnout” unless it was on weapons ranges – a matter influenced by many recruits and Specials believing that the rest of their training was useless given their knowledge of the region and terrain.[113] The extreme limitations of this ‘*very rudimentary training*’ were best encapsulated by UDR 1 who found it to be a repeat of his Army Cadet years.[114] Sending troops into dangerous and life-threatening scenarios with the same style and level of training that we give a child sounds particularly irresponsible. Officer training in this period fared little better, consisting of just two weeks of platoon leadership and tactics, fieldcraft, map reading, staff duties and first aid – the limitations of which appear to have been noticed relatively early, as after October 1972 all UDR officers attended the two weeks Territorial Army course at Mons and later Sandhurst.[115]

---

[110] Ibid. pg. 42

[111] David French, *Army, Empire, and Cold War: The British Army and Military Policy, 1945–1971* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pg. 120-125

[112] Thomas, *Violence and Colonial Order*, pg. 212-213

[113] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 36

[114] David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022; UDR 1, interview with author 22nd July 2022

[115] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 42-43

Perhaps most disturbingly, this near obsession with discharging the weapon not only limited the quality of the early UDR (through no direct fault of their own), but was also itself compromised. A 1972 memo reveals that HQNI was concerned that non-infantry Training Majors, who made up nearly half of that contingent, and training instructors lacked '...knowledge of basic weapon handling, fieldcraft and tactical skills.'[116] Thus, the already very limited training was being delivered by trainer's incapable of training even these few elements to a sufficient standard.

The early UDR were trained with an inappropriate and insufficient training schedule for the security situation; this same training was compromised by the poor skillset of some of its trainers, and of such dire results that it rose to the attention of Stormont minister and ex-Army officer John Brooke who in 1971 branded early UDR training as far too conventional, far too focused on company-level actions and left the UDR totally unprepared to take on the unconventional methods of the IRA.[117] This would not have come as a surprise to Whitehall, who had been warned by the military advisors to the Minister of Defence for Administration in 1969 that such training would fail to 'maintain a proper level of efficiency' for the UDR.[118] This almost certainly undermined UDR military efficiency. A letter to the Vice Chief of the General Staff from the Director of Infantry in February 1973 regarding his visit to Northern Ireland records the need to alter UDR training, and how in a meeting with the Commander of 3rd Brigade he detailed '...some instance when troops returned fire with the best of good intentions only to find later that they had been firing in quite the wrong direction.'[119]

UDR training in its earliest phase was a known and foreseen issue, ill-suited to the security situation and enemy it faced, and due to its limited nature unlikely to foster a culture of discipline and order that would have reformed any potential deviants. This would explain the "relaxed approach to discipline" that horrified later officers, despite

---

[116] NAUK: DEFE 70/3324 – *UDR – Non-Infantry Training Majors and PSIs*, [Memo from Maj. Blaker FOR Col. GS ASD 12, LM to A/20/Inf/4832 (ASD 12)], 8th November 1972

[117] NAUK: DEFE 70/3324 – *Ulster Defence Regiment – Training*, [Letter from Cumming-Bruce DS 7 to AT 2, Copied DDASD, MD 3 & HQNI], 4th March 1971

[118] NAUK: CJ 4/283, *Notes on phone call between Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Defence for Administration*, 3rd November 1969

[119] NAUK: DEFE 70/3324 – *Visit to Northern Ireland* [Letter from Major General C. Dunbar, Director of Infantry, to Vice Chief of the General Staff], 9th February 1973

Potter's defence that it 'did no harm'.[120] One officer recalled that whilst the UDR displayed good discipline under fire they otherwise had to be asked, not ordered, to complete a task.[121] Military discipline is one of the core principles of training and good conduct, and whilst it may have been relaxed but effective in some instances, as discussed in Chapter 2 it can also foster a culture of deviancy as it encourages individualism, dissent, and aggressive actions.

Certainly, it increased the likelihood of poor conduct and control when dealing with the public. UDR 1 recalled several incidents during this period where individuals within 2 UDR (S. Armagh) acted unprofessionally or discourteously, and also heard rumours of incidents of rough handling and treatment then and later when he moved to Belfast.[122] A handwritten but not dated note from the Irish Archives details the UDR's "Bad Barracks" in areas such as Enniskillen, Omagh and Portadown – all known for significant incidents of violence during the conflict.[123] Meanwhile, the following note lists areas of high UDR-caused tensions, which marry up with the "Bad Barracks".[124]

1. Kesh area
2. S. Tyrone area – no PCVs [illegible] or patrols (particularly at [nationalist] social events e.g. GAA matches)
3. Armagh (DOC)
4. Magherafelt -> Omagh area. Consult re: word of alleged harassment.

No date or heading

Recreation of NAI 2016/22/2025 – 'Areas where UDR presence creates maximum tension' [Handwritten note]

Clearly there is an association between increased threat and incidents of misconduct – which I advocate could be considered as "venting" given the significant overlaps between these lists. Such incidents of misconduct can be influenced by poor training insufficiently preparing some troops, whilst failing to install discipline in others. I would be surprised if enhanced training standards would not have altered or prevented some of these incidents. Indeed, as this chapter shall prove, the UDR was enhanced and improved through improved training, and this yielded a more professional force – even in the eyes of some of its critics.

---

[120] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 30

[121] Ibid. pg. 164

[122] UDR 1, interview with author 22nd July 2022

[123] NAI 2016/22/2025 – *List of "Bad Barracks"* [Handwritten note], No date

[124] NAI 2016/22/2025 – *Areas where UDR presence creates maximum tension,* No date

Whilst it was likely seen as a matter of expediency and low risk to poorly train the UDR, it fell below what was required. Better trained troops are better prepared troops – this poor standard and length of training likely diminished the UDR's effectiveness in the early stages of the conflict and provided fertile grounds for deviancy. Though the historical evidence is inconclusive, it could reasonably be suggested that it was expediency. Neumann noted how elements of the MoD in 1970 believed that peace was but a few months away.[125] Certainly, the UDR was severely under-resourced – they initially lacked radios and were forced to setup VCPs near public phones for communication. Battalions were setup in buildings of poor standard, forcing 3 UDR to bring in Army bin trucks to use as guardrooms.[126] The UDR appear to have been low priority, and as support units they were likely viewed as a militia supporting the real fighting force. Thus, for the sake of cost and expediency, the early UDR were critically undermined.

1973-1978

In August 1973, annual training requirements were raised to 15 days training, with the shift towards longer training sessions to encourage attendance and efficiency.[127] On 15-16th January 1973 the Officer Commanding of the Army School of Instructional Technology visited the UDR and highlighted varying standards of training between battalions amidst the broader issue of attendance.[128] Among the report's conclusions is that 'Instructors are few and of varying standards of proficiency; the average level is not particularly high'.[129] Connecting this to the previous memo months earlier highlighting the issues with non-Infantry training instructors indicates a significant issue with UDR training consistency and efficacy that undermined unit effectiveness.[130] When one reflects upon this and Chapter 1, there is a significant overlap between poor training, lax vetting, and the incidents of deviancy that spiked in the early years of the UDR such as the numerous armoury raids that occurred before 1974, the Miami Showband Killings (1975) and the Dublin-Monaghan Bombings (1974).

---

[125] Neumann, *Britain's Long War*, pg. 54

[126] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 27, 34, 37

[127] NAUK: DEFE 70/3324 – *Ulster Defence Regiment – Training* [Letter from HQNI to MOD], 2nd August 1973; *Training for the UDR* [Letter from Maj. Barnhill AT 2b, A/20/Gen/7420/AT 2], 8th August 1973; *UDR Training Obligation* [Letter from M. A. Barnes F2(AD)

[128] NAUK: DEFE 70/3324 – *Report on a visit to HQ UDR, Northern Ireland, by OC Army School of Instructional Technology (ASIT)*

[129] Ibid.

As discussed in Chapter 1 most of this was likely due to subversive elements infiltrating the UDR for their own agenda – though poor training and discipline standards would have exacerbated the issue by allowing subversive behaviour to be masked or pass unnoticed. Furthermore, as Bennett highlighted British policy towards Loyalism was characterised by fear and avoiding confrontations.[131] Downing Streets fears of escalation into a full civil war, and one that would impact the mainland, would have only furthered a permissive atmosphere.[132] For example, UDR 1 recalled how once on parade two members of another platoon showed up with pickaxe handles. Despite these being noticed and seized there was no follow-up or punishment.[133]A better trained, and more disciplined regiment could have converted some deviant or potentially deviant elements, whilst exposing others. Poor training and standards certainly did not harm the ability of deviants to operate whilst undermining unit capabilities and military effectiveness.

Ulsterisation created a UDR renaissance. Emerging from the unpublished *The Way Ahead* (1975) paper the conflict was now to be "localised" with security shifted towards local forces such as the UDR and RUC. This reflected broader British strategy to normalise the conflict and allow the British government to sustain their participation as political and military costs decreased.[134] The UDR were cheaper than the Regulars, and their deaths had lower political costs for Westminster. As Neumann noted many tie the UDR with Ulsterisation,[135] and drew comparisons between Ulsterisation and the Vietnamisation of the Nixon administration.[136] Both policies sought to reduce the political and military burden of the intervening power (the US and UK respectively) and "normalise" the conflict to make it more sustainable.[137] Ulsterisation also reflected the long-term desires and strategies of the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) which drove through the reforms.[138] Whilst this may have countered IRA propaganda efforts, I believe that this was a secondary effect and that the primary concern was to shift towards a "long war" strategy given the preluding discussions.[139]

---

[130] NAUK: DEFE 70/3324 – *UDR – Non-Infantry Training Majors and PSIs*, [Memo from Maj. Blaker FOR Col. GS ASD 12, LM to A/20/Inf/4832 (ASD 12)], 8th November 1972

[131] Bennett, *Uncivil War,* pg. 205

[132] Leahy, *The intelligence war against the IRA*, pg. 78; Peter Neumann, *Britain's Long War: British Strategy in the Northern Ireland Conflict 1969-98* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pg. 51, 144

[133] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021

[134] Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq,* pg. 359-360; Dixon, "*Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 466

Neumann however advocated that Ulsterisation should be seen as a British core policy from 1969 – not just the mid-1970s. The biggest expansion of Ulster security forces took place from 1969-1973, including the UDR's historical peak of 8,476 soldiers in 1972, which would indicate localisation occurred years earlier.[140] This is plausible, and perhaps such developments should not be seen as revolutionary, but simply as the next phase of this policy. However, I reject Neumann's presentation that Ulsterisation was a gradually evolving policy – UDR training innovations radically shifted post-1975, indicating a shift in policy.[141] Furthermore, Neumann relies upon numerical strength as the basis for Ulsterisation,[142] but as Aveyard highlights, his statistics are heavily flawed – for example Neumann's figure of 83 regular RUC officers for the entirety of Northern Ireland pales in comparison to the real figure of 4,902.[143] Aveyard also notes Neumann's assumption that the UDR peaked in 1972 is true in absolute numbers and for the part-time contingent – but the more professional full-timer contingent quadrupled in size between 1972 and 1979.[144] This rapid expansion of the "professional" element, alongside an expansion of duties and the eventual command of Tactical Areas of Responsibility (TAORs), certainly sounds like "Ulsterisation".

---

[135] Neumann, *Britain's Long War*, pg. 55

[136] Neumann, *Britain's Long War*, pg. 83

[137] Peter Neumann, *The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland* (Studies in Conflict and Terrorism Vol. 26:5), pg. 369-370

[138] Stuart Aveyard, *No Solution: The Labour Government and the Northern Ireland Conflict 1974–79*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pg. 135-136, 165

[139] See Aveyard, *No Solution*, pg. 135-138

[140] Neumann, *The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 367-868

[141] Neumann, *The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland*

[142] Neumann, *Britain's Long War*, pg. 83

[143] Aveyard, *No Solution*, pg. 148

[144] Ibid.; Neumann, *Britain's Long War*, pg. 83

However, I concur with Neumann's conclusion that Ulsterisation was a myth within "hard" Republican areas like west Belfast or south Armagh where Regulars maintained operational control.[145] The UDR were never going to be the "frontline" element of the conflict.[146] The regiment was a key support element providing the vital but simple basics of COIN operations that was further empowered and professionalised over time to ensure that this role was performed sufficiently whilst the Regulars targeted the drivers of the IRA campaign in the "hard areas". However, as shall be explored within Chapter 4 the real value of the UDR lay in its ability to harness militant Protestant energies.

The 1975 Report '*UDR Training outside Northern Ireland*' reflects this important development.[147] The UDR's security role was increased as the Regular's role was to be drawn down – a core tenet of Ulsterisation. The report highlighted a sudden need to adequately resource the UDR: 'We have been aware for some time that the training facilities available to the UDR in Northern Ireland are considered to be inadequate ... Thus, the UDR are severely handicapped by the lack of facilities for training for operations above section level.'[148] A summary discussion of the stated report (presumably by a senior member of the MoD) concluded that present facilities were adequate for training basic military skills and operations at the section level (7 to 11 soldiers) but would not suffice for their new expanded role which would include mobile rural and southern border patrols.[149] This required operations at the "strong platoon" (50 soldiers) to company level (80-150 soldiers), as these regions were now witnessing increased IRA violence necessitating '...that the maximum force level be available to counter the threat'.[150] It also appears that the UDR were already starting to mount such operations: 'On average about five out of the eleven battalions mount an operation of this size each weekend.'[151]

---

[145] Neumann, *The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 370

[146] Aveyard, *No Solution*, pg. 163-165

[147] NAUK: DEFE 70/241 – *UDR Training outside Northern Ireland* Report, [A Pawson to PS/US OF S(Army)] 14th June 1975

[148] Ibid.

[149] NAUK: DEFE 70/241 - *UDR Training outside Northern Ireland* [MoD]

[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid.

April 1976 saw the UDR begin training camps in England with superior facilities, training (such as on anti-ambush tactics and combat indicators), and instructors that the UDR would not have regular access to until the establishment of the UDR Training Depot and of the Northern Ireland Training and Advisory Teams (NITAT) in 1979.[152] The '*UDR Training outside Northern Ireland*' discussion noted the UDR training facilities at Ballykinler and Magilligan which the UDR had been reliant upon until this time as being '…no more than firing ranges'.[153] It is this author's belief that we may draw the establishment of the UDR Training Depot to this report. Such innovations must go through the bureaucracy before construction even begins, and the 1975 report's conclusions are close in time to the facility's establishment in 1979.

UDR equipment was brought in line with Regulars, training periods were extended and finally access to Regular training facilities such as the Royal Military School of Engineering, or the School of Service Intelligence for the new UDR intelligence teams.[154] This was significant – the IRA feared the UDR's intelligence capabilities the most, and this motivated their campaign of off-duty killings.[155] Reports also note that such local intelligence was also more than satisfactory.[156] This specialised training professionalised and enhanced their latent intelligence and counter-terrorism capabilities, and arguably allowed them to bring their unique capabilities to bear for the first time. Finally, it also reflected the first time that the UDR was trained alongside other soldiers.

The UDR was becoming a more professionalised force, with the widespread extension of "trades" (specialisms such as Machine Gunner, Combat Medic, or Weapons Specialist) emerging during this same period.[157] Crabbe noted that certainly by the end of the 1970s the UDR "apprenticed" its recruits – having seasoned members take them under their wing, and denying recruits "serious" duties until they were ready.[158] Interestingly, an operational pause for new recruits mirrors that of the previously discussed APL post-1955.[159] UDR basic training also evolved in this period. Crabbe described his basic training as one week at Ballykinler with a focus on *'the absolute basic … make sure they basically knew how to handle their weapon safely, everything else was on the job – "get out there and get it done"'*. This consisted of primarily weapons training, basic infantry skills (such as kit maintenance, combat indicators, camouflage, or navigation), basic legal training such as Yellow Card rules, and some drill mixed in. [160] Crabbe described this an intense basic training week, but one clearly designed to cram as much as possible into a short timeframe – and one he deemed as 'just about sufficient', considering the value he placed on practical experience.[161] Robinson, who was amongst the longest serving UDR soldiers, made a similar comment regarding UDR training at this time.[162] Robinson's insights should be noted as he is well-versed in training needs as he was repeatedly placed in charge of such matters – including in 1996 when he was posted to HQ Royal Irish Regiment to command the Regimental Training Company which conducted training for the entire regiment.

---

[152] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 89; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 172

[153] NAUK: DEFE 70/241 - *UDR Training outside Northern Ireland* [MoD]

[154] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 199

[155] Chesse, *Hunting the Watchmen*

[156] NAUK: WO 305/5755 – *2 [Grenadier Guards] Post Tour Report – Part 1*, 14th July 1980; NAUK: WO 305/5810 – *1 [Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders] Post Tour Report*, 3rd March 1982

[157] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

Robinson and Crabbe's wealth of experience ranging from the times of UDR training inadequacy to its peak and then beyond allows us to gain a true expert insight from a former seasoned officer of the regiment. Whilst UDR basic training now extended to include legal training and further basic infantry skills, it remained focused on lethality rather than practicality when considering the UDR's role. This author again would stress the limitations this would place on the effectiveness of the UDR at this time – the regiment needed to shift towards legality and public relations training given the involvement of some members in collusion, and its role as a support unit in an internal security crisis.

This period of training had clearly improved upon previous standards but remained below Regular standards even for the full-time UDR contingent, the

---

[158] David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022

[159] Bennett & Burke, *The Aden Protectorate Levies, Counter-insurgency and the Loyalist Bargain in South Arabia*, pg. 13

[160] David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022

[161] Ibid.

[162] John Robinson, interview with author 27th February 2022

"Permanent Cadre" (PC). This element began as "Conrates" guarding armouries, but in its now expanded role and size it was rapidly taking on new duties post-Ulsterisation.[163] PC expansions allowed for UDR battalions to have additional specialist officers such as more Operations Officers and full-time Intelligence Officers to conduct specialised and required duties, and from 1977 the PC continued to expand whilst part-time UDR numbers went into permanent decline.[164] A briefing notes reports that the UDR in June 1975 had 6,202 Part-timers (80.85%) to just 1,469 (19.15%) PC – by June 1982, there were 4,350 Part-Timers (61.35%) to 2,741 PC (38.65%) soldiers.[165] However, a statistics report from June 1982 reports the real strength was 3,620 Part-timers (58.23%) to 2,484 PC (39.96%).[166]

Thus post-1977 we should see the UDR becoming an increasingly professionalised force rather than largely consisting of "*half-civilianised*" part-timers.[167] As Herron noted, the rise of cross-border IRA units meant that as they settled in for a long war, the British shifted to the UDR and their local knowledge to police and secure regions outside of "contested areas" such as west Belfast, south Armagh and the urban sprawl of Derry.[168] The UDR provided the basics of COIN including the basic daily security needs for the regions – allowing the Regular to take the fight to the IRA in the "contested areas". Whilst it would take years to reverse the effects of years of inadequate UDR training and under-resourcing, I argue that we should view *The Way Ahead* and its consequences as the pivotal moment in UDR training. However, it paled in comparison to US Reservists training, and whilst this may have been impractical for part-timers the PC contingent should have received Regular-style training minus irrelevant components such as anti-armour training to ensure that they could maintain security.

---

[163] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 85-86; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 39, 165-166, 180

[164] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 199/

[165] NAUK: DEFE 24/2596 – *PUS Brief of UDR*, [R Brown, A/CIVAD], 8th January 1983

[166] NAUK: DEFE 24/2596 – *Northern Ireland Strength Return As At 30 June 1982: Ulster Defence Regiment Stats Control NO AR 115*, [Central Statistical Section: HQNI, Ref: 7478/Stats], 8th July 1982

[167] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; Neumann, *Britain's Long War*, pg. 83; Neumann, *The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 370-371

[168] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 83, 87-88

1979-1985

1979 saw these developments begin to pay off. The construction of the new UDR Training Camp (eventually UDR Depot) at Ballykinler offered enhanced training facilities and allowed the UDR to practice within realistic environments.[169] PC recruits could now experience a four-week basic training course that included weapons, physical, patrol, VCP, map, signals, first aid and legal responsibility training – whilst NCOs and platoon commanders saw relevant courses become available to them as well.[170] The significance of this training facility cannot be overstated. As already noted, inadequate facilities hampered prior UDR training and efficacy – this new facility erased the issue whilst expanding training capacity. By the mid-to-late 1980s its Close Quarter Battle Arrangement Urban (CQBAU) facility, an environment simulating local towns and cities, was one of the primary NI training facilities.[171] UDR training camp locations were also expanded to include similarly advanced facilities, including on the mainland such as Hythe in Kent in England where troops could practice within a simulated urban environment – including shooting at gunmen on a busy public street.[172] Officers were now sent to Sandhurst for a week, where they could now receive far superior training on par with their Regular counterparts.[173] The following Annual Pay Services Review increased the UDR bounty from a mere £25/£35 (lagging behind even TA rates) to £150 for the first year, £250 for the second, and £450 for subsequent years - incentivising training for the first time.[174] Obstacles and issues for UDR training were being removed, and the UDR was becoming professionalised.

I agree with Neumann that such innovations reflected the British pragmatically settling in for a long war.[175] UDR professionalisation was a cornerstone of this – not least as the army was becoming further reliant on locals to counter rural and cross-border IRA who otherwise could have used the terrain to their advantage.[176] The significance of the UDR was even acknowledged within the official Operation Banner report, which noted the 'critical role' that the UDR played in freeing up Regulars, reassuring the Protestant population, and providing: '…a level of continuity and local knowledge not achievable even by resident battalions. This understanding of the local situation was not always appreciated or drawn on by Roulement units.'[177]

---

[169] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 200
[170] Ibid.
[171] David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022
[172] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 225
[173] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 106
[174] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 225
[175] Neumann, *The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 369-370
[176] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 83, 87-88

The IRA had centred operations on Belfast but retained a significant and dangerous rural presence that drove the campaign following the 1970s.[178] This rural contingent Leahy detailed was a significant logistical and lethal component of the IRA's campaign – and one that caused havoc for the army.[179] The UDR could mostly police rural areas outside of south Armagh, and "hold the line" whilst the Regulars focused on IRA hotbeds like south Armagh or west Belfast, and increasingly did so overtime. Summarily, enhancing and improving UDR training was fundamental to this objective.

As Crabbe noted, standards were raised across the UDR – including the enforcement of Army uniform standards and the end to the acceptance of long hair in the regiment.[180] In Crabbe's mind, the UDR was finally acknowledged as no longer being a "temporary" solution, and thus was finally adequately resourced.[181] Under the new Commander UDR, Brigadier Pat Hargrave (1980-1982) PC basic training rose from four to six weeks (with later rises to eight and eventually 10 weeks) whilst part-timers training was now encouraged to be condensed to a single 8-day training period with a final pass or fail efficiency test.[182] Fitness standards were raised, whilst further infantry skills and fieldcraft were brought in to create a more effective and professionalised UDR.[183] In this author's opinion, this is the minimum training that the UDR should have received. The PC were now nearing Regular training periods and standards – a logical step given the need for military discipline, conduct and efficacy. Finally, part-timers who were unable to dedicate this amount of time due to their civilian roles, were receiving a condensed (and thus enhanced) training regime whose pass/fail final test ensured that those who were incapable of exhibiting basic military skills were screened out. Contrasting this with the initial period of rushed training led by inadequate trainers – and one can imagine the stark differences.[184] These increased standards would have revolutionised UDR efficiency and capabilities. This "professionalisation" Neumann connected to the enduring threat and nature of the conflict,[185] as "Professionalisation" and Ulsterisation was in reality the British settling in for a long conflict and finding politically and economically cost-effective methods of countering rural IRA units – such as the UDR.

---

[177] *Operation Banner* Report, pg. 3-5, 3-6

[178] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 142, 186-188

[179] Ibid. pg. 186-188

[180] David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022

[181] Ibid.

[182] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 225

[183] Ibid. pg. 224-225; Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 90, 92-93; David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022

In 1982, the various training organisations based in Ballykinler were merged into the Northern Ireland Training Establishment (NITE).[186] This became the NI training hub for all regiments operating Northern Ireland. The importance of this development cannot be overstressed, the UDR were now truly receiving training standards and facilities equivalent to their Regular counterparts. They had been unable to access NITAT – they would come to define NITE. Robinson recalled that a significant number of NITE trainers were UDR PC.[187] NITE was a pioneer in urban warfare training, with the CQBAU facility simulating Northern Ireland's urban centres – including elements of Belfast's skyline like the Divis Street Tower.[188] The development marked the first time that the facilities the UDR regularly accessed could go beyond Stage 3 training – a key development given that Regular training considered Stages 1 to 5 as part of basic.[189] This advanced facility was capable of simulating explosive devices or vehicles, "splat" distractions (spraying on to troops), and providing CCTV to allow seasoned soldiers, including the UDR, to review and provide commentary and feedback.[190] This enhanced UDR capabilities, but also facilitated these local experts who were well versed in IRA tactics to disseminate their experiences to incoming troops. The UDR became significant features of NITE's training regime, including often acting as Opposing Forces (OPFOR) for incoming regiments to prepare them for NI.[191] By acting as insurgents, the UDR used their knowledge and experience to impart important lessons and training for Regular forces. The UDR also provided individuals for the NIRTT (the Northern Ireland Reinforcement Training Team), which the Scots Guards noted as providing 'a good service'.[192]

---

[184] NAUK: DEFE 70/3324 – *UDR – Non-Infantry Training Majors and PSIs,* [Memo from Maj. Blaker FOR Col. GS ASD 12, LM to A/20/Inf/4832 (ASD 12)], 8th November 1972

[185] Neumann, *Britain's Long War*, pg. 109

[186] Robert Todd, *Ulster Defence Regiment 1970-1991: A Short History* (1991), pg. 7

[187] John Robinson, interview with author 4th November 2022

[188] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 95

[189] David Crabbe, interview with author 7th June 2024; IWM – Infantry Training: Volume 3, Ranges and Courses: Pamphlet No. 35, *Training the Battle Shot (Provisional): Annual Range Courses and Battle Shooting (Stages 1 to 5)*, 1966, pg. 1

[190] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 96-97; David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022

The UDR enhanced NI training through providing local insights that incoming units would otherwise not gain and simulating likely and expected scenarios. Crabbe recalled teaching troops on unplugging a washing machine if pursuing an insurgent through a house – as on at least one occasion, an insurgent had attempted to wash away forensic evidence and the UDR's quick actions resulted in a successful arrest and prosecution.[193] The value of this was recognised at the time as the UDR were even invited to run similar lessons and simulations in urban facilities in the mainland's Cinque Ports.[194] The UDR's effectiveness had been significantly raised by Ballykinler's facilities, and they were now a significant factor in pre-deployment training. The vital role the UDR and NITE played is reflected in its designation as the training hub for NI from 1990 – the same year it rebranded to Depot UDR to reflect the UDR's now majority use of and contribution to training, and their own increased professionalism.[195]

Training continued to develop throughout the period. Lt. General Sir Peter Graham's contributions as CO UDR (1982-1984) further enhanced training standards by removing repetitions of old drills that encouraged complacency and raising the annual training bounty to £500 at 3+ years.[196] More rigorous courses were added including pass or fail firearms and basic fitness tests. Internal security tests were also added, and female UDR soldiers were given first aid training for the first time. Annual training was raised to 22 days for all soldiers, whilst four compulsory RUC-led lectures were added to enhance security and cooperation, and annual camps were now to include a realistic training scenario.[197] This stands in stark contrast to the earlier UDR. The UDR in a few short years had been significantly improved through adequate resourcing, sufficient training facilities, and an improved approach to training.

---

[191] David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022

[192] NAUK: WO 305/5859 – *1 [Scots Guards] End of Tour Report*, 12th January 1987

[193] David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022

[194] Ibid.

[195] Potter 2001, pg. 345; NAUK: CJ 4/8872 – *Army Organisation and Manpower Committee: The Reorganisation of the Northern Ireland Training Establishment (NITE),* 1990; *The Reorganisation of the Northern Ireland Training Establishment (NITE)* [Letter from MOD to Head of Security, Policy and Operation Division NIO], 11th February 1990

[196] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 250

Value assessments of UDR security contributions have previously excluded the training role that the UDR began to play, and in this author's mind thus exclude an immeasurable enhancement of security force capabilities and preparations. Thus, whilst Neumann advocates that "Ulsterisation" was general British policy and did not lead to any significant revolution during the conflict – I challenge this notion based on the previously discussed elements. I also argue that it is also a factor of operational effectiveness (which he deems as a separate "professionalisation") and resourcing – not just numerical strength.[198] Neumann is correct that the RUC benefitted far more from this process, but the UDR underwent drastic development as well. The UDR's training and role in NI training evolved considerably, and whilst this may not be easily quantifiable, Regular troop effectiveness was likely enhanced by their guidance as well. Finally, the UDR's performance was noted for its significant improvement even by some of its critics, and it has hard to frame these developments in any way other than at least somewhat revolutionary.[199]

Post-tour reports from Regular regiments also discuss handing over greater control to the UDR without complaint – further evidencing this significant development of the UDR.[200] 2nd Battalion the Grenadier Guards even advocated in 1980 that Fermanagh could '…effectively run by 4 UDR, reinforced as necessary by regular troops, who should be placed under command of 4 UDR'.[201] This was an improvement upon their last UDR-related recommendation two years earlier in Derry – where they advocated that they man Permanent VCPs given their limited value in comparison to their manpower costs.[202] Clearly the UDR had come a long way to be recommended to not only run a TAOR, but also any Regulars within it. Furthermore, the Grenadiers recorded: ‘A joint UDR/Regular Army Intelligence Cell is established in the area, which provides good area information. One of its values is that it heavily involves the UDR in tasking and operational planning.’[203] Clearly, the Grenadiers valued the knowledge and input of the UDR. Where units were placed under control of the UDR there were no complaints – even from “Player” regiments such as the Parachute Regiment.[204] Even when the 1st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders complained that had not been assigned their own TAOR in Ballykelly they made no reference to the UDR’s TAORs.[205]

---

[197] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 250
[198] Neumann, *The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland*
[199] Dr Laurence McKeown, interview with author 5th July 2021
[200] NAUK: WO 305/6024 – *1 [Royal Anglian] Post Tour Report*, 8th January 1982
[201] NAUK: WO 305/5755 – *2 [Grenadier Guards] Post Tour Report - Part 1*, 14th July 1980
[202] NAUK: WO 305/5850 – *Post Tour Report – Part 1 – 2 [Grenadier Guards],* 13th March 1978

1985-1992

1985 saw an additional UDR development thanks to the Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA). This treaty designed to improve London-Dublin relations and cooperation, provided the Irish Government with an opportunity to push for changes to the UDR, as one British civil servant recorded of his conversation with an Irish civil servant in March 1985, the Irish had their own firm ideas of what the UDR needed. As the note records:

> Lillis said that the Irish would of course ideally like to see the UDR replaced with something completely different. They realised however that this was impossible if public confidence in the north was to be maintained. They saw the same difficulties in relation to the RUC … They would probably be putting forward to us ideas about the UDR, based on discussions with their own military. They thought that to begin with it was essential that all members of the UDR should be full-time and fully integrated in the Army. While they recognised the problems we had with Unionist opinion the fact was that since the introduction of Normalisation or Ulsterisation … one community has become the policeman of

---

[203] NAUK: WO 305/5755 – *2 [Grenadier Guards] Post Tour Report - Part 1*, 14th July 1980

[204] NAUK: WO 305/5626 – *Post Tour Report – Part 1 – 1 PARA*, 11th February 1982; WO 305/5810 – *1 [Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders] Post Tour Report*, 3rd March 1982

[205] NAUK: WO 305/5810 – *1 [Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders] Post Tour Report*, 3rd March 1982

> the other. The basic question was how to get the latter to see that the security system also belong to them.[206]

This indicated that perhaps whilst the Irish welcomed improvements to the UDR, they felt that these needed to go further. The Irish forwarded four key reforms: first, that the UDR improve its training and discipline to bar future incidents of misconduct; second, that it phase out the part-time element as they could not achieve the standards of the full-timers; third, that the UDR be kept away from "sensitive" Catholic areas due to their controversial reputation, and finally that operations be shifted over to the RUC where possible and RUC accompaniment where the UDR maintained operational control.[207] The result was that the UDR were withdrawn from sensitive areas such as Castle Street which provided the main access to Belfast city centre from the nationalist Falls Road, and the RUC did, for a time, accompany the UDR on patrols.[208] However, the Irish discovered that the British Army had hoped to improve the UDR's training regime for some time but lacked the funding – the AIA had simply given the government the right incentive.[209]

Part-time recruits now completed a 2-week basic (to be completed within three months), with the "apprenticing" method removed in favour of a "unit retention" model that only passed recruits on to units once they were deemed ready.[210] Training units often prepared recruits for some 2-3 months prior to enlistment, and the typical "holding" time thereafter was similar.[211] In Crabbe's view, recruits were leaving this average 6-month process just as capable as UDR men who had served 5 years or more, and this was how the UDR should have been from the start – professional, disciplined, and capable.[212] Edgar recalled how even post-training soldiers were graded from 1-4 in various aspects of their training, and if a soldier did not achieve higher than a grade 4 by the end of their first year post-basic they were discharged – as happened to one of his intake.[213] This should have been implemented for part-timers far earlier. Such pass/fail testing when married with unit retention would have aided in screening out subversives, undesirables or those generally unsuited to service. This certainly would have improved UDR conduct and results. The results of these developments can be seen from Irish government reports: 'During 1986 and so far in 1987 the number of complaints received about UDR misconduct declined noticeably'.[214]

---

[206] NAUK: CJ 4/5807 – *The RUC and the UDR* [Memo from Goodison, Dublin to Immediate FCO], 29th March 1985

[207] NAI 2018/28/2803 – DRAFT: Background Note UDR [Anglo-Irish Division], 4th October 1989; NAUK: CJ 4/5807 – *Anglo-Irish Relations, Northern Ireland* [Letter from A. Goodall to C Mallaby, Cabinet Office], 17th July 1985

[208] NAI 2017/4/89 – *Ulster Defence Regiment* [Memo from Anglo-Irish Section], March 1987; *Ulster Defence Regiment* [Memo from Anglo-Irish Section], March 1987; *Increased UDR/Army Activity in Belfast* [Memo from T. O'Connor, Anglo-Irish Section], 12th June 1987; *Meeting with Fr. Raymond Murray, Armagh, 22 September 1987* [Memo from B. McMahon, First Secretary], 24th September 1987; NAI 2018/28/2803 – *Meeting with Antrim SDLP Councillors 24 February 1*988 [Memo from L. Canniffe], 26th February 1988; *Accompaniment of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) by the RUC* [Report from P. Collins], 12th February 1988

[209] NAI 2017/4/89 – *Conversation with Military Intelligence* [Memo from D. O'Donavon], 21st January 1986

[210] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 213; Potter 2001, pg. 281; David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022; John Robinson, interview with author 4th November 2022

[211] David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022

By now, all focus was on the PC contingent. Seen as the professionalised element of the UDR, these troops were to take the brunt of the duties and responsibilities.[215] The perception was that part-timers were '*half-civilianised'* – incapable of mounting the level of operation tempo and efficacy that the army required.[216] However, following the negotiations of the Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA) even part-time training was increased once again from 8 days to 14 days to be completed within the first 3 months of service.[217] Nevertheless, the PC were more acceptable to the Irish and were likely providing better results and discipline. This shift to the PC was a natural and almost inevitable development. The now dominant PC sending its officers to attend the full 6-month commissioning course at Sandhurst.[218] The UDR were being brought in line with the standards of other regiments – much like how US reservists closely mirror their Regular counterparts.

Finally, technological developments enhanced UDR training. Take for example the Small Arms Weapons Effect System (SAWES) that used a series of lasers and sensors much akin to “laser tag” to train soldiers in combat scenarios, or Judgemental Shooting and Small Arms Trainer suites acting as virtual firing ranges to simulate urban environments and assess a soldier’s judgement and perception.[219] Such unprecedented training tools allowed the UDR to better prepare for realistic scenarios, whilst removing the focus on lethal responses. Whilst the early UDR focused on shooting the enemy, this new training regime focused on situational assessments, responding within the Yellow Card rules, and thereby less-than-lethal alternatives and conduct. Troops placed under Regular command during this period received no complaints of their conduct or ability in post tour reports.[220]

---

[212] Ibid.

[213] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[214] NAI 2017/4/89 – *Ulster Defence Regiment (including accompaniment)* [Report from the Anglo-Irish Section], July 1987

[215] Neumann, *Britain's Long War*, pg. 83, 109; Neumann, *The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 370-371; UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; Richard Edgar, interview with author 15th July 2022

[216] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022

[217] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 281

[218] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*, pg. 213; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 281

That UDR discipline and effectiveness improved over time has been advocated not only by ex- UDR, but also by a Republican.[221] Dr Laurence McKeown, a Republican and former hunger striker, believed that the UDR of later years was not the problematic regiment of the 1970s.[222]

> In later years, I do not know if they were a bit more mindful of it, but most of those famous killings happened in the early 1970s like the Glennane Gang. In later years you still have people being locked up for Loyalist offences who were in the UDR, but they maybe were not as numerous or blatant.

McKeown as part of his work on conflict legacy has encountered several UDR. He noted that whilst some report gross violations, others spent several years serving without witnessing deviancy.[223] I argue that the infamous collusion and sectarian incidents of earlier years stemmed from other institutions – not from the UDR. This included RUC collusion into the murder of Pat Finucane in 1989, and the killing of Rosemary Nelson in 1999.[224] Finally, when Stevens conducted his infamous inquiries from the 1980s to the 2000s, he uncovered not only widespread evidence of collusion but also found obstruction from the RUC and British Army.[225] As Crabbe highlighted, the Stevens inquiry found mostly the benign and unprofessional mishandling of intelligence and ammunition, and he could not recall any convictions for collusion stemming from this.[226] The UDR were a more disciplined and professional force than they had been a decade earlier.

---

[219] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 97-98

[220] NAUK: WO 305/5859 – *1 [Scots Guards] End of Tour Report*, 12th January 1987

[221] Richard Edgar, interview with author 15th July 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022

[222] Dr Laurence McKeown, interview with author 5th July 2021

[223] Ibid.

[224] De Silva Report, *The Report of the Patrick Finucane Review*, pg. 353-355, 440, 462, 465; Morland, *The Rosemary Nelson Inquiry Report*, pg. 105-110, 358-359, 465

[225] The Irish Examiner, *Report 'obstructed', says Stevens*, 17th April 2003

I forward that such progress was not rooted in the AIA that led to the RUC accompaniment of UDR patrols, but to a shift in internal policy. A series of UDR political,[227] and later public briefings,[228] attempted to disseminate a more favourable view of and dialogue about the UDR by engaging with the Catholic community. The political briefings (at the behest of HQNI) also seem to have been a way to allow relevant parties to air their concerns and to have these addressed. The Alliance party for example were particularly concerned about differences between Regulars and the UDR – particularly on training matters.[229] The SDLP in their November 1986 briefing meanwhile prioritised discussing UDR crime statistics and misconduct. In this they revealed a limitation in their own information sources.

> The atmosphere was cordial and discussion was very frank … Commander UDR's briefing covered the strength, operations, deployment and training of the UDR; it included the recent improvements in UDR training, casualty figures for the Regiment and the proportion of Roman Catholics in the regiment. Commander UDR noted the figures … [Catholics were] about 3%, but about 6.5% of recruits accepted so far in 1986, and sought views on how this might be further increased. [Commander UDR] pointed out the initial figure of some 18% in 1970 had fallen as a result of murder and intimidation by the IRA, as well as social pressures in the Nationalist community. Mr Hume expressed surprise that

---

[226] David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022 & 11th January 2023

[227] NAUK: CJ 4/8930 – *UDR – Briefing of Alliance Party* [Letter from Harrison to NIO, MOD], 30th June 1986; '*UDR*' [Letter to Secretary of State (L&B) from R. Andrew], 30th June 1986; *UDR – Briefing of OUP* [HQNI Memo to NIO, MOD], 30th July 1986; *UDR – Briefing of the SDLP* [HQNI Memo to NIO, GS Sec], 7th November 1986

[228] NAUK: CJ 4/8871 – *UDR* [Memo from R. Andrew to PS/Secretary of State (L&B)], 30th June 1986 '*Briefings on the Regiment – 1990*' [HQNI Memo], 24th November 1989

[229] NAUK: CJ 4/8930 – *UDR – Briefing of Alliance Party* [Letter from Harrison to NIO, MOD], 30th June 1986

> the figure had ever been so high, and did not believe that any significant increase in the present number of Catholics was possible.[230]

This revelation could indicate Hume's scepticism of the statistics, or indicate that despite SDLP pressure and anti-UDR campaigning they were not as well informed on the UDR as they believed themselves to be. As seen in Chapter 2 the latter is not improbable. Mallon in that same meeting raised the issue of UDR deviancy, but the UDR quickly pushed back on his claims by providing relevant figures:

> ...Mr Mallon's first question concerned statistics of crimes committed by members of the UDR. It was pointed out that the statistics which Mr Mallon had put forward to the Select Committee ... were invalid, in that they compared crime rates in the UDR with those of the population ... rather than a comparable group of mainly young active males. The GOC also noted the distinction between [PC] and Part-Time ... [PC] crime rate was lower than that for the Part-Time. It was stressed that where soldiers were shown to have committed offences, disciplinary action was taken ... Commander UDR explained that he had reviewed the cases of the 31 soldiers discharged from the UDR during 1986; these did not indicate an abnormal level of crime.[231]

The SDLP appear not to have been satisfied by this response, and pushed forward on the political implication of the UDR:

> ...Mr Hume stated his opinion that the Government had set up the UDR for political, not military reasons, to replace the B-Specials ... it was impossible for the UDR ever to be impartial, simply because it was a local force. It was pointed out to Mr Hume that the same applied to the RUC and such remarks led us nowhere.[232]

Mallon then quickly returned to the issue of complaints.

---

[230] NAUK: CJ 4/8930 – *Record of Ulster Defence Regiment Briefing of the SDLP at Headquarters Ulster Defence Regiment on Monday 3rd November 1986*

[231] NAUK: CJ 4/8930 – *Record of Ulster Defence Regiment Briefing of the SDLP at Headquarters Ulster Defence Regiment on Monday 3rd November 1986*

[232] Ibid.

> [Mallon] alleged that in Armagh City the UDR were "behaving diabolically" – repeatedly stopping young people, questioning and humiliating them. One ground of friction was that soldiers persisted in asking the names and addresses of individuals well known to them … [Mallon] believed that the situation was worsening and warned that it could lead to another incident like the murder of Adrian Carroll by members of 2 UDR in November 1983.[233]

This escalation from petty harassment to outright murder is quite hyperbolic. Insufficient detail may have been recorded in comparison to the real extent of the problem Mallon detailed, but regardless when Mallon was informed of the necessity of patrolling and offered a private meeting with the CO of 2 UDR to remedy his concerns it was noted: 'This offer was left for Mr Mallon to consider further, but he showed no inclination to accept it.'[234] The meeting then followed with cordial queries and discussions regarding the vetting system, and a joint complaint of Observation Posts in south Armagh which threatened communities too close to these potential IRA targets, drove individuals to join the IRA, and Mallon's 'sweeping allegations about cattle disease being spread in south Armagh because of the Army's activities'.[235]

The public briefings nevertheless represent a clear effort to marry up their improved training and discipline with a better PR campaign – including offering Catholics to clandestinely attend these small meetings at night so their concerns could be addressed.[236] These were summarised as 'a key component in the strategy to increase our compatibility'. I argue that this was the first time that the UDR shifted from "pruning" the "Bad Apples" that tainted the UDR, to realising that community relations were a significant issue and had been from the start. Tragically, after some 15 years, for most Catholics a fixed perception of the UDR would have emerged that would have been too difficult to shift. The inevitable harassment that occurred due to bad discipline and subversives, such as appears to have been occurring in Armagh, would have only exacerbated this issue. A drastic reduction in incidents did not mean that these had ceased – and therefore had not ceased to reinforce the narrative.

---

[233] NAUK: CJ 4/8930 – *Record of Ulster Defence Regiment Briefing of the SDLP at Headquarters Ulster Defence Regiment on Monday 3rd November 1986*

[234] Ibid.

[235] Ibid.

[236] NAUK: CJ 4/8871 – *Briefings on the Regiment – 1990* [HQNI Memo], 24th November 1989

A culture and training regime of professionalism emerged within the UDR, and by this period it was even acting as advisors for other military forces around the world.[237] That the UDR was a different regiment by the time it merged to become the Royal Irish Regiment (RIR) is a matter of fact. At the beginning of the period, we saw several incidents of notorious collusion and violence such as the Miami Showband killings.[238] Towards the end of the UDR's time the significant issue was harassment, a matter that cannot be ignored – but was ultimately described as limited or "sporadic".[239]

Conclusion

This thesis has established that training, specifically poor training, is a factor within deviancy and poor conduct. That initial UDR training was 'deficient'[240] and the UDR were 'almost alarmingly undertrained'[241] is well known. Whilst Potter claimed that there were very few incidents resulting from poor training standards, I argue that it is impossible to tell what may have motivated some incidents.[242] It is however easy to see how the poor, lethality focused training of 1970-1976 could have resulted in incidents of poor conduct, rough handling, and lack of restraint. Furthermore, whilst the UDR's duties were basic they help provide the foundations upon which "war-winning" strategies can be built. Failing to adequately prepare troops can be viewed as characteristic of COIN warfare, and as detailed in Chapter 2 can lead to deviancy. Struggling to cope with duties, something that should be heightened within the UDR given their high off-duty casualty rate, could plausibly lead to poor discipline and unprofessional conduct. This cannot be ruled out and is worth consideration.

---

[237] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 74, 109

[238] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 152; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment,* pg. 80-81; Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies*, pg. 99-101

[239] NAI 2018/28/2803 – *Meeting with SDLP Councillor John O'Kane, Irvinestown, Co. Fermanagh*, 23 May 1988 [Memo from T. O'Connor] 26th May 1988; *Meeting with Fr. Rooney, P. P. Omagh, Co. Tyrone, 9 March 1988* [Memo from T. O'Connor, Anglo-Irish Section], 14th March 1988

[240] David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022

[241] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 373

[242] Ibid.

Furthermore, by serving within their communities the UDR could never be stood down for retraining. Indeed, there was not much time for training at all.[243] Herron highlighted their focus on time-efficient training, which in the early years resulted in the focus on military skills. [244] This is somewhat logical, given these skills were what would keep a soldier alive. However, as noted earlier, this would have compromised the UDR's ability to operate effectively – especially given the COIN nature of the conflict. It should have adopted later training standards at a far earlier point, and as advocated this would mirror US reservists.

Furthermore, such rudimentary training would fail to be transformative – and thereby allow sectarian elements that infiltrated the regiment in its early years some cover. Herron highlighted that the training gap between the UDR and Regulars in its early years led to the UDR fostering its own distinct, separate identity from the rest of the military forces.[245] Whilst these elements failed to materialise as deviant for many interviewees and indeed the UDR at large, it still was a high-risk option that should not be pursued again.[246] LDF's should be trained alongside Regulars to dissuade deviancy, but also to allow the Regulars to learn local quirks and nuances that will not only potentially save their lives but also enhance their own capabilities.

The UDR's initial training was not suited to conducting even its basic tasks. Focusing on weaponry is not suited to engaging with the public on the streets of Northern Ireland, where an ability to check vehicles and individuals in a professional and effective manner is paramount. Whilst this was eventually achieved in the 1980s, the UDR of the 70s was ill-prepared and thereby unsuited to its tasks. The UDR appeared to acknowledge this at the time and used their own skillsets and knowledge as stop-gap solutions.[247] The UDR appear to have been sufficiently resourced and trained post-Ulsterisation. That the UDR needed to be trained to the same standards as Regulars given their vital importance in suppressing paramilitary activity and violence is reflected in early RIR recruit training, which ordered that part-timers/Home Service (of which ex-UDR were a significant contingent) were to skip CBRN and explosive weapons (such as mortars, grenades and anti-tank weapons) training but were to otherwise to be trained in line with their Regular, General Service counterparts.[248] Once again, this reflects my earlier point regarding US reservists and the need to replicate all relevant Regular training and operational capabilities where possible. Deploying the UDR and future LDF's in a rapid emergency deployment without sufficient training is to set them up to fail, to compromise strategy and to then necessitate long periods of constant training enhancements as the army is incapable of withdrawing these vital units from their guard and patrol postings. The UDR are a key example of this. Instead, LDF's should undergo a clear period of training before deployed alongside established units who will conduct the first "unit retention" periods before the LDF takes charge of this process themselves.

---

[243] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 163; Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 79

[244] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 79-80

[245] Ibid.

[246] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 101

[247] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 80-82

Dr Rory Finegan forwarded that among the glaring oversights in (particularly early) UDR training was the lack of personal security drills.[249] Dr Finegan noted that given the inevitability of off-duty attacks, training on matters such as counter-surveillance and avoiding "Pattern of Life" behaviours could have saved many lives. I also advocates that this should have been part of the UDR repertoire and needs to be a cornerstone of training LDFs given the likelihood of such attacks.

Neumann forwards that UDR training improvements were a response to criticism of security forces that were often met with training innovations.[250] I partially accept this point, but reject notions that these were the only significant impetus for training enhancements. Most of the UDR's greatest training innovations occurred in the early-to-mid 1980s, and these were clearly rooted in findings from a 1975 report as discussed earlier.[251] Neumann points to post-AIA innovations and the eventual creation of the RIR as evidence – but whilst archival evidence shows that Neumann is right to summarise the merger as an effort to professionalise and integrate the UDR within the broader Army, there was at the very least an improvement upon the notoriety of the

---

[248] NAUK: DEFE 24/3312/1 – *Royal Irish Regiment – Recruit Training* [Army Management Services Report], May 1992

[249] Dr Rory Finegan, interview with author 25th October 2022

[250] Neumann, *The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 372

[251] NAUK: DEFE 70/241 – *UDR Training outside Northern Ireland*, 1975

1970s.[252] To expect to see a total drop is unrealistic, there will always be the odd “bad apple” in any organisation, but that such incidents dropped to less frequent and lower-level incidents shows the value of UDR training improvements.

Later training advancements revolutionised the UDR. Through adequate resourcing, specifically in terms of access to appropriate training facilities on the mainland and NITE, the UDR was significantly enhanced. By the mid-1980s, the UDR was a different beast – one capable of mounting more complex operations such as searches and apprehending suspects, that went beyond basic guard and patrol duties. Once in this position, the UDR went from being a potential liability to supporting the rest of the security forces. It assisted in training and preparation for incoming units that only a local defence force could provide. It also secured and policed regions to allow the Regulars to target more dangerous IRA units elsewhere, whilst supporting the RUC in their duties.

I argue that the UDR should have been immediately granted access to the training and facilities that it was only granted access to in the 1980s. This may have radically changed the UDR, its conduct and effectiveness, and perhaps more importantly external perceptions of the regiment. The reasons for failing to do so likely stemmed from expediency and were corrected once the British settled in for a long war. However, the lesson that should be drawn from this is that operational effectiveness should not be subordinate to short-termism. However, it is worth noting that not all UDR feel that they were unprepared – Robinson believed that training was extended in correlation to the extension of duties, and thus the UDR was always broadly prepared.[253]

However, the UDR’s value lay elsewhere as a method of channelling militant Protestants – as shall be assessed in the next chapter. Assessing its military value, a matter that training should contribute to, is however more difficult. The UDR did free up Regulars to fight elsewhere, but otherwise is difficult to assess their contributions and effectiveness, for it is their deterrence as a result of their basic military patrols and checkpoints that likely was their greatest asset. We are unlikely to be able to provide data for aborted IRA operations, and thus can only work off some assumptions based on opinions and specific incidents.

---

[252] Neumann, *The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 372; NAUK: CJ 4/10328 – *Royal Irish Regiment* [Letter to Privy Council Office from PPS to Secretary of State for Defence], 5th December 1991; NAUK: CJ 4/10328 – *Cabinet Legislation Committee – Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Defence, January 1992*; Dr Laurence McKeown, interview with author 5th July 2021

[253] John Robinson, interview with author 4th November 2022

Nevertheless, some key conclusions and lessons can be reached: First, that the UDR were severely undertrained during the 1970s – and this may have compromised the regiment. UDR training in this period was not transformative and may inadvertently have facilitated deviancy and subversion through providing ambiguity between poorly trained troops and deviancy. Second, that the 1980s saw a significant improvement in training and standards within the UDR –particularly due to the UDR finally being sufficiently resourced. Ballykinler and NITE finally facilitated adequate training, especially once reinforced by CO UDR's who understood its importance. Third, that the UDR provided invaluable insight and experience for NI training facilities at NITE, and this aided the army during the conflict. Dr Rory Finegan noted the value that such lessons could have provided – particularly on local nuances.[254] The final Operation Banner report concluded that additional use of the UDR should have been made, particularly as they provided '…a level of continuity and local knowledge not achievable even by resident battalions. This understanding of the local situation was not always appreciated or drawn on by Roulement units.'[255] The UDR serves as an example for the need to adequately train local forces, but also to utilise their experiences and knowledge to enhance broader training for conventional forces.

---

[254] Dr Rory Finegan, interview with author 25th October 2022

[255] *Operation Banner* Report, pg. 3-5, 3-6

Chapter 4 - The Hammer, the Vent, and the Shield

After establishing who the UDR was to recruit, and how they were trained, it must be asked why they were created and then sustained in the first place. Discussions rarely go beyond such shallow considerations for the UDR and works that do go into detail such as Potter or Ryder mostly act as a history of events, and are not academic studies.[1] Few consider the UDR's purpose, or how this may have evolved. With recent archival releases, we are able for the first time to clearly define the UDR's purpose, why it was established and then maintained despite controversies and scandals, and even why it was phased out in 1992. In this chapter I explore this within the framework of its offensive ability (the Hammer), its ability to channel Protestant dissent (the Vent) and safeguard British interests (the Shield). I conclude that the UDR was ultimately an emergency response to an escalating security crisis, but one that was deemed effective at channelling Protestant dissidents whom the government feared, whilst freeing up British assets for other operational duties. Its offensive ("Hammer") role was limited, and seemingly was never intended to be its primary utilisation. I forward that its Shield role was significant, and that this is often inherent to any LDF as they are intended to shoulder some of the burden and eventually lead the charge and the costs of the conflict as it enters its latter stages. However, ultimately the UDR became most importantly as a "Vent" for Protestant dissent and militarism, in the hope that this could weaken or cripple Protestant vigilante and paramilitary action. Bennett's latest work *Uncivil War: The British Army and the Troubles 1966-1975*, details the British policy of active avoidance of confrontation with militant Loyalism – I forward that for at least the 1970s, they hoped that the UDR could siphon off and thus "strangle" this rogue undercurrent with Loyalism.[2] Finally, the regiment continues to serve as a convenient scapegoat at least by passive omission by the British state for their "ills" in Northern Ireland, namely excessive force and collusion, as part of a broader policy of collective intentional amnesia to move on from the conflict and to portray all parties (particularly local actors) as "savage". Finally, I note how the UDR and its role serves as an example of the various purposes of the "Local Defence Force". The location of this chapter here within the thesis is logical as after determining many of the UDR's core elements it is only logical to assess its purpose as part of British strategy and interests in Northern Ireland.

---

[1] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage;* Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment*

[2] Bennett, *Uncivil War: The British Army and the Troubles 1966-1975*, pg. 205, 208

Framework

I have identified three core themes to the UDR's efficacy and purpose, and listed these from least to most influential. The first of these is the offensive "Hammer" ability. This came in the form of arrests, kills, finds, and otherwise countering hostile and paramilitary forces. As I shall demonstrate, whilst this was incredibly important it is far from the UDR's primary function – and this undermines a number of the criticisms against the UDR. For the Hammer, I utilise UDR lethality as the measure of effectiveness. Second, the defensive "Shield" role that the UDR could play. This ranged from mounting checkpoints and guards, defending Regulars from harm, and indeed the British state. I argue that this is an often-overlooked element that explains much of its value to the state both before and after the conflict. Finally, I shall explore the political and strategic "Vent" – the role of the UDR as a safety valve or "vent" upon local frustrations for the British state. Recent archival releases have confirmed the significance of this underdiscussed factor, and current evidence suggests that this may have been for the British the most important factor of the UDR.

I differ from elements of the literature regarding the UDR's purpose. Of the few who deal with the UDR in detail, some present the UDR in far darker terms. Ellison & Smyth present the UDR as the latest generation of sectarian Protestant militias acting as tools of state oppression.[3] They go on to present the UDR as a "pseudo-gang" under British control: 'The UDR in the two decades or so of its existence operated a system of low-level state terror that was tolerated by the authorities because it fitted into the overall goals of the security apparatus.'[4] The use of "pseudo-gangs" against irregular forces was advocated by Brigadier Frank Kitson – an influential British officer who wrote on counterinsurgency (COIN) and went on to command 39th Brigade covering Belfast during the conflict.[5] To Cadwallader, Kitson's use of gangs and previous British colonial experiences and proxies influenced and led to the UDR as part of a broader British policy of plausible deniability.[6] This accusation is that the British use proxies like the UDR to fight a "dirty war" allowing it to deny all knowledge and culpability – a malevolent "Hammer" of the British state. McGovern believed that the UDR were a conduit for collusion – intended to allow the British to wage a "dirty war" behind the screen of Loyalists with the UDR as the command-and-control module.[7] The UDR was to act as the native levy harassing the Nationalist population into submission and compliance.[8] However, as I shall evidence, this relies heavily upon a "Hammer" role that simply did not exist. Furthermore, the literature neglects the "Shield" role that the UDR played by freeing up the Regulars and absorbing the costs of war – a key aspect arguably of any LDF. Finally, whilst some literature has acknowledged the "Vent" role of the UDR, its importance has yet to be adequately stressed – and was likely what the British state prized most.[9]

---

[3] Graham Ellison & Jim Smyth, *The Crowned Harp: Policing Northern Ireland*, (London: Pluto Press 2000), pg. 11

[4] Ellison & Smith, *The Crowned Harp: Policing Northern Ireland*, pg. 139-140

The UDR – An Evolution

Before commencing with our breakdown of the UDR's role it is beneficial to examine its stated purpose within archival documents. Edgar highlighted that the UDR was an emergency response to the security crisis emerging in late 1969, and therefore was not expected to last more than a few years.[10] Therefore, its role evolved overtime as the conflict progressed and its presence was further required. The Hunt Report in 1969 that established the UDR recommended:

(A) A locally recruited part-time force, under the command of the GOC Northern Ireland, and be raised as soon as possible for such duties as may be laid

---

[5] Frank Kitson, *Gangs and Counter-Gangs*, (London: Barrie Books Ltd 1960); Huw Bennett, *Uncivil War*

[6] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Northern Ireland*, pg. 347-358

[7] Mark McGovern, *Counterinsurgency and Collusion in Northern Ireland*, (London: Pluto Press 2019), pg. 28

[8] Ibid.

[9] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Northern Ireland*, pg. 36; Paul Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq*, pg. 467-468; William Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army: 1854–1992* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016) pg. 133

[10] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

> upon it. We consider that its strength need not be as high as that of the USC (Ulster Special Constabulary) and suggest that about 4,000 should be sufficient;
>
> (B) The nature, establishment and equipment and all other conditions relating to it, including the timing of its formation, should be decided by Her Majesty's Government at Westminster, in consultation with the Government of Northern Ireland;
>
> (C) The policy for the use of the force should be decided by the GOC Northern Ireland, in close consultation with the Government of Northern Ireland...[11]

However, much of this was altered. Stormont was rendered defunct and "Direct Rule" was implemented in March 1972 – removing local political consultation from procedure.[12] Therefore whilst consultations did occur with local politicians, these were not strictly required as they had been prior. Furthermore, the 4,000 cap was quickly abandoned. As Neumann highlighted it was first expected that the UDR would be kept under-strength rather than allowing it to become dominated by Protestants – but Heath's government quickly abandoned this restriction in favour of bolstering its military assets.[13] The reasons for this are unclear, but fear of the security crisis spiralling out of control likely played a significant part. The UDR peaked in 1972 at 9,000 troops, 8,476 of which were part-time – however by the time it merged this had declined to 2,620 part-time soldiers or around 48.4%.[14] The UDR had becoming an ever-increasingly full-time and arguably "professionalised" outfit – with 2,797 full-time soldiers by time of merger or around 51.6% of the regiment.[15] The NIO had advocated around a decade earlier that full-time soldiers were more effective and should come to dominate the UDR.[16] However, whilst Neumann frames this as a managed reduction, I would highlight Potter who noted that the part-time troop went into decline – and it was this that actually "shrank" the UDR over time.[17]

---

[11] NAUK: DEFE 24/868 – *The Army Board: The Formation of the New Northern Ireland Local Defence Force* [Army Board Secretariat – Paper No. AB/P(69)38)], 24th October 1969

[12] McKittrick & McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: A History of the Northern Ireland Conflict*, pg. 93, 96-97

[13] Neumann, *Britain's Long War*, pg. 55

[14] Ibid. pg. 190

[15] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; CJ 4/10328 – *UDR Restructuring: UDR Development*, 1991

[16] NAUK: CJ 4/3064 – *A Policy Appraisal of the Ulster Defence Regiment: Note by NIO* [SP(B)20/114/02]

As part of their evolution the UDR took over primary support for the RUC in many areas as Regulars withdrew and/or violence in these regions declined.[18] This was not anticipated upon their creation. The UDR was only expected to be a short-term fix. Appraisals starting from the late 1970s stated that the UDR was to be disbanded once the crisis resolved – confirming Edgar's theory of the UDR's "temporary" nature.[19] However, these policy appraisals by the MoD and NIO also note that a "Home Defence force" could be required post-conflict and that this could be modelled off of the UDR.[20] All of this had not been anticipated upon its activation not least because the Army believed they were more than capable of defeating the IRA – and therefore few anticipated a long war.[21] Therefore the UDR was not set clear objectives beyond an initial need to fill a security gap left by the Specials and the increase in IRA violence. Ultimately, as the thesis has shown, fears and expediency drove much of the UDR's development until Ulsterisation – and from here it was directed to become a more professionalised counter-insurgent unit. Therefore, whilst I track the elements of the UDR's purpose in this chapter, this is mostly retroactively as I identify themes and trends throughout its history.

The UDR on the Offensive - The "Hammer"

The associations between the UDR and aggressive functions such as gang warfare from quarters such as Cadwallader and Ellison & Smyth hinges upon the UDR having a large “Hammer” function.[22] I have noted the flaws in their arguments, now I shall demonstrate how the UDR was never intended to dominate the theatre. Its role was far more passive and defensive.

---

[17] Neumann, *Britain's Long War*, pg. 134; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 374-375, 380

[18] NAUK: CJ 4/2165 – *Security Forces' Capability: Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)* [SP(B)1/395/04], 1978; *Headquarters Northern Ireland: The Future Role and Organisation of the Ulster Defence Regiment* [109/1/7 G SD], 1978; NAUK: CJ 4/5524 – *The 1984 Security Review: The Future of the UDR* [1111/19 G3/GG5]; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment,* pg. 101

[19] NAUK: CJ 4/3064 – *The UDR Today;* CJ 4/5524 – *The 1984 Security Review: The Future of the UDR* [1111/19 G3/GG5]; NAUK: CJ 4/5524 – *The Ulster Defence Regiment;* NAUK: CJ 4/4800 – *Security Policy Meeting: The Ulster Defence Regiment,* January 1981

[20] NAUK: CJ 4/4800 – *A Policy Appraisal of the UDR* [SP(B)20/113/03]; *A Policy Appraisal of the Ulster Defence Regiment: Note by NIO* [SP(B)220/114/02]

[21] Doherty, *Tackling the Terrorists*, pg. 77-78; McCleery, *Debunking the Myths of Operation Demetrius*, pg. 415-416

The regiment was quite restrained when it came to lethality – officially killing only 9 individuals throughout its history according to Potter, whilst Lost Lives puts the tally at 8.[23] These comprised of one Loyalist hijacker, three IRA men, two teenage joyriders, an alleged thief, one young man killed by an alleged accidental weapon discharge and one deaf youth who was shot when he failed to stop when challenged. Of the two off-duty killings, one involved a soldier shooting his attempted hijacker, and another killing in self-defence during an IRA ambush.[24] However, Potter redacts the killings of individuals such as Geoffrey Edwards who killed one and attempted to murder six others, and the UDR who participated/ in the murder of three and wounding of two further members of the popular Irish band the “Miami Showband”.[25] Potter appears to only include the killings of individuals in the course of UDR duties or self-defence. Those killed in sectarian or criminal circumstances are listed elsewhere as 18 murders (14 of which were sectarian or terroristic in nature) by some 17 soldiers, with a further 11 convicted of manslaughter including one which was motivated by sectarianism and two involving mishandling of a personal protection weapon.[26]

This statistical information mirrors archival sources – an Irish government “background note” on the UDR from 1989 had the UDR totalling 130 serious convictions including 16 for murder and a further 7 for manslaughter from its inception.[27] However it cites the concern of itself and others that UDR members were forced to resign and thus were not appearing in the British Army crime statistics from which it drew these figures.[28] However, a month earlier the British government had sent a letter to the Shadow Secretary for Northern Ireland detailing that between 1985 and

---

[22] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies*, pg. 347-358; Ellison & Smith, *The Crowned Harp*, Chapter 8

[23] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 379-380; McKitterick et al. *Lost Lives* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company, 2007 edition), pg. 1560

[24] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 95, 366-368

[25] Ibid. pg. 275-276, 152

[26] Ibid. . 379

[27] NAI 2019/101/2291 – *Background Note: Collusion between members of the Security Forces and Loyalist paramilitaries* [Anglo/Irish Division: Dept. of Foreign Affairs], 4th October 1989

[28] Ibid. ; Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment,* pg. 182; Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 216

September 1989 there were 16 resignations following an offence, 54 discharges following convictions and sentencing (including suspended sentences) for an offence, and 3 terminations of engagement by the UDR pre-trial.[29] This same letter details that 9 soldiers were convicted of scheduled offences:

Offence	**Number convicted**
Murder and possession of firearms	3
Murder	1
Murder, Armed Robbery, Collecting information which may be of use to terrorists	1
Armed Robbery	1
Placing an article to induce belief that it was likely to explode; and Discharging a firearm in a public place	1
Suppling information which may be of use to terrorists	1
Theft (of weapons)	1

Table A – data taken from NAI 2019/101/2291 – Untitled letter from The Earl of Arran [D/US of S (AF)MJN/ADG] to Kevin McNamara MP [Shadow Sec of State for NI], 12th September 1989

This transparency does somewhat diminish Irish claims of British duplicity, and furthermore, only three (the two in connection to providing intelligence, and the fake bomb and weapons discharge incident) were overtly collusive. However, the British were known in the early-to-mid 1970s to settle cases out of court to avoid admissions of guilt and public attention.[30] Therefore, there is likely to be an element of truth in this claim. Attached to the Background Note is a list detailing specific offences in this period, and within the broader file there are a series of similar, and even detailed, records of such offences.[31] The Irish government noted that there was lack of readily available data for pe-1980 when it conducted a 1987 review of on-duty convictions. Regardless, whilst serious these figures account for a fraction of the over 40,000 total individuals who served in the UDR – indicating a lack of aggression in the UDR.[32] Desmond Hamill of ITN reported in 1985 that in total of there had been 80 convictions for assault – and even if one were to multiply these by a factor of 10 to account for out-of-court settlements, these would still only account for 2% of the regiment's total manpower.[33]

---

[29] NAI 2019/101/2291 – Untitled letter from The Earl of Arran [D/US of S (AF)MJN/ADG] to Kevin McNamara MP [Shadow Sec of State for NI], 12th September 1989

[30] Bennett, *“Smoke Without Fire”?*, pg. 292-293

[31] NAI 2019/101/2291 – *Background Note: Collusion between members of the Security Forces and Loyalist paramilitaries* [Anglo/Irish Division: Dept. of Foreign Affairs], 4th October 1989

Furthermore, whilst as noted the Irish government recorded UDR infractions and convictions – it did not always stress this. When protesting the need for UDR reform the impetus was not necessarily focused on UDR infractions, but focused on deep Nationalist resentment, fear, and dislike of the UDR.[34] Therefore, whilst condemning the regiment as tainted, this was recognised as significantly being the result of terrible nationalist PR and relations. It is however worth noting that for both the British and the Irish governments, taking action and focusing on a supporting military unit would have been more acceptable, more achievable and less demanding than overhauling the entire and vital police structure of Northern Ireland during a security crisis.

Regardless, the statistics show that for lethality the UDR had quite a low lethal incident count – the Army overall totalled 301 kills of which 170 were civilian.[35] Contrast this with the recent spike in lethal police shootings in the US – with minorities statistically more likely to be killed by US police.[36] This correlation is consistent in shootings of unarmed individuals as well – though it was statistically significant that states with higher gun ownership had higher killings.[37] There also are numerous infamous incidents in which US police used lethal force without necessity.[38] I argue that there are some similarities between the US and historical NI contexts – with both security forces "policing" regions that included minorities who are known to have bad relationships with state forces following historical oppression, and who may also be armed.

---

[32] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 97

[33] NAI 2016/22/2025 – *Transcript of Desmond Hamill on "News at Ten"*, 30th August 1985

[34] NAUK: CJ 4/5808 – *Anglo-Irish Relations, Northern Ireland* [Memo from A. Goodall to C. Mallaby], 17th July 1985; NAI 2016/22/2025 – *Ulster Defence Regiment*, [Report by Daithi O'Ceallaigh], 5th February 1985; *The Ulster Defence Regiment – Reasons for Disbandment* [Report from Northern Ireland Section, Dept. of the Taoiseach], 16th November 1984; NAI 2017/4/89 – Letter from M. Lillis to E. O Tuathail, Assistant Secretary of Anglo-Irish Division DFA], 20th January 1987

[35] *Operation Banner* Report, "Casualties", pg. 2 - 12

[36] Lett et al. *Racial inequity in fatal US police shootings*, 2015–2020 (Journal of Epidemiol Community Health, 2021); Shane et al. *The prevalence of fatal police shootings by U.S. police, 2015–2016*: *Patterns and answers from a new data set* (Journal of Criminal Justice, 2017)

[37] Hemenway et al. *Variation in Rates of Fatal Police Shootings across US States: The Role of Firearm Availability* (Journal of Urban Health, 2016), pg. 71

However, we do not find incidents of UDR soldiers "shooting first and asking questions later", nor numerous shootings of unarmed Catholics by UDR men protesting their suspicion that the suspect was armed. Rather there are counter-examples – take for example in 1988 a 7 UDR (E. Belfast) patrol mounting a VCP near Newtownhamilton faced a car stormed through their checkpoint before crashing into a field and its male occupant bailed out. As the man came into a crouching position, the men had cocked their weapons but awaited confirmation to fire – their NCO had to physically stop an RUC constable from firing on what was now clearly an unarmed man.[39] Instead of taking the easy option and shooting him the UDR demonstrated restraint, complied with the law, and took the man into custody. It is also worth again noting that the RUC faced its own serious incidents including collusion into the murder of Pat Finucane in 1989 and the killing of Rosemary Nelson in 1999.[40] Meanwhile Special Branch and the Army's Force Research Unit (FRU) provided broad and vague limits on agent activities that led to misconduct,[41] and the SAS had also been noted to have engaged in patterns of deviancy.[42] The sectarian Loyalist killer Robin "The Jackal" Jackson, who was said to have been a significant player in the Glennane Gang, after serving in the UDR for nearly 2 years worked for RUC SB and British military intelligence alongside other significant players – allowing him to dodge numerous charges and arrests throughout the 1970s and 1980s.[43] The recent disclosure that the infamous IRA informant known as

---

[38] The New York Times, *Murder Warrant Is Issued for Austin Police Officer Who Fatally Shot Unarmed Man* (10th March 2021); The New York Times, *How Police Justify Killing Drivers: The Vehicle Was a Weapon* (6th November 2021); The New York Times, *Video Shows Unarmed Texas Man With Pants Down Before Fatal Police Shooting* (2018); The New York Times, *How George Floyd Died, and What Happened Next* (29th July 2022)

[39] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 275

[40] The De Silva Report, *The Report of the Patrick Finucane Review*, pg. 353-355, 440, 462, 465; The Morland Report, *The Rosemary Nelson Inquiry Report*, pg. 105-110, 358-359, 465

[41] Leahy, *The Intelligence War against the IRA*, pg. 141

[42] Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The SAS and the Secret Struggle Against the IRA* (London: Faber & Faber, 2012)

[43] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies*, pg. 328-329

"Stakeknife" engaged in significantly more killing than previously disclosed, and may have even been empowered to do so, further evidences this issue.[44] Finally, when Stevens conducted his infamous inquiries from the 1980s to the 2000s, he uncovered not only widespread evidence of collusion but also experienced obstruction from the RUC and British Army.[45] The UDR was not alone in facing accusations and incidents of collusion, and post-1970s more questions should be raised about other agencies and bodies in the conflict.

As explored throughout this thesis, the UDR were not culturally violent, and as established already here they were not framed accordingly to act as a "death squad". As Matchett highlighted, the UDR were aware of a significant number of suspects or paramilitaries – '*...if the UDR had wanted to wipe out the IRA, they could have done it in a single night'*.[46] Furthermore, the Irish government collated a list of convictions for on-duty offences by British security forces between 1980-1987, and this details that there were 13 convictions for assault by UDR members, but 20 such convictions for RUC officers and 34 convictions[47] for Regular soldiers.[48] Not only did the UDR receive less assault convictions, none of its offences warranted imprisonment.

Security Force	**Fined**	**Fined and Suspended Sentence**	**Suspended Sentence**	**Conditional Discharge**	**Absolute Discharge**	**Imprisonment**
UDR	5	2	3	3	0	0
RUC	8	0	0	5	4 (1 overturned on appeal)	5
Regular Army	30	0	0	4	0	Illegible figure

---

[44] The Guardian, *More lives lost than saved in Troubles due to British spy, report finds,* 8th March 2024
[45] The Irish Examiner, *Report 'obstructed', says Stevens*, 17th April 2003
[46] Dr William Matchett, interview with author 20th April 2022
[47] The document is a copy, and has a copying and typing error for 1987 which prevents the first entry from being read. What is there clearly indicates that this was a Regular Army conviction for assault leading to imprisonment, but the illegible number is therefore not included in my stated figure.
[48] NAI 2019/101/2291 – *Numbers of members of the Security Forces in Northern Ireland convicted of offences whilst on duty 1980-1987* [DH 4611]

> *Table B – Data from NAI 2019/101/2291 – Numbers of members of the Security Forces in Northern Ireland convicted of offences whilst on duty 1980-1987* [DH 4611]

The UDR were therefore no angels, but were certainly less violent on-duty as the numbers and severity of the punishment indicate, than other security forces. I show this not to reiterate discussions of deviancy, but to disprove any notion that the UDR was engaging in any concept of the UDR clearly being allowed to engage in patterns of "low-level terror". Its offensive "Hammer" role was clearly not to oppress the Catholic community, but to provide local knowledge, observation and security.

The UDR's "hammer" role was intended to counter the IRA. The UDR's intelligence capabilities were a significant threat to the IRA and had to be neutralised.[49] The UDR were able to pass through areas and understand how to bring credible intelligence to the relevant authorities for action. For example, UDR 3 was able on a few occasions to intercept IRA attacks and plots.

> I remember driving home from duty, and I saw two known IRA men standing by the side of the road. I then saw them both check their watch together, and they were looking at a post van. I went "they are going to do a hit on that and they are timing it". I passed it through on the intelligence line, and they were arrested.[50]

UDR 3 highlighted that such incidents were not infrequent, and that when multiplied across the UDR multiple such interceptions would have occurred.[51] The UDR were also primed to intercept IRA gun-runners and other logistical movements through their use of female soldiers. Being the first regiment in the British Army to fully integrate and utilise women, the UDR were able to conduct searches in a socially acceptable manner – removing the need to wait for female searchers and further hindering the IRA by using "Greenfinches" to man additional search points.[52] This removed the IRA's ability to use social etiquette and utilise female runners to move intelligence and materiel. As one outgoing Regular commander recorded, the ability to shut down and search cars and individuals within a specific area required such female soldiers to be successful.[53] Though the British highlighted the feminine, “non-combat” nature of these troops even at the cost of their personal safety.[54] Overall, the UDR played their part where possible and caused enough problems for the IRA to warrant their specific targeting.

---

[49] Chesse, *Hunting the Watchmen*
[50] UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023
[51] Ibid.
[52] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 115; UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

Furthermore, the UDR’s ability to monitor areas and notice changes in the patterns of life would have likely forced the IRA to be more cautious. Highlighting how failures to tackle similar threats had crippled earlier IRA campaigns, McKearney summarised:

> The provisional IRA would have been incredibly naïve, not to say extraordinarily stupid, had it failed to recognise the threat these forces posed. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the Provisional IRA responded by proactively targeting UDR members and RUC Reservists, whether in or out of uniform.[55]

Republican 1 forwarded a similar theory in his interviews:

> The IRA command certainly through the 1970s was largely made up of IRA personnel who had experience of the 1950s campaign, with their memories of the effects that the B Specials had on the campaign. At that time the IRA apparently had an order that they were not to directly engage the B Specials – which effectively gave the B Specials a free hand locally. I think that was deemed to be a tactical and strategic mistake. [56]

As I demonstrated in my recent article this led to the UDR being deemed a credible threat worthy of off-duty attacks. [57] This local knowledge would have aided in weapons cache searches, as any soldier familiar with the terrain would be able to identify favourable sites. Potter’s book records thousands of rounds, guns, and explosive discoveries by the UDR. For example, 1980 saw the UDR recover particularly large quantities of explosives – with 1 UDR finding 854lbs in a quarry near Tyrone; 11 UDR discovered a 700lb device designed to catch a search party following find of two petrol bomb factories in Lurgan. Meanwhile 6 UDR would uncover 3,800 lbs of explosive via 66 separate bombs near Sixmilecross, and 8 UDR found 1,200 lbs divided between 8 milk churn IED's.[58] Local knowledge also enhanced their ability to act on intelligence. One such incident occurred when a video of masked men was discovered during a 1991 planned search of Cappagh village. Locating the site in the video, the UDR discovered a General-Purpose Machine Gun with 825 rounds of ammo, one AKM Rifle with magazine, another Heckler and Koch rifle with 2 magazines, and 2lb of Semtex. This eventually led to the arrest of 7 local men.[59] Through these measures the UDR was useful in supporting the response to the IRA insurgency – however the full range of statistics of finds versus IRA activity is insufficient to determine to what extent. Major General Nicholas Vaux, former commander of 45 Commando Royal Marines described the work of local RUC and UDR forces as making 'enormous strides forward' in the region and stated:

---

[53] NAUK: WO 305/5853 – *1 [Welsh Guards] Post Tour Report – Part One Operations* [Report by Capt. G. Wilson for Lt. Colonel Comd], 27th February 1980

[54] Hannah West, *A Negotiated Gender Order: British Army Control of Servicewomen in ‘Front Line’ Counterinsurgency, 1948–2014* (Journal of War & Culture Studies Vol. 16:2, 2023), pg. 171

[55] McKearney, *The Provisional IRA*, pg. 118

[56] Republican 1, interview with author 7th July 2021

[57] Chesse, *Hunting the Watchmen*

> I think all of us have an enormous admiration for the UDR – I certainly do. These are citizens who voluntarily risk their lives in the community interest ... I think it is particularly impressive when you realise that we tend to go for a short, concentrated period to somewhere where we don't actually live and return for some rest and recreation – but they are there all of the time. I believe that the future of Northern Ireland in the long-term is manifested by the contribution and self-sacrifice of people like that.[60]

UDR interviewees framed their actions as not necessarily "winning the war" by their finds and arrests – but by supporting other elements such as the RUC and Army and freeing them up to conduct the more targeted and higher-level operations whilst they conducted the basic but vital functions of COIN such as patrols and checkpoints.[61] The Operation Banner report concludes that the UDR along with Regulars mostly conducted "Framework Operations" '...intended to reassure the public and deter terrorist activity, whilst assisting the development of intelligence. Given effective intelligence that could be converted into evidence, the terrorist could normally be arrested quite easily and prosecuted through the courts.'[62] The Report summarises that 'The UDR and HSF performed a critical role, releasing units of the Regular Army for service in harder areas.'[63] However, there is insufficient data to cover arrests and finds of the UDR, so this warrants future study once archival releases allow for such an examination.

---

[58] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 229, 265

[59] Ibid. pg. 355

[60] Nicholas Francis Vaux, IWM interview 23rd October 1992

[61] John Robinson, interview with author 30th May 2024; David Crabbe, interview with author 25th May 2024

As established earlier in this chapter – the UDR's intelligence role was introduced after its establishment, and thus much of its greatest strengths for the "Hammer" role were evolutionary. The only specific tasks it was given upon its founding were 'protect key installations and other tasks as might be necessary to guard against the threat of armed guerilla-style attacks' and 'The task of the new force will be to support the regular forces in Northern Ireland... To this end it will be required to undertake guard duties at key points and installations ... and in, rural areas, to carry out patrols and to establish check points and roadblocks'.[64] These basic but vital military tasks once performed by the UDR freed up the Regulars to focus on more "contested zones". Check points allowed for the interception of men, materiel and supplies, whilst aiding in tracking the movements of known suspects. Finally, guarding key points such as power stations and preventing these from coming under attack. Removing one of these, such as Ballylumford Power Station which supplied 2/3rds of Northern Ireland's power, could significantly damage the local economy, put lives at risk and ultimately increase the pressure on the British to withdraw.

Searches are a natural evolution from these duties and even extend from them, but the intelligence role – arguably the most threatening aspect of the UDR in Republican eyes, was evolutionary. This utilised their ability to identify local suspects, note changes and developments, and to enhance and act on intelligence. Finally, their revolutionary integration of women allowed them to counter IRA attempts to bypass their searches. These elements however whilst making them particularly dangerous to paramilitaries, do not explain the UDR's true value to the British state as the next sections shall evidence.

---

[62] *Operation Banner* Report, pg. 2-15

[63] Ibid. pg. 3-5

[64] NAUK: DEFE 24/868 - *The Army Board: The Formation of the New Northern Ireland Local Defence Force* [Army Board Secretariat – Paper No. AB/P(69)38)] 24th October 1969; *Draft White Paper: Formation of the New Northern Ireland Defence Force*; *The New Defence Force for Northern Ireland: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Defence* [OPD(69)57], 29th October 1969

However, the UDR were not utilised against their most vulnerable potential targets – Loyalist paramilitaries. These individuals were operated in the exact same communities as the UDR. Thus, whilst the UDR were limited to the rumours and photos of Republican suspects that they could monitor in their local areas – they were able to access significantly more rumours and knowledge of Loyalist paramilitaries. Take for example Crabbe's arrest of a leading Loyalist, and the subsequent report of an overheard pub conversation about this leader and his discovery of Crabbe's name and address.[65] This evidenced the ability of the UDR to pick up conversations between Loyalist associates and uncover intelligence. Furthermore, as Bruce noted, on the rare occasions that the state did act against Loyalists such as during his example of internment – it had a much more accurate seizure and arrest rate than it did with Republicans because of this.[66] However, as the Vent section shall detail, the British feared militant Loyalism and thus never utilised their "trump card" against them. Had they done so, and moved quickly, there is a chance that not only could they have significantly undermined militant Loyalism – but with adequate support and PR efforts there is a reasonable chance that the UDR could have also won a "Hearts and Minds" struggle against the paramilitaries for the support of the Protestant population. It should also be noted however that this would have been a high-risk venture that risked escalating the conflict and should any Loyalist paramilitaries remain, also risked a retaliation campaign against the UDR. This campaign would likely have seen increased rates of off-duty killings and attacks on the UDR particularly – so the regiment had the most to gain and the most to lose in this move. However, successful or not this would have supported RUC and Army efforts by allowing them to focus their attentions on to the IRA and Republican paramilitary areas entirely, whilst undermining the IRA *raison d'etre* as they would have become one of the primary drivers of violence in the region – thus undermining their claims of being the defenders of their community.

---

[65] David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022

[66] Bruce, *The problems of "pro-state" terrorism*, pg. 75-76

I forward that critical literature such as Cadwallader, McGovern and Ellison & Smyth overplay this aggressive "Hammer" role through the lens of organised collusion and/or oppression.[67] As I have demonstrated, this simply does not stand up to scrutiny. The statistics reveal a regiment with issues – but it is certainly not an oppressive militia. It lacks the aggression, widespread violence, and lethality that such a militia would possess. The evidence is insufficient to claim that the regiment was a tool for organised, controlled collusion, and the "Vent" section shall furthermore note how this stands at odds with the recorded purpose of the regiment.

The UDR as a Defence for the British - The "Shield"

The UDR also served to protect British interests and personnel from harm. 197 UDR soldiers died, including 42 on duty.[68] Each of these could have been Regulars, as could each injury, close call and incident. The UDR shielded these alternative individuals from harm. There is a clear consensus that Western democracies are reluctant to lose their soldiers (known as "casualty aversion") – not least because this damages their government's electoral chances.[69] Though this can range from minor to severe, it nevertheless influences state decisions. Dixon's summary of British COIN doctrine: *"Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq* summarised that British policy consisted of four principles – one of which was to shift responsibility over to the local police ("Police Primacy"), partially in response to backlash from British deaths.[70] As Dixon summarised:

> There were several reasons for this, the police: were more effective intelligence gatherers; more likely to be sensitive to local opinion, and therefore more effective at winning hearts and minds; helped to create an image of normality;

---

[67] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies*, pg. 347-358; McGovern, *Counterinsurgency and Collusion in Northern Ireland*, pg. 28; Ellison & Smith, *The Crowned Harp*, Chapter 8

[68] Operation Banner Report, pg. 2-12

[69] Hugh Smith *What Costs Will Democracies Bear? A Review of Popular Theories of Casualty Aversion* (Armed Forces & Society Vol. 31:4, 2005); Paul Cornish, *Myth and reality: US and UK approaches to casualty aversion and force protection*, (Defence Studies Vol. 3:2, 2003), pg. 122-124, 127-128; Tanisha Fazal, *Life and Limb: New Estimates of Casualty Aversion in the United States*, (International Studies Quarterly Vol. 65, 2021), pg. 162-164, 170

[70] Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq*, pg. 359-360

> could be cheaper than the Army; and better trained for a 'peacekeeping' role (more likely to use less force). Police primacy also reduced the chances of any domestic calls for the troops to be brought home, which had been a consideration in British withdrawal from Empire.[71]

Whilst this motivated much of the ensuing "Ulsterisation" led to a rapid RUC expansion, given that the RUC had been disarmed as part of the Hunt reforms, this necessitated support from an armed local force like the UDR – who would thus also need to be adequately provisioned and trained for this role.[72] Such motivations were compounded by the British military seeing Northern Ireland as a comparative side show to the main threat of Soviet invasion from the east through Germany – so much so that this motivated denials of additional troop deployments and desires to reduce troop commitments in NI in favour of this.[73]

The UDR reinforced "Police Primacy" given it similarly "normalised" the conflict and shifted security and control over to local forces as had been successfully achieve prior.[74] The UDR could provide the intelligence and local knowledge under Police Primacy requirements.[75] Therefore, when placing the UDR as part of this policy, one can see the clear "shield" benefits to Whitehall and Westminster as it spread the risk and burdens of the conflict – allowing the British state to continue its campaign as costs mounted. This was logical, in September 1971, when the Regulars mounted most of the operations, a poll found that 59% of the public supported withdrawal.[76] The literature has long supported this feature. As Dixon notes, the expansion of forces to "Ulsterise" the conflict was part of the British settling in for a long war and by 1976 the majority of the security forces in Northern Ireland were in the RUC Reserve or the UDR.[77] As Dixon summarised: 'Police primacy and the Ulsterisation of security in Northern Ireland reduced the Army's exposure to violence and its risk of casualties; this helped to contain the conflict's impact on domestic politics and public opinion'.[78] Neumann also believed that such shifts on to local forces were not an attempt to "get out", but to shift the burden on to local forces and thereby make the conflict more sustainable and practical for the state.[79] Mumford meanwhile concluded that Ulsterisation was part of "normalising" the conflict to prepare for eventual withdrawal, but ultimately was sought to reduce the burden on the Regulars.[80]

---

[71] Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq*, pg. 360
[72] Aveyard, *No Solution*, pg. 135-136; The Hunt Report, Chapter 10
[73] Bennett, *Uncivil War,* pg. 9-10, 78-79, 199-200
[74] Dixon, "*Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 464-465
[75] Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq*, pg. 360
[76] Dixon, "*Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 453
[77] Ibid. pg. 453, 465

Neumann forwards that the continuing presence of Regulars leading the fight in "contested" areas like west Belfast or south Armagh undermine notions of Ulsterisation.[81] I forward that this overlooks broader strategies of "normalisation". I somewhat concur with Mumford that this "normalisation" was part of a broader strategy of "withdrawal"[82] – but I advance that this should not be seen as a "get out" clause. Rather normalisation refers to shifting the conflict to a more local and therefore sustainable model – where local forces take on the security burden as they would in peace time. Furthermore, this was politically and militarily desirable for the British state as it reduced their burden and the Regular burden in the region. Regulars also supported this shift. The Cheshire Regiment noted that UDR assistance at manning checkpoints and conducting patrols allowed its Regulars to be rested or re-tasked as and when necessary – and even called for additional UDR troops to be utilised alongside Regular forces to continue such benefits.[83] In Fermanagh, the Grenadier Guards advocated that the UDR were capable of effectively running the region instead of a Regular battalion. [84]

UDR interviewees stressed that victory to them was a cessation or drastic reduction in violence and a return to "normal" civilian life.[85] This process of

---

[78] Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 468

[79] Neumann, *Britain's Long War*, pg. 55, 83; Neumann, *The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland,* pg. 369-370

[80] Andrew Mumford, *From Belfast to Basra: Britain and the "Tripartite Counter-Insurgency Model"* (University of Warwick: PhD Thesis, 2009), pg. 258-260

[81] Neumann, *The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 370

[82] Mumford, *From Belfast to Basra: Britain and the "Tripartite Counter-Insurgency Model",* pg. 258-260

[83] NAUK: WO 305/5844 – *Post Tour Report – Part 1 – 1st Battalion the 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment*, 7th July 1978

[84] NAUK: WO 305/5755 – *2 [Grenadier Guards] Post Tour Report - Part 1*, 14th July 1980

[85] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; Noel Downey, interview with author 31st August 2021; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022; UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

“normalisation”, where security is turned over to local forces, is only possible where a sufficient reduction in violence has been achieved – and this was never the case in south Armagh and west Belfast. As the Operation Banner report concluded: ‘in the most difficult areas, such as West Belfast and South Armagh, the RUC could not operate without very considerable support.’[86] This level of violence and paramilitary threat can be seen through the mounting of permanent Observation Posts manned by Regulars on the Divis Flats in Belfast and the hilltop towers in South Armagh to support operations in these regions.[87] The IRA maintained their capacity within these regions to raise security issues and alerts, and otherwise disrupt civilian life right the way up into the 1990s.[88] Meanwhile in Derry, there were regions in which the security forces presence was the only way that the state’s authority and legitimacy could be felt, and where the security forces tolerated local “police” forces in the Bogside and Creggan in order to reduce violence.[89]

Furthermore, normalisation can be reversed should the security situation warrant – as was done with Operation CARA CARA.[90] I would contend that “Police Primacy” as Dixon frames it can be misleading as it connotes a police-led security force – whereas I would frame such primacy as shifting the conflict over to a civil rather than military crisis. Shifting security over to the local forces as would be expected outside of the crisis, this creates a more normal environment which is more conducive to creating peace conditions, or at the very least “peace-like” conditions. The UDR were to provide the RUC with the necessary force and support to create a civilian, police-led security crisis with the UDR conducting all patrols and operations requiring force – though I wish to note that I do not believe that this was successfully achieved in Northern Ireland. The British recorded as part of their preparation for the Anglo-Irish agreement negotiations in 1985 that: ‘Under the doctrine of police primacy, it has for some years been the universal practice that all military operations – including those of the UDR – are undertaken at the direct request of the RUC’ and that police attachments should always participate in these operations.[91] This was also seen in the focus on an "acceptable level of violence" ('– a level at which normal social, political and economic activities can take place without intimidation')[92] and "Criminalisation" around the same time as "Ulsterisation" commenced.[93]

---

[86] *Operation Banner* Report, pg. 4-3

[87] Ibid. pg. 5-7

[88] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 156, 165, 171

[89] Ó Dochartaigh, *From Civil Rights to Armalites,* pg. 294-295

[90] UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

The UDR acted as a shield on the back of the Regulars. By freeing them up to tackle the "contested" urban areas and south Armagh, this allowed the Regulars to take on the more concentrated areas of IRA activities. This is not to say that the UDR faced a lesser threat – the rural IRA contained some of its most dangerous brigades some of whom continued to pose an issue until the end of the conflict.[94] However, even when crises emerged and the UDR were replaced with Regulars (such as during Operation Cara Cara) the UDR as previously noted continued to play a supporting role, not least through their local knowledge and female operatives.[95]

The UDR's shield role as a by-product also satisfied another of Dixon's four principles – namely that of "Hearts and Minds", where efforts are undertaken to win over the population, and thereby draw away support and intelligence away from the insurgency and towards the security forces.[96] This may seem too pro-active for a "Shield", but I have chosen this iconography because like in traditional combat the shield is not inherently passive – it consistently moves to deflect, absorb, or re-direct a threat. By Hearts and Minds, the UDR re-directed potential threats. British COIN strategist Robert Thompson estimated that the government could rely on 10-20% of the population at all times (I would also argue that the inverse is also true – that insurgencies have around 10-20% die-hard support).[97] The rest of the population remains broadly neutral and is thus "winnable". The UDR served to win over the communities (particularly militant Protestant "Loyalists" – as shall be further explored in the "Vent" section). The importance of missions like these can be observed given

---

[91] PRONI CENT/3/147A – *"Annex A" to Negotiations with the Irish on the Anglo-Irish Agreement concerning the UDR* [Memo to PS/Secretary of State (L&B) from B. Blackwell, SIL Division], 14th March 1990

[92] *Operation Banner* Report, pg. 8-3

[93] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA*, pg. 123-124

[94] Ibid. pg. 164-188

[95] UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

[96] Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq*, pg. 358-359

[97] Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist insurgency* (London: F. A. Praeger, 1966), pg. 63

Hearts and Minds constitutes the vast majority of Dixon's discussion.[98] Furthermore, as Dixon notes local forces will act with the "big picture" (and thereby with Hearts and Minds) in mind whereas soldiers react in the moment.[99] However, I wish to highlight that in the context of Northern Ireland and despite Dixon's framing, military forces were inherently incapable of winning over Nationalists given their framing of being "occupied". A Hearts and Minds local force would have to be civilian and directly accountable to local and national political control – neither of which was possible nor amenable to Nationalists, particularly as "national" control would have been from the Unionists in Stormont. The UDR was briefly intended to satisfy this Hearts and Minds role – and even at its height of Catholic support was incapable of snuffing out the flames of IRA support. This was abandoned, and its "Vent" role became its primary concern.

The UDR was always intended to serve as a "Shield", hence its original design as a cross-community regiment. However, over time (as discussed in the "Vent" section) it became a way to win over Loyalists and to deter them from escalating their campaign and drawing Northern Ireland into a civil war. In this regard they shielded the British from their immense fear that militant Loyalism would manifest to such a degree that it would draw them into direct conflict and into the feared two-front war.[100] Furthermore, given that the UDR mounted numerous checkpoints and guards across Northern Ireland, they were also likely to encounter Loyalist gun-runners, plots and caches that would draw the paramilitaries ire. It would also be somewhat beneficial for Whitehall if this animosity was aimed against the UDR, given they were mounting these checkpoints in most of the region by 1980, and thereby kept in the local Protestant community from which both drew the vast majority of their members.

The impacts of this on the UDR must be highlighted. Robinson's *''We have long memories in this area'': Ulster Defence Regiment place-memory along the Irish border,* records the experiences of UDR soldiers through a series of interviews and how their experiences of the conflict shaped and continue to shape their lives.[101] Ex-UDR reported to Robinson being suspicious of and avoided any reconciliation discourse due to beliefs that ongoing reconciliation had been weaponised by Sinn Fein – the former political wing of the IRA.[102] Robinson & McClelland argued that:

---

[98] Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq*
[99] Dixon, "*Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 465
[100] Bennett, *Uncivil War,* pg. 205

> …their memory-work's superordinate purpose is not to engage in sectarian or quasi-sectarian one-upmanship but rather to resist a dominant post-conflict space and time that seeks to render them and their experiences anachronistic through calls for "reconciliation" and "moving on"…[103]

Robinson concluded that the UDR had been marginalised within legacy matters despite the impact of their experiences continues to have upon their lives.[104] It is worth noting that Robinson also believed that previous Stormont-led reconciliation efforts framed the process as requiring recognition that Republican violence against security forces was a justifiable campaign of liberation.[105] Many of the UDR that I interviewed believed that more blame with the British government for failing to ensure a balanced conflict legacy and reconciliation process,[106] but there was also a consensus that Sinn Fein and former members of the IRA had "won" this process and their version of history, and that many of the UDR had essentially gone silent on such issues in response.[107] As UDR 3 summarised: 'We achieved our goal, but did not- we did not have the winning hand … Sometimes I wonder, what was this all for?'[108] This thesis seeks to provide the UDR their rightful place in the histories of the conflict by demonstrating their value to the record, and how this has been wrongfully overlooked.

---

[101] Joseph Robinson, *"We have long memories in this area": Ulster Defence Regiment place-memory along the Irish border* (Memory Studies Vol. 15:5, 2020)

[102] Robinson, *"We have long memories in this area"*, pg. 1001

[103] Joseph Robinson & Andrew McClelland, *Troubling places: Walking the "troubling remnants" of post-conflict space* (Area Vol. 52:3, 2020), pg. 658

[104] Robinson, *"We have long memories in this area"*, pg. 1002

[105] Ibid. pg. 1001-1002

[106] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 15th July 2022; UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

[107] Ibid,; John Robinson, interview with author 27th February 2022

[108] UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

The UDR has also continued to shield the government from political costs of the conflict and has seen itself mostly ignored within legacy considerations and discussions. The UDR have been mentioned in parliament around 107 times since the Good Friday Agreement, and featured just 26 times between then and its merger.[109] The vast majority of these parliamentary mentions have come from the DUP, the only party to advocate for the UDR post-conflict, such as in July 2023:[110]

> My party grasps well the rationale behind that. The DUP has been clear and remains clear that the vilification of our serving soldiers, UDR members and RUC members must stop. The rewriting of history to make it acceptable for the IRA and UVF to carry out their atrocities must end.[111]

Whilst in these same debates others also advocate for the UDR, these appear to be on the individual level and are infrequent. The DUP's consistency would indicate that it is part of party policy. Furthermore, these are isolated. The most detailed discussions regarding the UDR discussed the death of four UDR soldier, protections for UDR veterans as part of the Armed Forces Covenant for Northern Ireland, concerns that the UDR would be particularly targeted in the examination of historical cases, and discussions regarding UDR participation in the Glennane Gang respectively.[112] Whilst one should expect a reduction in focus following the merger, this period has also seen the publication of material that is particularly critical of the UDR and has highlighted deviant elements.[113] As this thesis has noted, this has been a subject of too much focus in comparison to the statistics that have been released from the archives – but has had the consequence of sustaining the association of the UDR with deviancy.[114] Therefore, whilst UDR soldiers continue to suffer from this stigma, it must be questioned as to why the UDR have been left to rot. The strongest defence given amounts to what was said in January 2022 by the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Brandon Lewis in response to a point from DUP leader Sir Jeffrey Donaldson:

---

[109] Hansard, https://hansard.parliament.uk/search?startDate=1992-06-30&endDate=1998-05-22&searchTerm=udr&partial=False&sortOrder=1 & https://hansard.parliament.uk/search?startDate=2023-11-25&endDate=2024-07-14&searchTerm=ulster%20defence%20regiment%20udr&partial=False&sortOrder=1 Data accurate as of 17/07/2024]

[110] HC Debate 18th July 2023; HL Debate 31st January 2023; HC Debate 24th May 2022; HC Debate 7th March 2018; HC Debate 18th November 2013; HC Debate 23rd October 2013; HC Debate 6th July 2010; HC Debate 8th September 2004

[111] Jim Shannon (DUP), HC Debate 18th July 2023

[112] HC Debate 19th April 2017; HC Debate 7th March 2018; HC Debate 23rd February 2017; HC Debate 12th November 2013

[113] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies*; Smith, *UDR: Declassified;* The Pat Finucane Centre, *The Hidden History of the UDR: The Secret Files Revealed* (Belfast: The Pat Finucane Centre, 2014)

[114] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

Donaldson: … As a proud former member of the Ulster Defence Regiment, I want to ensure that whatever proposals the Government bring forward do not create a moral equivalence between the brave men and women who served in our armed forces and the police service and those who took the law into their own hands, engaged in acts of terrorism and sought to bring Northern Ireland to its knees. Will the Secretary of State be clear that there will be no moral equivalence between our armed forces and police and the terrorists of the IRA and other paramilitary groups?

Sec of State: The right hon. Gentleman makes an important point. I can be very clear, and as a Government we are clear, that we will never accept any moral equivalence between those who upheld the law in Northern Ireland—those who, as I say, went out every day to protect life and to do their service—and those who, from any point of view, went out every morning to destroy life and to destroy Northern Ireland. They must never be allowed to win, and there can be no moral equivalence.[115]

The summary act, the *Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023*, however did grant moral equivalence when it granted a de facto amnesty for all conflict participants.[116] Furthermore, the defence given here was broadly in defence of *all* regiments – not specifically the UDR. In contrast, if one were to look at just the Parachute Regiment and its conduct on Bloody Sunday, we can find a strong defence from a future Minister of Defence.

Mark Durkan (SDLP): The hon. Gentleman rightly refers to many of the landmark atrocities in Northern Ireland. Does he agree that four of them have a particular link: Bloody Sunday, Ballymurphy, Springhill and

---

[115] HC Debate 26th January 2022

[116] BBC News, *What is the Northern Ireland Legacy Bill?* (5th September 2023)

Shankill? The link is that they were all perpetrated by the Parachute Regiment. Should not somebody be looking at that?

Ben Wallace (Cons): I recognise the hon. Gentleman's points. Regiments are always living things: they come and go; different leaders take over and different soldiers join. The Scots Guards, of which I was a member, is a very different regiment from the Scots Guards when it was founded in 1642—ironically, to go to Northern Ireland. Regiments come and go, and it is too easy to put a beret on the problem and say that it is all due to the Parachute Regiment.[117]

Wallace went on to contextualise the incident in an effort to diminish the Parachute Regiment's responsibility. In May 2021, Lord Robathan (a former NI and Defence Minister) stated that whilst the Para's were 'out of control and without any proper discipline' that 'it is time to move on from this 'terrible, shameful disgrace, and from the many hundreds of murders committed by terrorists … Is it not now time to draw a line in the sand?'[118] There is no UDR comparative, as Crabbe highlighted: 'The Daily Telegraph leadership and their supporters will get behind the paras. But [it is always]: "UDR who sorry, what?". They have no interest or no buy-in to saving the reputation of the UDR.'[119]

It is noteworthy that during a recent comparative spike in legacy prosecutions of Regulars and the ensuing media attention, the government received a research brief on the matter.[120] This reflects not only the notoriety of the issue – but also government interest. The report noted that despite the hype, of 26 cases brought by the Public Prosecution Service since 2011 – only 5 were of non-paramilitaries.[121] In total six ex-soldiers faced prosecution – none of which were UDR.[122] In 2023, within years of the controversy arising, the British government passed the *Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023* which ended criminal prosecutions and granted conditional immunity to those cooperating with the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR).[123] As Leahy summarised, the previous government's approach has violated impartiality in favour of protecting veterans from prosecutions and itself from any potential political consequences.[124] This act has also been passed without consent from the vast majority of those in NI who support victims and survivors from all sides to have the option to pursue truth or justice if they so choose – a vital aspect of any functional amnesty.[125] Furthermore as Mallinder noted, where governments seek amnesty for their own benefit, the amnesty often has a negative impact on reconciliation.[126] Furthermore, where conditional amnesties have worked elsewhere such as in South Africa, they required for individuals to come forward and participate in "truth-telling", and thus provided some form of accountability.[127] As Leahy highlights the recently departed "Brexiteer" government revealed a willingness to violate international law and even threatened to leave international agreements such as the ECHR during disputes.[128] It is no coincidence that the amnesty has coincided with prosecutions of Troubles veterans – the government is simply seeking to shield itself from any political consequences.[129] The British state has a precedent of favouring politics over accountability – as Bennett noted the British systematically favoured out of court settlements over holding soldiers judicially accountable.[130] The British government has consistently sought to limit its culpability for conduct in the war, and is likely to only further harm reconciliation in Northern Ireland with this measure.[131] The UDR who responded to this question condemned it.

---

[117] HC Debate 3rd November 2010

[118] HL Debate 17th May 2021

[119] David Crabbe, interview with author 11th January 2023

[120] The Guardian, *Northern Ireland prosecutors drop Troubles-era cases against ex-soldiers* (2nd July 2021); The Guardian, *Ex-soldier who shot dead civilian during Troubles convicted of manslaughter* (25th November 2022); BBC News, *Bloody Sunday: Soldier F 'has no reliable recollection' of shootings* (25th August 2023); Reuters, *Ex-soldier gets suspended sentence for Northern Ireland 'Troubles' manslaughter* (2nd February 2023); Claire Mills & David Torrance, *Investigation of former Armed Forces personnel who served in Northern Ireland* (House of Commons Library: Research Briefing, 2022)

[121] Mills & Torrance, *Investigation of former Armed Forces personnel who served in Northern Ireland,* pg. 5-6

[122] Ibid. pg. 22-29

---

[123] Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023, Part 3; BBC News, *What is the Northern Ireland Legacy Bill?* (5th September 2023)

[124] Thomas Leahy, *"Rigorous Impartiality"? The UK Government, Amnesties and Northern Ireland Conflict Legacy, 1998-2022* (in Laura McAtackney & Máirtín Ó Catháin, The Routledge Handbook of the Northern Ireland Conflict and Peace, Abingdon: Routledge, 2024), pg. 31

[125] Leahy, *"Rigorous Impartiality"?,* pg. 32-33

[126] Louise Mallinder, *Amnesty, Human Rights and Political Transitions: Bridging the Peace and Justice Divide* (Portland: Hart Publishing, 2008), pg. 31-36, 46-72, 403-413

[127] Leahy, *"Rigorous Impartiality"?,* pg. 34

[128] Ibid.

[129] C.K. Martin Chung, Twenty Years after: Statute of Limitations and the Asymmetric Burdens of Justice in Northern Ireland and Post-war Germany (Parliamentary Affairs Vol. 74:4, 2021), pg. 983; Andrew Sanders, *Attempting to deal with the past: Historical inquiries, legacy prosecutions, and operation banner* (Small Wars & Insurgencies Vol. 32:4–5, 2021), pg. 794-799; Leahy, *"Rigorous Impartiality"?,* pg. 36, 38; Mallinder, *Amnesty, Human Rights and Political Transitions,* pg. 36-37, 62-68, 404

[130] Huw Bennett, *"Smoke Without Fire"? Allegations Against the British Army in Northern Ireland, 1972–5* (20th Century British History Vol. 24:2, 2013), pg. 290-293

Author: So, you are anti-amnesty?

UDR 3: Yes, because I know police service recruited police staff, not police officers, police staff who run the legacy branch – and I know that all they investigated was suspect military collusion, police cases. They didn't [investigate the IRA] … the justice has to be fair; it has to be balanced.[132]

The moral equivalency was something that UDR 3 found to be galling about the bill, as historically it had been ex-security forces facing investigations and not paramilitaries. Now, accountability for these forces would be forever locked away. Crabbe meanwhile summarised the position of himself and many others as: 'This is over us and against [former security forces'] will. No consultations, no consent – we would never have voted for this, and it will do far more harm than good.' [133] However, it should be noted that not all opposed the principle – John Robinson supported:

> …an amnesty for all those involved: Army, RUC and IRA, and that it should be implemented now. There will never be any new evidence provided for IRA murders as they did not keep records, whereas the only cases being taken to court where supposed new evidence is produced is against soldiers or Policemen where records were kept and able to be produced. We should now move on and draw a line under the past – although those murdered soldiers and Policemen's families, where no one was ever convicted, would like to see justice done.[134]

It should be noted that this was prior to the passage of the recent bill – though Robinson has not reversed his statement and maintains his personal position as a means of protecting former security force members, whilst supporting the right of others to desire and seek justice. The consensus is that all former members of the UDR desire justice, including the prosecution of criminality and collusion in the security forces.

---

[131] Leahy, *"Rigorous Impartiality"?,* pg. 40-41

[132] UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

[133] David Crabbe, interview with author 30th September 2023

[134] John Robinson, interview with author 22nd July 2022

Crabbe and UDR 3 appear to believe or hope that prosecutions will also be conducted against paramilitaries where possible, whereas Robinson believes that this is not possible – and to proceed without an amnesty for all when an amnesty has already emerged de facto for the IRA and other paramilitaries will not improve the situation but only do further harm.

Therefore in summary of this section, the UDR played a critical role in shifting the costs on to the locals of Northern Ireland, and thereby sheltering the government from political burdens. However, I wish to highlight that this was a basic role that any LDF can play – any UDR replacement (particularly one unburdened with its tainted reputation) could have satisfied this. The “friendly” to less critical literature, some of which I have just noted, stresses this or other aspects of the “Shield” role. The UDR’s shield role was both inherent in terms of normalisation, and yet evolutionary in terms of its political protection. Whilst one is apparent, the latter is a hypothesis that may never be provable – but would match the timeline of recent events. Regardless, I believe both to be true to a greater degree. The UDR was to shield the British state from physical and political harm, whilst acting as a security force and deterrent against local IRA operations in some places, and thus constituted a large shield. It has also raised some legacy issues – not least how the UDR has due to its misguided reputation and government action become a “bogeyman” of the conflict tgat continues to shield the government from even further examination. Nevertheless, I advance that, like with the reduced “Hammer” role, these functions are inherent to any LDF. The UDR’s significant contributions lay outside of conventional concepts of LDF roles as shall be demonstrated. The UDR were a part “Ulsterisation” and “Normalisation”, but its unique value and a guarantee that it could not be disbanded even at the height of its controversy, lay elsewhere.

The UDR as a safety valve on militant Loyalism - The “Vent”

The idea of the UDR being used as a “vent” to monitor and control the conflict is not revolutionary. Cadwallader makes note that joint UDA-UDR membership was initially tolerated despite its controversies as it was seen by the state as a “safety valve” for Protestant frustrations and a way to control and direct the community's energies.[135] Dixon made a similar connection, as did Butler.[136] Bennett's *Uncivil War* has revealed the extent to which the British government was terrified of militant Loyalism and actively avoided confrontations – including releasing the entire proscribed UVF leadership in 1972.[137]

That the UDR had a role to play in this is affirmed by the archives. One 1980 policy appraisal by the MoD, HQNI and NIO notes in its assessment in the UDR's future post-conflict: 'The UDR generates two countervailing political pressures. It commands Loyalist support and as the Ulster Special Constabulary (USC), enables Loyalists to contribute to the security of the province.'[138] This legitimate route for Loyalists to contribute is reaffirmed by the NIO in their commentary of the appraisal:

> A major ingredient in the decision to create the UDR was the political need to "provide full opportunity for... the community ... to serve" (Hunt para 172): there was fierce support in the loyalist community for a force in which ordinary Ulster civilians could make their own contribution to the security of the Province.[139]

These documents were created as part of a broader policy appraisal of the UDR by the NIO in the early 1980s to guide its future through the remainder of the conflict. This reflects the implementation of "Ulsterisation" and the growing influence of the full-time contingent. Once again, we are finding clear and significant admissions of the design and intent of the UDR as a "vent" on Protestant frustrations.

This use of the UDR was logical – and was noted by former UDR as shall be detailed shortly. One briefing memo within the MoD in May 1980 to understand the NIO's points and pressure from their own policy appraisal states the: 'The long-term role of the regiment is twofold: home defence and to provide a political safety valve (Northern Ireland has never been without a part-time security force of some sort).'[140]

---

[135] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Northern Ireland*, pg. 36

[136] Dixon, "*Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 467-468; Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army,* pg. 133

[137] Bennett, *Uncivil War,* pg. 208

[138] NAUK: CJ 4/4800 – *A Policy Appraisal of the UDR* [SP(B) 20/114/03], 1980

[139] NAUK: CJ 4/4800 – *A Policy Appraisal of the Ulster Defence Regiment: Note by NIO* [SP(B) 20/114/02]

[140] NAUK: CJ 4/3064 – *UDR: A Policy Appraisal* [Briefing from I. Burns to Miss Elliott], 20th May 1980

This notes the importance of the UDR to keeping Stormont's Unionist parties pacified – particularly the DUP who were among the UDR's strongest advocates.[141] Party leader Ian Paisley in response to discussions of altering the UDR (which would eventually culminate in their merging out under "Project Infancy" in 1992) once stated 'The people of Northern Ireland are not prepared to have the UDR tampered with in any way whatsoever'.[142] However it is worth noting that this appeared to be an electoral strategy, and that the DUP once advocated for the creation of a "Third Force" that would pursue a more aggressive security policy in the early 1980s.[143] It must be noted that this would have been unable to generate populate support at least due in part to the presence of a credible security force – the UDR. Butler highlighted one report that found that Protestants initially perceived the UDR as a partisan ally in the struggle – but following the creation of the professional Permanent Cadre, and their rigorous and impartial conduct during the UWC strike this had been quickly dissuaded.[144] Given this, and the need to maintain Protestant support, they had to be placated. Keeping the Unionist leadership content would certainly make maintaining control of the region easier, but it is its role in controlling Protestant violence that is of interest.

Indeed, this appears to have influenced retaining the services of ex-Specials within the UDR, as one MoD assessment concluded in 1969:

> ...the purpose of such a recommendation is simply to bring the B Specials under Westminster control and to provide a means of instilling proper training and discipline: that is, it is made not on its military merits, but in order to pull Home Office and Stormont chestnuts out of the fire.[145]

However, Bruce forwards that the lack of legitimate avenues for responding to the security crisis drove Catholics inevitably towards Republican paramilitaries.[146] However there is evidence that providing a legitimate avenue for security participation was a factor in the UDR's establishment as noted in a briefing memorandum from the then-Secretary of State for Defence, Denis Healey in October 1969:

---

[141] The Belfast Telegraph, *Storm over file on the UDR* (28th March 1986); The Belfast Telegraph, *Paisley launches "Hands Off" the UDR campaign* (5th October 1989); The Belfast Telegraph, Don't betray UDR (16th November 1991); Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 362

[142] The Belfast Telegraph, *Paisley launches "Hands Off" the UDR campaign* (5th October 1989)

[143] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 240, 362

[144] Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition*, pg. 181

[145] NAUK: DEFE 24/868 – *Future of the B Specials,* 1969

[146] Bruce, *The problems of "pro-state" terrorism*, pg. 74

> My proposals for the main features of the new force are set out in the draft White Paper. They are intended, so far as possible, to reconcile two conflicting aims. The first is to create a force which will include a substantial number of Northern Irish Roman Catholics and members of other minority groups who were reluctant to join the USC. The second is to ensure that enough people join the force to enable it to begin a viable existence early next year. In practical terms this means that we must in the early months attract a sufficient number of present USC personnel and members of the Protestant community in general.[147]

Therefore, there appears to have been a hope that Catholics would find a legitimate avenue within the UDR. This in itself could be another "vent". Finding a credible and legitimate route for security participation for Catholics would help undermine the IRA by diminishing their ability to claim and depict themselves as the defenders of the Catholic community. However, this already challenging concept was soon rendered impossible by coercive security policy.[148]

Nevertheless, as the conflict escalated, and once the UDA emerged in 1971 – this vent role only grew in importance. It is obvious that to deny a legitimate route, as Crabbe noted, would have inevitably driven many into the arms of the paramilitaries. I concur with Republican 1 that the admission of Specials was partially to occupy these individuals and prevent them being drawn into paramilitary forces.[149] The more individuals pushed to paramilitarism, the more they would have escalated the conflict and in response their own campaign. The boom noted in Chapter 1, the acceptance of UDA-UDR membership (as shortly detailed) and the peak of UDA on British Army violence when they briefly declared war all occurred in the same year.[150] This purpose was acknowledged in a July 1972 letter from the Civil Advisor to the GOC in HQNI to the Adjutant General Secretariat in the MOD that was read aloud in parliament:

---

[147] NAUK: DEFE 24/868 – *The New Defence Force for Northern Ireland: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Defence*, 24th October 1969

[148] Dr Laurence McKeown, interview with author 5th July 2021

[149] Republican 1, interview with author 7th July 2021

[150] Dixon, "*Hearts and Minds*"*? British Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 452

> The UDR has to draw a line somewhere between hard-line Protestants who can safely be contained in the UDR, and those who cannot. The UDA is not an illegal organisation, and membership of the UDA is not an offence under the military laws; it is also a large organisation not all of whose members can be regarded as dangerous extremists. *One important (but unspoken) function of the UDR is to channel into a constructive and disciplined direction Protestant energies which might otherwise become disruptive*. For these reasons it is felt that it would be counter-productive to discharge a UDR member solely on the grounds that he was a member of the UDA.[151]

This same letter is the source of the "safety valve" quote by other authors.[152] Overall, it highlights handling the UDA carefully and allowing the UDR to harness and channel it appropriately. Smith condemns this as allowing the UDR '…first pick of the potential "competent terrorist operators"'.[153] Smith fundamentally misunderstands and mischaracterises here – this is not recruiting openly sectarian individuals, but to prevent a scenario in which individuals could only participate by nefarious, sectarian and uncontrolled means. The state clearly feared an expansion of Loyalist paramilitarism.

Crabbe even hypothesised that such an expansion of paramilitarism could have escalated the conflict to become a true security crisis that threatened and drew in the Irish state either directly or indirectly against the expanded paramilitary forces, and then by proxy the US:

> You were staring in the face of civil war. There's no other way to look at it. I once said to Tony Blair's private secretary [Sir John Holmes] regarding Drumcree [a site of repeated disputes over marches during "Orange Order parade season"] "I said, Look, John, you got to realize when you

---

[151] Read by Mark Durkan, HC Debate 12th November 2013 [italics mine]

[152] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies*, pg. 36; Dixon, *"Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 467-468

[153] Smith, *UDR: Declassified*, pg. 50

drill down far enough into anybody who lives in Northern Ireland, they'll fall on one side of the line or the other." [Holmes] said "But that's a recipe for a civil war". I said "Now you're starting to understand" – and it's true. If you do drill down far enough, everybody's got their tipping point, everybody's got their red line, as it were, and force people into a position, and they will fall on one side of line or the other. And that's what would have happened in the early 70s that people would have felt forced into ... and that would have been immensely scary.

Author: It would risk a civil war akin to the Israel-Palestine conflict and its repeated flair ups. Like [the Israel-Palestine conflict] do you think it could have become part of a proxy war – possibly between the British and Irish state?

Crabbe: Exactly. You could have states at war then because Jack Lynch did say in 1969 "that we will not sit idly by while Irishmen are being killed" and that's what you would have been looking at – two islands side by side at war with each other. You take a wider dynamic, take the American context – Irish America [pushing for intervention], and you can build that and it would mushroom very, very quickly.[154]

Limiting the conflict was of the utmost importance. The Irish feared being drawn into the conflict, and thus "sealing" the conflict in the North was its priority.[155] The British similarly needed it to stay an "Ulster issue", and the value of the UDR to this mission was acknowledged by the final report into Operation Banner which noted that:

> [The UDR] also did a major service by reassuring the protestant population. That was not just a matter of law and order: it was probably also a factor in ensuring

---

[154] David Crabbe, interview with author 11th January 2023

[155] Patrick Mulroe, *Bombs, bullets and the border: policing Ireland's frontier, Irish security policy: 1969-1978* (Co. Kildare, Ireland: Irish Academic Press, 2017) pg. 225; Henry Patterson, *Ireland's Violent Frontier: the border and Anglo-Irish relations during the Troubles* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pg. 23, 38, 64, 82, 92

> that extreme loyalist violence was relatively rare because the protestant community largely did not feel itself to be at risk.[156]

I hypothesise that future archival releases may reveal that this motivated the initial tolerance of joint UDA-UDR membership.[157] This was widely condemned by UDR members – including at the time.[158] I suspect that Brigadier Ormerod's error in initially stating that such memberships would be tolerated was influenced by HQNI directives. One such directive stated that the UDA was to be handled with comparative kid gloves.[159] This preferential treatment, likely stemming from the fear that Bennett noted was highly influential in British decisions, may have led to hopes that the UDR may have been able to draw individuals away from the UDA, or at the very least remove its militant edge by demonstrating to vigilantes that there was a legal route for their activities.

Such fears motivated British policy response both before and after the UDR. Such fears pre-dated the UDR – in 1914 British Army officers made it clear that they would not confront any militant Loyalists should the government push for Irish "Home Rule", leading the government to quickly back down and shift to what would eventually become a separation between the southern Republic of Ireland and the Unionist-dominated Northern Ireland.[160] Such fears survived past the UDR's merger in 1992 – in 1996 at a controversial marching route through Drumcree the RUC removed and even clubbed protestors barring the Orange parade with their batons for fear of Loyalist violence.[161] What motivated British tolerance or avoidance of militant Loyalism was not the UDR, but its own fears and priorities.

Cadwallader noted one June 1972 letter from HQNI to the MoD arguing against a limit on UDR recruitment, and drew attention to its comment that such measures could have driven individuals into the arms of the UDA.[162] This line was echoed by former UDR.[163] As UDR 2 highlighted: ‘I always ask myself: “*what if we weren’t there*?” How many people would have felt they had no choice but to join a paramilitary [force] to take direct action against terrorism’.[164] This roughly reflects the sentiments of the other participants, including Richard Edgar:

---

[156] *Operation Banner* Report, pg. 3-5

[157] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment,* pg. 58-59; Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*, pg. 89-91

[158] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[159] Bennett, *Uncivil War,* pg. 188-189, 197

[160] Michael Connelly, *The army, the Press and the 'Curragh Incident': March 1914* (Historical Research Vol. 84:225, 2011), pg. 535-556

[161] James Dingley, *Marching Down the Garvaghy Road: Republican Tactics and State Response to the Orangemen's Claim to March their Traditional Route Home after the Drumcree Church Service*, (Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 14:3, 2002), pg. 58-59

> If the British government had not formed the [UDR] for people motivated to bring about the end to [the conflict] – I believe you would have had thousands of young people walking into the arms of paramilitaries. There would have been no control over it – they would have just gone out shooting people because they are that motivated enough to do something. But the government provided an outlet, a controlled outlet for that motivation, rather than just letting them join some criminal gang. [Otherwise], the situation would have been ten times worse.[165]

Specifically, that individuals who do not wish to join the police, especially given its work can range from sorting out domestic disputes and antisocial behaviour to tackling the security crisis, would otherwise be drawn to paramilitarism. This is not necessarily an attack upon the individual’s character – policing is not for everyone and is not geared towards resolving the security crisis. The UDR was the only direct security option for locals – the only way to “combat terrorism”.[166] As previously noted, this was also recognised by Westminster.[167] Crabbe highlighted how the absence of the UDR could have undermined security:

> When you look at the size of the UDA when it formed it was around 40,000 strong – the UDR was nearing its full 11 battalions. That 40,000 could have been doubled [without the UDR]. People with those frustrations would have said “look

---

[162] Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies*, pg. 36

[163] UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022; John Robinson, interview with author 4th November 2022; UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

[164] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022

[165] Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022

[166] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022; John Robinson, interview with author 4th November 2022

[167] NAUK: CJ 4/4800 – *A Policy Appraisal of the Ulster Defence Regiment* [SP(B) 20/114/03], 1981; *A Policy Appraisal of the Ulster Defence Regiment: Note by NIO* [SP(B) 20/114/02], 1981

> we have got to do something". With no other route to go down they would have gone into more nefarious ways to defend their homeland – and this would not have been within the confines of law and order. The UDA was legal for a long, long time – far too long. There's no doubt about that threat ... [without the UDR] they inevitably would have [militarised] themselves like the UVF of 1912 ... thankfully the UDR was there, and was legitimate, and was a legal route to resolving the crisis.[168]

This is indisputable – without a legitimate outlet for direct participation, individuals would have organised themselves or joined up with organisations with far less restrictions, oversight, and concern for the law. The UVF of 1912 rapidly grew to 100,000 men who whilst preparing to maintain their political and social dominance were granted the legitimacy and support of the Unionist political leadership – and were even cited as an influence by the contemporary UVF paramilitaries in "defence" of their community.[169] Without the UDR, Unionist and Loyalist politicians could have rallied support behind paramilitarism, just as they had with the UVF of 1912. The inevitability that the population of Northern Ireland would also be forced to pick a side was demonstrated by Ucko in his discussion of security in Afghanistan, who noted that in the absence of safety and security: 'the local population will turn to the strongest side – that with most influence over whether it lives or dies – or pick up a gun and join the fight.'[170] The potential risk and parallels are striking. The fear that the British had of militant Loyalism cannot be overstated. Bennett summarised the British position as:

> Without denying [collusion] existed in places, fear counted a lot more in British military attitudes towards loyalism ... The army persisted with the fiction that a distinction existed between the radical UVF and the moderate UDA, despite knowing better, because the thousands in the UDA's ranks were too terrifying a prospective foe.[171]

---

[168] David Crabbe, interview with author 11th January 2023

[169] Peter Taylor, *Loyalists*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), pg. 21; Aaron Edwards, *UVF: Behind the Mask*, (Newbridge: Merrion Press, 2017), pg. 217

[170] Ucko, *Beyond Clear-Hold-Build*, pg. 533

[171] Bennett, *Uncivil War,* pg. 205

The awkwardness of “pro-state terror” was acknowledged by Bruce – who highlighted the pro-British Army slogans and murals from Loyalists who would be arrested or in contention with these same security forces.[172] Bruce also highlighted the recruitment overlap between these organisations and the UDR – particularly for those wishing to respond to Republican violence.[173] The natural consequences of being unable to make a legitimate contribution were highlighted by a UDA Brigadier:

> When things started to get bad, I tried to join the Specials, but they were being stood down. I put my name down for the UDR but for some reason – they never tell you the reason – I was rejected. So, I had to look elsewhere. I got involved with my local vigilantes and just went on from there.[174]

A similar rejection led to the notorious Loyalist Johnny Adair joining paramilitarism according to one interview he had with a journalist.[175] Though it must be noted that those who immediately go off to join Loyalist paramilitaries likely have sectarian motivations mixed in with notions of “duty”. Bruce highlighted that the RUC and UDR were siphoning off “potential terrorists”, leading to Loyalist groups consisting of individuals with prior convictions and further diminishing their respectability.[176] The UDA’s initial establishment and rapid expansion was often led by respectable individuals and community leaders but over time these were pushed out by less admirable individuals – further diminishing their ability to gain the support and legitimacy of their community.[177] The UDR’s existence undermined the legitimacy of such groups and prevented them from gaining the community support and legitimacy of the 1912 UVF, and by taking some of the respectable individuals who wished to participate in the crisis they further limited the pool of talent paramilitaries could draw from. However, like any measure it can never be said to be 100% effective – as evidenced by the UWC Strike of 1974. The state however significantly undermined paramilitary support by making such violence seem unnecessary – Bruce highlighted the reforms of the RUC not only increased the likelihood of legal consequences for potential paramilitaries through increased police effectiveness, but also decreased the need to “aid” the state as a stronger police force reduced tensions.[178] I would add the UDR enhanced this “Venting” of Protestant tensions as its skillset and role was expanded, and combined participation with the prestige of masculinised military service. Paramilitaries and the security forces were also in direct competition with each other, and as Bruce noted those who often aided and “colluded” with these individuals were not career soldiers but often low-ranked, early career soldiers with deviant personalities.[179] As Bruce summarised:

---

[172] Steve Bruce, *The problems of “pro-state” terrorism: Loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland* (Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 4:1, 1992), pg. 71-72

[173] Ibid. pg. 73

[174] In Bruce, *The problems of “pro-state” terrorism*, pg. 73

[175] Maggie O’Kane, *A chilling car journey with “Mad Dog” Adair* (in Deric Henderson and Ivan Little (Eds.) *Reporting the Troubles 2*, Antrim: Blackstaff Press Ltd., 2022), pg. 135

[176] Bruce, *The problems of “pro-state” terrorism*, pg. 73

[177] Bruce, *The problems of “pro-state” terrorism*, pg. 73; Steve Bruce, *Loyalists in Northern Ireland: Further Thoughts on “Pro-State Terror”,* (Terrorism and Political Violence Vol. 5:4, 1993), pg. 253

> ...a 'pro-state' terror organization can prosper if the population who support the state - in the Ulster case the Protestants – feel that the government is unable or unwilling to defend them. But when the state is not seen as either terminally weak or terminally treacherous the 'pro-state' terror group is actually competing with the state and in that competition, it is fated to lose.[180]

One 1977 discussion paper ordered by the Ministerial Committee detailing the UDR’s role and future role in the conflict hides a handwritten note.[181] The note states:

1. Safety valve for Loyalists.
2. They provide a visible psychological, practical presence.
3. They supplement Army.
4. They relieve the Army of duties such as AP guards [sic]

Manpower – Not lack of training or equipment.

The note appears to cover the strengths of the unit, as well as presumably what the author believed were its true issues. The study and summary paper was written by Army and RUC officials and demonstrates that the UDR’s vent role was acknowledged far earlier and by more sources than has previously been thought. This unidentified civil servant may be summarising how many viewed the true importance of the UDR – not to assist the Regulars against the IRA (points 3 and 4), but to pacify Loyalists (the higher-ranking point 1 and 2). It is worth noting that points 3 and 4 again satisfy Kitson's ideas of the role of local forces and would constitute the UDR's "hammer" role. One April 1977 memo recalled how the Chief Constable of the RUC had suggested to the GOC that a UDR recruitment drive could 'quieten Protestant feeling.'[182] This timing as Ulsterisation was getting underway could indicate the entanglement of the "vent" policy and Ulsterisation. Clearly the UDR's "vent" role was far more important to the state than any military support that it provided –as one HQNI report in 1979 concluded '…it will continue to be important to attract into the UDR those who might otherwise join para-military organisations'.[183] This it should be noted, stood in contrast to how local communities viewed the UDR – Nationalist politicians perceived the UDR as a Protestant, sectarian force descending from the dreaded B Specials, whilst Protestants at the very least saw them as a tool of peace and a guarantee of NI (and ultimately their) security.[184]

---

[178] Bruce, *Loyalists in Northern Ireland: Further Thoughts on “Pro-State Terror”*, pg. 259
[179] Bruce, *The problems of “pro-state” terrorism*, pg. 73-74
[180] Ibid. pg. 86
[181] NAUK: CJ 4/1666 – *Role of the Ulster Defence Regiment: Discussion Paper,* 1977

I concur with UDR members that the UDR did draw many away from joining the UDA, however I believe that it was far less successful with existing UDA members.[185] One such example was of a set of estranged brothers who had broken ties due to the participation of one in the UDA, and the other in the UDR – as Crabbe noted, it does not take much to consider that without the UDR both brothers could have joined paramilitaries.[186] There is no evidence to support that the UDR drew existing paramilitaries out of their groups, and those who took up vigilantism over a legal military route were unlikely to be attracted by the possibility of joint membership. If joint membership options were motivated by such hope, it would be further evidence of

---

[182] NAUK: CJ 4/1666 – *Army Force Level in Northern Ireland* [Memo from Stormont Castle to Mr Stephens], 15th April 1977

[183] NAUK: CJ 4/3046 – *The Future Role and Structure of the Ulster Defence Regiment* [Report from HQNI], 14th November 1979

[184] NAUK: CJ 4/4800 – *A Policy Appraisal of the Ulster Defence Regiment* [SP(B) 20/114/03], 1981; NAUK: CJ 4/3046 – *The Future Role and Structure of the Ulster Defence Regiment* [Report from HQNI], 14th November 1979

[185] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022; John Robinson, interview with author 4th November 2022

[186] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021

British desperation and fear. Regardless, as established it provided a legal outlet for direct action, and thereby helped shape and control the conflict whilst barring against additional escalation towards civil war. This vent role, as the handwritten note recorded, trumped all other benefits of the UDR. It protected the British from facing an enlarged, rogue Loyalist paramilitarism – in a way contributing to the UDR's "shield" role. However, this "vent" element to the UDR should be viewed as a "big vent", and possibly the UDR's greatest importance. British fears also almost certainly motivated their decision to not utilise the UDR and their intelligence against the Loyalists operating in and around their communities. The UDR could have been an effective scalpel to remove violent Loyalist groups, and given both largely came from the Protestant community, with the right planning and resourcing there was the potential that the UDR could have undermined these groups by winning the support, and thus removing the backing and resources, of the Protestant community. Such a move would have been risky, particularly for the UDR who also lived in these communities and thus would have become "soft targets", but had the British state decided to prioritise protecting the public over its interests in Northern Ireland this could have been a viable strategy. But rather than focus on the anti-insurgent skillsets of the UDR, the British state prioritised the UDR as a critical "vent" on Loyalist energies.

The Final Days

When discussing the UDR's purpose, the question as to why it was merged out in 1992 naturally arises. Throughout this thesis I have explored the UDR and particularly why it was continued despite mounting pressure and hostility against it. The UDR fundamentally served a key "holding" role throughout the conflict that allowed Regulars to be deployed elsewhere. To replace the UDR with other security forces would simply have shifted the problem around or necessitated additional deployments of troops to the region.[187] Whilst basic patrols, guards and checkpoints often do not yield overt results against the enemy, such guards free up troops for more offensive and direct action against the insurgency whilst also localising and civilianising the conflict through ensuring elements of local security are maintained by the locals. As this chapter has highlighted, it is also important to offer the population a legitimate and controlled means of participating in the security crisis – or else risk turning those wishing to act over to illegitimate and illegal organisations.

---

[187] NAUK: CJ 4/5088 – *Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland* [DRAFT: 2nd PUS to Sir Robert Armstrong], Undated

However, the UDR was merged out in 1992 with the Royal Irish Rangers to become the Royal Irish Regiment. Not everyone saw it as a political move – Crabbe forwarded that the merger came as a result of military restructuring as the Cold War drew to a close, and that the priority of the merger was not to preserve the UDR but the Royal Irish Ranger:

> The Army was coming out of "Options for Change". So, there was that kind of background with a lot of change within the armed forces generally – money being a driver towards that. This is where I'll be cynical now and say that part of the reason for the merger was to save the Royal Irish Rangers because they were in danger. Being the only Irish infantry or Northern Ireland proper Irish infantry regiment, [excluding] obviously the Irish Guards, it was the only Irish infantry regiment, and it was in danger because of the "Options for Change" and rationalization. Its recruiting hadn't been great, it was dwindling a bit. It wasn't particularly high profile operationally. Then you had all these UDR battalions – still the biggest regiment in the British Army. Well, if you add the two together, you can create quite a large beast which will be more difficult to get rid of. And so, you maintain a line regiment that's going to stay on the order of battle more securely ... Things were becoming more manageable at that stage. Certainly, the commitment to Northern Ireland was reducing quite a bit, and they wanted to reduce it further. So, the more you integrated directly into the mainstream, if you like, the easier it became to handle that.[188]

The evidence, as shall be demonstrated, does not support this claim – but it is plausible that this may have been quietly acknowledged as an additional benefit to the merger. Edgar believed that rationalization from "Options for Change" was simply a cover:

---

[188] David Crabbe, interview with author 11th January 2023

> My personal opinion is that it had nothing to do with [Options for Change]. The government had created [the UDR] and it had played such a significant role against the [IRA] that now the [IRA] were saying “If you want peace, you have to get rid of the UDR” … Yes, it was such a controversial regiment that the government had to do away with it … I don’t feel that the regiment did anything [warranting disbandment]. But as someone who believes in the democratic process … if doing away with the [UDR] resulted in a lasting and acceptable peace – then that's acceptable. But I think a lot of people are now thinking that it was unacceptable.[189]

Crabbe similarly supported the premise of the merger, though resented the erasure of the UDR’s identity, noting that as an officer he regularly told his men at the parade ground: ‘We joined to put ourselves out of a job. Once that job [restoring security to Northern Ireland] has been complete, we will turn and march off.’ [190]

Robinson meanwhile offered a middle-way between Edgar and Crabbe’s views:

> The UDR at that time was under attack from Sinn Fein with malicious allocations of collusion and so on with constant calls for its disbandment. The UDR was under direct command of Northern Ireland and that put them in a difficult position. The way around this was to bring them under command of the MOD and Army thereby removing them from the firing line. Merging with the Rangers was the best way to achieve this. The Rangers existence was also under pressure at this time (1992/3) from options for change and disbandment or merger with other regiments was a strong possibility, so it was good for both parties … The calls for the UDR’s disbandment ended on the merger. I believe it was a good thing and supported it at the time.

Many UDR viewed this as folding to IRA and nationalist pressure as part of laying the groundwork for a peace deal.[191] From interviewees this appears to be a common perception from individuals who are pro-security forces, but it should also be noted that the Irish Government had continued to push for UDR disbandment over previous years due to what they saw as irresolvable issues.[192]

---

[189] Richard Edgar, interview with author

[190] David Crabbe, interview with author 11th January 2023

[191] UDR 2, interview with author, 23rd February 2022; Noel Downey, interview with author 31st August 2021

However, the UDR merger appears not to have been in condemnation of the UDR, but in support of it. Political considerations did feature heavily within British talks behind the scenes. The British wished to avoid any NI party gaining any political points during ongoing constitutional talks at the time, though it was clear that the move would be met with opposition from the DUP who viewed the UDR as “their” regiment, and triumphalism from the various nationalist parties.[193] However, when informing the Prime Minister of their intention to merge the regiment the MoD and Secretary of State for Defence made their position clear in early 1991:

> In its 20 years existence, the UDR has developed greatly. Originally, a part-time force, half its strength is now Permanent Cadre (PC) personnel serving full-time in the Province. UDR training with the Regular Army has increased significantly and the PC has a growing professionalism in Internal Security duties which increasingly bears comparison with that of the Regular Infantry … Nevertheless, the UDR remains a political “football” and for some time those who have the best interests of the Regiment at heart have been trying to enhance its professionalism and its standing as an integral part of the British Army in order to promote wider acceptance…’[194]

“Project Infancy”, the merger’s codename, was seen as the way to do this. The rationale for the merger was that the UDR had been professionalising for some time, as evidenced by its enhanced training and reduced part-time contingent.[195] However, the regiment had been evolving without direction – one internal MoD document from May 1991 noted that without guidance for the UDR issues including a chronic inability to recruit for its administrative, officer and NCO roles had emerged that had only been exacerbated by wastage and recruitment:[196]

---

[192] The Belfast Newsletter, *Talks stuck at UDR block*, 19th October 1989; Evening Herald, *Tensions grows as UDR row deepens*, 22nd September 1989

[193] NAUK: CJ 4/10328 – *Draft Minute to the Secretary of State* [JI/16286], No date

[194] NAUK: CJ 4/10328 – Draft Letter from Secretary of State for Defence to the Prime Minister, No date

[195] NAUK: DEFE 24/3312/2 – *The Reorganisation of the UDR to form 7 Home Service Battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment – Justification* [Annex A to DINF 23/51/13], 19th May 1992

> ‘Since the UDR is to remain an essential component in the fight against terrorism for the foreseeable future, it is essential to resolve these structural problems if the Regiment is to be properly prepared for the decade ahead.’ – enhanced service and deployments will also attract recruits.[197]

The cabinet was informed by the Secretary of State for Defence in January 1992 of the purposes and intentions of the merger:

> We are seeking to take the present UDR out of local and Anglo-Irish politics; remove its sectarian stigma and try to recruit more Catholics; improve training, career opportunities and personal horizons; and thus enhance the professionalism and effectiveness of the local security forces in countering terrorism. Recent events re-emphasise the importance of these objectives.[198]

At no point was it forwarded that the UDR’s disbandment had been requested as part of peace talks, or as the British laying the groundwork for future talks. The HSF would still likely be seen by critics as the “sectarian” UDR by another name but the British hoped that open-minded individuals would see the closer integration with the British Army as a positive develop for the regiment and the region.[199] Even MoD officials and NIO security officials favoured the easier automatic transfer of UDR soldiers to the new regiment over any perceived political benefits from voluntary transfers.[200]

The reasons for this merger are not thus immediately obvious. From the available evidence, the measure appears to have been the culmination of the previous “professionalisation” of the UDR alongside drawing the regiment away from its stigma by essentially rebranding the regiment and following Irish Government calls to integrate the UDR with the regular Army to do so. However, the ongoing exploratory talks under then-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Brooke, and Sir Patrick Mayhew in 1991 and 1992 could have some connection.[201] These talks excluded Sinn Fein and the Republicans, but the merging out of the UDR may have been offered as a "sweetener" to SDLP and the Nationalists. Whilst the UDR had served as an effective vent against Loyalism, it may have been hoped that their removal from the line of battle would have served as a "vent" on Nationalists. By removing the UDR, this may have reduced tensions with Nationalist politicians and their supporters and opened the door to the potential of a political solution. Meanwhile, Mi6 was reaching out to the IRA through an intermediary[202] - so once again, the removal of the UDR could have served to aid these overtures. Thus, whilst there was a considerable military merit in enhancing UDR professionalism, it may have also served a secret political purpose in the backroom talks.

---

[196] Ibid.

[197] Ibid.

[198] NAUK: CJ 4/10328 – *Cabinet: Legislation Committee – Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Defence*, January 1992

[199] NAUK: CJ 4/10328 – Untitled letter from J. Binstead, PS to Secretary of State for Defence, to “Stephen”, 8th July 1991

[200] NAUK: CJ 4/10328 – *Merger of UDR and Royal Irish Rangers: Proposed Bill* [Memo from C. Collins, Security Policy and Operations Division, to PS/Secretary of State (B&L) – B], 19th December 1991

The merger was framed as a net positive for the UDR – with its ultimate aim to turn the UDR into '…a more professional, effective and flexible security force.'[203] Whilst it was acknowledged that in all likelihood the merger would result in the domination of '…the strong traditions and ethos of the Royal Irish Rangers', given full-time UDR officers were limited to Major the integration into the regular Army would open the full career path for soldiers, alongside new deployments outside of NI for those who wanted them.[204] Training was similarly enhanced, with the only difference between HSF recruits and Regular training being the length of basic training (around 12 and 22 weeks respectively) and the removal of anti-armour drills for HSF recruits given the lack of tanks and armoured vehicles amongst the ranks of NI paramilitaries.[205] As Crabbe noted, the HSF still retained the unique position of the UDR within the British Army:

---

[201] Leahy, *The Intelligence War Against the IRA,* pg. 208

[202] Niall Ó Dochartaigh, *Deniable contact: back-channel negotiation in Northern Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), pg. 224-229

[203] NAUK: DEFE 24/3312/2 – *Statutory references to the UDR* [Memo from D. Kirk, RIRBT, to C. Collins, Security Policy & Operations Division Stormont House Annex], 22nd May 1992

[204] NAUK: CJ 4/10328 – Untitled letter from J. Binstead, PS to Secretary of State for Defence, to "Stephen", 8th July 1991

[205] NAUK: DEFE 24/3312/2 – *Royal Irish Regiment – Recruit Training* [Army Management Services, Report no. 680], May 1992

> I'm sure that there are political undertones within a stronger integration into the army ... but the UDR were always different. When the Home Service Battalions [HSF] were formed, the part-time element were actually part of the regular army. So, you were a part time soldier, Regular soldier. Whereas the Royal Irish Rangers, the reserve element were [and are] still the Reserves [and not Regular soldiers].[206]

The merger was essentially a rebrand of the UDR, many of whom like Crabbe continued their service until the end of Operation Banner and the disbanding of the HSF, and truly the last of the UDR, in 2006. The Royal Irish Regiment retained little of the UDR's identity – adopting the beret, colours and traditions of the Rangers.[207] The continuation of service for its personnel but the erasure of its public elements such as its name and iconography indicates that whilst its services were useful, the UDR in the eyes of its critics had to be seen to go.

Conclusion

I have suggested that the UDR's purpose was evolutionary but did have some inherent and designed elements. In January 1981, a policy appraisal stressed that 'There is at present no long-term Government policy for the [UDR]'.[208] Its "Hammer" role (although the significant element of intelligence was added later) was inherent. The UDR was to counter the IRA's knowledge of the terrain, intercept and apprehend its members and to free up the Regulars for "contested zones" – whilst normalising the security apparatus and spreading the burden of the conflict. It must also be noted that the UDR was not "unleashed", as evidenced by a lack of lethality and mass aggression.

The Vent element was also inherent in the UDR's design, as to allow militant Protestantism to spread, unchallenged and untapped – then the conflict would easily have escalated into a civil war, and one that could have threatened national security. This only became more apparent over time. Whilst its military capabilities would have made it difficult to disband and replace without jeopardising operations. This would then have been made impossible once the UDA formed and its Vent role became critical. In this perhaps, it demonstrates the benefits of the Local Defence Force – regional, national and political security. Thus, the UDR had a small Hammer, and an extreme Vent role. Returning to discussions of the UDR's MOE from the start of this thesis, the UDR were enhancing security through providing the crucial basics of COIN operations, alongside providing political benefits such as reassuring the Protestant population and providing a legitimate avenue for participation in the security crisis. The UDR acted as the shield of the British state whilst the Regulars were the Hammer sent out to destroy the IRA. The UDR arguably has always been the shield of the British state in Northern Ireland – it just shifted from defending it from the rise of militant Loyalism, to defending it from political consequences in an era of peace.

---

[206] David Crabbe, interview with author 11th January 2023

[207] Ibid.

[208] NAUK: CJ 4/4800 – *Security Policy Meeting: The Ulster Defence Regiment* [Memo from I. Burns, NIO], January 1981

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis I have sought to provide clarity on the UDR, its purpose and its structures. This thesis has also sought to draw a number of strong lessons for future LDFs that have, like the UDR, been previously overlooked and underappreciated. I forward that the UDR's contributions whilst simple should be acknowledged as providing the fundamental basics of COIN – allowing the Regulars to tackle the drivers of the IRA campaign elsewhere and helping to provide the space in which future talks occurred to resolve the conflict. Furthermore, for LDFs there are a number of key lessons for establishment, vetting and training that have gone possibly overlooked due to the lack of examination of the UDR. These themes and ideas have been drawn as a result of the initial research questions which are discussed below, before the thesis concludes by examining the conflict's legacy and future research issues.

Research Questions & Answers

This thesis set out to answer a number of key research questions:

1. Why was the UDR formed and what was its intended purpose?
2. Was the UDR a particularly collusive or undisciplined regiment?
3. Why was the UDR retained, even after allegations and incidents of collusion and criminality came to light?
4. How did the UDR contribute to security within Northern Ireland?

This thesis has successfully resolved each of these. The UDR was created as a "short-term" solution to a security gap created by the disbandment of the B Specials, and was intended to provide security whilst also acting as a cross-community regiment that would hopefully aid in reconciliation. The initial intention was that the UDR draw from both communities – but this was quickly undermined by an association with coercive British security policy, which exacerbated already existing tensions. These tensions stemmed from the decision to recruit Specials, which whilst providing expertise, continuity and channelling potential frustrations limited the attraction of the regiment for nationalists.[1] Furthermore, its association with collusion further undermined its cross-community aspirations, and created tensions with the Catholic community.[2] However, as this thesis has established the extent to which this occurred appears to have been over-estimated and thus within the literature has become a subject of focus. I believe that I have evidenced that there needs to be a reframing of the UDR that relies less upon a collusion-centred narrative in light of the evidence. Furthermore, any presentation of the UDR as an intentionally homogenously Protestant tool within a dirty war ignores internal desires to be a cross-community element which were in line with the regiment's initial design. Nevertheless, once Protestant domination of the UDR was established this further reinforced unfavourable narratives and tensions between itself and the Catholic community – becoming yet another chapter in the tradition of nationalists being policed by forces that were heavily skewed towards the unionist position.[3]

The UDR has become associated with collusion and deviancy as a result of "infamous" incidents of collusion in the 1970s that did not occur on the same scale thereafter. The dominance of Protestants combined with these incidents and an unmeasurable element of harassment reinforced this narrative. With current archival data, the evidence indicates that the UDR was not particularly deviant but was a beneficial vehicle for opportunists and subversives. Therefore, there should be a re-evaluation of the UDR in light of this evidence, and a shift in approach from focusing on its deviancy to contextualising this within its broader contributions and actions in support of law and order.

However, in spite of this controversy the UDR continued to exist. I believe that I have demonstrated that it was not the regiment's military merits alone that guaranteed its existence from 1970-1992 (and arguably beyond as the HSF). Whilst its local knowledge allowed for a certain level of continuity and assisted in combating the IRA, it was its political value that mattered most. As discussed in *The Hammer, The Vent and The Shield* the unique role that the UDR played, and one that essentially barred any significant reform or disbandment, was its ability to act as "vent" and conduit for Protestant energies during the conflict. A few authors have noted this previously, though with little detail.[4] However I have significantly detailed the importance of this to the British through a series of archival releases.[5] As one November 1979 HQNI appraisal of the UDR and the possibilities and options for its future noted: '…it will continue to be important to attract into the UDR those who might otherwise join para-military organisations'.[6] This was even acknowledged by members of the UDR.[7] The UDR undermined the ability of Protestant paramilitaries to gain the respect of being the "defenders of the community" in the same way that the IRA essentially had. Without the UDR, those looking to directly participate in the crisis would have likely joined Loyalist paramilitaries and escalated the conflict. However, the UDR provided a disciplined and controlled method of participation – and one that robbed Loyalists of any legitimacy through this avenue. This limited these paramilitaries and barred them from gaining additional members and potentially pushing the security crisis over into a full-blown civil war. However, the trade-off was that the move attracted some individuals with sectarian motives who ended up colluding. Overall, this does not negate or undermine its rudimentary but important role in local security, but it must be acknowledged that throughout the evolution in British intentions for the UDR its tole as a "vent" on Protestant energies remained consistently important in their planning.

---

[1] Burke, *Counter-Insurgency against 'Kith and Kin'?*, pg. 660, 662; Bennett, *Uncivil War*, pg. 6; NAUK: DEFE 24/835 – '*Statistical Analysis of UDR Wastage and Recruitment*', 6th June 197; NAUK: DEFE 24/868 – *Future of the B Specials*

[2] Frampton, *Agents and Ambushes*, pg. 86-87; Dr Laurence McKeown, interview with author 5th July 2021

[3] UDR 1, interview with author 6th July 2021; Noel Downey, interview with author 31st August 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021; Dr Laurence McKeown, 5th July 2021

Nevertheless, the UDR enhanced security provisions within Northern Ireland through freeing up Regulars for duties in "harder" areas and conducting basic but vital functions of COIN warfare. This quickly evolved beyond their initial design of guarding key points and conducting static checkpoints[8] – by 1980 they were responsible for security in 85% of the region and were conducting mobile patrols and checkpoints.[9] This role whilst somewhat rudimentary I have argued is a core part of establishing local/regional security and restoring a sense of normality to communities – key elements in combatting insurgency. As normalcy is restored, it becomes increasingly difficult to motivate individuals into participation or support for a no longer existential security crisis. Whilst conducting these duties, the UDR filled roles that otherwise would have necessitated additional Regulars. Now freed up from these tasks, this allowed Regular forces to focus on tackling the more dangerous elements of the IRA elsewhere without having to juggle this arm of the campaign against providing security across NI. In addition, their continuity and ability to sustain their operations also aided Regular forces by limiting fluctuations in security upon the withdrawal and replacement of experienced soldiers with those who would be new to the region. The UDR allowed for locals to participate in the crisis, and in a manner that was mostly disciplined and controlled – though as is known this was not always the case. Regardless, they blocked Loyalist paramilitaries from gaining legitimacy in new quarters, and limited their growth and violence as a result. The UDR performed its role as an LDF, conducted the duties necessary for this, and in doing so played their part in the establishment of circumstances which allowed for the peace talks.

---

[4] See Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Northern Ireland*, pg. 36; Dixon, "*Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland*, pg. 467-468; William Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army,* pg. 133

[5] NAUK: CJ 4/4800 – *A Policy Appraisal of the UDR* [SP(B) 20/114/03], 1981; *A Policy Appraisal of the Ulster Defence Regiment* [SP(B) 20/114/03], 1981; *A Policy Appraisal of the Ulster Defence Regiment: Note by NIO* [SP(B) 20/114/02]; NAUK: CJ 4/1666 – *Role of the Ulster Defence Regiment: Discussion Paper,* No Date; *Army Force Level in Northern Ireland* [Memo from Stormont Castle to Mr Stephens], 15th April 1977

[6] NAUK: CJ 4/3046 – *The Future Role and Structure of the Ulster Defence Regiment*, [Report from HQNI], 14th November 1979

[7] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022; John Robinson, interview with author 4th November 2022

The Lessons for LDFs

There are a number of important ideas for the use of future LDFs that can be learned from the UDR. For example, 1st Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders reported that the extension of their tour of duty from 18 to 21 months, and finally to two years, had an adverse impact on families – though fortunately they did recover quickly.[10] The UDR provided a "staying" power and continuity that Regulars simply could not. Many UDR reported a patriotic duty to serve and defend their nation from violence.[11] As one highlighted: 'I come from in Northern Ireland, I was born in Northern Ireland – as far as I am concerned it is my country and I will fight for it.'[12] The UDR particularly suffered physically and psychologically from off-duty killings.[13] This resulted in birthday's and important life events and milestones being missed as any scheduled event could easily be turned into an ambush by the IRA.[14] Yet, the UDR endured – as the Operation Banner report concluded: 'Counting the HSF with the UDR, these Northern Irish soldiers served far longer on continuous active duty than any other unit of the British Army.'[15] Furthermore, the report noted that the presence, intelligence capabilities and skillsets of the UDR could have been greater leveraged to provide continuity, provide greater actionable intelligence and assist with handovers between Regular units.[16] There is an important lesson here about utilising LDFs as a way of providing a sustainable response to the conflict. These forces will continue to make their contribution as their motives are likely to transcend the potential risks. One need only think of the contributions of Ukrainian LDFs since 2014 and particularly since the Russian invasion in 2022, and to consider how these have continued to hold the line whilst a significant number of the international volunteers have returned home.[17] Iraqi and Afghan local forces similarly maintained their security contributions even whilst they were also hunted by terrorist forces.[18]

---

[8] NAUK: CJ 4/7446 – *The Ulster Defence Regiment*

[9] Ryder, *The Ulster Defence Regiment: An Instrument of Peace?* pg. 101

[10] NAUK: WO 305/5810 – *1 A and S Post Tour Report* [Report from Lt. Col. H. Clark, CO], 3rd March 1982

LDF's will likely need to co-opt in pre-existing forces – even if they are notably controversial. Hunt had recommended barring USC officers from enlisting to provide a clear break from the Specials. Yet despite the controversy and impacts on Catholic perceptions, without ex-Specials the UDR simply could not have become operational by March 1970.[19] There is a clear avenue for future research here contrasting the retention of local security forces in the form of the UDR and the dissolution of such forces elsewhere – such as during de-Baathification in post-Saddam Iraq. In Iraq, all advice and consensus, the decision was taken to purge 385,000 members of the Iraqi Armed Forces, 285,000 police within the Interior Ministry, and 50,000 from the Presidential security units from the rolls.[20] The decision created a large pool of unemployed, humiliated and angry men – all of whom had the necessary training and cause to turn on coalition forces which many inevitably did.[21] This provides a clear example of what could have happened had the Specials been similarly and unceremoniously purged from the rolls. Furthermore, as Hughes highlighted, coalition forces constituted a mere fraction of what was required to ensure Iraq's security in 2003,[22] and the total removal of the Specials may have similarly undermined security without sufficient additional deployments of regiments which, as established, the government would have preferred focused on Cold War priorities elsewhere.

---

[11] IWM: Anonymous (Oral history) – 11166 IWM Interview; IWM: Anonymous (Oral history) – 11165 IWM Interview; IWM: Anonymous (Oral history) – 11179 IWM Interview; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 11th January 2023

[12] IWM: Anonymous (Oral history) – 11166 IWM Interview

[13] Chesse, *Hunting the watchmen*

[14] Herron, *The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh*, pg. 12

[15] *Operation Banner* Report, pg. 3-5

[16] *Operation Banner* Report, pg. 4-14, 7-3

[17] Ben Makuch, *"The Romantics Are Gone": A Year Later, Many Foreign Fighters Have Left Ukraine* (Vice News, February 23 2023)

[18] Chesse, *Hunting the watchmen,* pg. 564

There are naturally discussions of expanding the RUC and bringing in more Regulars instead of permitting the recruitment of Specials – but as established the government saw Northern Ireland as a secondary issue to its Cold War problems, and one that should be resolved quickly. Therefore, in an alternative scenario we may have only seen sufficient troop deployments to Northern Ireland after additional deaths and suffering than happened in the current timeline, or the situation spiralling out into an all-feared crisis. Secondly, for some conducting welfare checks, stopping speeding or drunk motorists and responding to domestic incidents as part of police duties did not sufficiently satisfy their need to tackle the security crisis and paramilitary violence. Furthermore, as Iraq demonstrated by the time you have established new forces you can be facing an insurgency partially armed, funded and constituting the forces that you have disbanded – necessitating even further troop deployments. Seeing former Specials take up arms against the state, finding no place in the RUC and perhaps finding insufficient Regulars on the streets would have only further motivated some to participate in the security crisis through more nefarious means. The UDR (and likely future LDF's) had to exist and had to be utilised, and the option for Special participation, though with additional vetting and checks than were applied, had to also be there.

---

[19] Douglas-Home (1969) 'New Ulster Force' *The Times*, November 13th; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Ó Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972*, pg. 843

[20] James Pfiffner, *US Blunders in Iraq: De-Baathification and Disbanding the Army* (Intelligence and National Security Vol. 25:1, 2010), pg. 80

[21] Pfiffner, *US Blunders in Iraq,* pg. 80; Anthony Cordesman, *The Iraqi Insurgency and the Risk of Civil War: Who Are the Players?* (Centre for Strategic and International Studies Working Draft, 2006), pg. 46; Shamiran Mako, *Subverting Peace: The Origins and Legacies of de-Ba'athification in Iraq* (Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding Vol. 15:4, 2021), pg. 481, 487

[22] Geraint Hughes, *The Insurgencies in Iraq, 2003–2009: Origins, Developments and Prospects* (Defence Studies Vol. 10:1-2, 2010), pg. 158

It must also be noted as previously stated that the UDR were best primed to take on Loyalist paramilitaries – not the IRA. They had for more knowledge on the likely whereabouts of these organisations, and were more likely to win over community support from the Unionists should a confrontation over their "Hearts and Minds" with Loyalism where to occur. It would also have driven those with sectarian motives from enlisting within the UDR as it would clearly state their non-partisan intent. However, as previously noted – this would have been a particularly high-risk venture, and not something that even this author would have advised unless circumstances and opportunity allowed. That the UDR did not enter into confrontation with these organisations was not its decision – such calls had to come from Whitehall and HQNI. Why this did not occur is likely the same reason that Westminster did not proscribe the UDA until 1992. As Bennett noted, the British feared a potential confrontation with Loyalism, and particularly that it would not be able to manage the security implications of such a crisis.[23] Therefore, decisions as noted throughout this thesis were taken to placate Unionism and Loyalism. This may be a decision that LDF's are forced to take in certain scenarios – namely to support or placate one more "pro-state" part of society to the detriment of another. Naturally however it is hoped that most would be able to avoid having to make such a "devil's bargain".

LDF's may also not be able to undergo extensive training to turn them into top-tier counter-insurgent forces due to the ongoing security crisis. However, the UDR show the need to ensure sufficient training – the early UDR were barely trained and were associated with discipline issues and colluding. The later UDR were far more competent and lacked the controversial incidents of the early years. Taking time away for at least some basic training is vital to ensure competence and discipline.

---

[23] Bennett, *Uncivil War,* pg. 205

Whatever duties the LDF should be assigned can be developed over time, but the Grenadier Guards felt that all checkpoints should be mounted by local forces to allow for Regular forces to be deployed to "harder" areas elsewhere.[24] The Operation Banner report noted the 'critical role' that the UDR played in freeing up Regulars, reassuring the Protestant population, and providing: '…a level of continuity and local knowledge not achievable even by resident battalions. This understanding of the local situation was not always appreciated or drawn on by Roulement units.'[25] Such skillsets and success can be replicated elsewhere – though the importance of these forces, despite perhaps the mundane tasks they are conducting, may need to be stressed to Regular forces.

The UDR must also serve as a lesson on deviancy. New units, such as LDFs, arrive as "clean slates". New units are not immune to deviancy due to a lack of bad habits. Rather they are prime breeding grounds if the space allows. The UDR easily could have fallen into this – the character of its recruits and soldiers appears to have been the only distinguishing factor preventing Warlord cultural elements. Indeed, Burke concluded that the British Army failed to safeguard against such aggressive cultures throughout the Army[26] – making the UDR stand out as an intriguing exception within the conflict. Other LDFs may not be so fortunate. Similarly, it must be noted that LDFs even if not deviant themselves can become hosts for such deviants – a body through which they can empower themselves. Guiding the mythos and ethos of the regiment can help create a particularly hostile environment for deviancy – as was eventually established in the UDR. The UDR by its end was more professional, effective, and disciplined[27] – as acknowledged by even some of its critics.[28] This UDR was far more hostile to deviancy than during its early years, and had it been adequately supported and provisioned then it could have been throughout. Finally, the regionality of LDFs (including deviancy) is a statistical fact, and this must be acknowledged and ameliorated throughout. Ignatieff noted that a soldier's war is a very limited geographical space – and it is the events, relationships and grievances within this space that can become triggers for deviant action.[29] As this thesis has proven the UDR demonstrate regionality, with "Bad Barracks" and more dangerous IRA units existing in some areas and not others. Regionality can and will influence the development and conduct of local forces, and whilst this can be a risk in terms of ensuring conduct and meeting standards, it has the potential to be utilised for adaptability and assisting with continuity for Roulement forces if additional study and value is drawn from this.

---

[24] NAUK: WO 305/5850 – *Post Tour Report – Part 1 – 2 [Grenadier Guards],* 13th March 1978

[25] *Operation Banner* Report, pg. 3-5, 3-6

[26] Burke, *An Army of Tribes*, pg. 335

[27] David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; UDR 2, interview with author 2nd September 2021

[28] Dr Laurence McKeown – 5th July 2021

There are also useful lessons to be gained from the Afghan Local Police comparison noted at the start of this thesis. Afghan Local forces were known misbehave outside of their own areas, and Afghan LDFs have history of unreliability and failure – but critics often overlook that they behave well when patrolling their own communities.[30] It was thus advised that the ALP should always be utilised alongside the Afghan army who can train, support, and advise whilst ensuring compliance to prevent historical incidents of them being used in local disputes.[31] This is reinforced by the UDR's experiences throughout the Troubles. Perhaps the UDR would have been more useful and certainly less controversial had they been limited to policing their own communities and shared spaces. As Jones & Munoz noted in the context of the ALP – there is a need to ensure that LDF's reflect their local communities.[32] There are still clear avenues for developing this field further – but the UDR demonstrates the need to nurture and train LDFs that has been affirmed in the Afghan context as well. Had the UDR policed mostly Protestant communities this could have freed up the RUC from having to conduct all but typical policing duties in these regions, and the Regulars up to tackle the IRA elsewhere. This would have reduced the Regular burden whilst also allowing for the UDR to defend their communities, as was often desired by both civilian and soldier alike, from IRA and other paramilitary attack. The UDR could then be attached to Regular and RUC patrols outside these regions as local advisers and armed escorts respectively when needed. This is perhaps a stronger LDF model within this, and perhaps also one less prone to accusations of collusion and deviancy. By securing and "defending" their own communities the UDR could have reduced collusion as sectarian enlistees would not have seen the UDR as a proxy to hit Catholics. However, an element of collusion would still have occurred as Loyalists infiltrated the regiment to disrupt its efforts and to gain intelligence on its operations. I also would strongly highlight the almost inevitable likelihood of increased off-duty UDR killings due to the access and intelligence on these soldiers creating numerous "soft targets" – a factor which had led to many UDR soldiers being killed by the IRA.[33] Such a shift would have had to factor these significant pros and cons against each other, whilst also acknowledging that it would have required additional Regular or RUC checkpoints and cordons. The 2nd Grenadier Guards believed following their tour that time and resources were better spent on the UDR mounting checkpoints to free up Regulars for more complex duties elsewhere,[34] which as this thesis has noted was one of the most valuable contributions of the UDR – so additional research is needed to affirm which model is best.

---

[29] Michael Ignatieff, *Handcuffing the Military? Military Judgement, Rules of Engagement and Public Scrutiny* (in Patrick Mileham & Lee Willet (Eds.) *Military Ethics for the Expeditionary Era*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2010) pg. 25-33

[30] Jones & Munoz, *Afghanistan's Local War,* pg. 76

[31] Ibid. pg. 77-78

[32] Ibid. pg. 83

Additional areas for future research

There are a number of areas highlighted throughout the PhD that warrant further and future research. Some of these directly concern LDF's and have been referred to above, but there are UDR-specific areas which warrant future research. There is a need to assess the finds and arrests of the UDR as part of broader studies of their effectiveness. The closest thus far to do this was Potter, though this data is again insufficient to cover the whole period.[35] Archival releases of UDR war diaries and records of finds will significantly enhance our ability to understand the UDR's ability to conduct searches and checkpoints. A similar principle applies to arrest figures, particularly once archival files are released that note the identities and arrests of significant IRA players and leaders, and whether these were ever apprehended or intercepted at UDR checkpoints. This would reinforce the finds statistics by allowing for an understanding of the effectiveness of these basic elements of COIN, and the UDR's ability to conduct these operations – particularly as their training was improved. We are also currently unable to ascertain the ability of the UDR to disrupt or impact IRA activity in the period 1969-1992 and a future study of this once all of this material is released would further clarify the impact of the UDR and broader LDF's on paramilitary activities. For example, were the UDR able to through explosive finds reduce IRA bomb activity for a certain period. This would allow for a greater understanding of the use of the UDR and broader LDF's.

---

[33] O Faoleán, *The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment*, pg. 848; Chesse, *Hunting the Watchmen*, pg. 549-550

[34] NAUK: WO 305/5850 – *Post Tour Report – Part 1 – 2 [Grenadier Guards],* 13th March 1978

[35] Potter, *A Testimony to Courage*

Furthermore, additional archival releases from Cabinet papers would likely yield further light on the final merger of the UDR and the motivations behind it. Similarly, releases from the backroom talks between the British and various parties, including the IRA, may reveal the role that the removal of the UDR paid in paving the road to peace. Lastly, additional archival releases of data for UDR harassment and criminality will allow for a total review of those issues. One area that this thesis was unable to reach a conclusion on was the issue of harassment – which seems to be a common complaint about UDR conduct based on discussions with UDR 1.[36] This thesis has argued that current data indicates that UDR deviancy has been the subject of too much focus – but such releases will be able to effectively confirm or deny this concept. Finally, the thesis also raises the possibility of a distinction within military violence against and abuses of civilians. Whilst this has collectively been called deviancy, I have raised that there may also be an additional "venting" category where deviancy stems not from cultural aggression and a glorification of anti-authority activities, but one motivated by trauma. This requires further examination – not least as cultural deviancy requires a significantly different approach from a condition which requires mental health treatment and support.

---

[36] UDR 1, interview with author 25th February 2022

Contested Legacies

With the conclusion of the main phase of the conflict the focus for many became how the history of the conflict would be recounted. Nearly every member of the UDR interviewed voiced that they felt that the history of the conflict was being written or at least being heavily influenced by the Republicans and former members of the IRA.[37] It must be acknowledged that regardless of whether former combatants in the conflict can rationalise the opposition's actions – they are highly unlikely to accept or condone them.[38] This thesis seeks to aid in "balancing" the record of the UDR further and aiding in presenting a more amenable and accurate legacy of the conflict. Naturally, to some this will not reflect their personal experiences of the conflict or even of the UDR. To those who experienced harassment and abuse at the hands of the UDR, their worldview naturally reflects the injustices committed against them. These are of course valid views of the UDR. However, there are also those who served in the UDR and their loved ones who have mostly suffered in comparative silence amidst the histories of the conflict. One UDR officer recalled how many had been forced to relocate to avoid assassination during their service: 'They'd had to move out of their farms, their homes, make new acquaintances, new friends inland, and they never got any recognition for that. You hear nowadays of people who are supposed to have been intimidated receiving up to £20,000 – those people received not one penny'.[39]

In final summary it must again be noted that it appears that for the British state so long as the UDR faced criticism back in NI, and were largely unknown to the mainland, this could be tolerated. Perhaps the lack of UDR notoriety on Great Britain shielded the government from any fallout, and perhaps it always could have been explained away as part of the broader issue of Northern Ireland sectarianism and violence. The UDR may have been a tolerable sacrifice that may even have distracted attention in NI from even greater calls for public inquiry into British misconduct during the Troubles. The shield of the UDR, and naturally the RUC and other local forces, was not worthy of British protection or defence. But once the attention shifted to Regulars, and to the mainland's media and public attention, the veterans had to be protected. In pursuing political gain or safeguarding, the British state has failed some of its own veterans and should the new Labour government follow previous precedents – it will continue to fail the people of Northern Ireland.

---

[37] UDR 2, interview with author 23rd February 2022; David Crabbe, interview with author 1st September 2021; David Crabbe, interview with author 7th March 2022; Richard Edgar, interview with author 8th July 2022; John Robinson, interview with author 4th November 2022; UDR 3, interview with author 1st November 2023

[38] Chesse, *Hunting the watchmen,* pg. 563-564

[39] Arthur, *Northern Ireland*, pg. 225

Bibliography

An Phoblacht (1999) 'UDR men acted as covert British death squad', 25th February, Available at: https://www.anphoblacht.com/contents/4575 [Accessed on 20/04/2023]

An Phoblacht (2011) 'The UDR — not Dad's Army but a sectarian militia', 18th August, Available at: https://www.anphoblacht.com/contents/1057 [Accessed on 16/08/2021]

Baron Henry Hunt, Report of the Advisory Committee on Police in Northern Ireland, London: HMSO, Chapter 10, available at: https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/hmso/hunt.htm

BBC News (2023) 'Bloody Sunday: Soldier F "has no reliable recollection" of shootings', 25th August, Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-66614633 [Accessed on: 25/11/2023]

BBC News (2023) 'What is the Northern Ireland Legacy Bill?', 5th September, Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-66648806 [Accessed on 25/11/2023]

BBC News (2024) 'NI Troubles: Legacy Act immunity clause 'breaches' human rights', 28th February 2024, Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-68419238 [Accessed on: 21/06/2024]

The Belfast Newsletter (1969) 'New Forces Welcomed By Opposition', November 13th

The Belfast Telegraph (1986) 'Storm over file on the UDR', 28th March

The Belfast Telegraph (1989) 'Paisley launches "Hands Off" the UDR campaign', 5th October 1989

The Belfast Telegraph (1991) 'Don't betray UDR', 16th November

British Army, *Operation Banner: An Analysis of Military Operations in Northern Ireland*, London: Ministry of Defence (2006)

British Army (1969) 'Counter Revolutionary Operations, Part 2 – Internal Security', Land Operations Vol. III

British Army (1970) 'Counter Revolutionary Operations, Part 3 – Counter insurgency', Land Operations Vol. III

British Army, *Subversion in the UDR* report, London: HMSO (1973)

British Government, *Northern Ireland Affairs – Third Report*, London: House of Commons (1998)

De Silva, D. (2012) ‘The Report of the Patrick Finucane Review’, Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-patrick-finucane-review [accessed on 13/08/2020]

The Derry Journal (1970), UDR Advertisement on pg. 5, February 20th

Devine, J. (1990) ‘Leaks: UDR linked to Loyalists’, *The Evening Herald* 17th May

Douglas-Home, C. (1969) ‘New Ulster Force’, *The Times* 13th November

The Fermanagh Herald (1972) Advertisements, 20th May

The Fermanagh Herald (1974) Advertisements, 16th March

The Fermanagh Herald (1977) Advertisements, 3rd September

The Guardian (1971) ‘Internment introduced in Northern Ireland’, 10th August

The Guardian (2021) ‘Northern Ireland prosecutors drop Troubles-era cases against ex-soldiers’, 2nd July, Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jul/02/prosecution-of-soldiers-over-northern-ireland-troubles-deaths-halted

The Guardian (2022) ‘Ex-soldier who shot dead civilian during Troubles convicted of manslaughter’, 25th November, Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/25/soldier-david-jonathan-holden-aidan-mcanespie-troubles-convicted-manslaughter [Accessed on 25/11/2023]

The Guardian (2024) ‘More lives lost than saved in Troubles due to British spy, report finds’, 8th March, Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/mar/08/more-lives-lost-than-saved-northern-ireland-troubles-british-spy-report [Accessed on 10/07/2024]

HC Debate 19th November 1969, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1969-11-19/debates/3ec3dd33-c578-4649-8608-ad4c69fcea1c/UlsterDefenceRegimentBill

HC Debate 1st December 1969, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1969-12-01/debates/4fb7176f-3367-4d7d-8792-9ce547214141/UlsterDefenceRegimentBill?highlight=ulster%20defence%20regiment#contribution-cfd53266-4f50-4e73-a911-ae7535cc859e

HC Debate 4th March 1970, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1970-03-04/debates/a0518cbf-eb44-4b28-8490-9b9bebf01c59/UlsterDefenceRegimentAndSpecialConstabulary?highlight=ulster

%20defence%20regiment%20special#contribution-3f11c2a4-8e2b-438c-9e20-d48630eb4bc6

HC Debate, 17th May 1990, Available at: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1990/may/17/northern-ireland-stevens-report **[Accessed on 05/07/2024]**

HC Debate 8th September 2004, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2004-09-08/debates/94a0a2b2-f498-4970-bd11-86f2cf983e95/RoyalIrishRegiment?highlight=udr#contribution-40bc14f0-9c31-4c1b-8f49-01c120358e27

HC Debate 6th July 2010, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2010-07-06/debates/10070622000001/Terrorism(NorthernIreland)?highlight=udr#contribution-10070622000009

HC Debate 3rd November 2010, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2010-11-03/debates/10110358000005/BloodySundayInquiry(Report)?highlight=scots%20guards%20not%20same#contribution-10110358000486

HC Debate 23rd October 2013, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2013-10-23/debates/13102350000001/NorthernIreland?highlight=udr#contribution-13102356000168

HC Debate 12th November 2013, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2013-11-12/debates/13111261000003/GlenanneGangMurders?highlight=udr#contribution-13111261000172

HC Debate 18th November 2013, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2013-11-18/debates/13111827000001/NorthernIreland(MiscellaneousProvisions)Bill?highlight=udr#contribution-13111825000115

HC Debate 23rd February 2017, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-02-23/debates/4FEA97DC-11F1-4D79-BE1A-A72A45DAD688/ArmedForcesHistoricalCases?highlight=udr#contribution-A7E3494F-4D34-483D-878E-E5EE2348766B

HC Debate 19th April 2017, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-04-19/debates/A011D06C-3781-

4121-BB89-3A4441234ECC/BallydugganFour?highlight=udr#contribution-5E6B616E-FA89-48A3-821F-57A32D627EDE

HC Debate 7th March 2018, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2018-03-07/debates/F71B5776-7BA1-44D0-B1AD-9DF145B7FEC7/ArmedForcesCovenantNorthernIreland?highlight=udr#contribution-9346D3B4-FD34-44CC-AB6C-706AF2033201

HC Debate 26th January 2022, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-01-26/debates/E511EB1C-C7C9-4FA1-9638-33A9E5988B53/VeteransProtectionFromProsecution?highlight=bloody%20sunday%20parachute#contribution-39A2A349-312F-46EA-8971-107B01B1746D

HC Debate 24th May 2022, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-05-24/debates/9A7C93DC-8187-47B9-8786-CA602DA2BB39/NorthernIrelandTroubles(LegacyAndReconciliation)Bill?highlight=udr#contribution-68710191-A071-497C-92CD-E3B90CF1E396

HC Debate 18th July 2023, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2023-07-18/debates/EADA122A-B956-4296-A739-B66818A2A4B6/NorthernIrelandTroubles(LegacyAndReconciliation)Bill?highlight=udr#contribution-7264E79F-0722-4FCA-A863-FF54AF722FC8

HL Debate 8th December 1969, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/1969-12-08/debates/268e3794-37a0-4730-9cf7-9cf201d87c76/UlsterDefenceRegimentBill

HL Debate 11th December 1979, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/1969-12-11/debates/36eab798-eec1-4463-9172-ccab2a5d29c2/UlsterDefenceRegimentBill

HL Debate 17th May 2021, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2021-05-17/debates/83BB6C43-5992-4C58-8BDC-1895FE7C5760/BallymurphyInquestFindings?highlight=bloody%20sunday%20parachute#contribution-631F34AA-DAC4-4B70-8F05-58964BD5082A

HL Debate 31st January 2023, Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2023-01-31/debates/2892AC55-FEEA-47F2-A038-CEE37B4BEF14/NorthernIrelandTroubles(LegacyAndReconciliation)Bill?highlight=udr#contribution-6AF9C7A3-F72D-4756-B4AD-D7D1D4C1E5C4

Holohan, R, (1970) 'Hume urges Catholics to move into UDR', *The Irish Times*, 26 March

The Irish Examiner (1990) 'Disturbing findings', 18th May

The Irish Examiner (1972) 'Figures for Whitelaw', November 2nd

The Irish Examiner (1972) 'Kilkenny man is new head of UDR', November 29th

The Irish Examiner (1990) '"Disband UDR" says man who helped form it', February 23rd

The Irish Examiner (2003) 'Report "obstructed", says Stevens', 17th April

The Irish Independent (1990) 'Salvaging the UDR', 19th May

The Irish Independent (1969) 'Unionists Will Accept New Force', November 13th

The Irish Independent (1970) 'GAA does not condone the UDR', March 2nd

The Irish Independent (1971) Front Page, July 15th

The Irish Independent (1971) 'Prisoners Hit White Paper', 26th August

The Irish Press (1969) 'Shades of the Specials', 13th November

The Irish Press (1969), 'New Force is Unacceptable', 14th November

The Irish Press (1971) 'New UDR Commander a Catholic', July 15th

The Irish Press (1971), '24 Catholics quit UDR', August 19th

The Irish Times (1969) 'UDR Keeps Name by One Vote in Lords', December 12th

The Irish Times (1970) 'First Members of UDR Sworn In', 19th February

The Irish Times (1970) 'Disappointed at Catholic UDR applications', 6th March

The Irish Times (1972) 'Miss Devlin Queries Whitelaw on the UDR, September 4th

NAI 2012/59/1690 - Ulster Defence Regiment [UDR]: parliamentary questions and adverse reports regarding behaviour

NAI 2016/22/2025 - Ulster Defence Regiment [UDR]

NAI 2016/22/2053 - The UDR [Ulster Defence Regiment]

NAI 2017/4/89 – Policy of UDR [Ulster Defence Regiment] patrols being accompanied by the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary]

NAI 2018/28/2803 - Policy of UDR [Ulster Defence Regiment] patrols being accompanied by the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary]

NAI 2019/101/2291 - UDR [Ulster Defence Regiment]: general file

NAUK: CAB 129/145/25 - Record Type: Memorandum. Former Reference: C (69) 150. Title: New Defence Force for Northern Ireland

NAUK: CAB 128/44/53 - Record Type: Conclusion. Former Reference: CC (69) 53

NAUK: CJ 4/283 – Ulster Defence Regiment: Formation

NAUK: CJ 4/669 - Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR): intelligence gathering function. Proposals by Ministry of Defence (MOD) for enhancement

NAUK: CJ 4/1664 - Force levels in Northern Ireland: proposed changes; presentation of statistics, form of units; provision of quarters; strength of Ulster Defence Regiment

NAUK: CJ 4/1666 - Ulster Defence Regiment: ministerial and official visits; future role; policy on carrying of personal protection weapons by UDR members; correspondence with Army and MOD

NAUK: CJ 4/2165 – Future Organisation of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)

NAUK: CJ 4/3064 - Studies into the future role and organisation of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)

NAUK: CJ 4/3467 - A policy appraisal of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR): papers sent to Planning Staff with comments

NAUK: CJ 4/4800 - Future organisation of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)

NAUK: CJ 4/5524 - Future organisation of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)

NAUK: CJ 4/5807 - Anglo-Irish talks on Northern Ireland: Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and security forces issues

NAUK: CJ 4/5808 - Anglo-Irish talks on Northern Ireland: Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and security forces issues

NAUK: CJ 4/6791 - Involvement of Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) members in serious crime

NAUK: CJ 4/7446 – Future Organisation of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)

NAUK: CJ 4/8871 - Future organisation of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)

NAUK: CJ 4/8872 – Future Organisation of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)

NAUK: CJ 4/8930 - Briefing Northern Ireland Politicians on the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)

NAUK: CJ 4/9682 - Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR): reform and relationships with the media

NAUK: CJ 4/10328 – Ulster Defence Regiment and Royal Irish Rangers (1992)

NAUK: DEFE 19/1903 - Northern Ireland: Security – Police, Prisons and UDR: UDR General (1985)

NAUK: DEFE 24/835 – Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR): Recruitment and Medals; Subversion (1974)

NAUK: DEFE 24/836 – Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR): Training and Organisation (1975)

NAUK: DEFE 24/868 - Northern Ireland papers: formation of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)

NAUK: DEFE 24/875 – Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR): Recruitment, Intelligence (1974)

NAUK: DEFE 24/2596 – Northern Ireland: Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR); statistics

NAUK: DEFE 24/3119 – Security Intelligence: Threats to the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) (1990)

NAUK: DEFE 24/3228 - Northern Ireland Ulster Defence Regiment statistics

NAUK: DEFE 24/3312/1 - Ulster Defence Regiment, Royal Irish Regiment: Infancy

NAUK: DEFE 68/916 – Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) Appraisal (1980)

NAUK: DEFE 70/7 - Ulster Defence Regiment: reorganisation of 'B' Specials

NAUK: DEFE 70/10 – Ulster Defence Regiment: Vetting (1970)

NAUK: DEFE 70/241 – Ulster Defence Regiment: Training Policy

NAUK: DEFE 70/1190 – Northern Ireland: Ulster Defence Regiment, Barnett Study (1984)

NAUK: DEFE 70/2208 - Western Europe; Northern Ireland; Ulster Defence Regiment and Royal Ulster Constabulary

NAUK: DEFE 70/3324 – Ulster Defence Regiment Training Matters

NAUK: FCO 33/1486 - Role of defence forces in Northern Ireland: possible introduction of full time Ulster Defence Regiment Battalion

NAUK: PREM 16/154 - IRELAND. Visit to UK by the Taoiseach, Liam Cosgrave, 5 April 1974

NAUK: WO 305/4822 – 8th (County Tyrone) Battalion, Ulster Defence Regiment (1983)

NAUK: WO 305/5626 - Northern Ireland: post tour report: 1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment

NAUK: WO 305/5755 - Northern Ireland: post tour report; 2nd Battalion, The Grenadier Guards

NAUK: WO 305/5810 - Northern Ireland: post tour report; 1st Battalion, The Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders

NAUK: WO 305/5850 - Northern Ireland: post tour report; 2nd Battalion, The Grenadier Guards

NAUK: WO 305/5859 - Northern Ireland: post tour report; 1st Battalion, The Scots Guards

NAUK: WO 305/6024 - Northern Ireland: post tour report; 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment

***The New York Times (2018)* 'Video Shows Unarmed Texas Man With Pants Down Before Fatal Police Shooting', Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/26/us/danny-ray-thomas-houston-police-shooting.html [Accessed on: 13/11/2023]**

***The New York Times* (2021) 'Murder Warrant Is Issued for Austin Police Officer Who Fatally Shot Unarmed Man', 10th March, Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/10/us/austin-police-shooting-murder-charge.html [Accessed on 13/11/2023]**

***The New York Times* (2021) 'How Police Justify Killing Drivers: The Vehicle Was a Weapon', 6th November, Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/police-traffic-stops-shooting.html [Accessed on: 13/11/2023]**

***The New York Times* (2022) 'How George Floyd Died, and What Happened Next', 29th July, Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/article/george-floyd.html [Accessed on: 14/11/2023]**

Police Service of Northern Ireland (2022) *Operation Greenwich* Report, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Available at: https://www.policeombudsman.org/Investigation-Reports/Historical-Reports/Collusive-behaviours-but-no-prior-knowledge-of-att [Accessed on 01/03/2023]

PRONI: CENT/3/147A - Ulster Defence Regiment, (U.D.R.)

PRONI: MIC 686/79 - Ulster Defence Regiment, (U.D.R.)

Reuters, (2023) 'Ex-soldier gets suspended sentence for Northern Ireland 'Troubles' manslaughter', 2nd February, Available at: https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ex-soldier-gets-suspended-sentence-northern-ireland-troubles-manslaughter-2023-02-02/ [Accessed on 25/11/2023]

Stevens, J. (2003) 'Stevens Enquiry: Overview and Recommendations' Available at: https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/collusion/stevens3/stevens3summary.htm [Accessed on 09/01/2023]

The Ulster Herald (1972) 'As the man says…' Section, February 12th

The Ulster Herald (1978) Advertisements, 21st January

Adamson, N. (1974) 'The Role of Reserve Forces in US Military Strategy', US Army War College

Anderson, D. (2017) 'Making the Loyalist Bargain: Surrender, Amnesty and Impunity in Kenya's Decolonization 1952–63' *The International History Review* Vol. 39:1

Aliyev, H. (2016) 'Strong militias, weak states and armed violence: Towards a theory of 'state-parallel' paramilitaries', *Security Dialogue* Vol. 47:6

Bar-Siman-Tov, Y. (1984) 'The Strategy of War by Proxy', *Cooperation and Conflict* Vol. 19:4

Batcher et al. (1995) 'On Measures of Effectiveness', *Phalanx* Vol. 28:4

Bellany, I. (2003) 'Accounting for Army Recruitment: White and Non-White Soldiers and the British Army', *Defence and Peace Economics* Vol. 14:4

Bennett, H. (2007) 'The Mau Mau Emergency as Part of the British Army's Post-War Counter-Insurgency Experience', *Defense & Security Analysis* Vol. 23:2

Bennett, H. (2010) 'From Direct Rule to Motorman: Adjusting British Military Strategy for Northern Ireland in 1972', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* Vol. 33:511

Bennett, H. (2013) ''Smoke Without Fire'? Allegations Against the British Army in Northern Ireland 1972-5' *Twentieth Century British History* Vol. 24:2

Bennett, H. & Burke, E. (2023) 'The Aden Protectorate Levies, Counter-insurgency and the Loyalist Bargain in South Arabia, 1951-1957', in Curless, G. & Thomas, M. (Eds.) *Oxford University Press Handbook on Insurgencies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Borsuk, I. (2016) ‘From War to Peace: Northern Ireland Conflict and the Peace Process’, *Uluslararası İlişkiler* Vol. 13:50

Branch, D. (2010) ‘Footprints in the Sand: British Colonial Counterinsurgency and the War in Iraq’, *Politics & Society* 38:1

Brannan et al. (2001) ‘“Talking to Terrorists”: Towards an Independent Analytical Framework for the Study of Violent Substate Activism’, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* Vol. 24:1

Bruce, S. (1992) ‘The problems of “pro-state” terrorism: Loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 4:1

Bruce, S. (1993) ‘Loyalists in Northern Ireland: Further Thoughts on “Pro-State Terror”’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 5:4

Bruce, S. (1997) ‘Victim selection in ethnic conflict: Motives and attitudes in Irish republicanism’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 9:1

Bryant, C. *Khaki-Collar Crime: Deviant Behaviour in the Military Context*, New York: Free Press (1979)

Bryan et al. (2010) ‘The failed paradigm of ‘terrorism’’, *Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* Vol. 3:2

Burke, E. (2015) ‘Counter-Insurgency against “Kith and Kin”? The British Army in Northern Ireland, 1970–76’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Vol. 43:4

Burke, E. *An Army of Tribes: British Cohesion, Deviancy and Murder in Northern Ireland,* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press (2018)

Bury, P. (2017) ‘Recruitment and Retention in British Army Reserve Logistics Units’, *Armed Forces & Society* Vol. 43:4

Butler, W. *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army: 1854–1992*, Manchester: Manchester University Press (2016)

Campbell, C. & Connolly, I. (2003) ‘A Model for the “War against Terrorism”? Military Intervention in Northern Ireland and the 1970 Falls Curfew’, *Journal of Law and Society* Vol. 30:3

Carey et al. (2015) “Governments, Informal Links to Militias, and Accountability” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 59:5

Chesse, D. (2024) ‘Hunting the Watchmen: The Ulster Defence Regiment and IRA strategy’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies* Vol. 35:4

Chung, C. K. M. (2021) ‘Twenty Years after: Statute of Limitations and the Asymmetric Burdens of Justice in Northern Ireland and Post-war Germany’, *Parliamentary Affairs* Vol. 74:4

Cochran, S. (2010) “Security Assistance, Surrogate Armies, and the Pursuit of US Interests in Sub-Saharan Africa” *Strategic Studies Quarterly* Vol. 4:1

Connelly, N. (2011) ‘The army, the Press and the ‘Curragh Incident’: March 1914’, *Historical Research* Vol. 84:225

Coogan, T. *The Troubles: Ireland’s Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace*, Head of Zeus (2015)

Cordesman, A. (2006) The Iraqi Insurgency and the Risk of Civil War: Who Are the Players?, Centre for Strategic and International Studies Working Draft

Cormac, R. (2016) ‘The Information Research Department, Unattributable Propaganda, and Northern Ireland, 1971–1973: Promising Salvation but Ending in Failure?’, *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 131:552

Cornish, P. (2003) ‘Myth and reality: US and UK approaches to casualty aversion and force protection’, *Defence Studies* Vol. 3:2

Cox, M. (2018) ‘Northern Ireland: The War that came in from the Cold’, Irish Studies in International Affairs Vol. 29

Dandeker, C. & Gow, J. (1999) ‘Military culture and strategic peacekeeping’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies* Vol. 10:2

Dingley, J. (2002) ‘Marching Down the Garvaghy Road: Republican Tactics and State Response to the Orangemen's Claim to March their Traditional Route Home after the Drumcree Church Service’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 14:3

Dixon, P. (2009) ‘“Hearts and Minds”? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq’, *The Journal of Strategic Studies* Vol. 32:3

Dixon, P. (2009) ‘“Hearts and Minds”? British Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland’, *Journal of Strategic Studies* Vol. 32:3

Doherty, M. (2015) ‘Tackling the Terrorists: the Experience of Internment Without Trial in Northern Ireland’, *Journal on European History of Law* Vol. 6:1

Dunn, B. (1984) ‘Analysis for Military Decision Makers’, *Naval War College Review* Vol. 37:4

Eck, K. (2015) ‘Repression by Proxy: How Military Purges and Insurgency Impact the Delegation of Coercion’, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 59:5

Edwards, A. *UVF: Behind the Mask*, Newbridge: Merrion Press (2017)

Ellison, G. & Smyth, J. *The Crowned Harp : Policing Northern Ireland*, London: Pluto Press (2000)

English, R. *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA*, London: Pan Macmillan (2012)

Fazal, T. (2021) 'Life and Limb: New Estimates of Casualty Aversion in the United States', *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 65

Fletcher, J. & Chatelier, P. (2000) 'An Overview of Military Training', Alexandria: US Institute for Defence Analyses

Fox, A.C. (2019) 'Conflict and the Need for a Theory of Proxy Warfare', *Journal of Strategic Security* Vol. 12:1

Frampton, M. 'Agents and Ambushes: Britain's "Dirty War" in Northern Ireland', in Cohen, S. (Eds.) *Democracies at War against Terrorism,* London: Palgrave Macmillan (2008)

French, D. 'Army, Empire, and Cold War: The British Army and Military Policy, 1945–1971', Oxford: Oxford University Press (2012)

Gerle, R. (1998) 'Movement without Ain: Methodological and Theoretical Problems in Oral History' in Perks, R. and Thomson, A. [Eds.] *The Oral History Reader*, London: Routledge

Gorman, L. & Thomas, G. (1991) 'Enlistment Motivations of Army Reservists: Money, Self-Improvement, or Patriotism?', *Armed Forces & Society* Vol. 17:4

Grassiani, E. *Soldiering under occupation: Processes of numbing among Israeli soldiers in the Al-Aqsa Intifada*, Oxford: Berghahn Books (2013)

Griffith, J. (2009) 'Being a Reserve Soldier: A Matter of Social Identity', Armed Forces & Society Vol. 36:1

Hack, K. (2009) 'The Malayan Emergency as counter-insurgency paradigm', *Journal of Strategic Studies* Vol. 32:3

Hemenway et al. (2016) 'Variation in Rates of Fatal Police Shootings across US States: the Role of Firearm Availability', *Journal of Urban Health* Vol. 96

Hennessey, P. & Brownfield, G. (1982) 'Britain's Cold War Security Purge: The Origins of Positive Vetting', *The Historical Journal* Vol. 2:4

Helmus et al. (2018) 'Life as a Private: A Study of the Motivations and Experiences of Junior Enlisted Personnel in the U.S. Army', RAND Corporation

Herron, S. (2014) ‘The role and effect of violence on the Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh’, Unpublished thesis: Queen’s University Belfast

Howard, M. (1993) ‘The use and abuse of military history’, *The RUSI Journal* Vol. 138:1

Hughes, G. *My Enemy’s Enemy: Proxy Warfare in International Politics*, Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press (2014)

Hughes, G. & Tripodi, C. (2009) ‘Anatomy of a surrogate: historical precedents and implications for contemporary counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism’ *Small Wars & Insurgencies* Vol. 20:1

Hulslander, R. & Spivey, J. (2012) ‘Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police’, *PRISM* Vol. 3:3

Ignatieff, M. ‘Handcuffing the Military? Military Judgement, Rules of Engagement and Public Scrutiny’, in Mileham, P. & Willet, L. (Eds.) *Military Ethics for the Expeditionary Era*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs (2001)

Jentzsch et al. (2015) ‘Militias in Civil Wars’, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 59:5

Jones, D. *Understanding Measures of Effectiveness in Counterinsurgency Operations (Fort Leavenworth,* Kansas: School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College (2006)

Jones, S. & Muñoz, A. *Afghanistan's Local War: Building Local Defence Forces*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation (2010)

Keene, S. (2015) ‘The Effective Use of Reserve Personnel in the U.S. Military: Lessons from the United Kingdom Reserve Model’, US Army War College

Keeney, R. (1996) ‘Value-focused thinking: Identifying decision opportunities and creating alternatives’, *European Journal of Operational Research* Vol. 92:3

Killingray, D. (1986) ‘The Maintenance of Law and Order in British Colonial Africa’, *African* Affairs Vol. 85:340

Killworth, P. (1998) ‘The British Army in Northern Ireland: Internal Security Operations, Training and the Ceasefire’, *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* Vol. 20:3

King, A. *The combat soldier: Infantry tactics and cohesion in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2013)

Kolesnichenko et al. (2021) ‘Content, Hierarchy, Intensity of Motives and their Possibility to be Implemented in Servicemen with Various Levels of Effectiveness of Service Activity', *BRAIN: Broad Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience* Vol. 12:4

Kowalski, R. (2018) 'The role of sectarianism in the Provisional IRA campaign, 1969–1997'*, Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 30:4

Krieg, A. & Rickli, J.M. (2018) 'Surrogate warfare: the art of war in the 21st century?' *Defence Studies* Vol. 18:2

Lafree, Dugan & Korte (2009) 'The Impact of British Counterterrorist Strategies on Political Violence in Northern Ireland: Comparing Deterrence and Backlash Models', *Criminology* Vol. 57:1

Laanepere, T. & Kasearu, K. (2021) 'Military and Civilian Field–Related Factors in Estonian Reservists' Military Service Readiness', *Armed Forces & Society* Vol. 47:4

Lawrence, G. & Legree, P. (1996) 'Military Enlistment Propensity: A Review of Recent Literature', US Army Institute for the Behavioural and Social Sciences

Leahy, T. *The Intelligence War against the IRA*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2020)

Leahy, T. (2024) '"Rigorous Impartiality"? The UK Government, Amnesties and Northern Ireland Conflict Legacy, 1998-2022' in McAtackney, L. and O Cathain, M. (Eds.) The Routledge Handbook of the Northern Ireland Conflict and Peace, Abingdon: Routledge

Ledwidge, F. *Losing Small Wars: British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan*, Padstow: TJ International Ltd. (2011)

Lennon, M. (2020) '"Strengthen the Nation": Exploring the Motivating Factors Leading to Irish Defence Forces Recruitment', *The Journal of Military History and Defence Studies* Vol 1:2

Mako, S. (2021) Subverting Peace: The Origins and Legacies of de-Ba'athification in Iraq, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* Vol. 15:4

Makuch, B. '"The Romantics Are Gone": A Year Later, Many Foreign Fighters Have Left Ukraine'*, Vice News*, February 23rd, Available at: https://www.vice.com/en/article/88qwm3/foreign-fighters-in-ukraine [Accessed on 20/06/2024]

Mallinder, L. *Amnesty, Human Rights and Political Transitions: Bridging the Peace and Justice Divide*, Portland: Hart Publishing (2008)

Lett et al. (2021) 'Racial inequity in fatal US police shootings: 2015–2020', *Journal of Epidemiol Community Health* Vol. 75

Lomas, D. (2020) ‘Security, scandal and the security commission report, 1981’, *Intelligence and National Security* Vol. 35:5

Lomas, D. (2021) ‘‘Crocodiles in the Corridors’: Security Vetting, Race and Whitehall, 1945–1968’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Vol 49:1

Lummis, T. (1998) ‘Structure and Validity in Oral History’ in Perks, R. and Thomson, A. [Eds.] *The Oral History Reader*, London: Routledge

MacWatters, K. *Home Guard, Police, and the Social Contract*, Carlisle: US Army War College, US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (2011)

Maxwell, D. (1999) ‘Revolutions in Military Affairs, New Measures of Effectiveness and Good Old Fundamental Objectives’, *Phalanx* Vol. 32:1

McCleery, M. (2012) ‘Debunking the Myths of Operation Demetrius: The Introduction of Internment in Northern Ireland in 1971’, *Irish Political Studies* Vol. 27:3

McCoy, K. (2005) ‘Trained to Torture? The Human Rights Effects of Military Training at the School of the Americas’, *Latin American Perspectives* Vol. 32:6

McEvoy, K., & White, C. (1998) ‘Security Vetting in Northern Ireland: Loyalty, Redress and Citizenship’, *Modern Law Review* Vol 61:3

McGovern, M. (2013) ‘Inquiring into Collusion? Collusion, the State and the Management of Truth Recovery in Northern Ireland’, *State Crime Journal* Vol. 2:1

McGovern, M. *Counterinsurgency and Collusion in Northern Ireland*, London: Pluto Press (2019)

McGovern, M. (2023) ‘Legacy, truth and collusion in the North of Ireland’, *Race & Class* Vol. 64:3

McKearney, T. *The Provisional IRA: From Insurrection to Parliament,* London: Pluto Press (2011)

McKitterick et al. *Lost Lives*, Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company (2007 edition)

Mills, C. & Torrance, D. *Investigation of former Armed Forces personnel who served in Northern Ireland* (House of Commons Library: Research Briefing, 2022), Available at: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8352/CBP-8352.pdf

Morland, M. *Rosemary Nelson Inquiry* Report (London: HMSO, 2011) Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/247461/0947.pdf [Accessed on 31/01/2023]

Moloney, E,. *Voices from the Grave: Two Men's War in Ireland*, London: Faber & Faber Ltd. (2011)

Moskos, C. (1977) 'From Institution to Occupation: Trends in Military Organization', *Armed Forces & Society* Vol. 4:1

Moskos, C. & Wood, F. *The Military: More than Just a Job?,* New York: Pergamon Brassey's International Defence (1988)

Mueller, A. & Segal, D. (2014) 'Structured versus Semistructured versus Unstructured Interviews', *The encyclopaedia of clinical psychology* Vol.1:7

Mulroe, P. *Bombs, bullets and the border: policing Ireland's frontier, Irish security policy: 1969-1978*, Co. Kildare, Ireland: Irish Academic Press (2017)

Mumford, A. *From Belfast to Basra: Britain and the 'Tripartite Counter-Insurgency Model',* University of Warwick: PhD Thesis (2009)

Mumford, A. *Proxy Warfare: War and Conflict in the Modern World*, Cambridge: Polity (2013)

Mumford, A. (2013) 'Proxy Warfare and the Future of Conflict', The RUSI Journal Vol. 158:2

Neumann, P. *Britain's Long War: British Strategy in the Northern Ireland Conflict 1969-98*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan (2003)

Neumann, P. (2003) 'The Myth of Ulsterisation in British Security Policy in Northern Ireland', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* Vol. 26:5

Ni Aolain, F. (2000) 'The Politics of Force: Conflict Management and State Violence in Northern Ireland', Blackstaff Press Belfast, Transitional Justice Institute Research Paper No. 12-05

NIOD – Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (2002), *Reconstruction, background, consequences and analyses of the fall of a 'safe' area*, Available at: http://publications.niod.knaw.nl/publications/srebrenicareportniod_en.pdf [Accessed on 02/07/2022]

Ó Dochartaigh, N. *From Civil Rights to Armalites: Derry and the birth of Irish troubles*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan (2005)

O Dochartaigh, N. (2010) 'Bloody Sunday: Error or Design?', *Contemporary British History* Vol. 24:1

O Dochartaigh, N. (2021) *Deniable Contact: Back-Channel Negotiation in Northern Ireland*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Ó Faoleán, G. (2015) ‘The Ulster Defence Regiment and the Question of Catholic Recruitment, 1970–1972’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 27:5

O’Kane, M. ‘A chilling car journey with “Mad Dog” Adair’, in Henderson, H. and Little, I. (Eds.) *Reporting the Troubles 2*, Antrim: Blackstaff Press Ltd. (2022)

O’Leary, B. *A Treatise on Northern Ireland Volume I: Colonialism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2019)

O’Leary, B. *A Treatise on Northern Ireland Volume II: Control*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2019)

O’Leary, B. *A Treatise on Northern Ireland Volume III: Consociation and Confederation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2019)

The Pat Finucane Centre, *The Hidden History of the UDR: The Secret Files Revealed*, Belfast: The Pat Finucane Centre (2014)

Patterson, H. (2010) ‘Sectarianism Revisited: The Provisional IRA Campaign in a Border Region of Northern Ireland’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 22:3

Patterson, H. *Ireland's Violent Frontier: the border and Anglo-Irish relations during the Troubles*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan (2013)

Pearson, D. (2001) ‘Low-Intensity Operations in Northern Ireland’ in *Soldiers in Cities: Military Operations on Urban Terrain,* US Army War College

Pfiffner, J. (2010) US Blunders in Iraq: De-Baathification and Disbanding the Army, *Intelligence and National Security* Vol. 25:1

Pliske et al. (1986) ' Towards an Understanding of Army Enlistment Motivation Patterns’, US Army Institute for the Behavioural and Social Sciences

Pockrass, R. (1986) ‘The Police Response to Terrorism: The Royal Ulster Constabulary’, *Police Journal* Vol. 59:2

Portelli, A. *The Order Has been Carried Out: History, Memory, and the meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan (2003)

Potter, J. *A Testimony to Courage: The Regimental History of the Ulster Defence Regiment*, Barnsley: Leo Cooper (2001)

Presser, L. *Why We Harm*, New York: Rutger University Press (2013)

Racioppi, L. & O’Sullivan See, K. (2001) ‘“This we will maintain” gender, ethno-nationalism and the politics of unionism in Northern Ireland’, *Nations and Nationalism* Vol. 7:1, pg. 93-94

Ramli, D. (1965) ‘History of the Malay Regiment’*, Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* Vol. 38:1

Robinson, J. (2020) ‘‘‘We have long memories in this area’’: Ulster Defence Regiment place-memory along the Irish border’, *Memory Studies*

Rosland, S. (2009) ‘Victimhood, Identity, and Agency in the Early Phase of The Troubles in Northern Ireland’, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* Vol. 16:3

Ryder, C. *The Ulster Defence Regiment: An Instrument of Peace?* London: Methuen London (1991)

Sackett, P. & Mavor, A. *Attitudes, Aptitudes and Aspirations of American Youth: Implications for Military Recruiting*, Washington DC: National Academies Press (2003)

Sanders, A. (2021) ‘“Attempting to deal with the past”: historical inquiries, legacy prosecutions, and Operation Banner’, Small Wars & Insurgencies Vol. 32:4-5

Scheipers, S. (2017) ‘Irregular Auxiliaries after 1945’, *The International History Review* Vol. 39:1

Segal, D. (1986) ‘Measuring the Institutional/Occupational Change Thesis’, *Armed Forces & Society* Vol. 1:3

Segal et al. (2001) ‘Attitudes of Entry-level Enlisted Personnel: Pro-Military and Politically Mainstreamed’ in Feaver, P. & Kohn, R. (eds.) *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil Military Gap and American National Security*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Shane et al. (2017) ‘The prevalence of fatal police shootings by U.S. police, 2015–2016: Patterns and answers from a new data set’, *Journal of Criminal Justice* Vol. 52

Arthur, M. *Northern Ireland: Soldiers Talking*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd. (1987)

Smith, H. (2005) ‘What Costs Will Democracies Bear? A Review of Popular Theories of Casualty Aversion’, *Armed Forces & Society* Vol. 31:4

Stanton, J. (2015) ‘Regulating Militias: Governments, Militias, and Civilian Targeting in Civil War’, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 59:5

Taylor, P. *Brits: The War Against the IRA,* London: Bloomsbury (2002)

Taylor, P. *Loyalists*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing (2014)

Thomas, M. *Violence and Colonial Order : Police, Workers and Protest in the European Colonial Empires, 1918–1940*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Thompson, P. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986

Thompson, R. *Defeating Communist insurgency,* London: F. A. Praeger (1966)

Todd, R. *Ulster Defence Regiment 1970-1991: A Short History* (1991)

Tonge, J. *Northern Ireland: Conflict and Change*, New York: Routledge (2013)

Tonge, J. (2014) 'A Campaign without End?: 'Dissident' Republican Violence in Northern Ireland', *Political insight: Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom* Vol. 5:1

Trigg, J. *Death in the Fields: The IRA and East Tyrone,* Newbridge: Merrion Press (2023)

Ucko, D. (2013) 'Beyond Clear-Hold-Build: Rethinking Local-Level Counterinsurgency after Afghanistan', *Contemporary Security Policy* Vol. 34:3

Urwin, M. *A State in Denial: British Collaboration with Loyalist Paramilitaries*, Cork: Mercier Press (2016)

Vogelsang, C. (2013) 'Propensity for Military Enlistment: a Descriptive Study of Motivations', Thesis: Smith College

Warner, G. (2006) 'The Falls Road Curfew Revisited', *Irish Studies Review* Vol. 14:3

West, H. (2023) 'A Negotiated Gender Order: British Army Control of Servicewomen in 'Front Line' Counterinsurgency, 1948–2014', *Journal of War & Culture Studies* Vol. 16:2

Winslow, D. *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia: A Socio-Cultural Inquiry*, Ottawa: Canadian Government Publishing (1997)

Wood, I. *Crimes of Loyalty: A History of the UDA*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press (2006)

Woodruff, T. (2017) 'Who Should the Military Recruit? The Effects of Institutional, Occupational, and Self-Enhancement Enlistment Motives on Soldier Identification and Behaviour', *Armed Forces & Society* Vol. 43:4

Woodruff et al. (2006) 'Propensity to Serve and Motivation to Enlist among American Combat Soldiers', *Armed Forces & Society* Vol. 32:3

White, R. (2011) 'Provisional IRA Attacks on the UDR in Fermanagh and South Tyrone: Implications for the Study of Political Violence and Terrorism', *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 23:3

Wright, J. (1990) 'PIRA Propaganda: The Construction of Legitimacy', *Journal of Conflict Studies* Vol. 10:3