

Background

As a Combat Medic I served on Operation Banner on three five month Roulement Tours and two long Tours. During those tours of duty, I witnessed dreadful atrocities. I saw at first hand the aftermath of PSF/PIRA and UDA/UVF execution/ punishment squads as well as their indiscriminate killing and bombing sprees. I saw close up the effects of "tarring and feathering", punishment beatings and kneecappings. We treated not only Soldiers, but countless Civilians, including terrorists, as well. I witnessed men, women and children blown to pieces, because PSF/PIRA or Loyalist Terrorists claimed they were legitimate targets, or enemies of the "cause" or just in the wrong place at the wrong time. I have been shot at, had my eardrums ruptured and routinely spat at. I had bricks and rocks thrown at me by, youngsters. We were experts at "social distancing" as our very lives depended on it. I narrowly escaped death in Divis Flats, whilst treating casualties, including a civilian. I have been petrol bombed¹ and suffered a serious injury that required months of hospitalisation and rehabilitation. That injury causes me permanent debilitating pain to this very day. Above all I lost many good friends, who were killed solely whilst doing their duty. On reflection, their deaths were in vain, as the Terrorists have now "won".

Random Examples

I served as a Saracen Crash Ambulance Team Leader in the Lower Falls during 1972/73, in a five Month period we had six Soldiers Killed and twenty others received major injuries. This included two RPG 7 attacks in a built up area, one fired from the Grosvenor Road Junction up Roden Street, where Marian Brown died earlier. Both RPG attacks killed one Soldier and severely injured fifteen more. One of those killed during that Tour was a young Pte Soldier. He was left isolated by mistake, surrounded by a mob of women disarmed, beaten and then executed by a PSF/PIRA criminal. That young Soldier could have used his SLR and shot those who attacking him, he showed huge restraint and paid for it with his life.

When we went to treat injured Soldiers, we were in grave danger from PSF/PIRA Gunmen. Often as we gave immediate life-saving aid to those Soldiers we were mocked by Lower Falls Residents, who in the words of Harvey Andrews "Laughed and Jeered and Sang their Rebel Songs". They would also try to steal our Weapons or Equipment, whilst we were distracted keeping someone alive. As some of those Soldiers lay dying, onlookers shouted, "hope the Brit Bastard Dies". Yet during that dreadful, haunting period there was not a single act of retaliation, such was our discipline.

Earlier in 1972, I responded, with my medical team, to a massive PSF/PIRA Beer Lorry Bomb, which they detonated in Callender Street. This Bomb injured perhaps 60 people, many of them suffered serious injuries, including facial

¹ Petrol Bombs were as deadly as real Bombs, yet they were used by those so called "peace activists" at every opportunity. The Security Forces could have shot every Petrol Bomber, instead they endured attacks with admirable restraint.

wounds, which probably disfigured them for many years, or possibly life. Later we "crashed out" to a Bomb in a Pub on the Lisburn Road where we had to rescue trapped casualties, one of whom had lost his legs.

Weeks later, we had to search a Tyre Store, near the Custom House, just before a Bomb went off. We were told that a young Apprentice was still in the Store, so we went in to find him and lead him to safety. We found him, he was terrified and we just got him to safety when the Bomb exploded. There but for grace of God! On another occasion, we had to rescue old people from Durham Street when a PSF/PIRA car bomb exploded as we were carrying an old Lady on a Chair to safety. (We used chairs from their houses) To this day, I do not know how the old Lady and we survived, with just eardrum damage and minor abrasions. The above examples are but a snapshot of the thousands, which took place throughout the "Troubles".

Our Daily Lot

Almost daily Soldiers and Policemen had scant minutes to evacuate the frail and elderly from bombs planted by PSF/PIRA close to homes, schools, hospitals and shops. Often PSF/PIRA planted secondary devices, intended to kill those very same "Good Samaritans". The secondary device at Narrow Water was designed exactly as above. It killed two very good friends of mine, one of whom would most likely have become Chief of The General Staff. I had the haunting anguish of watching my good friend, Sgt Tony Butcher a Bomb Disposal Officer, blown to pieces whilst he was defusing a Car Bomb in the Grosvenor Road, deliberately planted next to Houses by the notorious D Coy of PSF/PIRA.

To this day, I can vividly see James, a young Scottish Soldier, as he lay fatally wounded on the Doorstep of a House in Leeson Street. After failing to resuscitate James, I moved him to a Saracen Ambulance, as I did so the owner of the House came out and poured a Kettle of hot water on his Doorstep, which was covered with his Blood and Mucus. That cold, callous, spiteful act still haunts me to this very day. It was clear that he had heard James gasping his last and did nothing to help that dying young man. I was involved in the aftermath of the Bombing of Mil Wing MPH where another great friend, Phil Cross, lost his life. Towards the end of my service, I was involved in the Thiepval Barracks Bombing. Luckily I escaped injury, others like Warrant Officer Bradwell were not so lucky.

Clarification

The experiences I describe above were not unique to me, far from it, as they were the lot of most Soldiers and Police who served during Op Banner. ***I do not submit them to sell myself or to imply that I am some sort of hero.*** I submit them as a reminder to your committee of the terrible toll Op Banner had on very ordinary Soldiers and Policemen. I can also say with absolute conviction that I never met or even knew a Soldier or Policeman who woke up in a Morning and said "Today I am going to kill someone". The exact opposite is true of PSF/PIRA and the UDA/UVF, they went out specifically to kill. ***Yes, a very***

small number of RUC and Army did wrong and they should face the full impact of the Law.

Photographic Evidence.

I would draw the attention of you and your committee to the fact that the Internet and Archives contain a large number of Photos of Soldiers and Police comforting or treating Civilian Casualties following PSF/PIRA Bombs. Nationalists, including elected Politicians, routinely ignore those selfless acts! They just do not fit their mantra of "Brutal British Squaddies". I defy anyone to find a Photo of a PSF/PIRA or UDA/UVF Terrorist doing similar. Yet the Stormont House Agreement and its proposed replacement are designed to hound those who routinely and at great risk, did good and allow the Terrorists, who committed so much evil, to become the "victors".

Lives Saved

On this very day, countless people walking the Streets of Northern Ireland are alive solely because of the selfless actions of Soldiers and Policemen. Some of those actions I have described above, They routinely risked their lives so that others lived. Some died in the process, like Tony Butcher. The Bible tells us "Greater Love No Man Hath than he who lays down his life for his Friends". This was true time after time in during Op Banner. When I speak of those who are alive today because of the selfless acts of the Security Forces, I also include Children and Grandchildren of Parents or Grandparents whose lives ordinary Soldiers and Policemen saved. Another huge swathe of people are alive today because of the actions of organisations such as the RUC Special Branch and Military Special Forces. ***I would recommend to you and your Committee that you read a Book Titled "Secret Victory: The Intelligence War That Beat the IRA" by Dr William Matchett. In fact, I would strongly recommend that you ask him to give evidence to your Committee.***

Palpable Ingratitude

Included in those who now live fruitful lives because of the selfless actions of the Security Forces are many members of the Alliance, DUP and SDLP Parties. Your esteemed Committee includes elected representatives from each of those Parties. The reason I draw this to your attention is that both Alliance and the SDLP have never acknowledged the huge debt that is owed to those, who in the words of Bishop Chartres of London, "Kept the Pass open so that Peace could come through". Both parties will use any platform to expose alleged Army and Police wrongdoing, but the SDLP in particular will never acknowledge the price paid in blood and treasure by those who saved countless lives, including members of its own Party. ***This deliberate and calculated action by both Parties is demeaning. It causes Veterans great distress and in my mind contributes hugely to the mental health problems and suicides, which beset us.***

This ingratitude grieves me most. At times when I am in very dark places, I think of those who gave their lives defending Civilians against Terrorists and agonise over their sacrifice. It is time that those Parties publically acknowledged the debt they and countless others owe the very Soldiers and Police, they routinely and vociferously condemn. It is also a reason why Legacy is so one sided. I draw your attention to a series of Essays on the "Scandal of Legacy" which the Belfast Newsletter published in 2018. Those essays prove how this. Again, the Deputy Editor of the Newsletter would be a worthwhile and important witness for your Committee to hear.

Alleged Army and RUC Brutality and "Shoot To Kill"

During the 1990's the Army was also heavily committed to operations in the FRY. Those Soldiers, most of whom had served in Northern Ireland and after the Balkans returned to serve there, are to this day held up as an example of Professional Peacekeeping.

Later that decade the RUC sent some 60 Officers to Kosovo as part of an International Police Force. Like the Army, both NATO and UN Senior Commanders singled out the RUC as being the most Professional Police Detachment in Kosovo. Their actions were exemplary throughout. ***My point here is that the British Soldiers and RUC Officers who served with distinction in Bosnia and Kosovo had all served on Op Banner and returned there for further tours of duty. Yet according to Nationalists and their Politicians, they were and still are the epitome of evil. How can this be?***

There is little or no evidence that the Army and Police had a deliberate and directed "Shoot to Kill" policy during Op Banner.

Alleged Imbalance

You will hear during your deliberation that some 20,000 Republicans and Loyalists went through the Courts, whilst only a handful of Army and Police did so. In fact, a very senior member of our judiciary stated that it was this imbalance, which was part of the Legacy problem. What utter nonsense! The facts are clear, between 1969 and 2003 there were 37,000 Terrorist Shootings and over 19,000 Bombings including Incendiary Bombs. That is almost 60,000 Terrorist Incidents. Disputed actions by the Security Forces are less 0.1% of that total. The Terrorists who went through the Courts were often expendable Cannon Fodder. The Terrorist Godfathers never faced justice.

Collusion

I am sure that your Committee will hear lots about "Collusion" during its deliberations. Again, there is scant evidence of systemic Security Force Collusion and none that would stand up to intense Legal scrutiny. However, there was collusion! That collusion allowed senior PSF/PIRA godfathers and PIRA Army

Council members to get away with murder because they "were essential to the Peace Process".

The other elephant in the room over collusion is that between the ROI government and PSF/PIRA. Previous and recent declassified files show that the Republic of Ireland, in an act of blatant State Collusion, routinely abused the "Political Offense Exception" to prevent extradition to the UK of PSF/PIRA killers and bombers.

A paper, written by William J Duffy in 1991, on terrorists using the "Political Offense Exception" for the respected Dickinson Journal of International Law and published in the Penn State International Law Review concludes: *"Courts must not be permitted to allow IRA members to avail themselves of the protection of the "Political Offense Exception", protection to which they are not legitimately entitled. The acts of indiscriminate violence committed by the IRA, by which it seeks to achieve its goals, were not in the contemplation of the early judges who formulated the political offense exception"*

Getting to the Truth!

The Stormont House Agreement relied heavily on "Truth". Getting the truth from the Security Forces is highly likely, however getting the truth from Terrorists will just not happen. In particular, hell will freeze over before PSF/PIRA tells the truth. **PSF/PIRA will never tell the truth to any Legacy body. However, they will cynically use it to re-write history.**

Comments on the Stormont House and New Proposed Legacy Structures

Q; Will the Government's proposed approach will meet the needs of victims, survivors and their families?

A: No it will not as it is unlikely that any prosecutions of the Godfathers of Terror will take place. It is highly likely that only RUC and Army Veterans will face investigation. It will not meet the real needs of the countless victims, survivors and families of PSF/PIRA and UDA/UVF Terrorists or those they maimed for life.

Q: What are the differences between the Government's new proposals and the draft Stormont House Agreement Bill?

A: My personal belief is that when you dig beneath the surface there is little difference.

Q: Whether and how the Government's proposals will promote reconciliation in Northern Ireland?

A: No it will not, nor will the Stormont House Agreement. In particular, the pernicious influence of PSF/PIRA, a one-sided judicial system, gross abuse of

Legal Aid and above all the continual and toxic demonising of the RUC and Army by Nationalists will ensure that reconciliation is impossible. Furthermore, the continual interference of Dublin in our internal affairs confounds any hopes of reconciliation. The above will also ensure that no Soldier or Policeman will ever get a fair trial.

Q: What steps can the Government can take to ensure that the proposed new legacy body is independent, balanced and open, and complies with the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and ECHR commitments.

A; The only organisation that should be investigating the past is the PSNI. They are our legitimate Police Force and it is grossly insulting to them to suggest that they are incapable of meeting the above criteria. Having a parallel investigatory body with full Police Powers, could well be unlawful and open to Legal Challenge

Q: The potential merits of consolidating the bodies envisaged in the Stormont House Agreement into a single organisation?

A: It is pointless even setting up those other Bodies. PSF/PIRA will lie and lie to those bodies.

Q: What legislative steps the Government can take to address what have been described as vexatious claims against veterans?

A: It seems that the UK is too worried about the Dublin and Nationalists to expose vexatious practice. Last year alone Legal Aid came to £90 Million!. Almost all of that went to so called Public Interest or "Human Rights Lawyers" representing Republicans and Nationalists. Severely vetting this, perhaps by an independent Judge, would stop most of this vexatious money making racket.

Conclusion:

First: The PSNI should be funded to investigate all unsolved Murders and serious injuries which occurred during the "Troubles. That is their rightful role. The definition of Victim needs to change, to exclude Terrorists of any hue.

Secondly: The UK Government must initiate a major inquiry into the role of the Republic of Ireland throughout the terror campaign. In particular, the inquiry should examine potential collusion between Dublin and PSF/PIRA, which allowed PSF/PIRA to kill and maim along the Border regions. The UK Government must ensure, using International Courts if necessary, that the ROI pays its share of the Victims of PSF/PIRA Pensions as well.

Thirdly: Our Government should openly challenge the corrosive Nationalist Political narrative, which demonises those who "held the pass open" and frequently paid the ultimate price for doing so.

Fourthly, the Government should robustly challenge the BBC over its use of the term "Combatants" to describe both Security Forces and Terrorists. This

persistent use by the BBC of this term equates the Terrorists with the legitimate forces of Law and Order; again, it is wrong and demeans those who gave their all.

Fifthly: I am just an ordinary person who served his country, but I do know right from wrong and allowing proud, evil unrepentant Terrorists to rewrite history is wrong.

Finally: I recommend that the Committee listen to the song Soldier by Harvey Andrews. It tells the story of C/Sgt Willets GC, his sacrifice in saving others and the treatment of his remains as they were taken away from Springfield Road Police Station. His story epitomises the sacrifice that so many Soldiers and Police gave during Op Banner and how Nationalists have insulted that sacrifice to this very day.

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