



**An Chartlann Náisiúnta**  
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Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)Introduction:

1. The Ulster Defence Regiment is a regiment of the British army, composed of full-time and part-time soldiers recruited locally in Northern Ireland for service there. Under the terms of the Ulster Defence Regiment Act, members of the regiment are liable to be called out: in defence of life or property in Northern Ireland against armed attack or sabotage; in defence of the United Kingdom against actual or apprehended attack; or in circumstances where national danger is imminent or a great emergency has arisen. So far its role has been confined to the first of these tasks, i.e. internal security duties in Northern Ireland. The UDR differs from other regiments of the British army in that it can only be deployed for service in Northern Ireland.

2. The UDR was established in 1969. The Stormont Home Affairs Minister, Robert Porter, responding to widespread public concern about the RUC and the B Special Reserve, appointed an Advisory Committee, chaired by Lord Hunt, to

"examine the recruitment, organisation, structure and composition of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Ulster Special Constabulary and their respective functions and to recommend as necessary what changes are required to provide for the efficient enforcement of law and order in Northern Ireland".

3. The Hunt Report, issued in October 1969, made a number of recommendations, the thrust of which were to separate policing and military roles, specifically:

- that the RUC be relieved of all duties of a military nature;
- that the policy of the general issue and carrying of

firearms be phased out as soon as possible;

- that the B-Specials be disbanded and replaced by a volunteer police reserve, and a locally recruited part-time force under the command of the Army.
4. Arising from this latter recommendation, the British Government published a White Paper in November 1969 proposing the formation of the Ulster Defence Regiment. The White Paper outlined the proposed role and structure of the Regiment -viz-
- A locally recruited part-time force, under the control of the GOC (Northern Ireland), to support the regular military forces on purely military duties.
  - Its function would be "to support the regular forces in Northern Ireland should circumstances so require, in protecting the border and the State against armed attack and sabotage. It will fulfil its role by undertaking guard duties at key points and installations, by carrying out patrols and by establishing checkpoints and road blocks when required to do so. In practice such tasks are most likely to prove necessary in rural areas. It is not the intention to employ the new force on crowd control or riot duties in cities."
  - The size of the force was to be determined in the light of experience as the build-up proceeded, but "in any case will not ultimately exceed 6,000 officers and men."
  - The immediate commander of the force would be a regular army brigadier.
  - Members of the force would not be required to serve outside Northern Ireland (a provision subsequently included in the Act).

Legislative Background:

5. The force was established by the Ulster Defence Regiment Act (1969) which was later incorporated into the Reserve

Forces Act 1980. Regulations for the Regiment were first published in 1969 and were based largely on the regulations applying to the Territorial Army in Britain. These were subsequently amended and the regulations currently applying to the UDR were promulgated in 1980.

Recruitment and Terms of Service:

6. All recruits to the regiment are subject to clearance by the RUC and are vetted by a special unit staffed by members of the regular army. The regiment does not appear to have experienced any difficulty in obtaining recruits and it is estimated that, since its formation, at least 40,000 people have passed through the ranks of the regiment. The overwhelming majority of these recruits have been drawn from the Protestant community. Immediately after its establishment, Catholics joined the regiment in significant numbers. However, Catholic recruitment subsequently declined to the point where it rapidly became a negligible factor in UDR recruitment. (See further para 15 below.)

7. Full-time members sign up for a maximum of three years; this is extendable by one, two, or three year periods up to a maximum of 22 years. A full-time member can leave the regiment after giving 28 days notice. Part-time members are recruited for one, two or three year periods and are entitled to leave the regiment overnight.

UDR Casualties:

8. Over the years, off-duty members of the UDR, particularly in rural areas, have frequently been targets for IRA attack. Since 1970, over 180 members of the UDR have been killed both on and off duty.

Developments in the Role of the UDR - Ulsterisation:

9. The policy of "Ulsterisation" adopted in the mid-1970's reduced the profile of the British army in Northern Ireland and enhanced the role of the UDR. As a consequence, the UDR assumed increasing responsibility for the provision of military support to the RUC. Currently it is estimated that the UDR provide about 14 million man-hours a year, much of it at night and at weekends.

10. Since 1981, each of the 9 battalions of the UDR has had responsibility for a particular area, known in military language as the Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR). The TAORs of each battalion are shown on the map at Annex A. In 80% of Northern Ireland - everywhere other than North and West Belfast and the border areas apart from West Fermanagh - the UDR is responsible for providing round-the-clock support in the form of vehicle checkpoints, patrols, quick reaction forces etc. Regular British Army troops operating in any of the UDR TAORs come under the operational control of the local UDR Commander.

Developments in the Structure of the UDR:

11. There have been a number of important changes in the structure of the regiment:

- (1) The original part-time nature of the UDR has changed with a marked reduction in the numbers of part-time soldiers. In 1973 when the strength of the regiment stood at 9,000, about 89% of the UDR were part-time; currently, with a strength of roughly 6,400, about 55% are part-time. (At Annex B is a graph showing trends in the strength of the UDR, both part-time and full-time, for the period 1970 - 1989.)
- (2) Dress and equipment have been standardised with that normally used by the regular army. The old olive green fatigues have been replaced by camouflage dress; helmets

are now standard issue; the regiment's rifle is the modern Lee Enfield SA 80. Without sight of the regiment's insignia, a UDR soldier is indistinguishable from an army regular. The recent decision to issue plastic bullets to the UDR could be seen as a further development of efforts to provide the regiment with all the equipment currently available to members of the regular army.

- (3) There is now a considerable presence of former members of the regular army in the UDR: roughly 25% of UDR members are estimated to be ex-regular soldiers.
- (4) Officers are now recruited through the Army's Regular Commissions Board at Westbury in England and undergo the one-year regular officer training course in Sandhurst.

#### Training:

12. Efforts have been made to "professionalise" \* the force through an increased emphasis on training. Since 1985, recruits have had longer and more skilled training periods at Ballykinlar. There is also more opportunity for UDR soldiers to train and gain experience outside the North; members of the UDR may spend time not only in Britain, but also in Cyprus, Belize, Kenya etc.

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\* [NOTE: Professionalism here denotes stronger cohesiveness, morale and discipline, higher standards of military techniques, and greater effectiveness. It does not imply better conduct of relations with the public or higher standards of private behaviour; it is clear from official statistics as well as other evidence that UDR standards in these areas have not improved.]



Current Profile of the UDR:

13. The UDR now has the appearance of a conventional military force. It carries out much the same duties as the regular army with the exception of

- (1) riot control (though it is of note that the regiment have now been issued with plastic bullets);
- (2) patrolling in hard republican areas (though there have been reports of the regiment patrolling in some hard areas like the Short Strand and the Markets area of Belfast, and in nationalist areas of East Tyrone and South Derry);
- (3) covert plain-clothes operations;
- (4) bomb disposal.

In addition, the UDR does not screen applicants to the regiment - this role is assigned to a unit of the regular army.

14. Regular Army personnel continue to fill some key roles in the regiment:

- The Commander and the key staff at UDR HQ;
- Battalion Commanding Officers, Quartermaster, and Training Intelligence and Security Officers;
- At NCO level - the Regimental Sergeant Major, Chief Clerks, Armourers and Training staff sergeants. In addition, the staff sergeant in each battalion acting as Assistant Intelligence Officer is drawn from the regular army.

Perceptions of the UDR:

15. In Northern Ireland, there are profound divergences in perceptions of the UDR:

Nationalist attitude:

- Initially, nationalist attitudes to the UDR were relatively positive. When recruitment to the UDR began in January 1970, the new force attracted quite a number of Catholic recruits and by the end of 1970 roughly 18% of the force were Catholic. However, criticism soon grew among nationalists that too many former B-Specials had been recruited and, as its reputation worsened and as IRA attacks on its members increased, Catholic membership of the force declined. At present, Catholic membership is negligible (between two and three percent).
  
- There have been many complaints from nationalists of harassment by members of the regiment. There have also been a significant number of cases where members of the UDR colluded with loyalist paramilitaries (this was a key issue which gave rise to the Stevens Inquiry); and a significant number of cases of UDR members convicted for participating actively in loyalist paramilitary organisations. Up to the end of 1989, more than 130 UDR members had been convicted of serious offences. A recent survey compiled by the Irish Information Partnership shows that, over the past five years, members of the UDR were 50% more likely than members of the general public to be involved in paramilitary crime.
  
- The overwhelming body of Catholics (and not just nationalists) view the regiment with the deepest suspicion and, in many cases, with downright hostility. A recent reflection of the predominant Catholic attitude



was the statement by Archbishop Daly on 27 March 1991 where he called for a review of the deployment of the UDR in nationalist East Tyrone and described its deployment in the area as "a significant part of the problem rather than contributing to the solution". In the same statement, the Archbishop made the point that "members of this regiment are drawn almost exclusively from the unionist and loyalist community. As a result, their encounter in a security role with the nationalist community is seen and cannot but be seen as pitting one community against the other".

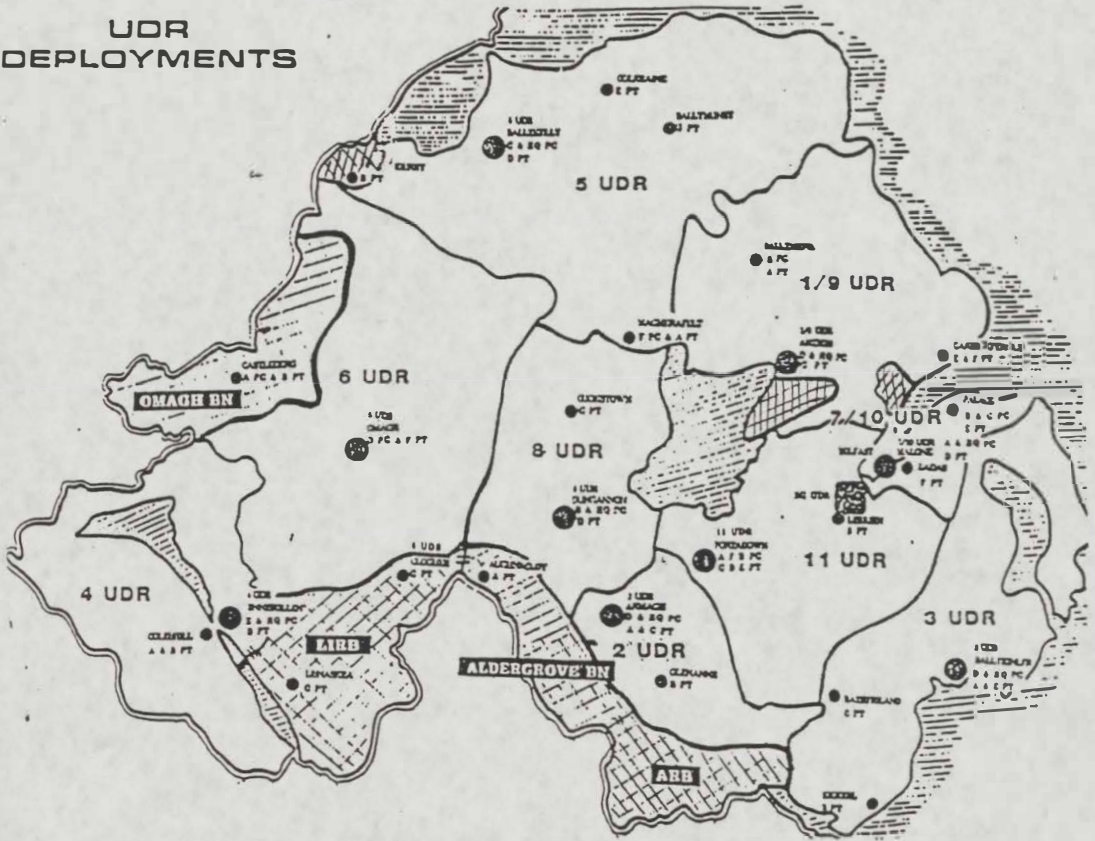
Unionist Attitude:

- For unionists, the UDR has symbolic importance as "their" force, composed of their neighbours and friends doing their civic duty of defending the community against terrorist threat. For this reason, attacks on members of the UDR are felt by the majority of Protestants as a direct attack on their community. For many loyalists, the UDR is viewed in terms of a last line of defence for their community; a view which is reinforced by IRA attacks and underlying suspicions of long-term British intentions.

16. Overall, attitudes to the UDR on the part of each community are diametrically opposed. It is hardly surprising in a divided community that an armed force raised almost exclusively from one side of the community to police the other, should tend to deepen divisions. It is noteworthy that Lord Hunt himself called in a recent letter to the London Independent for the regiment to be phased out.

15 May 1991

UDR DEPLOYMENTS



# STRENGTH OF UDR TRENDS

