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Local & National

Service to be held for soldiers who served and died in Ulster

Wednesday, January 09, 2008

By Sam Lister

The contribution made by British Armed Forces during the Troubles will be marked in a one-off commemoration service, the Government announced last night.

A ceremony will be held at St Paul's Cathedral in London to pay tribute to the 763 personnel killed and the 300,000 personnel who have served in operations in Ulster since 1969.

Ministry of Defence officials said it had been given the go-ahead following the end of Operation Banner, the Army's longest continuous deployment, which finished last July.

Plans were also announced for a service to recognise operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Defence Minister Derek Twigg said: "I am delighted to be able to announce dates for commemorations to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of our Armed Forces in Bosnia and Northern Ireland over many years.

"The two services will also be a time to pay tribute to those service personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice in bringing stability, security and peace to these countries.

"I hope these events will be well attended by veterans, their families and by those who lost loved ones in Bosnia and Northern Ireland."

The ceremony will be held on Wednesday, September 10, and details on how to obtain tickets will be released in the next few months.

Jeffrey Donaldson, DUP MP for Lagan Valley, said: "I am pleased that the MoD has finally decided to have the memorial service.

"I have been pressing for this for sometime for the department to recognise the valiant contributions Armed Forces personnel have made to securing peace in Northern Ireland.

"It is recognition of the commitment of the Army. Many personnel lost their lives and others suffered serious injuries and still live with the consequence today.

"It is right that the state should recognise these contributions.

"But I hope this is not the end. I want to see a permanent memorial in recognition of what has been done to protect the people of Northern Ireland and bring about lasting peace."

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