

From: J.F. Howe, Civil Adviser to General Officer Commanding



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Asst Sec.
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HEO
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EO
UDR Principal
Chief Clerk
31st July 1972

Lt Col J.L. Pownall, OBE,
AG Secretariat,
Ministry of Defence,
Main Building,
Whitehall,
London, SW1.

Your reference
Our reference
Date

1347/72

Dear John.

UDR - MEMBERSHIP OF UDA

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Thank you for your letter of 17th July about UDR involvement in the UDA.

It is inevitable that a part of the Protestant element of a part-time Regiment in Ulster will sympathise with the aims of the UDA; and it is suspected that there are cases where this sympathy is carried to the extent of active membership. There are however no proven facts as yet on which to base an estimate of the scale of the problem. The following are the firmer reports that have been received, and they are being investigated:

- In a television interview in Belfast on 15th July, a masked man wearing a beret claimed that he was a UDR officer.
- A UDR part-timer from a City battalion has furnished a list of nine other UDR men, including one officer, whom he says are active members of the UDA.
- Two series of weapons losses are thought to be almost certainly in part the work of Protestant organisations. These are the losses of 9 SLRs since the beginning of the year in 8 UDR (East Tyrone), and 12 SLRs in the last few weeks in the Portadown area (2 UDR).

The losses of two pieces of radio equipment in West Tyrone in March are not necessarily attributable to Protestant organisations.

The areas where HQ UDR believe that this involvement is most likely to exist are Portadown and Lurgan (2 UDR), the Bann Valley (5 UDR), Ardboe and Aughnacloy (8 UDR), Carrickfergus (9 UDR), and West Belfast (10 UDR).

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.

STAFF-IN-CONFIDENCE
CONFIDENTIAL

/Similarly..

