



# Long, Long, War: Voices from the British Army in Northern Ireland 1969-1998

*Ken Wharton*

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This is the story of the Troubles in Northern Ireland told from the perspective of the British soldiers who served there between 1969 and 1998. This was a war against terrorists who knew no mercy or compassion; a war involving sectarian hatred and violent death. Over 1,000 British lives were lost in a place just 30 minutes flying time away from the mainland.

The British Army was sent into Northern Ireland on August 14, 1969 by the Wilson government as law and order had broken down and the population (mainly Catholics) and property were at grave risk. Between then and 1998 some 300,000 British troops served in Northern Ireland. This is their story - in their own words - from first to last.

There are stories from some of the most seminal moments in the period of the Troubles in Northern Ireland - detailed accounts of firefights at Crossmaglen from the commanders on the ground at the time; an incredible story from a British Army sniper in Londonderry, 1973; an account from the first squaddie on the scene at Penny Lane after the 1988 funeral killings of the two corporals; the 1988 Ballygawley coach blast which killed 8 Light Infantrymen, with a first-hand account by one of the survivors; the case of the missing Christmas Club money in the Ardoyne; Gerry Adams' 'birthday treat' at a vehicle checkpoint, accounts by plain clothes intelligence officers on the streets of Belfast ... and many more. The brave men and women of the Ulster Defence Regiment, many of whom were murdered in their homes or at their places of work, occupy a prominent place in the book.

The author has also conducted a great deal of original research to produce a roll of honor for all service personnel killed in Northern Ireland. A major contribution to research, the list differs to its 'official' MoD counterpart to a surprising degree. It includes more than 20 names before the first official casualty, Gunner Robert Curtis (1971) and more than 10 after the last official casualty, L/Bombardier Stephen Restorick (1997).

Receiving a remarkable amount of cooperation from Northern Ireland veterans eager to tell their story, the author has compiled a vivid and unforgettable record. Their experiences - sad and poignant, fearful and violent, courageous in the face of adversity, even downright hilarious - make for compelling reading. Their voices need to be heard.

"In this excellent and wide-ranging selection of first-hand accounts from the British Army in Northern Ireland, Ken Wharton has assembled testimonies from men of all ranks that are invariably informative, sometimes humorous and often deeply moving. A fitting tribute to the British soldier in a campaign that lasted nearly three decades." Adrian Gilbert, author of *POW: Allied Prisoners in Europe 1939-1945* (The Sunday Times Best Military Books 2006)

"A compelling story, told in the refreshingly simple prose of a soldier-scribe. This is the tale of that other war on terror - one fought over several, bloody decades, and largely in the shadows. Lest we forget." Damien Lewis, bestselling author of *Operation Certain Death* and *Bloody Heroes*

"Here at last is the authentic voice of the veterans of a gruelling and thankless campaign. Powerful, revealing and moving." Patrick Bishop, bestselling author of 3 Para and Bomber Boys.

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