THE IRISH NEWS

TRUSTED SINCE 1891

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 18 2026 £1.80 (€2.30)

Meet the new Bishop of Derry

P5

PLUS... Derry and Raphoe 'may need to merge'

Adair 'has nightmares about Brian Keenan'

CONNLA YOUNG

LOYALIST Johnny Adair has revealed he has 'nightmares' about being held captive by veteran IRA leader Brian Keenan.

The revelations appear in a new book about Adair's role as a commander in the UDA/UFF at the height of the Troubles – Enemies Within by Dr Aaron Edwards.

During the Troubles, Adair was in charge of the UDA's infamous Shankill Road-based 'C Company', which was responsible for the murder of dozens of Catholics.

Although the former loyalist commander has been

turn to P3
£50k to 'turn tout' P3

MLAs' pay hike is 'grotesque'

JOHN MANLEY

STORMONT'S first minister has described a further pay hike for MLAs that takes their basic salary to almost £70,000 as "grotesque".

Michelle O'Neill said her party would "strongly reject" the increase, which comes just months after MLA salaries rose by £14,000.

Alliance deputy leader Eóin Tennyson also criticised the proposed 3% increase

turn to P7

'None of us want to be playing against Israel'

Head coach Heimir Hallgrímsson speaks to the media yesterday where he announced his latest Republic of Ireland squad and talked about the upcoming controversial matches against Israel PICTURE: BEN McSHANE/SPORTSFILE

Full report Back page

Residents reject the proposed mediator

Commission's choice previously worked with the Orange Order

CONNLA YOUNG
CRIME & SECURITY CORRESPONDENT
c.young@irishnews.com

GARVAGHY Road residents have rejected a mediator appointed by the Parades Commission to find a solution to the Drumcree dispute over concerns its clients included the Orange Order.

Details of the appointment of Tides Mediation NI emerged as the Garvaghy Road Residents' Coalition (GRRC) held a public meeting in Portadown last night.

A large crowd of residents, gathered at Drumcree Pastoral Centre, were read a letter sent by GRRC to the Parades Commission on Wednesday.

In the correspondence, the coalition pointed out it had been brought to its attention "that Tides Mediation NI has previously delivered training to the Orange Order".

"Clearly there has been a previous and formal business/client relationship between both organisations," the letter states.

"Was this previous relationship disclosed to the Commission by Tides Mediation?"

Earlier this month, members of the Order based in Portadown notified the Commission of their intention to bring 60 members through the mainly Catholic Garvaghy Road area later this month.

The controversial parade plan emerged after a determination linked to this year's Drumcree parade was quashed at the High Court in Belfast.

During proceedings, the parading body conceded a procedural error in how it dealt with an annual application by the Orange Order for permission to walk along the majority nationalist road.

The violent Drumcree stand-off, which began in 1995, ended with the UVF murder of three Catholic children in 1998.

turn to P4

Former RUC chief constable offered Adair £50k to 'turn tout,' book claims

CONNLA YOUNG
CRIME & SECURITY CORRESPONDENT
c.young@irishnews.com

FORMER RUC chief constable Ronnie Flanagan offered UDA/UFF boss Johnny Adair £50,000 in cash in a bid to recruit him as an informer, a new book about the loyalist godfather has claimed.

Enemies Within by Dr Aaron Edwards provides unique insight into the activities of the former paramilitary boss.

During the Troubles, Adair was in charge of the UDA's infamous Shankill Road based 'C Company', which was responsible for the murder of dozens of Catholics.

The new book sets out how Adair was arrested for the murder of mother-of-two Philomena Hanna in west Belfast in April 1992.

The 26-year-old is believed to have been gunned down by notorious 'C Company' triggerman Stephen 'Top Gun' McKeag as she worked in a pharmacy.

Adair, who spoke extensively to the author, claims that during questioning he was asked to work for RUC Special Branch.

When he refused, he says he was told "the boss" was going to visit him.

"He started talking and never mentioned the case … 'Johnny, you know, all these guys and their colleagues have been talking to you all week," Adair recounts.

'Yes, yes, yes, yes,' [I replied].

"Then he just lifts the case and says, 'This is yours …' And he opens her up. And he says, 'That's all yours!'

"And there's £50,000 in it and it was all £1,000 pound bundles."

Adair alleges the man who made the cash offer was Ronnie Flanagan, who became RUC chief constable in 1996.

"And it was Ronnie Flanagan, who went on to become the chief constable, [who] brought it in, and he was the head of Special Branch, but I didn't know that at the time, 'cos I'd never seen him in public," he said.

Adair says he rejected the offer and was later released.

It was common for the police to recruit paid informers from all paramilitary organisations during the Troubles.

The book also alleges that in 1992 Adair met with south Belfast UDA'/UFF commanders Joe Bratty and Raymond Elder before the Sean Graham's Bookmakers atrocity.

Five people were murdered when a UDA gunman burst into the Ormeau Road bookmakers and opened fire on February 5, 1992.

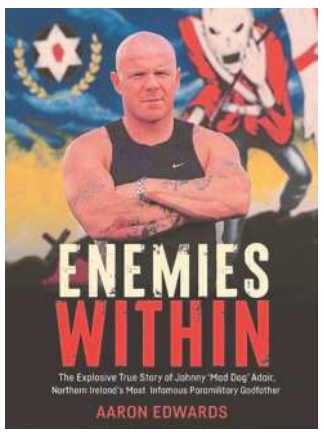
Former RUC Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan

"After the IRA carried out a targeted landmine attack on a minibus carrying eight Protestant workers home from making repairs to an army base near Teebane on 17 January, Adair met with Bratty and Elder again," the book states.

"By 4 February 1992 preparations had been finalised for an attack on a bookies just off the Ormeau Road.

"In addition to handing over a Browning 9mm pistol for the operation, Adair promised to provide a gunman from C Company."

The book also says that Adair's unit was armed by Ulster Resistance, which was formed in 1986, after a meeting with representatives in Loughgall, Co Armagh, in the early 1990s.



Enemies Within by Dr Aaron Edwards is published by Merrion Press and is available to buy now.

The loyalist group had access to guns and other equipment smuggled into the north in the late 1980s with the help of British intelligence.

"The handing over of arms would be piecemeal at first," the book states.

"There would have to be 'proof in the pudding' before they sent any more. Further meetings were arranged.

"Adair left Loughgall pleased that he had secured what some of his superiors in West Belfast thought was impossible.

"Some weeks later the Ulster Resistance men sent a lorry to Belfast under the guise of delivering a new kitchen to a house. On board were VZ58 assault rifles and other equipment, including RPG-7s and grenades.

"With C Company on a more militant footing, it wasn't long before Adair embarked upon a resurgent terror campaign."

Loyalist leader was forced to accept peace, says author

CONNLA YOUNG

THE author of a new book about former UDA/UFF boss Johnny Adair has said the loyalist was 'forced' to accept the peace process.

Dr Aaron Edwards, a senior lecturer at Sandhurst military academy, said his new book, Enemies Within, is a "360-degree study of the impact of the terrorism perpetrated by Johnny Adair and 'C Company' on the people of Northern Ireland".

"Although they had a greater impact on the nationalist community, I also think it offers a warts and all account of the trail of death, destruction and mayhem they left behind in terms of the loyalist community," he said.

"It's a serious study looking at the personality of Johnny Adair, but also in terms of how he radicalised an entire generation of loyalists, which had, at least, the prospect of serious repercussions for the peace process.

"Had he not been apprehended in the early '90s, and then again returned to prison on two separate occasions, I don't think we would be enjoying the peace of today."

Dr Edwards said Adair was forced to accept peace.

"I don't think it's contradictory to say he is supportive of the peace process today, but I think he had to be forced to accept the reality of the situation, people in Northern Ireland wanted peace," he said.

"He was a man of war in the 1990s and he was certainly motivated by a range of factors, including revenge against the Provisional IRA and armed republicanism because of the attempts on his life.

"I believe the agenda he pushed was laced, or animated by, fatalism because of the number of assassination attempts.

"And he was very driven to take his war to the IRA and 'C Company' inflicted an awful lot of damage on people outside of the IRA, and families and victims are still living with the consequences of that."

The academic said Adair was "the quintessential loyalist paramilitary", adding that his "reign of terror still casts a shadow on society today" and particularly on "deprived and marginalised communities" in north and west Belfast.

Dr Edwards said Adair was "good at radicalising….those other members of 'C Company'."

Former UDA/UFF boss Johnny Adair

"A lot of them are dead now because I don't think they could live with the consequences of their actions," he said.

In his book Dr Edwards writes about claims from a source that the explosives used to kill human rights solicitor Rosemary Nelson in March 1999 originated with 'C Company' after they were collected from an arms dump in Co Derry.

The academic said that Adair "denies" his unit provided the explosives and "questions the source's motivations".

"Why would they have said that?"

Dr Edwards added: "He denies it, he said that source is wrong and those allegations are wrong."

"He denies the lot, says he wasn't there."

'I've never woke up, ahh I've f***ing shot somebody'

From P1

linked to the murder of around 40 people, including men, women and children, some cast doubt on the extent of his direct involvement.

While death was the trademark of Adair's 'C Company' unit, he says he is not troubled by his conscience.

Instead, he reveals he has nightmares, or "bad dreams" about being captured by the IRA.

"I'll be honest with ye … I do have nightmares – I call them bad dreams – I don't have them all the time," Adair told the author.

"[They're] about the IRA catching me and it's so real – it's ever so real – and I get hit and I manage to get away and then one of them fires a gun at me and the rounds miss me.

"And it's all so real. I'm reliving all this. It's all so real.

"And then they get ye and you're f**ked and there's no fighting.

"And they've got ye tied to a chair and then it's all different ones."

He also admits to having nightmares about veteran IRA member Brian Keenan, who died in 2008.

"The last one there was old IRA men – I think your man (Brian) Keenan (he's dead) and they got me in Divis and there's hundreds of Taigs all outside, but the IRA men had me tied to a chair," he said.

"And there was no windows or nothing in the room.

"There's no escape. That was scary."

The former loyalist boss said his nightmares never focus on his past actions.

"And that's the effect it has had on me," he said.

"So, I've never woke up, 'Ahh, I've f**king shot somebody!'

"I've never had that, like. And I hope I never do … So maybe it's that fear I feel subconsciously, which is like, 'They're going to get me for what I've done to them.'"