

Billy Boomer, 1952 – 1995

A Prisoner

We are gathered here today to pay tribute to Billy Boomer, not just as the man but as a dedicated true and loyal soldier who loved his country and the cause he served with equal dedication and distinction. Billy first joined 'Tara' in 1969, being recruited in Clifton Street Orange Hall, where he was a member of his Local Orange Lodge at the tender age of 17. He later joined "S" company 1st battalion, Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). Later transferring to "A" company UVF 1st battalion, he served as a dedicated volunteer, always able and willing to fight against brutal Republican aggression.

Billy was arrested in January 1973 for the possession of arms and was sentenced to nine years imprisonment. During his incarceration, Billy spent 10 months in solitary confinement for the principles he so dearly loved, having refused cooperation with the prison authorities over the death of an informer on the UVF wing. Billy showed great fortitude at this time – a time of severe pressure during which May, his beloved wife, gave birth to their first son William 'Junior.' Such was the character and conviction of the man that he refused to talk, and with exemplary dignity, completed an horrific period of solitary confinement – *a true act of loyalty and dedication.*

Billy was subsequently released from prison in August 1978 and immediately returned to his active service unit, where he served until the ceasefire with the utmost distinction, courage, and dedication with results that classify him as a true soldier of Ulster. Focusing all his efforts with purpose and foresight, he believed that, in the final analysis, there was no substitute for diligence and preparation. This was evident throughout Billy's life. Billy was held in profound esteem for his honesty, dedication, and true camaraderie. That admiration for a proud volunteer ensures that he will live with us forever.

As we know, Billy died tragically whilst holidaying in Spain with his family. With his tragic passing died a true soldier of the Ulster Volunteer Force. Only history will recall the true and committed role Billy played in the defense of his beloved Ulster. But, we who are left can reflect that, without men of the character and standing of Billy Boomer, the goals that we set would have been so much harder to achieve. So let us remember him as he died – a loving husband – a loving father – a friend – a comrade – a soldier of the Ulster Volunteer Force.

*They shall not grow old, as we that are
Left grow old
Age shall not weary them, nor the years
Condemn
At the going down of the sun and in the
Morning we will remember them
For God and Ulster!*