

JULY 1975 - SPINCE

COMBAT

# Annual Orange Parade at Long Kesh P.O.W. Camp



The following address was delivered by Augustus Andrew Spence, Commanding Officer of UVF & Red Hand Commando Prisoners of War at Long Kesh Camp, at the annual Orange Parade held at the Camp on Saturday, 12th July, 1975.

Today, drawn up in military formation, we celebrate the 285th anniversary of the *Battle of the Boyne* when Wil-

son of Orange defeated the combined forces of tyranny and oppression in Ireland and installed democracy. . . So our traditions down through the years incorporates the words *freedom, civil and religious liberty, and the dignity of men*. This is as it should be, but something has gone wrong and we find ourselves prisoners in our own land. We are guilty of no crime and our captivity is worn by us as a badge of honour and, if guilty we be of anything, then it is the naivety of childishly believing everything that we were told by our so-called politicians — some of whom willfully led us to the brink but recoiled when the fighting commenced. Today, most of them have completely deserted us and we stand alone and, to add insult to injury, they clamour for a renouncement of our status as political prisoners. I give you this pledge: that I shall lead you to resist, with everything if necessary, any move to withdraw from us the category so dearly earned.

There is a lack of aim and achievement pervading the air of Ulster today and gangsterism and corruption, of whatever type, must be resisted at all costs. Our aims must only be the well-being of the Loyalist people and their defence. No organisation of the people can be allowed to become a tyranny or dictatorship exploiting the common people just as the political hacks did before them. For the people, by the people, and of the people is our only concern. Their hardships must be our hardships; their joys our joys; and their quarrels our quarrels.



Our age old enemy, the Irish Republican Army, are at present on a ceasefire, and thinking men must welcome

such a respite providing no principle has been conceded nor deals done behind closed doors. In the final summary the loyalists of Ulster shall decide what their destiny shall be, and the *Rifles of the Ulster Volunteer Force* shall be prominent in substantiating that claim. Wise men will be helpful and hold a watching brief on the Convention discussions and hope that a political solution will be found to our problems wherein all men of whatever calling can live in peace and justice with equal opportunity. But equally wise men will legislate for the day that an upsurge of violence could re-occur. An All-Ireland Republic is unattainable and unthinkable and will be resisted to the last. We have had enough of domestic serfdom to permit a foreign domination.

As I look about you I see ordinary men from many walks of life, men who wish to rejoin their families — but not at any price. I see your unity and I see your strength and I note with much satisfaction your precision and discipline. You are a force to be reckoned with and yet your wisdom and affability has extracted grudging respect from those who hold you in this place. Unity and mutual respect amongst our volunteers in this camp is a legend and you appeal to men's finer attributes as opposed to their baser instincts; but above all, your sense of *Cause* draws you together. The old sacred *Cause of Ulster* remains the same; whispering, demanding, pulsating the blood in your veins and loyalists for over 300 years have answered its

vibrant call with sometimes the most tragic of consequences. You are its standard bearers in this generation and however high it shall be lauded or however low it shall sink in disrepute will depend on you and your bearing. You showed your hardihood on the streets of Ulster over these last six bloody years and therefore have justified your claim to be called *Volunteers of Ulster*.



I am proud that I command your confidence and I, in turn, promise you that your welfare will be my over-riding consideration and between us we can inspire our people on the outside in complete freedom to emulate and achieve those things which we have achieved in complete confinement. The 12th of July has been celebrated by loyalists in many strange places throughout the world because it is our tradition, but surely the strangest place of all has been behind the barbed wire of Long Kesh. When the history of Loyalists and Ulster comes to be written I am confident that the unbending Ulster Volunteers of Long Kesh shall rate a mention alongside the heroes of the Somme, Thiépval and Passchendaele. In conclusion, I quote an extract from Kipling's poem 'Ulster 1912':

Believe we dare not boast  
Believe we do not fear  
We stand to pay the cost  
In all that men hold dear  
What answer from the North?  
One law, one land, one throne  
If England drives us forth —  
We shall not fall alone.