

Rioting returns to streets of Belfast

Troops and police subjected to acid and petrol bomb attacks as protests escalate at Holy Cross Catholic primary school

Report: Army Information Service

RIOTING in the Ardoyne area of north Belfast erupted once again with members of the security forces facing some of the worst street violence seen in the area since last summer. The ugly confrontations

resulted in injury to three soldiers and 82 police officers.

The seeds of the latest violence were planted last June when loyalists reportedly protested against parents walking their daughters to the Holy Cross Catholic primary school – a route that runs through

the loyalist Glenbryn area.

Although school pickets were called off last year, tensions between both communities have continued to boil under the surface. It was claimed that an argument between two women on the street sparked vandalism and civil disorder and led to full-scale rioting.

The task of assisting the police to restore order fell primarily on the shoulders of the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards. The Ardoyne area is well known to the guardsmen, who have patrolled it for the past three months.

In all, 180 Grenadiers, supported by a company of the 1st Battalion, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, were involved in a series of joint Army and police deployments.

The police were supported at other locations in Belfast, Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus by A Company from the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. Troops helped the police separate the rioters and restore order.

Guardsmen were involved in either manning baselines or dispersing angry crowds of up to 350. Fireworks, petrol bombs, and improvised grenades were thrown at soldiers and police.

Four people were treated for gunshot injuries during the rioting. Both elements of the security forces were subjected to acid bomb attacks. Numerous cars were hijacked and set on fire or used as makeshift barricades.

There were three minor casualties among the Grenadiers. Gdsm Andrew



Picture: Alan Lewis, Photopress

Blood on the pavement: Gdsm Robert Dawson is treated at the scene for a lacerated hand



Darkness falls: Gdsm Hazy Hayes, foreground above, and Gdsm Mike Hickey man a static location on Limestone Road. Below left, LCpl Steve Harrell at a vehicle checkpoint.

Pictures: Graeme Main

Below, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders keep a watchful eye on streets near the Holy Cross school



Picture: Steven George HORN

O'Connell had acid thrown in his face, but quick action prevented any physical damage and the soldier returned to his baseline within minutes.

Gdsm Robert Dawson suffered cuts to his right hand as a result of glass being

thrown at him; following medical attention he was back on duty within the hour. The third Grenadier received facial injuries after being attacked by youths throwing bricks.

Other Army elements assisting the

Police Service of Northern Ireland included ammunition technical officers from 321 EOD Squadron RLC, who dealt with improvised explosive devices and 25 Engineer Regiment, which deployed to clear cars, barricades and debris.