SEFF remembers Garda Sgt Frank Hand who was murdered 36 years ago yesterday by Provisional IRA terrorists.

Frank was shot dead on August 10th, 1984 during a raid on a post office van in Drumree, Co Meath.

Three Provisional IRA terrorists - Tony Eccles, Patrick McPhillips and Brian McShane - were convicted of his capital murder and each sentenced to life imprisonment with a recommendation they serve at least 40 years. They were released early alike hundreds of other terrorist prisoners.

Frank Hand was from Roscommon, the fourth child of seven. He was the first Garda in his family.

Frank’s brother Michael recounts: “He was very committed to the force; he was a rising star. Even by the age of 27 he had passed his sergeant's exams”.

“He was involved in lifting Malcolm McArthur at the Attorney General's house. He told me all about his week of sleepless nights combing the country looking for McArthur after his horrific crime of killing that poor nurse in the park."

Frank had "some close shaves" but he accepted risk as part of his job. He was involved in the front line in dealing with hardened crime."

Frank was 27 years old the day he was murdered. He was married to Garda Breda Hogan (who became a detective sergeant in the Fraud Squad).

They were just back from their honeymoon in Venice and she had told him the night before his murder she was expecting a baby.

Frank brother Michael adds: “Breda was totally traumatised by Frank's death. She had to go through the pregnancy and birth of Fiona all on her own."

As far as the Hand family knows, the terrorist who fired the shot wasn't caught. Several men were tried, and six were convicted (three of capital murder, three others for their involvement in the planned ambush and robbery).

Michael explains that Breda visited the trial just once: "She was given a two-finger gesture from the dock. She never went back."

Breda started receiving anonymous nuisance phone calls at night:

Michael explains: “We were afraid there might be a reprisal because the six men had been sent down. Maybe we were being paranoid. Who knows?"

Garda Frank Hand is remembered as part of SEFF’s latest memorial quilt - Terrorism knows NO Borders.

Our thoughts, prayers and support remains with the Hand family.