Frederick Irwin 30th October 1979

SEFF remembers Frederick (Fred) Irwin who was murdered 39 years ago today on 30th October 1979 by PIRA terrorists.

Fred was 43 years old, married with 5 children, a council worker and a part-time member of the UDR, was from Moy and worked with Dungannon Council's cleansing department.

As he was driving to work he was shot by 2 IRA gunmen with rifles at the Oaks Road, Dungannon.

Fred's family said that he had received threats and had altered his route to work every morning. However, he always had to drive the last stretch along the Oaks Road.

Fred was in the UDR for 10 years and had been a member of the B Specials. He was described by his neighbours as "a quiet, hard working man who did not drink or smoke". They said that not only did he look after his own 5 children, he and his wife were foster parents to his brother's 3 children after his brother had died.

An Armalite rifle that was used in the attack was later recovered after 2 IRA men were shot dead by the SAS.

Fred's brother Thomas was also a member of the UDR and in 1986 was also murdered by the IRA.

Nephew Rev Alan Irwin (C.O.I rector of Colaghty, Lack) painfully recalls: "I was in my early teens, at the Omagh Secondary School - now Omagh High School - when I can remember vividly my father coming in to take us home and knowing at that time that there was something seriously wrong, yet he didn’t tell us anything, he just took us home. When he got us home he told us that our uncle Fred had been shot on his way to his work on the Oaks Road in Dungannon, with Dungannon Council. The terrorists had opened up and basically pumped about 30 rounds into him, which left it that the family weren’t able to see the body afterwards".

"My uncle was said to have been shot because he was a part-time member of the UDR. He was a corporal in the regiment in Dungannon. That's more or less why he was shot".

Fred was also a member of Cloughfin LOL 1277 and Cloughfin RBP 58 and at one time a piper in the Lodge band.

A patch in honour of Fred's life and legacy is included on SEFF's Memorial Quilt and is displayed in SEFF offices, Lisnaskea.

SEFF's thoughts and prayers are with the Irwin family circle this day and every day.