George Gilliland 7th December 1985

SEFF remembers George GIlliland who was murdered 33 years ago today on 7th December 1985 by PIRA terrorists.

We also remember George's colleague and friend William Clements.

Both men were serving members of the RUC and were manning Ballygawley Police Station when they came under attack from PIRA terrorists.

The attack involved two PIRA active service units from the East Tyrone Brigade: an armed assault unit and a bomb unit. There were also several teams of PIRA observers in the area. The assault team was armed with AK-47 and AR-15 rifles, while the bombing unit was to be responsible for planting and detonating a 200 pounds (91 kg) bomb. Both terrorist units were commanded by Patrick Kelly who went on to lose his life in Loughgall when again on a terrorist mission to murder innocents.

The assault was launched on Saturday 7 December at 18:55pm when the handful of RUC officers manning the base were getting ready to hand over to the next shift. In the first burst of automatic fire, the two guards at the entrance were murdered: Constable George Gilliland and Reserve Constable William Clements. Constable Clements' Ruger security six revolver was taken by the attackers. The base was then raked with gunfire. Another three RUC officers who were inside ran out to the back of the base, where they hoped the walls might offer some cover. PIRA terrorists went into the building and took documents and weapons. The bomb was placed inside and, upon detonation, destroyed the entire base. Three further officers were hurt.

George was the son of Wlliam and Elizabeth Gilliland from Tempo. George was married to Iris Gilliland (who survives him) and they had three children together. Joanne was aged 11yrs, Craig 8rs and Gillian 4yrs at the time their Dad was murdered.

George joined the RUC tug-o-war team when stationed in Ballygawley and won many championiships along with the team, travelling all over the United Kingdom to participate in these events.

Another great love of his was Golf which he spent most of his free time playing, again winning many prizes. George liked to excel in everything that he was involved with.

He was considered an excellent Policeman and good friend to many aswlel as being a devoted fmaily man.

George Gilliland and William Clements were men of honour who were servants to our community. This stands in stark contrast to the cowardly actions of the PIRA terrorists who stole their lives.

SEFF's thoughts and prayers are with the family circles of George and William.

A patch remembering George is included on SEFF's Memorial Quilt which is displayed in the organisation's Manderwood offices.