Heather Kerrigan 14th July 1984

SEFF remembers Heather Kerrigan who was murdered 36 years ago. Heather was a serving member of the Ulster Defence Regiment.

On 14th July 1984 Heather was murdered by IRA terrorists in a landmine explosion on the Corgary Road, Castlederg whilst on a UDR foot patrol.

As brother David Kerrigan painfully recalls: "Myself and my brother and my other sister, Heather, were in the same patrol, being flown out to outside Castlederg. We were about three or four hundred yards from the border, checking cars. We were out on the ground about 15 minutes when the fella on the left hand side had stopped a car. My sister was directly behind me. I went back and was sitting talking to her, and just as I got up to walk away the bomb went off".

"I was thrown into the crater. I crawled out and we returned fire into the direction we thought the terrorists were. I heard my other brother shouting ‘she’s still alive’.
I collapsed then, with a collapsed lung and back injuries. About five minutes after that the helicopter landed and we were both carried in. I was lying on the floor and Heather was being cradled .... I could see her lips moving and nothing more. The blood was running out of Heather onto the helicopter floor, under my body. I was lying in her blood".

"We were flown to Omagh Hospital. I was taken into intensive care, and they told me just shortly after that Heather was dead. Heather was only 20 years old when she was killed. At that time I didn’t know anybody else was injured until the next day. Then I heard that Norman McKinley was blown into the next field - he was killed instantly".

Heather was single and came from a family of eight with one sister and six brothers. The family were raised one mile from the Donegal border.

Heather was a member of the Woman's Orange Lodge in Castlederg. She also worked part time in a bar in the Town.

The symbol on the Quilt is a Greenfinch. This was the term to describe female soldiers within the Ulster Defence Regiment.

SEFF's thoughts and prayers are with the Kerrigan family on Heather's Anniversary and everyday.