Jane Arbuthnot 17th December 1983

SEFF remembers Stephen Dodd an Inspector and Jane Arbuthnot, a Police Constable within the Metropolitan Police on this the 35th Anniversary since The Harrods Bombing on 17th December 1983.

Constable Arbuthnot was murdered by PIRA terrorists along with Sergeant Noel Lane (aged 28) Philip Geddes (aged 24), a journalist who had heard about the alert and went to the scene; Jasmine Cochrane-Patrick (aged 25); and Kenneth Salvesen (aged 28), a US citizen. Inspector Stephen Dodd (aged 34) died of his injuries on 24th December 1983.

On the afternoon of 17 December, IRA members parked a car bomb near the side entrance of Harrods, on Hans Crescent. The bomb contained 25 to 30 lb (14 kg) of explosives and was set to be detonated by a timer. It was left in a 1972 blue Austin 1300 GT four-door saloon car with a black vinyl roof, registration plate KFP 252K. At 12:44 a man using an IRA codeword phoned the central London branch of the Samaritans charity. The caller said there was a car bomb outside Harrods and another bomb inside Harrods, and gave the car's registration plate. However, according to Police, he did not give any other description of the car.

The bomb exploded at about 13:21, as four police officers in a car, an officer on foot and a police dog-handler neared the suspect vehicle. Six people were killed (three officers and three bystanders) and 90 others were injured, including 14 police officers. The blast damaged 24 cars and all five floors on the side of Harrods, sending a shower of glass down on the street. The police car absorbed much of the blast and this likely prevented further casualties.

Constable Jon Gordon survived, but lost both legs and part of a hand in the blast.

PIRA's Army Council claimed it had not authorised the attack and expressed regret for the civilian casualties.

Mina Jadeja, Vilas Parmar, Rajan Parmar and Roni Parmar (all SEFF members) were also injured in the attack.

Harrods was the target of a much smaller IRA bomb almost ten years later, in January 1993, which injured four people.

SEFF's thoughts and prayers are with the families and loved ones of those murdered and those who survived but who sustained serious physical and psychological injury.