Michael Paterson & James Houston 13th December 1989

SEFF remembers Michael Paterson and James Houston of the Kings Own Scottish Borderers who were murdered 29 years ago by PIRA terrorists (13th December 1989) as they manned a permanent vehicle checkpoint at Derryard.

Michael Patterson was 21-years-old and held the rank of Lance-Corporal and was from Edinburgh.

Meanwhile James Houston was 22-years-old, married with 1 child and a soldierand helf the rank of Private. James was from Wivenhoe, Essex.

Both soldiers were murdered following a sustained and unusually large scale PIRA attack on a permanent vehicle checkpoint at Derryard.

It was believed that more than 2 dozen IRA men were involved in the attack. It was the 1st time a flamethrower had been used.

Around 4:00pm a high-sided lorry was backed into an enclosed area of the checkpoint. Two soldiers approached the lorry when the driver sounded the horn. PIRA terrorists who were hiding in the back of the lorry opened fire with assault rifles and lobbed grenades.

LCPL. Patterson was killed instantly when a bomb inside the lorry exploded. PVT. Houston was shot as he provided cover while an injured colleague was being dragged to safety. A 3rd soldier was seriously injured in the attack and was airlifted to Erne Hospital in Enniskillen.

A senior British military officer, when quizzed about the IRA attack, said: "They are murdering bastards, but they are not cowards. This team actually pressed home a ground attack right into the heart of the compound. That takes guts when there are people firing back".

KOSB officers and security sources believed that the PIRA unit involved was not locally recruited, putting the blame instead on IRA members from Clogher (County Tyrone) and South Monaghan (in the Republic).The same sources said that the plan of the attack was executed "in true backside-or-bust Para style".

SEFF is in contact with both families and hopes to be able to continue to support them in the years ahead.