**Cpl. Stephen Smith**

**2nd July 1989**

SEFF remembers Cpl. Stephen Smith who was murdered by Provisional IRA terrorists whilst serving in the British Army and stationed in the then West Germany.

Cpl. Smith was 31-years-old married and had 4 children, he was a soldier with the Royal Tank Regiment holding the rank of Corporal and was from Yorkshire. Cpl. Smith was murdered via a Provisional IRA booby trap bomb that had exploded under his Mercedes car.

The attack took place at Kaiserallee, a residential area of Hanover. Cpl. Smith’s car was parked in a quiet street and as he opened the door, the bomb exploded killing him instantly.

His wife (Tina) and children were also outside the car and were hurt in the explosion. Tina was seriously injured and suffered burns over 30 per cent of her body. Her children were aged 2, 7, 9-and 11-years of age and were treated for shock, lacerations, bruising and shrapnel wounds but were not seriously injured.

In the Provisional IRA statement of admission which followed, they chillingly said: "we are forced to take our struggle beyond Ireland because the British public are restricted by their government from learning of its failure in Ireland and the resistance to its rule".

A military spokesman responded by saying that the murder of Cpl. Smith was an attack on a very soft target and said: "on a base you can have armed guards on the gates, but you cannot have armed guards patrolling the streets of Germany". Cpl. Smith's father was a lorry driver from Cleckheaton and said he learned of his son's death on a television news report. He said: "I never dreamed in a million years that this would happen to my son. He has become another innocent victim". The father said that his son's death came on the eve of the death of another son, Christopher, who died in a motorcycle accident.

Daughter Louise Freeman painfully recalls:

"Our father was a happy man known to his friends as “Smudge”. The Army and his family were the pillars from which he drew strength and he was devoted to both institutions. Our Dad was a career soldier and dedicated family man. My brother Lee and I remember spending hours with Dad, helping him to polish his boots to be as shiny as a mirror. It wasn’t a tedious task but a treasured time during which our Dad showed us his perseverance and commitment to his profession. As serious as he was about his duties, Dad had a playful and impish side and we well remember the playful pranks that he played on our Mum. We remember Dad loved to fish in his hometown of Cleckheaton when we visited from Germany. He liked to listen to Chris de Burgh and Rodger Whittaker. He like steamed puddings and his brogues which he wore with everything. He loved his fish tanks".

"Most importantly, we remember him loving us. He’d take us everywhere with him, to the mess hall for a paper cup full of sausages, to the storehouses for our favourite chocolates, and even the Tattoo shop when he got his British Bulldog tattoo and I got my ears pierced for the first time. These many small moments were the taste, the sound and the soul of our Dad and they meant everything to us".

"The terrorist attack upon our young family that evening completely changed the direction of life as we knew it. We were going out as a family to a local Fairground when the car exploded. The terrorists knew full well we were a very soft target, a family with little children in an un-patrolled civilian neighbourhood . Our father was killed instantaneously by a booby trap bomb attached to his beloved car as he opened the driver's door, on a Friday afternoon on a quiet street in Hanover, West Germany".

"I at aged 11 years and my siblings; Jade, at only 2 years old, Leanna 7, and Lee, 9 along with our Mum Tina did survive however like the destructive nature of a bomb, the fabric of our life was torn apart by shrapnel, fractured and scattered, never to be made whole again. Our many serious physical injuries were only the introduction to our new life. We healed physically but we are left with our broken spirits and hearts which have yet to mend".

The Smith family complete with widow Tina and daughters Louise and Jade were present in Brussels last October for the formal launch in The European Parliament of SEFF’s latest Memorial Quilt - Uniting Innocent Victims (which brings together innocents murdered in mainland Europe as a result of The Provisional IRA’s terrorist campaign and innocent victims of ETA terrorism) The Smith family story was also included within a Publication accompanying the Quilt. The family shared their testimony publicly for the first time and brought a stunned response from all who bore witness.

In July Louise’s son Stefan Freeman will represent SEFF at the U.S-based Project Common Bond Conference along with two Northern Ireland-based teens. The Freeman family are based in Canada.

Cpl. Stephen Smith is remembered on SEFF’s latest Memorial Quilt, Uniting Innocent Victims along with the 14 other innocents murdered by The Provisional IRA in mainland Europe and 16 innocents of ETA terrorism, inflicted in Spain.