**Ivan Toombs**

**16th January 1981**

SEFF remembers Ivan Toombs who was murdered on the 16th January 1981.

Ivan was married with five children and lived in Warrenpoint. He was a part-time officer in the UDR holding the rank of Major but also worked as a Senior Customs Officer.

On 16th January 1981 Ivan was at his work as normal and at 11am two gunmen burst into his office, they opened fire at point blank range hitting him several times in the head and chest. Ivan was rushed to Daisy Hill Hospital but was announced dead on arrival.

Ivan’s funeral was conducted by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Robin Eames in Warrenpoint Parish Church, in his address he recalled a conversation he had with Ivan a few weeks before his murder, they were talking about the difficulties of the present time in Northern Ireland and Dr. Eames recalled Ivan’s words,

‘Surely someday people will come to see that there are some things which are so good that they will endure’

Ivan Toombs was a God fearing Christian man who ultimately believed in the power of good, he was a man who believed in the sanctity of life and he believed that irrespective of the actions of terrorism that ultimately good would overcome evil.

In August 1976 Ivan had survived an attack on his life when his car was shot at in Newry while on his way to work, he was seriously wounded but managed to keep control of his car and drove to the Customs Station where he was then rushed to hospital.

Ivan was a keen sportsman; he played Hockey for many years in both Scotland where he started his career in Customs and Excise and in Northern Ireland when he moved back. He was closely involved with Newry Olympic Hockey Club and played rugby for Newry Club, he was also a keen soccer and cricket player. It was no surprise that Ivan’s children also showed an ability and skill for hockey.

Ivan was a member of Warrenpoint Masonic Lodge and a memorial tablet was unveiled in his honour within a newly renovated Lodge room of the Masonic Hall. The tablet was unveiled during a service of remembrance and thanksgiving.

Ivan was described as a ‘man of immense courage’ who had a very great concern for the good of the whole community.

Eamon Collins who was murdered by the IRA in 1999 was originally charged with the murder of Ivan, a different man was later charged for life in connection with Ivan’s murder, he was tried and cleared when the judge ruled his confessions were inadmissible.

SEFF’s thoughts and prayers are with the Toombs family circle today and every day.