**Joseph James (Jimmy) Speer**

**9th November 1976**

SEFF remembers Joseph James (Jimmy) Speer who was murdered on 9th November 1976 by Provisional IRA terrorists. On 9th November 1976 Jimmy was shot in the garage that he owned when three men drove in, asked him to look at a leaking radiator and shot him in the head. His family heard the shouts from the house opposite and they were with Jimmy when he died. He was aged 46 years at the point when he was murdered, shot by Provisional IRA terrorists.

Jimmy was born on Christmas Day (25th December 1929) and was brought up on a farm outside Moneymore but became a mechanic as a young teenager and also joined the UDR (reaching the rank of L/Cpl) Jimmy had 2 brothers and 3 sisters and was married to Ruby, together they had 3 children Deirdre, Cheryl and Dermot who were aged 16, 14 & 9 years old at the time of his murder.

Being a mechanic by trade Jimmy set up his own business at an early age, he built a garage across from his house. At the time he was murdered he had and was expanding into car sales, renting of agricultural machinery and had built an extension to his premises and bought the adjoining land.

Within the community he was considered to be a successful business man and was much respected by everyone. Jimmy was very dedicated to his family; he was very much into his community and people. He was always helping out locals, strangers and people who were generally in need. He was also a very committed member of the Orange Order (Cranny LOL 1015) and a founder member of Desertmartin Black Preceptory. He was also a member of the Masonic Lodge. He was a Christian man and regularly worshiped at Lecumpher Presbyterian Church.

Prior to joining the UDR Jimmy had been a member of the B Specials. Jimmy was faithful to his country and wanted to play his role in protecting it.

A few days after the funeral Jimmy’s family returned the wreath which had been delivered to their home by the Secretary of State, Jimmy and his wife Ruby had discussed how they considered this a mockery before his murder.

In September 2017 the Speer family launched a civil action against Sinn Fein/PIRA Mid-Ulster MLA Ian Milne in connection with Jimmy’s murder.

Ian Milne was once dubbed one of the "three most wanted men" by the Army and police, and became notorious when he escaped from Portlaoise Prison in 1974.

In 1977 he was sentenced to life for murder. He served time at the Maze where he participated in the blanket protest. He was released in 1992.

A patch honouring Jimmy is included on SEFF’s Memorial Quilt - A Patchwork of Innocents.

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