**Prison Officer Michael Christopher Cassidy**

**16th April 1979**

SEFF remembers Michael Cassidy who was murdered by PIRA terrorists. On 16th April 1979 Michael was attending his sister’s wedding at St. Macartan’s Cathedral on Easter Monday in Clogher when he was brutally attacked.

As he was leaving the church with the rest of the wedding party, he was holding his 3-year-old daughter's hand when the IRA shot him. As he lay on the ground, they shot him 3 or 4 times in the head.

A witness told the October 1979 inquest: "about 10 to 15 feet from the car park a man appeared from behind me to my left. He was carrying a rifle. Just then I heard a shot. By natural instinct I held out my arm and grabbed the rifle below the barrel. This man had a good grip on it and he wrenched it away from me. Then I heard another shot from behind me. Both men were firing. I turned around and saw Michael lying dead. He was shot through the head".

Some month’s earlier shots had been fired into Mr Cassidy's home.

Michael started work in the Prison Service in 1971, where he was based at Crumlin Road Prison. He was also an active member of their social club.

Michael was born on 27th May 1948 into a family of 9 siblings in Augher, County Tyrone. He lived at the family home in Augher until he left to work in Belfast in the late 60s.

Michael met his wife Mary on December 8th 1971 and they married 2 years later. They had a daughter who was born in October 1975 and a son in May 1978. Together they lived off the Antrim Road in Belfast until his death in 1979.

Michael's hobbies included Gaelic Football and golf. He was an active member of St Macartan’s GAC all his life. These interests and his work life were chosen to best represent Michael on the Memorial Quilt - A Patchwork of Innocents.

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