**Robert Laverty**

**16th July 1972**

SEFF remembers Const Robert David Laverty who was murdered on 16th July 1972 by Provisional IRA terrorists.

Robert was the fourth child and second son of James and Jane Laverty and he came from the town of Ballycastle on the North Antrim Coast. Jane had been widowed in 1962 and with seven children she relied on her tenacious spirit, her hard work and creativity, and her faith to carry her through what had been ten tough years.

In the early hours of July 16th 1972 Robert was a back seat passenger in an RUC patrol car which was ambushed on the lower Antrim Road in Belfast. Robert was shot in the head. Despite his colleagues’ best efforts to save his life, he passed away without regaining consciousness.

Robert joined the RUC as a career move after initially serving time as an apprentice engineer at Monsanto in Coleraine. He saw this move as an opportunity to provide a good life for himself and to send something home for the family in Ballycastle.

Robert was 18 years old and his sad passing had a devastating impact on his very close knit family and in the wider community in North Antrim where the Laverty family were well known, loved and respected.

Thousands turned out for his funeral in the local Presbyterian Church where the church bell was later restored in his honour by friends and colleagues. Robert is sadly missed but never forgotten by his family.

The words of the famous hymn, ‘How Great Thou Art’ were chosen for Robert’s patch on the Memorial Quilt - A Patchwork of Innocents as this hymn has great significance to the family, it is often sung in remembrance of Robert when the family get together.

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

**FORGET ME NOT**

Forget me not

I didn’t choose to die at eighteen years

My time was chosen for me

Not for me some grandiose battle plan fought out o’er foreign fields.

I did not go to war

Nor to defend some great ideal…

I just went to work in a bitter urban landscape.

There were many good people…

But the cowards sought me out

Lurking in the darkness they carried out their poor misguided act,

Another piece in the endgame jigsaw .. or so they thought .

‘’Ourselves alone’’ this puzzle will never be complete,

For there are no straight edges

And over three thousand pieces are missing.

Forget me not.

My hour of darkness came in a blinding flash.

Was there time for pain or perhaps a solitary tear?

No time for last goodbyes.

Where is my mother’s hand?

My brothers loving eyes?

My sisters caring smile?

Remember me.

For I cannot pass this way again and memories are all you can have.

Unlike those who put me here

Was it I who broke the law or they?

Yet they live to fight another day.

Don’t grieve for me.

For at the outset my time was chosen

But not by the ‘’brave men’’ of darkness who shot and ran,

By the Creator of all men, before whom all men unjustified

Will stand in final judgement.

Until That Day Forget Me Not

Remember My sacrifice

***This Poem was written by Jeremy Shane Laverty***

***(brother of Robert David Laverty murdered***

***on 16th July 1972 by PIRA terrorists)***