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Half a century since republicans killed first RUC men of Troubles

Below is a report from today's "Belfast Newsletter" that will bring back sad memories to many of my age group.

It seems as if it was only yesterday we ended each day listening to the 11.55 pm late night local BBC news report. The news often left you to seek sleep praying for another family or families bereaved at the hands of wicked murderers!

Those were terrible times indeed which have been mocked by the actions of today's politicians entering into a political agreement with those deeply engaged in that time of terror and anarchy!

It will abide as a shame upon our little Province that Unionism granted governmental power to the IRA terrorists as a reward for their cruel wickedness and we continue to daily submit to having our faces rubbed in the dirt as the likes of Sinn Fein leader, Michelle O'Neil, rejoices in and celebrates those heinous crimes of slaughter and butchery!

Half a century since republicans killed first RUC men of Troubles: Ex-top officer says thanks are owed to all those who wore the uniform

Half a century after republicans killed their first policemen of the Troubles, a former assistant chief constable (ACC) has said a debt of thanks is owed to all those who wore the uniform.

By Adam Kula 'Belfast Newsletter' Wednesday, 12th August 2020, 8:00 am



Constables Millar and Donaldson

Today marks exactly 50 years since RUC constables Samuel Donaldson and Robert 'Roy' Millar died, following a car bombing in south Armagh.

They were aged 23 and 26, respectively.

They were not the first police officers to die in the Troubles; 10 months earlier loyalists had shot dead 29-year-old officer Victor Arbuckle on the Shankill Road.

But officers Donaldson and Millar were the first to be killed since the Provisional IRA launched its campaign.

From that date onwards, an average of 11 RUC officers – either serving or retired – were killed each year up until 1998.

According to Ulster University's Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN), by the end of 1998 the total number of fatalities had reached 319 (with 306 of those murders being at the hands of republicans).

Stephen White, ex-ACC and chairman of the RUC George Cross Foundation, told the News Letter: "I was proud to wear the uniform of the RUC and serve alongside some of the most courageous and professional police officers in the world.

"So today, as we remember the 50th anniversary of the first RUC fatalities of Republican terrorism during the Troubles, I feel it is critically important to ensure they are never forgotten."

The foundation estimates that, in addition to the hundreds of RUC fatalities, "over 10,000 officers were injured, some 300 being severely disabled".



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That is a very substantial attrition rate for a force which – according to CAIN – numbered a maximum of 8,505 officers by 1997/98 (plus another 4,300 reservists).

The book 'Lost Lives' states that officers Millar and Donaldson were killed by a bomb hidden in a stolen red Ford Cortina on Lissaraw Road, just south of Crossmaglen – also making them "the first of many casualties to die in the south Armagh area".

The book says the policemen had been trying to tow the car some time after 8.30pm on August 11.

It had reportedly been sitting there for days.

Earlier that evening a local labourer had peered into the abandoned vehicle while travelling past with his son, whilst a curious passing farmer had gone as far as to try and open all four of the car doors.

Luckily for them, the device did not detonate.

But later on that night, the 9kg (20lb) gelignite charge exploded whilst the policemen were next to the car, throwing them into a field. They died in Daisy Hill the next day.

Mr White went on to add: "While condemning the act and reiterating sincere sympathy to the officers' families one can only be thankful that their colleagues were not deterred but instead continued to do their duty year after year in the most difficult and dangerous circumstances."



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