

# victims aren't forgotten

## The suddenness of lives cut short

EVEN now, Michael Harrison wonders if Freddie Starrett's killers know what kind of a young man he was.

The 22-year-old from Grand Parade in east Belfast had joined the UDR just four months before his murder and was only recently engaged to be married.

A member of Banner of the Cross LOL 1310 UDR, Freddie was devoted to his church.

"Freddie worked for a firm that produced gospel tracks and he was a lay preacher and member of the Sandown Free Presbyterian Church," said Michael, the Worshipful Master of LOL 710.

"That's what his job was but it was a low pay and he wanted to earn some extra money and help defend his community by joining the UDR.

"He was engaged and getting married and I believe he also did missionary work."

A religious scholarship was established by the Free Presbyterian Church in memory of Freddie's work as a lay preacher and distributor of gospel literature. James Cummings, known as a "real character" to his friends and UDR colleagues, had been a member of the regiment since 1986.

Originally from Rathcoole, he was a member of Johnston's Golden Star Orange Lodge.

While so many people in the community may forget the murders, Orangemen across Belfast are determined that they will not.

Every year a parade and then accompanying service is held at Royal Avenue.

Even now, the shock of learning about the murders is ingrained in Michael's mind.

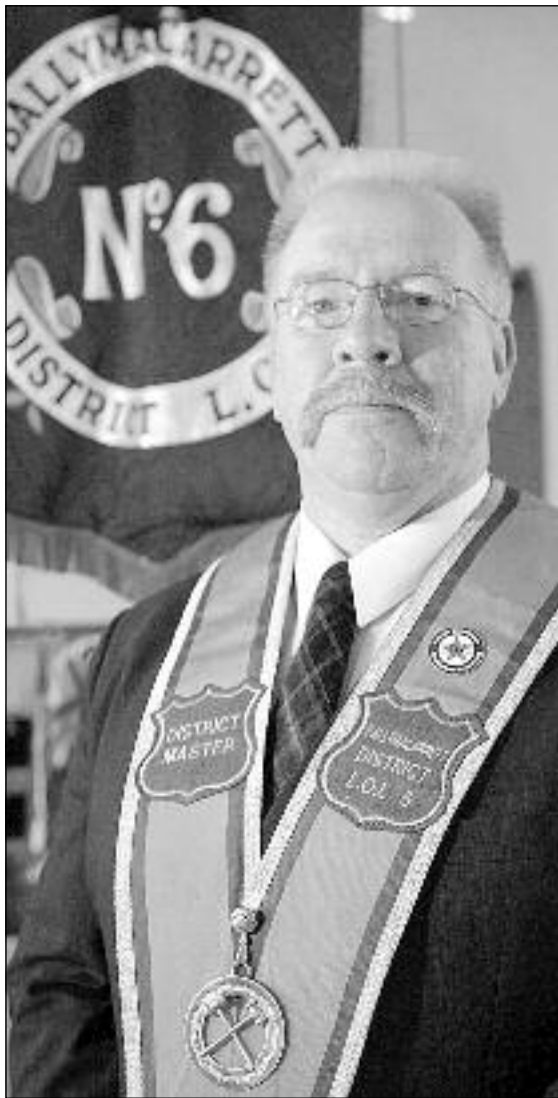
"It's a terrible shock to think that somebody goes out one night and says goodbye to his family and then doesn't come home the next morning. Maybe he rings his girlfriend to say, 'I will see you tomorrow', but then that's it, it's all over," Michael said.

"I think with the Royal Avenue bomb, the thing was it was so sudden. The boys had spoken about how they have never felt secure in that area but at the same time if one patrol goes into a street and a bomb goes off it's the suddenness of it. That's what gripped everybody."

It has always annoyed Michael that republicans attempt to portray men such as Freddie and James as legitimate targets for murder.

"On these television programmes people responsible for murders like these have been trying to say that these guys were not victims, that they were combatants, that they were part of it, but they weren't," he said. "They were people out doing a service for their country, that didn't mean they had to be blown up. They were taken out because of who they were and what they were."

"It is also worth pointing out that it was a miracle no civilians were killed that night."



**PROUD CONTRIBUTION:** was made by those Orangemen who served in the security forces, says County Grand Master Raymond Spiers

## Serving Queen and country 'an ethic' of Order

SOME 62 Belfast Orangemen were murdered during the Troubles, both civilians and men who unselfishly joined the security forces.

Raymond Spiers, Master of No 6 Ballymacarrett District, said the Orange Order in Belfast always pressed its members to join either the RUC, the UDR or the police reserve.

"That was always the case, you would almost call it an ethic of ours that you should serve Queen and country in whatever capacity you could," he said.

"As my colleagues who served in the UDR have said, there was nobody who joined to get fancy holidays on the continent.

"You were not getting paid big bucks, it was about their heart, they wanted to defend their country, stand between the two communities and keep Ulster in the Union."

Raymond said those Orangemen who served in the security

forces should be proud of their contribution to the Province.

"From the outside looking in, personally I thought they played a huge role," he said. "I know in the early days there would have been talk about dad's army and all the jokes that went with it."

"But as far as I'm concerned, the UDR, the RUC, and the RUC reserve, if they hadn't been there, then I don't think Ulster would still be united with Britain."

"The supreme sacrifice has been made by so many but now our enemies, and indeed with the tacit support of our own Government and others, are trying to airbrush this completely out of history, like it never happened."

"They are almost trying to wipe the memory of former comrades, Orange brethren and all that goes with it, out of history, like it never happened."

# Orange Institution prevented civil war

THE democratic principles that the Orange Order espoused during the Troubles prevented Northern Ireland from sliding headlong into civil war.

That is the firm belief of the Rev Martin Smyth, who was the Order's Grand Master between 1972 and 1998.

The former Ulster Unionist MP for South Belfast recalls a conversation between his former party leader, Lord Molyneux, and then Prime Minister Harold Wilson.

"Members of the Order were aware of the dangers and of the issues but they joined the security forces in their droves, knowing they were doing something positive rather than waiting to be killed," he said. "They played a fantastic role."

Harold Wilson said to Jim Molyneux on one occasion that it was the discipline of the Order that prevented it becoming a civil war here.

"He recognised the role that the Orange Institution was playing."



**KEY ROLE:** played by Orange Order, says Martin Smyth

Mr Smyth said that by joining the RUC, the police reserve and the UDR, Orangemen were continuing a tradition stretching back centuries.

Most notably in the First World War, the Orange Order in as far

as Canada, the United States and Australia sustained heavy losses.

"One of the things that people sometimes fail to realise is that while we are a Protestant organisation, we are also a patriotic organisation. Even going back to the First World War there were a huge number of Orangemen in the Canadian forces, for instance, who lost their lives," he said.

"The Orange in Canada never really recovered from the losses they sustained in the First World War, the losses were also heavy in the US, Australia and the UK."

Mr Smyth recalls how initially there was great anger within the unionist community when the B Specials were disbanded, and in their place the Ulster Defence Regiment didn't meet with everyone's approval.

"When they did away with the Specials there were some folk who were castigating the UDR. But I encouraged folk all around

the country that they should serve in the law-abiding forces," he recalled.

"They were aware of the dangers. I can remember speaking at a meeting in Tyrone and a person said to me, do you realise what you are asking us to do?"

"I said there will be people who are not in the security forces on the border who will be killed because they are Protestants. I remember a woman was slain like that and of course later in south Armagh there was an attack on the hall in Tullyvallen."

Mr Smyth admits that, "like any other large organisation", some Orangemen went "out on a limb" and resorted to violence. He claimed this wasn't a total surprise, especially given the way in which the Protestant community were being "overlooked by Government" and terrorised by republicans. However, the "bulk of the membership remained firm",

even when they were being targeted by paramilitaries from both sides.

Mr Smyth knew many of the Orange victims personally. Dessie Irvine, a church elder and a member of Christian Crusaders LOL 1330, was gunned down at Wellington Park in south Belfast in October 1977.

Sam Trainor, an off-duty UDR man and member of St Matthew's CD LOL 1903, was killed in a massive IRA bomb in Donegall Street in March 1972.

"They were soft targets but the terror did not divert them from doing their duty for their country," he said.

Plans for a permanent memorial to the dead in Schomberg House meet with the former Grand Master's warm approval.

"I believe it will be good to have the memorial. I was delighted to see the RUC memorial, it was a superb and fitting tribute to the sacrifice those officers made serving their country, this should be the same."