

Special dedication remembers the youngest fallen officer

The Care of Police Survivors (COPS) weekend is always an emotional event, as fallen officers are remembered by family, friends and colleagues. But for one family this year's event was particularly poignant, as special tributes were paid to the daughter they lost more than 25 years ago.

On Sunday, July 20, following the main service of remembrance at the UK COPS weekend at the national arboretum in Staffordshire, a service of dedication took place in the national memorial garden at the end of 'the walk'.

Police Credit Union Ltd had been invited to sponsor a centre piece for the garden and, in conjunction with Hertfordshire Police Federation, a blue police lamp has been sited in the middle of the garden. The blue lamp had stood at the front of Hitchin Police Station in Hertfordshire, and it was dedicated to the memory of Mandy Rayner. Mandy was killed on October 13, 1982 when the police vehicle in which she was the observer was deliberately rammed by an offender.

Mandy had joined the police service on June 21, 1982, aged 18 years and six months. She came into the service straight from the cadets, and had been out of training school for just five weeks at the time of her death.

Mandy's tragic death continues to be of major significance to the wider service, as well as to her family, friends and colleagues. She was the first female officer to be killed on duty, and she still remains the youngest police officer killed in service.

The dedication ceremony was conducted by the Hertfordshire force Chaplain, and the actual dedication was undertaken by Mandy's mother Sylvia in the presence of a small gathering which included the chair of the Police Federation Paul McKeever, and the Police Minister Tony McNulty.

Mandy's mother said the lamp is now dedicated to all officers that have lost their lives in the service of others, but she wished to make special mention of all those female officers that have died in service. Speaking after the service, Paul McKeever said it was important that we continue to remember officers like Mandy who had lost their lives in service, and to show that they would not be forgotten. "It was clear how much this event meant to Mandy's family, and it was the very good work by Vojislav Mihailovic, JBB Secretary, and the team at Hertfordshire Police Federation together with the Police Credit Union that made it happen."

