



UNIQUE COLLECTION OF POLICE MEDALS

A unique collection of medals has been presented to the Police Museum at Knock in Belfast.

The 10 medals belonged to District Inspector Michael Murphy, an officer who served with distinction in the RIC and RUC for more than 50 years before his death in 1977. Among the medals were the Military Medal, awarded for service in the First World War, the King's Police Medal and the MBE.

They were stolen in 1999 from the Murphy family home in north Belfast during a break-in but were eventually traced to a medal collector in Tyrone, who was unaware of their origin.

The medals were returned to the Murphy family, who have now presented them to the Police Museum as a memorial to their famous ancestor.

Born in Sligo in 1894, Mr Murphy joined the RIC in 1913. After the outbreak of the First World War he joined the Irish Guards and won the Military Medal while serving with his regiment in France.

After the war he re-joined the RIC and when it was disbanded in 1922, he transferred to the RUC on its formation. He served until his retirement in 1954, becoming a District Inspector. For his distinguished service Mr Murphy was awarded the King's Police Medal in 1944 and the MBE in 1950.

The Chairman of the RUC GC Foundation, Jim McDonald said:

“Michael Murphy was noted throughout his service as a strong leader of men and from his times with the Irish Guards was an acknowledged expert in parading. Indeed he was in charge of many parades in the RIC and he held the very powerful post of Head Constable Major in charge of Gormanstown at the disbandment of that very fine force.

“The current flavour for policing research is to refer to the neo colonial policing but I am glad to report and is evidenced by Michael Senior that in spite of having to uphold the law these men were part of our society and today the PSNI continues the tradition of our young people policing our society for societies good.

“Michael’s service covered four monarchs and we in the RUC GC Foundation are very pleased to assist in the generous donation of this wonderful collection of medals. When we are all gone these medals will be a lasting memorial to a great police officer who saw no problem in serving his country either during periods of normal policing or through the many periods of terrorist campaigns.

“It was a bitter blow when the medals were stolen from the family home. We set about tracing their whereabouts and as you would expect in the policing family, we managed to find out where they had gone. We were delighted that the medals were returned to the Murphy family and their wonderful gesture in presenting them to the museum will ensure that future generations can appreciate the service of a man who brought pride to the uniform of two police forces.”

Michael Murphy, son of the police officer, presented the medals on behalf of his family. He said they would now be in safe keeping and could be appreciated by many more people.

“We believe that the Police Museum is the perfect place to have the medals. They are a unique collection and as a family we are delighted that the wider public will now be able to view them and get a true sense of the history involved.”

For further information please contact Media Consultant, Austin Hunter, 07801 738604.