

IRA victim from Midlothian honoured nearly 40 years on

A poignant and long-awaited commemoration took place in Midlothian on last Thursday, with the awarding of the Elizabeth Cross to the family of Corporal John Aikman, of the Royal Signals Corps, nearly thirty-eight years after his death.

The ceremony took place in the debating chamber of Midlothian Council's headquarters at Midlothian House in Dalkeith, and was conducted by Councillor Adam Montgomery, the Provost of Midlothian. Also present were Patrick Prenter, the Lord Lieutenant of Midlothian, and Major David Harvey, of Headquarters 51 (Scottish) Brigade. Together they presented Corporal Aikman's widow, Theresa, with the medal and a copy of the Memorial Scroll, signed by Her Majesty the Queen.

Corporal Aikman, of Newtongrange, Midlothian, was the sole victim of an attack by IRA paramilitaries which took place in Newtownhamilton, County Armagh, on 6 November 1973. He was aged just 25. Immediate members of his family were invited to attend, and included in their number two of his sisters, Linda and Frances; another sister, Margaret, was unfortunately unable to attend due to ill health.

Speaking after the event, Mrs Theresa Aikman said: "I was so honoured and proud, for all the family, that he was recognised after the whole experience. You honestly can't put it into words how I feel." Now living in Bonnyrigg, Theresa has since married for a second time, marrying Colin May in 1994.

Established in July 2009, the Elizabeth Cross is awarded to the next-of-kin of all those who served in the British Armed Forces who died either during operations, or as a result of terrorist activity. Eligibility is restricted to the relatives

of those personnel who died after the Second World War. Those who consider themselves eligible should visit the [Ministry of Defence website](#) for information on how to apply.