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Local & National

Removal of fire station photo 'insult to memory of Poppy Day bomb victims'

Monday, October 01, 2007

By Matthew McCreary

The decision to remove a photographic tribute to firefighters who helped out following the Enniskillen bombing from a fire station wall has been described as "absurd".

The picture was taken down from a wall at Enniskillen fire station "to maintain an inclusive, neutral and harmonious working environment for all firefighters", according to the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

The NIFRS also revealed that the picture had been removed following a complaint from a member of staff.

It is understood the picture had originally been removed to allow decorating work to be carried out and then replaced.

But it was removed from the wall again following the complaint.

Eleven people lost their lives in the 1987 Poppy Day bombing, which provoked outrage around the world.

Assemblyman Tom Elliot said: "I am aghast that a simple tribute like this can be targeted in such a sectarian way, and I urge those concerned not to bow to this absurd pressure in order to appear politically correct.

"Removal of the memorial would be an insult to the memory of the people who lost their lives in this attack and those who suffered as a result of it.






"Yielding to this small minority of staff would be a real blot on the good working relationship currently enjoyed among many of the fire crew members in the county, which ensures the provision of this essential service to the whole community."

Fermanagh and South Tyrone MLA Arlene Foster said she was "saddened" to hear about the picture being taken down.

"People have told me of their disbelief that such an action could be deemed possible," she said.

An NIFRS spokeswoman said: "This complies with Equality Commission for Northern Ireland guidance which states that 'emblems or displays linked to the community conflict over the past 30 years are best avoided.

"NIFRS will be working with firefighters and the Equality Commission to resolve this."

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