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Widow recalls husband's last words

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GERRY MORIARTY, Northern Editor

KILLING OF CONSTABLE: THE WIDOW of the PSNI officer murdered in Craigavon, Co Armagh, on Monday night, has spoken of her hope that her husband has not died in vain while asking his killers to see the horror and futility of their action.

As she prepared for the funeral of her husband in Banbridge, Co Down, today, Kate Carroll recalled how police colleagues of Const Stephen Carroll called to her home on Monday night.

She instantly knew something was wrong and her first reaction was to plead with them to tell her that he was injured rather than dead. "Don't tell me he's dead," she said, "and they said: 'Just come in and sit down and we'll tell you'."

After she was told, she said: "I did not know what to do, I did not know how to cope, I just felt numb, I did not know day from night, night from day. It is an awful sensation and my heart goes out to so many people who have suffered what I have suffered."

Const Stephen Carroll (48), a keen sportsman, was due to retire in less than two years. He had taken a degree in sports science and in his spare time had qualified as a personal trainer in preparation for life after he left the force.

"He had decided we were going to grow old together and we would have a fantastic future. But, sadly, we haven't."

Ms Carroll, in a pooled media interview with UTV, recalled her last words with her husband as he went out to work a late shift on Monday. "On his way out, as I did every day, I said: 'Steve, you take care, you just keep your head down, take care.' And he said to me: 'Kate, I am working to my future here. I have been through all the worst times.' And he said: 'Wouldn't it be ironic if something happened now just before I retire?'"

"And I said: 'Steve don't talk like that, please, I don't want to hear that.' So, he said as usual: 'Love you, see you tonight.' And I said: See you, sweetheart, night-night'."

Originally from Epping in Essex, England, Const Carroll, who later lived for a short period in Co Kildare, leaves behind a widow, a stepson, Shane, and four grandchildren. "My son is devastated, obviously. He just feels his children have been robbed of their grandfather." Ms Carroll said she felt dead inside. "They've robbed my son of his father, my grandkids of their grandfather, a mum of her son, me of my life. Part of my life has gone, that's what they've robbed me of."

"He was a good person. He was competitive, sporty, kind, loving, caring, romantic, just everything a good man should be."

She added: "He thought this war was over, but obviously not and I just can't believe this has all started up again. If Steve's death has made a positive effect on all of this, that's all I care about. It's a hard lesson for everyone to learn but if it brings something positive out of it then fine, but I don't want Steven to have died in vain."

She had no feelings for the killers, as to do so would give them credence." "I just cannot comprehend the mindset of people. Why not enjoy your life – it's short, very, very short."

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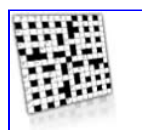
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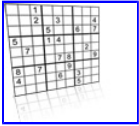
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