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# Map gives family of Disappeared man hope

Wednesday, 16 July 2008

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The family of a man who went missing 29 years ago have been given a map showing where his body might be.

The family of a Crossmaglen man who went missing 29 years ago has been given a map showing where his body might be, it emerged today.

Gerry Evans, who is listed as one of the 'Disappeared', was last seen hitching a lift in Castleblaney, Co Monaghan, on Sunday, March 25, 1979.

His family has never been told what happened to him, or where he might be buried.

The 26-year-old, whom the British Army listed as an IRA member, was never seen again. It is assumed that the IRA believed he was an informer — a charge his family disputes.

He is believed to have been killed and buried by the IRA.

Mr Evans' brother Noel today revealed that in March this year his aunt was anonymously given an A4 white card with a drawing of where the body was claimed to be and a message which read: "This is where I believe Gerry to be buried. I hope this helps and God bless you all."

The document was taken to the Gardai before being passed on to the Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains.

Noel and a commission representative visited the site, which is close to the area where Mr Evans disappeared. The exact location is being kept secret while tests are carried out.

Before a dig can start, demographical maps of the area 30 years ago need to be checked. Scientific equipment will be used to check for any soil disruption and sniffer dogs will also inspect the area.

Noel said it could take up to a year for this work to be completed.

He said that receiving the information was a shock for the family.

“The day it (the map was received) happened it was just like 29 years ago — just like we had got the word that someone had died,” he told the BBC.

“It takes time and we can’t go in heavy handed. People have learned their lesson from years ago where the right equipment and technology wasn’t used ... It (the spot) is very close to where he disappeared in the Co Monaghan region. We do not want to give the specific location. We do not want to contaminate the area and people just going down to look at it because it is distressing enough without other onlookers coming to look at the site.

“It is the first information we received ever ... we are hoping the digs will produce something.”

Noel said that the family appreciates the information and said that anyone who may be able to help in any other way can pass on information anonymously to the family through himself or a local priest.

He added: “Maybe someone’s conscience has been pricked and they have decided we have suffered enough.”

A neighbour of the Evans family, Charlie Armstrong, went missing in 1981 and is believed to have been abducted and murdered by the IRA.

The 54-year-old vanished without trace after setting off to drive an elderly woman to mass in nearby Cullyhanna and his body has never been located.

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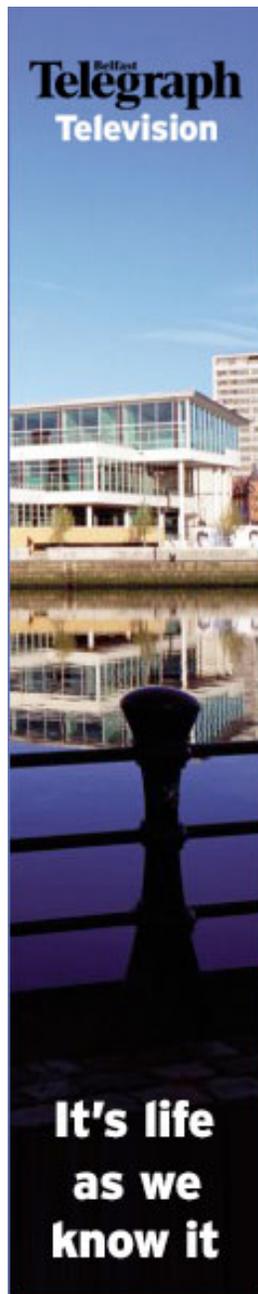
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