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Mon March 12 2007

News In Brief

No change in Foyle

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Historic deaths team probe Derry shooting

A SPECIALIST team of police officers has been in Derry to re-examine the death of a teenager who die ... [more »](#)

News



Historic deaths team probe Derry shooting

A SPECIALIST team of police officers has been in Derry to re-examine the death of a teenager who died in a shooting incident in the city's Waterside more than 35 years ago.

The 'Journal' has learned that the Historical Enquiries Team (HET) - which is reviewing scores of unsolved deaths during the Troubles - was in the city recently to investigate the circumstances behind the death of James O'Hagan (16), who was fatally injured in a shooting incident in the Limavady Road area on August 19, 1971.

Although just 16, James O'Hagan is listed on the republican roll of honour as a full member of the IRA rather than its youth wing, the Fianna. The teenager, the eldest of a family of six, had just finished his school term at St. Breacan's a few weeks earlier.

According to reports at the time, the teenager, who lived in the Clooney Estate, was shot on land at Deanfield owned by the sister of a unionist politician.

In the book "Lost Lives" - an account of more than 3,600 deaths related to 30 years of violence in the North - a family living in the area said they heard a shot coming from a nearby disused stable and saw three boys running away from it.

The book extract adds: "The boys went to a neighbouring house. A woman there said one of the boys told her one of the group was injured. She took the injured teenager to a bedroom and telephoned for a doctor, a priest and the police... My son took one of the other boys in a car to get the dying boy's father. The priest and doctor arrived and he got the last rites just before he died."

"Lost Lives" also reveals that James O'Hagan's father said he thought his son might have been out delivering civil rights pamphlets. He's quoted as saying: "A young fellow came to the door and told me there had been an accident and that my son had been slightly injured. He asked me to go with him to the house of a friend. When I got there, I found my son dying."

Contemporary reports also reveal that, in a follow-up operation, police and soldiers found bloodstains, a Smith and Wesson revolver, ammunition, a spent cartridge, fuse wire and gelignite in the stable.

This property was also owned by Unionist MP Albert Anderson's sister. The MP himself expressed shock: "My sister and I naturally did not know what was going on there."

It's believed two men were later jailed in connection with the discovery of the weapon and explosives.

'Family centred'

The HET - which confirmed it had re-examined the death of Mr. O'Hagan - says it aims to be a 'family centred' process with its primary goal to seek to answer for families any outstanding questions they have in connection with the death of their loved ones.

It insists it makes "no distinction as to whether the deaths were occasioned by the actions of paramilitaries or by the actions of the security forces, nor do we take account of police statistics (i.e. whether the deaths are recorded as 'crimes' or are shown as 'detected' or 'undetected')."

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