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[Home](#) > [Northwest Edition](#) > [Weekly](#)

Weekly

DUP want INLA statue removed from cemetery

Wednesday, April 11, 2007

The DUP today vowed to keep pressure on Derry City Council to have a statue of an armed INLA volunteer removed from the City Cemeterly.

DUP Councillor Willie Hay today responded to a defiant IRSP statement made during the Irish Republican Socialist Party's Easter wreath laying ceremony at the controversial memorial at the weekend.

IRSP representative Martin McMonagle said during a speech to commemorate the anniversary of the Easter Rising that the party had no intention of allowing the life-sized statue to be removed.

He said: "We can state here today to the DUP and others that this fitting memorial to our fallen comrades will not be moved, dismantled or decommissioned in any way. The Republican Socialist Movement and the families of our dead comrades will not be jumping through hoops for the DUP."

Mr Hay, however, said he was "not asking anyone to jump through hoops" but wanted the graveyard preserved as a place where both unionists and nationalists could mourn their dead without the shadow of a gunman.

He said: "There is a feeling in the whole community, not just the unionist community, but from the wider nationalist community that having a statue of a masked man with a rifle is unacceptable. Both sections of the community have loved ones in the cemetery and this is very offensive to both. The council needs to take the issue seriously.

"We cannot allow any paramilitary organisation or other group to take over a graveyard."

Mr Hay said he welcomed the cross-party backing for a recent motion he tabled to involve the Equality Commission to look at such contentious issues before deciding whether regulations were being breached.

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 - Health
 - Features
 - Columnists
 - Entertainment
 - Homefinder
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 - Archive
 - Calendar 2007
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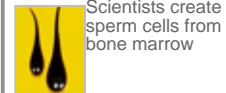
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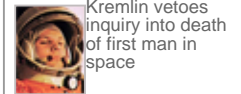
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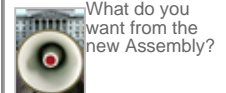
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