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## Local & National

### Petition demands inquiry into soldier's heroic death

Tuesday, January 09, 2007

By Claire Regan

The parents of a soldier killed in an IRA bomb blast while trying to rescue a man were today set to hand a petition in to the Secretary of State's office to demand a public inquiry into his case.

Cyril and Bernie Smith, from Carrickfergus, are planning to hand the signatures over to Peter Hain's officials in Stormont at 11am today to raise the case of their son, also called Cyril.

The Royal Irish Ranger died in a bomb in October 1990 while trying to rescue a man who had been forced to drive a car bomb into a permanent border checkpoint at Killeen, near Newry.

The 21-year-old had just rescued James McAvoy (68) who was told by an IRA gang that his sons would be shot if he did not drive the bomb to the checkpoint.

Ranger Smith was running back to warn his comrades about the device when it exploded, killing him instantly. He was the first RIR soldier to be killed in the Troubles and was posthumously awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal.

No one has been charged with his murder and his parents believe he was allowed to die to protect the identity of a republican spy.






Alliance Party assemblyman Sean Neeson has given his support and has arranged the handing over of the petition.

"I give my full support to the campaign to establish an inquiry into the death of Ranger Smith," he said.

"It is just and proper that there should be a full and searching inquiry into the death of Cyril Smith in order to help the family find out the truth.

"It has been suggested that his life was lost while the security forces had been trying to protect the identity of an informer within the Provisional IRA.

"I hope to be joined at the handing over of the petition by all of the other Assembly members from East Antrim."

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