



## Victims' relatives make silent appeal

(Rebecca Black, [Irish News](#))

*Relatives of the Disappeared paid tribute to their loved ones yesterday as they renewed their appeal about their burial sites, writes Rebecca Black*

Relatives of the Disappeared held a silent appeal at Stormont yesterday (Friday) to plead for people to come forward with information about the whereabouts of their loved ones.

The group picked All Souls' Day, the traditional day of remembrance for the dead, to stage their effort.

Led by Kathleen Armstrong, wife of Charlie Armstrong from Crossmaglen who disappeared in 1981, they proceeded silently up the steps towards Parliament Buildings and laid a wreath with nine white lilies to represent the nine still missing.

Ardoyne priest Fr Aidan Troy then led the mixed group in the Lord's Prayer.

"It was not a day about words, it was a day about symbolism," he said.

Mrs Armstrong said she did not know whether she would have the strength to physically carry the wreath but was glad she had been able to.

"It's been 26 years since my husband was taken away," she said.

"I am hoping and praying they can find him to let me say goodbye to him and have peace."

Eugene McVeigh, brother of Columba McVeigh who vanished in 1975 after republicans accused him of being an informer, was also there.

A major search for Mr McVeigh was carried out in 2003 by Garda excavation teams on bogland at Bragan Mountain close to the Tyrone-Monaghan border.

A year ago DUP leader Ian Paisley met Mr McVeigh's mother Vera in a bid to help her find her son's remains.

Mrs McVeigh died in May at the age of 82 before her wish could

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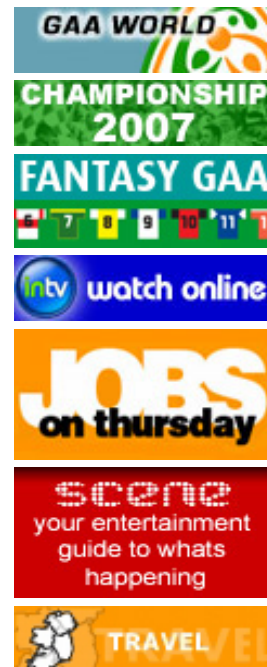
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Back to 10/96

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be fulfilled.

Fresh tests carried out in Co Monaghan last week failed to bring the news the McVeigh family were hoping for.

"Since it is All Souls' Day, when we traditionally remember the dead, it makes it very poignant for us," Mr McVeigh said.

"Politics here is moving at such a fast pace, we are probably the last group of people to be dealt with.

"I think also that there is always a danger that this group can be forgotten about in an effort to draw a line under the past."

The family of Seamus Ruddy said the pain of his disappearance was always with them.

His brother Sean said: "We would plead with people if they had any information to come forward, they don't have to speak to us.

"They can speak to anyone they feel comfortable with in order to pass the information on."

Kieran Megraw, whose brother Brendan was murdered in 1978, said the memory of what happened has never left him.

"It is always with you but you have to continue to live your life," he said.

"We are trying to bring to the fore that we want to get the bodies back and have a grave for us to go and visit."

In 1999 the IRA offered to help find the bodies, claiming responsibility for nine abductions and murder.

The remains of Eamon Molloy, John McClory and Brian McKinney, all from west Belfast, were found following information from the IRA.

In 2003 the remains of mother-of-10 Jean McConville were found on a beach in Co Louth by accident after a comprehensive search in 1999 turned up nothing.

The Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains (ICLVR) was established between in 1999 to locate the Disappeared.

Nine bodies remain missing.

Information can be passed confidentially to the team on 00800 5558 5500 or by post to ICLVR PO Box 10827, Dublin 2.



## THE DISAPPEARED

In March 1999, the IRA claimed responsibility for the abduction and murders of:

1. Seamus Wright (25) October 2 1972 – accused of being a British army agent. Last seen getting into the back of a car in west Belfast and being driven off. Believed to have been shot in south Armagh, with Kevin McKee.
2. Kevin McKee October 2 1972 – accused of being a British army agent. Abducted in west Belfast and believed to have been shot in south Armagh, with Seamus Wright.
3. Jean McConville (37) December 7 1972 – Widowed mother-of-10 murdered who was Disappeared because the IRA believed her to be a British spy or involved in a British army undercover operation. There have been other suggestions she was abducted from her home in Divis flats in west Belfast because she had comforted an injured British soldier. Her remains were discovered by members of the public on Shelling Hill beach in Co Louth in 2003. IRA information had on a number of occasions previously indicated a different, nearby, beach as their location.
4. Eamon Molloy July 1975 – quartermaster of one of IRA's three Belfast brigades, accused of being a British agent, Disappeared after a 'court martial'. His remains were recovered on May 28 1999 by the IRA and left in a coffin in a graveyard in Faughart, near Dundalk, Co Louth. Not regarded as one of the Disappeared until IRA named him on its list in March 1999.
5. Columba McVeigh (17), November 1 1975 – Decorator from Donaghmore, Co Tyrone, accused of being an informer.
6. Brendan Megraw (22) April 8 1978 – from Twinbrook, accused of being an 'agent provocateur' by the IRA.
7. John McClory (18) May 25 1978 – accused of using IRA weapons in a robbery with his friend Brian McKINNEY. Both from Andersonstown. His remains were found in double grave in bogland at Iniskeen, Co Monaghan on June 29 1999. They are the only remains found as a result of IRA information.
8. Brian McKinney (22) May 25 1978 – accused of using IRA weapons in a robbery with his friend John McClory. Both from Andersonstown. His remains were found in double grave in bogland at Iniskeen, Co Monaghan on June 29 1999. They are the only remains found as a result of IRA information.
9. Danny McIlhone summer 1981 – from west Belfast, accused of stealing IRA guns. Not regarded as one of the Disappeared

until IRA named him on its list in March 1999.

The IRA is believed to have been involved in Disappearing at least three others:

1. Captain Robert Nairac (29) May 14 1977 – abducted from a bar at Dromintee, south Armagh and killed by the IRA.

The British army 'liaison' officer was awarded a posthumous George Cross. Republicans believed Nairac was involved in loyalist killings.

2. Gerald Evans (24) March 27 1979 – last seen alive in Castleblayney, Co Monaghan, trying to hitch a lift to his parents' home in Crossmaglen.

3. Charles Armstrong (57) August 16 1981 – married, father-of-five. Last seen driving to collect an elderly neighbour to go to Mass in Crossmaglen.

The INLA disappeared Seamus Ruddy (33), May 1985 – a former member of the IRSP, killed in France by INLA after being questioned about arms smuggling. He had been teaching English at a private school in Paris.

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[BACK TO TOP](#)

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