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Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Two guns recovered near murder scene

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DAN KEENAN, Northern News Editor

TWO FIREARMS have been recovered in Craigavon, Co Armagh, close to the scene where PSNI Constable Stephen Carroll was murdered last Monday, police said last night.

The weapons have been recovered and taken for forensic examination. The discovery followed a planned search of the vicinity close to Lismore Manor where Constable Carroll (48) was shot dead by the Continuity IRA.

Earlier yesterday two further arrests were made by police investigating the murder. PSNI officers arrested two men, aged 31 and 27, in the Craigavon area yesterday morning.

The detentions bring to 11 the number of suspects being questioned by police in both the Carroll murder case and the killings of two British army engineers and the attempted murder of four others at Massereene army base in Antrim town 10 days ago.

Seven are now being held and questioned in connection with the Craigavon murder and the other four in relation to the Antrim shootings.

The PSNI said last night that a five-day extension had been granted to question three males aged 41, 32 and 31 who were arrested in connection with the Real IRA attack on Massereene barracks.

A similar extension has already been granted to enable detectives to question a 21-year-old man in connection with the Craigavon murder. They are being detained and questioned at the PSNI's serious crime suite in Antrim town.

In Craigavon there were further violent disturbances with teenagers, some of them wearing balaclavas, taking to the streets to attack police officers.

Some cars were hijacked and set alight near where Constable Carroll (48) was shot and killed as he and other officers investigated anti-social behaviour and stone-throwing.

Clergy, community workers and volunteers have condemned the rioting and called on parents to check on their children. Forensic specialists are continuing to examine the getaway car used by the Real IRA gunmen after the murders of army engineers Mark Quinsey (23) from Birmingham, and Patrick Azimkar (21) from London just hours before they were to deploy to Afghanistan with 38th Engineer Regiment.

Also being investigated are a firearm and some ammunition already recovered before last night's discovery by detectives investigating the murder of Constable Carroll.

Chief constable Sir Hugh Orde was last night on his way to Washington DC for a St Patrick's Day reception which is also to be attended by members from the four largest parties who have representatives on the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

The presence together in Washington of the chief constable, the cross-party delegation from the policing board and the First Minister and Deputy First Minister along with Taoiseach Brian Cowen is intended to show a determined and united front in the face of the dissident threat of further violence.

This article appears in the print edition of the Irish Times

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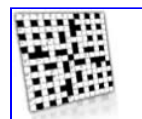
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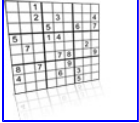
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