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reading the way, says Michael McAree, Motoring Editor

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Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Remains removed of presumed IRA victim

DAN KEENAN, Northern News Editor

HUMAN REMAINS, thought to belong to a teenage IRA victim, have been removed from the site of a search near Ballynultagh in the Wicklow mountains.

They were taken by hearse under Garda escort for examination in Dublin in an attempt to confirm they are the remains of Danny McIlhorne (19), who was taken, killed and secretly buried by the IRA in 1981. He is one of nine of the so-called Disappeared.

In a statement yesterday, the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains said: "The remains have been removed and will be retained by the coroner in Dublin until identification. The excavated area will be reinstated. This process could take an additional four weeks."

DNA samples have been taken for examination at the State Pathologists office in Dublin and for a comparative analysis at a laboratory in England.

This was established by forensic specialist Geoff Knupfer, who was called in by the Irish and British governments last year to help in the search for those IRA victims still undiscovered.

Mr McIlhorne's family has issued a formal statement, their first since confirmation of the discovery of human remains at the site was issued last week.

"It seems likely that they are the remains of our late beloved brother Danny but, unfortunately, the authorities have confirmed that they will be unable to verify this categorically for a further four weeks," they said.

"We sincerely hope and pray that these are the remains of Danny and that their discovery will allow us to afford Danny a proper Christian burial and to finally lay him to rest. Our hopes and prayers are today with the families of the other missing persons.

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"We sincerely hope that in the course of time they will be successful in locating the remains of their relatives, which will afford them the opportunity to bring closure to their loss."

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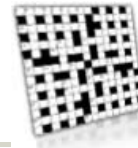
This article appears in the print edition of the Irish Times

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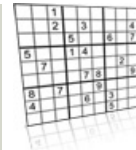
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