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### Daily Features

## 'More bullets were pumped into him. He died instantly'

Tuesday, March 13, 2007

Former UDR member Norman Hanna (28) was being dropped off at work on Newry's Rathfriland Road when he was shot dead by the IRA in front of his 23-year-old wife Sandra and their four-year-old daughter, Gail, on March 11, 1982. His brother Richard (50, right), a retired UDR man who lives in Rathfriland, tells Gráinne McCarry about the devastating effect Norman's death had on his family

**Former UDR member Norman Hanna (28) was being dropped off at work on Newry's Rathfriland Road when he was shot dead by the IRA in front of his 23-year-old wife Sandra and their four-year-old daughter, Gail, on March 11, 1982. His brother Richard (50, right), a retired UDR man who lives in Rathfriland, tells Gráinne McCarry about the devastating effect Norman's death had on his family**

I was out on patrol in the Kilcoo area the morning Norman was murdered. We were called back to base in Rathfriland and were to be sent to another area.

However, when we got back to base the sergeant major called me back and told me to hand over my rifle. It turned out that I wouldn't be going back out on duty.

Norman had been shot dead in Newry and the other soldiers were heading to the murder scene. He was shot as he was getting out of his car outside his work at the Vehicle Testing Centre on the Rathfriland Road.

He kissed his wife Sandra goodbye, then his four-year-old daughter Gail. As he opened his car, a gunman opened fire. He fell to the ground ... more bullets were pumped into him. He died instantly - he didn't stand a chance. Gail was crying for her daddy ...

Sandra and Norman had been married for five years or so. Sandra was in her late teens when they wed. Her family, the Croziers, owned a pub in Newry, and that's how she met Norman.

Our doctor came to the house and broke the news to my mother, Doreen. She had heart trouble and he was concerned about the effect the news would have on her.

My mum would have petted on Norman - they were very close. He would have been a sickly child and off school quite a bit with ear, nose and throat problems. She never got over it and passed away last year without seeing Norman's killers brought to justice.

My father, Isaac, was a coalman and was at work when he was contacted about Norman's death. He never said a word about it and to this day has yet to talk about it.

As soon as the word got out that Norman had been shot, the first people up to our door to sympathise were our Catholic neighbours, to see if they could do anything to help.

Norman's coffin was taken straight to the church; Sandra didn't want Norman waked at their home. They had left it that morning as a family and she didn't want to return to it without him alive. She never set foot in the house again. Anything she needed from it, relatives went in and got for her. The contents of the house were eventually auctioned off.

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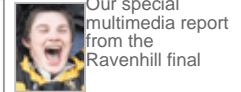
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My mother took a turn during the funeral service - if the doctor hadn't been there, I don't know what would have happened.

Norman and I would have chummed about together because we were close in age, 27 and 25. Isaac Junior was the oldest and we had another brother, William, and one sister, Sandra. We were an ordinary family and our parents didn't hold extreme political views.

Norman and I played football together and hockey for Newry Olympic, although he was better than me and played for the firsts. He would have gone to local pubs with mixed crowds. Everyone knew he wasn't in the UDR anymore.

When I went back to work, I was sent to visit the medical officer, who asked me a few questions and then gave me the all-clear to return to work, although I wasn't allowed to be in possession of a rifle for a while. I was a soldier and had to get on with it.

I would like Nuala O'Loan and the Historical Enquiries Team to look into Norman's murder - 25 years on, we just want to find out the truth ... a conclusion, closure. No one told us anything and we were his family.

I read about Norman's murder and how it was planned in Eamon Collins' book, Killing Rage. He was an IRA man who lifted the lid on what he had done.

In the book, he names his cousin Mickey as the gunman chosen to murder Norman. Mickey worked in the Housing Executive and had access to housing files for the Newry area. That is how these people operated - they were able to trace people's movements and watch them, thanks to informers they placed in all sorts of jobs.

Collins even admitted to having doubts in the end about whether or not Norman was in the UDR. He wasn't convinced by the intelligence he had been given, as he had never actually seen Norman in a UDR uniform.

He remarked on the fact that Norman wasn't very security conscious - he behaved like an ordinary person. When Collins was handing over the holdall of guns to Mickey, he had second thoughts - but Mickey wanted to go ahead with it.

It's hard to believe that all this information is allowed to be published in a book, yet no one ever thought to tell us anything.

Collins also states in his book that it was IRA policy that when people left the Crown Forces they were no longer a target. One of the hardest parts about Norman's murder was that he had left the UDR six years previously. Sandra wanted him to leave. She thought his job was far too dangerous.

Norman and I thought we were fighting for a cause by joining the UDR - we wanted to stop terrorism and bring peace to this country.

I joined on October 29, 1974, and worked full time, and then part time, for 29 years in the UDR, and when the name changed, in the Royal Irish Regiment.

I fully support peace, but I don't agree with the Good Friday Agreement because I have problems with the early release of prisoners. A terrorist is a terrorist, no matter who you are or what side you are on. The people who commit these sort of crimes should do time for what they have done.

It's sickening that this government is letting murderers out early and giving them money to rebuild their lives. They are not victims - they broke the law. Yet they are being treated better than the victims ever were. Nobody makes you go out and murder.

I met Bertha McDougall when she came to the offices of the victim support group, South Down Action for Healing Wounds, and we talked about different things.

My main concern was the early release of prisoners and what was going to happen with the On The Runs.

It seems to me that the British Government are giving everything to these terrorists-turned-politicians, just to get the Assembly up and running. They let the prisoners out and straight into government. As long as the IRA aren't bombing England, they are happy.

Gail is married now, but I'm sure she will never forget that day. I hope I never meet the man who murdered Norman in the street. I don't know how I would react. I'd probably end up doing time - whereas he would still walk free.

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