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Farmer who lost family in Omagh bomb dedicates book to victims

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Wednesday August 06 2008

[Martina Devlin](#)

The only man to lose three generations of his family in an explosion during the Troubles has written a book dedicated to them and to other [Omagh](#) bomb victims.

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Widowed farmer [Michael Grimes](#) (83) lost his wife, his daughter who was heavily pregnant with twins and his granddaughter.

He marks next week's tenth anniversary of the atrocity with a book in which he describes his family's ordeal.

Other families will mark August 15 in different ways, both publicly and privately, but father of 11, Mr Grimes, believes he is fulfilling the unspoken wish of his wife Mary with this book -- poignantly entitled 'Till We Meet Again'.

Shopping

Mrs Grimes, originally from [Cork](#) but living since her marriage near the [Tyrone](#) village of Beragh, died on her 65th birthday during a shopping trip to Omagh. With her was her daughter [Avril Monaghan](#) (30), and granddaughter Maura (20 months).

They were among 29 victims who were killed, although hundreds more were maimed by the [Real IRA](#) bomb which exploded on a busy Saturday afternoon in 1998.

The book describes life as a dairy farmer in rural [Ireland](#), but its final chapter -- entitled August -- tells of the last time he saw his wife, when she went through the door saying simply: "We are away now, bye." Mr Grimes first heard of the explosion when a florist arrived on his doorstep delivering a bouquet for his wife's birthday -- and spoke of a bomb in nearby Omagh.

In common with other relatives of those who were missing, the Grimes family went to [Omagh Leisure Centre](#), where an incident room had been set up, and waited for news.

Funeral

Three days later he attended a funeral for his daughter and granddaughter, buried together. The following day he buried his wife of more than 40 years.

Mr Grimes said: "On different occasions over the years Mary sometimes hinted that I should try to write a book. But I knew in my heart that it was beyond my capability.

"Then in the years after the atrocity in 1998 the fact that I had made no effort to comply with my wife's request sometimes caused me concern.

"About 18 months ago I decided to make an attempt. No doubt some readers will frown at my endeavour but I like to think that somewhere beyond the great divide there is one who smiles."

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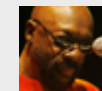
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