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IRA bomb victim finally breaks silence with book for his dead family

Conor McMorrow

TEN years after losing his wife, daughter and grand-daughter in the Omagh bombing, an 83-year-old Omagh man has spoken for the first time about the horror of losing three generations of his family.

Mick Grimes's wife Mary (65), daughter Avril Monaghan (30), Avril's youngest daughter Maura (20 months) and Avril's unborn twins were killed by the Real IRA bomb in Omagh on 15 August 1998.

They had gone on a shopping trip to the town to celebrate Mary's 65th birthday. "We are away now, bye", were Mary's final words before leaving.

Mick, her husband for over 40 years, had bought her flowers for her birthday but she never came home to see them waiting on the kitchen table.

"For a while we clung to the hope that they had gone to some other town but as time passed that hope faded. No words could describe the feeling of helplessness that set in as we watched and waited for the car to return," he writes in a new book.

At the inquest into their deaths, the coroner said that he could not remember any family suffering such a loss in the history of the Troubles. Grimes never spoke about his horrific loss until last week.

Some years before her death Mary Grimes and her daughter Avril gave him a professionally bound book containing all the poems he had written for their local parish newsletter for a number of decades. Mick later dismissed his wife's suggestion that he should write a book about his life containing his poetry.

Almost 10 years since his wife was killed in the bomb, the retired dairy farmer from Beragh in Tyrone will launch his book *Till We Meet Again*, fulfilling his late wife's wish in Omagh tomorrow.





He explained, "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."



Their daughter Avril, and grand-daughter Maura

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