

**Five years ago today
Ulster engineer Dessie
Boomer and five
colleagues vanished
after their plane was
reported missing over
the Mediterranean.**

**Now, Dessie's father
Cormac believes his
lost son may still be**

ALIVE. The former SNI P

GREAT ULSTER MYSTERIES 1



ALIVE. The former SDLP councillor has vowed to bring his boy home and solve the mystery of Flight 9H-ABU

EXCLUSIVE

By MARTIN BREEN

THE FATHER of an Ulsterman who mysteriously disappeared in Tunisia exactly five years ago, claims his son may still be ALIVE.

Former SDLP Belfast city councillor Cormac Boomer fears his son, Dessie, who was reportedly on a plane which vanished into thin air, may have been caught up in a terrorist incident.

He told the Extra last night that the information he had suggested his son could still be alive... somewhere.

It's the latest twist in a saga that has led to one of the greatest unsolved mysteries in aviation history.

Dessie Boomer has never been seen since disappearing with five fellow travellers in December 1995.

The married father-of-five from Banbridge, had been working in Libyan oilfields as an engineer — and was on his way home for Christmas.

The unsolved incident has remained one of the most mysterious in aviation history.

Authorities said he was one of six passengers aboard flight Piper Lance 9H-ABU, which vanished on a journey between Tunisia and Malta.

The 38-year-old was on an air-taxi flight to make his way home to spend Christmas with his wife, Maureen, and

However, his father Cormac said last night he had received information from well-placed sources in Malta that the light aircraft never left Djerba, in Tunisia.

Wreckage and personal belongings were recovered from the sea by Tunisian fishermen 10 months after the disappearance.

But Mr Boomer, who had hoped for a long time that his son was still alive at this late stage, hopes he is because of the information

"It would contradict claims the plane ever left the ground and crashed into the sea.

"As long as there is breath in my body, I will be looking for my son. I don't care whose toes I trample on.

"It could be that he was in the wrong place at the wrong time, and that he was caught in some type of terrorist incident. I think he most likely op-

tion."



HOPE AGAINST HOPE... Dessie's family, and right his father Cormac, who's still waiting for news five years on



MISSING... Ulster engineer Dessie Boomer

Mr Boomer and the others on the plane was that, they were there at a time when Islamic fundamentalists arrived to exact revenge on their pilot, Carmel Bartolo.

Bartolo was the owner of a small private Maltese airline called Excalair.

One month before the plane vanished, a local Maltese newspaper implicated Bartolo as an accomplice in the assassination of Islamic Jihad leader, Fathi Shqadi, by members of the Israeli secret service.

The second possibility is that Mr Boomer and his fellow travellers were abducted by Islamic fundamentalists, and may still be alive.

The third possibility is that their flight plunged into the water in bad weather killing all on board. However, no bodies have ever been recovered.

A massive search took place after the plane went missing involving sea and aircraft from five countries.

The US used specialised underwater search equipment, concentrating on an area in the Gulf of Gecbas where, in this scenario, the plane was suspected of crashing but nothing was found.

Now, a TV programme is to be made to try and unravel the mystery. In the New Year, TV3's 20/20 current affairs programme will be inves-

the disappearance of Mr