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The We Can Do It newspaper

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FINAL

30p



**At last I can hug my baby woman**

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## **My desert hell**

**Kirsty-Jane is champ in endurance race**

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# PROBE INTO SUSPICIOUS DEATH AT HOSPITAL



Police interviewed staff at Gosport War Memorial Hospital

## **Police investigation into alleged unlawful killing of patient, 91**

PROSECUTORS are examining files concerning the death in hospital of a 91-year-old, *The News* can reveal today.

A full report into allegations that the woman was unlawfully killed in 1998 has been prepared by detectives.

The investigation centres on the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Today health officials said they were co-operating fully with the police but insisted

### **EXCLUSIVE**

by Jonathan Carter  
The News

patient safety was paramount. *The News* understands that if a case is proven, detectives would consider re-opening the files on hundreds of other deaths at the hospital.

The woman's daughter told *The News*: 'I hope I will never see anyone die in the circumstances in which my mother died.'

FULL STORY ● Page 3

### **The News TODAY**

## **Three arrested over forest-body murder**

TWO men and a woman were in custody today after being arrested on suspicion of the murder of body-in-the-forest victim Lee Horrell.

They were held at addresses across the south this morning, more than three months after the decomposing body of 24-year-old Mr Horrell was found at a beauty spot near Fareham. The trio - all of whom live in the Portsmouth area - were taken to undisclosed police stations in south east Hampshire.

FULL STORY ● Page 2

## **Family disowns killer**

DISGUSTED members of murderer Leslie Pepall's own family have disowned him since he stabbed his four-year-old son to death and tried to kill his baby daughter.

One of his brothers and an aunt were at Winchester Crown Court to see him jailed last week for the murder of Ben and attempted murder of 11-month-old Chloe at their Gosport home.

FULL STORY ● Page 15

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**INQUIRY:** Police investigation of 91-year-old woman's death may lead to probe into hundreds of other cases

# Mystery at the War Memorial

**A HOSPITAL was today at the centre of a major police investigation into the alleged unlawful killing of an elderly patient.**

Detectives have sent a file on the case to be examined by prosecutors after a long-running inquiry into events surrounding the death of a 91-year-old woman at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

And senior officers say they cannot rule out having to reopen files on hundreds more deaths at the hospital if charges are brought over the death of the pensioner.

The probe was triggered by a complaint from the woman's family over the standard of care she received at the hospital in the days before she died there in August 1998.

Today her daughter, Gillian Mackenzie, refused to be drawn on the inquiry but said: 'I hope I will never see anyone die in the circumstances in which my mother died.'

Detectives working on the inquiry have interviewed a number of medical staff at the hospital.

None has been arrested or questioned under caution, but officers have sent a file to the Crown Prosecution Service seeking advice on how they might proceed with the inquiry.

Lawyers are now deciding whether there is sufficient evidence to bring a prosecution for alleged unlawful killing.

*The News* understands that if they do so, senior officers will consider reopening files on the deaths of other patients at the hospital.

One source told *The News* the deaths of as many as 600 elderly people could be re-examined. It is thought the use of the pain-killing drug diamorphine might form a part of any future inquiry.

In a statement today Hampshire police said: 'Police have completed their investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of a 91-year-old woman from Lee-on-the-Solent after a complaint by her family.'

'She died in August 1998 at the War Memorial Hospital in Gosport after being transferred there from Royal Hospital Haslar.

'In line with patient confidentiality, we cannot reveal the nature of her medical condition.

'We have the full co-operation of Portsmouth HealthCare (NHS) Trust and the Royal Hospital Haslar for our investigation.

'A file has been sent to the CPS and police are awaiting a decision.'

by Jonathan Carter  
The News

Detective Superintendent Steve Watts, who is overseeing the case, refused to comment on the inquiry but said: 'I can confirm it is an allegation of unlawful killing.'

The inquiry is being led by Detective Chief Inspector Ray Burt, who was put in charge of the investigation after Mrs Mackenzie, 67, who lives in East Sussex, criticised the initial handling by Gosport CID.

Asked whether he could rule out a future inquiry involving the deaths of other patients at the War Memorial Hospital, he said: 'When the CPS makes a decision in this case, whatever that might be, a decision will be made as to what would be the most appropriate course of action to take.'

'We are conscious of the fact that we are dealing with extremely sensitive issues and any decision about any further action will be taken with great care and consideration for all persons who may potentially be involved.'

The 91-year-old woman whose death prompted the police inquiry is understood to have been sent to Gosport War Memorial to recover after an operation at nearby Haslar.

It is believed she had to go back to Haslar for further treatment before being transferred again to the War Memorial, where she died.

Today the Portsmouth HealthCare (NHS) Trust confirmed it had investigated a complaint over the standard of her care.

Operations director Ian Piper told *The News*: 'The trust did receive a complaint in August 1998 about the standard of care related to the lady concerned. We always take complaints very seriously and that complaint was investigated.'

'No member of staff has been disciplined as a result of the investigation into the complaint received about the standard of care at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.'

Mr Piper said that the trust was told by police in December 1998 that an investigation into Mrs Mackenzie's complaint was being launched.

He added: 'We want to stress that patient safety is very important to us as a trust.'

'At the end of the day the decision is with the CPS about what the next step will be. If the CPS does identify that there is a case to be answered, then clearly we need to take appropriate action.'



Ian Piper: Aware



The War Memorial Hospital, Gosport, is at the centre of a police probe

## Daughter's complaint leads to rap for detectives

THE daughter of the 91-year-old patient today launched a stinging attack on the original police investigation into the death of her mother.

Gillian Mackenzie, who lives in Sussex, rounded on the handling of the inquiry by a Gosport CID team insisting officers failed to do a proper job.

She protested to the Police Complaints Authority.

It upheld her complaint and as a result disciplinary action was taken against Detective Inspector Steph Morgan of Gosport police and a second officer.

Hampshire police confirmed that a detective inspector was disciplined for an 'inappropriate remark' made to Mrs Mackenzie and the second officer was disciplined for 'investigative failures'.

Mrs Mackenzie said: 'I went with a serious concern to Gosport police station and they prepared a file for consideration by the CPS.'

'The file contained no statements - not even a written statement from me - no interviews and no medical reports. In fact, I don't know what they had in the file.'

'Literally within a few weeks I had a phone call from a police officer saying it was his opinion that there was no case to answer.'

Mrs Mackenzie described the second police investigation - led by DCI Ray Burt, now based at Winchester police headquarters - as 'first-class.'



DI Steph Morgan

## Town fought for its hospital

GOSPORT War Memorial Hospital provides services for elderly patients, including those with mental health problems, as well as mothers and babies on the Blake maternity unit.

From a modest beginning which saw it with 26 beds when it opened in 1923, it has more than trebled in size.

The people of Gosport are intensely proud of the complex - and very defensive of it.

When it was threatened with closure in a 1980s health shake-up, a huge

campaign was launched.

The campaign didn't merely convince health chiefs to keep it open but also to invest in it, and a £10m revamp was ordered which made the hospital much bigger and gave it a range of state-of-the-art facilities.

The hospital was officially opened on April 28, 1923, after it was built by Gosport-based Royal Marines - with money raised from Gosport people - as a memorial to those who had died in the first world war.



Alan Grimson: Killer

## Sailor's parents fly out to seek truth

THE parents of a teenager who vanished while serving in the same ship as killer Alan Grimson were today asking for help finding out what happened to him.

David and Margaret Parkes have gone to Gibraltar to find why 18-year-old Simon disappeared in December 1986 while serving on HMS *Illustrious*.

His disappearance sparked a massive land and seashore search by military and civilian police but no trace was found of him.

But now, days after Grimson's conviction for the killings of two young men, detectives are relaunching the investigation.

They insist they are keeping an open mind on whether Grimson was involved - but say the inquiry stems from the Grimson case.

Homosexual Grimson, 42, of North End, Portsmouth, was jailed for life last week for the murders of naval rating Nicholas Wright, 18, from Leicestershire, and 20-year-old barman Sion

Jenkins, from Newbury.

Chief Inspector Emilio Porro, of Royal Gibraltar Police, said: 'We are not connecting this disappearance with Alan Grimson but that is one of several possibilities. We will be re-interviewing certain people and appealing for new witnesses to come forward.'

'We investigated the disappearance on the evidence available at the time. In 1986 there was nothing to make us suspect he was murdered.'

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