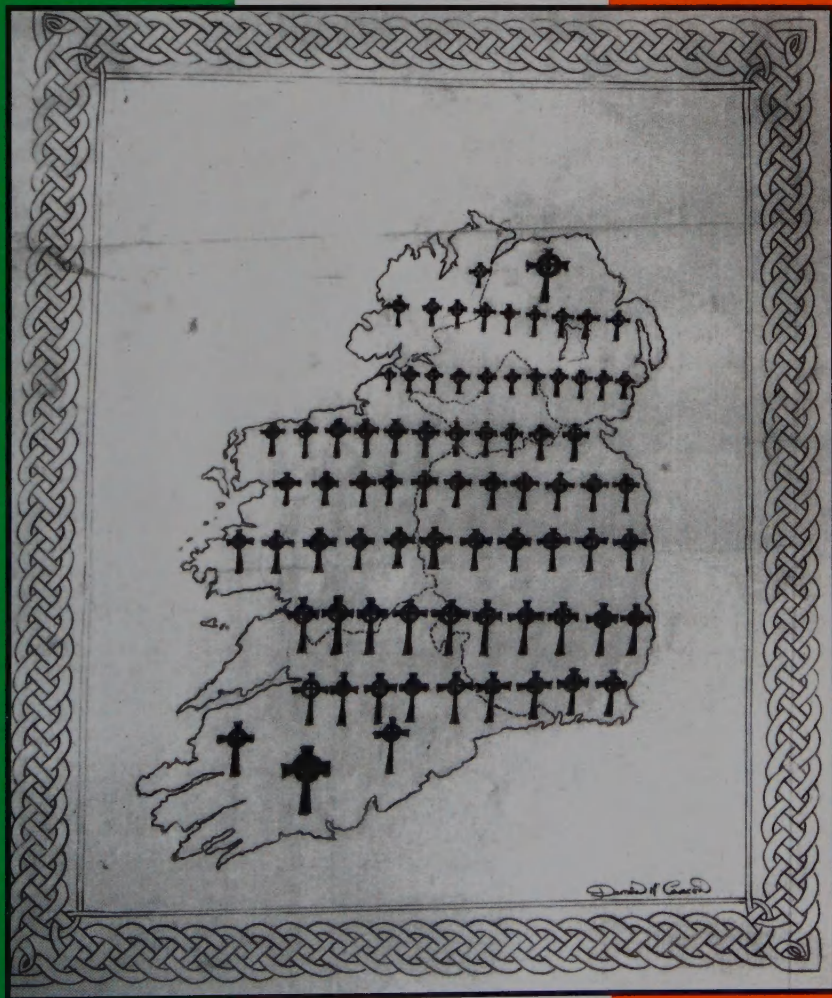


Seventy-Seven of Mine Said Ireland



Compiled by Martin O'Dwyer (Bob)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those who have become part of this tribute to the 77 men who were executed during the Civil War.

The entries in this book are based on available historical records which I have got from the various newspapers, namely, Éire newspaper; Cork Examiner; The Irish News; Irish Independent; Southern Star; Meath Chronicle; Kerryman; Clare Champion; Westmeath Chronicle; Drogheda Independent; Freeman's Journal; Nenagh Guardian; Nationalist Newspaper, Clonmel and Tipperary Star, Thurles. The many libraries who have helped me, namely, the National Library of Ireland; Tipperary County Library, Thurles; Kilmainham Jail Museum; Meath County Library and Kerry County Library. Also James Durney's book, "On The One Road."; Pdraig Ó Haicead's book "Keep Their Names Ever Green" and "Memories of a Tipperary Family" by Eamonn Gaynor.

I am also privileged to have been given personal diaries, notes and permission to use the photographs.

My deep thanks to Bill O'Dwyer, Ballingarry, for contributing the Forward for the book; Cashel Arts and Heritage Society for their encouragement; Pat Dunne, photographer, Cashel, who prepared the photographs for me; Breda Kirwan for her patient typing and retyping; Margaret Hogan, Brú Ború and Phil Fitzgerald, Cappamore and Danny O'Dwyer, who worked so hard on the proof-reading and Senator Labhrás & Úna Ó Murchú for their help and support; Matt Doyle, National Graves Association; Kathleen Moloughney, Roscrea and Michael O'Sullivan, Co. Down, Matt Stapleton, Borrisaleigh, Tony McCarthy, Blarney, Co. Cork, Dr. John Maguire, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, Brendan Daly, Clonmore Rd., Tyrone, Liam Lynch, Knocknagoshel, Tralee, Dessie Long of Limerick, Donal O'Flynn of Ovens, Cork and Larkin family Ballyagherty.

Dan Keating from Tralee, Co. Kerry, a man of 104 years related to me his memories of the Civil War and how he happened to be in Portlaoighse prison hospital where he witnessed from his room window the execution of Thomas Gibson by firing squad.

I would like to acknowledge the continued understanding of my wife Agnes and daughters Treacy and Sally, and sons Billy and Danny; my daughter-in-law Karen who drove me around the country collecting material for the book.

I hope that everyone who reads this book will recognise it as a memorial to the 77 who were executed in the Civil War.

Forward

Martin O'Dwyer is to be congratulated on an excellent task of bringing together the names and some information on the seventy seven men executed during the Civil War. It has been for long the unspoken subject in many quarters.

More lives on both sides including the seventy seven were killed during the Civil War than during the Black and Tan period, often under circumstances which were far from legal.

People of all ages, even as young as twelve years of age lost their lives. Of the seventy seven who were executed most were sentenced by what were known as military committees, akin to drumhead courtmartials and probably illegal. It could hardly happen under present international law and treaties. The killings by national forces were never estimated and lightly questioned.

At least a start has been made when it should now be possible to do so.

Bill O'Dwyer
Cappa House, Ballingarry.

POBLACHT NA H EIREANN.
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke, upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,

THOMAS J. CLARKE,

SEAN Mac DIARMADA,

P. H. PEABSE,

JAMES CONNOLLY,

THOMAS MacBONAGH,

EAMONN CEANNT,

JOSEPH PLUNKETT

Declaration of Independence

21st January 1919 First Dáil Éireann

Enacted by the

Parliament of the Republic of Ireland

'Whereas the Irish People is by right a free people'

'And whereas for seven hundred years the Irish People has never ceased to repudiate and has repeatedly protested in arms against foreign usurpation.

'And whereas English rule in this country is, and always has been, based upon force and fraud and maintained by military occupation against the declared will of the people:

'And whereas the Irish Republic was proclaimed in Dublin on Easter Monday 1916, by the Irish Republican Army, acting on behalf of the Irish People:

'And whereas the Irish People is resolved to secure and maintain its complete independence in order to promote the common weal, to re-establish justice, to provide for future defence, to ensure peace at home and good will with all nations, and to constitute a national polity based upon the people's will with equal right and equal opportunity for every citizen:

'And whereas at the threshold of a new era in history the Irish electorate has in the General Election of December, 1918, seized the first occasion to declare by an overwhelming majority its firm allegiance to the Irish Republic:

'Now, therefore, we, the elected Representatives of the ancient Irish People in National Parliament assembled, do, in the name of the Irish Nation, ratify the establishment of the Irish Republic and pledge ourselves and our people to make this declaration effective by every means at our command:

'We ordain that the elected Representatives of the Irish People alone have power to make laws binding on the people of Ireland, and that the Irish Parliament is the only Parliament to which that people will give its allegiance:

'We solemnly declare foreign government in Ireland to be an invasion of our national right which we will never tolerate, and we demand the evacuation of our country by the English Garrison:

'We claim for our national independence the recognition and support of every free nation in the world, and we proclaim that independence to be a condition precedent to international peace hereafter:

'In the name of the Irish People we humbly commit our destiny to Almighty God who gave our fathers the courage and determination to persevere through long centuries of a ruthless tyranny, and strong in the justice of the cause which they have handed down to us, we ask His Divine blessing on this the last stage of the struggle we have pledged ourselves to carry through to freedom.'

(Dáil Éireann: Minutes of the Proceedings of the First parliament of the Republic of Ireland, 21st January 1919)

TEXT OF THE FOUR COURTS PROCLAMATION

Oglaigh na hÉireann

PROCLAMATION

Fellow citizens of the Irish Republic:

The fateful hour has come. At the dictation of our hereditary enemy our rightful cause is being treacherously assailed by recreant Irishmen. The crash of the arms and the boom of artillery reverberate in this supreme test of the Nation's destiny.

Gallant soldiers of the Irish Republic stand rigorously firm in its defence and worthily uphold their [sic] noblest traditions. The sacred spirits of the illustrious Dead are with us in this great struggle. 'Death before Dishonour' being an unchanging principle of our national faith as it was of theirs, still inspires us to emulate their glorious effort.

We therefore appeal to all citizens who have withstood unflinchingly the oppression of the enemy during the past six years to rally to the support of the Republic and recognise that the resistance now being offered is but the continuance of the struggle that was suspended by the truce with the British. We especially appeal to our former comrades of the Irish Republic to return to that allegiance and thus guard the Nation's honour from the infamous stigma that her sons aided her foes in retaining a hateful domination over her.

Confident of victory and of maintaining Ireland's Independence this appeal is issued by the Army Executive on behalf of the Irish Republican Army

(Signed)

Commdt.-Gen. Liam Mellows, Commdt.-Gen. Rory O'Connor,
Commdt.-Gen. Jos. McKelvey, Commdt.-Gen. Earnan O Maille,
Commdt.-Gen. Seamus Robinson, Commdt.-Gen. Sean Moylan,
Commdt.-Gen. Michael Kilroy, Commdt.-Gen. Frank Barrett, Commdt.-
Gen. Thomas Deerig [sic Derrig], Commdt. T. Barry, Col. Commdt. F. Ó
Faolain, Brig. Gen. J. O'Connor, Commdt. P.O. Ruteless.

28th June, 1922.

Remembrance Days

(From the Catholic Bulletin)

"Two ceremonies in remembrance of the dead were recently held in Dublin and throughout Ireland. One was in commemoration of Irishmen who were murdered in the European war, the other in commemoration of some Irishmen who were murdered during the Irish Civil War. The tribute to the first consisted in the wearing of poppies, 500,000 of which were estimated to have been sold in Dublin and district. The centre of the celebrations was a Celtic cross, erected temporarily in College Green, opposite Trinity College. It has been estimated that 50,000 people were present. Among the wreaths that were placed on the Cross was one from the Free State Government with the inscription: "This wreath is placed here by the Free State Government to commemorate all the brave men who fell on the field of battle." Another rendering (perhaps there were two wreaths) was; "From the Government of Saorstát Éireann, in memory of all the Irishmen who died in the Great War."

We understand that shortly before 11 o'clock the great bell of Trinity College began to toll, and that a silence lasting longer than the official two minutes fell upon the multitude. The sudden bursting out of the bugles sounding the "Last Post" broke this. Subsequently a great burst of cheering heralded the hoisting of the Union Jack to the masthead of the old Irish Parliament House, now the Bank of Ireland. The ceremony concluded with the singing of the Imperial Anthem - "God save the King." The Irish Independent wrote: "The great gathering at the unveiling of the Memorial Cross to those who fell at Guillemont and Ginchy gave a tribute worthy of our country to brave Irishmen ... No one can deny that our country might find a basis of union in the ex-soldiers of the Great War, but even two years wrought swift changes. They have broadened the national perspective. Loyalty to the Empire is seen to be consistent with perfect loyalty to the Free State; and it is right to say that the Free State Government's tolerant and moderate policy is largely responsible for this better condition of things. Today the cross in College Green - the very fact of its presence in

College Green - is proof that within the Free State itself men of all parties are coming together in a new and broader creed of patriotism ..."

At the Remembrance Service in London, Senator Sir Bryan Mahon on behalf of the Irish Free State, laid a wreath on the Cenotaph in Whitehall. The Free State High Commissioner - Mr. James MacNeill accompanied him.

In a later article on the same subject, the Irish Times again wrote; "Freedom, the responsibilities of self-government, and a common legacy of proud memories are doing their healing work in the Free State. We are finding our place in that Commonwealth phant sacrifice ..." it will not be out of place to give here another tribute paid to the Free State by the Chairman of its Senate - Lord Glenavy: "On behalf of the Southern Unionists he declared that the assurances given them by the Free State Government had been met in every way. Speaking from experience, derived as Chairman of that House, he could say absolutely that the legislation passed for the past three years had in no way prejudiced or discriminated against the interests of any Southern unionists."

The Great Silence

(From the Catholic Bulletin)

We have now to contrast the second ceremony of Remembrance for the dead. It consisted of the lying-in-state, the funeral and the re-internment of seventy-seven men executed by the Irish Free State Government. Though Trinity College tolled its great bell at the Remembrance ceremony in College Green, we did not hear the sorrowful sound of a single dead-bell as the remains of our countrymen passed on to their abiding place. This was the Great Silence we observed, cold, icy, unforgiving silence. And then the fearful explanation came to us that these were, to some people, the funerals of bodies whose souls were damned for murder. One of the attributes of God is His unchangeableness. Surely, however, there are occasions when He smiles in anger.

The Free State Government and the Northern Government paid their Imperial attributes. In Belfast several hundred armed police who forcibly tore away the flag from the coffin met the remains of Joseph McKelvey. The words of the President of the Free State were: "I gave orders myself to the military to attend and prevent any armed display at these internments." No wreaths in the form of a colossal harp of yellow chrysanthemums and Flanders poppies, but wreaths in the form of bayonets and bullets and red Irish blood. The shooting in Dundalk cemetery, the military display elsewhere, comprehended the sympathy extended to the bereaved relatives and friends of the deceased.

When the European war began, Irishmen who joined the British Army were denounced as traitors. No language was scurrilous enough for them. While they are now the heroes of the Irish Free State, the men who fought for Ireland are denied the last tribute which one soldier pays to another.

William O'Brien need have no misgivings whatever, for writing the life of Edmund Burke as an Irishman.

ROLL OF HONOUR

" Authorised Murders "

1922

Name	Executed	Date
1. James Fisher	Kilmainham	November 17
2. Peter Cassidy	Kilmainham	November 17
3. Richard Twohig	Kilmainham	November 17
4. John Gaffney	Kilmainham	November 17
5. Erskine Childers	Beggar's Bush	November 24
6. Joseph Spooner	Dublin	November 30
7. Patrick Farrelly	Dublin	November 30
8. John Murphy	Dublin	November 30
9. Rory O'Connor	Mountjoy	December 8
10. Liam Mellows	Mountjoy	December 8
11. Joseph McKelvey	Mountjoy	December 8
12. Richard Barrett	Mountjoy	December 8
13. Stephen White	Dublin	December 19
14. Joseph Johnston	Dublin	December 19
15. Patrick Mangan	Dublin	December 19
16. Patrick Nolan	Dublin	December 19
17. Brian Moore	Dublin	December 19
18. James O'Connor	Dublin	December 19
19. Patrick Bagnel	Dublin	December 19
20. John Phelan	Kilkenny	December 29
21. John Murphy	Kilkenny	December 29

1923

22. Leo Dowling	Portobello	January 8
23. Sylvester Heaney	Portobello	January 8
24. Laurence Sheeky	Portobello	January 8
25. Anthony O'Reilly	Portobello	January 8
26. Terence Brady	Portobello	January 8
27. Thomas McKeown	Dundalk	January 13
28. John McNulty	Dundalk	January 13
29. Thomas Murray	Dundalk	January 13

30.	Frederick Burke	Roscrea	January 15
31.	Patrick Russell	Roscrea	January 15
32.	Martin O'Shea	Roscrea	January 15
33.	Patrick McNamara	Roscrea	January 15
34.	James Lillis	Carlow	January 15
35.	James Daly	Tralee	January 20
36.	John Clifford	Tralee	January 20
37.	Michael Brosnan	Tralee	January 20
38.	James Hanlon	Tralee	January 20
39.	Cornelius McMahon	Limerick	January 20
40.	Patrick Hennesy	Limerick	January 20
41.	Thomas Hughes	Athlone	January 20
42.	Michael Walsh	Athlone	January 20
43.	Herbert Collins	Athlone	January 20
44.	Stephen Joyce	Athlone	January 20
45.	Martin Bourke	Athlone	January 20
46.	James Melia	Dundalk	January 22
47.	Thomas Lennon	Dundalk	January 22
48.	Joseph Ferguson	Dundalk	January 22
49.	Michael Fitzgerald	Waterford	January 25
50.	Patrick O'Reilly	Birr, Offaly	January 26
51.	Patrick Cunningham	Birr, Offaly	January 26
52.	William Conroy	Birr, Offaly	January 26
53.	Colum Kelly	Birr, Offaly	January 26
54.	Patrick Geraghty	Portlaoighise	January 27
55.	Joseph Byrne	Portlaoighise	January 27
56.	Thomas Gibson	Portlaoighise	February 26
57.	James O'Rourke	Dublin	March 13
58.	William Healy	Cork	March 13
59.	James Parle	Wexford	March 13
60.	Patrick Hogan	Wexford	March 13
61.	John Creane	Wexford	March 13
62.	Séan Larkin	Drumboe, Donegal	March 14
63.	Timothy O'Sullivan	Drumboe, Donegal	March 14
64.	Daniel Enright	Drumboe, Donegal	March 14
65.	Charles Daly	Drumboe, Donegal	March 14
66.	James O'Malley	Tuam	April 11
67.	Francis Cunnane	Tuam	April 11
68.	Michael Monaghan	Tuam	April 11
69.	John Newell	Tuam	April 11

70.	John Mc Guire	Tuam	April 11
71.	Martin Moylan	Tuam	April 11
72.	Richard Hatheway	Tralee	April 25
73.	James McEney	Tralee	April 25
74.	Edward Greaney	Tralee	April 25
75.	Patrick Mahoney	Ennis	April 26
76.	Christopher Quinn	Ennis	May 02
77.	William Shaughnessy	Ennis	May 02



Kilmainham Jail

SEVENTY SEVEN

Seventy - Seven of mine, said Ireland,
Walking the dismal road to death,
Avowed their faith in a tortured Sireland,
Called my name with their latest breath;
Lifted their hearts to God above them-
Hearts as pure as the driven snow-
Prayed for the faithful ones who loved them,
But never quailed at the tyrant's blow.

Killed in my name! My best, my dearest!
In the lonely fields, in the barracks squares
Surely, O God of love, thou hearest
An outraged Sireland's heart-wrung prayers
Surely for their sake Thou wilt send me
A host of soldiers to set me free!
O God of battles, do thou befriend me,
For I have been loyal and true to thee!

Seventy-seven of mine are sleeping
Under the sod for love of me.
I have placed them all in God's good keeping
As my pledge for the glorious day to be
When men shall spring from the soon-trod masses
And march with a manly stride once more,
To fight in the streets and the hillside passes
'Til the night of thraldom and shame is o'er.

Mellows, McKelvey, Barrett, O'Connor,
Childers, Brugha and my martyrs all,
Shall gather my soldiers for Ireland's honour,
Shall send through the land my olden call.
My sons shall answer the brave reveille,
And heedless of sorrow and strife and pain,
Bring freedom and peace to hill and valley-
The true revenge for my soldiers slain!

Brian na Banban

1922

James Fisher, Patrick Cassidy, Richard Twohig and John Gaffney. Executed November 17th 1922

These four, the first of the seventy-seven executions of the Civil War were shot in Kilmainham on 17th. November 1922. Peter Cassidy and John Gaffney lived in 3 and 5 Ushers Street and were lifelong friends, having gone to school together, joined the Republican youth movement, Na Fianna and served with H. Company 3rd Battalion, IRA during the War of Independence. They both worked in Dublin Corporation's Electric Lighting Department. They remained in arms against the Treaty and on 27th October 1922, they were captured in possession of revolvers. They were tried by a military court on 9th November and were shot 8 days later. There was no appeal against the military court's sentence and they were executed within three weeks of capture. Of such deeds are Civil War made.

They were not prominent personalities in the conflict of the time, and are not now widely remembered, but they served their country as they saw it and they would be numbered amongst those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Richard Twohig and James Fisher also came from the same part of Dublin, which apparently was a hotbed of Republicanism. It was the area associated with Robert Emmet and Lord Edward Fitzgerald a hundred years earlier and this tradition remained in the Liberties.

The Executive Council meeting of 30th November records a decision "to pay mortality benefits in cases of Cassidy and Gaffney.

Thy Will Be Done



In Loving Memory of

James Fisher

Echlin St. Buildings, James St., Dublin

Executed in Kilmainham Jail

17th November, 1922

Buried in Glasnevin Cemetery Republican Plot.

Aged 18 years.

R. I. P.

James Fisher

Was born in Echlin St. Buildings, James St., He was captured in Catherine St., and executed in Kilmainham Jail 17/11/22, age 18 years. Buried in Glasnevin Cemetery Republican Plot. James was

a mere eighteen years old but in facing death he showed the coolness and audacity of a veteran soldier. He was charged by a military court on 8th November 1922, Dublin, for being in possession without proper authority of one revolver.

His last letter to his mother before he was executed.

16/11/'22

Dear Mother,

I am now waiting the supreme penalty at seven o'clock in the morning, but I am perfectly happy, because I've seen the priest and I am going to die a good Catholic and a soldier of the Irish Republic. Don't worry or cry for me, but pray for the repose of my soul and my three comrades.

I asked to see you, but they said they would see what they could do. Ask all my friends and comrades to pray for Dick and me and my other two comrades. Mother, I just long for one look at all the faces at home, yours especially, but seemingly that is denied me. I get everything I want now, which, as you know, is the usual stunt. Mother, my heart grieves me for one look at your dear face. But, please God, I will meet you and them all in Heaven. I picture how this will effect you; but, Mother, don't fret, for remember I am happy. The priest here is going to get me-to hear my confession, and I will receive at the altar in the morning.

Lord Jesus, give me courage in my last moments. If I only got told of my sentence I would have been well prepared before now. Oh! Mother, if I could just see you again. Don't fret, Mother, because I am happy.

To my Mother whom I dearly love, Good-bye, Good-bye, Good-bye. We will meet in Heaven, please God, mother. God strengthen me in this ordeal, Mother. I am to die for Ireland.

Signed J. B. Fisher.

Glóir don Athair



Peter Cassidy

Age 21 years old.

7 Usher St., Dublin

Executed by shooting in Kilmainham Jail

17/11/'22

Re-interred in Glasnevin Republican Plot, Dublin.

R.I.P.

Peter Cassidy

He was captured in Catherine Street and executed by shooting in Kilmainham Jail, 17/11/'22, and age 21 years old. Re-interred in Glasnevin Republican Plot, Dublin. Mrs. B. Cassidy survived him.

The charge against him was - possession without proper authority of a revolver. A military court tried him.

His last letter to his mother.

16-11-'22

Dear Mother,

Just a few lines to wish you a last and fond good-bye. I am going to die for Ireland at 7 o'clock, as the court has sentenced me to death.

Dear Mother, do not worry over me, as I am proud to die for Ireland. I have the priest with me; he is preparing me to meet my God. He will give you some prayer books and beads, which I sent you with my last and best love. Tell my Father, Bud, Jim, Paddy and Dan and all at home not to fret over me, as I am going to a happier place, thank God.

John Gaffney and two other fellows are to die with me. Tell all my friends and relations to pray for me that my soul shall be in peace. Dear Mother, be brave and bear up the cross you have to carry, it is all for dear old Ireland; think of the Blessed Virgin, and she will help you along. Dear Mother, I will finish now, as I have no more to say. Hoping to meet you all in Heaven.

From your loving and proud son.

Peter Cassidy.

P.S. - Tell all the boys and girls at the Quay to pray for me, Dear Mother, I die a happy death. I had confession. Dear Mother, get a mass said for me and one for the Holy Souls in Purgatory.

Mairfidh a Chuimhne go Brádh



Richard Twohig

**Born 1, Connor Buildings
James St. Harbour, Dublin**

Executed in Kilmainham Jail

7/11/'22

Buried in Glasnevin Cemetery

Republican Plot.

Rest In Peace.

Richard Twohig

Born in No.1, Connor Buildings, James St., Dublin. He was captured in Catherine St., and executed in Kilmainham Jail 17/11/'22. Buried in Glasnevin Cemetery Republican Plot.

His last letter to his Mother.

From your son, Dick, to my loving Mother.

I am in the best of spirits. Long live Ireland. God bless you, Mother, and the children. Good-bye

Ireland first, and Ireland last, and Ireland over all. I hope Ireland will be free soon. I send home the mouth organ to you for Paddy, if they will send it. The men over me were all right. I had nothing to say about them.

Dick Twohig

Bodies handed over at Kilmainham

(from Cork Examiner, October 29th 1924)

A large crowd mainly composed of women and girls, gathered at Kilmainham prison at 1.30 p.m., today for the handing over to their relatives of the bodies of J. Gaffney, P. Cassidy, J. Fisher, R. Tuohig, T. Brady, and L. Dowling, who had been executed there, and whose remains had been interred in the gaol grounds. While the coffins were being removed from the gaol a lady in the uniform of the Cumann na mBan approached the Press representatives and told them that the members of the Cumann na mBan had been allowed into the gaol to place the Republican flags on the coffins. Each tricolour bore the letters "I. R." in black cloth on the centre. The lady further stated that they had been refused leave to do this at the other barracks, but were allowed to do so at Kilmainham. The relatives of the executed men were admitted into prison and a priest was also present. The bodies were handed over by Commandant Noone and Captain Stafford on behalf of the army authorities, and were received by the relatives.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph



John Gaffney

**Executed in Kilmainham Jail
3 Ushers St, Dublin**

**Executed by shooting in Kilmainham Jail,
17th November, 1922**

Buried Glasnevin Republican Plot, (old).

Re-interred in Glasnevin Republican Plot, Dublin.

Aged 20 years

R.I.P.

John Gaffney

Born 3 Ushers St., Dublin. He was captured in North Thomas Street and was executed by shooting in Kilmainham Jail, 17/11/22, and buried Glasnevin Republican Plot age 20 years old. A Military

court charged him on 8th November 1922, for being in possession without proper authority of one revolver. His mother Mrs. Ellen Gaffney, 3 Ushers St, survived him.

His last letter to his mother.

16/12/'22

Dear Mother,

I am writing this letter to you, and hope to the Sacred Heart of Jesus you will bear it like a brave woman. It is to let you know I have been tried and sentenced to be shot on Friday morning at 7 o'clock. Dear Mother, you are not to worry, and thank God and His Blessed Mother for giving me such a time to repent. Oh, it is a great thing to know when you are going to die so as to have time to repent.

Dear mother, we had a priest here with us, a nice young gentleman, he will pay you a visit and let you know how brave I was, and I hope he will find you the same. All you have to do is to pray for me, and I will pray for you and all the family, and particularly father. Dear Mother, I am just after receiving yours and Ciss's loving letter and am glad you and all the family are well, and I hope you are not begrudging me to God, but be brave like all other mothers, and I will take the call bravely. God bless you all.

From your fond son,

J. Gaffney.

Glór don Athair



Erskine Childers

Born Wicklow

And

12 Bushy Park Rd., Dublin

Executed Beggar's Bush, November 24th 1922

Buried Glasnevin Republican Plot.

R.I.P.

Erskine Childers

True Lover of Ireland

Erskine Childers was born Wicklow and captured at Annamoe, Co. Wicklow and was executed Beggar's Bush, November 24, 1922.

He is buried Glasnevin Republican Plot.

After they had made use of him for years, leaned on his gifts and his fidelity and asked Irish voters to elect him as their representative in Dail Eireann, they called him "a damned Englishman" because he warned them against English cunning, against "the smile of the Sasanach", and tried to save them from the pitfalls of English diplomacy. Then, because the English who hated and feared him desired his death, those renegade comrades of his pursued him relentlessly from place to place where he fought and taught under the still undefeated flag of the Republic, until finally they siezed him, manufactured charges against him, arraigned him before a so-called "military court", condemned him to death, and in order to camouflage the fear and hatred which rode them, put four young Dublin boys to death a week before the day appointed for the slaughter of this gentle, unselfish, unfearing, faithful Irishman. At his "trial" on November 17, 1922, he made the following simple straightforward statement characteristic of the man who loved every lover of Ireland, who served her with the unselfish humility of greatness: -

"I wish to make this statement in view of the mass of prejudice which has gathered about me owing to false statements and calumnies, and innuendoes which have been made about me in the press and elsewhere for a year past, and to most of which I have been unable to reply. I am making no appeal - let that be clear. Whatever befalls I shall suffer gladly and happily, but I think it due to me, and above all to the cause I represent which has been traduced and slandered through the agency of attacks on me, to make some refutation of these attacks.

I have constantly been called an Englishman who having betrayed his own country came to Ireland to betray and destroy Ireland in England's interest. Not a single particle of proof has ever been brought forward for those charges. They depend solely on prejudice fostered by a pitilessly bitter propaganda and intended more, I think, to damage the Republican Party through me than me myself.

These are the facts of my life briefly.

According to the rules laid down by your own Government - and some such rules would have to be laid down by any Government - I am by birth, domicile, and deliberate choice of citizenship an Irishman. My father was English, born in England, my mother was Irish, born in Ireland, Anna, the daughter of Thomas J. Barton, of Glendalough House, Annamoe, Co. Wicklow.

I was educated in England, and entered the British Civil Service as a clerk and remained there until 1910 when I gave it up to take up political work and writing as a Liberal especially in the cause of Irish Freedom. I wrote and spoke much for Irish Home Rule in the years 1910-1914, and in 1911 published the 'Framework of Home Rule', advocating and elaborating a Dominion Settlement and stressing the vital importance of fiscal autonomy-practically the same scheme as that of the present 'Treaty'.

When the European war came, like thousands of Irish Nationalists I was misled by the idea of a war for small nations and joined the British Naval Air Service. With the formal establishment of the Republic in 1919, it became necessary for people like myself of mixed birth, to choose our citizenship once and for all. I chose that of the Irish Republic, like hundreds of ex-soldiers, on my release from the British Army. I threw myself into the work for the Republican movement, and took up residency with my wife and family in Dublin. My first mission was to visit our Paris envoys, S. T. O'Ceallaigh and Gavin Duffy in the summer of 1919 in order to help them with press and other work. My next important job was to act, on the nomination of Michael Collins, Finance Minister, as one of the five original Directors of the National Land Bank founded by Robert Earton, in January 1920, with capital secretly supplied from Republican funds. Later in the year I was appointed Chairman of the Republican Justices of Rathmines and Pembroke. Much of my work was involved with propaganda and in February 1921, when Desmond Fitzgerald was arrested the President appointed me in his place. After the Truce I went to London with the party which accompanied the President in his first interviews with Lloyd George. I attended most of the

subsequent Cabinet meetings on the Peace question and in September I was appointed by the Cabinet and Dáil as principal Secretary of the Delegation to London for the Peace negotiations of Oct-Nov and as the responsible adviser on Defence questions.

The slow growth of moral and intellectual convictions had brought me to where I stood and it was and is impossible and unthinkable to go back. I was bound by honour, conscience and principle to oppose the Treaty by speech, writing and action both in peace, and when it came to the disastrous point, in war. I take the fullest responsibility for any influence I may have had on my fellow countrymen. The influence has been grossly and ridiculously exaggerated by our enemies in order to discredit our cause through me, but such as it has been I am proud of it."

One favour only he asked before his death was to be allowed to see Father Albert, his friend and comrade in the cause of the Republic. His request was refused. So on the 24th November 1922, with the Rosary Beads given to him months before by Father Albert twined through the fingers the gentle, great hearted Erskine Childers walked calmly to his death. He will be remembered forever. (From The Wolfe Tone Annual 1937).

Graphic New Account of Childers Execution (The Irish News – Nov. 18th 2002)

One of the leaders of the Irish War of Independence, Erskine Childers, was shot in the face as he lay in his coffin minutes after being executed, a new eyewitness account has revealed.

The father of the future president of Ireland – also Erskine – was one of the most famous names in Ireland's battle for independence and subsequent civil war.

English by birth, he was involved in the struggle from before the 1916 Rising when his boat, the Aud, was used to smuggle guns into Howth harbour. He was also an author of note, having penned the "Riddle of the Sands" accepted as the definitive spy novel.

While he signed the Treaty along with Michael Collins, as a close ally of Eamonn De Valera, he opposed the Free State army

in the Civil War. A new account – believed to have been written by an associate from the IRA's First Battalion – tells how a Free State soldier ran up to the Childers's corpse five minutes after he was executed and shot him in the face.

Erskine Childers was captured in possession of a gun, on his way to meet rebel leader De Valera. Michael Collins gave the gun to Childers some years earlier before the men found themselves on different sides in the Civil War. The account, which is included as a part of an article in the December issue of the BBC's History magazine, is believed to have been given by one of the soldiers present at the execution.

It presents a graphic description of how Childers suggested to his executioners 'that perhaps the light was not right for the execution to be carried out properly and how he went on to express his concerns that he might be 'merely wounded or shot in the leg'. The description also included details of how Childers, who was described as the eyes and ears of De Valera in London, pointed out to his executioners that military procedure was not being adhered to because there was no medical officer present.

Whilst the soldiers tried to locate a doctor, Childers stood calmly smoking a cigarette and chatting to a Bishop who was present. He was eventually executed 75 minutes after being escorted from his cell at Beggars Bush Barracks.

The new account recorded "When at last the Free State party had got something near military procedure they approached Erskine. He asked them not to bind or to blindfold him, they refused his request and, as soon as the bandage was tied across his eyes, he came to attention and died at attention one hour and a quarter after leaving his cell.

"After they removed the bandage from his eyes etc., and placed his corpse in the coffin some five minutes after death or perhaps a little longer, Lt. Murtagh, brother of Peadar Murtagh and brother-in-law of Major General Paddy Daly rushed from the bottom of the shed and, to their credit be it recorded, horrified everyone present by firing his "peter" (name given to a .45 Webley revolver) into the face of the dead man.

Childers had been secretary to the delegation which signed the treaty with Britain in 1921 and was a propagandist for the IRA during the War of Independence. The document came to light after it was sent anonymously to a publisher in the 1970's. It is one of only a few accounts of his life remaining after his wife destroyed much of the Childers archive shortly before her death.

Caught in the Crossfire

By Anthony Delano

*(Senior Research Fellow Journalism at the London College of Printing School of Media)
Draws on previously unpublished document to unravel the riddle of Erskine Childers*

Erskine Childers, apart from being author of the prototype thriller, *the Riddle of the Sands*, arguably the best novel ever written on sailing, is supposed to have told the Irish firing squad that was about to execute him "Take a step or two closer, lads, it will be easier that way".

A matchless display of sang-froid, this was also a wise last thought. Inept marksmen had made a shambles of earlier executions in Beggar's Bush Barracks, the Dublin HQ of the raw army raised by the new Free State in 1922. The shooting of Childers, a half-English, idealistic Irish Republican, seen by his Irish enemies as a spy, and by many British as a turncoat, was a cruelly ironic reward for his key role in bringing independence to Ireland. A little known account, scratched by a steel nib on lined foolscap and reproduced far right, reveals that the execution was more grisly than previously supposed, and reeks of the poisonous hatred that Childers aroused on both sides of the Irish Sea.

The document, (which was sent anonymously in the 1970's to Harold Harris, Managing Director of Hutchinsons, publishers, seems to have been written in October 1923 by the Adjutant of the First Dublin Brigade of the Free State Army, who attributed the details to 'an actual eye-witness who had been dismissed from the army'. With a covering not bearing an official IRA stamp, it was apparently intended for Childer's widow Molly. The sender, probably the writer Séan O'Faolain, one of their Republican friends, writes that he had reason to believe that the account came

from an eyewitness. Molly Childers, daughter of a Boston doctor, destroyed or censored much of the enormous Childers archive. Had this account reached her it is unlikely that its tale of brutal indignity would have survived.

Childers had spent the night before his execution writing to Molly and his 12 year old son, also named Erskine – whom he had made promise that he would never speak ill of Ireland or the Irish. Ironically, young Erskine would succeed his father's ally, Eamon De Valera, as president of the Republic of Ireland. With his green uniformed guards sharpening pencils as he wore them down, Childers also wrote to De Valera, repeating his warning that the greatest problem confronting the new state would be the Protestants of Ulster.

Before his involvement in the Irish Republican cause deepened, Childers had been embroiled in high adventure as Boer War correspondent, during navigator, pioneer aviator, expert yachtsman, writer, propagandist and gun runner. On the eve of the Great War, he and Molly used their yacht *Asgard* to ship over from Germany the rifles that were eventually used in the 1916 Easter Rising. Since some readers thought *The Riddle Of The Sands* had been responsible for bringing the war about, it was hardly surprising that Childer's detractors should later accuse him of trying to start a full-scale war between Britain and Ireland.

In any case, Childer's domineering personally, acerbic manners and a near mystical faith in the righteousness of any cause he embraced ensured that he made enemies more readily than friends. He could not suffer fools and never bothered to hide it. On his death a British Cabinet minister said, 'it was his sniff of disdain for everyone that got the beggar killed.' It was completely in character that 'Captain Childers – as the commander of the firing party addressed him – would take charge of his last morning on earth. The Adjutant's account shows that, to the last, Childers was needling the Irish, playing to an audience of young officers, most of whom thought the execution arrangements might be 'a great bluff'.

Childers knew better but he was quick to pick up on the

likelihood that a jittery officer had got proceedings underway before it was light enough for the squad to take aim. 'I may fall mortally wounded or perhaps I may be only hit in the leg,' he said. The commander insisted that all was being done according to regulations. Although it was only six days since a secret military court had sentenced him, Childers, typically, had found time to study the regulations governing the ghastly ritual. He insisted, so the account claims, that the regulation required a medical officer to be present. Even after the doctor arrived, Childers slowed the pace of events by shaking hands with each of the seven riflemen. He stood to attention to await the bullets. His corpse was laid in the coffin that had been awaiting him in full view. Then something occurred that appalled the adjutant. A Lt. Murtagh rushed from the bottom of the shed and, to their credit be it recorded, horrified everyone present firing his 'Peter' into the face of the Dead'. (A 'Peter' was a .45 Webley revolver).

Childers had been convicted of possessing a firearm, a capital crime under the Free State's emergency anti-Republican laws. His real crime was not to have allowed independent Ireland's hapless first generation; of politicians to forget that the British had outmanoeuvred them. This may help explain why Irish writers still feel uncomfortable about this singular Englishman – as most regard him, though he was born near Dublin – and seem reluctant to explore his part in creating modern Ireland. That has been largely left to his English biographers, Andrew Boyle and Jim Ring, who with the co-operation of the family drew heavily on the family papers and Childers's gripping war diaries.

Renegade, or a voice of reason?

Erskine Childers made an improbable Irish Republican. Among the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy into which he was born, British rule over Ireland was unquestioned. To most of his acquaintances and to the British Government he was a contemptible turncoat and a dangerous renegade. Nevertheless, plenty of people in England, Ireland and the United States idolised Childers as a voice of reason and justice in the Irish cause. His talent for propaganda helped

make the 'Irish Question' an international issue. Both Michael Collins and De Valera, the rebel leaders who became bitter adversaries, owed much of their reputation to Childers's pedantic but impassioned advocacy.

In the 1918 general elections, the republican Sinn Fein swept the board in the south, set up a revolutionary parliament, the Dail, and unilaterally declared independence. Britain was not going to permit a Republic, least of all one embracing the entire island. But, worn down by a gruelling guerrilla war against the IRA, in 1921 it agreed to an Irish Free State with 'dominion' status, comparable to Canada or Australia. Ireland would remain under the symbolic authority of the British Crown and members of the Dail would be expected to take an oath of allegiance to the King. This prospect became the subject of debate worthy of medieval theology in the two years of civil war that lay ahead.

Childers, having spent the First World War in the Royal Navy flying primitive seaplanes, declared himself an Irishman and an uncompromising advocate of absolute independence. To mark his conversion, Michael Collins, the Republican gunman hero, presented him with a small pearl-handled automatic pistol. His cousin, Hugh Barton, and Irish MP at Westminster had already been imprisoned by the British for Republican sympathies.

Elected to the Dáil and made Minister for Propaganda, Childers was sent to the Versailles peace conference to argue that Ireland should be granted the same rights as other emerging states.

Erskine Childers left his cell in Beggars Bush Barracks with a large piece of white cloth one foot square fastened on his breast at 6.52 am., accompanied on his right by Bishop Browning, on his left by Captain Downey, behind came Comdt. Connell and Sergeant Major Byrne, late of the British Army now promoted to officer rank in the Free State Army. Shortly after entering Barrack Square SM. Bryant remarked to Comdt. Connell – Comdt. I am afraid you have made a mistake as regards the time. The Comdt. answered – 'Oh no it is quite according to orders.'

The party entered a shed near the playing field, used as a rifle range, there was already there a firing party of seven men and some

young officers filled with curiosity and most of them thought that it was a great big bluff. At the tip of the shed to where Erskine was conducted, an open coffin was on the ground. Comdt. Connell took charge of the firing party assisted by SM. Byrne. After a short discussion between Erskine, Bishop and the Captain, the Comdt was called to the top of the shed and Captain Childers, as they called him, said to the Comdt. 'I think Comdt. you have not enough light to carry out an execution, I may fall mortally wounded or perhaps I may be only hit in the leg.' The Comdt. Replied, 'I am sorry but these are my orders.' 'Oh very well' said Erskine, 'I do not wish to interfere with your military regulations but I would like to point out that there should be a MO present. This remark caused consternation in the Free State party. Captain Downey dashed away to get the barrack MO., who could not be found and a messenger was despatched to Portobello and after some time a MO arrived. In the meanwhile, Erskine coolly chatted, smoking a cigarette with the Bishop.

When at last the Free State party had got something near military procedure, they approached Erskine. He asked them not to blindfold him, they refused his request and as soon as the bandage was tied across his eyes. He came to attention and died at attention, one hour and a quarter after leaving his cell. After they removed the bandage from his eyes and placed his corpse in the coffin some five minutes after death or perhaps a little longer, Lt. Murtagh, brother of Peadar Murtagh and brother-in-law of Major General Paddy Daly rushed from the bottom of the shed and to their credit be it recorded horrified everyone present by firing his 'Peter' into the face of the Dead.

The above details were obtained from an actual eyewitness who has been dismissed from the FS Army, to which he belonged since his transfer from the LRA.

Nevertheless, then as now, America was the key to applying pressure on Britain. Childers and his wife went to Washington and engineered a Joint Resolution of Congress demanding freedom for Ireland.

Their return to Dublin found the Anglo-Irish was under way.

Producing two boldly seditious newspapers, the Irish Bulletin and War News, the Childers became pioneers of news management. Their papers refuted official British 'news' fed to the compliant mainstream press. Soon the Bulletin and War News accounts were widely accepted as more reliable than those of the government.

Beating the British at their own game did not win Childers unquestioned acceptance by his new compatriots. The breezy relationship he maintained with an equally enigmatic figure on the British side, Deputy Secretary of State Alfred Cope, had the Irish baffled. Cope, a former Customs officer, was Lloyd George's man in Dublin. The game of double bluff that Cope and Childers played may have served their mutual purpose but among the Irish it was widely taken to mean that Childers must have been playing some English game. In Whitehall, he was regarded at best as naïve, at worst a traitor.

Sniff of disdain

When, in 1922, the British finally agreed to talks on a treaty. De Valera, for reasons he never convincingly explained, decided not to lead the Irish emissaries. He put Arthur Griffith, the founder of Sinn Fein, and Collins in charge and made Childers its secretary. In the early meetings, Childers did much of the talking, infuriating the British and Irish equally with relentless legal pedantry – and his sniffs of disdain. Neither side was comfortable with him and he was soon excluded from the negotiating sessions. Without him, the Irish delegates were no match for the British team, which included Churchill, FE Smith and the wily Lloyd George himself.

Why did they sign?

After a few weeks of having the British run circles around them, practically the only cohesion among the Irish lay in their resentment of Childers reproachful debriefings. The British were threatening all-out if their terms were rejected and the Irish resented being told – by an Englishman – that they were being taken for a ride. The delegates put their names to a draft of the Free

State Treaty, believing it would at least achieve an end to the British 'occupation.' Collins grumbled that he was signing his own death warrant.

Why they did sign, knowing that the terms would be unacceptable to much of the Dail, remains as puzzling as why De Valera refused to go to London. De Valera had instructed the delegation not to sign without consultation but they did not contact him or anyone else. Why did Collins or Griffith not even telephone De Valera? Why did Childers, by-passed, but still the delegations secretary not let Dublin know what was happening? These questions remain unanswered by modern Irish historians such as Tim Pat Coogan, whose biography of De Valera leaves Childers in the shadows. He appears just as fleetingly-if more sympathetically – in earlier accounts of narrower scope such as Frank Gallagher's *Four Glorious Years* or Lord Longford's *Peace by Ordeal*. The Dail did eventually ratify the Treaty but De Valera, Childers, and other die-hard Republicans refused to join the Provisional Government that it brought into being.

The Dáil debates were corrosive. Childers assailed the delegation for its failings. Griffith, a kindly man stretched beyond his limits, shouted that he would not be told what to do by 'that damned Englishman'.

The IRA divided in support of either Treaty or Republic. Those in favour of the Treaty became the nucleus of the Free State Army, led by Collins. The Provisional Government he headed, anxious to show that it could control the country, introduced summary courts and the death penalty for unauthorised possession of arms. Childers joined Republican irregulars in the West of Ireland. Instead of a gun, he revived *War News*, cranking out an issue wherever he could set up his case of type. Both the Provisional Government and the British found him a convenient scapegoat, portraying him as the rebel master strategist responsible for the guerrilla campaigns ravaging the country.

Nothing could have been further from the truth. Childers was intellectually and emotionally marooned, unable to communicate his high ideals to the mulish Republican irregulars, out of touch

with Molly who was virtually under house arrest in Dublin. In every rebel bolthole across which his censorious shadow fell, there were copies of War News, still in their wrapping, unread. Soon there would be no more. He slipped in a bog and lost his little press.

On 22nd August 1922, Collins was killed in a Republican ambush in County Cork not far from a Childers hideout. Childers came under suspicion immediately. Supporters sent word that he could be smuggled out of the country but he was as contemptuous as ever of danger. When De Valera sent for him to join an 'underground' government he set out on a risky trek 200 miles cross-country to Dublin.

Stopping off at Glendalough, his old family home in County Wicklow, Childers was hailed as the young squire returning. But a farm labourer betrayed him. When the Free State Army soldiers arrived he was arrested while, it was said, trying to unbuckle Collin's keepsake pistol from his braces. Possession of the weapon was enough to seal his fate.

Spooner, Farrelly and Murphy

Executed November 30th, 1922.

The Irish Independent of Friday December 1st, 1922 reports how three men were executed in Dublin the previous morning. They were found guilty by military courts of possession of a revolver and bombs. They were captured after the attempt to blow up Oriel House, the headquarters of the C.I.D. on October 30th.

From the Irish Independent December 1st. 1922. – Death Sentences carried out.

Dáil Discussion – Mr. Johnson and question of secrecy.

On the adjournment of the Dail yesterday, Mr. T. Johnson raised the question of the executions. This method of carrying out punishment, he said, should not be persisted in. He was not going to deal with the crime for which these men were executed. He would only deal with the method of trial, the method of the sentence, and the method of the announcement to the public.

This kind of sentence was, in fact, anarchy. It was not law; it was anarchy-lynch law once removed.

Men were found in the streets with bombs or revolvers. They were arrested by the military authorities, taken prisoners by the military authorities; they remained in the hands of the military; were tried by the military authorities; executed by the military authorities and the announcement of the execution was made by the military authorities in the formal manner designed by military authorities.

No member of the public outside the military authorities knew anything about it.

The people against whom the offence was primarily committed, the people who made the arrests, the people who carried out the trial, and the people who carried out the sentence were the same people. It was but lynch law without mob violence, but also without judgement or without trial so far as they knew.

There had now been 8 men executed in Dublin. They were sure that it was not out of vengeance that those men had been executed, but as deterrents.

It was due to them to know on what principles the selection had been made. They were assured last night that no difference was being made between officers and men. Was there any difference made between officer and officer, between man and man or between locality and locality?

All in Dublin

How did it happen that these executions that were deterrents to all that had taken place throughout Ireland, so far, had taken place in Dublin only?

Was the method of selection chance? Was it by lot, by the enormity of the crime, by the circumstances surrounding the crime, or by the past record of the prisoners? Or was it by the chance competition of the Court.

He was pleading in the interests of justice, in the interests of good government, in the interest of the future of the country. Trials for the capital offence or for any offence whatever, but trials for the capital offence must not be in secret. The facts of the case, the circumstances surrounding the case must be made public.

He expressed the fear when these Courts were being committed and that the trials might take place when men were in hot blood. He was happy to say there was no evidence of anything of that kind having happened.

The Rule of Law

There was no evidence before them, but the secrecy that was exemplified in this kind of thing might suggest there was secrecy elsewhere; and the demand for publicity was a demand that every civilian in the country that had any regard for the rule of law ought to insist upon.

Mr. Johnson then referred to the case of a trades union official

who had responsibility for a large sum for strike pay, and had a revolver to protect himself against robbery. He was arrested but released on representations being made to the military. But supposing he had no friends and nobody able to plead, and supposing the circumstances had been such that he was in the neighbourhood of an ambush, the opportunity for that man to prove his case would have been very much minimised, and in those circumstances he would have run grave risk of his life, and nobody would have known anything about it if he had been as obstinate as other men in regard to understanding his defence.

He (Mr. Johnson) appealed with all the energy and effort that he was capable of to the Ministry to change their decision in regard to the secrecy. Here were men guilty of preparing to take the lives of citizens, to take the lives of soldiers, and incidentally citizens, and surely that being the case they ought to be tried in public. Mr. Darrell Figgis said that in the House yesterday the Minister for Home Affairs had repeated several times as if to emphasise the matter that it was the intention of the Ministry to shock the public minds. The day before the President made a speech in which, referring to Deputy Gavan Duffy's address, he said that the cause of the secrecy was to alleviate pain. There were two different things; two different Ministers referred to.

The People's Will

There was a public shock that would be healthful, but there was another kind of shock that was a very undesirable one, and he thought the secrecy of these courts had already created a very unhealthy shock, and would have grievous effects on the whole stability of the nation.

That would be so until the people came into a full knowledge of the power and responsibility of what these things meant. Mr. T. J. O'Connell (Labour) said it was the bounden duty of every Deputy on every possible opportunity to tell the Government who were carrying out this execution policy that they were not acting in accordance with the will of the people, and they were living in a

fool's paradise if they thought they were.

To him there was nothing more horrible than throwing bombs at soldiers in the streets, or firing at them from behind hedges. But who introduced the rule of the bomb and the rule of the gun into the country and what had they gained by it? "A Voice" -- (The Treaty). Who were those in the Government benches who could sit in condemnation of the rule of the bomb and the gun?

He doubted very much if a large number of people would not say that the position that had been gained was not worth the demoralisation, which had taken place in the country. He asked the members of the Government to realise what they were driving to.



General Liam Lynch

In Undying Memory



Joseph Spooner

67 McCaffrey Lane, Mount Brown

Executed Beggar's Bush Barracks

30th November 1922

Buried in Glasnevin Republican Plot

Age 21 years

R.I.P.

Joseph Spooner

From 67, McCaffrey Lane, Mount Brown, he was a tinsmith by trade, and aged 21. He lived with his parents, his father being a tinsmith also. At one time he was employed by the Dublin

Galvanising Co., Kevin St., but was unemployed previous to his arrest. He was the eldest of a family of four sisters and a brother, whose ages ranged from 2 1/2 to 16. Prior to going to England in 1920 he was a member of the Fianna. He returned in the harvest of 1921.

Arrested on the night of the attack on Oriel House at Erne St, his home which he had left between 7 and 8 p.m., was searched some hours afterwards. His relatives thought that the severest punishment that would be inflicted would be penal servitude.

He was tried by a Military Court on 11th November 1922, and charged with having possession without proper authority, of a revolver when apprehended by National forces at Erne St., Dublin on 30th October 1922. The accused was found guilty and sentenced to death. The finding and sentence were duly confirmed and the execution was carried out at Beggars Bush Barracks, Dublin, November 30, 1922 at 8.30 a.m. A dispatch rider arrived at his home with four letters, written at intervals since his arrest, and an official notification that the execution had taken place. Included in the letters was a valedictory message to the whole family stating that he had received the consolation of the Catholic Church. The mother was grief-stricken at the news. He is buried in Glasnevin Republican Plot.

In Undying Memory



Patrick Farrelly

67 Chancery Lane, Dublin

Executed in Beggars Bush Barracks

30th November 1922

Buried in Glasnevin Republican Plot

Aged 21 years

R.I.P.

Patrick Farrelly

Was aged about 21 when he was captured at Erne St. He lived with a family named Ormsby. Mrs. Ormsby having reared him since his mother died when he was very young. He was employed as a

packer in a druggist's shop in Mary St., prior to his arrest.

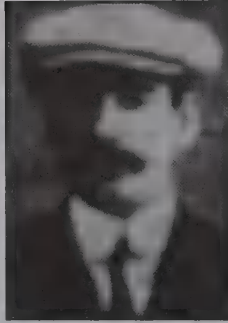
He was tried by a Military Court on 14th November 1922, and charged with having possession, without proper authority, of a bomb when apprehended by National forces at Erne St., on 30th October 1922. The accused was found guilty and sentenced to death.

The execution was carried out in Beggar's Bush, Barracks, Dublin, November 30, 1922. His father and brother survived him. He was buried in Glasnevin Republican Plot.



On 8 May 1922, a meeting of pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty officers at the Mansion House, Dublin sought to avert the threatening civil war. Their efforts were only temporarily successful. *Left to right:* General Sean Mac Eoin, Sean Moylan, General Eoin O'Duffy, Liam Lynch, Gearóid O'Sullivan and Liam Mellows.

Glór Don Athair



John Murphy

Aged 19

56 Belview Buildings

Thomas Court, Thomas St Dublin

**Executed in Beggar's Bush Barracks.
November 30th 1922**

Buried in Glasnevin Republican Plot.

R.I.P.

John Murphy

Lived at 56 Belview Buildings, Thomas Court, Thomas St, Dublin. Aged 19 and employed in Guinness Brewery. Educated at the Christian Brother's School in James St., he was employed for some

time as a railway clerk at Tullow. Leaving that position he taught for a period at the Christian Brothers Schools, but left for a clerkship obtained from a city insurance company, where he was employed only five weeks prior to his arrest.

He was tried by a Military Court and charged with having possession without proper authority, 2 bombs when apprehended by national forces at Erne St. on 30th October 1922. He was found guilty and sentenced to death.

The execution was carried out at Beggars Bush Barracks, Dublin, on November 30, 1922. His family later received the official notification of the execution. He is buried in Glasnevin Republican Plot.

Bodies handed over at Beggars Bush (Cork Examiner, 29th. October 1924)

The bodies of Messrs. Erskine Childers, James O'Rourke, Patrick Farrelly, Joseph Spooner, and John Murphy, who were executed in 1922, were handed over to their relatives at 9 o'clock this morning at Beggar's Bush Barracks.

Shortly before the appointed hour five hearses proceeded into the barracks, followed by mourning coaches, in which were the relatives of the executed men. At 9.15 the gates were thrown open, and the funeral procession passed slowly out of the Barracks Square.

A terse command from the Commanding Officer brought the troops to attention, and the guard presented arms. Those congregated outside uncovered heads, and the scene enacted was an imposing one.

The remains reposed in unpolished coffins of Irish oak, encasing the coffins in which the deceased men had been originally interred. The rough oaken coffins were sealed, and bore a simple inscription indicating the identity of the dead.

Ten members of the Cumann na mBan came to the salute as the remains left the barracks. The hearses were drawn up outside and the coffins were then shrouded in the tricolour flag, with the

inscription "I. R" in black letters.

The cortege was set in motion at 9.30 en route for Hardwick Street Hall, where the remains will lie in state till 8 p.m., tomorrow, when they will be removed to Whitefriar Street Church. At Mount Street Bridge the procession was joined by a number of men, drawn up in military formation. They performed a number of evolutions, and fell in behind and in front of the cortege. In single file on each side of the hearses the Cumann Na mBan formed a guard of honour.

The remains of James O'Rourke and Patrick Farrelly were handed over to their respective fathers and those of Joseph Spooner and John Murphy to their fathers and mothers. Messrs. R. C. Barton and David Robinson took charge of the remains of Mr. Erskine Childers, the coffin in which they reposed being the only one of polished oak.

The Press Association wires – The remains of 77 members of the irregular forces executed in Ireland during the recent civil strife, were handed over today to relatives. Arrangements have been made to hold public funerals on Thursday. This morning the remains of Mr. Erskine Childers and four other executed men were handed over at Beggars Bush, and at Mountjoy Prison the remains of Rory O'Connor and Liam Mellows.

The remains of Mr. Richard Barrett will reach Cork at 8 o'clock on Thursday night from Dublin when there will be a funeral procession from the station to S.S. Peter and Paul's Church. On Friday morning they will be taken to Enniskeane by train and from there the funeral will take place on Saturday to the family burial ground.

**Liam Mellows, Rory O'Connor, Joseph McKelvey and
Richard Barrett**

Executed in Mountjoy on 8/12/1922

Sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on the soul of



Rory O'Connor

4 New Brighton

Monkstown

Dublin.

He was executed in Mountjoy December 8, 1922

Buried Glasnevin Republican Plot.

R.I.P.

Rory O'Connor

Born No. 4 New Brighton, Monkstown, Dublin. He was captured at the Four Courts and executed in Mountjoy, December 8, 1922, and is buried Glasnevin Republican Plot.

Held the rank of Commandant-General in the Army of the Republic and who was first in command at the Four Courts has seen long and active and constant service in the cause of independence. He was reserved, thoughtful and gentle, but his face could light with merriment and his eyes could flash with anger, and those who knew him best loved him for his manly qualities, his unwavering sincerity and transparent truth. He was a close personal friend of Joseph Plunkett who was executed after Easter Week, 1916, and with him devoted long days and many sleepless nights to the task of preparing for the Rising. He was on the Headquarters Staff in the G.P.O. In 1916, was wounded while engaged in some activity outside, was brought to a city hospital, and escaped out of it before a search was made by the British for wounded Republicans. In the years that followed his activities increased and he was one of Cathal Brugha's right-hand men. Because of the position he held he was privileged to attend the secret meetings of Dáil Éireann during the Black-and-Tan campaign and had the confidence of all the Army chiefs and Ministers. In 1920 he was arrested by the British force known as Auxiliaries, taken to Dublin Castle and savagely tortured. Afterwards he was sent as a prisoner to the Curragh but escaped and resumed with more energy than ever the work, which only ended in Mountjoy Jail on 8th. December 1922. At 9 a.m. on Wednesday, 28th June 1922 he sent this message out from the Four Courts. It was printed the same day in *Poblacht na hÉireann*: - "At 4.40 this morning we received a note from Tom Ennis demanding on behalf of the 'Government' our surrender at 4 a.m., when he would attack. He opened attack at 4.7 in the name of his 'Government', with rifle, machine and field pieces.

The boys are glorious, and will fight for the Republic to the end. How long will our misguided former comrades outside attack

those who stand for Ireland alone? Three casualties so far, all slight. Father Albert and Father Dominic are with us here.

Our love to all comrades outside, and the brave boys especially of the Dublin Brigade. – (Signed)

Rory O'Connor,

Major General, I.R.A".

In a letter written from Mountjoy Jail a couple of months later Rory O'Connor revealed the fact that the Republican forces were never asked to evacuate the Four Courts until 25 minutes before it was attacked with cannon begged from the British. Only a few days previously the head of the "Free State" army sat in friendly council with Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows and Liam Lynch and discussed with them a plan for concerted action against the British garrison in North East Ulster. The man who then sat in friendly council with them as comrades and brothers-in-arms, a few days later ordered an attack on their position when he himself and his colleagues had received orders from the British Government to attack the Republic of Ireland by armed force or to clear out. They took their orders from London and commenced their rebellion against the Republic they had sworn to defend, and the campaign of slaughter of brave and innocent men that will be a cause of shame to Ireland for evermore.

Rory O'Connor died like a true soldier of Ireland and a true Christian of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and one hour before he died he wrote this note to his sister:

Mountjoy

About 7 a.m.

Dear Sister Eily,

I have just finished a General Confession. I am going calmly to death with four dear comrades. Is it not the grace of God that I am given time to confess and not like some others who have to answer the call without notice.

Dearest, You all will mourn for me. Do not do so. Is it not a

magnificent death. I forgive all my enemies. I have never felt any feelings of revenge.

Were you aware that the devotion of my life has been to the Blessed Virgin? This day I have just finished a Novena in honour of the Immaculate Conception, the anniversary of my First Communion.

God bless you and protect you all,

Your loving – if undemonstrative brother,
Rory

A letter to his Father.

My dear Father,

Forgive me for my past as you and I have disagreed. I hope you will grant me a last request that for the mother's sake you will take care of yourself.

Your affectionate son,
Rody

Letter to his Mother

Mountjoy

8/12/'22. (3.30 a.m).

My Darling Mother,

I have just been notified that I am to be executed at 8 a.m. this morning for been "taken in arms" and as a reprisal for the shooting of Hales.

I send you all my love, my best love. I ask Father to forgive me as I have opposed his wishes in every action.

I am going to confess soon, do you know this is the anniversary of my First Communion.

Your affectionate son,
Rory.

Letter 4

Dear Nor,

I am about to be executed with I think Mellows, McKelvin and D. Barrett at 8 a.m. today, a reprisal for the shooting of Hales. What I have done in the past I have thought right. I stood and stand now for the Independence of Ireland. I have felt it so utterly dishonourable to accept a Treaty bringing Ireland into the Empire that I could not continue with my former comrades. I am to meet death at their hands. I forgive them all. The will of God be done and may the honour of Ireland be preserved.

Yours always, Rory.

Letter 5

Dear Old Nor,

God bless you and help you and thank you for all your kindness. I did not think I would never see you again. It is the will of God. Take care of Mother and Eily. I have not time to write more. I hope to die like a soldier. My love especially to Eily and Charlie.

Your affectionate brother, Rory.

In 1922 Father Pigott became the first chaplain in the new Army.

His attendance at Mountjoy was requested by Rory O'Connor;
(from *On The Arm Of Time*)

John Canon Pigott, chaplain in Mountjoy Prison writes: -

"With reference to the executions in Mountjoy Jail in December 8th, 1922 there have been many different and very contradictory accounts of what actually happened. Many reports were spread abroad for their propaganda value, without any regard for the truth. It was said that Rory O'Connor died a cowardly death, that Liam Mellows was refused the last Sacraments by the Chaplains and that

he went to his death without the aid of his religion. That lie has been so persistently repeated by a small anti-clerical group that it is possible that a number of our people believe it. It was said that the actual shootings were carried out in a brutal manner.

As one who was personally involved in the tragic events of that 8th December, I shall set down here what I know to be the truth. Even today I have a clear and vivid recollection of everything that happened. Indeed, I am never likely to be without it. I cannot claim to be accurate in one respect only; that is with regard to the hour each event took place. But, indeed, on that question I could not be sure to be accurate if I were asked on the 9th December 1922.

About 1.30 a.m., or perhaps a bit later on Dec. 8th an officer phoned me from Mountjoy Jail and informed me that there were to be executions that one of the Prisoners had asked for my attendance. I was to dress and be ready to be called for. I was collected and driven to Mountjoy arriving at 2 a.m. I was immediately taken to Rory O'Connor's cell. He was pale but perfectly calm and composed. When I suggested that we waste no time in any discussions, but get down to the actual preparation, he said, "That is exactly what I want Father". I can say that no one could have made a more Christian preparation for death than Rory O'Connor.

He spent the few hours that were left to him in humble and fervent prayer. Never at any time right up to the end did I see in him any sign of fear or nervousness. Just before I took him to mass, where he was to receive Holy Viaticum, he said to me "Do you know Father? Is it not strange, this is the anniversary of my first Holy Communion" I thought that the recollection must have given him some consolation, now as he was about to receive his last Holy Communion.

I had been a few hours with Rory O'Connor when I was called out by Canon McMahon who asked me if I would see Liam Mellows. He said, "We have not being getting along at all". When I saw Mellows I found him in a strange mood for one who was to die in a few hours. He was obviously agitated, and talkative, and I

believe, elated that he was to die for Ireland. He said that he had written to his mother and, handing me the letter, he said 'read that'. I did so, and saw that he had informed his mother that he had a disagreement with the chaplain; and he was not receiving the sacraments, but that anyone going out to die for Ireland did not need the Sacraments. I do not remember the exact words, but that was the substance of his message.

I told him that he should not send such a letter to his mother. I begged him to use the very short time that was now left to him by speaking out to God and humbly pleading with Him for the direction and grace he now needed. I knew that God would not fail him. But, I was convinced that it was best he be left alone with God just then. There would be no arguments with God and precious time would not be wasted. Telling him that I would see him again I went back to Rory O'Connor.

Much sooner than I expected, we were all taken to the chapel for Mass. I had not seen Mellows again until he knelt down with the three others outside the altar rails. During the Mass, which Canon McMahan said, I stood aside the altar rails facing the prisoners, reciting with them the prayers and litanies for the dying. Barrett McKelvey and O'Connor received Holy Communion at the Mass. Mellows did not.

After he had concluded the Mass, Canon McMahan joined me at the altar rails. He continued to offer prayers and litanies for the dying. I have never known any priest could have prayed more fervently and more perseveringly than did the Canon during the fateful hour. Time and time again he repeated all the prayers with the prisoners, joining fervently in the responses. I was certain that God's grace was flowing about abundantly and that Mellows would not be denied his requirements.

I do not know how long we were there after Mass, but it must have been a full hour. At this stage my chief concern was to get Liam Mellows on his own, but how to do so was the problem. The Canon still prayed on: Phil Cosgrave, the Governor of Mountjoy, stood 'to attention' at the side of the altar – he had been standing there like a statue since Mass began – probably about an hour and

a half. Several times I looked at him, but he never moved a muscle. He knew Mellows had not received Holy Communion, and he was evidently reluctant to bring prayers to an end. He, as well as everybody else present, was well aware of the intentions in all the praying.

Finally, there was an end to the prayers. The prisoners were led out of the Chapel in single file, with Liam Mellows leading. Rory O'Connor, with whom I walked, was at the rear. As they walked along the passage they were suddenly halted. Officers immediately began to blindfold them. This was done in a matter of seconds. I was afraid my last chance of helping poor Mellows was gone. I ran up to him, and took the bandage from his eyes and said, 'Liam Mellows, you are not going out there without Viaticum'. He replied 'Ah! it's too late now I have held them up all morning'. I said 'No it is not too late. They will wait a little longer for you. Come with me and make your peace with God'. That he was now ready to do so I had not the slightest doubt. I took him by the arm ten or fifteen yards back the passage to a cell, the door of which I saw open, in a few minutes he was shriven. Liam Mellows was a deeply religious man, and his fervent prayers at the end had gained him a very special grace from God. Canon McMahon went to the chapel for the Viaticum but he did not return in a few minutes, as I had expected he would. He was a long time away and just as I was about to go out to look for him Father John Fennelly arrived at the door and he stayed with Mellows while I went to the chapel. As I approached it I heard a loud knocking and I called out 'Canon'. He was locked inside. What had happened was this; Paudeen O'Keeffe, the Deputy Governor, was doing his rounds with his huge bunch of keys. He saw the Sacristy door open. He closed and locked it not knowing the Canon had gone in. I found Paudeen as quickly as possible and brought him back to unlock the door. I have never forgotten his words when I told him what he had done. "Well blasht him, what took him there"? The Canon was released. Liam Mellows received Viaticum, and in a few minutes we were on our way to rejoin the others. He asked me to go and see his mother and tell her all. Taking a little Crucifix from his pocket he

said 'I want you to give her this when all is over'. Looking lovingly at it, he added 'It was out in 1916 too'. He held that little Crucifix firmly in his hand until the end.

As he was being blindfolded again, I suddenly remembered the letter he had written, and I asked him if he would write a few words more now. He said "Ah there's no time now", I'm sure I could have got him time, and sure no one there would have refused it, but seeing the others, I could not press him further. He said his mother would believe me; but I knew she would not.

In a few minutes we were all in the Prison yard and the four, all brave and calm were lined up before the Firing Squad. I gave a last Absolution and as I was having a final word with Rory and Liam I saw that Liam had shuffled the gravel from under his feet so that he could stand up more firmly. I moved a few yards to the right, and as I did so, I heard Liam Mellows say his last words 'Slan Libh Lads' – his farewell to the Firing Party.

In another instant the sign was given: the volley rang out: the men fell. Canon McMahon and I anointed them where they lay on the ground. The Prove-Officer stood by, to put out of pain anyone not already dead. Mc Kelvey, who was conscious needed attention and I heard him call 'give me another-and another' and then there was silence-a great silence.

It was after 9 a.m. I was already hours late for Masses in Griffith Barracks and I had to rush away leaving the Canon to attend the burial. When I reached the outer gate of the prison I remembered the little Crucifix. I went back and found it beside the body, and took it away to fulfil my promise. To contradict, to a grief-stricken mother, the last written words of her son were for me a terrible prospect. But, I had promised.

Next day, with a heavy heart, I called to the door in Mount Shannon Road. I felt I could never face the ordeal had I not in my pocket that little Crucifix which 'was out in 1916 too'.

This account, written by Canon Pigott nearly forty years after the event, gives an indication of the faith these four men had in the cause for which they died. It also gives an insight into the suspicion, which many Republicans had for sections of the

clergy, whom they perceived as political enemies. I can understand that suspicion, and even today there is still great unease, among many Catholics, about the role of their bishops in the politics of condemnation.

The words penned by Fr. Pigott are in stark contrast to those spoken by General Mulcahy, and the dignity of the four puts the words and deeds of the Cabinet in their proper perspective. The shooting of a man on the 21st February 1923 in the grounds of Mulcahy's house, under strange circumstances, added to the mystery surrounding the death of Séan Hales. It was believed that this man was in some way involved in that event.

One week after the executions in Mountjoy the Cork Examiner published the following communication from Hale's family.

"Sir, We view with horror and disgust, the executions of four Irishmen, Richard Barrett, Liam Mellows, Joseph McKelvey, and Rory O'Connor, as a reprisal for the death of Séan Hales, our dearly beloved brother, and we think it criminal folly to believe that such methods will end strife in our land; and we are of the opinion that reprisals on either side will only increase bitterness and delay reconciliation that all patriotic Irishmen long and pray for, and also that sole testimony of a British Officer is very insufficient proof of how he met his death.

Signed:- Robert Hales, Brother; Margaret Hales, Mother; Liam Hales, Brother; Domnal Hales, Brother; Italian Consul. Genoa, Italy; Margaret Hales, Sister; Elizabeth Hales, Knocknacurra, Ballinadee, 15th December 1922.

The statement fairly summed up the feelings, not alone of the Hales family, but people from all parts of Ireland.

In Loving Memory



Liam Mellows

Castletown, Wexford

He was executed in Mountjoy Jail

December 8th, 1922

Buried Castletown, Co. Wexford

R.I.P.

"He died as he lived, His country to save".

Liam Mellows

Liam was born in Castletown, Wexford, and later lived in Mountshannon Rd., Dolphins Barn, Dublin. He was arrested at the Four Courts and he was executed in Mountjoy, December 8, 1922

and buried Castletown, Co. Wexford.

They were all great men and brave men, but Liam Mellows was the greatest of them all. Boy and man he gave every waking hour to the service of Ireland, right to the end when he paid with his life for his principles. When the English guns did their foul work on the 8th. December 1922, one of Ireland's most unselfish lovers and clearest thinkers and bravest soldiers was taken from her side, on one of the British Empire's most formidable and unflinching enemies was swept out of its path.

Liam Mellows was born on May 23rd, 1889, son of Sergeant William Mellows, an Irishman in the British Army. He was only a boy fresh from school and just commencing to earn a livelihood as a Book-keeper in Goodbody's tobacco factory, when *Irish Freedom* was first published, and managed by Séan Mac Diarmada, and *Principles of Freedom* by Terence MacSweeney, saw the light of day.

Fianna Eireann had been established as an organisation in 1909. It would be impossible to give an idea of the apathy and ignorance that prevailed in Ireland in those days with regard to separation from the British Empire. Liam Mellows started out as the first organiser of Fianna Éireann and there was a heedlessness almost everywhere, although before that year ended the roads of Ireland were destined to ring with the music of marching feet, and the heart of Ireland was to stir again. The senior boys of Fianna Eireann were ready and competent to train the Irish Volunteer, a movement that had come into existence in 1913, in the use of arms and make them into effective soldiers and imbue them with love of service in the cause of Irish Independence. In 1915 he was arrested and sentenced to three months imprisonment and again in March 1916 when he was deported to England. As he was urgently needed to prepare for the Rising, James Connolly planned his rescue and he arrived back in Ireland disguised as a priest.

Liam Mellows and his comrades followed freedom through fire and blood, through poverty and strife and slander follows it through the gates of death, gladly, proudly, and uncomplainingly. They never despaired even when they were summoned before a

firing squad by the recreant former comrades, who were killing them to please the enslaves of their common country.

On October 12th, 1922 the Free State army issued a statement that anyone captured in possession of arms would be tried by Military tribunal and if found guilty would be killed. Then on December 7th, Séan Hales T.D., and Free State army officer, who had voted for the execution policy was shot dead by the I.R.A. The reaction of the Free State was ruthless and swift.

On a dark morning in December 1922 three names were added to the brave company of Liam Mellows. They were Rory O'Connor, Dick Barrett and Joe McKelvey and they were led out without charge or trial six months after they had been taken prisoners of war. There was no trial, not even by Military Tribunal. They were not even accused of shooting Séan Hales. On the morning of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8th, 1922 this great patriot died with his three comrades before a Free State firing squad in Mountjoy. They were placed against a wall and shot down in a moment of fear and fury.

A couple of hours before he went to his death Liam Mellows wrote. "I have no regrets, for the future of Ireland is assured. We die for Ireland, for the Republic, for that glorious cause that has been sanctified by the blood of countless martyrs throughout the cause of human liberty. The Republic stands for truth and honour, for all that is best and noblest in our race. By truth and honour, by principle and sacrifice alone will Ireland be free". These were the virtues that drew him back to lead the men of Galway in the Rising of 1916.

His famous "Notes from Mountjoy Jail", in August 1922 and later, charted an anti-imperialist course for the Republican Movement which came, unfortunately, too late. Although in prison, he was appointed Minister for Defence in the Republican Government set up by the faithful Dail Deputies and the Irish Republican Army in October 1922. This brilliant mind, following in line the other revolutionary Republican intellectuals – Padraig Pearse, James Connolly and Terence McSweeney – was extinguished because Mellows, as an uncompromising "man of

ideas" was a threat to the new colonialism embodied in the 26 County State.

Liam Mellows was buried according to his wishes in Castletown old graveyard in his own parish.

In a letter to his mother before his death he stated that "the Republic lives, our deaths make it a certainty".

Liam Mellows – By Hannah Sheehy Skeffington

"I first met Liam about 1912-1913 at Madame Markievicz's home, Surrey House, Leinster Road, Rathmines. He was then one of her Fianna boys, a slight, boyish figure, with hair almost golden, with clear blue eyes, and skin so fair that he could easily, if dressed up, have passed for a girl - in a dangerous time, when getting away after 1916 to England, I believe he actually used the disguise of a bride. He had a merry laugh and could, when in the vein, spin many a droll yarn, having the gift of mimicry, though in the presence of strangers or at first approach, he was shy.

Surrey House was Fianna Headquarters, the boys were forever going and coming, and the door always on the latch. Someone would play the piano in one corner, in another a typewriter, the worse for wear, would be pounding out a despatch, and there was a hand press downstairs in the cellar for printing of various seditious documents.

Foreign guests and journalists came, and Madame would send round a hasty whip to gather up a party for them. After work was done there was always the makings of a ceilidh. Liam would then be called on for some of his old-fashioned ditties or folk songs, of which he had a large number. The "Jug of Punch" was one of his favourites. Once when Madame's sister, Eva, Gore-Booth, came on a visit, she sent a hurried note bidding us come, adding: "The carpets are all up and the gas has just been cut off, for I forgot to attend to the final notice, but you won't mind, we have lots of candles!"

James Connolly stayed at Surrey House to recuperate after imprisonment and hunger strike. He and Liam used to have long talks together, for, like Madame Markievicz, Connolly loved

young people and had a way with him that won their confidence.

Then soon afterwards Liam went out on his push-bike organising for the Volunteers up and down the country. In 1915 the British ordered him to leave the country and reside in England 'for the duration'. He had come up against D.O.R.A. Ernest Blythe, another organiser, was also deported about the same time. Connolly planned a get-away for Liam, and he returned to Ireland to resume organising.

The story of Liam's leadership in the Galway rising, 1916, is history. Later, when all was over, the little band scattered, quietly melting, getting back to their homes, so that they were not captured. Liam went with two others on his keeping, and, though hotly pursued by soldiers and police, he managed to evade capture. In New York later he told how he could see the cordon being drawn round the hill, while he lay in the heather, behind a boulder, and he could hear the voices and shouts of the hunters at the battue-but they missed him.

The fugitives had the sympathy and help of the cottagers scattered on that bleak hillside. These gave the men food, leaving it on the windowsill so that it could be picked up under cover of darkness, or placing it on some flat, conspicuous stone on the hill slope. Often the trio had narrow escapes, but they seemed possessed of some hidden protection that guarded them.

Liam and his companions felt a presence (they used to call it the Fourth Man), and were more than once saved from peril or capture by this unseen guide - once from a rotten foot-bridge that they were about to cross at night, once from entering a cottage which turned out to have been watched by the enemy, who had surrounded it, waiting to ambush; once when all three had completely lost their bearings in a 'mist' on the mountain and were in danger of death from exposure. Liam told me the story, adding that they had a strong conviction that the Fourth Man was none other than Padraic Pearse. There are more things in heaven and on earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy, Horatio.

Liam Mellow's at last got smuggled away to England in disguise, and thence from Liverpool on a tramp ship, as a stoker, to

America. He reached the Bermudas and then New York, after a voyage of over 60 days. He was so grimy from the stokehold dust that it took quite a while to get it off. It was a disguise in itself. Liam had had a trying time from seasickness and other hardships, having had no previous sea experience. When I asked him what he had found the most trying in the trip, he answered, smiling, "oh, the language. I never knew there was such language in the world". That was like Liam.

In New York, after the U.S., had entered the war, in 1917, Liam and other Irish refugees had a hard time, for the politicians got scared and were playing safe. He was even advised to enlist by a certain "patriot" judge. But Liam went on, unperturbed, with his work, speaking, writing, organising, and teaching Irish at the Carmelite Schools. Often he was on short commons. Once at a meeting held by the Irish Progressive League in New York to protest against conscription in Ireland, early in 1918, he used a memorable phrase dealing with Irish race solidarity, "Blood is thicker than water, and Irish blood is thicker than any in the world". Liam was no orator, never striving for rhetorical effect; but this, spoken with passionate conviction, brought down the house.

Once, about this time, Liam was arrested, trying to get away home, for he hated to be in New York, inactive while things were so critical in Ireland. He was lodged in The Tombs prison and for three days and nights was given third degree subjected to constant questioning and prevented from sleeping. The New York press made a scare story of his capture, announcing that one Liam; *a dangerous Turk* had been arrested for conspiring with the Irish against the draft. As Turkey had come in on the side of Germany, the Turks in the States were, of course, alien enemies. After pressure, the hands of the politicians were forced by threat of exposure, and bail, for a steep figure, was forthcoming, so Liam was released.

Liam's work for the Republican Bond drive, after the arrival of Mr. de Valera and Harry Boland, his return home in 1920, his organising during the Truce filled the next strenuous years. I well recall his speech against the Treaty-impersonal, sincere, without

bitterness, but with no atom of compromise. It was greeted with general applause. Curiosity as it fell out, he was preceded by Eoin O'Duffy and followed by Desmond Fitzgerald. Both spoke flamboyantly as 100 per cent Republicans.

The sands were running out. Within a year Liam, Rory, Dick and Joe were dead, at the hands of former comrades. I remember one day in late September being with a band of women outside Mountjoy. The prisoners inside from their cell windows managed to shout out a message to us as to the terrible conditions within.

I was in U.S.A., when the news of the "execution" of four surrendered prisoners as a reprisal came over the wire. There was general horror. Kevin O'Higgins declared that it had been decided upon "after the coldest of cold discussion". Liam, being known and loved by the Irish from coast to coast, his death caused a mighty revulsion everywhere against those responsible. His farewell letter to the Hearn family in Westfield, Mass. (which was smuggled in by an American woman doctor) is a poignant document, full of characteristic touches that breathed the very soul of Liam in all its nobility and gentle beauty.

The Hearn still keep a precious souvenir of Liam, the chalked-up blackboard on which he had written his last Irish lesson. I saw the beautiful script: when it grows faint a loving hand retraces the chalk marks; so it looks as fresh as if it had been done but yesterday. Thus the perishable material keeps its message through the years.

No wonder that Dr. Magennis head of the Carmelites and Liam's devoted friend wrote of his martyrdom, "A death that impoverishes humanity".

A Letter to His Mother **December 8th 1922, 5 a.m.**

Mountjoy Prison, Dublin

My Dearest Mother,

The time is short and much that I would like to say must go

unsaid. But you will understand; in such moments heart speaks to heart. At 3.30 this morning, we (Dick Barrett, Rory O'Connor, Joe McKelvey, and I) were going to be executed as reprisal.

Welcome be the Will of God, for Ireland is in His keeping despite foreign monarchs and Treaties. Though unworthy of the greatest human honour that can be paid an Irishman or woman, I go to join Tone and Emmet, the Fenians, Tom Clarke, Connolly, Pearse, Kevin Barry, and Childers. My last thoughts will be on God and Ireland and you.

You must not grieve, mother darling; once before you thought you had given me to Ireland. The reality has now come. You will bear this as you have borne all the afflictions the cause of Ireland has brought you-nobly and bravely. It is a sore trial for you, but that great courageous soul of yours will rejoice, for I die for the truth. Life is only for a little while, and we shall be reunited hereafter.

I would write to Barney separately, but alas! He is not at home. That he will be brave I know; that he will persevere until the wrong is righted, and the shadow of shame is lifted from our country, I do not doubt. May God bless and protect him, and give him the courage, fortitude and wisdom necessary to adhere to truth and honour and principle. Through you I send to him my fondest love.

Through you I also send another message. It is this: Let no thought of revenge or reprisals animate Republicans because of our deaths. We die for the truth.

Vindication will come, the mists will be cleared away, and brothers in blood will before long be brothers once more in arms against the oppressor of our country-imperialist England. In this belief I die happy, forgiving all, as I hope myself to be forgiven.

The path the people of Ireland must tread is straight and broad and true, though narrow. Only by following it can they be men. It is a hard road, but it is the road Our Saviour followed - the road of Sacrifice. The Republic lives; our deaths make that a certainty.

I had hoped that some day I might rest in some quiet place-beside grandfather and grandmother in Castletown, not amidst the wordily pomp of Glasnevin; but if it is to be the prison clay, it is all

the sweeter, for many of our best lie there....

Go to Mrs. Pearse, she will comfort you

I have had the Chaplain to see me. It is sad, but I cannot accept the Bishop's Pastoral. My conscience is quite clear, thank God. With the old Gaodhals, I believe that those who die for Ireland have no need of prayer.

God bless, protect, and comfort you.

Your Loving Son, Willie

Letter 2

Mountjoy Prison

Baile Ath Cliath, December 8th 1922

4.30 a.m.

Dear John and Mrs. Hearn,

The time draws short. An hour ago I was informed that I was to be shot at eight o'clock this morning as a reprisal. Well I shall die for Ireland – for the Republic; for that glorious cause that has been sanctified by the blood of countless martyrs throughout the ages; the cause of Human Liberty. The Republic stands for truth and honour – for all that is noblest in our race. By truth and honour – by principle and sacrifice alone will Ireland be free. That this is so - that this is immuable – I am prepared to stake all my hopes of the hereafter.

Ireland must tread the path Our Redeemer trod. She may shrink as indeed she has shrunk "Put away this chalice" – but her faltering feet will find the road again, as indeed she is already finding it. For that road is plain and broad and straight; its sign posts are unmistakable. It is the road on which Wolfe Tone and Emmet, and Mitchel and the Fenians, and Tom Clarke, Pearse, Connolly, Kevin Barry, Terry Mac Suibhne, and Childers were the guides.

I have no regrets, for the future of Ireland is answered. The Republic is assured and before long all Irish men, including those

now unhappily in arms against the Republic, will be united against imperialist England – the common enemy of Ireland, and of the world.

To you and Mary I send my love. I know your prayers will be offered for me, though, with old Gaodhals I share the belief that those who die for Ireland have no need of prayer.

God Bless you all, with affectionate regard,

Liam Ó Maoiléofa.

(Liam Mellows)

Letter

To John J. and Mrs Hearn

9 Highstreet, Westfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Extract from Fr. Dominic's message to the Liam Mellows Memorial Meeting, held in Carmelite Hall, New York, December 2nd, 1923: -

"A whole year since dear Liam's murder at the hands of Britain's minions. A whole year. But neither a year, nor a year of years can blot out the memory of his noble life and heroic death. We are too near these events to fully appreciate the spirit, the sufferings and the achievement of Liam and his glorious companions. Those of us who have lived with them, hungered with them, striven with them, and faced death with them, know that we did so heartened by their example. And we realise that future generations will see them as the brightest stars in the historic galaxy of Ireland's martyrs for Faith and Fatherland.

Dominic of Cork, O. M. Cap.

Father Magennis, Patriot Priest.

(from Newspaper)

That lion-hearted Irishman and late General of the great Carmelite Order, Father Patrick Magennis, had the funeral he would have wished on Saturday when the poor and the children mingled with

the great ones of Church and State to do him honour.

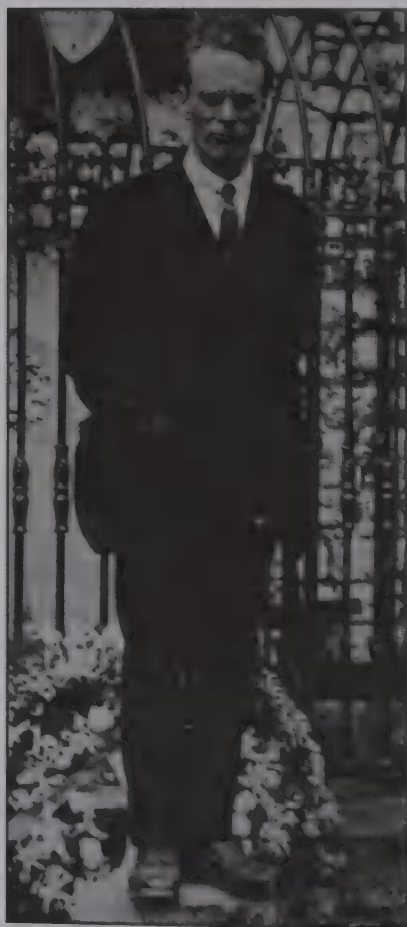
As his funeral passed near the Republican Plot, on its way to the burying place of the Carmelites in Glasnevin, his friends were pleased that he should lie so near to many of the Republican dead who had been his friends in life and to whom he had been defender and champion across the world when, after death, they were maligned by their enemies. Thought went out also to Father Dominic, Chaplain to Terence MacSweeney, to Father Albert, and to other priests, greatly respected, who were sent into exile and died far away. Some day, it is to be hoped that they also may come to a last resting-place in their own land.

Those who went to the United States as envoys or refugees in the early days after 1916 can tell best how staunchly Father Magennis and many of the Carmelites of New York befriended the Irish Cause. America was fighting with the Allies at that time and numbers of normally sensible people even among the Irish were badly infected with war fever. The crimes of Germany seemed enormous, those of England against Ireland were brushed aside. Liam Mellows and many others were 'on the run' with few to whom they could turn. Were it not for Father Magennis and his friends they would have been in very great need.

It was from those days that his friendship with Liam Mellows dated – a friendship that became even stronger after Liam's summary execution in Mountjoy, December 8th 1922, when the opportunity and necessity arose to vindicate the character and ideals of the dead.

In February 1923 he spoke of Liam Mellows in New York:-
"The independence of Ireland was a religion with Liam, as it was with the noble hearts that despised the materialistic inducements that have been in the past and are still being held out to the weak-souled children of Ireland. To me there is only one way to attain in the destiny of our island. We must go alone, unaccompanied by, and untrammelled with any nation that sold its God, any nation whose mission is a build empires on the broken bodies of suffering humanity, because our kingdom is not of that kind; it is a kingdom and an empire that is not of earthly riches or of selfishness, or of

tyranny. The kingdom of the Gael is a kingdom of light, of love, of truth, and of sacrifice. For such a kingdom Liam struggled and laboured, and it was for this kingdom that he died....I was not present at the death of our friend and companion, Liam Mellows, but I know how he died. Not even the priest who stood by his side could give me more information than I possess, for we have the assurance of Holy writ that as a man lives so shall he die".



Liam Mellows

Chuimhneachán



Sacred heart Of Jesus Have Mercy On The Soul Of

Joseph McKelvey

Stewartstown, Co. Tyrone

He was executed in Mountjoy Jail

December 8th, 1922

Buried in Milltown Cemetery Belfast.

R.I.P.

Joseph McKelvey

Born Stewartstown, Co. Tyrone, moved to Cyprus St., off the Falls Road in Belfast, when his father an RIC man was transferred to Springfield Rd. Barracks. Joseph was captured at the Four Courts

and executed in Mountjoy, December 8, 1922 and buried in Milltown Cemetery, Belfast.

On a cold November day in 1924, thousands of people gathered at the GNR Station in Belfast. Present too, were an enormous force of R.U.C. and armed Specials, for the return of the remains of their martyred comrade and leader, Lieutenant General Joe McKelvey, from his prison grave for re-internment in the Republican Plot at Milltown Cemetery, Belfast.

After the Treaty was signed in December 1921 he became Lieutenant General in the I.R.A to Liam Lynch and was the ideal type of Irish soldier. He was not a mere militarist but one who while striving to learn everything that was to be learned about warfare and weapons and at the same time steeped his mind in the history of Ireland, its songs, language and games. He rose rapidly in the I.R.A until he was in command of the Third Northern Division, at a time when the conflict with England was at its height.

After the Treaty of Surrender he was appointed Assistant Chief of Staff of the I.R.A and was with Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows and Dick Barrett in the Four Courts when it was attacked in 1922. After two days of constant bombardment the Republicans surrendered. He was with them until they all passed together from the crime-laden atmosphere of Mountjoy into eternal peace.

On the 8th December, a day held in reverence as the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the four men were aroused from their sleep in the early hours of the morning, told to dress and report to the prison Governor, to be informed of their imminent execution as a reprisal for the death of Séan Hales. At exactly eight o'clock Rory O'Connor (Leinster), Richard Barrett (Munster), Liam Mellows (Connaught) and Joe McKelvey (Ulster) were taken out to the prison grounds and shot to death without charge or trial of any kind by Free State firing squad. Their bodies were to lie 'neath that prison soil for almost two years before they were handed over to their relatives.

In his last hours Joe says "I feel very much not being out with the boys, but I feel certain that God will be good enough to give

one more chance before the end.

I am really surprised I never thought myself a brave man, but this has definitely left me almost unmoved, as a matter of fact I feel much calmer than my guards appear to be. The way to Freedom is a hard and bloody one. I can only hope and pray that my death will be a contributory factor towards the great end for which so much suffering is and has been endured – our Independence. I wonder what my former officers will think of this. I am going to pray for them and they may yet see the light."

"I hope when I face the firing squad I shall do so like a man, and that you may never be ashamed to have known me. I feel that God in his infinite love and mercy has given me grace to do this, and he will not desert me when the supreme moment comes." (From *The Wolfe Tone Annual* 1937). Mrs McKelvey then resided 26, Cyprus St, Belfast and C/O Mrs. Despard, Roebuck House Clonskeagh, Dublin.

Last letter to his mother

(From Antrim's Patriot Dead and Newspaper notes)

Mountjoy Prison,
3 a.m.,
Friday Morning

My Dearest, Dearest Mother,

How can I tell you the news I have to let you know? I don't care at all for my own sake, but I grieve for the pain it will cause you, my loving mother. A document has just been read to me informing me that, as a reprisal for the shooting of Séan Hales, I am to be executed at 8 a.m. this morning.

I can honestly tell you that news hasn't upset me one little bit, and I only hope I shall face the firing squad with equal equanimity.

Liam Mellows, Rory O'Connor and Dick Barrett are, I think, to go along with myself, at least they have been brought with me. I haven't yet seen the Chaplain, but he is to be brought to me; however, I feel quite happy, and I hope, and I hope God will accept

my sacrifice for Himself.

I feel very much the fact that it is my own countrymen who have sentenced me to death, but, I pray to God that by the deaths of those of us who are to be executed by these men, it may open their eyes to the dreadful crime and wrong against their better nature; against everything we hold dear, and at the bidding of our old enemy, England; waging such and relentless war against the Republic which once they would have died to uphold.

4 a.m. – The priest (Fr. McMahon) has just been with me, and I now feel supremely happy, being completely reconciled to God's Holy will. I am to receive the Viaticum and the Pope's blessing. Father McMahon has promised to write to you to let you know how I have met this. I am sending you everything I possess here, including my father's cuff links.

Now, mother, as the time is growing short, and as I want to see my comrades before we go, I must draw to a close. So Good-bye, good-bye and keep you, my mother. Give my heart's love to all friends. Pray for me, dearest.

Your loving son,

Joe

Poem

By Father Brown

Rory and Liam are dead and gone
(Star of the Morning, Mary, come!)
Slain on the Eight of December's dawn
(Mary Immaculate, guide them home!).

Rory and Liam and Dick and Joe
(Star of the Morning, Mary, come!)
Red is their hearts' blood, their souls like snow
(Mary Immaculate, guide them home!).

Their slayers have rung no passing bell
(Star of the Morning, Mary, come!)
But the rifle's crack is their funeral knell
(Mary Immaculate, guide them home!).

Their eyes are steady in face of death
(Star of the Morning, Mary, come!)
For their minds are rapt by the vision of faith
(Mary Immaculate, guide them home!).

For winter will pass and the spring be born
(Star of the Morning, Mary, come!)
And Freedom will waken the land at morn
(Mary Immaculate, guide them home!).

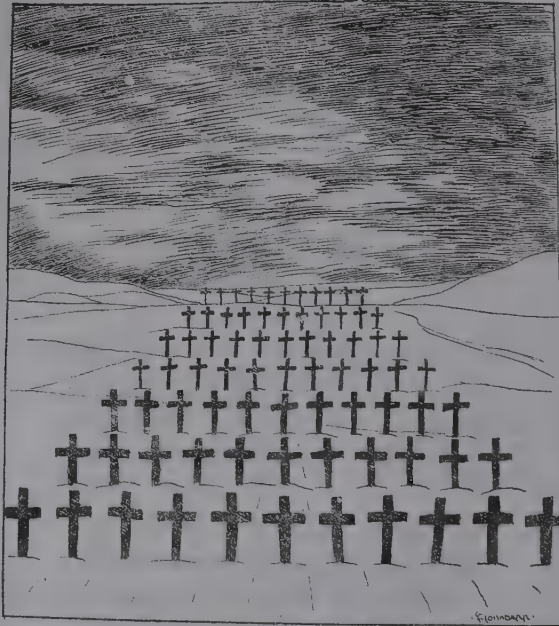
And what is death but an envoy sped
(Star of the Morning, Mary, come!)
With a call from the Heaven of Ireland's Dead
(Mary Immaculate guide them home!)

Why reckon the pangs that have sufficed
(Star of the Morning, Mary, come!)
To bring free souls to their Captain Christ
(Mary Immaculate, guide them home!).

Rory and Liam are dead and gone
(Star of the Morning, Mary, come!)
They have found the lights that go out at dawn
(Mary Immaculate, guide them home!).

Rory and Liam and Dick and Joe
(Star of the Morning, Mary, come!)
Our starlight fades, but the road they know
(Mary Immaculate, guide them home!).

(From The Wolfe Tone Annual 1937 and Republican Wexford Remembers 1922-1923).



SEVENTY-SEVEN ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE TREATY.

Mr. Hogan, speaking in Mayo 10 11 24:—"You did not think we would execute Irishmen. We did, and we'll bloody well execute again."

Mr. Kevin O'Higgins, speaking in Sligo, 18 1 25:—"I stand by the seventy-seven executions, and seven hundred and seventy-seven more if necessary."

**EVERY VOTE FOR THE FREE STATE IS A VOTE FOR
777 MORE EXECUTIONS.**

W.P.W.D.

Joe Mc Kelvey A Tribute

O, Give him a place among Ulster's dead
Who gave battle for Ireland's weal?
Who have fought and died to free this land
From the English tyrant's heel.
The true and brave who in every age
Came thronging at Freedom's call,
McKelvey stood where they shed their blood-
He remembered and loved them all.

From Breffni's lakes up to Antrim's glens,
Through Derry and green Tir Eoghain;
From the fields of Down to Lock Swilly's waves,
From Cuailene to Inis Eoghain;
To every spot that had seen the Gael
And their English foemen fall,
McKelvey sped on a soldier's quest-
He knew them and loved them all.

He was lover of Neilson and Betsy Gray,
Of McCracken and brave Munro;
Of Hope and Orr and of Séan and Eoghan,
And of Aodh O Domhnaill Ruadh.
In town and vale he told their tale,
And cried to his comrades all
Their faith to keep and their foes to sweep
From the fair land of Inis Fáil.

With Barrett, O'Connor and Mellows brave
They killed him at dawn of day,
Because he was true to his country's cause
And a foe to the Saxon sway.
For the truth they died; they are Ireland's pride
From Ciarraidhe to Dún na nGall;
McKelvey is ours till the end of Time,
But we honour and love them all.

Thy Will Be Done



Richard Barrett

Born Hollyhill, Ballineen, Co. Cork

Was executed in Mountjoy Prison

December 8th, 1922

Buried in Ahiohill Churchyard

Co. Cork.

R.I.P.

Richard Barrett

Born Hollyhill, Ballineen, Co. Cork, was captured at the Four Courts and was one of the four leaders executed as an official Reprisal in Mountjoy prison, December 8, 1922. Buried in Ahiohill

Churchyard, Co. Cork.

Dick proved himself as an exceptionally bright boy and after qualifying in the teaching profession in 1913; he was placed in the First Division by the Board of Education and was awarded a First Class Diploma by the College authorities. Following these brilliant successes, Tipperary was the scene of his initial educational labours as substitute in Newcastle boy's school, about seven miles from Clonmel. He then returned to his native county and was appointed teacher in Upton Industrial School and later principal of Gurrans National School.

Dick was also an athlete and soldier who did the work of twenty during the Five Great Years. He was among the first in his area to be enrolled in the Irish Republican Brotherhood. To his I.R.A comrades in County Cork he was a tower of strength and an inspiration during the strenuous years when England by savage methods of warfare strove to break the spirit and morale of the Irish people. Dick personally carried out a long series of gunrunning episodes, eluding the British authorities by varying ingenious plans which his inventive brain conceived and effected, so that from Dublin to Cork and from Upton to Mizen Head arms and ammunition were collected and distributed. He was repeatedly entrusted with risky undertakings and confidential missions which brought him in close contact with Brugha, Stack, O'Connor, Collins, Mulcahy, O'Sullivan and other members of General Headquarters Staff.

"As Brigade Quartermaster, Dick Barrett was responsible for organising the collection and disposal of the "Arms Fund" for which he got authority at the Brigade Council meeting in Dunmanway in September 1920. He had those 'on the run' clothed with raincoats in a matter of days. He next arranged for the deposit of the balance of the arms fund and subsequent contributions in the private business bank accounts of reliable friend.

Following his arrest after Crossbarry Ambush Dick was interned in Spike Island. Here he worked untiringly to break the prison discipline. He was the moving spirit in plotting an escape which was carried out on a wild, dark, stormy night in November

1921 in the company of six others, Bill Quirke, Moss Twomey, Tom Crofts, Henry O'Mahony, Paddy Buckley and Jack Eddy. They found a boat belonging to a British Launch and battling with the elements for hours and with the help of Henry O'Mahony's local knowledge, they eventually landed safely near the Belmont Hutments at Cobh, before it became known that they had left the prison.

When the Treaty of surrender split the I.R.A he remained true to the old ideal and was one of the gallant bands of soldiers who garrisoned the Republican Headquarters at the Four Courts when it was attacked in 1922. Then after the surrender, five months of imprisonment and at the end of it a few hours notice of death, a firing squad and release forever. There was no trial.

Since these men had been in Mountjoy Jail for five months, it would have been impossible to convict them of complicity in the shooting of Séan Hales. On the morning of December 8th 1922, Rory O'Connor, Dick Barrett, Liam Mellows and Joe McKelvey were aroused from their sleep and told of their execution. With extraordinary self-control and courage Dick washed, dressed and wrote his last letters. Mass was said. Dick, Rory O'Connor and Joe McKelvey had Communion, but Mellows did not. Mellows refused to accept the Bishop's Pastoral of October 10th 1922. Fr. Piggott, who was brought in from Wellington Barracks eventually, devised a formula, which made it possible for him to give Mellows absolution. As all four moved up to the place of execution, Dick started to sing "The Top of Cork Road" as a gesture from his stout heart to his comrades. The firing squad was tense for the occasion and the greater part of the volley went wide. Nine revolver shots were fired before the men were dead.

Last Farewell

Séan McBride, son of the executed 1916 leader was one of the last of Dick Barrett's fellow prisoners to see him before his death. On that terrible morning on 8th December 1922 Séan McBride wrote:-

"You were there then, Séan in one of those cells? Yes, I shared

the cell with Rory. Liam Mellows was next door, with Joe McKelvey. Dick Barrett was close by. Liam Mellows was O.C. Prisoners in C wing and shared cell 34 with Joe McKelvey. Dick Barrett was in 36 and Rory O'Connor and I were in cell 32. Liam was in a pensive mood that afternoon. Rory and I retired early to our cell where he was carving chess men from an old piece of wood. While he worked we discussed a rumour that Hales and Ó Maille had been shot that day. We had no confirmation of it. Then we settled into a game of chess, a game which he invariably won. While he waited my move he played with a sovereign and five-shilling piece; it was the gold and the silver that had been used at the wedding of Kevin O'Higgins a little over a year before when Rory was best man.

We retired early to bed. Bed was a mattress and three blankets upon the floor. Quietly we conversed on the tunnel that we knew was being dug to reach us. Then we laughingly talked about the island prison to which our captors threatened to send us. Which island would it be?

We had been asleep some time when the door quietly opened. Someone came in and went out again. I was beginning to doze when the person returned. He lit a match over Rory; the gas in the prison was always turned off at night. I recognised Burke, a Free-State red cap, who later applied for the post of public flogger. What can he want, I thought. I waited quietly for about half an hour. Rory was sleeping soundly. There were more footsteps outside, and whispering. Someone was now entering the cell of Liam and Joe. Paudeen O'Keeffe, late Secretary of Sinn Féin, and now Prison Governor, now came in. He fumbled with the gas, cursing quietly. Then he lit a match, bending over Rory. *Mr. O'Connor please get up and dress.* He spoke similarly. The unusual politeness dumbfounded me. What can this be? Apart from myself, they seemed only interested in the top people. That would explain the politeness, I thought.

Candles had been brought, and we dressed quickly. O'Keeffe returned. No, I would not be required. I could go back to bed. But I was too puzzled to go back to bed. I wandered out on the landing,

an unusual liberty. Liam was tearing up papers and looking very solemn. Joe was wrapping his books in a blanket. Neither of them had a clue as to what was afoot. I returned to Rory. Laughingly he offered me the gold and silver. *Take these, they have always brought me bad luck.* But I would not. *You may need them, even if it is another prison, and not negotiations.* All right. He said, *but take these chessmen and give them to young Kelly.* Then stepping out on the landing, he gave me a firm handclasp.

I followed him out, shaking hands with Liam and Joe. Joe looked funny with his Santa Claus sack of old books upon his back. Dick Barrett was already ahead going down the steps.

There was silence now in the wing. I started to worry. For the first time in weeks anxiety gnawed at me. Executions had taken place, but surely they were not going to shoot them. It was now around three. One could already hear a few cars mixed with some spasmodic night shooting. That morning, a Holy Day of obligation, Mass was late. From where I stood I could see red caps in the Circle, the meeting point of the four wings within the prison. That was unusual. A whistle went; it was about 8.30. A wing fell in for Mass, followed by ourselves. Then we heard shots near the front of the prison. A volley, another volley, then a number of isolated shots. What was it?

As another batch of our comrades emerged past us, one called over, *they were shot.* I was too dazed for it to register. There must be a mistake. Then, as we filed in, crossing above the Circle, I saw below me a squad of soldiers; there were boiler-suited workmen too. They avoided looking at us. I saw that their legs and boots were stained with earth. My thoughts ran to Oscar Wilde.

The warders strutted up and down,
And watched their herd of brutes,
Their uniforms were spick and span,
And they wore their Sunday suits,
But we knew the work they had been at,
By the quicklime on their boots".

Peadar O'Donnell, taken captive in the fall of the Four Courts

and a fellow-prisoner in Mountjoy Jail had this to say about Dick Barrett:

"Dick Barrett, the most loveable of men, had been on his way to London to attempt a rescue of Dunne and O'Sullivan, who were under sentence of death for the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson, on the night of the ultimatum to the Four Courts. At that time it was not clear whether the 1st Southern Division would play an early part in the struggle that was beginning and in these circumstances Barrett who had been stationed in the Four Courts, felt it his duty to join his comrades. Barrett's was a keen, searching mind with strong conspiratorial genius. He was easily the most dangerous, to the individual members of the Free State Cabinet, of all the minds in 'C' wing. He had been very close to Collins and told a few of us on two or three occasions that it was very unlikely that he would be 'left live'. He once gave an account of a talk between himself and Collins at which Collins had stated his plans in detail: he would use the Treaty to get strength but all the time he would operate a 'dark hand' would assassinate them.

I questioned Barrett a good deal about Collins; his knowledge of him was unusual for he had been very close, sharing the same lodgings for lengthy periods, and their minds had the same deep conspiratorial instinct, but informed in Barrett's case with a keen intellect. Barrett was immensely popular with us, but only those very close to him ever knew the deep searching mind that was for ever playing on individuals and discussions."

Of the previous evening O'Donnell wrote "No, that evening, things proceeded as always. I played two rubbers of bridge with Barrett, Tom MacMahon and Andy Cooney. We had no cigarettes; the three of them shared short jerks upon a butt. About eight o'clock I went into a debate – *Women in Industry – Equal pay for equal work* there were about twelve present. Nothing memorable was said I looked up and saw Barrett at the top landing. He was leaning and looking away out like a countryman gazing off upon a wet day, or in the shade of a fine summer's evening. As I passed Mellows' door, I told him a Mutt and Jeff joke. He chuckled as he

related it to McKelvey. Years after, when I was out again, I said to Paudeen O'Keeffe:

There is a story you must tell, the last hours of the four. Says he: I don't know it. I came in late, about one o'clock, went to bed in the same room as Phil Cosgrave. I was wakened up with a flashlight in my face. I was given the names of these four men. I went along and brought them out. When I returned to the room with Phil, we found two bottles of whiskey on the table. That is all I remember of the events of that morning. Eight years after, I was on the top of a Dublin tram and saw there a military policeman that I knew had been on duty. Had he witnessed the shooting? He had. He gave me this little detail. As Barrett walked forward from the jail door, accompanied by the other three, he struck up "The Top of Cork Road". It was so like him for courage. He had a poor voice, but he was going to liberate the only thing left to him, and throw a dubhslán in the teeth of the enemy"

One who knew Dick Barrett well wrote of him after his martyrdom "Richard Barrett, teacher, patriot and martyr; with tall, stately form, rapid stride, merry eyes, dark hair, a fine head and a heart of courage, the soul of truth and honour. With a ready tongue and a hearty laugh, with an energetic intellect, but never an evil thought. To God and Ireland true. Faithful, merry-hearted friend, beloved by little children. Gentle in peace, brave and fearless in war, he will never be forgotten. He is with the dead he loved, and his name is another bulwark to the Republic. Not in sorrow but in triumph his friends may cry out: The blood of men fighting for freedom is never shed in vain".

Towards the end of 1924 a decision was taken to hand over the bodies of the executed Republicans to their families. The Southern Star of November 1st 1924 states: - "Impressive scenes attended the removal of the remains of Liam Mellows, Joseph McKelvey, Richard Barrett, and Rory O'Connor from Mountjoy Prison. Only relatives of the executed men, Cumann na mBan, and numbers of their comrades were allowed inside. Amongst those present were Count Plunkett, and Joseph Clarke, TEC." "The remains of Mr. Rd. Barrett, a native of the Enniskillen district

reached Cork arrived by train at Glanmire terminus and was taken in a procession to St. Peter and Paul's church where it was suitably honoured by the gathering. Next day train transferred the coffin to Baleen. Preparatory to the funeral from Enniskeane church to Ahiohill Cemetery."

(From book on Dick Barrett).

There was no charge against him - administrative reprisal execution.

He wrote to his parents, brothers and sisters from Mountjoy a couple of hours before the end:-

Mountjoy Prison

Friday morning, 2 a.m.

December 8th, 1922

To My Dearest Mother, Father, Molly, Jim, Nelius, Eileen and Baby,

I have been just called up from my old bed in cell 36, top landing. A little paper was read to me, which stated that "I am to be executed this morning at 8 a.m as a reprisal for the murder of Séan Hales". Only a few days ago some fellow prisoners of mine and I were speaking of the poor lads who were executed in Beggar's Bush and wondering would it be difficult to die in such circumstances. Well the riddle is solved for me at any rate. The nearer we get to death the easier it is. I am quite prepared for the last long journey. For me the best has come, but for you all I can picture you when you receive this news. I wish you would take it as cool and resigned as I have, and remember it is sweet and glorious to die for one's country. There were three others brought out with me. Liam Mellows, Rory O'Connor and Joe McKelvey. I presume that these three great men will also pay the full penalty for loving Ireland. They will be a great loss to the cause of Irish Freedom. They too like me I'm sure regret that the executioners

should be Irish men. In the past they were English but the Cause is the same – holy and triumphant.

Well, I was not as good a son or a loving a brother as I might have been. I have caused you all a lot of worry and uneasiness but I know you will forgive me. The services of Ireland demand the giving up or perhaps in many cases the breaking of some family ties and dear friendships but this is more than compensated for, because in the service of our Motherland we make acquaintance with the greatest of men, men whose souls are in Communion with the Spirits of our martyred heroes.

I should have written to you all, but this is impossible. I hope that we shall meet in Heaven, sure it will be only a few years at the most. Try and remember that death is sure to come to all, make preparations for this and I ask you to regard my death as a necessary affliction, which you have to bear. Mikie and Lizzie and Jerry, Ciss, Mike, Robert and Dan will be sad but little Jerry Collins and little Eileen Galvin when they grow up will glory in the triumphant cause of Irish Freedom and will love to learn that I did not die for any other Freedom than that for which Tone, Emmet and Pearse died.

I have but few things in this life. I have no clothes of any consequence. If you get what clothes I have here in Mountjoy you can leave my old trunk at Belrose. If you don't get these clothes and that you are anxious to have something of mine you can get a few things from the Belrose people. There is a little money in the Munster & Leinster Bank, Bandon. Of course, it will be yours, and should anybody come looking for something I owe them, I don't know if there are any such people, try and go into the merits of their case and fix them up. There is nothing else in Belrose.

Well, I intended to write to Lizzie and Ciss but I'm sure I may not have time. You have a lot of little odds and ends to fix up. Let them see this letter and tell them to bear up like true women of Ireland; for live a thousand years I should not be so well prepared.

I want you now not to cry or mourn over my loss. Be proud that I have not died in disgrace. Pray for me. I can see Molly starting to cry already. Remember all the brave lads that have been

killed in this fight, and try and take it as your lot that you are called upon to give one member of your family to this holy cause". The Priest is with me and I'm happy. Tell Willie how I died happy.

Good Bye to all,
Richard

Letter to his girlfriend Bridgie O'Mahony, Belrose House, Upton, who he was to marry.

*Mountjoy Prison
December 8th, 1922*

My Dearest Bridgie,

It is now thirteen minutes to six in the morning and I am to be executed at 8 a.m. I have been called up out of bed and told so. I should like to write you a long letter and the same to all the others, but I have not time.

I know you will be very grieved at this but don't worry about me. I'm Happy. Try and think of me as a dear friend who has died for Ireland. I will probably be buried here in these grounds. You will some day have a chance of visiting my grave. Pray for me, but do not mourn my loss. There are many great men dying for Ireland in this sad conflict.

Good Bye, with best love and good wishes,
Dick.

To Miss Annie O'Mahony of same address.

My Dearest Annie,

Don't grieve over my loss. Try and regard it as a necessary thing for Ireland. When you see the "boys" tell them all and each I wished them well, and would love to be with them on the Green

Hills of Holy Ireland. Many of them may have to travel with me, but what matter. Death cometh to all. I shall meet you and rejoice in Heaven. Pray for me – Dick.

In general note to other dear friends in Belrose, including Mr. and Mrs. McCarthy, Innishannon, he said: - "I should love to see you all and tell you how easy it is to die in a Holy Cause. Pray for me and for Ireland". – Dick.

To his relatives at Kinsale Junction he sent the following: -

Mrs Barrett, Willie and Kiddies,

I know there are many dear friends I should write to, but I have not the time. It is now eight minutes past six and I am to be executed at 8 a.m. Well I am prepared to die and glad that I die in the same cause as Tone, Emmet, Pearse and Charlie Hurley.

You will be grieved and distressed but you have nobler things to do. Tell your kiddies, Ned, Joe and the little girls why I died and how. Teach them the stories of our martyrs. Teach them not to fear of death, but the duty of dying, if necessary for a cause that is bound to triumph. Make them acquainted with the Fathers of our National Faith.

The priest is waiting to hear my Confession.
Good-bye, Good-bye,
Dick.

To my fellow prisoners

Well, it is just seven o'clock and I am to be executed at eight o'clock. Perhaps more of you may be called out to go the same proud way. Well boys it is very easy. Death is only terrible at a distance, the nearer we get to it the better. It is all over for me. I can't easily escape now. I hope you will all live through to the Faith of our National Fathers and when called on to do great things for Ireland will face it manfully.

Do not bear ill will or dream of reprisals, the cause is too holy

for ignoble deeds.

I have not seen Rory, Liam or Joe. Sure they too are happy. Goodbye to all. Remember me and pray for us four. I have a packet of cigarettes. I would love to give one to Cooney and Joe.

Your fellow prisoner, - Dick.

Holy Cross College
Clonliffe,
Dublin,
13/12/'22

My Dear Mrs. Barrett,

You will have already heard from your son, who called upon me, some of the consoling particulars of Dick's death. Knowing the sorrow and suffering the terrible news of his execution have brought, I delayed writing to you, and postponing the fulfilment of the promise I made him in his last hours. From the supernatural all point of view – and where death is concerned all other aspects recede – you will find nothing but consolation in the manner in which he prepared to meet his fate.

I learned to know him well within the last few months for he served my Mass, and served it well, Sunday after Sunday. He rose to greet me in a very friendly manner when I entered his room and quite self-possessed asked me to leave him to himself for yet another while that he might prepare for a general confession. I chatted with him a few times during the night and on one occasion he remarked on what strange surprise life had in store. A week ago he and Liam Mellows, he told me, had been discussing the policy of threatening the members of the Dáil, and both decided it was unworthy of the cause for which they had fought, - and 'now' he pathetically observed. "I have become the sufferer for a policy I could not support".

We said prayers together and he was growing in confidence

and trust in God. Towards eight o'clock he received Holy Viaticum and the Apostolic Blessing and I shall never forget the earnestness with which he expressed his resignation to God's Holy Will. With increasing fervour, as the dread hour approached, he united his sufferings with those of our Divine Lord, accepted them from God's Hand in atonement for his sins, and made a willing sacrifice of his life as reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He bade an affectionate farewell of his companions and of those who had charge of him. Time and again he declared he bore a grudge against no man, he forgave and prayed for all. He realised God's Will in his fate, and "Thy Will be done" was the ejaculation frequently on his lips. I prayed with him while he was being blindfolded, accompanied him to the end, and as he walked he repeatedly said, "Into Thy Hands O Lord, I commend my spirit. Lord Jesus receive my soul". Into Thy Hands O Lord, I commend my spirit. Lord Jesus receive my soul." He told me he would continue to say it the last. Another priest who was nearest to him anointed him when he was lying down. The sad funeral rites were carried out with simplicity and reverence, and with the full ceremony of the Church. His death is sure a terrible blow to you and to all who loved him. He died full of confidence in God. No child could be more trusting or more simple in fact. He was brave and he was more than brave in his calm resignation to the Divine will. I trust God will send consolation to you and all who were dear to him, and that his happy death will assuage your keen sorrow.

With deepest sympathy,

I remain, sincerely yours,
Rev. M.S. MacMahon.

To the Editor "Cork Examiner"

Sir – That we view with horror and disgust the execution of the four Irishmen, Richard Barrett, Liam Mellows, Joseph McKelvey and Rory O'Connor as a reprisal for the death of Séan Hales, our

dearly beloved brother, and we think it a criminal folly to believe that such methods will end the strife in our land; and we are of opinion that reprisals on either side will only increase the bitterness and delay the reconciliation that all patriotic Irishmen long and pray for, and also that the sole testimony of a British officer is insufficient proof of how he met his death.

Signed

Robert Hales, Father; Margaret Hales, Sister; Liam Hales, Brother; Italian Consul. Genoa, Italy; Margaret Hales, Sister; Elizabeth Hales, Sister.

Liam Hales, Knocknacurra, Ballinadee.

December 15th 1922

Friendship – Hales & Barrett

That Séan Hales and Dick Barrett were exceptionally close friends there is no doubt. That special bond which existed between them has often been referred to by those who knew them and recorded by others who have written of that period including Tom Barry and Liam Deasy.

On hearing of their deaths Deasy gave the following reaction:

-
"For twenty four hours I think of nothing but the shooting of Séan Hales and that at the hands of my comrades. The reprisals completed the tragedy and brought home the desperation and savage hate caused by this Civil War. Séan Hales and Dick Barrett, two of my most intimate and personal friends were now dead and for what"?

The affinity that existed between Barrett and Hales come through in a nice story told by Charlie Madden of Timoleague and formerly of Upton.

"I'd like to record this poignant little story concerning Dick Barrett as told to me by my father, Miney Madden.

Miney worked as a young lad of 17-18 years in O'Mahony's Belrose, and naturally was greatly influenced by the local schoolmaster who lodged there. Miney always prided out of the fact that it was Dick Barrett who secured for him the tenancy of the council cottage in Lissagroom, Upton, when the Sinn Féin members got control over the Local Authority bodies after the 1918 election. Now this incident occurred as a direct sequel to Brinny ambush in the autumn of 1920.

Séan Hales was in charge of the I.R.A. Company that planned an ambush at Brinny Bridge where a convoy of soldiers were expected to pass. Dick Barrett would be privy to these plans, as it was mainly to Crosspound Co. that were involved. It appears their plans were conveyed to the British in Bandon and they were surrounded at around 4 p.m. Poor Timmy Fitzgerald was killed in the ensuing retreat and another volunteer injured. Hales pulled back his troops northwards to Crosspound, and having brought them a few drinks in O'Callaghan's pub – they dispersed to the nearby safe houses for a well-earned meal and rest.

Miney went back to O'Mahony's, told what he knew to Barrett and they both went to bed. About 3.00 a.m. next morning, they were awakened by the loud knocking on the doors and shouting of the soldiers in the yard. The house was searched from top to bottom and all the occupants questioned. However nobody was arrested, as Barrett's cover had not been blown at that point.

No sooner had the soldiers left the house than Barrett was into the room where Miney slept – 'get up quick', he ordered and 'go straight to O'Sullivan's, Raheen, and warn Hales to be on the alert' as he feared that O'Sullivan's might be raided. (O'Sullivan's was the home of Pake Sullivan who sadly was one of those shot at Upton the following February).

Miney hopped out the back window, even though the soldiers were still in the laneway, and went through the fields to O'Sullivan's to alert Hales and Tadgh Sullivan and another Volunteer. In the

midst of all the danger, Barrett's prime concern was for his comrade Séan Hales. Wasn't it so terribly sad that Dick Barrett should be taken from jail and executed as reprisal, two years later for the shooting of Hales on the 7th December 1922 in our cruel uncivil war"

Reaction to the Executions

At the Dáil meeting held on December 8th, the same day as the Mountjoy executions there was widespread reaction to the deaths. The reaction was printed in the Cork Examiner of December 9th. The following are extracts from some of the members of the Dáil on that occasion.

Mr. Johnson and Cathal O'Shannon (Labour) condemned the executions. Johnson, in his speech, said that "*Horrors upon horrors accumulate*".

O'Shannon referred to the executions as "*murders*" and asked what authority the Government had to commit such acts.

However there were some members of the Dail that considered the actions of the Government to have been right under the circumstances. They included General Mulcahy, Mr. Kevin O'Higgins, Mr. Milroy, Eoin MacNeill. They vigorously defended the actions of the Government.

Deputy Johnson said that it was a horrible and dastardly thing to hear of the assassination of Séan Hales. Now murder most foul had been further committed – murder bloody and unnatural. Four men had been in their charge for five months. The Government were charged with the case of these men – that was their duty as guardians of the law. These men had not been tried. Then because a man was assassinated the government announces with pride that they have taken out four men who were in their charge as prisoners, and shoots them as a reprisal. He wondered whether

any member who had regard for the Honour of Ireland would stand over an act of this kind.

The Press Association in a message said "The dramatic swiftness with which the Government has been moved to act for the assassination of Séan Hales has created a tremendous sensation in the city use to sensations"

The Editorial in the Southern Star on December 16th 1922 gave the following reaction to events of the previous week. "It looks as if the Ireland of Saints and Scholars is going to become a byword and a reproach among the nations. It is singularly deplorable – it is unspeakably sad – that the Free State was ushered into life amid assassination and reprisal and was christened so to speak in Irish Blood".

It goes on to condemn the killing of Séan Hales as a base and brutal crime that sent horror and indignation throughout the whole of Ireland. Referring to the reprisal killing of Dick Barrett and his comrades the Editor wrote, "Let us assume that they levied war against the State and sought by armed force to overthrow the Government. Let us assume that they aided and abetted the assassination of Séan Hales".

Let us assume that they were guilty of capital crimes. Let us go further still, and assume that there were compelling and overmastering reasons for the executions of these men, still they were entitled to a trial: they were entitled to be afforded an opportunity of making a defence. Even the doctrine of military necessity, which is a very vague and dangerous thing, is subject to limitations imposed by the moral code: even the State in the exercise of its eminent domain ought not to transgress Natural Law. It may be said that "inter arm leges silent" still, the law has not been silenced to such an extent as to prevent a man being tried by some tribunal. To execute any man, no matter who or what he may be, without charge or trial, establishes a very dangerous precedent.

"Twill be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error will creep into the State
Assassination is an unclean and unholy weapon of warfare.
Reprisals are an unjust and unwise form of punishment not far
Removed from "the wild justice of revenge".

The Editorial, which was representative of much of the thinking in the aftermath of the Executions, carried on in a similar vein for several more paragraphs.

The free world was shocked by what had happened and the names of those four men Barrett, McKelvey, Mellows and O'Connor were forever engraved in Republican lore; the manner of their death sealed that.

Bodies handed over at Mountjoy Prison

(Cork Examiner, 29th. October 1924)

Impressive scenes attended the removal of the remains of Liam Mellows, Joseph McKelvey, Richard Barrett, and Rory O'Connor from Mountjoy Prison. A large crowd assembled outside the main entrance to the prison, which was closed and guarded by members of the D. M. P. Only relatives of the executed men, those supervising the removal of the bodies, Cumann na mBan, and numbers of their comrades were allowed inside. The process of conveying the coffins from the interior of the gaol was a protracted one, and occupied over an hour. Amongst those present were Count Plunkett, Madame Gonne McBride, Mrs. Despard, Messrs John and George Plunkett, and Joseph Clarke, T. C. While awaiting the completion of the arrangements the crowd outside recited the Rosary.

The first coffin to be removed contained the remains of Dick Barrett. As the coffin was brought from the prison the military guard presented arms, a similar tribute being also paid the other remains. Next was taken out the body of Joseph McKelvey to be followed by the remains of Liam Mellows and Rory O'Connor.

The four coffins of polished Irish oak were then draped with the tricolours and laurel wreaths from the Prisoner's Defence league laid thereon.

A guard of honour composed of members of the Fianna walked on each side in single file, and members of Cumann na mBan also took part in the procession. Relatives and friends of the deceased men brought up the rear.

The North Circular road reached, some twenty men, drawn up in military formation augmented the procession. The pathways were lined with spectators. Madame Gonne McBride informed Press representatives that she had been refused admission to the prison when accompanying Mrs. McKelvey, although the official notification served on Mrs. McKelvey by the authorities intimated that she could be accompanied by another relative or a friend. Mrs. Mellows then went with Mrs. McKelvey to receive the body of the latter's son. Madame McBride also stated that Mrs. Mellows had refused to sign a receipt for the remains of her son, as she had been handed over a coffin and had not had an opportunity of ascertaining if it contained the body of her boy. Prayers were recited over the bodies in the interior of the prison by the Rev. Father McMahan, chaplain. At both ends of Hardwick Street today cordons of men were drawn across the roadway and stopped vehicular traffic from proceeding through the thoroughfare.



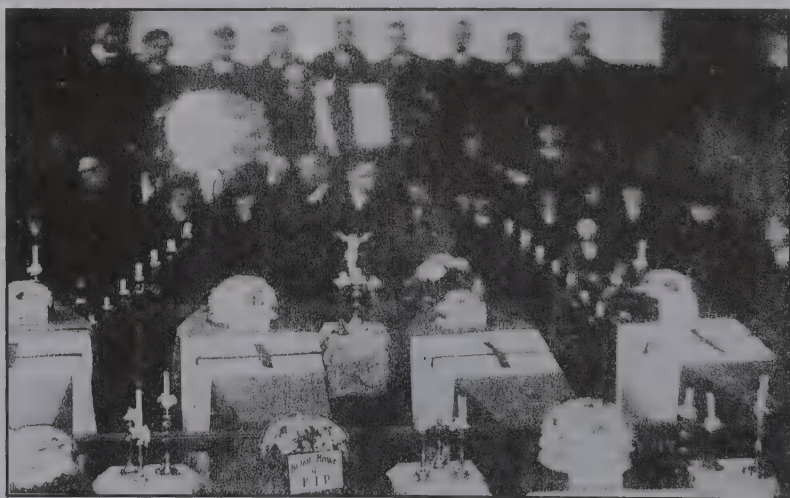
The first body to be handed over at Arbour Hill, Dublin, leaves the prison as large crowds wait outside. The date was Tuesday, October 28, 1924.



Uniformed Cumann na mBan and Fianna Éireann place the Tricolour around a coffin leaving Mountjoy Jail. The National Flag was later removed from the coffin of Joe McKelvey in Belfast.



The scene outside Whitefriar St. Church as the remains were being removed to Glasnevin Cemetery for burial in the Republican Plot. The remains of Erskine Chilens joined the cortege outside the Church.



Coffins of seven men executed at the Curragh, rest in Kildare courthouse before reinterment at White Abbey graveyard, 1924

The Aftermath

The Civil War continued into the Spring of 1923 but the Republican Forces were now confined to Guerrilla tactics, retracting further into remote country districts. The executions continued unabated. By the end of January 1923 fifty-five executions had been carried out. Most records show that the total number of executions was 77 but others put the figure at 81. The most shocking day was January 20th 1923 when eleven young Irishmen were executed. Liam Lynch had issued an order strictly prohibiting any retaliation for the killing of I.R.A. men. However Liam was to die himself after a round up in the Knockmealdown Mountains on 10th April 1923. Over a month later on 24th May 1923 his successor Frank Aiken issued an order to all I.R.A units to dump their arms.

In July 1924 Republican leaders were released from internment and later that year the remains of those executed were handed back to their families.

Remains Handed Over

The Free State became established. This was helped by the fact that De Valera and other elected Republicans refused to take the oath of allegiance, which would have enabled them to sit in the Dail.

Towards the end of 1924 a decision was taken to hand over the bodies of the executed Republicans to their families. The following is - a copy of the letter received by the Barrett family.

Office of Adjutant General,
General headquarters,
Parkgate,
22adh Deire Foghmhair, 1924.

REF : Mr. Richard Barrett
Hollyhill, Ballineen, Co. Cork

A Chara,

With further reference to my letter regarding the handing over of the remains of Richard Barrett, I wish to inform you that the transfer to your custody of these remains will take place at Mountjoy on 28th October between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The necessary instructions have been issued to ensure that a hearse accompanied by two relatives or friends of the deceased will be allowed to enter barracks for this purpose. It is desirable that relatives should attend as soon after 9 o'clock as possible on that day.

It should be noted that the body is encased in a double coffin, and you need provide no coffin.

The production of this communication of the occasion would facilitate the Military in establishing the bona fides of the claimants.

Mise-----

Major General, Adjutant General

The following newspaper reports, which appeared in the newspapers, including the Southern Star, give a very vivid and emotional account of the handing over of the remains at Mountjoy, followed by the train journey and ceremonies there.

Finally we get a poignant account of the last journey to Ahiohill graveyard and the highly charged and emotional atmosphere that prevailed there.

Removal from Mountjoy

Southern Star Nov. 1st 1924

Impressive scenes attended the removal of the remains of Liam Mellows, Joseph McKelvey, Richard Barrett, and Rory O'Connor from Mountjoy Prison, which was closed and guarded by members of the D.M.P. Only relatives of the executed men, whose supervising the removal of the bodies, Cumann na mBan and numbers of their comrades were allowed inside. The process of

conveying the coffins from the interior of the gaol was a protracted one and occupied over an hour. Amongst those present were Count Plunkett, and Joseph Clarke, T.C. While awaiting the completion of the arrangements the crowd outside recited the Rosary.

The first coffin to be removed contained the remains of Dick Barrett. As the coffin was brought from the prison the military guard presented arms, a similar tribute being also paid the other remains. Next was taken out the body of Joseph McKelvey, to be followed by the remains of Liam Mellows and Rory O'Connor. The four coffins of polished Irish oak were then draped with the tri-colour, and laurel wreaths from the Prisoners Defence League lay thereon. A guard of honour composed of members of the Fianna walked on each side in single file, and members of Cumann na mBan also took part in the procession. Relatives and friends of the deceased men bought up the rear.

The North Circular road reached, some twenty men, drawn up in military formation augmented the procession. The pathways were lined with spectators. Madame Gonne MacBride informed Press representatives that she had been refused admission to the prison when accompanying Mrs. McKelvey, although the official notification served on Mrs. McKelvey to receive the body of the latter's son. Madame MacBride also stated that Mrs. Mellows had refused to sign a receipt for the remains of her son, as she had been handed over a coffin and had not had an opportunity of ascertaining if it contained the body of her boy. Prayers were recited over the bodies in the interior of the prison by the Rev. Father McMahan, chaplain. At both ends of Hardwick Street today cordons of men were drawn across the roadway and stopped vehicular traffic from proceeding through the thoroughfare.

Arrival at Cork

Southern Star Nov. 1st 1924

The remains of Mr. Richard Barrett, a native of the Enniskeane district, reached Cork from Dublin on Thursday night and were removed to S.S. Peter and Paul's Church preparatory to being taken

to his native parish for burial. Impressive scenes were associated with the arrival of the remains at the Glanmire terminus.

The train reached that station at the appointed time and was met by a very large gathering, composed of members of public bodies, hurling and football clubs, the Cork County Board and the Gaelic Athletic Association, and also representatives of every branch of the Republican organisation throughout the city and county, as well as the Cork Volunteer and McCurtain Pipers' Band. It was an imposing and impressive assemblage.

Following the transference of the remains from the train to a hearse a procession was formed and proceeded to S.S. Peter and Paul's Church. The coffin containing the remains, covered by the tri-colour, was borne on the shoulders of deceased's comrades to the hearse and was suitably honoured by the gathering. A procession was immediately formed and proceeded from the station premises along Lower Glanmire Road, McCurtain Street, Bridge Street and Patrick Street to the church. Each side of the route was lined with spectators who evinced a good deal of interest in the procession and also paid a fitting tribute of respect to the deceased's memory.

Preceding the hearse was the Cork Volunteer Pipers' Band, which rendered music appropriate to the sad occasion. The hearse containing the remains was accompanied by the guard of honour provided by Volunteers and was followed by relatives of the deceased while the general public, contingents of Volunteers and members of the Cumann na mBan, with the McCurtain Pipers' Band, which also played funeral music along the route, completed a cortege of extensive dimensions. The Volunteers marched four deep, as also did the members of the Cumann na mBan, and many of the later representatives carried beautiful wreaths. It was a procession of marked impressiveness and was witnessed by a large gathering along the entire length of the route.

The remains were removed from the church on Friday afternoon to the Cork-Bandon and South Coast Railway terminus for entrainment to Enniskeane, where the funeral will take place on Saturday afternoon.

Contingents met the train at many stations and placed wreaths on the coffin at Kilmallock, Charleville and Blarney stations. Accompanying the remains from Dublin were Miss M. Barrett (sister), Miss M. H. O'Mahony, Messrs. Séan Buckley T.D., W. Barrett and J. Barrett (brothers), Séan McCarthy and others.

The M.Barrett referred to, in that account was later Mrs. O'Neill, Shanaway, mother of Ena O'Dwyer and Joan Nyhan, Gáirdin Mór. James Barrett lived at Reenroe, Clonakilty where the family still resides and Willie Barrett was a draper in Clonakilty where the Credit Union now has offices.

Overnight in Cork

Southern Star Nov. 1st 1924

The remains of Mr. Rd. Barrett which remained overnight at S.S Peter and Paul's Church, were removed yesterday to the Republican Rooms at the Grand Parade, and in the evening were transferred by train to Ballineen, preparatory to the funeral from Enniskeane Church today to Ahiohill Cemetery. This ceremony was largely attended, especially by Volunteers, and many spectators witnessed the procession as it proceeded along the Grand Parade and South Mall to the Albert Quay terminus of the Cork, Bandon and South Coast Railway Company. The coffin was covered by the tri-colour, and was conveyed on a hearse, around which members of a guard of honour marched, while close to the latter body members of the Cumann na mBan, carrying wreaths, walked in single file. A number of public representatives, including the Lord Mayor, Mr. Séan Buckley, T. D.; and Mr. D. Kent, T.D., marched in the cortege, with bodies of Volunteers, four deep, from city and county districts. The remains were afterwards conveyed by train to Ballineen Station for removal to Enniskeane Church. The funeral will take place at two o'clock today from the Church to Ahiohill Cemetery via Ballineen and Hollyhill.

The coffin bore the following inscription: -
Risteard Ó Baróid
Ceann Féinne de phríomh ionad
D'airm Poblachta na hÉireann
Do Deineadh príufananch de Mí an Iuil 12ad 1922
An 8ad Bliadhain de Poblacht na hÉireann
Bliadhain d'aoids a 30
Go nDeineadh Dhia Trócaire ar a Anam.
R. I. P.

The Last Journey

Southern Star Nov. 15th 1924.

Many friends and comrades travelled from Cork last Friday evening on the train which conveyed the remains of Richard Barrett on the last sad journey westwards to Ballineen and at stations on the route – Ballinhassig, Kinsale Junction, Upton, and Bandon – large crowds assembled on the platforms, placed wreaths on the coffin and recited prayers for the dead. Parties of volunteers from these districts where he taught and fought saluted respectfully as the train steamed out on its way. An immense assemblage from all parts of West Cork awaited the arrival of the remains at his native village, and the coffin was borne to Enniskeane Church on the shoulders of former comrades. Here the Rev. Fr. O'Connell, P.P. and the Rev. Fr. Gould, C.C. who recited prayers appropriate to the solemn occasion, met the cortege.

A great concourse from near and afar attended the Mass on Sunday, which was celebrated for the repose of the soul of the deceased. At two o'clock the coffin was placed before the High Altar, where the requiem ritual was intoned by the officiating clergy – Rev. Fr. O'Connell, P.P., Rev. Fr. Gould, C.C. and the Rev. Fr. O'Mahony, C.C. it was then carried to the hearse which was covered with beautiful floral tribute and the sad procession moved forward towards the village at Ballineen in a torrential downpour, which continued unremittingly until Ahiohill was reached. A guard of honour marched beside the hearse; then came the relatives and

immediate friends, followed by large bodies of volunteers from various Cork Brigades, reinforced by representative parties from Kerry and elsewhere. The mourning carriages occupied the next position, and in the rear of these were several hundred motors and vehicles conveying members of public bodies, including the Lord Mayor of Cork, members of the Cork Co. Council; National Teacher's Organisations; Gaelic Athletic Association; Urban and District Councils; Sinn Féin clubs, Cumann na mBan branches, and large numbers of the general public, all testifying high esteem and respect. When the little village of Ahiohill was approached the Cork Volunteer Pipers Band formed up at the head of the funeral procession and played suitable slow marches to the graveyard. On arrival it was observed that the sanctified ground was occupied and surrounded by a strong force of Free State Military who had come with several lorries and an armoured car. Relatives and some others protested, but these forces remained until practically all the crowd had withdrawn at the conclusion of the ceremony. When the parish priest, assisted by his curates, had recited the last prayers and the wreaths were placed on the grave, the Last Post was sounded.

Mr. Séan Buckley, T.D. then delivered an impressive oration, in the course of which he said – "We have got back his riddled body. We have laid it here in his native parish, where his parents and friends can kneel in prayer when they come to Holy Mass, and where its nearness will be an inspiration to his old comrades and to the generations that come after us.

In Dublin on last Wednesday night his coffin was borne through an avenue of densely massed people. On the long journey down the people gathered at the wayside stations to pay a tribute to his remains. In the chief town of his native county tens of thousands came to meet him. Today you have come here from near and far to honour him. And if we ask ourselves why did those thousands come to the streets of Dublin: why did the numerous citizens of Cork come to meet him with such respect? Why did the people assemble at the way side stations, and why ... this very inclement day did you come from near and distant parts to honour

him? It could not be for his fine personal qualities, for these were known only to his friends and intimates. We who knew him knew the greatness of his character. We knew his loveliness and kindness of heart, which endeared him to the children he taught. We knew his untiring energy in the cause he loved. We knew his courage displayed in many a struggle with the enemy. We knew the daring and resource which secured his marvellous escape from Spike Island. Nor was it the manly qualities he displayed in prison, where men's characters are tested; nor the generous thoughtfulness shown for his comrades in his last hours, the filial affection and tender love for the little ones disclosed in his last letters home, nor the magnificent courage with which he met his death. All the thousands who came to honour his remains could not know these things. Neither was it the circumstances or the manner of his death, - that deed so terrible in its calculated callous savagery, that it has left a stain on the name of Ireland, for all time - for this you would rather blot from your mind? No, the reason is that he lived true, and gave his life for that imperishable ideal that Irishmen have given their lives for in every generation - the ideal of Irish Independence. For in every age and clime none have been more honoured than those who died as he died. He was one of those who flung themselves into the gap of danger of whom it can truly be said that they blew themselves across the stampede of a nation, and none have been more honoured than those who have fought the forlorn hope.

Terence McSwiney in one of his essays reminds us that the greatest orator the world has ever known has vindicated the men of every age and clime who fought the forlorn battle and known even beforehand that failure was certain but that the ultimate result would be fruitful. Addressing his country men in words that have come down through thousands of years, he says "For if we had resigned without a struggle that which our ancestors endured so much to win, who would not spit upon you". And true indeed would these words have been of us. Well for Ireland that she had Rory and Liam, Dick and Joe and their comrades, for they have redeemed by their sacrifice our honour and answered the taunts

that could be flung at us, who had declared to the world our independence, allegiance to no foreign powers. For the justification of the National Struggle in every generation has been, that it is our right to have the same independence as every distinct nation in the world.

And those men who have saved our honour by their sacrifice have been the most maligned, the most misunderstood, and those who should have taken their stand with them stood against them, and took the side against them, and that is England's side. But they are being justified. Every day is proving it more and more. We have only to look around us to see it. What can we think of men who hand over to the relatives of the men they executed, their dead bodies, and then insult them by sending their armed forces here. It is a terrible thing to have the control of the country in the hands of such men, and ask yourselves who are responsible. Walking behind the coffin of our dead comrade in Dublin a friend remarked to me: How can you understand people who have come here to honour those dead men putting into power the men who are responsible for their deaths. But it is hard to understand. If there are some here who were foolish enough to think that it was safe to support these men I am sure they are disillusioned now. There is but one true National faith and that is the faith that has stood the test of centuries and I would ask you here over the dead body of our friend to pledge yourselves to be true to that faith. And you, his comrades of the Cork Brigades, you the soldiers of an army routed perhaps but unconquered, to you it is given in a special manner to safeguard the heritage he and his comrades have handed down, never to swerve in your allegiance to the cause for which he strove, and with God's help in our own time we will see the freedom of the Republic for which he laid down his life".

Miss A. McSwiney recited the rosary and later in the evening a salute of three volleys was fired over the grave.

That account in the Southern Star goes on to list the dozens of wreaths and floral tributes. They came from relatives and friends, from Republican organisations from all parts of the country and Sinn Féin executives, from Public Bodies, the G.A.A., and

Teacher's organisations. There was one which read "He died in Companionship with Erskine Childers R.I.P. "From Mrs Erskine Childers and family". From the neighbours there was one "From the O'Hara Family". And fittingly one from his friend, Liam Deasy.

Final Tributes

On the fiftieth anniversary of Dick Barrett's death and less than two years before his own, Liam Deasy said.

"Of his vital contributions to the successes in West Cork in the War of Independence, I have no doubt but that the greatest was in the sphere of leadership he displayed within the Brigade council. There his influence had its most potent effect. He was never "a hail fellow well met" even among his friends when on duty, though he could unbend with the best. At meetings he was always a serious, stern officer. He discounted hearsay and looked for proof to be produced in any contentious issue. Any job given to him to do he carried out with promptness and efficiency and the men under his command were seen to carry out his instructions to the final letter. At Brigade Council meetings he gave his views and opinions with lucidity and directness so that he won the entire trust of his fellow officers in all their dealings with him. There seemed to be a special affinity between Séan Hales and himself in those heroic days and it is particularly sad now to recall how tragically interlinked they were in death".

An unknown author wrote as follows: -

"Dick, teacher, patriot and martyr; with tall stately form, dashing stride, and merry flashing eye; with dark flowing hair, noble brow, heart of courage, soul of truth and honour, with tongue of ready wit, hearty laugh and sporting jest; intellectual mind, with never an evil thought. To God and Ireland, True, faithful, and jovial friend, unswerving in fidelity, loving and beloved by little children; gently in peace, brave in War, life like an interrupted melody breaking

anew through fondest memories and dreams, resting with the immortals spiritually and nationally, with name and fame floating along the ages to eternity".

The letter which follows is one which was written to a newspaper c. 1972 "in the interest of historical accuracy." It was written by a former pupil of Dick Barrett, who was a pupil at Gurranes during his time there as a teacher.

Sir, in the interest of historical accuracy I should be grateful if you will publish the following regarding Dick Barrett and the Gurranes School connection.

Dick Barrett was arrested as he called the roll in Gurranes School on the morning of the 21st March 1921. He was interned in Spike Island, from which he escaped during the Truce of 1921. I was present in Gurranes School when Dick Barrett was arrested. I was also present when he returned during the Truce and told the pupils he would return to teach them when Ireland was free!

Dick Barrett was a member of the Four Courts garrison when the garrison surrendered to Free State Forces and was imprisoned in Mountjoy prison. On the 7th December 1922, Deputy Séan Hales was shot dead and another Deputy seriously injured. As a reprisal for the shooting of Séan Hales, Dick Barrett, Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows and Joe McKelvey were executed on the 8th December, 1922. I have reason to remember the tragic deaths because both men, Dick Barrett and Séan Hales were kinsmen and their families and mine had been friends for generations.

Eibhlin Ní Cruadhloaich
Biolar
Baile An Teampaill, Corcaigh.

The Man from the Northern Land

**(Dedicated to Lieut. General McKelvey shot in
Mountjoy 8th December 1922.)**

Who is that man, now passing me by, as I stand at my prison-door?
Dark brown eyes, jet black hair, manly form, debonair, crossing the
prison floor.

And lo! He speaks with a northern voice, so quiet but yet with
command,

And with all the blás of a Shane O'Neill from our cast-out northern
land.

That night in my dreams four men I saw, passing out to the prison
yard,

Whilst green-coated soldiers "relieved" them from the "care" of
their prison guard,

And as dawn broke over those bleak, grim walls, they murdered
that noble band,

Whilst among the four, I recognised sore, my friend from the
Northern land.

Next morn I awoke-it was Mary's morn-as the prison bell rang
aloud:

Prepare for her Feast! It seemed to tone. I dressed, then marched
off with the crowd.

As we silently waited for Mass to start, my eyes searched among
that throng

For he who had fascinated me with his bearing, so noble and
strong.

But in vain I searched for me hero true, then that dream flashed
through my mind...

My God! Surely not! I couldn't believe our jailers were of that
kind,

Who'd murder noble, helpless men, for the sake of an Empire's
greed?

Because they had dared to believe and defend their beloved Eire's
creed.

Suddenly the priest rushes up the aisle; his face looking tired and
wan;

Reaching the Altar, he genuflects, then leans over, his head 'tween
his hands,

With surprise we watch his attitude, then he makes an effort to
move,

But covers his face again with his hands, as if his feelings to
soothe.

Turning the, his faltering voice exhorts us to "offer up this Mass
For four of your friends! – He stops to allow his pent-up emotion
pass.

"Who have met with death in the prison yard just a little while
ago",

Then concludes with their names in broken voice- Rory, Liam,
Dick and Joe".

That night in the drab prison tiers we prayed for our murdered
comrade's dear

Who had nobly sacrificed their lives for Mother Ireland without
fear;

And I vowed to my God, whilst kneeling there as the beads slipped
through my hands,

I'd continue the work of he who had died from our cast-out
northern land.

Patrick Bagnol (19), Patrick Mangan (22), Joseph Johnston (18), Bryan Moore (37), Patrick Nolan (34), Stephen White (18), James O'Connor (24)

(On The One Road Political Unrest in Kildare 1913-1994)

Seven men were executed in the Glasshouse, in the Curragh Camp on December 19 in the biggest official executions of the Civil War. The Glasshouse was a small stone and brick military prison up the hill where the military usually housed their own prisoners. It consisted of two floors enclosed within a twelve-foot high walled enclosure. During and after the Civil War it was used as a punishment block for Republican prisoner.

On the night of December 13th, a detachment of troops from the Curragh searching a farmhouse at Mooresbridge on the edge of the Curragh, found a dugout underneath the floor. The National soldiers surrounded the dug out and called on the men to come out. These seven men along with Commandant Thomas Behan were found. They were armed with rifles bought from a soldier stationed in Naas Barracks, ammunition, an exploder, and a roll of cable and food supplies. Thomas Behan was struck with a rifle butt and his arm broken. When he could not get on the back of a truck he was again struck on the head and died at the scene. Free State authorities claimed that he died while trying to escape from the hut. The seven were charged before a military committee with being in possession, without proper authority of 10 rifles, 200 rounds of ammunition, 4 bomb detonators and one exploder. They were found guilty and sentenced to death. The sentence was duly executed on the morning of 19th inst. At 8.30 a.m. Father Donnelly, chaplain to the troops, administered to the seven volunteers before their executions. They were shot one by one and were buried in the yard adjacent to the Glasshouse, but were later exhumed and re-buried in Grey Abbey Cemetery, Kildare in 1924. A gravestone was subsequently erected over their grave and a monument was erected in the Market Square, Kildare.

Thy Will Be Done



Stephen White

age 18.

Born Abbey St., Kildare

Executed in the Curragh

December 19, 1922

Buried Grey Abbey near Kildare town.

R.I.P.

Stephen White, Abbey St, Kildare

Stephen White, Born Abbey St., Kildare, was captured at Rathbride and executed in the Curragh, December 19, 1922, age 18. Buried Grey Abbey near Kildare town.

Last letter to his father.

Hare Park Prison,
Curragh, Kildare.
18th December 1922.

Dear Father,

I am writing this letter, sorry to say it is my last, as I am to die at 8.15 tomorrow, Tuesday. I am sorry I cannot to see any of you before I go, but, I hope by the time you get this to be with my poor Mother in Heaven, with God's help. I hope you will all say a prayer for me. I never saw Jimmie since the night we were arrested, but thank God it is me instead of him that was to go. He will be more use to you than I would, and tell him if ever he gets out, which, with the help of God, he will, to start work and give up this game as it is not worth it.

We have been treated all right since we came here and we were all with the priest today, and will be with him all night. I am sorry I cannot see you all to bid you "Goodbye", but I suppose we will all meet the other side.

I will bid you all a last " Goodbye" and pray for me.

Goodbye, Father,
Stephen.

Last letter in 'Eire' Newspaper

written on the eve of execution to his aunt

Harespark Prison,
Curragh
Dec 18th 1922.

Dear Bridie,

I am writing these few lines to bid you all good-bye, and to ask you to say a prayer for me, as I am to be shot in the morning in Harespark, but I am prepared to meet my maker, so that in itself is

some consolation, as I would have to fall sometime and might not be as well prepared. But I want all the prayers you can afford me.

Remember me to Doyles, also to Miss Braughall, Margaret, Lizzie and all the boys. Ask them to say a prayer for me. Say the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary for me and help my poor soul reach Heaven.

So I'll bid you all goodbye and pray for me.

From your fond nephew, Stephen White.

Good-bye and God bless you all.

Letter to his brothers, Pat, John, Michael

Dear little Brothers,

I am writing to bid you "Goodbye" as I shall never see you any more except in Heaven, which with God's help we will all see. All I can ask of you now is a few prayers, which I know the three of you will say. And now I will bid you all "Goodbye" and don't forget to pray for your loving brother.

Stephen White
"Goodbye" to all xxxxxx

To his sister, Mary

Dear Mary,

I am writing to bid you a last "Goodbye" as I am to be shot in the morning – Tuesday – am sorry I cannot see you before I die, but, I hope we will meet again some time, so I'll say "Goodbye" and say a prayer for me. "Goodbye".

From your loving brother,

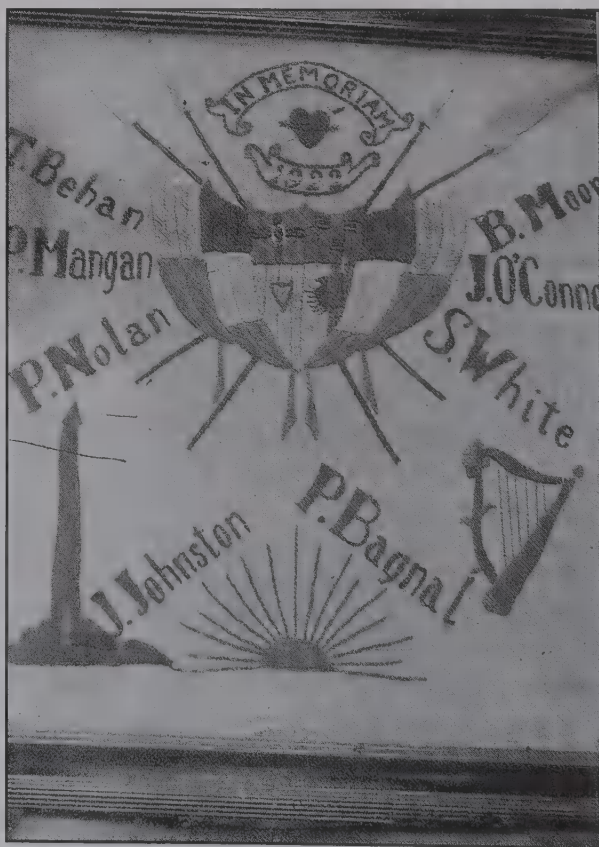
Stephen.

To Maggie

Dear Maggie,

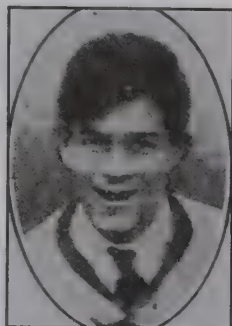
In this letter I am bidding you a last "Goodbye" as I will be shot at 8.15. Tuesday morning. Say a prayer for my poor soul that it may reach Heaven. I'd have a lot more to say but you know that I am not in much humour for writing with this burden on my mind. So, Goodbye Maggie, and say a prayer for your loving brother.

Stephen (God bless You)



Commemorative banner for Kildare volunteers captured at Moorsbridge and executed in the Curragh 1922.

In Undying Memory



Joseph Johnston

age 18.

Born Station Rd., Kildare

A brave soldier, executed in the Curragh December 19,
1922

He was buried in Grey Abbey cemetery
near Kildare town.

R.I.P.

Joseph Johnston

Joseph Johnston. Born Station Rd., Kildare, He was employed as a railway worker. He was charged of being in possession without proper authority of 10 rifles, 200 rounds of ammunition, 4 bomb detonators, and one exploder.

A brave soldier executed in the Curragh, December 19, 1922. He was buried in Grey Abbey cemetery, near Kildare town

A mother's letter to Newspaper "Eire"

"The mother of the late Joseph Johnston would thank you to contradict through your columns the vile and slanderous reflections cast upon him by the lying and corrupt Free State Press.

When he was taken prisoner (no arms been got on his person), he and his companions were cruelly beaten by First Staff Officer (vouched for by an eye witness), tied up with electric wire and taken off to the Curragh to be executed six days afterwards.

His parents received no notification of arrest or execution until long after the foul deed was carried out and the 1st. and last letters permitted by him to write were not received until eight days afterwards.

The dug-out was described as a huge warehouse containing several tons of food and loot – where in reality it was no more than able to contain the men who were captured, and who used it only as a refuge in any emergency. His mother can emphatically state that her son never did do any looting in the surrounding district and was in no way connected with any of the robberies of shops in Kildare as stated in the Press.

These men set out to free their country and not loot - they took an oath to the Republic and kept it, and they gave their young lives to the cause they were devoted.

Joseph Johnston was 18 years of age and was praised for his bravery by Fr. Dominic who served with him on numerous occasions. He was much esteemed by all who knew him and was ever on the alert to do a kindly deed. Comments on the actions of his captors is unnecessary except to say, that, not content with killing their Prisoners of War, did they defame and slander them as well. What can they say to the God when the day of reckoning comes.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph.



Patrick Mangan

(Railway Worker)

Age 22 years old

Born Fair Green, Kildare

Executed Curragh, 19th December 1922

He is buried in Grey Abbey near Kildare town.

R.I.P.

Patrick Mangan, Born Fair Green, Kildare (Railway Worker)

Captured at Rathbride, Kildare and executed in the Curragh, December 19, 1922, age 22 years old. He is buried in Grey Abbey near Kildare town. He was charged by a Committee, of being in possession without proper authority of 10 rifles, 200 rounds of ammunition, 4 bomb detonators and one exploder.

Last letter in 'Eire' Newspaper.

Dear Father and Mother,

I am to be shot tomorrow morning and all I can say is I fought for Ireland and sorry I could do no more. You must not worry about me as I have made my peace with God and I was never so happy as tonight. I would rather die now than live in this bad world.

Do not forget me in your prayers and get a mass said for me and my comrades, and I will pray for you when I go to Heaven.

Goodbye Mother, Father, Mary and Mike, Janie and Maggie, Chick, Bill and Tommy until we meet in Heaven, your loving son Paddy.

Letter sent to Jack Breslin 18/12/'22

The Prison
Curragh

Dear Jack,

Just a line that I am going to be shot in the morning but I am glad that I am dying for Ireland, but I am happy. I have my peace made with God and I will pray for you when I go to Heaven. Remember me to all the boys. I hope that there will be peace soon. I will now say good-bye.

Paddy Mangan

Thy Will be Done



Patrick Nolan
Rathbride, Kildare

Was executed Curragh Camp Prison

December 19, 1922.

Buried Grey Abbey near Kildare town

R.I.P.

Go ndeanaigh Dia trochaire ortha uiligh.

Paddy Nolan

Patrick Nolan born and captured at Rathbride, Kildare. He was executed in the Curragh, December 19, 1922. Buried Grey Abbey near Kildare town.

Last letter to his Father and Mother.

Curragh Camp Prison, 18-12-22

Dear Father and Mother,

I am writing my last few lines to you. I am to be executed tomorrow morning, and I hope you will bear it with the courage of an Irish father and mother. I am proud to die for the Cause I loved and honoured, and for which I give up my young life.

Six more of my comrades are to be executed. We have all been to confession and Holy Communion. Father ... told us we would go straight to Heaven, so do not worry. Dearest mother, there are a few pounds in my suitcase, you can have them, or anything else in the house belonging to me

Loving father and mother, good-bye for ever,

Your fond and faithful Son.

Paddy

Father ... Curragh Camp sends his sympathies and prayers.

Letter to his elder brothers and sisters.

Curragh Camp Prison, 18-12-22

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Now that I'm about to part from this world, I ask you for one favour – be kind and good to Father and mother, and never dishonour the Cause for which I die – a Free and Independent Ireland. I bear no ill will to any person. Fond sisters and brothers, pray for me. Good-bye forever.

Paddy

Letter to his young brothers and sisters.

My Dear little ones,

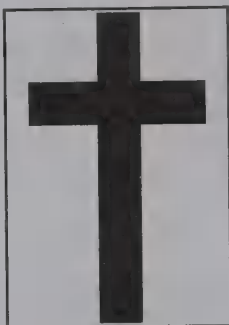
I, your fond brother about to pass out of this world, ask you loving little ones to offer up your innocent prayers for me and my comrades on Christmas morning. Be good children, and always obey your parents and do everything in your power to make them happy. God bless you little ones.

Good-bye for ever. Paddy



An execution of one of the seventy-seven. *(Person unknown)*

Go ndeanaigh Dia Trochaire orthu uiligh



Brian Moore

(Labourer)

Rathbride, Kildare

Executed Curragh Camp Prison

December 19, 1922

Buried Grey Abbey near Kildare town.

Rest In Peace.

Brian Moore

Born Rathbride, Kildare, (Labourer)

Captured at Rathbride and executed in the Curragh, December 19, 1922. Buried Grey Abbey near Kildare town.

Last letter to his brother

Hare Park Prison, 18-12-22.

Dear Pat,

I am about to die for the cause of Ireland as many did before. Pray for me and get the children to pray for me. I've just had the priest and will see him again in the morning at 6.30 and receive Holy Communion. He says we are to be envied the deaths we are about to meet, as we shall go straight to Heaven.

Do all you can for Father and Mother. Tell Mary and Kathleen to say a prayer for me every night.

Bryan.

Letter 2 to his Father and Mother

Hare Park Prison
18-12-'22

Dear Mother and Father,

I am about to be executed in the morning and I wish to bid you good-bye, and to ask you to pray for me and the rest of the boys.

I had the priest this evening and will see him again to-night. I am resigned to die. God comfort you both. Tell Johnny to pray for me.

Your Loving Son,

Bryan.

Letter 3
To his brother

Hare Park Prison
18-12-'22

Dear Johnny,

Goodbye, and be good to Father and Mother. Pray for me – Bryan

P.S. – You can do a man's part by looking after Father and Mother. Tell them not to worry for me, as I am better off. God Bless you. Pray for me.



The 80th anniversary of the Civil War by the National Graves Association.

Go Ndeanfaidh Dia Trochaire orthu uiligh



James O'Connor

(Railway Worker).

Bansha, Tipperary

Executed Curragh Camp Prison

December 19, 1922.

Buried in Grey Abbey near Kildare town

May He Rest In Peace

James O'Connor, Bansha, Tipperary
(Railway Worker)

Executed in the Curragh, December 19, 1922. He is buried in

Grey Abbey near Kildare town. Fr. Brett, Rockwell College knew the O'Connor and Brett families. Fr. Brett visited the Black household on the day after the execution of James O'Connor by the Free State. James O'Connor's mother, Mrs. Black and the entire family were totally devastated. There was terrible grief in the household. James O'Connor's wife-to-be, Esther Quirke was also in the house that day. She was deeply traumatised. Mrs. Black's first time out after the execution of her son was to sympathise with the Brett family over the death of Mrs. Brett-a neighbour.

Last letter in 'Eire'

To his mother before execution at Curragh Camp: -

"Curragh Camp,
18th December 1922

Dear old Mother,

A few short lines to you dear mother bidding you a last farewell.

I am going to eternal glory in the morning with six truehearted Irish men. Don't fret mother, I am quite happy at being at confession today and Holy Communion in the morning after which I will go to our Eternal Father in Heaven.

I should love to see your face mother, and all my little brothers and sisters, not forgetting poor old William. But God's Holy will be done. Keep the Holy Faith and put all your trust in the Blessed Mother. She will guide and protect you as she did poor Jim. Somebody might call on you someday that saw the last of me and my six companions who are coming with me. But God send the day that I will see your face and all the little children's faces in the Heavens above where we shall know no parting. Remember me to all kind friends around you and ask them to pray for the eternal repose of our souls and to keep the Holy Faith. Also remember me to poor Esther, Ned and Joe. Mother, I never felt in better form-must the same as if we were all going home for Christmas, but thank God we are going to a happy home.

My trunk and clothes are all here. I hope you will get them all.

I will also send you my Rosary Beads with a little medal attached for Esther Quirke. So now dear mother I must say good bye for the last time in this life to you and all my little brothers and sisters, kind friends and relations. But don't fret mother, I could not be happier. Don't forget mother, to go to confessions and Holy Communion as often as possible and show your love for the Almighty God and send all the children and everyone around you. Tell them from me to love, honour and serve God here on earth, to be rewarded with everlasting glory in Heaven. Tell Fr. Moloney I was asking for him and to pray for the souls of the following men who will be executed on the 19th December on Curragh Camp:- Brian Moore, Patrick Mangan, Patrick Begnal, Patrick Nolan, John Johnson, James O'Connor and Stephen White and most of all for poor Thomas Behan who was shot without seeing a priest on Tuesday 15th. December 1922, the night we were all arrested. I will leave the rest to the officer-in-charge of the prison trusting that he will see that you get all my belongings.

Alas, farewell now mother to all at home with love from your soldier son, James O'Connor.

P.S. Don't forget to write to Friar Donnelly, chaplain to the Curragh Camp. I told him all and he will see you someday mother. I am writing this about one hour before execution. Farewell mother and all.

Your fond son
Jim.

In Loving Memory



Patrick Bagnel

Born Fair Green, Kildare

He was executed in Curragh

December 19, 1922

Buried in Grey Abbey near Kildare town.

R.I.P.

Remember too our martyrs.

Patrick Bagnel

Born Fair Green, Kildare. He was executed in Curragh, December 19, 1922 and buried in Grey Abbey near Kildare town. The charge against him was:- possession without proper authority of 10 rifles,

200 rounds of ammunition, 4 bomb detonators and 1 exploder.

Last letter to his uncle.

Hare Park Prison, 18-12-22

Dear Jimmy,

I hope you and Willie are well. Tell all the boys and girls I was asking for them. I am writing to my sister and father. I am to be shot in the morning, 19th December, at 8.15. Mind Mary and do what you can for her. I know this will nearly kill her. We had a priest who heard our confessions. We are all here, seven of us – Johnston, Mangan, White, Moore, Nolan, Connor and I. We are all to go "West" together, so don't forget to pray for us. I know you and Willie will be sorry, but it is all for the best and I hope it sets old Ireland free. We are not afraid to die.

Tell them all in Kildare I was asking for them. Don't forget Harry Moore. We are dying happy anyway. So good-bye old Kildare, good-bye Jimmy and God bless you. I will meet you in Heaven. Tell Tom Byrne I was asking for him.

Your loving nephew, Paddy Bagnall.

The priest's name and address is Father... Curragh Camp, a very nice man: you can write him if you want to. He said we will die like men anyway.

John Phelan and John Murphy

Executed in Kilkenny Military Barracks December 29th 1922.

(From Notes)

The bodies of John Murphy, Bohor, Bennettsbridge and John Phelan, Thomastown, who were executed in Kilkenny on December 29th 1922, were handed over to their relatives by the military authorities at Kilkenny Barracks, on Tuesday, along with the bodies of Thomas Crean, John Hogan and James Parle, Taghmon, Co. Wexford, executed in Wexford. The bodies of the three Wexford men were brought to Kilkenny on the transfer of the battalion from Wexford.

After the handing over of the bodies the funeral procession marched through the streets and was a most impressive spectacle. A guard of honour of comrades of the deceased marched alongside of the hearse which carried the remains of John Murphy and James Phelan, the coffins containing the bodies of the Wexford men were carried on a motor-lorry and a guard of honour also marched alongside. The five coffins were covered with the Tri-colour and covered with wreaths. Large contingents of Volunteers, Cumann na mBan, and Sinn Fein clubs marched in the funeral procession which was headed by St. John's Brass band, playing a funeral march. The scene was most impressive and was witnessed by large crowds of people who lined the streets. All business houses closed from 12-3 o'clock. The remains of Murphy and Phelan were removed to Thomastown and the others to Wexford for re-internment.

"Impressive scenes at Thomastown, our correspondent writes:- The remains of the late John Phelan, Dangan Mills, Thomastown and John Murphy, Bishopsloough, Bennettsbridge, which were handed over by the military to the relatives of the deceased men on Tuesday, arrived in Thomastown from Kilkenny, at 6.00pm. the same evening. The business houses in Thomastown had been closed since noon and work was entirely suspended. The

Thomastown Brass and Reed Band and the Ballyhale Pipers Band accompanied by an enormous concourse of people from different parts of the county met the funerals at Bennetsbridge. The relatives of the deceased had travelled to Kilkenny in the forenoon to receive the bodies. As the melancholy procession passed through the streets of the town the scene was an impressive one, the bands playing the "Dead March" in turn. Before the funeral procession reached Chapel St., two motor lorries containing military from Kilkenny drove to the graveyard and took up positions convenient to the graves where the two bodies were about to be interred, evidently to prevent any shots being fired over the graves. A number of the military mingled with the crowd.

The remains of the deceased men were received at the entrance to the churchyard by Rev. John Doody, C.C., who recited the last prayers at the graveside. Both graves were literally covered with wreaths.

When the graves had been covered in, Mr. M. Shelly, T. D., delivered an oration. He paid a warm tribute to the memory of the two men who had just been interred. It was, he said, to men like John Phelan and John Murphy, who had sacrificed their lives for the Irish Republic, that the people of Ireland must look to in the future, and not to the members of the Free State Government, who were squabbling amongst themselves. The Government had done nothing for the farmers or labourers of Ireland because they were too busy watching the moneybags and enriching themselves at the expense of the people, and finding jobs for their 31st. cousins. He was certain that every man present there that night were prepared to fight for the same just cause as that for which Phelan and Murphy had died. If they were not they had no business attending Republican meetings or funerals. The days of the existence of the Free State Government were numbered, and in the near future their trusted leader, De Valera, who was at present under lock and key in Belfast jail, would rule the country from North to South as President of the Irish Republic. It was a crying scandal that they would not be permitted to bury their murdered dead without being surrounded by British guns and bayonets. He appealed to the

people to go home quietly and not to give the military an excuse, as they were 'itching' for a chance to shoot them down like dogs.

A decade of the Rosary was then recited in Irish, after which the Last Post was sounded. The military remained in the graveyard for some hours after the people had left.

The chief mourners at John Phelan's graveside were:- Mrs. B. Phelan, (widow); Mrs. Phelan, (mother); Bernard, May and Francis (children); Guard George Phelan, the depot, Dublin (brother); Mr. James Kelly (father-in-law); Thomas, Willie, Pat and Jim Kelly (brothers-in-law); Messrs Thomas and Willie Mackey; John Kelly, Market St; John Kelly Jnr., and Thomas Kelly, relatives and friends.

Chief mourners at John Murphy's graveside were: - Mrs. Murphy (mother); Messrs Pat, William and Ned Murphy (brothers); Misses Kitty, Nora and Tessie Murphy (sisters); Mr. Andrew Murphy, BishopsloUGH, Patrick Murphy, do., relatives and friends."



The Tricolour-draped coffins in the Hardwicke Hall, Dublin. One of these is identified as that of Volunteer Anthony O'Reilly, I.R.A., a native of Simonstown, Celbridge, Co. Kildare.

Cuimneachán



John Murphy

Born in Bishopslough, Co. Kilkenny.

He was executed in Kilkenny

December 29, 1922

Buried in St. Mary's Old Graveyard Thomastown

Rest In Peace.

John Murphy

Born in Bishop's Lough, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny. He was captured in Bishop's Lough and executed in Kilkenny, December 29, 1922 and buried in St. Mary's Old Graveyard, Thomastown

Last letter to his Mother.

Military Barracks,
Kilkenny
December 28th 1922

Dear Mother,

Just a line, the last I shall ever write you. John Phelan and myself are to be shot at 8 o'clock to-morrow morning, so this will be the last time I shall write to you. Dear mother, do not be downhearted, God is good. I am sending a brooch to you in memory of me. I am sending the cigarette case to Ned. I am sorry I did not get the chance of meeting you all. I was with Pat until this evening (Thursday), and so far he does not know what is about to happen us both.

Give my love to all my friends and to Katty, Bill, Norah, Tessie, Ned and also to Pat. The Priest is coming in this evening and God is good, so don't worry. I am dying a soldier's death. I will draw to a finish, as it is dark and I can't see what I am writing. I do hope this news won't cause much trouble, so cheer up all, and keep a brave heart, you will not help me by worrying. I do not mind my case so much, but poor Phelan's leaving a wife and three children. Good bye mother, brothers and sisters. With best love to all.

From your loving son,
John.

P.S. – I am quite satisfied to meet my God

Last Letter to his Brother, (a prisoner in the Military Barrack)

Military Barracks,
Kilkenny
December 28th 1922

Dear Pat,

I hope you won't feel too bad when you hear the sad news. Poor John and myself have to suffer death at 8 o'clock to-morrow

morning. It is very short notice we got. We have had the priest and made our peace with God, so we are quite satisfied with our lot. But poor mother, it will be an awful blow to her; you and the rest of the family will bear it better than her, but God will give you all strength to bear it.

Remember me to all my comrades, and also poor John. We are braving it to the last. Tell the boys not to be down-hearted, as it is the will of God, but to stand firm for the old cause and they will win some day. Father Drea will go and see mother to-morrow, and also to John Phelan's people; he will bring the things home for me. Give our best love to all the boys, and thank them for their kindness to us. Remember me to all at home.

Your loving brother, John (From Eire Newspaper)

Thy Will Be Done



John Phelan

Born Thomastown, Kilkenny

He was executed in Kilkenny Military Barracks

December 29, 1922

Buried St. Mary's Old Graveyard Thomastown

Rest In Peace.

John Phelan

Born Mall St., Thomastown, Kilkenny. He was captured at Bishops Lough and executed in Kilkenny, December 29, 1922, and is buried St. Mary's Old Graveyard, Thomastown

Letter to his friends

Military Prison

Dec. 12th'22.

To all my Comrades of the Irish Republic:

Goodbye to all. I am meeting the finish without any fear, and still true to the Republic. Thank God, I have received all the rites of the Church and die at peace with all men.

Don't turn against your religion-it's the only thing in the end. I would ask it as a last request not to go against Father Drea, because he stood by me well. Of course, I don't want you to go back on your principle; and, please God, better times are in store for Ireland.

From your happy comrade.

John Phelan.

"God be with you all" -- John Murphy.

A letter from a comrade of these men, written from Kilkenny Jail says: -

"Both of them are from Thomastown district, and are old and tried members of the I.R.A., John Phelan was a member of a Flying Column in Mid Tipperary during the Black-and-Tan terror. He leaves a wife and three young children. His home was burned by the Black-and-Tans, and since then his wife has had to live with her own people, but that did not keep him from taking up arms again and going out on the hill-side to fight against the domestic enemy and, in the end, to be taken out and shot at their bidding with only a few hours notice." (*From Eire newspaper*)

The Soldiers of '22

(Air: "The Foggy Dew")

I sing no song of the long ago,
Of the warriors staunch and bold,
Who bore their spears on the Irish hills?
In the golden days of yore:
But I raise a rann for our own dear lads,
The loyal, the brave and true,
Who flung their lives in the bearna baoghail-
The soldiers of '22.

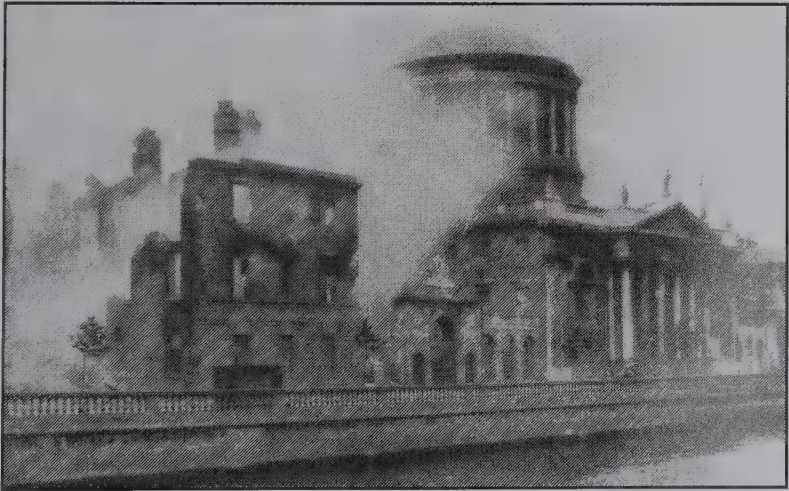
When they heard the call of a cause laid low
They sprang to their guns again,
And the pride of all was the first to fail,
The glory of our fighting men.
In the days to come when the pipe and drum
You follow in the ways they knew
When their praise you sing, let the echoes ring
With the memories of Cathal Brugha.

Brave Liam Lynch on the mountainside
Fell a victim to the foe,
And Dinny Lacy for Ireland died
In the Glen of Aherlow,
Neil Boyle and Quinn from the North came down
To stand with the faithful few,
And we'll sing their praise in the Freedom days
'Mong the heroes of '22.

Some fell in the proud red rush of war,
And some by the treacherous blow,
Like the Martyrs Four in Dublin Town,
And their comrades at Drumboe.
And a hundred more in the barrack squares,
And by lonely roadsides too-

Without fear they died and we speak with pride
Of the Martyrs of '22.

They were true to the Right, they fought the good fight
And they rest in the peace of God.
Lift up your hearts, O brave young men,
And march in the ways they trod!
The cause still calls that called to them
And the task will be only through
When freedom comes to the land that was loved
By the soldiers of '22.
Brian na Banban



The Four Courts when it was shelled
by the Free State Army in 1922.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

REPORT OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE
STRUCTURE OF THE
ATOMIC NUCLEUS
AND THE
PROPERTIES OF
THE ELEMENTS
OF THE PERIODIC
TABLE

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1923

**Corporal Leo Dowling, Corporal Sylvester Heaney,
Private Lawrence Sheeky, Private Anthony O'Reilly,
Private Terence Brady**

Executed Republicans - Bodies handed over by State
Impressive scenes at An Uaimh
(The Meath Chronicle, November 1st. 1924)

The remains of the seventy-seven executed Republicans were handed over to the relatives in various barracks all over Ireland on Tuesday amid impressive scenes. The remains were laid in state in the various centres until Thursday when the funerals left simultaneously for the different places of internment. Some arrests were made at Athlone and Limerick in connection with the removal of the remains. The relatives of the three executed Meath men, Thomas Murray, Kilcairne, An Uaimh; Terence Brady, Wilkinstown, An Uaimh; Laurence Sheeky, Braystown, Slane were conveyed on Monday evening, the former to Dundalk, and the last two to Dublin, where they remained until the remains were conveyed to An Uaimh on Wednesday night. The body of Terence Murray who was executed at Dundalk, was taken over on Tuesday by the relatives, and were laid overnight with the bodies of executed comrades from other areas. The remains of Terence Brady were removed from Kilmainham and those of Laurence Sheeky from Arbour Hill and were laid in state in the Hardwicke Hall until Wednesday evening. All the remains were encased in unpolished oak coffins, of large size, which held the caskets in which they were originally interred, and on the lids was an inscription of their names, and no more. When the remains arrived in An Uaimh, at the instance of the local Committee the coffins were properly mounted. The funeral arrangements in An Uaimh were entrusted to Mr. P. Gaughran, and were capably carried out. The breastplates bore the names and ranks of the deceased, and also the dates of their executions. The remains of Terence Brady and Laurence Sheeky arrived in An Uaimh at 7.30 prompt on

Wednesday night, and were met outside the Borough Boundary by a large cortege. The coffins in all cases were shrouded in the tricolour, inscribed "I.R." in black. The remains of Thomas Murray arrived from Dundalk shortly after 8 o'clock and the cortege from the town boundary was also of large dimensions. At the Mortuary Chapel attached to the Catholic Church Rev. N. Cooney, Adm. recited the prayers for Messrs. Sheeky, and Brady, and Father O'Reilly for Murray. On Wednesday morning Mass for the repose of their souls was celebrated. Though the weather was very inclement rain falling constantly all the morning, An Uaimh presented a lively appearance early on Thursday, sympathisers crowding in from a wide area to pay a last tribute to the executed men. From every end of County Meath and from parts of Cavan, Louth and Westmeath, people thronged in. Shortly after noon, a fairly large force of Free State military put in no appearance and in small parties were conspicuous. There was also a large augmentation of the local force of Civic Guards under Superintendent Mansfield. At 1 o'clock the rain at this time falling in torrents, a procession was formed, four-deep, in Railway Street and Trimgate Street, down to the Church gates, and at this time the streets adjacent to the Church were filled with people, large numbers going to the Mortuary chapel to pray for the dead. In professional order there cannot have been less than a thousand persons, the various Sinn Féin and allied organisations forming separate units. At 2 o'clock sharp, the coffins shrouded with the tricolour were removed to the three hearses, and the end procession started, headed by the Ceannanus Mor Brass Band playing the Dead march. The men in the procession at once stood to attention and saluted, and at this stage the Guards' Superintendent was seen to speak to the young man giving the word of command. What passed did not transpire, but shortly after a small party of Free State soldiers were seen to approach the head of the procession. Some thought that an unpleasant development was probable. But nothing occurred, the procession starting at the word of command and marching dead slow to beyond the town. The sidewalks were lined with people, who formed in at the rear, and the whole cortege

cannot have contained less than four thousand people. While Thursday is half-holiday in An Uaimh, it was noticed that houses which do not usually close were also shut up, and the local mills and industries in which the half-holiday is Saturday also shut down to give employees an opportunity of participating in the solemn function. Parties of Civic Guards and military who were stationed in different parts of the route through the town stood to attention and saluted as the three hearses passed. In the cortege were noticed several priests from different parts of the county. As each hearse passed out of the Church gates, and as they entered the cemetery, Mr. McKenna of Athboy, an old Fenian, made a devout and appropriate ejaculation in Irish. The bodies were interred in a plot in the New Cemetery, adjacent to the entrance gates, and close by the caretaker's lodge the site being secured by the local Committee as a Republican plot. The last prayers at the graveside were recited by the Rev. J. H. Kilmartin, C.C., An Uaimh. Practically all the Sinn Féin Clubs in Meath were represented some in full strength. Though the rain continued to fall heavily the vast crowd remained at the graveside until the end. The last post was sounded, and those present stood to attention, and it was noticed that the groups of Free State military did likewise. There was a vast number of floral tributes, natural and artificial, laid on the grave, many being in beautiful and artistic designs. Amongst these were the following:- "From the Staff, Midland Division, I.R.A., in memory of Volunteers Thos. Murray, Laurence Sheeky, Terence Brady;" "From the Meath Brigade, I.R.A., in memory of three gallant comrades;" "From the Navan Joseph Mary Plunkett Sinn Féin Club as a tribute to the memory of Thomas Murray, Laurence Sheeky and Terence Brady;" "From the North Meath Comhairle Ceanntair of Sinn Féin to three gallant comrades who fearlessly faced the firing squad that Ireland might be free;" "To Volunteers Terence Brady, Laurence Sheeky, and Thomas Murray, in proud and loving memory from Kilberry Sinn Féin Club;" "From the Michael Mallon Cumann Sinn Féin, Dublin, in proud and loving memory of our Republican soldiers." Other tributes included wreaths from the Cumann Na mBan and from individual sympathisers. A number of

Mass Cards were also placed on the coffins. The relatives of all the men were present and a guard of honour marched by each hearse, and also surrounded the grave.

The Orations

Mr. Michael Hilliard said: - "This is a day of triumph, a day of exaltation and great joy. This, surely, is a day of resurrection for the figurehead of our national faith-the Immortal Dead. This day we have buried in triumph the mortal remains of three of our own county men; Volunteers Thomas Murray, Terence Brady, and Laurence Sheeky, poor humble country boys, endowed by God with a richness of soul, a richness of honour, a richness of national responsibility, un-purchasable by all the material wealth of this material world. We see not the mounds which cover the mortal remains of these men; no, rather we see them as they stood some two years ago before the levelled guns of firing parties within the shadows of a bleak towering prison wall, and a few moments later their noble souls were hurled into eternity to appease the lust of England for the blood of Ireland's liberty-loving sons.

But the prison walls, the armed sentries, are not proof against the dead. On the mornings of those executions the prison yards were filled with the ghostly forms of the dead armies of Ireland. There they awaited in readiness to receive the souls of our gallant soldiers to bear them away in triumph to their God, to re-baptise them in the Fenian faith, and to send them forth to live a more forcible life than heretofore in the hearts of their countrymen. Ye who have not been fired with that desire for freedom which enabled those men to stand unflinchingly before the execution squads! Ye, who live not in the Communion of patriots! 'Go' I say on pilgrimage to the homes of these men, typical Irish peasant homes. Open out your hearts and receive therein the spirit of the fallen soldiers and then you will curse the laws that foredoomed the proud children of the Gael to work out such a cruel, miserable existence, in their native land. You will curse the nation-the British nation-who tore the little children from the breasts of their mothers and shipped them across the Barbadoes, who drove our people to

Hell or to Connaught, who brought such ruin and decay to this splendid nation, who sacked, plundered and destroyed our monasteries, churches, towns and homes, who sent the young men of this country to the rack, felon's track, hangman's rope, and emigrant ship, who wreaked their vengeance on the defenceless women of our motherland. You will curse the representatives of a native Government who attempted to cajole or drive this nation over the dead mangled bodies of Republican soldiers into that same British Empire, and cursing them you will swear to break them, and swearing to break them you will prepare to smash them with a vengeance. I wish not to stir up bitterness and animosity among my own countrymen. Those graves allow it not. Those men served and died for a noble cause. They gave their lives for the nation, for the dead generations of Irishmen, for the present generation, aye, even for the men whose hands held the guns that sent forth the deadly volleys into their proud and heaving bosoms, and for the generations of Irishmen yet unborn. As they fell they looked to us of the Irish Republican Army, and to you Citizens of the Republic, to carry on the fight for complete freedom. Today we answer that look; today we cry out across the vista of years just as Pearse cried out to Emmett: "Brothers, we have kept the Faith. We, too, stand ready to serve."

Mr. H. O'Hanrahan, representing the Sinn Féin headquarters, said: "We are not here in any spirit of weeping or wailing: rather is it that we offer joy to God that we are kith and kin to such men—rather is it that we offer hymns of praise to such heroes—aye, rather is it that often we are inclined to ask them to intercede to the King of Kings for us to help our beloved motherland in her fight for her independence. True, we all feel the loss of those near and dear to us, but how glorious is it to think that those near ones and dear ones of ours died for the faith that was in them—fell because they spurned England's blandishments and cajoleries. Yes, England's—it is England we are fighting today as it was England we fought in '98, '48, '67, and '16, as it was England we fought all along the ages since first she set her accursed foot on Irish soil. It is true, and pity 'tis true that men fell by the hands of our own countrymen, but

they—did they know what they were doing—did they realise that the men they were destroying were some of the fairest and best of this land—that they had pledged themselves to the service of their motherland. It would be interesting to know what were the feelings of that firing squad when their victims walked to their places with the demeanour of patriots with the resignation of martyrs. It would be interesting to know if that firing squad realised that it was by England's order those men were being done to death and that it was by England's order they were the executioners. There is hardly any need for me to tell you, who knew them so well, anything about them. There is hardly any need to tell you who and what they were—what their ideals were—what they worked and fought for—how, or when, or where they died. You all know it. After all, does the need exist for orations over such graves. And yet what a lesson those graves teach us. What a lesson we are taught when we think of what those coffins contain. They speak to us—those still and pallid features. Those pale lips yet implore us from their graves to strive for our birthright as God's creatures or die—if we but live as slaves. Ah! yes; those pallid features and pale lips yet implore us from their graves to strive for our birthright as God's creatures or die if we but live as slaves. Pearse at O'Donovan Rossa's grave speaking of England said: "The fools, the fools; they have left us our Fenian dead, and so long as Ireland contains one such grave, Ireland un-free will never be at peace, and now like their master England, those who stand for the so-called Irish Free State have added considerably to those graves of martyrs and heroes. They have given us 77 of those mounds, each of which speak volumes—each of which preach silent sermons of love and fidelity to Ireland—each of which mark another milestone on the road to Freedom.

"The dead who died for Ireland,
Let not their memory fade."

Keep their memory green by pledging yourselves to Ireland's service; to Ireland's holy cause—and her cause is holy. 'Freedom',

Davis told us, comes from God's right hand, and needs a Godly train, and if her cause was not holy so many of her countrymen and women would not have suffered for her-so many would not have died for her. A great Catholic preacher, when asked what were the duties of a man, replied: "First your God and then your country." Love of country is next to love of God. Patriotism is dear to God. It would be hard, very hard, for a patriot dying in the cause of his country and people, for their sake and betterment, to be damned. Happy is the country whose best life has been drained into some ideal cause and whose greatest names are those who have lavished their strength on this object. Happy is the country that can boast of a line of martyrs to an ideal held sacred by the people, for the country built on such a foundation of never-to-be-forgotten fame must of itself live till the end of time and can never die. We read in our schoolbooks of the mothers of long ago. The Spartan mothers of old. But we in Ireland need not go centuries back to find mothers willing to give the child of their bosoms to the service of their country. We have them all around us. They send them forth to the fight girding on their armour, telling them to fight the good fight-blessing them and telling them to strike a blow for Ireland. Are not those mothers worthy to go down in history as the mothers of old? Are they not heroines and the mothers of heroes? And so long as Ireland produces such mothers so long will she have sons and daughters too; to fight her fights when occasion demands. There may be those who sneer at the actions and ideals and the graves of such men as those we honour today-Materialists-snug in their smug hypocrisy-afraid, fearing their shops or their farms might suffer-fearful for themselves as against the welfare of the people and the country.

Yes, they sneer, those materialists-lay and cleric-who, by their materialism and selfishness begged, cajoled, aye, ordered those men in whose hands the honour of Ireland lay to sell their country's birthright for a mess of pottage. And such men sneer-yes, such men sneered at the martyrs of old and such men sneered at the Redeemer of the world on his way to execution. Yes; let them hold up their hands in abject slavery and tell England through the Free

State that she is doing the right thing in murdering such men, but let the Irish people tell those so-called Irishmen that they honour the memory of those heroes who died that Ireland might live. And so today let us carry from those graves a message of hope to Ireland. Let us have no bitterness for their executioners. Let us say like what was said when the world was much younger: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Let us prepare ourselves to be worthy successors of such men, and let us-

'Swear this year of story
To battle side by side,
Till Freedom crowns with immemorial glory
The cause for which they died".



Mairfidh A Chuimhne Go Brach



Leo Dowling

**Born Yew Tree House, Askinran
Co. Kildare.**

He was executed in Portobello

January 8th, 1923.

R.I.P.

"My Chums and I Are Satisfied"

Leo Dowling

Born Yew Tree House, Askinran Kildare. Ex-National Army Corporal. He was charged of Treachery, in that at Leixlip he assisted certain armed persons in using force against the National

Troops, and treacherously communicating and consorting with the armed persons mentioned in the first charge, in the place and at the time mentioned. A military court martial charged him. He was executed in Portobello, January 8, 1923.

The Meath Chronicle January 13th 1923

Two Meath Men in the Number

Charged With Treachery

The following official communiqué was issued on Monday night from G.H.Q:-

"At a General Court Martial held at Kilmainham Jail on 11th December, 1922, the following soldiers were tried on the charges set out below: -

Cpl. Leo Dowling, Yew Tree House, Askirnan, Carna, Curragh Camp; Cpl. Silvester Heaney, Dillonstown, Dunleer, Co. Louth; Pte. Lar Sheeky, Braystown, Co. Meath; Pte. Anthony O'Reilly, Simonstown, Celbridge; Pte. Terence Brady, Wilkinstown, Navan, Co. Meath.

The accused were put forward on the charges of -

(1) Treachery on the 1st December, 1922 in that they, at Leixlip, assisted certain armed persons in using force against the National troops.

(2) Treacherously communicating and consorting with the armed persons mentioned in the first charge, in the place and at the time mentioned. The Court found each of the accused guilty of both charges. They were sentenced to death. The sentence was duly confirmed in each case and the executions were carried out this morning at 8 o'clock."

The announcement of the executions caused a shock in Meath, particularly as two of the victims are natives of the county. Great sympathy is felt with the relatives in their terrible bereavement.

In Loving memory



Sylvester Heaney

Dillonstown, Dunleer, Co. Louth

Executed Portobello, January 8th, 1923.

He is buried Dundalk Republican Plot.

R.I.P.

Go ndeanaigh Dia Trochaire orthu uiligh

Sylvester Heaney

Born Dillonstown, Dunleer, Co. Louth. Executed Portobello, January 8, 1923 for treachery, by assisting Republicans in the attack of Free State troops at Leixlip and passing them information.

He was charged by general court martial. He is buried in Dundalk Republican Plot.

Corporal Leo Dowling, Corporal Sylvester Heney, Private Lawrence Sheeky, Private Anthony O'Reilly, Private Terence Brady, along with others, were arrested at Rathbride, Co. Kildare, on the 13th inst., and were charged before a "Military" Committee, with being in possession, without proper authority, of 10 rifles, 300 rounds of ammunition, 4 bombs detonators and 1 exploder. They were found guilty and sentenced to death. The sentence was duly carried out this morning, 19th inst. at 8.30 a.m.

His Last Letter to his Mother

Kilmainham Jail.

Dear Mother,

Just a few lines to let you know that I am in prison as you see on the address. I was caught on Friday last along with some more of my chums. I hope all are well at home and tell all I was asking for them.

Please send me a shirt if you have got one and tell some of the boys to send some cigarettes as we get very little of them so far. Thinking this is all for the time been, and hoping to hear from you soon.

I remain your fond son
Sylvester Heaney. (Write soon)

A letter from the Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Rathmines, Dublin 6, to a relative of Silvester Heaney in 2005.

“ I can confirm that Sylvester Heaney was a member of the National Army. He was attested for service on 3rd April 1922, assigned Service Number 16194 and posted for duty at Baldonnell Camp (now Casement Aerodrome) as part of the Dublin

Command.

Silvester Heaney's home address is recorded as Dillonstown, Dunleer, Co. Louth and his next of kin is recorded as his father "B. Heaney" of the same address.

At a time that is not recorded he was promoted to the rank of Corporal. It is in that rank that he was captured in part National Army uniform on 1st Dec. 1922 at Leixlip, Co. Dublin; having deserted his post at Baldonnel some days earlier and illegally removed arms and ammunition from that Camp, acting in concert with other soldiers.

The engagement at Leixlip came about as a party of Irregulars fired on an Army supply lorry that had broken down at a place called Collinstown on the Leixlip to Maynooth road. In follow up actions in the area, 22 Irregulars were captured under arms, 3 of them wounded. National Army losses were one killed and one wounded. A total of 21 rifles, a Thompson SMG, a Lewis MMG, 6 handguns, 5 grenades and about 1000 rds. of assorted ammunition were recovered from the captured Irregulars. All the captured Irregulars were initially taken to Kilmainham Jail, where five were recognised and identified as deserters from the National Army

Cpl. Silvester Heaney, Cpl Leo Dowling, Pte Laurence Sheeky, Pte Anthony O'Reilly and Pte Terence Brady were tried at a General Court-martial at Kilmainham Jail on 11 Dec. 1922. The accused were put forward on the charges of:

1. "Treachery on the 1st December 1922 in that they at Leixlip assisted certain armed persons in using force against the National Troops.
2. Treacherously communicating and consorting with the armed persons mentioned in the first charge, in the place and at the time mentioned."



The court found each of the accused guilty of both charges. They were sentenced to death. The sentences were duly confirmed by the Commander in Chief of the National Army in each case and the

executions were carried out on the morning of 8th January 1923 at Kehoe/Keogh Barracks-formerly known as Richmond Barracks during the Crown Forces occupation. Burial took place at the place of execution.

The remains of Sylvester Heaney were handed over to relatives on 28th Oct. 1924 for re-internment at Dunleer.

There are no transcripts from the Court Martial.

Yours sincerely"

<p>"He gave his young life for the Irish Republic".</p> <p>A TORCH & THE CROSS CHRISTIANITY</p>  <p>IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR SON</p> <p>Sylvester Heaney DILLONSTOWN, Irish Republican Army, who was Executed by the Free State, at Kehoe Barracks, 8th JANUARY, 1923. In the 18th Year of his Age. DEANAIC ÓG LE N-ANAM.</p> <p>Immense Passion! O Profound Wound! O Profusion of Blood! O Sweetness above all Sweetness! O Most Bitter Death! grant his soul rest.</p>	<p>At the foot of the cross, O Holy Communion, and at the foot of the Altar.</p>  <p>Immaculate Heart of Mary pray for us - 15 days each time.</p> <p>MERCIFUL JESUS! let one drop of that Precious Blood which fell from Thy Wounds be applied to the soul of Thy servant SYLVESTER, if he is still detained in Purgatory since it was shed for him, so let it solace, comfort, and release him. Amen.</p> <p>Oh Mary! take him to your heart. God grant him peace and rest. In Freedom's cause he took his part. And nobly did his best.</p> <p>ἸΗΣΟΥΣ, ὁ Ἐπιζῶν, ΣΥΛ Ἄ Ἐλμείλλε, ΣΥΤΕΡῶ ἈΠ.</p>
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A Letter to Mrs. Heaney from Oglaiġh Na Éireann

Oglaiġh Na hÉireann
H/Q. 4thN/DIV.
18. 10. 24

Mrs Heaney,
Dillons Cross,
Dunleer, Co. Louth

1. The Free State Authorities have notified their intention of handing over the remains of executed men to their relatives for burial in Consecrated Ground.
2. If you have not already applied for your son's remains I enclose a form which you will sign and will be sent on to P /S Authorities at once.
3. We are making preparation for the funerals of all executed men, the funerals will be carried out in a manner worthy of such heroes. The relatives of the men executed in Dundalk have signified their willingness to have their Martyr Dead interred in the Republican Plot, Castletown Cemetery, Dundalk. Please let me know if you are agreeable to have your son interred in Republican Plot, or if not.
(b) What place the internment will be.
4. On behalf of the Irish Republican Army I wish to express to you our deepest sympathy for the great loss you have sustained.

XXXXX

O/C DIV.

On January 9th 1923 the Dublin Newspaper, The Irish Independent

reported on a Communiqué from the GHO of the Irish Army. The Communiqué confirmed Sylvester's execution the previous day.

Freeman's Journal 30/12/'22

The following official report was issued from Army Headquarters GHQ yesterday.

Stephen White, Abbey St, Kildare, Labourer,
Joseph Johnston, Station Road, Kildare, Railway worker,
Patrick Mangan, Fair Green, Kildare, Railway worker,
Patrick Molan, Rathbridge, Kildare, Railway worker,
Brian Moore, Rathbride, Kildare, Labourer,
James O'Connor, Bansha, Tipperary, Railway worker,
Patrick Bagnel, Fair Green, Kildare, Labourer,
Who with others, were arrested at Rathbride, Co. Kildare, on the 13th, inst., were charged before a Military Committee, with being in possession of ammunition therefore, 4 bomb detonators, and 1 exploder.

They were found guilty and sentenced to death. The sentence was duly carried out this morning, 19inst at 8.30 a.m.

Irish Independent 9th January '23

The following official communiqué was issued last night from GHQ.

Cpl. Leo Dowling, Few Tree House, Askurna, Carna, Curragh Camp,
Cpl. Sylvester Heaney, Dillonstown Dunleer, Co. Louth,
Pte. Laurence Sheeky, Graytown, Co. Meath,
Pte. Anthony O'Reilly, Simonstown, Celbridge,
Pte. Terence Brady, Wilkinstown, Navan, Co. Meath.

The accused were put forward on the charges of

1. Treachery on the 1st December 1923 in that they at Leixlip assisted certain armed persons in using force against the

National Army.

Treacherously communicating and consorting with the armed persons mentioned in the first charge, in the place and at the time mentioned.

2. The Court found each of the accused guilty of both charges. They were sentenced to death. The sentences were duly confirmed in each case and the executions were carried out this morning at 8 o'clock.

Leixlip Battle

(From a newspaper account of Sylvester Heaney and his comrades capture)

Ambush Party's Big Surprise

22 Men Captured

Official Statement

The National Army Headquarters last night issued the following official report: - "A detachment of troops engaged a part of irregulars located at Leixlip, Kildare, today, and after a short engagement captured 22 prisoners, 1 Lewis gun, 1 Thompson gun, 21 rifles, 7 revolvers, 5 bombs, and over 1,000 rounds of ammunition. The casualties amongst the troops were one killed and two wounded."

Fight Described - Sequel to a "Hold Up"

One of the most notable engagements fought since the commencement of the present conflict took place yesterday on the borders of Kildare and Meath when troops of the National Army, after a fight lasting several hours captured 22 men with all their arms and equipment, killed one and wounded two or three others.

Private Joseph Moran was mortally wounded, but otherwise the casualties on the side of the troops were slight.

Mr. Mullanny, who is said to have commanded the attacking party, and an ex-member of the Dáil, were among the prisoners taken. A number of Thompson and Lewis guns, several rifles, automatic pistols, bombs, etc., and a great quantity of ammunition also fell to the national troops.

The engagement was a sequel to the 'hold up' of a military lorry, which was carrying rations to a small party of troops at Maynooth. In the car were Vice-Commandant Lynam, the Quartermaster-Sergeant and one other soldier from Lucan Barracks.

The little party was ambushed near Colinstown, on the Leixlip-Maynooth road and was obliged to surrender to its opponents-about 18 men. They were taken as prisoners to Grangewilliam house, the residence of Mr. Kiely, while their lorry was burned.

Information of the affair having reached Maynooth, Portobello, Trim, Navan and Lucan were asked for reinforcements. In the afternoon Grangewilliam was invested by a big number of troops, and the district soon echoed to the sound of firing. A running fight developed and the ambushers were ultimately surrounded near Ballygordon, some miles across country from Grangewilliam House. Here the whole column surrendered with their arms and ammunition and were congratulated by the troops on the fight which they had made.

"Disastrous for the Boys."

An Irish Times representative, who visited Grangewilliam in the evening was given the opportunity of hearing at first-hand the full story of the engagement from some of those who figured prominently in it.

The journey by motor car to Grangewilliam was uneventful. Occasional sounds of firing broke the night silence. At Lucan the first authoritative information of the day's events was vouchsafed by tired soldiers arriving Crossley tenders and Lancia cars. 'The day ended disastrously for the boys', they told us, and then as if they were merely unimportant details-"22 prisoners captured, and

one of our chaps killed."

During the remainder of the journey towards Grangewilliam lorry after lorry of green-clad soldiers flew past us towards the city. There seemed to be no ending to that stream of flying vehicles. Finally came a Red Cross ambulance, bearing its freight of wounded men.

At last the scene of the conflict is reached and there is a chance of hearing something more than the meagre information conveyed to the city earlier in the night. One is not disappointed, and with a little tact one is able to draw an interesting narrative from the tired-looking soldiers.

Some time on Thursday night, then to begin at the beginning-Commandant Ledwith and a party of about 17 men left Lucan for Maynooth, in order, it is stated, to search trains running between Dublin and the south. The party made the journey without experiencing trouble of any sort. Shortly after 9 o'clock yesterday morning Vice-Commandant Lynam, with the Quarter-Master-Sergeant of Lucan Barracks, and another soldier, left Lucan to take rations to Commandant Ledwith's party at Maynooth.

The Ambush -A Broken Down Car.

A short distance below Collinstown, on the Maynooth side of Leixlip, the lorry had a breakdown. The three occupants dismounted and set to work to repair the damage. They were thus engaged when several rifle shots were fired from the direction of Grangewilliam Wood, which overlooks the road. Almost immediately afterwards a machine gun opened fire on the lorry. The Royal Canal at this point adjoins the road, and Vice-Commandant Lynam and his two companions rushed for cover in the direction of the canal bank. A Thompson gun played about their shelter, and the only means of escape afforded was by way of the canal bridge - Pike Bridge - farther up the river.

The attackers however, had perceived this also, and seizing a motor car, rushed it to the bridge. Escape was now impossible, and Commandant Lynam had no alternative but to surrender to the seventeen or eighteen men who advanced towards him. One of his

two companions, the driver, had previously managed to get away.

The Commandant and the Quartermaster were taken prisoners, and, having been disarmed, were removed to Grangewilliam House, which is some distance off the road. Armed men had just occupied the house, which is the residence of Mr. Kiely. The two national soldiers, having been given something to eat, were placed in a room in custody of a guard.

The attacking party were all armed with Service rifles, and some of them carried "Peter the Painters" and Smith and Weason revolvers. Three of them were wearing uniform almost identical with that worn by the national troops. The lorry in which Commandant Lynam had travelled was set on fire by the roadside and destroyed.

Information of the affair later in the day reached Commandant Ledwith, who had been searching trains passing through Maynooth to and from Dublin. On an "up" train from Mullingar, he found a small party of troops who were travelling to Dublin. It was decided that this party, which consisted of a little more than half a dozen men, with rifles and a Lewis gun, should join Commandant Ledwith's force and go to the relief of Commandant Lynam.

Having despatched communications to Portobello, Naas, Trim and Lucan asking for reinforcements, Commandant Ledwith, with his augmented force of about twenty men, set out for Grangewilliam. The soldiers marched in extended formation, and, nearing Grangewilliam, spread out across the country.

To the east of Grangewilliam House is a fairly large wood. Suspecting the proximity of the ambushers, Commandant Ledwith advanced cautiously, the position of the soldiers being exposed most of the time. It was in this movement that Private Moran lost his life. He and a companion became detached from the main body. While crawling forward, face downwards, in a field, which offered a fairly clear view from the wood and house, both men were observed. Fire was opened on them from the direction of the house. Private Moran was hit during the first volley, and rolled over on his back, shot through the head. His companion, still under fire, crept over to him. "He never spoke a word, but just lay quite

still on his back", the soldier told me.

Some of the attackers now came out of the wood and from the house, and called to him to put his hands up. He was then taken prisoner, his captors also removing his dying companion's rifle and equipment.

Firing now became general around the wood, the attackers using a Thompson and Lewis gun. Commandant Ledwith and his party kept the attackers engaged for nearly an hour, by which time reinforcements from Portobello, Trim, Naas and Lucan began to arrive. The troops from Portobello were the first to come on the scene. With their arrival a determined fight began, and machine guns, rifles, and automatic pistols blended in shrill chorus.

Commandant Lynam was, meanwhile, still a prisoner in the house around which the fight was waged. The officer in charge of the attackers – Mullany - remained in the house during the earlier stages of the fight. The arrival of Commandant Ledwith was signalled by a sharp outburst of Thompson gun and rifle fire from the house and wood. The position of the Commandant and his companion was now becoming anything but pleasant, and their danger increased when the reinforcements from Portobello arrived. The Commandant was eventually obliged to remonstrate with the leader of the attackers, pointing out that it was scarcely fair to them, as unarmed prisoners, to be held in the house. Another of the ambush party present declined to take that view, and remarked sharply that the Commandant and his companion were going to take the same risk as themselves.

In Loving memory



Laurence Sheeky

Braytown, Co. Meath.

Executed Portobello, January 8, 1923.

Buried New Cemetery, An Uaimh.

Rest In Peace.

Laurence Sheeky

Born Lobinstown (Braytown), Co. Meath. Captured at Leixlip and executed Portobello, January 8, 1923. Buried New Cemetery, An Uaimh.

Westmeath Chronicle 25th. October 1924
Executed Meath Men
Arrangements for Public Funeral
Further Communication from Adjutant General

"Arrangements have been made by a local committee for a public funeral to be accorded the remains of the three executed Meath Republicans, Thomas Murray, Kilcairne, An Uaimh; Laurence Sheeky, Braystown, Slane and Terence Brady, Wilkinstown. The first named was executed in Dundalk, and the other two in Dublin. The remains of all three have been claimed. A Republican burial plot has been taken in the New Cemetery, An Uaimh, where the three bodies will be laid together. A collection to defray expenses will be made at all Chapel gates in Meath next Sunday. As we go to Press we learn that Mrs. Murray, Kilcairne, has received a communication stating that the body of her son would be handed over next Tuesday. The letter from the office of the Adjutant General of the Free State Army is in the following terms- "With further reference to my letter regarding the handling over of the remains of Thomas Murray, I wish to inform you that the transfer to your custody of these remains will take place at Dundalk Jail on 28th October, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. The necessary instructions have been issued to ensure that relatives should attend as soon after 9 o'clock as possible on that day. It should be noted that the body is encased in a double coffin, and no coffin need be provided by you. The production of this communication on the occasion would facilitate the military in establishing the bona-fides of the claimants.

Drogheda Independent 01/11/1924

"The remains of Laurence Sheeky of Braystown, Thomas Murray of Kilcrane and Terence Brady of Wilkinstown, who were executed in 1923, were brought by motor from Dublin and Dundalk to Navan on Wednesday night and placed in the Mortuary Chapel where they remained over night. The tricolour and a large number of wreaths were on the coffins, including wreaths from Kilbarry

and Navan Sinn Féin clubs and the North Meath Comhairle Countair Sinn Féin, the latter bearing the inscription "To three gallant Meath men who fearlessly faced the firing squad that Ireland might be free." Mass was celebrated in St. Mary's, Navan, on Wednesday and the funeral took place from the Mortuary Chapel to the New Cemetery on Thursday at 2 p.m."

This is a copy of the Immemorial in one of the cells in the old wing of Kilmainham. It reads as follows:

By Their Comrades of the Column R.I.P.

In Memoriam

Executed 8 January 1923

T. Brady
Leo Dowling
Sylvester Heaney
Anthony O'Reilly
L. Sheeky

It was written in black pencil by the comrades of the five men executed.

*Five Brave Irishmen Who Died For Ireland Leo Dowling,
Laurence Sheeky, Sylvester Heaney,
Anthony O'Reilly, Terence Brady
Executed in Kilmainham Jail on January 8th 1923*

"They told you that the Army you were joining was the Army of the Irish Republic.

They put the false title up on placards for you. They told you that in order to establish the Republic it was necessary to utilise the

Treaty, so that you could be armed and equipped for the purpose of establishing the Independence of Ireland. By false pretences they led you along, telling you they were framing a Republican Constitution, and that they would have no Governor-General, and that they would never take the oath of allegiance. Lyingly they whispered in your ear that when the time came they would stand up against England and say they would not have these things.

That was how they beguiled you and many boys like you into their army.

And then you saw them attack, not England, but your former comrades of the Irish Republican Army. You saw your Commander-in-Chief stand at the salute for the representatives of the English King in Ireland. You saw them raiding, night after night, the houses of those revered ones, the Men of 1916. You saw them bring into the army men who had never fought for any cause but England's while they murdered, officially and unofficially, the men who were fighting without pay for the cause of Ireland. You saw the Rory O'Connors and the Liam Mellows, names historical in the fight for Irish Independence, facing the firing squads, while the Tony Lawlers and the William English Murphys, who never fought for any cause but that of England, were in the counsels of your Higher Command. You saw that you were ranged in arms on the side of Empire, against the ancient and undefeated cause of Ireland.

Then your eyes were opened. You saw that by treachery and falsehood, you had been betrayed; and like honourable men you returned to your old allegiance to fight for the only cause worthy of your manhood—the Independence of your country.

For this they executed you. For this you died.

Mairfidh A Chuimhne Go Brách



**Sacred Heart of Jesus
Have Mercy on The Soul of**

Anthony O'Reilly

**Born Simonstown, Celbridge, Co. Kildare.
Executed Portobello, January 8, 1923.**

Buried in Celbridge Cemetery.

R.I.P.

Anthony O'Reilly

Born Simonstown, Celbridge, Co. Kildare. Captured at Leixlip and executed in Portobello, January 8, 1923, buried in Celbridge Cemetery.

"Corporal Leo Dowling, Corporal Sylvester Heaney, Private Lawrence Sheeky, Private Anthony O'Reilly, Private Terence Brady, along with others, were arrested at Rathbride, Co. Kildare, on the 13th inst., were charged before a 'Military' Committee, with being in possession, without proper authority, of 10 rifles, 300 rounds of ammunition, 4 bomb detonators, and 1 exploder.

They were found guilty and sentenced to death. The sentence was duly carried out this morning, 19th inst. at 8.30 a.m.

MERRY WIDOW'S SECOND HUSBAND: COURT STORY

DAILY SKETCH.

No. 1,272 LONDON, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1922 ONE PENNY.

ERSKINE CHILDERS EXECUTED IN DUBLIN








Mrs. Erskine Childers is an American with strong Irish sympathies. An evening for many years, she continued an interesting news of her husband's execution.

Erskine Childers (left) was executed in Richmond Barracks, Dublin, yesterday. The Irish Minister of the Home, had refused to grant a writ of Habeas Corpus signed for on his behalf. Childers is here photographed with Mr. E. J. Childers (right) when in London at the time of the Irish War's negotiations (1918-1921).

Erskine Childers had a distinguished war record. He served in the R.F.A. and was awarded the D.C.

Erskine Childers first became famous as author of "The Riddle of the Sphinx." Literary in his life he was a "Volunteer" in the Irish War.

MR. JUSTICE LEWIS, B.C. (left), appeared for Erskine Childers before the Military Court in Dublin, by whom Childers was tried and sentenced to death. Counsel also appeared in the matter of the writs for a writ of Habeas Corpus. Mr. Childers, after a few days' legal fight for his life, was ultimately sentenced by the Provisional Government to an automatic, silent, without proper authority.

In Loving Memory



Terence Brady

**Born Wilkinstown, Navan
Co. Meath.**

He was executed Portobello

January 8, 1923.

and buried in New Cemetery, An Uaimh.

Rest In Peace.

Terence Brady

Born Wilkinstown, Navan, Co. Meath. Ex-national Army private. Charge against him - Treachery, in that at Leixlip he assisted certain armed persons in using force against the National troops, and treacherously communicating and consorting with the armed persons mentioned in the first charge, in the place and at the time mentioned. He was executed Portobello, January 8, 1923, and buried in New Cemetery, An Uaimh.

From Irish Independent, 9th January 1923

'The following official statement was issued last night from the Army Headquarters in Dublin':- "At a general court-martial held at Kilmainham Jail on 11th. December, 1922, the following soldiers were tried on the charges set out below, Corporal Leo Dowling, Corporal Sylvester Heaney, Private Lawrence Sheeky, Private Anthony O'Reilly, Private Terence Brady.

The accused were put forward on the charges of

- (1) Treachery, on the 1st December 1922, in that they, at Leixlip assisted certain armed persons in using force against the National troops.
- (2) Treacherously communicating and consorting with the armed persons mentioned in the first charge, in the place at the time mentioned.

The court found each of the accused guilty of both charges. They were sentenced to death. The sentences were duly confirmed in each case and the executions were carried out this morning at 8 o'clock.

**Thomas McKeown, John McNulty and Thomas Murray.
Executed in Dundalk 13/1/1923**

(The Meath Chronicle, Jan. 20th, 1923)

The following official announcement was issued from G.H.Q. on Saturday afternoon:

"Thomas McKeon, Piedmont, Bellurgan, Co. Louth, was tried by a Military Court on a charge of having been in possession, without proper authority one revolver and two rounds of ammunition at Hackball's Cross, Co. Louth, on January 9th, 1923.

Thomas Murphy, White Cross, Newry, Co. Down, was tried by a Military Court on a charge of having been in possession, without proper authority, one revolver and two rounds of ammunition at Hackball's Cross, Co. Louth on January 9th, 1923.

Thomas Murray, Kilcarn, Navan, was tried by a Military Court on a charge of having been in possession, without proper authority, of one revolver and six rounds of ammunition at Hackball's Cross, Co. Louth, on 9th January, 1923.

The Court of the charges preferred against them and sentenced to death found all three accused guilty.

The finding and sentence were confirmed in each case.

The executions were carried out today at Dundalk at 8 a.m.

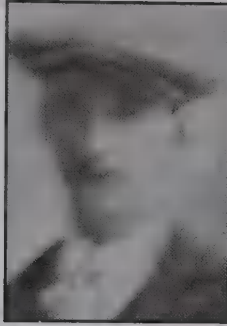
The following official statement was issued later from Army Headquarters, Dublin: -

"In the report issued today of executions at Dundalk, the name of one of the prisoners is given as Thomas Murphy, White Cross, Newry. It has since transpired from an admission made by this prisoner that the name and address he had given were fictitious. The prisoner's real name is John McNulty, and his home address is Corromanon, Belleek".

The total number of executions to date is 29. Thomas Murray leaves a mother and sister to mourn his loss. He was in the Connaught Rangers and on disbandment joined the I.R.A. Following the creation of the National Army he joined that body, but it appeared his sympathies were 'on the other side,' and as a

result of some trafficking with that side he was courtmartialled with others, and all were sentenced to terms of imprisonment. They escaped on the occasion of the famous Dundalk jail delivery. His sister is married to one of the Connaught Rangers involved in the Indian mutiny as a protest against the Black and Tan terror, who was released over a year ago and returned to his home in Navan. Deep sympathy is felt with the bereaved mother and sister on their loss.

Thy Will Be Done



Thomas McKeown

Age 26 years old

Born Piedmont, Co. Louth.

Executed in Dundalk Prison

January 13, 1923.

He was buried in Dundalk Republican Plot.

R.I.P.

Thomas McKeown

Born and captured in Piedmont, Co. Louth. He was executed in Dundalk, January 13, 1923. He was buried in Dundalk Republican Plot.

Letter in 'Eire' Newspaper.

Execution of Thomas McKeown justified-by his brother.

"On the occasion of the murder of my brother in Dundalk Jail on 13th January by order of General Mulcahy, the Press had the audacity to publish, at the bidding of the officials in Dublin, the lie that in his possession were found a revolver and a 100 round of ammunition. I can prove beyond doubt that he had neither revolver nor ammunition when arrested.

The facts are that on January 3rd at 6.30 a.m., Free State troops entered my mother's house at Piedmont, the occupants were my mother (age 66), two brothers, James (32), and Thomas (26), an uncle (58) and a nephew - also a servant boy of 21.

My mother is the sole proprietor of land and stock. On entering her house they arrested her youngest son. In searching the house they found two useless revolvers and six round of ammunition that did not fit the revolver. They took my brother to Dundalk jail where he was "legally murdered" on January 13th for being in possession of a revolver and 100 round of ammunition which was a complete falsehood. When my brother was arrested he had nothing on but a shirt - he did not occupy the apartment where the revolver or ammunition was found. Then why was the owner of the house not arrested? Simply because there was a motive. Shortly before 8 o'clock on 13th January the two men who along with my brother to be executed were put in their allotted places. A band was put around each man's eyes. A firing party of six in charge of an officer -presumably two for each prisoner.

The volley went off, the two men fell on their faces, my brother still remaining standing ultimately falling on his back, still alive. The officer stepped forward and said to some of the four priests in attendance "that boy is innocent" and then drew his revolver and fired three or four shots into his head and one through his heart and still the boy lived for four minutes until the priest administered the Last Rites for the dying.

Letter to his Mother

My Dearest Mother,

For my sake do not be sorry for me – I am going to be with my Father in Heaven. I will be watching over you, for you will be with me soon. All you can do now is to pray for me. Tell James, Patrick, Bridget, Michael, Tom, Mick Rice, Bridget, Mary, Alice, Hugh Hanlon, Minnie Clarke and Tommy, John Clarke and Ellen, James and Mrs Woods, Mick Ferguson, Pat and Moira Carroll, Aunt Catherine, Mary Anne and all my old friends to pray for my poor soul-it is at the gates of Heaven waiting for your prayers.

I am going to Holy Mass in the morning, which will be offered by Rev. Father McKeown, Administrator, Dundalk, and Canon Dunellan P.P., Hagardstown, Dundalk, for my eternal welfare, so I feel quite happy. There is nothing troubling me tonight. I know I am going to Heaven all right, as I made my confession to the Priest and am fully resigned to the will of God. I have my beads, prayer book, holy water and a special cross for a happy death, so I would not be as well done for at home. I am in the cell praying all night. Rev. Father McKeown got leave for the gas to be lighted all night, so you see I am not going to bed tonight as I am speaking to Almighty God all this night and will be with Him altogether this time tomorrow, please God. I suppose everyone who knows me will be sorry, but I know who it will affect most, poor wee James. My heart is broken for him, the poor wee child. I hope his father will not take him home from my mother, as it would annoy my bones in the clay for anyone to hurt him; as it is he would sleep with me at night and keep his arms around my neck.

I wish you all the best of luck, one and all. For my sake and God's sake have no crying for me when I am gone. It is all for dear old Ireland's sake and Irish Independence I die. It is also for God and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Pray for me and work for Ireland, my chums and companions; stick to the faith and the I.R.A and I will pray for you and Ireland in Heaven.

Good night chums, forever. Pray for me. Good-bye forever, never to come back.

Thomas McKeown.

Letter written home on 4th January 1923

Just a line to let you all know that I am alive yet. I was put in with the boys. I hope you are all well. How is wee James. I have no more news.

Tell everyone I was asking for them

Thomas McKeown
Cell 7
The Basement
Dundalk Jail

Letter to Mrs McKeown from the office of Adjutant General with reference to handing over of body.

Office of Adjutant General,
General Headquarters,
Parkgate,
22 adh Deire Foghmuir, 1924.

A Chara,

With further reference to my letter regarding the handing over of the remains of Thomas McKeon. I wish to inform you that the transfer to your custody of these remains will take place at Dundalk jail, on 28th October between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The necessary instructions have been issued to ensure that a hearse accompanied by two relatives or friends of the Deceased will be allowed to enter barracks for this purpose. It is desirable that relatives should attend as soon after 9 o'clock as possible on that day.

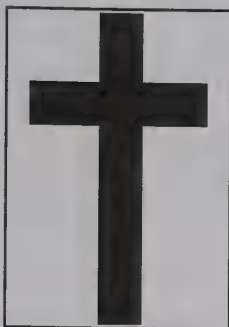
It should be noted that the body is encased in a double coffin and no coffin need be provided by you.

The production of this communication on the occasion would facilitate the Military in establishing the bona fides of the claimants.

Mise,

-----Major General
Adjutant General

Glór Don Athair



John McNulty

**Born Corremanon
Co. Louth**

Executed Dundalk Prison January 13, 1923

Buried Dundalk Republican Plot

R.I.P.

"Remember too our Martyrs"

John McNulty

(Alias Joseph Murphy)

Born Corromonnon, Co. Louth. Executed Dundalk, January 13, 1923, after being charged by a Military Court of being in possession of one revolver and 12 rounds of ammunition on 9th January 1923, without proper authority at Hackballis Cross. He is buried in Dundalk Republican Plot.

In Loving Memory



Thomas Murray

Born White Cross, Co. Armagh

Executed Dundalk, January, 13, 1923

Buried Dundalk Republican Plot

Rest In Peace.

Thomas Murray

Born White Cross, Co. Armagh. Lived later at Kilcarn, Navan. He was found guilty of being in possession without authority of a revolver and six rounds of ammunition at Hackballis Cross. Executed in Dundalk, January 13, 1923, and buried in Dundalk Republican Plot.

Five further executions are officially reported.

Four at Roscrea and one at Carlow.

Execution of Burke, O'Shea, McNamara and Russell at Roscrea Barracks

(From Roscrea, My Heart's Home and Keep Their Names Ever Green).

In 1923 four young Tipperary men, all Republicans in their early twenties, were condemned to death by the Free State Authorities. They were Frederick Burke, Martin O'Shea, Patrick McNamara and Patrick Russell.

It was alleged that the men were involved in a mail van robbery. Many robberies had taken place, which were considered minor crimes not meriting the death sentence. They were brought from Templemore the previous evening under heavy guard to Roscrea, which was a quiet, conservative town and a large percentage of the residents were pro-Treaty. The gates were closed behind them and nobody was allowed into the castle yard again until the prisoners were executed the following morning.

On the morning of the execution Father Moloney arrived at the Barracks and a room was set aside for him and the four prisoners, and they spent their last hours with him. They received the Sacraments and afterwards had tea and toast for breakfast. Very few personnel in the Barracks knew of the execution and there were some officers and soldiers who did not know for a couple of days. The executioners were all strangers brought from other towns and because they wore no badges of any kind it was impossible to know who they were.

The procedure for the execution was two soldiers to every prisoner. One gun had live ammunition, the other had blanks. In this way it was impossible to tell who fired the fatal shots. Burke, O'Shea, McNamara and Russell were shot by the wall in the small garden as the last bell rang for mass at eight o'clock in St. Cronin's Church. The bodies of the four men were coffined straight away and buried in alphabetical order between the two wall supports on

the long wall of the back garden.

In October 1924 the remains of the seventy-seven men officially executed by the State during the Civil War were handed back to their relatives. Russell, Burke and O'Shea were buried side by side in Illeigh Churchyard, Borrisoleigh and Patrick McNamara was buried in Templekelly graveyard, Ballina.

A white marble plaque on the outer wall of a church ruin, marks the spot, his comrades in the IRA erected it to his memory.

In Loving Memory



**Sacred Heart of Jesus, Have mercy on the soul of
Patrick McNamara**

Born in Killary, Derrycastle, Ballina, Co. Tipperary

Executed Roscrea Castle

January 15, 1923

Re-interred in family grave in Ballina.

R.I.P.

Patrick McNamara

Born in Killary, Derrycastle, Ballina, Co. Tipperary. Captured at Portroe, Nenagh and executed at Roscrea, January 15, 1923. Buried in Ballina.

He was involved in the War of Independence and the Civil

War, during which he was captured. He was well liked in the locality, as he had stood up for local tenant farmers whose land could have been divided among British soldiers had he not intervened. In 1922 he went to join the civic guards in Nenagh, but at the last minute changed his mind and went on the run with the local I.R.A. On the night of his arrest Patrick and another man, Mick Kennedy, were staying in Landsdowne House, owned by the White family. They were supposedly warned of the strong possibility of a raid there that night, and so must have chosen to ignore the warning. The house was surrounded by Free State troops who entered the house only to find the two Volunteers asleep in their beds.

Both men were detained in Roscrea where they were brutally beaten, particularly McNamara whose eyes were severely mutilated. They were subsequently charged with the possession of arms and ammunition by a Military Tribunal and sentenced to death. Mick Kennedy was successful in getting a pardon through a contact, a Free State soldier in fact, who acted on his behalf.

MacNamara and three other Republican Volunteers, Russell, Burke and O'Shea, Mid-Tipperary Brigade, were kept in Roscrea Castle to await execution. They were visited by Fr. Moloney who absolved them of their sins on the morning of the 15th of January 1923. A few hours later McNamara and his comrades were lined up against a wall in the small garden in the castle yard and shot by a firing squad. The bodies were buried there, later to be exhumed in October 1924. Patrick McNamara was re-interred in the family plot in Templekelly graveyard, Ballina, and the cortege was the largest ever seen in the district. The remains were borne by the Volunteers to the parish church, Ballina, and the Rosary and the Rev. Fr. Russell recited prayers for the dead. Grand, yet pathetic, was the sight of his comrades keeping guard over the remains during the night. Masses for the repose of the deceased were offered up at 8.30 a.m., and 11 a.m. on Wednesday. At both masses the church was crowded. The re-internment took place at 1 p.m. at the family burial ground, Templekelly, Ballina, and the cortege was the largest ever seen in the district. Rev. Fr. Noonan, P.P., and Rev. Fr.

Russell, C.C., recited the prayers at the graveside.

The following sent wreaths amongst others – Tipperary No.1 Brigade; Portroe 3rd Batt; Cumann na mBan, North Tip; Brothers of Arms B. Coy. 3rd Battalion; Mrs Scanlon, Miss Bridie Mooney, Miss Manning, Miss May Nash, Miss Bella Lucas, Miss Byrne, Mrs Stritch, Miss Nora Carroll; from an old comrade, Ballina.

As the last sod was placed over the grave Mr. Séan Hynes, Castleconnell, recited the Rosary in Irish and afterwards gave an oration in Irish and English. Speaking in English he said: Fellow Republicans, I have been asked to say a few words over the grave of our dead comrades, Patrick McNamara. I did not think that this honour should rest with me. Others of his more illustrious comrades would be more competent to deliver this oration. Yesterday fellow Gaels and Republicans, you all witnessed that spontaneous feeling of sorrow everywhere manifested by the large crowd that accompanied the remains of this gallant soldier of the IRA from Roscrea and Ballina. They came yesterday and you came today to honour the ideals for which he fought and died, and to pay an undying respect to the sisters and brothers and friends of the deceased. Patrick McNamara was a true soldier of Ireland. The partition of Ireland he and his fellow comrades would not suffer, nor shall ever tolerate: when the so-called Treaty came Patrick and his 77 other comrades were put to death with a vengeance, but the name of Patrick McNamara will live when this so-called Treaty will be wiped off the map. Concluding, he appealed to the young men in particular to step into the ranks, fill the places of their fallen comrades, and keep on the fight till the freedom of Ireland is achieved.

In the name of the Irish Republican Organisation, one of the most powerful in the world, he tendered his deeper sympathy to the brother, sisters, and friends of one of Ireland's most devoted soldiers, Patrick McNamara.

A number of National soldiers in charge of an officer took up position at the entrance to the burial ground. At 6 p.m. volleys were fired over the grave. (*From newspapers*)

Last letters in 'Eire' Newspaper January 14th 1923 to his brother

Roscrea.

14/1/'23

Dear Brother,

Just a few lines to let you know I am to be executed at Roscrea at 8 o'clock. Dear Jack I'll be alright as the priest is coming to me tonight to hear my confession and I will receive Holy Communion in the morning just before death. So I will be quite happy and the priest will be with me to the last. Well Jack I'll be with my poor mother in Heaven before you get this letter. So God have mercy on my soul. Be sure and get a couple of masses said for me and that is all I ask of you and don't forget to pray for me.

Remember me to all the lads around and tell them I went to meet my death like an Irish soldier, I am not afraid to die. We will never meet on earth again, so I hope we'll all meet in Heaven, as it is the will of God. I feel quite happy; I'll be all right. I hope yourself, wife and child are in good health. Remember me to poor Hannah. I know that she and you will pray for me every night. Don't forget to have me prayed for in Ballina on Sunday.

I don't know if you'll get my body or not, but if you do ever get it I want to be buried with my mother and father. That's all I have to say, so I'll bid you goodbye for the last time on earth. Goodbye to yourself and Hannah. Don't cry or be lonesome, I am happy for I'll be with my dear mother in Heaven. Goodbye for ever Jack.

From Pat

P.S. This is Sunday evening I'll be shot on Monday with three other boys. I must say goodbye for the last time as the priest is coming to into my cell at 6. May the Lord have mercy on my poor soul. Tell all the neighbours I was asking for them and say goodbye from me to them and tell them to pray for me. So goodbyes Jack, remember to Mary and Sarah and Uncle Michael and family and farewell to old Killary.

Letter 2 in Eire Newspaper

Roscrea
14/1/1923

Dear Mrs Lyons,

Just a few lines to let you know I will be executed on Monday morning at 8 o'clock. Well Maggie I am quite happy Thank God. The priest was with me tonight and I shall receive Holy Communion in the morning just before I am shot.

I feel very happy, as the priest will be with me to the very last. He told me I was alright and that is best of all; my poor soul will be saved. Don't cry or be lonely I will be alright as I hope to be with poor mother before you get this. All I ask of you is to pray for me and have a mass said for me.

I wrote to Jack to have me prayed for in Ballina on Sunday. Remember me to all the lads around and tell them I'm not afraid to die and that I go to meet my God like a brave Irish soldier. I hope yourself, Denny, Mary, Cathleen and Jack are in the best of health and all the neighbours.

There are three more to be shot with me from the Ragg. Get Tuesday's paper, it will be worth 2d. Well Maggie dear I say goodbye forever on earth. I hope we will meet in Heaven with God's help. God is very good to me to give me a chance of saving my poor soul. I feel quite happy my last night on earth. So now I say Good-bye to you and Denny. Pray for me, don't be lonely. I am alright Thank God, may the Lord have mercy on my poor soul - farewell poor old Killarney. Good-bye all. Goodbye Ireland forever. Pat McNamara.

Letter from Fr. Moloney to Mrs McNamara

Parochial House, Roscrea

16th January 1923

Dear Mrs McNamara,

By the time this reaches you, you will have heard of the execution of your son Patrick here in Roscrea. It will console your sorrowing heart to hear from me. The priest who attended him, and to the last that he died with resignation to God's will, and with a feeling strong in his heart, that he had made his peace with his Creator.

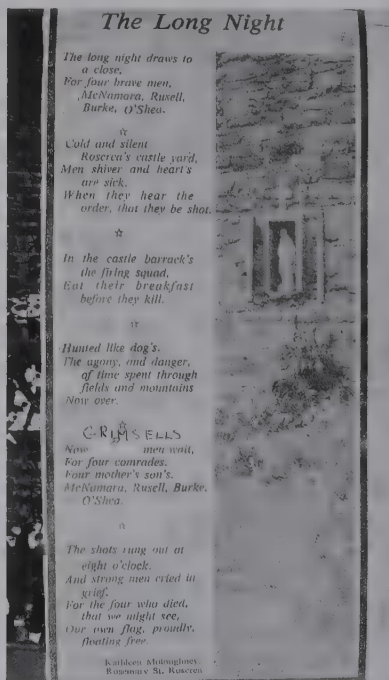
He received the last Sacraments very fervently and died without the smallest feeling of bitterness towards anyone.

God rest his soul and comfort you, in your great Sorrow.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. J. H. Moloney. Adm.

*Fr. Moloney wrote this letter unaware that Patrick's mother was dead for a number of years.



Cuimhneachán



Frederick Burke

Born: Illeigh, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.

**He belonged to the 'B' Co. 3rd Batt. 2nd Tipperary
Brigade**

Executed Roscrea Castle, 15th January 1923

Buried in Illeigh, Thurles

R.I.P.

Frederick Burke

Born: Illeigh, Thurles, Co. Tipperary. Captured in near Borrissaleigh and executed Roscrea, 15th January 1923. Buried in Illeigh, Thurles

He belonged to the 'B' Co. 3rd Batt. 2nd Tipperary Brigade

and was an active member of the I.R.A during the "Black and Tans" regime and remained true to his allegiance. In 1923 he was one of four young Republican Tipperary men who were sentenced to death by the Free State Authorities. They were accused of robbing a mail van. This was not the first time such crimes had occurred and were often treated as minor incidents. The men were first detained in Thurles and the local people strenuously objected to their sentence. They were then taken to Templemore. Ross Cottage, where they were hiding was searched and two Rifles and one hundred rounds of ammunition were found along with a Thompson gun and bomb making material.

The men were removed to Roscrea on the 14th January, 1923 and executed there the next morning at 8 o'clock as the church bells were ringing for mass. Soldiers attached to Roscrea were unaware of any executions to be carried out. There was an eight-man firing squad, two to each man. It was the first execution in County Tipperary. It was quite some time before the four bodies were exhumed and re-interred in their own local churchyard. Thousands attended the funerals.

Charge against him - Possession without proper authority of 2 rifles, 35 rounds of ammunition and one Thompson gun without proper authority.

A letter written on 25/12/'22

Irregular Prison,
Templemore Prison.

Dear Nellie,

I expect you have heard of our capture. I take the pleasure of writing to you wishing you a happy New Year. Hoping you are all quiet well. Tell the whole of the family that I was asking for them. If you see Will tell him I am alright. How is Han and Nora? I was intended to write to Hannie but I can not at present. You can write

to Han and tell her I am expecting to be tried in Roscrea some day very soon. Tell all the Commers I was asking for them. I am sending you back your chain and locket as I expect to want no more keepsakes. You can say a few prayers for us. I thought I would live to meet you at the well to drown you with another gallon of water, still God is good.

I have spent a happy time in the Palace of bars and bolts. You will excuse this handwriting.

Wishing you a happy New Year.

Frederick J. Burke.

2nd letter

11-1-23

Political Prison
Templemore Bks.

Dear Nellie,

Just lines hoping you are all well as my two chums and myself are fine. Did you get the chain and locket I sent to you? We were tried, found guilty of the following - possession of arms without proper authority, firing on the troops, holding up the mails. We were not sentenced yet of course. It will be lead, we don't mind, they can't break our spirits down, we feel quiet happy thank God. We got time to prepare for a better world. We beg mercy from God, forgiveness for our sins. We beg mercy from no human individual, we fought as brothers not as cowards. Well they know it for we fought them nearly four hours against the odds of 70-1. We were forced to surrender when they shelled the roof in on top of us with guns, rifles, bombs, bayonets, and grenades. We did not expect to live until now. We are confined to cells, separate ones. The two chums wish to be remembered to you. Little I thought the last time I was talking to you that I would be guest of the people's own government for Xmas. If we are not done in soon I will write again. Wishing you all a happy New Year, tell Mick Walsh I was asking for him, also Williams of the hill and the Rues of Commar.

You can tell them the country is not half settled. I will expect an answer to this as soon as possible. I am sending it out without any censor. Address yours to Goss Russell, Summerhill, Borrisoleigh. I will get it the same way. Address the inside one to me. You can say a few prayers for us.

A fond farewell,
I love you as ever,
Frederick J. Burke

3rd Letter

14-1-23
Roscrea, Sunday.

Dear Nellie,

I am sorry to inform you that this is my last as we are to be executed tomorrow Monday at eight o'clock. I know ye will not forget to say a prayer for us and remember us to the neighbours. We are quite satisfied when God wills it so I am sorry I shall never see a summer again. Often we had jolly days. We are resigned to the will of God. I hope we will all meet in Heaven. The priest is coming tonight and in the morning. I just had a letter posted to Wm. Kennedy, Glastrigan, and you can tell him of the news I heard after. We are not a bit downhearted, unflinching to the end. You ask the prayer of the family for us. We will pray for you after with God's help. You can hardly read it as we have only a few minutes to catch the post, Mary, Jesus and Joseph intercede for us at the hour of our death.

God be merciful to me a sinner.
Frederick J. Burke.

Thy Will Be Done



Martin O'Shea

Borrisoleigh, Co. Tipperary.

Executed Roscrea Castle

January 15th, 1923

Buried in Illeigh, Thurles

Age 28 years old

Rest In Peace

Martin O'Shea

Born at Garrangrenna, Borrisoleigh. Captured near Borrisaleigh and executed in Roscrea, January 15, 1923, buried Illeigh, Thurles. In December 1922 he, Frederick Burke and Patrick Russell, allegedly held-up a mail van on the Borrisoleigh/Nenagh road at Ross Cottage. They were captured after a gun battle by Free State

troops. He was sentenced to death by the firing squad and was executed on 15th January 1923 at the age of twenty-eight, along with Frederick Burke and Patrick Russell. He is buried in Illeigh.

His last letter written before his execution

From Eire Newspaper

Roscrea, Sunday, January 14th, 1923.

Dear Josie,

I feel it hard for the last time to pen these few sad lines. Fred, Patrick and myself will be executed tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock. From the bottom of our hearts we thank God for the long day we are getting and we are very glad that we weren't killed in Ross. We offer our lives to Almighty God this night, that by our deaths it may bring peace and happiness to the land we are about to leave, and hope our executions will be the last for Ireland's freedom. We are quite satisfied with God's will. Tell all our friends we send them our 1st love, also our comrades.

Dear Josie, I ask you to pray for the three loyal brothers - Fred, Paddy and myself. Dear Josie, send a copy of this letter to any place you think we slept. The last place I slept in R-S, they will tell you, it is up beside the N-S and M-S. You will do the rest yourself.

I ask you to have no spite for those who arrested us. We forgive every one of them. We forgive those who signed our executions. We forgive those who are about to execute us. To Mrs. Ryan and family, to all our neighbours and friends, we send our last fond love. Dear Josie, I ask you to pray for us till the day of your death. 'Sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on us'. 'My Mother Mary pray for us'. I will pray for you all in heaven. I feel very much for our people. May God comfort them in their hard trial - I feel quite happy every other way. We hope to meet you all in heaven. Good bye dear Josie. Get all our friends to pray for us. We have only a few more hours when we will be standing before our God.

Martin Shea.

Cuimhneachán



Pat Russell

Born in Summerhill, Thurles

Co. Tipperary

Executed Roscrea Castle, January 15th 1923.

He is buried in Illeigh, Thurles.

R.I.P.

Pat Russell

Born: Summerhill, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.

He was arrested near Borrisoleigh and was executed Roscrea, January 15, 1923, buried in Illeigh, Thurles. He and his brothers took an active part in the fight against the English and were on the run prior to the Truce. They had to leave their home because of

repeated visits of local R.I.C. and military. He was captured in September 1922 but escaped in October. In December 1922 he, Frederick Burke and Martin Shea allegedly held-up a mail van on the Borrisoleigh/Nenagh road at Ross Cottage. Sheltering in an isolated uninhabited cottage the men noticed unusual movement outside. They locked themselves inside. Nationalist troops had the place surrounded. Their commandant was a local and friend of the wanted men. He told his troops to hide and he would give them a signal (a single shot), when to shoot. He went and tapped on the window and whispered to the occupants to escape and he would say the house was empty. As the men were leaving, anxious to escape one of them hit his gun and a shot went off accidentally. The troops thinking this was their signal opened fire. Their fire was returned. The gunfire raged for four hours before a lull came. The men were captured and handcuffed and taken to Templemore cells and then Roscrea barracks. Rifles and one hundred rounds of ammunition were found along with a Thompson gun and bomb making material. All three denied any knowledge of the weapons. Their fate was sealed; death by the firing squad.

On the morning of January 15th 1923 as the bells rang out for mass the four were executed by a volley of gunfire in Roscrea. Russell, Burke, Shea and McNamara were dead. They were buried close to where they fell.

Letter one to his sister

From Eire Newspaper

Dear Josie,

This is my last letter to you. Before you receive this we will have gone to our last account. We were brought here from Templemore at about two o'clock this morning, at two o'clock today we were told that we were condemned to death. We are to be shot at daybreak tomorrow morning. McNamara is to be shot with us and I think Mick Kennedy has a very good chance of his life. Isn't it dark lines to think we will never meet again in this world but I hope

to meet you all in the next? The priest was with us in the morning, and he will be in attendance in the morning so that there is nothing to worry about. Thank God, we are all in the best of form, quite cheerful and resigned. Welcome is the Holy Will of God. Remember us to all your family, also to the R'S and the M'S and all the boys around, not forgetting 'Sper'.

Remember us in your prayers. We are dying as we lived, true soldiers of the Irish Republic. Fred and Martin send their love to all.

Farewell to all forever.

Your friend to the last,

Patrick J. Russell.

His last letter to his sister Josie

Roscrea

14th Jan. 1923

Dear Josie,

I feel it hard to pen these few sad lines to you. Tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock we'll be executed. Now Josie I know it will break your heart, try and console poor mother for I know she will find it very hard. But Josie if we were killed out in Ross that day there would be more cause to worry. T.G. we got a long day to prepare and we are quite satisfied, but we feel it very much for you all. We went to Holy Communion three times since and we are going tomorrow again. We will have the priest to the last. We got three Masses said on Christmas day and another in the morning, so when one gets time enough they ought to be satisfied with God's holy will. See all the poor fellows who get killed in action and get no time to prepare. So Josie try and keep up. We will all meet in heaven where we will have peace and happiness.

We offer our lives to God this night that by willingly giving them we pray that peace and happiness may be restored to you all

in a very short time and hope that our lives may be the last for Ireland's freedom. Poor Jose, have no ill-feeling for any man that arrested us that day, I forgive every one of them. I forgive the man that signed my execution. I forgive them who are about to take my life away. Give my best and last love to everyone and to the O'Briens and to the Fogarty's, and tell all our old friends, I mean all that know us. May Jesus and His Blessed Mother comfort you in your hard trial. Sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on our souls. Tell all our friends and neighbours we send them our last love. Get all the prayers you can for us. We will pray for everyone of you in heaven. Last love to mother, Josie, Jimmy, Jack and Thomas, from three fond brothers.

From your fond brother,
Patrick
- God save Ireland.

I wish to write a lot more but I have no time. So a last goodbye Josie. I can't write to Tommy. I wrote to Ned, it will do for the two. Martin Kennedy was the last man who shook hands with me that day in Borris. We did not think that day that he would be gone before us. I hope we will meet in heaven. Now Josie try and keep up. This world is but a shadow and in a very short time we will all be together again. - P.J.R.

McNamara, Russell, Burke and O'Shea

One Monday morning, the fifteenth of January,
Four of our brave Republicans gave their lives for Liberty.
They died for Dear Old Ireland on that dreary winter's day-
McNamara, Patrick Russell, Frederick Burke and Martin O'Shea.

They were captured, tried and sentenced, by that Dirty Free State
Clan,
They were beaten and blindfolded like was done by Black and
Tans,
Free State soldiers tried them. To be shot it was their doom,
And be buried in a prison in a lonely unmarked tomb.

They were kept in utter darkness as to what their fate might be
But before their execution at the very hour of three;
Those Free State soldiers told them, no longer could they live;
"Up the Rebels and Republic" was the answer they did give.

At eight o'clock next morning they were marched out from their
cells;
They shook hands with one another and bade their last farewells'
Standing calmly to attention up against the old jail wall;
Twelve of those Free State tyrants opened fire and they did fall.

Thank God we are dying for Ireland said the noble-hearted four,
Like those heroes our comrades who bravely died before,
Goodbye to Paddy Lacken and to all the Column Boys,
"Up the Rebel and Republicans" these were their dying sighs.

Those cruel cowards who would not give them leave shot them,
To see their poor aged parents, who were broken down with grief,
But they died like soldier bravely, which was plainly to be seen,
And died for their Dear Country like the heroes of '16.

Go ndeanaigh Dia trochaire orthu uiligh



James Lillis

James Lillis was born in

**Chapel St
Muinebheag, Carlow**

Executed in Carlow Prison, January 15th, 1923

He is buried in Dunleckney Cemetery Muinebheag.

R.I.P.

James Lillis

Executed in Carlow 15th January 1923.

(from Carlowvinnia)

James Lillis was born in Chapel St, Muinebheag, Carlow. After his execution he was buried in Dunleckney Cemetery, Muinebheag.

He was tried in Dublin on the 12th December on the following charges: -

- (1) Having in his possession, without proper authority at Knocksquire, Borris, a rifle on the 14th December 1922.
- (2) Having in his possessions, without proper authority, a number of rounds of ammunition.
- (3) Having taken part in an ambush of Pro-Treaty Forces, at Graney on 24th. October 1922. The accused was found guilty on all charges.

He was executed in Carlow Military Barracks on 15th January 1923. The reason James Lillis was executed was because of a planned attack on Carlow Military Barracks in 1922. To facilitate this attack James Lillis volunteered to join the Anti-Treaty soldiers. After taking in a number of engagements, he and a companion, against their superior's advice, decided to visit friends in Borris area. He was arrested at Knosksquire and sentenced to death. On the night before his execution arrangements were made for him to escape from the barracks, but he was convinced that he would be reprieved, so he did not avail of the arrangements which had been made.

He was shot in the coal-yard of the barracks the following morning. His remains were re-interred in Dunleckney Graveyard in 1924.

The reason why James Lillis was convicted under the firearms charge was that on October 10th 1922 Richard Mulcahy, as General Commander-in-chief had issued an order to the effect that anyone who did not notify the military that they had explosives, firearms and ammunition in their possession would be liable to be tried before a Military Court.

While the death sentence is not mentioned in the proclamation, this was the sentence, which was generally given for persons found guilty of these offences.

On the same day as James Lillis was executed four men met the same fate in Roscrea for similar offences.

A letter written to be his friend on January 3rd 1923.

189 James Lillis
Kilmainham Prison
Dublin

Dear Thomas,

Just a line in answer to your most kind and welcome letter so glad to see by it all is well as The Parting of this leaves me and my two companions OK at present T.G. Well Tom I was glad to see the old pals didn't forget us, also glad to see there is a sign of peace, it would be a blessing for everyone if it was over as regards myself I am getting as fat as that bloke you see on the Quaker Oats box and for Dick Coborn a real Fuzzy Timmons and Jimmie puts the tin hat on it. Now Tom remember me to all the lads I have nothing more strange at present. My two pals wishes to be remembered to all

I still remain one of the old Gods. James Lillis.

Letter 2 to his Mother

My Dear mother,

You need not fret about me, only pray for me. Tell Johnnie, Michael, Paddy, Bridget, Annie, Nora, and little Maggie and Paddy and William and my friends to pray for me. I know my Father is always praying for me.

Maggie is to keep these little beads, and Michael the pen; and you need not fret. I am dying as a soldier, and the Priest is stopping with me all night praying for me. Remember me to Tom Kinsella and his family; ask Lizzie Coburne to pray for me. I had a ring and I gave it to the Priest, and he will pray for me. Good-bye forever. Your fond Son, Jim.

Letter 3.

Dear Mother,

A line to say that I am going to be executed, but you need not fret for me, for with the help of God I am going to heaven. Get a mass said for me. The priest was with me all night and I have no blame to leave anyone.

Tell my Father and by Brothers and Sisters to pray for me, and all the mill-workers also. Tell Lizzie Coburn to pray for me.

Well, dear Mother, I am going to die with a good heart, and you need not fret for me. I was a soldier and I am going to die a soldiers death.

From your loving Son, Jim

Letter 4

My Dear Brothers,

Just a line to let you know I am going to be executed this morning; all I want you to do is to pray for me. You need not fret about me, for I am going to Heaven with the help of God

Tell my Mother that the man that let you in the day at the gate to see me was up with me all night, and that he did anything I wanted him to do; his name is-----, and any time you come to Carlow call to see him.

Remember me to Tom Kinsella and the Miller, and all the boys on the Column. I am dying as a soldier and a man. Get all the boys in the mill to pray for me. The priest told me I am going to Heaven, so you need not fret. Good-bye forever.

Your fond brother, Jim.

Letter 5

My Dear Brother John,

I am sending you my safety razor and keep it in remembrance of me. You need not fret about me, I will be all right. I am going to Heaven with the help of God. Tell my dear Mother that we will meet with God above, and to my Father and Brothers and Sisters I send my love. May the Angels ever guard you, is a dying brother's prayer; and folded in this note is a lock of my hair.

From your Brother, Jim

James Daly, James Hanlon, Michael Brosnan, John Clifford
Executed in Tralee, January 20th. 1923.

Glór Don Athair



James Daly

Born Knock, Killarney

He was a member of the 1st Battalion, Tralee

Executed in Tralee Jail, January 20, 1923

Buried in Killarney Republican Plot.

James Daly

Born Knock, Killarney. 1st Battalion, Tralee. He was captured at Knocksquire and executed in Tralee, January 20, 1923, after a trial by a Secret Court on the previous day, without any communication with his widowed mother and sister, or his brother, a prisoner in the same prison. He was buried in Killarney Republican Plot. He was charged with being in possession of arms and ammunition without

proper authority. The late James Daly was in the Volunteers since 1915 and was a Sergeant and Section Commander in the Killarney Battalion, and was in active service in all parts of Kerry, Cork, Limerick and Clare up to his arrest on 20th December 1922.

"We are prepared"

Last letter to his brother Joe also a prisoner in Tralee Jail, in Eire Newspaper

Dearest Brother Joe,

I was sentenced this morning but it is not confirmed yet. Anyway we are prepared to meet all these things. I hope you will be released soon, the only son out of five left to my mother. You will take care of her and our sister Annie, also our uncle, but I hope you will take special care of mother. If you go home tell our cousins and friends that I wish them goodbye.

Now Joe you must not worry for me, as I am dying for the land so many have died for. Then poor Ireland; all I am sorry for is that I have to leave my poor mother after all the trouble she has gone through loosing seven children out of nine. But I hope to join them and our dear father in Heaven where we will pray for all.

Goodbye dearest brother Joe, goodbye to my comrades.

Your fond brother, Jim

Extract from his last letter to his mother on 29th January, 1923.

"I would certainly wish to remain in this world a little longer if God willed it so, in order that I might comfort you in the troubles you have gone through. I hope, dear mother, you will take my death like the mothers of other Irish Martyrs and say I died for Ireland, as you will be rewarded for it in Heaven, where I will meet you, with my father, brothers and sisters, and we will enjoy freedom for once. God Bless you all and God save Ireland."

Go ndeanaigh Dia Trochaire Orthu Uiligh



John Clifford

Born Mountlake, Caherciveen, Co. Kerry

He was executed in Tralee Jail January 20, 1923.

Was buried Rath Cemetery, Tralee.

R.I.P.

John Clifford

Born Mountlake, Caherciveen, Co. Kerry. He was arrested at Knockshire and was executed in Tralee, January 20, 1923, and was buried Rath Cemetery, Tralee. The charge against him was that he was in possession of arms and ammunition without proper authority. He was tried by military court.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph



Michael Brosnan

Born Ballyfedora, Ballymac, Co. Kerry

Executed Tralee Jail, January 20th 1923.

Buried Rath Cemetery, Tralee.

"My chums and I are satisfied"

Michael Brosnan

Born Ballyfedora, Ballymac, Co. Kerry. Arrested at Knockquire and was executed in Tralee, January 20, 1923, buried Rath Cemetery, Tralee. Reason for his execution – being in possession of arms and ammunition without proper authority. He was tried by military court.

"My chums and I are satisfied"

Last letter of Michael Brosnan executed in Tralee January 20th 1923, to his cousin printed in 'Eire' Newspaper

Dear Cousin and family,

I am just dropping you a last few lines in this life. We are going before our God at 8 a.m., tomorrow morning. We were prepared this evening to go before him, and I am asking yourself and family to pray for me and my three chums. We are quite content to die, and do not be one bit lonely, for I will meet my mother in Heaven in the morning.

So cheer up and tell Brigid not to be lonely. I never thought death would come so soon. She was so good to me while I was here. I hope I will meet you on the Last Day and we will enjoy ourselves in Heaven, as I can stay no longer on this earth.

You can tell my father, sisters and brothers not to shed a tear for me, for my chums and I are satisfied to die.

Father will feel it hard I know, but tell him not to grumble for it is all for dear old Ireland. My three chums wish to be remembered to you all especially J. Clifford and myself. So good bye, as I must come to a close - goodbye now dear cousins, goodbye, I am leaving for Heaven. You will not get this before I go, so pray for me every night. Say goodbye to Mrs Murphy for me.

From your loving cousin.

Mick Brosnan and chums.

In Undying Memory



James Hanlon

Born Causeway, Ardfert, Co. Kerry

3rd Battalion Lixnaw IRA

Executed Tralee, January 20, 1923

**Buried Rath Cemetery, Tralee
R.I.P.**

"I Die a Republican Soldier".

James Hanlon.

Born Causeway, Ardfert, Co. Kerry. 3rd Battalion Lixnaw IRA. He was charged with being in possession, without proper authority of arms and ammunition at Knocksquire. He was tried by a military court. Executed Tralee, January 20, 1923, and buried in Rath Cemetery, Tralee.

"I Die a Republican Soldier".

Last letter of James Hanlon in 'Eire' Newspaper, to a comrade.

Dear-----,

Just a few lines to let you know I'm going to meet my death sentence this morning and that I am proud to die for the cause. It is for the Irish Republic and I hope my comrades will follow in my footsteps until our country is free from the bondage of English slavery.

I have been an Irish Republican soldier from the first day I knew what Sinn Féin meant, and I have the proud honour of saying I die a Republican soldier. I ask a request of you and my comrades. Pray for me and I will pray for all of you in Heaven. Tell all my comrades I am bidding them all a last farewell.

One more request, I ask you to look after my mother and father and see that they are not wronged and try to console them. Give one of the rings I sent you to my mother and get her name on it.

Good-Bye for the last time. Remember me to all the Causeway people. I forgive the man who is the cause of this. We have had the priest, so we die in peace with our enemies.

Your comrade,

Signed James Hanlon.

Letter 2 to his sister Bridget in Eire Newspaper

Tralee Jail 19/1/1923

Dearest sister Bridget,

Just a line to let you know that my life in this world is nearly expired. I expect by the time this letter reaches you I will be before my Maker in Heaven as three others and myself are sentenced to be executed at 8 a.m. tomorrow.

I know you will be very much troubled about me, I think it will break my mother's heart, but, dear Bridget I ask you to console her

with the thought that I died for old Ireland and the Irish Republic. I am meeting my death for the Republic and need not tell you how proud I am to be one of the chosen who die for such a noble cause.

Remember me to all in dear old Causeway and tell them to pray for me, and I will pray for you all in Heaven. Give my best love to Father, Mother and Madge. Goodbye, your loving and only brother James.

**Patrick Hennessy and Cornelius Mc Mahon
Executed in Limerick, 20th January 1923.**

(Taken from notes)

Hennessy and McMahan, both from Clooney, were arrested and charged and found guilty of being in possession of ammunition without proper authority and implicated in the destruction of Ardsollus railway station around mid-January. They were executed at 8 a.m. on 20th January. On October 29th 1924 five Clare men who had been executed were re-interred in Drumcliffe and Clooney. The re-internment's brought Ennis to a standstill. Businesses closed and all buildings

Had the blinds drawn as the funeral procession passed through town. Deputy Higgins in his oration at Clooney said, "Con McMahan and Paddy Hennessy died for Ireland. Whenever you tell their story of their fight and sacrifices for Ireland's weal to the younger children of Clare, do not forget to tell them always that they fought and died for Ireland. These two young Clooney soldiers, and their comrades in all the graveyards of Ireland, shall be for all time the true leaders of our race, because as long as we have these graves in our trust, as long as we have Irish hearts and minds, we can never forsake the cause for which they fought and died."

It is understood that the bodies of the two IRA men were not allowed to enter the grounds of Clooney church by the then Bishop Fogarty and remained for some time in the Town hall in Ennis.

Jesus, Mary Joseph



Patrick Hennessy.

A native of Clooney, Co. Clare

Patrick was a Volunteer, Mid Clare Brigade.

He was executed in Limerick Prison,
January 20th 1923.

Buried in Clooney Cemetery.

R.I.P.

Patrick Hennessy

He joined the Volunteer, Mid Clare Brigade, in 1918. A native of Clooney and educated in Clooney National School, was best known to his comrades as an ardent sports lover since his early teens. His favourite game was hurling and in this particular field he was outstanding. He was County Secretary of Clare G.A.A. His initiation in the Volunteers began with the formation of the Clooney Company where his record of IRA activities was most

commendable, during the Black and Tan War where he was Vice Commandant 1st Battalion, Mid Clare Brigade. In 1922 he was attached to the Active Service Unit until his arrest. He was charged of being in possession, without proper authority, of ammunition, being implicated in the destruction of the railway at Ard Solus on 14th January, also in possession of articles taken at Ard Solus station. He was tried by a Committee. Soon after being arrested he was sentenced to death and executed in Limerick Prison. The death of this popular and well-known man caused widespread regret among his comrades and sports lovers. Executed Limerick, January 20, 1923, and buried in Clooney Cemetery.

Last letter on the morning of his execution.

"I am to die this morning. I am innocent of the death of the poor soldier. I am sorry for his fate, but I forgive my enemies from the depths of my heart. May God bless Ireland and may her sons be united once more in love with one another."

Letter 2 just hours before his execution to a friend.

Dear Séan and the boys,

"Ye hardly know tonight that Con and myself are to be executed at 8 o'clock tomorrow morning. Found guilty on frivolous evidence, of course, our lives sworn away, but we are dying for Ireland, still true to the Republic at last. Money could not buy us. I am leaving my cigarettes to be divided amongst the Clare section, 17 boxes, a cigarette to each man, will go a long way. It will be only a little token in remembrance of me. Distribute them as far as they will go and say a prayer for me.

I think it is your voice I hear singing now. As for me, I am in the best of spirit and expect to face death like a soldier and a true Irishman. I forgive my enemies, even though they swore my life away. I forgive them from the bottom of my heart, for there is a God to judge them as well as me. It is a thing we all have to face some day, and no one can avoid it. I am in right good spirit, knowing I am going to Heaven.

Father McCreedy, Quin, came to see Con and myself tonight (Friday). I am in right good cheer, knowing that I am going to Heaven. They can only kill my body; my spirit will live. The cold silent grave will enfold her arms to receive me back to Mother Earth from which I came. We will all meet in Heaven.

Do not shed tears for me, if you don't let them be tears of joy, as there is joy in my heart tonight, knowing that I will be with God tomorrow. Good-bye comrades, forever more comrade".

Patrick Hennessy

Jesus, Mary Joseph



Cornelius McMahon

Born Clooney, Co. Clare

Battalion Vice-Commandant

Executed in Limerick Prison, January 20th, 1923

Buried in Clooney Cemetery.

R.I.P.

Cornelius McMahon

Battalion Vice-Commandant.

Born Clooney, Co. Clare. He attended St. Flanan's College in Ennis. His membership in the Meath Volunteers began in 1917, when he organised the Clooney Company of the 1st Battalion and later became Commandant. He was an active member of the Flying Column, and was engaged in all its activities. He participated in the disarming of the Soldiers of Ennis, and also in the capture of the R.I.C. Barracks at Ruan.

Following the Truce in July 1921, he remained on the Republican side, and in 1922 he directed the activities of the Active Service Unit in that area until his arrest, which led to his execution in Limerick Prison. Charged by a Committee for being in possession without proper authority of ammunition, being implicated in the destruction of the railway at Ard Solus, 14th January, 1922, and being in possession of articles taken from the station. He was executed in Limerick, January 20, 1923, and is buried in Clooney Cemetery.

A Limerick Scene as bodies handed over.

(Cork Examiner 29th October 1924)

Limerick, Tuesday – Pursuant to an order issued by the Minister of Justice, the bodies of Cornelius McMahon and Patrick Hennessy of Carrahan Quin, Co. Clare, were to day handed over to their immediate relatives for re-internment. The men were executed at Limerick County Prison on the 20th January 1923, having been convicted and sentenced to death by courtmartial for being implicated in the destruction of the railway line at Ardsollus, on the 14th January, and with being in possession of ammunition. The bodies were subsequently interred in the Castle Barracks where they lay ever since. Yesterday they were transferred to the relatives. There was a big crowd outside the barracks, including a number of Volunteers, who proceeded to carry out military like evolutions. These young men were warned by the military but took no notice, with the result that five who were giving orders, were placed under arrest. Their names are Kelly, Bray, Dargan, Kelly and Slattery.

The remains were then taken to the morgue of Barrington's hospital, for re-coffining, and were subsequently removed by motor car to Carrahan Quin, where they will be re-interred.

**Thomas Hughes, Michael Walsh, Hubert Collins,
Stephen Joyce, and Martin Burke.**

There were five executions on 20th January 1923 in Athlone, where the Western Command of the army was being entangled in the web. They are of particular interest to us because all five had Galway or western connections, as had the sixth person, General Tom Maguire, TD who was also sentenced to death, but possibly because of his status as TD the death sentence was not carried out in his case. On Saturday January 20th, 1923 those five men were taken out in Custume Barracks, Athlone, lined by a wall and, on the orders of the Highest Command in the Free State Forces, executed. Their relatives were not informed until at the earliest, 6 p.m., in the case of Captain Hughes' family which lived nearby, some ten hours later. The Connacht Tribune of the following Saturday, April 14th describes the event. "The condemned men went to their doom firmly and with brave hearts. They had been attended during the night by two of the town priests and in the morning heard Mass, at which two of them served. The priests were with them to the last.

The news of the executions cast a gloom over the people who could hardly realise what awful happening had taken place in their midst that morning. About 8 a.m. two volleys were fired and it is stated that the condemned men were taken out in parties of three each and blindfolded and their hands joined as in prayer. They had prayed fervently during the night before and in the morning and were fully consoled, prepared to meet their Creator. The six bodies enclosed in six coffins were interred in the ground with-in the Barracks and it is stated that the ground was consecrated. On October 28th 1924, the Free State released the bodies of the executed soldiers of the Republic. Some 20 bodies, those executed in Tuam, Athlone, Drumboe, Tullamore, Birr and Tralee were released through the back gate of Custume Barracks, Athlone at ten minute intervals.

(From Civil War in Connaught and Seventy-Seven who died for Ireland)

Mairfidh A Chuimhne Go Brádh



Thomas Hughes

Eldest son Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Hughes

Bogginfin, Athlone

Executed in Custume Barracks Athlone

**His body was re-interred in Cornamagh
Cemetery on 30th October 1924.**

R.I.P.

Thomas Hughes

Lieutenant Commandant, O/C. Munitions, and Western Division,
IRA.

Formerly captain and attached to 3rd Engineers Dublin
Brigade, and O/C. Munitions, Athlone Brigade.

He was the eldest son Mr. Patrick and Mrs Hughes of
Bogginfin, Athlone. He has been "on the run" for seven months and
was captured by the National troops on December 20 at Currahan
the previous year and it was not until 6 p.m. on the day of his

execution that his afflicted parents were officially notified of the event. He was charged by a Committee of being in possession without proper authority of arms and ammunition. On being blindfolded he shook hands with some of the captors requesting them to inform his mother that his last thoughts were of her. On October 30th 1924 his body was re-interred in Cornamagh Cemetery. Prior to his execution he wrote the following letters to his family:-

(From Civil War in Connacht)

Letter 1

My Darling Mother,

It is now 6 p.m. We are just after being told that we are to be executed in the morning at 8 o'clock. Do not fret for me, as with God's Holy Will, I will be prepared to meet Him, as it is a grand thing to get timely warning before you die. I hope I will be in Heaven before you receive this sad greeting. Well, welcome be the Will of God. Remember Mother, if it is the Will of God that He receives me, I will be always watching over yourself, Dad, Dotie, Pearl, Maud, Eileen, Jim and Josie. Try and bear up mother and please God we will all be together again in the time to come. I am writing to grandma and some of my friends. My companions and I do not bear any malice against those who are going to carry out the deed. Goodbye for the present.

Your Loving Son,
Tom.

PS - You will get a crucifix and prayer book from some of the officers.

Letter 2

My Dearest Dad,

It is now 6.30 p.m. We were just now informed that four comrades, namely, Martin Burke, Michael Walsh, Hubert Collins and Stephen Joyce and myself are to be executed in the morning at 8 a.m. We are all to be attended by Canon Crowe and Father Columba tonight and have Mass in the morning. So we have plenty of time to prepare to meet our God. Dad, try and console poor mother and tell her that I am not afraid to die. 10.30 p.m. - We are just after getting Confession now from Father O'Reilly and had a very nice chat with him. He said he would call to see you. I am leaving my beads to you, dear Dad, and my crucifix to mother.

Your Loving Son,
Tom

Letter 3

My Dear Sister Pearl,

Just a line to let you know I am about to be executed in the morning. Pearl, do not fret for me. Try and console poor mother and Dad, because I know it will be a terrible blow to them. Do not forget to write to some of the lads here as they long for a letter from outside. I feel very happy tonight and am prepared to die. It is not everyone who has 12 hours for same. Well, Goodbye and God Bless you.

Your Affectionate Brother,
Tom

Letter 4

My Dear Sister Dotie,

Just a line bidding you my last farewell on this earth. But Dotie, keep you heart up and do not fret for me, as with God's help I will

be happy. I am sending you a small pocket looking-glass for a souvenir. Try and cheer up mother, as I know this will be a terrible blow to her. Bid goodbye for me to all my friends.

Your Affectionate Brother
Tom

Letter 5

My Dear Grandma,

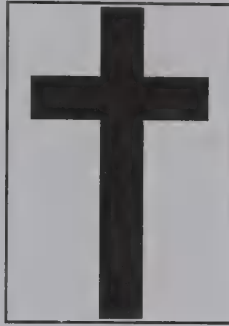
Sorry to say this is the last time you will get a letter from me, as myself and four comrades are going to meet our God in the morning. Grandma, don't fret for me. I will meet the firing squad just like a soldier should. I am feeling happy now since I had Confession. We will receive Holy Communion at 7 a.m. in the morning. We were attended by Father O'Reilly as Canon Crowe is away. I know it will be a terrible blow to you and poor Mother, but all you can do is say a prayer for my comrades and myself.

The Free State officers and men are as nice as they can be to us and you must not think I am dying bearing any malice towards them. I forgave them as they are only doing what they think is their duty. I only hope I will be with Grandma and Kit before you receive this note. And again, cheer up, grandma, and say "it is no crime to die in a noble cause". Bid my last goodbye to Katie, Pearl, Pat, Lil and family, Tiny and family, Dick and family, Joe and family and all in the house. Well, dear grandma, I think I have enough said now. Goodbye and God bless you all.

Your Affectionate Grandson, Tom

P.S.- I will have a crucifix for you if I can. Don't forget to pray for me. Tom

In Undying Memory



Michael Walsh

Born Derrymore, Co. Galway

**Executed Custume Barracks
Athlone**

January 20, 1923.

R.I.P.

Michael Walsh

V.C., 2nd Battalion No. 1 Brigade, 2nd. Western Division. Born Derrymore, Co. Galway. Executed Athlone, January 20, 1923.

Letter to his parents

Athlone,
January 19th 1923.

Dear Loving Parents,

Parents dear, do not be overcome at this, for I am quite resigned to my fate. We had a priest in to hear our Confessions and we are to hear Mass in the morning and receive Holy Communion.

Michael

Military Barracks,
Dundalk.

1st February 1923.

Ref:-

A:-1-34

To /

Colonel O'Higgins,
Quartermaster,
Dublin Command,
Collins Barracks,
Dublin.

I enclose herewith accounts for whiskey, which was purchased on the order of General Hogan, and supplied to the Firing Squad who carried out the executions here – Dundalk.

I have certified these accounts correct, and would be glad if you would arrange to have them paid.

S. O'Connor Capt.,

In Loving Memory



Herbert Collins

Born Kickeen, Headford, Co. Galway

Executed in Custume Barracks Athlone on 20th
January 1923

Buried Donaghpatrick Cemetery Headford

Rest in Peace

Herbert Collins

Born Kicked, Headword, Co. Galway. Captured at Currahan and executed in Athlone on 20th January 1923. Buried Donaghpatrick Cemetery, Headford. His offence – being in possession without proper authority of arms and ammunition. He was tried by Committee.

His last letter.

(From Civil War in Connaught)

Garrison Detention,
Custume Barracks, Athlone,
19th January 1923.

My dearest Mother

I again write you a few lines, but oh, Mother it is going to be the last. The last word to you on this side of the grave, as I am going to meet my great God tomorrow morning. But Mother dear don't grieve for me as I prepared to meet him who created me, to his likeness. But dear mother I know it shall grieve you all, but I ask one request of you not to worry but to pray for me because one prayer goes longer for me than all the sad tears that a nation could shed.

I am fully prepared for what poor Thomas wasn't. * Just yesterday two years he was put before the firing squad. And I hope to be with him by the time you get this letter. Oh, how happy he shall be to see me.

Dearest Mother I am sending you my Rosary beads. The beads I got from Father Kearney the day of Thomas' funeral. I can't stop but think how happy he shall be when he sees me and knows that I have died for the same ideal that he died for.

Dear mother I now finish by sending you dear mother my best love and also to Cissie, James and Joe. I shall write to them also.

So cheer up now we shall meet again in that happy land where there is no pain. Again I ask you all not to worry over this.

Goodbye and God bless you,

From Your loving son,
Herbert.

*Thomas was shot by the British in Headford on 22nd January 1921.

(Publ. In Eleven Galway Martyrs)

Garrison Detention,
Custume Barracks,
Athlone, January, 1923

My Dear Joe,

As I write you these few lines it is drawing nearer to my death. As I am about to die for loving my country, I am proud of it. It's just one short month since I saw you all. How happy we were then. But I am happier now when I know I shall be in a few short hours with the great God who made us all. How happy I shall be when I see our dear brother Thomas who died for the same cause I am dying for.

But Joe this world has no earthly charms for me now, as I am ready to meet my God. Don't worry Joe after me, as we will all have to go and might not get the chance of preparing for death as I did. Wish all the boys luck and success for me. I must conclude by sending my best to you Joe, Mammy, James and Cissie. Goodbye now and pray for me and God bless you all.

Your Loving Brother,
Herbert Collins

Joe do help Mama and make her as happy as you can. Goodbye, cheer up' H.C

Letter to his Brother James

19th January 1923.

Dear Bros. James,

Just a line from this side of the grave. A line to let you know that it is going to be the last ever again. For it now being about nine o'clock tomorrow Saturday morning.

Dear James don't worry about me as I am very happy and resigned to the will of God. The priest is going to be with us to the

last.

We are all happy going to meet our God. We shall be happier in the next life. We have all got to die and we are getting a great chance of preparing ourselves to meet our loving Jesus.

So James try and cheer up Mama. I know that it shall be another great blow to her, but for God's sake try and console her-do James for me.

James dear, I am leaving you my overcoat, if they send it to you, and I also leave you my collar pin and tie-clip (your own). God bless you all James dear I must finish now and hope you are as happy as I am. I send you, mama, Joe and Cissie my very best love.

Goodbye, cheer up and have courage.

From your loving brother,
Herbert C.

Letter to sister Cissie.

Athlone, Jan. 19, 1923

Cissie Dear,

It is hard for me to find words to say to you, but all I say now will be the last for me on this earth, but I shall be before you all in the next to meet you.

Cissie dear, you that used to write to me the nice letters, if I only knew the last time I was talking to you that it would be the last to see you on this earth, how I would hug and kiss you, you that was so nice to me always, but dearest Cissie all I can leave you is the handkerchief you sent me and also leave you my little scissors, I think it was Jim Lee that gave it to me. I will write to him also.

Cissie dearest, don't grieve or worry after me, pray for me and I will pray for you, think of what I die for, that is great and glorious for one to die for one's country. Cissie it is grand to be going to meet a King, a King of Kings. I am well prepared now as the priest is only after leaving us and we are going to mass tomorrow morning and receive the Blessed Sacrament and then to be off with

our blessed lord.

Stephen Joyce, Martin Burke and Tommy Hughes are coming with me. We shall all meet you when you come to us.

Cissie dear, I must now come to a finish both in this note and in this life, so goodbye, cheer up Cissie dear. I am sending you all my very best love.

From your loving brother,

Herbert (Collins)

P.S. Cissie dear, cheer up Mama, tell her that she don't know how happy I am. Tell her not to shed one tear for me, but pray.

H. Collins.

Remember me Cissie to all my neighbours, to Aunt Kit, Tommy McDonagh, wife and father also to Dan Finn. H.C.

Cuimhneachán



Stephen Joyce

Born Derrymore, Caherlistrane, Co. Galway

Executed Custume Barracks
Athlone.

January 20, 1923.

R.I.P.

"He died as he lived, His country to save"

Stephen Joyce

Quartermaster 1st Battalion, No. 1 Brigade, 2nd
Western Division.

Attached to No. 1 A.S.U., since start of recent hostilities.

Born Derrymore, Caherlistrane, Co. Galway. He was charged by a Committee of being in possession without proper authority of arms and ammunition. He was executed in Athlone, January 20, 1923.

"The dream of my earliest youth"

Last letter of Stephen Joyce in 'Eire' Newspaper

Letter 1

Garrison Detention Camp,
Custom Barracks,
Athlone.
Undated

Dearest Sister,

Just a few lines bidding you a last farewell. It is on tomorrow I will breathe my last. Still, I am quite happy and content. I fear your heart will break for me. I will ask you not to grieve or worry but try to do the best you can to keep the house. Send for sister Mary and she will help you to do the work and it will please me very much. Tell mother not to grieve for me- I am quite happy.

Help her as well as you can; do not allow her to work hard

I know it will come as a terrible shock to you but it cannot be helped for it has been the dream of my earliest youth that I should die for Ireland.

The music of the rifles has been always ringing in my ears since the day C. F. Davey handed me his revolver and said: "Hold this; rather than part with it loose your life first". This I was determined to do.

You know the consequences. Now tell all that cared for me my hour has come and pray for me. Wear those medals in memory of your dead brother.

Good bye! 'till we meet in Heaven!

Your loving brother,
Stephen Joyce,
R.I.P

2nd Letter

Custume Barracks
Athlone
January 20th, 1923

Dear Sister Julia,

I am writing these few lines bidding you a last farewell. On tomorrow morning, Michael Walsh, Hubert Collins, Martin Burke, Thomas Hughes and myself will meet our death at the hands of Irishmen. Still, we are quite happy and contented. We have been to see a priest and will hear Mass in the morning and receive the Body and Blood of our Saviour. Tomorrow morning at 8 a.m. will be the happiest hour of my life.

I know this will come as a terrible shock to you. I fear your heart will break. I ask you not to grieve for me, for it must be God's holy will that I should sacrifice my life for Ireland. It has been the dream of my earliest youth. The music of the rifles has always been ringing in my ears since the day Comdt. Louis Darcy handed me his revolver and said "Hold this; rather than part with it, lose your life first." This I was determined to do, as you know the consequences of now.

Tell mother and father not to grieve for me for all I ask now is to pray for me. I would not like to hear you crying when I am among the dead. Tell all my companions to pray for me, Julia, and I ask you to wear those medals in memory of your dead brother. May God protect and save you from all danger. Goodbye now, dear Julia, until I meet you in Heaven.

From your loving brother,
Stephen.

Letter 3

Dear Loving Parents,

I was ordered out of my bed an hour ago and was brought along to another part of the prison and told to prepare to meet my God. I and my four companions were brought to see a priest. We will be executed tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock by the hands of Irishmen.

Trust in almighty God and He will comfort you when I am gone. 8 o'clock on tomorrow morning will be the happiest hour of my life, when my soul will soar upwards to my Redeemer, to join the Martyrs who have gone before me and who, I know, will meet me with outstretched arms.

Stephen

The last farewell to my loving Mother.

(From Eire Newspaper)

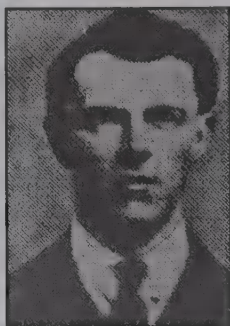
Dear Mother

I am bidding you a last farewell in this little note. This has been the result of your teaching to me. You often told me of those brave deeds done by Irishmen. By this you aroused in me a spirit that could never be extinguished until the last drop of my blood should issue from my veins. Since this has been the case, I hope you will not grieve for me.

I hope our blood will satisfy their lust and that peace will soon come to poor Ireland, and that we may be the last to suffer in her cause.

Stephen

Glór Don Athair



**Sacred heart Of Jesus Have Mercy On The Soul Of
Martin Burke**

Caherlistrane. Co. Galway

Executed in Custume Barracks, Athlone

20th January 1923.

Rest In Peace.

Martin Burke, Caherlistrane

O/C. A.S. Unit, No. 3 Brigade and Western Division.

He was captured at Dowdallshill and executed Athlone 20th January 1923. The charge against him was - possession without proper authority of arms and ammunition.

Last letter to his brother.

(From Eleven Galway Martyrs & Eire Newspaper)

Custume Barracks
Athlone
Friday night-Saturday
January 19th 1923.

To Dear Jim,

Just a few line before I pass away from this world forever. I suppose my time has come. So don't cry for my sake. Life is sweet but we are getting a good chance at preparing for tomorrow.

Poor Tom Hughes is by my side, a soldier to the last. Stephen Joyce, Mick Walsh and Hubert Collins are going before God in the morning. I think with God's help I'm prepared to die. I don't know where this will find you but I will direct it to Ballinapark, the spot I loved best.

Poor old Dad, this will give him a blow, but it's a chance for a happy death. So Goodbye until we meet in the happy land beyond the skies.

Goodbye from your loving brother,
Martin J. Burke.

Letter to his cousin, Kathleen

Custume Barrack,
Athlone.
Friday night, January 20th 1923.

Dear Kathleen,

I suppose you heard my fate before this reaches you. I would not die without writing to Ballinapark the spot I love best. But I bid goodbye for the last time on New Year's Eve. But goodbye Aunt Delia, Nora, May, Uncle Jack and poor Patrick. I am happy for we got a fair chance; we had the priest and will hear Mass in the morning. I'll see you reading this. I'll be singing with the angels when you are reading this. I am enclosing my beads as a keepsake. I am happy as I write this, I hope ye will remember me in your prayers. Will you drop a note to Daniel and tell him I'll die game... Remember me as the wild boy of the family. Tell all the boys to

pray for me.

Goodbye all,

From your darling cousin,

M.J. Burke.

Letter to his brother Patie.

Friday night, January 20th 1923.

Dear Patie,

I suppose by the time this reaches you my fate will be known. Well, Patie, don't cry or grieve for my sake, for it is God's will. My time in this world is at an end. Some time this day will come for us all. Mine is a happy one, I hope. So cheer up. Please God I will be looking down at your reading this. Poor old dad, will this kill him. Tell him I will soon be meeting him again. Pray for the repose of our souls.

Goodbye, From your fond brother.

(Capt.) Martin J. Burke

James Melia, Thomas Lennon and Joseph Ferguson

Were executed in Dundalk on 22nd January 1923.

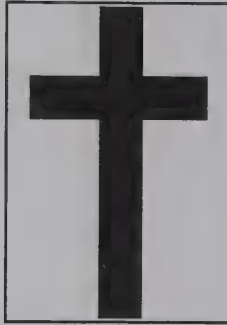
"All three accused were found guilty of the charges against them and were sentenced to death. The findings and sentence were confirmed. The executions took place today at Dundalk. Joseph Ferguson was executed at the gaol; James Melia and Thomas Lennon were executed in the Military Barracks.

News of the executions shocked the town, particularly in light of the fact that Thomas Lennon was only nineteen years old and James Melia just twenty. The executions in the Barracks took place in an enclosed area on the Point Road side, to the rear of the present transport complex. The patrols and raids by Pro-Treaty troops continued into 1923.

(From Military Barracks Dundalk by Joseph Gavin & Stephen O'Donnell)

The Meath Chronicle January 20, 1923

Cuimhneacháin



**Sacred heart Of Jesus Have Mercy On The Soul Of
James Melia**

Born Dundalk

Executed in Dundalk 22/1/'23.

He is buried in Republican Plot Dundalk.

Rest In Peace

James Melia

Born Dundalk, executed in Dundalk and is buried in Republican Plot, Dundalk. On Monday 22nd January 1923 the following communiqués were issued from the General Headquarters, Dublin. "James Melia of 2 Bridge Street, Dundalk was tried on a charge of having arms and ammunition in his possession without proper authority at Dowdallshill, Dundalk on 7th January, 1923."

Mairfidh A Chuimhne Go Brách



Thomas Lennon

**Born Dowdallshill,
Dundalk**

Executed in Dundalk 22/1/'23.

Buried in Republican Plot Dundalk.

R.I.P.

Thomas Lennon

Born in Dundalk. Captured at Dowdallshill and executed in Dundalk 22/1/'23. Buried in Republican Plot, Dundalk. He was charged by a Committee of being in possession without proper authority of arms and ammunition on 7th January 1923.

**Notification received by Mrs Lennon of the Execution
of her son, January 1923.**

Dublin Command Headquarters,
Collins Barracks,
22nd Jan. 1923.

Mrs T. Lennon,
Dowdall's Hill,
Dundalk

Madam,

I am to inform you that Thomas Lennon, Dowdall's Hill, Dundalk, was tried by a Military Court on January 8th, 1923 on a charge of having possession without proper authority of one Colt Revolver fully loaded and six rounds of .45 ammunition, at Dowdall's Hill, Dundalk on the 7th. January, 1923.

The accused was found guilty, and sentenced to death.

The sentence was duly executed at 8 a.m. this morning.

Yours respectfully,

Aodh Mac Néill Col. Comdt.

D.A.A.G Dublin Command.

Thy Will Be Done



Joseph Ferguson

Born Greenore, Co. Louth

Executed in Dundalk 22/1/'23

Buried in Republican Plot, Dundalk

R.I.P.

" I Die A Republican Soldier "

Joseph Ferguson

Born Greenore, Co. Louth, (Giles Quay, Riverstown, Carlingford).
Captured at Lordships Hall and executed in Dundalk 22/1/'23.
Buried in Republican Plot, Dundalk. He was charged with being
in possession without proper authority, of arms and ammunition on
7th January 1923 at Lordship's Hall, Co. Louth. He was tried by a
Committee.

Letter to his mother before his execution

My Dear Mother,

Do not let this grieve you, but I know it will. I am happy and prepared to die and it is all God's holy will. There is only a few years in the difference. I am as happy here as if I was at home. Canon Donnellan is coming to see me. I am waiting on him. I will tell him to visit you and he will take this letter to you and tell you all. So do not worry for me, for I will pray for you when I am in Heaven, where we will all meet some day. I am writing to Mary and Annie. Tell Dannie not to forget them and anything he can do for them let him do it. Give Mary one of my photos. There is a football in my room or somewhere, give it to her. There are also a few photos of me and Mick McKeown, you can let her have one of them. Tell my brother Dannie to make the drills for Owen, as I promised I would have the work done. Tell my father that I send him my last good-bye, also Dannie, Nellie, Michael and grandmother. Remember me to Margaret, Mary, Paddy, Tommy, Ritchie, Annie, Minnie and the baby-God bless them all. Tell Michael, Catherine, Patrick and Annie Connor, John Fearen and Longboat, James and Annie McArdle, Thomas and Annie Fearon and Shamus O'Hanlon. I wish to remember them all. So, dear Mother, do not let this worry you. Be proud you have a son that you will meet in Heaven – who died for the Irish Republic like a man. I will meet death as many a brave Irishman did before. So be proud of my death, not sorry. My death is a triumph for the cause of Irish Independence.

Let Dannie have my bicycle and keep it in remembrance of me. Tell Jimmie Hanlon to remember me to all my old girls. You can show him this letter. Remember me to Mrs. Jordan and all the girls.

This is all I have to say. So, dear Mother, do not let this grieve you. Brave it all for God and Ireland's sake, and he will reward, for I am dying a happy death-better than some poor boys who died on the mountain-side and no priest near them. Be of good heart, Mother. It is all God's will. I will say good-bye, mother, father and God bless you all.

From your loving son,

Josie

Michael Fitzgerald and Paddy O'Reilly

Executed 25th January 1923 in Ballybricken Jail

(From Waterford Remembers)

Two executions took place in Waterford on 25th inst. The latest victims were natives of Youghal, and were captured with arms and murdered for no other offence. Their names were O'Reilly and Fitzgerald. Both men were attached to the Cork No. 1 Brigade I.R.A. and were operating in their Brigade in Clashmore, Co. Waterford where they were captured by the Free State troops towards the end of 1922. On their capture they were imprisoned for some time in Dungarvan, being later removed to Ballybricken Jail. They were charged before a Free State military courtmartial in Waterford with carrying arms and waging war against the newly set up Government forces. They were both found guilty and sentenced to death.

Patrick O'Reilly and Michael Fitzgerald were marched from Ballybricken Jail on the morning of January 25th, 1923, to the place of execution at the Military Barracks where they marched in the midst of a heavy bodyguard across Mayor's Walk. They sang lustily together "We are the boys of the First Cork Brigade". On the morning of the 25th at 4 a.m. the young martyrs were notified that their executions would take place at 8 o'clock, and were told prepare for death. They made their final preparations quietly. The chaplain was with them to the last; he was most deeply affected by the terrible ordeal. They received the rites of the holy Church that morning, and were calm and composed. One of them taking from his pocket a packet of cigarettes proceeded to hand them around to the Firing party.

At ten minutes to eight the Imperial forces were mustered. The victims were brought forward. The two men made one last request, that they be not blindfolded, which request was granted. They died standing erect, side by side. A great cause is worthy of brave men and the two Republican soldiers from Youghal who faced death in Waterford Barracks, added in their passing lustre to the noble cause, which they espoused.

Both men were buried in the Barracks grounds, but in October 1924 their bodies were exhumed and finally laid to rest in Youghal.

Thy Will Be Done



Michael Fitzgerald

Born 8, Main Street
Youghal, Co. Cork

Executed Waterford Jail

25th January 1923

Buried Youghal, Co. Cork.

Michael Fitzgerald

A member of the I.R.A. Born Youghal, Co. Cork. Executed Waterford 25th January 1923. He was charged with being in possession without proper authority of arms and ammunition on 4th December 1923 at Ballinaclesh, Clashmore. Tried by a Committee, and executed in Waterford. He is buried in Youghal, Co. Cork.

Last Letter in 'Eire' Newspaper

Ballybricken Prison,
Waterford

My Dearest Mother,

Just a few lines to let you know that Paddy and myself are going to meet our Maker at 8 o'clock. Mother do not worry about me for you know I will meet my doom like a Geraldine should. I ask one request, I do not know if it will be granted or not. I ask for Paddy and Myself to be shot together. If not we will wait at Cork for one another. I hope you will not grieve for me, for, although not dying a death you would like me to, yet what more can we look for than the last Sacraments. We will go to confession and communion in the morning. So what have we to dread? I faced death too many times both by land and sea to worry myself about a treacherous Irish Man's bullet.

We were both resigned to our fate the minute we were taken and tell the people that did so much for us that we thank them from the bottom of our hearts. At the same time ask them if it would be fair to the other 46 if we were not shot.

Tell my chums we do not wish them to have any reprisals. God knows, there are enough and tell them I died a man, my crime being for loving my country. Well Mother we often said goodbye before, but this time we say it for good.

But never mind I hope we will meet again for by this time tomorrow I hope to be with father and brother. Would you mind asking anyone I caused trouble to in Youghal to forgive me and I forgive them?

Well Mother, I will now close not before wishing you a loving goodbye also Lina and Patie, Cathy, Mike, Dell, Kitty, Jimmy, Nora, Maggie, Ann, Theresa ad Christy and tell them to pray for us and offer up their communion for us. So goodbye now from your ever troublesome son, M. Fitzgerald.

P.S. Mother remember this is for poor Old Ireland and anything for her we would gladly lay down our lives for her. God save Ireland. Be sure and pray for us. I forgot Uncle Micky, J Fitz and family and Frank Morrissey and family.

Letter 2

Ballybricken Prison, Waterford

Dear Maureen,

I am writing these few lines as a last farewell to yourself and mother and all of your friends. By the time you will get this it will be all over with Paddy and me. I received everything you sent in today, also some stuff from a Miss L. Power, and up to the last I thank you and friends for what you have done for us. Well, as you mentioned in one letter about dancing when this was over, I knew only too well that Paddy and myself had danced our last. I am writing this and the last post is sounding. I wonder if it is over us. But cheer up. We as soldiers do not dread their best. If we did we would not be rebels from Cork. We asked them a favour; we want them to shoot us together. I don't know whether they grant it or not. We are quite content and only too proud to follow Terence McSweeney's footsteps. We would not recognise their Court and their Justice is '303', so if it benefits Ireland to have us die we are ready now before the dawn comes. I will now close, asking yourself and mother not to forget us in your prayers, also your friends, so I bid you a last farewell.

Remaining yours until death, and Irish Republican soldier.

M. Fitzgerald.

Letter to the Editor of the Newspaper Eire from the recipient.

2nd February 1923

A Chara,

I send you a copy for publication of a farewell letter of my friend, Michael Fitzgerald, one of the Irish Republican soldiers executed in Waterford on Thursday, 25th January. He wrote to me on the dawn of that morning. I only received it today. It came censored bearing the Mallow post-mark unstamped and marked fourpence to pay. It tells well of the men who could descend to such an act of

meanness. And I am sure it will do more than any pen picturing to show to the world the grandeur, the beauty and nobleness of those heroes of the Irish Republican Army who have and will give their lives that Ireland might live. "Many are called but few are chosen", and for the victorious few I beg the prayers of your readers.

Is Mise,
Maureen.

Letter 3

To his sister, brother and aunt.

Dear Lena, Cathy and Pattie,

Good-bye now, and pray for my soul, for I will be before my God tomorrow. Weep not for Paddy and me, for we will be only be dying the way hundreds of Irishmen died before. We will get the Last Sacraments at dawn, so we will be alright. I will know and see my father and brother now very soon. Cheer up.

Don't let my poor mother get down-hearted now, for even though it was I that made her hair grey, there is no one that repents it more.

Cathy, be sure and bring your children up rebels, and ask them to pray for me.

I will leave you now for good, hoping to meet you all in the next world.

I am, your fond brother
Mickey.

Be sure and remember that your brother will die a Geraldine and a man. Keep a look out on my mother.

Go ndeanaigh Dia trocaire orthu uiligh



I ndíol chuimhne

Patrick O'Reilly

Born Youghal, Co. Cork

Executed in Waterford Jail

Jan. 25th 1923

Buried Youghal, Co. Cork

R.I.P.

Go ndéanaigh Dia trócaire ar an anam

Patrick O'Reilly

Born Coastguard Station, Youghal, Co. Cork. He was arrested at Ballinaclash, Clashmore and executed in Waterford Jail, Jan. 25th 1923. Buried Youghal, Co. Cork.

Last letter in Eire Newspaper

Ballybricken Prison,
Waterford.

My dearest Father,

May God comfort you in your sad trouble at parting with me your only son, never mind, my life will help with the Republic. Father you must be very brave and help cheer up my poor mother, and remember me sometimes as a poor old soldier who died for Ireland.

Some of the Irish people may say hard things about me now, but one day they will remember the sacrifices I have made for them. Thank all my friends for their help to me while I was on the 'Run' and say goodbye to them for me. Well, Father, I will never see your sweet face again in this world, but what harm? We will meet again a happier brighter home. I am sending on my shaving gear and a white jersey, keep them in memory of me.

Father, this is my last goodbye and May God and his Blessed Mother bless you.

With deepest sympathy for your only darling son.

Padraig

P.S. Tell all the boys I have done my best to uphold the name of Co. Cork - God's own county. Say me to all the boys.

Letter 2 in 'Eire' Newspaper

Ballybricken Prison, Waterford.

My dearest Mother,

This is my last letter written to you in this world; Mother, I fought purely and simply as a soldier of the Irish Republican Army, and I am proud of what I have done for dear old Ireland. Some of the people may say hard things about me now but one day they will

realise the sacrifices I have made, and all for them. Mother, don't shed a single tear for me, as someday you will be proud to know you raised your only son to fight and die for the old cause of the Republic.

I am in a cell by myself tonight, but feel very happy and never braver. Mother, I will be in Heaven this time tomorrow night with Commandant Hurley, Jim Quain, Tom Power, Willie Hore and all my comrades who were killed in Clonmult. Remember me as a soldier who died for poor old Ireland.

Dearest Mother be brave as you always were, when you hear of this sad news. There will be bright and happy days in Ireland yet, and that before long I hope. I am sending you on all my Sacred Heart badges and medals which you can give to my comrades and friends. Say goodbye to Mrs. Quain and all the family for me. Malix is one of the bravest soldiers I ever met and a credit to his family. Mother you would not believe how big and strong I am now - even the officers here remarked it.

Tell all my comrades not to have reprisals for us as two wrongs never made a right. I forgive anyone that ever said anything about me and forgive me for saying anything about them.

Dear Mother as I only have a few hours to live and it would take weeks to write to all my friends I will write one letter which you can copy and send to all of them for me. Good night now and say a prayer for me. Remember me to Maggie, Molly, Annie, Bridget, Uncles and Aunts as I have no time to write to them.

Darling Mother, this is my last goodbye and May God and his Blessed Mother protect you all at home. With deepest sympathy - from your only darling son.

Patrick O'Reilly, Vice Commandant of IRA.

Letter 3 in Eire Newspaper

Ballybricken prison, Waterford

My Dear Friends,

I am writing these few lines to thank you all very much for your support to my comrades and myself during the Anglo Irish war and the present war.

I am going to meet my old comrades at 8 o'clock in the morning, so I will say good bye now. May God bless you all and grant you the peace you deserve. Remember me sometimes as a soldier who died for Ireland. Good-bye.

Yours faithfully,
Patrick John O' Reilly,
Voce Comdt. IRA.

Patrick Cunningham, William Conroy, Column Kelly, all from Birr, Co. Offaly.

Executed in Birr on January 26th 1923.

(Memoirs of a Tipperary Family. Fr. Pat Gaynor)

"In Tullamore, where several rebel volunteers were captured, three youths were released from prison on parole. By ill-chance they were tempted soon afterwards to hold up a few farmers who were on their way home from the town in the dusk of the evening. They demanded money at the point of a gun and procured in all about eighteen shillings. They were arrested and, at a court-martial in Roscrea, were identified by the farmers whom they had held up and were sentenced to death, all three, for robbery under arms and for breaking parole. At the time, the Irish Government had decided to put down violence and, by way of warning to everybody in Offaly County, the Tullamore youths were sentenced to death in Roscrea, and were brought to Ross Castle in Birr for execution.

Dean Ryan was fiercely indignant at the procedure, the more so since he was asked to provide one of his curates as Chaplain to give the condemned men the last rites of the Church. He decided to appoint two chaplains for the ordeal, Fr. Michael Dinan and myself (Fr. Gaynor). "On the eve of the executions, Fr. Dinan and myself spent an hour or two with the prisoners: one was only eighteen and the others were about twenty years of age. They were very resigned and to all appearances, were not in the least afraid. We heard their confessions and arranged that I should offer Mass for them in one of the rooms of the Castle next morning at six o'clock and would give them Holy Communion. I did not advert then that I was saying Mass in the great Protestant stronghold of Birr: my mind was totally absorbed by the tragedy that three young Irishmen were being put to death for theft of eighteen shillings, and by the duty of giving them the last Sacraments. I did not let myself visualise the coming horror of the executions. I felt only the familiar presence of death and tried to keep ice-cool; my one great fear was that I might break down and cry like a child and might break as well those poor lads' amazing courage and self-control.

After Mass, Fr. Dinan and I had breakfast with them; we tried to chat quietly and naturally and to be very kind. I took last messages for their relatives in Tullamore, including a shy message from the tallest boy to a girl friend, and forwarded them that same day.

At a quarter to eight the officer-in-charge came to their room and asked them if they had any last request. Two of the boys said he would some lemonade and the third asked for a bottle of stout. After the final treat, they were led away to one of the little twin towers at the archway beside the Castle and taken upstairs to be blindfolded to have pieces of white cloth pinned over their hearts. The firing squad then took up position just inside the archway (between it and the Castle). Some rifles were loaded with live cartridges, others with blanks, so that the soldiers would not know who among them had fired the fatal bullets. Fr. Dinan and I stood near at hand, oilstocks opened. Three chairs were placed, backs to the east, opposite the firing squad, and at eight o'clock the blindfolded youths were helped down the stairs from the eastern

tower and were placed in the chairs and were tied to them. The tallest boy - without any air of bravado - asked to be let face the firing squad standing. There was not even a tremor in his voice and his comrades were equally calm and brave. On being told that he must sit in the chair, he obeyed without a word. Next moment a silent signal was given by the officer-in-charge and the shots rang out: two of the boys seemed to be unconscious, if not dead, but the third boy fell sideways and the chair toppled over and he lay moaning and twitching, on the ground. Fr. Dinan and I rushed forward to give Extreme Unction, but were told to wait. Then three officers advanced and placed revolvers against the boys' temples and fired one shot each to end their agony. I anointed two with all haste and Fr. Dinan anointed the other boy. All my attention was fixed on my own part in the tragedy.

While I live I will remember how serenely they faced death, how resigned they were - poor victims of mischance! - making atonement for a boyish prank without a word of complaint. They were laid to rest in three graves, which had been dug some fifty yards outside the archway, east of the avenue. (Later the remains were taken to Tullamore). I read the burial service and when the graves were filled, Fr. Dinan and I walked away, scarcely speaking a word. As we walked away past the Church to Seffin, people who met them glanced hastily away as if death walked by our side."

William Conroy, Patrick Cunningham and Colm Kelly were executed on January 26th 1923.

Glór Don Athair



William Conroy

Born Tullamore, Co. Offaly

**Executed Ross Castle, Birr
Co. Offaly**

January 26, 1923

Buried in Clonminch Graveyard, Tullamore.

R.I.P.

William Conroy

Born Tullamore, Co. Offaly. Arrested at Tullamore and executed Birr, Co. Offaly, January 26, 1923, and buried in Clonminch Graveyard, Tullamore. The charge against him was: - Possession of firearms, feloniously and Burglariously entering into intent the houses of several residents in Tullamore and stealing there from a silver watch, several sums of money with other goods and chattels. He was tried by Military court.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph



Colum Kelly

Born Tullamore, Co. Offaly

He was executed Ross Castle
Birr, Offaly

January 26, 1923

Buried in Clonminch Graveyard
Tullamore.

R.I.P.

Colum Kelly

Born Tullamore, Co. Offaly. He was tried by a Military Court in Roscrea of being in possession of firearms on 21st. November, feloniously and burglariously, entering into intent, the houses of several residents in Tullamore and stealing there from a silver watch, several sums of money with other goods and chattels. He was executed Birr, Offaly, January 26, 1923, and was buried in Clonminch Graveyard, Tullamore.

His last Letter to his Mother

From Tullamore, executed in Birr.

My Dear Mother,

Just a few lines, as they are the last you will ever have from me on earth. Do not fret or give way. I am dying a happy death. I had two priests and received all the rites of the Catholic Church. Get my little sister Christina and my brothers Joseph and Charley to pray for me, also pray for me yourself, and I will do the same for you all in Heaven. I am going to be executed in the morning at 8 o'clock, so all I ask of you is not to fret or give in. I am sending you all my belongings-my prayer book, photos, also a lock of my hair. I beg of you as a favour not to grieve. Tell my Father not to fret, as I am going to Heaven. Tell all my comrades and chums to pray for me, and I will do the same for them in Heaven. Bid everyone good-bye for me. So, cheer up, mother.

From your fond and loving Son,

Columba Kelly.

May the Lord have mercy on us all.

Cuimhneachán



Patrick Cunningham

Born Tullamore, Co. Offaly

**Executed in Ross Castle, Birr,
Co. Offaly**

January 26, 1923

He is buried in Clonminch Graveyard, Tullamore.

Patrick Cunningham

Born Tullamore, Co. Offaly. Executed in Birr, Co. Offaly, January 26, 1923. He is buried in Clonminch Graveyard, Tullamore. He was charged with being in possession of firearms, feloniously and burglariously entering into intent the houses of several residents in Tullamore and stealing therefrom a silver watch, and several sums of money along with other goods and chattels.

Last Letter of Patrick to his Mother

Birr Castle

25/1/'23

Dearest Mother,

Just a line, hoping all at home are well. This is the last letter I will ever write to you in this world, as I am to be shot here in Birr Castle in the morning at 8 o'clock. I have seen the priest, and I am happy under the circumstances, as I will go straight to Heaven in the morning; and, sure, after all, isn't that what we were all born for - to try and save our souls and get to Heaven?

When you come to think of it, I will be far better off in Heaven looking down on you all, and praying for you night and day and protecting you. Don't fret, mother, as I am very happy, knowing I am going straight to God. Remember me to Mr. Connor and family also to Mrs. Whelan, Joe and Mike, and don't forget above all to tell them to pray for me, as I will pray for them in Heaven; also to my dear brothers and sisters Timmy, Jimmy, Kitty and Sally-tell them especially that I will watch over them from above -also little Paddy. God bless you all and protect you. Now, dearest Mother, don't you know I will be far better off in Heaven. Mother, for God's sake, don't be worrying. I am happy, and I know you will be when I am. Goodbye now, dearest Mother, forever, and let me ask of you as my parting wish not to fret for me. I will meet you all soon in Heaven. Again saying goodbye to dear Mother, Tim, Jim, Kitty and Sally forever.

Your fond Son, Paddy.

P.S. Get a few masses said for me, also remember me in your prayers - P. R.I.P.

Patrick Geraghty, Joseph Byrne and Thomas Gibson Executed Portlaoighse 27/1/23

Both of the accused men, Patrick Geraghty and Joseph Byrne were found of the charges preferred against them and were sentenced to death by firing squad. The findings and sentences were duly confirmed in each case and the executions took place at Portlaoise prison on Saturday, 27th. January, at 8 a.m. The party who made up the firing squad were drawn from the Free State command at Roscrea. Geraghty had been a Commandant with the Offaly No. 1 Brigade and Byrne had been an Adjutant. Michael Sheehy told Ernie O'Malley, these executions depressed the republican prisoners greatly because they all thought that they were going to be next.

A proposal to adjourn a meeting of the Co. Council as a mark of protest against the executions then taking place was made by Councillor William McEvoy in the first days in February. While many of the members felt that it was tragic that this situation had developed, the chairman did not think that adjourning the meeting would do any good or influence the government's decision to use this extreme form of punishment. Councillor Lewis made the point that the men were now being executed for the very acts their executioners had taught them. Mr. M. P. Collier expressed the view that the necessity for these executions never arose. All the councillors regretted that the Government considered it necessary to carry out executions and expressed the hope that the activities that led up to them would cease.

(From The Quiet County by Michael J. Rafter)

In Undying Memory



Patrick Geraghty

Born Rochfortbridge Westmeath

Executed in Portlaoighise Prison

January 27, 1923.

Buried Oldtown, Rochfortbridge.

R.I.P.

Patrick Geraghty

Born Rochfortbridge, Mullingar, Westmeath. Charged on the 5th January 1923, on a charge of having possession, without proper authority, of one automatic pistol at Croghan Co. Offaly on the 10th. November 1922. He was tried by a Committee. Executed in Portlaoighise, January 27, 1923. Buried Oldtown, Rochfortbridge.

Cuimhneacháin



Joseph Byrne

Born at Cruit, Croghan

Executed Portlaoighse Prison

January 27, 1923

Buried in Kilclonfirt, Dairgean
Co. Offaly.

R.I.P.

Joseph Byrne

Born at Cruitdangan, Croghan. Joseph Byrne was tried on the 5th January 1923, on a charge of having possession of one Webley revolver at Croghan, Offaly on the 10th November 1922, without proper authority.

Executed Portlaoighise, January 27, 1923. Buried in Kilclonfirt, Dairgean, Co. Offaly. He was tried by a Committee.

In Undying Memory



Thomas Gibson

Born Cloneygowan, Co. Offaly

Executed in Maryboro Prison February 26th, 1923

Buried Raheen Cemetery, Cloneygowan, Co. Offaly

Thomas Gibson was the only Free State
execution during the month of February 1923.

R.I.P

Thomas Gibson.

Born Cloneygowan, Co. Offaly. Tom Gibson was caught at a threshing at Foyles of Cullinagh, Portlaoise, Co. Laois in possession of a revolver and brought to Portlaoise jail and executed there in February 26th, 1923 by Free State soldiers. Buried Raheen Cemetery, Cloneygowan, on the Laois/ Offaly border.

He was a former Free State soldier, and was the only Free State execution during the month of February 1923. He was charged by a General court martial of treachery in as much as that on the 19th November 1922, being then on active service, he left Portlaoise barracks and took with him five rifles and one grenade cap bearing the same serial numbers as those stolen when he deserted the army, and this sealed his fate.

The unfortunate Gibson, who had a little over a year's service in the army when he deserted, was around 23 years of age at the time of his death. He was attached to A. Company, 51st Battalion based at the military barracks in Portlaoise under the command of Captain J. O'Meara. It is believed that Gibson was executed in the military barracks and not the prison. His execution is reputed to have been a poorly carried out affair. After being hit by a volley of shots from the firing squad, and prior to him being anointed he stood up and an officer at close range administered the 'coup de grace'.

(From The Quiet County By Michael J. Rafter)

Thomas Gibson's death was witnessed by Dan Keating, Kerry (still living at 104 years of age). Dan was a patient in the military hospital and from his bedroom window he saw the execution taking place.

Last letter in 'Eire' Newspaper.

23rd February

My Dear Mother,

I take the pleasure of writing a few lines, hoping to find yourself and all enjoying good health. As for myself I cannot complain about anything, I am in the best of health and spirits Thank God, and you? Well mother I hope you are contented over me, as my only wishes are today (Friday) that you would never for a moment

fret or let worry for me, for I am too happy and prepared to meet what is already read out to me. I would wish you to do as I tell you; cause you know if I am not prepared, no one is. I find it very hard to tell you, but I must. On this 23rd day of February, now 10 o'clock, I am sentenced to death and must on tomorrow morning face it. But dear mother I thank God I am able to. You know it is not very odd to me, after all my adventures it is all the fortunes of war. Well mother, I must send my best love and good wishes to you all, father and all my brothers. I had a letter from Aunt Ellen or Annie from Emo. I was glad to hear from them, of course I have not a lot of strange things to tell you as I know very little in here. Also tell all the boys I was asking for them. I received everything you sent me. I hope my death won't change anyone or anything. I can't say much more as I cannot think to tell you. I have told you all so I bid you all along farewell on this earth hoping to meet you all in the next life.

Your loving son, Tom (ever).

Letter 2 in Eire Newspaper To his mother same date

I am preparing to go to mass at present. Well my dear mother, I must write a few more lines as I feel in great spirits thank God. I am very contented now, as it is 8 o'clock. I had a priest in with me two hours ago, a very nice man and he is very interested in me. He is coming again at 10' o'clock. I am also attending mass here before I depart. I feel at the present as if I would like to die, and there is nothing in the world on my mind. I wish you could come and see Fr. Doyle as I would like if you could have a chat with him. It is now fifteen minutes to 10' o'clock and he is just leaving me. So I will shortly retire for a few hours as I am after writing a terrible lot. You know I am writing to old friends just to pass the time away, also to keep smiling over old adventures. You would think I was going to a dance of some amusement.

Well mother, you remember poor William did not get one

minute to prepare. Well I must say I am well looked after.

I have no enemies anyhow. I never did anything to any, Thank God. I am taking the responsibility myself and am able to do so. You will later on get more particulars about me as I am speaking from all I know, that is not a lot. I would like to write to a few more people, but I am getting sleepy over this letter. Of course there is not much to talk about, Thank God, only I must say in favour of things.

Well, up to the present time 10.30, I am still smiling and enjoying a chat with the guards over me and talking about old times. I am thinking of getting a rest for a while as its closing 12 o'clock and I would feel the better of it, as I didn't get much last night. I was called early to appear before my charge. I am enjoying it right fine. Everything I require is given to me. I will leave word for the book of St. Anthony to be sent back to you. I have it at the present and I have been very interested in same. It is now 12.15 and I will retire for a while and I will finish this when I awaken.

Well mother dear, as it is 5.15 and the time is drawing so near I must finish my letter. I am in the best of spirits after a few hours sleep. The nearer my hours come, the more I smile, so now mother, I hope you will not fret too much for me.

Drawing to a close I send you all my best love and happiness.

From your loving son.

Goodbye, Tom.

5.30. and smiling

The Last Note

The song is to the air of the "Deportees"

It is based on the letter written to his family the night before his execution in Maryborough Gaol 24/2/1923

1

The room it is dark on this cold winter's evening
The room it is dark and two friends are with thee.
They say their farewells before your long journey
And you said your goodbyes and no more to see me.

Chorus

Your happy thank God to go on this journey
Your happy thank God but your lonesome for me.
Your going away as many others before you
And many more set to follow until our foes see.

2.

You'll go on that journey across the blue yonder
You'll go on the journey across the blue skies for me.
You'll not be afraid with your friends there beside you
You'll not be afraid as there is no fear in thee.

Chorus

3.

Tonight in your room that is 10ft by 10 ft
You'll sit at your table and write your last plea
You'll think of your mother, you'll think of your father
Your brothers and sisters and the wind blowing free.

Chorus

There is none now so deaf as those who'll not listen
There is none so blind as who look but won't see.
You write your Last Note to those deafened and blinded
You write your Last Note that some day they'll be healed.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph



James O'Rourke

Born Upper Gloucester St Dublin.

**He was executed in Beggar's Bush,
Dublin**

March 13th 1923

Buried in Glasnevin

Republican Plot.

R.I.P.

James O'Rourke

Born Upper Gloucester St, Dublin. He was executed in Beggar's Bush, Dublin, March 13th. 1923 for participating in an attack on Jury's Hotel, Headquarters local Government Department, Dame St, Dublin. He was buried in Glasnevin Republican Plot.

Last letter to his Father

March 12th 1923

My Dearest Father,

When you receive this you will know the worst. Keep up your heart and comfort my mother, for she will need it.

You will be brave and so your best. I did my duty and I am prepared to meet my God. I fought as a soldier of the Irish Republic, and I am not ashamed of it. We will win yet, for those lives are not offered up for nothing.

I forgive everyone. I have no personal spite against any man or woman. Cheer up, my dear father, and be brave and help my mother in her hour of sorrow.

Goodbye, loving father, goodbye, goodbye.

Your loving son,

Jim.

Letter 2

Mountjoy Jail
March 12th 1923.

My Dearest Mother,

I have just seen an officer who told me I am to be executed at 8 o'clock in the morning. My dearest Mother, for God's sake try and be brave under this heavy cross. Ask the Mother of God to help you. I am sure she will, for she had to carry the same cross. Think of others who lost more than one. Try and be brave, for I am doing the same in my own small way. The guard and all the soldiers here are very kind.

Dearest mother, death is but a release from this troublesome world. I feel like someone who has won a big prize. It is all for Ireland so I don't mind dying.

The guards brought me to the office, I got permission to see Harry Ardiffe and Paddy Barron. I am to be shifted - I wonder where...

I am now in Beggars Bush Barracks. The priest has just been with me. He was a grand gentleman and he gave me great strength, and heard my confession and he gave me a lovely book. My dearest Mother, I feel very happy, oh so happy, so happy, I cannot describe it. What is death? Nothing but a glorious release from this troublesome and unhappy world.

Tell everyone I was asking for them, and I thought of everyone in my last few hours. Bear up, my dearest Mother, and resign your soul to God's Holy will, and carry this heavy cross as well as Our Blessed Mother, the Mother of Mothers. I will write to my father and brothers now. The priest is going to say mass for me in the morning and I shall receive holy communion. Is it not grand to get time to prepare to meet my God? God is truly merciful to me. I will but leave this earth and will see all my comrades in Heaven.

Tell Miss Kavanagh to pray for me, also Mary and Kit, and all the neighbours-also get masses said for my soul, as many as you can, my dearest Mother. I am very, very sorry for all the trouble I have caused you during the last few years, you were so good and unselfish. I shall pray for you in heaven, I am sorry I can't take you with me.

Dearest Mother, don't break down; try and keep up, don't give way to sorrow. I know it will be very, very hard. God help you in this hour. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph strengthen you in your hour of need. Think of all the boys who have died before me-Tone, Emmet, Cassidy, Gaffney, Colley and Cole, and all the rest, too numerous to mention. Think of all the saints who gave their lives in the cause of religion and their country. The only thing I am sorry for is that it is my own countrymen who will shoot me. But it is as painful for them as it is for you.

Give my love to Fran O'Brien, Stanley Buckley and all the boys and girls. Give O'Brien and Stanley a book each and thank Mrs. Buckley for her kindness to me, also Mrs. Kavanagh and her daughter. I will send home all my belongings, and you can do as

you wish with them. I have given the guard in Mountjoy my razor and soap. My dearest mother give Barney, Jack and Tommy something each in remembrance of me, and also my Father. Keep up your heart, don't break down, and be as brave as possible. My soul is as clean as the day I was born, and I am prepared to meet my Maker.

Goodbye, and God bless you. Goodbye, dearest Mother, till we meet in Heaven. Goodbye, goodbye, and pray for me night and morning.

Goodbye, dearest mother, goodbye.

From your loving son, Jim

(From Eire newspaper)

Thy Will Be Done



William Healy

Born Blackpool, Donoughmore

He was executed Cork Jail, March 13 1923

Buried St. Finbarr's Republican Plot Cork

R.I.P.

Beannacht Dé le n-anam

William Healy

Born 52 Dublin St, Blackpool, Donoughmore. He was executed Cork Jail, March 13, 1923 for murder conspiracy, aiding attack on P.T. troops, and unlawful possession of a revolver during an attack in Blarney St.. He is buried in St. Finbarr's Republican Plot, Cork.

Body Handed Over To Relatives

(The Cork Examiner Wednesday October 29th 1924.)

The remains of William Healy, of Cork City, who was executed in Cork in March 1923, were handed over to the relatives yesterday afternoon, and will be interred to-day in the Republican Plot, St. Finbarr's Cemetery.

The remains were received by members of the deceased's family at Cork Gaol at 2 p.m., and were then removed to 56 Grand Parade for purposes of verification, it not having been permitted at the gaol to remove the lid of the coffin.

The cortege was headed by the Volunteer Piper's Band, immediately following which was the hearse. The chief mourners followed on foot and in carriages, and a large detachment of Volunteers and members of kindred organisations brought up the rear. Many of the general public, including the Lord Mayor (Mr. S. French) and members of public bodies, walked in the cortege, and the remains were reverently saluted as they passed through the city streets.

The chief mourners were:- Maurice Healy, father; Patrick, Thomas, Michael, Maurice, John, Mathew, Jeremiah and Denis Healy, brothers; the Misses Madge and Molly Healy, sisters; Mrs. T. Healy, sister-in-law; Miss J. O'Callaghan, Messrs Jerh. O'Callaghan, John O'Callaghan, P. O'Callaghan (2), M. O'Callaghan, C. O'Callaghan; M. Murphy; Michael, Maurice, and A. Healy; D. and T. McCarthy; D. and T. Forde; F. Coleman, D. Drew, J. Butler, W. Walsh, R. Aherne; M. O'Connor; Mrs. Burns, Mrs O'Connor, Mrs C. O'Callaghan, Mrs. T. McCarthy, Mrs. McAuliffe, Mrs. Forde, Mrs. Coleman, Mrs. Drew, Mrs. Butler (cousins).

Verification of the remains was conducted under the supervision of three doctors, and the remains were then transferred to another coffin, that in which they were received were shallow and unfurnished, having only a small breastplate with the inscription "William Healy". The delay lasted for more than an hour and the cortege proceeded to the Church of the Immaculate

Conception, St. Finbarr's West, via the South Main St and Barrack's St., reaching the Church just before six o'clock.

The coffin was borne into the mortuary chapel, where it will lie overnight, and until the funeral for St. Finbarr's cemetery this afternoon. Mass will be celebrated at 10 o'clock this morning for the repose of the soul of the deceased. The oak coffin in which the remains are now encased, is brass-mounted, and the inscription on the breast-place is in Irish and reads as follows: -

Liam Ó h-Ealuigte

Iad Briogáid Corcaige

D'Ainm Poblacta na h-Eireann

Do togad 'fa troid

Do cuiread cun báis I-lamaid an namaid

An Sad Bliadain de Poblact na h-Eireann

Ar a aois 20

Go nDeanadh Dia Trocaire an a Anan

A number of beautiful wreaths were laid on the coffin.

BALLAD OF PARLE, CREANE AND HOGAN

As the cold grey dawn was breaking over ancient Wexford town
Three patriotic heroes were led forth in fetters bound
Because they love their country, and served her night and day
And before they faced the rifles this is what those boys did say.

Chorus

Take away the blood-stained bandage from off an Irish brow.
We fought and bled for Ireland and will not skirk it now
We have helped her in her struggle, we answered to her call
And because we loved her freedom, we are placed against the
wall.

Jim Parle from Clover Valley, John Creane from Tagmon
Pat Hogan from old Wexford, a true born Irish son,
They have sprinkled our dear shamrock with their blood for
freedom's day
And before they faced the rifles this is what those boys did say.

Chorus

James Parle, John Creane, Patrick Hogan,
Executed 13th March 1923, Military Barracks, Wexford
(from Republican Wexford Remembers and County Wexford's Civil War.)

One of the saddest episodes of the Civil War in Wexford was the execution of three young Republicans by the National Army firing squad. On a cold February evening six weary I.R.A soldiers made their way on foot to a house in Horetown, Co. Wexford. They sought a change from bedding down in open fields and hillsides. The house was owned by a Major, ex-British army, and unknown to him the servant girls provided them with food. On the following evening when five of them were having their tea in the loft a Free State soldier burst in, with revolver in hand. He had noticed a pair of 'leggings' beneath the kitchen garb hastily donned by one of the young men. Taken by surprise the men raised their hands. The sixth man, Barney Cosgrave, had left the loft only minutes earlier. He was about to join them when he saw his comrades being escorted away by the Free State soldiers, put in a lorry and taken to the Military Barracks in Wexford (later the Co. Hall). They were James Parle, his brother William, John Creane, Murt Walsh and Patrick Hogan. He could not help them and made his escape by swimming across the local river that divided them from him.

A few days later the five were brought before a Military Tribunal in the Barracks and charged with being in possession of firearms without proper authority. On the evening of March 12th and three weeks after their capture, the names of James Parle, John Creane and Patrick Hogan were called out aloud by a Free State soldier in a room where they were with forty or fifty prisoner and told they were to shot at eight o'clock the following morning. As they were leaving James waved to his brother William not knowing he would never see him again. The three were lodged upstairs in cells.

Fr Patrick Walsh of Taghmon, one of the priests who attended them, wrote a moving account of the hours before their execution, and the courage exhibited by the three young men. He quotes Jim Parle asking in a happy voice, "Do you hear the birds, Father"?,

and a few minutes later "I never felt as happy in all my life". This was a bare thirty minutes before his execution. Jim Parle also asked Fr. Walsh to advise Bob Lambert, (the leader of the South Wexford Republicans at the time) and his boys, to do nothing rash. John Creane, aged nineteen, showing the same courage as his comrade, asked Fr. Walsh to break the news to his parents. Pat Hogan, also nineteen, appeared only to be worried at the loss he would be to his father in his work.

The executions took place at eight o'clock on the Tuesday morning of March 13th 1923. The men were taken blindfolded to the place of execution accompanied by two priests. They were halted beside a large, newly dug grave. Three coffins lay nearby. A moment later the fatal volley rang out. Patrick Hogan died instantly, his comrades lingered in their throes until a Free State soldier delivered the coup de grace, the revolver shots in the ear of each man. The two priests rushed to the side of the dead and gave them the last rites of the Catholic Church. Immediately afterwards the bodies of the three men were placed in the coffins and buried. The morning's work done the firing party retired to a private room where, tradition has it, they were fortified with whiskey. Some time later before the Free State army returned the gaol to the County Council the remains of the three executed IRA soldiers were disinterred and taken to the Military Barracks, Kilkenny, under cover of darkness and in total secrecy, presumably for fear of local demonstrations. Following many meetings between the relatives of those executed and the military authorities, the remains were handed over to their relatives. The funeral passed through New Ross, Taghmon via the Clovervalley Road. They were accorded a public funeral and buried in a specially acquired Republican Plot in the cemetery St. Ibar's, Wexford.

On Sunday June 26th 1949, a monument was unveiled to the three men in Taghmon. In recent years the site of the executions at Spawell Road, has been marked by a Garden of Remembrance through the efforts of the National Graves Association.

Parle - Crean – Hogan

The mourners weep for the three who sleep by the Slaney's silvery stream,
In Crosstown lone, there's a Celtic stone o'er an honoured plot so green
By that rebel tomb you'll know the doom of Parle, Hogan and Creane
Let history tell, each victim fell by the Treaty's cruel reign.

In the battlefield they would not yield in the rebel ranks they trod,
They were caught and tried, and each one died shot by the firing squad
Ye mourners weep for the three who sleep where we kneel each Eastertide
To pledge anew that we'll be true to all who nobly died.

If some forget the rebel plot in Crosstown's churchyard old
Now let them pause, upon the cause of every rebel bold
Oh, where's the gain, 't was all in vain, the hand of vile duress
Took the youthful three, sad sight to see with vengeance to oppress
Oh, Wexford Jail speak now your tale, each cell looks grim and cold
Oh, let me tell, each hero fell defending Erin old.

Did their deaths not cry to Justice high ere that court in Wexford jail
With the firing squad sent each soul to God, while friends did weep and
wail
Had I seen them fall, for revenge I'd call, though 'tis better indeed to pray
Yet my blood would boil, 'cause on Irish soil, they were done to death one
day.

And oh, ye three, full of life and glee with many a year to live
With hearts so brave, by an early grave did you speak that word 'forgive'
mid radiant light and hopes so bright what mortal ere could stand
With no crime here, but his country dear and forgive the killing hand.

And now you three we'll honour thee and your memory shall not fade
Since 't was your lot in the rebel plot your bodies to be laid.
In peace you sleep by the Slaney deep and while that stream do roll
On Wexford's sod we'll pray to God, for mercy on each soul.

(All from Republican Wexford Remembers)

Thy Will Be Done



John Creane

Age 18

**Born Cloneraine, Taghmon
Co. Wexford**

Executed Wexford, March 13, 1923

He is buried in Crosstown Republican Plot, Co. Wexford.

Rest In Peace.

John Creane

Executed 13th March 1923.

Born Cloneraine, Taghmon, Co. Wexford, John, aged 18, was a near neighbour of James Parle and the youngest of the three. He was employed as a shop assistant. He had one brother in the Civic Guards and another in the Free State Army. Executed Wexford, March 13, 1923. He is buried in Crosstown Republican Plot, Co.

Wexford. He was charged with being in possession without proper authority of a revolver. He was tried by a committee.

His last letters from Military Barracks, Wexford 8/3/'23

Dear Sister,

I received your welcome letter. Glad to hear that you are well. I suppose you have heard from home of our arrest. J. Parle, W. Parle, Murt Walsh and a Wexford chap was captured with me. We were caught at Lakin's, Horetown. You know the place. We were in hard luck but perhaps it will be better the next time. I had no letter from Jim or Patsy. The latter is too staunch to the F.S. to write to a Repub. - however I suppose I can live without it. We have a fairly good time here. All the boys (neighbours) are in good form. We're waiting anxiously for parcel of medals you promised to send. It never arrived. The clergy still hold out, still refuses us our rights of Holy Mass by the so-called Irish Free State. Black and Tans had far better morals as bad as they were.

I pray and hope the clergy may find their mistake before it is too late for some of us. It is hard for us to live at all but God is very good and our cause is just.

There is one favour I ask you before I conclude is that you send me some Blessed Medals or a Cross and never for a moment believe the slanderous stories that are used against us.

Hoping you are in the best of health and that I shall live to write again. Things are very hot at present. It is hard to escape capture and the bullet.

I Remain,
Your Affec. Bro.
Jack

Letter 2

The Gaol
12th March 1923.

My Dearest Father and Mother,

I must break the news to you that I was trying to ward off for the past few weeks. God knows it is very hard for me to do it when I think of the pain and trouble it will cause you. I have just heard that we three, Jim Parle, Pat Hogan and myself are to be shot in the morning. Before this letter reaches you I shall probably have gone before the firing squad.

I am after making my confession with Father Wickham, also with Father Walsh, and we will receive Holy Communion in the morning. I hope my soul will be prepared as it should be. I pray God may give me strength to bear up. I will die happily if you both promise to do your best to bear this heavy cross which God has sent you. God, in His infinite mercy, is very good to me in giving me such time to prepare. He will also help you both to bear up, and it will be my dying prayer that He may.

Father Walsh has promised to go and see you, also Father Wickham. I have written to Jim and Patsy; I told them all. Dearest Mother, I hope for your sake you will do your best to bear the awful trouble I have cast on you. Remember me in your prayers. All that I have here belonging to me I have made arrangements to be sent home to you. I have given a half completed ring to Father Wickham; he will give it to you. Give my love to Dolly and Sonny; tell them I won't forget them when I go to my Father in Heaven.

I trust you will bear no ill-will to anyone connected with my arrest, as I freely forgive them all. Give my best wishes and prayers to all the boys. Remember me to Kate Whelan and all around. Tell all, with God's help and grace, I will die like a true soldier. Tell Dolly that as a special favour I ask her to make the Nine Fridays for me. Father Walsh has promised me to remember me in his Masses. As the time is drawing short, and I must get an

hour's rest, I must conclude, with fervent prayers and best love to all.

Good-bye to all, and we will meet in Heaven

Your loving son, Jack

A Letter from Fr. Michael Murphy to Mrs. Creane

Tinahely,
Co. Wicklow.
March 15th, 1923.

Dear Mrs Creane,

I thought Jack was only a chap but I find he was a man - a great man - a hero; one of those great ones who will live forever in Irish History. And hence you don't need sympathy but deserve congratulations. I need say no more at present.

I will offer Mass for the three heroes tomorrow morning although I am convinced they don't need it.

In future I will pray to, not for such martyrs.

Kindest regards to Watty and all.

Michael Murphy C.C.

We have loved him in Life,
let us not forget him in Death



James Parle

Born Clovervalley, Taghmon, Co Wexford

He was executed Wexford Jail, March

13th, 1923, and buried in Crosstown

Republican Plot, Co. Wexford

Aged 25 Years.

R.I.P.

James Parle

Born Clovervalley, Taghmon, was the oldest, aged 25, who together with his three brothers joined the I.R.A. prior to the truce in 1921. He was typical of a young man of his age. He played football and the concertina and worked as a shop assistant. He had one brother in the National Army and another in the Civic Guards. James wrote his last letter to his parents on 12th March 1923. He

was executed Wexford Jail, March 13, 1923 and buried in Crosstown Republican Plot, Co. Wexford.

Letter

The Gaol. Wexford

My Dearest Parents,

Providence has decreed that I shall be executed along with two of my gallant comrades at 8 o'clock sharp to-morrow (Tuesday). It is a hard trial for you to bear in your old days, but the knowledge that I am dying for a great and noble cause will help to minimise the grief and anxiety, which you may feel after my death.

Rev. Father Walsh and Rev. Father Wickham were most attentive to me during my short stay in the cells, and did everything that could possibly be done for my personal comfort, Father Walsh hearing my Confession and preparing me for my journey to the next world.

My last request to you, father, mother, brothers and sisters is, that you pray most devoutly for the welfare of myself and my gallant comrades, John Creane and Patrick Hogan, who, with God's help, will be happy for evermore in heaven. I will pray for you all.

Good-bye to you all for the last time.
From your loving and affectionate son,
Jim

Go ndeanaigh Dia trochaire
orthu uiligh



Patrick Hogan

Born William St, Wexford

He was executed Wexford

Jail, March 13, 1923

Buried in Crostown Republican Plot,
Co. Wexford.

R.I.P.

Patrick Hogan

Born William St, Wexford. He was executed Wexford Jail, March 13, 1923. buried in Crostown Republican Plot, Co. Wexford.

Aged 19 years, worked for his father, a Farrier in Wexford town. Like James Parle, both Patrick Hogan and John Creane were pre-truce Volunteers. All three were unmarried, well known and respected. He was charged by a Committee of being in possession, without proper authority of a revolver on 15th February 1923.

Last Letter in 'Eire' Newspaper

My Dearest Mother,

I am sending you my last farewell as in the morning I am going to face my doom. But Mother do not worry about me as I have had a priest and made a good confession, and prepared to meet my God and be received into Heaven where someday we shall meet and enjoy the happiness there.

Dearest Mother keep brave and don't fret only pray for me and my comrades. There is a parcel in the Barracks, and there is a brooch in the parcel that I made and that I am sending to you as a keepsake to remind you of a son who was always so good and loving to you. I again ask you to keep brave and not fret. I know how it will hurt you. Keep up and do not be downhearted as I am dying happy myself and my comrades and you know that God's will must be done.

But all I hope for is that God will look over you, father and the children and guide you all to further glory and happiness and send you full and plenty of everything in this world.

I forgive the men who are carrying this out, as they think they are right, as I thought I was. So my last prayer is to forgive them and God will settle for all.

I will writer Father my last farewell, so goodbye and may God protect you all from the harms of this word until we meet in the next world. This is your dearest and loving son's prayer and last farewell.

To my dearest and loving Mother, from your dearest and loving son,

Pat.

Good Bye and God bless you all.

The Present Government say that you are responsible for this terrible crime. It is no fallacy! Every day in the week you can read their catch-cry, "The Will of the People!"

We know that is not your will to break the hearts of the fathers and Mothers of Ireland.

Therefore, we ask you, as a protest against this shameful accusation to use the only weapon at your disposal and **Vote 1 & 2** for the Republican Candidates **Dr. Ryan** and **Bob Lambert**, and help to lift the weight of shame and sorrow from our loved Ireland

Printed by reps. W. Hanrahan, 14 South Main Street, Wexford

HERE'S THEIR MEMORY

As I passed Wexford jail, on a bright summer evening
My heart missed a beat as I gazed on the scene,
Where three gallant heroes Parle, Creane, and Hogan
Died for old Ireland, the orange, white and green.

T'was on a March morning they were led from their prison
Young Hogan from Wexford tall and proud was his frame
He was placed in the centre, his comrades beside him
For the guns of the soldiers the better to aim.

He died in that first hail of shots from the rifles
While our other two heroes fell twisted with pain
As their priests knelt to help them in their last dying moments
Parle cried out bravely: "Shoot us again!".

With two bullets for Creane, and two for his comrade
The Free Stater's Captain quickly obliged
Then their bodies were buried in that old Wexford Courtyard
For the love of their country they'd fought and they'd died.

It was from Major Lakin's these young men were captured
As they fought while their captain made his daring escape
O'er the hills and the fields Barney Cosgrave retreated
To rejoin his brigade and return to the fray.

On the night 'fore they died Parle, Creane and young Hogan
In the cells of their prison lay calm and serene
They requested their priests take these words to their parents
"Say we died for old Ireland, the orange, white and green.
So farewell to our heroes so young yet so youthful
Two in their twenties and one just eighteen
May their memories live on and their cause never falter
For they died for old Ireland the orange, white and green.

Words and music by Séan O'Farrell

**Timothy O'Sullivan, Charlie Daly, Séan Larkin,
Daniel Enright
Executed March 14th 1923, Drumboe Castle.**

Specimen Copy of the Letter to be sent to the Next-of-Kin of
each executed prisoner.

I am to inform you that

(Name)-----

was tried by-----

that he was found guilty of

(Charge)-----

and sentenced to death.

This sentence was executed on the morning of

Respectfully yours.

(Signature)-----

Glór Don Athair



Timothy Sullivan

**Aughatubrid and William St
Listowel, Co Kerry**

Executed March 14th 1923

Drumboe Castle.

Buried in Listowel Cemetery

R.I.P.

"I die ■ Republican Soldier"

Timothy Sullivan

Timothy Sullivan. Born Auaghatubrid, Co. Kerry, (William St, Listowel, Co Kerry), was the eldest boy in a family of nine children. His father died young and his widow sold the farm and returned to her native place in Listowel. After local national school Timothy worked in Gibson's drapery store. There he met an ardent patriot, James Surgue. Being a young boy he had to be contend

with watching the local Volunteers at their weekly drill and manoeuvres in the Island, in the Market or in the Furry Glen.

At last his time arrived and he was enrolled in the Irish Volunteers, soon after attaining the rank of section commander. Before he was accepted for active service, there came the years of the Black-and-Tans and naturally this young Volunteer did not escape their attention. On one occasion he was severely beaten by Raymond and Cahill, two names who need no introduction to the people of Listowel. He was on 'the run' for some time, and escaped without being wounded or captured. Part of the summer was spent in the volunteer training camp. Collins and Liam Lynch differed on other matters; they were in entire agreement that every help should be given where it was badly needed. Early in March 1922 the little band from North Kerry made their decision and head to Donegal and help the Republicans. A year later on a March morning 1923, the four soldiers Comdt-General Charlie Daly, Brigadier-Commandant Séan Larkin, Lieutenants Tim O'Sullivan and Daniel Enright faced the Free State firing squad. When captured the men were heavily armed with rifles and ammunition. The party was taken completely by surprise. Some were in bed, while others seated round the fireside, bore traces of having undergone much hardship and privation. The authorities regarded the capture of these men as of the utmost significance, for it is believed they formed the nucleus of a body operating in these regions for a considerable time. He is buried in Listowel, Co. Kerry.

His last letter in 'Eire' Newspaper to his girl-friend

Drumboe Castle, Co. Donegal

Dear Helena,

I was expecting a letter from you all along. Well Helena you will be surprised to hear of my execution tomorrow morning at 7 o'clock. Welcome be the Will of God. We were told this evening about 4 o'clock. Dan Enright, Charlie Daly, Séan Larkin and myself. We are quite happy. If you saw us now you would be

envious. God was very kind to us. We got two months to prepare. Each of us made a general confession tonight and we will receive mass and Holy Communion in the morning, and in a short time, after all will be over.

We will be before the Judgement seat of God to render and account of everything we have done wrong. Don't worry one bit about me as we were expecting the call all along. It is getting late now so I must say good-bye and God Bless you. Remember me to Father, Eddie, Pat, Pats Fitzgerald, Mary and all in Tralee. Tell Moss Sheahan I hadn't time to drop him a line. Good-bye again Helena. Every good luck in the future. Remember me in your prayers.

Good-bye
Timmy

Letter to his Mother.

Drumcree Castle,
Stranorlar, Donegal
March 14th, 1923.

Dear Mother,

Just about 4 o'clock this evening it was announced to us, Charles Daly, Dan Enright, Sean Larkin, and myself, that we are to be shot at 7 o'clock tomorrow morning. Welcome be the will of God.

Well, dear mother, I want to tell you not to be a bit worried or troubled about me. I know naturally enough, it will be a shock to you, especially when you thought everything had passed over all right, but I wouldn't change places with anybody now. We were expecting this ever since our court-martial, that is two months ago now, and I think God was very fair with us to give us such a long time. Our friends in Donegal have been offering Masses, Novenas, and prayers for us since then, so they will be a great help to us now, so I think we couldn't be better prepared. We had a long chat with the priest this evening (Father McMullen, Ballybofey), and each one of us made a general confession. The priest took our addresses

so you will have a letter from him in the near future. We will have Mass in the morning and will receive Holy Communion and a short time after that we will be no more on this earth; we will be gone to another land, where sorrow is unknown.

God will judge us according to our work.

Well, Mother, I had a few narrow escapes during the last war. I thank God I was not taken then, as I wasn't as well prepared as I am now. I will wear your beads tomorrow morning and the authorities here will send them on to you with my clothes. I am also sending you a little prayer book I got since I came in here (St. Anthony's Treasure). The small prayer and beads are for John Joe; I made the little case for the beads in here. Any other little emblems that may be there give them to the rest of my sisters. I intended writing to Mai and Maggie, but I think I won't have time; I wrote to Grandma and Kate. I have nothing special to ask you, but don't worry about me, as I couldn't be happier, thank God.

Goodnight, mother, goodnight, Mai, Kate, Julia, John Joe, Ciss, and Michael. Remember me to Thomas and Mrs. O'Connor and all my friends in Listowel. Goodbye again, and God Bless you. I will pray for you all and don't forget me in your prayers.

Timmy.

In undying memory



Charlie Daly

Charlie Daly, Commandant General

Born at Knockanescoulten, Furies, Co.

Kerry.

Executed Drumboe, Donegal, March 14th, 1923.

Buried in Listowel.

Rest In Peace

Charlie Daly

Commandant General 2nd Northern Division, having been sent to the North during the Black and Tan regime by G.H.O.

Charlie Daly was second son of Con W. Daly of Knockanescoulten, Furies, Co. Kerry. In 1914 a company of Irish Volunteers was formed in the neighbouring parish of Currans and Charlie was one of the first to join up. He became Adjutant of

Currans Company from 1914-1917. He worked on the farm and at night organised Sinn Fein as well as being an active Volunteer. In 1918 he was arrested in a friend's house in Kerry and arrested. He was badly beaten by the R.I.C. after his arrest and sentenced to two years hard labour in Cork jail. Here his health completely broke down and he was nearly blind. He was released from prison because of his health by the British on the belief his health would never improve. While in prison he was elected to Kerry Co. Council.

In 1920 along with his brothers Tom and Willie he successfully attacked Gortalea barracks. He was also involved in the attack on Brosna barracks. In 1920 he was sent to organise the I.R.A. in Tyrone into Flying Columns on the same principal as in the South and West.

He became O/C Second Northern Division about May 1921. He succeeded Eoin Duffy in this post and worked hard preparing his Division for a resumption of hostilities as soon as the negotiations broke down. It was a great shock when he learned the Treaty was signed and from the very first moment he opposed it. Many of his fellow officers and men of the 2nd Northern supported Michael Collins and the Treaty, but the fact they were in the North they were united for longer than in the south where the I.R.A were split in two.

By 1922 tragedy hit Ireland, Civil War blazed forth. Daly collected together the remnants of his Division and crossed the border into Donegal and took to the mountains in small bands, to oppose the Free State troops marching from Sligo. Charlie Daly was captured and imprisoned in Drumboe Castle. In 1923 he was courtmartialled and sentenced to be executed on March 14th 1923. His remains arrived by motor in Tralee from Athlone. Charlie Daly from Kerry gave his life in Donegal for Ireland to be free. He is buried in Listowel.

The charge against him was – Possession, together with five other persons of 3 rifles, 1 revolver, 300 rounds of 303 ammunition, 6 rounds of 45 ammunition, 1 German Egg Bomb, without proper authority.

Letter from Donegal to his people in the South:

(It will be noted that Charlie Daly used the name 'Cormac' in all correspondence while in the North)

20/12/'21

A Mhathair Dhillis,

I was delighted to receive your letter this morning - the more so because of your attitude to the Treaty. I am glad to know that you do not want peace at such a price. This is most encouraging as well as comforting to me just now when the chances of war are so great.

I did not express much of an opinion about the Treaty when writing last week, for it was generally expected that it would be ratified and so I left it over until I get home. Anyhow, I can more freely express my dissatisfaction with it now than I could then. There is less chance of my being misunderstood now. It was a safe matter for people to say that they preferred war to such a Treaty when there was a likelihood of the Treaty being ratified, but now when it is likely that it will be rejected with war as a certain result most of these people would be glad to accept far less than face war.

Though completely dissatisfied I was, on account of my position willing to take the same stand as H.Q. staff. This of course was only proper from the military point of view, but I was determined that this would only be as long as nothing arose to conflict with principle and my oath of allegiance to the Republic. I will stick to this oath whatever Government is in power, though it may eventually mean my being fired out of the Army.

I feel certain now that the Treaty will not be ratified and candidly I am glad. The sensible and advisable thing would be its acceptance if we only look at it from the material point of view, but then it would be a denial of principle, tradition and history. We have lived on these in the past and I don't think we could get on without them in the future. I felt far happier during the war than I felt for the past week, and far more so I am sure than I would feel in a Free State. What interest would there be in an Army or anything else that England still had a claim on? The whole

business is a terrible calamity. We would be better off if we never had a Truce for before it there was not this disunion and ill will that exists at present. The only person that will benefit by this is L. George.

War is bad as 'tis is the only means I see of bringing the people together again. I don't care to think what will happen if the people of the Free State have a majority. If they do I fear that we will be anxious to get back to war again. After all the sufferings and sacrifice I never thought that things would come to such a pass. There must be something in the saying that we can never agree about anything. 'Tis a pity that Mick Collins should be in such a position. He, nor the others cannot be blamed for what they did, for the position they found themselves in was a dreadful one. If Mick only considered himself he would have no hesitation in refusing.

The whole business, I suppose, means at any rate, that I cannot go home for Christmas. Tomorrow or after will decide our fate. If it is war it is a glorious thing that we are still faithful to our ideals in spite of the terrible alternative.

It will be a pity if I cannot get home after having chanced it for so long but it will be only a small item if the racket starts again.

So I may not have the opportunity of writing to you again. I want to tell you that you need not expect to hear from me again once the racket starts. Things will be different from the last time and 'tis not likely that many letters will get through especially so far. You can pray and trust in God. He may see us through all right again.

I will not say that I hope to see you all next Saturday for that it would be like hoping that the Treaty is ratified but perhaps L.George may let us get Christmas over.

Slán agus beannacht libh,
Cormac.

Letter to Thomas, then Adj., 1st Southern Division

12/1/'22

A Thomáis, A Chara,

I got your letter on Tuesday morning but delayed replying so as to see if the situation concerning the Army would become anything clearer.

The past week has been the hardest that I have ever gone through. Knowing my own feelings I have an idea of what Liam's have been. He has been in a dreadful way, but in his case he has been able to declare definitely against certain things, while in my case, I would only be expressing my own opinions. Liam's attitude in this matter is the attitude of his Division, and mine would not.

If he likes he can say that he cannot take orders from certain quarters, but I have got to, because my area is in a state of war. If my area was normal I would tender my resignation and go to the South. You have no idea of the fix I have been in. The arrangement that has been made about the position of the Army makes it possible for me to carry on a little longer. With the exception of the O/C 2nd Southern, De Valera and Dick Mulcahy met all the Divisional Comdts. and a few Brigade O/C's at the Mansion House, on Tuesday night. The meeting was called at Dev's request. He explained the arrangement to us. He said that the Republic and the Dail still existed and while such was the case we were to carry on as the Republic Army. Liam can't see this point-he holds there is no Dail now, but for myself I am satisfied for the present. It may be possible for me to carry on until the people decide for or against the Treaty. If against I am done with my present position in the Army or if it comes about that I have to give a decision before then I will give it and G.H.Q. can fire me if it likes. That is my position now in a nutshell. You are a lucky man that you are not directly mixed up in this thing. I almost feel guilty of something when I saw Liam cry on Tuesday night when making his statement before the President. I had to keep my mouth closed. Poor Liam, no man in the Dail or out of it is in a harder fix than he

is. I am glad however; that he understands me-we had a long chat about things this morning.

I am for the North this evening and will be here again on Monday, so when you are writing send your letters here. I hope to have one from you when I come back. Things are pretty bad in the North. The Police and Specials are out to get us. It would not matter one bit but it seems curious that we must risk our lives for the sake of a corner that has been handed over to the enemy, of course the Northerners must fight for their existence under whatever Government is in power.

I understand that our car was got as well as the lads last week. So far as I can see, we must either fight or clear out of that part.

Be sure to write either on Saturday or Sunday and let me know what the lads think about things.

Beannacht leat, Cormac

Drumboe Castle
Feb 12th '23

A Mhaithair Dhillis,

I was very glad to get your letters this evening for although having heard from Father Brenan and Florrie O'Mahony that you all at home had taken the news of my Court-martial splendidly, I was still anxious to hear from yourself. I have been almost anxiously on the lookout for a letter from you for the past week, but then I didn't know that you hadn't got my second last letter, which in fact accounts for the delay.

I knew that you would get a shock on first hearing the news but I knew also that when you had time to get over the first shock and look into the matter you would take things calmly and with resignation. To hear from yourself that this has been so gives me the greatest satisfaction. How you and the others at home would be affected if anything happens has been almost my only and chief concern in all this business, but since 1916 I have known that you

would accept whatever was demanded in a religious and patriotic spirit. I need not say that I myself have always found strength and consolation in this knowledge, but never more so than now. It is you and others like you who are punished and really suffer but after all we have got to die some time. It is not how or by what means death comes that should concern any of us. If death comes to us both we and our friends have reason to be thankful that we have had such ample time for preparation and that we have an opportunity of benefiting by all the Masses, Novenas and prayers that are being said for us at present. All the prayers give us so much confidence that I can't help thinking that perhaps death could not come under more favourable circumstances. 'Tis hardly likely that we will again have so many people praying for us at the same time. They will certainly either secure us our lives or happy deaths. Anyway, we have reason to hope for the best whichever 'tis. I have received many letters for the past couple of week's assuring me that priests and people of all shades of opinion in Donegal, Derry, Dublin and elsewhere are praying for us. This I know will be as cheerful news for you as it was for me. I would like you to see those letters but you shall some time. I am delighted that all my friends in Kerry and praying for me too. Convey my gratitude to all of them and tell them anything else they could do, couldn't be appreciated more by me

I am sorry to hear that Thomas is not allowed to write or receive letters. I wrote to him in Mountjoy a few days ago but he may get my letters as I mentioned how I was situated and hoped for a reply from him. I've asked Susie to send me Willie's address so's I could write to him.

There was no need for you to ask me to pray for you. My prayers may not be as efficacious as you think but I have prayed for you and all at home all along, but more so than ever now. In fact my prayers have been as much, or more, on your account than on my own. Could I feel (and I almost do) that you were taking this business as well as I am? I could wish for nothing better. Like you, I trust in Providence that everything will be all right. Don't imagine that I don't hold hopes of coming through safely. I do, but

there's no use in overlooking facts or presuming too much. The safest and surest way, while hoping for the best, is to be prepared for anything that God may send. Even the present talk about peace has not changed me in this. Whatever I may do, I hope that for the sake of the country and people both sides may find it possible to end the trouble soon.

Slán agus beannacht leat anois,
Le grá.
Cormac.

Last Letter to his mother

Drumboe Castle,
Stranorlar, Tírchonall.
14/3/'23

A Mhaithair Dhilis,

My last message to you and all at home is not to worry about my death or its circumstances. Forget all about its physical and worldly aspects and look at it only from the spiritual and religious point of view. I am now within a few short hours of death and writing you with perfect calmness. All I think of is Eternity, and am ready to go out at 7 o'clock and face the firing squad with confidence and hope in God's great Mercy for salvation of my soul. Our bodies don't count much at this stage and so far as our souls are concerned we have had a splendid opportunity. Thank God to make them ready.

We got the news about four this evening. Though 'twas rather sudden it wasn't altogether unexpected. Besides we had never lost sight of the possibility of our C.M. ending in death.

Father McMullin has been with us and heard our confessions. His kindness and encouragement had made us feel, I might say, light-hearted. We are to have Mass and H.C. at six. I think that I will have the privilege and pleasure of answering Mass as I used to

long ago in Kiltallagh. I won't say much about worldly affairs-they look very insignificant now-except that I am leaving all of you some souvenir or other. I will give a list of them later. My clothes and a few other things will be sent home also later on.

To sum up my best wishes to you they are your prayers or my eternal happiness and that you and all the others at home will pray that each and everyone of us will meet together in Heaven. I feel that I am fortunate in going now and leaving you all behind to pray for me. I too, with the help of God and the Blessed Virgin will pray for you until our next meeting. My death is one of the trials, which God is sending you and to the rest of my family for your advancement in His love. I am confident that all of you will bear it in the way from which you will derive most spiritual benefit. 'Tis not necessary for me to remind you that in this world God sends most sufferings to those whom he loves most, only to look at it in this way and all will be well. We derive one of our greatest consolations from the knowledge of all the prayers, etc., that have been offered up for us. That they have not saved our lives is God's will, but prayers never go unheard, and if not answered in one way will be in another. God in His all-seeing wisdom has perhaps reserved all the prayers rather than our bodies. I had promised publication of thanks giving to the Sacred Heart, the B.V., St. Joseph and St. Anthony in the event of my coming through all right. Now I want you to publish a thanks giving to them for my death and the splendid opportunity seems to me a greater reason for thanks giving than were my life spared. Looking at it from all points, I can't imagine in what place, time or circumstances we could hope for a more favourable time to die.

Somehow I don't feel as if I were saying farewell to you. Rather I feel as if I were only writing you a few lines, which will be followed by a short silence until we meet to part no more. After all our short separation will not be all silence for there will be that Communion of prayer which will make us always feel near to one another. I can't understand how a person without religion might feel in a situation like this, but the possession of faith and hope make all the difference in the world. Do you know I felt far and

away sadder on each occasion that I left home than I do tonight. As a matter of fact I feel practically no sadness in that sense tonight. All I am concerned about is what the news will mean to you and all who are dear to me, but as I said already I trust in God to comfort you all.

I will now say goodbye to you all, to my father, grandmother, Willie, Tom, Susie, Nora, Nellie, Nancy, and to Judy and Bill and all the friends. I hope to be able to pray for all of you in the future as in the past. I know you won't forget me. May God and His Blessed Mother bless you all and reunite all of us with them in Heaven. Goodbye for a while.

Yours lovingly, Charlie.

I have written this hurriedly-you can understand.

Drumboe Castle

14th - 3.a.m.

My dear Father,

I haven't time now for more than a few hurried lines but the thought of another and happier meeting than any in this world leaves no room for regrets for the few words more which I might write you. All I will now say is that you must not worry about me. I will say nothing about my life or it's history except that I will hope that both have been what a good Irishman's and Catholic's should have been. I feel that I have done my best in both capacities and hold no vain regrets. Perhaps I have been more conscientious in the service of my country than in God's but the service of both are so closely identified that I trust in His mercy for forgiveness if it has happened that I have been more diligent in the service of Ireland than in His.

As I may not have time to write to each member of the family, as I would like to I will send them all through you my best fond farewell in this world. If I can't write to all of them they won't for that reason be less in my thoughts and prayers. Not alone would I like to write to all of you but I'd like to write to many other friends

as well, but since I won't have time I will say a prayer for them instead. Ask all of them to remember me and my comrades in their prayers. The three other lads are splendid. Anybody looking in and seeing us scribbling letters would hardly believe that we will be with God in a couple of hours from now.

Goodbye dear father, may God and His Blessed Mother strengthen and comfort you and all others.

Yours as always,

Charlie.

P.S. - 6 a.m. Goodbye all and God bless and protect you and baring you all safely to Himself.

(Eire Newspaper)

Drumboe Castle
Straolar, Tirconnail
14/3/'23

A Lám Dil,

We will not meet again in this world but with the help of God we will in a short time. We got the news this evening and although rather sudden was not altogether unexpected. Thank God we have had a good opportunity to prepare and are now quite resigned and, I might say, almost happy. In a few short hours we will be in Eternity where I hope we will all meet one day again and be happy together with God.

Don't worry, old boy, about the manner of death I die. That is of very little consequence at the present stage. T'is not when or how we die that matters. Don't grieve over the manner of my death but pray for my soul and that we may meet again in Heaven.

Charles Daly
Executed Drumboe Easter 14/3/'23

In Loving Memory



Daniel Enright

(1900 - March 14th 1923)

Born Listowel, Co Kerry

Executed Drumboe Castle

Donegal

14th March 1923

Buried in Listowel Cemetery.

Rest In Peace.

Daniel Enright

Daniel came from Listowel, Co Kerry, and was from an early age active in the War of Independence, and later in his rejection of the Treaty, engaged in a battle against the forces of the Free State to uphold the principles of the Republic. He, like his comrades accepted their sentence with immense courage and it was this courage that spurred on many others in the ensuing years of

struggle against a common foe. The irony in Daniel Enright's fate was that the hand, which determined his place in Ireland's roll of honour, was that of his former comrades, whom Daniel had fought with against the British and the 'Tans', and who were later to betray him and his comrades. He is buried in Listowel. He was charged by Military Court on 18th January, 1923, of being in possession, together with 5 other persons of 3 rifles, 1 revolver, 300 rounds of .303ammunition, 6 rounds of .45 ammunition, 1 German Egg bomb, without proper authority.

Letter 1 **(written before Confession)**

Drumboe Castle,
Stranorlar, Co. Donegal
13/3/'23

My Loving Mother,

I am writing you my last letter. The sentence of death is just after being passed upon me, but I am taking it like a soldier should. I am glad to meet my God and our Mother, so they will keep me safe until you will come to me. Now, my dear mother, don't want you to be worrying over me for I will pray for you and the lads, so Mother, take this like the rest of the mothers who had to put up with the same when their boys went from them. I am quite happy this night, so don't trouble about me and God will keep you safe and the lads. Well Mother I am getting the photos on to you and my clothes, also some letters and my beads, also a Prayer Book and some other things. I expect you will get them all right.

Well Mother, myself and Tim are in the best of form, also Charlie Daly and John Larkin, four of us so I am sure all their mothers will take it well and mother let you be brave and trust in God. All I am sorry for is I can't see you before I die, but God will spare you, Jack and Paddy, so Mother comfort the lads and they will make you happy. Now mother, it is just one o'clock. I have five more hours to spend on old Ireland and thinking of you and the

lads, but we are quite content with our fate. You know Mother it could be much worse. We are having the priest at six in the morning to have Mass and we were never so happy. Now ' Mother I will write you another letter after Confession, so goodbye for the present.

Your loving boy,
Daniel.

Love to Muriel, John and yourself.

Letter 2

Drumboe Castle,
Stranorlar, Co. Donegal
13/3/23

My dearest Mother,

I am just after Confession. The Priest came here to comfort us. He was very nice. He did everything he could to make us happy, so now after having our minds made up we are willing to meet our God, so long as I think you and the lads are happy. All the officers and men here were in to say goodbye to us. It was very kind of them. Well my dear Mother, I have not long more to spend in my cell until I will be in my God's country when I will look down and pray for you and the lads. Just say that you are glad for I might not be prepared in the way I am at present.

Well mother I know you won't take this very well but Mother be like all the mothers of Ireland and trust in Our Lord and He will turn things all right. Also, mother, maybe this might be for the better for our dear country and us. God will send you peace soon again and you will have Jack at home and the rest of the boys and they will cheer you for me. So now dear Mother be brave for my sake and be good to the lads Jack and Minnie. Poor little Nan-if I could only make her happy. I will pray for Janey and Paddy for us all to meet some day in our Father's Kingdom.

Well Mother, the Priest is going to write to you to tell you how

we died, also all the people of Donegal are praying for us, so I think I could never be so happy as I am at present. Well now mother, I must write to Jack so this is my last goodbye until we meet again in God's Home and His Mother's.

From your fond loving son,
Daniel.

Letter 3

Drumboe Castle,
Stranorlar, Co. Donegal
13/3/23

My dear Brother,

I am writing this to you and your chums. I am just after getting my sentence, myself and Tim and Charlie also John Larkin. But we are taking it like soldiers. Our God has called upon us so we were never so happy and I hope you will take it the same. Well dear Jack, we are after having the Priest. Thank God for giving us such a happy death. We are willing to meet our God in that loving Kingdom. Well now Jack, don't forget my mother and Nan. Be always near them because you are all they have to comfort them, also Paddy. You will find him when you get out and take him home to cheer up my mother for me. And look after Jane and Minnie. I know this will come very hard to you but for my sake don't worry for we are dying, as we should like to die. So Jack just say 'He died for this country', and then I will be looking down on you and the lads. Well Jack, I am just after writing to my mother. God give her strength to bear it. Drop her a line when you get this and comfort her, and tell the lads I died happy. Well now Jack I must write a few more letters, so remember me to all my pals, Harry, Bill and Humphrey Cahill. Well I will say goodbye now only for a while until we meet again.

From your fond loving brother,
Daniel

Jack be careful of my mother and the lads. God Bless you, Dan.

Letter 4

Drumboe Castle,
Stranorlar, Co. Donegal
13/3/23

My dear sister,

Just a little line to keep in remembrance of me, hoping this will find you and Jim in the best of form, as I was myself never so happy, also the rest of the boys, Tim, Charlie and John Larkin. Well Minnie, I wrote to my 'Mod' and Jack hoping they will be brave and you too also Jim and poor little Kate and John. I was hoping to see them some day but the will of God must be done so I will wish to see them some other time. I hope Jim will be good to them and to you and I won't forget to watch over him. Well, Minnie, I am writing for you and Nan and Jane to be good and don't worry but comfort my 'Mod' and trust in God and his Blessed Mother and we will all meet together in Heaven. Well now, tell Nan not to forget that little night prayer she used to say, also Jane. Minnie, write to Jack and let him know what way my 'Mod' will take it for he will be troubled over her. So now it is getting late, it is half past three so I must try and write another letter or two. Dear Minnie remember me to all, Delia and Ned, also my uncle. Tell him I wrote to him. Remember me to Maggie, Willie and Eddie. Also to Moss Connor, Peggy Sullivan and her mother and father, Mrs Leahy, Son, Dandy, Polly, Nora, Connor, also Nora McElligott. Tell her I am sorry, as I can't get her next letter, hoping she got the last. Well now, Minnie, I will say goodbye for the last time, and to Nan, Jane, Jim and the kids. God Bless you.

Your loving brother,
Daniel.

Remember me to Mrs. Fitz and Mick, Bob Slemon. So long.

Daniel
To Minnie, Nan and Jane.

Rest In Peace



Séan Larkin

(Division Quartermaster, 1st Northern Division IRA)

Born Magherafelt, Co Derry

Executed Drumboe, Donegal March 14, 1923.

Buried in Loup Churchyard

Re-interred in Magherafelt

Cemetery, South Derry.

Séan Larkin

Division Quartermaster, 1st Northern Division IRA. He was tried by a Military Court on 18th January 1923 for being in possession without proper authority of 3 rifles, 1 revolver, 300 rounds of .303 ammunition, 6 rounds of .45 ammunition, 1 German Egg Bomb (2nd November 1922).

'Eire' Newspaper.

"Séan Larkin born Magherafelt, Co Derry, was fourth child of a family of thirteen children and his home was always the centre of debate and political cut and thrust in this area. His father was a magistrate, a J.P and sat on the bench at Magherafelt. In 1920 the police and military raided his home searching for his son Séan, in his keeping there after at Mountjoy. They asked for John Larkin and the father replied " I am the only John Larkin in the house. He was arrested and found himself a day later in jail-he was then 63 years of age. His other son Tom was in jail already and the old man was a hero among the young prisoners. The authorities realised their mistake and a few months later John Larkin was released. However his term in prison took its toll on his health and he died within a month.

Séan or Johnnie, as he was known in his youth has a warm patriotic instinct and a nature that knew no fear. In 1914 he and his brother Tom joined the original formation of the Irish Volunteers as well as the I.R.A. He drilled and learned the use of firearms etc. with Redmond's Volunteers until the split and remained in the Irish Volunteers up to 1916.

On Easter Saturday 1916, both brothers went under orders to mobilise and await orders at Coalisland, Co. Tyrone, intending to proceed to Dublin to take part in the Rising. They took with them all the arms in their possessions as well as two days ration made up in haversacks by their mother (who kept their secret). He, and his brother Tom, were prominent in all Volunteer activities over the next few years and by 1920 activities were so hot that neither brothers slept in their beds. Comrades were being shot or put in prison without being charged. In February 1920 in a house raid Sean was arrested and taken to Belfast prison, court-martialled and sentenced to two years. Tom was arrested next day in Derry, but without arms due to a clever move by a sister who was living there at the time. He joined his brother in Crumlin, but was released after a week because there was no charge. Séan was then sent to Mountjoy where with 34 others went on hunger-strike and was

released off this in April 1920. After the Treaty he became a Brigadier of 2nd Northern Brigade. He joined the Flying Column with Charlie Daly and his comrades working until his capture with the 3rd Western.

He was buried in Loup Churchyard, then re-interred in Magherafelt, South Derry on 29/10/23

Last letter to his mother

14th March 1923 in Eire Newspaper

Drumboe - Tuesday night

Beloved Mother,

What a contrast the content of this letter are to the one I wrote last night. What a change twenty-four hours can bring, but Mother this is surely the best news you could hear from me. I go tomorrow morning at 7 o'clock to meet my Redeemer and Judge. Through the infinite mercy of Almighty God I hope to join my dear father and Dermot and all my deceased relatives in Heaven.

Yes Mother, my hour has come and I must obey the call. But Mother I want you not to worry about me, and I hope you will respect my wishes. You know that this is God's Will and what more proof of his mercy could we have, in that he has given me such an opportunity to prepare my soul for Eternity. Yes, I have a lot to be thankful to Almighty God for when we consider the uncertainty of life, and the certainty of death and the suddenness of which so many young Irishmen are called away.

We have ample time to prepare. We were notified of our execution tomorrow at 4 o'clock this evening, and we had a long talk with the priest, Fr. McMullan, after which he heard our confessions. In the morning he will say mass and give us Holy Communion before we are executed. So you see we'll be well prepared, better perhaps, than we ever would again.

I know this must have come as a great shock to you all after all the assurances Fr. James got. Now mother, don't worry too much over this, just think of the Crown of Glory I will receive in the

morning. I know it will be a great blow to you all. For the sake of the Passion and Death of Christ bear it patiently and Almighty God will reward you for this and all you have suffered for my sake.

You have been a model mother to me and all of us, and I know that you would share your last breath with any of your children. And ever since Father's death it has been my one desire to make you happy, but now I'm to have the real opportunity to make you happy and all my brothers and sisters as it is the holy will of God. You should, by my prayers on your behalf in the company of all the Angels and Saints in Heaven. Thank God I am happy and resigned to the Holy Will of God and who knows but that our deaths may be the means of bringing to an end this horrible and unfortunate war. If this happens our sacrifice may not be in vain.

I am having masses said with the money you sent and I suppose you will have some said as well. I have nothing but praise for our treatment here from both officers and men and especially the policemen in charge of us. I am sending my things home. There are two pipes, one for Father James and the other for Tom.

I carved the small one myself and Tom can keep it as a souvenir. My razor and brushes for Tom. There is a small silver ring I attempted to make and tried to scratch Cissy's initials on it. Give it to her. There is a photo book for you and another souvenir for James. I have some religious articles but I intend wearing them when being executed and I'll try and make arrangements with Fr McMullan to have them sent on to you and you can divide them among the family as souvenirs. I will write a note of farewell to Father Mick and Uncle Tom, James, Cissy, Bridget and Maggie.

Now, dear mother again I ask you not to worry yourself about me for you know I will be happy, far happier than I could ever hope to be again on this earth, and I will be praying for you and my brothers and sisters that the almighty God, may bring you all safely through this Vale of Tears and that may we meet again in the land that knows no care or sorrow, where everything is sunshine and happiness, there to sing the praises of Almighty God and the Sacred Heart of Jesus for all eternity.

Now, Mother, I'm going to bid you goodbye, but I know it won't

be for so long, and that Almighty God whose mercy is infinite, will bring you soon from this earthly pilgrimage to join your husband and two sons in Heaven. Do not worry, dear mother, but bear with true, Christian fortitude the crosses and traits which Almighty God sees fit to send to those he loves-so that one day you may be brought to eternal happiness to enjoy the glory of God and the presence of his Angels and Saints in Heaven.

Mother, I die for a great and noble cause the same cause which I joined from the first time I knew anything of politics, and I only hope that my death and that of my comrades will have the desired effect: then our lives will not have been given in vain. I have nothing now to say except I am very happy and hope to be happier still tomorrow morning after I hear the words: "Come ye blessed of my Father and possess the Kingdom prepared for you", and now I must say the final words: Good-bye and may the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Sorrowful Heart of Mary, the Little Flower and all the saints in Heaven protect you. Again Mother, Good-bye, Goodbye.

Your loving son, Jack.

Letter 2

Drumboe
Tuesday Night

My Dear Sister,

Just a few parting words before I leave you. Your brother has been called away in the prime of life for the sake of Erin. I only pray that my sacrifice may bear fruit and that our dear country may yet blossom as one of the fairest lands on God's earth. I have very little time for writing so this will have to do you and the others. Remember me to Kathleen, Sheila, Mollie, Kath Doherty and all the others.

Now girls you must do everything in your power to make mother happy, this is a last request of mine. I thank you for all the kindness and consideration you have always shown me and I hope to be able to reward you all by my prayers in Heaven where I hope to meet

Daddy and Dermot as well as all my deceased friends and relatives on tomorrow morning. I thank God we are all very happy and quite resigned to our fate and proud to be dying for Faith and Fatherland. Do not worry for me in the least but give mother all the consideration possible. Of course I am sorry to be leaving you all but 'tis God's will so we can't grumble. I will finish now by saying goodbye to you all and may God and His Blessed Mother guard and protect you all. To Maggie, Bidy, Annie, Nellie, Tillie and Cissie, Goodbye and God Bless.

Your loving brother
Sean

Some records of the Larkin Family, Bellagherty – taken from letters written by family members.

Date

- 1910 Letter from James to his brother Michael, now a student in USA, 8/1/1910. Tom has become Treasurer of the recently formed Ballinderry AOH flute band; Johnny (Séan) is also a member. James is now in the diocesan seminary, Armagh.
- 1911 Letter from Maynooth from James to Mick. Tom has begun to learn to play the violin/fiddle, and the one-year-old, Paddy, makes a nuisance of himself at the saying of the family Rosary.
- 1912 John Larkin (Sen) has become a JP.
- 1916 Tommy and Johnny join the contingent to go to Coalisland to meet up with comrades and then, intentionally, to proceed to Dublin to take part in the Rising. They get a countermanding order to go no further – a breakdown in communications. Their father doesn't

know of their 'involvement' but their mother does.

- " Also the year in which the brothers, Mick and James, are ordained within 3 days of each other to the priesthood.
- " James shortly to be ordained, writes to Mick and gives his admiration for the men of 1916 – "there we are, only 15 miles from the scene of conflict and we know precious little about it all. This I do know: that truer, braver, more distinguished men never struck for Ireland: Irishmen all...hence, I am sad at heart and Maynooth is sad with me".
- " Second letter in 1916 to Mick, James asks Mick to say a prayer for "poor Volunteers who went down in the Dublin Rising".
- " Fr. James, recently ordained, begins his ministry in Errigal Ciaran, Ballygawley and remains there for two years.
- 1918 Fr. James transferred to Pomeroy.
- 1921 Fr. James transferred to Donaghmore (remains there until 1941), then becomes PP Tynan/Middletown, Co. Armagh.
- 1917 Tom writes to Fr. James – (Autumn) "While you are teaching them their duty to their God I hope you will also teach them their duty to their Country".
- 1919 Cissie and Maggie have opened a religious shop in Derry. Séan (Johnny) write to invite Fr. James to a Sinn Fein ceili in Magherafelt, (M'Feft, Newbridge and Ballinderry groups).
- " Summer: Fr. M. and J. are united for the first time since becoming priests.

- " (Nov). Séan writes to Fr. M. about Tom, Patsy Hinfey and J. McMahon going to a Sinn Féin demonstration for the Manchester Martyrs in Bellaghy, he intends to follow them 'on the bike'.
- 1920 Séan is now in Crumlin Road Prison, Belfast, having been arrested following 'Conyingshams raid', Springhill/Moneymore. Tom is also there – he had been arrested in Derry and then sent on to Belfast. Tom released later in 1920.
- " March. Séan is transferred to Mountjoy Prison, Dublin. Begins hunger strike, having got two years hard labour. Governor writes to Fr. James - Séan's condition has become serious. After 10 days strike the prisoners were released unconditionally. Prior to release he had been transferred to Mater Hospital, visited there by Tom, Brigid and Sarah A. Kelly.
- " Mid-April. Séan released from Mountjoy – Newbridge band came to meet him, procession from Ballinderry Bridge to Bellagherly; speeches of welcome made at Larkin's home. Séan sang the song "Mountjoy Hotel" – a sarcastic description of the Jail
 "The beautiful building controlled by the King",
 I was there once myself and am able to tell
 There are no digs in Dublin like Mountjoy Hotel".
- " May. Mrs Larkin writes to Fr. M. telling him about Séan's release and the jubilant "pile of letters" he received from his friends, and having to answer them.
- " Aug. Séan has moved to Durham, N.E. England, and begins employment there to avoid arrest, writes home under the pseudonym of Séan O' Sullivan.

“ Sept. Letter to Fr. M. from Maggie – finishes by asking for his prayers and “hurry up and write but don’t forget in your prayers this unrecognised Republic of ours. Then there will be peace but not until that Republic is recognised”.

“ Dec. Séan writes from Durham, recording his sadness at the death from hungerstrike of Terence Mac Swiney, Lord Mayor of Cork.

“ Dec. Séan letter to Fr. J. giving his approval for the buying of Lake Lodge (Ballyronan) and how the money could be raised, and of how Fr. J. could influence other family members in that direction.

Very long letter from Fr. J. to his uncle Fr. Tom (USA), detailing all the events around Larkins in 1920 up until that time. - “Needless to say, I am very proud of Jack, there is a terrible lot in him...(plot), so I’m thinking he is not at home. Our Protestant neighbours say he is buried without a coffin at Cookstown”. Note: Cookstown was referred to because a Volunteer named Loughran had been shot following a raid on Cookstown Barracks in June 1920.

“ Dec. Séan writes to Fr. J. and thanks him for his offer of financial help for the purchase of Lake Lodge – “we can stay in Bellagherty”.

“ Dec. Tom arrested, placed in Derry Jail, also John Larkin Snr., 63 years of age at the time, released by Jan. 21st, returned the JP “bauble” to Lord Chancellor on his release.

- Jan. 1921 Tom transferred to Ballykinlar Camp prison from Derry Jail, 1500 prisoners, conditions much better than Derry.
- “ Séan writes from Durham, there is much unemployment and he is out of work.
- “ April. John Larkin Snr. Dies, following an attack of bronchitis and asthma, he had spent three weeks in Derry Jail, from Dec. until January. Tom not allowed out for funeral to Loup, Sean wanted to risk coming home for funeral but the passenger steamer service had been suspended owing to miner’s strike in NE England.
- “ May. Tom writes from Ballykinlar Camp, informing him of the Lough Derg Pilgrimage the prisoners have begun in the prison.
- “ June. Séan’s letter to Fr. J. Séan is now back working, driving a bus and delighted with his competence; teaches Irish to a night class group. Mentions the squabble with Patsy Hinfey, the latter’s visit to Larkin’s demanding Bates’ bicycle. Bates was a former farm helper on their farm, and had been arrested shortly after taking up employment. Séan made arrangements to have the matter dealt with – “I’ll bet that when justice is done a lot of people will be more cautious with their tongues”. This was the last of his letters from England, as he came home following the Truce in July.
- “ July. Tom writes home, he is expecting early releases, though this didn’t occur.
- “ Dec. Tom writes to Fr. M. says there is hope of a release by Christmas, mentions the Ballykinlar Christmas card. Rings made from half’crowns were also being made there and macrami bags

Sean Larkin

Oh my name is Sean Larkin
A rebel am I
In this cold dreary castle
A prisoner I lie
At the dawn of tomorrow
With my comrades I go
Oh for death is my sentence tonight in Drumboe.

Chorus

So farewell Ballinderry, Belagherty, this and sweet Ballylifford
that in childhood I knew
When the seeds we have planted have blossom and grown
Just remember Sean Larkin and lonely Drumboe.

A patriarch mother in Derry for me
And I learnt Ireland's history at a fond father's knee
I went with my brother to fight Ireland's foe
But it's little I thought I would die at Drumboe.

Chorus

We fought the good fight then with fervour and fame
Till an in-glorious treaty of surrender and shame
Turn kin against kin and brought sorrow and woe
And it left me a prisoner tonight in Drumboe.

Chorus

So it's Jimmy O'Sullivan, Dan Enright and I
And the brave Charlie Daly tomorrow must die
And the life love of Derry and Kerry will flow
To mingle in union on the sod of Drumboe.

Chorus

So goodbye darling mother the prince is at hand
I leave as a token the small silver band
How I wish I could spare you this sad bitter blow
For sorely it bereaved me tonight in Drumboe.

Chorus

Just remember Sean Larkin and lonely Drumboe

Account of Séan Larkin's Funeral

Letter from Cis to her sister Margaret in U.S.A.

Derry

Nov. 3rd, 1923

My Dear Maggie,

I am sending you a couple of papers containing an account of the removal of poor Séan's remains from Athlone. Thank God for the consolation it has afforded mother and us all. An immense weight of grief and loneliness has been lifted from off our minds since last week, the events of which shall be forever registered in my brain. I went with Fr. James and Séan of Brian via Dublin to Athlone on Monday last. We got there at 3.30 in the afternoon and afterwards got in touch with the I.R.A. staff who were arranging the funerals. Before bed-time Mick Heaney, who is teaching Irish in Westmeath arrived and shortly afterwards about twelve men who turned out to be the Divisional Staff of the 3rd Western Division, and the guard of honour, and my good friend Sean McCool all the way from Stranorlar, Donegal. They were there to take charge of the funeral. Next morning most of the other relatives arrived and we met Tom Daly and the brothers of Sullivan and Enright. The entire party went in an open motor, and drew up outside the Barracks. Only

two relatives and a driver were allowed into the Barrack grounds and one car at a time. It was a sad sight to see those coffins made out of the commonest Deal wood, and just like a box, with neither handles nor else, and of a size and shape which a motor hearse could not hold. Each coffin had to be put into an open car and roped down. It was three o'clock on Tuesday before we left Athlone en route for Bundoran where arrangements were made to have the remains kept there that night. It was a triumphal journey no doubt, and had he been one of their own, the West could not have done him more honour. Outside each town we passed through, Roscommon, Boyle, Ballymote, Grange, Colooney, and Sligo, a party of Volunteers met the cortege which now consisted of four cars, guard of honour, car with remains, relatives, and Divisional staff. Going through each town the guard of honour paced slowly with hands behind the backs, three on each side of the coffin and one in front, and the local Volunteers alongside. All shops were closed and all townspeople seemed to follow. At Sligo, there seemed to be thousands but it was getting dark and we couldn't see much. The Mayor and Corporation met and were introduced to us outside the town although it was pouring rain. Beautiful floral wreaths were placed on the coffin at each of these places. Nearing Grange, we passed through a flat stretch of country in the shadow of Benbulbin, the mountain on which Seamus Devan was murdered and we came to a cottage with lights in the window and door. Standing outside the cottage were two women holding a huge Tricolour with a black cross on it. They presented a touching scene in the darkness and later Liam Pilkington told us that it was the wife and mother of Seamus Devan. God helps them and have mercy on him too.

It was almost eleven o'clock before we got to Bundoran, and the crowds there were terrific – he was so well known there. I shall never forget those lines of people standing in the rain. Fr. McCarville received the remains and recited the rosary in Irish. Donegal men who had come from all parts (under Seamus McCarin) went on guard all night and made us go to bed. After Requiem Mass in the morning we started for Stranorlar about eight

o'clock. Twelve cars left Bundoran with us and another eight met us between that and Stranolar. There was a huge crowd there but as we were in a hurry to get across the border, we did not delay long, although Séan McMenamin gave us a very touching speech at the gates of Drumboe. Fr. Ward met us in Convoy but most of them returned as we were only going as far as Derry that night. Seven cars came across with us and poor Annie was waiting for us, as well as many Derry friends including poor Andy, standing stiffly to attention and he seeing nothing. We proceeded to Waterside Chapel where the remains lay overnight.

The Derry Journal (Press Report) October 1924.

An Executed Derryman.

Sean Larkin's remains handed over. Impressive Ceremonies in Bundoran.

The body of Séan Larkin who was executed in Drumboe Castle, Stranolar was, on Tuesday handed over to his relatives at the Free State Military Barracks, Athlone, in accordance with the recent decision of the Free State authorities to hand over the remains of all executed men to their relatives. Larkin's body together with those of three Kerry men executed at the same time was first buried in the precincts of Drumboe Castle, and afterwards disinterred and removed to Athlone Barracks and again buried. The handing over of the remains therefore necessitated a second disinterment. The remains have now been conveyed to Co. Derry for Christian burial in consecrated ground. The funeral left Athlone on Tuesday accompanied by Miss Mary Larkin and Rev. Fr. Larkin, sister and brother of the dead man and a bodyguard of the Sligo Brigade of the 3rd Western Division I.R.A., which accompanied the cortege all the way to Magherafelt, Co. Derry.

The remains were enclosed in the coffin of stained wood in which it had been handed over and the only inscription were the words "John Larkin" scratched on the lid for identification in handing over.

At all towns along the route I.R.A. companies, Cumann na mBan and local sympathisers met and escorted the funeral and so dense was the crowd in places that the funeral was hours behind time in arriving at Bundoran. At Bundoran, sections of the 3rd Western Division were drawn up with a guard of honour from the Hallys anon Coy. and they escorted the cortege to Bundoran Church where the remains lay overnight. Men of the Tirconnell Brigade from Ballyshannon, Mountcharles and Frosses Companies acted as a guard of honour during the night. The scene as Rev. M. McCarville recited the rosary in Irish was very solemn and impressive, the response from the crowded church were fervent, and the guard of honour of eight men lent a great dignity to the sad scene as they stood soldierly and motionless beside their dead comrade in the tri-colour draped coffin.

Rain had fallen in torrents while the procession made its way to the church and the participants were drenched to the skin but many remained a considerable period. On Wednesday morning after Requiem Mass celebrated by Fr. McCarville, the cortege continued on its way being escorted out of Bundoran by a large detachment of clubs and personal friends of the deceased. Owing to a hitch caused by the breakdown of the motor, which carried the remains, the funeral did not leave Bundoran till 11 a.m., and therefore drove straight through Ballyshannon and other towns contrary to arrangements.

Many well-known northern and western republicans were present including Liam Pilkington, Sligo, the divisional commandant of the 3rd Western and the whole proceedings were carried out with remarkable military precision and dignity. The wreaths included a beautiful artificial wreath from the relatives of Charlie Daly, Kerry, who was executed with Sean Larkin. The inscription read "in memory of Charlie's comrade, From the Daly family."

On the arrival of the remains at Stranorlar, Mr. Joseph Green delivered an oration at the entrance to Drumboe Castle. A couple of hundred I.R.A men accompanied by the general public met the funeral, which was escorted by fourteen motor cars. In

Ballyshannon the bell of the Catholic church tolled and sympathisers went out to meet the cortege. In Bundoran, shops were closed and blinds were drawn. From Stranorlar the cortege proceeded towards Derry. All along the route to the Border, the small towns showed their respect and sympathy, the inhabitants closing their shops and places of business and standing with bowed heads on the roadside.

The I.R.A. detachment came as far as the Border where northern members took over the task as guard of honour. At Derry which was reached on Wednesday afternoon, a large crowd escorted the remains to St. Columbs Church, Waterside where Rev. W. H. MacFeely P.P. B.D. received them and offered prayers for the dead. The coffin was placed on a catafalque in front of the High Altar and remained there for the night.

During the evening many people visited the church and throughout the night a number of young men acted as guard of honour, four remaining on duty, and being relieved at intervals of half an hour by comrades. The coffin was suitably mounted and draped by an undertaker, before it was merely a crude wooden box, disguised as far as the Border by being draped in a tri-colour; the police insisted that the flag be removed at the Border.

Next morning Mass was celebrated by Father P. Kelly, C.C., and the final stage of deceased's last journey home was begun. Again the coffin was carried out as prayers were recited by Father McFeely.

A huge crowd awaited the funeral at Loup in South County Derry, where the family burial ground is situated. Among the relatives and neighbours was Séan's broken-hearted mother and his two younger brothers Paddy and Malachy. His older brother Tom could not be present as he was a guest of the Northern Government on the prison ship *Argenta*.

Requiem Mass was said by Father James, assisted by several priests who had come to pay their respects and amid affecting scenes, the burial took place of one of Derry's noblest sons.

(From notes)

Drumboe Martyrs
By
Michael Mc Ginley

'Twas the feast of St. Patrick
By the dawn of the day'
The hills of Tirconail
Stood sombre and grey;
When the first light of morning
Illumined the sky,
Four brave Irish soldiers
Were led forth to die.

Three left their loved homes
In Kerry's green bales,
And one came from Derry
To fight for the Gaels.
But instead of true friends,
They met traitors and foe,
And uncoffined were laid
In the woods of Drumboe.

Four Republican soldiers
Were dragged from their cells
Where for months they had suffered
Wild torments like hell's.
No mercy they asked
From their pitiless foe,
And no mercy was shown
By the thugs at Drumboe.

The church bells rang out
In the clear morning air
To summon the faithful
To penance and prayer,

When a crash from the woodlands
Struck terror and woe-
'Twas the death-knell of Daly,
Shot dead at Drumboe.

Let Tirconaill ne'er boast
Of her honour and fame;
All the waters of Finn
Could not wash out her shame;
But while the Finn and the Swilly
Continue to flow,
That stain will remain on The woods of Drumboe.

The Green Woods of Drumboe **By Eamonn Monaghan**

Near the town of old Stranorlar,
Where the quiet Finn does flow,
There's a lonely grave still open
In the green woods of Drumboe,
And there each Easter Sunday,
They gather, proud and sad,
Where four faithful Irish soldiers
Fell before the firing squad.

From their homes in far-off Kerry
Came three noble men and bold;
And another came from Derry,
The Republic to uphold.
But betrayed and fast surrounded
In Dunleavy's rocky glen,
Lehane's bold flying column
Will never march again.

It was on a cold March morning,
With the grey dawn in the sky,
When they grimly marched their prisoners
To a lonely glade to die;
Where an old oak tree was spreading,
They lined them side by side,
And with the hands erect and fearless
In manhood's bloom they died.

Loudly crashed the terrible volleys,
Then the pistol shots as well,
And their hearts' blood soaked the green sod,
Where their shattered bodies fell.
In a quicklime grave they flung them,
Where for eight long months they lay,
And then they sent their bodies,
To their graveyards far away.

God rest you Charlie Daly,
And gay Séan Larkin too;
And fearless Tim O'Sullivan,
And Danny Enright true.
Never more will shamed Tirconail
See such noble, upright men,
For Lehane's bold flying column
Will never march again.

Bodies handed over at Athlone

(Cork Examiner 29th October 1924)

The bodies of executed men which had been taken to Athlone some weeks ago and re-interred in Custume Barracks were removed from the barracks to-day. A small crowd collected in Castle Square and remained for hours in a drenching downpour. Many of the relatives of the executed men arrived at Athlone last night. Shortly after 12 o'clock the coffin containing the remains of Wm. Murphy, Gort, Co. Galway was brought out from the barracks. About a quarter of an hour later it was followed by another coffin on which was no inscription plate, but which was stated to contain the remains of a young man named O'Rourke. The coffin containing the body of Charles Daly, a native of Castlemaine, Co. Kerry, who was executed in Drumboe Castle, was the third to be removed to the square. It was covered with the tricolour and bore an inscription in Irish. All the bodies are enclosed in large over-sized coffins stained yellow, and are apparently those in which the remains were conveyed to Athlone. The bodies re-interred in Athlone number eighteen, and are those of men executed in various parts of the Saorstat in 1922 and 1923.

An Arrest

A young Athlone man named Bryan Mulvihill, was arrested shortly after noon. He was in charge of a company of I.R.A. men who were drawn up in front of the main entrance gate to Custume Barracks. Two soldiers with rifles and fixed bayonets from the barracks took him into custody. As young Mulvihill was passing through the gate into the barracks there was a faint cheer from the bystanders who shouted "Up the Republic". The bodies are to lie in state at Athlone Town Hall until Thursday.



On the following Easter Sunday, April 12, 1925, J.J. O'Kelly ("Sceilg") delivers the oration in Glasnevin by the gravesides of some of the 77. Mrs. Pearse, mother of Padraic and Willie, is included.



The Rosary is recited by members of the Cumann na mBan at the Republican Plot, Glasnevin Cemetery, during the commemoration ceremonies on Easter Sunday, 1925.

SOLDIERS COMING HOME

(In October, 1924, the bodies of all 77 executed patriots of the 1922-23 period were exhumed from the yards of the barracks and jails where they had been buried and handed over to their relatives. In all cases they were given heroes' funerals by their comrades and by the general public.)

Tell me why the crowds are waiting in the city's busy street,
What's the subject they're debating as in solemn groups they meet,
Why the shuttered shops and windows in the early evening's gleam,
Break the news, but break it gently, there are soldiers coming home.

CHORUS

Coming home to join the column that now sleeps in mother loam,
March with stately step and solemn there are soldiers coming home.

T'was not in the field of battle with the victor's smile of pride,
Where the guns and rifles rattle that our soldier heroes died
But inside a gloomy prison there they found an early tomb
By a brutal bullet driven these young soldier lads went home.

CHORUS

Hear the march of that great column with their faces sad and pale,
Hear their steady step and solemn and the pipers plaintive wail;
Raise the old flag at half-mast, lightly tap the muffled drum
For a gloom around is now cast, there are soldiers coming home.

CHORUS

Make their graves upon the hillside where they fought in days gone by,
Fire three volleys o'er their graveside where our soldier boys will be;
Let us wipe out feud and faction and when freedom's day shall come
Let us prove ourselves in action like those soldiers coming home.

The Kerryman 1924

THE SIX

The Workhouse, Tuam-
Outside those gloomy walls,
The Famine victims died in fever and in pain.
The golden grain that sprang from Irish soil
Was not for them, for they were slaves,
And by their masters doomed to perish so.
In anguish and in woe,
Now for their souls we pray;
Rest and refreshment, light and holy peace,
Upon this April Day.

Within those walls so grim a spot is marked,
And from His Cross the pitying Christ looks down
Where six men stood to gain the patriot's crown.
Eager and young were they,
One lad but eighteen summers past,
Holding their dream until the last,
Until the volley rang, and in their blood they lay.
Bravely they died in manhood's pride.
Upon that April Day.

Oh, lay the Flowers of Spring upon that hallowed spot,
Flowers for their dream and for their young lives given.
Prayers to the Captain, Christ
Who died on Calvary's Hill,
That He receive their souls today in Heaven.
Now, not in anger or revenge do we look back,
But like unto the Crucified we humbly pray:
"Father, forgive," they knew not what they did
Who doomed those six to die
Upon an April Day.

Frank Cunnane, Séan Maguire, Séan Newell, Michael Monaghan, Martin Moylan, Seamus O'Maille.

Executed at 8 a.m. April 11th. 1923 in Tuam Workhouse

On April 10th six men were taken aside in Galway Jail and told that they would be executed at 8 a.m. next day, not in Galway but in Tuam Workhouse where they were taken that evening. They wrote their final letters, got mass and in two groups of three, lined by the Oratory wall, were executed. They had been charged with having possession of a rifle and ammunition at Cluid on February 19th 1923, without proper authority. All six persons were found guilty.

The Connaught Tribune describes the event: "The condemned men went to their doom firmly and with brave hearts. They had been attended during the night by two of the town priests and in the morning heard Mass, at which two of them, served. The priests were with them to the last. The condemned men were taken out in parties of three each and blindfolded and their hands joined as in prayer. They had prayed fervently during the night before and in the morning and were fully consoled, prepared to meet their Creator. The six bodies enclosed in six coffins were interred in the ground within the Barracks and it is stated that the ground was consecrated." After the evacuation of the Workhouse, the Bon Secours Sisters, the nursing order which today runs the hospital at Vicar St, Tuam, took over the building. It served for many years as a home for unmarried mothers, their children and orphans. Rev. Mother Hortense McNamara, as the Sister in charge, did not forget the dead. She placed a beautiful wood Crucifix on the site of the executions and later, had a glass protection erected around it. Prayers were offered continually by her and her Community for the souls of "The Six". She was also responsible for the founding of the present hospital.

Later in 1923, when the Free State vacated the Workhouse they exhumed the bodies and brought them to Athlone.

(from Eleven Galway Martyrs)

Cuimneachán



Martin Moylan

**Born Annaghdown,
Co. Galway.**

Executed Tuam Barracks,

April 11, 1923.

Buried in Headford Cemetery.

R.I.P.

"We are prepared"

Martin Moylan

Born Annaghdown, Headford, Co. Galway. Executed Tuam, April 11, 1923.

Last letter to his mother in 'Eire' Newspaper

Tuam Barracks, Tuesday night.

My Dear Mother,

You are aware by now I suppose through the papers that I am about to be executed for loving Ireland. For me do not worry as I am fully prepared and happy to die and then I may never get such as glorious opportunity. To all at home, John, Willie, Thomas, Eddie, Patrick, and Michael give my best love and not to grieve, but pray for us all. Soon we will be with those who likewise died for Ireland. I am sending you my Rosary Beads the only thing I have and request your prayers on them for us all. Of course the shock for you hard, but worrying or crying is no use. Cheer up then, Mother dear and may God bless you and comfort you all is the sincere wish of your loving son Martin.

P.S. The priest has been with us, so we are quite ready. I am sending five badges; give one each to John, William, Thomas, Julie and John and a medal to Harry.

Letter 2 in Eire Newspaper To Mother 10th April 1923.

My dear Mother,

Just a few short lines that this morning I am informed of my execution. Little I thought the last time I was home with you that this would be the case. But I am proud that I am dying for my country. Dear Mother, don't be down hearted, I am going to a happier land and all you can do is pray for me and I will pray for you all in Heaven. Tell John Cahill, Julie and Harry and Thomas and Willie to pray for me also. Dear Mother, cheer up I am happy I am dying now. I may never get a better chance of preparation to meet my God.

Dear mother I am asking you to keep up your courage and don't

get frightened when you get this letter, as I'll meet you in Heaven someday Please God. I was at mass and confession and received since I came here and Fr. Donnelly is coming to hear my confessions now. Tell all the neighbours to pray for me and I will pray for them when I get to Heaven.

Goodbye from your loving son Martin.

Cuimneachán



Mickey Monaghan

Born Headford, Co. Galway.

He was executed in Tuam Barracks,

April 11th, 1923.

Buried in Headford.

R.I.P.

"My Chums and I Are Satisfied"

Mickey Monaghan

Born Headford, Co. Galway. He was executed in Tuam, April 11, 1923.

Last letters before his execution.

Tuam Barracks

10/4/1923

Dearest Mother,

As God has ordained so must I die for Ireland as one of his sons who has been called by his motherland to swell the roll of Ireland's martyred dead.

At 2 p.m. today I was told that I was to die so I am perfectly resigned to God's will as He has commanded us. I feel, dear mother, that you and all at home will lament for me, but don't as I am better prepared than even I may be again, and never will I die a more glorious or happier death since it is for Ireland I am to die.

To my companions give my best love, and tell them all I wish to be remembered to them. Give to Father, Pat, John, James, Winnie, Delia, Mary Ellie, uncle Denis, John Kyne, the Flahertys, Nolans, Dooleys and all my dying wishes.

It is inconceivable no matter how you try, how happy we are, the cause of which I die is the cause for which the men of 1916 'till now have died for, and what can be a more consoling thought than that, to the companions of my childhood give my best love.

I bear no ill feeling against any living soul. Now dear Mother farewell, and again I ask you to be brave and happy and may God bless and comfort you. All is the sincere wish of your loving son,

Michael.

P.S. I am sending you my beads, the last and only thing I have left. So now mother, cheer up, all you can do is pray for me. We will meet in heaven yet, please God. Goodbye now forever.

From your loving son,
Michael

Letter 2.

Tuam Barracks

10/4/1923

Dear Jim,

Tomorrow morning I am going to meet my God and join the goodly company of men who died for Ireland. We are after getting confession and I am very happy. Fr. King and Fr. Cunningham are here with us for the night so you can imagine how happy we are. Dear Jim it is not so hard as you think, it is worse for you and the poor people at home. Remember me to T. Joyce, J. Collins, M. Sweeney, E. Dooley, T. Madden, M. Connelly, P. Farragher, M. O'Brien, Duignan and all our comrades in the other half of the jail. Tell all to pray for us. Send a letter to my people at home, it will console them a little as you know it will be hard on them. Remember me also to Ray Colleran, Jim Lee, E. Conneely, G. Murphy, and Petie Dooley and all my former comrades. We sang a few songs here tonight, M. Moylan, Jim O'Malley and myself so you can see we are not downhearted. Dear Jim, I must conclude, goodbye forever and God bless you all. I hope we will be the last to die for Ireland. Goodbye, once more.

From your fond companion,
Mickey Monaghan
(Clooneen, Headford)

Thy Will Be Done



Frank Cunnane

Born Kilcoona, Co. Galway,

Executed Tuam Barracks, April 11, 1923.

Buried in Donaghpatrick Cemetery,

Headford, Co. Galway.

R.I.P.

Mairfidh ■ Chuimhne go Brádh

Frank Cunnane

Born Kilcoona, Co. Galway, Executed Tuam, April 11, 1923. Buried in Donaghpatrick Cemetery, Headford, Co. Galway. His crime is that he was in possession without proper authority of a rifle and ammunition. He was tried by a committee.

Last letter

Reception Ward
Galway Gaol, 1923

Dear Mother,

You are aware perhaps by now that I am one of the destined by God to swell the roll of that martyred band who died for Ireland. I am going to my grave, dying as I lived, believing that I did the best for my country and that the sacrifice will atone for anything left undone by me. I have conscientiously done everything for the better interest of my country, according to my lights.

I have no dread, therefore it is with composure I accept my sentence, bearing no hatred against any living soul. To all my friends, too numerous to mention, give my best sincerest love. For their many kindnesses, during and after my intercourse with them I am more than grateful and I trust that God will in some way repay them, as I intended doing. But now, that I am leaving them for a happier exchange, I am debarred from fulfilling my desire in this world of sorrow.

Well, Mother I know my death will shock you and all at home, but my dying wish is that not grief or sorrow be unnecessarily displayed by any of you, for the end must come some time and is as welcome now as at any future date. And perhaps when I am no better prepared than now, I hope God will accept my sacrifice for any faults I may have committed during my life on earth, - my death is a glorious one and I am unworthy of it.

There may be some who think our line of action a hopeless and foolish one, but the voices of Pearse and Plunkett and those who died for the same cause in 1916, inspired me to follow in their footsteps and I am confident the vindication of the sacred cause will come in some generation or another. Cheer up, Mother dear; I shall meet you in Heaven in the near future, though I hope your life on earth shall be long and happy, so much so that you will be recompensed in some small measure for your past and present worries.

Give to all my neighbours and companions of my childhood, my dying wishes for their future welfare and to my loyal comrades a fond farewell. And let no act of vengeance mar the cause for which I die. Let that sanctified flag be borne aloft, unstained by the sin of Cain, so that the world will see we are not waging a war of Bolshevism of which the I.R.A. are accused. I am sending you a few souvenirs, including a pair of beads I got from Cissie during the Black and Tan regime. In them, find consolation and do not worry.

Now, I must conclude finally and eternally on this side of the grave. So, I send you, Father, Cissie, Tessie, Bertie, Gerald, Willie, John, Tommie, Martin, Charles, Joe and Vincent my blessing and good wishes. May God bless you all, and may we all meet in Heaven, is the sincere wish of your dutiful and loving son.

Frank Cunnane.

Letter 2

Tuam Barracks,
10/4/1923

My Dearest sister Tessie,

For the last time on this side of the grave I whisper my last farewell message to you. I ask you to cheer up and be brave. My body is lifeless but my spirit lives on. I am fully prepared to go to Him.

Your loving brother
Frank

In Undying Memory



James O'Malley

**Born Oughterard,
Co. Galway**

Executed in Tuam, 11th April 1923.

Buried in Headford Cemetery.

Rest In Peace

"Those who for Freedom fall, Shall never die".

James O'Malley

Seamus was born in Oughterard, Co. Galway. He was O/C of the active service unit in the 4th Western Division. He was the most popular all over the West, and the last thing he did before being blindfolded was to go over to a mantelpiece in the office where they were being held blindfolded, take up a little picture of Pearse and kiss it. He was with five others executed in Tuam Military

Barracks, on 11th April 1923.

Since a boy Seamus O'Malley interested himself in the freedom of his country. During the Black and Tan regime, he was forced to leave the country. He continued to work actively in England in the cause of Irish freedom. Arrested in England, he was sentenced by court martial to ten years penal servitude. The cessation of hostilities and the signing of the Truce found him once more in Ireland, and in his native district he was the leading spirit in its social life.

(From Eire Newspaper)

A Connemara correspondent writes: "Regret is general in Oughterard and Connemara at the death of Mr. Seamus O'Maille, Bridge St., Oughterard, who was executed a fortnight ago at Tuam Military Barracks. The news came as a shock to the people of Oughterard, and his untimely end has cast a gloom over the district.

Since a boy the late Mr. O'Maille interested himself in the freedom of his country. He took a deep interest in the Irish revival movement, was an ardent Gaelic Leaguer. He was an enthusiastic supporter of Irish athletics. He was one of the first men in the district responsible for the establishment of the Oughterard Co-operative Store."

Letter to his Mother.

(From Eire Newspaper)

Dearest Mother,

I have to let you know the hard fact that I am to be shot on the morrow, myself and five others, John Maguire, J. Newell, M. Moylan, Frank Cunnane and M. Monahan. Dear mother, I know that this will break your heart, but mother, I ask you to be brave and take it all for Ireland.

Mother, think of all the mothers who have given up their sons for the same cause that I now die for. From 1916 on to this day many of the mothers of Ireland have suffered the same pain that

you now suffer. But mother, she is a poor mother who cannot say that she has given at least one son for the cause of Irish freedom. Mother, you reared me hard, and when I came of age it was for the freedom of my country I worked, and not for you. I always thought that one day I would be able to make you happy, but now that part I must leave to Peter and John, and I ask that request of them.

There is one thing you can be proud of – I was the first man in Oughterard to suffer imprisonment and now I give my final sacrifice, that my life, to help to save the life of the Irish nation. My little part in public life has been conducted the best way I thought possible to win respect for my country and the cause which I stood for. Those who know me know that I went out purely for the freedom of my country.

Mother dear, I am sorry that I cannot write to all my friends, so give my best wishes to them all, the O'Tooles, O'Connors, Healys and O'Malleys, Jack Connelly, B. Egan and McDonaghs, of Meam Cross and Rosmuck, and the others. I would like to write to John, but, sure, this one will do for himself and Kathleen. Poor John, if I were not here he would be in my boots, and I am glad that I am here to take his place. Remember me to Father Craddock, and ask him to pray for me. Write to my Liverpool friends and remember me to them all.

Mother, I will put in a note in this letter for Peter and Mary. Mother dear, I am happy, so don't worry about me. I pray that God will give you courage and strength to get you over this trouble. The priest is here with us and the hour is drawing near. I will now finish. Hoping to meet you in Heaven.

Goodbye from your fond son, with love and kisses,

Seamus O' Maille

Sacred Heart Of Jesus



John Newell

**Born Headford,
Co. Galway.**

Executed Tuam Barracks, April 11th. 1923.

Buried in Headford.

"He Died As He Lived, His Country To Save"

John Newell, Headford

Born Co. Galway. Executed Tuam, April 11, 1923.

Mairfidh A Chuimhne Go Brách



John McGuire

**Born Cross, Cong,
Co. Mayo.**

Executed in Tuam Barracks,

11th April 1923.

Glór Don Athair

John (Séan) McGuire

Séan McGuire was born 2nd October 1902, executed in Tuam, 11th April 1923. He was charged by a Committee of possession of a revolver and ammunition on 21st Feb. 1923

His last letter to his mother: -

Galway Jail,

My Dear Mother,

I am going to bid you all last farewell as this is my last day on this earth, but I hope it will not put you about in the least as I expect that God will take me to Himself. Well, dear Mother, it is sad to think that my lot was such, but I am pleased with the will of God and I hope that He will have mercy on me. Do not mourn or grieve for me dear Mother for I die in a noble cause but always pray for me. I shall pray for you and some day I hope we will all meet in heaven where we will enjoy the home our dear Redeemer has prepared for us. I am going to receive the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion and to follow in the footsteps of the brave men who are gone before me.

With all my love and blessings to dear Father, Mother, Pat, Mark, Paddy, Maryanne, Tom, Peg, Michael, Kit, Bridie, Criss, Brian and my loving little brother Joe, also to Mr. Mannion and Christie. I expect to be with my God when you receive this.

From Your loving son,
John

The Barrack Square in Tuam

The morning sun shone slowly out,
And heavy was the air;
As a band of men condemned to death,
Had knelt in silent prayer.
They heeded not the martial tread,
For well they knew that soon
They would have to face the firing squad,
At the Barrack Square in Tuam.

Their only crime they loved too well,
The land for which they died,
And Seagan Buidhe flag the union rag
They never could abide.
'Twas Ireland free from sea to sea,
They staked their lives to win
A country free without travail,
A nation once again.

Surrounded by their country men,
As in blissful sleep they lay,
And then marched off to Galway Jail
Before the break of day.
Conveyed to Tuam to meet their doom,
Sad story to relate,
The hangmans rope the firing squad,
Was still the patriots fate.

No more to join the merry throng
To Mass at early morn,
No more to hear the curlews cry,
Above the tempests roar,
Nor the plaintive call of plover,
By the Corrib's sparkling shore.

Whilst the Union Jack flies o'er the North,
No peace we will ever know,
For discontent for ever will
The seed of discord sow.
And men as brave will rise again,
And take what is our own,
The land that gave us fighting men,
Like Russell and Wolfe Tone.

*Composed to the air of Donnelly & Cooper who fought upon Kildare.
Piano music also available from publishers. – W. C Hugh.*

Maura O'Kelly From Galway

(A Galway woman returns from the funeral of her two Republican soldier sons, slain treacherously by the tools of tyranny)

'Twas Maura O'Kelly from Galway walked down the hill with me.
High was her head for her two sons dead and buried in Killalee,
And I said, "Oh, woman of Galway, it breaks my heart to see
That a Saxon foot still tramples the root of Irish Liberty."

Said Maura O'Kelly of Galway, and her eyes were flaming fire.
"No Saxon foot shall trample the root of the tree of my sons' desire
For where they were shooting Galway, and buried in Killalee
A thousand more are still to the fore for Irish liberty.

"And what care I for the shoneens, and what care I for the slaves,
And what care I for Britain's tools who have filled two soldiers' graves,
And what care I for a London peace that a Connacht gun can't share,
There will be no peace in Ireland while a Union jack swings there.

"Did treaties ever make freedom, or lies from treacherous lips?
The lash that falls on a shoulder may scourge a soul to strips,
There is only the vengeful rifle to burn old scores away,
And I'd rather be dead with my two brave sons than a willing slave
today."

I said "Oh, woman of Galway, the toll of death is long"
She said "They died with their hands in pride and in their hearts a song;
And the lads I buried in Killalee, with blood on their hands and face,
Are a pledge between their God and me that He will redeem the race".

By Theresa Brayton.

**Reginald Stephen Hathaway, Edward Greaney and
James McErney
Executed in Tralee on April 25th, 1923**

Freeman's Journal 26/4/1923.

"Two Kerry men and an Englishman executed – Cave Siege Sequel".

The following statement was issued by Army Headquarters yesterday: -

Edward Greaney, Ballinbranig, Ballyduff, Reginald Hathaway, 29 King Edward St., Slough, Bucks, England and James McInery, Slieveadra, Lixnaw were tried before a Military Tribunal at Tralee on the 18th April, 1923 on the charge of taking part in an attack upon National Forces at Clash Cave. On that occasion Lieut. Pearson lay four and a half hours bleeding from wounds before he could be rescued. Red Cross men, who endeavoured to recover the body of the wounded officer under the Red Cross flag, were fired upon by the Irregulars and obliged to withdraw.

All three men belonged to the party of Irregulars under a leader named Lyons, who was killed at Clash Caves. They were concerned in the robbing of Ballyduff Post Office and the burning of Ballyheigue Garda Station.

Edward Greaney, in a statement made subsequent to his arrest, said he was compelled by Lyons to join his column. Lyons read an order to him, intimating that any man who refused to obey the order would be shot.

Reginald Hathaway was a deserter from the East Lancs. Regiment, said he was attached to Lyon's Column and had been fighting against the National Army since the previous August. He had received a note from Humphrey Murphy stating that if he did not report to Lyons he would be shot within 24 hours.

James McInery had surrendered to the troops with Pierce's Column, and had signed the form of undertaking not to take up arms against the Government. On receiving a note from Murphy stating that he would be shot within 24 hours, he joined Lyon's Column.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph



Reginald Hathaway

Born in London

Executed in Tralee Barracks,

April 25th 1923.

Buried in Republican Plot,

Rahela Graveyard, Ballyduff,
Co. Cork.

Rest In Peace.

Hathaway Stenning, Reginald
(From the GPO)

Reginald Hathaway was said to be a native of London and came to Tralee some time during the War of Independence as a member of the East Lancashire regiment of the British Army. During this time he deserted and became involved with the I.R.A., and in

particular Edward Greaney and Aero Lyons. When the Civil War broke out he joined the Free State army of which he absconded with a rifle and a hundred rounds of ammunition in order to become an active member of the anti-treaty Republican forces. He was captured during the surrender of Pierse Column and signed a form of undertaking not to take up arms against the Free State under the alias of Walter Stephens. He was taken prisoner along with James McEnery and Edward Greaney on the 18th April 1923. He is said to have received severe physical abuse for his involvement in Clashmeadon when captured. He was executed for his involvement in the siege at 8 o'clock on Wednesday 25th April 1923. He is buried in the Republican Plot in Rahela Graveyard, Ballyduff, Co. Kerry.

Thy Will Be Done



Edward Greaney

Born Ballinbranning, Ballyduff.

Age 21 year.

Executed 25th April 1923 in Tralee Prison.

Buried in Republican Plot

Rahela, Ballyduff, Co. Cork

Rest In Peace

Edward Greaney

Edward Greaney was a 21 year old young man from Ballinbranning, Ballyduff. He was an orphan, his mother had emigrated to New Zealand and was shipwrecked on route. He joined the I.R.A. in 1918 and was involved in active service in Limerick City on July 1922. He surrendered to troops with Pierce Column and signed a form of undertaking not to take up arms against the Free State. He was executed for his involvement in the siege at 8 o'clock Wednesday 25th April 1923. He is buried in the Republican Plot in Rahela Graveyard, Ballyduff, Co. Kerry.

Sacred Heart Of Jesus



James McEnery

Born at Slieveadara, Ballyduff

He was in the 3rd Battalion of the I.R.A.,
and was Company Captain in Ballyduff.

Executed Tralee April 25th 1923.
30 years old

Buried in Republican Plot Rahela,
Ballyduff.

James Mc Enery

James McEnery was from Slieveadara, Ballyduff and was 30 years old and a farmer by profession. He was in the 3rd battalion of the I.R.A., and was Company Captain in Ballyduff.

Along with Greaney and Hathaway he surrendered to Free State troops with Pierce Column and signed a form of undertaking not to take up arms against the Free State. It was at McEnery's home the

siege of Clashmealcon began when the Free State army came to question him for his suspected involvement in the skirmish in Meenogahane. The decision of the Free State authorities to murder a married man with a young child was considered very severe. He was executed on Wednesday 25th April, 1923 at 8 o'clock. He is buried in the Republican plot in Rahela Graveyard, Ballyduff, Co. Kerry.

Letter by John McEnery to his brother Rev. Thomas McEnery on the eve of his execution.

April 24th '23.

Dear Fr. Tom,

I am leaving you all tomorrow morning. It is very hard that I cannot see you but some day I hope we will meet in Heaven.

I have been in the Republican Army since 1916. I fought the Tans and it is hard to think that my own countrymen are putting me to death. I forgive all my enemies.

Look after my wife and child who are the pride and joy of my heart and I am asking you one request, don't let anyone do anything. Bring Sonny up for the priesthood.

It is a pity I did not get a chance to tell a story about that "Siege of the Caves". It was just something awful.

Say masses for me and my comrades. Console our dearest mother. It was her who was kind to me and did not forget my good wife and darling child. You will get a lock of my hair from Hannah. Cheer up now dear brother and pray for me.

I am proud that I'm dying a soldier of the Irish Republic. I never expected this would be my fate, but welcome be the will of God.

Good bye now.

From your fond brother,
Jim

Tralee Scenes as bodies were handed over (Cork Examiner 29th October 1924)

Tralee (Tuesday)

A sad scene was witnessed in Tralee this evening when the bodies of the seven Republicans executed in Tralee Jail during the spring of last year were handed over to their relative for re-internment in their in their respective family burial grounds. There was a big crowd of people outside Tralee prison for two hours before the remains were handed over.

At one point tense excitement prevailed when Mr. John Joe Sheehy, in charge of the local volunteers, gave certain orders to them outside the prison. Mr. Sheehy was approached by Supt. McNulty, Civic Guard, and after some conversation between him and the superintendent, military officers appeared with some military armed with rifles. The superintendent of the Guards and the military officer were seen to place hands on Mr. Sheehy. Some of the volunteers broke from their ranks and rushed to where Mr. Sheehy was standing. There was, however no disturbance, and the cortege of seven coffins proceeded to St. John's mortuary Chapel without further incident.

The streets were lined with people and shops closed while the mournful procession passed through. The executed men were:- James McEnery, Edward Greaney, James Hanlon, of Ballyduff; Reginald Steening Hathaway, London; Jack Clifford, Caherciveen;; Michael Brosnan, Ballymacelligott and John Daly, Killarney.

Clashmealcon Caves **(From Tragedies of Kerry)**

By the mighty streams that pour
 With the Irish seas to join,
By Shannon and Liffey and Boyne,
Lee, Slaney, Suir, Barrow and Nore,
 Their generous blood was shed,
And the famous Three Waves of Song
Cried out, yet not to lament the dead,
 But to greet the souls of the strong.

P. de Brún

Clashmealcon Caves

(From the book produced by Ballyduff Sinn Féin, and Republicans of North Kerry for the 50th Anniversary of the deaths of the men of the caves.)

The story of "Aero" Lyons and his five companions and how they stood siege for three nights and days in Clashmealcon Caves will be told in Ireland while men praise the fighters for freedom – "while grass grows and water runs."

Dark impregnable cliffs confront the Atlantic from Kerry Head to Kilmore. At the foot of the cliff long ridges run out to the breakers that crash over them in tempestuous riots of foam. At Clashmealcon stands up a tall, isolated turret of rock guarding a narrow, horse-shoe shaped creek, whose base has been bitten in far under the cliff. Here seagulls and cormorants breed; the tufted sea-pinks root in every crevice; soft winds, gorse scented, blow from the wild spaces inland; while below, round the lonely pinnacle, the ocean breakers battle and swirl and foam.

On a day of sun and wind at high tide, when the sea and the sky are blue and the foam is leaping, it is a scene of elemental,

rejoicing life. At night, under a brooding sky, when the ocean is beating heavily on the rocks, it is like a tomb or a place of mourning for Ireland's dead.

Aero Lyons, christened Timothy, won the name by which he will be remembered by dropping out of the sky, as it seemed, whenever he was least expected and seeming to be in a dozen places at once.

"A light, lean, hardy man" in build, he delighted in activity and in danger. He had a child's love of going about, where he was most keenly hunted, in disguise, and there was laughter in nearly every adventure of his, whatever the period. He was a name of power: while and invisible outlaw, marked out to be shot at sight, he would rule his district as a potentate and be obeyed. He had the light-hearted bravery of spirit that leads Irishmen to early death.

It was on a day in the middle of April that Free State troops came to Causeway to make a round-up. From ditches and hollows on every side, Lyons and the nine men under him kept them fighting all day until at nightfall the others gave up the chase.

One of his comrades, Jim McEnery, had a house close to his mother's a mile or so from the cliffs. He was married and had a little son. His sister Catherine was never without anxiety for him; she had it in her mind always that he was doomed; he had a grave, patient look, sometimes, like a man facing great pain. She used to be very watchful about the place. His house was raided early on Sunday morning and he was arrested.

If only he had been taken to prison then...But his guards let him escape, as though it was meant; he ran out to seek refuge among the cliffs. Later, more troops came and surrounded the house, not knowing what had occurred. His comrades saw them from a house across the road and two of them, Shea and Hathaway, knowing nothing of his escape, opened fire.

Jim McEnery, meanwhile, had been sighted and was pursued. His friend, Tom McGrath, saw it and fired, diverting the pursuit to himself. He retreated to Clashmealcon and there disappeared.

Reinforcements from the Free State post at Ballyheigue, advancing to surround McEnery's house, came under the crossfire

from their own troops and the Republicans. They all scattered over the country then and McEnery's house was left in peace. Catherine looked out and saw a stray soldier threatening two young Republican scouts. She went up and he turned to her, exited and frightened. "They'll plug me," he said, "for running away!" She took him prisoner and gave him a cup of tea. Lyons came into the house with Hathaway, Shea and Greaney. The poor soldier who, in his own barracks, had seen prisoners killed, upset the dresser in a terrified effort to fly. "I'm a Catholic," he was crying; "get me a priest."

Lyons soothed him and told him to stay close to him and he would be safe. The prisoner thankfully obeyed. A Free State cycling corps came up to the attack, was ambushed from as many sides as there were defenders – some seven or eight, maybe – broke up in confusion and returned to Tralee. Lyons' prisoner ran after his own army and rejoined it in its retreat.

When night fell all was quiet again. Catherine went out. She knew well that the comedy was over and there would be real danger next day, and she wanted to know what the men would do. She met Aero Lyons wandering in the dark fields. He was in great delight over the day's work, but when she asked him, "What are you going to do?" he answered doubtfully, "I don't know."

She met her brother Jim with Greaney. "What will you do at all?" she asked. "We are going to a place that's safe," Greaney answered. "We'll send a scout tomorrow for whatever we want." It seems that the soldiers had said to a woman in Causeway that they knew the Republicans had a cave, and that they would make a good search for it next day. "And she never stirred her tongue to give us the warning." It is a thing that the people do not forgive. Three of the nine had been wary and gone inland, but six men, losing, as though by some unavoidable doom, all judgement, went into Dumfort's Cave. They slept; they put out no sentry; they had taken in no food.

The Free State troops took one prisoner on Sunday morning, Jimmy McGrath. He was Tom's brother, but had not Tom's quick wit; he hardly understood what the danger was. They interrogated

him in Tralee barracks by their inhuman methods until he broke down and promised to take them to the caves. It would do little harm, he thought – there was nobody there.

Very early on Monday morning he came out with the troops to Clashmealcon. The soldiers watched from above while he clambered down the half-hidden, perilous path. He came down the cliffs and up the steep slope of shingle to the mouth of the cave. Aero Lyons and O'Shea and Jim McEnery and Greaney and the brave Englishman, Hathaway, and his own brother, Tom was there. Dumforth's Cave was named, it is said, after a Fenian who used to hide there in '67, or, maybe, from some fugitive of penal times.

It is a small shallow hollow at the base of the rocks at the apex of the horse-shoe shaped creek. Great boulders lie piled in front of it; the tide flows almost to the hole; halfway up the cliffs jut over it in an arch and the grassy edge above shelves out over that arch again. From no point, except one, far out on one butt of the horse-shoe, can the cave be seen. There is no way to it save the slippery path where only one man at a time can go, and he must cling with his hands; the path is commanded, the whole way down from the cave. It is a position from which one man, had he provisions, might defy a besieging host; the high rocks above are his allies, and the deep ocean below.

Not one of them blamed Jim McGrath. They took him into the cave. A soldier tried to follow him, shouting "come out". A bullet fired from the cave killed him instantly, and he fell on the flat rocks below. One more tried and was shot and fell into the sea. No soldier would go down after that. Officers went into the village and sent wires; "prominent irregulars in caves. Come On!" They believed De Valera and Humphrey Morgan were there. They sent soldiers to every cottage to take out the hay and brought it to the cliff's edge and bundled sods of turf into it and threw it down, flaming and smoking, the mouth of the cave. They wired to Tralee for paraffin oil and tar. Lorries came tearing out loaded with oil and petrol and something that seemed like sulphur.

They got sheets from the houses and saturated them with the sulphurous stuff and set fire to them and flung them down. They

made a choking smoke with a poisonous fume. They poured oil and tar and petrol into hay and turf and flung it all, flaming, down to the cave. A roaring blaze and a yellow smoke. The people thought that the rocks themselves would be consumed. But the wind changed and blew the flames out to sea. At nightfall the rain fell in torrents.

The officers talked of rushing the cave under a shield of iron shutters, or attacking it from a boat, but the soldiers would make no such attack. They were cold and wet and their efforts subsided during the night. They tried once more to lower a lamp, but a shot from the cave smashed it, and they tried no more. The night was hung with thick, impenetrable darkness; the tide, at midnight, was far out; the elements were with the men in the caves.

One by one, they crept out, like snakes, from the narrow mouth of the cave and walked, barefoot, over the boulders, to the right, along by the friendly overshadowing rock wall. They moved stealthily, for fear of stirring a pebble, between the lonely pinnacle and the cliff, out of the creek and along to the flat rock over which hung, they knew well, a ledge they would be able to climb to and, above it another cave.

They came to the flat rock and stood there, cold and wet, hungry and victorious, their ruse wholly successful, their going unheard. It seemed, the enemy were so idle in the wet night, that if only aid could be summoned one little company ambushing above might save them now. Tommy McGrath and Patrick O'Shea volunteered to go farther, to try to make their way out and get help.

For a little distance they groped their way safely, but the night was black and the rocks baffled them; there was no pathway now, no escape; only rocks jutting every way overhead and slippery masses of seaweed below; they had come within reach of the breakers that flung themselves like monsters against the rocks and dragged the shingles back with a grinding roar. They were torn from their hold in the darkness and drowned.

With daylight on Tuesday lorry after lorry came tearing out from Tralee with troops and munitions, bombs and grenades and mines. A machine gun was placed on the point that commanded

the cave. An armoured car was run out to the edge of the cliff. The soldiers were swarming above the cliffs like green-flies, the people said. The bombardment of the cave went on all day. The crackle of the machine-gun and the thunderous concussion of bursting shells, the rending explosion of mines and grenades, shook the houses in Causeway and Ballywilliam; shook the listening people, fathers and mothers, wives and sisters of the besieged Republicans, to their hearts. All day it went on and all day there was no answer from the silent cave.

Aero Murphy was laughing, no doubt. That night darkness was routed from Clashmealcon. The white beam of a search-light crept over the rock face, making every ridge and hollow stand out clear. Crimson flame and smoke from burning tar barrels mixed with yellow, choking, and sulphurous fumes, made the creek below look like the pit of Hell. The roar of the ocean and the roar of the fire, the pounding of breakers on rocks and the crash of explosions filled the night with a fiendish din. Rage and fury grew in the defeated horde of soldiers above the cliff.

In the grey dawn, exhausted, they began to say the Republicans must be dead. Soldiers volunteered to go down. There was hesitation for a long time and disputes arose. The people from the cottages began to venture out. For some hours nothing was done. At ten the people heard it had been decided to send down a scout.

What would the scout find? Were they all dead in the cave, or drowned? Was the cave empty? There had been no sign from it for thirty hours. Could they, it would be like Aero Lyons, could they, by some miraculous feat of daring, have got away?..... How Aero would laugh?.....If the cave was empty what would the soldiers do? Make sure they were drowned, maybe, and go away.....And then, supposing they had escaped! While the soldiers were making ready to go down a call was heard below, away to the right; then a savage triumphant yell from the cliff's edge.

Lyons had come out on to the ledge below and put up his hands. They had been starved out. The tide rose to the foot of the

second cave and the waves swept in. Saturated with salt water and parched with thirst, weak and trembling from cold and want of food, they would have sunk into delirium very soon. The thought of McEnery's wife and child was troubling Lyons. "What will we do," he kept saying, "about your wife and child?" He knew well what fate awaited him if he were taken. He was going over plans in his mind. It would not be right for me," he said, "to slip into the sea." There was joy like the joy of friends above, when Lyons was seen at last, living and trapped. "We'll butcher him!" some of the soldiers screamed.

Notes were passed up and down by cords. Lyons was trying to make terms. He would surrender himself and the rifles on condition that the rest should go free. His enemies would hear of no terms. Catherine McEnery heard of the surrender at eleven o'clock. She knew what had to be done then; she sent two cars away for the priests. It was just mid-day when a rope, brought out in a lorry, was lowered to Lyons from the cliffs, and he knotted it and began to climb up.

Mrs. Lyons, his mother, tells of a strange thing that happened at that time in the house in Kilflyn. The cottage is remote from the roads, and they had heard no word at all of the siege at the caves. She was sitting in the kitchen. Her young son and daughter were about the house; the father was mending the fence outside the door. A round pendulum clock hangs on the wall, an heirloom, long past work. Its one hand had been hanging at the figure six, motionless, for fourteen or fifteen years. At mid-day they heard the clock strike. The four of them gathered round it, staring, counting the strokes. The hand had moved up to the figure twelve and it struck twelve times.

What happened on the cliff's edge is not known. Soldiers boasted afterwards to their prisoner, that some of them cut the rope; other people say this is not true; the rope was thin and rotten, it is said. All that is known is this: when Lyons almost reached the top the rope snapped and he crashed on the rocks below. The people heard a dreadful cry below and a wild yell of triumph above. Sea birds flew madly into the air. Then came the sharp crackle of a

machine-gun. Lyons lay on the ridge of the rock below, maybe a hundred feet down. Greaney and McEnery and Hathaway sprang to him out of the cave, but he was riddled by the gun-fire where he lay. When they lifted him he was dead. The firing went on and on.

Fr. Cahill stood with his arms lifted on the edge of the cliff. "Savages, stop shooting" he cried. He gave Conditional Absolution, standing there on the ridge, to the man below. Then all was quiet for a while. The air was full of the smell of tar. Catherine McEnery was hoping only for one thing now. She hoped they would drown themselves. They were sending up answers to the Free State officers' notes.

The officer wanted Fr. Cahill to go down to them on the rope with the message, "Will you stay down and starve or come up and be shot?" If only they would drown themselves, now Catherine thought.....While Fr. Cahill stood hesitating about the message Jim came out on the ledge and put up his hands. Some soldiers forced her into Harrington's house for fear, perhaps, of what she might see next. When she looked out from the window she saw four soldiers leading Jim in, he was swaying between them, his head hanging limply. She ran out and cried to him and he looked at her with staring eyes. Water was streaming from his clothes; his face was as white as death. "Who are they all round me?" he was asking wildly. "Don't shoot him" she implored the soldiers. "No, no," they answered. "We won't."

Greaney and Rudge Hathaway were brought up and Jimmy McGrath. Greaney had a mad look on his face. Fr. Cahill said something reproachful to him as he passed, and a soldier protested. "Why do you want to throw water on a drowned rat?" Their vengeance seemed to have spent itself on Aero Lyons. The soldiers were kind. They let the prisoners warm themselves at the fire and put on dry clothes; the women gave them hot tea, and gradually their senses came back. They sat smoking, waiting....Jim said "They are going to finish us here." His wife came to him with his little son. He took the boy in his arms and began to cry. That was about four o'clock. Nothing happened for about three hours, nothing happened to them; then they heard a car drive up.

An officer came in, a small man, with a white, smiling face. He looked from one to another and recognised the Englishman, Rudge Hathaway. "Now, get the caves!" he ordered. Rudge had to obey. He went out. "They are taking us to the caves to finish us," Jim said, and he implored Catherine to follow Rudge. But Catherine cared most for her brother; she would not leave him. They sat in silence, waiting again. It was not long before poor Rudge staggered in, trembling and bleeding and groaning. He could not tell what had been done to him. The rest sat waiting still. It grew dark.

Three cars tore up to the house. The soldiers started up. "Hancock's coming!" someone called in. The door opened, an officer, a big man, strode in. The soldiers saluted, the prisoners looked at him and he at them. "Are these the prisoners?" he said, slowly. "Is this McEnery? This Greaney? This the Englishman?"....."At last!" Rudge was bleeding. They knotted his hands behind his back and threw him down on the floor. Then Greaney's hands were tied and he was flung down. They had hurt him; he was moaning; "O, God."

Catherine could not move. The look she had seen, half in imagination, on her brother's face, was there in reality now. The look of a man facing a hard death. With violence, muttering terrible threats, they seized him and bound his hands and flung him beside the others on the floor. Jim McGrath was taken out to the lorries, and then the three were thrown in, on the floor, under the soldier's feet. Catherine saw her brother looking up at her once with that tense, enduring look on his face. Then the lorries were driven off.

The story of the fight at Clashmealcon caves was in all the papers; Fr. Tom McEnery, Jim's brother, had rushed home from England; a petition for the prisoner's lives was signed by thousands; rumours were flying through Tralee. The prisoners, it was said, had been beaten almost to death. Fr. Tom was all night and day at the barrack gate, but no one was let in to them at all. He telephoned again and again to Brigadier Daly asking what was to be done. He got a definite answer at last. "They will be executed

when we have time."

They were executed at dawn on April 25th.

It was on the eighteenth that Aero Lyons was killed. On the fifth of May his body came up from the sea. Patrick O'Shea's and Tom McGrath's bodies the sea holds still. Only Jimmy McGrath lives now of the men who stood siege in Clashmealcon Caves. How those nights and days passed for them, what sufferings they endured, what hopes and imaginations came to them, what Lyons said when he left them to climb the rope, no one but Jim can tell, and his memory of it all is confused. These are secrets that the caves will keep forever, however myth and legend may shape the tale.

"If they had food and water...." "If one of them had known how to swim...." "If Lyons had held out for one more hour..." the people are saying still. Then they comfort themselves with the sad phrase of resignation; "It seems that it was to be". "It was to be," and they comfort themselves with that, for so many deaths – deaths of young, kindly, and joyous men.

Because there has been treachery in Ireland her destiny cannot be fulfilled without sacrifice greater than that shame – without the prodigal heroism, the extravagant sacrifice of the brave. There is little pity in her destiny, it seems for the men who die. That courage should blaze up, like a beacon, before the people; that faithfulness should stand, in their vision, enduring as a rock; that the passion for freedom should be revealed to them deep and irresistible as the sea – this, it would seem, is expedient, if Ireland is to be saved.

Ireland will be saved surely, in spite of treachery, in spite of cruelty, in spite of murder, as the wise people of Kerry say, "If there's any life in the dead."

An extract from the book 'The Oracles Of God'

A Kerry priest, Fr. McEnery, serving in England had a more disturbing case to make to the Bishop of Kerry and the priests of his diocese. McEnery's brother was captured after a fight at Clashmealcon Caves. It was widely rumoured that he and other prisoners were beaten almost to death by their captors. Fr. McEnery returned in haste from England, was not allowed to see his brother, but was told by the authorities that the prisoners would be executed when time became available. He wrote to Bishop O'Sullivan that his brother, after being first tortured, was murdered at Ballymullen Barracks, Tralee. He was writing, 'not to ask Your Lordship how much Christianity is allowed in your diocese, but what is to be done for his widow and little child,' and to point out that 'the very priests who made these young fellows swear a solemn oath of fealty to the Republic are now enjoying comfortable incomes as chaplains to the Free State. O'Sullivan and his clergy might be considered particularly vulnerable to Fr. McEnery's line of attack, since their enthusiastic denunciation of Republicans was not matched by a willingness to draw attention to the atrocities perpetrated by the other side.

Foreign foe and native traitor
Both have failed to quench the flame,
That has guided Ireland's army
Through the years of pride and shame.

And 'twill flash to deathless glowing
Making bright the upward way,
When our men shall march to Freedom
At the dawning of the Day.

Go dtagadh bneacadh an lae sin agus go dragadh se gan mhoill.

Sean - Chomraidh

Clashmealcon Caves

It being on a Sunday morning early in the month of spring,
The rifle shots rang in their ears, the chapel bell did ring,
But louder still their shots rang out, you could hear the thunder roar,
As the ambush it was taking place down by the Shannon shore.

In Dunfort's cave they took their stand, the last in Ireland's rights,
Three days and nights with rapid fire they nobly held the fight,
Till worn out without relief they did at length give o'er
And they gave their lives for Ireland down by the Shannon shore.

McGrath and Shea were washed away as the foaming tide did rise,
Their comrades knew that they were doomed when they heard their
drowning cries,
They knew they could not hold the fight, being then reduced to four,
And they yielded to their enemies down by the Shannon shore.

Ned Greaney, Mac and Hathaway in irons soon were bound
And taken off to Tralee jail, where guilty they were found,
They were placed before the firing squad, which quickly on them
poured,
And now they sleep in martyrs' graves down by the Shannon shore.

Their captain was a brave young man with a heart both light and bold
It was said he knew that death was due as soon as he tied the rope,
Timothy Lyons it was his name from a place called Garranagore
And he too met his doom in his youthful bloom, down by the Shannon
shore.

Their comrades sorely miss them gone, their loss they now deplore,
When strangers came to view the cave and roam along the shore,
There to enjoy the pleasant time while other heats feel sore,
And that will be for years to come down by the Shannon shore.

And now to end this mournful rime, I have no more to say,
The cave will be their monument and that for many a day.
May God reward these guileless souls and blessing on them pour,
Console their friends who miss them gone, down by the Shannon shore.

William O'Shaughnessy, Christopher Quinn and Patrick O'Mahony Executed in Ennis on May 2nd 1923

The last three men executed at the Home Barracks, Station Road, Ennis, during the Civil War were William O'Shaughnessy, Kilrush Road; Christopher Quinn, Turnpike; Patrick O'Mahony, Market St., who took the Republican side during the Civil War. These three executions which took place after the Republican forces had issued a general ceasefire, bringing an end to the Civil War hostilities, and brought to 77 the number of executions during the most turbulent period in Irish political history.

Eighty years on, the executions still represent one of the saddest chapters in the Independence struggle where Clare is concerned, closing as it did a chapter in county history that everyone wished never happened.

On Saturday night April 21st, Private Stephen Canty was shot dead on Carmody St. The 22 year old Kerryman was to have been married within two weeks. The murder came as a bitter sting in the tail of a Civil War that was drawing to a close. Ten people were arrested by national troops in the immediate aftermath of the murder. They were: Patrick O'Mahony, Market St; John O'Leary, Clonroad; Christy Quinn, Turnpike; William Fahy, Turnpike; Michael White, Clonroad; William and Michael O'Shaughnessy, Kilrush Road; B O'Regan, Turnpike; J. O'Loughlin, Market St, and Thomas Blake, Turnpike.

The authorities were determined to bring someone to task for the murder. O'Mahony and O'Leary were tried at a military tribunal in Ennis on April 23rd. They were charged with being in possession of a partially loaded revolver on the night of Canty's murder. Both were sentenced to death but O'Leary's sentence was commuted to ten years' penal servitude.

The inquest came up with the verdict that Private Canty was killed by "some person unknown" and O'Mahony and O'Leary could not have fired the fatal shot. However it did not save O'Mahony from the firing squad. He was executed in the home Barracks on April 26th. On May 2nd, Christopher Quinn and William O'Shaughnessy were executed for the murder of Canty.

Mairfidh A Chuimhne Go Brách



Patrick O'Mahony

Born in Ennis,

Patrick O'Mahony, Volunteer, Mid-Clare Brigade,

Executed April 26th 1923 in Home
Barracks, Station Rd., Ennis,

Buried in Drumcliffe Cemetery.

Age 25 years.

R.I.P.

Patrick O'Mahony

Patrick O'Mahony, Volunteer, Mid-Clare Brigade, was born in Ennis, and received his early education there. He was a member of the Ennis Company, 1st Battalion Mid Clare Brigade. After completing his education he went to work for his father, who engaged in a Shoe Making business in the town of Ennis. During his apprenticeship he became restless and joined the British Army.

On termination of his service he returned to Ennis and became a member of the IRA. In 1921 he was active as a drill instructor. He became attached to the Active Service Unit of the 1st. Battalion in 1922, and was later arrested. He was sentenced to death and executed at Home Barracks, in Ennis. He is buried in Drumcliffe Cemetery.

Last letter on the eve of his execution

"I am to die this morning, I am innocent of the death of the poor soldier. I am sorry for his fate, but I forgive my enemies - if I have any - from the depths of my heart. May God Bless Ireland and may her sons be united once more in love with one another."

Glór Don Athair



Christopher Quinn

Born and educated in Ennis.

Volunteer Mid-Clare Brigade.

**Executed on May 2nd 1923,
in
Home Barracks, Station Rd., Ennis.**

Aged 18 years.

R.I.P.

Christopher Quinn

Christy Quinn, Volunteer Mid-Clare Brigade, was born and educated in Ennis. He worked as an apprentice tailor, while his father worked in The Clare Champion as a Printer. He was a member of a large family and lived in the Turnpike. He was attached to the "E" Company, Ennis and in 1922 he volunteered for Active Service in the 1st. Battalion. He was arrested later and

sentenced to "Death", and executed in his own town of Ennis at the Home Barracks. Much could be said about the high ideals and patriotic principles of this youthful teenager, whose courage, loyalty and devotion was an inspiration to all who knew him. He is buried Drumcliffe Cemetery, Ennis, Co. Clare.

**Last letter to his father on the eve of his execution.
(from Séan Sabhat Commemoration)**

Dearest Father.

My last letter to you. I know it is hard but welcome be the will of God. I am to be executed in the morning but I hope you will try and bear it. Tell Katie not to be fretting for me as it was all for Ireland; it is tough on my brothers and sisters -poor Jim, John, Joe, Paddy, Michael, Cissie, Mary, Margaret-hope you will mind them and try to put them in good positions. Tell them to pray for me.

Well father, I am taking it great, as better men than ever I was fell. You have a son you can be proud of, as I think I have done my part for the land I love. Tell all the neighbours in the Turnpike to pray for me. Tell Nanna, Mary and Jimmy to pray for me, Joe, Séan, Mago, Julia, Uncle Jim and the Tipperary people which I knew. I hope you will mind yourself and do not fret for me. With the help of God I will be happy with my mother in Heaven and away from all the trouble of this world, so I think I will be happy. Tell Mrs. O'Shaughnessy not to fret as myself and Willie were pals together and will die together. He is a good lad-he is a soldier to the end. Well father, I don't think I have much more to say. Tell the Guiton family to pray for me, as I know they will feel it very much. I know it is hard on you, but with God's help you will get out of it.

Dear father, I will now say good-bye - good-bye 'till we meet in Heaven".

I remain Your loving Son,
Christie

In Undying Memory



William O'Shaughnessy

Age 18.

Born in Ennis.

Volunteer Mid-Clare Brigade.

Executed in Home Barracks,

Station Road, Ennis.

May 2nd 1923

R.I.P.

William O'Shaughnessy

Volunteer Mid-Clare Brigade, born in Ennis, he was brought up in the Turnpike and was the son of honest hard working parents. Prior to his active service in the I.R.A. he was employed as a Mailman.

He was attached to the "E" Company, Ennis and in 1922 he volunteered for Active Service in the 1st. Battalion. Following his

arrest he was sentenced to death. Both he and Christopher Quinn were executed for the murder of Private Canty on May 2nd 1923. They all protested their innocence but to no avail.

With a feeling of patriotic duty, this noble and determined youth of eighteen made the supreme sacrifice with calmness and unusual courage. He was executed at Home Barracks in Ennis on the 2nd May 1923.

His death was a shock to all. He is buried in Drumcliffe Cemetery, Ennis, Co. Clare

Articles Of Agreement For A Treaty between Great Britain And Ireland, December 6, 1921

1. Ireland shall have the same Constitutional status in the community of Nations known as the British Empire as the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa, with a Parliament having powers to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of Ireland, and an Executive responsible to that Parliament, and shall be styled and known as the Irish Free State.
2. Subject to the provisions hereinafter set out, the position of the Irish Free State in relation to the Imperial Parliament and Government and otherwise shall be that of the Dominion of Canada, and the law, practice, and Constitutional usage governing the relationship of the Crown or the representative of the Crown and of Imperial Parliament to the Dominion of Canada shall govern their relationship to the Irish Free State.
3. The representative of the Crown in Ireland shall be appointed in like manner as the Governor-General of Canada, and in accordance with the practice observed in the making of such appointments.
4. The Oath to be taken by members of the Parliament of the Irish Free State shall be in the following form:-

I...do solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State as by law established, and that I will be faithful to H.M. King George V, his heirs and successors by law, in virtue of the common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain and her adherence to and membership of the group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations.

5. The Irish Free State shall assume liability for the service of the Public Debt of the United Kingdom as existing at the date hereof and towards the payment of War Pensions as existing at that date in such proportion as may be fair and equitable, having regard to any just claim on the part of Ireland by way of set-off or counter-claim, the amount of such sums being determined in default of agreement by the arbitration of one or more independent persons being citizens of the British Empire.

6. Until an arrangement has been made between the British and Irish Governments whereby the Irish Free State undertakes her own coastal defence, the defence by sea of Great Britain and Ireland shall be undertaken by His Majesty's Imperial Forces, but this shall not prevent the construction or maintenance by the Government of the Irish Free State of such vessels as are necessary for the protection of the Revenue or the Fisheries. The foregoing provisions of this Article shall be reviewed at a conference of Representatives of the British and Irish governments, to be held at the expiration of five years from the date hereof with a view to the undertaking by Ireland of a share in her own coastal defence.

7. The Government of the Irish Free State shall afford to His Majesty's Imperial Forces
 - (a) In time of peace such harbour and other facilities as are indicated in the Annex hereto, or such other facilities as may from time to time be agreed between the British Government and the Government of the Irish Free State; and
 - (b) In time of war or of strained relations with a Foreign Power such harbour and other facilities as the British Government may require for the purposes of such

defence as aforesaid.

8. With a view to securing the observance of the principle of international limitation of armaments, if the Government of the Irish Free State establishes and maintains a military defence force, the establishments thereof shall not exceed in size such proportion of the military establishments maintained in Great Britain as that which the population of Ireland bears to the population of Great Britain.
9. The ports of Great Britain and the Irish Free State shall be freely open to the ships of the other country on payment of the customary port and other duties.
10. The Government of the Irish Free State agrees to pay fair compensation on terms not less favourable than those accorded by the Act of 1920 to judges, officials, members of Police Forces, and other Public Servants who are discharged by it or who retire in consequence of the change of government effected in pursuance hereof. Provided that this agreement shall not apply to members of the Auxiliary Police Force or to persons recruited in Great Britain for the Royal Irish Constabulary during the two years next proceeding the date hereof. The British Government will assume responsibility for such compensation or pensions as may be payable to any of these excepted persons.
11. Until the expiration of one month from the passing of the Act of Parliament for the ratification of this instrument, the powers of the Parliament and the Government of the Irish Free State shall not be exercisable as respects Northern Ireland, and the provision of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, shall, so far as they relate to Northern Ireland remain in full force and effect, and no election shall be held for the return of members to serve in the Parliament of the Irish Free State for constituencies in Northern Ireland, unless a

resolution is passed by both Houses of Parliament of Northern Ireland in favour of holding of such elections before the end of the said month.

12. If, before the expiration of the said month, an address is presented to His Majesty by both Houses of Parliament of Northern Ireland to that effect, the powers of the Parliament and the Government of the Irish Free State shall no longer extend to Northern Ireland, and the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920 (including those relating to the Council of Ireland) shall so far as they relate to Northern Ireland continue to be of full force and effect, and this instrument shall have effect subject to the necessary modifications.

Provide that if such an address is so presented a Commission consisting of three persons, one to be appointed by the Government of the Irish Free State, one to be appointed by the Government of Northern Ireland, and one who shall be Chairman to be appointed by the British Government shall determine in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants, so far as may be compatible with economic and geographic conditions, the boundaries between Northern Ireland and the rest of Ireland, and for the purposes of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, and of this instrument, the boundary of Northern Ireland shall be such as may be determined by such Commissions.

13. For the purpose of the last foregoing article, the powers of the Parliament of Southern Ireland under the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, to elect members of the Council of Ireland shall be such as may be determined by such Commission.
14. After the expiration of the said month, if no such address as is mentioned in Article 12 hereof is presented, the Parliament and Government of Northern Ireland shall continue to exercise as respects Northern Ireland shall

continue to exercise as respects Northern Ireland the powers conferred on them by the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, but the Parliament and Government of the Irish Free State shall in Northern Ireland have in relation to matters in respect of which the Parliament of Northern Ireland has not power to make laws under that Act (including matters which under the said Act are within the jurisdiction of the Council of Ireland) the same powers as in the rest of Ireland, subject to such other provisions as may be agreed in manner hereinafter appearing.

15. At any time after the date hereof the Government of Southern Ireland hereinafter constituted may meet for the purpose of discussing the provisions subject to which the last foregoing article is to operate in the event of no such address as is therein mentioned being presented and those provisions may include: -
- (a) Safeguards with regard to patronage in Northern Ireland;
 - (b) Safeguards with regard to the collection of revenue in Northern Ireland;
 - (c) Safeguards with regard to import and export duties affecting the trade or industry of northern Ireland;
 - (d) Safeguards for minorities in Northern Ireland;
 - (e) The settlement of the financial relations between Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State;
 - (f) The establishment and powers of a local militia in Northern Ireland and the relation of the Defence Forces of the Irish Free State and of Northern Ireland respectively,

And if at any such meeting provisions are agreed to, the same shall have effect as if they were included amongst the provisions subject to which the powers of the Parliament and the Government of the Irish Free State are to be exercisable in Northern Ireland under Article 14 hereof.

16. Neither the Parliament of the Irish Free State nor the Parliament of Northern Ireland shall make any law so as either directly or indirectly to endow any religion or prohibit or restrict the free exercise thereof or given any preference or impose any disability on account of the religious belief or religious status or affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending the religious instruction at the school or make any discrimination as respects State aid between schools under the management of different religious denomination or any educational institution any of its property except for public utility purposes and on payment of compensation.
17. By way of provisional arrangement for the administration of Southern Ireland during the interval which must elapse between the date hereof and the constitution of a Parliament and Government of the Irish Free State in accordance therewith, steps shall be taken forthwith for summoning a meeting of members of Parliament elected for Government of Ireland Act 1920, and for constituting a provisional Government, and the British Government shall take the steps necessary to transfer to such Provisional Government the powers and machinery requisite for the discharge of its duties provided that every member of such provisional Government shall have signified in writing his or her acceptance of this instrument. But this arrangement shall not continue in force beyond the expiration of twelve months from the date hereof.
18. This instrument shall be submitted forthwith by his

Majesty's Government for the approval of Parliament and by the Irish Signatories to a meeting summoned for the purpose of the members elected to sit in the House of Commons of Southern Ireland and if approved shall be ratified by the necessary legislation.

Signed

On behalf of the Irish Delegation: -

On behalf of the British Delegation:

Art. O. Griobhatha.
Michael O. Coileain.
Riobard Bartun.
E. S. O. Dugain.
Seorsa Gabhain Ui Dubhthaigh

D. Lloyd George.
Austen Chamberlain.
Birkenhead.
Winston S. Churchill.
Hamar Greenwood.
Gordon Hewart.

6th December, 1921.

1922 – The Civil War.

Quote

"Patriotism is in large part a memory of heroic dead men and a striving to accomplish some task left unfinished by them "- Pearse

Resolution On Secret Military Courts.

The following Proclamation was issued on 10th October 1922, after the granting of Special Emergency Powers to the Provisional Government's Army.

1. With a view to the speedy termination of the present state of armed rebellion and insurrection, and the restoration of peace, order, and security, the Government, with the sanction of Dáil Éireann, has sanctioned the doing by, or under the authority of , the Army Council of all of the following matters or things:
 - (a) The setting up of Military Courts or Committees for the inquiring into charges against persons in respect of any of the offences hereinafter mentioned, provided, however, that every such Military Court or Committee shall include as a member thereof at least one person nominated by the Minister of Defence and certified by the Law Officer to be a person of legal knowledge and experience.
 - (b) The inquiry by such Military Courts or Committees into the cases of persons charged with any of the offences following, that is to say:
 - (1) Taking part in, or aiding or abetting any attacks upon or using force against the National Forces.
 - (2) Looting, arson, destruction, seizure, unlawful possession, or

Majesty's Government for the approval of Parliament and by the Irish Signatories to a meeting summoned for the purpose of the members elected to sit in the House of Commons of Southern Ireland and if approved shall be ratified by the necessary legislation.

Signed

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"Patriotism is in large part a memory of heroic dead men and a striving to accomplish some task left unfinished by them "- Pearse

Resolution On Secret Military Courts.

The following Proclamation was issued on 10th October 1922, after the granting of Special Emergency Powers to the Provisional Government's Army.

1. With a view to the speedy termination of the present state of armed rebellion and insurrection, and the restoration of peace, order, and security, the Government, with the sanction of Dáil Éireann, has sanctioned the doing by, or under the authority of , the Army Council of all of the following matters or things:
 - (a) The setting up of Military Courts or Committees for the inquiring into charges against persons in respect of any of the offences hereinafter mentioned, provided, however, that every such Military Court or Committee shall include as a member thereof at least one person nominated by the Minister of Defence and certified by the Law Officer to be a person of legal knowledge and experience.
 - (b) The inquiry by such Military Courts or Committees into the cases of persons charged with any of the offences following, that is to say:
 - (1) Taking part in, or aiding or abetting any attacks upon or using force against the National Forces.
 - (2) Looting, arson, destruction, seizure, unlawful possession, or

removal of, or damage to, any public or private property.

- (3) Having possession without proper authority of any bomb, or article in the nature of a bomb, or any dynamite, or gelignite, or other explosive substance, or any revolver, rifle, gun or other firearm or lethal weapon, or any ammunition for such firearm.
- (4) The breach of any general order or regulation made by the Army Council and the infliction by such Military Courts or Committees of the punishment of death or of penal servitude for any period or of imprisonment for any period or of a fine of any amount either with or without imprisonment on any person found guilty by such Court or Committee of any of the offences aforesaid provided that no such sentence of death be executed except under the counter signature of two members of the Army Council.
- (c) The removal under authority of the Army Council of any person taken prisoner, arrested, or detained by the National Forces to any place or places within or without the area of jurisdiction of the Government, and the detention or imprisonment of any such persons in any place or places within or without the area aforesaid.
- (d) The regulation and control of the sale, possession, transfer of, and dealing in, revolvers, rifles, guns and other firearms.
2. By regulations made the 2nd day of October, 1922, the Army Council have provided for the trial by Military Courts of civilians charged with the offences specified in the preceding paragraph and for the infliction upon any civilian convicted by a Military Court of any such offence, of any of the following punishments according to the nature and gravity of the offence:

Death,
Penal Servitude,
Imprisonment,

Deportation,
Internment,
Fine.

3. It is provided by the said regulations that they shall come into force upon and shall apply as from such date as the Army Council shall determine and announce by proclamation.
4. By proclamation published the 3rd day of October, 1922, the Government announced and proclaimed as follows:

Amnesty Offer

- (1) Every person who is engaged in such insurrection and rebellion against the State as aforesaid, or in such armed opposition to the National Forces as aforesaid, or who has been guilty of any offence against the State, directly arising out of such insurrection, rebellion, and armed opposition aforesaid, and who, on or before the 15th day of October, 1922, voluntarily delivers into the possession of the National Forces all firearms, arms, weapons, bombs, ammunition and explosives, and all public and private property, now unlawfully in his possession, and quits all lands or buildings unlawfully occupied by him, and who, on or before the 15th day of October, 1922, voluntarily ceases to take any part in, or aid or abet, such insurrection, rebellion, or armed opposition, shall be permitted to return unmolested to his home, and to every such person we hereby offer, assure and proclaim a full amnesty and pardon for all such insurrection, riot, rebellion, and opposition and offences as aforesaid.
- (2) Every such person may deliver any such firearms, arms, weapons, ammunition, explosives and bombs, and any such public property as aforesaid, to the Officer Commanding the nearest Military position or station, or to any such person as shall be nominated by him.

**SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF SAORSTAT ÉIREANN
LIAM T. Mac COSGAIR,**

President of Dáil Éireann.

Known then, and it is hereby announced and proclaimed as follows:

- (1) After the 15th day of October, 1922, we, the Army Council, will exercise all the powers and do all the matters and things in the first paragraph of this proclamation mentioned, or any of them, according as the same shall to us seem necessary or expedient.
- (2) The said Regulations as to the Trial of Civilians by Military Courts made by us, the Army Council, on the 2nd day of October, 1922, shall come into force and apply as from the 15th day of October, 1922.

Given at General Headquarters, Portobello Barracks, Dublin, and published this 10th day of October, 1922.

Signed on behalf of the Army Council,

Risteard Ua Maolcatha, General,

Commander-in-Chief.

We, the undersigned officers of the I.R.A., realising the gravity of the present situation in Ireland, and appreciating the fact that if the present drift is maintained a conflict of comrades is inevitable, declare that this would be the greatest calamity in Irish History, and would leave Ireland broken for generations.

To avert this catastrophe we believe that a closing of the ranks all round is necessary.

We suggest to all leaders, Army and political, and all citizens and soldiers of Ireland the advisability of a unification of forces on the basis of acceptance and utilization of our present national position in the best interest of Ireland; and we require that nothing shall be done which would prejudice our position or dissipate our strength.

We feel that on this basis alone can the situation best be faced, viz:

- (1) The acceptance of the fact-admitted by all sides-that the majority of the people of Ireland are willing to accept the Treaty.
- (2) An agreed election with a view to
- (3) Forming a Government which will have the confidence of the whole country.
- (4) Army unification on above basis.

Tom Hales

S. O'Hegarty

Sean Boylan

Owen O'Duffy

Micháel Ó Coileáin

Dan Breen

H. Murphy

F. O'Donoghue

R.J. Mulcahy

Gearoid O'Sullivan

Text of October Pastrol (From Oracles of God, The Roman Catholic Church and Irish Politics 1922-37)

The version reproduced below is that printed in the Freeman's Journal on 1st. October 1922.

The present state of Ireland is a sorrow and humiliation to its friends all over the world. To us, Irish Bishops, it is, because of the moral and religious issues at stake, a source of the most painful anxiety. Our country that but yesterday was so glorious is now a bye-word before the nations for a domestic strife, as disgraceful as it is criminal and suicidal. A section of the community, refusing to acknowledge the Government set up by the nation have chosen to attack their own country as if she were a foreign Power. Forgetting, apparently, that a dead nation cannot be free, they have deliberately set out to make our Motherland, as far as they could, a heap of ruins. They have wrecked Ireland from end to end; burning and destroying national property of enormous value, breaking roads, bridges and railways, seeking by this insensate blockade to starve the people, or bury them in social stagnation. They have caused more damage to Ireland in three months than could be laid to the charge of British rule in so many decades.

They carry on what they call a war, but which, in the absence of any legitimate authority to justify it, is morally only a system of murder and assassination of the National forces – for it must not be forgotten that killing in an unjust war is as much murder before God as if there were no war. They ambush military lorries in the crowded streets thereby killing and wounding not only the soldiers of the Nation, but peaceful citizens. They have, to our horror, shot bands of these troops on their way to Mass on Sunday; and set mine traps in the public roads and blown to fragments some of the bravest Irishmen that ever lived.

Side by side with this woeful destruction of life and property there

is running a campaign of plunder, raiding banks and private houses, seizing the lands and property of others, burning mansions and country houses, destroying demesnes and slaying cattle.

But even worse and sadder than this physical ruin in the general demoralisation created by this unhappy revolt – demoralisation especially of the young, whose minds are being poisoned by false principles, and their young lives utterly spoiled by early association with cruelty, robbery, falsehood and crime. Religion itself is not spared. We observe with deepest sorrow that a certain section is engaged in a campaign against the Bishops, whose pastoral office they would silence by calumny and intimidation; and they have done the priesthood of Ireland, whose service and sacrifices for their country will be historic, the insult of staggering a cabal amongst them to brow-beat their bishops and revolt against their authority. And, in spite of all this sin and crime, they claim to be good Catholics and demand at the hands of the Church her most sacred privileges like the Sacraments reserved for her worthy members. When we think of what these young men were only a few months ago, so many of them generous, kind-hearted and good, and see them now involved in this network of crime, our hearts are filled with bitterest anguish.

It is almost inconceivable how decent Irish boys could degenerate as tragically, and reconcile such a mass of criminality with their duties to God and to Ireland. The strain on our country for the last few years will account for much of it. Vanity, perhaps self-conceit, may have blinded some that think that they, and not the nation, must dictate the national policy. Greed for land, love of loot and anarchy have affected others, and they we regret to say, are not a few; but the main cause of this demoralisation is to be found in false notions on social morality.

The long struggle of centuries against foreign rule and misrule has weakened respect for civil authority in the national conscience. This is a great misfortune, a great drawback and a great peril to our young Government. For no nation can live where the civic sense of obedience to authority and law is not firmly and religiously maintained. And if Ireland is ever to realise anything but a

miserable destiny of anarchy all classes of her citizens must cultivate respect for and obedience to the Government set up by the nation in whatever shape it takes, while acting within the law of God. This difficulty is now being cruelly exploited for the ruin, as we see, of Ireland. The claim is now made that a minority are entitled, when they think it right, to take arms and destroy the National Government. Last April, foreseeing the danger, we raised our voices in the most solemn manner against this disruptive and immoral principle. We pointed out to our young men the conscientious difficulties in which it would involve them, and warned them against it. Disregard for the Divine Law then lay down by the Bishops is the chief cause of all our present sorrows and calamities.

We now again authoritatively renew that teaching and warn our Catholic people that they are conscientiously bound to abide by it, subject of course to an appeal to the Holy See.

No one is justified in rebelling against the legitimate Government, whatever it is, set up by the nation and acting within its rights.

The opposite doctrine is false, contrary to Christian morals and opposed to the constant teaching of the Church. 'Let every soul', says St. Paul, 'be subject to the higher powers' – that is to the legitimate authority of the State. From St. Paul downwards the Church has inculcated obedience to authority as a divine duty as well as a social necessity; and has reprobated unauthorised rebellion as sinful in itself and destructive of social stability: as it manifestly is, for if one section of the community has that right, so have other sections the same right, until we end in general anarchy. No Republican can evade this teaching by asserting that the legitimate authority in Ireland is not the present Dáil or Provisional Government. There is no other, and cannot be, outside the body of the people. A Republic without popular recognition behind it is a contradiction in terms.

Such being Divine Law, the guerilla warfare now being carried on by the Irregulars is without moral sanction, and therefore the killing of National soldiers in the course of it is murder before God. The seizing of roads, bridges and railways is criminal destruction;

the invasion of homes and the molestation of citizens are a grievous crime. All those who in contravention of this teaching participate in such crimes, are guilty of grievous sins, and may not be absolved in Confession, if they persist in such evil courses.

It is said that there are priests who approve of this irregular insurrection. If there be any such, they are false to their sacred office and are guilty of grievous scandal, and will not be allowed to retain the faculties they hold from us. Furthermore, we forbid under pain of suspension, irascibility, and reserve to the Ordinary any priest who advocates such doctrine, publicly or privately.

Our people will observe that in all this there is no question of mere politics, but of what is morally right or wrong according to the Divine Law in certain principles and in a certain series of acts, whether carried out for political purposes or otherwise. What we condemn is the armed campaign now being carried on against the Government set up by the nation.

In any section in the community have a grievance or disapprove of the National Government they have the elections to fall back upon; and such constitutional action as is recognised by God and civilised society. If their political views are founded on wisdom they will succeed sooner or later, but one thing is certain, the Hand of Providence will not be forced nor their cause advanced by irreligion and crime.

It may perhaps be said that in this our teaching we wound the strong feelings of many of our people; that we know and the thought is agony to us. But we must teach Truth in such a grave crisis no matter what the consequences. It is not for want of sympathy with any part of our flock that we interfere, but from a deep and painful sense of our duty to God, to our people, and out of true charity to the young men themselves specially concerned.

Let it not be said that our teaching is due to political bias and a desire to help one political party. If it were true, we were unworthy of our sacred office. Our religion in such a supposition was a mockery and a sham. We issue this Pastoral Letter under the grievous sense of our responsibility, mindful of the charges laid upon us by our Divine Master to preach His Doctrine and

safeguard His sacred rule of faith and morals at any cost. We must, in the words of St. Peter, 'obey God rather than man'.

With all earnestness we appeal to the leaders in this saddest revolt to rise above their own feelings, to remember the claim of God and the sufferings of the people in their conscience, and to abandon methods, which they now know beyond the shadow of a doubt are un-Catholic and immoral, and look to the realisation of their ideals along lines sanctioned by Divine Law and society.

Let them not think we are insensible to their feelings – we think of them with compassion, carrying as they do on their shoulders a heavy responsibility for what is now happening in Ireland. Once more we wish to appeal to the young men in this movement in the name of God to return to their innocent homes and make, if necessary the big sacrifice of their feelings for the common good. And surely, it is no humiliation, having done their best to abide by the verdict of Ireland.

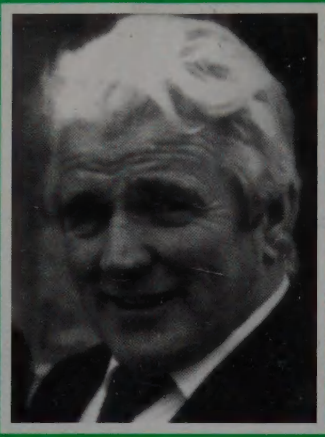
We know that some of them are troubled and held back by the oath they took. A lawful oath is indeed a sacred bond between God and man; but no oath can bind any man to carry on a warfare against his own country in circumstances forbidden by the law of God. It would be an offence to God and to the very nature of an oath to say so.

We, therefore, hope and pray that they will take advantage of the Government's present offer and make peace with their own country, a peace which will bring both happiness and honour to themselves and joy to Ireland generally and to the friends of Ireland all over the world.

In this lamentable upheaval the moral sense of the people has, we fear, been badly shaken. We read with horror of the many unauthorised murders recorded in the Press. With feelings of shame we observe that when country houses and public buildings were destroyed the furniture and other fittings were seized and carried away by people in the neighbourhood. We remind them that all such property belongs in justice to the original owners, and now must be preserved for and restored to them by those who hold them.

We desire to impress on the people the duty of supporting the national Government, whatever it is, to set their faces resolutely against disorder, to pay their taxes, rents and annuities, and to assist the Government in every possible way to restore order and establish peace. Unless they learn to do so they can have no Government, and if they have no Government, they can have no nation.

As human effort is fruitless without God's blessing, we exhort our priests and people to continue the prayers already ordered, and we direct that the remaining October devotions be offered up for peace. We also direct that a Novena to the Irish saints for the same end be said in all public churches and oratories, and in semi-public oratories, to begin on the 28th day of October and end on November the 6th, the feast of all Irish Saints. These Novena devotions, in addition to the Rosary and Benediction, may include a special prayer for Ireland and the Litany of the Irish Saints.



Martin O'Dwyer (Bob) was born in 1937 in Cashel, where he developed a love of Irish history. He is the curator of the Cashel Folk Village and a co-founder of the Cashel Arts and Heritage Society.

He has lectured on subjects ranging from traditional cures, "piseogs", superstitions, and burial customs, to the 1916 Rising, the War of Independence, the Irish Civil War, and World War I (1914-18).

Previous Publications

- Biographical Dictionary of Tipperary
- Cashel Memories
- Tipperary Sons & Daughters 1916 - 1923
- Pictorial History of Tipperary 1916 - 1923

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