

Establishment:

The Irish Volunteers were established in Aughagower in 1915, and a Company was formed.

Territorial Delimination of Unit:

Parish boundary on N. and E. Derrycroff, Roigh, Lanmore and Knappa Beg on S and W.

Terminal Dates, Reorganization & C:

Reorganization June 1916 and summer 1919.

Personnel Pre-1916.

Owen Hughes, Lankill: Captain.
Hugh Reid, Knappa Beg: 1st Lieutenant.
Mamus Keane, Cloonskill: 2nd Lieutenant.
John Duffy, Letreen: Adjutant.

Personnel Easter 1916:

Same: Hugh Reid, Acting O/C.

Personnel: Sept 1918:

JohnDuffy, Cloonskill: Captain.
Hugh Reid, Knappa Beg: Lieutenant.
Tom Bourke, Doon: 2nd Lieutenant.
E. Berry, Lanmore: Adjutant.
Pat Quinn, Doon: Quarter Master.

Section Leaders:

Brod. McGuire: Cushen.
Dick Butler: Rokkfield.
Ed. McGuire: Cordarragh.
Martin Mulroy: Curvey.
John Reilly: Aughagower.
Ml. Gavin: Roigh.
John Duffy: Letereen.

Volunteers;

Knappa Beg: Tom Moran, Ml. Kerrigan, James Geraghty.
Cordarragh: John Lavelle, Ml. Tuohy, John McGuire, Andy McGuire, Pat Heneghan, Peter Sheridan, P. O'Malley, Dan McGuire, Hugh McGuire, P. McGuire, J. McGuire, T. McGuire, T. McGuire.
Lanmore: Tom Berry, Ml. Berry, John Berry, Ml. Flynn, A. Duffy, P. Ruddy, T. McGuire, Ml. Morrison, John Duffy, Ml. Duffy, P. Walsh, John Walsh, James Walsh, Tom Walsh.
Cloonskill: John Heneghan, Pat Hughes, Mtn. Malone, Ml. Grady, P. Duffy, O. Duffy, Peter Jennings, Tom Jennings.
Lankhill: Charles Hughes.
Curvey: Mtn. Grady, P. Mulroy, Peter Mulroy, P. Scahill, A. Brady, J. Sheridan, Ml. Moran.

Ballygorman : James Kerrigan, Jas. Scott, John Scott,
Mark Scott, P. Kerrigan, John Kerrigan,
J. Sheridan, T. Sheridan.

Leckaun : John Kerrigan, John Reilly.

Mace : Martin Berry.

Cushen : J. Feehan, J. Butler.

Rotkfield : B. Kerrigan, J. McGuire, P. McGuire, D. Butler,
A. Kerrigan, J. Butler, J. Walsh, J. Reilly.

Bunrower : P. O'Malley, Ml. O'Malley, Dom. Geraghty,
E. Walsh.

Doon : M. Geraghty, P. Heraghty, P. McGing, M. Horan,
P. Horan, J. Horan.

Derrycroff : Tom Tunney and others.

In this reorganization (Sept. 1918) Shratheen, Glenmask & C became part of the South Mayo Brigade under T. McGuire, and formed a Company of their own. John King was O/C of this company, and Michael Butler, his Deputy.

Personnel : Nov. 1919 : Same generally.
Personnel : Nov. 1920 : Same generally.
Personnel : July 1921 " Same generally.
Personnel : Dec. 1921 :

Martin Mulroy : Captain.
Ed. Berry : Lt.
P. Quinn : 2nd Lt.
J. Heneghan : Adj.
T. Jennings : Q.M.
rest generally same.

Here is some information re surrounding districts, which there may be no one to supply it.

Cushlough Company:

J. Hastings, O/C, Michael Tunney, Deputy O/C,
P. O'Malley, Adj., John Hastings, Q.M. 30 men.

Drummin Company:

Brod. McLoughlin O/C
Pat Cox Dep. O/C. 35 men.

Owenwee Company:

Tom McLoughlin O/C.
Peter Joyce Dept O/C.

Belclare Company:

M. J. O'Malley O/C
Pat Duffy Dep. O/C.

Killawalla Company:

Martin Ward O/C.
J. Lally Dep. O/C.

Kilmeena Company:

Jeff Gibbons O/C.

Westport Battalion: Pre-truce.

Area: Parishes of Westport, Aughagower, Killawalla, Half-parishes of Cushlough and Drummin, Parish of Kilmeena, and Murrisk area.

Personnel:

O/C	:	Joe Ring, Westport.
Dep. O/C.	:	James Malone, Westport.
Adj.	:	Charles Gavin, Westport.
Engin.	:	Richard Joyce, Westport.
Intell.	:	B. Cryan, Westport.
Transp.	:	T. G. Gibbons, Westport.
Comm.	:	P. O'Malley, Westport.

Westport Battalion : July 1921.

Personnel:

O/C	:	Jas. Malone.
Dep. O/C	:	Wm. Malone (later to sig. on Brigade)
Adj.	:	T. Blaney.
Q.M.	:	Ed. Sammon.
Police	:	J. McGoff.
Transp.	:	T. J. Gibbons.
Intell.	:	B. Cryan, J. Duffy.
Comm.	:	T. Ainsworth.
Training	:	John Berry.

West Mayo Brigade

Personnel: Pre-truce: Area: Westport, Newport, Castlebar, Achill.

O/C	:	Tom Derrig (up to 1920, when arrested)
	:	Ml. Kilroy (1920 until Truce)
Dep. O/C	:	E. Moane, Westport.
Adj.	:	J. Gibbons, Westport.
Q.M.	:	T. Ketterick, Westport.
Acting Q.M.	:	P. Duffy, Aughagower.
Engin	:	T. P. Flanagan, B.E.
Comm.	:	J. Rushe.
Transp.	:	John Dick Gibbons.

West Mayo Brigade: July 1921.

Personnell:

O/C.	:	E. Moane, Westport.
Dep. O/C	:	J. Gibbons, Westport.
Adj.	:	T. Heavey, Westport.
Assist. Adj.	:	T. Harney, Louisbrugh.
Q. M.	:	P. Duffy, Aughagower.
Assist. Q.M	:	P. Reilly, Newport.
Engin.	:	J. Moran, Newport.
Sig.	:	Wm. Malone, Westport.

Transp. : M. Killalea, Castlebar.
Intell : B. Mullins, Breaghwy.
J. Gibbons, Adj. went to Division Staff, Dec. 1921.
Replaced by P. Duffy, Reilly replaced Duffy.

4th Western Division.

Established : July 1921.

Comprised : West Mayo, North and N.W. Mayo, and two Brigades
from Galway in Clifden and Oughterard areas.

Personnel :

O/C : Ml. Kilroy, Newport.
Deputy O/C : Peter McDonnell, Leenane.
Adj. : Christy Mackin, Spiddal.
Assist Adj. : J. Gibbons, Westport.
Q.M. : J. Feehan, Leenane.
Training
Signals : P. Higgins.
Transp. : John Dick Gibbons, Westport.
Engin. : T. P. Flanagan, B.E. Castlebar.
Police. : Charles Gavin, Westport.
Medical : Dr. Turbidy.
Comm
Organisation: J. Rushe, Kiltimagh.
Intell. : T. Mullins, Castlebar, J. Barrett, Crossmolina.
Operations : James Malone, Westport, O/C of Act. Service Unit.
Joe Baker, Westport, Dep. O/C. of A.S. Unit.
This last appointment made Dec. 1921.

"Irish Volunteers" Formed:

I was only 13 years in 1916, but I may be able to give some idea of the general position as I remember it.

When the Irish National Volunteer Force was dissolved, I remember the forming of a Unit, which was known as the Irish Volunteers. This organization centred around Owen Hughes, Lankhill, and his staff was made up of Hugh Reid, Knappa Beg, John Duffy, Lettereen, Manus Keane, Cloonskill. The Organization was made up of practically all the able-bodied men of the west half of the parish the north-east side of the parish, including Aughagower townland still maintaining the I.N. Volunteer Organization.

Mobilization at Cross-roads:

On the Sunday following Easter Sunday of 1916 the Aughagower Company (new organization) mobilized at Lankhill Cross-roads, and among those I remember the following marching to Fornoock Hill to join a general mobilization of the Westport Area; Owen Hughes, Harry, Hughes, P. Hughes, Manus Keane, John Lavelle, John Duffy, Ed. Duffy, Owen Duffy, Tom Berry, E. Berry, John Berry, Michael Flynn, John McGuire, Ml. Tucky, Larry Conway and P. Conway.

The little band carried five shot-guns, the rest carrying walking sticks.

After being reviewed at Fornoock by Joe McBride of Westport Quay, the parade dismissed.

Arrests after the Rebellion:

Following the surrender in Dublin the following were arrested: Owen Hughes, and his son Paddy of Lankhill; John Berry, Manus Keane, Cloonskill, Joe McBride, Joe Gill, Charles Hughes, Edward Moane, Joe Ring, and T. Walsh, all of Westport. There were a few more from Westport I do not remember.

Release of Prisoners 1917:

On the release of the prisoners at Christmas 1917, an active Sinn Fein Club was established with Owen Hughes as Chairman, John Foy of Aughagower as vice-chairman, and Ed. Duffy, Cloonskill as secretary:

The only outstanding achievement of this organization was the hanging of a Sinn Fein Flag on the top of the Round Tower in Aughagower 1919.

Reorganisation of Volunteers:

The volunteers were again about this time reorganized with John Duffy, Cloonskill as Captain: Hugh Reid, Knappa Beg, and Tom Bourke, Doon, as Lieutenants; Ed. Berry, Lanmore; Martin Mulroy, Curvey; Pat Quinn, Doon; Broddie McGuire, Cusheen; Michael Gavin, Rbigh; and John Reilly, Aughagower as Section Leaders; and Frank Knight, Ayle as Adjutant. During 1918 and 1919 training and parades were the principal functions of the Irish Volunteers. Early in 1919 the Organization changed its name to I.R.A.

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In 1919 John Duffy was sentenced to three months in Sligo for drilling in Aughagower after Mass. Hugh Reid took over, and training continued. Concerts and dances were held to raise money for the Arms Fund. All arms - shotguns, snort arms and ammunition were collected by the I.R.A., often the I.R.A. only beating the R.I.C. by a few minutes.

Edward Moane and his sister Tess were imprisoned for singing patriotic songs at a concert in Carrowkenedy.

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The American Delegates at Knappa:

Three American delegates Dunne, Walsh, and other - on mission to Ireland from the Self-Determination Organization of America, came to Westport, then under military law owing to the shooting of Resident Magistrate Milling. The delegates were met at Knappa by the Aughagower and Cushlough boys. The two companies marched to the barricades manned by a half-company of military at Knappa National School. The delegates, accompanied by General Mulcahy, demanded admittance to Westport, but were refused. The military ordered the parade to retire, and immediately advanced with fixed bayonets. John Lavelle, Cordarragh, carrying an American flag was attacked, the flag ripped from his shoulder, himself receiving scratches and torn clothes. The flag was recovered, and handed to Governor Dunne (Penn.), and I am sure questions were asked elsewhere about this insult to the U.S.A. Flag.

I also think that Manus Keane the same day got a job in the south end.

Disturbances in Westport:

Another incident that happened late in 1918 was the arrest of Ed. Moane, Carrowbaun, Westport, for singing a song, and it led to many exciting days around Westport. Ned was tried in Westport. Also in the dock was Wm. O'Malley of Newport, Cushlough band led a parade up Castlebar Street to the Courthouse, which was surrounded by about fifty R.I.C. and a company of some Scotch regiment. As the band approached the Christian Brothers' School the R.I.C. drew batons and charged. The band was badly mauled. John Hastings (or O'Malley?) Claddy, the drummer was badly beaten but gave a good account of himself with his drum-sticks. One R.I.C. man, attacking Joe Walsh of Mill Street, was thrown into the Mall by O. Duffy. The battle raged all afternoon, stones and batons. District Inspector Shore had his teeth knocked out. Moane and O'Malley each received six months. The battle was resumed on the following day, when the prisoners were removed to Westport Railway Station, and again continued for hours.

As a result of the disturbances, Joe Ring, Joe Walsh, Charles Gavin, Wm. Malone, Tom Ketterick and Ed. Gannon were arrested, and got 12 months each in Belfast Jail.

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Boundaries of Company Areas:

The Aughagower Company area was the parish boundary on the north end east, with Roign, Lanmore and Knappa Beg on the south and west. Shraheen, Glenmask and Croaghrim were a separate Company, and attached to the South Mayo Brigade. Michael Butler was Captain; John King, his Deputy.

Cuslough half-parish had its own Company. John Hastings, Derrynerbert was O/C, and Michael Tunney, Deputy O/C.

Drummin had also its own Company with Brod. McLoughlin O/C.

Owenwee Company was captained by Tom McLoughlin of Bohea, with Peter Joyce, Owenwee, as Deputy.

Burning of Police Barrack:

Things drifted along till 1920. In 1920 Carrowkenedy Police huts were burned by a patrol of Aughagower and Cuslough boys under Captain J. Duffy. Ayle Barrack was burned by a patrol under T. Bourke Doon. Preparations were moving at this time for more active work by the I.R.A. Petrol was removed from a train on way ~~to~~ to Newport, and stored in Owenwee bog. Sleepers were commandeered from the Railway for the building of dug-outs.

Black and Tans arrive in Westport:

On the morning of 2nd November 1920 Westport had its first visit by members of the new Black and Tan Force. Most of the wanted men had been forewarned, and had made good their escape before their houses were raided. On the morning of the 2nd, most of those men collected on the top of Lanmore Hill. Amongst them were Charles Hughes of Westport, E. Moane of Westport, Charles Gavin, T. Heavey, Joe Ring, J. McDonagh (all of Westport), Owen Hughes of Lanknill and Manus Keane of Cloonskill. Capt. J. Duffy made arrangements for billeting, but in a few days the scare was over, and some of the older men, whose houses were not raided, returned and were not afterwards disturbed.

Raids for arms at Cloonskill:

From that onwards the task of forming an Active Service Unit was taken more seriously, and a number of young men volunteered this service for full-time activity. Arms were being collected at Cloonskill. The full armaments of the Westport Area at this time were 8 Service Rifles, 3 revolvers, 1. Peter the Painter, 8 good shot-guns and a great number of useless guns, 1500 rounds of .303 ammunition and 60 rounds of .45 ammunition. The military hearing of preparations being made, swooped down on Cloonskill on the night of 23rd December 1920. They wanted the Duffy brothers, as well as the arms, but found neither. They pulled down hay, oats, and walls, and even dug out the pits of potatoes in the fields, but of no avail. All they had for their trouble was a fat goose belonging to Phil Lyons of Cloonskill, which one of the soldiers picked up on

his bayonet.

On the night of the 24th they again raided. During the raid Pat Duffy arrived home from America to find his home occupied by the Black and Tans and his sons outlawed. On the same night Hughes, Keane's and Berry's were raided. The following morning (Christmas morning) Aughagower Chapel was surrounded and all the people questioned at the church door.

St. Stephen's Night in Aughagower:

On St. Stephen's night Aughagower was again visited. The village was surrounded about 11 p.m. as the dance in the local hall broke up. All the men were brought in front of the chapel to be identified by some local R.I.C. men. On the same night during the round-up Joe Ring, John Duffy, and Charles Gavin were having tea in Father McHugh's. P. Duffy and T. Heavey on their way to join them were captured in front of a squad of soldiers, and as the soldier's attention was directed towards Mark Scott of Ballygolman and John Reilly of Leekaun, who were standing against the Pound Wall, Duffy and Heavey escaped into the Old Graveyard, and worked round again to Father McHugh's to give the word to their companions.

That night Curvey came in for its terror raid, Moran's, Heneghan's, Mulroy's and Seahill's being visited.

About this time P. Duffy was accidentally wounded in the palm of the hand, which put him on the inactive list for some weeks.

During those Christmas raids Hugh Reid of Knappa Beg was arrested. So also were Pat Tunney of Cusnlough, Michael Tunney, his brother. John Hastings of Derryherbert and Brod. McLoughlin of Oughty, Charles Gavin, Westport was arrested in T. O'Connor's of Loughloon. Tom Bourke, Doon, was also arrested.

Westport Active Service Unit:

During this time Michael Kilroy was touring his area selecting men for his Active Service Unit. He started in the Westport district, and as a result we had the following men comprising the Westport Unit: Joe Ring O/C, James Malone, John Duffy, Joe Baker, Batty Cryan, James Flanerty, "Nigger" Ainsworth, Jack McDonagh, Dan Gavin, Ml. Staunton, P. Duffy, Jack Keane, T. Heavey, John Collins, P. Pearce, "Laddeen" Hogan, "Maneen" Naught, J. Cannon, John Bradley, Tom Basquill, James Duffy, "Butch" Lampert, Rich Joyce. The above were in addition to the Brigade Staff made up of Michael Kilroy, E. Moane, J. Gibbons, J. R. Gibbons, T. Ketterick and Jim Kushe,

Louisburgh Active Service Unit:

The Louisburgh Active Service Unit was made up of the following: P. Kelly O/C. A. Harney, J. Harney, Dan McNamara and Dan Sammon, having only four rifles in the Louisburgh Area.

Capture of Ammunition:

About this time 2 rifles and 500 rounds of ammunition were taken from the military station in the Distillery at Westport, and a few were bought from soldiers.

Ambush at Glospatrick arranged:

An ambush was attempted at Glospatrick on the Louisburgh road on St. Patrick's Day 1921. Michael Kilroy was in charge of both Westport and Louisburgh Units. The men withdrew on the following day, no enemy convoy having passed.

Shooting at Derrykillew:

Shortly after this Michael Kilroy, Joe Ring and Broddie (James) Malone were travelling through Derrykillew when they encountered three R.I.C. men. Shots were exchanged. Sergeant Coughlin was killed; Constable Love was wounded, and the other surrendered.

On the following day Dr. Madden arrived and joined the Active Service Unit at Anthony Judge's in Glanmask, having quit his job as assistant to Dr. McBride in the County Hospital. From that day onwards, Dr. Madden became a favourite in the Westport Area.

As a result of the shooting at Derrykillew, three houses were burned in Letterbrock, also Pat Cox's house in Cuilmore, Drummin, and Ed. O'Malley's in Carrowreevagh. In trying to extract information from Thomas Hastings of Derryherbert, the Black and Tans pulled out half his moustache with a pincers. Many people were beaten. Owen O'Malley, Carrowreevagh, died some years later, as a result of beating received.

Accidental Death of Jim Duffy of Prospect:

Michael Kilroy went on to Newport and Castlebar to get things fully going in those areas. The Westport Unit entered Westport on several nights trying to contact patrols in the town. Moving into Rockfield one night after a visit to Westport, Jim Duffy of Prospect was accidentally killed by the discharge of a revolver during cleaning. The accident took place in Austin Hastings house, and was a good cause of sending Mrs. Hastings to an early grave. We buried Jim on top of the little hill overlooking Cushen. The Butlers, McGuires and Kerrigans helped us to carry him across the fields to Cushen.

In ambush at Brackoon Bridge:

A few days later we took up positions on the Leenane Road at Brackoon bridge, having received information of intended troop movements. Having stayed all morning and into the afternoon we received word that Tom McGuire O/C South Mayo was in trouble in the Bohann Mountains, being surrounded by military following an engagement at Partry. We moved off to his assistance, and having

arrived in Glenmask, found that the show was over. We later learned that Paddy King and Phil Hallinan of Glenmask was captured. Plans were made to rescue them at Ballinrobe on the following day. It was later learned that they had been taken to Claremorris, and the plans had to be abandoned. A short time after leaving Bornea, three lorry-loads of military passed in from Leenane, followed by six others fifteen minutes later. We were lucky to have left.

The Islandeady Ambush:

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We took up position some time about 1st May at the high wall near the Half-Way House on the Castlebar road, having information of troops coming from Castlebar to Westport. Arrangements were being made with the Islandeady Company to block the road at Cloonkeen when the convoy passed. As the convoy came unexpectedly around the corner at Fair Hill, they saw some of our men exposed on the sky-line. They turned their cars while still about 800 yards away, and made away to Castlebar. They surprised the men behind cutting the road at Cloonkeen. Volunteers Lally and O'Malley of Islandeady were killed. Others were captured, while some escaped. The most notable escape of all was that of Paddy Cannon (Sec. Board of Health) who ran through a hail of bullets, and escaped unscratched.

Another Accidental Death:

We were quartered a few days later at Maineen and Ardigommon when Volunteer Marley of Glenhest was accidentally killed coming off sentry duty. That night we laid him beside Jim Duffy on the little hill at Cusmen. So far we were more danger to ourselves than to the enemy.

Newport and Castlebar Units:

We were, a few days before these events, joined by the Newport Unit and Castlebar Unit at Curvey, being billeted over the townlands of Curvey, Cordarragh and Lenmore.

Notable amongst the Newport men were Jack Connolly O/C, Jim Moran, Larry McGovern, all of Tiranar. Danny O'Donnell of Newport, Paddy Doherty, Mick Gallagher, two Jim Brownes, Vol Staunton, Vol. Geraghty, Jim Kelly, Vol. O'Malley, Tap Corcoran, all of Kilmeena.

The Castlebar boys were Paddy Jordan O/C, Jim McEvilly, "Dolly" Chambers, "Gas" Hughes, Jimmy Smith, J. Swift, J. Hughes, Paddy Cannon, Maloney, Mark Killalea, and O'Boyle.

Bombs thrown in Westport:

While quartered in this area a dance was held at Duffy's Cloonskill, on a Sunday night. During the evening Broddie Malone, Joe Baker and Tom Ketterick went into Westport, and encountered a patrol of 18 police in Altamount St. Bombs were thrown, several policemen were wounded, and three men returned safely.

Encounter on Carnacloy Road:

About this time, too, 10 men from the Westport Unit on Patrol north of Westport encountered three lorries of Black and Tans on the Carnacloy road at Cumachow after night.

The surprise was complete on both sides. The I.R.A. opened with rifles; the Black and Tans used bombs and rifle-fire. After five minutes both sides withdrew, the only harm done being a policeman wounded.

The I.R.A. Unit spent the rest of that night on Sheeoun Hill hoping the shots would start a troop movement from Castlebar. Daylight found them in Jim Moran's of Derrygorman, when they again joined the main column.

Mr. Kilroy sends patrols into westport:

The complete Brigade Unit took up positions again on the Castlebar-Westport road a few days later, and nothing happened. Mr. Kilroy decided on sending patrols into Westport and Newport, hoping to start something in either town, and get the military moving on some road.

The Westport patrol was in charge of Broddie Malone, and comprised of the Duffy brothers of Cloonskill, Baker, Flaherty, Keane, Joyce, and Staunton. On arriving in Morrin's wood, the scouts from the Westport area notified them that a patrol of 18 had gone up Altamount Street. Positions were taken up at the Convent and at Malone's forge. The enemy also must have had his scouts out, as instead of returning, they went into Dr. O'Rourke's in Altamount St. and spent the night there. The I.R.A. remained until daylight, wondering why the Black and Tan force did not come back.

The Newport patrol under Captain J. Moran had more luck, and contact was made in which one policeman named Bourke? was killed.

The Kilmeena Ambush:

In the meantime Mr. Kilroy with his Castlebar unit and what was left of the Westport and Newport units, took up positions at Clooneen, Kilmeena, close to Knocknabola Bridge. As Malone and Moran had picked their best-armed men, Mr. Kilroy was left with mostly shot-gun men, and about twelve rifle-men.

Owing to some Church function in Newport on the same day, a number of nuns were travelling from Westport by car. One car, closely packed by Black and Tans, travelling behind the car conveying the nuns, slipped through the I.R.A. positions unnoticed. One minute behind were travelling two lorries of Auxiliaries, which came under fire. The car, which had slipped by unnoticed, unloaded immediately north of Knocknabola Bridge, and got into a position with machine-gun fire. Another machine was mounted in front of Father Brett's, and against the cross-fire, the shot-guns of the I.R.A. were useless. The shot-gun men withdrew.

the rifle-men covering their retreat. In a few minutes Paddy Jordan, Jim McEvilly, Johnny Collins and P. Staunton were dead, Jack Cannon and O'Malley wounded, Pearse a prisoner, and Michael Kilroy found himself almost alone in fighting a rear-guard action, and he by his courage that day saved disaster from becoming a holocaust. It was later learned that some of the I.R.A. men had fallen asleep before the action, a great cause of the enemy's being able to get his machine-guns into a position to infiltrate ours. We were learning that war is not a game for amateurs.

Meanwhile, the Westport patrol resting at Mr. David Gibbon's N.T. Sandyhill heard the shots, and made their way immediately through Morrin's wood towards Kilmeena. They met "Meneen" Naughton at Carnaclay with the bad news.

Mr. Kilroy took the remnants of his men towards Newport into the villages of Skirdagh and Cloonchafinne. Two days later they were surrounded at Daybreak, and had to fight their way through into Glenlaura. In this action Vol. J. Browne of Kilmeena was killed, the commanding-officer of the Black and Tens lost his life.

The Westport patrol, having gone on to Rockfield after the news of the Kilmeena disaster were joined there by Johnny Berry and Joe Walsh, who had returned from England to join the Active Service Unit. Willie Malone arrived two days later as the news of the Skirdagh action came in. Joe Ring and "Ladeen" Hogan rejoined us the same day.

Mail train held up:

In order to ease pressure on Mr. Kilroy at Newport, it was decided to hold up the morning mail train from Westport at Meneen in the hope that some of our prisoners with their armed escorts would be aboard. The line was blocked outside Meneen Bridge, and "Ladeen" Hogan stood on the line, and flagged the train to a standstill just in front of the barricade. There were neither troops or prisoners aboard, but we removed the mail-bag for censorship. The day was pleasantly spent in the Deerpark wood censoring letters. All letters were stamped "censored by the I.R.A." We learned a lot that day, and realised that smiles and applause are not always indicative of good wishes.

Drummin Police Barrack Burned:

It was drawing on to the end of May 1921, when we again joined forces with Mr. Kilroy in the village of Tonlagree.

On the night of May 31st we moved across Curvey and Lannore to the village of Oughty, where we remained all day on June 1st. As evening fell Michael Kilroy took about fifteen men with him in the direction of Drummin Police Barracks. The rest were dispersed on the Westport Road near Letter Brock. As night fell we saw the Drummin Barracks burst into flame illuminating all the hills around.

We again joined forces and across the Drummin bogs towards Derrykillew, some of the boys calling into McGovern's. We were always welcome there, and seldom missed a chance of calling, when in the district.

The Carrowkennedy Ambush:

We arrived at Claddy as dawn broke on the morning of June 2nd. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon the sentries notified the presence of enemy forces on the road south of Carrowkennedy Dance Hall. The enemy were engaged in rounding up turf-workers, and compelling them to dump their turf into a road trench in order to fill it up to enable the lorries to cross over. The I.R.A. Unit stood to, while their officers decided what the likely enemy moves were to be. It was first assumed that Letterfrack was their destination as a fair was being held there on June 3rd. However, it was decided to interrupt them at Carrowkennedy, whether they returned that day or the next.

The Active Service Unit moved out of Claddy across the side of Sleemanagh into the village of Carrowkennedy. Temporary positions were taken up, while Michael Kilroy, Dr. Madden and Joe Ring looked for better ones in the direction of Thomas Navin's. Broddie Malone was in charge of the Westport Unit, assisted by J. Duffy and J. Baker. Jack Connolly and Jim Moran had charge of the Newport boys. The only Castlebar man present was Paddy Cannon.

Our arms consisted of 16 rifles, a few shot-guns and revolvers. We had a few home-made bombs of a very primitive type. We had about 800 rounds of rifle ammunition, 25 rounds per shot-gun, and about 12 rounds per small arm. The I.R.A. full realized that day, that, if a haul of enemy war-material was not made soon, their activities as an Active Service Unit would be at an end.

The men in positions immediately start preparing them. Michael Sammon moulding potatoes near by vigorously protests that rabbit-hunters on the previous Sunday had ruined all his walls.

The look-out man reports the enemy approaching fast a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile down the road. The roar of the Crossley engines of the high-powered arm-plated lorries was deafening. The I.R.A. dived for positions, Michael Sammon still protesting and abusing all rabbit-hunters in general. The first lorry shoots around the corner; a volley of rifle-fire; the lorry stops, the driver shot through the head. Michael Sammon disappears as if the wind took him.

The other two lorries come to a stop in front of Mrs. McGreal's without coming under any severe fire. They immediately try a sortie against our position, but are driven back, and take refuge in Mrs. McGreal's house.

The first lorry being armour-plated, the only thing accomplished is the death of the driver. The Black and Tans immediately start

to shell our position with rifle grenades. Fortunately, the range was long, and they fell about 10 yards in front of us.

The enemy starts to machine-gun our position. A sharp-shooter spots the machine-gunner, and sends a bullet through his brain. Another gunner tries, and meets the same fate. A third tries, and he also dies. From that onward, no man risked touching that gun.

Edward Moane with Johnny Gibbons and some others had by this time taken up positions on the Westport side of Carrowkennedy to intercept any reinforcements that might come from Westport.

The fight was dragging on; a stalemate was being reached; our ammunition was diminishing. The Black and Tans, although their position was hopeless, resolutely held out. Mr. Kilroy realized that nothing less than an assault on the enemy positions would give him victory and that much-wanted ammunition. Accordingly John Duffy with his brother Paddy, and Jack Keane were sent down on the right flank, Joe Baker with "Ladeen" Hogan and "Nigger" Ainsworth on the left, to infiltrate between the enemy positions. Anxious men above, while giving terrible covering fire, watch the progress of their assault parties. Both parties are within 25 yards of the enemy position. Johnny Duffy's party are fixing bayonets, a bomb explodes in the armoured lorry, and as the assault party reaches the road, a white flag is feebly waving within the vehicle. Joe Baker's party, seeing that Johnny Duffy has the position well in hand, concentrates on the enemy in Mrs. McGreal's house. A policeman was sent to demand that Mrs. McGreal and her children be allowed out of the house. This was refused.

The machine-gun captured in the first lorry was already set up and trained on Mrs McGreal's by Jimmy Flaherty, an expert gunner. Again Baker called on the Black and Tans to surrender. * Should be Maumnagasagh, probably Mam na gCeasach. "Ceasach" may be a genitive of "ceis". The place is between Drummin and Lecanvey.

After a few minutes this request was complied with, and fourteen more prisoners were taken.

The I.R.A. immediately set about collecting all the arms and equipment. The haul yielded 25 rifles, 1 Lewis machine gun and 28 revolvers, 60 hand-grenades, 5000 rounds of .303 and 500 rounds of revolver ammunition, with much other useful material.

The three lorries were burned. One policeman was despatched to bring spiritual and medical aid to the dying and wounded before the I.R.A. again went back to Claddy, where they enjoyed a much-wanted meal.

Aeroplanes give chase:

That night they moved westwards through the villages of *Derryherbert and Drummin, arriving at the top of Maumacassir, at Day break. As they sat there they could see the first enemy planes searching around Carrowkenedy. Help did not arrive for the captured British Force until 6 a.m. on the 3rd of June, and then only after the position had been thoroughly scouted by the Air Force.

Pat Joyce of Durless gave the flying column a hearty welcome, and in celebration of the victory, killed two sheep. The column spent that day and the next in the townlands of Durless, Boris, and Furrigal, afterwards moving on to Greggabaun and Aillmore villages.

While we were safely passing the time in the "West" the British Forces carried out a thorough round-up in the Tourmakeady area, being informed by Peter O'Malley of Gladdy that we had gone in that direction. They soon started to direct their attention to the "West", and when they got on our track, relentlessly pursued us for a month over half Mayo, always about a day behind.

The Pursuit over half Mayo:

After leaving Aillmore we moved on to Delphi and Glenamurra, From this we travelled through Errif, Shraheen, and Rockfield till we arrived in Derryloughran, north-east of Newport. The following night found us at Coolnabinna at the foot of Nephimmore. We got word that evening that large enemy forces had surround the Newport area. That night found us in Derrymartin in the Brougnadoon Area. Again we heard of the enemy in our rear.

While in Derrymartin J. J. Leonard took a photograph of the column, which included practically all the men on active service then, barring five men on sentry duty.

From Derrymartin we moved to the other side of Addergoole Parish, and remained a night in Cuilmullagh. From there, we passed up the Winny Gap, remaining in Sheenaun and Shanvallybeg for a day. The next night we arrived at the house of Capt. Staunton of the Crimlin Coy.

After spending a night in Crimlin we moved a few miles to the villages of Laragan Gort. About 2 a.m. the sentries reported the village being surrounded by large forces of military, all men were called, and infiltrated through the enemy cordon. Two men, sleeping in Rowland's, for some reason were not called. There are 25 houses in the villages of Gort and Laragan. Twenty-four of these houses were searched, all except Rowland's, which Rich. Joyce, and P. Duffy slept, unconscious of all the excitement around them.

From there we went to Shinnagh in the Parke area. The only remarkable thing about this place was all the "poteen" made there at the time. Our next stop was Carracastle, near Bohola, where we were royally entertained. From there we moved into Toocanannagh and Tooramin, nearer Kiltimagh. This being a poor area, materially and nationally, we left there to be next billeted in the villages of Prizon and Tawnagh in the Balla area.

The British were still raiding one day behind us.

From there we stayed nights in the following villages: Cloonsunnagh, near Errew Monastery; Banogs; Burcam; and Devlish, arriving at Tonlagee on Saturday night July 2nd 1921. At Tonlagee, Tom Ludden of Curvey brought us word that the British had encamped at Killawalla, behind us.

We left Tonlagee, and came on to Lanmore. About two hours after arriving there, we got word again by Tom Ludden that a further camp had been set up on the Ballinrobe road at Cooloughra bridge.

We set out again for Owenwee spending all day Sunday in Crickacinnny and Treablaur. All day Sunday, word kept arriving of military pouring into Westport. On Sunday evening the military set up a further camp at Brackloon bridge, a mile from us. As it was reliably reported at the time that the British had 20,000 troops in Mayo, and practically all concentrated in the Westport Area, Michael Kiroy decided to disband his unit of 50 men, and instructed them to infiltrate through the enemy lines, and if at all possible avoid capture. Accordingly, we broke up into small units of from two to six men, and each unit moved off for themselves.

Joe Baker's Unit:

One unit was made up of Joe Baker, William Malone, Joe Walsh, Dan Gavin, Tom Heavey and P. Duffy. As this is the only one I have personal knowledge of, their trouble will give an idea of the activities of the forces ranged against them. Deciding that McGovern's in the Drummin bogs was the safest place on earth, they arrived there at about 1 a.m. on Monday morning.

About twenty minutes later the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard, and as the six men escaped over the garden wall, the house was surrounded by about twenty-five cavalry-men. The six men proceeded to Lettermaglinskin, and were followed some distance by the soldiers, who saw their tracks in the dew on the grass. From Lettermaglinskin, Baker took his men on to Sheaffry, and as the day broke, the six men were asleep near McPherson's.

A fire was noticed in McPherson's garden, and P. Duffy went to investigate. He found on the other side of the garden wall an encampment of hundreds of soldiers.

The six men started to creep away, but P. Duffy became cut off from the other five, when six lorries passed on the road between them, the last lorry towards Kilmore; the other over

Sheaffry Hill.

P. Duffy called to Cuilmore to Pat Cox, who was sleeping on hay in a barn at the time with his nine small children, his house having been burned some time before.

The Air Force was very active, planes flying low observing all movements on the ground. The military started to search Cuilmore, and P. Duffy had again to move, this time in the direction of Derryherbert. On arriving close to Derryherbert he noticed military again searching that village. He took cover in some whins, and slept for some time. On awaking, he went to Flynn's in Derryulra, where he had something to eat. On Mr. Flynn's advice he went to bed, Flynn stating that he would keep a good watch, and that there was no danger in such an out-of-the-way place. Fifteen minutes later, however, he was called, as a strong force was advancing across the bog from Lackdeirg. He had to escape through a window, and take cover in a "seoch" of potato stalks in the garden. The search over, he went on to Hoban's of Errif, where he again met Joe Baker and the five other men, who had come by Tawneyard via Mark McDonnell's to Erriff.

We went from there to Kearns's of Derrinkeel, and were about to sit down to eat, when about twenty-five horse-soldiers came round by Tunney's of Derrycroff, and proceeded in the direction of Derrinkeel. However, before reaching Derrinkeel they turned back, as the road was impassable.

That night we tried to cross the Slievemanagh Mountains, but found the place covered with soldiers, who shot off Verey lights every few minutes. We turned back, and went into Sraheen, arriving at Tom Cusack's about an hour before dawn. Tom was very suspicious of us when he heard Joe Baker's Northern accent, and refused to give any information whatever. However, when daylight came, and when he recognized some of us he was willing to do anything for us.

The airplanes were out again early that morning. We lay in some whins by the Sraheen River, and slept all day. We removed our socks before going to sleep, and left them out to dry. When we awoke we found the Sraheen cows had eaten the socks - a game the Sraheen cows are very good at.

We spent the day at O'Donnell's of Ayle, and everything was very quiet. We moved on to John Moran's of Deerpark on Thursday morning, and but for a few military lorries flying around, we had a very quiet day. That night we succeeded in getting some socks from Tom Ludden, who was our official store-keeper.

On Friday morning, military moved along the Curvey road towards Castlebar for hours, leaving their camp at Carrowkennedy, and other points. We watched their columns of armoured cars, tanks, artillery, horses, and infantry move along the road for hours, and were thankful the pressure was being lifted.

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On arriving at Cloonskill that evening we found a daily paper with news of truce to take effect at 12 o'clock on the following Monday.

During Saturday and Sunday more of the boys came in, and we were delighted that not one man had been captured during the whole week.

On Monday morning we parted, each man for his own home, little thinking that in less than one year, our arms would be turned against one another.

As regard documents and such, any that were in existence were sent to the Pension Board some years ago by claimants for pensions. There may be yet some around, and if I come across any I shall let you know.

The real soldiers of the whole campaign were the women, who cooked, washed, darned, and fed the column. The women, in many cases were better soldiers than their husbands and sons, and did more to encourage the I.R.A. to continue in what looked like a forlorn hope.

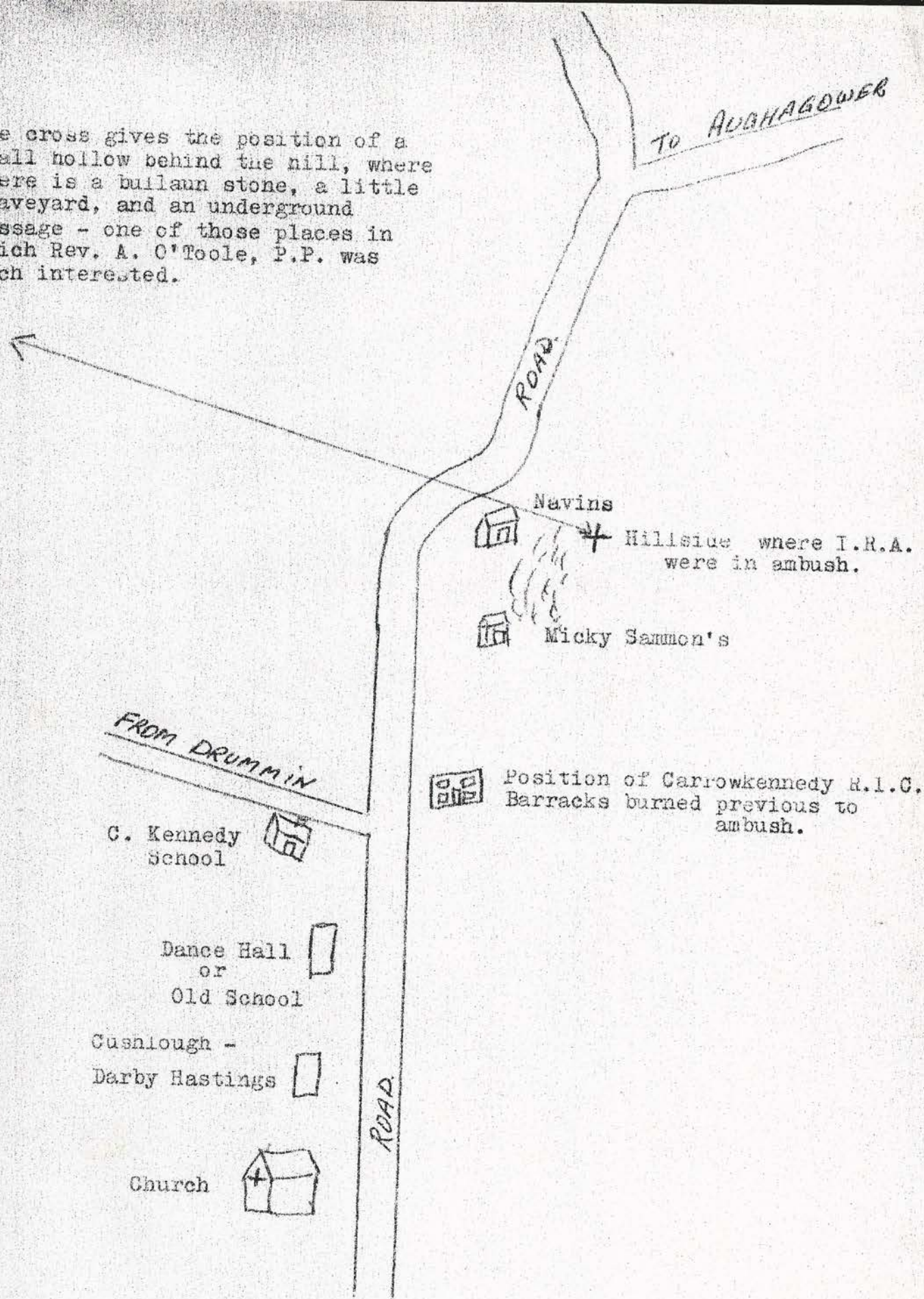
I would like to pay tribute to a few women in this parish whose service was outstanding:

Lanmore:	Mrs. Berry, Mrs. Duffy, Mrs. Flynn.
Cordarragh	: Mrs. Lavelle, Mrs. McGuire, Mrs. Tuohy.
Curvey	: Mrs. Heneghan, Mrs. Moran, Mrs. Grady.
Leckaun	: Mrs. Reilly, Mrs. Kerrigan.
Deerpark	: Mrs. Moran.
Roigh	: Mrs. Gavin, Mrs. McGuire.
Derrycroft	: Mrs. Tunney.
Knappa Beg	: Mrs. H. Reid.

This is only an incomplete record of things I have a knowledge of, and is not to be taken as a complete record of I.R.A. activities in West Mayo.

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The cross gives the position of a small hollow behind the mill, where there is a bullaun stone, a little graveyard, and an underground passage - one of those places in which Rev. A. O'Toole, P.P. was much interested.



Positions of places mentioned in Mr. Duffy's account of the Carrowkennedy Ambush.