

In connection with plans to honour members of the West Mayo Brigade Old I.R.A. by memorial crosses erected on the sites of noted engagements in the Tan War, we print this article by "Rank and Filer," the pen name of a veteran of the era, which recalls some of the flavour and humour of these stirring times.

# "Tell Me Your Company"

(THE MEMORIES OF A RANK AND FILER)

Nearly every reader knows the end of the above quotation, but the reader would have in mind another sort of company. "B" Company of which I write, was formed as a unit of Westport Battalion, West Mayo Brigade, Irish Volunteers in 1917. John Kearns was appointed captain.

The night was calm. There was no sound to break the stillness, except when the harsh note of the corn-crake seemed to interrupt the gentle murmur of the river, or the drone of some winged insect sounded for a moment and faded into the woods. The world seemed indeed to be at peace.

### ANOTHER SIDE

My object in recording these memories of over fifty years ago is to recreate the atmosphere of the time for the benefit of a generation of whom the period may be an irksome lesson for history books, and to dispel any idea that ours was a generation of grim freedom-fighters who had lost the gift of laughter.

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### IMITATING NATURE

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Meanwhile "B" Company had been the other gullet to be destroyed, about two miles nearer to Westport. To protect his men, Captain Kearns placed a chain of sentries on either side. As police whistles might alert the enemy, it was ingeniously decided that, at the approach of danger, the sentries were to give a low whistle of two notes, like the cry of a wild bird.

The only encounter with the law on record concerns one Richard Walsh, unjustly suspected of making poison. The story goes that two policemen on revenue duty arrived in the district early one morning to see a barefooted man emerge from a cottage with a cleave on his forehead. He fled towards Croagh Patrick, with the two men in hot pursuit. When the chase got too close, Richard, who was a member of the "B" company, Owenwee river. When the police, to the detriment of pressed trousers and polished boots, fringed the river, the fugitive fled towards Croagh Patrick, with the two men in hot pursuit.

After a hearty laugh at their own discomfort, the Volunteers returned to complete the work. But by this time the first section of the "B" company had reached the point of no return. They formed the party by moonlight, that had alarmed the jokers when they saw the distance from the recalcitrant road-cutters.

### ARMS CONSIGNMENT

The splines on the constable's moustache, which was the status symbol of police at the time, were produced in a notebook and began to uncork the ink-bottle which policemen carried hooked to the "tunics. In those pre-fountain pen days, the constable Richard reminded him that cross-country running and carrying turf in a cleave, were crimes unknown to the law, he had to be forgiven.

### DANCE IN DEATH'S SHADOW

In the meantime, "B" Company became more than ever a centre of activity. Let us look at a scene, that has become part of Ireland's history. The year is 1921. The scene is in the house of Thoma Joyce, Owenwee. As in the house of Yeats "Cathleen Ni Houlihan," there is music and laughter and the sound of dancing feet. Some of the dancers are in the field-green uniform of the Irish Volunteers, but most of them wear sports jackets and riding breeches. All have revolvers and pistols strapped to their waists. A pile of rifles, and runs leans against the "outshot" bed. Dark-haired Tom Ainsworth sits on the hob by the open fireplace, as he sings:

They were indeed a varied assortment. There were Mauser and Martini rifles, Webley Colt and Bulldog revolvers, Parabellum and "Peter the Painter" pistols, a gas mask and an ancient double-barrelled pistol, which might have belonged to Brennan on the Moor. When some of the older people began to doubt the wisdom of attacking the Crown forces with such weapons, Tommy assured them that we were on the "eve of the Republic." With those doubt vanished and courage grew.

"Raise it aloft on the breeze, boys, The watchword the grandest we've known, That Labour must rise from its knees, boys, And claim the broad earth as its own." At the call of "who is next," an athletic figure in a Sam Brown belt springs to attention. "My rifle is as bright as my sweetheart's eye, I'm happy and gay and free, Why should I give a damn for such England's laws, I'm an outlaw rapparee."

### ROAD CUTTING

On a midsummer's night in 1921 Captain Kearns had orders to cut the road at Knappagh. Armed with axes and a crowbar, the company met at Bracklawn wood. He took with him the main body, Lieut. Michael Sammon, with Vols. James Kerrigan and Eddie O'Donnell, were sent back for more tools, and told to await orders at a culvert, known locally as Jennings' Bridge, which it was proposed to destroy later. The three men soon returned to their post and settled

down to await the return of their O/C. The night was calm. There was no sound to break the stillness, except when the harsh note of the corn-crake seemed to interrupt the gentle murmur of the river, or the drone of some winged insect sounded for a moment and faded into the woods. The world seemed indeed to be at peace.



The famous Active Service Unit of the West Mayo Brigade Old I.R.A. more commonly known as the "Flying Column," which saw action in this special commemorative article. The famous War of Independence picture was taken by Mr. Leonard of Lahardans of the Column members who are as follows: (left to right): Back row—Michael Kilroy, T. Ketterick, E. Moane, J. Gibbons, J. Walsh, J. Ring, Middle Row—M. Naughton, J. Hogan, J. Heaney, D. Sammon, J. Keane, J. Connolly, R. Joyce, P. McNamara, W. Malone. Front Row—Dan Gavin, T. Heavey, J. Duffy, J. McDonagh, P. Kelly.

### UNPAID GENERATIONS

To replace the R.I.C. who now never ventured into the area except as part of a raiding party, a force of Republican police was formed under James Kearns (T). At first the older people with their natural grasp of realities, looked askance at local boys assuming the dignity of the law. As one old lady put it, "who ever heard tell of a policeman that didn't come out of the depot?"

### THE FATEFUL YEAR

1921 was a fateful year for Ireland. The West Mayo Active Service Unit had already made a name for itself. As the arms, h.d. party. There was a tense few moments when a boy from Knappagh inadvertently drove his cows into the ambush position. After a conversation with the Batin Comdt. he was allowed to go home with his dangerous secret. He was the only person outside the Volunteers to know that the ambush was being prepared. The column, however, left in response to an appeal from the South Mayo Comdt. to force the British arrived, and the local men returned to their homes.

### THE LIGHTER SIDE

Although these were dangerous times, there was always a modicum of humour to brighten the scene. Once, when a column party was on duty with a local man, a party of men carrying Mauser rifles suddenly appeared within feet. Some of the men were in the local man assured the sentry that it was not a hostile force and went to investigate. He reported back that it was the "Comrade" under Capt. Kearns, on arms removal duty, under orders of the Column Comdt. The sentry was satisfied. He demanded an explanation and personal apology from the captain, failing which, he threatened to open fire on the party. "Tell him to go to hell," and proceeded on his way. The local man now protested that his term of duty was over and that another man should be sent to deliver this unedifying reply. This was done and the ex-sentry, taking the Mauser rifle from his rear, promptly proceeded to wave it with Martini rifle bullets. When the bullet struck in the breech he banged the rifle on a rock, blissfully ignorant of the fact that contact between the hammer and cartridge would have blown the rifle to smithereens.

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## Vocational School, Ballyhaunis ENROLMENT

of boys and girls for 1971/72 school year will take place on SATURDAY, the 8th MAY, between 12 noon and 2 p.m.

NOTE—Students enrolling in the Secretarial Class must have passed any one of the following: (1) Group Cert.; (2) Inter. Cert.; (3) Leaving Cert.

THE HEADMASTER.

## Neale, County Mayo. RESIDENCE AND PLOTS OF LAND FOR SALE

(a) An attractive detached two-storey, slated Drillingham, situated in the centre of Neale, close to church, schools, post office, shopping, with outbuildings, fuel sheds, vegetable garden and further room for development.

(b) Plot of ground, area, 1 rood, 14 perches, close by (situated also in Ballyshingadun) suitable for building.

(c) Another plot, area 2 roods, 20 perches (within 200 yards) situated on Neale-Cong road.

All held in fee simple. Free of rent or annuity. Rateable Valuation: Building, 55-10-0; Land, 15/-. Property of the late Tom Ward, N.T.

Offers will be received by the undersigned up to the 21st May. MAGUIRE & BRENNAN, Solicitors, Ballinrobe.

## FORM OF NOTICE OF A COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE HOUSING ACT, 1966, TO BE PUBLISHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 4(a) OF THE THIRD SCHEDULE TO THE SAID ACT. COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND.

County Health District of Mayo (No. 2) Compulsory Purchase (Housing) Order, 1971.

The County Council of the County of Mayo (hereinafter referred to as "housing authority") in exercise of the powers conferred upon them by Section 76 of the Housing Act, 1966, and the Third Schedule thereto, have made an Order entitled as above, which is about to be submitted to the Minister for Local Government for confirmation. If confirmed, the Order will authorise the housing authority to acquire compulsorily the lands described in the Schedule hereto for the purposes of the Housing Act, 1966.

A copy of the Order and the maps referred to in it may be seen at all reasonable hours at the offices of the Housing Authority at the Courthouse, Castlebar, County Mayo.

No. on Map deposited at the offices of the Housing Authority.	Quantity, description and situation of land.	Owners or reputed owners.	Lessees or reputed lessees.	Occupiers (except tenants for a month or a less period than a month).
46	1 rood, 25 perches of land and right-of-way 730 ft. long and 10 ft. wide in the townland of Rathredaun and D.E.D. of Kilgarvin.	Thomas Ruane	Nil	Thomas Ruane
63	1 rood, 37 perches of land and right-of-way 480 ft. long and 10 ft. wide in the townland of Pollatombish and D.E.D. of Knocknolower.	Reps. Catherine Doherty Stephen Doherty.	Nil	Stephen Doherty.
64	1 rood, 17 perches of land in the townland of Srahnaplata and D.E.D. of Barrookoe.	Thomas Maloney (otherwise Mallooney)	Nil	Thomas Maloney (otherwise Mallooney)
70	1 rood, 30 perches of lands in the townland of Claggan and D.E.D. of Glencastle.	Michael Ginnelly Patrick Ginnelly	Nil	Michael Ginnelly
112	1 rood, 19 perches of land in the townland of Carracnada and D.E.D. of Swinford.	Reps. James Neary.	Nil	Mrs. Delia Neary
114	1 rood, 1 perch of land in the townland of Ballyglass and D.E.D. of Clogher.	Reps. Thomas Murray, Mrs. William Brennan, Edward Dixon.	Nil	Mrs. William Brennan, Edward Dixon.
158	1 rood, 6 perches of land in the townland of Shanagh and D.E.D. of Belmullet.	Peter Walsh (Pat). Peter Walsh.	Nil	Peter Walsh (Pat).
168	1 rood, 26 perches of land and right-of-way 470 ft. long and 12 ft. wide in the townland of Gleneadgh Eighter and D.E.D. of Kilfan West.	Mrs. Celia Lally Mr. Martin Moran (Tom) Miss Bridget Mills Mr. Thomas Gaughan (John) Mrs. Mary Murphy Mr. John Donohoe Mr. Martin Moran Mr. Patrick Murphy Mr. Michael Scanlon Mrs. Mary Barrett Mr. Michael Barrett Mr. Pheilm Scanlon	Nil	Mrs. Bridget Henry (Tom) Mrs. Celia Lally Mrs. Bridget Mills Mr. Thomas Gaughan (John) Mrs. Mary Murphy Mr. John Donohoe Mr. Martin Moran Mr. Patrick Murphy Mr. Michael Scanlon Mrs. Mary Barrett Mr. Michael Barrett Mr. Pheilm Scanlon Patrick Calvey
171	1 rood, 32 perches of land in the townland of Stah and D.E.D. of Sraheen.	Reps. Patrick Geraty Patrick Calvey Patrick Moore	Nil	Patrick Moore Reps. Marie Moore Reps. Michael Moore Mrs. Michael Henry Mrs. Bridget Henry
174	1 rood, 37 perches of land in the townland of Knappagh and D.E.D. of Knappagh.	Reps. Mrs. Mary Henry Michael Henry Mrs. Bridget Henry	Nil	Mrs. Mary Duffy Peter Duffy (otherwise Mea) Edward Mave (otherwise Mee) Annie Mave (otherwise Mee) John Murphy
175	1 rood, 29 perches of land in the townland of Carrow Beg and D.E.D. of Course.	William Conlon.	Nil	Mrs. Sarah Moran
176	2 roods of land in the townland of Urlaur and O.E.D. of Urlaur.	Mrs. Sarah Moran.	Nil	Mrs. Sarah Moran John Moran Mrs. Mary McQuaid Thomas Rogers.
177	1 rood, 25 perches of land in the townland of Cloonchara and D.E.D. of Kilmoye.	Mrs. Mary McQuaid.	Nil	Mrs. Ellen McManamon Department of Lands (Forestry Division)
178	1 rood, 34 perches of land in the townland of Bunnafollisra and D.E.D. of Shrule.	Mrs. Ellen McManamon Department of Lands (Forestry Division)	Nil	Mrs. Ellen McManamon
179	1 rood, 33 perches of land in the townland of Derrzhick and D.E.D. of Pontoon.	William Conlon.	Nil	Mrs. Ellen McManamon
181	1 rood, 32 perches of land in the townland of Corraun and D.E.D. of Bellavary.	Mrs. Sarah Moran.	Nil	Mrs. Sarah Moran John Moran Mrs. Mary McQuaid Thomas Rogers.
182	2 roods, 4 perches of land in the townland of Ballymacbibbon and D.E.D. of Houndswood.	Mrs. Mary McQuaid.	Nil	Mrs. Ellen McManamon
184	2 roods, 4 perches of land in the townland of Clagganagh East and D.E.D. of Islandeady.	Mrs. Mary McQuaid.	Nil	Mrs. Ellen McManamon
185	2 roods, 32 perches of land in the townland of Fuchanagh and D.E.D. of Doncastle.	Mrs. Mary McQuaid.	Nil	Mrs. Ellen McManamon
186	3 roods of land in the townland of Glenturk Beg and D.E.D. of Glenamoy.	Mrs. Mary McQuaid.	Nil	Mrs. Ellen McManamon