

The Untold Story

Anthony Gallagher was born in Drimurla in 1898. The Gallagher's owned most of the land in Drimurla. In the year 1910 they exchanged their land in Drimurla, for land at Aughagowla. Anthony was 12 years old at the time, he went to Fahy school for a short time after coming to Aughagowla. His earlier school days were at Cuilmore school taught by Master McFadden.

The Gallagher families were a strong Nationalist Republican family. Their mother was Nora Jordan who came from Glenhest. Her people were involved in the 1798 Rebellion. They had joined with General Humbert when he landed at Castlebar. Both the Gallagher and Jordon families were in the Fenians.

The house they moved to in Aughagowla was the local R. I. C. Barracks. It was built in rural areas so the R.I.C. could have more surveillance and obtain more local information on people. There was steel bars on the windows. The lock-up cell was the same as it was when it was a Barracks. During the War of Independence and the Civil War the cell was used by the I.R.A. to hold prisoners. One prisoner who spent 6 months in this cell was from Claremorris. The I.R.A. thought he was an informer. He helped the Gallagher's on the farm during the day, and then was locked up at night. He was released after 6 months.

In 1913 there was a big effort to get people to join the Volunteers, and Anthony, Michael, Paddy and Tom Gallagher all joined. Michael Kilroy from Newport and Ned Lyons were the leaders in the Newport area. The Volunteers drilled and trained in Derrylahan and Shramore. General Michael Kilroy was in charge of the training.

The 1st World War was raging in Europe when the British Government passed the Conscription Bill, all the people united against conscription and many Priests urged the young people to join the Volunteers, the Volunteers from this area did not take part in the 1916 Rising.

When word got back that the Rising had failed and all the leader's were executed, (including John McBride from Westport), people joined in large numbers. In Westport, Ned Moane and Joe Ring were arrested and held in Sligo jail, awaiting trial. They were in Court in Westport, and a large number of Volunteers assembled at the Court House. They were both charged by

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the R.I.C., and the Volunteers retaliated with stones. Both Moane and Ring got 6 months for being members of the Volunteers. The Judge that passed sentence was Judge Milling, and lived on the Newport Road. In March 1919, Judge Milling was shot in his home. The three "Joes" were involved in the shooting of Judge Milling and he was the first man to die in the West of Ireland in the War of Independence. The R.I.C. and the Army were drafted in and they sealed off the town. Volunteers were questioned as to their whereabouts on the night of the killing, and nobody was ever charged with the assassination.

Later that same year, the Black and Tans arrived in the area, and Gallagher's house was a "safe-house" for the Volunteers. Anthony, Michael and Patrick went on the run, and their sisters Nora and Mary joined Cumann an mBan. This was a Women's Organization, that collected information and delivered dispatches for the Volunteers, (dispatches were messages and notes passed from one Cumann to another). This was a dangerous job, because if you were caught, you would be shot. When Volunteers slept in the Barrack's, someone had to look out for the Tans. The Barrack's was a suitable "safe-house" as the lights of the Tans lorries could be seen for miles, and this gave the Volunteer's plenty of time to get out of bed and away from the house before the Tans got there. This worked well for a time, but the Tans got information that the Volunteer's were sleeping in the Barrack's.

One night when the Volunteer's were sleeping, the Tans arrived, but the look-out alerted the Volunteer's and they escaped. When the Tans arrived, they checked the beds and they were empty but still warm. The Tans pulled Patrick Gallagher from his bed and dressed him in Mrs. Gallagher's clothes, pulled him out of the house and savagely beat him, the family were inside the house praying that he would not be shot. Nora Gallagher his daughter, was praying to "The Sacred Heart" picture in the kitchen when a young Black and Tan came into her, and Nora pleaded with him for her father not to be killed. That Black and Tan went outside, and stopped Nora's father from being killed, although he was very badly beaten, and his nose was broke, his life was saved.

Some weeks later, the Black and Tans returned to the Barrack, and again they beat Patrick and put him up against the wall of the house and fired shots at him, the shots were only inches from his body. He was moved to

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Jordan's in Glenhest to recover, he stayed in Glenhest until the end of the War of Independence.

Ned Lyons was arrested by the Tans, and he was brought to Galway jail, he was badly beaten and died 2 years later in a Mental Hospital.

Stephen McGough was savagely beaten in his house.

Stephen Keane was also badly beaten in his house, they put a horse into the house with him and fired shots to frighten the horse, hoping that the horse would tramp all over him.

Michael Kilroy formed a flying column. The army supply was limited, and Kilroy picked men from the column and gave them guns. The remainder of the column were given a few jobs to do, such as: cutting roads, making dugouts, moving arms, intelligence work and dispatch carrying. Kilroy got word that there were guns in Scotland, so Michael Gallagher and a man from North Mayo, went to Scotland to get the guns, and the first consignment arrived in Clew Bay and landed at Kilmeena. Anthony Gallagher collected the guns and brought them to a dugout at his land on the North Road.

The arms were distributed among the Column. Ambushes were set up in several places, and Anthony Gallagher was involved in the blowing up of the bridge of Loch Jodie with Mick Gibbons and John McNulty. The Column planned an ambush at Clooneen, Kilmeena, there was disagreement amongst the Column leaders, as some wanted the ambush to take place at Loch Jodie. The ambush took place on 18th May, and the Column got word that the Tans were going from Newport to Westport. The Column on the hills on the North Road side mistook a car load of Nuns travelling from Newport for the Tans and shot at them, luckily none of the Nuns were injured and continued on their journey to Westport, where they reported the incident to the R.I.C. Some time later, a lorry load of Tans came down the road, and the shooting started, but unknown to the Column, there was more Tans coming behind them from the North Road, The Column was caught in the middle. The ambush was not very successful, as five I.R.A. Volunteer's were killed, they were: Tom O'Donnell, Newport, Seamus McEvelly, Castlebar, Paddy Jordan, Islandeady, John Collins, Westport, and Pat Staunton, Kilmeena. The

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dead Volunteer's were brought to the Barracks in Westport, and their families collected the bodies at the Barrack's and buried them in Rua.

Two men were injured, and their names were: Swift and Hughes. Anthony Gallagher and Red John Gallagher brought the two men to Fahy, there they were brought to Daly's shed. Dr. Madden was there and he removed the bullets from the injured men. Nurse Joyce from Clogher dressed the wounds for the two men until they recovered.

During the Civil War, ninety per cent of the Volunteer's in this area, supported the Anti-Treaty side of De Valera. Joe Ring supported the Pro-Treaty side. The Gallagher's joined the Anti-Treaty side, and once again the drilling and training started.

The Anti-Treaty side had taken over Westport and Newport, they policed the towns and ran the courts, they were in total control of the area.

Michael Kilroy was the General in the Anti-Treaty Army, he stayed at the Barrack a lot during this time. The Anti-Treaty side held the area with little trouble until October, 1922. Families were split on each side of the Treaty, Peter Corcoran from Rua was on the Anti-Treaty side, while his brother Michael was on the Pro-Treaty Free State Army.

During the Civil War and the War of Independence, the Barrack had a dispatch station, and there the dispatch would be sorted out and sent to the area, or people which they concerned.

The Free State Army had little support in West Mayo, Joe Ring joined the Free State Army and was a Commander. General MacEoin was in charge of the Western Campaign and he decided to take Mayo by surprise. It was decided that MacEoin would attack by land, and Ring would attack from the sea, Ring landed at Rossmoney.

The island at Rossmoney was used as a prison by the I.R.A. and there was about 100 prisoners on the island. Ring took over the island, and he released the prisoners. A Free State ship blocked the port in Newport, to stop the I.R.A. from escaping by boat.

On 1st November, 1922, some members of the I.R.A. were at the North Road. Patrick Gallagher from the Barrack's was there with them. Anthony Gallagher was "on the run", he stayed with Burkes in Kilmeena, and that night at 1. o'clock the Free State Army had taken up position on the hills above

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the Barrack's. The Quinn's had a room rented from the Gallagher's in the Barrack, and Mr. & Mrs. Quinn had gone to Westport to shop, and two children were in the Barrack's.

Pat Mulchrone from Aughagowla, was visiting and playing cards with the Gallagher's. Patrick and Nora Gallagher, their sister and children were in the Barrack's when the Free State started to fire, this lasted for about 2 hours. The children were trapped in the upstairs bedroom. Aggie Gallagher was the eldest of the children, and she pulled the feather tick mattress off the bed and covered the children with it. The Army got close to the house, and threw hand-grenades at it. One of the grenades went through the window in the sitting-room, and the children were directly above that room. The grenade rolled underneath the sofa, and when it exploded, the sofa took the impact saving the children overhead. Patrick and Nora Gallagher were in the back kitchen, and some of the Army had gone to the back of the Barrack's. There was a yard at the back enclosed by a large wall, which some of the Army had crossed.

Pat Mulchrone said that he knew one of the soldiers called XXXX, and that he had worked with him in Westport. Pat thought that if he went to the back door and explain that there were no I.R.A. men inside the house, that they Army would hold their fire, but on opening the door, XXXX opened fire and shot him dead. Nora Gallagher went to the door and she had one of the Quinn children in her arms, and on seeing that Pat was shot, she ran into the yard and shouted at one of the soldiers to get help and the Priest for Pat. A neighbour Willie Rice, went on horseback to get the Priest, his son Willie was in the Free State Army and was at the Barrack that day.

Pat's body was brought to Castlebar Hospital. The Free State Army searched the house, and when they didn't find anything, they left and headed in the Newport direction. They returned later after arresting Paddy Gallagher on the North Road, and he was brought to Galway where he spent 6 months in jail.

The Free State Army continued on towards Newport, and the I.R.A. engaged them in battle two days later at the Railway tunnel on the Westport Road, XXXX was with the I.R.A. that evening. XXXX was shot in battle.

The Civil War continued for about 6 months after this, and Michael Kilroy spent four years in jail and was elected T.D. for Mayo whilst still in jail.

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Michael Gallagher never returned to Scotland, and some years later he moved to England where he got married. He made one visit home to see the family, he died from a fall and was buried in England.

In 1969 the Gallagher's exchanged their farm and the Barrack's for a farm in Co. Meath.

The last Sergeant that served in the Barrack's was Sergeant Hogan.

Shortly after the Gallagher family moved to Co. Meath, the land-commission sold the Barrack to Michael Burke who is the present owner.

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