

West Clare War of Independence Commeration Committee Events to August 2021

Tullycrine the home place of the O'Donnell family was visited in December and a remembrance service was held to remember the contribution of the O'Donnell family to the War of Independence. Local historian Paul Markham told us the history of the O'Donnell family and the use of their home and lands as a training camp for the local Brigade of the IRA. Art O'Donnell was the first Commandant of the West Clare Brigade. Art O'Donnell son Hugh spoke on behalf of the family in Irish and English and thanked the Committee for remembering his family.

On December 22, the Committee visited the grave of Willie Shanahan and Michael McNamara at Doonbeg graveyard to remember them on the one hundredth anniversary of their killing by British forces. These two volunteers were captured near Doonbeg by Crown forces and suffered terrible torture at the hand of British intelligence in Kilrush and Ennis. They were murdered in Ennis by Crown forces and were buried together on Christmas day 1920 in Doonbeg graveyard. Murt McInerney of Doonbeg gave the oration. Eoin Shanahan a nephew of Willie Shanahan laid a Laurel wreath on behalf of The West Clare War of Independence Commeration Committee.

On April 18, there was a remembrance event to remember Capt. John Breen of D Company 2nd Battalion of the West Clare Brigade. Capt Breen was killed in action in an attack on the RIC in Kilmihil village on April 18 1920, he was 21 years of age. The group laid a laurel wreath at his memorial in Kilmihil village and one of the local members, John McGuane, read the names of all the Volunteers from the two Kilmihil companies of the IRA 1919/21. J.T. Larkin, Chairman of the Committee, addressed the audience.

On April 20th, they held an event at Crovraghon Pier on the River Fergus Estuary near the village of Kildysart. One hundred years ago on the evening of April 20 1920, forty men and officers of the East Clare Brigade landed at Crovraghan Pier from Rineanna on the first part of their journey to Kilrush to assist their comrades of the West Clare Brigade in a military attack on the British forces in the town of Kilrush. Michael Brennan was the leader of the East Clare unit and Sean Liddy lead the West Clare unit. Dr Tomas Mac Conmara and Councillor Pat Hayes represented East Clare, JT Larkin, John Cleary, Des Murphy, Dr. Bill Shannon and Tom Haugh represented West Clare. Des Murphy read a list of some of the East Clare volunteers who were present one hundred ago. Des received this list from his grand uncle Mick Kenny a volunteer from the Coolmeen company who was present on the night to assist in transferring the East Clare men to Kilrush. They were all safely accommodated in safe-houses in the Cranny Coolmeen area, and continued their journey to Kilrush the following day with the assistance of the local volunteers in different company areas.

In June, they took part in a Commemoration event at Meelick with our friends of the East Clare Commemoration Committee to remember Captain Christopher McCarthy of Clonlaheen, Mullagh and Capt. Michael Gleeson of Meelick. Both men were killed in action by British forces. Christy McCarthy, a grand nephew of Christopher McCarthy, laid a Laurel

wreath on behalf of the West Clare War of Independence Commemoration Committee. On July 11th, in support of our committee members from Coolmeen, they attended the unveiling of the plaques to the memory of the IRA volunteers and members of Cumann na mBan from the Coolmeen company. This event was very well attended and great credit is due to the local people for remembering their local men and women who took part in the War of Independence

On July 23rd they remembered Thomas Shannon at Old Shanakyle graveyard Kilrush. Thomas Shannon was a magistrate of Sinn Féin in West Clare and he lived in Moyasta. He became a target of British intelligence when he became a magistrate. On the night of the 13th of March 1920 he was brutally shot down answering a knock to his front door. His wife and neighbours gave him medical help but he died of his wounds inside his front door. The British Crown forces were responsible for this murder but officially denied it, and tried to blame the Republican movement. He was buried in Old Shanakyle graveyard Kilrush, Tom Prendiville, Secretary gave a brilliant oration at his graveside and also present were the Shannon family. Michael Shannon laid a Laurel wreath on behalf of the West Clare War of Independence Commemoration Committee

On July 29th, they remembered Capt. Michael Fahy of O Curry St. Kilkee. Michael Fahy and his sisters were very active in the Republican movement in Kilkee. He died in a Limerick hospital after receiving treatment for one hundred days for a bullet wound in his thigh, but died from other medical complications. He was buried in Kilferagh graveyard, Kilkee and we laid a Laurel wreath on his grave. We also rolled called all the members of the three Kilkee companies of Volunteers (1919/1921) Kilkee, Kilferagh, Lisdeen. Michael O Connell PRO gave the graveside tribute to Michael Fahy

On August 7th, they held a remembrance event in honour of Commandant Pádraig Burke and Volunteer Michael D'Arcy in Kilmacduane graveyard, Cooraclare. Pádraig Burke was an outstanding young officer in the West Clare Brigade I.R.A. and was arrested in August 1920 at Ballanagun, Cree. He was jailed in England and went on hunger strike with his fellow republican prisoners. As a result of his hunger strike and ill treatment, his health deteriorated and he was sent back to Ireland where he died as a result of the ill treatment he received in prison. He was 21 years of age. His great grand niece Tara O Gorman laid a laurel wreath on his grave.

Michael D'Arcy joined the Volunteers in 1917 and he and his family were active members of the local Cooraclare Company. Michael was on scouting duty when the local company attacked the RIC in Cooraclare. Michael came under fire from the RIC and when trying to escape the gunfire entered the Doonbeg river to escape their attention. Unfortunately the river was in flood and Michael drowned trying to cross the river. The police would not allow local people to rescue him and opened fire at anyone who attempted a rescue. Brendan Daly a nephew of Michael D'Arcy laid a Laurel wreath on his grave. Brendan Daly is a former government minister and he thanked everyone involved for organising the event. The names of the volunteers of the Cooraclare and Cree companies were read out by Michael O'Connell PRO. JT Larkin Chairman paid a tribute to both men. Tom Prendiville Secretary was the M.C.

On Saturday August 21st at 1pm, a remembrance event was held at Labasheeda to pay tribute to the local company of volunteers. A plaque was unveiled in their honour in the village of Labasheeda. Their names were read out to the attendance and a wreath laid at the new plaque in their honour. Father Hayes the parish priest during the War of Independence will be remembered for protecting his people from the aggression of the Black and Tans. A wreath will be laid in his memory. Michael Falahee, the local IRA Brigade leader, will be remembered and a wreath will be laid at his homeplace at Ballyartney. The Falahee family made a huge contribution to the local companies. Eight members of the family were involved in the War of Independence, in the IRA and Cumann na mBan. A Piper will lead a colour party of flag bearers and the public to the Quay in Labasheeda where the plaque will be unveiled. Historian Dr. Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc gave the oration. Two of the Committee, Paul Markham and Stephen McDonagh, are the main organisers of this event

Saturday August 28 Kilkee

A remembrance event is planned at the Old football field in Kilkee for Patrick Studdert. Patrick Studdert was a local man and a father of nine. The British army had taken over the football field and were billeted there and they had a sentry on duty at the perimeter fence. Mr Studdert was attending to his cows and went towards the perimeter fence. The sentry shouted "halt" but unfortunately Mr Studdert was deaf and didn't hear the sentry's instructions. Mr Studdert was shot in the head and died of his injuries. This is the first time in over 100 years that Mr Studdert is remembered. Patrick Studdert was killed on July 1st 1919. A floral wreath will be laid by one of his descendants.

In September, the committee will remember Tomas Curtin of Carricfenic, Doonbeg. Mr Curtin was attending a Sinn Fein court at a rural location and the house was raided by the British. In trying to escape from the British raid he was shot dead and another man, Michael Crotty from Kilrush was seriously injured by British gunfire.