

My great grandfather Eugene Callanah, that is my Granny's Dad was born on November 14th 1898 in his home in a house called 'Dunleary' on Glasheen Rd. He was the second youngest of 9 children 5 boys and 4 girls. He was educated at Glasheen National School and the Christian Brothers Secondary School. He went to UCC to study medicine.

My Granny says to understand him we must learn about the background to the 1916 Rising. When the 1916 rising was over the leaders were executed, it changed most Irish people's attitude. This along with the failure of the Home Rule Movement led to Sinn Féin's landslide victory and the setting up of the first Irish Dail in 1919. England resorted to extreme force to try and regain Ireland and sent the 'The Black and Tans' (named that because of their uniform) and the Auxiliaries to subdue and terrorise ordinary Irish people.

This is when the War of Independence began and while a student my great grandfather joined the University branch of The IRA. In 1920 things got worse, Terence McSweeney died on hunger strike, Thomas McCurtain his successor was murdered and Cork City was burned. This is when he went to West Cork and joined Tom Barry's Flying Column.

The Flying Column were a Guerrilla Army and Tom Barry was their leader. They lived on the run and were specifically to fight the Black and Tans who were terrorising West Cork, burning villages and killing people. He became an officer with the Column and assistant medical officer to Dr Con Lucey. Guerilla warfare was most successful in the country areas so most of his activities took place here in West Cork.

On the 19th of March 1921 he was involved in the famous ambush at Crossbarry. They were to ambush an artillery on route from Bandon Barracks to Cork, but the British Army knew their plan and sent soldiers from Macroom, Kinsale and Cork. They defeated the soldiers and escaped north through Crookstown and onto Macroom to a safe house, only because the Black and Tans coming from there went to Rathbarry in error instead of Crossbarry! This was a huge success for them as they were far outnumbered by British soldiers that day. During these troubles, my great grandad was on the run in West Cork. He was shot in the thigh in Clonakilty and he made his way across fields to a farm where he was taken care of in an outhouse and was later moved on to a safe house. The wound left him with a limp for the rest of his life. He had a lucky escape also in Crossbarry when a grenade rebounded off a tree and landed

at this feet. He spotted that the pin was still in, so he pulled the pin out and threw it back from where it came!

The truce was signed on 11th July 1921 and after this Eugene and some of his comrades on the Republican side in the Civil war spent another 2 years on the run. They were on the losing side and the Free State Government was formed. After this, he returned to UCC and finished his medical degree. Eugene was passionate about everything Irish, the culture, the language, the history and this love of his country. His wish for it to be free and a Republic lasted all his life. He didn't talk a lot about the Civil War as it was so divisive, but in his later years he pointed out many safe houses in West Cork. He learned to knit while on the run which was unusual for a man but must have kept him warm and busy.

He was a very talented sportsman and played all sports well and played Sigerson and Fitzgibbon Cup for UCC. An all-rounder he sang, played music and was a very sociable person. He spent his career as a dispensary doctor in Innishannon and Bandon, delivering babies and looing after people who were sick and in need of care.

He lived a very full life with his wife Girly and 6 children and my granny says he was what people would call a 'character' and I wish I had known him!

By Johnny Walsh

Told by Catherine Field

February 2017

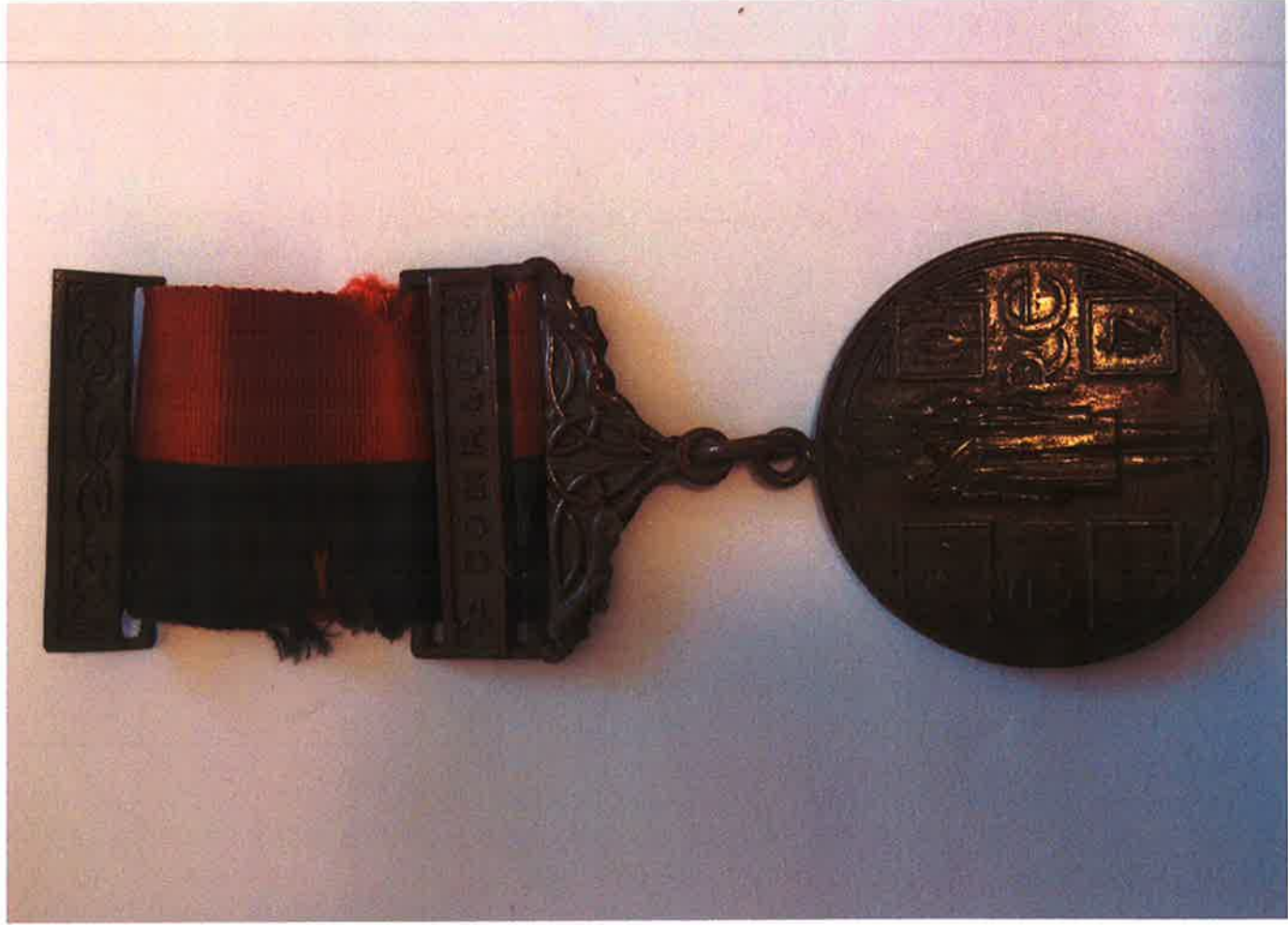


When Eugene was only 14 years old he met Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa on the mar dyke in Cork. We believe that this meeting made quite an impact on young Eugene.

The above painting by Robert Ballagh depicts Padraig Pearse's oration at O'Donovan Rossa's grave.

This moment is seen as a call to arms which led to the 1916 rising

This was a special medal given to those who saw active service during the civil war. The comrag bar was not present on the black and tan medal given to those whose service was not deemed to be active military service but who were members of the IRA, Curragh na mban or the Irish citizen army for the three months ended on the 11th of July 1921

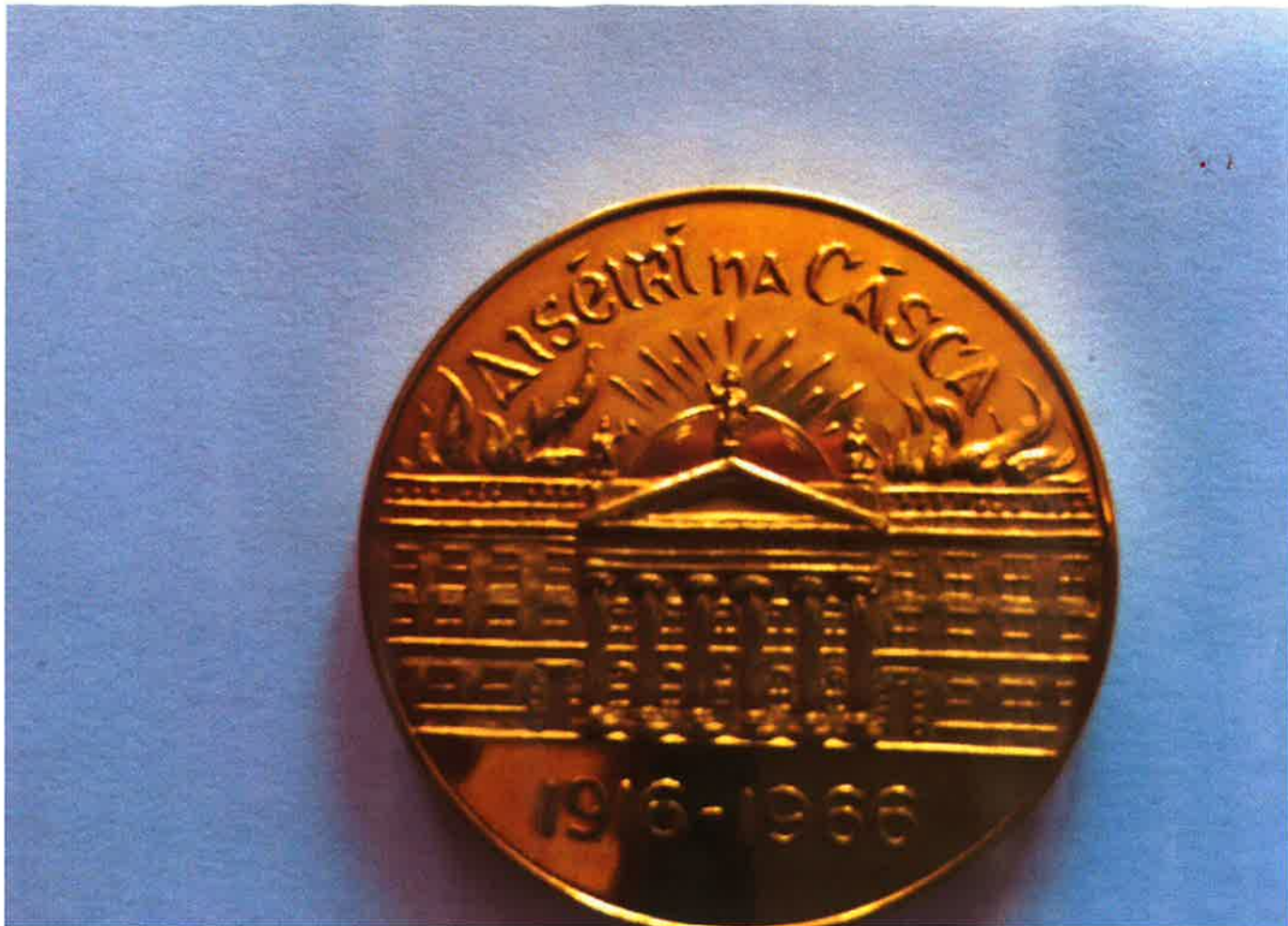


This is Eugene and girly getting
married (on their wedding day)





Eugene Callanan is on the far left in this picture



LOCAL COUNCILS GAELIC FOOTBALL CLUB.
 WINNERS OF CORRY HOSPITALS CUP, 1904-5.



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2. J. O'CARROLL.	D. LEHANE.	F. CROSSIN.	J. T. MALDENHOTT. <i>Captain.</i>	J. F. CALLANAN.	D. CONNORAN.	M. J. WALSH.	M. J. WALSH.	<i>Hon.</i>
	DENNIS AHERN.	J. M. QUARLEY.		DENNIS LINDEN.				



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