

THE STORY
OF

JIM O'

SULLIVAN

By Anna D. L. G. H. L. C.

On Saturday the 30th of November, I met Dan O'Leary of Caherkirky, Rossmore and Con O'Callaghan of The Mall Leap.

They told me that my parish of Rosscarbery made a major contribution to The War of Independence.

Michael Collins, General Tom Barry and Jeremiah Feehily were from the Rosscarbery parish.

Sean Hurley who died in the Easter Rising was from nearby in Drinagh and Jim O'Sullivan was from across the valley from my house in Knockawaddra,

They told me that Jim O'Sullivan was a young man who died fighting for Ireland at Kilmichael, on 28th of November 1920.

He was born in 1894, he was fourth in a family of nine and he was born on the family farm a Knockawaddra, Rossmore.

They told me that he went to school with my great aunt in Balligurteen, he walked to school from his house everyday.

I had a look on Google Maps and it took approximately an hour to get from his house to school. Even if he went across fields it would still be around the same time.

Jim became a member of the Kilmeen Company of Volunteers and was one of the Arms Fund Collectors.

On the 21st of November 1920, he was called for special training with Tom Barry's Flying Column.

His family tried to stop him going.

Kilmichael was a very important ambush because it changed the course of the war.

18 British soldiers were killed that day.

Jim was thought to have been killed by a ricochet bullet that hit off his own rifle into his head killing him instantly.

There were two other Irish Volunteers killed that day. Sometime after Jim was killed a protestant man from Dumanway came out to the family to tell them it was gossip around the town that Jim was killed in Kilmichael and they were concerned his brother who was working as an apprentice, possibly a carpenter, would be in danger if the police were to hear of him being there and he was better to be out of Dumanway.

Then the story is told of an eight-day clock in the family home which had not worked for years, on the day Jim was shot it began ticking again.

Jim was buried at Castle Town Kenneigh
Graveyard.

The Kilmeen under Age GAA is called
'Seamus Ó Súilleabháin' in his memory.

Con O'Callaghan played a recording of Tim
Crowley (Castleventry) singing this.



The Ballad of Séamus Ó Súilleabháin

Let the winds of time make music sweet, o'er you our Seamus dear
Where rest today in Castletown clay Ó Súilleabháin true and brave
A soldier boy of Inisfail undaunted bold was he
Who freely gave his heat's red tide to set his country free.

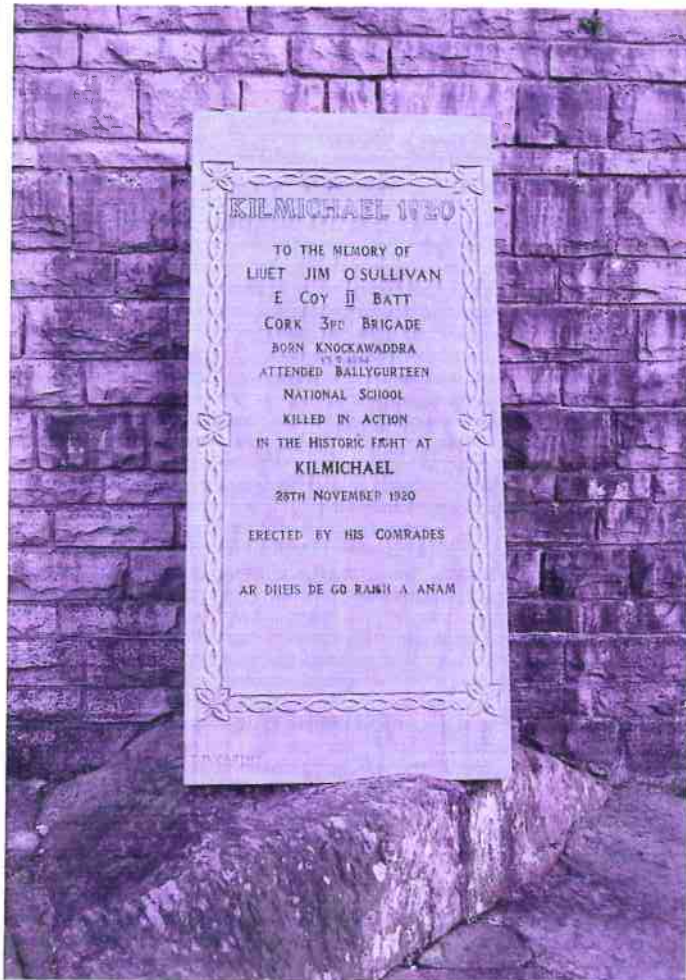
When he heard the call of Motherland he straight away obeyed
He counted not the bitter cost nor tarried nor delayed
At Kilmichael's fields when fighting hard for dear Dark Rosaleen
He wounded fell beneath the flag the yellow, white and green.

Ah he had hoped to see the day when Erin's shore would be
From North to South, from East to West from foreign tyrants free
And through the years that yet will come he always will remain
As one who died to make his land a Nation once again.

Tonight he sleeps his last long sleep beneath the Emerald sod
And may his soul find peace and rest in the halls of God.
For back at home in sweet Rossmore a plaque stands proud from all
To the memory of that famous son on a rock beside the wall.

Let's not forget your comrades too the ones so brave and true
The men who stood beside you then and fought for Ireland too
'Tis in your name in Luth Chleas Gael our young boys play their games
Bless and keep you while you sleep, Séamus Ó' Súilleabháin.

There is a monument to Jim in Rossmore,



I visited his home and farm after the interview which is now in ruins.

