

Kilmichael

Ambush

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Kilmichael is a rural area situated about 5 miles north of Dunmanway on the road to Macroom. My great Grandfather grew up in Kilmichael and went to the local school, St. Enda's National School, Kilradur.

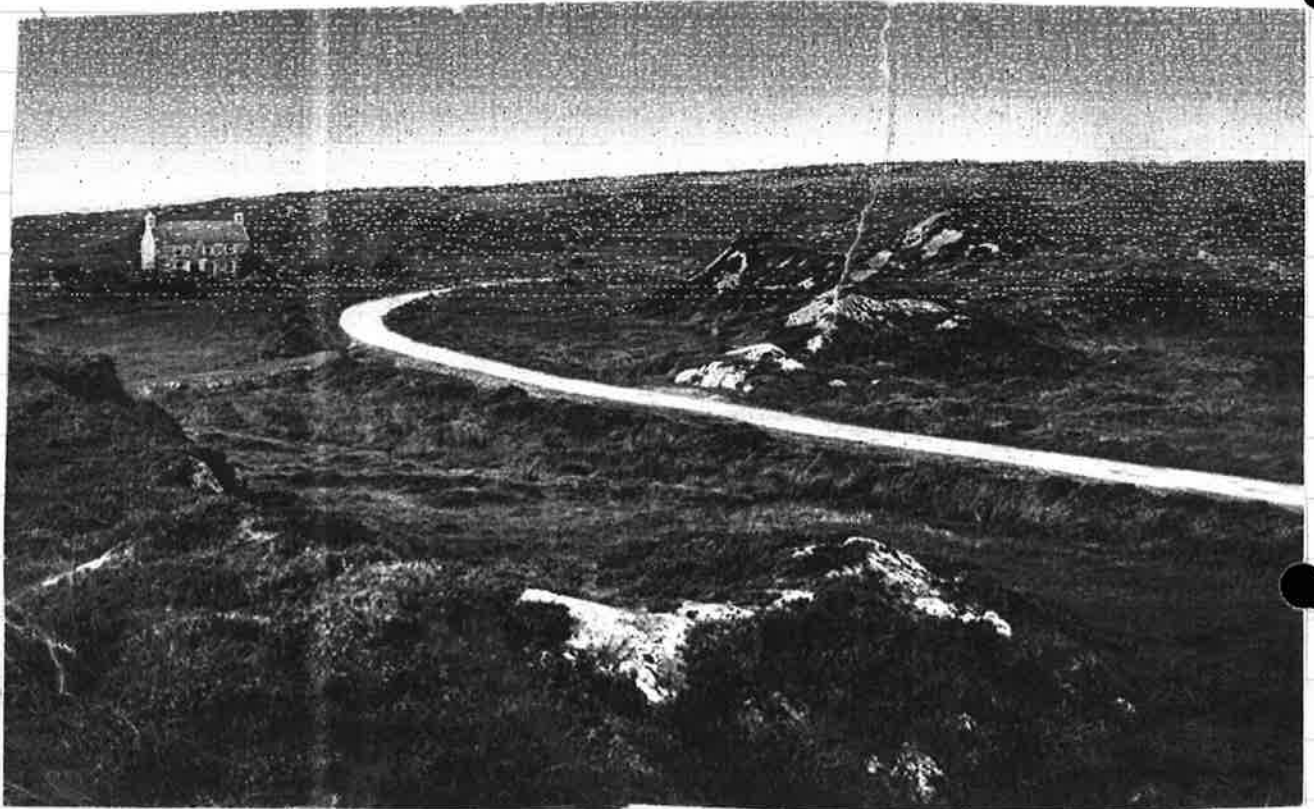
The IRA

From 1916 onwards volunteers were being formed in companies. The local company in Kilmichael was the Aullagh Company. My great grandfather Jeremiadh McCarthy served as captain of this company for a period of time. Alongside this a group of men from all over West Cork were formed into a Flying Column.

This was a guerrilla unit who could attack the British Forces and move quietly to another area. The Flying Column was commanded by Commdt. Tom Barry.

The Ambush

Tom Barry decided to attack Auxiliaries British Forces. This group had terrorised the area and it's people. He chose a remote stretch of road in very rough terrain at Kilmichael. On Sunday the 28th of November 1920, The Flying Column lay in wait all day. Towards the evening the Auxiliaries arrived in two army lorries. The fight began. The Auxiliaries taken by surprise were overwhelmed and surrendered. But they then began firing again killing three of the IRA volunteers - Pat Deasy, Michael McCarthy and Jim O'Sullivan. All the British were killed. One escaped but was



later shot nearby. The Flying Column then moved out carrying their three fallen comrades. They moved Southwards to Gortroe. Some called to local farms including my father's home to get timber boards to make temporary coffins for their three dead comrades. These were then buried on a temporary basis in Gortroe Bog. A few nights later they were moved and secretly buried in Castletown Kenneigh. The Flying Column then moved further Southwards and rested in the safe house in Granure near Ballinacorney.

Kilmichael Ambush was the first major engagement of the War of Independence and is regarded as a crucial moment in the war. It is commemorated each year on the last Sunday in November. In recent years the monument and area around it has been redeveloped and enhanced with improved information on the site.

