Clonakilty Bloody Streets 1920 – 1922

By Michael Francis Collins

Clonakilty's Bloody Streets

Tim Crowley Michael Collins Centre,
castleview Clonakilty

Done by Michael Francis Collins 5th C
Scoil na mBuachaillí Clonakilty £3 Ladys Cr

Clonakilty's Bloody Streets

During the war of Independence and truce period from July 1920 - 1922, five men died from gun shots wounds and wounds inflicted by an exploding grenade, on three adjoining streets in the centre of Clonakilty town.

The fact that the streets where th various incidents took place were close to the Barracks of the Royal Irish Constabulary at the top of Barrack hill is no coincidence. The IRA during the war of Independence as part of their campain set out to destory the police in Ireland, as they felt the Ric were controlling Ireland for the British.

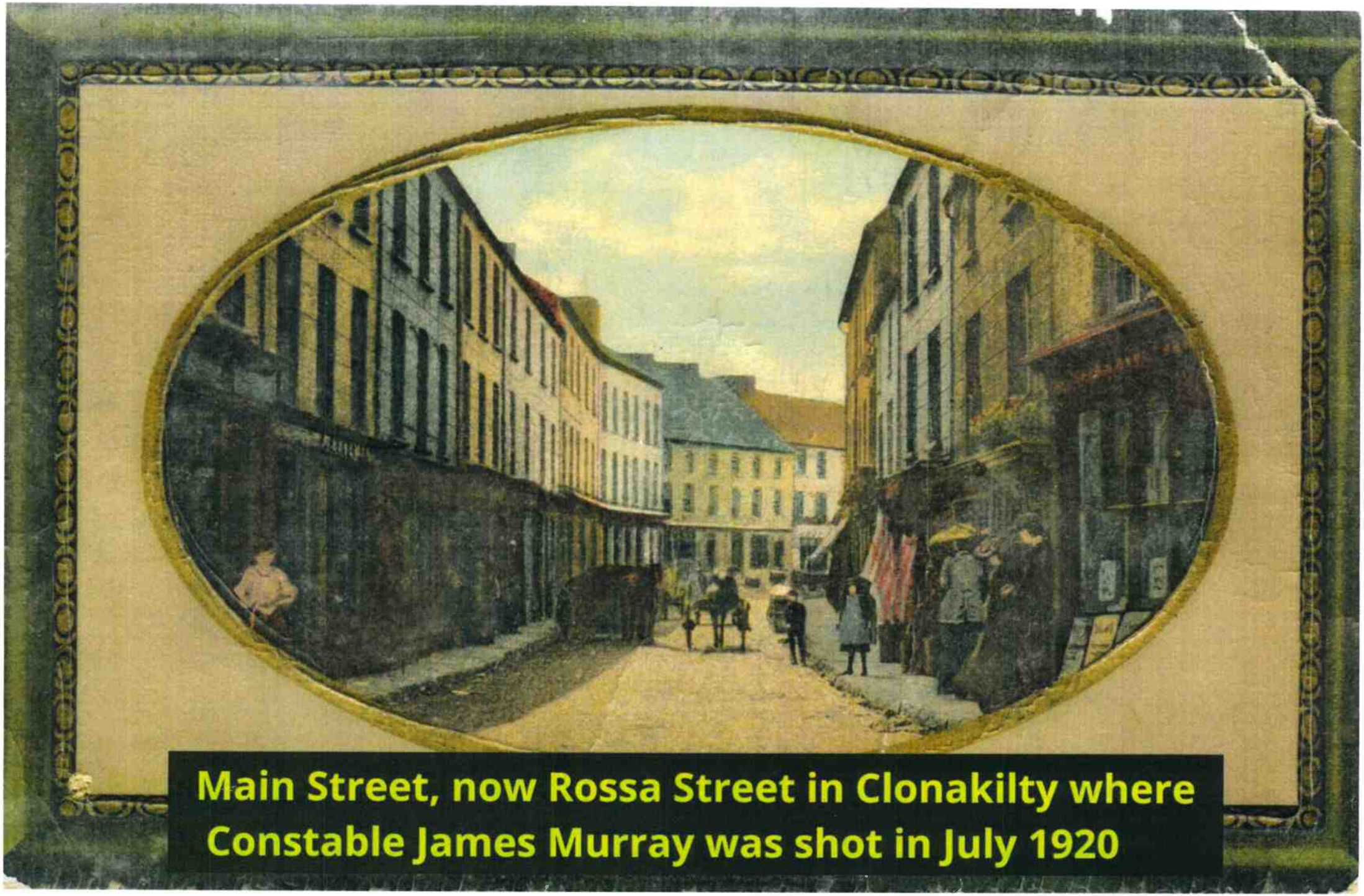
The first of these deaths took place on main street, which is now Rossa Street in Clonakilty on the 27th of July 1920. Constable James Murray who was from County Laois and was 26 yers old was shot 8:30 in the evening as he was entering a shop. prominent local IRA Officer James (Spud) Murphy in a witness statement, which he wrote in 1957, gave an interesting ~~fact~~ acount of what happened.

Clonakilty Bloody Streets

"I accompanied "John Flyer Nyhan" to the Munster and Leinster Bank corner where we were informed that Murray had proceeded down Kent St. to Rossa St. We just caught up with him as he was entering Fitzgerald's green-grocer shop in Rossa St. We opened fire. He was shot through the head as the result of which he died at 2 a.m. on the morning of July 28th, without regaining consciousness".

On the 3rd of May 1921 two men died after IRA men threw a hand grenade into a shop at the bottom of McCurtain hill. One of the casualties was Constable James Cullen, aged 23; he was a Black and tan and was from Wilshire in England. The other men who died in the incident was Constable Martin fallon, who was from Co. Roscommon, he was aged 31 In another section of Jin (Spud) Murphys statement he outlines that he was also involved in the grenade incident

"We searched a number of public houses and got some scouts to search others. We were eventually informed that there were three Tans in Kingston's public house in McCurtain Hill, and two in a public house next door. Tom Lane was left to cover the public house next door while Jim and I moved to Kingston's where I threw a bomb into the shop. The bomb blew out all the glass in the front of the shop, killed one of the Tans and seriously wounded another. I was struck in the buttock by a splinter of the bomb and seriously wounded. "



Main Street, now Rossa Street in Clonakilty where Constable James Murray was shot in July 1920

James (Spud) Murphy left and John (Flyer) Nyhan right, prominent members of the Clonakilty IRA during the War of Independence.

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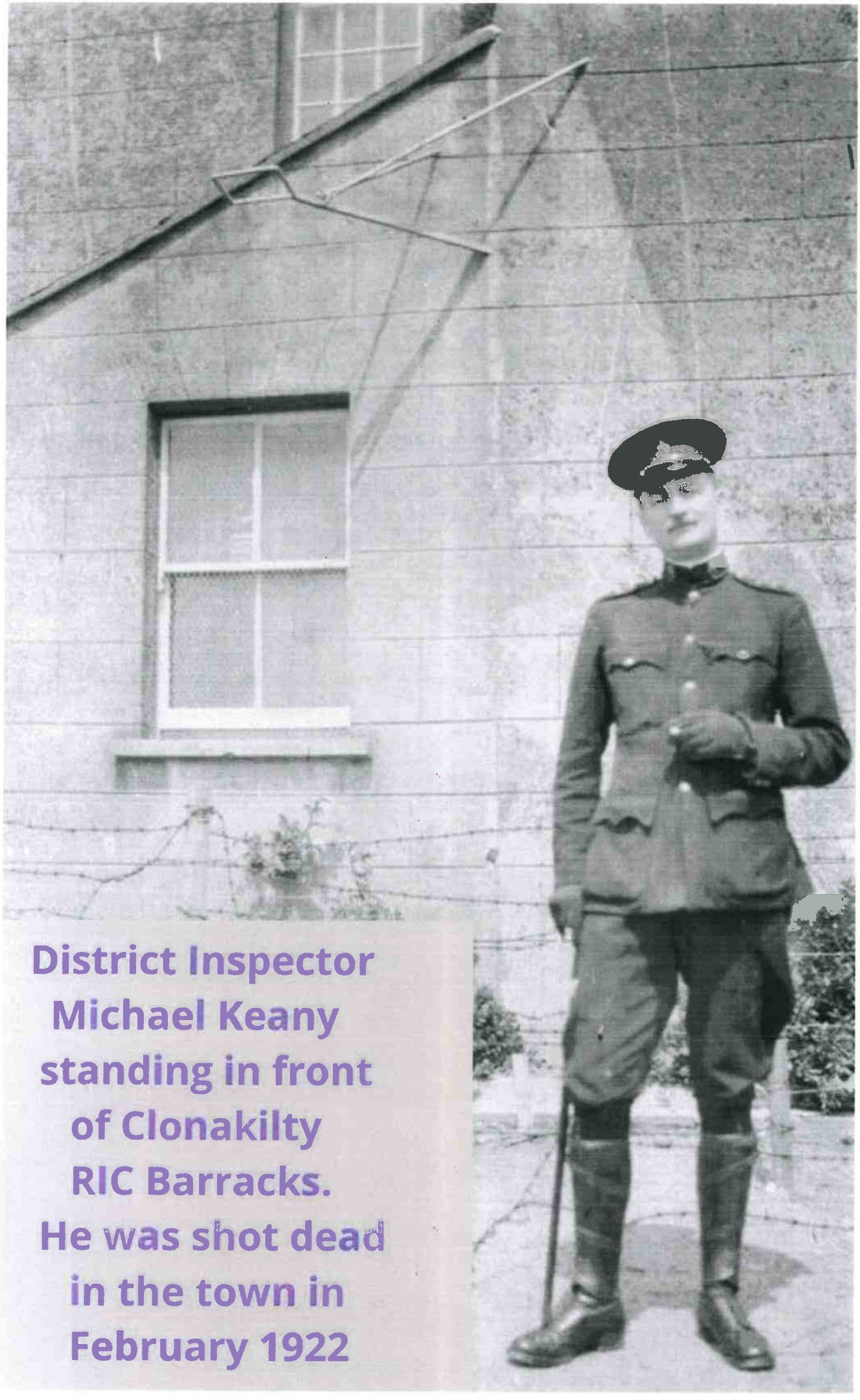
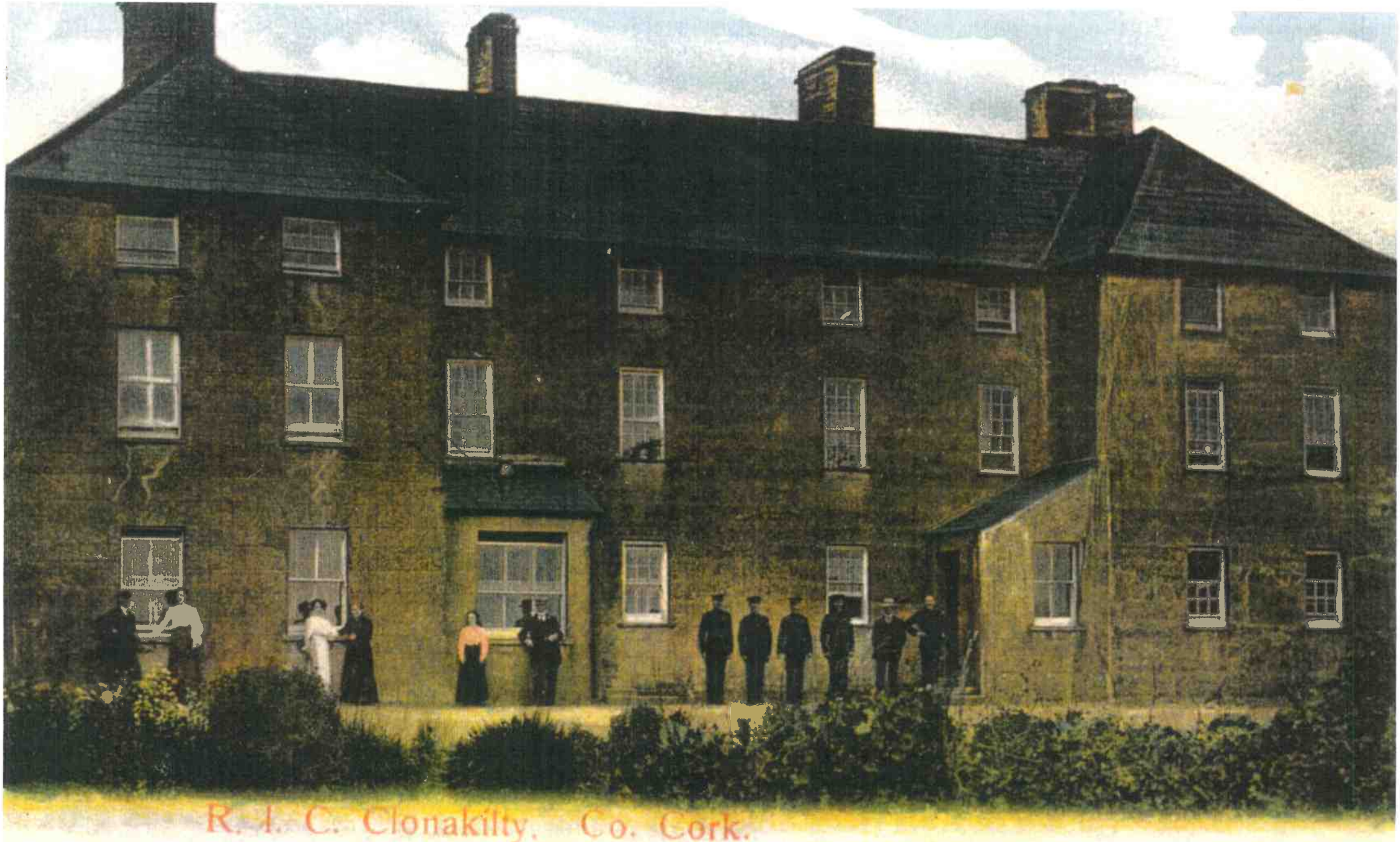
The war of independence ended with the Truce of July 1921, but during the truce period two more killings took place in the centre of Clonakilty town. On the 11th of February 1922 District inspector Michael Keany of the Royal Irish Constabulary, which was being disbanded at the time, was shot dead on old chapel Lane. Di Keany's 16-year old son Edward was also shot in the incident but later recovered from his wounds. Michael Keany was from Co. Leitrim and was 55 years old. During the truce between April 26th and 28th 1922 a series of mysterious killings took place mainly in and around Dunmanway Town and Enniskeane village. Thirteen protestant people were shot or taken away by armed and masked men during the night. Historians sometimes call those incidents combined, the Bandon valley massacre. One of the victims of the Bandon valley massacre was shot on McCurtain Hill in Clonakilty on the night of the 27th of April 1922. Robert Nagle was 16 years old and was living in No 35 McCurtain Hill with his family. Armed and masked men entered his house at 11pm and shot Robert Nagle in his bed. The Men may well have been looking for Robert Father, Thomas who was caretaker of the town's masonic lodge and court clerk. The Bandon valley Massacre took place during the truce which was between the end of the war of Independence and start of the civil war. To this day it is not certain what were the motives behind the killings and who was responsible.



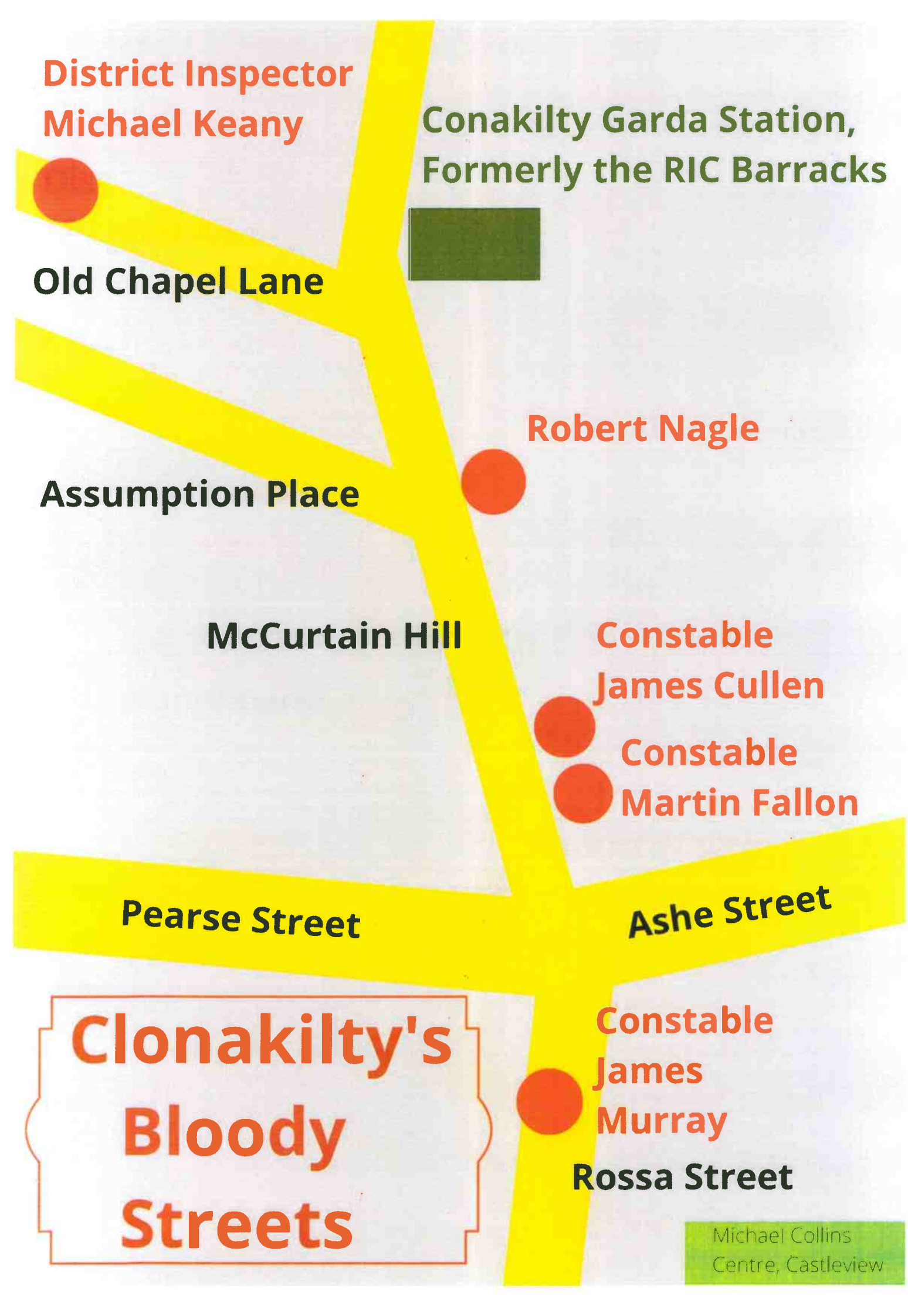
District Inspector Michael Keany standing in front of Clonakilty RIC Barracks. He was shot dead in the town in February 1922



R. I. C. Clonakilty, Co. Cork.

E. C. Dawson, Publisher, Bandon, Co. Cork.

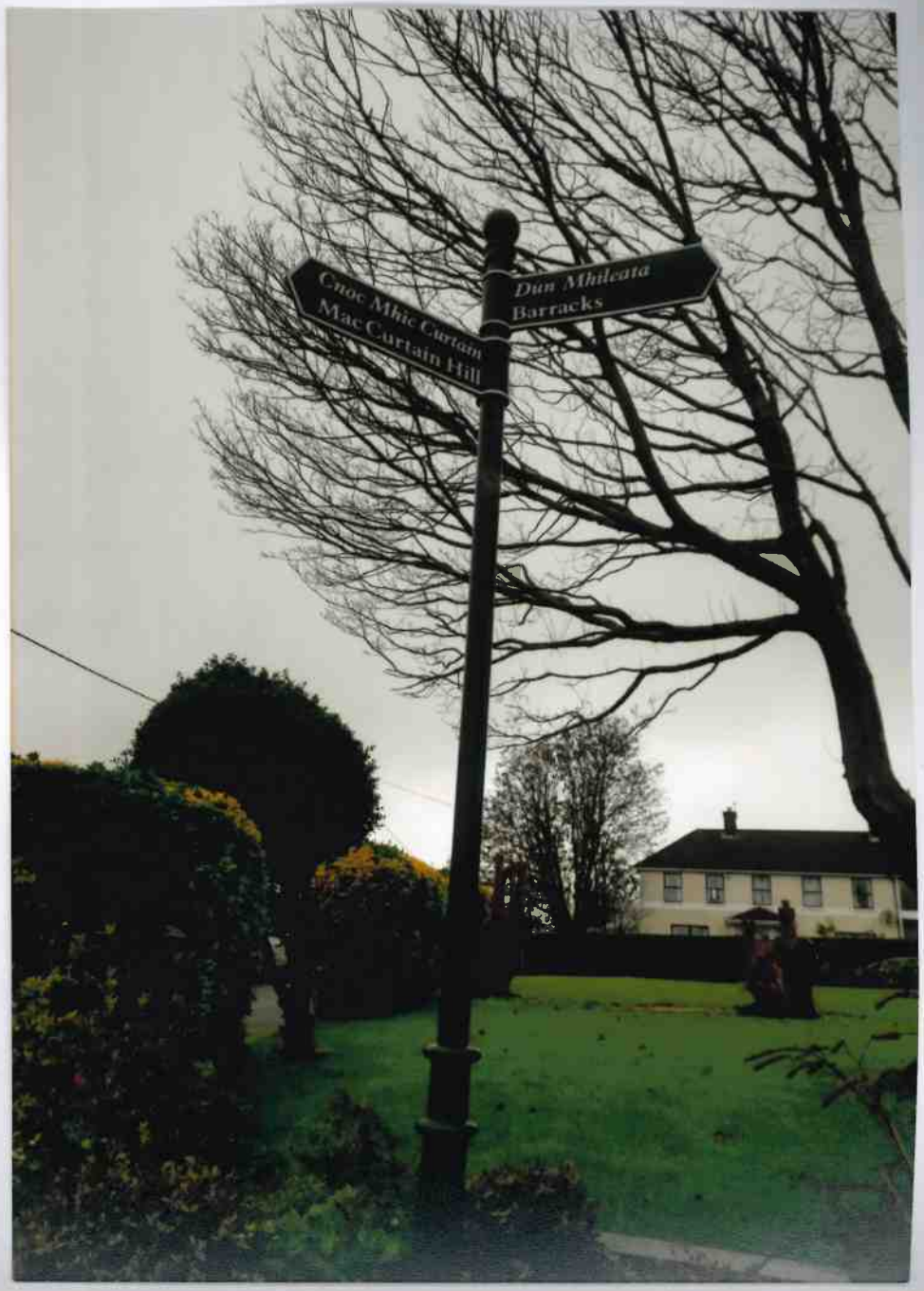
British Military and Police at Clonakilty RIC barracks during the War of Independence


District Inspector
Michael Keany
Conakilty Garda Station,
Formerly the RIC Barracks
Old Chapel Lane
Robert Nagle
Assumption Place
McCurtain Hill
Constable
James Cullen
Constable
Martin Fallon
Pearse Street
Ashe Street
Clonakilty's
Bloody
Streets
Constable
James
Murray
Rossa Street
Michael Collins
Centre, Castleview

This Where District inspector Michael Keany died he died on the 11th of February 1922

This the exact house that Robert Nagle that got shot on 27 of April 1922

This is the IRC Barracks



Constable James Murray died at this street on 27th July 1920. During the war of Independence.

Constable Martin Fallon and Constable James Cullen died as the IRA threw a hand grenade in Con and Maura's Pub. On the 3rd of May 1921