

On the 28th day of November 1920 the West Cork Flying Column consisting of 36 gun men and Scouts and led by Tom Barry Ambushed the Black and Tans at Kilmichael. All the Tans were killed and 3 of the Column were killed.

The four days before the ambush the Column stayed at my grandmother's home place in Ahilnane near Enniskeane. They cleaned and oiled their guns on the kitchen table and the oil is still to be seen on the table. They used a large tree behind the house as target practice and years later when a storm knocked the tree down they couldn't cut it up with all the bullets in it.

On the evening before the ambush the parish priest Canon O'Connell, from Enniskeane came to the house and heard their Confession.

He said "I hear ye're going to take on the Sarsnaigh and ye are going to win, Tom" They all left the house at midnight and his parting words were "Ye will be alright." They travelled all night to Kilmicheal and at 4 in the evening the fighting began. After the ambush the Column left and headed to Ballinacarriga and stayed in the far away camp in Granure for a week afterwards.

Local people in the area fed and protected them from the Tans.

Meanwhile, one gunman, Tim O'Connell, moved the three dead soldiers to a safe house in a horse and cart and they were buried in a temporary grave in a bog until they were buried properly in the church yard in Castle town Kinneigh. Again Canon O'Connell said the prayers.

All of these events were carried out during the night. Days after ambush the Tans wanted Canon Magnier of Dunmanway to ring the church bell as a mark of respect for the dead Tans but he refused and they boasted that they would get the little man, 'with the red button'. Some days later they shot Canon Magnier another man by the roadside and threw his body up on the ditch. When his body was found his little dog was lying beside him on the ditch. Some year later, back in my grandmother's homeplace, Canon O'Connell returned to attend a station mass. On entry to the house he remarked "The last time I was in this house it was all guns, guns and guns"