

My Great-Grandfather and Michael Collins

By Peadar Dinneen Age: 11

Scoil na mBuachallí, Clonakilty

Facts told to me by my Great Uncle, Patrick Dennehy, Dennehy Cross, Cork

December 2019

Address: 3 inus Cuain Clonakilty



Denis Dennehy in his army uniform

Denis Dennehy 1901-1982

Denis Dennehy was my great-grandfather. At 16 years of age he was training to be a car mechanic, with Rock Savage engineering. He had also worked for Macbride Engineering, (now Merchants Quay shopping centre) who were involved in making bombshells for World War I.

With his combination of automobile and engineering skills he was commandeered into the Southern Branch of the Irish Republican Army at the age of 18. Because he could drive, and not many could at the time, he was given the job of driver and also formed part of an explosive disarming unit.

This is the story he related to my Gran-Uncle regarding the day he drove Michael Collins: -

There was a knock on the door early in the morning. There was an army officer at the door who said that he was being commandeered to do a driving job that day. He was brought to the Imperial Hotel, where he was informed that he would be driving Michael Collins to Macroom, as the driver that had been allocated to this drive was sick.

The car was an open top car, and was not armour plated, which he felt left Michael Collins very vulnerable. They were to be accompanied by a Crossley tender, with soldiers on the back. There had been a problem with engines overheating on a lot of the army fleet, which was to accompany Michael Collins on his journey from Dublin to Cork. They had brought these vehicles into Johnson and Perrott in Cork to be repaired.

The Crossley tender that was being used for the trip to Macroom was considered to be okay. When they got near to Macroom, the engine in the Crossley had overheated, so they decided to pull in to some woods to let the engine cool down, before proceeding any further.

It took some considerable time for the engine to cool down. During this time my Great-grandfather had a long conversation with Michael Collins, whom he had never met before. He said that he found him such a very nice and interesting person to talk to.

Commander Emmet Dalton was also in the car with him. Michael Collins and the Commander went into the hotel in Macroom for a meeting. My great-Grandfather

does not know who they met in the hotel. On the return journey to Cork city, they stopped at several houses at which they collected parcels. My father didn't know what was in those parcels, but suspected it may have been money. He dropped Michael Collins back to the Imperial Hotel.

Michael Collins was killed the following day in Béal na Bláth.

Disarming of explosive device at Carrigaphooca: -

The following month, my Great-grandfather was involved in removing a landmine, which had been planted on the roadside in Carrigaphooca, near Macroom. He had been digging up the landmine with the other soldiers, when he decided it was time to take a cigarette. He went over and sat on a ditch to have a smoke. While he was sitting on the fence the mine exploded, and he was blown into the next field. He got up and went over to help the injured. It was a terrible scene. There was moaning from some of the injured, and some of the bodies had been dismembered. He drove to the nearest village and collected a priest and some help and brought them to the scene. The priest anointed them all. My great grandfather was the only one to survive the blast. He said that Tom Keogh who was in charge of the operation that day was very experienced with mines. But the mine had been booby trapped, and this was how they got caught out.

CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1901.

No. 011 Form B. 2
(See Examples of the mode of filling up this Table on the other side.)

FORM A.

REPORT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY AND THEIR VISITORS, BOARDERS, SERVANTS, &c., who slept or abode in this House on the night of SUNDAY, the 21st of MARCH, 1901.

No.	NAME and SURNAMES	RELATIONS	PROFESSION	BIRTHPLACE	AGE	SEX	RELIGION	EDUCATION	MARRIAGE	MARRIAGE	MARRIAGE
1	James Linnell	Head of Family	Wine Merchant	London	35	M	Protestant	Elementary	Married	Married	Married
2	Elizabeth Linnell	Wife	Wine Merchant	London	25	F	Protestant	Elementary	Married	Married	Married
3	John Linnell	Son	Wine Merchant	London	4	M	Protestant	Elementary	Married	Married	Married
4	Mary Linnell	Daughter	Wine Merchant	London	3	F	Protestant	Elementary	Married	Married	Married
5	James Linnell	Son	Wine Merchant	London	18	M	Protestant	Elementary	Married	Married	Married
6	Elizabeth Linnell	Daughter	Wine Merchant	London	15	F	Protestant	Elementary	Married	Married	Married
7	John Linnell	Son	Wine Merchant	London	24	M	Protestant	Elementary	Married	Married	Married
8	Mary Linnell	Daughter	Wine Merchant	London	21	F	Protestant	Elementary	Married	Married	Married
9	Elizabeth Linnell	Daughter	Wine Merchant	London	14	F	Protestant	Elementary	Married	Married	Married
10	James Linnell	Son	Wine Merchant	London	12	M	Protestant	Elementary	Married	Married	Married
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12											
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14											
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I hereby certify, as required by the Act 63 Vic, cap. 6, s. 6 (1), that the foregoing listers is correct, according to the best of my knowledge and belief.

John Linnell
(Signature of Head of Family)

I believe the foregoing to be a true Return.
James Linnell
(Signature of Registrar of Families)

Census showing my Greatgrandfather at 3 months of age