

The War of Independence

By Clodagh O'Regan

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For this project I spoke to my grandad Sean Collins and his friend Neilie Donovan, Ardfield.

My Grandad told me lots of stories relating to the period around the War of Independence. Grandad explained to me about Gorilla warfare and how the I.R.A. set about to steal guns from the R.I.C. in their efforts to regain control.

West Cork was a very important part of this fight with Tom Barry, who was born in Rosscarbery and leader of the 3rd West Cork Brigade. This was formed with the best men from local companies. Men such as; flyer Nyhan of Lyre, Bob Hayles, Bandon and Charlie Hurle,. Clogagh.

The men of the 3rd West Cork Brigade were on the run as they and their place of residence was known to the R.I.C., so safe houses were used. One such house was Dineens, Knockea.

Horses and carts were often taken from local farmers for transport and knocking bridges by night. This was to obstruct the movement of enemy forces.

My grandad Sean Collins told me about my great great Grandad, Thomas Hennessy, born 1871. He was shot in Sisks farm, Crossharven on 15-3-1921. He was not an active volunteer. He is buried in Newcestown Cemetry.

His son Patrick; Grandads uncle, was reared by Dineens Knockea and he often told my, Grandad that he did often look out from safe houses for raiding' Black and Tans ' while some volunteers rested.

Many towns and parishes had groups of volunteers, called companies. From these companies, the best were selected to form the famous 3rd West Cork Briade led by Tom Barry.

I also spoke to Grandads friend, Neilie Donovan, Ardfield. His dad was John Cornelius Donovan. Neilie said his two uncles were on different sides. One fighting for the R.I.C. ; and the other fighting for the I.R.A.

His father knew Michael Collins well.

Neilie told me about 2 different look out posts. One in Ardfield and one in Galley head.

He said the I.R.A. blew up Ross bridge, Owenahincha bridge and Longstrand bridge to Slow down the R.I.C. . Ross Barracks was burnt also.