

Tom McEllistrim

My mom is from Ballymacelligott one of the largest parishes in Ireland. Neighbours of my grandparents are the McEllistrim family of Abane Farm. They had strong connections with the Fianna Fail party since its creation in 1914. He fought in the war of independence he took the republican side in the civil war. He was a TD for north Kerry from 1923 to 1969. As a long serving Munster Fianna Fail TD, he strongly supported Jack Lynch for Taoiseach in 1966 following the retirement of Sean Lemass. McEllistrim recalled discussing the impending 1916 rising with Austin Stack and on Easter Sunday marching at the head of 40 men from Ballymacelligott to the volunteers headquarters in Irree. They expected to be part of the rising on that day or some days later and brought rations with them. Pádraic Cúibhristín De Staic the GAA headquarters in Irree is named after Austin Stack as is Austin Stack GAA Club which is celebrating its 100th year anniversary this year.

In Irree McEllistrim was introduced to Robert Monteith who accompanied

Roger Casement on his trip to Germany to Kerry with arms.

He was asked by the head of volunteers in Irree to take charge of Monteith, he took him to his home in Ballymac "he stayed with me for 4 days and 4 nights we slept in the same room and same bed". "we went for long walks".

Monteith was later moved to a house in Glanageanty a remote townland in Ballymac before going on to Limerick and eventually escaping to America. Monteith was sheltered in the home of Seán Iadgh Óg Lenihan grandfather of world champion runner John Lenihan until he made his escape to America.

McEllistrim was later arrested and jailed in Irree, Dublin and Britan. While in prison he heard about the executions that followed the rising.

Released before Christmas 1916 McEllistrim returned to Kerry, participating in two high profile events in Kerry in April 1918

he led the attack on Gortalea barracks, the 2 RIC men inside surrendered with their hands to the wall a shot was fired from outside killing 1 of the men. Gortalea used to be a railway station it is located off the Tralee/Killamey road west of Farranfere. all that remains of the station today is a signal box and station masters house.

Tom McEllistrim was joint commander of the IRA column which attacked a British provisions train at headford junction in March 1921 28 people killed and all lined up in the train compartment except himself and John Cronin.

In Ballyseedy there is a large monument in honour of the Irish republican soldiers executed by Free State forces at Ballyseedy during the civil war. The Ballyseedy massacre and its aftermath. March 1923 saw a series of notorious events in Kerry where 23 republican prisoners were killed in Ballyseedy

Woods in a period of just 4 weeks.

The killings were sparked off when 5 Free State soldiers were killed by a booby trap bomb while searching a republican dugout at the village of Knocknagathel on the 6th of March, the next day the local Free State commander.

authorised the use of republican prisoners to clear mined roads

That night 6th of March, nine Republican prisoners were taken from Ballymun barracks in Tralee to Ballyseedy crossroads and tied to a landmine which was then detonated after which the survivors were then killed by machine guns. One of the survivors Stephen Fuller was blown to safety by the blast of the explosion, he was taken care of by Micheal and Hannah Curran. They cared for him although badly wounded he survived. Fuller later became a TD for Fianna Fail. The Free state troops in Tralee had prepared 9 coffins and were surprised to only find the scattered remains of 8 bodies on the scene. There was a riot when the bodies were brought back to Tralee where the enraged relatives of the killed prisoners broke open the coffins as a statement of contempt for the Free state and its troops, and in an effort to identify the dead.

Ballymun barracks was later used by Kerry county council as officers and a machinery yard my grandad worked

there as an administration officer
with Kerry county council.

My grandmother Siobhan O Sullivan
is a retired nurse. She worked
in Edenburn hospital in Ballymac
and nursed Stephen Fuller he
passed away on January 1st
1984.

Michael Donovan 27.10.1914

My great grandad Michael
Donovan was part of the Irish
guards. He was killed on the
27th of October 1914 YPRES. YPRES
is situated in the North
of Belgium.

There was a German attack
on the night of the 27th Oct
lasting for less than an hour
but the advance of the 6th
brigade on the Battalions left
together with the advance of
the French still further to
the left threatening Passchendaele,
kept the enemy moderately quiet
till the battalion was relieved
on the evening of the 27th
by the cold stream, settling
down here and at intervals
throughout the night Major Herbert
Stepney was slightly wounded
in the back by a bullet
when at supper in a farm
house 2 men were killed
and 3 wounded, Captain Mc Carthy
joined replacing lieutenant Shields