

## **THIS IS THE EXCELLENT WORK OF P.S BUCKLEY**



**THE AMBUSH SITE TODAY**

### **The Event:**

On the cold wintry evening of Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November 1920, two Crossley tenders, each with nine cadets of the Auxiliary Division of the RIC, were travelling from Dunmanway to their base in Macroom, when they were attacked about 1.5 miles south of the village of Kilmichael, Co Cork by the Flying Column of the West (Third) Cork Brigade of the IRA.

While a number of details remain unclear and many others are disputed, what is clear and undisputed is that by the end of the ambush, nineteen men lay dead. Sixteen of the dead were Auxiliaries<sup>1</sup> and three were IRA men<sup>2</sup>

This essay will look at -

- (1) Background to the ambush
- (2) The controversies that arose from the ambush, and
- (3) The effect of the ambush

### **1.0 Background**

The Auxiliaries arrived in the town of Macroom in August 1920. According to Hart, they arrived in a "district whose police chief declared it to be 'practically in a state of war'". Almost all the outlying police barracks had been evacuated and burned down. The British army had stepped in May 1920 to try to restore order and found itself embroiled in a vicious little war in the Muskerry hill country west of the town with the Ballyvourney I.R.A. "The British army has lost three dead (including two officers) and six wounded, the I.R.A. lost one." (*Hart 1998, pages 27-28*).

In his account of the lead up to Kilmichael, Tom Barry, who led the Flying Column of the West Cork Brigade at Kilmichael, paints a very dark picture of the actions of the Auxiliaries after their arrival in Macroom: "it seems to me that they were working on a plan to eliminate I.R.A. resistance by terrorism. They had a special technique. Fast lorries of them would come roaring into a village, the occupants would jump out, firing shots and ordering all the inhabitants out of doors. No exceptions were allowed. Men

and women, old and young, the sick and the decrepit were lined up against the walls with their hands up, questioned and searched. ... For hours they would hold the little community prisoners, and on more than one occasion, in different villages, they stripped all the men naked in the presence of the assembled people of both sexes, and beat them mercilessly with belts and rifles." (*Barry 1999, page 37*).

Barry goes on to describe the Auxiliaries killing local men as if for sport and concludes that "The Auxiliary force had been allowed to bluster through the country for four or five months killing, beating, terrorising, and burning factories and homes." (*Barry 1999, page 37*).

A different picture is painted by Hart, who says that the commanders of Auxiliaries based at Macroom, were "responsible men, who kept their cadets under control, and prevented serious mischief or drinking" (*Hart 1998, page 28*).

Hart goes on to say that Liam Deasy (then Adjutant of the West Cork Brigade of the I.R.A.) "remembered Lieutenant Colonel Crane - who died in the ambush, - for his 'soldierly humanity'. Other I.R.A. men recalled their decency and restraint." (*Hart 1998, page 29*).

Which account is more accurate? There are a number of problems with Barry's account. He gives no dates or places for the villages 'terrorised' by the Auxiliaries<sup>3</sup>. In addition, the only person he names as being killed by the Auxiliaries was the Very Rev Canon Magner of Dunmanway. Canon Magner was killed by an Auxiliary but not until mid-December i.e. over two weeks after the Kilmichael ambush. (*See Deasy 1973, page 192; Hart 1998, page 286 and Hopkinson 2002, page 83*)

In addition, Hart's account gets support from Bill Munro, who was an Auxiliary stationed in Macroom at this time. Munro's account is given in Gleeson's book (*Gleeson 1963, pages 61-80*).

According to Gleeson, Munro was "as nice and gentle a man as you would ever want to meet" (*Gleeson 1963, page 60*).

Munro says that the commanding officer of the Auxiliaries stationed in Macroom "turned out to be a wise and considerate officer, who got little credit for the good work he did" (*Gleeson 1963, page 63*).

Munro also credits this commanding officer with ensuring that the Auxiliaries did not go on a rampage of retaliation after the Kilmichael ambush (*see Section 3 below*). More relevant to the current issue of the actions of the Auxiliaries before the Kilmichael ambush is that rather than describing a rampage of terror after their arrival in Macroom in August 1920, Munro describes the first two months as follows: "We had been in Macroom for two months and despite all our endeavours we had not been in action or even seen anyone armed or looking aggressive. Really the life was getting a bit dull." (*Gleeson, page 69*).

However, while Hart does get support from Munro, there are problems with Hart's account as well. The source he referenced for his claim that the Auxiliaries in Macroom did not engage in serious mischief or drinking was Crozier. Brigadier-General F P Crozier had been appointed commandant of the Auxiliary Division of the RIC when it was established in July 1920 but he resigned his command in the Spring of 1921 after a

number of Auxiliaries who he had dismissed for alleged robbing and looting in Trim, Co Meath were re-instated (see Townshend 1975, page 163 for further details). In the reference given by Hart, Crozier does state that company of the Auxiliaries based at Macroom ('C' Company) was one of the few companies who "drank moderately" (*Crozier 1932, page 198*), but Crozier goes on to give examples of Auxiliaries elsewhere engaging in torture, looting and killing. Similarly, while it is true that Deasy does commend Colonel Crake for the "soldierly humanity" that Crake had shown him, he goes on to say that this "was so different from the mercenary depravity of the majority of the Auxiliaries" (*Deasy 1973, page 167*).

In addition, one of the references that Hart gives to back up his contention that some I.R.A. men "recalled their decency and restraint" is O'Suilleabhain in his book *WHERE MOUNTAIN MEN HAVE SOWN*. However, O'Suilleabhain does not mention anything about the Auxiliaries 'decency and restraint'<sup>5</sup>

Can the two accounts be reconciled? Perhaps they can be reconciled to some extent by removing the hyperbole (especially in Barry's account) and by looking at the arrival of the Auxiliaries in Macroom from both sides. Hart noted that when the Auxiliaries arrived they transformed the situation and "raided constantly and aggressively. Where previously rural Volunteers might not have seen a policeman for weeks or months at a time, now there were no safe havens. An Auxiliary patrol might appear at any time, day or night. They were fast, well armed and strong in numbers." (*Hart 1998, page 28*).

Not only the Volunteers of the I.R.A. would have been affected by this constant raiding because, as Munro noted, when they arrived in Macroom they had "little idea of what to look for. In other words, we were raw." (*Gleeson 1963, page 67*).

Munro goes on to say that their lack of intelligence sent them "careering round Cork and Kerry on many a wild goose chase." (*Gleeson 1963, page 67*).

It is highly likely that the people whose houses were raided (both members of the IRA and not) were in considerable fear of the Auxiliaries, particularly in the light of the stories in circulation of their activities elsewhere in the country. Therefore, while Barry's hyperbole can be rejected so can Hart's (and Munro's) rather benign view of the activities of the Macroom-based Auxiliaries in the period leading up to Kilmichael ambush. However, while some reconciliation is possible, we are still left with the people on both sides of the conflict viewing the same activities in very different ways.

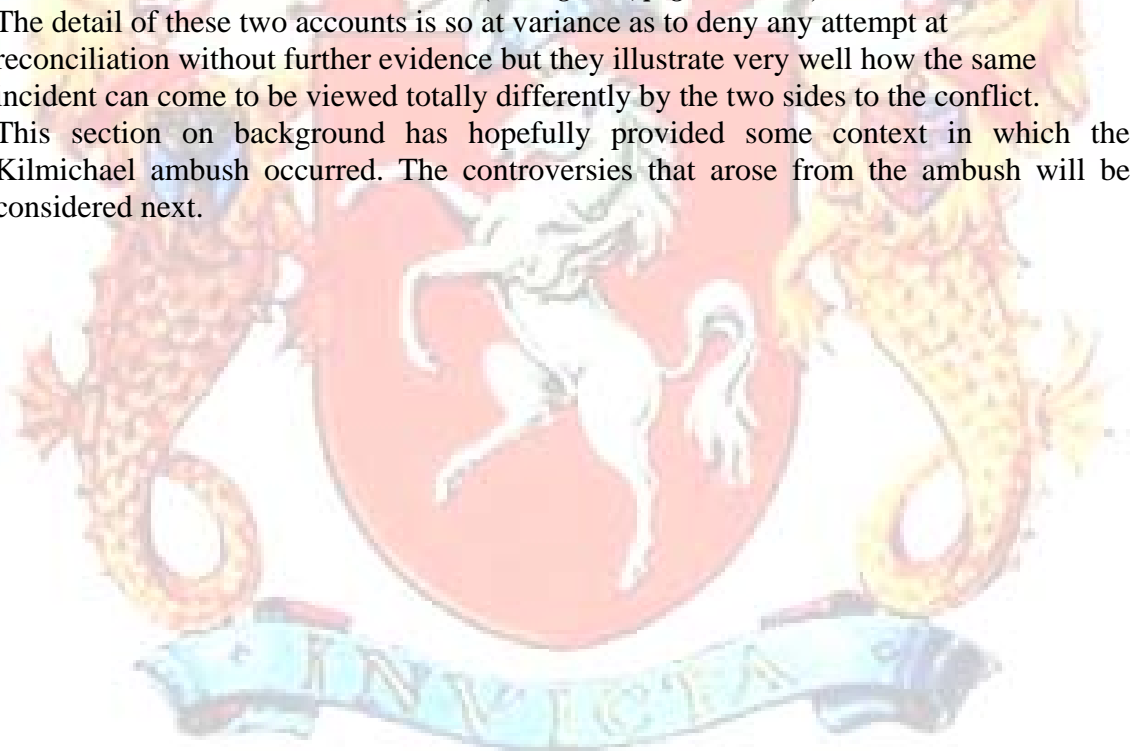
To get a sense of how different the same incidents can be viewed, I will review in some detail one particular incident - the killing by a Macroom-based Auxiliary of James Lehane in the village of Ballymakeera in October 1920. Hart says that Lehane was the first and only victim of the Macroom Auxiliaries before Kilmichael and that he was not a Volunteer. As usual, the account of his killing from both sides could not have been more different. Munro's account goes as follows: "It was during a raid on some cottages up toward the Kerry border that we apparently surprised a meeting of some sort. It was just young fellows who took fright on seeing us and ran for it. They were some little way off before we spotted them and they were called on to halt, but they kept going and a few shots were fired after them, and one was hit and fell. On reaching him we found him to be badly wounded so, taking him into one of the cottages, we did what we could for him and sent one car to get a doctor and a priest, both of whom arrived in time to do what they had to do before the young man died." (*Gleeson 1963, page 72*)

Munro goes on to say that "This incident depressed us, especially as it was a stupid and unnecessary death" (*Glesson1963, page 72*).

Twohig's version of the killing of James Lehane is very different. He places Lehane's killing, not in the context of a 'raid on some cottages' but in the context of a major raid on the village of Ballymakeera by the Auxiliaries where practically every house and business in the village is raided. Twohig gives details of who were in various houses and pubs and of the attempts by various I.R.A. men in the village to evade capture (*Twohig 1994, pages 136-141*).

Twohig describes Lehane as "a middle-aged, easy going man, big and harmless. All this, and one thing and another, kept him from taking an active part in the events of the time." (*Twohig 1994, page 140*). On the evening of the raid<sup>6</sup> Twohig says that Lehane "happened to be in a house in the village - his own home was in the EastEnd - when an Auxie walked in. When questioned he gave his name as James Lehane. The name must have meant something to the soldier who was obviously the worse for drink. He was ordered out of the house and directed down the by-road where, about fifty yards from the village cross; the Auxie emptied his revolver into him. Other Auxies ran to the spot but immediately the usual whistle blew for 'All Aboard' and they made for the lorries at the double. Some of the villagers went down and found Jim Lehane slumped against the fence with his feet towards the road." (*Twohig 1994, pages 140- 141*).

The detail of these two accounts is so at variance as to deny any attempt at reconciliation without further evidence but they illustrate very well how the same incident can come to be viewed totally differently by the two sides to the conflict. This section on background has hopefully provided some context in which the Kilmichael ambush occurred. The controversies that arose from the ambush will be considered next.





X MARKS THE SPOT WHERE THE FIRST TRUCK STOPPED

## **2.0 The Kilmichael Controversies:**

As mentioned above, much of what happened at the Kilmichael ambush is either unclear or disputed. (*Abbott 2000, page 160*) enumerates five points of conflict as follows<sup>7</sup>:

- (A) Was the Auxiliary patrol tricked onto a minor road by a civilian or a person in Military uniform by telling them that a British army patrol had broken down on the minor road?
- (B) When the Auxiliary patrol reached the ambush position, was it induced to slow down or stop by a man in British Army uniform or a group of men in uniform gathered around one or two lorries?
- (C) Did some of the Auxiliaries in the second lorry make a bogus surrender call resulting in the deaths of some of the IRA men?
- (D) After the ambush, did the IRA kill Auxiliaries who had surrendered or who were wounded?
- (E) Did the IRA mutilate the bodies of dead Auxiliaries with axes?

(A) That the Auxiliary patrol was tricked onto a side road is mentioned by Munro (*Gleeson 1963, page 73*) and by Macready, (*Macready 1924, page 512*).

Munro says it was a civilian and Macready says that it was a man in the uniform of a British soldier. This ruse is not mentioned by Barry, or another member of the ambush party, Paddy O'Brien in his account of the ambush (*Deasy 1973, pages 170-174*). Perhaps more unusually, it is not mentioned in the official report prepared by a senior police officer in December 1920. Also, this latter report states that the patrol have being searching for a man in the Dunmanway direction. As the ambush site was on the main Dunmanway-Macroon road, there would have been no need to trick the patrol onto a side road if it was taking the main road back to its barracks. This seems likely as Munro also says "each section officer got into the habit of doing the same patrol each time he was on duty" (*Gleeson 1963, page 73*).

Therefore the need for a ruse to get the patrol into the ambush site probably did not arise.

(B) The only real point of conflict in the next point is whether one man in military uniform got the first Auxiliary lorry to slow down or was it a bunch of men in uniform (pretending to be British soldiers) standing around one or two lorries. Munro

says there were two stationary lorries at the ambush site with men in khaki uniforms clustered around them (*Gleeson 1963, page 74*) and when the patrol lorries stopped<sup>7</sup> fire was opened on them from all sides. Barry says that they had one of their men in the uniform of an Irish Volunteer stand on the road and this caused the first lorry to slow down and approach slowly and a Mills bomb was thrown into the driver's seat to start the ambush (*Barry 1999, page 43*).

On reviewing the evidence (which included interviews with two veterans of the ambush and access to other four other statements of veterans), Hart agreed with Barry that there was only one man in uniform standing on the road to slow down the Auxiliaries' trucks (*Hart 1998, page 30*).<sup>8</sup>

(C) It is this point of conflict (did some of the Auxiliaries in the second lorry make a bogus surrender call?) and the next point of conflict (did the IRA kill Auxiliary prisoners and/or wounded?) which are the key issues that arise from the Kilmichael ambush.

Barry claims that the Auxiliaries in the second lorry gave a surrender call and then shot the three IRA men as they approached. For this reason, he says he did not accept a further surrender call and had his men keep firing until all firing stopped from the Auxiliaries (*Barry 1999, pages 44-45*).

Hart makes an in-depth trawl of the evidence concerning the false surrender claim (*Hart 1998, page 25-27*).

He notes that Barry made no mention of the false surrender in his report to his superiors immediately after the ambush and also no mention of it in his account of the ambush made in 1932 (an published in the *Irish Press* newspaper) and he did not include the false surrender claim until his wrote it in his book *Guerilla Days in Ireland* first published in 1949. O'Brien, in his account, makes no mention of the false surrender (published in 1973) and Hart notes that this led Barry to claim that he felt that O'Brien's account depicted him as a bloody-minded commander who exterminated the Auxiliaries without reason (*Hart 1998, page 27*).

This is a very odd interpretation for Barry to have made as O'Brien's account makes no such claims. The weight of evidence would seem to be against Barry - but why would he make such a claim? Perhaps to cover the treatment of prisoners and wounded and this is the issue that we turn to next.

(D) Some evidence that prisoners and/or wounded were killed comes from Dr Kelleher's report (the Macroom coroner). He found that three Auxiliaries had been shot in the head at point-blank range, probably by guns held to their head, that several had been shot after death and another has his head smashed open. This evidence on its own does not prove that prisoners or wounded were killed as Barry account talks of hand-to-hand fighting, revolvers used at point-blank range and use of rifle butts (*Barry 1999, pages 43-44*).

In addition, being somewhat inexperienced fighters some of the column members could have shot dead Auxiliaries because of heightened tension. However, more damning is the accounts of participants gathered by Hart (*Hart 1998, page 35*) and Barry's admission to Meda Ryan that he "didn't want prisoners - especially men who used deceptive tactics" (*Hart 1998, page 35 footnote*).

While the evidence for the killing wounded and/or prisoners by the I.R.A. is not totally convincing, there is enough to warrant an interim judgement that it is likely to have happened. Hart goes on to say "There is also a strong possibility that Barry intended to wipe the Auxiliaries out from the very beginning. It was he who ordered the wounded to be killed and made sure it was done." (*Hart 1998, page 37*).

This overstates the evidence he makes available but Hart does point out that at previous engagements when Barry was not in command of the West Cork Brigade flying column, enemy prisoners and wounded were treated decently, as they were in subsequent I.R.A. engagements (see, for example, Coleman's account of the ambush on an Auxiliary patrol at Clonfin on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1921 by the flying column of the North Longford Brigade of the I.R.A. led by Sean MacEoin – (*Coleman 2003, pgs126-127*).

This points to the importance of the commanding officer in these engagements.

(E) The claim that the IRA mutilated the bodies of dead Auxiliaries with axes was made by the British in the wake of the Kilmichael ambush. At this point, it would seem to be practically impossible to either verify or reject these claims. At any rate, put beside the much more important debate on whether the wounded Auxiliaries and/or those who were prisoners were killed after the ambush, it pales in significance and can safely put into the realm of war-time propaganda.



THIS WAS THE COMMAND POST OCCUPIED BY TOM BARRY

### **3.0 The effects of the ambush:**

As Townshend has noted, after the ambush "West Cork trembled in anticipation of Auxiliary reprisals", (*Townshend 1975, page 131*).

West Cork had every right to expect reprisals. As Hopkinson has noted "The list of reprisals in the late summer and autumn of 1920 reads like a sombre catalogue of small towns throughout the length and breadth of the south and west: Thurles, Upperchurch and Limerick in late July, Templemore on the 16<sup>th</sup> August, Balbriggan on 21 September, Ennistymon, Lahinch and Miltown Malbay on 22 September, Trim on 27 September and Mallow a day later, Boyle on the 5 October, Listowel, Tralee and Tubbercurry also in October, Templemore again on 1 November and Ballymote and Granard on 4 November." (*Hopkinson 2002b, page 80*).

However, the expected level of reprisal did not come. As Bill Munro, who as noted above was an Auxiliary stationed in Macroom at the time, has stated "For us who were directly concerned the shock had been so great ... that we were like men dazed. Not so the army, who although not directly affected, immediately thought of taking reprisals on the local inhabitants. The houses of some known sympathisers were set alight before our CO[Commanding Officer ] could stop it. He ordered us to help in putting out the fires." (*Glesson 1963, page 76*).

The effect of Kilmichael was more pronounced on the level of British policy. According to Townshend , two days after Kilmichael, (1<sup>st</sup> December 2002) the British decided that "because of 'the recent outrage near Cork, which partook of a more definitely military character than its predecessors', that the Chief Secretary [Hamar Greenwood] should apply martial law 'in such particular areas as he might consider necessary' " (*Townshend1975, page 133*)<sup>10</sup>.

Townshend places the declaration of martial and the other measures undertaken at this time by the Irish Executive (such as internment on suspicion) as a reaction to not only Kilmichael but also Bloody Sunday which has taken place the previous Sunday (21<sup>st</sup> November 1920) when Collins's Squad "and the Dublin Brigade of the I.R.A. entered eight houses in Dublin and shot dead 12 British officers" (*Townshend 1975, page 129*). However, when Viscount French, Lord-Lieutenant, proclaimed martial law on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 1920 on the counties of Cork, Kerry, Limerick and Tipperary part of the reasons for declaring martial law given in its proclamation read "repeated murderous attacks have been made on His Majesty's Forces culminating in the ambush, massacre, and mutilation with axes, of sixteen Cadets of the Auxiliary Division" (*Proclamation is given as Appendix F in Hopkinson 2002b, page 211*).

The latter part of his statement is obviously a reference to Kilmichael. The part that Kilmichael played in the declaration of martial law gives rise to a number of interesting questions. One question is whether the imposition of martial law was a success from a British point of view. With regard to this question, Townshend has shown that even when martial law was extended from the original four counties to four more (Clare, Waterford, Kilkenny, Wexford) in early January 1921, a number of problems persisted. One of the main problems centred on the legal authority of the Military Governors and their decisions, particularly with regard to executions, were continually challenged in the High Court in Dublin with some cases being taken to the House of Lords. According to Townshend, this meant that "a climate of 'delay and uncertainty' had been created which, in Macready's<sup>11</sup> opinion, 'nullified the effects of martial law' " (*Townshend 1975, page 147*).

Another major impediment to the successful imposition of martial law (from a British stand-point) was the continued divided command between the army and the police. This issue was never fully resolved before the Truce (for political reasons according to Townshend), (*see Townshend 1975, page 162*) and remained a major impediment to the successful imposition of martial law.



Another, much more general question, is whether the ambush at Kilmichael and the many subsequent ambushes and violent engagements carried out by the I.R.A. were instrumental in bringing the British to the negotiation table or whether the dominion status offered by the Treaty could have been won without it. As noted by Hopkinson, this question, while a central question posed by the Anglo-Irish War, is "not easily adapted to the professional historian's techniques and language and involving consideration, often disliked, of hypothetical issues." (*Hopkinson 2002a, page 123*). Nevertheless, Hopkinson goes on to present a quite convincing argument that the "eventual decision to negotiate with Sinn Féin was determined by the logic of events after the elections of May 1921" (*Hopkinson 2002a, page 124*) and not as a reaction to I.R.A. violence. He goes on to say that "The possibility of a negotiated peace in the second half of 1920 or early 1921 has been generally underestimated. Terms discussed in various peace moves were similar to those eventually agreed in the early hours of 6 December 1921 - safeguards on defence and Ulster, fiscal autonomy for the 26 counties and a form of dominion status" (*Hopkinson 2002a, page 124-125*).

While this argument has much to recommend it, questions still arise. For example, if the decision to negotiate with Sinn Féin was based on the outcome of the May 1921 election, why had the British Government not offered such favourable terms to the Irish Parliamentary Party, which for many years had an equally strong electoral mandate? Also, while Hopkinson in a later work shows that the terms being discussed in the earlier peace moves were very similar to the terms offered in the Treaty (*Hopkinson 2002b, pages 177-191*), every negotiator knows that there can be major differences between terms discussed and terms offered. Indeed, the tortuous negotiations before the Treaty was signed (and the equally tortuous semaphore diplomacy before the Truce) would lead one to believe that not all that was discussed what intended to be offered by the British or accepted by the Irish.

Interestingly, Hopkinson somewhat goes against his own argument when he says that in the twelve months before the Truce "a wide range of opinion in Ireland and Britain had long seen the necessity for compromise. Nonetheless, a failure of political will on the part of the British Government had prevented any realistic peace terms being offered. Responsibility for this must be placed squarely on Lloyd George" (*Hopkinson 2002b, page 177*). He goes onto say that "Throughout the peace initiatives the Prime Minister acted deviously and inconsistently" (*Hopkinson 2002b, page 179*).

One interpretation of this behaviour is that Lloyd George was attempting to see if his military measures would succeed in crushing the I.R.A., leaving him in a stronger position to negotiate with Sinn Féin. One piece of support for this interpretation is that Hopkinson (following Townshend) accuses Lloyd George of, at worst, complicity or, at best, 'turning-a-blind-eye' to the outrages and reprisals being carried out by the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries in Ireland. (*Hopkinson 2002b, page 82*).

Of course, this is just one interpretation. Another is that Lloyd George was a captive of the Tory right wing in his Coalition Cabinet and in Westminster and he needed to have some issues safeguarded (such as Ulster) and prove that he was not 'soft on terrorists' before he could enter negotiations with Sinn Féin. Further research is required to elucidate this important question.

1. The names of the R.I.C **Auxiliaries** killed in the ambush were-

**William Barnes DFC:** Cadet, 26 years old, single, joined the RIC 18<sup>th</sup> August 1920, Auxiliary No. 269. Ex Lieut. RAF, and a native of Surrey. Home address: 47 Glebe Road, Sutton, Surrey. Buried at Bexhill Churchyard, Sutton.

**Cecil James W. Bayley:** Cadet, 22 years old, single, joined the RIC 18<sup>th</sup> August 1920, Auxiliary No. 328. Ex Lieut. RAF, and a native of Lancashire. Home address: 24, Reynard Road, Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, Manchester.

**Leonard D. Bradshaw:** Cadet, 22 years old, single, joined the RIC 18<sup>th</sup> August 1920, Auxiliary No. 297. Ex Lieut. Royal Field Artillery, and a native of Lancashire. Home address: 24, Larkhill Terrace, Blackburn.

**Francis William Crake MC:** District Inspector; 27 years old, single, joined the RIC 14<sup>th</sup> August 1920, Auxiliary No. 205. Ex Captain, Hampshire Regiment, and a native of Northumberland. Home address: 22 Westgate Road, Newcastle on Tyne. Buried at Elswick, Newcastle on Tyne.

**James C. Gleave;** Cadet, (mentioned in Despatches) , 21 years old, single, joined the RIC 18<sup>th</sup> August 1920, Auxiliary No. 266. Ex Lieut. RAF, and a native of Worcester. Home address: Crundale near Canterbury.

**Philip Noel Graham;** Cadet, 31 years old, single, joined the RIC 18<sup>th</sup> August 1920, Auxiliary No. 274. Ex Captain, Northumberland Fusiliers. Home address: 14 Wooton Road, Abingdon, Berkshire. Buried at Abingdon. (He was promoted to Section Leader on 03.10.1920, and would have been 32 on 06.12.1920.

**Cecil J. Guthrie:** Cadet, 28 years old, married, joined the RIC on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1920, Auxiliary no. 294. Ex Lieut. RAF, and a native of Fyfe. His wife was residing at Macroom at the time of his death. Guthrie escaped from the ambush site but was subsequently captured and killed by the IRA (*See Hart 1998, page 35*). Buried at Inchigeela, Co. Cork, in 1926, when it was exhumed from the bog in which it had lain since his death.

**Stanley Hugh-Jones;** Cadet, 27 years old, single, Auxiliary No. 413. Ex Lieut. Northumberland Fusiliers, and a native of Hampshire. Buried at Holcombe near Bury.

**Fredrick Hugo OBE. MC Mons Star;** Cadet, 40 years old, single, joined the RIC on 16 November 1920, Auxiliary No. 820. Ex Major Royal Engineers & Indian Army, and a native of London. Home address: Grove House, Southgate. Buried at Southgate. (His 40<sup>th</sup> birthday had been on the 23.10.1920.

**Albert George James Jones;** Cadet, 33 years old, single, joined the RIC on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1920, Auxiliary No. 268. Ex 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut Shropshire Regiment, and a native of Northamptonshire. Home address: 56 Swindon Road, Wroughton, Wiltshire.

**Ernest William H. Lucas:** Cadet, 31 years old, single joined the RIC on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1920, Auxiliary No. 292. Ex 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut Royal Sussex Regiment, and a native of Sussex. Home address: 42 Fox Street, Shaldon, Tidworth

**William Pallester:** Cadet, 25 years old, single, joined the RIC 22 October 1920, Auxiliary No. 822. Ex Captain, West Yorkshire Regiment, and a native of Yorkshire. Home address: 71 Primrose Avenue, Sheffield. Buried at Burngreave Cemetery, Sheffield.

**Horace Pearson:** Cadet, 21 years old, single, joined the RIC 31<sup>st</sup> May 1920 as a Defence of Barracks Sergeant, Auxiliary No. 835. Ex Lieut. Yorkshire Regiment, and a native of Co Armagh.

**Arthur F. Poole;** Constable, 21 years old, single, joined the RIC 24<sup>th</sup> September 1920, ex Motor Fitter/ Air Force, and was a native of London. Home address: Muriel Street, Kings Cross, London. Buried on 06.12.1920 at Kensal Rise Cemetery, London. He and four brothers came through the war unscathed. He would have been 22 on 23.12.1920.

**Frank Taylor:** Cadet, 22 years old, single, joined the RIC 18<sup>th</sup> August 1920, Auxiliary No. 331; Ex Lieut. RAF, and was a native of Kent. Home address: 21 Seaview Road, Gillingham, Kent.

**Christopher Wainwright;** Cadet, single, 36 years old, joined the RIC 18<sup>th</sup> August 1920, Auxiliary No. 330. Ex Capt Royal Dublin Fusiliers and Royal Irish Rifles. He had 10 years army service, and was a native of Lancashire. Home address: 13 Brunswick Road, Gravesend.

**Benjamin Webster;** Cadet, 30 years old, single, joined the RIC 16<sup>th</sup> November 1920, Auxiliary No. 832. Ex Lieut. Black Watch, and was a native of Lanark. Home address: 300 Langside Road, Crosshill, Glasgow. ( He would have been 31 On 05.12.1920.)

**H. F. Forde;** survived being shot in the head but remained paralysed with brain damage for the rest of his life.

*These names and details are taken from Abbott (2000), (pages 161-163).*

## 2. The names of the three IRA men killed were-

**Michael McCarthy** (Dunmanway, Co Cork);

**Jim O'Sullivan** (Rossmore, Co Cork) and

**Pat Deasy** (Kilmacsimon Quay, Co Cork).

## Who was in the West Cork Flying Column at Kilmichael?

**Barry** says that there were 37 men (including the three killed) and 3 unarmed scouts. There were four in his Command Post (Barry himself; John 'Flyer' Nyhan (Clonakilty); Jim 'Spud' Murphy (Clonakilty) and Mick O'Herlihy (Union Hall).

The rest of the column was divided into three sections. He does not say who was in the first section of ten men but the second section, of eleven men, was under the command of Michael McCarthy (V/C of the Dunmanway Battalion). Also in this section was John Lordan (V/C of the Bandon Battalion) who arrived late.

There were thirteen men in the third section commanded by Stephen O'Neill. Other people mentioned by Barry as being at Kilmichael were Paddy O'Brien (Ballinacarriga); Jack Hennessy (Ballineen); Jim O'Sullivan and Dan Hourihan. (*Barry 1999, pages 41-48*).

**O'Brien** says there were 32 men in the column divided in two sections - one under Barry himself and the other under Michael McCarthy. He says that he was the first section (under Barry) with John Aherne and Battie Coughlan. He names the three that Barry says were with him in the Command Post but also says that Sonny Dave Crowley was with them. Also in this section were Tim O'Connell, Jerh Cotter and Mick O'Donovan. Also present (but not clear in which of his two sections) were Stephen O'Neill; Jack Hegarty; Paddy McCarthy and Jack O'Sullivan.

In the second section were Ned Young and Michael Con O'Driscoll. He names the two scouts as two local men Tim O'Sullivan and Jack Kelly. He names the same three column men as being killed and he also mentions Dan Hourihane (*Deasy 1973, pages 170-172*). Assuming that Jack O'Sullivan is the same person as Jim O'Sullivan who survived then the above gives the names of the 23 of the 'Boys of Kilmichael' and the names of two of the scouts.

**Hart** says that there were 37 men on the column and ten local scouts and were "West Cork men all" (Hart 1998, page 130). He does not name the column men but says that there were five O'Donovans; five O'Sullivans and four McCarthys. This means there were four more O'Donovans; three more O'Sullivans and two more McCarthys.

3. It could be argued that Barry was writing a memoir and therefore not subject to the same rigorous requirements to define a chronology and elucidate his sources, as would a professional historian like Hart. However, when there is a clash in the accounts (as there are between Hart and Barry) then the absence of careful chronology and/or reference to back-up sources weakens Barry's account.

4. Barry spells the priest's name as Magnier while Deasy, Hart and Hopkinson spell his name as Magner.

5. The actual page reference given by Hart to O'Suilleabhain's book relate to story of what happened one day in the Autumn of 1920 when O'Suilleabhain was working in the

fields with some relatives and the Macroom-based Auxiliaries came towards them in two lorries. O'Suilleabhain tells how his relatives expected him to run but instead he went and got his two revolvers, put them in his belt and put on his coat to conceal them. He then went to the gate of the field and waited for the two lorries to arrive. One of the Auxiliaries saluted him and he saluted both lorry-loads of Auxiliaries in turn. The Auxiliaries passed on without incident. In the end of this bizarre little story (which is in keeping with the sense of bravado in his book), O'Suilleabhain is more concerned with commenting on the lack of nationalist feeling among his relatives than with "decency and restraint" of the Auxiliaries (*O'Suilleabhain 1965, pages 91-92*). It is appropriate to note that O'Suilleabhain does comment on the courage and physical fitness of the Auxiliaries (*O'Suilleabhain 1965, pages 90*), but not their decency and restraint. It should also be pointed out that while O'Suilleabhain memoir is highly enjoyable, it does stretch credibility a number of times.

6. There is even disagreement as to the date - Hart says it was the 17<sup>th</sup> October and Twohig says it was the 20<sup>th</sup> October. O'Suilleabhain also gives an account of the killing of James Lehane (*O'Suilleabhain 1965, page 142*). His account is very similar to Twohig's and differs only in small details. However, O'Suilleabhain gives the date as 1<sup>st</sup> November 1920. Interestingly, this is the day that Kevin Barry was hung in Mountjoy Jail but neither this event, or the more significant Bloody Sunday in Dublin (three weeks later on the 21<sup>st</sup> November) is mentioned by O'Suilleabhain, Twohig or Barry!

7. Abbott does enumerate a sixth point of conflict concerning Barry's claim that there was no Auxiliary survivors - this claim by Barry was clearly wrong - see footnote 1 above.

8. Hart claims that the man in uniform, standing on the road, was Barry himself. This is implied rather than stated in Barry's account. Also, Hart says that Barry threw the Mills bomb into the driver's seat - again this is not stated explicitly in Barry's account, "the Mills bomb was thrown" (*Barry 1999, page 43*). In O'Brien's account, no mention is made of a man in uniform slowing down the trucks but he does say that it was Barry who threw the Mills bomb. It is interesting that given the picture that Hart paints of Barry's character as "vain, angry, and ruthless" (*Hart 1998, page 32*) that Barry did not claim the 'glory' of being a key fighter in the ambush.

9. The Commanding Officer of 'C' Company of the Auxiliary Division of the RIC which was stationed at Macroom Castle in November 1920 was ex-British Army Colonel Barton Smith. He re-signed from the Auxiliaries on 21 February 1921 and committed suicide on Clapham Common, London on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 1922 (*Abbott 2000, page 163*). Hart named him as Buxton Smith rather than Barton Smith (*Hart 1998, page 36*)

10. The quotes within this quote from Townshend come from British Cabinet papers.

11. General Neville Macready was General Officer Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in Ireland.

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## **Appendices:**

App 1: Site of Ambush Map.