

On 12th May 1921 "Gortaglanna".
Three officers of the I.R.A. (attached to 4th Kerry Column)
Capt. Patrick Walsh (Ballydoonahane); Capt. Patrick Dalton (Dunwooleen) and
Capt. Jerry Lyons (Dunwooleen) were murdered by Tans at Gortaglanna.

About the beginning of May 1921 owing to the serious illness of some of the members of our Flying Column on the advice of our M.O. we were ordered to separate for a week or so in order to get special treatment. We accordingly went in groups of four or five to different districts. I accompanied our Column Leader Denis Quille to Mrs Walshe's at Tullamore.

On Monday evening the 9th May I was chatting to him outside Walshe's when Capt. Patrick Dalton and Capt. C. Dee called and asked if they could go to a Retreat which was being given by the Redemptorist Fathers at Athea a village some miles away on the Limerick Kerry Border. This permission was given with a warning to them to travel along the bye roads and thro the fields (columns had regular defined routes thro the country districts which were comparatively safe). Capt. P. Walshe followed afterwards. All were to rejoin the Column again on Wednesday night or at latest on Thursday.

On the following Wednesday evening a Battalion Council meeting of the 6th Battalion was held at Coolard and at this meeting there were present amongst others Capts. Jerry Lyons and Christy Broder (Duagh) who had that evening returned from a Convention at Tralee. The two latter left the following morning - THURSDAY - about 6 o'clock to get home to Duagh via Knockanure and Kilmorna. When near Knockanure Christy Broder left for friends of his a short distance away at Gortdromagowna while Jerry Lyons travelled on and waited for him at Tim Carroll's (Coy. Capt. Knockanure). After some time Jerry went on alone leaving word for Christy to follow him. Luckily the latter delayed and thus escaped the awful fate of the others. At Gortglanna Bridge Jerry met Con. Dee, Paddy Walsh and Paddy Dalton. Having much of interest to tell one another they remained chatting. Of what occurred then I had better let you have the following statement of Con. Dee which was sworn at Tarbert in June 1921:

"GORTGLANNA"
(12th May 1921).

COPY/ SWORN STATEMENT OF CORNELIUS DEE (SURVIVOR) SWORN BEFORE THOMAS R. HILL, J.P. TARBERT IN JUNE 1921.

About 9.30 a.m. on Thursday May 12th 1921 I, Cornelius Dee, accompanied by Patrick Dalton and Patrick Walsh, left Athea, unarmed where we had been attending a Mission given by the Redemptorist Fathers.

We were walking along the road leading to Listowel when at Gortaglanna Bridge we met Jerry Lyons - he was cycling. He dismounted and began talking about various happenings. After a few minutes Paddy Walshe suggested that we should go into a field as it would be safer than the roadside, we moved and were just inside the fence when we heard the noise of a Lorry. Take cover, lads, I advised and we tried to conceal ourselves as best we could. Jerry Lyons, Paddy Dalton and I took cover immediately. Paddy Walshe ran to the end of a field and lay down. Very soon we were surrounded by men in R.I.C. uniforms. We are done, Connie, said Paddy Dalton. Come out, lads, I said, with our hands up. Paddy Lyons, Paddy Dalton and myself stood with our hands over our heads; Paddy Walsh ran towards us, we were met with a torrent of abuse and foul language; I remember such expressions as "Ye Murderers" "Ye B----- we have got the real root we have got the Flying Column". We were asked our names and gave them correctly, we were searched and found unarmed, having nothing but a copy of the Irish Independent. We were then compelled to undress and while we were fastening our clothes again we were beaten with rifles, struck with revolvers and thrown on the ground and kicked in trying to save ourselves. Then we were separated some distance from each other, four or five men came around each of us and my captors continued to bear me with their rifles and hit me with their fists; after about 20 minutes we were marched towards the road/then to the Lorries. Paddy Walshe and Paddy Dalton were put in the first Lorry; I was put in the second and Jerry Lyons in the third. The Lorries were then driven for about half a mile towards Athea. They were then stopped and turned round; Paddy Walsh and Paddy Dalton were changed to the Lorry in which I was. Jerry Lyons was not changed out of the last Lorry which was now first. The Lorries were then driven the same road for about a mile. We were then ordered out of them. I looked at my companions; I saw blood on Jerry Lyons face and on

P. S. M. 1934
OIFIG AN RÉITEÓRA
FAIGHTE
23 ABR 1935
DÚN ÚI GRIOBHETHA

Paddy Walshe's mouth; Paddy Dalton was bleeding from the nose. We were then asked to run but we refused; we were again beaten with the rifles and ordered into a field ~~but~~ by the roadside we refused but were forced into the field. We asked for a trial but the Black and Tans laughed and jeered and called us murderers. We were put standing in a line facing a fence about 40 yards from the road - I was placed first on the right, Jerry Lyons next, Paddy Dalton next and Paddy Walshe on the left. Then a Black and Tan with a rifle leaned on the face was put in front of each of us about 5 yards away. There were about then more Black and Tans standing behind them. I looked straight into the face of the men in front of me. He delayed about 20 seconds as if he would like one of his companions to fire first. The second Black and Tan fired - Jerry Lyons flung up his arms, moaned and fell backwards. I glanced at him noticed blood coming on his waistcoat, I turned round and ran. I was gone about 12 yards when I got wounded in the right thigh - my leg bent under me but I held on running although I had to limp. I felt that I was being chased and I heard the bullets whizzling past me.

One of the Lorries was driven along the road on ~~xxxxxxzzzzzzzzzz~~ my front and fire was kept up from it. After I had run for about a mile and half I threw away my coat collar tie and puttees. The Tans continued running after me for fully three miles; when too exhausted to run further I flung myself into a drain in an oats garden. I was there for about 45 minutes when two men came along; they assisted me to walk for about 40 yards. I was limping so much that one of them went for a car and I was taken to a house. I recognised Head Constable Smith Listowel along the Black and Tans present also Constable Raymond and there was one in the uniform of a District Inspector of the R.I.C."

Maddened at Dee's escape the infuriated Tans butchered his comrades- they were a ghastly sight when remains were given over a couple of days afterwards to the relatives.

Luckily Con Dee was found by one of our own men - Donal Sullivan of Derry - and a friendly farmer named Michael McCarthy of Coilbwee. When he had been taken to a place of safety Donal came on to Tullamore where he reported the terrible tragedy to Denis Quille and arrangements were then made for Dee's removal to a different district as of course the enemy would comb out the whole place in order to destroy every evidence of their ghastly crime. The whole district was raided that night and the following day and in accordance with their lying propaganda the British reported there was an ambush at Gortaglanna - but everybody knew no ambush had taken place there and that those captured were unarmed. Dee was removed safely; naturally for some time afterwards he was somewhat nervy and jumpy but did much good work.

Despite the threats of the Black and Tans, Auxiliaries and Military huge crowds of people thronged to the funerals of the murdered Officers at Gale, Duagh and Athea where their Column comrades paid the last proud tribute. In their fury the Tans again attempted to capture the Firing Parties at these places but luckily all escaped.

Such tragedies as Gortaglanna caused a nauseating feeling of horror amongst the people against the British Forces and instead of inspiring terror only served to make the Irish more determined in their resistance to British misrule.

And now when we pass along by Gortaglanna we seem to hear in the sighing of the wind thro the Glen the moans of our dying comrades and their plaintive calls for help- when thunderstorm bursts over the Hill it reminds us of the sweeping powerful victory humanity will yet gain over Sassenach oppression; in our hearts we pray that the day of reckoning may come soon as in our minds we think of those inspiring lines of Teresa Brayton:

"The day will end with the setting of the Sun
But the fame of the noble Three
Will live till the uttermost sands are run
Of the Land that they died to free
The Justice of God is lightning shod
And tyrants pass in a day
But Martyrs blood and the Fenians sword
Will be saviours of men for aye".

*Paddy Walshe as stated in his memoirs.
Denis Quille
Columnarist 1921.*

P. S. M. 1934
OIFIG AN RÉPÉÓRA
FAIGHTÉ
23 ABR 1935
DÚN ÚÍ GRIOBHATHA

Military Service
Pension Application