

The life and death of

MIKIE

DINEEN

(26/3/1898 -24/6/1921)

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF MIKIE DINEEN

Mikie Dineen was born to Michael and Mary Dineen (nee O'Connor) in the townland of Cahirbarnagh on the 26th of March 1898 and was baptised in Rathmore Chapel.

He was the youngest of four brothers including, John, Paddy, Dan and Eugene and three sisters, Mary, Margaret and Hannah. He attended the local Hollymount National School. The home farm went to John, then to his son Dan Joe and then to Donal Dineen.

Because of the year of his birth he was nicknamed "98" which turned out to be somewhat prophetic in view of his participation another uprising, inspired in part, by that of 1798 and the fact that he died in similar circumstance to many of the insurgents of '98. Of course a major difference being that this uprising was a success though he did not live to see it.

His older brother, Dan, married a Mrs. Margaret Leahy (nee Ring) who lived in the townland of Ivale (officially known as Brookpark) under the south western shadow of Musherah. Mrs. Leahy's first husband, William, died one year later their marriage. Mikie was in the habit of visiting his brother's new home to help out with the farmwork. Another brother, Eugene, had a farm nearby in Ivale which made the area almost a second home for him. With two locals, John Howard and Denis Twomey he called very often to the Kelleher family known as the 'Farmers' as all three were keen to get acquainted with the three Kelleher sisters, Elly, Maggie and Julia.

He also got on very well with his brother's young stepson, Billy Leahy, who lived with his daughter Mary, in Ballintona, Millstreet.

Like many of his age he got involved in the fight for freedom after the General election of 1918 which resulted in an overwhelming vote for separation from the UK. Like many others Mikie expected that the result would be honoured by the government that had claimed to have launched a world war for the rights of national self-determination, "*that small nations might be free!*"

He no doubt shared the anger that resulted when this demand was denied and a military attempt was made by the British Government to crush the

efforts to set up a separate government in this country. He volunteered for military service and was a member of the Kilcorney Company (Millstreet Battalion).

Because of the very sensible policy adopted by him and his colleagues of not sharing information on his activities with non-combatants there is a lack of detailed information on his involvement in the war which is especially true of people like him who did not survive. Those who survived could tell their story but he was not given that opportunity.

All the indications are that he was heavily involved in the preparations for the successful ambush of Auxiliaries at Rathcoole on 16 June 1921. He 'cut the roads' with Con 'Clem' Kelleher from Tooreenbane and a member of the Musherah Company. 'Cutting the roads' was the precaution taken some time before an ambush of digging trenches across the roads leading to the site of the planned ambush. In the case of the Rathcoole Ambush being a Brigade action, there was a decision to minimise the involvement of the local IRA Companies directly so they could have alibis for the inevitable follow-up by the Crown forces in the local community.

After Rathcoole the Crown forces began the most extensive and concentrated comb-out of an area ever undertaken in the South on 23-24 June 1921. Troops converged on Rathcoole from Buttevant, Kanturk, Ballyvonaire, Ballincollig, Macroom, Killarney and Tralee. See the Military's Operational map of the deployment of Crown forces for the round up that resulted in Mikie's killing, see pages 6 and 7. (From the Strickland papers in the Imperial War Museum).

They cordoned off an area of about five square miles from Rathcoole towards Musherah which had got a reputation in the English press for being a training ground for the Volunteers. It has since been known as the Musherah Roundup and was a futile exercise as all the Volunteers were safely away in their own areas.

The Auxiliaries were the main force involved. Officially they were supposed to be an Auxiliary police force to help the RIC and nominally under their command. They were in fact an independent force and all were high ranking officers demobilised after the world war that Britain had begun by declaring war on

Germany in August 1914. That war had a brutalising effect on most participants and these Auxiliaries had that brutality in abundance. So much so that their first Commander, Brigadier General Frank Crozier, had resigned in February 1921 in disgust at their behaviour. Their torture and killing of Mikie Dineen was good sample of this. They were paid £1 per day, twice as much as the Tans who were mere disorganised thugs by comparison. The Auxiliaries were responsible for the burning of Cork and afterwards sported burned corks on their tam-o-shanters in celebration. They were disbanded in 1922 and many then joined the Palestinian Police force and no doubt continued to behave in the same way towards the Palestinians as they had done here.

On the way to Dineen's they raided most houses along the way and were accompanied by the local RIC to point out who to look for. Sergeant 'Spotty' Mulcahy from the Millstreet Barracks did the honours for them on this occasion. They raided Clement Kelleher's house in Tooreenbane which had a houseful of Volunteers led by Clement's son, Con 'Clem' Kelleher. Clement Kelleher was a long standing figure in public life and a prominent 'O'Brienite' or All-for-Ireland supporter, being Vice Chairman of the Millstreet Branch. He had mortgaged his farm at one point to save Kilcorney Creamery. Even 'Spotty' had a lot of respect for him and gave him an opportunity to forewarn his sons and Con in particular who would undoubtedly have suffered the same fate as Mikie Dineen if caught.

They called to Connell's in Tooreenbane and claimed that a picture on the wall of Daniel O'Connell must be a Sinn Feiner and were considering whether this was sufficient to take it out on the inhabitants. They raided Lane's cottage, smelling strongly of alcohol and threatened to kill the owner if any guns were found inside or outside the cottage. They raided Bill Kelleher's cottage next door and forced him to make a fire and proceeded to kick him on the bare soles of his feet as he did so and also threatened to kill him if any guns were found inside or outside the house. They helped themselves to some whiskey.

Billy Leahy recalled the 23rd June 1921 and being a Thursday it was customary to make butter on that day in his house and he did so with Mikie on this occasion. Mikie had been away most of the time since the Rathcoole Ambush. He had stayed in a house in

Curraigue on the night of the Ambush and arrived in Ivale on the afternoon of the 23rd. He and the 10 year old Billy got on well together and it was a happy and relaxed time in the house and it was also the eve of the local annual holiday, St. John's day, and it was one of the finest summers on record.

Billy recalled the lines of a song Mikie used to sing:

*We tried it before in '98
We'll try it again boys, it's never too late
We'll raise up our swords and sharpen our spears
And will die in the field with the Green Volunteers*

They slept in the same bed that night and both were awakened the following morning by loud knocking and Dan Dineen was accosted by 2/3 Auxiliaries when he opened the door. Bill Leahy remembered the strong smell of alcohol from them.

Mikie Dineen was an obvious suspect being the 'right' age and like many of the Dineens with the right bearing at six feet three inches tall that would be consistent with being a soldier. They had strong suspicions about him. There was a curfew in force with the requirement that all members of the household have their names listed on the back of the door. Mikie was probably not listed as he was visiting this, his brother's home. If so this would have heightened their suspicions. He was interrogated as to his movements on the day of the Rathcoole ambush and said that he was thinning turnips in the field beside the house.

This was not true and his demeanour may have indicated that this was not true. The Auxiliaries, with the help of the RIC eventually convinced themselves that he was not in bed all night and had therefore broken the curfew and was most likely on active service or training. That was enough for them.

Two of them ordered him away from the house along a cow path towards the nearby 'rea' in Tooreenbane. Three more watched from the road and two more moved into positions further up the road. After he had gone about thirty 30 yards the two Auxiliaries fired at him several times and he ducked the bullets. This was done to create the impression he was running away. Then they hit him in the back and the soft-nosed 'dum-dum' bullet went right through him making a massive hole in his chest. This was the designed effect of this type of bullet which expands on impact. Billy Leahy remembered his roar of pain

which was also heard in the house and then more bullets hit him.

Billy Leahy saw him lying flat on his back with blood flowing down the cow path. The people in the house were afraid to go near him in case the Auxiliaries were in the mood to kill again. Billy ran back to the house but was sent back on his own to check that he was really dead. It was felt a child was safer to do this than an adult.

The British authorities went through the motions of an inquiry at Kanturk Workhouse on 28th June and the two Auxiliaries who killed him, R. Taylor and J. Trower, claimed he had assaulted them and tried to disarm them and ran away and they shot him - the standard excuse for shooting people in the back. The inquiry concluded:

"Gunshot wounds in back and leg. The deceased was shot during operations in a wild area a long distance from the nearest military centre. I consequently forbade the Court to proceed to view the body and to obtain further details at the scene of death, as such action would have risked lives unnecessarily. Col Commandant E.H. Willis (Edward Henry Willis)"

(File reference: TNA: WO 35/149A/65)

These Auxiliaries were accosted on the road afterwards by a brave young woman, Julia Lucey, a returned Yank, who berated them for what they had done. She put her petticoat over the body. (She later married Dominic Riordan).

Dan Dineen gave a statement about the killing to the daily newspaper of the Irish Government the *Irish Bulletin*, and it was published on 20th July:

The Torture and Murder of Michael Dineen.

(The following statement has a peculiar interest in that neither the Press nor Dublin Castle ever reported this murder. Such crimes on the part of the British forces have been so numerous that eventually both the press and the public ceased to be surprised at them, regarding them as normal incidents in the daily life of the people. Dublin Castle, whose agents were involved in this horrific murder, were careful to conceal its occurrence).

Statement of Daniel Dineen, Ivale, Kilcorney.

About 7 a.m. on Friday, June 24th. I noticed some Auxiliaries and a policeman at a little distance from my house. I have since ascertained that the policeman's name was Dowd. I called my brother, Michael, who was in bed. He got up and dressed, and was saying his morning prayers when the Auxiliaries came in. They questioned him and charged him with being in the Rathcoole Ambush on the previous week, and with being an officer in the I.R.A., all of which was untrue, and which he denied. Then they took him out of the house and one of them went to his room, searched it and took some money. When this man came downstairs he ordered my brother to be brought in again, and questioned him about Sinn Fein, etc. and said: "I am going to shoot you because you must be an officer in the I.R.A." "If you do," said Michael, "I cant help it. I suppose you shot as innocent men as me." He ordered Michael to be brought outside again.

We heard Michael shouting.

My wife and I begged that Michael would not be shot, but the door was shut on us. We heard Michael shouting as if he were being beaten. My step-son went out, and he saw two Auxiliaries shooting my brother. He also heard them telling Michael to run, but he did not. My wife went out, and three men in uniform told her she had better go into the house again. She heard a good deal of firing as she returned to the house. Shortly afterwards

two Auxiliaries came into the house, and one of them told me they had shot my brother, that they had turned the machine-gun on him, and he ought to be dead by this. He told us to bring him to one of the sheds and put him in a coffin, and bury him, and said they would report the matter themselves, and that I need make no report. The man who said this was the man who had questioned Michael previously and who had taken the money. I can identify that man. The policeman named Dowd was present during the whole proceedings.

Terrible Wounds.

When I examined the body of my brother, Michael, I found that one of his legs completely shattered at the knee. There was no wound or any mark of gunfire here, so the leg must have been broken when he was beaten. His back was covered with bullet wounds, and nearly all the blood was drained from his body. There was a long cut in his vest, and a large open wound in his breast, which I thought was caused by a bayonet.

I have never been asked to give evidence at any inquiry into my brothers death.

(Signed) Daniel Dineen.
Ivale, 3rd. July 1921

Local members of Cumann na mBan, Nora Sullivan from Glenleigh (sister of Humphrey and later Sister Colmcille) and Teresa Sullivan from Laharn (later Mrs. Morgan Sweeney, Tooreenbane) collected his mangled corpse and brought it back to the house in a sheet with blood still dripping from it along the way and flies were busy on such a hot day.

Nobody who witnessed the scene ever forgot it. Jer Sheahan (Glenleigh), Paddy Buckley (Ivale), Julia Lucey also helped as did Con and Denny 'Clem' Kelleher (Tooreenbane).

The Millstreet IRA were in a position to avenge his death but deferred to Mrs. Dineen's request that one death was enough for that day. Mary Sullivan (later Sister Patrick) ran to Banteer for the priest, Fr. O'Sullivan, late P.P. in Clondrohid who anointed him. Then his mother came from Cahirbarnagh.

Dan Dineen organised the wake in the house on Friday and Saturday night. The coffin was made by Corcorans in Minor Row for Den Buckley, the undertaker. His body was shouldered from the house in Ivale to the graveyard in Millstreet.

His funeral in Millstreet on Sunday, 26th June was attended by leading members of the Volunteers though many were on the run. Sean Moylan had been captured in another round-up on the 16th of May and Paddy O'Brien had taken his place. He attended along with Con Meaney, Sonny Meaney, Jerry Crowley, Mattie Kelleher, Sean Healy, Patrick Healy, etc.

His funeral was a huge demonstration in support of the fight for Independence and a great boost to the morale of the Volunteers at the height of the War and helped ensure the eventual victory. He is buried in the graveyard adjoining Millstreet Church.

His mother later made a claim for compensation against the Auxiliaries and Billy Leahy as the only witness to the killing gave evidence at the Courthouse in Cork. She was awarded about £300. This was little consolation for the brutal killing of a brave, unassuming and fun loving son in the prime of his life.

He deserves to be commemorated and honoured, like so many others, for the price he paid to achieve the political independence we enjoy today.

FROM MILLSTREET

OWENBAUN BR.

606

L. Co. Aux.

965

LYONS BR.

CORTMAGLOON

521

1st

704

531

0827

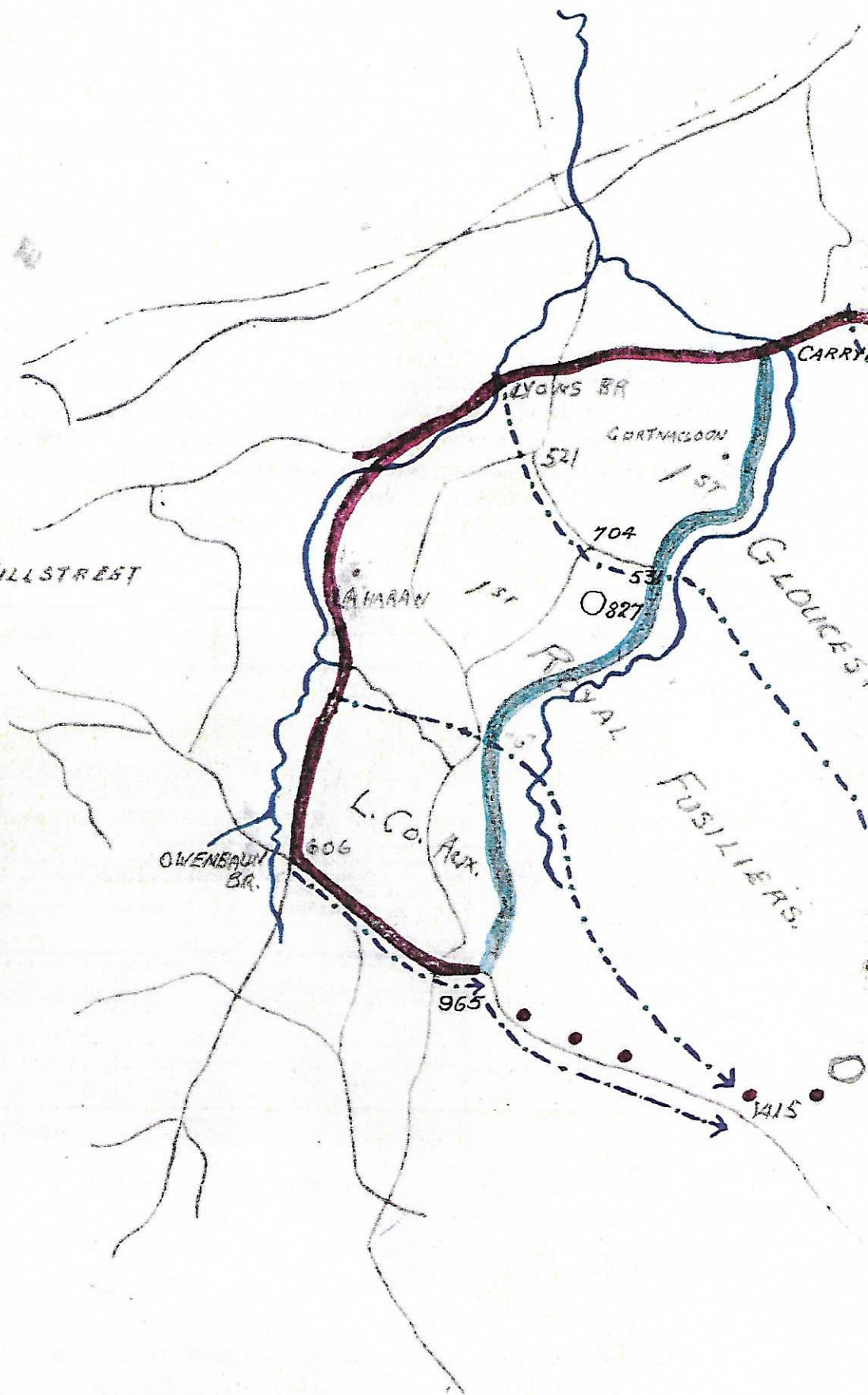
ROYAL

FUSILIERS

CARRY

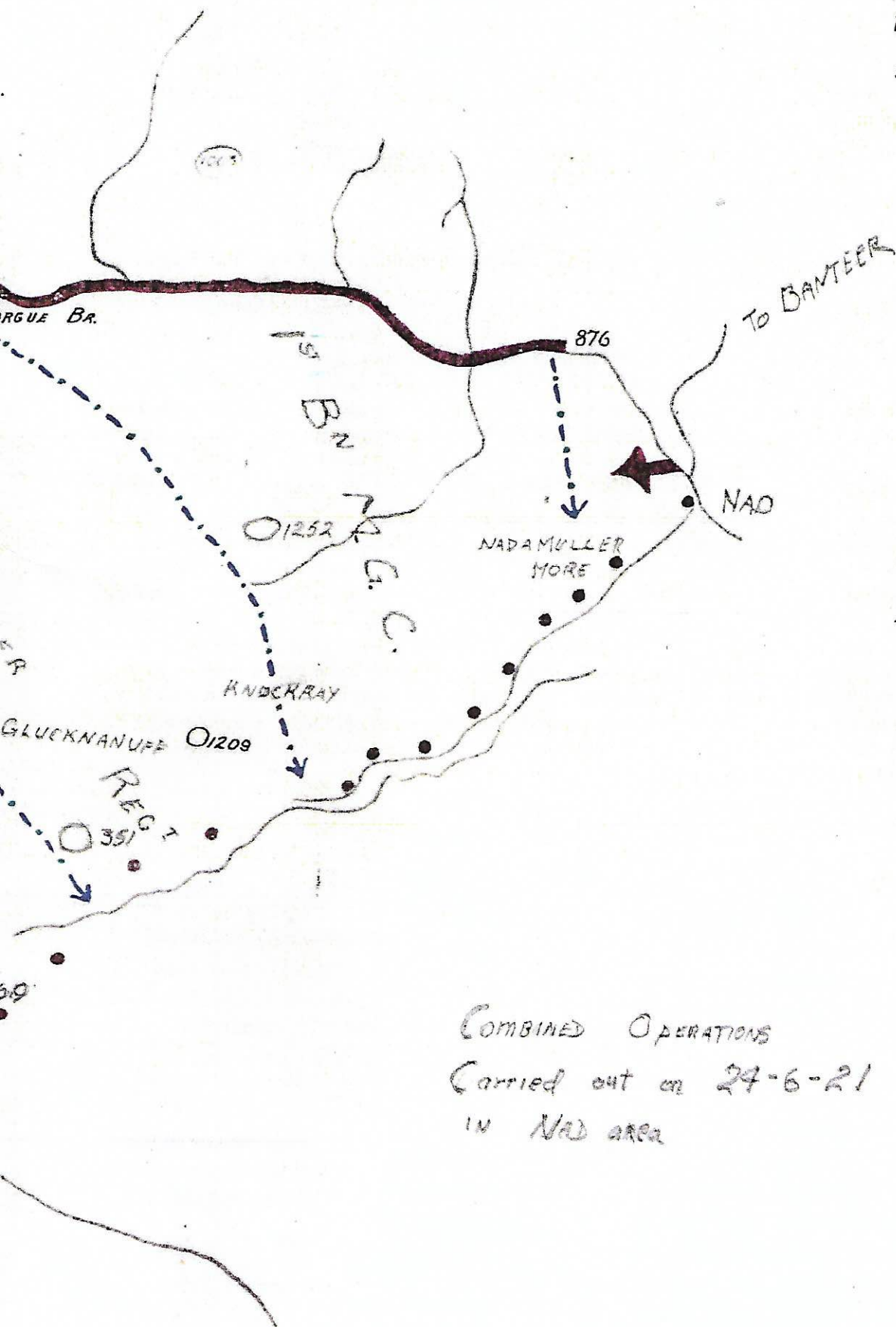
GLOUCESTER

1415



Map 6

su p 115



COMBINED OPERATIONS
Carried out on 24-6-21
IN NAD area

A DINEEN FAMILY TREE

Michael Dineen + Mary O'Connor
(Cahirbarnagh)

Mary+Jim O'Sullivan / John+Kate O'Mahony / Paddy+Mary Anne Murphy / Margaret+Daniel O'Riordan / Hannah+John Ring / Eugene+Kit Barrett / Dan+Margaret Leahy, (nec Ring)
(Cahirbarnagh) (The Bower) (Prohus) (Tootbona) (Cahirbarnagh) (Ivale) (Ivale)

Mary
Dan
Fred
Nell

Michael*
John*
Paddy
Dan Joe
Mary
* (twins)

Mikie
Mamie
Madge
Jer
Nonie
Hannie

Timothy
Julia
Michael
Mary
Hannah
Jack
Dan
Bridgid
Jim
Andy

John
Cathy
Patrick

Mamie
Angie
Mikie
Peggy
Dick

Billy Leahy
Mary
Mikie
Tony
Peggy
Nora Bridgid (Una)

ÉIRE



IRELAND

Uimhir
Number

V

No

3017

86

DEIMHNIÚ BREITHE

BIRTH CERTIFICATE

Na hAchtanna um Chláirú Breitheanna agus Básanna 1863 go 1972
BIRTHS AND DEATHS REGISTRATION ACTS 1863 to 1972

Ainm agus Sloinne
Name and Surname Michael Dineen

Gnéas
Sex Male

Lá
Day Twenty Sixth

Mí
Month March

Bliain
Year 1898

Míle
One Thousand eight gCéad
Hundred and ninety eight

Ceantar Cláraitheachta
District of Registration Mallow

i gContae
in the County of Cork Éire
Ireland

Dáta Breithe
Date of Birth

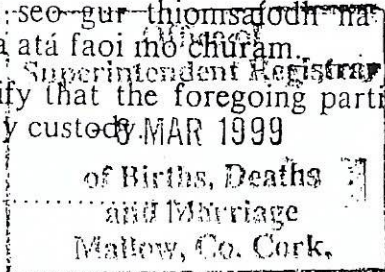
Uimhir an Taifid
Number of Entry 109

Deimhním le seo gur thiomasaíodh na sonraí thuasluaite ó Chlár-leabhar na mBreitheanna atá faoi mo chúram.

I hereby certify that the foregoing particulars have been compiled from a Register of Births in my custody.

Oifig
Office

Dáta
Date



B. Keane

Cláraitheoir * (Maoirseachta)
† (Superintendent) Registrar

*Scríos amach an focal (idir luibíní) mura n-oireann se.

†Strike out words in brackets if not applicable.

Is cion trom é an feastas seo a athrú nó é a úsáid taréis a athraithe.

TO ALTER THIS DOCUMENT OR TO UTTER IT SO ALTERED IS A SERIOUS OFFENCE



i nDíl cuimhne

ar

mícheál ó Duinnín,
cillcórne,

Ungáir a Dó i gCorcaig
D'arum Saorradic na h-Éireann,
Do Dúm Marbad go fealltac as reirbiris Sall,
meitiam 24ad, 1921.

Ar doira trí ir píce oc:

asur ar

biornáir ó muineadáin,
cillcórne,

Ungáir a Dó i gCorcaig
D'arum Saorradic na h-Éireann,
Do Dúm Marbad go fealltac as reirbiris Sall,
meitiam 30ad, 1921,

Ar doir naoi mbliada déas.



Go n-olansid Dia trodaire ar a n-ainmnasib.

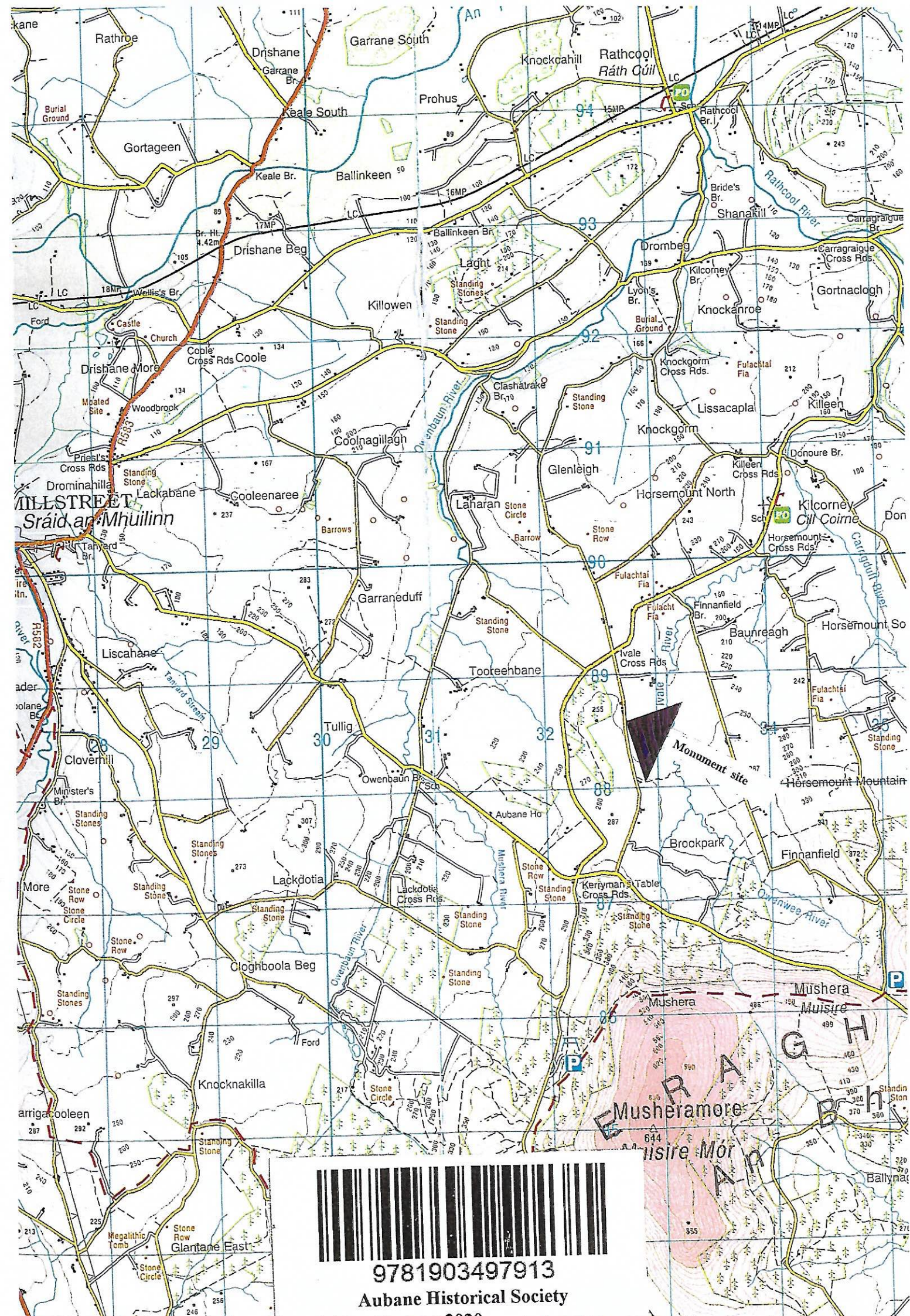
Mícheál Ó Riada

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