
**MILITARY SERVICE PENSIONS
COLLECTION**

MA/MSPC/A/34 (1)

**WEST MAYO
BRIGADE**

**MILITARY ARCHIVES
IRELAND**

(4)

ACTIVITIES IN MAYO, 1920-1921

- W.E. 3rd April, '20 - General burning of evacuated Barracks and Income Tax raids.
- 11th April, 1920 - Three R.I.C. fired on at Ballyhaunis. Two wounded.
- 11th April, 1920 - Two R.I.C. on leave wounded at a Dance at Aughamore, Claremorris.
- 13th May, 1920 - Inland Revenue Offices raided.
- 22nd June, 1920 - Constable Doogue killed in Main Street, Belmullet, and three R.I.C. wounded.
- 2nd July, 1920 - Two R.I.C. deprived of dispatches and revolver near Swinford.
- 17th July, 1920 - Three R.I.C. disarmed and deprived of uniforms near Kiltimagh.
- 18th July, 1920 - Military patrol fired on near Claremorris. Two wounded.
- 21st July, 1920 - Four R.I.C. ambushed in Ballina. One killed; one wounded.
- 2nd August, 1920 - Military attacked between Claremorris and Ballyhaunis, at Holywell. 3 soldiers wounded.
- 22nd August, 1920 - Ballyvary Bks. raided and arms taken.
- 29th August, 1920 - Inniscrone Coastguard Station taken, and arms seized.
- 8th Septr., 1920 - Motor patrol fired on near Ballina. One officer injured.
- 7th March, 1921 - Partry (alias Port Royal) ambush: lorry of soldiers fired on. Two killed and two wounded. May be the same as :-
- ~~7th March, 1921 - Military lorry fired on near Ballinrobe: three wounded. (alias Holywell ambush).~~
- 22nd March, 1921 - Ambush at Carrowkenedy: one killed; 3 wounded. Reprisals at Westport.
- 29th March, 1921 - Constable wounded at Ballyhaunis.
- 4th April, 1921 - Police patrol attacked at Bonniconlon, Ballina.
- 4th April, 1921 - Military Camp at Swinford attacked.

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15th April, 1921 - Two constables wounded at Ballina.

24th April, 1921 - R.I.C. patrol ambushed at Clogher Cross, near Westport.

3rd May, 1921 - Thirteen police ambushed in Tournakeady; four killed; two wounded. Later the military went out and there followed a running fight through the Partry Mountains and a round-up with airplanes next day in which one officer was wounded. There had apparently been a fight at Partry shortly before.

+ 6th May, 1921 - Ambush at Clonkeen. Two Volunteers killed; two wounded and captured. (*Tans surprised R.I.C. party*).

8th May, 1921 - R.I.C. patrol of eleven men ambushed in Westport; five wounded.

18th May, 1921 - R.I.C. Sergeant fired on and wounded at Newport (?).

Newport Barracks attacked (?).

18th May, 1921 - Constable Butler shot dead at Newport. Reprisals.

X 19th May, 1921 - D.I., and 20 police ambushed at Kilmena, between Westport and Newport. One constable killed; one Head-constable seriously wounded. Four Volunteers killed and six captured: (five of them wounded).

Y 23rd May, 1921 - Fight at Skirdagh, near Newport: lasted from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Ambush of D.I., and 18 policemen: the D.I. was wounded; one constable was killed and one Volunteer wounded, and captured. He died later.

24th May, 1921 - D.I. Whyte wounded at Ballina.

25th May, 1921 - Thomas Howley wounded by Crown Forces at Ballina and died subsequently.

X 2nd June, 1921 - D.I. and 17 R.I.C., ambushed at Carrowkennedy. D.I. and 5 constables killed and 4 wounded. The police surrendered and they were disarmed and two tenders and one touring car burned. The fight lasted 3½-hours. (This is the second ambush at Carrowkennedy).

17th June, 1921 - Ballyhaunis Barracks attacked.

26th June, 1921 - Crown Forces surrounded a house occupied by I.R.A., at Clydagh, Ballycastle: one Volunteer killed; 5 captured.

Activities

West Mayo Brigade

Fourth Western Division

Date	Engagement	Index No.
1921 March	Clogher Cross	1
"	Carrowkennedy No. 1.	2
May	Red Bridge, Westport	3.
19 th "	Kilmeena Ambush	4-4a.
"	Skirdagh,	5-5a.
June	Carrowkennedy No. 2.	6, 6a, 6b.

1920-'21

Activities in Mayo - General

7.7a

N.B.

Certificate covering these activities (on attached file) states
 ".... it is... possible — in fact probable — that the names
 of some men who assisted in the operations may have
 been forgotten or overlooked."

Military Service
 Pensions Collection

Military Archives

CLOGHER CROSS - March, 1921

(map on attached file)

The Active Service Unit made up of men from the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the West Mayo Brigade were stationed in the villages of Dunminawoonagh and Carnaclay one day towards the end of March, 1921. The Unit had selected an ambush point at Clogher Cross and were proceeding to take up positions when four lorry loads of Crown forces came along unexpectedly about 7 p.m. The Active Service Unit had not actually reached their positions and had not their outposts in position. Nevertheless, fire was opened on the enemy and returned. A running fight ensued for about an hour when eventually the action had to be called off owing to falling darkness.

In this engagement no member of the I.R.A. active ~~service~~ service column was wounded but four members of the enemy forces received severe wounds.

The men who took part in the engagement were as follows:-

3rd Battalion : Joe Ring (dead)
James Malone, Castlebar;
Joseph L. Baker, Bridge St., Westport;
Tom Ketterick, Dublin;
Jack McDonagh, England;
E. Kelly, Slogger, Westport;
Martin Naughton, U.S.A.,
Michael Staunton, do
Thomas Heavey, Ballina;
Jack Keane (dead)
T. Ainsworth, Castlebar St., Westport;
J. Flaherty, Fair Green, Westport;
Martin Gibbons, Old Walls, Kilmeena, Westport;

James G. Rushe

2nd Battalion: M. McHale, Kilmeena, Westport;
✓ Tom O'Brien, Moyhastin, do
M. Kearney, Aghavale, do
P. Lambert, Westport Quay;
Lorcan Heavey, Howth, Dublin;
John Duffy, Memeen, Aghagower, Westport;
Patrick Duffy, Cloonskill, do
Willie Joyce, U.S.A.

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In the accompanying map the position of the members of the Active Service Unit who were engaged in the first Carrowkenedy ambush, which was the first engagement which took place in the West Mayo Area, is shewn roughly A - A' coloured green. A supporting outpost was situate in the area shewn B - B1 - B2 - B3. The position of the enemy is shewn E - E' coloured red.

Leading up to the first encounter between the Active Service Unit and the enemy in the West Mayo Area the main body of the Active Service Unit was stationed at Clady. An outpost was stationed in the village of Derrakillew in the position shewn B - B1 etc. The Brigade O.C., and the O.C. and Vice-Captain of the 3rd Battalion went out on an expedition to select an ambush point and positions, and to make arrangements for taking up positions. As they were proceeding along the road from Derrakillew towards Carrowkenedy, on turning a bend of the road, they encountered a Sergeant and three members of the R. I. C. fully armed, and fire was opened immediately. There was a short, sharp encounter during which the Sergeant was killed and two members of the R. I. C. seriously wounded and the fourth man taken prisoner. Their revolvers and full equipment were captured. About the same time an attack on the Drummin R.I.C. Barracks had been planned, and members of the 4th Battalion of the Active Service Unit, together with Seamus McEvilly of Castlebar and J.L. Baker, Adjutant of the 3rd Battalion, with their men, had actually taken up positions with a view towards attacking the barracks. As a result of the encounter with and the disarming of the patrol the attack on the barracks was rendered unnecessary, and the barracks was vacated a few days after the action.

The following are the names of the officers and men who were engaged in the action:-

Brigadier Michael Kilroy, Newport;
Joseph Ring, Westport, O.C. 3rd Batt., (since dead);
James Malone, Vice-Capt. 3rd Batt., Castlebar.

Following are the names of the men who were on outpost duty on this occasion:-

Paddy Kelly, Westport, O.C. 4th Batt.,
Andy Harney, Louisburgh, Vice-Capt. 4th Batt.,
P. McNamara, U.S.A.,
James Harney, Louisburgh,
John J. Philbin, do
J. L. Baker, Westport, Adjutant 3rd Batt.,
T. Fergus (H), Mullagh, Kilsallagh, Westport;
T. Ryder, do. do. do
Austin Mortimer, Lecanvey, Westport,
Myles O'Malley, Old Head, Louisburgh.

John J. Philbin

ENGAGEMENT AT RED BRIDGE, WESTPORT, May, 1921.

(Map on attached file)

In May, 1921, the Crown forces attended all trains in search of wanted men and material of the I.R.A., and a column was despatched to carry out an attack on the police patrol at the Railway Station, Westport. A number of men were posted at vantage points along the railway embankment and as the patrol left the Station going in the direction of Westport the members of the I.R.A. column at great personal risk crawled along the embankment on to the metal railway bridge crossing the road and bombed the patrol with hand grenades from the bridge.

The following men took part in this attack on the Crown forces:-

T. Ketterick, Brigade Q.M., Dublin;

Capt. J. Malone, Castlebar;

J. L. Baker, Bridge St., Westport;

John Duffy, Meneen, Aughagower, Westport;

— T. Sheridan, Mill St., Westport;

— J. J. Gavin, Mill St., Westport;

J. Keane, (dead)

J. Ring (dead)

J. T. Walsh, New Cottages, Westport;

J. R. Gibbons, Cloona, Westport;

Patrick Duffy, Cloonskill, Aughagower, Westport.

Didn't claim it
Did not claim it
(21660)

Michael Malone — He is here (C. Malone 23/1/41)

(4)

(Map on attached file)

KILMEENA AMBUSH - 19th May, 1921.

In the accompanying map the position of the I.R.A. is shewn in green and the positions of the enemy are shewn coloured red.

In preparation for the ambush which took place at Kilmeena, westport, on the 19th May, 1921, all the roads in the 2nd Battalion Area were either cut or blockaded with obstructions. The Active Service Unit of the I.R.A. consisted of officers and men from the 1st., 2nd., and 3rd Battalion Areas and comprised about 65 men in all.

Having previously selected positions and made arrangements for the blocking of roads the Active Service Unit took up ambush positions at daybreak. The main body of men, under Michael Kilroy, took up the positions shewn A - A' on the map. There was a supporting column in position shewn B - B'; an outpost under Eamon Moane, westport, in position D - D'; and an outpost under John Gibbons, Westport, in position C - C'.

After the men had been in position for nine or ten hours the enemy approached from westport in three lorries, with approximately 20 armed men in each lorry. The first two lorries, which were travelling close together, and which are shewn L1 and L2, had reached a position opposite the main body when fire was opened on them. A number of the enemy dismounted, took up positions and returned the fire. The first lorry (L1) went forward in the direction of Newport across the Railway Bridge and as it approached the outpost D - D' fire was opened by the Active Service Unit. The lorry was halted and backed back to position on the Railway Bridge where the men from the first lorry dismounted and set up a machine gun (M1) which was trained on the outpost D - D'. The third lorry (L3) never reached a position opposite the main body of I.R.A., but when fire was opened from the men in position B - B' the lorry reversed in the direction of Westport out of range of the Active Service Unit. It was halted on the hill opposite the Parochial House and a second machine gun was established in the position shewn M3. The outpost in the position C - C' was in no position to engage the enemy at M3 and had to retreat. The main body of the Active Service who were equipped mostly with shot guns only were faced by the fully armed enemy lying with full protection on the road side of the fence while the machine gun M3 was in a ~~xxxxx~~ position to rake them from the flank.

A number of the I.R.A. were killed. The outpost at D - D' moved up into the position D2, and had eventually to retreat, with practically no cover and under the full fire of the enemy, in the direction R2. The main body of the Active Service Unit, being raked with machine gun fire from the flank and having suffered considerable casualties, retreated in the direction R and the supporting column B - B' retreated in the direction R1.

In the action five members of the Active Service Unit were killed, four were wounded and captured, one was captured without wounds and two other members of the Active Service Unit were wounded but escaped. The enemy casualties were never definitely known but it is practically certain that one was killed and a number were wounded.

The following officers and men took part in the engagement:-

MAIN BODY

1st. Batt: Vice-Commandant P. Jordan, Islandeady - killed;
P. J. Cannon, Mayo Board of Health;

A. Company: Captain John Chambers, Castlebar;
Michael Hughes, Ballina - wounded;
James Hughes, Castlebar;
James Swift, Castlebar - wounded;
James McEvilly, Castlebar - killed;
Thomas O'Donnell, do. - killed;

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Dr. J. A. Madden, Castlebar;
John Cooney, do
Patrick Boyle, do
Patrick Ainsworth, do
Anthony Clarke, do
William McCarthy, do
Bernard McDonnell, do
Thomas Nolan, do - wounded;
Thomas Maloney, do - do.

2nd Batt.

A. Company: Captain James Browne, Kilmeena;
James Browne (R), do ; (killed in action at Skirdagh)
P. Staunton, do ; (killed in action)
Michael McHale, Rosmindle, westport;
Michael Joyce, Drumgarve, do
Martin Gibbons, Old Walls, Drumgarve, westport;

B. Company:

Patrick Kelly, Chicago;
Michael Gallagher, westport;
M. O'Malley, Chicago;
Thomas Geraghty, do
P. Gallagher, do
P. Corcoran, do
James Kelly, Liverpool.

C. Company: Brigadier Michael Kilroy, Newport;

Joe Doherty, U.S.A.,
Patrick O'Malley, Rosinrubble, Newport - wounded;
Edward Murray, Cuilmore, Newport;

F. Company:

Jack Connolly, Tourmakeady;
Jim Moran, Tiernaur, Newport (killed in action, 1923)
Larry McGovern, Newport;
Michael Browne, Leeds, England;
Patrick Molloy, Vaughan Road, Barrow; (wounded)
James Gill, Ishandmore, Kilmeena;
Patrick McLoughlin, Sandhill, Carrowbeg, Newport;

3rd. Battalion:

Tom Ketterick, Dublin;
Michael Staunton, U.S.A.,
John Duffy, Aughagower, westport;
Paddy Duffy, do do
Batty Cryan, westport;
Jack McDonagh, do
Martin Naughton, do
Edward Hogan, do
Jimmy Flaherty, do
William Joyce, U.S.A.,
Tommy Heavey, westport;
P. Lambert, do
Jack Keane, do (dead)
T. Ainsworth, do
J. Collins, do (killed)
J. Pearce, do (wounded and taken prisoner)
J. Cannon, do (since dead)
J. Bradley, Murrisk, westport;
T. Basquil, U. S. A.,
L. Kelly, Slogger, westport;

Outpost at D - D': Eamon Moane, westport;
Michael Staunton, U.S.A.,
Jack McDonagh, westport;
James Kelly, Clogher, westport;
J. R. Gibbons, Cloona, Westport.

Outpost at C - C': John Gibbons, westport;
M. Naughton, U. S. A.

After the battle of Kilmeena the Active Service Unit was scattered and broken, and some days elapsed before the various units could locate one another and link up. Progress from the scene of the ambush was also greatly hampered in the delay occasioned by the necessity for having the wounded dressed and attended to and moved to a place of safety. After four or five days the wounded men were eventually taken to the houses C - C' in Upper Skirdagh - a position secure and very difficult of approach on the side of Buckagh Mountain north of Newport. Various groups of the Active Service Unit began to converge on Skirdagh and occupy houses marked A - A', B - B', C - C', D - D', all in the villages of Skirdagh Upper and Skirdagh Lower. Suddenly an outpost at A' consisting of Brigadier Michael Kilroy, Commandant Jack Connolly and Dr. J. A. Madden, noticed large bodies of enemy approaching Skirdagh and immediately opened fire. Those three men kept up a regular exchange of fire with the enemy for some hours and enabled the various other scattered bodies of the Active Service Unit to get out of their billets and into a position of defence. The whole action was fought on the bare, wild mountain side, with very little cover, but from the scattered positions of the Active Service Column and the fire from a wide area the enemy were evidently deceived as to the numbers and were satisfied to keep on returning the fire and sent for reinforcements. In this way valuable time was gained which enabled the wounded to be removed from houses at C - C' and taken in the direction shewn R on the map along the Skirdagh valley on towards Keenagh where later on under the cover of darkness they were transferred via Neiphin to Lahardane. In the meantime the enemy had summoned all available reinforcements from the Mayo Area and great numbers of police and military arrived from Westport and Newport along the lines shewn E, from Ballina along the lines shewn E' and from Castlebar along the lines shewn E'' as well as directly from Castlebar to Newport. The whole line of country from Newport by Glenhast right up to Boughadoon and Neiphin was swarming with military forces. In the meantime the Active Service Unit kept up a spasmodic fire with the units of the enemy in contact and at the same time made use of their knowledge of the country to retreat along the ravines and mountain side with night and darkness coming to their rescue. After about seven hours continuous contact with the enemy night fell and under the cover of darkness the main body of the I.R.A. broke through the enemy lines to safety. The enemy, remaining in position during the night with their outposts drawn in, continued to comb the mountains for the next and succeeding days with the Active Service Unit and their wounded well out of reach.

In this engagement James Browne of Kilmeena was killed on the I.R.A. side and the Inspector of the R.I.C. and some members of the R.I.C. were severely wounded.

The following are the names and addresses of those who took part in the action:-

1st Battalion: Dr. John A. Madden, Dublin;
 John Cooney, Castlebar;
 Patrick Boyle, do
 John Chambers, do
 Michael Hughes, do
 P. Ainsworth, do
 Anthy, Clarke, do
 James Hughes, do
 James Swift, do
 John Cummins, do
 William McCarthy, do
 Patrick Cannon, do

Military Archives
Bernard McDonnell, Castlebar;

2nd Battalion: Brigadier Michael Kilroy, Newport;
Jack Connolly, Tourmakeady;
Jim Browne, Kilmeena, Westport;
James Kelly, Clogher, do
Michael Gallagher, Westport;
Joe Doherty, U.S.A.,
Edward Murray, Cuilmore, Newport;
Jim Moran, Carrowsallagh, do (killed
1923).
Lawrence McGovern, Rosturk, Newport;
Michael Browne, Tiernaur, do
P. McLoughlin, Sandhill, do
Thos. McNeela, Skirdagh, do
James Browne, Kilmeena (killed)
P. Kelly, Chicago, U.S.A.

3rd Battalion: E. Moane, Carrowbaun, Westport;
T. Ketterick, Dublin;
John Gibbons, do
M. Staunton, Westport;
J. McDonagh, do

Military Service
Pensions Collection

By far the most successful ambush which took place in the West Mayo Brigade Area was that which took place at Carrowkenedy in June, 1921.

The positions here had been carefully selected and the Active Service Unit had actually taken up their positions and lain in ambush at this point on different occasions but the enemy did not come their way. On the day in which the ambush took place all roads in the 3rd battalion area were blocked. About 1 p.m. three lorry loads of crown forces passed by Carrowkenedy towards Leenane and commandeered a number of local men to fill in and make good a trench on the main road. Word was conveyed to the Active Service Unit who were on that day billeted in the villages of Carrowkenedy, Clady and Derryna-killew. The various units were speedily assembled and rushed to their positions and they had only taken up positions when the enemy returned, the first lorry towing a disabled car. The first lorry was allowed to proceed past Carrowkenedy until it was directly opposite the main body of the I.R.A. who occupied positions marked A - A' on the map. When the first lorry was opposite the position A' and the second and third lorries well in the line of fire of the main body fire was opened. The first volley killed the driver of the first lorry instantly and wounded other members of the Crown forces in the lorry with the result that the lorry and the car it was towing came to a standstill, completely blocking the road. The other two lorries were well inside the line of fire of the main body and retreat for them was cut off by the fire of the Outpost C - C'. All the members of the enemy dismounted and took up positions along the road and maintained a steady rifle fire but did not bring their machine gun into action as the gunner was killed or wounded early in the fight. On this occasion they were firing cup bombs from their rifles but fortunately those were just falling short of the I.R.A. men in position. During the course of the action the outpost at B - B' controlled the road to Westport and cut off this as a line of retreat from the enemy and also cut off any possible reinforcements. Some members of the enemy during the action attempted to outflank the I.R.A. and Joseph Ring was despatched from the main body to take up a position marked X on the west side of the road and during the engagement he went along with very little protection and at great personal risk crossed the road without any protection whatsoever and eventually reached the position X where he maintained a steady fire on the enemy from the rear and evidently led them to believe that there was a strong force in the rear because they did not attempt to retreat in that direction.

As the fight developed the enemy began to retreat along the dykes of the road in the direction of the bridge at McGreal's house. A party of the I.R.A. Active Service Unit were despatched with Jim Moran (deceased) into the positions Y - Y' where they raked the enemy with fire in the direction of the bridge. The outpost at C - C' now also came into action and with retreat cut off in every direction the surviving members of the enemy made a dash for McGreal's house out of which they kept up fire for some time and eventually surrendered.

Every single member of the enemy forces in this engagement fell into the hands of the I.R.A. column. The enemy had seven killed, four seriously wounded and the rest surrendered. The I.R.A. captured all the equipment comprising about 24 rifles, one Lewis Gun, several revolvers, some bombs and several thousand rounds of ammunition and in addition the lorries and car were burned and destroyed. The engagement last about six hours. No member of the Active Service Unit was wounded. The

enemy numbered about 35 and the following members of the Active Service Unit were engaged:-

MAIN BODY in position A - A.

1st Battalion: Dr. J. A. Madden, Dublin;
John Cooney, Castlebar;
P. Boyle, do
P. J. Cannon, do

2nd Battalion: Brigadier M. Kilroy, Newport;
Jack Connolly, Tourmakeady;
Jim Browne, Kilmeena, Westport;
James Kelly, Clogher, do
Michael Gallagher, do
Joe Doherty, U.S.A.,
Edward Murray, Cuilmore, Newport;
Jim Moran, Carrowsallagh, Newport; (killed 1923)
Lawrence McGovern, Rosturk, do
Michael Browne, Tiernaur, Newport;
P. McLoughlin, Sandhill, do
P. Kelly, Chicago, U.S.A.

3rd Battalion: Joseph Ring (dead) - position X on map;
Eamon Moane, Westport;
T. Ketterick, Dublin;
John R. Gibbons, Cloona, Westport;
Joseph Walsh, Mill St., do (dead)
Capt. James Malone, Castlebar,
Mtn. John O'Malley, Ardoooley, Belclare, Westport; ✓
Pat Duffy, Prospect, Westport;
T. J. Gibbons, England;
John Duffy, Memmen, Aghagower, Westport,
William Malone, Breaghwy, Castlebar;
Martin Naughton, U.S.A.,
John Bradley, Murrisk, Westport;
T. Basquil, Murrisk, do
Paddy Duffy, Cloonskill, Westport,
T. Heavey, Dublin;
Lorcan Heavey, do
J. L. Baker, Westport;
William Joyce, U.S.A.,
Johnny Berry, U.S.A.,
T. Tunney, Derrycroff, Westport;
D. McGuire, Roigh, Aghagower, Westport;
Jack Keane, Westport (dead)
Edward Hogan, do
Daniel Gavin, do
Hubert Reid, U.S.A.

Outpost B - B' John Gibbons, Dublin;
J. J. Gavin, Mill Street, Westport;
Tom O'Brien, Moyhastin, Westport,
M. Kearney, Streamstown, do
Thos. P. Flanagan, Castlebar. ✓

Outpost C - C' P. J. Kelly, 4th Battalion, Louisburgh;
Dan Sammon, Lecanvey, Westport;
Pat McNamara, U.S.A.,
James Harney, Louisburgh;
Tom Fergus (Harry), Mullagh, Kilsallagh, Westport;

Thomas Ryder, Mullagh, Kilsallagh, Westport;
Myles O'Malley, Old Head, Louisburgh;
— John J. Philbin, Louisburgh;
— Andrew Harney, do
Austin Mortimer, Lecanvey, Westport;
— Jim Fair, Glospatrick, Murrisk, Westport;
A. O'Toole, Louisburgh, Westport;
J. P. Sammon, do do
Peter McLoughlin, Tawnyslinaun, Drummin, Westport;
M. T. Hastings, do do do

Road Blocking Party:

Michael Berry, Lanmore, Liscarney, Westport;
Michael Morrison, do do do
John Lavelle, Lankill, Aughagower, do
Thomas Gavin, Roigh, Liscarney, Westport;
Peter Joyce, Owenwee, Knappagh, Westport;
— Thomas McLoughlin, Bohea, Liscarney, Westport;
John Gannon, Streamstown, Belclare, Westport;
John Grady, Cloona, Westport.

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