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CARLOW

**MILITARY ARCHIVES
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ROINN.....

MSPA / FE / 35

F.C. 1

Fó Roinn

NÁ CUIRTEAR AON TUAIRISC AR AN GCLÚDACH SO

Tá annso, leis

An Uimhir

An Gnó

F.E

CARLOW.

PHOTO STATS

An Uimhir ag Roinn
Eile

Do Cuireadh Chun

Dáta

Do Cuireadh Chun

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Do Cuireadh Chun

Dáta

Carlow Fianna

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No records of Carlow Fianna were submitted to the Referee for the purposes of the 1934 Act, and nobody got a pension under either the 1924 or the 1934 Act in respect of pre-Truce Carlow Fianna membership.

However, we have a record of five applications under the 1924 Act in respect of such membership. They were from -

- (1) Peter P O'Farrell (24SP/5683) who claimed to have been pre-Truce Battalion O.C. of the 1st Battalion, Carlow Fianna and also (simultaneously) a pre-Truce member of the Volunteers. The I.R.A. Brigade I.O., Superintendent S. Stack gave him qualified verification - with the addendum "Carlow was not very warlike", and General Hugo McNeill stated that he had come in contact with him in the Fianna before the critical period. The Board of Assessors credited Mr. O'Farrell with non-pensionable Fianna service for the critical period. He has since disappeared from the scene - deceased or left the country.
- (2) Frank Hutton (24SP/7048) who claimed to have been pre-Truce Lieutenant and Captain of A (Carlow Company) 1st Battalion Fianna. Superintendent Stack did not know him, but P.P. O'Farrell verified for him as a Lieutenant and also as to his having worked with the Volunteers. There were other Fianna and I.R.A. verifications, and the Board of Assessors credited him with non-pensionable Fianna service for the critical period.
- (3) John L. Walsh (24SP/3467) who claimed pre-Truce membership of A Company, Carlow Fianna. He received a qualified verification from P.P. O'Farrell - "not a very useful member", and was also verified by Garda Peter Branagan, who described himself as Fianna Battalion Adjutant. There were other I.R.A. and Fianna verifications and the Board credited him with non-pensionable Fianna service for the critical period. He is now dead.
- (4) Denis ^{HOGAN} ~~Cross~~ (24SP/4591) who claimed pre-Truce membership of A Company, Carlow Fianna. He got verifications from P.P. O'Farrell and Peter Branagan. The Board credited him with non-pensionable Fianna service for the critical period.
- (5) James Rice (24SP/109), who claimed pre-Truce membership of Carlow Fianna. He was verified by Peter Branagan and also gave P.P. O'Farrell as a reference, but the verification form seems to have been sent to another officer of the same name, who replied that he did not know the applicant. Possibly on that account, the Board did not credit him with pre-Truce service, pensionable or non-pensionable.

Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5 were awarded Medals under the old system of investigation. It has always been the practice to regard the findings of the Board of Assessors (and of the 1932 Act Military Service Registration Board) as beyond question in the matter of certification of pre-Truce service, both being statutory bodies, so that, even

though there were no 1934 Act records of Carlow Fianna, the Medals in cases 2, 3 and 4 were held duly awarded when the holders applied for benefits - 2 and 4 for free travel and 3 for a special allowance. In case 5, the medal was held not duly awarded for free travel purposes because of the absence of 1934 Act records or of a Board of Assessors certificate. The person in question - James Rice - is appealing against that decision.

Peter Branagan, referred to above as one of the verifiers, applied for a pension under the 1934 Act, describing himself as pre-Truce Company (not Battalion) Adjutant, Carlow Company Fianna. His application was unsuccessful. The Referee and Advisory Committee, unlike the Board of Assessors, did not concern themselves with certifying non-pensionable service.

Mr. Branagan received a Medal under the old system on the certification of the Fianna Advisory Board. When he applied for free travel, the Medal was held not duly awarded pursuant to the "general Ministerial decision." He has not appealed, although he expressed himself strongly in a letter of 14th October, 1969 to another applicant, Denis Connolly (ND/25399).

On looking through all the files of those who applied for Medals in respect of membership of Carlow Fianna, a feature which emerges is the frequent mention of Messrs. O'Farrell and Branagan as officers. Frank Hutton is seldom mentioned and in his own Medal application he says that he was a Fianna officer for three years "until transferred to the I.R.A."

It is possible - and indeed likely - that in Carlow, as in other places, the Fianna had become moribund or brushed aside at the critical period, the Fianna officers continuing to work with the I.R.A. On the other hand, we have, because of the Board of Assessors certificates, held Medals duly awarded in four cases and so have implicitly accepted the existence of a Carlow Fianna unit at the critical period - in any event, it would be difficult for us, if challenged on the basis of these cases, to argue otherwise.

Therefore, I will hold, on balance, that there was such a unit. The next question is the verification of applications. I.R.A. verification alone is not much help; the only surviving I.R.A. Company officer is the O.C., James Rice (no relation of case 5 above). Therefore, I would propose to accept Frank Hutton and Peter Branagan as Fianna officers for verification purposes.

This means that, as a first step, I must now hold Mr. Branagan's Medal duly awarded. I have done this on his own file. He should be informed at once that this has been done as a result of further investigation, and should also be given whatever free travel or other concessions for which he has asked and is eligible.

After this has been done, the two appeal cases should be dealt with - James Rice and Denis Connolly. Verification forms should be sent to Messrs. Hutton and Branagan - there is already verification from the I.R.A. Company O.C. If they verify, Mr. Rice's Medal may be held duly awarded and the Medal may be awarded to Mr. Connolly.

As regards Mr. Connolly's file, it is as well to record that all those listed on the back of his application form, with the exception of Frank Hutton, were I.R.A., not Fianna, and that, despite what is said by Mrs. Hutton in her letter of 24/9/69, there are no pensions being paid in Carlow in respect of Fianna membership.

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As regards all the other cases, we should await appeals which will no doubt come - in some instances, anyhow. If they do, the cases should be dealt with in the same way. I should like to be kept informed of all such cases.

12-Jan-61r 1970



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