

# Scotland's Easter Rising Veterans and the Irish Revolution

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*Abstract:*

In 1916 members of the Scottish unit of the Irish Volunteers were deeply involved in preparations for the Easter Rising in Dublin and some republican activists travelled from the west of Scotland to participate in the rebellion. What follows is a limited prosopography of the revolutionary involvement of those members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), the Irish Volunteers, or Cumann na mBan, who were resident in Scotland between 1913 and 1915 and who fought in Ireland in 1916, or who were prevented from doing so because they were imprisoned. By covering militant activity in both Ireland and Britain, this treatment will argue that Scotland's Irish republicans were highly integrated with the wider separatist movement in Ireland and beyond, while being very much of the Glasgow, and Europe, of their time.

*Keywords:* Irish Diaspora in Scotland, Irish Republicanism, Irish Revolution, Militant Activism

## *1. Introduction*

A part of Scottish life for over 200 years, Scotland's Irish community has also been part of the global Irish diaspora during that time. As such it has played a major role in the transnational movements associated with the campaigns for various forms of Irish independence. This was vividly illustrated throughout the Irish revolution as there were Scottish connections to separatist activity in Britain, Ireland and beyond. This article will examine and contextualise the activities of a small group of separatist veterans of 1916 from the Rising, through the guerrilla campaign by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) against the British from 1919-21, and during the Irish Civil War that followed the split in the IRA over the Treaty with the British govern-

ment. In looking at what might be termed the revolutionary biographies of the members of this particular group, it will, having established certain common characteristics in that group, attempt a collective revolutionary biography or prosopography that details the activities of that group. Taking prosopography to be a historical approach which involves the compilation of multiple biographies in order to establish some pattern within that particular group, the purpose here is to analyse the activities of the Volunteers in the sample in comparison to other veterans of 1916 and to highlight the integration of Scotland's Irish community into the separatist movement.

In addition to placing the sample group in the context of the Irish separatist movement, the article will also seek to place it in the context of the politically tumultuous post-World War I years in Scotland, Glasgow and Europe. The years of the Irish revolution saw political unrest across Britain and the continent also. In addition to the republican insurgency that took place between 1919 and 1921, Ireland also experienced troubles related to land agitation and labour disputes (Dooley 2004, 36-39; Grant 2012, 94-96). Scotland, too, experienced: a recrudescence of rural agrarianism (Cameron 1993, 75) and an increased number of labour disputes, including the famous events known as "Red Clydeside", in 1919 (Devine 2012 [1999], 314-315). A salient feature of the political history of Glasgow during this time was the rise of the Labour movement and the increasing levels of participation in that movement by the city's Irish Catholic community (McCaffrey 1978, 151; Knox 1988, 619-623).

These events in Ireland and Scotland were echoes, of various register, of the political change and paroxysms of violence that spread across other parts of Europe in those years. Indeed, taking the events of Easter week 1916 in Ireland to be a part of the Great War, as one recent work has done (Grayson 2018) and thus taking our sample to be veterans of that conflict, we can, arguably, see some definite similarities to the continental experience. The reaction of those Volunteers who travelled from Glasgow to Dublin in 1916 to their defeat in the Rising, and other, as they saw it, setbacks for the cause of the Irish Republic, such as: the failure to gain recognition at Versailles, the imposition of the Government of Ireland Act 1920 by Westminster, and the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921, under which the Irish Free State remained a part of the British Empire, involved making further attempts to right the wrongs that had been done through further revolutionary action. At the micro-level, that is in the decision-making of the individual Volunteer, this resembles very much some recent scholarship of paramilitarism in post-World War I Europe. Robert Gerwarth has described how a culture of defeat, either military in the case of the Central Powers, or diplomatic in the case of Italy, drove this post-war paramilitary violence (Gerwarth 2016, 12-15). A key "vector or violence" within this culture of defeat was a refusal to acknowledge or accept a reversal as those who had wielded force previously

sought to undo a political outcome they found uncongenial (Gerwarth, Horne 2011, 491-492). There are parallels between the reactions of those soldiers to the outcome of the war, the so-called “the mobilizing power of defeat”, and the actions of many members of our sample group between Patrick Pearse’s surrender on the 29 April 1916 and the end of the Irish Civil War in 1923.

## 2. *Historiography*

It is hoped that this article’s prosopographical approach will add to our understanding of the role of Scotland’s Irish diaspora in the Irish revolution as it has been fostered by previous work in the area. Certainly, it should be noted that the arguments presented below in relation to the integration of the Scottish section of the Irish Volunteers/IRA into the wider paramilitary organisation echoes the conclusions of two previous studies of the political activity in support of Irish republicanism in Britain by Keiko Inoue (2008, 162-164) and Darragh Gannon (2014, 124) respectively<sup>1</sup>. Both of these studies highlight the strength of the Sinn Féin party in Scotland, as opposed to the Irish Self-Determination League, a support organisation which supposedly covered all of Britain but in practice was restricted to England and Wales. On the military side of the Irish separatist movement, previous work on the Scottish units of the IRB/Irish Volunteers/IRA and the connections of those organisations as a whole to Scotland, has included: Iain Patterson (1993) and Máirtín Ó Catháin’s (2007 and 2009) studies of Irish physical force organisations in Scotland; Ó Catháin’s (2008) further article on Scottish republicans in Dublin in 1916, and Gerard Noonan’s (2014) monograph on IRA operations in Britain from 1919-23<sup>2</sup>. Noonan’s work does encompass the activities of IRA Volunteers from Britain, and thus Scotland, in Ireland during the Civil War but since Ó Catháin’s article on events in Dublin concludes in 1916, and Ó Catháin’s other articles, and that of Patterson, mainly concern events in Scotland, the role of Volunteers with connections to Scotland in the War of Independence in Ireland itself has not been fully considered. The recent publication *We will rise again: Ireland Scotland and the Easter Rising* (Ó Catháin and Coyle 2018) has further advanced matters, most particularly essays on the Military Service Pensions as they relate Scottish Brigade and the confusion surrounding the orders from Dublin for Scottish units to

<sup>1</sup> Dr Inoue’s thesis is available to download from TCD’s institutional repository <<http://www.tara.tcd.ie/handle/2262/78429>> (05/2019).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Hart’s (2003, 141-177) chapter, which had previously been published in the *English Historical Review*, has been omitted from this list as it has been entirely superseded by Noonan’s work.

join the Rising<sup>3</sup>. This publication was the first on Irish republicanism and Scotland to make use of the newly-released online Military Service Pensions Collection (MSPC), available through the Military Archives of Ireland website. However, it does not offer a contextualised treatment of militant activism at a micro level.

### 3. *The Rising and the sample*

The activities of twenty-two Irish republicans, members of the IRB, Irish Volunteers or *Cumann na mBan*, the women's revolutionary support organisation, who were resident in Scotland but travelled to Ireland to participate in the Rising form, the core of this article. Nineteen of the sample were members of A Company of the Glasgow/West of Scotland Regiment of the Irish Volunteers. This company had been founded by members of the IRB shortly after the foundation of the Irish Volunteers in Dublin. Margaret Skinnider was a member of *Cumann na mBan*. Neither Joe Vize nor Patrick Mahon were members of the Volunteers in Glasgow. However, both were in Dublin in 1916 deliberately in order to take part in the Rising.

This sample group of twenty-two includes eighteen activists who took part in the fighting in Dublin, two others who fought in country areas and two senior Volunteers, Joe Robinson and Séamus Reader, who travelled to Dublin in advance of the Rising but were arrested on a return trip to Glasgow. There were also some Glaswegian Volunteers and *Cumann na mBan* members who were in Dublin in the spring of 1916 but returned home before the rebellion, and more who were involved in the abortive attempts to foment a rebellion in Tyrone, but these were not included. Nor does this article really concern those who were involved in the Rising and who subsequently had a connection to Scotland, of whom there are 24<sup>4</sup>. Although this last fact is another testament to the Irish community in Scotland's deep involvement with the separatist movement. Many emigrated there because of connections within the various nationalist and republican organisations.

Name	Gender	Grew up?	Easter Wk?	Pension File No.
Alexander Carmichael	Male	Scotland	GPO	NA
Charles Carrigan	Male	Scotland	GPO	DP1538
Bernard Friel	Male	Scotland	GPO	MSP34REF54981

<sup>3</sup> Although the whole work is recommended for its blend of newly released Irish State sources and deep specialist knowledge of anti-state republicanism and the Glasgow scene.

<sup>4</sup> This figure is taken from my own, as yet unpublished, PhD research.

Seán Hegarty	Male	Dublin	GPO	NA
John Lafferty	Male	Derry	GPO	24SP6369
Patrick Maguire	Male	Fermanagh	GPO	NA
Patrick Mahon	Male	Unknown	GPO	MSP34REF21428
James/Séamus McCarra	Male	Monaghan	Galway	MSP34REF21270
James/Séamus McGaleagly	Male	Scotland	GPO	1D321
John/Seán McGallogly	Male	Scotland	GPO	MSP34REF1762
Bernard McMullan	Male	Scotland	GPO	MSP34REF14737
Patrick Morrin	Male	Scotland	GPO	NA
Matt O'Brien	Male	Scotland	Wexford	NA
Francis O'Flanagan	Male	Dublin	Four Courts	MSP34REF20616
Michael O'Flanagan	Male	Dublin	Four Courts	MSP34REF13684
Séamus Reader	Male	Scotland	Imprisoned	MSP34REF4300
Joe Robinson	Male	Belfast	Imprisoned	MSP34REF298
Séamus Robinson	Male	Scotland	GPO	MSP34REF147
Francis Scullin	Male	Dublin	GPO	MSP34REF60223
Margaret Skinnider	Female	Scotland	Green	MSP34REF19910
Cormac Turner	Male	Dublin	GPO	24SP5421
Joseph Vize	Male	Wexford	Jacob's/Green	24SP9904

Table 1 – List of Scottish-based Irish Volunteers who were granted active military service by the Irish government, or who would have been had they applied<sup>5</sup>

Of this cohort of twenty-two activists, listed above, seventeen were awarded pensions and medals by the government of independent Ireland. Therefore, it has been possible to use their pension application files in the MSPC to trace their activities. Furthermore, three of these pensioners gave witness statements to the Bureau of Military History (BMH) and Margaret Skinnider left a memoir of the early years of her revolutionary involvement

<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise stated the information in this article come from these listed files. The reference is Irish Military Archives/Military Service Pensions Collection (IE/MA, MSPC) and the references above. The files are searchable at <<http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/search.aspx>> (05/2019). James/Séamus McGallogly is referred to as McGaleagly on his pension application although the other form is used also. For clarity, I have used the same style as his brother in the text.

(1917)<sup>6</sup>. Some death notices, a commemorative booklet from the fiftieth anniversary of the Rising (Heuston 1966, 64-65), a roll file for the Scottish units of the Irish Volunteers/IRA compiled as part of the MSPC, and an annotated list written by a Scottish IRA commander that is held in the Eithne Coyle-O'Donnell papers in the University College Dublin (UCD) Archives Department have also been used<sup>7</sup>. In three cases, Stephen Coyle's recently published biographical dictionary (2018, 40-64) has been relied upon. Some use has been made of Dublin historian Jimmy Wren's work also (Wren 2015 and 2016)<sup>8</sup>.

Eleven of the sample appear to have been Scottish-born or living in Scotland from a young age, while ten had grown up in Ireland and had migrated to Scotland. There are no details on Patrick Mahon prior to his arrival in Dublin in January 1916 bar the fact that Mahon states that he, as a member of the IRB, had left Scotland for Ireland in order to participate in the Rising. The two Robinson brothers are listed as growing up in separate places because their family moved to Glasgow when they were thirteen and sixteen respectively. Joseph, the elder, returned regularly to Ireland, whereas Séamus did not (Coleman 2009; Murphy 2015).

It is difficult to assess whether or not these figures represent a fair reflection of Scotland's Irish community. Diasporic identity can be a nebulous thing. Alan O'Day (2009, 334-335) wrote of a "mutative" or "adaptive" Irish identity in which nationalism in its various forms was used to bolster the community's distinctiveness. This had the effect of allowing the community to sustain itself and cast its membership net beyond the bounds of Irish-born immigrants. There is plenty of evidence to show that this process took place in Scotland also (Wood 1980, 74-76; Kavanagh 2016, 94-99). Indeed, the community began to integrate a lot more more once Irish independence had been achieved (Gallagher 1987, 100-104). For the half-century or so before that, however, there is likely much truth in Tom Gallagher's observation that "[s]econd or third generation Irish, who were counted as Scottish in the census returns, often retained the attitudes and traditions of their Irish parents or grandparents, even if outwardly these heirs of the original settlers seemed to have adopted the speech and ways of west central Scotland" (42). Professor Gallagher's sentiments were echoed almost exactly by an internal

<sup>6</sup> Bureau of Military History (BMH) Witness Statement (WS) 244 (John McGallogly); BMH WS 156, 1721, 1722 (Séamus Robinson); BMH WS 800, 908 (Michael O'Flanagan).

<sup>7</sup> University College Dublin (UCD) Archives Department, Eithne Coyle-O'Donnell papers, P61/13; *Irish Press*, 23 September 1933 and 25 September 1933; *Irish Independent*, 25 September 1933 (Seán Hegarty obituaries and reports on funeral); *Irish Press*, 23 November 1938 (Patrick Morrín obituary).

<sup>8</sup> I am extremely grateful to Stephen Coyle for making some of this information available to me in advance of the publication of his book.

Scottish Office document, written during the preparation of a report on Irish immigration for the Empire Migration Committee in which one official reminded another to: “refer to the Irish classes as those of Irish descent and not only those whose immediate parents were born in Ireland ... Irish colonies [*sic*] are as much Irish and distinctively Irish when they are grandchildren as when they are children of Irish born people”<sup>9</sup>.

Five of the sample who had grown up in Ireland were from Dublin. This is a surprisingly high proportion, given the well-known migratory connections between the west of Scotland and the province of Ulster (Devine 2012 [1999], 487). In part this is a reflection of the fact that most of the fighting in the Rising took place in Ireland’s capital. Had some fighting taken place in Belfast or Tyrone then some northerners like Daniel Branniff, Pat McCormick and Thomas Kelly would have been included in the list above<sup>10</sup>. In part the high proportion of Dubliners is a reflection on the close connections between the Liffey and the Clyde in this era of ferry travel. These connections were particularly strong in the Labour movement: Dublin trades union leader “Big Jim” Larkin had spoken in Glasgow as early as 1908 and maintained links with the Catholic Socialist Society, the organisation led by future British Labour Cabinet minister, the Waterford-born John Wheatley (Gunnin 1987, 229-230).

This sample group illustrates how membership of the Irish Volunteers was often a family affair. In addition to the Robinsons, it contains two further sets of brothers. One set of brothers grew up in Glasgow, one set in Dublin. The set of brothers who grew up in Dublin were the O’Flanagans of Moore Street, a staunchly republican family. Their father had been involved in the IRB for many decades<sup>11</sup>. The other set of brothers, the McGalloglys, were Lanarkshire-born. John, the youngest, had never been to Ireland, prior to travelling to Dublin for the Rising. Furthermore, Francis Scullin’s brother, Patrick Scullin, is listed as being Glasgow-based in Séamus Robinson’s bureau statement. However, no evidence could be found to suggest that Patrick was ever resident in Scotland<sup>12</sup>. It is probable that Patrick was mistakenly included in Robinson’s list. Likely he was associated with the Glaswegian con-

<sup>9</sup> Private letter from Tom Johnston to William Adamson, 19 September 1930, National Records of Scotland, Scottish Office Irish Immigration Files, HH1 563, quoted in Ritchie (2013, 130).

<sup>10</sup> BMH WS 222 (Daniel Branniff); BMH WS 339 (Pat McCormack); WS 378 (Thomas Kelly).

<sup>11</sup> BMH WS 800 (Michael O’Flanagan); see also Wren 2015 (206-209). In addition to using the MSPC and newspaper sources, Wren has spoken to some of the O’Flanagans’ descendants.

<sup>12</sup> BMH WS 156 (Séamus Robinson) and Leo Patrick Scullin pension file, IE/MA, MSPC, MSP34REF21722.

tingent during the period leading up to the Rising, when many Volunteers from Britain lived together in billets around Dublin (including the fabled “Kimmage Garrison”) and also during Easter week itself and the period of internment which followed<sup>13</sup>. The familial nature of Irish republican activism in Scotland remained a constant throughout the revolutionary period. According to Gerard Noonan (2014, 65-67), the Scottish Brigade contained at least 22 sets of brothers during the 1919-1921 period.

The numbers in the sample are very low. They are a small proportion of the roughly 250 Irish Volunteers in Scotland in 1916. This latter figure rose to around 2,500 by the time of Truce between the IRA and the British in 1921<sup>14</sup>. Noonan (2014, 230) estimates that roughly 250 members of the Scottish Brigade of the IRA fought in the Irish Civil War on the pro-Treaty side and five died. While roughly 50 fought on the Republican side. Of course, these figures are dwarfed by the numbers who fought in the Great War. Géraldine Vaughan (2013, 123) quotes a figure of 15,000 Irish Catholics from Scotland for 1915, that is before conscription had been introduced. Elaine Mac Farland (2008, 137) states that 30,000 Glaswegian Catholics were in the British armed forces in 1916. Given that around a fifth of Vaughan’s figure joined Irish Regiments, and that these regiments were heavily involved in British efforts to suppress the Rising, it is possible that there were more Glaswegian Catholics voluntarily fighting for the British than against them in Dublin in 1916. Stephen Coyle (2018, 18-20) lists three Crown Forces fatalities of the fighting with Glasgow addresses.

The size and characteristics of the sample of 22 activists was affected by the circumstances of the build up to the Rising in both Ireland and Scotland. Ironically, the apparent militancy of this sample may have been affected by the strong anti-insurrectionist tendency within the IRB in Scotland. Seán T. O’Kelly remembered being sent to the west of Scotland, to a steel works outside Glasgow, around 1915 to swear a member of the supreme council out of the IRB. The man in question had opposed plans for a rising during the Great War and agreed to O’Kelly’s request. It is not wholly clear from O’Kelly’s statement who the individual was or if he did leave the Brotherhood<sup>15</sup>. It does, however, seem likely that this man was John Mulholland of Motherwell. Pat McCormack remembered that Mulholland resigned from the Supreme Council after disagreements over a rising at a meeting that took

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*; A detailed account of life at Kimmage can be found in Matthews (2010).

<sup>14</sup> Irish Military Archives (IE/MA), Military Service Pensions Collection (MSPC), IRA Membership Series, Roll file of the Scottish Brigade, RO 603 (<[http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/docs/files//PDF\\_Membership/8/MA-MSPC-RO-603.pdf](http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/docs/files//PDF_Membership/8/MA-MSPC-RO-603.pdf)>, 05/2019).

<sup>15</sup> BMH WS 1765 (Seán T. O’Kelly). It should be noted that O’Kelly was President of Ireland by the time he gave this statement.



place early in the Great War<sup>16</sup>. However two Motherwell Fenians, James Byrne and Patrick Mills described how Mulholland had disrupted mobilisation for the Rising in north Lanarkshire in April 1916. Apparently, a joint meeting of the three Motherwell and Wishaw circles of the IRB was called<sup>17</sup>. Mills remembered that Mulholland was vague about the timing of the Rising while Byrne claimed that he, Mulholland, had been supposed to bring a letter from the leadership of the IRB. There is no way to reconcile the fact that Mulholland was described by some as resigning from the "Organisation" as the IRB was known to initiates, but he seems to have been still trusted in his local area. Unless he was taken back into some confidences in 1916 after so many of the local leadership had left Scotland or been imprisoned. Those who had left included very senior figures such as Daniel Branniff, a co-opted member of the supreme council of the IRB, and Charles Carrigan, Scotland's representative on same body<sup>18</sup>. Carrigan was also a leading member of John Wheatley's Catholic Socialist Society (Patterson 1993, 49).

Leading Glasgow Fenian Tom McDonnell appears to have disrupted attempts to mobilise also. McDonnell accepted responsibility for not passing on instructions to John Carney, an ex-US Army man who was a leading figure in the separatist movement in Glasgow. McDonnell also appears to have been in Dublin during the Rising but not to have taken part. Strangely McDonnell seems to have only baulked at the Rising at the last moment. He passed on instructions for Volunteers to travel to Ireland in January, acting on orders sent by Seán McDermott via Séamus Reader, and later ordered Séamus Robinson to go to Dublin<sup>19</sup>. What exactly McDonnell and Mulholland did or were trying to do is opaque. The title of Stephen Coyle's essay on this topic, "Confused Counsels", is extremely apposite (2018, 34-38). What seems certain is that Seán McDermott sent gun-runner Liam Pedlar to Glasgow to give word to the republicans there about the impending insurrection<sup>20</sup>. MacDermott seems to have been a point of contact for the Scottish sections of the movement, possibly because of the fact that he used to live in Edinburgh (Lusk, Maley 2016, 21). Pedlar was familiar to the Clydeside republicans having lived there previously with his Glasgow-born wife. Following a meeting convened by Pedlar late in Holy Week, Pat McCormack left Glasgow for Belfast as another contingent from Scotland was supposed to bolster the

<sup>16</sup> BMH WS 339 (Pat McCormack).

<sup>17</sup> BMH WS 777 (Patrick Mills) and WS 828 (James Byrne).

<sup>18</sup> BMH WS 222 (Daniel Branniff); Branniff was later elected as Scotland's representative on the supreme council, in 1918.

<sup>19</sup> BMH WS 627 and 1767 (both Séamus Reader); WS 156 and 1721 (both Séamus Robinson).

<sup>20</sup> Liam Pedlar pension file, IE/MA, MSPC, MSP34REF21572.

rebels in Ulster.<sup>21</sup> Two other west of Scotland Fenians, Daniel Branniff and Thomas Kelly, had travelled across some weeks earlier<sup>22</sup>. Although McCormack left word for others to follow, none did. Margaret Skinnider arrived in Dublin on Holy Thursday. Whether or not she knew the Rising was due is not entirely clear from her memoir (Skinnider 1917, 69-70). Thus, the sample may be taken to be more militant than other groups of 1916 veterans. In general, those who made it to Dublin were hard-core militants, including those who had been participating in arms procurement and transportation for the previous eighteen months, and tradesmen who were known to the senior leadership and whose skills were required.

Arms procurement, including: raids for arms and explosives in various quarries and shipyards, and the purchase of small quantities from men who worked in these places, had been ongoing in Glasgow in the years preceding the Rising. Michael O'Flanagan, who had been forced to leave Dublin due to his involvement in the Labour movement during the 1913 lockout, ran a bar in Glasgow and used this as cover to purchase small quantities of explosives and detonators off his customers. O'Flanagan, Joseph Robinson, Séamus Reader, Barney Friel, Cormac Turner, and Patrick Morrin were all present when an experiment with these materials went awry and blew the boundary wall off the side of the Volunteer drill hall, which unfortunately abutted Glasgow Central Station<sup>23</sup>. Séamus Reader and Joseph Robinson were deeply involved in transporting arms to Ireland and made several trips backwards and forwards to Dublin and Belfast in the months prior to their arrest in January 1916 (Murphy 2015)<sup>24</sup>. Joe Robinson, Reader, Barney Friel, Cormac Turner, Frank Scullin, Alex Carmichael, Seán Hegarty, Michael O'Flanagan and the two McGalloglys all took part in at least some raids for arms<sup>25</sup>. This activity attracted a degree of attention from the authorities. Although it appears most of the sample left Glasgow voluntarily, some did have to leave to escape police attention at the time Joe Robinson and Séamus Reader were arrested in mid-January 1916. Following Joe Robinson's arrest, his brother, Séamus who had been an ordinary Volunteer up to that point, campaigned on Joe's behalf. This appears to have radicalised Séamus to a degree as well as convincing other leading republicans of his bona fides and competence. He was inducted into the IRB by Tom McDonnell at this time. Séamus' witness statement noted that he was never formally attested

<sup>21</sup> BMH WS 339 (Pat McCormack).

<sup>22</sup> BMH WS 222 (Daniel Branniff); WS 378 (Thomas Kelly).

<sup>23</sup> BMH WS 800 (Michael O'Flanagan).

<sup>24</sup> BMH WS 1767 (Séamus Reader).

<sup>25</sup> BMH WS 244 (John McGallogly); WS 1767 (Séamus Reader); WS 800 (Michael O'Flanagan).

to the Volunteers. They and he simply took each other for granted<sup>26</sup>. By the time of the Rising, Séamus Robinson was a leading figure among the Glasgow Volunteers who had travelled to Dublin.

All accounts point to an increased level of activity during the winter of 1915-1916, from both the police and the Glaswegian republicans. Increased raiding led to increased police attention and some Volunteers were forced to depart Glasgow, although, as noted above, the threat of imprisonment was not their sole motivation for leaving. Séamus Robinson was among the second batch of Volunteers to leave Glasgow for Dublin. James McCarra travelled with him. The first batch had left across a few days in mid-January. Joe Robinson decided to launch a major raid for explosives at that time to make use of the fact that many of the hardcore of the IRB arms raiding group were about to leave for Dublin. Militant leader Seán McDermott had ordered that any members of the Irish Volunteers who were in danger of being conscripted should move to Ireland and that some IRB men who were skilled workers, should transfer to Dublin earlier. Alexander Carmichael, (carpenter), Barney Friel (plumber) and Paddy Morrin (slater) were members of the latter group<sup>27</sup>. Reader lists himself, Seán Hegarty, Frank Scullin, Cormac Turner and Séamus McGallogly as going over following the last big raid. After delivering the explosives to Dublin, Reader was sent back to Glasgow with further instructions from McDermott<sup>28</sup>. Like another group who travelled with Seán McGallogly, Reader made a stop at James Connolly's family on the Falls Road in Belfast while en route to Dublin. McGallogly remembered travelling across with his brother Séamus after Reader and Robinson's arrest. These accounts clearly conflict as Séamus McGallogly is thus reported to have crossed with two different parties. While it is possible that he returned to Glasgow having travelled across with Reader, it seems more likely that Reader simply confused him with someone else when giving a statement to the Bureau over thirty years later. Cormac Turner only remembered travelling with Reader and Scullin when giving Reader a reference for his pension, again thirty years later, and when interviewed by RTÉ in the 1960s<sup>29</sup>. The McGalloglys had intended leaving the following week but police attention, and the knowledge that Reader and Joe Robinson had been arrested, hastened their departure. The McGalloglys met with fellow Glaswegians Bernard "Barney" Friel and Alex Carmichael en route<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> BMH WS 156 (Séamus Robinson).

<sup>27</sup> BMH WS 1767 (Séamus Reader).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>29</sup> <[www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/1993-easter-1916/2017-survivors/793811-the-survivors-cormac-turner](http://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/1993-easter-1916/2017-survivors/793811-the-survivors-cormac-turner)> (05/2019).

<sup>30</sup> BMH WS 244 (John McGallogly).

On arrival in Dublin, these four Scottish-born republicans, some on their first visit to Ireland, found themselves walking the streets. After failing to find Tom Clarke's shop they resorted to calling on Constance Markievicz's Surrey House even though the police were thought to have been looking for them there. They then found a *Cumann na mBan* meeting where they met Kathleen Clarke who managed to find someone that provided them with accommodation<sup>31</sup>. Séamus Reader had experienced similar difficulties on his visits to Dublin when looking to deliver explosives and other material<sup>32</sup>. An unfamiliarity with the Irish capital was not universal. For Frank Scullin and Michael O'Flanagan the move to Dublin was a return home. On his arrival in the city with Séamus Reader, Frank Scullin simply headed for his residence on the northside of the city<sup>33</sup>. Although he did not stay there and ended up in the Plunkett residence in Kimmage by March. Michael O'Flanagan was actually moving house back to his home town, with explosives packed in with his furniture<sup>34</sup>. Apart from the O'Flanagan brothers, all of the others, including Cormac Turner, seem to have been at Kimmage for a period. It would be a mistake to view the experiences of the Scottish-born Volunteers in essentially getting lost in an unfamiliar city as a sign of their isolation from the separatist movement. The list of names they interacted with: Seán McDermott, Constance Markievicz, the Connollys, the Clarkes and the Plunketts tells a different story.

The Glasgow Volunteer's experiences of Easter week 1916 again emphasise that they were deeply involved in, and integrated with, the separatist movement. The Glaswegian contingent lacked neither militancy nor valour when compared to the local Republican units. There is absolutely no sense of them being tourists, of it not being "their fight", or of them being in Ireland simply to avoid conscription: this having been introduced in Britain in early 1916. Since many of the members of a Company of the Glasgow/West of Scotland Regiment of the Irish Volunteers were members of the Kimmage Garrison, they were part of the group who seized the General Post Office. The Glasgow group helped to clear O'Connell Street after the rebels had taken over the GPO, their accents causing understandable confusion amongst local civilians<sup>35</sup>. Seán Hegarty was responsible for raising the flag of the Irish Republic above the rebel's HQ. Scottish-born Charles Carrigan was one of the last rebel casualties of Easter week: he died having been caught in the open by British machine gun fire following the evacuation of the GPO (Wren 2015, 33; Coyle 2018, 42-43).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>32</sup> BMH WS 627 and 1767 (both Séamus Reader).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> BMH WS 800 (Michael O'Flanagan);

<sup>35</sup> *An t-Óglach*, 1 May 1926.

There were rebels who had travelled from Scotland and spread around many other locations. The O'Flanagan brothers were heavily involved in the fighting around North King St, the second heaviest in the Rising. Another O'Flanagan brother, Patrick Joseph, better known as Padjoe, who had been resident in Dublin rather than Glasgow, was killed defending "Reilly's fort" at the corner of North King Street and Church Street<sup>36</sup>. Francis, Michael, and another O'Flanagan brother without a Glasgow connection, George, were in close proximity<sup>37</sup>. Joe Vize, who had worked as an engineer with a shipping company and later on Glasgow docks, was sent to join D Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Dublin Brigade of the Irish Volunteers when he moved to Dublin in the winter before the Rising<sup>38</sup>. Vize began the Rising in Jacobs Factory, now the location of the National Archives of Ireland, on Dublin's south side, but was ordered to the Turkish Baths on St Stephen's Green on Tuesday and spent the rest of the week there. Nearby was Margaret Skinnider of *Cumann na mBan*. Skinnider joined the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) on arrival in Dublin and fought as part of an ICA group under Michael Mallin in and around St. Stephen's Green and the Royal College of Surgeons building. She also worked as a courier, a more usual role for a woman in the Republican forces' gendered activities. Skinnider was wounded, (Skinnider, 1917, 156-157) thus becoming famous as the only female combat casualty on the rebel side<sup>39</sup>. Others were involved outside Dublin. Matt O'Brien (Coyle 2018, 54-55) was in Enniscorthy where Volunteers took over the town centre, while James McCarra was involved in fighting in Galway having been sent there from Kimmage. McCarra managed to escape once the Galway Volunteers dispersed. Having been involved in some fighting with the RIC the Galway rebels had fallen back on the occupation of a building in anticipation of some sort of last stand, before discretion prevailed (Greaves 1971, 86-94; Newell 2006, 129-130). McCarra, a native of Monaghan, eventually made his way to Belfast.

Two of those who travelled from Glasgow to Dublin to fight in 1916 died before the later part of the War of Independence, Carrigan and Alexander Carmichael. Carmichael was buried at his own request in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin. Often referred to as Sandy or Alec, Carmichael had been prominent during the arms raids of 1915 and was a company captain from 1917. Carmichael played a leading role in the re-organisation of the Volunteers in

<sup>36</sup> Patrick Joseph O'Flanagan pension file, IE/MA, MSPC, 1D94; BMH WS 800 (Michael O'Flanagan).

<sup>37</sup> George O'Flanagan pension file, IE/MA, MSPC, MSP34REF2391; BMH WS 131 (George O'Flanagan).

<sup>38</sup> BMH WS 493 (Seamus Kavanagh); *Bray People*, 23 April 2016 (interview with Vize's sons Joe Jnr and John).

<sup>39</sup> For one example amongst many see: *Irish Times*, 17 January 2014.

Glasgow, having returned there following the mass release of prisoners from Frongoch in late 1916<sup>40</sup>. Carmichael had sided with Joe Robinson in a major argument which almost split the separatist movement in Scotland. Robinson had attempted to take to task Tom McDonnell and the anti-insurrectionists, plus those who had been in Dublin, but not fought in the Rising. Joe Robinson kept his company apart from the other structures in Scotland, and Carmichael took over from him as captain once Joe was arrested<sup>41</sup>.

All of the Glasgow contingent bar two: Séamus McCarra and Margaret Skinnider, were captured following the Rising. Perhaps they lacked the local knowledge that allowed so many rebels to escape. Skinnider avoided arrest thanks to the fact she was taken away in an ambulance in the period between the ceasefire order and the actual surrender of the rebel forces in the St Stephen's Green area. Skinnider returned to Scotland after the Rising but could not return to her work as a teacher due to her injuries and later spent some time touring the United States.

All but one of those captured were eventually interned in Frongoch prison camp in north Wales. Yet, Séamus Robinson was moved to Reading jail after being part of a group who demanded trade union wages for the War Office work the Frongoch internees were obliged to do<sup>42</sup>. His brother, Joseph and Séamus Reader had been moved to Reading from Edinburgh Castle following the Rising<sup>43</sup>. The only Glasgow Volunteer to be sentenced, rather than interned, was Seán McGallogly. McGallogly was convicted for holding up an officer, Lt. Stanhope King of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers<sup>44</sup>. This is a noteworthy incident: a Scottish born-and-bred Catholic rebel holding up an Irish, almost-certainly Protestant, officer of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers Regiment of the British Army.

Resistance continued in Frongoch. The internees prevented the camp authorities from identifying those Volunteers who had been resident in Britain so that they could either be conscripted or made to face trial (Murphy 2014, 64-65). Séamus Robinson claimed in his Bureau statement that the Volunteers from England, principally London and Liverpool, were "harried" to a much greater degree about this issue because the British War Office were wary of the Glasgow contingent, although this may be simple bravado<sup>45</sup>. The

<sup>40</sup> BMH WS 627, 933 and 1767 (all Séamus Reader); BMH WS 648 (Catherine Rooney née Byrne).

<sup>41</sup> BMH WS 933 (Séamus Reader)

<sup>42</sup> BMH WS 1721 (Séamus Robinson).

<sup>43</sup> BMH WS 627 (Séamus Reader).

<sup>44</sup> The (UK) National Archives, Easter Rising Courts Martial files, Trial of William Pearse, John McGarry and John Doherty, WO 71/358. McGallogly used O'Doherty, his mother's maiden name, as a cover.

<sup>45</sup> BMH WS 1721 (Séamus Robinson).

vanquished rebels do not seem to have accepted their reverse for any length of time. Michael O'Flanagan remembered a meeting of IRB men from Britain in Frongoch just before the general release. This meeting resolved to continue the fight and to use the IRB "to perpetuate the ideals for which they had gone out in Easter Week 1916". Efforts were to be made to find work for those Volunteers who could not return to England or Scotland. The Glasgow group at the meeting included Patrick Morrin, Barney Freil, Seán Hegarty, Alexander Carmichael and both O'Flanagan brothers; an interesting mix of Irish-born and Scottish-born Volunteers.

#### *4. Behind the numbers: the War of Independence*

In terms of post-Rising activism, all, including McGallogly, were involved in re-organising the Volunteers upon their release in late 1916 and early 1917. By the time of the Truce with the British on 11 July 1921 only 3 of the 20 who remained alive had completely dropped out of the IRA. That gives a 15% drop out figure with 85% who were still members. This compares to a roughly 37% drop out figure for Irish volunteer veterans of the fighting in Dublin and 60% who had some post-rising involvement in the military side<sup>46</sup>. As mentioned above, it is likely the militancy of the group dealt with here has been increased by the reduced numbers who travelled from Scotland to take part in the Rising as a result of the disruption caused by senior IRB men there. The roles the various Volunteers played in the War of Independence speak to their militancy, their refusal to accept reverses, and their integration with the separatist movement.

Of the three who were no longer militarily active at the Truce in 1921, two were still politically active. Cormac Turner remained a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Turner had dropped out of the IRA in 1919. Bernard McMullen had dropped out to become a trade union organiser having moved to Limerick for work. Limerick, with its fabled "Soviet" in 1919, was a centre of Labour militancy in this period (Grant 2012, 93-94). While many revolutionaries joined different units as they migrated for economic reasons, as can be seen repeatedly in the case of the IRA in Scotland, the partly social nature of Volunteer activism meant that many did not, so McMullen's actions were not unusual. The only Volunteer who appears to have completely dropped out by the time of the Truce was Barney Friel. Friel had served a three-year sentence of imprisonment having been arrested for arms smuggling in 1918. As such, Friel was the exception that proved the rule. Even the sample's one definite drop-out had been particularly militant for at least some of the post-Rising period.

<sup>46</sup> These figures relate to my unpublished PhD research into the veterans of 1916.

Some of our group took a behind the scenes role in armed resistance in Ireland. Having played a prominent part in re-organising *Cumann na mBan* in Glasgow, Margaret Skinnider moved to Dublin and joined the large Ard Craobh branch. Interestingly Skinnider's rank of captain did not carry from Scotland. Skinnider also noted that *Cumann na mBan* members worked more closely with the IRA in Glasgow than in Dublin. On Clydeside the women often went with the men in raids for arms. Skinnider worked giving first aid lectures, storing arms, and distributing funds to prisoners' dependents on the north side of Dublin throughout the War of Independence. Volunteers could have such activity recognised as military service if they were "key men" providing support to "fighting men" in areas where armed resistance was taking place (Brennan 2012, 70). Frank Scullin, in his regular occupation as a lamp-lighter with Dublin Corporation, was sometimes called upon to extinguish lights in certain areas in order to hinder the Crown Forces and/or facilitate IRA operations. Another former member of the Glasgow unit, Michael O'Flanagan, used money paid to him by the Green Cross, a republican prisoner's welfare association, to open a poultry business in Dublin's south inner city. The business became an arms dump and a post-restante centre for the IRA General Headquarters (GHQ). O'Flanagan also won the contract for supplying poultry to the local British Army barracks. The fact that a man who had to leave Glasgow on the run in 1915 and fought in the Easter Rising could be awarded such a contract says much about British intelligence failures and/or complacency in this period<sup>47</sup>. Although it should be noted that Michael O'Flanagan and his brother Francis were arrested in the round ups that followed Bloody Sunday in Dublin on 21 November 1920<sup>48</sup>.

Francis O'Flanagan was one of two Volunteers to participate in an attack on the Crown Forces during the War of Independence. He had come over to Dublin in 1916 later than his brother, and was involved in the attack at Monk's Bakery, September 1920, in which three very young British soldiers of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment were killed after resisting an IRA attempt to relieve them of their arms. This was the attack for which republican icon Kevin Barry was executed<sup>49</sup>. O'Flanagan was also involved in an attempted rescue of Barry that was called off because of the crowds surrounding Mountjoy Prison where he was held. Barry was the first Volunteer to be executed since 1916 and the three soldiers were the British Army's first

<sup>47</sup> BMH WS 908 (Michael O'Flanagan).

<sup>48</sup> Yeates (2012, 205-9) gives a description of the atmosphere in Dublin at this time.

<sup>49</sup> BMH WS 493 (Seamus Kavanagh); BMH WS 1154 (Seán O'Neill); for an account of the ambush itself see Kautt (2010, 193-194), for an account of the ambush and its importance see Ainsworth (2002), 272-287. This article is open-access here: <[https://eprints.qut.edu.au/247/1/Ainsworth\\_Kevin.PDF](https://eprints.qut.edu.au/247/1/Ainsworth_Kevin.PDF)> (05/2019).



fatal casualties in Dublin since the Rising. Both O'Flanagan brothers had joined C Company of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Dublin Brigade on their return from Glasgow. Francis had moved unit to the newly established H Company as a section commander in 1918. H Company was established as C Company was simply getting too big. This was a common experience for ordinary rank-and-file Rising veterans who regularly moved up the ranks and were used as experienced cadres to stiffen newly organised units in the Dublin Brigade. This phenomenon continued to 1923 on both sides of the Treaty divide.

Séamus Robinson travelled to Tipperary to help organise the Volunteers there after his release from post-Rising internment. Appointed officer commanding the Third Tipperary Brigade of the IRA, a particularly militant unit, Robinson led the IRA action responsible for the first Crown Forces casualties of the War, the shooting of two policemen at Soloheadbeg on 21 January 1919 (Hopkinson 2002, 116-118; Townshend 2013, 78-80) and was involved in several other well-known incidents. Usually, they are well known not for their size but because of their impact. They occurred early in the conflict before Ireland became inured to violence and when there were few other events competing for attention. Robinson stated that he had been trying to start a guerrilla war at Soloheadbeg, he did not think that the war had ended at the surrender in 1916, rather he felt that this was the same war that had been ongoing since 1172 (i.e. the Norman invasion of Ireland). Having been involved at the very earliest phase of the War of Independence, the Third Tipperary Brigade were by no means a spent force as the conflict progressed. They played a full part in the IRA offensive of early 1921 that followed the failure of peace talks and the passage of the Government of Ireland Act in late 1920 (Augusteijn 1996, 164, 180-181; Hart 2003, 65-71). Robinson felt that, as an outsider in Tipperary, he never got the credit he deserved in the local historiography/legends of the War. Although he believed that this was because his upbringing in Belfast and Glasgow meant that he was seen as an urbanite, rather than his being perceived as Scottish<sup>50</sup>. Séamus Robinson had spent around half his life in Scotland by the time he arrived in Tipperary.

Séamus' brother, Joseph, the man he was arrested with in 1916, Séamus Reader, and Joe Vize were three of the leading figures in the Scottish Brigade of the Irish Volunteers/IRA between their release in 1917 and the Truce of 1921. All three were heavily involved in the IRB-led gun-running operations which took place across the Scottish central belt and the north of England. Joe Robinson had been engaged in arms smuggling almost from the time of his release at Christmas 1916. Joe Robinson was arrested in 1918, shortly

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of Robinson's fractious relationship with the brigade see: <<http://www.theirishstory.com/2014/12/08/a-bitter-brotherhood-the-war-of-words-of-seumas-robinson/#.W3Etm-hKguE>> (05/2019).

after Barney Friel, and remained in jail until March 1922. Vize was sent to Scotland in Joe Robinson's stead in 1918 before being recalled to Dublin in the summer of 1920. During this time, he managed to heal the split between Alex Carmichael's A Company and the rest of the movement in Scotland. He also worked with Séamus Reader in doing a large amount of organising and founded companies across central Scotland, including in Falkirk and Edinburgh<sup>51</sup>. Vize was later arrested in a shootout on Dublin's Talbot St. This was the well-known incident in which Séamus Robinson's Tipperary comrade, Seán Treacy, was killed. Séamus Reader had co-operated with Vize in his work. Reader had been advancing within the Volunteer hierarchy in Glasgow since his release in 1917 and during Vize's period in Scotland, Reader helped Vize consolidate the old IRB networks into the IRA<sup>52</sup>. Following Vize's departure Reader continued to drive the arms smuggling operation, using contacts in Hamburg, Edinburgh and Liverpool. Reader claimed to have supplied the majority of the Mauser pistols, known as "Peter the Painters", in the IRA's collective armoury, particularly favoured by IRA units in urban areas.

These operations were the main IRA effort in Scotland. Séamus McCarra was a full-time Volunteer on this work as a purchasing officer on the Scottish Brigade staff from January 1921. At one point "purchasing committees" were established to concentrate on arms procurement and they were kept apart from the regular Volunteer units of the Scottish Brigade which continued the routine of meeting to drill and train in a similar manner to IRA companies in the quieter parts of Ireland (Ó Catháin 2009, 168-169; Fitzpatrick 2017, 539). John Carney acted almost as a dummy o/c Scotland and often toured the central belt inspecting companies and liaising with political support groups<sup>53</sup>. It should be noted that the bluff worked, and British intelligence were far more interested in the IRA's main organisation than the purchasing committees, as evidenced by the intelligence reports sent to the British cabinet<sup>54</sup>. However, as recent studies have found the perceived existence of a secret army, and the imagined threat that it posed, were significant underpinning factors in the development of the Church of Scotland's racist anti-Irish campaign of the 1920s (Agnew 2009, 125-129; Ritchie 2013, 40-44).

Paddy Morrin, Patrick Maguire and Matt O'Brien are listed as members of the Scottish Brigade on the MSPC roll, but they are not listed as be-

<sup>51</sup> BMH WS 933 (Séamus Reader); WS 696 (Henry O'Hagan).

<sup>52</sup> BMH WS 933 (Séamus Reader).

<sup>53</sup> John Carney pension file, IE/MA, MSPC, MSP34REF993.

<sup>54</sup> (UK) NA, CAB 24/112, CP 1978, "Illegal drilling in Scotland' Memorandum by the Secretary for Scotland", 18 October 1920; and CP 1997, "Report on revolutionary organisations in the United Kingdom (Circulated by the Home Secretary), Report No 77", 21 October 1920.

ing heavily involved in the gun-running or as being arrested for the famous/infamous “smashing of the van” incident, in which a Scottish policeman was shot as local IRA members attempted to free Frank Carty of the Sligo Brigade who had been on the run in Scotland before his arrest<sup>55</sup>. Although the three men may have been involved in low-level company activity (Coyle 2018, 49-53)<sup>56</sup>. Another three of our sample: Séamus Reader, Séamus McCarra, and Séamus McGallogly, were arrested for the “smashing of the van” incident. Reader was released after about a month and had to pick up the pieces of a Scottish Brigade that had been shattered by the arrest of over 100 of its prominent members including DP Walshe their GHQ liaison. Séamus McCarra was charged over the incident. Perhaps Reader was not charged because the Scottish authorities were aware that he had opposed the operation. McCarra had been peripherally involved in the incident, but escaped sanction through the Scots Law verdict of “not proven”.

Séamus McCarra's activities in the period between the Rising and his return to Glasgow in the summer of 1920 had been extraordinarily varied. In 1918 McCarra was, with many other veterans of Easter week, involved in travelling around Ireland to participate in the street violence between Sinn Féin supporters, mainly Irish Volunteers, and the supporters of the Home Rule Party that accompanied by-electoral contests at that time (Laffan 1999, 122-128). McCarra also took part in similar street fighting in Belfast. As quartermaster of his company, McCarra was involved in an exchange of shots with the RIC when moving weapons in the Short Strand district. McCarra was repeatedly dismissed from his employment owing to his activities and left Belfast on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 1920, shortly after the beginning of the major anti-Catholic pogrom around the shipyards and Belfast docks and the civil unrest that followed (Parkinson 2004, 29-55; Lynch 2008, 378-381).

The two McGallogly brothers had left the Glasgow IRA in 1917 following the split that had been engendered by disagreements over senior west of Scotland-based IRB members' opposition to the Rising in 1916. Seán had felt the time for the Volunteers had passed and that purely political action would be required going forward. However, with the cause of Irish independence stalled by, amongst many other things, the failure of Seán T. O'Kelly and his delegation to get a hearing at Versailles, both McGalloglys re-joined the Volunteers in Manchester<sup>57</sup>. Although there is contradictory evidence as to

<sup>55</sup> For a good account of this incident see Coyle 2008 and IE/MA, MSPC, IRA Membership Series, Roll file of the Scottish Brigade, “Scottish Brigade Press Cuttings”, RO 603A, <[http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/docs/files//PDF\\_Membership/8/MA-MSPC-RO-603A.pdf](http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/docs/files//PDF_Membership/8/MA-MSPC-RO-603A.pdf)> (05/2019).

<sup>56</sup> IE/MA, MSPC, IRA Membership Series, Roll file of the Scottish Brigade, RO 603.

<sup>57</sup> BMH WS 244 (Seán McGallogly).

when<sup>58</sup>. Both McGallogly brothers were involved in arms smuggling as the IRA units in Britain moved from operating through Clydeside to using Liverpool docks and the Manchester Brigade became a key link in the chain. Séamus McGallogly was taken ill while collecting a consignment of arms in Scotland and ended up in a Glasgow hospital where he was arrested over the Carty rescue attempt but was let go some days later. Upon release, he was moved to Dublin to convalesce, although he died from his illness in 1924. His brother Seán was also arrested in May 1921, during the police round up that followed a burst of IRA sabotage activity in the Lancashire countryside in which he participated (Noonan 2014, 178-180). In fact, Seán McGallogly had participated in a large amount of militant activity in the Manchester area and had helped Gary Holohan, a Dublin battalion engineer, to conduct assessments on major installations such as power stations with a view to escalating the IRA's punitive campaign. Seán McGallogly was a company captain in the Manchester IRA at the time of his arrest<sup>59</sup>.

Lastly, it is not entirely clear what role John Lafferty, Patrick Mahon, and Seán Hegarty, played in the War of Independence. John Lafferty appears to have been a founder-member of his local company but did not engage in any major activity until 1922. Mahon claimed to be involved in the transport and storage of arms in the latter period of the conflict. Sometimes the ambiguous nature of the work of these "key men" left scope for the exaggeration of claims. Mahon asserted that he had been excused from parading with his company. He was certainly active in the early period after the Rising. He was involved with other members of his unit, C Company 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Dublin Brigade, in slaughtering some pigs that were scheduled for export in 1917<sup>60</sup> and also, similarly to Séamus McCarra, travelled to South Armagh and Waterford to engage in the street fighting and campaigning that accompanied the by-elections in those places. Mahon claimed to have been excused from attending parades by his company captain, Seán Flood, because he was using the horse and cart usually used for his dairy business to transport arms for the quartermaster Frank Harding. Flood left C Company in the summer of 1920 and there is no trace of Harding outside some Bureau statements,

<sup>58</sup> Seán McGallogly's pension file states that he re-joined in January 1920, while his Bureau statement (BMH WS 244) states that he travelled to Manchester with brother. Séamus McGallogly's pension file claims that he was involved in the rescue of Piaras Beaslaí and Austin Stack in Manchester in late 1919. Beaslaí's (1926, 372) account lists both McGalloglys as taking part.

<sup>59</sup> BMH WS 244 (Seán McGallogly); BMH WS 847 (Patrick O'Donoghue); IE/MA, MSPC, IRA Membership Series, Roll file of the Manchester Brigade, RO 608.

<sup>60</sup> A Dublin history blog has recently published an account of this incident: <<https://comeheretome.com/2019/04/16/feeding-the-people-when-the-irish-volunteers-commandeered-pigs-on-the-streets-of-dublin/>> (05/2019).

and all mentions of him there appear to be in relation to activities in 1920 or before<sup>61</sup>. Mahon does not appear on the MSPC roll for either C company or I Company, his Civil War unit<sup>62</sup>. Obituaries for Seán Hegarty, carried in both the *Irish Independent* and *Irish Press*, mention or imply his involvement in the War of Independence. The *Press* tribute is a little vague as a result of that paper's reluctance to draw a distinction between the pre- and post-Truce IRA: it described Hegarty as "an active member of the IRA from the Rising in 1916 until the 'Cease Fire' order", meaning Frank Aiken's order of 1923. The *Independent* recorded that Hegarty "took an active part against the Black-and-Tans and later opposed the Treaty"<sup>63</sup>.

### 5. *Behind the numbers: Civil War*

There was little support for the Treaty among the sample. As will become clear, the exact allegiances of some members are opaque, but an overall level of militancy and reluctance to accept the Treaty can be discerned. Three members of the sample joined the National Army, seven remained entirely neutral, and ten fought with the anti-Treaty IRA. At best, the pro-Treaty figure is 15%, and the neutral figure is, at worst, 35% and could be as high as 55%. Given that the small sample size means that each Volunteer represents 5%, these figures are broadly in line with the overall figures for Irish Volunteer veterans the Dublin fighting. These are 27% for pro-Treaty, 46.5% for neutral. However, the figure for fighting with the anti-Treaty IRA by members of the sample is likely to be 50% and is certainly no less than 40%. Considering that equivalent figure for Irish Volunteer veterans of the fighting in Dublin city is 26.5%, this again highlights the militancy of the group. The roles of those who participated in the Civil War again highlight the integration of the sample into the wider movement.

John Lafferty, Cormac Turner and Joe Vize were the only three of the group to ever join the pro-Treaty National Army. This is significant given the number of Scottish Volunteers who fought with the National Army in the Civil War. Indeed, the majority of the senior members of the Scottish Brigade from the War of Independence, including most former members of the "purchasing committees" backed the Treaty<sup>64</sup>. This was possibly due to the personal loyalty the IRB gun-runners felt towards Michael Collins. Fol-

<sup>61</sup> BMH WS 1387 (Hugh Maguire); BMH WS 678 (George Joseph Dwyer); BMH WS 576 (Kathleen O'Donovan, née Boland).

<sup>62</sup> IE/MA, MSPC, IRA Membership Series, Roll file of the 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade, 2nd Eastern Division, IRA, RO 2.

<sup>63</sup> *Irish Press and Irish Independent*, 25 September 1933.

<sup>64</sup> IE/MA, MSPC, IRA Membership Series, Roll file of the Scottish Brigade, RO 603.

lowing his escape from Hare Park internment camp in September 1922, Joe Vize was sent to Scotland to smooth over the ongoing internal divisions in the Scottish Brigade (Ó Catháin 2009, 173)<sup>65</sup>. This was essentially the same dispute over the failure of some to turn out in 1916 that had been ongoing since the Rising. Vize spent the Civil War as Director of Purchases in GHQ. His appointment was announced publicly on 31 March 1922, but it is likely he was working in the role from before that date<sup>66</sup>. The National Army census, taken in November 1922, records that Vize had surrounded himself with other ex-members of the Scottish Brigade such as Séamus Fullerton, Seán Golden, George O'Reilly and Thomas Kirkpatrick<sup>67</sup>.

Turner and Lafferty were lukewarm National Army men: Turner, who had dropped out of the Volunteers in 1919 but remained in the IRB in Dublin, only joined a rear echelon unit of the National Army in 1923. Lafferty was enrolled in the National Army in Donegal on June 14 1922 having escaped from the six-county area in May as the Ulster Special Constabulary waged what amounted to a state sponsored terror campaign following the failure of the so called "Joint IRA offensive". This was the attack on Northern Ireland involving both pro-and anti-Treaty IRA members conducted in the spring of 1922 (Lynch 2006, 191-192; Grant 2018, 136-137). It seems that Lafferty's unit did not take part in any activity prior to the countermanding order from pro-Treaty GHQ in Beggar's Bush, Dublin<sup>68</sup>. Lafferty's support for the Treaty, like that of many National Army members, was inchoate. Indeed, it might be debated as to whether Lafferty supported the Treaty at all. He is possibly listed as a member of the anti-Treaty element of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Northern Division of the IRA<sup>69</sup>. However, Lafferty's willingness to work the Treaty's structures, even if it was as he wrote to Éamon de Valera in 1932 "for no purpose other than to train and prepare for going back to the 6 county area on active service" does suggest a degree of acceptance. At no

<sup>65</sup> For a detailed first-hand account of this escape see (Andrews, 199-204). Confirmation of Vize's involvement can be found in the Bureau statement of Tom "Boer" Byrne, a veteran of fighting against the British in the South African War of 1899-1902: BMH WS 564 (Thomas Byrne).

<sup>66</sup> *An t-Óglach*, 31 March 1922. Interestingly Vize's clandestine work in Scotland is not mentioned "Comdt.-Gen. Vize fought in the GPO in 1916 [incorrect] and subsequently served under various commands".

<sup>67</sup> These census returns have been digitised and are searchable at <<http://census.militaryarchives.ie/index.php>> (05/2019). Details about the census can be found at <<http://militaryarchives.ie/en/collections/online-collections/irish-army-census-collection-12-november-1922-13-november-1922>> (05/2019).

<sup>68</sup> I am grateful to Kieran Glennon, historian of the Northern Divisions of the IRA, for his guidance concerning the situation in the north of the country in early 1922.

<sup>69</sup> IE/MA, MSPC, IRA Membership Series, Roll file of the Derry City Battalion, RO 399. The address for the John Lafferty in this file is not listed anywhere in Lafferty's own pension file.

point does he co-operate with the explicitly anti-Treaty IRA in Donegal under Seán Lehane. Lafferty's MSPC file contains a reference from the commander of the IRA unit in Dunboe, Co. Londonderry, that states that Lafferty was "always in favour of the Free State". The Dunboe unit was an outpost of the Derry City Battalion as was the nearby Magilligan unit of which Lafferty was a member<sup>70</sup>. Lafferty found himself in an awkward situation following the beginning of the Civil War as he was being trained as a member of the National Army but did not fully support the Treaty or the new Provisional Government. A company of Volunteers who travelled from Coatbridge, six miles east of Glasgow, to Dublin found themselves in this predicament also (Noonan 2014, 230). Lafferty's personal situation in the second half of 1922 is not entirely clear as his pension files contain two contradictory accounts. By the first account he was asked to renew his attestation to the National Army in mid-August by leading Ulster pro-Treatyites Dan McKenna and Seán Haughey, and was confined to barracks by Haughey and McKenna having refused their request. By this account, given to the Military Service Pensions Board when *Cumann na nGaedheal* were in government, Lafferty was later arrested by McKenna and the supposedly neutral Tom Morris before escaping and heading to Dublin to plead his case with Richard Mulcahy. By the second account Lafferty and his comrades in Moville Barracks refused orders to attack the anti-Treaty IRA in Donegal and also refused to re-attest be sent to the Curragh with the rest of the neutral men from the north (Grant 2018, 144-145). These men then escaped to the Donegal hills. Both of Lafferty's accounts agree that he went to Dublin to plead his case and was detained in the National Army's Griffith Barracks. The second account claims that Lafferty was only released after he threatened to go on hunger strike. It seems likely that Lafferty is exaggerating his conflict with the National Army authorities in the second account. The report of the Director of Intelligence in the MSPC file does not record it and Lafferty was awarded a pension by the Free State authorities.

This pattern of involvement on the pro-Treaty side has many echoes in the broader picture including the fact that the GHQ man supported the Treaty and the fact that a man who had dropped out of military activity, Cormac Turner, joined the National Army. The soft support for the Treaty among the group is further emphasised by Cormac Turner's position as a prominent member of Fianna Fáil in later life (Wren 2015) and John Lafferty's membership of the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic, and later Fianna Fáil, in Chicago. In this Turner and Lafferty were unusual but not exceptional. Indeed, the path from a National Army background to the Soldiers of Destiny was also trod by Seán Haughey's son, Charles James.

<sup>70</sup> IE/MA, MSPC, IRA Membership Series, Roll file of the Derry City Battalion, RO 399.

Seven members of the sample group definitely avoided taking sides in the Civil War. Séamus McCarra and Barney Friel both stayed neutral having dropped out on their release from imprisonment: McCarra in August 1921 having escaped conviction over the “smashing of the van”; Friel in 1920 having been convicted in 1918 and having served a prison sentence for arms-smuggling. There is no suggestion in any source of activity by Matt O’Brien after 1921<sup>71</sup>. Bernard McMullen also remained neutral although he was imprisoned in Dundalk for a period by the pro-Treatyites in 1922. Seán McGallogly, having moved to Ireland in February 1922 following his release from imprisonment, refused to take sides in the IRA split that was calcifying during that spring. McGallogly’s brother Séamus was in Dublin’s Four Courts building, which had been occupied by the anti-Treaty IRA. However, Séamus was in a non-combatant role due to his illness. Like Seán McGallogly, Michael O’Flanagan had also resolved to stay neutral during the split in the IRA in 1922. O’Flanagan found himself rendering some assistance to the anti-Treaty forces, putting his car at the disposal of elements of the Dublin Brigade and later providing food and shelter to Séamus Reader and a group of Glasgow republicans who had travelled to Dublin to fight in the opening battles of the Civil War in Dublin city centre<sup>72</sup>.

Ten of our sample, including Reader, opposed the Treaty as members of the IRA. Although Patrick Morrin and Patrick Maguire remained with their companies for the Civil War, there is a lack of direct evidence about their participation in the activities of the Scottish Brigade, such as continued attempts to engage in arms procurement through both raids and smuggling; and attempts to block recruitment to the National Army. They do not seem to have travelled to Dublin with Reader. Indeed, Reader was the only one of that group to have been involved in 1916<sup>73</sup>. The group had travelled to Dublin on the regular ferry once they heard about the attack on the Four Courts. Reader and his crew had escaped from the fighting in Dublin City Centre following the collapse of Republican resistance there and later returned to Glasgow on a normal civilian boat after hiding in Michael O’Flanagan’s house for a few hours<sup>74</sup>. Joe Robinson was already in Dublin and was in the Four Courts two hours before it was attacked, but was sent back to Scotland. We should note that as Reader and his men were fighting against the Treaty in the vicinity of Dublin’s O’Connell Street, other members of Scottish Bri-

<sup>71</sup> Coyle (2018, 54-55) states that O’Brien’s activity finished in 1920. Since he is on the Roll (note 54 above) for 11 July 1921 he has been assumed to be with his company until the Truce.

<sup>72</sup> For details of this fighting see Hopkinson’s lucid account (2004 [1988], 121-126) or the more lurid (Neeson 1989 [1966], 120-132).

<sup>73</sup> IE/MA, MSPC, IRA Membership Series, Roll file of the Scottish Brigade, RO 603.

<sup>74</sup> BMH WS 908 (Michael O’Flanagan).



gade of the IRA were guarding the pro-Treaty Provisional Government less than a mile away<sup>75</sup>.

In addition to Reader, four others members of our sample: Seán Hegarty, Patrick Mahon, Frank O'Flanagan and Frank Scullin, all took part in the fighting in Dublin city centre. All were in the not unusual situation, for Dublin IRA Volunteers, of seeing much more combat during the Civil War than in the War of Independence. Their arrests: Patrick Mahon on surrender, Frank O'Flanagan a month later, and Frank Scullin in early 1923 after taking part in a large number of guerrilla actions in Dublin, are typical of the broad range of experiences of anti-Treaty Volunteers in Dublin<sup>76</sup>. Hegarty, Mahon and Frank Scullin, took part in the hunger strike in late 1923. Scullin lasted thirty-five days before giving up. Hegarty's health was affected in later life by his involvement in at least two hunger strikes during the revolutionary period<sup>77</sup>. Mahon was among the last group of Republicans to be released from internment.

Margaret Skinnider had a behind the scenes role in the anti-Treaty IRA's quartermaster-general department. Although Skinnider does not seem to have been involved in the clandestine distribution of arms, a usual role for an IRA quartermaster, she bore the heavy responsibility of administering the anti-Treatyites' payments to the cadres of full-time volunteers attached to both their GHQ and Dublin Brigade. Skinnider was involved in this work from the beginning of the conflict until her arrest at Christmas 1922.

The two Robinsons had political roles, and they were the only members of our group to do so. Although Joe Robinson was also the IRA's o/c Scotland from his release from prison in 1922, working closely with Séamus Reader, until he (Joe Robinson) was arrested as part of a major round-up of anti-Treaty Republican sympathisers in the spring of 1923 (Noonan 2013, 244). Séamus Robinson spent much of the Civil War working as aide-de-camp to Éamon de Valera, then the political leader of the anti-Treaty side. Robinson is a fitting veteran to conclude with as he is a very good example of the integration of the Scottish sections of the Irish republican movement into the wider whole. He was later a Fianna Fáil senator, a board member of the Bureau of Military History, and a referee for the military service pensions board, and thus intimately involved in the production of a great deal of the source material for this article (Coleman 2009).

<sup>75</sup> BMH WS 939 (Ernest Blythe).

<sup>76</sup> For a comprehensive account of the guerrilla phase of the Civil War in Dublin see (Dorney 2017, 152-176 and 220-257).

<sup>77</sup> For Hegarty see *Irish Press*, 23 September and 25 September 1933, and *Irish Independent*, 25 September 1933 (Seán Hegarty obituaries and reports on funeral). For an account of the Republican hunger strike of 1923 see Hopkinson (2004 [1988], 268-271).

## 6. Context and conclusion

Overall, the Volunteers in this sample differ from other veterans of Easter week in three important respects. Firstly, very few of them drop out, and even those that do are relatively active. Two of the three that dropped out before the Truce remained politically active and the third only dropped out having served a three-year jail sentence. Secondly, very few of them serve with the Scottish Brigade in the War of Independence. Usually the figure for Volunteers moving brigade is about 5%<sup>78</sup>. Although in this case the situation is not directly comparable given the number of the sample who are Dubliners who had only been in Glasgow on a temporary basis. Lastly, only one of the group was a whole hearted supporter of the pro-Treaty side during the Civil War. This is deeply ironic given how many active members of the Scottish Brigade in the War of Independence later joined the National Army. However, in spite of the well-known examples of split friendships and families, IRA members tended to make up their minds on the Treaty issue along social or familial lines (Hart 1999, 264-266; Tormey 2016, 45-53).

The prosopographical approach adopted by this study has highlighted the integration of Scotland's republicans with the wider separatist movement. The stories of the Glasgow Volunteers of Easter week run like a thread through both the War of Independence and Civil War. This highlights very well the integration of the Scottish section of the Irish diaspora with the wider separatist movement. From brigade commanders to ordinary Volunteers, from political activists to gun-runners and on to hunger strikers; from "key men" to "fighting men", and on to *Cumann na mBan* activists; whether they were raising the flag over the GPO or fleeing their home in the six counties, their lives ran the gamut of militant republican activist experience.

The sample group was made up of separatist veterans of the fighting of Easter week who had been resident in Scotland between 1913 and 1915. Their experiences highlight the existence of a mutative transnational Irish identity: Michael O'Flanagan, a Dubliner, interacted freely with the Irish community in the west of Scotland when purchasing weapons; Séamus Robinson, born in Belfast but with many years spent living in Scotland, led the IRA in Tipperary; Seán McGallogly, born and raised in Lanarkshire, became captain of an IRA company in Manchester; Séamus Reader, from Glasgow, fought alongside the Dublin Brigade in 1922, as many of his comrades had done in 1916.

It is possible to trace a left-wing thread through the sample. The labour activism of Michael O'Flanagan, Margaret Skinnider, and Brian McMullen; Séamus Robinson's demand for "trade union wages" for internees in Frongoch, and, indeed, Charles Carrigan's membership of the Catholic Socialist Society all serve to highlight this and locate the sample in the Glasgow of their time.

<sup>78</sup> Figures from my own PhD research.

A city with a growing radical reputation, and a city whose Irish community was increasingly lending its support to the Labour movement.

Also, Séamus Robinson's comment about 1172 places these Volunteers very much in the nationalist milieu of early twentieth century Europe. In terms of a European context it is also possible to view the actions and experiences of the sample as being analogous to the actions and experiences of some Great War veterans, particularly those from countries who had experienced defeat, or felt that they had. The refusal of the Volunteers in the sample to accept political reversals, and, in fact, to engage in further action, such as resisting authority in Frongoch, smuggling arms in Britain and Ireland, or engaging in armed action on the streets of Dublin, Belfast and Glasgow, mirrors the paramilitarism of the vanquished elsewhere.

All good biographies must offer contextualising information. The context of this collective biography highlights that the Volunteers in this group were of the Glasgow, Scotland, Europe, Ireland, and Irish diaspora, of their time. As such, they were highly integrated into the transnational Irish separatist movement.

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