

## **Kildare Black and Tans**

### **James Durney**

When recruitment to the Royal Irish Constabulary Special Reserve (RICSR) was opened to residents in Britain from 6 January 1920 thousands of unemployed ex-servicemen joined up. A substantial pay rise for Irish police from £2 11 shillings to £3 10 shillings per week helped boost recruitment at a time when there were about 167,000 ex-servicemen receiving unemployment benefits in Britain. In early 1920 most of southern Ireland was boycotting the RIC, refusing to serve them in shops, or trade with them; uniforms could not be tailored for the police force leaving the new recruits wearing perhaps an RIC bottle-green trousers with a British army khaki tunic and a policeman's cap. On 25 March 1920 when journalist Christopher O'Sullivan met a group of special reserve police at Limerick Junction in their motley uniforms, he wrote in the *Limerick Echo* that they reminded him of the Scarteen Hunt, whose 'Black and Tans' nickname derived from the colours of its Kerry Beagles. Even though by the end of 1920 the uniform situation was rectified, the name 'Black and Tans' stuck.

While most of these new recruits were British a substantial proportion of the Black and Tans were Irishmen. According to police expert and author Jim Herlihy 10,936 Black and Tans were recruited, of whom 883 (eight per cent) were Irish born. The Black and Tans were not a separate force and lived and worked in barracks alongside the Irish policemen. Their number in each region was roughly proportional to the level of violence in an area and they served mainly in the south and west where the IRA was most active. Black and Tans were based at Naas, Athy, Kildare Town and the Curragh Camp throughout the War of Independence. The arrival of the Black and Tans escalated the violence throughout the country. In Kildare they were active in patrols throughout the county and subsequently took part in reprisal attacks at Naas and Kill in August 1920 after two regular policemen were killed in an ambush at Greenhills, Kill.

The new force, designated the RIC Special Reserve, was recruited throughout Great Britain and Ireland from 6 January 1920 and by July 1921 a total of 7,684 recruits – 312 of them Irish-born – had arrived in Ireland. On 23 April 1920 RICSR recruit training was moved from the RIC Depot, at Dublin's Phoenix Park to a new sub-depot training centre at Hare Park Camp, the Curragh. Around 400 recruits arrived at Kildare railway station and were conveyed to the Curragh in military lorries; more recruits arrived at Newbridge railway station and were then brought to the Curragh. RIC District Inspector Victor Henry Scott was appointed the sub-depot adjutant. (Scott had been wounded in action while serving as a captain with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in WWI.) On 11 September 1920 all training of members of the RICSR was transferred to a new sub-depot at Gormanstown Camp, Co. Meath. From 3 September 1920 a second and separate group of 2,189 temporary constables – 312 of them Irish-born – were

recruited and attached to the newly opened headquarters of the Transport (motorised) Division of the RIC at Gormanstown Camp. A third group, known as the Veterans and Drivers Division, attached to Gormanstown Camp and comprising of 1,069 – 189 of them Irish-born – were also recruited.

### **Kildare men who enlisted in Royal Irish Constabulary Special Reserve between 6 January 1920 and 7 July 1921**

381 members of the 7,684 strong RIC Special Reserve were Irish born; nine were from Co. Kildare.

**John Costello.** No. 78690. Catholic, born at Old Connell, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, on 29 November 1893 (1894) son of John (car driver) and Bridget Costello (wash woman, later a farmer). He enlisted in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers aged eighteen at Naas Barracks on 26 October 1911, while employed as a groom. Served as a Private with 16th Battalion, Yorks and Lancs., regimental no. 59897, in France with British Expeditionary Force; demobilised 11 March 1919 with 30% disability pension, Bronchitis, Gassed. He joined the RICS in Glasgow. Dismissed, probably on account of his war illness.

**Patrick Dunne.** No. 70181. Catholic, born in 1885, in Co. Kildare. He was an ex-Soldier. Deemed unfit for service and discharged.

**Kenneth Walter James.** No. 70288. Catholic, born on 20 August 1899, at Loughlinstown, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, son of John (labourer) and Winifred James. Enlisted at London, ex-soldier, employment status: Motor Mechanic. Disbanded in 1922.

**Edmund Hornby Kenyon.** 74724. Born on 10 March 1899, at the Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare, son of Charles Arthur (staff sergeant, Gymnastic Staff) and Anne Elizabeth Kenyon. Edmund's two older brothers, Charles, and Frederick had been born in England before the family moved to the Curragh Camp, where Edmund (1899), Alfred (1900) and Albert (1901) were born. The family were not recorded in Ireland in the 1911 census, so they had presumably returned to England. At the outbreak of war in August 1914 Edmund joined the British Army and served in France where he was gassed at the Battle of the Somme. He subsequently transferred to the Royal Navy, where he remained until the Armistice in 1918 and his demobilisation. Kenyon then joined the Merchant Navy, but continual strikes left him out of work. He joined the RIC on 22 October 1920 and was stationed at Lanesborough, Co. Longford. His young wife, to whom he married five weeks prior to his death, lived in the East End of London. His widowed mother had seven other sons. all of whom, with one exception, were in the Services. Less than three weeks prior he had returned to Ireland from leave. Killed in ambush near Ballymahon, Co. Longford, on 17 May 1921. He was interred at Plaistow, London.

**John Henry Lambert.** No. 78471, Catholic, born 20 May 1895, at Newbridge, Co. Kildare, son of John Henry (private, 3rd King's Own Hussars) and Anne Lambert. Enlisted at London, Ex-Soldier, Motor Driver, Disbanded.

**Patrick Meehan.** No. 75600. Catholic, born 30 October 1894, at Drogheda Row, Monasterevin, Co. Kildare, son of Patrick (tailor) and Hannah Meehan. Enlisted at Canterbury, Ex-Soldier, Groom, Married, Disbanded.

**Francis Leo Mooney.** No. 80949. Catholic, born 24 December 1894, at Pollardstown, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, son of Francis (labourer) and Kate Mooney. Enlisted at London, Ex-Soldier, Footman, Disbanded.

**Denis O'Neill.** No. 71907. Presbyterian, born on 1 February 1889 at Walshestown, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, son of Patrick (constable, RIC) and Helena O'Neill. (According to church record he was born on 22 January 1889, baptized 9 February.) Enlisted at Glasgow, Ex-Soldier, Carman, Married, Dismissed.

**Albert E. Whale.** No. 72211. Catholic, born on 25 March 1900, at the Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare, son of William Fred (sergeant, 14th Hussars) and Nora Whale. Enlisted at London, Ex-Soldier, Clerk, Disbanded.

### **Kildare men who enlisted in Royal Irish Constabulary as Temporary Constables between 3 September 1920 and 7 September 1921**

312 members of the 2,189 strong Temporary Constables, RIC were Irish born; nine were from Co. Kildare.

**Patrick Connor.** No. 80895. Born 4 June 1877, at Timolin, Co. Kildare to Patrick Pepper (mendicant) and Mary Connor. RIC IG, 1921, Ex-Soldier, Married.

**John Donoghue.** No. 77995. Born 20 May 1882, at Graigues, Co. Kildare, son of Oliver (herd) and Eliza Donoghue. Enlisted at London in 1921, Ex-Soldier, Housekeeper.

**Arthur Stewart Leopold.** No. 76443. Born 5 May 1869 (1868) at Emily Square, Athy, Co. Kildare, son of Bernard (merchant tailor) and Sarah Leopold. He joined the 8th Hussars aged eighteen at Canterbury, England on 8 May 1885 while employed as a clerk. He served in South Africa from 1899 to 1902; discharged on completion of service in 1908. He married Ethel Paget in Dublin on 13 September 1906. He later served with the South Irish Horse during WWI. He joined the RIC in 1920, ADRIC O/C. Arthur Stewart Leopold died of a heart attack aged eighty-two on 12 October 1951 at his home at Sandymount Drive, Dublin. He was described as an 'ex-Sergt. Maj.'

**Thomas McGovern.** No. 81582. Born 3 May 1891 (1892), Edenderry, Co. Kildare, son of Thomas (labourer) and Jane McGovern. Enlisted at London, 1921. Ex-Soldier, Chief Waiter.

**Christopher Mooney.** No. 76441. Reported born in 1891, Kildare. RIC IG, Enlisted in 1920, Ex-Soldier, Labourer, Married. Recommended by DI John Kearney Gorman.

**Thomas G. Scott.** No. 75270. Born 25 April 1887 (1888), at Market Square, Monasterevin, Co. Kildare, son of Thomas (merchant) and Lizzie Scott. Enlisted at London, 1920. Ex-Soldier, Labourer.

**Christopher Henry Tindall.** No. 72754. He was the first 'temporary constable' to enlist in the RIC. He was born in the Curragh Camp on 14 January 1881, son of Frederick, a corporal in the 19th Hussars, and Annie O'Callaghan. His parents were married in Cork. By 1891 the family was living in London where his father was from originally; his mother was from Co. Cork. Christopher joined the 3rd Middlesex Regiment in 1897. He enlisted in the RICS, in London, on 3 September 1920.

**Thomas Walton.** No. 76578. Born 1 January 1879, at Bishopshill, Ballymore Eustace, Co. Kildare, son of Mary Anne Walton. Enlisted at Portsmouth, 1920. Ex-Soldier, Groom.

**Edward Wilson.** No. 75488. Reported born in 1872, in Kildare. Enlisted at Exeter, 1920. Ex-Soldier, Clerk.

### **Kildare men who enlisted in the Veterans and Drivers Division, Royal Irish Constabulary between 3 September 1920 and 7 September 1921**

189 members of the 1,067 strong Veterans and Drivers Division, Auxiliary Division were Irish born; four were from Co. Kildare.

**Patrick Connor.** No. 80895. Born 1876/7, Kildare. RIC IG, 1921, Ex-Soldier, Waiter, Married, 1081, Depot Y.

**Arthur S. Leopold.** No. 76443. Born 1868, Kildare. 1920, ADRIC O/C, Ex-Soldier, Clerk, 179, Depot Y.

**Thomas G. Scott.** No. 75270. Born 1888, Kildare. Enlisted at London, 1920. Ex-Soldier, Labourer, A/Sgt, 327, Depot Y.

**Christopher Tindall.** No. 72754. He was born in the Curragh Camp on 14 January 1881, son of Frederick, a corporal in the 19th Hussars and Annie O'Callaghan. His parents were married in Cork. By 1891 the family was living in London where his father was from; his mother was from Co. Cork. Christopher joined the 3rd Middlesex Regiment in 1897. He joined the RIC in London, in 1920, and served with I Company, Y Depot.

## Auxiliary Division, Royal Irish Constabulary

On 27 July 1920 the first British recruits arrived in Ireland to join the Royal Irish Constabulary's newly formed Auxiliary Division. Their role, along with the Black and Tans, was to help the RIC maintain control of the countryside and conduct counter-insurgency operations against the Irish Republican Army. The two paramilitary groups are often confused with each other, as both the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries shared similar types of uniforms, a mix of RIC dark bottle green and British Army khaki. However, the Auxiliaries were distinguished by their distinctive tam-o'-shanter caps.

At a pay rate of £1 a day (twice what a constable received), plus cost-of-living expenses, the Auxiliary Cadets were the highest paid policemen in the world. About 2,100 were recruited, all of them ex-officers with war experience. At least 182 Auxiliary Cadets were Irishmen with the majority coming from Ulster, 73, and Leinster, 71. They were barracked first at the Curragh Camp – where they received a six-week training course – and later at Beggars Bush Barracks, Dublin. In military terms they were regarded as an elite force and were much more feared than the Black and Tans. The Auxies, as they became known, were divided into Companies stationed in Dublin and mainly in southern Ireland where the IRA was most active.

### Kildare men who enlisted in the Auxiliary Division, Royal Irish Constabulary between July 1920 and July 1921

**John Alexander Battersby.** No. 1679, 82604. Born, Donadea, Co. Kildare, on 5 February 1897, son of Francis Battersby (clerk in holy orders, Church of Ireland) and Elizabeth Hartford.

**Bernard Joseph Bolger.** No. 38, 72165. Born on 11 January 1894, at Killadoon, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, son of Christopher (labourer) and Rose Bolger.

**Francis Henry Doran.** No. 692, 79053. Born 27 July 1889, at Naas, Co. Kildare, son of Charles J. (printer) and Mary Doran.

**Note:** Information on Co. Kildare-born men taken from *The Black and Tans. A complete Alphabetical List, short history and genealogical guide* by Jim Herlihy (Four Courts Press, 2021). Co. Kildare names were updated and edited by James Durney and Karel Kiely, Kildare Local Studies, Genealogy and Archives Department, Kildare Library Service.