

Fingal and the Fight for Irish Freedom

CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1911.
The Examples of the mode of filling up the Tables are given at the other side.

FORM A.
No. 10 FORM B.

RETURN of the MEMBERS of this FAMILY and their VISITORS, BOARDERS, SERVANTS, &c., who slept or abode in this House on the night of SUNDAY, the 2nd of APRIL, 1911.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATION to HEAD of FAMILY	SEX	AGE	MARRIAGE	EDUCATION	RELIGION	BIRTH	PROFESSION, OCCUPATION, TRADE, &c.	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE	WHERE BORN	IRISH LANGUAGE	SPEAKS	READS	SIGNATURE
Richard Coleman	Head	M	21	Single	None	Roman Catholic	Ireland	Student		Ireland	Irish	None	None	Richard Coleman
Thomas Coleman	Wife	F	18	Married	None	Roman Catholic	Ireland	Domestic		Ireland	Irish	None	None	Thomas Coleman
John Coleman	Brother	M	15	Single	None	Roman Catholic	Ireland	Student		Ireland	Irish	None	None	John Coleman
Mary Coleman	Sister	F	12	Single	None	Roman Catholic	Ireland	Student		Ireland	Irish	None	None	Mary Coleman
Elizabeth Coleman	Sister	F	10	Single	None	Roman Catholic	Ireland	Student		Ireland	Irish	None	None	Elizabeth Coleman
James Coleman	Brother	M	8	Single	None	Roman Catholic	Ireland	Student		Ireland	Irish	None	None	James Coleman
William Coleman	Brother	M	6	Single	None	Roman Catholic	Ireland	Student		Ireland	Irish	None	None	William Coleman
Thomas Coleman	Brother	M	4	Single	None	Roman Catholic	Ireland	Student		Ireland	Irish	None	None	Thomas Coleman
Mary Coleman	Sister	F	3	Single	None	Roman Catholic	Ireland	Student		Ireland	Irish	None	None	Mary Coleman
Elizabeth Coleman	Sister	F	2	Single	None	Roman Catholic	Ireland	Student		Ireland	Irish	None	None	Elizabeth Coleman
James Coleman	Brother	M	1	Single	None	Roman Catholic	Ireland	Student		Ireland	Irish	None	None	James Coleman

1911 Census Return Coleman family Main St., Swords, completed in Irish courtesy NAI



Photograph of Richard Coleman on Volunteer manoeuvres prior to 1916

Richard Coleman



Postcard of main St. Swords c.1909 courtesy of Fingal Local Studies

Richard Coleman was born in 1890 and lived on Main Street Swords with 9 brothers and sisters. He attended Swords National School and afterwards the O'Connell Christian Brothers School on Richmond St.

The Colemans were a patriotic family, members of the Gaelic League, as well as being involved in the Catholic Church locally, and Richard's earliest vocational ambition was to join the priesthood. After a number of unsuccessful attempts, and intermittently working as a railway clerk, Richard got a job as an agent for the Prudential Insurance Company, working from his home in Swords.

A regular welcome visitor to the Coleman house was Thomas Ashe, as the family were very interested in the Irish language, music and the idea of an independent Ireland. Around this time Thomas McDonagh paid a visit to Swords and recruited many local men into a company of Irish Volunteers. Following Redmond's famous speech at Woodenbridge, the company split, the majority siding with Redmond and his National Volunteers, many of whom joined the British Army. Richard and about 20 others disagreed with Redmond's stance and formed their own company of Irish Volunteers, with Richard their company Captain. Their company was one of the companies of the Dublin Fifth Battalion, often known as the Fingal Brigade.

An Troid ar son Saoirse na hÉireann I bhFine Gall

CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1911.
 FORM A.
 RETURN of the MEMBERS of this FAMILY and their VISITORS, BOARDERS, SERVANTS, &c., who slept or abode in this House on the night of SUNDAY, the 2nd of APRIL, 1911.

NAME AND Surname	RELATION to Head of Family	RELIGION	EDUCATION	AGE last BIRTH or DEATH	MARRIAGE, PROFESSION, or OCCUPATION	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE	WHERE BORN	IRISH LANGUAGE	SPEAKS IRISH	READS IRISH	WROTE IRISH	SPEAKS ENGLISH	READS ENGLISH	WROTE ENGLISH
1. Richard Coleman	Head of Family	Roman Catholic	None	38	Married	None	Ireland	Speaks Irish	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English
2. Margaret Coleman	Wife	Roman Catholic	None	35	Married	None	Ireland	Speaks Irish	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English
3. Thomas Coleman	Son	Roman Catholic	None	10	Single	None	Ireland	Speaks Irish	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English
4. Elizabeth Coleman	Daughter	Roman Catholic	None	8	Single	None	Ireland	Speaks Irish	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English
5. William Coleman	Son	Roman Catholic	None	6	Single	None	Ireland	Speaks Irish	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English
6. Mary Coleman	Daughter	Roman Catholic	None	4	Single	None	Ireland	Speaks Irish	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English	Speaks English

1911 Census Return Coleman family Main St., Swords, completed in Irish courtesy NAI



Photograph of Richard Coleman on Volunteer manoeuvres prior to 1916

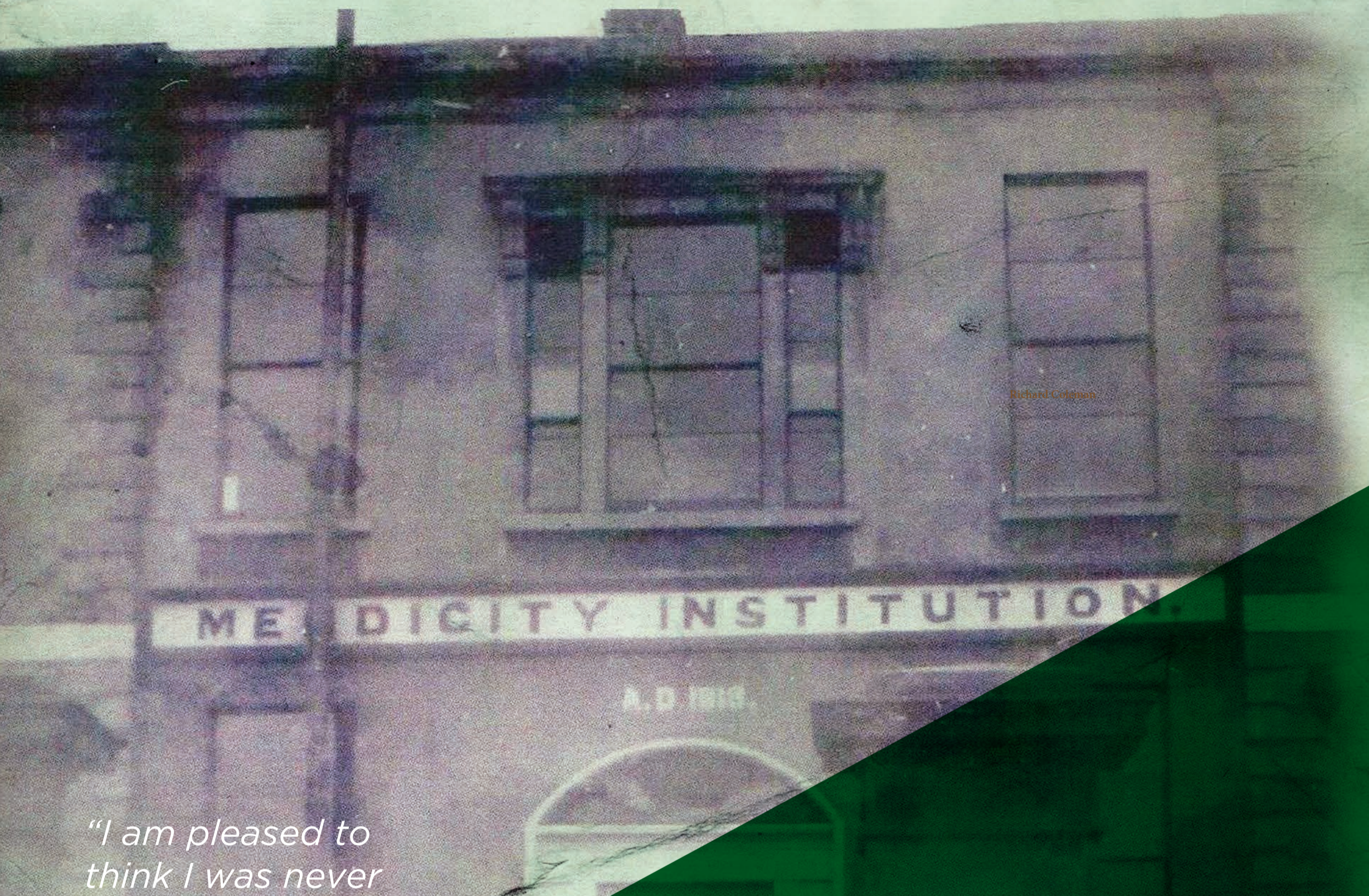


Postcard of main St. Swords c.1909 courtesy of Fingal Local Studies

Rugadh Risteard Ó Colmáin in 1890 agus chónaigh sé ar an tSráid Mhór, Sord, lena 10 deartháireacha agus deirfiúracha. D'fhreastail sé ar Scoil Náisiúnta Shoid agus ina dhiaidh sin i Scoil Uí Chonaill na mBráithre Críostaí ar Shráid Richmond Thuaidh. Teaghlach lán de thírghráthóirí ab ea muintir Uí Cholmáin, a ghlac páirt i gConradh na Gaeilge agus a raibh baint acu leis an Eaglais Chaitliceach sa dúiche, agus is é an chéad ghairm bheatha a raibh dúil ag Risteard inti ná an tsagartacht. Tar éis roinnt iarrachtaí nár éirigh leo, agus tar éis dó a bheith ag obair mar chléireach iarnróid, fuair Risteard post mar ghníomhaire don Chuideachta Árachais Prudential, ag obair óna bhaile féin i Sord.

Cuaríteoir a tugadh fáilte mhór roimhe i dteach mhuintir Uí Cholmáin go minic ab ea Tomás Ághas, ós rud é go raibh dúil mhór ag an mhuintir sa Ghaeilge, sa cheol dúchasach agus san fhís d'Éirinn neamhspleách. Timpeall an ama sin tháinig Tomás Mac Donnchadha ar cuairt go Sord agus rinne sé roinnt mhaith fear áitiúil a earcú chun complacht d'Óglaigh Náisiúnta. Tar éis do Mhac Réamoinn a óráid cháiliúil a thabhairt ag an Droichead Adhmaid, roinneadh an complacht ina dhá leath, agus an tromlach dóibh ag dul ar thaobh Mhic Réamoinn agus ag dul isteach in Arm na Breataine. Chuaigh Risteard agus timpeall ar 20 duine eile dóibh in aghaidh sheasamh Mhic Réamoinn agus bhunaigh siad a gcomplacht féin d'Óglaigh na hÉireann, agus Risteard mar Chaptaen ar an gcomplacht. Bhí an complacht ar cheann de na complachtaí de chuid an Chúigiú Chathláin de Bhaile Átha Cliath, ar a dtugtar Briogáid Fhine Gall go minic.

Fingal and the Fight for Irish Freedom



Richard Coleman

"I am pleased to think I was never afraid to die."



Richard Coleman

The story of the success of the Fingal Brigade or Fifth Battalion at the Battle of Ashbourne has been told many times. The story of the 20 men from Lusk and Swords sent into Dublin City by Thomas Ashe under Capt. Coleman less so.

On the Easter Monday the men mobilised at Knocksedan Bridge. According to eye-witness statements, Captain Coleman paraded the sixty-five men for inspection and found one shouldering the cocked rifle. To demonstrate the danger of this Coleman pressed the trigger and the rifle went off. The men later commented that it was "the first shot" fired by the battalion in the rising.

At 10a.m on the Tuesday, Ashe received instructions from James Connolly to send forty men into Dublin. However Ashe decided to send only half that number. Having selected the men, he sent Coleman into the city in charge of them. Captain Coleman, one of the few wearing a uniform, entered the G.P.O with his men and reported to Connolly.

Connolly made sure the other fourteen men were well-armed. He issued them with two grenades and directed a young man called McLaughlin to lead Captain Coleman and his men to the Mendicity Institute. Connolly's last words to the men were:

"I don't think you will get there, but get as far as you can".

The group somehow managed to elude enemy fire and reached the Institute without loss. Coleman reported to Sean Heuston, who welcomed the reinforcements from the Fingal brigade as the buildings were now under heavy fire.

On Wednesday the houses at the rear of the Institute were occupied by the enemy and the rebels knew that their line of escape at the rear was gone. Their attackers crept along the Quay under cover of the front garden wall and threw grenades through the windows. One man was killed instantly. With mortar fire striking the building they knew it was time to surrender and they raised a white flag. It was here that Peter Wilson of Swords was killed by a bullet through the head. He is buried in a small cemetery at Dr. Stevens' Hospital.



An Troid ar son Saoirse na hÉireann I bhFine Gall

*"I am pleased to
think I was never
afraid to die."*



Richard Coleman

Is minic atá an scéal inste faoin tslí inar éirigh le Briogáid Fhine Gall nó an Cúigiú Chathlán i gCogadh Chill Dhéagláin. Ní chomh minic sin a chloistear an scéal den 20 fhear ó Lusca agus ó Shord ar chuir Tomás Ághas iad isteach go Baile Átha Cliath faoin Captaen Ó Colmáin.

Ar Luan Cásca shlóg na fir ar Dhroichead Chnoc Siáin. De réir béal-ráiteas finnétithe chuir an Captaen Ó Colmáin an seasca cúig fhear ar paráid chun cigireacht a dhéanamh orthu nuair a thug sé faoi deara go raibh fear amháin dóibh agus raidhfil ar tinneall crochta ar a ghualainn. Chun an chontúirt a bhí ann a léiriú, tharraing Ó Colmáin ar an truícear agus scaoileadh an raidhfil. Níos déanaí luaigh na fir gur bhí é sin "an chéad piléar a scaoileadh" sa Chathlán sin san Éirí Amach.

Ag 10 ar maidin an Mháirt, fuair Ághas treoir ó Chonghaile daichead fear a chur isteach go Baile Átha Cliath. Ag an am céanna, bheartaigh Ághas gan ach an leath oireadh den líon sin fear isteach. Tar éis dóibh na fir a roghnú chuir sé Ó Colmáin isteach sa chathair i gceannas orthu. Chuaigh an Captaen Ó Colmáin, duine dóibh siúd a bhí faoi éide, isteach san Ardoifig Phoist in éineacht lena fhir agus thuairiscigh sé do Chonghaile.

Rinne Conghaile cinnte de go raibh an ceathair dhuine dhéag go léir armáilte go maith. Thug sé dhá ghránáid dóibh agus d'ordaigh sé d'ógfhear

darbh ainm McLaughlin an Captaen Ó Colmáin agus a fhir a threorú go dtí an Institiúid Mendicity. Ba é focal scoir Chonghaile do na fir ná:

"Ní measaim go n-éireoidh libh é a shroicheadh, ach téigi chomh fada is gur féidir libh."

D'éirigh leis an mbaicle lámhach an namhad a sheachaint ar slí amháin nó ar shlí eile agus bhain siad an Institiúid amach gan aon duine a chailliúint. Thuairiscigh Ó Colmáin do Sheán Mac Aodha, a bhí lán sásta na trúpaí breise ó Bhriogáid Fhine Gall toisc go raibh lámhach tiubh á scaoileadh ar na foirgnimh faoin am sin.

Ar an gCéadaoin, bhí na tithe ag cúl na hInstitiúide faoi sheilbh an namhad agus bhí a fhios ag na reibiliúnaigh nach raibh an bealach éalaithe a bhí acu ar chúl go dtí sin ann go deo. Shleamhnaigh na hionsaitheoirí ar fad na céanna faoi chéim bhalla an ghairdín thosaigh agus chaith siad gránáidí isteach trí na fuinneoga. Maraíodh duine amháin ar an toirt. Agus lámhach moirtéir ag bualadh síos ar an fhoirgneamh, bhí a fhios acu go raibh sé in am dóibh géilleadh agus chroch siad bratach bhán. Ba ag an bpointe sin a maraíodh Peter Wilson as Sord nuair a chuaigh piléar glan trína cheann. Tá sé curtha i reilig bheag ag Ospidéal an Dr Steevens.



Fingal and the Fight for Irish Freedom

“Just another chapter to my eventful life”



Lewes Prison Kent, which post-1916 held Eamonn De Valera, Thomas Ashe, Harry Boland, Frank Lawless and Dick Coleman



Caption: Photograph taken in front of Mansion House Dublin June 1917 of Easter Rising prisoners released. R Coleman second row from front, left to right, kneeling, second last, holding hat . Image courtesy of Bureau of Military History of Ireland.



Studio portrait of Richard Coleman in uniform

Coleman's garrison was rounded up at the Rotunda Hospital for identification and then marched to Richmond Barracks to be court-martialed that day and sent to Kilmainham Gaol. Richard Coleman was sentenced to death but the sentence was later commuted to penal servitude.

The Volunteers were shipped to Dartmoor England where Richard was put in solitary confinement. Then the prisoners were divided and Richard was sent to Lewes prison in Kent.

Most of the prisoners were released in June 1917, and they received a £100 grant from the National Aid Fund in America. They all gave their money to start the New Ireland Friendly Society. Richard was on the Board of Directors. He was appointed a Trustee and got a salary as a Superintendent.

During the election campaign for Eamon De Valera for County Clare, Richard Coleman, like Ashe, travelled to Ennis where volunteers appeared in uniform for the first time since the insurrection.

Richard paraded and addressed a group of Clare volunteers and was arrested for drilling and sent to Mountjoy for six months. Here he took part in the famous hunger strike, on which his friend and comrade Thomas Ashe lost his life.

The death of Thomas Ashe caused such a public protest that the prisoners were moved from the Mountjoy. Richard was sent to Cork and later transferred to Dundalk gaol. At Dundalk they started another hunger strike and were later released.



An Troid ar son Saoirse na hÉireann I bhFine Gall

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Caption: Photograph taken in front of Mansion House Dublin June 1917 of Easter Rising prisoners released. R Coleman second row from front, left to right, kneeling, second last, holding hat . Image courtesy of Bureau of Military History of Ireland.



Studio portrait of Richard Coleman in uniform

Gabhadh garastún Uí Cholmáin ag Ospidéal an Rotunda chun aitheantas a dhéanamh orthu agus leis sin cuireadh ar máirseáil iad go dtí beairicí Richmond chun iad a chur faoi thriail armchúirte agus ansin chun iad a chur ar aghaidh go dtí Príosún Chill Mhaighneann.

Daoradh Ó Colmáin chun báis ach níos deireanaí leasíodh an pionós sin go pianseirbhís.

Cuireadh na hÓglaigh ar seol go dtí Dartmoor i Sasana, áit ina gcuireadh Risteard i ngaibhniú aonair. Leis sin, roinneadh na príosúnaigh agus cuireadh Risteard go Príosún Lewes in Kent.

Scaoileadh saor an mhórchuid de na príosúnaigh in Iúil 1917 agus fuair siad deontas 100 punt ón gCiste Cúnamh Náisiúnta i Meiriceá. Thug siad go léir an t-airgead a fuair siad isteach sa Chara-Chumann Éire Nua. Bhí Risteard ar bhord na stiúrthóirí. Ceapadh é ina Iontaobhaí agus fuair sé tuarastal mar Fheitheoir.

Le linn fheachtas toghchánaíochta Éamon De Valera i gContae an Chláir, chuaigh Risteard Ó Colmáin, agus an tÁghasach leis, go hInis agus is ann a bhí na hÓglaigh le feiceáil faoi éide den chéad uair i ndiaidh an Éirí Amach.

Chuir Risteard grúpa d’Óglaigh ó Chontae an Chláir ar paráid, gabhadh é as iad a chur ar druileáil agus cuireadh é go Muinseo ar feadh sé mhí. Nuair a bhí sé gafa ann, ghlac sé páirt sa stailc ocrais cháiliúil ina bhfuair a chara agus a chomrádaí Tomás Ághas bás.

Tháinig an méid sin agóid phoiblí sna sála ar bhás Thomáis Ághais go n-aistríodh na príosúnaigh ó Mhuinseo. Cuireadh Risteard go Corcaigh agus níos déanaí aistríodh go príosún Dhún Dealgan é. Thosaigh siad stailc ocrais eile i nDún Dealgan agus scaoileadh saor iad.

Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
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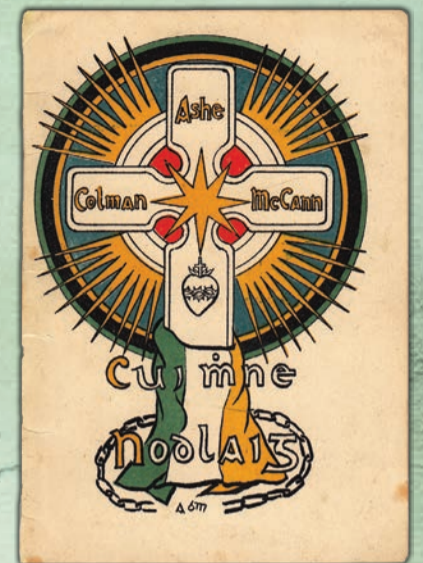
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Fingal and the Fight for Irish Freedom

'And poor Dick Coleman has left us to join his comrades. Fingal has contributed more than its share.'

Eamonn De Valera



Christmas Memorial Card bearing the names of Fingal Battalion members, Ashe, Coleman and McCann - Fingal Archives



Front and back of postcard sent by Richard Coleman to his mother from Usk - Fingal Archives Collection



Fingal Archives Collection

In the Spring of 1918 after only a brief period out of prison, Richard and all the leaders of Sinn Fein were re-arrested in connection with an alleged 'German Plot' charge.

On the 17th May 1918 the prisoners were gathered at Dublin Castle and Coleman was sent to Usk Prison in Wales. An epidemic of influenza broke out in the prison in November and Richard and a number of his POW's, already weakened by 6 months in confinement, had little or no resistance.

They received no medical attention and were left in their cells.

Dr Morton took up duty as Assistant Medical Officer in the prison. On the 1st of December 1918 he diagnosed Coleman with pneumonia. He was removed to hospital the next day but before his family could get to see him, he died on the 7th December 1918.

Remembering the result of the verdict on the death of Thomas Ashe, the Home Office instructed the Prison Governor to refuse to grant an Inquest.

Richard's brother Fred arrived in Usk but was refused admission. He claimed that

Richard was strong and healthy at the time of his arrest, while three of his fellow prisoners gave evidence that poor prison conditions and improper nursing had contributed to his death.

Richard's remains were released to his brother Fred and brought back to Dublin.

Over 15,000 mourners followed the funeral procession and many more lined the route, while tri-colours draped in black ribbon were displayed everywhere.

A firing party of six Volunteers defied Government regulations and police and fired three volleys of shots over the grave in Glasnevin.

Richard's sad end was final stroke for victory. Sinn Fein referred often to his tragedy in their election posters, and the event is regarded by historians as having played a significant part in the historic landslide election of the Sinn Fein candidates that followed.

On hearing the news of Coleman's death, De Valera is quoted as saying:

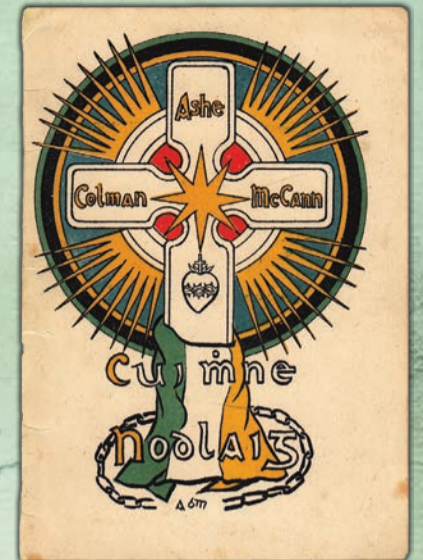
'And poor Dick Coleman has left us to join his comrades. Fingal has contributed more than its share.'



An Troid ar son Saoirse na hÉireann I bhFine Gall

'And poor Dick Coleman has left us to join his comrades. Fingal has contributed more than its share.'

Eamonn De Valera



Christmas Memorial Card bearing the names of Fingal Battalion members, Ashe, Coleman and McCann - Fingal Archives



Front and back of postcard sent by Richard Coleman to his mother from Usk - Fingal Archives Collection



Fingal Archives Collection

In Earrach 1918, tar éis dó a bheith tréimhse bheag ghairid as príosún, gabhadh Risteard agus na ceannairí go léir de Shinn Féin den athuair agus gearradh orthu go raibh baint acu le 'Comhcheilg Ghearmánach' líomhnaithe.

Ar an 17 Bealtaine 1918 bailíodh na príosúnaigh le chéile ag Caisleán Bhaile Átha Cliath agus cuireadh Ó Colmáin go Príosún Usk sa Bhreatain Bheag. Tháinig eipidéim den fhliú go dtí an príosún i mí na Samhna agus ba bheag frithsheasmhacht a bhí ag Risteard agus roinnt dá gcomhphríosúnaigh cogaidh, agus iad lag tar éis 6 mhí a bheith caite acu i ngéibheann, ina leith.

Níor tugadh aon chúram leighis dóibh agus fágadh iad ina gcillíní iad.

Chuaigh an Dr Morton isteach ann chun dualgais a ghlacadh mar oifigeach leighis cúnta. Ar an 1 Nollaig rinne sé diagnóis ar Ó Colmáin go raibh níúmóine air. Aistríodh é go dtí an tOspidéal an lá dár gcionn ach fuair sé bás ar an 7 Nollaig 1918, sula raibh seans ag a mhuintir é a fheiceáil.

Tar éis an cleacht a bhí múinte dóibh nuair a scaoileadh fíoras ar bhás Thomáis Ághais, d'ordaigh an Oifig Gnóthaí Baile do Rialtóir an Phríosúin ionchoisne a dhiúltú.

Shroich deartháir Risteard Usk ach níor cheadaíodh dó isteach. Deir a dheartháir go

raibh sé láidir agus sláintiúil ag am a ghabhála agus thug triúr dá gcomhphríosúnaigh fianaise go raibh tionchar ag an drochbhaile a bhí sa phríosún agus an t-altranas míchuí ar a bhás.

Ligeadh dá dheartháir a chorpán a fháil agus aistríodh ar ais go Baile Átha Cliath é.

Bhí breis is 15,000 duine a shiúil taobh thiar dá chónra sa mhórshíúil ag an tsochraid agus bhí i bhfad níos mó ná sin a sheas ar thaobh ar fad an bhealaigh, agus bhí brataigh thrídhathacha na hÉireann ar taispeáint gach áit.

Thug meitheal lámhaigh de sheisir Ógánach neamhaird do rialacháin an Rialtais agus na bpóilíní agus scaoil trí rosc thar an uaimh i nGlas Naíon.

Ba é an buille is deireanaí roimh bhua críoch bhrónach Risteard. Is minic a rinne Sinn Féin tagairt dá bhás tragóideach sna póstaear a chur sé suas don toghchán, agus féachann staraith ar an eachtra mar thosca suntasach san ollbhua stairiúil do na hiarrthóirí Shinn Féin a tháinig sna sala air.

Ar chloisteáil dó scéala bhás Ó Colmáin, tagraítear go ndúirt De Valera:

'Agus tá Dick Ó Colmáin tar éis sinn a fhágáil chun a bheith lena chomrádaí.

Tá muintir Fhine Gall tar éis níos mó ná a chionn féin a dhéanamh.'

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