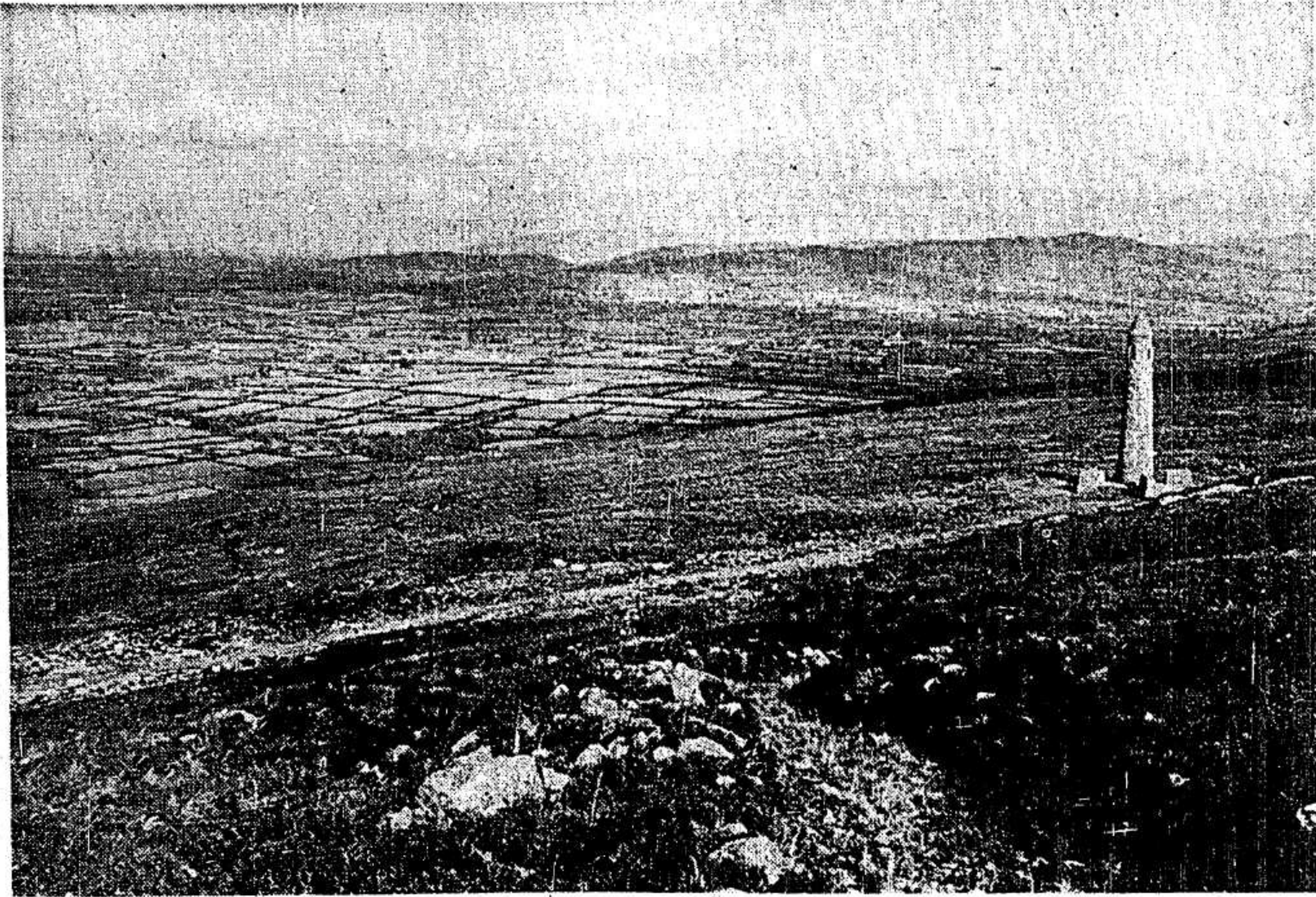


Death of a revolutionary—part two



Area surrounding Liam Lynch's memorial on the Knockmealdowns

'Are you one
of the old
crowd? Then
shake hands
with me.'



Lieut. Lawrence Clancy

'BURY ME WITH FITZGERALD!'

'This is a pity. It should
never have happened'

The death of Liam Lynch has been shrouded in controversy ever since that fateful day in April, 1923, when he was shot on a lonely hillside on the Waterford/Tipperary border. The EVENING HERALD recently came into possession of this document which was prepared by Lieut. Lawrence Clancy, the man who led the patrol which shot Lynch. Today he concludes his story . . .

HE WAS A BIG sallow complexioned man, rather pale faced, wearing glasses. I said, as I dropped on one knee beside him—"Are you the bloody Chief-of-Staff of the Irregulars?" He answered "I am General Liam Lynch, Chief-of-Staff of the Irish Republican Army. Get me a priest and a doctor, I am dying."

I said—"Where are your guns," and then proceeded to search him. He answered—"My friends have taken my guns." He then gave a moan of pain.

I searched his pockets quickly to make sure he had no guns and said: "Where are you hit." He said: "Touch the lower part of my stomach with your hand; oh, there; oh there." By this time I glanced and saw practically all my troops gathering around.

I said: "Do you all want to be riddled? Come on; get out at once before the rest of them get away. They've gone this way. Come on and spread out for God's sake."

We ran towards the skyline a few hundred yards ahead and there we had a good clear view of the mountain, which was practically level or flat at this

point, going towards the Mount Mellera direction.

I scanned the landscape with my glasses while the soldiers searched round for a while, but no further sign of Republicans could be found. We then went back towards Liam Lynch, who was being tended by a couple of soldiers. We decided the remainder should not go down the mountain but through a ravine towards the lowlands of Goatensbridge.

A further search of Lynch resulted in the finding of approximately fifteen or eighteen rounds of Parabellum ammunition, plus one gold and silver pocket watch, one silver fountain pen, together with seven shillings and ten pence in cash. There were also a few documents pertaining to I.R.A.

He said once again he was dying and I said: "We will have a look at your wound." So we opened his clothes and there it was, an entrance wound, scarcely visible, in front of one of the hip bones, and an exit wound in the very same spot, in front and opposite the other hip bone, with about one inch of the intestine protruding at the exit wound.

A few drops of blood showed that the bullet had torn its way through the intestines and had probably penetrated vital organs.

I then enquired if anyone had a field bandage in his possession and a man named Houlihan, who had fought in the 1914-18 war, said he had but he would not give it to a — diehard, because he had been hit himself. He at once undressed to show me the scorch of a bullet across one buttock.

I said: "Give me your bandage, you want nothing on that little burn." He refused, so I was compelled to produce my revolver to get the bandage. Houlihan deserted that night from Clogheen and I have not heard of him since.

THE BANDAGE WAS TOTALLY INADEQUATE FOR LYNCH'S BODY AND HE WAS SUFFERING PAIN, ESPECIALLY WHEN BEING MOVED. HE WAS GROWING PALER AND PALER HOURLY. WE CONSTRUCTED AN IMPROVED STRETCHER WITH A COUPLE OF RIFLES AND A SOLDIER'S GREAT-COAT TO CARRY HIM DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN.

Oh, what a job. It was accomplished with trouble



to us and pain to poor Lynch. You can imagine what it is to try and keep a big heavy man on two rifles, three feet, eight inches long, and in a semi-sitting position, because he could not bear to be fully stretched with his wound.

Lynch was a great patient but I must pay tribute to those soldiers who carried him down that rough mountain side, all bunched together in a square yard or less, and he asking to be let down every few yards.

I disarmed a soldier and sent him for a priest and doctor but the poor chap was afraid to go as I later found. When we got to the round there was my soldier but no priest or doctor. He said he couldn't get a bicycle; when I asked him to go again he began to cry and he said he would be shot if they got him, because he was only a young lad.

About this time Captain Taylor arrived down the hill with his party of troops and asked me about the whole affair and what I was going to do. I told him. Then he said: "I don't approve at all, your handling of the situation is questionable."

WE HAD HOT WORDS AND DREW GUNS AT EACH OTHER WHEREUPON THE CAPTAIN SAID HE WAS TAKING BACK ALL TROOPS.

I said: "You won't take my men," and he replied: "Who is in charge of the column?" To this I replied that I was holding the men and that I was indifferent to what the consequences would be. With that Captain Taylor left with the forty or so men he had with him and returned to

Clogheen district. The rest stayed with me.

I decided to go on to Newcastle with Lynch because it was nearer to Clonmel and I knew I should get medical attention and a priest as soon as possible. As luck would have it we had not gone far when a clergyman came up in a pony and trap.

As he passed I asked if he was a Catholic priest. He replied: "I am."

"Are you the priest coming to the wounded man," said I.

"No," he answered, "have you a wounded man?"

"We have."

"Where is he," he asked.

"There in the car," I replied.

"Oh, thank God I came this way. I was going no place in particular."

I gave him the details of the engagement on the hill and said I thought Lynch needed a priest.

We had, by this time, procured a pony from a small farmer at the foot of the mountain to convey Lynch to Newcastle. Well, on reaching Newcastle I phoned Clonmel, informed the military authorities of our capture and requested an escort ambulance and doctor as soon as possible.

We obtained a glass of brandy for poor Lynch and a mattress and blankets from the local publican, an ex-R.I.C. man, by the way, in whose parlour we placed Lynch in comparative comfort after his ordeal of the day.

I felt happy myself. As I sat in the adjoining room, the soldier who was minding Lynch looked in and said: "The prisoner wants you, sir." "I went in and Lynch

'I am going from it now.
Poor, poor Ireland...'

said to me: "Is it getting dark?"

I replied: "No. It is not 3 o'clock yet. Are you comfortable? You are here only an hour or so yet."

"I thought it was getting . . . I must be going to die, and I want to ask you to do a couple of little things for me."

He said: "When I die, tell my people I want to be buried with Fitzgerald of Fermoy, will you think of that?"

I assured him I would, and asked him was it the hunger striker who had died. "Yes," he replied, "the greatest friend I have had on this earth."

"Are you one of the old crowd, the I.R.A., I mean," he asked. I replied that I was, and said I had two brothers killed during the Tan war, with smoking guns in their hands, and that I had been tried by Field-General Court-Martial at Victoria Barracks, Cork, for murdering His Majesty's Forces and police.

He raised his right hand and said: "Shake hands, I am one of the old crowd, too," and with that the tears began to stream down his face. With my hands clasped in his I, too, sobbed.

"GOD PRAY FOR ME, ALL THIS IS A PITY, IT SHOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED. I AM GLAD NOW I AM GOING FROM IT ALL, POOR IRELAND, POOR IRELAND."

"Now, to my little things. I want to tell you what to do with them. My gold watch and my fountain pen to my brother. Brother Lynch, he is a Christian Brother. My silver watch to my sister, Mrs. Mullins, of Mitchelstown. My silver fountain pen you may keep for yourself as a small token of appreciation for the way you treated me from the time I fell into your hands. God bless you and the boys who carried me down the hill. I am sorry for all the trouble I caused you and them."

I repeated all his requests for him and said: "I will see to all that." Once again we clasped hands and parted with tears in our eyes. He added: "I will live until about 10 o'clock tonight." That ended our conversation.

In about 10 minutes General Prout and another officer whom I knew not, but who was a captain, arrived with an Army doctor, ambulance and medical orderlies with stretcher, etc. Lynch was conveyed to Clonmel Hospital where, as pre-

dicted by himself, he died at approximately 10 p.m. that evening.

His requests I conveyed to General Prout as well as the articles and slips of paper on which I had written the requests, so that he could remember all and make certain that all his requests were carried out. I produced the silver mounted fountain pen and told him I was to keep it myself as a token of appreciation and remembrance of poor Lynch.

"Oh," said Prout, "give me that pen as well as all the other things. Intelligence will want all for the present. You will get it afterwards, and all those other people will get theirs in a course of a few days."

After a week or ten days had elapsed I was at Coolville House, Clogheen, where we were stationed, when a Christian Brother approached me. He was Brother Lynch, a brother of the late Liam Lynch, R.I.P.

He introduced himself and demanded his brother's property which he alleged I had kept, but I informed him that I had given them to General Prout with full details as to what should be done with them.

As he had a motor car, I offered to accompany him to Clonmel to see General Prout, but he retorted: "I have something to do besides driving Free-States around the country." I mentioned the pen which his brother had left me, and that I did not get it either.

Some weeks later I saw General Prout and made enquiries about my pen. He informed me it was dispatched to Lynch's people as well as the other articles. I hope the above is the truth and that poor Liam Lynch's people . . .

GOD BLESS YOU, AND I WILL PRAY FOR YOU, AND YOU SOMETIMES THINK OF POOR LIAM LYNCH AND SAY A LITTLE PRAYER FOR ME.

TOMORROW—
Men who fought beside Lynch and who knew him intimately tell of their private memories of the man, and recall those tragic days just before the end of the Civil War.