



Jim and Mary Roughan/Rowan



The Treacy family



Autograph Books

Resistance in Ballykinlar, Tom Treacy and the discovery of dictaphones / listening devices.

Tom was a member of the prisoners' officer council which met in the Black Hut. It became apparent to them that certain protest actions they had planned were being stymied by the introduction of more soldiers to the camp. Tom remembered he had read an article about a device called a dictaphone which could essentially listen in to conversations. He suggested a search be made for these devices, but nothing was found. However, the problem reoccurred, and he persisted so much that his fellow officers felt he had dictaphones on the brain. They were still sceptical about the likelihood of finding such a device and about where to search in a large camp.

Tom suggested that they start with the Black Hut where the officers met around the stove. Using the skills of Tom Hickey and other carpenters among them and hampered by lack of proper tools they duly searched again. In his Witness Statement he said, after a number of boards had been removed, they found a dictaphone about two feet from the stove. None of them had ever seen anything like it before as this was advanced technology. He continued

To describe the discovery as a sensation was to put it mildly. I will never forget the look of consternation on the faces of Joe McGrath, Mossy Donegan, Dr.T.F. O' Higgins, Barney O' Driscoll and other members of the Camp Council.

In all they discovered about six "listening sets". Joe McGrath, Commandant of Camp 1 and T.D., gave him the job of searching each morning for the wires and cutting them each time they were replaced. The sandy soil in the area made this easier to spot. However, the soil made it more difficult to dig escape tunnels but undaunted the internees managed to dig seven tunnels. The tunnels were discovered, and Army engineers studied them carefully and the plans still exist in the British National Archives and were an inspiration to P.O.Ws during World War 2.



Photo Courtesy of KMGLM Ballykinlar Collection

Camp 1 Internee Officer Council

Back Row Left - Right

Tom Meldon, Barney O'Driscoll, Thomas Treacy, D. Hogan

Front Row Left - Right

Art O'Donnell, Mossie Donegan a.k.a. Thomas Fitzpatrick, Joseph McGrath T.D., Dr. Richard Hayes T.D., Dr. T.F. O'Higgins

Tom Nolan's Autograph Books, Kilkenny Archaeological Society.

Many prisoners kept autograph books and got their fellow prisoners to write verses in them.

Tom Nolan's autograph book is a particular gem because it contains verses written by other Kilkenny prisoners and wonderful watercolours by Jim Lalor showing the interior of Hut 19 and the prisoners' altar in the chapel.

Tom Nolan was very involved in Conradh na Gaeilge and he wrote in Jack Creed's autograph book about his love of the Irish language. Jack, from Burncourt, Cahir Co. Tipperary was also an inmate of Hut 19.

'Sí an Ghaeilge an teanga is binne liom agus labhróid me í i gcónaí.

'Sí teanga na naomh is na n-ollamh í agus tagann sí díreach ón chroí.

(For me Irish is the sweetest language, and I will speak it always.

It is the language of the saint and scholars and it comes directly from the heart.)

Tom Treacy used the same verse in several autograph books, Nolan's included. It is a verse from Thomas Moore's *Forget not the Field*. This inscription from the Kilmainham Gaol Ballykinlar collection is in patriotic green ink.

The Capture of Ernie O'Malley and more Kilkenny Arrests. 9/10 December 1920.

When Tom Treacy, Jim Lalor, Tom Nolan, and Mick Loughman were arrested in late November 1920 the Kilkenny Brigade had been planning an attack on Woodstock House, in Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny which was the headquarters of the Auxiliaries in the Southeast of Ireland. Tom Treacy and Jim Lalor having reconnoitred the area were aware that

Woodstock could only be taken by strategy and every detail in the planning had to be carefully considered, as it would be disastrous for us if our first engagement with the Auxiliaries were not successful. They had also decided to use Flying Columns in the operation along with diversionary tactics.

Tom Treacy had been summoned to meet Chief of Staff, General Richard Mulcahy in the Banba Hall, Parnell St. Dublin earlier in November. Here he was introduced to Ernie O'Malley, an I.R.A. training officer, who he was informed would be sent to Kilkenny to help the Kilkenny Brigade take Woodstock. Such a task was no easy thing to achieve as the Kilkenny Brigade were well aware of from their reconnaissance of the imposing and strategically well defended site of Woodstock House which was situated on an elevated site, commanding a view of Inistioge and the valley below. In addition the Auxiliary division was well-armed, and also mobile being supplied with Crossley tenders. These facts contrasted starkly with the dearth of weaponry available to the Kilkenny men. At this initial meeting O'Malley contributed little to the conversation.

On the 23 November when they were arrested Tom Treacy and Jim Lalor were still awaiting the arrival of O'Malley to Kilkenny. He didn't arrive until the 4 December the very day the *Kilkenny People* was reporting on the opening of camps for mass internment.

O' Malley attended the brigade meeting where Peter DeLoughry was elected Brigade Commandant and he noted down the names of the Kilkenny Battalion officers and weaponry available to the Brigade. He then decided that he would go to Inistioge and meet James Hanrahan who was the local commanding officer. Despite warnings about this course of action he ignored advice from Tom Stallard not to bring his notebook to such a dangerous area so likely to be raided by Auxiliaries. He was captured in Hanrahan's house on the 9 December 1920 along with his notebook which prompted a jubilant Auxiliary to exclaim *We have the lot!* James Hanrahan was arrested along with his brother and cousins, Ned Holland and a workman named Joseph Colleton. The Auxiliaries then set fire to the Hanrahan house in Cappagh. In February 1921, the men were tried by field general court martial in Waterford. James Hanrahan was sentenced to 12 months and Ned Holland was sentenced to 10 years penal servitude.



Joe Rice

Ned Comerford

This was a second severe blow to the Kilkenny Brigade and led to the arrest of Peter DeLoughry, the newly-elected Brigade Commandant and Mayor of the city, on the 10 December, along with Jim Roughan/ Rowan, Joe Rice and Ned Comerford. Peter DeLoughry was eventually released about five weeks later from Arbour Hill and was duly re-elected Mayor for a third term. The other men were interned in Camp 2 in Ballykinlar which was opened because there were over 1000 internees in Camp 1 by this stage. By February 1921, the authorities opened Spike Island as an internment camp and 33 Kilkenny men were interned there.

When Ernie O'Malley published his book *On Another Man's Wound* in 1936 the Kilkenny Brigade disputed his interpretation of events and characters and his generally poor view of Kilkenny and Kilkenny men. The *Kilkenny Reply* comprised several articles in December 1936 in the *Irish Press*, and it was signed by Tom Treacy, Jim Lalor, Ned Comerford, Seán Byrne, Joe Rice, John Joseph Byrne, and Patrick Bryan, then Mayor of Kilkenny. They countered O' Malley's criticisms and pointed out the incongruity of his actions so close to Woodstock, the headquarters of the Auxiliaries in the Southeast. What incensed the writers was the fact that neither Peter DeLoughry nor Jim Roughan could defend themselves from criticism, since they were both dead at this time.

Jim Roughan had died aged only 41 in 1925 and Peter DeLoughry in 1931 aged 49.

Glenmore and Castlecomer Connections to Camp 2 Ballykinlar.

Initially I used the county lists for both camps which appear in Liam Ó Duibhir's very informative book (Prisoners of War, Ballykinlar Internment camp 1920-21). I recognised seven of the fourteen names given for Kilkenny and could add one more i.e. Tom Nolan. Only some of the remaining names had an area address. So that meant I focused on Glenmore first and Castlecomer later. Given the scarcity of information I was not successful in all cases. The roll books in the Kilmainham Gaol Ballykinlar Collection were invaluable for shedding light and confirming the identity of some of these lesser-known men. Equally the Military Archives website is an extremely useful resource which is releasing information in tranches, and we look forward to finding more relating to Kilkenny men and women during the War of Independence. If any reader can supply clarification on any of the men who were interned in Ballykinlar contact can be made through Kilkenny Library Local Studies section.

From the Truce to Release 9 December 1921.

The agreement of a Truce in July 1921 did not bring release for the thousands of internees. Many County Councils, Kilkenny included, protested about the continued incarceration of their colleagues. Tom Treacy had been elected to Kilkenny Corporation in the January 1920 municipal elections. By October 1921 he became last Commandant of Camp 1 after the escape and recapture of Mossy Donegan.

After the signing of the Anglo - Irish Treaty on 6 December 1921 word came that the prisoners were to be released. The *Freeman's Journal* reported that *a chorus of delirious ecstasy* echoed through the Camps and the men were allowed fraternise for the first time.

When questioned about the response to the Treaty one internee replied, *We had long and contentious debates all night, foreshadowing the bitter Treaty debates to come.*

The joy of release was tempered by the events of their journey home when the special trains packed full of now ex-internees were attacked by a sectarian mob near Banbridge. Tom details all this in his Witness Statement 1093 and it was reported in the newspapers at the time. He felt they were lucky not to have experienced fatalities. Unfortunately for one released internee, Declan Horton, from Waterford, this was to be the case. A bomb was thrown at the train from the parapet of the railway bridge by Black and Tans as it entered Thurles Station. Several other people were injured. Declan Horton died that night from his injuries.

Of the Kilkenny ex-internees several of them were not happy with the Treaty but accepted it and returned to civilian life. At least two, Mick Loughman and Patrick Dempsey joined the National army for a few years. Some went on to marry and start families. Tom Treacy returned to civilian life. His Witness Statement simply said *I took no part in the Civil War.*

Despite differing opinions, a bond remained between the men but very few of them spoke about their experiences. The men who were interned in Ballykinlar were in the first mass internment camp opened during the War of Independence and they were interned the longest. Now at the centenary of their internment is a good time to remember them. As William Murphy pointed out they too were revolutionaries, challenging the system from within as much as their comrades from outside.



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Orla Murphy, (Author) Carmel Cummins, (Editor)
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Kilkenny Men Interned in Ballykinlar, Co. Down.

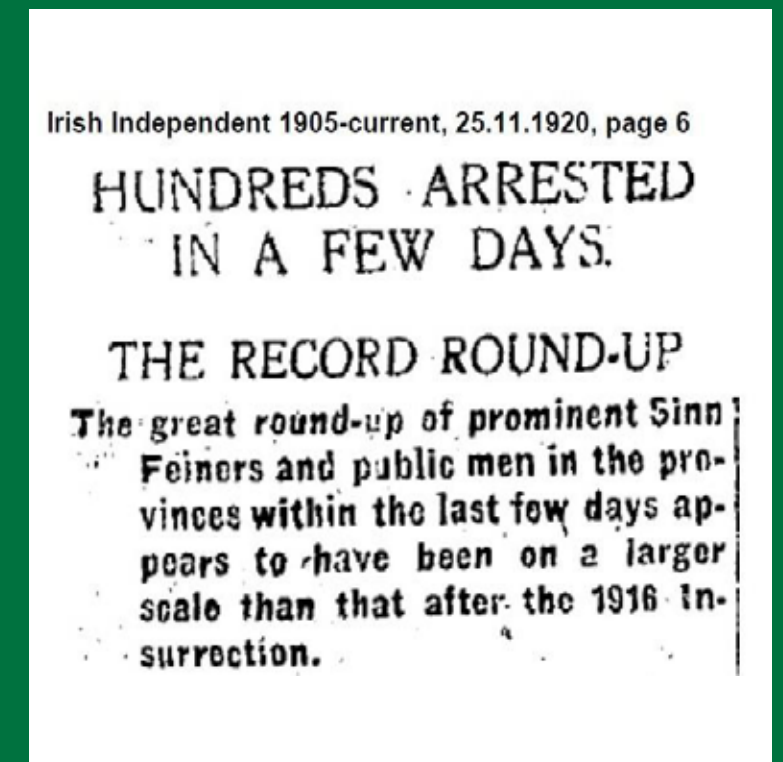
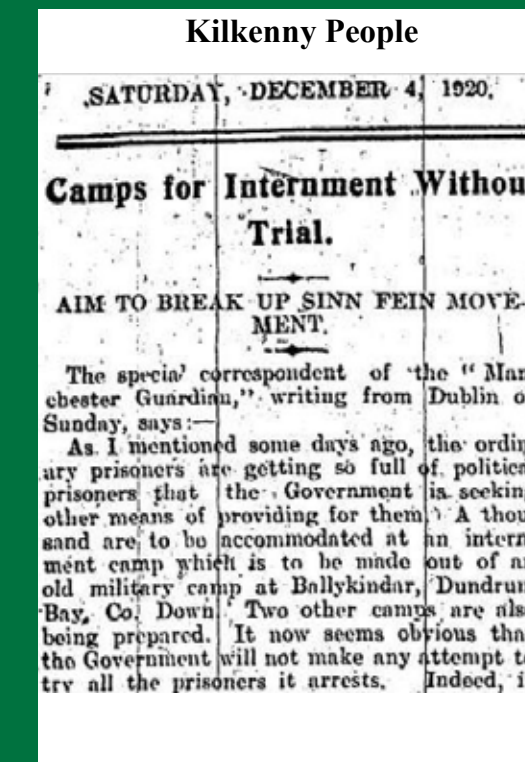
1920-21



View of Sentry Tower and Huts in Ballykinlar 1921. Courtesy Kilmainham Gaol Library and Museum.

Kilkenny People

Irish Independent



Kilkenny men Interned in Ballykinlar, Co. Down 1920-21

Internment = imprisonment without trial.

“*The prisons became one of the most significant fields in which Irish nationalists challenged the legitimacy and durability of British authority. Because of this, the prisons and camps were not just places one learned to be a revolutionary; these were places where one was a revolutionary.*“

William Murphy, Political Imprisonment & the Irish 1912-1921, Oxford University Press.

Ballykinlar Camp Co.Down was the first and the largest of the internment camps opened by the British authorities at the height of the War of Independence in December 1920. Several of the Kilkenny men who were interned in Ballykinlar already had experience of internment earlier in 1920 and some like Tom Treacy, Jim Lalor and Ned Comerford had experienced it in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising. Both Tom and Jim had ended up in Frongoch via Richmond Barracks, Dublin, and Wakefield Prison in Yorkshire. It was in Frongoch, “the University of Revolution”, which had thrown almost 1800 prisoners together after the Rising, that the seeds of the resurgent Irish Volunteers were sown.

The day after Bloody Sunday, 21 November,1920, the authorities moved swiftly to implement a country-wide round up of any prominent Sinn Féiners, public representatives and anyone suspected of being an I.R.A. officer. They were enabled to do this by the Restoration of Order in Ireland Regulations which had multiplied the

number of raids and arrests carried out in all areas that autumn.

On the 4 December, the Kilkenny People reported that Ballykinlar, a British army training base duringVWW1, was being readied for an influx of internees from across the country. During the war British soldiers had christened it World’s End and that One eyed Godforsaken Ballykinlar, Co. Down because it was so isolated on the shores of Dundrum Bay .

By the time this news broke in the local newspaper arrests had already been made on 23 November and the first batch of Kilkenny men who were destined for Ballykinlar had been transferred from Kilkenny Military Barracks to Kilworth camp and then to Cork Military Prison from where they were transferred on board a ship called *The Heather* to Belfast along with 250 other prisoners.

They were Tom Treacy,Brigade Commandant, Jim Lalor, Vice Commandant, Tom Nolan, Outrath and Mick Loughman, New St. They endured a gruelling voyage in freezing weather and were met with a very hostile reception by the shipyard workers on arrival in Belfast before being put on a train which dropped them at Ballykinlar Halt and still handcuffed they walked the three miles to the *Cage*, as they described it, because of the thick barbed wire impeding escape.Tradition has it that Ballykinlar was the site where St. Patrick landed in Ireland when he was

taken as a slave, something that would have resonated with the prisoners.

Martial law was declared on the 10 December in four Munster counties, Cork, Limerick, Kerry, and Tipperary. By the 1 January 1921, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford, and Clare were also “proclaimed”.

Of the initial Kilkenny arrests, as recently as April 1920, all four had been arrested after the successful attack on Hugginstown R.I.C. Barracks which was only the 3rd surrender of an R.I.C. Barracks in the country and the first in Leinster.They had been imprisoned in Crumlin Rd. Gaol in Belfast and Tom Treacy, Mick Loughman, along with the Hugginstown prisoners, had been transferred to Wormwood Scrubs Prison in London whilst on hunger strike.

Jim Lalor and Tom Nolan had been released due to ill health and the death of Tom Nolan’s sister. By the time he arrived in Ballykinlar, Mick Loughman had also spent a few months in Mountjoy and had been court-martialled but acquitted. So, they were well-acquainted with internment even before the mass internment facilities were opened in December 1920.

The camp held about 600 prisoners when they arrived and soon filled up to 1000 men necessitating the opening of a second camp. By February Spike Island was in use for internment followed by Bere Island and the Curragh. Thirty-three Kilkenny men were interned in Spike and one in the Curragh.

Details of Kilkenny men Interned in Ballykinlar, Co. Down 1920-21

Name	Dates Address Occupation in 1920	Where Buried	Camp No. in Ballykinlar Internment Camp	Hut No.
Thomas Treacy <ul style="list-style-type: none">Kilkenny Brigade Commandant 1919-1920 Last Commandant Camp 1, Ballykinlar.1921	1885-1975 Dean St. Kilkenny. <i>Drapery owner in Parliament St.</i>	Foulkstown, Kilkenny.	Camp 1	Hut 19
James Lalor <ul style="list-style-type: none">Kilkenny Brigade Vice Commandant	1886-1969 19 Friary St. Kilkenny. <i>Construction</i>	Tulla Cemetery, Threecastles, Co. Kilkenny.	Camp 1	Hut 19
Thomas Nolan <ul style="list-style-type: none">Captain Outrath Company	1892-1953 Outrath, Kilkenny. <i>Farmer</i>	Foulkstown, Kilkenny.	Camp 1	Hut 19
Michael Loughman	1896-1965 New St. Kilkenny <i>Gas Fitter</i>	Foulkstown, Kilkenny.	Camp 1	Hut 11
Michael Joseph Tierney	1897-1982 Kiltoran, Co. Kilkenny 16 King St. London. Glenageary <i>Clerk</i>	Deansgrange Cemetery, Dublin.	Camp 1	Hut 2
Edward Comerford <ul style="list-style-type: none">Quartermaster Kilkenny Brigade	1880-1962 Newmarket, 6 Wellington Square, Kilkenny. Burnchurch, Kilkenny. <i>Irish Teacher</i>	Ballygunner Cemetery, Waterford.	Camp 2	Hut 21
James Roughan/ Rowan <ul style="list-style-type: none">Commandant 7th Battalion Kilkenny Brigade	1884-1925 Ahenure, Callan, Co. Kilkenny <i>Farmer</i>	Kilbride Cemetery, Callan	Camp 2	Hut 21
Joseph Rice	1891-1965 Outrath Kilkenny <i>Farmer</i>	Foulkstown, Kilkenny.	Camp 2	Hut 21
James Walsh <ul style="list-style-type: none">Captain Glenmore Company	1899 - ? Glenmore, Co. Kilkenny and Adare, co. Limerick <i>Creamery Worker</i>		Camp 2	Hut 3
James Mernagh	1889-1959 Glenmore, Dysert, Castlecomer. <i>Railway Worker</i>	Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin	Camp 2	Hut 3
Richard Dunphy	1885-1955 Crutt, Castlecomer, Kilkenny and Dublin <i>Shop Assistant</i>		Camp 2	Hut 21
Sean Dunphy	1883-? Crutt, Castlecomer, Kilkenny <i>Possibly a brother or relative of Richard?</i>		Camp 2?	Hut?
Patrick Dempsey	1886-? Loon, Castlecomer. 17 Little Mary St. Dublin <i>Insurance Agent</i>		Camp 2	Hut 15
Sean Ruane	Address <i>unknown</i>		Camp 2?	Hut?
Edward Walsh	<i>Not identified</i>			



Hut 19, Camp 1, Ballykinlar 1921.

Louis J. Walsh, a solicitor living in Derry, was interned along with Tom Treacy, Jim Lalor, and Tom Nolan. He later became first District Justice for Donegal. They were all inmates of Hut 19 and he mentioned them by name in his book, *On My Keeping and in Theirs, Talbot Press 1921*. He was released in May 1921 to stand in the general election. The Kilkenny men had to wait until after the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed in December 1921 before they got out of Ballykinlar on the 9 December 1921.

Photo Courtesy of Gearoid Kingston

Hut 19

I was very lucky in my hut, as my fellow hutsmen were men with whom it was a pleasure to live. Some of the men such as Paddy O’ Sullivan, Tom Treacy, Jim Lalor, Tom Nolan and Jack Fitzgerald- had a fairly extensive acquaintance with British prisons and had been through hunger strike.

One impression was deeply marked on my mind by my experiences in Hut 19 and in the Camp and that was the high standard of civilisation and idealism and spirituality of our people...

The saving of them is of course, first their religion, and then their sense of patriotism.

Tom Treacy detailed how the prisoners organised themselves on military lines with each row of ten huts making up a company. Each hut leader was answerable to a Line Captain and they in turn were answerable to the prisoners’ officer Commandant and committee.

Tom noted that *the brains of the prisoners were pooled for the benefit of the prisoners*. All kinds of classes ranging from Irish, history, politics, accountancy, agriculture were organised and in some cases the certificates issued enabled the released prisoners to secure employment. Henry Dixon who was a graduate of “Frongoch”, was the driving force in realising how important it was to combat the dreaded *barbed wire disease*, or demoralisation which could afflict them. There were also sporting events and competitions , theatrical and musical occasions. Martin Walton, later of Walton’s famous music shop in Dublin, organised the camp orchestra which included Peadar Kearney who wrote the words of Amhrán na bhFiann which is the National Anthem. Martin Walton also composed the *Ballykinlar March*. They also managed to smuggle in a typewriter and duplicator which allowed them to publish a magazine called “Ná Bac Leis” or “Never Mind” which kept up spirits with poems and humorous contributions, as well as sports results. M.J. Tierney contributed two articles in October and November 1921, entitled *The British Empire in Collapse* and *The Psychology of Modern Dress in Ballykinlar*.

The prisoners even managed to have a St. Patrick’s Day Parade in March 1921, marching in military formation, perhaps the only place in Ireland that managed that in that troubled time. Another famous internee was future Taoiseach, Seán Lemass, who was interned in Camp 2 Ballykinlar.

We are very lucky to have a photo of the prisoners from Hut 19. All photography was forbidden but they managed to smuggle in a small camera and only photos from Camp 1 survive. Jim Lalor, looking thin, and Tom Nolan, sporting a beard, are included. Unfortunately, Tom Treacy is not in this photo, but he is in a photo of the prisoners’ officer staff showing the effects of incarceration.

Life in Ballykinlar 1921

The first Kilkenny prisoners arrived to a bitterly cold Ballykinlar on 9 December 1920. Tom Treacy remembered seeing a glass of water in the hospital building frozen on a bedside table. The men were housed in Armstrong huts which were cold and damp and heated by a stove, but coal was in short supply and disputes soon arose when the prisoners were ordered to haul it to the huts whilst handcuffed to the buckets.

No. 1 Compound was composed of four lines of ten huts. Two were punishment cells, others were used as stores, offices, a dispensary, and post office. Each hut housed 25 men and conditions were spartan. There was a small area boarded off as a night latrine. The men slept on low wooden trestles and the cold conditions meant that they were prone to various respiratory diseases. We have Jim Lalor’s vivid watercolour, (in Tom Nolan’s autograph book) of the interior of Hut 19 which gives us a great insight into living conditions for the prisoners. There was no privacy, and the huts could be noisy. The military often disrupted the sleeping prisoners by night searches or roll calls. This created friction and protests. The prisoners hid some of their more *wanted* comrades by using other names and men went *on the run* between huts to escape attention. Mossy Donegan went by the name Thomas Fitzpatrick while he was in Camp 1. Punishments of solitary confinement and bread and water were issued in various instances. (see Ó Duibhir for details).

Sanitation and hygiene were primitive and inadequate for the large numbers of men and prisoners struggled to avoid scabies and lice. Diseases like pleurisy and pneumonia were common. Five men, aged between 17 and 41, died in Ballykinlar due to disease and the unwillingness of the military authorities to move them to properly equipped hospitals in nearby Belfast. To add insult to injury families were charged for the costs of returning their deceased Some broke

down mentally due to the conditions. Tom Treacy in his capacity as prisoners’ Commandant smuggled out a letter to the *Freeman’s Journal* in October 1921 expressing frustration and anger at the harsh treatment dealt out to sick prisoners who were eventually allowed to be transferred to hospital in Belfast but only at the point of a bayonet, handcuffed in an open lorry during a downpour.

If disease did not get you there was the ever-present possibility that you could be shot. Tom Treacy and Jim Lalor narrowly missed death one morning when a sentry fired at them without warning as they emerged from the chapel after mass. On Monday 17 January 1921 they both witnessed the shooting dead of Patrick Sloane and Joseph Tormey supposedly because they were too close to the barbed wire. They were killed by a single bullet which struck Tormey in the head ,passed through him and hit Sloane in the neck. The sentry had fired the shot without any warning and prevented the other internees from going to the aid of the dying men. Tom Treacy says in his WS 1093

I saw their bodies in a pool of their own blood where they fell.

No disciplinary action was taken against the sentry who killed them. Patrick Sloane had only been recently married and Joseph Tormey’s brother, James, was killed in an encounter with Crown forces in February 1921. During WW1 he had joined the British army as an underage boy, but his parents had written to the War Office to get him discharged. He had later joined the I.R.A.

Even after the Truce in July there was still the danger of death. On the 15 November 1921 at the height of the Treaty negotiations, Tadgh Barry, from Cork who was prominent in the Labour movement was shot dead, again by a sentry. His funeral was the largest in Cork since that of Lord Mayor Terence MacSwiney in 1920.

Food in Ballykinlar was often unpalatable. The men experienced real hunger and supplies of meat were sometimes tainted and condemned as inedible and unsafe. They never saw butter, only margarine which could be rancid at times. Rations were small and they depended a lot on parcels from home which they shared with their hut mates. Since many of the internees were the main breadwinners, this put increased pressure on families to find the wherewithal to send parcels, but friends and neighbours often rallied round. When a canteen system was set up prisoners still needed money to be able to buy necessities and some extra food with the tokens issued to them by the military who didn’t allow them to have cash. The prisoners even formed a branch of St. Vincent de Paul to help the more destitute among them.

Two of the Kilkenny internees were married , Tom Treacy and Jim Roughan/Rowan.

They had both married in 1915 and by the time they were arrested in December 1920 had 3 and 2 children, respectively. Tom’s wife was pregnant with their fourth child, Tomás, who was born in February

1921. His father did not get to see him until December 1921 and sadly the little boy died from childhood illness in May 1922. Jim Rowan was eventually released on parole in October 1921 because one of his children was seriously ill. The parole system in Ballykinlar was very uneven and many prisoners were refused parole even when they experienced bereavements.

The Irish Republican Prisoners Dependents’ Fund organised in each county to help families of internees. When questioned in the House of Commons regarding the situation of internees’ families and whether any provision had been made for them Sir Hamar Greenwood, Chief Secretary, replied *No Sir*. The upheaval and the effect on families in a society where few women were in paid employment can only be imagined. There were no visits permitted and all letters were censored. Resilience was a quality needed as much outside as inside the Camps where raids continued on homes including that of internees up to two weeks before Elizabeth Treacy gave birth to her fourth child.



Jim Lalor’s Watercolour of Interior of Hut 19 Nolan Autograph. Courtesy KAS.