

ILLUMINATING THE TRAGEDIES OF KERRY: THE MILITARY SERVICE PENSIONS COLLECTION AND THE CIVIL WAR IN KERRY

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On 10 March 1923 John C. Brosnan, an undertaker on Main Street, Castleisland, County Kerry was paid £10 in cash for a coffin. John Kerry O'Connor's thriving 'The Emporium' in Castleisland supplied a hearse for £2 and other funeral requirements for a further £1 10s.¹ These sums represented a small fortune for a bereaved father with insufficient grass on his three-acre holding for his two cows. Two of the man's daughters lived at home but were unemployed and another son, Patrick, was so ill-treated at the hands of the National Army while in custody in Tralee that he never recovered and died on 25 January 1927.² This was the grim situation that confronted Patrick Daly, of Ahaneboy, Castleisland, when he set about interring what remained of his son, John ('Jack') in Kilbannivane cemetery outside Castleisland. The latter was one of eight prisoners infamously blown up by a land mine at Ballyseedy on 7 March 1923. While John Daly's name and gruesome end have been documented, the lives of his father and siblings have not registered in the historical record. The detail provided in military service pension applications has decisively changed this and presents a hitherto unknown opportunity to trace some of the historical contours of family, locality and county. Drawing on examples from pension applications pertaining to deaths in Kerry in March 1923, this essay reflects on some of these new research possibilities.

The bloodshed in Kerry in March 1923 stands apart for its savagery, vengefulness, and extrajudicial nature. The sequence of events is well known.³ In the early hours of 6

¹ Receipt from John C. Brosnan, 6 Mar. 1933; Receipt from J.K. O'Connor and Sons, The Emporium, Castleisland, 18 Dec. 1933, MSPC/DP51 John Daly.

² Report by D. McAsey, Customs and Excise, Killarney, to Secretary, Army Pensions Board, 5 Mar. 1934; Julia Sheehan (sister of John Daly) to Dept. of Defence, 16 Oct. 1953, *ibid*.

³ See Niall C. Harrington, *A Kerry landing* (Dublin, 1992), pp 147-9; T. Ryle Dwyer, *Tans, terror and troubles: Kerry's real fighting story, 1913-23* (Cork, 2001), pp 367-73; Michael Hopkinson, *Green against green: the Irish Civil War* (2nd ed., Dublin, 2004), pp 240-2; Tom Doyle, *The Civil War in Kerry* (Cork, 2008), pp 271-6; Tim Horgan, *Dying for the cause: Kerry's republican dead* (Cork, 2015), pp 200-2; Gavin Foster, 'The Civil War in Kerry in history and memory' in Maurice J. Bric (ed.), *Kerry history and society: interdisciplinary*

March 1923 Paddy Pats O'Connor, from Knockaunatee, Castleisland and a second lieutenant attached to the intelligence department of the Kerry Command of the National Army, was killed instantly by a booby-trap mine in Barranarig Wood near Knocknagoshel. He had been given information that Humphrey Murphy and other prominent members of the anti-Treaty IRA were sheltering there. Captains Michael Dunne and Edward Stapleton of Dublin were also killed along with two Kerry natives, Privates Michael Galvin from Killarney and Laurence O'Connor from Causeway.⁴ Over the next fortnight, nineteen republican prisoners in Kerry were killed at the hands of the National Army in three land mine explosions and in individual killings for allegedly attempting to escape. Revenge for Barranarig Wood came swiftly. A mine constructed in Tralee by Captains Jim Clarke and Edward Flood of the National Army was placed in a mound of stones at Ballyseedy crossroads, about three miles from Tralee.⁵ Nine prisoners were selected at Ballymullen barracks. All bar John O'Connor, who was from Waterford, were Kerry men. Stephen Fuller survived the explosion and escaped. He later recounted to Robert Kee, the British writer, journalist and broadcaster, and to the *Kerryman* newspaper how the prisoners' ankles and knees were tied together and how the wounded were finished off by machine-gun fire.⁶ John Daly had been a prisoner in Ballymullen for over a month and had no involvement with the mine at Barranarig. On the same day, a similar premeditated killing of four captives took place in Killarney at Countess Bridge with one prisoner, Tadhg Coffey, escaping. Five days later, another batch of five prisoners were shot in the legs before being placed beside a landmine at Bahaghs near Caherciveen. There were no survivors to relate what had happened. A military inquiry into the killings was little more than a whitewash as it was headed by General Paddy Daly who had authorised the reprisal policy in the first place.

essays in the history of an Irish county (Dublin, 2020), pp 476-7; Owen O'Shea, *No middle path: the civil war in Kerry* (Newbridge, 2022), pp 82-106.

⁴ Acting Command Adjutant, Southern Command, to Adjutant General, GHQ, Dublin, 16 June 1924, MSPC/3D58 Patrick O'Connor; Barranarig Memorial, Knocknagoshel.

⁵ Horgan, *Dying for the cause*, p. 202; Ryle Dwyer, 'Two weeks of bloody massacres' in Simon Brouder (ed.), *Rebel Kerry: from the pages of the Kerryman* (Cork, 2017), p. 181.

⁶ Fuller spoke about Ballyseedy when interviewed in 1980 by Kee for his thirteen-part documentary series *Ireland – A Television History*. Fuller's contribution featured in episode ten on the Irish Civil War on 3 Feb. 1981. Fuller was interviewed at greater length about Ballyseedy by Peter Levy for the *Kerryman* in January 1981, see issue of 30 Jan. 1981.

A wide variety of disciplines use census data for the study of the past. The digitisation of the 1911 Census of Ireland in 2009 and the 1901 census a year later were landmarks that have transformed our understanding of what Ireland was like. Whereas the nominative census lists allow us to see the composition and size of households, the Military Service Pensions Collection facilitates the testing of the quality of the census data. That will become more apparent when the long-wished for 1926 census is made available to the public in January 2026. Furthermore, while census data provides a snapshot of household composition, the reports of police, social welfare officials and customs and excise officers in the MSPC reveal how a household fared over time. They answer questions such as what became of schoolchildren listed as ‘scholar’ in the 1911 census when they grew up, how many acres were farmed, was the holding sufficient to sustain a family in independent Ireland, and how many offspring emigrated.

To illustrate how the MSPC can complement census data, let us take the example of John Sugrue of Canuig, Ballinaskellings, who was killed at Bahags on 12 March 1923. The census reveals that his parents, Patrick Sugrue and Ellen Fitzgerald, had ten children by 1911, of whom seven had survived.⁷ Two more children were born before 1923. John, a 9-year-old schoolboy on census night, was the eldest child and his siblings ranged in age from seven to one. At the time of his death, the family survived on twenty-three acres of mountainy land with a poor law valuation of just £4, sufficient to maintain three cows and their calves.⁸ An acre was tilled for potatoes and vegetables and there was no shortage of turf. The family income was supplemented by shore fishing which raised an estimated £15 per annum. John assisted his parents to work the holding as his father suffered from rheumatoid arthritis which, as his doctor certified, ‘crippled him to the extent that he is unable to work’.⁹ A partial dependency was demonstrated and Patrick Sugrue was awarded the maximum of £112 10s. under the Army Pensions Act, 1932. Ellen Sugrue also received an allowance from 1941 until it was withdrawn in 1944 as her means exceeded the maximum amount of £40. Attempts by John’s sisters, Annie and Peggy, to secure awards were unsuccessful. Their claims offer fascinating insights into the family’s fortunes. During the 1930s, the Fianna Fáil government

⁷ Census of Ireland 1911, entry for Patrick Sugrue

(<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Kerry/Ballinskellings/Canuig/103486/>) (accessed 30 Jan. 2023).

⁸ Memorandum by J. Lambe summarising reports of various investigating officers into claims by members of Sugrue family, 8 Oct. 1958, MSPC/DP7845 John Sugrue.

⁹ Note by Dr B. Hanley, 21 Jan. 1933, *ibid*.

established five Gaeltacht colonies in County Meath of which Ráth Cairn, populated by twenty-seven families from County Galway in 1935, was the best known.¹⁰ Other colonies were established in the townlands of Kilbride (1937), Gibbstown (1937), Clongill (1939) and Allenstown (1940) as part of a short-lived dual policy of extending the Irish language and relieving agricultural poverty.¹¹ Five families from Kerry and four from Donegal migrated to Clongill and this included some of the Sugrue family who were allocated a thirty-one-acre holding by the Irish Land Commission. The new farm was valued at £20 10s., or four times that of the original Kerry homestead and by the 1950s it had been transferred to Daniel Sugrue, a younger brother of John, who was married in Meath with four children. This development is a reminder that the Meath resettlement scheme was not confined solely to Irish speakers from Connemara, although they accounted for just over half.¹² It provides an unusually detailed example not only of internal Irish migration but also of upward social mobility. In addition to Daniel Sugrue's status as a landowner, Annie Sugrue became a primary school teacher in Meath. Under part two of the 1953 Army Pensions Act, Patrick Sugrue was granted £180 per annum. This was paid from August 1953 until his death in November 1957 in St Loman's Psychiatric Hospital in Mullingar, having been made a ward of court for being of unsound mind in August 1955.¹³ One wonders if other parents of those killed during the Irish Revolution suffered similarly.

The sad end to Patrick Sugrue's life is replicated in other Kerry pension applications. The ill health and grief of parents as well as abject poverty feature prominently. For example, the police report on the circumstances of 63-year-old Daniel O'Shea of Caherciveen suggest that the 'loss of his own and his wife's health' was due to the death of their son, Captain Timothy O'Shea of the National Army, who was killed on 5 March near Caherciveen. The

¹⁰ See Terence Dooley, *'The land for the People': the land question in independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), pp 146-52; William Nolan, 'The migration policy of the Irish Land Commission in County Meath: theory and practice' in Arlene Crampsie and Francis Ludlow (eds), *Meath history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 2015), pp 787-819; Suzanne M. Pegley, *The Land Commission and the making of Ráth Cairn: the first Gaeltacht colony* (Dublin, 2011).

¹¹ *Report of the Irish Land Commissioners for the year from 1st April, 1942 to 31st March, 1943* (Dublin, 1943), pp 17-18.

¹² Of a total number of 122 families in the five colonies, sixty-three were from Galway, twenty-one from Kerry, eighteen from Mayo, eighteen from Donegal and two from Cork.

¹³ Gerald Maguire, Office of the General Solicitor for Minors and Wards of Court, to Secretary, Dept. of Defence, pensions section, 8 Sept. 1955; death certificate for Patrick Sugrue, MSPC/DP7845 John Sugrue.

deceased had been a shoemaker by trade and had contributed between 30s. and £2 a week to his parents.¹⁴ When that delicate internal family economy collapsed, Daniel was plunged into straitened circumstances and had to employ a labourer to assist another son with the farm work. In July 1924 he was awarded a gratuity of £75.¹⁵ In a statement signed before his solicitor in 1933, Edward Hartnett of Listowel, whose brother Patrick was killed at Ballyseedy, recounted how his father ‘suffered a complete breakdown after the death of his son, and died practically of a broken heart’ in March 1932. Furthermore, his mother died in April 1924 from complications arising from a knee injury sustained on a journey from Tralee after Patrick’s death. That was not all, however. Edward’s brother John, ‘practically an invalid’ died in June 1923, a short time after being taken from his bed by National Army soldiers. Edward himself was arrested in February, April and June 1923, even though he was then just a 12-year-old boy. Another brother Maurice was also arrested frequently at this time.¹⁶ The entire family had depended on the wages of Patrick Hartnett who had worked as a labourer. The dependency was estimated at about £30 per annum. Edward Hartnett’s claim under the 1932 Pensions Act was unsuccessful but his sister, Mary, received a partial dependant’s gratuity of £112 10s. and a dependant’s allowance of £125 per annum under the 1953 legislation.¹⁷ The example of Timothy O’Shea reveals the stark economic dependency on their sons of ageing parents in poor health who had not yet reached seventy, the qualifying threshold for the modest security offered by an old age pension. Likewise, many sons also simultaneously supported siblings in delicate health.

Perhaps surprisingly, the families of a number of the anti-Treaty dead applied for a gratuity under the 1923 Pension Act even though the legislation pertained only to members of the army under the control of the Minister for Defence and rendering service to the Irish Free State.¹⁸ It was indicative of their dire financial circumstances. Jeremiah Tuomey of Kilflynn, whose son Timothy was blown up at Ballyseedy, was one example. Timothy had worked the family farm which comprised ninety acres, half of which was mountain, and carried a poor law valuation of £12. The application was refused in 1924 but Jeremiah was granted a

¹⁴ Report by Sergeant J. Holland on circumstances of Daniel O’Shea, c. May 1924, MSPC/3D63 Timothy O’Shea.

¹⁵ Army Pensions Department life certificate, 19 July 1924, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Statement by Edward Hartnett, 4 Apr. 1933, MSPC/DP9533 Patrick Hartnett.

¹⁷ Army Pensions Department life certificate, 1 Mar. 1954, *ibid.*

¹⁸ Army Pensions Act, 1923, section 16, available at

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1923/act/26/enacted/en/print.html> (accessed 9 Feb. 2023).

gratuity of £112 10s. on 15 December 1933.¹⁹ From August 1953, Timothy's mother Johanna was awarded a dependant's allowance of £180 until her death in February 1958.²⁰ Ellen Rearden, mother of William ('Willie') Rearden of Waterville who was killed at Bahags, was another who sought a gratuity in vain in the 1920s.²¹ Margaret O'Donoghue of Lower New Street, Killarney made an unsuccessful application in April 1928 in respect of her son Jeremiah, who had been killed at Countess Bridge.²² Her circumstances were particularly difficult. Her son, an attendant at St Finian's psychiatric hospital, was her 'whole support' as her husband had died in 1923, another son and daughter were unable to work due to ill health, and a younger child was a schoolboy. 'I am shure', she later wrote despairingly, 'there is nobody feels his [Jeremiah's] death as much as I do, for since that day I have put hard times over me, at times practically hungry'.²³ In December 1933 she was granted £112 10s. In the 1950s two of Jeremiah's siblings were granted dependants' allowances which made their final years more comfortable. In 1953 Julia O'Donoghue, who survived on weekly sickness benefit of £1 4s. out of which she paid her brother 6s. to rent a room in his house, was allowed £125 per annum until her death at the age of fifty on 31 March 1959.²⁴ She was thirteen when Jeremiah was killed, and ill health had prevented her from attending school regularly. James O'Donoghue, Julia's older brother by three years, worked in Hilliard and Palmers boot factory, one of the main employers in Killarney since its establishment by Richard Hilliard in 1935. Increasing automation in the 1950s reduced the workforce and O'Donoghue was discharged in 1957. A social welfare inspector in Killarney reported that he was forced to live on his savings until they were exhausted and was not entitled to unemployment benefit or social insurance. From 18 May 1960, O'Donoghue was awarded a

¹⁹ Report by Army Pension Board on the application of Jeremiah Tuomey, 24 Apr. 1933, MSPC/DP5819 Timothy Tuomey.

²⁰ Secretary, Dept. of Defence, to Con Tuomey, 29 Feb. 1956; Con Tuomey to Secretary, Dept. of Defence, 3 Mar. 1958, *ibid.*

²¹ The family spelt their surname 'Rearden' which is what is entered on the 1911 census. Subsequently, the spelling 'Riordan' was used and both appear in the MSPC file along with a third rendering 'Reardon'. Application of Ellen Reardon, 13 Mar. 1933, MSPC/DP3844 William Reardon.

²² Application of Margaret O'Donoghue, 25 Apr. 1928, MSPC/DP3621 Jeremiah O'Donoghue.

²³ Margaret O'Donoghue to Minister for Defence, n.d. [1933], *ibid.*

²⁴ Application of Julia O'Donoghue, 24 Oct. 1953; payment of sum at death [of Julia O'Donoghue] to James O'Donoghue, 15 Apr. 1959, *ibid.*

dependant's allowance of £125 but did not enjoy this benefit for very long as he died in May 1961 at the age of fifty-four.²⁵

The circumstances of the families of National Army fatalities in Kerry were just as grim. Margaret O'Connor of Lissycurrag, Causeway lost her son Laurence when he was killed in Barranarig Wood. A police report indicated that at the time of her application in February 1924 none of the family was employed. Her husband had no regular work and the couple had eight children, the eldest not yet seventeen. The report suggested that the family was maintained by Margaret's parents or parents-in-law.²⁶ To compound matters, three of the children, including the eldest girl, who had been earning 10s. a week, had been stricken with fever in early 1924 and required hospitalisation. This family misfortune coincided with a steady increase throughout 1924 in the cost of living, which by mid-January 1925 was 95 per cent above (or almost double) the baseline figure set in July 1914.²⁷ An initial gratuity of £30 was regarded as derisory by Mrs O'Connor and prompted her to write of her refusal to believe that the Army Pensions Board would 'estimate the life of a young Irishman as of less value than an Irish terrier for which I have often seen larger compensation awarded'.²⁸ On 31 July 1924 the gratuity was increased to £100. Subsequent appeals for additional financial support were declined. Cornelius Hayes, a private in the National Army from Killarney who had been a postman in civilian life, was accidentally killed in Newtownsandes on 25 March 1923.²⁹ He was the sole support of his three younger sisters – Norah (a 24-year-old laundress), Mollie (a 17-year-old servant), and Nancy (a 15-year-old schoolgirl) – as their parents were deceased. In May 1924 Norah wrote to the military authorities that she was

tired from writing to Portobello Barracks for help but nobody seemed to give us any satisfaction. We are orphans alone in the world with nobody to work for us and our only support killed while fighting for the Free State Army ... but nobody misses him but his heartbroken sisters who are not able to work and are sometimes hungry. I am

²⁵ Memorandum by J. Lambe summarising reports of various investigating officers into claim by James O'Donoghue, 11 Sept. 1959; secretary Department of Finance to secretary Department of Defence, 24 May 1960 regarding O'Donoghue; copy of death certificate, 9 June 1961, *ibid*.

²⁶ Report by Sergeant Edward O'Reilly, Garda Síochána, Causeway, 29 Feb. 1924, MSPC/3D57 Laurence O'Connor.

²⁷ Ministry of Industry and Commerce Report on the Cost of Living for Mid-January 1925 (Dublin, 1925).

²⁸ Margaret O'Connor to Army Finance Officer, 19 July 1924, MSPC/3D57 Laurence O'Connor.

²⁹ Newtownsandes is the official name but this village is better known by its Irish name of Moyvane.

in debt everywhere in Killarney and we are threatened of being in the streets, with rent and rates calling in on us, also shopkeepers which were kind enough to give us credit are calling on us.³⁰

A gratuity of £100 was awarded in June 1924: £30 payable immediately with £7 per month for ten months.³¹ These examples reveal the sense of exasperation and anger with state bureaucracy. They also provide a stark insight into the subsistence-level living standards, poverty, and unemployment that many families in Kerry endured in the early decades of independence. This evidence is important because there was no Irish equivalent of the major British provincial social surveys of the 1930s which tracked questions of income, employment, housing, and differences between social classes.

Emigration provided a centuries-old means of escaping such miserable economic conditions. In 1926 the population of County Kerry was 149,171, about half that of the 1841 peak. During the quarter century following independence, the population of the county fell by 15 per cent or 22,500 people. In absolute terms, this was almost twice the decline of Ireland as a whole.³² The MSPC provides fascinating granular detail on IRA men and family members who emigrated, allowing the prospect of constructing microlevel histories of the prevalence of emigration in a family or locality. Strikingly, in the nominal rolls for Kerry No. 1 and Kerry No. 2 Brigades the address of several men was given simply as ‘now in the U.S.A.’ or in specific cities such as New York and Chicago.³³ Few of the Sugrue family discussed above remained in Kerry. By the 1930s two of John Sugrue’s brothers and four sisters – half the offspring of the family – had emigrated to the United States. Just one sister was married in Kerry.³⁴ A sister of Norah Hayes went to the United States in June 1922 and her brothers, Michael and Christopher, were in England.³⁵ Four of Kate Murphy’s married sons lived abroad.³⁶ From Knocknagoshel, her son Daniel (‘Dan’) was a blacksmith and was

³⁰ Norah Hayes to GOC, The Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, 23 May 1924, MSPC/3D136 Cornelius Hayes.

³¹ Army Pension Board certificate of assessment, 5 June 1924, *ibid*.

³² James A. Walsh and Breandán Ó Caoimh, ‘Population, economy and place in Kerry’ in Bric (ed.), *Kerry: history and society*, p. 604.

³³ See IMA, MSPC, RO/88-101A, Kerry I Brigade and RO/102-110, Kerry II Brigade.

³⁴ Memorandum by J. Lambe summarising reports of various investigating officers into claims by members of Sugrue family, 8 Oct. 1958, MSPC/DP7845 John Sugrue.

³⁵ Statement of claim for dependant’s allowance, 27 July 1923, MSPC/3D136 Cornelius Hayes.

³⁶ Report by D. McAsey, Customs and Excise, Killarney, 29 Jan. 1934, MSPC/DP8259 Daniel Murphy.

assisted in his forge by his younger brother John. Both had been in the IRA during the War of Independence. On 24 March 1923 the Murphy brothers were captured at home by a National Army detachment. Dan was accused of making the mine that was used at Barranarig; in fact, he had been on the run at the time and the device was manufactured by his brother.³⁷ Dan was taken to a field by Lieutenant Jeremiah Gaffney and others and shot multiple times. Gaffney became the first commissioned officer in the National Army to be executed when he was hanged in Mountjoy on 13 March 1924 for the murder of Thomas Brosnan, a civilian, in Scartaglin, County Kerry in December 1923.³⁸ Kate Murphy received an *ex gratia* payment of £200 on 5 July 1926 and a gratuity of £112 10s. in December 1935.³⁹

Kerry TDs played, and were perhaps expected to play, a prominent role in advocating for constituents who made applications under the various army pension acts. Until the 1940s local political representation was dominated by Fianna Fáil which typically won three or four of the seven seats available to about two for Cumann na nGaedheal/Fine Gael. Most of the Fianna Fáil TDs were War of Independence veterans such as Tom McEllistrim who represented Kerry from 1923 until 1937 and then Kerry North until 1969. He was one of the most prominent IRA leaders in the county but never spoke publicly of his considerable exploits. In the case of Patrick Daly's application in 1935, McEllistrim emphasised the family's poor financial circumstances and that the maximum gratuity should be 'paid without delay in this most deserving case'.⁴⁰ Fred Hugh Crowley represented Kerry and later Kerry South from 1927 until his death in 1945 when he was succeeded by his wife Honor. Jack Flynn also represented Kerry and Kerry South from 1932 until 1957 but did not contest the 1943 and 1944 elections and was an independent TD for a period before re-joining Fianna Fáil. Stephen Fuller, who survived Ballyseedy, was a Fianna Fáil TD for Kerry North from 1937 until 1943. He never mentioned Ballyseedy from a public platform but was active in supporting several applications, particularly those of the relatives of the Ballyseedy atrocity killed by his side. The MSPC permits an insight into the mechanisms of political lobbying within a particular parliamentary party.

³⁷ Horgan, *Dying for the cause*, pp 210-12; O'Shea, *No middle path*, pp 91-2.

³⁸ *Evening Herald*, 13 Mar. 1924.

³⁹ Application of Kate Murphy, 3 Feb. 1933, MSPC/DP8259 Daniel Murphy.

⁴⁰ Tom McEllistrim to Minister for Defence, 6 Jan. 1935, MSPC/DP51 John Daly.

Members of the Dáil were not the only advocates. One of the most compelling was Dorothy Macardle, the journalist, writer and former republican hunger striker.⁴¹ In 1924 she published an exposé of the events in Kerry in March 1923, based on eyewitness accounts, called *Tragedies of Kerry*.⁴² During her research for that project Macardle interviewed Ellen Reardon and a decade later received a ‘distressing letter’ outlining her impoverished circumstances. Macardle wrote to Frank Aiken, Minister for Defence, claiming that ‘surely the families of prisoners murdered while in custody have or will have a claim’ to a pension and asking that Mrs Reardon be reassured.⁴³ The Minister replied that Mrs Reardon had been granted £112 10s. in 1932.⁴⁴ She was also subsequently awarded an allowance of £180 from 5 August 1953.

The tragedies of Kerry referred to by Macardle were not confined to March 1923 alone. Those ghastly killings occasioned a myriad of further minor tragedies and personal hardships. At a human level the granularity of the MSPC files from Kerry reveal many layers of trauma and grief: for the loss of a son or even a recognisable body to bury, for the loss of support for the household income or labour for the family farm, for the loss of personal dignity, for the loss of other family members to illness, premature death or emigration, and fear of poverty and even hunger. These strands of fresh evidence have significant implications for how we write about, conceptualise, and understand the economic lives of ordinary people (something that has been barely explored in an Irish context) as well as local and family history across the middle decades of the twentieth century. For historians and practitioners of cognate disciplines, the Military Service Pensions Collection provides the pen and ink with which to trace historical contours from challenging, uncomfortable and different perspectives.

Further reading:

Tom Doyle, *The Civil War in Kerry* (Cork, 2008).

Gavin Foster, ‘The Civil War in Kerry in history and memory’ in Maurice J. Bric (ed.),

⁴¹ On Macardle, see Leeann Lane, *Dorothy Macardle* (Dublin, 2019).

⁴² Dorothy Macardle, *Tragedies of Kerry* (Dublin, 1924).

⁴³ Dorothy Macardle to Frank Aiken, 17 Mar. 1934, MSPC/DP3844 William Reardon.

⁴⁴ Frank Aiken to Dorothy Macardle, 20 Mar. 1934, *ibid*.

Kerry history and society: interdisciplinary essays in the history of an Irish county
(Dublin, 2020), pp 469-89.

Michael Hopkinson, *Green against green: the Irish Civil War* (2nd ed., Dublin, 2004).

Tim Horgan, *Dying for the cause: Kerry's republican dead* (Cork, 2015).

Owen O'Shea, *No middle path: the civil war in Kerry* (Newbridge, 2022).

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