

# Emly Honours It's Fallen Heroes

**THIS IS A STORIED COUNTRYSIDE—A COUNTRYSIDE WELL FITTED TO BE THE NURSING GROUND OF HEROES.** It has bred men as firm and as unshakable as the Galtees that tower above it, those Galtees that have so often sheltered the gallant fighting men of Tipperary."

So stated Rev. G. M. Wall, C.C., Effin, Co. Limerick, in Emly, on Sunday, when he unveiled a monument to six men from the district who were killed in action fighting with the I.R.A. during the War of Independence, 1916-1921.

The men honoured were:

**VOL. JOHN O'MEARA**, Ballyhone, Emly, who was shot dead in an engagement with the enemy near Emly in June, 1921, and is interred in the family burial ground.

**VOL. THOMAS HOWARD**, a native of Glenbrohane, and a foundation member of the East Limerick Flying Column. He took part in all the principal engagements in the area, and was shot dead in action against enemy forces at Lackelly. Following temporary secret burial at Loughgur, the body with that of William O'Riordan, was later re-interred in Ballylanders Republican Plot.

**LIEUT. PATRICK RYAN**, Anagh, Murroe, participated with the Mid-Limerick Flying Column in many engagements, including the fights at Shraherla and Lackelly. He was killed in the last-named struggle, and is buried in Murroe Churchyard with his comrade, John Frahell.

**LIEUT. WILLIAM SLATTERY**, of Lisobhyane, Emly, an officer of the Emly Company, and a vallant fighter. He was captured in the nation-wide round-up of leaders at Christmas, 1920, and shot dead by Blackand-Tan escort to Tipperary Barracks. He is buried in the family plot in Emly Cemetery.

**CAPT. WILLIAM O'RIORDAN**, Cullane, Ballylanders, served with the East Limerick Flying Column on all major engagements. He was mortally wounded in combat with enemy forces at Lackelly in May, 1921. Temporarily buried at Loughgur, he was later re-interred in the Republican Plot, Ballylanders.

**VOL. JOHN FRAHELL**, a native of Rath, Murroe. He volunteered for service with the Mid-Limerick Flying Column, and was fatally wounded in the action at Lackelly. He is buried in the Republican Plot at Murroe Cemetery.

## A FITTING MEMORIAL

The monument—a slim limestone pillar on a concrete plinth, faced with a sculptured figure of a volunteer and surmounted with a torch—is in restrained and dignified style. It is a credit to the sculptor, Mr. Leo Broc, Dublin, whose work was further enhanced by Mr. Harry Keogh's attractive lay-out. The site was provided by Mr. Denis Murphy, Emly, while Mr. J. C. Ryan facilitated its development.

About 3,000 people had gathered in the flag-bedecked village for the ceremonies, which commenced with a parade of Old I.R.A. veterans to the site of the monument. The parade was in charge of Mr. J. McCarthy, and included a colour party of veterans, under Mr. Morgan Portley, Adjutant Mid-Limerick Brigade, and a veterans guard-of-honour, under Comdt. Liam Fraher. Parade marshals were Mr. J. O'Meara, and Mr. J. Slattery. Two bands—the Regimental Pipe Band of the 12th (Southern) Battalion, Limerick, and the Tipperary Confraternity Brass and Reed Band—took part.

The parade halted at the memorial, in front of which an F.C.A. guard-of-honour, under Lieut. D. O'Dwyer, Tipperary, had been drawn up.

On a platform erected near the monument, the guests-of-honour, who included a number of relatives of the men commemorated, took their positions; and the chairman, Rev. M. Connelly, a native of Emly, who is ministering in Birmingham, introduced Father Wall.

Father Wall was accompanied by his uncle, Very Rev. T. Canon Wall, P.P., Ballingarry, Limerick, a brother of Brigadier Sean Wall,

O.C., East Limerick Brigade, who was shot by the British in 1921.

The F.C.A. guard of honour presented arms, the Last Post and Reveille were sounded by an F.C.A. bugler, and for a moment the Tricolour fluttered at half-mast. Then, amidst the cheers of the assembly, Father Wall unveiled the memorial. Emly had not forgotten.

## FATHER WALL'S ADDRESS

Father Wall, who spoke first in Irish, thanked the members of the Memorial Committee for inviting him to perform the unveiling ceremony. He said that the fine monument was a worthy tribute to the memory of the patriot dead. It was a tribute in stone, but in the erection of that tribute in stone the people had also paid the tribute of the appreciation, their thanks and their love to the men who had died for them and for Ireland. These six names were names that were borne by true men, true men to whom they prayed God to grant the reward of their sacrifice.

This was a storied countryside, a countryside that was well fitted to be the nursing ground of heroes. It had bred men as firm and unshakable as the Galtees that towered above it, those Galtees that had so often sheltered the gallant fighting men of Tipperary. He recalled that not very far from there, at Sulcoit, Brian Boru long ago vanquished the Danish invaders. Closer still to them in time and space was Ballyneety, where Sarsfield smashed King William's siege train, and a few miles west of the spot was that famous railway station of Knocklong, where in their own day was performed a deed of daring, the fame of which rang throughout Ireland.

Rev. Father Wall said that the Separatist tradition had ever been strong around there, and when the testing time came in the terrible years of struggle that followed the Easter Week, that Tipperary-Limerick countryside was to prove faithful and true to its noble traditions. So it was that they thought with profound respect of those whose memory they honoured there that day. For these men belonged to the great unnumbered host of the dead who died for Ireland. They should not forget them and their sacrifice, and above all, the ideals for which they died.

They should take no heed of the cynic or the shoneen who belittled and mocked the idea of Ireland a nation, but they should set against the selfishness and bitterness and mockery of these cynics and shoneens the unselfishness and nobility and courage of the men who chose to risk everything and sacrifice everything for an ideal, and who went out and died for that ideal in the bloom of their youth and their strength. In a world that had turned away from God, in a world that grew daily more selfish and more materialistic, it was only right that they should hold up, for the benefit of their young people, the example of the men who died bravely and unselfishly to assert a God-given right to rule their own destiny.

## ALIEN MONUMENTS

It was good to find so many monuments like that one being erected. In erecting such monuments they were only doing what other nations had been doing for centuries. They had much leeway to make up in this respect for, because they had been an un-free people up until recently, they were not permitted to erect public

memorials to the men who fought and died. That was why they found in their cities and large towns so many statues to alien soldiers and statesmen who meant nothing to them, and so few statues to the men of their own race who should mean all the world to them.

"Towering above the principal street of our capital city is the statue of the Englishman, Nelson, put up there not because of any service he rendered to Ireland, but because of a victory he gained over the French at a time when the French were aiding us in our fight for freedom. But in that same city of Dublin you will find no statue to Pearse or to Tone."

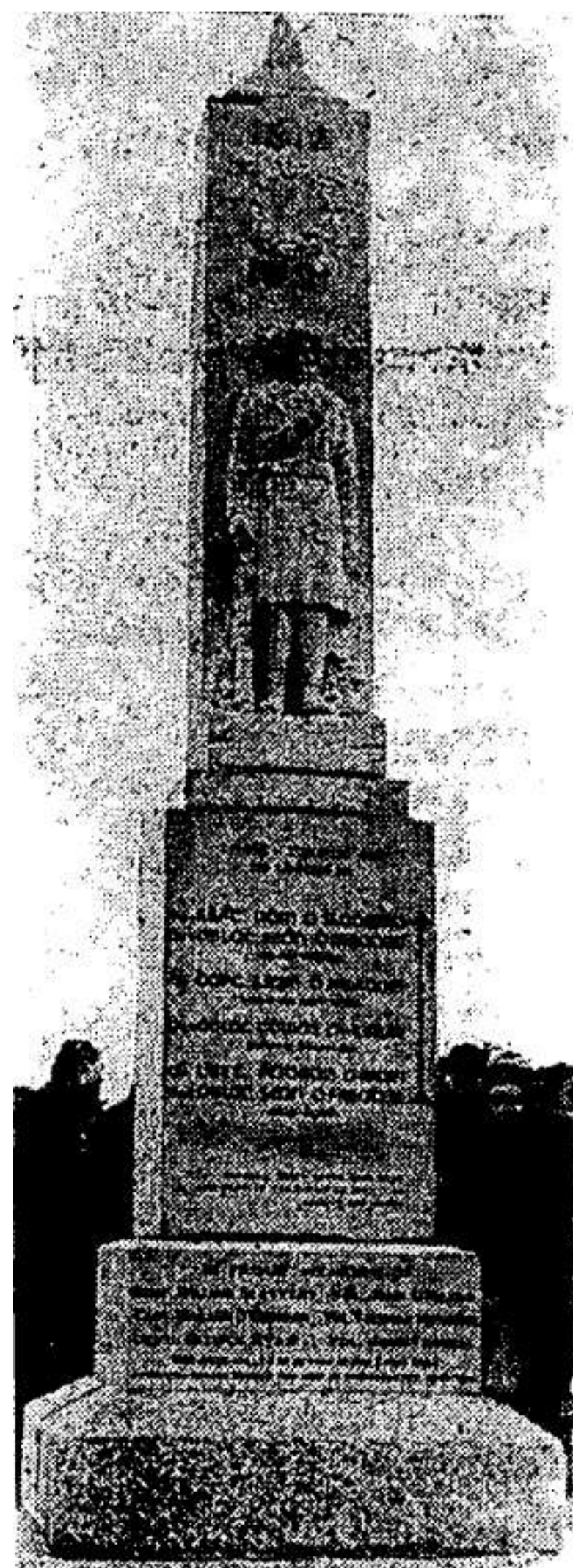
## THE WRONG OF PARTITION

Rev. Father Wall said they were very slow at times to show their appreciation. They had grasped the fruits of partial victory in 26 of their 32 counties, but they could never speak of complete victory until Partition was ended and the lost counties recovered.

"Until this great national wrong is righted," said Father Wall, "it is hard to blame young Irishmen of to-day who, seeing part of their land under foreign dominance, and who seeing no hope of its being freed in the immediate future, have lost their patience and have gone out to solve the problem in the way their hearts thought best. Many there are who, perhaps, may question the wisdom of the course they are adopting. Be that as it may, we feel that every true Irishman and Irishwoman must have been horrified at the harsh and inhuman sentences meted out to those three young Irishmen who took part in the recent raid on an English barracks.

"From the evidence brought forward at their trial, it would appear that the men freely surrendered rather than take life. Yet they were sentenced to life imprisonment. It is surprising that Britain has not yet learned the lessons of the past.

## THE MEMORIAL



Note: the memorial was vandalised in Apr 1966 and replaced by the present monument. ©INA