



ATLAS OF THE **IRISH**  
**REVOLUTION**  
*Resources for Schools*



College of  
Arts, Celtic Studies  
and Social Sciences

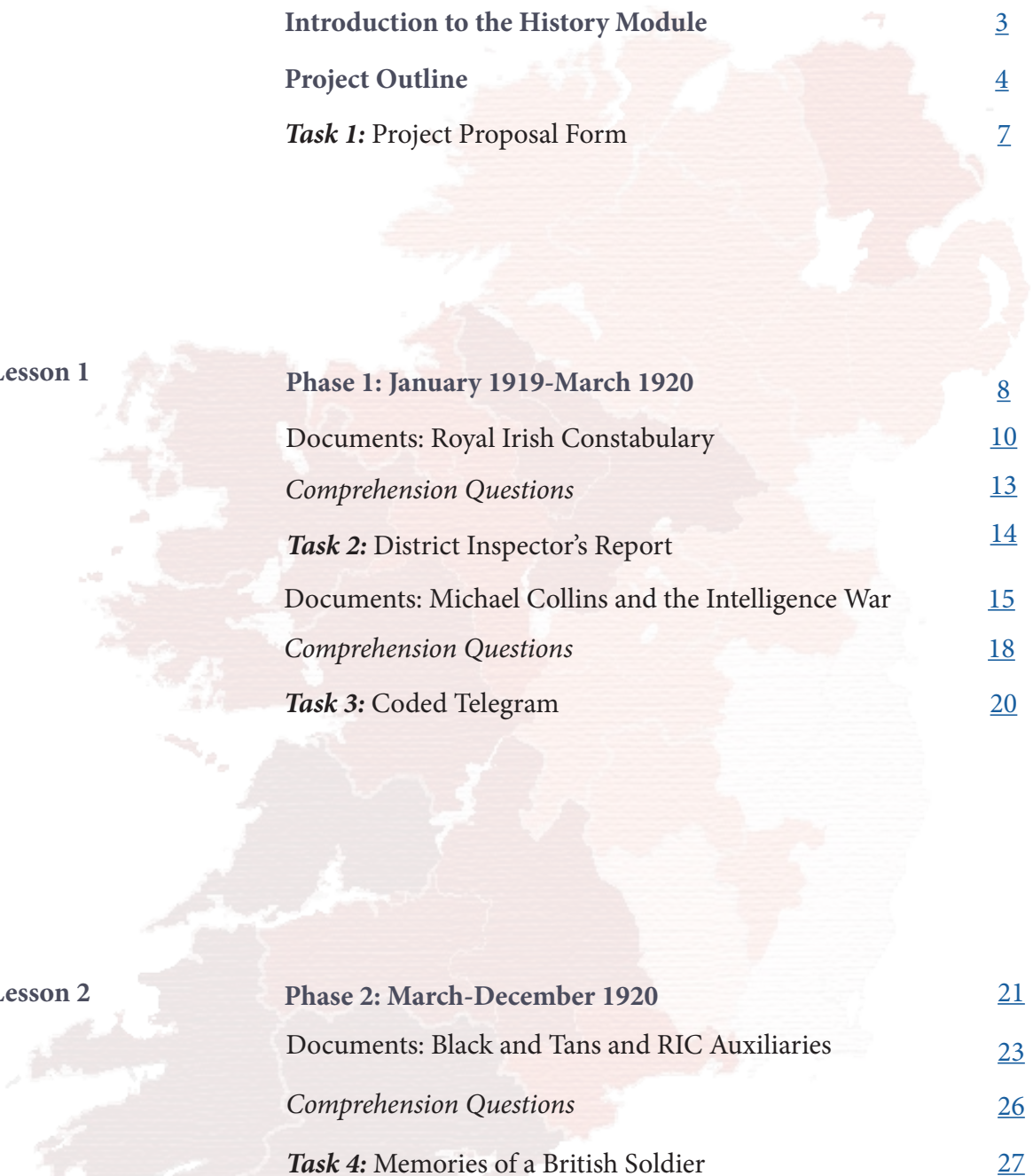
## Unit 7:

*The Irish War of Independence, 1919-21*

*Part 1*

*Transition Year Project Book*

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# ATLAS OF THE IRISH REVOLUTION

*Resources for Schools*

 UCC College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences

## Transition Year Unit: The Irish War of Independence

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In this unit you will examine the events and personalities of the Irish War of Independence. The conflict began in January 1919 and ended with the Truce in July 1921 and unlike the 1916 Rising most of the fighting took place outside of Dublin. For this reason most counties will be commemorating the centenaries of events during of the War of Independence in the coming years.

You are invited to become experts on the three phases of the conflict through an examination of primary source material and original maps from the *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*. Working in groups, you will use that expertise to plan and host an War of Independence exhibition for the school. This project book will guide you in the stages involved in organising the exhibition but, ultimately, the focus, content and layout will be yours to decide.

Even if you choose not to take the subject for Leaving Cert, an appreciation for History will stay with you forever and has benefits far beyond the realms of secondary school. You will also learn transferable skills, which you can apply to your other subjects. These include, critical thinking skills, research and presentation skills. For those of you who continue History after TY, it will offer a tremendous foundation in more advanced project work, document analysis and writing skills.

### Assessment:

**Continuous Assessment (10%)** You will be awarded a mark for overall participation in the module. That is why you should remain focused, organised and engage with the group and individual tasks.

**The Group Project (60%)** Remember, you must meet the deadline for your element of the exhibition and marks will be awarded for effort, imagination and originality as well as for the quality of your work.

**Presentation & Self Assessment: (30%)** Your input into the project will be assessed verbally by your teacher on the day of the exhibition after which you complete a self assessment sheet.

## EXHIBITING THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE: PROJECT BRIEF

In the lead up to the centenary of the outbreak of the Irish War of Independence in 1919, the school wishes to host an exhibition open to all students and/or the public. As experts in the three phases of the conflict, you have been asked to design and host the exhibition.

**The exhibition may include but is not limited to the following elements:**

1. Informative display boards relating to one or many elements of the War of Independence
2. A historical re-enactment - live or filmed
3. A display of documents/artefact's/photographs
4. A reconstructed model relating to one aspect of the War of Independence
5. A map based on information collected from different sources
6. A piece of music, poetry or art that commemorates and event or person associated with the War of Independence



### THE PLANNING PROCESS

**BASE GROUP MEETING 1.** *Your teacher will divide the class into groups of 4-5 students*

- 1 As a group, discuss any exhibitions that they you have visited and any elements that were particularly good
- 2 Note the elements you would like to see included in your school exhibition
- 3 Make a list of the tasks which might be required in planning and setting up the exhibition. (e.g. *securing exhibition space, designing exhibition space, materials, invitations, advertising, curating, interactive elements, audience participation/feedback, etc*)
- 4



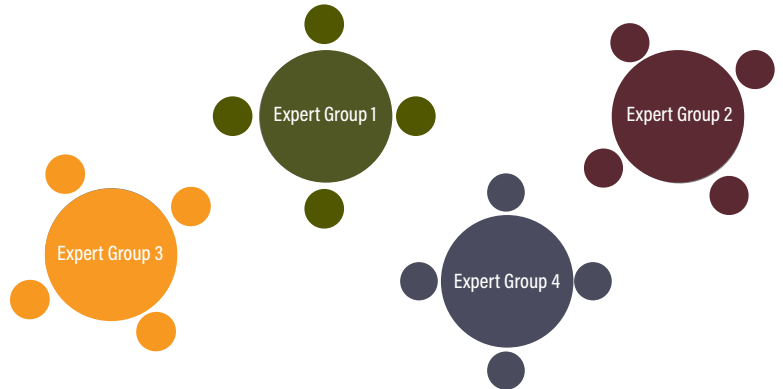
*After discussion, the class should vote on 4-5 elements that will definitely feature in the exhibition  
 Your teacher will assign **one** of these elements to each of the four base groups*

- 5 In your base groups, decide which member will join the expert group for each element of the school exhibition. (e.g. Information boards, re-enactment, artists)
- 6 For homework, individually conduct research in preparation for joining your expert groups.



### EXPERT GROUP MEETING 1.

- 1 Each expert group appoints a chairperson and a scribe
- 2 The chairperson oversees a group discussion about ideas for that group's exhibition element
- 3 The chairperson makes sure that every group member has an opportunity to speak and the scribe takes notes
- 4 Identify any details that you need to research and discuss materials that might be required or artefacts that need to be sourced/ reproduced
- 5 Create a timetable listing the stages of the project up to the point of the exhibition
- 6 The chairperson will divide research, creative and/or writing tasks evenly among the group
- 7 Once everyone has agreed, the scribe will complete the **Project Proposal Form** on the next page for submission to the teacher. All group members should have an input into preparing the proposal and sign the commitment at the end of the document
- 8 Once the proposal has been approved, planning may proceed



### BASE GROUP MEETING 2

- 1 Students return to their original base groups
- 2 Representatives from each Expert Group explain the approved concept for their exhibition element
- 3 Discuss your group's planning task(s) in relation to each of the elements
- 4 Create a to-do list for your group and divide tasks evenly among the group members
- 5 Create a timetable for completing your task(s)





# Project Proposal Form

To be submitted to your teacher at the conclusion of the expert group meeting

Exhibition Element: .....

Relates to what aspect of the War of Independence : .....

Brief Description: .....  
.....  
.....

Group Members' Names: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Responsible For: .....  
.....  
.....

Materials Required: .....  
.....

Research, Design and Construction Timetable:

By \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ we will have completed .....  
By \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ we will have completed .....  
By \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ we will have completed .....  
By \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ we will have completed .....

We the undersigned commit to working together as a group and contributing equally to the research and design of the exhibition element. We also commit to being fully to prepared to display our completed exhibition element on the deadline of \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ assigned by the teacher.

## Signed:

Expert Group Coordinator: .....  
Expert Group Member: .....  
Expert Group Member: .....  
Expert Group Member: .....  
Expert Group Member: .....

## UNIT 7:

# THE IRISH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

### PHASE I: JAN 1919 - MARCH 1920

The first phase of the War of Independence consisted mainly of isolated incidents between the IRA and the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC). From the beginning of the conflict, the British government refused to recognise the Irish Republic or to admit that a state of war existed between this republic and the UK. The violence in Ireland was described as 'disorder' and the IRA was a 'murder gang' of terrorists and assassins. For this reason, it was the job of the police rather than the 50,000-strong British army garrison in Ireland to deal with the challenge to the authority of the British administration. British soldiers would later become heavily involved in the conflict, but from the beginning the police force was at the front line of the conflict.

### SOLOHEADBEG AMBUSH

On the same day as the meeting of the First Dáil on 21 January 1919, members of the South Tipperary Brigade ambushed a convoy of RIC at Soloheadbeg. The aim of the operation was to capture the gelignite being escorted to a local quarry, and to intensify hostilities against the RIC. Led by Dan Breen, Séan Treacy and Seamus Robinson, the Tipperary Volunteers acted independently of Volunteers General Headquarters (GHQ), which had forbidden arms raids. The ambush resulted in the deaths of two police constables, James McDonnell and Patrick O'Connell. The action was condemned by the church and the attackers reprimanded by GHQ.

### POLICE BOYCOTT

Eamon de Valera escaped from Lincoln Jail on 3 February 1919 and when the remaining 'German Plot' prisoners were released in March 1919, the President of the Dáil was able to return to Ireland without danger of arrest. He presided at a meeting of Dáil Éireann on 10 April 1919 at which the assembly confirmed a policy of boycotting against the RIC.

THE RIC ARE "SPIES IN OUR MIDST ... THE EYES AND EARS OF THE ENEMY ... THEY MUST BE SHOWN AND MADE TO FEEL HOW BASE ARE THE FUNCTIONS THEY PERFORM AND HOW VILE IS THE POSITION THEY OCCUPY".

- Eamon de Valera (Dáil Debates, vol. F, no. 6, col. 67)-

This 'social war' first initiated by republicans in 1917, succeeded in driving a wedge between the RIC and the community and prepared the ground for the actual war that was waged against the force from early 1920.

-Document A -

ROINN COSANTA.  
BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.  
STATEMENT BY WITNESS  
DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 450...  
**Brigid O'Mullane, Cumann na mBan  
Organiser, 1917-1923**

In 1919, owing to the officiousness of the local police in supplying information to the British military, Cumann na mBan decided to have an extra activity, namely, the social ostracism of the police throughout the country.

This I put into operation by getting the Cumann na mBan girls to refuse to dance with, or even to greet the police on the street, and further, to encourage shopkeepers to have no business dealings with them. I even got mothers to pull in their children from the doorways of the houses when the policemen were passing. This turned out to be a most effective method of preventing the police from supplying the British army with information.





The RIC was poorly prepared for the conflict. In 1919 the police force did not have the equipment, the training or the young men it needed to fight a guerrilla war. Their distinctive uniforms made them conspicuous and their barracks were often located in isolated rural areas. After a series of sporadic, unsuccessful attacks on police barracks in the second half of 1919, the RIC inspector general ordered the closure of the more vulnerable police stations. The police force was concentrated in more heavily fortified barracks that were better protected against rebel attacks.

As the number of violent incidents gradually increased, the British authorities introduced Special Military Areas where all public meetings were banned. Nonetheless, the RIC who were predominately Irishmen, became demoralised and less effective against the IRA. Many resigned or retired and the strength of the force declined steadily until the autumn of 1920.

## THE INTELLIGENCE WAR

The 'intelligence war' was one of the most important military aspects of the Irish War of Independence. As IRA Director of Intelligence, Michael Collins built up an effective spy network which included Ned Broy, a member of G Division - an intelligence-gathering unit of plain-clothes Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) detectives. Collins' intelligence sources also included policemen, clerks, typists, waiters, hotel porters, post office staff, bar staff, railway officials and journalists.

Collins established a Volunteers General Headquarters (GHQ) Intelligence Department with offices at 3 Crow Street, only about 200 yards from Dublin Castle. Its personnel monitored British agents and spies, kept records on enemy personnel and monitored their telephone, telegraph and postal communications.

Collins' assistant Joe O'Reilly, called twice a day to collect reports and deliver instructions.

## THE SQUAD

Having familiarised himself with the British intelligence system, Collins began eliminating its most prominent officers. In the summer of 1919, he established a special unit of full-time gunmen from Dick McKee's Dublin Brigade, IRA. The 'Squad' established a secret headquarters in a building disguised as Moreland's Cabinetmakers, Upholsters and Builders in Upper Abbey Street.



On 30 July 1919 Squad members assassinated their first 'G'-man, Detective Sergeant Patrick Smyth. This was followed on 11 September by the assassination of Detective Sergeant Daniel Hoey. On the same day, the Dáil was declared a dangerous assembly and soon afterwards Collins went on the run, the Dáil government departments were forced underground, and the British government suppressed Sinn Féin and the Irish Volunteers. The year ended with the Squad's failed attempt on the life of Lord French at Ashtown railway station.

On 21 January 1920 the new Assistant Commissioner of the police, William Redmond, was shot dead and a reward of £10,000 was offered for the body of Michael Collins - dead or alive.



-Document B -

**Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) Barracks, Brookeborough, Co. Fermanagh, early 1900s**

The RIC was formed in 1822 as a provincial constabulary; it became the county-based Irish Constabulary in 1836, and was renamed the Royal Irish Constabulary following the Fenian Rising in 1867. Barracks were built in towns and villages across the country and on the eve of the First World War there were over 1,400 RIC barracks spread across Ireland.

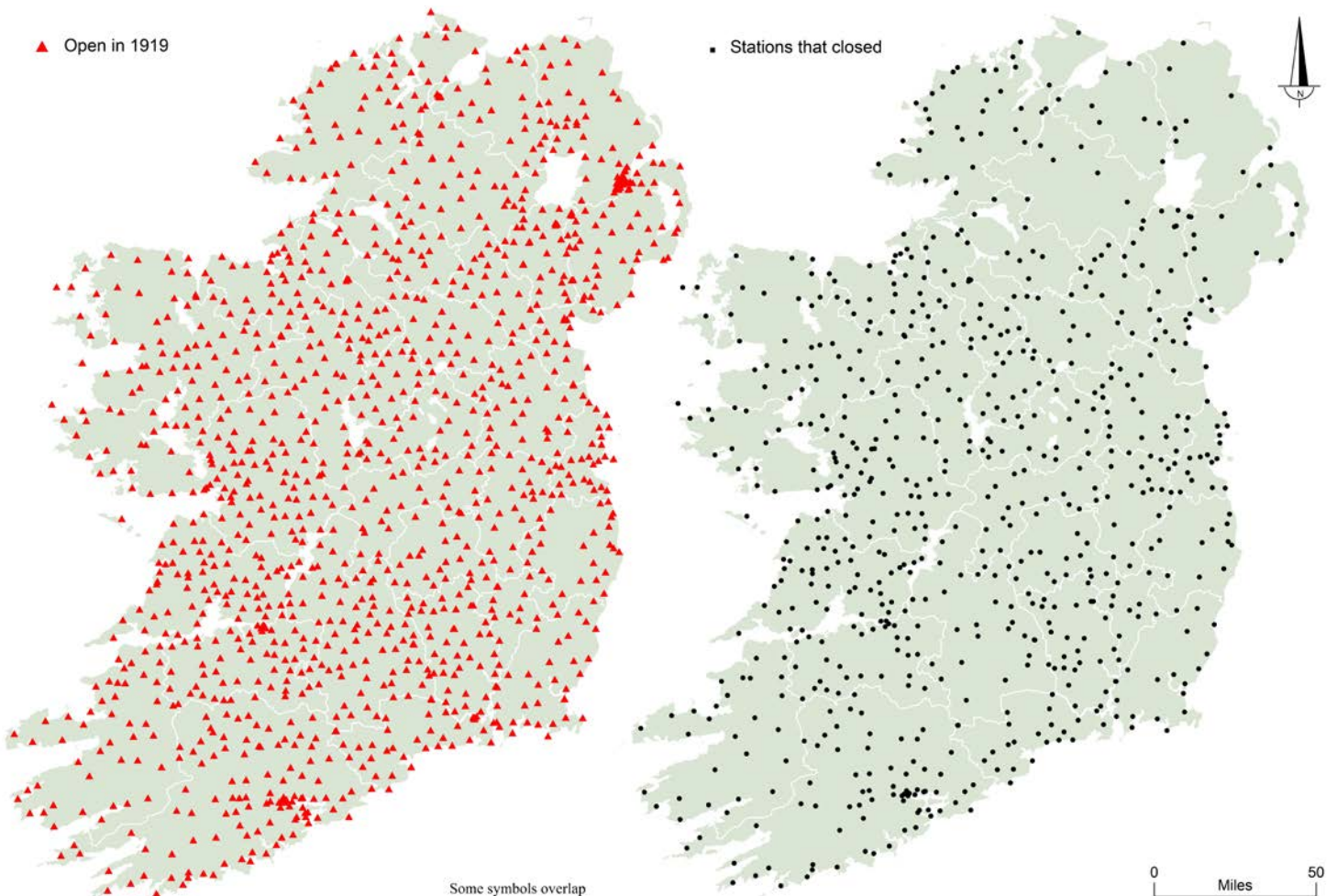
The RIC formed an essential part of the British administration. It was its eyes and ears on the ground and the first line of defence against any challenge to its authority.

For the mostly Catholic rank-and-file constables, joining the RIC provided not only stable employment but also conferred status and respectability, until the sea change heralded by the War of Independence.



-Document C -

**Location of RIC barracks in Ireland in January 1919, and RIC barracks closed by January 1921**

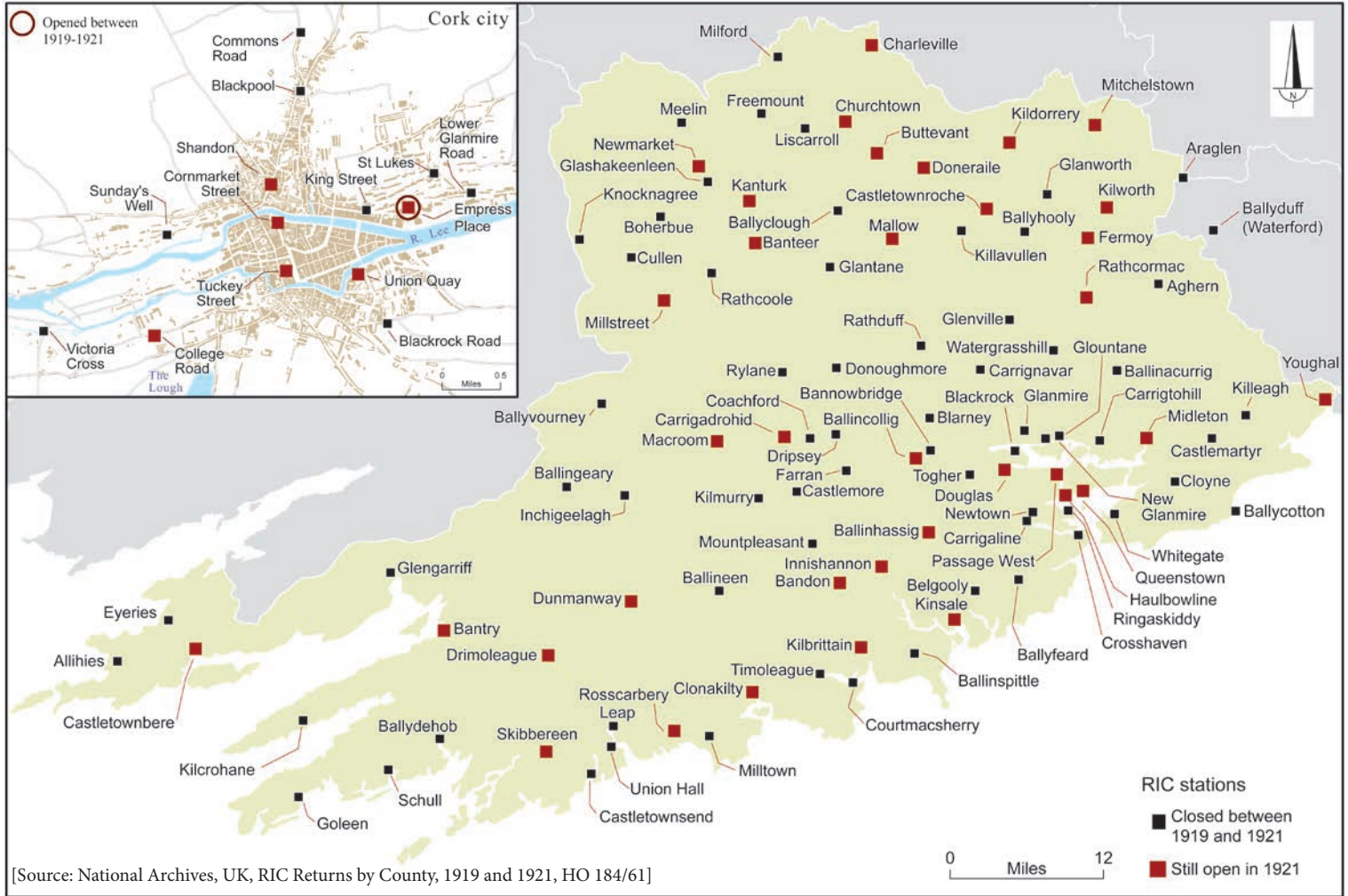




Location of RIC barracks in County Cork in January 1919 and January 1921

Cork had the largest number of barracks in the country in January 1919, with 123 in total; the majority (87) were in the east-riding region, including eleven in the city. The countrywide IRA offensive against the RIC began in Cork in January 1920 when the semi-fortified barracks at Carrigtwohill was taken by the IRA. By January 1921 eighty barracks had been abandoned, including six of the eleven in the city. The

policemen were reassigned to the remaining barracks and a new station opened on Empress Place as the headquarters of the Auxiliaries. Nineteen of the thirty-six barracks in west Cork had closed by January 1921, leaving those in the larger towns and villages with heavily supplemented numbers. This pattern was replicated in east Cork and across the country.



[Source: National Archives, UK, RIC Returns by County, 1919 and 1921, HO 184/61]

**The Freeman's Journal**  
MONDAY 4<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1919  
**BARRACKS ATTACKED**  
Broadford (Co. Clare) police barracks about ten miles from Limerick, was attacked about twenty armed men yesterday. The barracks is occupied by six men, and at 2 am (2 am) the major part of the occupants were in bed. For an hour until apparently the barracks had been made. Some of the police with his family were in the barracks.

**The Cork Examiner**  
THURSDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 1919  
**POLICE BARRACKS ATTACKED**  
An attack was made at a late hour last night on Drimoleague barracks, Co. Cork, by a party of men, who threw stones at the occupants who were in bed. As yet been made. Some of the police with his family were in the barracks.

**SUNDAY INDEPENDENT**  
Vol. 14 no. 44 SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2nd, 1919 PRICE 1½d  
**POLICE BARRACKS ATTACKED BY ARMED MEN**  
A sensation has been caused by the report of armed attacks which were made on two outlying barracks in Co. Meath on Friday night, with fatal consequences in one case. Shortly after ten o'clock Bellivor Barracks, some distance outside Trim, was raided by an armed party ... and all the arms and ammunition in the place removed in two motor cars. Almost simultaneously a raid was made on Dilion's Bridge Barracks, but in this case the assailants were driven off after an exchange of shots which lasted for a considerable time ... The only clue in the possession of the police is said to be some handkerchiefs left by the raiders.

**The Freeman's Journal**  
TUESDAY 9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1919  
**BARRACKS ATTACKED IN CLARE**  
Another attack on a Co. Clare police barracks is reported to have occurred at Kilenora. It appeared about 9.30 on Sunday night. A party of men surrounded the barracks and fired a number of shots into it, shattering the windows. The police were besieged for some time. The police were eventually rescued by a party of six rural police from Midleton. The police barracks in the village of Ballinacurry is now being closed.

**The Cork Examiner**  
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 20<sup>th</sup> 1919  
**AN EAST CORK POLICE BARRACK CLOSED**

DISPOSITION OF ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY IN LIMERICK , 1919-1921												
BARRACK	1919				1920				1921			
	DI	HC	Sgt	Con	DI	HC	Sgt	Con	DI	HC	Sgt	Con
William Street	1	1	13	40	1	1	16	37	1	2	14	112
John Street	1	1	2	8	1	1	2	9	1	1	4	17
Boherbuoy (Edward St)			2	8			2	7			3	20
Docks (O'Curry St)			1	5			1	8			4	18
Mary Street			2	5			2	6			3	18
Thomondgate			1	5			1	6			Closed	
Abbeyfeale	1	1	1	7	1	1	1	8	1	1	1	18
Adare	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	6	1	1	3	21
Bruff	1	1	3	4	1	1	2	8	1	1	3	21
Kilfinnane	1	1	2	4	1	0	2	6	1	0	2	10
Newcastlewest	1	1	1	8	1	1	3	12	1	1	7	13
New Pallas	1	1	1	4	1	1	3	6	1	1	2	18
Rathkeale	1	1	1	7	1	1	3	7	1	1	1	11
Ardagh			1	3			Closed				Closed	
Ashford			1	3			1	5			Closed	
Askeaton			1	5			1	4			1	17
Athea			1	3			Closed				Closed	
Ballinacurra			1	4			2	8			Closed	
Ballingarry			1	4			1	6			Closed	
Ballylanders			1	4			1	6			Closed	
Ballylneety			1	3			Closed				Closed	
Ballysimon			1	2			0	*2			Closed	
Blackboy			1	3			0	*3			Closed	
Broadford			1	3			1	5			Closed	
Bruree			1	4			1	5			Closed	
Caherconlish			1	3			0	*2			Closed	
Caherdavin			1	3			1	0			Closed	
Cappanahane police post			0	0			0	3			Closed	
Cappamore			1	3			1	8			1	12
Castleconnell			1	3			2	4			Closed	
Castletown			1	3			1	7			Closed	
Clarina			1	4			Closed				Closed	
Croom			1	4			1	5			1	13
Doon			1	4			1	6			2	15
Dromcollogher			1	5			1	6			2	14
Elton			1	3			Closed				Closed	
Fedamore			1	3			2	4			2	12
Foynes			1	5			3	8			1	14
Galbally			1	4			2	8			2	17
Glin			1	5			2	8			Closed	
Grange			1	3			Closed				Closed	
Herbertstown			1	3			Closed				Closed	
Hospital			1	4			2	6			1	14
Kildimo			1	3			2	6			Closed	
Kilmallock			1	5			2	8			1	18
Kilmeedy			1	3			*1	0			Closed	
Kilmurry			1	4			1	2			Closed	
Kilteely			1	3			Closed				Closed	
Knockaderry			1	3			Closed				Closed	
Loughill			1	3			Closed				Closed	
Mountcollins			1	3			Closed				Closed	
Murroe			1	3			1	5			Closed	
Oola			1	3			1	5			1	13
Pallaskenry			1	4			Closed				Closed	
Patrickswell			1	2			2	5			2	15
Shanagolden			1	3			Closed				Closed	
Strand			1	2			1	5			Closed	
Tournafulla			1	5			Closed				Closed	
TOTAL	9	9	75	264	9	8	75	281	9	0	64	471
			357				373				553	

DI = District Inspector \* = Partial Occupation  
 HC = Head Constable \*\* = Temporary Police Unit  
 Sgt = Sergeant  
 Con = Constable

[Source: Tom Toomey, "RIC Consolidation in Limerick, 1919-1921" in *Old Limerick Journal*, Winter, 2006, p.35]



## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

### Documents A - E

1. Why were members of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) socially ostracised [boycotted] from 1917? (*Doc A*)

.....

2. How did members of Cumann na Ban help to enforce the boycott? (*Doc A*)

.....  
.....  
.....

3. What does Document C suggest about the effect of IRA attacks on police barracks between 1919-21?

.....

4. Why do you think the IRA attacked the rural Royal Irish Constabulary Barracks?

.....  
.....  
.....

5. Does the information in table (*Doc E*) support the evidence in the map of the Irish RIC barrack closed between 1919 and 1921? (*Doc C*) Explain your answer.

.....  
.....

6. Calculate the average number of constables assigned to the barracks outside Limerick City in 1919. (*Doc E*)

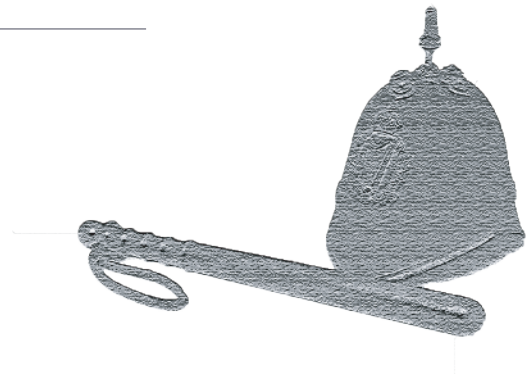
.....

7. What three barracks in Limerick saw the highest increase in constables due to the closure of the rural barracks. (*Doc E*)

.....

### YOUR TASK:

You are a Royal Irish Constabulary District Inspector in Cork in 1921 and are required to write a report on barracks closures in the city and county in the past three years. Using the maps and captions (*Docs C and D*) as evidence, write your report using the template provided in this worksheet.



**DISTRICT INSPECTOR'S REPORT**



**CORK CITY AND COUNTY  
JANUARY 1921:**



**Royal Irish Constabulary Barrack Closures since 1919**

Number of Barracks open in Cork City in 1919 \_\_\_\_\_ } **TOTAL**  
Number of Barracks open in Cork County in 1919 \_\_\_\_\_ }

Total number of Barracks open in Cork City & County in 1921 \_\_\_\_\_

Locations of Cork City Barracks still open in January 1921 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reasons for the Closure of Barracks:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Problems Caused by the Closure of Barracks:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A Comment on the Morale of R.I.C Constables and Sergeants

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Irish Counties in which large numbers of barracks have been closed

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Signed:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date:* \_\_\_\_\_



A 1948 account of the formation of the IRA GHQ intelligence department by and IRA Director of Publicity and friend of Michael Collins, Piaras Béalsai

## HOW IT WAS DONE – IRA INTELLIGENCE

by PIARAS BÉASLAÍ

The RIC had established a system of espionage which was wonderfully efficient [by 1916]. In every town and village all the movements of persons was watched and reported on. All popular organisations were kept under observation, and all persons who expressed patriotic opinions were the object of surveillance ... In Dublin the work fell upon the 'political section' of the 'G' or detective division of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. Their methods were more crude and obvious. They 'shadowed' men known to have what they called 'extreme views' [and] noted their movements and their associates ... This was done in so open a manner that our being followed around by our 'escort' of 'G' men, was a matter of jest to us.

The first step towards creating a Volunteer, or (to use the later term) IRA intelligence service came from within this very 'political section' of the 'G' division. Some young men in that body were in secret sympathy with those they were required to spy on, and made cautious overtures to Sinn Féiners of their acquaintance in early 1918. Through Mr Michael Foley, Éamonn (Ned) Broy ... came into contact with Michael Collins and arranged a system of sending him information ... This was the beginning of the systematic undermining of the British machinery of espionage in Ireland. Subsequently, Michael Collins got in touch with another detective, David Nelligan, who later was sworn in as a member of the British secret service! ...

In April 1919, Collins made a daring midnight visit to the headquarters of 'G' division in Brunswick Street, now Pearse Street. Broy was alone on duty, and had locked the door of the dormitory in which the other detectives were sleeping. A number of secret documents and confidential reports were locked up in a small room on the upper floor, which Broy unlocked with a skeleton key, and Collins spent several of the small hours of the morning studying these papers and making notes. He was particularly amused by a report on himself, which began with the words: 'He comes of a brainy Cork family.'

In 1918 a department of intelligence was set up by GHQ [Volunteers General Headquarters] ... Finally, in 1919, Michael Collins became officially director of intelligence and commenced to organise a department on a considerable scale ... The intelligence staff was built up slowly, as suitable men were not easily found. A good intelligence officer is born, not made ...

In July 1919, 'The Squad' was formed, a body that played a big part in the subsequent fighting in Dublin. The Squad consisted of a small body of Volunteers attached to the intelligence department, specially selected for dangerous and difficult jobs ... The activities of the intelligence department continued to expand. The keys to police, official and military cipher codes were obtained and gradually a system was established by which English official messages were tapped at various postal centres and decoded. Copies of the necessary codes were sent to intelligence officers in the country to enable them to deal at once with matters urgently concerning their own units.

By the end of 1920, battalion intelligence officers were appointed in every active area in Ireland [and...] by 1921 the department possessed photographs of practically every Auxiliary and most of the intelligence officers in Dublin.

[Source: *Dublin's Fighting Story 1916-21, Told by the Men who Made it*, (Mercier Press, Cork 2009), pp. 376-383 ]

## - Document G -

### Extract from an interview conducted with double-agent David Nelligan in the late 1970s

There were no jobs to be got around the country at all during the First World War, but I used to notice some of the local men from where I came from in West Limerick coming home from their jobs in the Dublin police, the DMP. They used to be home on leave wearing fine suits of clothes and high stiff collars and riding bicycles, and I used to envy them this, you see. I thought they were paid for walking around the town and doing nothing. So I applied for the Dublin police. My father didn't want me to leave the place at all, and he burned my papers when they came down from Dublin Castle. The revolution was livening up at the time and he didn't want me to get mixed up with anything like that ... but I wanted to shake the dust off my feet, so I gave a neighbour's address, and the papers came down and I found myself on the way to Dublin ...

I soon found out that the police weren't paid for walking about and doing nothing else, as I thought when I was an ignorant gobdaw down the country. I had to go on night duty, 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. every night for a solid month ... Well, of course, I soon got fed up with the old uniformed job ... so I decided to join the 'G' division looking for adventure. 'Twas easy for me to join because they were all getting shot by

revolutionaries and they were taking on practically anybody. ... A man named Tim Kennedy from Tralee down in Kerry sent word to my brother that he wanted to see me. He was a small little man about four feet nothing in height. But he was a Jekyll and Hyde - we were all Jekyll and Hyde characters in those days. He was an accountant by day and a revolutionary by night...

He told me that he had a letter from Michael Collins. He said 'Collins wants to see you'. 'What does he want me for?' says I. Collins was only a legendary character as far as I was concerned. He said, 'I think he wants you to [do] police work for the IRA.' ...

Joe O'Reilly took me down to an old third rate pub in upper Abbey Street ... and there was a handsome-looking man sitting there in an old shabby suit and an old dust coat thrown over the back of the chair. This was the famed Michael Collins.

I didn't fancy the role of spy at all ... 'Listen Dave', says he, 'the British trust you and we trust you. If you want to serve this country and the revolution then go back [to G division]. He was a persuasive kind of man, and a very magnetic character. So against my better judgment ... I started my nefarious career as a double agent'.

[Source: Kenneth Griffith and Timothy O'Grady, *Ireland's Unfinished Revolution, an Oral History*, (Roberts Rinehart, Colorado, 1999) pp.138-141]



-Document H -

**Locations in Dublin associated with Michael Collins during the War of Independence**



**CAPTION:**

Collins was the key organiser of the independence movement, holding the two key positions of IRA director of intelligence and Dáil Éireann secretary for finance. In Dublin he maintained numerous offices, safe houses and meeting places, many of them clustered around Parnell Square in the north inner city. Some of his administrative centres were disguised as commercial offices, and Collins usually moved about well dressed, resembling a clerk or businessman. He also relied on seemingly innocent hotels, pubs and shops run by republican sympathisers.

The identifiers of the locations come from contemporary language and denote slang of the period, such as 'joint' (a hotel or public house where Collins met colleagues, spies, messengers, etc.), 'dump' (a place where arms and ammunitions were stored) and 'dugout' (a place where Squad members 'holed up' while on the run or waiting for action). This map also features some locations associated with Collins' 'Squad', a group of IRA intelligence operatives who specialised in assassination, such as the 'Bloody Sunday' operation in November 1920.



Edited Extract from Bureau of Military History Witness Statement (819) submitted on 5 March 1953 by Liam Archer, Member of G.H.Q. Intelligence Section, 1920-21

Apart from my activity in the Battalion I became involved in Intelligence. I was a Post Office Telegraphist - reinstated following a period of suspension from duty after Easter Week. On 21st August, 1918, two sisters and a brother were prosecuted in Glasgow for attempting to carry arms to Ireland. I took a copy of a cipher [coded] message from R.I.C. Dublin to Police Glasgow and brought it to Collins. He was very interested and asked could I get more. I said I thought so.

By degrees I organised a group of about a dozen men and women who worked for the next four years on this task ... Because of the anti-national outlook of some of the staff, we had to be very careful. Supervision of staff was very close. I think my most profitable period was when curfew began at 8 p.m. I was on night duty and each morning for three weeks I took out in my socks copies of every police cipher message that had passed through the office the previous day. This was November, 1920 ...

Some time before I got on this work Collins had made contact with members of the detective division and he soon was able to supply me with the key to the cipher ... The key was a word in which no letter was repeated, and having 10 or 11 letters but not more than 13. The word being written out was followed by the first letters of the alphabet which were not [already] in [the word] to bring the number of letters to 13, and the remaining letters of the alphabet written underneath, viz:-

SWITZERLANDBC  
FGHJKMOPQVXY

Thus F = S or vice versa. As the new key word was sent out in the old cipher on the 1st of each month, we were automatically supplied ... Collins had several "post offices" in the city into which we could drop [deciphered] messages and one, a dairy, was in Amiens Street, a short distance from the telegraph office.

From about October 1920 until the Truce I was "on the run" as far as not being able to sleep at home was concerned. In the daytime I was, of course, on duty in the Central Telegraph Office. I suffered two raids, one early in 1918 by four detectives .. I was not at home when they called, and though they made a close search of my room they did not open a locked drawer which, besides two revolvers, contained a lot of very incriminating papers. From the description I concluded the "Dog" Smyth, Hoey and Coffey were in the party.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY  
BUIO - STAIRS MILITARY  
NO. W.S. 819

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Form B.S.M. 2

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

### Documents F - I

1. What did Piaras Béalsai' find funny about the methods of the Dublin 'G' men. (*Doc F*)

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2. Why was Ned Broy a valuable addition to Michael Collins' intelligence service? (*Doc F*)

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3. How did Ned Broy assist Michael Collins during his 'daring midnight visit' to Pearse Street in April 1919? (*Doc F*)

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4. What do you think Piaras Béalsai meant when he said, "A good intelligence officer is born, not made"?

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5. Do you consider Document F to be an objective source? Explain your answer with reference to the text.

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6. Why did David Nelligan apply to join the Dublin Metropolitan Police? (*Doc G*)

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7. What were David Nelligan's first impressions of Michael Collins? (*Doc G*)

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8. What are the strengths and weaknesses of an oral history interview as an historical source?

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9. When meeting messengers or spies in Dublin, how many 'joints' did Collins' have to choose from? (*Doc H*)

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10. Can you suggest why most of Collins' 'joints' were based in public houses or hotels? (*Doc I*)

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11. Based on *Document I*, why do you think it was important for Collins to disguise his identity?

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.....

12. Why do you think Collins was 'very interested' in Liam Archer's coded message?

.....

.....

13. Is there any evidence in Liam Archer's witness statement that his work for Collins was dangerous? (*Doc G*)

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.....

### YOUR TASK:

.....

It is November 1919 and one of Collins' intelligence operatives in the Telegraph Office has just intercepted a message from a 'G' man providing information on Michael Collins' background, appearance and his movements during the previous week. The first part of the message is written in English/Irish. The final sentence, giving the location in Dublin for a planned RIC stakeout, is written using code.

*Step 1:* Your teacher will divide the class into groups of three students. Each group should compose the 'G' man's message using the telegraph template provided



- Step 2:* Conduct research into the biography and appearance of Michael Collins and complete the first paragraph of the telegraph
- Step 3:* In the second paragraph of the telegram briefly describes Collins' activities during the previous week when he inspected the locations in Dublin associated with the 'Squad'. Using the information in the map (Doc H), write a short report on his movements around the city and his possible activities
- Step 4:* Using the code provided by Liam Archer in his witness Statement, (Doc I) and the map (Doc H) write a short sentence giving the location of a planned police stakeout. You should choose a location on the map where Collins would be likely to visit
- Step 5:* The last step in the task is to swap your coded message with another group and, working together, try to crack the code

The form is on aged, yellowed paper. At the top left is a coat of arms logo. To its right, the words "POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS" are printed in a bold, serif font. Below this, the text "MICHAEL COLLINS :-----" is followed by a large area of horizontal dashed lines for writing. At the bottom left, the text "CODE:-----" is followed by a few more dashed lines.



## PHASE II: MARCH 1920 - DEC 1920

From 1 January when 1920 when IRA General Headquarters (GHQ) officially approved offensive action against Crown Forces saw the intensity of activities increase all over the country. Unlike IRA activity during 1919, which consisted mainly of arms seizures and attacks on individual policemen, the new year marked the commencement of an all-out assault on the RIC.

At Easter 1920 GHQ ordered a major mobilisation by the Irish Volunteers for a concerted nationwide assault that saw the destruction of over 300 buildings, including vacated police barracks, courthouses and taxation offices on the night of 3-4 April. By the end of the year, 533 police barracks were destroyed, of which twenty-three had been in use when attacked.

Raids and arrests became more frequent and curfew was introduced. However, some police began resorting to violence outside the law. On 20 January 1920, after an RIC constable was wounded in Thurles, County Tipperary, his comrades rioted, firing in the

streets and smashing the windows of buildings belonging to prominent local republicans.

On 20 March 1920, after the Volunteers had killed three RIC constables in three days, Lord Mayor Tomás MacCurtain was shot dead in his own home in Cork city, almost certainly by the police. The conflict was made more bitter by such acts and the reprisals that followed.

### BRITISH COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

By this time the British government was taking steps to reinforce the demoralised RIC. In December 1919, it initiated a recruitment campaign in Britain aimed at young ex-servicemen with military skills and experience.

Due to a shortage of the dark bottle-green RIC uniform, the new RIC recruits were uniformed in a mixture of police and military clothing; in some cases they wore military trousers and tunic with a policeman's cap and belt. Within a few months they were nicknamed 'Black and Tans', most likely after a famous pack of foxhounds in County Tipperary.

The Black and Tans began to arrive in Ireland in March 1920. They were most numerous in the south, where the fighting was fiercest and police casualties and resignations had been the highest. Like their Irish comrades the Black and Tans also soon became associated with unofficial reprisals.

The Black and Tans were supplemented in July by the new Auxiliary Division of the RIC. The elite corps of ex-British Army officers were paid twice as much as the cadets and the Auxiliary companies were heavily armed with light machine guns and repeating shot-guns as well as service rifles and revolvers.



Wrecked RIC barracks, MacCurtain Street, Cork, following an IRA bomb attack on 1 July 1920



Auxiliary companies were also full motorised, with touring cars for officers, Crossley Tenders (light-duty trucks) for their men, and even armoured cars. They wore distinctive khaki and black uniforms topped with a tam-o-shanter bonnet. The Auxiliary Division soon gained a reputation for harsh treatment of civilians, assassinating known and suspected revolutionaries and burning the homes and shops of their supporters.

IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO STAMP OUT THE 'MURDER GANG' IN IRELAND, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD CREATED UNIFORMED GANGS OF ITS OWN, WHO FOUGHT WHAT WAS, IN EFFECT, A POLITICAL GANG WAR WITH THE IRA UNTIL THE TRUCE OF JULY 1921.

- David M. Leeson, *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, (CUP, Cork 2017)-

Prior to 1920, direct attacks by the IRA were focused on the RIC and the British Army remained on

the sidelines of the conflict. However, as the RIC required greater support, the military presence in Ireland increased. Troops began to take over large local buildings such as workhouses and other public buildings and by the summer of 1920 the IRA and the British army were engaged in a bloody guerrilla war.

By this point it was clear to the newly-appointed Chief Secretary, Sir Hammar Greenwood, and the Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in Ireland, General Sir Nevil Macready, that British authority in Ireland was becoming less effective. On 9 August 1920 the government introduced the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act, which gave Dublin Castle the power to govern by regulation. Mass arrests, internment, deportations, courts martial, curfews and executions were implemented as the military situation deteriorated.



[Photo: Irish Examiner]

Members of 'K'  
Company, Auxiliary Division,  
RIC, at Lower Glanmire train  
station (now Kent Station),  
Cork, circa 1920-1



# Do You Want a Job?

## YOU CAN JOIN THE R.I.C.

“The Finest Constabulary Force in the World.”

- PAY - -** 10/- Daily - Temporary Bonus  
12/- weekly for Married Men,  
6/- weekly for Single Men, in addition.  
Service Pay is also issuable in certain cases - 1/- and 2/- a day.
- UNIFORM - - -** Free to all Recruits ; Boot Allowances of 1/6 per week extra
- QUARTERS - -** Free Subsistence Allowance in addition when away from station, on duty.
- LEAVE - - - -** A Month's Leave on Full Pay every twelve months. A Free Railway Warrant from Ireland to your home and back
- PENSIONS - - -** Pensions on the Highest Scale payable to any police force in the United Kingdom.
- PROMOTION - -** Opportunities for Men of special ability occur frequently.
- COMPENSATION** For wounds received in action generous Compensation is paid.

If you have the Physique - - If you have a Good Character  
*And especially - if you are an Ex-Service Man*

### You can join the R.I.C to-day.

Call at any Army Recruiting Office or write to, or call at, either of the following Addresses

<b>LONDON</b> The Recruiting H.Q., Great Scotland Yard, S.W.1.	<b>LIVERPOOL</b> The Recruiting Office, 19, Old Haymarket	<b>GLASGOW</b> The Recruiting Office, 130, Bath Street	<b>DUBLIN</b> Command, R.I.C. Depot, Phoenix Park
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► **REMEMBER**

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE JOB - YOU CAN GIVE  
A MONTH'S NOTICE - AND LEAVE



**Map showing the locations of the companies of the Auxiliary Division of the RIC (ADRIC), with the dates of their arrival at the location**

The Depot Company was based originally at the Curragh but moved to Beggar's Bush Barracks in Dublin in September 1920. A Veterans & Drivers Division numbering 856, based at Gormanstown, provided the drivers for ADRIC, while two companies, 'S' and 'Z', involved in intelligence and communications work, were based at Dublin Castle. Seventeen field companies ('A' to 'R') were based at different times across seventeen counties.



[Sources: Information supplied by Jim Herlihy; E. McCall, *The Auxiliaries: Tudor's Troughs* (Newtownards, 2010); D.M. Leeson, *The Black and Tans: British police and auxiliaries in the Irish War of Independence, 1920-1921* (Oxford, 2011); <http://www.theauxiliaries.com> [accessed 1 Feb. 2016]; contemporary newspaper reports, 1920-21]





## - Document L-

**Extract from a recording held in the Sound Archives Department of the Imperial War Museum. In it, Major Reginald Graham gives an account of his service as a boy soldier in the Devonshire Regiment during the War of Independence. He was based in Waterford.**

**Interviewer:** Now, one of your early experiences was that you were posted to Ireland during the “Troubles” there. Can you tell me about your posting there?

**RG:** Well, we were sent there in July 1920 from Devonport. Headquarters [was] at Waterford and detachments, companies, were sent out to Waterford, Clonmel, Kilkenny and various other places.

**Interviewer:** Where did you go?

**RG:** Waterford ... There were two barracks in Waterford: the artillery and the infantry barracks. The infantry barracks was built to accommodate about 200 men but there was about 600 in them till we sent out the detachments. We were sleeping on floors or in tents and so forth.

**Interviewer:** Did you ever get an impression of the situation in Ireland as far as the “Troubles” were concerned?

**RG:** Yes, because we had men wounded, policemen were wounded, ambushes were of a frequent nature, police barracks were attacked and burnt down and there was little or no co-operation between the Royal Irish Constabulary and the troops ... and then they recruited the Black and Tans who were for all intents and purposes the dirty job boys. You know, they were ex-officers clad in all sorts of uniform, armed with various weapons and they were paid a pound a day. They were really tough people

**Interviewer:** Was a pound a day a lot then?

**RG:** Oh yes. My pay as a boy was a shilling a day and a full-blown soldier, a fully-trained soldier, got four shillings a day.

**Interviewer:** What did the Army think of the Black and Tans?

**RG:** We didn't see a lot of them. They'd swoop into barracks, in and out ... they seemed to be a law unto themselves.

**Interviewer:** What did the civilian population think of the Black and Tans?

**RG:** Oh, they loathed them. They hated them ... because the Black and Tans stood absolutely no nonsense. They bashed people about, shot them. And it is suspected that they burnt down the main shopping centre in Cork after thirteen or fourteen chaps had been killed in an ambush.

**Interviewer:** How did you know that the civilian population was hostile to the Black and Tans?

**RG:** In many ways. You see if a soldier went into a pub he wasn't exactly welcomed with open arms but he was given a drink and they would talk to him, the publican would, but if a Black and Tan went into a pub there was dead silence.

**Interviewer:** Did you ever see any hostilities yourself?

**RG:** No, I saw the results of them. On January 4th 1921, the police barracks at Tramore was attacked, we sent out a large patrol and luckily the patrol heard a shot go off. The force was split in two and they caught the Shinnars [in the] crossfire and killed and wounded several .... Well, that morning I went into breakfast and there was two bodies laid out on the tables ... two Shinnars. We were very lucky. We had several men wounded but only one fatal one.

**Interviewer:** What was the Army's opinion of the people against whom they were fighting?

**RG:** Not very much. Not very high at all. It was this question of tip and run. You see the ambushes were made chiefly by flying columns. They used to rendezvous at a certain point and the weapons for the ambush were brought out by the women in jaunting cars and things like that. Well, then having carried out the ambush, they'd push off and so another one.

**Interviewer:** Did you take any prisoners of the Sinn Fein?

**RG:** Oh yes, yes. But it usually meant if they were taken prisoner [in the later part of the war], they were court-martialed and shot. At one incident at County Cork, four or five men caught digging trenches across the road were court-martialed- if I remember - at four o'clock in the afternoon and shot at half past five ... That same night the Shinnars went out and picked six British soldiers ... and shot them. So it was tit for tat.



**Interviewer:** When you saw the Sinn Fein prisoners what impression did you get of them?

**RG:** Well, I shan't say that they were nondescript, but they seemed to be of a certain age group ... early thirties I should say, maybe a bit younger. The older men of course were the Commandants as they called themselves, the OCs of the various brigades and whatnot.

**Interviewer:** Did you have any dangerous moments yourself in Ireland?

**RG:** Not myself because I was young, silly, I used to wander miles out into the countryside taking a girl home but nothing was said to be me. Yet in other cases men had been picked up and shot [because of] associating with Irish girls. You see Cork was the worst place of the lot; they'd be more violent there than anywhere. Cork and Dublin were pretty bad.

**Interviewer:** So you were courting an Irish girl were you?

**RG:** Well, you know, the usual thing, a lad of fifteen.



## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

### Documents J-L

1. For what purpose was Document J created in 1920?

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2. Based on the evidence in *Document J* what type of man was the RIC recruitment drive aimed at?

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3. What financial incentives were offered to encourage recruitment to the RIC in Ireland in 1920? (*Doc J*)

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4. Identify three persuasive techniques used in RIC recruitment advertisement. (*Doc J*)

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5. Based on Document K, what was the name of the Auxiliary company involved in intelligence work and (b) where was that company based?

----- (b) -----

6. What types of buildings were taken over by Auxiliary companies in County Cork? (*Doc K*)

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7. What was Major Reginald Graham's impression of the Black and Tans? (*Doc L*)

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8. According to Major Graham what were the main differences between the British soldiers and the Black and Tans during the War of Independence? (*Doc L*)

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9. In your own words explain why the British Army did not have a high opinion of the people they were fighting? (*Doc L*)

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10. What information does Major Graham interview provide about the Irish Republican Army Volunteers between 1920 and 1921? (*Doc L*)

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11. How valuable do you think the transcript of Major Graham's interview would be to a historian of the War of Independence? Give reasons for your answer. (*Doc L*)

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## YOUR TASK

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(a) Imagine that you are fifteen-year old Reginald Graham. Write a letter to your brother in Devonport in England describing your experience in Ireland during your first year of service. Using evidence from Documents J and K, you should also include some details about the Black and Tans and the new Auxiliary Division of the RIC which began to arrive in Ireland from July 1920.

OR

(b) In his interview Major Graham mentions the IRA attack on Tramore barracks in 1921. Research the details of that event and write a short account of the attack comparing your findings with the information provided by Major Graham.

