

# Limerick's 'bravest sons' fought in 1916 Rising

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2016 will mark the official centenary celebrations and commemorations of the Easter 1916 Rising — an event that helped mould the sovereign State Ireland is today, and a milestone in Irish history in which the people of Limerick had an important role, which the Leader looks forward to marking.

## Easter 1916

On April 24, 1916, the men and women of the Rising seized the General Post Office, in Dublin, making it their headquarters, and also strategically occupied the Four Courts, Jacobs Factory, the College of Surgeons, South Dublin Union and Boland's Bakery.

On that day, the Proclamation of the Republic was read out to the members; a document that set out

their wishes to separate Ireland from British rule. This document was then signed by the seven signatories, the leaders of the Rising.

On April 30, one of the signatories Patrick Pearse declared an unconditional surrender and each volunteer laid down their arms. The carnage's death toll was 250 civilians, 130 British forces and 60 volunteers.

As a result of the surrender, many of the leaders were executed, two of whom included Limerickmen Edward 'Ned' Daly and Cornelius 'Con' Colbert.

## Con Colbert

Con Colbert, born in Castlemahon in 1888, was executed for his active involvement in the Rising, on May 8, 1916, at Kilmainham Gaol. Before his efforts that year, he was an active member of the Fianna Éireann and the Irish Volunteers movements.

Colbert, known to neither drink

nor smoke, was captain of the F Company of the Fourth Battalion, and was in command of the distillery in Marrowbone Lane when it surrendered on April 30.

## Ned Daly

Ned Daly, born in 1891, grew up in Frederick Street (now O'Curry Street). He was brother to prominent female politician Kathleen Clarke and nephew to Fenian leader and former Limerick mayor John Daly.

Commandant Ned Daly was executed on May 4 for his role in the Rising, where he led the First Battalion, which raided Bridewell and Linenhall Barracks, eventually taking control of the Four Courts. Daly had strong ties with Thomas Clarke, one of the signatories, who married his sister Kathleen.

## The Leader exclusive

On May 28, 1956, the Limerick

Leader published an exclusive first-hand account of a volunteer who served under Daly's command during the Rising.

The front page story was written especially for the paper by volunteer Charles Bevan, who was sentenced to death, but was instead imprisoned.

He wrote that "Ned Daly was known and loved by each and everyone of us", adding that it was "gratifying" to see that the people of Limerick had erected a monument in his honour, earlier that week at Sarsfield Bridge.

The night before surrender, Ned Daly told his comrades: "Men, I am proud of you. You have made a wonderful fight. But I have bad news for you. I have received an order from Comdt-General Pearse to surrender and hand over our arms."

Days before his execution, Bevan wrote, Ned sang songs at Richmond Barracks with his comrades, and when he was called on

by a British officer, he "went from man to man, shaking his hand in farewell".

His finishing lines read: "People of Limerick, you claim Ned Daly as one of your bravest sons. You have this beautiful memorial to remind you of him. We need no memorial, for he is enshrined in our hearts. Remember, he was our Commandant, our friend, our idol; he was our "Ned", and we remember him always. For myself, I will remember him as I last saw him; at the salute — a soldier to the end."

## 2016 celebrations

As part of Limerick's celebrations and commemorations of the 1916 Rising, Limerick City and County Council has planned a programme to mark the historic event.

Additionally, the Limerick Leader will provide coverage for all 1916 events in the city and county, as well as a focus on the anniversary of the Easter Rising.



Commandant Edward 'Ned' Daly: grew up in Limerick city