

Limerick patriot's gun for the people

By PADDY MORONEY

THE MAUSER pistol used by Limerick's Commandant Edward Daly in the 1916 Rising — he was executed for leading the Four Courts' garrison — has been presented to the people of Ireland by relatives.

It was handed over to the National Museum, where it will in the near future go on display, by Mr. Gerry O'Shea, of Limerick, and a sister, Mrs. Patsy Dowling, of Dublin.

They are grand-nephew and grand-niece respectively of another executed 1916 leader, Tom Clarke, who was married to a sister of Commandant Daly, Kathleen.

Mr. O'Shea — he and his family live at 8 Fushcia Avenue, Caherdavin Heights — is a godchild of Kathleen. Another sister, Mrs. Maureen Bourke, lives at Castletroy.

O'Curry Street

Commandant Daly's family, who originally came from O'Curry Street, lived on the Ennis Road. The gun was lost in the early years to the family but since the early 1920's it was taken care of by a sister of Commandant Daly, Madge, until, on the 50th anniversary of the Rising, she expressed the desire that it should be presented to the people of Ireland.

She wanted her nephew, Tom Clarke, son of the executed Tom Clarke of the Rising, who had been married to her sister, Kathleen, to make the presentation in due course to the National Museum.

But only a few weeks ago, as he was making preparations for the ceremony — he lived at Munster Terrace, O'Connell Avenue — he died. It was left to a nephew and niece of his, Mr. Gerry O'Shea and Mrs. Patsy Dowling, to go ahead with the presentation.

Explained Mr. O'Shea: "We were his family really, as he didn't have a family of his own. He was married to my mother's sister, and I looked after his affairs over the last few years. I used to do most things for him — he was living on his own — and it was up to me to go ahead."

Ceremony

The presentation ceremony was at the National Museum, where the pistol was formally accepted by Mr. John Teahan, keeper of the art and industrial division, of which the historical collection is part.

Added Mr. O'Shea: "They are presently doing up the 1916 section so it won't be on display in the immediate future. Hopefully, it will be in a matter of months."

Kathleen (nee Daly), who was married to the executed Tom Clarke, herself spent a term in Holloway Prison, in England, with Countess Markievicz, for her Republican activities.

And she as a widow and the Countess sent a Christmas card in 1918 from the prison to the widow of another 1916 executed leader, Michael Mallin, chief of staff of the 200-strong Irish Citizen Army.

By a remarkable co-incidence, that very card, along with Michael Mallin's dress sword (acquired possibly during his 14 years with the British Army in pre-Rising



The Mauser pistol which was used by Limerick's Commandant Edward Daly when he commanded the Four Courts garrison during the 1916 Rising, along with its wooden case, being handed over to the National Museum by (right) Mr. Gerry O'Shea, of Limerick, and sister, Mrs. Patsy Dowling of Dublin. In the centre is Mr. John Teahan, of the museum. The wooden case can be attached to the gun-handle to enable it to be held against the shoulder like a rifle, as seen in the picture.

years) were presented to the National Museum at the same ceremony as that at which Commandant Daly's gun was handed over.

Execution

Michael Mallin was executed at Kilmainham on May 8, 1916, only days after Limerick's own Edward Daly. He had been in command of the College of Surgeons' garrison in Stephen's Green, a short

distance from today's National Museum, and Countess Markievicz had been his second in command: she signed herself "IRA" on the Christmas card.

The sword, like Edward Daly's gun, was very nearly lost through dispossession. It was handed over to the National Museum by Michael Mallin's youngest daughter, Mrs. Maura Phillips, of Dublin, who was born four months after her father had been executed and who recalled that her mother

had saved the sword, during a Tan raid on their home, by simply dropping some newspapers over it.

She was friendly, over the years, with the Dalys of Limerick, and also with the Clarks. As a child, she had spent six months in the care of Patrick Pearse's sister, Margaret, while her own mother was ill, but she could remember being driven by her mother to the funeral of Kathleen Clarke's 'nee Daly's great friend, Countess Markievicz.

The nun's story

By LEADER REPORTER

THE STORY of how Commandant Edward Daly's gun was recovered, after being out of the possession of the family for years, is one of tenacity by a nun, a Sister Agnes Nora Scanlan, who at the time of the Rising was based at St. John's Convent in North Brunswick Street, Dublin. She came from Co. Clare.

She was a friend of both Commandant Daly and his sister, Madge, who later asked her on the 50th anniversary of the Rising, to record her recollections. It was to Sister Agnes that Commandant Daly entrusted the gun before he was executed. But she was not able to give it to the Daly family in Limerick until after the War of Independence.

Memories

She recorded her memories as follows:

"On Saturday afternoon, April 29, 1916, the sixth day of the Rising, Commandant Daly returned to our convent and told our much-loved superior, Ma Soeur O'Grady, that he wished to see me.

"I found him looking sad and very worried, and I asked him if there were anything wrong. He said, 'No, nothing, but I have a great favour to ask. Would you



Edward Daly.

take care of my gun?"

"I said, 'Of course, I'll take care of it, on condition it isn't loaded'. He smiled and reassured me on that point. We had a few more words, and he was gone.

"The gun was in a case, the same case as it is in today. In the inner hall of the convent, there was a rarely-used couch, upholstered in cretonne with a frill reaching the floor, and under this I hid the gun.

"Ten days later, I was back at work in the Union, the North Dublin Union as it was then known, when I got an urgent message to come to the convent. I got there to find Ma Soeur standing beside the couch with the precious gun.

"To my shame, I had forgotten all about it, possibly due to the shock of the executions. I told her it belonged to me, how and by whom it was given to me, but she ordered me to hand it over to the Master of the Union, David Fagan.

Pleaded

"I begged and pleaded with her to let me take it to the Vincentian Monastery, in Phibsboro, and leave it in the care of one of our own priests there, but she was adamant and I, of course, had to obey.

"Very sadly and unwillingly, I am afraid, I called to the Master's office and handed it over.

"Mr. Fagan became very excited, and said he could not believe he really owned such a treasure. He unlocked his desk and put the gun in the second drawer and thanked me profusely."

Sister Agnes, however, was not without resource. Two days later, she was going to work when she met Mr. Fagan on the avenue, apparently going into town.

"We talked for a few minutes," she recalled, "and I asked him if I might use his phone, as I wanted to speak to my sister, Sister Magdalen, at Maynooth College."

There was nothing suspicious about this request, as Sister Agnes' convent had no telephone.

"He handed me his bunch of keys," she remembered, "I unlocked the office door, put a call through to Maynooth, opened the second drawer, removed the case, opened it and saw that the gun was there, relocked the drawer, put the gun up my wide sleeve, and spoke to my sister for a few minutes."

Next day, a Fr. John Bowen called at her request, and took it to his home in Howth, where it was safely hidden. A few months later, that house was searched by the British Army, but the gun was not found.

However, the Bowen brothers living there became worried for the safety of the gun, and a Father Williams, the senior curate in Howth, buried it in his garden.

When he was later made a Canon, and changed to Tere-nure, he again buried the gun there.

Shortly after the electoral victory by Mr. de Valera in Co. Clare, Sister Agnes' native county, an article appeared in the then Unionist paper, *The Irish Times*, on foot of which she was transferred to Birmingham.

Four or five years were to elapse, during which the War of Independence was fought, before Sister Agnes could make a return visit to Dublin. There, she met Canon Williams, who gave her the gun.

"I took it to Limerick, and handed it over to the Daly family," she remembered happily.