

# New book tells life story of Limerick war hero

## Live satellite link up of launch to America

By Mary Earls

THE remarkable life story of a 97-year-old Limerick man who, as a boy, was hired out as a farm labourer and later survived jungle warfare in Burma, is told in a new book launched this Tuesday, in Ballylanders, with a live satellite link up to the United States.

"From Knockadae to Mandalay" tells the inspiring story of Danny O'Brien, who served in the National Army after the Civil War and later fought with the British Army in the Burma campaign during the Second World War.

Written by Cllr John Gallahue, from Ballylanders, the book recalls rural life in county Limerick, when Danny was a young boy helping his father on their small holding at Knockadae. It also recounts the way of life at the time and offers an insight to an Ireland now largely

forgotten.

"Danny O'Brien has known six generations of my family," said Cllr Gallahue, "and I felt that writing down his life story would be a fitting tribute to a true gentleman".

The book outlines the time Danny served in the National Army after the Civil War and his recruitment into the Irish Republican Army locally, and later his departure to work in Britain.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Danny was drafted into the British army where he rose to the rank of Sgt. Maj. in the artillery. He trained in Scotland and took part in the Burma Campaign.

"It was an exhausting theatre of battle," commented Cllr Gallahue. "The jungle warfare took its toll and fighting the Japanese was a fearful task, but Danny survived and after the Japanese were driven out, he became a

policeman in Malay".

After the war, Danny went back to London and worked as a policeman at the new Heathrow Airport. Later, he returned to farming in Surrey before retiring to his native place near Anglesboro.

"While the book tells the story of his life, it is really a love story as Danny says he owes everything to his late wife Lena," continued Cllr Gallahue.

"She was also a local girl and today, their children and grandchildren are living across the world, from Ireland to Canada and the West Indies," he said.

The book is on sale in local bookshops. It was launched by Col. Colm Doyle, former chief of the Irish Defence Force Mission to Kosovo, this week.

Colonel Doyle first became well known to international television audiences during his tour of duty in

Bosnia.

John Gallahue said they were delighted to

have Col. Doyle launching the publication.

A special DVD presentation was also shown, and there was

a live satellite link up with the United States, where friends

of Danny paid tribute to the 97-year-old Limerick man.



97-year-old war hero, Danny O'Brien's life story was the inspiration behind the newly launched book, "Knockadae to Mandalay" written by Cllr John Gallahue (right).