

# Markievizch's guard turned gaoler, Pat, is laid to rest

By **PATRICIA FEEHILY**

A VOLLEY of shots rang out over the hillside cemetery at

Knockainey as the last surviving member of the Mid Limerick brigade of the Old IRA, Pat Hickey, of Newtown, Elton, was

laid to rest last week.

He was also one of the last veterans in the country of the IRB, which he joined as a teenager.

But as a bugler from the 12th Batt, Sarsfield Barracks, sounded the Last Post in the bitter January afternoon, there was nobody left to recall the stirring and heroic times of the man they had come to honour.

Pat Hickey had never looked for glory.

He was 95. He died peacefully at St Camillus' hospital, but had lived with his son, John, and daughter-in-law, Mary, at the old homestead until recently.

A firing party from the 12th Batt, under Cpl Andrew Tobin, did the military honours, and his coffin was borne to the cemetery wrapped in the tricolour.

His role in the fight for freedom was dramatic and noteworthy, but according to friends and neighbours who came to pay their respects, he rarely spoke about it.

The late Mr Hickey was

adjutant to Comdt Dick O'Connell, and was one of the heroes of the famous Dromkeen ambush, one of the last engagements of the War of Independence.

He was only 16 years old in 1916 when he overstated his age, and joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood. The following year, he enlisted as a volunteer, and took part in many Mid Limerick attacks, sustaining a serious eye injury in one shooting.

It was Countess Markievizch, to whom he had been appointed bodyguard, who got a German surgeon to operate on his injured eye.

Ironically, Adj Hickey was later, as a member of the National Army, to become the Countess' jailer in the Civil War.

He took the pro-Treaty side in the Civil War, and became adjutant to Gen Richard Mulcahy. He was one of 30 army officers who took over the Curragh when the British army moved out, and remained in the Army until 1927, when he went back to his Elton farm.

But he was to return to duty once more, when Gen Michael Costelloe appointed him LDF commandant in charge of the Galtee area during the Emergency from 1939 to 1954.

His neighbours in Elton and Knockainey remember him as a good neighbour - a kind and courteous man, who never sought the lime-light, but something like an



The cortege follows the coffin of Old IRA veteran, Patrick Hickey, Elton, t



Mr Hickey's daughter, Philomena Ellis, Cork. (LL)



Soldiers from the 12th Batt, Sarsfield Barracks, fire a volley of shots over the grave. (LL)







**John Hickey, a son of the late Patrick Hickey, and John Joe Hickey, grandson, carry Mr Hickey's coffin. (LL)**



**Dick Hourigan son-in-law. (LL)**

Michael Costelloe appointed him LDF commandant in charge of the Galtee area during the Emergency from 1939 to 1954.

His neighbours in Elton and Knockainey remember him as a good neighbour - a kind and courteous man, who never sought the lime-light, but something like an applause seemed to linger in the air over Knockainey cemetery when the Last Post had ended.

His son-in-law, Jack Horgan paid the most appropriate tribute: "He came from oblivion, did his bit for his country and went back to oblivion. That takes greatness."

There was a large attendance at the removal of the remains from St Camillus' hospital to Davoren's funeral home in Hospital, and at the Mass and burial in Knockainey.

Requiem Mass was celebrated by Fr Tom Ryan, PP, assisted by Fr Joe Hoare, Fr Tom Lanigan Ryan, Fr Paddy Curriivan, Fr Tom Egan, Fr Paddy O'Doherty and Fr Derry Quirke.

Mr Hickey is survived by his son, John, daughters, Carmel, Philomena and Esther, daughter-in-law, sons-in-law, grandchildren and friends.



**Mary and Michael Hickey with Margaret Keane, Kathleen Hanley and Anne O'Gorman. (LL)**



**Former MEP, Tom O'Donnell, at the funeral. (LL)**

