DEATH OF HEROINE OF WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Mai Clair (nee Moloney) of Lackelly

It was with the deepest regret and the sorrow of many old men and women that the news was received in the East Limerick Brigade I.R.A. area recently of the death in Manchester, England, of Mrs. Mai Clair (nee Moloney), formerly of Lackelly, Knocklong. There is no doubt that Mai Moloney was one of the outstanding heroines in the East Limerick and South Tipperary areas during the fight for freedom — no more than there is any doubt that the women of that part of Ireland were second to none in that testing time, when sacrifice and heroism of a high order were called for.

It was at the home of Mai, and her equally patriotic brother, Danny, at Lackelly, that the final arrangements with the men of the Galtee Battalion for the rescue of Sean Hogan at Knocklong Station in May, 1919, were made. Mai was sent to Knocklong to ascertain on which train Sean Hogan and his captors would be travelling to Cork. She duly wired the vital information which resulted in the successful rescue, a daring and courageous deed that fired the souls of Ireland's fighting men and set the ballots singing.

From Dingle Bay to Garryowen, this name will echo long. Of the rescue of Sean Hogan at the station of Knocklong.

During the War of Independence, Mai nursed and fed the wounded I.R.A., and was at hand at every barricade attack and ambush in the East Limerick area. Her brother, Danny, was a member of the famous East Limerick Flying Column of the I.R.A., the first such column in Ireland.

Perhaps Mai’s greatest and most courageous exploit was the rescue of wounded and dead I.R.A. men from under the very noses of the British forces at the Lackelly ambush in May, 1921. Michael Collins is known to have said that “East Limerick holds the flower of Irish womanhood” and in his book, B'Fhliú an Braon Fóir, Séamus Ó Maolóin gave it as his opinion that in the War of Independence the women of East Limerick were the best in Ireland. And, it might be added, none were better than Mai Moloney.

If necessary, Mai would—and in fact did—sacrifice. As a reprisal for the patriotic activities of his family, the Mooney family, the Germans burned down their home at Lackelly. During the Civil War the Mooneys took the Republican side, and Mai was interned throughout all that tragic period.

She is survived by her husband, James, and her son, James Christopher.

Go dtúla Dia saolaimneas síoraí dá nanam cróga! — S. O. M.