My grandfather, my hero

SURREY-based Jim Corbett, has spent two years researching the life and times of his grandfather Cornelius McNamara who showed remarkable bravery in the Civil War and War of Independence.

By John O’Shoughnessy

A FASCINATION with the exploits of his grandfather Cornelius McNamara during the War of Independence and Civil War, influenced Jim Corbett into researching the man and the role he played in a turbulent period in Irish history for a new book titled "No White I Have Amour," due to be published next March.

Jim is the youngest of six surviving children, and brother to Tomma, Davy, Sarah, Neill and Oon, born to Thomas and Patricia (nee McNamara) Corbett, both of whom were pharmacists.

Explained Jim: "All through my life, stories about my grandfather, a member of the IRA, were related to me. We had his war medals, a picture and an old bullet from a battle in the Strand Barracks, from the Civil War era, where Connie and his comrades made their historic stand."

"That bullet was fired at him as he made a telephone call on the final day of battle and pierced the window. He was a very lucky man. Also in our possession was an autobiography book, with some strange illustrations on the covers from his time as a prisoner of war at Dungannon."

"My mother told me stories of Republican prisoners, and the buns he was presented with, follow their country and countrymen."

I wanted to give him a place in history that I felt he deserved, and to give back to the people of Limerick, the story of one of her gallant sons.

This photograph was taken outside the Strand Barracks, Limerick. He was one of a golden generation of unsung Irishmen with high ideals who were prepared to risk and endure everything for the sake of their country and countrymen.

I wanted to give him a place in history that I felt he deserved, and to give back to the people of Limerick, the story of one of her gallant sons.

Commandant Liam Campbell, of Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Carolin Crawley, of the National Museum, Michael Collins Barracks, Deirdre Griffin of Limerick City Registers, St. Camillus Hospital, Limerick, for the McNamara family and friends who kindly obtained a copy of his obituary, and Derek Molloy of the Limerick Republican Graves Association, Tom Townshend, for his clarification on various Volunteers activities.

Taksh Onomiyi, for preparing the Limerick City Battalion crest.

Philip Tomer, for drawing the map of the Strand Barracks.

Mike Reynolds of Snappy Snaps, Croydon, James McMahon and Rodger Boulter for helping me with their research.

And last but not least, the various members of the Corbett, Molloy and McNamara families whose family records and first-hand information proved invaluable.

The book will be launched at the Hilton Hotel, Limerick, in March 2008.