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On Sunday June 15th 1919 Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant John Whitten Brown became the first people to successfully complete a non-stop flight across the Atlantic Ocean.

Lord Northcliffe, the owner of the Daily Mail, had offered a £10,000 prize to the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic by a 'heavier than air' machine with terms and conditions drawn up and administered by the Royal Aero Club. The advent of the First World War suspended the competition.

Alcock and Brown, both former WWI fighter pilots, arrived in St John’s, Newfoundland with their Vicker Vimy Biplane and set up in Lester’s Field on Sunday May 25th in order to begin preparations.

Intending to set out on Friday 13th a damaged axle acquired during test flights delayed their departure. Saturday 14th dawned with strong winds and had they not heard that another competitor, Admiral Mark Kerr, also planned to set out that day they may have delayed again.

Brown told reporters, “with this wind, if it continues all the time, we shall be in Ireland in 12 hours...I am steering a straight line for the Galway Bay and although I shall do my best, I do not expect to strike it exactly.”

The Vickers Vimy, fully loaded, was capable of reaching speeds of up to 90 miles an hour. The average speed achieved during their flight was 120 mph during the crossing.

The pair endured terrible weather and failed equipment throughout the journey. They lost their transmitter which meant that they could not contact any ships passing beneath them to get their position. They also endured turbulence and thick fog and snow. They were unable to out fly the conditions. Communication between the two was also difficult due to the roar of the engines, the wind and the darkness. At one point Alcock lost control of the plane and they spiralled to within a 100 feet of the water below.

The battery heating their clothes failed and their instruments iced over due to the adverse weather conditions.

When they reached the Royal Aero Club they were greeted by the club’s vice president General Holden and they handed over a small mail bag entrusted to them by the postmaster in St. Johns completing the first transatlantic air mail delivery. The letters were taken to a post office to be franked and forwarded as airmail stamps had not been issued yet.

Later in the month both men were awarded their prize money by the Secretary of State Winston Churchill and knighted the following day by King George V in recognition of their pioneering achievement.

When they had landed they asked for fresh milk which was delivered to them by the Royal Aero Club. The milk was too far away for their radio equipment to be heard.

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January 21 2019 marked the centenary of the sitting of the First Dáil in Dublin’s Mansion House which comprised of Sinn Féin Members of Parliament or Teachtaí Dála as they are known today to deliver a Declaration of Independence and a Democratic Programme for an independent Irish nation. There were nine MPs elected from Cork, however, of the nine, James J. Walsh and Sean Hayes were the only MPs present at First Dáil, because others were in prison, banished or “simply marked down as absent.”

There were fourteen sessions in 1919 alone, with the largest attendance of fifty two members in April. This was due to the release of Sinn Féin internees such as Terence MacSwiney. Although Dáil Éireann was conducted as an official and democratic parliament, there was always the chance proceedings would be interrupted by the British authorities. For example, the British would ensure that proceedings were not reported in the national papers. Some members were advised to refrain from attending in fear of ill health being exacerbated by imprisonment.

From September 11 Britain declared Dáil Éireann an illegal organisation due to the issue of Dáil Loans. These were loans amounting to £300,000 raised by Michael Collins as recently appointed Minister for Finance to cover running expenses and salaries. As an example of British censorship, The Cork Examiner and its allied papers were suppressed by Dublin Castle for several days in September for publishing the Dáil Loan prospectus and related advertisements. The authorities would use the Defence of the Realm Act as an excuse, making it an offense to publish false reports or make false statements or spread reports or make statements intended or likely to cause disaffection to His Majesty’s forces. In some cases, newspaper offices and machinery were attacked and destroyed in order to suppress public consumption of news about the Dáil Loan. In retaliation, a daily paper supported by the Dáil called The Irish Bulletin began publication in November and aimed to promote the policies of Dáil Éireann in the interest of the Irish people and to highlight the oppressive actions of the British government, particularly, informing major foreign newspapers of the activities of the Crown forces in Ireland.

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Around the time he was appointed Finance Minister in April, Michael Collins was secretly planning an intelligence war against the British by establishing a hit Squad comprised of Irish Volunteer gunmen loyal to Dáil Éireann in order to execute various British intelligence agents and detectives of the Dublin Metropolitan Police known as the ‘G’ Division. In the aftermath of the Rising a vengeful Collins’s swore, ‘By Christ, I’ll have my revenge for this’ and set up a Squad of Irish Volunteer gunmen assisted by inside men in the ‘G’ Division to intimidate British intelligence and began a series of targeted assassinations from July 30.

Operating from a Headquarters nearby Dublin Castle on Crow Street, the Squad, under the direction of Liam Tobin, moved around the city of Dublin posing as carpenters and workmen, hiding their guns under their work aprons. These assassinations, along with the raising of the Dáil Loans, compelled Dublin Castle to suppress Dáil Éireann on September 11, in tandem with the banning of supporting organisations and newspapers. The ‘G’ Division would be decimated by the end of 1919, but the fighting would continue...

Sources: Atlas of the Irish revolution / editors: John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil and Mike Murphy; associate editor: John Borgono. Irish Examiner January 21, 2019

The Cork Nine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cork City</th>
<th>Liam de Róiste</th>
<th>Nominated to a committee that would decide on Dáil salaries, and eventually became Leas Céann Comhairle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cork City</td>
<td>James J. Walsh</td>
<td>Present at First Dáil, but subsequently arrested in 1919 for partaking in an illegal government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork East</td>
<td>David Kent</td>
<td>Brother of Thomas and Richard Kent who both died shortly after the 1916 Rising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork Mid</td>
<td>Terence MacSwiney</td>
<td>- Was released from Lincoln Gaol in March 1919 and served on Dáil subcommittees to raise monies for the Dáil Loan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork North</td>
<td>Patrick O'Keeffe</td>
<td>In prison at time of First Dáil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork North East</td>
<td>Thomas Hunter</td>
<td>In prison at time of First Dáil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork South</td>
<td>Michael Collins</td>
<td>Originally Home Affairs Minister, than appointed Minister for Finance 2 April 1919 to oversee the Dáil Loan, while simultaneously acting as Director of Intelligence for the Irish Republican Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork South East</td>
<td>Diarmuid Lynch</td>
<td>Elected in absentia while exiled in America in 1918, Lynch was an active fundraiser and the national secretary of the Irish-American Friends of Irish Freedom, raising over $1m by August 1919.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork West</td>
<td>Seán Hayes</td>
<td>Present at First Dáil.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The IRA raid and the subsequent reprisals carried out by British security forces was a precursor to how much of the urban conflict that took place in the War of Independence developed. The first major action of the War of Independence and the first concerted attack on the British Army since 1916 was in the town of Fermoy, County Cork. It was led by Liam Lynch, Officer Commanding, Cork No. 2 Brigade of the IRA. The exact number of Volunteers involved in the ambush varies from multiple sources. It is estimated that about 20 Volunteers from the No.2 Brigade took part with the assistance of 10 other Volunteers from other areas. The number of British Forces also varied in number with the newspaper accounts stating a total of 14 soldiers and 1 officer were present at the time of the ambush. The aim of the ambush, as with most such operations in 1919, was to capture badly-needed weapons.

After observing the routines of the British Troops stationed at Fermoy for a period of about three months, it was decided that the most opportune moment to stage an ambush was as a small group of British soldiers marched toward the old Wesleyan church for Sunday service. Fifteen soldiers of the Shropshire Light Infantry were ambushed before the Sunday service by the group of Volunteers armed with revolvers and clubs. Private Jones of the King’s Own Shropshire Light Infantry died from a single gunshot to the heart. A second British soldier to be gravely injured was Private Lloyd who was shot in the neck. The only Irish Volunteer to be wounded in the engagement was Liam Lynch who was slightly wounded in the shoulder. The rifles were loaded into waiting cars and driven away with trees being felled on the main road to cover their escape from RIC and Military vehicles.

The attack was the first in which a British soldier was killed by the IRA during the War of Independence. On the Monday night following the raid, a large party of soldiers from the British garrison at Fermoy descended upon the town. They smashed the windows in most of the shops in Pearse Square, MacCurtain Street and Patrick Street and looted the contents. The following night the troops were confined to barracks, but on the Wednesday night they assembled again only to find a large crowd of residents waiting for them in Emmet Street. Armed with sticks, stones and other weapons, the local people attacked the soldiers so furiously that they were driven back to their barracks.

Cork Examiner, 8 September 1919
The patron saint of the Diocese of Cloyne is Colmán mac Leinín, born in 522. Colmán was a bard in Cashel before becoming a priest, serving Aodh Caomh the powerful chieftain there. On his ordination he received a grant of land in Cloyne in East Cork late in the 6th century from Aodh Caomh. The round tower from his monastic settlement still stands, and it was the village of Cloyne which gave its name to the Diocese which includes all of East Cork, almost all of North Cork, and most of Muskerry in Mid Cork. The boundaries of the diocese were set by the Synod of Kells in 1152.

Pomp and Circumstance were the order of the day when the Cathedral was consecrated on 12 August 1919. Leading the ceremony was Michael Cardinal Logue, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland, the Archbishops of Cashel and Tuam, the Bishop of Cloyne Robert Browne (an uncle of the priest-photographer Fr. Francis Browne, SJ) and 20 other bishops, plus almost 100 other dignitaries of the Catholic Church.

Building a Cathedral was traditionally a long-term project in medieval Europe. Notre Dame de Paris took 850 years to complete. The Dom or Cathedral in Cologne, Cork’s twin city, was begun in 1248 and finished in 1883. St. Colman’s did not quite take that length of time. It was, however, ten years in planning before the architects – Edward Welby Pugin and George C. Ashlin – were appointed in 1867. The actual building began in April 1869 so the construction phase lasted only a comparatively modest half century. The contract price was £33,000! The construction was not without incident: the initial contractor – M. Meade & Son of Dublin – was let go after two years, and the plans themselves were changed and made more elaborate while the building work was going on.

St. Colman’s Cathedral is Gothic in design, in the shape of a Latin cross, with the main entrance at the western front. Traditional in design, it has the usual features of a Gothic church: north and south aisles, a soaring nave focused on the high altar. The Cathedral has one tower, rather than the more customary two. This is on the southern side of the west front.

This tower contains perhaps the most significant feature of the building: a carillon with 49 bells, one of the largest in Europe. An automated system strikes the hour and 15 minute intervals while it also rings the bells for religious events. The carillon is played on special occasions and most Sunday afternoons by its current carillonneur Adrian Gebruers, son of Staf (Gustavus) Gebruers, who had come to Cobh in 1924 from Flanders to be the carillonneur – the post has thus been in one family for almost a century.

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The location of the Cathedral, before building began, showing the church previously on the site.
On 19 July 1919, the British Authorities organised a 'Victory of Peace' parade in Cork to celebrate the signing of the Versailles treaty and the official end of the First World War. The parade included a number of different sections. The first part of the parade began with a show of armoured cars and 'Whippet' tanks followed by demobilised personnel from all arms of the British military.

The next section showcased Irish regiments, such as the Munster Fusiliers, and other British regiments stationed in Ireland during this time. There was also a large display from the female military units who had also served during World War 1. Amongst the female units were the Queen Mary Army Auxiliary Corps (Q.M.A.A.C.), the Voluntary Aid Detachment (V.A.D.), The Army Pay Corps Clerks and the Women's Legion. On the Grand Parade there was a fixed platform in position close to the National Monument where Major-General Williams took up position in order to salute the parading regiments.

Although the parade went off without any major incident and large crowds gathered to support the peace parade, that evening there were a number of public order disturbances. A group of British soldiers were confronted while singing a song which was insulting to the Irish and were chased off the streets only to be saved from further harm by the RIC. Later a RIC Constable Keogh was shot in the thigh while chasing a crowd of protestors before the RIC returned fire with revolvers. One British Army officer was attacked and had to take refuge in the Victoria Hotel before RIC officers escorted him out of the city centre. Armed pickets from Victoria Barracks were later posted throughout the city centre and were jeered. By this stage the majority of people had left the streets and there were no other disturbances.

Irish Examiner July 1919