



## What is the IBCC?

The International Brigade Commemoration Committee was established at a meeting held in the Linen Hall Library on February 26<sup>th</sup> 2005, by interested parties, where it was agreed to erect a Memorial to those from the north of Ireland who volunteered, fought, and died fighting against Franco/Fascism in the Spanish Civil War.

## What were the International Brigades?

A CENTRE-LEFT Government was democratically elected in Spain in February 1936 which then came under attack from the army, big business, Hitler and Mussolini. It was the opinion of the international volunteers who went to Spain, (and also many others) that this right wing rebellion was really the start of the Second World War. They believed that it was necessary to defend the Spanish Government from the rising tide of Fascism sweeping Europe in order to stop World War II.

In the autumn of 1936 men started to arrive in Spain to defend the country from fascist attack. By Christmas they were coming in their thousands and this included over 275 men and women born in Ireland. While Hitler and Mussolini could send over 100,000 'volunteers', tanks and equipment, the Spanish government was dependent on volunteers and whatever they could scrap together, despite international blockades.

From 1936 to 1939 the Spanish people were supported by over 55,000 men and women (over 10,000 fell in the conflict) who formed what became known as the International Brigades. Literally from the earliest months through to the end of the war, Irish volunteers were present. They fought, they suffered, some were mutilated: many of them died.



*Members of the International Brigade on the march in Spain.*

## Why is it important to remember these people?

THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE Commemoration Committee has been established to erect a memorial to those men from Northern Ireland who fought and died fighting for democracy; fighting against fascism.

The volunteers from here will make this memorial unique. This was a war fought by men who were trade union, community and political activists. They were working class protestants and catholics who shared a hatred of fascism, combined with the willingness and determination to do something about it. What can be truly said is that this was a cross community struggle by those from the labour movement.

served in several different military units, operating under the general title of the International Brigade. Of these 70 people, 20 died in Spain. (See inside for a full list). We have also added another volunteer who was killed when he continued the anti-fascist struggle into World War 2 – Warrant Officer Jim Haughey of the Canadian Air Force, originally from Lurgan.

**In 2006 the IBCC plans to erect a memorial in Belfast city centre to these men. Join with us in commemorating this period of struggle which united workers from the North of Ireland in a common cause – the struggle against fascism in Spain from 1936 to 1939.**

There were over 70 volunteers born here who went to Spain. This includes medics, some non-combatants, and people who

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**Roll of Honour for those men from northern Ireland who died in the defence of the Spanish Republic. Ongoing research may yet uncover more information about these volunteers and information on other volunteers who we are not yet aware of.**

**William Beattie, Belfast, d. 25 July 1937**

A Belfast Protestant, from 14 Wilton Street off the Shankill, he had served eight years in the British army from 1924-32. In the 1930s he was a member of the NI Labour Party.

He moved to Glasgow where he joined the Communist Party. Left there in December 1936 for Spain. Serving with the No. 1 Company, XIV International Brigade at Lopera he was hospitalised in Albacete with shrapnel wounds in the left arm on Dec. 27th 1936. He was still there on Feb. 11th 1937. After treatment he rejoined the Batt. and died at Brunete on 25th July 1937.

**Danny Boyle, Belfast, d. Sept. 1938**

Boyle read his obituary in early February 1937! That error was then compounded by another account saying he died at Jarama on the 12 - 13th of February 1937. After these two obituaries Boyle was finally correctly listed as Killed in Action at the Battle of the Ebro in 1938.

He gave his next of kin as being Mrs. McCaul, 160 Glenard Gardens in Belfast.

**John Campbell, Belfast, b. 1910?, d. 27th Feb. 1937**

This East Belfastman, from 39 Woodstock Road, joined the International Brigade in London, leaving there on January 22nd 1937. A member of the British Battalion at Jarama, he was fatally wounded at Pingarron on February 27th, dying in hospital.

**James C Domegan, Belfast, d. 23rd September 1938**

James Domegan listed his next of kin as Mrs. Susan Domegan, 4 Leeson Street, Belfast. This labourer arrived on April 14th 1938, serving with the British Battalion. Listed as Killed in Action/Missing in Action in the fighting at Sierra Cabals, Corbera, September 23rd 1938

**James Donald, Derry, b. 12 Jan 1916, d. June 1938**

The Derry-born volunteer worked as a miner in Scotland where he lived at Methil, Fife. Arrived in Spain on 24th January 1937, serving with the British Battalion.

James Donald was still in Spain in the Spring of 1938 when he was sent to the front to help stem the fascist attack at the Aragon. Some say he was killed at Caspe on St. Patrick's Day 1938. It is most likely that he was again sent back to the line in June where he died as he failed to renew contact with his family.

**Charles Donnelly, Dungannon, b. 10 July 1914, d. 27 Feb 1937**

A well-known Irish poet, he had been active in left-wing politics for years before going to Spain. While in Dublin he joined with Paddy Byrne in a series of public meetings around the city.

He left London on 23rd Dec. 1936 with a group of others. He was killed in the battle of Jarama by an explosive bullet and his body lay for 4 days on the battlefield before it could be recovered. There is a commemorative plaque to him near the Crystal factory at Coalisland, the only one so far in Northern Ireland.



*Members of the 15th International Brigade in Spain.*

**George F Gorman, Derry, b. 1900, d. 23/09/1938**

This Derry born volunteer had lived in Folkestone, Kent before joining the British Army with whom he saw service in India and during WW1 in Iraq. In all he served 12 years in the British Army.

In Spain from 3rd May 1938 he was a sergeant in the No. 4 company of the British Battalion. He was taken prisoner of war at Sierra Cabals. George Wheeler, a British volunteer who was also captured in that incident, states that Gorman was captured and then fell victim to friendly fire.

**Jim Haughey, Lurgan b. 6/12/1919, d. 12/09/1943**

While in London some Basques explained to him what was going on in Spain. He arrived on May 13th 1938 and was assigned to the British Batt.

He was one of eight soldiers left holding back a fascist attack on the Sierra Cabals mountain range in late 1938. They were captured and lined up for execution. When he asked the fascists for a priest to make his last confession they gave him a severe beating for apparently laughing at the Church.

He was released from the San Pedro prison camp in April 1939. He arrived in Vancouver, Canada in May 1939 with a fake ID. He reverted to his own name later as he joined the Canadian Air Force during WW2 in 1941. He died in a training flight accident on September 12th 1943 and is buried at Lurgan in a military grave in Lurgan (Dougher) RC cemetery.

**Bill Henry, Belfast, b. 1896 or 1901, d. 27 Feb 1937**

Bill Henry arrived in Spain on December 22nd 1936. His experience of World War 1 led to this veteran being made acting commander of the No. 1 Company, Lincoln Batt., by the time he died at Jarama. One description of the battle at Jarama says that on 27.2.37 the IB charged and within minutes 147 of them were killed by the heavy gunfire, one of them being Bill Henry who was hit on the head with an explosive bullet.

His widow Rosina lived at 31 Bradford Street. Henry had been in the Irish Distributive Workers Union, a market dealer and in the NI Labour Party. In his last letter home to his wife Rosina he stated that "there are some great comrades here with me, with whom it would be an honour to go to the happy hunting ground."

**William Keenan, Bangor, b. 1901?, d. July 1938**

William Keenan emigrated to Canada in 1934 and it was from there that he left for Spain. On his way he was arrested in France on March 27th 1937. He got 20 days in jail but still made his way to Spain and served with the Mac-Pacs, the Canadian unit. After 15 months he was reported killed in action during the battle of the Ebro by a Stuka bomber.

**Thomas A Kerr, Belfast, b. 1910?, d. Oct 1938**

Thomas Kerr, a Belfast born sailor, and member of the National Union of Seamen, from a Protestant background, joined the International Brigade in Liverpool. He arrived in Spain in January 5th 1937, serving with the British Battalion. By 1938 he had joined the Number 4 Company. He caught typhoid and was treated near Barcelona where he later died of his illness in October 1938.

His family lived at 17 Belmont Road in East Belfast.

**William P Laughlin, Belfast, d. 7th July 1937**

Laughlin was a married man from 162 Conway Street, off the Shankill Road. This left wing activist had joined the Irish Guards. He spent 13 years in the British army and then worked as a labourer.

While in Spain he was with the British Batt. at Lopera in December 1936 and went onto serve as a machine gun instructor at Madrigueras, a major training camp. He fought at Los Rozas in January, then in Jarama in Feb. He was listed as missing but was wounded and in hospital. After returning to the Batt. he was KIA 7th July 1937 at Villanueva de la Canada.

**Henry McGrath, Belfast, b. 1902, d. 23rd Sept. 1938**

Henry McGrath arrived in Spain December 10th 1936. He is thought to have been serving onboard the naval ship, the Alcala Galiano in Categena in early 1937 when it was visited by a British Officer. After seven months with the Spanish fleet he had moved to the British battalion by July 4th 1937.

There is a suggestion that he was repatriated in July 1937 but the most likely development was that he was killed in action at Sierra Cabals, September 1938, as he never resurfaced or made contact.

**Eamon McGrotty, Derry, b. 1911, d. 27th Feb. 1937**

Eamon McGrotty had been in the Christian Brothers between 1925-32. He moved to Dublin in 1932. He was a socialist, member of the Gaelic League and the republican movement.

His brother John said that, 'Eamon was affected by teaching young people with no shoes, this made him a socialist. It could be what [ultimately] made him go to Spain.... He went to Spain because of his knowledge about the danger of advancing fascism in Europe, he had to help stop fascism.'

Arriving in Spain December 22nd 1936. Eamon was Adjutant in the Irish Company. They were initially a part of the British Battalion but joined the American Battalion. He died at the Battle of Jarama.

**Ben (Basil Andrew) Murray, Tyrone/Belfast, b. 19 July 1895, d. 14th March 1938**

Ben Murray moved from Ireland to Canada when he was 15. He was born in Enniskillen although his family lived outside Aghnacloy.

He joined the Canadian army, serving in World War 1 for the whole war. After the war he returned to Montreal, staying there until 1933 when he returned to Belfast and became active in the Communist Party. He was a well-known Party speaker.

After moving to London in 1935 he joined the CPGB and was the role Secretary of his branch. He went to Spain in February 1937. Served with the British Batt. from Feb - June 1937, from Jarama to Brunete where he was wounded in July. By March 1938 he was reported Missing/KIA. Brendan Moroney, another Irish volunteer, recounted how he recited the "appropriate Catholic prayers" as he buried Murray in the bomb crater where he was killed, although he was not to know that Murray was from a Methodist background.

**Joe Murray, County Antrim, d. March 1938**

Some confusion exists over the fate of Joe Murray, again caused because there were two men of this name, both dying in the war. It is thought that the Joe Murray from Northern Ireland arrived on Dec. 8th 1937 and died in March '38.

**Dick (Richard) O'Neill, Belfast, b. 1911?, d. 14 Feb 1937**

O'Neill was a Falls Road man who worked in the skilled trade of compositor. An active socialist he had been a member of the Northern

Ireland Labour Party before transferring to the CPI. He lived with his father, Hugh O'Neill, a tailor, at 5 Colindale Street, Belfast before going to Spain on December 10th 1936. He was quickly into battle, serving with the British Battalion. While with the Battalion Ryan is quoted as saying that he "survived the worst days of the fighting to fall a victim to a stray bullet behind the lines" at Jarama 14th Feb. 1937.

**Jackie (Edward) Patterson, Belfast, d. 30th July 1938**

The key source for this Protestant volunteer is the pamphlet concerning Paddy McAlister, *No Pasaran!* He apparently lived in the Dee Street area of East Belfast and went to Spain via Canada. McAlister reports that he died in Spain during the Ebro battle when a shell landed among the vineyard beside the group, killing 5 soldiers instantly, including Patterson.

**David Frederick Pritchard, Newtownards, b. 10th Dec. 1906, d. March 1938**

A David Frederick Pritchard of Newtownards served with the Canadian unit in Spain and went missing/KIA in March 1938. He disappeared between the Belchite (10/3/38) and Batea-Gandera battles of the 31st March.

**James Stranney, Belfast, b. 1913?, d. 31st July 1938**

Stranney arrived in Spain on September 20th 1937 from Birmingham. He had a long history of class struggle behind him in Ireland. He was one of the organisers of the Shankill Road James Connolly Workers Republican Club, Bodenstown, 1934.

He arrived in Spain on September 20th 1937 with W O'Hanlon and D Walsh. In Spain Stranney was a crewmember of No. 1 Gun Company anti-tank battery of the British Batt, along with William O'Hanlon, in Feb. 1938. Stranney went to an infantry company in April 1938.

Away from the horrors of the war he was one of the organisers of the June 1938 Wolfe Tone Commemoration. He was reported Missing/KIA 31st July 1938 at Cota 481, Gandesa.

**Liam Tumilson, Belfast, b. 1901?, d. 14th Mar. 1937**

Tumilson had emigrated to Australia where he had joined the Communist Party. On his return to Belfast he lived on the Shankill Road and was active during the 1932 ODR riots, and was engaged in helping working class people in both sections of the community. In 1934 he was one of the 3 busloads of trade unionists and socialists from the Shankill who marched with a banner with the slogan, "Break the Connection with Capitalism." He originally lived at 9 Thorndyke St, Ballymacarrett, Belfast.

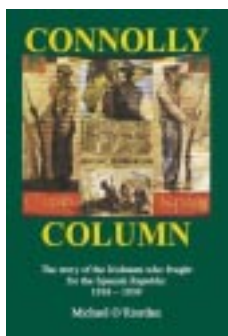
Tumilson wrote a series of letters and/or postcards to his fiancée, Kathleen Walsh. On March 11th he said that he was all right and that we "are still driving the fascists back and still confident of victory." 3 days later he was dead. KIA at Jarama, 14th March 1937 when he was shot in the head while directing the machine guns against an enemy attack.



*Republican stretcher bearers in the battle for Brunete just west of Madrid, in July 1937.*



## Books/Pamphlets to read



### *The Connolly Column*

by  
Michael O'Riordan,

283 pages.  
Hardback £19.99 / €30.  
Paperback £14.99 / €22.50

reprinted earlier this year with a new  
foreword and 12 new appendices.

*The Irish and Spanish Civil War, 1936-39* by Robert Stradling, 1999,  
256 pages. £11.99



### *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War*

by  
Fearghal McGarry (1999)

326 pages. £16.95

“This book, tells the story of the military  
intervention of almost 1,000 Irishmen who  
fought on opposing sides of the war - a story  
which has been the source of much curiosity  
and controversy. ...” Manus Ó'Riordan

### *You Are History, You Are Legend*

by  
Annette O'Riordan (editor),  
booklet on the 11 Waterford volunteers commemorated 2004.  
31 pages. €10.  
Available from Seán Kelly, 3 Breffni Close, Lismore Lawn, Waterford  
City



### *Irish Volunteers for Spain:*

*A Short History of the Northern Irish  
volunteers who fought in defence of the  
Republican government of Spain 1936-  
1939*

by  
Raymond John Quinn,  
Belfast Cultural and Local History  
Group,

50 pages. £4.99

## Memoirs

*La Niña Bonita agus An Róisín Dubh* by Eoghan Ó Duinnín (Eugene  
Downing). The only book written in Irish about the Spanish Civil War.  
€6. Available from Conradh an Gaeilge, 6 Sráid Fhearchair, Baile Átha  
Cliath 2, Ph (00353) 1475 7401, eolas@cnag.ie or An Ceathrú Póilí,  
An Chultúrlann, 216 Bóthar na bhFál, Béal Feirste, BT12 6AH

*Memorias de un Rebelde sin Pausa* by Bob Doyle. Asociación de  
Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales, Madrid, 2002, 187 pages,  
€12 paperback. In Spanish. It is hoped that an English version will be  
available soon.

*A Soldier of Liberty: Recollections of a socialist and anti-fascist fighter* by  
Peter O'Connor. 1996. MSF, 15 Merrion Square, Dublin 2. 44 pages. £2

## We need help and information

The International Brigade Commemoration Committee  
intends to commemorate those who died, and all others who  
went to support the democratic Spanish government, but  
we need your help.

A lot of information has been obtained and can be found in  
the books listed above and more can be found on this  
website:

### **Ireland and Spanish Civil War**

<http://members.lycos.co.uk/spanishcivilwar/>

The IBCC appeals to all those interested in this topic for  
information. Do you know anyone who was in Spain? Have  
you friends or relatives who fought there? Any little bit of  
information could help fill gaps in our knowledge. Contact  
our researcher, Ciaran Crossey, at [cpcrossey@hotmail.com](mailto:cpcrossey@hotmail.com)

## International Brigade Memorial Trust

This organisation welcomes support from all our friends, and  
hopes to promote activities all over Britain and Ireland to  
help achieve our aims.

Veterans and spouses/partners, and widow/ers of Brigaders  
will be will be honorary members, and other subscriptions are  
£10 waged, or £5 concessions. Affiliating organisations by  
arrangement.

For information contact:  
Marlene Sidaway  
Secretary of the IBMT  
37 Reginald Road  
Forest Gate, London E7 9HS  
Tel: 020 8555 6674 or Email: [marlenesidaway@hotmail.com](mailto:marlenesidaway@hotmail.com)

## International Brigade Commemoration Committee

**A member of the IBMT (Charity No. 1094928)**

Subscriptions to the International Brigade Commemoration  
Committee are £10 waged, £1 unwaged. Organisations wishing  
to affiliate may contact the Secretary.

Veterans and spouses/partners, and widow/ers of Brigaders  
will be honorary members.

For more information contact:  
Kevin Doherty  
Secretary of the IBCC  
c/o  
Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre  
45/47 Donegall Street  
Belfast, BT1 2FG



**Keep an eye out for upcoming Events and  
Fundraisers!**

**Links:** **Ireland and the Spanish Civil War;** <http://members.lycos.co.uk/spanishcivilwar>  
**IBMT: International Brigades Memorial Trust;** <http://www.international-brigades.org.uk/>  
**ALBA: Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives;** <http://www.alba-valb.org/>  
**Friends and Veterans of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion;** <http://www.macpapbattalion.ca/>