

**Behind the legend:  
Waterfordmen in the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War<sup>1</sup>**

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On Saturday 19 December 1936, four Waterfordmen made their way to London's Victoria Station and caught the boat train to Paris. Their true destination was the training base of the International Brigades at Albacete, 264 kilometres south east of Madrid.<sup>2</sup> It was another step in the making of Waterford's substantial connection with the Connolly Column, the name which has become a blanket term for the Irish who fought for the Spanish Republic. The four – Jackie Hunt, Peter O'Connor, Johnny Power, and Paddy Power – were followed to Spain by Willie Power, younger brother of Johnny and Paddy, Johnny Kelly, Harry Kennedy, Jackie Lemon, John O'Shea, and Mossie Quinlan. The eleventh man, who had been the first from Waterford to join the Brigades, was Frank Edwards.

The celebrated Republican orator, La Pasionaria, did not exaggerate in telling the International Brigaders: 'You are history. You are legend'.<sup>3</sup> There is a vast corpus of work on the Spanish Civil War – in excess of 40,000 volumes - and its impact on Ireland has attracted increasing interest since the mid 1970s. Following Michael O'Riordan's *Connolly Column*, in effect the Communist Party of Ireland's official history of the Irish involvement, a trickle of memoirs and biographies of veterans appeared from the 1980s.<sup>4</sup> More recently, academic studies have explored the motives

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<sup>2</sup> Peter O'Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty: Recollections of a Socialist and Anti-Fascist Fighter* (Dublin, 1996), pp.13-14.

<sup>3</sup> Dolores Ibarurri, from her valediction to the International Brigades, Barcelona, 28 October 1938.

<sup>4</sup> Michael O'Riordan, *Connolly Column: The Story of the Irishmen who Fought in the Ranks of the International Brigades in the National Revolutionary War of the Spanish People, 1936-39* (Dublin, 1979); Seán Cronin, *Frank Ryan: The Search for the Republic* (Dublin, 1980); Joe Monks, *With the Reds in Andalusia* (London, 1985); Eoghan Ó Duinnín, *La Nina Bonita agus an Róisín Dubh: Cuimhní Cinn ar Chogadh Cathartha na Spáinne* (Dublin, 1986); Joseph O'Connor, *Even the Olives are Bleeding: The Life and Times of Charlie Donnelly* (Dublin, 1992); H. Gustav Klaus (ed.), *Strong*

and experiences of the volunteers, while internet webmasters are busy accumulating exhaustive detail on all aspects of the Connolly Column.<sup>5</sup> Waterford has generated some curiosity for the relatively large number of volunteers from the city, and the city's exceptional recognition of their role, extending to the unveiling of a civic monument – the first such in Ireland - in July 2004. The literature on the Waterford contingent comprises memoirs by Edwards and O'Connor, and a commemorative souvenir by Manus O'Riordan.<sup>6</sup> Like all the International Brigaders, the Waterfordmen are presumed to have been selfless idealists and heroes of 'the good fight'. But does history support the legend?

### **The International Brigades and the Connolly Column**

The Spanish Civil War began on 17-18 July 1936 with a military revolt against the left-wing popular front government. From the outset the war had an international dimension. German and Italian air transports were vital to the rebels initially, and Germany, Italy, and Portugal would later send troops, machines, munitions, and advisers to Franco. The French government decided to assist the Spanish Republic at first, but was dissuaded by Britain, and by fear of a backlash in France. Instead the British and French sponsored a 'non-intervention committee' to prevent all foreign involvement in Spain. Needing Anglo-French support against Hitler, the Soviet Union endorsed non-intervention in principle, but supplied increasing aid to the Republic as it became evident that the non-intervention committee was substantially ineffective. Meanwhile, thousands were volunteering to fight in Spain, and in September the Communist International or Comintern, the controlling body of all communist parties, agreed to the formation of International Brigades. In line with the Comintern's popular front policy, the communists exaggerated non-communist enlistment in the

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*Words, Brave Deeds: The Poetry, Life and Times of Thomas O'Brien, Volunteer in the Spanish Civil War* (Dublin, 1994); Bob Doyle, *Memorias de un Rebelde sin Pausa* (Madrid, 2002); O'Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*. See also Peadar O'Donnell, *Salud! An Irishman in Spain* (London, 1937).

<sup>5</sup> Robert A. Stradling, *The Irish in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939: Crusades in Conflict* (Manchester, 1999); Fearghal McGarry, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War* (Cork, 1999). The best website is <http://www.geocities.com/irelandscw> maintained by Ciarán Crossey, Belfast (hereafter cited as Crossey).

<sup>6</sup> Unseann MacEoin (ed.), 'Frank Edwards', *Survivors* (Dublin, 1980), pp.1-20; O'Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*; Manus O'Riordan (ed.), 'You Are History, You Are Legend': *In Memory of the Eleven Waterford Volunteers Who Fought in Defence of the Spanish Republic in the Ranks of the XVth International Brigade* (Dublin, 2004). See also David Smith, 'The Man that Fought the Bishop': The Story of Frank Edwards and the Mount Sion Strike', *Decies*, 58 (2001), pp.122-49.

Brigades, and communist Internationals were instructed to give their own political affiliation simply as 'anti-fascist', but the Brigades were communist controlled.

The Communist Party of Ireland (CPI) immediately agreed to contribute an Irish unit for Spain, and as party organisation was confined to Dublin and Belfast and struggling to survive with about 100 members, it turned to its friends in the socialist republican movement for help. Completing the independence struggle through class politics had been an ambition of a significant minority of republicans since their defeat in the Civil War, and to that end a sizeable number had left the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in 1934 to found the Republican Congress. Led by Peadar O'Donnell and Frank Ryan, the Congress became one of the few organisations willing to collaborate with the CPI. Republican interest in Spain was further heightened by the announcement, in August 1936, of former Blueshirt leader General Eoin O'Duffy that he would raise an 'Irish Brigade' for Franco.

Some 35,000 people from fifty-three countries joined the International Brigades.<sup>7</sup> The surviving records and definitional problems do not allow for exactitude on the number of Irish amongst them. Michael O'Riordan listed 145, including 'honorary' Irishmen who associated with the Connolly Column, and a few second-generation Irish in Britain or Irish-Americans, but his pioneering efforts failed to detect many others.<sup>8</sup> McGarry put the number of Irish born volunteers as 'closer to 200'. In the most exhaustive research project available, Crossey has recorded 244 names, including non-combatants and second generation Irish.<sup>9</sup> It is estimated here that 139 went to Spain directly from Ireland, of which 131 fought with the International Brigades (some enlisting in Britain or elsewhere), three joined other forces on the republican side, and five served with medical units. A further 101 volunteers were first generation Irish exiles, of whom at least twenty-eight were living in London. Some of these expatriates were long out of Ireland and politicised abroad, while others were recent emigrants and still engaged with Irish politics, notably through the London

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<sup>7</sup> Richard Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: The British Battalion in the International Brigades, 1936-1939* (London, 2004), pp.8-9.

<sup>8</sup> O'Riordan, *Connolly Column*, pp.162-5.

<sup>9</sup> McGarry, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War*, p.56.

branch of the Republican Congress.<sup>10</sup> Even excluding the exiles, the Irish involvement was remarkably high, given the size of the CPI. Wales and Scotland, for example, with their concentrations of mining and heavy industry, and their pockets of vibrant communism – the so-called ‘little Moscows’ - generated 150 and 500 volunteers respectively.<sup>11</sup> If we remember that 650 or so enlisted in O’Duffy’s ‘Irish Brigade’, then it is likely that Ireland – in these supposedly insular times – sent more volunteers per capita to the Spanish Civil War than any other country except France.

### **Who Were They?**

Most International Brigaders – of all nationalities - were single, working class men in their twenties or thirties, from urban, industrial backgrounds. In Waterford’s case, all were from the city except O’Shea, who lived in John Street, but had immediate family in Kilmeaden. All were single, though some had marriage partners in mind. They were typical too in age. O’Shea was rather old at 33, Lemon was young at 19 – from February 1937 the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) refused to accept volunteers under 18 - and the rest were aged between 23 and 29 on arrival in Spain.<sup>12</sup> Edwards and Quinlan were the only volunteers who could be considered middle class. Trained as a primary teacher at De La Salle College, Edwards had worked in Mount Sion until dismissed by the Catholic bishop in 1935 because of his membership of the Republican Congress. When he volunteered for Spain he was unemployed. Quinlan’s social status is even more ambiguous. His occupation was listed in the records of the British battalion as ‘salesman’.<sup>13</sup> Kennedy, Kelly, and O’Shea were in the building trades, and Lemon had worked or served his time as a fitter in Waterford, and then went to work in the HMV gramophone company in London.<sup>14</sup> The remaining five

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<sup>10</sup> These figures are based on Crossey; newspapers; RGASPI, International Brigades in the Spanish Republican Army, 545/6/-; and Marx Memorial Library, London (MML), International Brigades Memorial Archive (IBA).

<sup>11</sup> Baxwell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, pp.19-20.

<sup>12</sup> Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, p.16; MacEoin (ed.), ‘Frank Edwards’, *Survivors*, p.1; O’Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, p.1; RGASPI, report on John O’Shea, 1938, 545/6/444-70; other sources are MML, IBA, Box D-7, A/2, list of members of the British battalion (Hunt, Quinlan); RGASPI, International Brigades in the Spanish Republican Army, 545/6/- (Kelly); Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Waterford.

<sup>13</sup> Smith, ‘The Man that Fought the Bishop’, pp.122-49. I am obliged to Jim Carmody for details on Quinlan.

<sup>14</sup> National Archives (NA), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Irish Minister, Paris legation, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 February 1938, P10/55; RGASPI, report on John O’Shea, 1938, 545/6/444-70. I am obliged to Jim Carmody for details on Kelly, and Mick Barry for details on Lemon.

were unskilled, and were working in Woolf's rubber factory in London prior to departure for Spain.<sup>15</sup>

Two characteristics of the Waterford volunteers are striking. First, their political profiles are very similar. Eight were republicans. Edwards, Hunt, O'Connor, Johnny Power, and Quinlan had been in the post Civil War IRA and the Republican Congress. Paddy Power joined the Republican Congress, while Willie shared the republicanism of his elder brothers. Unusually, O'Shea had served in the National Army, but he subsequently joined the Republican Congress. A ninth man, Kennedy, claimed to have scouted for the IRA in Waterford during the Civil War, though he would have been fourteen years of age at the time and his family were not republican sympathisers.<sup>16</sup> More remarkably, all of the volunteers were moving towards communism. Edwards, Hunt, O'Connor, Johnny Power, and Quinlan were members of the Workers' Study Circle, formed at Coffee House Lane in 1932. The circle was closely connected with the Revolutionary Workers' Groups, which in turn became the CPI in 1933. O'Connor and Power joined the CPGB in London.<sup>17</sup> Four others, O'Shea, Paddy and Willie Power, and Jackie Lemon were members of the Communist Party in Spain. In the remaining two cases the evidence is more tenuous. Kelly was known to his friends in London as 'Red Kelly'.<sup>18</sup> Kennedy (admittedly, as we shall see, a doubtful case) was reported to have been

particularly influenced by the propaganda of Mr. Frank Ryan and Mr. Pollitt of the British Communist Party. He gradually became 'class conscious' and finally intervened actively in the Spanish struggle.<sup>19</sup>

Secondly, none of the eleven went directly from Waterford, yet, unlike so many Irish born recruits, none were long exiled. Edwards left the city in 1935 after losing his job,

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<sup>15</sup> O'Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, pp.12-13.

<sup>16</sup> MacEoin, 'Frank Edwards', *Survivors*, pp.5-11; O'Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, pp.7-13; interview with Mick Barry, Waterford, 10 July 2004; NA, Department of Foreign Affairs, Irish Minister, Paris legation, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 February 1938, P10/55; RGASPI, Biografia de Militantes, John O'Shea, 545/6/444-63/64a; report on John O'Shea, November 1937, 545/6/444-69.

<sup>17</sup> O'Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, pp.7, 12-13.

<sup>18</sup> RGASPI, Note on John Power, 1938, 545/6/445-14; 545/6/162-55/56, characterisation of Lemon (cited as Lennon); interview with Mick Barry, Waterford, 10 July 2004.

and was living in Dublin. Since the late 1920s, O'Shea and Kennedy had been moving back and forth between Waterford and London in search of work in the building line. Quinlan moved to London sometime after 1932, O'Connor and the Powers in 1934/5, Hunt in 1935 or 1936, and Lemon in 1936.<sup>20</sup>

### **Why Did They Go?**

What makes a civilian volunteer for a war in a faraway country of which he knows little, with no guarantees about conditions of service or securities should he return minus an arm or a leg? In the broadest context, the decision will be framed by environmental values. Many at the time were expecting another world war - the more so if Spain became the latest domino tumbled by fascism - and soldiering was widely seen as a defining element of manliness. Both O'Duffy and Peadar O'Donnell, a leading recruiting agent of the Connolly Column, claimed to have been inundated with would-be recruits, and none of the Irish who went to Spain has ever suggested that they were harangued into volunteering.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, the flow of recruits dwindled substantially in 1937, as the lethal consequences of the war hit home. More specifically, the motives will be a mixture of the subjective and the objective, and while the International Brigades is commemorated as a political army par excellence, it attracted a share of adventurers and social misfits.

Although the Waterford volunteers were highly politicised, they were also distinguished by certain socialising influences. All had grown up during the militarised atmosphere of 1916 to 1923. Six could claim to be ex-soldiers, though none had been in combat and O'Shea alone had served in a regular army. In some cases, elder brothers had set an example. O'Connor was conscious of having had two brothers in the War of Independence. During the Civil War siege of Waterford, Edwards had tried to join the IRA garrison in the General Post Office, only to be told by his elder brother, Jack, 'Go home to hell'. Weeks later, Jack was shot by a Free State sentry in Kilkenny jail, and Edwards admitted to joining the IRA in 1924 out of

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<sup>19</sup> NA, Irish Minister, Paris legation, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 February 1938, P10/55.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, 'The Man that Fought the Bishop', pp.122-49; RGASPI, Biografia de Militantes, John O'Shea, 545/6/444-63/64a; NA, Irish Minister, Paris legation, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 February 1938, P10/55; O'Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, pp.7, 11-12.

<sup>21</sup> McGarry, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War*, pp.24-37; Michael McInerney, *Peadar O'Donnell: Irish Social Rebel* (Dublin, 1974), p.179.

‘a feeling of family loyalty, of not wanting to let Jack down’. Johnny Power attributed his initial involvement in politics to ‘padres: obreros y republicanos. Condiciones social[es] en Irlanda han influenciado’ [parents: workers and republicans. The influence of social conditions in Ireland].<sup>22</sup> Willie Power followed his elder brothers to Spain. More common than the continuity of family tradition, was the disruption of unemployment and emigration. While Edwards alone was unemployed on departing for Spain, the others were in London, in jobs they regarded as short-term or unattractive. Woolf’s was a sweatshop. O’Connor and Johnny Power had been compelled to work in secret in attempting to unionise the factory, the management having defeated several previous efforts.<sup>23</sup> Some had shown a singular spirit of courage or adventure in Waterford. Edwards had sacrificed his career for his principles. He denied, implicitly, that his decision on Spain was a reaction to his treatment by the Catholic church, though a Dublin comrade in arms, Joe Monks, thought him a bitter man because of it.<sup>24</sup> Hunt was prominent in the protests over Edwards’s dismissal, and when brought before the courts for disruption, he refused to give an undertaking that he would keep the peace.<sup>25</sup> When O’Connor and Willie Power emigrated in 1934, they stowed away on a coalboat from the Scotch Quay.<sup>26</sup> Kelly is remembered as ‘a bit of a tearaway’. On one occasion, for pure bravado, he dived from one of the towers on Redmond bridge into the Suir and boasted that he would do the same from the top of R. & H. Hall’s.<sup>27</sup> Yet whatever the import of subjective factors, with one exception – discussed below – none of the Waterford men could be bracketed with the adventurers or misfits that made their way to Spain. Their defining characteristics were class, republicanism, communism, emigration, youth, and mobility. It is difficult to deny their overriding sense of political purpose.

What, ultimately, was that purpose? It has been argued that the Connolly Column owed more to the Irish than the Spanish Civil War.<sup>28</sup> O’Duffy’s men were of course associated with the Blueshirts and the Free State, and O’Donnell presented the

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<sup>22</sup> O’Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, pp.1-2; MacEoin, ‘Frank Edwards’, *Survivors*, pp.3-5; RGASPI, Biografía de Militantes, John Power, 18 September 1938, 545/6/445-11/12.

<sup>23</sup> O’Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, p.12.

<sup>24</sup> MacEoin, ‘Frank Edwards’, *Survivors*, pp.3-5, 14; Monks, *With the Reds in Andalusia*.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, ‘The Man that Fought the Bishop’, p.145.

<sup>26</sup> O’Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, p.11.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Mick Barry, Waterford, 10 July 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War*, pp.128-44.

Republican Congress engagement with the International Brigades as a riposte to O'Duffy. McGarry estimates that about half of the Connolly Column had been in the IRA, whereas the number of known communists among the Irish contingent was low in comparison with other countries.<sup>29</sup> Of those who went directly from Ireland, thirty-three can be identified as communists; of the exiles, forty-two. By contrast, communists accounted for approximately 60% of French, 62% of British, and 70% of United States volunteers.<sup>30</sup> However, the presumption that republicans saw the war in Irish terms, and the communists in international terms, is in itself doubtful, and based on untenable notions about Ireland's insularity and Spain's singularity. The magnetic appeal of Spain lay in its universal relevance, and the belief that if fascism was not stopped at Madrid, it would have to be fought in Paris, Prague, or London, and that a defeat for fascism in Spain would have political repercussions in all countries. In other words, all of the Brigaders had both a domestic and an international reason for going to Spain. Waterford illustrates how a-historic it is to introduce a dichotomy between republicanism and communism. In the Irish context, the Waterford men were exceptional in that all were communists or communist influenced. Yet at least nine were republicans too. O'Connor has been cited as one who interpreted the Spanish conflict through the prism of Irish politics.<sup>31</sup> Undoubtedly he did. But he and others saw it equally in an international context:

taking a stand against fascism in Spain was the most important issue of the time. Johnny and Paddy Power, Jackie Hunt and I discussed it between us and we decided that we should all volunteer to join the International Brigade. We applied through the Communist Party and they made all the necessary arrangements.<sup>32</sup>

Edwards responded directly to the Franco revolt. Kennedy, as we have seen, attributed his decision to his growing 'class consciousness'.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, in completing his military biography for the Communist Party of Spain, O'Shea answered the

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<sup>29</sup> McGarry, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War*, p.58.

<sup>30</sup> Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, pp.15, 23; Andy Durgan, 'Freedom Fighters or Comintern army? The International Brigades in Spain', *International Socialism*, 84 (Autumn, 1999).

<sup>31</sup> Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War*, p.140.

<sup>32</sup> O'Connor, *Soldier of Liberty*, p.13.

<sup>33</sup> MacEoin, 'Frank Edwards', *Survivors*, p.11; NA, Department of Foreign Affairs, Irish Minister, Paris legation, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 February 1938, P10/55.



questions as to the reason for his interest in politics with ‘porque me familias obreras (condiciones social)’ [por mis familias obreras (condiciones sociales): because my family are workers (social conditions)], and why he came to Spain with ‘por combate fascismo’ [para combatir el fascismo: to fight fascism].<sup>34</sup>

### **The Record in Spain**

As with the Irish generally, the Waterford men reached and departed Spain at different times and, as timing dictated, fought on different fronts, in various sections of the XV International Brigade. The XV was treated as the brigade for English-speakers, though it was not exclusively so. In January 1937 it comprised the mainly Slav Dimitrov battalion, the Franco-Belgian 6 February battalion, the American Abraham Lincoln battalion, and the 16<sup>th</sup> battalion. In deference to the Irish within it, the 16<sup>th</sup> was sometimes called the ‘Anglo-Irish’ or ‘English-speaking’ battalion at first, until everyone settled on the shorter title ‘British’, except the continentals, to whom ‘British’ was invariably ‘English’. In November, when new numbers were allocated, the XV Brigade was made up of the 57<sup>th</sup> (British), the 58<sup>th</sup> (Lincoln-Washington), the 59<sup>th</sup> (Spanish), and the Canadian 60<sup>th</sup> (Mackenzie-Papineau) battalions.<sup>35</sup> Initially it was assumed that the Irish would form part of the British battalion, until in January 1937, in a controversial decision, a number opted to join the Lincolns. Some of the Waterford Lincolns would later revert to the British unit.

Edwards joined the war in November 1936.<sup>36</sup> Hunt, O’Connor, Paddy and Johnny Power crossed the Pyrenees from Perpignon to Figueras on 22 December, reaching Albacete at noon the following day. When Quinlan arrived is unclear; it is known only that he was at the front in February 1937.<sup>37</sup> The remaining Waterford volunteers arrived in 1937, O’Shea in February, Willie Power in either April or June, Lemon in July, and Kennedy and Kelly in August.<sup>38</sup> Edwards, Quinlan, O’Shea, Lemon, and

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<sup>34</sup> RGASPI, Biografia de Militantes, John O’Shea, 545/6/444-63/64a.

<sup>35</sup> Frank Ryan (ed.), *The Book of the XV Brigade; Records of British, American, Canadian, and Irish Volunteers in the XV International Brigade in Spain 1936-1938* (Madrid, 1938, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1975), p.23; Tom Wintringham, *English Captain* (London, 1939), pp.15-16; Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, pp.66, p.92.

<sup>36</sup> MacEoin, ‘Frank Edwards’, *Survivors*, p.11.

<sup>37</sup> O’Connor, *Soldier of Liberty*, pp.13-14, 17.

<sup>38</sup> RGASPI, Biografia de Militantes, John O’Shea, 545/6/444-63/64a; O’Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, p.26, implies that Willie Power arrived in Spain in June, but records in RGASPI, 545/6/- say he arrived on 2 April 1937; dates for Lemon and Kelly are in RGASPI, 545/6/-. For Kennedy see NA, Department

Kelly served with the British; O'Connor, Paddy and Willie Power with the Lincolns; and Johnny Power, Hunt, and Kennedy with both battalions. Kennedy spent time on brigade staff and later in a penal battalion, O'Shea was assigned to a machine gun company, and Hunt, in March 1938, to the artillery.<sup>39</sup> Otherwise they fought as infantrymen, with rifles, revolvers, and grenades in what was largely a soldier-intensive war. Their military record ran the gamut of the International Brigaders' experience. Some or other of them fought in all of the XV Brigade's battles, and one or other was killed, wounded, or captured, promoted or demoted. Some were commended for bravery, some were criticised for bad conduct, and one deserted.

Following 'very rudimentary training' at Madrideojos, Edwards was allotted to an English-speaking company deployed in Andalusia, and first went into action at Lopera just after Christmas 1936. After ten days fighting, the company was transferred to Las Rozas on the Madrid front. In a letter home, he gave a graphic account of being wounded:

We were lying in position on a ridge. Dinny Coady lay near me with another Irishman, Pat Murphy, beside us. A shell landed between Coady and Murphy. I immediately felt a sharp pain in my side. Murphy screamed...I got up and walked down to a ravine ... and told them to send up a stretcher at once. I thought Murphy had been badly hit. Then I got a Red Cross man to rip my clothes off. I had a very deep wound under my left armpit and a slight scratch on my leg. While I was being dressed the stretcher-bearer came back with a body. Somebody pulled back the blanket and I saw his face. It was Dinny Coady, I got a hell of a shock – perhaps because I had known him longer than any of the other lads...I was carried on a stretcher across four miles of open country under shellfire. Every jolt of the stretcher was hell...The hospital was crowded...I lay there for some time; I was getting weaker. The blood was pouring out of my side. At last a doctor came...He realised I was an urgent case

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of Foreign Affairs, Irish Minister, Paris legation, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 February 1938, P10/55.

<sup>39</sup> NA, Department of Foreign Affairs, Irish Minister, Paris legation, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 February 1938, P10/55, and information from Jim Carmody on Kennedy; RGASPI, Biografia de Militantes, John O'Shea, 545/6/444-655; MML, IBA, Box C, special files, 25/4, 57<sup>th</sup> British Battalion, recommendations, citation for John O'Shea, September 1938; RGASPI, 545/6/- (Hunt).

and I was taken into the operating room at once. The fixed dressing had come off and the shrapnel had burst an artery. The doctor soon removed the shrapnel and stitched me up...<sup>40</sup>

After a few weeks, he was back at the front.

This time I felt a seasoned warrior. I had been through it. I had been wounded. I got reckless. I felt that, as I had been hit once, I could not be hit again. Could anything be more silly? A ridiculous notion.<sup>41</sup>

While Edwards was convalescing, Hunt, O'Connor, O'Shea, Paddy and Johnny Power, and Quinlan fought in the XV Brigade's first big battle, at Jarama in February 1937. It was at Jarama that Mossie Quinlan was killed in action. O'Connor wrote home:

[Mossie] was near me in another Battalion here. I was on one side of a hill, while a company of men filed past me. I recognised in one of them the figure of Mossie, in spite of his uniform and trench helmet... That was the last I saw of him. I made several attempts to get in touch, but it was only last Thursday that I met a Belfast chap who was in his Company and he told me that Mossie was in the front lines only a day when he was killed. Shot through the head by a sniper....<sup>42</sup>

O'Connor himself had a near miss in the Lincolns' next major engagement at Brunete in July. The incident is of some wider interest as it involved Jack Shirai, who acquired a posthumous celebrity in his native country as the only Japanese in the International Brigades. O'Connor provides a new account of his death.

For the second time a section of our battalion advanced too far and there was a danger of being cut off. I believe that if we had reached the high ridge in front of us and the remainder of the battalion were to follow, we would be in a better

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<sup>40</sup> Letter from Edwards, 16 January 1937, quoted in the *Worker*, 30 January 1937.

<sup>41</sup> MacEoin, 'Frank Edwards', *Survivors*, p.13.

<sup>42</sup> *Irish Democrat*, 24 April 1937. Quinlan's remains are

defensive position if the fascists were to counter-attack. We were ordered back and withdrew to a lower ridge, occupied by the main body. In so doing, we came under heavy crossfire. Several of our comrades failed to reach the lower ridge. While we were resting and taking a breather, I happened to be sitting next to Jack Shirai, who was eating some food when he was struck in the forehead by an explosive bullet. He fell forward and some of his brains fell into his billycan. He died instantly...He was very attached to the Irish and insisted on staying with us. We were all very sorry to lose such a great Japanese anti-fascist.<sup>43</sup>

Over the course of the war, casualties among the International Brigades were high. About 25% of the British and Lincoln battalions were killed in action, and about half the remainder were wounded. Of the 145 men of the Connolly Column logged by O’Riordan, 59 died in Spain.<sup>44</sup> Five of the ten Waterford survivors were wounded, one on two occasions; a sixth was hospitalised from an illness contracted in battle; a seventh was stunned by a trench mortar.<sup>45</sup> That more did not make the supreme sacrifice owed much to Frank Ryan, who was concerned at the effect of casualties on Ireland, and well aware that among his troops were political activists he could ill-afford to lose. On being informed that three Power brothers were at the front, he ordered home the two youngest just before Brunete. Paddy left on 2 July, and Willie probably in November.<sup>46</sup> Again on Ryan’s instructions, O’Connor left in September, and Edwards at the end of the year.<sup>47</sup> Kennedy deserted in January 1938. Lemon was taken prisoner in March. Hunt, Kelly, O’Shea, and Johnny Power soldiered with the British battalion until it was stood down in October and the International Brigades

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buried in the village cemetery of Marata de Tajuna.

<sup>43</sup> O’Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, p.27. For other versions of Shirai’s death see Yoneo Sakai, *The Vagabond Tsushin (Reports)* (Tokyo, 1939), p.169; Steve Nelson, *The Volunteers* (Berlin, 1958), p.180; MML, IBA, Box 50/Sh/1, Yo Kawanari, ‘The life and death of a Japanese volunteer in the Spanish civil war’, pp.40-2.

<sup>44</sup> James K. Hopkins, *Into the Heart of the Fire: The British in the Spanish Civil War* (Stanford, Ca, 1998), pp.254-5; Carl Geiser, *Prisoners of the Good Fight: The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (Westport, Ct, 1968), p.1; O’Riordan, *Connolly Column*, pp.162-5.

<sup>45</sup> MacEoin, ‘Frank Edwards’, *Survivors*, pp.11-13; RGASPI, Biografia de Militantes, John Power, 18 September 1938, 545/6/445-11/12; Biografia de Militantes, John O’Shea, 545/6/444-63/64a; 545/6/- (Kelly); *Irish Democrat*, 8 May 1937 (Hunt); NA, DFA, Irish Minister, Paris legation, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 February 1938, P10/55; O’Connor, *Soldier of Liberty*, pp.25, 28.

<sup>46</sup> O’Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, p.26, implies that Paddy and Willie Power left in July, but O’Connor’s diary notes that Paddy left on 2 July and Willie was still in Spain on 22 August. RGASPI, 545/6/- say Willie was in the XV Brigade until November 1937.

<sup>47</sup> O’Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, pp.26-30; MacEoin, ‘Frank Edwards’, *Survivors*, pp.13-14.

were repatriated in a desperate gesture by the Spanish government to encourage an end to all foreign intervention in the war.<sup>48</sup>

Some legends, it would seem, are substantially true. If the record of the Waterfordmen was not stainless - one deserted, one was characterised as ‘demoralized, undisciplined, shaky’, one as ‘fair, brave but undisciplined’, and another was faulted for drinking too much - their collective performance was comparatively good. Of about 1,900 survivors of the British battalion, 300 deserted and another 100 were characterised as ‘bad elements’ – drunks, cowards, criminals, spies etc.<sup>49</sup> Johnny Power ended the war as a captain, and Edwards, O’Connor, and O’Shea as sergeants. Edwards and Power also served as company political commissars, the duty of the commissar delegates of war, as they were termed officially, being to look after the welfare of the troops and maintain morale.<sup>50</sup> The position was less grand, but of more practical value, than it sounds. They did ‘an enormous number of odd jobs’, according to one commander of the British battalion:

Laundry, and in our last weeks hot baths, and a club with radio and canteen, sing-songs, food, news, mail – all these things were up to them. For discipline they were more useful than any number of guard-rooms and orderly officers. In their little meetings, through their wall-newspaper, and more than all through personal contact and argument and example, they strengthened and organised the morale, the political understanding, and determination that was the basis of our discipline.<sup>51</sup>

In formations composed of political volunteers, some of whom resented traditional ideas of military etiquette, tact and example were important. Edwards recalled: ‘It was

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<sup>48</sup> NA, DFA, Irish Minister, Paris legation, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 February 1938, P10/55; Doyle, *Memorias de un Rebelde sin Pausa* (on Lemon); RGASPI, Biografia de Militantes, John Power, 18 September 1938, 545/6/445-11/12; Biografia de Militantes, John O’Shea, 545/6/444-63/64a; O’Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, pp.31-2.

<sup>49</sup> RGASPI, 545/6/162; Hopkins, *Into the Heart of the Fire*, pp.254-5. Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, pp.9-23, estimates the number who served in the British battalion at almost 2,500, including fatalities.

<sup>50</sup> RGASPI, Biografia de Militantes, John Power, 18 September 1938, 545/6/445-11/12; Biografia de Militantes, John O’Shea, 545/6/444-63/64a; O’Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, p.26; MacEoin, ‘Frank Edwards’, *Survivors*, p.12; Ryan, *The Book of the XV Brigade*, p.217.

<sup>51</sup> Wintringham, *English Captain*, p.115.

my job to keep up morale, to shout ‘Adelante’ (forward), in a charge, ‘Communisti pirote!’ (Communists in front!).<sup>52</sup>

Reckoning the extent of disillusionment caused by Spain is not so easy. Memoirs on the war include bitter stories of incompetent military leadership, unnecessarily poor conditions of service, or cynical manipulation of the cause by the communists. But the impressionistic evidence suggests that most felt the struggle to be just and worthwhile, and recalled their involvement with pride.<sup>53</sup> Aside from the deserter, two Waterfordmen suffered some degree of demoralisation or disenchantment in Spain, yet both remained involved with radical politics on their return. Three others resumed high profile radical activism, and while four do not appear to have been politically active again.

### **Three Men’s War**

Only Edwards and O’Connor have recorded their accounts of Spain. The extant archives provide some detail on three others, who, coincidentally, form a cross-section of experiences, varying from the heroic, to the human, to the all too human.

Johnny Power might have served as a model hero of the International Brigades. A former adjutant of the Waterford battalion, IRA, he nonetheless began the war in the ranks. After transferring to the Lincoln battalion on 20 January 1937 and fighting at Jarama, he was promoted to corporal on 4 April and company political commissar in May.<sup>54</sup> Harry Fisher illustrates something of what made Power a good commissar in an incident on 9 July, just before they went into action at Mosquito Hill in the battle of Brunete:

At about 9.40am, we lined up near the top of the hill. I was to be Paul Burns’s runner for this action, along with John Power, a tough and wiry but small guy from Ireland...

I watched John take a sip of water from his canteen, mine was empty.

‘Can I have a sip’, I asked rather plaintively.

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<sup>52</sup> MacEoin, ‘Frank Edwards’, *Survivors*, p.12.

<sup>53</sup> Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, p.149.

<sup>54</sup> RGASPI, reports on John Power, undated, 545/6/445-16/19.

‘Sure, go ahead’, he said and handed me the almost full canteen.

I meant only to wet my lips and throat, but somehow gulp after gulp went down. I found it impossible to stop. I emptied half the canteen.

‘Gee, I’m sorry’, I apologized.

‘No need to apologise! I know how thirsty you are’.

Another comrade saw me drinking; he asked John for just enough to wet his throat. In a minute or two, the canteen was empty. John just shrugged, and that was that. It’s probably hard for people who have never known the torture of thirst to understand what it meant to give away the precious, sweet-tasting, life-saving water. From that moment on I was devoted to John Power. To me he was the greatest guy in the world.<sup>55</sup>

Within minutes, Power was wounded in the foot, and Fisher gallantly helped him off the battlefield under fire. After medical treatment he enjoyed a pleasant convalescence with other Lincolns on the Mediterranean in the splendid mansion of Juan March, a pro-fascist who had fled to France and who was formerly one of the wealthiest men in Spain.<sup>56</sup>

Frank Ryan requested Power’s repatriation in August, but Power was ‘impatient to get back to the front’, fought at Belchite, and on 11 November was appointed a company commissar at Albacete. On 17 March 1938 he resumed field service in the British battalion.<sup>57</sup> Two weeks later the battalion walked into a column of Italian tanks at Calaceite, mistaking them for their own machines. The blunder led to the capture of over 100 prisoners, including Jackie Lemon. Power escaped, and survived for days with little food or water before reaching Republican lines.<sup>58</sup> On 27 April, in a recommendation that his recent promotion to acting sergeant be gazetted, he was characterized as ‘one of our best fighters’ and ‘the best company commissar in the battalion’.<sup>59</sup> In July, when the Republic launched its last major offensive, on the Ebro,

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<sup>55</sup> Harry Fisher, *Comrades: Tales of a Brigadista in the Spanish Civil War* (Lincoln, Na, 1998), pp.60-1.

<sup>56</sup> Fisher, *Comrades*, pp.61-2, 75-6; MML, IBA, Box 21, file B/3e, list of wounded for 6-12 July 1937.

<sup>57</sup> Fisher, *Comrades*, pp.75-6; RGASPI, letter from Ryan, 11 August 1937, 545/6/53; Biografia de Militantes, John Power, 18 September 1938, 545/445-11/12; report on John Power, undated, 545/6/445-17.

<sup>58</sup> Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, p.112; Cronin, *Frank Ryan*, p.135.

<sup>59</sup> RGASPI, Batallon 57 (Ingles), Delegade de Compania, John Power, 27 April 1938, 545/6/445-15.

the British battalion made repeated and futile attempts to capture Hill 481, a key position overlooking Gandesa. Power's No.2 Company joined the attack on 30 July, and suffered heavy losses.<sup>60</sup> Now a lieutenant, he was commended 'for displaying exceptional qualities as a military and political commander' and made company commander on 2 August. The citation read:

He displayed exceptional bravery a number of times in the attack on Hill 481. Finally he took over command of the coy [company] after the death of the coy commander. From that moment he became and continues as coy commander.<sup>61</sup>

Power's irrepressible morale is again revealed by Fisher when they met during the Ebro offensive.

After the hugging and handshaking were over...[Power] sat with us and joined in our bull session. Afterwards, he expressed surprise at the bitching and griping by some of the Americans. I assured him that in spite of their complaining, they were terrific soldiers and good comrades. They bitched only when in the rear. I didn't have the heart to tell him that I was one of the biggest gripers in the battalion.<sup>62</sup>

By 6 August the Republicans were on the defensive, but the battalion remained in action. On the night of 21-22 September, just after Prime Minister Juan Negrín announced that the International Brigades were to be withdrawn, the XV Brigade was recalled to the front. According to what is virtually the official history of the British battalion:

On the early morning of 23 September the enemy artillery opened a terrific barrage. The British Battalion HQ counted one shell every second landing on its front alone, and 250 enemy bombers and fighters dominating the sky, bombing and strafing the front lines. Only after five hours of this did the enemy dare to advance. The Lincolns, with an open flank, were forced to retreat. Some of their

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<sup>60</sup> Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, pp.104-5.

<sup>61</sup> MML, IBA, Box C, special files, 25/4, 57<sup>th</sup> British Battalion, list of citations, 27 September 1938.

<sup>62</sup> Fisher, *Comrades*, p.155.



recent Spanish reinforcements surrendered and went over to the enemy. The fascists, at near brigade strength, occupied the heights and then enfiladed the British positions. Five tanks attacked down the road. The small group of thirty-five British holding the area put three out of action but then was forced to retreat. The two remaining tanks followed by infantry, reached the *barranco* behind No.1 Company, inflicting very heavy casualties and taking prisoners. The company fought desperately in hand-to-hand combat but was overwhelmed. John Power, who was commanding, managed to fight his way out with a handful of men....<sup>63</sup>

Power was given the following mention in dispatches:

[he] used all the bullets in his revolver against the fascists, except one which he kept for eventualities. Fortunately, he managed to get out and reach our lines with a handful of other comrades.<sup>64</sup>

Shortly after 1 a.m. on 24 September the XV Brigade was withdrawn from active service for the last time. Power received a final citation for 'efficient leadership and bravery under heavy fire. Magnificent record of duty during 21 months service in the anti-fascist fight'. At a review of all foreign volunteers in the 35<sup>th</sup> Division on 17 October, Power was promoted to captain.<sup>65</sup>

Power's record was equally admirable in other respects, and he was repeatedly assessed as excellent in his political work, personal conduct, and relations with his comrades. His final characterisation from the XV Brigade party committee for the central committee of the Communist Party of Spain, described him as 'brave and cool...a very fine cadre for the Irish party'.<sup>66</sup>

If Power appears to have had nerves of steel, John O'Shea's courage probably lay in overcoming fear. O'Shea arrived in Spain on 22 February 1937, having previously

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<sup>63</sup> Bill Alexander, *British Volunteers for Liberty: Spain, 1936-1939* (London, 1982), p.214.

<sup>64</sup> MML, IBA, Box C, special files, 25/5, September 1938.

<sup>65</sup> MML, IBA, Box C, special files, 25/4, 57<sup>th</sup> British Battalion, list of citations, 27 September 1938; Alexander, *British Volunteers for Liberty* p.239.

<sup>66</sup> RGASPI, report by Sam Wild, 21 October 1938, 545/6/445-13.

worked as a plasterer with the building firm of Bovis in London. With two years experience in the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Irish army behind him, he was assigned to a specialist unit, the British battalion's No.2 (machine gun) Company. Wounded in the neck at Jarama in April, he was promoted to sergeant on 20 April, spent some weeks in hospital, but fought again at Brunete, and then at Quinto, Belchite, and in the Aragon offensive of August. A reference in November described him as a 'very good soldier'. During the Nationalist counter-offensive on the Aragon front, he received a second wound, in the arm, at Caspe on 16 March 1938, and was listed as 'missing in action, presumed dead'. Fortunately he was found and hospitalized until 6 July, after which he returned to action on the Ebro front. He later received the citation: 'Devotion to duty. Brought out his machine gun under heavy enemy fire and organized his team in a defensive position against enemy attack'.<sup>67</sup>

By the conclusion of his tour of duty, O'Shea was afflicted with illness in addition to his wounds, and the strain was evident. In his final characterization, for the Communist Party of Spain, he was reported to have done 'As well as was in keeping with his physical condition. His nerves are in a bad state and he does not have the political understanding necessary to affect this'. If the latter sounds like the diagnosis of a fanatic, O'Shea's file does reveal symptoms of confusion. His written appraisal of the policy of the Spanish government and the role of the International Brigades was highly favourable, but he 'expressed his intention of having nothing to do with politics and struggle on his return home'. Despite this, and contrary to allegations that the party enforced discipline through terror and could be harsh on those who failed to meet its exalted standards of 'Bolshevik enthusiasm', O'Shea's characterization was sympathetic. His personal conduct was 'fair' – he was faulted for drunkenness – but his 'conduct was on the whole disciplined, steady, and brave'. Though he 'has played no part in the political life', the brigade party committee wrote 'he has done well', and was 'a good party member'.<sup>68</sup>

The most curious of the Waterford volunteers was Harry Kennedy, who arrived at the Irish legation in Paris on 3 February 1938 claiming to be a refugee from the red terror

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<sup>67</sup> RGASPI, Biografia de Militantes, John O'Shea, 545/6/444-64/71; MML, IBA, Box C, special files, 25/4, 57<sup>th</sup> British Battalion, recommendations, citation for John O'Shea, September 1938.

in Spain. Was he genuinely disillusioned, making excuses for desertion, or a charlatan on the make? Kennedy was born in Waterford in June 1909, and lived in Cooke Lane, which ran between Peter Street and High Street.<sup>69</sup> While he said he had scouted for the IRA between 1921 and 1923, he is not known to have been involved in politics locally; nor was he mentioned in previous accounts of the Connolly Column and his case did not come to light until 2004. Emigrating to London in 1929 or 1930 to work as a house decorator, Kennedy returned to Waterford to work with the building firm of Casten's, and then moved back to London, staying with his sister on King's Road, and working as a painter. He says he decided to go to Spain in July 1937, and appears to have joined the International Brigades on 6 August, serving on brigade staff as an instructor under Major Allan Johnson of the Lincoln battalion.<sup>70</sup> It was an odd appointment for one with a vague military or political background, the more so as Johnson was the highest-ranking veteran of the United States army in the war, and a 'stalwart party man'.<sup>71</sup> It is tempting to conclude that Kennedy had exaggerated – or fabricated - his IRA experience and was soon found out. On 1 September he enlisted in the British battalion, deserted, and was sent to a penal detachment, where errant soldiers were put to distasteful duties like digging latrines. He claimed to have taken part in 'many engagements', and was certainly at Teruel in January 1938, a battle fought in sub-zero blizzards which resulted in numerous cases of frostbite. After a short time in hospital at Valencia, recovering from 'an illness...contracted during the battle', he made friends with British seamen who smuggled him onto a Greek ship bound for Algiers. Another friendship in Algiers, this time with a Scandinavian sailor, secured him a free passage to Marseilles, where the British consul loaned him his trainfare to Paris.<sup>72</sup>

Kennedy then appealed to the Irish minister in Paris, Art Ua Briain, for his fare to London. On going to Spain, he told Ua Briain, he discovered that the struggle was 'in

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<sup>68</sup> RGASPI, Biografía de Militantes, John O'Shea, 545/6/444-64/71; Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, pp.130, 134-5.

<sup>69</sup> Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Waterford.

<sup>70</sup> NA, Department of Foreign Affairs, Irish Minister, Paris legation, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 February 1938, P10/55. Kennedy's military pay-book gave his employment as an 'instructor' under Major Johnson. RGASPI, 545/6 files list Kennedy as attached to brigade staff.

<sup>71</sup> Peter N. Carroll, *The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil War* (Stanford, Ca, 1994), p.137.

<sup>72</sup> Information from Jim Carmody; NA, DFA, Irish Minister, Paris legation, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 February 1938, P10/55.

reality a war between Italian and German fascism on the one side and Russian communism on the other', that the Republicans were anti-clerical and controlled their troops and territory with a 'reign of terror'. While allegations of this kind had some factual basis, Kennedy's claim that his Catholic sympathies made him a marked man, and that he fled from Spain on being warned that he would be 'eliminated' by the secret police was, at best, less than the whole truth. Kennedy also made ludicrous assertions about French collaboration with Russia to ship munitions to Spain and Soviet plans to deploy the International Brigades in China after the war in Spain. With his talent for making useful acquaintances, he stayed the night at a 'good hotel' in the salubrious Avenue Wagram, where a retired British army captain entertained him 'lavishly' in return for 'a recital of his experiences in Spain'. Subsequently he travelled to London at the expense of the British Charitable Fund in Paris.<sup>73</sup>

In Ua Briain's opinion, 'Kennedy's tale was just a little 'too good'...he deceived everybody'. Clearly he regarded him as an adventurer, suggesting 'It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that he may later on decide to try his fortune in the Far East on behalf of some cause or other'. Nor was Ua Briain sympathetic to the Spanish Republican cause, having detailed the case so that the Department of External Affairs might 'appreciate the type of Irish national that is engaged on the side of the Valencia [Republican] government'.<sup>74</sup>

## **Epilogue**

On 10 December 1938 Jackie Hunt, John O'Shea, and Johnny Power were among a small group of Internationals who steamed into Dublin's Westland Row, to be greeted by the Irish Friends of the Spanish Republic.<sup>75</sup> There followed a little ceremony in Waterford, which symbolised the defiant spirit of a corporal's guard who had beaten their boats against the current, and marked the formal conclusion of the city's part in the war.

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<sup>73</sup> NA, DFA, Irish Minister, Paris legation, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 February 1938; Ua Briain to British Consulate General, Marseilles, 8 February 1938, P10/55.

<sup>74</sup> NA, DFA, British Consulate General, Marseilles to Irish legation, Paris, 3 February 1938, and annotation, 4 February 1938; Irish Minister, Paris legation, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, Dublin, 5 February 1938, P10/55.

<sup>75</sup> O'Riordan, *Connolly Column*, p.139.

About twenty of us met them off the Dublin train at Waterford. We formed into a line, marched across the bridge, along the Quay, and turned into Henrietta Street to the old Cathal Brugha Sinn Féin Hall, where about fifty people gave them an enthusiastic reception. A party of tea, cakes and sandwiches had been prepared by ex-members of Cumann na mBan and the IRA.<sup>76</sup>

It was not quite the end. The last man home was Jackie Lemon, who had been held as a prisoner of war in San Pedro de Cardena, where, in grim conditions, he endured beatings by the camp guards and the ‘obsession of wondering if we might ever emerge from there alive’. On 6 February 1939 he was among sixty-seven Internationals exchanged for seventy Italians.<sup>77</sup> He returned to Ireland on 27 February. About a year after the gates opened for Lemon, they closed behind Johnny Power, who became one of a number of republicans and communists interned in the Curragh during the Emergency. For Captain Power the Spanish war did not end until his release in 1943, though in another sense, for all of them, it would never end.

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<sup>76</sup> O’Connor, *A Soldier of Liberty*, pp.31-2.

<sup>77</sup> Manus O’Riordan, ‘Irish and Jewish Volunteers in the Spanish Anti-Fascist War’, lecture, Irish Jewish Museum. Dublin, 15 November 1987; Doyle, *Memorias de un Rebelde sin Pausa*.

