

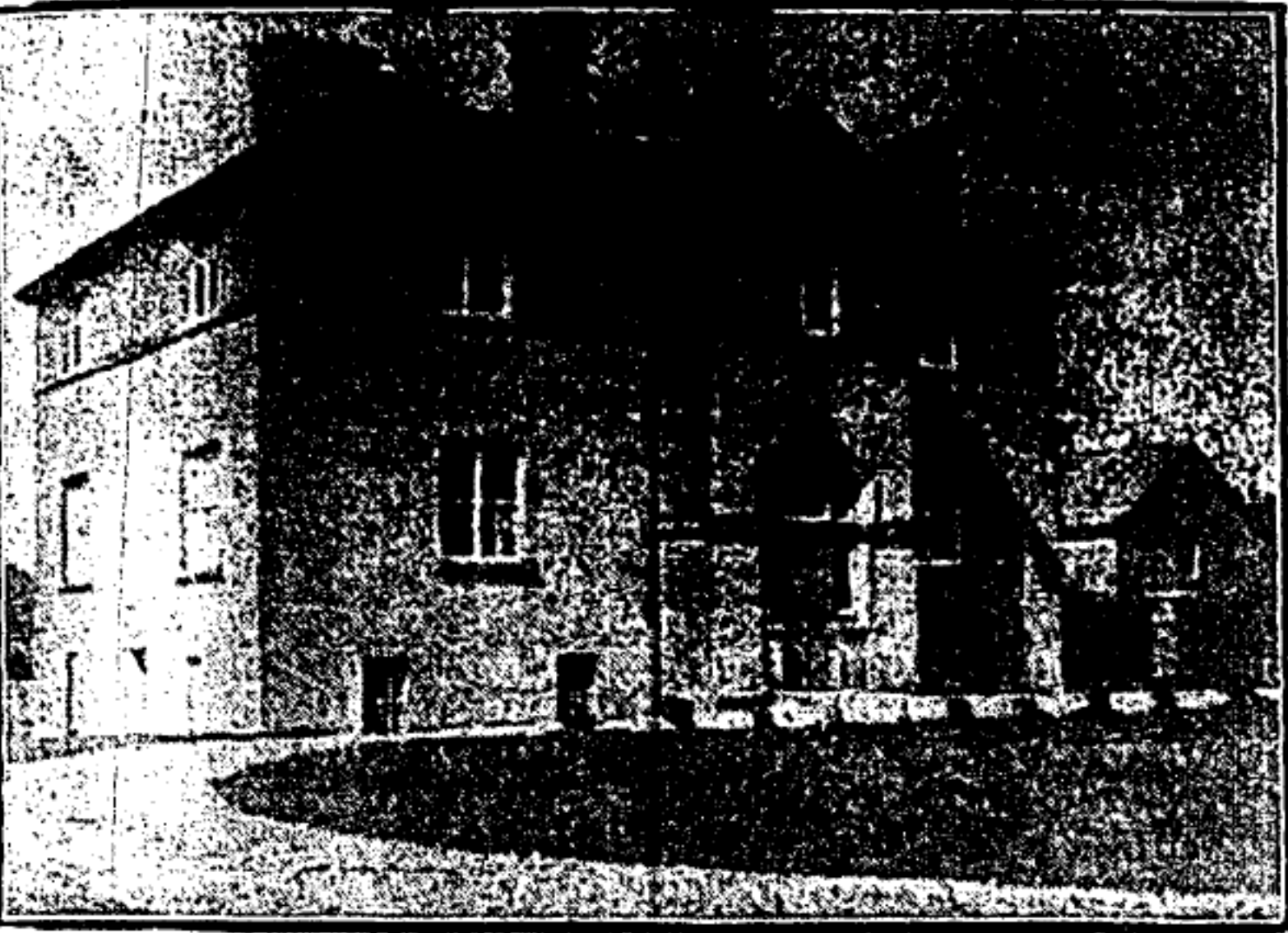
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MICHAEL COLLINS AND THE SHOOTING WAR

The Longford Leader September 8, 1951

"The Squad" Took Mr. Jameson For A Ride

By J. DORAN O'REILLY

HE was an inoffensive little man, who wore knee breeches. He had only three interests in the world—detective stories, cage-birds and revolutions. Mr. Jameson had a weakness for a good revolution, whether it was in Moscow, London or Dublin, and he couldn't resist the temptation of being on the spot when one was in progress.

Therefore he wanted above all things to contact Michael Collins when he came to Dublin. Collins, the chief doer of the Irish revolution, agreed to meet him and in so doing nearly lost his life. The little man arrived with a bird in his cage, storybooks in his trunk and a letter of introduction to Collins in his pocket.

In London, Jameson had made his name as an enthusiastic Bolshevik. As an unofficial ambassador of Russia, he had taken part in the police strike in London and his advice was highly regarded by the leaders in the Socialist movement.

In London he met Art O'Brien, Collins' agent, and got from him his letter of introduction.

Ambitious Plans

MICK'S chief intelligence officer, Liam Tobin, met the little man and hated him from the first moment. But Mick himself stuck out his jaw. If the inoffensive little man could get his arms and money from Russia he was welcome. He made an appointment for lunch and Mrs. Batt O'Connor, of Brendia Street, was hostess.

They discussed the little man's ambitious but practical plans about arms, money, passes to military barracks and information from Russian agents who had already the man said, infiltrated the military services. Collins was pleased.

They lunched together again next day, but the conversation ended early and Tobin and Jameson went away.

That afternoon McNamara, Mick's agent in the Detective Division, had a serious report to make. The newly-appointed Assistant Commissioner of the D.M.P., William Forbes Redmond, had found out Collins's luncheon place and had been ready to raid O'Connor's with a strong force when the sentries, mistaking Tobin for Collins, reported that Mick had left.

A Menace Goes

ALWAYS ready for a prank, Mick sent word to Mrs. O'Connor that he would not lunch there next day, but at the usual time cycled in the direction of her house, passing the detective on sentry duty on the way.

At once the detective rushed to report Mick's presence, without noticing that he had cycled past the house and was peeping around a nearby corner. He had only a minute to wait. William Forbes Redmond and his force of detectives surrounded O'Connor House and began a detailed search.

That day Collins decided that Redmond was a menace. He was a small, shrewd man who had served with distinction in Belfast and come to Dublin, sworn to capture Collins. He took every precaution to safeguard himself—even to the wearing of a bullet-proof vest.

A few nights after the raid on O'Connor's, he was returning to his hotel and was almost at the door when shots rang out and he died in the street.

Guns in a Trunk

THAT day too, Collins began to wonder about the credentials of Mr. Jameson and how Redmond had found out the luncheon place. Jameson, however, had business in London, and Collins was glad to be rid of him.

But he returned after a short time with a trunkful of guns, the first consignment he had promised Collins. Frank Thornton, the man who had been Captain of the

London-Irish in 1916 (and now one of Collins' most trusted men) met him and took charge of the trunk which he placed in the basement of a house on the corner of Bachelors' Walk.

He told Jameson that the basement was one of the principal arms dumps and went away while other members of the "Squad" came and took the trunk away. Before an hour had passed word came from the Castle that the basement was to be raided that afternoon.

Members of the Squad leaned on the wall at the Aston Quay side of the river and watched the raid being carried out, gleefully picturing the discomfiture on failing to find an arsenal.

Collins was furious. Yet because he had met the "Russian agent" and by some chance took a liking to him, he wanted even further proof. He got it when Jameson asked for the return of a pass to military barracks which he had given to Tobin.

Collins wrote a note to Tobin, giving the impression that the pass was with all the other secret documents at a certain address. By "accident" Tobin let Jameson see the note.

The address was the home of a well-known Loyalist, who that very night was pulled out of bed by the detectives while the house was thoroughly searched.

"Like a Soldier"

AGAIN Mr. Jameson disappeared and did not return until February, 1920. Meantime Collins had issued orders that the intelligence officers and the Squad were to keep off of his way.

For a few weeks Mr. Jameson was left severely alone with his birds and his storybooks, wandering around Dublin, searching for new ways to contact Collins, for whose capture there was now a reward of £10,000.

At length he met Joe O'Reilly and insisted on contacting Collins. Convinced that there was now only one way of getting rid of the inoffensive little man, Mick sent two members of the Squad to keep an appointment with him.

They met him in the late afternoon, and on the pretence of going to meet Collins took him by tram to a lonely lane at Ballyman.

They told him the game was up and that they were doing their duty. "I have done my duty," he said, and died like a soldier.

Informer Trapped

COLLINS had no competition in dealing with would-be informers like Quinlisk, who was a pathetic figure.

He had fought in the British Army and was captured by the Germans at an early stage of the war. In Berlin he joined the Irish Brigade, organised by Sir Roger Casement, and hence, when he came to Ireland after the war, he won Collins's sympathies easily.

Mick gave him money, both out of the funds at his disposal and out of his own pocket. He gave lavishly, for it was his life-long fault that he had no discretion in giving charity.

Even when the award offered by the authorities for Mick's capture was only £100, Quinlisk was trying to cash in on Collins's friendship. He wrote to Dublin Castle offering to sell his friend. Hardly had the letter reached the Superintendent of the Dublin Metropolitan Police than a copy of it was in Mick's file.

Quinlisk was taken to the Castle for questioning. He told all he knew, and a copy of his statement reached Mick almost simultaneously, with another appeal from Quinlisk for more money.

Dublin Castle did not pay out quickly. They wanted Collins dead or alive now, for the award went up after the shooting of Redmond. Quinlisk went

bags and disappeared. The incident took no more than a few minutes to perform.

There was consternation at the D.M.G. headquarters, at the offices of the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief and Assistant Secretaries. All their most secret letters were in Collins's hands, and Collins, they knew, would use them.

But intelligence was only part of Mick's work in the beginning of 1920. As Finance Minister of Dail Eireann he had the vast task of organising the National Loan. He could not trust the money in the post; he had no secure office for conducting the business and had to shift his headquarters throughout the city.

Most of the money was hoarded in at 21, Henry Street, at a secret office over the shop owned by Mrs. Dyse Power.

Banking was another problem. He had to lodge the money in various names and now an order had been made that the banks would have to give information regarding money on deposit.

Too Careful

THE shrewd intelligence man, Mr. Alan Bell, was sent from London to conduct a bank-deposits inquiry. He was a careful man, too careful for his own good.

No one knew him at first but everyone came to the same conclusion when they heard of the man who was escorted to the tram each evening and met at his home by an agent.

One evening a member of the squad went on the same tram. The armed police at the other side of the journey waited in vain for Mr. Alan Bell. With his death the deposits inquiry ended.

Collins had a finger in every pie. Now he was watching the administration of his fellow-ministers' department, now coaxing girl civil servants into

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MICHAEL COLLINS

around begging for information about Collins's whereabouts. They gave him an address in Cork as a trap. Next day a code telegram sent from Dublin to the R.I.C. in Cork instructing them to arrest Collins at the fictitious address was intercepted by Mick's post office agents.

The pathetic Quinlisk, in panic lest his "friend" should be arrested and the award claimed by someone else, took the train to Cork, a fact that was duly reported to Collins. Mick, in a burst of fury, sent instructions to the I.R.A. in West Cork, and next morning Quinlisk's body was found on the roadside.

Many Shootings

THE beginning of 1920 was a time of many such shootings. Here and there particular policemen were attacked; here and there the body of an unknown man was found on the roadside.

In the quiet, frosty nights shots rang out in a quick volley, and people who heard them were in terror; for they learned to know the significance of the volley.

Generally the ordinary people did not know what it was all about; they did not know the details of the cause of the shooting. The volleys rang out in the most unexpected places, and as a rule all the sympathy went to the victim of the shooting.

The ponderous machinery of the law went into operation. A group of nervous R.I.C. men examined the "scene of the crime," taking care not to examine it too closely. They always went in groups and carried their guns.

The newspapers reported the incident, always ending with "no arrests have yet been made."

Mail Grabbed

ALTHOUGH his contacts with the sources of the Castle's secret correspondence were good, Collins was not satisfied. For several weeks he had planned to capture the government mailbag which he knew went out from the G.P.O., then situated in the Rink behind the Rotunda Hospital at 8.30 each morning.

The imposition of curfew encouraged him to greater efforts. As soon as the horse-drawn wagon that contained the mail pulled in the street at the G.P.O. Collins's men quietly surrounded it, took the

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