

My Great-Grandmother's War of Independence Survivors Medal (1971)

Eoin Mac Uileagóid



My name is Eoin McElligott. I am a Transition Year student in Gaelcholáiste Chiarraí. I recently took part in a public speaking competition called ARTiculation with Kerry County Museum. The competition asks students to talk about Art, Architecture or an Artefact. I chose to speak about my great-grandmother's War of Independence Survivors medal. Around the time of the 1916 commemorations in 2016, the school sent us home a quest to resurface any 1916 or War of Independence stories. An old shoebox was then recovered from one of the wardrobes upstairs in my Grandparents house. Out of the box emerged an old ration book and the War of Independence Survivors Medal. The Medal was presented to my great-grandmother Ellen Byrne in 1971 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of the War of Independence. 23,432 medals were commissioned and presented. Ellen would've received it as she was a member of Cumann na mBan. The medal depicts an IRA soldier in full uniform on the front and a palm leaf on the back, symbolizing peace. My great-grandmother would have had a safe house in Muckenaugh, Lixnaw. (shown in picture) Irish Volunteers during the War of Independence would've hidden there from the Black-and-Tans during their stint in Ireland from 1920-22.

Eoin Mac Uileagóid is ainm dom. Táim san Idirbhliain i nGaelcholáiste Chiarraí. Le déanaí, ghlac me páirt sa chomórtas ARTiculation le Músaem Contae Chiarraí. Bíonn ort caint faoi Ealaíon, Déantúsáin nó píosa ailtíreacht. Bhí m'óráid agus cur i láthair bunaithe ar an bonn a bhronnadh ar mo shin-seanmháthair don páirt a ghlac sí i rith Cogadh na Saoirse. Timpeall

an am céanna le comóradh 1916, tháinig mé abhaile ó scoil le dúsláin, chun scéalta agus eolas clainne a fháilt amach faoi 1916 agus Cogadh na Saoirse. Tháinig bosca bróg briste brúite thíos ó cófra thuas i dtigh mo sheanmháthair. Sa bhosca bhí leabhar ciondála agus bonn. Bronnadh an bonn ar mo shin-seanmháthair Ellen Uí Broin i 1971 chun an páirt a ghlac sí i gCogadh na Saoirse a comóradh. Bhí 23,432 boinn coimisiúnaithe agus bronnaithe go dtí daoine a ghlac páirt i gCogadh na Saoirse. Léiríonn an bonn saighdiúir IRA ar taobh amháin agus craobh phailme ar an taobh eile (siombal i gcomhair síochán). Bhí tigh sábháilte ag Ellen i Muicineach, Leac Snámha (sa phictiúr). Bhíodh saighdiúirí IRA i bhfolach ann nuair a chaith na Dúchrónaigh tréimhse in Éirinn idir 1920 agus 1922.