

Béaslaí Papers, NLI

Ms. 33, 913 (4) 'Reports re. execution of spies' [on folder]

Executions of Michael Reilly, ex-soldier, Cloghan, Thomas Cunningham, ex-soldier and carpenter, Cloghan, Sgt King, RIC, Castlerea, and the Pearson brothers, Kinnity; and remarks on the execution of spies in Offaly. 15 items, 1921.

1.

Remarks on Execution of Spys Spies [handwritten, n.d.]

The enclosed reports of execution of Spys Spies is forwarded by Bde Adjutant who was present with me at Court of Enquiry into the charges against these men.

It was definitely established at the court that these men were continuously communicating with the Enemy and helping to point out houses in which Officers of the Battn were staying. Warning in such cases is useless. It only result in [sic] a few cases here in which suspected spys were warned was that these men joined the Black & Tans.

There have been numerous and continuous arrests of our men in this district and spying is rampant. It is to be hoped that the executions will have a salutary[sic] effect.

O/C

Offaly 2(?)

To

1. DI

2. Ed (?) Óglach

2.

Preliminary Report of execution of the two brothers Pearson of Cadamstown, Kinnity. [Taken from typed copy - there is an almost identical handwritten one.]

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C. Coy. (Kinnity) 3rd Battalion reported to me on 26/6/21 that some of their men have been fired on a few nights previously, whilst engaged in a road blockade operation, by three men armed with shotguns. As a result one of their men was somewhat seriously wounded.

Then men who fired were recognised by the men present to be three brothers named Pearson. These Pearsons were sons of a Protestant farmer in teh district. They had always displayed open hostility towards I.R.A. and had

been active in promoting the Ulster Volunteers movement in their district in which there are a number of "Planters".

Having satisfied myself by enquiries from Coy. Capt. Kinnity, and Officers present at Battalion Council, that there was no doubt about the identity of the men who fired, I ordered that these men be executed and their houses destroyed. Destruction of their premises was essential /and also to remove other members of the family from the district to safeguard our forces. The enemy is kept well informed of the actions and personnel of our force in the district and arrests have been frequent. There is good ground for suspecting this family of transmitting information.

Two of these men - Pearsons - were duly executed on 1/7/21 and their house destroyed by fire. I understand that the other brother was absent but have not yet received a proper report of the execution from the Battalion yet.

Signed:- O/C Offaly.