



**UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK**

**OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH**

**The East Limerick Brigade Papers**

**P46**

**University of Limerick  
Library and Information Services**

# University of Limerick Special Collections

## The East Limerick Brigade Papers

**Reference Code:** IE 2135 P46

**Title:** The East Limerick Brigade Papers

**Dates of Creation:** 1900-1962 (predominantly 1921-1922)

**Level of Description:** Fonds

**Extent and Medium:** 104 files (1 box, 3 outsize items)

### CONTEXT

**Name of Creator(s):** MacCarthy, John Maurice ('Jack') (1896-1976)

**Administrative/ Biographical History:** John 'Jack' MacCarthy was born in Kilfinane, County Limerick, and was educated to primary school level locally. He completed his secondary education in Clongowes Wood College in County Kildare. From an early age MacCarthy was highly interested in nationalist politics. He joined the Irish Volunteers at their inception in 1914 and was involved in the reorganisation of the Volunteers in 1917 following the release of IRA prisoners. In the War of Independence he was successively Commandant of the Galtee Battalion, Commandant of the East Limerick Brigade and Vice Officer Commanding and Adjutant of the 4th Southern Division of the Irish Republican Army. He was heavily involved in all the major operations conducted by the East Limerick Brigade during the conflict, most famously in the events surrounding the downing of an RAF airplane by the IRA. At the end of the War of Independence, MacCarthy joined the pro-Treaty side for purely pragmatic reasons, realising that the IRA would be unable to recommence hostilities against the vastly superior British forces. In later years, MacCarthy worked as military correspondent to the *Irish Independent* during the Second World War and was the author of *Limerick's Fighting Story* (1948).

**Archival History:** Unknown.

**Immediate Source of Acquisition:** Purchased at auction in Dublin in four separate lots on 20 April 2010.

### CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

**Scope and Content:** The collection contains a vast array of documentation relating to the activities of the East Limerick Brigade during the War of Independence, both day-to-day organisation and military engagements involving the brigade. The material documents the logistical problems of running an amateur guerrilla army with extremely limited resources. It also paints the picture of the efforts made to maintain morale during the Truce of 1921. The collection includes an original copy of the captured Strickland document (71), a British Military Intelligence report detailing an updated and comprehensive account of the state of Ireland in February 1921. The report was captured by the East Limerick Brigade in 1921 and was slightly damaged by the British forces in an effort to burn it before it fell into enemy hands. Other documents of note in the collection include the announcement of the Truce in July 1921 signed by Ernie O'Malley (58), and an order issued by O'Malley of the steps to be taken in the event of the collapse of the Treaty talks and the resumption of hostilities (48).

**Appraisal, Destruction and Scheduling Information:** All records have been retained.

**Accruals:** No accruals are expected.

**System of Arrangement:** The material has been divided into seven series reflecting the form of the records and thereunder arranged chronologically by date. Series A, which comprises correspondence, has been further sub-divided according to the originating body or department.

## CONDITIONS OF ACCESS AND USE

**Conditions Governing Access:** Unrestricted access to all items.

**Conditions Governing Reproduction:** Standard copyright regulations apply to all items. For photocopying or reproducing material, please consult with the staff.

**Language/ Scripts of Material:** English.

**Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:** Paper documents mostly in good condition.

**Finding Aids:** A hard copy of the descriptive catalogue is available at the Special Collections Department, Glucksman Library, University of Limerick.

## ALLIED MATERIALS

**Related Units of Description:** The Bureau of Military History Archive in Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin, also houses a collection of John McCarthy's papers donated to the archive when he gave his statement to the bureau during the 1940s.

## DESCRIPTION CONTROL

**Archivist's Note:** Papers arranged and described by John Harrington under the supervision of Anna-Maria Hajba.

**Rules or Conventions:** This description follows guidelines based on *ISAD(G)* 2nd edition, 2000 and *Irish Guidelines for Archival Description*, 2009.

**Date of Description:** July 2015.

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<b><u>The East Limerick Brigade Papers</u></b>		
<b>A. CORRESPONDENCE (1919-1962)</b>		
<b>I <u>From Óglaigh na hÉireann General Headquarters (1919-1922)</u></b>		
<b>1. From the Adjutant General (1920-1922)</b>		
<b>1</b>	Aug-Oct 1920	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, relating to individuals entitled to the payment of a weekly grant.  5 items
<b>2</b>	[c. 1920-1922]	General Order No. 24, outlining punishments to be meted out to those who pass information to the enemy.  1 p.
<b>3</b>	[c. 1920-1922]	Printed circular to Brigade Commandant, relating to the importance for company officers to have detailed knowledge of their area and providing instructions for carrying out a survey of same.  1 p.
<b>4</b>	15 February 1922	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, providing instructions for the forwarding of reports and communications.  1 p.
<b>2. From the Chief of Staff (1919-1922)</b>		
<b>5</b>	1 November 1919	Circular to Brigade Commandant attaching forms (now not present) to be filled in to detail military and police actions.  1 p.

6	31 October 1921	Special memorandum to all Officers Commanding relating to the ongoing Truce negotiations. 1 p.
7	25 January [1922]	Special memorandum to all Officers Commanding ordering an immediate cessation of the collection of levies. 1 p.
8	26 January 1922	Special memorandum outlining the steps to be taken following the evacuation of enemy forces as a consequence of the signing of the Treaty. 1 p.
	<b>3. From the Department of Engineering (1921)</b>	
9	8 June 1921	Circular no. 16 relating to railway demolition without explosives and ambushing of troop train. 2 pp.
10	14 July 1921	Circular no. 17 relating to railway demolition and ambushing of troop trains. 4 pp.
	<b>4. From the Department of Intelligence (1921)</b>	
11	30 June 1921	To Adjutant, East Limerick Brigade, acknowledging receipt of various despatches. 1 p.
	<b>5. From the Department of Organisation (1920-1922)</b>	
12	11 September 1920	To Commandant, East Limerick Brigade, relating to a request from Commandant of Cork No 2 Brigade to organise a Volunteer company in Kilbehenny close to the operations area of the East Limerick Brigade. 1 p.

13	5 March 1921	To Officer Commanding Limerick East Brigade, relating to the training and use of Cumann na mBan members in local areas for tending to the wounded. 1 p.
14	22 July 1921	To Officer Commanding Limerick East Brigade relating to the formation of a Republican Police Force in each brigade area. 1 p.
15	14 February 1922	To Officer Commanding Limerick East Brigade, relating to organizational issues in the East Limerick Brigade area arising from a report recently submitted by the commanding officer. 1 p.
	<b>6. From the Department of the Quartermaster General (1921)</b>	
16	4 May 1921	To Commandant, East Limerick Brigade, seeking the brigade's latest arms return. 1 p.
17	14 June 1921	Circular to Commandant, East Limerick Brigade, announcing the appointment of a Divisional Quartermaster for the 2nd Southern Division of which the East Limerick Brigade is a unit. 1 p.
	<b>7. From the Department of Training (1921)</b>	
18	[January?] 1921	Training Memo no. 2 relating to the function of Active Service Units. 1 p.
19	24 November 1921	Training Memo no. 16 relating to the use and maintenance of the German Mauser automatic pistol known as Peter the Painter. 1 p.

<b>8. Weekly Memoranda (1921)</b>		
<b>20</b>	16 June 1921	Weekly memorandum no. 13. 2 pp.
<b>21</b>	10 August 1921	Weekly memorandum no. 15. 2 pp.
<b>22</b>	7 October 1921	Weekly memorandum no. 16. 2 items
<b>23</b>	21 October 1921	Weekly memorandum no. 17. 3 pp.
<b>24</b>	4 November 1921	Weekly memorandum no. 18. 2 pp.
<b>II <u>From Óglaigh na hÉireann Headquarters of the 2nd Southern Division (1921)</u></b>		
<b>1. From the Commanding Officer (1921)</b>		
<b>25</b>	28 June 1921	To the Officer Commanding No 1 Battalion, East Limerick Brigade, relating to a planned attack on Doon Royal Irish Constabulary Barracks on 5 July 1921. 1 p.
<b>26</b>	10 July 1921	To Brigade Commandant, East Limerick Brigade, seeking a map showing brigade, battalion and company areas and providing instructions on how the map should be prepared. 1 p.
<b>27</b>	10 July 1921	To Brigade Adjutant, East Limerick Brigade, providing instructions for the forwarding of press cuttings from daily and local papers illustrating IRA and enemy activity to the Divisional Headquarters on a fortnightly basis. 1 p.



28	10 July 1921	To Brigade Adjutant, East Limerick Brigade, ordering him to keep accounts updated fortnightly. 1 p.
29	14 July 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, providing a table to facilitate the filing of and reference to communication when sending despatches to the Divisional Head Quarters. 1 p.
30	15 July 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, issuing routine orders for the preparation of reports and filing of orders. 1 p.
31	15 July 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, issuing routine orders for the provision of typewriters, fountain pens and notebooks. 1 p.
32	15 July 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, issuing routine orders regarding the holding of councils and parades. 1 p.
33	18 July 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, issuing routine orders relating to the addressing of communications to and from Divisional Head Quarters and the responsibilities of officers commanding brigades. 1 p.
34	18 July 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, issuing routine orders for the establishment of brigade, battalion, company, half-company and section headquarters in each brigade area. 1 p.
35	19 July 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, issuing routine orders for permissions to be sought by officers seeking to leave their area. 1 p.

36	17 August 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, issuing a routine order for the treatment of IRA officers arrested and released by the enemy. 1 p.
	<b>2. From the Department of the Adjutant (1921)</b>	
37	2 February 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, relating to a dispute within the division arising from the issuing of communications. 1 p.
38	15 July 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, seeking information concerning rent, income tax, the functioning of republican courts in the area and the condition of local roads and requesting a list of civil and military offences with punishments. 1 p.
39	15 July 1921	General order relating to the destruction of enemy houses as a reprisal measure. 1 p.
40	15 July 1921	General order relating to the commandeering of material. 1 p.
41	15 July 1921	General order relating to enemy flying columns in the divisional area and how they should be dealt with. 1 p.
42	21 July 1921	General order relating to the preparation of sketches of all towns and villages in the divisional area. 1 p.
43	21 July 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, attaching specimen forms for the preparation of reports (now not present). 1 p.

44	22 July 1921	To Adjutant, East Limerick Brigade, acknowledging receipt of a communication. 1 p.
45	24 July 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, relating to the repairing of roads by civilians. 1 p.
46	2 November 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, enclosing a copy of a communication from the Chief of Staff in General Headquarters (now not present). 1 p.
47	25 November 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, acknowledging receipt of various communications. 1 p.
48	3 December 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, issuing orders for the demobilisation of camps and the mobilisation of all active service units. Also a manuscript version of same. 2 items
49	7 December 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, cancelling the orders issued in 48. 1 p.
50	22 December 1921	To Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, instructing all commanders to be on guard "In view of the present uncertainty". 1 p.
	<b>3. From the Department of Training (1921)</b>	
51	25 August 1921	Circular from Ernie O'Malley, Commandant 2nd Southern Division, relating to the training and equipping of men to carry out operations in towns. 1 p.

52	26 August 1921	From Ernie O'Malley, Commandant 2nd Southern Division, to Officer Commanding Tipperary 3rd Brigade, complaining that not enough time is devoted by IRA officers on routine work, training, or self-training.	1 p.
53	26 August 1921	Circular from Ernie O'Malley, Commandant 2nd Southern Division, relating to the opportunity presented by the Truce for organization and training, and providing instructions for how such training should be approached.	1 p.
54	26 August 1921	Circular from Ernie O'Malley, Commandant 2nd Southern Division, relating to the reorganisation of the IRA in villages and towns.	1 p.
55	[August 1921?]	From Ernie O'Malley, Commandant 2nd Southern Division, to Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, ordering the officers of the Brigade to assemble for a training camp and providing a list of arms and equipment each man is to bring.	1 p.
		<b>III Internal Correspondence (1921)</b>	
		<b>1. To and from the Brigade Adjutant (1921)</b>	
56	8 May 1921	From Commandant, 1st Battalion East Limerick Brigade, to the Brigade Adjutant, providing him with a list of companies in his battalion, names of their captains, and the number of men and arms in the battalion.	3 pp.
57	14 May 1921	Brigade order to boycott the sale, storage, wholesale and retail of foreign manufactured tobacco and cigarettes within the brigade area.	1 p.

58	11 July 1921	Brigade order to cease all hostilities against the enemy from midday.	1 p.
		<b>2. From Intelligence Officers (1921)</b>	
59	[c. June-July 1921]	Communications from the Intelligence Officer of the E Company 2nd Battalion East Limerick Brigade, to Brigade Adjutants of 2nd and 5th Battalions East Limerick Brigade, relating to suspicions that the British forces have learned the whereabouts of the Brigade Headquarters.	5 items
60	30 December 1921	From the Intelligence Officer of the 4th Battalion East Limerick Brigade to Vice Commandant, East Limerick Brigade, relating to intelligence received that the Irish Citizen Army has been instructed by Liberty Hall to raid for arms in the Barracks of evacuating British forces.	1 p.
		<b>IV Other Correspondence (1921-1962)</b>	
		<b>1. Relating to the Downing of an RAF Aeroplane (1921-1962)</b>	
61	13 February 1921	Photocopy of a manuscript letter from [Flight Lieutenant] Mackay [to Lieutenant Colonel J. M. MacCarthy], confirming that he has been “treated with every possible consideration and respect” by the IRA from the time of his being taken prisoner. Also a typescript copy of same, undated but <i>post</i> 1948.	2 items
62	[c. 1948-1962?]	Typescript note providing background information to 61.	1 p.
63	12 February 1947	From E. B. Murphy, Independent Newspapers Ltd., Independent House, Dublin, to Major J. M. McCarthy, Dunard, 225 Cabra Road, Dublin, returning press cuttings (for which see 104) which the sender has used for writing an article.	1 p.

64	9 April 1962	From Philip Conran, 16 South Summer Street, Pimlico, Dublin 8, to Colonel John M. MacCarthy, 225 Cabra Road, Dublin 7, seeking information relating to the destruction of a British aeroplane by the IRA near Kilfinnane on 8 February 1921.	1 p.
		<b>2. Other (1921-1922)</b>	
65	8 September 1921	From Cormac O'Ruayne, Kilmallock, to the Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, seeking a court martial or inquiry in consequence of his dismissal from an Active Service Unit.	1 p.
66	29 December 1921	From East Limerick Brigade Headquarters to Captain Browne, Machine Gun Corps, Kilmallock, [county Limerick], relating to Browne's request to have an interview with Commandant Hannigan concerning an unspecified complaint.	2 pp.
67	[c. 1921]	From Alfred W. Thurston alias Thomas Murphy to Officer Commanding IRA, appealing for a change of underwear. Inserted inside the letter is a sheet bearing the addresses of Miss Taylor and Mrs Thurston.	2 items
68	14 January 1922	From Officer Commanding No. 1 Tipperary Brigade, 3rd Southern Division, Brigade Headquarters, to Officer Commanding East Limerick Brigade, suggesting that Thomas Egan, a member of the East Limerick Brigade, pay a fine imposed upon him by a Republican Court in Tipperary to "save any further unnecessary trouble or publicity".	1 p.
69	Jan-Feb 1922	From Chief of Police, Police Headquarters, Dáil Éireann, to Officer and Vice Officer Commanding Troops, East Limerick, relating to a request from the Brigade Police Officer for military assistance in quelling local disturbances.	2 items

70	20 April 1922	From Brigade Vice Commandant, East Limerick Brigade, to the Member of the Court Presiding at Special Sitting of Bruff Parish Court, relating to legal action taken by the IRA against five local men guilty of robbery and assault on 17 April 1922. Also a related charge sheet.	2 items
		<b>B. INTERCEPTED ENEMY COMMUNICATIONS (1921)</b>	
71	17 May 1921	Weekly British intelligence report by Major General Strickland captured by the East Limerick Brigade IRA, detailing British intelligence on IRA activities in Munster and South Leinster, British plans to counter same and a list of all British forces both military and police in the region. Outsize. <i>Damaged and fragile.</i>	17 pp.
72	May 1921	Weekly intelligence summary for week ended 17 May 1921 issued by Major J. M. MacCarthy relating to the captured Strickland document (for which see 72) and its intelligence value to the IRA. Attached to the letter is a manuscript report outlining the need for greater intelligence on the part of the IRA and using the Strickland Document as an example of how it could be achieved.	2 items
73	31 May 1921	Intercepted message from C. A. Walsh, Deputy Inspector General, RIC Office, Dublin Castle, issued to DCs, Cis, Dis, Auxiliary Division and Commandants of Special Constabulary relating to the commandeering of bicycles for RIC.	1 p.
		<b>C. CASUALTY LISTS AND REPORTS (1920-1921)</b>	
74	1920-1921	Casualty report from the 2nd Battalion Headquarters on the deaths of Private John Reardon, Quartermaster Edmund Crawford, Captain William Reardon and Private Thomas Howard at various dates.	4 pp.

75	17 May 1921	Casualty report from the 5th Battalion Headquarters on the death of Second Lieutenant Willie Slattery on 23 December 1920. 1 p.
76	29 May 1921	List from the 3rd Battalion Headquarters of men killed and taken prisoner. 2 pp.
77	30 May 1921	List from the 6th Battalion Headquarters of men killed and taken prisoner. 1 p.
78	21 June 1921	Casualty reports on the deaths of First Lieutenant John Quinlan, Daniel Sheehan, Private Edmond Moloney and Captain Martin Conway on 27 December 1920. Also a related cover letter. 5 items
79	[c. 1920-1921]	List from the 5th Battalion Headquarters of men killed in action and taken prisoner. 1 p.
		<b>D. RECEIPTS (1919)</b>
80	Aug and Oct 1919	Assorted receipt issued to Sean Wall. 3 items
81	October 1919	Receipts from Óglaigh na hÉireann for affiliation fees received, signed by T. Cullen. 13 items (19 receipts)
		<b>E. MAPS (1919-1921)</b>
82	[c. 1919-1921?]	Hand-drawn map of East Limerick Brigade area of operations, marked "H.Q. 5th No I Issue, Ordnance Depot". Scale 1 inch to 1 mile. Outsize. 1 item



83	[c. 1919-1921?]	Hand-drawn map of East Limerick Brigade area of operations; marked "Issue II Vol. I Ordnance Dept. H.Q." Scale 1 inch to 1 mile. Outsize.	1 item
<b>F. EPHEMERA (1919-1922)</b>			
84	[c. 1919-1922]	Mobilisation order for 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the East Limerick Brigade for the visit of the President, Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff, Minister for Defence and Divisional Commandant and Adjutant.	1 p.
85	[c. 1919-1922]	Typescript document providing a description of a man wanted by the IRA for shooting and wounding a soldier of the Irish Republic.	1 p.
86	[c. 1919-1922]	Form issued by Óglaigh na hÉireann seeking information on forces and equipment in companies.	1 item
87	December [1921]	Programme of parades listing dates, time, battalion attending, companies attending and place of parade.	2 pp.
<b>G. PRINTED MATTER (1900-1950)</b>			
<b>I <u>Leaflets and Pamphlets (1900-1930)</u></b>			
88	[1900]	Flyer printed by Powel Press, Dublin, entitled <i>Do You Want to Know the Reason Why You Should Support the Gaelic League by Your Co-Operation and Your Subscription?</i>	1 item
89	10 November 1915	Leaflet entitled <i>Irish Emigrants and English Mobs – Letter from the Bishop of Limerick.</i>	1 item

90	Christmas 1915	Leaflet bearing a photograph and signature of Roger Casement, printed as a supplement with <i>The Spark</i> Christmas Number.	1 item
91	Spring 1916	Leaflet bearing a poem entitled <i>Lines written in Richmond Barracks on the occasion of bearing mass in the Barrack Yard on Sunday, 28th May, 1916.</i>	1 item
92	2 November 1916	Leaflet bearing the names of the Irishmen who were killed during Easter Week 1916 or executed in that year.	1 item
93	28 August 1918	Leaflet issued by Sinn Fein, entitled <i>Can Ireland Stand Alone? Is She Rich Enough to Set up as an Independent Nation?</i>	1 item
94	[1918]	Sinn Fein election leaflet.	1 item
95	25 October 1930	Pamphlet issued by Cumann na mBan entitled <i>The Story of Terence McSwiney.</i>	1 item
	<b>II Newsletters (1917-1922)</b>		
96	19 April 1917	<i>The Factionist</i> vol. I, no. 12.	1 item
97	17 May [1917]	<i>The Factionist</i> vol. I, no. 16. The date has been erroneously printed as 1916.	1 item
98	28 June 1917	<i>The Factionist</i> vol. I, no. 22.	1 item

99	17 July 1922	<i>Limerick War News</i> vol. I, no. IV.	1 item
100	20 July 1922	<i>Limerick War News</i> vol. I, no. VII.	1 item
101	9 August 1922	<i>Limerick War News</i> vol. I, no. XXIV.	1 item
102	11 August 1922	<i>Limerick War News</i> vol. I, no. XXVI.	1 item
		<b>III Press Cuttings (1922-1950)</b>	
103	[1922?]	Newspaper advertisement attacking the Anglo-Irish Treaty.	1 item
104	1940:1947-1948: 1950	Press cuttings from <i>The Irish Press</i> and <i>Evening Herald</i> relating to the destruction of a British aeroplane by the IRA near Kilfinnane on 8 February 1921.	8 items