

CH/12 (11/10/15)  
Flanna Éireann—BATT. II.

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AERIDEACT**



**CROKE PARK, SUNDAY, 12th MAY, 1918**

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I have, thank God, no vain regrets.”—**J. J. Heuston.**



# THE WORK OF FIANNA EIREANN.

The Fianna was started in 1909, and its object was, as stated in its Constitution, to be the re-establishment of the Independence of Ireland, and to combat the demoralising influence of English schools and boys' organisations.

We, too, have learned that the destiny of a nation lies in the hearts and hands of her young people. As their hearts cry liberty or cringe slavery, so will their country be enslaved or free.

Therefore, we have set ourselves the task of building up Fianna Eireann to be the training ground of the nation, a centre which will embrace, and unite in brotherhood, all the young people of Ireland, irrespective of creed or class or party politics. We know that there are only two real parties in Ireland, Irish and English, and we are of Ireland's party. We hold that the only test necessary to know an Irishman is the same test that has always been applied to citizens all the world over—"Would you give your life for your country?" We teach that there is but one life worth giving—an Irish life; and one death worth dying—a hero's death.

Our work in Ireland is a work of restoration, but it is something more. We must link up the life of Ireland to-day, and in the future, with the life of that Ireland that gave us the Cuchulain Sagas and the Stories of Fion and the Fianna and the strength and sweetness of Columb and Ciaran and the great schools. The Ireland that is pictured in our older literature was a land of kingly men and queenly women whose lives were strangely beautiful and noble, people who knew how to use life and how to sacrifice it when need arose. They had the fine perspective of things, ample and generous, the breadth of view and the depth of feeling without which no nation has ever risen to greatness.



The old Fianna of Ireland as commanded by Fion Mac Cumhail is our pattern. We are striving to build up a brotherhood of young Irishmen who, like their forebears the Fianna of old, are strong of limb and fleet of foot, chivalrous, keen of intellect, cultured. "No Fian ever told a lie—no Fian ever turned his back on a foe." Times have changed, and the world has grown modern, but there are no principles higher than the old Fianna principles, no ideals truer than the old Fianna ideals.

We give opportunities in the movement to save our language from dying, and we put Irish ideals before our boys by teaching them the true history of their country; why Emmet and Tone were butchered, why the '48 men were sent to live lives of slavery in far countries, why Allen, Larkin and O'Brien were hanged in the streets of Manchester, why Pearse, Connolly, Colbert and Heuston were murdered in Kilmainham Courtyard—why, in fact, Irishmen of all times have sacrificed their prospects, their happiness, their lives, have given all and without a murmur to the national cause, and have known, too, that it was worth while. Irish boys have only to learn this, and they, too, will know that it is worth while.

We do not believe in moral force unless it goes hand in hand with its sterner sister physical force, so we are training our bodies as well as our minds to the service of our country. We need to recollect that the nation which loses its military spirit is surely doomed, but there can be no military spirit worth anything if the youth of the country are not virile and hardy and trained in the use of arms.

It will take the best and noblest of Ireland's children to win Freedom, for the price of Freedom is suffering and pain. It is only when the suffering is deep enough and the pain almost beyond bearing that Freedom is won. Through the long black record of England's tyranny and oppression, Empire-building and robbery many names stand out of noble souls whose lives were given in a passionate protest against their country's wrongs.

It is the flaming words from dying patriots' lips that light the torch of Freedom to guide a nation's steps. It is their self-sacrifice and suffering that keeps the spirit of the nation free though the body may be in chains.

The spirit of Ireland is free because Ireland's children have never shirked to pay the price. The path of Freedom is narrow and thorny. Heuston and Colbert trod that path. They sacrificed their young lives so that those thorns would be cut away. They have left that work to us to finish, and the Fianna will not prove false to them. Their spirits are our beacon-lights. They call upon the youth of Ireland to swell the ranks of the Fianna, and particularly the youth of Dublin, with whom they lived, fought and died.

Boys, Ireland is calling you! Ireland wants your help! Join Fianna Eireann, the young Army of Ireland, which has already given so many martyrs to the holy cause of Róisín Dubh, and help to place the crown of Freedom on her head.

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Signwriter I.R. Government of 1916



# SHAUN HEUSTON

MAY 8th, 1916.

Seaghan Heuston's first activities with Na Fianna Eireann commenced while residing in Limerick, where the Fianna Sluaghte grew to such enormity, due largely to his energy and genius.

The writer's earliest recollection of Seaghan goes back to the Ard-Fheis held in the Mansion House in 1912, when he represented the Limerick District Council.

In supporting motions from the Limerick bodies, he spoke always in Gaelic. He was a fluent speaker of the Language, and on all possible occasions avoided English.

In 1913 he came to reside in Dublin, and immediately reported for Fianna duty. He was appointed Lieutenant in Command of a North City Sluagh. But the work of the Sluagh was too small a boundary for his energy, and in a very short time he became Vice-Commandant of the Dublin Brigade, and was appointed to the Headquarters Staff as Director of Training for Ireland. When the Volunteers were organised in 1914 he, with Con Colbert and other Fianna Officers, gave to them his services. Long and diligently he worked in this new Army, and when the Insurrection occurred he commanded in the Mendicity Buildings. The enormous casualty list in the ranks of the enemy who engaged with him during Easter Week bears sufficient testimony to his military genius and bravery.

Respected and honoured for his kindly and courteous manner, admired for his genius, all whose privilege it has been to know him dearly treasure his memory.

He was condemned to death, and executed on May 8th.

None were more glad to die for Ireland than Seaghan Mac Aodh.

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13. Διέγυρ ... "James Connolly" Ραίτς ηι Σντίριρ
14. Διήπλάν ... "Whack fol-de-diddle" Ριοθάιρτ Ó η-Óλαϊν
15. Διήπλάν ... Ίνջεαν ηι Βεϊργςίν
16. Rinnee ... Ράτ Ραϊς Ó Κατάρ
17. Διήπλάν ... "Signal Fires" Ριοθάιρτ Ó Μόρτá
18. Rinnee ... —
19. Διέγυρ ... Δίτε ηι Κοιτε
20. Rinnee ... "Cór" Κάιτε ηι Βάιρτ
21. Διήπλάν "Wrap the Green Flag round me" Ίνջεαν ηι Σπέλέάιν
22. Διήπλάν ... "Felons of Our Land" Κάιτε ηι Ήατφορτ

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**DORSET STREET.****CON COLBERT**

MAY 8th, 1916.

Con Colbert, the first Captain of Na Fianna Eireann, was born at Monalena. His earliest national work was in the Gaelic League, Dublin, and commenced before he had left school. He joined the Fianna at its birth in 1909, and, having a good knowledge of physical training, became Instructor. Within a very short-time, through much study and perseverance, he acquired an extensive knowledge of Scouting and Infantry Training, which he imparted to the boys of the Dublin Fianna.

For years he worked unceasingly among the Dublin Sluaghite, while, at the same time, he directed various departments of the Higher Control. Con's efforts, however, were rewarded even at the moment when it seemed as if the way the Fianna had shown was not the right way. The Volunteers were founded, and the Fianna Officers threw themselves into the gap. Con was not found wanting either. Here was more scope for his activities, and again we find him on the Executive Council.

One of the most remarkable things about his own Company is that they were the last to purchase uniforms, but the first fully equipped with arms and camping equipment.

Despite all his new work, he never once slackened his activities in the Fianna.

When the Insurrection broke out he commanded in the Marrowbone Lane Area. Those who were with him there testify to his capabilities as a leader and his bravery as a soldier. His was the last party to surrender.

He was condemned to death, and paid the price on May 8th with a glad determination which was characteristic of him.

(Continued on page 13).



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What a fitting end to such a life! His noble endeavours, culminating in the supreme sacrifice, have built for Con Colbert an everlasting monument in the memory of his fellow-countrymen.

"Not braver was Finn of that elder Sluagh  
Whose name we bear with pride,  
Nor less the Fianna's love for you,  
Con Colbert—you—who died."

**CON COLBERT**

Dead! but not in vain the sacrifice,  
The life you gave, the blood you shed,  
Enrolled us more to pay the price when called  
You are stronger Dead.

Captain! Stronger now than e'er before,  
With fearless tread and glad determination  
Our swollen ranks you lead once more  
To victory now, 'tis the consummation.

Stronger now is the silent command  
We hear from your rebel's grave;  
We hear it now and we understand,  
We'll avenge your death, the life you gave.

Not braver was Finn of that elder sluagh  
Whose name we bear with pride,  
Nor less the Fianna's love for you,  
Con Colbert—you—who died.



## The Defence of The Mendicity ("HEUSTON'S FORT")

Of the many gallant defences that contribute to prove the resource and bravery of the I.R.A. officers in the 1916 Insurrection, not the least remarkable was that of the Mendicity Institution on Usher's Island. On that fateful Easter Monday, a few minutes after noon, Commdt. Heuston, having under his command not more than a dozen men, took possession of this building, in accordance with the orders he had received, and immediately commenced to fortify it. While the necessary preparations were being made inside under the supervision of a subordinate officer, Sean, with three men, left the building in order to erect a barricade on the Quay and thus prevent traffic and more effectually hinder any advance of the enemy. Having returned to the building, he examined minutely the defences, and having assured himself that all was right, and after seeing to the other necessary preparations for a siege, he ordered each man to his post.

It is made abundantly evident by the accounts of various officers and men that Heuston's intention when taking the Mendicity was to hold it for a few hours and then retreat to the Four Courts area. The general opinion amongst those who can speak with authority being that it was intended more or less as an outpost to engage the enemy while the I.R. troops in the Four Courts area were making their preparations for an effective resistance. Be that as it may, however, Sean, once in possession, was not in any particular hurry to evacuate, and late on Monday the position was successfully enfladed by the English troops and communication with the Four Courts cut off.

The officers and men in this position had hardly completed their preparations when the action commenced on Easter Monday. Troops debouching from the Royal Barracks on to the North Quays were met by a fusillade of bullets from the Mendicity. The officer in command fell mortally wounded, and the enemy, quite disconcerted by this unexpected fire from an unseen force, scattered in all directions to seek cover. All day long a sporadic fire was kept up by both sides, those in the Mendicity being quite confident and determined after being re-assured by news from Headquarters and all the other positions.

At sunset on Monday Dublin was silent except for the crack of the rifles and the rattling of maxims. Inside the Mendicity not a sound was heard, for everyone in it realised that the position might become untenable, and for the rest mercy to a beaten foe is not a virtue attributed to England in her dealings with those who question her moral right to rule Ireland.

Tuesday dawned bright and clear, and those under Commdt. Heuston's command, imbued with his own spirit of bravery and determination to resist to the death, were in high spirits, in spite of the fatiguing strain of the previous

day and night. The lack of men to carry out the necessary relief duties was now keenly felt, but nobody grumbled, and Sean, a veritable store-house of energy, went round to whisper cheering words and communicate the good news in the latest dispatch. As the day wore on the machine guns from the North Quays at Queen Street Bridge commenced a searching fire of Usher's Island, but the Mendicity was quite secure, and the bullets flattened themselves harmlessly against the face of the building or entered through the upper parts of the windows and lodged in the opposite walls of the various rooms. Orders were now given to conserve ammunition supplies, and after another day of strain and hard fighting the cloak of night came as a welcome to some who expected a slight relaxation for slumber, however short or insufficient it might be.

The third and final day of this gallant defence came. The previous evening Commdt. Connolly had sent a detachment of Swords men as a relief and, fighting with considerable dash and courage, they succeeded in forcing their way through the English lines to the Mendicity. Two of the original force occupying the Mendicity on Monday had been sent with dispatches to Headquarters. This left something over a score of men under Sean's command. The position was entirely surrounded and shortly after noon, the area in front being forced, a bombing party started operations. For some time the fighting was fierce, but those in the Mendicity were covered by the rifles and machine guns on the Northern Quays. Two men holding the top story of the building being wounded, Sean yielded to the earnest entreaties of one of his officers to surrender, as the position of the enemy precluded the idea of carrying on the fight with intent to seriously hamper them in their operations against the position or the neighbouring one of the Four Courts.

When all those defending the Mendicity had lain down their arms and were marching into captivity Peter Wilson of Swords was shot dead as the men passed out to the place where the English officers had taken Commdt. Heuston's surrender. It was thus these "civilised" English soldiers recognised the flag of truce and kept their word of honour. Commdt. Heuston surrendered with twenty men and was brought and lodged in Arbour Hill. The wounded men were taken to King George V. Military Hospital, and the victim of English honour was afterwards murdered and buried by them in what place the writer has been unable to find out. The remainder of the story is sufficiently well known as not to need repetition.





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