

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

www.traditionalmusic.co.uk

Take It Down From the Mast

Take It Down From the Mast

Take it down from the mast, Irish traitors
The flag we Republicans claim.
It can never belong to Free Staters,
You've brought on it nothing but shame.

You've murdered brave Liam and Rory,
You've taken young Richard and Joe.
Your hands with their blood are all gory,
Fulfilling the work of the foe.

But we stand with Enright and Larkin,
With Daly and Sullivan bold.
We'll break down the English connection,
And bring back the nation you sold.

So leave to those who are willing,
To uphold it in war and in peace.
The ones who intend to defend it
Until England's tyranny cease.

From the site IRL-NEWS:

The song "Take it down from the mast" sums up the feelings of republicans after the Drumboe executions

History: The Drumboe executions

Aengus O Snodaigh on the 75th anniversary of the execution of four

Republican prisoners captured by pro-treaty forces in the Civil War in 1923

The executions of prisoners held in state jails, as an official policy of reprisal against continued republican opposition, was a heinous response by the fledgling Free State. Over 80 official executions (77 is the usual figure given) were carried out in the short period of the Civil War, while the British executed 24 during the Tan War.

The policy of execution as reprisal was carried out often against those imprisoned in the areas where the IRA was enjoying a degree of success. By February 1923 there were nearly 12,000 republican prisoners of war incarcerated by the state in various jails and concentration camps around the country. The first of the 'official' executions occurred on 17 November 1922 with the shooting dead in Kilmainham Jail, Dublin, of James Fisher, Peter Cassidy, Richard Twohig and John Gaffney.

A unanimous cabinet decision authorised the execution policy and Kevin O Higgins, the then Justice Minister, stated: "It was done deliberately and in the belief that only by that method could representative government and democratic institutions be preserved here." President William Cosgrave said: "They are dealing with the dregs of society, people who had no regard for life or property or all that people held dear".

The only difference between the official and the unofficial execution is that the state went through the pretence of a court martial before passing sentence. Most of those executed had been in jail months before being 'tried' and then executed at dawn, often in groups of three or four. But in one case six weeks before the end of hostilities, with victory for the State in sight, four men who had been sentenced two mo

captured the vast bulk of Volunteers operating in the county or forced them to go on the run in other counties. Amongst those captured were the remnants of Charlie Daly's column (2nd Northern Division) which had been engaging both the Staters and the Crown Forces since May 1922.

Daly, a native of Knockanescoulter, Feries, County Kerry, joined the Irish Volunteers in 1914 and as Adjutant of the Feries Battalion, IRA, he took part in many successful attacks on RIC barracks in County Kerry in the early years of the Tan War, and was also a member of Kerry County Council.

In September 1920 he travelled north on Cathal Brugha's order to organise the IRA in counties Tyrone and Derry. From the time of his arrival the local units became more daring and active in the struggle. He organised the first daylight attack on an RIC barracks during the Tan War.

Drumquin barracks was taken and a large haul of arms captured. The local RIC sergeant was also killed in the attack.

Before being arrested and interned he went on hunger-strike and was released, and reported back for active service.

During the truce period of 1921 Charlie Daly and Sean Larkin reorganised the IRA in the Tyrone/Derry area and implemented an intensive period of training. When on 6 December 1921 the Irish delegation in London accepted the Articles of Agreement (Treaty) Daly and Larkin were among the first to reject its terms.

At Christmas 1922 Charlie returned to Kerry for a short period where he appealed for Volunteers to return north with him to challenge the Orange state. Among those who joined him were Dan Enright and Tim O Sullivan, experienced Volunteers.

The reorganised IRA launched numerous attacks on the crown forces in the Donegal/Tyrone/Derry border region. May and June 1922 saw serious engagements between the IRA divisions and crown forces at Pettigo-Belleek, Clady, Strabane and Lifford.

With the outbreak of open hostilities between the Free State and the IRA Charlie Daly tried to halt the spread of the conflict and a

ctarian pogroms. His appeals fell on deaf ears and on 28 June they attacked republican positions in County Donegal.

The IRA responded with attacks on estates in East Donegal at Manorcunningham, Drumkeen, Castlefin and Lifford before being forced to retreat further into the county. Daly reported to HQ soon after, "We had something over 100 men at the start, some of them were spies and traitors. In the course of a few weeks we were left with only 30 men and nearly all of them were strangers to the county."

He also outlined the harsh conditions which his and other IRA columns operated under during the Civil War. "The country is so assuredly poor that we could hardly get enough to eat. We are often glad when we get potatoes and salt, or a bit of bread and a drop of tea, no matter what side their sympathies were with, they were always hospitable."

The 2 November sweep followed in which Daly, Larkin, Enright and Sullivan were captured at Dunlewy in the shadow of Errigal mountain. They were court-martialed in a sloping field in the nearby woods. They were summarily executed at this spot.

The song "Take it down from the mast" sums up the feelings of republicans after the Drumboe executions

GG
apr00