

Daly's eyes 'filled with tears' at the order to surrender

Emma Lyons profiles Edward Daly, who was the commander of 1st Battalion during the Rising

'AS the body of Ned Daly went limp in death in the high-walled yard of Kilmainham his execution enshrined his name in Irish history." So recalled Piaras Béaslaí, vice-commandant of 1st Battalion, after his comrade Daly was executed on 4 May 1916. Although not a signatory of the Proclamation, Edward 'Ned' Daly was Commandant of 1st Battalion stationed at the Four Courts during the Rising. At 25, he was the youngest person to be executed for his role in the Rising.

The only son and youngest of 10 children, Ned was born in Limerick to Catherine (née O'Mara) and Edward Daly. His father, who died five months before his son's birth, was a Fenian, having taken part in the 1867 rebellion along with his brother, John, who was imprisoned.

Ned was educated by the Presentation Sisters, the Christian Brothers, and at Leamy's commercial college. Following a brief period as a baker's apprentice in Glasgow, he returned to Limerick and was employed as a clerk in Spaight's timber yard. In 1912 Ned moved to Dublin, working in a builders' providers and a wholesale chemists, May Roberts and Company. He lived in Fairview with his sister, Kathleen, and her husband, Tom Clarke, who had been imprisoned with their uncle.

Daly was one of the first to join the Irish Volunteers. Kathleen wrote that she "never saw a happier young man than he was the night he joined. He told me it was what he had always been wishing for". Ned, who had an avid interest in military tactics, initially joined the Volunteers as a private in B Company, 1st Battalion. By early 1914 he was captain of B Company, and his promotion to Commandant of 1st Battalion by Patrick Pearse in March 1915 was almost certainly a result of his impressive actions during the Howth Gun-running.

On Easter Monday, Daly was charged with occupying the area from the Four Courts to Cabra. However, when he mobilised 1st Battalion shortly before noon, Ned was disappointed that only 150 of the expected 400 men presented. The Battalion's full plans could not be achieved. Nonetheless, it held a strategic position on the Liffey. Buildings on Church Street and North King Street, along with the Four Courts, were occupied, meaning that fighting spread out to residential streets.

Ned's men therefore manned barricades

SNAPSHOT

EDWARD 'NED' DALY

Born: 28 February 1891, Limerick

Educated: Sexton St convent, CBS Roxboro Rd, Leamy's Commercial College.

Affiliation: IRB/Irish Volunteers

Career: Worked in wholesale chemist's

Died: 4 May 1916, Kilmainham Jail



Edward 'Ned' Daly was the youngest of those executed after the 1916 Rising.

at strategic intersections, escorting civilians to the shops and bakery which remained open. However, by April 27 the South Staffordshires and Sherwood Foresters battalions had surrounded the district, and were supported from one of the few armoured cars available in Dublin.

Ned's 1st Battalion resisted defeat and the British forces were unable to advance more than 150 yards between the morning of April 28 and 2pm on April 29, when he received Pearse's order to surrender.

According to Piaras Béaslaí, Ned's "eyes filled with tears" when he saw the order. Notwithstanding his disappointment, Ned suppressed suggestions Pearse's orders be disobeyed.

"He impressed the British officers with his dignity. They permitted him to march at the head of his men as they brought us through the empty streets (where the few people we saw were those who cursed us) to where the other bodies of prisoners were assembled... And when the British General asked one of his own officers: 'Who is in charge of these men?', Daly proudly answered: 'I am. At all events I was', a remark which, he must have known, would sign his death-warrant."

Ned was arrested and court-martialled. Despite pleading innocent, he was found guilty. Following a visit from three of his sisters, Ned was executed on 4 May 1916, having, in the words of Tom Clarke, "proved himself a fine soldier and hero".

Dr Emma Lyons' (UCD School of History) research focuses on the experience of Irishwomen during World War I and Catholic landownership and education in 17th and 18th-century Ireland



Unearthing

Biographer Helen Litton only found out by chance

THE biographer Helen Litton comes from a family that is steeped in the history of 1916, and the tumultuous events that followed.

Her grandfather James O'Sullivan fought with 1st Battalion in the Rising, and was there until its final moments when the rebels surrendered on Moore Street.

James later married Laura Daly, a member of a well-known nationalist family from Limerick.

She was a sister of the 1st Battalion commandant Ned Daly, who was renowned for his military prowess during the Easter Rising as his volunteers held crown forces at bay for days on the northside of the Liffey.

Ned was James O'Sullivan's best friend. Another Daly sister, Kathleen, married Tom Clarke, the Fenian veteran who was the first man to sign the Proclamation.

One of the most prominent of the 1916 widows, Kathleen Clarke, went on to become a TD and Lord Mayor of Dublin.

Helen Litton has been involved in the campaign to save the buildings on Moore Street where some of the most dramatic events of the Rising unfolded.

She believes that not enough has been done to recognise the contribution of Clarke, seen by some as the central figure in the Rising.

"There should be some memorial to Tom Clarke in the capital. One of the Ballymun flats was named after him, but that has since been demolished."

She also believes more should be done to commemorate both Kathleen Clarke and Ned Daly.

"The railway station in Bray is named after Ned Daly, but he had no connection with the town."

Helen says she grew up in a household where the events of 1916, the War of