

Dublin Castle issued the following:—

A Military Court of Inquiry, in lieu of an inquest, was held at Longford concerning the deaths of Lt. Commander Francis Worthington Craven, late R.N., 32, of Barrow-in-Furness, a District Inspector in the R.I.C.; Temporary Cadet John Aldridge Houghton, 25, of Stafford, and Temporary Cadet George Bush, 25, of Pontefract, Yorks, who were killed on February 2nd in an ambush in the Granard district of Co. Longford.

A Cadet who was with the ambushed party, giving evidence on oath, said that under District-Inspector Craven they left Granard about 2 p.m. to return via Ballinalee to Longford. About two miles from Granard the leading car struck a mine and heavy fire was opened on them from the left of the road. After a little while heavy enfilade fire was opened on them from a distance of about twenty yards. After all their ammunition was expended they were surrounded and called upon to surrender. The witness asked the leader of the attacking party what he proposed to do with them.

ARMS TAKEN.

Several of the others did their best to persuade him to kill them in cold blood, but this the leader refused to allow. The leader of the attackers then fired a shot into the petrol tank of the leading tender, setting it alight. After the attackers had searched them and taken their arms, ammunition and some money, they were disturbed by a rifle shot heard in the direction of Ballinalee. They then made off. Shortly afterwards a party of police appeared on the scene and opened fire on the attackers, but none were caught. When the Auxiliaries were able to attend to their wounded they found D.I. Craven and T. C. Houghton were both dead.

The witness added that while they were being disarmed he had a good look at the attackers and while out operating in the same district the next day he identified a man called James Donohoe as being one of the party who had taken part in the ambush. Donohoe was now under arrest.

"COMMANDANT McKEON."

Another Cadet who was with the ambushed party corroborated on oath the evidence of the previous witness. When they were surrounded, he said, he noticed a man among the attackers wearing a Sam Brown belt. The witness asked him who was in charge of the

party as he wished for permission to attend to their wounded. The man replied: "I am Commandant McKeon." While operating in the same district the next day he identified a man named James Donohoe as being one of the party who had ambushed them on the previous day. D.I. Craven was bandaging his leg when he was struck in the neck by a bullet. After about a minute he lay quite still and when the fight was all over they picked him up dead.

Another witness who was with the ambushed party stated on oath that when they had been forced to surrender the leader of the attackers came up and congratulated them on the fight they had put up. He stated he was John McKeon. He also said he was wanted for murder and denied that he had killed District-Inspector McGrath.

Medical evidence was given that in each case the deceased police officers died from hemorrhage and shock caused by bullet wounds, and the Court returned a finding that they were wilfully murdered by "Commandant" John McKeon, James Donohoe and other unknown persons. The Court also expressed sympathy with the relatives of the deceased men.

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