



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe  
Galway County Council

# **Galway County Council Archives**

## **RIC Constable Whelan, Letters of Sympathy To His Family Following His Death**

**GS16/01/**

**1916**

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GS16/01 (1)

THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS .

Galway Headquarters,  
Temperance Buildings,  
GALWAY .  
9th, May, 1916.

GALWAY CITY CORPS .

Dear Madam,

I am directed by the Galway City Board, National Volunteers, to inform you that at a meeting held on the 7th. Ultimo, a vote of sympathy was passed with the relatives and friends of Constable Whelan, your son, who died doing his duty.

In Galway his death is sadly regretted, poignantly so among the Constabulary, who pay such a deserving tribute to him, always ready to assist, so unassuming, and so beloved by all who knew him.

I beg to associate myself in terms of sympathy to you and your family.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas J. Lydon,  
Secretary.

Mrs. Margaret Whelan,  
Johnstown,  
Co. Kilkenny.

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GS16/01 (2)

St. Patrick's Monastery,

GALWAY.

7th. May, 1916.

Dear Mrs. Glendon,

I got your letter this morning. I was intended writing to some of Pat's friends and was only waiting for your address. Well, to begin, sincerest sympathy to you and all his friends, brothers, father Etc., on his death, so early and so unexpected. Bro. Anthony Phelan, Gange, and myself were great friends of his. No day past that we had not a chat with him and often and often he sent me down his bicycle. His kindness, his gentleness and his good nature we will never forget.

One evening of the rising we met him in the street and he was quite cheerful and happy and as cool as an iceberg. He went to rest that night and was called at 3.30a.m. to go out to the country where he was stationed before. He had 12 others with him but he was in first motor car. As soon as he landed the savages began firing and the police took shelter under a wall. Pat thought when the people knew him they would not fire on him but as soon as he raised his head they fired. He got wound in neck. He was brought in at once and the priest anointed him. He is now a saint. The parish priest says he was a great man and a great Catholic. He was at mission and communion a day or two before and he used always receive Holy Communion every month. So rest assured poor Pat your dear brother and my good friend is happy T.G. We had him looked after properly laid out, waked Etc. I gave out several rosaries over corpse and we had him one night in Chapel. I got an Office on day of burial- 8 priests, and he had a magnificent funeral. I made an effort to have him buried at home but there was no chance of getting it anyway by motor or by rail you could not leave town. His comrades presented a lovely wreath. Dont grieve for Pat. He is only gone to prepare a place for you and all. He has some little money, bicycle Etc. Head Constable will make it all right. Any information further you want I will only be too happy to supply it.

Best love and sympathy

from Bro. E. O'Connell.



GS16/01 (3)

R. I. Constabulary,  
Dominick Street,  
GALWAY.

10th. May, 1916.

Dear Mr. Dwyer,

I offer you and Mrs. Dwyer my heartfelt sorrow on the great loss you have sustained by the death of poor Pat. Not alone has his death been a loss to his poor people, but it is a great blow to his comrades in the Force amongst whom he was most popular. He was beloved by everyone even amongst those at whose hands he met his death, but unfortunately someone was to fall on that morning and it fell to the lot of the best man, and the best prepared to go at such short notice before his God.

It will I hope console you and his dear sister to know that he was at Communion the Sunday before his death. He was one of the best living young men in Galway and if he is not happy may God help us.

At 3a.m. on the morning of the 26th. ult. he was one of a party of police accompanied by some military and some special constables under the command of our officer Mr. Heard, D.I. that went on motor cars to see how the country lay as regards the Sinn Feiners, when about 4 or 5 miles from Galway town a party of the latter was observed behind the walls and no sooner did the police and military leave the cars than they were banged into by the crowd. Poor Pat I suppose being so tall compared with the rest received apparently the full charge of a shot gun in the face and neck from the effects of which he died immediately. His dead body was taken to the barracks and a clergyman sent for, as was also a Dr. but life was extinct on the arrival of both.

There was no chance of communicating with you or any of his friends and anything that could be done in the absence of his friends was done. A splendid coffin was procured which was carried on the shoulders of his comrades from the barrack to the Pro.Cathedral notwithstanding that the hearse was there, next morning High Mass was celebrated for the repose of his soul and that evening he was buried in the new cemetery in one of the nicest parts of the cemetery that could be selected. His funeral was one of the largest ever seen in Galway. It



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was attended by the Military and Military band, the Navy, Police and civilians, and was buried with Military honours. It was one of the greatest sights I have ever witnessed. Masses have been said for the repose of his soul by all the religious communities in Galway, and prayers of congregations asked for at the various Masses, that as far as his spiritual welfare is concerned you need have no fear but his poor soul is safe.

The Head Constable who is himself a good catholic has done everything for him that he would have done for his own son. He had a great wish for poor Pat and he feels his death very much. He has told me that he has sent all particulars to his mother in Kilkenny.

Again asking you and Mrs. Dwyer to accept my sincere sorrow in your great bereavement.

I am,

John Golden, Ser.

Mr. Dwyer, Esq.,  
TEMPLEMORE.

GS16/01



R. I. Constabulary,  
GALWAY.

6th. June, 1916.

Dear Mrs. Whelan,

It was with the most profound sorrow I sent you an account of the death of your noble boy. He joined this station from the Depot, and with short periods of service in country stations he spent the whole of his service under my charge. I have very near 40 years servive in the Police, and never met a more honorable self-respecting boy, attentive to his religious duties, and in every way a superior young man. He attended a mission two weeks previous to his death, was a member of the Sacred Heart, and you may rest assured that he would not change places with the best on this earth at this moment. He received Holy Communion on Sunday, and on Tuesday morning about 6a.m. was shot dead by the rebels. He and the District Inspector were standing side by side when he was shot. May the Lord in His mercy grant him peace. I could not communicate with you owing to the wires being cut down. We had the remains laid out in Barracks, had a magnificent oak coffin, removed at 6p.m. to the Pro Cathedral, and the following morning had High Mass. The only relative was a cousin who is a Patrician Brother in this town. The Co. Inspector, District Inspector and every available policeman was present, with the band, and a funeral party of the Cannaught Rangers, and a funeral party of the Royal Marines. The townspeople in thousands accompanied the remains to the grave side and are now arranging to having a suitable monument erected to his memory. This will show in what esteem your dear son was held in by the people of Galway, amongst whom he served for his time in the Force. When peace is restored I will send you a complete list of his effects and any money he had. Again accept an expression of the sorrow we all felt at the loss of a dear chum and a noble comrade.

Yours respectfully,

P. J. Killacky,

Mrs. Whelan.

Head Constable.

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