

**Leabharlann Naisiúnta na hÉireann
National Library of Ireland**

Collection List No. 109

**Letters of Liam Lynch
(1917, 1920 – 1923)**

(MS 36,251)

(Accession No. 5760)

Series of 28 letters from Liam Lynch to his brother Tom, relating to the War of Independence and the Civil War (1917 & 1920-22). Also, 1 letter to his mother (22 July 1922) and 1 letter to Fr. Tom from his successor as I.R.A. Chief of Staff, Frank Aiken (6 July 1923). Also associated memorabilia (5 items).

Compiled by Helen Hewson, 2002

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Letters Liam Lynch

(MS 36,251)

Introduction

Jeremiah and Mary Lynch (née Kelly) had seven children: John (Seán), Jeremiah, Margaret, Martin, Liam, James and Thomas. At the time of writing Thomas ('Tom'), to whom the letters are addressed, was a clerical student at St. Patrick's College, Thurles, until he was ordained to the priesthood on 11 June 1922. He was afterwards Very Reverend Dean Lynch, P.P. of Bega, New South Wales, and died in a Sydney hospital on 28 March 1950. Martin, frequently referred to in the letters, joined the Christian Brothers and took the name Brother Placidus. He died in 1964.

Liam was born on 9 November 1893, five miles north of Mitchelstown, in the townland of Barnagurraha, near Anglesboro in county Limerick. He was baptised William Fanaghan Lynch. In 1910, when he was seventeen years old, he entered upon a term of three years' apprenticeship to the hardware trade with Mr. P. O'Neill of Baldwin Street, Mitchelstown. He joined the Mitchelstown Company of the Irish Volunteers in November 1913. Having completed his term of apprenticeship in 1913, he remained at O'Neill's for a further year. In the autumn of 1915, he transferred to Messrs. J. Barry & Sons, Ltd., Patrick Street, Fermoy, where he continued to be employed until he took up whole-time active service with the Army.

During the War of Independence he commanded the Cork No. 2 Brigade of the I.R.A. He was captured on 12 August 1920, but not being recognized he was released by the British troops. In March 1921 he was appointed to the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Appointed Divisional Commandant, 1st Southern Division, on 26 April 1921, he was an influential figure in the War of Independence. He opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty but worked to avoid a split in the Army and the nationalist movement in general. Appointed Chief of Staff in April 1922 at the Army Convention outlawed by the Provisional Government, he escaped following the attack on the Four Courts and returned to the south. There he re-assumed command of the 1st Southern Division of the I.R.A. or 'Irregulars', the largest command, being one-quarter of the total force. Arriving in Mallow on 29 June he also announced his resumption as Chief of Staff of the I.R.A.

In July/ August 1922 he directed that the I.R.A. should break up into small active service units of 'flying columns' in order to operate more effectively against the Provisional Government's troops. He was a member of the Army Council which hoped to negotiate terms of peace that would not bring the country 'within the Empire'. Following the killing of Seán Hales, T.D. on 7 December 1922 and the wounding of Deputy Speaker

Padraic O'Máille, the Government instituted a round of executions of Republican prisoners. Lynch called on Republicans in arms not to surrender, but over the next two months, more of his battalion were captured by Government forces. Despite the hopelessness of his position he attempted to carry on the fight. A meeting of the I.R.A. Executive was called to consider the new situation, as by now both Eamon de Valera and Frank Aiken favoured coming to terms with the Free State Government. Accompanied by Aiken, Lynch travelled to Cork to attend the meeting, stopping at a hideout owned by the Phelan brothers in the townland of Poulacappal, county Tipperary on the way. On the morning of 10 April, the day of the meeting, he was shot and fatally wounded in a skirmish with Free State troops at Crohan West on the slopes of the Knockmealdown Mountains. He died later that night in Clonmel. His death signalled the end of hostilities in the Civil War, as his successor, Frank Aiken, called a unilateral cease-fire on 30 April 1923.

On 7 April 1935, on the spot where Liam Lynch fell, a 60-foot high round tower surrounded by four bronze wolfhounds, was unveiled in his memory. Built with the volunteer labour of many of his old friends and comrades, it replaced the simple wooden cross that had stood there for many years. A crowd estimated at fifteen thousand gathered that day to honour a man who had given his life in the cause of Irish freedom.

Provenance

The letters were acquired by the National Library of Ireland from a niece of Liam Lynch, Mrs Peggy Lyne (née Lynch) in May 2001 (Accession No. 5760). Her father, Séan Lynch, received them from his brother, Fr. Tom, who brought them back from Australia in the 1940s.

The letters were used by Florence O'Donoghue in his biography of Lynch entitled *No Other Law: The Story of Liam Lynch and the Irish Republican Army, 1916-1923* (Dublin: Irish Press Ltd, 1954). The letters were also referred to by Meda Ryan in her book *Liam Lynch – the real chief* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1986), and in Joe Walsh's booklet *The Story of Liam Lynch* (Cork: Lee Press, 1973) produced on the fiftieth anniversary of Lynch's death.

Note: all the letters are addressed to 'Tom', unless otherwise stated.

Extent

MS 36,251: Letters from Liam Lynch (1893 – 1923) to his brother Tom and mother Mary (1917 & 1920 – 1923).

Comprises a series of holograph letters from Liam Lynch to his brother Tom (28 items). Also letter from Liam to his mother Mary and letter to Fr. Tom from I.R.A. Chief of Staff Frank Aiken following Liam's death on 10 April 1923. Also some memorabilia (5 items; see final page for description).

I Correspondence 1917 - 1923

MS 36,251/ 1 10 Oct 1917

4pp

See Ryan, p18

Written from: J. Barry & Sons Ltd., Patrick Street, Fermoy.

Signed: 'Liam O Loinsigh'.

Cycled home last Sunday week. Would prefer to see Jack Kirby 'dressed as a soldier of The Irish Republic'. Hopes Tom will not be sent to a diocese in England; advises, 'try if possible for America or Australia.' Anxious to see action. 'Our friend Donald is after coming . . . bringing good news from our fellow country men across the pond. . .'. 'In a few months to come we will be able to marshall an army next to none in quality, & by that time our oppressors will have none but cripples & pensioners, if we do not get what is our own at the peace conference we will have to fight for it.'

MS 36,251/ 2 1 Nov 1917

4pp

*See:
O'Donoghue
(1954), p18*

*Ryan,
p11 & 20*

Written from: Fermoy.

Signed: 'Captain Lynch, I.R.A.'

Advises Tom to 'take up the Australian mission...Australians scarcely...(have)...anything to do with England'. Refers to the parade of Volunteers in Fermoy on Sunday 21 October in defiance of the British proclamation of 1 August 1917 prohibiting the wearing of military uniforms or the carrying of hurleys. Company Commander Liam O'Denn was arrested and Lynch was 'appointed Captain & commanded about 150 men'. Expects to be arrested at any minute. Promises to keep in touch even if he must go on the run or is arrested. Refers to Jack Kirby. Promises to write to his mother and Brother Placidus.

MS 36,251/ 3 9 Nov 1917

4pp

*See:
O'Donoghue
(1954), p18*

Ryan,

Written from: Fermoy

Signed: 'William. I.R.A.'

Glad that Tom has 'taken on the Australian mission'. Received a letter from mother about rumours of his arrest. Three hundred Volunteers marched to

p20 & 26

Ballyhooley last Sunday to open a Sinn Féin club – nearly all of Fermoy came out to march with them. A number of officers have been arrested. Prisoners in Cork jail are allowed to drill, hopes to go there ‘at least for a few weeks training’. Fr. Daly has been sentenced to two months in jail in England for possession of certain papers on return from America. ‘Tell your Kilkenny friend that he should be proud of Capt. O’Denn . . . he was & is a true soldier of the Republic. . .’
Refers to local girl Bridie Keane – ‘I am doing a grand line these times . . .’

MS 36,251/ 4 12 November 1917 3pp

Written from: Messrs. J. Barry & Sons, Patrick Street, Fermoy.
Signed: ‘William. I.R.A.’
Has escaped arrest so far. Eamon de Valera is visiting Fermoy next Friday, ‘we are expecting a big demonstration. There is a strong rumour that the Government has forced the Convention into accepting a measure of Colonial Home Rule. . . England is well on her knees at last.’ Expects Tom’s return home soon. Encloses a copy of Comdt. Liam O’Denn’s speech at his court martial – ‘you can give it to you Kilkenny friend’ (not enclosed). Hopes to see Tom at Christmas. Expects to be arrested at any minute.

MS 36,251/ 5 2 Jan 1920 1p.

Written from: No address
Signed: paper torn away
Instructs Tom not to write to his previous address – he will give him his new address as soon as possible. Do not forward his belongings until he settles down – ‘Pack trunk as directed before you leave for college & see that you get all keys from George.’ Having a ‘fairly good time here, a change from the quite (*sic*) life I was leading, was at a kailee (*sic*) the other night & met a lot of the boys. Hope to have job soon as all are looking up for me. Our cause is going great guns lately certain of success in near future. I like the people here as they are more homely than any I have ever met. If Bill Mullins has any message for me keep until I send my address.’

MS 36,251/ 6 22 Feb 1920 1p.

Written from: Dublin.
Signed: ‘Liam’.
‘As censor is at work now & then I put off writing to you or to people in Anglesboro.’ Hopes to send long letter by hand soon. ‘. . . things are desperate hot here now. We are making it hot for John Bull . . . I did not get to work as yet but may later on, presently I have plenty to do otherwise.’

There are dozens of the city chaps here who had to give over work as they do not wish to go to Scrubs . . . would like to know if you receive this . . . you will be surprised to hear later some of the famous places I have been in since, even where I write this now.'

(Liam was in Dublin from 7 January to the first week in March, where he had continuous consultations with the staff of G.H.Q. particularly Richard Mulcahy and Michael Collins. He also met Dan Breen and Seán Treacy)

MS 36,251/ 7 7 March 1920 1p.

Written from: Cork.

Signed: 'Liam'.

Presently in Cork 'on urgent business', having travelled on the train with the Tipperary hurling team, carrying their kit. Has been in touch with Jack Meagher 'a brother to a friend of yours in college'. Notes arrangements for carrying the letter to Tom. Refers to some personal belongings apparently taken by the police. Is trying to contact Brother Placidus. 'Have some business to do in my own area for a few weeks. Hope to get to work permanent about Easter. Very busy presently . . .'

MS 36,251/ 8 31 March 1920 1p.

Written from: No address.

Signed: 'L---'.

Is sorry that he will not be joining Tom and the family for Easter. Hopes that 'when next hollidays (*sic*) come round the Republic will be a reality... We have driven the enemy at last to the breaking point, in their final effort to hold on they are loosing their senses . . . Sorry to hear our friend is gone to Scrubs, surprising fellows do not keep out of jail . . . hope that by now Galtee area is active again.' Hopes Tom will see Br. Placidus at Easter and tell him all the news.

MS 36,251/ 9 19 April 1920 2pp

Written from: No address.

Signed: 'Liam'.

'Delighted to hear of Bob Walsh's arrest as he was too tough to be of much use to movement outside, I heard he tried to save his own skin, a little of late. Tom is by far better stuff. Too bad Tim Lynch was arrested again . . . I used meet Tim pretty often of late. Auntie seems to have travelled with terrible hot speed to Walsh's after arrest . . . Glad they are giving those ladies in Galbally a hot time . . . Yes, the New Lord Mayor . . . is well worthy to step into boots of Old Lord Mayor . . . I see there is a turn in politics in Anglesboro as elsewhere... The Army has to h?? the way to

freedom for politics to follow. . . M(itchels)town is going strong again & working with Cork County. Hegarty got completely off his head . . . his nerves were . . . not able to bear the present strain. In the end we will make the enemy treat him as a lunatic, as up to now they want to insist that he is sane & are treating him in an uncivilised fashion.’ Mentions some verses Tom wrote and hopes ‘the country will stick this terrible suffering . . . I believe we cannot be beaten now.’

(The ‘New’ Lord Mayor referred to is Terence MacSwiney who succeeded Tomás MacCurtain as Lord Mayor of Cork in March 1920.)

MS36,251/10 30 May 1920

1p.

Written from: Mallow.

Signed: ‘LL’.

Comments on the recent capture of the Millstreet bank robbers by the Volunteers’ Millstreet Battalion and the local Republican police, mentioned by Tom in his last letter – ‘did you dream that it was I got this in motion & was through it, in fact we will not finish (*sic*) this for some time longer. This case has set all Ireland on like jobs ever since . . . We have now double enemies (*sic*) the last perhaps worse than the old.’ (On 27 April Liam had presided over a special Court before which eight prisoners were tried for the robbery on 17 November 1919. Following the investigation co-ordinated by Lynch, the robbers were tried and sentenced to deportation. All of the money recovered was returned to the banks.) ‘Bobbies have threatened to track us down to death, in fact we got a list on one having 22 down for execution including a priest. Will arrange where you can stay with me for a few days during holidays (*sic*) when we can have a long chat.’

MS36,251/11 28 June 1920

1p.

Written from: No address.

Signed: ‘L’.

‘Owing to the heavy pressure at which our war is being waged at present, I will not be able to arrange to see you for some days yet . . . as time goes on these days the more enemies are on my track. Thank God I have been in the big push for the motherland. I think there could be no more sacred calling . . . I am after breaking my rimless glasses, so for heaven’s sake send me on by post my other goldrimmed ones . . . address to Messrs. Buckley & Walsh, Abbey Stores, Mourne Abbey, Mallow.’

(Towards the end of April 1920, when the investigation of the Millstreet bank robbery had been successfully concluded and the criminals punished, Liam returned to his headquarters at Mourne Abbey. The Mourne Abbey Stores, owned by Batt Walsh and Jeremiah Buckley, became the clearing house for all despatches to and from brigade headquarters while it remained

in the area. British forces subsequently burnt down the stores as a reprisal after an ambush which took place near there.)

MS36,251/12 3 July 1920

1p.

Written from: No address given.

Signed: 'L'.

Received the letter their Mother sent him before Christmas the other day. His trunk has been returned from Dublin but he cannot find his glasses in it – he may have left them in his last digs but the 'Police may have taken those for satisfaction, I also miss that heavy silver watch. Could you find among my papers, a prescription from Dr. Horgan for glasses dated last year . . . ' Passed through Emly on his way to Dublin lately. Was offered a 'good position in Dublin at my own business this morning but will not take up same for some time yet. Have promised my comrades to stick the game of soldiering for some time longer. John Bull should give in soon; at least Brigadier General Lucas thinks so.' (Lynch was in Dublin from about 7 January to 7 March 1920. While there he was offered the post of Deputy Chief of Staff but declined the position. Brigadier General Cuthbert Henry Tyndall Lucas, commanding the British 18th Brigade, was taken prisoner by Liam and three other officers, while fishing at Kilbarry on 26 June 1920.)

MS36,251/13 4 July 1920

2pp

See:
O'Donoghue
(1954), p86

Written from: 'Flying Squadron'.

Signed: 'L'.

'Surely Maggie Cronin is not dead, sorry to hear of Dan & the other deaths . . . I dare say you got lots of news from Ryan & Buckley, poor W.J. had a tough time of it. The enemy made a mess of it that time as it was a dam lot of politicians they swooped in. They showed this by their unmilitary tactics in hospital afterwards. I doubt if Bob Walsh is arrested in the wrong as our police are not allowed arrest without evidence . . . If Anglesboro does not hurry up & organise, they will not be in even for the kill as things are moving fast now.' Refers to a trip to Ireland's Eye with Michael Collins and Harry Boland on a Sunday afternoon and Harry's account of de Valera's mission to America where he was seeking support for the recognition of the Irish Republic and floating a national loan. Refers to the split between de Valera and John Devoy/ Judge Daniel Cohalan. 'There is great hopes of we winning (*sic*) through this year, anyway it is only a matter of time.' 'Letters sent to the following address will get to me safely. Mark 'personal' as my Adjutant reads all my communications: – Miss Minnie Grandon, Glandulan House, Fermoy. – Mark inside envelope To. 'M' For Liam.'

MS36,251/14 21 July 1920 1p.

Written from: Glanworth.

Signed: 'L.L.'

Arrived her last evening and intend to stay about a week. 'If you come here on Monday next you could stay with me for a few days . . . Find out in Galbally what trains – if any – are not guarded by police or military at Emly . . . I must reach Dublin the end of next week. If Emly is safe I could call home when passing by motor . . . M.W. could direct you here or give you my whereabouts'.

('M.W.' is probably Captain Maurice Walsh of Mitchelstown, Liam's principal staff officer.)

MS36,251/15 9 August 1920 1p.

Written from: Mallow.

Signed: 'L.L.'

Arrived back in Mallow on Friday after his trip to Dublin and Limerick City. 'I expect you were surprised to read re Lucas.' Spent a night at Ned Curtain's in Buttevant on his way to Mallow. Intends attending Glanworth Feis next Saturday and hopes Tom will be there. 'Anglesboro will be made move this week or so'.

MS36,251/16 n.d. (cSep 1920) 1p.

Written from: Address torn away.

Signed: 'L. L.'

'Sorry I had not the pleasure of meeting Br. Placidus or Austin when at home . . . I expect you little dreamt that No 2 was in same military quarters as 1 & 3 . . . our fellows are suffering terrible agony by the hunger-strike but I believe they will win through. I could nearly wish that they would leave the Lord Mayor die, his death now would be worth a thousand later.' (Lord Mayor of Cork Terence MacSwiney, arrested on 19 August 1920 died in prison on 25 October after 74 days on hunger-strike).

MS36,251/17 22 July 1921 1p.

See:
O'Donoghue
(1954), p105

To: 'Mother'.

Written from: No address given.

Signed: 'Liam'.

Ryan, p54

'Hear (*sic*) I am turning up again though often reported in lost list. I was indeed surprised when I heard from Tom as to your fear of me, I all the time thought you were aware of my safety through Mitchelstown. The last letter I

wrote to you – sometime about March – I did indeed think it would be the last as enemy were continually dogging me & often close on my trail . . . I am living only to bring the dreams of my dead comrades to reality & every hour of my life is now entirely devoted to same . . . Too bad I missed Tom the other day . . . If Placidus is calling home I will strain every point to just call as I could get back with Tom, even though Truce is on we are still at high pressure. Through the war I have got to understand so much of the human being that when peace comes I would wish for nothing more that (*sic*) hide myself away from all the people that know me or even follow my dead comrades.’ ‘Glad so far that I was not the cause of getting the old home destroyed by repressals’ (*sic*).

(Liam was appointed Divisional Commandant, 1st Southern Division, on 26 April 1921. He then commanded nine brigades, comprising more than 30,000 officers and men. The Truce came into effect on 11 July 1921.)

MS36,251/18 22 Aug 1921 1p.

See:
O'Donoghue
(1954), p182

Ryan, p81

Written from: Lombardstown.

Signed: 'Liam'.

Refers to Chief of Staff Richard Mulcahy's weeklong visit to division headquarters in early August and President de Valera's official three-day visit of inspection. 'We had a big tour of area where Coys [Companies] and Columns – under arms & equipment – were inspected... We went through all war zone & visited several ambush positions.' Describes his arrest at Ballinacorney on 18 August on his way from Lombardstown to Bandon. 'I was released with my car & driver at 1.30a.m. after a phone message from Dublin Castle . . . I enjoyed the time with Tans & D.I. etc. as the Truce feeling prevailed all round & even discussed the possibility of again meeting them face to face in a clash with arms.' 'You can write or post to me enclosing letter in envelope marked with my own name & personal to: – Miss Mary Looney, Gortmore, Lombardstown.'

(Division Headquarters had been moved from its wartime location at Sweeney's, Gortarahilly, Coolea, to Patrick O'Sullivan's, Mortonville, Lombardstown, on 21 July 1921.)

MS36,251/19 30 Aug 1921 1p.

See:
O'Donoghue
(1954), p184

Ryan, p81

Written from: Lombardstown.

Signed: 'Liam'.

Is very busy but considers taking a few days off 'a National sin when there is work to be done.' 'I am expecting a call to Dublin any day . . . should truce not last long I of course will not be travelling. You can write during truce to last address & give me your Thurles one.'

- MS36,251/20 26 Sep 1921 1p.
- See:* Written from: Lombardstown.
 O'Donoghue Signed: 'Liam'.
 (1954), p184
 Ryan, p81
 '... were it not that I continually think of my dead comrades & the glorious cause we fight for it would be more than impossible sometimes to carry on. You may rest assured that our Government as well as the army is out for the Republic and nothing less ... we are, & must be prepared to fight to the last for that ... a fight ... which never for generations seemed more hopeful than now'. Was in Dublin last week and tried to see Tom on the way back. Intends to go to a dance in Mitchelstown 'not for amusement but just to meet all the boys & perhaps girls as I believe that after a few weeks I may have a poor chance of seeing them again.'
- MS36,251/21 11 Nov 1921 2pp
- See:* Written from: Lombardstown.
 O'Donoghue Signed: 'Liam'.
 (1954), p184
 Ryan, p82
 'I was delighted with my run home, especially with all the Limerick friends I met at Ballylanders races. Perhaps my welcome home depends on the Peace situation, but war or peace I am always the same. I am indeed surprised at the clear view you take of the Irish situation, you would do fairly well playing my game.'
- MS36,251/22 12 Dec 1921 4pp
- See:* Written from: Dublin.
 O'Donoghue Signed: 'Liam'.
 (1954),
 p190/191.
 Ryan,
 p9 & 86/87
 The Supreme Council of the I.R.B., of which Liam was a member, met on 10 December 1921 and issued a note to divisional and county centres stating its decision that the peace treaty should be ratified. 'Members of the Organisation, however, who have to take public action as representatives are given freedom of action in the matter'. In his letter of 12 December to Tom Liam gives his reaction to the decision:
 Assures Tom that 'my attitude is now as always, to fight on for the recognition of the Republic. Even if I were to stand alone I will not voluntarily accept being part of British Empire. What ever will happen here on this week of destiny we must & will show an united front (*sic*) Thank God that we all can agree to differ. Minority of the Dail will stand by majority no matter what side, the same will apply to the army.
 It is only natural on such a big issue that there would be difference of opinion, the President has a fair backing of T.D.s but at the moment though I am almost certain of the issue I do not wish to state same. All my Division hold the one view & that strongly too, several other southern areas I know

already are with us in this view. If the Government accept Treaty we shall not but strike for final victory at most favourable opportunity . . . Even if we must temporarily accept the treaty there is scarcely another lap to freedom & we certainly will knock her off next time. Speeches and fine talk do not go far these days, we have had already too much gas. What we want is a definite line of action . . . Sorry I must agree to differ with Collins, that does not make us worse friends. If the war is to be resumed he will again surely play his part as before, & that better than some of the Irish Diehards.'

MS36,251/23 16 Jan 1922 2pp

See Ryan, p88

Written from: Lombardstown.
Signed: 'Liam'.

Has been in Dublin recently 'fighting as you say a hotter fight than pre truce days'. 'You can rest satisfied that the I.R.A. will save the situation. Time will tell whether L(oyd) George has got the best of the Irish Nation or made a big mess of himself . . . Four or five of the Staff & myself are going to Republican Prisoners Dep. Dance in M[itche]lstown on Saturday night next & will call out to see you on Sunday . . .'

MS36,251/24 6 March 1922 2pp

See:
O'Donoghue
(1954), p184 &
228

Ryan,
p26, 82 & 98

Written: on headed paper 'Óglaigh na h-Éireann. Headquarters, 1st Southern Division' (Military Barracks, Mallow).
Signed: 'Liam'.

'I presume they are satisfied at home by now that I was not married, while my whole time is required by Old Ireland it won't be waisted (*sic*) otherwise. I am particularly anxious to drop on someone spreading those continuous rumours . . .

I have tried to resign several times during the past few months but same would not be accepted.

[Shanon] . . . (Seán Hyde)...has quite recovered & is at present at G.H.Q. recruiting himself. We expect him here in a few days but he is returning again to take up an important post at G.H.Q.

You need not be troubled by my lofty position as I think nothing of it, at the moment I am fed up of army & people & were it not for Ireland's sake alone I would drop out of things . . . At any rate I don't give a dam about the people when it comes to praise or notoriety & they are making the hell of a mistake if they think I forget their actions during the war. I remember at one time in the best areas where it was next to impossible to find a bed to lie on.' His Division is 'united in it latest actions . . . we will take over all Barracks & their . . . stores . . . To the moment we have got 500 rifles as well as consignments by sea . . . We are not running ourselves to ruin as Tipperary No 3 would have us do . . . At any rate we don't expect O/C Limerick City

Ryan,
p105 & 111

'We have at last thrown down the gauntlet again to England through the Provisional Government . . . I write this from G.H.Q. Four Courts not knowing the hour we will be attacked by Machine Gun or Artillery, we have a well armed garrison of about 150 men with G.H.Q. Staff & we need only call on the Dublin Brigade or any part of the country when support will come in any numbers. I am absolutely certain that the Free State was sent to its doom by our action last week . . . Sad it is to risk having to clash with our old comrades but we cannot count the cost . . . I would wish to have remained on in 1st Southern but duty called & I was there. Liam Deasy will I am sure ably take my place.

MS36,251/27 1 May 1922

2pp

See:
O'Donoghue
(1954), p225

Ryan,
p97 & 111

Written from: Dublin.

Signed: 'Liam Lynch'.

'I do not wish to dwell too much on the present situation with you as your thoughts should be mostly in another direction until ordination. We are absolutely convinced of wiping out this supposed Free State, but we don't mind giving it a slow death, especially when it means the avoidance of loss of life & general civil war . . . I note you saw my reply to . . . [Free State Chief of Staff Eoin] . . . O'Duffy, it was so convincing there was no squeak since from that direction. There is no strain here, a fight would in fact relieve any such, especially if the English interfere.'

Promises to attend Tom's ordination in June if at all possible.

'Since the truce has been a worse time on me than the whole war, every bribe & cunning plan has been put up to us but Thank God we pulled through to take once more free action.'

MS36,251/28 31 May 1922

2pp

Written from: Four Courts. On headed paper 'Óglaigh na h-Éireann. Árd-Ofig, Áth Cliath. General Headquarters, Dublin'.

Signed: 'Liam'.

Outlines arrangements for his attendance at Tom's ordination on 22 June. He will be accompanied by Liam Deasy, Con Moylan and Shanon [Seán] Hyde. Asks if may invite two 'special friends of mine during the war' – Fr. Joseph Breen of Millstreet and Fr. Dominic O'Connor, former chaplain to Lord Mayors MacCurtain and MacSwiney and chaplain to 1st Southern Division.

'I am pretty hopeful of the present army & political situation, though a lot depends on the present negotiations (*sic*) in London . . . we have so far agreed a coalition Army Council which is now in complete control of army under chairmanship of Minister of Defence, but as yet we have not agreed on a G.H.Q. Staff.'

MS36,251/29 16 Sep 1922

1p.

Written on headed paper: 'Irish Republican Army. Field General Headquarters.'

Signed: 'Liam Lynch'.

Hopes to see Fr. Tom soon before he leaves Ireland for Australia. 'The disaster of this war is sinking to my very bones when I count the loss of Irishmanhood & the general havoc of civil war...

The I.R.A. . . . have now been hopelessly let down by their former comrades & leaders . . . they have stooped to lower methods than the British, including murder gangs & vile propaganda . . . Who could have dreamt that all our hopes could have been so blighted.'

MS36,251/30 6 July 1923

3pp

To: Fr. Thomas Lynch ('A Athair a Chara').

Written on headed paper: 'Óglaigh na h-Éireann (Irish Republican Army) General Headquarters Dublin.'

Signed: 'Frank Aiken. Chief of Staff'.

Letter from Frank Aiken outlining the circumstances of Liam's death on 10 April 1923, when he was shot by Government troops on the slopes of the Knockmealdown mountains.

"The fight took place on a mountain as bare as a billiard table. Sean Hyde had him by the hand helping him along when he was hit . . . To leave him was the hardest thing any of us ever had to do. I was last leaving, having been carrying his feet. I was afraid to even say 'Good-bye Liam' least it would dishearten him . . . Liam's death was a great blow to our chances of success, coming at the time it did. But they . . . [the press] . . . are quite wrong if they think they have heard the last of the I.R.A. & the Irish Republic. Although we have dumped our arms, we have not surrendered & there are several thousand men women & boys in Ireland yet, who believe it their duty to free our country & to see that Liam & the rest of our dead comrades have not died in vain."

II Miscellaneous Items

- a) Irish National Volunteers membership card, made out in the name of William Lynch, Baldwin Street, Mitchelstown. It records subscriptions made in February 1915.
- b) Section of a six inch to one mile Ordnance Survey map (9.5 x 18cm) showing the area around Ardfinnan, Clonmel and Newcastle, Co. Tipperary and indicating location of Liam's fatal shooting. Accompanied by page of explanatory notes as follows:

'Crohan West where General Liam Lynch, I.R.A., fell on 10/4/23. [Rev. Br.] M.P. Lynch, Liam's brother, got this map from M. Gen. Prout in the Borstal, Clonmel. This is portion of the very map used by Prout in tracking down Liam. Note red arrowheads indicating advance of troops to surround the mountains.' Lists names and locations of Liam's comrades who were in the area, 'Those with Liam on fatal morning' and 'Those who took' various items belonging to Liam. Also notes names of the three priests who attended him.

Figures 1 to 4 marked on map in pencil corresponding to the names 'Condon', 'McGrath', Prendergast' and 'Holohan morn[ing]' written on reverse, marking the locations of men who were with Lynch shortly before he was shot – Michael Condon, Tom McGrath, Seán Prendergast (3rd Tipperary Brigade, 6th Battalion Commandant) and Bill Houlihan ['Holohan'].
- c) Scapulars [belonging to Liam Lynch].
- d) Cutting from The Irish Press of photograph captioned 'Knockmealdown, showing the Liam Lynch Memorial' [7 March 1940].