

Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection – the Saltmills Explosion 12 October 1920.

On the night of 12 October 1920 an explosion took place in an unoccupied house near the village of Saltmills, County Wexford in which an IRA unit were making munitions. 5 IRA members were killed and 9 injured. According to John Timmins, the officer in charge of the IRA unit making the munitions, the explosion occurred as a result of fumes from the explosives coming into contact with flames from the candles which were being used for lighting purposes. This was the largest number of accidental casualties received by the IRA in a single incident during the whole of the revolutionary period.

Files relating to those killed were released previously and now we are releasing the files relating to the nine who were wounded.

The five killed were:

James Gleeson, St Kiernan's, Saltmills, County Wexford – file reference 1D263; **Michael Fitzgerald**, St Leonard's, Ballycullane, County Wexford – file reference 1D264; **Robert Walter Walsh**, St Kiernan's, Saltmills, County Wexford – file reference 1D265; **Martin Roche**, Saltmills, Arthurstown, County Wexford – file reference 1D266; and **James Byrne**, Scar, Duncormick, County Wexford and Baldwinstown, Bridgetown, County Wexford – file reference 1D483.

The nine survivors were: **Patrick Kelly**, Clongeen, Foulksmills, County Wexford – file reference 1P830; **Thomas Gleeson**, St Kiernan's, Saltmills, Ballycullane, County Wexford – file reference MSP34REF23970; **John Timmins**, Tomahurra, Marshalstown, Enniscorthy, County Wexford – file reference MSP34REF24497; **Thomas Kinsella**, Kinnagh, Ballycullane, County Wexford – file reference MSP34REF24794; **Edward Kelly**, Saltmills, County Wexford – file reference MSP34REF22223; **Stephen Barron**, St Kiernan's, Saltmills, County Wexford – file reference MSP34REF31289; **Patrick O'Grady**, Tintern, Saltmills, County Wexford – file reference MSP34REF56365; **Michael Conway**, Curraghmore, Ballycullane, County Wexford – file reference MSP34REF27209; and **Patrick Reville**, Ballycullane, County Wexford – file reference MSP34REF53745.

Of the nine survivors seven received wound pensions or gratuities and/or service pensions. One who received no award at all was Patrick Kelly 1P830. Patrick Kelly's application was unsuccessful as he died before his case had been

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fully investigated. The investigation of his case had been delayed as, due to his medical condition, Kelly was unable to travel from his home in County Wexford for examination before the Army Pensions Medical Board at St. Bricin's Hospital in Dublin. On 1 October 1925 the President of the Medical Board refused to send a medical officer to examine Kelly at Kelly's home in protest at the difficulties facing medical officers in recovering their expenses for domiciliary visits on behalf of the Army Pensions Board. Patrick Kelly died on 24 October 1925 before the issue was resolved and no award was granted.

Peter Kelly, father of Patrick applied for an award as a dependent of Patrick Kelly but his claim was also turned down as Patrick Kelly had not died within three years of receiving his injuries as laid down under the Army Pensions Act, 1923. Peter Kelly then applied again under the Army Pensions Act, 1927 but was once more turned down as his son had not died within four years of his injuring as the legislation then required.