

9th Irish Military Seminar

13 May 2025: Naas Library and Cultural Centre
16-17 May 2025: Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge



GREAT EPISODES IN IRELAND'S HISTORY

The Irish in the Resistance

Rory O'Connor

Irish Military in France 1690-1815

Conflict in Colour

Cathaoirleach of Kildare County Council

Cllr. Kevin Duffy

It gives me great pleasure to welcome everyone to the 9th annual Irish Military Seminar at the Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge.

Ireland has a long, proud military tradition, while Co. Kildare's military heritage stretches back to Fionn MacCumhaill and the Fianna who played for sport on the Curragh Plains.

The Seminar begins in Naas Library & Cultural Centre with the showing of two short films on Tuesday at 19.00 – 'The Rathbride Flying Column. Kildare in the Civil War' and a WWI short 'The Land.'

We are delighted to welcome many former and serving Defence Force members at 19.30, on Friday 16 May, when former Lt. Col. Ray Lane will lead us through the minefield of IEDs both at home and abroad, based on his recent fascinating memoir, 'Only a soldier knows.'

Saturday's half-day seminar has several renowned speakers who will examine a range of subjects and episodes in Ireland's military history: the Irish in the Resistance, a presentation by Michael B. Barry and our own John O'Byrne on Colour of Conflict; the Irish Legion in France and the story of Rory O'Connor executed in 1922 during the dark days of the Civil War.

The 2025 programme has something to offer all those interested in Irish and military history and I hope you will enjoy the week's event.



Tuesday 13 May at 19.00: Naas Library and Cultural Centre

***'The Rathbride Flying Column.
Kildare in the Civil War'***

This film documentary tells the story of the Rathbride Flying Column from Kildare, and its executed members during the Civil War. Produced by Prosperous Heritage Society.



'The Land'

Set during the Great War of 1914-18 'The Land' is the story of two men struggling to survive the aftermath of a failed mission. Produced by Framelt Productions.

Author and film historian Wayne Byrne will interview Joe Murphy of Prosperous Heritage Society on making a Civil War docudrama and discuss with writer and director Joseph Butler the filming of a WWI movie in Kildare.

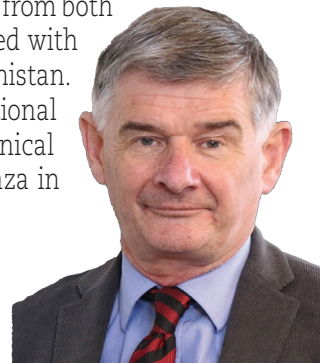


Friday 16 May at 19.00 : Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge

***Launch of 9th Irish Military Seminar
by Cathaoirleach of Kildare Councillor Kevin Duffy***

19.30 Presentation by Ray Lane: 'Only a soldier knows'

Ray Lane's memoir explores the nature of warfare, duty and the courage and mental strength it takes to be the person who overrides every natural human instinct and walks towards an improvised explosive device. Lt. Colonel (retired) Ray Lane has over thirty years of experience in counter terrorism from both an operational perspective and product developer. He has served with EU/UN and NATO in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lebanon, and Afghanistan. Ray has given personal and expert evidence to the International War Crimes Tribunal on the former Yugoslavia. He was the technical expert on the Goldstone enquiry into the Israeli invasion of Gaza in 2006. Ray is presently an adviser for UNOPS in Ukraine.



Saturday, 17 May

Riverbank Arts Centre

9.40-10.20: The Irish Military in France, 1690-1815

Stephen McGarry is the author of *Irish Brigades Abroad*, and a historical novel on the Irish Legion of Napoleon, titled *Napoleon's Blackguards*. He regularly contributes to *History Ireland* magazine and the UK's *Military History* periodical. Stephen is currently writing a compendium of Irish rebellions from the Anglo-Norman conquest to the Late Modern period.

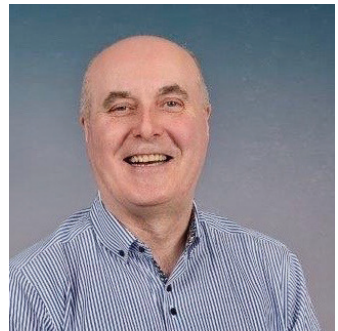


10.25-11.05: The Irish in the Resistance

Clodagh Finn is author of *Through Her Eyes: A History of Ireland in 21 Women* and *A Time to Risk All*, a biography of Mary Elmes, the 'Irish Oskar Schindler'. In 2022, she collaborated with the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Alison Gilliland, to write *Her Keys to the City*, highlighting the overlooked contributions of eighty women who shaped Dublin. Clodagh writes 'An Irishwoman's Diary' in the *Irish Examiner*.



John Morgan is a lawyer who has a longstanding interest in the history of World War II, particularly in relation to Allied Resistance and Escape Lines. John is a Trustee of the Escape Lines Memorial Society (UK) and co-founder of the Basque Pyrenees Freedom Trails' Association (Basque Country/Spain).



Saturday, 17 May

Riverbank Arts Centre

11.05-11.30: Tea/Coffee Break

11.35-12.15: 'I hope to die like a soldier.' The life and death of IRA leader Rory O'Connor

Gerard Shannon is a historian of the early 20th century Irish revolutionary period. In 2023, his book *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic* – a biography of the IRA Chief of Staff during the Civil War – was released to critical acclaim. He is currently writing a biography of Irish republican leader Rory O'Connor for release in spring 2026.

12.20-13.00: Colour of Conflict: Ireland 1922-1945

Michael B. Barry is the author of many books, including best-selling *Victorian Dublin Recorded*, a trilogy of books on the Irish Revolution period and the critically acclaimed *An illustrated history of the Irish Revolution 1916-1923*.

John O'Byrne is a professional photographer and colouriser. Over the last decade he has specialised in colourising military scenes from the early 20th century. John has collaborated with Michael B. Barry on three bestselling books *The Irish Civil War in Colour*; *A Nation is Born. Ireland in Colour 1923-1938* and *The Emergency in Colour. Ireland in Wartime*.



9th Irish Military Seminar

Tuesday 13 May, Naas Library and Cultural Centre at 19.00

‘The Rathbride Flying Column. Kildare in the Civil War’

Film documentary of the Rathbride Flying Column from Kildare, and it's executed members during the Civil War.

‘The Land’

During the Great War of 1914-18 two men struggle to survive the aftermath of a failed mission.

Author and film historian Wayne Byrne will interview Joe Murphy of Prosperous Heritage Society and Richie Kearney and Dave Butler of Framelt Productions.

Friday 16 May: Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge

19.00: Reception & Tea/Coffee

Book-signing by guest speaker Ray Lane

Launch of 9th Irish Military Seminar by Cathaoirleach of Kildare County Council, Councillor Kevin Duffy

19.30: Guest Speaker Ray Lane: ‘Only a soldier knows’

From the darkest depths of humanity to the pinnacle of bravery Ray Lane's memoir explores the nature of warfare, duty and the courage and mental strength it takes to be the person who overrides every natural human instinct and walks towards an improvised explosive device.

Saturday 17 May: Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge

9.00-9.30: Registration and Bookshop.

9.30: Welcome.

9.40-10.20: The Irish Military in France, 1690-1815.

Stephen McGarry

Around 50,000 Irishmen served in the armies of France, Spain and Austria from 1690 until the disbandment of the Irish Brigade in the Spanish Service in 1818.

The Irish Brigade in the French Service gained a reputation as crack troops and served France with distinction for one hundred years. They were followed by Napoleon's Irish Legion, a new unit raised for an anticipated invasion of Ireland.

10.25-11.05: The Irish in the Resistance

Clodagh Finn and John Morgan

The untold story of how ordinary Irish people who were caught up in extraordinary situations in Nazi-occupied Europe joined resistance movements in France, Belgium, Holland and Italy and helped to win the Second World War.

11.05-11.30: Tea/Coffee Break

11.35-12.15: 'I hope to die like a soldier.' The life and death of IRA leader Rory O'Connor

Gerard Shannon

Rory O'Connor had several key roles in the revolutionary movement, but it was his opposition to the Anglo-Irish Treaty that brought him to public prominence and began his path to civil war, eventual execution and the endurance of his memory within Irish republican commemoration.

12.20-13.00 Colour of Conflict. Ireland 1922-1945

Michael B. Barry and John O'Byrne

Conflict on the island of Ireland from 1922-45 revealed using photographs carefully selected from archives and private collections. Hand-coloured by John O'Byrne, each image is brought further to life by Michael B. Barry's informative captions. The images give a fresh perspective to the events from the Civil War, through to the Emergency.

13.00: Close of seminar

Seminar Bookshop

We are delighted to welcome Farrell & Nephew, Newbridge, as the Irish Military Seminar Bookshop for 2025. Established in 1957, Farrell & Nephew has been a part of the main street in Newbridge for almost sixty years. They will be offering a wide range of local, national, and international history publications, including books by our seminar speakers on Saturday.



<https://kildarelibraries.ie/ehistory/>



Kildare County Archives & Local Studies



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

