

## PEOPLE

**History is never simple. This week TOM GILMORE writes about a Milltown family whose ancestors fought in two very different wars**

# Milltown family had heroes in two wars

- One got the Military Medal, the other was sentenced to death, twice

**A**S historians research the history of a century ago, a Milltown family can lay claim to heroes of two wars.

The Brennan family, originally from Liskeavy, had sons honoured by both the Irish Government and the British Royal family in two very different conflicts, the Irish War of Independence and World War II.

In 1945 Pat (Patrick) Brennan was awarded one of Britain's highest honours for bravery, the Military Medal, by King George VI for his daring deeds on the battlefield.

Meanwhile in 1948 his cousin Peter J Brennan, a grandfather of John Concannon of JFC Plastics,

was laid to rest with full military honours in Kilconly. Deputy Mark Killilea (Snr), representing the Irish Government, gave a graveside oration about his bravery in Ireland's War of Independence.

While Liskeavy was the original home of the Brennans, War of Independence veteran Peter moved from there to Ironpool, Kilconly. His first cousin, John Brennan, moved to Kilgevrin and later to Northern Ireland, home of his wife Marie.

Their son Patrick joined one of the British Army's premier regiments, the Irish Guards.

As a lance corporal in charge of

a squad of 17 guardsmen, he saw service in Europe after D-Day in 1944-45, as well as on garrison and defence duty in the UK in the earlier years of the war.

Patrick Brennan's moment of glory was near Beaulieu, France in August 1944. His unit was part of a Bren gun carrier force which was being harassed by an enemy machine gun nest.

His subsequent action is detailed in the citation still proudly held by his cousin Peter (Pete) Brennan from Liskeavy who now lives in Doughuisce, Galway.

The citation states that "L/Cpl Brennan went forward alone of his own accord with a Bren gun to eliminate this nest. He succeeded in silencing the enemy machine gun but was himself wounded in the leg in the process.

"In spite of his wound, however, he crawled under constant fire from other enemy weapons to a slit trench and lay there for 45 minutes.

"He then succeeded in crawling the remaining distance to his own



LANCE Corporal Patrick Brennan (third from left, front) with his Irish Guards squad in 1943.



**SAFE HOUSE:** The Brennan homestead at Liskeavy, Milltown, was shot up by Crown forces during the War of Independence.

lines though still under fire from the enemy. L/Cpl Brennan's gallant action undoubtedly prevented other casualties amongst his comrades and at the time enabled our guns to carry out their task."

This is a graphic description of the dangers that those taking part in that war on Europe's battlefields faced, and the extent of their

bravery under fire.

Peter was given some of the material about his cousin Patrick from the latter's son in England, Gerry Brennan, who was a dental surgeon in Robin Hood Bay, Yorkshire. Gerry kept in touch with him until he passed away in 2014. Peter's own son, Graham, also did some research on it in Dublin.