

with the director of intelligence for the old IRA; Michael Collins during this relationship is specifically effective in the War of Independence.

Collins was appointed IRA director of Intelligence in 1919.

He had studied previous Irish risings and recognised what impact espionage had on their failings. Collins was intelligent and took risks. His guerrilla warfare strategy proved a success and has been adopted by rebels all over the world. His spies such as Broy and Neligan kept him informed as to the movement and decisions of British forces. Collins Squad, which was his spy network, was set up to identify, locate and execute British soldiers.

After the first Dail in 1919, the British focused their attention back to Ireland. Collins managed to avoid imprisonment due to the tip-offs he received from his "G" men agents. Collins set up "drops" in Dublin Castle. These were varied locations where agents could leave information found. (This system is still in use today by the various intelligence agencies throughout the world). The locations changed to avoid being caught by the RIC.

On the 7th of April 1919 Broy smuggled Collins into G Division archives on Pearse Street. The two men spent eight hours going through files which contained political and military information from around Ireland. There were police files on the Irish Volunteers. Collins even managed to read his own file. The information obtained enabled Collins to identify six G division men, who would be killed by the IRA. Collins then realised that in order to defeat Britain they would have to take out their spies as they would be unable to replace them. Collins was then reportedly to have stated to Broy "I am a builder, not a destroyer. I get rid of people only when they hinder my work." Along with Broy Collins had recruited other "G" men, one of these was David Neligan. Neligan like Broy had offered services to Sinn Fein but was turned down. He left the DMP in 1920 but Collins encouraged him to rejoin as a spy. In 1921 Neligan then allowed himself to be recruited into British Intelligence in Dublin Castle which



**Ned Broy was played by Stephen Rea in the 1996 film Michael Collins. Although the depiction of historical events was at times inaccurate, the film brought light to the role Broy played in Irish history.**

was the centre of British Intelligence in Ireland. As a result of this placement, Neligan was able to pass on the British Oath of Allegiance, passwords and identities of British agents to Collins. Neligan gave false reports to the DMP claiming that the IRA were much bigger and better equipped than they actually were. This may have influenced the British cabinet to grant the Irish Free State independence.

In February 1921, Broy was arrested by the RIC on suspicion of collaboration with the enemy. He was sent to Arbour Hill prison for interrogation. Collins persuaded another detective to flee the country, which therefore lifted the suspicion off Broy. When he was released from prison Collins removed Broy from active service for the duration of the war. Collins recognised the key role that Broy had played in the War and

was fully cognisant of the risks that he had taken. Collins clearly felt a deep sense of gratitude for the efforts made by Broy and demonstrated this in ensuring his safety.

After the Civil War, the RIC disbanded and Michael Collins pushed for the establishment of a Civic Guard. On the 8th August 1923 the newly established Irish Government created An Garda Síochána. The DMP later merged with An Garda Síochána in 1925. With the establishment of An Garda Síochána Eamon Broy left the Irish Republican Army and joined the newly established police force.

On the 22nd of February 1933 Taoiseach Eamon de Valera fired General O' Duffy and Eamon Broy succeeded O' Duffy as Garda Commissioner. After receiving orders from his political masters Broy set up an armed auxiliary force that consisted of former IRA men and former Republican prisoners. This group became known as the 'Broy Harriers'.

While all this was going on, Eoin O' Duffy went from being the strongest defender of the Irish Free State to the greatest threat to its existence. In 1933 he became the leader of the extreme right wing movement the Blueshirts. De Valera originally wanted the Broy Harriers to act as body guards for Free State ministers but they were eventually used against the Blue Shirts.

The Broy Harriers had a controversial history. They were involved in a controversial shooting which resulted in the death of a Cork farmer. In the 1940s the Broy Harriers and the CID (criminal investigations department) were merged together into the Special Branch. They were disliked by many. The Broy Harriers started to become unpopular after

Broy had served as Garda Commissioner.

I believe that the questions posed at the outset can be answered as follows:

- The huge contribution made by Broy was overshadowed by the historical giant that is Michael Collins. (Arguably made in death what he was not in life).
- The reputation of the new Provisional IRA and the old IRA and becoming intertwined in the public psyche. Public ignorance and guilt by association.
- The fear of confronting the past and a wish to move forward and let 'sleeping dogs lie'.
- The actions of the 'Broy Harriers' despite the fact that Broy was no longer commissioner at the time of the controversial events.
- The unique hatred by the Irish people of the double agent.

In 1990 attempts to award Eamon Broy with the credit he deserves were stymied once again. In 1996, Broy briefly came to light when the film Michael Collins was released. However, once again his role was completely misrepresented. In fact, Broy is portrayed as having been murdered by British Forces and eliminated all together!

History tells us that Eamon Broy served his country well. He demonstrated his bravery time and again while working at the very heart of the British war machine as a double agent. He was arrested, jailed and narrowly avoided death for his beliefs. He later continued to serve his country by joining An Garda Síochána in 1933 where he rose to the rank of Commissioner. He eventually retired in 1939.

It is to our national shame that we fail to commemorate his memory and recognise his contribution to Irish history. ■  
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## Revisionists have failed to adequately address the following questions:

- Why has Eamon Broy not been given the credit for the integral part he played in the Sinn Fein Intelligence network?
- Why has he remained in relative historical obscurity?
- Why was his contribution not been acknowledged in life or in death?
- Has one to fall in battle before one's sacrifice is recognised?