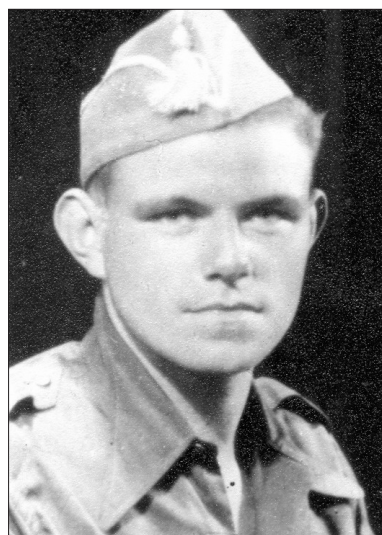


Micheál O'Riordan



Born 12th November 1917
Died 18th May 2006



Michael O'Riordan, age 20, in the uniform of the Spanish Republican Army's International Brigade, 1938.
Credit: Manus O'Riordan, International Brigade Memorial Trust.

"Michael O'Riordan is his own message ... He looks a sturdy lad – as, of course, all those who fought for Republican Spain were sturdy lads. He has nothing to sell but his soul, and he isn't likely to do that, though he'll be told he'll lose it by holding on to it."

- Seán O'Casey, May 21, 1951



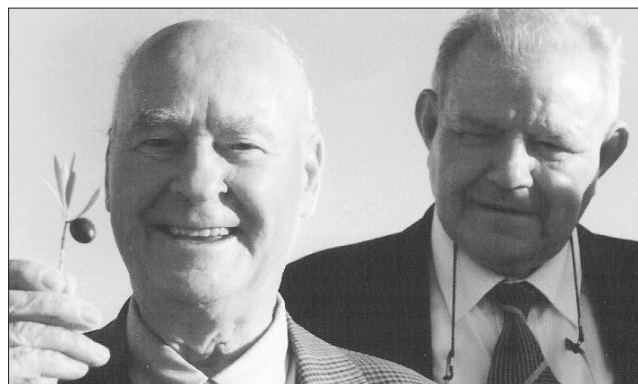
Mick photographed with his grandson Luke on the occasion of the Civic Reception by Dublin Corporation for Irish International Brigade Veterans, 1997.
Credit: Bryan O'Brien, Photographer.

"Without Mick I'd never have been able to write Viva la Quince Brigada . I must have performed the song over a thousand times and every single time I sing it I think of Mick and wonder how can I ever thank him enough. Then one day the answer came to me in a flash. I was in Connolly Books and saw Mick at the back of the shop.

'That's it', I said to myself, 'I can sing for him!'...

"In Spain in 1983 ... I was reading his book Connolly Column and I began this song as I read on ... In February 1997 ... four of the five surviving International Brigade members were honoured by Dublin City Council, 60 years on. But, never too late, these proud gentlemen were welcomed back to Dublin after giving everything in the fight against Franco ... Michael O'Riordan gave an emotional oration and recalled the deeds of his comrades past and present. ... He quoted loudly from the song Quince Brigada but never mentioned that the song was lifted entirely from his book Connolly Column."

- Christy Moore, January 25, 2002



Mick with his friend and fellow International Brigader Peter O'Connor, photographed on the Jarama Front, Spain, 1996.
Photo Credit: Sean Kelly.

Micheál O’Riordan

Born at 37 Pope’s Quay Cork on November 12 1917, in the first week of Russia’s Socialist Revolution. He was the youngest of five children born to parents from the Ballingeary-Gougane Barra Gaeltacht area of West Cork. He was married to Kay Keohane from the West Cork town of Clonakilty, with whom he shared both family and political life until her death in 1991.

Michael and Kay were the parents of three children. Their first-born Mary survived only two days but Manus and Brenda went on to provide Michael with five grandchildren. Manus and his wife Annette MacDonald are the parents of Jessica, Neil and Luke, while Brenda and her husband Tony McGaley are the parents of Dara and Caitriona.

Michael worked for twenty years as a bus conductor, serving on branch committees of the Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union in both Cork and Dublin. Thereafter he devoted his life to full-time politics, having been an activist from his teens. As an Irish Republican he fought Blueshirt fascism on the streets of Cork in 1933-34. In 1938 he was a Connolly Column volunteer in the 15th International Brigade, defending the Spanish Republic from the Fascist onslaught of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini. In the Republic’s final offensive of July 25th, 1938 he carried the flag on Catalunya across the Ebro. On August 1st he was wounded whilst fighting on Hill 481 outside Gandesa.

- 1940-43 he was a Republican political prisoner in the Curragh Internment Camp where he edited the clandestine anti-fascist journal ‘An Splannc’.
- 1944 he was founding secretary of the Liam Mellows Branch of the Irish Labour Party.
- In 1945 he was founding secretary of the Cork Socialist Party.
- In 1947 he was founding secretary of the Irish Workers’ League and General Secretary thereafter, and of its successor organisation the Irish Workers’ Party from 1962-1970.
- From 1970-1983 he was General Secretary of the reunited Communist Party of Ireland.
- From 1983-1988 he was National Chairman of the C.P.I.
- In 1996 he was made an Honorary citizen of Spain.
- Author of Connolly Column 1979, 2nd edition 2005.
- Died May 18th 2006.

VIVA LA QUINCE BRIGADA!
by Christy Moore

Ten years before I saw the light of morning
A comradeship of heroes was laid.
From every corner of the world came sailing
The Fifteenth International Brigade.
They came to stand beside the Spanish people,
To try and stem the rising Fascist tide.
Franco's allies were the powerful and wealthy,
Frank Ryan's men came from the other side.
Even the olives were bleeding
As the battle for Madrid it thundered on.
Truth and love against the force of evil,
Brotherhood against the Fascist clan.

Chorus:

Viva La Quince Brigada!

"No pasaran" the pledge that made them fight.
"Adelante" was the cry around the hillside.
Let us all remember them tonight.
Bob Hilliard was a Church of Ireland pastor,
From Killarney across the Pyrenees he came.
From Derry came a brave young Christian Brother.
Side by side they fought and died in Spain.
Tommy Wood, aged seventeen, died in Cordoba.
With na Fianna he learned to hold his gun.
From Dublin to the Villa del Rio

Where he fought and died beneath the Spanish sun.

Chorus:

Viva La Quince Brigada!

"No pasaran" the pledge that made them fight.
"Adelante" was the cry around the hillside.
Let us all remember them tonight.
Many Irishmen heard the call of Franco.
Joined Hitler and Mussolini too.
Propaganda from the pulpit and newspapers
Helped O'Duffy to enlist his crew.
The word came from Maynooth: 'Support the Fascists'.
The men of cloth failed again
When the Bishops blessed the Blueshirts down in Galway
As they sailed beneath the Swastika to Spain.

Chorus:

Viva La Quince Brigada!

"No pasaran" the pledge that made them fight.
"Adelante" was the cry around the hillside.
Let us all remember them tonight.
This song is a tribute to Frank Ryan,
Kit Conway and Dinny Coady too,
Peter Daly, Charlie Regan and Hugh Bonar
Though many died I can but name a few.
Danny Boyle, Blaser-Brown and Charlie Donnelly,
Liam Tumilson, Jim Straney from the Falls,
Jack Nalty, Tommy Patten and Frank Conroy,
Jim Foley, Tony Fox and Dick O'Neill.

Chorus:

Viva La Quince Brigada!

"No pasaran" the pledge that made them fight.
"Adelante" was the cry around the hillside.
Let us all remember them tonight.