

SIX Limerick men figured on the Munster team that beat Connacht, at Galway, 7-5 to 0-6, in the Railway Cup semi-final on February 16th, 1941. They were: Paddy Scanlan, Jacky Power, Timmy Ryan, Dick Stokes, Mick and John Mackey.

Three days later, the unexpected and deeply regretted passing of Paddy Mackey deprived Limerick Gaeidom of a very promising player. His brothers, Mick and John, did not play again that season, in tribute to his memory.

Leinster beat Munster, holders since 1937, in the Railway Cup final on St. Patrick's Day, 2-5 to 2-4. Timmy Ryan captained the Southern side, other Limerick players being Peter Cregan, Paddy Scanlan, Jacky Power and Dick Stokes.

1941 will be remembered as the year of the great cattle plague, and this "Foot and Mouth Disease" ravaged some of the traditional hurling districts, with the result that the Hurling Championship ran very late.

MUNSTER SEMI-FINAL.

It was September 14th, when Cork and Limerick lined out at Cork Athletic Grounds in the Munster semi-final. The All-Ireland champions, without the Mackeys and Paddy Clohessey, were a listless side, and the Leesiders won, 8-10 to 2-3. Jimmy Cooney partnered Timmy Ryan mid-field, but neither proved the dominating personalities of other days.

Cork and Dublin fought the All-Ireland Final on September 28th, although both had still to play their provincial finals. Cork won, 5-11 to 0-6.

In the Munster Final played later at Limerick, Tipperary created a first-class surprise by defeating Cork 5-4 to 2-5. Bill O'Donnell gave a masterly display that day at mid-field for Tipperary, his placing of long distance frees and seventies being responsible, for more than half of his side's total.

WHEN MEDALS WERE STOLEN BY "TANS."

The Mackey brothers re-appeared in Limerick colours on May 2nd, 1942, when they lined out at Limerick in a game with Munster champions, Tipperary, in a third match for a set of medals which were originally put up for competition between the counties in 1918. On that occasion the match resulted in a draw, and the medals were later stolen by the Black and Tans during the War of Independence. They were not recovered until after the Truce, and it was around 1927 before the second meeting took place at the Markets Field, when a second draw resulted. No member of the original teams participated in the third meeting, which Tipperary won, 2-5 to 1-4.

On May 31st, Limerick beat Waterford, 4-4 to 2-5, at Cork, in the opening round of the Munster Championship. The newspapers said of this match: "Mick Mackey was the man of the moment, for

the winners. His goal from the side line transposed the game. Timmy Ryan gave a great display at mid-field and Paddy Carroll was a fine full back."

The Munster semi-final was played at Limerick Gaelic Grounds, where Cork (All-Ireland champions) beat Limerick 4-3 to 5-3. In a game that scintillated and sparkled, Limerick led at the interval, 3-0 to 1-4. The real thrills were in the second moiety, the sides were level twice and the deciding scores came to Cork almost on the call of time.

Cork afterwards beat Tipperary (Munster champions) 4-15 to 4-1, to regain the Munster Cup, which they last held in 1939.

RAILWAY CUP FINALS OF 1943.

The Railway Cup Finals of 1943 were voted by many the "best ever" in these competitions, and were watched by a then record crowd of 25,170, with gate receipts £1,302 5s 7d. The final scores were: Hurling—Munster, 4-3 (15 points); Leinster, 3-5 (14 points); Football—

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Ulster, 3-7 (16 points); Leinster, 2-9 (15 points).

Munster's win came through sheer grit and determination. Six points behind ten minutes from time, they scored two goals and a point in a turmoil of thrills, to win by a point—a grand effort by Christy Ring. Jack Lynch captained the side. Limerick players included Peter Cregan, Dick Stokes, Jacky Power, Mick and John Mackey. Stars on the Leinster side were Jim Langton and Nickey Rackard, the latter giving a great display against John Keane.

In the opening round of the Munster Championship, played at Ennis, Limerick beat Clare, 6-4 to 3-3, but the Shannonsiders lost to Waterford in the next round at Cork, 3-7 to 4-3. Timmy Ryan and Mick Mackey were great at mid-field against Waterford but two goals direct off frees by John Keane, plus magnificent goalkeeping by Jim Ware, helped Waterford to their one point success.

MICK MACKEY IN THE ARMY.

Mick Mackey served in the National Army during the Emergency, and army sports records contain many references to great games he played both for the Seventh Brigade and the Southern Command.

He won at least one all army medal, but gained glory, too, in many of the games in which his team were beaten. In a great final at the Army Grounds, Phoenix Park, in 1942, the Southern Command were leading the Eastern Command by four points with three minutes to go—Mick Mackey having contributed seven points to the Southern tally—when Mossy McDonnell, a native of Cork, got through for two great goals and the title in a thrill packed finish.

When the Seventh and First Brigades held spell-bound a great gathering at Sean Tracey Park, Tipperary, on October 3rd, 1943, Mick Mackey and Charley Tobin were in line for the "Seventh" and notched five goals by splendid combined play. This game ended level—7th, 7-6; 1st, 6-9.

ANOTHER EXCITING ENCOUNTER.

Another exciting encounter was the meeting at Mallow on May 10th, 1944, in which 31st Battalion beat the Seventh Brigade 2-5 to 2-4. Mick Mackey and Jimmy Cooney operated at mid-field for the losers, who led at the interval, 1-1 to 0-1. The sides were level twice in the last quarter and entering the final stages, with 31st two points in front Mick Mackey made an all-out effort and cut the leeway with a lovely point.

A solitary point was again the margin of defeat at Limerick on July 26th, 1944, when the final tally read: 5th Brigade, 1-12; 7th Brigade, 2-8. Mick Mackey had three points for the losers that evening. Connacht qualified for their first Railway Cup Hurling Final when they beat Leinster, at Birr, 4-5 to 1-5, on February 13th, 1944. It was the westerners' sixteenth attempt to reach the decider.

When the Munster team was announced for the final, they were challenged by a second—Munster string. The Cork Augustinian Church New Building Fund Committee offered attractive trophies and a very interesting match was the outcome, the official Munster side winning, 6-2 to 2-3. Highlight of that game was the exchanges between Mick Mackey and D. J. Buckley (Cork)—a pair that gave us many hectic and stirring encounters.

THE 1944 RAILWAY CUP FINAL.

Despite the absence of travelling facilities, due to Emergency conditions, a record crowd of 31,031 paid £1,457 12s. 6d. to see Munster and Connacht contest the 1944 Railway Cup Final on St. Patrick's Day at Croke Park, which the men from the south won, 4-10 to 4-4. Mick Mackey did not play, and John filled the full forward berth. John Mackey and John Quirke (Cork) were both figuring in their eighth Railway Cup Final, and they played a big part in the Munster scoring. A remarkable feature about that southern fifteen was that it contained no Tipperary representative—the first occasion since the inauguration of the series in 1927 that the Premier County failed to gain a place.

In a Green Cross Fund game at Galway on April 29th, Mick Mackey figured in some exciting episodes in leading Limerick to a 4-8—3-10 victory over the home side, that was confirmed in a welter of thrills.

The following Sunday, Limerick and Cork qualified for the Thimond Feis Final, the Shannonsiders beating Tipperary 7-4 to 3-0, and Cork defeating Clare, 6-7 to 2-6.

Limerick sparked in that final, to beat the All-Ireland champions, 4-9 to 3-1, after Cork had led by a point at the interval. The Mackeys contributed 3-3 to the Limerick total on that occasion.

MACKEYS IN DEVASTATING FORM.

When Ahane met the Tipperary champions, Eire Og, in a medal tournament final at Nenagh, on May 15th, the Mackeys were again in devastating form, being responsible for 5-1 of the 9-2 the Limerick Club scored. The Tipperary reply was also 5-1. The sides were level, 3-1 each, at the interval. Four of the Mackey goals came in the second half.

When Limerick beat Clare in the Munster semi-final at Limerick, 5-9 to 4-1, Mick Mackey had two goals and two points of the Garryowen total.

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