

# THE BLUE CAP

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## **The Cross and the Sword: Marie, Tommy and Charlie Martin in the First World War Part 3.**

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Tommy, Marie and Charlie were among twelve children born to Tom and Mary Martin of Kingstown (now Dun Laoghaire), Co. Dublin. Tommy was the eldest, Marie the second and Charlie the fourth child. The previous parts of this article told of their childhood and how, on the outbreak of war, Marie became a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) i.e. volunteer nurse, Tommy joined the 5<sup>th</sup> Bn. Connaught Rangers and Charlie the 6<sup>th</sup> Bn. Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Charlie (Captain Charles Martin) was killed in action in Salonika on 8 December 1915. After serving in Malta, Marie returned to Ireland in May 1916. Like Charlie, Tommy also served in Salonika. The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division of which his battalion was a part, began to embark from Salonika on 1 September 1917. On Sunday 7 September 2003 Tom Burke, Nick Broughall, Joe Gallagher and Seamus Greene of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association and Ian McQuigg, Area Representative of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission laid a wreath at the Doiran Memorial in memory of Captain Charles Martin and all his Irish comrades who died in the Salonika campaign. Part 2 of the article concluded at this point.

After barely a month at home Marie was called up again. Now aged twenty-four, she was on her way to France. She dropped a post card to her mother into the mailbox at London's Charing Cross Station before boarding the early morning boat train. The Mail Boat to Boulogne was very crowded and Marie and the four young women with her sat on their luggage all the way. The ship docked in France in time for them to have lunch at the *Boulogne Tower Hotel*. By 5 p.m. the five

young women were travelling again. By 7.30 p.m. Marie had arrived at Hardelot, a coastal town.

In 1900 Hardelot, with its long sandy beaches, had been established as a seaside resort by Sir John Whitley, an Englishman who owned the local Chateau. Edwardian families spent their summer holidays in spacious villas in the forests around Hardelot. The Chateau became a clubhouse for golfers. Other holidaymakers enjoyed sailing, tennis and cricket. French families also bought property at the resort. Among them was Louis Blériot, who pioneered sand yachting on the wide flat beach – a sport that remains popular in Hardelot to this day. On 25 July 1909, Blériot became the first man to fly the English Channel, a feat that earned him the *Daily Mail* prize of £1,000 awarded by the owner, Dublin born Alfred Harmsworth, Lord Northcliffe.

In Hardelot Marie was assigned to No. 25 General Hospital, located in what had previously been the *Aviation Hotel*. Marie described the building as “*rather quaint*.” Apart from the wards within the former hotel, the wounded were also treated in several large tents in the grounds. Upon arrival Marie was given a brief visit to the surgical ward where she would take up duty the next day. Then she was shown to a “*sweet villa*” where she was billeted. She would share a room with “*Miss Paul*,” a VAD with whom she had become friendly while serving in Malta. June 18 was Marie's first day on duty. Despite being tired, she sat up in bed that night writing to her mother. “*I'll give you three clues so you can puzzle out where we are: (1) The opposite of soft. (2) The fifth letter of the alphabet. (3) The man in the bible whose wife was turned into a pillar of salt.*” Either because it was presumed that the Germans couldn't possibly decipher the clues, or because the person censoring Marie's letter was kind-hearted, the letter was allowed through!

On 21 June Marie wrote home again. She asked if there was *"any news of poor Charlie"*, her younger brother serving in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The family had been told in December 1915 that he was missing. (In fact he had been killed on 8 December.) As Marie wrote home that day, she could distinctly hear the gunfire from the Front, even though it was nearly one hundred kilometres to the east of Hardelot. At the town of Albert, nearer the front line, it was decided which convoy was sent to which of several military hospitals. Sister Makenzie, in charge of Marie's ward, did not like VAD nurses. Fully trained State Registered Nurses (SRNs) tended to look down on VADs with their short emergency training.



Mary Martin at her 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday party in 1913.

Marie received a letter from the mother of her boyfriend Gerald Gartland, saying that he had been recalled to the trenches. This was a cause of much anxiety to Marie. However, a half-day off duty gave her the opportunity to take a tram to Boulogne, about ten miles away. There she was able to walk and have tea. She shared her

thoughts in a letter to her widowed mother. On 24 June, seven days of shelling of German positions began in preparation for an assault at the Somme. The hospital prepared itself for the expected influx of wounded. Marie asked her mother to send some plug tobacco for the men. On 30 June, word spread among the hospital staff that the final bombardment had begun. Little did the staff know that they were about to experience the aftermath of the bloodiest single day in British military history, 1 July 1916.

Casualties were treated in First Aid Dressing stations in farmhouse basements near the front, and then transported by rail and ambulances to the hospitals. At Hardelot on 2 July, the hospital had filled up by 5:00 p.m. Marie spent extra time on duty helping Sister Makenzie who, she could see, was new to military ways. Then came a cruel blow. The post brought confirmation of what Marie had long feared. The War Office had informed her mother that Captain Charles Martin 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers was dead. Marie's letter home that night tried to comfort her mother, while she tried to cope with her own grief. *"It is really impossible to realise that we shall never see his dear face again. How we shall all miss him!"* Her friend Miss Paul supported Marie in her grief. In Malta Miss Paul had spent off-duty time accompanying Marie while she made enquiries about Charlie. Now her friend was on hand to support her in France when the dreadful news finally arrived. On 8 July, Marie wrote home saying that it was a relief that Charlie had died without much suffering. The soldiers she was nursing *"had such nasty wounds."*

Marie was now nursing men who, in addition to their original wounds, had developed gas gangrene. This is a condition where open wounds are infected by bacteria that cause extremely painful swelling. The condition sometimes requires amputation and, if not treated quickly and carefully, can have fatal consequences. Around this time Marie received another letter from home, telling her that her boyfriend Gerald Gartland had been wounded. A short time later she received a wire telling her that he was alright and was going back to the trenches. He then wrote saying that he had only been slightly wounded, but had had a bad time in France. Her mother sent the requested tobacco, which Marie said she would keep for her *"Paddys."*

Convoy after convoy of wounded men were arriving at Hardelot from Albert. Marie was transferred from the surgical ward to the medical section, in the tented wards of the hospital.

She told her mother that the tents were very nice in the sunshine, but were awful when the rains came. On 13 July Marie found herself on a committee of Nursing Staff and VADs who were planning a tea party for the 180 orderlies at Hardelot. She spent her day off buying the necessary provisions. Towards the end of July things slackened off for a short time at Hardelot. The tents were closed for a while, as a recent epidemic of diarrhoea was being investigated. Marie had come to know Dorothy Whitley, whose father had established the resort at Hardelot. Miss Whitley used to come to the hospital with flowers from her garden at Pré Catelan. When off duty Marie sometimes walked through the woods to visit this lovely house that reminded her of home.

By 13 August 1916, the tents were filling up with soldiers suffering from the effects of gas poisoning. For four days Marie nursed fifty-six men on stretchers, with only a single orderly to help. Then Miss Paul was sent to help her. The Medical Officer with whom Marie was working had specialised in the treatment of gas poisoning. So Marie learned a lot from him. At the end of August it began to rain. It was, "*bestly in the tents and so nasty for the men.*" The nurses got so wet walking between the tents that Marie asked her mother to send her a sou'wester and boots. It was under these conditions that the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division went into action. In the first ten days of September the Division lost 240 of its 435 officers, and 4,090 of its 10,410 other ranks in attacks on Guillemont and Ginchy. As winter approached, Marie began to suffer very painful chilblains on her hands, shins and feet. She had bought an oil stove in Boulogne to heat the room she shared with Miss Paul. By boiling two pots of water on the stove, she could manage to get a warm bath. With, "*terrible gales and raindrops the size of eggs,*" everyone wondered if the hospital would be kept open in such an exposed place. On 8 November Marie told the Matron that she would not be renewing her contract when her six-month term was up. She had thirty-nine days left. She began crossing them off on her calendar, looking forward more and more to getting home.

Early in December, the tents were finally closed. On 8 December Marie got the chaplain to say Mass for Charlie on the first anniversary of his death. Hearing that Gerald Gartland was expected in Boulogne, Marie set out by tram to find him there, but failed to do so. Disappointed, she returned to Hardelot, telling herself that somehow it was God's will. In early 1917 she returned home. Marie Martin's war was over. By the time she was twenty-five she had made up her mind that marriage was not for her and she told Gerald of her decision. As Mother Mary Martin, she went on to found the Medical Missioners of Mary nursing order.

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The British and Imperial troops had twice tried to cross from the Sinai into Palestine. On both occasions the Turks had defeated them outside Gaza. At the end of June 1917, General Sir Edmund Allenby was given command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, with the instruction from Lloyd George: "*Jerusalem by Christmas.*" The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) and 60<sup>th</sup> (London) Divisions were withdrawn from Salonika to augment Allenby's force. The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division embarked on a fleet of hired transports between the first and third weeks of September. On 15 September 1917, Captain Tommy Martin arrived in Egypt with 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Connaught Rangers. By the end of the third week of September the entire division was concentrated in the area of Ismalia on the edge of the Suez Canal by Lake Timsah. The officers, including Tommy Martin, were offered the hospitality of the French Club and enjoyed cuisine the like of which they had not enjoyed for several years. Training and re-equipping began on 17 September and continued until 27 September. During this time, a major boxing tournament was held within the division. On 29 September, the division marched to El Kantra, the railhead of the Trans-Sinai railway, which they reached the following day.

The Turkish army held a line extending from the sea at Gaza to east of Beersheba. Having convinced the enemy that he would concentrate his attack on their right, sea-based flank, Allenby planned to strike their left, inland flank. The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division were placed in reserve on Allenby's right, opposite Beersheba.

The Third Battle of Gaza opened with a three day naval and land artillery bombardment of Gaza to convince the Turks that this was the Allied objective. On the fourth day a direct assault was made on Beersheba, combined with a wide flanking movement by the Desert Mounted Corps. Two days later the greater part of Gaza was captured by XX1 Corps, commanded by General Sir Edward Bulfin, who was born at Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin and educated at Stonyhurst and Trinity College, Dublin. Allenby's victory and its aftermath brought his army to the gates of Jerusalem.



Officers of the 5<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion Connaught Rangers. Lieut. Tommy Martin is in the middle row and the fifth man in from the right.

Allenby was concerned to avoid fighting around the Holy City. The Turks appear to have shared the same concerns. On 8 December, the 60<sup>th</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Divisions advanced from the west and the 53<sup>rd</sup> (Welch) Division from Hebron in the south. The divisions passed through Bethlehem and formed a line two and a half miles south of Jerusalem. During the night the Turks retired north and northeast from Jerusalem. Early on the morning of Sunday 9 December, two British soldiers foraging for eggs met a group of Jerusalem dignitaries carrying a white flag. Among them was the Mayor with the keys of the city. The dignitaries were looking for someone to whom they could surrender the city. The two soldiers took the dignitaries to a sergeant. He in turn took them to Irishman Major-General John Shea, who accepted the city's surrender. On 11 December, following instructions from London, Allenby entered the city on foot, to avoid emulating the Kaiser's triumphal entry on horseback in 1898. No Allied flags were flown over the city, and to avoid offending Muslim tradition, Indian Muslim troops were sent to guard the Dome of the Rock.

Christmas 1917 in the Holy Land was the most bleak the men of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division ever had. They were based near Beit Sira, a village twenty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem. Poor roads and bad weather delayed supplies and all were on half rations. One officer wrote: "*Terrible rain on Christmas day, bully beef and a cup of rum.*" On Stephens's Day, (Boxing Day) the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division attacked Zeitun Ridge. For the first time in its three-year history the division was fighting as a complete formation under its divisional commander. Tommy Martin's 5<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers were on the left of the attack. They were held up by machine-gun fire. Signals had run out of telephone cable for a telephone link between the artillery observation officer and the gun-battery positions. Half an hour later, with communications connected, the divisional artillery put the machine-guns out of action. Under covering fire from the rest of the battalion, two companies of Rangers stormed the ridge. Meanwhile, to the right of the Rangers, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Leinster Regiment gained another part of the ridge. The Rangers and the Leinsters then poured enfilading fire into the Turkish positions that were between the two battalions. When 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Irish Rifles, to the left of the Rangers, were held up by machine-gun fire, the Connaught regiment attacked the Turkish flank, forcing the machine-gunners to withdraw.

In the latter part of February 1918, the British advanced eastwards, capturing Jericho and driving the Turks across the Jordan. On 9 March a general offensive began in which the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division gained the battle honour *Tell'Asur* for breaking the Turkish line at that place. The 29<sup>th</sup> Brigade, to which 5<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers were attached, were on the left of the attack. The Rangers took the village of Nebi Salih, with only three men being wounded. While attacking Arura Ridge, the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Rifles suffered heavy casualties from machine-guns manned by German soldiers. Tommy Martin's battalion made an outflanking move against the Germans, thus allowing the Rifles to gain their objective. Shortly after dawn on 12 March, the Rangers at Nebi Salih were attacked by a combined force of Germans and Turks. The Connaughts drove off a frontal assault. The enemy then attempted to push back each flank in turn, but the Rangers again drove them off.



On 20 March 1918, the Duke of Connaught visited the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division. Detachments from all battalions attended a parade at which many officers were decorated. At the end of April most battalions were down to an average fighting strength of about twenty officers and 480 men of other ranks. In the aftermath of the German offensive of March 1918 on the Western Front, Allenby was forced to despatch to France two complete infantry divisions and the infantry strength of two more. Among those sent to France from the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division were the 5<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers, the 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the 6<sup>th</sup> Leinster Regiment. Also sent were the 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who were absorbed by the regiment's second battalion and 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Munster Fusiliers, who were absorbed by their regiment's 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion.

Tommy Martin and his men arrived in Marseilles on 1 June 1918. Attached to the 14<sup>th</sup> Division from 7 to 28 June, the battalion were then attached to 197<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 66<sup>th</sup> Division at Serqueux. Later on 25 August, they were moved to 66<sup>th</sup> Division's 199<sup>th</sup> Brigade. In an attack at Le Catelet on 4 October the 66<sup>th</sup> Division were in reserve during an attack on part of the Hindenburg line. On 8 October, Tommy Martin's battalion and the 9<sup>th</sup> Manchesters captured the village of Serain, attacking it from north and south. An assault on Le Cateau was planned for 17 October. The evening before, 5<sup>th</sup> Bn. Connaught Rangers forced an entry into the town. (Outside the Military Cemetery at Le Cateau, there is a memorial plaque that refers to the 5<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers attack on the town in October 1918.) Because of their exposed position they were ordered to withdraw. They did so, but not before causing great consternation to the Germans in the town. On 11 November 1918 German machine-gun fire continued up to the ceasefire on the front held by 66<sup>th</sup> Division. On 15 December Tommy Martin was promoted to Major.

On 5 December 1914, following heavy losses sustained by the regular 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Connaught Rangers Battalions at First Ieper, the latter battalion was absorbed by the former. For the rest of the war the Rangers had no 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. After the armistice Tommy Martin's service battalion were based at Huy in Belgium. There, news reached them that they were to receive the singular

honour of becoming a regular battalion. On 11 February 1919 a parade took place which had only once before been enacted in British Army history when, in 1660, Monk's Regiment of Foot became the Coldstream Guards after the Restoration of Charles II. Tommy Martin's battalion received the order "5<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers, ground arms." Then, "2<sup>nd</sup> Connaught Rangers, take up arms." Unfortunately, along with five other Irish Regiments, the Connaught Rangers were disbanded in June 1922.

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My thanks to Sister Isabelle Smyth of the Medical Missionaries of Mary for information on Marie Martin and for giving her copies of her articles on Marie's wartime service. The photograph of Marie comes from one of the articles. My thanks to Oliver Fallon of the Connaught Rangers Association for the information on Tommy Martin that he discovered in his own research. I am also grateful to him for the photograph of Tommy with officers from the 5<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers.

It has been a privilege to write the story of the Martins for *The Blue Cap*, as I believe that it is the first time ever that the story of the First World War service of an Irish woman and her two brothers has been told. I would be very grateful to readers who might help add to the story in any way. For instance: What was Miss Paul's first name? In what Regiment did Gerald Gartland serve? I would also be very grateful for any further information on Miss Paul, Gerald Gartland and any information on Tommy Martin's life after the First World War. I can be contacted through *The Blue Cap*.

## **Contentious Parades and remembrance days in Dublin 1928 - 1936.**

*Tom Burke MBE*

*The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association*

The Great War ended on 11 November 1918 and each year following the anniversary of that date, on the weekend before Armistice Day, remembrance services were held throughout the length and breadth of Ireland. On the morning of Remembrance Sunday in Dublin, hundreds of ex-service men would proudly parade to Mass in the Roman Catholic Pro-Cathedral and in the afternoon to the Church of Ireland Cathedral of St. Patrick's. In the immediate years after the war, Ireland was torn apart with the Anglo / Irish war of Independence. Prior to the Truce of July 1921, at least eighty-two British Army ex-service men were killed by the IRA. What happened to the thousands of Irish Great War veterans in the years following the establishment of the Irish Free State is a fascinating story yet fully to be told. (1)

In the early nineteen twenties over Remembrance weekend, thousands of people would gather at College Green opposite Trinity College in Dublin around a temporary cenotaph outside the College. The Irish cenotaph was first erected for the remembrance services in Dublin in November 1924. The Cenotaph consisted of a wooden Irish cross known as the Ginchy Cross. The Cross was approximately four meters high and was made from elm timbers that came from a ruined French farmhouse. Prior to it being brought back to Ireland, it was erected between the Somme battlefield villages of Ginchy and Guillemont. The Cross was built by men from the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment who were the Pioneer Battalion of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division during their part in the Battle of the Somme in September 1916.

In late August 1926, an Irish delegation travelled to France and Flanders for an unveiling ceremony of two new Irish granite crosses. Both crosses were built in Ireland and shipped from Dublin to their sites on the continent. On Saturday 21 August 1926, the first cross unveiled was the one erected on the side of Suicide Road (Wijtschatestraat) facing the Bois De Wijtschate in

memory of the Irishmen who died taking the village of Wijtschate in June 1917. The Suicide Road was the name given to road that was near the divisional boundary that divided the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) and 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Divisions before they attacked the village of Wijtschate on 7 June 1917. Present at the ceremony were General Sir William Hickie, General Sir Bryan Mahon who commanded the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division in Gallipoli, Mr. Alfie Byrne T.D the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Count O' Kelly, the Irish Free State Representative in Brussels, Sir George Graham, the British Ambassador to Belgium and the Abbess of the convent at Loker.

Next day, the party travelled on to Guillemont in France. The route they took was down the old line through Armentieres and La Bassee travelling through Loos where so many Irishmen were gassed to death while a rebellion took place in Dublin in April 1916. On to Arras, Bapaume, Albert and finally to Amiens where they spent the night. Next morning on Monday 23 August, the party travelled to Guillemont to unveil the other Irish granite cross. The French military commander, Marshall Joffre, attended this ceremony. Over the small roads leading into the village of Guillemont were banners which read, 'Vive l'Irlande' while around the site of the Cross itself, paper shamrocks and green paper bunting were intermingled with Union Jacks and brand new French tri-colours (2) Today, the timber Ginchy cross stands in the north-east room at the majestic Irish National War Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge, Dublin.

Up to 1925, different venues such as College Green and St Stephen's Green had been used in Dublin to hold the Saturday wreath laying ceremony at the Ginchy Cross cenotaph. In 1926, the ceremony finally moved to the Phoenix Park beside the Duke of Wellington's monument. The Sunday religious ceremonies carried on as usual. Symbolically however, the remembrance commemorations were moving from the centre to the outskirts of Dublin city.

For many years after the ending of the Great War, particularly up to the mid nineteen thirties, the remembrance services in Dublin were set amidst a volatile political atmosphere that dangerously hung over Dublin and indeed the rest of the country.

In November of 1926, the Irish Minister for Home Affairs (later called Justice), Mr Kevin O'Higgins laid a wreath at the Cenotaph in London. On Sunday 10 July the following year, he was murdered in Dublin while walking alone home from Mass. No one was ever arrested for his murder but it was assumed to be the work of a section of the IRA.

On Saturday afternoon 5 November 1927, a new British Legion Hall was opened at Inchicore on the south side of Dublin city. It was built for members of the Legion who were veterans of the Great War and who were employed in The Great Southern Railway works at Inchicore. Membership was approximately 200. Colours to the railway ex-service men were presented at Pond Park in Inchicore where the hall was built. At the opening of the hall, Major J.J. Tynan, Chief Officer of the British Legion in Dublin, told the gathering about the Legion and its work in Dublin. He told the gathering that the Legion.

Were non-sectarian and non-political. Their main objective was to do everything they possibly could for the men who fought in the Great War and the dependants of those who fell. There were many ex-service men in Southern Ireland and their lot was not easy on account of the tremendous amount of unemployment. Every man that left Ireland was a volunteer and that was a thing they should all be proud of. (3)

The next morning on Sunday 6 November, a special Memorial Mass was held in the Pro-Cathedral in Marlborough Street at 11:00 a.m. An hour earlier, the veterans had assembled in Molesworth Street and led by the band of the British Legion and Ireland's Own Band, they paraded through Dublin with their standards to Mass at the Pro-Cathedral. At least 2,000 men filled the Cathedral wearing their medals. About a dozen members of the British Fascist (Black Shirts) movement with their banner also attended the Mass. After the Mass, the men paraded back to Molesworth Street. Watched by the people of Dublin, they marched in lines of military formation over O'Connell Bridge and into the fashionable shopping streets of Dublin. On they marched with their medals showing along

Westmoreland Street, College Green, Nassau Street, Dawson Street and into Molesworth Street, where outside the headquarters of the Royal British Legion, the different units dispersed. At that time, the headquarters of the Legion in Dublin were at No. 27 Molesworth Street that is next door to Buswell's Hotel. During the Great War, the building was used as a convalescent home for officers. Molesworth Street runs perpendicular to Kildare Street. The Irish House of Parliament, Dail Eireann, stands at the intersection of the two streets. Later on in November, the British Legion moved to No. 23 Harcourt Street.



The Irish National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge Dublin. tended to and maintained by the Irish Office of Public Works.© OPW.

Remembrance Services were held in most of the Protestant churches around Dublin, the largest service being in St. Patrick's Cathedral. There was only one Catholic Church reported by *The Irish Times* as having held a remembrance service and that was the Pro-Cathedral. This indeed was another sign of the times in view of the fact that the majority of those who served and died in the Great War from Dublin were Roman Catholic. (4) For Catholic ex-service men and women in 1927, Remembrance Day had by then become sectarianised, a point which General Hickie had come to realise. Addressing a British Legion meeting in Athy Co. Kildare on the 22 September 1926, Hickie stated that he did not want to see, 'the eleventh of November being turned into the twelfth of July.' (5) Not surprisingly, even the reporting of the Mass in *The Irish Times* was minimal compared to the coverage given to the Services in the two Dublin Protestant Cathedrals.

Despite this however, throughout the length and breadth of Ireland in major towns such as Sligo, Carrick-on-Shannon, Limerick, Tullamore, Athlone, Drogheda and Waterford, Catholic ex-service men attended Masses on remembrance weekends in memory of their fallen comrades. However, the main service of remembrance was the Sunday service at St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral in Dublin.



A Comrades of the Great War Certificate dated 23 May 1919 to 14443 Pte. James Kavanagh 8<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers, a member of the Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow branch.

In the afternoon of Sunday 6 November 1927 at St. Patrick's Cathedral, a British Legion Band led the parade and Legion standards were carried into the Cathedral. Sir Hubert Gough was due to attend but could not make it so Earl Haig appointed Colonel John Brown C.B, Vice President of the Legion to be his representative at the service. It was intended that General Sir Bryan Mahon, would lay a wreath at the South African War Memorial in the Cathedral, however both he and his wife did not attend due to illness. The service was attended by an array of interesting people; the nobility of Dublin would best describe them.

In attendance were the Chairman of the Port and Docks Board (Mr T .R. Mc Cullagh), the President of the Chamber of Commerce (Mr J.C.M. Eason O.B.E), Sir William Taylor, C.B: Sir John Lumsden, K.C.B, Chairman Joint Committee British Red Cross and Order of St. John: the President of the Royal Irish Academy (Mr R. A.S Macalister Litt.D., L.LD), Vice- President of the Royal College of Surgeons, (Dr Bethal Solomons). The Dublin Fusiliers friend, Lady Arnott, who became a Dame of the British Empire, also attended.

The event took on a diplomatic nature with the attendance of various Consular representatives from France, America and Belgium. The Preacher, Rev E.H.F Campbell M.A, Vicar of All Saints, Grangegorman, gave a very patriotic sermon evoking the heroism of the gallant 10<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Divisions which left, 'the shelter and security of this island home of ours and offered life itself as a sign of their greater love: and our moral perception will have gone fatally wrong if we ever ceased to hold them in remembrance.' The sermon concluded with the singing of 'God Save the King.' (6)

On Tuesday night, 8 November 1927, a large gathering answered the call of the Fianna Fail Party to a meeting in College Green, Dublin. The meeting was to demonstrate, 'the protest of the Nationalist people of Dublin against the repetition of displays of British Imperialist sentiment that are insulting to the Irish people.' The speakers included prominent members of Fianna Fail .They were Mr Sean Lemass, T.D, Mr Frank Fahey, T.D, Mr Oscar Traynor, ex-T.D and Mr Eamon De Valera, T.D. All speakers protested about the carrying of the Union Jack by some of the ex-service men on the Remembrance Day parades. It was, they claimed, an insult to the Irish sentiment and should be stopped. *The Irish Times* reported.

Mr Sean Lemass T.D said that on previous occasions, when demonstrations were arranged in memory of men who died in France, the demonstrations were utilised by a small section to display Imperialistic sentiments that, in view of the history of this country, and in particular of Dublin, could not be peaceably tolerated by the Irish people (*Hear, hear from the crowd*). On those occasions the flag that had forever been the symbol of tyranny, rapine and loot in Ireland was flaunted. A small section availed itself of the occasion to offer that insult to the Irish people, and, as inevitably happened when such insults were offered to a high-spirited people; they resulted in rioting and disorder in the capital. They did not wish to see a renewal of riot or disorder in Dublin.



They had no objection to any section of the people honouring their dead but they did object to the alien section in their midst, whose headquarters were situated in the building opposite (*pointing to Trinity College*) availing itself of these occasions. He believed that the vast majority of the British ex-service men themselves objected to the demonstrations being used for such purpose, and the main purpose of this meeting was to ask the Nationalist ex-service men to see that the demonstration on Friday next was not utilised, as previous demonstrations had been, to insult the citizens of Dublin. (7)

Another speaker Mr. Frank Fahey, T.D. expressed similar sentiments to those of Mr. Lemass and added that, 'He had no quarrel with those who would commemorate their dead, who honestly died believing they were right; but that commemoration should not be used by pro-Britishers to spread the Union Jack over Dublin and to say that the remnant of the ex-service men in Ireland were pro-British. They were not.' Mr. T. Mullins T.D. said that, 'a section had used Remembrance Day as a demonstration in this country of the solidity of British Imperialism.' Mr Eamon De Valera, who was at the time, Chancellor of the National University also spoke at the same meeting. He said that.

Nothing was more natural than that men should seek to commemorate the memory of comrades who fought by their side in battle. That was generous sentiment, and nothing was meaner than to take advantage of that sentiment and use it for a base end. They understood that sentiment and respected it and nobody present would do anything at variance with an understanding of that sentiment..... The young men who went out to France and Flanders from 1914 to 1918 went because the Nationalist leaders of the time asked them to go as being the best way to secure freedom for this country. It was to those men - to the rank and file - that they appealed to see to it that the commemorations

would not be used by *Britishers* to plant their flag here. There were two points he wished to make. One, that the misuse of this celebration could be stopped by the rank and file, and two, it could be stopped by the citizens making it quite clear that they would not tolerate its continuance.

Despite Mr Lemass being, 'no stranger to criticising remembrance ceremonies' (8) , there was a conciliatory tone running through the speeches made by Mr Lemass and Mr De Valera outside Trinity College that night.

It is important to understand what these men were saying. They had fought for Irish independence, yet they had respect and an understanding for their fellow countrymen who joined Kitchener's armies. There was, as Mr De Valera stated '*nothing more natural*' than those men remembering their dead. There was, and still is, a certain consistency of attitude towards Irish veterans of the Great War amongst the speakers that night in 1927. Many years later in 1966, with the hindsight of years, Mr. Sean Lemass as Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) graciously stated.

In later years it was common - and I was guilty in this respect - to question the motives of those men who joined the new British armies formed at the out break of the war, but it must be in their honour and in fairness to their memory be said that they were motivated by the highest purpose.

There is no doubt that the occasion of Remembrance ceremonies in Dublin in 1927 and surrounding years, did antagonise the sensitivity of some members of the Dublin citizenry. In the eyes of Mr. De Valera and company, the 'Britishers' hadn't gone away.

There may have been one or two individuals at College Green who misunderstood what Mr. Lemass and Mr. De Valera had said on the Tuesday night because two days later, only five days after it had been officially opened, the British Legion Hall at Inchicore was burned down in the early hours of Thursday morning on 10 November 1927.

Newspaper reports stated that the Police had found amongst the ruins, three empty petrol tins each capable of holding two gallons of petrol. The Hall was gutted since it was mainly constructed from wood. It was erected on private ground given by the Great Southern Railway Company. (9)

The caretaker of the new hall was a Boer War Veteran named Mr. Hugh Waldron who lived at No. 41. James's Street, Dublin. The destruction of this meeting place for veterans was a bitter pill for Mr. Waldron to swallow in particular. The Great War had taken the lives of two of his sons, Paddy and Thomas. Paddy had originally served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers and was killed on the 27 May 1918 while serving with the 7<sup>th</sup> (South Irish Horse) Royal Irish Regiment. He is buried in Aire Communal Cemetery sixteen kilometres southeast of the French town of St. Omer. About four months after Paddy died, his brother Thomas died of wounds on 24 September 1918 at the age twenty-two. Thomas served with the 21<sup>st</sup> Highland Light Infantry and died at home. He was buried in St. James's Church of Ireland Churchyard in Kilmainham, Dublin, and his name is on the Grangegorman Memorial in Blackhorse Avenue, Dublin. (10)

Two years later, the hall was rebuilt on the same site, this time out of concrete. Just as it was nearly complete, on Friday 8 November 1929, the roof was blown off and a dividing wall blown in. The explosion was heard all over Inchicore. (11) According to police intelligence, this particular act of terror appeared, 'to have been an unofficial job'. What 'unofficial' means is anybody's guess, possible renegade republicans? (12)

The annual military style remembrance parades organised by the Royal British Legion in Dublin and throughout the Irish Free State became a contentious and sensitive issue both for the Government and the police. Each year, the remembrance parade presented several major issues such as civil disorder in the week leading up to 11 November and further disorder arising from counter demonstrations and rival factions fighting with each other before and after the parade had passed through Dublin. The appearance of British Fascists in the parade did not help anybody's cause either.

Apart from the street violence that occurred during the Armistice period, a more serious worry presented itself to the Dublin Metropolitan Police and that was the indiscriminate use of explosives throughout the city by the IRA. At 5:00 a.m. on 11 November 1928, the IRA blew up the statue of King William of Orange in College Green. Windows in the immediate vicinity were blown in and no arrests were made. At exactly the same time on the same day, the monument in Herbert Park erected to commemorate the visit of King George V in 1911 was completely destroyed. Again at the same time and date, an attempt was made to blow up a monument to King George II in St. Stephen's Green. (13)

In Limerick, the hall used by the Sarsfield Fife and Drum Band in Mungret Street was broken into. The floor was torn up and the band's drums were destroyed. The members of the band, who were for most part Irish veterans of the Great War, had received threatening letters warning them not to take part in the Remembrance parade. In defiance to this threat, the men borrowed a set of drums and took part in the ceremony in Limerick. (14)

Police intelligence had prior knowledge of many of the outrages that the IRA had planned over the Armistice period in 1928. For example, they knew that the IRA was planning poppy raids throughout the Free State and that the Headquarters for the sale and distribution of poppies at No. 23 Suffolk Street in Dublin was going to be raided. Another poppy depot was at No. 2 Dawson Street, Dublin. They also knew that the Capital Cinema in Dublin was going to be raided simply because the cinema was showing a war picture titled 'Verdun.' They knew about a planned IRA raid on a Bank in Inchicore. Interestingly they also knew that the new War Memorial at Trinity College was going to be attacked and that the statue of King William was going to take flight as well. Because of their intelligence network, many of these outrages were prevented. The blowing up of 'King Billy' was the only slip up the DMP made. The statue was guarded by two detectives who left their post at 4:30 a.m. to 'convey an abandoned motor car found in Dame Street to the Detective Office'. While they were away, the statue of King William was blown up.

Chief Superintendent David Neligan was not impressed with these two men leaving their post and noted in his report to the Garda Commissioner that, 'disciplinary action is being taken against these two men for leaving their post.' (15)

Another main issue of concern to the Police and indeed the Government was the military nature of the Armistice parades. As well as the threat of civil disorder, the parades presented a dilemma which had a certain amount of political baggage attached. The gun had not departed from Irish politics and consequently the Government was obliged to watch over its shoulder for what they termed the 'Irregulars', i.e. militant republicans. One of these irregulars, Mr George Mooney, was caught in possession of a land mine and a fully loaded .45 revolver.

The parades dilemma which yearly confronted the Irish Government was, that if the British Legion could march in military formation through the cities and towns of the Irish Free State each November, why couldn't the 'Irregulars' parade when they chose to do so in a similar manner. On this particular issue, Garda Chief Superintendent Neligan, stated in a report to the Garda Commissioner Eoin O'Duffy that:

This 'commemoration' is becoming the excuse for a regular military field day for these persons. I direct your attention to the formation of companies under persons calling themselves Captain and Majors, and, the companies are going to march in Military formation. I think the attached programme gives these men far too much scope and certainly if the Irregulars adopted these tactics, they would be arrested under the Treasonable Offences Act 1925. The position this year is far worse than other years because they are being allowed far more latitude than formerly. (16)

Attached to Chief Superintendent Neligan's letter to the Commissioner was a paper cutting from an *Irish Times* report on a recent remembrance parade in Dublin. To illustrate his point, Superintendent Neligan had underlined in the report the words, '*formation and order of parade*'

*'columns of four'*. '*Major W. Nolan*', '*companies of 200 strong*.' In his report to the Secretary of the Department of Justice, dated 8 November 1928, the Commissioner agreed with his Superintendent's assessment of the parades dilemma.

I agree with Col. Neligan....This is intended much more as military display than a bona fide commemoration service for the dead to which there can be no objection, though there appears no necessity to perpetuate this form of ceremony in the Saorstat. (Irish Free State.)

If we allow this military display in Dublin, we cannot very well object to similar displays elsewhere on the occasion. I am aware that in certain quarters these activists are looked upon as provocative, particularly in view of the fact, that similar activities are prohibited and punished by imprisonment if indulged in by other organisations.

Were I in a position to do so, I would very definitely prohibit all military activities, other than by the recognised forces of the State. No section would have a grievance and the work of the Police would be easier.

I suggest, that the Secretary of the British Legion here be very definitely informed that the parade is to take the form of a procession and that no recognised military words of commands will be allowed. I attach a cutting from '*The Independent*' of the 5<sup>th</sup> instant, showing British Fascisti marching in uniform. I consider this should not be allowed. (17)

On Armistice Day 1928, the issue of military style British Legion remembrance parades nearly came to blows on the morning of the parade in Ennis, Co. Clare. A parade of about 100 ex-service men formed up at the Legion Headquarters in Ennis from where they marched to the Franciscan Church to attend Mass.

Orders of '*Stand at Ease*' and '*Form Fours*' were issued by a Sergeant Major. The officer in charge was Major George Studdert. The Garda Chief Superintendent in Ennis was Edward O'Duffy who heard about this parade and the military orders that were given. He immediately sent a Garda Sergeant to advise Major Studdert to '*refrain from issuing unnecessary military commands and movements.*' Major Studdert ignored the request made by the Garda Sergeant and after Mass ordered his men to form up. He then marched them off to the Town Square where they held a two-minute silence.

After the two-minute silence, the ex-service men were preparing to march off when Chief Superintendent O'Duffy and another detective officer approached Major Studdert who issued the command, '*Parade Halt*' and '*Stand at Ease.*' Supt. O'Duffy informed the Major that he had 'glaringly infringed the Treason Regulations' and he, the Garda, contended he 'was justified in his action'. He explained to the Major that his actions were likely to provoke a breach of the peace and that he would have to dismiss the parade, which Major Studdert did after some wrangling.

During the time Chief Superintendent O'Duffy was remonstrating with the Major and another officer named Bukeridge, a Protestant Clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Griffen, approached the Gardai excitedly and shouted, '*To Hell with the Free State.*' In his report on this particular incident, Chief Superintendent O'Duffy noted, with what can only be described as exemplary diplomacy that, 'there was no reply to the Reverend gentleman's vulgar insult to the State which affords him full protection and respect.' He concluded in his report that this particular Armistice parade was a:

Definite Imperialists display and not a commemoration of the War dead as it ought to have been....The continuance of exhibitions of this kind which are hateful in the eyes of nine tenths of the people, will undoubtedly court trouble. It is not suggested that any action should be taken against the men concerned on this occasion, but I respectively beg to renew my recommendation to have permission for such displays refused in future years. (18)

In the same year in Dublin i.e. November 1928, the outward and return remembrance parade along the Northern Quays to and from the Phoenix Park, took place without much incident. Approximately 20,000 ex-service men paraded to the Park where they were joined by 10,000 on-lookers who were mainly relatives of the men who marched or relatives of men who died in the War. According to the Garda Commissioner's report to the Dept of Justice, 'the parade was carried out in an orderly manner.' However from 5:00 p.m. onwards, there were 'some minor scuffles between rival parties of ex-service men and groups of young men wearing Easter Lilies.'

The Commissioner's report also referred to the parade in Cork City in which about 2,000 ex-service men 'assembled at the South Mall and marched to the Cenotaph in the same street where a two-minute silence was observed and Last Post sounded.' In the county of Cork, there were parades in 'Cobh, Mallow, Kanturk, Fermoy, Bandon and Skibbereen. In all cases, they were conducted in an orderly manner and in no case was there anything in the nature of a military display. There was neither counter demonstrations nor any breach of the peace in the areas listed. Parades by ex-service men also took place in Carrick-on-Shannon, Wexford, Kilkenny and Tralee, all of which were conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner. The bit of anger shown by Reverend Griffin in Ennis was the only incident of this nature which according to the Commissioner's report, 'called for special attention.' (19)

In 1929, attendance figures at the annual Armistice parade to the Phoenix Park had dropped off slightly from the previous years. The Police estimated a crowd of 9,000 people witnessed the ceremony. No Police figures were given for the number of ex-service men on parade, however, *The Irish Times* quoted a figure of over 10,000. (20) One possible reason for this fall off in on-lookers, was a fear of been attacked or intimidated by 'young men wearing Easter Lilies'. According to Police intelligence, 'Poppy day was a period when Irregulars were active.' Things got so bad that year that Government Minister's escorts were told to take special precautions during the remembrance period and the Military at Collins Barracks and Portobello Barracks as well as Baldonnell Aerodrome were put on full alert. (21)





A stone cross memorial to the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division outside Trinity College Dublin. Note the centre of the wreath '9 RDF'. This cross is one of the two cross memorials shipped to France and Flanders to commemorate the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division. One is at Ginchy, the other is at Wijtschate. The cross at Wijtschate was un-veiled on Saturday 21 August 1926. It seems that one of these crosses was put on display outside Trinity College prior to its shipment to the continent.

Each year, the issues of the parades and the sale of poppies were put on the long finger and forgotten by the Government until early November when the same worries of public disorder and the threat of outrages carried out by Irregulars cropped up. As far as Republicans were concerned, what really upset them was, not so much the ex-service men remembering their dead but the flying of the Union Jack flag from some buildings in Dublin around the Armistice period and the carrying of Union Jacks by some ex-service men on Remembrance parades through the City. Like the poppy sellers, anyone selling Union Jacks in Dublin became the focus of I.R.A attention. Mr Charles Morrissey sold Union Jacks in his second hand bookshop at No. 28 Upper Ormond Quay, Dublin. . One day in November 1930, his shop was raided by seven men, one of whom was armed. One of the raiders asked Mr. Morrissey, 'if had had any Greek books for sale.' While Mr. Morrissey was looking for the books another one of the raiders said. 'Hand up those flags', meaning the Union Jacks, which were on sale. Morrissey refused to do so.

The man with the gun, a .45 revolver, pressed the gun into Mr. Morrissey's side and hit him in the face with his fist. Mrs. Morrissey, who was in the shop at the time, screamed for help and she too was assaulted. Mrs. Morrissey's two nieces were outside and ran into the shop screaming. In the pandemonium the assailants scampered from the shop and jumped on a passing tram taking with them two Union Jacks that were about three foot square and worth fifteen shillings. (22)

In 1932, a public rally in College Green on the eve of Armistice Day was organised by a group calling themselves, 'The League Against Imperialism'. Addressing a crowd of about 15,000 people, one speaker on the platform, Mr. C. Lehane, who first spoke in Irish, told the gathering, 'We issue a solemn warning that wherever the Flag of England flies in Dublin, it will not fly safely.' At the meeting a Union Jack was burned. In her address to the crowd, Mrs Hanna Sheehy Skeffington stated, ' They [The League Against Imperialism] grudged no honour to the dead who believed they fought for a good cause, even though they were dupes, but they objected to the dead being used to carry on the traditions of imperialism.' (23) The meeting was advertised in the Republican newspaper 'An Phoblacht' on the 5 November 1932. There was an interesting array of other speakers that night. Mr. Peadar O'Donnell, Mr. Sean Mc Bride, Mr. Frank Ryan, Mrs. Maude Gonne-Mac Bride, Mrs. Connolly-O'Brien and an Indian citizen named Mr. L.R. Yajniska.

Aspects of the speech made by the IRA man Peadar O'Donnell brought particular attention to the Police. He actually warned them to stay away from any fights that might erupt between what he called 'Cosgravians', a term he used to describe supporters of the Cumann na nGaedheal party leader William Cosgrave and 'angry Irish men' i.e. O'Donnell's Irishmen. (Back in February of that year, i.e. 1932, William Cosgrave lost power in a General Election to the De Valera led Fianna Fail party. They entered government with the support of seven Labour deputies.) O'Donnell stated that, 'the policeman who puts his head between the Cosgravians and angry Irishmen might as well leave his head at home.' (24) This was a direct threat to the new Fianna Fail Government who had abandoned force as a means of achieving the Republican objective that was a thirty-two county Irish Republic.

That night, trouble broke out in the streets of Dublin city. The meeting concluded and the following resolution was passed.

That this mass meeting of the citizens of Dublin pledge our determination to resist Imperialism by every means in our power. And we call upon the Government not to make any settlement with Britain until the complete Independence of Ireland is achieved. (25)

From the above resolution it would sadly seem that some Republicans were equally as guilty as the so-called Imperialists in using the remembrance period to voice and advance *their* political objectives despite the sentiments of Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington and others.

The responsibility for maintaining law and order on the streets of Dublin lay with the Dublin Metropolitan Police. When disorder broke out during the Armistice commemorations, despite Peadar O'Donnell's threats, the police were in the middle. Therefore, in order to prevent any civil disorder arising from future Armistice parades, the Garda Commissioner, Eoin O'Duffy, presented a discussion paper to the Secretary of the Department of Justice, in which O'Duffy broadly outlined the problems the Armistice celebrations created in the City each year and, more importantly, he presented a set of recommendations for the peaceful running of future Armistice commemorations in Dublin and elsewhere in the Irish Free State. O'Duffy titled his paper, 'Sale of Flanders Poppies and Armistice Parades'. The paper was dated the 21 September 1932. (26)

These ceremonies have always been a source of much concern to the police owing to the possibility of grave disturbances arising in connection with them. The parades and poppy sales are held in all the more important towns of the State and the protection of poppy depots - day and night - the protection of those selling the poppies and the maintenance of order at the parades are a very serious strain on police resources.

The carrying of the Union Jack in the parades, its display from houses en route and the flourishing of this emblem as a badge and as a wrapper on the collection boxes are considered provocative conduct on the part of their followers. There is no doubt that many of the latter take advantage of such occasions to display anti-Irish and pro-British sentiments. It is this objectionable aspect of the proceedings that appeals to them rather than any genuine commemoration service for the dead.

If the sale of poppies and parades are to be permitted at all on this occasion, I would recommend:

1. The Parade should take the form of a procession and no recognised military words of command - nor anything in the nature of a military display should be allowed.
2. The Garda should not permit Union Jacks to be carried in the processions nor to be displayed going to or returning from the procession - on the grounds that such display is likely to lead to a breach of the peace.
3. The Permits for the sale of Flanders poppies should only be given on condition that the sellers do not wear Union Jacks as badges or use them as wrappers for or exhibit them on collection boxes.
4. That no general permission for parades or for the sale of poppies be given. Each Chief Superintendent to use his own discretion in his own area having regard to his local knowledge as to the possibility of disturbance and his ability to render adequate protection with the forces at his disposal. Where a Chief Superintendent gives permission and subsequently learns that there is a danger of disorder, he should be in a position to withdraw such permission at any time.

5. The sale of Flanders poppies should be limited to the 11<sup>th</sup> of November and the preceding day. Usually permission is sought for the previous and following Sundays.

Signed. *Eoin Ua Dubhthaigh.*  
Coimisineir.  
(Eoin O'Duffy. Commissioner)

As a postscript to this document, O'Duffy stated the following reasons why he considered the commemorations to be Imperialistic and not in the true spirit of remembrance.

1. The very definite tendency of the majority of the processionists to adhere unnecessarily closely to military formation. The excessive use of military commands.
2. The indiscriminate display of the Union Jacks by the processionists and participants generally. The flying of Union Jacks from buildings along the processional routes and elsewhere in the City. The waving of Union Jacks by spectators along the processional route. The offenders in this respect are almost exclusively young girls and not infrequently it happened that the flags were flaunted, unintentionally perhaps, but never the less provocatively in the faces of citizens passing by in the course of their business.
3. A further feature of the ceremonies which was quite unnecessary to their purpose, was the collection each year of a number of people at College Green ostensibly to observe the 'Two minutes silence', but who immediately afterwards indulged in 'community singing' of the English National Anthem.

As usual, when the 11 November passed, the issue of the Armistice commemorations for both the Police and the Government was put on the long finger until the following year of 1933.

By that time however, De Valera had called a surprise general election in January 1933 hoping to secure an overall Fianna Fail majority in the Dail, which in fact he did manage to achieve.

After the election, the victorious De Valera requested the resignation of O'Duffy who refused to do so but eventually stepped down in a blaze of publicity. He was replaced by De Valera's own man, Mr Ned Broy. O' Duffy went on to lead the Irish Nationalist organisation called the National Guard or more commonly known as The Blue Shirts.

Broy's approach to the yearly problem of disorder at Armistice parades was quite different from his predecessor. As far as Broy was concerned, there should be no parades at all. As became the custom, the Royal British Legion in Dublin, represented by Major Tynan, wrote to the Garda Commissioner's Office requesting permission to hold a parade in Dublin to the Phoenix Park on 11 November and for permission to sell poppies. In a letter dated the 18 October 1933 to the Secretary of the Department of Justice, Commissioner Broy proposed that British Legion church parades to and from church should 'not be permitted.' His reason for this recommendation was that any such parades were likely to lead to 'breaches of the peace.' He went on to say, 'While there can be no objection to church services' and the sale of poppies, he believed that if his recommendations were enforced, no 'serious trouble would ensue and the Gardai would be able to cope with anything that might arise.' His feelings on the parade to the Phoenix Park were the same, i.e. that it should not take place on the grounds of public safety. He put the ball firmly into the politician's court and requested an urgent decision. (27)

The next day, the Secretary of the Dept. of Justice, Domhnall De Brun, summarised the Garda Commissioner's recommendations in a letter to the Secretary, Dept. of the President of the Executive. (In today's terms, the latter would be the Secretary of the Dept. of the Taoiseach.) In his summary he noted.

While due consideration must be given to the views of the Commissioner, this Department (Dept of Justice) is slow to arrive at a decision which might give offence to

the large body of ex-service men in this country and the Department is of the opinion that permission should be granted for the Church parades, the march of the 11<sup>th</sup> of November and the two minutes silence in the Phoenix Park. If such permission is granted, it will be necessary to afford adequate protection throughout the country for the purpose of preventing possible breaches of the peace. (28)

The Executive Council, i.e. the new Government, led by the leader of Fianna Fail, Mr Eamon De Valera, met on 24 October 1933 and made the following decision on Royal British Legion parades and the sale of Flanders poppies in the Irish Free State.

- a) That the Church parades proposed for the 5<sup>th</sup> of November should be permitted.
- b) That the proposed march to the Phoenix Park on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November should be allowed on the following conditions.
  - 1. That it should be from Beresford Place.
  - 2. That after the ceremony in the Park, the participants should disperse in accordance with arrangements made by the Police with the organisers.
  - 3. That the wearing of British Fascist uniforms should not be allowed.
  - 4. That no Union Jacks should be displayed.
- c) That in general the sale of poppies should be permitted, subject however to restrictions by the Police in certain areas.

The next day, the Minister for Justice informed the Commissioner about the Government's decision and that was the end of the matter. Other than the return parade from the Phoenix Park, nothing much had changed. With some few stipulations, the remembrance parades went ahead as usual.

In an open letter to *The Irish Times* dated 27 October, 1933, the area Chairman of the Royal British Legion in Dublin, Mr A. P. Connolly, wrote informing his members that they were very much aware of the Government's difficulties and instructed members of the Legion to do nothing that 'could be construed as provocative.' (29)

The file in the Irish National Archives in Dublin which contains this interesting insight into the Irish Government's handling of the Armistice Day parades and the sale of Flanders poppies between the years 1928 – 1936, contains one final interesting document. It is a letter from a Mr. J Mac Raghnaill, Runai., (Hon. Secretary) The Association of Old IRA, 52 Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin 2. The letter is dated 6 November 1936 and is addressed to President of the Executive, Mr Eamon De Valera, Government Buildings, Upper Merrion Street, Dublin. It is a well-written letter, the essence of which is the Old IRA's disgust at the yearly display of British Imperialism at the Dublin Horse Show and on the streets of the capital of Ireland during the Armistice weekend. The singing of the British National Anthem at Armistice commemorations was an insult to the 'dead who died in the National struggle and an insult to the vast majority of their countrymen by insolent ruthless contempt of their traditions, right, faith and National independence.' Mr. Mac Raghnaill was dismayed that De Valera's government gave sanction to such open displays of Imperialism and actually afforded the protection of 'State Forces to those who spurn the Nation, whilst the young men loyal to Ireland, stung into violent resentment, are apprehended as a menace to the public peace.'

In concluding his letter, Mr. Raghnaill made a recommendation to Mr. De Valera that had a very disturbing sting in the tail. It seems they too hadn't gone away.

We would recommend that in future no permit be granted for the holding of Armistice Day demonstrations or suchlike provocative displays, otherwise the National Executive (Old IRA) must disclaim responsibility for any preventive that may eventuate because of the continuance of these demonstrations. (30)



Clipped onto Mr. Raghnaill's letter was a note from the Secretary, Dept. of the President to the Secretary, Dept. of Justice. Referring to Mr. Raghnaill's letter, De Valera's secretary wrote, 'The letter has been acknowledged and it is not proposed to send any further reply.' (31) And the matter of ex-servicemen's parades was laid to rest for another year.

### References.

1. For further reading on remembrance in Ireland, mainly Republic, see the following excellent articles by historian Ms. Jane Leonard and book by historian Professor Keith Jeffery.
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  - *The Twinge of memory: Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday in Dublin since 1919. in Unionism in Modern Ireland. New Perspectives on Politics and Culture* Pp. 99-114. R. English and G. Walker Macmillan Press. Great Britain. 1996.
  - Jeffrey's. K. *Ireland and The Great War*. Cambridge University Press. 2000
2. *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent*. 25 August 1926.
3. *The Irish Times*. 7 November 1927.
4. Callan. P. Dr. *Recruiting for the British Army in Ireland during the First World War*. Irish Sword XVII. 1987. pp. 53.
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6. Ibid. 7 November 1927 .
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10. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission.
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12. The National Archives Dublin. File reference. JUS8/64. Letter from the Secretary Dept. of Justice to Secretary Dept of Defence. 9 November 1929.
13. Ibid. File reference. JUS8/64. Report By Supt. Neligan on outrages carried out in November 1928.
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16. Ibid. Letter from Chief Superintendent Neligan to Garda Commissioner. 7 November 1928.
17. Ibid. Letter from Garda Commissioner to Secretary Dept. of Justice. 8 November 1928.
18. Ibid. Report from. Chief Superintended Edward O'Duffy, Garda Office, Ennis, Co. Clare. to the Garda Commissioner. 12 November 1928.
19. Ibid. Report from the Garda Commissioner to the Secretary Dept. of Justice on Armistice Day Celebrations held in November 1928. 21 November 1928.
20. *The Irish Times*. 12 November 1929.
21. The National Archives Dublin. File reference. JUS8/64. Letter from the Secretary Dept. of Justice to Secretary Dept. of Defence . 9 November 1929)
22. Ibid. File reference. JUS8/64. Garda report of incident titled, 'Robbery with Arms-Green Street.' 11 November 1930.
23. *The Irish Independent*. 11 November 1932.
24. The National Archives Dublin. File reference. JUS8/64. Statement by Gardai on duty at meeting in College Green.
25. *The Irish Times*. 11 November 1932.
26. The National Archives Dublin. File reference. JUS8/64. Report from the Garda Commissioner to the Secretary Dept. of Justice titled. 'Sale of Flanders Poppies'. 21 September 1932.
27. Ibid. Letter from the Garda Commissioner to the Secretary Dept. of Justice. 18 of October 1933.
28. Ibid. Letter from the Secretary Dept. of Justice to the Secretary Dept of the President of the Executive. 19 October 1933.
29. *The Irish Times*. 27 October 1933.
30. The National Archives Dublin. File reference. JUS8/64. Letter from the Mr. J Mac Raghnaill, Secretary Old IRA to Mr Eamon De Valera. 6 November 1936.
31. Ibid. Letter from the Secretary Dept. of the President of the Executive to the Secretary Dept. of Justice 18 November 1936.

## Naas Man's Thrilling Tale.

From the *Kildare Observer* Newspaper.  
10 July 1915.

An account of the German Gas attack at St.Julien  
in April and May April 1915.

*Mrs. Lilly Whelan*

*The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

**Reporter.** There has within the last eleven months been no dearth of more or less graphic descriptions of general engagements on the field of battle, but most of them do not make the direct appeal to the imagination of the readers which is produced by a first-hand statement of the exploits of men known to them- such, for instance, as that made below by one who has gone forth from their midst to take his place in the deadly conflict, where he has stood to make the greatest sacrifice that man can make-with total extinction as an imminent risk and a too ephemeral glory, combined with a knowledge of a duty performed as his portion should he escape with his life. Do we appreciate the heroic work, the sacrifice and suffering of our soldiers at anything approaching their value? This was a thought that occurred to me the other day- and not for the first time either- as I listened to the tale of horror, of valour and of suffering, told in simple yet vivid language which Private James Rogers, of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, unfolded to me.

Private Rogers, who is yet more than a boy, though he has experience and more of the stern realities of life than the lot of even the most adventurous amongst us in a long lifetime. He has seen seven and a half years service with Dubs, four and a half with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion and the remainder with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion since mobilisation in August last. He looks none the worse for his six months in the firing line. Private Rogers has been on a short furlough with his parents in Milbrook after his recovery from the effects of the wound for which he was sent from the front. He has now gone to join his regiment with the prospect of further thrills before him, from which, let us hope, he will return unscathed.

**Private Rogers.** I arrived in France on the 10<sup>th</sup> December last and we were at once sent to the trenches, where we had a pretty tough time I can tell you. There was plenty of snow, which made our life anything but a pleasant one, particularly as we were frequently nearly waist deep in water. Our first really lively time came at St. Julien, where we got a bad cutting up.

We got orders to take the town -St. Julien- and we did it, only to find we were too far advanced from the main body, and so we had to fall back a bit and occupy a position outside the village. We got the order from the Warwicks to retire. We had then only about six officers and fifty men. We got a sort of cover in a ditch and we held it, repulsing the enemy several times. When they could not get us out they started to shell us, and we had no cover from shells. We were ordered to move to a house, which we had taken that morning and which was only a short distance away. While getting into the house Col. Loveband was wounded in the hip. That was his first wound and it knocked him up, though he tried to hang on for a while. He had to give up, however, and told Major Banks to take charge.

The enemy made no attack on the house when we reached it, and we started to prepare for what we expected would come very soon. We knocked a portion of the side out of the house to allow us to use two machine guns we had pulled with us. Soon they came for us, and I can tell you we fairly cut the ears off them with the machine guns when they did come. We repulsed them, and they left us alone for the rest of the day.

Next day they started to fire what we call plug shells at us- they are used for breaking into a house. They blew away the barn in the yard, which had prevented them from getting at the house before that. When they got the barn away they started at the house with the plug shells and knocked away one of the gables. Then they started to try and gas us out of the house, but did not succeed.

The following day the Northumberland Fusiliers came to relieve us. They lost heavily in trying to reach us, as the approach to the house was terribly exposed. However they drove the Germans back, and we left the house and started to dig ourselves in.

We entrenched and remained near the farmhouse for six or seven days until we were relieved. When the Northumberlands were coming up to us, the Germans were hammering away at them. In the confusion some of them mistook us for the Germans, and the first one to get shot was Major Banks, who was shot through the stomach in mistake. That night when things had become quiet I and another chap came out to look about us. We came across one fine looking German who had been killed in attacking us. We found on him some papers and a photograph of his wife and family. That photograph was taken in London. It had the name of a London photographer at the bottom.

We were next moved to reinforce the Cheshires in the trenches. There we remained for about ten days, after which we were shifted to St. Jean. That was on Whit Monday and here the toughest time began. About 5'o clock we were saluted with gas from the Germans. The first thing I have any recollection of was a shout of THE GAS! THE GAS! And it was upon us. A lot of our fellows got badly choked by it, but I was not much affected by it at all. After giving us the gas they began to shell us with high explosives. Part of our fellows on our right had retired, thus leaving our right flank exposed. Most of our officers had been knocked over by the gas and shells, and either killed or wounded. A Scottish regiment came up to reinforce us about 8 o'clock, but they were gassed and had to retire. All our officers and non-commissioned officers had been knocked over except Lieut. Shanks, who was in charge of what was left of us.

We held the position until about 11 o'clock, when there were only six or seven of us left. The remainder had all been killed or wounded. When the Jocks (as we call the Scottish regiments out there) retired, it was a matter of looking out for ourselves. Our right and left flanks were gone. We were told reinforcements were coming up to us, and I said to the few that were left we should try and hold on until they arrived. A little later four of the six left stole away to look out for themselves, and they got away. There were then only two of us left, myself and a fellow named Andrews, a Dublin Chap. We thought we had better try to make a rush to get back to headquarters. The very minute we got out of the trench they turned a machine gun to us, but we managed to cover a bit of ground unhurt, and got to about 100 yards

behind the reserve trenches, which we unoccupied at this time. The bullets were flying all about us. They tore through my coat and shirt just under the left arm. I had this Queen Mary Xmas box in the pocket on the left side of my tunic, and that must have saved my life. It was full of fags at the time. A bullet struck it, and going through the cover, glanced off the bottom of the box. (The box itself bore evidence of the valuable service it had done Pte. Rogers). The bullets kept on flying and whistling around us, and then I found myself hit in the left arm. I felt the blood running down my sleeve, but in the excitement I did not mind much. Just then Andrews got shot in the wrist and I went to bandage him.

We lay in a ditch, which gave us a bit of cover, and each time we tried to get up the machine gun opened fire on us. We thought our best chance was to lie there for a while. We lay down in the ditch for a while and Andrews kept lying down until he had time to get clear (and I found he got safely to headquarters) and then I made a bolt for it. I saw there was a little more cover in a ditch on the other side of the road, and thought I would make for that side. They cut the ground from under my feet as I crossed the road, but I got into the drain all right, and crept back to headquarters. The first men I saw when I got there were Captain Leahy and Captain Magan.

We had sent word down for reinforcements and a message came back from Colonel Loveband to hold a on a little longer, that the reinforcements were coming. The Colonel was in a 'dugout' near headquarters. The Jocks told us the Warwicks were coming to our aid, and try and hold out. That was the last message we had from Colonel Loveband, and it was at about 8 o'clock in the morning. As I came back to headquarters past the dugout I saw a man lying near the trench. I thought I knew the boots- a sort of high-laced boots. I went over and found there was a coat over the man's face. I lifted it off and saw it was the body of Colonel Loveband. He had, as far as I could make out, been shot through the lip, just at the bottom of the nose. I looked at the wound and saw the bullet had gone through the back of the head. He was evidently anxious about us- to see how we were getting on without the reinforcements and wanted to have a look. He came out of the trench and was evidently got by a sniper.

His face when I saw him dead seemed as if he was laughing- a sort of smile on his features. When I got to the hospital I was like a ragman-my clothes flittered by bullets.

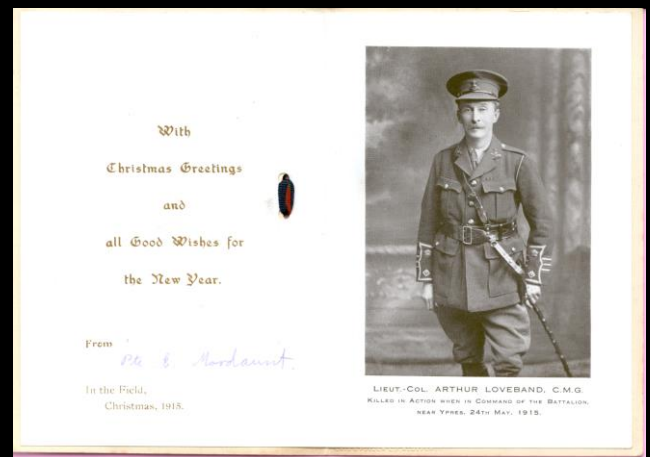
### Naas Boy's Deaths.

**Reporter.** Do you know anything about the other Naas boys who were in the 'Dublins' out there? I queried.

**Private Rogers.** Yes, he said; I know about some of them. There was Mick Keogh of Kill. He was killed going into action at St. Julien. Sgt. Halloran, who was in the Depot, had his two legs blown off by a shell at St. Julien. Michael Lewis of Naas, was wounded in the leg twice, but when he heard the cheers of our fellows nothing would do him but to put his head up out of the trench. I checked him for this, but he would do it, and he was killed. I helped to bury himself and Mick Keogh that night. Oh yes, you see plenty of plucky things done out there. You could have no pluckier man than Colonel Loveband. He was everywhere, and always anxious to be in it himself. After him I think the pluckiest young officer I saw out there was Lieut. White, of Dublin. He was the best man I saw, and he was killed at St. Julien. He was in charge of my platoon, and the way he led us at St. Julien was fine.

### Grange Con man and his watch.

I had one narrow squeak, said Private Rogers in the course of further conversation, and it was due to our own foolishness. At St. Julien, when things were quiet for a bit, a fellow named Moore, of Ballyhok, Grange Con, and myself went into a farmhouse close to our lines. We wanted to wet a drop of tea. We could not make a fire in the house- which was wrecked- because the smoke would give us away, so we went down into the cellar and lit a bit of a fire to boil the water. We managed that all right, but nothing would do Moore but to build up the fire up with more fuel we found in the house and that did it. You know the way spuds boil over. Well, we had them in a tin and didn't let the water boil over. Up went a gush of smoke from the fire when the water went on it, and it was nearly being the end of us. There was a hole in the top of the cellar, the smoke went out through it in a rush, and that gave us away.



Lieut. Col Arthur Loveband CMG  
Commanding Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers.  
Killed in action at Mouse Trap Farm northeast of Ieper  
24 May 1915.

The Germans started shelling the damned house and we could not get away, as it was too bright. They kept pounding away at us, and it was awful. Next thing down comes part of the roof on us and nearly smothered us. Moore had a German's watch, which he had fixed upon his rifle swivel. I got a whack of something on the back of the head and I thought I was done for, but I wasn't hurt at all. It was getting darker at this time.

Come on, said I to Moore, we'll make a shot to get away now.

Wait a minute, said he.

What's the matter? I said.

My watch, he said; I'm looking for it, and he was groping about the place. Well, he spent half an hour looking for the watch, and he found it in the finish buried in the stuff that had fallen down and we got away. I was glad to be out of that fix.

**Note.** James Rogers survived the Great War. He returned to Naas and had several jobs to make ends meet. For a long time he worked as a labourer in the local Gas works near the canal in Naas. He refused an ex-service man's house in the town on the advice of his mother who suspected that living in the house might make him an easy target for local hard-line republicans. He died on 19 January 1947.



## Something to get off my chest!

Kevin Cunningham

*The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

*"The men are Irish and apparently did not like the enemy's shelling".* So said General Hubert Gough in his report to Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig after the slaughter of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) and 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Divisions during the battle of Langemarck 16 August 1917. (1) Following the near annihilation of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division in the opening days of the German offensive that began on a misty morning 21 March 1918, General Haig noted in his diary. *"Our 16<sup>th</sup> Irish Division, which was on the right of VII Corps and lost Ronsoy Village, is said to be not so full of fight as the others. In fact certain Irish units did very badly and gave way immediately the enemy showed"*. (2) Never has there been a more perverse miscarriage of justice against fine soldiers, than that contained in the foregoing statements. It is an affront to the universal bravery of Irish soldiers that such derogatory statements should go unchallenged. My late father, Regimental Number 9500 Sergeant Thomas Cunningham, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers, took part in the above battles and neither he nor his compatriots ran from the field of battle. On the contrary, they stood their ground against impossible odds with courage, resolution and determination and faced an over-powering enemy head on.

During the German March offensive, my father stood in the reserve trench with a Mills Bomb behind his back, his index finger through the pull ring, ready to blow himself and his attacker to kingdom come. He did not do this out any sense of bravado but as a quick way to die. My father and his fellow soldiers had just witnessed the troops in the forward trench being bayoneted, and they were next!

At no time did they consider running, it never entered their heads, with nothing left to fight, they expected to die. Thankfully, a German Officer's offer of surrender was very speedily accepted with much relief. My father now had to surreptitiously get rid of the bomb, which he did by dropping it behind him and burying it by pressing it into the soft mud with his boot. Luckily the German troops never noticed it. For a second time that day his life was spared.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers, lost 108 men killed that morning, the rest either wounded or captured, the highest casualties of all the Irish battalions serving with the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division that day. As can be seen by Haig's, degrading and scurrilous statement, their sacrifice earned them no gratitude or honour; only a derisory excuse from a totally inept commander for his failure to hold the line against the German attack, they knew was coming. Irish troops did not *"give way"* but were ground under, by a massive German juggernaut, which rolled over them. That day, a proud division, the 16<sup>th</sup> Irish, virtually ceased to exist. There were no doubt other British divisions that suffered losses probably equally as bad as the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) over those couple of days in late March 1918. One must wonder why Gough had to use the Irish card in such an insulting and unnecessary way to insult brave men.

Gough's, asinine statement that, *"Irish troops did not like the enemy's shelling"*, defies comprehension. What troops, from any army, from any country in the world, likes being the recipient of high explosive ordinance? No one I should imagine and certainly no unit within the British Army. Therefore, Gough's comments need to be addressed.

The 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) and 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Divisions were in the front line for near on thirteen days before the battle of Langemarck in August 1917. During this time 1,000 men per day were practically used as pack horses manhandling munitions and stores to the trenches. This work was, because of the ground conditions, an exhausting and strength sapping exercise. Moreover the work was carried out under incessant *"enemy shelling"* causing approximately 2,000 casualties to both divisions prior to them going into any action and thus severely effecting battalion fighting strengths and indeed morale. Both divisions were to go over the top with approximately 300 / 350 men per battalion instead of the normal complement of 700 / 750 men. On the morning of 16 August 1917, they lined up as usual, received their rum ration and waited for the whistle. As dawn awoke they went over the top and the slaughter of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Divisions at the battle of Langemarck had begun. As the troops left their trenches they came under sustained and prolonged machinegun and artillery fire, almost immediately they started taking casualties, but slogged on.

The German batteries and machinegun emplacements had been hardly touched by 5<sup>th</sup> Armies desultory and inaccurate opening bombardment. Still the Irishmen pushed on hoping to receive some protection from the promised creeping barrage. It was not to be. The barrage had long passed the artillery being unable to match the slow advance of the Irish troops, nevertheless the men kept going, a remarkable feat in itself.

It wasn't only the Germans that slowed down the Irish troops that day. The dreadful condition of the ground that they had to traverse in order to reach their objective that was the Zonnebecke Ridge also added to their slow advance. No troops could have done better, the ground was a network of shell holes half-filled with stinking water ready to trap any unfortunate man that accidentally fell, or was blown into one. The earth between was a quagmire of sucking mud that trapped the feet and clogged their weapons. Yet incredibly some men reached their objective that day but were so few and so exhausted that they were easily pushed back to their start line, by fresh counter attacking German troops. The purgatory suffered by Irish soldiers that day gained not one foot of ground, only the loss of 7,800 men killed, wounded and missing, over half their divisional strength.

That night they had the added agony of listening to their comrades, trapped in no-mans land, dying from their wounds or slowly drowning in water filled shell holes and helpless in doing anything about it. These were the men, *'that did not like the enemies shelling'*, or *'gave way immediately the enemy showed'*. I think not! No country had finer sons; if there were a league for courage then the Irish troops that fought in the First World War would be up among the best of them. Sadly their bravery earned them nought. Disowned and ignored in their own country, treated with suspicion and distrust by the British Army with whom they had gallantly fought in every major engagement throughout the war years. Not a very fitting reward for services so bloodily rendered.

So who were these rank and file Irish volunteers, and yes they were all volunteers. There was no conscription in Ireland during the war. Well, I had the privilege and honour of knowing some of them when I was a lad. Here are my memories of just some of them.

Mr. Colton, a Dublin Fusilier, who had been badly wounded, gassed, blown up and buried alive. He lived at No. 33 Upper Mercer Street, in a two-roomed tenement, on the ground floor, with his wife and children. His bed was adjacent to the front window (he was bed ridden) so that he would be able to see and chat to passers by. Although he must have been in severe pain, I never heard him complain, and he always had a cheery word for us kids whenever we passed his window. Best of all, he would call you over and hand you a small object, a beautiful little pig or donkey carved from a potato, treasure indeed however fleeting. Mr Colton was a Bog Oak carver, he could take a piece of twisted wood and fashion it into the most beautiful donkey and cart complete with miniature sods of turf. His carvings were much sought after and they helped to supplement his meagre pension. Mr Colton passed away during Christmas week in the late nineteen forties. Other than his immediate family and friends, this brave old soldier's passing was hardly noticed.

Mr. Dennis was wounded and very severely gassed during the war. Like Mr. Colton, he was also bed-ridden and barely able to breathe. He had a gasping cough yet was always in good spirits. He always had time for a chat and had a keen interest in whatever new films were out, and, what Sam (his son) and myself were up to. Sam had been orphaned when he was a baby; his mother and father were both killed in a horse and cart accident. So rather than see him going to an orphanage Mr. and Mrs. Dennis took Sam in and reared him as their own son. Such was the calibre of these people who were barely able to support themselves; they still had time for the troubles of others. Mr. Dennis lived in two tiny rooms – second floor back – in a tenement house in York St, not too far from where Mr. Colton lived. However, unlike Mr. Colton, he hadn't the luxury of a front window to look out from, unfortunately his faced the backyard and hadn't a very pleasant view. However, what he did have to look at was a large hand coloured photograph of a young soldier, resplendent in a scarlet tunic, highly polished boots, seated on a brown charger carrying a gold tipped lance, himself. Mr. Dennis had been a 5<sup>th</sup> Lancer during the Great War and was extremely proud of it. He died during the middle fifties and like Mr. Colton, his passing hardly caused a ripple.



Sgt. Tommy Cunningham with some of his RDF pals  
Tommy is the man seated in front row on right hand side  
with the moustache

Mr. Confrey, an artilleryman who was nearly deaf from the sound of the big guns, but otherwise in reasonable health. He lived with his wife and son in a three-roomed flat, on the second floor at No. 28 York St. They had flat above my father and me. Mr. Confrey had fought at the Battle of Passchendaele and had met my father at Ieper during that campaign. That battle was to affect Mr. Confrey with recurring nightmares that occurred to him several times a week. I would often hear him shouting and trashing about in his bed reliving the past. Worst of all was when he would come whizzing out of his bed and land on the floor with a mighty crash. This would wake my father who would shake his fist up at the ceiling, shouting in as loud a voice as possible, *"If you can't sleep in the bloody bed, then sleep on the bloody floor, bloody idiot"* or words to that effect. My father didn't like artillerymen having blamed them (unfairly) for letting them down during the March Offensive in 1918. My father firmly believed that the artillery had been withdrawn the night before the German attack, leaving the front line troops without protection or support.

In the late sixties, within a few days of one another both Mr. and Mrs. Confrey passed away, again quietly and with no fuss. Another gallant old Irish soldier had faded away.

Mr. Stephen (Pop) Arnold as he was known was also Dublin Fusilier wounded in action during the Great War. Pop worked in his son's garage in Clanbrassil Street, Dublin. He was well over eighty when I first met him, and as fit as a flea. Every morning he would wash and polish all the vehicles for sale, and at 11:00 o'clock and 3:00

o'clock he would bring a mug of "army" tea and two digestive biscuits for our break. One day when Pop had his sleeves turned up, I noticed he had a very bad scar to his right forearm, (some of his bone and muscle were missing). When I asked him what happened he told me the following story. They had gone over the top in full daylight, the ground they had to cross was in a terrible condition, so bad that Pop had to keep his head down and pick his way along for fear of falling into a shell hole. As he was making his way forward, he became aware that there was no one in front of him and no one beside him. Looking back he was astonished to see that he was the only man standing so he turned to go back. While he was turning, a German bullet struck him in the right forearm that knocked him into one of the shell holes that he had earlier tried to avoid. Fortunately for Pop, it was one of the few dry shell holes about and in it was a young soldier bleeding from a head wound. Pop and the young soldier managed to apply a No 1 Field Dressing to Pop's arm. When Pop tried to dress the young man's head wound, he suddenly jumped out of the shell hole and Pop never saw him again. Pop reckoned he owed that chap his life and bitterly regretted not been able to do the same for him. He figured he would have been killed immediately he exited the shell hole. Mr Stephen (Pop) Arnold died in his eighty-six year 1966. He, like many more Dublins, is buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery. He was one of the few old soldiers to have a head stone.

These are the memories of the men I knew as a child in the place where I lived in Dublin's tenement inner city. The people were the salt of the earth. These were the men of the 101<sup>st</sup> Tenement House Brigade, Forgotten Army, Dublin's inner city, who, in their final years tightened up their webbing, donned their tin hats, grabbed their rifles and went back over the top into historical oblivion. Colton, Dennis, Confrey, Pop Arnold and my father Tommy Cunningham, we will never forget you. Sorry it took so long to remember you. God bless.

#### References.

1. Prior.R, and Wilson.T. *Passchendaele, The Untold Story* (London 1996) Pp. 103.
2. Denman, T. *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers*. Irish Academic Press. Dublin. 1992. Pp. 166

## Gran's Widow's Penny.

*Fred Heatley*

*The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

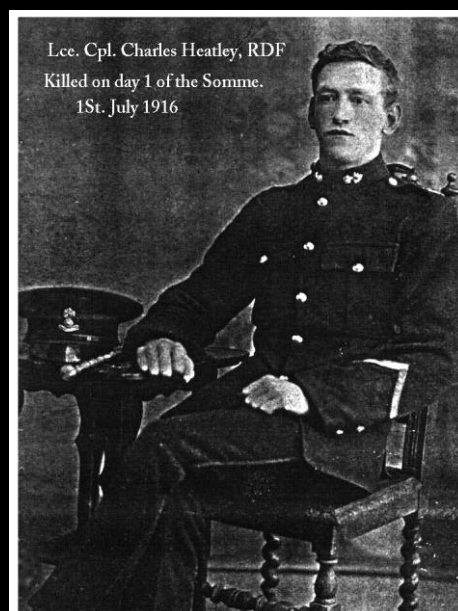
When we were very young, there was always a large bronze medal on the wall of our little Artisans dwelling house. It always fascinated me. "He died for honour and glory," it said. As I grew older, I learned that it was given to my father's mother as her husband had died in the Great War. It was always a part of my growing up and a feature of our home. In time, I started to ask about this granddad I never knew. Nor did I ever learn what part he played in this "Great War". There was very little information forthcoming, not that any one was ashamed of him, but because my father's mother died in 1918 when he was very young. Fred, my father, and his two brothers, Charlie, and Christy, were left orphaned and relatives from both sides of the Moran / Heatley families raised them. My brothers and I often asked about him, as young boys do. "Dad, tell us about your Dad in the war. Did he kill any one, where did he fight, how did he die, Dad"? "Dad did he get any medals? "Yes" we were told, but they were up in Uncle Jimmy's house. "Dad, when are you going to go up and ask for granddad's medals?" He never really got around to it and Uncle Jimmy died and the location of the medals died with him. We never really got much information about the war, sadly, because there was not a lot known in the family. All we learned was that he was in the Dardenelles and France and he was killed some where in the latter country. We never thought to ask about his grave, we just assumed he had one.

One day when browsing web sites, looking for nothing in particular, I came across the web site, of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

This site led me to the War Graves Commission and the British Legion sites. My interest aroused, I started to search the sites in earnest. There he was.

*In Memory of, Charles Heatley, Lce. Corporal, 8024 Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Who died on Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup>. July 1916 age 21. The first born son of, Charles and Mary Jane Heatley, of 52 High St. Dublin; Husband of the late Catherine Heatley (nee Moran). His name Liveth forever more.*

No known grave but name engraved on the Thiepval Memorial to the missing of the Somme, France. When this information came up on the screen it just rocked me. At last he was within my grasp. Then the feeling of disappointment crept over me as I realised that he had no known grave. Not for my brothers or me, a pilgrimage to visit his grave. No closure then. The disappointment took several months to get over but slowly the curiosity overcame the disappointment and I started to search for more information on the man.



Lce / Cpl. Fred Heatley. 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers.  
Killed in action 1 July 1916.

I subsequently learnt that although the records said he died at age twenty-one, he was in fact twenty-four (His birth cert. proved this). He was working as a trunk maker in a small workshop off Dorset St in Dublin City and he was one of the first to enlist when the war broke out. He was assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup>. Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers and was part of the relief contingent to arrive in Gallipoli on 19 May 1915. He left behind his wife Catherine and his three very young sons aged four, two and one. He saw action at Cape Helles, at the Third Battle of Krithia, Gully Ravine, 'V' Beach, Krithia Vineyard, Suvla Bay and Scimitar Hill. His Battalion was then withdrawn with the rest of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division to Egypt in December 1915. Later they sailed to Marseilles in France arriving on 19 March 1916. The next day they departed by train and arrived forty-eight hours later in Pont Remy.



Once detrained, they marched to Domqueur where they were billeted. Leave was granted for the first time to the United Kingdom. On the last day of the month, the 86<sup>th</sup>. Brigade, which included the 1<sup>st</sup> Dublins moved to Beauval and on 4 April the Battalion marched to Acheux in preparation for going up into the front line. On 27 June 1916, the Battalion was ordered to move up next day to the lines known as the 88<sup>th</sup> Trench and Essex Street.



Remains of trenches in the Newfoundland Memorial Park.

On the morning of the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 1 July 1916, the 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers went into the attack as part of a second wave. The Royal Fusiliers went in front of them at 07.30 a.m. in broad daylight. As the barbed wire had not been destroyed in the bombardment, the men bunched in the gaps and were mown down by heavy machine gun fire. When the Dublin Fusiliers moved into the front line trench to follow them at a distance of 300 yards, (274 meters) they could not advance because of the dead and wounded and the incessant German machine gun fire. Only a small number got through the British wire and they were shot down before they had advanced fifty or sixty yards.

When the attack was called off at noon, four officers and eighteen other ranks, including Charles Heatley had been killed, seven officers and 125 other ranks were wounded. One officer and sixty-three other ranks were missing. The young Lance Corporal and father of three little boys who had survived the horrors of Gallipoli, died that morning, his young life had come to an abrupt end. Within two short years his wife Catherine, would die during the Spanish or Black flu epidemic, which swept Europe in 1918/19.

### **In search of our roots.**

For years I had thought about travelling to France to see this place where he died but because there was no known grave I was not really fired with a will to go. Yes, there was this memorial with his name on it but at the time it was just not enough. In the meantime, I continued to read various books on the subject of the Great War. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association web site and some of its members gave me more information. Books such as, "The First day on the Somme" and "Neill's Blue Caps" also gave me a lot of the history of the Gallipoli and Somme campaigns. Gradually it just got to me and I decided, I had to make this pilgrimage to try and locate where he fell and to view the memorial. So, in September 2004, along with my two brothers, we started out on the pilgrimage that my father and his two brothers did not get the opportunity to go on.

We flew to Beauvais Airport, hired a car and drove the one hour drive to the town of Albert. An overnight there included a visit to the famous basilica and the museum that is located beneath the church. The following morning a short drive took us to Thiepval. Nothing could have prepared us for this. When we turned the corner from the car park, there it was. Magnificent and splendid, so imposing as it reached to the sky. A giant memorial to all of the 73,367 men who have no known grave. Each and every soldier's name inscribed on the giant pillars that support it. We approached it with our heads in the air, not just because we were so proud but also because the memorial draws you to it like that. We were armed with the location of his name which we had obtained on the website but, just to be sure, we checked it out on the index books which are located behind a small bronze door at each column. Yes, there he was, pier and face 16 C. We walked around, and after a few frustrating and anxious minutes, we spotted his name "Heatley C". A quiet prayer and a few moments of reflection before we left. God bless you Charles.

The next part of our journey took us to Beaumont Hamel and the site of the Hawthorn Mine crater. On route, we called to pay our respects and visit the Ulster Tower that honours the men of the 36<sup>th</sup>. (Ulster) Division. The caretaker and his wife warmly greeted us.

When he noticed our Royal Dublin Fusilier's Assoc. badges he took us outside and painted in graphic illustrative words what was previously for us, a blank canvas of the rolling landscape stretching out before us. He enthusiastically pointed out in the distance, the Newfoundland Memorial Park, the marks in the soil of the trenches and the Hawthorn Mine site. He continued then to describe the attack on 1 July 1916. We were riveted to the spot and hung on to his every word. When we returned inside the Ulster Tower, he showed us a special section of the display devoted to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and other Irish Regiments. Inside this Tower, we were all brothers that shared a common tragedy and grief. After a cup of tea, we shook hands warmly and continued on our journey of discovery. A few short minutes later, we crossed the Ancre River and having passed through the famous village of Hamel, we swept up the hill to the Newfoundland Memorial Park.

Visiting this area which is preserved, gave us a good idea of the terrain of the battlefield. The outline of the trenches are still there although they are now grassed over and do not illustrate the true horror of trench warfare. The interpretative centre exhibition at the entrance to the park gave us further information as to the location of the area in which the Dubs went over the top on that fateful morning. Into the car again, we turned out of the car park and headed towards the village of Longeval. A short distance down this road we stopped at a small turning on the right. This road led up to Hawthorn Ridge Cemetery No 1. Of all the cemeteries we visited on route this was the most lonely and beautiful. It must be said though, that every cemetery is extremely well maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and long may they last. As we stood just outside the cemetery, I checked my maps and my notes. To the right, the Newfoundland Memorial Park where their Regiment followed the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Wales Borderers and 1<sup>st</sup> Border Regiment. To the left in the distance, opposite Redan Ridge, the Lancashire's, 1<sup>st</sup>. Hants./ 2<sup>nd</sup>. Seafort Highlanders and the 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers. In front, and a little to the left, the Hawthorn Mine site was visible and behind that, the church spire and roof tops of Beaumont Hamel village. This was it, here somewhere probably within a hundred yards or so our granddad had fallen. Viciously cut down with his comrades by machine gun or artillery fire.

I looked over the terrain now so peaceful and serene. A mixture of freshly tilled and green fields of a Picardy farm. Some poppies growing here and there in rough ground. We walked into the cemetery and amongst the head stones there was one with the emblem of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. "A soldier, known only to God ", killed 1<sup>st</sup>. July 1916. Once again a silent prayer, it was time to go home.



The lonely Hawthorn Ridge No. 1 Cemetery.

On the way back to our hotel in Albert, we visited the mine site and saw for ourselves how easy it was to cut down our men in the open terrain once the Germans had seized the mine crater. We passed through Beaumont Hamel and along Station Rd., the objective the Dubs had on that fateful morning. Next day, before heading to the airport, we revisited the couple in the Ulster Tower to thank them for all their assistance and kindness. Over a cup of tea, I asked the caretaker a question I by now knew the answer to but wanted an expert to confirm my thoughts. 'How come', I asked, 'if so many men of the Dublin Fusiliers were killed that morning, there are so few graves?' His answer was as I expected, that most bodies were left in no mans land and could not be recovered. Those who died from their wounds near the battle site were then buried and a small number of bodies were dragged back into the trenches. It was only after the big push in November that the forces were able to take control of the German trenches, and of course no man's land. Then the task of collecting the bodies, or what was left of them, began. Often a uniform button or some similar piece of uniform indicated perhaps the rank and the regiment. There were no metal dog tags to indicate the person. My question was answered. I could now go home.

**In conclusion.**

To anyone who has a relative killed in the Great War and who learns that they have no known grave, be consoled. The missing are the norm. Those with graves were the exception. There are 73,367 names inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial. This is your loved one's headstone. His grave is the beautiful rolling landscape of the Somme region. Perhaps like me, you could stand praying in a small graveyard, looking at a simple white headstone with the inscription, "A soldier known only to God." Who knows or can deny you, that perhaps where you are standing is where your relative is buried. Go there and be fulfilled. Now that I have been there I have only one more wish. To secure for the future generations of the family the medals we lads were always asking Dad to get. The bronze Widow's Penny Medal, proudly hangs on my brothers wall. Our grandchildren will no doubt look at it from time to time and wonder like us about the man who gave his young life for it.

**They are not forgotten:  
Memorials to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers  
Part 6.**

*Philip Lecane.*

*The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

Campbell College, Belfast

In the previous issue of *The Blue Cap* (Vol. 10, December 2003), under the heading *The Campbells are coming!*, I published memorial information from a booklet on Campbell College. Unfortunately I did not have the name of the author. So I was unable to give due credit. Happily, I can now rectify this omission. The booklet was compiled by Mr Keith Haines, who was Head of History at Campbell College for nearly twenty-five years and is now the school Archivist. Congratulations to Keith on an excellent publication, that allowed *The Blue Cap* to record the Campbellians who lost their lives while serving with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers during the Great War.

War Memorial

(Jeffrey Martin, First World War Researcher)

Location: Dromore, Co. Down.

One of the names on the memorial is that of Captain James Roland (Rollie) Miller of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who was killed at the Battle of Langemark on 16 August 1917. *The Dromore Weekly Times* records his death. It appears that during the battle he was attached to a battalion of The Royal Irish Rifles. Unfortunately the Commonwealth War Graves Commission incorrectly records his surname as Millar and his date of death as 16 August 1918.

Mr. Martin, who is researching all those recorded on Dromore War Memorial, would be grateful for any information on Captain Miller including, ideally, a photograph. He can be contacted at: 6 Primrose Way, Dromore, Co. Down, Northern Ireland BT25 ITL.

Roll of Honour, Wesley College

(Henry Johnston and Pat Hogarty RDFA members)

Location: Wesley College, Ballinteer, Co. Dublin.  
Wording on Memorial:

*"1914-1918 and the Great War. This memorial was erected to honour all boys of this college who ventured their lives for defence of home and country in the Great War and especially in loving and grateful memory of those who fell."*

Details: The memorial was originally in The memorial Chapel, Wesley College, Stephen's Green, Dublin. The Chapel was built in 1927. The memorial was erected in the main college, Ballinteer when the College moved there. According to Pat Hogarty: "*At the outbreak of war a number of the old boys were already serving in the Army. Nevertheless over 600 went on active service, including the whole of the 1914 senior rugby team. Seventy-five old boys gave their lives, sixteen of them while serving with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.*" The college is a Methodist College and in true egalitarian fashion neither ranks nor regiments are recorded on the memorial. The extra information was researched by Henry Johnston.

There are eighty-six names recorded for the First World War and twenty-five for the Second World War. The RDF is the regiment with the highest representation among the former pupils who served in WW1.

Pte. W.J. Acton (30), Kinsale, Co. Cork, 10<sup>th</sup> Bn RDF. KIA 1916.

L/Cpl. G.C. Arthurs (26), Rathgar, Dublin, 10<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF. KIA.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. W.H. Boyd (29), 9<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF. KIA 1916. (Note: Our Chairperson, Tom Burke, tells me that Boyd was killed in the same action as Tom Kettle).

Lt. F.P. Dowling (19), Clontarf, Dublin, 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. RDF. KIA 1917.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. H.W. Gibson (24), Sandford Road, Dublin, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. RDF. KIA 1916. Previously wounded at Gallipoli.

L/Cpl. J.W. Little (23), Sligo, 7<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF. KIA 1915. (See The Blue Cap. Vol. 8 2001 for article on this man)

L/Cpl. H.H. Mac Mahon B.A. T.C.D. 10<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF.

Capt. W.H. Monson MC (38), Dublin, 8<sup>th</sup> Bn., RDF. KIA 1916.

Pte. W.C. Paul (19), Clontarf, Dublin, D Coy, 7<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF. KIA 1918.

Pte. W.J. Rudd (20), Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, 10<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF. KIA 1916.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. T. Goodwin Tyner (20), Tinahealy, Co. Wicklow, 9<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF. KIA 1916.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. F.A. Walkey (23), Palmerston, Dublin, 7<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF. KIA 1918.

#### Roll of Honour, St. Matthews Church of Ireland

(Henry Johnston, RDFA member)

Location: St Matthews Church of Ireland, Newtown Mountkenedy, Co. Wicklow.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants Arthur and Henry Gun-Cunningham served in the RDF. Both survived the war. The family were members of the local landed gentry.

L/Cpl. H.G. Stamper (32), Son of the Rector of Newtown Mountkenedy, Co. Wicklow, 10<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF. KIA 1916. Name also recorded on the *Roll of Honour*, in St. Matthew's Church of Ireland, Newtown Mountkenedy, Co. Wicklow.

#### John Condon Memorial

(Ann S. Allridge, RDFA member)

Location: The Quay, Waterford, Co. Waterford  
Memorial: A bronze sculpture within a circular limestone structure.

Purpose: *To remember John Condon, the Irish men and women killed in the First World War and all Irish men and women who died in conflicts at home and abroad.*

Design: Anne Harpur (Architect) and Pat Cunningham (Artist).

Organisers: The John Condon Memorial Committee, established by Waterford City Council.

As its title suggests, *The Blue Cap's* column *They are not forgotten: Memorials to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers* was established to list the memorials that record the names of RDF men. However, I feel justified in bringing the John Condon memorial to your attention.

John Condon was born in near Ballybricken, Waterford around the turn of the last century. After some schooling, he worked as a boy bottler. His mother died in 1912. Sometime subsequently he joined the Royal Irish Regiment. In December 1914 he was posted to the regiment's 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion based at Devonport on the outbreak of war. As part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, they sailed from Southampton on 13 August on board the *SS Herschell*. They were among the first British Army troops in action and took part in fighting on the eastern outskirts of Mons on 23 August 1914. They also took part in the retreat that followed the action. In October 1914 the battalion suffered heavy casualties and were put on Line of Communication duties. Having received reinforcements, among them young Private John Condon, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. Royal Irish Regiment joined the 12<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Division in March 1915. By this time both armies were facing each other in lines of trenches that stretched for several hundreds of miles along the Western Front. Over a period of five minutes on the evening of 22 April 1915, near Langemarke, in the Ieper Salient, Belgium the Germans discharged 168 tons of chlorine gas from 4,000 cylinders over a four-mile front. The gas was discharged against two French Divisions, one Algerian and the other Territorial, and the nearby Canadian Division.

The Algerian troops fled, leaving an 880-yard (731 kilometre) gap in the Allied line. The Allies moved quickly to block the opening. This was the start of what became known as the Second Battle of Ieper.

On 3 May, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Irish Regiment moved up to the firing line at St. Julian. The battalion's War Diary records their first experience of poison gas on that day. Between 1 and 4 May British units retired to new positions. The 22 May found John Condon's battalion at Irish Farm. The regiment's official history records:

*On the 24<sup>th</sup> at 2 am, the battalion stood to arms. At 2.20 the enemy, preceded by gas, attacked. A gentle breeze blowing from the north-east brought the full volume of the gas on to that part of the line occupied by the battalion. Although respirators and sprayers were used, many of the ranks were overcome by gas. Shell Trap Farm, which was garrisoned by two platoons of another unit, was captured by the enemy, thus enabling them to enfilade the Royal Irish portion of our line. They walked down our line bombing with hand grenades and, only a few men of the Royal Irish now being left, took it as far as the right of the King's Own. Here the attack was checked*

Ten of the battalions officers were listed as killed, died of gas poisoning, or missing. Seven others were hospitalised as a result of being gassed. There were 379 casualties among the other ranks. Among them was Private John Condon, Reg. No. 6322.

John Condon's body wasn't recovered until 1923, when it was re-interred in Poelkappelle Cemetery. The only personal item returned to his family was a piece of a boot bearing his regimental number – 6322.

The headstone erected to his memory by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records his age as fourteen. He is said to be the youngest Allied soldier to have been killed in the war. (I am aware of a particular source that claims that

not only was John Condon not fourteen years old, but that he is not even buried in the grave that bears his headstone. Our association regards all First World War deaths as equally tragic, irrespective of age, nationality, gender, religion and whether the person was in the armed services or a civilian.) All those who were involved in the planning and building of the John Condon Memorial can be justly proud of this fitting tribute to John Condon, all the Irish men and women killed in the First World War and all Irish men and women who died in conflicts at home and abroad.

As a footnote I might add that President Mac Aleese laid a wreath at John Condon's grave in June 2004.

### Sources:

John Condon Memorial information brochure, Waterford City Council.

Gilbert, Martin *First World War* (London, 1995).

Westlake, Ray. *British Battalions in France & Belgium 1914* (South Yorkshire, 1997).

Westlake, Ray. *British Battalions on the Western Front January to June 1915* (South Yorkshire, 2001).

**[www.irishwarmemorials.ie](http://www.irishwarmemorials.ie)**

I highly commend this excellent website to all readers of *The Blue Cap*. Established by RDFA member Dr. Michael Pegum, the site presents an inventory of war memorials in the Republic of Ireland. The inventory includes photographs of each memorial, the text of all inscriptions and details of the site of the memorial. The survey began in 2003 in the south county Dublin area. It includes a full inventory of memorials in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and is progressing to cover other areas. The website includes a *How to contribute* to the inventory page. An incredible piece of work by Michael, well done.

Please keep sending in your memorial discoveries to me c/o Mr. Pat Hogarty, 92 Maryfield Crescent, Dublin 5. If possible, please include a photograph of the memorial you discover and send to us for inclusion in the next edition of *The Blue Cap*.



## Royal Flying Corps, Royal Naval Air Service and Royal Air Force

*Philip Lecane*

*The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

I am researching Irishmen who served in the RFC, RNAS and RAF up to the end of the First World War with a view to writing a book on the subject. I would be very grateful for any information and / or photographs that members might make available to me. All assistance given will be acknowledged in my book. I can be contacted at the RDFA mailing address which at present is c/o Mr. Pat Hogarty, 92 Maryfield Crescent, Dublin 5. Ireland or emailed at [philip.lecane@comhairle.ie](mailto:philip.lecane@comhairle.ie) (note full stop between first and surnames and between comhairle and ie)

### Poetry.

#### The Menin Gate

By

Carole Hope, September 2001.

So many men in the Menin Gate,  
So many shattered lives.  
So many cruel strokes of faith,  
So many grieving wives,  
Sweethearts, parents, sisters, brothers,  
A multitude of relations!  
Countless others,  
Too many lives,  
Ruined  
For the glory of nations.

The salient beyond 'Wipers'  
Was remarkable indeed!  
Mines, mud, slime, snipers,  
Rats searching for a good feed,  
Whizz-bangs, shrapnel, gas.  
Men cursed their luck  
As they surveyed an endless morass  
Of churned earth, sludge and muck,  
Shell hole criss-crossing shell hole,  
Nature had lost her soul.

See it, touch it, smell it, feel it,  
Death suffused the Salient.  
Mud reeked of it,  
Men were sick of it,  
Horses bewildered by it.

A sea of mud  
A sea of death  
Drowned corpses  
Carcasses of horses  
Damaged duckboards  
Bloated bodies....stepping stones.

The Salient is a graveyard,  
'Great' War cemeteries abound.  
The Menin Gate stands guard  
Over those pounded into the ground.  
Fifty-five thousand names,  
Thirty-five thousand more at Tyne Cot,  
Of men fated to fall and rot,  
Fated to find fame  
As 'The Missing'  
With no known grave,  
On the salient.

So many names inscribed  
On the Menin gate.  
So many men deprived  
A consecrated last resting place.

But

'They are not lost, they are here'  
The Last Post honours their memory  
Do restless spirits gather here  
To hear the buglers' eulogy?

Please God, tell them  
'We will remember them'  
We do remember them.  
All those men in  
The Menin Gate.

Note. This poem was submitted for publication in *The Blue Cap* by Mr. Michael O'Rahilly of Wanstead, London. Member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

**Dublin Fusilier**

By  
Marie Gahan

Hungry you took the King's shilling,  
fought the Hun on Flanders field.  
blood-soaked, lice infested,  
entrenched with dead companions  
gagged on German gas  
at Flanders and survived.

You never wore a Poppy  
for remembrance, nor marched  
through Dublin streets.

Pride battling shame,  
window-framed you watched  
the veteran parade,  
Saluted be-ribboned comrades,  
three tarnished medals  
decorating your tenement.

This poem was submitted for publication in *The Blue Cap* by Mrs. Marie Gahan from Greenhills in Dublin. Marie's father was 14713 Pte. Richard Toomey who served with the 9<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers. 'He was one of many who were locked out in the General Strike of 1913 and with no work he enlisted. He was gassed in France but returned to Ireland. Despite his weakened lungs, he lived to the age of seventy-eight.

**It's an illusion.**

By  
Bertie Messit

Last night I had a dream  
I felt that death was near,  
I was a soldier in Salonika  
With the Dublin Fusiliers.

I lay there on the battlefield  
In a tangle of barbed wire,  
All around dead and dying  
And the deafening enemy fire.

I thought about my mother  
And started to pray,  
A widow-woman all alone  
In her home in little Bray.

The more I tried to free myself  
The more tangled I became,  
At last the firing stopped  
And down came the lashing rain.

The wounded all around me  
Were crying out in pain  
As I lay there petrified,  
In the mayhem and the rain.

And then the shelling started  
And I thought this is it –  
When suddenly I woke up  
In a lather of sweat!

This poem was submitted for publication in *The Blue Cap* by Mr. Bertie Messitt. The poem was written in August 1998. Bertie's father and uncle were Dublin Fusiliers whose story was written in *The Blue Cap* Vol. 8. June 2001.

**No. 10118**

By  
Criostoir O'Floinn

Convicts and canon-fodder were branded  
Like sheep for the shambles, and so  
When young Tom Flynn decided to go  
To save little Belgium from being savaged

By hordes of Huns, he was given  
A uniform, a rifle and a number.  
Admonished by his older brothers,  
One my future, to let the English

Fight their own wars, he repeated  
Redmond's solemn promise from John Bull:  
'Ireland will be granted Home Rule  
As soon as the imperialist Kaiser is defeated.'

Their house in Limerick's West Watergate  
Faced a remnant of the ancient walls  
Battered by Dutch William's cannon balls:  
That, and rugby's unarmed conflict, made

His experience of war before he joined  
Second Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers.  
Seen off at Limerick Station with prayers and tears  
He sailed from Kingstown Harbour to combine

With millions of other uniformed numbers  
In war-games on the Western Front  
Until he died in shell-churned mud  
On the tenth day of November

In Nineteen-Seventeen, one year before  
He would have reached manhood's age.  
Home Rule remained a political mirage,  
But young Tom Flynn had his name restored

On Panel 143 of the massive memorial  
At Passchendaele, six miles north-east  
Of Ieper, when all the guns had ceased,  
By some liberated Belgian's bored chisel.

This poem was submitted for publication in *The Blue Cap* by Mr. Criostoir Flynn, writer and poet from Dun Laoghaire in Co. Dublin. The poem is dedicated to his uncle, 10118. Pte. Thomas Flynn, 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Munster Fusiliers killed at Passchendaele on 10 November 1917.

### Highlights of the past year.

*Sean Connolly.*

*The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

**March:** The Annual General Meeting of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association was held on 20 March 2004. Progress was reported and the outgoing members of the Committee were reappointed. The meeting was followed by the return visit of Martin Middlebrook, one of the key figures in the revival of interest in the First World War and the author of a number of books which are essential for an informed visit to the Western Front. Martin's topic was *The German March Offensive of 1918*. His masterly analysis was accompanied by his own detailed battle diagrams. He described the events that inflicted so many casualties in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions of the RDF and destroyed the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division.

**April:** We had a good attendance at the Gallipoli Remembrance Service in St Anne's Church, Dawson Street.

**May:** members of the RDF Association took part in the Commemoration Ceremony in St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena, in honour of the disbanded Irish Regiments. In his address to the parade, General Sir Roger Wheeler GCB CBE stated.

*'The Disbanded Irish Regimental Associations have been kept alive and vibrant by the sons and grandsons of those who served and are most welcome to the Combined Old Soldiers day for the second successive year – Let Erin Remember.'*



Mr. Martin Middlebrook presenting his lecture to members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association at the Gilbert Library, Pearse Street in Dublin on 20 March 2004.

**June:** Over fifty members and friends of the RDFA went on the Association's tour to the 1914 / 1915 Battlefields in Flanders and Northern France from 5 to 8 June. It began by following the route the 2<sup>nd</sup> RDF took when they marched from the railway station at Le Cateau to meet the German advance at the farm named Fontaine-sur-Tertre. The current farmer and his family had prepared a buffet that was enjoyed outdoors, almost ninety years after the opening battle. During the next three intensive days, the group visited many locations associated with the Irish soldiers. Paul Clarke and his team from UTV came along part of the way and the result featured prominently in the programme transmitted on Remembrance weekend on Ulster Television. (See Oliver Murphy's article for a participant's view of the tour.) On the following weekend, twenty members went to London to attend a wreath laying service at the Cenotaph in London organised by the Combined Irish Regiments Association.

A bit of association history was created when Captain (Retd.) Seamus Greene formally of the Reserve Irish Defence Forces paraded the new RDFA standard for the first time.

On Wednesday 16 June, by the kind invitation of Lieut.-Col. Michael Mc Dermot, MBA, Tom Burke presented a lecture on the history of the Dublin Fusiliers to officers attending the Junior Command and Staff Course at the Irish Defence Forces Training College in the Curragh Camp. This was the second of two lectures Tom presented to the course run by Col. Mac Dermot. Our sincere thanks go to Col. Mc Dermot and his colleague Capt. Colm O Luasa for the kindness and hospitality shown to our chairman who was impressed by the professionalism, dedication and enthusiasm shown by the officers who attended the lecture. Many of the officers who attended the lecture later travelled to the battlefields of France and Flanders to see at first hand where the battles of the Great War took place and where so many of their fellow countrymen died.

**July:** Over thirty members attended the ceremony for the National Day of Commemoration at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham., Dublin. The number attending this ceremony has grown in recent years as the inclusive nature of the occasion has become known throughout the island and in the UK. It was at this ceremony that we said farewell and thanks to Col. Paul Cummings and his wife Fay upon his retirement.

**August:** A small group of RDFA members joined forces with friends from the Royal Welch Fusiliers Old Comrades Association to travel to the Edinburgh Tattoo. Our special thanks must go to Steve Hunt and his team for organising this marvellous event. It was yet again another example of what President Mac Aleese asked us all to do and that was to build bridges.

**September:** Our own committee member, Philip Lecane, spoke to a large audience on the topic *Soldiers of the Sky: Irish Airmen 1914-1916*. His research discovered many fascinating personal Irish stories that illustrated the role of Irish aviators from the very start of the Royal Flying Corps. Thank you Philip.

**October:** There was a large attendance for Oliver Fallon's fine lecture titled, *Mesopotamia, the forgotten campaign*.

Oliver was one of the founding members of the Connaught Rangers Association that has similar objectives to our own. His lecture looked at the Connaught Rangers tragic venture into Mesopotamia. Familiar place names such as Basra and Fallujah were frequently mentioned which brought home how history can often repeat itself particularly in the context of the present conflict in the region. Again, many thanks' Oliver. Over the same weekend as Oliver's lecture, the National Museum of Ireland presented an excellent seminar on the Great War. Our congratulations go to the staff at the Museum for presenting such a fine project. We wish the National Museum every success in the opening of the new Military Exhibition at the Museum in 2005. October also saw the return to Dublin's Abbey Theatre of Frank Mc Guinness's play, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching towards the Somme*. A fine performance that was well attended by members of the RDFA.



Mrs Trees Vannesste.

VVV Heuveland Tourist representative and honorary member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association addressing the annual dinner.

**November:** The annual remembrance ceremonies were well attended by our members. In addition to the Mass in City Quay Church on Friday night, the ceremony at the Irish War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge on the Saturday morning and the Ecumenical Service in St Patrick's Cathedral,



there was a special Mass in the Pro-Cathedral Dublin to mark the publication of the Dublin City and County Roll of Honour by Paddy Harte and his team. A copy was presented to a delegation from Eu, the town in Normandy where St Laurence O'Toole, the Patron Saint of the Dublin Diocese, is buried. The group were in Dublin for the Annual Mass in honour of the Saint. They acknowledged the link between the book and the huge French losses in the Great War. The 600 page book which contains over 6,000 names is available from the National Museum, price €35. There was touch of déjà vu about this Mass arranged by Paddy Harte. For many years after the Great War ended, hundreds of ex-service men who fought in the war attended a Remembrance Mass in the Cathedral to pray for and remember their fallen comrades. Finally during the month of remembrance, several members of our committee attended a Festival of Remembrance organised by Glen Barr at the Waterside Theatre in the Ebrington Centre in Derry / Londonderry. Along with Paddy Harte, Glen was Joint Chairman of the Journey of Reconciliation Trust. Our members were made most welcome by Glen and the festival organisers.



Mr. Paul Clark. UTV Journalist wearing his Dubs tie showing VC won by William Mc Fadzean on 1 July 1916.

On 13 November, Alan Wakefield, from the Imperial War Museum, London, gave a lecture entitled '*We marched away into Serbia.*' *The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division and the action at Kosturino, December 1915.*

While we are fairly familiar with the Gallipoli story, there has been little recent discussion about the subsequent campaign of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division's campaign in Salonika. Once again there was a full house. We were pleased to welcome Paddy Harte on the occasion. He gave a short description of his past work on the Messines Peace Park and other projects in which he is currently involved. Those present made clear their deep appreciation of the work that he and others have done.

**December:** Over 150 members and friends attended the Association's Annual Dinner in the Masonic Hall, Molesworth Street in Dublin. This was organised by Brian Moroney who acted / performed / entertained as Master of Ceremonies on the night. Many thanks and well done Brian and Teresa, your efforts are very much appreciated. The home talent available was so great that we were unable to call on all 'volunteers'. The Guest of Honour was Paul Clark from UTV. Paul has been a kind and generous supporter of the work of the RDFA. Inviting him as our guest of honour was our humble way of simply saying thanks Paul. As well as delivering a perfect after dinner address, he displayed the VC won by William Mc Fadzean on 1 July 1916. Also at our dinner we welcomed Col. John Steed MBE from the British Embassy, Major Jim Macleod of the Combined Irish Regiments Association and Mr. Oliver Fallon, Hon. Sec. The Connaught Rangers Assoc, Mr. Steve Hunt and the men from the Royal Welch Fusiliers Association. Many thanks Steve for presenting the RDFA with your officers Flash, much appreciated. Two special guests were Mrs Trees Vannesste and her husband Marc from Wijtschate. Trees has made all of the local arrangements for each of our tours to the Heuvelland region of Flanders where many of the Irish soldiers from both the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) and 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Divisions fought in 1917. Trees and her colleague Johan have become friends of the Association.

On 17 December 2004 there was another first for the Association when our Chairman, Tom Burke, was presented with his MBE by the British Ambassador to Ireland H.E Mr. Stewart Eldon CMG, OBE at a private ceremony at Glencairn. Col. John Steed in the citation he read to Tom, his family and members of the RDFA Committee stated.



*Tom Burke founded the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association in 1996. The aim of the association is to promote a better understanding of the Irish involvement in the Great War. The Association believes that a better understanding of the shared heritage of sacrifice now will help to reconcile the two major traditions on the whole Island of Ireland. The Association is deeply involved in living history, bringing the peoples of the Island into contact with their past and creating a sense of pride in those that fought for freedom at a time that Ireland was on the brink of Civil War. Its work is consistent with other reconciliation activities in Northern Ireland drawing inspiration from the First World War. Tom Burke has ignited a real interest in military history in Ireland. In the words of the Taoiseach at a State Reception given in 2001 to honour the work of the RDFA, 'in the past official attitudes to commemorating the fallen of World War 1 tended to be censorious.' The Association has done much to redress the balance and encourage Irishmen to be justly proud of their forebears in the name of freedom.*

*It is in recognition of his dedication, determination and vision in establishing the RDFA that Her Majesty the Queen has appointed Tom Burke to be an Honorary Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.*

In accepting the award, Tom stated said that he accepted the award with the grace in which it was offered and regarded the award as recognition for the work of the members of the Association in reviving the memory of the forgotten Irish men and women of the Great War.

Another member of our association to receive an MBE award was Mr. Michael Kearney, ex -Royal Irish Fusiliers. At the fine age of seventy-two years, Michael received his award from H.R.H The Prince of Wales at Buckingham Palace on 15 October 2004.



Mr. Tom Burke MBE, Chairman of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association with his mother Mrs. Annie Burke at Glencarin on 17 December 2004. Annie celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in January 2005.

The award was granted to Michael for his dedicated work with the Royal Irish Fusiliers Old Comrades Association for over twenty-five years. A born Dubliner from Mercer Street, he would have known many of the men mentioned in Kevin Cunningham's article. Both Michael and Kevin were neighbours and are both ex-servicemen. As Michael noted himself about his award. 'Not bad, from Mercer Street to Buckingham Palace.' Well done Michael from your friends in the RDFA. An award richly deserved. *Faugh a Ballagh.*

The year ended on another high note with the news that the film made by our fellow member Oliver Murphy had won the Audience Poll Award at the Fourth Imperial War Museum Student Film Festival in London. The film deals with the former students and teachers of Belvedere College SJ who lost their lives in military conflicts in the last century. Oliver is a schoolteacher in Belvedere College SJ. Copies are available from Oliver at the College at €20 each (DVD or Video).

There is also a book available at the same price. Belvedere College SJ, 6 Great Denmark Street, Dublin 1. Telephone; Dublin 8586600.



Some of the RDF Assoc. and RWF OCA  
in Hollyhead in August 2004.

## Commemorative Tour of Flanders June 2004.

*Oliver Murphy.*

*The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

If the First World War campaign had been as well organized as this tour, then the war would have been over by Christmas 1914. Those of us who went along as 'passengers' owe a huge debt to the organizers and the tireless team who planned and carried out a remarkable and educational tour.

It started with a talk by Tom in the little train station at Le Cateau where the Royal Dublin Fusiliers began their campaign (and near where it ended: as Tom pointed out this location is a poignant symbol of the wastefulness of war). It ended with a lament by a piper at our own quiet ceremony at Tyne Cot Cemetery near Passchendaele. In between, tears were shed by many, meals and laughs were shared by us all, we learnt a great deal about the details of the First World War, we held ceremonies in graveyards and, perhaps most importantly of all, we got to know and like each other. (...and there was the mystery of two small shoes in my hotel room one morning.)

For me, I cannot decide what the greatest highlight was: there were so many. Was it the picnic in the farmyard at Fontain au Tetre north of Clary where the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dublins fired their first shots in anger at

German Uhlans. Was it Des Byrne singing '*Oft in the stillly night*' at the Menin Gate, while a gathering of hundreds listened reverently? Was it President Mary Mac Aleese's speech at the Messines Peace Park? Was it Brian Moroney's translation of Tom's French? Was it Pat Cummins' sad homily at our private ceremony at Dud Corner which brought tears rolling down my cheeks? Was it Leo Enright explaining the Transit of Venus at the side of a supermarket while a few of us conducted a scientific experiment using a sheet of paper, a pair of binoculars and the roof of a parked car? Was it Tom Burke's talks - which always had an emotional tug - with his incredibly detailed knowledge and his impassioned message? Was it our young German student friend Martin Steffan's prayer at the water-filled crater at Spanbroekmolen as cattle lowed? Was it the wonderful final meal on the balcony overlooking the plains of Loker and Wijtschate from the heights of the Kemmelberg? No, I cannot decide.

I have learnt a lot. I left Ireland with only a smattering of knowledge about the war, but I returned with a very clear overview as well as some detailed information about the battles that we traced. I am in awe at the extent of knowledge held by those who took part - each with their own particular interests and their personal reasons for being there.

I had a special moment of my own on the last day. I woke early in the Kemmelberg Hotel and asked the proprietor for the loan of a bicycle. His two daughters were heading off for school on their bikes - but before they left, they found me a bike for myself. I freewheeled down the hill as the sun was rising, along the forest road, through the town of Kemmel and then on to Kemmel Chateau Military Cemetery where two rabbits and I were the only early-morning visitors. I went there to pay my respects to two past pupils from Belvedere College, where I teach. One was James Fagan of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. The other was Capel O'Brien Butler who died at during the Battle of Wijtschate on 7 June 1917 - one of three Belvedere brothers who died in that dreadful war. (...and the mystery of the shoes was solved that day. No, Seamus Greene, who used my room to shower and change, does not have tiny feet. The explanation is simpler than that. He brought them to my room in a bag, by mistake, - or so he says - and left them behind.



The true owner (Cinder Amhain or Cinder Eile) has been re-united with her footwear and all is well...)



Members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association in Ieper, June 2004. (Thanks Niall for the photo)

I want to thank everyone who went on the tour. On the day we set out, I knew three of those on the bus. By the time we returned, I think I knew everyone. You were all wonderful companions on our 'Magical History Tour'. I hope to see you all again.

Finally I want to thank Tom Burke for asking me along, for making me feel so welcome, and for all his enthusiasm. He truly deserves the award he received at Messines from President Mac Aleese - and it is typical of Tom's modesty that he allowed us all to go back to the hotel for dinner while the award ceremony was on. Well done, Tom - keep up the important work: we all appreciate it. I also want to thank the team: Brian Moroney (with his baton and his constant good humor), Seamus Greene (our standard bearer), Nick Broughall, Pat Hogarty and Sean Connolly (who couldn't travel) for all the effort they put into the preparations and the smooth running of the tour. *Go raibh mile maith agaibh.*

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Many thanks to those members of the tour party who wrote and thanked the RDFA Committee for their efforts in running such a successful tour. One of our members who came along on the tour in June 2004 was David Cummins. As a reflection of his feelings about the tour, David wrote the following few lines.

*It was good to reflect, perhaps cry a little inside.  
Ponder much on the unquenchable, inexplicable,  
and sometimes inexcusable.  
It was good to be human with other humans  
As we wound our way through the headstones.  
Unsaid attributes expressed and unexpressed  
emotions of those whose sacrifices we humbly and  
so frequently acknowledged.  
It was good to be one with our kith and kin.  
To tread on the recess of our imagination our  
thoughts and memories.  
To gracefully blissfully express, many many  
heartfelt words.*



Mr. Michael Kearney MBE at Buckingham Palace .

## Notices.

We extend our special thanks to Dublin City Council for the use of the excellent lecture facilities at the John T. Gilbert Room, Dublin City Library Archive, 138-144 Pearse Street, Dublin. The lecture room has superb state-of-the-art public address and multi-media communication systems which are perfect for the display of photographs, diagrams and maps.

Jack O'Connell from Schull Books, Ballydehob, Co. Cork has written to us asking would be so good to bring a notice to the members of the Association that he has some 'special offers on slightly shelf marked' editions of *Neill's Blue Caps* and *Crown and Company*.

Jack can be contacted at Schull Books, 00353 28 37317 outside ROI, or from within ROI: 028 37317.

On Wednesday 19 January 2005, Mr John O'Donoghue T.D, Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism officially launched the CD\_ROM produced by Irish Genealogy of the records of the Irish men who died in the Great War that are contained in the volumes of the war dead at National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge, Dublin 8. This is a very valuable item to have for all Irish Great War enthusiasts. The CD costs Euro 95.00 and is available from Irish Genealogy, 7 – 9 Merrion Row, Dublin 2. Website is [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) or [www.eneclann.ie](http://www.eneclann.ie)

Billy Good from the great town of Bandon, Co. Cork has asked us to bring to the notice of our readers that he is offering for sale embroidered cap badges of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The badge is embroidered on a St. Patrick's Blue cloth twenty-four inches (600 mm) length by eighteen inches wide (460 mm). The cap badge is gold thread inscription approximately nine inches (230 mm) high and nine inches (230 mm) wide. Total number of stitches he tells us 60,402. Contact Billy at 23, Oliver Plunkett Street, Bandon, Co. Cork. Email: [billygood@eircom.net](mailto:billygood@eircom.net).



Embroidered RDF Cap Badge with frame.

**PRO London Website.** For students of the Great War, you will be pleased to know that the Medal Roll index for men who served in the Great War is now on line from The (British) National Archives at Kew in London.

We strongly recommend you look at the following website and join the Newsletter service provided by the Public Records Office at Kew.

<http://www.documentsonline.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

Interestingly when you type in Royal Dublin Fusiliers under the Corps heading you get over 24,000 records of men who served with the Dubs during the war who were entitled to a medal of some sort. Our thanks go to Mr. Michael Leydon for giving us this information. Michael's grandfather Pte. Patrick Leydon, served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Dubs.

### Books Notice.

*Nick Broughall*

*The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

**Remembrance**, is Pat Hogarty's latest work on the Dubs. It is a brief history of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion covering their campaign in Gallipoli and the Western Front, with the 29<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Divisions in the Great War, to their disbandment in 1922. It has a number of photographs and a Roll of Honour. Also, other stories of Dublin Fusiliers in Gallipoli, and as prisoners of war in Germany. It is a soft cover limited edition, to be distributed in February. It will join Pat Hogarty's first book on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion *The Old Toughs* as a valuable record of the achievements of the two regular Battalions from just before the war to disbandment in 1922. Information at Dublin 01-8476945.

**Angels and Heroes** is the story of a machine gunner with the Royal Irish Fusiliers August 1914 to April 1915, compiled by Amanda Moreno and David Truesdale from the Journal of Sergeant Hugh Wilson, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers. The book also contains extracts from the Battalion's War Diaries, personal letters and diaries in the Regimental Museum's collection; a Roll of Honour of those who served with Sergeant Wilson and were killed during the period. Published in 2004 by The Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum, Armagh, to mark the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the First World War. Visit [www.rirfus-mus@freeserve.co.uk](mailto:www.rirfus-mus@freeserve.co.uk).

**Torpedoed! The RMS Leinster Disaster.** This book tells the story of the sinking of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company ship RMS Leinster by the German submarine UB-123. The sinking resulted in the greatest loss of life in the Irish Sea. The greatest loss ever in an Irish owned ship. It lists, and tells the story of passengers, crew, and 22 members of the Dublin Post Office. Military personnel, the majority of passengers, from Ireland, Britain, Canada, United States, New Zealand, Australia, including army, navy, airforce men and women, military and volunteer nurses, were lost. The book tells the story of the submarine's captain and crew. It traces the lives of survivors after the sinking and brings the story up to 2003 when the first ever joint commemorations were held in Dun Laoghaire and Holyhead. Published by Periscope Publishing Ltd ( ISBN 1-904381-29-4). It will be launched initially in Holyhead on 26 February, and at a later date in Dun Laoghaire / Dublin. For the author Philip Lecane it is the culmination of over six years of research. It will be soft back covered and priced at £stg 15.99 or Euro 24 .00 plus post and packaging. A limited edition in hardback will also be available at £stg 28.00 or Euro 40.00 plus post and packaging. Author may be contacted by e-mail at: [rdfa@eircom.net](mailto:rdfa@eircom.net)

**A Guide to Irish Military Heritage** is Number 7 in the Maynooth Research Guides for Irish Local History, edited by Dr. Brian Hanley, and published by Four Courts Press. The guide was commissioned by the Military Heritage of Ireland Trust and is designed to help those who wish to learn more about Ireland's military history at home and abroad. To this end the Guide lists the bodies that hold source material and catalogues the heritage sites and battlefields. A comprehensive bibliography and a guide to on-line Irish military sources are included. Visit [www.four-courts-press.ie](http://www.four-courts-press.ie), e-mail: [info-@four-courts-press.ie](mailto:info-@four-courts-press.ie)

**Tommy - The British Soldier on the Western Front 1914 – 1918** by Prof. Richard Holmes, one of Britain's most successful historians and television presenters. *Tommy* is the latest of more than a dozen books with a military theme and tells the story of "Tommy Atkins" in the Great War. Out of the five million who served, one million lost their lives and two million were wounded. This tells the story of the war as it was fought in

the words of those that fought it; conjures up images of blood, barbed wire, shell holes filled with dead bodies, and puts the ordinary soldier centre stage. Published by HarperCollins [www.harpercollins.co.uk](http://www.harpercollins.co.uk) ISBN 0-00-713751-6.

**Forgotten Victory: The First World War: Myths and Realities** by Dr. Gary Sheffield. To quote just two out of sixteen complimentary reviewers' comments; 'I recommend Gary Sheffield's iconoclastic tour de force. Forgotten Victory: .....Sheffield is one of the new generation of military historians determined to demolish the old cliché of 'lions led by Donkeys'' Niall Ferguson, Sunday Telegraph. "The picture we have of the war...is of a meaningless mud and bloodbath...That slanted picture, Sheffield shows, wasn't how it was for the vast majority of men who fought and won the war' Daily Express. Publishers Headline Book Publishing. Visit [www.hodderheadline.com](http://www.hodderheadline.com)

**Under the Devil's Eye:** Britain's forgotten army at Salonika 1915-1918. By Alan Wakefield and Simon Moody who tell the story of the British Salonika Force, which included the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division, from its landing in Greece to the defeat of Bulgaria in 1918. The "Devil's Eye" was the name given to the infamous Bulgarian observation post that overlooked the British line at Doiran during the Salonika campaign. Published by Sutton Publishing Ltd.

**Ballyshannon Belcoo Bertincourt: History of the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (Donegal and Fermanagh Volunteers) in World War One.** Written and published by W.J.Canning, Dunsilly Lodge, Antrim. Bill Canning, a son of Donegal, gives a discerning insight into the Battalion from its inception in 1914 through until its disbandment in 1918. The author has completed this work as a memorial to brave men. Let us humbly remember them ISBN 0 9528487 0 8

**The First World War – A New Illustrated History** by Prof. Hew Strachan who is the author of several highly regarded books on military history. He now presents a stunning new account of the hostilities which offers many new insights into one of the defining events of the twentieth century.



It offers a truly global vision of the conflict and features a wealth of photographs many not previously published. Published Simon and Schuster: [www.simonsays.co.uk](http://www.simonsays.co.uk) ISBN 0-7432-3959-8.

**The Catholic Church in Ireland 1914 – 1918 War and Politics** by Dr. Jerome Aan de Wiel, University of Reims. This work, for the very first time, using archives never before properly examined, explores how the Church negotiated this turbulent period. How the Church reacted to the British war effort, the government, Home Rule, etc. It reassesses some leading ecclesiastical figures, such as Cardinal Logue, Archbishop Walsh, and Bishop O'Dwyer of Limerick. Published by Irish Academic Press. See [www.iap.ie](http://www.iap.ie)

**The Best of Francis Ledwidge** Edited by Liam O'Meara, with an Introduction by Ulick O'Connor give sixty four of Ledwidge's best poems with comments and extensive notes. Published by Riposte Books.

**Heroic Option: The Irish in the British Army** by Desmond and Jean Bowen. It is one of history's more puzzling paradoxes that Irishmen have served the British Crown for many centuries despite the ambivalent relationship between the nations. Heroic Option records the vast contribution of Irish soldiers and their historic Irish Regiments which is so rich a part of the heritage of both Ireland and Britain. The narrative focuses on the heroic exploits of Irish soldiers in many British Army campaigns throughout the world from the creation of the British Army under Charles II to the end of the Great War and is written to appeal to a general readership interested in military history and Ireland. Available from Pen and Sword Books Ltd, Bamsley, South Yorkshire. Website [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk)

### **In Memoriam.**

The Committee, members and friends of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association wish to offer our sympathies and prayers to Fidelama O'Brien, her husband Des and their children Malachy and Suzanne on the death of her son Adrain

The death occurred of Mr. Basil Baker from Fermoy, Co. Cork. Basil was a member of the

RDF Assoc since the year it was established in 1996. Basil was named after a Capt. Basil Maclear, 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers, killed in action at Mouse Trap Farm 24 May 1915. During the Second World War, Basil was a Sergeant in the North Irish Horse and the 13<sup>th</sup> / 18<sup>th</sup> Hussars, Queen Mary's Own. He occasionally travelled from Cork to attend our lectures in Dublin. He was well over eighty years of age and with the onset of years, his travelling was restricted. His absence at our lectures was sadly noted. Having fought through the Second World War, Basil was tragically killed in a car crash early in 2004. May you rest in peace Basil, we will be thinking of you.

Ar dheis De go raibh a nAnamchca.

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Finally, keep researching and let us know what you are doing. Thank you for your continued support. We can tell the world about the Dublin Fusiliers through *The Blue Cap*.

### **Spectamur Agendo.**