THE BLUE CAP

JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS ASSOCIATION VOL. 16. DECEMBER 2009

‘Fancy the Royal Irish captured Moore Street.’

Attitudes of Irish soldiers serving in the British Army during and after the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin.

Tom Burke.
The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

At mid-day on Monday 24 April 1916, a sniper’s shot rang out along Westmoreland Street in Dublin. The recipient of the sniper’s fatal bullet was an unarmed Dublin Fusilier on furlough named Corporal John William Humphries. He was twenty-nine years of age and died of his wounds at Mercers Hospital. He was buried in Grangegorman Cemetery, Dublin. (1) The death of Cpl. Humphries marked the opening of the Easter Rising in Dublin. Earlier that morning, Patrick Pearse had stepped onto the portico of the General Post Office in Dublin to proclaim the new ‘Irish Republic’. He spoke about the long usurpation of Ireland’s right to control her own destiny by ‘a foreign people and government’ and referred to the ‘gallant allies in Europe’ who were supporting Ireland. Such language cruelly swept aside the thousands of Irishmen who had been fighting those ‘allies’ for the past year and a half. Within hours of Pearse’s proclamation, Irish soldiers of the 10th Royal Dublin Fusiliers were moving against the General Post Office in Dublin. (2) The killing of Corporal Humphries and the Easter Rising that followed presented a dilemma to the Irishmen serving in the Irish regiments of the British Army in 1916. The Rising placed the Irish serviceman in a no-man’s land during the fighting in Dublin and indeed in the years after. His dilemma created a series of internal questions about his reaction and attitudes to the event. It also created a series of questions amongst the British military command about the loyalty of the Irish soldiers. By analysing the feelings and sentiments expressed by a range of Irish officers and men of other ranks who served in the British army at the time of the Rising, this essay will attempt to answer the question: How did the 1916 Rising affect Irish soldiers serving in the British Army during the Great War and what was the officers reaction to the Irish men under their command? The essay will draw on primary source material of unpublished letters of Irish soldiers serving both in Ireland and at the Front, and on similar secondary source material available in books, journals and other sources. The investigation will highlight broad types of reaction of Irish soldiers serving in Dublin during the Rising and at the Front just after the Rising and present any patterns that can be discerned.

Before attempting to analyse the central questions of the essay, a brief summary of the strengths, make-up and actions of the Irish regiments engaged in the Rising will be presented.

Irishmen have a long history of service in the British army. In 1799, the official ban on Catholics joining the army was lifted. Between 1799 and 1815, some 159,000 Irish Catholics had enlisted in English regiments. By 1830, no less than 42.2% of all non-commissioned officers and men throughout the British army were Irish, a A figure way out of proportion to Ireland’s population at the time. (3) By August 1914, the proportion of Irishmen in the regular British Army had levelled out and was 9.1%, in line with the 9.7% Irish composition of the United Kingdom population. (4) The immediate impact of the outbreak of the First World War was the mobilisation of some 58,000 Irish servicemen which included 21,000 regular soldiers, 18,000 reservists i.e. men who had previously served in the forces, 12,000 members of the Special Reserve, 5,000 Naval ratings and several thousand officers. (5) By August 1916, four months after the Rising, 104,466 men had volunteered for service. (6) Between 4 August 1914 and 11 November 1918, some 140,460 Irishmen volunteered into the British army alone. (7) Overall it has been estimated that some 210,000 native-born Irishmen served in the British armed forces during the four years of the war, the majority of whom were volunteers. (8)

By February 1916, approximately 22,000 National Volunteers had joined the army. Within the same period 25,000 men enlisted who were UVF members. Approximately 40% of the National Volunteers who enlisted were Ulster Catholics and a significant proportion of the rest were from the Dublin National Volunteers. (9) At their meeting on 26 April 1916, the Executive Committee of the Belfast National Volunteers passed a resolution condemning the Easter Rising. (10)

> We the members of the Executive Committee of the Belfast Regiment of the Irish National Volunteers condemn in the strongest possible manner the action of the Sinn Fein Party in Dublin in bringing about a reign of terror and playing into the hands of the enemies of our country; and hereby resolve to maintain our allegiance to the Party led by Mr. John Redmond and assure him and them of our determination to support him in any action they may think it wise to take to promote the maintenance of peace and order.

By the end of the war, the National Volunteers eventually contributed 32,000 men to the armed services of which 7,600 were reservists. Nearly 31,000 men including 4,350 reservists were transferred from the Ulster Volunteers to the army. (11)

On Easter Monday 24 April, there were 2,427 British troops in Dublin facing fewer than 1,000 Irish volunteers. (12) By Saturday there were 16,000 British troops in the City. (13) Most of the British infantry battalions stationed or drafted into Dublin were reserve battalions of Irish Regiments reinforced with soldiers on leave and colonial troops spending Easter in Ireland. Australian, New Zealand and Canadian soldiers helped the Dublin University Officer Training Corps in its defence of the college. (14) At the time of the Rising, most Irish officers in the British forces were not nationalists. The majority of officers in the Irish regiments in early 1916 held regular commissions and were either not Irish or else came from Irish unionist backgrounds. Nationalists who received temporary commissions generally served in southern Irish battalions of the 10th (Irish) and 16th (Irish) Divisions established by Lord Kitchener at the outbreak of the war. (15) In terms of the non-commissioned officers and other ranks, the majority of men in both these infantry division were Roman Catholic.

The British Army's plan of campaign to defeat the Volunteers in Dublin was to encircle them and draw their net tighter. To this end, a Northern and Southern cordon was formed around the City. Reserve battalions of the Irish regiments were used in the first few days of the Rising to put it down. In Dublin city, these Irish regiments were, the 3rd Royal Irish Regiment, the 3rd Royal Irish Rifles, the 4th, 5th and 10th Battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the 5th Leinster Regiment. The 4th Dublins were stationed at Templemore Co. Tipperary and the 10th Dublins at The Royal Barracks, Dublin. (16) On Easter Monday 24 April 1916,the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment was stationed at Richmond Barracks in Inchicore, Dublin. Other than a high stonewall near St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church in Inchicore, nothing remains of Richmond Barracks today. The church is the original garrison church. The battalion was under the command of Lieut.-Colonel R.L. Owens. The main function of the 3rd Royal Irish was to train new recruits for the regiment serving at the front in Flanders and France. They were one of the first units of the British army to challenge the Volunteers. The participation of the 3rd Royal Irish Regiment in putting down the rebellion is recorded by the historian of the Royal Irish, Brig.-General Stannus Geoghegan C.B. They fought the Irish Volunteers in the South Dublin Union. They were later ordered to proceed to Trinity College and from there to secure Grafton and Kildare Streets along with Merrion Square as part of the cordon. They also took part in the assault on the G.P.O. At 6:00 p.m. on 28 April, about 600 rebels formed up and surrendered to the battalion, which kept them under guard until the following morning, when they were marched to Richmond Barracks. After the surrender, Brig. General Lowe, C.B., complimented the battalion through Colonel Owens, on their, 'excellent behaviour throughout, and said it was due to the aggressive manner with which the battalion dealt with the rebels that the surrender was brought about.'(17)

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers fought the Volunteers at Dublin Castle, Broadstone Railway Station and at Cabra. Their officer casualties were the following.

- Twenty-two year old 2nd Lieut. George Gray from Newcastle-on-Tyne. Before joining the Dublin Fusiliers he was a dental student. He is buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin. His name is on a memorial in the Church of Ireland Church in Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin.

- Lieut. Gerald Aloysius Neilan, a Dubliner, was killed fighting with the 10th Royal Dublin Fusiliers by a rebel sniper at Usher's Island on Easter Monday. (18) His brother, A. Neilan, was sent to Knutsfurd Detention Barracks in England on 1 May 1916 for his participation in the Rising. (19)

The Neilan's were not the only brothers who took different sides in 1916, although they did not fight against each other in the Rising. There were the Saurin brothers from ' The Cottage', Vernon Avenue, Clontarf. Thomas Saurin served with the Royal Army Medical Corps on the Western Front. His brother Charles Saurin was an Irish Volunteers officer in the Dublin Metropole Hotel garrison that fought against the British in the Rising. Both Saurin brothers were pupils of St. Joseph's CBS in Fairview. (20) Another set of brothers who took different sides was the Malone brothers originally from the South Circular Road in Dublin. On 24 May 1915, Sgt. William Malone of the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers died in the German gas attack at St. Jullien northeast of Ypres in Flanders. He was a married man and lived at Brannixtown near Trim in Co. Meath. (21) During the Rising, William's brother Michael Malone was killed fighting with the Volunteers at No. 25 Northumberland Road in Dublin. His name is on a memorial plaque on the front end of the house on Northumberland Road. (22) William Kent, the brother of Irish Volunteer Eamon Ceannt, was killed in action with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in 1917. (23)

There was concern amongst the officers of the 4th Dublin Fusiliers about the reaction of the ordinary soldiers if ordered to fire on their fellow countrymen. Lieut. Arthur Killingley noted in his diary on 24 April 1916.

'We had a general discussion as to how men will behave if ordered to fire on their fellow countrymen.' (24) Nationalist officers were keen to emphasise the sensitivity with which Irish regiments handled themselves in the Rising when contrasted with the heavy-handed methods used by non-Irish units subsequently. It seems reactions by Irish soldiers to the Volunteers were mixed. Captain Eugene Sheehy, son of former Home Rule MP and brother-in-law of Tom Kettle MP, stressed the restraint with which his battalion, the 4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, had conducted itself. (25) Charles Duff had just missed the Easter Rising. He went to England for officer training on Easter Monday from Fermanagh. He noted in his memoirs that he, 'had joined the British Army as a volunteer in Dublin – to fight Germans', presumably not to fight his fellow countrymen. (26) One Anglo-Irish officer, whose name is not given noted: 'There were far too many Dubliners fighting with Irish regiments, in France and elsewhere, for the population to feel that this was the right moment to embarrass England.' (27) An officer of the Leinster Regiment declined to command the firing party at the execution of Joseph Plunkett. He cited their childhood friendship and was excused his duty. Captain Stephen Gwynn of the Connaught Rangers, a Nationalist MP for Galway, noted that the 10th Royal Dublin Fusiliers included men who, 'had been active leaders in the Howth gunrunning. It was not merely a case of Irishmen firing on their fellow countrymen: it was one section of the original Volunteers firing on another.'(28)

However, when they arrived at Kingsbridge Railway Station, Killingley and his men came across a batch of Volunteers who had been taken prisoner. His concerns and doubts about his men's attitude towards their fellow countrymen were soon answered. His men he noted, 'booted the prisoners with great gusto.' (29) This account by Killingley is in total contradiction to Sheehy's account of a restrained 4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Killingley's account was a contemporaneous one. Sheehy's was written in hindsight in 1951 and it may well have suited him to present his regiment as being well behaved to Ireland's freedom fighters in the Ireland of the 1950s.

What were the attitudes of Irish Volunteers to their fellow countrymen fighting against them in the Rising?

One of the Volunteers captured by the 3rd Royal Irish Regiment was Commandant W. J. Brennan-Whitmore, Director of Field Intelligence and Officer Commanding the North Earl Street area of the City. In his book *Dublin Burning*, Brennan described his treatment by the Royal Irish at Richmond Barracks. His comrades mixed with the Irish soldiers in a cordial atmosphere and his reflections are in compliance with Sheehy's account but differ from Killingley's. (30)

> At this time, the 18th Royal Irish Regiment was in occupation of Richmond Barracks. To my great surprise, we were not segregated and isolated. The members of the garrison were allowed to mix freely with us in the barrack room in which we were temporarily housed. We were not the only insurgent prisoners confined in this great military barrack and many of my men recognised and had a great powwow with city friends and acquaintances.
>
> I would have felt very much out of it and alone but that the Royal Irish was the territorial unit of County Wexford. I knew many of the soldiers and they knew me. We were received and treated with the greatest kindness by the NCO's and men of the 18th. I do not know personally if the statement in the second proclamation of the provisional government to the citizens of Dublin that Irish regiments in the British army had refused to act against their fellow countrymen was founded on fact or mere rumour. What I do know is this. Many of the NCO's and men of the 18th Regiment were very dissatisfied that we had not given them a chance to join us. Practically all those whom I knew personally, and some I didn't know, came and unhesitatingly voiced that sentiment to me… At any rate they fed us well and lent us shaving and toilet kits… In fact the troops were over anxious to do us every little kindness they could anticipate.

In the same account, Brennan noted that some of the Royal Irish wanted to assist the Volunteers, but he dismissed their offer and felt their sentiments were not sincere and too late.

> I queried why they (the Royal Irish soldiers) had not sought to contact the volunteers privately beforehand and thus find out whether their services would be welcome or not. They replied that they did not take all this volunteering and drilling seriously, that in fact they never once thought it would lead to a rebellion.
>
> Oh, how often had I listened to that excuse all through Monday night and all day on Tuesday! In view of the antics of the Irish Parliamentary Party and their 'National' Volunteers - most of whom had joined the British army - it was a reasonable point of view. But the numbers of nationally minded people in Ireland who did not take the Irish Volunteer movement seriously must have been extraordinary high

Brennan's account indicates that some of the Royal Irish soldiers had sympathies with the Volunteers and their cause. Whether these sentiments were genuine or not is difficult to confirm. One can only take Brennan's word and assume they were genuine. To date, there is no evidence of a mass defection or mutiny amongst the Irish regiments in Dublin or at the Front. Pearse's statement of 26 April that, 'Irish regiments in the British Army have refused to act against their fellow countrymen 'and, that they were defecting to the rebels was not totally true. (31)

Michael Wall was a nineteen-year-old young man from the townland of Carrick Hill between Portmarnock and Malahide in north county Dublin. He went to St. Joseph's Christian Brothers School in Fairview, the same school as the two Saurin brothers. He later went to O'Connell's Boys Christian Brothers School in North Richmond Street, Dublin, coincidentally the same school as Tom Kettle attended. A devout Catholic and very bright student in science and mathematics, Michael had been offered a place in the National University of Ireland (UCD) to study

science. Like many of his generation, he was smitten by this terrible war. He was so enthusiastic that he initially volunteered for service in munitions works in England. He applied for a commission into the army and was accepted into the Royal Irish Regiment. He spent six weeks on a training course at the Trinity College Officer Training Corps (OTC) after which he was posted to the Regiment. Michael Wall was totally against the Sinn Fein movement. While on his way to training in Ballykinlar Camp in County Down, he got word of the Rising in Dublin. He missed the outbreak by one day and was delighted to hear that his regiment, the 3rd Royal Irish, had captured Moore Street from the Volunteers. The sympathies of men from Michael's regiment at Richmond Barracks with the Volunteers as noted by Comdt. Brennan was in total contrast to that of Michael who was a junior officer in the same battalion. When he got to Ballykinlar he wrote home to his mother on 26 April 1916. (32)

> Officers Company, Ballykinlar Camp, Co. Down.
> Dear Mother,
> I hope this letter finds you all well and safe at Carrick Hill. Wasn't it a terrible week. I hope Auntie has not sustained any damage as I saw the paper that there was an outbreak at Swords but whether it is true or not I cannot say. I got back to camp too soon. I wish I had been in Dublin. It would have been great. Fancy the Royal Irish captured Moore Street under Col. Owens. One of our officers was killed - Lieut. Ramsey.

On 11 May, Michael wrote to his younger brother Joseph. If there was any doubt as to where Michael's loyalties lay regarding Irish republicans, this letter makes his feelings very clear. (33)

> Dear Joe,
> Those letters of sympathy are very interesting indeed. I saw Jim Connolly's photo all right, it is a dream. 'Some General'. Did you see the picture of the 'Irish Beauty' that married one of the rebels before he was shot in The Sketch. Isn't she a dream… I remain your fond brother, Michael.

The 'Irish Beauty' Michael referred to in his letter to Joseph was Miss Grace Gifford, Mrs. Joseph Mary Plunkett, who was by then a widow. Her husband, along with three other rebels were sentenced to death by a Courtmartial held in Richmond Barracks. The presiding British officers at Plunkett's trial were Colonel Maconchy, Lieut.-Col. Bent (an Irish born Royal Munster Fusilier) and Major Woodward. They were married in the prison chapel and a prison warder acted as the witness. Plunkett was executed on 4 May 1916. The 'Some General' remark is no doubt a reference to James Connolly.

2nd Lieut. Michael Wall, 6th Royal Irish Regiment from Carrick Hill, Co. Dublin at Ballykinlar Camp in 1916. He was nineteen when this photograph was taken.

The stock phrase uttered by Irish Great War veterans about the Easter Rising was that it was 'a stab in the back.' The term may have come from different motivations. It was used by both Nationalist and Unionist officers. Nationalist officers who were politically minded believed the Rising damaged the prospects of Home Rule. Robert Barton, a Wicklow landowner, was gazetted from the Inns of Court OTC to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers just as the rebellion began. He spent the week in Richmond Barracks and was in charge of gathering prisoners' effects after their surrender.

The prisoners found Barton sympathetic and helpful, which interestingly ties in with Comdt. Brennan's account of his treatment at Richmond. Barton became disillusioned with the war and grew in sympathy for the Sinn Fein movement. By June 1916 he felt that, 'everyone is a Sinn Feiner now…Ireland will never again be as friendly disposed to England as she was at the outbreak of the war.' In December 1918, Barton was elected Sinn Fein MP for West Wicklow and was one of the signatories to the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921. (34)

There were officers in Dublin who felt no sympathy for the Volunteers, and there were officers who felt quite the opposite. J.C Carrothers found it, 'pitiable to see some of the Sinns (sic) that have been captured by women in the back streets. They are all scratched and stabbed with hat pins.' (35) Lieut. John Wilson-Lynch sent a vivid account of escort duty to his family in Galway. He stated the Sinn Fein prisoners, 'were a sad sight.' Captain Sir Francis Vane and 2nd Lieutenant Monk Gibbon stationed at Portobello Barracks, notified the War office of the circumstances of the murder of Francis Sheehy Skeffington. (36) In hindsight, Eugene Sheehy recalled years after the Rising: (37)

> The Rising in Easter week was a source of heartbreak to me and to the many tens of thousands of Irish Nationalists who joined the British Army. We had done so at the request of our leaders – who were the elected representatives of the people – and the vast majority of the Nation applauded our action. The Rising was not even approved by the leaders of Sinn Fein…. As the tide of Irish public opinion gradually changed and hostility to England grew we did not quite know where we stood, or where our duty lay. The threat of conscription in 1918, and the ultimate betrayal of Redmond by the British Parliament, made those of us who survived feel that the thousands of Irishmen who died in Flanders, France and Gallipoli had made their sacrifice in vain.

For Ulster Unionist officers and men of other ranks, reaction and attitudes to the Rising fell along predictable lines.

The Rising disrupted the war effort and was a useful reminder of nationalist treachery. At the time of the Rising, Basil Brooke, later Viscount Brookeborough was a regular officer in Dublin. He was on special leave as his wife was having a baby. He felt ashamed, 'for his country, for his regiment and for those who had died in the war.' (38) Major Frank Crozier serving with the Royal Irish Rifles in France, a regiment that recruited mainly in loyalist areas of Belfast, found very little talk amongst his men of the events in Dublin. (39) And yet there was concern shown amongst some of the Rifles. The trench journal of the 14th Royal Irish Rifles, the pre-War UVF Young Citizen Volunteer battalion wrote in its editorial comment. 'Speaking for ourselves, we'd rather have seen a little less mercy to some of the rebels…what kind of death do those insurgent dogs deserve…Ugh! Doesn't it make your blood boil lads.'(40) Private Andrew Lockhart of the 11th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, a battalion in the 36th(Ulster) Division, was worried that the Volunteers would cause trouble around his home farm near Bruckless in Co. Donegal. 'I was glad to hear that things are getting quiet in Ireland, had you any trouble with them at home.' (41) One man who would later become a Unionist MP for North Down, Lieut. Walter Smiles, serving with the Royal Naval Armoured Train, hoped that Carson would be appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland. (42) When he wrote his diary in 1962, from an Ulster Unionist's perspective, Major T.C.H Dickson MC wrote an interesting appraisal of the Easter Rising in Dublin. He served with the 4th Dublins in Dublin during the Rising after which he was posted to the 9th Dublins in France. He survived the war and returned to his native town in Ulster where he became a member of the Special Reserve of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the 'B' Specials. (43)

> It is difficult to say, even after forty six years which have elapsed after the Rebellion, what the policy of the British Cabinet in London should have been, for Treason in any country has always been punishable by death, and it was the Cabinet who confirmed the sentences. But for twenty years before the Rebellion bitterness against England had been building up and little had been done to counter it.

> I believe that if Gladstone's policy of Commonwealth Home Rule for Ireland had been carried out in the 1880's and if the British Royal Family had at that time built two Royal residences in Ireland, and if the Irish landlords had then lived on their rents - the Irish Rebellion of 1916 would never have occurred. But the opportunity was lost and passed in the 1880's for after 1890 each party in Ireland was irrevocably committed to a fixed policy. I believe that if Gladstone and T.A.D *(a relative)* could have lived to see the Rebellion and the events of recent years which have sprung from it, they would have said sadly. 'We told you so'

The Rising prevented the movement of troops around the city. For some troops home on leave, this curtailment of movement prevented them from visiting relatives and socialising that consequently left a sour taste in the mouth of the ordinary foot soldier towards the Volunteers. The Police had prevented Sgt. John Brooks M.M of the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers from going to Blackrock due to ongoing sniping on men wearing military uniform, remember what had happened to Corporal Humphries. Brooks had promised to visit Miss Monica Roberts in Blackrock but could not get through the military cordon and was pretty annoyed when he got back to France with those who started the Rising. He wrote to her telling her that if he had his way he 'would shoot every one of them', which would seem a bit harsh on the Volunteers simply for not getting to see his friend. (44)

News about the Rising in Dublin was slow to reach the front lines in Flanders, France and beyond. The authorities did their best to contain the news. (45) The Irish serving overseas heard about the Rising in various ways. Tom Barry, while serving with the Royal Artillery in Mesopotamia, found out about the Rising from a bulletin posted in his unit's orderly room. He found the news, ' a rude awakening.'(46) *The Irish Times* continued to print during the Rising. When other papers resumed printing, they reported that Irish troops felt betrayed and angered by the Rising.

It could be argued that Irish newspapers, particularly *The Irish Times* may have had some influence over the men's negative attitude towards the Rising and volunteers. Some of the Nationalist Irish newspapers gave their support to the Irish regiments for putting down the Rising. On 5 May 1916, *The Freeman's Journal* sang their praises. 'Not regiments of professional soldiery of the old stamp, but reserves of the Irish Brigade who had rallied to the last call of the Irish leader, true Irish Volunteers…defending their city against the blind self-devoted victims of the Hun.' (47) Press reports emphasised that nationalists in the trenches felt let down. On hearing the news, Lieutenant Patrick Hemphill speculated on 29 April. 'I suppose they'll hang the ringleaders. It's what traitors deserve. It appears to have been got up by Roger Casement.' (48) All army leave to Ireland was stopped on 27 April and post from Ireland may have been censored. (49) German newspapers were aware of the Dublin Rebellion and this news travelled to the German lines at the front. They raised placards opposite the Irish lines informing them of the rebellion in Dublin. One read: 'Irishmen! Heavy uproar in Ireland. English guns are firing on your wives and children 1st May 1916'. (50) The placards asked the Irish to desert, little heed was paid to the German enticements. The official war diarist of the 9th Royal Munster Fusiliers recorded a revenge taunt on 21 May when his battalion hung up an effigy of Roger Casement in full view of the German trenches. Their war diary recorded that the effigy 'appeared to annoy the enemy and was found riddle with bullets.'(51)

When news of the Rising eventually filtered through to the Front, it came as a great surprise. Captain Stephen Gwynn, a nationalist MP serving with the 6th Connaught Ranges told his fellow Nationalist MP, a dejected Major Willie Redmond MP, 'I shall never forget the men's indignation. They felt they had been stabbed in the back.' (52) Attitudes of Irish soldiers serving at the front line were a bit more emotional than those expressed by men serving in Dublin during the Rising. Some of the men believed the rebels should be conscripted while others believed they should be shot. Almost a year after the Rising, Michael Wall reckoned, 'those Sinn Feiners should be sent out here to do a few nights on the fire step, I will guarantee it will cool their air down.' (53)

The Monica Roberts Collection is an eight-volume collection of letters in The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association archive in Dublin City Library and Archive at Pearse Street, Dublin. Irish soldiers, predominantly Royal Dublin Fusiliers, wrote the letters to Miss Monica Roberts of Kelston House, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin. In 1915, aged eighteen, Miss Roberts and her friends established a voluntary charity group they named 'The Band of Helpers for Soldiers'. The young ladies toured church and parochial halls in south county Dublin and presented light musical entertainment for a small fee. From the money collected they purchased comforts for the troops such as tobacco, razor blades and cigarettes etc. They then sent these out to the Dublin Fusiliers at the front in France and Flanders. The letters the troops sent back to Miss Roberts and her friends thanked them for their kindness. Many of the soldiers expressed their sentiments about the war, conditions at the front and indeed their attitude towards the Irish rebels and the Easter Rising. The letters are an authentic source. The general feeling expressed in the letters about the Rising is one of disgust, betrayal, revenge and downright hostility towards the men who carried out the Rising. However a note of caution must be issued when reading or interpreting these letters. Officers censored all the letters before they were posted to Ireland. Keeping in good favour with your commanding officer was important at the front. Therefore expressing sentiments that the officer would like to hear would stand the soldier in good favour. Writing to Miss Roberts on 11 May 1916, Pte. Joseph Clarke of the 2nd Dublins told her what he and many of his comrades felt about the rising in Dublin. (54)

> I was sorry to hear of the rebel rising in Ireland, but I hope by the time this letter reaches you, the condition will have changed and things normal again. There is no one more sorry to hear of the Rising than the Irish troops out here, it worries them more than I can explain. Their whole cry is, if they could only get amongst them for a few days, the country would not be annoyed with them any more. Some of the men in this Battalion is very uneasy about the safety of their people and one or two poor fellows have lost relatives in this scandalous affair. We just have had some men returned off leave and they tell us that Dublin is in ruins. It is awfully hard to lose one's life out here without being shot at home. The Sherwood's lost heavily but I expect the Rebels got the worst of the encounter. We of the 2nd Battalion, the Dublins, would ask for nothing better that the rebels should be sent out here and have an encounter with some of their ' so called Allies', the Germans. I do not think anything they have done will cause any anxiety to England or her noble cause. We will win just the same. These men are pro-German pure and simple, and no Irish men will be sorry when they get justice meted out to them, which, in my opinion, should be death by being shot.

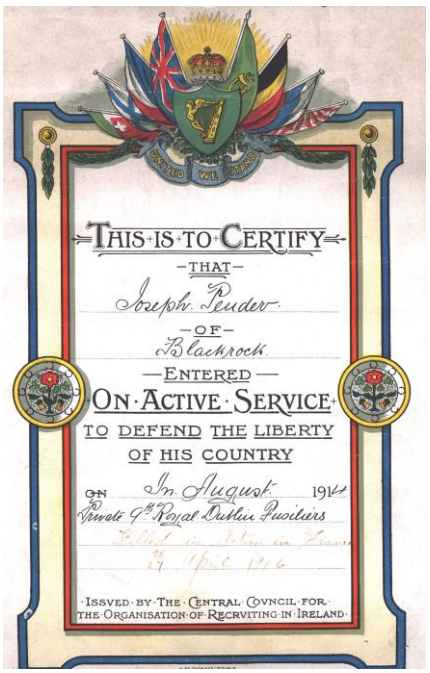
Sgt. Edward Heapey of the 8th Dublins also wrote to Miss Roberts and expressed similar views to Michael Wall's of dealing with the rebels. ' I wish I had my way with the Sinn Feiners. I would put every one of them out here and make them do some real good fighting and make them realise what war is like.' (55) Amongst other men there was a feeling of apathy. There were officers who felt they could simply do nothing and get on with the task in hand at the front. Lieut. Michael Fitzgerald serving in the Irish Guards noted. 'We were too preoccupied with what was in front of us and what we had to do…whatever might happen in Ireland after we'd gone we could do nothing about it. That was our attitude.' (56) There were others who found the whole affair uninteresting. Anthony Brennan of the 2nd Royal Irish Regiment wrote in 1937. 'Although we were mildly interested, nobody took the thing very seriously.'(57)

Having stated their attitudes, I now wish to present some possible reasons why such attitudes existed. It seems there were several commonalities among the reasons why Irish soldiers serving at the Front expressed such feelings of bitterness and apathy towards the Volunteers and Rising itself. The following are just some of these commonalities that may go some way in explaining such feelings. They are not listed in terms of priority or importance.

The first reason I would suggest was the executions. The executions took the British army beyond the threshold of tolerance for most of the Irish population that included a good number of Irish soldiers serving in the British army. The knock-on effect was self-doubt amongst the ranks. There were officers and men who began to question their loyalties. Men like 2nd Lieut. O'Connor Dunbar of the Army Service Corps. He was a friend and colleague of Monk Gibbon who wrote about Dunbar who had taken part in the gun-running at Howth and was a Redmondite National Volunteer. Monk stated that 'it had taken the Easter executions to make Dunbar begin to doubt the wisdom of the step he had taken.'(58) Tom Kettle was distressed by the executions; he was friendly with several of those who were shot. His wife Mary and Francis Skeffington's wife Hanna were sisters. The murder of Francis Sheehy Skeffington deeply effected Kettle. His murderer, Capt. Bowen-Colthurst and Kettle wore the same uniform. Kettle too began to doubt his vocation. (59) Prophetically he noted about the men executed. 'These men will go down in history as heroes and martyrs; and I will go down-if I go down at all- as a bloody British officer.' (60) Kettle was not the only Irish officer to doubt his decision to join the British army. Writing in 1970 about 'that affair in April 1916' and the executions in particular, William Mount, an ex-officer with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and friend of Sean Heuston, stated, 'there were times when I wondered if we were on the right side. That was a cowardly, unforgivable thing to do.' (61) John Lucy of the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles was anguished by the news of the Rising. He noted that, 'my fellow soldiers had no great sympathy with the rebels but they got fed up when they heard of the execution of the leaders.' (62) These sentiments were published twenty years after the Armistice and were not an attempt to exonerate him. (63) The poet Francis Ledwidge was deeply troubled by the executions in Dublin. 'Yes, poor Ireland is always in trouble' he wrote to an Ulster protestant friend on the day the first leaders were executed. 'Though I am not a Sinn Feiner and you are a Carsonite, do your sympathies not go to *Cathleen ni Houlihan*? Poor MacDonagh and Pearse were two of my best friends and now they are dead, shot by England.' (64)

The second reason I would suggest was a terrible event which happened in France during the week of the Rising when the Irish Brigades of the 16th (Irish) Division suffered horribly in a Chlorine gas attack launched by the Germans on 27 April 1916 at Hulluch, north of Loos. It was into this Division that most of the Redmondite volunteers had enlisted. There were 2,128 Irish casualties; approx. 538 were killed, the remainder were to suffer chronic lung and breathing conditions for the rest of their lives. John Redmond commented on the tragic irony of the German attack that occurred during the Rising. He spoke in the House of Commons. (65)

> Is it not an additional horror that on the very day when we hear that the men of the Dublin Fusiliers have been killed by Irishmen on the streets of Dublin, we receive the news of how the men of the 16th Division - our own Irish Brigade, and of the same Dublin Fusiliers-had dashed forward and by their unconquerable bravery retaken the trenches that the Germans had won at Hulluch? Was there ever such a picture of a tragedy which a small section of Irish faction had so often inflicted on the fairest hopes and the bravest deeds of Ireland.



Service certificate for Pte. Joseph Pender 9th Royal Dublin Fusiliers from Blackrock, Co. Dublin. Pte. Pender was killed in action at Hulluch on 27 April 1916. He was seventeen years of age.

The events at Hulluch had a devastating effect on the men of the 16th (Irish) Division. The timing and link with events in Dublin was not lost on some men. Lieut. Edward Gallagher served in the 7th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and was relieved to have come through the Hulluch gas attack. He noted, 'poor old Ireland. Betrayed again.' An unnamed officer who also survived Hulluch wished 'to God the War office would send the 16th Division over to Dublin to settle things. After going through the 27th (April) we are game for everything, and would soon settle the German puppets.' (66)

The third reason I would suggest stemmed from a worry some Irish soldiers had for the safety of their families back in Dublin. In his letter to Miss Roberts, Private Clarke was more concerned about the safety of his family in Dublin than any political cause for the Rising. Although not yet at the front, Michael Wall also expressed concern about the safety of his family at Carrickhill. He was also concerned about the state of Dublin. '…I hear they have restarted to rebuild Sackville Street. Did Arnotts shop escape.' (67) In August 1916, one of Michael's officer friends wrote to him and addressed the letter to Michael as 'Lieut. M. Wall. 3rd Bat. R.I. Regt, Carrick Hill, Malahide, Co. Dublin.' In addressing his letter to Michael as Lieut. Wall of the Royal Irish Regiment, his friend didn't seem to be too concerned about Michael's safety and the possibility of any republican sympathisers or informers that may have been around Carrickhill. (68) Pte. Christy Fox of the 2nd Dublins was very worried he had not received any letters from home following the Rising. Since he lived near the Linenhall Barracks, he was worried if any of his people were caught up in the fighting. By the end of May 1916 he had received word that all was well. (69)

> I'm glad to be able to tell you I have got news from home, all my people are quiet safe. There was a few people killed where I live. Those two men that were dug up in the cellar in 177 North King Street, I live in the house facing it at the corner of Linenhall Street. There were four men killed in a house only three doors from me at 27 North King Street, I live in 24 when I'm at home and I knew one of them well. ……(Who killed them, rebel or soldier?)
>
> I am glad to hear all the trouble is over in Dublin. I would like to have a few of those rebels out here, I can tell you I would give them 2 Oz. of lead. But in ways the poor fools, that's what I would call them, were dragged into it by Connolly and a few more of his colleagues. Deed (sic) I know them very well, the lot of robbers. I remember the strike in Dublin, look at the way Dublin was left poverty stricken that time. It is the same click that has brought on all that destruction on our dear old country. However they are put down now and I only have one hope and that is I hope they are down forever.

It is interesting to note Fox's question – 'Who killed them, rebel or soldier'. Records have shown it was soldiers and the incident has been recorded as an atrocity.

The fourth reason I would suggest was political motivation. Private Christy Fox in his letter above was aware of the role of James Connolly. He may have found out about Connolly from Irish newspapers sent out to the Irish troops. Fox believed that the rebels were fools that were politically duped and dragged into a fight by James Connolly and a few of his colleagues. Politically motivated bitterness operated at higher levels in the ranks than that of Christy Fox from Linenhall Street. The Easter Rising had weakened the cause and image of constitutional Irish nationalism in Ireland, however it had a deeply demoralizing effect on members of the Irish Parliamentary Party serving at the Front. It was a bitter disappointment for the thousands (32,000) of Redmondite volunteers who had joined the army at the outbreak of the war and answered Redmond's call at Woodenbridge. Captain Stephen Gwynn's subsequent speeches to the House of Commons and his letters to the press were bitter about the damage done to Home Rule. (70) There were three officers in the army during the Rising that had been or were currently Home Rule MPs. They were Stephen Gwynn, Willie Redmond and Tom Kettle. Stephen Gwynn and Willie Redmond realised their war service would compromise them

should the Irish electorate change its views in the wake of the Rising. Kettle was aghast with the Rising. He denounced the venture as madness. He saw it as destructive of what he had striven for throughout his adult life. The death of his brother-in-law added to his depressed state after the Rising. (71) Willie Redmond, who had been on leave in England at the time of the Rising, told Stephen Gwynn. 'Don't imagine that what you and I have done is going to make us popular with our people. On the contrary, we shall both be sent to the right about at the first general election.' The fighting in Dublin devastated him too. He sobbed bitterly like a child on hearing the news. It was Patrick Pearse's appeal to the 'Gallant German allies' that particularly shocked him. (72) The Rising had undermined his political life's work also. His wife wrote that, 'often since the rebellion he said he thought he could best serve Ireland by dying.' (73) His death wish came true on 7 June 1917 when he was killed leading his men of the 6th Royal Irish Regiment in their successful attack on the Flemish village of Wijtschate. Eamon DeValera won the vacant Westminster seat in a bye-election in July 1917. In September the year previous, Tom Kettle was killed leading his men of the 9th Royal Dublin Fusiliers in their attack on Ginchy during the Somme campaign.

Another political feature that I suggest may have been a consequence of the Rising that affected the Irish troops at the Front was, that for some Irishmen, the Rising in Dublin might have realigned their nationalism, particularly amongst soldiers who were Redmondite Volunteers. The Rising may have acted as a kind of catalyst or propellant that quickened their journey from a mild form of Irish nationalism to a more militant form. Tom Barry had started on that road; the Rising was his Damascene conversion. He recalled. 'Thus through the blood sacrifices of the men of 1916, had one Irish youth of eighteen been awakened to Irish Nationality.' (74) Erskine Childers travelled that road too from being a member of the Royal Navy to being an anti-treaty Republican. Emmet Dalton (d'Alton) served with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and won the Military Cross at Ginchy. He was with Kettle when he was killed. He too like Tom Barry stayed in the army until the end of the war. Barry remained in the British army for four years after the Rising. He was discharged on 31 March 1920. (75) In an RTE TV interview in 1966, Emmet Dalton stated that he saw no difference fighting with the British for Ireland's independence in 1916 and against the British for the same cause in the War of Independence. (76)

In November 1917, men of the Royal Munster Fusiliers held an informal meeting in Ireland declaring that they were, 'as good Irishmen and nationalists as any Sinn Feiners. Though they fought for England against the Hun, and would continue to fight till the war was won, their interest in their country was just as SF as anyone else.' (77) One of Col. Rowland Fielding's Company of 6th Connaught Rangers made an enormous green flag with a yellow Irish harp on it; which they took on marches and flew outside their billets. The flag had no crown, and Fielding noted that it might be regarded as 'Sinn Fein'. Deneys Reitz, an officer of the 7th Royal Irish Rifles found that his men, 'certainly talked a lot of politics' with 'frequent wranglings'. Before the battalion was disbanded in late 1917, Reitz wrote of rumours that the battalion could no longer be trusted politically because 'there were too many Sinn Feiners among us.' (78)

There is no doubt that there was a fear in London about the loyalty of the southern Irish soldiers. Col. Maurice Moore, senior training officer in the National Volunteers noted in June 1916 that, 'all nationalists are Sinn Feiners in war office eyes.' (79) However, high-ranking British officers in Dublin did not express such fears. General Maxwell, in his army order of 1 May 1916 commented favourably on the, 'Irish regiments that have so largely helped to crush this rising.' The CIGS, Robertson, agreed with Lord French, now the Commander-in-Chief Home Forces, that there was no evidence to doubt the dependability of the Irish troops. From his research, Satterthwaite has suggested that, 'there appears little to suggest that there was a widespread belief that following the Rising there was a concerted effort on behalf of the British military authorities to suppress or undermine the national identity of Irish units.' The military command still had confidence in Irish units at the Front to fight. (80)

Whatever about the opinions of people like Maxwell and French, it must be stated that there was evidence of an element of doubt and miss-trust that had set into the British military establishment after the Rising.

There were incidents of doubts expressed to some officers in Irish front line units. Noel Drury, a unionist officer in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers ironically experienced some of that doubt that had filtered down through the ranks even to as far away places as Ismalia in Egypt where he was stationed. He and his men liked to look at the aeroplanes but he found the pilots a bit standoff in their conversations. 'They were very chary of letting us see much of the machines. Suppose they thought the Irish couldn't be trusted.'(81) Anthony Brennan's unit in the 2nd Royal Irish Regiment was held out in the countryside for a few extra weeks, 'to guard against any possible sympathetic reactions to affairs in Dublin.' (82) In April 1917, the Roman Catholic Chaplain to the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles, Fr. Henry Gill S.J was asked by his commanding officer if he 'thought it likely that any of the Irish would think of deserting and if it would be advisable to talk to the men.' Fr. Gill noted in his diary. (83)

> It was, I suppose an aftermath of the trouble in Ireland a year before. I said that nothing could do greater harm than to suggest that any of the men were thought capable of treachery. As a matter of fact, no further step was taken. Later on when the attack (on Wijtschate) was over, it was discovered that a sergeant of an English regiment had given information to the enemy. We were free from anything of this kind.

There was ill feeling whipped up by civilian groups like the All British Association who attacked those who were perceived to be opposed to the war effort such as Irish and Catholics. Germans, Hungarians and Ukrainians all came under suspicion in Canada. (84) The Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion Irish Guards was summoned to the War Office in June 1916 to discuss the political situation in Ireland. The Irish Guards were, and still are, the senior Irish regiment in the British Army and were recruited from all over Ireland although strongly rural and Catholic in composition. The officer of the Guards summoned noted that the Rising made 'no impact on the men of the battalion.' (85) It was an Irish Guardsman named Reggie Dunne and a Munster Fusilier named Joseph O'Sullivan that murdered General Sir Henry Wilson in London in June 1922. (86) It is worth noting that Dunne enlisted into the Irish Guards in June 1916 *after* the Rising and executions. (87) Even as late as the spring of 1918 men of the 16th (Irish) Division were harassed by other BEF soldiers who shouted, 'there go the Sinn Feiners.' (88) In light of the honesty to the cause they had undertaken, it was tragic to hear, that after the German offensive in March 1918, what was left of the 16th (Irish) Division was still the subject of slander originating from some ill-perceived notions created by bigots, that Irishmen were disloyal to their cause. (89)

Having listed the possible reasons and explanations as to why there was such a negative reaction by Irish soldiers both in Dublin and at the Front to the Rising and the Volunteers, perhaps the greatest concern or fear the Army high command had about the post-Rising Irish units which had a direct link to political sentiments and attitudes within Irish units, was of course their state of morale. On the surface at a high level of command, as has been shown, there seemed to be no great concern of these men's loyalty. However, the question remained, what was the morale and fighting spirit of these Irishmen like at ground level on the Front line.

Irish loyalty to their comrades as distinct to the Crown was never in doubt and a precedence for such comradeship was established long before the Rising broke out. In December 1914, Roger Casement accompanied by a German prince, Emich von Leinnhgen, went to the German POW Camp at Limburg to try to recruit from amongst the Irish P.O.W's, an Irish Brigade that would fight alongside the Germans against the British, i.e. to get Irish men to fight against their comrades. Casement had little or no success. Out of a prisoner of war population of 2,500,Casement managed to recruit just fifty-two. (90) Casement himself admitted later that the Limburg affair had been 'a ghastly folly.' (91) Private George Soper a signaller with the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers serving in France wrote to Miss Roberts on 20 May 1916. He had read about the Rising in the Irish newspapers. The Rising had no effects on him except to make him more determined and fight on. (92)

> I was more than surprised when I heard of the Rebellion in Ireland and I

> could scarcely believe it until I read it in the papers… It took no effect on us chaps out here except to make us more determined to stick. I suppose their idea was that the Irishmen out here would be for them but, they were greatly mistaken and we wished we had a chance to get even with them. I don't know where their bravery was if they call killing wounded soldiers a brave deed.

There were officers and men of other ranks who had strong nationalist sympathies but they did not mutiny, and if they did, their numbers never made the headlines. Evidence to support this may be seen from the fact that courts martial held in Irish regiments serving on the Western Front between October 1915 and September 1916 were not above average. Moreover, the there was no significant increase in the courts martial records of the home battalions of the Irish regiments in Dublin after the Rising either. (93)

The timing of the Rising was significant too. According to Terry Denman, 'from the magnificent achievements of the 16th(Irish) Division on the Somme a few months after the Rising, it is clear that whatever disquiet the events in Ireland produced, they did not damage its fighting performance.' (94) As can be seen from the 9th Munsters and their treatment of Casement's effigy, although the Rising dismayed and embittered men in the trenches, it did not weaken their morale. Using the incidence of reporting sick for duty as a means of measuring morale in an infantry battalion, Lynn Lemisko noted that the average incidences of sick reporting amongst Irish troops in the 16th(Irish) Division after the Easter Rising was nothing above the average. She further noted. (95)

> While Irish catholic soldiers of the 16th(Irish) Division were not completely divorced from the politics of their homeland, political incidents did not have pronounced or long-term ramifications on the morale of the Irish division. Although their English comrades occasionally labelled Irish soldiers as Sinn Feiners, most Irish troops were clear on their position in spectrum of Irish political opinion. When asked his views about the relative aims of the nationalists and the Sinn Feiners, an Irish corporal told the Catholic commanding officer of the 6th Connaught Rangers, Col. Rowland Fielding, ' the nationalists aim at getting independence by constitutional, the Sinn Feiners by unconstitutional, means.'

In June1916, John Redmond visited Irish troops in France. The timing of the visit was significant being a couple of months after the Rising. His visit may well have been a morale boosting exercise. Redmond received a warm welcome from the Irish troops. In a letter to Miss Roberts, Private Tom Finn of the 2nd Dublins wrote on 13 June 1916. 'We have Mr. Redmond out here with us, he is a very nice man.' Tom seemed to hold John Redmond in high regard. He was happy to learn that Redmond had sent the men Shamrock and a green ribbon for their St. Patrick's Day celebrations in France. (96) Many of the men were very conscious of their Irish nationality. Tom was very proud to be an Irish soldier and a Dublin Fusilier. In another letter home to Miss Roberts, he proudly wrote. 'You asked me am I an Irish man, I am, and proud of it. This is one of the best regiments out and I don't know what would happen only for the Irish.' (97) The Rising did not dent this man's morale.

Despite the evidence that suggests a maintenance of morale in post-Rising Irish units, there is no doubt that the Rising left a bitter taste in the mouth of some Irish soldiers who served in the British Army during and after the Rising. Over a year after the Rising, the bitterness and resentment at the Irish Volunteers had not gone away. Sgt. Heapey of the 8th Royal Dublin Fusiliers wrote to Monica Roberts in August 1917. He was feeling very depressed and seemed to link his depression with the state Ireland was in following the Rising. One thing soldiers in any army must feel they have is the support of the home front. Loss of that support undermines their morale and confidence. Such pessimism can be sensed from Sgt. Heapey's letter. (98)

> We are having awful weather just now, raining day and night and what a pity too just as we were making so much success. No one knows how we are

> going through it all, we are having a most awful time of it just now and I have lost nearly all of my of platoon. Poor boys, it has upset me very much. I went to see them after our last battle and there are only nine of them left. So you see Ireland is doing her share in the great struggle. I had a very narrow escape last week myself. A piece of a shell just missed me (thank God).
> I have great faith and I believe I shall pull through this war all right, but still, we have much to go through yet and by the time you get this we will be in the thick of the fray once more……. I am sorry to hear the old country is so much upset. If I had my way with the Sinn Feiners, I would put them where I am just at the present, up to our eyes in muck and wet and then they would know what war really was like. Anyway, they will get what they are looking for when we Boys see this over.

The Great War on the Western Front at least, ended in November 1918. Of the estimated 210,000 Irish men who fought in it, some 35,000 were estimated to have died. (99) This is a very neat number, estimates have varied and the exact number may never be known. For the thousands of Irishmen who followed John Redmond and indeed the thousands that did not, the Ireland they came home to had changed. The political collapse of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the death of John Redmond had left their shade of Irish nationalism eclipsed by the rising star of Sinn Fein's brand of nationalism. In the words of the national bard W.B. Yeats, ' a terrible beauty' had been born in their absence. The Easter Rising of 1916 was the mother that gave birth to that terrible beauty and the Irish men who took the other side were left to wander in the no man's land of Irish history. Their fate was best summarised in the words of one of one of their own, Captain Stephen Gwynn MP.(100)

> Was there anything more tragic than the position of men who had gone out by the thousands for the sake of Ireland to confront the greatest military power ever known in history who had fought the war and won the war, and who now looked at each other with doubtful eyes?

Conclusion

So what affects did the Easter Rising of April 1916 have on the Irish soldiers serving in the British army at the time of the Rising and after, and, what was the British reaction to the Irish men under their command? At the time of the Rising, there were approximately 162,466 Irish men serving in the British army, just over one hundred times more than the Irish volunteers who took part in the Rising. The first units of the British army to challenge the Irish Volunteers were the reserve battalions of the Irish Regiments. The challenge these Irishmen faced was both physical and mental. For some, the mental challenge proved more difficult than the physical.

Opinions and sentiments about the Rising amongst Irish soldiers who served in Dublin by in large were against the Rising and the Volunteers. The only difference in opinion was by how much they were against the Rising. Although against the principles of the Rising in general, there were soldiers who offered some sympathy for the Irish Volunteers. Some apparently wanted to join the cause. Commandant Brennan dismissed these men as Johnny-come–lately. There were some contradictions in the accounts of how the Irish soldiers treated the Volunteers. Killingley claimed his men kicked the Volunteers. Sheehy claimed his battalion, the same as Killingley's, behaved with restraint. Sheehy's account was written many years after the Rising and may account for the dilution of the account of his men's behaviour. Young educated Catholic men like Michael Wall from Malahide who joined the Royal Irish Regiment were delighted to see the Volunteers beaten by his battalion. There were other young officers like Robert Barton who felt a great sympathy for the Sinn Feiners. For the loyalist soldiers of Ulster; attitudes amongst their ranks were predictable. In their view, the Rising reinforced their beliefs and often warnings that Nationalists and republicans could not be trusted.

News of the Rising filtered through to the men at the Front mainly from Irish newspapers. *The Irish Times* and indeed other Irish papers may well have flavoured the soldier's opinions about the Rising. Press reports emphasised that nationalists in the

trenches felt let down. German newspapers too knew all about the Rising and tried to use it to their advantage but to no avail. The men who wrote to Miss Monica Roberts in Dublin expressed a general feeling of disgust, betrayal, revenge and downright hostility towards the men who carried out the Rising. And, there were men like Lieut. Michael Fitzgerald of the Irish Guards who felt uninterested in what happened in Dublin. What was happening in France and staying alive was more important to him and his men. It seems there were several common themes expressed by Irish soldiers at the Front that may go some way in explaining why they felt so negative about the Rising and the people who carried it out. The executions seemed to be one step too far. The aftermath of Hulluch and the timing of that gas attack by the Germans during the Rising added to a sense of isolation felt by the Irish troops. John Redmond referred to this tragic irony in the House of Commons. The Rising created a personal worry for many Irish soldiers at the Front who felt concerned for the safety of their families back home in Dublin. This concern added to their negative feelings towards the Volunteers. Christy Fox was worried about the safety of his family in North King Street. He had every cause to be. The rising dismantled the Irish Parliamentary Party and in the eyes of Tom Kettle and other Nationalist MPs at the Front, smashed a lifetimes' work. The Rising may have distilled political sentiments amongst the Irish troops into a more concentrated form of nationalism that had existed prior to the war. Some men like Emmet Dalton were part of that process. But yet despite this shattering of confidence, morale and fighting spirit in the Irish ranks stood firm.

There is no doubt that the Rising caused a concern about Irish loyalty amongst the British military command. Some senior commanders in Dublin expressed confidence in the Irish regiments while others in France expressed the opposite. Bowman and Lemisko have shown that neither discipline nor morale drastically changed in Irish units after the Rising. Unlike the French in 1917, whatever about being loyal to King or Emperor, Irish troops remained loyal to each other and never mutinied in any great numbers during the war if at all. Men like Tom Barry and Emmet d'Alton stayed on in the army until the war had ended in November 1918. But by that time, their decision was made which war they would take on next and gives them their place in Irish history.

For thousands of their comrades, the Easter Rising placed them in the no-man's land of Irish history where they would remain for many years before being brought home where they belong.

References

1. Public Records Office, Kew.WO35/69.
2. Denman. T. *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers. The 16th (Irish) Division in the Great War*. Irish Academic Press. Dublin. 1992.p129.
3. Karsten, Peter. *Irish Soldiers in the British Army, 1792-1922: Suborned or Subordinate?*. In Journal of Social History, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA. p36.
4. Denman, T. *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers*. p31

5. Fitzpatrick. D. *Militarism in Ireland 1900 – 1922* (ed.) *A Military History of Ireland.* Edited by Bartlett T. and Jeffery K. Cambridge University Press. 1996. p386
6. Callan, P. *Recruiting for the British Army in Ireland during the First World War. The Irish Sword*. Vol. XVII. No.66. 1987. p42
7. Ibid. p42
8. Fitzpatrick. D. *Militarism in Ireland 1900 – 1922* (ed.) p388
9. Denman, T. *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers*. p37
10. Minute Book of the Belfast National Volunteers Executive Committee. Tom Kettle Archive UCD. p81
11. Fitzpatrick. D. *The Logic of Collective Sacrifice: Ireland and the British Army, 1914-1918*. The Historical Journal, 38,4 ,1995 pp1028 – 1029
12. McCann. B.P. *The Diary of 2nd Lieut. Arthur V.G. Killingley. 'A' Company. 4th Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers Easter week, 1916*. The Irish Sword. Vol. XX. No. 81. Summer 1997. p246
13. Leonard. J. *The Reactions of Irish Officers in the British Army to the Easter Rising of 1916*. In ed *Facing Armageddon. The First World War Experienced.* Cecil. H and Liddle. P.H. Published by Lee Cooper London. 1996.p258
14. Ibid. p258
15. Ibid.p258
16. McCann. B.P. *The Diary of 2nd Lieut. Arthur V.G. Killingley*.p247
17. Geoghegan. C.B. Brig. Gen. S. *The Campaigns and History of The Royal Irish Regiment*. Vol. II.

1900 to 1922. Schull Books, Cork. 1997. pp102 - 104
18. The British Commonwealth War Graves Commission website www.cwgc.org.
19. *The Irish Times. An Irishman's Diary.* Myers. K. Wednesday 26 August 1998
20. Brockie. G. *St. Joseph's C.B.S. Fairview 1888-1988*. Published by St. Joseph's C.B.S. Fairview, Dublin. 1988 pp24-38
21. The British Commonwealth War Graves Commission website www.cwgc.org.
22. Papers from Malone family in possession of author.
23. Leonard. J. *The Reactions of Irish Officers in the British Army to the Easter Rising of 1916*. p263
24. McCann. B.P. *The Diary of 2nd Lieut. Arthur V.G. Killingley.* p247
25. Leonard. J. *The Reactions of Irish Officers in the British Army to the Easter Rising of 1916*. p260
26. Ibid. p261
27. Jeffrey, K. *Ireland and the Great War.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.2000.p45.
28. Leonard. J. *The Reactions of Irish Officers in the British Army to the Easter Rising of 1916*. p260
29. McCann. B.P. *The Diary of 2nd Lieut. Arthur V.G. Killingley*.p247
30 Brennan-Whitmore. Commandant W.J. *Dublin Burning.* Gill and Mc Millan. Dublin. 1996. pp121-124
31. Denman, T. *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers*. p142
32. Letters of Michael Wall in possession of author. To his mother 26 April 1916.
33. Ibid. To his brother 11 May 1916.
34. Leonard. J. *The Reactions of Irish Officers in the British Army to the Easter Rising of 1916*. p261
35. Ibid. p260
36. Ibid. p261
37. Sheehy. E. *May it please the Court.* Fallon Ltd. Dublin. 1951. p91
38. Leonard. J. *The Reactions of Irish Officers in the British Army to the Easter Rising of 1916*. p259
39. Denman. T. *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers*.p143
40. Bowman, T. *Irish Regiments in the Great War – Discipline and Morale*. Manchester University Press, Manchester.2000.p127
41. Diary of Pte. Andrew Lockhart.18 May 1916. In possession of author.
42. Leonard. J. *The Reactions of Irish Officers in the British Army to the Easter Rising of 1916*. p263
43. Diary of Major T.C.H Dickson MC. In possession of author.
44. Monica Roberts Collection. RDFA Archive, Dublin. Joseph Brooks to Monica Roberts 14 June 1916.
45. Denman. T *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers*.p142
46. Ibid. p142
47. Ibid. p142
48. Leonard. J. *The Reactions of Irish Officers in the British Army to the Easter Rising of 1916*. p262
49. Denman. T *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers*.p143
50. Denman. T *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers.* p129
51. Ibid. p130.
52. Ibid. p144
53. Letters of Michael Wall 14 April 1917.
54. Monica Roberts Collection, Pte. Joseph Clarke to Monica Roberts 11 May 1916.
55. Ibid. Sgt. Edward Heapey to Monica Roberts 18 July 1917.
56. Dungan. M. *Irish Voices from the Great War.* Irish Academic Press. Dublin.1995.p33
57. Satterthwaite, D. *How did the Easter Rising affect the Nationalism of Irish soldiers serving in the British Army during the Great War.* Unpublished final year dissertation. The Queens College C, Oxford, Spring 2006. p36
58. Dungan, M. *They Shall Grow Not Old-Irish Soldiers and the Great War*. Four Courts Press, Dublin. 1997. p31
59. Lyons, J.B. *The Enigma of Tom Kettle.* The Glendale Press, Dublin. 1983.p285
60. Denman. T *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers.* p145
61. Leonard. J. *The Reactions of Irish Officers in the British Army to the Easter Rising of 1916*. p266
62. Denman. T *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers*. p143
63. Satterthwaite, D. *How did the Easter Rising affect the Nationalism of Irish soldiers*. p14
64. Jeffrey, K. *Ireland and the Great War*. p54
65. Denman. T *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers*. p129
66. Leonard. J. *The Reactions of Irish Officers in the British Army to the Easter Rising of 1916*. p263
67. Letters of Michael Wall 14 April 1917
68. Ibid. 3 September 1916
69. Monica Roberts Collection. Pte. Christy Fox to Monica Roberts 12 May 1916.

70. Leonard. J. *The Reactions of Irish Officers in the British Army to the Easter Rising of 1916*. p264
71. Lyons, J.B. *The Enigma of Tom Kettle.* p284
72. Denman. T. *A Lonely Grave. The Life and Death of William Redmond.* Irish Academic Press, Dublin. 1995.p97
73. Ibid.p123
74. Dungan, M. *They Shall Grow Not Old-Irish Soldiers and the Great War*. Four Courts Press, Dublin. 1997.p31
75. Satterthwaite, D. *How did the Easter Rising affect the Nationalism of Irish soldiers*. p4
76. Dungan. M. *Irish Voices from the Great War*. p33.The Interview was with Padraig O Raghallaigh contained in RTE Archive.
77. Satterthwaite, D. *How did the Easter Rising affect the Nationalism of Irish soldiers*. p38
78. Denman. T *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers.* p144
79. Denman. T. *A Lonely Grave. The Life and Death of William Redmond.* Irish Academic Press, Dublin. 1995.p97
80. Satterthwaite, D. *How did the Easter Rising affect the Nationalism of Irish soldiers.* p21
81. Dungan. M. *Irish Voices from the Great War*. p32
82. Ibid. p31
83. Jesuit Archive Dublin. Diary of Fr. Henry Gill S.J. April 1917. CHP 1/27 p123
84. Beckett, Ian F. *The Great War 1914-1918*. Pearson Education Company, Essex. 2001. p283
85. Denman. T *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers*. p143
86. Jeffrey, K. *Ireland and the Great War*. p65
87. Ibid. p65
88. Lemisko, Lynn. *Morale in the 16th(Irish) Division, 1916-1918*. The Irish Sword. Vol. XX. No 81. Summer 1997. p217
89. Denman. T. *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers*. p. 169
90. Dooley .T. *Irishmen or English Soldiers*. Liverpool University Press, Liverpool.1995. p1
91. Dungan. M. *Irish Voices from the Great War*. p139
92. Monica Roberts Collection. Pte. George Soper to Monica Roberts 20 May 1916.
93. Bowman, T. *The Irish Regiments in the Great War – Discipline and Morale*. p127 and p194.
94. Denman. T. *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers*. p. 144
95. Lemisko, Lynn. *Morale in the 16th(Irish) Division, 1916-1918*. The Irish Sword. Vol. XX. No 81. Summer 1997. p226
96. Monica Roberts Collection. Pte. Tom Finn to Monica Roberts, 13 June 1916 and 23 March 1916.
97. Monica Roberts Collection. Pte. Tom Finn to Monica Roberts, 14 January 1916.
98. Monica Roberts Collection. Sgt. Edward Heapey to Monica Roberts, 15 August 1917.
99. Jeffrey, K. *Ireland and the Great War*. p35
100. Denman. T *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers.* p181

Motorcycles in the Great War

Michael Carragher.
The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

Few now think of the motorcycle as war-winning technology. Yet through the Great War it was "an inseparable part of a modern army"—in the words of one officer, "as much a fixture as the machine gun", and "the motor cyclist (corps) was probably the most popular unit in the British Army". (1) "Quite calmly and without depreciating our wonderful infantry (to whom I take off my hat), no one has put in harder work and got less recognition than artillery drivers and motor cycle orderlies". (2) But since then, the motorcycle's contribution to winning the war has been overshadowed by those of the plane and the tank, artillery and machinegun.

Motorcyclists served in three roles in particular. The British *Service de Santé Militaire* had been formed on the outbreak of war to work in France, conscription there leaving little room for voluntary work. (3) The *Service*'s volunteers drove sidecar ambulances in the Vosges sector, mountainous and notoriously difficult of access; their efforts bolstered an often-strained alliance. Sidecars' relative compactness, combined with an asymmetric twin-track vehicle's peculiar advantages of traction, allowed these men and machines to go where cars could not and when necessary they were light enough to be manhandled out of ditches. Presenting a small target, they could venture closer to the action, where their small turning circle was of benefit too. (4) They were, besides, "not only cheaper and quicker, but more reliable than cars" in such conditions. (5)

They enormously reduced evacuation time—from up to 30 hours to as few as 100 minutes—while improving any *blessé*'s comfort thanks to "plangent" sidecar suspension (superior to that of most cars at the time) and a narrow-track vehicle's ability to pick the easiest way. (6) Subsequent removal of casualties from road clearing stations by car ambulance exemplifies not alone Allied warfare but integrated "tactics". French car ambulances ran at night, when British sidecars, due to their poor lighting over dangerous trails, could not operate. (7)

Sidecars also were used by the Motor Machine Gun Service (MMGS). Initially these were seen as war-winning weapons, modern-day chariots going into battle with guns blazing. "Imagine the great possibilities of a small, fast, and easily handled vehicle mounting a quick-firing gun…" noted one champion. (8) But cooler military heads realised that sidecars might be better employed as rapid gun delivery systems rather than as mobile gun platforms. The envisaged role went from firing on the move—which could not possibly have been accurate, due to both ground irregularities and recoil on a non-stable gun platform—through fire-and-movement-type tactics, to a gun delivery system pure and simple, the crew carrying gun and tripod into position.

Trenchlock quickly turned the MMGS into a mobile reserve, deployed to reinforce resistance as required, often to where separate armies adjoined (always a point of potential vulnerability). (9) A subtle advantage of sidecars' mobility was drawing the enemy's fire and leading to his expending shells as the outfits moved on. (10) The MMGS rendered, "invaluable service" at Hill 60, during the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, (11) evacuating wounded as well as fighting, (12) and by Loos eighteen MMGS battalions were serving with the BEF, but most were disbanded through 1916.

Ludendorff's breakout, however, restored war of movement and the MMGS was resurrected, and used for reconnaissance and in fighting rearguard actions, buying time to retreat, "the contribution which (it) put in was of the greatest value". (13) The service played a supportive role in the critical Battle of Amiens, and through the Hundred Days, fitting into the All Arms strategy that characterised British victory.

At Morlancourt it cooperated successfully with Whippets, elsewhere with cavalry, and always with infantry. Rapid deployment and re-deployment was an intrinsic strength of mobile units, and the MMGS proved its worth, "exploiting success, forming defensive flanks … holding and consolidating ground, and flanking and overcoming strong points", the sidecars' speed sometimes enabling them to direct enfilade fire on retreating Germans. (14) Unlike tanks, sidecars had speed and flexibility, which may have been more valuable than tanks' greater firepower in supporting the still greater and far more effective firepower of artillery. Certainly, when integrated into an all-arms offensive, the MMGS proved its worth. But where the war motorcyclist proved utterly essential was as despatch carrier and convoy rider. Don R, as the despatch rider was known, quite literally may have saved the BEF from annihilation in the Great Retreat of August 1914. Even during positional warfare he was essential to maintaining logistical support by managing the lorry convoys that sustained the army in the field. Such work was fraught with danger. The roads themselves were in a wretched state, made worse by the weight of traffic they never had been designed to carry, and often were under enemy fire. As one car-driver admitted. "The roads were awful. How motor-cyclists stayed on them no one knew…. Heroic work, that dispatch carrying over roads that never knew complete freedom from shell fire". (15)

But it was during the war of movement, especially in August 1914, that Don R proved his worth. Wireless sets were fragile and heavy, and communication had to be either *en clair*, with all the security problems that that posed, or encoded, with the delays that that entailed—and time was at a premium. Cable was in short supply, and at Le Cateau the Germans captured "a complete cable detachment", a serious loss to add to cable already abandoned at Mons. (16) To a very great extent, therefore, wireless was worthless and "Cable communications were out of the question for the present, with the Huns close on our heels. It was up to the Despatch Corps now to keep … the British Army articulate." (17)

The Despatch Corps' success is highlighted by the consequences of one DR's failure. On 26 August 1914, after Landrecies, this man was detailed to instruct several units to fall back but in the

confusion he was unable to locate one of his targets, the 2nd Royal Munster Fusiliers. The entire battalion was lost. (18) The very war might have been lost were that failure not exceptional in the dutiful, very frequently heroic, role played by Don R.

References.

1. *The Motor Cycle*. 22 February 1917, front page.
2. Ibid, 20 December 1917, p. 593.
3. *The British Medical Journal*, 14 November 1914, p. 858; *The Motor Cycle*, 28 December 1916, p. 563.
4. *Motor Cycling*, 23 November 1915, p. 58; *The Motor Cycle*, 11 July 1918, p. 28.
5. *The Motor Cycle*, 11 July 1918, p. 28.
6. *Motor Cycling*, 5 December 1916, p. 98; *The Motor Cycle*, 28 December 1916, pp. 562-53
7. *The Motor Cycle*, 11 July 1918, p. 28; *Motor Cycling*, 11 April 1916, p. 567-68.
8. *The Motor Cycle*, 17 September 1914, front page.
9. Fletcher, David. *War Cars: British Armoured Cars in the First World War* (London: HMSO, 1987), p. 56.
10. *The Motor Cycle*, 5 August 1915, p. 141.
11. *Motor Cycling*, 27 April 1915, p. 613; *The Motor Cycle*, 13 May 1915, p. 465.
12. Fletcher, ibid, p. 57.
13. Fyfe, Hamilton. *"What Canadian MM Gunners did"* in *The War Illustrated*, 29 June 1918.
14. *The Motor Cycle*, 22 August 1918, p. 166.
15. Coleman, Frederic. *From Mons to Ypres with French* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1916), p. 205.
16. Priestley, Major R E. *The Signal Service in the European War of 1914 to 1918 (France)* (Chatham: W & J Mackay and Co, 1921), pp. 30, 18-19.
17. Corcoran, Captain AP. *The Daredevil of the Army: Experiences as a "Buzzer" and Despatch Rider* (New York: EP Dutton & Company, 1919), p. 37.
18. The Munsters gave their lives and freedom dearly. For hours they held up an enemy force many times their strength, allowing their companions to gain perhaps a dozen miles on their pursuers. By the time ammunition ran out there were fewer than 250 men, many of them wounded, left to surrender. They "were warmly congratulated by the Germans on the fine fight they had made". See S McCance, *History of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, Vol II*, (Schull, Co Cork: Schull Books, 1995), pp. 115-19.

Neville Fryday, Irish boy soldier killed in action

Philip Lecane.
The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

Neville Nicholas Fryday was born in Ballydough, Milestone, Thurles, Co. Tipperary, the son of William and Elizabeth A. Fryday. William died in Thurles in 1905. At some point subsequently the family moved to Millhouse, Shankill, Co. Dublin. The 1911 census for Dublin shows Neville's sister Meta Fryday age thirty, Single, Religion Methodist, Saleswoman, Born Co. Tipperary, staying as a visitor at the home of the Mills family 18 Terenure Road South.

Neville enlisted in the Canadian Army in Toronto on 19 July 1915. He gave his occupation as Labourer. He was five feet and nine inches in height, of dark complexion, with brown hair and brown eyes. He gave his date of birth as 4 September 1893 and his age as twenty-one years and ten months. (The falsehood of this information is shown by the 1901 and 1911 Censii for Ireland. The first shows him as aged two and the second as aged eleven. The first census was taken on 31 March 1901 and the second on 2 April 1911.) His brothers Harry George Fryday and William Fryday had previously enlisted in Toronto: the former on 24 November 1914 and the latter on 16 July 1915. Another Fryday from Tipperary, John Nicholas Fryday, son of John Nicholas Fryday, enlisted in Winnipeg on 14 June 1915

Private Neville Fryday, Reg. No. 140229, 75th Battalion (Central Ontario Regiment) died of wounds on Sunday 30 April 1916. What is unusual is that he wasn't killed in France or Flanders. He met his fate at the hands of fellow Irishmen on the streets of Dublin during the 1916 Rising. He is buried at 276.2101, Mount Jerome Cemetery, Dublin. While Commonwealth War Graves Records give his age as seventeen, the Irish Times published *Sinn Féin Rebellion Handbook* gives his age as *'16 and a half'* and his address as *'Mercer's Hospital.'* His sister Meta is buried in the same grave.

The headstone is standard Commonwealth War Graves Commission in design. It has the Canadian Maple Leaf emblem and the following wording. *'140229 Private N.N. Fryday 75th Bn. Canadian Inf. 30th April 1916. And his sister Martha (Meta) Richardson 17th April 1965. At Peace.'*

In his book *'Anzacs and Ireland'* my Aussie pal Jeff Kildea tells how Australian and New Zealand soldiers on holiday in Dublin during Easter 1916 were called to duty to help suppress the Rising. Presumably Neville Fryday found himself in a similar situation while on leave with his parents.

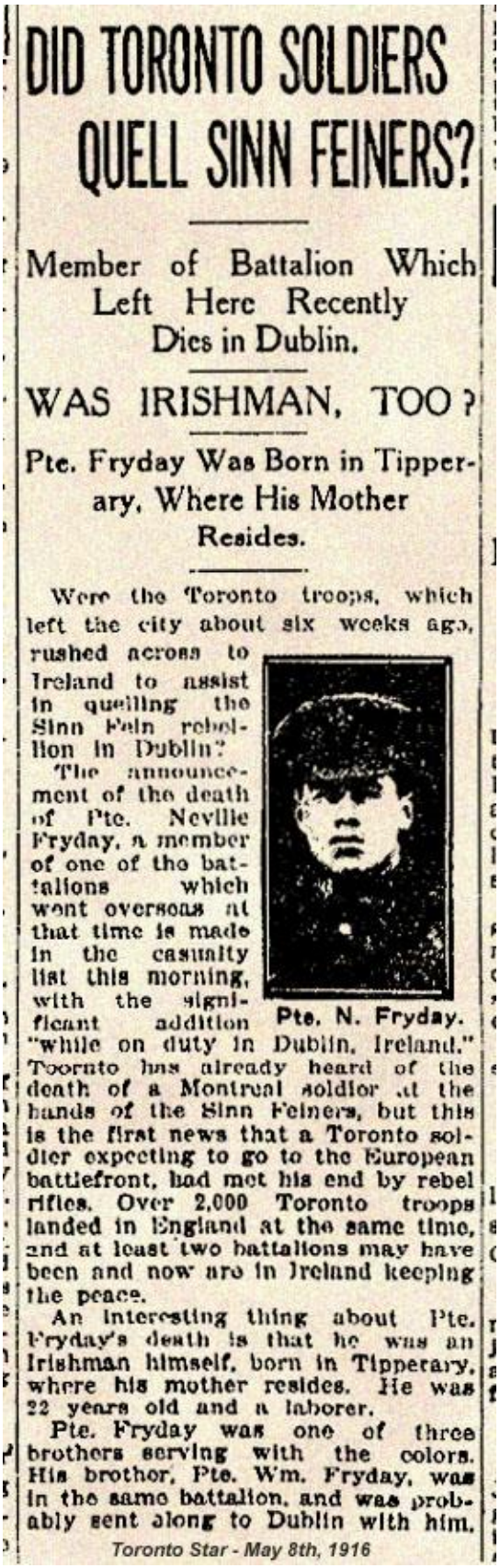
Commonwealth War Grave Records also show Edward James Fryday, twenty-nine, son of Nicholas B. and Joanna Fryday of Ireland. Enlisting in 1914, he served (Reg. No. 10/1072) with the Wellington Regiment of the New Zealand Army. He died on 12 May 1915 and is buried at C.115 Alexandra (Chatby) Military and War Cemetery, Egypt. Presumably he was a relative of Neville.

Neville's mother, Elizabeth Fryday, entered Canada aboard the Montroyal on 9 July 1926. She appears to have subsequently married a man named Kinnear. She died in Toronto in 1942. The 1939 electoral roll shows, Neville's sister Meta Richardson living at 23 Molesworth Street, Dublin. She died on 17 April 1965 and is buried, with Neville, in grave 276.2101, Mount Jerome Cemetery, Dublin.

The Toronto Star of 1 January 1980 published the following obituary.

FRYDAY, William H. (Veteran of WW1 and life member of the R.C.L. (Presumably Royal Canadian Legion) #345. At the Providence Villa Hospital on Sturday, December 29, 1979, William Fryday, in his 91st year, beloved husband of Naomi, dear father of Eileen (Mrs T. Kender(?)ne) and William, brother of Ruth (Mrs Downton{?}), Maude (Mrs Campbell) at Hamilton, and the late Jim, Frank, Henry, Edward, Neville, Helen, Lilly and Matta. (The last named is probably a misspelling for Meta, who is remembered on her headstone as Martha (Meta) Richardson.) Loving grandfather of Marlene, Duane and Bill. Mr Fryday is resting at the "Scarborough Chapel" of McDougal & Brown, 2900 Kingston Rd. (near St. Clair Ave. E.)

After New Year's Day Service in the chapel Wednesday 1 p.m. Internment St. Margaret's-in-The-Pine.



DID TORONTO SOLDIERS QUELL SINN FEINERS?

Member of Battalion Which Left Here Recently Dies in Dublin.

WAS IRISHMAN, TOO?

Pte. Fryday Was Born in Tipperary, Where His Mother Resides.

Were the Toronto troops, which left the city about six weeks ago, rushed across to Ireland to assist in quelling the Sinn Fein rebellion in Dublin?

The announcement of the death of Pte. Neville Fryday, a member of one of the battalions which went overseas at that time is made in the casualty list this morning, with the significant addition "while on duty in Dublin, Ireland."

Pte. N. Fryday.

Toornto has already heard of the death of a Montreal soldier at the hands of the Sinn Feiners, but this is the first news that a Toronto soldier expecting to go to the European battlefront, had met his end by rebel rifles. Over 2,000 Toronto troops landed in England at the same time, and at least two battalions may have been and now are in Ireland keeping the peace.

An interesting thing about Pte. Fryday's death is that he was an Irishman himself, born in Tipperary, where his mother resides. He was 22 years old and a laborer.

Pte. Fryday was one of three brothers serving with the colors. His brother, Pte. Wm. Fryday, was in the same battalion, and was probably sent along to Dublin with him.

Toronto Star - May 8th, 1916

Cutting from *The Toronto Morning Star* 8 May 1916.

Sources

I came across Neville Fryday's story in the excellent *"50 Things You Didn't Know About 1916"* by Mick O'Farrell (Mercier Press, Cork 2009).

Kildea, Jeff *"Anzacs and Ireland"* (Cork University Press, 2007)

The website of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission www.cwgc.org

The website for Ireland's 1911 Census (only a few counties are currently accessible) www.censusnationalarchives.ie

Additional information on Fryday was posted by John Doyle on the Great War Forum website (http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums on 25 February 2010. I commend this excellent website to members. John Doyle cites Ancestry (based on information in Canadian records) and, in a later posting on the same date, the Toronto Star of 1 January 1980.

Lieut. James Byers
Royal Dublin Fusiliers

Glen Thompson
The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

James Byers was living at 1 Waverly Terrace, Kennilworth Road when he enlisted in the 52nd (Grad) Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers in Dublin on 10 November 1916. (1) By the time he was discharged from that unit on 17 December 1917, he held the rank of Sergeant. His discharge was in consequence of being appointed to a temporary commission with the 11th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. A recruitment poster for the 11th Dublins stated they wanted 'Business Men'. The official commission appointed him to be an officer in the Land Forces from 18 December 1917; this was dated 9 January 1918.

The accompanying photograph depicts James Byers as a Lieutenant in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers on his wedding day on 24 March 1920. By that time, rank insignia had been transferred to the shoulder straps, and the two metal stars are prominent confirming that he had been promoted to Lieutenant. Of interest is the whistle attached to the Sam Browne belt and service ribbons above the left breast pocket flap.

James married Frances Sherwood at Charleston Road Methodist Church, Rathmines in Dublin, where they were both members. They lived at 4 Belgrave Square, Rathmines. James died on 12 November 1928. I am indebted to James's son Roger for supplying the photographs and relevant information.

Reference

1. British Army Discharge Certificate Number B. 2079 in possession of author.

2nd Lieut. James Byers and his wife Frances in 1920.

Recruitment poster for the 11th Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

Private Michael McCarthy: How a County Cork Royal Dublin Fusilier met his death in the final weeks of the war

Philip Lecane
The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

Northern France, October 1918.

On 7 October 1918, the 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers, "The Old Toughs", were in support trenches near the town of La Pannerie in Northern France. During the late afternoon, the battalion moved forward a short distance. While doing so it came under heavy shellfire and suffered several casualties. Among them was Lieutenant William Sutherland MM, who was mortally wounded and died soon afterwards. A thirty-year-old Scotsman, he had been sent to the battalion from the 7th Dublins. Corporal Frank Noake (Reg. No. 14938, incorrectly called Noakes in *Crown and Company*) "who was killed, was recommended for the Victoria Cross, in that, although wounded, he went steadily on with his work of cutting gaps in the enemy wire." On 8 October, the battalion was in reserve. The following day they were brought back to billets in the village of Gouy. On 10 October, the battalion was first carried by bus and then marched via Maretz to Maurois, where, the following day they were presented with a French flag by the Curé of Maurois. For the rest of the campaign this flag, with "R.D.F." emblazoned on it, was carried as the Battalion Headquarters flag.

At 3:00 p.m. on 12 October the battalion moved to Honnechy, sustaining some casualties en route. Twenty-four-year-old Lieutenant William Pedlow MC (referred to as Captain Pedlow in *Crown and Company*) from Anglesea Road in Dublin was killed. Twenty-two- year-old Second Lieutenant Jack Boulter MC from Chelmsford, Essex – who had been promoted from the ranks – was wounded. He died three days later. Between the move to Honnechy and 17 October, the battalion, as part of the 50th Infantry Division, prepared to play its part in an attack to be made by the 10th and 13th British Corps and the 2nd American Corps. At 6.30 a.m. on 17 October, the battalion crossed the River Selle, 'B' Company by a bridge that had been constructed and 'A', 'C' and 'D' Companies by fords. The advance took place under cover of heavy fog, but The Old Toughs were met by heavy machine-gun fire, which seemed to come from a sunken road and from a railway embankment that were parallel to the river and 100 and 800 yards distance from it respectively. The battalion's 'A' Company suffered particularly heavily in the attack, with twenty-four-year-old Lieutenant Charles Kidson from Sittingbourne, Kent, twenty-three-year-old Second Lieutenant Francis Walkey from Rathmines and several men being killed. Attached from the 5th Dublins, Kidson, like Boulter, had been promoted from the ranks. Walkey had joined up in 1914 and had served with The Pals, 'D' Company, 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers in Gallipoli, Salonika and Palestine.

Pte. Michael McCarthy from
Churchtown, Co. Cork.

The 149th Brigade, 50th Division attacked with 3rd Royal Fusiliers on the right, 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the centre and the Scottish Horse on the left. At about 9.30 a.m., with 151st Brigade held up by stubborn resistance, the battalions of 149th Brigade became embroiled in the fight, with the Dublins advancing to support a battalion of 151st Brigade. The battalion became intermingled with the 1st Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and both were held in check by the Germans in orchards on the Arbre Gueron – Le Cateau Road. Following further fighting the battalion found itself, with the 2nd Royal Munster Fusiliers and the 1st Yorkshire Infantry, holding a line between the orchards and a brick-works. Fighting continued throughout the night. Early on the morning of 18 October, the 50th Division launched a successful attack. According to *Crown and Company*:

> A party of the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, over-running their objective, even penetrated into Bazuel and captured a few prisoners. Here a daring individual exploit by Sergeant Curtis of this battalion put out of action the teams of two hostile machine-guns and resulted in the capture of four other machine-guns with their crews.

Sgt. Curtis was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions. The official account from *The London Gazette* of 6 January 1919 is as follows.

> No. 14017 Sergeant Horace Augustus Curtis, 2nd Battalion The Royal Dublin Fusiliers (Newlyn, Cornwall). For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty east of Le Cateau on the morning of October 18th, 1918. During an attack on an enemy position his platoon came unexpectedly under the intense hostile fire of many machine-guns. Knowing that the attack would be a failure unless the enemy guns were silenced, Sergeant Curtis without hesitation rushed forward through our own barrage and the enemy machine-gun fire. He reached the enemy position and killed and wounded the teams of two guns. Through his extraordinary bravery and prompt action the teams of four other guns surrendered to him. A train-load of reinforcements was in the immediate vicinity, from which many of the enemy were detraining. He shot the driver and succeeded in capturing over a hundred prisoners by the time his comrades reached him. His outstanding gallantry and disregard for personal safety inspired all near him to greater keenness and effort, which resulted in the attack on the whole battalion front being a complete success.

The Old Toughs paid a heavy price for their victory. While Sergeant Horace Curtis was awarded the Victoria Cross and the officers who were killed were named in *Crown and Company*, the rank and file were remembered only by their families. On 19 October 1918, Private Michael McCarthy, Reg. No. 40126, 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers died of wounds received in the recent fighting. Twenty-five-year-old Michael was from the village of Churchtown, near Buttevant, in north County Cork. He had enlisted in Mallow and was sent to 2nd Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers, with Regimental Number 7057. He was later transferred to 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers, The Old Toughs. The son of Mrs Kate McCarthy, he is buried in Grave I.C. 25, Roisel Communal Extension.

Michael's mother Mrs. Kate McCarthy in Churchtown in later life.

Note. She is dressed in black, perhaps still mourning the death of her son Michael.

Sources

Crown and Company 1911-1922 by Colonel H.C. Wylly CB

The Annals of Churchtown Compiled by Denis J. Hickey Churchtown Village Renewal Trust (2005).

www.churchtown.net

Research by the author.

My thanks to Gerry Murphy, Churchtown Renewal Trust for permission to reproduce the photographs of Michael and Kate McCarthy. My thanks also to Theresa Carroll, my sister Eileen Carroll and my brother-in-law Niall Carroll.

Irish tricolour captured by Dublin Fusilier after 1916 Easter Rising on sale in Dublin in May 2010

On Saturday 13 March 2010, both *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* carried a story relating to the capture of an Irish Tricolour at the GPO by British soldiers during the Easter Rising of 1916. The flag had been presented for auction at Whyte's of Molesworth Street, Dublin's famous antique auctioneers. The dimensions of the flag were twenty-nine inches (73.5 cm) by sixty-three inches (160.0 cm) and it was valued at between $500,000 and $700,000 (Euro 366,000 and 513,000) It last appeared on the market at Adams Auctioneers in Dublin in 2006 when it failed to sell, with estimates of Euro 600,000 and 800,000.

The flag is believed to have been removed from the Prince's Street end of the GPO pediment by a Dublin Fusilier named Sgt. Thomas Davis from Lisburn, Co. Antrim. After capturing the flag, Sgt. Davis kept it safe before giving it to Dr. George St. George in thanks for treating his injuries. A note from Sgt. Davis which also went on sale with the flag reads. ' Captured by British troops at GPO Dublin, April 1916, and given to Dr. George St. George by an old war veteran, Sergt. Davis.' It passed through various hands over the years before its presentation by a former British army captain to the family of one of the founder members of Sinn Fein. The family's descendants were the sellers.

The GPO in Dublin after the Rising in Easter 1916.

The only other Irish flag known to have flown from the GPO during the Rising was an all-green standard with the words Irish Republic embroidered across it in gold. This flag was removed by British troops and held at the Imperial War Museum in London until 1966 when it was returned to the Irish Government as an act of reconciliation. It is now in the National Museum at Collins Barracks. A point to note is that a young Prof. Peter Simkins, a member of the RDFA and distinguished military historian, was an employee at the Imperial War Museum in 1966 and co-ordinated the handover from London. The flag never sold at the Whyte's auction and is now on temporary loan to the American Irish Historical Society and is on display at a museum in New York.

Sources
The Irish Times and *Irish Independent*
13 March 2010.

Note. The RDFA would welcome any information on Sgt. Thomas Davis from Lisburn, Co. Antrim.

Calling the Germans by a nasty name

Philip Lecane
The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

The derogatory term "Hun" for the Germans first appeared in the Northcliffe owned tabloid the *Daily Mail.* Dublin born Alfred Harmsworth, Lord Northcliffe, owned several British national dailies and is often credited with the introduction of tabloid journalism. He had huge influence on the British Government and was greatly hated in Germany. But how did he or the *Daily Mail* come up with the term "Hun?" Surprising, the term may have been taken from an unlikely source: Kaiser Wilhelm II. During the Boxer Rebellion in China, a German contingent formed part of a European force fighting the Boxers. On 27 July 1900, Kaiser Wilhelm II sent the following message to his men. "Mercy will not be shown, prisoners will not be taken. Just as a thousand years ago, the Huns under Attila won a reputation of might that lives on in legends, so may the name of Germany in China, such that no Chinese will even dare so much as look in askance at a German." (The Kaiser called Attila by his German name: Etzel.) Fourteen years later, when the First World War broke out, Allied propaganda made full use of the Kaiser's concept of the German as "Huns."

Sources
Stephen Pope & Elizabeth-Anne Wheal *The MacMillan Dictionary of The First World War.*
John Simpson *Unreliable Sources: how the 20th Century was Reported.*
S.J. Taylor *The Great Outsiders: Northcliffe, Rothermere and the Daily Mail.*
Weser-Zeitung, second morning edition 28 July 1900.

St. Laurence O'Toole and The Great War

Sean Connolly
The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

The web of sorrow created by the First World War connects the most unlikely places and people. When the pupils of St. Laurence O'Toole Primary School in North Wall, Dublin began their annual exchange trip with the primary school in the town of Eu in Normandy in 2001, the link was the tomb of their patron saint. St. Laurence, who was the first native Irish Archbishop of Dublin. He died in 1180 AD in Eu where he was buried, though his heart was supposedly brought back to Dublin. The route to Eu passes the Mont Huon Military Cemetery at Le Treport, about twenty-five kilometres north-east of Dieppe. The town was an important hospital centre during the fighting in France and Flanders and Mont Huon cemetery was opened when the original military cemetery was full. It contains the remains of over 2,300 soldiers who died from wounds. The pilgrimage organiser Fr. Ivan Tonge, decided to stop the coach at the cemetery to make the students aware of the loss of Irish soldiers in the First World War. Since 2001, young students on similar pilgrimages have held a simple wreath-laying ceremony on route to Eu.

In 2005, the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Diarmuid Martin laid a wreath at Mont Huon Military Cemetery at Le Treport.

Fr. Tonge discovered that the following Royal Dublin Fusiliers were buried in the cemetery.

Pte. Ernest Astins, 28942, 6th RDF, born Walsall, London, died 15 October 1918.
Grave Number. VII K 12A.
Pte. Patrick Fortune, 23027, 6th RDF, died 11 October 1918.
Grave Number. VIII K 10B.
Pte. Patrick Madden, 26465, 10th RDF, from Branganstown, Kilmessan, Co Meath, died aged twenty-three on 22 February 1917.
Grave Number I.D. 5.
Pte. George Rigby, 19119, 6th RDF from Dublin, also served in Salonika and Palestine, died on 17 October 1918 aged twenty.
Grave Number VII K 7A.
L/Cpl. Joseph Warren, 29001, 2nd RDF, from Gabrook, Betchworth, Surry, died on 24 October 1918, aged thirty-five.
Grave Number VII K 9A.

In October 2009, Fr. Tonge, contacted the RDF Association to see if we could provide some personal details of any of the above men that would be of interest to the young pupils. One of the names, Pte. Patrick Madden of the 10th Dublin Fusiliers struck a chord with me. In 2004, Mr. Ian Le Brunn, who lives in Kent, contacted us. Ian had come across a collection of letters from Patrick when visiting Rathmoylon, Co. Meath where Pte. Paddy Madden's niece, Miss Ann Sweeney, was living. Here is Ian's story.

I was privileged to read Paddy's letters home while waiting for the funeral of my Great Uncle Mattie McLoughlin. The letters were kept in an old chocolate box and as I had some time on my hands waiting for people to get ready for the funeral I began to read the letters myself.

As a teacher of English and History, I was charmed by the letters that I read from that chocolate box. This was back in 1989 and I read them once. It told of a young farmer going to Glasgow with friends from Meath (Kiltale/Trim etc) and signing up to fight in the Great War. Of course, much was happening at home in Ireland at the time too- but the reader was treated to a trip from Ireland , through Wales and then to a camp in England before dispatch to France. I particularly remember his description of the battle at Beaumont Hamel- around 400 or so Germans surrendered to the Dubs.

He was very proud of the Dubs and their awesome reputation for toughness and tenacity. In the letters he spoke of the importance of knowing which German regiment you are facing- the Bavarians were tough he said, but those from further north in Germany were not. Respect existed between the adversaries. At Beaumont Hamel, Paddy tells of their excitement when Germans came from their trenches (like palaces) to surrender 'Kamarade'. He tells of fine German spirits and cigars being 'rescued' as war booty. The description takes you there.

I particularly remember his description of hares boxing on the fields around after the battle, of his constant yearning for news of home- who was doing what, what 'field day' was coming; who was asking after him; what he would be doing on the fields in Branganstown. There are the practical bits- socks, cigarettes and other goodies from home.

Pte. Patrick Madden, 10th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, died on 22 February 1917.

There is so much more. The final tragedy of his death- going back behind the lines to collect food/ammunition and other provisions for his 'pals' and getting caught with a shell burst. He walked back to the dressing station on his own and claimed it was a little wound. By the morning he had gone. A final letter about the tragedy comes from a friend from Belfast. Paddy was greatly honored in the letter by his friends and comrades; and in a very moving way his friend tells of how

all loved him and would miss him dearly.

At that time, my friend Ann and her mother (Paddy's sister) never knew where he was buried or if he had a grave. After reading through the letters, I said that I would contact the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and see if they had a record of him. They did. It brought some closure for Ann, but too late for her mother who had passed.

I hired a mini-bus here in Kent and went over with my wife, her parents, brother and our children. I drove up to the cemetery, and we found his grave along with the many others there. Around the immaculate white cemetery the farmer harvested the sugar beet. In the distance was the ocean and Ireland. Paddy would have recognised the farmland around him.

We all knew him well by the time we arrived and honoured his memory with a wreath. Paddy's letters have a charm, innocence and freshness. To me they brought a new glimpse into the times of grimness and death. I loved them so much I never forgot them.

Pte. Patrick Madden's grave in 2010 with two Irish children standing beside it. The inscription on his grave is.

Not forgotten. Most sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on him. Amen

Through Ian, we made contact with Ann and she was delighted to discover that young Irish boys and girls had commemorated Patrick after so many years. Fr. Tonge and myself visited Ann to learn more about her uncle and to take copies of the letters for the RDFA Archive in Pearse Street, Dublin. While there, we met Oliver Madden, a nephew of Patrick and his wife, Davnet, who has also visited the grave in Mont Huon.

Irish school children at Mont Huon Military Cemetery after a wreath laying ceremony in 2010.

Patrick Madden had enlisted in the 10th Royal Dublin Fusiliers while working in Greenock, Scotland. He took part in the final phase of the Battle of the Somme in November 1916 when the ruins of the village of Beaumont Hamel were finally taken in dreadful weather conditions. In his letter of 25 November 1916 to his mother, he wrote. *" I thought that the morning of the 13th that every minute was my last –it was like hell let loose. The Germans are very bad fighters. They prefer to be taken prisoner. They told us that they are sick of the war".* He again referred to the capture of the village in his letter dated 5 January 1916 to his sister Lily. *"I would not like to go through the same again but the Dublins showed "Fritz" what they were made of that morning. They came out of their dugouts crying "Mercy Kamerad". Their dugouts were like Palaces. There was a German officer whom I took prisoner (who) gave me a big bottle of whiskey. It was badly needed as the morning was awful cold but I made sure he drank some of it himself first because it might be Poison and as for cigarettes and cigars, he gave me plenty. That was the morning Duff and Brogan were wounded*." Pte. William Brogan was from Philistown, Trim, Co. Meath and was just twenty-one years of age when he died from his wounds.

Patrick Madden was beside him when he *"got hit. He got a most nasty wound."* He is buried in Boulogne Eastern Cemetery. Pte. Cyril Duff was sent to a hospital in Essex to recover. He wrote to Patrick to say that he will pay a visit to Branganstown and give Lily, *"a tune on the piano".* Another friend mentioned in the letters was Patrick Coyle. Perhaps he was the private of the same name who also enlisted in the 10th Dublin Fusiliers in Greenock. He was born in Knockbride, Co. Cavan and died of wounds following the attack on Tunnel Trench, near Ervillers on 30 November 1917. When the young Dublin students' next visit Mont Huon Cemetery, they will be aware that there may be a story similar to Patrick's associated with each of the gravestones. And this cemetery is just one of the many that are permanent reminders of the waste of young lives.

Photocopies of Pte. Patrick Madden's letters are available for perusal in the archive of the RDFA, Pearse Street, Dublin.

Note. Also buried in Mont Huon is Pte. Cecil Henry Browne of the 25th Battalion of the Nova Scotia Regiment. He was just twenty-two years old when he died on 27 September 1916. He was a Dublin man, one of the ten children of William and Elizabeth Browne who lived at 16 Great Western Square, Dublin in 1911.

Fr Ivan Tonge, Ann Sweeny, Oliver Madden, Davnet Madden

Captain George Weldon

Philip Lecane
The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

Early on the morning of 20 October 1898, a messenger arrived at the British camp near the town of Dundee, Natal, South Africa. He reported that a patrol from the Mounted Infantry Company of the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, under the command of Lieutenant Cecil Grimshaw, had encountered a group of Boers advancing on the town. About an hour later, Grimshaw sent a second message. His patrol was retiring in the face of superior numbers, one of his men had been wounded and the Boers occupied the hills to the east of Dundee. The Battle of Talana Hill - the first battle of the Second Anglo-Boer War - had begun.At about 9.15 a.m., the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers were advancing through a wood below the Boer position on Talana Hill. The British commander, General Sir William Penn-Symons came forward. Crying, "Dublin Fusiliers, we must take the hill!", he crossed a wall on the edge of the wood. Soon afterwards he was mortally wounded. Captain George Weldon of 'E' Company, 2nd Dublins crossed the wall with some of his men and took shelter in a small depression on the other side. Private Gorman (No. 5078) was hit as he was crossing the wall. He was falling backwards when Captain Weldon rushed from cover and caught him by the arm and began to pull him to cover. Weldon was struck and was mortally wounded. Privates Brady and Smith dragged him to cover but he only lived for a few minutes. Under heavy artillery fire, the Boers eventually withdrew from Talana Hill. But, according to Arthur Conan Doyle in *The Great Boer War*: "The battle of Talana Hill was a tactical victory but a strategic defeat. It was a crude frontal attack without any attempt at even a feint of flanking, but the valor of the troops from general to private, carried it through. The force was in a position so radically false that the only use they could make of their victory was to cover their own retreat."Early next day, three men from 'E' Company, under Corporal Foley, went out to bury Captain Weldon, but they could not find his body. After further search, they heard his faithful terrier, Rose, howling piteously. She was lying on his body, which she had apparently never left.

They buried Captain Weldon in the cemetery at Dundee, just below Talana Hill, and Rose was taken back to 'E' Company.

Capt. George A. Weldon.

George Anthony Weldon, 'E' Company, 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers was the first British Army officer to be killed in the Boer War. From Athy, County Kildare, he was the son of Sir Anthony and Lady Helen Weldon. Born in February 1866, he was educated at Cheltenham College. He joined the Royal Dublin Fusiliers from the Militia in December 1886, and was promoted Captain January 1896. He served in the Burmese Expedition, 1887-89 and received the medal with clasp. He was mentioned in despatches by Lieutenant-General Sir George White on 2 December 1899, London Gazette 8 February 1901. Memorials to him were erected in St James's Church, Dundee, Natal, St George's Church, Pietermaritzburg, St Mary's Church, Blythe, in Athy, County Kildare and in the depot of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in Naas, County Kildare. His name was also recorded on the Eleanor Cross War Memorial at Cheltenham College.

Notes

In *The Second Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the South African War*, C.F. Romer stated that Captain Anthony Weldon tried to save Private Gorman (No. 5078). The excellently researched www.angloboerwar.com stated that the man was Weldon's servant, Private Crotty. The site would appear to be correct as Private J. Crotty (No. 5933) is listed on page 191, line 57 of the Natal Field Force casualties for Talana. There is no record of a Gorman casualty.

Lieutenant Cecil Grimshaw from Dublin was in command of the patrol that spotted the Boer advance on Dundee. Later captured by the Boers, he was imprisoned in the same prisoner-of-war camp as Winston Churchill. On 26 April 1915, senior surviving officer Major Cecil Grimshaw was killed as he led the men of the 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers from 'V' Beach, Sedd-el-Bahr, Gallipoli. He is buried in 'V' Beach Cemetery above the beach.

Sources

C.F. Romer. *The Second Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the South African War.*
Frank Taaffe *Athy and the Great War,* which is Chapter 20 of *Kildare History and Society* Dublin 2006.
www.angloboerwar.com

Perth branch, Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

RDFA Members Michael Mangan and John McDonogh. ANZAC Day, Perth, Australia. Michael is wearing his grandfather's medals. He was William Mangan, 14 Granby Row, Dublin. He served in the Boer and First World War. He died in 1958 and is buried in Grangegorman Cemetery, Dublin.

An over-age volunteer: Corporal Isaiah Brooks, 13988, Royal Dublin Fusiliers

Robin Mellor
The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

Isaiah Brooks was a younger brother of my great-great grandfather, John E. Brooks. He was born in Treforest near Pontypridd. At the time of the 1891 census, he was sixteen years old and working in John's hairdressers in Pontypridd. However, by the time of the 1901 census he was in Tralee, County Kerry, Ireland. It was here, in 1895, that he had married his wife, Julia McEllistrum. When the 1911 census was taken, Isaiah was back in South Wales, and living with his family at 40 Henry Richard Street, Treodyrhiw, Mertyr Tydfil. He was now thirty-six years old and working as a coal miner hewer. He had six children; Alphonsus (14), John (11), Eileen (10), Marie (8), Stephen (6), and Gerald (2). His seventh child, Pauline, would be born a year later.

Luckily, Isaiah's wartime service record has survived, and all the information below has come from it. On 21 September 1914, Isaiah attended the recruiting office in Pontypridd and joined the army. He was described as being five foot six and three-quarter inches tall, with blue eyes, brown hair and a fresh complexion. It appears he hadn't enjoyed working in the coalmines, as he was now employed, once again, as a hairdresser. As he was thirty-six at the time of the 1911 census, in 1914 he would have probably been thirty-nine. The maximum age for new recruits was thirty-eight, though in some regiments it could be as low as thirty-five. Therefore, Isaiah lied about his age and said he was thirty-four and three hundred days exactly. Why Isaiah did this is unknown. Due to his age, he was under no obligation to join up. One reason why Isaiah joined the army could have been to get the separation allowance. This was a weekly payment given to men separated from their wives and children whilst serving with the armed forces. There was a fixed payment for being separated from your wife, but the more children you had the more money you received. At the time of his enlistment, Isaiah was living with his family at 3 Belle Vue, Treforest. Even though two of his children, Alphonsus and John, were no longer living at home, Isaiah would still have received a fairly large weekly sum on top of his standard army pay. When a man joined the army, he could choose the regiment he was assigned to. Even though Isaiah had been born and brought up in South Wales, he chose to join the Royal Dublin Fusiliers rather than the local Welsh regiment. The Brooks' had originated from Ireland and it seems that Isaiah still felt a strong bond with the country of his ancestors. Once enlisted, Isaiah was posted to 'B' Company of the 8th Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The battalion was part of 48th Brigade, which was one of the three brigades of the newly formed 16th (Irish) Division.

Initial training for the 8th Dublins was at Buttevant in Co. Cork. On 23 November 1914, Isaiah was promoted to Corporal. In September 1915, the 16th (Irish) Division moved to barracks at Blackdown near Aldershot in England. Here they underwent more intensive training ready for deployment to France. However, when the division left for France in December, Isaiah was not with it.

During training in November 1915, Isaiah had started to have difficulty with breathing and was admitted to a military hospital. A physical examination discovered mitral systolic murmurs in his heart. After spending five weeks in hospital, the murmurs could no longer be heard so distinctly, and he was discharged. Despite being released from hospital, it was felt that Isaiah was now, fit for Home Service only. Consequently, on 28 December 1915 he was transferred from the 8th Battalion to the 5th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. This was an extra Reserve Battalion stationed in Ireland.

Sadly, Isaiah never fully recovered from his heart condition, and on 24 August 1916 a medical board at the Curragh Military Hospital decided he was no longer fit for War Service. Isaiah left the hospital on 4 September 1916 and went home, which was now at 5 Guildford Street, Cardiff. He was discharged from the army on 7September 1916. On 18 February 1917, Isaiah received his War Badge and his days with the Dublins at the age of forty-two had ended.

Poetry.

Brendan Forde
The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

Pro Patria – Die Gefallen

On a visit to the battlefields
A thought came unawares.
We seem to mourn our relatives
But never think of theirs.

They're buried in their thousands
In straight and ordered rows.
Their regimental badges carved upon
A cold and pristine stone.

But sometimes in among them
One finds an alien stone.
A strange and different carving
Also very far from home.

While looking for my uncle's grave
I came upon another.
And standing by with tearful eye
Was a German soldier's mother.

Fritz and Frank lay side by side
They almost died together.
But now they lie where they died
And their mothers wonder ever.

In years gone by they both did die
While trying to kill each other.
And now they lie in graves close by
A brother and another.

Each soldier did his duty
For country and its crown
He tried to do what he believed
That orders had lain down.

Karl and Heinz, Max and Fritz
Did what they had to do.
And they are just as honourable
As Tommy, me and you.

They called them Die Gefallen
They were also very young.
Who fought for God and Fatherland
Believed they did no wrong.

Today we try to honour them
As we stand in memory
But let us all together say
Never again for me.

Today I think of all of them
As I watch the candles burn
And the wax drops roll like teardrops
Before they melt and run.

As I look upon the rows of stones
And teardrops sting my eyes.
Am I the only one round here
Who is trying not to cry?

Pte. Frank Forde. 10th Royal Dublin Fusiliers.
KIA Somme 1916, age sixteen.

In memory of my two uncles who died in both world wars and that of my dear wife's uncle who died at Stalingrad.
First World War.
Pte. Frank Forde 10th Royal Dublin Fusiliers. KIA 10 September 1916. Age 16.
Second World War.
Pte. Robert Forde. Royal Pioneer Corps.
17 June 1942.Age 20.
Gefr. Karl-Heinz Lurensen, German 6th Army.
KIA Stalingrad. 1942. Age 17.
It is quite possible that young Frank Forde knew Paddy Madden, they both served in the 10th Dublin Fusiliers.

Review of 2009

Sean Connolly
The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

The Annual General Meeting was held on 20 April 2009, in the Dublin City Library and Archive. The serving members of the Committee were reappointed. On 25 April, members attended the ANZAC Dawn Service of Remembrance in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Blackhorse Avenue. In the evening, the Association laid a wreath during the commemoration service in St. Ann's Church, Dawson Street. In June, members of the RDFA participated in the parade and wreath laying ceremony at the Cenotaph in London. This annual event is organised by the Combined Irish Regiments Association. There was a large attendance at the Royal British Legion wreath-laying ceremony at the National War Memorial Gardens on the 11 July and at the National Day of Commemoration event at The Royal Hospital, Kilmainham the following day. On 2 September, the Association was represented at a ceremony at the 16th (Irish) Division Memorial at Guillemont to unveil a plaque to three Irish recipients of the Victoria Cross. The following is a report by Seamus Greene who attended the ceremony.

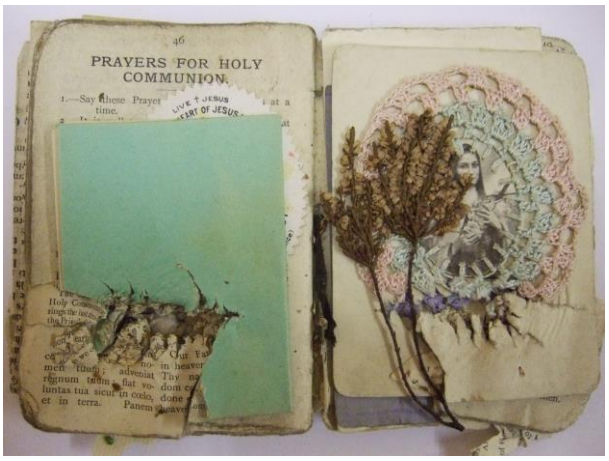
On Wednesday, 2 September 2009, I had the pleasure of travelling to France in the company of Nick Broughall and Comdt (Retd) Joe Gallagher, to represent the RDFA at the unveiling of two plaques to commemorate the three soldiers who were awarded the Victoria Cross for acts of bravery during the battle of Guillemont, on 3 September 1916. The soldiers commemorated were: Lt John V. Holland, Leinster Regiment; Pte Thomas Hughes, Connaught Rangers and Sergeant David Jones, Liverpool Regiment. The formal ceremony began with a short remembrance service at the Memorial to the 16th(Irish) Division outside the church in Guillemont. The Celtic Cross was flanked by standard bearers, who carried French Tricolours, while the lone RDFA Standard represented the Irish Regiments. A bugler and a piper from the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Regiment stood beside the Cross, while soldiers from the North Irish Horse and 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Regiment were also present. Following a short remembrance service, civic and military representatives laid wreaths.

Capt. (retd) Seamus Greene parading the Standard of the RDFA at Guillemont in September 2009. Senior officers from both the Irish Defence Forces and Royal Irish Regiment also attended the ceremony.

Many civic representatives from across Northern Ireland were among the party who had travelled with the Somme Association, whose chairman, Dr. Ian Adamson OBE, presided over the impressive ceremony at the Celtic Cross. Monsieur Didier Samain and Madame Genevieve Desailloud, Maire of Guillemont and Maire of Ginchy respectively, jointly laid a floral wreath on behalf of their citizens. Brig-Gen Tom Behan, Ireland's military representative to the EU, who had travelled from Brussels with his wife Anne, laid a wreath on behalf of the Irish Defence Forces. A senior officer of the 38th(Irish) Brigade also laid a wreath following the Act of Remembrance, which included The Exhortation, Last Post, Silence, Reveille and Piper's Lament. After which followed the unveiling ceremony inside the beautifully restored church, which had been refurbished in the main by the Somme Association. Ms. Carol Walker, Director of the Somme Association, gave a short account of the project and thanked the relatives who had travelled from as far afield as Australia to read the individual citations. The Memorial Plaque bearing the names of the three VC's with appropriate citations was unveiled jointly by the two French Mayors. One plaque bearing the names and citations is located inside the church at Guillemont while the identical plaque is located on the outside wall of the church. In fact, the church itself had been closed for many years and the structure had become derelict. However, in recent years it has been fully restored jointly by the Somme Association & the Somme Remembrance Association in close co-operation with local

authorities. Following the ceremony the Maire of Guillemont held a 'Vin D' Honour' in a local hall in a street, recently renamed Rue de la 16me Division Irlandaise, in honour of the 16th (Irish Division). The event was coordinated by The Somme Remembrance Association and Friends of the Somme in conjunction with the Maire and people of Guillemont and was a fitting tribute to Ireland's gallant heroes of Somme. 'Let Erin Remember'

In his lecture on 17 October, RDFA member Des Byrne spoke about his research into his grandfather's service in the RDF and his death during the German offensive in March 1918. In a very well illustrated presentation, Des gave an insight into how the War affected one Dublin family. Apart from the very moving story, Des passed on lessons gained from his own experience in researching. He has published a fine book for private circulation, "Memory and Remembrance", about his grandfather, Patrick Byrne.



Prayer book of a different Pte. Patrick Byrne showing bullet indentation. Patrick served with the 2nd Royal Irish Regiment.

On 7 November, as part of the World War One Family Day at the National Museum Collins Barracks, we provided a drop-in advice service for those wishing to trace relatives who fought in the Great War. The number of attendees exceeded all expectations. One of the enquirers produced a prayer book that had been carried by his father, Private Patrick Byrne, 2nd Royal Irish Regiment, throughout the war. The marks of a bullet that was deflected can be clearly seen in the attached photo. Patrick was wounded and taken prisoner and attributed his survival to the expertise of the German surgeon.

In the afternoon, Sean Connolly gave a lecture on the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the Kaiser's Battle, March 1918

In his lecture on 12 November, Professor Stuart Ward analysed the way in which Gallipoli was remembered in Australia, Ireland and beyond. He summarised the similarities between the Irish and Australian experience in the Gallipoli campaign. It was the first time that volunteers from each country fought in their own division. They wanted to prove themselves as fighting soldiers. Both countries had national reputations as fighters, both wanted to be seen as a nation and both blamed the British High Command for the disaster. He contrasted the central role of Gallipoli in Australian life with its disappearance from Ireland where it was overtaken by the 1916 Rising. Stuart's talk provoked much discussion.

In December once again, Brian and Therese Moroney organised a very enjoyable association annual dinner in the Masonic Hall, Molesworth Street, Dublin.

There was one very important and historic event in 2010 that merits notice in this edition of *The Blue Cap*.

President Mary McAleese, Dr. Martin McAleese and Dr. Ian Adamson Somme Association at unveiling ceremony of the 10th (Irish) Division Memorial at Green Hill Cemetery Gallipoli 24 March, 2010.

The visit by President McAleese to Gallipoli on 24 March 2010 was an historic milestone on the journey to proper recognition of those who had been forgotten for so long. For the first time, the Irish soldiers, sailors and nurses who served and died in that disastrous Gallipoli campaign were

given formal recognition by an Irish President when she visited the Helles Memorial, 'V' Beach and Green Hill Cemetery. She unveiled the new Irish memorial at Green Hill, which overlooks Suvla Bay. A full report of President McAleese's visit to Gallipoli will be presented in the next edition of *The Blue Cap.*

On the previous day, H.R.H The Duke of Gloucester KG,GCVO President of the Somme Association planted four myrtle trees at the site of the memorial to represent the four provinces of Ireland from which the soldiers came. The Somme Association had a key role in having this memorial erected. In June 2005, the RDFA donated Euro 1,000 to the Somme Association towards the placement costs of a memorial to the 10th (Irish) Division in Gallipoli.

RDFA Standard Bearers at 'V' Beach Cemetery, Gallipoli. 25 March 2010 The Standards on parade were left to right, The Royal Munster Fusiliers Association carried by Niall Leinster, The 10th (Irish) Division carried by John Moore and The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association carried by Capt.(Retd) Seamus Green.

Reverend Ian Paisley and Baroness Paisley paid a private visit to our exhibition at the Irish Museum of Modern Art at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham on 2 June 2010. The former First Minister of Northern Ireland had shown good will towards the work of our Association over the years and had met some of our members at the Battle of the Somme commemorations in France in 2009. For his visit to Dublin, Dr. Paisley wore the RDFA tie and the Baroness, not to be outdone, wore her RDFA scarf. Dr. Ian Adamson, OBE, Chairman of the Somme Association accompanied them.

The RDFA website report

We continue to have a steady stream of traffic on our website. This is surprising given the number of relevant websites that now exist and the passive nature of our site. The website had over 57,000 visits in 2009. This year, there was an increase in traffic in March on the date of President McAleese's visit to Gallipoli and on the days when Joe Duffy's *Liveline* RTE Radio 1 program discussed the War. We had just under 200 new email enquiries during 2009, mainly seeking assistance in tracing relatives and other related information. Such emails often generate further exchanges that add missing information about individuals to our archive.

Month	Average Daily Visits 2009-10	Average Daily Visits 2008-9	Average Daily Visits 2007-8	Average Daily Visits 2006-7
Mar 2010	186	155	171	223
Feb 2010	160	152	157	221
Jan 2010	173	148	167	213
December	159	146	157	189
November	201	294	209	224
October	203	179	182	180
September	168	159	168	152
August	140	136	176	124
July	139	162	224	166
June	119	174	246	166
May	126	187	197	177
April	132	187	203	188

The RDFA website address is.
www.greatwar.ie

Email address is
rdaf@eircom.net

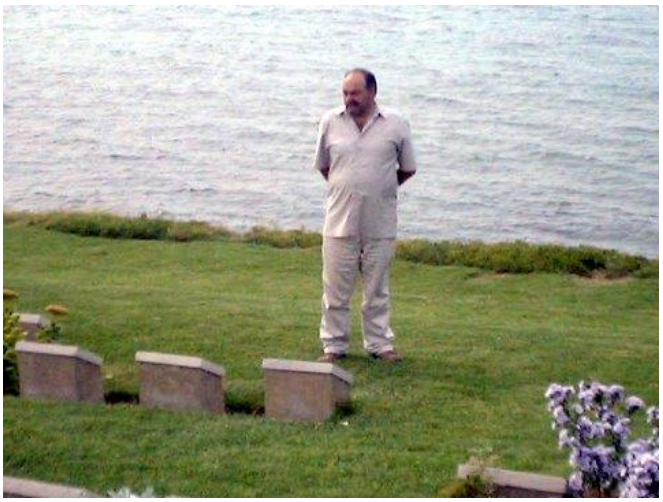
Members of the RDFA Committee and Ms. Philomena Byrne of IMMA with Dr. Ian Paisley, his wife Baroness Paisley and Dr. Ian Adamson OBE of the Somme Heritage Centre on their visit to Dublin in June 2010.

In Memoriam

Mr. Hugh Young. Hugh died on 13 June 2010. He was a gentleman. His intelligence, personality and charming good humour left a deep impression on all those that met him. He had a smile that lasted just over fifty-six years of his life. He was born and raised into a large and warm family in Cabra. He followed his father's footsteps into Arthur Guinness where he worked for thirty-five years as an electrician in the Keg Plant. Like a lot of lads of the nineteen-fifties, Hugh educated himself and became an avid student of history. He specialised in researching family ancestors and made many friends whom he surprised and delighted by showing them the lives of their grandparents and the way they had lived and survived. This was long before it became a popular TV show.

He married Linda Kiernan from East Wall in Dublin and lived in Artane in north Dublin. Together they had five lovely children and one grandchild. Hugh, Phillip Doyle and myself first started going to northern France several years ago after reading a Kevin Myers article about the Irishmen who died in the Battle of the Somme. We were touched with the care and dedication the British War Graves Commission lavished on those sacred sites. We went back to France every year armed with more information and names of relations of friends who had died in the Great War. We would hire a car at the airport, take the north road and swing around Amiens.

From here we would take the road to Peronne and book into our favourite hotel which we used as a base to go to Thiepval, Dellville Wood, Arras, Albert, Guillemont and Ginchy visiting all the small cemeteries and battle fields along our way. We travelled all along the Somme and the old front line from Verdun to Ypres. Martin Middlebrook's book was our bible. We even got to Mouse Trap Farm. We were always on the lookout for graves of friend's grandfathers. Hugh did Trojan work researching and finding the men's graves that worked in Guinness.



Mr. Hugh Young RIP at ANZAC.

But it wasn't all work. Every morning we would go to the local Carrefour Café and buy the making of a nice picnic lunch. One time we noticed Hugh had a packet of Laughing Cow cheese in the basket. We gave him a right good slagging saying we were in the greatest cheese-making country in the world and The Laughing Cow brand was all he could come up with! It was the topic of many a conversation in times after. In the evenings we would have dinner and a couple of beers and discuss the days discoveries. We would talk about our families, football, and of course Irish politics and anything else that came to mind. Phillip would get heated up a bit if Charlie Haughey came into the conversation. But all the same, we realised how lucky we were, to have this life of leisure, and the opportunity to study history at first hand .Not a day went by without discovering another gem that Hugh would put in his notebooks. We went up to Ypres one time, and after the ceremony at the Menin Gate where the last post was played, we had dinner and went around to the Shell Hole Bookstore. Hugh charmed the owner who broke out his best wine for us and we left late into the

night laden with free books and posters. Hugh kept in touch with him thereafter. Next day we visited Tyne Cot the biggest was cemetery in Flanders this sobered us up a bit.

The following year we travelled to Turkey to see the battlefields of Gallipoli. As usual, our tour was well planned by Hugh. My thanks must go to Nick Broughall of the RDFA for giving us lots of valuable tips on where to go and what to look for on the peninsula. We spent the first night in Istanbul where Hugh introduced us to Richard the owner of the James Joyce Bar, another good night. The Guinness connection worked its magic. It was a long drive to Canakkle which was straight away followed by a tour of the peninsula. I well remember that refreshing swim in Suvla Bay and that cool drink we had in a little bar overlooking 'Y' Beach where we read up about the landing of the Dubs and Munsters. The Turkish people and battle tour guides were brilliant. Tony Murray who was with on that trip, found the grave of his father's younger brother. It was a special moment for us all. Tony was the first member of his family to visit the grave in ninety years. Our trip to Gallipoli will always be remembered fondly.

Two years ago we went to Coventry with the RDFA 'officer' class. The weather was cold but the itinerary was packed starting with the National Memorial Arboretum near Burton-on-Trent followed by a visit to the Imperial War Museum in Manchester. On a rain swept Sunday morning we laid a wreath at 29th Division Memorial in the middle of a road to at Stretton-on-Dunsmore to remember the Irish Regiments who were stationed there before their transfer to Gallipoli. This was followed by a Sunday service in the local church where the congregation treated us to tea and biscuits, and a history of their area. On our way home to Dublin we stopped off in Stratford-on-Avon for a few hours which was a nice touch.

Due to his illness, unfortunately Hugh could not attend the RDFA Christmas dinner that year. The Coventry trip was to be his last expedition with the RDFA .He had his own battle to fight that he faced with his usual good grace, bravery and humour. He had the love and support of his devoted family who cared for him but never treated him like a patient. He got to see his eldest daughter Louise married in May. It was a smashing day for everyone.

Hugh was funny, witty and kind. Everybody liked him. His interest in family history made him many life-long friends. He was a true husband, father, grandfather and my dear friend. He was a loyal member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association. May you rest in peace Hugh, we will all miss you.
Dermot O'Brien, RDFA.

Mrs. Winifred O'Reilly. After a long illness that she bravely battled through, Winnie O'Reilly died on Thursday 17 June 2010. Her husband Tommy and family were by her bedside when she passed away. Both Winnie and Tommy were active members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association; their fathers were Dublin Fusiliers. Winnie and Tommy travelled to France with the RDFA; they were regular attendants at the annual dinner. They were members of a RDFA party who visited Devoy Barracks in Naas before it was closed. Devoy Barracks was the former Depot of the Dublins. When on the bus home from the Depot, she told me that as a little girl, she used to make hair ribbons from the ribbons of her father's Great War medals. Winifred was eighty-three when she died. She is buried in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin and is survived by her husband Tommy and loving family.

Mrs. Jacqueline Cowell from Clitheroe in Lancashire passed away on 20 February 2009. Jacqueline was a member of the RDFA. Her father served in the Dubs. Her daughter in the USA survives her.

Finally it is of historic note to include the names of the last of the British ex-Service men of The Great War in our section of remembrance. They were Harry Patch and Henry Allingham who both died in July 2009. Harry died aged 111 on 29 July and Henry died a few days earlier on 18 July at the amazing age of 113.

Ar dheis De go raibh a n'ainmneacha dilis

Spectamur Agendo