



THE BATTLE OF BELLEWARDE RIDGE - MOUSE TRAP FARM. The 2nd Dublins and 2nd Royal Irish.

*Mr Tom Burke, Mr Pat Hogarty and Dr Jim Stacey.
Members of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

The opening months of the Great European War (WW1) saw the destruction of many of the regular troops of the British Expeditionary Force. This period included the battles of Mons, Le Cateau where the 2nd Dublins fought, Etreux where the 2nd Munster Fusiliers were overwhelmed, Le Pily where the 2nd Royal Irish Regiment were similarly overwhelmed, Armentieres where the 2nd Leinsters severely suffered, and the first battle of Ypres where the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles were decimated. November and December of 1914 saw floods of fresh recruits flooding into France replenishing the old battalions and forming new ones.

The Royal Irish Regiment was based at Clonmel and drew in volunteers from the counties of Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. The First Battalion was destined for the East where they joined the 10th(Irish) Division in operations in Salonika, Egypt and Palestine. The replenishment for the 2nd Battalion embarked to France in November 1914 and went to the Ploegsteret region in Belgium becoming part of the 12th Brigade, 4th Division.

The 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the Old Toughs, were part of the 10th Infantry Brigade of the 4th Division. They arrived at Boulogne on August the 24th 1914 from Gravesend in England and moved by train to Le Cateau where they fought a rearguard action on the 27th of August.

By the end of September, it became clear that the Allied armies could not break through with frontal attacks on the Aisne. Joffre, the French Commander in Chief, decided on an outflanking movement north-eastwards and so began in October 1914 the so called 'Race to the Sea'.

By this time the Germans and French were already facing each other in a trench system that ran for about ninety miles from the Aisne north and west towards Bethune and La Bassee, two towns between Arras and the Belgian cloth city of Ypres. This movement was not a race, but, as already stated, a series of flanking movements. The Trench system on the Western Front was actually created by weeks of flanking attacks, each one stifled by the enemy's defence line.

This shifting movement to the north-west caused Field Marshall French to review the position of his army. At the end of September he proposed to Joffre that the BEF, currently sandwiched between two French armies in the centre of the Allied line, should resume its position to the left, beyond La Bassee and with the aid of Belgian units fill the gap between the town and the sea, a distance of some forty miles. This offered various logistical advantages, it would put the BEF close to their cross-Channel supply ports at Calais and Boulogne. Joffre was less enthusiastic, but on the 1st of October, the British commander told him that, with or without Joffre's agreement, he intended to shift his forces north and west. The move began on the night of the 2nd of October 1914.

In terms of the Dublin Fusiliers, on the 6th of October they were relieved by French troops at St. Marguerite and began their journey north as per Field Marshall French's orders. On the 17th of October they moved into billets in the suburbs of Armentieres, there they relieved an advance guard of Royal Irish Fusiliers (The Faughs). The Old Toughs were about ten miles south of Ypres. On their arrival at Armentieres, the inhabitants 'were wild with joy at our entry, surrounded the troops, giving coffee cigarettes etc.' The Faughs encountered snipers at the east end of the town. The Dublins were detailed to make a house to house search to flush out the German snipers. At night fall they moved to the east of the town in continuation of a line held by The Faughs. 'A' and 'B' companies acted as out-posts while 'C' and 'D' companies occupied billets in the Aisle d'Etrangers. The First Battle of Ypres had begun on the 10th of October and ended on the 11th November 1914.

From Armentieres, the front line ran north-west around the city of Ypres like a fist punching into the German lines. Military activity on the Western Front never ceased, apart from a brief pause on Christmas Day 1914.

The Kaiser's birthday, on 25th January 1915, was celebrated with an attack on the Le Basse-Givenchy sector. The British began their own first offensive on the 10th of March with an attempt to seize Neuve Chapelle. This was their part in the plan to eliminate the German salient in France. It failed. (A salient is a bulge of territory along a front line). Submarine warfare was extended to Ireland in February 1915 and on the 5th, the Lusitania was sunk off the Old Head of Kinsale with the loss of 1,195 lives. On the 25th of April, the Gallipoli campaign opened with landings by the 1st Dublin Fusiliers and the 1st Munster Fusiliers in the Dardanelles.

During the greater part of the first three months of 1915, the 2nd Dublins remained in a triangular area with the three points of the triangle being Armentieres in the south, Ploegsteret in the north and Nieppe in the west on the road to Bailleul, a round distance of about seven miles. During the night of April the 12th 1915, a German Zeppelin flew over the village of Bailleul where the 2nd Dublins were billeted. Three women, one child and seven horses were killed. (1)

The biggest effort by the Germans in the Spring of 1915 on the Western Front was the second battle to seize Ypres. In their opening attack, for the first time on the Western Front, the Germans used Chlorine Gas. The attack occurred over the Allied lines between Steenstraat on the Yser Canal through Bixchoote and Langemark to Poelcappelle. It was not the first time the Germans experimented with chemical weapons. On October the 27th 1914, in the Neuve Chapelle sector, the Germans fired three thousand shrapnel shells containing a nose and eye irritant as well as bullets. This was the first battlefield experiment, but the effect was so weak that the fact was not even known until revealed by the Germans after the war. In an attack in Poland on the 31st of January 1915, the Germans tried the use of an improved lachrymatory (eye irritant) gas-shell which turned out to be a failure owing to the nullifying effect of the intense cold. The next attempt to use chemical weapons was on the Western Front and owing to the

German authorities failure to provide the inventor, Professor Fritz Haber, with adequate facilities for the manufacture of shells, gas cylinders were used to discharge the Chlorine. (2) On the 7th of February 1920, Haber was indicted as a war criminal, sadly however he never stood trial. (3) Despite being dubbed as 'Frightfulness' and 'an atrocious method of warfare' which would 'fill all races with a new horror of the German name,' the British used this terrible weapon in September 1915 at Loos. (4) They released 150 tons of Chlorine from 5,243 gas cylinders killing 6,000 German soldiers. (5)

German prisoners taken at the end of March had revealed that gas cylinders were being brought up to the line. The information one prisoner gave was so precise that the French assumed he was a plant and ignored his warnings. (6) Following an initial bombardment by German Howitzers, at 5:00 p.m. on the evening of the 22nd of April 1915, the Germans launched a gas attack on the Allied lines north east of Ypres. The Germans discharged 178 tonnes of Chlorine gas from 5,730 cylinders over a four mile front. The first Allied troops to be hit were the 45th Algerian Division and the 87th French Territorial Division. Chlorine gas mixed with water produces Hydrochloric Acid. Men's lungs just melted with the effects of the gas. The unfortunate French and Algerian troops coughing blood and blinded came pouring out of their trenches. French artillery began pounding their abandoned trenches in an effort to stop the advancing Germans. However, the gas reached the guns and they too fell silent. In 1917, young Wilfred Owen wrote of such horror in his poem Dulce et Decorum est.

*If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs.*

The result of this attack was that the Germans had achieved a four mile wide gap in the line, completely exposing the 1st Canadian Division's left flank, towards which the gas cloud was now rolling. Two Canadian officers became aware of the gas and told their men to urinate in a handkerchief and hold it over their mouths. Uric acid crystallises Chlorine gas. (7) Weak in reserves, at 10:00 p.m. on the 22nd of April, the German advance stopped on the southern slope of Pickem Ridge. During the night of the 22nd, 1,500 Canadians counter attacked the Germans west of the

village of St Julien at Kitchener's Wood and suffered appallingly but to their eternal credit they stood their ground in the face of gas and shell fire and they halted the German assault at a terrible price. Today in the village of St. Julien stands a memorial to the 2,000 Canadian men who died nearby in the battles which took place between the 22nd and 24th of April 1915.

Into this gap were rushed 15,000 British and Indian troops. (8) At 7:30 p.m. on April the 23rd, the 2nd Dublins received orders to march north in half an hours notice. That night, they left their billets in Bailleul and marched to billets at Westoutre. Next morning at 07:30 a.m. they marched through the villages of Hensken, Zevecoten, Ouderdom where ammunition was distributed and Vlamertinghe to the outskirts of Ypres arriving at 8:00 p.m. Packs were discharged and at midnight on the 24th of April, they marched through the outskirts of Ypres north-east to St. Jean. At 04:00 a.m. on the 25th, the Dubs took up a position west of Wieltje - St Julien Road. (9)

At 06:30 a.m. the first wave of the counter attack on St. Julien attack went in. It was still dark when the 2nd Dublins moved off. About the same time, the 1st Bn. Royal Irish Regiment were shelled by 5.9 inch howitzers. There was no progress and the attack failed, the reason being that the ground over which the attack occurred was unknown, honeycombed with trenches and strewn with barbed wire. Canadians were reported still in parts of St. Julien and artillery could not shell the village.

As soon as our men got out of their trenches we were met with a terrific machine gun fire..... Our men dropped left and right, but they never wavered, and the Irish Fusiliers and Dublins Irishmen all, fighting shoulder to shoulder actually got into the outskirts of St. Julien. (10)

Near the close of day, the 2nd Dublins C.O, Lieut.-Col Loveband, was wounded. East of St. Julien, the German advance was stopped. The Dublins dug in about a quarter of a mile facing St. Julien. Over the next few days up to the 30th of April, the Germans hammered the allied lines in the Ypres Salient. The British position could not be held and Gen. Plumer ordered a retreat to a pre-prepared line. On the 2nd of May, the Germans launched another gas attack from St. Julien on the lines occupied by the 10th, 11th and

12th Brigades, however the men had been supplied with respirators 'of a sort' and the attack failed to breach the British line. (11) The 'sort' of gas mask the Royal Irish used was simply a piece of moistened flannel. (12)

The surprise and devastation the Germans achieved by the use of gas on the 22nd of April did not achieve its full potential in capitalising the ground lost to the Algerian and French Divisions. The German Command had little trust in the value of gas. There were no reserves at hand to pour through the wide gap that had opened in the Allied lines following the gas attack on April the 22nd.

On the 4th of May, the 2nd Dublins were withdrawn from the line and took up camp on the east bank of the Yser Canal about half a mile north of La Brique and camped round the Chateau des Trois Tours. They arrived here about 2:00 a.m. on the 5th of May being greeted by single German aircraft which dropped two bombs slightly wounding two men from the battalion. The following two days were quiet. (13) Over the previous days, German aircraft were used to spot British trenches. When located, they dropped smoke-balls to locate the British trenches for their artillery to launch an attack. (14)

Between the 24th of April and the 5th of May 1915, 136 men from the 2nd Dubs were killed in action or died of wounds. (15) For roughly the same period the 2nd Royal Irish suffered a loss of twenty men killed in action or died of wounds. The 1st Royal Irish who were stationed in the same area near Wieltje, again for the same period, suffered a loss of one officer, 2nd Lieut. C.R. Fausett and thirty eight men of other ranks. (16) The 10th Infantry Brigade suffered more casualties than any other unit having lost sixty three officers and 2,300 men. Among the dead Dublins were two brothers from the village of Skerries in north county Dublin. Pte. Joseph Gossan from Strand Street in Skerries was thirty years of age when he died of wounds on the 27th of April. He is buried at Wimereux Communal Cemetery, Grave Reference IF5A. His brother James died of wounds on the 4th of May. James was a married man aged thirty. Together with his wife Mary Ellen, they lived at No. 30 Church Street, Skerries, Co. Dublin. James is buried at St. Sever Cemetery, Rouen. Grave Reference A825. (17)

Also to die with the Dublins on the 26th of April was Pte. Peter Mc Donnell.

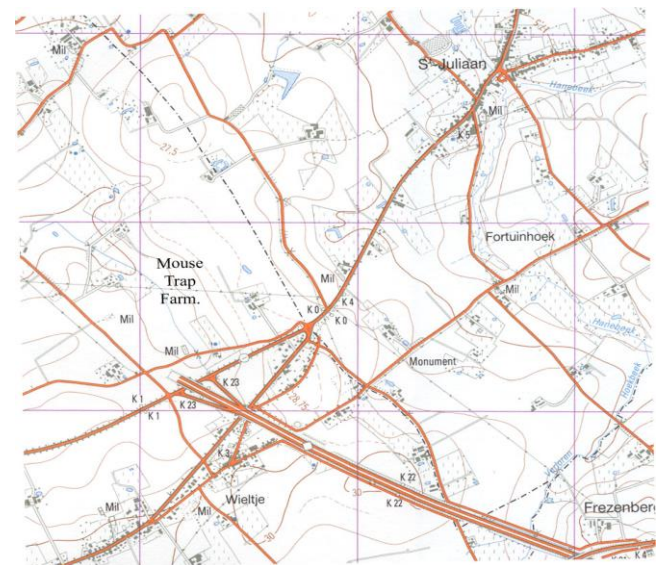
Peter came from No. 46 Bride Street in the heart of Dublin city and was forty two when he was killed in action. Sadly, his two brothers, Patrick aged thirty two and John aged twenty two who served with him in the 2nd Dublins, were to die roughly a month later in an even worse German gas attack. Three Dublins aged eighteen years of age died trying to retake St. Julien during April 1915. They were, L / Cpl. Peter Galvin, from No. 7 Peter Street, The Coombe. Dublin. Pte Thomas Clinton from Navan, Co. Meath and L/Cpl. Albert Gordelier from Bermondsey in Surrey. The oldest Dublin Fusilier to die was Pte Peter Farrelly from Manchester. Peter was forty seven. All of the men mentioned above are listed on the Menin Gate in Ypres.

Private Hugh Lynch 11297, 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was born at No. 67 Railway Street in Dublin in 1896. He came from a family of six children. His father's name was John and his mother was Mary Weldon. She too was born and reared in Dublin's north inner city. The family moved to No. 61 Foley Street Buildings. Hugh, like hundreds more young men from the inner city, joined the Dublin Fusiliers about a year or two before the Great War began during the General Lockout when there was little or no chance in obtaining work. By family memories, he was a very quiet lad. On the 24th of April 1915, Hugh died of wounds. He was nineteen years of age. His nephew, also name Hugh Lynch, lives in Artane. For years, at the request of his mother, Hugh's family kept his Death Scroll wrapped in a scroll dedicated to the Sacred Heart. Hugh's body was buried by the Germans in Westroosebeke Cemetery but was destroyed in later battles. A headstone marked 'To the memory of Private H Lynch' now stands in the Divisional Collecting Post Cemetery, Westroosebeke Communal Cemetery. For the first time since the lad died, in February 2001, a wreath was placed on his grave by a young Belgian man on behalf of Hugh's family who live in Artane, Dublin. (18)

Between the 8th and 12th of May, the 2nd Dublins occupied a sector which covered a distance of 100 yards between Shell (Mouse) Trap Farm and west of the Wieltje-St. Julien Road during which time they were continuously shelled and sniped at. The land

around the farm was like the surface of the moon with shell craters. Battalion headquarters was at Wieltje Farm house. Mouse Trap Farm was a Flemish Chalet situated on a ridge known as Bellewarde Ridge. From the Menin Gate, it is about two and a half miles north east of Ypres. It was located where the Front took a right-angled bend in the Ypres salient. On the evening of the 12th of May, the 2nd Dublins were relieved by the 15th Hussars and London Rifle Brigade and marched back towards Ypres to bivouac in the grounds of Vlamertinghe Chateau. Over the next twelve days, both Irish regiments served their time in and out of the trenches regularly being shell and sniped at from the Germans in St. Julien which lies about one and a half kilometres north east of Mouse Trap Farm.

At about 2:30 a.m. on Whit Monday the 24th of May, Colonel Loveband, who by that time had recovered from his wound suffered back in April, along with his second in command, Major Magan, Medical Officer Major Russell (R.A.M.C) and Captain Tom Linky, the Acting Adjutant of the Battalion were sitting in their headquarters dugout which lay about 400 yards behind the first line of trenches. Other than a German aircraft flying over Mouse Trap Farm the day before, things had been quite enough when night fell on the 23rd of May. Colonel Loveband and his officers had just finished a meal. Previous to their meal, he and Major Magan had conducted a tour of inspection of the Dubs front line trenches in and around Mouse Trap Farm.



Mouse Trap Farm. June 2001.

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Taking the Farm as the middle of the line, to the left was the 2nd Royal Irish Regiment. To the right of the Farm was the 2nd Dublin. On the Dublins right was the 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers amongst whose officers was 2nd Lieutenant Hugh Patrick Shine from Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. Behind the 2nd Dublins were the 9th Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders. During his rounds of the trenches, Loveband had warned all Company Commanders to keep themselves in preparation for a gas attack. The medical officer Major Russell, had inspected all the Vermoral sprayers and warned each company about keeping their respirators damp. On the morning of the 25th of May there were ten sprayers in working order, one with each machine gun and the remainder distributed along the trenches.

Capt. Linky and Col Loveband were standing outside the door of their dugout when, at about 02:45 a.m., they saw a red light thrown up from the German lines to the north west of the Farm and immediately followed by three more red lights directly over Mouse Trap Farm. More red lights were seen over the German lines south east from where Loveband and Linky were standing. Within seconds of the final red light going up, a dull roar was heard - 'more of an explosion (certainly not a shell) and we saw the gas coming on either side of Shell Trap Farm.' Loveband shouted to his men. 'Get your respirators boys, here comes the Gas.' (19)

In the trenches, 'Stand To' was just over and Rum was being issued. The battalion strength in the line was seventeen officers and 651 men of other ranks, i.e. 668 men. (20) Everyone was awake when the dense gas came in on a gentle north easterly breeze. (21) Due to the nature of the ground which was a gradual slope from the direction of the gas cloud and first line of trenches towards the 2nd Dublins battalion head quarters, a distance of about 400 yards, the toxic cloud took three quarters of an hour to pass over the Irish lines. As soon as the gas came over, the men came 'pouring out of the trenches' to the left of the Farm, i.e. the Royal Irish trenches. (22) 'Dropping like flies,' was the term used to describe the unfortunate Highlanders trying to evacuate their lines. (23) The area most effected by the gas was north west of the Farm, i.e. on the left of the Dublins and right over the Royal Irish. One cannot even imagine the agony those men must have suffered in trying to escape from the effects of the gas. They didn't stand a chance. The

Germans, grey-coated storm troopers of the 51st Reserve Division, advanced immediately behind the gas cloud, bombing and bayoneting the Dublin men in the trenches. By 04:45 the Germans had captured Mouse Trap Farm and had occupied the Royal Irish trenches.

Following the gas, at about 05:55 a.m., came their artillery 'heavies' and gas shells. Machine gun fire was now coming from their new positions in the Royal Irish trenches left of the Farm. By this time there was few left of the men who had 'stood to' earlier on in the morning. Yet some of the Dublins did manage to fight back. They were assisted by men from the 9th Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders. The last message Captain Basil Maclear sent was, 'Very many of our men are surrounded. We must have reinforcements.' He was killed leading a grenade assault on the occupied Dublins trenches facing the Farm. 2nd Lieut. Kempston got another note through to battalion head quarters. 'For God's sake send us some help. We are nearly done.' At 12:45 p.m., the only surviving officer of the 2nd Dublins, Captain Tom Linky, sent a note to the headquarters of the 10th Infantry Brigade. 'Reinforce or all is lost.' (24)

Standing at the back of his dug out, Col. Loveband was shot through the heart. 'The bullets came from behind'. Another officer named Burt Marshall was hit in the shoulder by fire 'coming from the same direction.' (25) There are some interesting questions surrounding the death of Col. Loveband. He was standing at the back of his dug out when 'the bullets came from behind.' One might logically assume the Germans were in front of him and his own men were behind him. If that being the case, was he shot by his own men. Why did the wounded Burt Marshall race 'off to stop the firing.' Who was Marshall trying to get to stop firing. It certainly wasn't the Germans. So who killed Loveband and tried to kill Burt Marshall as well.?

Regardless of who killed him, and more interestingly, why, the fact is he was now one of the dreadful statistics of that terrible attack on the 25th of May 1915. The Germans had taken Mouse Trap Farm and had pushed the Irish lines back by about 200 yards. From about 2:30 p.m. there was no fighting in the Dublins or Royal Irish trenches. 'Everyone held on to

them to the last. There was no surrender.... They all died fighting at their posts.’ (26)

At 9:30 p.m., Captain Linky received a message to withdraw his battalion headquarters and all his men to the Brigade Headquarters on the west bank of the Yser Canal. He took twenty men with him to camp about one and a quarter miles west of La Brique. Out of a battalion strength of 668 who stood to earlier on that morning, 647 were killed, wounded or missing. The 2nd Royal Irish Regiment also lost their commanding officer Lt. Col. R.G.S. Moriarty along with sixteen other officers and 379 men of other ranks. (27) The youngest recorded soldier to die fighting with the British Army in the Great War was a private with the 2nd Royal Irish Regiment. He was Private John Condon aged fourteen from the Ballybricken area of Waterford City. He died at Mouse Trap Farm on the 24th of May and is buried at Poelkapelle Military Cemetery. No doubt there was many more John Condons who died in that terrible war but who were never recorded.

Between the 25th of April and the 25th of May 1915, according to the Battalion War Diary, the 2nd Dublins suffered the following losses. (28)

Officers Killed.	24
Other Ranks Killed	103
Officers Wounded	14
Other Ranks Wounded	291
Officers Missing	2
Other Ranks Missing	1,094
Total Loss to Battalion	1,528

According to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records and Soldiers Died Series 76, the number of Other Ranks who died during that period was 383. The difference between the Battalion Diary and CWGC figures, i.e. 103 and 383 respectively, is 280.

This figure of 280 would make up some of the 1,094 Other Ranks who were missing. The final number of ‘Other Ranks’ who were missing is therefore 814. Of the 383 Other Ranks who died during that period, 323 were Irish Born ,i.e. 84.3 %. Forty two were English born, twelve were Scottish, one each was born in Wales, Australia, Brazil and Pakistan. There was two who had no place of birth data. In terms of the 323

Irish born Dublins who died, 234 were born in Dublin, i.e. 72.4%. In terms of the Battalion, 61.8% of the men were born in Dublin. (29)

What the statistics never show is the number of men who died after the war with illness related to those gas attacks. What the statistics also never show nor can we even imagine, is the terrible death and suffering those unfortunate men on both sides went through, dying from the effects of gas. On the 15th of June 1989, Jack Campbell, an Irish veteran of the Great War was interviewed by Michael Lee from Radio Telefis Eireann (RTE) at his hospital bed in Leopardstown Park Hospital in Dublin. Jack was a regular soldier who served in the Black Watch and during his interview he spoke to Michael about gassed men around him pleading with him to shoot them and put them out of their misery. ‘ It takes up to three hours to die from Gas....Yes its been said to me and others, *for Christ sake be a pal and put one in to me and finish me.*’ (30)

In reality, as an Irish battalion, the Second Battle of Ypres marked the end of the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Combined with the terrible losses the 1st Dublins suffered in Gallipoli during the month of April 1915, the grief inflicted upon the people of Dublin must have been shattering. Regardless of any political reasons, on a human level, was it any wonder why, one year later the Easter Rising in Dublin was so unpopular amongst the people of the City.

Two of those English born lads, who died at Mouse Trap Farm on the 24th of May 1915 were 16693 Private George Amos and 16694 Private George Alderson. The first thing to notice is their Regimental Numbers, one follows the other. The two Georges, along with another English man named James Unsworth, came from Durham. At the outbreak of the War, they went to their local recruiting office in Newcastle-on-Tyne and tried to enlist into the Durham Light Infantry or The Green Howards. Such was the eagerness to enlist amongst the young men from the mining area of Wheatley Hill, the three lads were told at the recruiting office that both regiments had filled their quotas and they should come back in a few weeks to try again. Not content to hang about for a few weeks and miss all the action, the three lads decided to enlist into the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. After twelve weeks square and ear bashing from instructors,

the two Georges were posted to the 2nd Dublins and James was posted to the 1st Dublins. Before he left for France, George Amos became engaged to a local girl from Wheatley Hill. The other George, i.e. George Alderson was married to a Miss Hannah Simpson from Thornley in Durham.

George Amos and George Alderson, two young English lads who joined the Dublin Fusiliers together, died together at Mouse Trap Farm on the 24th of May 1915. They were both twenty one years of age. The third of these likely lads, although not as much of a lad as his two mates, Private James Unsworth was killed in Gallipoli on the 29th of June 1915. He too was married and was forty one when he died. George Amos's fiancée never married, she died in 1999. (31) The bodies of these three Durham men who died with the Dublin Fusiliers were never found. Both George Alderson and George Amos's names are mentioned in the Dublins section of the Menin Gate at Ypres. James Unsworth's name is on the Helles Memorial at Cape Helles in Gallipoli.

2nd Lieut. Hugh Patrick Shine, serving with the 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, was killed on the 24th of May as well. Hugh was one of three Shine brothers who were officers in the regular army before the outbreak of war. All three were ex-pupils in the prestigious Benedictine Downside College near Bath in England. All three were killed in the War. Their Father was Colonel J.M.F Shine, C.B., a Royal Army Medical Corps Doctor. Their mother was Kathleen Mary Shine who, according to family beliefs, died from a broken heart in 1924. The Shine family lived and still live, at Abbeyside, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. (32)

The first of the Shine brothers to die was 2nd Lieut. John Denis Shine of the 1st Royal Irish Regiment. John was born on the 10th of September 1894 and went to Downside in September 1905. 'Gozo' Shine, as he was called by his school mates, distinguished himself in all the school sports. He was awarded a First Eleven colours in the schools Cricket, Association Football and Hockey teams. He also became a sergeant in the school's Officer Training Corps and was a member of the School's Library Committee. In 1912, he passed into Sandhurst and the following year was Commissioned into the Royal Irish Regiment. When war broke out, he went to France with his regiment and was wounded in the groin at

Mons on the 27th of August 1914. He was carried away to a neighbouring Church which was used as a hospital. Almost immediately after his arrival the building was destroyed by shell fire killing all its inhabitants. John died within a few days of his twentieth birthday. (33) He is buried at Mons Communal Cemetery, Grave reference IV.B.18.

The second of the Shine family to die was 2nd Lieut. Hugh Patrick. As already stated he died at Mouse Trap Farm on the 24th of May 1915. Hugh was the youngest of the three lads to die. Born on the 20th of August 1896, he went to Downside in September 1905. 'Full of energy', wrote his school's account of him. Like his older brother, Hugh was a keen sports man. He represented his house, Carvel, at Cricket, Hockey and Golf. He also achieved the rank of Lance Corporal in the school's OTC. In December 1913, Hugh left Downside and followed his brother to Sandhurst. On the 21st of May 1915, Hugh wrote to the Headmaster at Downside mentioning several 'Old Gregorians', contemporaries of his own, whom he had met in France, some of whom had since been killed. The letter concluded with the words: 'It does not seem as if there will be many left when the war is over.' (34) Three days later he died himself. He was eighteen years of age. Hugh's name is on the Menin Gate Panel 42.

The third and final tragedy to hit Col. Shine and his wife Kathleen was the death of their eldest son James Owen. Captain James Owen Williams Shine was an officer in the 1st Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Born on the 23rd of April 1891, he was the first of the Shine boys to attend Downside in September 1902. 'An able boy, gifted with considerable eloquence and humour.' Qualities which enabled him to become a successful actor on the Downside stage. In 1906, he passed the Lower Certificate and the Higher Certificate in each of the following three years. In 1909, he passed to Sandhurst and on completion of his course at the Military College was gazetted to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. (35) He joined his battalion in India and on their return to England he was transferred to the 2nd Battalion. Luckily he missed the terrible ordeal at Gallipoli. He was wounded in the leg in July 1916 at the Battle of the Somme and following his recovery, he returned to the Front and joined the 9th Royal Dublin Fusiliers on the 8th of October 1916 to take command of 'C'

Company who at that time were in Loker. Between April and the middle of June 1917, he worked as a Staff Officer with the 16th (Irish) Division. This was a vital time for the Division in their preparation for the Battle of Messines which began at dawn on the 7th of June 1917. During that battle, the 2nd, 8th and 9th Royal Dublin Fusiliers were kept in reserve. Their turn for front line assault came on the 16th of August when they attacked the German machine gun pits at the Potsdam, Vampir and Borry Farms just east of Frezenberg. It was during this ill-fated attack that Captain Jim Shine was killed along with seven fellow officers from his battalion. (36) Also to die was their Chaplain, Fr. Willie Doyle, S.J. Jim was twenty seven years of age and is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke in Western Flanders, Belgium.

No attempt was made to retake Mouse Trap Farm until the Third Battle of Ypres which began two years later on 31st July 1917. The Second Battle of Ypres effectively ended on the 24th of May 1915. In reducing the Ypres salient to a flat curve east of the City, the Germans had achieved their greatest success of the year. A shortage of troops and ammunition had prevented them from making the major breakthrough they had planned. The overall British losses in the battle from the 24th of April to 31st of May were 2,150 officers and 57,125 other ranks. French estimates of their casualties were 10,000. The overall German losses were 850 officers and 34,073 other ranks. The majority of the Dublins and Royal Irish who died are amongst the 54,000 names on The Menin Gate at Ypres, Panel 44 - 46.

Unlike the Canadians who have a beautiful memorial at St. Julien, there is no memorial specifically to the Irish men who died around Mouse Trap Farm in April and May of 1915. On Monday morning the 4th of September 2000, fifty nine members and friends of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association made an historic visit to Mouse Trap Farm. The visit was kindly arranged through Dr Jim Stacey, Dungarvan Great War Society, Mr Geert Spillebeen, Belgian Radio Journalist, Mr Robert Missinne, School Teacher at St. Julien, Mr Erwin Ureel, Officer in Belgian Army and friend of the RDF Assoc. Thanks must also go to Mr Johan Vandelanotte and Miss Trees Vanneste, executives from VVV Heuveland tourist office at Kemmel.

The present farm house is built in front of where the old farm house was. This was reduced to rubble in the attack on May 24th 1915. The farm is run by a young farmer and his wife and out of respect for their privacy, their name shall remain with the author. After introductions were made, a brief story was told of the terrible events that occurred nearby by Mr Tom Burke and Mr Brian Moroney from the RDF Assoc. Mr Robert Missinne kindly gave the gathering a brief on his research into the events of April and May 1915. Robert is a school teacher at St. Julien and has a particular interest in the Gas attack at Mouse Trap Farm. He had brought along his class of young boys and girls aged between ten and twelve years of age to take part in the remembrance ceremony. That war still has lessons to teach us.



Belgian School children at Mouse Trap Farm
on the 4th of September 2001.

Our ceremony began with the naming of ten Dublin Fusiliers who died in the gas attacks. Ten members of our group read out the name, address and age of the Irish soldier who died at this very sacred place. In many ways, naming these men returned to them a sense of identity, dignity and respect. Following this very emotive part of our ceremony, two members of our association laid poppy wreaths on the gable end of the farm house. The farmer had put hooks in the wall in preparation. Written in the centre of one of the wreaths was Wilfred Owen's poem *Dulce et Decorum est*.

The other wreath was laid by a friend of the family of Sgt William Malone, 2nd Royal Dublins who died at the Farm in May 1915 and whose brother, Michael,

died fighting with the Irish Volunteers in Easter Week 1916. There is a memorial plaque to Michael on the house at No.25 Northumberland Road, Dublin. His brother now has a memorial on a farm house in Flanders.

After the wreaths were laid, we said a decade of the Rosary and offered the Lords Prayer which was led by Mr Pat Cummins. The final act of our service was one which I will never forget. Almost all the men and women in our group broke with emotion. With Robert and his teaching colleague playing their guitars, the school children began to sing a song of peace, in English. It was beautiful. If only those poor men who died nearby all those years ago could see and hear those Belgian children singing in their honour, how proud they would have been. After the song, folks just stood in silence for a while then made their way to thank the children for their lovely singing. Some day I hope Irish children will go to this place and sing a song of peace.

Our visit to Mouse Trap Farm was probably the first time since the war ended that a group of Irish people went there to remember their fallen countrymen. We concluded the formalities with the presentation to our new friends at Mouse Trap Farm a picture of the Dublin Fusiliers Arch in St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. We cannot thank them enough for allowing us to visit their home. Two days later our bus passed by the farm on our way to Ypres and the wreaths were still on the farmhouse wall. Till the next time lads, all the best, you were not forgotten.

Cemeteries in which are buried men from the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who died near Ypres in the Winter and Spring of 1914 / 1915 and from the gas attacks at Wieltje (St. Julien), Ypres in April and May 1915.

Ploegsteret Memorial. This memorial stands in the Berks Cemetery Extension which is located 12.5 kilometres south of Ypres town centre on the N365 leading from Ypres to Mesen (Messines), Ploegsteret and on to Armentieres. From Ypres town centre, the Rijselsestraat runs from the market square, through the Lille Gate (Rijselpoort) and directly over the cross-roads with the Ypres ring road. The road name then changes to Rijselseweg (N336). The N365, which forms the right hand fork, leads to the town of Mesen (Messiness) . The Cemetery lies three

kilometres beyond Mesen on the right hand side of the N365 and opposite Hyde Park Corner Royal Berks Cemetery. The memorial commemorates over 11,000 men who have no known grave. It is a covered circular colonnade.

Bailleul Communal Cemetery. Bailleul is a large town in France near the Belgian border. It is 14.5 kilometres south west of Ypres and on the main road from St. Omer to Lille. From the Grand Place, take the Ypres road and 400 meters along this road is a sign indicating the direction of the cemetery. Turn down right into a small road and follow for approximately 400 meters, the cemetery is on the right.

Prowse Point Military Cemetery. The Cemetery is located 11.5 kilometres south of Ypres town centre on the road leading from Rijselseweg N365, which connects Ypres to Wytschaete, Mesen, Ploegsteret on to Armentieres. From Ypres town center, the Rijselsestraat runs from the market square, through the Lillie Gate (Rijselpoort) and directly over the cross-roads with the Ypres ring road. The road name then changes to the Rijselseweg. Take the road out of Mesen that leads past The Island of Ireland Peace Park. Two kilometres after Mesen lies the left hand turning onto Rue St. Yvon. The cemetery is located 600 meters along this road on the right hand side. The Cemetery was begun by the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the 1st Royal Warwicks and was used from November 1914 to April 1918. It was named after Brigadier General C.B. Prowse D.S.O (Somerset Light Infantry) who fell in July 1916.

The Menin Gate Memorial: Ypres (now Ieper) is a town in the Province of West Flanders. The Memorial is situated at the eastern side of the town on the road to Menin and Courtrai (Kortrijk) and bears the names of men who were lost without trace during the defence of the Ypres salient in the Great War. There are over 54,000 names of officers and other ranks engraved on the Portland Stone. 460 of whom are Royal Dublin Fusiliers on Panels 44 and 46. Each night at 8:00 p.m. the traffic under the memorial is stopped and the local Fire Brigade sound the last Post and have done so since the end of the Great War.

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**Michael Francis O'Donnell M.C.
A unique Royal Dublin Fusiliers Officer**

Mr Liam Dodd.

Member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

Michael Francis O'Donnell was the only officer of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers ever to receive the Military Cross and two bars. Yet this brave man's last resting place is an unmarked grave in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin.

O'Donnell was born on September the 26th 1886. At the outbreak of the First World War, he was a clerical officer with the Congested Districts Board of Ireland. He enlisted into the army in November 1914. He gave his address as No. 47 Irishtown, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. He was posted as a Private to the "Pals", 'D' Company of the 7th (Service) Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers. His regimental number was 17392. On the 28th of November 1914, he joined his new unit at the Curragh for training.

He was soon promoted to the rank of Lance-Sergeant and proceeded overseas with his unit in June 1915. He took part in the landings at Suvla Bay on the 7th of August 1915. It was at this time he was further promoted to the rank of Sergeant and saw continual service until December 1916 in places such as Gallipoli, Serbia and Salonika. He left Salonika in December 1916 and was mentioned in General Milne's despatches for that month. He returned home for a course in the Cadet School before joining the 7th Officers Cadet Battalion at Moore Park, Fermoy, Co. Cork. After training, he was gazetted as Second Lieutenant to the 11th Battalion of the Dublin Fusiliers on April the 20th 1917. In June he was sent to France attached to the 8th Battalion of the Dubs and fought in the Third Battle of Ypres. It was there, on July the 31st 1917, he received his first wound, yet he still remained at his post. Four days later, he was taken to a casualty clearing station near Habile where he received treatment over the next ten days. He returned to action at Frezenberg Ridge (Ypres) and was awarded a *Hickie Parchment* for operations in November 1917 in the Bullecourt Sector. Due to heavy casualties, early in 1918, the 8th and 9th Battalions of the Dublins were amalgamated. Soon afterwards the casualties further increased, the officers and men of the 8th/9th Battalion were transferred to the 2nd Battalion.

He was granted leave on the 20th of March 1918 and arrived at Le Havre on the 21st of March to sail to England. However, the ship could not sail due to the German offensive and all leave was cancelled. He then had to return to the front and was attached to 'Y' Company of the 1st Battalion. On April the 21st with O'Donnell leading, the Company took over the village of Beausingham from a Company of the 2nd Battalion, Irish Guards. *The Micks*, as all Irish Guardsmen are known, had recently come under a gas attack. During

the hand-over, O'Donnell spent some time with the famous photographer Father Brown DSO, who was Chaplain to the Irish Guards. They spoke about '*the death of the heroic Rev. W. Doyle MC who gave his life at Frezenberg*'.

The trenches taken over by 'Y' Company were only three feet deep. Despite further gas attacks, headquarters would not allow the Dublins to make the trenches deeper or wider. Headquarters maintained that the appearance of freshly dug soil would betray the Company's exact position. Needless to say, O'Donnell was not happy with this order.

In July, O'Donnell was sent on a five week course at Wisques (near St. Omer) with a good many worn-out officers after the March Offensive. The state of the other officers, perhaps, explains how he won competitions there in welterweight boxing and recreational training. He then proceeded to Hazebrouck, where officers who had a rough time in the line were resting. Unfortunately, there was not much opportunity for rest, as half an hour after his arrival (at 12:50 am) he was awoken with the news that Captain Alexander was badly gassed and he was to take over his platoon. A horse was provided for him to ride to Strazeele, with a guide, who '*did not even know where the Battalion Headquarters were!*'. Despite the gas shells raining down, O'Donnell dismissed the guide who '*was left to wander around Strazeele*'. At 2:15am, he finally located Capt. Maguire MC (who was the Adjutant). O'Donnell, who must have been exhausted by this stage, was told to locate and report to Lieutenant Cassidy. At daybreak, he finally found him with Second Lieutenant Lennon, who, '*were both very badly shaken from the Bosch shelling.*'

While in Strazeele, on the 26th of August 1918, Colonel Moore DSO, offered O'Donnell the position of Assistant Adjutant to the Battalion but O'Donnell declined this position as he '*preferred being with my company*'. Moore did not force the issue and instead appointed Lieutenant Strange to the position. Two days later, his Company were assigned to a raid in which O'Donnell and 2nd Lieutenant Lennon participated. Each had twenty five men and were told to take three farmhouses held by a German officer and about thirty five men. After the British barrage finished, the farmhouse was attacked. O'Donnell's

men were on the left and Lennon on the right. However, the Germans had abandoned the house. Despite the absence of any enemy, 2nd Lieutenant Lennon and one or two of his men were wounded as they got too close to the British barrage.

O'Donnell and the Battalion were ordered to La Romarin on the 2nd September of 1918 and were ordered to take Ploegsteret the following day *'at all costs.'* (It is not clear if this order refers to human life or exertion!). The Dubs formed the right side of the attack, with 'W' and 'X' Companies leading and O'Donnell's 'Y' Company providing a defensive flank. The attack started shortly after dawn. They had not proceeded far before the Germans started trench mortaring. Severe casualties were suffered and the advance ground to a halt at 8:30 a.m, about 900 yards from Ploegsteret. O'Donnell then decided to go forward to the leading Company Commander who was sending back messages for reinforcements. En route, he captured two German machine guns, one heavy and one light. In a farmyard on the main road to Ploegsteret, the Company Commander requested O'Donnell to go to the assistance of an advanced platoon of 'Y' Company commanded by M J McNulty, who had previously lost a portion of thumb, and a couple of fingers. When McNulty saw O'Donnell, he shouted, despite a throat wound, *'Mick, are there any stretcher bearers there?'* As O'Donnell and his runner, Private Coffey, raced towards McNulty, they saw him fall. O'Donnell was shocked to discover that *'the poor fellow's life was slowly ebbing, and was bleeding profusely'*. On kneeling over him, he asked McNulty if there was any message that he wished to send home. He was unable to make any reply, and never spoke. At this point, they were under heavy machine gun fire and Coffey was wounded in the wrist.

There were only five men left in McNulty's platoon, whom O'Donnell took command of. They took cover in a drain, which was five feet deep, containing about eighteen inches of water. At 3:00 p.m. they received a message that a British barrage was to be expected and Ploegsteret was to be taken under this creeping barrage. As they advanced they discovered *'the Bosch had very thick wire erected'* and that *'machine guns seemed to spring up everywhere'*. They hacked their way through the wire and the *'enemy surrendered rather too willingly.'* The ones who did not surrender,

'bolted for their own lines and were nice targets for our men.' Ploegsteret was consolidated that night and they were relieved by the Royal Fusiliers. O'Donnell had also captured another four guns (new field guns), which along with the two captured earlier on, totalled six. He also captured several trench mortars.

Despite the success, the cost was high, casualties were heavy, four officers (one killed) and about 250 rank and file. In addition, 185 Germans (including officers) were taken prisoner. The Battalion was still complimented for their performance and the Brigadier, Divisional Commander, Corps Commander and General Plumer took the salute from the Battalion. The Battalion was also decorated with four Military Crosses (M.C.'s), two Distinguished Conduct Medals (D.C.M.'s) and forty one Military Medals (M.M.'s). One of these Military Crosses was awarded to O'Donnell. The citation reads:

For conspicuous gallantry during an attack. Owing to casualties, he assumed command of two platoons, and with greatly reduced numbers, rushed a strong point, capturing an officer and six men and a machine gun. He next, from an advantageous point, causing heavy casualties with his Lewis guns on the retreating enemy, and, pushing on, he captured two field guns, one trench mortar and ten prisoners. From first to last, he set a splendid example of courage and leadership.

The Battalion were moved to the Brandhoek area and next saw action on the 29th of September at Ypres. During this engagement O'Donnell was also Acting Transport Officer, as the T.O. was on leave. The Battalion reached Cheuvelt, before they were withdrawn for rest. On the 13th of October 1918, they were moved by light railway to Ledgehem Railway Station. The Battalion advanced with 'Z' Company on the left, 'Y' Company (still under the command of O'Donnell) on the right with 'X' and 'W' Companies behind. The advance started under a heavy smoke barrage and quickly took their objective about 2,500 yards east of Ledgehem.

Unfortunately Colonel Moore was killed and the Battalion came under the command of Major Rigg. For this action he received a bar to his Military Cross. The citation reads:

In the operations at Ledgeham on October the 14th 1918, he showed marked gallantry and powers of leadership. On reaching the first objective in face of heavy fire he succeeded in working round to the flank of one machine gun, which was forced to retire from a commanding position from which it had been causing casualties. His example and coolness had a most inspiring effect on all ranks.

As a result, they were allowed to rest from the 14th of October until the 18th of October. The Germans were retreating quickly and it was intended not to give them any rest. Therefore, from the 19th of October onwards they were chasing the Germans. At three o'clock on the afternoon of October the 20th, the Dublins met German machine gun fire from the right. They managed to dislodge two machine guns which had caused many casualties. Just as the British barrage went down, O'Donnell was severely wounded in the shoulder and left thigh. He sent for Lieutenant Scott and handed over command of his Company. O'Donnell received his second bar to his Military Cross (his third M.C.) and the official citation was:

At St. Louis, in the Courtrai Sector, on October the 20th 1918, his company was held up by machine gun fire. He made a personal reconnaissance under severe machine gun fire, and then led on and took the enemy position that was holding up the advance of the battalion. His marked courage and leadership were the means of enabling the battalion to advance.

He received the Military Cross and two Bars from King George V at Buckingham Palace on the 19th of March 1919. He must have been proud of these awards as a letter relating to a piece in 'The Times' illustrates.

'I beg to point out that the letter 'MC' should be added (to my name), considering the fact that I have been awarded the Military Cross and two bars' (sic).

This was to be the pinnacle as well as the end of his career. A medical examination was carried out and the report was as follows:

- i. Left Thigh: a wound 10" long beginning 2½" below Poupart's ligament. A wound 6½" long in postero-external surface mid thigh. Stitches removed 8th November 1918.
- ii. Right Shoulder: extensive wound involving muscles, 4½" long extending from above clavicle, across shoulder towards spine and ending 1½" from latter. Wound was septic on arrival in England and stitches had to be removed. This wound still causes limitation of movement of shoulder.
- iii. Left leg: small wound.
- iv. Right thigh: small wound.
- v. Left arm: small wound two inches above the elbow in under side.

Collectively these wounds are equivalent to a very severe injury. (sic) As a consequence of these wounds, he was invalided from the Army on the 27th of July 1919 with the rank of Lieutenant. This must have been a bone of contention to O'Donnell, as a 1932 letter from O'Donnell to the War Office states, '*I have been deprived for some inexplicable reason of my rank of Captain, to which I was promoted at Ypres on October 11th 1918 by my commanding officer Colonel Moore DSO.*' Unfortunately, Colonel Moore DSO was killed in action on the 14th of October 1918 without a chance to formalise O'Donnell's promotion.

Michael Francis O'Donnell died at his home in Leinster Square, Dublin, on the 27th of December 1958. In his will, after the payment of debts, everything was left to the Passionist Religious Community in Mount Argus, Dublin. He was buried in a totally unmarked grave in Glasnevin Cemetery (Grave Number J.L.188½). Hopefully, sometime in the future, a benevolent society will make a contribution to provide a suitable memorial on the grave of this brave Irish soldier.

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14785 Lance Corporal Joe Little
7th Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

Mr Rodney Bill.

Member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

Lance Corporal Joe Little died as a result of wounds received at Gallipoli at the Island of Lemnos on the 17th of September 1915. He had enlisted on the 19th of September 1914 and was previously an officer of the Registry of Deeds in Dublin. Joe was a native of Co. Sligo where his family were involved in farming. I don't know what became of his family. In 1928 his mother and sister were mentioned as being present at the unveiling of Sligo's War Memorial. I can imagine them as a very quiet Irish family with a strong religious nature. They were Methodists. Joe was educated at Wesley College in Dublin.

Joe's family lived in the same town-land of Castlegarren as my grandmother's family. Unknowingly as a younger man, I knew people who could have told me the whole story about him, but it wasn't to be. Something rather miraculous happened however which kept his name alive and may yet, by this article, translate it into a new future. On the way into Sligo, at Cooladrumman, lived a woman by the name of Jane Gillmor. Jane was into her 60's at this time and all her life had been involved with a newspaper started by her father- THE SLIGO INDEPENDENT. With the permission of Joe's family, Jane Gillmor had some of his letters written whilst on active service published in her newspaper. I came across them in the 1980's and that was my first knowledge of Joe Little. I think the world should be grateful to Jane Gillmor for effectively making a true and lasting memorial to Joe's name.

What was Joe like? After his death another soldier wrote, ' *His sunny temperament and general good nature endeared him to everyone*'. I think at this time one can't really refer to what he did or said. What is

left is feeling. Reading his letters I would have said a man who trusted in the Lord as the following extracts make clear:

We had a service (Presbyterian) here yesterday morning. It was the first I had the opportunity of being at since we came out here and I did enjoy it. You wake to realise in a time like this and under conditions like those what an important thing is religion. It is a fact that you will not hear so much of the comic song out here as is usually granted to the soldier. I have heard many of the chaps around this camp sing snatches of hymns more often than songs. You cannot leave God out of the battlefield.

I know for myself I have never felt God's presence nearer than when under the greatest dangers of the field and the hottest fire possible. Shells dropping around me on all sides at a few yards, and yet, though the hot blast of the explosion has blown my face, I may come through untouched. I remember one day, about a fortnight ago, crossing an open plain to a well for water, and bullet shots whizzed past me and hit the ground under my feet all the way across and back, and yet I wasn't hit. On two other occasions shells dropped within ten yards of the well.

With all this, is it any wonder that my faith in Providence should grow stronger? I always pray for protection before I set out on any of those risky journeys, and I feel no fear. I have never prayed so much nor so earnestly in my life than I have since I came out here, and I know God has answered my prayers... I think of you so very often, and prize that little Khaki Bible you gave me, and this little photograph of you both, and also the one taken at the Sligo Cattle Show... How often I think of you all at quiet evening service in the Hall, and I know you are praying for your soldier boy...

In his penultimate letter home, Joe spoke of having a 'rare burst up' with a mate when he got out of that place. (The mate was another RDF man, Jack Holm, who later died on the Western Front). May they both rest in peace.

The Chanakkale Battles and The Irish Regiments.

*Professor Dr. A. Mete Tuncoku
The Middle East Technical University, Ankara.*

The participation of the Irish Regiments in the Chanakkale Battles on the side of the British, and the estimated four thousand losses they suffered, is known little not only in Turkey but in Ireland as well. The Chanakkale Battles are almost a negative page of history for Ireland, unlike Australia and New Zealand. Consequently, this connection has not been delved into much by Irish researchers until the 1990's.

The main reason for this lack of concern on the side of the Irish is linked to the historical relations between Great Britain and Ireland. As is known, Ireland was under British administration starting in the 12th century until Independence in 1922. Yet another important point is that throughout this period, resistance movements against the British have also continued unabated. While a group of Irish have considered themselves as part of England, another group has continued resisting against British rule for centuries. This bifurcation, known as the Unionists and the Nationalists, has continued after independence up to our present day.

Independence from Great Britain in 1922 is, in a way, the victory of the Nationalists. This being the case, the Nationalists have perceived the Unionists who participated in the Chanakkale Battles of 1915 as 'the deceived' or 'the traitors', and considering this incident as a black mark in their history, have not been willing to remember it.

It is only after the 1990's that the Chanakkale Battles and the role of the Irish Regiments in these battles has begun to be researched and taken up and re-evaluated with an objective eye. In this process of re-evaluation, this connection is being restored to its rightful place as a respectable part of Irish national history, just as it has been the case in Australia and new Zealand.

The Irish have participated in the Chanakkale Battles, voluntarily, yet even during the training they received and their preparations for battle, they were chanting marches of 'Erin Go Brath'. This means that although they were participating in the war together with the British, they nevertheless did possess a consciousness of being Irish. Although they fought in Chanakkale for no longer than two months, between August and October 1915, they suffered a great deal of casualties in such a short span of time, and proved themselves to be able warriors.

The heroic acts of the 10th (Irish) Division, made up of Irish soldiers and under the command of General Bryan Mahon, have been especially eye-catching. In addition, the poor treatment they were subjected to by British commanders had a negative impact upon the Irish and made them question their feelings of allegiance towards Great Britain. As a consequence, the Irish, who had volunteered to participate in World War One on the side of the British, have left the Chanakkale Battles with increased consciousness and strengthened sentiments of nationalism, like the Australians, the New Zealanders, and the Turks.

TV. Documentary on the Irish in Gallipoli.

Mr Michael Lee and Mr Colm Connolly of RTE Television are currently working on a TV documentary about the Irish who fought in Gallipoli. Any members who had a relative that served in the Gallipoli campaign should contact Michael Lee at Dublin 01.-2842003.

Remembering the Irish in World War One is relevant to Reconciliation and Peace.

*Mr Tony Quinn S.C
Member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

The failure to honour adequately the Irishmen who died in the Great War, was depicted as a forgotten wound on national unity by the late Francis Shaw, SJ, (1) a controversial essay published in the Jesuit journal, 'Studies', in Summer 1972. (2) That wound was evident for many decades in the official neglect of the Memorial Park, Islandbridge, Dublin. In asserting national identity, the Irish educational system naturally emphasised the Easter Rising and the struggle for independence from British rule. The wider context, and

specifically the Great War, now often called World War One, (WW1), was generally neglected.

In 1966, Sean Lemass, TD, then Taoiseach, pierced the great silence in a sensitive speech at the King's Inns, Dublin, on the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising and the Somme slaughter. Lemass spoke about honouring the memory of the Irish who, motivated by the highest purposes, joined the British forces during WW1. An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, TD, echoed the views of Lemass in November, 2000, when he launched Keith Jeffery's fine book, *Ireland and the Great War*. (3) In reality, the diverse motives for Irishmen enlisting in the British army included expectation of Home Rule, a sense of adventure, the need for employment and a desire to defend Belgium.

Lemass's speech heralded a wider perspective on the substantial participation by hundreds of thousands of Irish people in WW1. A significant milestone on the road to reconciliation was the opening of the Irish Round Tower and Peace Park at Mesen, in Flanders fields, Belgium on the special Remembrance Day, 1998. Private citizens and public figures from diverse strands of Irish society participated in that historic event attended by President Mc Aleese in the presence of the British and Belgian monarchs. The President stressed the need to use the tremendous sacrifice of those who fought and died in WW1 as a basis for forging a deeper understanding and respect between the various traditions on the island of Ireland. As President Mc Aleese pointed out, reconciliation is a series of steps - a journey not an event.

At what stage is that journey now ? What progress has been made on healing the wound on national unity in the context of the peace process ? Senior politicians and other Irish public figures now attend remembrance services without causing controversy. But in some respects war commemorations, especially when expressed by the symbolic poppy, can be divisive in Ireland. Many individuals and groups actively pursue the stories of the Irish people and regiments who participated in WW1. Such initiatives include criticism of British militarism and incompetent generals. The Journey for Reconciliation Trust is concerned with maintaining and improving the Irish Peace Park at Mesen, Belgium. Groups such as the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association organise lectures, exhibitions and remembrance tours.

'Let those who come after see to it that their names are not forgotten' : Charles P. Keary's words from the war commemorative scrolls, inspired me to research specifically the stories of twenty-five Irish barristers who died in WW1, as listed on the Four Courts memorial, Dublin. A few of the names, especially Tom Kettle and Willie Redmond, are justifiably renowned, but most are relatively unknown. Letters from relatives of forgotten members of the Irish Bar encourage my efforts but there are still gaps in the available information, for example about : John H. Edgar, Durham Light Infantry, died in Belgium, 24th of February 1916; Arthur R. Moore, London Regiment, Royal Fusiliers, died at the Somme, 1st July 1916; George B.K. Smyth, 6th Battalion. Royal Irish Rifles, killed on the 22nd of October 1918. The research provides insights into the human tragedy of WW1. For example, William Lipsett, from Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal, emigrated to Alberta after qualifying as a barrister. He returned to serve with the Canadian Infantry Division which fought bravely during 1915 in the Second Battle of Ypres, (Ieper). Lipsett, who was killed in that battle, is named on the Menin Gate and at Trinity and St. Andrew's Colleges, Dublin and the Four Courts. Another victim of the Second Battle of Ypres, was Alexis Helmer from Ottawa, whose death in the poppy fields inspired Canadian surgeon John McCrae to write the memorable and evocative poem : *In Flanders Fields, the poppies blow, Between the crosses, row on row...* That poem places the symbolic poppy in a wider international context.

During the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association's journey in September 2000 to Flanders and the Somme, there was spontaneous poppy - picking in the roadside field near the Ulster Tower, Thiepval, which commemorates the 36th (Ulster) Division. Poppies and other symbols are important - as illustrated by the souvenir badges of the Ulster Tower which refer to '*Somme, Ireland 1916*'. Even informed visitors are challenged by that enigma: the reference to a WW1 battle displaces traditional perceptions of 1916 as the year of the Easter Rising.

The main memorial tower at Thiepval remembers many Irishmen who died in the Somme slaughter, including Tom Kettle, barrister, nationalist MP, poet, essayist, patriot and Lieut. B company, 9th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. On our tour, we honoured Kettle at the Irish commemorative cross in Guillemont and at

nearby Ginchy where he was killed on the 9th of September 1916, a few months after the Easter Rising. Kettle was critical of the Rising which resulted in the deaths of Thomas McDonagh, his university friend, and of his own brother-in-law Francis Sheehy-Skeffington. Kettle had a European outlook and strove to promote good relations between Ireland and Britain. Although he had been an MP for East Tyrone at Westminster, he under-estimated the depth of intransigent unionist opposition to Home Rule for Ireland. Kettle's poignant poem to his baby daughter may provide a clue to why Irishmen volunteered to serve in WW1 :

*Died not for flag, nor King, nor Emperor -
But for a dream, born in a herdman's shed,
And the secret Scripture of the poor.*

In the Flemish village of Loker, Willie Redmond is a local icon and an Irish pub is named after him. His lonely grave is nearby. A barrister and MP, he was in his mid-fifties when he enlisted to fight and die on the Western Front. In 1917, Major Redmond returned from the trenches to plead in an Imperial context to the House of Commons at Westminster for an Irish parliament and for amicable Anglo-Irish relations. He spoke of Orange and Green in the brotherhood of the Somme. Three days before his death at the battle of Messines, on June 7th 1917, Willie Redmond of the 16th (Irish) Division at a officers' dinner at Loche (Loker) prayed for *'the consummation of peace between North and South'* Stretcher-bearers of the 36th (Ulster) Division carried the wounded Redmond back to the field aid post at Dranouter where he died. On the RDFA tour, we remembered Willie Redmond as a brave Irishman who lived and died for his country. The Jesuit war chaplain, Fr. Willie Doyle, SJ, from Dalkey, Co. Dublin, in his last sermon to about 3,000 Irish soldiers on the Western Front in July 1917, diplomatically and eloquently spoke of Irish participation in the Great War. He referred to *'fighting for Ireland, indirectly through another.'* As his work was appreciated by Catholics and Protestants, Dubliners and Ulstermen mourned his death.

Participants in the RDFA tour prayed and placed wreaths at war graves of family members, after decades of personal neglect fostered by the dominant mood of official amnesia for the Irish role in WW1. Some prayers were recited in the Irish language which was also used for inscriptions on memorial crosses to the

Irish Divisions which served in the Great War. Flemish school children sang a song of peace for the Irish visitors and the official hosts at the formal dinner expressed thanks for the sacrifices of an earlier Irish generation in Belgium's defence. During recent excavations on the Western Front, generations and traditions were spanned when the remains of an Irish soldier from WW1 was discovered. Identity papers revealed that the victim came from a nationalist area of Belfast. The examples outlined in this article and the initiatives by many individuals and groups demonstrate that remembering the extensive Irish participation in World War One is relevant and inclusive. The tribute by Stephen Gwynn, MP, and Connaught Rangers officer, to Irish in the Great War ends aptly : *You also are Ireland.*

ANTHONY P (TONY) QUINN, who was called to the Bars of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and also England and Wales, is researching the stories of the twenty-five Irish barristers who died in WW1. In addition to Tom Kettle, they include Royal Dublin Fusiliers officers : Capt. Poole H. Hickman and Lieut. Ernest F. Julian, both of the 7th Bn. (Pals) who died in Gallipoli in August 1915; and Lieut. Cornelius A. Mac Carthy, 9th Bn. drowned on 19th July 1917 and commemorated on the Basra Memorial, Iraq. Anthony P. Quinn, can be contacted at : rosbeg@iol.ie

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1. The Canon of Irish History, a Challenge.
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3. Jeffrey. K. *Ireland and the Great War*. Cambridge University Press. 2000.

They are not forgotten: Memorials to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Part 3.

Mr Philip Lecane.

Member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

This series of articles records details of memorials on which men of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers are mentioned. The name of the person who recorded the details is given in brackets at the start of each piece of information.

Thank you to those who have taken the time and trouble to record details of memorials and send them to the association. *'The Blue Cap'* will publish all submissions of memorials on which men of the R.D.F. appear. Please keep sending in memorial details. We need **your** support for this series of articles.

Fauldhouse and District War Memorial

(Mr. Francis Mc Mahon. Member of the RDF Assoc.)

Location: Nappers Park, Bridge St, Fauldhouse, Scotland. Memorial: Seventeen feet high square monument of unpolished silver gray granite, rising from three steps, surmounted by a dome and Ionic cross. The names of 109 casualties are inscribed on four panels.

Inscription in lead imperishable letters: *"Erected in proud and grateful memory of the men of this district who fell in the Great War 1914-1919."* (Note the fact that those who designed the memorial didn't consider the war to have ended until 1919.) On the base of the pedestal are the words *"Their name liveth for evermore."*

The *Lothian Courier* of the 22nd of September 1922 carried a report on the dedication of the memorial. The unveiling was performed by Sir Francis Davies, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., A.D.C. to the King and Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Scotland. Approximately 100 ex-servicemen from the district marched to the memorial, where they stood on either side of it during the dedication ceremony. Relatives of the fallen carrying floral tributes occupied seats, which almost encircled the monument. Fauldhouse Pipe Band, Crofthead Brass Band and a combined choir drawn from the various churches took part in the ceremonies.

The names of two RDF men appear on the memorial. Pte. Neil Gormley, 1st Bn. RDF. From Dunhead, Co. Down, he enlisted in Fauldhouse, Scotland. He was killed at Gallipoli on the 29th of June 1915. Pte. John McGourty, 2nd Bn. RDF. From Glenkeel, Co. Leitrim, he enlisted in Fauldhouse, Scotland. He was killed in France on the 1st of July 1916.

Saint Matthew's Church of Ireland, Dublin
(Mr.Pat Lynch. Member of the RDF Assoc.)

Location : Irishtown, Dublin. There are six RDF men among thirty six names listed.

L/Sgt. Duncan Black MM., 2nd Bn. RDF. 21st March 1918.

Lt. Walter Blackwell, 11th Bn. RDF. 28th of September 1918.

L/Cpl. William Julian Lowth, 2nd Bn. RDF. 25th of April 1915.

Pte. John McGourty, 2nd Bn. RDF. 1st of July 1916.

Lt. F.H.N. Sessions, RDF and RAF. 5th of June 1918.

Pte. Samuel Willoughby, A Coy, 2nd Bn. RDF. 27th of August 1914.

Roll of Honour, *The Ushaw Magazine*, March 1919

(Mr. Michael Robson. Member of the RDF Assoc.)

There are three RDF men among the seventy eight names listed.

2nd Lt. Charles Mc Alister. Killed in June 1918. Attended Ushaw 1897-8.

2nd Lt. Austin Tumilty. Killed on the 10th of November 1917. Attended Ushaw 1912-6. Ecclesiastical student.

Also on the list is Rev. William Finn. Attended Ushaw 1889-1900. Killed at Sedd-el-Bahr, Gallipoli on the 25th of April 1915 while ministering to the men of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and Royal Munster Fusiliers. Mentioned in Despatches. Father Finn was the first chaplain to be killed in the war.

St. John The Evangelist

(Mr Liam Dodd. Member of the RDF Assoc.)

Location: Sandymount, Dublin. Memorial: Large wooden plaque. Inscription: *"This Chapel is dedicated to the glory of God in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary and in memory of the men of this parish who fell in the war 1914-18."* At the end of the memorial is inscribed *"As Gold in the furnace he hath tried them and received them as a burnt offering."*

There are four RDF men among the eleven names listed.

2nd Lt. Charles De Burgh Daly.

Lt. Eric Greaves M.C.
 Lt. John Godfrey Baird Dunne
 Cpl. Henry Augustus Kavanagh

Clontarf Presbyterian Church, Dublin.

(Mr. Warren Lawless. Member of the RDF Assoc.)

Location: Howth Road, Dublin. In the 1920's the church served the communities of Ballybough, Fairview, Clontarf, Dollymount and Sutton. Memorial: A beautiful stained glass window. It was dedicated on the 7th of November 1920 with reports in church and national newspapers. The design, based on the painting *La pieta*, includes the following scenes:

Christ's Death and Resurrection

A soldier falling wounded, received by an angel

The laurel wreath of victory, fame and honour held by an angel

Christ standing over a fallen soldier

An angel ministering to a wounded soldier

A mother and child seated beside a soldier's grave.

An angel ministering to a weeping woman.

At the base are eight shields with the insignia of the Australian Commonwealth Forces, The Royal Munster Fusiliers, the 13th London Regiment, the Royal Irish Horse, the Connaught Rangers, the West Yorkshire Regiment, the Royal Air Force and the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

Inscription ---- *"To the Glory of God and in Loving and Grateful Memory of the Sons of this Church who laid down their lives in the Great War 1914-1918. Erected by the Congregation."*

There are seven RDF men and former RDF men among the fourteen names on the Memorial.

2nd Lt. Ronald Gordon Hunter 1st Bn. RDF, died 25th of April 1918.

Lt. G.F. Mac Nie, 5th Bn. Connaught Rangers, formerly "D" Coy, 7th Bn. RDF, died on the 5th of September 1916.

2nd Lt. James Robertson Mc Daniel 3rd RDF, attached to 57 Squadron Royal Flying Corps, died on the 18th of August 1917.

Lt. Alexander Charles Paul, 11th Bn. Royal Irish Regiment, formerly "D" Coy, 7th Bn. RDF, died on the 2nd of October 1917.

His brother Pte. Walter Cecil Paul, "D" Coy, 7th Bn. RDF, died on the 7th of August 1915.

2nd Lt. Arthur M.C. Taylor, 2nd Bn. Royal Munster Fusiliers, formerly "D" Coy, 7th Bn. RDF, died on the 10th of November 1917.

Pte. Robert Cyril Porter, 7th Bn. RDF, died on the 8th of December 1915.

Also of interest on the memorial is Sgt. Major A. A. Tennant, 1st Australian Imperial Force.

Dunganstown Church of Ireland

(Mr Tony Pyke. Member of the RDF Assoc.)

Location: Redcross, Co. Wicklow. This memorial records eleven parishioners who served in the First World War, of whom seven were killed, three wounded and one taken prisoner. Among the names is that of Pte. R. Bell, RDF, who was killed at Mouse Trap Farm, 2nd Battle of Ypres, on the 24th of May 1915.

Ambleside Cemetery

(Mr Des Byrne. Member of the RDF Assoc.)

Location: Colenso, Natal, South Africa. A stone memorial in the cemetery is inscribed *"This cemetery enclosed in March 1962 commemorates the officers & men of the Fifth Irish Brigade who were killed in this loop of the Tugela River on 15th December 1899."*

A standing stone memorial in the cemetery has the Royal Dublin Fusiliers crest above the words *"Fifth Irish Brigade."* A marble cross is inscribed *"The Royal Dublin Fusiliers."* On the base of the cross are the words: *"In memory of 2 officers, 51 N.C.O.s & Pte.s who fell at Colenso 15th December 1899. R.I.P."*

Grangegorman Military Cemetery

(Mr Maurice Riley. Member of the RDF Assoc.)

Location: Blackhorse Avenue, near Phoenix Park, Dublin. *"The Irish Builder and Engineer"* on the 15th of February 1930 published the following item, under the title *"Soldiers' Graves in Ireland. The British War Graves Commission, through the Commissioners of Public Works, have placed two contracts with Messrs. C. Harrison and Sons, Pearse Street, Dublin, for headstones to be erected in Grangegorman Cemetery over the graves of soldiers who died in Ireland as the result of injuries received during the Great War. The regimental badge of each of the deceased is to be inscribed on each stone. The number of headstones covered by the contracts is 565."*

In fact, approximately 140 First World War casualties buried in the cemetery were killed when *"R.M.S. Leinster"* was torpedoed on 10th of October 1918 shortly after leaving Kingstown (now Dun Laoghaire), Co. Dublin. 501 people, mostly military, were killed in the greatest ever loss of life in the Irish Sea. Many of the British Army casualties of the Easter Rising are buried in the cemetery.

In addition to the many headstones in memory of individual Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the cemetery, there is a memorial wall (to the right as one enters, close to the boundary wall with Blackhorse Avenue), commemorating the following members of the RDF who died during the First World War *"And are buried elsewhere in Ireland."*

Corporal J. Cosgrove, Privates C.Carroll, T. Corcoran, M.Dooney, P. Glynn, C. Hackman, W.Hore, O. McAuley, P.Mulhall, T. Murphy, M. O'Hara.

St. George's Church of England

(Mr Pat Hogarty. Member of the RDF Assoc.)

Location: Gravesend, Kent. A memorial records L/Sgt. Frederick William Robert Burke (21), 10th Bn. RDF. Born in Quetta, Baluchistan. Enlisted in Gravesend. Killed on the 28th of April 1916 during the Easter Rising in Dublin. Son of Major John Burke, D.S.O. M.C. D.C.M. of 62 Grove Ave, Twickenham. Buried Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Blackhorse Avenue, Dublin.

Presbyterian Church

(Mr Pat Hogarty. Member of the RDF Assoc.)

Location: Parnell Square, Dublin. Lieut. George Gray (22), 4th Bn. RDF, son of Helen and the late Alexander of Newcastle on Tyne, a dental student in Dublin, killed near Kelly's Lane, Phibsborough on the 27th of April 1916 during the Easter Rising in Dublin. Buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Blackhorse Avenue, Dublin.

Items for this series should be sent to:

Mr Philip Lecane,
The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association,
C/o Dublin Civic Museum,
South William Street,
Dublin 2.
Ireland.

Thank you to those members who have taken the time to send in memorial details. Due to space restrictions several have had to be held for the next issue. All contributions will be published.

In Memoriam.

We remember **Rosaleen Cummins (nee Coleman)** who died on the 2nd of May 2000. She was the wife of RDFA member Mr.Pat Cummins, mother of David, Mim and Joanie, grandmother of Conor, Niall and Matthew and sister of Fr. Dermot OCSO, Dr Tadhg O Colmain and Dr Colmain. The RDFA extends its sympathy to Rosaleen's family and in a special way to our members Pat and David.

We also remember RDFA committee member **Mr. Jack Sinclair** who died on the 8th of May 2001. He was the husband of Eileen, father of Peter, Mark, Jaqueline and Brian and brother of Pat. The RDFA extends its sympathy to Jack's family. Jack played an active part in making the RDFA the vibrant organisation it is today. He will be missed by the association and especially by his colleagues on the committee. May **Rosaleen** and **Jack** rest in peace.

Ar dheis De go raibh a nAnamacha
(May their soul be on God's right hand side)

Poetry.

Ms Sally Keogh.

Member of the Royal Dublin Fusilier Association.

On the 4th of September 2000, a group from the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association were at Ypres, Belgium. Sally Keogh (nee Copeland) took a few hours away to go on her own personal pilgrimage to her uncle's grave. John Copeland, from Foyle, Co. Limerick, had joined the army in 1903. After completing his service he was placed on the reserve list. A married man with two children, he was called up on the outbreak of war in August 1914 and took his place in 2nd Bn. Scots Guards. The battalion were stationed at the Tower of London when war was declared.

The following month they went to Lyndhurst, Hampshire, as part of 20th Brigade, 7th Division. On the 4th of October the battalion went to Southampton. They boarded the ships 'SS Cestrian' and 'SS Michigan' and sailed the following day. Due to a warning of German submarines, the ships had to dock at Dover. At 7.30 p.m. on the 6th of October they sailed again. They arrived at Zeebrugge, Belgium on the 7th of October and entrained for Bruges. After a certain amount of maneuvering necessitated by German advances, the battalion went into action on the outskirts of Ypres. Guardsman John Copeland, Reg. No. 5116, was killed on the 26th of October 1914. He was thirty two years old. Sally Keogh went through the effects of her late father her joy and amazement she found a poem written Bill two weeks before she set out for Flanders. To by her uncle Charlie and sent to her father. The poem commemorates their brother John.

John Copeland RIP.

Killed in Action 1914

*Somewhere out in France you fell
As of yore our poor Wild Geese
And the thunder and the shell
Cannot break your blessed peace.*

*Who was near you! Held your head!
Staunched your fatal wounds awhile;
Caught the last words that you said;
The beauty of your fading smile?*

*Who of all that mighty fray,
Who but the angel heaven gave
To light the soul on its dark way
From the cradle to the grave.*

*Rest, as but the tired slain can,
In some cold and nameless hole;
Earth is poorer by a man,
Heaven richer by a soul.*

Thankfully, John Copeland does not lie "in some cold and nameless hole." He is buried in a well tended grave in Hooze Crater Cemetery, Belgium. On the 4th of September 2000, his niece Sally visited the cemetery and placed heather, stone and clay from Ireland on the grave. She recited her uncle Charlie's poem. "I felt that it brought all of the family together" said Sally.

Mr Brian Merry.

Member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

Following a visit to the Somme last year, Mr Brian Merry wrote the following poem about his father who served there as an officer in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

*I watched as pigeons
raced across the Somme
a foot above the April
growing corn, fed by
sightless soldiers far below
that red brown clay.
The racers rose to clear the
trees as lifted by a cloud.
Oh, if those buried could
be carried by them
their joy at getting home
at last.*

Privates Thomas and John Messitt. 2nd Battalion. Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

Mr Bertie Messitt

Member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

When Strongbow invaded Ireland in 1169, a Messitt came with him and settled in Co. Westmeath. His descendants stayed there until, being disposed by Cromwell, they found their way to a small settlement

near Enniskerry, County Wicklow. At the turn of the 20th Century, there were approximately ten families with the name Messitt in the Enniskerry area. They worked as farmers, foresters, gardeners and stonemasons.

Thomas Messitt was born in Riverside, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow. His father was named Luke who was a coachman and he too was an Enniskerry man. His mother was named Eileen and she came from Stillorgan in south County Dublin where they were married. In his youth, Thomas worked in the famous gardens of Lord Powerscourt near Enniskerry in Co. Wicklow. He was a good athlete and used to run what was then an annual race from Enniskerry to Dublin. Those that completed the race were presented with a bottle of whiskey. Being light on his feet, Thomas also won an all-Ireland dancing championship.

At the outbreak of Great War in 1914, Thomas and his third cousin, John Messitt, who was born in Kilbride near Kilmacanogue in County Wicklow, together joined the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. John was assigned the regimental number 19787 and Thomas was given the next number 19788. Both men were assigned to the 'Old Toughs' i.e. the 2nd Battalion of the Dublins. In August 1916, a mortar bomb exploded near Tom which covered him up to the neck in debris causing superficial injuries to his limbs, the real damage done was from shell shock. He was honourably discharged and returned home to Bray. While convalescing he got to know John's sister, Bridget. They fell in love and got married in June 1918. Just three weeks before the Great War ended, John was killed on the 18th of October 1918 while fighting with the 2nd Dublins. He was one of the 149 members of the regiment from County Wicklow who died in the Great War. A Celtic Cross type memorial to their honour along with Wicklow men from other regiments stands near the Carlisle Grounds, home to the Bray Wanderers AFC in Bray, Co. Wicklow. John was twenty three years of age when he was killed. He is buried in The Highland Cemetery, Le Cateau. Grave Reference III.C.2.

It is a one of the many tragic ironies of the Great War that on the same day John Messitt was killed, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers won their third and last Victoria Cross near Le Cateau. It was awarded to a soldier named Sgt. Horace Augustus Curtis from Newly in Cornwall. During the final Allied offensive,

Sgt Curtis charged and took out a German machine gun post, for such bravery or utter madness, he was awarded the Victoria Cross. Since the war began, four years and two months earlier, nine million people had died fighting each other, and yet the 2nd Dublin Fusiliers were near enough back in the same place from which they had started out in August 1914. If there was ever an indictment on the folly of war, surely this must be it.

Thomas and Bridget Messitt had seven children, three sons and four daughters. They lived in Bray's ex-Service men's cottages at No. 15 Old Court, which was known as 'Soldiers Road.' One of their sons, Albert John, or Bertie for short, followed in his father's footsteps and joined the Royal Irish Fusiliers after WW2 in 1945. He served with the Faughs up to September 1952. Those were golden years recalled by Bertie in verse.

Faugh a Ballagh

*I wore a hackle in my hat
And marched behind a band,
Carried a Lee Enfield rifle
And served in foreign lands.*

*They were the best days of my life;
I cherish those golden years,
When I was a proud member of
The Irish Fusiliers.*

During his army years, Bertie had developed a love for athletics. When his soldiering days were over, he carried on with his athletic career and joined Donore Harriers Athletic Club in Dublin. He won numerous national titles on road, track and country. He set sixteen Irish national records and won world championship bronze on the track. In memory of his father who survived the Great War and John Messitt who died with the Dublins in October 1918, Bertie wrote the following poem.

The Somme 1914-1918.

*Two teenage boys left house and home
Despite their mother's fears
And took the train to Dublin town
To join the Fusiliers.
Their earthly goods were in their packs
As they marched behind the band
To the tune of Tipperary
And shouts of cheering fans.*

*They landed at Le Havre, France,
And each one wore a smile;
Said Tom to John, We're here at last,
We're now on foreign soil.
They marched for days and days and met
The wounded coming back:
Sad, tattered lines of limping men,
Broken on war's cruel rack.*

*And soon they made it to the front
And filed into the trenches;
The sergeant roared, Heads down me boys!
For the gunfire was horrendous.
Then a blinding flash and a dreadful blast
Blew some of the lads away
And John will never return again
To his dear hometown of Bray.*

*But Tom survived the awful war,
Came home to build a life;
He met and loved John's sister,
And she became his wife.
And though John lies in foreign soil,
Far from his dear hometown;
His name is scribed with love and pride
On a plaque by the Carlisle Ground.*

Music History.

Mr Pat Cummins.

Member the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

The Irish Guards are permanently stationed in London and they made their first visit to Dublin under their conductor Major A R Chatburn in June 2000. They were joined on this occasion by the Irish Army No.1 Band under its conductor Commander Joseph J Ryan. There were almost 100 musicians on the stage of the National Concert Hall. The scarlet red uniforms of the

Irish Guards blended beautifully with the green of the Irish Army No.1 Band. They played to a full house to an appreciative audience and were given a rapturous reception. The programme was a well-balanced selection of marches, traditional airs and modern musicals. Two Guards musicians played the Post Horn Gallop, and we also had St. Patrick's Day March (traditional) and Evening Hymn and Last Post. I hope it will not be too long before the Irish Guards make a return visit to Ireland and I hope also to live to see the massed bands of the Irish Army play at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

The Military Heritage of Ireland Trust.

On Thursday the 25th of January 2001, the Minister for Defence, Mr Michael Smith TD, officially handed over office accommodation at the Department of Defence offices on Infirmery Road to The Military Heritage of Ireland Trust. The Trust, a voluntary organisation, was established in 1999 and incorporated as a limited company with charitable status in June 2000. The main objective of the Trust is to promote a knowledge of Ireland's military heritage, including its relationship to economic, political, social and cultural affairs, thereby encouraging interest in that heritage and fostering an appreciation of it.

Currently the Trust is working with the National Museum of Ireland and museums in Armagh, Belfast and Enniskillen on a project entitled 'The Irish Soldier'. The project will be centred at the National Museum, Collins Barracks, Dublin with links to other museums throughout the Island of Ireland. This project stemmed from the decision to open military galleries at the National Museum in Collins Barracks, as well as the joint decision made by the National Museum and the Defence Forces to relocate Irish Military Archives to Collins Barracks. The current directors of the Trust are. Colonel (Retd.) Harvey Bicker, Mr John Cullinane, Sir John Gorman, Mr Kevin Mc Goran, Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Patrick Nowlan, Professor Eunan O' Halpin, Maj. Gen. (Retd) David The O' Morchoe, Dr Pat Wallace, Mr Frank Murray, Col. William Gibson and Maj. Gen. James Shreenan.

The Island of Ireland Peace Park at Messines in Belgium.

Despite all the negative publicity this worthy project has received in recent months, the latest news on the Peace Park at Messines is encouraging. For the next twenty seven years, the Office of Public Works who are responsible for the maintenance of Public Buildings in the Republic of Ireland, in co-operation with their sister organisation in Northern Ireland, i.e. N.I Construction Services, will jointly take responsibility for the development and maintenance of the Peace Park. The acting chairman of the Trust who are responsible for the project, Lieut. Gen. (Retd.) Gerry Mc Mahon, expressed delight at the decision taken by the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly in taking joint responsibility for the project. However he suggested that it would be at least next summer before the Memorial is completed.

Visit of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association to Flanders and France, September 2000.

Mr Brian Moroney.

Member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

We stood in the still of a late summer evening; Philip Lecane addressed us on the order of march a Battalion of the B.E.F would have taken as it neared Mons. We were standing in St. Symphorien cemetery, possibly one of the most unusual and, indeed, beautiful cemeteries of the Western Front. For in this amazing cemetery lie British and German dead of the Great War, men who died in the opening battle of the war and men who were amongst the last to die in action. In this poignant setting we could see in our minds eye Philips wonderful word picture of those Old Contemptibles as they marched into history. Here we saw the grave of Westmeath man Lieut. Dease one of the first to be awarded the V.C(posthumously) and only a few steps away lay the grave of the last soldier to die in action.

Over the next week the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association visited a number of such sites associated with Ireland and the Great War in both Flanders and France. We also paid homage to our friends and our foes of that war to end all wars. From Flanders to

Vimy, the Somme and all the way back to Mons, we toured and we remembered, we brought Ireland to those who never came home, we spoke the names of men so long forgotten. Along the way we heard the special family stories from men and women who never dreamt that they would have an audience who would listen in rapt attention and with deep empathy.

Sixty travellers, two countries, five hotels, one pub lunch, one picnic, one restaurant lunch and so many reasons to be there. Would it be a success- the answer was a resounding *yes*. Some of our travellers were on a pilgrimage and they would lay wreaths at the graves of relatives, the first grave visits in many, many decades. Others simply wanted to see where it all happened, to hear the stories and to pay homage to all those men who fell in the Great War.

From Loos to the Somme we travelled and, at each stop, we held a short ceremony where the names of fallen Dub's were called aloud and a member of the group read a short prayer of remembrance. On regular stops we were told what happened and how it happened and, with the aid of trench maps, where it happened.

Philip had set the standard on day one and the speakers who followed him kept to that standard. Vivid word pictures were painted by Tom, Brian, Paddy, Nick and Sean as they told the story of not alone the Dubs but of the Irish in the Great War. From this group itself came the personal stories, the vignettes of family histories shared with a group that rejoiced and mourned as one. We understood as one member spoke of his father, we shared with another the satisfaction as she poured soil from the Curragh on the grave of a son of Kildare. We were as delighted and suprised when purely by chance two members happened on the grave of a 'lost' relative, and those who stood on the battlefield of Messines and listened to Tom as he read extracts from letters from the Front previously unread for eighty years felt a rush of emotion that will rarely, if ever, be recovered.

Not that we confined ourselves to places of purely Irish interest. We were given a first class reception at Vimy Ridge and again at Newfoundland Park by informed and delightful Canadians. At T.O.C.H we were given a tour to remember by the excellent Jacques and at the Historical in Peronne we visited a

first class Great War museum which told the story from 'both' sides with understanding and poignancy.



Members and friends of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association who visited Flanders and France in September 2000. This photograph was taken in the Square in Arras, France.

We had a meal at a restaurant deep in the Flemish countryside with our Belgian and Flemish friends to thank them for all their help. It was somehow typical of the mix of nostalgia and high good humour that was evident throughout the tour that just as we departed for our hotels, just as the coach pulled away we were called back, as we thought for a final round of goodbyes. Not so, said our hosts for the evening—just a little matter of paying the bill. Typical Dubs!!

The more we came in contact with our friends in Belgium the more we discovered of our common bonds. A prime example was our visit to Mousetrap Farm a historical first for both our association and the people of the district. Here the farm owners joined us in laying a wreath to the Dublin Fusiliers, so many of whom had died in the region of the original farm in 1915. Local school children sang of peace in English led by their teachers. They listened solemnly as prayers were read and dedications to the memory of the dead were recounted. When we asked why the answer was simple, it was their tribute to the men of Ireland who came to Flanders to defend their freedom. How simple and how accurate. Indeed it was one of their teachers who had organised our visit to the farm when he heard from some locals that the Irish were coming back. Some days later as we passed by the farm, we could see from the road our wreaths still in place. We have been told that those wreaths will be honoured for many years to come and this we find

easy to believe. The tour was a trip high on emotion and typically many tears were from laughter as from memory. Who will forget our two laggards offering to pet the dog in the Hollermersch as they were last to take their seats for Tom's morning briefing? Old the dog may have been but by God could he still move over a short distance. It is officially denied that Brian wanted to take the dog with him for the rest of the tour. He just was inquiring for future reference. Be warned.

Just as the tour prepared to leave France we met with a burial detail from the Royal Irish Regiment who were in Arras to inter the remains of a recently discovered Irish Soldier of the Great War. In a charged atmosphere the Sergeant Major of the Royal Irish detachment presented his Pace Stick to his fellow Dubs. Toasts were exchanged and friendship struck, such evenings as this create memories that add that special magic that seems to accompany the Dubs on tour.

We had a ball, it was an outstanding success. We laughed a lot and we cried a little, we celebrated two weddings anniversaries and we laid many wreaths and not a ghost a two. Will we travel again... watch this space.

Highlights of the Past Year. 2000.

Mr Sean Connolly.

Secretary, The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

We have had a number of successful activities since the issue of *The Blue Cap* Vol.7, culminating in the reception by An Taoiseach "to honour The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association" in the State Apartments on the 26th of April, 2001. This was attended by over 700 guests and was featured in the main TV news programmes on R.T.E, U.T.V and B.B.C 1. During his speech, An Taoiseach congratulated all the members of the Association "on all your good work in reviving and preserving the memory of the thousands of soldiers who belonged to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers". The full text is included in this edition.

Last July, our exhibition travelled again, this time to the Dungarvan Museum where it remained for two months. More recently, it returned to the Phoenix Park

Visitors Centre. We are continuing our search for a permanent home. The Taoiseach stated that he shared our wish to see a permanent home for the materials to be put on display but also where the records can be read or consulted.

In September, our group of fifty nine members and friends travelled to Flanders and the Somme region. The detailed planning and preparations were rewarded by a very smooth six day tour which met the expectations of all participants. During the three days around Ypres, we visited Mouse Trap Farm at the invitation of the current owners and laid a wreath in memory of the 143 soldiers of the 2nd R.D.F killed in the gas attack on the 24th May 1915.(This was where the youngest soldier of the war, Private John Condon, was killed). The local school welcomed us and sang a song for the occasion. Our Belgian friend and expert on the Irish aspects of the war, Erwin Uriel, presented the Association with an original five foot steel support for barbed wire which was recovered from the Irish trenches. A full report is included in this edition.

In October, Mr Nick Perry, spoke about *General Nugent and the 36th Ulster Division*.

In November, Mr Tony Canavan, dealt with a controversial subject when he gave his lecture entitled

The Poppy my Father wore- Northern Nationalists and commemoration.

In December, Dr. Patrick Mc Carthy, made a return visit when he gave a lecture on *The Irish Cavalry Regiments in the First World War* . All lectures had a full capacity attendance.

The Association participated in the commemorations at the National War Memorial, Islandbridge, in July and November. The new Association standard was carried for the first time. It was also carried during the Ecumenical Service of Remembrance in St. Patrick's Cathedral on November 12th, 2000.

Many members attended the National Day of Commemoration ceremony at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham in July. This is now attracting a wide attendance including those from Northern Ireland and the UK. The Committee of the Combined Irish Regiments Association i.e. Chairman, Mr Jim Scott,

Vice-Chairman, Mr Jim Mac Leod and Secretary, Mr Jim Graham, were our invited guests at the National Day of Commemoration .

Our Annual Dinner was held in the Masonic Hall, the guest of honour being The O'Morchoe, former Commanding Officer of the Royal Irish Fusiliers. Over ninety attended.

On March 24th, 2001, we had a capacity attendance of eighty at our full day seminar which provided expert advice on how to research the Great War. The feedback was very positive. Send in your research.

The website continues to generate interest. There were 7,713 unique visitors up to last April. Over 600 enquiries have been received by e-mail. One result of the website is that we have been in touch with the family of the only known living member of the Regiment, Charles Milne, a bandsman who was born and lives in England. Our current membership stands at 285 and is growing.

The breakdown is:

Irish Republic	200
England	42
Northern Ireland	17
Wales	8
U.S.A	5
Scotland	4
South Africa	2
Canada	2
Arabian Gulf	1
Australia	1
France	1
Israel	1
Luxembourg	1

Dublin Fusiliers remembered at State Reception .

Mr. Nick Broughall.

Member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

Over seven hundred and fifty people were guests of the Taoiseach, Mr.Bertie Ahern T.D, at a State Reception, in honour of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, held in Dublin Castle on the 26th of April 2001. It was also to be the occasion of the launch of the Association's website www.greatwar.ie.

The assembled guests in St. Patrick's Hall, in the State Apartments, included the British, German and Turkish Ambassadors; representatives of the Royal British Legion, Organisation of National Ex-service men and women, Royal Munster Fusiliers Association, Connaught Rangers Association, Royal Irish Fusiliers Association, the Combined Irish Regiments Association from London, close relatives of those who had served with the Dublin Fusiliers including sons and daughters of those who had fought at Gallipoli. Also present, were representatives of the Somme Association Northern Ireland; the New Zealand Ireland, and Australia-Ireland, Associations.

In his address of welcome the Taoiseach congratulated the Committee and members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers "on all your good work in reviving and preserving the memory of thousands of soldiers who belonged to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Many of course paid the ultimate sacrifice". Mr. Ahern said that official attitudes to commemorating the dead had in the past "tended to be cold and censorious". He went on to say that "Huge numbers of Irishmen, mostly from humble backgrounds in city and country, signed up for the Irish regiments in the British army over the last 300 years. They are part of our history". He added "It is important for the future of Ireland in the 21st century that we have an inclusive attitudes to all our traditions".

Over 200,000 men and women from every region and class in Ireland enlisted in the Great War of whom at least 35,000 were killed. The total for the Royal Dublin Fusiliers was 4,777.

Tom Burke said the association believed that a better understanding of the shared heritage of sacrifice today would help to reconcile the two major traditions in Ireland and form cross-community links on both sides of the border.

The venue for the reception St. Patrick's Hall was the place where the Knights of the Order of St. Patrick were invested. One distinguished recipient Brigadier the Earl of Longford, K.P who was born in Dublin was killed in action in the Dardanelles and is buried there in Greenhill Cemetery.



Members of the Committee of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association with the Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern TD and his partner Ms Celia Larkin at the State Reception at Dublin Castle in honour of the RDF Assoc. (Left to right. Front row.) Mr Philip Lecane, Mr Sean Connolly, Ms Celia Larkin, The Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern TD, Mr Pat Hogarty, Mr Tom Burke. Back row Left to right. Mr Nick Broughall, Mr Seamus Greene and Mr Brian Moroney. Sadly due to illness, Mr Jack Sinclair RIP could not attend..

ANZAC Commemoration In Dublin.

On the evening of the 25th of April, a Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving to mark Anzac Day was held in St. Ann's Church, in Dublin. The Church was full for the interdenominational service. The Australian Charge d'Affaires, David Hammond, and the New Zealand Honorary Consul-General, Alan Mc Carthy placed a wreath, and were joined in a candlelight procession by Major-General Carl Dodd, Irish Defence staff, representatives of the Australian, New Zealand, Canadian Defence Staffs. Veterans associations and the Australian and New Zealand communities in Ireland participated. Diplomatic representatives including the British Ambassador, Sir Ivor Roberts KCMG, and the Turkish Ambassador H.E. Gunalgay Sibay, who read Ataturk's Eulogy, were also present.

Speech by An Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern T.D. at the State Reception in Honour of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association in Dublin Castle at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday the 26th of April, 2001.

I would like to welcome all the members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association here in Dublin Castle tonight. I congratulate your chairperson, Tom Burke, and all yourselves on all your good work in reviving

and preserving the memory of the thousands of soldiers who belonged to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Many of course paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Tonight's event is another symbol of the evolution of public attitudes in this State. The wheel of time turns. In 1914, those who belonged to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers would have been regarded by their families and by the powers that be in the Irish Parliamentary Party and in the Churches as good Irishmen going about their patriotic duty. Whether their background was Nationalist or Unionist made no difference, but the majority would have come from a Nationalist background.

Those who started the revolution in Ireland in 1916 were afraid that Irish nationality was being submerged, and that all the country's fighting energies were being spent, as so often in the past, on battlefields far removed from Irish freedom. When the soldiers who survived the First World War came back, they found a different and a changed Ireland. That was not unique. It was a situation encountered by returning soldiers all over Europe, with in some instances traumatic long-term consequences.

Memory of the sacrifice of Irish soldiers during the First World War was kept alive in succeeding decades, and a fine war memorial designed by Lutyens was opened in Inchicore. It is not well known that the then Taoiseach Eamon de Valera had intended to open the war memorial, but unfortunately the approach of the Second World War and the need to maintain Irish neutrality made him decide that the time was not appropriate. Sadly, official attitudes to commemorating the fallen of World War 1 tended to be cold and censorious, and that remained the case until the relatively recent past. Sean Lemass as Taoiseach started to make honourable amends for this in 1966, when he acknowledged that attitudes had been less than generous.

I am glad to say that in recent years, unfortunately long after most of those directly involved passed on, we have had the national self-confidence to recognise that our past has many strands, and that there is not just one officially sanctioned historical canon.

The National Day of Commemoration was instituted by all-party agreement in the mid-1980's. In the early

1990's, I had the Memorial park in Inchicore restored. In November 1998, the Messines Tower in Belgium was opened by the President and the Queen as a result of a joint venture North and South. I was very glad to launch Keith Jeffrey's book on Irishmen in the First World War in the National Museum a few months ago.

Huge numbers of Irishmen, mostly from humble backgrounds in city and country, signed up for the Irish regiments in the British army over the last 300 years. They are part of our history. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers had their origin in regiments that served in India. They fought in the Boer War, and led the parade into Ladysmith at the end of the famous siege. They were on the opposite side to Major John MacBride's Irish Brigade, but this was not the first time the Irishmen found themselves on opposite sides in wars abroad. It happened, for example, during the American civil war.

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers also fought at the Dardanelles, on the Western Front, including the Battle of the Somme. In every war cemetery in north-eastern France and in Flanders, Irish headstones are to be found.

I would like to congratulate Tom Burke, Tim Bowman, and their colleagues on all they have done to develop the website, and to collect information about those who served in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. I congratulate you on the exhibitions that you have mounted and on the Blue Cap Magazine with all its stories and anecdotes.

I share your wish to see a permanent home for the materials to be put on display, but also a place where the records can be read or consulted. All of this constitutes a valuable dimension of our varied history. It is important for the future of Ireland in the 21st century that we have an inclusive attitude to all our traditions. The Government must set a good example. That is why I am very pleased to be here with you tonight.

Spectamur Agendo.