



## **The Cross and the Sword: Marie, Tommy and Charlie Martin in the First World War Part 1.**

*Mr. Philip Lecane.*

*Member the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

Room 10, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda,  
Co. Louth, Ireland. 27<sup>th</sup> January 1975.

Sister Michael Farrell transferred Mother Mary from her chair to her bed in the small hours of the winter morning. She then gently brushed the old woman's hair. Mother Mary took Sister Michael's right hand in both of hers and kissed it. 'Thank you dear' she said. Then she closed her eyes and went to sleep. Sister Michael remained on duty at the bedside. At 2.40 a.m. Mother Mary showed signs of restlessness. Sister Michael put her hand on Mother Mary's arm and asked if she was alright. Did she want anything? Mother Mary opened her eyes, looked at her, smiled, looked up to heaven and peacefully passed away.

Upon her death, the religious order founded by Mother Mary Martin had 450 sisters. Today the Medical Missionaries of Mary come from eighteen different nationalities and work in sixteen countries. Mother Mary had brought much healing, comfort and joy to the world in the years since she had been born Marie Martin in 1892.

Marie, Tommy, and Charlie Martin were among eleven children born to Tom and Mary Martin of Kingstown (now Dun Laoghaire), Co. Dublin. The Martin's were a prosperous Catholic family, Tom Martin being a partner in the firm of T. and C. Martin, Timber Merchants. Tommy was the eldest child. Marie, born on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1892 was the second born. Charlie, was the fourth child. At the time of the older children's births, the family lived in *Glencar*, a substantial red-brick house still standing on Marlborough Road,

Glenageary, Co. Dublin. The family later moved to Mount town House on Lower Mount town Road, Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire). They finally settled in *Greenbank*, on Carrickbrennan Road, Monkstown. As the Martins do not appear on the 1901 census for the house, the family must have moved to *Greenbank* sometime after April 1901. The house stood on five acres. It had flower, fruit and vegetable gardens, a rockery, green lawns, tennis courts, a summer house and a bamboo plantation. There were trees, a paddock, cowsheds and an acre or more of rough unused ground, with two ponds. A gardener and under-gardener were employed.

The family's idyllic life was shattered on St. Patrick's Day 1907, when Tom Martin was found 'lying dead on the floor, a revolver in his hand and a bullet through his eye.' A doctor who lived near Greenbank was first on the scene after the shooting demonstrated that the death could not have been other than accidental. Whatever the reason for Tom's death, his wife Mary, pregnant with their twelfth child, had to carry on, supported by relatives from her own and her husband's families.



Marie Martin in her VAD Uniform 1915.

The 1911 census shows Mary Martin as head of the household. Marie and five of her brothers were in the house on the night of the census, as were Marie Ernst, a governess from Bavaria and five female servants.

As neither Tommy nor Charlie was present, it may be that they were away at boarding school. The summer of 1914 saw the Martin family still living at *Greenbank*. In the meantime Marie had been educated, with her two first cousins, at a finishing school in Bonn, Germany. Tommy had graduated from Trinity College, Dublin. Charlie was an undergraduate at Trinity. Upon the declaration of war, Tommy joined the Connaught Rangers and Charlie, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Having completed a year's course in First Aid, Hygiene and Home Nursery, with the St. John Ambulance Brigade, Marie applied to serve as a V.A.D. ( Voluntary Aid Detachment i.e. a voluntary nurse). Early in September 1914, she was interviewed by a selection board. She was sent to Richmond Hospital, Dublin, where after three months training she was given a certificate stating that she was a trained V.A.D. nurse.

With the rank of Lieutenant, Tommy was assigned to 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Connaught Rangers. The battalion was formed in Dublin in August 1914. In September it was sent for training to Kilworth Camp, Co. Cork as part of 29<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division. In January 1915, the battalion was sent to the Curragh, Co. Kildare. Towards the end of April / start of May, it was moved to Basingstoke, Hampshire. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1915, the majority of the battalion moved to Devonport for shipment to the eastern Mediterranean. But twelve officers, including Captain Bryan Cooper (later Major and author of *The Tenth (Irish) Division in Gallipoli*) and Lieutenant Tommy Martin and 159 other ranks, mostly from 'A' Company, took the train to Liverpool. There, at 5.45 p.m. on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July they set sail on the Cunard Liner, *HMT Mauritania*. The *Mauritania*, sister ship of the recently torpedoed *Lusitania*, was painted in camouflage as an anti-submarine measure. On board the ship were Lieutenant-General Sir Bryan Mahon, commander of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division, his headquarters staff, the 30<sup>th</sup> Brigade headquarters staff, part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Connaught Rangers, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Battalions of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion the Leinster Regiment and detachments of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment (Pioneers). On the 16<sup>th</sup> of July, the ship docked at Mudros harbour, Lemnos island in the Mediterranean. Tommy Martin was among the first of the troops of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division to arrive at Mudros, near to Gallipoli.

At 4:00 p.m. on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 1915, the 5<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers left Mudros harbour on board the *Clacton*. At 3:00 a.m. on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August they landed at Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli peninsula. With the rest of the 29<sup>th</sup> Brigade, they were reinforcements for the Australian troops who had been fighting there since the 25<sup>th</sup> of April. Sometime between the landing on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August and the 25<sup>th</sup> of September, Tommy Martin was badly wounded. He was shipped home to Ireland, where he was hospitalised on Bere Island, Co. Cork.

In the meantime Charlie Martin, with the rank of Lieutenant, was posted to the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The battalion was formed at the regimental depot Naas, Co. Kildare in August 1914 and sent to the Curragh, Co. Kildare for training. Presumably, when the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Connaught Rangers were moved to the Curragh in January 1915, Charlie was able to spend a certain amount of time with Tommy. Presumably also, they were able to go home to Monkstown on leave. On the nights between the 27<sup>th</sup> of April and the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1915 inclusive, the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division, including Tommy and Charlie's battalions, was transported from Dublin to Liverpool. The transport ships were escorted by the destroyers *HMS Laverock*, *Legion*, *Linnet*, and *Lucifer*. From Liverpool the Division was moved to Basingstoke, Hampshire, where training continued. Again, presumably, Tommy and Charlie would have been able to meet each other regularly. The monotony of training was broken on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May, when King George V inspected the Irish troops. With the band playing the music associated with each particular regiment, the soldiers, including the Martin brothers' battalions marched past the saluting point, allowing each man a clear view of the King.

A few days later, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, the Division was inspected by Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener. This time the troops included the 31<sup>st</sup> Brigade, made up of two battalions each of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and the Royal Irish Fusiliers, who had been on musketry training during the inspection by King George V. During practice for Kitchener's visit the Royal Dublin Fusiliers played *St Patrick's Day*, instead of their usual marching tune. They did this for variety, as all the fusilier battalions, who made up the second two-thirds of the parade had the same marching tune i.e. *The British Grenadiers*. (Rarely would so many fusilier battalions march together). But the fury of the Connaught Rangers, who shared the right of playing the *St Patrick's Day*

march with the Irish Guards alone, was such that the *Dubs* had to drop the march. No doubt the incident later caused much banter between the older Connaught Ranger, Tommy Martin and the younger Dublin Fusilier, Charlie Martin.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 1915, Charlie's battalion travelled to Devonport, from where they sailed to the eastern Mediterranean on the *HMT Alaunia*. The ship docked at Gibraltar, Malta and Alexandria, all no doubt wonderful sights for the young Charlie. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, the battalion was put ashore at 'C' Beach, Suvla Bay, a few miles north of Anzac Cove, where Tommy's battalion had landed the day before. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of August, the 6<sup>th</sup> Dublins being part of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade attacked Hill 50 (Chocolate Hill). It was during this attack that Charlie was wounded. His wounds, however, were not as severe as Tommy's, as he was not shipped home. Lieut. Bob Stanton, another Trinity graduate was killed along with Lieut. Doyle. At sunset on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August, following their attack on Chocolate Hill, the 6<sup>th</sup> Dublins had suffered the following losses.

Officers killed: Lieut. Doyle. Wounded believed killed: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Stanton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Mc Garry, Wounded and missing: Major Jennings. Wounded: Capt. Luke, Capt. Carroll. *Lieut. Martin*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Carter, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Mortimer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. O'Carroll. Missing: Lieut. Clery. Killed, wounded, missing, other ranks. 259.

(To be continued)

**Sources:** My heartfelt thanks to Sister Isabelle Smyth of the Medical Missionaries of Mary. She very kindly shared her knowledge of Marie Martin and her family. Marie's wartime story will feature in the next part of this article.

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## In memory of Tom Kettle.

*Mr Tom Burke.*

*Chairman. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

Towards the end of September 1916, Mrs Mary Kettle, wife of Lieut. Tom Kettle MP, received the following telegram from the War Office in London. The telegram was dated the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 1916.

To: *Mrs Kettle, University College Dublin.*

*Deeply regret to inform you, Lieut. T.M Kettle, Dublin Fusiliers, was killed in action September 9<sup>th</sup>. The Army Council express their sympathy. Secretary War Office. (1)*

Her husband was the officer in command of 'B' Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He was killed leading his men in the attack on the village of Ginchy on the evening of September the 9<sup>th</sup>, 1916. He had joined the 9<sup>th</sup> Dublins at the front as part of a draft of officers sent to the battalion on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 1916, he had lasted just fifty-two days with his battalion at the front. (2) Tom Kettle's name is on the Thiepval War Memorial in France. The Memorial was designed by Sir Edward Lutyens and built between the years 1928 and 1932. It was unveiled by the Prince of Wales in the presence of the President of France on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1932. There are approximately 72,000 names on this memorial built in memory to the missing of the Battle of the Somme. Each name has one thing in common, their bodies were never found. Like thousands of other Irish women who were widowed as a result of that terrible war, Mary Kettle (nee Sheehy) wanted to know how her husband was killed and where he might be buried. In her efforts to settle her mind on Tom's death, she wrote to some of his friends who were fellow officers in the

Dublins. Perhaps the last officer to be with Tom when he died was a young officer named 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Emmet Dalton. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 1916, Emmet wrote to Mary from The Liverpool Merchants Hospital at Etaples in France where he was recovering from wounds.

14<sup>th</sup> of October 1916.

Dear Mrs Kettle,

*I presume by now that you are utterly disgusted with me for failing to reply to your letter, but I assure you that if I had been in a fit condition I would I have replied before now. I met Mr Kettle for the first time in France on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 1916 and having known him in Ireland before we became good friends. He was then 2<sup>nd</sup> in command of 'B' Coy. Well, between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup>, I spent some very pleasant hours with him. (At a place called Craters) You see, he was writing a book about the war and the Irish Division, namely the 16<sup>th</sup>. Well, on the night of the 5<sup>th</sup>, we marched for three hours in terrible rain on an awfully uneven road until we came to Trones Wood which is opposite Guillemont. On the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> we lost 200 men, 7 officers at Guillemont by the Bosch shell fire. We returned to Trones Wood and Tom took over 'B' Company whilst I became 2<sup>nd</sup> in command of 'A' Company. Well, during the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup>, Tom and I were discussing the losses we had sustained when an orderly arrived with a note for each of us saying . 'Be in readiness, battalion will take up (a x b) position in front of Ginchy tonight at twelve midnight.' I was with Tom when we advanced to the position that night and the stench of the dead that covered our road was so awful that we both used some foot powder on our faces. When we reached our objective, we dug ourselves in and then at five o'clock p.m. on the 9<sup>th</sup> we attacked Ginchy. I was just behind Tom when we went over the top. He was in a bent position and a bullet got over a*

*steel waistcoat that he wore and entered his heart. Well, he only lasted about one minute and he had my crucifix in his hands. He also said. ' This is the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my wedding', (I forget whether 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup>).*

*Well, Boyd then took all Tom's papers and things out of his pocket in order to keep them for you, but poor Boyd was blown to atoms in a few minutes so papers and all went. The Welsh Guards carried Mr Kettle's remains. Tom's death has been a big blow to the Regiment and I'm afraid that I could not put in words my feelings on the subject. I remain dear madam, yours faithfully. J. Emmet Dalton.' (3)*

A chaplain attached to the Royal Munster Fusiliers also wrote to Mary telling her about Tom's death. He did not witness Tom being killed, the information he received about Tom's death was second hand from a Lance Corporal of 'B' Coy. 9<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublins who did see Tom falling. The Munsters chaplain wrote.

*Our attack on Ginchy started at 4:00 p.m. that evening (9<sup>th</sup> September) and your husband led his men over. The shelling and machine gun fire was terrible and the advance had to be made from shell hole to shell hole. About fifteen minutes later, while sheltering with a Lance Cpl. Bormyle of his own Company in a shell hole, he was struck over the heart by a bullet. The only words he said were, 'Oh my God I'm struck.' He died within ten minutes. An officer, M. Boyd, who took possession of his papers was killed a few minutes later. Your husband was buried on the spot where he fell. Fr. Burke can furnish you with many details of your husband which I know nothing of. Corporal Bomroyle 9<sup>th</sup> RDF 'B' Company is my authority.*

*With deepest sympathy J.A Spiltes C.F. 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Munster Fusiliers. (4)*

Both the Munsters chaplain and Emmet Dalton's account agree on a couple of points. One, Tom was shot in the chest and two, Tom's papers were taken by a fellow officer named Boyd who was also killed in the attack and God love him, blown to 'atoms' as Emmet Dalton

recalled. However, there is one slight difference in both accounts of Kettle's death. The chaplain claimed Kettle was shot while sheltering in a shell hole. Emmet Dalton claimed Kettle was killed as they went over the top. Since the chaplain's account was second hand and since Dalton was actually just behind Kettle when they went over, Dalton's account would seem more credible.

When Tom was hit, Dalton carried on with the attack and left Tom's dead body where he fell. According to Dalton, and indeed the battalion war diary, the Welsh Guards took over the position the Dublins had gained beyond Ginchy that day. Again according to Dalton, the Guards took Tom's body and presumably buried him along with lots of other bodies, where is not known. At 05:00 hr on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, only two officers of the 9<sup>th</sup> Dublins walked back to the 48<sup>th</sup> Brigade Headquarters at Carnoy, they were 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Emmet Dalton and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Hurst. The rest of the battalion's officers were dead, wounded or missing.

Having found out *how* her husband died, Mary's next task was to find out *where* he was buried. Sadly, not many could help her here. Perhaps an indication as to what might have happened to Tom's body can be found from a letter written by a Lance Corporal W. Brown to his mother dated the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 1917. The letter portrays a truly graphical description of the evil of war.

*Lance Cpl. W. Browne. 25599.  
10<sup>th</sup> R.D. Fus.  
63 Royal Naval Division.  
School of Instruction, Cookery,  
BEF, France.*

*Dearest Mother,*

*No, I never seen Tom Kettle's grave, anyway you'd never find it, there are hundreds of graveyards all around. It would take you a day to look through one of them. 10 and 12 being sometimes buried in one grave. Then some of the graves are being constantly blown up and the remains scattered all over the place, so you could never tell where to find them, besides, a large number are buried along the roadside. You can see the arms*

*and legs sticking out of the banks and a lot are never buried at all.*

*I remember one night before the November stunt, going out to get identification discs off some of the Dubs who fell in July. They had to retreat at Hawthorn Ridge. I got sick after getting the third man's disc.....Don't worry about me, I am all right now. It is harder to get things than you would think. They can't get things up to us, they are not able to bring up enough food let alone other things.... It is a common sight to see horses drop down dead in the traces. We would be in Berlin only the guns could not come up in time. That is why we only advance a little at a time to give the guns time to come up.*

*I shall get a home if I go down the line the next time. The only way is to give the nurses no rest, day or night, keep shouting for drinks or more blankets or anything. They will get you marked 'Blighty' to get rid of you. (5)*

The 'November stunt' that L/Cpl. Browne mentioned in the above letter was the attack on the village of Hamel on November the 13<sup>th</sup> 1916 in which the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins took part. See *The Blue Cap* Vol. 7. 1999 for further details of this attack and on the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins. Included in L/Cpl Browne's letter, was Tom Kettle's poem to his daughter Elizabeth. Written on the sheet of paper were the words, 'Betty'. 'In the field before Guillemont. September 4<sup>th</sup> 1916.'

Lieut. Maurice Healy, a Dublins officer, wrote several letters to Mary Kettle expressing his sadness on the death of Tom and on her crusade to find out where he was buried. He tried in vain to look for Tom's grave.

*29<sup>th</sup> Division Res.Coy. BEF 11<sup>th</sup> April 1917.*

*My Dear Mrs Kettle,*

*For three weeks my camp was just east of Bernafay Wood and I searched every graveyard between my camp and the Ginchy-Longuval-Combles line without ever thinking of looking behind me.....Of one thing you need have no fear.*

*There is not a un-buried body west of Ginchy or west of Combles for that matter. (6)*

Note: Bernafay Wood lies approximately 1.5 Km. south-west of Ginchy.

It seems that Mary was given some hope. There is no correspondence in the UCD Kettle archive from anyone telling her about Tom's grave. However, someone must have told her that Tom might be buried near the village of Carnoy which is about eleven kilometres south west of Ginchy. She wrote to Maurice Healy informing him about this possibility and he in turn wrote back to tell her that he would have a look around the Cemetery near Carnoy for Tom's grave.

*29<sup>th</sup> Div HQ BEF 27<sup>th</sup> November 1917.*

*Dear Mrs Kettle.*

*I was delighted to hear your good news about Tom's grave. Major W.B Dunne of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dublins is area Commandant of Maricourt which is only about two miles from Carnoy. A number of our battalion are buried in the same cemetery, so poor Tom has company. (7)*

Whoever gave Mary her 'good news' was wrong. Maurice Healy, nor Major Dunne, or anybody else for that matter, ever found Tom Kettle's grave. The Welsh Guards may well have buried Tom when the attack on Ginchy died down, but the whereabouts of his grave was lost. His name would end up on the Thiepval Memorial along with the thousands of other missing of the Somme battles. Through the eyes of Maurice Healy, the search for Kettle's grave took on a patriotic similarity to that of another Irish man named Robert Emmet. In a letter to Mary Kettle, Healy wrote.

*May I refer you to what I consider the best of T.D S's poems addressed to those engaged in a search for Robert Emmet's grave of which the gist is. 'Search ye no more.... For Emmet's grave is Ireland.' As he proclaimed Emmet still to live, immortal in the hearts of the Irish people, so do I think that a later generation of*

*Irishmen, blessed in peace and heart-free from political bitterness, will find Tom's spirit of their company, eloquent as in life, and a constant guide to the principles for which he died. (8)*

Kettle was highly regarded by his fellow officers and the men who served with him. Fr Felix Burke, serving with the 8<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers wrote a letter of condolence to Mrs Kettle on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 1916.

*8<sup>th</sup> RDF BEF. 6<sup>th</sup> November 1916.*

*A few days after your husband joined the 9<sup>th</sup> Dublins in France, he and I became aquatinted and from that day 'till his death we became faster friends day by day. He was an ideal officer, always showing the greatest sympathy for the men under his command. Needless to say the men loved him and we all looked up to him as a towering genius and a store house of information. His many accomplishments he never allowed to interfere with his genial good humour and his 'Swank' which so often is bred of attainments vastly inferior to his did not strain his honest, noble and truly Irish character. He was a brave soldier. He could have been in a safe position at GHQ on the day of the Ginchy battle but no ! he would fight in the thick of the battle with his boys and if death came, welcome be God's will. As a Catholic, we had none better in the Irish Division... He never went into the trenches without first going to confession. About two hours before the attack in which he fell, I spent half an hour with him and the other officers of his Company. I absolved them all. In the advance he was hit through the heart by a bullet or piece of shrapnel and died immediately. 'Twas a glorious life extinguished before it had worn out. Many mourn his death, but I believe that not even you must have felt the blow most of all, feel or have felt as sorry for the death of Tom Kettle as I his chaplain. I don't know where he is buried or rather the exact spot..... I am dear Mrs, yours v truly, Felix Burke C.F. (9)*

Fr. Burke advised Mrs Kettle to write to the Graves Registration Commission for information on Tom's

grave. This she did and finally after some time, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 1925, the Imperial War Graves Commission replied to Mary at her home in No. 3 Belgrave Square, Rathmines, Dublin, stating that they had searched the area west of Bernafay Wood but, 'the grave of this soldier has not yet been identified.'

(10) One man who was particularly very close to him was his batman, a Belfast man, or rather a Belfast lad aged eighteen, named Robert Bingham. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 1916, Private Bingham wrote to Mrs Kettle. He wrote to her on headed paper titled, 'Scottish Churches Huts, France.'

*Wednesday the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 1916.*

*Dear Madam,*

*Writing to you in respect of my late officer which I have been servant to him since he has been out in France, Lieut. T.M.Kettle. He was a brave officer and was like a father to me as I am myself an orphan boy at the age of 18. I have the only brother serving in France. I was awfully sorry when God called such a brave man away. He refused a Staff situation, he wanted to be with his comrades. He told me just before his death that I was going home and that he was staying where he was. With that he gave me his watch and I will be willing to forward the watch to you and also his pass from headquarters when you write to me as I am not certain of the address. My address is 9168. Pte R. Bingham, 9<sup>th</sup> RDF, B. Coy. British Expeditionary Force, France. I will be awaiting your kind reply. I remain yours sincerely, Robert Bingham. (11)*

Mrs Kettle kept up some correspondence with Bingham. In many ways, she took him under her wing and sent him parcels of cake and other little treats. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1916, Bingham wrote again to Mrs Kettle.

*Dear Mrs Kettle,*

*I received both your welcome letter and parcel and indeed I must thank you very much for the parcel as it was quite a treat*

*to me. It was strange to see a bit of cake out here. I am well and under hard conditions.... I also hope that the little girl is well as Mr Kettle was telling me about her. It is quite cold out here and wet. My brother was gassed but is at home now. I only wish I could get a leave so as I would speak to you privately my-self and let know news concerning your husband.... Thank you for the parcel. Robert Bingham 'B' Company. (12)*

Note: The 'little girl' Private Bingham refers to in the above letter was Kettle's daughter, Elizabeth. It was to her that he wrote the now famous poem 'To my daughter Betty, the gift of Love.' Betty (Dooley) died at a nursing home in Clontarf, Dublin on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 1996 and is buried in the family plot in Swords, Co. Dublin.

Private Bingham returned to Ireland in August 1917 and was posted to the 4<sup>th</sup> Dublins based at Mullingar Barracks, Co. Westmeath. He too tried to find out where Tom was buried but alas to no avail.

When Tom Kettle was killed in September 1916, Lieut. Maurice Healy was serving with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in another sector of the Somme front and was therefor not with Kettle when he was killed. He too held Kettle in high regard. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 1916, Healy wrote to Mary Kettle.

*Dear Mrs Kettle,*

*I have just read of Tom's gallant death with a sorrow not as much for him as for you and the country that he died for. I never read more prepared\_speeches than those in the early days of the war in which he proclaimed his faith that this was God's war and Ireland's war. I think that he and I shared the belief that our service was as sacred as that of the crusaders of old.... During the eleven years I knew him we were separated by all the things that make men bitter in Ireland and yet I am happy to say we remained good friends. For his work I had the most intense admiration and there was nobody who as well expressed the voice of young Ireland....Tragedy follows tragedy in your family and grant he may bring Eugene safely home to you. As you know he is my*

*best in good and evil days and he makes  
life possible for us all out here....* (13)

The tragedy following tragedy that Healy refers to in the above letter is that of the killing of Mary's brother in law, Francis Sheehy Skeffington who, in 1903, married Hanna Sheehy, Mary's sister. Francis Sheehy Skeffington was a pacifist, he detested war of any sort. He was editor of *The Irish Citizen*. On Easter Monday 1916, Francis Sheehy-Skeffington had risked his life, crossing a square under fire, to aid a wounded British officer during the Rising. That day and the next he spent hours dissuading looters and called a meeting to organise a civic police force. His wife, Hanna, spent some time with him on Tuesday afternoon and then went home to their little son Owen, never dreaming she would not see her husband again. He was arrested that evening at Portobello Bridge and taken to the nearby barracks where he was held without charge. Towards midnight, Captain John Bowen-Colthurst of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal Irish Rifles, setting out with a raiding party, took the bound prisoner with him as hostage. When the raiders shot an unarmed youth, Sheehy-Skeffington protested but Bowen-Colthurst told him to say his prayers or he would be next. Shortly before ten o'clock the following morning, Bowen-Colthurst ordered Sheehy-Skeffington and two editors, Dickson and McIntyre, who had been taken during the raid, to be brought out from their cells. As Sheehy-Skeffington walked across the prison yard he was shot in the back without warning. The two editors were killed in a similar way and when it was noticed that Sheehy-Skeffington was still alive, Bowen-Colthurst gave the order to finish him off. His body was buried in quick-lime on the Wednesday night. (14) When this was going on, Kettle had spent the weekend with his family and knew nothing of what had happened. For this outrageous act of madness, Captain John Bowen-Colthurst was placed under arrest and tried for murder. His trial started on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1916 at Richmond Barracks. He was found guilty but insane and placed in a mental institution and detained at His Majesty's pleasure which wasn't very long. Two years later, he was freed on pension and emigrated to Canada. He died in Canada in 1965. His younger brother Capt. R Mc G Bowen-Colthurst served with the Leinster Regiment and was killed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1915. His name is on a memorial plaque in St. John the Evangelist Church of Ireland, Tonglodgee Road, Dublin.

The 'Eugene' which Maurice Healy refers to in the above letter was Mary's brother, Eugene Sheehy. He too was an officer in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. In October 1917, Healy wrote to Mary Kettle about his relationship with Kettle. In his letter he also makes a swipe at apocalyptic Irish men who one can only surmise as being members of Sinn Fein.

*29<sup>th</sup> Div. HQ.BEF. 21<sup>st</sup> October 1917.*

*Dear Mrs Kettle,*

*For his genius I always had the most profound admiration; I never knew him well enough to have him count me amongst his friends, though I would have been very proud to find myself so numbered. But he so nearly expressed all my own unattained ideals, more especially about our poor country, that I always felt the barriers between us were only the hedges of two parallel roads. If we had nothing else in common, we had the desire, foreign to Irish politics, that all honest men should express their views fearlessly and not bare malice because they disagree.*

*I regret to learn that Colum wrote ungraciously of Tom's death; for I like Colum. But all these apocalyptic Irishmen are the same - I so often think for nowhere out of the apocalypse is to be found the unattainable Ireland for which they propose to wait. They have no politics other than the hatred of England. Liberty? Yes: but let liberty perish, provided England is humiliated. The burning of Drogheda in Cromwell's time weighs more with the great-to-the-nth grandsons of the people who were not burned, than the burning of Louvein which might be avenged. And under the standard of these honest fools, all the cowards take refuge from their duty.* (15)

After the war, Mary Kettle ran a campaign to gain recognition for the Irish veterans of the Great War. She was instrumental in setting up an Irish Nationalist Veterans Association.

As previously mentioned, Mary's brother was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Eugene Sheehy, a Dublin Fusilier and ex-Belvedere

College boy. In 1910, Eugene was called to the Bar. Their father was a Nationalist Member of Parliament. Maurice Healy was a barrister too whose uncle was the veteran Nationalist MP for Cork, Tim Healy, who held the office of Governor General, i.e. the King's representative in the Irish Free State. This position was set up as part of the Treaty between Britain and Ireland following the War of Independence. After the Great War, both Sheehy and Healy returned to Ireland and resumed their legal practice. Sheehy became a senior officer in the Irish Free State Army and later a district Justice. Healy wrote several books such as, *'The Old Munster Circuit'* and, being an expert on wines wrote, *'Stay me with Flagons'*. (16) Both Maurice Healy and Eugene Sheehy knew each other from their days at Belvedere College in Dublin. Healy was active in the recruiting campaign of 1915 and according to Eugene Sheehy, *'resembled his famous uncle in that he never failed to raise a row when he considered that he or others were unfairly treated.'* (17) Both men were Nationalists and according to Sheehy, *'The War Office evidently did not approve of Irish Nationalists as officers.'* He discovered, *'that as long as my application was sponsored by Mr. Devlin, MP, or Mr. T.P. O'Connor, MP, it achieved no success other than a futile journey to Reigate in Surrey to interview a Major of the London Irish Rifles. It was not until I met Mr. Maurice Healy in Dublin in March 1915 that I received the hint that political sponsorship was a hindrance rather than a help.'* (18)

Kettle's batman, 53919 Private Robert Bingham from Belfast died at home on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1919. He is buried in Belfast City Cemetery, grave reference J1.6. He had been transferred from the Dublins to the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. He was just twenty one years of age when he died. Lance Corporal William Patrick Brown, the man who wrote to his mother about the horrible state of the dead Dublin Fusiliers after their assault on the Hawthorn Ridge in July 1916, died of wounds on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1917. He was twenty two years of age and came from No. 14 Buckingham Terrace, Buckingham Street in Dublin. He is buried at Etaples Military Cemetery. Many of the men who are buried in this cemetery came from the hospital used during the war in Etaples on the French coast. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. William Hatchell Boyd, the young man blown to bits who had Tom Kettle's papers was the son of the Reverend

Samuel T. Boyd from Dublin. William was twenty nine years of age when he died and he too is mentioned alongside Tom Kettle on the Thiepval Memorial, Pier and Face 16C. Emmet Dalton won the Military Cross on that terrible day at Ginchy in September 1916. When the war ended he fought with Michael Collins against the British army in the Irish War of Independence. He later became Director of Munitions and Training in the Irish Free State Army. He saw no conflict of principles in fighting *with* the British for Ireland in the Great War and *against* the British for Ireland after the Great War.

Soon after Tom Kettle's death, a committee comprising of his friends raised money to have a bust of him cast. It was completed in 1921 and the committee planned to place the bust in St. Stephen's Green in Dublin. Its placement was held up by the disturbed political situation in Ireland and a lengthy strike at the quarry where the stone came from in Stradbally, Co. Laois. In March 1927, a date was set for the bust to be officially unveiled but the Commissioners of Public Works intervened and objected to the use of the words *Killed in France* being used on the inscription. They also objected to the words in the last three lines of Kettle's famous sonnet: *Died not for flag nor King, nor Emperor / But for a dream born in a herdsman's shed / And for the secret scripture of the poor.* However in the end, the Commissioners withdrew their objection to the later quotation, but the words, *Killed in France* was replaced by *Killed at Ginchy, 9<sup>th</sup> September 1916* with no reference as to where Ginchy was or what Tom Kettle was doing there. (19) Had Kettle's grave been found, Maurice Healy would have placed, *an Irish Cairn above him with a Celtic Cross over all.* (20)

In 1909, Tom Kettle was appointed Professor of National Economics at University College Dublin. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1916, Professor William A Scott of the School of Architecture at UCD in Earlsfort Terrace, wrote to Mrs Kettle the following letter.

*I read in the Irish Times of yesterday – there is a suggestion to erect a monument to him and I hope this may be erected. I shall be greatly disappointed if I am not permitted to act as Honorary designer for this memorial. I think a mural tablet might be placed in the New University College to record his connection with the University. This would be only a fitting tribute to his memory.* (21)

Professor Scott's ambitions to erect a memorial tablet to Tom Kettle in UCD never happened. Outside the UCD engineering students coffee room at the Belfield campus today, there is a tablet on the wall which reads.

*In memory of Lieut. Frank Flood, Dublin Brigade Old IRA, Engineering Student at UCD. Executed for treason at Mountjoy Jail, Dublin 14<sup>th</sup> March 1921. Donated by his brother Alfred Flood 1994.*

Wouldn't it be nice if University College Dublin carried out Professor Scott's ambitions and erected a memorial to one of its long forgotten and esteemed member of staff, Lieut. Tom Kettle, essayist, poet, professor of economics, Member of Parliament, patriot and a Dublin Fusilier.

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(Note: The papers of Francis and Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington are available to the public at the National Library of Ireland in Dublin. My thanks to Mr Jimmy Taylor author of *'The 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Irish Rifles in the Great War'* and Mr Brian Moroney for the information on Bowen-Colthurst)

### **Sgt. John Willis** **7<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers.**

*Dr James H Willis MA MB FRCP.*

*Member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

My father, John Robert Patrick Willis, born on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1898, was one of five brothers. He joined the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in 1914 at the outbreak of the war. His elder brother Philip also joined the Dubs. Why did he join the army? To get away from Dublin and get regular meals was the reason that he always gave. Before the war, he and his brothers had enjoyed a life of middle class affluence until they were deserted by their father who was a bullying psychopath and disloyal husband. My grandmother, i.e. my father's mother, had been quite well off and lived in a comfortable part of Dublin; at a time of relative affluence, their next door neighbour was the Countess Markievicz. However, the carry on of my grandfather had put my grandmother through a fortune and hard times followed as a consequence. So my father and his brother joined the army.

When he first joined the Dublins, he was impressed by the old-timers who had served with the battalion in India and South Africa. These old-timers regarded the 1914-1918 war as a grubby, rather disreputable affair, in contrast with the scenic wonders of South Africa. He recalled hearing men saying Indian or Irdu words such as *bundook* (rifle) *koi hai* (come here) *juldi* (quickly) He used to say that as far as these old chaps were concerned, the regiment offered a home with accommodation, wages and a regular existence. When he was about to be demobbed, a veteran said to him. *'young fella, you don't mean to say you're leaving the regiment.'* The idea that anyone wanted to leave was, according to some of these men, unthinkable.

He was a signaller in the Dublins and this led him, after the war, to train as a telegraphist in the Marconi company. He became a ship's wireless operator and ultimately a communications engineer in the Cable and Wireless Company. He volunteered for service in World

War Two and rose to the rank of Squadron Leader in the RAF.. He was involved in the development of Radar during that war. During the war my father had served in Gallipoli and Salonika. He nearly died in Salonika following an attack of bacillary enteritis. Like a lot of soldiers, the Dubs were strong on irony. I recall him talking about such irony, for example on gaining ground, someone would say, *'I hear were gaining ground.'* The reply would be, *'Yes, on the soles of our feet.'* He thought me a little doggerel one of his mates had written.

*Twas the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April boys and we were lookin' rather thin.*

*When the order came along the line for to get ourselves dug in.*

*To get ourselves dug in me boys*

*And it was an awful sight*

*For you couldn't hold up your head be day.*

*Nor the half of your head be night.*

Father said the Dublins always hated jam and for some odd reason the Wiltshire Regiment seemed to be on their list of pet hatreds as well.

He referred to soldiers who were sometimes less enthusiastic than the Dubs as, *'Come outa the wet soldiers.'* In 1918 he was with the regiment somewhere in England at a seaside resort. In a local theatre there was a patriotic play in which the Irish were depicted as traitorous cowards. Word got round the battalion and one night the front rows of the theatre were filled with Dublin Fusiliers. When a particularly offensive line was uttered from above the footlights, the senior officer who was sitting in the front row, stood up and said, *'That's a bloody lie.'* And all hell broke loose in the theatre.

My father's main recollections of the war that he cared to discuss were the dirt, lice and cold. Also boredom and above all the shared hatred of the General Staff and the senior officer class whose out-dated ineptitude he still cursed in 1940 when General Ironside – a notable buffoon – suggested that the Duke of Gloucesters should lead the defence of the country (England) against the Panzer Division of the Wermacht.

During the late 1930's when the English middle classes were admiring Hitler, my father was regarded as a war monger because he could see that we would

have to fight facisim sooner or later. Indeed when Mosley and his thugs tried to disrupt the celebrations of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, my father was out there in the streets ready to have a go at these gentlemen. The Tolpuddle Martyrs were a group of 19<sup>th</sup> Century labourers who tried to set up a trade union movement in the village of Tolpuddle in Dorset. For their ideals they were sentenced to death. Later this sentence was dropped and they were transported to Australia. Mosley and his mob tried to disrupt the commemorations of these early trade unionists claiming they were the forerunners of communism.

Sometime in the mid 1950's my father retired from Cable and Wireless. He and my mother lived in Bermuda at the time. The week before he left he stumbled on a bit of good fortune and won the Treble Chance in Vernon's Pools, a prize of £75,000. God knows what that would be in today's money. He had used the same permutation every week. Need I add that it was based on his old army number with the Dublins.

In 1960, my father and mother moved back to Ireland and lived near the Curragh in Co. Kildare and later moved to Greystones in Co. Wicklow. He used to attend re-unions of the regiment in Dublin. I think that one of the most interesting facets of my father's character and abilities was, that despite his lack of formal education, he was a well read and learned man, he was one of the first people in England to obtain a copy of Ulysses. My father's brother Philip, also a Dub to survive the war, became a radio engineer. Phil worked for Pathe News in France in the early days of sound movies. He was a great friend of Marcel Pagnol and 'did' the sound for his most celebrated movies – *La femme du boulanger, Mauris*, etc. My father died in 1969, my mother died several months before him. They are both buried in Falconwood Cemetery in London. And may they rest in peace.

### **The 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1919. An Historic Day.**

*Dr. Patrick Mc Carthy.*

*Correspondence Secretary Military History Society of Ireland and Member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

The 21<sup>st</sup> of January of January 1919 is an important date in Irish history. Shortly after 10:00 am that morning, some Irish Volunteers led by Sean Treacy and Dan Breen held up a cart carrying gelignite to the quarry at

Soloheadbeg, near Tipperary town. In the ensuing affray, two RIC men were shot dead. By common consent, these were the opening shots of the War of Independence. That afternoon the Sinn Fein MPs (they would soon adopt the Irish title Teachta Dala, TD) who had been elected in the historic General Election of 1918, assembled for the first time at the Mansion House in Dublin. The RTE journalist, Mr Brian Farrell, in a Thomas Davis lecture, captured well the sense of excitement and history in the making of that day (1).

Seventy-five years ago a small group of deputies assembled at the Mansion House in Dublin. They were there to make history and they knew it. The long-pursued dream of an independent Irish parliament was at last to be realised in practice. The first meeting of the first Dail (Irish Parliament) was to lay the firm constitutional basis of the new Irish state. It would provide, through the troubled infancy of that state, a forum for deliberation and a visible source of legitimate authority. It's unlikely that many of those jostling for position in Dublin on that 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1919 were fully aware of that significance.

Outside in Dawson Street they pressed right across the road, climbed the lamp-posts for a glimpse of the arriving leaders. Young Volunteers preserved a good-natured order and a detachment of Dublin Metropolitan Police managed to keep the trams running. Disappointed visitors who had come all the way to town sought entry in vain.

Those in the know, with official tickets from their TDs, had queued up with invited guests and packed into the Round Room. Space was found for sixty-nine journalists from home and overseas papers; many of them commented on the respectability of those crushed into this technically illegal assembly. The great circular hall of the Mansion House was dense. Contemporary photographs show the ground floor and gallery thronged and, mainly men, some of them priests, gazing

at the scene below; a raised rostrum, tables for the clerks, and, before the speakers dais, carefully arranged benches offering place for all one hundred and three Irish members returned at the General Election of the previous December.

Neither Mr Brian Farrell nor any other historian has ever alluded to the fact that the inaugural meeting of the Dail was preceded by another important function in the Mansion House, one that equally caught the imagination of the ordinary Dubliner. At 12:30 p.m. more than 400 officers and men of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, former prisoners of war, sat down for a special lunch to welcome them home after their repatriation from Germany. Some had been prisoners for more than four years, men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion who were captured during the retreat from Mons in late August 1914. (2) Others had been captured during the German offensive of March 1918. Their experience must have been very similar to those recorded by Sergeant Charles Mills of the Royal Munster Fusiliers. Sgt. Mills was taken prisoner by the Germans at Epehy in March 1918. He kept a diary of his captivity and it was published in the journal of the Military History Society of Ireland, *The Irish Sword*, in 1983. (3)

Even though the Armistice came into effect on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, it was late December or early January 1919 before the prisoners could leave their camps in Germany. Thus the dinner in the Mansion House was the first opportunity that the people of Dublin had to welcome home their heroes. Contemporary newspapers report that, '*many sympathisers found themselves accidentally mixed up in the Sinn Fein gathering as they cheered and waved handkerchiefs to the men striding proudly by.*' (4) Some good-humoured banter was recorded while all cheered as more than 500 wounded members of the regiment were brought from various city hospitals to join the lunch. After the lunch, the men formed up and marched to the Theatre Royal for a concert, again without any rancour with the assembled Sinn Feiners. Guests of honour at both the lunch and the concert was Fr. Crotty, O.P., who had been chaplain in the prisoner-of-war camps at Limburg and Giessen.

Through the good offices of Mr Liam Leeson and Mr Sean Ward, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association has acquired programme of this event. It contains messages from the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Connaught, the

Earl of Meath and Major General Cooper, C.B., Colonel, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and the musical content of the concert in the Theatre Royal. The programme also lists the various committees of the 'Dubs', eg Women's Branch, Dublin Committee, RDF Prisoners of War, Co. Kildare etc. This is truly a valuable addition to the Associations archive and we are indebted to Mr Leeson (whose father served in the South Irish Horse) and to Mr Ward for the donation.

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### Music.

#### The Greatest Honour.

*Mr Des Byrne.*

*Member The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2002, I felt privileged and honoured when asked by the Committee of the Royal

Dublin Fusiliers Association to sing at The Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate memorial in Ieper (Ypres), Flanders. I was a member of the group of RDF Assoc. who had travelled to Flanders. On the evening of the 7<sup>th</sup> of September, four regimental associations were present at the Menin gate, two Belgian Regiments, The Ex-POW's Assoc. and The RDF Assoc. There was roughly up to 1,000 people who gathered under the famous Arch that evening. The ceremony commenced with a call to attention by the buglers who are mainly men from the local Fire Brigade. This was followed by the lowering of the Regimental Standards and then a minute silence was observed. Normally at this point, a piper would play a lament, however the RDF Assoc. had obtained permission from the Last Post Committee to have a singer sing a song of remembrance.

I stepped forward to the microphone and announced that the song I was about to sing was to the memory of the thousands of Irish men from the Island of Ireland who never came home. I sang Thomas Morre's beautiful '*Of in the stilly night*.' It was an incredibly moving experience. The ceremony then ended with the Buglers playing Reveille. My daughter, Ciara and her family had, unknown to me, travelled from Brussels. She told me later there were many in the crowd who had tears in their eyes as I sang. To have sung at the Menin Gate at the Last Post ceremony was not only a unique occasion for me but the highest honour I had achieved in all my years of singing.

*When I remember all the friends so linked together,  
I've seen around me fall, like leaves in wintry weather.  
Thus in the stilly night, 'ere slumber's chain hath bound  
me,  
Sad memory brings the light, of other days around me.*

## Central Advisory Committee Royal Dublin Fusiliers



## Dinner and Entertainment

To Welcome the Men of the Regiment who have been  
Repatriated from German Prison Camps.

*On Tuesday Afternoon, 21st January, 1919,*

Dinner at the Mansion House, at 12.30 p.m. (by kind permission of the Lord Mayor)  
Entertainment at the Theatre Royal, at 2 p.m. (by kind permission of the Directors)

### GREETINGS.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE LORD LIEUTENANT, K.P., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G.

"I much regret being unable to be present at your gathering on Tuesday. I have deep reason to be for ever grateful to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers for the magnificent gallantry and devotion which they invariably displayed when serving under my Chief Command in the Field. You have my warmest and best wishes.

FRENCH, Viceroy."

H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT, K.G., Patron, Central Advisory Committee, R.D.F.

"As Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, I send my warmest greetings to the Repatriated Prisoners of War of your Regiment who are gathered together at the Mansion House in Dublin, I welcome home these gallant men with the hope that their health will not have suffered by their long and tiring imprisonment in Germany.

ARTHUR, Colonel-in-Chief."

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF MEATH, K.P., H.M.L., President of the Central Advisory Committee.

"As Hon. Colonel of the old 5th Battalion of this Regiment and as H.L.M. for the County and City of Dublin I regret that absence from Ireland will prevent my being present, but I wish to express my sense of regret that I cannot shake by the hand the noble men who have sustained in so world renowned a manner the ancient honour of this distinguished Regiment and have contributed in so large a degree to the glorious Victory of Right over Might. Peace to the Glorious Dead and Honour to the Living Victors!

MEATH."

MAJOR GENERAL COOPER, C.B., Colonel, Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

"Comrades—It is with much regret that I am unable to be present at your 'Welcome Home.' You are all in my thoughts and as your Colonel I wish to express how much I have sympathised and felt for you all in your captivity. May you all spend a very Happy Day and have every good luck.

C. D. COOPER, Major-General."

Programme of the Central Advisory Committee Royal Dublin Fusiliers on  
Tuesday afternoon the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1919.

## A time to remember.

*Mrs Marjorie Quarton.*

*Member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association*

'Did you enjoy your holiday?' my friends ask. It's hard to say. The weekend trip in September for members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association to Flanders was certainly enjoyable, in that the company was great, the hotels comfortable and the food as good as it was ample. I felt emotionally drained at times. On Friday, after we had driven to Mons, we visited the cemetery where the first and the last soldiers to be killed in World War 1 are buried just yards apart. We heard that Germany was really beaten in 1914, having failed in her drive west. The frightful carnage of the next three years might have been avoided. An average of 5,000 soldiers killed a *day* for the duration of the war. The local Mayor, whose Town Hall is a vast castle, rebuilt like everything else around here, welcomed us. Saturday was a tough day for me, but it was strange to stand where my father had re-encountered the young officer he had liked so much when they fraternised during the truce of Christmas 1914. Here at Mousetrap Farm he was gassed in 1915, but not badly. I was wrong in saying he was left for dead here; it was at Vampire Farm near Ypres. I said the enclosed prayer, and found it hard not to cry. Local schoolchildren sang for us and the schoolmaster has sent me photos, for which I thank him. That day we saw the grave of the youngest battle casualty, Private John Condon, aged fourteen. We visited two good but gruesome museums, plus the preserved trenches at the Hooze Crater Museum. These brought it home to us what life was like in the trenches, especially as we encountered lashing rain to help our imaginations.

That evening we attended the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate. Although drenched before we arrived, we would all gladly have attended it again. One of our members, Mr Des Byrne, sang '*Oft in the Stilly Night*' most movingly. It was a brilliant choice and all who heard Des were moved by his singing. It had never happened at the Menin Gate before that anyone sang a song in remembrance. Before he began to sing, he informed the attendance of nearly 1,000 people from all over the world, that he dedicated his song to the memory of all those Irish men and their families who never came home.



Mrs Marjorie Quarton at Mouse Trap Farm on Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2002.

On Sunday, we saw some of the craters still there after the mining of the Messines Ridge. We saw Willie Redmond's grave and visited the Island of Ireland Peace Park. I would urge anyone who has the chance to see this. Nearby the German cemetery at Langemarck was almost unbearably poignant. We saw the mass grave where 24,917 German student soldiers lie in a mass grave. On Monday, we visited Fr Willie Doyle's grave, passing the spot where my father's company was reduced from sixty three to two within minutes and where he was gassed again, losing a lung. So many thanks to Tom, Nick, Seamus, Paddy and Oliver and all those who made our weekend a time to remember.

## My father.

My father, Standish Smithwick, was born in Ireland in 1878 and was a regular soldier. He served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. Royal Dublin Fusiliers through the Boer War, in Egypt, India and elsewhere, and re-founded the Camel Corps in the Sudan. When WW1 broke out, he had been transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. (*The*

*Old Toughs*) and he served on the Western Front throughout, being one of only four officers to survive in the whole regiment, although severely wounded in 1915 and gassed twice, losing a lung.

At the famous Christmas truce in 1914, he met a young German who approached him and, indicating a fresh scar on Father's face said, *'I did that, I am glad I did not kill you.'* The two men had much in common, although my father was senior by several years. Both kept horses, had the same kind of background and education, were good at sports and athletics. The young man, Sigmund or Siegmund, came from Hanover. He showed Father his rifle, with its telescopic sight. The British Army didn't have such things. Both were humane men and returned to the business of trying to kill one another with disgust.

Some months later, the 'Dublins' approached Mouse Trap (or Shell Trap) Farm. Father went to investigate the buildings before it was light, suspecting that there might be snipers or hidden machine guns. Going round the end of the main building, revolver in hand, he came face to face with Sigmund, also holding his revolver, on exactly the same mission. Both stopped a yard apart. Nothing was said. Then, each turned his back and walked away, frightened no doubt, but fairly sure that he would not be shot.

Father didn't talk about the war in later years, except in general terms. But, as an old man, during his last illness, he relived the incident many times and the gas attack that followed – the first of the war.

### After the war.

In 1918, my father was made second in command of Catterick Camp in Yorkshire with the rank of Lt.Col. He and his first wife lived in Richmond, Yorkshire. He was then sent to Constantinople. When the regiment was disbanded in 1922, he was transferred to the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and sent to India. His wife, Dolly, died and was buried at sea on her way to join him there in 1922. He served with the D.C.L.I., mainly in India, until he retired in 1928. He was given a clerical job, which he hated, in the War Office and married my mother, Marjorie Cooper, a year later. He was awarded the military O.B.E. and retired to Ireland. The twenties had been a bad time for an officer in the British Army to retire to his Irish

home, the country having been torn by Civil War just a few years before. Many felt they had no future here.



A young Standish Smithwick. Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

However, my father was delighted when he inherited the family home, Crannagh, near Nenagh in Co Tipperary. The couple moved there after their marriage in May 1929 and I, their only child, was born eighteen months later. The place was run down and money was scarce, but Father was a born farmer, with an instinctive knowledge of livestock. He was a noted horseman and high handicap polo player in his day and had loathed city life. The Economic War broke many Irish farmers, but he survived – just. I never remember him in really good health, as he was full of splinters of metal, resulting from a grenade explosion that shattered his rifle in 1915. For years, he suffered from bouts of agonising pain as the splinters moved about in his body. Finally, one of them pierced his stomach wall and he died of internal bleeding 10<sup>th</sup> April 1958, aged eighty. During the six weeks illness before his death, he dreamed and raved in delirium about W.W.1. In particular, he relived his second meeting with the young soldier he had met

during the Christmas truce of 1914, and the approach to the Frezenberg Ridge, where he was left for dead after being gassed.

He and my mother, who died May 29<sup>th</sup> 1979, are buried in Monsea graveyard, four miles from Nenagh. He didn't enjoy his time in the D.C.L.I. His only request to me when he knew he was dying was to put 'Royal Dublin Fusiliers' in full, on his headstone, which I did.

### A Prayer.

The following is a prayer which my father, Capt. Standish Smithwick, carried with him throughout the war.

*Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers  
But to be fearless in facing them.  
Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain  
But for the heart to conquer it.  
Let me not look for allies in life's battlefield  
But to my own strength.  
Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved  
But hope for the patience to win my freedom.  
Grant me that I may not be a coward,  
Feeling your mercy in my success alone:  
But let me find the grasp of your hand in my failure.*

(Rabindranath Tagore. Trans. from *The Bengali*.)

### The Connaught Rangers Association founded.

*Mr Oliver Fallon.*

*Secretary, The Connaught Rangers Association.*

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of June last, following a weekend of lectures in King House Boyle, Co Roscommon the Connaught Rangers Association was founded. Like our sister organisation the RDF Assoc. and RMF Assoc. our ideals and aspirations are almost identical ; to remember and record the history of the Rangers and organise events to bring people together who have a shared interest in the Regiment. For those wanting to join our Association application forms may be obtained from : *The Secretary, The Connaught Rangers Assoc., c/o King House, Boyle, Co Roscommon.* King House Museum situated in the town of Boyle, was once the home of the King family and later headquarters of the 4<sup>th</sup> Militia Battalion of

the Connaught Rangers. Today the museum holds a small but rather limited collection of material related to the Regiment. We have been promised exhibition space to expand the collection and set up a research and database in King House for those interested as well as using the facilities to hold lectures and other events. The town of Boyle itself is situated in north Roscommon and nestled under the Curlew Mountains and has a number of attractions for the visitor. As well as King House, there are the marvellous remains of a 12<sup>th</sup> century abbey and the beautiful Forest Park on the shores of Lough Key.

For Great War enthusiasts, it may be interesting to note that eleven officers and ninety six men born or who resided in the town and surrounding villages of a radius of five miles, perished in World War One.

When one considers that the town had a population of 2,691 in the Census of 1911, this represented a huge proportion of the town's population. Only one of these men has a public memorial that being Capt. Edward Stafford King Harman, the twenty two year old heir to the Rockingham Estate, now the Forest Park. Capt. King went missing at the Battle of Ypres a few days after arriving at the front on November the 5<sup>th</sup> 1914. His name is recorded on the impressive town clock situated on the Crescent, along side that of his mother who died in 1916 having never got over the loss of her eldest son. Another interesting claim to fame for Boyle is that it is the birthplace of the Hollywood actress Maureen O'Sullivan born in 1911 in a house in Main Street just outside the gates of King House. Her father a Corkman, Captain Charles O' Sullivan was at the time, adjutant to the 4<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers and he and her mother, a local girl named Ann Marie Fraser met while playing tennis in the local pleasure grounds. Capt. O'Sullivan was seriously wounded at the Battle of the Aisne in September 1914 and his brother in law Lieutenant Jack Fraser was killed in action trying to pull him to safety.

Of the other men from the town who died in the Great War, about half, like Lieutenant Fraser, were Connaught Rangers. However there were Munster Fusiliers, Leinsters, Royal Irish Regiment, Royal Irish Rifles, Royal Irish Fusiliers, Irish and Coldstream Guards, West Yorkshire Regt, RFA, RAMC, East Lancs, Hampshire Regt, Duke of Wellingtons,

Manchesters, Lancashire Fusiliers, Royal Lancasters, KOSB, Cheshires, HLI, Inniskillings, Worcesters, Royal Hussars, Northumberland Fusiliers, Royal Scots, RASC, one member of the Royal Navy, one member of the Canadian Army and a member of the New Zealand Army. It is interesting to note the predominance of North of England Regiments reflecting the pattern of high emigration from north Roscommon to the mill towns of Lancashire and West Yorkshire as pointed out by Kevin Myers (Irish Times) in a enjoyable lecture during our inaugural weekend. In addition to the above there were two officers and six men from Boyle who died with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Pte. John Mc Gowan. No. 8638. 2<sup>nd</sup> Dublin Fusiliers. Died of Wounds in Dublin received in Belgium, May the 15<sup>th</sup> 1915. Buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin. Pte. Patrick Edmond O'Beirne. No. 19261. 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Aged twenty one. Died of Wounds, Salonika, Greece, November the 20<sup>th</sup>, 1916. Pte. John O'Donnell. No. 25274. 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Killed in action Monday February the 5<sup>th</sup> 1917, the Somme, France. Sgt. Thomas Priest. No. 25462. Also of the 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Killed in action, the Somme France, February the 11<sup>th</sup> 1917. Pte. Joseph Farrell. No. 27938. 9<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Killed in action Passchendaele, Belgium, August the 16<sup>th</sup>, 1917. Aged nineteen. Pte. Charles Rushforth. No. 20967. 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Killed in action, Le Catelet, Aisne, France., October the 7<sup>th</sup>, 1918.7. Capt. William H. Monson M.C. 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Dublin Fusiliers. Died of Wounds, La Neuville No. 21 Casualty Clearing Station, Corbie, Somme, France, September the 7<sup>th</sup>, 1916. Aged thirty eight. Capt.. Bernard C. J. Cunningham. 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Killed in action Thursday March the 21<sup>st</sup> 1918 in the German offensive.

One other item of note is that Lord French, he who got sacked in the Autumn of 1915 and later became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in May 1918, purchased a country retreat called Drumdoe House in Crossna just outside the town on the shores of Lough Arrow. He frequently stayed there and it was on his return to the House by train in December 1919, that an assassination attempt was carried out on him as he left Ashtown Gate Station to return to his residence in the Phoenix Park. The French family originated from nearby Frenchpark and it seemed French himself

loved to visit until it became too dangerous. Today Drumdoe House still stands in private ownership.

We would like to extend a special word of thanks to the Committee of the RDFA for their much appreciated assistance in the setting up of the Connaught Rangers Association.

**Cricket, lovely cricket.**

*Mr Pat Hogarty.*

*Member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

St. Columba's College Vs. The 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 1916, members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers played a cricket match against the boys of St. Columba's College, Dublin . The match was played at Rathfarnham. The Dubs won by ninety six runs.

The following score-sheet recorded the scoring.

Saint Columbus.

C.W. Huggard c. Mount b. Cpl Robinson	4
R.N.Stanton b. Lieut. Cox	4
Mr. Bell b. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Cox	0
C.H.Deane run out.	16
The Warden b. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Cox.	64
Mr. Pontet not out.	16
Mr Wood not out.	2
H.E.Jones not out	7
G.G. Symes did not bat.	
J.G. King did not bat.	
R.H. Doves did not bat	
Extras	6
Total	119.

10<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

Pte. Malcolmson c. Symes b. King	28
Pte. Irvine not out.	86
2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Cox. l.b.w. b. King	56
Cpl. Robinson not out.	29
Lieut. Wilson. did not bat.	
C.Q.M.S. Wilson. Ditto	
Lieut. Mount. Ditto.	
Pte. Glynn. Ditto.	
H. St. G. Mc Kenny. Ditto.	
S Guilford. Ditto.	
E. L'E. Davies. Ditto.	
Extras.	16
Total	215.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 1916, the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublin left the Phoenix Park for Pirbright Camp in England. The Somme awaited them in November. A check of the above names on the Dublins cricket team against those members of the battalion listed KIA or DOW in *Soldiers Died* indicates that none of the above men died while serving with the battalion..

Reference.

*The Columban*. July 1916.

### **The Military Heritage of Ireland Trust.**

In the last edition of *The Blue Cap*, we announced the formation of the Military Heritage of Ireland Trust. The aim is to promote the study and commemoration of Irish men and women who served in military forces on land, sea and in the air, wherever in the world and for whatever country or cause. It will do this by developing projects concerned with military archives and museums. It is working with the National Museum to prepare a major exhibition in Collins Barracks which is expected to open in late 2003.

There are plans to locate the Irish military archives in Collins Barracks. This will facilitate the acquisition of material related to all aspects of the Irish military heritage and provide a central point for research by the general public and researchers.

The Trust is planning to provide a Guide to Irish Military Heritage to enable individuals to locate records, objects, buildings and places. It will be provided in a printed version and on the website of the Trust [www.irishsoldiers.com](http://www.irishsoldiers.com). Funding is needed to complete this project. Further information can be found on the above website.

### **They are not forgotten: Memorials to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Part 4.**

*Philip Lecane.*

*Member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

St Ann's Church of Ireland.

Location: Dawson Street, Dublin.

Memorial: A stain glass window commemorates two officers killed in Gallipoli.

Inscription: "*In loving memory of Ernest Lawrence Julian: 7<sup>th</sup> Dublin Fusiliers and Robert Hornidge Cullimam: 7<sup>th</sup> Munster Fusiliers who died for their country at Suvla Bay in August 1915. They were both members of the Irish Bar. This window was erected by some of their friends. Non sibi sed patria.*"

Lieutenant Ernest Lawrence Julian of "D" Company, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers was the Reid Professor of Law at Trinity College, Dublin. Aged thirty six, he died on board *His Majesty's Hospital Ship Valdivia* on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August 1915 from wounds sustained the previous day. He was buried at sea. The only surviving son of the late John Julian of Drumbane, Birr, King's County and Margaret Jullian, No. 28 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin, he was educated at Strangeway's School, Dublin and Charterhouse and Trinity College, Dublin. He was called to the Bar in 1903. He was gazetted Lieutenant in October 1914. He is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey.

(Two people separately contacted *The Blue Cap* about this memorial. They were Mr Tom Brooks and Mr A. C. Sutton. Both are members of the RDF Association.)

#### Church of Ireland, Boyle

(Mr Oliver Fallon, Secretary of the Connaught Rangers Association)

Location: Boyle, Co. Roscommon.

A memorial in the church contains the name of Captain W.H. Monson MC, 8<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF. Born the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1878, he was the son of George Thomas and Kate S. Monson of Grallaghmore, Boyle, Co. Roscommon and Dublin. Went to France on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 1915. Died of Wounds at La Neuville No. 21 Casualty Clearing Station, Corbie, Somme, France, 7<sup>th</sup> of September 1916. Aged thirty eight.

The same memorial contains the name of Private Joseph Farrell, Reg. No. 27938, 9<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF. Killed in action Passchendaele, Belgium, Thursday the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 1917. Aged nineteen.

Church of Ireland, Ardcarne

(Mr Oliver Fallon, Secretary of the Connaught Rangers Association)

Location: Ardcarne, Boyle, Co. Roscommon.

A memorial in the church contains the name of Private Charles Rushforth, Reg. No. 3028, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. RDF. Killed in action, France, the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 1918.

St. Peter's Church of Ireland

(Patrick Hogarty, Member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association)

Location: Bandon, Co. Cork

Memorial inscription *"To the glory of God and in honoured memory of men belonging to this parish who gave their lives in the service of King and Country during the Great War 1914-1919. 'Their name liveth for evermore.'*

Among the seventeen names on the memorial are: Second Lieutenant William Andrews (32), 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. RDF. Killed in action on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 1915 at Gallipoli. Son of the late William Andrews; husband of Esther Mary Andrews, 11 Park Rd., Polsloe Park, Exeter. Buried in 'V' Beach Cemetery: No. F. 13, Turkey.

Second Lieutenant Robert Henry Burns (25), 8<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF. Killed in action on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1918, near Epehy. Son of Robert Henry and Elizabeth Burns, Monarone, Bandon, Co. Cork. Name on the Special Memorial, Preseau Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

Second Lieutenant Albert Ernest Carrette (21), 9<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF. Killed in action on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 1916 in the gas attack at Hulluch. Son of Edward William and Jane Carrette, Bandon, Co. Cork. Buried Vermelles British Cemetery: No. 11.F.29.

Lieutenant Cecil Mahon Tweedy (24), 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Bns. RDF. Killed in action on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1917. Son of Isabel Tweedy, 45 Prior Park Rd., Bath and the late Chief Inspector Thomas Tweedy, R.I.C. Buried Saily-Saillisel British Cemetery-Somme: No. 11.D.8, France.

Public War Memorial, Cahir

(Mr James Nolan, Member of the RDF Association)

Location: Opposite Cahir Castle, Co. Tipperary.

Memorial: Celtic cross. The memorial commemorates the First World War dead from *"Cahir and the surrounding district."* Seventy-six men, from twenty-eight military formations are listed on the memorial. Panel four of the memorial lists four R.D.F. men: R.S. Boles, M. O'Donoghue, P. Quigley, F. Smith. Research into the seventy-six men on the monument would give an interesting insight in the effects of the First World War on part of county Tipperary.

St James Church of Ireland

(Mr A.C. Sutton, Member of the RDF Assoc.)

Location: Moy, Co. Tyrone.

A roll of honour contains the name of Lieutenant A. Rose-Cleland RDF. The only child of Mr H.S. Rose-Cleland, Redford House, Moy, he was educated at Dungannon Royal School and St. Columba's College Rathfarnham, Dublin. At the outbreak of war he was employed by McLaughlin and Harvey Ltd, Belfast. He enlisted in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and was gazetted Second Lieutenant in February 1915. He was killed in action in France on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1916 at the Battle of the Somme.

Fratton Bridge British Legion Club

(Mr Tom Brooks, Member of RDF Association)

Location: Fratton Bridge British Legion Club, Portsmouth, Hampshire.

Memorial: Plaque and Portrait.

The memorial is to a *Dub* who survived the Great War and lived until 1966. Acting Company Sergeant-Major James Ockenden, V.C. M.M. 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. RDF was born on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1890 at No. 56 Albert Street, Landport, Portsmouth, Hampshire. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1917 near Langemarck, Belgium. He died on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1966, aged seventy five years, at No. 5 Yorke Street, Southsea, Hampshire. He was cremated and his ashes were buried at North Border Post, Plot 20, Porchester Crematorium.

St. Mary's Hospital, Phoenix Park,  
Dublin.(previously the Royal Hibernian Military  
School)

(Mr Tim Foster, Member of RDF Association)

Location: St. Mary's Hospital, Phoenix Park, Dublin.

Memorial: Obelisk.

Among those commemorated on the memorial is Corporal H.J. Leetch Reg. No. 7953, RDF who was killed in action on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August 1914. He attended the Royal Hibernian Military School from the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 1899 to the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1902.

Cemetery at Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley  
(Mr Chris Coombes, Member of RDF Association)

Location: The Royal Victoria Country Park, near Southampton.

Netley Hospital was built following the Crimean War. The foundation stone was laid by Queen Victoria on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 1856 and the hospital was completed in 1863. Queen Victoria visited the hospital several times and awarded Victoria Crosses to three of the patients. In his first Sherlock Holmes story, "A Study in Scarlet," Arthur Conan Doyle says that Dr John Watson was a student at the hospital. The hospital treated casualties from the Boer War. In 1914 a Red Cross hutted hospital with 1,000 beds was built at the rear of the main hospital. About 50,000 patients, including wounded German prisoners, passed through the hospital during the First World War. (20,000 main hospital. 30,000 hutted hospital). The hospital also saw extensive use during the Second World War. Afterwards the main hospital fell into disuse. In 1966 it was demolished except for the Royal Chapel. In 1980, the site became the Royal Victoria Country Park, the former chapel housing a heritage centre. The cemetery has about 3,500 graves, mostly military but also wives and children of the hospital staff.

The following RDF men are buried in Commonwealth War Graves in the cemetery: L/Cpl. A. Thompson Reg. No. 11707. 17<sup>th</sup> of June 1915, aged nineteen. Pte. James Hickey Reg. No. 11499, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. 16<sup>th</sup> of July 1915. Aged twenty. Pte. T. O'Keefe, Reg. No. 7628, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1916. Aged forty. Pte. W. Swift Reg. No. 21866. 26<sup>th</sup> of August 1916.

Table 1. lists earlier RDF graves at the Netley cemetery.

Name.	Regt. No.	Bn.	Died.	Grave No.
Pte..J Reardon	2791	1 <sup>st</sup>	25-4-1883	444
Pte. J Whelan	733	1 <sup>st</sup>	16-3-1885	466
Pte.J Timmins	2916	2 <sup>nd</sup>	24-11-1885	476
Pte..M Whelan	2638	2 <sup>nd</sup>	7-6-1890	523
Sgt. M Boshell	2412	1 <sup>st</sup>	31-7-1890	527
Pte. M Chambers	3637	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3-12-1892	549
Pte. J Hoey	2897	1 <sup>st</sup>	28-2-1900	638
Pte. Mc Donnell	3492	1	20-10-1900	652
Pte. P Moran	4503	4 <sup>th</sup>	16-6-1902	689
Pte. P Costello	6374	1	3-4-1906	738
Pte.J Farrell	9722	2 <sup>nd</sup>	5-4-1912	775

Table 1.  
Graves of RDF at Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley.

Church of Ireland, Rathfarnham  
(Mr Maurice Bryan, Member RDF Association)

Memorial to Second Lieutenant Harold Mansfield, 10<sup>th</sup> Bn. RDF. Killed in action 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1916, aged thirty six. Married to Helen Mansfield, 11 Grosvenor Square, Rathmines, Dublin. Buried Knightsbridge Cemetery Mesnil, Martinsart, France. His wife was pregnant when he was killed. See *The Blue Cap Vol. 7* March 2000 for article on the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins.

Thank you to those members who have taken the time and trouble to record and send in memorial details. To assist the RDF Association in building up a comprehensive database of war memorials, it would be helpful if contributors would record as much detail on memorials as possible including the exact location of the memorial within the church / building, an exact description of the memorial (e.g. marble tablet / wooden cross), any inscriptions on the memorial, the number of names that are on the memorial, etc. 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.

Website: [www.greatwar.ie](http://www.greatwar.ie)  
E Mail address: [rdfa@eircom.net](mailto:rdfa@eircom.net)

## The Incomparable 29<sup>th</sup> Division.

*Mr Pat Hogarty.*

*Member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 1915, the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of the British Army assembled at Dunchurch in Warwickshire. Prior to their departure to Gallipoli, HM King George V, reviewed his troops outside the village. Some 18,000 men and 6,000 horses paraded in front of the King. The Division was made up of three infantry brigades, the 86<sup>th</sup>, 87<sup>th</sup> and 88<sup>th</sup>. Irish Regiments such as The Royal Dublin and Royal Munster Fusiliers were part of the 86<sup>th</sup> Brigade. The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers were part of the 87<sup>th</sup> Brigade. There were no Irish regiments in the 88<sup>th</sup> Brigade. The Division fought in Gallipoli in 1915 and on the Western Front in France and Belgium for the remaining years of the war. The soldiers that made up the Division were drawn from the four home countries, i.e. England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Following their term in Gallipoli, the Division earned the name as being the 'Incomparable 29<sup>th</sup>.' On the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 1918, the Division marched across the Rhine on their way to Cologne. The salute was taken by General Plumer of Messines at the foot of the Kaiser's statue on the Hohenzollern Bridge. Total casualties suffered by the 29<sup>th</sup> throughout the war amounted to 94,000. Gallipoli alone accounted for 34,000. They won twenty-seven Victoria Crosses. Details on these Victoria Cross winners may be obtained from the RDF Assoc.

Approximately one kilometre from the village of Dunchurch, east along the A45, there is a memorial to the 29<sup>th</sup> Division near the village of Stretton-on-Dunsmore. The memorial is situated in the centre of a large roundabout on the A45 about eight kilometres east of Coventry, grid reference SP415733. Money for the memorial was raised by public subscription following a local wish to commemorate the King's review and in memory of the men who served in the Division. The memorial was designed by Bridgman and Sons of Lichfield and erected in late 1920 at a cost of £stg 646. Before an estimated crowd of over 7,000, the stone memorial standing 12.3 meters high, was unveiled by the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire, Lord Craven and handed over to the Chairman of the Warwickshire County Council, Lord Algernon Percy, on Tuesday the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1921.

For many years the Stretton-on-Dunsmore Parish Council were anxious about the deteriorating condition of the memorial. Thanks to a splendid donation of £stg. 14,000 from the Ready Mix Concrete Aggregates, the Council was able to proceed in July 2001 with a major programme of restoration. Work was completed and a rededication ceremony took place on September the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2001. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2002, following a service of remembrance, Major Hugh Fenner of the Gallipoli Association kindly laid a wreath at the foot of the memorial on behalf of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association. Present also at the ceremony was Mr Bill Shields, a local Borough Councillor whose father served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Dublins at Gallipoli.

### Reference.

*The Gallipolitan* Journal of the Gallipoli Association. No 97. Winter 2001-2002., N0. 96. Autumn 2001 and No. 92 Spring 2000.  
Gillon. Capt. Stair. *The Story of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division*. Thomas Nelson and Sons. London.

### Poetry.

#### Storming of the Dardanelles.

*Private Thomas Doran, 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. Royal Dublin Fusiliers*

*We talk of Irish regiments, no wonder why we do,  
The Dublins and the Munsters, you've heard about  
those two;  
You can see by many papers how Irish blood it tells  
The way those famous regiments fought at the  
Dardanelles.*

*On the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, when we did make a start,  
We were singing Tipperary, a song that reached our  
hearts;  
The ships were packed with khaki lads, such spirits  
they did show,  
To the cry Are we downhearted? We quickly  
answered No.*

*We got then into our small boats, this way we were to  
land,  
Then every Tommy could be seen with a Woodbine in  
his hand,*

*There were boys from Tipperary, from Cork and  
County Clare,  
And the boys from County Dublin and the Short  
Grass, that's Kildare.*

*The Turks they were prepared for us, as one and all  
could tell,  
For about one thousand yards from land we were met  
with shot and shell;  
There were bodies floating through the sea and  
hundreds on the sand,  
But the Turks they suffered terribly when we fought  
them on the land.*

*The wounded moaning mercy, it was an awful sight;  
Those who got badly wounded were wishing for the  
night,  
And when night came our stretcher boys had lots of  
work to start,  
Collecting bodies, legs and arms, the sight near broke  
their heart.*

*The Turks were then retreating retreating their  
numbers lost were large,  
Our officers say Dublins! We'll have a bayonet  
charge.  
The charge was done, the Turks they run, our lads in  
ringing cheers,  
I can't forget those Irish boys-the Dublin Fusiliers.*

*Before I go, I tell you, be proud and give three  
cheers,  
For those brave fighting Irishmen-the Dublin  
Fusiliers.*

Private Thomas Doran from The Harbour, Naas, Co. Kildare was wounded at 'V' Beach, Gallipoli. He was shipped to a hospital in Exeter, where he wrote *Storming of the Dardanelles*. James Durney published the poem in his book *Far from the Short Grass: The Story of Kildare Men in Two World Wars* (Naas, Co. Kildare) 1999, ISBN 0 9530521 2 5. The book is a well researched and well written account of the men from one Irish county who served in both world wars.

### **The Loyal Irish**

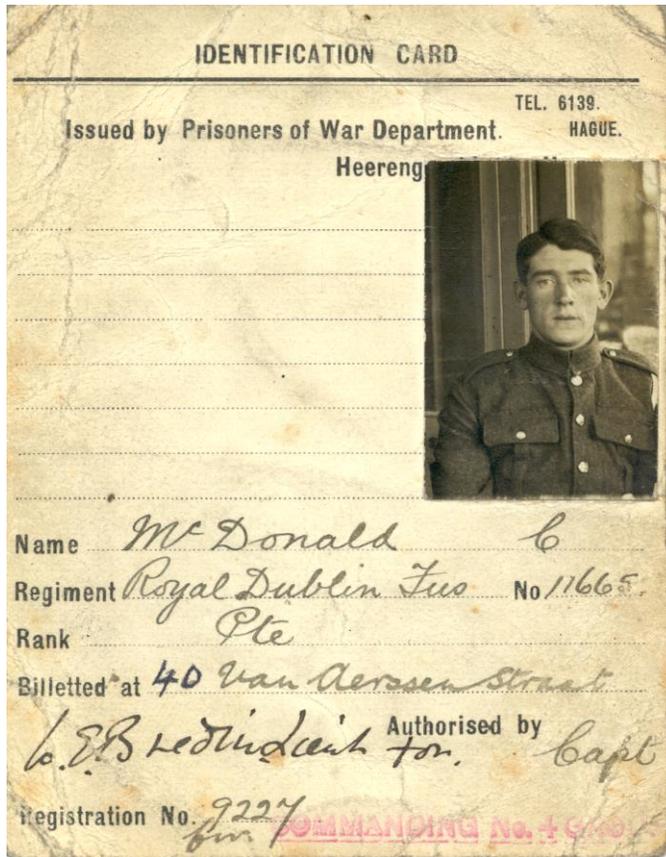
In 1914 Sir Roger Casement went to Germany in an attempt to get German backing for a planned rising in Ireland. As part of his efforts, he attempted to raise

an Irish Brigade from Irish prisoners of war in German prison camps. A paper cutting from the Daily Mail with a poem titled *The Loyal Irish* written by *Touchstone*, was found among the papers of Private Christopher Mc Donald, who was a prisoner at Limburg. No date was on the paper cutting. The poem was a tribute to the Irish prisoners in the camp at Limburg, who were offered £10 apiece by Sir Roger Casement if they would fight for Germany. They refused practically to a man, and were treated with such severity that seventy of their number died. Chris Mc Donald survived the war. Born in Holles Street, Dublin, he was a gardener before he enlisted as a young man of seventeen. His two brothers also enlisted. They were Daniel, who was an RSM with the Dubs and Peter. After the war Christopher returned to Dublin. He could not get work so he emigrated to Scotland where he got a job on the railways. He died in 1972. Thanks to Christopher's daughter, Mrs. Grace Campbell from Aviemore, Inverness-shire in Scotland for the material supplied to *The Blue Cap* about her father.

*We were worn and weary and the hunger had a hold  
of us,  
Rotting in a prison camp as the days went dragging  
by:  
Ah! The cruel time we had, the misery and cold of us!  
But still we met our gaolers with our heads held high.*

*He came, the dirty traitor, with his German gold to  
buy us all-  
Buy the souls of Irishmen whose honour knew no  
stain:  
Offered us poor, starving men our liberty to try us  
all;  
God! We so have answered him he will not come  
again.  
Then they cut our rations down who dared to answer  
nay to them,  
Bidding hunger speak where late the traitor's voice  
was heard.  
Aye, and there were those of us too proud to whine  
and pray to them,  
Turned their faces to the wall and died without a  
word.  
You who keep within your hearts the records bright  
and glorious,  
Telling how the Irish fell on many stricken field,  
Keep you in remembrance those eternally victorious,*

Lads who fought a bitter fight, and knew not how to yield.



POW Identification Card of Private Christopher McDonald, 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

**A tree grows in Gravesend.**

*Mr Pat Hogarty.*

*Member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

About two years ago I read one of the English newspapers that a number of Councils in England were planting trees in their local parks to commemorate the regiments now disbanded who had been stationed in or near the towns during the two World Wars.

From 1911 to 1914, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers were stationed at Milton Barracks in Gravesend.

They were very popular and well received in the town. I wrote to the Council at Gravesend and enquired if they could plant a tree to remember the men of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The response I received was very positive. I received a reply from Ms Caroline Halfpenny, Technical Officer, Leisure Services. She informed me that they had an oak tree

and would be pleased to plant it in the local park which is Woodlands Park.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2001, a cold and dry winter's day, the planting ceremony was performed by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Mrs Peggy Mersh. The party attending included, Councillors Brook, Parker and Mersh. Mr Brian Tourle of the Heritage and History Department; Ms Caroline Halfpenny; Mr Tony Larkin of the Gravesend Historical Society and member of the RDF Assoc.; Mrs Marion Hughes whose uncle, Private George Amos, was killed in the fighting at Mouse Trap Farm on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1915.

The Ceremony opened with the reading of the 'De Profundis', followed by the Lord's Prayer. After the Lord's Prayer, Councillor A. Marsh laid a bouquet of flowers with a card bearing the inscription : 'Remembered. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers. 1911 – 1914. God Bless.' Councillor A. Marsh gave a short speech and Councillor Brook agreed with the proposal that a plaque be made and placed at the tree. The ceremony then concluded. The tree is located in the corner of the park nearest the Wrotham Road, close to the area which was previously fenced off.

**Under the Colours.**

*Capt. (ret'd) Seamus Greene.*

*Member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

In a solemn and historically poignant ceremony in St. George's Hall, Windsor Castle, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1922, King George V received the Colours of five Southern Irish Infantry Regiments, which were disbanded on that fateful day. The Colours laid up were those of the following Regiments:

- The Royal Irish Regiment
- The Connaught Rangers.
- The Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians)
- The Royal Munster Fusiliers
- The Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

The South Irish Horse were also disbanded, but as they had no Colour, they presented a Regimental Engraving to the King.

In accepting the Colours, the King made the following promise: *' I pledge my word that within these ancient and historic walls your Colours will be treasured, honoured and protected as hallowed memorials of the glorious deeds of brave and loyal regiments.'* From the accompanying picture, it is clearly evident that the Colours have been so treasured, honoured and protected.



Pictured in Windsor Castle beneath the Colours of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers are: from left Comdt (Retd) Joe Gallagher, Capt (Retd) Séamus Greene, Maj.-Gen (Retd) David The Ó Morchoe, Mr Nick Broughall, RDFA Committee member, RDFA Chairman Mr Tom Burke and Major Jim McLeod, Chairman of the Combined Irish Regiments O.C.A. and Project Officer for the Commemoration Ceremony to mark the eightieth anniversary of the laying up of the Colours of the disbanded Irish Regiments of the British Army.

This year's ceremony to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Laying-Up of the Colours of the Disbanded Irish Regiments was held in St. George's Hall, Windsor Castle, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2002. The ceremony was attended by representatives of the various Regimental Associations and by the

Regimental Headquarters Staffs of the Irish Guards, Royal Irish Regiment, North Irish Horse and London Irish Rifles. The Irish Defence Forces were represented by senior officers including the Chief of Staff, Lieut.-General Colm Mangan.

During the service of prayers, our chairman was invited to read from the Gospel of St John 15. 9-17 and prayers were offered for all who served under the Colours, particularly those who gave their lives to make the world a better place for those whom they loved as well as those who lived after them.

The Irish Ambassador, Mr Dáithí Ó Ceallaigh, gave the closing address, in which he acknowledged that Irishmen who served in the British Army during the Great War had been shamefully forgotten during the early years of the new Irish State. He recalled the recent moves to redress this, including the restoration of the National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge, the Irish government's support for the Island of Ireland Peace Park in Flanders and the State Reception for the RDFA in Dublin Castle last April.

On Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> of June, twenty members of the RDF Assoc. took part in the annual parade to the Cenotaph organised by the Combined Irish Regiments Old Comrades Association. Along with standards from other Irish regiments and the Organisation of National Ex-Service men, Capt. (Retd) Seamus Green paraded the RDF Assoc. standard. The parade was led by the pipes and drums of the Royal Irish Regiment and London Irish Rifles. The following officers took the salute as parade marched past near the Cenotaph. Major-General (Retd) Paddy Nowlan former Quartermaster General, Irish Defence Forces; Major General Arthur Denaro OBE (late Queen's Royal Irish Hussars) now GOC 5<sup>th</sup> Div; Major General (Retd) David the O'Morchoe (late Royal Irish Fusiliers and Royal Irish Rangers) Colonel Stewart Douglas OBE, Regimental Colonel, The Royal Irish Regiment. Following the march past, General Nowlan and General Denaro laid wreaths at the Cenotaph. At the same parade in June 2001, General Nowlan's former colleague in the Irish Defence Forces, Lieut.-General Gerry Mc Mahon also laid a wreath at the Cenotaph. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Major Jim McLeod, Cpts (retd) Jim Graham, Jamie Mac Neish and the committee of the Combined Irish Regiments OCA in

treating the committee and members of the RDF Assoc. with kindness and hospitality during their stay in London.

*Quis Seperabit.*

### **Highlights of the past year since the last issue.**

*Mr Sean Connolly.*

*Secretary. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

It is not possible for every member to attend every event organised by the association. The following is a brief summary of what happened since the last edition of *The Blue Cap. Vol. 8* in June 2001. It will revive memories for some and may prompt ideas for others.

In August 2001, a small group went to Gallipoli to investigate the feasibility of an RDF Association tour to the battlefields that have such significance for Ireland. While there, wreaths were laid at the Helles Memorial and at other locations associated with Irish soldiers. Military honours were rendered by the Turkish Army. Despite the success of the reconnoitre, the regrettable conclusion was that a full scale visit would be too difficult and expensive to organise.

In September, we had the good fortune to have Judge Anthony Babbington deliver a spell-binding lecture on the Connaught Rangers Mutiny. He is an acknowledged expert on this subject and this was clear in his generous replies to the questions from the audience. In October, Mr Ian Passingham, who has written an excellent book on the subject, spoke on *The Battle of Messines, June 1917*. This successful attack is of particular interest to us because of the involvement of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) and 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Divisions and the location of the Irish Round Tower at Mesen (Messines). Note. Tom Burke is currently working on a book which tells the story of the Irish Regiments who re-took the village of Wijtschate (*Whitesheet*) in the same battle.

The RDF Assoc. have donated a script / photograph exhibition in the Museum at Mesen. The exhibition presents some stories and photographs of Irish men who took Wijtschate in June 1917. During the month of June 2002, the Assoc. also placed a similar

exhibition to the Dubs on the Somme at the Musee Regional d'Ethnologie in Bethune, France.

In November, our good friend Dr Timothy Bowman, returned to speak on '*Carson's Army or Kitchener's men: The Ulster Volunteer Force and the formation of the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division*'. Later in that month, over ninety members and friends attended our Annual Dinner in the Masonic Hall, Dublin. The Guest of Honour was Major-General Gerry McMahan, ex-Chief-of-Staff of the Irish Army.

In December, Professor John Horne gave us an insight into the impact of the Great War on civilians particularly in Belgium when his subject was '*German Atrocities in 1914: fact, fantasy or fabrication?*'

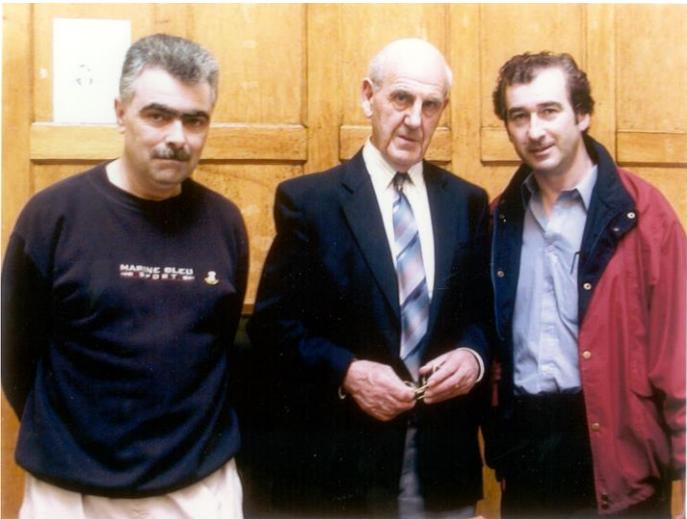
In March 2002, we organised a lecture by the well-known author Mr Martin Middlebrook. He spoke for over two hours on the Battle of the Somme and his own research which led to his seminal book *The First Day on the Somme*. He surprised many by saying that the German Offensive of 1918 was more interesting and significant than the Somme of 1916. As he has retired from the lecture circuit, we are grateful to our member Mr Jimmy Taylor who persuaded Martin to make his first visit to Dublin. The cost was defrayed by the contributions of the attendees.

In April, a group of twenty two members and friends of the RDF Assoc. visited the Regimental museum of the Royal Irish Fusiliers and the Cathedral in Armagh. Many thanks to the Curator, Ms Amanda Moreno and her colleagues for their kindness and hospitality. We installed photographic exhibition about the Gallipoli campaign in the ILAC Central Library during the month of May. In June, a group of 20 attended the commemoration ceremony of the Combined Irish Regiments Association at the Cenotaph in London. In the same month, the Association participated in the formal ceremony in Windsor Castle to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the laying up of the Regimental colours. We also wrote to Mr. Alex Maskey, the Sinn Fein Lord Mayor of Belfast, to congratulate him on his decision to lay a wreath at the Belfast memorial on the anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. In September 2002, Mr Maskey, along with the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr Dermot Lacey also laid a wreath at the Ginchy Cross in Guillemont.



Members and friends of the RDF Assoc. pictured at the War Memorial in Armagh City on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2002.

In early September, our Chairman Tom Burke led another successful tour of forty four members to Flanders. See article written by Mrs Marjorie Quarton. Later in the month, Dr David Murphy gave a lecture on *Neill's Blue Caps and the Relief of Lucknow: The Madras Fusiliers in the Indian Mutiny 1857-9*. Once again, there was a capacity audience in the Dublin Civic Museum. We continue to appreciate the generosity of Dublin City Council in making this facility available to us.



At the lecture in the Dublin Civic Museum on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2002. Left to right. Mr Jimmy Taylor. Mr Martin Middlebrook and Mr Larry Gittens

We participated in the formal remembrance ceremonies at City Quay Church, The National War Memorial, Islandbridge in Dublin and St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin in November. In April 2002,

members participated in the Gallipoli remembrance ceremony in St Annes, Dawson Street, Dublin and in the National Day of Commemoration at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, in July.

The project to install a commemorative stained glass window in the Garrison Chapel, Cathal Brugha Barracks is well under way and members will be notified of the dedication ceremony. Thanks to our members for their generosity in contributing towards the cost of this important memorial. Thanks must also go Rev. Fr. Eoin Thyne CF at Cathal Brugha Barracks and to Capt. (Retd) Seamus Greene, REF Assoc. who acts as project manager.

Our three lectures for this year are. 28<sup>th</sup> September. *Neill's Blue Caps and the relief of Lucknow: The Royal Madras Fusiliers in the Indian Mutiny 1857-9*. By Dr. David Murphy of Trinity College Dublin.

12<sup>th</sup> of October. *How are things in Baghdad?* The effects of the Great War on an Irish town (Drogheda, Co. Louth) By Mr Sean Collins. B.A., M.A. Drogheda Historical Society.

9<sup>th</sup> of November. Learning together. Some aspects of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers experience on the Western Front 1916-1918. By Prof. Peter Simkins. Ex-Imperial War Museum, London.

We continue to deal with regular requests for information and guidance from home and abroad. Over 700 queries were dealt with in the last year.

### Books Notice.

Jack O'Connell from Schull Books in Ballydehob, Co. Cork has written to The Dubs Assoc. informing us of a limited special offer on the sale of *Neill's Blue Caps*, the history of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion and *Crown and Company*, the history of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. Contact Jack or Barbara at Schull Books, Ballydehob, Co. Cork. Telephone and fax : From ROI; 028 37317 or outside ROI; 00353 28 37317.

Our CD, Association tie, blazer badge and lapel badge are still available from the association through the Dublin Civic Museum.

Congratulations to historian and RDF Assoc. member Dr. David Murphy on the publication of his book *Ireland and the Crimean War*. (Four Courts Press, ISBN 1-85182-639-4). This excellently researched and well written book is the first to be written on Ireland's forgotten involvement in the Crimean War.

Congratulations also must go to another member of the RDF Assoc., Mr James Taylor, on the publication of his book titled. *The 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Irish Rifles in the Great War*. Also published by Four Courts Press.

Mr Pat Hogarty's book on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, titled, *The Old Toughs*, is available from Paddy through the RDF Assoc., Dublin Civic Museum, 58 South William Street, Dublin 2.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 1918 The *RMS Leinster* was sunk by a German U-boat off Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire), Dublin. The tragic sinking of this ship and the loss of 501 lives was and still is, the worst maritime disaster to take place in the Irish sea. The sinking of the *Leinster* and the stories behind the people who went down with the ship is the subject of a book by Mr. Philip Lecane awaiting publication.

### In Memoriam

RDFA member Joseph Colfer died in Ontario, Canada at the end of October 2001. His father was a *Dub* and also served in the Irish army.

RDFA member John O'Sullivan died 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2001.

RDFA member Michael Reynolds passed away on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 2002 on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. His father was a *Dub*. Our condolences to his daughter Rosemary Higgins and other relatives.

Mrs Marie Dandy (nee Burke), sister of RDFA's chairman Tom Burke, died on Wednesday the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2002 after a lengthy illness. Our condolences to Tom, Marie's husband Mick and their family, Michael, Paul, Louise and Allison.

### An appreciation.

**Ronald (Ronnie) Jones Marino (1923-2002)**

*Mr. Joe Gallagher.*

*Member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

On Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2002, a last farewell was made by a large number of relatives and friends to a gentleman of many parts, but above all a gentleman. As a young boy *Ronnie* won a scholarship to the prestigious choir school of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. And it was as a chorister he took part in the coronation of the late King George VI. He subsequently became very well known in church and academic musical circles throughout Ireland. He was assistant organist to St. Patrick's Cathedral at the time of his death. His interests were in contrast to his music, mainly of a military nature. He was a keen collector of militaria, a model soldier enthusiast and an amateur military historian. He was a member of the Royal British Legion, the Royal Air Force Association, the Military History Society of Ireland and more recently a member of the reconstituted Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association: to all of these he brought generosity of spirit, an unflinching interest and above all his friendship and irrepressible good humour. To his widow Ann and family we extend our sincere sympathy on their loss. *Ronnie* you will be missed.

Ar dheis De go raibh a nAnamacha

(May their soul be on God's right hand side)

### Spectamur Agendo.