



Reflections on 1916

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The concerted Allied response to their failure to breakout from their stalemate at the end 1915 came at a conference at Joffre's Chantilly headquarters – the great horse-racing town north of Paris – on 6 December 1915 when representatives of the Allied high command from Britain, France, Russia, Serbia and Italy agreed to aim for a synchronised offensive on the Western, Eastern and Italian fronts on some date after March 1916. In Ireland, Irish Republicans made plans for their offensive against British rule in Ireland too. The ever-increasing size of the Allied armies would allow these offensives to be carried out. The philosophy behind this synchronised Allied offensive was to prevent the Germans from using their central static position to switch their reserves in turn from front to front. The representatives also agreed that if the Central Powers attacked one ally, the others would assist.¹ The Italians would attack the Austro-Hungarians along the central Isonzo river; the Russians' Brusilov Offensive would attack along the southern sector of the Eastern Front; and the British and French would attack the Germans astride the river Somme, but would then switch their main effort to break the German hold on Flanders via the British-held Ypres salient and attempt to take the Belgian ports of Ostend, Blankenberge and Zeebrugge, which had been in German hands since the end of 1914. The 1916 strategic plan for the Gallipoli front can be summed up in one word- withdrawal. One word too can be used to present the Allied plans for the Salonika front for 1916 – consolidation. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers played their part in all of these military plans prepared by the British in 1916, including the plans prepared by Irish Republicans.

RDF battalions on the Western and Eastern Fronts

On 1 January 1916, the 1st RDF received orders to assemble at 'V' Beach in preparation for final departure from the Gallipoli peninsula. Before their departure, they were placed on the *SS River Clyde* where many of their comrades had died coming ashore off the *SS River Clyde* at 'V' Beach on 25 April 1915.² Their destination was Marseilles and ultimately facing the Germans in Beaumont Hamel on the Somme front on 1 July 1916. The 2nd RDF began 1916 billeted in the French village of Orville also along the Somme front.³ Their objective on 1 July 1916 was the village of Serre north of Beaumont Hamel. At 07:20 a.m. on 1 July, a large land mine exploded on the Hawthorn Ridge facing Beaumont Hamel. The 1st RDF objective was to take the village of Beaucourt. Casualties for the 1st RDF on 1 July 1916 were 12 officers and 208 men of other ranks killed wounded or missing.⁴ Casualties for the 2nd Dubs were 14 officers and 311 men of other ranks killed wounded or missing.⁵ Neither RDF battalions achieved their objectives on 1 July.

The 6th and 7th RDF were in Salonika at the beginning of 1916. For much of the year they were deployed as labours digging roads north of Salonika. The major encounters they had occurred between 30 September and 6 October 1916 was fighting the Bulgarians for the Greek village of Jenikoj (Yenikoi). The 7th Dublins suffered 128 casualties, the 6th Dublins suffered 131. Both the 6th and 7th RDF remained in Salonika for the remainder of 1916 building defences around the town of Salonika.⁶

¹ Stevenson, David, *1914 -1918 the History of the First World War* (London Penguin Books, 2004).p.161.

² Wylly, H.C, *Neill's Blue Caps. 1826-1914*, vol. 2 (Cork: Schull Books, 1996).p.61.

³Wylly, H.C, *Crown and Company. The Historical Records of the 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers. 1911 - 1922*, vol. 2 (Cork: Schull Books, 2000). p.59.

⁴ Ibid.p.69.

⁵ Ibid.p.65.

⁶ *War Diary 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers* WO95/4836. (London: The National Archives, October 1915 to August 1917).

The 8th and 9th RDF began 1916 in the Loos sector at Noeus-les-Mines. They had come to France from Ireland via Blackdown near Aldershot in Surrey as part of the 16th (Irish) Division on 19 and 20 December 1915.⁷ Their first major encounter with the Germans was in April 1916 at Hulluch north of the French city of Lens when the Germans launched a massive gas attack on the 16th (Irish) Division lines. The Irish Division suffered a loss of 2,128 men in April 1916.⁸ In September, both battalions were part of the Irish Division’s successful assault on the village of Ginchy in their Somme campaign. Between 6 and 9 September 1916 at Ginchy, the 8th RDF suffered a loss of 20 officers and 416 men of other ranks killed in action, died of wounds or missing.⁹ The 9th RDF suffered a loss of 24 officers for the same period. There is no list of casualties for men of other ranks in the 9th RDF War Diary. The 48th Brigade, which included the 8th and 9th RDF and the 7th Royal Irish Rifles, again between 6 and 9 September 1916, the majority on 9 September at Ginchy, suffered a massive loss of 82 officers and 1,324 men of other ranks.¹⁰ In his after-battle report, the CO of the 48th Brigade, Brigadier-General Ramsay noted, ‘...I submit that the highest credit is reflected on all ranks that the capture of Ginchy was affected under these adverse conditions and that the traditions of the Irish race were worthily upheld by these men of the New Armies.’¹¹ Table 1 below presents the losses suffered by the 16th (Irish) Division between 1 and 10 September 1916 as a result of the attacks on Guillemont and Ginchy.¹²

Table 1
Losses suffered by the 16th (Irish) Division between 1 and 10 September 1916.

	Officers	Other Ranks
Strength on 1 September 1916	435	10,410
Strength on 10 September 1916	195	6,320
Losses	240	4,090
% Losses	55%	39%

The 10th (Commercial) Battalion of the RDF was formed in Dublin at the end of 1915. The recruiting drive for men to enlist into the 10th Dubs was targeted at the white collar, middle management / clerical workers. The battalion had many ex-members of ‘D’ Company from the 7th RDF who had battle experience. Ex ‘D’ Co. 7th RDF Pals in the 10th Dublins were allowed wear a yellow shoulder chord or ‘lanyard’ as a distinctive mark.¹³ Billeted in The Royal (Collins) Barracks in Dublin, the 10th RDF was one of the RDF battalions who helped put down the Easter Rising. On 18 August 1916 they arrived in France having been assigned to the 190th Brigade of the 63rd Royal Naval Division.¹⁴ The Battle of the Somme had been raging since early July. With a battalion strength of 24 officers and 469 other ranks, the 10th Dubs attacked the Germans facing them in Beaucourt north of Hamel, which was the Division’s objective on 13 November 1916. It was also the objective of the 1st RDF on 1 July. The 10th RDF began their part in the attack in thick mist at 06:31 a.m. (Zero hour was 05:45 a.m.) The attack this time was a success. They assisted in the rounding up of some 400 German prisoners.

⁷ *War Diary 9th Royal Dublin Fusiliers* WO95/1974. (London: The National Archives). 20 December 1915. See also Denman, Terence, *Ireland’s Unknown Soldiers. The 16th (Irish) Division in the Great War* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1992).p.61. The 9th RDF arrived in France at Le Havre on 19 December. The 8th RDF arrived in France on 20 December 1916.

⁸ Denman, Terence.p.62.

⁹ *War Diary 8th Royal Dublin Fusiliers.* WO95/1974. (London: The National Archives). Nominal Roll of Killed, Wounded, Missing. The men of other ranks noted included five men who were wounded on 4 September 1916.

¹⁰ *War Diary 48th Brigade.* WO95/1972. (London: The National Archives). Report of Operations of 48th Infantry Brigade on 9th and 10th September, 1916 in the attack on Ginchy.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *War Diary 16th (Irish) Division* WO95/1955 (London: Public Records Office). Part 3. September 1916. Figures written into War Diary at 10:10 p.m. on 11 September 1916 while at Corbie.

¹³ Laird, Frank, *Personal Experiences of the Great War (an Unfinished Manuscript)* (Dublin: Easons, 1925).p.77.

¹⁴ *War Diary 10th (Commercial) Royal Dublin Fusiliers.* WO95/3118. (London: The National Archives, 11 July 1916 to 31 January 1918). 18 August 1916.

The battalion chaplain Fr. Thornton, assisted in bringing in the prisoners.¹⁵ However the 10th RDF suffered 51% losses, i.e. 242 officers and men of other ranks killed, wounded or missing.¹⁶ The battle to take Beaucourt and Beaumont Hamel in November was known as the Battle of the Ancre. (13-19 November 1916). With the onset of winter, the attempted Somme break through the German lines by the British was abandoned at the conclusion of the Battle of the Ancre.¹⁷ What began in July with an offensive of high hopes ended in November in mud and misery. Plans for 1917 offensives were afoot.

For the first six months of 1916, the 6th and 7th Dublin Fusiliers, 30th Brigade, 10th (Irish) Division spent much of their time digging roads and new trench systems as part of the consolidation of Salonika from feared Bulgarian attack. Both battalions were camped west of the Greek village of Langavuk which is about twenty-four kilometres west of Salonika and the villages of Levena, Hortackos, Tumba and Laina on the south shore of Lake Langaza.¹⁸ The normal routine of work for both battalions was; Reveille at about 3:30 a.m., followed by tea and a march to the road so as to commence work at 5:00 a.m. Return to camp about 8:00 a.m. for breakfast, turn in for rest, if possible, till about 3.00 p.m. when dinners were served. Roadwork from 4:30 p.m. till 10:00 p.m.¹⁹ A further part of their duty was to guard the Salonika - Seres Road which ran northeast out of Salonika through the Krusha Balkan Mountains to Seres, a village about ninety-six kilometres from Salonika and linked the port of Salonika with the eastern end of the front line. However by far the greatest number of casualties suffered by the 6th and 7th Dublin Fusiliers in the Salonika campaign occurred towards the end of September and the beginning of October 1916 in the fighting to capture the village of Yenikoi which is about thirteen kilometres southeast of Seres. The total casualties in the 30th Brigade were 385 killed wounded and missing. Of that 385, the 7th Dublins suffered 128 casualties, the 6th Dublins suffered 131 casualties.²⁰

Activities of the 3rd, 4th and 5th (Reserve) Battalions of the RDF in 1916 were mainly focused on training recruits and in terms of the 4th and 5th RDF battalions, assisting in putting down the Easter Rising in Dublin. As mentioned above, the 10th RDF also took part in fighting the Irish Volunteers, mainly at the Mendicity Building on the opposite side of the Liffey from where they were based at the Royal (Collins) Barracks. The 5th RDF fought at City Hall. The 4th RDF fought against Irish Volunteers at the North Circular Road and Cabra Road railway bridges.

Tables 2 and 3 present the number of deaths suffered by the battalions of the RDF on the Western Front and Eastern Front in 1916. One direct effect on this loss of life in Ireland and indeed the rest of the UK, was the fall off in recruitment in Ireland which went from 25,235 at the end of August 1915 to 9,323 twelve months later at the end of August 1916.²¹ The publication of casualties in Irish newspapers didn't help recruitment either.

¹⁵ Ibid. *Appendix II. History of the Operations on the ANCRE from Zero Z Day 13 November 1916 as for unit concerned the 10th Royal Dublin Fusiliers* by Lieut.-Col. E. Smith. *From Officer Commanding 10th Service Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers to Brigadier General 190th Infantry Brigade.* By Capt. H Lecky 2nd in Command..15 November 1916.

¹⁶ Ibid.19 November 1916.

¹⁷ Edmonds, J.E. Sir. (Brigadier-General), *History of the Great War Military Operations France and Belgium Volume 2, 1916* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1948).p.523.

¹⁸ *War Diary 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers.* WO95/4836. (London: The National Archives, October 1915-August 1917).

¹⁹ McCance, S, *History of the Royal Munster Fusiliers. 1861 to 1922*, vol. 2 (Cork: Schull Books, 1995).p.181. For further discussion on the RDF on Salonika, see Connolly, Sean, 'Better Than No War at All'. *The Royal Dublin Fusiliers in Serbia, October to December 1915*, The Blue Cap, Journal of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association 20, (2015).Pp.2-12

²⁰ *War Diary 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers.* See also *War Diary 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers* .

²¹ Callan, Patrick, *Recruiting for the British Army in Ireland During the First World War*, The Irish Sword XVII., (1987).p.42. Note. For period February 1915 to August 1915 recruitment was 25,235. From August 1915 to February 1916 recruitment was 19,801. From February 1916 to August 1916 recruitment was 9,323.

Table 2 ²²

Date From	Date To	KIA,DOW or D
6 August 1914	31 December 1914	131
1 January 1915	31 December 1915	1,483
1 January 1916	31 December 1916	1,338

Table 3 ²³

1 January – 31 December 1916.

RDF battalion	Other Ranks only KIA,DOW,D	% Irish in battalion	% of Irish born in battalion coming from Dublin
1 st	147	76	48
2 nd	214	74	43
6 th	66	63	63
7 th	61	48	59
8 th	419	88	57
9 th	262	84	61
10 th	127	77	36
Others	42	62	46
Total	1,338		

The 4th RDF and the Easter Rising of 1916

On Easter Sunday 23 April 1916, *The Sunday Independent* carried the following front page notice. ‘No Parades ! Irish Volunteer Marches Cancelled.’ The order to cancel all Irish Volunteer (IV) parades was issued by Eoin Mac Neill, Chief of Staff of The Irish Volunteers.²⁴ The notice to cancel the parades created confusion among the ranks of some of the volunteers as to what to do. For example, according to Volunteer Peter Blanchfield from Killarney, Co. Kerry who served in ‘B’ Co. 1st Battalion of the Dublin Brigade, some men mobilised and then demobilised. He and some of the men from his battalion gathered at Liberty Hall and were first posted to Blackhall Place (St Colmchille’s Hall, Blackhall Street) and later to Cabra Road and the North Circular Road. He had spent Easter Sunday delivering mobilisation orders and ‘getting the lads together.’²⁵ Others mobilised and couldn’t find the unit they were assigned to. For example, Volunteer Patrick Kilmartin from No. 23 Stoneybatter in Dublin and a member of ‘D’ Co. 1st Battalion of the Dublin Brigade was ordered to mobilise in George’s Place. He couldn’t find his Company on Easter Monday morning when he heard the rebellion had broken out.

²² *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919, Part 73 Royal Dublin Fusiliers* (Suffolk: J.B. Hayward and Son, 1989). See also [Http://www.Cwgc.Org](http://www.cwgc.org) The Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

²³ *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919, Part 73 Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. See also [Http://www.Cwgc.Org](http://www.cwgc.org) and Burke, Tom, *Whence Came the Royal Dublin Fusiliers?*, *The Irish Sword* XXIV, no. 98 Winter (2005).p.449. Note. Others include the following; 5 RDF men who have no battalion number record; 11 of 3rd RDF; 8 of 4th RDF; 17 of 5th RDF. 1 RDF man listed as being part of the Depot. Total 42.

²⁴ Editor, *The Sunday Independent* 23 April 1916. Order issued by Eoin Mc Neill cancelling all Irish Volunteer parades for Easter Monday 24 April 1916.

²⁵ [Http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/](http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/). *The Military Service Pensions Collection*, Department of Defence. (2017). File Reference MSP3REF32028. Sworn Statement Made Before Advisory Committee By Peter Blanchfield on 4 June, 1938. (Ref 32028).

Because he lived near Phibsborough, he and a neighbour named Moore, 'went to the bridge in Phibsboro', which he knew was occupied by volunteers. The bridge being, 'the railway bridge on the North Circular Road.'²⁶ However, despite Eoin Mac Neill's order not to parade on Easter Monday, a group of Irish Volunteers decided to disobey this order and carry out what they had already planned – a rebellion in Dublin which began on Easter Monday 1916 at around mid-day.

Opposing the Irish Volunteers on Easter Monday morning in Dublin city was approximately 2,427 British troops. However, later that day they were reinforced by 1,600 troops from the 3rd Cavalry Brigade at the Curragh giving a total of 4,027. Next day on Tuesday 25 April, some 2,600 troops from the Artillery Brigade at Athlone and the 4th RDF from Templemore arrived in Dublin. It wasn't until Friday 28 April that reinforcements from England arrived to bring the total strength to 16,000.²⁷

The 4th RDF was based in Templemore, Co. Tipperary. It was a training battalion for both officers and men of other ranks prior to them being sent to the 1st and 2nd (Regular) RDF battalions in France and or Gallipoli. In April 1916, the 4th RDF had a battalion strength of 1,600 officers and men divided into five companies; 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', and 'E'. Some 85% of the new recruits were Roman Catholic and 15% were Protestant. In contrast however, about 70% of the officers were Protestant and 30% were Roman Catholic.²⁸

Monday 24 April 1916

It was around mid-day that a republican sniper's shot rang out along Westmoreland Street in Dublin. The recipient of the sniper's fatal bullet was an unarmed Dublin Fusilier named 19222 Corporal John William Humphries of the 5th RDF, aged twenty-nine who was shot through the head, 'while returning unarmed off furlough'. He was taken to Mercer's Hospital and died later of his wounds.²⁹ In the evening, news came through from Dublin to Templemore Barracks that a rebellion had broken out in the city. Second-Lieut. Arthur Killingley of the 4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers noted that he heard, 'rumours of troubles in Dublin.'³⁰ According to 2nd Lieut. T.C. Dickson, a brother officer of Killingley in the 4th Dublins, some of the officers including himself had never heard of Sinn Fein; Irish politics was seldom discussed. The war in France was more important.³¹ Railway telegram signals between Dublin and Templemore were working on Easter Monday and a message came through to Templemore to say that, 'a special train would be at Templemore Station the following morning (Tuesday) at 6:00 a.m. when the whole battalion would entrain for Dublin.' Consequently the battalion spent all-day Easter Monday preparing to move to Dublin the following morning Tuesday 25 April. Many of the men were tired of Templemore and were glad to get out of it.³²

The strategic military plan of the Irish Volunteers on Easter Monday morning was to seize and occupy the centre of Dublin city and to prevent the security forces be they police or army from retaking it. To carry out their plan, their tactic was to block the main arterial roads leading into the city centre. Two of these arterial roads on the north side of the city were the North Circular Road (the NCR) and nearby Cabra Road. The railway line from the Broadstone Railway Station ran under bridges over these two roads and linked the station with the outskirts of north Dublin city and county.

²⁶ Ibid. File Reference MSP34REF21157. Sworn Statement Made Before Advisory Committee By Patrick Kilmartin on 28 September 1936. (REF21157)

²⁷ McCann, B P *The Diary of 2nd Lieut. Arthur V.G. Killingley. 'A' Company. 4th Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers Easter Week, 1916*, The Irish Sword Vol XX, no. No. 81 Summer (1997).p.246.

²⁸ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. (Dublin: RDFA Archive).p.28.

²⁹ Editor, *The Irish Times*. 29 April 1916.p.8. See also. *Return of Unarmed Persons Wounded by Rebels During the Outbreak*. W035/69. (London: The National Archives, 27 May 1916).

³⁰ McCann, B P .p.247.

³¹ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.37.

³² Ibid.p.38.

Irish Volunteers were to commandeer houses near these bridges on Monday, blow up the bridges and erect barricades across the NCR and Cabra Road behind which they would defend the roads into the city.

During Easter Monday morning, between about 11:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., about fourteen Irish Volunteers mainly from 'B' Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade of the Irish Volunteers under the Command of Capt. James O' Sullivan had marched from Blackhall Place to take up positions on the bridges over the NCR and Cabra Road.³³ James O'Sullivan had taken part in the Howth gun running on 26 July 1914. The officer commanding the 1st Battalion was Commandant Ned Daly. Blackhall Place was the assembly point for the Volunteers who attempted to hold these bridges. Back on 5 February 1916, between 10:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., about 350 members of the Irish Volunteers, 200 of who had rifles, assembled at Blackhall Place, 'and engaged in manoeuvres which extended as far as the Phoenix Park, North Circular Road, Kingsbridge and Thomas Street.'³⁴

Later in the day fourteen more Volunteers arrived at O'Sullivan's post at the NCR barricade. They commandeered two houses near the railway bridge on the NCR and one on Cabra Road also near the railway bridge. Volunteer Albert Rawley claimed the house they commandeered on the Cabra Road was No. 19. Volunteer Thomas Kilmartin claimed the house he occupied near the bridge on the NCR was named 'Mountain View'.³⁵ They barricaded the house, 'cut the wires' and helped build the barricade across the railway bridge on the Cabra Road.³⁶ They spent Easter Monday building their barricades and sniping at the Broadstone Railway Station.³⁷ Volunteer Leo Patrick Scullin claimed he was sniped at from Broadstone during the day.³⁸ According to Volunteer Peter Blanchfield, their objective was to, 'blow up the North Circular Road Bridge, the New Bridge and Fassaugh Lane. N.C. Rd Bridge, Cabra Bridge and Fassaugh Lane.'³⁹

Volunteers Blanchfield, O'Sullivan and three others were detailed to blow up these bridges. According to Volunteer James Tallon, who was on the NCR Bridge during the day, Volunteer Sam Reilly and another member of 'B' Company IV were, sent to blow the Railway Bridge near Liffey Junction Tallon and Peter Blanchfield were sent with Reilly to protect him, 'while he was carrying out this operation.'⁴⁰ Volunteer Patrick Kilmartin claimed he had, 'brought dynamite and other war material from the G.P.O to the NCR Bridge.'⁴¹

³³ [Http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/](http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/). *The Military Service Pensions Collection*. File Reference MSP34REF21722. Sworn Statement Made Before Interviewing Officers By Leo Patrick Scullin on 15 March 1937. (Ref 21722). Note. The Irish Times wrote it was men from The Citizen's Army who manned the barricade on the NCR. See. Editor, *Obstruction on North Circular Road, The Irish Times*. 25 April 1916.p.5.

³⁴ *The Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook Easter 1916* (Dublin: The Irish Times, 1916).p.195.

³⁵ [Http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/](http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/). *The Military Service Pensions Collection*. Volunteer Patrick Kilmartin. File Reference MSP34REF21157. Application to the Minister for Defence for a Service Certificate. 31 December 1935. p.9.

³⁶ *Ibid*.Reference MSP34REF21474. Sworn Statement Made Before Advisory Committee By Albert S Rawley on 7 June, 1938. (Ref 21472).

³⁷ *Ibid*. File Reference MSP34REF59530.Sworn Statement Made Before Interviewing Officers By James J O'Sullivan on 28 February 1941. (Ref 59530).

³⁸ *Ibid*.File Reference MSP34REF21722. Sworn Statement Made Before Interviewing Officers By Leo Patrick Scullin on 15 March 1937. (Ref 21722).

³⁹ *Ibid*.File Reference MSP3REF32028.Sworn Statement Made Before Advisory Committee By Peter Blanchfield on 4 June, 1938. (Ref 32028).

⁴⁰ *Ibid*.File Reference MSP34REF59929. Summary of unsworn evidence given before interviewing officer by Seamus O'Tallamhain (James Tallon) and agreed to by him on 12 May 1942. (Ref 59929)

⁴¹ *Ibid*.File Reference MSP34REF21157. Sworn Statement Made Before Advisory Committee By Patrick Kilmartin on 28 September 1936. (Ref 21157). Note Kilmartin claimed he brought the dynamite to the NCR Bridge, 'at 3 o'clock or 3:30 on the Tuesday morning'.

He was given the explosive material by Volunteer M Staines at the G.P.O at about 3:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning.⁴² They had some success in damaging the bridge across the NCR. Blanchfield noted.⁴³

We blew up part of the Circular Road Bridge; and we were getting ready to blow up Cabra Bridge. We took over a few houses there and we were there all day Monday barricading and getting ready, and all Tuesday.

The Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook Easter 1916 noted that the rebels were unsuccessful in blowing up the bridge on the Cabra Road and NCR.⁴⁴ All throughout Monday night, some of the Volunteers manned their posts at the barricade along the NCR. Others slept in the houses they had commandeered.

Tuesday 25 April 1916

Mobilisation of the 4th Dublins at Templemore had begun as early as 5:00 a.m. Second Lieut. George Gray stated that the Adjutant and Commanding Officer, 'had been rushing about since 05:00 a.m.'⁴⁵ It wasn't until 8:30 a.m. that the entire battalion under the command of Lieut.- Colonel J A Meldon, moved off, 'in full marching order with a blanket' to Templemore Train Station to pick up a train to Dublin. Killingley headed off to Dublin armed only with his officer's cane. Because of the rush to get off, the memorial service for the men who had been killed at Suvla Bay in Gallipoli the previous year had been cancelled. Many of the men were light hearted about going to Dublin, anything seemed better than Templemore. At the station they were issued with, '150 rounds of ammunition and a waterproof sheet.' At 9:50 a.m., the train pulled out of Templemore bound for Dublin. Along their journey Killingley and his fellow officers were relaxed and played bridge.⁴⁶ There was concern and discussion among the officers as to how the men would react if asked to fire on their fellow countrymen.⁴⁷

The battalion arrived at Kingsbridge (Heuston) Station at 11:30 a.m. They met up with some men from the Royal Munster Fusiliers and Leinster Regiment who had been at the station since 2:00 a.m. They were sitting around, 'chewing bully beef and biscuits.'⁴⁸ The entire battalion of the 4th Dublins formed up in companies on the platform, nearly taking over the whole station. The order was given to load with live ammunition. In the excitement that followed this order, twenty-five live rounds went through the roof of the station; the reason given was that many of the recruits hardly knew one end of a rifle from the other.⁴⁹ Killingley stayed at the station with 'A' Company who were kept in Reserve. The other Companies, 'B', 'C', 'D' and part of 'E', marched out of Kingsbridge Station left wheeled over the Liffey and marched in column up Parkgate Street and on to the North Circular Road. They met no resistance along their march from Kingsbridge.⁵⁰

The British Army's strategic plan to defeat the Volunteers in Dublin was to encircle the city thus containing and capturing the Volunteers. The tactics they used to carry out this strategy was to form a Northern and Southern cordon around the city by controlling or retaking from the Volunteers where confronted, the same roads leading into and out of the city the Volunteers had barricaded.

⁴² Ibid. File Reference MSP34REF21157. Patrick Kilmartin. Reference letter written by M. Staines 23 September 1936.

⁴³ Ibid. File Reference MSP3REF32028. Sworn Statement Made Before Advisory Committee By Peter Blanchfield on 4 June, 1938. (Ref 32028).

⁴⁴ *The Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook Easter 1916*. p.31.

⁴⁵ McCann, B P .p.247.

⁴⁶ Ibid.p.247.

⁴⁷ Ibid..p.247.

⁴⁸ Ibid.p.247.

⁴⁹ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. p.39.

⁵⁰ Ibid.p.39. See also McCann, B P .p.247.

Just before mid-day, about 230 meters away from railway bridge over the NCR, the column of 4th Dublins stopped. Ahead of them on the bridge was the barricade erected by Captain O'Sullivan's men made from 'country carts and boxes piled high on top of each other.'⁵¹ According to Volunteer James Tallon the barricade on the NCR 'was a flimsy one'.⁵² Second-Lieut. Dickson noted that behind the barricade in houses on either side of the road were, 'a number of rebels to be seen many of them in uniform.'⁵³

From fear of losing a lot of his men in a direct charge on the barricade, Col. Meldon sent back a messenger to Army HQ in Parkgate for a Field Gun. Earlier that morning, four of these guns had arrived in Dublin with their crews from Athlone. One of those guns drawn by horses and under the command of a very excited and inexperienced twenty-one year old English officer of the Royal Field Artillery, arrived on the scene just before mid-day. This young chap had never fired a live artillery round, however he knew all the theory and was desperate to get a shot away before the Volunteers disappeared. He insisted in setting the gun and fuse in the shell himself and would not permit his more experienced sergeant to assist him. According to Dickson, this excited young Royal Artillery officer fired the gun completely missing the target. The shell landed in the garden of Mountjoy Prison which was about 550 meters away and to add insult to injury, the shell was a dud. Because they were either very brave or were unaware of the damage the shell from an 18 Pounder could do, according to 2nd Lieut. Dickson, many of the Irish Volunteers who manned the barricade waited for the gun to fire and never moved.⁵⁴ Volunteer Tallon reckoned the Dublins used a, '6-inch gun' to blow up the barricade. He also believed artillery fire was directed on the barricade from a point along the NCR 'near Upper Charleville Road'. Whatever calibre of gun was used, it did its job and the barricade was 'soon blown to pieces'.⁵⁵

However, the fun and games that were afoot with the young English officer soon came to an end when his more experienced sergeant stepped forward, took control of the gun and let fly with a second round which hit the barricade spot on and blew it 'to pieces', as Tallon recalled. Luckily for the Volunteers, before the sergeant's shot was fired, they had moved away from the barricade into some of the surrounding houses. The 'scrap' at the barricade on the NCR began at about 2:30 p.m. and as Volunteer Albert Rawley stated, it 'only lasted about 20 minutes.'⁵⁶ Volunteer Peter Blanchfield referred to the British soldiers who were involved in the fighting at the NCR bridge. He stated that he was on the bridge up to about 4:00 p.m. He thought, 'it was the Dublin Fusiliers who attacked us.'⁵⁷

⁵¹ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.39.

⁵² [Http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/](http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/). *The Military Service Pensions Collection*. File Reference MSP34REF59929. Summary of unsworn evidence given before interviewing officer by Seamus O'Tallamhain and agreed to by him on 12 May 1942. (Ref 59929)

⁵³ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.39. Note Volunteer John Faulkner claimed he was captured in with rifle 'uniform and full equipment.' See [Http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/](http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/). *The Military Service Pensions Collection*. File Reference MSP34REF2054. Sworn statement of John Faulkner made before Advisory Committee on the 8 January 1937. (Ref 2054)

⁵⁴ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.39. Col. Meldon later found out that the Governor of Mountjoy had the dud shell mounted as a souvenir of the rebellion and placed in his office at the prison.

⁵⁵ [Http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/](http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/). *The Military Service Pensions Collection*. File Reference MSP34REF59929. Summary of unsworn evidence given before interviewing officer by Seamus O'Tallamhain (James Tallon) and agreed to by him on 12 May 1942. (Ref 59929)

⁵⁶ Ibid. File Reference MSP34REF21474. Sworn Statement Made Before Advisory Committee By Albert S Rawley on 7 June, 1938. (Ref 21472).

⁵⁷ Ibid. File Reference MSP3REF32028. Sworn Statement Made Before Advisory Committee By Peter Blanchfield on 4 June, 1938. (Ref 32028).

He was right. The Volunteers tried to make a stand in the house but were surrounded and captured. Volunteer James Tallon was captured in the house sometime between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. interestingly one of the Volunteers captured with Tallon was a chap with an English accent from either Manchester or Liverpool who earlier had collected bombs from the Cabra Road bridge and brought them to the house on the NCR.⁵⁸ Some Volunteers escaped back to the G.P.O. Capt. O'Sullivan was one who got back to the G.P.O. later in the evening and reported to Pearse.⁵⁹ Others escaped through Glasnevin cemetery and off into the Finglas countryside.⁶⁰ Volunteer Albert Rawley was one of the men who escaped from the house on the Cabra Road after about twenty minutes of a 'scrap'. He made his way through Glasnevin cemetery and Finglas golf links to his home in Finglas where he reached Tuesday night.⁶¹ Volunteer R.P. Cogan stated: 'We evacuated the bridges between 3 / 4 p.m.'⁶² Volunteer Peter Blanchfield also escaped from the NCR northwards towards Glasnevin and Finglas, 'with the intention of joining Ashe at Finglas.'⁶³ According to Volunteer John Faulkner, the Volunteers who fought at No. 19 Cabra Road were captured, 'at about 4 o'clock on Tuesday evening.'⁶⁴

Some of the Volunteers who were captured at the Cabra and NCR bridges were brought back to Kingsbridge (Heuston) Station. Second-Lieut. Killingley was still in the station when these prisoners arrived late in the afternoon; he noted how some of the Dublins miss-treated some of the prisoners in the station. 'A batch of prisoners soon arrived and all doubt about the men's' (RDF) behaviour was removed when they booted the prisoners with great gusto.'⁶⁵ Neither 2nd Lieut. Dickson or 2nd Lieut. Killingley reported any 4th RDF casualties at the NCR bridge.⁶⁶ *The Rebellion Handbook* noted that, 'about forty casualties' were reported and 100 prisoners were secured following the fighting on the NCR and Cabra Road Bridges.⁶⁷ Volunteer Tallon stated that during the brief fire fight on the NCR, one of his comrades named Daly was wounded. He was later treated by a doctor in a nearby house.⁶⁸ No other Irish Volunteer casualties were reported. When members of 'E' Company of the 4th Dublins followed up the fighting with a house search of the area, 2nd Lieut. Dickson found an abandoned single barrel rifle the Volunteers left behind in the rush. For many years after the Rising, the same rifle hung Dickson's home.⁶⁹

With the barricade removed and the bridge over the NCR secured, 'E' Co. of the 4th Dublins pushed on down the NCR onto the Phibsborough Road. It may well have been in a skirmish after the taking of the NCR bridge that fifteen-year-old Volunteer Sean Healy was killed. According to Darragh Murphy.⁷⁰

⁵⁸ Ibid. File Reference MSP34REF59929. Summary of unsworn evidence given before interviewing officer by Seamus O'Tallamhain (James Tallon) and agreed to by him on 12 May 1942. (Ref 59929)

⁵⁹ Ibid. File Reference MSP34REF59530. Sworn Statement Made Before Interviewing Officers By James J O'Sullivan on 28 February 1941. (Ref 59530).

⁶⁰ Editor, *Scenes in Glasnevin District. The Fight at Cabra., The Irish Times.* 2 May 1916.p.2.

⁶¹ <http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/>. *The Military Service Pensions Collection.* File Reference MSP34REF21474. Sworn Statement Made Before Advisory Committee By Albert S Rawley on 7 June, 1938. (Ref 21472).

⁶² Ibid. File Reference MSP34REF60508. Evidence of Volunteer R.P. Cogan. See statement given by Sean Shorthall on 4 September 1946. (Ref 60508).

⁶³ Ibid. File Reference MSP3REF32028. Sworn Statement Made Before Advisory Committee By Peter Blanchfield on 4 June, 1938. (Ref 32028).

⁶⁴ Ibid. File Reference MSP34REF2054. Sworn statement of John Faulkner made before Advisory Committee on the 8 January 1937. (Ref 2054)

⁶⁵ McCann, B P p.247.

⁶⁶ Ibid.p.247.

⁶⁷ *The Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook Easter 1916.*p.9.

⁶⁸ <http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/>. *The Military Service Pensions Collection.* File Reference MSP34REF59929. Summary of unsworn evidence given before interviewing officer by Seamus O'Tallamhain (James Tallon) and agreed to by him on 12 May 1942. (Ref 59929)

⁶⁹ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers.*p.40.

⁷⁰ Murphy, Darragh, *The Revolution of the Young: Many Teenagers Took Part in the 1916 Rising, Either as Messengers or in the Actual Fighting, The Irish Times.* 23 September 2015.p.9. Note. A plaque in the pathway at Phibsborough, Doyle's Corner, marks the spot where Sean Healy died. According to the *Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook Easter 1916*, Sean Healy lived at No. 188 Phibsborough Road. See *The Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook Easter 1916.* p.59.

A member of Na Fianna, he (Healy) had been carrying despatches before being sent home from the G.P.O. by one of the leaders (Irish Volunteer), Thomas McDonagh, who thought him too young to be involved. Sean was hit by a deflected bullet near his home in Phibsborough.

It is tragic to think that the deflected bullet could have come from the rifle of a Dublin Fusilier, a possible fellow country and even county man of young Sean Healy. A bronze plaque marks the spot on the interstation of the Phibsborough and NCR where Sean Healy died. It contains the words; *'In memory of Sean Healy. Na Fianna Éireann. Aged 15 years. Fatally wounded by British Forces at this spot during the Easter Rising April 1916.'*

The final objective of the 4th Dublins in their encirclement strategy was, according to 2nd Lieut. Dickson, Amiens Street railway station. Following the 'scrap' on the NCR bridge, 'A' Company of the 4th Dublins sent patrols down to the railway line and cleared the lines and sidings back into the Broadstone railway station. It was during this operation that the 4th Dublins lost one of their officers shot by Irish Volunteer snipers.⁷¹ The bridge on the NCR was linked to a private pathway constructed by the railway company for the use of their employees passing to and from their work at the Station. Some of the railway employees lived in Great Western Square just off the NCR and used the pathway to get to the station. In the late afternoon, men from 'A' Company of the 4th Dublins proceeded down the private pathway to establish communications with the railway station.⁷² Somewhere along this short journey between the bridge and the train station, a distance of about 150 meters, 2nd Lieut. George Gray of 'A' Company of the 4th Dublins was killed by Irish Volunteer snipers shooting from houses overlooking the railway line. According to 2nd Lieut. Dickson.⁷³

It was hard to establish just where the enemy were and which houses they occupied, for the station was tightly ringed around with houses except on that side which carried the railway lines; civilians had gone into their homes, they had shut the doors and seemed to be waiting to see whether or not the rebels had any success, although I am sure the majority did not approve of fighting.....

It is very likely that one of Capt. James O'Sullivan's men in 'B' Co. 1st Battalion, Irish Volunteers shot 2nd Lieut. George Gray. In his sworn evidence given to the Military Pensions Board on 28 February 1942, Capt. O'Sullivan agreed to the following statement.⁷⁴

On Easter Sunday, you reported to Blackall Place. The orders for mobilisation were cancelled. You went to Liberty Hall and stood-to there and you spent the night at home awaiting orders. On Easter Monday, you reported again to Blackhall Place and marched with about fourteen Volunteers, mostly from 'B' Coy. of the 1st Battalion, and took up positions at the bridges at North Circular Road and Cabra Road. You commandeered two houses in North Circular Road and one house on the Cabra Road. You sniped military at Broadstone Station. Roughly about fourteen other Volunteers came into your post. On Tuesday you had the same kind of activities, sniping Broadstone etc. About mid-day on Tuesday your post was shelled by Artillery and it had to be evacuated. You yourself succeeded in getting through to the G.P.O. and you reported to Pearse. He put you in charge of the Volunteers on the roof of the G.P.O.

⁷¹ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. Pp.40-41.

⁷² For reference to this private pathway see. *The Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook Easter 1916*. p.31.

⁷³ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. p.41.

⁷⁴ [Http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.ie/](http://Mspcsearch.Militaryarchives.ie/). *The Military Service Pensions Collection*. File Reference MSP34REF59530. Sworn Statement Made Before Interviewing Officers By James J O'Sullivan on 28 February 1941. (Ref 59530).

Second-Lieut. George Gray was the only officer from the 4th Dublins killed during the Rising. An account of his death was given by a fellow officer named 2nd Lieut. Eugene Sheehy, a Catholic and ex-Belvedere College student and son of a Nationalist Member of Parliament. Sheehy was on the rooftop of the Broadstone station and he observed the killing of 2nd Lieut. Gray. He noted.⁷⁵

The only death we had to record was that of an officer named Gray. On the Thursday (sic) he led a small party of men to attack an outhouse in Kelly's Lane from which troops holding the Broadstone were being sniped at. It was a very foolhardy venture as our men offered an open target to the rifles in the outhouse. Through his own field-glasses - which he gave me to mind for him - I witnessed the attack from the roof of the railway station and, within a few minutes, saw him shot dead in the laneway. He received a bullet through the head and was killed instantaneously.

Kelly's Lane is a little laneway sandwiched between the Royal Canal Bank line of houses and the Phibsborough Road; access to the laneway lies directly facing the Fire Station on the Phibsborough Road. Behind the Fire Station is the old railway line now the Luas line and site of the private pathway referred to earlier between the bridge on the NCR and the Broadstone railway station. Dickson believed 2nd Lieut. Gray was killed on Tuesday 25 April. Sheehy's account stated Gray was killed on Thursday 27 April. To add further confusion, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records state he died on Friday 28 April. Although Sheehy claimed to have seen 2nd Lieut. Gray shot through the head in the attack on a house occupied by a sniper in Kelly's Lane which is literally across the road from where 2nd Lieut. Dickson claimed Gray was killed which was along the private pathway running between the bridge on the NCR and Broadstone railway station. Therefore it seems that the accounts as to where 2nd Lieut. Gray was killed would agree somewhat. Both accounts of 2nd Lieut. Gray's death were written many years after the event and so dates and specifics may have become a bit hazy in terms of precise locations and times. Dickson's account was written in 1962 and Sheehy's account was written in 1951. Second-Lieut. George Gray came from Newcastle-on-Tyne. Before joining the Dublins he was a dental student. He was twenty-two years of age when he died and is buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin. His name is on a memorial in the St. Thomas, Church of Ireland Church in Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin.

As night fell on Tuesday 25 April 1916, writing from Broadstone station, Dickson noted in his diary.⁷⁶

We all had a scratch meal of sorts and waited to see what the night would bring. Gradually the City became quieter and settled down, so that by midnight everyone in the houses around seemed from sheer exhaustion to be going to sleep.

Back down at Kingsbridge station, 2nd Lieut. Killingley and his men bunked down for the night. The men slept, 'wrapped in their blankets on the platform.' Killingley had the luxury of sleeping in a first-class railway carriage. He and a brother officer rotated duties during the night as two officers had to be awake at all time through the night.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Sheehy, Eugene, *May It Please the Court* (Dublin: Fallon Ltd, 1951), p.91. Note for further account of the RDF in Easter Rising 1916 see; Burke, Tom, *Fancy the Royal Irish Captured Moore Street, The Blue Cap*, Journal of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association 13, no. December 2006 (2006). Pp.22-36.

⁷⁶ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. p.41.

⁷⁷ McCann, B P p.248.

Wednesday 26 April 1916

Wednesday 26 April, was ‘as warm as July.’⁷⁸ During the morning, according to Dickson, Irish Volunteers were seen withdrawing from the Broadstone area and moving back towards the city centre. To prevent the escape from the Grangegorman district by Irish Volunteers ‘across the North Circular Road towards the open country North and West’, which some Volunteers did, ‘E’ Company of the 4th Dublins was ordered along the railway line to set up a number of small posts with a new Company headquarters near the Richmond Hospital. This Company of about 200 men was responsible for the section of the northern cordon which ran from Parkgate down the NCR to Phibsborough.⁷⁹ During the Rising, the Broadstone station was used as the headquarters of the 4th Dublins.⁸⁰

At around noon, 2nd Lieut. Killingley and ‘A’ Company had been ordered to move out from Kingsbridge station. They marched the same route as the other Dublin companies, up Parkgate Street, onto the NCR passed the barricade where they met Colonel Meldon who ordered them to push on down the NCR to take hold of Amiens Street station as part of the north city cordon.⁸¹ They took off down the NCR in single file on the footpaths on each side of the road. They got as far as Russell Place and stopped. Apparently ‘another lot’ from the battalion ‘had done the work’ laid out for his men of clearing the houses and streets of rebels. Consequently, they retreated back up to the corner of Dorset Street and Frederick Street where they relived ‘D’ Company and placed men in ‘each corner house of the crossroads, posting men at the windows and on the roofs.’ Their machine gun commanded ‘the street down to the Rotunda from an upper widow above the Metropolitan Laundry office.’ However, it seemed the other ‘lot’ had not done their job completely because during the evening, Irish Volunteers still in the houses around Russell Place (actually Russell Street), began to snipe at Killingley’s men. According to Killingley, the snipers were ‘all over the place on roofs’ and it was ‘hard to locate them.’ His platoon was given the task of guarding the ‘five crossroads by the Fitzgibbon Street police barracks.’ His headquarters were set up in the DWD malt stores just at one corner.⁸²

Apart from very sporadic sniping from the cattle market district on the NCR, the sector in which ‘E’ Company of the 4th Dublins was responsible for, most of Wednesday 26 April past of quietly. It seems the Volunteers in his area had either got away or were captured. Some form of normality had returned. So much so that before it got dark, enquiries were coming into ‘E’ Company H.Q. from residents along the NCR who were concerned about getting food through the cordon. According to Dickson, the majority of these people at the time were ‘anti-rebel’ and anxious that law and order should be restored quickly.⁸³ Wednesday night was also warm and dry. That being so, it enabled Dickson and his men to sleep in their greatcoats on the pavement with, their ‘heads on a pack’.⁸⁴

It wasn’t until about 9:00 p.m. that Killingley and his men had a bit to eat with tea and biscuits given from a ration lorry brought up to them. They had nothing to eat since 7:00 a.m. The night wasn’t as quiet in Killingley’s sector as it was up at Dickson’s sector of the cordon. Volunteer snipers were still sporadically firing at the Dublins prompting machine gun responses throughout the night.⁸⁵

⁷⁸ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.43.

⁷⁹ Ibid.p43.

⁸⁰ McCann, B P p.251. (Friday 28 April 1916).

⁸¹ Ibid.p.248.

⁸² Ibid.p.248. DWD. The Dublin Whiskey Distillery Company was in Jones’s Road Distillery, Dublin.

⁸³ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.44.

⁸⁴ Ibid.p.44.

⁸⁵ McCann, B P p.248.

Thursday 27 April 1916

Many shops were closed and the distribution of food and milk came to a standstill around Dickson's sector of the NCR cordon. Many of the locals wanted to do something about the shortage of food so they were advised to go out of Dublin with great care and try to bring essentials in from the country. The cordon set up by the army around the NCR etc. prevented civilians from entering or leaving the districts inside the cordon. *The Irish Times* somewhat dramatically noted on the shortage of food in the area.⁸⁶

On Thursday it became apparent that something approaching a food famine was imminent. The alarm was instantaneous. Immediately the provision shops in the district were besieged, the Mill Store at Cross Guns Bridge were crowded and men and women of all classes were seen carrying away parcels of flour, potatoes, bread and everything that could be procured in the way of foodstuffs...Many people went out to Finglas where the local butchers did a tremendous trade.

Killingley's sector was active again throughout the morning. He described the fighting tactics the Volunteers used, much of which was hit and run sniping from rooms and roof tops around Dorset Street, Upper Frederick Street, Russel Place (actually Russell Street) and Summerhill corner.⁸⁷ He got down to Amiens Street train station and noted that 'all was clear'. However on their return journey to the five crossroads and the shelter of the DWD stores, they were fired on by snipers on the Summerhill Road. One of Killingley's men brought him 'a bundle of ammunition which was found in a backyard' of one of the houses from which the snipers were firing. Among the ammunition he found was what he termed 'dum – dum' bullets. Killingley went round the houses in Charles Street Great just off the NCR before Fitzgibbon Street telling the occupants to keep their doors and windows shut.⁸⁸ According to Dickson, some people foolishly stood 'at their doors so as to see what was happening, and who were hit by the many stray bullets that were flying around.'⁸⁹ In the afternoon Killingley took his men for a brief rest in the DWD stores.

The streets around the Summerhill area of Dublin's north inner city are located within the old Dublin Postal District Number of Dublin 1. It was from these streets that many a Dublin Fusilier was born and sadly killed during the First World War.⁹⁰ Lance Corporal John Boland for example came from No. 16 Russel Street. He was killed in action with the 2nd RDF on 27 August 1914 near the French village of Clary. He was twenty years of age. Seventeen year old Pte. Paddy Byrne from No. 19 Summerhill served with the 8th RDF and was killed during the week of the Easter Rising. He was gassed at Hulluch. His body was never found and his name is on the Loos Memorial.⁹¹ What must the families of these young men have felt about what was happening around them during the Rising. Their sons died in France with the Dublin Fusiliers and here was the same Dublin Fusiliers firing on their neighbours some of whom were probably firing on the Dublins. They must have felt confused, bewildered, bitter and no doubt angry with the whole thing. War and revolution brought nothing only misery and sadness to some of the poor families who lived around Summerhill in 1916.

⁸⁶ Editor, *Scenes in Glasnevin District. The Fight at Cabra*.p.2.

⁸⁷ McCann, B P .p.249.

⁸⁸ Ibid.p.249.

⁸⁹ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.45.

⁹⁰ Burke, Tom, *Whence Came the Royal Dublin Fusiliers?* Pp.445- 458.

⁹¹ See [Http://www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org) And *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919, Part 73 Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. See also Burke, Tom, *From Southampton to the Aisne, the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the First World War, 22 August to 10 October 1914.* , The Blue Cap, Journal of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association 19, (December 2014).Pp.1-17.

On Thursday afternoon 27 April, special orders issued by Lieut.- Col. Meldon were sent from the battalion headquarters at the Broadstone station to 'E' Company headquarters near the Richmond Hospital. The orders were for an officer and machine gun crew to proceed to high ground on the NCR and from there to, 'spray with machine gun fire Aughrim Street and Grangegorman districts. No reason was given but possibly rebel escapists were thought to be collecting.'⁹² Second-Lieut. Dickson took a Maxim gun, a sergeant and two other men with him to carry out the order. Facing the Cattle Market on the NCR in Dublin is a line of beautiful red bricked three story terraced houses known as Altona Terrace. There are now houses built on the site of the old Cattle Market. At this point on the NCR, i.e. Altona Terrace, the road rises. Standing on the roof of one of these terraced houses; one had a panoramic view of the Grangegorman area, i.e. the target of Col. Meldon's order. Grangegorman was a very poor area of the Dublin's northwest inner city with a myriad of narrow streets. The Dublins mounted their machine gun in the front bedroom of a house on Altona Terrace from which they gave Grangegorman, 'a good spraying of about 1,000 rounds which must have broken several hundred slates and windows and kept everyone indoors for a while.'⁹³ This was an appalling act. It wasn't the only time the Dublins fired off a machine gun into civilian houses. On the same day, further on down their cordon line at the end of the NCR over Dorset Street at the five cross-roads, again in order to flush out snipers, 2nd Lieut. Arthur Killingley claimed that, 'a machine-gun of ours at the five cross-roads peppered a few suspected houses.'⁹⁴ The operation to remove the snipers from both Grangegorman and around the five cross-roads at Fitzgibbon Street police station required a fine scalpel, what Col. Meldon used was a blunt hatchet. It was wrong.

By nightfall, Killingley had posted sentries around the five cross-roads and Summerhill sectors. The fires from Sackville (O'Connell) Street had, 'lit up the whole sky' and a lot of firing was heard in the direction of the North Wall and Clontarf. By 10:00 p.m. however, the firing had died down.⁹⁵ Back up at the Richmond Hospital, Dickson noted that he had become friendly with one of the doctors who invited the officers of 'E' Company to sleep over in his house which had a 'large drawing room'. They cleared much of the furniture and for the following few nights they slept in comfort on mattresses set out on the floor of this doctor's house.⁹⁶

Friday 28 April 1916

Early on Friday morning, having had a restful night, Killingley went down to Fitzgibbon Street police station for a wash and shave. He noted there were, 'plain-clothes men at the examining post' near the police station. These men may well have been plain-clothes policemen or RIC detectives. Apart from 'a little sniping down Summerhill', nothing much was reported that morning in Killingley's sector.⁹⁷ It was quiet too up at the Richmond Hospital, Broadstone station and the NCR. Dickson noted that it was 'noticeable that bursts of fire became less frequent, and everywhere tension had relaxed. Rumours flew around that the rebels were surrendering and the civilians were obviously relieved.'⁹⁸

Along with the 4th RDF, the 12th Lancers also supplied sentries on the Amiens Street side of the crossroads. It is important to remember that almost all of the British soldiers who manned the checkpoints around the Fitzgibbon Street crossroads were not trained in civil conflict operations and were consequently jittery and unsure of their roll apart from shooting at what they perceived as being legitimate targets.

⁹² Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.45.

⁹³ Ibid.p.46.

⁹⁴ McCann, B P p.250. For further discussion on Dickson's account of Altona Terrace, see. Burke, Tom, *Fancy the Royal Irish Captured Moore Street*.Pp.22-36.

⁹⁵ McCann, B P p.250.

⁹⁶ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.47.

⁹⁷ McCann, B P p.250.

⁹⁸ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.47.

Killingley noted instance of his soldiers and the 12th Lancers wrongly firing on confused and frightened citizens on the streets and in rooms around the side streets of Summerhill such as Rutland Street.⁹⁹ He and his platoon were ordered back to Broadstone station. His sector of operations was taken over by men from 'D' Company. The battalion's medical officer, Captain Cassidy of the RAMC, arranged with the Chief Engineer of the Midland and Great Western Railway, a Mr William Purcell O'Neill who lived at 'Highfield' on the NCR, to offer his bathroom for some of the Dublins officers to have a bath. Killingley took the kind offer of the bath after which he returned to Broadstone station. Nothing much happened for the rest of the day. His quarters for the night were, 'a first class carriage' on one of the railway sidings. During the night, a party of Sherwood Foresters arrived at Broadstone. While on duty throughout the night, he could see from one of the offices the G.P.O, 'standing out in the flames glowing with heat.'¹⁰⁰

Saturday 29 April 1916

By Saturday morning the centre of Dublin had quietened down, 2nd Lieut. Killingley noted, 'in the afternoon, we heard there was an armistice.'¹⁰¹ Dickson noted that, 'the official announcement that the Rebellion had collapsed was made at noon, when everyone received the news with a relief.'¹⁰² Orders were issued to the Dublins that, 'no one was to fire a shot unless actually fired on and unless they were absolutely certain of who was firing at them.'¹⁰³ In the afternoon, Police began to appear on the streets. 2nd Lieut. Dickson believed it was, 'the first indication that life was returning to normal.' In the afternoon the 4th Dublins were ordered to prepare for entrainment at Kingsbridge, their destination was the barracks at Mullingar and not Templemore.¹⁰⁴ The reason they went to Mullingar and not Templemore was that in the event of a further outbreak of violence in Dublin, Mullingar was nearer to Dublin than Templemore.¹⁰⁵

Sunday 30 April 1916

Throughout the morning, the battalion gathered at Broadstone station. Companies came in from their various sectors of the cordon around the north side of the inner city. During the early afternoon, Killingley heard that Jacobs Biscuit factory 'was to be bombed'. A rebel flag was reported flying over the factory. But, at 'about 3 o'clock the flag came down'. Apparently the occupants of the factory had surrendered and the bombardment was cancelled.¹⁰⁶ Dickson claimed the battalion went by train to Mullingar on Sunday 30 April. However Killingley noted they went to Mullingar the following day. Either way, their roll in putting down in the Easter Rising in Dublin's north inner city was over and by late evening on 1 May, the 4th Dublins were in barracks at Mullingar.

⁹⁹ McCann, B P Pp.250-251.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.p.251.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.p.251.

¹⁰² Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.48.

¹⁰³ McCann, B P p.251.

¹⁰⁴ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.48. Note. Killingley noted that he heard the battalion were going to Mullingar on Monday 1 May 1916. See McCann, B P p.252.

¹⁰⁵ Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.48.

¹⁰⁶ McCann, B P p.252.

The total number of casualties suffered by the RDF during the Easter Rising was forty-six. Table 4 presents a breakdown.¹⁰⁷

Table 4
RDF Casualties of the Easter Rising

Rank	Killed or Died of Wounds	Wounded
Officers	2	6
Other Ranks	9	29

What happened to some of the men from both sides of the barricade on the NCR ?

Captain James O'Sullivan was born in 1891. He joined the Irish Volunteers at the Rotunda Rink in November 1913. Following his participation in the Rising, he was sentenced to death by a British Army Courts Martial - later commuted to Penal Servitude for eight years. He was released in June 1917. Rearrested in July 1917, O' Sullivan was imprisoned in Belfast, Mountjoy and Dundalk prisons before being released in September 1917. During this period of imprisonment O' Sullivan took part in a hunger strike and claimed to have been forcibly fed on a number of occasions. During the War of Independence, O' Sullivan claimed while living in Limerick to have been active in an intelligence capacity for the Irish Volunteers and IRA providing information to Michael Collins and other GHQ members on members of the British forces - mobilising for an aborted attempt to kill a British officer named Deasy in Limerick - as well as on the situation of Limerick IRA units. He took no part in the Civil War. He worked as a Manager in Daly's Bakery in Limerick where he lived at No. 22 Lansdowne Park, Ennis Road, Limerick. He died on 26 February 1974 at age of eighty-three.¹⁰⁸

Volunteer Peter Blanchfield from Ballydowney House in Killarney, Co. Kerry was born in 1893. He got away to Finglas and joined Thomas Ashe. He surrendered and was taken to Kilmainham. Later he was sent to Knutsford Prison and later to Frongoch Camp. He was released in December 1916. Between 1 April 1917 and 31 March 1918 he took part in disrupting recruitment meetings and participated at anti-conscription meetings. In his application to the Minister for Defence for a Service Certificate dated 27 December 1927 he noted.¹⁰⁹

I became a member of the I.R.B. in 1912 or 11 and was an active member at all times. Was one of the armed party in house in Kildare Street on the night the late Mr Redmond held a recruiting meeting in the Mansion House. I was one of the party that broke up the meeting (recruiting) in Galway on the night that same was held in Town Hall.

Between April 1919 and March 1920, Blanchfield took part in 'armed police duty on street on Armistice night', presumably in November 1919. In 1921 he took part in attacks on a lorry containing Black and Tans at Ormond Quay and Blessington Street. After the Truce he took no further part in active service units. He became a Clerk of Works in the Office of Public Works in Kerry. He died on 8 February 1976.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ *The Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook Easter 1916*. Pp.45-47. For personal details on the RDF soldiers listed see. <http://www.dublin-fusiliers.com/easter-1916> For discussion on attitudes of Irish soldiers serving in the British Army during and after the Easter Rising of 1916, see Burke, Tom, *Fancy the Royal Irish Captured Moore Street*. Pp.1-17. And Burke, Tom, *Messines to Carrick Hill - Writing Home from the Great War* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2017). Pp. 26-49.

¹⁰⁸ [Http://Mspsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/](http://Mspsearch.Militaryarchives.Ie/). *The Military Service Pensions Collection*. File Reference MSP34REF59530. Sworn Statement Made Before Interviewing Officers By James J O'Sullivan on 28 February 1941. (Ref 59530).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. Volunteer Peter Blanchfield. File Reference MSP3REF32028. Military Service Pensions Act, 1934. Application to the Minister for Defence for a Service Certificate. 27 December 1927. p.16.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. Volunteer Peter Blanchfield. File Reference MSP3REF32028. Application to the Minister for Defence for a Service Certificate. 30 December 1935. Pp.10-16.

Volunteer Patrick Kilmartin from No. 23 Stoneybatter, Dublin was born in 1895.¹¹¹ He was arrested on the NCR and sent to Arbour Hill prison. He was later sent to Wakefield Prison in May 1916 where he served only one month and was released in early June 1916. Back in Dublin he continued drilling and activities with the Irish Volunteers up to 31 March 1919. During this period he sold fruit and vegetables to the British soldiers in Marlborough (McKee) Barracks in Dublin. It was during some of these vegetable selling trips into the barracks that he; 'Engaged in buying arms from the British Military Royal Engineers Marlboro (Sic) Barracks...'¹¹² Patrick Kilmartin died on 18 November 1976.

Volunteer Albert Rawley came from St. Teresa's Place in Glasnevin, Dublin. He was born on 31 December 1891. He was not captured following the Rising. In 1917 he joined Sinn Fein and claimed that he got arms from the barracks in Islandbridge. He claimed he was, 'getting them from a man (civilian) in charge there.' The man was not a soldier but apparently a civilian working in the barracks. Rawley claimed that this activity went on right up to 1921 and that he got between fifty or sixty weapons of all class such as, 'shotguns, Sebleys (Sic) Smith and Wessons (Sic), .35 and .32.' IRA men such as 'Corless and Flood' gave Rawley money that he would pass on to this man in Islandbridge barracks who in turn gave Rawley weapons which he brought home for distribution to the IRA.¹¹³ He died on 3 February 1966 aged seventy-four.

Volunteer Leo Patrick Scullin was born in 1889 and lived at No. 27A, Upper Glengarriffe Parade, NCR, Dublin. He served as, 'a physical culture instructor' with 'B' and 'F' Coys. 1st Bn. Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Following the Easter Rising, Scullin was arrested and interned in Wakefield Prison and Frongoch Camp until December 1916 when released back to Ireland. During the War of Independence he was arrested in connection with the shooting of Detective Wharton at Blackchurch, Dublin in 1919 but was released without charge after three days detention in the Royal Barracks, Dublin. He took part in IRA activities between 1920 and 1923. He was arrested at his home on 4 December 1920 and served nine of a twelve month hard labour sentence in Mountjoy Jail. He was found to have an IV Membership Card on him at the time.

During the Civil War, Scullin returned to his old fighting ground of Easter 1916. He claimed he was involved in blowing up Glasnevin bridge, derailment of a train at Liffey Junction and an attack on Broadstone railway station. He was arrested in February 1923 and interred in Mountjoy 'Tintown No 3' and took part in a hunger-strike. In a reference letter written by The Governor of Mountjoy Jail to the Military Service Pensions appeal committee in November 1941, the Governor noted that Scullin was considered to be, 'a very zealous member of the organisation by the senior officers imprisoned with him.' He was released in November 1923 and according to his wife Elizabeth he was, 'completely broken up in health.'¹¹⁴ He died on 30 October 1938 at St. Vincent's Hospital, Dublin.

Volunteer James Tallon was born on 31 December 1891 and came from Drumcondra in Dublin. After his release from Frongoch in December 1916 he returned to Ireland and took no further part in Irish Volunteer activities. He became a Vocational School Teacher. He died on 21 March 1969.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Ibid. File Reference MSP34REF21157. Sworn Statement Made Before Advisory Committee By Patrick Kilmartin on 28 September 1936. (REF21157)

¹¹² Ibid. Volunteer Patrick Kilmartin. File Reference MSP34REF21157. Application to the Minister for Defence for a Service Certificate. 31 December 1935. p.11.

¹¹³ Ibid. File Reference MSP34REF21474. Sworn Statement Made Before Advisory Committee By Albert S Rawley on 7 June, 1938. (Ref 21472).

¹¹⁴ Ibid. File Leo Patrick Scullin Reference MSP34REF21722. See letter from his wife, Elizabeth Scullin to Military Service Pensions appeal committee, 1 June 1941. See also reference letter written by The Governor of Mountjoy Jail, Dublin. 1 November 1941.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. Summary of unsworn evidence given before interviewing officer by Seamus O'Tallamhain (James Tallon) and agreed to by him on 12 May 1942. (Ref 59929).

Volunteer Kevin O'Reilly born in 1894 and came from Rathgar in Dublin. He was arrested in a house near the Cabra Bridge and sent to Wandsworth Prison and Frongoch Camp. On return to Dublin re-joined his Volunteer company and also took part in 'armed patrols during the Armistice Celebrations' in Dublin in 1918. Between April 1919 and March 1920, he worked as a night-time telephonist in Crown Alley Telephone Exchange where he 'tapped wires and sent the results of his work to Liam Tobin regularly.'¹¹⁶ According to Tobin, O'Reilly 'endeavoured to keep us informed of Enemy activities.'¹¹⁷ O'Reilly continued volunteer activities until the Truce. He died 19 December 1962.

The 4th Dublins remained in Mullingar as part of the 25th Reserve Brigade up to the first week in November 1917. Between 1 and 8 November 1917, every Reserve battalion of the Leinsters, Munster Fusiliers, Royal Irish Regiment, Connaught Rangers and Dublin Fusiliers were moved from Ireland to barracks in England and Scotland. The 4th Dublins went to Brocklesby Camp in Lincolnshire.¹¹⁸ The reason for these movements out of Ireland was due to a concern by the military command of guns being given to the IRA, and, to remove the men serving in these regiments from the volatile political atmosphere that existed in Ireland after the rebellion. Judging by the activities of some Irish Volunteers such as Albert Rawley and Patrick Kilmartin, their worries were well founded upon. Michael Lee, a TV journalist with RTE and RDFA member, interviewed Terrence Poulter at the Leopardstown Park Hospital in the summer of 1989. Mr Poulter was in Dublin in November 1917 recovering from wounds he had received while serving with the 7th Dublins in Gallipoli. For a while he became attached to the 5th Dublins who were stationed in Longford. In the interview Mr Poulter told Michael.¹¹⁹

In November 1917 when all the blackguards had joined up the Dublin Fusiliers you see and then handed their rifles out to the IRA fellas and them bumped off, we were all shifted out that night in November. The 3rd, 4th, 5th battalions of the Dublins, the Leinsters, were all put on board a boat and sent to Scotland and we were replaced by English regiments here because of this. The fact that they couldn't trust us, the fellas who were joining up here, locals; they were all IRA fellas giving their rifles away.

James Austin Meldon was born on 13 July 1869, the son of Austin Meldon D.L. and Margaret Ryan. His father was a distinguished doctor and President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland between 1889 and 1900.¹²⁰ The Meldons were a well-known and successful Catholic family who have a prominent vault in Glasnevin Cemetery beside the O'Connell Tower. James Austin was educated at Brussels, Clongowes and later Trinity. In 1889 at the age of nineteen, he enlisted in the 19th Lancers at Aldershot as a Private and served with them until 1897 when he purchased his discharge for a commission as an officer. He served as a Captain with the 4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers and in August 1897 he was attached as a company commander to the 4th (Uganda) Battalion of the King's African Rifles where he commanded some thirty Swahili soldiers in Uganda during the British East Africa Rebellion, 1897-8.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Ibid. File Kevin O'Reilly MSP34REF5060. Summary of case of Kevin O'Reilly (File No 50604) heard on the 16 June 1938.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. File Kevin O'Reilly MSP34REF5060. Reference letter written by Liam Tobin to Military Pensions Board on behalf of Kevin O'Reilly 13 June 1938.

¹¹⁸ *Disbanded Irish Regiments* WO 379/128. (London: The National Archives, 1 January 1914 to 31 December 1921).

¹¹⁹ Interview by Michael Lee, R T E T V, in *Leopardstown Park Hospital of Terence Poulter 5th and 7th R D F*. (Private collection of Michael Lee, Dublin, 1989). Note the 5th RDF and 5th Leinster were moved from Ireland on 5 November 1917. The 5th Leinsters went to Edinburgh and the 5th Dublins went to Glencorse in Midlothian, Scotland. See. *Disbanded Irish Regiments* .

¹²⁰ *History of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland* (Dublin: Fannin, 1896).p.362.

¹²¹ *Captain J.A.Meldon, The London Gazette* .23 April 1909.p.2780.

He served during the Anglo-Boer War with the Dublin Fusiliers before returning home. He commanded the 4th RDF during the First World War rising to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and was sent to the Western Front in June 1918. According to T.C. Dickson, although over age, Meldon 'asked to be sent to France.'¹²² Following the war he retired from the army and was called to the Irish Bar in 1920. He later left for England and in his final years he resided at Coolarne, Camberley. He died on 30 December 1931 and was buried on 2 January 1932 at St. Peter's, Frimley.¹²³

Second-Lieut. Arthur Killingley was born in 1897 in Kilsoran near Rosslare, Co. Wexford where his father was the local Church of Ireland Rector. He had two brothers; one of whom was Lieut. Hastings Grevatt Killingley who was killed during the Battle of the Somme on 23 October 1916 age twenty-one. At that time the family lived in Whitechurch Vicarage in Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin. His other brother was a career officer in the Indian Army.¹²⁴ Following the Rising, Arthur transferred to the 'Y' Co.1st RDF in 1916. He arrived to the battalion on 17 July 1916 as part of a draft of seven officers and 98 other ranks. One of the officers that accompanied him was 2nd Lieut. Eugene Sheehy. At that time, the battalion was in the line at Mesnil on the Somme.¹²⁵ The drafts were needed to rebuild the battalion following the losses suffered on 1 July 1916. Later in August he was sent to train as a battalion Bomber.¹²⁶ Arthur Killingley survived the war. According to B.P.McCann.¹²⁷

After the war he (Killingley) retired from the army and spent some time in Spain, prior to returning to Trinity College Dublin where he took a degree in Spanish and French. In 1922 he met Phyllis French, a niece of Percy French. They married in 1927 and lived all their working life in Liverpool, where they reared one son and one daughter. Killingley was a school teacher by profession and taught at the Liverpool Institute High School for boys where he established the Spanish department. The Killingley family returned to county Wicklow to retire in 1958. Arthur Killingley died in 1979 and is buried in Redford Cemetery, Greystones, Co. Wicklow.

After the Rising, 2nd Lieut. T.C. Dickson was transferred to the 9th RDF. The battalion diary did not record the date of his arrival in France. However, he left Dublin on 25 May 1916 to join the battalion who at that time were in the Hulluch Sector. He bid farewell to his wife Mary at the Royal Hibernian Hotel in Dawson Street, Dublin. Mary volunteered as a VAD with the UVF Hospital at Craigavon House in Belfast. The first reference to T.C. Dickson in the 9th RDF diary is as Lieut. Dickson on 20 July 1916.¹²⁸

Throughout the day, enemy artillery and Minenwerfers were very active especially on our front and support lines between Hunts and (illegible script) Craters much damage was done and several casualties inflicted. A patrol under Lieut. Dickson went out about 11 p.m to enemy front line opposite end of Loos Crassier reported enemy working hard but nothing to be seen.

¹²² Dickson, Major T C H, *4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. p.75.

¹²³ I would like to thank Mr. Conor Dodd MA of Glasnevin Trust Museum for this data on Lieut.-Col. J.A.Meldon.

¹²⁴ McCann, B P p.246. See also [Http://www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org) Lieut. Hastings Grevatt Killingley. Thiepval Memorial .

¹²⁵ *War Diary 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers, March 1916 to September 1917*. W095/2301. (London: The National Archives).17 July 1916.

¹²⁶ Ibid. 30 August 1916.

¹²⁷ McCann, B P p.246.

¹²⁸ *War Diary 9th Royal Dublin Fusiliers* 20 July 1916.

The next night, Dickson led another patrol out on the German front line. The war diary noted. ‘ At about 11:30 p.m., a strong patrol went out under Lieut. Dickson and 2nd Lieut. O.K. White to attempt to obtain identifications and capture a prisoner but met with no success...’¹²⁹ He seemed to be a man keen for action with the battalion. Later on 13 August 1916. The diary noted.¹³⁰

A quiet day. An officer’s patrol of Lieut. Dickson and Sgt. Courtney went out at night to fasten a guiding line onto German wire. This patrol was bombed when it got to the wire and Lieut. Dickson was wounded. Sgt. Courtney pluckily drove back Germans who tried to cut them off and carried Lieut. Dickson back to our lines under fire. A quiet day.

Dickson’s wounds were serious enough to have him sent back to London to recover and later back to Ireland for further treatment, rest and recovery. He returned to the 4th RDF as Adjutant and for the following two years he and his wife lived in Mullingar. He travelled with the 4th RDF when they were sent from Mullingar to Brocklesby Camp in Lincolnshire. On demobilisation of the 4th RDF, he was sent to the 3rd RDF stationed Weelsby Camp in Grimsby.¹³¹ However he returned to France to serve as a Major in the 13th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and served with that battalion in the closing months of the war up to 14 January 1919.¹³² He was awarded the Military Cross in September 1918. Like Arthur Killingley, T.C. Dickson’s brother was killed in the war. He was Capt. William T. Dickson, 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, died of wounds on 9 July 1916 at the Somme. Aged twenty-nine, he was buried in Beauval Communal Cemetery, Somme, France.¹³³ The Dickson’s came from Miltown House, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone. The family were linen manufacturers. Thomas Cedric was born on 7 March 1889. He went to school in Paris and Wiesbaden in Germany. He initially saw service in the First World War as a Private in the RAMC with an Australian Voluntary Hospital at Wimmereux in France. He was subsequently recommended for a commission into the 4th RDF. After the war he served in the Royal Ulster Constabulary. He commanded a group of some 200 ex-Servicemen at the unveiling of the Dungannon War Memorial in November 1922.¹³⁴ In January 1942 he was appointed High Sherriff of Co. Tyrone.¹³⁵ At the time of writing I could not find when Major T. C. Dickson died. Since his diary was written in 1962, I suspect he may have died in the late 1960s or early 1970s.

¹²⁹ Ibid. 21 July 1916.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 13 August 1916. 22493 L/Sgt. J. Courtney was awarded The Cross of St. George 4th Class. See *ibid.* List of Honours Awarded During Month of September 1916. According to Dickson, Courtney was a ‘reliable Platoon Sergeant.’ See *Dickson, Major T C H, 4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. Pp.67-69. for account of events on 13 August 1916. Courtney died about 1935.

¹³¹ *Dickson, Major T C H, 4th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. Pp.74-75. Note. Dickson noted that he went to Brocklesby Camp in November 1918. According to War Office records the 4th RDF went to Brocklesby Camp on 5 November 1917.

¹³² Adams, James Salesrooms, *The Irish Collectables and Militaria Sale - Catalogue* (Dublin: James Adams Salesrooms, 17 September 2000). Lot 767 in Catalogue of 4th RDF items auctioned at Adams Sales Rooms, Dublin on 17 September 2000.

¹³³ [Http://www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org) Capt. W.T. Dickson.

¹³⁴ Editor, *Dunganon War Memorial, The Tyrone Courier* 16 November 1922.

¹³⁵ Editor, *Six-County High Sheriffs, The Strabane Chronical*. 17 January 1942. p.4. His father Jas Dickson D.L. died on 27 March 1942.

Sgt. Robert (Bob) Downie V.C.
Tom Burke

On 9 October 1916, the 2nd RDF were in the reserve lines line just east of Trones Wood not too far from Ginchy, the French village which the 16th (Irish) Division had taken from the Germans back on 9 September. The battalion diarist wrote; *'Every place is now very desolate owing to the previous bombardment. The camp is of tents and owing to the recent heavy rains - in a very muddy condition.'*¹ At 2:30 p.m. on 23 October 1916, in yet another attempted push by the British along the Somme front, the 2nd RDF, attacked a German machine gun position known as Gun Pits located to the east of the village of Lesboeuvs. On that day, a little bit of regimental history was made when the regiment won its first Victoria Cross of the First World War. It was awarded to a twenty-two year old Glaswegian from Springburn named Sgt. Robert Downie, Regimental Number 11213 and a member the Machine Gun Section of 'B' Company. As part of a tactical assault team, Sgt. Robert Downie won the V.C. charging a German machine gun position. His citation appeared in *The London Gazette* on the 25 November 1916.²

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty in attack. When most of the officers had become casualties, this non-commissioned officer, utterly regardless of personal danger, moved about under heavy fire and reorganized the attack, which had been temporarily checked. At the critical moment he rushed forward alone, shouting, 'Come on the Dubs'. This stirring appeal met with immediate response and the line rushed forward at his call. Sergeant Downie accounted for several of the enemy and in addition, captured a machine gun, killing the team.

This was a bloody affair. So much so that Sgt. Downie seldom spoke about the event to anyone again, not even his own family. Winning the Victoria Cross gave a boost to the morale of the 2nd RDF. On 1 December 1916, Pte. Christy Fox, a member of the Transport Section of the battalion wrote to a lady named Monica Roberts in Dublin. He noted:³

I suppose you have read in the paper a sergeant getting the V.C. Sergeant Downie, he belongs to our battalion. I can tell you he deserves it. He will be going home shortly to get decorated by the King...The gun (he captured) is gone home I expect, it will be on view in Dublin. One of these days you will be able to see him on view in Dublin. He is a very brave chap; he doesn't care where he goes. It's the first V.C. won by the Dublins and there was great rejoicing when he heard he got it and mind you it was time we got one...hoping you will be able to see Sergeant Downie when he arrives in Dublin with his V.C., it is about time Dublin got a chance of welcoming home a V.C. Sincerely Christy Fox.

¹ *War Diary 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 1 October 1916 to 30 April 1919* WO95/1974. (London: The National Archives). 9 October 1916.

² Wylly, H.C, *Crown and Company. The Historical Records of the 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers. 1911 - 1922.* p.74. *The London Gazette.* 25 November 1916. For details of age see. Editor, The, *Glasgow V.C.'S 'Come on, the Dubs.'*, *Daily Record* 28 November 1916.

³ *Monica Roberts Collection.* (Dublin: RDFA Archive). Letter from Pte. Christy Fox to Miss Monica Roberts dated 1 December 1916. See also Hogarty, Pat, *The Old Toughs, from Milton to Mons and the Western Front 1911-1918 a Brief History of the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers* (Dublin RDFA, 2001).p.151.

Even a year later, the commanding officer of the 2nd RDF Lieut.-Col Jeffrey's referred to it in his diary.⁴ When news came to Springburn that Bob had won the V.C., the boys and girls of his former Catholic school St Aloysius's, 'went wild with joy, and their cheers were loud and long.'⁵ His former teachers or Mistresses as they were titled, Miss Prendergast and Miss McCluskey were, 'even still more proud' of him. When Bob returned to Springburn in early January 1917, his school kindly presented him with a gold watch which the children subscribed to.⁶ He was also given a Civic Reception at the Town Hall after which in the evening he was given a special reception by the United Irish League and given a purse of treasury notes.⁷



THE COLOURS, LE QUESNOY, 1919.

Left to right—Sergt. Downie, V.C., Lt. O'Sullivan, M.C., C.S.M. Walters, Lt. Wolfe, M.C., Sergt. Curtis, V.C.

Bob left the army in March 1919.⁸ However before he did, he was a member of a colour party at Le Quesnoy in France in 1919 where a cadre of the battalion assembled before they left France for good. Other members of the colour party were Lieut. O'Sullivan, M.C., C.S.M. Walters, Lieut. Wolfe M.C. and Sgt. Curtis V.C.⁹ In addition to the V.C. Bob was also awarded the Military Medal, and the Russian Order of St. George.¹⁰ He was an extremely modest man and avoided talking about the war. When asked by a former Lady Mayoress of London how he won the Victoria Cross, Bob replied by telling her, 'I shot the cook.'¹¹ People used to ask him, 'Is it true you have won the V.C.?' Shyly he would reply. 'No, it was my brother.'¹² For many years after the war ended, Bob

kept the Victoria Cross 'in an old shoebox on top of the wardrobe.'¹³ He was given a special edition of *Crown and Company* by the Officers of the 2nd RDF.¹⁴ In 1928, he was even invited to take part in a film about winners of the V.C. in the First World War titled 'For Valour.' They wanted Bob to 're-enact' his winning of the V.C.¹⁵

He was well liked and respected in his Springburn tenement community.¹⁶ Bob came from a family of sixteen children, thirteen of whom were alive in 1917. Three of his brothers were in the Army and one in the Navy.¹⁷ His father, Frank Downie, may have come from Donegal and was employed for thirty years in the Hydepark Locomotive Works as an oiler and belt man.

⁴ Jeffrey's, Lieut.-Col. R.G.B, *2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers* (Dublin: RDFA Archive). Major-General Sir William Hickie visited the 2nd RDF in late October 1917. Jeffrey's noted in his diary that it was this time last year, 'when we got the V.C.'

⁵ Sgt. Bob Downie V.C. (Dublin: RDFA Archive). Letter from the Children of St. Aloysius Schools, Springburn. Donated to RDFA Archive by The Springburn Museum Trust.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. Biographical details written by his grandson Joseph Downie (RIP)

⁸ Ibid. Biographical details written by his grandson Joseph Downie (RIP)

⁹ Wylly, C.B, *Crown and Company, the Historical Records of the 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers. 1911 - 1922*, vol. 2 (Cork: Schull Books, 2000).Pp.128-129.

¹⁰ Ibid.p.183.

¹¹ Sgt. Bob Downie V.C. Newspaper cutting titled; 'I just ran up the hill', by John MacLennan. Unknown newspaper and date. Possibly The Evening Citizen from 1956 onwards.

¹² Ibid. See Regan, Liam, *He Is Surely Scotland's Shyest Hero*, *Sunday Mail* 9 January 1955.

¹³ Sgt. Bob Downie V.C. Letter from Mr Terrence McFee to Tom Burke 8 January 2000

¹⁴ Ibid. Photocopy of inside cover of *Crown and Co. Vol.II*.

¹⁵ Ibid. Copy of letter from Victoria Films Ltd to Bob Downie dated 5 January 19287

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Editor, The. *Glasgow Record* 28 November 1916.

His mother lived in Springburn Road where Bob was born on 12 January 1894. After leaving school, he worked in the same place as his father. However, at the age of eighteen in 1912, he and his best pal joined the army.¹⁸ Sadly the evil of Glaswegian sectarianism raised its ugly head at the recruiting office. Bob and his pal presented themselves at the recruiting depot of a famous highland regiment for enlistment only to be told that while acceptable in every other way, the fact was that they were Roman Catholics which automatically barred them from this particular regiment. ‘We don’t take Fenians’ was the expletive used by the recruiting sergeant.¹⁹ The highlander’s loss was the Dublins gain.

Bob was with the BEF when they went to France and incredibly survived the killing in some of the major battles the battalion took part in at Le Cateau in late August 1914, the dreadful German gas attack at Mouse Trap Farm in May 1915 and the opening of the Somme campaign on 1 July 1916.²⁰ Bob married Miss Ivy Sparks from Gravesend on 4 April 1914.²¹ She ‘spoke with a strong English accent and also came from a large family of seventeen children with two serving in the army at the front.’²² Ivy worked in the night shift as an inspector of shells in a munitions factory. They lived at No. 33 Carlestone Street, Springburn, Glasgow.²³ Bob and Ivy met in Gravesend when the 2nd Dublins were stationed there in the months leading up to the outbreak of war in August 1914. At the time he won the V.C., Ivy and Bob had two children.²⁴ They eventually had three children, one of whom died.

Bob was indeed a Roman Catholic. In 1934 he was a member of group of 400 ex-Servicemen who went on a peace pilgrimage Lourdes.²⁵ He was a lifelong supporter of Glasgow Celtic. On one particular Saturday in the early 1920s he found himself queuing at the unemployed men’s gate at Brockville, Falkirk, when the Celtic team bus drew up. Out stepped Willie Maley, the austere Newry-born Celtic manager, who recognised the erstwhile war hero in the queue and was more than surprised to find he couldn’t find work anywhere. Maley asked Bob to call at Celtic Park first thing on Monday morning where he was given a letter to the manager of the Parkhead Forge Foundry. There he was engaged on the spot as a labourer in the moulding shop. Before leaving Maley’s office for the foundry, Maley offered him a turnstile keeper’s job at Parkhead which he was delighted to accept. The day he started work at Parkhead Forge, the man he was put to work with said to him, ‘Now to put you in the picture, I’m the only Fenian B.... working on this floor.’ Bob laughingly answered; ‘You were !’.²⁶ Although the Glasgow newspaper *The Evening Citizen* claimed Bob visited Ireland in 1954 for a holiday; neither he nor his Victoria Cross ever got to Dublin as his comrade Pte Christy Fox hoped.²⁷ He lived long enough to see his beloved Glasgow Celtic win the European Cup Final on 25 May 1967. He died on 18 April 1968 at the age of seventy-four and was buried at St. Kentigern’s Cemetery, Glasgow. A portrait of Bob Downie V.C. was given to Jock Stein, who stated that it would, ‘find an honoured place at Parkhead’.²⁸

¹⁸ Ibid. Glasgow Record 28 November 1916. See also *Sgt. Bob Downie V.C.* Letter written by Mr Terence O’Dea to Tom Burke dated 8 January 2000. Also *ibid.* Biographical details written by his grandson Joseph Downie (RIP)

¹⁹ *Sgt. Bob Downie V.C.* Letter written by Mr Terence O’Dea to Tom Burke dated 8 January 2000.

²⁰ Editor, *The Glasgow Record* 28 November 1916. Reference is made to Sgt. Downie suffering from the effects of gas poisoning. However Army Form B.104 dated 20 August 1917 noted he had been wounded by a ‘Shell gas (severe).’

²¹ *Sgt. Bob Downie V.C.* Questionnaire on Soldier’s History completed by Joseph Downie, grandson of Bob Downie.

²² *Ibid.* Letter written by Mr Terence O’Dea to Tom Burke dated 8 January 2000.

²³ Editor, *The Glasgow Record* 28 November 1916.

²⁴ *Ibid.* Glasgow Record 28 November 1916.

²⁵ *Sgt. Bob Downie V.C.* Newspaper cutting. Unknown newspaper title. Photograph titled *V.C.s for Lourdes*. See <http://Archive.TheTablet.Co.Uk/Article/10th-November-1934/9/the-Pilgrimage-of-Peace>, The Tablet Publishing Company.

²⁶ *Sgt. Bob Downie V.C.* Letter written by Mr Terence O’Dea to Tom Burke dated 8 January 2000.

²⁷ *Ibid.* See press cutting in file. Johnston, Bill, *One Man’s War Cry Turned Defeat into Triumph*, *The Evening Citizen* (Glasgow) 6 August 1964.p.4.

²⁸ *Sgt. Bob Downie V.C.* Press cutting from unknown paper.

An unmarked grave **Kevin Cunningham**

*A keen edged sword a soldier's heart
Are greater than the poet's art
And greater than the poet's fame
A little grave that has no name.*

From Soliloquy by Francis Ledwidge.

For almost fifty years my late father, Thomas Cunningham, lay in an unmarked communal grave in Mount Jerome Cemetery, Dublin. Across the path and some fifty meters on, lay my dear mother, Margaret Cunningham, also in an unmarked grave. Their internment was no different from the hundreds, if not thousands, of the Dublin tenement's poor who lacked proper insurance cover for such sad events.. All the insurance cover most people had in those days was the 'penny death policy' issued by the Royal Liver Insurance Company. The penny policies would just about cover the cost of opening a grave, buying a coffin, hiring a hearse and two coaches topped with a few drinks after the burial. It certainly didn't cover the cost of buying out the grave.

These graves were known as communal graves and could accommodate four to five different corpses, male or female. Consequently, no marker or head stone was allowed to be erected and soon the graves went into chronic disrepair. In time the actual location of my father's grave was lost. To my shame, the location of both my father's and mother's grave were lost in the aforementioned way. My father had fought with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in France and Belgium in the First World War. He had fought with the 8th and 9th RDF in several major battles the battalions took part in. During the push for Passchendaele at Frezenberg Ridge in August 1917, he was wounded by shellfire taking a piece of shrapnel in his face. He was saved from very serious injury or even death by a tin or two of Bully Beef he carried in his back pack which stopped a large lump of shrapnel entering his back.

He recovered from his wounds and was transferred to the 2nd RDF when the 8th and 9th battalions were first amalgamated and then disbanded. He was taken prisoner on 21 March 1918 when the Germans attempted to break through the Irish lines at Malassise Farm east of Epehy which is between Cambrai and St. Quentin, France. My father went into captivity and almost died from starvation. For eight months he had to exist on a diet of two slices of black bread every day along with watery soup and whatever scraps of food his German captors could bulk the soup up with. Incidentally, the black bread was bulked up too with potato skins, Ox blood and sawdust. The Germans themselves were almost starving owing to the very successful British naval blockade. Their daily diet was not much better. Only for the Red Cross food parcels sent to men in the camps, many POWs would not have survived their captivity.

On liberation he had to be slowly introduced to solid food, as his stomach and throat had constricted from lack of solids. Having been nursed back to health he then had the misfortune to contract Spanish Flu, a pandemic that swept through the world killing millions of people, more in fact than had died in the First World War. However, he survived owing to some life-saving treatment in a Paris hospital. He returned to Ireland, a country that had changed since he joined the Dublin Fusiliers. The country he had left was far different than the one he came home to. Flags and cheers had then been replaced by sneers and jeers for men like my father. Words like Traitor, Turncoat and Scum were some of the names being bandied about. Some of his comrades were shot by the IRA as supposed informers. So, Tommy Cunningham, like thousands of his Irish ex-soldier comrades kept his head down, his mouth shut and got on with his life.

Life was to get a whole lot better for my father. He met my mother Margaret. She was a county girl from a small farm holding in the Athy area of Co. Kildare. Like many small farms, her parents were unable to sustain the entire family, so my mother left the farm to go to Dublin and seek employment. She obtained a job as a cook, maid and general factotum in one of Dublin's 'Big Houses'. It was in this house that she met my father who was working as a painter / decorator and was decorating the house. They were married in the early 1930s and I was born in 1936, their one and only child. When World War Two started, my father immediately went to Belfast to enlist; he was turned down because of his age. He was fifty-five. He went to England seeking work and obtained a job as a labourer on the Derwent Dam that was being constructed on the Derwent River, some sixteen kilometres outside the city of Sheffield. My father was a fully qualified painter / decorator and sign writer, his Irish trade union card was not recognised. Eventually though his skills were recognised and he became a maintenance painter for the project. He painted the massive water pipelines in the dam. When the reservoir was completed he was retained by the Water Board on a permanent basis. An interesting point to note was that prior to their successful attack on the Ruhr Valley dams in Germany during the war, Wing Commander Guy Gibson of Dam Buster fame led his 617 Squadron of Lancaster Bombers on training exercises on the Derwent Reservoir. My father recalls seeing these training exercises.

In 1946 my mother and I joined my father in Sheffield. She found a position as a cook for the priests of St. Joseph's R.C. Church in the city. She held that position for three years until my father retired in 1949 when we came back to Dublin. We lived in a tenement building at No. 34 Upper Mercier Street. My mother was a hard-working, honest and light-hearted woman who never complained no matter how hard life became. Unfortunately her health deteriorated over the years back in Dublin. Sadly she passed away in 1959. Six years later in 1964, my father joined her. Like my mother, my dear father ended up in an unmarked communal grave in Mount Jerome Cemetery which neither deserved. I vowed to myself that one day before the Lord took me; I would rectify this sad affair.

My dear daughter Rachel, more familiar with the wonders of the internet and computers than I will ever be, and fed up hearing me talk about my parent's unmarked grave, contacted the authorities in Mount Jerome Cemetery seeking any information on the possible location of this unmarked grave in which my father and mother were buried. Her endeavours proved successful. Not only were they able to give the location of the grave but informed her that both graves were now for sale on a first come basis. The race to secure the grave was on. Unfortunately however this news raised a further problem. Which of my parent's graves should I purchase as they were not buried together? This dilemma caused me no end of problems in trying to solve it, as both graves were full and there was no way to put my parents together in the one grave. It was not an option for me to purchase both graves and erect two separate headstones. I was determined to have both their names on the one headstone, so a compromise was called for. The best solution I could come up with was to transfer soil from my mother's grave to the grave of my father. I reckoned that spiritually at least, they would be together again after some fifty years apart. At last I was in a position to erect a fitting headstone to my parents inscribed with both their names and the regimental crest of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Honour was now restored and my vow carried out. So my dear friends if you are ever in Mount Jerome and at the start of the Yew Tree Walk, you will find their marker between the sixth and seventh Yew trees on the left hand side of the road. Please do stop and say hello to two fine people. One of whom was a Royal Dublin Fusilier. Thank you.

See also: *The Blue Cap* Vol.18 December 2013. 'A New Headstone for a Dublin Fusilier' by Kevin Cunningham and Sean Connolly. Pp.21-22. *The Blue Cap*, Vol. 11. December 2004. *Something to get off my chest!* By Kevin Cunningham. Pp.21-23.

Captain William Joseph Murphy remembered John O'Donovan



On Friday 9 September 2016, the Captain Murphy Memorial Hall in Tullow, County Carlow was the venue of a short ceremony of remembrance in honour of the local man after whom the building is named. Welcoming those present, Cllr. William Paton said that the event was arranged to 'remember one of our own' and he went on to recount that Captain William Joseph Murphy (opposite) was killed in action on 9 September 1916 – one hundred years ago to the day – while commanding the 9th Royal Dublin Fusiliers at the Battle of Ginchy. Clkr.Patton also spoke about the history of the hall and acknowledged the generosity of the Murphy family who gifted the lease and original building to the people of Tullow. Among those in attendance was a unit from the local J. G. O'Connor branch of The O.N.E. – The Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel. Local historian John O'Donovan gave a brief outline of Captain Murphy's life,

referring to his early years as a shopkeeper in Tullow, followed by a period farming in Western Australia and, finally, his army service and death at the Somme. *In Memoriam*, a First World War poem by Ewart Alan Mackintosh was then read by Robin Eustace Harvey. There followed a joint prayer service, conducted by Fr. Andy Leahy and Archdeacon Andrew Orr. Honours were then rendered by an O.N.E. Colour Party, followed by the playing of the Last Post. A minute's silence was observed after which Reveille was sounded. William Paton then drew proceedings to a close, thanking those who attended as well as complimenting John Keogh of the Tullowphelim Historical Society who had organised and mounted an exhibition of World War One photographs and posters for the commemoration.

For further reading on Captain W.J. Murphy, see: *Captain Bill Murphy of Tullow - unsung hero of the Somme*, in *Carloviana*, Journal of the Carlow Historical and Archaeological Society. 2016. Copies available from John O'Donovan. Email address: john_odonovan@hotmail.com

Married in Dublin in 1916 wearing his British Army / Royal Dublin Fusiliers uniform Christopher Sands

The year 1916 is an important year in Irish history. But even better, 1916 is a very important year in the history of my family. That family, of which I, Noel Christopher Sands, am the youngest, last of twelve, born 17 November, 1937, had its beginning in that very historic year of 1916. But that wasn't without its dangers and difficulties.

Our father, William (Billy) Sands, had been born on 3 September 1893 in the family home in No. 2 Windmill Lane (a place in recent years more famous as the venue for the early recordings of rock band U2 and others). Our mother, Anne (Annie) Byrne was born on 7 March 1896 in the new maternity hospital nearby in Holles Street. The family lived on Sir John Rogerson's Quay (in the house next to the Sailor's Home). Both Windmill Lane and the Sailor's Home are mentioned in James Joyce's great novel of Dublin, *Ulysses*. Being near neighbours, they would have known each other from early days in what was a lively social life, with music and dancing, often on the dockside, with musicians coming from ships crews, plus house parties or 'hoolies' occurring often, for various reasons. So, gradually they got closer together, 'keeping company', and in their teens they became engaged to marry. While 'keeping company', much of their time would have been spent on nearby Great Brunswick Street (GBS, now Pearse Street). There they purchased goods in various shops including Hopkins, then a very high quality menswear retailer, with the Pearse family home and business beside it.

There was also the occasional visit to the Queen's Theatre to see their popular variety shows or to the bigger Theatre Royal in Hawkins Street. After the show they might have visited 'Cervi's' the first fish and chip shop in Dublin, located almost opposite the Queens, with the British Army recruiting office a few doors further on and, ironically, close to the Pearse family home.

Annie, the eldest of three girls, with two older brothers, was expected to provide for the family when her mother was hospitalised, and she just stopped attending school after her twelfth birthday. So, even before her teen years, Annie had become a housewife, expected to carry out the duties her mother would have done, shopping, cooking, cleaning, especially having meals ready for her father, a hobbler, and her eldest brother Michael, a docker. As a 'Hobbler', her father, Jack 'Yaller' Byrne, had the task of rowing out to meet incoming ships, to take their line and guide them onto their allotted berth, securing the ship there. A very competitive business and sometimes dangerous, there were injuries and fatalities amongst Hobbler's from time to time (Jack had got the name Yaller or Yellow because of his pale, sallow, almost Spanish appearance. Later, members of the family were given the nick-name of 'Sainty' Byrne).

Billy, after leaving school at fourteen, did as most lads in the area did then, worked as a helper with the carters, and then as he grew bigger and stronger, he followed his father on to dockside working, loading and unloading ships as they became available. Work on the dockside as carter or docker, depended upon the arrival of ships, which could be very erratic. Undependable as this work might be, even worse was to come when in 1913 the 'Lockout' or general strike occurred. Most workers suffered badly at this time, but even worse, many lost their jobs, poor as they were, as some employers closed their businesses, some for good reasons, and others almost to show they could do so.¹

This lack of work locally caused many young men to enlist in the British Army as possibly the only alternative. Even more did so as the build-up for the First World War intensified. Annie's brother, Michael Byrne joined the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Shortly after this Billy also joined the RDF and he was sent off to his training centre. Then word came home that Michael had been killed aged nineteen in 1915.² Billy was among the RDF troops sent off to the Dardanelles in the Gallipoli campaign. After all the mayhem, chaos and slaughter there, eventually he was invalided out with frost bite, as temperatures had moved from burning sunshine in the day, to below freezing at night. The month of November brought flooding resulting in the collapse of trenches and freezing northerly winds into the Allied and Turkish lines in Gallipoli resulting in men dying from frostbite and cold. It's been reckoned that only 20% of the RDF returned. Billy was one of those lucky few. Many returned scarred for life both mentally and physically. Some sadly became institutionalised because of mental breakdown having experienced the horror of trench warfare.

At some stage during his convalescence, as part of his therapy, Billy embroidered the cap-badge of the RDF in memory of Annie's brother, the deceased Michael Byrne. This embroidery and the 1917 picture are lodged in the archive of the RDFA in Dublin City Library and Archive in Pearse Street in the care of senior archivist Ellen Murphy and colleagues. Shortly after his return to Dublin, when going to visit a friend, a neighbour and former schoolmate of Billy's, then an IRA activist, called after him and told him to go home and get out of his uniform. Billy didn't take this advice. He continued to wear his uniform, as I believe he might have been obliged to do. When Annie and he attended St Andrew's Church in Westland Row on 28 June, 1916, they were married, with, as was traditional then, the bride's sister Mary Byrne as bridesmaid, and the groom's brother Patrick Sands as best man, Billy wore his Dubs uniform and looked splendid in it. Their first child was born on 26 April, 1917.

¹ For further reading on the Dublin Lockout of 1913. See Yeates, Pdraig, *Lockout. Dublin 1913* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2000).

² There is a strong possibility that Michael was killed at Mouse Trap Farm following the German gas attack in May 1915. James was killed on 25 April 1915. For further details on this event, see. Burke, Tom, *The 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Tragedy of Mouse Trap Farm April and May 1915* (Dublin: RDFA, 2005).

He was named James, after his father's father. To my knowledge, there were no pictures of the wedding. However, I do have a picture of Annie and Billy with their first-born James. As stated, he was born in April 1917 so that picture must have been taken September 1917, by The French Photo Co. once on Grafton Street, Dublin. In that picture Billy is wearing his RDF uniform. The year of 1916 is important in our family. We know other Irish people have quite different reasons to remember 1916, but our Mam and Dad's wedding is why the year is important us.

First World War commemorative events and activities of RDFA in 2016

March 28: *Fall in men – there's trouble at the Castle.* As part of RTE's Centenary Commemorations of the Easter Rising, the RDFA offered two walking tours from Collins Barracks; one to the Mendicity Building and the other to North Circular Road, Dublin. Brian Moroney and Seamus Greene led the group of about fifty people on a tour to the former Mendicity Building. Tom Burke led a similar number on the tour to the NCR. The objective of each tour was to present the story of the events of Easter week 1916 in Dublin from the perspective of the Dublin Fusiliers who took part in the fighting against the Irish Volunteers at the former Mendicity Building and NCR. Both tours turned out to be a great success.

April 16: A one day seminar on the German gas attack at Hulluch in France was held in The Council Chamber Room, Dublin City Hall in Dame Street, Dublin. The objective of the seminar was to discuss the terrible tragedy that fell upon the 8th and 9th RDF and 16th (Irish) Division in the week of the Easter Rising in Dublin. Our speakers were. The Lord mayor of Dublin, Cllr. Ruairi McGinley; Kevin Myers; Ronan McCreevy; Philip Lecane; Dr Elain Byrne; Ms Carole Hope; Ms Anne-Sophie Douchin; Sebastian Barry; Michael James Ford; Ms Bairbre Ni Chaoimh; Francy Devine; Luke Cheevers; Capt.(retd) Seamus Greene. About 100 members of the RDFA and public attended. Our thanks go to Dr. Mary Clarke and Ms. Ellen Murphy, Archivists, Dublin City Library and Archive for facilitating the seminar. For a copy of the booklet on the seminar, see the RDFA website www.greatwar.ie Essays and Events page.

April 24 and 25: The annual Gallipoli Service of Remembrance was held in Christ Church Cathedral Dublin on Sunday 24 April. At 6:00 a.m. on Monday 25 April, the annual Dawn Service was held in Blackhorse Avenue Cemetery, Dublin.

April 30: A remembrance ceremony was held in St. Mary's Advanced Dressing Station Cemetery in Hulluch, under the guidance of a resident of Hulluch, Sophie-Anne Douchin, and an English WW1 excavation group named the Durand Charitable Trust. The villagers of Hulluch presented a remembrance ceremony to commemorate the Bavarian gas attack on Hulluch in April 1916. The ceremony was attended by the Chairman and members of the RDFA, Mr Harman Murtagh, President of the Military History Society of Ireland and several folk from the island of Ireland. After the ceremony people visited St. Martin's Roman Catholic Church in the village of Noeux-les-Mines, about twenty kilometers west of Hulluch. Along the wall in the left transept there is a marble statue memorial to the 16th (Irish) Division. The inscription on the memorial is as translated as follows: *'To the memory of the officers, subalterns and soldiers of the 16th (Irish) Division who died on the field of battle or who died of wounds or disease contracted during the war in France in 1916 RIP.'*

June 12: The annual wreath laying service at the London Cenotaph organised by the Combined Irish Regiments Association, London, took place. Well done to David Ball and his comrades in the Combined Irish Regiments Association for organising this annual event. Unfortunately this year Capt.(Retd) Seamus Greene could not attend to parade the RDFA Standard.



Thiepval Memorial, France 1 July 2016. L to R. John Greene, Glasnevin Trust; Sean Connolly RDFA; Members of the Irish Defence Forces representing the Air Corps, Navy and Army; John Kennedy, Dept. of Arts , Heritage and Gaeltacht ; Tom Burke, RDFA.



Soldiers of the Irish Army and Irish Guards at the Thiepval Memorial, Somme commemorations on 1 July 2016.

July 1: Thiepval, France. The principal commemoration for the Battle of the Somme took place at the Thiepval Memorial in France. In the context of Irish commemoration of the First World War, this was a truly historic day. Wreaths were laid by President Michael D Higgins, the then British Prime Minister David Cameron and the former German President, Horst Kohler. Members of the British Royal family also laid wreaths at the Thiepval Memorial. Members of the RDFA and committee attended the ceremony. RDFA member Fred Heatley and his son Mark from Dublin attended. Fred's grandfather, L/Cpl Charles Heatley, 1st RDF, was killed in action 1 July 1916. Unfortunately Fred lost his grandfather's medals at the ceremony. Amazingly the medals were returned to Fred some weeks later by post.

Later in the day, a remembrance ceremony took place at the Ulster Tower facing Thiepval Wood. This ceremony was attended by the then Minister for Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys. Fifty years previous in July 1966, the Irish government was represented at a similar ceremony at the Ulster Tower by the Irish Ambassador to France Mr Denis McDonald.

Throughout 2016, Somme related commemorative, reflective, educational, cultural and artistic events were presented by the Irish government, the National Library, National Gallery, National Archives, An Post, RTE, Abbey Theatre, Glasnevin Cemetery, Local Authorities (see article below by Ken Kinsella on Somme commemoration in Kilkenny), the Irish Embassy in Paris, Third Level Institutions such as UCD, National and Secondary Schools throughout Ireland.

The Kilkenny Great War Memorial Committee Somme Commemoration **Ken Kinsella**



The Kilkenny Great War Memorial Committee designed and built a temporary life-size Somme Trench in a Callan farmyard before dismantling and erecting it again at the courthouse plaza on Parliament Street, Kilkenny. This masterpiece took six months in the making and remained in place during the Marble City's famous Arts Festival in August 2016. The trench was manned throughout the festival by the committee and friends of the project in what was an exhausting, but exhilarating week. A special mention to Fran Egan and P.J. Norton for their skill and expertise in the design and building of the Trench. The Kilkenny People newspaper wrote; *'all great ideas take enormous attention to detail*

and I believe it is this attention to detail that has made the Kilkenny Great War Memorial a massive success on our city street'. This detail included recorded battlefield activity played on a loop over a sound system and many pieces of memorabilia. A viewing platform depicting aspects of a scene from no man's land, inclusive of realistic rats, bullets, skulls and barbed wire. There were 126 white crosses with the name of each Kilkenny man who died in the Battle of the Somme available for viewing. Photographs of Kilkenny soldiers and the 'Kilkenny War Dead' book containing details of all Kilkenny men and women who fell in the war added to the information available to relatives of war casualties.

This wonderful work gave the public an opportunity to imagine, in a small way, what it might have been like to serve in one of the most brutal wars ever known. It also served to give people a better understanding of the horrors of war and wonder how men coped with life at the Front. The Somme week culminated in a commemoration service and flag raising ceremony attended by hundreds of people in warm sunshine on Sunday 14 August at 3:00 p.m. Music was provided by St. Patricks Brass Band and hymns sung by the Castlecomer Male voice choir. The service began appropriately with reading of the names of all Kilkenny men killed in the Battle of the Somme.

Dignitaries attending included his Excellency Mr Kevin Vickers the Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, Mr Alan McCarthy, New Zealand Consul-General in Ireland, Mr Neil Holland, Charge d Affaires from the British Embassy and Deputy head of Mission, Mr Simon Mamouney representing Australia; all of whom took part in the wreath laying ceremony. They were joined by Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr., Pat Fitzpatrick representing Kilkenny County Council and J.J. Doolan of behalf of the Kilkenny Great War Memorial Committee. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association was well represented. Chairman, Tom Burke, came off his cycling holiday to be present and was accompanied by committee member Philip Lecane. Others representing the Dubs were Michael Lee, J.J. Doolan, his daughter Berni and Ken Kinsella.



Photo by Michael McGrath, Kilkenny.

L to R. Mr J.J. Doolan, Kilkenny Great War Memorial Committee, Mr Simon Mamouney representing Australia. Mr Alan McCarthy New Zealand Consul-General in Ireland, Mr Neil Holland Charge d Affaires from the British Embassy, Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr., Pat Fitzpatrick representing Kilkenny County Council, Mr Kevin Vickers the Canadian Ambassador to Ireland.

The event served as another reminder to Kilkenny people of the need to have a permanent memorial to commemorate 780 men and women from the county who fell in the First World War. Kilkenny County Council has chosen a beautiful site on St. John’s Quay, situated between our two famous bridges. A plan for the memorial is in place and it is now a question of raising another €50k to complete the project. Any donations may be made to. Bank of Ireland, Parliament Street, Kilkenny. A/C No: 22546979; Sort Code: 90-60-64.



September 1 to 5: To commemorate the centenary of the Battles of Ginchy and Guillemont, about thirty members of the RDFA went on a battlefield / commemorative tour to these villages and the Ulster Tower. Enormous thanks must go to RDFA committee members Brian Moroney and Capt. (Retd) Seamus Greene for organising this tour. There were many magical moments on the tour to remember, but one event stands out. We had planned a ‘Tom Kettle March’; the object of which was to march the route that Lieut. Tom Kettle and his 9th RDF made from Carnoy Craters (reserve trenches) to Sherwood and Fagan Trench (front line assembly trenches) beside Trones Wood, a distance of about six kilometres. Then

to walk on another two and a half kilometres from the location of these assembly trenches at Trones Wood, through Guillemont and on out to Ginchy where the 48th and 47th Brigades of the 16th (Irish) Division attacked and took Ginchy on 9 September 1916. Tom’s battalion moved off from Carnoy in a downpour of rain just before midnight on 4 September 1916. It was in Carnoy on that date that Kettle wrote his famous poem to his daughter Betty titled; *To my daughter Betty, the gift of God*. The 9th Dubs reached Trones Wood at dawn. The youngest member of our tour party was Ciaran Fogarty, he was sixteen. Ciaran carried the RDFA Standard at the head of our column from a crossroads near Carnoy to Trones Wood. Security prevented our group from beginning at Carnoy. The site of this young Irishman carrying the Dubs Standard on that country road to the edge of Trones Wood was one to remember. We stopped in Trones Wood and one of our group recited the poem. On we marched with Ciaran holding the Standard out front and by an amazing coincidence, we met Oliver Fallon and a group from the Connaught Rangers Association just outside Guillemont Road Cemetery. On we marched with the Dubs and Rangers Standards aloft in the wind through Guillemont and on out to Ginchy. We stopped at the location of the final jump off trench on the western edge of Ginchy. Ciaran lowered our Standard and we offered a prayer in memory to the men from Ireland and Germany who died there one hundred years ago. By yet another coincidence, on our return journey back into Ginchy where Brian had arranged our bus to pick us up at the church in Ginchy, we met a group among who were relatives of Major Cedric Charles Dickens 13th (Kensington) Battalion, London Regiment age twenty-seven, killed on 9 September 1916 and remembered on the Thiepval Memorial. He was the grandson of the famous writer Charles Dickens. The family’s memorial brochure to commemorate the death of Cedric Charles included Kettle’s poem *To my daughter Betty*.



Trones Wood - Sherwood and Fagan Trench lay in a perpendicular direction between the road and wood.



September 9: A State Ceremonial event to remember Lieut. Tom Kettle 9th RDF was held at the bust of Tom Kettle, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin in the afternoon of 9 September. Organised by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, with input from and participation by the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade and the Defence Forces, the event was initiated by the Kettle family, in particular Declan Kettle and RDFA. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Charlie Flanagan T.D. represented the

Irish Government. Students from O'Connell's CBS Dublin and Clongowes Wood S.J. where Kettle went to school recited some of Kettle's writings. Representatives from UCD and the British Embassy also attended. Earlier in the morning, the School of History at UCD presented a seminar on Tom Kettle.



October 21: As stated earlier, throughout 2016, Somme related events were presented by the Irish Government. Dublin City Library and Archive in Pearse Street, Dublin, presented an exhibition titled; *Dublin Remembers: Stories From The Somme* which opened in the library on 21 October 2016. On display in the exhibition was the letter by Pte. Christy Fox, 2nd RDF written to Miss Monica Roberts on 1 December 1916, referring to Bob Downie winning the V.C.

October 23: Members of the Downie family gathered in Glasgow to unveil a V.C. stone to Sgt. Robert (Bob) Downie V.C., 2nd RDF. The Irish Government was represented by Consul General of Ireland to Scotland Mr Mark Hanniffy, (sixth in from the left). The City of Glasgow, who hosted a Civic Reception afterwards, was represented by Lord Provost of Glasgow, Councillor Sadie Docherty, (lady in centre with pink coat.) Members of the RDFA committee also attended and Capt. (ret'd) Seamus Greene carried the RDFA Standard at the unveiling ceremony. There were representatives from Scottish Regimental Associations. The Royal Irish Regiment kindly provided a piper and bugler. The RDFA would like to thank Mr Desmond Thomas who acted as the liaison officer between the RDFA and the Downie family.

December 2: The RDF Assoc., annual dinner took place in the Masonic Hall, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2. In their usual enthusiastic and wonderful manner, Brian Moroney and his wife Theresa organised the entire event. The committee, membership and friends of the RDFA cannot thank Brian and Theresa enough for organising this annual event. Thanks too to Seamus and his wife Anne for 'manning the stall' on the night. Tony Behan gave us his annual stand-up, as distinct from sitting-down, moments of comic genius. His annual party-piece of, 'The Coat' is now part of RDFA folklore. Our dinner this year topped the bill and marked the end of an historic year for the Dubs.

We Will Remember Them – Members of the RDFA who passed on in 2016.

On 2 September 2015, Irving Vance died. Irving was the last remaining members of the RDFA Old Comrades Committee. He knew many an old Dublin Fusilier and donated a wonderful photograph of the RDF Old Comrades Committee to the RDFA Archive in Pearse Street.

On 26 January 2016, Mrs Sheila Norrish-Werry passed away peacefully at her home in Torquay. Her father was Cpl. Thomas Sloan of the 1st RDF. It was when the 1st RDF were billeted in houses in Torquay having come to England from India at the outbreak of the war that Thomas met a local Torquay girl named Alice Nellie Dale whom he married after the war on 16 December 1918. Sheila very kindly donated her father's medals and papers to the RDFA Archive.

On 25 February 2016, Capt. Mike 'Flash' Kearney MBE passed away at his home in Pensby, The Wirral, Merseyside. Flash was born in Dublin in 1930 and at the age of fourteen he joined The Royal Irish Fusiliers. He was promoted through the ranks and was a keen piper. He retired as Captain. For many years he was a great servant to the Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum in Armagh. For his services he was awarded an MBE. Mike was always willing to offer any help he could in researching Dublin Fusiliers for members of the RDFA. *Faugh a Ballagh* Mike.

On 12 February 2016, Professor Keith Jeffrey died from cancer at the age of sixty-four. Keith was one of Ireland's leading historians on Ireland's participation in WW1. He was the first Irish historian to acknowledge the work of the RDFA in his book titled; *Ireland and the Great War* published by Cambridge Press in 2000. He regularly attended our lectures in Dublin and offered great inspiration to the RDFA in the early days. Keith left us too early in life. His work shall be his legacy.

On 13 April 2016, George Pearson from Hillsborough in Co. Down died. He and his loving wife Mabel were members of the RDFA from the beginning of the Association. Mabel's uncle was Cpl. Andrew Lockhart of the 11th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers from Donegal who was killed in action at Wijtschate on 7 June 1917.

On 20 June 2016, Capt. (Retd) Patrick Goggin died. Paddy was a very proud member of the RDFA. He was a man of letters and was a contributor to the letters page of *The Irish Times* congratulating the work of the RDFA.

On 23 June 2016, Rosemary Kavanagh died. Rosemary's death was a sad loss to the RDFA. She and her husband Andy were members of the RDFA from the beginning. It was the Kavanagh family who kindly donated the letters and medals of 2nd Lieut. Michael Wall to the RDFA Archive. 2nd Lieut. Michael Wall, 6th Royal Irish Regiment, KIA 7 June 1917 at Wijtschate is the subject of Tom Burke's book titled; *Messines to Carrickhill-Writing Home from the Great War*. To be published by Mercier Press, Cork in June 2017.

On 27 September 2016, Comdt. (Retd) Frank McGoldrick died. Frank was a member of the Pearse and 20th Infantry Battalion of the FCA. Frank was a regular attendant at RDFA lectures, remembrance ceremonies and annual dinner.

On 6 November 2016, Major-General Paddy Nowlan died.

On 9 November 2016, Glenn Thompson died. Glenn was an excellent military historian and expert on Irish military uniforms. He spent many years as a volunteer consultant on Irish military uniforms at the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Dublin. Glenn donated many of his collected papers on Lieut.-Col. Brian Clarke, ex-Royal Irish Fusiliers, to the RDFA Archive.

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