

Annual General Meeting of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association 2020

Secretary's Report

The Year 2020 will surely be remembered by all as the year best forgotten. It brought hardship, stress and sorrow to far too many people. Many clubs and associations have ceased to function but I am pleased to report that your committee has endeavoured to keep the Dubs Association vibrant.

The Committee members are Brian Moroney, Seamus Greene, Philip Lecane, Niall Leinster, John Sheehan, Sally Copeland Keogh, George Jones, Suzanne O'Neill, Aidan Kavanagh, Sean Slattery, David Buckley, Thomas Murphy and Paul Taylor.

The year started very optimistically on 18 January when a sub-committee met with the Military Attache of the British Embassy to set in motion plans to commemorate the centenary of the disbandment of the Regiment in June 2022. The Embassy is more than willing to assist us with our events both in Dublin and Windsor.

We have also been in contact with the Dean of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin who has very kindly offered the Cathedral for a commemorative service on Sunday 12th June 2022.

Contact has been established with our sister regimental associations who are also keen to join with us in our commemoration. George Jones has been in touch with The Naval Association who are delighted to join us for ceremonies in Liverpool as part of our proposed trip to Windsor in June 2022. Although a start has been made in organising this important occasion much work needs to be done as soon as circumstances permit.

The committee has held regular monthly meetings via Zoom video conferencing thanks to Thomas Murphy.

In April I contacted members and gave an update on the Association and asked for details of e-mail addresses. An editorial sub-committee was set up with a

view to producing a newsletter to be called The Old Tough, the first edition was sent to members at the end of May. A second edition was circulated in mid September. The newsletter has attracted a very positive response. The members of this sub-committee are Thomas Murphy, Sally Copeland Keogh and Paul Appleby. John Sheehan has since joined them.

Tom Burke is currently working on his final edition of The Blue Cap but unfortunately due to Covid-19 restrictions his access to archives has ceased. Tom's journal will cover the final year of World War 1 and will be well worth waiting for. Future editions of The Blue Cap will be produced by the editorial sub-committee which is at present working on the project.

Committee member Aidan Kavanagh runs his personal Facebook page dedicated to The Royal Dublin Fusiliers. It is a mine of interesting information and photographs and well worth a visit.

A planned trip to Salonika in May for which fifteen members signed up was necessarily cancelled due to Covid-19. Hopefully it will be rescheduled in better times.

Brian Moroney, Chairman, represented the Association at the very limited National Day of Commemoration Ceremony in Kilmainham in July. Seán Ryan represented us at the commemoration of Sergeant Martin Doyle VC MM in New Ross in February. Martin served in the RDF and RMF during the Great War. His grave is in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Blackhorse Avenue, Dublin. Seán carried the RDFA Standard during the parade and unveiling ceremony, while Capt Éamon Sheridan laid the wreath on behalf of the Association.

Charities like The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association will have to report to the Charities Regulator next year on the extent of their compliance with a new Charities Governance Code. In preparation for its implementation, Association Trustees participated during 2020 in information events and webinars run by the Charities Regulator to assist charities comply with the new obligations. Work on this is ongoing at year end. Many thanks to Paul Appleby for his skills and dedication to this task.

A draft new constitution for the Association is currently being prepared in order to ensure we comply fully with the foregoing. This revised constitution will be put before the membership for consideration and approval.

In October we sent a message of greetings and support to the Kilkenny War Memorial Association on the unveiling of a sculpture to Thomas Woodgate, who served with the R.A.F. and who died in the sinking of the R.M.S. Leinster aged fourteen years.

A planned commemoration in Mount Jerome Cemetary for Sunday 1st November had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions. The event was to remember former members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who are interred there. Some of their relatives are members of our Association. Members Aidan Kavanagh, John O'Brien and Sean Ryan are in the process of preparing an information booklet and map showing the location of these Dubs graves. The commemoration will be rescheduled when permitted. Members will be advised of the details when known.

We have recently learned of the proposed retirement, in December, of Dr Mary Clark, Dublin City Archivist. Mary has been a long time friend and supporter of our Association and we shall be forever in her debt. May we wish her a long and happy retirement. As soon as circumstances permit we propose making a suitable presentation to Mary.

Unfortunately, due again to Covid-19, there will be no Annual Christmas Dinner this year. It is hoped that when circumstances allow perhaps a lunch could be arranged. Christmas Cards will not be produced as their sale depended greatly on the Christmas Dinner.

The A.G.M. for 2020 must of necessity be held by virtual meeting. All members will be asked to furnish their e-mail address and download the Zoom App in order to participate in the event.

Key tasks for 2021 therefore are to continue planning for the June 2022 commemorations, to produce the new constitution and to comply with the Charities Regulator's requirements. A tour would also be envisaged.

In the meantime we can only hope for an early end to the current pandemic. Keep safe colleagues and I look forward to seeing us all together again soon.

Paul Taylor
Hon. Secretary