

## Reflections on 1915

Tom Burke

By the end of 1914, following the First Battle of Ypres (19 October - 22 November 1914), stalemate had resulted along the western front. For the Central Powers – that is Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria – 1915 was a somewhat successful year of the war insofar as no Allied breakout initiative, such as that in Gallipoli or Salonika, had delivered much, and the Russians and Serbs had been routed.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, 1915 might well be considered the year of the failed attempts of a British breakout. German attempts of a breakthrough at places like Mouse Trap Farm during the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April – 25 May 1915) also failed. Rather optimistically, General Joseph Joffre, the French commander-in-chief, believed the autumn breakout offensives in Champagne and Artois (including Loos) had brought tactical results, and he ascribed their overall failure to bad weather and a shortage of ammunition. He took the lead in seeking a concerted response to the Allied breakout failures of 1915.

Throughout 1915, four battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers took part in the war, these were: the 1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> who fought in Gallipoli; the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> fought in Salonika following their disastrous few weeks in Gallipoli. The 2<sup>nd</sup> RDF fought during the Second Battle of Ypres at Mouse Trap Farm northeast of Ypres. It was the year that brought the tragedy of war back to the streets of Dublin. On average, a little over 67% of the Irish soldiers killed during the Gallipoli and Second Ypres campaigns in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> RDF came from between the Royal and Grand Canals in Dublin.

Table 1<sup>2</sup>

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

Table 2<sup>3</sup>

Dates between in 1915	RDF battalion	Other Ranks only KIA,DOW,D	% Irish in battalion	% of Irish born in battalion coming from Dublin	Highest Dublin Postal District
1 April and 31 April	1 <sup>st</sup>	219	80.0%	61.7%	Dublin 1,8
1 April and 31 May	2 <sup>nd</sup>	411	84.4%	72.3%	Dublin 1,2 and 8
6 August and 31 December	6 <sup>th</sup>	158	67.7%	47.6%	
6 August and 31 December	7 <sup>th</sup>	128	59.5%	59.2%	

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

<sup>2</sup> *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.

<sup>3</sup> *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.

To commemorate the centenary anniversaries of the gas attack at Mouse Trap Farm and the landings at Gallipoli, several State and RDFA events took place throughout 2015. This edition of *The Blue Cap* reflects and records the events the RDFA participated in or organised independently throughout 2015.

**‘Better Than No War At All’**  
**The Royal Dublin Fusiliers in Serbia, October to December 1915**  
**Sean Connolly**

Almost a century ago, a force almost double the size of the current Irish army sailed away from Ireland to play its part in the defeat of Germany and its allies. This essay presents the part volunteer soldiers of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division played between October and December 1915 in stemming the advance of the Bulgarians who had joined the Central Powers in mid-October 1915.

The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division expected to go into action on the Western Front but fresh troops were needed to rescue the ill-fated invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula which had been halted by the unexpected effectiveness of the Turkish defences. The inexperienced soldiers landed at Suvla Bay in August 1915 but this second attempt also failed. Having suffered 9,000 casualties, including 4,000 deaths<sup>1</sup>, the reinforced Division was then selected for a joint enterprise with French Army units that saw Irish soldiers in bloody hand-to-hand combat with soldiers of the Bulgarian army in what is now the Republic of Macedonia. The 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers took part in both of these campaigns. The eager Irish volunteers who answered the call to arms in 1914 resulting from the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo could not have foreseen the chain of events that would lead them into a battle on the soil of Serbia itself.

The 10 <sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division		
29 <sup>th</sup> Brigade	30 <sup>th</sup> Brigade	31 <sup>st</sup> Brigade
10 <sup>th</sup> Hampshire Regt.	6 <sup>th</sup> Royal Munster Fusiliers	5 <sup>th</sup> Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
6 <sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Rifles	7 <sup>th</sup> Royal Munster Fusiliers	6 <sup>th</sup> Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
5 <sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers	6 <sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers	5 <sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Fusiliers
6 <sup>th</sup> Leinster Regt.	7 <sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers	6 <sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Fusiliers

The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division was created August 1914 from Irish volunteers from all classes, creeds and political opinions. It contained the newly raised 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. While the Division was being trained in Ireland, the war had reached a stalemate in Europe where the combatants faced each other along a line of trenches that stretched for about 800 kilometres from Switzerland to the North Sea. Instead of joining the fighting in Flanders as they expected, the Irish soldiers were diverted to re-launch the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign in August 1915. While these inexperienced soldiers attempted to overcome the battle-hardened Turkish soldiers defending their homeland, Bulgaria was induced to join the Central Powers by the promise of additional territory at the end of war. The Serbian army, weakened by combat losses and typhoid, was now under the threat of an attack by the combined forces of Austria-Hungary, Germany and Bulgaria.

The Serbian government requested assistance from the Allies. In response, the French 156<sup>th</sup> Division and the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division were assigned in the expectation that the mere presence of the additional manpower alone would inhibit an attack. But on 5 October, before the new troops could arrive, the Serbian Army was forced to retreat.

<sup>1</sup> Orr, Phillip, *Field of Bones* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2007).p.202.

Despite this crucial development, the strategy was not altered and another ill-prepared and badly equipped campaign got underway, one that had no clear objective other than a show of solidarity with Serbia. And once again, as in Gallipoli, the military capability of the enemy was underestimated.

Lt.-General Sir Bryan Mahon was the General Officer Commanding of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division. After a distinguished career in Africa and India, he had retired from the Army in 1914 at the age of fifty-two. He was recalled at the outbreak of the war. His superior in Gallipoli was an old rival, General Sir Ian Hamilton who tried to prevent his assignment. Having failed, at the beginning of the Division's Gallipoli campaign, Hamilton reassigned one of Mahon's three brigades to the ANZACs thereby preventing the 10<sup>th</sup> Division acting as a unit. Following the failure of the August landing at Suvla Bay, the officer responsible, Lieut.-General Stopford, was dismissed and General Mahon was replaced for four days until he was reinstated by Lord Kitchener. When a British Division was sought to support the French in Serbia, it is not surprising that General Hamilton selected the 10<sup>th</sup> Division. (Hamilton was relieved of his command on 16 October and was given no further assignment.)

At the end of September 1915, the Irish Division was withdrawn from Gallipoli and reassembled on the nearby Greek island of Lemnos. Despite the arrival of new drafts, the constituent battalions had only about half of their official establishment. The Division had suffered about 3,000 casualties (20% approx.) in less than two months of fighting. The period of peaceful recuperation was welcomed by the exhausted men. Captain Noel Drury of the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers noted in his diary that he slept for twelve hours, finding 'the extraordinary quiet of everything quite uncanny at first after the noise of the peninsula'.<sup>2</sup> His next destination was still unknown. Some officers thought that they would reinforce the troops still fighting at the south of the Gallipoli peninsula while others expected that they would invade Smyrna (modern Izmir) on the Turkish mainland. The speculation ended when they received their pay in Greek notes.

The 29<sup>th</sup> Brigade left Gallipoli on 4 October for the overnight voyage to Salonika (Thessaloniki). As they arrived, the snow-covered peak of Mount Olympus on the Greek mainland could be seen in the bright morning sunlight. By 24 October, the Division had a total of 400 Officers and 13,000 men available in Salonika.

The ordinary soldier would not have been aware of the political machinations that would determine his fate. Greece had a mutual defence agreement with Serbia but its population was divided as to which side to support. The King was pro-German while Prime Minister Venezelos favoured the Allies. Both Greece and Bulgaria wanted more territory in return for entering the war. Unfortunately, they both wanted the same territory. While still neutral, Greece gave permission to the Allies to station troops in Salonika in order to assist Serbia and to act as a deterrent. A force of 150,000 troops was agreed but the actual number assigned did not go above 30,000. The Bulgarians, having succeeded in getting a deal from the Central Powers in September, directed their war aims against Serbia and launched a two-pronged attack on 11 October. The remaining Serbian troops were forced to retreat through Albania. About 125,000 of them were taken to Salonika via Corfu in December 1915. The Bulgarian occupation of parts of Serbia was ruthless. They banned the Serbian language, promoted the Bulgarian language and culture and executed thousands of intellectuals and priests, the backbone of Serbian national sentiment.

Surnames were changed, Petrovic became Petrov for example and children were instructed to say how happy they were to be Bulgarian again.<sup>3</sup> The 156<sup>th</sup> French Division crossed into Serbia and proceeded up the Vardar valley until it met the advancing Bulgarians. It took up positions in the mountains near Kosturino. It was joined by the 57<sup>th</sup> and 113<sup>th</sup> Divisions which came from France. General Maurice Sarrail was in overall command. Lt.- General Sir Bryan Mahon reported to him.

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<sup>2</sup> Drury, *Captain Noel, 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. (Dublin: RDFA Archive).

<sup>3</sup> Mulligan, William, *The Great War for Peace* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014).pp.118-119

While the Irish soldiers were encamped on the outskirts of Salonika, some more replacements arrived which diluted the Irish identity of the Division. A batch of eight officers and 388 men from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Norfolk Regiment was assigned to the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The new arrivals remained in their own platoons and were not distributed. Captain Drury commented that they were a, 'well educated and pretty smart lot but seem a bit uppish'.<sup>4</sup> He overheard a few remarks about their 'hard luck' in being attached to an Irish Regiment. In his opinion, they did not appreciate the honour of being in the 'oldest Regiment in the Army, making Empire history ever since 1641'. He would read to them from a booklet on the Regiment on parade and make them learn the Battle Honours.<sup>5</sup> Among the English soldiers was Lance Corporal George William Norman from Ellingham, Suffolk. He survived the Balkan campaign but was killed in action on 8 October 1918 in an assault on the Hindenburg line, aged twenty-nine.



The 7<sup>th</sup> RDF was reinforced by six officers and 302 men from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal West Kent Regiment and thirty transferees from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> (Reserve) RDF from Dublin. Cecil Gunning of 'D' Co. 7<sup>th</sup> RDF commented on the enthusiasm of the young English 'conscripts' who were 'full of the joys of life, singing all the old war songs on route marches' compared to the small band of Gallipoli survivors who 'plodded along weary and all washed out'.<sup>6</sup>

After a number of cross-country route marches and weeks of good food, the 30<sup>th</sup> Brigade boarded a train on the 29 October 1915 which brought it over the Greek frontier to the station at Gjevgeli (now Gevgelija) in modern Macedonia. From there, they marched about eight kilometres north-east to the village of Bogdanci. On 31 October, the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers relieved a French Battalion at Dedeli village about thirty kilometres from the Greek border. This was to become the divisional headquarters. The French had captured the villages of Tatarli, Kajali and Memisli which were handed over to the Irish as well as the defensive line that ran along the Kosturino Ridge. The Irish were now responsible for the right end of the Allied frontline, from the village of Kosturino to Lake Doiran.

Landmarks were assigned names such as Dolly Mount, Bray Head and Rocky Peak. The firing range beside Dollymount Strand on Bull Island, in the suburbs of Dublin, had been used by the new recruits during training. The nearby beach was similar to the coastline at Suvla Bay but the hills and valleys now surrounding them were bare, rocky and inhospitable. The assigned positions were overlooked by the Bulgarians and were liable to shelling if a fire was lit. Cooking was only possible in the ravines to the rear which were not visible to the enemy. The French had made stone sangars on the crests of the hills but the 10<sup>th</sup> Division dug new positions on the forward slopes. The sangars were easy targets for the enemy artillery and the rocks became dangerous shrapnel when hit. Communication was difficult as the rocky terrain prevented the laying of the scarce telephone cable.

The Division lacked the artillery to counter enemy shelling and the expected attack by the fresh, well-equipped Bulgarian 2<sup>nd</sup> Army. This was now under the command of Field Marshal Anton Ludwig von Mackensen, the experienced German officer who had led the successful campaign in Serbia. As the 6<sup>th</sup> Dublins took their place in the frontline on 4 November, they came under fire from the Bulgarian artillery which was well positioned in the opposite hills. The first casualty was a Cork man, Sergeant Major Henry Doherty, 13562, aged forty-five, of 'D' Company. Eight Norfolks were also killed. These dead have no known graves. Some of the Bulgarians who had been killed by the French still lay unburied where they had fallen in the Irish area.

<sup>4</sup> Drury, Captain Noel, 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

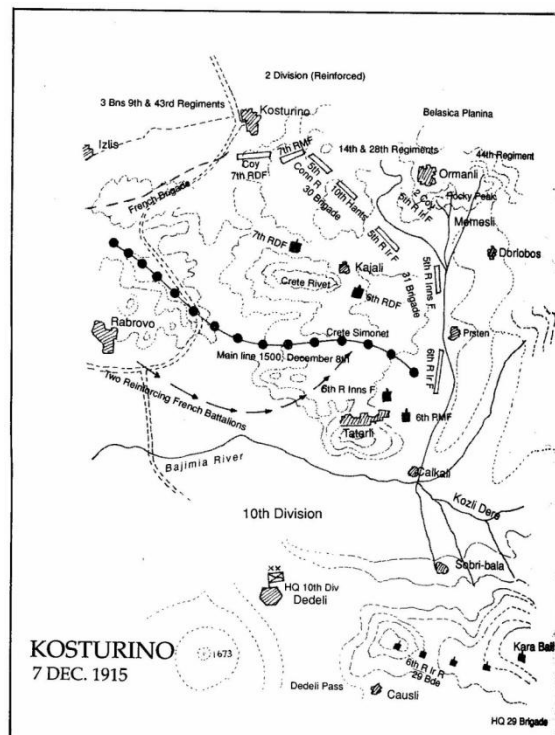
<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Gunning, Cecil and Frank, *Diary*. (Dublin: RDFA Archive). Note. Conscription was not introduced until March 2 1916.

The Quartermaster of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dubs, Lt. Richard Byrne, was particularly effective in these difficult circumstances. He had been awarded a Military Cross in Gallipoli.<sup>7</sup> Captain Drury always referred to him as 'Stuffer Byrne'. On 4 November, he noted in his diary:<sup>8</sup>

Stuffer Byrne got us from somewhere, huge tarpaulins like the ASC use for covering dumps and gave one to each company. We made a huge bivouac into which all the men can pack when it rains... On the 13<sup>th</sup>, Loveband and Byrne arrived up with the rations about 21.00. Byrne was most amusing about the big Bulgars he saw lying about saying they were bigger than DMP men. One fine big fellow lying at the junction of the tracks to Kajali and to Memesli would make a fine signpost for him in the future.

Later, on 15 November Drury noted. 'Yesterday was the first day that the rations were short. Byrne got no groceries at all but managed to send up a half ration of tea and sugar from his reserve.'<sup>9</sup> One of the houses in the village of Tatarli became the headquarters, in turn, for various Irish battalions. The village had a mosque to serve the ethnic Turkish inhabitants. This was used as an Advanced Dressing Station by the 31<sup>st</sup> Field Ambulance.



Battle lines at Kosturino, 7 December 1915.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Correspondence between author and nephew of Lieut. Byrne, Mr Richard Byrne, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Drury, Captain Noel, *6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.32. and p.43. Lieut. Loveband was the Transport Officer. The DMP was the Dublin Metropolitan Police.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.p.46.

<sup>10</sup> Johnstone, T, *Orange Green and Khaki* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1992).p.xxiv



View of the location of the Irish frontline from Rocky Peak, May 2012

The men were not properly equipped for the rain, snow and bitter cold that came on 25 November 1915. They were in open trenches along the ridges with waterproof sheets for a roof and no heating. A three-day blizzard caused frostbite and exposure which led to the eventual evacuation of twenty-three officers and 1,663 men. A total of 988 were admitted with frostbite.<sup>11</sup>



One of those evacuated was Corporal Alexander McMurty, a 'Pal' from 'D' Coy of the 7<sup>th</sup> RDF. He was transferred to Malta where he was scheduled to have a leg amputated. A friendly nurse intervened and persuaded the doctors to wait and, eventually, only one toe was removed. He spent his twenty-first birthday in the hospital. When he recovered, he was commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant with the Royal Irish Fusiliers, served in Flanders and returned to Dublin after the War. He joined the Local Defence Force during the Second World War and was prepared to fight any invader, even the British!<sup>12</sup> Sergeant Walter Baillie Honeyman, 7<sup>th</sup> RDF who had been wounded at Suvla Bay, was invalided to Cairo before resuming duty. From Killeen Road in Rathmines, he died of pneumonia in Taranto, Italy on 13 October 1918 when returning from his only period of leave in Dublin.<sup>13</sup>

A hospital had been installed in a disused tobacco warehouse in Gjevgeli by the Scottish Women's Hospital movement. Mrs Katherine Harley, the sixty-year old sister of Sir John French, was in charge. She later formed a transport unit which collected Serbian casualties and brought them to the SWH hospitals for treatment. While based in the frontline town of Monastir, she was killed by Bulgarian shellfire on 7 March 1917.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.p.171.

<sup>12</sup> Interview between author and daughter of Lieut. McMurty, Mrs Pat Roberts in 2003.

<sup>13</sup> [Http://www.Cwgc.Org](http://www.cwgc.org)

<sup>14</sup> Krippner, Monica, *The Quality of Mercy; Women at War, Serbia 1915-1918* (UK: David and Charles, 1980).p.196.





Another evacuee due to illness was an American volunteer, Meredith Gray from Atlanta, Georgia. He came to Ireland in March 1915 to join the newly formed 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers as a Private. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant on 25 September 1915 but the news did not reach him for over two months. After his evacuation he set out for London and so avoided the looming Bulgarian attack. He was appointed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and following recovery was attached to the 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Rifles in Belgium. He was killed on 16 August 1916 and is buried in Ration Farm (la Plus Douve) Annexe Cemetery, about eleven kilometres south of Ieper in Belgium. He had married Miss Lottie Austin of Cork City in Ireland while on leave just weeks before he was killed.<sup>15</sup>

A group of 180 men from the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry had the misfortune to arrive as replacements in these remote barren hills on the day the blizzard began. They then joined their comrades in the miserable wait for the impending assault. When the thaw came, all had good reason for referring to the area as 'Muckydonia'.<sup>16</sup> Capt. Noel Drury gave a vivid picture of the conditions on 27 November:<sup>17</sup>

We are a comical sight at meals. Imagine a hollow 3 feet deep and 8 feet circumference dug in the hill side, leaving a round block of earth in the centre for a table. Huddled around this sit 4 or 5 figures like Esquimaux wearing balaclava woollen helmets, woollen gloves, mufflers and as many coats as one possesses, legs wrapped in muddy and torn blankets. In fact nothing to be seen of the individuals except eyes, noses and lips. Yet the jokes and laughter might surprise a visitor. Stuffer Byrne's story about how he got us all 2 cardigans each by bluffing Sewell, the Quartermaster of the Munsters kept us in roars of laughter; only Byrne could describe Sewell standing on the outskirts of Calkali as the mules with the bales passed along, in his rich Cork brogue saying "Goodbye to me cardigans". How it was done, I don't know and the wise ones never ask Byrne how he does these things but all we are interested in is that he landed up here today with an issue of cardigan jackets plus an issue intended for the 6<sup>th</sup> Munsters.

On that day, the battalion was relieved by the 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Munster Fusiliers and ordered to proceed to the village of Tatarli where they were to occupy vacated bivouacs. Drury continued:<sup>18</sup>

Stuffer Byrne evidently had not been told of this arrangement as he sent us the following: 'Please say if you are allotted ground here. If not, I will arrange houses for companies, etc.' Before we could get an answer through to Byrne, we got a further message from him saying: 'You have been ordered to the Connaught's bivouacs. There is no shelter. I can put Battalion in a few old houses. Will you take the responsibility for the latter?' We wired Byrne that we would take the responsibility.....When we got down into the trees above Tatarli, we picked up the good old Stuffer and passed the Connaught's bivouacs where we were to have gone. When we got down to the village, a grand sight met us. There were huge fires burning outside each billet and the field kitchens were steaming merrily with a hot supper for everyone. Byrne is really a grand fellow in an emergency.

<sup>15</sup> Correspondence between author and Mr Martin K O'Toole, relative of Meredith Gray.

<sup>16</sup> Mather, William D, *Muckydonia, 1917-1919. Being the Adventures of a One-Time Pioneer in Macedonia and Bulgaria During First World War* (Devon: Stockwell, 1979).

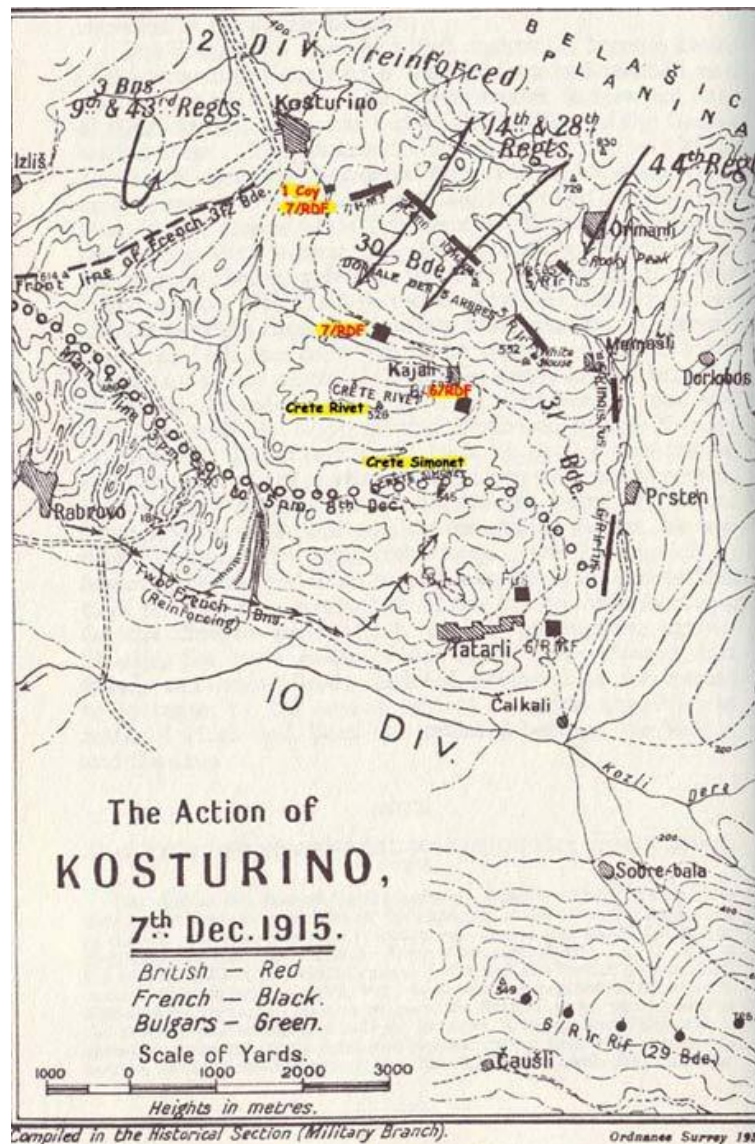
<sup>17</sup> Drury, Captain Noel, *6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.61.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p.63.

He got extra rations from somewhere by some means of his own. He had the houses cleaned out, great stacks of logs cut for the fires and everything ready for the weary men, even getting straw from somewhere for them to sleep on in the houses.

On 4 December 1915, the Bulgarians began shelling the rear area and the tracks leading to the frontline positions. When the firing ceased, enemy infantry attacked some of the front positions but were repelled. When the shelling resumed, some of the exposed positions were evacuated. The next day, orders were issued to prepare for a withdrawal on the night of 11-12 December and they began to extract the heavy equipment. Lieut.-Col. Jourdain, 5<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers, was of the opinion that a Bulgarian attack would occur before they could evacuate.

On the morning of 6 December, the Bulgarians opened heavy rifle and machine gun fire on the Irish positions. Their attempts to take the trenches were repelled. Some nine Bulgarian battalions failed to overcome the three of 30<sup>th</sup> Brigade. The isolated forward post on Rocky Peak was held by the 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Fusiliers, assisted by one platoon from 'D' Company of 6<sup>th</sup> Dublins under 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Richard Clive Mc Bryde-Broun. He had been recently commissioned from the ranks of the Ceylon Planters Rifles Company while serving as a Private in Egypt. They were driven off the peak but retook it in a counterattack. Lieut. Broun was killed.<sup>19</sup>



<sup>19</sup> [Http://www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)



The main attack came on the next day. The heavy mist enabled the Bulgarians to get close to the Irish positions before the assault. Rocky Peak was taken aided by machine guns installed which could fire on all of the Irish defences. Eighteen Bulgarian battalions were able to overwhelm the 7<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers and the 10<sup>th</sup> Hampshires. The troops fell back to defensive positions on the Crete Simonet and Crete Rivet ridges which were occupied by the 6<sup>th</sup> Dublins. During the fighting, ninety-seven of the Rangers and seventy-four of the Hampshires were killed. The 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Munster Fusiliers lost eight. None has a known grave.<sup>20</sup>

Private Edgar Thomas Butler of the 10<sup>th</sup> Hampshires was only sixteen years old when he was killed. His father, Thomas, was serving in France at this time. He was wounded but survived the war and had another son in 1919. Just twenty-five years later, Arthur Cecil was on an RAF mission to supply the Danish resistance when he was lost over Denmark in December 1944. His name is on a Danish RAF memorial at Rebild, in Northern Denmark as well as on the RAF memorial at Runnymede in Surrey. Edgar's name is on the Doiran Memorial. Two brothers who never met lie in unmarked graves far from their homeland.<sup>21</sup>

The Bulgarians attacked again on 8 December through heavy fog. Lieut. Charles Martin of the 6<sup>th</sup> RDF was wounded in the arm and was last seen being accompanied to the rear in a ravine between the Dublins and the French. He was not seen again. His mother hoped that he had been taken prisoner and kept a diary for him from 1 January to 25 May 1916.<sup>22</sup> His superior, Captain Drury, thought that, 'he must have been got by a chance shell when going down the Tatarli Ravine.'<sup>23</sup>

The 6<sup>th</sup> Dubs engaged with the Bulgarian attackers and then managed to slip away and got back to the village of Tatarli. According to Drury, 'Here we broke open some cases of biscuits and bully beef which Stuffer Byrne had placed there for us and gave each man as much as he could carry.'<sup>24</sup> They continued the retreat to the Dedeli Pass where, again according to Capt. Drury:<sup>25</sup>

We found Stuffer Byrne apparently in Command at the top of the Pass. He had made arrangements for each Battalion's bivouacs and had guides ready. He had big fires lit and hot food ready for everyone. There he was ordering French batteries and Irish Regiments, Zouave pioneers and English gunners, creating order out of chaos as if he were QMG. That man ought to get the DSO. He rises to the occasion and no job is too big for him to run when the need arises.

On 9 December, the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division acted as a rearguard for the French withdrawal. The Bulgarians did not resume their advance and the night passed peacefully. Officially recorded as missing on that day was twenty-one year old Lance Corporal Bertie Frederick Fish, from Norwich, formerly of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Norfolk Regiment. He died in captivity in Sofia on 27 February 1916 from wounds received in action. His grave in the Sofia War Cemetery shows his regiment as the Norfolks.<sup>26</sup> On 10 December, the Irish Division was threatened by encirclement as the French were driven back on their left. The following day, the last of the Irish troops crossed the Greek border and made for Salonika.

While some were transported by train, others had to slog the six day, ninety mile march to the city. Among them was the poet Francis Ledwidge who was serving with the 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> The diary may be read online at <http://dh.tcd.ie/martindiary/>. His sister, Marie Martin, was a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) Nurse who went on to found the Medical Missionaries of Mary.

<sup>23</sup> Drury, *Captain Noel, 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers..*

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.p.81.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.p.81.

<sup>26</sup> [Http://www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

A copy of his book *Songs of the Fields* was delivered to him while he was waiting for the Bulgarian attack. He collapsed on the way and was taken to a hospital in Salonika. He described his experiences as follows:<sup>27</sup>

The Bulgars came on like flies and though we mowed down line after line, they persisted with awful doggedness and finally gave us a bayonet charge which secured their victory; we only had 200 yards to escape by and we had to hold this until next evening and then dribble out as best we could.

After some initial difficulties in organising tents and cooking facilities, the men began to recover from their ordeal. According to Captain Drury, the officers of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dubs had a:<sup>28</sup>

Famous Christmas dinner and drank several toasts and one silent one. Byrne kept us in roars of laughter with his stories, mostly about the Regiment and its officers. ..Cromie was grouching about his hard fate in being stuck in such a place as this and ended by saying bitterly, 'It's a rotten old war.' Instantly Stuffer Byrne replied, pretending to be most indignant : 'Isn't it better than no war at all.'



Lieut. Byrne rose to be a Lt.-Colonel, M.C. and OBE.<sup>29</sup> After a winter spent building defences around the city, the Division moved to occupy a defensive line in Northern Greece. Attempts to push the Bulgarians back in 1917 were not successful. After enduring the heat and risk of malarial infection in the Struma Valley, the Division left for Egypt and Palestine on 9 September 1917.

There was a sad postscript to the fighting in Serbia. Private Patrick Downey, of the 6<sup>th</sup> Leinsters was accused of disobeying an order to fall in for fatigue duty on 26 November 1916 while serving in the frontline at Kosturino. He had been sentenced to eighty-four days Field Punishment for insubordination on the previous day. Captain Cradoch ordered him to put on his cap and he refused. Just nineteen years and nine months old, the Limerick soldier was brought before a Field General Court Martial at Hasanli on 1 December where he pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to death. Five other soldiers from the battalion were also charged with disobedience, found guilty and given various sentences. Lieutenant-General Mahon recommended that Private Downey's sentence be approved because, 'the condition of discipline in the Battalion is such as to render an exemplary punishment highly desirable...' He was bought back to Salonika and executed on 27 December. The only soldier of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division to be executed, he is buried in Mikra Cemetery, Thessaloniki.<sup>30</sup>

## Outcome

The attempt to aid the Serbs had failed. The Central Powers occupied the whole country and established strong positions along the Greek border that would prove costly to regain. The important railway link between Germany and Turkey was now secure.

<sup>27</sup> McKenna, Laura, <https://Writeso.Wordpress.Com/2013/07/15/Francis-Ledwidge-in-Serbia/>.

<sup>28</sup> Drury, Captain Noel, *6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.p.101.

<sup>29</sup> His family name was actually Byrnes.

<sup>30</sup> File W0 71/441 (London: Public Records Office).



The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division memorial in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The memorial to the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division's service in the Balkans and Gallipoli was erected at Robrovo, a short distance from the fighting on the Kosturino Ridge. It is the least known of the three Celtic cross divisional memorials erected after the war. It stands close to where those listed on the Doiran Memorial to the fallen lie in unknown graves.<sup>31</sup>



Officers of the 5<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers outside the Battalion HQ in Tatarli, November 1915.<sup>32</sup>

### New Memorial

There is project underway to restore the house in Tatarli village which was used as the Battalion HQ. A plaque will be installed to commemorate the men of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division who fought and died in the area. The building will be used by the local Moslem community for social purposes.

<sup>31</sup> For further discussion on the Salonica campaign see: Lecane, Philip, *The Cross and the Sword: Marie, Tommy and Charlie Martin in the First World War Part 2*, The Blue Cap, Journal of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association 10, (2003).Pp.1-4.

<sup>32</sup> *Photographic Archive*. Photo Reference Q55132. (London: Imperial War Museum).

It will be an information and orientation centre for visitors to the battlefield area informing the younger generations of the effect of the war on their area. It will encourage the retention and display of objects found on the battlefield and will preserve the Irish connection with the area that still holds the lost remains of those who died in the fighting. If you require further information or wish to make a donation to the development of this worthy project, no matter how small, please send an email to [rdfa@eircom.net](mailto:rdfa@eircom.net).

## **Paddy Tobin's story**

### **Paul G J Murphy**

*'When my son sits down in Paradise, I pray that the Turk who killed him may sit down beside him.'*

So said the father of Capt. Paddy Tobin, Dr Richard Francis Tobin, in 1915.

#### Introduction

This story started for me in 1990 when my mother sent me an article that Kevin Myers had written in *The Irish Times* recounting a visit to Suvla Bay and featuring both a photo and reference to her uncle, Paddy Tobin and the Pals 'D' Company of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers. I had known vaguely about Paddy Tobin, my grandmother's beloved only brother who had been killed in the Gallipoli campaign. I never heard my grandmother speak about what happened, though my mother later told me that she never did - to anyone, having been utterly devastated at the loss of her only sibling.

Today, understanding more about our country's difficult path to self-determination and more particularly, the way huge elements of our past were effectively removed from both the history books and acceptable discussion; I think I have a better appreciation of my grandmother's reticence to express more. I just wish I had taken an interest sooner.

As I learnt more about Paddy's story, I often wonder how she must have felt when both her own children, Patrick and Biddy, got on a train to Belfast in early 1940, aged just 21 and 19 respectively, in order to enlist in the British Army at the outbreak of World War Two. Paddy had been a twenty-year-old medical student when he joined the army in 1914.

In 2009, I received a copy of *The Pals at Suvla Bay* by Henry Hanna. This book was such an engrossing and revealing read, I was determined that I would finally find out more. In passing, I noticed that Paddy and his sister Sheelagh's father, Dr Richard Tobin, were Committee members behind the establishment of the RDF Pals Battalion.

There are a few remarkable letters written in August 1915 from Suvla Bay before Paddy's death. Extracts from his last letter home (held in the RDF archives) have featured widely in various books and most recently have been quoted at the Commonwealth Commemoration at Gallipoli which was attended by President Higgins and Prince Charles in April 2015.

#### Early years

Paddy was born on 6 August 1894 in Wicklow and I think spent many of his early years in the locality of Greystones. The family home however was at 60 Merrion Square, Dublin, adjacent to the old St Vincent's Hospital where Richard Francis Tobin was Head Surgeon. He was born in 1843 in Waterford and qualified as a Doctor with the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI). He joined the British Army in 1866 and served as Field Surgeon on the Suakin Expedition to the Sudan in 1878. He published several papers in medical journals on his experiences. When he left the army after twenty years, he held the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.





Paddy studied medicine at Trinity College Dublin. He played rugby for Lansdowne RFC where a number of other future RDF Pals also was members. Having entered Trinity in 1912, for the 1913/14 season, Paddy switched to playing there. He was Hon Secretary of the Dublin University Dramatic Society (DRAMSOC) and in February 1914 performed in George Bernard Shaw's *You never can tell* presented at the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin.

Paddy, who had been in the Officers Training Corps in Trinity, was one of the early recruits to Frank Browning's Pals Company of the 7<sup>th</sup> RDF. Hanna's book makes the following reference to Paddy at this time, quoting Colonel Downing: <sup>1</sup>

Captain Paddy Tobin, his (Captain Harrison's) second in command was one of the most splendid young officers I have ever known.

His work seemed to come to him naturally and he was brave and fearless to a degree. The Pals Company set sail from Exeter for Gallipoli on 10 July 1915, stopping in Valetta, Alexandria and then Mytilene, from where Paddy wrote to Sheelagh on 6 August 1915.<sup>2</sup>

*My dear Sheelagh,*

*Last night we had a great dinner on board H.M.S. ----- . Eight of us were the official guests of the ship. We dined on the quarter-deck which was all lit up with fairy lights and decorated with flags. This of course is a great honour, and has only been done a few times in the ship's history. I celebrated my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday consequently in great form.*

*Well, we're off now to do the real work, and have in about two hours to get into trawlers to pull us up to the shore. Everyone is in a great state of excitement and fuss, but all are delighted to get away from here. My next letter will probably be from the trenches – please God it will anyhow. I'm still keeping as fit as a fiddle.*

*Give my love to everyone.*

*Your loving brother,*

*Paddy.*

On 7 August 1915, the Pals disembarked at Suvla Bay. They instantly went from what until then, had been like a *Boy's Own* adventure, into the most horrendous and terrifying killing zone. On top of this, one can only begin to imagine the hardships associated with intense August sun, insects, bowel ailments and the severe dehydration due to lack of water. It was during this first engagement that Paddy played a critical role in the taking of Chocolate Hill. Paddy's own letter refers as follows:<sup>3</sup>

*On Monday I had my most trying experience so far. Our forces were attacking another hill, about 600 yards from here and of the same height and had just got to the top then they were driven back. I had to take 34 boxes of ammunition up to the firing line with 60 of D. Company. This time I was out from 6 a.m. till 9 p.m. I got up into the firing line under a hail of bullets and dumped along the ammunition but not without losing 6 more of the Company.*

It is particularly poignant to also read this message to his father in the same letter:

<sup>1</sup> Hanna, Henry, *The Pals at Suvla* (Dublin: E. Ponsonby Ltd, 1916).p.23.

<sup>2</sup> Tobin, Capt. Paddy 'D' Co. 7th R D F. (Dublin: RDFA Archive).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



*Of course when I get back with the help of my maps, and this - if you'll keep it - I will be able to explain the whole thing to you, as if you were there.*

This letter to his father (post censorship) is reasonably candid. In contrast, the tone adopted in a letter the next day to his mother is full of good cheer: <sup>4</sup>

*My Dearest Mother,*

*I sent Daddy pages yesterday so this is just an answer to all your letters received today. We are having a great time here, a hot sun, but a delightful breeze and no flies. We expect to be here till tomorrow when we go up to the firing line to relieve some other regiment. Our happiness was complete when after a good night's sleep and a bath, our first mail (18 letters for me) came in. I am going to a general confession and Holy Communion in the morning - I'll send you another long letter in a week.*

*Best love to all.*

*Your loving son,*

*Paddy.*

Even at just twenty one, the maturity and sensitivity to reassure an extremely anxious mother, while immersed in such a cauldron of human carnage, is remarkable. On 15 August, the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division attempted to take the strategic ridge of Kirtech Tepe Sirt (also known as Kizlar Dag). It was here that Paddy lost his life. The letter of Ernest Hamilton, a fellow Trinity Medical Student, to Paddy's father, best explains the circumstances: <sup>5</sup>

*Rest Camp - 19th August 1915*

*From Ernest Hamilton, D. Company 7th Batt., R.D.F.*

*Dear Mr Tobin,*

*Since our battalion arrived here, I have been fighting side by side with your noble son. I have witnessed his gallantry, which no one could excel, and saddest of all, I stood fighting by his side when he fell.*

*Well we - 'D' Company - occupied the highest knoll of the hill against which the enemy made his main attack. They brought up a huge supply of bombs, and throwing them over amongst us caused huge damage. We were then ordered to charge - which we did. Alas, the enemy were in an inaccessible position and few of us came back. We lost Major Harrison, Captain Hickman, and nearly all the men who took part in the charge.*

*Your son now took command of the Company. Our men at this time were getting badly knocked down. Paddy and I took up a position on the top of the knoll from there he controlled the fire and steadied the men. Such gallantry and coolness I have never witnessed. We fought like demons against three times our numbers and held on too. Our knoll came in for at least six attacks. During one of these your son was killed, shot through the head. He caught me by the shoulder, and when I turned he had passed away. I carried him back some distance, and placed him under shelter, but had to get back to my position and try and follow his magnificent example.*

*His death affected the men so much that I thought all was finished, but spurred by his example they fought for another hour as they have never fought before.*

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Captain C B Hoey, acting Commanding Officer, wrote to Paddy's father on 20 August as follows: <sup>6</sup>

*It would be impossible to describe the gallantry displayed by the officers and men of the Battalion..... Hamilton was beside Paddy when he fell; he was shot through the brain and died instantaneously. He died as he lived, a gallant Irish gentleman. A hero, if ever there was one.*

*.....The Colonel sent both their names in for gallantry in the field. D Company, who have been splendid throughout and are stunned at the loss of both their Captains. They would have followed Paddy anywhere.*

The aftermath.

Paddy's death took a huge toll on his parents. His mother, Frances, literally never recovered. She had not been in good health and apparently just relinquished any attempt to live, passing away in 1916. Richard Tobin, like many men, channelled his grief into his work and also by determining to see the positive. His attitude is best illustrated in this moving poem, published by Katharine Tynan in 1916: <sup>7</sup>

### **The Father**

*Captain Patrick Tobin, R.D.F. Suvla, August 15th, 1915*

Ever his eyes are fixed on a glorious sight.  
A boy is leading, calls his men to come on:  
Light as a deer he leaps, slender and bright,  
Up the hill, irresistible: it is won!

Ever he sees the boy against the sky,  
A slender Victory, light on his golden head.  
Hardly the down on his lip he hath leaped so high,  
His name is writ among the undying Dead.

Captain at one-and-twenty! Much was to come,  
Great things yet to be done, heights to be scaled;  
Love and comradeship, all fruition of bloom.  
He has attained to the highest. Not he who failed!

The mother weeps her boy who comes not again.  
The Father sees him, splendid and laughing still,  
Leaping like a young deer, calling his men.  
The glory dazzles! The boy's keeping the hill!

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Tynan, Katherine, *The Holy War* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd, 1916).p.56.

Richard or Dick Tobin was by all accounts, not only an excellent Surgeon, but also quite an outspoken and engaging character. Although he had spent twenty years in the British Army and was a supporter of the Union with Britain, he also held Irish nationalist sentiments. Like many of his contemporaries, Dick believed that the 1916 Rising was wrong and a betrayal of those who had gone to war. There was however a further dimension to him only six months after Paddy was killed, when James Connolly, was assigned to his care following incarceration. Although holding very different political views, Tobin formed a positive relationship with Connolly. It seems that the respect was reciprocated as the following extract from a biography of Connolly notes:<sup>8</sup>

After some time, a military doctor and a civilian entered the room. The white-haired elderly man asked Connolly how he was. 'As usual, Surgeon Tobin', he replied. Surgeon Tobin drew the military officer and an army officer who had been seated in the room into the conversation. Nora Connolly saw the twinkle come back into her father's eyes and heard him laugh. As Surgeon Tobin prepared to leave the room her father remarked: 'Wonderful Man. Wonderful Man. Never met his like.'

Some final reflections and a visit to Gallipoli.

Gordon (my son) and I visited the Gallipoli Peninsula on 14 and 15 August 2015 to mark the centenary of Paddy's death. As Kevin Myers said back in that original piece he wrote in *An Irishman's Diary*; 'Gallipoli is a sobering place, particularly around Suvla Bay'.<sup>9</sup> It was where we were, alone when we visited on the morning of 15 August. We also visited the Helles Memorial where Paddy's name is inscribed, along with thousands of others who have no known graves. It was I think very fitting that on the very day I was in Gallipoli on Paddy's centenary, an Irish Rugby team was in action at Lansdowne Road. I leave the last word to Mr Tom Burke Chairman of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association who in an article in the *Irish Times* published on the day. Tom wrote:<sup>10</sup>

*When we sing Ireland's Call, standing shoulder to shoulder, in a spirit of reconciliation, could we spare a thought for Paddy Tobin, Jasper Brett and the hundreds of young Turkish men who died defending their homeland in a war that should never have happened.*

I conclude with two quotations. The first was spoken in 1915 by my Great Grandfather about Paddy:

*'When my son sits down in Paradise I pray that the Turk who killed him may sit down beside him.'*

The second is the now very well-known statement attributed to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1934, who had commanded the Turkish troops defending Gallipoli.

*Those heroes who shed their blood and lost their lives on this land!  
You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country.  
Therefore rest in peace.  
There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side now here in this country.  
You the mothers who sent your sons from faraway countries!  
Wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace.  
After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.*

<sup>8</sup> Nevin, Donal, *James Connolly, a Full Life* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2005).Chapter 36.

<sup>9</sup> Editor, *The Irish Times*. 22 August 1990. Article by Kevin Myers.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 'All of Dublin felt the horror of a single brutal weekend in Gallipoli.' Article by Tom Burke.15 August 2015

While uttered many years apart, there is nice harmony in these two sentiments and this is also something that resonates on visiting the peninsula and seeing how the two sides have remembered their fallen. It took me a long time to get there, but I am very glad that I eventually did.

Paul G.J. Murphy  
Howth,  
Co. Dublin

May 2016

Many people have assisted me in various ways and I would particularly like to thank the following.

Kevin Myers  
Myles Dungan  
Ciaran O'Mara, Lansdowne FC  
Sean Connolly, RDF Association  
Tom Burke, RDF Association  
Liam O'Callaghan, Liverpool Hope University  
James Durney, Historian, Naas  
Mary Clark, City Archivist, Dublin City Library, Pearse St.

## The day London remembered The Royal Dublin Fusiliers

John Toohey and Tom Burke.

It was on 25 April 1915 that beach landings were made by Australian & New Zealand troops at what became known as Anzac Cove; British & Irish troops landed at five beaches on Cape Helles and the French landed a Kum Kale beach (a diversionary action). 'V' Beach at Cape Helles was where the 1<sup>st</sup> RDF came ashore mainly in open tows and on the *SS River Clyde*. Casualties were enormous. When they set sail for Gallipoli from England on 16 March 1915, the 1<sup>st</sup> RDF battalion strength was twenty-five officers and 987 other ranks.<sup>1</sup> The battalion casualties incurred from the attack on 'V' Beach were twenty-four officers and 613 other ranks. The battalion strength on 30 April 1915 was one officer and 374 other ranks.<sup>2</sup> Of those who came ashore on 25 April 1915, according to Wyll: <sup>3</sup>

There remained at the final evacuation no more than eleven non-commissioned officers and men who had served continuously throughout the campaign without having been invalided by reason of wounds or sickness.

Remarkably though, the objective of the 25 April 1915 - Hill 141 - was taken, albeit a day later. The day is hugely significant for the Australians & New Zealanders and is an annual public holiday which often overshadows the role played by the British and Irish troops.

To commemorate the centenary of the landings of the 1<sup>st</sup> RDF at 'V' Beach, sixteen members of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association who travelled from Dublin to London, marched passed the Cenotaph in London on Saturday 25 April 2015. Several old members of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers marched alongside the Dubs Association members too. Among the Dublin's group were Dr. Patricia and Miss Margaret Horne, twin daughters' of Dr. Andrew Horne RAMC who served as a doctor in Gallipoli. The BBC journalist Fergal Keane had interviewed these ladies in their Dublin home prior to their departure from Dublin. They both appeared on BBC 1 News. Amazingly these two ladies in their late eighties stood on parade in Whitehall for over two hours awaiting the call by the Guards, Royal Marine and Turkish Air Force bands to march past the Cenotaph. Three young soldiers, who had been on parade for the same length of time beside these ladies, fell off the parade feeling faint, and yet these two Irish ladies stood firm all that time. Nothing was going to hold them back from marching past the Cenotaph that morning in memory of their father. I wonder if HM The Queen had known these two Irish ladies, of her own vintage, stood for two cold hours in memory of their father, would she later have invited them for tea. Another member of the RDFA who marched passed the Cenotaph that morning was Mrs. Marie Plane nee Guilfoyle, the granddaughter of RSM Michael Guilfoyle. All three ladies wore their father's and grandfather's medals with pride and as they passed the Cenotaph, at which a wreath was laid by the Irish Ambassador, Mr Dan Mulhall. People watching the parade from the kerbside clapped as the Dubs ladies marched past. When the parade ended near Wellington Barracks, there was a lot of emotion shown by those of us who marched. Patrick Arnold stood for a moment of silent reflection at the Guards memorial in memory of his father who had served with the Dublins in Gallipoli. Great credit must go to a couple of parade marshals, who for safety reasons, marched alongside our two ladies all the way. We never got their names, so whoever you chaps are, you did your country proud.

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<sup>1</sup> Wyll, H.C, *Neill's Blue Caps 1826-1914*, vol. II (Cork: Schull Books, 1996).p.16.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.p.39.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.p.63. For a concise account of the landings of the 1<sup>st</sup> RDF in Gallipoli in April 1915, see: Lecane, Philip, *Beneath a Turkish Sky. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Assault on Gallipoli* (Dublin: The History Press, 2015).



But our sense of pride did not end with the parade. Included in the Order of Service that took place earlier at the Cenotaph was a reading given by twenty-two year old Michael Toohey, the great- great nephew of Private Thomas Toohey of the 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers who was killed at 'V' Beach on 25 April 1915. Private Thomas Toohey was born on 17 January 1893 and Michael Toohey was born on 17 November 1992, two month and 100 years apart; Michael being almost the exact age of Thomas when he fell 100 years before at 'V' Beach. What a moment in history this was for that old Irish regiment. Out of all the British and ANZAC regiments who took part in the Gallipoli campaign and whose descendants were represented at the Cenotaph on 25 April 2015, it was the Dublin Fusiliers who were chosen and given pride of place at the Cenotaph in London to represent all those who served and died in Gallipoli. *The Telegraph* described the scene at the Cenotaph on 25 April 2015: <sup>4</sup>

For some in London the tears came when a Royal Marines bugler played Last Post. But for many it was when 22-year-old Michael Toohey began to read Laurence Binyon's familiar eulogy *The Fallen*: "They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old". As the crowds lining Whitehall intoned, "We shall remember them", the last words of Binyon's verse, the Queen stepped forward to lead the wreath-laying in remembrance of the tens of thousands slaughtered on the beaches of the Dardanelles. Among those killed on April 25, 1915, was Mr Toohey's ancestor, Private Thomas Toohey, who died – also aged 22 – when the Royal Dublin Fusiliers disembarked from the collier River Clyde and fought their way ashore. He was one of 29,000 British and Irish soldiers killed before their surviving comrades were eventually evacuated from Gallipoli eight months later, in December 1915, at the end of the disastrous campaign.

Thomas's younger brother Joseph Toohey, joined up immediately on hearing of his brother's death in Gallipoli. Sadly he too was killed serving with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers on 21 March 1918. <sup>5</sup>Soon after the parade, our group headed off to Holy Trinity Church in Eltham. We had been invited to attend a Gallipoli Service of Remembrance. In 1917, Holy Trinity's Gallipoli Chapel was created by Henry Hall, then Vicar of the parish who had served as a Chaplain with the 29<sup>th</sup> Division. <sup>6</sup>The RDFA had donated towards the cost of refurbishing a RDF regimental crest on display in the chapel. We arrived a bit late, but our Standard was graciously placed at the foot of the altar alongside other standards of past regiments who served on the Peninsula. The central theme of the service was that of reconciliation. The reading included those famous words of reconciliation spoken by Atatürk in 1934. In his sermon, the Bishop of Woolwich, the Right Reverend Dr Michael Ipgrave OBE, reflected on the tragic loss of young lives in Gallipoli, of friend and foe alike.

And so our Gallipoli day of remembrance ended. It was the day London remembered the Dublin Fusiliers. For the descendants who took part in it, a chapter in their family histories was closed. Leaving aside the historic tragedy and legacy associated with Gallipoli and the appalling loss of young lives lost on all sides in that ill-fated campaign, it would have been a shame had the old Dublins, the Munster and Inniskillings not been remembered. We didn't forget ye lads, rest now in peace.

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<sup>4</sup> Sawyer, Patrick, *At Gallipoli and London They Came to Remember the Dead of the Dardanelles*, *The Telegraph* 25 April 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Toohey, Michael, *Brothers in Arms*, *The Blue Cap*, Journal of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association 15, (15 December 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Elliott, Brian CF, *The Centenary of the Gallipoli Landings Liturgy of Commemoration Holy Trinity Eltham* (Eltham, London: Holy Trinity Church, 2015).p.3.



Members of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association outside Wellington Barracks in London after the parade past the Cenotaph. Patricia and Margaret Horne are the two ladies on the left end of the front row. The parade marshals who looked after us are seen standing on the end of the left hand side of the above group. If any members of The Gallipoli Association know these men, could they please tell them there is a pint of the black stuff waiting for them in Dublin.

## **RDFA member Michael Lee wins Gallipoli Association award**

As part of its centenary commemorations, The Gallipoli Association (GA) organised a photographic competition to capture the spirit and history of Gallipoli (Çanakkale). The closing date for entries was 31 December 2015, and since then the GA have gone through the wonderful images that were sent in. The theme, 'Images of Gallipoli', was open to individual interpretation although the entries needed to respect the events that took place on the peninsula in 1915 and have the battlefields at their heart. Entrants were not restricted to only GA members. The centenary committee of the GA received a mix of entries from entrants living all over the world who had a personal interest in the area and its history.

In total, the GA received eighty-five photographs, ranging from cemeteries and memorials, living history groups to modern life and battlefield panoramas which included the fauna and flora of the region and the remaining scars on landscape.

With so many excellent entries the final decision was never going to be easy, however our judge, professional photographer Michael St Maur Shiel managed to select a winner and two fabulous runners-up. The winning entry is taking pride of place on the front cover of the next edition of *The Gallipolian*, and the runners-up will have their images shown inside the journal.

Congratulations go to RDFA member Michael Lee who was awarded the first prize of £250 with the winning photograph, captioned 'W Beach'. Well done Michael from all your friends in the RDFA.



Michael's winning photograph 'W' Beach

## **Gallipoli Centenary Commemorations in The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in 2015**

**April 21<sup>st</sup> Tuesday evening:** Gallipoli Panel Discussion presented by The Irish Historical Society at Boston College Dublin St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. Chaired by Professor Marian Lyons NUI Maynooth and Boston College Dublin, papers on the Gallipoli campaign were presented by Dr William Mulligan, UCD; Mr Tom Burke RDFA and UCD; Dr David Murphy NUI Maynooth.

**April 22<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday afternoon:** Opening of exhibition on the RDF in Gallipoli. This was a joint project run by the RDFA and Dublin City Library and Archive. The exhibition was opened at Dublin City Library and Archive, 138-144 Pearse Street, Dublin by the Australian and Turkish Ambassadors to Ireland.

**April 24<sup>th</sup> Friday evening, 25<sup>th</sup> Saturday and 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday:** *Gallipoli 100*. A two-day seminar on WW1 with emphasis on Ireland's role in the Gallipoli campaign. Events included lectures, poetry reading, exhibitions and WW1 antiques roadshow. The seminar was run by the Hay Festival (Kells) and *The History Show*, RTE, Radio 1.

**April 25<sup>th</sup> Saturday morning:** Gallipoli dawn service of remembrance was held at 6:30 a.m. in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Blackhorse Avenue, Cabra, Dublin. The Irish Defence Forces participated in the Service.

**April 25<sup>th</sup> Saturday morning:** Members of RDFA attended a parade at Cenotaph in London. Irish Ambassador laid a wreath at the Cenotaph. Reading at Cenotaph was carried out by Michael Toohey, age 22, descendant of Pte. Thomas Toohey 1<sup>st</sup> RDF, KIA 25 April 1915 at 'V' Beach, Gallipoli. See article attached.

**April 25<sup>th</sup> Saturday afternoon:** Lecture: *Beneath a Turkish Sky: The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Assault on Gallipoli*. Speaker was Mr Philip Lecane. Venue: Dublin City Library and Archive, 138-144 Pearse Street, Dublin 2.

**April 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday evening:** Gallipoli Service of Remembrance. This centenary year the annual Gallipoli Service of Remembrance was held in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. Following the service, there was a reception in Dublin Castle hosted by the Minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys T.D. The Services was organised and co-ordinated by the Committee of the Ireland- New Zealand Society.

**May 1<sup>st</sup> Friday noon:** A school's presentation of project work on Gallipoli was presented at National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Dublin.

**August 9<sup>th</sup> Sunday:** The Northern Ireland World War 1 Centenary Committee held a Service in Lisburn Cathedral to commemorate the Gallipoli campaign. Representatives of the Northern and Southern Irish Governments attended along with the High Commissioners of Australia and New Zealand. Members of the RDFA attended and the RDFA Standard was paraded at the service by Capt.(Retd) Seamus Greene.

**November 14<sup>th</sup> Saturday:** The National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, presented a one day seminar on the Gallipoli campaign titled *Gallipoli Perspectives*. The seminar was moderated by Tom Burke, Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association and organised with the support of The British Embassy in Ireland. Speakers and titles of papers were the following:

*Gallipoli: Road to Republic*, presented by His Excellency Ambassador Necip Egüz, Embassy of the Republic of Turkey.

*Gallipoli - rethinking the Irish Great War narrative*, presented by Philip Orr, author of *Field of Bones: An Irish Division at Gallipoli*.

*Gallipoli: War and Family*, presented by David Davin Power, RTÉ's Political Correspondent and co-presenter with Mr Michael Lee of the RTE TV documentary on Gallipoli titled, *Ireland's Forgotten Heroes*.

*Gallipoli, memory, and nationalism in Australia and New Zealand*, presented by Dr Jennifer Wellington, School of History & Archives, UCD.

*Past as Possession: Twitter and #Anzac100*, presented by Neale Rooney, a recent graduate of the MA in Digital Humanities from Maynooth University.

### **Exhibitions and events in which the RDFA had an input.**

- To commemorate the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign, the RDFA and Dublin City Archive present an excellent exhibition at Dublin City Library and Archives in Pearse Street, Dublin which tells the story of the RDF in Gallipoli with particular emphasis on the individuals who served in that ill-fated campaign of 1915.
- The National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks, Dublin, presents an exhibition titled; *Recovered Voices: the Stories of the Irish at war 1914-1915*. Detailing the stories of twenty-one Irish men and women, the exhibition uses original objects and interactive material to illustrate the human impact of the war on their lives.
- The National Library of Ireland in Kildare Street, Dublin presents an exhibition titled; *World War I Ireland: Exploring the Irish Experience*. Again, very much focusing on the human experience of war, running from November 2014 to 2018, the exhibition draws on the NLI's collections of letters, diaries, recruiting posters, newspaper reports dating between 1914 and 1918.
- *Pals – The Irish at Gallipoli*. This play, recently nominated for an Irish Times theatre award and received marvellous reviews and attendance, was presented in Collins Barracks Dublin for several runs in 2015. The play told the story of selected men from 'D' Company, the Pals, of the 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers who fought at Suvla Bay in August 1915. Presented by ANU Productions, the National Museum of Ireland and the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht and in association with the National Archives of Ireland, ICTU and the RDFA.
- Congratulations to Philip Lecane on the publication of his book titled: *Beneath Turkish Sky: The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Assault on Gallipoli*.





Mr James Burke (left) presented his MA thesis on the RDF in Gallipoli to Capt. (Retd) Seamus Greene, RDFA on 25 April 2015. The thesis is on deposit in the RDFA Archive in Dublin City Library and Archive, Pearse Street, Dublin.



His Excellency Mr Necip Eguz, the 2015 Turkish Ambassador to Ireland with Margaret (left) and Patricia Horne at the RDFA annual dinner on 4 December 2015. Margaret's and Patricia's father Dr Andrew Horne served as a doctor with the Royal Army Medical Corps in Gallipoli.



Lanterns at headstones at Gallipoli Dawn Service in Blackhorse Avenue Cemetery Dublin on 25 April 2015.  
Photograph supplied by Patrick Lynch.



President Michael D Higgins laying a wreath at Gallipoli Dawn Service in Blackhorse Avenue Cemetery, Dublin on 25 April 1915.

Photograph supplied by Patrick Lynch.

## **Remembering the tragedy of Mouse Trap Farm 100 years on Mass at St. Nicholas of Myra in Francis Street, Dublin**

On Wednesday 24 May 1916, a first anniversary death notice was placed on the front page of *The Irish Independent* newspaper which read: ‘In sad and loving memory of my dear husband Sgt. William Malone, 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who was killed in action at St. Julien on May 24<sup>th</sup> 1915. Sweet Heart of Jesus have mercy on his soul.... Inserted by his loving wife and children.’<sup>1</sup> See next page. Just below Mrs Malone’s notice was another first anniversary death notice referring to Privates John, Peter and Patrick McDonnell from Bride Street which is not too far from Francis Street in the heart of Dublin’s Liberties. Private John McDonnell’s mother had placed this death notice stating that; ‘a Mass will be offered for the repose of his (John’s) soul in the Church of St. Nicholas of Myra, Francis Street.’

To commemorate the loss suffered by the McDonnell and Malone families and, indeed, the massive loss suffered by the 2<sup>nd</sup> RDF following that dreadful German gas attack in April and May 1915 at Mouse Trap Farm, north of Ieper, about 100 members and friends of the RDFA attended a Mass celebrated by Fr Martin Dolan in the Church of St. Nicholas of Myra in Francis Street, Dublin on Saturday 23 May 2015. The loss suffered by the 2<sup>nd</sup> RDF was as bad as the loss their comrades in the 1<sup>st</sup> RDF suffered at Gallipoli during the same months. Many of the men from both RDF battalions came from Dublin’s inner city.

The RDFA Standard was reverently paraded in the church by Capt. (retd) Seamus Greene and traditionally placed at the foot of the altar during the Mass. Our thanks must go to Fr Martin for his kindness in celebrating the Mass at which all the men of the parish who died in the war were prayed for, particularly the three McDonnell brothers. Mrs Malone lost another son, Michael, fighting with the Irish Volunteers at Mount Street Bridge a week or so previous to the Mass. War and revolution left its mark on this Dublin family.

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<sup>1</sup> Editor, *The Irish Independent*. 24 May 1916.



ended to. W. ...

**IN MEMORIAM**

**BRENNAN**—In loving memory of Francis A. Brennan, Pals, R.D.F., killed at Dublin, 24th April, 1916. On whose soul, Sweet Jesus, have mercy. Australian papers, please copy.

**FEGAN**—Twelfth Anniversary—In sad and loving memory of Mrs. Catherine Fegan, daughter of Thomas and Catherine Lynch, Oriel street, who departed this life 24th May, 1904. On whose soul, Sweet Jesus, have mercy. Holy Mary, pray for her. Inserted by her fond mother. Australian and American papers, please copy.

**KEEGAN**—First Anniversary—In sad and loving memory of my dear wife, Margaret Keegan (née Dunne), late of 8 Strandville avenue, North Strand, who departed this life on Whit Monday, 24th May, 1915. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on her soul.

**KELLY**—First Anniversary—In sad and loving memory of Margaret (Dotie), eldest child of the late Stephen O'Connor, who died at her mother's residence, 63 Heytesbury street. Mother of Good Counsel, pray for her.

**MALONE**—First Anniversary—In sad and loving memory of my dear husband, Sergt. William Malone, 2nd R. D. Fus., who was killed in action at St. Julien, on May 24, 1915. Sweet Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul. R.I.P.  
 One lonely year has passed away  
 Since Death's cold hand did take you,  
 But never more in this cold world  
 Will my fond thoughts forsake you.  
 —Inserted by his loving wife and children.

**McDONNELL**—Private John McDonnell (8982), 2nd Batt. R.D.F. (late of 46 Bride street), killed in action, May 24, 1915. Mass will be offered for the repose of his soul in the Church of St. Nicholas of Myra, Francis street. R.I.P.  
 —Inserted by his mother, father, and sisters.

**McDONNELL**—Private Peter McDonnell (9443), 2nd Batt. R.D.F. (late of 46 Bride street), killed in action, April 26, 1916. Mass will be offered for the repose of his soul in the Church of St. Nicholas of Myra, Francis street. R.I.P.  
 —Inserted by his father, mother, and sisters.

**McDONNELL**—Private Patrick McDonnell (8848), 2nd Batt. R.D.F. (late of 38 Bride street), killed in action, May 24, 1915. Mass will be offered for the repose of his soul in the Church of St. Nicholas of Myra, Francis street. R.I.P.  
 —Inserted by his wife and children.

**ANTHONY O'NEILL & SON.**  
**Funeral Requisites of Every Description.**  
**COUNTRY UNDERTAKERS SUPPLIED.**  
**171 NORTH STRAND,**  
**30 BOLTON STREET & 120 JAMES'S STREET.**  
 Telephone. 553.

**GENEALOGY'S**

Newspaper cutting May 1916 ?.



**For Dublin at Christmas**  
**An Unforgettable Encounter**  
**Marjorie Quarton**

My father, Standish Smithwick, was born in an Irish village where his father was Church of Ireland Rector. He spent a lot of time at my old home, Crannagh, near Nenagh in county Tipperary. He inherited the farm when he retired and was happy there. I think he would have been a farmer rather than a soldier given the choice, but, like many of his generation, he had no choice. He fought in the Boer War, where he was sympathetic to the Boers by instinct, but carried on obeying orders. He was a Lieutenant then and a Captain when the First World War broke out in August 1914.

He was transferred from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in 1914. In France from the beginning, he fought at Le Cateau in late August 1914. It is well known that owing to blunders in high places, the time up to Christmas 1914 was a confused and bloody exercise, gaining nothing. On Christmas Eve, the battalion was close to Hill 63 and Messines in an area that would be fought over for more than three years with fearful losses. A day or two before Christmas Eve 1914, my father had been hit by a sniper's bullet which grazed the top of his ear and drew a line to his eyebrow. For the rest of his life, he had a white scar and the top of his ear that used to bleed and scab over from time to time. On Christmas Day, he was still wearing a dressing on the wound, but was perfectly fit.

We all know the story of the Christmas Truce of 1914. In fact we have all heard apocryphal stories too. Like the football match. I read recently that a chaplain plans to re-enact that match around now (December 2014). The article is illustrated by a photo of a group of soldiers playing football. They all wear the same uniform – remarkably light gear for ground frozen hard, with snow to follow next day. I checked and found they were British troops going to Salonika.

It is true though that the Germans sang Christmas carols and some of the Irish and British joined the singing. Then first the Germans, then the allies emerged unarmed from their trenches and mingled in no-man's land. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers were opposite to a Saxon regiment and were later relieved by a Highland regiment.

I recall my father telling me that as he walked towards the Germans, a young officer went up to him and held out his hand. Nodding at the dressing, he said in perfect English; 'I did that. I am glad I did not kill you.' I would imagine my father's response was, 'so am I.' He asked the young German officer, whose name was Sigmund (or maybe Siegmund) what an officer was doing sniping from a tree. 'I saw the blighter,' he said, 'miles away. It was a fluke shot.' Sigmund continued; 'Wait a minute' and ran back to his trench and emerged with a rifle (the only weapon anywhere in sight). He showed my father the telescopic sight. 'It is the first,' he said. 'I am the best shot in Germany, so I was ordered to "bag an officer."' He had almost succeeded.

It seemed that he was not of the Saxon regiment; in fact he may not have been a regular soldier at all. He was from Bavaria, passionate about horses and a crack shot. The two men had a great deal in common besides a love of horses. They were countrymen, keen on sports and well educated. They loved horses. They parted with reluctance. My father gave Sigmund a souvenir; he couldn't remember what it was. Sigmund gave him a pocket calendar for 1915 with a picture of the Kaiser on it and a photo of a group of British prisoners being rounded up by Germans. I have them still.

That truce might have ended the war, but after a short time, all were ordered back to the business of killing each other. My father told me the story several times when I was a child and impressed on me how it had changed his thinking. A humane man, he hadn't joined the army for choice, but treated it as a career with opportunities for seeing the world.



He said to me that he hadn't thought much about the, 'honour and glory' of a military career, but had been schooled to think war a glorious affair (for the winners, anyway). After meeting Sigmund, his outlook changed. He said, 'there may be some glory when one empire beats another at war. When Standish is sent out to kill Sigmund and Sigmund is sent out to kill Standish, there is neither honour nor glory; just a waste of lives, no matter who wins.' He told me to remember that and repeated the story until he died.

In May 1915, he encountered Sigmund again, when they met face to face, guns raised, at the corner of an undamaged farm-house, later known as Mouse Trap Farm. My father, suspecting a trap, had approached alone through woodland. Sigmund had presumably had the same idea. Neither spoke. Each turned his back and returned the way he had come. Probably both were frightened, but reasonably sure they wouldn't be shot. After five months, this might seem like an unlikely encounter – and so it was, up to a point. But the movement of regiments followed a pattern, so that these two battalions were once more facing one another.

This meeting, at Mouse Trap Farm quite a short distance from their original meeting, reinforced my father's thinking. He worried that he might have wounded or even killed the younger man. As it happened, the house was a shield, not for guns but for gas, first used on a large scale on this occasion. All the Dublins in the trench were gassed, as gasmasks were in their infancy and their respirators not very efficient. When the dead and dying had been removed, their place was taken by a Canadian unit in their first action of the war. The gas was dispersed, but the battle that followed was a costly one.

See Marjorie's article on her father also in *The Blue Cap* . Vol.9 September 2001. For further reading on the events at Mouse Trap Farm in May 1915, see. *The Blue Cap*. Vol.8 June 2001, and, Burke, Tom. *The 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Tragedy of Mouse Trap Farm April and May 1915*. Dublin: RDFA, 2005. Available from The RDFA website at [www.greatwar.ie](http://www.greatwar.ie)



Regimental Standards of Irish Regiments and wreaths at the war memorial tree in  
St. Patrick's Cathedral Dublin, November 2015.  
Photograph supplied by Patrick Lynch.

## The Pearse and the Brennock brothers

### Two families of Row Boys

#### Des Byrne

To any past pupil of Westland Row the names Patrick and Willie immediately bring to mind the Brothers Pearse whose stories have been told and retold to generations over the almost 100 years since their deaths. To mark the old school's sesquicentennial, the PPU managed to gain access to the early school roll books. Their acquisition, in digital format, was marked by a visit to the school by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, on 20 November 2014.

Looking back, it is slightly surprising to see how limited the references to the Pearse brothers are. William's entry is clear and unambiguous. It shows the family address in the then Brunswick Street and confirms the occupation of his father as a sculptor. Ironically, the more famous Patrick almost slips through the net. He is referred to only in an abbreviated class listing on page 303 of the records for 1888-97, almost certainly 1890. He appears there as Patk. Pierse (sic). We do also, of course, have some photographic evidence of Patrick with his classmates. We know also of other past pupils who played a prominent role in the Rising- Michael Malone who led the IRA unit at the Battle of Mount Street Bridge. His brother Sgt. Willie Malone was killed with the 2<sup>nd</sup> RDF. There was also the Pedreschi brothers who were active in Oglagh na hEireann in those years.

Less well known however are the past pupils who died in the Great War of 1914-1918. Given what we know about the numbers of Irishmen who died in that awful conflict, it would be surprising if Row boys escaped the carnage. One of the projects being undertaken by the PPU this year (2015) is an attempt to remember these brave men. The project is only in its very early stages but already we have discovered one story which we feel deserves to be told.

The Brennocks were a large family who, at the time of the 1901 Census, were living in No. 2 Island Villas, just off Brunswick (Pearse) Street- behind the old National School. The father, Michael was then a forty-two-year old Miller from Tipperary, who had married a Dublin girl (Mary Bolger, also forty-two). Given his occupation and address, I think it is fair to guess that Michael worked at Boland's Mills which itself played an important role in those tumultuous times. Despite their youth, the Brennocks had eight sons and two daughters. I have established definitively so far that at least five of the sons were Row Boys. Patrick, their eldest boy, who was born a year after Willie Pearse, was eighteen at the time of the 1901 Census and working as a machinist. He had left home by the time of the next Census in 1911. I suspect he joined the Royal Navy. The next record we have of him was his death on board *HMS Europa*. He is remembered at the Portsmouth Navy Memorial. De Rouvigny's Roll of Honour (Vol. 4, page 18) notes that Patrick was appointed to *HMS Syrius*, one of Admiral Hood's Squadron, which took part in the bombardment of the Belgian coast. He later served on *HMS Europa* engaged in the landing of troops at Gallipoli, where he contracted dysentery and died at sea on 26 August 1915. Interestingly De Rouvigny's Roll specifically mentions that Patrick was educated at the Christian Brother's School, Westland Row, Dublin.

Extraordinarily he was not the first of the family to die in the conflict- nor was he the last. Willie, a couple of years younger - had also joined the British Forces before the outbreak of war. He was a member of the Irish Guards who suffered dreadful casualties in the First Battle of Ypres. Willie Brennock died at Klein Zillebeke on 6 November 1914. He is remembered on The Menin Gate at Ypres. Two sets of brothers, sharing the same first names, Patrick and Willie, each born two years apart, living a few hundred meters apart and all attending Westland Row within a total time span of eight years and illustrating the multiple and complex strands of Irish identity and history. Mary Brennock's suffering was not yet complete however. On 28 February 1917, a third son, Thomas, by then aged twenty-eight, died at Sailly-Saillisel where he was buried. He was a sergeant serving with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers and he is remembered at The Thiepval Memorial.

As he has no marked grave, at this time it seems likely that the graveyard fell victim to later bombing-one of the reasons that so many victims now have no known resting place. Thomas originally enlisted in The Royal Army Medical Corps on 19 January 1915. He was later transferred to The King's Shropshire Light Infantry and finally to The Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He was obviously a very highly regarded soldier, having been promoted to the rank of Sergeant in the two years since enlistment. Even more remarkable, De Rouvigny's Roll mentions that he was under orders to return to England on 3 March 1917 to obtain a commission. Unfortunately he had been killed four days earlier.

An "In Memory" piece for Michael appeared on page one of The Freeman's Journal on 28 February 1918, a year after his death. He is mentioned in *The Irish Times* of the same date. His memorial reads-"Son of Michael and Mary Brennock of Dublin. His brothers, William and Patrick, also fell". One can only sense the anguish of the parents at that line. The 1911 Census makes clear that the family had moved home to No. 18 Shelbourne Road by then. De Rouvigny's Roll makes it clear that the family subsequently moved to Galway, a fact confirmed by Thomas' will, which can be viewed on The Irish National Archives website. One suspects that the reason for the move to Galway was linked to Michael's occupation as a miller. Their final known address was No. 4 Mill Street Galway. In passing, De Rouvigny's Roll also mentions that both Willie and Thomas were educated by The Christian Brothers in Dublin, without specifically mentioning Westland Row. None of the bodies of the three brothers have any known resting place. It seems fitting that we should remember them at this time.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Des Byrne would like to acknowledge the help of Conor Dodd of Glasnevin Cemetery Trust in fleshing out the detail of this article.

**Presentation of New Colours to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers**  
**1 July 1911 by**  
**H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught and Strathern**  
**Phil Carter**

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers were formed in 1881 under the Cardwell Reforms from the 102<sup>nd</sup> Royal Madras Fusiliers and the 103<sup>rd</sup> Royal Bombay Fusiliers. At the beginning of 1911, the 2<sup>nd</sup> RDF was still carrying the old colours of the Royal Bombay Fusiliers. The King's Colour, especially was in very bad repair consisting of only the bordering trim and the Red Cross of St. George at its centre. New Colours were presented to the Battalion on 1 July 1911, just a week after the Coronation of King George V on 22 June. The colours were presented by the Colonel in Chief of the Regiment, Field Marshall H.R.H. Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathern, who arrived at the Queen's Parade, Aldershot by motor car, a feature worthy of note in the newspapers of the time. The battalion was drawn up on parade under its commanding officer, Colonel Bromilow. The parade ground was enclosed by men of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Grenadier Guards and 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.

The Ceremony began with the Trooping of the old colours whilst the band of the regiment played a selection of music under the direction of its Bandmaster, Mr. W. Scraggs and the Sergeant Drummer, (whose name is not recorded in accounts of the proceedings). The tunes played were the following:

March of the Drums	Wearing of the Green
Slow March of the Band and Drums	Let Erin Remember
Quick March of the Band and Drums	St. Patrick
Drummers' Call	
March of the Escort	British Grenadiers
March of the Old Colours	Come Back to Erin
Farewell March of the Old Colours	Auld Lang Syne.

The battalion then formed three sides of a square and the new colours were dedicated by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Taylor Smith, Chaplain General. The Colonel-in-Chief then presented the New Colours to the battalion who in turn reformed the line and saluted the new colours before marching past the saluting base and escorting the old and new colours to the officer's mess.

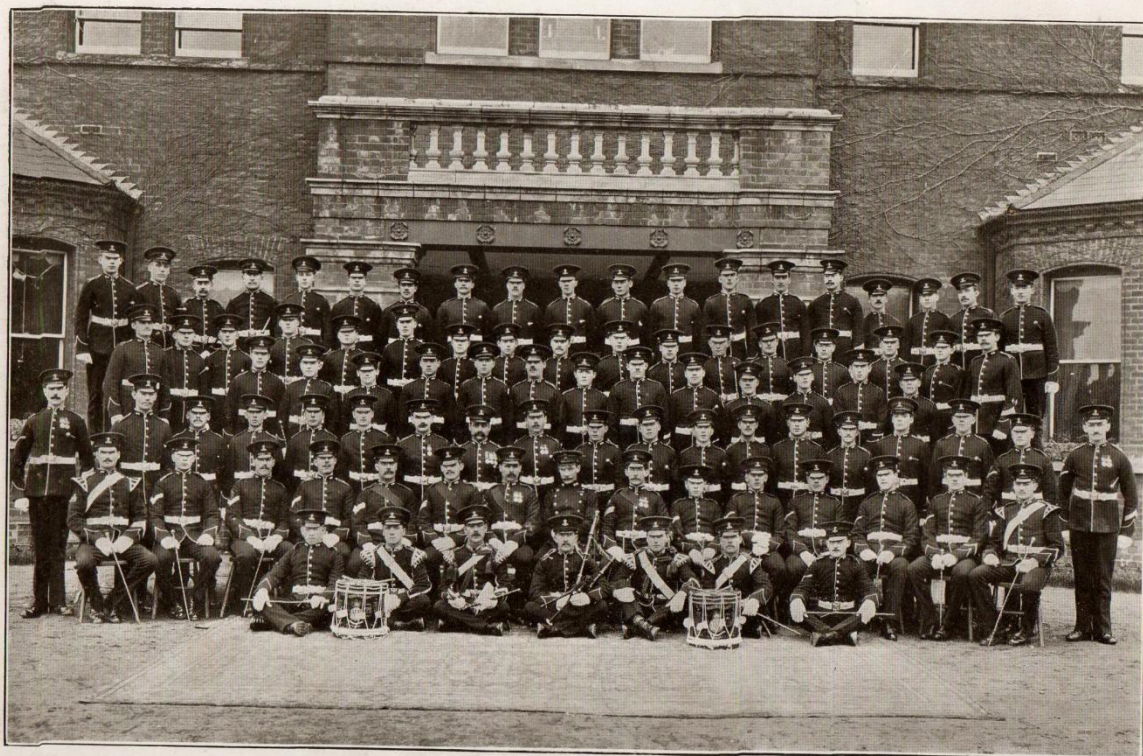
After the ceremony, a commemorative booklet produced by military publishers Gale and Polden was presented to each member of the battalion.<sup>1</sup> This included photographs of the parade, the drums, band, sergeant drummer and the pipes of the battalion. The pipers are shown wearing the normal uniform of the men of the battalion, without drummers' wings, or any distinguishing badge and certainly not in the saffron kilts later to become fashionable in the Irish regiments. The pipers are holding the two drone Irish war pipes with keyless chanter then in use by most Irish regiments, rather than the musically more versatile three drone Brian Boru being used by the London Irish Rifles or the Highland Warpipes then (and now) favoured by pipers of the Scottish regiments. Oddly the presentation book fails to mention the playing of the pipers during the parade, or indeed whether the pipes paraded with the band at all on this occasion.

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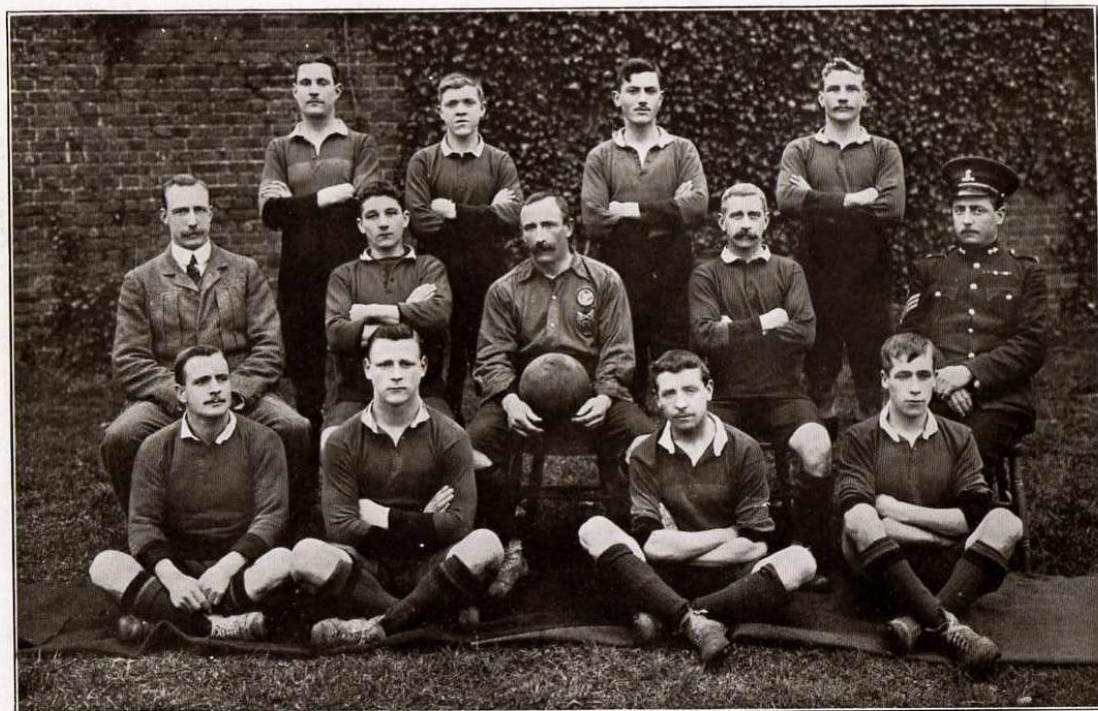
<sup>1</sup> *Souvenir Commemorative Presentation of New Colours to 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers* (Wellington Works, Aldershot: Gale and Polden Ltd, 1911). See also Wylly, H C, *Crown and Company, the Historical Records of the 2nd Batt. Royal Dublin Fusiliers Vol. 2 1911-1922* (Aldershot: Gale and Poulden Ltd, 1923). And Harris, R G, *The Irish Regiments 1683-1999* (Kent: Spellmount Ltd, 1989).



The colours presented on that day stayed with the battalion throughout the First World War. Along with colours of other Irish Regiments disbanded on creation of the Irish Free State, the 2<sup>nd</sup> RDF colours were laid up in June 1922 at the Tower of London. They are still in St. George's Chapel in Windsor Castle. The following are just some samples of photographs from the booklet.

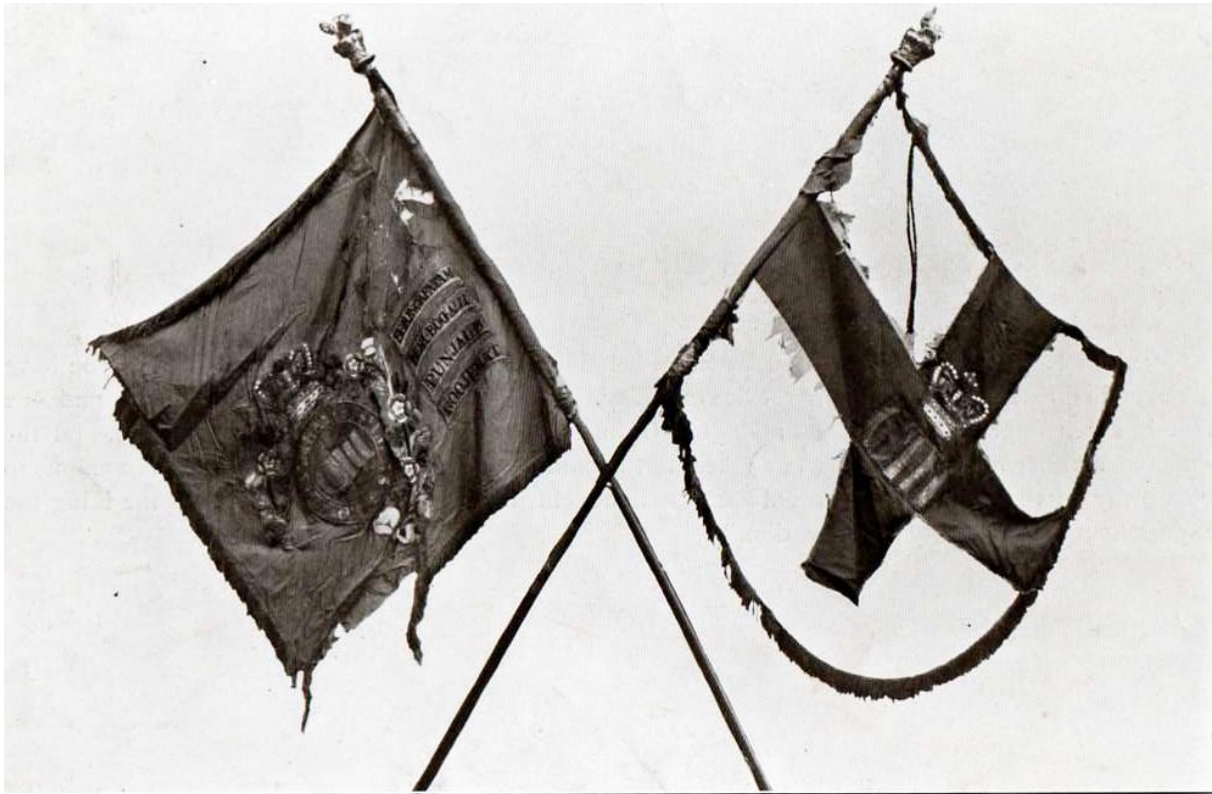


"A" COMPANY.—Captain L. F. RENNY.

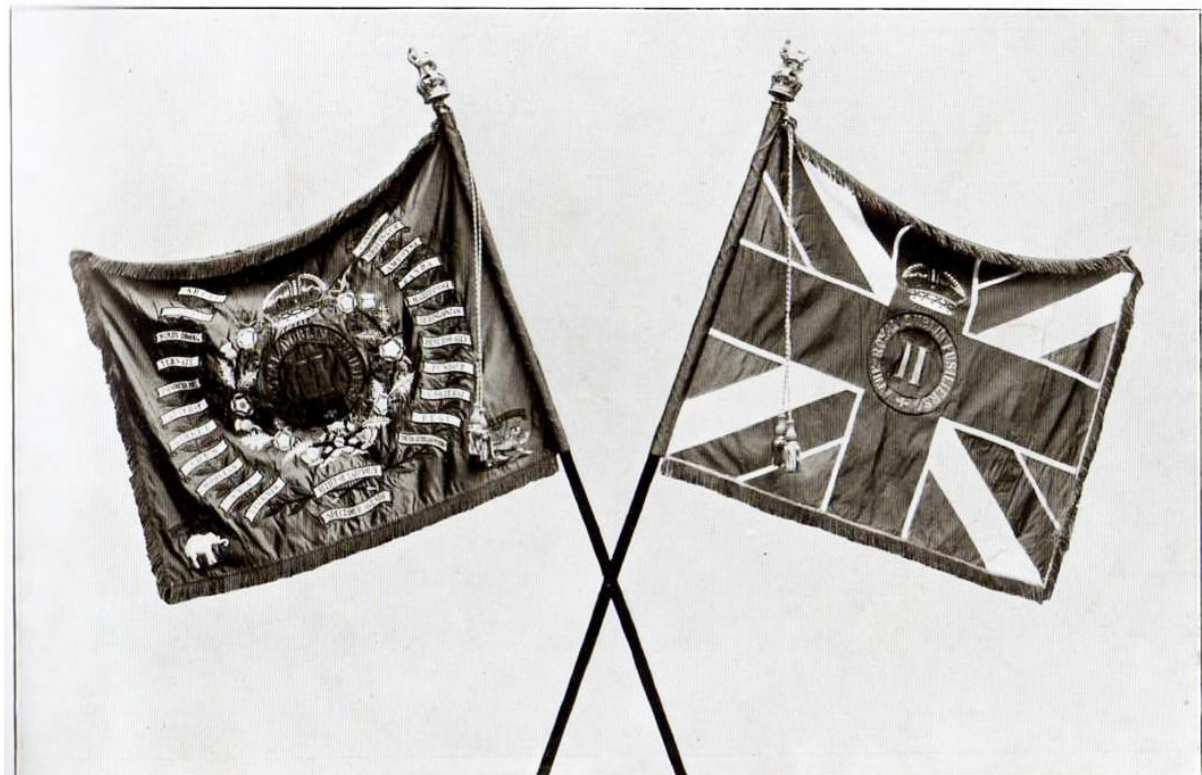


FOOTBALL TEAM.—1st XI.



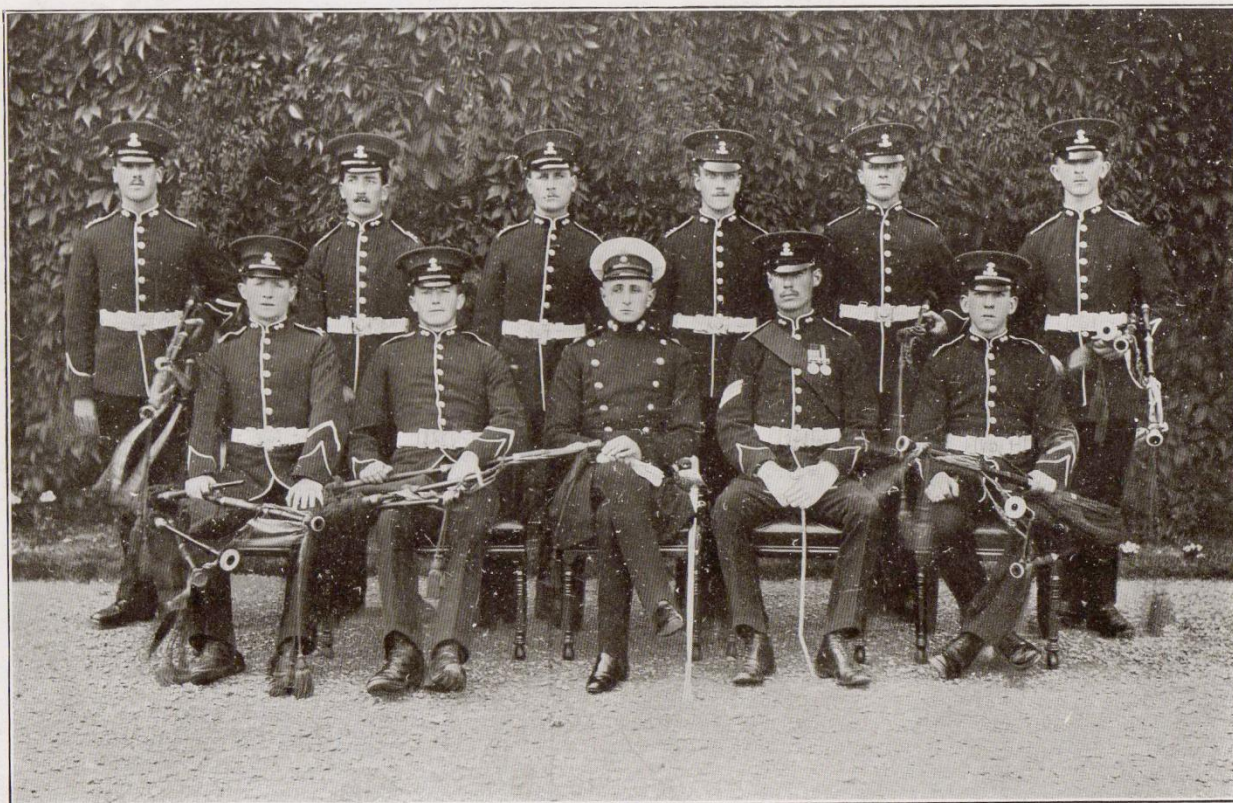


OLD COLOURS.

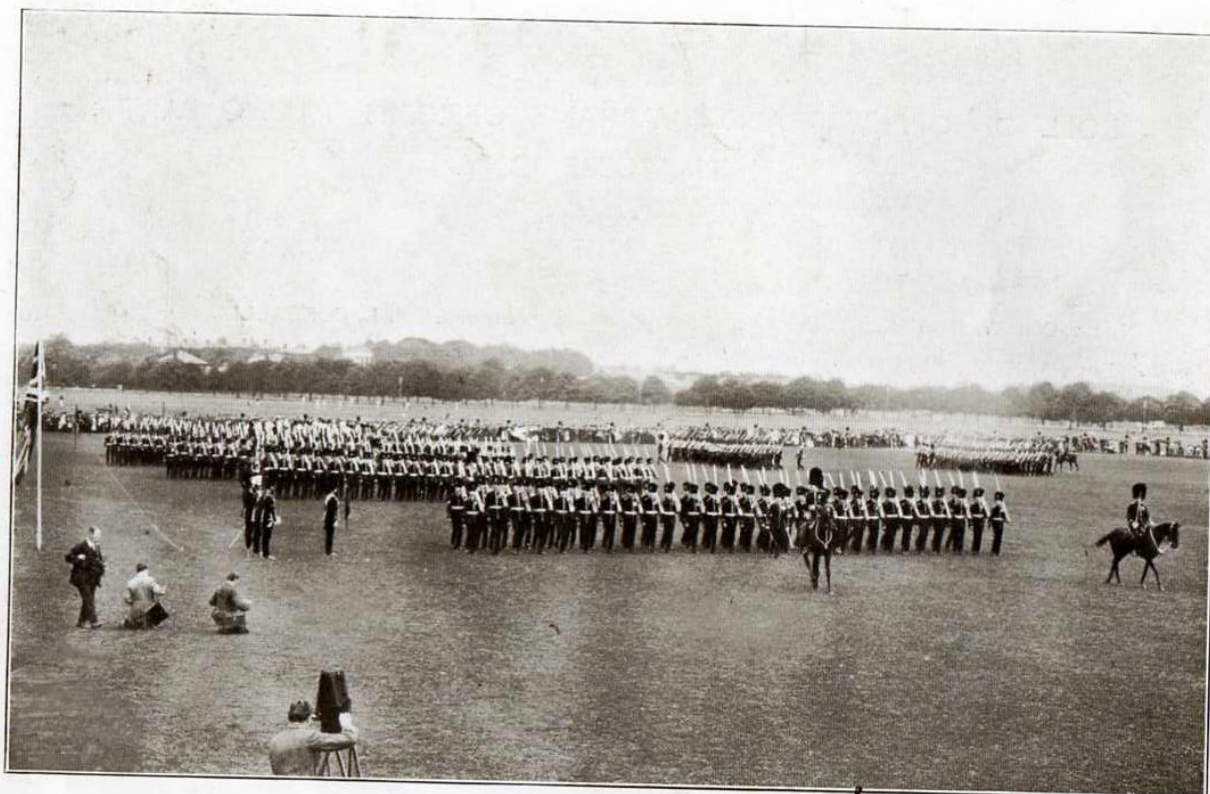


NEW COLOURS.





PIPERS.



THE MARCH PAST

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