

The Old Tough

Newsletter of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association
(Registered Charity No 20038816)



Issue 6: Spring 2022

Editorial

Welcome to the Spring 2022 edition of The Old Tough.

We hope that the first months of 2022 have been kind to you and your family. With the recent removal of many Covid restrictions and the improvement in the weather, you will no doubt have welcomed the opportunity to meet safely with your friends and wider family in recent weeks.

Now that we have returned to a form of normality, your Association plans to hold a number of in-person events this year in suitable surroundings, and we hope that you will support them. The highlight will undoubtedly be the Remembrance Service in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on Sunday, 12 June 2022, at 3 pm, which will commemorate the centenary of the disbandment of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and five other Irish regiments in June 1922. Further details are contained in the Dubs' News article which follows below.

Other features in this edition include:

- the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the connection with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers;
- a poem by John O'Brien entitled 'Laying of the Wreath' about remembrance at the Menin Gate in Ieper/Ypres, Belgium;
- a reminder about renewing your Association membership for 2022;
- our usual 'In Memoriam' feature which recalls the deaths of 17 named Dublin Fusiliers in the first two months of World War 1, and
- a biography of Sergeant James Aspill, a former Dublin Fusilier, who is buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery, Dublin, and who was included in the Association's remembrance tour of the Cemetery last Autumn.

We hope that this edition of the newsletter will be of interest to you. We look forward to receiving your suggestions and contributions to future editions at rdfa1918@gmail.com.

The Editorial Committee

Paul Appleby, David Buckley, Philip Lecane, Thomas Murphy and John F Sheehan

The Anglo-Irish Treaty and the Connection with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers

By John F Sheehan

On 6 December 1921 in London, the British and Irish negotiators signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty which provided for the establishment of the Irish Free State covering 26 of the 32 counties of Ireland. The British delegation comprised Prime Minister David Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Lord Birkenhead FE Smith, Austen Chamberlain, Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, Sir Hamar Greenwood and Sir Gordon Hewart. The Irish representatives were Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, Robert C Barton, Edmund J Duggan and George Gavin Duffy.

One of the Irish signatories, Robert Barton (pictured), was born in 1881 in Wicklow. He was educated in England at Rugby, Christ Church in Oxford and Gloucestershire Agricultural College. He came from a landed gentry Protestant family who owned Glendalough House in Annamoe, Co Wicklow. As a committed nationalist, he joined the Irish Volunteers under Eoin McNeill to help ensure the implementation of Home Rule.

However at the outbreak of WW1 on 3 August 1914, Robert, like many other nationalists, joined the British Army. As an officer of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, he was on duty in Dublin during the Easter Rising in 1916. While stationed at Richmond Barracks, he had dealings with several Republican prisoners. However he resigned his commission shortly afterwards in protest at the response of the British Government to the Rising. His two brothers, Erskine and Thomas, were later killed in WW1.

In the 1918 General Election, he was elected MP for Sinn Féin in his native Wicklow. Like the other elected Sinn Féin members, he boycotted the Westminster Parliament serving in Dáil Éireann instead. He was appointed Minister for Agriculture in the First Dáil which met in the Mansion House on the afternoon of 29 January 1919. On the day, the Mansion House hosted several hundred Royal Dublin Fusiliers who had returned from the War. It was on this day also that two members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, Constable Patrick O'Connell and Constable James McDonnell, were killed at Soloheadbeg, Co Tipperary, whilst escorting a cart of gelignite to the local mine.

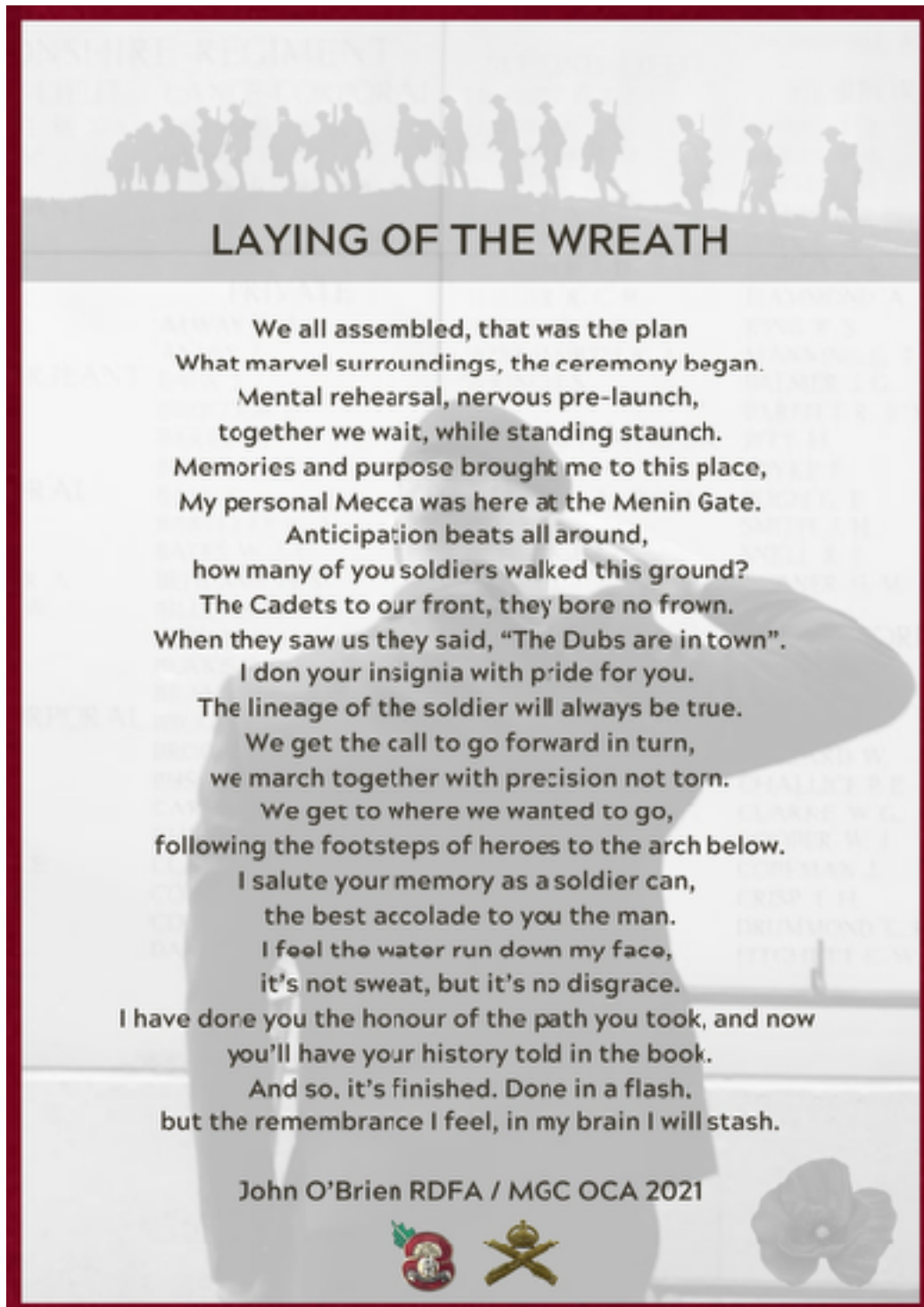
Robert was arrested in 1919 for sedition, escaped from Mountjoy Prison and was re-arrested in January 1920. Imprisoned for three years, he was released in July 1921 just before the Truce. Along with Éamon de Valera who was President of Dáil Éireann, he



travelled to London for exploratory talks with Lloyd George in July 1921. He was elected to the Second Dáil in 1921 and appointed Minister for Economic Affairs.

Although he signed the Treaty, he did so reluctantly and later rejected it. As an anti-Treaty candidate, he was defeated in the 1923 General Election and retired from politics. He then practised as a barrister and later became a judge. He served as chairman of the Agricultural Credit Corporation for many years. As the last surviving signatory of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, Robert Barton died aged 94 at his Wicklow home on 10 August 1975.

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In Issue 3 of The Old Tough last year, we listed 43 Dublin Fusiliers who died at the Battle of Le Cateau on 26/27 August 1914. Most are buried in Honnechy British Cemetery near Le Cateau or are remembered on the La Ferté-Sous-Jouarre Memorial, east of Paris.

Further research now indicates that eleven more men from the 2nd Battalion died of their wounds over the following month. It appears that these wounded men were left behind as the 2nd Battalion retired south from Le Cateau, and most are buried in cemeteries (other than Honnechy) near the battlefield. Their details are as follows:

Number, Rank and Name (Age if available)	Date of Death	Birthplace (and/or Relative's Residence)	Cemetery (Grave or Memorial Reference)
Pte Albert Peake 10479	28/8/1914	Isleworth, Middlesex	Montigny Communal Cemetery Nord, France (E 1)
Sgt Francis Patrick Walsh 10134 (28)	28/8/1914	Cawnpore, India	Montigny Communal Cemetery Nord, France (E 1)
Pte Robert Hawe 8921 (31)	31/8/1914	Leighlinbridge, Co Carlow	Valenciennes (St Roch) Communal Cemetery, France (V G 24)
Sgt Edward Hoey 6680	2/9/1914	Dublin (28 Upper Dorset Street)	Bethencourt Communal Cemetery, France (C 1)
L/Cpl Christopher Darcy 10184 (23)	3/9/1914	Kingstown, Co Dublin (8 Convent Road)	Bethencourt Communal Cemetery, France (C 1)
Pte Denis Hughes 7908	5/9/1914	Cork	Valenciennes (St Roch) Communal Cemetery, France (V G 25)
Pte Jeremiah O'Brien 7972	6/9/1914	Cork	Porte-de-Paris Cemetery, Cambrai, France (II A 34)
Pte James Cleary 11607 (19)	6/9/1914	Dublin (26 Bay View Avenue, North Strand)	Porte-de-Paris Cemetery, Cambrai, France (II A 30)
Pte William O'Connor 8827 (27)	17/9/1914	Dublin (9 The Boro', Phibsborough)	Porte-de-Paris Cemetery, Cambrai, France (I B 3)
Pte John Woods 9267	24/9/1914	Dublin	Porte-de-Paris Cemetery, Cambrai, France (I A 31)
L/Cpl John Murray 10106	25/9/1914	Dublin (1 Hanover Parade, Hanover Street)	Niederzwehren Cemetery, Kassel, Germany (V B 12)

However more Dublin Fusiliers died that September. By 5 September, the German advance had stalled on the outskirts of Paris, and over the following days, the French Armies heavily engaged the Germans along the River Marne. This resulted in a German withdrawal of about 50 kms to the River Aisne where they concentrated on the high ground. It was here that the 2nd Battalion

and other regiments dug crude trenches in deteriorating cold and wet conditions, and it suffered regular casualties from shellfire and sniping primarily. Over two weeks from mid-September, another six Dublin Fusiliers lost their lives as follows:

Number, Rank and Name (Age if available)	Date of Death	Birthplace (and/or Relative's)	Cemetery (Grave or Memorial Reference)
2 nd Lt Brian McGuire (20)	14/9/1914	Clifton, York	Vauxbuin French National Cemetery, France (IV F 6)
Pte Henry James Dover 8539 (27)	14/9/1914	Dublin (Castle Street)	Vauxbuin French National Cemetery, France (IV F 7)
Pte Richard Byrne 11559	15/9/1914	Dublin	Vauxbuin French National Cemetery, France (IV F 8)
Pte Michael Ford 8992	16/9/1914	Maddenstown, Co Kildare	Vauxbuin French National Cemetery, France (IV F 9)
Pte Edward Ward 10133	18/9/1914	Dublin	St Nazaire (Toute-Aides) Cemetery, France (A 15)
Pte Edward Stafford 8804 (27)	24/9/1914	Athy, Co Kildare (Church Town Road)	Crouy-Vauxrot French National Cemetery, France (A 11)

Sources:

www.cwgc.org;

www.findmypast.ie;

War Diary, 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 1914, WO95/1481/4 (UK National Archives).

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Appeal for Relatives

In December 2021, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission issued an appeal for the relatives of Private John Cunningham 9605, 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who died on 22 October 1918 to contact them. On the basis of recent research indicating that John is buried in St Peter's Roman Catholic Cemetery in Glasgow, the Commission indicated that it was in the process of producing a special memorial to mark his death, although the precise location of his grave in the Cemetery was not known. Any relative of John's can contact the Commission's Enquiries Team by phoning +44 (0) 1628 507200 or emailing them via their website at www.cwgc.org.

When John, a labourer, enlisted in the 4th Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers on 18 January 1915 in Glasgow, he was aged 39. While serving with the 2nd Battalion on the Yser Canal in Belgium in mid-1915, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis and on 10 September 1915 was discharged as unfit for further service. He had married Helen Gilligan in Gorbals, Glasgow, in 1895, and at the date of discharge, they had two daughters, Ellen and Mary.

Sergeant James Aspill 13915, 8th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers (1874-1954)

James Archbold (alias Aspill) was born in a tenement at 12 South Earl Street (then near Meath Street), Dublin, on 29 August 1874. His parents were Thomas, a labourer, and Mary Archbold (née Kemblan). For reasons unknown, at some point the family surname was changed to Aspill. He enlisted in the Royal Irish Regiment in Clonmel on 26 August 1891 stating his age to be 18, but within a month, he was discharged for giving an incorrect age. After a period in the Militia (5th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers), he enlisted in the 1st Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers, in Dublin on 8 August 1893 and served at Dublin, The Curragh and Fermoy over the following three years. On 26 November 1896, James was posted to the Regiment's 2nd Battalion in India where he qualified as a mounted infantryman on 29 October 1898. In late 1901, the Battalion was deployed to the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa. After the War ended, the Battalion returned to Ireland in November 1902, and James left the regular Army around that time. He received Queen's and King's South African medals for his War service. His regimental numbers in the Royal Irish Regiment and Royal Munster Fusiliers were 4035 and 4417 respectively.

On 8 May 1904, James, then a labourer, married Bridget Kelly in Francis Street Church, and they had at least five children together of whom two died young. When WW1 broke out, he re-enlisted in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers on 19 September 1914 claiming to be just 33 years old (he was aged 40) and was posted to the 8th Battalion. He first entered the theatre of war in France on 19 December 1915 and was promoted to Sergeant at that time. He took part in the subsequent fighting on the Somme being hospitalised in July 1916 with a knee injury which remained a disability after the War. He was discharged from the Army on 27 March 1919 and received the 1914-15 Star, British and Victory medals for his War service. The accompanying picture shows James during WW1.



He died aged 79 on 8 January 1954 at his home in 29 Upper Kevin Street, Dublin. His wife, Bridget, passed away on 17 September 1966. Both are buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery.

James Aspill is the grandfather of one of our longstanding members, Mr Gerry Spain.

Dubs' News

Annual General Meeting 2021

The Association held its 2021 AGM by zoom on 8 January 2022. Over 20 members attended. The Secretary's Report on 2021 was adopted. As Secretary, Paul Taylor reported on a busy year of Association business despite the impact of Covid. Activities for members included a remembrance tour of Royal Dublin Fusilier graves in Mount Jerome Cemetery, Dublin, in early October, a visit to Durrow, Co Laois (which included the WW1 Museum in Bob's Bar) later in October, and a remembrance service in City Quay Parish Church, Dublin, in November.

The Treasurer's Report was also adopted. As Treasurer, Seamus Greene reported that for the 2020/2021 financial year, income and expenditure amounted to €3,407 and €2,420 respectively, while the end-of-year balance was close to €13,000.

Brian Moroney paid tribute to the valuable service of Seamus Greene and Paul Taylor as Treasurer and Secretary respectively in recent years and was glad that both wished to remain as trustees. The Meeting proceeded to elect the following as trustees of the Association for 2022: Brian Moroney, Sally Keogh, Thomas Murphy, Suzanne O'Neill, Paul Appleby, David Buckley, Seamus Greene, George Jones, Philip Lecane, John O'Brien, John F Sheehan and Paul Taylor. It was agreed that Brian would act as Chairman, Sally as Treasurer, Thomas as Secretary and Suzanne as Membership Secretary.

Remembrance Service on 12 June 2022 in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin

The most important of the Association's activities for 2022 will undoubtedly be the centenary of the disbandment of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, together with the 18th Regiment of Foot Royal Irish Regiment (and South Irish Horse), the Connaught Rangers, The Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians), and the Royal Munster Fusiliers. To mark the occasion, the Association is organising, in association with the other Regimental Associations, a remembrance service in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on Sunday, 12 June 2022, at 3.15 pm. **All Association members are invited to be present for this historic occasion.** The Association has issued formal invitations to various dignitaries to attend the Service. Attendees must be seated in the Cathedral by 2.45 pm. Further details will be communicated to members nearer the date of the Remembrance Service.

Visit to England, 20-24 June 2022

Planning is underway to arrange a visit to Windsor, the National Army Museum in London and possibly other locations in England between 20 and 24 June. When details are finalised, Association members will be asked if they wish to participate in the visit. In the interim, those who may be interested should note the above dates in their diaries.

Visit to Greece and North Macedonia, 9-13 May 2022

This visit to the WW1 battlefields of Salonika was originally planned for 2020 but had to be postponed because of the Covid pandemic. It has now been rescheduled for the above dates, and the members who paid deposits two years ago are now looking forward to the visit. A report on the visit will be included in the next edition of The Old Tough.

Renewal of Membership for 2022

We thank those members who have paid their 2022 membership subscription (€20 for island of Ireland members and €25 for overseas members). For those who have not yet done so, we wish to remind you that membership subscriptions are overdue.

Membership subscriptions are vital in sustaining the Association as they cover any unavoidable expenses associated with:

- the remembrance ceremonies in which we participate,
- the preparation and circulation of our annual journal (The Blue Cap), our popular Old Tough newsletters and our other publications, and
- other expenses (e.g., public liability insurance) related to the Association's work.

Payment of the modest membership subscription also makes you eligible to take part in our occasional domestic and overseas events to relevant sites of military interest. Membership also connects you with people sharing similar interests.

Those who wish to become a member of the Association or renew their membership should send their name, postal address, phone number and email address to rdfa1918+Membershipsecretary@gmail.com or to the following address: Ms Suzanne O'Neill, RDFA Membership Secretary, c/o The Old Pound, Ballybrittas, Co Laois R32 E1C5, Ireland. Payment of the membership subscription may be made by sending a cheque to Suzanne or by electronically transferring the relevant amount to the Association's bank account at Bank of Ireland, Stillorgan Road, Dublin 4. The details of the account are as follows:

Account Name: The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

IBAN: IE57 BOFI 9013 5180 5058 76

BIC: BOFIE2D.

Please note that only paid-up members and members who pay by standing order will continue to receive our newsletters, annual journal and other communications relating to the Association's work. So don't delay in renewing your 2022 membership subscription!

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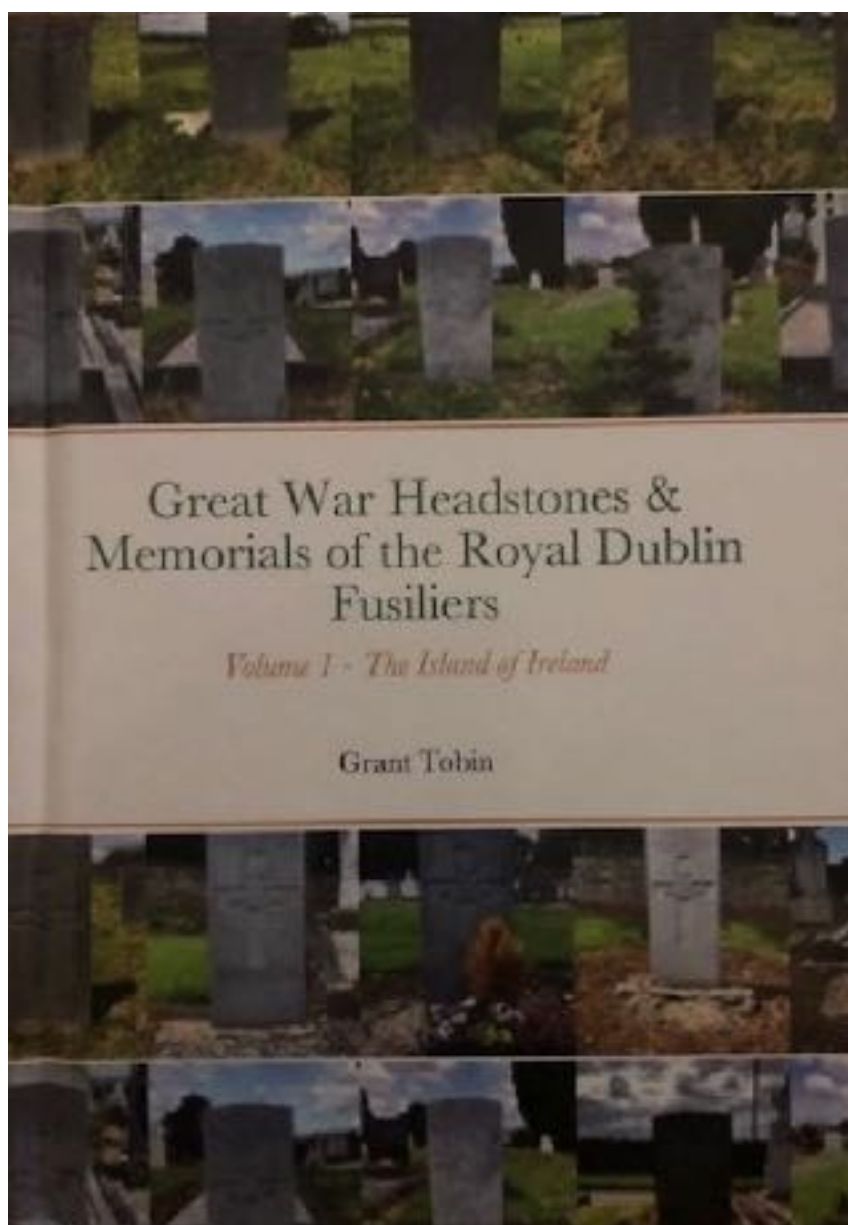
Association Merchandise

Association members may purchase our ties, lapel badges, blazer badges, poppy badges and remembrance CDs. Unfortunately the ladies' scarves are out of stock at present. Printed copies of some of our older Blue Caps are also available for purchase. Contact our Treasurer, Sally Keogh, at rdfa1918+Treasurer@gmail.com for further details.

Great War Headstones and Memorials of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers

In The Blue Cap of 2020, New Zealander, Grant Tobin, now living in Co Wicklow, told us about his project to publish six volumes of the above book which will contain details of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who, according to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, died in the Great War. Volume 1 on the graves and memorials on the island of Ireland is now complete. An accompanying CD includes photographs of those graves and memorials. Work on the next two volumes relating to Belgium and France is underway at present.

This is an admirable and extensive research project which deserves the support of members of the Association. A copy of Volume 1 of the above book (in softback form) and the accompanying CD may be purchased for €10 (including postage in Ireland) by contacting the author, Grant Tobin, at rdfww1@gmail.com. An additional charge will apply for postage overseas – contact Grant for details. You might even prompt a family member to purchase it for your next birthday!



STOP PRESS!**Remembrance Event in Clonmel, Co Tipperary, on Saturday, 9 April 2022**

Members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association have been invited to attend an event being organised by the 18th Regiment of Foot Royal Irish Regiment (& South Irish Horse) Association from 10.30 am on Saturday, 9 April 2022, in the Tipperary Museum of Hidden History, Clonmel, Co Tipperary (Google maps <https://goo.gl/maps/agUa5J5xbCWEaZip8> or Eircode - E91 Y891). Activities that day will include presentations on the Regiment and on the Battle of Le Pilly in October 1914, re-enactments and a procession to the former Kickham Barracks in which the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association has been invited to parade its standard.

The event is being organised to showcase the history of the Royal Irish Regiment as well as marking the centenary of the disbandment of the Royal Irish Regiment and South Irish Horse and its sister regiments (the Connaught Rangers, The Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians), the Royal Munster Fusiliers and the Royal Dublin Fusiliers) in June 1922. Just turn up on the day!



Spectamur Agendo
(We are judged by our deeds)