

The Blue Cap

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Editorial

Welcome to the 2022 edition of The Blue Cap.

What a year that was! Undoubtedly one of the busiest that the Association has ever had. It was entirely fitting that we pulled out all the stops for the Centenary Year of 2022. The undoubted highlight was the Service of Remembrance which the Association organised for Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on 12 June last, which marked the disbandment of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and five other Irish regiments exactly 100 years earlier.

Our engagement this year with our sister regimental associations under the umbrella of the Association of Disbanded Irish Regiments ensured that many commemorative events were held at other locations around Ireland in 2022. All of this good work served to remind the public at large of the men who had served in these Irish Regiments in World War 1 with the encouragement of their political leaders. Many of us know from family members the sacrifices that they made - sacrifices that deserve to be remembered.

In this edition of The Blue Cap, we have a nice variety of articles about remembrance and about some of the historic events in which Dublin Fusiliers fought. After the suspension of much of Association activity due to the Covid pandemic, it was great to return this year to visiting WW1 battlefield sites abroad. Seamus Moriarty reports in this Blue Cap on our informative visit to Salonika last May.

We wish to record our appreciation to all of the Association's members who have taken the time and trouble to contribute an article or feature this year, either to this Blue Cap or to one of our popular Old Tough newsletters. However a special word of thanks is due to the author and broadcaster, Joe Duffy, who is allowing us to publish in this Blue Cap his inspiring remarks at Woodenbridge WW1 Memorial Park in early November.

We wish to remind you that all Association activity depends on a healthy membership base. We therefore encourage all members to pay their modest annual fee in early 2023. The Membership Form is being distributed to members with this Blue Cap.

We hope that you enjoy our 2022 journal, and we look forward to receiving your suggestions for future editions of The Blue Cap. We also invite you to send us at rdfa1918@gmail.com any articles for future publication.

Stay safe.

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

'All his failings are a result of war service':
The Quest of WW1 Irish Ex-Service Personnel for Help

Tom Burke MBE

Introduction

On 17 September 2022, to commemorate the centenary of the disbandment of six Irish regiments of the British Army in June 1922, The National Library of Ireland presented a one-day seminar in Dublin City Library and Archive, Pearse Street Dublin. I was invited to present a paper along with Dr Patrick McCarthy, Research Associate, School of History and Geography, Dublin City University, Mr Arthur Cagney, NUI Maynooth, Dr Emmanuel Destenay, Sorbonne University, and Dr Fionnuala Walsh, University College Dublin. I would like to thank for the invitation and acknowledge the work of Brid O'Sullivan of The National Library and Paudi Baggott of Escape Pod Media for filming the Seminar which is now on the Facebook page of The National Library of Ireland. It may also be viewed at <https://youtu.be/tKRJ1uunVcE>. The following is the paper I presented at the Seminar.

oOo

In 2013, a lady from The Not Forgotten Society (NFS) in Dublin contacted me telling me she had thousands of post cards and some files containing personal information on WW1 ex-service men and women who lived in the Republic of Ireland. Most of the files had sadly been destroyed by the Society. She was about to destroy the cards and asked if I wanted them. Naturally I took the cards and spent the following years inputting their contents into a computer for analysis.

The NFS was a sort of St Vincent de Paul Society for British ex-service personnel. They were originally The Joint Committee of the Dublin Branch of the Red Cross and the Irish District of the St John's Ambulance Brigade established not long after the outbreak of WW1. The Joint Committee's charity work continued up to March 2002 as the NFS.

The information contained on the cards revealed an insight into the lives of thousands of Irish WW1 veterans who, at some stage in their lives, shared one thing in common; they had fallen on hard times and applied for charitable help from the NFS.

Much like a jigsaw, the information contained on one card was not very revealing. However, compiling the pieces together in a computer program, Microsoft Access, resulted in a very interesting socio-economic profile and history of Irish veterans of WW1 which this essay presents under the following headings:

- The NFS – information contained on cards.
- From whence the ex-service men and women came.
- Dublin street analysis in which WW1 ex-service personnel lived.
- Neighbours and Homeless.
- The shadow of unemployment.
- Sources of help – Pensions.
- Sources of help - ex-service charity societies.

- The NFS – assessment and assistance.
- Not just a number – examples of claimants.
- The span of the sample analysed and the period of which help was given.
- Conclusions.

Not Forgotten Society - Card Information

The total number of cards entered into the Microsoft Access database up to 17 September 2022 was 7,904. The sample analysed for this paper was 6,805 WW1 ex-service personnel whose **surnames** began with the letters A, B, and C. Surnames beginning with the letter D are almost finished. There are thousands more cards to be analysed. The following is the information contained on the cards:

1. Name and Address – Examples:

- Michael Carr from Urlingford, Co Kilkenny. He served in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and Royal Irish Regiment. Had no pension, suffered from gunshot wounds, was in the Mental Hospital in Kilkenny. He received help and £30-4-9 up to 1960.
- John Boland from Limerick served in The Leinster Regiment. He was killed/murdered, take your pick, by the IRA in June 1921. His widow was awarded £10 from The Limbless Fund attached to the Society.

2. The Regiment or Unit men or women served in.

3. The War they served in:

6,805 served in WW1 including:

- 42 who served in the Boer War and WW1;
- 84 who served in WW1 and WW2;
- 70 women served as VADs in the Red Cross and Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service. (One woman, Miss - Mrs? Lilly Duggan, a munitions worker from No 46 Portland Row, Dublin, had 10 children and got £5 in 1921 from the Society.)

4. Personal details on topics such as employment, marriage status, family, children.

5. Pensions details and the kind of disabilities.

6. The sources of help from societies such as the NFS, the British Legion etc.

7. The assistance given by the Society such as food, clothing, medical and fuel.

8. The period of which help was given.

9. Occasionally, details of death, cause of death, year, place of death and age.

FILE DESTROYED

CARR, Michael, H4252. R. Enns. R. Enns.
 School View, ^{John} Urlingford
~~Johnston~~, Co. Kilkenny.
 19 St. Mary's Quay, Urlingford
 wife Emma
 Ref. no. 2140. 13/MC/254
 (1940/1941 - mental hospital for years) 65/1 head 2. am
 I.D. £1.10.0 Feb. 26. bronchial catarrh.
 I.D. £3. May 26.
 Total help 8 1960 £30-49

NFS Card of Michael Carr from Urlingford, Co Kilkenny, ex-Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and Royal Irish Regiment¹

alias Doherty,
 BOLAND, James, deceased 4578 Leins A1082
 18, Mungret St., Limerick
 Shot dead 1 R.A.
 File destroyed.
 Widow given £10. from Limerick fund 1921

NFS Card of James Boland from Limerick, ex-Leinster Regiment, murdered by the IRA in June 1921²

¹ Not Forgotten Association Archive, Cards (Dublin: RDFA Archive, Dublin City Library and Archive), Card A.456.

² Ibid., Card A.1082.

Table 1 - Breakdown of Counties in Ireland

County	Number of WW1 Ex-Service Personnel	Percent of 6,805 sample
Dublin	2,150	31.6
Cork	1,355	19.9
Tipperary	350	5.1
Limerick	271	4.0
Waterford	205	3.0
Wexford	180	2.6
Kilkenny	174	2.6
Kerry	154	2.3
Kildare	154	2.3
No details	151	2.2
Westmeath	145	2.1
Clare	142	2.1
Louth	136	2.0
Laois	134	2.0
Wicklow	134	2.0
Offaly	125	1.8
Carlow	114	1.7
Galway	108	1.6
Meath	94	1.4
Longford	86	1.3
Roscommon	80	1.2
Sligo	75	1.1
Mayo	71	1.0
Cavan	63	0.9
Leitrim	49	0.7
Donegal	46	0.7
Monaghan	32	0.5
Others in GB	23	0.3
Antrim	2	<0.1
Armagh	1	<0.1
Derry	1	<0.1
Down	0	0.0
Fermanagh	0	0.0
Tyrone	0	0.0
Total	6,805	100

Note: 151 or 2.2% gave no details of their address. The NFS mainly serviced counties in the Republic of Ireland. A separate NFS looked after Northern Ireland veterans. Hence the low numbers for the Six Counties.

Table 2**Breakdown of Dublin Postal Districts where Ex-Service Men and Women came from**

Dublin Postal District	Number of WW1 Ex-Service Personnel	Percent of 2,150
8	608	28.3
1	407	18.9
2	309	14.4
7	228	10.6
18	144	6.7
6	101	4.7
4	75	3.5
12	45	2.1
5	40	1.9
3	36	1.7
9	31	1.4
17	24	1.1
14	21	1.0
0	20	0.9
13	17	0.8
20	16	0.7
11	12	0.6
24	8	0.4
10	2	0.1
15	2	0.1
16	2	0.1
22	2	0.1
Total	2,150	100

Note: 20 or 0.9% ex-service personnel gave no details of their address in Dublin.

Table 3**Number of Ex-Service Men and RDF Men killed in WW1 who lived on Same Street in Dublin 8**

Dublin 8 Street Name	Number of Ex-Service Personnel living on Street	RDF Men KIA or DOW in WW1 from Same Street
Iveagh Buildings, Bride Road	39	0
No 34 Peter Street, formerly Molyneux House	23	0
Kevin Street	20	7
Francis Street	18	11
Golden Lane, off Bride Street	17	5
Clanbrassil Street	9	2

Table 4**Number of Ex-Service Men and RDF Men killed in WW1 who lived on Same Street in Dublin 1**

Dublin 1 Street Name	Number of Ex-Service Personnel living on Street	RDF men KIA or DOW in WW1 from Same Street
Gloucester Street and Place	42	9
Gardiner Street	36	10
Summerhill	27	9
Dorset Street	21	11
Marlborough Street and Place	15	2
Buckingham Street	12	7

Table 5

Number and Percent of Ex-Service Men that served in an Irish Unit as listed on the NFS cards
(Revised sample total being 6,942)

Irish Unit	Number of Ex-Service in Unit	Percent of Sample Total
Royal Dublin Fusiliers	765	11.0
Royal Munster Fusiliers	722	10.4
Royal Irish Regiment	667	9.6
Leinster Regiment	497	7.2
Royal Irish Fusiliers	376	5.4
Connaught Rangers	315	4.5
Irish Guards	212	3.1
Royal Irish Rifles	137	2.0
Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers	87	1.3
South Irish Horse	23	0.3
London Irish Rifles	1	0.0
Total	3,802	54.8

Table 6

**Number and Percent of Ex-Service Men that served in a non-Irish Unit as listed on the NFS cards
(Revised sample total being 6,942)**

Non-Irish Unit	Number of Ex-Service in Unit	Percent of Sample Total
English/Scottish/Welsh and other units	2,016	29.0
Labour Corps	391	5.6
Royal Engineers	378	5.4
Royal Navy and Naval Reserve	243	3.5
Royal Air Force and Flying Corps	94	1.4
Canadian	13	0.2
Australian	5	0.1
Total	3,140	45.2

Notes on Tables

With reference to Table 1, Dublin had the highest concentration of ex-service personnel, followed by Cork. Irish recruitment into the British Army was very much from urban areas in cities such as Dublin and Cork, followed by large rural towns such as Tipperary and Limerick. Discharged service personnel returned to the place they were recruited from, i.e., their home.

With reference to Table 2, as with previous research on the RDF WW1 casualties, the highest concentration of Dublin ex-service personnel came from the Dublin postal districts 1 and 8 between the canals.³ Essentially, they left the tenements of Dublin and Cork with all its social and economic deprivations to go to war and returned to the same tenement life after the War.



Tables 3 and 4 present the number of ex-service men and RDF men killed in WW1 who lived on same street in Dublin postal districts 8 and 1; some were neighbours. For example in Dublin 8, Francis Street had 18 ex-service families and 11 families with RDF men killed. In Dublin 1, Summerhill had 27 ex-service families with nine RDF men killed in the War. In the now affluent postal district of Dublin 4 was Turner's Cottages off Shelbourne Road in Ballsbridge. In this small terrace of cottages, to date eight men served in WW1. Among them was Ned Brierley MM of the 8th RDF who played for Shelbourne FC after the War and lived at 18 Turner's Cottages.⁴

It is important to note that these casualty numbers do not include men killed who served in other units; and, as previously stated, whose surnames begin with the letters A to C, also some of D. Therefore, the number of British servicemen and women who lived on these streets will be higher. His neighbour, Patrick

³ Burke, Tom, *Whence Came the Royal Dublin Fusiliers?*, The Irish Sword XXIV, No. 98 Winter (2005), pp. 452-553.

⁴ *Not Forgotten Association Archive*, Cards A.7788, A.4741, A.5731, NB.4592, A.1098 and A.1136. Ned Brierley never applied to the NFS for help. His papers are in the RDFA Archive.

Kavanagh, served in the 17th South Lancashire Regiment, 65301, who died on 26 March 1920, aged twenty-seven and was the son of Mrs Jane Falby of 15 Turner's Cottages, Ballsbridge. Pte Kavanagh is buried in Blackhorse Avenue Military Cemetery, Dublin, RC 700.⁵ Also living at 15 Turner's Cottages was 6337 Pte Michael Byrne of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.⁶

Tables 5 and 6 present the service units the ex-servicemen served in during WW1. The sample used in this analysis was 6,942. In keeping with the pre-War traditional recruiting districts of the Irish regiments, it is no surprise to see that, as shown in Table 1, the highest number of ex-servicemen came from Dublin and Cork, and the most popular regiments these Dublin and Cork ex-servicemen served in were the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Royal Munster Fusiliers respectively. However, almost thirty percent did not serve in an Irish unit. Moreover, there was almost a fifty per cent chance the ex-serviceman did, or did not, serve in an Irish unit.

Neighbours and Homeless

Drilling down even further into this Dublin 8 and 1 data revealed ex-service personnel living alongside ex-service neighbours. For example, Hugh Doyle from 119 Clanbrassil Street served in WW1 and WW2 with the Royal Irish/Ulster Rifles; next door at 120 Clanbrassil Street was Thomas Birch, ex-Royal Navy, and at No 121 was the widow of John Byrne, ex-Royal Army Service Corps. John Carter, aged 19, and Thomas McDonnell, aged 32, lived at No 12 Golden Lane. Andrew Moore lived next door at No 13. All three men were Dublin Fusiliers KIA in WW1.

There were ex-servicemen living in the same tenement house. For example, John Cunningham served in the Surrey Regiment, John Aherne served in the Leinster Regiment, Thomas Buckley in the Royal Irish Fusiliers, Patrick Bolger in the Royal Army Service Corps. All four men lived in a tenement at No 27 Golden Lane off Bride Street, Dublin.

There were men who recorded 'no fixed address' in the sample. Out of 2,150 who lived in Dublin, 62 lived in the Iveagh Trust and Molyneux Hostel in Peter Street. 77 lived in more than three places in their lives. This was a method used to track men who had no settled address. However, the vast majority of ex-service men and women had one settled address which is an indicator of a form of stability they had reached in their lives.

The data presented in these tables show the impact that WW1 had on Dublin's inner-city communities; the economy of which in the post-War years was very much dependent on British military pensions and British-funded charities such as the NFS.

The Shadow of Unemployment

The greatest threat to British ex-servicemen in Ireland pre-1922 was not the shadow of an IRA gunman but the shadow of unemployment. The most common cause of poverty listed by the authors of the annual reports produced by the St Vincent de Paul Society was unemployment. Ex-service men, be they British

⁵ <http://www.cwgc.org> The Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Pte P Kavanagh 65301, 17th South Lancashire Regiment.

⁶ *Not Forgotten Association Archive*, Card A.352.

Army or Irish Free State National Army, did not escape the ravages of unemployment and its social consequences. In their yearly report for 1924, the Society of St Vincent de Paul stated:

“The principal cause of poverty in the Conference district during the year was unemployment, due to slackness of trade and illness. Some widows with young families came under notice also and were assisted. Applications were received from some ex-soldiers of the National Army, who were unable to obtain employment after demobilisation; their families were visited and assistance given by the conference.”⁷

In 1920, demobilised servicemen in Britain amounted to 3,365,000. In Ireland, it was 83,500. Unemployed ex-servicemen in Britain were 311,646 or 9%. In Ireland, it was 27,648 (33.1%). Unemployment amongst ex-servicemen in Ireland was approx. four times higher than in Britain.⁸ There were several reasons for this anomaly. The country was in turmoil. The Irish economy was mainly agricultural, but the majority of ex-service men were urban dwellers. Apart from jobs in beer and biscuits, there were few opportunities for work in cities and towns.

The King’s National Roll Scheme, where large employers employed wounded veterans from a national roll, was adopted in Britain in 1919. This scheme did not work in Ireland. According to Paul Taylor, ‘the commitment of Irish business and society in general was lacking.’ It was feared that Republican and Trade Union opposition would make the scheme unworkable. One reason given was Trade Union objections on the grounds that the scheme gave favouritism to British ex-servicemen.⁹

The British response to unemployed ex-service personnel up to 1922 was piecemeal. The British Ministry of Labour provided training schemes around the country. For example, the Clonmel Technical School trained men as Blacksmiths and Carpenters. In Dublin’s Hume Street, men were trained in watch and clock repair.¹⁰ There was also the Lord Roberts Workshop at 26 South Frederick Street, Dublin. However, the training schemes were totally inadequate and hindered by the violence in the country during the early 1920s. In November 1922, there were 3,914 ex-servicemen on a waiting list for training; only 163 got places.¹¹

However, not all was doom and gloom. James O’Brien from Thomastown served in the RASC and got an £80 grant in 1920 from The King’s Fund for the purchase of straps for harness-making.¹² Ex-service men in the Banks and Jacob’s got their pre-War jobs back. About 540 men returned to their jobs in Guinness.¹³

Post 1922, the British had no legal obligation for the employment of ex-servicemen in the Irish Free State. The issue of unemployment and resulting destitution among British ex-service personnel in the Irish Free

⁷ *Report of the Council of Ireland* (Dublin: Society of St Vincent de Paul), 1924, p.40.

⁸ Taylor, Paul, *Heroes or Traitors? Experiences of Southern Irish Soldiers Returning from the Great War 1919-1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), pp. 98, 106 and 168.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.92.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.108, Table 12 - Activities of Training Centres.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.108, Table 11 - Numbers Trained/Awaiting Training.

¹² Thanks to Berni Egan of the Kilkenny War Memorial Committee for this information.

¹³ *Roll of Guinness Employees Who Served in His Majesty’s Naval, Military and Air Forces, 1914-1918* (Dublin: Arthur Guinness and Sons, 1920).

State came to a head in 1927 when the Cosgrave Government commissioned the Lavery Committee to examine, among other things, allegations of discrimination in State Employment schemes.¹⁴

A case example presented to the Lavery Committee was Daniel Slyne from Inniskeane, Co Cork, who wrote to the Lavery Committee on 23 January 1928. He enlisted in the Irish Guards in 1915, *'In response to a personal appeal by the British Postmaster General, Mr Herbert Samuels.'* He applied to get his job back in the Post Office. He was threatened and *'told that, ex-British soldiers were a thing of the past... My chances of securing an established appointment are now nil, as with the change of government, vacancies will only be given to telegraph messengers who are ex-National Army men.'*¹⁵ And yet, Edward Cuthbert from Dublin Road, Dundalk, ex-Royal Field Artillery, worked as a Postman earning £3 per week, beginning in 1930. He also had some temporary work with a Major C Barrow of Castlebellingham as a groom.¹⁶

Nothing much came of the Lavery Report. The recession in the 1930s didn't help with unemployment in the Free State running between 90,000 and 100,000. Unemployed British ex-service personnel in the 1930s did not have the monopoly on the misery of unemployment. They suffered the same fate as their unemployed fellow citizens. A British Ministry of Pensions report noted in 1936:

*"In general while there is no sympathy for the ex-servicemen as such, there is no boycott....their difficulties do not spring from his war service but are indigenous to the economic conditions of the country in which he lives and are shared by all other members of the same community...while not discriminated against, ex-servicemen were not officially regarded as candidates of favour."*¹⁷

But, if capable of working, the majority of the men in the sample had jobs, most of which however were menial. The following are a few examples. William Garston from Sandy Row, Belfast, ex-Royal Irish Rifles in WW1 and WW2, worked in Dublin between the Wars *'with a Circus whose business had failed.'*¹⁸ Miss Francis Broderick, Monkstown, Co Dublin, who served in the Queen Alexandra Imperial Medical Nursing Service, worked after the War with The Royal United Kingdom Beneficent Association.¹⁹ William Loftus from Borrisokane, Co Tipperary, served in the Irish Guards. He got a job with the North Tipperary County Council and worked with them for most of his life. He died in November 1972.²⁰ Denis Donnelly, Carraroe, Co Galway, also ex-Irish Guards, obtained a position in the Gardaí.²¹

¹⁴ For further analysis of the Lavery Report, see Burke, Tom, *Nobody's Children*, The Blue Cap - Journal of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, Volume 12 (December 2005), pp. 5-19.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.8. See also *Report Issued by the Committee on British Ex-Servicemen* (Dublin: The National Archives of Ireland, 1927-1928).

¹⁶ *Not Forgotten Association Archive*, Card B.5279.

¹⁷ Robinson, Michael, *Shell-Shocked British Army Veterans in Ireland, 1918-1939 - a Difficult Homecoming* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), p.115.

¹⁸ *Not Forgotten Association Archive*, Card B.5103.

¹⁹ Ibid., Card B.5389.

²⁰ Ibid., Card B.5408.

²¹ Ibid., Card B.5327.



**Ex-Servicemen from the Leinster Regiment Old Comrades Association
receiving Christmas parcels in December 1938²²**

Sources of Help – Pensions

The only obligation successive British governments had to Irish ex-servicemen and women after 1922 was the financing of their Disability Pensions. By 1926, out of 83,500 demobilised in Ireland, some 34,500 disabled veterans were in receipt of pensions from the British Ministry of Pensions with offices at Merrion Square, Dublin.²³ On appeal, widows were awarded a widow's pension.²⁴ The majority of veterans in the sample had no pension and little income from employment.

Pensions were categorised between 20% and 100%, and they were not for life:

- 100% - Loss of two or more limbs.²⁵
- 20% - Loss of fingers.

The majority of claims in the NFS sample were 20%. There were many challenges in obtaining a pension:

²² *Distribution of Christmas Parcels - Photograph, The Evening Herald, 24 December 1938.*

²³ Robinson, Michael, p.9.

²⁴ *Not Forgotten Association Archive*, Card A.8466.

²⁵ Hodgkinson, Peter, *Health in Returning Veterans of the First World War - a Study of Pension Ledgers* (London: The Western Front Association, 2022), p.9.

- It was a complicated process of form filling and medical examinations.
- Many men were unaware of their pension entitlements, hence the work of the Regimental Associations.
- In the early 1920s and 30s, there was a lack of pension administrative staff and office space.
- Pensions were the largest complaint identified in the Lavery Report. Of the 268 pension cases examined by Lavery, 151 were inadequate or terminated pensions.²⁶

An example of an inadequate pension was that of Mrs Johanna Cleary from Tipperary. She lost three sons killed in the War. Thomas, 1st Leinsters, 3095, 12 May 1915, Joseph, the 6th Royal Irish Regiment, 6415, 31 May 1916 and Patrick, the 2nd Royal Irish Regiment, 7535, killed during the German March offensive of 1918. She was in receipt of eight shillings a week in 1928 in total as a pension for the loss of her three sons. Her husband was old and unable to work. She complained bitterly that with eight shillings a week it was impossible to make ends meet. Captain (Retd) JF Knox, ex-Royal Navy of the Thurles Branch, Royal British Legion, championed her case to the Lavery Committee in March 1928. The Committee admitted that she had grounds for complaint, but nothing happened.²⁷ Common disabilities cited in the NFS sample were gunshot wounds, malaria, heart disease, lung damage from gas and neurasthenia, a mental disorder, nowadays known as PTSD.

Psychiatric Pensioners

According to Michael Robinson, in 1921 there were approx. 65,000 ex-service pensioners suffering from psychoneurotic afflictions in the UK. In Ireland, there were 12,420, with 500 in Irish asylums.²⁸ Some were treated in Leopardstown Park Hospital. An example of one such psychiatric patient was Pte P Byrne who served in the Irish Guards. He wrote to the Lavery Committee in 1928 stating that in late 1918 he was sent to a mental hospital and kept there for twelve months. Again, the Thurles Branch of the British Legion made an appeal for a pension on Byrne's behalf. The Committee noted in their reply that *'this man's case should be re-considered as he is incapable of making any statement on his own as he is still mentally deficient.'*²⁹

The Irish Government attitude to WW1 veteran pensions was, like the British attitude to the employment of ex-service men, it's not our problem. In March 1922, the British Ministry of Pensions proposed that the Irish Free State take over the running of the War Pensions. The British Exchequer would service the pension. However, the Irish rejected the proposal.³⁰ In 1938, the British tried again, with an annual budget of £1,435,000; again, the Irish rejected the idea.³¹ The Irish Government looked upon the help of British ex-service personnel as *'an Imperial Obligation.'* These men and women fought for your cause; they are your responsibility; so you look after them. In June 1936, a British Ministry of Pensions report noted:

'The Irish Free State refuses to regard itself as having participated as a nation in the Great War and has repudiated responsibility for the cost of its after effects. Every southern Irishman who enlisted

²⁶ Report Issued by the Committee on British Ex-Servicemen, Burke, Tom, p.12.

²⁷ Burke, Tom, p.13.

²⁸ Robinson, Michael, p.2.

²⁹ Burke, Tom, p.13.

³⁰ Robinson, Michael, p.101.

³¹ Ibid., p.135.

*did so as a volunteer, and each individual must either bear responsibility for the results of his voluntary act or look to his employer the British Government for redress...The Great War and its aftermath does not enter the ethical conscience of the Free State, with the result that, those who suffered by volunteering their services excite neither interest nor sympathy.'*³²

That policy remained up to at least 20 years ago. However, in fairness to the Irish Government, they helped in the provision of infrastructure, i.e., office space for the administration of British pensions.³³

Note: For further information on WW1 Pensions, see The Western Front Association websites:

<https://www.westernfrontassociation.com/world-war-i-articles/pension-record-cards-and-ledgers-how-they-fitted-in-to-the-bigger-picture/> and

<https://www.westernfrontassociation.com/world-war-i-articles/the-disabled-first-world-war-soldier-how-his-pension-was-calculated/>.



WW1 ex-service men with no pension were often reduced to begging in the streets



Members of the RDFA Old Comrades Association issuing financial help to one of their comrades

³² Ibid., p.118.

³³ Taylor, Paul, p.11.

Sources of Help - Ex-Service Charity Societies

The following are just some of the British ex-service personnel help societies and sources of funding that operated in the Irish Free State/Republic after WW1; some even to the present day. The societies, be they welfare or regimental associations, looked after the welfare of ex-service men and women and their families. They provided advice on their Irish social welfare entitlements, out of work and health care entitlements. Many were unaware of these entitlements and indeed the charity available from the NFS. For example, Joseph Quinn from Drumlish in Co Longford served with the RDF in Gallipoli. He first applied to the Joint Committee on 5 April 1949 for assistance. He had never previously applied for assistance; he noted on his first EHS Application Form that 'he never got anything, not knowing about it.'³⁴

Ex-service men and women also had help from the St Vincent de Paul Society. *The Irish Times* acknowledged the work the St Vincent De Paul Society did in helping with ex-service men in an article on 15 November 1927. *The Times* noted that the St Vincent de Paul Society was 'doing admirable work.'³⁵ In 1924, the Secretariat for the entire city of Dublin dealt with 240 cases where advice was given to people on matters relating to claims under the National Health Insurance Act and pension entitlements. Of the 240 cases taken on by the Society, sixty were for British ex-servicemen. The report concluded: '*Regarding ex-British soldiers - all cases referred by us to the different organisations in Dublin were always given sympathetic consideration.*'³⁶ In Cork City, the 1925 Conference of St Matthew report recorded:

*"Another class weighing heavily upon us are the ex-Service men, some of whom have very little pensions, entirely inadequate to maintain their families, while some of these men have no pensions whatsoever, hence we get in touch with the Associations 'Comrades and Regimental' (Also Red Cross Emergency) attached to the battalions they had served in with fairly good results. It is only quite recently we succeeded in getting grants to the extent of £5-10s from the Army Comrades Association, London, for a family, the husband of whom was away in Waterford, with no means of taking them with him, so that the sum referred to it enabled us to send them there."*³⁷

To make sure that nobody fell through the administration cracks, these societies worked with each other in Dublin and in Britain on men and women who applied for help. The number of British ex-service personnel help societies, regimental associations and sources of charity funding listed in the NFS cards/files and Lavery Report was thirty.³⁸

- The Not Forgotten Society.
- The Royal British Legion (Southern Ireland)
- The Help Society and Lord Roberts Workshop, later Soldiers Sailors and Airmen Help Society.
- Regimental Associations.
- The Southern Irish Loyalist Association.
- The Ex-Serviceman's Welfare Society.

³⁴ *Not Forgotten Association Archive*, Card B.5097.

³⁵ *Ireland's Ex Service Men - St Vincent De Paul.*, *The Irish Times*, 15 November 1927.

³⁶ *Report of the Council of Ireland*, 1924, p.99.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1925 Conference of St Matthew, Cork, p.37.

³⁸ *Not Forgotten Association Archive*. See also *Report Issued by the Committee on British Ex-Servicemen*.

- The Comrades of the Great War.

Funding from:

- The Royal Cambridge Fund.
- The King's Fund.
- BLESMA Welfare Fund.
- The Royal Albert Fund.
- The Rowland Hill Fund.
- Irish Guards Benevolent Fund.
- The UK Exchequer for pensions.

Out of 6,805 cases in the NFS sample, 4,640 or 68% received grants; 2,165 or 32% received nothing. Between 1920 and 1930 alone, the NFS paid out £15,223 to 832 applications. This was the minimum according to the NFS cards data only; probably about £1.5 million today. In 1928, the British Ministry of Pensions paid out £2,080,000 in ex-service pensions in the Irish Free State.³⁹ This was a substantial transfer of funds from the British Government into the Exchequer of the Irish Free State.⁴⁰

The Not Forgotten Society – Assessment and Assistance

The assessment process began with a referral letter or visit by the ex-service man or woman to the NFS office at 14 Merrion Square, Dublin. The applicant had to HONESTLY fill out an application form for help. There were occasions where some applications did not give the correct information. To verify the information on the application form, the Society would write to the local priest and check if the statements were accurate. If found lying, the applicant was barred from future applications. Friends of ex-servicemen occasionally volunteered their time and helped ex-servicemen and women in their applications for help. Pte Edward Burke served in the Leinster Regiment. In November 1949, aged seventy-six, his address was The County Home, Cashel, Co Tipperary. Edward applied to the NFS for clothing. His application form and covering letter were 'written by a friend', a Porter in the County Home.⁴¹ Occasionally, the local priest would assist applicants in completing their application forms. Fr T Ryan in White Friar Street, Dublin, was a regular assistant and acted as a character reference.⁴²

³⁹ Robinson, Michael, p.123.

⁴⁰ *Not Forgotten Association Archive*, Card B.5401.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Card B.5317.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Card B.5311.

Case No. B 5401

**JOINT COUNCIL
OF
The Order of St. John and the British Red Cross Society.
EMERGENCY HELP COMMITTEE.**

APPLICATION FORM—WIDOW.
(To be suitably adapted for Dependents.)

Date 19th March 19 63

1. PARTICULARS OF DECEASED EX-SERVICE MAN:—

Name FLYNN - Henry Age 78 years
 Address 9, O'Hanlon Park, Dundalk, Co. Louth.
 Regiment or Ship R.I. Regt. No. 40651 Rank Pte.
R.D.F. Discharge 60501
 Date of Enlistment 16.9.16. Date of Discharge and/or Demobilisation 20.2.1920.
 Theatre of War Palestine. Period Overseas 4 yrs.
 Date of Death February 1943 Place of Death O'Hanlon Park Dundalk
 Cause of Death (quoted from Death Certificate) Pneumonia Malena Fever
 Amount of Pension (if any) at Time of Death £9-16-0 Nature of Disability for which drawing Pension Pneumonia Malena Fever
 If Pension had ceased prior to Death, Date of Cessation no
 Particulars of Appeal (if any) outstanding at Date of Death none
 Pre-Enlistment Employment General Labourer
 Post-War Employment Seed Store Labourer
 Was Post-War Employment continuous, or intermittent? had to leave off work with his Captain
 If intermittent, state reason _____
 Pension Area Office _____ Pensions Reference No. 13/MS/1303.

The NFS card/file of Pte Henry Flynn from Dundalk, ex-Royal Irish Regiment and RDF⁴³

Essentially the Society wanted to know two things about the applicant:

1. Their financial affairs, i.e., their income from all sources and expenditure.
2. Their personal and domestic well-being and their state of health.

In terms of the financial assessment, the Society checked if the applicant had any source of income such as a job, how much they earned, who was their employer, had they any unemployment benefits or insurance etc or a pension. Had they any outstanding debts, hire-purchase. Were they members of any 'no clothing clubs' and had 'no debts or pawnings'.⁴⁴

Help was categorised and if an applicant's income exceeded the level for which help was allocated in this category, they were refused help. Grants varied in amounts given. The money was seldom given to the applicant. Grants were paid directly to, for example, coal merchants, clothing and/or bedding shops in the nearest town. The NFS had a network of suppliers around the country to which they sent ex-service men and women seeking help.

⁴³ Ibid., Card B.5401.

⁴⁴ Ibid., Card B.5106.

For example for medical devices, Fannin and Co located in Grafton Street, Dublin, was used. For clothing, Calvert Ltd of 24 Talbot Street, Dublin, was used. Mr McManus's shop at 59 Pearse Street, Dublin, and Millets Stores at 6 Henry Street, Dublin, supplied boots and shoes.⁴⁵

The duration of grants varied with applicants. For example, John Dennehy from a tenement in Sheriff Street, Dublin, served in WW1 and WW2 in the Royal Army Service Corps. He got £3 towards treatment of his bronchitis for a year between 1946 and 1947.⁴⁶ On the other hand, Christopher Cullen from Denmark Row served in Royal Irish Regiment. He was discharged in 1917 and received a 100% pension with tuberculosis. He received £145 over 58 years between 1928 and 1986 when he died.⁴⁷

In terms of the personal health and domestic well-being of the applicants, the NFS would check if an applicant was genuinely ill. Their own doctor would examine the applicant. Dr Cyril Watson of 43 Harrington Street, Dublin, was regularly used from a pool of Dublin NFS doctors. The NFS wanted to know if applicants were capable of work and what was the probable duration of their illness. A case worker would then visit the applicant and compile an Investigator's Report.

An example of one such report was that of John Dundon who gave his address as St Vincent's Hostel, Merchant's Quay, Cork. He was a tragic case of neglect and poverty. He served in the RDF and was discharged on 1 March 1917 as a manic. He had a son in England in an Industrial School and a daughter with the Nuns in a convent who ended up in a mental hospital. The report noted:

"This man is a widower, aged 64 and a half years is a bad neurotic, he lives at the above hostel where he pays 11 shilling and 3 pence per week for bed and light and breakfast. He has to buy his other meals outside, I am sure he rarely has a decent meal. When interviewed, this pensioner was wearing the suit given to him in April 1959, he had no overcoat, and I'm sure he feels the cold very much. A warm overcoat would be of great comfort to him. He also needs a warm pullover, underclothing, and if possible, two size 4 shirts with collar attached. This is a very neurotic man and I'm sure he is not very popular to charitable organisations here. I believe he is blacklisted by Shanakiel Hospital. Despite his manner, I do feel he should be helped as no doubt all his failings are a result of his war service.

*Catherine Bracken
10 February 1960."*⁴⁸

Sometimes the reports would not be so kind to the applicant, for example, Joseph Quinn from Drumlish, Co Longford, who served with 1st RDF in Gallipoli. In April 1949, he applied for financial assistance. He had been out of work suffering from rheumatism. Based on a report by Fr John Meehan, the local PP, dated 2 February 1954, the Society wrote to Quinn declining his application for help noting: *'Your distress appears to be due more to unemployment than incapacity for work resulting from War Disablement.'*⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Ibid., Card B.5106.

⁴⁶ Ibid., Card NB.3764.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Card Z.1034.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Card B.6823.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Card B.5097.

The Span of the Sample Analysed and the Period for which Help was given

The span during which help was given by the NFS in the sample of 6,805 ex-service personnel was between 1919 and 1992. One of earliest applications to the Society was from Daniel Brady of 20 Abbeyfield, Killester, in Dublin. He served in the London Regiment, had no pension and was given help of sixty pounds between 1919 and 1929.⁵⁰ One of the last claims was made by Cecil Baker from Ulverton Road, Dalkey, Co Dublin. He served in 'D' Coy of the 7th RDF, a member of the Dublin 'Pals'.

He had a gunshot wound to the left leg which required amputation. His family received twenty-five pounds for funeral expenses when he died on 21 October 1992.⁵¹ The periods of help varied. The minimum was one year or less; the maximum was fifty-eight years. The latter was only one man, Pte Christopher Cullen from Denmark Row off Henrietta Street, Dublin, ex-Leinster Regiment and Royal Irish Regiment. He and his widowed wife received help between 1928 and 1986.

Not just a Number – Examples of Claimants

The following are some examples of claims under the category heading. Each applicant had their own personal reason for requesting help over the years. In analysing the 6,805 WW1 veterans, there were five categories of assistance that were most frequently arranged in order of frequency, namely widows, clothing, medical, fuel and unusual.

- **In terms of widows:** The widow of Sgt William Barry, 2nd Royal Irish Regiment, from Lord Edward Street in Kilkenny who was KIA on 19 October 1914 aged thirty-four. His widow received assistance of two pounds in May 1926. She died soon after. An application for help came from her daughter in 1944, but she was refused help.⁵²
- **On clothing:** Robert Dickson served in Royal Field Artillery. No details of his address. On 31 March 1922 he received assistance of five shillings a week for four weeks for baby clothing.⁵³ Sgt Robert Donovan from Kinsale was a Munster Fusilier and veteran of 'V' Beach landings in Gallipoli. He was married and had six children. Between 1944 and in 1959, he applied to the NFS for a suit of clothes and a pair of boots.⁵⁴
- **Medical:** The majority of medical applications were for dental treatment. However, John Barrett from Mitchelstown, Co Cork, served in the Labour Corps. He received assistance of eight shillings and six pence for glasses up to 1932. He died on 9 November 1935.⁵⁵ George Dixon from Crumlin in Dublin served in the Royal Army Medical Corps. He suffered with a heart condition. He received £29 in 1954. Sadly, he died alone of pneumonia and malnutrition in St Kevin's Hospital in 1962 aged seventy-six.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Ibid., Card A.172.

⁵¹ Ibid., Card A.32.

⁵² Ibid., Card A.67.

⁵³ Ibid., Card 7/3.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Card B.7294.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Card. 22/240B.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Card Z.594.

- **In terms of fuel:** Already mentioned, Edward Cuthbert from Dundalk served in the Royal Field Artillery. He received regular loads of coal from Elphinstone Coal Merchants in Dundalk paid for by the Society up to the mid-1950s.⁵⁷
- **Some unusual applications:** Nicholas Bolger from Cuffe's Grange, Co Kilkenny, served in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. He was KIA on 9 October 1916 facing Wijtschate. His mother, Bridget, was given seed potatoes in 1927.⁵⁸ Irish Guardsman, Edward Dalton from Ballyconnell, Co Cavan, had a gunshot wound to the right arm. Up to 1950, he was given £60 help which included a grant for the purchase of a donkey and cart.⁵⁹

CONFIDENTIAL Case No. 22/167B

JOINT COUNCIL
OF THE
Order of St. John and British Red Cross Society

EMERGENCY HELP COMMITTEE, CORK & COUNTY Branch

Name of Applicant Robert Donovan

Address 3, Barrack Green, Kinsale.

INVESTIGATOR'S REPORT.

Have you every reason to believe the statements on the application form are correct? Yes

What corroborating documents have you seen? This man is most deserving, he has a wife & 6 children under 15 years

What are the results of any independent enquiries you have made? (e.g., Guardians, Pensions, references, etc.) He has been as temporary post-man & regularly employed. He found it impossible to even get shoes for the children & he badly needs clothes

Do you recommend assistance? If so, under which paragraph of the Regulations? himself. In fact clothes are due for any member of the family whom he must help

REMARKS:— My Committee will be obliged for your report on this case please. Shuey
Secretary.

PRESENT INCOME OF HOUSEHOLD:— E. H. C. SCALE*

	s.	d.	s.	d.
Man
Wife
Children
Other Dependant (if any)
				Rent

* As per E.H.C. Circular 2, para. IV. (c), or County adaptation thereof.

NFS report on Sgt Robert Donovan from Kinsale who wanted shoes for his children and clothes for himself in 1944 and 1959⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ibid., Card B.5279.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Card A.4596.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Card A.933.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Card/File B.7294.

Conclusions

The social and economic profile of the sample of 6,805 Irish WW1 ex-service personnel whose surnames begin with the letters A, B, C and some of D, presented through analysis of the data contained in the Not Forgotten Society cards, revealed the following:

- The ex-service man or woman returned to their pre-War locality of abode.
- They were mainly urban citizens, the majority coming from Dublin and Cork.
- The majority of the Dublin applicants to the NFS lived in Dublin postal districts 8 and 1, i.e., between the Grand and Royal Canals respectively.
- The vast majority had fixed abodes; only a fraction of the ex-service personnel lived in temporary/charity accommodation.
- They were poor tenement-type dwellers; often neighbours such as the men from Turner's Cottages in Ballsbridge, Dublin, revealing the poor socio-economic nature of recruits into the British Army at the outbreak of the War. The push factor of a perceived escape from poverty for men to enlist from these poor areas of Dublin and Cork outweighed the pull factor against enlisting, such as the high possibility of a terrible death or injury in a trench in France or Flanders.
- The units/regiments the ex-servicemen served with during the War tied in with the pre-War recruiting districts of these Irish regiments. However, almost thirty percent did not serve in an Irish unit. Moreover, there was almost a fifty per cent chance the ex-serviceman did, or did not, serve in an Irish unit. The revised sample for this particular analysis was 6,942.
- Applications for help to the NFS by ex-service personnel followed a strict procedure of verification. Because of their falling into hard times, the Irish ex-service personnel were given categories of help from the NFS such as clothing, fuel in the winter months and on issues relating to poor health attributed to or aggravated by their War service.
- Out of 6,805 cases in the study, 4,640 or 68% received grants from the NFS; 2,165 or 32% received nothing.
- Between 1920 and 1930 alone, the NFS paid out £15,223 to 832 applications. This was the minimum according to the cards data only. The exact amount paid to each applicant for assistance would be indicated on the applicant's file; sadly, most of the files were destroyed.

However, through the network of British ex-service charity organisations, such as the NFS and regimental old comrades' associations, there were many nets to catch the fallen ex-service man or woman from poverty. The average Irish citizen who fell on hard times in the 1920s, 30s, 40s and 50s did not share such advantages as their ex-service neighbour.

In November 1927, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Irish Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs, Mr M Heffernan, referred to the Irish ex-servicemen and women of WW1 as being '*nobody's children*'.⁶¹ He was right; and like all abandoned children, the fittest survived and got on with their lives the best they could. The weakest failed; their failures, be they attributed to or aggravated by their War service, was particularly tragic and specific to them.

⁶¹ *Appeal for Whips to Be Removed., The Irish Times, 17 November 1927.*

The man in the photograph below is Mr Kevin Cunningham. The man to his left is Mr Gerry Spain, whose grandfather, James Aspill, was also a Dublin Fusilier. Kevin is standing by the grave in Mount Jerome Cemetery of his late father, Sgt Tommy Cunningham of the 2nd RDF, who died in 1964.⁶² I once asked Kevin did his father ever talk to him about his time in the Great War. *'He did Tom',* replied Kevin, *'little and often. But he was too concerned about rearing his family than he was about the past.'* And perhaps that sums up the entire story of every ex-service man and woman of the Great War.



**Mr Kevin Cunningham, ex-RAF standing with hand on his father's headstone in Mount Jerome Cemetery, Dublin.
The man on the right is Mr Gerry Spain whose grandfather was also a Dublin Fusilier**

⁶² Cunningham, Kevin and Connolly, Sean, *A New Headstone for a Dublin Fusilier*, The Blue Cap - Journal of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, Volume 18 (December 2013).

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Foreword

This review of the NLI Seminar focuses on the contributions made by the named speakers below (other than Tom Burke MBE whose contribution to the Seminar has been given in full in the preceding article). About 50 people (including almost 20 members of the Association) attended what was a very informative day.

Introductory Address

Katherine McSharry, National Library of Ireland, opened the Seminar and welcomed the attendees. She thanked the speakers and Dublin City Library for facilitating the Seminar. She recalled the Collecting Day of 2012 when to the Library's astonishment, 600 people turned up in Trinity College Dublin with WW1 memorabilia to be recorded and photographed. This highlighted the willingness of many families to bring into public view long suppressed history about their ancestors' contributions to the Great War. The late Queen Elizabeth II and our former Presidents had played a major role in promoting reconciliation and in creating the conditions for a more open dialogue about the past. As the Decade of Commemorations concludes, the theme of the Seminar was important and timely in looking at the difficult post-War period.

The Twilight Years – The Irish Regiments 1919-1922

On this topic, Dr Pat McCarthy, DCU, spoke eloquently about the challenges faced by the British Government in the immediate post-War period. Not only did it need to continue to manage its continuing interests in India, the Suez Canal and Afghanistan, but it was also faced with new problems and commitments in Ireland, Mesopotamia (where oil had been discovered), Palestine/Transjordan, the former German colonies in Africa and the occupation of Germany and Turkey. The British Government was also dealing with strikes and much domestic unrest after the War.

For the British Army, its problems were manpower and money. It ended the War with 3.82 million men, compared with a complement of 250,000 at the start of 1914. The Treasury wanted to scale back cost from £425 million to £80 million in peacetime. Demobilisation became a necessity, and after the Treaty, many Irish Regiments were necessarily disbanded. However recruitment also continued, and surprisingly more than 10,000 enlisted from Ireland in 1920/'21, of which 1,856 were from Counties Dublin, Carlow, Kildare and Wicklow, the traditional recruiting area for the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. By March 1922, most of the Irish Regiments' officers opted to stay in the British Army, while most of the men were decommissioned.

Before disbandment however, the Irish Regiments were deployed everywhere, except in Ireland (understandably) and Afghanistan. Dr McCarthy focused on just two areas:

- India, where the Leinster Regiment put down the Moplah Rebellion in June 1921. The Moplahs were Moslems in south-west India and were virtually unarmed. A mixture of ethnic, religious and caste violence ensued which resulted in the deaths of more than 10,000 people according to independent figures. More prominence was given in contemporary reporting to the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1922 than to the Rebellion itself;
- Germany, where the future of parts of its territory was subject to plebiscites. Most passed off peacefully enough. The province of Schleswig Holstein was split between Denmark and Germany. Allenstein voted 98% in favour of staying within Germany, while the plebiscite in Saarland was postponed to 1935. The situation in Upper Silesia close to the Polish border was however quite volatile. It was a wealthy coal and steel manufacturing province, and Germany insisted that it could not pay its War reparations without it. The subsequent plebiscite revealed that 54% wanted to remain with Germany. A strike in August 1919 was suppressed by German troops. Rioting in August 1920 was stopped by British troops. In May-July 1921, the Poles invaded and were driven back. The British Army (half of which comprised Irish Regiments) was sent in to impose a ceasefire. A subsequent boundary commission report drew a wandering partition line across the province which was ultimately accepted by both sides. This enabled a withdrawal of the British troops.

Ex-British Soldiers in the National Army during the Irish Civil War

In introducing this subject, Mr Arthur Cagney, NUI Maynooth, said that in early 1922 a National Army of 4,000 men was envisaged for the Irish Free State. However when the split over the Anglo-Irish Treaty erupted in March, about 60% to 70% dissociated themselves from the Treaty. Former British Army barracks around the country came to be occupied by pro and anti-Treaty forces. As tensions rose and both sides recruited, some 13,000 men rallied to the anti-Treaty/IRA side, while up to 10,000 supported the Treaty.

When the Civil War started with the Battle of the Four Courts at end-June 1922, the pro-Treaty side sought to create a National Army of 35,000 men. Although this figure later came to be exceeded, some 33,000 were in the Army on the night of 12/13 November 1922 when a census was undertaken.

The National Army Museum, London, holds the Enlistment Books for the five disbanded Irish Regiments. These records indicate that in early 1922, there were about 8,100 men in Irish Regiments in the British Army, many of whom were decommissioned by mid-year. With the aid of technology, a research exercise was undertaken to match individuals who served in the Irish Regiments with the National Army Census Returns to ascertain the extent to which the decommissioned men transferred to the National Army.

The research revealed that 1,800 of the 8,100 men transferred to other British Army units. Many senior non-commissioned officers did so. Of the balance of 6,300 who were discharged, 1,100 returned to Ireland and joined the National Army. The Census indicated that the average age of the 1,100 recruits was 21, while that of WW1 veterans was 26 with an average of four years military service. Other notable features of the recruits were that:

- 99% were Roman Catholic;
- 97% were born in the 26 Counties;
- 93% were privates or fusiliers;
- 85% were unmarried;
- 78% were manual workers (labourers, etc);
- 73% were from urban areas, and
- 35% were WW1 veterans of which 8% had been wounded and 23% had been decorated for gallantry in WW1.

Overall the research indicated that they made a large contribution to the effectiveness of the National Army. The expertise acquired by some in the British Army (radio operators, artillerymen, machine gunners, etc) bolstered the quality of the National Army. Some 20% of those recruited were immediately promoted. Some former British Army soldiers became instructors in The Curragh which improved the quality of raw recruits. It is nevertheless estimated that about 150 men in the National Army were killed by accident or as a result of mishandling weapons.

Great War Veterans, the Foundation of Dáil Éireann and the Search for National Recognition

Dr Emmanuel Destaney, Sorbonne University, considered that about 1,500 WW1 veterans may have joined the IRA in opposing the Anglo-Irish Treaty. These veterans often trained their brigade members and participated in the fighting. Unfortunately it is not possible to be precise about numbers as the testimonies in the Military Archives in Dublin tend not to mention the presence of WW1 veterans in the brigade ranks. The value that these veterans brought to their brigades was recognised in many quarters. Nevertheless it is known that some IRA members viewed their presence with suspicion, and some officers felt threatened by their knowledge and experience. At the same time, there was no general campaign by the IRA to punish veterans unless they were seen to be interacting with Crown Forces (Army or police).

For those who joined the National Army in support of the Treaty, ex-IRA men were given preference over WW1 veterans. Of course some ex-IRA men may have been veterans. At the same time, veterans were often accepted into the Army because of their military expertise in areas like artillery, machine guns, etc. When the Civil War ended, many former veterans were let go from the National Army.

Some efforts were made by the British Government to re-integrate the veterans into society. This saw the development of 'colonies' like Killester in Dublin, where ex-servicemen and their families were given houses in newly created estates. Ex-servicemen were also given preferential treatment in public employment, while some private employers, like Guinness, did so too. Some former officers also tried to help their men get jobs. Overall though, the new Irish Government did not accept any responsibility for assisting WW1 veterans viewing it as a 'British burden'.

'The world we had known had vanished': Irish Women's Experiences in the Aftermath of the Great War

Dr Fionnuala Walsh, UCD, explained how the War had greatly expanded women's work experience beyond traditional domestic service. They had worked in munitions factories and had taken on many other roles

which became vacant when men had enlisted for war. Many upper class women fund-raised and worked for the Red Cross in helping those wounded or captured abroad. Many lower class women joined the Women's' Army Auxiliary Corps where they worked as clerks, cooks, waitresses, etc.

When the War ended, many women struggled. Their sense of purpose had dissipated. Many were laid off, some to make way for the men returning to their jobs after the War. Those who had enjoyed new freedoms were reluctant to return to their pre-War roles in domestic service. By February 1919 in Britain, 33,000 women and girls depended on out-of-work donations from the British Government. Many emigrated. Couples separated during the War found it difficult to share homes again.

Like their male counterparts, women were physically or mentally affected by their War service. Even in 1919 after the War had ended, 12 Irish women died mainly from medical conditions like TB and typhoid. Some women successfully applied for disability pensions for back problems, bronchitis, etc.

The UK Government also provided pensions to over 266,000 widows and children of deceased British soldiers. However these widows would lose their pension if they remarried.

The Clash at Itala in September 1901 during the Anglo-Boer War

Paul Appleby

Introduction

During the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902 in South Africa, a serious engagement occurred between British and Boer forces on 26 September 1901 at Mount Itala in today's Province of KwaZulu-Natal. This clash occupies three of the 38 pages devoted to the War in *Neill's 'Blue Caps', Volume II, 1826-1914*, the history of the 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. My granduncle, Sergeant Francis Price 5879, and another two men from the 1st Battalion were killed that day. They were then serving with the 5th Division of Mounted Infantry, a mixed regimental force under the command of Major AJ Chapman, Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

Chapman's official report of the incident records the British sustaining 81 casualties, of whom 22 died locally. Lieutenant TE Fielding, a Royal Army Medical Corps doctor serving with the 5th Division, later reported that another two men died of their wounds. The number of Boer deaths is subject to wide variation. At a minimum, the Boers suffered a similar level of deaths as the British, because 21 names came to be inscribed on a memorial nearby at Gelykwater. However as we shall see, the overall number of Boer deaths may equally have been a multiple of the British loss. About six native South Africans also died, and four were wounded. Overall at least 50 men were killed in the day's engagement.

The Irish Interest

On 4 October 1901, *The St James's Gazette* portrayed the outcome as a "*splendid defence made by the Irish picket at Fort Itala*" and went on to praise the fighting qualities of "*our glorious Irishry*". The report particularly commended "*the splendid death of Lieutenant Kane, shouting 'No surrender!' to his men in the midst of the close-fought hurly-burly...*". In truth, this summary exaggerates the Irish contribution at Itala as the defence included officers and men from seven English regiments/units as well as the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

And yet there was a substantial Irish interest at Itala:

- the officer in charge, Major Archibald John Chapman, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was born in Monkstown, Co Dublin, in 1862 or 1863. While a Captain in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, he married Annie Eveline Wilson of Blackrock, Co Dublin, in Newtownpark Church of Ireland Parish Church on 28 December 1895, when his address was listed as 27 Longford Terrace, Monkstown;
- the doctor, Lieutenant Thomas Evelyn Fielding, Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC), was born in the Curragh Camp on 27 July 1873 and secured his primary medical degree from Trinity College Dublin in 1897. During the Anglo-Boer War, he corresponded with his parents and siblings in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, where his father was Adjutant and a Captain in 4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards. He married Isabel O Palmer, eldest daughter of Dr BA Palmer, Newry, Co Down, in London in late 1913;

- Lieutenant Harold R Kane, South Lancashire Regiment, who was killed at Itala was born in Dublin on 23 June 1878. He was the son of Robert R Kane and Ellen Louisa Coffey of 20 Upper Mount Street, Dublin. Harold Kane was baptised in St Andrew's Catholic Church, Westland Row, Dublin, on 2 July 1878. After he was killed, his address was given as 4 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin, and his father (by then Secretary of the Royal Dublin Society and a County Court Judge for Kildare, Carlow, Wicklow and Wexford) was named as the Executor of his son's Estate. Harold's grandfather, Sir Robert Kane who was also prominent in the Royal Dublin Society was a Professor of Chemistry who wrote *The Industrial Resources of Ireland* in 1844 which advocated industrial development in Ireland. He also served as the first President of Queen's College Cork (UCC today);
- three Royal Dublin Fusiliers were killed and six were wounded at Itala, although the total number of Fusiliers involved in the fighting is not known. More information on these men, where available, is given in the **Appendix**.

The Progress of the War before the Itala Clash

At the start of the Anglo-Boer War in late 1899 and early 1900, the Boers enjoyed considerable success. In their initial invasion of Natal, they surrounded the town of Ladysmith to which over 10,000 British troops (including about 50 Dublin Fusiliers) had retreated. It took four months and a number of failed attempts before the British Army succeeded in relieving Ladysmith and rescuing its embattled troops. Many British lives were lost in the effort including hundreds of troops from Irish regiments. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers alone had over 100 men killed in the first six months of the War.

Aided by massive reinforcements, the British Army gradually secured control of the main Boer population centres in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal during 1900. As a result, the Boers resorted to guerrilla attacks against the dominant British Army in their homelands. This required the Army to maintain troops to the rear in order to protect its long lines of communication to the sea, particularly the railways. An extensive mesh of blockhouses connected by barbed wire was developed which was also used to restrict the movement of Boer guerrilla units across southern Africa and to try to clear them from particular regions.

The British Army also implemented a policy of burning Boer farmsteads, killing the associated livestock and concentrating the Boer occupants in protected but inadequately provisioned camps near the railway lines in order to deny food and sustenance to the Boer guerrillas. This had devastating results. Many thousands died in these concentration camps (particularly women and children).

In a comment on this phase of the War, the South African-based historian, Donal P McCracken, has reported that most Irish soldiers were sympathetic to the Boers, and he ascribed the following attitude to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers:

"...the Dubs had little taste for the 'looting' of Boer farms they were ordered to undertake in the latter part of the war. But they were professional soldiers, proud of their own fighting record in the Natal campaign and resigned to their lot in having later to march back and forth over the high veldt in the hopeless pursuit of de la Rey and de Wet [two Boer generals]."

The 5th Division of Mounted Infantry

The Boers' horsemanship and greater mobility in the early part of the Anglo-Boer War had prompted a reconfiguration of some British infantry regiments into similarly mobile units so that they could quickly respond to Boer raiding activity. On 14 August 1900, Lieutenants RGB Jeffreys and BP Lefroy went with 75 other ranks to join the 5th Division of Mounted Infantry which was then forming under Major AJ Chapman. All of these officers were with the 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. My granduncle, Francis Price, was almost certainly one of the 75 men involved as it is clear from available British Army records that he was part of the contingent of the 1st Battalion who were in the 5th Division of Mounted Infantry.

Over the following months, the 5th Division was regularly involved in trying to capture Boer guerrillas and in confiscating and destroying Boer property, particularly where the inhabitants were Boer sympathisers. The Division also captured a number of Boer towns in south-eastern Transvaal, and on Christmas Eve night in 1900, the Dublin Fusiliers helped to repel a Boer attack on the town of Utrecht at a cost of just two men slightly wounded.

By April 1901, the 5th Division was deployed to Nkandla in Zululand in order to deter Boer attacks in the area for cattle and other supplies which the local Zulu population resented. In a letter home that month to his family in Dublin, Lieutenant Fielding, RAMC, reflected growing disenchantment with the War:

"...no matter where one goes there is nothing but desolation and poverty to meet the eye.

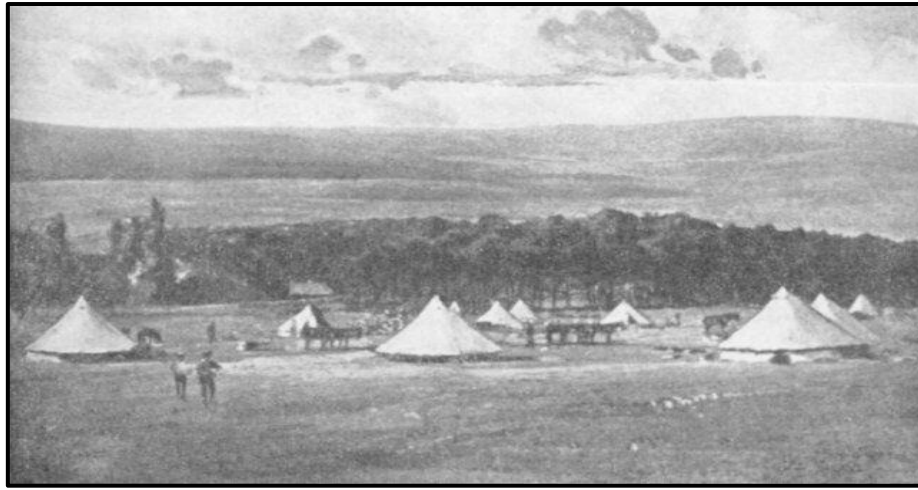
Women and children are starving and many would have died but that we have formed laagers [camps] near all the towns, and there we house and feed them.

War is frightful there is no doubt, but this war in its far-reaching effects is doubtless the worst that has been the direct result of the English arms for many many years.

I am afraid I have bored you with what is almost a moral dissertation, but we are all 'fed up', and very few can detect any sign of the 'fun' they came out to see."

As the Boers' overall situation was desperate, peace talks were opened, but the terms on offer from the British Government were rejected in mid-1901. In order to prove to the British that the Boers were not a spent fighting force and thereby try to obtain improved peace terms in time, the Boers decided in August 1901 to launch a second invasion of Natal. This would be led by General Louis Botha (the future Prime Minister of South Africa) who had over several months successfully beaten off British attempts to relieve Ladysmith in late 1899 and early 1900. Ultimately, about 300 men of the 5th Division of Mounted Infantry which had recently established a camp at the foot of Mount Itala would bear the brunt of Botha's advance after he crossed out of the Transvaal. The British had available two 15 pounder field guns and a Maxim machine gun to help with their defence.

In a 1971 article, MC Carter included the following picture of Itala camp in 1901.



The Attack on Camp Itala

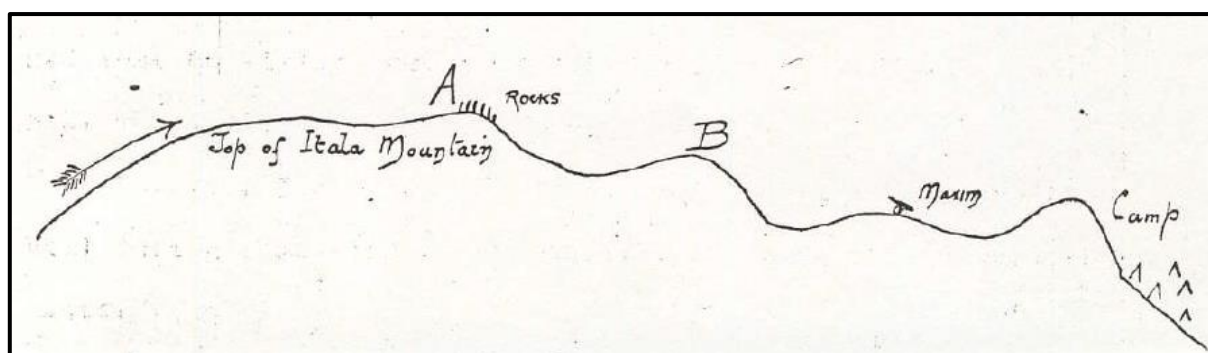
By mid-September, Botha was camped about 30 kilometres from the borders of Natal to the south-west and Zululand to the south. On 17 September, a British patrol spotted a Boer force of 150 men in south-east Transvaal close to the Zululand border. Possessing guns and a mounted infantry force that was twice as large, Major Hubert Gough decided to surprise the Boer party at Blood River Poort. However unknown to Gough, Botha had arrived close by with about 1,000 men, and they encircled Gough's men during the attack resulting in a heavy defeat. The British Army lost almost 300 men killed, wounded, captured and missing, while the Boer casualties amounted only to one man killed and three wounded. Importantly, the British also lost many horses, rifles and cartridges which immediately served to bolster the Boers' capability as a fighting force.

The Times History of the War in South Africa 1899-1902 records that Major Chapman's patrols learnt of Botha's advance southwards towards Itala on 21 September, although it was 25 September before Chapman first got wind of an imminent attack on his camp at Itala. Acting on intelligence from local scouts that the border posts at Itala and Fort Prospect (some 15 miles east of Itala) were not well fortified, Botha decided to attack both posts simultaneously early the following day. This intelligence, while correct for Itala, was not accurate for Fort Prospect where the Boer attack on 26 September was comfortably resisted with limited British casualties of just one soldier killed and eight wounded. Lieutenant RGB Jeffreys, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, assisted in repelling the Boer attack on Fort Prospect.

In anticipation of a considerable Boer attacking force on 26 September, the defences at Itala camp were hurriedly expanded. Trenches were improved on its northern, eastern and southern sides while the rocky high ground above the camp to the west was protected by a stone wall or sangar. This Imperial War Museums' photograph (© IWM Q 72298) of Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the Anglo-Boer War gives an indication of the type of rough defensive position erected on the spur overlooking the main camp.



Holding this spur of high ground was critical as the camp would be taken if the Boers were able to direct accurate short-range fire at the shallow trenches below. The following diagram of the terrain involved was later included by Lieutenant Fielding in a letter to his mother in Dublin. He commented that the camp's location had been selected for its proximity to water, firewood and a good road before any prospect of a Boer attack had materialised. He added that his father would readily appreciate that it was a bad defensive position.



Based on intelligence that the Boers under General Chris Botha, a brother of General Louis Botha, would attack the spur from the west by traversing the summit of Mount Itala, Chapman sent about 80 mounted infantry under Lieutenant Lefroy, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and Lieutenant HR Kane, 1st Battalion, South Lancashire Regiment, to the summit to meet the Boer threat. An account by Major DM Moore in 1979 of the fighting on the summit of Mount Itala reads as follows:

"The first contact between the Boers and the British occurred at midnight. Chris Botha's men approaching the summit in close formation, clearly visible in the bright moonlight, suddenly came under heavy fire from the waiting British lying hidden among the scattered rocks. The initial exchange of fire lasted for about 15 minutes, and was followed by half-an-hour's silence while the Boers regrouped and surrounded the British position. Although Kane and his men had a clear field of fire to the west their position was vulnerable from the other three sides where the same boulders which protected the British, gave the Boers cover as they completed their encirclement. The charge came simultaneously from all directions and within a further half-hour, all British resistance had been overcome. The newspaper reports of the time made much of the reported fighting at close quarters and the use of the British bayonet. The two British officers acquitted themselves with particular distinction and bravery. Kane fell shot through the spine and stomach encouraging his men, only to die of his wounds seven hours later, without leaving the summit, where he lies buried.

Lefroy was shot through the stomach, leg, arm and chin but recovered to be awarded the Distinguished Service Order in recognition of his efforts."

Only a small minority of men (Carter suggests 14) managed to escape from the summit and return to the camp below.

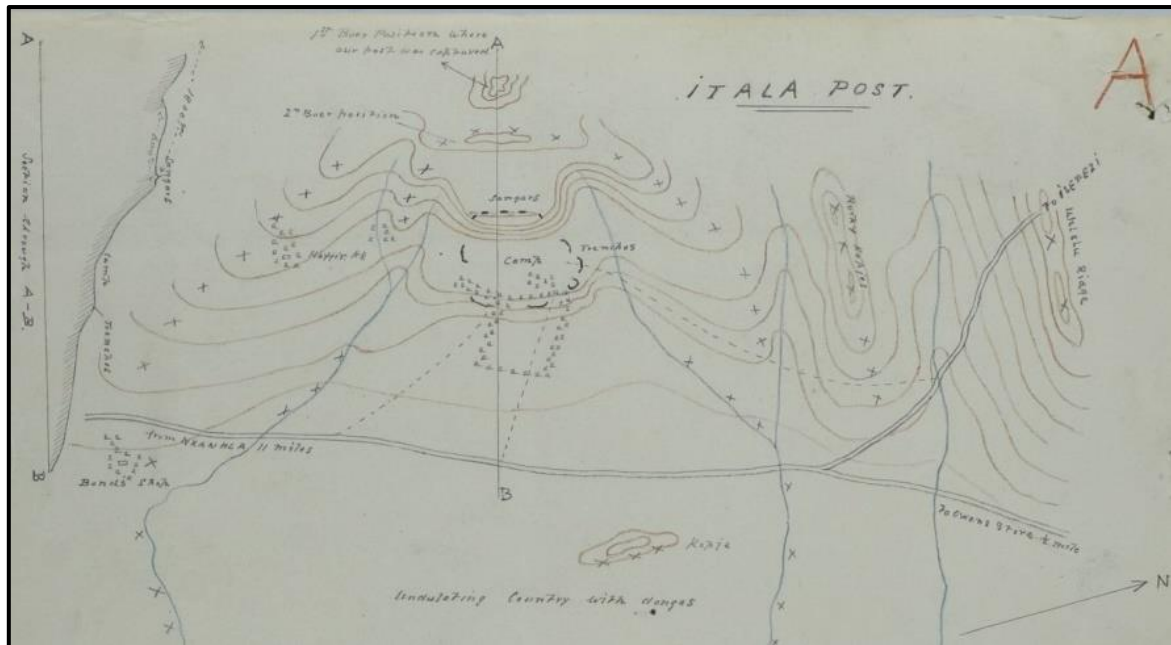
Having taken the summit, Botha and some 500 men descended to attack the spur under cover of darkness. Simultaneously, two other Boer thrusts, each also comprising about 500 men, attacked the camp below the spur from the north and from the south-east. More Boers occupied high ground further away to the east of the camp.

The Times History offers a graphic account of the fighting that night and during the following day:

"From 2 A.M. to 4 A.M. Chapman's men were subjected to a severe ordeal. At every point the Boer strength was overwhelming, and at some points the enemy charged right up to the trenches and sangars, only to recoil before the steady fire of the defence. During this period, the two British guns were of considerable service; for there was moonlight bright enough to give them a fair idea of their target while not so bright as to expose the gunners to aimed fire. At 4 A.M. the attack slackened...

A few minutes after 6 fire broke out again and continued for thirteen hours. With daylight, Chapman's guns became the target of every rifle and were ordered to cease fire. The Maxim, too, behind the sangars on the spur, was jammed early in the day by a flying sod from the parapet... The Boers, who showed great courage and suffered considerable loss, could not be induced to make the last sacrifices necessary for the capture of the post. That the sangared spur was the key to the position they fully realised... Chris Botha, unable to persuade his men to cross more than a portion of the fire-swept zone, endeavoured to weary and demoralize the garrison by an accurate and incessant fire upon every portion of the camp and its defences. In this he failed; for the defence at every point was magnificently stubborn. Chapman and his second-in-command, Captain Butler, were both hit, but continued to direct and encourage the defence by every means in their power. None the less, the situation was critical. Ammunition grew scarce, cover was bad and the marksmanship of the Boers was much superior to that of the British troops. As the day wore on, the losses became serious; while exhaustion, hunger and thirst began to tell upon the survivors..."

A key extract from the map by Captain Butler of the post at Itala in the official record of the battle follows. Their camp is represented by a rough circle near the middle of the drawing while Xs mark the Boer positions on the surrounding hills. Note also that Captain Butler represents the summit in the top centre of the map as being closer to the camp than was actually the case. The true distance between the peak and camp was approximately one mile.



Fortunately for the British defenders, General Louis Botha took the decision to withdraw late in the afternoon. Moore explains Botha's decision in these terms:

"He had already lost too many men and expended too much ammunition. General Botha would have had either to expose himself to unwarranted casualties in taking a prize of little value, by pressing home the attack, or he would have had to continue the siege and thus expose himself to being caught in the rapidly closing British net while so engaged. He had already received news of the large-scale British troop movements in the Vryheid district, designed to cut off his retreat."

Moore confirms too that notwithstanding the withdrawal of the Boer forces, the option for Chapman of remaining at Itala was unrealistic:

"Exhaustion, hunger, thirst, battle fatigue and shortage of ammunition were taking their combined toll and the Boers' tactic of sitting back and firing on the camp came close to success."

The possibility of defeat and surrender had presented itself to the minds of the defenders. They could not endure another night of continuous attacks like the previous one...

At the time the engagement was broken off Chapman had received no news of a relief column. The wounded needed attention and the facilities of a base hospital. The state of his troops coupled with the shortage of ammunition made it impossible to withstand another attack without relief, and Chapman had no assurance that the Boers would not return. Wishing to save the remainder of his troops and guns from falling into the hands of the enemy in the event of a new attack, Chapman decided to abandon the position he had held so tenaciously and to withdraw to the base camp at Nkandla."

Medical Assistance given by Dr Fielding

In the initial attack on the camp, Dr Fielding was involved in tending to the British wounded under fire. At dawn during the lull in the fighting and with Major Chapman's agreement, he set out from the camp with

his orderly and two stretcher-bearers to see what medical assistance he could offer to those lying wounded on the summit. He was given passage through the Boer combatants by their General Opperman. On reaching the summit, he treated the seriously wounded, both British and Boer, for two hours and made them as comfortable as possible.

However Dr Fielding had to wait until the fighting stopped in the late afternoon before he could return to camp with the British wounded. The Boers returned some captured prisoners from the summit engagement to enable him to ferry the wounded (including Lieutenant Lefroy) back down the mountain to the camp that night. On his return, he found the camp abandoned save for the wounded from the day's fighting who were being looked after by a Veterinary Officer, a Lieutenant and about 20 unarmed men. One of their tasks was to bury the dead.

That morning (27 September), Fielding received a letter from Boer General Cheere Emmett seeking the return of those Boers who had fallen the previous day. With Fielding's approval, two Boers later came into the camp under a white flag and took away an unspecified number of bodies in an ox wagon. Many of these were probably the Boer fighters who were killed during their rushes on the British sangars and trenches before dawn on the previous day. One of those may have been Commandant JSF Blignaut who bravely pierced the British defences but was shot dead as he tried to turn one of the British guns on the defenders.

It would be a further 24 hours before the expected British relief column arrived. By this time, the camp was in an unsanitary condition due to the hundreds of rotting horse and mule carcasses which had been shot during the fight. Fielding therefore organised an evacuation of the wounded to Nkandla with the assistance of the prisoners captured on the summit who had returned. For a number of weeks afterwards, Fielding attended to the wounded and supervised the transfer of the seriously wounded to hospitals in the vicinity.

Memorials at Mount Itala

After the battle, the dead British soldiers were buried close to where they had fallen. Save for one isolated grave south-east of the summit of Mount Itala, the dead were interred in four small cemeteries – on the summit, on the spur below it and on the northern and southern sides of the former camp below the spur. These cemeteries have all been recently improved. Although 22 died in the vicinity, the graves of only 15 men are evident today, and 14 of them are still marked with a cross showing the name of the interred soldier. Fortunately, the graves of the three Royal Dublin Fusiliers who died are so marked in the cemetery on top of Mount Itala.

Shortly after the battle, the British residents of Zululand erected a large monument beside the summit cemetery to remember the fallen. According to Fielding, every surviving officer and man contributed a day's pay. This monument stood for many years until it was severely damaged, allegedly vandalised. The stump of the original stone obelisk remains in place today, and a shattered plaque containing the names of the dead (including those of Sergeant Price, Corporal J Donohoe and Private P Lynch of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers) lies beside it on the ground.

These photographs show the grave of Francis Price in the summit cemetery in front of the damaged obelisk and part of the shattered plaque identifying the men of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who died close by.



The following photographs show the inscription on the metal cross over Francis Price's grave and the laminated memorial card which I attached to the cross when I visited the grave in November 2018. The inscription on the cross reads: '5879 SGT. F. PRICE 2ND R. DUB FUS KILLED 26-09-1901', although the reference to the 2nd Battalion of the Fusiliers is an error.



As part of the recent refurbishment of the cemeteries, a new plinth commemorating the dead has been erected in the northern cemetery beside the former camp. This identifies the 22 British soldiers (including the three Dublin Fusiliers) who lie buried in the cemeteries around Mount Itala.



Newspaper Reports of the Casualties

Newspaper reports of the fighting at Itala on 26 September 1901 were published in Ireland over the following days. In dealing with the casualties, the commissioned officers were identified first. On 1 October 1901, page 5 of *The Cork Examiner* reported the death of Lieutenant Kane, South Lancashire Regiment, the dangerous wounding in the body of Lieutenant Lefroy, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and the slight wounding in the right leg of 'Captain Chapman', Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

It would be another week before the names of the non-commissioned officers and men emerged. On 9 October 1901, page 5 of *The Cork Examiner* notified the following Dublin Fusilier casualties:

"The War Office to-night issued the following: – Casualties at Fort Itala, Zululand, on September 26th – First Royal Dublin Fusiliers – Killed, 5879 Sergeant F Price, 4392 Corporal J Donohoe, 3880 Private P Lynch; severely wounded, 5136 Private T Gilbert, and 3879 Private T Gamble; slightly wounded, 5991 Private E Birmingham, and 3738 Private T Land (sic – Lunn is the correct surname)."

The Wide Variation in the Estimates of Boer Deaths

We have already learnt that at least 50 men were killed at Itala, comprising 24 British, 21 Boer and six native South Africans. However there is some controversy over the number of Boer deaths. Botha's list of Itala casualties dated 27 September (the day after the fight) stated that 15 of his men were killed, 40 wounded and one missing, a total of 56. While Moore, Torlage and Watt accept these figures, Wessels adds that five or six of the wounded died soon afterwards. This conforms closely with the 21 Boer names

said by Carter to have been inscribed on a memorial at Gelykwater where casualties from Itala were initially buried.

It is difficult to reconcile this level of Boer deaths with Chapman's report which stated that Boer casualties numbered 128 dead and about 270 wounded. These, he said, were based on reliable eye-witness accounts. Moore has criticised Chapman's figures as 'far too high' but without adequately explaining why he cast aside the first-hand observations of Fielding and others. While it is possible that Chapman's various eye-witnesses were double-counting the Boer dead, Fielding alone reported that he counted 53 Boer dead (31 of whom were on the summit) and that he dressed the wounds of another 50 Boers approximately. Uniquely Fielding was behind Boer lines during the day's fighting and was therefore in a position to count accurately the Boer casualties on the summit and around the camp on the following day. Perhaps therefore, Botha's list of casualties was not comprehensive.

An *Irish Times* report of 30 September (page 5) relaying the content of a message from Colonel Bruce Hamilton to the Governor of Natal on the day of his arrival at Itala on 28 September includes the following statement about Boer casualties:

"Kaffirs [native South Africans] state that they [the Boers] lost heavily, and were carrying away dead and wounded all day yesterday."

Despite the misgivings of Moore in particular, a significant number of Boer casualties seems quite plausible. As well as those killed in the summit engagement, the Boer frontal assaults on the British positions in the early morning of 26 September likely caused many Boer casualties having regard to the good fields of fire available to the defenders on that moonlit night. Carter alone suggests that 149 Boers died at Itala but without explaining why he added the 21 buried at Gelykwater to Chapman's 128 figure.

Chapman's report added that his field guns fired 63 shrapnel shells and that his force used over 70,000 rounds of ammunition. These figures indicate the severity of the Boer assault at Itala. Page 5 of the *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail* dated 9 November 1901 reported one wounded soldier who lost an arm at Itala describing the fighting as *"the severest of the war"*. The report added that the *"fury of the Boers at the resistance of the small outpost...equalled anything seen at Wagon Hill during the siege of Ladysmith"*. While these opinions cannot be validated, there is no doubt that it was an intense Boer assault which the British were fortunate to repel. The true number of Boer dead at Itala must unfortunately remain unknown.

Awards and Commendations

Arising out of the successful defence of Itala, the conduct of a number of officers and men was officially recognised.

By War Office notice of 11 October 1901 published in the London Gazette that day, Distinguished Service Orders were awarded to the following officers *"for gallantry in the defence of Forts Itala and Prospect"*:

- Captain Cecil Alured Rowley, Dorsetshire Regiment, for defending Fort Prospect;
- Lieutenant Bertram Percival Lefroy, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, for Itala.

In the same notice, Captain AJ Chapman, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was also commended “*for gallantry in the defence of Forts Itala and Prospect*” and appointed to the brevet rank of Major. His further promotions to Major and brevet Lieutenant-Colonel became effective on 26 and 27 October 1901 respectively.

On 27 December 1901, the London Gazette reported the award of a Victoria Cross and four Distinguished Conduct Medals to five soldiers of the 69th Battery, Royal Field Artillery, in the following announcement:

War Office, December 27, 1901.		
<p>THE King has been graciously pleased to signify His intention to confer the decoration of the Victoria Cross on the undermentioned Soldier, whose claims have been submitted for His Majesty's approval, for his conspicuous bravery in South Africa, as stated against his name :—</p>		
Regiment.	Name.	Act of Courage for which recommended.
69th Battery Royal Field Artillery	Driver F. G. Bradley	During the action at Itala, Zululand, on the 26th September, 1901, Major Chapman called for volunteers to carry ammunition up the hill ; to do this a space of about 150 yards swept by a heavy cross fire had to be crossed. Driver Lancashire and Gunner Bull at once came forward and started, but half-way across Driver Lancashire fell wounded. Driver Bradley and Gunner Rabb without a moment's hesitation ran out and caught Driver Lancashire up, and Gunner Rabb carried him under cover, the ground being swept by bullets the whole time. Driver Bradley then, with the aid of Gunner Boddy, succeeded in getting the ammunition up the hill.
<p>His Majesty has further been pleased to approve of the grant of the Medal for Distinguished Conduct in the Field to the undermentioned Soldiers, in recognition of their gallant conduct during recent operations in South Africa :—</p> <p style="text-align: center;">69th Battery Royal Field Artillery.</p> <p>14494 Gunner W. H. Rabb. 15247 Driver E. Lancashire. 25209 Gunner A. Boddy. 10694 Gunner W. Bull.</p>		

A subsequent notice in the London Gazette on 17 January 1902 indicated that these men were promoted bombardiers by Lord Kitchener for “*conspicuous gallantry in defence of Itala, Zululand, on 26th September, 1901*”.

The conduct of a number of other officers and men at Itala was also commended by Lord Kitchener in *The London Gazette* on 17 January 1902:

- Lieutenant RC Trousdale, 1st South Lancashire Regiment, for “*the plucky way he worked the maxim gun during the attack on Fort Itala, on 26th September, 1901, after both the men with him had been killed*”;
- Lieutenant TE Fielding, Royal Army Medical Corps, for “*good service at Itala on 26th September, 1901*”;
- 4961 Sergeant G Wheeler, 2nd Dorsetshire Regiment, for “*gallant conduct in defence of Itala, Zululand, on 26th September, 1901*”;
- 6076 Sergeant P Clarke, 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers)
- 5999 Private E Birmingham, 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers) see paragraph below;
- 2902 Private W Ayres, 2nd Dorsetshire Regiment)

- 4216 Private T Gilbert, 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers, on the basis that he stayed *“with Lieutenant Lefroy after he was wounded, and killed 2 Boers who were aiming at him [i.e., Lefroy] at close quarters”*;
- 4068 Sergeant J King, 2nd Royal Lancashire Regiment, on the basis that he and *“14 men held an advanced trench under heavy cross fire and repulsed enemy. He and 8 men were killed or wounded”*;
- 4067 Private C Lownes, 2nd Royal Lancashire Regiment, on the basis that he *“[v]olunteered to carry ammunition to the hill, and wounded in doing so”*;
- 3972 Colour-Sergeant Duffy, 1st South Lancashire Regiment, on the basis that *“[t]hough wounded early in the action, [he] continued to fight, and exercised great control and influence over his men”*.

The cited basis for commending the conduct of Sergeant Clarke, Private Birmingham and Private Ayres above was that: *“When Boers broke into position, [they] held a place near the break and checked enemy till ammunition and horses were got away”*.

Privates Gilbert, Birmingham, Ayres and Lownes were all promoted to Corporal by Lord Kitchener as a consequence of their conduct at Itala.

It does not appear that Lieutenant HR Kane received any posthumous award for his reported good conduct on the summit of Mount Itala, although his death was noted when his successor was appointed. However he had earlier been mentioned in despatches.

Conclusion

In his report Chapman praised the *“early, ample and accurate information”* provided by his native scouts which enabled his force of 300 to be *“quite prepared when the attack began”*. However he does not explain his motivation for detaching about 80 men to occupy the summit of Mount Itala. In a letter home from hospital, the wounded Lieutenant BP Lefroy, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, said that their objective was *“to try and hold it, and prevent the Boers from attacking the camp from that direction”*. As 80 men were to confront about 500 Boers, the detachment could hardly have been expected to hold the summit. Rather Chapman’s main aim may have been to delay the Boer attack on the critical spur overlooking the camp. The longer the Boer attack was postponed, the shorter would be the time available to mount the attack under cover of darkness. In summary, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that it was a ‘suicide mission’ for the 80 men involved. The apparent willingness of both Lieutenants Kane and Lefroy to ‘fight to the death’ with their men suggests that they were aware that the fate of their comrades in the camp below was to some extent in their hands.

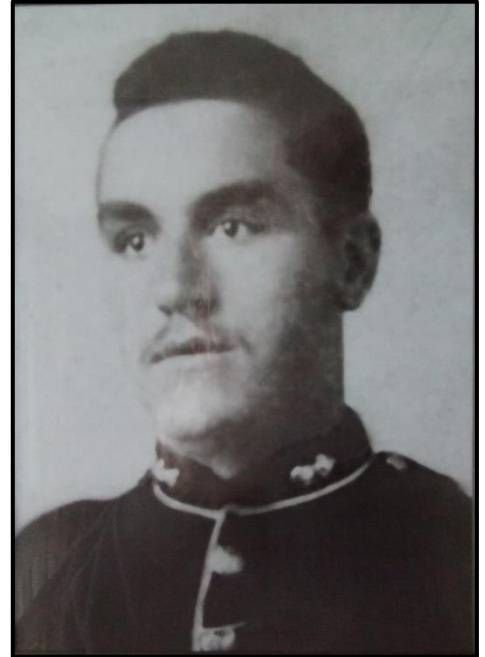
The day long engagement at Itala is but a minor episode in the three years of death and destruction involved in the Anglo-Boer War. Some 70,000 people died, while major damage was inflicted on Boer property with homes destroyed and several million cattle, sheep and horses killed or looted. And yet the peace treaty and subsequent negotiations with Britain created the basis for Boer self-government in a dominion of South Africa comprising Cape Colony, Natal, Orange Free State and the Transvaal. By 1910 as Pakenham noted, a Boer Government led by Louis Botha controlled three times the territory and over four times the population which had existed in their former republics of Orange Free State and the Transvaal. The Boers may have lost the War, but they certainly triumphed during the subsequent peace.

APPENDIX

The Dublin Fusilier Casualties at Itala

Sergeant Francis Price 5879 (Killed)

Francis (pictured) was the second child of George Philip Price and Mary Ann Price (née Cotterill). According to his birth record, Francis was born on 21 January 1879 in Birmingham, Warwickshire, England. His father was a brass worker. Ultimately, George and Mary Price had ten children, the youngest of which was my grandfather, Joseph, who was born in December 1899 after Francis had left for South Africa. It is evident from birth records that George and Mary's first six children were born in Birmingham, and the last four in Dublin. This means that the family immigrated to Dublin between 1888 and 1890. It is thought that the move was prompted by the amount of brass working available in Catholic Churches in the Dublin area. In the 1901 Irish Census, the parents and nine of their children, all Roman Catholic, were living at 31 Clonliffe Road, Dublin. The exception was Francis who was serving in South Africa.



While no enlistment records survive, Francis probably joined the Royal Dublin Fusiliers when he was 17 in about September 1896. The 1st Battalion of the Regiment was stationed at Portsmouth in southern England in late 1896 when about 80% of its soldiers (excluding commissioned officers) were Irish-born. In April 1897, the 1st Battalion moved from Portsmouth to Aldershot in Hampshire and then in May 1899 to The Curragh in Co Kildare. Francis Price undoubtedly trained with the Battalion in these locations before leaving for the War in South Africa in November 1899. The circumstances associated with his eventual promotion to Sergeant are unknown. Francis qualified for four clasps on his Queen's South Africa Medal related to service in Orange Free State, Laing's Nek, the Relief of Ladysmith and Transvaal. He is remembered on the Fusiliers' Arch in Dublin.

Corporal James Donohoe 4392 (Killed)

James Donohoe was born in Old Connell, near Newbridge, Co Kildare, in about 1873. His parents were Charles and Catherine, and his siblings were Peter, John, Bridget and Catherine. He was an 18 year old labourer when he enlisted in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers at Naas on 23 March 1892. He had previously been in the militia (3rd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers). He was permitted to extend his Army service to 12 years on 3 March 1899 and was appointed a Lance Corporal in the 1st Battalion of the Fusiliers on 9 October 1899.

Unusually, his available enlistment papers contain no record of his service in South Africa. However the Medal Roll indicates that his service merited Orange Free State, Laing's Nek, Relief of Ladysmith and Transvaal clasps on the Queen's South Africa Medal, although he is not listed as killed in action. As well as the cross over his grave at Itala (see accompanying photograph), he is remembered on the Fusiliers' Arch in Dublin.



Private P Lynch 3880 (Killed)

While no enlistment records for Private Lynch survive, he probably enlisted in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in late November 1890. However his service is recognised on the Medal Roll where he was awarded four clasps on his Queen's South Africa Medal related to service in Orange Free State, Laing's Nek, the Relief of Ladysmith and Transvaal. He was also awarded the King's South Africa Medal for 1901. His date of death is incorrectly listed on the Roll as 8 October 1901. As well as the cross over his grave at Itala (see accompanying photograph), he is remembered on the Fusiliers' Arch in Dublin.



Private T Gilbert 4816 (Severely Wounded)

Again no enlistment papers for Private Gilbert survive, but he probably joined the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in mid-1893. He suffered a severe head wound at Itala while protecting Lieutenant Lefroy. As indicated earlier, Private Gilbert was commended and promoted to Corporal as a result of his gallant conduct at Itala. Despite inaccuracies in his number and/or initial on some of the available records, it is clear that he also received the Orange Free State, Laing's Nek, Relief of Ladysmith and Transvaal clasps on his Queen's South Africa Medal.

Private Thomas Gamble 3879 (Severely Wounded)

Although no civil birth record for him has been located, Thomas Gamble was baptised in Saints Michael and John Church, Dublin, on 17 March 1872, a son of William and Elizabeth Gamble, 34 Temple Bar, Dublin. He enlisted in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers at Naas on 26 November 1890. He had been in the militia (5th Royal Dublin Fusiliers) since April 1890. On his enlistment he declared himself to be a sawyer's assistant aged 18 years and two months. He completed his service in early 1899, but after spending just six months in the Reserve, he was recalled to Army service in October 1899 and posted to the 1st Battalion.

Thomas Gamble's service in the Mounted Infantry was commended by Lord Roberts (without elaboration as to the circumstances) in a despatch dated 4 September 1901, although his listed regimental number is not correct. At Itala, he received a severe gunshot wound to his left leg resulting in a compound fracture. This was later adjudged to have incapacitated him to the extent of 75%. On 17 March 1903, he was discharged as medically unfit for further service at Netley Hospital, Southampton. His next of kin, possibly in 1903, was his grandmother, Elizabeth Gamble, 42 Lower Kevin Street, Dublin. While his Army papers note that he is deceased (without giving a date), it is probable that he is the Thomas Gamble who died aged 34 in the second quarter of 1907 in the district of South Stoneham, Hampshire, where Netley Hospital was located. He was awarded a Queen's South Africa Medal with clasps for the Orange Free State, Laing's Nek, the Relief of Ladysmith and Transvaal for his service during the War.

Private E Birmingham 5991 (Slightly Wounded)

Although no enlistment records for Private Birmingham have been located, he probably joined the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in early 1897. As indicated earlier, he was commended and promoted to Corporal as a result of his gallant conduct at Itala. The shoulder wound he received there was classified as slight. Private Birmingham's service in South Africa led to the award of the Queen's South Africa Medal with clasps for the Orange Free State, Laing's Nek, Relief of Ladysmith and Transvaal.

Private Thomas Lunn 3738 (Slightly Wounded)

Private Thomas Lunn, a mill hand, enlisted in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers at Halifax on 8 August 1890 when he was aged 18. He was born in Huddersfield, Yorkshire, and previously served in the 3rd Battalion of the West Riding Regiment. It is not known why he joined the Dublin Fusiliers. Having completed his term of service, he was discharged from the Army on 19 July 1898. However on the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War in October 1899, he was recalled from the Reserve and posted to the 1st Battalion of the Fusiliers on 9 October 1899.

The wrist and thigh wounds sustained by Private Lunn at Itala were initially classified as slight. However he was sent home from South Africa in November 1901 and discharged from the Army on 26 June 1902, because he was medically unfit. A stated result of his being wounded was a weakness of his forearm. Private Lunn was awarded King's and Queen's South Africa Medals with clasps for Orange Free State, Laing's Nek, Relief of Ladysmith, Transvaal and Tugela Heights. The latter clasp suggests that he was among the minority of the 1st Battalion who fought with the Dubs' 2nd Battalion in trying to relieve Ladysmith.

Thomas Lunn, a mill hand aged 42, enlisted again in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in Huddersfield on 25 November 1914. He is recorded on Active Service Casualty Forms as serving in other units during the War including the Royal Irish Regiment, Durham Light Infantry, Royal Munster Fusiliers and the Labour Corps, but the nature of his War disability is not specified. Part of his period of War service was spent in Cork and in Fort Purbrook, Portsmouth. He was demobilised in March 1919 when his character was stated to be good. No definite Medal Roll record for him has been located. His Army record lists him as deceased (without giving a date), and his next of kin was his wife, Fanny, Newsome Road, Huddersfield.

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Acknowledgements

Firstly, I want to thank Seán Ryan of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association for giving me the RDF Memorial Card which I placed on the grave of Francis Price in South Africa.

In addition to those individuals already identified above, there are a number of people in South Africa whose assistance and dedication I would like to acknowledge:

- Mr Hugh Bland who runs a heritage website, www.kznpr.co.za, containing photographs of KwaZulu-Natal's heritage sites. It was my unexpected discovery of a photograph of the grave of Francis Price on this website in late 2016 that spurred me to research his death at Itala in September 1901 and ultimately visit his grave in November 2018;
- Mr Pat Rundgren, an experienced and accredited tour guide, who accompanied me to the battlefield and cemeteries of Mount Itala in November 2018, and
- Dr Eugene Campher, Parys, Orange Free State, and Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal, for his assistance and encouragement while undertaking my research.

RDFA Tour of Battlefields in Salonika, 9-13 May 2022

Seamus Moriarty

Introduction

This RDFA trip was originally scheduled for 2020 and was necessarily postponed for two years due to Covid. It eventually went ahead last May just after the easing of Covid restrictions on a widespread basis. Fortunately, the group of 14 members enjoyed perfect weather conditions for the five days - no rain and never too warm.

Our guide was Alan Wakefield, the head of the First World War and Early 20th Century Team at the Imperial War Museums. He is a co-author of *Under the Devil's Eye: Britain's Forgotten War at Salonika 1915-1918*. Alan was assisted by a number of local guides (including Romeo and Apostolos) in the areas of Greece and North Macedonia that we visited.

Overview of the Salonika Front, 1914-1918

As a prime cause of WW1 was the hostility between Serbia and its neighbour, Austria-Hungary, it is not surprising that some of the earliest fighting took place between Serbia (who sided with the Allies) and its powerful neighbour to the north. Once it was obvious that the Allies had failed in their Gallipoli venture, Bulgaria joined the Central Powers in September 1915.

Serbia held out for more than a year before it was conquered by the combined forces of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria in late 1915. Having left Gallipoli a few weeks earlier, the 10th (Irish) Division (including the 6th and 7th Battalions, Royal Dublin Fusiliers) was part of a small Anglo-French force that had landed at Salonika (now Thessaloniki) in October 1915 to support Serbia, but it arrived too late to be of assistance. The remnants of the Serbian Army retreated into Albania from where its troops were evacuated to Corfu in 1916.

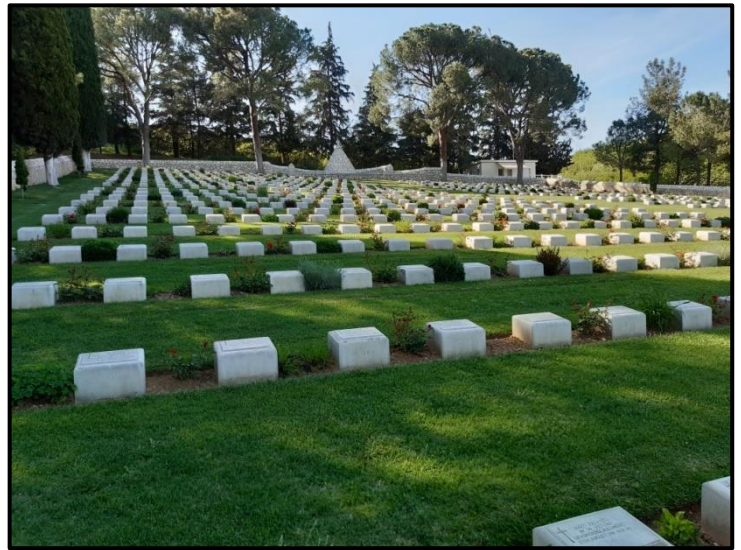
Most 10th Division military activity during the War was against the Bulgarian Army beginning at Kosturino in late 1915 near the Bulgarian-Serbian border (now in North Macedonia) and during 1916 and 1917 in the Struma Valley, north-east of Salonika, in Greece. The Serbs joined up with British, French, Italian and Russian forces to contain the southward movement of their German, Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian opponents. This Macedonian Front (also called the Salonika Front) remained relatively stable during 1916-17. In September 1918, Allied forces attacked en masse out of Greece, forced the surrender of the Bulgarian Army and secured the liberation of Serbia. Bulgaria's surrender was a factor in Germany seeking an armistice in 1918. So perhaps the considerable Allied investment in the Salonika Campaign returned some dividend after all.

By that stage, the 10th (Irish) Division had left Salonika and been redeployed to Egypt and Palestine. A description of the Dubs' involvement in the Salonika Campaign is now contained in the recently published *'Come on the Dubs! – A Brief History of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.

Monday, 9 May - 'Arrival and the Advance into Serbia'

7.40 Ryanair flight from Dublin for the near four hour flight to Thessaloniki.

Our first day followed the advance of the 6th and 7th Battalions, RDF, from Salonika northwards into Serbia (now North Macedonia) in support of French and Serbian forces. Our first port of call was the town of Polyastro and the nearby Karasouli Military Cemetery (pictured). Here we visited the grave of Sapper Charles Kennedy 16677, Royal Engineers, a granduncle of our member, Mary Kennedy, who spoke to the group about him. She has also expressed her appreciation to member, Noel Farrelly, for his work in filling in some gaps in her granduncle's military career with detail that had escaped the attention of professional historians. (See the Summer 2022 issue of *The Old Tough* for further information on Charles Kennedy's life.)



Mary told us about some other Irishmen buried at Karasouli, specifically Corporal Philip Hogan 49046, 82nd Company, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), from Clonmel, Co Tipperary, and Private James Hopkins 18886, 14th Battalion, The King's Liverpool Regiment, from Ballyhaunis, Co Mayo. Remarkably Mary had tracked down and contacted descendants of both men.

The group then crossed into North Macedonia and visited Gevgelija railway station. The 6th and 7th RDF had entrained here from Salonika on 29 October 1915. We then moved to Bogdanci by the Chenali River tracking the move towards the front line. The party adjourned that evening to our accommodation for two nights at Fuk Tak Bungalows, Marshal Tito Str., Doiran.

Tuesday, 10 May - 'The Action at Kosturino, 7-8 December 1915'

The Battle of Kosturino was the significant engagement between the Irish and the Bulgarians during the Salonika Campaign. It was also the occasion when an Irish army, in the form of the 10th (Irish) Division, engaged with Bulgarians, essentially alone, with their French allies out of sight over the mountains to their left. Most Irish battalions in the 10th Division partook in this battle in an attempt to block a Bulgarian advance against Serbia. Having taken over the Kosturino Ridge two weeks earlier, the Irish positions on the Ridge endured a Bulgarian artillery barrage from 4 December. The fulcrum of the attack over the following days proved to be the isolated height of Rocky Peak and the adjacent positions of 'Bray Head' and 'Dollymount'. All were taken by the Bulgarians in hand to hand combat on 7 December in conditions of thick fog and intense cold. With French forces already in retreat, the loss of the positions above Kosturino would jeopardise a successful Allied withdrawal back to Salonika.

Our group was facilitated in reaching the ridge from Kosturino village by tractor and trailer transport. Packed lunches were taken on to Rocky Peak which offers an outstanding panorama of the field of battle.

From there we visited the village of Memesli, the ruins of Kajali and the heights of Crete River and Crete Simonet. It was on these latter ridges that the 6th and 7th RDF attempted to hold the Bulgarian advance on 8 December. Many of our group spent close to four hours on a beautiful day walking down to Tatarli while following the route of the 10th Division's retreat towards Doiran from Rocky Peak.

Our final stop of the day was at the 10th (Irish) Division Memorial (pictured), near the head of the Dedeli Pass, through which the road leads back to Lake Doiran. The inscription reads 'De Cum Glóire Dé', 'Onóra na hÉireann' and 'In Memory of those of the Xth Irish Division who fell on Gallipoli and in defence of Serbia and of all Irishmen who gave their lives in the Great War RIP'. It is a similar design to Celtic crosses on the Western Front and was apparently made in Dublin.



Wednesday, 11 May - 'The Retreat into Greece and an Introduction to the Struma Valley'

The day's focus was the strategically important valley of the Struma River where the 10th Division, containing Dublin and Munster Fusiliers, came to be deployed in Summer 1916. Here, as elsewhere in this theatre of war, the chief enemy for both sides was the malarial mosquito. Consequently, while regularly quiet in terms of bullets and shells, the Salonika Front was, in terms of casualty numbers, almost as deadly as France or Belgium at times. There were 7,000 reported malaria cases in the 10th Division in October alone.

Our first visit of the day was to the Doiran Memorial, a picturesque location overlooking Lake Doiran. This honours more than 10,000 officers and men of the British Salonika Force who died between 1915 and 1918. It also commemorates by name almost 2,000 soldiers who have no known grave, and it includes Dublin Fusiliers who fell in the fighting on the Kosturino Ridge. As indicated in the Summer 2022 issue of *The Old Tough*, John F Sheehan and Suzanne O'Neill spoke at the site about family members named on the Memorial.

We then moved to Doiran Railway Station which in December 1915 had been used to evacuate casualties and units from the 10th Division back to Salonika. Due to a shortage of rail transport, some had to walk much of the way. We proceeded from there via the Krusha Balkan Hills and Beles Mountains towards the top end of the Struma Valley. At Paleokastro, we stopped at a former Bulgarian position overlooking the valley which offered a different perspective of the terrain over which the RDF 6th and 7th battalions would fight in 1916 and 1917.

Our final stops were the villages of Monokklisia and Provatas to examine the capture of these villages, then called Karajakoi and Yenikoi, between 30 September and 4 October 1916. The Dublin and Munster Fusiliers were ordered to seize Yenikoi on 3 October 1916 and succeeded in expelling the Bulgarian forces. However there followed a severe counter-attack, and after close to 24 hours fighting, British reinforcements arrived to consolidate its capture.

Overnight accommodation was in the Hotel Sirius, outside Serres.

Thursday, 12 May - 'War of the Sideshow of a Sideshow'

Throughout the day, we visited places associated with operations by the 6th and 7th Battalions, RDF, when they were part of the XVI Corps in the Struma Valley. In the early days, XVI Corps established defensive positions along the line of the Valley with raids and patrols across the River. Subsequent locations highlighted the British offensive strategy to dominate the Valley by establishing an outpost line east of the River and maintaining aggressive raiding and patrolling against Bulgarian strongpoints and outposts.

Our final visit in the Valley was to the Struma Military Cemetery which was largely made up of graves brought in from much smaller cemeteries. Some 73 Dublin Fusiliers are interred here. On behalf of Kathleen Leyden, I spoke over the grave of her grandfather, Private James Murphy 23031, 6th Battalion, RDF, who died on 3 October 1916. James's childhood friend had been Georgie Geoghan. Both married sisters and had been best man at each other's wedding. Georgie Geoghan also died in action in the same year as James Murphy, but in a very different theatre of war. He



died on the roof of Dublin City Hall while serving with the Rebels in the Easter Rising as a member of James Connolly's Irish Citizens' Army. It is not inconceivable that the bullet that killed him came from a Royal Dublin Fusilier rifle. See the Summer 2022 issue of *The Old Tough* for further information on the family. Pictured are members of our group (including myself holding the folder) beside James Murphy's grave.

Before heading for our hotel in Thessaloniki, we stopped at the Allied Lembet Road Military Cemetery. Begun in November 1915, it contains graves of the various nationalities that comprised the Allied forces in the Salonika Campaign. After the Armistice, graves were brought in from cemeteries in Macedonia, Albania and the island of Thasos. There are now 1,648 Commonwealth First World War dead either interred or commemorated here, as well as 45 Bulgarian and 1 Serbian war graves. On behalf of the Bird family, Paul Appleby paid his respects at the grave of Private Michael Bird 23269, 6th Battalion, RDF, who died on 8 September 1917.

Accommodation was at the El Greco Hotel, Thessaloniki, and our final meal was *en plein air* at the Tiganies kai Schares Restaurant in the Ladadika area which was the old olive market.

Friday, 13 May - Conclusion

Straight to the Airport for the 12.35 flight to Dublin. This had been another very successful RDFA venture abroad to remember the fallen Irishmen of WW1. Excellent food, including quality North Macedonian

wine. Having the evening meals and some breakfasts away from our accommodation was a welcome touch. Thanks as ever for the great company during the trip.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge that the information in this article is primarily derived from the Salonika Campaign Society's itinerary for the trip. I also wish to thank our guide, Alan, for an edit of an earlier draft. However, remaining errors are mine and not Alan's!

Kilkenny City's WW1 War Memorials

John F Sheehan

Earlier this year, an invitation was extended to our Association's Committee to meet with the Kilkenny Great War Memorial Committee in Kilkenny. The purpose was to see some of the wonderful work they have done over the last number of years in remembering the people from the area who fought in the Great War and in particular those who lost their lives and had for so long been forgotten.

On Sunday, 16 October, we assembled at MacDonagh Railway Station, Kilkenny, where we were greeted by the members of the Kilkenny Committee. Those who used the train described it as a very comfortable way to travel, while others arrived there by car. We gathered on the station platform in front of the memorial wall which records the names of the 3,271 soldiers from Kilkenny who took part in the Great War. Also included are those who served in the Second World War. At the official unveiling of the memorial on 12 August 2018, the Chairman of the Committee said:

"Together as one all 3,271 men and women are now recognised in their own county and country, and the fog of national amnesia has now lifted on a part of our history. The sun will now shine on their names forever."

We were addressed by the Chairman of Kilkenny County Council and Castlecomer Municipal District, Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick, and by Berni Egan, a proud Kilkenny member of our Association. Berni spoke about her grandfather, John Doolan, a veteran of the First World War, and the promise she made to him many years earlier to help erect a memorial in Kilkenny.

The Kilkenny Committee members drove those who had travelled by train to our next stop which was the Peace Park. This was the location of the Kilkenny World War 1 Memorial which has the names of 827 men from Co Kilkenny who died serving in that conflict. We were addressed by the Mayor of Kilkenny, Cllr David Fitzgerald, who made a very moving unscripted address touching on tolerance and understanding of all traditions on this island. This was followed by a speech by the Committee's Chairman, Donal Croghan. Wreaths were laid, among them two from our Association by our Chairman, Brian Moroney, and by Philip Lecane. This was followed by a minute's silence, the exhortation and the dedication. A piper's lament by Finbar McCarthy followed, and the last post and reveille were played on the bugle by Charlie Parsons, ending with the National Anthem.



Leaving the Peace Park, we crossed over the River Nore footbridge to the Thomas Woodgate Memorial. Thomas Woodgate died on 10 October 1918 following the sinking of the HMS Leinster. He was from Callan, Co Kilkenny, and was officially the youngest Irishman to be killed by enemy fire during WW1. Here our own author and historian, Philip Lecane (pictured), spoke of Thomas Woodgate. He was a Private 2nd class, no 297699, in the 23rd Training Squadron of the RAF. He was just 14 years and 9 months of age when he was killed. Philip spoke about the sinking of the Leinster by the German U boat UB-123 in which 570 lives were lost, the biggest loss of life in the Irish Sea.

Following lunch, we visited the Military Barracks (Stephens Barracks, named after the Fenian, James Stephens) to look at the Museum therein. The Museum is largely the work of Comdt Larry Scallan (Retd). It contains many artefacts of past wars but most especially World War 1. What caught my eye was a group of medals to Capt James Smithwick (1881 – 1915), Royal Irish Regiment, who sadly lost his life in the War.

The Smithwicks had a long history in the military and were a very well-known Kilkenny family in the brewing business. Major Standish Smithwick from Nenagh, Co Tipperary, served with the RDF and was the commanding officer at Mouse Trap Farm following the gas attack. It was then on to the Officer's Mess for tea and biscuits before our departure from the City.

Our sincere thanks to all of the Kilkenny Committee for their hospitality and for making us feel so welcome. They have done wonderful work in raising awareness of the loss of life in the Great War in their area, and visitors to Kilkenny City should spend a quiet moment of reflection at one or more of these memorials. Overall more than 200,000 Irish men took part in the War, and approx. 35,000 died in the conflict. We look forward to arranging a trip to Kilkenny for Association members in the near future.



Address by Broadcaster and Author, Joe Duffy, at a Commemoration Ceremony organised by the Woodenbridge Village Development Association at the Woodenbridge WW1 Memorial Park, Co Wicklow, on Sunday, 6 November, at 2 pm -

Campaign Launch by Joe Duffy and Sculptor, Orla de Brí, for a Public Sculpture and Memorial in a Central Dublin Location for the 40 Children killed in the Easter Rising 1916

Your Excellencies, TDs, Councillors, relatives of those who are remembered here, ladies and gentlemen.

Eight days before the Easter Rising began on April 24 1916, Christopher Kit Carroll, a 21 year old member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers from Church Street in Dublin, was killed near Bienvillers on the Somme in northern France. He was my grand uncle, who along with his own uncle, Tom Kavanagh, had walked the few hundred yards from their tenement room in 89 Church Street to the nearby Linenhall Barracks to sign up after the collapse of the 1913 lockout.

I don't know if they signed up to defend small countries or simply to try to make a living in the dire poverty of Dublin - I suspect the latter, because my grandmother, Christopher's sister, was an ardent follower of Michael Collins, who disliked de Valera and never spoke of her brother's death in World War 1.

Indeed in 2008, I was the first member of Christopher's family to visit his grave in Bienvillers in France.

Such was the atmosphere in Dublin after the Rising that Christopher's family did not officially place a death notice in the newspapers until a full year had passed.

At the time Christopher met his untimely death, 25,000 Dubliners were in the British Army fighting the Kaiser for the rights of small nations, including their own, which had been promised a grudging measure of self-determination, and about 5,000 of them were already dead or would perish shortly thereafter.

But the horrific death toll in World War 1 was only matched by mortality rates in Dublin. In one part of Dublin's Inner City at the start of the 20th Century, of every 100 children born - only 36 would still be alive ten years later! Dublin was a sea of grinding poverty, disease and premature death of unimaginable proportions. Twenty million people were killed in World War 1, 10.3 million civilians and 9.7 million combatants.

In the Easter Rising, just under 500 were killed - shockingly we still don't know the exact figure. Of those 54% were civilians, 30% were security forces - army and police – and 16% were Irish rebels.

This beautiful and poignant memorial here in Woodenbridge is a fitting and moving tribute to the 1,224 men and nine women, residents of County Wicklow, who lost their lives as soldiers, sailors, munitions workers, nurses or civilians in the so called Great War of 1914-1918.

I do not underestimate the amount of work that has gone into the many years of research, campaigns, persuading, financing, designing and erecting this everlasting memorial, which not only is impressive to view, but historically significant in naming and locating the deceased.

Unfortunately no such memorial yet exists for those civilians who died in the 1916 Rising.

Yes, rightly the leaders of the Rebellion, both men and women, are remembered in nearly every city and town in the country through memorials, street names, railway stations, hospitals, public buildings and parks.

The majority who died in the Easter Rising in 1916 are forgotten; their names are not etched anywhere.

In the words of the great Seán O'Casey commenting on the civilians killed in the Rising:

"They must put up with it. You would be unknown forever, you died without a word of praise, you would be buried without even a shadowy ceremony, no bugle will call your name, no gunshot will let loose brave echoes over your grave, you will not be numbered among the accepted slain."

(Seán O'Casey, *Drums under the Window*).

Thankfully no members of Cumann na mBan were killed in the Easter Rising, but they are rightly commemorated. But do we know that 45 adult women, mostly mothers from the tenements, and six girls under 16 were killed in Easter week?

Two hundred men, who were not combatants, were also killed.

To stand in front of this beautiful, dignified memorial on this historic spot, where John Redmond made his courageous speech in September 1914, encouraging members of the Irish Volunteers to join the British Army - in his words, *'the interests of Ireland, the whole of Ireland are at stake in this war'*, regardless of what one thinks of the politics involved on the day - this memorial invites reflection, solitude, empathy and learning - all that makes us human.

Indeed the only place in the world, where all the civilians killed in the Easter Rising were named and memorialised in stone, was on the Necrology Wall in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin. Unfortunately, after a few acts of vandalism - which as we now know any public work can be a target for cheap and counterproductive publicity - the Glasnevin Trust decided to remove all the names from the Wall.

Today, it is a sheer, blank, black wall - an ignominious standing stone of intolerance, wanton vandalism and cowardice by those who in the dead of night defaced it.

It is surely the only memorial in the world to those who died in conflict that has been forcibly removed.

Ironically, because of what we commemorate today in this sacred spot in this Garden County, the Necrology Wall emerged at the same time and independently in Ireland as the stunningly beautiful 'Ring of Memory' in St Alain de Nazareth in northern France, about fifty miles from where my own relative lies buried.

'The Ring of Memory' lists alphabetically - with no distinction in rank, nationality or allegiance - the 600,000 who perished in that area in World War 1. So there is every likelihood that as Philippe Prost, the designer, stresses: *"There are no ranks, no nationalities: just a dizzying list of the human stories that ended on France's northern battlefields. The names of friends and foes are engraved together in order to establish a theme of forgiveness and reconciliation after the conflict."*

The 'Ring of Memory' in France has become a sacred, dignified, moving memorial, visited silently by countless thousands from across the globe.

The Necrology Wall in Ireland is gone.

Remember, literally brother fought against brother in the birth of this nation.

Gerard Neilan from Rathmines in Dublin was, like his two brothers, a member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, but unlike my grand uncle, he had not been dispatched to France. Instead on Easter Monday 1916 morning, he was stationed in the Royal Barracks (now Collins Museum in Dublin). As they marched down the Liffey Quays in formation, led by an officer with his sword outstretched, Gerard Neilan was shot dead by the Rebels. Ironically his younger brother, Anthony, was a member of the Volunteers behind a barricade 500 yards away in Church Street. Anthony survived the Rising and died in 1944 - both brothers are buried together in Glasnevin Cemetery. If her youngest child had been killed in the Rising, Eva Neilan would have buried her sons together - but their names could never appear on the same memorial in 21st Century Ireland.

They are buried in posthumous fraternity - can that not be the rallying cry for our own memorials?

In the words of the great poet, Louis McNiece, in his epic poem, Autumn Journal, ironically published on the eve of World War II:

*"Why do we as a country", he asked,
"Let them pigeon hole the souls of the killed,
Into sheep and goats, patriots and traitors."*

I did protest at the time to the removal of the Necrology Wall in Glasnevin, but support, especially from those who were espousing the idea of a shared Ireland, was not forthcoming.

I can honestly tell you I was reduced to tears when I visited Glasnevin to see the blank, black slates with the names - mostly of the forgotten children and civilians - removed.

Indeed the civilians who died were not forgotten, because they were not remembered in the first instance. Can anyone recall any others who died violently in the formation of this State, that were forgotten, then remembered for the first time in 2016, then forgotten again - consigned to the skip of unwritten history once again by a few acts of wanton vandalism?

Before this Decade of Centenaries ends next year, they should be remembered.

It is way beyond my influence at this stage to reinstate the Necrology Wall and all it stood for, but to begin with, I would like the children of this nation who died violently in the Rising to be remembered in a central national location.

In an attempt to remember the 40 children who were killed in the Easter Rising - whose names have also been erased from the Glasnevin Wall, myself and eminent public sculptor, Orla De Brí, are campaigning for a significant public piece of art to be erected in memory of the children in central Dublin.

Orla's design envisages a three meter high bronze piece comprising forty young hearts, which reflect onto a three meter long piece in the ground with the names of the children engraved. The piece would be lit and landscaped, with an explanation positioned nearby.

Today we are publicly launching a campaign for a location and resources for the project. In turn we hope that this will lead to public memorials to the fallen heroines of 1916, the mothers of the tenements and the other 200 civilians who died.

In the words of songwriter and poet, Declan O'Rourke:

"Nor Pearse, nor Clarke, nor MacDonagh nor the Connolly we know, would rest if they were remembered on a pedestal alone, and are they not the fathers of our nation proud and free, and our sisters and our brothers then, the children of '16?"

This memorial in Woodenbridge, with 1,224 individual names beautifully engraved, stands not just to the memory of those who perished, it is a testament to our quiet dignity, tolerance and appreciation of our common shared humanity.

It should inspire us to remember others with courage, dignity and inclusivity.

As we arrived here today, we were greeted with the etched words of Ireland's war poet, Francis Ledwidge, who was killed in World War 1 in Flanders' fields in Belgium. He was just 29, two years older than the average age of those who were killed in the carnage - the greatest single group killed in WW1 were aged just 19.

On the spot where he was killed, his poem, 'Soliloquy', is inscribed, and it is with his words I wish to conclude:

*"Tomorrow will be loud with war,
How will I be accounted for?
It is too late now to retrieve
A fallen dream, too late to grieve
A name unmade, but not too late
To thank the gods for what is great;
A keen-edged sword, a soldier's heart,
Is greater than a poet's art.
And greater than a poet's fame
A little grave that has no name."*

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anamacha dílis go léir.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

Contact: joeclontarf@gmail.com



Photograph courtesy of <https://visitwicklow.ie/listing/woodenbridge-world-war-1-memorial-park/>

Book Review

The First World War Diary of Noël Drury, 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers – Gallipoli, Salonika, the Middle East and the Western Front

Thomas Murphy

How do you review a book which is a personal account (diary) of the First World War experiences of the writer, Noël Drury, which is then edited by a third party, in this case the eminent Richard S Grayson, Professor of 20th Century History at Goldsmiths, University of London?

You must immerse yourself in the book which was quite easy to do due to the manner in which the diary was edited by Professor Grayson. The book opens with a number of photographs of Noël Drury and his colleagues-in-arms in various locations mentioned in his diary. This allows the reader to visualise the times and places in question. This is then followed by a very good introduction to Noël Drury and his family. He was born in 1884 into a middle-class Dublin Protestant family and served as an officer in the 6th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, which was part of the 10th (Irish) Division for most of the War. There then follows a well written Foreword in which Professor Grayson explains his approach to editing the diary.

Like all good books, there has to be a beginning, middle and an end. Noël Drury volunteers in September 1914, and his diary begins in December 1914 when he details his training from December to July 1915. Throughout the book, Drury lists the names of numerous fellow officers and men which is a great reference source for the careers of these soldiers. Professor Grayson goes to great trouble to try to find the service records of these officers and men in various archives. This greatly helps the reader to understand the personalities and foibles of these individuals.

We then get taken on Noël Drury's journey to all of the major theatres of war in which the Dubs were involved during WW1. We start in Gallipoli in August 1915 with the Suvla Bay landings. The diary explains from day to day the events that Drury and his Battalion experienced during several key phases of the disastrous Gallipoli Campaign. Two months later in October 1915, they are moved to Salonika which proves to be similarly difficult. He recounts, for instance, his experience of the Battle of Kosturino in Serbia which results in a British and French retreat back to Salonika in December 1915.

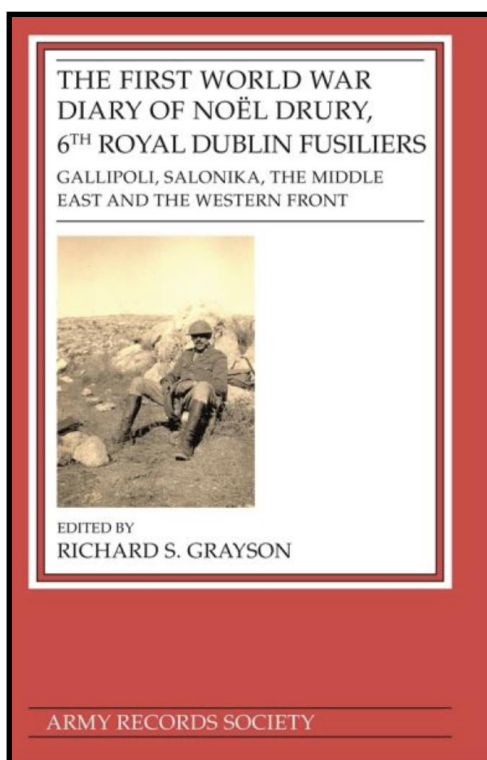
When summer comes, the heat and mosquitoes take their toll. Like many others, Drury succumbs to malaria, is evacuated by hospital ship to Malta in July 1916 and is effectively out of the War with various medical issues for a year. After returning to Salonika in mid-July 1917, he spends a number of further weeks in hospital with a recurrence of malaria and eye trouble but is discharged in time to join his Battalion preparing for departure to Egypt and Palestine.

While in the Middle East, the 6th Battalion are only indirectly involved in the advance on Jerusalem which is taken from the Turks in early December 1917. Drury spends a miserable cold and wet Christmas in camp in the hills around Jerusalem. He describes his experience of the Battle of Tell 'Asur in March 1918, the final action of the Battalion's time in the Middle East. Within a few weeks, Drury is again in hospital with a recurrence of his eye problems, first in Jerusalem and later in Alexandria. When he learns that his Battalion is leaving for France in early July, he absconds from hospital to join them with the acquiescence of his Commanding Officer.

After leave and further medical attention for his eye problems, Drury re-joins his Battalion in mid-September 1918, and over the following weeks, he gives the reader an informative account of the Allied pursuit of the German Army across northern France during the Hundred Days Offensive. His diary finishes four months after the Armistice on 11 March 1919 when he writes *"Doffed uniform and turned civilian again."*

After the War, Drury returned to his family paper mill business in Saggart, Co Dublin, but this closed in February 1926. While his subsequent employment is unknown, he seems to have remained in Dublin as he had associations with Irish motor sports and yacht racing and with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Old Comrades' Association. He is not known to have married nor had any children. Noël Drury died just before his 92nd birthday at his home in Foxrock on 5 December 1975 and is buried in Deansgrange Cemetery.

The editing by Grayson of Drury's diary is excellent. It gives an informative account of Drury's experiences of very different theatres of war. One can almost feel the rain and taste the sand. The Appendices, Biographies and Bibliography at the end of the book are a valuable source of reference for the researcher of the First World War. I highly recommend the book as a great read. An ebook version is available from its publisher, Boydell Press, at £24.99.



Chairman's Statement

Annual General Meeting of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, 2 December 2022

Brian Moroney

I would like to begin by thanking all my fellow Committee members for their magnificent work over the past year. Thanks to their efforts, we have emerged from the Covid Pandemic with a greater ability to reach our members than ever before. Our membership base has been rejuvenated, and our participation in local and national events is greeted with great enthusiasm. Our mission to remember, recount and rekindle our past in an honourable and truthful fashion is well established, and long may it flourish.

We have seen our Editorial Committee expand from our wonderful journal, *The Blue Cap*, to an additional magazine, *The Old Tough*. Both publications are now online to members and are eagerly anticipated and appreciated. This year the Committee also completed our wonderful Centenary Booklet entitled 'Come on the Dubs!' – A Brief History of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. We have reached out on Social Media, and news of our Association and its activities are now on Facebook and Twitter in addition to our own excellent website. Praise to Paul, Thomas, John, Philip and David from the Editorial Committee, and Jon Toohey, John O'Brien and Anthony Barnes, our dedicated social media team.

Our Membership Secretary and Treasurer work hand in hand to encourage new members to join, help our Association to grow and make sure in turn that our members are well looked after. To this end, my deepest appreciation to Suzanne, Sally and George.

Thanks also to Paul Appleby who monitors our status with the Charities Regulator and ensures that we are at all times acting in accordance with the rules and regulations governing our Charity Status.

Grateful thanks to Tom Murphy, our Secretary, who took over the post from Paul Taylor and continued to look after the Association in the manner to which we had become accustomed. It is an onerous task, I can assure you, and Tom manages to fit in his Secretarial duties alongside editorial and website matters.

Our Standard, nobly and proudly borne by John O'Brien and David Buckley, has been on parade on many occasions this year as the Association took part in ceremonies in Clonmel, Birr, Castlebar, Belfast, Mount Jerome, many other locations in Dublin, not least of which was Saint Patrick's Cathedral in June when we commemorated the 100th Anniversary of the disbandment of the Irish Regiments in June 1922. It was a marvellous occasion, and the Cathedral was packed with members of our own Association and sister Associations, the Lord Mayor, senior officers from the Defence Forces, An Garda Síochána and Dublin Fire Brigade, Ambassadors and representatives from Australia, Canada, Germany, Belgium, Turkey, New Zealand and the UK, Dublin Fire Brigade, Senators from the Oireachtas, members from the ONE, the UN Veterans Association and The British Legion. Visitors from home and abroad and well-wishers from the general public also attended. It was a very special occasion in which the Association took a full part, with Tom Burke and Kevin Cunningham reading lessons from the Scripture.

This event would not have been possible nor as successful as it was were it not for the full cooperation of the Dean and the Authorities in Saint Patrick's and with the help and guidance of the Rev Charles Mullen who took our event to his heart. Special thanks to John O'Brien, our Standard Bearer on the day, and all

who took on the burden that day of acting as stewards and guides – Seamus Greene, Philip Lecane, Paul Appleby, Thomas Murphy, David Buckley - who personally chaperoned the Ambassadors and special guests into the Cathedral, George Jones, Suzanne O'Neill, Therese Moroney and Miriam Sadlier who made sure everyone was issued with our special anniversary Centenary Booklet, and special thanks to John Sheehan who, in addition to joining me in organising the event, made sure a personal welcome was issued to everyone attending.

As the opportunity now presents itself, may I offer a special word of thanks to Seamus Greene (Capt Retd) who has been our Standard Bearer for nigh on two and half decades. In fair weather and foul, Seamus has borne our Standard at home and abroad and across practically every battlefield on which a Royal Dublin Fusilier soldier once stood. He has done so with pride and dedication and has blazed a trail for others to follow as he now hands over our Standard to others equally dedicated to our cause. John O'Brien has accepted the role as the Association's main Standard Bearer, and we can rest assured the Standard is in good hands. One only has to recall the wonderful ceremony organised by John, Seán Ryan and Anthony Barnes in Mount Jerome to remember the Dubs buried there after surviving the Great War.

We have now established close contact with our sister Associations to form the Association of Disbanded Irish Regiments. Together we will work closely to further the mission of telling the story of the Irish Soldier in the Great War and studying the legacy that they left behind them.

It is an honour to be part of a team that has energy, enthusiasm and dedication to our Association and its aims. We hope that the coming year will see us grow and, importantly, continue to participate in and, indeed, foster the growing interest and awareness of our varied and fascinating history.

Annual Report of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Annual General Meeting, 2 December 2022

Thomas Murphy, Hon Secretary

Introduction

The Association held its 2021 AGM by zoom on 8 January 2022.

I am pleased to report that since then your Committee has endeavoured to keep the Dubs Association vibrant and has met many times throughout the year by zoom. In October, we held our first Committee Meeting in person since the start of Covid 19. The Committee members for 2022 were Brian Moroney (Chairperson), Paul Appleby, David Buckley, Seamus Greene, George Jones, Sally Keogh, Philip Lecane, Thomas Murphy, John O'Brien, Suzanne O'Neill, John F Sheehan and Paul Taylor.

The Committee had a number of sub-committees which included in particular:

- the Centenary Committee;
- the Editorial Committee;
- the Membership Committee;
- the Governance Committee and
- the Mount Jerome Cemetery Remembrance Committee.

Remembrance Events

2022 has been the first year in two years that we could hold and attend remembrance events in person. Much of the focus of the Centenary Committee, led by Brian Moroney and John F Sheehan, was on planning and organising the centenary of the disbandment of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in consultation with the Association of Disbanded Irish Regiments and various authorities. The highlight event was obviously our own successful Service of Remembrance in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on 12 June last.

The main Remembrance Events in which we participated were the following:

- a Remembrance Event in Clonmel on Saturday, 9 April, organised by the 18th Regiment of Foot Royal Irish Regiment (and South Irish Horse) Association, which included lectures on the Regiment's history, a parade of standards and a wreath-laying ceremony;
- the Royal British Legion's Remembrance Ceremony at dawn on ANZAC Day, 25 April, in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin, which was followed that evening by a Service of Remembrance held in Saint Ann's Church, Dawson Street, Dublin;
- our own organized tour in early May 2022 to the battlefields of Salonika where the Royal Dublin Fusiliers served in 1916 and 1917;
- the current Royal Irish Regiment's Old Soldiers' Day in Belfast on Saturday, 4 June. Our acceptance of the Regiment's invitation demonstrated our continuing desire as an Association to contribute to the process of reconciliation on the Island of Ireland;

- our own Service of Remembrance in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on Sunday, 12 June, to mark the centenary of the disbandment of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and five other Irish Regiments;
- the Royal British Legion's Annual Remembrance Ceremony in the War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge, Dublin, on Saturday, 9 July;
- the National Day of Commemoration in Collins Barracks, Dublin, on Sunday, 10 July, remembering all Irishmen and Irishwomen who died in past wars or on service with the United Nations;
- a Commemoration Event on Saturday, 16 July, in Ennis at which the Associations representing the six disbanded Irish Regiments each received a complimentary commemorative gift box containing a regimental coin pertaining to each disbanded Regiment;
- the Connaught Rangers Association's Centenary Event in the Mayo Peace Park, Castlebar, on Sunday, 31 July;
- the Leinster Regiment Association's Remembrance Ceremony in Birr on Sunday, 7 August;
- a Remembrance Service in Dungarvan on 28 August for the 1,100 Waterford men and women who died in WW1;
- the National Library of Ireland's Seminar on Irish WW1 Ex-Servicemen and Women in Post-War Ireland on 17 September in Dublin City Library, Pearse Street, Dublin 2, at which our President, Tom Burke OBE, was one of the speakers;
- the Annual Dinner of the Irish Guards in Dublin on Saturday, 1 October, whose theme was the disbandment of the Irish Regiments in 1922;
- a visit to Kilkenny on Sunday, 16 October, at the invitation of the Kilkenny War Memorial Committee, to visit various locations in the City commemorating the loss of over 800 Kilkenny lives during WW1;
- the Military Ball in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Santry, on Saturday, 5 November;
- the Royal Irish Regiment's Annual Service of Remembrance in Saint Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, on Sunday, 6 November, which particularly honoured those in the disbanded Irish Regiments who lost their lives during WW1. The invitation also included a visit to the Royal Ulster Rifles Museum in Bedford Street before the Service;
- a Commemoration Ceremony, also on 6 November, organised by the Woodenbridge Village Development Association at the Woodenbridge WW1 Memorial Park, Co Wicklow, where over 1,100 Wicklow WW1 dead are remembered;
- a Lecture given by our President, Tom Burke MBE, in Richmond Barracks, Inchicore, Dublin, on Monday, 7 November, on the theme *From Shoe Box to Window Box: Remembrance of WW1 in Ireland from 1919 to Present Day*;
- our own Service of Remembrance in the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, City Quay, Dublin, on Friday, 11 November (the 104th anniversary of the end of WW1), for former Association members and our deceased relatives and friends;
- a walking tour of Killester Garden Village on Saturday, 12 November, which was led by members of the Killester WW1 Memorial Campaign around the 289 homes built for WW1 veterans (including Dublin Fusiliers) after the War, and
- various other events and ceremonies recently, including at Oldtown, Co Dublin, and Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

The Association is grateful to all of its members and friends who attended these and other events throughout the year to remember the dead of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and other regiments.

The Association also expressed its condolences to the British Embassy on the passing of Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September last. Her legacy includes an outstanding contribution to reconciliation on the island of Ireland in recent years.

Publications

The Editorial Committee of the Association is responsible for preparing our annual journal (The Blue Cap), our occasional newsletters (The Old Tough), other Association publications and our website at www.greatwar.ie. The Committee which comprises Paul Appleby, David Buckley, Philip Lecane, Thomas Murphy and John F Sheehan met over 20 times in 2022.

After much work in the early part of the year, the Committee finalised the Association's Centenary Booklet entitled 'Come on the Dubs!' - A Brief History of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. This Booklet was made available to attendees at the Service of Remembrance in Saint Patrick's Cathedral on 12 June last. A copy was later circulated to each paid-up member of the Association who did not attend the Service. Copies remain available from the Association at a cost of €10. The History is also on sale in selected bookshops.

In 2022, three editions of The Old Tough newsletter were circulated to members in Spring, Summer and Autumn. A positive response continues to be received to these regular communications which serve to inform them of Association news and developments.

An extensive range of articles is planned for inclusion in The Blue Cap 2022 which, it is hoped, to finalise before year-end. The Committee records its thanks to the members for their articles and the other contributions to the journal and newsletters.

Website

For over 12 months, some users of our website at www.greatwar.ie experienced security alerts when trying to download certain Association documents uploaded to the site. Thankfully this problem has been resolved, and with the recent addition of our latest Blue Cap journals and Old Tough newsletters, our website is now up-to-date.

Social Media

The Association is now also on social media via Facebook and Twitter. These pages are run by a dedicated social media team of members comprising Jon Toohey, John O'Brien and Anthony Barnes. Check us out. We'd love to hear from you. Our Facebook and Twitter addresses are <https://www.facebook.com/RoyalDublinFusiliersAssociation/> and [www.twitter.com/@RoyalDubsFus](https://twitter.com/RoyalDubsFus) respectively. And you can still contact us by email at rdfa1918@gmail.com.

Membership

We now have over 100 members in the Association, and credit for this rejuvenation must be given to Suzanne O'Neill, our new Membership Secretary, ably assisted by George Jones, Sally Keogh and Seamus Greene.

Governance

As a registered charity (no 20038816), the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association endeavours to comply with the important provisions of the Charities Governance Code which was finalised by the Charities Regulator and became effective in 2021.

In reviewing the Code's provisions in early 2022, the Association's trustees updated the Schedule of Trustee Roles and Duties and the Statement of Internal Financial Controls. We also completed the required internal form detailing our compliance with various aspects of the Code.

In submitting our most recent annual return to the Charities Regulator this year, we notified our conclusion that we were fully compliant with the Code.

Correspondence

Most correspondence to our website and gmail account was from members and interested people who were looking to join our Association. Every effort was made to respond to these queries promptly.

Mount Jerome Cemetery Remembrance

Members John O'Brien, Anthony Barnes and Seán Ryan have continued their research into the Dublin Fusiliers buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery, Dublin, some of whom have been forgotten. To date the graves of 78 men have been identified in cooperation with the Cemetery's Authorities. It is hoped that a film about this research initiative will be ready for screening in 2023.

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.

Conclusion

Finally, we must not forget Michael McGovern RIP, our former member, who passed away in 2022.

Lest we forget.

Reminder

Membership Renewals for 2023

Suzanne O'Neill, Membership Secretary

At the close of 2022, the Committee would like to thank all members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association for their continuing support through their subscriptions and donations.

2022 has proved to be a busy year following our emergence from the necessary restrictions placed upon all of us by the Covid pandemic. The Association has resumed its involvement in many events and commemorations during the year, particularly in marking the centenary of the disbandment of the Irish regiments. Your membership subscriptions help the Association to participate fully in these events.

The Editorial Committee has been heavily committed in preparing regular issues of both *The Old Tough* and *The Blue Cap*, and I am sure that you look forward, as I do, to their arrival. In addition, a highly commended booklet "*Come on the Dubs!*" - *A Brief History of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers* was produced to coincide with the commemorative service organised by the Association at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in June. All paid up members should have received a printed copy of the booklet.

Our recent Annual General Meeting has set the membership subscription for 2023 at €20 for members on the island of Ireland and €25 for overseas members. Our renewal date is 1 January. In order to keep in contact with all members, we would ask that our membership form be completed and returned to me on renewal. We can then check and update as necessary all postal and email addresses and phone numbers. The form is relatively simple and can be found either on our website, <https://www.greatwar.ie/member-information/>, or by sending an email to rdfa1918+Membershipsecretary@gmail.com. A copy of the form is included with this issue of *The Blue Cap*. When returning the form, please indicate the method of payment used for renewal, i.e. cheque, bank transfer, standing order, etc.

New members are always welcome, and if you know of relatives or friends with similar interests who may wish to join the Association, then please guide them in our direction.

In order to control our costs, we prefer to send information via email. Therefore if an email address is provided on the renewal form, we will use it to keep in contact. We do however appreciate that some of our members do not have access to email, and in those cases we will continue to correspond by post.

Best wishes to all our members for a happy and healthy New Year.

History Quiz 2022

Brian Moroney

- 1) What was the name of the Russian imperial family in WW1?
- 2) Which lay in front of a trench: a parapet or a parados?
- 3) The Schlieffen Plan called for Germany to fight France and which other country simultaneously?
- 4) In which city was the Archduke Ferdinand assassinated?
- 5) What nationality was Lord Kitchener?
- 6) By what name was the Dutch exotic dancer, Margareta Zelle, better known?
- 7) Who wrote:
 - A) In Flanders Fields?
 - B) Dreamers? and
 - C) My Boy Jack?
- 8) Where did Emmet Dalton win his Military Medal during the fighting on the Somme?
- 9) Where would you find the Vineyard of Krithia? (Campaign will do.)
- 10) Name the Regiment and the Battalion associated with the picture below, please.



Recent Dubs' News

The Spring, Summer and Autumn editions of *The Old Tough* newsletter provided information on the extensive range of events in which the Association participated up until the end of October 2022. This small article covers the main events of Association involvement in the final two months of the year.

Service of Remembrance, Belfast

There were two events on Sunday, 6 November. The Royal Irish Regiment held its Annual Service of Remembrance in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, that afternoon, which particularly honoured those in the disbanded Irish Regiments who had lost their lives during WW1. Members of the regimental associations (including the RDFA) did various readings during the Service which included a parade of Standards (see accompanying photograph). About 12 members of the Association attended the Service.



Before the Service, we enjoyed a visit to the Royal Ulster Rifles Museum at 28 Bedford Street. Some of us even purchased Royal Dublin Fusilier mugs while there! The Museum also kindly agreed to stock in its shop our Centenary Booklet, *'Come on the Dubs!' – A Brief History of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.

Service of Remembrance, Woodenbridge

Also on Sunday, 6 November 2022, the annual commemorative service was held at the WW1 Memorial Park, Woodenbridge, Co Wicklow, on a bank of the River Aughrim. The Memorial commemorates 1,192 men and women from County Wicklow who lost their lives in WW1. The event was organised by the Woodenbridge Village Development Association. The guest speaker was author and broadcaster, Joe Duffy. Music was provided by Liam Kinsella, with the backing of John and Denis Nolan. Our Association was represented by Committee members, Seamus Greene (who carried the RDFA standard at the event), Sally Keogh and Philip Lecane. Joe Duffy's address on the occasion is included in this Blue Cap.

Summary of Tom Burke's Remarks, Richmond Barracks

On the evening of 7 November, our President, Tom Burke MBE, delivered a Lecture in Richmond Barracks, Inchicore, Dublin, on the theme *From Shoe Box to Window Box: Remembrance of WW1 in Ireland from 1919 to Present Day*. He noted that 155,000 demobilised Irish soldiers came back to a changed Ireland between late 1918 and 1920. With widespread unrest and the country under martial law and an Army of Occupation in the post-War years, many ex-servicemen quickly learnt to 'keep their heads down'. This same sense of self-preservation encouraged families to hide their involvement in WW1. Medals and memories came to be consigned to shoe boxes rather than openly displayed in homes.

In the early years of the Irish Free State, annual remembrance services on the anniversary of the Armistice every 11 November were well attended, although they occasionally attracted counter-demonstrations. However the Cosgrave Government didn't want to see the 11th of November turned into a '12th of July'. The later de Valera and Lemass Governments also had no problem with ex-servicemen remembering their dead comrades, but they too objected to the hijacking of the ceremonies by those displaying loyalty to the British State. The flaunting of Union Jacks and the singing of 'God Save the King' at these events were particularly disrespectful to the settled will of the Irish people for independence. Because of the risk of disorder therefore, these events came to be run under strict conditions and were banned altogether during the 'Emergency' and later during the 'Troubles'.

Despite recent independence, the Cosgrave Government was also anxious to recognise the trauma that the War had inflicted on Ireland and its people. However it refused a memorial in Merrion Square within sight of Dáil Éireann. Eventually the idea of a Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge obtained approval, and the Government committed a generous contribution of £50,000 to its development. Work started in late 1931 and was completed in Spring 1938 during the later de Valera Government.

In 1966 on the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising, Taoiseach Seán Lemass openly acknowledged that many WW1 recruits in Ireland had enlisted with the highest of motivations. This reappraisal and reconciliation signal foundered with the outbreak of the Troubles in 1969. The subsequent peace-building efforts by the British and Irish Governments, with support from the EU and US, created the conditions over subsequent decades for the contents of those household 'shoe boxes' to be placed in metaphorical 'window boxes' for public display and discussion. As an example of this changing attitude, the War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge were renovated and reopened in 1994. Ironically, the horror of the Remembrance Day bombings in Enniskillen in 1997 probably gave an impetus to those reconciliation efforts and strengthened people's determination to build cross-community bridges. The work of people like Paddy Harte TD and Glen Barr in developing the Island of Ireland Peace Park at Messines in Belgium which opened in 1998 represented tangible progress in this direction. As the centenary of the War approached, WW1 memorials around the country came to be erected and restored. And the National Library, the National Museum and RTÉ got involved in educating new generations about its impact.

While major progress has been made in recent decades in creating a balanced understanding of the tragedy of the Great War for tens of thousands of Irish families and for the Irish nation as a whole, it remains a work in progress. Arguably, the aftermath of the Brexit decision of 2016 has renewed community divisions in Northern Ireland. Engagement between Governments and communities remains imperative if the delicate flower of understanding and reconciliation is to thrive in the future.

The full text of Tom Burke's Lecture is being made available on the Periodicals and Essays page of our website at www.greatwar.ie.

Service of Remembrance, City Quay Church

At 7 pm on Friday, 11 November (the 104th anniversary of the ending of the Great War), the Association held a Service of Remembrance for former Association members and deceased relatives and friends in the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, City Quay, Dublin 2. About 25 members attended. Father Pearse Walsh officiated.

Walking Tour of Killester Garden Village

On Saturday, 12 November, at the invitation of the Killester WW1 Memorial Campaign, about five Association members and other members of the public enjoyed a walking tour of Killester Garden Village. The Village comprises 289 homes built for WW1 veterans (including Dublin Fusiliers) after the War. Present was the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Caroline Conroy of the Green Party, who gave a very nice speech on the occasion. Pictured is the Lord Mayor with Association Chairman, Brian Moroney, and member, John F Sheehan, that day. Member, David Buckley, also exhibited some of his RDF artefacts in an adjacent sporting facility, a display which proved to be very popular.



Service of Commemoration, Windsor Castle

At 3 pm on Tuesday, 29 November last, a small, private and sombre Service of Commemoration took place in the main entrance to St George's Hall, Windsor Castle, to remember the disbandment of the Irish Regiments which took place in June 1922. Each Regiment was represented by two members of their regimental association at this Service. See the accompanying photograph.



Brian Moroney and John Sheehan represented the RDFA, and the principal guests were Lieutenant General Philip Jones CB CBE DL, the Constable and Governor of Windsor Castle representing King Charles III, and Major General Chris Ghika CBE, General Officer Commanding London District and the Household Division.

The Irish Embassy was represented by Mr Raymond Mullen, Deputy Director of Foreign Policy at the Embassy. A number of other senior officers representing serving current units in the British Army with an Irish background were also present. Sir Anthony Weldon made a speech during the Service which paid tribute to the men of the disbanded regiments and to their service during the course of their existence. He also mentioned the role played on the world stage by members of the Irish Permanent Defence Forces and stated that the spirit and ethos of the Irish Soldier, renowned the world over, was alive and well.

The Service concluded with the playing of *Oft in the Stilly Night*, and the group retired to the Governor General's House where he was presented with a set of medallions which represented all six of the disbanded regiments. The presentation was made by Senator Gerard Craughwell, President of the Connaught Rangers Association. The medallions were prepared by Seán Collopy at his own expense and donated by him to the Association of Disbanded Irish Regiments to present at the Service. It should be noted that Lieutenant General Philip Jones clearly expressed that he was present on the day representing the King and that the presentation would be made known to him.

It was a service which was indeed far from that which we had hoped for, but circumstances, not least the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, precluded any other event this year. Be assured that those of us present carried out our duty in the finest tradition expected of persons representing their Regimental Associations. Spectamus Agendo.

AGM and Annual Dinner

Our AGM on Friday, 2 December, passed off successfully. All of the resolutions before the Meeting were approved. The following members were elected to the Committee for 2023:

Brian Moroney, Chairman,
Sally Keogh, Treasurer,
Thomas Murphy, Secretary,
Suzanne O'Neill, Membership Secretary,
Paul Appleby,
David Buckley,
Seamus Greene,
George Jones,
Philip Lecane,
John O'Brien,
John F Sheehan and
Paul Taylor.

The 2023 membership fee was set at €20 (island of Ireland) and €25 (overseas).

The Annual Dinner later that evening, our first in three years, proved to be very enjoyable. Allowing for some late withdrawals due to sickness and other reasons, about 40 members attended.

Quiz Answers

Brian Moroney

- 1 Romanov.
- 2 Parapet.
- 3 Russia.
- 4 Sarajevo.
- 5 Irish.
- 6 Mata Hari.
- 7 A) John McCrae,
B) Rudyard Kipling and
C) Siegfried Sassoon.
- 8 Ginchy.
- 9 Gallipoli Campaign.
- 10 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

SEASON'S GREETINGS



SPECTAMUR AGENDO