

# THE BLUE CAP

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## THE ANGLO BOER WAR ONE HUNDRED YEARS ON.

Dubliners and visitors alike are familiar with the granite triumph arch which dominates the entrance to St. Stephen's Green Park; however, unless you stop to read the details engraved on this pile, one would be none the wiser to the fact that this is the main and only monument to the memory of the members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who died in South Africa during the second Anglo Boer War of 1899-1902.

As a native Dubliner I am well aware of the significance of the memorial which is variously described as the 'South African Gate' to the less flattering 'Traitor's Gate'. The year 1999 was designated by the South African government as the first of a three year memorial to mark the centennial celebrations of the war. The Military History Society of Ireland decided to organise a tour of two weeks duration during which it was intended to visit selected battlefield sites. The battlefields selected were Blood River (16 December 1838) where the Boers defeated the Zulu army, Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift (Anglo-Zulu war of 1879), Dundee (Talana) - (Anglo Boer war 1899), Elandsplaagte, Ladysmith, Colenso, Vaalkranz, Spioenkop (1900) and finally Thukela Heights (1900). It was also intended to visit the armored train site near Frere, where Winston Churchill was captured by the Boers and Chieveley which was the site of what was designated as No. 4 stationary hospital and was located there from December 1899 to May 1900. Those who died of wounds in the Colenso area are buried there.

Having departed Dublin airport early on Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 1999, our tour party arrived in Johannesburg the following day. From there a coach journey of 400Kms which took about five hours brought us to our first destination and the starting point of our tour. This was Fugitive's Drift Lodge, which is situated very close to Fugitive's Drift on the Buffalo River. Having settled in at the lodge we then proceeded on foot to the height overlooking the gorge where lies the crossing point (drift) where the fugitives of the battle of Isandhlwana crossed or tried to cross the Buffalo River from Zululand into Natal. It was here that Lieuts. Melville and Coghill lost their lives

following the attempt to save the Queen's Colour of the decimated 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot. It is notable that despite the fact that the 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment recruited mainly in Wales these two young officers came from Rosscarbery, Co. Cork and Dublin. They lie side by side overlooking the gorge facing towards Zululand just above the viewing point from where we looked down on the drift.

The battlefield of Isandhlwana has changed little since 1879 and David Rattray of Fugitive's Lodge gave the most highly charged and detailed description of a battle on site that I have ever heard. Here another Irishman of note died at the last stand of the Natal Carbineers at the foot of Stoney Kop - Major (Brevet Lt.Col.) Anthony William Durnford R.E. At the time of his death he had been in South Africa for eight years having been posted to Capetown in 1871 and in 1872 to Natal as chief engineer for the colony. The following day the group visited Rorke's Drift which was the location of the engagement which resulted in the highest number of V.C.'s ever won during a single action. One of these was awarded to Army Surgeon James Henry Reynolds of Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire) Co. Dublin. There is a portrait of him in his old school, Castleknock College, Co Dublin.

We then travelled to the town of Dundee where our party, because of our numbers, was lodged in two very attractive guest houses just outside the town, Lennox Cottage and Battlefields Country Lodge. The town of Dundee was a coal mining town at the time of the Anglo Boer War and was garrisoned by a British force of five thousand under the command of Maj. Gen. Sir W. Penn Symms. The garrison included the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers and 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers. The Boer army, commanded by General Lucas Meyer, invaded Natal Colony and it was this force which attacked Dundee. There was some Irish fighting on the Boer side at Talana. It is recorded that the Dublin Fusiliers who surrendered at the cattle kraal on the farm Adelaide did so to men of the Irish Transvaal Brigade. This action is recognised as the first battle of the war and was fought on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1899. Although the British forces won the day the tactical position dictated that they withdraw to Ladysmith. Casualties suffered by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers at Talana were:

Killed: Capt. G.A. Weldon  
2/Lt. Genge  
Died of wounds: Major Lowndes  
Wounded: Capt. A. Dibley  
Lieut. C.N. Perreau  
Sgt. Maj. Bourke

It is interesting to note that this was not only the first battle of the second Anglo Boer war but it was also the first battle for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers under their new designation. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers had been the Royal Madras Fusiliers and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion the Royal Bombay Fusiliers when, with the amalgamation of the East India units into the imperial forces in 1873 following the Indian Mutiny in 1857, became the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.



Talana Hill Cemetery Dundee.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Batt: Royal Dublin Fusiliers  
In memory of the 2 Officers and 10 N.C.O's & Ptes  
who fell at Talana 20<sup>th</sup> October 1899  
R.I.P  
Erected by their comrades.

The cemetery containing the remains of those who fell at the battle of Talana is located within the area of the Talana museum. The museum contains the battlefield, the industrial and military museum buildings and the home and outbuildings of the Smith farm. The Smith family was the founding fathers of the town of Dundee. The cemetery is located within what remains of a large eucalyptus tree plantation. Those who took part in the battle remarked afterwards on the smell of the eucalyptus trees as they advanced on the Boer held hill. Following a

memorial service conducted by Rev. Mark Marals, a local priest, Brig. Gen. J.P. Purcell (Ret'd), the groups leader, laid a wreath dedicated to all the Irishmen who fell in the war. The ceremony was covered by Natal TV and was shown on the news later the same evening.

We headed out along the Ladysmith road to the battlefield at Elandslaagte (13<sup>th</sup> May 1900). The Royal Dublin Fusiliers were not present at this battle but it is worthy of note as the last battle at which there was a full cavalry charge in which the 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Lancers took a notable part. The next major battlefield with a large Irish input was Colenso (15<sup>th</sup> December 1899). The story of how the 5<sup>th</sup> Irish Brigade was caught in the loop of the Thukela River still marching in close order in the open veldt and without any cover and were badly shot up, is well known to members. It is only when one stands in the small cemetery of Ambleside one fully realises the terrible open position in which the men found themselves. The ground is flat and overlooked by the hills on which the Boers were entrenched with a river with steep banks in between. Our guide, Evan Jones, informed us that the trees and shrubs growing in the area are of recent date and that at the time of the battle there was only open savannah type country with little or no cover for the troops. Royal Dublin Fusiliers buried in Ambleside cemetery are Capt. A.H. Bacon, Lieut. R.C.B. Henry and fifty one NCOs and men.

We then drove to Chieveley military cemetery. Royal Dublin Fusiliers listed on the memorial at the cemetery on the site of Chieveley hospital are : L/Cpl Gibson, Pt. Keogh , Pt. P. Martin , Pt. J. Oldham These were men who died in hospital and are buried in the Chieveley cemetery. These include Field Marshal Lord Roberts's only son, Lieut. Frederick H.S. Roberts who died of wounds following an unsuccessful attempt to recover the field guns at Colenso. We then visited the location of the armoured train incident (15<sup>th</sup> November 1899) near Frere where Winston Churchill was captured. The armoured train carried a seven pounder gun and one hundred and sixty four soldiers under the command of Capt. J.A.L. Haldane. Seventy seven were captured and among those soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers killed were : Pte. J. Birney, Pte. J. McGuire and Pte. M. Balfe. These together with four others who were not identified are buried beside the railway line where the fighting took place. On the far side of the railway track beside the road is the memorial stone recording the capture of Winston Churchill at that spot on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1899.

The three names that have remained in the folk memory (in these islands) and are synonymous with the Anglo Boer War are Ladysmith, Mafeking and Spioenkop. Two

of these we visited during the tour namely, Ladysmith and Spioenkop. Ladysmith is still a large town and railway junction as it was in 1900. It stands on a plain surrounded by hills or kops. The Boer Army occupied all these hills except the one which dominates the town – Wagon Hill Plateau, and despite every effort of the besiegers, this position was held. If the British had lost this high ground there is every possibility that Ladysmith would have fallen. The view from the crest overlooking the town and surrounding countryside is spectacular. The summit is dominated by the Burgher Memorial where the remains of the three hundred and thirteen Boers are interred in a crypt. All the Boers who died in Natal are listed there. A large number of the weapons, gun pits and defense positions are still there. Probably the most interesting of these is a rock on which the members of the Natal Naval Volunteers galley (cookhouse) inscribed their names: W.A. Hatch and J.S. Bennett, cooks.

The only representatives of the RDF during the siege were the members of G Company and the regimental transport section, a total of two officers, Lieut. H.W. Higginson and Lieut. L.F. Renny with three NCOs and fifty one men. During the siege they carried out the greatest number of piquet duties performed by any unit in Ladysmith. The danger of this type of forward duty is best demonstrated by the following true story: 'A RDF soldier crouched behind one of the rocks which make up the Wagon Hill. He poked his rifle around the rock where it contacted something soft. He pulled the trigger, looked around the rock and found that he had just killed a Boer.'

Friend and foe were that close at times while performing piquet duties. When Ladysmith was relieved the numbers of the RDF had been reduced to twenty seven; the remainder had been killed in action, died of wounds or disease. The lists of all the defenders of the town who died are recorded on wall plaques in the Anglican Church of All Saints on the corner of Princess Street. The museum, which covers the war and the siege, is situated beside the courthouse on the main street of Ladysmith. There is a reproduction of 'Long Tom' the famous Boer siege gun outside the museum.

On Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 1900, the British army marched into Ladysmith. The parade was led by the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, a tribute to their heroism up to that time in the war. The battalion, which had been about nine hundred strong when it disembarked in South Africa, had been reduced to five officers and four hundred and fifty NCOs and men. Roughly fifty per cent casualties.

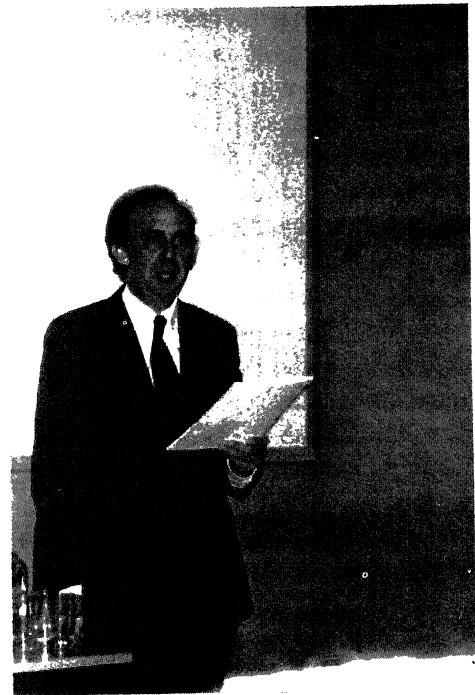
Spioenkop: To reach the summit of this kop you must approach from what was the Boer position along the Bergville Road (R616) onto a country road. There you start the 1400 meter twisting rise to the summit. The summit is relatively flat with a wonderful view all around. In the coach park there is a 'sighting' rock indicating the main kops and the distance to them. The Boer memorial is on this side, roughly in line with the position held by them during the battle. The British graves and memorials mark the high-water mark of their attack.

As you approach the mountain, looking from left to right, you see Green Hill, Conical Hill, Spioenkop and Aloe Knoll Twin Peaks. The Boer army occupied all of these including the reverse slopes of Spioenkop, a position they held down during the entire battle. The details of this battle are well recorded in all the accounts of the war but when you stand on the site of the British trenches and then lie down on the ground as they were forced to do by the constant rifle pom-pom and artillery fire, the full realisation of what happened hits home. You can see nothing except rock and grass. If you look up you are a target from the Boer position on the reverse slopes or from Green Hill on your left. This was why so many of the dead were found to have bullet wounds on the left hand side of their heads. The RDF were present but in position below the crest and did not take any active part in the battle.

We finished off the military part of our tour by going over the ground of the final push by Gen. R. Buller which raised the siege of Ladysmith namely, the battle of Hart's and Peter's Hill, 22<sup>nd</sup> / 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1900. The terrain is open country dominated by high ridges and stony kops bordered on the right flank by the Thukela River and the railway. The key to the position was the ridge containing the hills of Hart and Peter which dominated the approach to the plain below where stood the town of Ladysmith. The overall operation is recorded as the Battle of Tugela Heights or second Colenso, 14<sup>th</sup> / 27<sup>th</sup> February 1900. As at Spioenkop, just to get some idea of what it was like, I climbed Peter's Hill, thick with rounded stones and rocks which would twist or break an ankle if you tried to move forward too quickly or without watching where you placed your feet. What would it have been like with a rifle, a pack and full ammunition pouches and a hail of bullets helping you along? The climb, without all this baggage, in temperatures of thirty degrees Celsius on a day in September 1999 was enough for this writer.



The 5<sup>th</sup> Irish Brigade Memorial at Ambleside Military Cemetery in the Loop of Tugela River Colenso Battlefield. 15<sup>th</sup> December 1899



Professor Donal Mc Cracken.  
Dean of Faculty of Arts.  
University of Durban-Westville, South Africa. presenting his lecture titled. *This beats Athlone on a Saturday night. The Natal campaign of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the Anglo Boer War.* Professor Mc Cracken delivered a superb lecture to the RDF Assoc. on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 1999 at Collins Barracks, Dublin.

We visited the memorials and graves, some in prominent positions, some in secluded little valleys, most of which have hardly been visited by Irish people for many years. Our guide, Evan Jones, told us that the memorial to both battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers was at a very isolated spot on the old railway line at Pom Pom Bridge. To reach this memorial we made our way down the dry river bed (donga) of a tributary of the Thukela River to the remains of Pom Pom railway bridge where stands the monument to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. A fitting end to our military history tour of Kwa Zulu Natal.

## The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and other Irish Regiments in Gallipoli.

Guy Butler Cranwill was born in 1896. He was the son of Thomas B. Cranwill and Ellen Kate Cranwill (nee Blake). The family lived in Monkstown. His father was an insurance official. Guy was a student at King's Hospital School, Blackhall Place, Dublin, and at Queen Mary Grammar School, Walsall. From 1908 to 1913 he was a student at King's Hospital School. At the outbreak of the war in 1914 he enlisted in the D Coy, The Pals, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. This is his story.

The history of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers gives a very comprehensive list of the total number of casualties in the Anglo Boer war, it makes sombre reading. The terrain over which the war was fought was not for infantry. It consists of high, very rocky hills and mountains with wide rolling savannah country in between; the perfect killing ground for sharpshooters and artillery. The air is so clear the eye can cover vast distances. The days hot and the nights cold. As one of our South African guides said to me, 'South Africa is a cold country with a hot sun'. Probably the most harrowing report of the casualties is the list, which clearly shows that 'General Disease' killed as many men as were killed in action or died of wounds received. *This article was written by Mr. Joe Gallagher. Member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

Before the Great War, we boys at K.H. used to be very interested in the various troops that occupied the Royal Barracks ( I believe that these are now called the Collins Barracks). Some of us used to talk to the soldiers from the various English, Scottish, and Welsh Regiments( when the headmaster was not looking) and we used to wonder why no Irish troops were ever stationed there. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers enjoyed the distinction of being the 'City Regiment', and so they were the only troops, I believe, who were allowed to march through Dublin with fixed bayonets. None of us ever expected to see a battalion of that regiment stationed in the Royal Barracks, and we would have laughed at the idea of being

able to 'talk down' to any of the School or Staff as serving soldiers stationed there. The 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers were moved into the Royal Barracks early in 1915. Nearly two-thirds of the Irishmen in this Battalion were enlisted in Dublin 1914, and it contained one Company, of whom the majority were either past, present, or future intending members of various Dublin Rugby Football Clubs. This company, of about 275, contained several old boys from K.H. Mountjoy, and other Irish Schools.

Before mentioning the R.D.F at Gallipoli, a very brief description of the peninsula is necessary and the object the British had in attempting to force the Narrows. Gallipoli is a tongue of hilly land about 53 miles long between the Aegean Sea and the Straits of the Dardanelles. Its maximum breadth is about 12 miles. The roads are very bad, just possible for wheeled traffic. There is no railway, and the villages are few and far between; they are sparsely populated by small cultivators, but not one-hundredth part of the land is under cultivation. The seashore is fairly steep. Abrupt sandy hills rise from the sea to a height of from 100 to 300 feet. These hills are broken up by ravines. There are three important heights on the peninsula, of which two command important landing places. If you can imagine all this hilly country, commanded by the enemy strongly entrenched, the landing-place mined, barbed wire along the beaches, the enemy artillery with all the ranges estimated to a nicety, to say nothing the ground being swept by enemy machine gun fire and the British having to land in these circumstances in full kit, you will realise some of the difficulties which confronted every British regiment at the original landings.

The reasons for the Gallipoli expedition were fairly simple. In 1915 Russia was one of our allies and was not then disorganised by Bolshevism. Their armies were fighting the Turks, and consequently this expedition would divert a large part of the Turkish Army against the British Army. Secondly, we would have been able to pass into Russia, at a time when her Northern ports were ice-bound, the rifles and munitions of war which were so necessary to her Army, if we had control of the Black Sea and the capital of Turkey in Europe. Thirdly, we would have been able to bring out of Russia the great stores of wheat which we required and which were there awaiting shipment. In addition to this our campaign, if successful, might have prevented any other alliance against us by the Balkan people, as there were several neutral states early in 1915. We would also have broken the link between Germany and Turkey if we occupied the Turkish capital.

Before commencing any operations against the Turks it was necessary for the British to secure some harbour as close to the straits as possible to serve as a base where large stores of munitions and fuel could be accumulated. The port of Mudros, in Lemnos was selected. It has a great wide natural harbour, and offered a safe anchorage for the allied fleets. The island produces very little, and consequently everything had to be brought from a very long distance. The entrance to the narrows had to be cleared of mines, which was a very difficult operation owing to the weather and the fact that the entrance was commanded by guns from enemy forts, which had to be silenced. Heavy weather delayed operations for a long time after this and it was another two months before any of the British Army was ready to land. The Turkish Army, no doubt, profited from this delay. Several simultaneous landings were planned to take place on the Peninsula, and one temporary landing by the French on the Asiatic coast, but, as each landing would take a page of description and as each one equally important, we have confined ourselves to those in which the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and other Irish regiments took part. The Australians and the New Zealanders had a very heavy casualty list and the British Army who took part in the original expedition suffered similarly. The Irish regiments simply took their share of losses with the rest.

In April 1915, the Regular Battalion of the R.D.F landed at Cape Helles in the South with the 29<sup>th</sup> Division of the British Army. Three companies of this Regiment were towed in lighters to the landing place, and the remainder had to land from a tramp steamer called the *River Clyde*. This steamer had been altered to carry troops. Great entry ports had been cut in her sides and platforms had been built out from here so that as many men as possible might run from these entry ports in a hurry. The plan was to beach the steamer as near as possible to the shore and then to fix the lighters, which she towed, into position, so as to make a kind of floating bridge from her to the beach. Immediately after the *River Clyde* had grounded on the beach and the men were getting the lighters into position, the Turks opened fire. There was no question of their missing, as they had a perfect target at ranges from 100-300 yards in clear daylight about 30 boats crowded together and a big ship. The first outbreak of fire made the beach as white as a rapid, for every rifle and machine gun of the large Turkish force defending this beach was concentrated on the attackers. Those not killed at the first discharge waded or swam ashore, having jumped from the boats. Many were killed in the water, others were wounded were swept away or drowned. Others were drowned by the weight of their equipment. Some reached the shore, but were killed at their work of cutting the barbed wire protective entanglements. They were at once

replaced by others, who dashed forward to take their places. After the impossibility of the attack being successful became obvious, the remaining survivors of the force stayed on board the *River Clyde* until nightfall. After dark they landed on the beach, having joined up with survivors on the land. They were driven back again and again throughout the night. At dawn the following morning the fleet opened a terrific fire on the enemy defences and after fighting from bush to bush, the ruins of the castle and fort were captured. This was the worst of all the landings. The position at the end of April 1915, was that the Allies had obtained a footing on the Peninsular at all the beaches. The British at Cape Helles and the Australians and the New Zealanders were at a place called Gaba Tepe - but that was all. They had been unable to push on any further. Two more big attacks were prepared and carried out unsuccessfully in May and June 1915 and it would take a long time to go into the question of each attack and the cause of failure. On account of the failure of the allied troops to advance any further or to be able to link up with the other troops on their right and left, a new attack was planned. The idea was that a concentrated attack would be carried out all along the peninsular and, while the Turks were withstanding this push all along the line, a new force would be landed at Suvla Bay, which was, of course, a considerable distance north of Cape Helles and a few miles north of A.N.Z.A.C (where the colonial troops had landed). The Turks would not be expecting a landing at Suvla, so it was expected that the troops landed there would push on, seize the high ground some distance inland and link up with the troops already landed. Then the whole force would seize and occupy all the high ground running right along the peninsular.

August 6<sup>th</sup> was the day fixed for the attack. The heat at the time was unbearable and while the general attack all along the line in this intense heat began, the Suvla landing started. This was to be the decisive element in the campaign. An English Division landed first in pitch darkness by wading ashore in five feet of water on to the beaches prepared with land mines. The first five boatloads had very heavy casualties from the mines and from the snipers, who came right down on to the beach in the darkness and fired into the midst of our men. But, after great difficulty, our men stormed Lali Baba, which was a small hill practically on the beach. The hill was then shelled by the Turks, which set fire to the gorse, so that the continued British advance was through a blazing common, in which those who were wounded fell and in many cases, were burnt to death or suffocated where they lay.

While this fighting was in progress the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division landed on the left. There were three hills to be taken at a distance of from one to two miles inland, after which the whole party was to push on and join in the concentrated attack when they had linked up with the Colonial troops, who had landed on the right some months ago. The hills in question were taken, of which the main one, Chocolate Hill, was captured by the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Battalions, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The fighting for this hill lasted from shortly after dawn until after sunset the same day. The casualties were heavy, but they were nothing to what the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the 10<sup>th</sup> Irish Division generally suffered a few days later, on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> August, when the Turks attacked us after they had obtained strong reinforcements. The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division on landing had to cross a big inland lake which was mined. Several were blown up crossing this lake. During all the day the men suffered acutely from the great heat and thirst. It is said that several went raving mad from thirst. Efforts were made to send up water, but the distribution system was very bad, which is not to be wondered at when it is considered what an overcrowded state of chaos existed on the beach and what a confused country Suvla was without anything like a road. In addition to this, much of the scrub and thicket was still blazing, or smoldering from fires which had broken out then the attack started. A few wells were discovered which were filled with corpses, put there by the Turkish garrison. A few unpolluted wells or brackish, but drinkable water was found, but most of these were guarded by snipers, who shot at men going to them to get water and the Turkish snipers were exceptionally good shots and very cleverly hidden.

The first objectives were taken by our troops on August 6<sup>th</sup> (the day of the landing), but the greater objective of pushing on, taking possession of the higher ground some miles further inland and connecting up with the Anzac Force was never secured. If it had been secured Gallipoli would have been won. On the night when Chocolate Hill was taken the Turks were 'on the run' and our troops could have advanced further, but unfortunately, they received orders from higher command to consolidate the positions already won and not to continue the advance. For any big advance, supporting and reserve troops are necessary and there were no troops to carry out this work. On the day after the landing at Suvla Bay there was not a great deal of fighting. The Turks seemed to have retired a good distance. A few days later on when we attacked, the Turks were ready for us, having being strongly reinforced. Consequently when two subsequent attempts were made to attack and dislodge the enemy from their position they were not only unsuccessful, but caused very great losses to the British and Irish troops. Space will not

permit a description of these two attacks, which, in one case, led to severe hand-to-hand fighting and in the other, definitely decided the higher command that success was impossible and that the only thing to do was to consolidate and hold the positions already held until the final evacuation some months later. None of the 10<sup>th</sup> Irish Division were present at the withdrawal of the British from Gallipoli as they had been moved to another theater of war some time previous to this. The health of the troops was wretched during the whole campaign and especially in the summer 1915. The great shortage of water was mainly due to the skill of the Turkish snipers, who actually managed to get behind the British lines and fire on those drawing water from the wells. These snipers were, in many cases, women, who painted their bodies green so as to resemble the shrubs and trees into which they climbed to conceal themselves. The writer remembers seeing one captured woman sniper, scantily clothed, with some sort of paint on her body and leaves of plant and trees sewn together were fixed around her so as to make her resemble a piece of Turkish scenery herself. She had in her possession, in addition to several days supply of tinned food, a great number of British Tommie's identity discs. It was a habit of the Turkish snipers to lie concealed very cleverly all day with rifles fixed on a definite point, past which British troops were bound to travel when going to fetch water. On reaching that point the sniper fired and seldom missed. At night these snipers used to emerge from their places of concealment to take the identity discs off those whom they had shot during the daytime. Food was short at the beginning of the Suvla Bay campaign. Probably this, combined with lack of water for washing or drinking (washing was considered an unnecessary luxury when the daily allowance per head was so small) may help to account for the appalling losses from diseases such as dysentery and enteric. Such things as sufficient equipment or change of clothing were unknown at the beginning of the campaign, owing to the fact the troops, after landing, had been ordered to dump all their spare kit on the beaches. Later when they went back to the beaches to retrieve their spare kit it had vanished-probably blown up. At most of the other theaters of war there was such a thing as a Base. The Base in France was often quite comfortable and war could sometimes be almost forgotten. But at Gallipoli the Base was almost as uncomfortable as the front line and the fact that the Turks had all the ranges to the base worked out with mathematical precision.

Gallipoli failed. It is the writer's opinion that the peninsular was lost through the delay in pushing on after the Suvla Bay landing. That delay was due to insufficient troops in support and in reserve, in addition to the

difficulty of intercommunication and passing of orders during the first forty-eight hours after landing. IT was not due to the troops themselves, who carried out all orders to the best of their ability. After the losses of Gallipoli the Irish regiments went to fight elsewhere in Macedonia, Palestine, and France. Most of us who had enlisted in the British army had learnt to be humbly proud of the Irish regiments. To some of us it seemed sad that after 1915 the Irish were not able to keep their own regiments at the front up to strength, owing to the poor response to recruiting posters at that time. After 1915 many were over half full of Englishmen, Scottish, or Welshmen. But now we cannot have our Irish regiments even at half strength, and soon the flags in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, will be the only symbol by which to remember. Guy Butler Cranwill.

From *The Blue Coat, Midsummer and Christmas 1932*, by kind permission of The King's Hospital, Palmerstown, Dublin.20. *This story was researched and written by Mr Paddy Hogarty, Member of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

### **They Achieved the Impossible. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and their Chaplain, Father Finn.**

High up on the moors, above and to the west of the city of Durham in north-east England, lies Ushaw College, home to a unique memorial to a soldier-priest. It is a remarkable oil painting whose canvas measures 29 x 50 inches. The picture's gilt frame bears an inscribed commemorative plate which in too few words encapsulates the story of a chaplain's devotion to his duty and his self-sacrifice in his care of the soldiers whose spiritual needs he had charge of. The plate reads:

The collier transport *River Clyde* landing troops at 'V' Beach, Sedd-el-Bahr in the Dardanelles, 25<sup>th</sup> April 1915. by Frank H. Mason R.B.A. The troops included the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Munster Fusiliers. Here the Rev. Father William J. Finn, Chaplain to the Forces was killed in the exercise of his sacred duties. They Achieved The Impossible. Presented to Ushaw College by his sister Mary Holland.

Originally from county Tipperary in Ireland, the Finn family latterly resided in Yorkshire, England, where William Joseph was born in 1875. The young Finn

studied at Ushaw College for eleven years from 1889 up to his entrance into the priesthood. He was ordained at Middlesbrough Cathedral on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 1900 by the Bishop of Middlesbrough. Before joining the army chaplaincy Father Finn served his church in St. Helen's, Lancashire.

At the outbreak of war, the 1st. Battalion The Royal Dublin Fusiliers returned to Great Britain following service in India. Father Finn joined them in late 1914, becoming a Chaplain 4th Class; a rank equivalent to that of Captain. On 16<sup>th</sup> of March 1915, the Dublins sailed from Avonmouth on board the *Ausonia* bound for the eastern Mediterranean. After a week in Alexandria the *Ausonia* took them on to Lemnos where they arrived at Mudros Bay on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April. The Dublins left Mudros for the Dardanelles on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April sailing via Tenedos. Here, let Michael Mac Donagh take up the story as he tells it in his book 'The Irish at the Front.'

On the Saturday morning Father Finn heard the confessions of the men on board the transport off Tenedos, said Mass and gave Holy Communion. Then on Sunday morning he asked for permission of the commanding officer of the battalion to go ashore with the men. Colonel Rooth tried to persuade him to remain on the transport where he could give his services to such wounded as were brought back. You are foolish to go; it means death said the officer. The priest's place is beside the dying soldier; I must go, was Father Finn's reply.

The Dublins were split up before the landing at 'V' Beach, one company staying on board the *River Clyde*, while other companies were in picket-boats. It should also be remembered that the *River Clyde* did not reach as good a final beaching position as had been anticipated. The ship had to take evasive action during her final approach in order to avoid running down some of the small boats and eventually ran aground at 0622 hrs. but still too far from the shore line. Douglas Jerrold (1923) describes her position as 50 yards from the beach, which was 10 yards wide. Beyond this narrow strip of strand lay a green amphitheatre whose,

Peaceful slopes were themselves covered with trenches and dug-outs invisible from the shore, and beyond

the reach of damage from the preliminary bombardment.

Returning to Michael Mac Donagh, who continues;

Father Finn left the transport for the shore in the same boat as the Colonel. When the boats crowded with the Dublins got close to the beach a hail of shrapnel, machine gun fire and rifle fire was showered upon them by the Turks, hidden amongst the rocks and ragged brushwood on the heights. Numbers of the Dublins were killed or wounded and either tumbled into the water or dropped on reaching the beach. This fearful spectacle was Father Finn's first experience of the savagery of war. It terribly upset him. He at once jumped out of the boat and went to the assistance of the bleeding and struggling men. Then he was hit himself.

Those fortunate few who made it to the beach had to keep their heads down behind what little cover there was. This was provided by a small sand bank, only four feet high in the estimation of Michael Hickey (1995). Here the survivors tried to avoid the Turkish fire, which was maintained throughout the daylight hours. Referring to the 1st. Royal Dublin Fusiliers, Jerrold (1923) says 'Of three companies of this fine battalion, barely 150 men reached the shore line.'

Resuming with Mac Donagh (1916) once again, he goes on to say of Father Finn.

By the time he had waded to the beach his clothing was riddled with shot. Yet disabled as he was, and in spite of the great pain he must have been suffering, he crawled about the beach, affording consolation to the dying Dublins. I have been told that to give absolution he had to hold up his injured right arm with his left. It was while he was in the act of blessing one of his men that his skull was broken by a piece of shrapnel.

Michael Mac Donagh's 1916 book was based not only on the letters of regimental officers and soldiers of the Irish battalions but also on the records compiled at the depots.



Among his other sources was the Reverend H. C. Foster who, when he later came to write his own book, noted that despite being severely wounded in the head, Father Finn '...continued his work of mercy until he lay down to die from sheer exhaustion and loss of blood.' Finally, according to Mac Donagh, "The last thought of Father Finn was for the Dublins. His orderly says that in a brief moment of consciousness he asked; 'Are our fellows winning?'"

The Rev. Henry Clapham Foster M.A. was a Church of England chaplain and a veteran of the previous year's action at Antwerp. He was serving with the 2nd. Brigade of the Royal Naval Division and like Father Finn he too had meant to land at 'V' Beach. During that frightful morning however the Rev. Foster, along with three platoons of 'A' Company of the Anson Battalion, was diverted to 'W' Beach. There they joined their 'B' Company, who were already on the shore and in this fashion the Reverend Foster became the first Anglican chaplain to land on the Gallipoli peninsula. The Rev. Foster, '...highly esteemed Father Finn as a friend' and that feeling was fully reciprocated by Finn, who presented the Anglican cleric with a medal of 'Our Lady of Mount Carmel' as a talisman to protect him. Perhaps Father Finn's thoughtful gift was of some help too, for Foster did survive the war and later went on to become a vicar in Stocksbridge, near Sheffield, Yorkshire. Wishing "in a very humble way to chronicle the immortal deeds of the 2nd Royal Naval Brigade" Foster published his memoirs in 1918 and included this extract from a poem, written by Bertrand Shadwell of Chicago, on the subject of Father Finn's death:

He was down among the leas  
Of the blood-encrimsoned seas;  
But he struggled to his knees,  
Father Finn.  
With a bullet through his breast,  
He raised his hand and us he blest:  
'And I pardon all your sin,'  
Said Father Finn.  
Sure, there never was a priest  
Like Father Finn.  
Other priests are not the least  
Like Father Finn.  
O! the boys are all in tears  
In the Dublin Fusiliers-  
They have lost the friend of years,  
Father Finn.

The Reverend Foster summed up his feelings at his friend's fatality in the following words; "Father Finn's death was a great grief to me and a great blow to his men

who well nigh worshipped him." The above view of Father Finn's hold over his flock is also supported by his fellow chaplain from the 86th Brigade, the Reverend Oswin Creighton. This Church of England padre wrote in his book *With the Twenty-ninth Division in Gallipoli*

The men never forgot him and were never tired of speaking about him. I think they felt his death almost more than anything that happened in that terrible landing off the *River Clyde*. I am told they kept his helmet for a very long time after and carried it with them wherever they went. It seemed to me that Father Finn was an instance of the extraordinary hold a chaplain and especially perhaps a Roman Catholic can have on the affections of his men if he absolutely becomes one of them and shares their danger.

Yet another chaplain who was also serving with the 29<sup>th</sup> Division, the Reverend William Ewing, writing in his memoirs *From Gallipoli to Baghdad*, speaks of Father Finn: 'The praise of whose courage and devotion was upon all lips.'

Fr. Finn was not the first chaplain to die in World War I: Canon Robert B. Gwydir O.S.B., drowned when the Home Fleet hospital ship *Rohilla* was wrecked in a storm off Whitby on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1914. Father Finn however was the first priest to be killed in action. He had been serving at the Church of the Sacred Heart, St. Helen's, when he joined-up and the *St. Helen's Newspaper and Advertiser* carried a detailed account of his death in action in their edition of the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1915. Apparently Father Finn had the same inspirational effect upon the then parish priest of the Sacred Heart, as he had upon the men of the Dublins. Although already middle aged, Father Richard Corcoran was reported to have volunteered to take Father Finn's place. Corcoran was as good as his word too! The newspaper's edition of the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1915 reported on a talk given by Father Corcoran on his return from the Dardanelles. Between the time of his learning of Finn's death and his lecture in November, this priest had managed to join-up, get posted to Gallipoli and see some action on the Suvla front during August.



Painting of Rev Fr Finn at Ushaw College, Durham.

Father Finn's Alma Mater, Ushaw College, publishes a magazine three times a year and the issue for July 1915 carried the college's news of his death and his obituary. It also published the following poem by J. R. Meagher:

In Memoriam  
The Rev. William Finn  
Killed in action, April 25th, 1915

He did not turn his ears from that high call,  
Nor parley with himself, nor hesitate.  
Men would have held him; but he did not wait,  
Albeit the air was thick with shell and ball.  
He saw with tears his gallant Dublins fall;  
His place was with them. Like a mountain spate,  
His spirit o'leaped its banks and laughed at Fate,  
Knowing God's Providence that ruleth all.  
O Alma Mater, bind your brows with laurel !  
Yours sons have flocked to wield their Country's sword,  
And take up arms in Honour's latest quarrel.  
But this one seized the javelin of the Lord,  
And hurled it flashing, all too brief a star,  
High up the bloody steeps of Sedd-ul-Bahr.

There was another Ushaw alumnus on board the River Clyde that day in 1915; Father T. A. Harker serving with the Royal Munster Fusiliers. Father Harker chose not to leave the ship with the first assault, but instead waited until evening before making his way to the beach. When he reached the shore and had caught up with the men under his pastoral care, he said Mass for the survivors of the Munsters and Dublins. He also buried Father Finn.

The grave was marked by a cross made out of an ammunition box. On it the inscription read, ' To the memory of the Rev. Capt. Finn .' Thankfully, the memory of Father Finn's heroic actions did indeed live on and though he was 'Mentioned in Despatches' by Gen. Sir Ian Hamilton, others have hinted that even higher recognition would not have been out of place for this gallant priest. Father Finn's devotion to the men of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and his total disregard for himself, found a fitting epitaph at the hand of Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Patterson, who in his book, 'With the Zionists at Gallipoli' wrote:

Father Finn has so far been granted no V.C. but if there is such a thing in heaven, I am sure he is wearing it, and His Holiness Benedict might do worse than canonise this heroic priest, for surely no saint ever died more nobly. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

The name of the Reverend Father William Joseph Finn appears on the east wall, panel four, of the Royal Garrison Church, at Aldershot. His final resting place is at 'V' Beach Cemetery, Helles, Gallipoli, in row F, grave number 4. He lies at the right hand of his good friend and commanding officer, Lt.-Col. Richard A. Rooth, whose advice he so bravely chose to ignore.

Acknowledgments by Michael D. Robson, Tel Aviv, Israel, January 2000.

The above article first appeared in the Winter 1999 issue of *'The Gallipolitan'*, the journal of the Gallipoli Association. It is principally based upon research by Roy Makinson who was assisted by Mari Simpson. Further valuable input was provided by David Saunders, the editor of 'The Gallipolitan' and by Tom Burke, the chairman of our own association.

Thanks are due to the President of Ushaw College, Rev. Jim O'Keefe, for permission to reproduce the painting of the landing from the River Clyde. Thanks are also due to Mr. Peter Seed, the Procurator of Ushaw College, who assisted in research at the college, was generous with his time and always made one feel welcome there.

Finally, I would also like to thank my name-sake, the Rev. Father Frank Robson, of St.Oswald's Church, Bellingham, Northumberland, England, who first pointed me in the direction of Father Finn, his portrait and the River Clyde memorial painting at Ushaw College.

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**The World Wide Web.**

Anybody who has sampled the Internet will be aware of the potential for getting easy access to information at anytime from anyplace. There are a number of excellent websites which deal with the First World War, a selection of which is given below. The Association has commissioned Martello Multimedia to develop a website for us using the grant obtained from the Department of An Taoiseach. Martello are also producing a multimedia display which will run on a PC and which will be used in our exhibition. CDROM versions will be available for distribution. We hope to have the project completed by the end of March 2000.

The Internet address will be

**www.greatwar.ie**

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission has made all of its records available on the web at [www.cwgc.org/](http://www.cwgc.org/). It is possible to obtain an immediate reply when searching for information about soldiers killed.

[These are some Great War sites with an Irish dimension.](#)

The Athy Heritage Center  
<http://www.kildare.ie>

Dungarvan Museum:  
<http://www.cablesurf.com/dungarvan/ymuse.html>

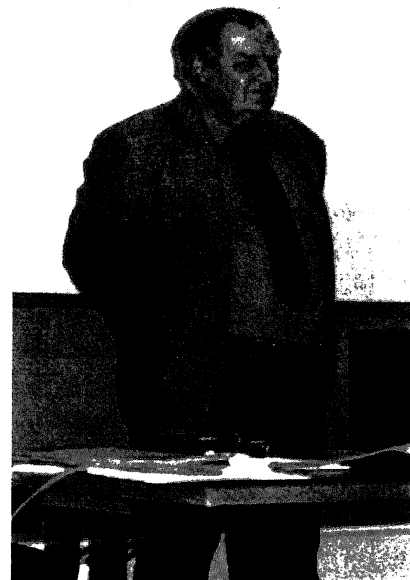
The Somme Heritage Center  
<http://www.telinco.co.uk/NorthernIreland/ndown/somme/index.htm>

The 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division  
<http://freespace.virgin.net/sh.k/xvidiv.html>

Karl Murray.  
<http://www.infosites.net/general/the-great-war/index.html>

The Royal Munster Fusiliers.  
<http://www.globec.com.au/~finbarr/>

You can contact The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association at **[rdfa.eircom.net](http://rdfa.eircom.net)**



Professor Peter Simkins, a member of the RDF Assoc., presenting his lecture to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1999 at Collins Barracks, Dublin. The title of Peter's lecture was *The One Hundred Days Offensive. August to November 1918*

## They are not forgotten. Memorials to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Part 2.

This series of articles records details of memorials on which men of the R.D.F. are mentioned. The name of the person who recorded the details is given in brackets at the start of each piece of information.. Their address is with the Secretary of The RDF Assoc. Thank you to those who have taken the time and trouble to record details of memorials and send them to the association. 'The Blue Cap' will publish all submissions of memorials on which men of the R.D.F. appear. Please keep sending in memorial details. We need your support for this series of articles.

Church of Ireland, North Strand. (Pat Hogarty)  
Location: North Strand, Dublin. Memorial : Marble memorial on wall inside the church. The memorial was moved from its original setting in St. Barnabas Church, which stood near Spencer dock/Church Avenue/New Wapping St. Most of the parishioners came from the East Wall area and would have been employed in the old Liffey dockyard, Levers of Sherriff St. and the London Midland and Scottish Railways. Inscription: *Erected by the parish of St. Barnabas in grateful memory of the following parishioners who died on active service in the Great War* At the end of the memorial is the quotation *Death is swallowed up in victory* (Cor. XV. 54) Among the twelve names listed are two R.D.F. men. They are, Pte. Joseph M. Burke, 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, R.D.F. Aged 28, killed in action, the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1916 at Guillemont. Pte. Joseph Reyner 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion R.D.F. Aged 38, married and died of wounds on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 1917.

The Hollybrook Memorial (Dan Finnigan) Location: In civil cemetery on north side of Southampton, Hampshire. The Hollybrook Memorial was erected by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to commemorate those who were lost on transport or other ships in home waters during the First World War. 1,868 people are commemorated on the memorial, including 137 of the 501 people who were lost when the *R.M.S. Leinster* was sunk on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 1918 shortly after leaving Kingstown (now Dun Laoghaire), Co. Dublin. Among those listed on the memorial is Rev. J.J. McIlvain. The following extract is from the *Aldershot News* of Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March 1918. *Royal Dublin Fusiliers were present in large numbers on Monday morning at a pontifical requiem mass at St. Joseph's Church, Queen's Road .....for the repose of the soul of the Rev. John McIlvaine, C.F., Chaplain to the Dublin Fusiliers, whose life was sacrificed by the torpedoing of the hospital ship*

*Glenart Castle in the Bristol Channel. The fate of this young Chaplain has been particularly pathetic. Almost losing his life by being gassed on the Western Front, where he had been doing splendid work amongst the wounded soldiers, he had been sent home to England to recuperate.....and was on his way back to duty, probably to take over duties as a Chaplain on a hospital ship, when the ship he journeyed on was sent to the bottom.....* The Royal Dublin Fusiliers present at the mass were probably men of the 11<sup>th</sup>(Reserve) Battalion who were stationed at Aldershot at the time.

St. Philip and St. James Church of Ireland. (Liam Dodd)  
Location: Cross Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.  
Inscription : *In honour of the men from this parish who gave their lives in the Great War 1914-1919.* At the end of the memorial is *Lest we forget.* Among the seven names listed is Charles Linton R.D.F. On a plaque outside the vestry door is the recording of the death of Lt. Frederick Norway, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry in 1915. His family lived for a time at *South Hill*, South Hill Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. His father was Secretary to the Post Office in Ireland, based in the G.P.O. Dublin. On Easter Monday 1916, shortly after he left his office for a meeting at Dublin Castle, the G.P.O. was taken over by the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army. Frederick's brother Nevil later became famous as the author Nevil Shute ( *A Town Like Alice, On the Beach* etc.)

Church of Ireland, Monkstown (PhilipLecane) Location: Monkstown, Co. Dublin. The memorial was moved from its original setting in St. John's Church, Mountown, Co. Dublin. It is now upstairs in the balcony on the right side of Monkstown Church of Ireland. Memorial: A brass plate with an engraving of a soldier on the left side of the plate and a sailor on the right side. The names are listed in the middle of the plate. Inscription : *In glorious memory of those connected with the parish who gave their lives for King and Country in the Great War 1914-1918.* Among thirteen names listed is that of Pte. William Warren 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. R.D.F., who died of gas poisoning at Boulogne on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1918. (Commonwealth War Graves Commission records give his date of death as the 18<sup>th</sup> of May.)

In the old burial ground at Monasterois near Edenderry, Co. Offaly is the resting place of a Dublin Fusilier. The grave stone clearly bears the inscription 3405 Private J Carroll, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. 24<sup>th</sup> February 1916. Age 27. Below the inscription is a cross bearing the representation of the Regimental Badge. (Mr. Glen Thompson, Member RDF Assoc.)

Fr. Dominic O.F.M Cap. Died in 1935 at Hermiston, Oregon. Born in 1883, he had suffered in a car crash some years before. He had been chaplain to Terence Mac Swiney on his 74 day fast at Brixton prison. Prior to that he had been chaplain with the Royal Irish Rifles in Macedonia and with the Royal Munster and Royal Dublin Fusiliers in 1916 and 1917. Returning to Ireland he took part in Cork in the anti-conscription campaign. Arrested with Fr. Albert at the Church Street Friary, he was sentenced by court martial to five years and deported to England. Following the Treaty, he was released on January the 22<sup>nd</sup>, but soon after he was exiled by his order to Bend, Oregon. The remains of both Fr. Albert and Dominic were returned to Ireland in 1958 through the good offices of Connie Neenan and Florence O'Donoghue and were reinterred in the Order's foundation at Rochestown, Co. Cork. Ref. The IRA in the twilight years 1923 - 1948. By Uinseann Mac Eoin. Argenta Publications, 1997. pp 352. This notice was provided by Mr. Sean Connolly, Secretary of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

Pettigo, Co. Donegal. (Mrs. Margaret Kibble, East Kilbride, Scotland). This memorial is a stone memorial mounted on a derelict wall in the village of Pettigo in Co. Donegal. The memorial is in desperate need of repair and is presently being held in position by a rope. It would be sad to see this memorial fall to ruin. Any folks in the locality who may have local influence to have the memorial restored would be welcomed. There are 17 names on the memorial, one of whom is Gnr. Arthur Abraham who died in Gallipoli in August 1915 while serving with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He had previously served with the Royal Garrison Artillery and was Margaret Kibble's grandfather.

This article was researched and written by Mr Philip Lecane, Member of the RDF Assoc. Items for this series should be sent to: Mr. Philip Lecane, Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, C/o Dublin Civic Museum, 58 South William Street, Dublin 2. Ireland.

### In Memoriam

Mrs Norah Broughall was a member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association. Her husband Nick, is currently a member of the Committee. Since the Association was formed, Nick and Norah regularly attended the lectures presented by the Association. In 1998 they both travelled to France and Flanders.

Norah laid a wreath at her uncle's grave at Duisans Cemetery in Arras, his name was Private Albert Dunne of

the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He came from Dolphin's Barn in Dublin and was KIA on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 1917. In May 1999, Nick and Norah travelled to Gallipoli for the second time and represented the RDF Assoc. on the tour to the Peninsula. The tour was arranged by The Somme Association from Northern Ireland. While in Cape Helles, Norah and Nick laid a wreath at V Beach Cemetery on behalf of the RDF Assoc. Sadly Norah died not long after they returned home from Gallipoli. She died on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 1999. She is buried at Bohernabreena Cemetery, Co. Dublin. We will all miss you Norah and may you rest in peace.

Mr Paddy Dolan was a member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, his father served as a Private in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Regiment, *The Blue Caps*. Paddy was a keen member of the association who attended many of our lectures and social gatherings. A great big man who always had a smile and a handshake that would crack your knuckles with sincerity. Paddy served in Burma during WW2 with the RAF and was also a member of the Royal British Legion in Dublin. He died on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October 1999. He is survived by his wife May and daughters Mary, Patricia and Pauline. His large frame and good humour will be sadly missed. Paddy is buried in Fingal Cemetery, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin.

Commandant Peter Young was the Senior Officer in Charge at the Irish Military Archives offices at Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin. Peter was a dedicated and professional officer who earned the respect and admiration of all who knew him. A family man who sadly left behind his wife Annette, three sons Eoghan, Ronan, Peter and daughter Anne-Marie. Commandant Young welcomed with enthusiasm the formation of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association. Many of the inquiries which came to Peter's office were from Irish people seeking information about their relatives who served with the Dubs. Peter is buried in Confey Cemetery, Leixlip, Co. Kildare. We extend to his wife, family and colleagues in the Irish Military Archives our deepest sympathy.

Mr Paddy Guidera was a Belfast member of the RDF Assoc. Paddy tragically died suddenly last year. He kindly loaned the association an embroidered RDF Regimental Color for our exhibition in 1996. *Faugh a Ballagh* Paddy.

Ar dheis De go raibh a nAnamacha

(May their soul be on God's right hand side)

**A Statistic.**  
**Private Frank Forde. D Company.**  
**10<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion**  
**The Royal Dublin Fusiliers.**

Frank Forde was born in Dungarvan in 1900. His father, John Forde was a retired Sergeant in the Royal Irish Constabulary. His mother was named Margaret. The family lived at Patrick Square in Wexford Town. On St. Patrick's Day 1916, Frank enlisted into the army at Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, he was sixteen years of age. According to family history, he had previously enlisted into the Royal Irish Regiment earlier on in the war and was discharged owing to the intervention of his father. When Frank did eventually fool the Recruiting Sergeant about his age, he was assigned to D Company of the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Frank began his military training in musketry at Kilbride Camp, Co Dublin. Lewis Gun training was conducted at Dollymount beach north of Dublin City. Before they departed from Dublin the main body of the battalion were camped in the Phoenix Park and on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 1916 they left the Park for Hutments at Pirbright Camp near Aldershot in England. Their sister battalions, the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Dubs had trained there back in September 1915. The 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins were assigned to the 190<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Naval Division. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 1916, the battalion departed from Southampton for Le Havre in France.

The battle of the Somme had been raging since early July. D Company, in which Frank was a member, comprised of four officers and 158 other ranks. They were assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Marines. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 1916, the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins were billeted at the French village of Mesnil, the battalion diarist spelled it Maisnil. The village of Mesnil is about two miles north of Albert and is on the western side of the River Ancre facing the village of Thiepval. Over the next couple of days they carried out training prior to moving up for their term of duty in the support line trenches. At 9:00a.m on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September, D Company along with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Marines of the Naval Division, began their move from the village to the Angres II sector of the support line. Late at night (11:50 p.m.) on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September the Germans had been busy maintaining their wire defences when they were discovered by a night patrol of the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins. A volley from a Dublins Lewis gun made the Germans return to their trenches. At 8:10 a.m. the next morning, two lads were killed and seven were wounded by a German Minnewefer or 'Prawn' as the battalion diarist noted. One of the lads killed was sixteen

year old Private Frank Forde. The other soldier killed was twenty nine year old Private Michael Moore from the parish of St. Finbar's, Co. Cork. Both Frank and Michael are buried side by side in the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery named Tranchee De Meckness Cemetery. Their grave numbers are J9 and J10 respectively. The Tranche De Meckness Cemetery is near the village of Aix Noulette and is about twelve miles north of Arras and one mile south west of Bally les Mines on the road from Arras to Bethune.

**A Profile of the men.**  
**The 10<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion**  
**The Royal Dublin Fusiliers.**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers was established in Dublin in late 1915. Before they departed for England in August 1916, their title was changed from the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers to the 10<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 1918, what was left of the 10<sup>th</sup> Dubs became the 19<sup>th</sup> Entrenching Battalion. (1) Like *The Blue Caps* and *The Old Toughs* being the nick name for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> battalions respectively, the 10<sup>th</sup> battalion were called *The Commercials*, supposedly on account of the battalion comprising of men from middle management, shop keepers assistants, clerical assistants etc. The recruiting leaflet for the 10<sup>th</sup> battalion declared. 'For many months the Press and public have been saying that shop assistants, clerks etc. have been *slack* and that very few of their vast numbers have joined the Colours'. The battalion, appealing to the supposed snobbery of such men, would be 'exclusively reserved' for bank clerks, solicitor's clerks, civil servants, shop assistants, engineers, mechanics and others of 'similar position'. (2)

Who were these men who volunteered to join the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins ? Death on the Western Front was random, indeed one of the thousands of Irishmen who died on the Western Front, namely Lieut. Tom Kettle, wrote of such morbid randomness.

The bombardment, destruction and bloodshed are beyond all imagination, nor did I ever think of the valour of simple men could be quite as beautiful as that of my Dublin Fusiliers.....the men are grubbing and an odd one is writing home. Somewhere the Choosers of the Slain are touching, as in our Norse story they used to touch, with invisible wands those who are to die. (3)

In order to try and find out who these men were, where did they come from, how old were they etc, other than going through each man's personal record, which in the majority of cases were destroyed during the Second World War, one way to try and answer some of these questions is to analyse the combined information contained for each man in both the Soldiers Died Series published by H.M.S.O London in 1921, (Part 73) being the Royal Dublin Fusiliers (4) and The Commonwealth War Graves Commission Data Base (5). It is because of this randomness in death throughout the war, that an inherent statistical model presents itself as a method of analysing the data and endeavoring to answer the above interesting questions.

**Table 1.**  
**Total deaths in Battalion.**

Total KIA:	223
Total DOW:	72
Total D:	21
No data:	5

Total KIA , Dow, Died.: 321

**Table 2.**  
**Nationality. Countries in which soldiers were born.**

Ireland	221	68.84 %
England	75	23.36 %
Scotland	6	1.87 %
Wales	2	
America	1	
China	1	
India	2	
South Africa	1	
No data	12	
<b>Total</b>	<b>321</b>	

**Table 3.**  
**County in Ireland in which soldier was born.**

Antrim	5
Carlow	4
Cavan	4
Clare	1
Cork	16
Derry	4
Donegal	3
Down	2

Dublin	88
Galway	3
Kerry	1
Kildare	9
Kilkenny	2
Laois	7
Leitrim	2
Limerick	2
Longford	2
Louth	1
Mayo	5
Meath	5
Monaghan	3
Offaly	2
Roscommon	4
Sligo	5
Tipperary	6
Tyrone	3
Waterford	5
Westmeath	6
Wexford	8
Wicklow	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>221</b>

**Table 4.**  
**Dublin Profile**

Dublin Postal District No.	Number KIA,DOW etc.
No data	45
1	4
4	5
6	9
7	7
8	9
11	1
18	7
20	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>

**Table 5.**  
**Enlistment.**

Irish born who enlisted in Ireland	176
Irish born who enlisted in England	23
Irish born who enlisted in Scotland	10
Irish born who enlisted in Wales	0
Irish born with no enlistment data	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>221</b>

**Place of enlistment  
in Ireland of Irish born..**

<b>Ulster:</b>	
Armagh	3
Ballymeena	1
Banbridge	1
Belfast	5
Cavan	1
Coleraine	2
Derry	2
Enniskillen	1
Portadown	1
<b>Total Ulster</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Munster:</b>	
Cork	12
Ennis	1
Limerick	2
Waterford	2
Youghal	1
<b>Total Munster</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Leinster:</b>	
Arklow	1
Athlone	1
Bray	2
Carlow	4
Curragh	1
Dublin	99
Dundalk	1
Dunlaoghaire	4
Gorey	1
Kilkenny	2
Mullingar	2
Naas	6
New Ross	1
Portlaois	1
Sutton (Dublin)	1
Trim (Meath)	1
Wexford	2
Wicklow	2
<b>Total Leinster</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>Connaught:</b>	
Boyle	4
Galway	2
Sligo	3
<b>Total Connaught</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Total Enlisted in Ireland</b>	<b>176</b>

**Table 6.  
Age profile of soldier who were KIA,DOW,D**

Age	Number KIA,DOW,etc
No data	147
16	1
17	3
18	4
19	18
20	16
21	11
22	14
23	15
24	6
25	7
26	8
27	10
28	8
29	8
30	7
31	5
32	7
33	4
34	3
35	3
36	2
37	2
38	1
39	3
40	2
41	4
42	1
46	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>321</b>

**Table 7.  
Time of Death profile.**

Year: 1916 Month	Number KIA,DOW,etc
January	1
February	1
March	1
April	5
May	0
June	0
July	0
August	4
September	2
October	12
November	98



December	3
Total 1916	127
Year 1917:	
January	2
February	40
March	3
April	41
May	21
June	0
July	9
August	6
September	6
October	3
November	24
December	0
Total 1917	155
Year 1918:	
January	0
February	1
March	20
April	5
May	2
June	1
July	1
August	2
September	2
October	3
November	1
December	0
Total 1918	38
December 1919	1
Grand Total	321

**Table 8.**  
**Rank of soldiers KIA,DOW,D**

Rank	Number KIA,DOW etc.
Captain	1
Lieutenant	3
2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant	18
RSM	1
Sergeant	14
Co. Sergeant Major	3
Co. Quartermaster Sergeant	1
Lance Sergeant	5

Corporal	16
Lance Corporal	26
Private	233
Total	321

**Table 9.**  
**Soldiers who formerly served in Other Regiments**

Irish born	14
English born	32
Scottish born	1
Welsh born	1
Total	48

**Table 10.**  
**Deaths of English born soldiers.**

1 <sup>st</sup> January 1916 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1916	19
1 <sup>st</sup> January 1917 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1917	42
1 <sup>st</sup> January 1918 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1918	13
Died in 1919	1
Total	75

**Table 11.**  
**Deaths of Irish born soldiers**

1 <sup>st</sup> January 1916 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1916	98
1 <sup>st</sup> January 1917 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1917	100
1 <sup>st</sup> January 1918 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1918	23
Total	221

**Table 12.**  
**Married men of the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins.**

Out of the 321 men who died serving with the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins, 28 were married, i.e. roughly 9 %. In terms of ethnic breakdown, they were the following.

Irish	18
English	7
Others	3
Total	28

The average age of these married men was 31 years of age. 7 of the 28 men who died formerly served in other regiments.

**Table 13.**  
**Places and Graves of**  
**where soldiers are buried.**

France	287
Ireland	13
Belgium	10
England	6
Germany	5

Total 321

Thiepval Memorial	57
Arras Memorial	39
Ancre British Cemetery	34
Croisilles British Cemetery	20
Pozières Memorial	16
Varennes Military Cemetery	13

No of soldiers with no known grave 112

**Table 2. Nationality.**

By far the main ethnic group within the battalion were Irish, followed by the English. The man born in America was Lance Cpl. Cornelius Buckley. He was born in San Francisco, California. He came to Ireland and lived at 6 St. Luke's Place, Cork. He enlisted into the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins at Aginagh, Co. Cork. He was killed in action on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 1917 when the battalion was in the Line near the French village of Beaucort which is near Beaumont Hamel.

The man who was born in China was Pte. Wilfred Sidford, he was born in Swatow (Shantou, North East of Hong Kong.) He enlisted in Edinburgh and at the age of twenty six was killed in action on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1916 when the battalion took the village of Beaumont Hamel. Pte. Sidford was a married man. His name is on the Thiepval Memorial.

Two of the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins killed during the war were born in India. The first was Pte James O'Connor. He was born in Bombay. He lived in Dublin before the war and enlisted in Dundalk, Co. Louth. Pte. O'Connor was killed in action on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 1917 and is buried in the Orchard Dump Cemetery, grave reference number VIIIIC4.

The other member of the battalion who was born in India was Lance Sgt. Frederick William Burke. He was born at the Indian Army military base at Quetta in the Province of Baluchistan. The date on which Lance Sgt. Burke was killed gives a good indication as to where he was killed.

He died on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1916. Lance Sgt. Burke was killed during the Easter Rising in Dublin. He was twenty one years of age. He enlisted in Gravesend. His father was Major John Burke, DSO, MC DCM of 62 Grove Avenue, Twickenham. Lance Sgt. Burke is buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery in Dublin, his grave reference number is CE642.

The South African was a young officer by the name of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Henry Cross. His father was a Clergyman named Rev. George William Cross, his mother was named Margaret. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Cross was killed in action on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1916 at Beaumont Hamel, he was twenty three years of age. He is buried in Knightsbridge Cemetery, Mesnil-Martinsart. His grave reference number is C2.

**Table 3. The counties in Ireland in which**  
**soldier were born.**

It would appear from Table 3 that the recruitment drive for men to enlist into the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins had got its message across in almost every county in Ireland. There are thirty counties listed in this Table. The only counties missing from the Table are Co. Armagh and Co. Fermanagh, i.e. no man born in Co. Armagh and Co. Fermanagh died serving with the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins. Dublin by far had the highest number of men who died with the battalion, followed by Cork and Wicklow.

**Table 4. Dubliners.**

The total number of men who were born in Dublin and died with the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins was 88. Out of this sample there was 43 men whose place of birth in Dublin was listed. In order to identify the then place of birth with an area in Dublin today, the current Dublin Postal Districts numbering system was applied. Uneven Postal Districts represent areas of Dublin which are located north of the river Liffey. Even numbers represent those areas of Dublin which are south of the Liffey. Much like today, Dublin in 1915 had areas of social divide. The principle in applying Postal District numbers to the areas in which the sample of men were born, although not a perfect model, is however an attempt to determine the social make up of the men in the battalion who came from Dublin. Using a random sample of 43 men as a means of presenting a social profile of the entire battalion may statistically seem a bit small. However, given the place of birth in Dublin of a random sample of 43 men, is in itself a model to examine, even if it is so small. In analysing this sample of 43 men, it would appear from Table 4. that the Postal Districts of Dublin 6, Dublin 8, Dublin 7 and Dublin 18 was where many of the Dublin

recruits came from. Dublin 18 recruits mainly came from Dunlaoghaire and south County Dublin. One interesting discovery is that two men who make up the Dublin 6 (Rathmines) statistics were neighbours who came from the same road. One was an officer and the other was a private. They were 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Harold Mansfield aged 36, from 11 Grosvenor Square and Private Robert Evans aged 24, from 17 Grosvenor Square.

- Dublin 6. Southside. Rathmines, Rathgar, Terenure.
- Dublin 8. Southside. South Dublin inner city. Francis Street, New Bride Street, Great Ship Street.
- Dublin 7. Northside. North Dublin inner city.
- Dublin 18. Dunlaoghaire. South county Dublin.

Traditionally the people who came from and lived in areas contained in Dublin 6 as mentioned above were considered to be from a wealthy class. The people who came from or lived in areas contained in Dublin 7 and 8 would have come from a poorer class. Judging by the even split in the sample of men who came from Dublin 6 and Dublin 8, it may be fair to say that there was an even class mix of men who joined the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins. The men were not all from the one social class, in other words they were a reflection of the social make up of the men of Dublin.

**Table 5. Enlistment.**

The total number of men who died with the battalion who were born and enlisted in Ireland was 176. The majority of Irish men who were killed, enlisted in Ireland. Since the battalion was in Dublin when conscription was introduced in Britain ( January 1916), it would appear that those born in Ireland who enlisted in either England or Scotland may have been working there and may have been 'caught' by the Conscription Act. It is interesting to note however that they joined an Irish regiment. Table 5 would suggest that the majority of those men born in Ireland who died serving with the battalion were volunteers and not Irish conscripts working in Britain.

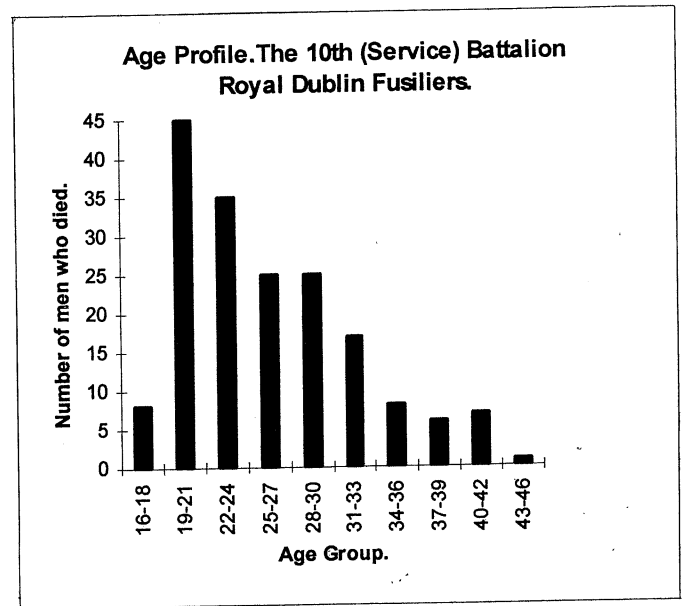
In terms of the number of men who enlisted in centers which were spread throughout the four provinces of Ireland, the number of men who died while serving with the battalion are as follows.

Ulster	17
Munster	18
Leinster	132
Connaught	9
Total	176

The counties of Leinster had the highest number deaths in the battalion being 132. Of those who enlisted in Leinster and died, 100 enlisted in Dublin alone. It may be fair assumption therefore that Leinster, and hence Dublin, provided the highest number of recruits to the Battalion.

**Table 6. Age Profile**

Out of the total of 321 men who died serving with the battalion, no age data was available for 147 of them. However of the 321, age data was given for 174 men. Figure 1. presents an age profile of these men.



**Figure 1.**

The age group in which the maximum deaths occurred was between 19 and 21 years of age. Within this group, the age 19 had the highest component. Since most of the personal records belonging to these young men are unavailable, it would be hard to establish whether or not they had a job before they enlisted. If they were employed and being between 19 and 21 years of age, they more than likely would not be in management positions, if anything they were more than likely to be at the bottom of the ladder. The chance of adventure in France may have seemed more attractive to these young men than what they were doing at the bottom of the ladder. It would seem that the age group targeted in the recruitment drive to fill the ranks of the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins with young men, employed or otherwise, was successful.

**Table 7. Time of Death.**

The following is a summary of Table 7.

1916	127
1917	155
1918	38
1919	1
Total	321

**1916.**

By far the highest number of men killed in action or died of wounds etc. in 1916 was during the month of November. Five members of the battalion were killed in April. These men were killed during the Easter Rising in Dublin. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1916 the battalion attacked Beaumont Hamel with 24 Officers and 469 other ranks. (1) The battle which the battalion took part in on that day and casualties suffered, was written about in Vol.6 of *The Blue Cap* 1999.

**1917**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1917. The following notice appeared in the battalion war diary. (1)

News was received that 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. A.W. Henchy 10<sup>th</sup> RDF was awarded the M.C in connection with the Dublin Rising and that the names of V / M have been brought to the notice of the Secretary of State in the same connection. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. F.O'Neill (KIA) ; A/RSM J.S Henderson ; A/RSM C.Lynch

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. O 'Neill was killed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November. He is buried in Knightsbridge Cemetery, Mesnil-Martinsart in France and is commemorated on a seat in Clarendon St. Church in Dublin. Although in 1917 there was no one particular date in which the casualty rate was higher than in November 1916, it is interesting to note that more men died in 1917 than in 1916. The main deaths which occurred in 1917 were during the months of February, April, May and November. During the intervening months there was a constant drainage of men, a sort of drip by drip loss, no significant numbers on a weekly basis but when added up over a month or year, contributed to the slow hemorrhaging effect casualties had on the battalion. In February and April, the combined deaths in the battalion amounted to 81. These casualties were suffered by the battalion during their period of Front Line duty at the Beaucourt and Bailleul sectors on The Somme. In November the death rate was 24. These deaths occurred during the attack on Tunnel Trench near

Fontaine Les Croisilles( Battle of Cambrai) in November 1917. The attack was a success after which the battalion took 170 German prisoners which included two officers.

**1918**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1918, the battalion strength was 47 Officers and 796 other ranks. (1) Due to army reorganization, the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins were disbanded and became the 19<sup>th</sup> Entrenching Battalion, this occurred on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 1918. On a misty morning on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1918, the Germans launched their last major offensive. During this month, 20 members of the battalion died, it was the maximum number of deaths the battalion suffered during 1918. The last member of the battalion to die during the war was Company Sgt. Major James Whitton. He enlisted in Devonport and was 32 years of age when he died. Born in Kenton in Devon, he died of wounds and is buried Kilcock Cemetery, Co. Kildare in Ireland. He may have been sent to Hospital in Ireland where he died.

**Table 8. Rank of soldiers KIA,DOW,D**

A total of 22 Officers and 299 other ranks died while serving with the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins. The ratio of other ranks who died to officers who died is approx. 14 to 1. There was eighteen 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants who died, the age was given for 11 men of this rank in the records. The average age of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants who died was 24. The oldest man in the sample was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Harold Barton Mansfield. He was a married man from 11 Grosvenor Square in Rathmines, Dublin, he was 36 years of age when he died on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1916. The youngest was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Anthony Vincent St. John Guisani from St. Patrick's Hill in Cork City. His father was Dr. Joseph Guisani, the local M.D. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Guisani was 19 years of age when he was killed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1916. Both men are buried in the same cemetery at Kingtsbridge Cemetery, Mesnil-Martinsart (The Somme).

Prior to his enlistment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Charles Martin Armstrong was a student in Trinity College Dublin. His father was The Rev. Chancellor S.C, his mother was named Eliza. They lived at The Rectory, Finglas, Dublin. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Armstrong was 23 years of age when he died on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1917. He is buried in the Ancre British Cemetery.

There is very little information on the officers who died while serving with the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins in both sources of data used for this study. In order to conduct a proper study of the religious and social make up of these officers, a study of each man's file would need to be

carried out. These files are available from the Public Records Office in Kew Gardens, London.

**Table 9. Soldiers who formerly served in Other Regiments**

Irish born	14
English born	32
Scottish born	1
Welsh born	1
Total	48

Approximately 15% of the men who died serving with the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins had served previously in other regiments. There are two possible explanations for this occurrence. These men may either have been on the reserve and were called up, or, when in France between the years 1916 to 1918, they were transferred to the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins. The first explanation seems unsound since if the men were Reservists, they would have been called up at the outbreak of the War. The second explanation would seem more logical, i.e. due to 'wastage', men were drafted into the battalion from other regiments in order to keep up the battalion fighting strength. It is interesting to note that the majority of the men who previously served in other regiments were English born. There are two possible explanations for this occurrence. Either there was no Irishmen to fill the gaps, or, as John Redmond suspected for political reason, that Irishmen who were wounded and recovered were sent to non Irish regiments. More research would need to be done to answer this question. It is more likely that there were not enough Irishmen coming forward to fill the ranks since recruitment in Ireland had fallen off by the end of 1915 and so the 'wastage' was balanced from non Irish battalions.

**Table 10. Deaths of English born soldiers.**

1 <sup>st</sup> January 1916 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1916	19
1 <sup>st</sup> January 1917 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1917	42
1 <sup>st</sup> January 1918 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1918	13
Died in 1919	1
Total	75

**Table 11. Deaths of Irish born soldiers**

1 <sup>st</sup> January 1916 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1916	98
1 <sup>st</sup> January 1917 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1917	100
1 <sup>st</sup> January 1918 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1918	23
Total	221

Tables 10 and 11 are an attempt to determine the Irish and English make up of the battalion as the war progressed. There were other nationalities within the battalion, however, the major nationality other than Irish was in fact English, see Table 2.

As can be seen from Table 11, the number of Irishmen who died during the year 1916 / 1917 remained almost constant, i.e. in 1916 there were 98 and in 1917 there were 100. It is therefore reasonable to assume, again based on the random theory, that the ethnic make up of the battalion did not change during this period, the number of Irishmen did not increase nor decrease. In 1918 it did however drop off, so too did the English make up of the battalion. Table 10. presents a more interesting picture. During the same period of analysis i.e. the years 1916 and 1917, the make up of the battalion, as reflected in terms of English men who died with the battalion, increased from 19 in 1916 to 42 in 1917. The possible reasons for this are presented in the previous section. Whatever the reasons, the statistical evidence is that more Englishmen died with the battalion in 1917 than in 1916. During 1918, the number of Irish men dying with the battalion dropped off drastically from 100 in 1917 to 23 in 1918. So too did the number of English men dying with the battalion. In contrast to the Irish rates however, the English rates returned roughly to what they were in 1916. See Figure 2. The conclusion would suggest that the number of Irishmen serving with the battalion dropped off in 1918. This trend in the rates of Irish and English men dying with the battalion would seem to reflect the ethnic make up of the battalion towards the end of the war.

Although it was predominantly Irish, and even Dublin in its make up, in the end sadly it was a battalion with a lot less Irishmen in it compared to what it was when they set out for France in the Summer of 1916.

**Table 12. Married men of the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins.**

9% of the men who died with the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins were married and their average age was 31 years of age. 7 married members of the battalion served in other regiments, which would imply that the majority of the married men who died were, like their single younger comrades, volunteers. It is hard to know what drives a married man of 31 years of age and who may have a young family into a war where the chances of coming out uninjured were not very good. The majority of the men who died were single.

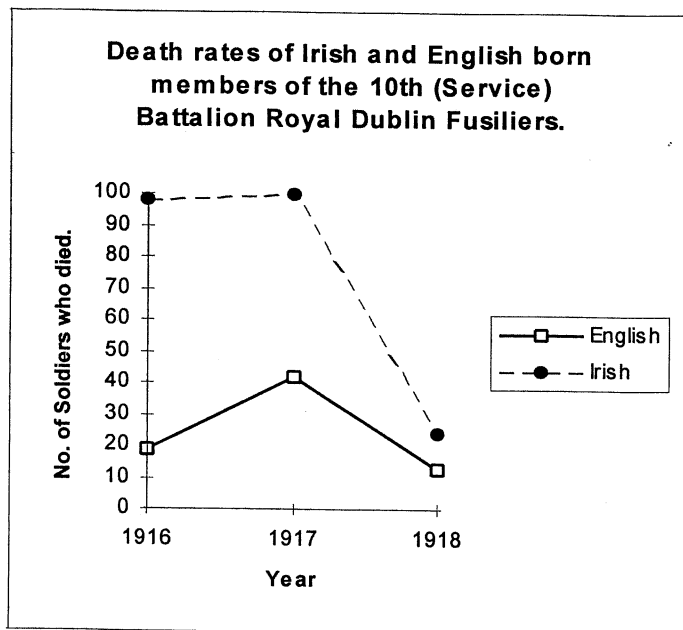


Figure 2.

**Table 13. Places and Graves of where soldiers are buried.**

The majority of the 321 members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins who died in the Great War are buried in France. Between three memorials in France namely the Thiepval, Arras and Poziers Memorials, there are 112 members of the battalion inscribed on the stone which makes up these memorials. Since it is the practice of the British Commonwealth War Graves Commission to place the names of men on memorials who have no known grave, it is therefore fair to say that approximately one third of the men who died serving with the 10<sup>th</sup> Dublins have no known grave, their bodies were never found. Many of them lie together. However one chap must feel terribly lonely, he is Private James Mc Cabe from Ballybay, Co. Monaghan. He was formerly a member of the Leinster Regiment. He died of wounds on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 1918 as a prisoner of war following the German March offensive. Although there are 17 Dublin Fusiliers buried in Niederzwehren Cemetery, 14 are from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion alone. The Cemetery was established by the Germans in March 1915 to bury prisoners of war who died at the local POW Camp named Niederzwehren. The Cemetery is located 15 kilometers south of Kassel. (5) James is the only man from the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion buried there, none of his 'Pals' are with him.

**Conclusions.**

Although by no means a perfect method of establishing the kind of man that served with the 10<sup>th</sup> battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the method used and the

assumption made about the randomness of death and hence the cohort used, is at least logical. From the data presented in this paper there is a high probability that the average recruit into the 10<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers would have fallen into the following categories.

He would have been Irish.

He more than likely came from Dublin. There was an equal chance of him coming from a wealthy area of Dublin as coming from a poor area of the City.

He would have volunteered and was not conscripted.

He would have had little or no previous military experience since he did not serve in the army before he enlisted, ie he was not a Reservist.

He enlisted in Ireland and more than likely in Dublin.

He would have been between the age of 19 and 21.

He would have been single.

He may well have had a job but being between 19 and 21 years of age, his working life was only beginning.

Being of that age, he would not have been from middle management which, was the target of the recruitment drive in establishing this 'Commercial Pals' battalion.

He may well have been a shop keeper's assistant, a clerical assistant or a civil servant. However in what ever profession he came from, he more than likely was on the bottom of the ladder.

In conclusion, apply the above characteristics to any young man you know who fits them. Look for a bit of adventure in him and there you will find your typical recruit to the 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

*This article, along with the story of Pt. Frank Forde was researched and written by Mr. Tom Burke. Chairman of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.*

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5. The British Commonwealth War Grave Commission.



In April 1999 a group of School Teachers and Councilors from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland visited the Island of Ireland Peace Park at Messines Ridge. The trip was arranged by The Journey of Reconciliation Trust.

The above photograph was taken in a small Cemetery at the foot of the Spanbroekmolen Crater (Pool of Peace) where men of the Royal Irish Rifles, 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division are buried. The men died during the attack on Wytshaete in June 1917. In the photograph are Councilors. Francis Casement SDLP, Mr. Tom Burke, Chairman of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association and Councilors Jack Mc Ilheron UUP. Both Councilors represented the Down District Council.

## Gas attack on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dublins, May 1915.

The First Battle of Ypres ended on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 1914 and the Front Line ran eastwards around the City of Ypres like a fist punching into the German occupied Belgium. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of November, the battalion moved to St Yves which is just under a mile north of the Belgian village of Ploegsteert. On Christmas Day 1914, the battalion diary stated. 'No Sniping'. During the greater part of the first three months of 1915, the battalion remained in a triangular area with the three points of the triangle being Armentieres, Ploegsteert and Nieppe, a round distance of about seven miles.

On the 22nd April 1915, the battalion was ordered to Wieltje - on the Yeper - St.Juilen Road. On the previous day the Germans launched their first gas attack in the war over French Colonial troops at St Julien. The next day the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division was attacked with the

same deadly weapon. They stood their ground at a cost of 2000 men. A breach appeared in the line and four Divisions of reinforcements were rushed to close the gap. One month later on May the 24<sup>th</sup>, the Germans launched another gas attack followed by artillery. The attack occurred over the Dublins at Wieltje at about 3:00 a.m. By 12:45 p.m. all was lost. At 9:30 p.m. those that were left retreated west of the Canal. Out of a battalion strength of 17 Officers and 651 other ranks, by 10:00 on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1915 all that was left to cross the Canal were 1 officer and 22 other ranks. (Ref Crown and Co. History of 2<sup>nd</sup> Bat. Page 50 )

Outside the city of Ypres on the road to Menin, stands the majestic Menin Gate Memorial. There are 54,000 names engraved on to the stone from which the Arch is constructed. Each name has one thing in common, the bearers have no known grave. Engraved on that memorial are the names of 461 Royal Dublin Fusiliers killed during the battles of Ypres. 143 of them are belonging to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion who died on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1915 alone.

Late in 1915, Mr and Mrs Edward and Anne Mc Donnell from 46 Bride Street in Dublin received the news about the death of their son Peter. He was forty two when he died on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 1915. They later received the news that their other two sons, John aged twenty two and Patrick, aged thirty two were killed in the gas attack of May the 24<sup>th</sup>. All three were members of the *Old Toughs* and are remembered on the Menin Gate Memorial. On the same day John and Patrick Mc Donnell were gassed to death, Pte William Malone from Dublin also suffered the same horrific fate. William was a married man who lived in Brannixtown near Trim in Co. Meath. Nearly one year later during the Easter Rising in Dublin, at the fighting near the Grand Canal Bridge in Mount Street, William's brother, Martin was killed while fighting with the I.R.A. His name is on a Memorial Plaque on a house in Northumberland Road, Dublin. *I would like to thank Mr. Kevin Cunningham, a member of the RDF Assoc. for bringing this information about Pte Malone to light. This article was researched and written by Mr T. Burke. RDF Assoc.*

**What did the RDF Association do in 1999?**

- 12 February The reunion of the members who took part in the opening of the island of Ireland Peace Park at Messines in November. The venue was The Bankers' Club, St Stephen's Green.
- 19 March The official opening of our "Let Ireland Remember" exhibition in the Workhouse Museum, The Waterside, Derry, performed by Mr. Glen Barr, Joint Chairman of the Journey of Reconciliation Trust.
- 27 March A lecture titled "Deeds not Words" by Mr. David Robertson about the 200 former pupils from Wilson's Hospital School, Multyfarnham, County Westmeath, who served in the two World Wars.
- 24 April The Annual General Meeting in the Dublin Civic Museum.
- 18 May A visit to the National Maritime Museum in Dun Laoghaire. The tour was conducted by Mr Seamus O'Connor
- 11 July The National Day of Commemoration in the Royal Hospital. Kilmainham.
- 11 Sept Visit by members to the Somme Heritage Centre in Newtownards. Dr. Tim Bowman gave a very informative briefing to the large group.
- 18 Sept A lecture titled "The Anglo Boer War" by Mr. Thomas Pakenham, the author of one of the best selling books on the subject.
- 16 Oct A lecture titled "For King, Country and a Shilling a Day; Recruitment in Belfast during the Great War of 1914-1918" by Mr. Eric Mercer.
- 6 Nov Sandymount Ecumenical Church Service. A service of remembrance was organised by Mr and Mrs Pat Lynch, both members of The RDF Assoc. at The Star of the Sea Catholic Church, Sandymount, Dublin. Pat and Patricia would like this to be an annual event which would alternate between the Catholic and C of I Churches in the Parish.

- 11 Nov Commemorative Mass at City Quay Church, Dublin.
- 13 Nov A lecture titled "This beats Athlone on a Saturday night: The Natal Campaign of the Dublin Fusiliers in the Boer War" by Professor Donal McCracken, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- 13 Nov Wreath laying ceremony at the National War Memorial, Islandbridge, Dublin.
- 14 Nov Ecumenical Remembrance Service at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association Standard was carried by Capt. (Retd) Seamus Greene and a wreath was laid on behalf of the Association.
- 10 Dec The Association Annual Christmas Dinner was held in the Masonic Hall, Dublin 2. Brigadier-General Nowlan gave a short address on the need for a National Military Museum.
- 11 Dec A lecture titled "The One Hundred Days Offensive: August to November 1918" by Professor Peter Simkins, recently retired from the Imperial War Museum, London. This was Peter's second lecture for the Association.

Many thanks to all our members and friends who attended our events last year. We look forward to seeing you again. Thanks also to those folks who submitted articles for publication in *The Blue Cap*, keep them coming. They will all be published at some stage. Please submit your writing on 3 1/4" Floppy disc in Wordstar 6 format for Microsoft Windows 95 and send to the Secretary of the RDF Association

**Spectamur Agendo.**