

# The Blue Cap

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**New Association Event Banner flanked by the Standards of the Association and the Machine Gun Corps Association with a 'Lest We Forget' Sculpture at our Annual Dinner, 8 December 2023  
(Photograph courtesy of Association member, John O'Brien)**

## Editorial

Welcome to the 2023 edition of *The Blue Cap*.

In this edition, you will find a number of articles containing original research by the authors. Philip Lecane, the acclaimed author of *Beneath a Turkish Sky: The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Assault on Gallipoli*, outlines the colourful military career of Cork-born Captain (Brevet Major) Thomas Frankland, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who was killed in 1915 at Gallipoli within hours of landing. He had participated in the Anglo-Boer War, been imprisoned with Winston Churchill at that time and later survived the Battle of Le Cateau and the First Battle of Ypres/Ieper in late 1914, before dying in Gallipoli the following April. As Philip suggests in his interesting article, Frankland deserves to be remembered for his gallant service as a Royal Dublin Fusiliers' officer.

Paul Appleby's article focuses on the intriguing claim of Annie Botha (née Emmett) and her family that they were descended from the family of Robert Emmet, the Irish patriot executed in 1803. Annie was the wife of Louis Botha, the famous Boer General and later the first Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Paul's research of this surprising assertion uncovers a host of interesting facts and personalities of Irish interest. His article has undoubtedly helped to clarify this longstanding mystery.

The research by Stephanie Jones for her article on 'The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and Naas' was originally undertaken in 2022 as part of a BA Course in Local Studies at Maynooth University. Stephanie is a member of the congregation in St David's Church of Ireland Church in Naas, Co Kildare. This historic Church and its associated school were used extensively for religious and educational instruction by the families of those Dublin Fusiliers of a Protestant persuasion who were based in Naas from the 1880s to 1922. Stephanie's examination of these under-explored aspects of the history of the Dublin Fusiliers vis-a-vis Naas and its Protestant community has been a welcome initiative on her part. She suggests in her conclusion that further research could usefully be undertaken in evaluating the contacts between the Dublin Fusiliers and Naas.

This edition of *The Blue Cap* also contains a biography by member Adrian Fingleton of Private Patrick Mulhall 4796, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Patrick transferred to the Machine Gun Corps shortly before his death on 21 March 1918 during Operation Michael, the ferocious but ultimately unsuccessful German assault on Allied lines.

Another interesting article by John F Sheehan on the WW1 memorials in Saint Ann's Church in Dawson Street, Dublin, identifies over ten Royal Dublin Fusiliers who are remembered on its walls.

We also have a number of our usual news items and features in this edition including the following:

- an account by member Seamus Moriarty of our successful trip to Ypres/Ieper and its environs last September;

- an obituary by Tom Burke MBE on the passing of Ms Margaret Horne, a long time and loyal member of the Association;
- a report of recent Association news (including our Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner in December), with which is associated some of the papers that were before that Meeting, and
- a new Dubs' Quiz by our esteemed Chairman, Brian Moroney, which will test and entertain us.

All Association activity depends on a healthy membership base. Suzanne O'Neill, our Membership Secretary, takes the opportunity in this edition to remind us to pay our modest annual subscription of €20 promptly. To facilitate payment, we associate with this copy of *The Blue Cap* our Membership and Renewal Form which members are asked to complete and return to Suzanne. If paying by bank transfer, please include your name as reference on the bank transfer so that Suzanne knows that the payment is yours!

We hope that you all enjoy our 2023 journal, and we look forward to receiving your contributions and suggestions for future editions of *The Blue Cap* and our quarterly newsletter, *The Old Tough*. All such material and correspondence can be directed to us at [rdfa1918@gmail.com](mailto:rdfa1918@gmail.com).

Our social media channels at Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) also offer members an opportunity to give feedback on the Association and its work which, as you will know, depends entirely on voluntary effort. We ask that all feedback takes account of this fact. Our Facebook and X (Twitter) addresses are <https://www.facebook.com/RoyalDublinFusiliersAssociation/> and [@RoyalDubsFus](https://twitter.com/RoyalDubsFus) respectively.

We hope that you all have a healthy and happy 2024.

Stay safe.

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



**Captain (Brevet Major) Thomas Frankland:  
A Royal Dublin Fusiliers' Officer who should be remembered**

**Dedicated to Kate Lecane (née Grant), 23 May 1955 – 27 November 2020**

**Philip Lecane**

Thomas Hugh Colville Frankland was born on 17 October 1879 in Victoria Barracks (now Collins Barracks), Cork. Erected between 1801 and 1806 on high ground to the north of the City, the complex was originally known as 'The Barracks'. In 1849, it was extended and renamed Victoria Barracks following a visit to Ireland by Queen Victoria.



**Victoria Barracks, Cork, in 1897. On the left is the original gateway and arch on the Old Youghal Road. The barracks chapel is in the centre of the photograph, and the guardroom is on the right.**

Thomas was the eighth and final child of Mary Jay Frankland (née Dawson) and Lieutenant-Colonel Colville Frankland, Commanding Officer of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot (Royal Bombay Fusiliers) at Victoria Barracks. The Regimental cap badge is pictured across. The 103<sup>rd</sup> (Royal Bombay Fusiliers) had only arrived in the Barracks in May 1879 and left there in July 1880. Lieutenant-Colonel Frankland registered the birth on 5 November 1879, before Thomas was baptised. When he was baptised on 29 December 1879, his name was added to his birth certificate.

Mary and Colville Frankland had five daughters before having three sons, of whom Thomas was



the last. All of their children had Colville as part of their name. Their daughter Margaret died on 26 November 1874, before the birth of the boys. Interestingly, Colville, father of Thomas, was himself the eighth and final child of his family. His father and Thomas's grandfather, Sir Frederick William Frankland, was the 8<sup>th</sup> Baronet Frankland of Thirkleby, North Yorkshire. Educated at Military College, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, and the Royal Military Academy, Kent, Frederick fought in the Peninsular Wars between December 1812 and 1814. He also fought at Waterloo in 1815. Colville himself served in the Indian Mutiny (known in India by various names including the First War of Independence) and eventually rose to command the 103<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot (Royal Bombay Fusiliers). In 1881, two years after Thomas Frankland's birth, the 103<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot was joined with the 102<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Foot (Royal Madras Fusiliers) to form the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, with the 102<sup>nd</sup> becoming the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion and the 103<sup>rd</sup> becoming the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. Lieutenant-Colonel Colville Frankland became the first commanding officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, which had been stationed in Ireland since 1876 as the 103<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot (Royal Bombay Fusiliers), was transferred to England in 1881 upon the creation of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. (The 102<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Foot (Royal Madras Fusiliers) was in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) when it was re-designated the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers.)

By the time of the 1881 Census, the Frankland family was in England, living at 1 Mount Royal, Bradford, Yorkshire. Thomas was recorded as aged 1. Thomas's education is an area in which my research ran into some problems. In the 1891 Census, Thomas (11) and his brother Robert (13) (born in Greystones, Co Wicklow, on 7 July 1877) were recorded as boarders at a school run by a 59 year old clergyman (name difficult to read) at 49 St John's Road, Eastbourne, Sussex.

All I can say about Thomas's subsequent education is that he was educated at Cheltenham and Charterhouse Schools. The records for the former School say that on 18 September 1889, Thomas and Robert began as boarders. Thomas was a month short of his 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. Robert was 12. While his nomination form for the School shows that Robert had previously attended St George's School, Ascot, Berkshire, the section on Thomas's form recording "*previous school or private tutor*" states "*None*". For some unknown reason, neither form mentions the school in Eastbourne. At the time the Frankland brothers began school at Cheltenham, the family was living at 14 Christchurch Road, Folkestone, in Kent. Cheltenham College records say that Thomas left the school to attend Charterhouse School in Surrey in July 1890.

Frustratingly however, Charterhouse records show him attending the school from 1893 to 1895. He was not yet 16 upon leaving Charterhouse. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find where he went from there. *The Carthusian* (the Charterhouse School magazine) recorded that on 7 April 1895, Thomas Frankland was among a group of new members elected to the Carthusian Cricket and Football Club.

On 11 February 1899, aged 19, Second Lieutenant Thomas Frankland was gazetted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, which had been stationed in Natal in southern Africa since 1897. War with the Boers broke out on 11 October 1899. On 20 October, the first major battle took place at Talana Hill. Supported by artillery and with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, on the left flank, a British infantry attack drove the Boers from their hilltop position. The British,

however, suffered heavy casualties. The commanding officer, Lieutenant-General Sir William Penn Symons, was mortally wounded. With the British having to fall back on Ladysmith, Symons was among the severely wounded left behind. Captured by the Boers, he died three days later.

On 30 October 1899, Thomas Frankland fought at the Battle of Lombard's Kop, one of two defeats for the British near Ladysmith, on what came to be known as '*Mournful Monday*'.

\* \* \*

On 15 November 1899, Second Lieutenant Thomas Frankland was in command of a company of Royal Dublin Fusiliers aboard an armoured train that was attacked by the Boers. Also on the train was a company of Durham Light Infantry, four sailors from *HMS Tartar* manning a 7-pounder muzzle-loading gun, a small civilian repair gang and Winston Churchill, correspondent for the *Morning Post*. The military on the train were under the overall command of Captain Aylmer Haldane DSO, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Gordon Highlanders. The train was shelled by the Boers. Some of its wagons were derailed, and the rest became uncoupled from the engine. The derailed wagons were cleared from the line, and the engine began to steam slowly southwards, with Churchill and the wounded troops aboard. More of the troops followed behind on foot using the engine as cover. One of the soldiers on foot waved a handkerchief in surrender. The Boers ceased firing, and about a dozen horsemen rode from their lines. The British became confused, and many soldiers surrendered. As the engine, with Churchill aboard, continued to a nearby deserted station (at Frere), he saw Frankland, "*with a happy confident smile on his face*", attempt to rally his men. At the station, Churchill got off the train, deciding to return to the soldiers who were making their way to the station on foot. But the soldiers had been captured by the Boers, as was Churchill in the vicinity of the station.

Meanwhile, the engine and those aboard escaped. The Boers marched their prisoners to Colenso railway station, where they were put in a corrugated shed near the station. Churchill and Frankland spent the night sharing a blanket. On the march the following day, an elderly Boer said that he didn't understand what had induced the soldiers to go in the armoured train. Frankland said: "*Ordered to. Don't you have to obey your orders?*" That night Churchill, Haldane and Frankland shared a tent, while the NCOs and soldiers shared another.

While on the march the following day, the prisoners and their escorts met several parties of Boers. According to Churchill, an Irishman was with one Boer party. He addressed himself to Frankland, whose badges indicated his Regiment. When disentangled from obscurity, what he said amounted to: "*I'm glad to see you Dublin fellows in trouble....The soldiers felt the sting and scowled back; the officers looked straight before them.*"

The prisoners ended up in Pretoria, where the soldiers were put in a prison camp at a racecourse. The officers and Churchill were put in the Staat (State) Model School. A skilled artist, Frankland drew anti-Boer cartoons on the wall of his room, to the annoyance of the Boer camp commander. Churchill and Frankland shared a dormitory. Churchill encouraged Frankland to draw coloured campaign maps, so that they could keep abreast of the Anglo-Boer War whenever they could glean information. While in the prison camp, Frankland kept a diary, from which Churchill later

published extracts in his book, *Ian Hamilton's March*. (Frankland was among those Churchill thanked in the preface to the book.)

On 12 December 1899, Churchill escaped from the prison camp. Four days later on 16 December, Tom Frankland's promotion to Lieutenant was published in *The London Gazette*. On 12 February 1900, JB Coulson, a past pupil of Charterhouse School, wrote to *The Carthusian* magazine from the prison camp in Pretoria:

*“Dear Mr. Editor – I wonder if you would care to hear how one or two Old Carthusians are getting on as Prisoners of War at Pretoria.”* [He told of his capture and transport to Pretoria, where] *“we found about 60 other officers who had been taken earlier in the campaign. Among them was young Frankland, an Old Daviesite [he was in Daviesites House in Charterhouse], now in the Dublin Fusiliers, who was taken in the Armoured Train at Chieveley”*.

With rumours spreading that the prisoners would be moved to a new camp, Captain Aylmer Haldane (who had been captured with Churchill and Frankland), Lieutenant Frederick Neil Le Mesurier of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers (born in Brighton on 7 March 1875) and Sergeant-Major A Brockie of the Imperial Light Horse resolved to escape. They planned to hide beneath the floorboards of the building where they were imprisoned. Hoping to fool the Boers into thinking they had escaped, they planned to emerge after the rest of the prisoners were moved to the new camp. Believing the prisoners would be moved the following day, the three men hid in the space beneath the floorboards on 26 February 1900. While they fooled the Boers into thinking they had escaped, the prisoners were not moved from the camp for some time. The floor of the building under which the men hid was about two and a half feet above their heads, and they were in pitch darkness. Frankland, who had shared a room with them, kept them supplied with food, water and hot cocoa at night.

With matters becoming grim for the hiding men, it was decided to dig a tunnel towards the camp hospital. On 13 March, Frankland, Lieutenant Cecil Grimshaw and Lieutenant Chudleigh Garvice DSO began work on the tunnel. (Like Frankland, Grimshaw and Garvice were from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Both had been captured at Talana. Grimshaw was from Dublin. His biography is extensively covered in my book, *Beneath a Turkish Sky*. Garvice was born in Cookham, Buckinghamshire, on 12 January 1875, son of Charles Garvice, a famous novelist.) On 15 March, the prisoners were told that they would be moved the following day. Food to last a week was sent down to the *cavemen*, as Frankland called them. Word spread that a number of other officers also planned to hide beneath the floorboards in an attempt to escape. Worried that this would put the subterranean men at risk of discovery, Frankland and Grimshaw reported the matter to the senior British officer, who promptly ordered the spur-of-the-moment-would-be-escapers to abandon their plan.

On 16 March 1900, the prisoners were moved to a new camp. As the prisoners left the building, Frankland sang *“For Auld Lang Syne”* in farewell to the men beneath the floorboards. For 19 days, they had remained in their dark, claustrophobic dungeon. The three men subsequently escaped.



Haldane went on to attain high rank in the Army. Brockie was killed in a mining accident a few years after the escape. Le Mesurier was killed in the Second Battle of Ypres.

The prisoners (including Frankland) were moved to Waterval camp, north of Pretoria. In the new camp, some of the prisoners produced a magazine. In a diary of his time in the camp, James St Clair-Erskine, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Rosslyn, Correspondent for the *Daily Mail and the Sphere* and editor of the prison camp magazine, said that Frankland (pictured) drew an amusing illustration depicting the escape of Haldane, Le Mesurier and Brockie. “*He is only twenty, and really very clever*”.

On 5 June 1900, riders were seen approaching the prison camp. Frankland recorded:

*“Who should I see on reaching the gate but Churchill, who, with his cousin, the Duke of Marlborough, had galloped on in front of the army to bring us the good tidings. It is impossible to describe our feelings on being freed. I can scarcely believe it, after seven months imprisonment; the joy nearly made up for all our former troubles, and besides, the war is not yet over.”*



Frankland was subsequently assigned to line of communications duties. On 30 October 1901, he fought at the Battle of Bakenlaagte. The *London Times* recorded that on 30 August 1902, the *Galician* (Union-Castle Line, 6,757 tons, built by Harland and Wolff, 1900) left South Africa for England. Among the troops aboard were Lieutenant THC Frankland, Second Lieutenant KC Weldon and 105 men of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

\* \* \*

On 19 August 1907, a memorial arch to the officers and men of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who were killed in the Anglo-Boer War was dedicated at St Stephen's Green, Dublin. *The Second Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the South African War* by Major CF Romer and Major AE Mainwaring reproduced an account of the ceremony from *The Dublin Daily Express*. Among those in attendance were Colonel Colville Frankland, father of Thomas, and Captain Chudleigh Garvice.

\* \* \*

Following his return to England, Thomas Frankland was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, in Malta (1903), and the following year (1904), he went with the Battalion to Crete. The year after (1905), the Battalion was back in Malta. In 1906, the Battalion moved to Egypt, where it remained until 1910, when it moved to Ahmednagar in India. While in Egypt, Frankland was promoted to Captain on 13 May 1908. On 28 December of that year, he was appointed Battalion Adjutant. He was recorded on the 1911 Census as being with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, at Ahmednagar, before it moved to Madras in 1913. By that stage, Frankland was in

England. In a War Office notice dated 22 January 1912, he is recorded as being on secondment from his Regiment while a student at the Staff College at Camberley, more popularly known as Sandhurst.

Colville Frankland, Thomas's father, died on 22 December 1913, aged 74. His wife, Mary Jay (née Dawson), died a month later on 25 January 1914.

\* \* \*

Having successfully graduated from Sandhurst, Thomas Frankland trained to fly. He obtained his pilot's licence on 5 November 1913, flying a Vickers Biplane at the Vickers School, Brooklands, Surrey. He was awarded the Royal Aero Club Aviator's Certificate Number 679. On 30 June 1914, he was placed on the Reserve List for the Royal Flying Corps. However when war broke out just over a month later, he reported for duty as a Royal Dublin Fusilier. Captain Tom Frankland was assigned as a staff officer to the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Division.

From April 1912 to 18 November 1914, the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Division, was commanded by Brigadier-General Aylmer Haldane, with whom Frankland had been imprisoned during the Anglo-Boer War. (The Brigade was subsequently commanded by Brigadier Charles Hull.) The 10<sup>th</sup> Brigade (which included the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers) arrived in France in late August 1914. On 23 August, in the vicinity of Mons, Field-Marshal Sir John French, commander of the British Expeditionary Force, was informed that French forces on his right were falling back. In order to avoid being surrounded, the British also began to retreat early on the morning of 24 August. The 4<sup>th</sup> Division was ordered to assist the retirement.

On the morning of 26 August, the 4<sup>th</sup> Division hurriedly took up a defensive position extending over 10 kms on the left flank of Le Cateau and were immediately engaged by a German force which outnumbered them by about three to one. The 4<sup>th</sup> Division was ordered to stand fast, to allow the retreating British troops to escape south. On a ridge north of the village of Haucourt, 4<sup>th</sup> Division Commander Major-General Snow (grandfather of military historian, Dan Snow) and 10<sup>th</sup> Brigade Commander Brigadier-General Aylmer Haldane came under German rifle fire, as presumably did their staff, including Staff Captain Tom Frankland. Throughout the day, the British front line was severely tested by German artillery and rifle fire and attacks, and communications between Haldane and some of his subordinate commanders in the front line broke down. Captain Frankland tried unsuccessfully to find Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Mainwaring from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and Lieutenant-Colonel John Ford Elkington, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, while their similar efforts to locate Brigade Headquarters also failed.

In the late afternoon, Haldane's 10<sup>th</sup> Brigade was ordered to cover 4<sup>th</sup> Division's retreat. When it became clear that a general retreat was in progress, Mainwaring and Elkington made independent decisions to withdraw. Frankland met Mainwaring retreating on foot and recognising that he was very tired, Frankland generously gave him his own horse. However unknown to Mainwaring, half of his Dublin Fusiliers had remained in the front line and stayed there until nightfall. This delay in withdrawing was a major factor in some 300 of these men being surrounded and captured by the German Army early the following morning after a fierce firefight.

In *The Blue Cap*, Volume 19, December 2014, our Association's President, Tom Burke MBE, recounted the Dublin Fusiliers' story at the Battle of Le Cateau. He also told how Mainwaring and Elkington with about 100 men each arrived in St Quentin that evening in an exhausted condition. The Mayor told the officers that the Germans had surrounded the town and pleaded with them to surrender in order to save the town from destruction. The officers agreed and told their men to lay down their arms. Major Tom Bridges of the 4<sup>th</sup> (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards intercepted a surrender document about to be sent to the Germans, and he led the troops from the town. Mainwaring and Elkington were subsequently court-martialled and cashiered from the Army.

On 6 September, Staff Captain 10<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Division, Tom Frankland, assumed temporary command of the remnants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. According to *Crown and Company* (the history of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers), Lieutenant-Colonel Loveband joined the Battalion on 25 October. He went home on leave, possibly in November (the text is a bit confusing), and Captain Tom Frankland again took over temporary command of the Battalion. Soon afterwards, he was assigned to the 86<sup>th</sup> Brigade in the newly formed 29<sup>th</sup> Division, with the rank of Brevet-Major.

In *The London Gazette* on 20 October 1914 (Issue 28945, page 8378) and again on 17 February 1915 (Issue 29072, page 1668), Tom Frankland was reported to have been mentioned in despatches by Field-Marshal Sir John French. While no detail is given of the nature of his meritorious conduct, it probably related to Frankland's time as a Brigade Captain with the 4<sup>th</sup> Division.

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Following the outbreak of war, British regular troops were recalled from abroad and replaced by territorials. Among the troops brought home were the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers (from India), and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers (from Burma). The two Battalions were assigned to the 29<sup>th</sup> Division, which was formed in the midlands of England in early 1915. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers, were attached to the 86<sup>th</sup> Brigade, with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. Brigadier-General Steuart Hare commanded the Brigade. His staff officers were Brevet-Major Thomas Frankland and Captain Mynors Farmar. (Brevet-Major meant Frankland held the rank of Major while attached to the Brigade staff. If he returned to duty with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, he would revert to Captain rank. While christened Harold Mynors, Farmar was known as Mynors.)

It was decided that the 29<sup>th</sup> Division would be used in an attack on the Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey. In the period before leaving England, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was based in Nuneaton, Warwickshire. In mid-March 1915, the 29<sup>th</sup> Division was ordered to leave for Gallipoli. Shortly before leaving Nuneaton, Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Rooth, commanding officer of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, hosted a dinner at the home of a mill-owner where he was billeted. The dinner was attended by Brigadier-General Steuart Hare, Brigade-Major Tom Frankland, Church of England Chaplain, Oswin Creighton, and about 16 Royal Dublin Fusiliers' officers.

On 16 March, 86<sup>th</sup> Brigade staff left Avonmouth aboard the 8,133 ton Cunard Line ship *Ausonia*. Also aboard was the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Built six years previously, the *Ausonia's* cuisine was reported to be of first-class hotel standard. On the afternoon of 16 March, everyone on the ship was vaccinated. On the morning of 24 March, the *Ausonia* docked at Malta for re-coaling. Only officers were allowed ashore. The ship set sail again on the morning of 26 March and docked in Alexandria, Egypt. The 86<sup>th</sup> and 87<sup>th</sup> Brigades were based at Mex Camp, about five miles east of Alexandria. Only officers were allowed to visit Alexandria. On 8 April, the *Ausonia* left Alexandria for Lemnos, an island lying about halfway between the western coast of Turkey and the mainland of Greece. On 10 April, the ship docked in Mudros Harbour, Lemnos, where the Gallipoli invasion fleet was gathering.

On 23 April, the *Ausonia* left Mudros Harbour. On 24 April, it anchored at Tenedos, an island halfway between Mudros and the tip of the Gallipoli peninsula. The soldiers who would go ashore in the initial landing were given a hot meal. Then, each carrying his rifle, 200 rounds of ammunition and his pack with three days of rations, they lined up to await disembarkation to the warships that would carry them to the Gallipoli shore.

The plan for early morning 25 April was for British troops to land at five beaches on the tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula, while Australian and New Zealand troops would land on a sixth beach. East to West, the beaches were designated S, V, W, X, Y and Z Beaches by the British High Command. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers, were among the troops who would land at V Beach. (Although outside the scope of this article, the story of the V Beach landing is told in detail in my book *Beneath a Turkish Sky: The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Assault on Gallipoli*.)

The initial landing at W Beach was made by the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers. 86<sup>th</sup> Brigade Staff Captain Mynors Farmar subsequently sent a detailed account to his wife of his experiences during the landing. On 24 April, 86<sup>th</sup> Brigade Headquarters (Brigadier-General Steuart Hare, Brigade-Major Tom Frankland and Captain Mynors Farmar) sailed aboard the *Ausonia* to Tenedos Island. There they transferred to the minesweeper *Whitby Bay*. The next morning, the *Whitby Bay* came under fire as it approached W Beach, and men on deck were killed or wounded. Men of the Lancashire Fusiliers were already ashore. More disembarked from the *Whitby Bay* to ships' boats. 86<sup>th</sup> Brigade staff went with them travelling in separate boats. The boats were in 'tows'. Each tow comprised four or five boats in line-ahead. A rope ran from the stern of the first boat to the bow of the second; another ran from the stern of the second and so on. Each tow was pulled towards the shore by a steam-powered boat. As the tows approached shore, the tow ropes were dropped, and the boats were rowed ashore by Royal Navy sailors. According to Farmar:

*"Frankland, in the tow ahead, had seen the first party of Lancashires, who were put ashore in the middle of the beach, suffer severely [trapped in barbed wire and under fire]. Frankland diverted the boats with him [to the left side of the beach] where the men were able to land under a certain amount of cover afforded by the cliffs. He collected a few men and went up [the cliff], the General [Hare] also went up...Frankland, with the General found themselves with only half a dozen men on the plateau, and Turks only 20 to 40 yards*



*distant. Frankland took a rifle from a man, who was a little excited and firing rather wildly, and shot three Turks, if not a fourth."*

*"The General was then severely wounded in the leg. More men then arrived and went for the enemy, who gave way. Frankland bound up General Hare and, seeing all was going well on the left, ran down to his right to get the company there to conform and go forward. There is no doubt that the General's action in landing with the foremost [i.e. the first troops] in this unprecedented enterprise, with Frankland's mastery of the situation, were together responsible for our success....The General and his brigade major were the power that gave cohesion to the operation, and at a moment when the troops were enduring the effects of a bewildering shock, they gave them a plan to pursue with confidence. The General and Frankland had the energy and enthusiasm of boys, and the coolest bravery and skills, it was contagious."*

A message was received from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, which had landed without much opposition at X Beach, to the left of W Beach. The Battalion hoped to link up with W Beach. No news had been received from the troops at V Beach, to the right of W Beach. Farmar came upon Hare just after Frankland had left him to go to the troops on the right. Farmar gave the General some brandy and helped him a little bit down the cliff. Frankland then returned. He said that with all well on the left side of the beach and in the centre, they should move to the right to assist the troops at V Beach. Plans required Brigade Headquarters to be set up in a ruined lighthouse on Cape Helles, between W Beach and V Beach.

Frankland explained that they would push from the right side of W Beach, attack a Turkish strongpoint at a place designated Hill 138, establish Brigade Headquarters in the lighthouse and link up with the troops at V Beach, which included his fellow Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Accompanied by about 50 men from B Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Lancashire Fusiliers, under the command of Captain Richard Haworth, Frankland and Farmer began to move towards the lighthouse by way of cliffs on the right of W Beach. They came under fire from a strongpoint which Frankland took to be Hill 138. In fact it was coming from a hill which was not marked on British maps. Called Gözcübaba by the Turks, it is the hill on which the Helles Memorial now stands, about 350 yards nearer to V Beach than Hill 138.

Meanwhile further inland than Frankland's party, Captain John Shaw of A Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Lancashire Fusiliers, led *"the remnants of his command"* in an attack on Hill 138. In an account published in *Gallipoli* by Eric Bush, Farmar said:

*"We reached the lighthouse and pushed on until hung up by a maze of barbed wire. Fortunately there was almost dead ground against the wire for a strip. The Signal Section was established under cover of the lighthouse and they got communication with the Royal Fusiliers, the [cruiser] Euryalus [anchored off W Beach. Major-General Aylmer Hunter-Weston, Commanding Officer of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division, was aboard what was also the flagship of Rear-Admiral Rosslyn Wemyss, naval commander of the landings] and the River Clyde [a converted collier used to carry many of the troops that landed at V Beach. As the River*

*Clyde did not have a radio, contact with the ship would have had to have been established visually.] Frankland left me and went to the ridge on the right to see if there was any way on from there [towards V Beach]. At about 8.45 a.m. he stood up in order to see, and was shot through the heart, neck and head. We buried him two days afterwards."*

Tom Frankland (pictured) had been killed as he attempted to break through to link up with his Regiment, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He was 35 years old.

Among the letters of sympathy received by the Frankland family following Tom's death were the following. His fellow staff officer from 86<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 29<sup>th</sup> Division, Captain Mynors Farmar wrote:

*"I attribute the success of the landing and progress on the first day to Frankland's bravery, skill and example. He gave the right lead."*

Winston Churchill wrote:

*"I am very much indebted to you for sending me an account of my cherished and gallant friend's death. It was a sorrow in these sad times to me to learn he had fallen. We had always kept in touch with one another since the armoured train fight in Natal in 1899. He was every inch a soldier, and in him the army and the country loses an officer of high ability and absolute self-devotion. I should be glad if you would endeavour to procure me a photograph of Tom, preferably in his uniform."*



Mynors Farmar said that Frankland was buried two days after he was killed. Presumably he was buried where, or near where, he was killed. Yet his name is recorded on the nearby Helles Memorial, on which are listed the names of those with no known grave. How did this come about?

In early 2023, I was contacted by my friend, RDFA member Michael Robson. Michael put me in contact with a German researcher who has the diary of a German officer who was posted to the Helles area after the British left Gallipoli in January 1916. In a very kind act of trust, the German researcher sent me (and Michael) a photograph that the German officer took of Tom Frankland's grave with its wooden cross. The grave had been looted, and the wooden cross lay on the ground near the grave, a situation which appears to have happened to other graves in the area. The horrified German officer ordered that the desecrated graves be resealed. Presumably re-erected, at some point the wooden cross from Tom Frankland's grave went missing, and it was no longer possible to identify the grave's location. The German researcher hopes to publish his findings, including the photograph of Tom Frankland's grave. I was deeply moved by the trust the researcher placed in me by sending the photograph, on condition that I would not publish it. While wishing to record that Tom Frankland initially had an identified grave, I am keeping my word by not publishing the photograph. To further protect the researcher's findings, I will not give his

name or the name of the German officer who took the photograph. But I – and Tom Frankland – owe the researcher a deep debt of gratitude. I will conclude this paragraph by saying that unfortunately, the photograph only shows Frankland's grave and does not allow its location to be ascertained or estimated.

\* \* \*

The following is from *Return to Gallipoli* by Bruce Scates:

*“Within weeks of the Allied withdrawal [from Gallipoli] fears that 'heathen' Turks would 'destroy or desecrate' Christian graves posed (as one distressed father put it) 'a cruel and additional burden of grief.'....By 1916 a Papal envoy had been sent to the Peninsula to investigate rumours that the cemeteries had been desecrated. With the end of the war, British ships sailed triumphant through the Dardanelles. One of the first to land was an officer with the Graves Registration Unit. His urgent cable caused little short of alarm in Whitehall. 'Cemeteries....are in worst possible condition....all the wooden crosses have been removed....Practically all the British and French graves [at] Cape Helles....have been systematically desecrated....Bones in many cases lying besides graves which have been opened; in other cases skeletons lying in open graves.'*

*In a report which 'hoped to ease the 'cruel burden' of anxiety that weighed so heavily on distant families', Australian War Correspondent, Charles Bean, refuted 'any claims of 'systematic desecration.' True, all the wooden crosses had been removed but 'it is almost certain that they were taken by the [Turkish] local garrison for firewood.' These troops had been virtually 'marooned' after the Allied withdrawal, cut off from supply lines and forced to wait out the winter. The bitter cold of Gallipoli cleared the graveyards, not the fiery zeal of Islam. Claims that graves had been opened had caused the most concern and here Bean could hardly quibble with the evidence [that they had been]. [According to Bean] 'At some period after the Evacuation the graves were unprotected and local inhabitants and individual soldiers dug up a certain proportion, searching the pockets and moneybelts of the dead.' But these 'violations' took place without official sanction and only because 'government control was weak.' [Bean noted that Turkish graves had also been disturbed.] This was the work of 'isolated marauders,' men brutalised by war and made desperate by poverty. Bean challenged all the racist stereotypes of his time: the Turks had proved themselves an honourable opponent, they were not by nature tomb robbers.”*

\* \* \*

On the same day that Brevet-Major Thomas Frankland was killed in Gallipoli, Captain Frederick Neil Le Mesurier, whom he helped to escape from the Boer prison camp, was killed in Flanders, serving with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Like Frankland, he has no identified grave. He is commemorated on the Menin Gate in Ypres/Ieper. The following day, 26 April 1915, Major Cecil Grimshaw, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who worked with Frankland on the tunnel to help the prison camp escapees, was killed in an advance from V Beach, Gallipoli, within a mile of where Frankland was killed. He is buried in Grave F1, V Beach Cemetery.

Less than four months after Tom Frankland's death, his brother, Captain Robert Cecil Colville Frankland, was also killed in Gallipoli. Recorded in Commonwealth War Graves records as being in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Prince of Wales's North Staffordshire Regiment (and on a memorial in Hove as being in the Regiment's 2<sup>nd</sup> Reserve Battalion), he was attached to the 1/8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers. On 7 August 1915, he was killed during an attack on 'The Vinyard' near Krithia. Like Tom, he has no identified grave and is commemorated on the Helles Memorial.

\* \* \*

After his death, money held by and/or owed to Thomas Frankland was transferred to his sisters, Miss Katherine Marian Colville Frankland and Mrs Beatrice Colville Dawson.

\* \* \*

In St John the Baptist Church, Hove, East Sussex, there is a plaque in memory of the Frankland brothers on the south pillar of the chancel arch. It reads:

*"In loving memory of Thomas Hugh Colville Frankland Brevet Major 1<sup>st</sup> Batt. Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Dearly beloved son of the late Col. and Mrs Colville Frankland Aged 35. Killed in action April 25<sup>th</sup> at the Dardanelles. Also Robert Cecil Colville Frankland brother of the above Captain 2<sup>nd</sup> Reserve Batt. North Staffords attached 8<sup>th</sup> Batt. Lancashire Fusiliers Aged 38 Killed in action August 7<sup>th</sup> 1915 at the Dardanelles. 'Be faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life'.*

Tom Frankland is also commemorated on the war memorials in Cheltenham School, Charterhouse School (see the accompanying photograph), the Chapel at the Royal Military College in Sandhurst, the 29<sup>th</sup> Division Column at Stretton-on-Dunsmore in Warwickshire and the Helles Memorial in Gallipoli.

The other two men remembered in the picture were killed on the same day as Tom Frankland. For the Gallipoli landings, each major Royal Navy ship contributed men for naval beach parties. These would assist in placing buoys and moorings and in getting stores ashore. Royal Navy Lieutenant-Commander George Pownall was a member of the V Beach Naval beach party. He was killed during the landing. Captain George Dunlop, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, died at V Beach.



\* \* \*

On 24 March 2015 in Gallipoli, my good pal, Dave Neenan, and I paid our personal tribute to Tom Frankland by following his route from W Beach to V Beach. We remembered him in the place



where he was killed. I believe that we were the first in a century to pay such a tribute to this brave man.

\* \* \*

Thomas Hugh Colville Frankland, soldier and pilot, was born in Cork and died in Gallipoli. He is a Royal Dublin Fusiliers' officer who deserves to be remembered.

\* \* \*

### **Notes on Tom Frankland's Siblings**

Eleanor Colville Frankland: On 6 April 1905, Eleanor married Thomas Maberley Cobb of Newbridge House, Donabate, Co Dublin. They had two children, Thomas and Francis (died 1949). Thomas Maberley Cobb died on 7 June 1914 aged 30. On 28 August 1915, Eleanor remarried Cyril Corbally of Rathbeale, Co Dublin. They did not have children. Eleanor died on 10 March 1946.

Thomas Marley Cobb was succeeded by his elder son, Thomas, who lived until 1984. He did not marry and was succeeded by Francis's family.

Newbridge House, near Donabate, Co Dublin, was built by Richard Castle circa 1737 for Dr Charles Cobb, later Archbishop of Dublin. In 1986, the House passed to Dublin County Council, but the Cobb family continued to live upstairs.

Katherine (Kathleen on Army records following the death of Thomas) Marian Colville Frankland: She did not marry. She died on 17 September 1950.

Margaret Lee Colville Frankland: Died in childhood on 26 November 1874.

Beatrice Colville Frankland: On 14 January 1915, she married George Crosbie Dawson. They did not have children. Beatrice died on 11 October 1959.

Mary Olive Elsie Colville Frankland: She did not marry. Mary died on 26 March 1960.

William Jay Colville Frankland: Born on 14 April 1876. William died in November 1896, aged 20.

Robert Cecil Colville Frankland: Born 7 July 1877. Fought in the Anglo-Boer War. He remained in South Africa after the War. He returned to England on the outbreak of the First World War. He was killed in Gallipoli on 7 August 1915.

\* \* \*

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My thanks are also due to Paul Appleby, Editorial Committee, Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, for online research into Tom Frankland's military career between the end of the Anglo-Boer War and his death.

# Annie Botha (née Emmett) and the Mystery surrounding her Family Link to Robert Emmet

Paul Appleby

**Explanatory Note:** The spelling of the surname 'Emmet' differs in this article depending on the context. As 'Emmet' is the accepted correct spelling for Robert and Thomas Addis Emmet, this is uniformly used for them. However an inconsistent approach to the spelling of the surname was evident during their lifetimes. Apparently, their father, Dr Robert Emmet, varied the spelling of his own name no less than four times in the latter portion of his life!<sup>1</sup>

In many authoritative and South African official documents, 'Emmett' is most often used as the spelling of the Boer/South African family which is the subject of this article. In referring to them in his letters and later book however, Michael Davitt used 'Emmet', while the referenced letters of Dr Thomas Fielding used 'Emmett'. While various sources replicate these inconsistencies, other formats (e.g., Emmet and Emmott) also occasionally appear in documents. In this article, I have accepted 'Emmett' as the usual spelling for the surname of the South African family, although alternatives are used where they are in quoted sources or where the context otherwise requires.

## Introduction

While researching the involvement of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902, I was struck by the number of Irish connections in that War on both the British and Boer sides. Obviously many soldiers in the various Irish regiments were Irish-born. A good number of officers in other command positions in the British Army were also born in Ireland, even if many would not have considered themselves to be Irish. General Lord Kitchener, born in Kerry<sup>2</sup>, was perhaps the most prominent of these. One of the most notable on the Boer side was Major John McBride of the First Irish Transvaal Brigade who would later be executed for his part in the 1916 Rising.

However the most surprising connection to Ireland which featured regularly in news reports on the War was the belief of Annie Botha, the wife of Louis Botha, the prominent Boer general, that she was related to the family of Robert Emmet, the Irish patriot who was executed in 1803. Annie's maiden name was Emmett.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Addis Emmet MD LLD, *Memoir of Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet with their Ancestors and Immediate Family*, Emmet Press, New York, 1915, Volume II, page 346. This book was re-published by Derek Warfield Press, Kilcock, Co Kildare, in 2003, and a research copy is available in Dublin City Library, Pearse Street. A copy of the original publication is also available in .txt format at [https://archive.org/stream/cu31924091786628/cu31924091786628\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/cu31924091786628/cu31924091786628_djvu.txt).

<sup>2</sup> André Wessels (Editor), *Lord Kitchener and the War in South Africa 1899-1902*, Army Records Society, Volume 25, 2006, page xvii.

My research traced these reports to another prominent Irishman, Michael Davitt, the ‘father’ of the Irish Land League. At the outset of the War in October 1899, Davitt resigned his seat in the House of Commons in protest at British attempts to curb the autonomy of the Boer peoples in their homelands of Orange Free State and the Transvaal. He subsequently received commissions from the *Freeman’s Journal* in Ireland and the *New York American Journal* to report on the War, and he travelled in that capacity to the Boer Republics in early 1900 to assess the progress of the War at first hand. As we shall see, Davitt reported on the link between the Boer and Irish ‘Emmet’ families after he had met Annie Botha.

Annie Botha had a number of brothers who served during the Anglo-Boer War. The Dublin Fusiliers and other units in South Africa knew of the reports of a family connection between the Irish and Boer ‘Emmets’. In examining this family link, we will learn that some Dublin Fusiliers were anxious to meet these Boer Emmetts in battle.

### **A Brief Biography of Annie Botha (née Emmett)**

Annie Frances Bland Emmett was born on 3 July 1864 in Swellendam, Cape Colony, now part of South Africa. Annie had seven siblings. Three of her brothers, Cecil Frederick Cheere (pronounced ‘Cherry’), Joseph James Cheere and Robert Cheere Boyes are mentioned in this article.<sup>3 4</sup> Annie trained as a teacher and taught for a time at St Michael’s Convent in Bloemfontein, Orange Free State.<sup>5</sup> At 22, she married Louis Botha (24) on 13 December 1886 in Vryheid, Natal. They later had two daughters and three sons together.<sup>6</sup> The accompanying picture was published in 1900.<sup>7</sup>

Early in the Anglo-Boer War, the Bothas and their young family were living in Pretoria in the Transvaal. However she travelled with her husband to his military headquarters near Glencoe in Natal in March 1900 just after the British Army had relieved Ladysmith and the surrounding area from Boer occupation. While there, she met Michael Davitt and Colonel Arthur Lynch of the Second Irish Transvaal Brigade which was also fighting with the Boers.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>3</sup> These details were obtained from the transcription of South African birth and marriage records available on <https://www.familysearch.org/> (accessed on 13 August 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Five of Annie’s six brothers included ‘Cheere’ as their second or third forename, although it is not clear how many of them served in the War. Wessels, *Lord Kitchener and the War in South Africa 1899-1902*, page 294, suggests that Joseph James Cheere Emmett (1866-1933) was the most well-known.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ancestors.co.za/database/trees/getperson.php?personID=I78057&tree=100> (accessed on 16 August 2023).

<sup>6</sup> These details were obtained from the transcription of South African birth and marriage records available on <https://www.familysearch.org/> (accessed on 13 August 2023).

<sup>7</sup> *Black and White Budget*, 7 July 1900, page 426. This edition is available on [www.angloboerwar.com](http://www.angloboerwar.com) (accessed on 20 September 2023).

<sup>8</sup> Carla King, *Michael Davitt after the Land League 1882-1906*, UCD Press, 2016, page 482.



As the British neared Pretoria in late May and early June 1900, Louis Botha proposed to Field-Marshal Lord Roberts that peace talks be held. Roberts accepted the offer, and so the Boers gained additional time to abandon their capital and begin preparations for a new guerrilla campaign. After Roberts's hopes for a Boer surrender dissipated, he sought militarily to counter the Boer guerrilla strategy and initially engaged them at Diamond Hill, east of Pretoria.<sup>9</sup> However he also took the following action as described by the historian, Thomas Pakenham:

*"...Roberts expelled from Pretoria several hundred women and children, sending them by railway in open trucks to Botha's laager near Machadodorp [east of Pretoria]. He warned Botha that he refused to feed and house Boer dependants as long as the Boers were raiding the railway. Botha protested that it was inhuman. (In fact, many refugees seemed glad to be off; they sang the 'Volkslied' defiantly at the station. And Roberts took care not to expel Botha's own wife, still less the wives of Steyn and Kruger [the Presidents of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal respectively], who were treated as show-pieces of imperial generosity.)"*<sup>10</sup>

After occupying Pretoria, Lord Kitchener wrote on 6 June 1900 that Mrs Kruger and Mrs Botha were both there and were being treated with every respect.<sup>11</sup> Lord Roberts recorded on 21 June 1900 that he had met Mrs Botha on a number of occasions. He described her as a very nice person who was most anxious for peace to be made.<sup>12</sup>

When in early February 1901, Louis Botha asked that his wife be allowed to visit him in eastern Transvaal, Roberts's successor as Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, made her aware that he was willing to meet her husband to discuss ending the War. However he also made it clear that he could not talk about granting independence to the Boer republics.<sup>13</sup> According to Pakenham:

*"The break-through came in late February after Botha's own wife, who had helped arrange the talks the previous June (the abortive talks before Diamond Hill) had been asked to try her luck as mediator once again."*<sup>14</sup>

General Botha and Kitchener duly met at Middelburg on 28 February 1901, but the resultant draft peace terms were amended by the British Government and subsequently rejected by the Boer leadership.<sup>15</sup> According to Kitchener, Mrs Botha wrote to her husband shortly afterwards seeking clarification on a point in dispute, but it is not recorded what answer, if any, she obtained.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War*, 1979, George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd; pages 432-434 of the Abacus paperback edition, London, 1992. All later page references relate to the paperback edition of the book.

<sup>10</sup> Pakenham, *The Boer War*, pages 449 and 450.

<sup>11</sup> Wessels, *Lord Kitchener and the War in South Africa 1899-1902*, page 35.

<sup>12</sup> André Wessels (Editor), *Lord Roberts and the War in South Africa 1899-1902*, Army Records Society, Volume 17, 2000, pages 103 and 104.

<sup>13</sup> Denis Judd & Keith Surridge, *The Boer War – A History*, 2002/2003, John Murray (Publishers) Ltd; page 201 of the IB Tauris & Co Ltd paperback edition, London, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 489.

<sup>15</sup> Pakenham, *The Boer War*, pages 490, 491 and 499.

<sup>16</sup> Wessels, *Lord Kitchener and the War in South Africa 1899-1902*, page 92.

An account of the personal risks that Annie Botha took at this time in the interests of peace emerged in her husband's biography published in 1916<sup>17</sup>. This incident from the book was recounted later:

*"On one occasion Mrs. Botha travelled for three days to bring her husband a new suggestion from the British headquarters. Botha, who had just planned a battle, said, 'You must get back as soon as you can. I am blowing up the line.'*

*Shrapnel fell all round her as she returned, and in the British lines she was told to get back to Pretoria.*

*'But my husband is going to blow up the line.' 'He won't if you are on it,' was the answer, and so she started in a train full of soldiers.*

*The line was blown up, the train stopped, and the soldiers marched off. Mrs. Botha and a companion being left for three days with the engine-driver and the stoker."*<sup>18</sup>

On 13 May 1901 with the permission of Kitchener, Mrs Botha sailed from Durban for Europe. Some speculated that she was on a peace mission to see President Kruger who was in exile, but it was later denied that she intended pressurising anyone about the War as she believed that her husband knew best what to do and when. The sole reason for her voyage was stated to be her health due to the strain of the wartime situation.<sup>19</sup> It later transpired that she was then pregnant, as she gave birth to a son in Holland on 10 October 1901.<sup>20</sup>

In May 1902, the War ended. The peace settlement was similar to the draft peace deal negotiated at Middelburg 15 months earlier with some additional concessions to the Boers.<sup>21</sup> In June 1903, Mrs Botha and her children were among a group of about 150 Boer exiles who left Holland to return home.<sup>22</sup>

Over the following period, Mrs Botha regularly accompanied her husband in touring the devastated countryside to raise morale and provide practical support. She was prominent in establishing a refuge for orphans and children in need of care and co-founded the South African Women's Federation. When her husband's political responsibilities intensified in subsequent years – he became the first Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa in 1910, she withdrew from a number of her commitments to support his work.<sup>23</sup> A striking portrait of Mrs Botha in middle age hangs in her former home, Botha House – see the photograph on the following page (photograph courtesy of Hugh Bland, a distant relative of Mrs Botha).

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<sup>17</sup> Harold Spender, *General Botha – The Career and the Man*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1916.

<sup>18</sup> *The Yorkshire Evening Post*, 22 May 1937, page 8 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 16 August 2023).

<sup>19</sup> *The Irish Times*, 14 May 1901, page 5; *The Weekly Irish Times*, 25 May 1901, page 8, and *The Irish Times*, 10 June 1901, page 5 (accessed at [www.irishtimes.com](http://www.irishtimes.com) on 2 August 2023).

<sup>20</sup> *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette*, 12 October 1901, page 6 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 10 August 2023).

<sup>21</sup> Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 563.

<sup>22</sup> *The Derry Journal*, 29 June 1903, page 8 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 14 August 2023).

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.ancestors.co.za/database/trees/getperson.php?personID=178057&tree=100> (accessed on 14 August 2023).

At the start of World War 1 (WW1), Prime Minister Botha and his Minister of Defence, Jan Smuts, decided that South Africa would fight with Britain against Germany. While this was opposed by many Afrikaners, some 146,000 ultimately served in South African units in the War.<sup>24</sup> One of these units was a newly raised South African Irish Regiment whose Honorary Colonel was Annie Botha. Just before leaving Pretoria on 8 December 1914, Mrs Botha presented Colonel FH Brennan (who was mainly responsible for the Regiment's formation) with the regimental colours, and she wished them well and a safe return. These colours were made of green silk and included the inscription 'Erin Go Bragh'. The Regiment later saw service in German South-West Africa (Namibia today) and German East Africa (now including Burundi, Rwanda and most of Tanzania).<sup>25 26 27</sup>



Not long after returning from the Paris Peace Conference which formally ended WW1, Prime Minister Botha died at home in Pretoria on 27 August 1919 following a short illness. He was aged just 56.<sup>28 29</sup>

While Mrs Botha's public profile declined after her husband's death, she agreed in 1926 to unveil the Delville Wood Memorial in France to the South Africans who had died in WW1. South Africans had suffered 75% casualties (about 2,400 dead, wounded and missing) at Delville Wood on the Somme in July 1916.<sup>30</sup> More than 400 people attended the ceremony. Pictured at the ceremony on 10 October 1926 are Mrs Botha and Brigadier-General WEC Tanner who had commanded the South African Infantry Brigade during the War.<sup>31</sup>



On 21 May 1937 aged 72, Annie Botha died of heart failure at her home, Botha House, Undoni Park, Umzinto District in Natal.<sup>32</sup> *The Yorkshire Evening Post* reported on her death and paid

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/regiments-and-corps/south-african-forces-british-army/> (accessed on 14 August 2023).

<sup>25</sup> *The Irish Times*, 7 January 1915, page 7 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 14 August 2023).

<sup>26</sup> See Cmdt OEF Baker DWD, 'The South African Irish Regiment: An Exemplar of the Military Traditions of the Irish in South Africa', *Military History Journal*, Volume 6, No 1, June 1983, South African Military History Society, at <http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol061ob.html>.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QP8C-19P9> (accessed on 16 August 2023)

<sup>29</sup> *The Freeman's Journal*, 30 August 1919, page 5 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 16 August 2023).

<sup>30</sup> *The Irish Times*, 11 October 1926, page 5 (accessed at [www.irishtimes.com](http://www.irishtimes.com) on 2 August 2023).

<sup>31</sup> *Westminster Gazette*, 11 October 1926, page 7 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 4 August 2023).

tribute to her as a peacemaker, as it recognised the personal risks that she had taken trying to end the Anglo-Boer War.<sup>33</sup>

### **Contemporary Newspaper Reports of a Link between the Boer and Irish ‘Emmet’ Families**

After Michael Davitt arrived in Pretoria in the Transvaal on 26 March 1900, he spent the following weeks travelling around the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. Recognised as a Boer sympathiser who could counter British propaganda on the War, his journalistic work was greatly facilitated by the Boers. He met with the leaders of both Republics, inspected Boer camps near the front lines, interviewed senior Boer military figures (such as Louis Botha) and visited leaders of the First and Second Irish Transvaal Brigades.<sup>34</sup>

The first recorded reference to a link between the Boer and Irish ‘Emmet’ families occurred in Michael Davitt’s letter dated 31 March 1900. Louis Botha had just been appointed as the new Commandant-General of the Boer Army, and the letter gave a portrait of him. Published in the *Freeman’s Journal* on 23 June 1900, the letter went on to describe his wife, Annie, as follows:

*“His wife (nee Emmet) is an enthusiastic ‘Irish Boer’, and boasts, with much pride, that the blood of Robert Emmet runs in her veins. She is a strikingly handsome woman, with blue eyes, fair hair, and classic features, and is, as a matter of course, a worshipper of her brave, chivalrous, and equally handsome husband.”<sup>35</sup>*

In a subsequent letter dated 8 April 1900, published in the *Freeman’s Journal* on 28 June 1900, he elaborated on that connection as follows:

*“Meanwhile it will be of interest to the people at home, and to our race in America, to know that the illustrious name of Emmet will figure prominently in this war. The wife of the new Commandant-General, Louis Botha, is the daughter of a rich Irish farmer who settled in Natal a generation ago, and removed afterwards across the border to the Buffalo River, in the Transvaal. He prospered in his migration, and soon found a large family, including four sons, growing up around him. The Bothas, also well-to-do farmers, lived near the location of the Emmets, and a warm friendship soon grew between the two families. The marriage of Miss Emmet and young Botha followed (about fourteen years ago), and it has been blessed in every way with handsome children and a happy home.*

*Old Emmet is still alive, and has four sons fighting in his son-in-law’s command. It was Cherry Emmet, aged 24, who captured the eight English guns and Colonel Long at the battle of Colenso...”<sup>36 37</sup>*

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<sup>32</sup> These details were obtained from her South African death record which is available on <https://www.familysearch.org/> (accessed on 13 August 2023).

<sup>33</sup> *The Yorkshire Evening Post*, 22 May 1937, page 8 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 16 August 2023).

<sup>34</sup> Carla King, *Michael Davitt*, UCD Press on behalf of the Historical Association of Ireland, 2009, page 75, and Laurence Marley, *Michael Davitt – Freelance Radical and Frondeur*, Four Courts Press, 2007, pages 246-248.

<sup>35</sup> Letter from South Africa by Michael Davitt while at Kroonstad, Orange Free State, dated 31 March 1900 which was published in *The Freeman’s Journal* of 23 June 1900, page 6 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 1 August 2023).

<sup>36</sup> Letter from South Africa by Michael Davitt while at Pretoria, The Transvaal, dated 8 April 1900 which was published in *The Freeman’s Journal* of 28 June 1900, pages 5 and 6 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 1 August 2023).

This belief of a family association between Annie Emmett and her siblings and the family of the Irish patriot, Robert Emmet, continued to be repeated in subsequent reportage of the War, including in English newspapers. For instance, the *East Anglian Daily Times* on 26 October 1900 indicated as follows:

*“It has frequently been stated that Mrs. Louis Botha, the wife of the Boer General, is a descendant of Robert Emmett, the Irish patriot. This is a mistake; she is a descendant of Emmett’s elder brother, Thomas Addis Emmett, who was one of the United Irish Directory in 1798, and was punished by the Government merely by confinement in Fort George for three years. Robert Emmett, whose name is so popularly known, was but a youth of twenty in 1798.”*<sup>38</sup>

On 31 August 1900, *The Cork Examiner* reproduced part of a letter by a correspondent of *The Daily News* which introduced a new family connection by describing Mrs Louis Botha as “a great-grandniece of Robert Emmet”.<sup>39</sup>

After Mrs Botha travelled to Europe in May 1901, *The Weekly Irish Times* reported another form of family relationship with Robert Emmet:

*“Not until the present occasion has the wife of the well-known Boer general been out of South Africa. She was born in Natal, where she was as popular as she was in the Transvaal. Her residence in the vicinity of Vryheid, on the border of Zululand, was always a centre of hospitality. Until the war began, General Botha was looked upon as one of the most progressive farmers in the Republic. The much-debated relationship of Mrs. Botha to Robert Emmett, the Irish reformer, is founded on the fact of her grandfather having been an uncle of the ill-starred patriot.”*<sup>40</sup>

On 14 March 1902, General Cheere Emmett was captured near Vryheid.<sup>41</sup> A week later, *The Irish News and Belfast Morning News* wrote about Mrs Botha’s brother in the following terms:

*“General Cherry Emmett is spoken of as ‘an important leader’. He is a descendant of Thomas Emmett, the famous Irish patriot. He is also General Louis Botha’s brother-in-law. His name was never prominent until the attacks on Major Gough at Blood River Poort and the Dublin Fusiliers at Itala, at both of which engagements he was present with Botha. His*

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<sup>37</sup> The village of Colenso and other parts of British-controlled Natal were occupied by the Boers at the start of the War, and Davitt’s letter refers to the Boer success in repelling the British attempt to regain control of the area around Colenso on 15 December 1899. The Battle of Colenso saw about 150 British officers and men killed, including some 54 Dublin Fusiliers as well as others serving in Irish Regiments.

<sup>38</sup> *East Anglian Daily Times*, 26 October 1900, page 2 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 4 August 2023).

<sup>39</sup> *The Cork Examiner*, 31 August 1900, page 5 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 1 August 2023).

<sup>40</sup> *The Weekly Irish Times*, 22 June 1901, page 1 (accessed at [www.irishtimes.com](http://www.irishtimes.com) on 2 August 2023).

<sup>41</sup> *The Irish News and Belfast Morning News*, 19 March 1902, page 8 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 1 August 2023).



home was in south-east Transvaal, which may explain why at the present time he is regarded as an important leader.”<sup>42 43</sup>

The above references to ‘Thomas Emmett’ and ‘Thomas Addis Emmett’ clearly relate to the older brother of Robert Emmet. Thomas Addis Emmet was a United Irishman who was imprisoned shortly before the 1798 Rebellion took place. On his release, he, his wife (Jane) and young family lived on the Continent. After Robert was executed, they emigrated in 1804 to the United States of America where he established a successful legal practice. Ultimately they had nine adult children (five boys and four girls).<sup>44</sup> The implication of the above newspaper reports is that Annie Emmett and her siblings were descendants of one of those five sons.

### ***The Boer Fight for Freedom and Other References to the Emmet Family Connection***

Michael Davitt reiterated these family associations between the Boer and Irish ‘Emmet’ families in his own book, *The Boer Fight for Freedom*, published in America in May 1902<sup>45</sup>, as follows:

*“In the same year [1884], [General Lukas] Meyer’s little Utopia attracted among others a family named Emmet, from Smallendeal, in Cape Colony. Mr. John Emmet, with his four sons and two daughters, settled in the Vryheid district, and became neighbors of Louis Botha. Miss Emmet, a handsome and accomplished young lady, soon attracted the ardent attention of young Botha, and some sixteen years ago they became man and wife. There are four children of this happy union, two boys and two girls. Mrs. Botha is of Irish extraction on the father’s side, and is proud of claiming a blood relationship with Robert Emmet. I found General Botha thoroughly conversant with the salient facts of Irish history; a result, of course, of his marriage with a lady whose name recalls that of one of the ‘revolutionary saints’ of Irish political martyrology. Addressing the kreigsraad [war council] of his officers on the eve of the battle of Colenso, Botha quoted from the speech of Robert Emmet a sentiment appropriate to the struggle of the Boer nation against the enemy who had exacted the sacrifice of Emmet’s young life in the cause of Irish freedom.”<sup>46</sup>*

Later in his book, Davitt described an incident involving Cheere Emmet and his brother, Robert, who assisted in capturing some British guns at the end of the Battle of Colenso:

*“It was Cherrie Emmet who commanded the contingent sent by Botha to bring in the guns, and who saved Colonel Bullock from the consequences of his action in firing on the contingent after the English had complied with Emmet’s ‘Hands up!’ Robert Emmet,*

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<sup>42</sup> *The Irish News and Belfast Morning News*, 21 March 1902, page 4 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 1 August 2023).

<sup>43</sup> More details of the engagement between the Boers and British Army units (including the Dublin Fusiliers) at Itala on 26 September 1901 can be found in the author’s article, ‘The Clash at Itala in September 1901 during the Anglo-Boer War’, in *The Blue Cap*, Volume 26, December 2022 which is at <https://www.greatwar.ie/>.

<sup>44</sup> James Quinn, *Biography of Thomas Addis Emmet (1764-1827)*, at <https://www.dib.ie/biography/emmet-thomas-addis-a2922> and Alfred Webb, ‘Thomas Addis Emmet’, *A Compendium of Irish Biography*, at <https://www.libraryireland.com/biography/ThomasAddisEmmet.php> (accessed on 5 September 2023).

<sup>45</sup> Michael Davitt, *The Boer Fight for Freedom*, Funk & Wagnalls Company, New York, 1902, page 249. A copy of this book is available at <https://archive.org/stream/boerfightforfree00daviuoft#page/n7/mode/2up> (accessed on 25 April 2023).

<sup>46</sup> Davitt, *The Boer Fight for Freedom*, page 163.

*brother of Cherrie, was with difficulty restrained from shooting Bullock for his conduct. The Emmets are brothers-in-law of General Botha, and claim a blood relationship with the family of Robert Emmet, the Irish hero-martyr.”<sup>47</sup>*

The South African-based historian, Donal P McCracken, has added that Major John McBride and some Irishmen from the First Irish Transvaal Brigade were part of the force sent to capture the guns. MacBride apparently kept a sight from one of the guns as a memento.<sup>48</sup>

The claimed family connection between the Boer and Irish ‘Emmets’ was also known to others. Donal P McCracken has indicated:

*“Here at Glencoe [near Dundee] in late March Lynch’s Irish commando was visited by General Louis Botha and his wife Annie. Lynch was quick to point out to his men that Annie Botha was an Emmet and of Irish extraction.”<sup>49</sup>*

It seems clear from these newspaper and other reports that Mrs Louis Botha in particular believed in her family connection to Robert Emmet and his family and that out of pride, she openly told Michael Davitt and others of that connection.

### **The Attitude of Dublin Fusiliers to their Boer Opponents and to the Emmet Connection**

By 1901 during the guerrilla phase of the War, the British sought to deny food and other resources to the Boer fighters and to limit their movements. Many Boer farms were destroyed and families placed in concentration camps. In a comment on this phase of the War, Donal P McCracken, reported that most Irish soldiers were sympathetic to the Boers, and he ascribed the following attitude to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers:

*“...the Dubs had little taste for the ‘looting’ of Boer farms they were ordered to undertake in the latter part of the war. But they were professional soldiers, proud of their own fighting record in the Natal campaign and resigned to their lot in having later to march back and forth over the high veldt in the hopeless pursuit of de la Rey and de Wet [two Boer generals].”<sup>50</sup>*

The family link of the South African Emmetts to Robert Emmet was also known to Dublin Fusiliers and members of other British Army units in South Africa. Evidence for this is to be found in the letters of Dr Thomas Evelyn Fielding who served with the 5<sup>th</sup> Division of Mounted Infantry during the War. This composite unit included officers and men of the Dubs’ 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion under the overall command of Captain (local Major) AJ Chapman, Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

Dr Fielding was born in The Curragh in 1873 and secured his primary medical degree from Trinity College Dublin in 1897. He regularly wrote to his family in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, where

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<sup>47</sup> Davitt, *The Boer Fight for Freedom*, page 283.

<sup>48</sup> Donal P McCracken, *MacBride’s Brigade: Irish Commandos in the Anglo-Boer War*, Four Courts Press, 1999, page 58.

<sup>49</sup> McCracken, *MacBride’s Brigade*, pages 96 and 97.

<sup>50</sup> McCracken, *Forgotten Protest: Ireland and the Anglo-Boer War*, Ulster Historical Foundation, Belfast, 2003, page 135.

his father was Adjutant and a Captain in the 4<sup>th</sup> (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards. In a letter dated 3 February 1901 to his father, Dr Fielding stated as follows:

*“We are encamped on a hill here in Zululand, and it is our business to protect the border (as the Boers are rather fond of rushing across and raiding the natives’ cattle), and to close one way our slim foe used to take into Natal... Their commandant at present is an Irishman named Emmett, a descendant of the hapless Robert Emmett. He is a naturalised Boer, however, and not a renegade, so one does not feel very bitter against him. However, I have heard some of our ‘Dubs.’ remark that nasty things are going to happen if they get within bayonet-reach of his person.”*<sup>51</sup>

Fielding’s sympathetic attitude to Cheere Emmett seemed to be based on the fact that as he was domiciled in southern Africa, it was natural that he should be fighting with his kin. Of course, the corresponding implication was that if Emmett had travelled from Ireland to South Africa to fight against the British in the War, he would be treated as a traitor.

In a letter dated 23 May, Dr Fielding recounted his visit (with the approval of his unnamed commanding officer, presumably Major Chapman) to a Boer camp in Zululand to treat Boer wounded, some days after a successful British attack on a party of Boers. While there, he met the Boer Commanding Officer (unnamed in the letter but possibly Cheere Emmett in the light of his earlier letter) who reciprocated Fielding’s kindness by lending him a horse to return to base when his own was unable to make the journey.<sup>52</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the battles at Itala and Fort Prospect on 26 September 1901, Fielding told his mother that:

*“I have made the acquaintance of Chris Botha [a brother of Louis Botha], Emmett, and Opperman, three more or less famous generals, and they gave me much assistance in seeing our own wounded as well as theirs.”*<sup>53</sup>

Fielding’s letters recounted personal meetings with Chris Botha and Opperman while Fielding was attending to British and Boer wounded behind Boer lines in the course of the battle at Itala. In relation to his contact with Emmett, Fielding clarified later that he corresponded with him on the day after the Itala fighting:

*“You ask about Emmett. I did not meet him on the field because he attacked at the opposite side of the camp to Itala [i.e., Fort Prospect (where incidentally Lieutenant RGB Jeffreys, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was posted)]. The morning after the fight (when I was left alone with the wounded, you remember!) I got a letter from him asking for the bodies of*

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<sup>51</sup> Fielding, Dr TE, *A Doctor’s Narrative of the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902*, Volume 1 of 2, Letter of 3 February 1901 (No 33) from Nqutu, Zululand, to his Father, first page, Campbell Collections, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. These letters were originally published in 1902. The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the South African Military History Society in providing a copy of Dr Fielding’s letters.

<sup>52</sup> Fielding, Volume 1, Letter of 23 May 1901 (No 52) from Nkandhla, Zululand, to Hedley (his brother), third page.

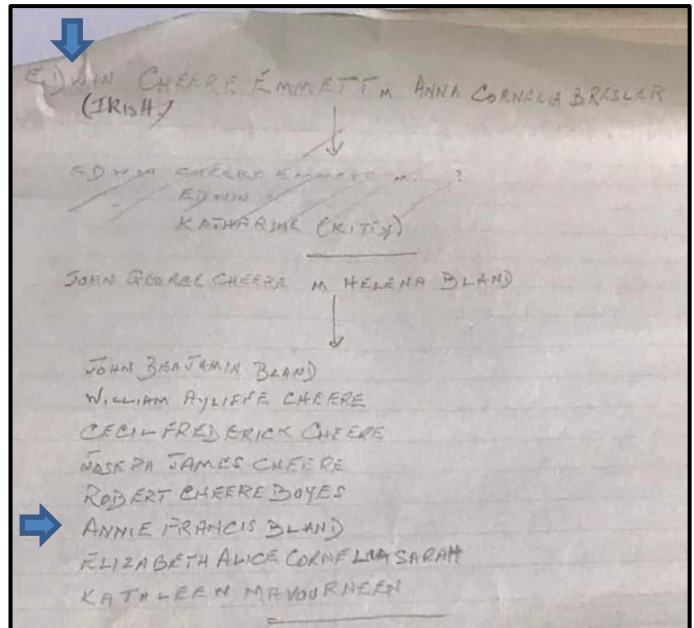
<sup>53</sup> Fielding, Volume 2, Letter of 2 October 1901 (No 73) from Nkandhla to his mother, first page.

*the Boers that had been left behind. Two Boers came in under a white flag and took the bodies away on an ox-waggon..."*<sup>54</sup>

### South African Sources on the Emmett Family's Link to Robert Emmet

The various reports above suggest that there is little consistency as to the nature of the family relationship between Annie Botha, her siblings and the family of Robert Emmet. In some reports Annie or her father have been described as Irish, while in others her family relationship to Robert Emmet has been variously described as granddaughter, niece, grandniece and great-grandniece. What evidence is available from South African sources to validate one or more of these links?

During my research, I was fortunate to locate a descendant of the South African Emmett family. Mr Hugh Bland (who runs an extensive website at [www.kznpr.co.za](http://www.kznpr.co.za) illustrating the heritage of KwaZulu-Natal) is a distant relation of Annie Frances Bland Emmett. Great-great-grandparents of his were Annie's maternal grandparents. Hugh has provided a copy of a manuscript family tree by a now deceased family member in which it is recorded that Annie's parents were John George Cheere Emmett and Helena Bland and that her paternal grandparents were Edwin Cheere Emmett and Anna Cornelia Bresler. The document (see the accompanying photograph) records Edwin as 'Irish'. Edwin and Annie's names are arrowed in the picture.



A relative of Hugh's also forwarded a press report dated 27 September 1940 of the funeral of Cecil Frederick Cheere Emmett, a brother of Annie's. The report includes the following statement:

*"His grandfather came to South Africa in the late 1790's from Ireland and was a cousin of the Irish patriot, Robert Emmett."*<sup>55</sup>

A different press report of the same funeral (see the photograph on the following page) made a similar statement:

*"Mr. Emmett's grandfather came to South Africa towards the end of the Eighteenth Century and was a cousin of the Irish patriot, Robert Emmett."*<sup>56</sup>

The historian, Graham Dominy, has separately written that Joseph James Cheere Emmet, another of Annie's brothers, was:

<sup>54</sup> Fielding, Volume 2, Letter of 4 December 1901 (No 86) from Nkandhla to 'dear old Grace' (his sister), second page.

<sup>55</sup> Press cutting dated 27 September 1940 of an undetermined South African newspaper provided to the author by Hugh Bland and Estelle Dubber, descendants of the Emmett family.

<sup>56</sup> Press cutting dated on or close to 27 September 1940 from an undetermined South African newspaper provided to the author by Hugh Bland and Estelle Dubber, descendants of the Emmett family.



*“a descendant of Robert Emmet, the United Irishman and leader of the unsuccessful rising in Dublin in 1803. Robert Emmet’s brother married a Miss Cheere and eventually their descendants made their way to South Africa.”*<sup>57</sup>

The source for the latter statement connecting Annie and her siblings to Robert Emmet is stated to be the Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa, Volume 4, pages 303-304 (Cape Town, 1971).<sup>58</sup> However in the absence of the forenames of Robert Emmet’s ‘cousin’ and ‘brother’ and of ‘Miss Cheere’ in the above cases, it has not been possible to progress this line of inquiry, although it is self-evident that records for the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century would be limited.

In passing, I should mention that ‘Cheere’ was a known surname in England in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, there is a burial record for Mary Elizabeth Cheere at Finsbury Bunhill Fields Burial Ground, London, on 23 December 1781<sup>59</sup>, but no further information on this lady (age, marital status, etc) has been located.



Other members of the South African Emmett family have also claimed a connection with Robert Emmet and his family. In October 1938 at an event in Belfast, the high commissioner of the Union of South Africa in London, Mr Charles Theodore Te Water, indicated that: *“...he was married to a kinswoman of the Irish patriot Robert Emmet.”*<sup>60</sup>

In a 1948 press report, the unnamed wife of Mr Te Water, a newly appointed Ambassador at large for South Africa, was reiterated to be Irish: *“She is of the family of Robert Emmet, hanged in Dublin in 1803.”*<sup>61</sup>

It has been established that Mr Te Water’s wife’s name prior to marriage was Ellen May Marais and that the surname of her mother, Catharina, was Emmett. Records indicate that Catharina’s

<sup>57</sup> Graham Dominy, ‘The Marshlands of the Zulu Kingdom’, *The Irish in Southern Africa 1795-1910*, South African-Irish Studies, Volume 2 (1992) - Donal P McCracken (Editor), page 220.

<sup>58</sup> Dominy, ‘The Marshlands of the Zulu Kingdom’, page 223.

<sup>59</sup> "England and Wales Non-Conformist Record Indexes (RG4-8), 1588-1977," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:FWW7-NMC>: 11 December 2014), Mary Elizabeth Cheere, 23 Dec 1781, Burial; citing p. 17, Bunhill Fields, London, record group RG4, Public Record Office, London.

<sup>60</sup> Sandren Naidoo, ‘Advocate Charles Theodore Te Water and his Irish Connection’, in *Southern African-Irish Studies*, Volume 4: Series 2 No 1 (2012), Donal P McCracken (Editor), page 43.

<sup>61</sup> *The Frontier Sentinel*, 11 September 1948, page 2 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 23 August 2023).



great-great-grandparents were Edwin Cheere Emmett and Anna Cornelia Bresler who were also the paternal grandparents of Annie Emmett and her siblings.<sup>62</sup>

The information in the manuscript Emmett family tree made available to me is substantially confirmed by more detailed genealogy records available on [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org). According to these records:

- Annie Frances Bland Emmett was born in Swellendam, Cape Colony, on 3 July 1864<sup>63</sup>. Her face, extracted from the striking portrait shown above, is associated with her record on this website;
- her father, John George Emmett, was born in Uitenhage, Cape Colony, on 19 March 1822 and married Helena Letitia or Aletta Bland at Swellendam on 26 December 1854;<sup>64</sup>
- her grandfather, Edwin Cheere Emmett, was born on 11 February 1777 and christened in Haslemere, Surrey<sup>65</sup>, on 11 March 1777. This christening record indicates that Edwin's parents (and Annie's great-grandparents) were Sebastian and Elizabeth Emmett.<sup>66</sup> Annie's family tree on [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) adds, but without identifying a source, that Sebastian and Elizabeth (née Wilmot) were born in about 1751 and 1757 respectively and were married in St George's Church, Hanover Square, London, on 24 December 1774.<sup>67</sup> [Note: A Sebastian Emmett served as a captain in a corps of artillery in the early 1800s<sup>68</sup>, but it has not been possible to confirm that this man was Edwin's father.]

Accordingly while these genealogy records largely substantiate the manuscript family tree document, they fail to connect Annie and her siblings to Ireland or corroborate the family belief that Edwin Cheere Emmett was Irish.

### **Edwin Cheere Emmett (1777-1850)**

Edwin Cheere Emmett, as a common ancestor of both Annie Emmett and Ellen May Marais who believed that he was Irish, merited some further research. After his birth in 1777, he is recorded as enlisting in the Army at the age of just 17 in 1794. Two records provide some information on his early military career. Under the heading 'Commissions in the Somerset Militia, signed by the Lord Lieutenant', the relevant text in the English of the day reads as follows:

*"Edwin Cheere Emmett, Gent. to be Ensign, vice Zachary Clutterbuck Bayly, resigned; dated as above [Feb. 13, 1794]"*.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> These details were obtained from transcriptions of South African birth and marriage records which are available at <http://www.familysearch.org/> (accessed on 20 September 2023).

<sup>63</sup> See <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/pedigree/landscape/94M8-544> (accessed on 13 August 2023).

<sup>64</sup> See <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/pedigree/landscape/94M8-544> (accessed on 13 August 2023).

<sup>65</sup> Haslemere is located in south-west Surrey, close to the county boundaries of Hampshire and Sussex.

<sup>66</sup> "England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975", *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NPTM-V8R> : 4 February 2023), Edwin Cheere Emmett, 1777 (accessed on 13 August 2023). This reproduces a transcription of Edwin's birth record from page 180 of *The Registers of Haslemere, Co Surrey*, which were transcribed and edited by John Wormham Penfold FRIBA and published in London in 1906 by the Parish Register Society.

<sup>67</sup> See <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/pedigree/landscape/94M8-544> (accessed on 13 August 2023).

<sup>68</sup> *Kentish Gazette*, 30 October 1801, page 2 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 11 November 2023).

<sup>69</sup> *Kentish Gazette*, 8 April 1794, page 2 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 24 September 2023).

*John Armfrong to be Ensign, vice Edwin Cheere Emmett, resigned. Dated April 27, 1794.*<sup>70</sup>

A series of later press reports (based on War Office lists of appointments and promotions) records the return of Edwin to the military and his subsequent appointments:

- Sussex Fencible Cavalry<sup>71</sup>: “Edwin C. Emmett, gent. to be cornet” [War Office notice dated 31 December 1796]<sup>72</sup>;
- Sussex Fencible Cavalry: “Cornet Edwin C. Emmett to be lieutenant, vice Lewes, removed from the service” [War Office notice dated 18 March 1800]<sup>73</sup>;
- 83<sup>rd</sup> (County of Dublin) Regiment of Foot<sup>74</sup>: “To be Ensigns, without purchase – ....and Edwin Cheere Emmett, Gents.” [War Office notice dated 21 August 1804]<sup>75</sup>;
- 83<sup>rd</sup> (County of Dublin) Regiment of Foot: “To be Lieutenants, without purchase – Ensigns....and Edwin Cheere Emmett” [War Office notice dated 11 May 1805]<sup>76</sup>;
- 83<sup>rd</sup> (County of Dublin) Regiment of Foot: “To be Captains of Companies... Lieutenant Edwin C Emmett, vice Powyfs, dead of his wounds...” [War Office notice dated 13 June 1812]<sup>77</sup>.

Another source confirms that ‘Captain EC Emmett’ was serving in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 83<sup>rd</sup> (County of Dublin) Regiment of Foot in the Cape of Good Hope in present day South Africa from 25 December 1814 to 24 March 1815.<sup>78</sup> It is also clear that he served in South Africa for a longer period than those three months as his children were born there in 1813, 1815, 1817, 1819, 1822 and 1824<sup>79</sup>. Indeed it is known that the 83<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot was in southern Africa between 1804 and 1817 when it was posted to Ceylon (Sri Lanka today) until 1825.<sup>80</sup>

The following additional information on Edwin Cheere Emmett is derived from Wikitree, the source for which is indicated to be a book by Edmund H Burrows entitled *Overberg Origins: The English Speaking Overberg Families*, Swellendam Trust, 1988:

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<sup>70</sup> *Dublin Gazette, 1750-1800*, page 1613 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 24 September 2023).

<sup>71</sup> As tensions with France mounted after the French Revolution of 1789, Britain decided to raise additional forces for home defence against a threat of invasion. According to the National Army Museum at <https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1975-09-72-1> (accessed on 26 December 2023), the Sussex Corps of Fencible Cavalry was formed in 1794 and disbanded in 1802. This was the year in which the Peace Treaty of Amiens with France was ratified.

<sup>72</sup> *Kentish Weekly Post or Canterbury Journal*, 6 January 1797, page 2 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 24 December 2023).

<sup>73</sup> *The Hampshire Chronicle*, 24 March 1800, page 4 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 24 December 2023).

<sup>74</sup> According to [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/83rd\\_%28County\\_of\\_Dublin%29\\_Regiment\\_of\\_Foot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/83rd_%28County_of_Dublin%29_Regiment_of_Foot) (accessed on 26 December 2023), the 83<sup>rd</sup> (County of Dublin) Regiment of Foot was formed in 1793 and served in the West Indies between 1795 and 1802. Between 1803 and 1805, it was deployed in Jersey. A second battalion of the Regiment was raised in Sussex in 1804 which date suggests that Edwin Cheere Emmett was one of the battalion’s new officers.

<sup>75</sup> *The Star (London)*, 22 August 1804, page 4 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 24 December 2023).

<sup>76</sup> *The Star (London)*, 13 May 1805, page 2 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 24 December 2023).

<sup>77</sup> *Inverness Journal and Northern Advertiser*, 26 June 1812, page 4 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 24 September 2023).

<sup>78</sup> This record from the British Army Muster Books and Pay Lists 1812-1817 is available on subscription at [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) (accessed on 22 September 2023).

<sup>79</sup> These details were obtained from transcriptions of South African birth, marriage and death records which are available at <https://www.familysearch.org/> (accessed on 22 September 2023).

<sup>80</sup> See <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/83rd-county-dublin-regiment-foot> for more information on the 83<sup>rd</sup> (County of Dublin) Regiment of Foot (accessed on 22 September 2023).

*“...Not much is known about him and his antecedents. According to family legend, he was an Irishman descended from the great patriot, Robert Emmet, who was born in 1778 and was executed by the British in Dublin in 1803 for treason. Against this is the fact that he came to the Cape as a lieutenant in the British Army in 1807, and it seems unlikely that the British would have commissioned the brother or any close relative of a Traitor. Edwin remained a lieutenant in the 83rd Foot Regiment until 1813 when promoted to captain, he served in the Army until 1818.”*<sup>81</sup>

Although Edwin is recorded as having applied for an appointment with the Government in 1819<sup>82</sup>, it appears that he remained in the Army in some capacity. A War Office notice of British Army appointments dated 7 January 1820 announced his transfer from the 83<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot to the 54<sup>th</sup> (West Norfolk) Regiment of Foot on that date, viz:

*“54<sup>th</sup> Ditto [Regiment of Foot] – Captain Edwin Cheere Emmet, from half-pay 83d Foot, to be Captain of a Company, vice Charles Lionel Fitzgerald who exchanges.”*<sup>83</sup>

A likely reason for Edwin’s transfer to the 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot was that this Regiment was posted to southern Africa in 1819 for a period of three years, and therefore the transfer afforded him the opportunity to remain with his family there after his 83<sup>rd</sup> Regiment was sent to Ceylon.<sup>84</sup> A note associated with his record on [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) confirms that he was a captain in HM 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment for an unspecified period.<sup>85</sup>

Another record indicates that Edwin retired from the Army as a Captain and settled in Uitenhage (about 700 kms east of Cape Town) where he married.<sup>86</sup> Edwin’s marriage to Anna Cornelia Bresler took place on 5 November 1822 in Uitenhage which suggests that his retirement from the Army roughly coincided with the departure of his 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment from southern Africa. A number of Edwin and Anna’s children (one of which was Annie’s father John George Emmett) are also recorded as having been baptised in late 1822 at Uitenhage in the Dutch Reformed Church Registers.<sup>87</sup> In 1831, the family moved to Swellendam (some 220 kms east of Cape Town) where Edwin was clerk to the Civil Commissioner.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> See <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Emmett-246> (accessed on 22 September 2023).

<sup>82</sup> See <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Emmett-246> (accessed on 22 September 2023).

<sup>83</sup> *The Star (London)*, 10 January 1820, page 3 (accessed at [www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie) on 19 August 2023).

<sup>84</sup> According to the National Army Museum, the 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot originated in West Norfolk, and in 1881 was amalgamated with the 39<sup>th</sup> (Dorsetshire) Regiment of Foot to form the Dorsetshire Regiment. Intriguingly, the 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot served in Ireland between 1797 and 1800 when it was deployed to put down the 1798 Rebellion. See <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/54th-west-norfolk-regiment-foot> (accessed on 9 November 2023).

<sup>85</sup> This information is included in the record of Edwin Cheere Emmet at <https://www.familysearch.org/> (accessed on 24 September 2023).

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/trees/getperson.php?personID=I72574&tree=100> (accessed on 12 November 2023).

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/pedigree/landscape/G6P4-5CB> (accessed on 12 November 2023).

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/trees/getperson.php?personID=I72574&tree=100> (accessed on 12 November 2023).

Intriguingly, Donal P McCracken has indicated that a statue to Robert Emmet was erected outside the Dutch Reformed Church in Uitenhage in about 1888<sup>89</sup>, although the statue is apparently no longer in place.<sup>90</sup> While no further information is given as to the initiators of this project, the residence of the family for a period in Uitenhage may possibly be relevant.

With reference to the 'family legend' statement of Edmund H Burrows above, it would not of course be possible for Edwin (born in 1777) to be descended from Robert Emmet (born in 1778). However as we shall see, it is possible that a family connection may have existed in some more distant way.

More particularly, I have not located any information associating Edwin with Ireland. As indicated in an earlier footnote, a 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion of the 83<sup>rd</sup> (County of Dublin) Regiment of Foot was raised in Sussex in 1804, the year in which Edwin was appointed an Ensign to the Regiment. This may be the only reason Edwin came to serve in the Irish Regiment. Moreover, I am reliably informed that the appointment of regimental officers at the time was not conditional on being associated with the area from which its soldiers were originally drawn.<sup>91</sup>

### **A Family History of the Irish Emmet Family**

The family history of the Irish Emmet family is well known due to the prominence of many of its members. While Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet had 15 other siblings<sup>92</sup>, only two (Christopher and Mary Anne) survived to adulthood. While Christopher married and fathered a daughter, he died aged just 27 in early 1788 after a short illness.<sup>93</sup> Although Robert Emmet was romantically involved with Sarah Curran before his execution in 1803, they never married.<sup>94</sup> Accordingly the earlier reports of a close connection between the Irish Emmet family and the Emmett family of South Africa seem to rest with one of the five sons of Thomas Addis Emmet.

Fortunately there is an extensive family history available. Thomas Addis Emmet MD LLD, a grandson of the United Irishman, Thomas Addis Emmet, wrote a memoir about his grandfather, granduncle Robert and the family as a whole. With the assistance in the early 1900s of Sir Bernard Burke, the Ulster King at Arms (and Chief Herald of all Ireland), he obtained information over a number of years from the public records of England and Ireland relating to the earliest use of the Emmet surname in its various spellings.

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<sup>89</sup> Donal P McCracken, 'Irish Settlement and Identity in South Africa before 1910', *Irish Historical Studies*, Volume 28, No 110 (November 1992), pages 146 and 147. This article is available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30008315> (accessed on 18 October 2023).

<sup>90</sup> Donal P McCracken, 'Michael Davitt's Wartime Visit to South Africa (March-May 1900) and its Consequences', *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies*, Volume 46, No 2, 2018, page 74. This may be viewed at <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/smsajms/article/view/183734/173091> (accessed on 18 October 2023).

<sup>91</sup> Information provided by David Buckley, a knowledgeable member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

<sup>92</sup> Patrick M Geoghegan, *Biography of Robert Emmet (1729-1802)*, at <https://www.dib.ie/biography/emmet-robert-a2920> (accessed on 5 September 2023).

<sup>93</sup> Quinn, *Biography of Thomas Addis Emmet (1764-1827)*, at <https://www.dib.ie/biography/emmet-thomas-addis-a2922> (accessed on 5 September 2023).

<sup>94</sup> Patrick M Geoghegan, *Biography of Robert Emmet (1778-1803)*, at <https://www.dib.ie/biography/emmet-robert-a2921> (accessed on 5 September 2023).

This memoir was published in New York in 1915 and re-published by Derek Warfield Press, Kilcock, Co Kildare, in 2003. Interestingly, it explicitly addresses the belief of Mrs Louis Botha and her siblings that they were connected to Robert or Thomas Addis Emmet. The following is an extract from the relevant portion of the book:

*“Within the personal experience of the writer there have been seven different families of Emmet (with the name variously spelt) unknown to each other, and from different parts of the world, who have claimed to be in direct descent from Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet, or more remotely connected with the same family. So fixed has the tradition become that it is impossible to prove how the question of relationship originated, it becoming finally accepted as true, on the alleged claim of some progenitor who knew the facts, but has since died.*

*I recall two noted instances; that of Mrs. General Botha and the Reverend Thomas Addis Emmet, S.J., whose father was an Irishman. A member of the Tucker family who was of position in the East India Company, when the British Government annexed India, was a first cousin of the writer’s grandfather, on his mother’s side.*

*After a visit to Bermuda some sixty years ago the writer became possessed of some papers connected with this official, where frequent mention was made of a General Emmott, who had spent his life in the East India service. He was a native of Yorkshire in England, and when the East India Company ceased to exist the General was pensioned and given some office connected with the government at Cape Town, where he finally died. Mrs. Botha’s father was undoubtedly descended from this General Emmott, but her name had been changed to Emmet and she had two brothers, Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet who served through the Boer War with great credit. Through the aid of the late Michael Davitt, the writer was able to correspond with Mrs. Botha, but she had no proof of relationship nor extended knowledge of her own family’s settlement at the Cape nor of any connection with Ireland, and yet the family continues to hold the claim.*

*The family of the Catholic clergyman was from Ireland, but he possessed no knowledge of his history and held nothing more than the tradition that a relationship did exist.*

*From the birth of Christopher, the grandfather of Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet, every connection of the family is perfectly well known. Christopher, who was born in 1700, may have had a brother or sister of whom the present members of the family have no record.”*

*“...Therefore, the claim of relationship with the family of Robert Emmet at any time within at least 210 years can only rest on an illegitimate connection.*

*But from the writer’s intimate knowledge of the lives of the male members of the family, it seems an absurdity to suppose they ever had any illegitimate children. There can not exist the slightest basis for the claim of those who hold they have descended directly from Robert Emmet. He never married, and both friend and foe who knew him from childhood, agree*



*that his moral character, in every relation, was in accord with the highest standard of purity.”<sup>95</sup>*

The General Emmott mentioned above seems unlikely to be Edwin Cheere Emmet, the grandfather of Annie Emmett. There is no indication that Edwin ever served in the West Indies, or if he did, he would not have done so with the rank of a general. Accordingly the supposition in the biography that General Emmott was Annie’s grandfather would appear to be mistaken.

Like the available records pertaining to the South African Emmett family, the records of the Irish Emmets have found no link between Annie Botha (née Emmett) and her siblings and the family of Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet. Indeed it seems certain that contrary to widespread reports, Annie and her siblings were not directly descended from the family of Thomas Addis Emmet as all of his five sons remained in America.

However the possibility of a more distant connection between the Irish and South African families remains open. The extensive research done over many years by Sir Bernard Burke, the Ulster King at Arms, which underpinned the Emmet family memoir, suggests that the various Emmet families in England and Ireland may have had common ancestors, viz:

*“A portion of these papers showed that there were certain striking peculiarities or facts strangely associated almost everywhere with the name of Emmet. We may recall the circumstance stated in relation to the close resemblance of the arms borne by the different branches of the family for centuries past, and without relation to the different modes of spelling the name. It has also been found in nearly every generation, and in every branch, that the Christian names of Christopher, Robert, William, Thomas and John have been those most commonly used. Again, the records of England and Ireland show, during the past three hundred years, that an unusually large proportion of the Emmets, with the various modes of spelling, have been professional men, generally ‘married well’, and evidently to superior women, as a rule, who were able to train their children to the best advantage.”<sup>96</sup>*

In relation to the Emmets who settled in Ireland, the memoir includes the following statement:

*“It appears that during the reign of Charles I [1625-1649], there were members of the Emmet family settled in four different counties of Ireland, viz: Waterford; Limerick; Tipperary; and Kildare – between whom, no relationship can now be traced. But it is worthy of note, in this connection, that there existed a similarity in the Christian names of these several branches, and that these names had been continuously used by the immediate ancestors of the extant family of Emmet.”<sup>97</sup>*

Arising from the research undertaken of the Emmet families in England, the following is said:

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<sup>95</sup> Thomas Addis Emmet MD LLD, *Memoir of Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet*, Volume I, pages 159 and 160.

<sup>96</sup> Thomas Addis Emmet MD LLD, *Memoir of Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet*, Volume I, page 158.

<sup>97</sup> Thomas Addis Emmet MD LLD, *Memoir of Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet*, Volume II, page 338.

*“So far as we can rely on circumstantial evidence, we are justified in the belief that all those bearing the name, and who, during the seventeenth century, were living in Co. Kent, Middlesex, Surrey, and London, were all closely connected, and that from some of these families the Irish settlers of the same name came...”*<sup>98</sup>

The memoir specifically records that Thomas Addis Emmet, the author’s grandfather, believed that the first settlers with the Emmet name in Ireland came from Kent.<sup>99</sup>

In the same way that Thomas Addis Emmet knew of a family connection to Kent, it is equally conceivable that Edwin Cheere Emmett, a contemporary of Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet, was aware of a distant family link between his Surrey-based family and the Irish Emmets. Despite the prevalence of certain common forenames in various branches of the Emmet families, it must be said at the same time that a word search of the Emmet family memoir failed to find any Emmet named Edwin, Cheere or Sebastian (Edwin’s father) in the early ancestry of the Emmets in England or Ireland.

### **Conclusion**

As a result of this research, the mystery surrounding the Emmett family’s belief in a connection to the family of Robert Emmet is somewhat clearer. The available information (in particular the Emmet family memoir by Thomas Addis Emmet’s grandson) does not identify any close blood relationship between the two families. However the England-based ancestors of both the Emmet family in Ireland and the Emmetts of South Africa suggest that a more distant connection between both families may be possible.

At the same time, there seems to be no substance to the Emmett family’s belief that Edwin Cheere Emmett, the grandfather of Annie Botha, was Irish. The records indicate that he was born in England, and his only known link to Ireland is his service for 15 years in the 83rd (County of Dublin) Regiment of Foot. Indeed, the indications are that he enlisted in the Regiment in southern England.

While serving with his Irish-born counterparts in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot over a period of 15 years, Edwin probably added to his existing knowledge about Robert Emmet and his sacrifice in the cause of Irish freedom. Moreover as footnoted earlier, the 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot helped to suppress the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland, and his later service with this Regiment may have enhanced his understanding of this noteworthy event in Irish history. Whatever distant family connection there may have been to the Emmets in Ireland, it is unlikely that Edwin claimed a relationship to two Irish patriots, while he was in the British Army.

After he retired from the Army, Edwin worked as part of the colonial administration in Cape Colony. In dealing with the independent-minded Boers in that capacity, his Emmett name and any distant family connection that he may have had to Robert Emmet may have assisted his family’s transition into Boer society.

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<sup>98</sup> Thomas Addis Emmet MD LLD, *Memoir of Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet*, Volume II, page 346.

<sup>99</sup> Thomas Addis Emmet MD LLD, *Memoir of Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet*, Volume II, page 346.

Despite the fact that a close association between the Irish and South African families was emphatically rejected in the Emmet family memoir over 100 years ago, the reports of a family connection have persisted. To this day, Annie Emmett is described in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as the “*granddaughter of an Irish patriot*”.<sup>100</sup>

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South African Military History Society.



## **RDFFA Membership Renewals for 2024**

**Suzanne O'Neill, Membership Secretary**

Your Committee thanks all members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association for your continuing support through your subscriptions, donations and participation in events. As recorded elsewhere in this edition of *The Blue Cap*, 2023 was another busy and successful year for the Association in fulfilling its mission of remembrance.

Looking ahead to 2024, your Committee intends once again to participate actively in remembrance events throughout the country and beyond. You will be kept up to date with developments through our *Old Tough* newsletters, regular correspondence and of course our annual journal, *The Blue Cap*. Your Committee is hoping to arrange another European trip during 2024, and we are also likely to have one or more events of historic interest in Ireland.

Our recent Annual General Meeting has set the membership subscription for 2024 at €20 for all members, including those residing overseas. Subscriptions fall due on 1 January each year. We have been able to maintain this modest annual fee in these inflationary times, thanks largely to the donations which many members opt to make in support of our work. It is also a tribute to the voluntary effort put in to the Association by your Committee and other members. I hope that you will agree that the €20 subscription represents exceptional value for money.

With this edition of *The Blue Cap*, members will separately receive our Membership and Renewal Form. As well as renewing your membership, I would ask all members to complete this Form and return it to me, so that we have an up-to-date set of contact details for all our members. Please also indicate on the Form how you have paid (whether by way of cheque, bank transfer, standing order, etc), which will help me to trace the payment and correctly assign it. If paying by bank transfer, please also include your name as the reference, so that I know that the payment is yours!

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

Of course, we always welcome new Association members who share our interest in remembrance. So if you know of relatives or friends who may wish to join us, then please guide them in our direction. If you have a membership query at any time, you can contact me at [rdfa1918+Membershipsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:rdfa1918+Membershipsecretary@gmail.com).

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

# The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and Naas

Stephanie Jones

## Introduction

In this essay, the role of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers will be explored in terms of their ties to Naas, Co Kildare. To understand the impact of their forty years in Naas, the Fusiliers' history is important, along with details on their base in Naas. Their economic, educational, religious and social effects will be assessed. The families of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers are examined, and finally, the conclusion will give an assessment of the different contacts between the Fusiliers and Naas.

Much Irish research has been conducted about the First World War in general. James Durney's book, *In Time of War, Kildare 1914-1918*, on the effects of the First World War on Co Kildare proved to be an excellent starting point. This book gave a general view of the time in question. *Beneath a Turkish Sky: The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Assault on Gallipoli* by Philip Lecane had a more detailed story of the early years of the First World War and the Royal Dublin Fusiliers' time in Turkey. The newspaper, *Kildare Observer*, was a valuable source for much of the information in this essay. Further research involved a visit to the Representative Church Body Library, the Church of Ireland library, where the vestry minutes, baptismal and marriage records of St David's Church in Naas in particular were searched for evidence of connections with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The history of St David's School also had several fascinating insights in terms of education. St David's Church is a local Church of Ireland church in Naas, and it was felt that a specific study of the contacts between it and the Royal Dublin Fusiliers would be of interest to many in Naas.

## History and Timeline of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers was an infantry regiment of the British Army created on 1 July 1881. It amalgamated two former East India Company regiments, the 102<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Foot (Royal Madras Fusiliers) and the 103<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot (Royal Bombay Fusiliers), along with the Dublin and Kildare militia.<sup>101</sup> These former regiments became the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions respectively of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.<sup>102</sup> The existing militias for Kildare, Dublin City and Dublin County were re-designated as the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Battalions respectively of the Regiment. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's nickname was 'the Blue Caps'<sup>103</sup>, while that of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was 'the Old Toughs'.<sup>104</sup> With the influx of recruits after war was declared in 1914, a further six battalions were formed by 1918.

Membership of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was about 80% Irish and 16.9% English at the beginning of the Second Anglo-Boer War; 61% of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had been born in Dublin City. Most British infantry regiments had two battalions, one usually based at home and the other overseas. They would swap home and overseas service after several years.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Brian McCabe, 'The Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the Second Boer War' in *Dublin Historical Record*, vol 69, no 2 (Autumn/Winter 2016), pp 258-9.

<sup>102</sup> [www.royaldublinfusiliers.com/regimental-history/](http://www.royaldublinfusiliers.com/regimental-history/) (accessed 05/02/2022).

<sup>103</sup> Philip Lecane, *Beneath a Turkish Sky: The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Assault on Gallipoli* (Dublin, 2015), p 29.

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.dublin-fusiliers.com/battalions/2-battalion.html> (accessed 5/12/2023).

<sup>105</sup> Lecane, *Beneath a Turkish Sky*, p 30.

The Cardwell and later Childers reforms created larger military regiments in the British Army and linked them to specific regimental 'districts'.<sup>106</sup> The Royal Dublin Fusiliers became the local regiment for the counties of Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow and Carlow. Its headquarters was at the barracks ('Depot') in Naas, Co Kildare.<sup>107</sup>

The new 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, formerly known as the Kildare Militia, was presented with its Colours at The Curragh on 23 May 1885 by the Marchioness of Kildare. Their commander was Colonel Lawless, and the Colours were consecrated by Rev Mr Ritchie.<sup>108</sup>

In June 1898, training took place on The Curragh. Three battalions, the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, were involved under the command of Colonel Leggett, who was chief of the 102<sup>nd</sup> regimental district which included Naas. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion was commanded by Colonel Tynte, with Major Gresson as second-in-command and Captain Loveband as adjutant. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Battalions also assembled in Dublin to move out to The Curragh for training.<sup>109</sup>

On 22 August 1898, the *Kildare Observer* reported that Major Gordon had left Naas to join the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion at Aldershot; he was described as an immensely popular officer whose departure would be regretted by the people of Naas.<sup>110</sup> A draft of 45 men also left the Depot heading for Aldershot, and they were escorted to the Station by the Depot Band.

When the Second Anglo-Boer War started in October 1899, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was in South Africa, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was ordered to join them.<sup>111</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was among the first reinforcements dispatched to South Africa according to the *Kildare Observer*. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion took part in the first major battle, the Battle of Talana, and in the siege at Ladysmith. Both battalions were involved in the Battles of Colenso at the Tugela River and later at Tugela Heights<sup>112</sup>, although the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had only just arrived.<sup>113</sup> About 139 men were killed at the Battle of Colenso, including Private P Deevy of Naas (1<sup>st</sup> Battalion) and Private J Pearse, also of Naas (2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion). Private J Reilly, Lance-Sergeant J Gibbons, and Private M Murphy, all of Naas, were wounded.<sup>114</sup>

The *Kildare Observer* then went on to report that Bugler Dunne was injured but wanted to go back to the front. He was born in Johnstown and had been one of the first to be injured while crossing the Tugela River. He received a medal and three bars. His father, Sergeant Dunne, was also in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.<sup>115</sup>

The memorial gate at the corner of St Stephen's Green, later known as the Fusiliers' Arch (Figure 1), was built in memory of the members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who were killed in the

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<sup>106</sup> McCabe, 'Royal Dublin Fusiliers', pp 258-9.

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/royal-dublin-fusiliers> (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>108</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 23 May 1885.

<sup>109</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 4 June 1898.

<sup>110</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 27 August 1898.

<sup>111</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 8 May 1897.

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/royal-dublin-fusiliers> (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>113</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 23 December 1899.

<sup>114</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 23 December 1899.

<sup>115</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 12 February 1900.

Second Anglo-Boer War.<sup>116</sup> In October 1904, there was a meeting to discuss raising money for the memorial at St Stephen's Green. They needed £3,000 of which £800 had already been raised.<sup>117</sup> This memorial was funded by subscriptions; for example, there was a concert in aid of it announced by the Countess of Dudley in the Royal University buildings, Earlsfort Terrace, later in August 1905.<sup>118</sup> The ceremony to unveil the memorial took place on 19 August 1907.<sup>119</sup>



**Figure 1: The Fusiliers' Arch, St Stephen's Green**<sup>120</sup>

The *Kildare Observer* reported in September 1902 on the return from South Africa to Naas of 150 men from different battalions who were to be paid off. They were under the command of Captain Mainwaring of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion along with Captain McDonnell of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Headed by the Band under Sergeant-Drummer Colnett, they marched up the streets of Naas to the Depot where they received their back pay and a 'suit of civies'. Those who lived elsewhere were played by the Band back to the Station and went home in the afternoon. The paper commented on how well they all behaved.<sup>121</sup> In July 1902, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion went from South Africa to Malta and on to India; the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion moved on to Aden and then came home.<sup>122</sup>

On 12 September 1914, an advertisement was put into the *Kildare Observer* looking for ex-soldiers of the regular Army or special reserves from 19-42 years of age to enlist for one year or for the length of the War. Other men from 19-30 years could also enlist for three years or for the period of the War.<sup>123</sup> Similar advertisements were published on 29 August and 26 September 1914.

<sup>116</sup> McCabe, 'Royal Dublin Fusiliers', pp 258-9.

<sup>117</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 29 October 1904.

<sup>118</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 19 August 1905.

<sup>119</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 24 August 1907.

<sup>120</sup> [www.buildingsofireland.ie](http://www.buildingsofireland.ie).

<sup>121</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 6 September 1902.

<sup>122</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 12 July 1902.

<sup>123</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 12 September 1914.

Later in October 1915, the Recruiting Committee planned to set up a series of public meetings. According to the *Kildare Observer*, they were appealing for more men to join in the defence of their country. In the report, they addressed their readership with a very direct appeal: 'Irishmen – remember the awful sacrifice and the many brutal crimes committed in Belgium and France and prepare to avenge the many gallant boys who have bled and died for their country'.<sup>124</sup> The Band of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers was organised to attend these meetings. The meetings ended with 'God Save the King, God Save Ireland'.<sup>125</sup> They were organised through Kildare County Council.

The paper went on to report that 250 of the Cyclist Corps had arrived in Naas on 6 February 1916. They stayed in licensed premises and private houses in the town with the help of Acting-Sergeant Collins who was responsible for their billeting. The 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers ('The Pals') also arrived from The Curragh where they had been training; there were 1,000 men in the Battalion. They were accommodated overnight in the Naas Depot and then went on to Dublin where they were quartered in the Royal Barracks. The advance guards of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Connaught Rangers and the Royal Irish Rifles also arrived in Naas and took possession of the North Kildare Farming Society's premises (the Gaol), the Town Hall and other places. They were on the way to The Curragh for final training before going on active service.<sup>126</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, along with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Royal Munster Fusiliers and two of the four companies in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment, landed on V beach in Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. The objective of the campaign in Gallipoli was to open a second front and remove Turkey from the War. The War Council felt that a Turkish surrender would open a supply route across the Black Sea into Russia, which was friendly to Britain. The attack was badly planned and very poorly organised.<sup>127</sup>

By 29 April, only one officer (Lieutenant Henry Desmond O'Hara, who later died of wounds on 25 August) and 344 men were fit for duty in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers out of 25 officers and 987 men who had landed on Gallipoli four days beforehand. Both they and the Royal Munster Fusiliers were amalgamated briefly until reinforcements arrived. The sacrifice of these men up to recently had been left out of Irish history.<sup>128</sup>

Their commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Rooth and their Catholic chaplain, Father William Finn, were both killed on the first day of the operation. The former had been attached to the Depot in Naas. From 1907 to 1910, he was in command in Naas; he later re-joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and was sent to Gallipoli in 1915.<sup>129</sup>

Father Finn became chaplain early in 1914. He refused a command to stay on the boats and jumped onto the beach to give absolution to the dying men. Their medical officer was Dr Henry

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<sup>124</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 23 October 1915.

<sup>125</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 23 October 1915.

<sup>126</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 16 February 1916.

<sup>127</sup> Lecane, *Beneath a Turkish Sky*, pp 21-2.

<sup>128</sup> Lecane, *Beneath a Turkish Sky*, p 23.

<sup>129</sup> Lecane, *Beneath a Turkish Sky*, pp 40-1.



Speldwinde de Boer who was wounded on the first day. The Rev Oswin Creighton was a Church of England chaplain in the 29<sup>th</sup> Division which included the Dublin Fusiliers.<sup>130</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was moved out by early January 1916 and spent the rest of the War on the Western Front. Only 11 of the original men who landed on 25 April at V Beach survived the Gallipoli campaign without being ill or wounded; one officer and 78 men returned to duty after being invalided out for a time.<sup>131</sup>

There were many deaths. Lieutenant John J Doyle of the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion (who was a nephew of Mr PJ Fegan of Broadfield, Naas) and Captain AJD Preston, also of the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, both lost their lives in the Dardanelles (Gallipoli). Captain Preston had been based in Naas, where he had been ordered to raise the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He was a well-known sportsman, a fine tennis player, cricketer and a good shot with both a rifle and a revolver.<sup>132</sup>

The *Kildare Observer* reported the death of Drummer Rodney Ahern on 14 September 1915. He died of wounds received in Gallipoli, and his passing was heard about with great regret in both Naas and Newbridge. He was a native of Naas and was only 20 years old. In a letter to his mother, he mentioned 'Titch', his younger brother, who was also in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Their father, Private Richard Ahern, had been an officer's servant in the Naas Depot for many years. He fought through the Anglo-Boer War and had volunteered again at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 and re-enlisted in his old battalion, the 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers.<sup>133</sup>

Also in September 1914, the *Kildare Observer* reported that Private Michael White of 'A' Company of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers was in the firing line at the retreat from Mons the month before but was now at home on Rathasker Road recovering from two wounds that he had received, one in a hand and one in the groin. He had been discharged from hospital and sent home to Naas; when interviewed, he said that he wanted to go back to his Regiment when his fortnight was up.<sup>134</sup>

In June 1916, another Naas soldier, Lance-Corporal Patrick Leonard, had been recommended for the Distinguished Conduct Medal because of his bravery and devotion to duty when he rescued wounded men under heavy shell fire. He was the son of Mr Patrick Leonard, Fair Green, Naas, and had joined in 1914. He was 23 years old and had been in France for the previous nine months. His brother, Corporal John Leonard, was also in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and had taken part in the first landing at Gallipoli. Two other brothers-in-law were also on active service. His father, Patrick, was a life pensioner from the Army and had been in Afghanistan in 1881.<sup>135</sup>

Private Michael Dennison of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers had been a shop assistant for Mr James Whelan in Naas and enlisted in 1915. He was awarded the parchment certificate for gallantry in the field in March 1918.<sup>136</sup> Private Patrick Brien, late of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was interred in

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<sup>130</sup> Lecane, *Beneath a Turkish Sky*, pp 69 and 84.

<sup>131</sup> Lecane, *Beneath a Turkish Sky*, p 243.

<sup>132</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 28 August 1915.

<sup>133</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 14 September 1915.

<sup>134</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 19 September 1914.

<sup>135</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 4 June 1916.

<sup>136</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 13 March 1918.

Naas Cemetery with full military honours in May 1918. The coffin was covered by the Union Jack and carried on a gun carriage to the Cemetery. A detachment of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers under Major Shadforth marched with reversed arms accompanied by the Band. He had lived with his mother on Rathasker Road and had spent two years in France during an earlier part of the War.<sup>137</sup>

The duties of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers also covered the domestic sphere. The *Cork Examiner* reported on a court martial which involved Major Molesworth DSO and Captain Cunningham, both of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and Captain Duckett of the Leinster Regiment. They assembled at Cork Barracks to investigate charges against three young men who had recently been arrested in the Southern Military District for offences against the Defence of the Realm Act.<sup>138</sup>

John Murnane of Clenagh, Co Clare, who declined to plead, was charged with being involved with parties of men in movements of a military nature at Clenagh on 25 July 1917 and at Newmarket-on-Fergus at the end of August. The accused was seen drilling a party of men on the date in question.<sup>139</sup> The second man, Denis Murphy of Courtbract, Blarney, was charged with wearing arms of a military nature, a leather belt with a frog, scabbard and bayonet. He was arrested on 30 August. The third man, Michael Sullivan, faced a similar charge. All three men did not recognise the court and said that the only law they recognised was that of the Irish Republic. All wanted to be treated as prisoner of wars if they were imprisoned.<sup>140</sup>

Men from the Royal Dublin Fusiliers were awarded three Victoria Crosses between 1914 and 1918. The Fusiliers fought in France, Belgium, Gallipoli, Salonika and Palestine and again in 1918 on the Western Front. In Dublin, the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Battalions were involved in putting down the Easter Rising of 1916. After the War, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion became part of the British Army's occupation of Germany, whilst the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was stationed in France, England, Turkey and India.<sup>141 142</sup>

Before the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, the British Government decided that six southern Irish Regiments (out of a total of 13) would be disbanded. This included the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who were disbanded in 1922.<sup>143</sup> On 12 June 1922, they laid up their Colours at a ceremony at Windsor Castle along with the other southern Irish Regiments.<sup>144</sup>

They had been in operation for just over 40 years and had served abroad in various conflicts including the Second Anglo-Boer War and the First World War.

### **Naas and its Barracks**

The Barracks at Naas was a focal point for the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The Regiment drew many recruits from Kildare, Dublin, Carlow and Wicklow. Figure 2 below clearly shows the Barracks situated on the Limerick Road on the way to Newbridge to the southwest of the town centre.

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<sup>137</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 11 May 1918.

<sup>138</sup> *Cork Examiner*, 14 September 1917.

<sup>139</sup> *Cork Examiner*, 14 September 1917.

<sup>140</sup> *Cork Examiner*, 14 September 1917.

<sup>141</sup> <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/royal-dublin-fusiliers> (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>142</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, *'Come on the Dubs!' – A Brief History of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers*, 2022.

<sup>143</sup> <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/royal-dublin-fusiliers> (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>144</sup> <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/royal-dublin-fusiliers> (accessed 15/02/2022).



**Figure 2: Map of Naas (1<sup>ST</sup> Edition, Ordnance Survey, 6in, colour, 1829-1841)  
(© Tailte Éireann - Copyright Permit No MP 006323)**



The Barracks which was built for infantry was started in 1810. It replaced an earlier building at the South Moat which had been damaged. It was built for 19 officers and 300 men or double that number in times of war. The architects were Messrs Bernell, Browning and Behan, and it was completed at a cost of £17,900.<sup>145</sup> The Barracks was completed in 1813 and in time became the home of the Kildare Militia (later the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers).<sup>146</sup>

In 1881, the Barracks became the Depot for the Royal Dublin Fusiliers on its establishment as a regiment, and this began a 40 years' association between them.<sup>147</sup>

Prior to 1914 and during the War, many men from Naas and the surrounding areas enlisted at the Barracks. Most recruits from the town at the time came from its poorer areas such as Loch Bur, Back Lane and Rathasker Cottages.<sup>148</sup>

At the outbreak of the War, the *Leinster Leader* reported that there were remarkable scenes in Naas. Co Kildare reservists came forward to enlist in the two Battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. About 280 men who had been called up for service arrived at the Depot in Naas. They

<sup>145</sup> <https://www.dublin-fusiliers.com/Naas/naas.html> (accessed 16/02/2022).

<sup>146</sup> James Durney, *In Time of War: Kildare 1914-1918* (Kildare, 2004), p 13.

<sup>147</sup> Durney, *In Time of War*, p 18.

<sup>148</sup> Durney, *In Time of War*, p 13.

were then moved from Naas to Dublin and on to Gravesend in England where the Regiment was stationed. They were sent on their way with the help of music from the Irish Volunteers Band and a large crowd of well-wishers. There were large crowds on the footpaths as they marched down Main Street. The Station platforms and the bridges overhead were also alive with spectators.<sup>149</sup>

During the First World War, Naas was a centre for recruitment, and by June 1917, 26,611 men had joined up, including 250 men from the town. During the War, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers eventually numbered 11 battalions. Recruits were accommodated at the Barracks until they were in uniform and were sent away for training. Men came from as far away as England and Scotland, as the Royal Dublin Fusiliers were well known and respected outside Kildare.<sup>150</sup> Appendix 1 shows the men of Naas who joined up, most joining the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The details go up to 1916.

Today all that is left of the Barracks is the clock tower and the arch (Figure 3).



**Figure 3: The Clock Tower and Arch of the Barracks (Author's photograph)**

Naas Urban District Council offered the Town Hall as a place of accommodation to the military, as recruits continued to arrive in the town and men from the Royal Dublin Fusiliers also came back from the front. A camp was planned for recruits in the field opposite the Barracks, and huts were erected to accommodate 500 men. There were rumours of harsh conditions which spread through the town. A journalist in the *Leinster Leader* suggested that a full health inspection should be carried out of the Barracks and camp.<sup>151</sup>

The rations were seen as inadequate, and a house-to-house collection was made in Naas during the first week of September to help. Vouchers were issued to allow recruits to receive food. But as the military authorities did not know how many recruits would arrive, it was not easy to estimate food quantities. There was also concern when notices were issued for the wives and families of the men at the front to leave married quarters and find accommodation elsewhere due

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<sup>149</sup> Durney, *In Time of War*, p 8.

<sup>150</sup> Durney, *In Time of War*, p 18.

<sup>151</sup> Durney, *In Time of War*, p 19.

to space problems. Another rumour persisted that the Old Jail across the road which had not been used since 1890 would be cleaned out and taken over by the military.<sup>152</sup>

In the 1911 Census, the total population of Kildare was 66,627. Of these, 54,684 were Catholic and 11,943 Protestant. In the Protestant group, 10,498 were Church of Ireland, 611 Presbyterian and 834 of other Protestant faiths. This meant that 15.76% of Kildare's population was Protestant compared to the national average of 13.3% at the time. Recruitment numbers throughout Kildare were particularly good as Protestants tended to be pro-British and to join up faster.<sup>153</sup>

Many influential families such as the Fitzgeralds and the Earls of Mayo at Palmerstown House, near Kill, were very pro-British. Their butlers, gardeners and staff were also pro-British in their sympathies. The Protestant population sent vast numbers into the armed services. As the War progressed, Catholic support waned, but Protestant recruitment numbers remained constant.<sup>154</sup>

Finally in January 1922, the decision to disband the Royal Dublin Fusiliers came through, and Lieutenant-Colonel KC Weldon asked the *Kildare Observer* to publicise that all claims against the Depot must be presented by February 1922 after which no liabilities could be accepted.<sup>155</sup>

The Depot in Naas had played a key role in recruitment for the Regiment for over 40 years.

## **The Economic, Religious, Educational and Social Effects on Naas and the Surrounding Area**

### Economic

The economic impact of the War was apparent immediately. Food prices rose, and this was queried by the newspapers, both the *Leinster Leader* and the *Kildare Observer*. By the beginning of August, sugar in Naas was up to 4½d per lb. Flour went up to 2s 6d per cwt, and best grade coal was quoted at 30s and 32s 6d per ton.<sup>156</sup> Retailers blamed the wholesalers who in turn blamed the creameries, the farmers and the cross-channel suppliers. As Rachel Duffett points out, the four years of the War saw rising food prices accompanied by shrinking supplies.<sup>157</sup>

Once the orders came through to mobilise, the Army's Remount Department sought horses for their cavalry, artillery and transport needs. All horses at the Kildare Hunt Stables at Jigginstown, Naas, were taken into Army service. Local horses were also commandeered and sold to the Army for competitive prices. A troop horse fetched £40 and an officer's charger £60.<sup>158</sup>

The Army was extremely popular in the town. Naas was not a military town like Newbridge but did benefit from a military presence.<sup>159</sup> Soldiers had families, and they provided a major source of

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<sup>152</sup> Durney, *In Time of War*, p 19.

<sup>153</sup> Durney, *In Time of War*, p 24.

<sup>154</sup> Durney, *In Time of War*, p 25.

<sup>155</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 12 January 1922.

<sup>156</sup> James Durney, *In Time of War*, p 10.

<sup>157</sup> <https://everydaylivesinwar.herts.ac.uk/2015/01/food/> (accessed 16/05/2022).

<sup>158</sup> James Durney, *In Time of War*, pp 9-10.

<sup>159</sup> James Durney, *In Time of War*, pp 17-8.



revenue for the Kildare area. The military presence had a positive effect overall to the town. Food grown and horses bred locally were sold to the Army.<sup>160</sup>

Civilians were also employed by the military and brought spending power to the shops and hotels of Naas. The financial benefits continued throughout the War years.<sup>161</sup>

### Religious

Although the officers were mainly Protestant, the Census of 1901 shows the residents of the Naas Depot with a surprisingly high percentage of Protestants among the non-commissioned officers and the men. Many of the men married locally.

Looking at the 1901 Census, just over 30% were Protestant, including members of the Band. Only the first page of the Census is shown in Table 1 below.<sup>162</sup> However, it also shows the range of birthplaces of the soldiers and a wide range of previous occupations.

Residents of a house 1000.2 in Naas East (Naas Urban, Kildare)							
Surname	Forename	Age	Sex	Relation to head	Religion	Birthplace	Occupation
Gresson	William	40	Male	-	Church of England	Co Kildare	Nil
Brumby	Charles	40	Male	-	Church of England	England	Boiler Maker
Sterrete	Walter	33	Male	-	Church of Ireland	Co Dublin	Slater
Doyle	Edward	24	Male	-	Roman Catholic	Dublin City	Bross Moulder
Moore	Thomas	23	Male	-	Roman Catholic	Dublin City	Gen Laborer
O'Brien	John	25	Male	-	Roman Catholic	Co Cork	Gen Laborer
Hatt	Frederick	20	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician
Burke	James	18	Male	-	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	Gen Laborer
Byrne	Daniel	35	Male	-	Roman Catholic	Dublin City	Gen Laborer
Cassin	Richard	21	Male	-	Roman Catholic	Co Carlow	Gen Laborer
Clarke	Thomas	33	Male	-	Roman Catholic	Co Carlow	Farm Servant
Connor	Patrick	26	Male	-	Roman Catholic	Co Kildare	Gen Laborer

**Table 1: Census 1901, first page showing details of the residents of the Barracks**

A high percentage of these men were either Church of England or Church of Ireland, and many would have attended the local Church of Ireland Church, St David's, in Naas.

The vestry minutes of St David's Church in 1897 indicate that the military occupied a specific place in the Church, because they appealed for kneelers there. But it is not certain which pews were

<sup>160</sup> James Durney, *In Time of War*, p 10.

<sup>161</sup> James Durney, *In Time of War*, p 22.

<sup>162</sup> Census 1901 (accessed 16/02/2022).

involved.<sup>163</sup> In 1914, the Church changed their services on Sunday mornings to 11 am. It was a better time for the military according to the vestry minutes. Unfortunately, the original time is not listed, but it was probably earlier as 11 am would be deemed late for a Sunday morning service.<sup>164</sup>

When looking at the marriage register for St David’s Church from 1882, a surprising number of grooms stated their military occupation. In 1882, John Biven, a bugler in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, married Elizabeth Lloyd. This is the first mention of the Regiment in the register. Later John Dance, a Royal Dublin Fusiliers’ sergeant, married Sarah Anne Deverall. On 21 July 1886, Henry Elliot Byers, a 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion sergeant, married Frances Hannah Haslam.<sup>165</sup>

However from the St David’s Church point of view, the marriage of Francis Edward Downer to Delphinia Brereton in March 1888 is interesting. The baptism of their second son, William Alexander Grant Downer, was recorded in 1892, when they were living in Railway Terrace in Naas.<sup>166</sup> Francis can then be traced first through an article in the *Kildare Observer* on 26 October 1895 when he was promoted to the position of orderly room clerk which carried the rank of a quartermaster. At that point, he was 11 years in Naas and was described as courteous and obliging. This had won him many friends who, according to the paper, would be pleased with the appointment.<sup>167</sup> He was again mentioned in the *Kildare Observer* when he was presented with a good conduct medal in 1898.<sup>168</sup> By then, he had close to 20 years of service; the presentation was by Colonel Leggett who congratulated him on his exemplary conduct during his Army service.

In 1901, the Downer family appeared on the 1901 Census – see Table 2 below.<sup>169</sup> It looks like Francis Downer was then still in the Army.

Surname	Forename	Townland/Street	DED	County	Age
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Francis E</a>	Dublin Road West	Naas Urban	Kildare	34
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Delphina</a>	Dublin Road West	Naas Urban	Kildare	34
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Francis H G</a>	Dublin Road West	Naas Urban	Kildare	11
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">William N G</a>	Dublin Road West	Naas Urban	Kildare	9
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Ralph E G</a>	Dublin Road West	Naas Urban	Kildare	7
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Gladys E D</a>	Dublin Road West	Naas Urban	Kildare	4
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Lionel N</a>	Dublin Road West	Naas Urban	Kildare	2

**Table 2: 1901 Census showing the Downer family details**

<sup>163</sup> St David’s Church of Ireland, Naas, Vestry Minutes, No 2, (1897) RCBL, P.0487.05, 1885-1914.

<sup>164</sup> St David’s Church of Ireland, Naas, Vestry Minutes, No 2, (1914) RCBL P.0487.05, 1885-1914.

<sup>165</sup> St David’s Church of Ireland, Naas, Marriage Register, No 1, RCBL, P.0487.03, 1884-1897.

<sup>166</sup> St David’s Church of Ireland, Naas, Baptism Register, No 2, RCBL, P.0487.02, 1882-1994.

<sup>167</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 26 October 1895.

<sup>168</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 5 November 1898.

<sup>169</sup> Census 1901 (accessed 15/02/2022).

By 1911 (Table 3 below), the family had moved to Kilmeague, roughly 19 kms from Naas, and Francis had retired from the Army. The family had increased in size to include seven children; Ralph seems to have been visiting neighbours on Census night.<sup>170</sup> The history of St David's National School shows the three older boys, Francis, William and Ralph participating in the First World War, but it is not certain if they joined their father's old Regiment.<sup>171</sup>

Surname	Forename	Townland/Street	DED	County	Age	Sex	Birthplace	Occupation	Religion
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Ralph George</a>	Ballyteige, North	Kilmeage, North	Kildare	16	M	Co Kildare	Scholar	I C
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Frances E</a>	Ballintine	Kilmeage, South	Kildare	44	M	Co Westmeath	(Commercial Traocller Grocery and Lequors)	C of Ireland
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Delphina</a>	Ballintine	Kilmeage, South	Kildare	46	F	Co Kildare		C of Ireland
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Frances H G</a>	Ballintine	Kilmeage, South	Kildare	22	M	Co Kildare	Clerk Unemployed	C of Ireland
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">William A G</a>	Ballintine	Kilmeage, South	Kildare	19	M	Co Kildare	Clerk Unemployed	C of Ireland
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Ralph E G</a>	Ballintine	Kilmeage, South	Kildare	17	M	Co Kildare		C of Ireland
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Gladys D E</a>	Ballintine	Kilmeage, South	Kildare	14	F	Co Kildare		C of Ireland
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Lionel N G</a>	Ballintine	Kilmeage, South	Kildare	11	M	Co Kildare		C of Ireland
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Leslie A W</a>	Ballintine	Kilmeage, South	Kildare	6	M	Co Kildare		C of Ireland
<a href="#">Downer</a>	<a href="#">Herbert S G</a>	Ballintine	Kilmeage, South	Kildare	4	M	Co Kildare		C of Ireland

**Table 3: 1911 Census showing the Downer family details**

There were several military marriages in St David's, including Benjamin Rhodes (Sergeant, Royal Dublin Fusiliers) who married Jane Lily Agnes Johnston (whose father was a quartermaster-sergeant in the same Regiment) on 3 January 1895.<sup>172</sup>

In 1891 there were 18 baptisms in total in St David's, nine of which were military. Most of those fathers were Sergeants in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers – see Appendix 2. There were several families where names came up repeatedly, such as Wakefield, Downer, Byers, Baker, Andrews and Oliver. They were young families who attended St David's Church. Some could not be traced through either the 1901 Census in Naas or the 1911 Census and seem to have moved on, but others such as the Baker family (see Table 4 overleaf) were still there in 1901.<sup>173</sup>

<sup>170</sup> Census 1911 (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>171</sup> Gillian Drennan, *St David's National School, Naas, 1890-1990* (1990, Kildare), p 32.

<sup>172</sup> St David's Church of Ireland, Naas, Marriage Register, No 1, RCBI, P.0487.03, 1884-1897.

<sup>173</sup> St David's Church of Ireland, Naas, Baptism Register, No 2, RCBI, P.0487.02, 1882-1994.

Baker	Charles	53	Male	Head of Family	C of Ireland	London, Eng	Shoemaker
Baker	Annie	41	Female	Wife	C of Ireland	Trowbridge, Eng	Laundress
Baker	Ester	17	Female	Daughter	C of Ireland	Naas, Kildare	Laundress
Baker	Arthur	14	Male	Son	C of Ireland	Naas, Kildare	Apprentice Printing
Baker	Theresa	9	Female	Daughter	C of Ireland	Naas, Kildare	Scholar
Baker	Bella	7	Female	Daughter	C of Ireland	Naas, Kildare	Scholar

**Table 4: 1901 Census showing details of the Baker family**

Arthur Baker, the eldest son, is on the St David's School Roll of Honour as having served in WW1.<sup>174</sup> In 1901, his father Charles, a shoemaker, seems to have left the Army.

There were also many marriages in the Catholic Church; the *Kildare Observer* reports on one marriage, a Sergeant Devereux married a Miss Byrne in the Church in August 1898. They celebrated in the Barracks afterwards.<sup>175</sup> W Arbuthnot Gresson, Major, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, married Charlotte L Brush of Marino, Newcastle, Co Down, in April 1897.<sup>176</sup>

### Education

The children of the Protestant commissioned and non-commissioned soldiers attended St David's Church of Ireland School. The table below shows the numbers from 1920 to 1933.

1920: 49	1927: 22
1921: 41	1928: 28
1922: 43	1929: 27
1923: 41	1930: 27
1924: 32	1931: 23
1925: 27	1932: 22
1926: 34	1933: 23

**Table 5: Numbers of Children in St David's National School, Naas, from 1920 to 1933**

As Gillian Drennan points out, the numbers in the School fell drastically after the Army left Naas in 1922. They decreased by almost 50% in a decade.<sup>177</sup>

On the School Roll of Honour for the First World War, there are many familiar names: Tony Shadforth, Arthur Holloway, Arthur Baker, Ralph, Frank and Willie Downer, John Horne, Harry

<sup>174</sup> Gillian Drennan, *St David's National School, Naas, 1890-1990*, (1990, Kildare), p 32.

<sup>175</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 27 August 1898.

<sup>176</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 1 May 1897.

<sup>177</sup> Drennan, *St. David's National School, Naas*, p 31.

Oliver and Arthur Oliver. There were many others including one woman.<sup>178</sup> Many of the men that had been baptised in the 1880s and 1890s went on to serve in the War.

### Social

Perhaps the most important effect the Royal Dublin Fusiliers had on Naas was social. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers, both officers and men, were involved in many activities in Naas. The Band was perhaps the strongest link between the military and the locals.

Table 6 below shows most of the band members in 1901. They were English and belonged to the Church of England.<sup>179</sup>

Miller	A	15	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician
Mills	A	14	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician
Mulholland	G	14	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician
Partridge	H	14	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician
Gtonl	G	14	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician
Shimeld	A	14	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician
Weekley	A	14	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician
Nash	C	14	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician
Jones	E	14	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician
Westwood	L	14	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician
Ford	J	14	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician
McManus	C	14	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician
Leeson	J	14	Male	-	Church of England	England	Musician

**Table 6: 1901 Census - The Band Members**

Because the Depot was the headquarters for the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the Band was accommodated there. The Band seems to have been made up mostly of 14 and 15 years olds who were known as boy soldiers and referred to as 'boy' followed by their surname. The stories of Stephen Filbey and Harry Fox give some insight into their social background. They had both been placed in the Foundling Hospital in London as babies. Harry Fox's single mother was unable to care for him and sent him to the Hospital. He was later fostered until he was five or six and was then sent back to the Hospital to attend school. He was taught to play a musical instrument and went on to a career in the Army at 14. He joined the Royal Dublin Fusiliers as a drummer and served in the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa and in Malta, Crete, Egypt and Sudan.<sup>180</sup>

<sup>178</sup> Drennan, *St. David's National School, Naas*, p 32.

<sup>179</sup> Census 1901 (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>180</sup> Lecane, *Beneath a Turkish Sky*, pp 30-1.



Stephen Filbey was younger; his father abandoned his family a month after he was born. His mother was unable to look after him and petitioned the Foundling Hospital to take him in. Her petition was accepted, and he entered the Hospital in April 1885. He was also fostered and like Harry returned to the Hospital when he was five. He was chosen for the Band and was especially gifted with the cello. He joined the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in 1899. He also became a drummer with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.<sup>181</sup>

### Music

On 11 February 1893, there was an evening of music and dramatic entertainment in the Naas Barracks Theatre as reported in the *Kildare Observer*. Part 1 was a negro minstrel troupe, and the second half was a farce entitled '£5 Reward' by John Oxenford. The paper went on to point out that the reputation of this club was so well known that it was hardly necessary to recommend it to their readers.<sup>182</sup>

In July 1901, the bandmaster, JP Mullins of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, notified the *Kildare Observer* of a concert to be performed on the following Friday.<sup>183</sup> Later they played in the Market Square.<sup>184</sup> On 23 November, the paper reported that His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught had commanded the band of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion to attend an entertainment in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, in aid of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Family Association. This, the paper pointed out, was to the credit of Mr JP Mullins, a resident of Naas, who well deserved it. The paper went on to mention that the band was a treat to the public of the town during the summer evenings when they performed in the Market Square. Mr Mullins was warmly congratulated on the success which the band had achieved under his very able baton.<sup>185</sup>

In July 1904, the Band was invited to play at Naas Horticultural Show.<sup>186</sup> The paper later reported that the Fusiliers' Brass and Pipe Band played a well selected programme of music in the Town Square, this time under the able baton of Sergeant-Drummer O'Toole.<sup>187</sup>

Other mentions of the band included a fete organised in Naas Military Barracks in aid of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers' Prisoners of War Fund. Mr JW Dane (a local solicitor based in Castlewarden, Naas) was one of the organisers.<sup>188</sup> Later the band played in the Sergeant's Mess in January 1919 for the departure of Sergeant-Major Murphy who was involved in setting up the Pals Battalion. He had been in Naas Depot since 1915.<sup>189</sup>

### Sports

Both the officers and the men had strong sporting connections with the town. There was a Sports Day organised in Naas Barracks on 28 September 1901. The committee was made up of Colonel

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<sup>181</sup> Lecane, *Beneath a Turkish Sky*, pp 31-2.

<sup>182</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 11 February 1893.

<sup>183</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 1 July 1901.

<sup>184</sup> *Kildare Observer* 2 August 1901.

<sup>185</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 23 November 1901.

<sup>186</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 30 July 1904.

<sup>187</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 8 September 1906.

<sup>188</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 16 September 1916.

<sup>189</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 25 January 1919.

AM Patterson, Lieutenant-Colonel WA Gresson, Lieutenant Rogers, Sergeant-Major Brumby, Sergeant-Major French, Colour-Sergeant Rice, Sergeant Kelly and Lance-Corporal Connor. Sergeant-Major Brumby was the leader of the 'A' Company team who were beaten by 'D' Company. He came third in the veterans' race. Lance-Corporal Oliver came first in the throwing the cricket ball competition, while Bella Brumby came first in the girls' race. Gertie Bishop came third in the same race. The prizes were distributed by Mrs Patterson.<sup>190</sup>

The Fusiliers' main sport was hockey. They played Kells in January 1912 and won 6-0.<sup>191</sup> They played Railway Union on 25 October 1913 which the writer described as a poor match. The *Kildare Observer* reported on several hockey matches in 1913, one on 15 November when they played Royal Hibernians in Naas and lost 5-2. Following that, the same team had another match on 22 November against Dublin University where they lost again, this time 2-0, and a further match was played in January 1914 against Dundrum where they lost 4-0.<sup>192</sup> A match against Three Rocks Rovers gave them a draw on 28 February 1914.<sup>193</sup>

Their other sport was cricket. When they served in South Africa, Captain Mainwaring was mentioned in a local paper as playing particularly well in a match in March 1898, which the Fusiliers won. He was described as a fine asset to any team. In 1902, when he was appointed adjutant in Naas, the *Kildare Observer* pointed out that the cricket people would be delighted.<sup>194</sup> The same paper later reported on a cricket game played in Oldtown, Naas, on 10 June 1910, where the Reverend EW Clover (the Church of Ireland Minister in Naas) was on the Kildare side.<sup>195</sup> In May 1911, there was a report in the *Kildare Observer* about a game against Beggar's Bush which resulted in a win for Beggar's Bush by three runs.

### Drama and Dancing

On 26 September 1885, a series of popular 'singsongs' began in the library of the Barracks which were for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday night of that week.<sup>196</sup>

On 15 February 1893, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Dramatic Club held an entertainment night in the Theatre in Naas Barracks. It was run by Quartermaster C Matthews, assisted by Major and Mrs Cooper. Sergeant-Drummer Ashcroft conducted the Band at the interval.<sup>197</sup>

In November 1902, according to the *Kildare Observer*, the members of the Sergeant's Mess Depot in Naas commenced their usual quadrille parties in the Theatre Hall. The writer pointed out that 'the red coats mingled with the pretty dresses of the ladies set off the surroundings with pleasing effect.'<sup>198</sup> The paper added that some of the officers and members of the Corps who had fought in South Africa attended and thoroughly appreciated the relaxation after their long and arduous

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<sup>190</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 28 September 1901.

<sup>191</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 27 January 1912.

<sup>192</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 3 January 1914.

<sup>193</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 28 February 1914.

<sup>194</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 19 July 1902.

<sup>195</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 11 June 1910.

<sup>196</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 26 September 1885.

<sup>197</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 15 February 1893.

<sup>198</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 29 November 1902.

duties. Credit was given to Colour-Sergeant Keogh and his committee for arranging the evening.<sup>199</sup>

In March 1905, the *Kildare Observer* reported on the annual ball run by the warrant officers and sergeants on St Patrick's Eve night. The band played under the supervision of Sergeant-Drummer Colnett. The committee was made up of Colour-Sergeant Rhodes (President), Sergeant-Drummer Colnett, Sergeant Morris and Sergeant Hamper. Among those present included Captain and Mrs Matthews, Mr EB Gray, Miss Gray, Sergeant-Major and Mrs Brumby and Sergeant Horne.<sup>200</sup>

In October 1910, the Sergeants of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers held their second annual dinner on the anniversary of the Battle of Talana Hill, the first action fought in the Second Anglo-Boer War. The chair was occupied by Mr Charles Brumby, late Sergeant-Major of the Depot in Naas. 70 people sat down for dinner including Lieutenant L Holloway of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. The four battalions at home were represented along with several ex-warrant officers. It was reported to have been a most enjoyable evening and ended with toasts and songs.<sup>201</sup>

In July 1914, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers entertained Mr RG French, a recently retired Battalion Sergeant-Major. The occasion honoured his long Regimental service of 30¼ years. He was well known in Naas having served in the Depot for 19 years.<sup>202</sup>

The gentry regularly entertained the officers in the County. They were invited to seasonal balls, hunting parties, racecourses, polo grounds, cricket pitches and shooting parties throughout Kildare. Non-commissioned officers and men brought spending power to the shops and local hotels. The military were not seen as strangers; many married locally, and their presence made a difference to the County.<sup>203</sup>

### Outings

In July 1902, the annual outing for warrant officers, staff sergeants and sergeants took place. They went from Naas to Dublin by train and on to Glendalough where they had an enjoyable day with pleasant weather. They returned at 6 pm by the same route.<sup>204</sup>

For the King's visit to Ireland in 1903, it was arranged that the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Battalions would line a portion of the route from Kingstown to Dublin; there would also be a guard of honour at Kingstown Station which Brigadier Patterson would command. Major Bromilow, Captain Riccard, Lieutenant Bradford and Sergeant-Major Brumby were to accompany the Depot contingent.<sup>205</sup>

The economic, educational, religious and social contacts between the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and Naas were strong, and they played an active part in Naas life. Perhaps the band was the strongest one and the most missed when they left in 1922.

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<sup>199</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 29 November 1902.

<sup>200</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 25 March 1905.

<sup>201</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 29 October 1910.

<sup>202</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 11 July 1914.

<sup>203</sup> Durney, *In Time of War*, p 26.

<sup>204</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 29 July 1902.

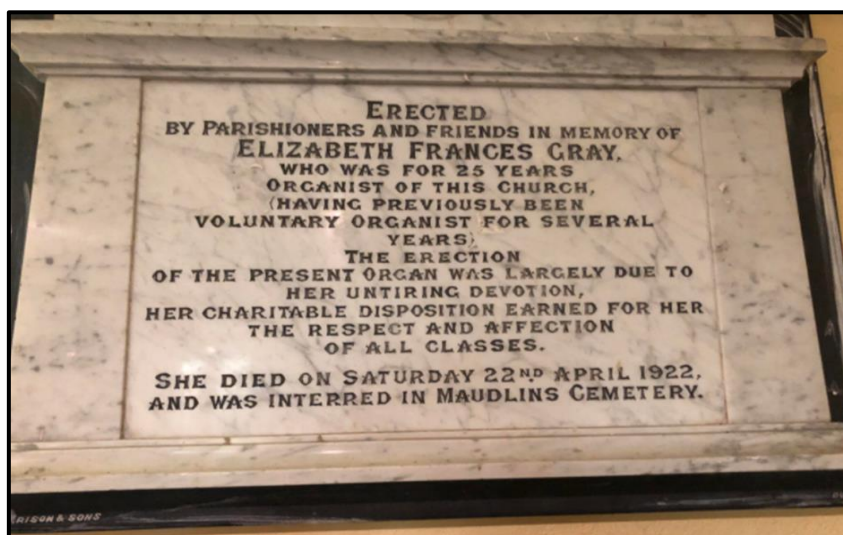
<sup>205</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 1903.

## The Home Front

While the men went off to fight in the Second Anglo-Boer War and the First World War, the women left behind were busy supporting them and sending comforts to the front line. They were particularly good at looking after prisoners of war. Two women were incredibly involved in helping these soldiers, Lady Mayo and Miss Gray. Others supported them.

Lord Mayo married Geraldine Sarah, the eldest daughter of the Honourable Gerald Henry Brabazon and Lady Maria Ponsonby in 1885. She was 22 years old and was known as Geraldine, Countess of Mayo. Her husband, Dermot, was the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Mayo, and one of their houses was Palmerstown House, Johnstown, Kildare, four kms from Naas. She was a keen gardener and worked on a walled garden in Palmerstown for more than 30 years. Unfortunately, the house was burned in 1923 but rebuilt between 1926 and 1928. They sold the house at that point and moved away.<sup>206</sup> Lady Mayo was very involved with Naas affairs; for instance, she was a director of the Naas Carpet factory and encouraged enterprise in the town.<sup>207</sup>

Miss Elizabeth Gray was the organist in St David's Church, first as a volunteer and then as a paid employee – see Figure 4. She lived on the Main Street as can be seen on the 1901 Census and was still there ten years later.



**Figure 4: The Plaque in St David's Church giving details of Elizabeth Gray (Author's photo)**

During the Anglo-Boer War, there was an appeal for socks and bootlaces as well as money. In answer to the appeal, the *Kildare Observer* reported in February 1900 that Lady Mayo had received money and helmet caps. Mrs Loveband, the wife of then Captain Loveband, had received 50 pairs of socks, 6½ dozen bootlaces and some helmet caps.<sup>208</sup>

During the First World War, they organised fundraising to aid soldiers who were away. The work began at the meeting of the Committee of the Dublin Women's Unionist Club in Dublin in August 1914. Four separate committees began to work in Ireland with the purpose of supplying comforts

<sup>206</sup> <https://lady.co.uk/secrets-lost-garden> (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>207</sup> <https://lady.co.uk/secrets-lost-garden> (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>208</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 13 January 1900.

at the front for prisoners of war. A Central Advisory Committee was formed to co-ordinate the work of the four groups: the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Bureau, the Ladies Committee of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the Dublin Women's Royal Dublin Fusiliers Committee and the Co Kildare Committee.<sup>209</sup> The last one was the only one based in Kildare and sent fortnightly parcels of food to prisoners of war in over twenty different camps in Germany except Limburg.<sup>210</sup>

In September 1915, Lady Mayo, Mabel Loveband and JW Dane wrote to the editor of the *Kildare Observer* undertaking to send prisoners of war regular fortnightly supplies of food. The parcels were to contain one tin of coffee and milk, one tin of condensed milk, ¼ lb of tea, 1 lb of bacon and 1 lb of cheese to help supplement their food rations. They also organised bread, tobacco and cigarettes to be delivered to the prisoners. The letter was looking for money to help them.<sup>211</sup>

The Red Cross also organised fund-raising events. Baroness de Robeck of Naas was heavily involved in the local branch and helped raise many consignments of shirts, pyjamas, slippers, etc. which eventually went to the hospitals of France, Egypt and Lemnos.<sup>212</sup> During the early War years, Lady Weldon and Lady Mayo requested women around Kildare to help them make garments from patterns received from the Central Red Cross Society. The Naas division of the St John's Ambulance Brigade also organised surgical dressings for hospitals at the front.<sup>213</sup>

Later in September 1915, a letter sent to the editor of the *Kildare Observer* on behalf of Lady Mayo, Mrs Loveband, and himself (JW Dane) wanted to thank the Naas Dramatic Society for the handsome receipt of £34 9s 6d which was the proceeds of a recent dramatic entertainment. Again, it was to be directed to the prisoners of war fund. The letter pointed out that they wanted to keep sending 'comforts to the men who are fighting for us all in the cold, wet trenches and those through no fault of their own are interned in the prisons of our cruel and inhumane enemies.'<sup>214</sup> He mentioned that thank you letters had been received by Colonel Loveband and the men.

Earlier in December 1914, they had started a 'Warm Clothing and Prisoners Fund'. It was advertised again in January 1915. The ladies advertised for subscriptions which would be gratefully received by Lady Mayo, Palmerstown, Mrs Loveband, the Barracks, Naas, or JW Dane, Naas. This was repeated twice in the paper in January 1915. A combination of 'vests, socks, shirts, mufflers, belts etc' were received by the Committee and dispatched to soldiers either leaving for France, at the front, in hospitals or to prisoners of war.<sup>215</sup>

On 17 November 1917, a letter to the *Kildare Observer* signed on behalf of Lady Mayo, Mrs Loveband, Mrs Shadforth and JW Dane wanted to arrange a 'fancy fair' and 'gift sale' in the Town Hall, Naas, to help raise money to pay for Christmas parcels and 'replenish our much-depleted

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<sup>209</sup> <https://www.dublin-fusiliers.com/Naas/naas.html> (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>210</sup> <https://www.dublin-fusiliers.com/Naas/naas.html> (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>211</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 15 September 1915.

<sup>212</sup> <https://www.dublin-fusiliers.com/Naas/naas.html> (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>213</sup> <https://www.dublin-fusiliers.com/Naas/naas.html> (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>214</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 15 September 1915.

<sup>215</sup> <https://www.dublin-fusiliers.com/Naas/naas.html> (accessed 15/02/2022).



exchequer'.<sup>216</sup> The letter pointed out that readers could help in several ways including adopting a prisoner and making sure that he got his parcels. It stated that 'this committee and its allied committees have for the past three years working with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and been sending six parcels of food each month to each prisoner of war of the regiment, besides bread, tobacco and cigarettes.' The letter concluded by pointing out that there were over 500 prisoners including men from Co Kildare in 1916 and the monthly cost for each parcel and tobacco was roughly £2 10s per man.

There was another letter to Miss Gray which appeared in the *Kildare Observer* on 26 December 1914. It thanked her on behalf of the Regiment for her gift of socks which she had organised. It was signed by Captain RGB Jeffreys, Adjutant, 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers.<sup>217</sup>

Other women also received thank you letters for sending comforts to the troops. Mrs McCreight, wife of Sergeant-Major McCreight, was sent a letter by Noel E Drury, Captain of the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, thanking her for the present of tobacco that the people of Naas and district had sent them.<sup>218</sup>

There were many men in regiments, but most Kildare men were in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and the women at home looked after them very well. A later letter to the *Kildare Observer* in March 1919 reported that General Cooper thanked friends in Kildare who had helped prisoners of war during the previous four years. It came from Lady Mayo who signed herself as president of the Co Kildare Royal Dublin Fusiliers' Prisoners of War Committee.<sup>219</sup>

On 19 April 1919, the Central Advisory Committee decided to allocate a large balance of the remaining money to repatriated prisoners of war, their children and widows. As it was nearly their last meeting, Colonel Briggs thanked them for all their demanding work, and there were various votes of thanks given to individuals including JW Dane, one of their joint secretaries.<sup>220</sup>

Clearly, there were many contacts between the men and those left at home especially during the War years.

### **Officers and Men**

Many of the officers and men of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers had contacts with Naas. These are a few examples.

#### George Weldon

Captain George Anderson Weldon was the first officer killed during the Second Anglo-Boer War. He was the son of Colonel Thomas Weldon of the Indian Army and the grandson of Sir Anthony Weldon of Kilmoroney, Athy. He was commissioned into the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in 1886 and promoted to Captain in 1889. He was a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and was killed on 20 October

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<sup>216</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 17 November 1917.

<sup>217</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 26 December 1914.

<sup>218</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 14 January 1916.

<sup>219</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 22 March 1919.

<sup>220</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 19 April 1919.

1899 at Talana Hill. Memorials to him remain in St Michael's Church, Athy,<sup>221</sup> and in St David's Church in Naas.

### Arthur Loveband

The commanding officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Loveband who was based in Naas – see Figure 5 below. He was described as 'diminutive'<sup>222</sup>.



**Figure 5: Arthur Loveband<sup>223</sup> (© Imperial War Museums)**

He was born in Devon in 1865 and completed his education in Sandhurst Military College in 1885. He was commissioned into the regular Army on 28 August 1885. He served as a lieutenant from August 1885 to December 1894 and as a captain to February 1896. He married Alice Mabel Manders on 4 February 1894. They had one child, Lettice, who was born in 1901. He was appointed Adjutant to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion from February 1896 to May 1901. He later transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion in February 1902. On 15 February 1902, he was ordered to go to South Africa.<sup>224</sup> He was described as a popular officer, and his friends wished him a good voyage and a speedy and safe return.<sup>225</sup> He became a major with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion on 10 April 1907. He was awarded Chancery of the Order of St Michael and St John on 18 February 1915. He was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel but unfortunately was killed on 25 May 1915. He is buried in Belgium.<sup>226</sup>

Lieutenant-Colonel Loveband had strong connections with St David's Church of Ireland Church in Naas and is remembered on its plaque to the First World War dead of the Parish (see Figure 6 overleaf).

<sup>221</sup> <http://athyeyeonthepast.blogspot.com/1993/10/captain-george-weldon.html> (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>222</sup> <https://astreetnearyou.org/person/1619386/Lieutenant-Colonel-Arthur--Loveband> (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>223</sup> <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/lifestory/2706655>.

<sup>224</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 15 February 1902.

<sup>225</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 15 February 1902.

<sup>226</sup> <https://astreetnearyou.org/person/1619386/Lieutenant-Colonel-Arthur--Loveband> (accessed 15/02/2022).

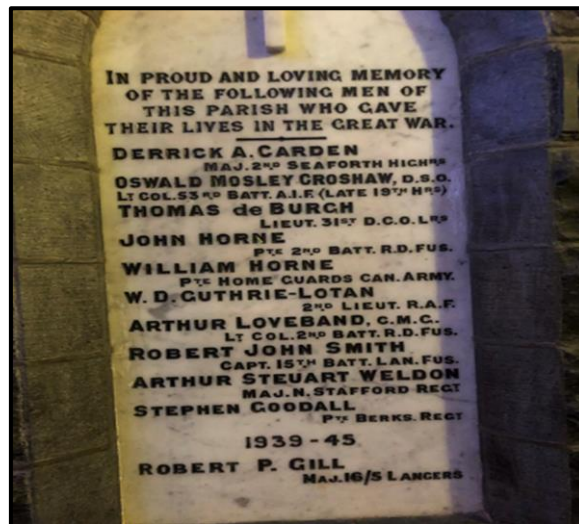


Figure 6: WW1 Memorial in the porch of St David's Church, Naas (Author's photo)

### The Byrne Family

Private Michael Byrne was a Royal Dublin Fusilier and former Army bandsman who died at home in New Row, Naas, in January 1915 of heart failure following bronchitis. He was buried with full military honours. He had become a taxi driver following discharge. After the outbreak of war in 1914, he re-joined in Naas and was attached to the Depot. His sons, Sergeant Laurence Byrne and Private Michael Byrne, were then serving with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion in Gallipoli.<sup>227</sup>

Later in 1916, the *Kildare Observer* reported that Sergeant Laurence Byrne was awarded the Military Medal for bravery. He was then one of four brothers, all serving with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.<sup>228</sup> The following Tables 7 and 8 show the Byrne family in the 1901 and 1911 Censuses.<sup>229</sup>

Residents of a house 55 in Limerick Road (Naas Urban, Kildare)										
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Show all information										
Surname	Forename	Age	Sex	Relation to head	Religion	Birthplace	Occupation	Literacy	Irish Language	Marital Status
Byrne	Michael	35	Male	Head of Family	Roman Catholic	Co Carlow	Drummer R.D.F	Read and write	-	Married
Byrne	Mary	36	Female	Wife	Roman Catholic	Co Kildare	Laundress	Read and write	-	Married
Byrne	Lawrence	15	Male	Son	Roman Catholic	Co Kildare	Scholar	Read and write	-	Not Married
Byrne	Kathrine	13	Female	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Co Kildare	Scholar	Read and write	-	Not Married
Byrne	Richard	11	Male	Son	Roman Catholic	Co Kildare	Scholar	Read and write	-	Not Married
Byrne	Michael	9	Male	Son	Roman Catholic	Co Kildare	Scholar	Read and write	-	Not Married
Byrne	Christopher	7	Male	Son	Roman Catholic	Co Kildare	Scholar	Read and write	-	Not Married
Byrne	Gertruth	5	Female	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Co Kildare	Scholar	Read and write	-	Not Married
Byrne	Alexander	3	Male	Son	Roman Catholic	Co Kildare	-	Cannot read or write	-	Not Married
Byrne	Henry	1	Male	Son	Roman Catholic	Co Kildare	-	Cannot read or write	-	Not Married

Table 7: The Byrne family in the 1901 Census

<sup>227</sup> Lecane, *Beneath a Turkish Sky*, p 66.

<sup>228</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 18 November 1916.

<sup>229</sup> Census 1901 and Census 1911 (accessed 15/02/2022).

Residents of a house 11 in Limerick Road (Naas Urban, Kildare)										
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Show all information										
Surname	Forename	Age	Sex	Relation to head	Religion	Birthplace	Occupation	Literacy	Irish Language	Marital
Byrne	Michael	45	Male	Head of Family	R C	Co Kildare	Car Man	Read and write	English	Married
Byrne	Mary	47	Female	Wife	R C	Co Kildare	-	Read and write	-	Married
Byrne	Richard	20	Male	Son	R C	Co Kildare	Grocers Porter	Read and write	-	Single
Byrne	Thomas	17	Male	Son	R C	Co Kildare	Messenger	Read and write	-	Single
Byrne	Gertruth	15	Female	Daughter	R C	Co Kildare	Carpet Maker	Read and write	-	Single
Byrne	Alexander	13	Male	Son	R C	Co Kildare	Scholar	Read and write	-	Single
Byrne	Henery	11	Male	Son	R C	Co Kildare	Scholar	Read and write	-	Single
Byrne	Edward	9	Male	Son	R C	Co Kildare	Scholar	Read	-	Single
Byrne	Vincent	7	Male	Son	R C	Co Kildare	Scholar	Read	-	Single
Byrne	Geraldine	5	Female	Daughter	R C	-	-	Cannot read write	-	-

**Table 8: The Byrne family in the 1911 Census**

### Charles Brumby

Another with connections to Naas was the Brumby family. Charles Brumby was English by birth, but his wife came from Westmeath. He was a Sergeant-Major with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Their daughter, Annabella, was christened in St David's Church. They are recorded in the 1901 Census – see Table 9 below. By 1911, he had retired and moved to Dublin.<sup>230</sup>

Charles Brumby was a particularly popular man and oversaw presentations to men leaving the Army. In August 1898, he made a presentation to Colour-Sergeant Fitzpatrick on behalf of the members of the Mess and pointed out that he would be missed as he was a first-class drill instructor. On the same day, he made a second presentation to Sergeant Harry Smith who was leaving the Army and getting married.<sup>231</sup> The retirement of Quartermaster Harry Byres was celebrated in March 1899; the presentation was again made by Sergeant-Major Brumby who expressed regret at his leaving. He was in the Barracks during the 1901 Census – see Table 1 above. He probably spent some time in South Africa as well.

Surname	Forename	Townland/Street	DED	County	Age	Sex
<a href="#">Brumby</a>	<a href="#">Charles</a>	Naas East	Naas Urban	Kildare	40	M
<a href="#">Brumby</a>	<a href="#">Rachael</a>	Limerick Road	Naas Urban	Kildare	33	F
<a href="#">Brumby</a>	<a href="#">Isabella</a>	Limerick Road	Naas Urban	Kildare	12	F
<a href="#">Brumby</a>	<a href="#">Amelia</a>	Limerick Road	Naas Urban	Kildare	10	F
<a href="#">Brumby</a>	<a href="#">Bertha</a>	Limerick Road	Naas Urban	Kildare	2	F

**Table 9: The Brumby family in the 1901 Census**

<sup>230</sup> 1901 Census and 1911 Census (accessed 15/02/2022).

<sup>231</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 27 August 1898.

### The Lawless Brothers

The final example of a family with Naas connections were the Lawless brothers. They did not grow up in Naas but were associated with the town through their father, Denis Lawless, the caretaker of Maudlins Cemetery, the Church of Ireland cemetery on the Dublin Road.

Private William Lawless, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, his eldest son, was awarded the Military Medal for bravery in 1917; a bar was added in 1918 with two parchment certificates signed by General Cayley. He married Ruth Llewellyn Brown in St David's Church in 1922. The youngest brother, Private Richard Lawless, was in the Army Service Corps (Mechanical Support) and was not yet 18 years old in late 1918. He had been in France for the previous six months.<sup>232</sup> Another brother, Private Denis Lawless, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, had also been recommended for the Military Medal and was still in the British Army in 1922. He only retired in 1937 after 21 years of service.<sup>233</sup> When he came home, he got a job as a grave digger in Maudlins Cemetery. He lived in the Sexton's House beside the Cemetery where he raised a family. His daughter and granddaughter are still involved with St David's Church today.

### **Conclusion**

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers during their 40 years in Naas made many contacts with the people of Naas. They had a strong economic effect on the town, and the purchasing power of the men and families made a difference to Naas and its surrounding area. Their children went to school in Naas, and when the Regiment was disbanded, the numbers in the Church of Ireland School, St David's, went down over the next decade. They attended St David's Church, got married there and brought their children to the Church to be baptised.

However, the greatest contacts were social, especially the band. They were out playing on a regular basis, and their playing was enjoyed by the people of Naas for many years. It could be suggested that this was missed the most by the people of Naas when they boarded the train to go to Hampshire in 1922.

This is only a beginning of the description of the contacts between the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and Naas. Further research could be undertaken using Appendix 2 and the Census records.

\* \* \*

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Census 1901.

Census 1911.

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<sup>232</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 19 October 1918.

<sup>233</sup> Durney, *In Time of War*, p 166.



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## **Acknowledgements**

Tailte Éireann for permission to reproduce the historic map of Naas, Co Kildare.

The National Archives of Ireland for permission to reproduce the images of the 1901 and 1911 Census records.

## Appendix 1

### Men from Naas who enlisted

(Those who joined the Royal Dublin Fusiliers are in bold type below)

*THE KILDARE OBSERVER* 25 March 1916

#### Naas Roll of Honour

#### HEROES FROM OUR MIDST

(Special to "Kildare Observer")

Below we give the Naas Roll of Honour, being a return, so far as available, of men either natives or residents of the town who have joined the colours since the outbreak of war. The list has been prepared in connection with the proposal to issue certificates of Honour to the relatives of our soldiers who have come forward to assist in the defence of country and of Empire. It is necessarily incomplete by reason of the difficulty in procuring particulars. Should omissions be noticed in the light – as doubtless they will be – and readers will forward us names, particulars of men whose names do not appear in the list, we shall be happy to make the necessary amendments and forward same to the Controller of Recruiting of so that certificates may be issued.

#### B.

Brown, Lieut. J. Barry, Connaught Rangers; **Barnett, Alex, R.D.F;** **Bolger, John, do.;** Brown, J., Irish Guards (killed); **Butler, George J., R.D.F.;** **Boyne, John do;** **Bourke, John J., R.D.F.;** Byrne, Thomas, R.F.A.; **Brien, Patrick, R.D.F.;** Boyle, James V., H.L.I., Boyle, Joseph, Conn. Rangers; Bermingham, Patk., do.; Berney, J., S.I. Horse; Brennan, J., R.F.A.; **Byrne, Patrick, R.D.F.;** **Thos, do.**

#### C.

**Carter Sec.-Lieut. R. W., R.D.F.(wounded);** **Clare, George, do.;** **Casson, R., do.;** Curley, Michael, A.S.C.; **Caveney, James, R.D.F., Courtney, Thomas, do.;** Coughlan, Patk., A.S.C., **Courtney, A.T., R.D.F., Coady, James, do., Cosgrove, Patrick, do.,** Corcoran, Michael, R.F.A.; **Curran, Stephen, R.D.F;** **Clements W. J., do., Clery, W. J., do.,** Connolly, C., C.; A.C.C; **Coady, M., R.D.F.**

#### D.

**Doyle, John, R.D.F.;** **Dunne, Jas., do.;** **Doyle, Thomas, do.;** **Daly, Thomas so.;** **Donohoe, Murtha, do. (prisoner);** **Desmond, D., R.D.F.;** **Doran, J., do (prisoner);** **Daly, J, C.R.;** **Dwen, E., R.D.F., Dowd, John, do.;** **Dignam, Michael, do;** **Daly, Patrick, do.;** **Dunne, Edward, do.;** **Dennison, Michl., do.;** **Doyle, Richard, do.**

#### E.

**Egan, J.C., R.D.F.;** **Eacret, Richard, do.**

#### F.

**Fitzpatrick, J. J., R.D.F.;** **Foley, Geo., do.;** **Fennell, W., Do.;** Fox, James, R.I.F.; Foley, Peter, Irish Guards; Farrell, Thos., A.O.C.; Farrell, Andrew, Conn Rangers; **Fennessy, Patrick. R.D.F.;** Fleming, J., S.I. Horse; **Fennessy, John, R.D.F.;** Farnan, W., A.C.C.

#### G.

**Guilfoyle, Martin, R.D.F.;** **Gray, Patk., do.;** **Gray, Edward, do.;** **Gray, John. do.;** **Gray, Patk., do.;** **Gordon, John do.;** Grant, D., A.S.C.; Gleeson, Patk., Irish Guards; Granger, Maurice, do.

(killed); Granger Myles, do.; Gogarty, Michael, Flying Corps; Gordon, James, R.I. Regt.; Griffin, Richard, 4th Hussars.

## H.

**Hughes, Martin, R.D.F.; Hayes, Jas., do.;** Hayes, Jas., A.G.S.; Hartigan, R., A.S.C.; Hornidge, Wm., R.F.; Hooks, Jas, A.S.C.; Harrington, Michael, Irish, Gds.; **Hickey, Patrick, R.D.F.; Hanlon, Denis, do.; Harris, Samuel, do.;** Hughes, Joseph, S.I. Horse; **Hughes, Patrick, R.D.F.;** Hickey, W., A.C.C.; **Hickey, John, R.D.F.**

## J.

**Johnson Albert E., R.D.F.; Johnson, Thomas, R.D.F;** Johnston, Myles, R.M.F.; Johnston, Philip, Scots Guards.

## K.

Knox, Sec.-Lieut., Con. Rangers; **Kelly, Patrick, R.D.F.; Kehoe, Thos., do.;** Kelly, Laurence, do.; Kelly, C., Con. Rangers; Kelly, John, A.S.C.; Kerrigan, Thomas, R.F.; **Kelly, Lee, R.D.F.;** **Kavanagh, John, do.;** **Kelly, Lee., do.;** **Kelly Chris., do.;** **Kerry, Frederick, do.;** Kelly, John, A.S.C.; **Kavanagh, E., R.D.F.;** Kelly, John, R.I. Rifles.

## L.

**Lagrue, Peter, R.D.F.;** **Loughlin, John do.;** **Leeson, James, do, Loughran, John, do.;** **Lennon, Wm. do.;** **Leonard, Patk, do.;** Lee, James, R.F.; Lennon, William, 1st South Wales Borderers; **Lennon, P., R.D.F.;** **Loughran, Michael, do.;** **Lynch, W., S.I. Horse;** **Leeson, Patk., R.D.F;** Lockman, P., A.C.C.; Lacy, Joseph, R.M.L.I

## M.

**Morrin, Thos., R.D.F.;** **Mahon, Thos., do.;** **Martin, John, do.;** **Mahon, Chris., do.;** Morrison, Mathew, Leinsters; **Martin, Thos., R.D.F.;** **Morrison, Samuel, do.;** **Mooney, R., do.;** Masterson, P., do.; **Marsh, John, R.D.F.;** **Morrin, Matthew, R.D.F.;** Martin, John, A.O.C.; **Maguire, Thomas, R.D.F.;** Masterson, W. M., Black Watch (killed); **McHolmes, James, R.D.F.;** **McGarr, Michael, do.;** **McGrath, James, do.;** **Mooney, M., do.;** **McGarr, John, do.**

## N.

Newell, James, A.S.C.; Nolan, Samuel R.E.; **Nolan, Patk., R.D.F.**

## O.

**O'Brien, J., R.D.F.;** O'Brien, William, S.I. Horse.

## P.

**Pearse, Thos., R.D.F.;** Plant, Patrick, A.S.C.; **Purcell, John J., R.D.F.**

## Q.

**Quinn, Patk., R.D.F.;** **Quinn, John, do.;** **Quinn, Thomas, do.;** **Quaile, T., do.;** **Quaile, T., do.,** Quinn, Thos., Irish Gds.; Quinn, Thomas, R.M.F.: Quinn, Thomas, Scots Guards.

## R

**Rourke, John, R.D.F.;** **Ross, Wm., do.;** **Rogers, Patrick do.;** **Robinson, N., do.;** **Ring, Chris., do.;** **Rogers, John, do.;** **Reilly, Wm., do.;** **Robinson, James, do.;** (wounded); Rafferty, Joseph, A.C.C., **Rochford, John, R.D.F.;** **Ryan, Thos, F., do.;** **Rogers, James, do.**

## S

Smith, Captain R. J., Lancashire Fus.; Scully, D., Durham L.I.; **Shea, William, R.D.F.;** **Shea, Patrick, do, Semmence, A. A., do.;** **Semmence, Ronald A., do., (wounded);** Sargent, Mervyn,

V., R.A.M.C.; Shea. P., Con. Rangers; Sheridan, **Patk., R.D.F.**; **Sargent, E., R.D.F.**; **Shiels, M., R.D.F.**, **Sargent, A., do.**; **Stockton, F., do.**

## T

Tracy, Lieut. Cantrell, A.V.C.; **Toole, Michael, R.D.F.**; Treacy, Patrick, R.G.A.; **Treacy, Chris., R.D.F.**; **Treacy, James, do.**; **Treacy, Thomas, do.**

## W

Whitehead, Charles V., R.E.; **Wilson, Henry, R.F.A.**; Waldron, John, Cheshire Regt.; Walton, Albert, R.F.C, **Walsh, Thomas, R.D.F.**; **Walsh, Stephen, do.**; **Waldron, Thomas, do.**

### *THE KILDARE OBSERVER 1 April 1916*

#### **Naas Roll of Honour**

In addition to the list of 197 Naas men whose names appeared in our last issue as having joined the colours since the out-break of war, we have received the following, which were omitted, and have forwarded them to the controller of Recruiting for the county:

**B – Baldry, F., R.D.F.**; Butler, James, Machine Gun Corps; **Bermingham, Joseph, R.D.F., (killed)**; Byrne, Laurence, East Lanes.; Byrne, Thomas, A.S.C.: Boyhan, 2nd-Lieut. T.F., R.I.R.; Brooks, J., R.F.A.; **Burke, James, R.D.F.**; **Bermingham, Patrick, do.**

**C – Chanler, John, Canadians.**

**H – Hale. - Royal Flying Corps; Hanlon. Denis, R.D.F.; Harris, Samuel, do.**; Harrington, T., Irish Guards; Hickey, Patrick, do.

**K – Kelly, Martin, Conn. Rangers; Kearney, Patrick, R.D.F.**

**L – Legge, Thomas, R.H.A, Lennon, John, R.D.F. (wounded).**

**M – Meredith, F.C., Driscoll's Scouts; Marsh, T., R.F.A.**; McDermott, R., Inniskilling Fusiliers; Morrin, Jas., R.A.M.C.

**N – Noone, Edward, Irish Guards; Nolan, P., R.D.F.**

**R – Roger, John, Irish Guards; Reilly, Christopher, R.D.F. (dead).**

**S – Smith, George, A.S.C.**

**T – Turpin, Sec.-Lieut. H., R.I. Rifles; Treacy, Thomas, R.D.F.**; Treacy, Thomas, 5th Lancers.

**W – Walsh, T., R.D.F.**; Wheeler, J., R.I. Rifles.

## Appendix 2

### Baptisms in St David's Church, 1882-1893

Name of Baby	Parents	Father's Occupation	Date	Other Details
Maud Elizabeth Holloway		Drummer-Major, RDF	1 December 1882	Performed by Curate
Jack Roberts		Sergeant, RDF	7 January 1883	Performed by Curate
Louisa Owen	John and Elizabeth	Bugler, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Battalion, RDF	10 January 1883	
Louisa Maud Baker		Quartermaster-Sergeant	6 May 1883	
William Henry Jones		Barrack Sergeant	18 July 1883	
Llewelyn John Remington		Private, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion, RDF	24 October 1883	
Margaret Kate Moon		Sergeant, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Battalion, RDF	7 May 1884	
Catherine May Greene		Private, RDF	14 May 1884	
Alfred Edwin Oliver		Quartermaster-Sergeant	5 October 1884	
Winfred Frances Mary Clarke		Orderly Room Sergeant		
Elizabeth Mary Lloyd Dwen		Private, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Battalion, RDF	22 April 1885	Address – The Barracks, Naas
Helen Blanche Holloway		Bugler-Major, RDF	22 April 1885	Address – The Barracks, Naas
Susannah May Jones		Colour-Sergeant, RDF	17 June 1885	Address – The Barracks, Naas
Eustace Spencer Godfrey Bird		Captain, RDF	2 September 1885	
George Henry and Frederick Charles Andrews		Sergeant, RDF	16 October 1885	
Margaretta Arabella Wakefield		Private	28 April 1885	



Thomas Percy Sibley		Sergeant-Major, RDF	14 August 1886	
Florence Ada Oliver		Quartermaster-Sergeant, RDF	27 October 1886	
Arthur William Baker		Lance-Corporal, RDF	16 March 1887	
William John Powell		Sergeant, RDF	25 March 1887	
Sarah Lillian Wakefield		Private, RDF	20 April 1887	
Viola Cecelia May Wernham		Sergeant Instructor of Musketry, RDF	25 May 1887	
Mary Jane Dwen		Sergeant, RDF	6 July 1887	
Mary Jane Hutchinson		Sergeant, RDF	20 July 1887	
Arthur Thomas Moore		Colour-Sergeant, RDF	24 August 1887	
Jane Anne Thompson		Sergeant, RDF	24 September 1887	
Susan Jane Byers		Sergeant, RDF	31 March 1888	
Herbert John Holloway		Sergeant Drum Major	23 May 1888	
Irene Matilda Sibley		Sergeant-Major	12 December 1888	Address – The Barracks, Naas
Violet Gertrude Oliver		Sergeant, RDF	19 December 1888	
Frank Herbert Baker		Corporal, RDF	14 July 1889	
Jessy Beatrice Andrews		Sergeant, RDF	11 September 1889	
Phoebe Wakefield		Corporal, RDF	11 September 1889	
Charles Raymond		Colour-Sergeant, RDF	15 January 1890	
George Elliot Byers		Sergeant, RDF	2 April 1890	
Cecil James Bishop		Sergeant, RDF	16 April 1890	

Ethel Maud Hetherington		Colour-Sergeant, RDF	1 April 1891	
Amelia Brumby		Colour-Sergeant, RDF	15 April 1891	
Ernest James Jackson		Sergeant, RDF	29 April 1891	
Horace Edgar Andrews		Sergeant, RDF	29 April 1891	
Percy Albert Oliver		Quartermaster-Sergeant, RDF	6 May 1891	
Mabel Wakefield		Corporal, RDF	3 June 1891	
Edith Anna Swan		Sergeant, RDF	1 July 1891	
Theresa Maud Baker		Corporal, RDF	25 October 1891	
Frances Mary Byers		Sergeant instructor, RDF	25 November 1891	
William Alexander Grant Downer	Frances Edward and Delphina	Colour-Sergeant, RDF	1892 (date unclear)	Railway Terrace
Charlotte Wakefield		Sergeant, RDF	3 May 1893	

**Private Patrick Mulhall 4796, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and  
74027, Machine Gun Corps: A Military Biography**

**Adrian Fingleton**



**Patrick Mulhall: 7 September 1892 - 21 March 1918**

**Introduction**

Patrick Mulhall was born in Plewman's Row, Athy, Co Kildare, on 7 September 1892 to Patrick and Esther Mulhall (née Leonard). In the 1901 Census, Patrick, a scholar aged 8, was living at 18 Upper William Street, Athy, with his parents, three older sisters and an older brother. Ten years later in the 1911 Census, he was declared to be a 20 year old general labourer and was living at 17 Upper William Street, Athy, with his parents, a brother, brother-in-law and nephew.

**Service as a Reservist**

On 1 June 1908, Patrick, a labourer, enlisted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion (Special Reserve) of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers (RDF) at Carlow for six years and was allotted the number of 4796. His declared age was 18, but having regard to his date of birth, he appears on enlistment to have been not yet 16. Patrick's height was 5 foot 7 inches, and his weight was 109 lbs. He initially completed five months' training from June to October 1908 inclusive at the RDF Depot in Naas. He returned for a few weeks of training in the summers of 1909, 1910, 1911 and 1912 but was granted leave in 1913.

Having completed his six years of service in the Reserve, Patrick was re-engaged for another four years on 30 May 1914 and undertook his annual training in late June and early July 1914. On the outbreak of WW1 in early August 1914, he was called up for permanent service and remained in Ireland for about three months. On 20 October 1914, Patrick married Annie Stynes in St Michael's Church, Athy. His older brother, William, had already married Annie's sister, Kate, in 1909. On 3 November 1917, Annie Mulhall had one child, also christened Annie.



**Private Patrick Mulhall (on right) with 'another Athy man' (name unknown)**

### **France/Belgium**

In order to replenish the losses of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, RDF, in the early months of the War, Patrick and many others were posted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and sent to France on 27 November 1914. That winter, the Battalion was deployed close to Ypres/Ieper in Belgium where they regularly suffered casualties from sniping and shellfire.

During the Second Battle of Ypres/Ieper in April/May 1915, the RDF suffered serious casualties in a number of German attacks in which poison gas was regularly used to disable the defending troops. In one of these incidents on 2 May, the Battalion resisted a German gas attack on its trenches in front of St Julien which most affected the men of the left company. According to his casualty record, Patrick sustained a shrapnel wound on 4 May and was diagnosed as suffering from gas poisoning on the following day. As there was no reported gas attack in the intervening days, it

seems likely that Patrick was one of those poisoned by gas on 2 May. In the event, he was transferred to Dover on 8 May. His record places him 'at home', presumably recuperating, from 9 May to 15 October 1915. It is not clear if he returned to Ireland during this period.

### **Gallipoli/Egypt**

On 16 October 1915, Patrick was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, RDF, and sent to Gallipoli. Fortunately he missed the initial landings at V Beach on Cape Helles in April 1915 and at Suvla Bay in August 1915 when hundreds died. As a result perhaps of the reputation of this battleground, he made a will on 28 October and left all of his property and effects to his wife, Annie, living in Grangemellon, Athy. From his arrival in late October/early November for a period of six weeks, the Battalion was stationed at Suvla where they improved trenches and suffered occasional shell and sniper fire from the Turkish Army. Conditions deteriorated as winter set in with men suffering from exposure on top of the illnesses resulting from the poor sanitary conditions.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was withdrawn from Suvla on 14 December and redeployed back to Cape Helles. When the offensive at Gallipoli was abandoned soon afterwards, the Battalion was withdrawn to Suez in early January 1916. Shortly after arrival, Patrick was hospitalised with myalgia (muscle pain) for a number of weeks but re-joined his unit on 31 January.

### **France/Belgium**

Six weeks later, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was sent to France arriving in Marseilles on 19 March. Over the following months, it rotated in and out of the front line near Auchonvilliers in northern France.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion took part in the opening phase of the Battle of the Somme on 1 July at Beaumont Hamel in northern France which had limited success. Patrick is not recorded as one of the 218 Battalion casualties that day.

In late July, the Battalion was moved to Belgium where it alternated between Poperinge and Ypres/leper. In late August, Patrick was diagnosed with dysentery and its associated conditions, colitis and diarrhoea, and he was withdrawn to hospital in Boulogne.

When he recovered, he was posted to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, RDF, on 12 September 1916, presumably to help replenish the Battalion's losses after its successful capture of Ginchy in northern France. A week later, the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division (including the 9<sup>th</sup> Dublins) was deployed near Kemmel in southern Belgium close to the French border. On 11 October, Patrick was appointed a Lance Corporal in the Battalion.

In April 1917, the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division began training for a planned summer assault on the German lines. The attack on the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge on 7 June, in which the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division, the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division and other units participated, was a significant success. The attack was preceded by a coordinated series of devastating mine explosions under German lines. The 48<sup>th</sup> (Dublin Fusiliers) Brigade (including the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion) was in reserve in the initial part of the attack.

In August 1917, the 48<sup>th</sup> Brigade participated in an attack on the Frezenberg Ridge, part of the Third Battle of Ypres/leper. Weakened by losses from regular German shelling, the subsequent



attack on Langemarck failed. Only isolated parties managed to get near their objectives such was the intensity of German machine gun fire. Patrick's casualty record suggests that he was wounded in an arm and fingers during the Battle of Langemarck on 16 August and was withdrawn from the front line to recuperate.

When Patrick returned to duty on 27 October, he was given leave for the period 31 October to 10 November inclusive and may have travelled home to Athy, as this period of leave coincided with infant Annie's birth on 3 November 1917 in Grangemellon, Athy.

It is unclear to what Dubs' Battalion Patrick returned, as around that time the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Battalions were amalgamated to form a composite 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Battalion with the surplus of men going to the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion. However in February 1918, these Battalions were themselves disbanded, as a result of which the men were re-assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions of the Dubs and other units including the 19<sup>th</sup> Entrenching Battalion.

The 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Machine Gun Corps (MGC), was formed on 9 March 1918 from the machine gun companies of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division. Patrick joined the Battalion that day and was allotted the number 74027 in the Corps. The stated reasons on his record for the transfer from the Royal Dublin Fusiliers were 'benefit of service' and 'rates of pay for MGC infantry'. It is unclear if he was already in a machine gun company with the Dubs.

When the German Army launched 'Operation Michael' less than two weeks later on 21 March 1918, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions of the Dubs and other units in the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division were forced to retire from their defences close to the village of Ronssoy in northern France. A similar outcome occurred elsewhere along the Somme front, such was the overwhelming strength of the initial German attack. It was later estimated that casualties in the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division amounted to over 200 officers and 5,300 other ranks during the first four days of Operation Michael. The majority of these casualties occurred in the initial 24 hours of the attack.

Within the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division, the loss estimate for the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the MGC was 12 officers and 500 other ranks. Patrick Mulhall was one of those reported on 22 March as missing in action by the officer commanding the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Although Patrick's body was never recovered, his death was confirmed by letter dated 14 August 1919 to his widow Annie. Patrick's death on 21 March is remembered on Panel 90 to 93 of the Pozières Memorial near Albert in northern France.

### **Conclusion**

After the War, Annie received his three War medals, the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal (pictured on the following page).

She never remarried, and her only daughter was Annie (Peg) Mulhall. Peg was largely reared by Annie's family, while Annie worked 'in service' in various locations. When Peg got married in June 1947, she and her husband, Kevin Fingleton, moved in with Annie and lived together in Grangemellon, Athy, until Annie died on 25 December 1976. Peg herself died seven years later, on 20 March 1983. Peg Fingleton and Kevin Fingleton had one son, Adrian (the author of this biography), born in 1956.



\* \* \*

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## WW1 Memorials in Saint Ann's Church, Dawson Street, Dublin

John F Sheehan

### Deceased Parishioners of St Ann's Church who were Royal Dublin Fusiliers and died in WW1

For many years, I have attended various events in Saint Ann's Church, especially the service each year to commemorate Anzac Day which is normally followed by a reception hosted by the Lord Mayor of Dublin in the Mansion House, Dawson Street.

However until recently, I didn't observe the mosaic tiling at the back of the main altar (see the author's accompanying picture) which contains the names of 35 parishioners who were killed in the Great War 1914-1918. Nor did I realise that amongst those names were men of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. On discovering this, I carried out some research on all of those named on the mosaic tiling. This was quite easy to do, as in addition to the names, the tiling also states the Regiment to which the men belonged.



I set out hereunder those named and brief information as to who these men were:

**2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Ray Lancaster-Bell**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, RDF: Born in Ballinasloe, Co Galway. Resided at 23 Morehampton Road, Donnybrook, Dublin 4. Killed on 17 May 1915 at Ulanentynghe, Ypres, aged 19 years. He was the only son of Alfred and Annie Bell. He is buried at Vlamertinghe Military Cemetery – grave reference IE.10.

**Pte William Sinclair Boyd 14165**, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, RDF: Killed on 16 August 1915 at Gallipoli, aged 22 years. Son of James Sinclair and Amelia Boyd of 22 Mountainview Road, Ranelagh, Dublin 6. He is remembered on the Helles Memorial, Panel 192 to 197.

**Lt Ernest Lawrence Julian**, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, RDF: Killed on 8 August 1915 at Gallipoli, aged 36 years. Son of the late John and Margaret Julian of Drumbane, Birr, Co Offaly and 28 Lr Leeson Street, Dublin. He held the Reid Professorship of Criminal Law at Trinity College, Dublin. He is remembered on the Helles Memorial, Panel 192 to 197.

**Pte Charles J McDonald 14395**, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, RDF: Killed on 16 August 1915 at Gallipoli, aged 27 years. Only son of Thomas J and Elizabeth McDonald of 104 Marlborough Road, Donnybrook, Dublin. He is remembered on Special Memorial 15 in the Azmak Cemetery, Suvla.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Thomas Maxwell**, 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, RDF: Killed on 9 September 1916 in Ginchy at the Battle of the Somme, aged 20 years. Son of Dr Patrick W Maxwell and Elizabeth Suckling Maxwell of 19 Lr Baggot Street, Dublin. He is buried in the Guillemont Road Cemetery – grave reference III.G.8.

**Pte Charles Potter 11525**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, RDF: Killed on 24 May 1915 at the Somme. He is remembered on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial – Panel 46.

**Capt William R Richards**, 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, RDF: Killed on 15 August 1915 at Gallipoli, aged 24 years. Son of John William Richards JP and Adelaide Prudentia Richards of Rath, Greystones, Co Wicklow, and 51 Merrion Square, Dublin. Whilst a student at Trinity College in May 1914, he was awarded the gold medal for first place at the Incorporated Law Society final examinations. He was also a member of Trinity College Officer Training Corps. He is buried at Green Hill Cemetery – grave reference II.B.22.

Included on the memorial is a **John Smith**. But as I found a number of J Smiths in my research, I was unable to establish with certainty any further details about him.

Several other Irishmen, parishioners of Saint Ann's, enlisted in a wide number of other Irish and non-Irish regiments. For example, Thomas Bould enlisted in the Royal Munster Fusiliers along with George Evans. Frederick Harrison and Henry Oulton joined the Leinster Regiment. Walter Harpur joined the Irish Guards. Quite a few joined the Royal Irish Fusiliers and the Royal Irish Rifles. Arthur Bell Thompson and Eddie Wilson joined the South Irish Horse.

### **Deceased Parishioners of St Mark's Church who were Royal Dublin Fusiliers and died in WW1**

In addition to those remembered on the mosaic tiles, there is another memorial located at the right hand side of the church. This bronze plaque (see the author's picture on the following page) was originally installed in Saint Mark's Church in Pearse Street, Dublin. With the closure of Saint Mark's, the plaque was re-located to Saint Ann's Church. This plaque contains 24 names of those killed in the Great War. It does not however contain any further information beyond the names. However, my subsequent research revealed that three of those named were members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

The three in question are as follows:



**Pte Leo D Matthews 11375**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, RDF: Killed on 24 May 1915, aged 18 years. Student of Townparks, Galway. Resided at 32 Pembroke Street, Dublin. He is remembered on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial – Panel 46.

**Pte Alfred Maybury 19532**, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, RDF: Killed in action in France on 30 July 1916, aged 34. Born in Longford. Son of David and Sarah Maybury, Dublin. Married with three children to Frances Maybury of 67 Rueben Avenue, South Circular Road, Dublin. He is buried in the Vermelles British Cemetery – grave reference III.K.11.

**Lance Corp William Payne 24099**, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, RDF: Died on 7 October 1916 of wounds suffered in Gallipoli. He is remembered at the Lahana Military Cemetery, Greece – grave reference II.C.12.



I hope that readers will visit and view these memorials when they have an opportunity to do so and remember these brave men who perished in the Great War.

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## RDFA Trip to Ypres/Ieper, 4 - 7 September 2023

### Seamus Moriarty

#### Monday, 4 September

Ryanair Dublin - Brussels 07.00 flight. On arrival, we met up with our bus and driver, Edgar, for the four day trip. He proved to be highly adept and negotiated tight tracks and turnarounds in Belgium with aplomb. What was even more remarkable was that Edgar is a native of Latvia. Our initial port of call was to **Patrick Foley's Irish Pub**, Ghent ('combines hearty Irish cuisine with the finesse of the Belgian kitchen') for a full Irish breakfast. A planned meet up with a local guide, Mr Steven Sloss, did not materialise due to his non-arrival. Weather was excellent for the whole trip with temperatures reaching 30°C. Accommodation for the 25 strong party was in the perfectly adequate **Hotel New Regina** in Ypres Grote Market, opposite the In Flanders Fields Museum. Ypres was the only major town in Belgium never to have fallen to German occupation during World War 1, but at the cost of being a heap of rubble by War's end.

**Nimy Railway Bridge, Mons:** This was the site of the first VC to be awarded in the War. The recipient, Lt Maurice Dease, was mortally wounded on 23 August 1914 during action on this Bridge which was the first British encounter with Germans in the War. He was from Coole, Co Westmeath, and served with the Royal Fusiliers. 'Though two or three times badly wounded he continued to control the fire of his machine guns - - - until all his men were shot'<sup>234</sup>. Educated at Stoneyhurst and Sandhurst, he had been a pre-War career soldier. A Royal Fusilier colleague, Private Sidney Godley, was likewise awarded a VC in the same engagement but survived the War. Both are remembered on a plaque at the bridge<sup>235</sup> and Dease on a paving stone in Glasnevin Cemetery sponsored by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

**New Irish Farm Cemetery:** This Cemetery near Ypres was named after a nearby farmhouse that had previously been Irish-occupied. Established in August 1917 as a small cemetery, it was gradually enlarged by graves from nearby battlefields and other small cemeteries. Thus the number of graves increased from 73 to 4,500, 70% of them unknown.

**Ypres Town Cemetery and Extension:** This is the burial place of HRH Prince Maurice of Battenburg who died in action on 27 October 1914 aged 23. He was the youngest grandson of Queen Victoria and a cousin of King George V and thus also a cousin of the Kaiser. It was designed by Reginald Bloomfield who was the architect of the Menin Gate. In the early days of the War, some casualties were interred in civilian cemeteries.

#### Tuesday, 5 September

A guided tour of **Mons Memorial Museum** covered the history of the Mons area. In the first weeks of the War in August 1914, Mons was the key battleground. The RDF was not involved in

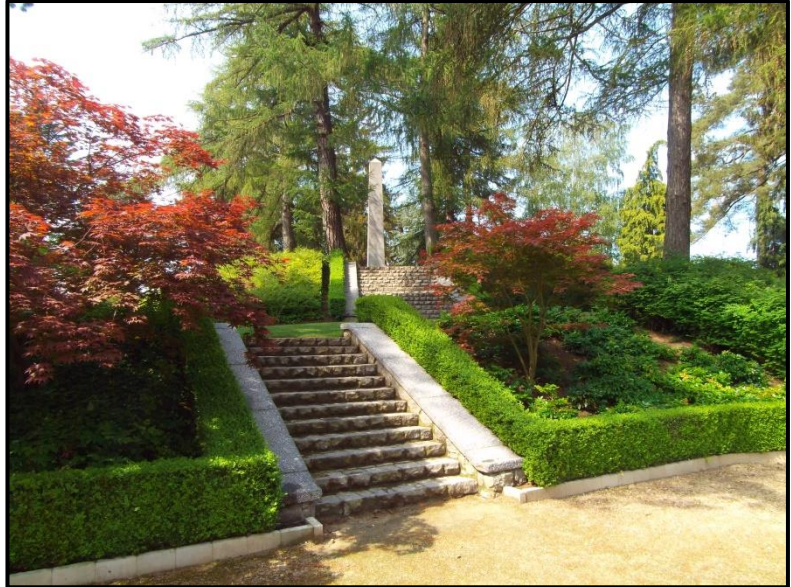
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<sup>234</sup> *London Gazette*, 16 November 1914.

<sup>235</sup> Nimy Bridge Inscription: 'To the glorious memory of the officers, NCOs and men of the 4<sup>th</sup> BN. Royal Fusiliers who held this sector of the British Front in defence of the town of Mons August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1914. This memorial marks the M.G. where the first VCs awarded during the war 1914-18 were gained by Lt. M.J. Dease VC and Pte. S.F. Godley V.C.'

this action at Mons, unlike their colleagues in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Connaught Rangers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Munster Fusiliers and 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Irish Regiment.

Passing the Celtic Cross Memorial to the Royal Irish Regiment unveiled in 1923 and NATO'S Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), the party visited **St Symphorien Military Cemetery** (pictured) where we enjoyed our picnic lunch. Originally established by the German Army, it is the resting place of both German and British soldiers who died in the Battle of Mons. Before the War developed into an industrial killing machine, it resembles a small country park and is very different from later cemeteries. Buried here is Capt Hon Fergus GA Granard, the son of the 7th Earl of Granard, Castleforbes, Co Longford.<sup>236</sup> Severely wounded, he was captured by the Germans and died in their hospital in Westphalia. This was not known until after the War.<sup>237</sup>



Also buried here are John Parr and George Price who are recognised as the first and last Commonwealth soldiers to die in action in World War 1. En route we had a brief road stop at adjacent wall plaques with the Union Jack and Canadian flags commemorating Parr and Price respectively. By an accident of history and in the world's first truly global conflict, the first and last British soldiers died close to each other in the town of Mons, Belgium.

**Hill 60:** Because of its 1,800m height, it was a highly prized target during the War. Seized by the Germans in the First Battle of Ypres in 1914, it was recaptured by the British, with the assistance of mines under the German front lines. Retaken by the Germans with the help of poison gas shells, control alternated several times until it was finally secured by the British in the Battle of Messines in 1917. Some eyebrows were raised among our group at what appears to be a policy of allowing the Hill return to nature with no attempt to control trees and vegetation. This makes a sense of perspective difficult in the absence of views of the surrounding landscape. To compensate however, it does have a dedicated walkway. Amid the trees are the remains of some wartime structures, including a near intact pill box. Originally German, it was later occupied by Australians and modified to fire in the opposite direction. The Hill would also be the scene of heavy fighting in May 1940.

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<sup>236</sup> Granard headstone inscription: 'Capt. Hon. Fergus GA Granard - Royal Irish Regiment 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1914 Age 32 - Son of 7<sup>th</sup> Earl Granard - killed at Mons RIP - Of your charity pray for his soul'.

<sup>237</sup> Presumably his remains were brought to St Symphorien after the War.

**Langemark German War Cemetery** was established in 1915 with casualties from the First Battle of Ypres. Belgium made every effort to accommodate the cemeteries of the Commonwealth war dead, maybe as an appreciation to Britain for going to war in her defence in August 1914. When it came to the German war dead however, they were not so accommodating, not least because of the German atrocities against their civilian population during the conflict. This helps to explain why there are 44,000 soldiers buried here, 25,000 in mass graves. Many of these were brought in from smaller German cemeteries in the region during the 1950s. The layout differs significantly from the Commonwealth cemeteries, and it is adorned with mature oak trees, oak being the national tree of Germany.

There was also a brief visit to the adjacent **Brooding Soldier**, also known as the St Julien Memorial, which stands in tribute to the 18,000 Canadian soldiers who took part in the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915. It was unveiled in 1923 and is considered one of the most poignant memorials in the Ypres Salient.<sup>238</sup>

**Last Post at the Menin Gate:** The Colours of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association and the Machine Gun Corps Association were carried here, directly opposite the Fire Brigade bugler, by two of our group in memory of family members who served in these Regiments. Pictured are the RDFA ceremonial team at the Menin Gate which is undergoing refurbishment. Attendance at this event has been a tradition of RDFA visits to the Ypres region. Because



our accommodation was in Ypres town centre and the Menin Gate only a short walk away, it allowed for an RDFA presence at the Last Post each evening of our stay. This short ceremony involving the Last Post has been conducted every night at 8 pm since 1928.<sup>239</sup> It is dedicated to the Commonwealth soldiers who died in the Ypres Salient and who have no known grave.<sup>240</sup> Since April 2023, the Gate has been closed to allow for a major restoration programme which is due for completion in 2025. The Last Post ceremony continues however on the adjacent bridge. Nearby is the Commonwealth War Graves Information Centre with its display of the Lego Menin Gate Memorial, built with 54,000 Lego bricks by a local furniture maker.

<sup>238</sup> Brooding Soldier plaque inscription: 'This memorial marks the battlefield where 18,000 Canadians on the British left withstood the first German gas attacks the 22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> April 1915, 2,000 fell and lie buried nearby'.

<sup>239</sup> The Last Post ceremony was not held in Ypres during German occupation in WW2, but to ensure no break in continuity, it was moved to Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey.

<sup>240</sup> Menin Gate inscription: 'To the Armies of the British Empire who stood here 1914-18 and who have no known grave'.



### Wednesday, 6 September

Today's itinerary concentrated on the Ypres area. **Bufs Road Cemetery** is one of many similar cemeteries in this region. In an ideal world, we would have visited the historic Mousetrap Farm nearby, but as a working farm, this was not possible. Mousetrap Farm is notable for the first use of gas by the Germans in May 1915, and the RDF were nearly wiped out there. The group was here to commemorate Jeremiah Barnes RDF, who was from Patrick Street in the Liberties and died at the Farm. He has no known grave. He was the great-grandfather of Anthony Barnes, a member of our group, who spoke movingly about him.

In a different, but also Irish, context, this engagement is notable for the death of Sgt William Malone RDF. He was a brother of Volunteer Michael Malone who died in action the following year at Dublin's Mount Street Bridge during the 1916 Rebellion.

**Messines Peace Park** (officially known as the Island of Ireland Peace Park): This site containing an iconic round tower (pictured) was chosen to commemorate World War 1 dead from this island and is close to the Battle of Messines Ridge, where for one of only two occasions in the War, the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) and the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Divisions fought side by side. Initiated by the late Paddy Harte TD and Glen Barr, a loyalist community activist from Derry, it was formally opened on Armistice Day 1998 by President Mary McAleese, Queen Elizabeth II and King Albert II of Belgium. This event was notable as it also marked the first organised RDFA trip to the Western Front.



Lunch was in **Redmond's Pub** in **Loker**. This was followed by our first visit since Covid to the grave of Major Willie Redmond, after whom the pub is named. His grave a short distance away is one of the few on the Western Front that is not in a cemetery. He was a brother of John Redmond, the last leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party. He died in the Battle of Messines Ridge at the age of 56 while serving with the Royal Irish Regiment. He had represented Clare for 25 years in the House of Commons, and in 1914 he led out the Clare GAA team at Croke Park when they won their first senior All-Ireland hurling title.<sup>241</sup> He remains an example of an Irish person who is much better known and respected in another country than the one in which he was born and reared. Early RDFA trips were based in Loker, when visits to his grave were *de rigueur*. During a locally organised event to commemorate the centenary of Redmond's death in 2017, the visit took place at night.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> They would not win another All-Ireland until 1995.

<sup>242</sup> The ensuing by-election occasioned by Redmond's death was won by Éamon De Valera of Sinn Féin, a portent of things to come.

**Frezenberg Ridge** is noted as the second and final time when the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) and 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Divisions fought side by side. This engagement lasted for two days in August 1917 during an early phase of the Battle of Passchendaele. Unfortunately, it would also be the worst day for the Irish since the first day of the Battle of the Somme, with some 600 deaths from each Division and nothing to show for it. Doubly unfortunate was the fact that it was quickly forgotten. In 2017, the RDFA sponsored the erection of a memorial on the road which had divided the 16<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Divisions in that engagement.<sup>243</sup> The bronze plaque attached to the memorial was designed by sculptor, Willie Malone, whose grandfather, William Malone, is mentioned earlier. The 16<sup>th</sup> Division ceased to exist after this debacle, and what was left was subsumed into the French 5<sup>th</sup> Army. Also remembered on the memorial is the Jesuit Chaplain to the RDF, Fr Willie Doyle SJ, who also has no known grave.<sup>244</sup> Pictured are members of our group at the memorial.



**Tyne Cot Cemetery** is the largest CWGC burial ground for Commonwealth forces worldwide. It was built around a German pill box and commemorates those killed at the Battle of Passchendaele. Due to space constraints, the Menin Gate only commemorates the dead of the Ypres area with no known grave up to 15 August 1917. Those who died after that date are on the panels at Tyne Cot. There appears to be some uncertainty as to the origin of the Cemetery's name.

**St Georges Memorial Church, Ypres:** As with so much else in the Ypres area, this was also designed by Reginald Bloomfield and is a memorial to the Commonwealth dead of the Ypres Salient. Every wall is festooned with plaques with names of the fallen, particularly from public schools recalling the numbers of their past pupils who served and died around Ypres. St

<sup>243</sup> The RDFA received great assistance in this venture from a local good friend of the Association, Erwin Ureel.

<sup>244</sup> At Frezenberg Ridge, we met Jo Loettiger of Langemarck Poelcappelle Council. He has been working on finding a better location for the memorial stone. Another local, Trees van Este, also met us at a meal later. She has been helping with our trips to the area for some 20 years.



Columba's College, Rathfarnham, has a plaque indicating that '72 Old Columbians and Masters of the College' died in the Salient. A Dubliner with a prominent plaque in the Church is 'Herbert Celler of Dublin Aged 23 Only son of Herbert and Agnes Killed in Action 16 August 1917'. Google told us that he was a native of Ardee Street, has no known grave but is commemorated on the Celler family grave in Mount Jerome Cemetery.

The adjacent **St Martin's Cathedral** was also visited by the group. This was rebuilt post-War and has no WW1 memorials. But one corner has wreaths commemorating, maybe Ypres residents, who lost their lives in the conflict. On top of these, someone had left a memorial card. The inscription read 'Merciful Jesus Pray for the Soul of Hugh McEvoy RDF Kilcoo Co Down Killed in Action in France 10 August 1917 aged 26 RIP'. The card initially appeared to date from this period, but it lists the names of a niece, a nephew and also three grandnieces. So it could be a case of a family in Northern Ireland, presumably from a nationalist background, going to some lengths in recent years to commemorate a family member who died in World War 1. It is intriguing that the card ended up in this Cathedral.

### **Thursday, 7 September**

This was the final day of our trip, and we availed of the journey to Brussels Airport to call to **Kemmelberg**, the location of one of the War's most ferocious battles. This was in April 1918 just six months before the Armistice. Kemmelberg at 154m high is heavily forested and closely resembles an Irish hill in Wicklow. At its summit is the *Monument aux soldats Francais*. The fact that the French Ossuary just down the hill from this monument contains over 5,000 largely unidentified soldier remains gives an indication of the furious German bombardment that enabled them to capture the Hill.

Lunch was had in Toc H (**Talbot House**) in Poperinge, Toc H being the signaller's code for 'T' and 'H'. It originated as a home from home for the military resting from the front. It was styled as an 'Every Man's Club' where all soldiers were welcome regardless of rank. Notwithstanding this, there were separate sections for officers and men. It has been restored and extended since our last visit in 2019 and is run by volunteers from an international Christian movement.

From there, the party headed back to Brussels Airport for our 19.00 return flight to Dublin. This concluded another successful and highly enjoyable trip in memory of members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who ended their lives in a very different environment to what they had known in Ireland.

Over the four days of the trip, members of the group (particularly Philip Lecane, Brian Moroney, Thomas Murphy and John O'Brien) spoke in turn about interesting aspects of the War in the Ypres area.

In compiling this review of the trip, I must acknowledge in particular the assistance provided by Brian Moroney, Thomas Murphy and my old friend, Wikipedia, who all helped to clarify issues of detail regarding the itinerary. The photographs are courtesy of Association members, Paul Appleby, George Jones and John O'Brien.

## Ms Margaret Horne RIP

### Tom Burke MBE, President, Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association (RDFA)

Margaret Horne passed away peacefully at Kinvara Nursing Home in Bray, Co Wicklow, on 27 November 2023 aged 96. Margaret and her twin sister, Patricia Dolores, were born on 19 September 1927. Patricia sadly passed away on 29 October 2021 aged 94.

Both women were pioneers in their professional careers; Patricia as a doctor who worked in Zambia and Monaghan and Margaret as a social worker in Dublin. Together they lived in Rathmines, Dublin. Patricia followed in her father's footsteps and became a doctor. Their father was Dr Andrew Horne who served in The Royal Army Medical Corps in Gallipoli. His papers and the diary he kept in Gallipoli are now in the RDFA Archive in Dublin City Library and Archive, Pearse Street, Dublin. The donation of papers includes a short biography of Dr Andrew Horne written by myself and published in *The Blue Cap*, Volume 10, December 2003. After WW1, Andrew returned to Ireland to take up the position of Assistant Master at the National Maternity Hospital in Holles Street, Dublin. Their mother, Dr Delia Moclair, was also an obstetrician at the Hospital. Their grandfather, Sir Andrew Horne, had co-founded the Hospital in 1894. Sadly, their only brother, Andrew, died when he was a child.

Margaret and Patricia were very proud of their father's service in Gallipoli. Both ladies were committed Christians and regular attendees at the Gallipoli Commemoration Service at St Ann's Church, Dawson Street, Dublin, in April, the Annual RDFA Mass in City Quay Church, Dublin, in November and the RDFA Annual Dinner in December. When Patricia died, Margaret continued attending the remembrance services at St Ann's and City Quay.

In July 2022 in her mid-90s, Margaret attended the National Day of Commemoration in Collins Barracks, Dublin. Here she is pictured with the then Taoiseach, Mr Micheál Martin, TD, and Association Committee members, George Jones, Suzanne O'Neill and Brian Moroney.

Margaret was a graduate of UCD and obtained a Master's Degree in Social Work at Ulster University, Coleraine, in the 1970s. She was dedicated to



human rights and justice, was a wonderful advocate for Social Work, particularly Medical Social Work, and was highly regarded by her peers. She chaired The Irish Association of Social Workers founded in 1971 and greatly contributed to the profession's development and the profile of social workers.

A colleague of Margaret's graciously wrote:

*"Margaret's understanding, humanity and passion when helping the people she met through her work in the Adelaide Hospital, especially those who were homeless or living in nearby hostels, was unforgettable. She comforted, challenged and inspired all who crossed her path."*

In her spare time, Margaret was a keen golfer and a member of Milltown Golf Club. She was also a dab hand at Bridge. She had an incredible memory and could recall her father's stories of his time in Gallipoli as if they happened yesterday. I spent many a Sunday afternoon talking to both of them about their father and indeed their own lives. Both Margaret and Patricia were RDFA members since 2001, and it was an honour to know them.

May they both rest in peace; as twins, they are together again.

## Dubs' Quiz 2023

### Brian Moroney

- 1) In what city was Archduke Franz Ferdinand assassinated?
- 2) Which of these countries made the first declaration of War:
  - A) Serbia;
  - B) Germany;
  - C) Russia, or
  - D) Austria-Hungary?
- 3) Which was the longest battle of the War:
  - A) The Somme;
  - B) Verdun, or
  - C) Passchendaele?
- 4) True or False: Tanks in WW1 were classified as either Male or Female?
- 5) For what reason was Mata Hari executed?
- 6) In which month did Britain declare war with Germany?
- 7) What was the role of a VAD in WW1?
- 8) The Daily Mail first brought to the public's attention the song 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary' when a journalist heard Irish troops singing the song when on the march. Were those men:
  - A) Royal Dublin Fusiliers;
  - B) Connaught Rangers, or
  - C) Royal Munster Fusiliers?
- 9) A famous painting by Fortunino Matania depicts an Irish priest giving troops a blessing before the Battle of Aubers Ridge. What was the priest's name?
- 10) When was the Treaty of Versailles signed:
  - A) November 1918;
  - B) June 1919, or
  - C) November 1919?

**(Answers are on the final page of this edition of *The Blue Cap*.)**

## Recent Dubs' News

### Annual General Meeting

About 40 members attended the Association's Annual General Meeting which was held in the Freemasons' Hall, 17 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2, on 8 December 2023. Over 20 apologies for non-attendance were also noted. Having accepted the draft agenda, the Meeting proceeded to adopt the Secretary's Annual Report for 2023 and the Treasurer's Financial Statement for the period ending 25 April 2023.

Suzanne O'Neill, Membership Secretary, reported that membership of the Association had increased to 117 members, prompted by a comprehensive effort in recent years to invite lapsed members to rejoin and to enlist new members. The public profile and activity of the Association had undoubtedly contributed to this increase.

On the proposal before the Meeting to move our end of financial year from 25 April to 30 September, Paul Appleby outlined the case for doing so. In particular, it would better align the membership year with the financial year as almost all membership and donation income was received before 30 September. This report date would also mean that our December AGM would have a more up-to-date statement of the Association's financial position. The Meeting proceeded to adopt this resolution unanimously.

In his address to the Meeting, Chairman Brian Moroney praised the energy and commitment of the Association's trustees and named a number of other members who had actively supported the Association's work. He highlighted in particular the organisation of the recent successful trip to Ypres/Ieper in Belgium, the parading of the Association's Standard at numerous remembrance events at home and abroad, the production of our regular journal and newsletters to members via *The Blue Cap* and *The Old Tough*, the communications with members and the general public via our website, gmail account, Facebook and X (Twitter) pages and the fulfilment of our obligations as a registered charity under the Charities Governance Code.

The Meeting proceeded to unanimously re-elect the current trustees for 2024 with Brian Moroney elected as Chairman, Sally Keogh as Treasurer and Thomas Murphy as Secretary.

The Meeting also set €20 as the membership fee for 2024 for all members, including those based overseas.

The Chairman's Statement to the AGM and the Secretary's Report on Association Activities in 2023 are reproduced later in this *Blue Cap*.

### Annual Dinner

A lively Annual Dinner followed the AGM and was enjoyed by all attendees. Brian Moroney excelled as the Master of Ceremonies.

The Dinner was notable for two innovations:



- a new roll-up event banner was on display (see the photograph on page 2). This had recently been designed and produced for use in the future at public events involving the Association, and
- a rolling slide show of remembrance events at which the Association had participated in 2023.

In addition, the stock of ladies' scarves in the colours of the Association had recently been replenished, and these were among the Association merchandise which were available for purchase at the Dinner.

### **Charlie Goodwin RIP**

A long-time member of the Association, Charlie Goodwin (pictured), passed away peacefully on 23 December 2023 aged 93. He and his late wife, Patricia, were among the first members of the Association in 1996. His father had served in the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, in Gallipoli, Salonika, Egypt and the Western Front and had fortunately survived the Great War.

The Association meant a lot to Charlie. Sally Keogh, our Treasurer, recalls that Charlie insisted on paying his annual subscription for 2023 when he attended the Annual Dinner in late 2022. So proud was he of the Association that he was buried in Glasnevin Cemetery wearing his Association tie and blazer as he had wished.

With the prior agreement of his family, the Association's Standard was placed on Charlie's coffin at his Funeral Mass in Christ the King Church, Cabra, on 2 January 2024. Members David Buckley and Seán Ryan formed a Guard of Honour and saluted his coffin as it passed down the centre aisle of the Church at the end of Mass. Our President, Tom Burke MBE, and Chairman, Brian Moroney, were also present.

On behalf of the Association, we extend our sincere condolences to Charlie's grieving children, Mark, Joan and Andrew, their spouses, his six grandchildren, two sisters and extended family, neighbours and friends.

'We'll see you at the end of the road, Charlie'.



## Chairman's Statement to the RDFA AGM, 8 December 2023

**Brian Moroney**

Dear Colleagues

As Chairman of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, I welcome you to our Annual General Meeting. It is an honour and privilege to be Chairman of the Association and to work with a committee that is comprised of the most dedicated and hard-working members of our Association. In addition to the many meetings that we have had over the past year, they have dedicated their abilities and talent to advancing the cause of our Association. In addition to producing our journal, *The Blue Cap*, and our regular magazine, *The Old Tough*, the committee has ensured that through our Standard Bearers, we have been to the fore in many commemorations and ceremonies that have taken place over the past year.

Dedicated work from our Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Team has seen our numbers grow and our finances remain stable in a world of ever-increasing costs. Our Team has carried out research on behalf of members at home and abroad and has initiated contact with many organisations with a similar mission to our own.

Some of our teams have provided material for various talks and exhibitions and indeed have taken an active part in working to bring to the attention of the public our rich and varied history.

This year we returned to the Western Front in a highly successful tour of the Ypres Region in September, and there we had the singular honour of parading not only our Association Standard but historically the Standard of the Machine Gun Corps. This historic occasion was received with great pleasure and delight by the Last Post Committee in Ypres which is responsible for marshalling the ceremony of the Last Post held each evening at the Menin Gate.

As if this were not enough, we are now governed by the rules and regulations of the Charities Regulator. We took the step of registering full compliance with the demands of its Charities Governance Code last year, and in so doing we committed to the preservation and protection of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association as a trusted Registered Charity.

I cannot commend too highly the following officers of the Association: Sally Keogh – Treasurer; Thomas Murphy – Secretary; Paul Appleby, David Buckley, Philip Lecane, Thomas Murphy, John F Sheehan – Editorial Committee; John O'Brien, Seamus Greene, David Buckley, Thomas Murphy – Standard Bearers; George Jones, Suzanne O'Neill – Membership and Renewals Team; David Buckley – Exhibits Officer; Paul Appleby – Charities Regulator Facilitator; John F Sheehan – Coordinator for travel and representation, and Paul Taylor – general administration. As can be seen, each and every committee member of the Association is obliged to cover a number of functions within the committee. They are, not to put too fine a point on it, multi-skilled, and we as an Association are the benefactors of their hard work and endeavours.

For my own part, I repeat, that it is an honour and privilege to be Chairman of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association. My job, in being the figure head for the Association and helping to guide us as we look to the future, is made quite simple by having a fantastic committee ready and willing to work together as a team to be reckoned with!

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association is your Association, and with your willing help and participation, long may it flourish.

Spectamor Agendo.

## **Annual Report to the RDFA's 2023 AGM, 8 December 2023**

### **Thomas Murphy, Honorary Secretary**

#### **Introduction**

The Association held its 2022 AGM on Friday, 2 December, in the Freemason's Hall, Molesworth Street, Dublin, at 7.00 pm.

I am pleased to report that since our AGM your Committee has endeavoured to keep the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association vibrant and has met many times throughout the year in person and by zoom. The Committee members for 2023 were Brian Moroney (Chairperson), Thomas Murphy (Hon Secretary), Sally Keogh (Hon Treasurer), Paul Appleby, David Buckley, Seamus Greene, George Jones, Philip Lecane, John O'Brien, Suzanne O'Neill, John F Sheehan and Paul Taylor.

During the year, the Committee met over 12 times both in person and online and was assisted by several sub-committees, such as the Editorial Committee, the Membership Committee, the Governance Committee, the Finance Committee, the Mount Jerome Cemetery Remembrance Committee, the Standard Bearers Committee, the Social Media Committee and the Merchandise Committee.

#### **Remembrance Events**

The Association participated in over 20 remembrance events in 2023 which included the following:

- 25 April (ANZAC Day), Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin.
- 25 April, Service of Remembrance, St Ann's Church, Dawson Street, Dublin.
- 28 April, Dedication of Sligo Great War Memorial Garden, Cleveragh Park, Sligo.
- 11 June, Combined Irish Regiments Annual Parade, Whitehall, London.
- 1 July, Somme Commemoration, Ginchy Cross, Guillemont, France.
- 8 July, Somme Commemoration, War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge, Dublin.
- 16 July, National Day of Commemoration, Collins Barracks, Cork.
- 26 August, Centenary Community Day, Killester Garden Village, Dublin.
- 30 September, Annual Dinner of the Irish Guards, Dublin.
- 10 October, RMS Leinster Commemoration, Dún Laoghaire.
- 11 November, Remembrance Ceremony, Killester Garden Village, Dublin.
- 11 November, Dedication of War Dead Monument, Oldtown, Co Dublin.
- 12 November, Remembrance Service, Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.
- 13 November, Unveiling of Plaque to Sgt Lawrence Crawley, RDF and ex-RIC, Castlederg, Co Tyrone.
- 17 November, RDFA Service of Remembrance, City Quay Church, Dublin.
- 19 November, German Remembrance Day Commemoration, Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, Co Wicklow.

In a field trip to Ypres/Ieper in Belgium in early September, 25 Association members enjoyed a very busy four days visiting many WW1 sites of Irish interest and paying our respects to the men who had fought and died there over 100 years ago. A highlight was the parading of the Standards of the Association and the Machine Gun Corps Association at the Menin Gate on 4 September. A review of the trip was included in the most recent edition of *The Old Tough* newsletter.

### **Dublin Festival of History**

For the first time, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association participated in the Dublin Festival of History. In Pearse Street Library on 30 September last, our President, Mr Tom Burke MBE, spoke on the theme, *From Shoebox to Window Box: Remembrance of WW1 in Ireland*. About 40 members of the public attended including a number of Association members. A summary of Tom's remarks was included in the most recent edition of *The Old Tough* newsletter.

### **Publications**

The Editorial Committee of the Association is responsible for preparing our annual journal (*The Blue Cap*), our occasional newsletters (*The Old Tough*), other Association publications and our website at [www.greatwar.ie](http://www.greatwar.ie). The Committee met about ten times in 2023. Aside from their formal meetings, individual members of the Committee spent a lot of time researching aspects of the Dubs' history and developing or editing interesting articles for inclusion in either *The Blue Cap* or *The Old Tough*.

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

An extensive range of articles is again planned for inclusion in the 2023 edition of *The Blue Cap* which, it is hoped, to finalise and circulate in early 2024. The Editorial Committee thanks members for their articles and the other contributions to the journal and newsletters.

Last year, the Association issued a new publication, '*Come on the Dubs!*' - *A Brief History of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers*, to mark the centenary of the disbandment of the Irish Regiments. This booklet received a positive review in The Ticket supplement of *The Irish Times* on 28 January last – see Issue 9 of *The Old Tough*, Spring 2023. To date over 450 copies have been distributed to members and friends of the Association and to selected bookshops. Copies remain available for purchase from the Association at a cost of €10 (including postage).

This year, the Editorial Committee has designed and ordered a roll-up banner for use at public events featuring the Association. It is hoped to obtain delivery of it soon.

The Committee has also been tasked with updating the original pamphlet on the Association and its aims. It is hoped to complete this work in early 2024.

### **Website**

Our website at [www.greatwar.ie](http://www.greatwar.ie) contains a host of material relating to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and World War 1 in particular. The 2022 *Blue Cap* and 2023 *Old Tough* newsletters were added to



the website during the year. Every effort continues to be made to keep it up-to-date and to address promptly any issues that arise for members and the general public in accessing the website's material. Please contact [rdfa1918@gmail.com](mailto:rdfa1918@gmail.com) if you experience any such problems.

### **Social Media**

Over the last year, our Facebook and Twitter accounts have had many hits and visits from members and the general public. Our Facebook and Twitter addresses are <https://www.facebook.com/RoyaDublinFusiliersAssociation/> and [@RoyalDubsFus](https://twitter.com/RoyalDubsFus) respectively. Our Social Media Committee closely monitors the content of the messages included on the sites.

### **Membership**

Following our review of membership data in 2022, the Membership Team completed an up-to-date record of all renewed members: postal address, email address (when available) and contact phone number. They were therefore able to send renewal forms to all members by either email or post at the start of 2023.

We started the year with 103 members who had renewed during 2022. At the present time, we have 117 members who joined the Association or renewed their membership during 2023, i.e., an increase of 14 in total membership.

We have welcomed 16 new members to the Association during the year, but unfortunately two of our long-standing members, Capt Brendan Forde and Joe Gallagher, passed away this year. They were stalwarts of the Association, and they are sorely missed. May they rest in peace.

### **Governance**

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

In reviewing the Code's provisions in early 2023, the Association's trustees updated the Schedule of Trustee Roles and Duties and agreed the Association's Activity Plan for 2023/2024. They also confirmed that other Association policies (e.g., the Statement of Internal Financial Controls) remained valid. The required internal form detailing our compliance with various aspects of the Charities Governance Code was also completed.

In submitting the Association's most recent annual return to the Charities Regulator earlier this year, the trustees notified their conclusion that we were fully compliant with the Code.

### **Mount Jerome Cemetery Remembrance**

Members John O'Brien, Anthony Barnes and Seán Ryan have continued their research into the Dublin Fusiliers buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery, Dublin. To date the graves of 91 men have been identified in cooperation with the Cemetery's Authorities. It is hoped that a film about this research project will be ready for screening in 2024.

**Merchandise**

Members may purchase our ties, lapel badges, blazer badges, poppy badges and remembrance CDs. We are hoping that the ladies' scarves will be back in stock shortly. Printed copies of some of our older *Blue Caps* are also available for purchase. Contact our Treasurer, Sally Keogh, at [rdfa1918+Treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:rdfa1918+Treasurer@gmail.com) for further details.

**Correspondence**

Most correspondence to our email account, [rdfa1918@gmail.com](mailto:rdfa1918@gmail.com), was from members and the general public interested in looking to join our Association or to find out information on relatives who were members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Every effort was made during the year to respond to these queries promptly.

## Answers to Dubs' Quiz 2023

**Brian Moroney**

- 1) Sarajevo.
- 2) Austria-Hungary.
- 3) Verdun.
- 4) True.
- 5) Espionage.
- 6) August.
- 7) Voluntary Aid Detachment – the work comprised mostly menial jobs in hospitals and similar facilities such as cleaning, mopping up, etc.
- 8) The Connaught Rangers.
- 9) Francis Gleeson.
- 10) June 1919.

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**Spectamor Agendo**