

The Blue Cap

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Journal of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association
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Editorial

Welcome to the 2024 edition of *The Blue Cap*.

We are pleased to be able to bring you another extensive edition of *The Blue Cap*. The rededication of six Dublin Fusilier graves in Belgium in July was one of the highlights of 2024 for the Association. In our first article, we inform you about the lives of these soldiers, report on how they were likely killed in September/October 1918 and outline the process which led to the recent identification of their final resting places in Belgian cemeteries.

Our President, Tom Burke MBE, contributes an article on the Salonika Campaign with reference in particular to the capture of the Greek village of Jenikoj (now Provatas) on 3 and 4 October 1916. The 6th and 7th Battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers were involved in this successful attack with other units of the 10th (Irish) Division. The Dubs suffered over 260 casualties including 60 killed. Tom draws particular attention in his article to 18890 Corporal John Joseph ('Jack') Nolan, an 18 year old from Terenure in Dublin, who now lies in Struma Military Cemetery, Kalokastro, Greece.

The start of the Anglo-Boer War in October 1899 occurred 125 years ago. To mark the occasion, Paul Appleby includes a review of the War and a description of the first engagement between the British and Boers at Talana Hill near the town of Dundee in KwaZulu-Natal today. In the early months of the War, hundreds of Dublin Fusiliers were killed, wounded and captured. It is appropriate that this edition of *The Blue Cap* should recall this piece of our history on the 125th anniversary of the start of the War.

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

- an article by Thomas Murphy on Grangegorman Military Cemetery and its association with the Dublin Fusiliers;
- an article by Donal Croghan on the successful development of the various war memorials in Kilkenny in recent times;
- an account of the Association's successful trip to the Somme last September;
- an obituary by Tom Burke MBE on the passing of Nick Broughall, a long-time stalwart of the Association and a member of its Committee for many years;
- recent Association news (including our Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner in December), together with some of the papers that were before the AGM;
- a review of Michael James Nugent's recent book, *A Bad Day I Fear: The Irish Divisions at the Battle of Langemarck, 16 August 1917*, and
- a new Dubs' Quiz by our Association's 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. She also includes advice on payment arrangements and urges all members to complete and return to her an up-to-date Membership Form, so that we can continue to communicate with you in your preferred manner.

We hope that you all enjoy this year's 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.

Our social media channels at Facebook (FB) and X 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 FB and X addresses are <https://www.facebook.com/RoyaDublinFusiliersAssociation/> and [@RoyalDubsFus](https://twitter.com/RoyalDubsFus) respectively.

We hope that you all have a healthy and happy 2025.

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

Rededication of Six Royal Dublin Fusilier Graves in Belgium, 10/11 July 2024

Paul Appleby, Seán Ryan and John F Sheehan¹

On 10 and 11 July 2024, the graves of the following soldiers of the 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, were rededicated at the indicated locations in Belgium:

- 10 July: Sergeant Laurence Connell MM 20012, killed in action (KIA) aged 21 on 5 October 1918 and interred in Dadizeele New British Cemetery (grave ref: VI.B.23);
- 10 July: Private William McCann 18626, KIA aged 22 on 21 October 1918 and interred in Stasegem Communal Cemetery (grave ref: A.15);
- 11 July: Lance Corporal James Edward Freer 40976, KIA aged 29 on 29 September 1918 and interred in Hooze Crater Cemetery (grave ref: XVII.B.11);
- 11 July: Corporal Edward Doyle 19877, KIA aged 19 on 28 September 1918 and interred in Hooze Crater Cemetery (grave ref: XVII.B.13);
- 11 July: Private Bertie George Reynolds 24316, KIA aged 24 on 28 September 1918 and interred in Hooze Crater Cemetery (grave ref: XVII.B.14);
- 11 July: Lance Corporal George Washington 27653, KIA aged 20 on 29 September 1918 and interred in Hooze Crater Cemetery (grave ref: XVII.B.15).

The remains in these graves had lain unidentified for more than 100 years, being typically marked by a headstone which read 'A Soldier of the Great War, Royal Dublin Fusiliers'. Although military records initially listed these men as missing, the names of all of them were later inscribed on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Panel 144 to 145.

This year a new headstone was erected on each of these graves courtesy of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). The soldier's name, rank, number, age and date of death were inscribed on each headstone. In effect the men's extended families now have a focal point for remembering their loss.

The process of identifying the remains in these graves followed a detailed examination of available documentary sources by private researchers. The CWGC, the UK's National Army Museum and the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) of the UK's Ministry of Defence later confirmed the validity of the researchers' findings.

This set in train a process which led to the commissioning of new headstones and their erection in place of the longstanding headstones. The rededication services at these graves on 10 and 11 July last were conducted by the Reverend Jason Clarke MBE CF, Chaplain to the 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment. Each service was attended by relatives of the deceased soldiers and representatives of the following organisations: CWGC, JCCC, the

¹ Seán Ryan sourced a copy of the terms of the document at Appendix 1, while Seán and John F Sheehan contributed valuable research material to Appendix 2.

Royal Irish Regiment, the Irish Defence Forces and the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.² Thomas Murphy, John O'Brien and Seán Ryan represented the Association and displayed the standards of the Association and the Machine Gun Corps Association. This was the first time that the Association had participated at such an event, and it was a privilege for all involved.

Identification of the Four Remains in Hooze Crater Cemetery

A UK Ministry of Defence paper given to Mr Les Reynolds, a relative of Private Bertie George Reynolds, outlined the analysis by which the identities of the four remains in Hooze Crater Cemetery were confirmed. The terms of this paper are attached at **Appendix 1**.

The paper indicates that a CWGC Burial Return (see picture below)³ records that the six bodies occupying graves XVII.B.11 to XVII.B.16 inclusive in Hooze Crater Cemetery were found together at the same location, about 1.6 kilometres east of Geluvelde⁴. Only one man was capable of being positively identified at the time, namely Corporal Michael Giles 18852, who is interred in grave XVII.B.12. He was found on top of a 'Roll of men' who were all known to be from the 1st Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The conclusion drawn was that they were most likely killed at around the same time. The paper outlines the process of deduction by which four of the other five unknown Dublin Fusiliers came to be identified.

ZILLBEKE 177.859/E		950/577					
CONCENTRATION OF GRAVES (Excavation and Re-burials).							
BURIAL RETURN.							
12.7.19.							
Name of Cemetery or Re-burial <u>HOOZE CRATER CEMETERY</u> Sheet 28.1.12 & 1.9. Sheet 28							
Plot	Row	Grave	Map Reference where body found.	Was Cross on Grave?	Regimental particulars.	Means of Identification.	Were any effects forwarded to Base?
15	B	17	K.31.a.3.9.	Yes	24532 Pte. J. PAISELEY 1/R. D. Fus.	Div Sign No. 74 on back of stake	No
17	B	9	K.31.a.40.35.	Yes	2/Lt. J. COWARD } 4/Worcester Regiment		No
		10	K.31.a.40.28.		19236 E. JEAVONS. } 29.9.18.		
		11	J.24.c.95.45.	No	UNKNOWN L/C R. D. Fus.	Stripes	No
		12	J.24.c.95.45.	No	Cpl. GILES	Roll of men with Cpl on top	Yes
		13	J.24.c.95.45.	No	UNKNOWN CORPORAL R. D. F.	Stripes	No
		14	J.24.c.95.45.	No	UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER R. D. Fus.	N.M. Ribbon found	No
		15	J.24.c.95.45.	No	UNKNOWN L/C R. D. Fus.	R.C. Medal marked R.V.M.	No
		16	J.24.c.95.45.	No	UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER R. D. Fus.	R.C. Medal & Numerals	No

Appendix 1 notes that the remaining Dublin Fusilier in grave XVII.B.16 remains unidentified. However it names six possible candidates for the grave, all of whom were born in Ireland. The six are recorded as being killed on the following dates: 27 September (1), 28 September (1), 29 September (3) and 1 October (1). This compares with the five identified Dublin Fusiliers whose dates of death are recorded as either 28 September (2) or 29 September (3).

² <https://www.cwgc.org/our-work/news/graves-of-royal-dublin-fusiliers-rededicated-in-belgium/>.

³ <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/458088/m-giles/#&gid=2&pid=1>.

⁴ The WW1 villages of Gheluvelt, Gheluwe and Kruseeke are known today as Geluvelde, Geluwe and Kruseeke respectively. In discussing below the attack around these villages, the spelling in the quoted War Diaries will be used. Geluvelde is in Belgium, while Geluwe and Kruseeke are both in France.

If, as appears probable, the six Dublin Fusiliers in Hooze Crater Cemetery were killed together, their dates of death should be the same. The relevant War Diaries shed some light on the circumstances in which these men were killed, and as we shall see, it appears that the soldiers only reached the location where their bodies were found on 29 September.

Attack on 28 September 1918

The attack on 28 September was part of a coordinated series of attacks along the Western Front. In outlining the attack that day, the historian Dr Nick Lloyd has said:

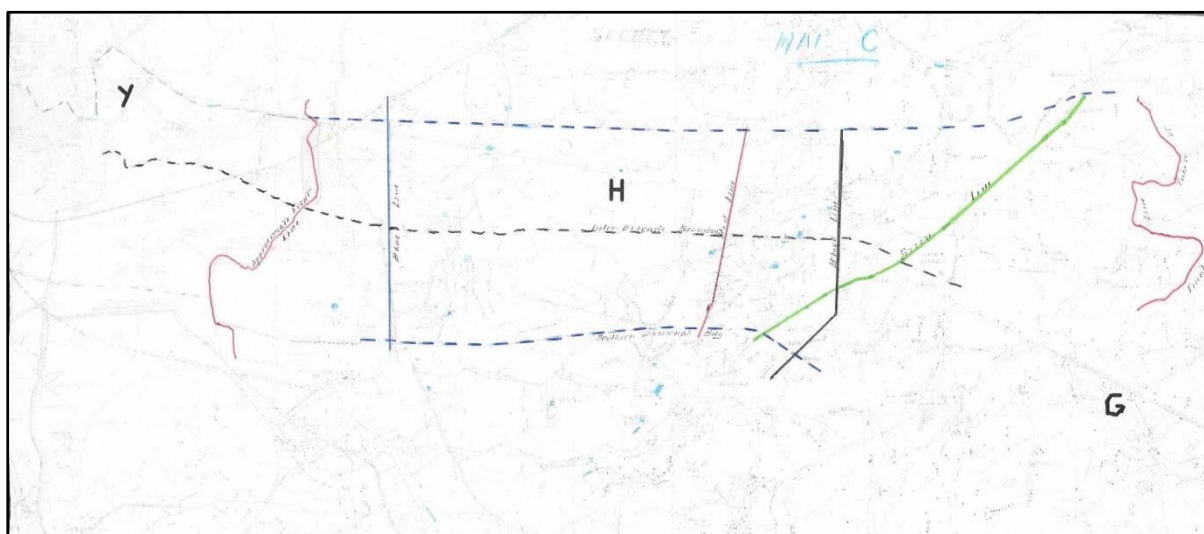
“...In his desperation to protect other vital sectors of the front, Ludendorff had moved troops out of Flanders, leaving just five divisions to hold the seventeen miles of front between Diksmuide and Voormezele (four miles south of Ypres), praying that the wet weather and swampy ground would prevent any Allied breakthrough. German forces, outnumbered two to one, had already made plans to withdraw to the Passchendaele Ridge, but found themselves isolated and overrun when the attack was launched in the early hours of 28 September. There was the usual clatter of machine-gun fire from stubborn detachments that had to be winkled out one by one, but there was little artillery support – most of the German batteries having been silenced by a concentrated series of barrages at Zero Hour. In a single day, the attackers managed to seize almost the whole of the Houthulst forest (at the northern edge of the salient) and the crucial villages of Broodseinde and Gheluvelt.”⁵

In September 1918, the 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was part of the 86th Infantry Brigade within the 29th Division. The 1st Lancashire Fusiliers and the 2nd Royal Fusiliers were the Brigade’s other infantry components. Their attack objective was to push the German front line eastwards a further 3½ miles away from Ypres/leper. The attack would be preceded by a creeping artillery barrage of high explosive (HE) and smoke. Preparations went smoothly, and the troops moved to their starting points on the night of 27/28 September.

On ‘Map C’ on the following page, the 29th Division was responsible for attacking eastwards between the parallel blue serrated lines from the approximate front line (marked in red on the left). Its 86th Brigade was on the left of the black serrated line and 87th Brigade on the right with 88th Brigade (which included the 2nd Leinsters) in support of them. The plan of attack for 86th Brigade envisaged the 1st Lancashire Fusiliers advancing from their starting point east of Ypres/leper (the town is marked ‘Y’ on the Map) to the red line east of Hooze (‘H’ on the Map). Then the 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers were to go through the Lancashires and attack through the black line to the green line. The 2nd Royal Fusiliers would then take the lead and advance further. Finally, the 88th Brigade were to push through the 86th and 87th Brigades to capture the high ground around Gheluvelt (‘G’ on the Map) and Kruiseeke, south-east of Gheluvelt.

⁵ Dr Nick Lloyd, *The Western Front: A History of the First World War*, Penguin Books, 2021, page 467.

The attack on 28 September was entirely successful, and the 2nd Royal Fusiliers reached the ragged red line on the right hand side of the map by dusk. In all, the attack that day had pushed the Germans a further six kilometres away from Ypres/leper.⁶



The War Diary of the 86th Brigade included the following account of the attack:

“At zero (5-30 a.m.) the barrage fell and was closely followed by the Infantry. Troops of this Brigade had never previously advanced under an H.E. barrage and owing to the intense enthusiasm of all ranks and the fact that one battery fired very short throughout the barrage – the greater number of casualties throughout the day were caused by our own barrage... Very few casualties were suffered from hostile fire...”⁷

The War Diary narrative recommended in future that *“troops advancing under an H.E. barrage should keep from 200 to 250 yards behind it.”⁸* Despite the smoky conditions, the troops were apparently kept in the proper direction by the Brigade Intelligence Officer and Observers advancing on a compass bearing of 102° while carrying a large red flag with red patches on their backs.⁹

The difficult terrain over which the Leinsters in the supporting 88th Brigade made their advance that morning was later described as follows:

“...as we moved up the rise of that desolate and shell-ravaged region, not even the rank grass was to be seen on that denuded ridge – just mud, brown, clinging mud and pitted everywhere with slate-coloured shell-holes overlapping themselves in the water-logged area. The company arrived on the commanding ridge at Hooge before

⁶ War Diary, 86th Brigade, WO 95/2299/3, pages 101-107, at <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>. The Map above (minus the ‘Y’, ‘H’ and ‘G’ insertions and the re-colouring included above) is at page 107.

⁷ War Diary, 86th Brigade, WO 95/2299/3, page 102.

⁸ War Diary, 86th Brigade, WO 95/2299/3, page 103.

⁹ War Diary, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, WO 95/2301/2/2, page 31, at <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>.

its allotted time...We were all very wet, most of us had been bogged up to our knees, struggling through the liquid mud...”¹⁰

The War Diary for the 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, initially included a very brief and positive report on the attack of 28 September as follows:

“Attack opened at 5.30 am. Most successful. Day fine. Rain during night. Battalion with great dash carry all objectives allotted to them.”¹¹

A narrative account of the operations on 28 September was later prepared and included in the Battalion’s October 1918 War Diary.¹² This extract from *Neill’s Blue Caps* summarising the day’s events gives a more nuanced view compared with the initial War Diary entry:

“The move forward to the assembly position was very successfully accomplished and without excessive casualties, but when the actual advance to the first objective began the losses increased, for the reason that the troops of the brigade had never before moved forward under a high explosive barrage, and owing to their eagerness to get to grips with the enemy, and one of the British batteries firing very short, many casualties were caused by our own barrage. The Germans in front did not put up so good a fight as usual, and by the time that the third objective was reached the enemy opposition had been completely broken.”¹³

The 1st Battalion War Diary estimated that about 80% of its casualties on 28 September were caused by British battery fire falling short.¹⁴

After the 2nd Royal Fusiliers had passed through them, the 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers were ordered to follow the advance down the Menin Road. Later on, the 88th Brigade passed through the 86th Brigade, and the latter was given the task of protecting the left flank of the 88th Brigade. This Brigade succeeded in reaching Gheluvelt around midday, before its advance was later held up west of Kruseeke cross-roads. That evening, the 1st Battalion camped overnight just north of Gheluvelt with its HQ in a pillbox at Polderhoek Chateau, about 1 km north of the village.¹⁵

Attack on 29/30 September 1918

According to the War Diary for the 86th Brigade:

¹⁰ Tom Johnstone, *Orange, Green & Khaki: The Story of the Irish Regiments in the Great War, 1914-18*, Gill and MacMillan, 1992, pages 411 and 412. The quote is taken from Captain FC Hitchcock, *Stand-To: a Diary of the Trenches*, London: Hurst and Blackett, 1937.

¹¹ War Diary, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, WO 95/2301/2, page 116, at <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>.

¹² War Diary, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, WO 95/2301/2/2, pages 52 and 53.

¹³ Colonel HC Wyllly CB, *Neill’s ‘Blue Caps’, Volume 3, 1914-1922*, The Naval & Military Press Ltd in association with the Imperial War Museum (reprint of original 1923 book), pages 119 and 120.

¹⁴ War Diary, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, WO 95/2301/2/2, page 68.

¹⁵ War Diary, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, WO 95/2301/2/2, page 52.

*“Throughout the following day the 88th Inf. Brigade endeavoured to press forward but only succeeded in advancing a few hundred yards, the enemy resistance having been strengthened by very gallant and well-trained machine gunners. During the day, the enemy’s mobile reserve artillery came into action and maintained considerable activity. French cavalry proved invaluable throughout the day by maintaining liaison with the Division on our Left, who succeeded by dusk in capturing DADIZEELE.”*¹⁶

The War Diary of the 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, indicates that 86th Brigade was protecting the flank of 88th Brigade during its advance that morning. When 88th Brigade was stopped east of Kruseeke, the Battalion continued to protect its flank. Considerable machine gun and trench mortar fire was encountered, and during the afternoon, *“the enemy put down a very heavy concentrated shoot on KRUISEEKE cross-roads.”*¹⁷

The Germans withdrew overnight allowing the 88th and 86th Brigades to advance further. However 88th Brigade was checked just short of Gheluwe village by a strongly wired enemy position. As artillery support was not available to degrade it, little progress was made over the following days.¹⁸

When the 1st Battalion was relieved and returned to Ypres/Ieper on 3 October, its War Diary records that 19 officers and men had been killed in the overall attack, 97 were wounded and 10 were missing.¹⁹

As mentioned earlier, the CWGC Burial Return indicates that the six Royal Dublin Fusiliers occupying graves XVII.B.11 to XVII.B.16 inclusive in Hooze Crater Cemetery were found together at the trench map location of 28.J.24.c.95.45 about 1.6 kilometres east of Gheluvelt. It has been confirmed that this location lies about 2 kilometres directly due east of Gheluvelt, close to a cross-roads north of Kruseeke today.²⁰ Accordingly it seems likely that the six Dubs who were subsequently buried in Hooze Crater Cemetery lost their lives under this German artillery barrage on 29 September 1918. The fact that only one of the six was identifiable afterwards supports the view that all six men were likely killed by artillery fire.

Action near Ledegem, 5 to 9 October

The 1st Battalion War Diary indicates that on 5 October, the Battalion moved back to the front line which was now beyond Dadizeele near Ledegem (see the ‘D’ and ‘L’ respectively which have been added to ‘Map A’ below for illustrative purposes). For 6 to 8 October, the Diary reports *“very heavy enemy shell fire at intervals in expectation of a continuation of our*

¹⁶ War Diary, 86th Brigade, WO 95/2299/3, pages 102 and 103.

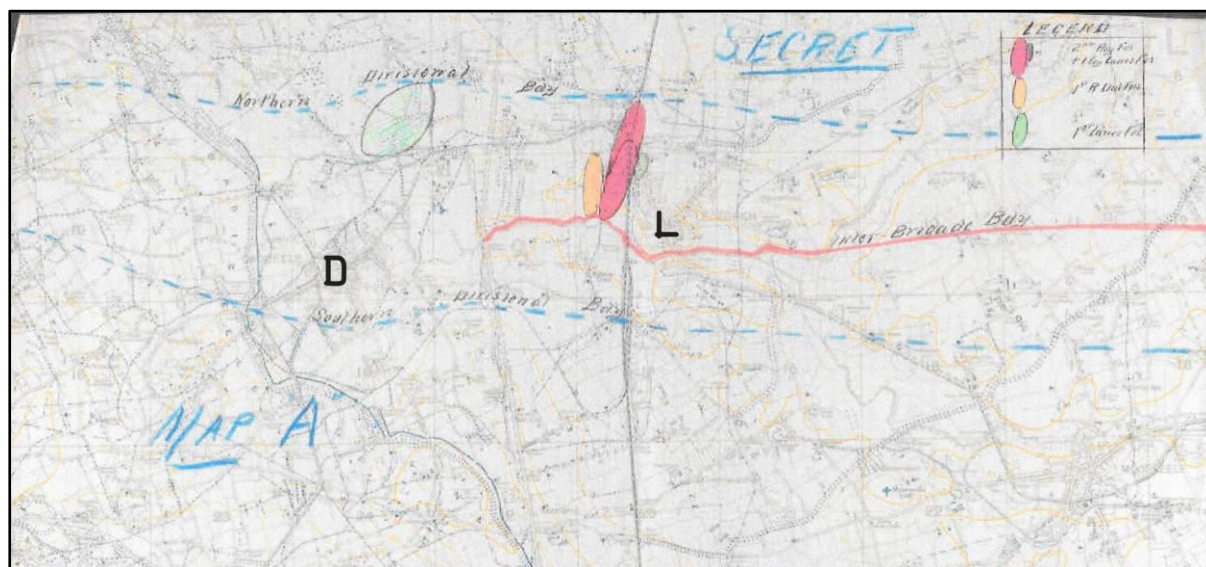
¹⁷ War Diary, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, WO 95/2301/2/2, page 53.

¹⁸ War Diary, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, WO 95/2301/2/2, page 53, and War Diary, 86th Brigade, WO 95/2299/3, page 103.

¹⁹ War Diary, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, WO 95/2301/2/2, page 56.

²⁰ <https://www.westernfrontassociation.com/trenchmapper-public/>.

advance". When relieved on 9 October, the Diary reports that five other ranks had been killed and that 40 officers and men had been wounded.²¹ Sergeant Laurence Connell 20012 MM (recorded date of death, 5 October) was one of the five killed. The accompanying map shows the front line position of 86th Brigade just west of Ledegem from 5 to 9 October. The location of the 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers is coloured in yellow.²²



For many years, Laurence Connell's gravestone in Dadizeele New British Cemetery only remembered an 'Unknown Serjeant' of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The distinctive combination of his rank and Military Medal recently enabled researchers to identify Laurence Connell as the only Dublin Fusilier who could be interred in that grave.²³

Advance across the River Lys, 20/21 October

By 20 October, the British advance had reached the River Lys, and the 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, crossed the River that morning having left Heule near Kortrijk/Courtrai in southern Belgium earlier. By mid-morning, it passed through 88th Brigade, and 'X' Company on the left reached some buildings where it was held up by machine gun fire and subjected to shelling. 'W' Company on the right eventually outflanked the enemy position that evening. Both positions were held by the Battalion overnight. Further progress was not made on 21 October, and the Battalion withdrew to a support position near St Louis that evening.²⁴ The reported casualties for this operation were seven other ranks killed and 54 officers and men wounded.²⁵

Private William McCann 18626, 1st Battalion, is recorded as being killed on 21 October. His unidentified remains were buried in Stasegem Communal Cemetery as an unknown soldier

²¹ War Diary, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, WO 95/2301/2/2, pages 56 and 57.

²² War Diary, 86th Brigade, WO 95/2299/4/1, page 18, at <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>. The map at page 18 does not have the 'D' and 'L' insertions above.

²³ <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/841056/laurence-connell/>.

²⁴ War Diary, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, WO 95/2301/2/2, pages 71 and 72.

²⁵ War Diary, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, WO 95/2301/2/2, page 59.

of the 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Recent research has enabled the remains to be identified as Private McCann's.²⁶

Conclusion

Appendix 2 to this article contains biographical information on the six Dublin Fusiliers whose graves were rededicated on 10 and 11 July last. Despite the limited documentation available, the information uncovered gives a good understanding of the men and their families. They had soldiered for several years, had survived some of the epic engagements in which the Dubs were involved and were unfortunate to be killed just weeks before the War ended.

It has been our privilege as an Association to honour these men this year and to help rekindle the public memory of the contributions of the Dublin Fusiliers in WW1 which is an Association priority. Of course the men's extended families are the major beneficiaries of the research which led to the identification of their graves. They now know their final resting places and can visit to pay their respects. Our Association and its individual members will no doubt also return to these graves to remember the men's sacrifice in the years ahead. It is heartening that some 105 years after their deaths, their resting places are still honoured and respected.

²⁶ <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/833546/william-mccann/>.

Background to Identifying the Grave of Private Bertie George Reynolds MM

A CWGC Burial Return shows that the remains of 5 unknown casualties of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers were recovered from Trench Map location 28.J.24.c.95.45 and were buried in Plot XVII, Row B, Graves 11, 13, 14, 15 and 16 in Hooge Crater Cemetery. The location where they were found is around 1.6 kilometres east of Geluveld. The remains of Corporal Michael Giles 18852 of 1st Battalion The Royal Dublin Fusiliers who was killed on 29 September 1918, were found alongside these 5 men. As they were all found together at the same location it was most likely that they were connected and were killed at around the same time.

Geluveld was behind enemy lines from October 1914 until 28 September 1918. 2nd Battalion The Royal Dublin Fusiliers was the only battalion of the regiment to have been serving on the Western Front in 1914. Their casualties commemorated in Belgium from this period are all buried at Prowse Point Military Cemetery, Strand Military Cemetery and London Rifle Brigade Cemetery further south towards Armentieres. The rest are all commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial. The War Diaries of 2nd Battalion The Royal Dublin Fusiliers place them around Armentieres, Ploegsteert and Messines during that period which is consistent with how their casualties are commemorated. This would rule out these 5 men as having belonged to 2nd Battalion and having been killed in 1914.

The War Diaries of 1st Battalion The Royal Dublin Fusiliers contain a narrative of their attack on 28 September 1918. At 04:30 hours Y and Z Companies moved forward into the frontline. After a bombardment they moved forward at 05:30 hours behind 1st Battalion The Lancashire Fusiliers. After the Red Line had been captured, they moved through 1st Battalion The Lancashire Fusiliers and captured the Black Line. The Red Dotted line was taken at 08:45 hours and 2nd Battalion The Royal Fusiliers passed through them to exploit the success. At 09:00 hours Battalion HQ moved to Fort MacLeod which was located in 28.14.a. and b. At 10:45 hours they were ordered to march down the Menin Road. By this stage 88th Brigade had reached as far as Geluveld. At 16:00 hours the battalion took up positions north of Geluveld in 28.J.17.c. and J.22.b. They were to maintain touch between 29th Division and 9th Division on their left. The Battalion HQ moved to a pillbox at Polderhoek Chateau which was at 28.J.16.d.2.3. Therefore, on 28 September 1918, the battalion were still in the line west of the location where these remains were concentrated from.

At 06:00 hours on 29 September 1918 the advance continued. They encountered considerable machine gun fire from the left flank and their progress was slow. At 08:30 hours the battalion took up positions between 28.K.25.c. and K.19.c. This trajectory would have the battalion moving directly through the area where the remains were concentrated from that morning.

There are 10 soldiers of 1st Battalion The Royal Dublin Fusiliers still missing in Belgium from between 27 September and 1 October 1918. It was likely that 5 of these men are buried in Graves 11, 13, 14, 15 and 16 in Plot XVII, Row B in Hooze Crater Cemetery. The key to this case was whether there was enough evidence to place any of these men in these graves.

Grave 11:

Grave 11 is listed as being that of an unknown lance corporal of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers. This was determined from stripes found on the body. There were 2 lance corporals of 1st Battalion missing from 29 September 1918, **Lance Corporal James Edward Freer 40976** and **Lance Corporal George Washington 27653**. Based on what is known about the occupant of this grave, there was nothing to distinguish between these 2 men.

Grave 13:

Grave 13 is recorded as belonging to a corporal of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers. This was determined from stripes found on the body. **Corporal Edward Doyle 19877**, who was killed on 28 September 1918, was the only missing corporal out of these 10 men, meaning that he was the only candidate for this grave.

Grave 14:

Grave 14 is recorded as being that of an unknown soldier of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers who was found with a Military Medal ribbon. The only man among the 10 who is recorded in CWGC records as having received the Military Medal is **Private Bertie George Reynolds 24316 MM** who died on 28 September 1918. A record of Private Reynolds receiving the Military Medal was found in the Edinburgh Gazette of 11 July 1917. No mention of any of the other 9 casualties receiving the Military Medal could be found in the London Gazette. A search of these men's personal records was also made and no mention was found of any of them having received the Military Medal. This left Private Reynolds as the only candidate for this grave.

Grave 15:

Grave 15 is recorded as being that of another lance corporal of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He was found with a Roman Catholic medal which was marked 'R.V.M.'. As has been established there were 2 lance corporals of 1st Battalion The Royal Dublin Fusiliers missing from 29 September 1918, **Lance Corporal James Edward Freer 40976** and **Lance Corporal George Washington 27653**. It is reasonable to presume that a high percentage of soldiers of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers would have been Catholic. Therefore, the key to distinguishing between these men was to establish if one of them was of another Christian denomination.

Based on what was known about these 2 men, Lance Corporal Washington was the more likely to have been a practising Catholic as his mother was born into a Catholic family. But no proof of his religion could be found through records. Equally there was no evidence to conclusively prove that Lance Corporal Freer was not a Catholic. There was also the possibility that the Catholic medallion found did not originally belong to this man or that the

soldier could have converted to Catholicism since birth. Either way, it is not possible to definitively distinguish between the 2 lance corporals based on religion alone, and it was decided to place Special Memorials stating 'Buried Near This Spot' over Graves 11 and 15. (Incidentally since the case was accepted and the Washington family were contacted, his great nephew confirmed that the family is Catholic, meaning that the headstones are very likely to be correctly designated with Lance Corporal Washington's name on the headstone over Grave 15.)

Grave 16:

Grave 16 is listed as being the grave of an unknown soldier of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers who was in the possession of a Roman Catholic Medal and numerals. As it had been established that Corporal Doyle is most likely buried in Grave 13, Private Reynolds in Grave 14 and Lance Corporals Freer and Washington in Graves 11 and 15, this left 6 candidates for this grave. Of these men, **Private Thomas Fitzsimmons 27426**, **Private Thomas Malone 8458** and **Private Michael Kavenagh 19293** were all born in Dublin, **Private Cornelius Kenny 41334** was born in Kilfinane in County Limerick, **Private James Mehon 16898** was born in Leitrim and **Private Michael McClean 21944** was born in Castlederg in County Tyrone. It is probable therefore that most of these men were Catholic. The soldier buried in Grave 16 therefore remained unknown as there was no evidence to distinguish between these 6 men.

Based on the information available it was concluded that there was clear and convincing evidence to suggest that Corporal Edward Doyle is the occupant of Grave 13 and Private Bertie George Reynolds MM is the occupant of Grave 14. 'Buried Near This Spot' Special Memorials were erected for Lance Corporal James Edward Freer and Lance Corporal George Washington over Graves 11 and 15.

Biographies of the Dublin Fusiliers whose Graves were Rededicated in 2024

Lance Corporal James Edward Freer 40976, Grave XVII.B.11, Hooge Crater Cemetery

James Edward Freer (pictured) was born in Cropston, Leicester, England, most likely in 1889. According to Census records for 1891, 1901 and 1911, James was the fifth eldest of ten children (five boys, five girls). In the 1911 Census, James was single, aged 21, employed in shoe manufacturing and lived with his parents, James and Elizabeth Freer, at Highfield Street, Anstey, Leicester.



Although his date of enlistment has not been established, James enlisted in the British Army in

Leicester and served in the Leicestershire Regiment, prior to his transfer to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He is recorded as having been wounded in Spring 1918, possibly during the German Offensive of March/April that year.

In September 1918, the 1st Battalion of the Dublin Fusiliers were participating in the 100 Days Offensive against Germany and her allies. As indicated earlier, the remains of Lance Corporal Freer were recovered near Geluvelde in Belgium, and he is recorded as having been killed on 29 September. He was aged 29. Initially listed as missing, his name came to be included on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Panel No 144-145. Because it was not possible to distinguish definitively between his remains and that of a second lance corporal (George Washington) who were found together and interred near one another in Hooge Crater Cemetery, the CWGC gravestones over both graves are inscribed with the phrase 'Buried Near This Spot' (see later photographs). More recent information suggests that his gravestone correctly identifies his resting place.

His War service qualified him for awards of the Victory and British War Medals, and his mother Elizabeth later received a War pension arising from the loss of her son. Lance Corporal James Edward Freer is also remembered in *Ireland's Memorial Records 1914-1918* (page 226).

oOo

Corporal Edward Doyle 19877, Grave XVII.B.13, Hooze Crater Cemetery

Edward Doyle was born in Pump Street, Bagenalstown, Co Carlow, on 20 January 1899. He was one of seven children born to Michael Doyle and his wife, Kate (née Meaney), who married in the town on 21 July 1896.

In the 1901 Census, Edward was 2 years old, living in 7 Pump Street, Bagenalstown, with his father Michael (a mason aged 29), mother Kate (30), and brothers Michael (4) and Patrick (6 months), in the home of Anne Meaney (40), Kate's relative and a dealer by occupation.

In the 1911 Census, Edward was 12, living in 4 Pump Street, Bagenalstown, with his father, mother, siblings (Michael (14), Patrick (10), James (8), Katie (5) and Mary (5)) and their relatives, Annie Meaney (50), a dealer in herrings, and Mary Brophy (28), a servant.

Private Edward Doyle 19877 is recorded as having initially been in the 5th Battalion of the Dublin Fusiliers and elsewhere is indicated as having enlisted at Carlow, although his actual enlistment date is not known. However he first saw service in Gallipoli on 2 August 1915. After withdrawal from Gallipoli, the 1st Battalion was involved in the Battle of the Somme (where Edward was wounded in August 1916), the Battle of Arras in April 1917, the Third Battle of Ypres/leper in Autumn 1917 and the German Spring Offensive in March/April 1918. By early Autumn 1918, the Battalion was participating in the 100 Days Offensive which would end the War.

At some point during 1918, Private Edward Doyle was promoted to Corporal. However on 28 September 1918, he is recorded as having been killed in action. He was only 19 years old. As noted earlier however, his death near Geluveld in Belgium most likely occurred on 29 September. Although his remains were later recovered and interred, his identity could not be established. For many years, his gravestone in Hooze Crater Cemetery near Ypres/leper in Belgium indicated his Regiment but not his name. However as a missing soldier who was presumed to be dead, his name was recorded on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Panel No 144-145. The new headstone over his grave is pictured later in this article.

In early November 1918, Corporal Doyle's death was published in a Roll of Honour list in the *Irish Independent* as follows: 'Doyle, Cpl. E (Bagenalstown)'. His sacrifice was also later recorded in *Ireland's Memorial Records, 1914-1918* (page 11).

Consistent with his Will, his mother inherited her son's property. She later received a War pension at her address in Regent Street, Bagenalstown. The 1914-15 Star, British War and Victory medals were also awarded arising from Corporal Doyle's War service.

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Private Bertie George Reynolds MM 24316, Grave XVII.B.14, Hooge Crater Cemetery

Bertie George Reynolds was born in Homerton in the Borough of Hackney in London in 1894. According to Census records for 1901 and 1911, he was the third eldest of seven children (four boys, three girls). In the 1911 Census, Bertie was single, aged 16, employed as a porter at a silk merchant business and lived with his parents, Thomas and Alice Reynolds, at 34 Sedgewick Street, Homerton, London.

Although his date of enlistment has not been identified, Bertie (pictured) is recorded as having enlisted at Shoreditch, also in the Borough of Hackney. He served initially in the 2nd Battalion, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, with the number 17449 on the Western Front from 1 April 1915. This Battalion of Light Infantry, like the 6th and 7th Battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was redeployed to Macedonia in late 1915. While the date of his transfer to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers is not known, Bertie did serve in its 7th, 10th and 1st Battalions. He was with the 1st Battalion when he was awarded the Military Medal. This award was announced in *The London Gazette* of 6 July 1917.



In September 1918, the 1st Battalion of the Dublin Fusiliers was participating in the 100 Days Offensive. Private Bertie George Reynolds, 'Z' Company, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, is recorded as having been killed in action on 28 September. He was aged 24. As noted earlier however, his death near Geluveld in Belgium most likely occurred on 29 September. Initially listed as missing, his name came to be included on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Panel No 144-145. The new headstone over his grave is pictured at the end of this article.

After the War, Bertie's mother inherited her son's property. She later received a War pension at her home in Sedgewick Street, Homerton. The 1914-15 Star, British War and Victory medals were also awarded arising from Bertie's War service. His sacrifice was later recorded in *Ireland's Memorial Records, 1914-1918* (page 217).

The following picture shows Les Reynolds, a grand-nephew of Private Reynolds, laying a wreath at his new headstone on behalf of his family on 11 July last.



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Lance Corporal George Washington 27653, Grave XVII.B.15, Hooze Crater Cemetery

George Washington was born in Salford, Lancashire, in 1898. He is understood to have been the second eldest of six children born to James and Margaret Washington. In the 1901 Census, James was aged 30 and worked as a riveter/boiler maker. Margaret, aged 28, was born in Ireland. The parents and three children then lived at 7 Garden Walk, Chorlton, South Manchester.

On Census night in 1911, George Washington, who was indicated to be aged 12, was a patient in Salford Union Infirmary. The remainder of his family have not been readily located in that Census record.

It is known that George served in both the 9th and 1st Battalions of the Dublin Fusiliers. Page 334 of Section XIV (Salford) of the *National Roll of the Great War* includes the following information on George's War service:

"WASHINGTON, G., Corpl., Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

Two months after joining in January 1916, he embarked for France and was actively engaged on the Somme, and at Guillemont, Carnoy, Fricourt, Ypres, and Passchendaele, where he was gassed. After his recovery, he served in many engagements during the Retreat and Advance of 1918, but was unfortunately killed

on November 9th, 1918 [sic]. He was entitled to the General Service and Victory Medals.

'The path of duty was the way to glory.'

131, Clarendon Road, Seedley, Manchester."

As a lance corporal in the 1st Battalion, George Washington was killed in action on 29 September 1918. He was only 20 years of age. Because it was not possible to distinguish definitively between his remains and that of a second lance corporal (James Edward Freer) who were found together near Geluveld in Belgium and interred near one another in Hooze Crater Cemetery, the CWGC gravestones over both graves are inscribed with the phrase 'Buried Near This Spot' (see later photographs). More recent information suggests that his gravestone correctly identifies his resting place.

His War service qualified him for the British War and Victory Medals. His sacrifice was later recorded in *Ireland's Memorial Records, 1914-1918* (page 273). After his death, his mother, Margaret, was the sole legatee for his property, and she later received a pension for the loss of her son. She was then resident at 131 Clarendon Road, Seedley, Manchester.

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Sergeant Laurence Connell MM 20012, Grave VI.B.23, Dadizeele New British Cemetery

Laurence (Larry) Connell was born on 25 January 1897 at 8 Charlemont Square, Charlemont Street, Dublin. He was one of six children of John Connell (a Park Constable from Queen's County), and Elizabeth (his wife, née Doyle, from Dublin City). He was the second youngest of the five still living at the 1911 Census (four boys and one girl). All were born in Dublin.

It is not known when precisely Laurence enlisted, but he first saw service in France on 20 December 1915. This service ultimately resulted in the award of the 1914-15 Star, British War and Victory Medals. As he was wounded at some point, he also qualified for the Silver War Badge.

Sergeant Laurence Connell MM 20012, 1st Battalion, RDF, was aged 21 when he was killed in action near Ledegem in Belgium. The recorded date of death is 5 October 1918. On 2 November 1918, Dublin's *Saturday Herald* (page 3) included this Roll of Honour notice:

"CONNELL – Oct. 5, 1918, killed in action, Sgt. Laurence (Larry) Connell, R.D.F., aged 21 years, dearly-loved son of John and Elizabeth Connell, Concrete Lodge, Phoenix Park, and grandson of Jas. Doyle, late R.N.; deeply regretted. R.I.P."

In *The London Gazette* of 11 February 1919 (page 2119 of Issue 31173 - Supplement), '20012 Cpl. (A/Sjt.) Connell, L.,' 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was posthumously awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the Field. His death was later recorded in *Ireland's Memorial Records, 1914-1918* (page 118).

As Sergeant Connell was initially listed as missing, he was remembered for many years on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing, Panel 144 to 145. While his remains were later recovered, his grave in Dadizeele New British Cemetery in Belgium was just marked with a headstone to an 'Unknown Serjeant' of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Records indicate that his next-of-kin was his mother, Mrs E Connell of Concrete Lodge, Phoenix Park, Dublin.

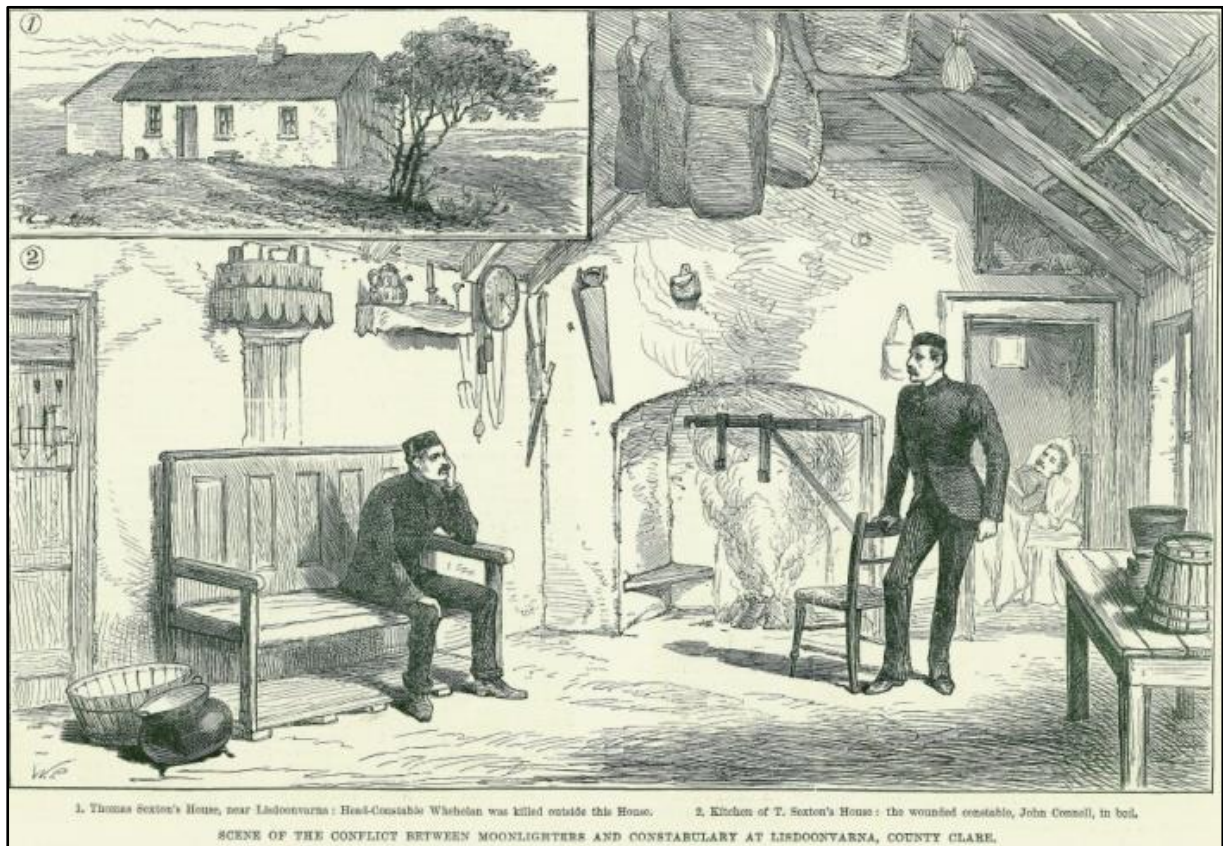


The accompanying picture includes Laurence Connell's grandniece, Ms Bonita Fish (second from right), her family and Thomas Murphy of the Association (left) at the rededication ceremony on 10 July last.

Laurence's older brother, John Joseph, also enlisted in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, possibly on the same day as Laurence, with a service number of 20017. Unfortunately while with the 9th Battalion, Private John Connell was killed in action on the Somme on 6 September 1916. His service later earned the award of the 1914-15 Star, the British War and Victory Medals.

Sergeant Connell's Military Medal was not the first award for bravery in his family. When his father John was in the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC no 48014), he received the Constabulary Medal, the police equivalent of the Victoria Cross, for helping to defend Thomas Sexton's house near Lisdoonvarna, Co Clare, from attack by 'moonlighters' on 11 September 1887. Sexton had been boycotted locally for letting land which he had inherited from his father and from which the former tenant had been evicted. Although the Land League denounced violence in pursuit of their campaign for improved tenant rights, this policy was not uniformly respected. When the local RIC were alerted to an imminent attack on Sexton's home, they moved to protect him. In the resultant mêlée, Head Constable

Whelehan was killed and Constable Connell and many of the attackers were wounded. See the following illustration which shows John Connell lying injured in bed.



When John Connell married Elizabeth Doyle in St Andrew's Church, Westland Row, Dublin, on 14 July 1890, his occupation was an insurance company agent. However he joined the Board of Works as a Park Constable for St Stephen's Green on 29 July 1895. At age 47, he was appointed to the Phoenix Park on 30 May 1904 where he and his family lived in Spa Lodge beside Dublin Zoo. He transferred within the Park to Concrete Lodge and District on 1 May 1911, and shortly afterwards, his family occupied Concrete Lodge (pictured right). John Connell retired on 4 January 1922.



Located on the North Road between the National School and the Hole-in-the-Wall Pub, its name apparently derives from its status as the first building in the Phoenix Park to be constructed of mass concrete in the 1870s.

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Private William McCann 18626, Grave A.15, Stasegem Communal Cemetery

William McCann was born in Baillieston, Glasgow, in 1896. According to the 1901 Census for Scotland, he was the sixth of eight children (four boys and four girls) born to Patrick McCann (a coal miner aged 41), and his wife, Catherine (39). Patrick was born in Ireland.

After enlisting, William joined the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and he first entered the War on the Western Front on 10 June 1915. For reasons now unknown, he served as Private Patrick McCann 18626, the name of his father and one of his elder brothers. He saw action on the Somme in 1916, the Battle of Messines and the Third Battle of Ypres/leper in 1917 and the German Spring Offensive in March/April 1918. As a result of the heavy casualties sustained by both the 1st and 2nd Battalions in this Offensive, most of the surviving men (including Private McCann) were consolidated to serve in the 1st Battalion on 14 April 1918. He was later wounded on 24 June 1918.

Private McCann was reportedly killed on 21 October 1918 aged 22. Although his remains were recovered and interred, his identity could not be established. For many years, the gravestone in Stasegem Communal Cemetery, four kilometres east of Kortrijk/Courtrai in Belgium, indicated his Regiment but not his name. However as a missing soldier who was presumed to be dead, his name was recorded on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Panel No 144-145.

After the War, the 1914-15 Star, British War and Victory medals were awarded in respect of Private McCann's War service. William's death is recorded in *Ireland's Memorial Records, 1914-1918*, as his alias, Private Patrick McCann 18626, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers (page 272). The publication also indicates that he died in France, which seems incorrect as the Battalion's operations were then located in Belgium.

William's mother, Catherine, inherited his property as his sole legatee. She later received a War pension at her address at 21 Kenmore Street, Shettleston, Glasgow. This payment recognised that she was the guardian of William's illegitimate son, also called William, who was born on 24 April 1915. William's elder brother, Patrick, was also killed in the War on 3 May 1917 whilst serving with the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Scots. He is commemorated on the Arras Memorial.

The following picture of some of the attendees at the rededication ceremony at Private McCann's grave include Reverend Jason Clarke MBE CF (centre), Julie McInally, great-granddaughter of Private McCann (third from left) and Association members, Seán Ryan (second from left) and John O'Brien (second from right).



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Photographs of the New Headstones





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'IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR ONLY SON'

A Lad from Terenure: Corporal John Joseph 'Jack' Nolan, 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers

Tom Burke MBE

Introduction

Over the past two years or so, I have been researching the history of the 6th and 7th Battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers (RDF) in WW1. I hope to present this work in a published book in due course.

I have always believed that in order to write an accurate account of battles, one must walk the ground over which the battle took place. In order to get an idea of the landscape associated with the battle to take the Greek village of Jenikoj between 3 and 4 October 1916, I had to walk the fields and country roads of the Struma River Valley and the surrounding hills to the north and east of the Valley.

I had a further couple of objectives in my journey to the Struma Valley which took place in the heat of late August 2024. All of the place names mentioned in the 6th and 7th RDF Battalion and 30th Brigade War Diaries are written in Turkish. For example, Jenikoj today is known as Provatas, about 70 kilometres north of Thessaloniki. Up to 1923, the village was inhabited mainly by Turks and Bulgarians. My objective was to locate the villages mentioned in the Diaries and establish as near as possible their names in Greek. My other objective was to visit the Struma Military Cemetery and pay my respects to some of the Dublin Fusiliers who died in the battle to take Jenikoj, one of whom was Private John 'Jack' Nolan from Terenure in Dublin.

The Battle to take Jenikoj

As part of the 30th Brigade, 10th (Irish) Division, the 6th and 7th RDF captured the village of Jenikoj on 3 and 4 October 1916. The capture of Jenikoj was one of a series of operations that took place between 30 September and 4 October 1916 to capture the villages of Karadzakoj Bala, Karadzakoj Zir and Jenikoj, all located on the northern or right bank of the Struma River.¹ See the later maps in this article. The following is a brief account of the RDF's role in the taking of Jenikoj.²

¹ For further discussion on the RDF in Salonika in 1915, see Connolly, Seán, *'Better Than No War at All': The Royal Dublin Fusiliers in Serbia, October to December 1915*, The Blue Cap - Journal of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, Volume 20 (December 2015).

² *War Diary, 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*, WO 95/4836 (London: The National Archives, 1 October 1915 to 31 August 1917). See also *War Diary, 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*, WO 95/4836 (London: The National Archives, 1 October 1915 to 31 August 1917) and *War Diary, 30th Brigade* WO 95/4836 (London: The National Archives, 1 October 1915 to 31 August 1917). See also *War Diary, 7th Royal Munster Fusiliers*, WO 85/4837 (London: The National Archives, October 1915 to October 1916). See also Wakefield, Alan and Moody, S, *Under the Devil's Eye* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2004), pages 106-109. See also Falls, C and Becke, AF, *Official History*

At 1.45 am on Tuesday 3 October, the 6th RDF moved off from Karadzakoj. Between 2.30 am and 3 am, the first Battalion of the 30th Brigade, the 6th RDF, crossed at Jungle Island Bridge and 'took up position for the attack at a point 1,000 yards (914 metres) south-west of Karadzakoj Bala.' The Dublins and Munsters crossed the river in the following order:

½ Section Machine Gun Company 6th Royal Dub. Fus. 7th Royal Mun. Fus.

½ Section Machine Gun Company 7th Royal Dub. Fus. 6th Royal Mun. Fus.

Between 4 am and 4.45 am, they all had crossed to the right bank of the river and waited in silence. At 5.30 am, British artillery began to shell the north of Jenikoj. The following is a brief account of the RDF role in the taking of Jenikoj.³

At 5.45 am, the 6th RDF attack on Jenikoj began. It was still dark. The village was lightly held by the Bulgarians, and small parties were reported to be getting out northwards towards the railway line. As the Dublins entered the village, shells fired by the Royal Artillery barrage were falling. By 6.30 am, the 6th RDF had captured Jenikoj with practically no opposition until they began to consolidate the north side of the village when they were hit by Bulgarian artillery. With the village clear, two Companies of the 7th RDF took up a position north of the main Seres Road with the 6th RDF on their right. By 7.40 am, both Battalions began to consolidate their positions with wire that had been brought up.

At 8.15 am, estimates of three or four battalions of Bulgarians were seen coming south from Topalova, a village north of Jenikoj near the railway line, with their artillery shelling Jenikoj and Karadzakoj Zir in advance. This firing and movement of Bulgarian troops was seen by Lieutenant-General Briggs, XVI Corps Commander and his Artillery Observation Officers located on the hills south-west of Orlyak, a village on the southern side of the Struma River, just south-east of Jenikoj.

By about 9.05 am, the Bulgarians had assembled and were seen advancing across the flat bottom of the Struma Valley. But as they came into the zone of British artillery, the British shrapnel shells played havoc scattering the Bulgarian infantry in great confusion. The 7th RDF on the Seres Road reported the flank of the forward line appeared to be threatened. Men from the 6th Munsters pushed forward to support the 7th RDF at around 11 am. The consolidation work carried on.

An artillery duel began after about 1½ hours of relative silence. At around 12.45 pm, Bulgarian artillery hit Jenikoj under cover of which their re-assembled infantry advanced led by an officer on a white charger. British artillery was again reported falling short and hitting

of the Great War, Military Operations, Macedonia: From Outbreak of War to the Spring of 1917, Volume 1 (London: Imperial War Museum, October 1932), pages 181-184.

³ *War Diary, 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. See also *War Diary, 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers* and *War Diary, 30th Brigade*, 3 October 1916. See also *War Diary, 7th Royal Munster Fusiliers*. See also Wakefield, Alan and Moody, S, pages 106-109. See also Falls, C and Becke, AF, pages 181-184.

their own men. Both the 6th and 7th RDF Battalions suffered severely from the shells falling short. One casualty of this British artillery barrage was the Forward Observation Officer attached to the Dublins that day.

British artillery failed to knock out the Bulgarian gunners and stop their infantry moving towards Jenikoj. The 6th and 7th RDF positions were hammered by the Bulgarian gunners. The situation got so bad that the battered Dublins and Munsters were forced to return to a position in a sunken road running through the centre of the village which they held earlier in the morning. The 6th Dublins fell back even further at around 1 pm to a point referred to as Lonely Joe, some 731 meters from the village. The withdrawal allowed some Bulgarians to re-enter the northern side of the village.

More hours of relative quietness followed. During this time, the Dublins were given rations. However at 3.45 pm as the Official History (OH) noted:

'The action blazed up again. The bombardment which had slackened a little, was renewed in its former violence, and large numbers of the enemy in close formation advanced on the village (Jenikoj). A few minutes later the men of the two Dublin Battalions began to fall back from it.

The spectators on the hills had a worse impression of what was happening than was actually warranted; for it was afterwards found that a considerable number of the men seen retiring from Jenikoj belonged to carrying parties returning after taking up wire and ammunition. The Munster Battalions on the flanks maintained more or less their original position.'

'B' Company of the 6th RDF were still in Jenikoj.

A counter attack was ordered by 30th Brigade H.Q. to begin at 4.30 pm. The 6th Royal Irish Rifles, 6th Leinsters and a Composite Battalion were sent up to reinforce the Dublins and Munsters.

The 7th RDF reported that at *'about 5:00 p.m. the 6th Royal Irish Rifles and 6th Leinsters, having been sent up in support, reached the sunken road and proceeded to dig themselves in and consolidate that line. The enemy kept up a continuous rifle fire from the village and their artillery maintained a barrage on our support and reserve.'*

Between 5 pm and 7 pm in a state of panic, men, or 'stragglers' as the OH referred to them, struggled back from Jenikoj; some were stopped from going back further by their own officers. The wounded that could be gathered were carried back by men from the Royal Irish Rifles. During this period, British artillery kept up fire on the Bulgarians in an attempt to prevent them from crossing the Seres Road and getting into Jenikoj in great numbers.

At 7 pm, the 7th RDF Diary noted: *'the enemy's attack became very violent and at 7:30 p.m. the order came to retire.'* At 7.40 pm, 30th Brigade issued an order to retire to 29th Brigade's

old line at Lonely Joe. The retirement was more of a rout than an ordered retreat as units became mixed up; amazingly, no casualties were reported by the 7th RDF during the retreat.

However when they got back to the Lonely Joe position, they were told that the order to retire had in fact been cancelled. They were not aware of the cancelling order. All the telephone lines to Jenikoj had been cut by artillery. Some units had received the order; others hadn't. For example, 'A' Company of the 7th RDF under 2nd Lieutenant EM Ewen, along with a party of the 6th RDF and the 7th Munsters, had received the order cancelling the retirement and held their ground in Jenikoj.

An explanation of the breakdown was given by the OH:

'News of the despatch of this Order (General Macphearson's order to retire) did not reach the headquarters of the 27th Division until 8:05 p.m., and it was then at once cancelled. Unfortunately, all the telephone lines to Jenikoj, except that to the 7th Munsters on the east of the village, had been cut by artillery fire, and the message did not arrive in time to prevent the other troops of the 10th (Irish) Division, with the exception, it would appear, of one Company of the 7th Dublins and one Company of the 6th Dublins, from withdrawing. The situation was very confused...'

Amidst the confusion, amazingly the Bulgarians hadn't taken their advantage to occupy the village in great strength. The OH noted:

'It appeared as the night wore on that there were few of the enemy in the village, and those only in its northern part...The Bulgarians seem to have thrown in their hand at almost the same moment, and the God of war must have witnessed a sight not unfamiliar to him but always fresh in its irony – that of both sides retiring simultaneously.'

A consequence of the confused state in the ranks of the 30th Brigade was that it proved impossible to organise the counter-attack for several hours. Moreover, it was now dark.

As night fell on 3 October, the situation was that the 6th Dublins and 7th Munsters initially had taken Jenikoj as ordered. However because of Bulgarian and indeed British artillery fire and Bulgarian infantry counter-attacks, they had to withdraw to the old 29th Brigade line near Lonely Joe on the southern side of Jenikoj. Broken telephone lines from artillery fire resulted in a breakdown of communication between 30th Brigade HQ and units in the fight resulting in some units retiring and others digging in at Jenikoj. They discovered that the Bulgarians failed to push home their advantage and were not holding the village in any great strength.

At about 9.45 pm, the 7th Munsters reported that the Bulgarian line on their left was gone.

But Jenikoj had to be cleared entirely of Bulgarians to complete the task assigned to them by General Briggs. Just after midnight at 00.30 am, on Wednesday, 4 October, General

Macpherson held a meeting with his Battalion Commanders at Spy Tree near Lonely Joe. The 6th and 7th RDF would carry out a counterattack at 3.30 am, in total darkness, to rout any Bulgarians left in Jenikoj.

Tired and exhausted, the Dublins began their push off from Lonely Joe some 30 minutes late at about 4 am. They didn't know it for sure, but the Bulgarians had gone. The 7th RDF noted that: *'the old line was occupied without opposition.'* The 6th RDF noted at 5 am: *'Commenced consolidation and collecting dead and wounded impossible to recover the previous evening.'* The OH noted: *'The advance met with no opposition...One Company of the 6th Dublin Fusiliers appears to have remained in the village all night.'* The rest of the day was spent consolidating the village; wire and other material were brought up, and the dead were buried.

The consolidation work proved difficult as they came under artillery fire throughout the day from a Bulgarian mountain battery located in the foothills to the north of the village. As evening fell, Yeomanry patrols that had gone out during the day as far as the railway reported seeing no Bulgarians. The OH concluded that: *'the Bulgarians had lost an excellent chance by giving up too soon.'* General Briggs rode out to Jenikoj during the day; he was assured by some of his Battalion Commanders *'that with a fresh Division he could have captured the Rupel Pass; and the reports by prisoners subsequently taken of hopeless confusion in their units for a full two days seemed to confirm this view.'*

The destruction of Jenikoj was devastating. Captain Peter Eckersley of the 17th Squadron, Royal Flying Corps, visited the village and the new front line soon after the fighting had died down. What he saw was the end result of mass artillery, a scene very similar to any of the villages along the Somme front a few months earlier:⁴

"We rumbled over Orlyak bridge where a week ago I had watched shell after shell falling...The river mud was one mass of circular holes and here and there splintered pieces of wood lay about. Later we came to the stretch over which the Bulgars had advanced. Numerous newly dug graves and patches of dirty clothing. A still unburied Bulgar lay 100 yards (91 metres) from the road face down. Horses lay dead here and there and one lay legs upward in the ditch and stenchd horribly as we passed. We got to ruined Jenikoj chiefly visible on account of its trees and almost shapeless piles of stones. A few house walls standing and everywhere shell holes deep in the roads and grass in the house spaces. Shrapnel lay like shingle on a beach in places and all about torn and twisted pieces of shell...the Bulgars main line of defence was three miles away..."

The capture of Karadzakoj Bala, Karadzakoj Zir and Jenikoj was the largest operation undertaken by British forces in the Struma Valley to date. The Bulgarians had indeed fallen back as Captain Eckersley had observed. The OH noted:

⁴ Wakefield, Alan and Moody, S, page 109.

*'It was proved that the enemy had, in fact, made a considerable retirement, approximately to the line of the railway, though he held several of the villages south and west of it with small detachments.'*⁵

They had abandoned most of the ground south of the Seres Road between the Struma and Salonika to Constraining Railway.⁶ Feeling somewhat optimistic, looking back in hindsight and in agreement with some Battalion commanders with regard to the routing of the Bulgarians at the Struma, 2nd Lieutenant Richard Skilbeck-Smith of the 1st Leinsters recalled: *'Had there been five to six Divisions instead of three, under strength by illness, we could have swept over the mountains and knocked Bulgaria out of the war.'*⁷

The Casualties

The casualties among the troops under Major-General HSL Ravenshaw's command for the operations between 30 September and 4 October 1916 to capture the villages of Karadzakoj Bala, Karadzakoj Zir and Jenikoj were 1,137; almost equally divided between the 10th (Irish) and 27th Divisions. The troops of the 28th Division that came under a heavy shelling on the Seres Road suffered 111 casualties bringing the overall total to 1,248. Three Bulgarian officers and 339 other ranks were taken as prisoners, and by 10 October, it was reported that 1,375 dead Bulgarians had been buried by the British.⁸

Table 1

Casualties of the 10th (Irish) and 27th Divisions between 1 and 5 October 1916

Officers			Other Ranks		
Killed	Wounded	Missing	Killed	Wounded	Missing
10	79	0	179	818	51

According to the 7th RDF Diary, the casualties suffered by all ranks of the 30th Brigade for the operations between 2 and 3 October was 385 'killed, wounded and missing.'⁹ The 6th Munsters recorded Lieutenant SC Webb and ten other ranks were killed along with Captain JG Brownlee, Lieutenant EA Thompson and 32 other ranks wounded.¹⁰

⁵ Falls, C and Becke, AF, page 184.

⁶ Wakefield, Alan and Moody, S, page 109.

⁷ Johnstone, Tom, *Orange Green & Khaki* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1992), page 264. Taken from Skilbeck-Smith, Richard, *A Subaltern in Macedonia and Judea 1916-1917* (London: The Mitre Press, 1930), page 67.

⁸ Falls, C and Becke, AF, page 184.

⁹ *War Diary, 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*, 3 October 1916.

¹⁰ McCance, S, *History of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, 1861 to 1922*, Volume II (Cork: Schull Books, 1995), page 183.

Table 2

Casualties of the 6th RDF between 1 and 5 October 1916¹¹

Officers			Other Ranks		
Killed	Wounded	Missing	Killed	Wounded	Missing
0	5	0	30	93	3

The five wounded officers were Captains Carroll and Clarke and 2nd Lieutenants Bolster, Layton and Malley. A total of 124 other ranks were casualties.

Table 3

Casualties of the 7th RDF between 1 and 5 October 1916¹²

Officers			Other Ranks		
Killed	Wounded	Missing	Killed	Wounded	Missing
1	6	0	23	99	1

The officer killed was 2nd Lieutenant Frederick William Goldberg, 3rd The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment) attached to the 7th RDF, aged 34 and son of Leopold and Louisa Goldberg of 23 Cadogan Gardens, London. He is buried in Struma Military Cemetery (grave reference: III.H.2).¹³

The 7th RDF officers wounded were Lieutenant FH Doran, Lieutenant G Hare, Lieutenant and Adjutant CD Harvey and 2nd Lieutenants RWH Callaghan, JF Fellows (3rd Scottish Rifles attached to the 7th RDF) and WF MacHutchison. A total of 123 other ranks were casualties.

It is interesting to note that the number of casualties for both the 6th and 7th RDF Battalions was the same – 129 apiece.

According to current CWGC data, 35 men from the 6th RDF either died of wounds or were killed in action between 1 and 5 October 1916; for the 7th RDF, the number is 25. It would seem that out of the 96 men of the 6th RDF noted by the Battalion Diary as being wounded or missing, five men died. In terms of the 7th RDF, two of the 100 men noted by the Battalion Diary as wounded or missing died.

¹¹ *War Diary, 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*, 3 October 1916.

¹² *War Diary, 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*, 3 October 1916.

¹³ <https://www.cwgc.org/>, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Note: As he was a member of the 3rd The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment), 2nd Lieutenant Frederick William Goldberg is not registered in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers CWGC listing of death casualties.

Based on CWGC data, the following tables set out the deaths on a daily basis for the other ranks of both RDF Battalions between 1 and 5 October 1916.

Table 4

Death Casualties of the 6th Dublin Fusiliers (Other Ranks) between 1 and 5 October 1916¹⁴

6 th RDF	2 October	3 October	4 October	5 October	Total
KIA	3	18	9	0	30
DOW	0	0	1	4	5
Total	3	18	10	4	35

Table 5

Death Casualties of the 7th Dublin Fusiliers (Other Ranks) between 1 and 5 October 1916¹⁵

7 th RDF	2 October	3 October	4 October	5 October	Total
KIA	0	20	2	0	22
DOW	0	0	1	2	3
Total	0	20	3	2	25

Table 6

Nationality of the 6th RDF Other Rank Fatalities between 1 and 5 October 1916¹⁶

Nationality	Total	Percentage of Total
Irish	21	60
English	9	25.7
Scottish	5	14.3
Total	35	100

¹⁴ <https://www.cwgc.org/>. See also *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919, Part 73 - Royal Dublin Fusiliers* (Suffolk: JB Hayward and Son, 1989).

¹⁵ <https://www.cwgc.org/>. See also *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919, Part 73 - Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.

¹⁶ <https://www.cwgc.org/>. See also *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919, Part 73 - Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.

Of the 21 Irish death casualties of the 6th RDF, 14 (66.6%) were from Dublin. According to the CWGC data, the 6th RDF lost two young men aged 18.¹⁷ They were:

- 5810 Private Michael Mills, 'Died in action between 2 and 4 October 1916', the son of Peter and Ellen Mills of Lowtown, Kilmeague, Naas, Co Kildare;
- 18890 Corporal John Nolan, KIA 3 October, son of Thomas and Kate Nolan of 4 Tramway Villas, Terenure, Dublin.

According to the 1911 Irish Census, John Nolan was a Roman Catholic, aged 11, a 'scholar' who could read and write, thus making his age in 1916 as being 17, not 18.¹⁸ However according to his registered birth record, he was born on 22 July 1898 thus making him 18 years of age.¹⁹ To be a Corporal at 17 or 18 must have been an indication of John being a fine soldier.

His father Thomas was a tram driver aged 44 in 1911. John's mother Kate was also 44. They had six children, five girls named Mary Josephine, Margaret Mary, Kathleen Clair, Josephine and Brigid Carmel; their one boy was John or Jack as he was known. Tragically three of the girls died very young. Mary Josephine died on 17 January 1903 at seven years of age. She died at home of 'convulsions shown.' Margaret Mary died on 29 January 1903 at two years of age. She died at home of meningitis. Josephine died of tuberculosis on 5 May 1922 at home with her mother. She was 15 years of age.

The house that John and his family lived at is still there to this day (August 2024). It is one of a line of cottages, now renamed Rathmore Villas, built for Tram Company employees of The Dublin and Blessington Steam Tramway Company that operated out of Terenure in Dublin.²⁰ John was the only boy and to reflect their tragic loss, his parents had the following words placed on his headstone: '*In Loving Memory of Our Only Son*', 26 letters which cost them seven shillings and seven pence.²¹ Both 5810 Private Michael Mills and 18890 Corporal John Nolan are buried in Struma Military Cemetery, Kalokastro (grave references, III.F.15 and III.F.1 respectively). On Thursday, 29 August 2024, I had the honour of laying a wreath at the graves of both these young men.

Also among the 6th RDF dead was 10113 Private Tom Cullen, 78 Old Kilmainham, Dublin. He was previously a member of the 1st RDF and came ashore at 'V' Beach off the *River Clyde* on 25 April 1915. He was a brave man; Wyllly noted that in the 1st RDF attack on the Fort at Sedd-el-Bahr, Tom Cullen was the first man into the Fort. For his bravery, he was awarded

¹⁷ <https://www.cwgc.org/>. See also *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919, Part 73 - Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.

¹⁸ *Census of Ireland*, The National Archives of Ireland, <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie>.

¹⁹ <https://www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/>.

²⁰ O'Brien, Philip, *Search Carried out on the Life of John Joseph 'Jack' Nolan*. (Not published, family documents: RDFA Archive, Dublin City Library and Archive, 17 July 2017).

²¹ <https://www.cwgc.org/>. See also *Census of Ireland*, The National Archives of Ireland, <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie>.

the Distinguished Conduct Medal.²² Tom wasn't the only 'V' Beach veteran that died on 4 October 1916. 6347 Private John McAuley, 'C' Company, 6th Royal Munster Fusiliers, served with the 1st Munsters at Gallipoli and was due to receive the Military Medal. He was killed carrying a message to the CO of the 6th RMF, Lieutenant-Colonel VT Worship.²³

Another member of the dead was 23031 Private James Murphy, the married man with six children that was previously mentioned. He enlisted in the 6th RDF at the outbreak of the War. James and his wife Teresa (Ledwidge) Murphy lived at 27 Upper Dorset Street, Dublin. Their daughter Easa was born in 1915 when her dad went off to war. One of their sons, Seamus, went to the Hibernian School in the Phoenix Park, Dublin. Seamus joined the British Army and served in WW2.²⁴

Sadly one of Captain Noel Drury's signallers, 5633 Private M Reilly, a member of 'C' Company, 6th RDF, who was from Dublin was among the 6th RDF death casualties too.²⁵

Of the 35 death casualties, 27 are buried in Struma Military Cemetery, Kalokastro; five are on the Doiran Memorial, and three are interred at Lahana Military Cemetery.²⁶

Table 7

Nationality of the 7th RDF Other Rank Fatalities between 1 and 5 October 1916²⁷

Nationality	Total	Percent of Total
Irish	13	52
English	12	48
Scottish	0	0
Total	25	100

Of the 13 Irish death casualties of the 7th RDF, six (or 46%) were from Dublin. The youngest recorded death casualties of 7th RDF were:

²² Wylly, HC, *Neill's Blue Caps 1914-1922*, Volume III (Cork: Schull Books, 2000), pages 36 and 179 regarding his Gazette details on 5 August 1915.

²³ McCance, S, page 183.

²⁴ *Murphy, James - 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. (Dublin: RDFA Archive Dublin City Library and Archive). I wish to thank Tommy Leydon and his wife Kathleen, granddaughter of James Murphy, sadly both RIP, for telling me about her grandfather of whom she was very proud.

²⁵ Drury, Noel, *Drury, Lieut. Noel, 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers*. (Dublin: RDFA Archive Dublin City Library and Archive). p.304. See also <https://www.cwgc.org/> and *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919, Part 73 - Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.

²⁶ <https://www.cwgc.org/>. See also *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919, Part 73 - Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.

²⁷ <https://www.cwgc.org/>. See also *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919, Part 73 - Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.

- 24060 Private Arthur Denzil Paul, son of Arthur JT and Lucy Paul Denzil of Meadow View, Perranwell Station, Cornwall (formerly 10382 The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry), aged 20, and
- 24348 Private Thomas Holmes, son of Richard and Sarah of 81 Park Lea Road, Blackburn (formerly 21355 The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry), aged 20.

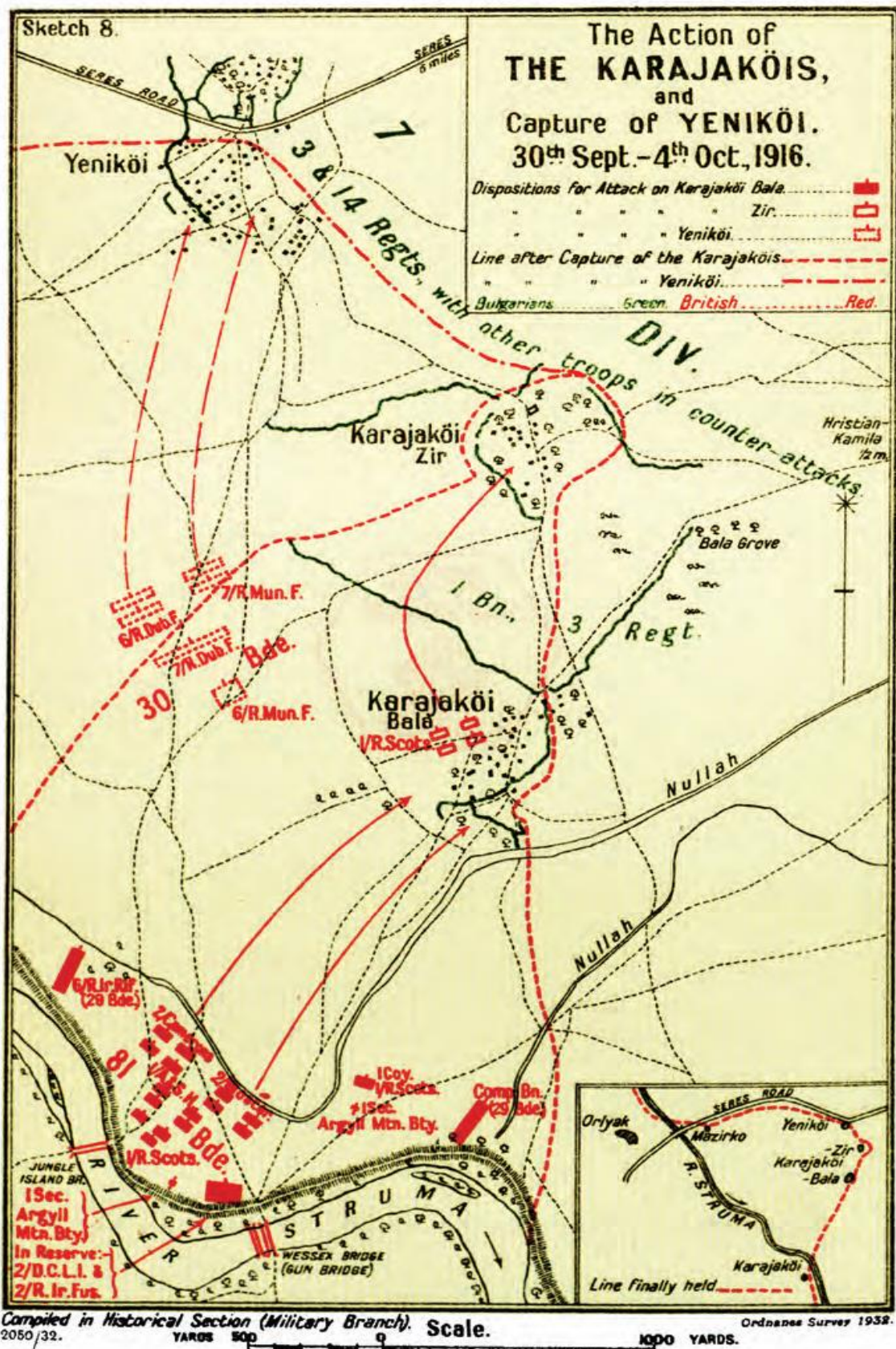
Both young men are also buried in Struma Military Cemetery, Kalokastro (grave references IIC 8 and IIID 3 respectively).

Of the 26 death casualties (including 2nd Lieutenant Goldberg, 3rd The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment) attached to the 7th RDF), 21 are buried in Struma Military Cemetery, Kalokastro; one is remembered on the Doiran Memorial, and four are interred at Lahana Military Cemetery.²⁸

A number of maps, photographs and other documentation relevant to this article are included in the following pages.

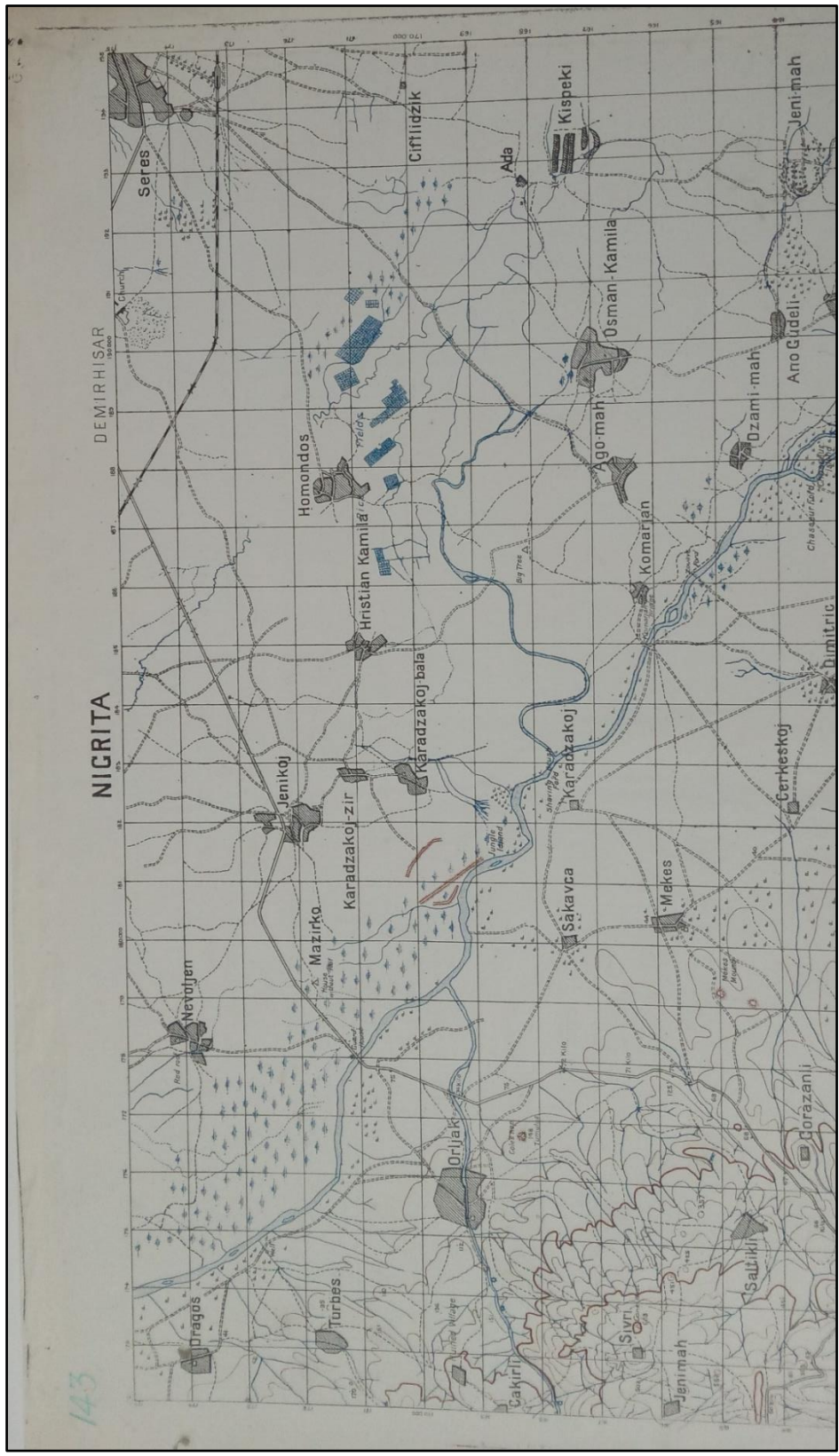
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²⁸ <https://www.cwgc.org/>. See also *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919, Part 73 - Royal Dublin Fusiliers*.



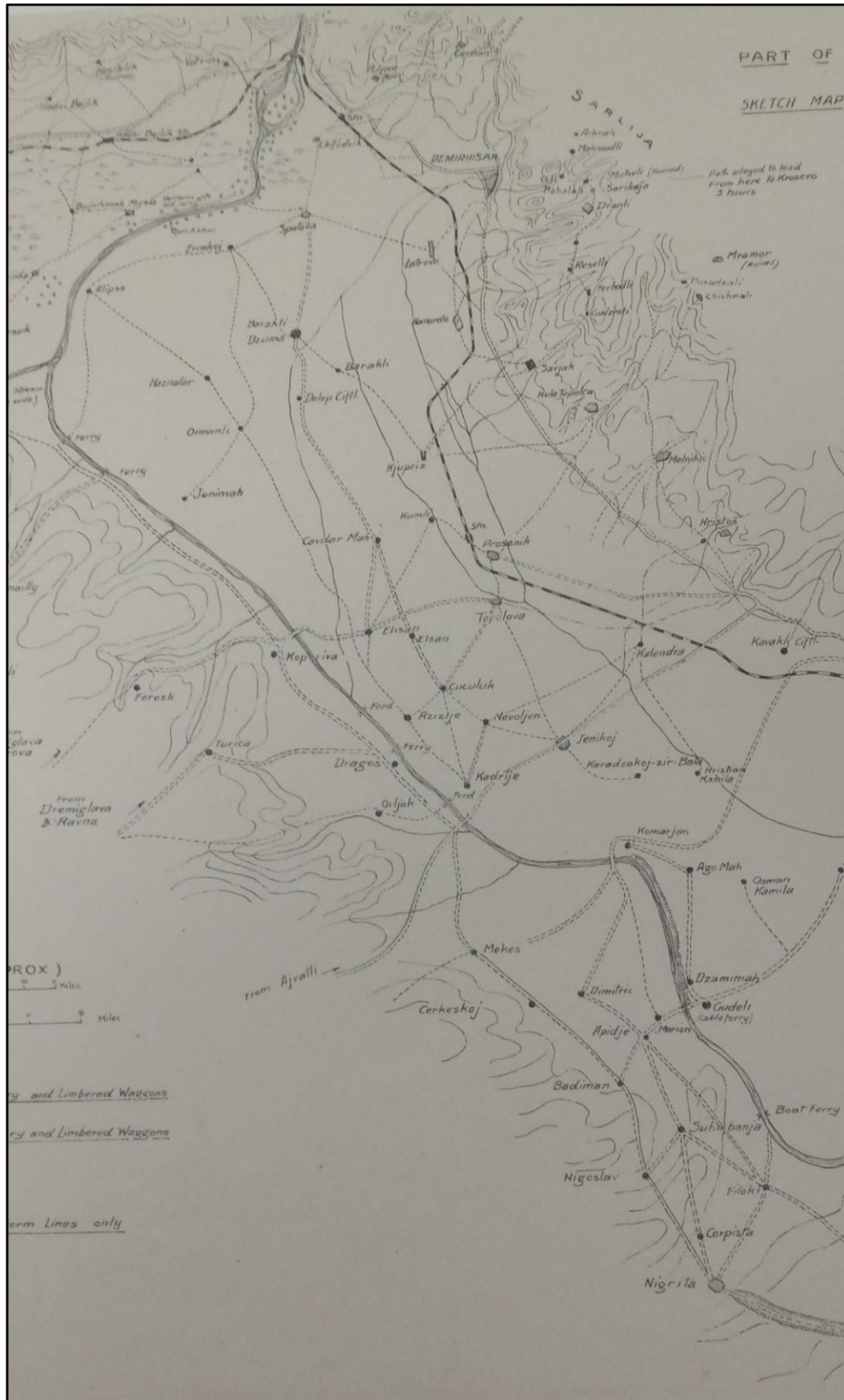
Dispositions of the 6th and 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 30 September 1916²⁹

²⁹ Falls, C and Becke, AF, page before page 175.



Map showing assembly positions of 6th and 7th RDF prior to their attack on Jenikoj on 3 October 1916. It shows Orljak, Mazirka, Nevoljen and Seres to the east.³⁰

³⁰ Sheet Name: Map of Stavros Production: Printing Section Ahq No 20, WO 298/532 Nigrita, (London: The National Archives, 1908 to 1919).



Map of Theatre of Operations of 30th Brigade between 1 and 4 October 1916. Going from south to north along the Struma River beginning with Gudeli, Dzamimah, Komarjan, Karadzakoj Zir and Bala, Jenikoj, Nevoljen, Orljak, Cuculuk, Topalova, Kalendra, Prosenik on the railway line and finally Demirhisar.³¹

³¹ Sheet Name: Salonika Production: Maps and Surveys Ahq Printing Section Ahq No 61, WO 298/708, part of Struma Valley, (London: The National Archives, 9 June 1916).



View from the Bulgarian hillside positions north of Jenikoj looking across the Struma Valley below, August 2024



Outline of Bulgarian trenches on hillside positions north of Jenikoj looking across the Struma Valley below, August 2024



View of the centre of Jenikoj or Provatas looking north, August 2024



Headstone of 18890 Corporal John Nolan, 6th RDF, aged 18, at Struma Military Cemetery, Kalokastro, Greece

(Thanks to Seán Ryan, RDFA, for the memory card placed at John's headstone)



No 4 Tram Villas, now Rathmore Villas, Terenure, Dublin, where John Nolan and his family once lived

44

STRUMA MILITARY CEMETERY. Final. Greece 7-4C

P. R. Gr.	Regtl. No.	Rank.	Name and Initials.	Date of Death.	Regiment.
3 D	c 1	7/24159	Sgt. BLUNDELL E.	24. 2.17.	7/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 2	69944	A/Bdr. SUTTON T.	3.10.16.	RFA.D/67 F.A.B.
	c 3	7/24238	Pte. HOLMES T.	3.10.17.	7/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 4	1/9207	Sgt. HUNWICK L.	3.10.16.	6/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 5	7167	Pte. MCGUIRE O.	3.10.16.	6/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 6	8675	Sgt. LUDLOW W.	13. 1.17.	1/R.Irish Rgt.
	c 7	6347	Pte. McAULEY J.	3.10.16.	6/R.Munster Fus.
	c 8	2125	Pte. LAKE C.J.	3.10.16.	6/R.Munster Fus.
	c 9	10732	Pte. GEORGE T.	17. 3.17.	6/R.Munster Fus.
	c 10	7/24350	Pte. MARKHAM H.	3.10.16.	7/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 11	10113	L/Cpl. CULLEN T.	3.10.16.	6/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 12	13081	Cpl. CONNELLY J.	3.10.16.	6/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 13	7/15345	Pte. LAWRENCE T.	3.10.16.	7/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 14	7/18865	Pte. MANNING W.J.	3.10.16.	7/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 15	7/28500	A/L/Cpl. HYLAND H.	24. 2.17.	7/R.Dub.Fus.
3.E.	c 1	-	2/Lt. MAY E.B. (DCM)	4.10.16.	30/M.G.Sect.
	c 2	L/6162	C.S.M. BRISTOW A.	5. 9.16.	2/R.W.K.att.7/R.D.F.
	c 3	1257	Spr. HOLBROOK A.	1.10.16.	RE.1/Wessex Fld.Coy.(T)
	c 4	219	Pte. QUIGLEY H.	23. 9.16.	7/R.Munster Fus.
	c 5	13907	Pte. FISHER H.	30. 9.16.	1/R.Scots.
	c 6	69079	Gnr. JOHNSON T.Mc.K.	19. 9.16.	RGA.153/H.B.
	c 7	13893	Pte. BISHOP F.	17. 9.16.	3/Dorsets att.7/R.M.F.
	c 8	4682	Pte. MOONEY T.	10. 9.16.	6/R.Innis Fus.
	c 9	-	2/Lt. MACNIE G.F.	4. 9.16.	5/Conn.Ran.att.6/R.D.F.
	c 10	17689	Pte. MCCONKEY W.	10. 9.16.	5/R.Innis Fus.
	c 11	10179	Sgt. SKELTON G.	30. 9.16.	1/A. & S.H.
	c 12	5/12257	A/Cpl. FERGUSON W.	10. 9.16.	5/R.Innis Fus.
	c 13	1879	Pte. BOYD VBS.R.	10. 9.16.	6/R.Innis Fus. <i>Ry/2/4/19.</i>
	c 14	7786	Pte. STYNES W.	23. 9.16.	6/R.Munster Fus.
	c 15	18503	L/Cpl. KENNEL F.	3.10.16.	6/R.Munster Fus.
3 F	c 1	18890	A/Cpl. NOLAN J.	3.10.16.	6/Dub.Fus.
	c 2	5/5859	Rfn. POWER T.	3.10.16.	6/R.Irish Rifs.
	c 3	48868	L/Cpl. HANNEY O.	3.10.16.	2/Cam.Hrs.att.81/MGC.
	c 4	31074	Pte. MUIR W.	1.10.16.	1/R.Scots.
	c 5	17787	Pte. RANKIN A.	10. 9.16.	6/R.Irish R.
	c 6	16548	Pte. ASTLE J.	4. 9.18.	6/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 7	2/11639	Pte. FENNIS C.	22. 9.16.	6/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 8	9011	Sgt. O'BRIEN P.	3.10.16.	6/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 9	24540	Pte. MCCORMACK C.	3.10.16.	6/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 10	16477	Pte. O'BRIEN J.	3.10.16.	6/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 11	7994	C.S.M. SANDIFORD J.	3.10.16.	6/R.Munster Fus.
	c 12	665	Pte. MCCOLE T.	3.10.16.	6/R.Munster Fus.
	c 13	18213	Pte. BINKS P.P.O.	10. 9.16.	6/R.Irish Fus.
	c 14	2725	Pte. McNAB D.	14.10.17.	1/R.Scots.
	c 15	5810	Pte. MILLS M.	3.10.16.	6/R.Dub.Fus.
3 G	c 1	6/7021	Pte. HORSLEY J.E.	3.10.16.	2/R.W.K.att.7/R.D.F.
	c 2	17342	Pte. HOGAN A.	2. 5.17.	2/R.Irish Fus.
	c 3	15509	L/Cpl. BURNETT G.W.	3.10.16.	6/R.Dub.Fus.
	c 4	20956	Pte. SHIPPE E.	30. 9.16.	2/Glosters.
	c 5	26985	Pte. SMITH D.	30. 9.16.	2/Glosters.
	c 6	7974	Pte. FISHER P.	30. 9.16.	1/A. & S.H.
	c 7	9151	L/Cpl. BLACKWOOD J.	30. 9.16.	2/Cam.Hldrs.
	c 8	13770	Cpl. WHITEHEAD J.	30. 9.16.	1/R.Scots.
	c 9	3189	Pte. DEWAR N.	2.10.16.	1/R.Scots.
	c 10	14180	Pte. GODDARD D.	4.10.16.	1/A. & S.H.
	c 11	8397	L/Cpl. FAWCETT T.	30. 9.16.	2/Cam.Hldrs. x
	c 12	36940	Spr. CLARK J.	1.10.16.	R.E.66/Fld.Coy.
	c 13	8156	Pte. RUGG G.	30. 9.16.	2/Cam.Hldrs.
	c 14	2100	Pte. McFARLANE D.	3.10.16.	1/R.Scots.
	c 15	2666	Pte. DONOHUE	3. 1.17.	2/R.I.F.

ENTERED *19/1/20*
CLIPS CHECKED *12-7-22*

Page from Struma Military Cemetery registry showing grave of Corporal John Nolan, 6th RDF, being in Plot 3, Row F, Grave 1 (arrowed)³²

³² <https://www.cwgc.org/>.

No. of Contract.....dated.....

Name and address of Firm.....

IMPERIAL WAR SERVICES COMMISSION.

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (A) OF TABLET INSCRIPTIONS
to this report is attached
COMPREHENSIVE REPORT B TABLET TEXTS
(those tablets to be inscribed with texts are underlined)

SCHEDULE A PAGE 13

NAME OF CEMETERY.
STRUMA M.C.
to be stencilled on back
of Tablets abbreviated thus
STRU. M.C.

Badge Design No. Layout	1st line	2nd line	3rd line	4th line		To be stencilled on Back of Tablets.	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Number and Rank	Initials NAME and Honours	Regiment	DATE	RELIG: EMBLEM	PLOT -P ROW -R GRAVE-G P. R. G.	No. of Stone
	4682 PRIVATE	T. MOONEY	ROYAL INNISKILLING FUS.	10TH SEPTEMBER 1916	CROSS	3 E 8	301
IR/P	<u>SECOND LIEUTENANT</u>	<u>GEORGE FRANCIS MACNIE</u>	<u>CONNUGHT RANGERS</u>	<u>5TH SEPTEMBER 1916</u>	<u>CROSS</u>	<u>3 E 9</u>	<u>302</u>
	17689 PRIVATE	W. MC CONKEY	ROYAL INNISKILLING FUS.	10TH SEPTEMBER 1916	CROSS	3 E 10	303
IR/P	10179 SERJEANT	G. SKELTON	ARG. & SUTH'D HIGHRS.	30TH SEPTEMBER 1916	CROSS	3 E 11	304
	12257 CORPORAL	WILLIAM FERGUSON	ROYAL INNISKILLING FUS.	10TH SEPTEMBER 1916	CROSS	3 E 12	305
IR/H	14970 PRIVATE	R. BOND	ROYAL INNISKILLING FUS.	(see label 11)	CROSS	3 E 13	306
	2776 PRIVATE	W. STYVES	ROYAL MUNSTER FUSILIERS	23RD SEPTEMBER 1916	CROSS	3 E 14	307
	20050 LANCE OPL.	FRANK KENNEL	ROYAL MUNSTER FUSILIERS	3RD OCTOBER 1916	CROSS	3 E 15	308
	18890 CORPORAL	J. NOLAN	ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS	3RD OCTOBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 1	309
	5/5859 RIFLEMAN	T. POWER	ROYAL IRISH RIFLES	3RD OCTOBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 2	310
IR/P	48868 LANCE OPL.	O.G. HANNAY	MACHINE GUN CORPS	30TH OCTOBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 3	311
	31074 PRIVATE	W. MUIR	ROYAL SCOTS	1ST OCTOBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 4	312
	17787 PRIVATE	A. RANKIN	ROYAL IRISH FUSILIERS	10TH SEPTEMBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 5	313
	18548 PRIVATE	J. ASTLE	ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS	4TH SEPTEMBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 6	314
	2/11659 PRIVATE	CHARLES ENNIS	ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS	22ND SEPTEMBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 7	315
	9011 SERJEANT	P. O'BRIEN	ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS	3RD OCTOBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 8	316
	24540 PRIVATE	MC CORRICK	ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS	2ND/4TH OCTOBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 9	317
	16477 PRIVATE	T. O'BRIEN	ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS	2ND/4TH OCTOBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 10	318
	7994 C. SERJT. MAJ.	J. SANDIFORD	ROYAL MUNSTER FUSILIERS	3RD OCTOBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 11	319
IR/P	625 PRIVATE	T. MC COLL	ROYAL MUNSTER FUSILIERS	4TH OCTOBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 12	320
	18219 PRIVATE	P.P. O'B. BINKS	ROYAL IRISH FUSILIERS	10TH SEPTEMBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 13	321
	8745 PRIVATE	DUNCAN MC NAB	ROYAL SCOTS	15TH OCTOBER 1917	CROSS	3 F 14	322
	5810 PRIVATE	M. MILLS	ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS	2ND/4TH OCTOBER 1916	CROSS	3 F 15	323
	67021 PRIVATE	J.E. HORSLEY	ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT	3RD OCTOBER 1916	CROSS	3 G 1	324
	17342 PRIVATE	ANDREW HOGAN	ROYAL IRISH FUSILIERS	2ND MAY 1917	CROSS	3 G 2	325

The Grave Number will be engraved in "STANDARD ALPHABET" type on the tablet, in the space provided, the height of the figures being in accordance with the height of the space as shown on the Layout.

Where no layout No is stated LAYOUT IR will be used

*These headstones are not to be executed until further orders.

Tablets of men buried in Struma Military Cemetery that had inscriptions placed on them; names are underlined. See Corporal J Nolan, No 309 (arrowed)³³

³³ <https://www.cwgc.org/>.

MORGAN, Rfn. John George, 204978. 22nd Bn. The Rifle Brigade. 25th Oct., 1918. Age 30. Native of Cwmcarn, Cross Keys, Newport. Husband of Mary Jane Morgan, of "The Bunch," Ocheryweith, Pontymister, Risca, Newport, Mon. VIII. A. 7.

MORGAN, Pte. Patrick, S/23658. 1st Garrison Bn. Seaforth Highlanders. 28th Nov., 1917. IX. D. 3.

MORLEY, Pte. G., 7961. 1st Bn. Suffolk Regt. 4th Oct., 1916. IV. C. 5.

MORLOND, Lce. Cpl. J., 13386. 2nd Bn. Northumberland Fusiliers. 10th Sept., 1916. V. H. 6.

MORRELL, Capt. Harold Francis. 3rd Bn. British West Indies Regt. and Royal Flying Corps. 19th March, 1918. Age 20. Son of Mr. J. and Mrs. E. Morrell, of 75, Caron Avenue, Windsor, Ontario. II. F. 15.

MORRIS, Lce. Cpl. B., 21483. 2nd Bn. Northumberland Fusiliers. 10th Sept., 1916. Age 31. Husband of M. F. Atkinson (formerly Morris), of "East View," Bellingham, Northumberland. V. F. 8.

MORRISON, Pte. William, S/8194. 1st Bn. Argyll and Suth'd. Highrs. Killed in action 30th Sept., 1916. Age 23. Son of John and Ellen Morrison, of 71, South Portland Street, South Side, Glasgow. V. A. 3.

MOYES, Lt. John. 2nd Bn. Cameron Highrs. Died of wounds 14th Oct., 1917. Age 26. Son of John D. and Agnes McCall Moyes, of 19, Learmouth Place, Edinburgh. II. J. 2.

MUDIE, 2nd Lt. J. 9th attd. 1st Bn. Royal Scots. 30th Sept.—1st Oct., 1916. IV. G. 4.

MUIR, Pte. Peter, 49850. 81st Coy. Machine Gun Corps. Died of wounds 30th Sept., 1916. Age 33. Husband of Mary Muir, of 28, Gordon Square, London. Native of Scotland. II. J. 15.

MUIR, Pte. W. 31074. 1st Bn. Royal Scots. Died of wounds 1st Oct., 1916. Age 36. Son of Alexander Muir, of Glen Village, Falkirk, Stirlingshire, and the late Jane Muir. III. F. 4.

MULLEY, Lce. Cpl. G. V., 20874. 1st Bn. Suffolk Regt. 4th Oct., 1916. IV. C. 7.

MULLISS, Pte. Henry Francis, 20310. 2nd Bn. Gloucestershire Regt. Killed in action 31st Oct., 1916. Age 23. Son of Henry and Adelaide Mulliss, of 65, Stanhope Street, Cheltenham, Glos. VII. E. 14.

MURCHIE, Pte. William Hay, 315904. "D" Coy., 13th Bn. Black Watch. Killed in action 14th October, 1917. Age 19. Son of William Hay Murchie and Annabella Morrison Murchie, of 154, Crossloan Road, Govan, Glasgow. II. B. 8.

MURPHY, Pte. James, 36028. 1st Bn. Welch Regt. Died of pneumonia 11th July, 1916. Age 36. Son of James and Catherine Murphy, of 25, Dean Street, Newport, Mon. VII. F. 9.

MURPHY, Pte. J., 23031. 6th Bn. Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Killed in action 3rd Oct., 1916. Age 33. Son of James and Margaret Murphy, of Dublin; husband of Teresa Murphy, of 27, Upper Dorset Street, Dublin. III. A. 10.

MURPHY, Pte. M., 7/24218. 7th Bn. Royal Dublin Fusiliers. 5th Sept., 1916. II. D. 3.

MURPHY, Gnr. R., 44661. 98th Bty. 1st Bde. Royal Field Artillery. 2nd Oct., 1916. IV. F. 13.

MURRAY, Pte. Frank, 19464. 1st Bn. York and Lancaster Regt. 11th Oct., 1916. Son of James Murray, of 45, Govan Road, Glasgow. VI. A. 14.

NEILSON, Pte. F., 22796. 2nd Bn. Cameron Highlanders. 1st/2nd Oct., 1916. IV. J. 9.

NESBITT, Lce. Cpl. Thomas, 16340. 2nd Bn. Northumberland Fusiliers. 10th Sept., 1916. Age 28. Son of John and Margaret Nesbitt, of New Etal, Cornhill-on-Tweed, Northumberland. Native of Wooler, Northumberland. V. E. 11.

NICHOL, Pte. J., 17255. 2nd Bn. Royal Lancaster Regt. 21st Aug., 1916. Age 20. VI. A. 1.

NOLAN, Cpl. J., 18890. 6th Bn. Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Killed in action 3rd Oct., 1916. Age 18. Only son of Thomas and Kate Nolan, of 4, Tram Villas, Terenure, Dublin. III. F. 1.

NOONAN, Pte. H., 16488. 2nd Bn. Royal Irish Fusiliers. 2nd May, 1917. IV. E. 10.

NORMAN, Spr. Thomas Henry, 1971. 1st/7th (Hants) Field Coy. Royal Engineers. Died of wounds 4th Oct., 1916. Age 26. Son of Fred and Martha Mary Norman, of Castle View, Langton, Matravers, Dorset. III. B. 10.

NORTON, Dvr. A., T/37460. 122nd Coy. Royal Army Service Corps. 26th July, 1916. Age 17. Son of Edward and Annie Norton, of Oxford Terrace, Oxford Street, Wednesbury, Staffs. VII. H. 3.



Page from listings at Struma Military Cemetery: 'NOLAN, Cpl. J.', 6th RDF (arrowed)³⁴

³⁴ <https://www.cwgc.org/>.

RDFA Membership Renewals for 2025

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. 2024 has been another busy year for the Association in fulfilling its mission of remembrance.

Looking ahead to 2025, 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*. We are also hoping to arrange another European trip during 2025 to Gallipoli (numbers permitting) on the 110th anniversary of that Campaign. We are also likely to have one or more events of historic interest in Ireland.

Our recent Annual General Meeting has again set the membership subscription for 2025 at €20 for all members, including those overseas, with subscriptions due on 1st January. 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 into the Association by your Committee and other members. I hope that you will agree that the €20 subscription represents exceptional value.

In order to contain costs and maintain the current subscription fee, we would like all correspondence to be sent to members by email where possible. Therefore if an email address is provided on the Membership and Renewal Form, we will use it to keep in touch.

However we appreciate that some members do not have access to email, and so we will continue to correspond with them by post. Due to current postage costs, we will not be sending separate renewal reminders to those members who choose postal communication. Instead our Membership and Renewal Form is being issued with this printed *Blue Cap*.

As well as renewing your membership, I would ask all members to complete the Membership and Renewal Form and return it to me, so that we have an up-to-date set of contact details for all members. Please also indicate on the Form how you have paid (whether by cheque, bank transfer, standing order, etc), so that we can trace the payment and correctly assign it. If you have a membership query, you can contact me at any time at rdfamembershipsecretary@gmail.com. For bank transfers, please reference the payment with the prefix 'MR' (membership renewal) followed by your first name initial and then surname. For example, Brian Moroney's renewal would be referenced 'MR BMoroney'.

Of course, we always welcome new 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 to me.

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

Remembering the Start of the Anglo-Boer War on its 125th Anniversary:

How the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Fared in the War's First Battle at Talana Hill

Paul Appleby

Introduction to and Aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902

The interest of European powers in southern Africa was limited until Europeans like David Livingstone and Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza began exploring the interior in the middle of the 19th century. Commercial interests followed them in an effort to exploit the potential riches of these new-found lands. By 1880, the scramble among European powers for control of African territory had begun in earnest, and in about 30 years, the whole continent (bar Liberia and Ethiopia) was under European control or influence. The main imperial protagonists in this period were Britain, France, Germany, Spain and Portugal, while King Leopold II of Belgium enriched himself in the Congo.¹

Britain had had a strategic interest in today's South Africa since the early 1800s, but it had an uneasy relationship with the Boers, the resident Dutch-speaking community, with respect to, for instance, their autonomy, land and the rights of the native Africans. The following extracts from Thomas Pakenham's book, *The Boer War*, provide some additional information on the circumstances in which these issues caused friction:

"In 1652, the Dutch East India Company founded a shipping station at the Cape of Good Hope... The settlers were mainly Dutch Calvinists... The poorest and most independent of them were the trekboers (alias Boers), the wandering farmers whose search for new grazing lands brought them progressively deeper into African territory.

In 1806, during the Napoleonic Wars, the British government took permanent possession of the colony. Britain's aim was strategic. The Cape was a naval base on the sea-route to India and the East... In 1834 Britain ordered slaves to be emancipated in every part of the Empire. This precipitated the Great Trek: the exodus in 1835-37 of about 5,000 Boers... beyond the north-east frontiers of the colony. The voortrekkers (pioneers) quarrelled among themselves but shared one article of faith: to deny political rights to Africans and Coloured people of mixed race.

... In 1843 Britain created a second colony by annexing Natal, one of the areas in which the voortrekkers had concentrated. But in 1852 and 1854 Britain recognized the independence of the two new Boer republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Then in 1877, Britain annexed the Transvaal as the first step in an attempt to

¹ Thomas Pakenham's, *The Scramble for Africa, 1876-1912*, George Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1991, offers a detailed review of the progress of European imperialism in Africa in this period. All subsequent page references relate to the Abacus paperback edition of this book which was published in London in 1992.

federate South Africa. This annexation was reversed in 1881, after Paul Kruger had led a rebellion (the First Boer War) culminating in the defeat of the British at Majuba. The Transvaal's independence was restored, subject to conditions, including British supervision of its foreign policy.”²

Kenneth Griffith, a Welsh actor, documentary maker and anti-imperialist, was fascinated by imperial history and made a number of films about the Anglo-Boer War.³ In the introduction to his 1974 book on the siege and relief of Ladysmith in late 1899/early 1900, he described the background to the War in forthright terms:

“...Britain already had a long record of dabbling in the Transvaal's affairs; indeed, since the time the country was established by trekking Boers, back in the 1830s. However in 1852 the Transvaalers secured a categorical promise of freedom from English interference at the Sand River Convention. Britain stuck to her promise when it suited her and broke her promise when it did not. On 12 April 1877, with a Tory Government in Britain, the Transvaal was annexed into the British Empire. On 15 December 1880, the Boers rose in rebellion against the British army of occupation and quickly inflicted defeats on them at Bronkhorst Spruit, Laing's Nek, Ingogo and finally, crushingly, at the battle of Majuba Hill. By this time, Mr Gladstone and his Liberals had come to power in England and they decided to come to terms with the Transvaalers; the British troops marched out of the country.”⁴

Of course the genesis of the War was not purely a Britain versus Boer clash of interests – other pressures were at play. Local tribes like the Xhosa and Zulu in southern Africa fought with both the British and the Boers during the course of the 19th century. The humanitarian instinct which prompted Britain's abolition of slavery in the 1830s was regularly sacrificed in succeeding decades in the interests of expanding its Empire and/or securing harmonious relations with the Boers. Although Africans were not a direct protagonist in the forthcoming Anglo-Boer War, they would be drawn into the conflict. Their cattle were occasionally confiscated by the Boers for food which sometimes gave rise to bloody reprisals. Their labour came to be used to help build fortifications and undertake other military tasks. Africans employed as armed scouts, guides and guards by the British were usually killed by the Boers if they were captured (unlike their white Army colleagues who were treated respectfully). Disease attributable to the conditions of war also had a major impact on the native population. In all, an estimated 14,000 Africans would die in the War, but no one was

² Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War*, 1979, George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd., pages xxi and xxii of Abacus paperback edition, London, 1992. All later page references relate to this edition of the book.

³ A review of Kenneth Griffith and his work was published by *The Irish Times* on 21 October 2006 after his death. See <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/welsh-film-maker-fascinated-by-irish-history-1.1019012> (accessed on 19 March 2020). His work in Irish history included controversial films on Michael Collins, Roger Casement and the veterans of the 1916 Rising.

⁴ Kenneth Griffith, *Thank God We Kept The Flag Flying: The Siege and Relief of Ladysmith 1899-1900*, 1974, Hutchinson of London, page xv.

keeping proper records of African casualties. In the view of Pakenham, it was the Africans who suffered most during and after the War.⁵

In particular, the discovery of valuable minerals in South Africa would stoke British-Boer tensions. Diamonds were found at Kimberley in Cape Colony in 1870, and gold was then discovered outside Johannesburg in the Transvaal in 1886. These finds enriched men like Cecil Rhodes, Alfred Beit and Julius Wernher who were keen supporters of Britain and of imperial expansion in southern Africa. In exploiting the gold finds in the Transvaal, new immigrants (many British) poured into the country, but as their numbers grew, the Boers enacted a discriminatory electoral law in order to preserve their own pre-eminence within Transvaal society. Rhodes, Beit and Wernher were also unhappy with the taxation and other operating conditions imposed on their businesses by the Transvaal Government, and they sought to exploit the bitterness among the immigrants (so-called Uitlanders or outsiders) which was engendered by their lack of political influence.⁶

In 1895, Rhodes, Beit and Wernher planned to take over the Transvaal for themselves and the British Empire by precipitating an Uitlander revolt against the Boers. The so-called 'Jameson Raid' from neighbouring British-controlled Bechuanaland (now Botswana) included some 400 Rhodesian mounted police in the employment of Rhodes and Beit. However the Raid was a fiasco as no contemporaneous Uitlander rising took place.^{7 8} Although there were suspicions at the time that the new British Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, had secretly colluded with Rhodes in planning the Raid, hard evidence only emerged many years later.⁹ However a result of the 'Jameson Raid' was that the Transvaal used part of its new-found wealth to equip itself with the best French and German weaponry – modern rifles (principally Mausers) and artillery (including a number of 155 mm heavy guns later known as 'Long Toms').¹⁰ The availability of this matériel would prolong the forthcoming War.

In 1899, federal unification of the two British colonies (Cape Colony and Natal) and the two Boer republics (Orange Free State and the Transvaal) under the British flag remained a British strategic aim. Chamberlain considered the moral case for supporting the Uitlanders and curbing Boer supremacy to be overwhelming. A fair deal for the native Africans was also considered desirable. Pressed by Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner, Britain's High Commissioner for South Africa, to respond to the Uitlanders' continuing appeals for improved political rights, the British Government authorised Milner to enter negotiations with Mr Paul Kruger, the President of the Transvaal.¹¹ While Kruger offered concessions,

⁵ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, pages xvii, 15-17, 57-71, 402, 507-510 and 573 and *The Scramble for Africa*, pages 577-581.

⁶ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, pages xxii and 48-50 and *The Scramble for Africa*, page 564.

⁷ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, pages 1-5.

⁸ Julius Wernher's involvement is cited in Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, page 564.

⁹ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, pages 502 and 503.

¹⁰ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 41.

¹¹ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, pages 558-560.

these were deemed by Milner to be inadequate. 'It is our country you want', Kruger reportedly said, as the talks broke down in early June 1899.¹²

For Milner, the collapse of the negotiations was because Kruger was not sufficiently frightened. In his view, Britain must now turn the 'war-screw'.¹³ War was the only way to 'burst the mould' of Boer dominance of the Transvaal.¹⁴ Thomas Pakenham characterises the Second Anglo-Boer War as 'Milner's War' because of the crucial role that Milner played in fomenting Uitlander grievances and in manipulating Chamberlain and the British Government, both directly and via influential friends.¹⁵

After further contacts with Kruger over the summer came to nothing, the Government decided on 8 September to send 10,000 troops to reinforce Natal and other areas of British control which were considered susceptible to Boer attack. Yet Chamberlain believed that these troops would not precipitate war; they would merely frighten Kruger back to the negotiating table. This belief was promoted by Milner and the Beit-Wernher-Rhodes axis who well knew that the Boers would fight.¹⁶

The War began on 12 October when Boers from the Transvaal and the Orange Free State crossed over the frontier into Natal. Within weeks, the Boers had cut off three British garrisons at strategic border towns: Mafeking and Kimberley in Cape Colony and Ladysmith in Natal. The Boers were only forced on to the defensive when the newly arrived



¹² Pakenham, *The Boer War*, pages 66-68.

¹³ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 68.

¹⁴ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 118.

¹⁵ Pakenham uses the term 'Milner's War' to headline Part I of *The Boer War* and Chapter 31 of *The Scramble for Africa*. Page 564 of the latter book instances some of Milner's subterfuge 'to work up to a crisis'.

¹⁶ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, pages 559 and 560 and *The Boer War*, page 89.

British troops were deployed against them over the following weeks.¹⁷ The above map of southern Africa is a useful source of reference for some of the main events during the Anglo-Boer War.¹⁸

Ultimately however, the British Army prevailed as a result of its deployment of almost 450,000 imperial and colonial soldiers to South Africa during the War.¹⁹ When the War ended in late May 1902, the Boers and the British Empire alike had suffered enormous loss. Some 70,000 people were dead, including 20,000 British lives, 35,000 Boers (about 80% of whom were women and children) as well as over 14,000 native Africans.²⁰ The financial cost to the British Exchequer alone was about £200 million²¹ (equivalent to over £20 billion today when intervening inflation is taken into account²²). Major damage was also inflicted on Boer property with homes destroyed and several million cattle, sheep and horses killed or looted. In addition, the British War Office reckoned that it had 'expended' over 400,000 horses, mules and donkeys during the War.²³

Under the Treaty of Vereeniging which was signed between Britain, the Transvaal and Orange Free State²⁴ on 31 May 1902, the two former republics became colonies and were promised self-government as soon as circumstances permitted. While the Uitlanders were given the vote on equal terms with the Boers, no franchise guarantee was included for the native Africans.²⁵ The Treaty's terms enabled the Boers to reassume supremacy of the Transvaal in 1907 when they won an overall majority of seats in parliament. The Uitlander threat had not materialised.²⁶

In October 1908, the British Government encouraged the four colonies to develop plans for a single dominion in South Africa. What emerged from these discussions was a proposed constitution for a South African union which would clearly be dominated by the Boers of the resource-rich Transvaal. By July 1909, a majority of Natal voters and the parliaments of other three colonies had endorsed the draft constitution, and the required legislation received Westminster approval and Royal assent that autumn. On 31 May 1910, Mr Louis Botha took office as the first Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, albeit a jurisdiction now wholly within the British Commonwealth. Exactly eight years after their defeat in the

¹⁷ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, pages 567 and 570.

¹⁸ This map is available at

<https://www.google.ie/search?q=Map+of+South+Africa+at+the+time+of+the+Boer+War> (accessed on 3 April 2017).

¹⁹ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 572.

²⁰ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, pages 580 and 581.

²¹ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, page 580.

²² This calculation is derived from <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator> (accessed on 22 November 2024).

²³ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 572.

²⁴ As noted by Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 581, Orange Free State was renamed Orange River Colony after Britain proclaimed the annexation of the Boer republic on 28 May 1900. For convenience however, the former term is always used in this article despite the formal change of name after this date.

²⁵ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, page 579 and *The Boer War*, pages 490 and 491.

²⁶ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, page 665.

War, the Boers had returned to control three times the territory and over four times the population which had existed in their former republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.²⁷ While the Boers may ultimately have lost the War, they could certainly be said to have triumphed during the subsequent peace.

Sentiment in Ireland towards the Anglo-Boer War

The period leading up to the Anglo-Boer War in Ireland was dominated by tenant agitation over land and the efforts of constitutional nationalists to restore Home Rule. The British Parliament responded with a series of Land Acts which improved the security of tenants, but the Home Rule Bills of 1886 and 1893 failed to become law. These Bills which were supported by Irish MPs in Westminster envisaged Ireland staying in the British Empire.²⁸

After the failed 1867 Fenian Rising, the revolutionary tradition which sought to create an independent Irish nation by force was effectively moribund. However the final decades of the 19th century were also notable for a new focus by nationalists on a revival of Irish culture, particularly of language, music and games.²⁹ As noted by Donal P McCracken, nationalism had inherent tensions:

*“Increasingly in the 1890s Irish nationalism was divided into two distinct movements: the solid, wealthy, Catholic middle-class nationalists of the Parliamentary Party, and the advanced extra-parliamentary nationalists, imbued with the enthusiasm of the Gaelic revival. There was no love lost between the two.”*³⁰

And yet at the beginning of the 20th century, ‘Dublin was a British city and saw itself as one’.³¹ While there was support in establishment and unionist circles in Dublin and elsewhere for the decision of the British Government in late 1899 to declare war on the Boers, there was considerable sympathy among nationalists for the Boer independence cause. The strong stance against the War taken by the elected Irish MPs in Westminster was influenced by their distaste for the Government’s actions in proceeding to deploy the British Army against their ‘home rule’ counterparts in South Africa.³² Many local authorities in Ireland also passed pro-Boer resolutions.³³

Others took a direct approach to supporting the Boers. An Irish Transvaal Committee which included Maud Gonne and Arthur Griffith sought to dissuade Irishmen from enlisting in the

²⁷ Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, pages 665-667.

²⁸ D. George Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland*, Gill & Macmillan, Revised Edition, 2005, pages 166-199.

²⁹ See, for instance, David Fitzpatrick, *Ireland Since 1870*, in *The Oxford History of Ireland* edited by RF Foster, Oxford University Press, 2011 edition, pages 180-189.

³⁰ Donal P McCracken, *Forgotten Protest*, Ulster Historical Foundation, Belfast, 2003, page 33.

³¹ Quotation attributed to Todd Andrews by Ronan McGreevy on page 2 of *The Irish Times* of 2 August 2019. The online version of the article is at <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/astonishing-video-footage-of-smiling-famine-queen-victoria-s-dublin-visit-found-1.3974137> (accessed on 5 August 2019). Todd Andrews (1901-1985) was a republican during the Irish Civil War and later became a prominent public servant.

³² McCracken, *Forgotten Protest*, pages 34, 35 and 45-56.

³³ Donal P McCracken, *MacBride’s Brigade: Irish Commandos in the Anglo-Boer War*, Four Courts Press Ltd., Dublin, 1999, page 72.

British Army with, for example, a public poster campaign and a new flag sent to South Africa for the Irish Transvaal Brigade.³⁴ A few individuals (including Major John McBride who would later be executed in Dublin after the 1916 Rising) joined the Boers and fought in the Irish Transvaal Brigade in South Africa. McBride was a pivotal figure in the formation of the Brigade and left his job as an assayer in a Johannesburg gold mine to become second-in-command in the Brigade to Colonel John Blake, an Irish-American and a former lieutenant in the US cavalry.³⁵

Pro-Boer public rallies were a regular occurrence, and unrest occasionally stalked the streets of Dublin in particular. On 17 December 1899 two days after the Boers defeated the British Army at Colenso, a demonstration supporting the Boers proceeded through Dublin City Centre, and a riot ensued. The Dublin Metropolitan Police sabre-charged the crowd near Parliament Street causing several injuries, and James Connolly (who would also later be executed after the 1916 Rising) was arrested. The catalyst for the demonstration was the decision of Trinity College Dublin to award an honorary degree to Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary, who was seen as the architect of the Anglo-Boer War. The subsequent visit of the elderly Queen Victoria to Ireland for three weeks in April 1900 was likely designed to counter pro-Boer sentiment in the country and to encourage continuing Irish recruitment into the British Army.³⁶

However as time went on, the British prosecution of the War (including in particular the destruction of Boer farm holdings and the incidence of death and disease among Boer women and children in the concentration camps established by the British Army) proved publicly controversial in both Ireland and Britain. If anything, these events resonated even more with the Irish population who had recent memories of evictions and hunger at the hands of Britain, and they served to consolidate Irish nationalist support for the Boer cause.³⁷

Interestingly, Roger Casement (who would also later be executed for his part in the 1916 Rising) was a British Foreign Office official in southern Africa in the run-up to the Anglo-Boer War. From his base in Lourenço Marques in Portuguese East Africa (now Maputo in Mozambique) in 1896, he reported to his superiors on the Boers' extensive importation of German arms through its port. These arms imports were triggered by the 'Jameson Raid' into the Transvaal some months earlier which rightly led the Boers to believe that their independence was threatened.³⁸

After the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War in late 1899, Roger Casement was again assigned to the area and in December, advocated blowing up the rail line from Lourenço Marques to

³⁴ McCracken, *Forgotten Protest*, pages 50-53.

³⁵ McCracken, *MacBride's Brigade*, pages 22-31.

³⁶ McCracken, *MacBride's Brigade*, pages 58, 59, 72 and 83.

³⁷ McCracken, *Forgotten Protest*, page 75.

³⁸ Angus Mitchell, *16 Lives: Roger Casement*, The O'Brien Press Ltd, 2013, pages 60-62 (2016 reprint).

Pretoria in order to disrupt the Boers' main supply route.³⁹ Ultimately, this plan was aborted in late May 1900 after the Boers took measures to guard against such an attack.⁴⁰

Angus Mitchell, a biographer of Roger Casement, has commented:

"Casement's plan was indicative of a shift in the way wars were fought; not on the open field of battle but in response to localised skirmishes and commando-like operations mounted by the Boer. Britain responded to the guerrilla campaign with a bitter scorched earth policy, burning Boer farmsteads and imprisoning thousands of civilians, including women and children, in concentration camps. Although the Boers were eventually defeated in 1902, British authority was deeply scarred by the experience. The Boer War changed popular views of the British Empire and in many ways it also changed Casement... What Casement had experienced and witnessed had started to sow doubts in his mind. Sixteen years later, as he languished in the Tower of London, he reflected on the change stimulated within him:

*'I arrived home in July 1900 and I was then becoming a pro-Boer as a result of what I had seen in South Africa. I went home to Ballycastle and this visit and the lessons of the Transvaal brought my thoughts back to Ireland, for although always a strong nationalist I had lost interest when Mr Parnell died and had come to look upon myself as an African, until my stay in the Cape and closer touch with "Imperial" ideals.'*⁴¹

Unlike Roger Casement at the outset of the War, Michael Davitt, the prominent Irish land reform activist, was very sympathetic to the Boer cause. He felt so strongly that he resigned his seat in the House of Commons in October 1899 following the declaration of war against the Boers.⁴² In early 1900 having secured commissions from the *New York American Journal* and *The Freeman's Journal* in Ireland, Michael Davitt travelled to South Africa as a war correspondent.^{43 44} According to Carla King, the Boer leaders gave him valuable support, and his pro-Boer reports on the War were quite detailed. However, she has also suggested that his Boer sympathies clouded his judgement at times, viz:

"He greatly admired the courage of the small republics in their resistance to the might of the British Empire... But in his treatment of the Uitlander mining magnates he engaged in a measure of anti-Semitism... This is curious because in an age when

³⁹ Mitchell, pages 69 and 70.

⁴⁰ Mitchell, pages 71-73.

⁴¹ Mitchell, page 74.

⁴² McCracken, *Forgotten Protest*, pages 88 and 89.

⁴³ McCracken, *Forgotten Protest*, pages 131 and 132.

⁴⁴ There was no question of Michael Davitt becoming a member of the Boer Irish Brigades. Firstly, he was over 53 years of age. More importantly, he had lost his right arm in an industrial accident at a Lancashire cotton mill machine in 1857 at the age of 11. This accident led to four years of unexpected schooling which undoubtedly assisted his later career. This information is derived from *The Course of Irish History* edited by TW Moody and FX Martin, Mercier Press, page 248 (2011 Edition).

*overt anti-Semitism was common, in Ireland as elsewhere, Davitt on more than one occasion took a stand in defence of Jews. Even more striking is his inconsistency in his treatment of Africans. In 1898 he had asserted the rights of West Africans to govern their own country. However, in his accounts of South Africa he adopted the Boers' racist attitudes towards the African population, describing them on several occasions as 'savages' and refusing to see British criticism of Boer treatment of Africans as anything more than a smokescreen for their own ambitions."*⁴⁵

On his return home in July 1900, Michael Davitt began writing a book on the Boers' defence of their homeland. This book, *The Boer Fight for Freedom*, was published in New York and London in 1902 and represented an attack on British policy in South Africa.⁴⁶

And yet it would be wrong to assume that Ireland was overwhelmingly pro-Boer. Establishment circles in Ireland were delighted that many of the leading British Army officers in South Africa were Anglo-Irish, including Generals Roberts, French and Kitchener. Many Irish (including nationalists) were proud of the performance of the Irish regiments in the War. Indeed some nationalists supported the War, because they had relatives serving not just in the Irish regiments but elsewhere in the Army. McCracken has noted that a correspondent to the *United Irishman* newspaper in October 1899 stated in relation to the poor people in his area that:

*"...it would be dangerous to say a word derogatory of England's invincibility. They have relatives among the Fusiliers, etc. who are at present fighting in South Africa, and they are proud of the fact."*⁴⁷

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers as War Beckoned

In September 1899, there were less than 10,000 imperial troops in southern Africa, and these were divided between Cape Colony and Natal, a huge area totalling several hundred thousand square kilometres. Arising from the British Government's decision on 8 September 1899 to double its forces in both colonies in order to deter or, if necessary, counter any Boer invasion, reinforcements were initially sourced from Britain, Crete, Egypt, Gibraltar, India, Ireland, Malta and Mauritius, the first detachment leaving India on 17 September. Egypt and Ireland contributed the 1st Battalions of the Royal Irish Fusiliers and the Royal Munster Fusiliers respectively. All of these initial troops had arrived in southern Africa by the end of October.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Carla King, 'The Mahdi for an Irish Constituency or at least a Seat in Dublin Town Council: Davitt and Africa', in *History Ireland*, Issue 4, July/August 2006. This article is available at the website <http://www.historyireland.com/18th-19th-century-history/the-mahdi-for-an-irish-constituency-or-at-least-a-seat-in-dublin-town-council-davitt-and-africa/> (accessed on 25 March 2017).

⁴⁶ Carla King, *Michael Davitt*, University College Dublin Press on behalf of the Historical Association of Ireland, 2009, page 75.

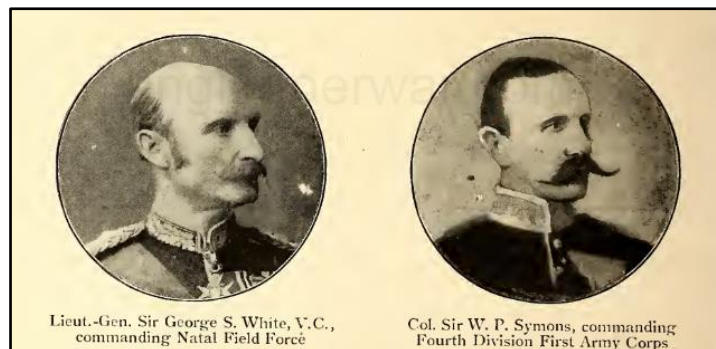
⁴⁷ McCracken, *MacBride's Brigade*, pages 82-84.

⁴⁸ Griffith, pages 2-6.

As the Anglo-Boer War approached, the 1st Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers was based initially at Aldershot for two years and then was moved to The Curragh in May 1899 having been re-armed with the Lee-Netford Mark II Rifle some months earlier. As war became imminent, the 1st Battalion was ordered to South Africa to form part of the 5th (Irish) Brigade under Major-General A Fitzroy Hart. This Brigade also included the 1st Battalions of the Inniskilling Fusiliers and the Connaught Rangers. These additional reinforcements left Queenstown (Cobh) on 10 November 1899 and disembarked at Durban on 1 December.⁴⁹

The 2nd Battalion of the Fusiliers was hurriedly moved from India to South Africa in early 1897 due to continuing tension with the Transvaal. For the following two years, it was based at Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Natal.⁵⁰ Accordingly the 2nd Battalion was *in situ* when the Anglo-Boer War broke out in October 1899.

However pending the arrival of these reinforcements and of the newly appointed Lieutenant-General Sir George White (a native of Co Derry/Londonderry⁵¹) as General Officer Commanding in Natal and of Sir Redvers Buller as overall Commander-in-Chief of the British Army forces in southern Africa, the senior officer in Natal, Major-General Sir William Penn-Symons, began to take steps to protect the vulnerable northern border of Natal which adjoined both Boer republics.⁵² Contemporary images of White and Penn-Symons follow.⁵³



Both White and Buller had misgivings about deploying troops in this area given the difficult terrain involved, but the Irish-born Governor of Natal, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson⁵⁴, persuaded White that a withdrawal from northern Natal would leave its British subjects

⁴⁹ Wylly, Neill's "Blue Caps", Volume II, 1826-1914, pages 158-164.

⁵⁰ Romer and Mainwaring, *The Second Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the South African War*, reprint by The Naval & Military Press Ltd, page vi. The book is published on www.ajhw.co.uk/books/book313/book313.html and on www.angloboerwar.com/ (accessed on 16 December 2016 and later dates).

⁵¹ Based on information attributed to his eldest sister, Miss FA White, in *Black and White Budget*, 12 May 1900, page 181, Sir George White was born at Rock Castle, Portstewart, Co Derry/Londonderry, on 6 July 1835. This publication is available online at <https://www.angloboerwar.com/images/pdf/blackandwhite19000512.pdf> (accessed on 9 March 2020 and other dates).

⁵² Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 98.

⁵³ *Black and White Budget*, 21 October 1899, page 6, which is available at <https://www.angloboerwar.com/images/pdf/blackandwhite18991021.pdf> (accessed on 9 March 2020 and other dates).

⁵⁴ According to <http://lordbelmontinnorthernireland.blogspot.com/2018/01/1st-earl-of-donoughmore.html>, Walter Hely-Hutchinson was a son of the 4th Earl of Donoughmore, Knocklofty House, Clonmel, Co Tipperary.

isolated and vulnerable to local Afrikaner and/or Zulu insurgency.⁵⁵ The coal mines in the area were a consideration too as the British Government was relying on various coal-dependent shipping companies to transport men and materials from Britain and from its colonies to South Africa.⁵⁶ Moreover, Penn-Symons was expressing total confidence that he could hold Dundee. The town was also connected by rail to nearby Glencoe and Ladysmith through which ran the critical railway line between the coast at Durban and the Transvaal.⁵⁷

The additional troops redeployed towards the Natal border in late September by Penn-Symons included the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The Battalion left Pietermaritzburg (also known as Maritzburg) by train for Ladysmith on 20 September and proceeded to Dundee four days later.⁵⁸

Shortly after the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War on 12 October, about 4,000 British troops were garrisoned around Dundee in northern Natal.⁵⁹ These troops included the 18th Hussars (a cavalry regiment), the 13th, 67th and 69th Batteries of the Royal Field Artillery, the 1st Battalions of the Royal Irish Fusiliers (which had recently arrived in South Africa from Egypt), the King's Royal Rifles (previously known as the 60th Rifles) and the Leicestershire Regiment, as well as the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The four infantry regiments (including the Royal Dublin Fusiliers) had mounted infantry companies in their ranks. With war declared, mounted patrols were sent out by day and infantry piquets by night to keep an eye on the Boers as they advanced into Natal. Penn-Symons also conducted field exercises in Dundee to help prepare his troops for offensive operations.^{60 61} There were also some colonial forces stationed at Dundee including the Natal Police and the Dundee Town Guard.⁶²

However Penn-Symons failed to implement properly the advice of White that he should establish a strong defensive position at Dundee despite being well informed by his scouts about the movements of the Boers towards him. Penn-Symons also rejected the recommendation of a subordinate, Major P Marling VC, 18th Hussars, that he should occupy the hills surrounding Dundee before the Boers arrived. Penn-Symons apparently took the view that an irregular Boer army would be no match for his professional soldiers.⁶³ *The Times History* describes him as impetuous whose plan was merely to lie in wait in the valley for the Boers to come within striking distance and then to attack them as befitted the

⁵⁵ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 108.

⁵⁶ Pam McFadden, *The Battle of Talana: 20 October 1899*, page 5.

⁵⁷ Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War in South Africa 1899-1902*, Volume 2, London, Sampson Low, Marston and Company Limited, 1902, page 130.

⁵⁸ Romer and Mainwaring, page 3.

⁵⁹ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 125.

⁶⁰ Romer and Mainwaring, pages 3 and 4.

⁶¹ According to

https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/file%20uploads%20/encyclopedia_of_the_boer_war_martin_marix_evans.pdf (accessed on 18 September 2019), a 'piquet' is a small group of soldiers acting as sentinels.

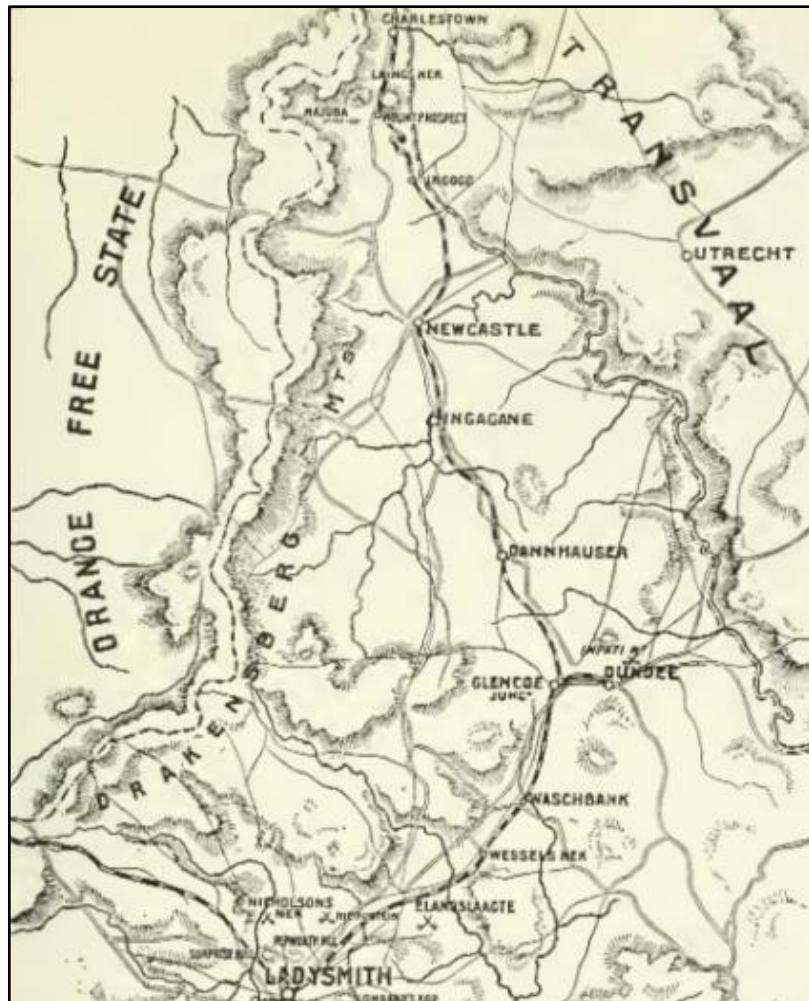
⁶² McFadden, page 36.

⁶³ Griffith, pages 28-32.

prevailing circumstances. As noted by *The Times History*: “It was not ignorance but unbounded self-confidence and contempt for his opponents” which determined his approach to the coming conflict.⁶⁴

This extract from a contemporary map demonstrates the vulnerability of northern Natal to attack given that it was surrounded on two sides by the Boer Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.⁶⁵

Boer military objectives envisaged eliminating the threat to their independence which was posed by the increasing British military presence in northern Natal. After war was declared, some 20,000 men crossed from the Transvaal and Orange Free State into Natal of which about 7,500 were advancing towards Dundee from the north and east.⁶⁶



Romer and Mainwaring have stated that as the Boers advanced towards the Dundee area, the isolated company of Royal Dublin Fusiliers at Glencoe was withdrawn to Dundee on 18 October 1899.⁶⁷ Perhaps the photograph on the next page records this event.⁶⁸

During the night of 19 and 20 October, General Lucas Meyer who was approaching from the east occupied Talana Hill and the adjacent Lennox Hill with over 3,000 Boers and a small

⁶⁴ Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History*, Volume 2, pages 150-152.

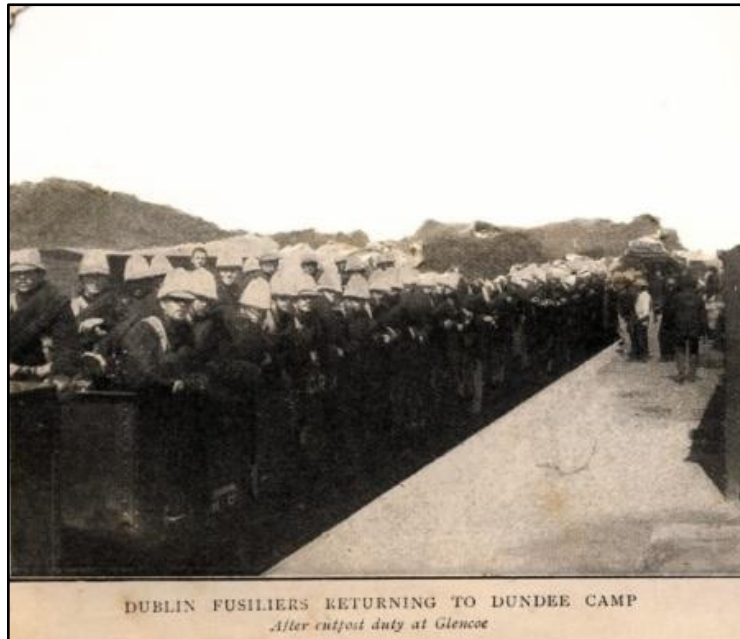
⁶⁵ Louis Creswicke, *South Africa and the Transvaal War*, Edinburgh, TC & EC Jack, 1900, Volume II, page 9. This book is available online at <https://www.angloboerwar.com/images/pdf/creswicke02-01.pdf> (accessed on 10 March 2020 and other dates).

⁶⁶ McFadden, pages 7-9.

⁶⁷ Romer and Mainwaring, page 5.

⁶⁸ This photograph was made available by Ms Pam McFadden, Curator/Manager of the Talana Museum in Dundee, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

number of heavy guns.⁶⁹ Their approach was detected by Lieutenant CTW Grimshaw, 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who was commanding an infantry piquet located a few miles east of Dundee. His first message to General Penn-Symons informing him that a Boer commando was advancing on Dundee elicited no response. In a later second message, Grimshaw informed Penn-Symons that he was retiring in the face of overwhelming



numbers having suffered one casualty and that the Boers had occupied the hills to the east of Dundee, namely Talana and Lennox Hills. In response to this second message, Penn-Symons mobilised two companies of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers under Captains Dibley⁷⁰ and Weldon⁷¹ to provide support to Lieutenant Grimshaw.⁷² The casualty in question was 5011 Private Edward Brennan who was wounded in the arm.⁷³

The Battle of Talana Hill, 20 October 1899

The extract from a detailed contemporary map (overleaf) gives some indication of the topography associated with the forthcoming Battle of Talana Hill (which is also referred to in some accounts as the Battle of Dundee or the Battle of Glencoe).⁷⁴

As the morning of 20 October 1899 dawned, the Boers occupying Talana Hill began shelling the British camp which lay to the west of Dundee. One of the initial shells thumped into the wet earth close to the Dublin Fusiliers. It was fortunate that some of the Boer shells failed to explode. Despite the initial surprise and confusion, the 67th Battery quickly responded, while the 13th and 69th Batteries moved closer to Talana Hill before opening fire. Within a short while, the Boer shelling died down. Because intelligence reports indicated that a second column under General Daniel Erasmus was approaching Dundee from the north and that its men were likely to ascend Impati Hill overlooking Dundee to the northwest, Penn-Symons determined to strike a decisive blow to General Meyer's force on Talana Hill before

⁶⁹ Griffith, pages 31 and 32.

⁷⁰ Captain Athelstan Dibley led 'B' Company, 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, according to Romer and Mainwaring, page 6.

⁷¹ Captain George Anthony Weldon led 'E' Company, 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, according to Romer and Mainwaring, page 6.

⁷² Romer and Mainwaring, page 6.

⁷³ David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll for the Queen's South Africa Medal, 1899-1902*, page 490.

⁷⁴ This is an extract from a larger map included in Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, facing page 230.

the two forces could consolidate. He planned a concentrated infantry attack on Talana Hill with artillery support, after which his cavalry would come into action when the Boers retreated off the Hill. He would also shell the Boers on Lennox



Hill, while the Leicester Regiment and one artillery battery would remain to protect the camp against a possible flank attack from the direction of Impati Hill.⁷⁵

Penn-Symons rode up to the three infantry battalions (Royal Dublin Fusiliers, King's Royal Rifles and Royal Irish Fusiliers) which were assembling in the shelter afforded by a river bed called Sand Spruit east of Dundee and gave them their final orders for the attack on Talana Hill. The frontal attack would be led by the Dublin Fusiliers on the left and by the Rifles on the right with the Irish Fusiliers in reserve.⁷⁶ For the Rifles, the imminent engagement had a special importance as the Rifles' 3rd Battalion was virtually annihilated at Majuba in 1881 during the First Anglo-Boer War. Before leaving the Spruit, Colonel Bobby Gunning reminded his non-commissioned officers of the opportunity now available to them to avenge that defeat.⁷⁷

At about 7.30 am, the infantry moved across the plain in open order under Boer long-range rifle fire and reached the eucalyptus wood at Smith's Farm near the foot of the Hill without incurring many casualties.⁷⁸ Here, the soldiers found some shelter, although the intense Boer fire from both Talana and Lennox Hills was shredding the eucalyptus leaves overhead which were falling all around them.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, pages 125-129.

⁷⁶ Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, page 159.

⁷⁷ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, pages 129 and 130.

⁷⁸ 'Letter by Captain C Hensley RDF' indicates that "my Colour-Serg't" was killed in advancing across the plain. Romer and Mainwaring, page 259, indicates that Colour-Sergeant F Anderson (No 1166) who was killed at Talana belonged to 'F' Company, the company of which Captain Hensley was in charge. Captain Hensley's account is included in page 38 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* by David Biggins at <https://www.angloboerwar.com/images/pdf/Talana%20update%201.pdf> (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

⁷⁹ Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, page 159.

Beyond the wood on the left and right sides respectively, a low stone wall and a hedge on a small bank were being peppered by Boer bullets from above.⁸⁰ On the left, Major English ('A' Company), Captain Hensley ('F' Company) and Captain CN Perreau ('G' Company) led their men into a gully which, it was thought, would provide some cover as they advanced up the Hill. However this hope soon dissipated. The gully became shallower further up the Hill, and it proved to be a virtual death-trap as the Boers were able to pin down the Dublins with effective fire from their sheltered positions above.⁸¹ Seeing their predicament, Major FRC Carleton of the Royal Irish Fusiliers deployed two of his companies to the stone wall on the left to harass the Boer firing positions.⁸²

Captain Hensley later recounted to his father one incident in the gully that day:

"We who had the luck to get into that cursed nullah [drain] had a bad time of it as it proved a regular death trap... Then a bullet whizzed past my head over my right shoulder and I thought I was hit and put my hand up. I heard a thud and Perreau⁸³ staggered back saying, 'by God, they've got me.' He had got it clean through the left shoulder but afterwards it proved to be a clean wound and not very serious..."⁸⁴

Elsewhere, there was a reluctance to move into the open beyond the wall and hedge owing to the severity of the Boer rifle fire. As a result, the attack stalled. Growing impatient, Penn-Symons rode up to the wood to demand that his men advance further. Brigadier-General James Yule is thought to have suggested to him that the British artillery's shrapnel fire should be given more time to inflict casualties on those holding the summit of Talana Hill. However Penn-Symons was in no mood to delay. Despite the objections of his staff, he moved through the wood to the stone wall where he urged his men forward. However while moving about in this forward position, he suffered a bullet wound to the stomach from which he died some days later.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, page 160.

⁸¹ Romer and Mainwaring, page 9, and Maurice, Maj-Gen Sir Frederick, and other officers, *History of the War in South Africa, 1899-1902*, London, Hurst and Blackett Limited, 1906, Volume I, page 132. Copies of both books are available online at www.angloboerwar.com/ (accessed on 11 March 2020 and other dates).

⁸² Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, page 160.

⁸³ Captain Charles Perreau, 'G' Company, 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. According to Tom Burke MBE, 'The Disbandment of the Irish Regiments in 1922', *Irish Sword*, Vol XXXII (2019), page 177, Lieutenant-Colonel CN Perreau eventually retired from the Royal Dublin Fusiliers after its disbandment in 1922.

⁸⁴ Hensley at page 38 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

⁸⁵ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 130. According to <https://kznpr.co.za/dundee-boer-war-talana-museum/> (accessed on 29 September 2019 and other dates), General Penn-Symons is buried in the cemetery attached to St James's Anglican Church, Gladstone Street, Dundee.

In the absence of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers companies who were trapped in the gully, the next phase of the attack would primarily be led by the King's Royal Rifles and the Royal Irish Fusiliers.⁸⁶ Other Royal Dublin Fusilier companies would also



participate.⁸⁷ Their immediate objective was a higher stone wall parallel to their current position, the lea of which was somewhat sheltered from Boer fire emanating from the summit. A low perpendicular wall running from the wood to the higher wall offered some protection for the attack from the enfilading fire from Lennox Hill on the right. The above photograph indicates the severity of the slope over which the attack was made with the higher stone wall in the foreground, the plantation below it and the transverse wall connecting both features.⁸⁸

At about 9.30 am, officers and men made a dash in the face of heavy fire, and some reached the higher wall unscathed. However there were many casualties, among them Captain GA Weldon, 'E' Company, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The circumstances of his death are described in Romer and Mainwaring as follows:

"...Captain Weldon was also killed near the same spot [where General Penn-Symons was mortally wounded] in a gallant effort to help a wounded comrade, No. 5078 Private Gorman.⁸⁹ Captain Weldon, together with several men of his company, had surmounted the wall in face of a heavy fire, and had taken cover in a small depression on its further side. Private Gorman was hit in the very act of surmounting the obstacle, and was falling backwards, when Captain Weldon, rushing out from his cover, seized him by the arm, and was pulling him into safety when he himself was

⁸⁶ Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, page 161.

⁸⁷ Romer and Mainwaring, pages 9-13.

⁸⁸ McFadden, pages 16-18. The contemporary photograph is on page 18.

⁸⁹ Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, page 161, stated that the wounded soldier was Captain Weldon's servant. McFadden, page 15, has identified his wounded servant as Private Cotty, although there appears to be no Royal Dublin Fusilier with that precise surname. According to Romer and Mainwaring, page 241, a Private Crotty (No 5933) of the Dublin Fusiliers was killed at Talana Hill. David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*, pages 144 and 377, has identified Weldon's deceased servant as 5933 Private John Crotty.

mortally wounded. Privates Brady and Smith dragged him in under cover, but he only lived a few minutes...^{90 91}

By degrees, officers and men from all three regiments made it across to this higher wall and spread out behind it in preparation for a further charge, while the artillery sought to reduce Boer numbers on the crest.⁹²

At about 11.30 am, Brigadier-General Yule ordered an attack beyond the second wall where the climb to the summit became very steep. The Boers successfully resisted their first charge, some of them standing in their mackintoshes without cover on the skyline to fire down on the advancing troops until they themselves were shot. All three regiments suffered many casualties in this assault, some of whom were senior officers such as Colonel RH Gunning, King's Royal Rifles, and Captain and Adjutant FHB Connor, Royal Irish Fusiliers, who were killed. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers lost 2nd Lieutenant CJ Genge who later died of his wounds and Private Albert Merrill, while the seriously wounded included Captain and Adjutant M Lowndes and Captain Dibley, 'B' Company.⁹³

The watching Captain Hensley focused his attention on the charge led by Captain Dibley, and he and his men provided some covering fire. He later reported to his father as follows:

"Then, at the wall, we saw a lot of men led by Dibley, one of our captains, make a mad rush over the wall for the hill. This was the so-called bayonet charge. It was a very plucky thing to do but mad and absolutely useless as it was impossible to charge up a perpendicular hill, as we found it afterwards. They had to come back. Some of the 60th and 87th joined in the charge. Lowndes, our Adjutant, who followed Dibley, was shot in the leg and had it broken. He has had to have it off, I'm afraid."⁹⁴ Dibley was shot under the eye and the bullet came out behind his ear. It looked a ghastly

⁹⁰ Romer and Mainwaring, pages 9 and 10.

⁹¹ Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, page 161, suggests that Captain Weldon, 'E' Company, was killed in the gully, but Romer and Mainwaring, page 8, is very clear that 'B', 'C', 'E' and 'H' Companies did not join 'A', 'F' and 'G' Companies there.

⁹² Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, pages 161 and 162.

⁹³ Romer and Mainwaring, pages 11 and 12; Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, pages 163; and *Leinster Leader*, 23 December 1899, as quoted by Gary Owens, 'Dear Mother – It's a terrible life': Irish soldiers' letters from the Boer War, 1899-1900, in *Irish Sword*, XXI (1998), page 178.

⁹⁴ Captain and Adjutant Maurice Lowndes, 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, survived his serious leg injuries and returned to the War in South Africa following a period of convalescence at home according to information on the subscription website, www.findmypast.ie, (accessed on 20 November 2019 and other dates). Other sources agree that Lowndes did not have his leg amputated, e.g., a footnote associated with Captain Hensley's letter on page 38 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates) and a photograph of Battalion officers in early 1902 in Romer and Mainwaring, facing page 216, shows a seated Captain Lowndes holding a stick between his legs.

wound but he was doing well when we left Dundee⁹⁵. Just as our fellows came back our guns began salvos on the top...⁹⁶

The British artillery continued to fire shrapnel along the ridge resulting in some casualties to its troops (including the wounded) near the top of the Hill.⁹⁷ Captain Hensley later stated:

"It was while this awful fire was going on that, either by some mistake or accident, a lot of the 60th and 87th either had got over the wall to try Dibley's charge again or were those who followed him and had had no time to get back. Anyway, one of our shells burst amongst them and killed the lot. This partly accounts for their casualty list being so much bigger than ours..."^{98 99}

Romer and Mainwaring reported on the increasing casualties as follows:

"...a large number were undoubtedly hit by our own shrapnel, as they clung closely to the hillside to avoid coming under fire from the enemy, who still held the top. It was imperative to draw our gunners' attention to their situation, to effect which purpose, an intrepid signaller, Private Flynn, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, jumped up, and at the imminent risk of his own life freely exposed himself in his endeavour to 'call up' the guns. Finding, after repeated attempts, that he could not attract their attention, he boldly walked back down the hillside, torn as it was by mauser fire, and personally delivered his message, a glorious and courageous example of that devotion to duty which proved so strongly marked a characteristic of our N.C.O.'s and privates throughout the war."^{100 101}

Eventually under pressure from British shrapnel and infantry attacks, Boer firing abated, and the survivors of 'A', 'F' and 'G' Companies of the Dublin Fusiliers managed to extricate themselves from the gully. They too assembled behind this second wall to bolster the waiting attackers. With the encouragement of their officers, another charge was launched but quickly aborted when it was learned that the British artillery were about to resume shelling the crest. In returning to the wall, the officers and men brought back some of their

⁹⁵ Captain Dibley survived his wounds. Remarkably, he afterwards acquired a reputation of being one of the best bridge players in the Regiment according to Romer and Mainwaring, page 12.

⁹⁶ Hensley, page 40 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

⁹⁷ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, pages 131 and 132.

⁹⁸ Hensley at page 40 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

⁹⁹ Lieutenant RG Stirling, King's Royal Rifles, recounts a similar incident (perhaps it is the same one) in which he notes a report that one British shell "killed eight or nine of the Irish Fusiliers and the Rifles". Lieutenant Stirling's letter is on page 124 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

¹⁰⁰ Romer and Mainwaring, pages 12 and 13. However they do not record if Private Flynn was rewarded for his courage on this occasion.

¹⁰¹ Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, page 166, suggests that it was a signaller of the Royal Irish Fusiliers who committed this act of bravery.

wounded from the earlier charge and placed them under cover. Four men moved the dying Captain and Adjutant FHB Connor, Royal Irish Fusiliers, who was wounded in three places.¹⁰²

When the threat of friendly fire had receded and the men were ready, a final charge was launched which the Boers on Lennox Hill again contested. On reaching the top of Talana Hill, the attackers found that the Boers had retired. The Boers then withdrew from Lennox Hill.¹⁰³ The following account of the taking of Talana Hill appears in *The Times History*, but it seems clear that it combines details of the various attacks on the summit, because few, if any, of the identified officers participated in the last successful charge:

*“Rifles, Irish Fusiliers, Dublins, were all represented in the charge, but the greatest share of the credit belongs to the Rifles, who supplied most of the men and lost most heavily. Colonel Gunning, who had so gallantly led the attack, was killed as he reached the crest. Among the other officers it is hard to single out names where all distinguished themselves, but Captain Nugent and Lieutenant Stirling of the Rifles, Captain Connor (mortally wounded) and Captain Pike of the Irish Fusiliers, and Captain Dibley of the Dublins may be mentioned as among the first to reach the crest of the hill.”*¹⁰⁴

Romer and Mainwaring elaborate on what was witnessed by those who gained the top of Talana Hill, and they proceed to outline in rather circumspect terms what happened next:

*“Below them they saw the stream of flying Boers hurrying across the veld. It was the moment for a vigorous outburst of musketry, but 'some one blundered', and the fleeting moment sped without being taken advantage of. It is true that those men who first arrived on the summit were firing away, and were joined in doing so by every other man who breathlessly arrived. The company officers had just got their men well in hand, and were directing the fire, when to every one's disgust, and sheer, blank amazement, the 'Cease fire' sounded clear above the din of the fight. There was nothing for it but to stop, but the sight of the enemy streaming away in dense masses just below them, that enemy who had up to now been pouring a relentless hail of bullets on them for hours, was too much. Captain Hensley rushed up to Major English, and after a brief conference, feeling certain the call must have been blown in error, the latter gave the command to re-open fire. Barely was it obeyed when the imperative bugle once more blared forth its interference, and the company officers, the commanders of the recognised battle-units, had nothing left them but compliance.”*¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Hensley at page 40 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

¹⁰³ Hensley at page 40 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

¹⁰⁴ Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, pages 163 and 164.

¹⁰⁵ Romer and Mainwaring, pages 13 and 14.

As the Boers withdrew, 'D' company of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, escorted the British artillery to the col between Talana and Lennox Hills intending that the guns would fire on the retreating Boers. However no such firing took place.¹⁰⁶ What apparently gave rise to the order to cease fire was that the artillery commander, Colonel EH Pickwood, saw a white flag raised by the retreating Boers. According to Pakenham however, there was an additional reason: the Boers in their capes fleeing in the prevailing mist and drizzle were mistaken for the 18th Hussars.¹⁰⁷ Griffith gives a similar account to the effect that the artillery commander held his fire, because he had received a Boer message asking for an armistice to collect their wounded. This decision angered many British soldiers who had been under withering Boer fire for hours.¹⁰⁸ Regardless of the particular reason for inaction, the fleeing Boers only needed a short period of time to disappear out of sight into the mist.

Captain Hensley's reaction spoke for many of the officers and men who captured Talana Hill:

"We all expected the guns, which had galloped up to the nek between the hills to open fire... But no, the old fool commanding officer; Col. Pickwood, would not let them fire as he said the Boers had hoisted a white flag. When, O when, will we learn about the Boer tricks? When a white flag goes up, troops halt and lay down their arms. It was too much for me though the cease fire had gone. I got 15 to 20 men together for long range volleys at 1,600 yards and got in two before the Staff Officer could get up on his flat feet and wanted to know what I meant by firing after the cease fire had sounded. I said I thought it was a mistake and he grinned but said it was the General's (Yule's) orders. He is an old woman too. I wish he could have heard the men's remarks.

*It was 2.45 when firing stopped and we reached the top of the hill, so that we had been 9.5 hours under fire, and as I heard one Tommy say, 'we have been 9 ***** hours getting to the top of the ***** hill and when we can get a good shot at the ***** we won't be let fire. What fools work it is, at all, at all.'¹⁰⁹*

The phrasing of the latter comment suggests that this unhappy soldier was Irish.

oOo

The original plan of General Penn-Symons had envisaged that as the Boers retreated from Talana Hill, they would be intercepted by the 18th Hussars and the mounted infantry companies (including Royal Dublin Fusiliers) under Colonel BD Möller who had been deployed behind Talana Hill. A sympathetic account of what transpired appeared in Romer and Mainwaring:

¹⁰⁶ Romer and Mainwaring, page 14.

¹⁰⁷ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 132.

¹⁰⁸ Griffith, pages 39 and 40.

¹⁰⁹ Hensley at page 40 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

“Colonel Möller had been sent with the mounted troops round the right flank of the Boers. He succeeded in his task, but Möller proceeded too far, and when the enemy retreated from Talana Hill he found himself with some 200 rifles attempting to stop a force of 4000 Boers. He was roughly handled, but managed to get clear. Then, unluckily misled by the mist, he lost his way, and, instead of returning to camp, moved towards Impati Mountain, where he stumbled into the Boer main commando advancing from Newcastle. He took up a defensive position, placing the cavalry in a kraal [a hut village] and the mounted infantry on some rising ground near. The enemy brought up artillery and soon surrounded him, finally forcing him to surrender.”¹¹⁰

The reality was that Penn-Symons’s plan of pursuit entailed considerable risk. Firstly, Colonel Möller was always likely to be quite isolated behind Talana Hill and outnumbered. Moreover according to Griffith, Möller refused to open fire on the Boer horses at the back of Talana Hill which could have impeded the Boers’ retreat. Möller also weakened his force by sending Major EC Knox with two of his three squadrons of the 18th Hussars and a company of mounted infantry (possibly Royal Dublin Fusiliers under Lieutenant GN Cory¹¹¹) behind Lennox Hill where they did later intercept some of the Boers retreating from that Hill. Although suffering two casualties, Major Knox’s detachment managed to withstand their engagement with the Boers and withdraw back to camp under the cover of the prevailing misty conditions.¹¹²

While *The Times History* gives an extensive account of the movements of Colonel Möller and his men on the day, Griffith takes the view that all that could realistically be done by his reduced force was to flee when faced by the thousands of Boers streaming from Talana Hill. A succession of desperate retreats ensued in which the British narrowly avoided being surrounded. Captain MPE Lonsdale of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers is reported to have skilfully deployed his mounted infantry in covering the retreat as best it could.¹¹³

However what followed also had elements of farce. While Möller’s objective was to return to camp, it is unclear if he intended to do so by a circular route around the back of Impati Hill or by a more direct route but got lost in the misty conditions. General Erasmus and his men on Impati saw the fleeing Colonel Möller and his men, and soon many Boers were chasing them. The intended pursuers became the pursued. Griffith notes the view of a young Boer, Deneys Reitz:

¹¹⁰ Romer and Mainwaring, page 14.

¹¹¹ Romer and Mainwaring, page 7, notes that Lieutenant Cory’s section of Royal Dublin Fusiliers mounted infantry was fortunately sent off in another direction and thereby avoided capture, the fate which befell the remainder of the Battalion’s mounted infantry under Captain Lonsdale.

¹¹² Griffith, pages 37 and 39.

¹¹³ Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, pages 170-173, and Griffith, page 37.

“How this handful of men came to be right in the rear of the whole Boer Army I never heard but they were on a desperate errand, for between them and their main body lay nearly 15,000 horsemen...”¹¹⁴

Some 100 Boers under the command of Commandant Trichardt pressed the fleeing Hussars. Möller and his men sought refuge at Adelaide Farm (owned by a Mr Maritz), about eight miles north-north-west of Talana Hill where they were surrounded. The Hussars defended the barn while the mounted infantry (including the Dublin Fusiliers) took up a position on rising ground overlooking the farm. They comfortably defended the position until the Boers brought up a gun and started firing shells. These stampeded the horses, and with mounting casualties and diminishing ammunition, it became clear that they would not be able to hold out until nightfall.¹¹⁵

As recounted by Griffith, an unidentified captured British officer, apparently with the 18th Hussars, later recorded an account of what happened next:

“...for three hours we resisted overwhelming forces... we suffered heavily. We replied to the enemy’s fire, but at length our ammunition began to run short... and when heavy guns were brought into position against us I thought our last hour had come. The shells killed many horses and several men; nearly all the remaining horses stampeded... When the Colonel ordered the white flag to be hoisted... the firing ceased on both sides. The Boers galloped up and we surrendered... We were very well treated, and were allowed to visit the wounded. We had eight wounded and two killed, and the mounted infantry with us the same number. We were altogether nine officers, thirty-two men of the 18th Hussars, eighty men of the Dublin Fusiliers and fourteen of the 60th Rifles...”¹¹⁶

The account of Lieutenant Grimshaw, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, offers a different perspective in some respects. Early on in the engagement at Adelaide Farm, he sought to persuade Colonel Möller that an opportunity for escape in a particular direction was available. When this was rejected, he offered to ride off to get reinforcements. This too was denied. Grimshaw’s account continued as follows:

¹¹⁴ Griffith, pages 37 and 38.

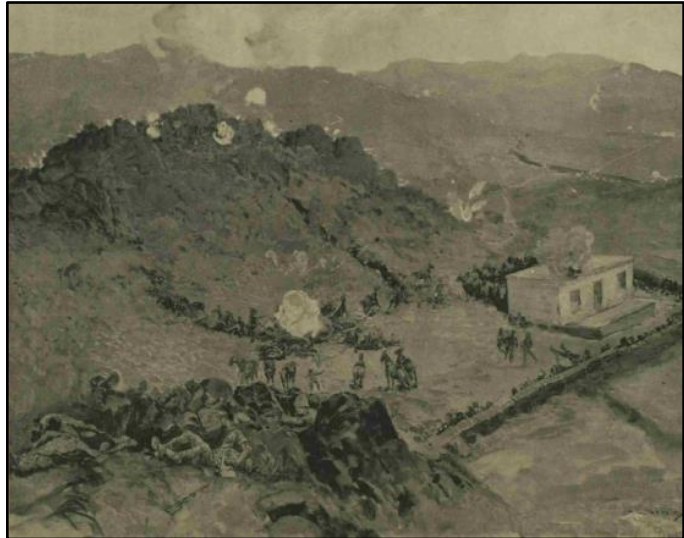
¹¹⁵ McFadden, pages 22 and 23.

¹¹⁶ Griffith, page 38.

“...Then the Boers shelling us, and eventually we had to surrender, which came as a surprise to us, and did not seem to surprise or worry our Commanding Officer, who seemed to take it all in the day’s work. I know I and the others never felt so bad in our lives, as we and all the men were prepared to fight to the end, instead of being handed over as we were to the Boers, as a present.”¹¹⁷

This illustration of the engagement appeared in the *Illustrated London News*. The associated caption reads:

“SURROUNDED: THE FIGHT AT MARITZ FARM, WHERE LIEUTENANT LE MESURIER [Royal Dublin Fusiliers] WAS TAKEN PRISONER, EIGHT MILES FROM DUNDEE.”^{118 119}



McFadden has indicated that the British loss within Colonel Möller’s force comprised eight killed, 18 wounded and 209 captured.¹²⁰ It is believed that three Royal Dublin Fusiliers were killed and about 90 captured (including two wounded). The only Fusiliers’ wounded casualty known to the author is 5127 Private J Battersby who suffered gunshot wounds to the eye, neck and hand.¹²¹ He is absent from the list of wounded published by Romer and Mainwaring, presumably because his condition was never relayed to the Battalion while he was detained in Pretoria.

Those captured at Adelaide Farm were brought to Pretoria by train arriving there on 22 October. It appears that on arrival the wounded were transferred to hospital.¹²²

In his book on the Anglo-Boer War, Michael Davitt related a number of stories about the capture by the Boers (which included Colonel Blake’s Irish Brigade) of the mounted infantry unit of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. This is how he described the aftermath:

“A little recrimination occurred between the divided Irish, but did not go beyond a few words of reproach addressed by some of Blake’s men to fellow-countrymen who could fight against a small and a republican nation for the power which deprived

¹¹⁷ David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*, page 492.

¹¹⁸ *Illustrated London News*, 30 June 1900, page 32. This was sourced from the British Newspaper Archive at <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> (accessed on 9 January 2020 and other dates).

¹¹⁹ The reason for the prominence given to Lieutenant Le Mesurier in the caption was because this edition of the *Illustrated London News* was recounting his escape from captivity in Pretoria.

¹²⁰ McFadden, page 23.

¹²¹ This information was sourced from www.findmypast.ie (accessed on 16 January 2020).

¹²² David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*, pages 48 and 49.

their common country of self-governing liberties. The Fusiliers, on finding that nothing more unpleasant than a political lecture was to be inflicted upon them for the present, fraternized with the pro-Boers, to whom they related details of the morning's attack upon the Dundee camp.”¹²³

Certainly, the imprisonment of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers by the Boers' Irish Brigade captured the public imagination in anti-War circles in Ireland. The event inspired an anonymous songwriter to compose an amusing ballad which became popular. This ballad was entitled 'Twas an Irish Fight or How the English fought the Dutch at the Battle of Dundee', and this single verse from the ballad gives a flavour of its tone and content:

*“On the mountain side the battle raged, there was no stop or stay;
Mackin captured Private Burke and Ensign Michael Shea;
Fitzgerald got Fitzpatrick, Brannigan found O'Rourke;
Finnigan took a man named Fay – and a couple of lads from Cork.
Sudden they heard McManus shout, 'Hands up or I'll run you through'.
He thought it was a Yorkshire 'Tyke' – 'twas Corporal Donaghue!
McGarry took O'Leary, O'Brien got McNamee,
That's how the 'English fought the Dutch' at the Battle of Dundee.”¹²⁴*

On the other hand, there are also examples in soldiers' letters of an antipathy to the Boer cause and a bitterness that it should be commanding significant support at home. A letter dated 21 November 1899 from a Private Phoenix¹²⁵ (probably with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the light of the letter's contents) comments on Boer sympathisers and his fighting pride:

“The [Boers'] Irish Brigade are a few Irishmen; the remainder are German, English, and some Americans and Jews. That will tell you what the Irish Brigade are. The people in Dublin should be ashamed of themselves for what the papers say. Ireland backing up the Boers, and going to send them out a green flag with a golden harp on it!

We are Dublin men, and we are after making a good name for Ireland, and Irishmen should be proud of us, instead of running us down. We enlisted in the English army as men, and we will die as men if required.

Well, our regiment went out with 945 men to the field, and now we number 623. That will show you what we lost. I am sure you are praying for me, and only for that I am certain I would have been killed long ago.

¹²³ Davitt, pages 121 and 122.

¹²⁴ McCracken, *MacBride's Brigade*, page 42, and Nicki von der Heyde, 'Field Guide to Irish Involvement in the Siege and Relief of Ladysmith, 1899 to 1900', *Essays and Source Material on Southern African-Irish History*, Volume 4, Series 2, No 1, 2012 (Donal P McCracken, Editor), Durban, page 173. McCracken's book gives a further two verses of the ballad.

¹²⁵ www.findmypast.ie (accessed on 30 September 2019) has no record of a soldier with the surname, Phoenix, in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers or otherwise recognised for participating in the Battle of Talana.

...I remain your fond son and fighting soldier and a man. If I am killed, Sissy will get my will. Good-bye, mother, for the present.^{126 127}

What is apparent from a number of these letters is that while the letter writers had survived the initial fighting, they fully realised that their death was a very real prospect in the War.

oOo

According to Pakenham, the total loss to the British at Talana Hill was 51 dead or dying and 203 wounded¹²⁸, but more recent research by Watt indicates that 66 British and 35 Boers were killed or died of their wounds. According to Watt, the wounded numbered 185 British and 91 Boers, while 246 British were captured or missing. The equivalent Boer figure was 30. Overall therefore, the British suffered over three times the Boer losses – 497 versus 156 approximately.¹²⁹

According to Romer and Mainwaring, the cost to the 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, of their involvement at Talana Hill was 12 dead, some 52 wounded and over 100 missing.¹³⁰ Most of these missing men were captured with Colonel Möller and sent to a prisoner-of-war camp outside Pretoria. It is likely that those identified by Romer and Mainwaring as having died ‘near Talana’ were serving with the mounted infantry and accordingly comprise the three Fusiliers killed in the vicinity of Adelaide Farm.

The following photographs of Captain Weldon (left) and 2nd Lieutenant CJ Genge (right) are included in Romer and Mainwaring’s book.^{131 132}

¹²⁶ *The Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, 6 January 1900, page 7. This article was sourced from www.findmypast.ie on 28 July 2019.

¹²⁷ It is not possible to reconcile fully the figure of 623 claimed in the letter of 21 November 1899 for active Royal Dublin Fusiliers. However it is clear that the 2nd Battalion had lost at least 270 men in a month: some 160 (in deaths, wounded and captured) at the Battle of Talana Hill, a further 50 or so in the armoured train incident on 15 November 1899 and another 58 who were left behind in Ladysmith when the Battalion left the town by train on 2 November 1899. Other than the figure of 58 which is included in Steve Watt, *The Siege of Ladysmith: 2 November 1899-28 February 1900*, 30^o South Publishers (Pty) Ltd, Pinetown, 2014, page 37, the remaining approximate figures are derived from Romer and Mainwaring, Appendix, Sections I, II, IV, V, VI, VII and VIII, pages 241-251 (other than page 243).

¹²⁸ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, page 132.

¹²⁹ Gilbert Torlage and Steve Watt, *A Guide to the Anglo-Boer War Sites of KwaZulu-Natal*, 30^o South Publishers (Pty) Ltd, 2014, Pinetown, page 21.

¹³⁰ Romer and Mainwaring, Appendix, Sections I, II, IV, V and VI, pages 241-251 (other than page 243).

¹³¹ Romer and Mainwaring, page 9.

¹³² A plaque commemorating Captain GA Weldon is located in Saint David’s Church of Ireland Church in Naas, Co Kildare.



Romer and Mainwaring included the following account of the recovery of Captain Weldon's body by 5623 Corporal M Foley and three men of Weldon's 'E' Company:

"His dog, a fox-terrier named Rose, had accompanied him through the fight, and when his body was later on recovered, the faithful little animal was found beside it, and was afterwards taken care of by the men of 'E' company."^{133 134}

Romer and Mainwaring made a brief comment about the death of 2nd Lieutenant Genge, viz:

*"Poor young Genge, who had only recently joined, was mortally wounded, and died shortly after the battle, killed in his first fight and in the springtime of life."*¹³⁵

oOo

The diary of the Anglican vicar in Dundee, Reverend Gerard C Bailey, reported that Captain Weldon was buried by his men in the Dundee Town Cemetery on the morning of Saturday, 21 October.¹³⁶ That day too, Reverend Bailey was asked by Brigadier-General Yule to officiate at various funerals at Smith's Farm on Talana Hill. However this ceremony came to be cancelled when the Boers started shelling the town from Mount Impati that afternoon.

On the next day, 22 October, Reverend Bailey struck up a friendship with the Catholic Chaplain to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, Father W Murray, who was now ministering to the wounded. At noon, they buried eight men in the grounds of the Swedish Mission Hospital

¹³³ Romer and Mainwaring, page 10.

¹³⁴ According to David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*, pages 178, 377 and 378, the Dublin Fusiliers who recovered Captain Weldon's body were led by Corporal Foley. At the end of the War, the only Foley in the Dublin Fusiliers with a Talana clasp was 5623 Lance-Sgt M Foley.

¹³⁵ Romer and Mainwaring, page 12.

¹³⁶ According to Steve Watt, *In Memoriam: Roll of Honour, Imperial Forces, Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2000, page 443, Capt Weldon's body was exhumed from the Old Cemetery in Dundee and re-interred at Talana Hill, perhaps on 25 October 1899 when the rest of the burials at Talana Hill took place. Nevertheless the marble monument over his grave includes the following statement which must necessarily refer to the original interment: "He was laid to rest here under heavy fire on Oct 21st by 4 men of his Regt for he was beloved of all". The monument is also inscribed with the following: "Killed in action on Talana Hill, 20th Oct. 1899, while placing a wounded soldier under cover" and "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friend".

(including 2nd Lieutenant Genge). Just before dark, a further four were laid to rest in St James's Churchyard (including Colour-Sergeant Anderson and Private Crotty).

On 25 October, Reverend Bailey and Father Murray officiated at the burial of 35 officers and men at Smith's Farm on Talana Hill. This was the ceremony which had originally been set to take place four days earlier.¹³⁷ The Irish-born Major Dr JF Donegan¹³⁸ who was in charge of the 18th Field Hospital at Dundee later described the horrific burial work that day as follows:

*"At 7 am A Section under Capts Erskine and Milner fell in and proceeded to the farm house to bury the dead. The scene was too frightful for description... Suffice it to say that all the dead in an advanced stage of decomposition were buried in five large graves, the officers separate. All were identified by marks on their clothes and slight mementoes of all officers were taken from the bodies... This was the most disagreeable duty that officers NCO and men of this British Service were ever asked to perform... The party returned to camp at 6.20 having been occupied on this duty referred to from 7 am without food or anything to drink... Clergymen of each denomination read their Burial Services. It was impossible to bury them NCO's and men by Corps."*¹³⁹

Reverend Bailey's diary noted that 15 in total were ultimately buried at the Swedish Mission Hospital. The additional seven included 'Privates Cavanagh and Frahn' of the Dublin Fusiliers (actually Privates Callaghan and Frahill).¹⁴⁰

A memorial at Smith's Farm on Talana Hill outside Dundee (pictured on the next page) remembers the twelve Dublin Fusiliers who were killed in the vicinity, although it does not unfortunately identify them by name.¹⁴¹

Separate memorials at the site and at other locations in Dundee were erected to Major-General Penn-Symons, 17 members (including two officers) of the 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers¹⁴², and 26 members (including four officers) of the 1st Battalion, King's Royal Rifles¹⁴³. As five officers of the latter battalion are known to have died¹⁴⁴, it is likely that its

¹³⁷ David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*, pages 520-522.

¹³⁸ According to <https://search.findmypast.ie/search-world-records-in-military-service-and-conflict/> (accessed on 26 November 2019 and later dates), Dr James Francis Donegan was born in Co Donegal in 1863. However he is also reported to have been born in Cork on 29 March 1863 according to the Imperial War Museum at <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/lifestory/1668138> (accessed on 26 November 2019).

¹³⁹ 'Account by Major JF Donegan RAMC', pages 34 and 35 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

¹⁴⁰ David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*, page 522.

¹⁴¹ Photograph taken by the author on 14 November 2018.

¹⁴² This information is derived from a photograph taken by the author on 14 November 2018.

¹⁴³ This information was obtained from the website of the Talana Museum in Dundee at <https://www.talana.co.za/index.php/our-museum/cemet> (accessed on 23 September 2019).

¹⁴⁴ According to Amery LS (Editor), *The Times History of the War*, Volume 2, page 174, the five officers of the King's Royal Rifles who were killed were Lt-Col RH Gunning, Captain MHK Pechell, Lt J Taylor, Lt RC Barnett and 2nd Lt NJ Hambro. According to <https://kznpr.co.za/dundee-boer-war-talana-museum/> (accessed on 29

total number of officers and men killed was at least 27. According to Biggins, a further ten soldiers lost their lives in the fighting.¹⁴⁵

As we shall see, much credit was attributed to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers for the victory on Talana Hill, despite the fact that their number of dead (12) was significantly less than the numbers incurred by the Royal Irish Fusiliers (at least 17) and King's Royal Rifles (at least 27). We have seen that *The Times History* gave most credit to the King's Royal Rifles on the basis that they supplied the most men and lost most heavily. However as already noted, Captain Hensley attributed eight or nine of the Royal Irish and Rifles deaths to British artillery, so-called friendly



fire. He also suggested in this extract from the letter to his father that inadequate training had caused both regiments to suffer disproportionately:

*"It was then, as afterwards, that the training of our men told and showed that we had not been dinning into the men's ears for 2.5 years in vain that they must advance in open order formation, take advantage of all cover, and fire independently when they could see anything to fire at. You may have seen in some of the home papers very flattering accounts of the behaviour of the regiment and others that rather cry it down, saying, why, if we did it all, were our casualties so much less in both officers and men than the other regiments. I can only put it down to the different training, and several times during the day it was most noticeable. Our men would, one at a time, get up and rush across the open, never two together, get over behind a stone or in a nullah, the officer, of course, going first. It was different in the 87th and the 60th. I, several times, saw them advance a whole section at a time, à la drill book. It does not do against good shots like the Boers."*¹⁴⁶

September 2019 and other dates), individual memorials to these five officers are in the grounds of the Talana Museum in Dundee.

¹⁴⁵ David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*, pages 401 and 402.

¹⁴⁶ Hensley at pages 37 and 38 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

oOo

Back in Ireland, news of the 'victory' at Talana Hill was greeted enthusiastically in establishment circles. The following press report under the headings 'How the Dublin Fusiliers Fared', 'Brilliant Display' and 'The Losses' appeared in *The Kildare Observer*:

"The battle of Glencoe, on Friday, proved another Majuba Hill, but on this occasion the Boers it was who suffered a severe defeat, and the credit of the day is due to the 2nd Batt. Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the King's Royal Rifles. As is well known the Dublins contain many young County Kildare men in its ranks, whose pluck and valour on the field has won widespread admiration. The result of the victory at Glencoe was naturally a signal for rejoicings at the Depot of the Dublins in Naas, and likewise at the Curragh amongst the 1st Batt. of the corps. Some old comrades met their doom in the fight, and it is with deep regret the men at the Curragh have learned of the cutting off of old friends. But the victory was a great one, and the losses comparatively small. Amongst the killed was

CAPTAIN WELDON,

who was a great favourite, not alone with the 2nd Battalion, with whom he gallantly fought at Glencoe, but with the Battalion at the Curragh. On all sides expressions of regret are made at the loss of so genial and so brilliant a young gentleman.

*...Amongst the others killed belonging to the Dublins were: - Privates Patrick Cahill, Albert Merrill, John Crotty, P Callaghan."*¹⁴⁷

All regiments claimed part of the glory associated with the removal of the Boers from Talana Hill. Griffith includes the following extract from a letter of an unknown date which was written by Private Francis Burns of the Royal Irish Fusiliers¹⁴⁸:

*"The papers say the Dublins were first on the hill, but it was the Royal Irish. It does not matter anyhow, for we were all Irish. Tell my mother England's first battle was won by the Irish Brigade."*¹⁴⁹

Captain Hensley was dismissive of the competing claims made by the three regiments as to which deserved the most credit for the victory. In his letter after the Battle, he stated:

*"As for the rot that the honour belongs to us - the Dublins; in my opinion all were alike and everybody did his best, as they must have done, or we could never have succeeded as we did..."*¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ *The Kildare Observer and Eastern Counties Advertiser*, 28 October 1899, page 7. This was sourced from www.findmypast.ie on 8 July 2019.

¹⁴⁸ www.findmypast.ie (accessed on 30 September 2019) confirms that Private F Burns (No 4355) served with the Royal Irish Fusiliers at the Battle of Talana.

¹⁴⁹ Griffith, page 35.

Over the following months, incidents involving Royal Dublin Fusiliers during and after the Battle of Talana Hill emerged in the press and subsequently in published books on the Anglo-Boer War. A Paul O'Toole, 'E' Company, 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers¹⁵¹, wrote on 1 November 1899 to his father, Mr A O'Toole, at 27 New Bride Street, Dublin, as follows:

*"As you already know, we got great credit for Dundee and the battle of Talana... There was not so much loss on our side, but three sections of mounted infantry of ours were captured... Our mountain battery lost heavy, and, as it is, ours is a remarkably lucky regiment to get it so soft. I mean the little loss of life; and we should have been cut up to a man at the battle of Talana, for we charged up a hill like the side of a house, and had to advance about 700 yards across a level field before we came to hill. The bullets were like rain all round us; so you can imagine how lucky we are. But any place they expect hard work to be done we are put to it..."*¹⁵²

Lieutenant TB Ely, 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, also wrote to his father dealing with the final stages of the attack on Talana Hill as follows:

"...I followed our Adjutant, Captain M. Lowndes, and a good many men followed. It proved a very warm place, and it was only by making a rush through the hail of bullets to another shelter that we were able to get on. Our sergeant-major was hit here... By dint of repeating rushes I succeeded in advancing, followed by the men, to where Captain Hensley, Lieutenant C.N. Perreau and Major S.G. Bird were with their men. The noise all this time was indescribable, and everybody nearly was covered with blood and dust. I had lost my sword and took a rifle and fixed bayonet instead. Perreau got a bullet in the shoulder quite close to me, and Hensley a shot in his boot. You cannot imagine the missiles flying, the hissing, splashing, banging and rearing, quite deafening, and the rattle tattle of the maxims, which the enemy were also armed with.

Our men, the Dublins, boldly rushed to the very top of the hill. Private Merrill of E Company was the first up on top and was instantly shot dead; Captain A. Dibly [sic] was the second, and shot through the eye but not killed; Captain Lowndes, third up, shot through the leg. Following those were Dublins, King's Royal Rifles and Royal Irish Fusiliers. The Boers along the front sold their lives to cover the retreat of their friends... The sight at the top you may imagine, but I could not describe: all our poor

¹⁵⁰ Hensley at page 41 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

¹⁵¹ www.findmypast.ie (accessed on 30 September 2019) notes that a Private Stephen O'Toole (No 5259), Royal Dublin Fusiliers, participated in the Battle of Talana. However, the initial of his Christian name was given as 'P' on the War Office's Medal Rolls. It also records him as being in the 1st Battalion of the Fusiliers which cannot be correct as at October 1899 as the 2nd Battalion was only involved at Talana.

¹⁵² *Dublin Daily Express*, 13 December 1899, page 6. This article was sourced from www.findmypast.ie on 3 August 2019.

*dead fellows, men and Boers in heaps, among them poor Guage [actually Genge], a young subaltern...”*¹⁵³

The Abandonment of Dundee

Despite the apparently satisfactory result, the Boers continued to shell the town and camp, and the British presence at Dundee remained perilous despite relocating their camp further away from Dundee. The garrison was surprised that Boer shells were able to reach its new camp as the Boers possessed a modern ‘Long Tom’ gun which had considerable range.¹⁵⁴

Two days later, the British decided that they would have to withdraw to Ladysmith, over 70 miles away. Under cover of darkness on the night of 22/23 October, the garrison, now commanded by the newly promoted Major-General Yule, abandoned Dundee and their wounded, including General Penn-Symons who would die within 24 hours. Tents, stores, baggage and regimental and personal kit were also left behind. The soldiers, joined by some civilians from Dundee, succeeded in reaching Ladysmith three days later.^{155 156 157}

oOo

After the British left, the Boers occupied Dundee. The following account of the entry of the Boers into Dundee by the wounded Lieutenant (later Major) FM Crum, King’s Royal Rifles, also records his appreciation of the care received by him from Irish-born Dr Hugh Galbraith and his wife Mrs Mary Elizabeth Galbraith (née Stanton)¹⁵⁸ (*‘a most attractive young lady’*):

“Elated by their success, excited with drink, and under the impression that there were still some troops in Dundee, the Boers rode into the town, each with his rifle cocked, and ready to shoot the first British soldier he saw. Anyone will realise the risk of meeting men in such a mood – it was Mrs. Galbraith, while others hung back, who went out to meet them. She told them the English had left the town, that this was a hospital, and that it would be bad for the wounded to be disturbed...”

There were at the Swedish Mission Hospital besides myself, Major Nugent, D.S.O., Lieut. Carbery, Sergeant-Major Burke, R.D.F., and about thirty men who had been wounded too badly to be moved with the remainder to Ladysmith – and I am sure

¹⁵³ *Leinster Leader*, 23 December 1899, as quoted by Gary Owens, ‘Dear Mother – It’s a terrible life’: Irish soldiers’ letters from the Boer War, 1899-1900, in *Irish Sword*, XXI (1998), page 178.

¹⁵⁴ David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*, page 52.

¹⁵⁵ Romer and Mainwaring, pages 17-21.

¹⁵⁶ McFadden, pages 23-26.

¹⁵⁷ David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*, pages 52 and 55-65.

¹⁵⁸ According to Irish civil birth and marriage records, Hugh Tener Galbraith of Waterloo Place, Derry, was born on 7 October 1866. His parents were David Galbraith, Druggist, and Matilda Galbraith (née Tener). On 15 September 1892, Hugh Tener Galbraith, Apothecary, 1 Sackville Street, Londonderry, married Mary Elizabeth Stanton, Spinster, Willington Villa, Cullenswood Avenue, Ranelagh, Dublin, in the Baptist Chapel, Parish of St Peter, Dublin. These civil records were sourced at https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1892/10643/58776_37.pdf (accessed on 7 November 2019). No birth record for Mary Elizabeth Stanton has been located.

there is not one of them who will ever forget the good work done by the Galbraiths.”¹⁵⁹

The Boers arranged to transfer on 2 November all lightly wounded men to Pretoria by ambulance train where they received continuing medical treatment. On the next day, many of the more seriously wounded were dispatched by train to Ladysmith where they arrived on 4 November. The wounded who could not be moved were temporarily left in Dundee.¹⁶⁰ Ultimately, these were also moved to Pretoria by ambulance train on 31 December 1899.¹⁶¹

Another doctor who remained behind in Dundee with overall responsibility for the Swedish Mission Hospital was a Dubliner, Surgeon-Major FAB Daly¹⁶², RAMC, who had travelled to South Africa as Medical Officer with the 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers. Among the actions recorded by him in his 1935 memoir after Dundee was occupied by the Boers are:

- his establishing and sourcing from scratch the basic facilities necessary for a battlefield hospital (e.g., beds and bedding, kitchen, food and refreshments, sanitation, clothing, etc.)¹⁶³;
- organising his staff, including the bandsmen of the Royal Irish Fusiliers whom he had trained in first aid while they were all voyaging to South Africa¹⁶⁴;
- ministering to Boer as well as British wounded for which, as a token of good will, General Louis Botha later gave him a prize set of animal horns from the General's own home¹⁶⁵;
- rescuing from Boer hands the damaged regimental drums of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Royal Irish Fusiliers which were returned to the imperial authorities when the British Army recaptured Dundee some months later¹⁶⁶;
- recovering the bugle and trumpet from the body of Trumpeter Horn, the first casualty of the Battle of Talana Hill. The trumpet was later returned to the custody of the 69th Battery of the Royal Field Artillery for ceremonial use¹⁶⁷.

¹⁵⁹ Account by Major FM Crum, pages 50 and 51 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* by David Biggins at <https://www.angloboerwar.com/images/pdf/Talana%20Update%201.pdf> (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

¹⁶⁰ Account by Lieutenant Cape, 18th Hussars, page 75 of the document entitled *Talana: Account and Medal Roll – Update 1* (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

¹⁶¹ Major FM Crum, page 51 (accessed on 7 November 2019 and other dates).

¹⁶² According to https://www.dnw.co.uk/auction-archive/special-collections/lot.php?specialcollection_id=112&lot_id=134244 (accessed on 21 September 2019), Surgeon-Major Francis Augustus Bonner Daly was born in Dublin on 28 May 1855 and educated at Trinity College Dublin. In 1901, he was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel in the RAMC. The title page of his 1935 memoir (see reference below) indicates that he was then a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

¹⁶³ Lieutenant-Colonel FAB Daly, *Boer War Memories: Personal Experiences*, Melbourne, 1935, Wilke & Co Pty Ltd, pages 17-20. A copy of this publication is available online at www.wellcomelibrary.org - reference: RAMC 30 (accessed on 22 September 2019 and later dates).

¹⁶⁴ Daly, pages 14, 17 and 18.

¹⁶⁵ Daly, page 31 and the illustration between pages 16 and 17.

¹⁶⁶ Daly, pages 46 and 47.

¹⁶⁷ Daly, pages 13, 53, 54 and 56.

Major Daly, his staff and patients were all transported to Pretoria by ambulance train on 31 December 1899. While his seriously ill patients remained in hospital in Pretoria, the Boers sent Major Daly and his staff over the border into Portuguese East Africa (now Mozambique) having agreed beforehand that they would never take up arms against the Boers. On reaching Natal, they joined General Buller's force and continued their work ministering to British wounded during his subsequent campaigns.¹⁶⁸

oOo

The diary of Reverend Gerard C Bailey, the Anglican Minister in Dundee, refers to a number of interesting incidents after the occupation of the town by the Boers. To prevent the looting of his home in the following days, Reverend Bailey arranged that it was always occupied by himself, Father Murray (the Catholic Chaplain to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers) or a young man named Hearne. He described Father Murray in these terms:

"...Father Murray behaved like a brick, and guarded the place as if it were his own. He is a big, burly, and formidable person to encounter. During the early days we went on guard like sentinels, one of us always remaining in the house. And it was as well that we took these precautions, as we balked several attempts to enter. The would-be looters used to come and try the doors; and on our appearing cleared off in the cheekiest manner possible..."¹⁶⁹

On 31 October, the Boers found some British rifles hidden in the steeple at the Swedish Mission Hospital. Bailey records that a *"corporal of the Dubs, with much brogue and no little native wit, said he had removed all 'the blessed bolts' so that they would be useless."*¹⁷⁰

By 6 November, Bailey described having met the following nationalities in the Boer Army to date: English, Irish, Scots, Hollanders, Germans, French, Russians, Scandinavians, Cape Colonials and Jews. Two weeks later, he and Father Murray received a visit from a man named Kelly with the Swaziland Commando who were then in Dundee. Kelly knew Father Murray.^{171 172}

Conclusion

Having reviewed various sources identifying those Dublin Fusiliers who were wounded, I am satisfied that in addition to suffering 12 deaths, approximately 55 Dublin Fusiliers were wounded in the fighting. My analysis of the available information has enabled the movement of the 55 men to be tracked and has facilitated the development of the table at **Appendix B**. The wounding of each soldier has been corroborated by at least two sources in

¹⁶⁸ Daly, pages 39-42.

¹⁶⁹ David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*, pages 526 and 529.

¹⁷⁰ David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*, page 529.

¹⁷¹ David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*, page 535.

¹⁷² McCracken, *MacBride's Brigade*, page 181, indicates that Patrick Aloysius Kelly, originally from Maryborough (now Portlaoise), was with an unknown Boer commando. Perhaps this is the Kelly who knew Father Murray.

over 90% of cases. Not surprisingly, not all of the records agree on the details (such as the soldiers' names, numbers, etc) due to the conditions of war in which statistics are compiled.

oOo

By a similar examination of the various information sources¹⁷³, it has proved possible to identify the estimated 90 Royal Dublin Fusiliers who were captured at Talana and imprisoned in Pretoria. Their identities have been corroborated in more than 90% of cases despite some data inadequacies and inconsistencies vis-à-vis names or regimental numbers in particular. **Appendix C** identifies the 90 individuals and the corroborating sources.

The indicated location of the soldiers in Appendices B and C has been greatly assisted by the nature of the clasp(s) subsequently awarded on their Queen's South Africa Medals. For instance if a man were awarded a Talana clasp but neither a 'Defence of Ladysmith' or 'Relief of Ladysmith' clasp, it is likely that he was detained in Pretoria while the battle for Ladysmith was taking place.

oOo

In an overall assessment of the Battle of Talana Hill, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle described it as a tactical victory for the British side but a strategic defeat.¹⁷⁴ Arguably if Generals Erasmus and Meyer had executed the originally planned joint attack by their forces against the British camp on the following day, 21 October, this 'tactical victory' would probably not have been secured.

In conclusion therefore, this first engagement of the Anglo-Boer War at Talana Hill had cost the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers over 150 officers and men in killed, wounded and captured. Within a few short weeks, further fighting would impact both the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Fusiliers. These engagements included:

- the armoured train incident on 15 November which resulted in the loss of a further 50 men, most of whom were captured and imprisoned in Pretoria;
- the Battle of Colenso on 15 December when more than 50 Dubs were killed, and
- the further attempts made by the British Army in January and February 1900 to break through to the town of Ladysmith when at least 30 more Dublin Fusiliers died.

Perhaps we will return at another time to discuss further episodes in the Anglo-Boer War involving the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

¹⁷³ The databases consulted were primarily the following: www.findmypast.ie, www.angloboerwar.com (both accessed on 28 July 2020 and other dates) and David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*.

¹⁷⁴ Griffith, page 40.

Royal Dublin Fusiliers Killed at the Battle of Talana Hill (including those who died of their wounds)

Some inconsistencies in rank and name were apparent among the various sources consulted. Preference has been given in the table to the more likely option with additional or alternative information included in square brackets.

Rank and Name	No	Cause/Date of Death, Battle Site and Grave Site	Primary Sources ¹⁷⁵
Capt [George Anthony] Weldon		Killed in Action (KIA), 20/10/1899, Talana Hill*	Biggins, Fusiliers' Arch (FA), Find My Past (FMP), Romer and Mainwaring (R&M) and Watt
2 nd Lt [or Lt] [Charles Jarvis] Genge		Died of Wounds (DOW), 21/10/1899, Talana Hill^	Biggins, FA, FMP, R&M, Watt
Clr-Sgt [Francis] Anderson	1166	DOW, 21/10/1899, Talana Hill~	Biggins, FA, FMP, R&M, Watt
Sgt [James] [or D] Broughton	3094	DOW, 22/10/1899, Talana Hill ⁺	Biggins, FA, FMP, R&M, Watt
Pte [C or J] Byrne	4864	KIA, 20/10/1899, Near Talana*	Biggins, FA, FMP, R&M, Watt
Pte [Patrick] [or J] Cahill	5103	KIA, 20/10/1899, Talana Hill*	Biggins, FA, FMP, R&M, Watt
Pte [John] [or P] Callaghan [or Cavanagh]	5918	KIA, 20/10/1899, Talana Hill^	Biggins, FA, FMP, R&M, Watt
Pte [John] Crotty	5933	KIA, 20/10/1899, Talana Hill~	Biggins, FA, FMP, R&M, Watt
Pte [Patrick] Frahill [or Frakill] [or Fairhall] [or Frahn]	2753	DOW, 30/10/1899 [or 3/11/1899] [or 28/11/1899], Talana Hill^	Biggins, FA, FMP, R&M, Watt
Pte [M] Mahoney	5987	KIA, 20/10/1899, Near Talana*	Biggins, FA, FMP, R&M, Watt
Pte [Albert] Merrill	5794	KIA, 20/10/1899, Talana Hill*	Biggins, FMP, R&M, Watt
Pte [M] Tyrrell [or Tyrell]	5573	KIA, 20/10/1899, Near Talana*	Biggins, FMP, R&M, Watt

According to Watt, six men are interred in Talana Hill Cemetery (designated by an asterisk * above), three in the Betania Mission Cemetery (designated ^ above), two in St James's Churchyard (designated ~ above) and one in the Town Cemetery (designated + above).

¹⁷⁵ The five main sources used were: (1) Romer and Mainwaring, pages 241 and 242, (2) the subscription website, <https://search.findmypast.ie/search-world-records-in-military-service-and-conflict/> (accessed on 18 February 2019 and later dates), (3) the inscriptions on the Fusiliers' Arch in Dublin, (4) David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll*, pages 82, 109, 116, 118, 119, 144, 180, 185, 256, 278, 366, 377 and 378, and (5) Watt, *In Memoriam*, pages 6, 48, 60, 61, 62, 96, 144, 153, 262, 286, 426 and 443.

Royal Dublin Fusiliers Wounded at the Battle of Talana

The core information in the following table is from Romer and Mainwaring's book, supplemented by the information contained in the indicated sources below:

- '1' denotes a record of the soldier's wounding in Romer and Mainwaring;
- '2': the Anglo-Boer records available on www.findmypast.ie;
- '3': the similar records on www.angloboerwar.com;
- '4': the records in David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll for the Queen's South Africa Medal, 1899-1902* and
- '5': the list of prisoners from Irish regiments in Pretoria in the *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail* on 14 April 1900 (accessed via www.findmypast.ie).

However not all of the information in Romer and Mainwaring is considered accurate. Some changes to names and numbers have accordingly been made. Extra (and occasionally contradictory) information from other sources is also added in square brackets. The men's later War record has enabled the A, B, C and D groupings in the table to be prepared.

Number, Rank, Name, Nature of Wound and Corroborating Source Codes [Other Data primarily from Biggins, www.findmypast.ie and www.angloboerwar.com]			
A. The Superficially Wounded who likely withdrew from Dundee on 22 October 1899			
4894 Sgt [W] Grace	1, 4	[5349 Pte W (or T or P) Bracken]	2, 3, 4
5317 Pte [W] Maher	1 only	5142 [5347 Pte J Murray]	2, 3, 4
[4987 Pte J or M Reilly]	3, 4	[5210 Pte John Rice]	2 only
4910 Dmr [or Dvr A] Brudnell [or Brudell]	1, 4		
B. The Lightly Wounded who were likely sent to Pretoria on 21 October or 2 November 1899			
3770 Clr-Sgt [J] McNeice [or McNeill]	1, 4	[2865 Sgt [John] Linehan [or Lenehan]]	4 only
2156 Cpl [later Sgt] [James] Hogan	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	5634 L-Cpl [or Pte] [Thomas] Keenan [W slightly]	1, 2, 4
[5127 Pte J Battersby [served in Mounted Infantry ('MI')] [W eye, neck and hand]]	2, 5	6084 Pte [W] Brady	1, 2, 3, 4
5643 Pte [Henry or J] Cullen	1, 2, 4	4592 Pte [Peter] Cullen	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
6125 [6155] Pte [Henry] Dempsey [W slightly]	1, 2, 3, 4	4815 Pte [James] Doyle	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5947 [5741] Pte [J] [James] Dwyer	1, 2, 3, 4	4593 Pte [Alfred] Flood [W severely]	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

5686 Pte [Lewis or R] Gray	1, 2, 3, 4	4785 Pte [Samuel] Hopkins [served in MI]	1, 2, 3, 4
5063 [or 4063] Pte [W or J] Kelly	1, 2, 3, 4	4347 Pte [John or M] Lahey [or Leahy]	1, 2, 3, 4
4700 Pte [Joseph or P] Leonard	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	5118 Pte [William] Magee [or McGee]	1, 2, 3, 4
5137 Pte [James] McGrath	1, 2, 3, 4	4766 Pte [Michael] Murphy	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4790 Pte [Thomas or C] O'Brien	1, 2, 3, 4	5595 Pte [Joseph] Reynolds	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5635 Pte [Michael or J] Tracey	1, 2, 3, 4	4948 Pte [Henry or F] Wilby [or Welby] [W slightly]	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
C. The Moderately Wounded who were likely sent to Ladysmith on 3 November 1899			
Capt [Athelstan] Dibley [W dangerously, under eye]	1, 2, 3, 4	Capt [Maurice] Lowndes [W dangerously, left leg]	1, 2, 3, 4
Lt [Capt] [Charles Noel] Perreau [W severely, shoulder]	1, 2, 3, 4	3139 Sgt [or Cpl] [George] McKenna	1, 2, 3, 4
5426 Sgt [Pte] [Edward] Walton	1, 2, 3, 4	5011 Pte [Edward or F or W] Brennan [served in MI] [W, arm]	1, 2, 3, 4
4857 [4851] Pte [Michael] Butler [W slightly]	1, 2, 4	4767 Pte [John] Byrne	1, 2, 3, 4
6264 Pte [Peter or O] Carroll	1, 2, 3, 4	6022 [or 6012] Pte [Richard] Cassin [or Cassini, Cassim or Cassein] [W severely]	1, 2, 3, 4
4444 Pte [Patrick] Cregan [Cregan]	1, 2, 3, 4	5078 Pte [Christopher] Gorman	1, 2, 3, 4
5047 Pte [John or R or T] Greer	1, 2, 3, 4	5531 Pte [or L-Cpl] [Frederick] Hatt	1, 2, 3, 4
4382 Pte [Thomas] Jordan	1, 2, 3, 4	3704 [3784] Pte [Thomas] Kearns	1, 2, 3, 4
5038 Pte [Matthew] Richardson	1, 2, 3, 4	5523 Pte [Christopher] Ryan	1, 2, 3, 4
4359 Pte [John] Smith	1, 2, 3, 4	4620 Pte [Robert] Summerville [or Somerville]	1, 2, 3, 4
D. The Seriously Wounded who are recorded as patients of the Swedish Mission Hospital in Dundee and were likely sent to Pretoria on 31 December 1899			
43 Sgt-Maj [John] Burke [Wounded ('W') severely, leg]	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	5310 Pte [Samuel or Thomas] Black [W dangerously, breast, back and leg]	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5156 Pte [Christopher] Fitzpatrick [W dangerously, thigh]	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	6096 Pte [William] Gilhooley [or Gillooley]	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

'Missing' Royal Dublin Fusiliers likely captured at the Battle of Talana and sent to Pretoria

The core information in the following table is from Romer and Mainwaring's book, supplemented by the information contained in the indicated sources below:

- '1' denotes a record in Romer and Mainwaring;
- '2': the Anglo-Boer records available on the subscription website, www.findmypast.ie;
- '3' and '3?': the similar records on www.angloboerwar.com (see note on '3?' below);
- '4': the records in David J Biggins, *Talana: Account and Medal Roll for the Queen's South Africa Medal, 1899-1902*, and
- '5': the list of prisoners from Irish regiments in Pretoria in the *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail* on 14 April 1900 (accessed via www.findmypast.ie).

Some numbers and names are amended in the table where it appears that the Romer and Mainwaring information may not be correct. Extra information from other sources is also added in square brackets. The designation '3?' is used where the information may not be accurate, as the men are elsewhere recorded as being prisoners until 6 June 1900.

Number, Rank and Name (per Romer & Mainwaring) and Corroborating Sources Codes [Other Data (primarily from Biggins, www.findmypast.ie and www.angloboerwar.com)]			
Capt [Malcolm Percy Eustace] Lonsdale	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Lt [Chudleigh] Garvice	1, 2, 4, 5
Lt [Cecil Thomas Wrigley] Grimshaw	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Lt [Frederick Neil] Le Mesurier	1, 2, 4
2615 Clr-Sgt [John Edward Francis] Gage	1, 2, 3?, 4	3761 Sgt [J or P] Carroll	1, 2, 4, 5
4388 Sgt [M] Guilfoyle	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	2078 Sgt [W] Martin	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
5178 L-Sgt [or Sgt] [Thomas] Crean	1, 2, 5	5328 [or 5378 or 5387] L-Sgt [Francis] Payne	1, 2, 4, 5
5094 Cpl [Michael or J] Corrigan	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	5004 Cpl [or Pte] [J or E] Kiernan	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
6028 Cpl [Charles J] Pearson	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	5544 Cpl [or Sgt] [R] Richards	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
5033 L-Cpl [or Pte] [J or T] Byrne	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	5143 L-Cpl [or Pte] [or Cpl] [J or P] Flynn	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
4868 L-Cpl [or Cpl] [J] Green	1, 2, 3?, 4	4947 L-Cpl [or Cpl] [G or J] Harper [or Harpur]	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
5601 [5661] L-Cpl [M or J] Lee	1, 2, 5	4812 [4212] L-Cpl [or Cpl or Sgt] [F] Lyons	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
5304 L-Cpl [V] Whelan	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	5070 [6070] Pte [W or S] Angleton	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
5127 Pte [J] Battersby	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	5266 Pte [J or T] Bigley	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
5931 Pte [Thomas] Bracken	1, 2	5479 Pte [J] Brien	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5

5702 Pte [or L-Cpl P] Byrne	1, 2, 3?, 4	5030 Pte [P] Callaghan	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
5427 Pte [P or J] Carr	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	5880 Pte [E] Carroll	1, 2
5182 [5180] Pte [James] Cavanagh	1 only	4513 Pte [C or SS] Connor	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
5609 Pte [J] Connor	1, 2	4411 Pte [M or P] Cooney	1, 2, 3?, 4
4974 [or 4978] Pte [M or T] Costello [or Costelloe]	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	4655 Pte [or L-Cpl] [F or P] Cullen	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
6120 Pte [J or D] Cullen	1 only	5126 [or 6126] Pte [P] Delaney	1 only
5724 Pte [P] Dempsey	1, 2, 5	5027 [5025] Pte [D or L] Doody	1, 2
5184 Pte [J] Dowler	1, 2	5759 Pte Dowling	1 only
5390 Pte [Edward] Doyle	1, 2, 3?, 4	4366 Pte [J] Doyle	1, 2, 3?, 4
5209 Pte [P] Dunne	1, 2, 4	5350 Pte [W] Farrell	1, 2, 5
5551 Pte [C] Finn [or Fenn]	1, 2, 4	5714 Pte [J or T] Finnegan	1, 2, 4
5789 Pte [W] Flood	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	5489 Pte [M or J] Geoghegan	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
4964 Pte [Hugh] Gibney	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	5600 Pte [T] Gleeson	1, 2, 3?, 4
4566 Pte [Edmund] Glynn	1, 2, 5	6055 Pte [T] Gough [or Goff]	1, 2, 3?, 4
4473 Pte [H] Hand	1, 2	4998 Pte [C] Hawthorn [or Hawthorne]	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
4359 Pte Hall [J Hull]	1, 2, 3?	4927 Pte [T] Kane	1, 2
5912 Pte [T] Kavanagh	1, 2, 5	5693 Pte [E] Keating	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
4884 [or 4844] Pte [Thomas] Kenny	1, 2, 3?, 4	5889 [or 5880] Pte T [or M] Keogh	1, 2, 3?, 4
4532 Pte [W] Kirwan	1, 2	4142 Pte Lyons	1 only
5162 Pte [J or P] Macken	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	4638 Pte [C] Mahon	1, 2
5501 Pte [P] Mannix	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	6018 Pte [H] McDonagh [or McDonogh]	1, 2, 3?, 4
5706 Pte [J] McEvoy	1, 2, 3?, 4	4692 Pte McGuinness or McGann [R M'Quinn or McGuinn]	1, 2, 3?, 4
5246 [5245] Pte [William] McGuinness	1, 2, 3?, 4	[5810 Pte J Molloy]	2, 3?, 4, 5
5876 [5875] Pte [T] Molloy	1 only	5321 Pte [M] Moran	1, 2, 3?, 4
5793 [or 5795] Pte [P or J] Murphy	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	4966 Pte [S] Murphy	1, 2, 3?, 4
4327 [4357] Pte [M] Neill	1, 2, 5	5175 [or 5125] Pte [P] Reddy	1, 2, 3?, 4
5055 Pte [S] Reidy	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	5545 Pte [P] Reilly	1, 2, 5
5218 Pte [W] Reilly	1 only	5022 Pte [J or W] Rourke	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
5956 Pte [M or T] Rourke [or Rorke]	1, 2, 3?, 4	5402 Pte [T] Rourke	1, 2, 3?, 4
4788 [or 4783] Pte [J] Toomey	1, 2, 3?, 4	3752 Pte [J] Travers	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5
6087 Pte [P] Tyrrell [or Tyrell]	1, 2, 3?, 4	4498 Pte [R or W] Watts	1, 2, 3?, 4
5352 Pte [P] White	1, 2, 3?, 4, 5	5144 Pte [J] Williams	1, 2

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin

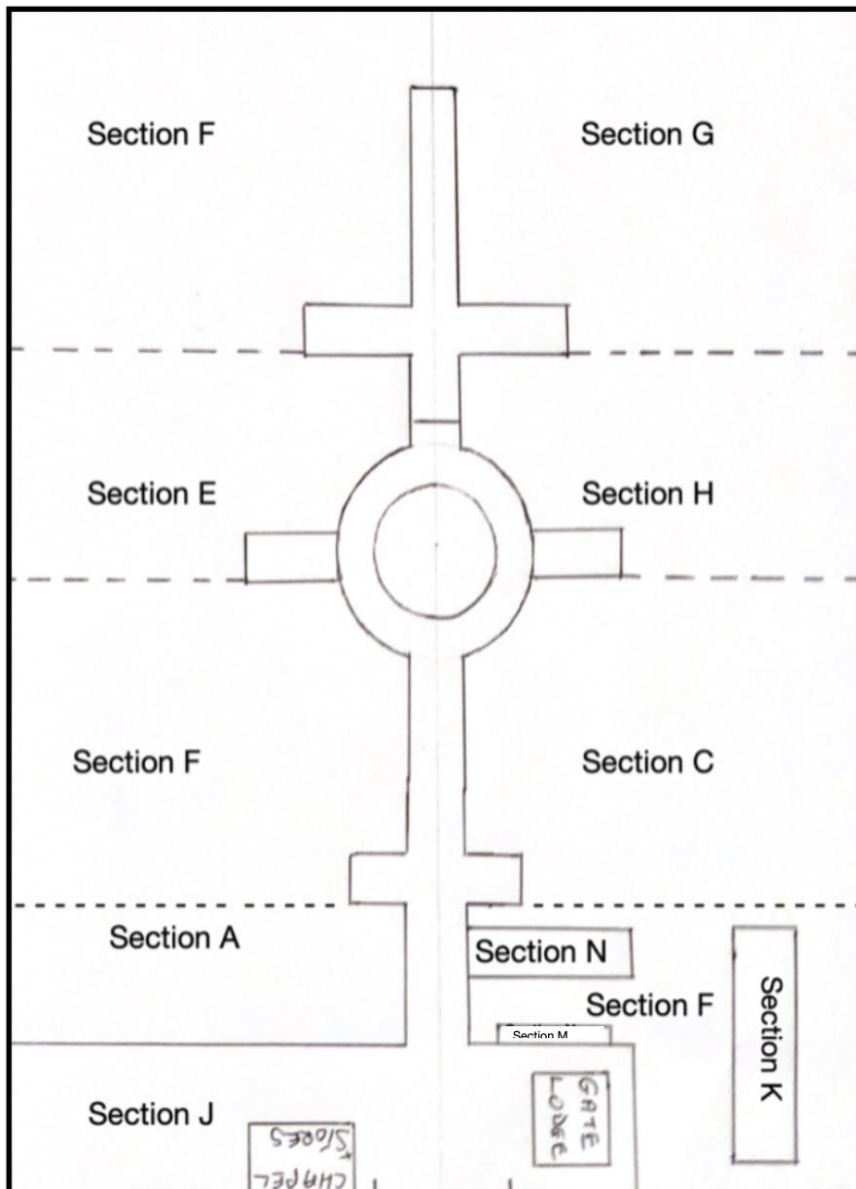
Thomas Murphy

Grangegorman Military Cemetery was opened in 1876 to serve as a graveyard for soldiers and soldiers' families who died in Dublin and the surrounding areas. The entrance (pictured below) is on Blackhorse Avenue close to the Phoenix Park. McKee Barracks (also pictured below) which was formerly known as Marlborough Barracks is located nearby.



Map of Grangegorman Military Cemetery

Section A	Church of England and Ireland
Section B	Church of England and Ireland
Section C	Church of England and Ireland (Children) - Section 2
Section D	Church of England and Ireland - Section 1
Section E	Wesleyan Plot
Section F	Presbyterian
Section G	Roman Catholic - Section 4 (Officers)
Section H	Roman Catholic
Section J	The Lawn
Section K	Roman Catholic
Section M	Memorial Wall
Section N	



The Cemetery opened in 1876. The first burial on 7 August 1876 was of a child, Christina Frazer (aged 7 months) whose father was a private in the 93th Highlanders Regiment (see the accompanying burial record).

Name.	Abode.	When buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
C. Frazer Child 93 rd Reg ^{nt} No. 1	Beggars Bush Barracks	7 th August	7 Months	J. Mansbridge P.C.

The first adult to be buried on 12 August 1876 was Elizabeth Reid (aged 31 years) who was associated in some way with the 34th (Cumberland) Regiment of Foot.

Elizabeth Reid (Woman) 34 th Reg ^{nt} No. 3	St. P. Dunes Hospital	12 th Aug st	31 ⁹ / ₁₂ Years	J. Mansbridge P.C.
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The first adult male to be buried on 4 September 1876 was William Shelly, a private in the 6th Dragoons. He was aged 38 when he died in hospital in Arbour Hill.

William Shelly Priv 6 th Dragoons No. 8	Station Hosp ^l Arbour Hill	4 th Sep ^{tr}	38 Years	C. J. Host
--	--	--------------------------------------	-------------	------------

The first connection to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers or its predecessor regiments is the burial in mid-July 1877 of Mary Anne McEvoy (aged 1 year), the daughter of Corporal William McEvoy of the 103rd Fusiliers. Four years later in 1881, the 102nd Regiment of Foot (Royal Madras Fusiliers) would be merged with the 103rd Regiment of Foot (Royal Bombay Fusiliers) to form the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers respectively.

No. 103 Mary Anne McEvoy Daughter of Corporal Wm McEvoy No. 104 103 rd Fusiliers	Dublin	19 th July	1 Year	Wm. O'Sullivan St. Michael & John's
--	--------	-----------------------	--------	--

George Henry Smith of the 103rd Fusiliers was buried in the Cemetery on 7 November 1877. He was the first soldier connected to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers or its antecedent regiments to be interred there. He was aged 26 when he died in Arbour Hill Hospital.

Name.	Abode.	When buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
George Henry Smith 103 rd Regt No. 129	St. S. Barack (Arbour Hill Hospital) died at.	Nov 7 th 1877	26 1/2	Thos. Stanley C.F.

The next soldier to be buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery who was associated with either the 102nd or 103rd Regiment of Foot was John White of the 103rd Regiment on 31 May 1878. He too died in Arbour Hill Hospital aged 25.

John White 103 rd Regiment No. 199	Arbour Hill Hospital	31 st May 1878	25 6/12	Patrick P. ...
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After the establishment of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in 1881, the first connection to the new Regiment is the burial of Hannah Hanly, aged 20, the wife of a soldier of the 5th Battalion of the Fusiliers who died in the Rotunda Hospital.

Hannah Hanly (5 R. D. Fusiliers) No. 756	Rotunda Hospital	22. 9. 84	20yrs	Joseph J. Nolan A.C.F.
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The first actual Royal Dublin Fusilier interred in the Cemetery on 12 August 1886 was Quartermaster Sergeant Augustine Fowler. He died aged 56 in the Linen Hall Barracks, Lower Dominick Street, Dublin. The record of his death on 10 August is also below.

Quartermaster Sergeant Augustine Fowler Dublin Fusiliers No. 911	Linen Hall Dublin	12 August 1886	56 3/12	A. Fowler C.F.
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Second Page		Page		04786953						
Superintendent Registrar's District <i>In Dublin</i>			Registrar's District <i>In City 2</i>							
1886 DEATHS Registered in the District of <i>In City 2</i> in the Union of <i>In Dublin</i> in the County of <i>In City of Dublin</i>										
No. (1.)	Date and Place of Death (2.)	Name and Surname (3.)	Sex (4.)	Condition (5.)	Age last Birthday (6.)	Rank, Profession, or Occupation (7.)	Certified Cause of Death, and Duration of Illness (8.)	Signature, Qualification, and Residence of Informant (9.)	When Registered (10.)	Signature of Registrar (11.)
953	<i>Death Sergeant Linen Hall Barack 4th R. D. Fusiliers</i>	<i>Augustine Fowler</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>Sergeant Royal Dublin Fusiliers</i>	<i>Of this Sergeant Linen Hall & Mark Barack Dublin</i>	<i>William Fowler Present at death Linen Hall Barack</i>	<i>18. 86</i>	<i>W. Fowler C.F.</i>

In my research, I found that Augustine Fowler was born in St Paul's Parish in Dublin in 1830 and enlisted with the 1st Battalion of the 9th (East Norfolk) Regiment of Foot on 29 February 1848 when aged 18. He served for 21 years and travelled to places like Malta, Canada and Gibraltar. However I have yet to find details of his service with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

oOo

It is not until the start of the First World War that an increase in the number of British soldiers buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery becomes apparent. Approximately 672 deaths attributable to the War are buried there, of which 63 are Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Most of these soldiers died of their War wounds in Dublin.

The first Royal Dublin Fusilier to be buried in the Cemetery during the War was Sergeant Edward James 15211 who died 18 February 1915. A further six Dublin Fusilier interments took place in 1915 as indicated in the following table.

Name	Service No (Battalion)	When Buried	Age	Grave Plot Location
Edward James (Sergeant)	15211	18 February 1915		RC 584
Edward Horn (Lance Corporal)	12479	19 February 1915		RC 441
George Isaacs	14917	23 February 1915		RC 585
James Byrne	15547	25 February 1915	48	RC 442
Patrick O'Brien	14512	7 May 1915		RC 448
John McGowan	8638	15 May 1915		RC 449
John Byrne	13996	7 June 1915	34	RC 450

During the Easter Rising, the 4th, 5th and 10th Battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers were deployed to suppress the Rising. The 4th and 5th Battalions were rushed to Dublin from Templemore and The Curragh respectively, and both saw action during Easter Week suffering casualties. The 10th Battalion was then training in the Royal Barracks (now Collins Barracks) prior to deployment to France that summer. On the first morning of the Rising, the Battalion marched down the north quays and was engaged by the Volunteers based in the Mendicity Institution at Usher's Island on the opposite side of the River Liffey.

Lieutenant Gerald Aloysius Neilan of the 10th Battalion was one of those killed. His brother Arthur was a Volunteer in the Four Courts garrison nearby. This reflects the complex situation pertaining in many families at the time, whereby some favoured securing Home Rule through support for the War while others were prepared to use force against the British to secure Irish freedom.

A total of 118 British soldiers were killed in late April and early May 1916. Of these, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers lost two officers and ten other ranks as outlined in the following table. Nine of these soldiers are buried in the indicated plots in Grangegorman Military Cemetery.

Name	Service No (Battalion)	When Buried	Age	Grave Plot Location
Francis A Brennan (Private)	25244 (10 th)	24 April 1916		RC 468
Frederick Burke (Lance Sergeant)	22164 (5 th)	26 April 1916		C of E 642
James Byrne (Private)	18259 (Depot)	1 May 1916 (died of wounds)	19	RC 483
Richard Coxon (Private)	22164 (5 th)	26 April 1916		RC 479
Alfred Ellis (Private)	21735	1 May 1916 (died of wounds)	19	(Deansgrange Cemetery)
George R Gray (2 nd Lieutenant)	(4 th)	28 April 1916	21	C of E Officers 46
Henry Hare (Private)	6745 (5 th)	26 April 1916		RC 482
John W Humphreys (Corporal)	19222	25 April 1916	29	RC 484
Francis Lucas (Private)	17687 (5 th)	26 April 1916		RC 480
Gerald Aloysius Neilan (Lieutenant)	(10 th)	24 April 1916		(Glasnevin Cemetery)
John A Thompson (Private)	24923 (10 th)	24 April 1916		(Kinanley C of I Fermanagh)
Abraham Watchorn (Private)	25026 (5 th)	26 April 1916		C of E 625

A particularly sad case relating to the 1916 Rising is that of Mrs Margaret Naylor who is also buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery (see the picture opposite). She was wounded in crossfire at Ringsend Drawbridge on 29 April 1916. The fighting that day was so intense that nobody could come to her aid for six hours. She died three days later in hospital.

Her family's tragedy was exacerbated by the fact that her husband, John, was killed in the German gas attack at Hulluch, north of the French city of Lens, on the very same day (29 April). He was a private (no 14578) in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers as is evident from the pictured headstone. Two of John's brothers, James and William, also died in the War.

In Grangegorman, there is also a memorial wall remembering all of the WW1 soldiers who died in Ireland and are buried elsewhere. Panel 8 on this wall lists 11 Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the details of



whom are outlined in the following table.

Name	Service No (Battalion)	Age	When Buried	Where Buried
L Cosgrove (Corporal)	15553 (9 th)	49	7 October 1914	Tullow (The Abbey) Cemetery
C Carroll (Private)	7001 (3 rd)	37	2 December 1918	Not yet known
T Corcoran	5578 (2 nd)		14 March 1919	Mullawn Cemetery, Tullow
Michael Dooney (Private)	9439 (2 nd)	18	10 June 1915	St James's Church of Ireland, Dublin
P Glynn (Private)	24760 (5 th)		22 January 1920	St James's Church of Ireland, Dublin
Christopher Hackman (Private)	20384 (3 rd)	30	2 February 1916	Not yet known
William Hore (Private)	8938 (2 nd)	32	4 November 1920	Sleaty Old Burial Ground, Co Laois
Owen McAuley (Private)	12541 (9 th)	19	1 September 1915	Not yet known
P Mulhall (Private)	12132 (1 st)	23	14 January 1917	Carlow Old Cemetery
Thomas Murphy (Private)	12760	35	2 June 1915	St James's Church of Ireland, Dublin
Michael O'Hara (Private)	10217 (2 nd)	22	11 May 1915	Ballymore Eustace (St John's)

The next large loss of life during the First World War was the sinking of the *RMS Leinster* by a German torpedo off the Kish Bank on 10 October 1918 when 571 people were killed. A total of 817 persons were on board at the time. 361 of the 571 who died were military casualties, and 144 of them are buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery. However none of these casualties were Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

Section F of the Cemetery contains 83 headstones of soldiers who died in the Cork area during WW1. These men are buried in Cork Military Cemetery. The headstones were originally over their graves but had to be removed to Grangegorman for safe-keeping many years ago after they were repeatedly damaged. 11 of these gravestones remember deceased Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

Grangegorman Military Cemetery also contains the grave (pictured) of a Victoria Cross recipient, Sergeant Major Martin Doyle VC MM of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, with whom he was awarded the Military



Medal and Victoria Cross (see his Medal Card below). He was in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers before transferring to the Munsters. He survived the War, joined the IRA in 1920 and fought in the Irish War of Independence. He was on the pro-Treaty side during the Civil War and retired from the Irish Army in 1937. He died in 1940.

Name.		Corp.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
DOYLE		R. Mun. Fus	Pte	7073
		R. D. Fus		4023
Martin				
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.	
VICTORY	B/101 B12	1032		
BRITISH				
STAR				
Theatre of War first served in			E/492101/3. EF/9/4483.	
Date of entry therein				
K. 1330				

Conclusion

While this initial article only covers some of the persons associated with the Dublin Fusiliers in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, I plan to do further research to identify more of these forgotten men and their families. As far as I am concerned, the Cemetery is an under-appreciated gem of Irish military history. The Office of Public Works usually organises guided tours of the Cemetery at 11 am every Thursday from April to November. Enquiries may be made to phoenixparkvisitorcentre@opw.ie.

Sources and Acknowledgements

Commonwealth War Graves Commission.
Office of Public Works.
UK National Archives.

The Kilkenny War Memorials, their Origins and Development

Donal Croghan, Chairman, Kilkenny Great War Memorial Committee

Those of us of a certain age will remember how little was taught about the Irish involvement in World War 1. In the school books that we used from the foundation of the State, the modern history narrative really began with the GPO in 1916. It wasn't until an event held in Kilkenny Castle in 2010 during a regional ceremony for the National Day of Commemoration that the Mayor, a musician and a gardener (David Fitzgerald, Gary Lynch and myself) chatted together about remembering those from Kilkenny who served in World War 1. Here in Kilkenny, there was only one memorial at Saint Canice's Cathedral, but this only included some of Kilkenny's War Dead. Accordingly, we decided that something needed to be done.

After that chance meeting in Kilkenny Castle, work began in earnest to review events in Kilkenny that had happened since the end of the War. Up to the early 1930s, a service of remembrance was held by the veterans at the annual Armistice Day Commemoration in the County. Since then and with the changing political climate, the families of those who lost relatives in the War had no particular location to see their relatives' names and reflect on their personal loss. Most would not have had the resources to travel to the theatres of war in Belgium, France and elsewhere to visit the graves and memorials of their loved ones.

We, the Mayor, the musician and the gardener, thought that action was needed to build a memorial to all the men and women from Kilkenny who served in World War 1. A committee was formed over a number of months comprising those who had an interest in the Great War and who wished to see a memorial erected. After its formation in 2011, the Committee arranged a meeting with Kilkenny County Council to secure its support.

We were fortunate that around this time, authors Niall Brannigan and John Kirwan were launching a book: 'Kilkenny Families in the Great War'. This was a great source of material about Kilkenny people who served in World War 1. We also met with Mr Tom Burnell who, realising our dedication to the planned project, very kindly offered us all his research relating to the



Kilkenny War Dead and allowed us to publish a book, 'The Kilkenny War Dead', to raise

funds for a memorial. In Kilkenny Castle in June 2014, President Mary McAleese viewed an exhibition about Kilkenny's involvement in the Great War and formally launched the project. Pictured opposite is the President, Martin McAleese and myself at the launch.

The book, 'The Kilkenny War Dead', was launched on 2 November 2014. On that day, a Centenary Parade took place from Kilkenny Castle to McDonagh Station with re-enactors, military vehicles and St Patrick's Brass and Reed Band. Members of the Band accompanied soldiers going to war as they marched from the Army Barracks to the railway station during the War years. Members of the public and families also walked to the Station that day as had happened when the soldiers were heading to war.

While discussions were ongoing with Kilkenny County Council, the Committee set about fundraising and were very lucky to receive donations to help pay for the publication of the book and the proposed memorial. The Committee met regularly and sought a suitable site for the memorial. Designs were drawn up and costings calculated. Finally, a location was agreed with Kilkenny County Council. Subsequently we were told that we were the first group to actually bring money to the table!

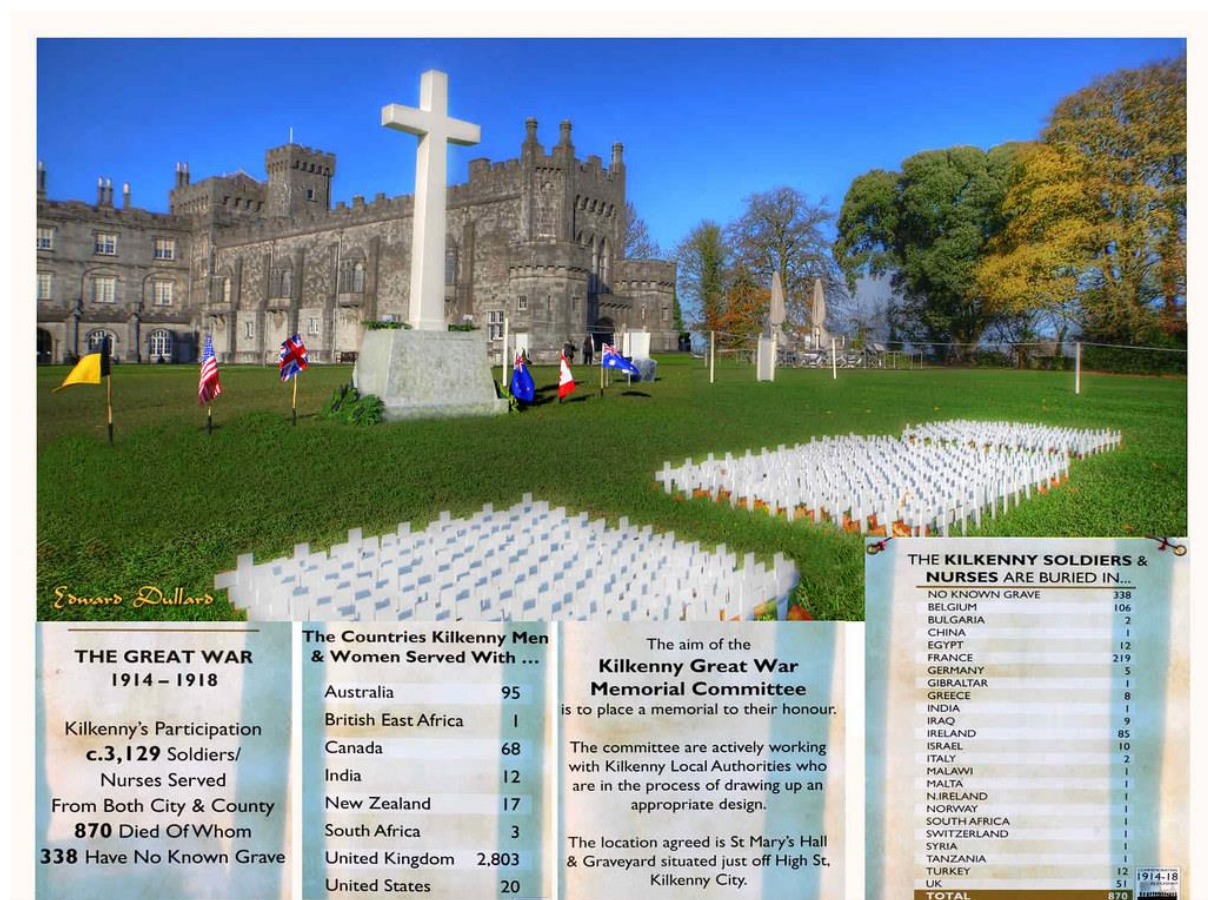
With the promise of support from Kilkenny's 24 elected councillors, County Council funding towards the project was secured on an annual basis over a number of years. Press releases, interviews on local media and information leaflets were distributed to inform families and the wider public of what was proposed. Events were staged to help educate and inform people of the huge sacrifice made by the men and women of Kilkenny during the Great War. These events included remembrance walks, candlelight walks and flag days, while an unused shop was loaned to us for a window display in Irishtown in the City. Lectures were given in Langton's Set Theatre and in towns around the County, and talks and lectures with local and national historians and academics of renown were arranged. In some areas, Parish Masses were said for the Kilkenny War Dead. We also set up a website and Facebook page. Some Committee members travelled to visit the Menin Gate in Ypres/Ieper and the many cemeteries and other memorials where Kilkenny men and women are commemorated.

On our journey, we met Ambassadors, Ministers and Presidents, all believing in our cause. Also as part of our fundraising, Tom Kennedy, a legend of a man with no sight, cycled a tandem the length of the Wild Atlantic Way to raise funds for the memorial. Our re-enactment group held a flash choir to remember the Christmas Truce. For the Arts Festival, we built a replica trench and placed it outside the open space at the Courthouse in Kilkenny. Thousands visited it and saw a beautiful art piece in the background displaying an image of No Man's Land. Displayed inside the trench were an Officers' Mess and a First Aid Post along with all the paraphernalia of war. The display was in place for ten days and raised thousands for the Memorial Fund.

We were also in contact with War Memorial Committees around the country, including those in Waterford, Carlow, Clare and Galway and those behind the Mayo Peace Park. We

all supported each other. As we wanted to provide visual acknowledgement of Kilkenny's involvement in the Great War, we participated in St Patrick's Day parades and the annual Wellie Race in Castlecomer. We also donated history books relating to the War to local schools and are very grateful to the local and national newspapers for promulgating our message and covering the events that we held.

In 2017, the Committee won an award for historical promotion and education from Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce in the 'Person of the Year Awards' category. While fundraising for the Memorial, we also contributed financially towards other causes such as the Alzheimer's Association. Some of the more memorable events that took place involved the display of crosses at Kilkenny Castle (pictured). The following November, we held a display of 42 exact replica size Commonwealth War Grave headstones, each representing a parish in Kilkenny. We manufactured and displayed each cross - black ones representing those who died in the War and white ones for the veterans. The name of each person was inscribed on an individual cross, all now reunited in one replica graveyard for the display. At a ceremony on a cold November evening as the piper Finbarr McCarthy played in the darkness and moved into the light surrounding the headstones, we knew that our poignant Memorial would be built. It was a very moving moment for all of those in attendance.



Our primary objective was achieved on 15 July 2018 when the Memorial was unveiled at the Kilkenny Peace Park before a large crowd of dignitaries, supporters and well-wishers. The

Memorial contains the names of over 800 Kilkenny men and five women who lost their lives in World War 1. This Memorial has now become the focal point where Kilkenny families can remember their relatives who died in the War. We are very grateful to everyone who helped us on our journey.



As our work on the WW1 Memorial (pictured) proceeded, we were asked by the relatives of those who survived World War 1 to erect a memorial to them. With funding and other support from the Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland, we unveiled our second memorial to all those who served in WW1 on 12 August 2018 in McDonagh Station. The names of the 64 Kilkenny men and women who died in WW2 were later added to it, and this was unveiled at a separate ceremony on 7 June 2021.

A further memorial was commissioned in memory of our youngest casualty in WW1, Thomas Woodgate from Callan, Co Kilkenny, who was only 14 years and nine months old when he was killed aboard the *RMS Leinster* on 10 October 1918 while serving with the Royal Air Force. The Thomas Woodgate Memorial (pictured) was unveiled on 11 October 2020 outside Kilkenny Courthouse and is dedicated to all the young Irish boys who left our country to fight in conflicts around the world. Other Committee events, too numerous to be included in this article, were held over the past 12 years or so.



The work still goes on: we maintain the

memorials, and we conduct remembrance ceremonies throughout the year. One of our latest projects involved the planting of 26,000 pollinator-friendly crocus bulbs behind the WW1 Memorial in the Peace Park. All donations to the continuing work of the Committee are gratefully received, in order to help us remember those from Kilkenny who served and died in both World Wars. Contributions may be made to the following account:

Kilkenny Great War Memorial Group c/o Bank of Ireland, Parliament Street, Kilkenny
IBAN: IE29BOF190606422546979
BIC: BOFIE2D

The following have worked on the Kilkenny Great War Memorial Committee: Donal Croghan, Anne-Marie Gleeson, Berni Egan, John Joe Cullen, Paddy Horohan, Jim Corcoran, James Cartwright, Michael Gabbett, Michael McLoughlin, Larry Scallan and the late Ken Kinsella RIP.

For more information about the Kilkenny Great War Memorial Committee, see:

Website: <https://kilkennywarmemorials.com/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KilkennyWW1/>
X/Twitter: https://x.com/i/flow/login?redirect_after_login=%2FKilkennyWW1.

The Kilkenny Great War Memorial Committee may be contacted via the contact page on our website or at:

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Report on the Association's Trip to the Somme Battlefield - 9 to 14 September 2024 (Monday to Saturday inclusive)

Paul Appleby

28 Association members enjoyed a very interesting and busy six days during our trip to the Somme in September. Early on Monday morning, 27 of us set off by coach from Dublin via Holyhead (Stena ferry), Hull (overnight P&O ferry) and Rotterdam. Despite the impact of Brexit, our travel into and out of Britain was relatively trouble-free. However on the outward leg, the UK's Border Force selected some members for baggage checks and frisking at Hull which amused their other colleagues on the coach.

As we travelled south on the following morning, the size of Rotterdam Port was such that it took us 30 minutes of good motorway to get beyond it. At several points, the road was situated below sea level. All available land seemed to be in use for forestry, crops, animal husbandry, industry or housing. Less surprisingly, windmills and solar panels were a constant sight. By this time, our Chairman, Brian Moroney, had circulated his informative Souvenir Booklet of the Somme Tour and talked about the lack of awareness over 100 years ago of the impending World War, both in Ireland and Britain.

After a comfort stop in Bruges and a brief stop to collect an England-based member at our hotel (the Ibis Styles Kortrijk Expo in southern Belgium), we arrived in the early afternoon at Hoge Crater Cemetery near



leper/Ypres where the graves of four Dublin Fusiliers were rededicated in July. This picture shows our damp group behind the new headstones on the four Dubs' graves and other weathered headstones to Dubs who died with them. A short ceremony was held in their honour, and John O'Brien and Seán Ryan spoke about the four recently identified Fusiliers. As John noted, speaking their names is remembering them.

Following a quick lunch in Ieper, we made our way to Bethune Town Cemetery which holds the remains of over 3,000 British, French and German servicemen. The graves of 31 Dubs of the 8th and 9th Battalions who all died in 1916 are located there. Brian Moroney explained that Bethune was behind the front line for much of the War, and many badly wounded men were returned there to be treated in casualty clearing stations. Many of those in the Cemetery had probably succumbed to their wounds. The Cemetery was also unusual in containing the graves of two Brigadier-Generals, an MP for Bath, two convicted murderers and their victim.

oOo

On Wednesday morning as we headed south, George Jones spoke about the history of the King's Liverpool Regiment and its experience at the Battle of the Somme. On 1 July, the Regiment reached its objective of Montauban, one of the few British successes of that first day. However it suffered devastating casualties in the following weeks trying on five occasions to take the heavily fortified village of Guillemont. The Liverpool's 12th Battalion, together with the Irish Regiments of the 16th (Irish) Division, ultimately succeeded on 3 September. Two Victoria Crosses were later awarded to Captain Noel Chavasse and Sergeant David Jones of the Regiment for their gallantry during this period.

Our first stop was at the 'lost' village of Fay which was levelled in WW1 and is thought to be the only village not reinstated in its original location. The new village of Fay is located nearby. It was poignant walking among the foundations of homes long gone.

Next we visited the Belvedere de Frise, a high point above the Somme (see the accompanying picture). Because the marshy terrain was deemed to be very difficult for any attacker, the area was only lightly held by the German Army. However the French succeeded in taking the German positions in July 1916.



As we travelled away, George Jones spoke about the Battle of Fromelles in mid-July 1916. This Allied attack was intended to draw German troops from strategic locations on their front line. However the Germans realised that it was a decoy manoeuvre and did not bolster their defences. Yet they successfully resisted the attack at a cost of more than 7,000

Allied soldiers killed, wounded or missing, 80% of them Australian. In the mid-2000s, a mass grave was located in the area. Exhumations took place in 2009 which recovered the remains of 250 soldiers, 173 of whom were Australian. After taking DNA samples, 75 men were later identified. As the original burial site was unsuitable, in 2010 the Commonwealth War Graves Commission built its first war cemetery in 50 years close by to re-inter the bodies. The new Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery also has a museum which opened in 2014 and is worth visiting. Unfortunately, it did not prove possible to visit it on this trip.

Our next stop was La Chapelle du Souvenir outside Rancourt (see the photo opposite), a beautiful church completed in 1922 in memory of Lieutenant Jean du Bos and other French soldiers who died in the Battle of the Somme. Jean had worked on Wall Street before the War, and a fund-raising drive, led by his mother, attracted French and American donations. Ms Marie Ange guided the group around the interior which is covered in memorial tablets. The Church and its associated cemetery is now a World Heritage Site.



A few hundred metres away from La Chapelle is the Delville Wood Memorial commemorating the 7,000 members of the South African Armed Forces who died in WW1. As we travelled towards Ocean Villas in Auchonvillers for lunch, Paul Appleby spoke about the surprising Irish connections to the Memorial:

- the Irishmen who fought in South Africa's infantry included Kildare-born George Herbert Medlicott who died on 15 October 1916 during the Battle of the Somme. He is remembered in Ireland's Memorial Records at Islandbridge and on a plaque in St Brigid's Cathedral in Kildare Town;
- the Delville Wood Memorial was inaugurated in 1926 by Annie Botha, the widow of Louis Botha, the Boer general and first Prime Minister of South Africa. Annie's maiden name was Emmett, and her family believed that they were direct descendants of Robert Emmet and his family. While this claim has no known substance, it seems to have emanated from Annie's grandfather who served with the 83rd (County of Dublin) Regiment of Foot in South Africa for over ten years;

- of course Louis Botha clashed with the Dublin Fusiliers and other Irish Regiments in the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. Notably at the Battle of Colenso in December 1899, more than 50 Dubs were killed. Paul's granduncle, a Dub named Sergeant Francis Price, also died repelling a Botha-led force at Mount Itala in September 1901.

In the afternoon, we visited Sunken Lane and Hawthorn Ridge, the site of an attack by the 1st Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers, on German lines outside Beaumont-Hamel on the first day of the Somme. George Jones referred us to this YouTube video documenting what happened that day: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AYx_k7liFo. We climbed Hawthorn Ridge, the German strong point overlooking the attack area, and saw the large crater left by the explosion which temporarily destroyed the German machine-gun positions. However as the explosives detonated ten minutes early, the Germans had enough time to reinstate their machine guns before the attack started. The accompanying photograph is taken from Hawthorn Ridge and shows the Sunken Lane (the assembly area of the Lancashires - where the coach is), the German lines (in the forest on the right) and the Beaumont-Hamel British Cemetery on the intervening ground where the Lancashire soldiers and those in supporting regiments were cut down (centre). This is just one of the many fiascos that took place during the Battle of the Somme.



On the way to our Hotel, we stopped at the Pozieres Memorial where the death of a relative of Noel Farrelly is commemorated. Noel was accompanied from our coach to pay his respects.

oOo

On Thursday morning, the Standards of the Association, Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann and the Machine Gun Corps Association were paraded in front of Guillemont Church. This special ceremony remembered the 1,000 Irishmen in the 16th (Irish) Division who died while capturing the villages of Guillemont and Ginchy on 3 and 9 September 1916 respectively. Wreaths were laid at the Celtic Cross to the 16th (Irish) Division in the grounds of Guillemont Church (see the photograph on the following page). Brian Moroney, John Sheehan, Derek Fox, Seán Ryan and Mary Kennedy were among those who spoke at the event. Seán remembered his relative, Rifleman John Fullerton 1011, 14th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles, who was seriously wounded in the attack and died the following year.

We were particularly grateful to Monsieur John Frank who facilitated our visit by opening the Church for the Association. We learned on the morning of our visit that his wife, Claire, had died just six days earlier. We offered our sincere condolences to him on his loss.



We then paid a visit to the Thiepval Memorial which records the names of 72,000 British and South African servicemen with no known grave who died in the Somme region between August 1915 and March 1918. Over 400 Dublin Fusiliers are remembered on the panels of the Memorial, and names are added or removed from time to time as information is updated. For instance, the Addenda panel includes the newly inscribed name of 22 year old Private John Donnelly 20218, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who was from Ratoath, Co Meath, and was killed on 1 July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

Our lunch that day was at the Ulster Tower which remembers the men of Ulster who gave their lives in WW1. This is a replica of Helen's Tower which stands on the Dufferin and Ava Estate in Clondeboy, Co Down. The 36th (Ulster) Division had drilled and trained on the Estate within sight of Helen's Tower on the outbreak of war. Wreaths were laid at the Ulster Tower by the Association and the Disbanded Irish Regiments Association. The Tower now stands on the hill which held the Schwaben Redoubt, a strongly fortified German position during the Battle of the Somme. It is managed by the Somme Association, and one of its tour guides, 'Rocky' Mallon, outlined the initially unsuccessful efforts made to take the German positions in the area at great human cost to the 36th (Ulster) Division and other units. He brought us into Thiepval Wood where he and other volunteers had painstakingly

reopened and reinstated some of the trenches held by the British to launch their attacks (see the accompanying photograph). It was an informative and fascinating presentation.



Due to time constraints, we were restricted to two further sites that day. George Jones outlined the attack by the 8th and 9th Battalions of the Devonshire Regiment on 1 July 1916. Like so many others that day, they suffered heavily as they advanced across open ground near the village of Mametz. However their Division's attack did succeed in gaining ground, and the surviving Devonshires returned three days later to bury their dead comrades in a section of their old front line trench. The Devonshire Cemetery at Mametz contains the remains of more than 150 soldiers from the Regiment.

We also briefly visited the Fricourt German Cemetery where some 17,000 German casualties of WW1 are buried. The German flying ace, Manfred von Richthofen, known as 'The Red Baron', was buried here at one time, but his remains now lie in a family plot in Wiesbaden in Germany.

As we returned to our Hotel, Paul Appleby spoke about the German Spring Offensive from 21 March to 4 April 1918 which ruptured the Allied front line and lost the ground around the River Somme which had been so expensively taken from the German Army over the preceding 20 months. The crisis gave rise to recriminations and an Allied reorganisation, and the Allies were fortunate to hold the German advance before Amiens. In his diary for 22 March, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig had criticised the 16th (Irish) Division which was

claimed 'not to be so full of fight as the others'. This assertion was emphatically rejected by the new commander of the Division, Major General Sir Charles Patrick Amyatt Hull KGB, and was also criticised by the Official Historian of the War who indicated that the Division had remained a fighting force against the odds.

Paul indicated that within the last 12 months, our Association had been made aware of an account by a Dub's officer, Lieutenant Reginald Peacey, of the events of 27 March. That day, he participated in counter-attacks led by officers of the Dublin and Munster Fusiliers in an effort to check the German advance south of the Somme. However he was captured close to Morcourt and was imprisoned in Germany for the rest of the War. Lieutenant Peacey's account of that day's events confirms the accounts in the relevant War Diaries that both Regiments were very active in opposing the German offensive.

oOo

Having checked out of our Hotel on Friday morning, we visited Dadizeele New British Cemetery which contains close to 900 soldiers. All 11 Dubs there died in October 1918, the month before the Armistice. Our purpose in visiting was to pay our respects at the grave of Sergeant Larry Connell MM, 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who lay in another recently rededicated grave. John Sheehan spoke about the Dublin-born man and his family at his grave. The accompanying picture shows our group at the Cemetery.



On our way to Rotterdam Port, we stopped for breaks in Ieper and Bruges, where the group had lunch and did some sightseeing and shopping. The return P&O sailing to Hull that evening was every bit as good as the outward leg with excellent food and service. Our drive across Britain to Holyhead on Saturday was uneventful, and we returned to Dublin Port in good heart that evening after a very enjoyable trip.

oOo

Looking out on a green and pastoral landscape around the Somme every day, it was often difficult for the group to envisage the reality of war and the conditions faced daily by the troops as described in books, documents and other media. While much of the terrain is intensively farmed now, it is also clear that the biodiversity crisis is encouraging local authorities to allow some areas to go back to nature. Certainly low impact tourism (walking, cycling, etc) is being actively encouraged at present in the areas of wartime interest.

While some of us may have had apprehensions beforehand about the overland travel arrangements, I have to say that the journey worked very well. Although it naturally took time, this feature allowed the group to gel well together. Everyone contributed to the trip whether it was by parading standards, laying wreaths, leading prayers, giving talks, singing and a whole host of other small kindnesses to the well-being of the group. Particular thanks must be given to Brian and Therese Moroney for their organisation of the superb trip in conjunction with DM Tours, our travel partner. Our driver, David Thompson from Northern Ireland, was excellent throughout. His driving skill, knowledge of the Somme area (which he readily shared with us) and his good humour contributed immensely to the trip's success.

We're looking forward to next year's overseas trip already!

Nick Broughall RIP

Tom Burke MBE

Nicholas Broughall, or Nick, as most of the folks in the RDFA knew him, was a gentleman and indeed a gentle man who sadly died on 30 July 2024. I first met Nick and his dear wife Norah, who sadly died on 10 July 1999, at one of the first set of lectures the RDFA presented in the Dublin Civic Museum, South William Street, in 1996. Norah had a particular reason to attend the lecture, as her uncle was none other than Bugler John F Dunne of the Dublin Fusiliers. When only 14, he insisted on accompanying the Dublins' column in the advance on Colenso during the Anglo-Boer War. He was badly injured in two places during the attempt to force the passage of the River Tugela. He was invalided home to England, where he was hailed a hero and presented to Queen Victoria who gave him a bugle to replace the one that he lost in battle. The whereabouts of the famous bugle is not known.



Nick had a keen interest in military history, particularly in the history of the Irish Regiments of the British Army who served in WW1. As a young couple with their children, Nick and Norah paid many a visit to the battlefields and cemeteries along the Western Front long before it was fashionable to do so.

When the RDFA was established, Nick volunteered to become a member of the Committee. He passionately believed in the ideals of the RDFA, one of which was and is to build bridges of reconciliation between the Nationalist and Unionist communities who share this island. When German, Turkish or Bulgarian bullets flew, they never distinguished between Roman Catholic or Protestant, Unionist or Nationalist soldiers; death was non-sectarian. It was through the commemoration of this shared tragedy that the RDFA built and continues to build what Mary McAleese termed 'bridges of reconciliation.'

Nick was building these bridges of reconciliation long before he got involved with the RDFA. As a senior Printers' Union representative, he travelled to union meetings in Belfast and throughout Northern Ireland before and during the troubled years working for the rights of

printing workers, particularly in the newspaper industry. Their religion or political persuasion was irrelevant to Nick.

With many years working as a trade unionist and negotiator, his skills of compromise and reconciliation were put to good use after he retired when he was recommended to sit on various labour tribunals and courts throughout Ireland. He was a wise man, and his wisdom was constantly tapped by our RDFA Committee to guide us through some delicate topics that confronted us on political history and commemoration of WW1, which in the late 1990s, was a politically sensitive subject. He kept the minutes of our Committee meetings in the early years, all hand written. He was a regular member of the RDFA touring groups to the Western Front, Gallipoli and the Combined Irish Regiments events at the Cenotaph in London, even in his wheelchair accompanied by his son Eddie. He had been to Gallipoli long before many of us had. He was a jovial communicator; he and Joe Gallagher, another staunch member of the RDFA who passed away recently, would talk for hours on our tours on every subject under the sun.

Nick's illness slowed him down, but it didn't stop him. For several years, we held Committee meetings in Nick's house in Perrystown. It was at that last meeting in Nick's house in 2018 that I decided to step down as Chairman of the RDFA. Seán Connolly too decided to step down as Secretary. Thankfully good men like Brian Moroney, Philip Lecane and Seamus Greene agreed to carry on the work of the RDFA.

I would like to thank you Nick for the kindness and wisdom you shared with us during your time as a member of the RDFA Committee. I would like congratulate you for the unseen contribution you made over many years to industrial and political reconciliation in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Nick died peacefully at his home with his family; he was 94 years of age. His funeral was held in St Agnes's Church, Crumlin Village, on Friday, 2 August 2024, followed by burial in Bohernabreena Cemetery, Co Dublin. Nick's coffin was draped in the RDFA Standard, something he and his family wished for. The Chairman of the RDFA, Mr Brian Moroney, along with past and present members of the Committee, attended Nick's funeral. On behalf of the members and friends of the RDFA, I would like to offer our condolences to Nick's family, Edward, Yvonne and Susan, and his grandchildren, Keith, Kerrie, Jessica, Mark and Laura May.

Spectamur Agendo.

Rest in peace, Comrade.

oOo

The following are some memories that Nick's son, Eddie, had of his dear father:

“Two childhood memories came back to me when Da died; one was of a very early morning sitting with Da eating toast and marmalade. He had come home from work when his night shift ended; I was very young at that time. The other memory being the one I spoke about at his funeral. It was Da dressing me for my Communion and tying my tie, and for the rest of my life when I had to wear one, gently giving out to me that I tied it wrong and adjusting it, even on the morning of my wedding.

As a young man, Dad was bitten by the travel bug, and we travelled extensively on the Continent through Belgium, France, Holland and Germany, mainly based in De Haan, Belgium. It started for Da in 1966 when himself and his brother-in-law went to France on a motorbike and visited my Great-Uncle’s grave, Albert Dunne, who was killed in WW1 and buried in Arras. He always had an interest in military history and that, as you folks in the RDFA know, continued for many years.

My last big holiday with Dad was when we travelled to Australia in 2007 – my first time in Oz but Dad's third or fourth – visiting Perth, Brisbane, and Sydney, meeting relatives, some of whom I had never met before. On our return journey, we stopped in Singapore for a couple of days, and of course I was brought to see the guns pointing the wrong way. It was a great trip, and we had some fun and laughs along the way. There are so many good memories. To myself and my two sisters, he was just Da; always there when you needed him and good company to be around – a good man.”

Dubs' News, November/December 2024

Remembrance and Other Notable Events in November

The month of November is always a busy time for the Association as the anniversary of the Armistice on 11 November 1918 is remembered. This year we were involved in 12 events which are listed in the Report on Association Activities in 2024 (see later article). We discuss just four of them in the following paragraphs.

A service rededicating the grave of Private Joseph Letty, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin 7, was held on 7 November. Private Letty (1864-1943) and his wife Mary Jane (1887-1946) had been originally buried there in an unmarked grave. The rededication was initiated by the Royal British Legion, Republic of Ireland Branch, after the grave's location was identified. While Private Letty had a number of earlier service periods in the British Army, he re-enlisted in the 8th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, on 28 September 1914 (no 14868), and he first entered the War in France on 19 December 1915. From 1 October 1917, he served in the Labour Corps (no 376881) until his discharge on 9 November 1918. He later qualified for the 1914-15 Star, British War and Victory Medals. As indicated by the accompanying picture, the Association was well represented at the rededication ceremony.



On the afternoon of 10 November, the Annual Remembrance Service for those killed in war was held in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. Several hundred people, led by President Michael D Higgins and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Emma Blain, were in attendance at the Service which was marked by readings of scripture, beautiful choral singing and a thought-provoking sermon by Reverend Canon David Oxley dealing with the conduct of war. The Association's Standard (pictured) was one of ten paraded during the uplifting ceremony.



In association with the National Museum, the Association held another Open Day in Collins Barracks, Dublin, on 16 November. About 60 people attended, and each received a copy of our new brochure on the Association and its work. Thomas Murphy gave an interesting talk on the history of Collins Barracks and, as he admitted, its somewhat limited links with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. However a notable instance was the presence of the 10th (Commercial) Battalion in the Barracks during the 1916 Rising, when they were deployed against the Irish Volunteers holding the Mendicity Institution on the opposite side of the River Liffey.



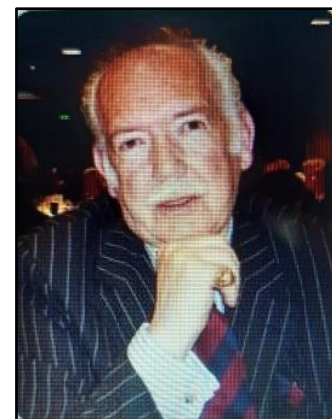
The Open Day also featured a wonderful exhibition of Dubs' memorabilia, curated by David Buckley, which delighted both young and old attendees. One of the striking exhibits is pictured opposite. The mannequin is dressed in a Dublin County Militia officer's home service helmet, a dress tunic for the other ranks and a Dublin County Militia swagger stick.

On 23 November at Pearse Street Library, Dublin 2, a busy Thomas Murphy gave an informative talk to the Western Front Association on the history of Grangegorman Military Cemetery and the Dubs who are buried there. About 40 people attended including more than ten RDFA members. Pictured opposite is Thomas (left) with Ian Chambers, Chairman, Western Front Association – Dublin Branch. This edition of *The Blue Cap* contains an article by Thomas on his talk that day.



Death of Pat McGrail Senior

Our Association has lost a number of members and former members this year. The most recent was Pat McGrail Senior (pictured) who died on 17 November last. Our sincere condolences go to his children, Debbie, Patrick and Gregory, and his extended family. His death notice may be viewed here: <https://rip.ie/death-notice/patrick-paddy-mcgrail-dublin-cabra-574996>.



Ginchy Cross Refurbishment Project

As many members will be aware, the iconic Ginchy Cross is housed in the north-east bookroom within the Irish National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge, Dublin 8. This Cross remembers over 1,000 Irish soldiers from the 16th (Irish) Division who lost their lives in September 1916 capturing the villages of Ginchy and Guillemont in northern France. It is made of wood and has deteriorated over time.

The Irish National War Memorial Trust (INWMT) which cares for the Cross has recently launched a fund-raising drive to refurbish it in a manner recommended in a specialist report. The cost is estimated to be about €22,000. Having considered a recent request from the Trust, your Association made a €500 donation to this worthwhile project in November.

Public donations to the project are also being sought. Cheques payable to 'The Irish National War Memorial Trust' should be sent to Captain (Retd) Gale Scanlan, INWMT Secretary/Treasurer, c/o An Radharc, Springhill, Killeslin, Carlow R93PX14. Alternatively, donations by electronic funds transfer may be made to the following bank account:

- Name: The Irish National War Memorial Trust
- IBAN: IE45BOFI90001716305765
- BIC: BOFIE2D

The reference accompanying any electronic funds transfer should include your surname and the letters 'GCP' which denote the Ginchy Cross Project. After making the transfer, an email should be sent to gale.scanlan@imma.ie confirming the donation amount, and this email should also be copied to the Trust's Chairman, Brigadier-General Paul Pakenham (Retd) at ppakenham@gmail.com.

Annual General Meeting

About 40 members attended the Association's Annual General Meeting in the Freemasons' Hall, 17 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2, on 6 December 2024. The Meeting noted that some members who could not attend had forwarded postal votes in favour of the draft resolutions before the Meeting. Having accepted the draft agenda, the Meeting proceeded to adopt the Secretary's Annual Report for 2024 and the Treasurer's Financial Statement for the period ending 30 September 2024.

Suzanne O'Neill, Membership Secretary, reported that membership of the Association had increased from 117 to 133 members in 2024, prompted by our significant efforts to contact lapsed members and enlist new members. The public profile and activity of the Association had undoubtedly contributed to this increase.

In his address to the Meeting, Chairman Brian Moroney praised the energy and commitment of the Association's trustees and named other members who had actively supported the Association's work. He highlighted in particular the organisation of September's successful trip to the Somme, the parading of the Association's Standard at

numerous remembrance events at home and abroad, the production of our journal (*The Blue Cap*) and regular newsletters (*The Old Tough*) and the communications with members and the general public via our website, Gmail account, Facebook and X (Twitter) pages. He was also pleased that the Association continued to satisfy our obligations as a registered charity under the Charities Governance Code.

The Meeting proceeded to unanimously re-elect the current trustees for 2025 with Brian Moroney elected as Chairman, George Jones as Treasurer and Thomas Murphy as Secretary.

The Meeting also set €20 as the membership fee for 2024 for all Association members.

The Chairman's Statement to the AGM and the Secretary's Report on Association Activities in 2024 are reproduced later in this *Blue Cap*.

Annual Dinner

A lively and enjoyable Annual Dinner followed the AGM. Brian Moroney entertained the gathering in his traditional role of Master of Ceremonies. Our usual fund-raising raffle was well supported, and members availed of the opportunity to purchase merchandise, greeting cards and copies of our publications. The interesting documentary on the Mount Jerome Remembrance Project was also shown and was well received by the members and their guests.

Maltese Ambassador's Reception

Members will be aware of the interest of His Excellency Mr Giovanni Buttigieg, the Maltese Ambassador to Ireland, in the historical links between Malta, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and other Irish Regiments. His desire to maintain strong bonds of friendship with the Association and its counterparts was confirmed by his invitation to the Association to attend a Reception in Dublin City Centre on 9 December last. Pictured opposite at the Reception are from left Paul Stephenson, Royal British Legion – Republic of Ireland Branch, Jim Ahern of the Irish United Nations Veterans Association and Brian Moroney and Seán Ryan of our Association.



CWGC Appeals for Relatives, November and December 2024

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) recently made two further appeals for relatives of named WW1 soldiers to contact the Commission. These appeals were made on 13 November and 19 December 2024.

Although there is no Dublin Fusilier in its December statement, the CWGC's November appeal includes the name of Private Michael Donovan 21751, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who

died on 1 April 1918. Based on recent research, the Commission believes that Private Donovan is buried in Glasgow (St Kentigern's) Roman Catholic Cemetery (grave IX.638). The CWGC is in the process of producing a headstone to mark his grave and has appealed to Private Donovan's relatives to contact the Commission.

The limited available information indicates that Michael Donovan was born in 1897, was a resident of Portsmouth prior to his War service and served in the 8th and/or 9th Battalion of the Dublin Fusiliers. He was apparently wounded on 26 November 1916 and then discharged from service on 21 February 1917 because of those wounds. He was only 21 when he died the following year. Private Donovan's War service qualified for the award of the British War and Victory Medals and a Silver War Badge (no 140175) in consequence of his wounds.

The Association would encourage any member of Private Donovan's extended family to contact the Commission's Enquiries Team via its website at <https://www.cwgc.org/contact-us/>.

Review of

A Bad Day I Fear: The Irish Divisions at the Battle of Langemarck, 16 August 1917

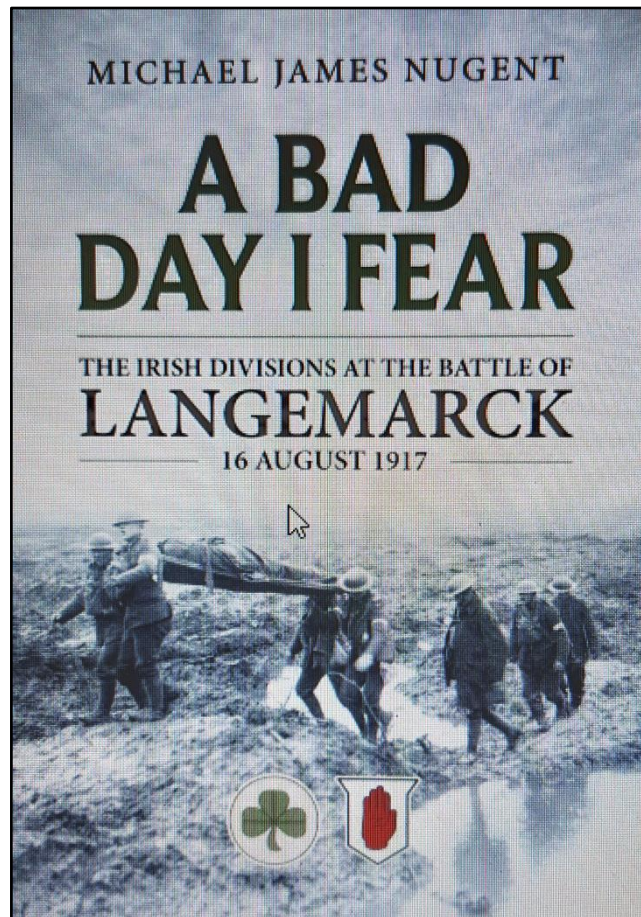
Paul Appleby

The author, Michael James Nugent from Coleraine, is a former public servant with a passion for the Great War. He has published three books on World War 1 to date:

- *It was an Awful Sunday: the 2nd Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers at the Battle of Festubert, 15-17 May 1915* (2015);
- *A Long Week in March: the 36th (Ulster) Division in the German Spring Offensive, March 1918* (2019), and most recently
- *A Bad Day I Fear: The Irish Divisions at the Battle of Langemarck, 16 August 1917* (2023).

In his latest book, Nugent seeks to outline the factors which caused the spectacular joint success of the 16th (Irish) and 36th (Ulster) Divisions at the Battle of Messines on 7 June 1917 to be dissipated just ten weeks later in their disastrous attack at Langemarck on 16 August. The book is a sobering read.

So how did this disaster occur? Nugent identifies a broad sweep of issues at all levels of the chain of command. The delay in exploiting the success at Messines gave the German Army time to construct elaborate defences against the imminently expected next attack. A newly appointed German defensive expert, Oberst [Colonel] Fritz von Lossberg, decided that the German front line was to be protected by barbed wire and lightly held by teams of soldiers in foxholes. Behind them would be placed 'pillboxes' built of reinforced concrete, impregnable to all but the heaviest British artillery shells. These machine gun strongpoints would mutually support one another in the event of an attack. Behind them the main counterattack divisions would be held in lines of strongly reinforced bunkers. The thinking was that once the British attackers had been thinned out and weakened by the



strongpoints, the counterattack would overwhelm the surviving British troops and push them back to their start point or beyond.

Nugent indicates that this is what exactly happened at Langemarck. The battle was effectively over on 16 August, although it did not officially end until two days later. The fatalities for the 16th (Irish) and 36th (Ulster) Divisions alone for the period 16 to 18 August were remarkably similar – 624 and 622 respectively. The evidence, he indicates, is *“that the officers and men of each of the infantry battalions showed outstanding bravery against overwhelming odds”* (page 207).

Haig’s decision to replace the steady General Sir Hubert Plumer (who had secured the success at Messines) with General Sir Hubert Gough at the head of his Fifth Army is widely regarded as a grave error. The latter was known to be impetuous, and yet Haig failed to keep him under control. Haig specifically instructed on 31 July that the next advance would only take place after adequate bombardment and after dominating the hostile artillery on the Gheluvelt Plateau. Not only was the latter condition not met, but the shellfire did not destroy the intervening German pillboxes.

The fighting in the weeks prior to Langemarck had also seen the 16th and 36th Divisions deployed in or close to the front line when they should have been preparing for the planned attack. In the period from 31 July to 15 August, their fatalities amounted to 445 and 414 respectively. Therefore these Divisions were significantly under strength by the time the Battle of Langemarck commenced. By way of example, the 9th Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers went into battle with only 17 officers and 353 other ranks. And Langemarck inflicted a further toll of casualties on the 9th Battalion comprising 15 officers and 229 other ranks, a casualty rate of 66%. Heavy losses were also incurred by the 2nd and 8th Battalions of the Dubs.

The wet weather which started on 31 July also fatally undermined the prospects of success. It soon turned the battlefield into a swamp. This meant that the tanks which were part of the battle plan could not be used. Indeed the ground was so soft that the British troops could not keep up with the creeping artillery barrage and, it was said, could not even have done so, had they faced no opposition on 16 August.

All of these factors (the state of German defences, poor planning and resource management, weakened attacking battalions, the weather and soft ground) should have caused a postponement of the attack. Nugent’s overall conclusion is devastating:

“Thursday 16 August 1917 was a dark day for Ireland. The 16th (Irish) and 36th (Ulster Divisions)were neglectfully thrust into an attack which had no prospect of success from the outset. They were disadvantaged by weak leadership at Corps level and by an uncaring and incompetent Fifth Army, the staff of which neither knew nor cared of the conditions that the men were sent to fight in.” (page 208).

There is more in this book of general interest. We are introduced to many of those who died. For instance, Nugent recounts the death of Father Willie Doyle SJ MC who went forward to offer assistance to 2nd Lieutenants Arthur Green (from Belfast) and Charles Marlow (from Oldcastle, Co Meath), both of the 8th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, after they were wounded. As he was doing so, all three were killed by shellfire. Apparently, Father Doyle's death was mourned equally by the men of the 16th and 36th Divisions. According to Nugent:

"[He] was a revered figure amongst Irish troops, renowned for ignoring danger to carry spiritual assistance to those in need. Respect for him transcended religion and political views and he was as respected by the men of the Ulster Division as he was by the men of his own Division..." (page 105).

This fine book fills a timely gap on an episode of the Great War which has not received the same attention as many others. It is backed by extensive research including from German Regimental Histories. Leaving aside some minor editing mishaps (e.g., the appendix numbers in the text and appendices differ), the book is worthy of a place on the bookshelf of everyone interested in the history of the Irish Regiments in World War 1. It is published by Helion & Company Ltd and is priced at £25. See www.helion.co.uk. No doubt copies can also be ordered through any reputable Irish bookshop.

Merchandise and Publications

Merchandise

The attractive merchandise which is available to Association members principally comprises a tie, a scarf, a blazer badge and a metal pin as shown in the following photograph.



The current merchandise price list by item number is as follows:

1A. Member's bundle – option A (tie or scarf, blazer badge and metal pin)	€34
1B. Member's bundle – option B (tie and scarf, blazer badge and metal pin)	€44
2. Tie	€24
3. Scarf	€19
4. Blazer badge	€16
5. Metal pin	€10

The above prices include standard postage. If registered post is required, add €7 to the listed price. Destinations outside the island of Ireland may have an additional postal charge.

All enquiries for purchase of RDFA merchandise should be addressed to the Membership Secretary by email: rdfamembershipsecretary@gmail.com or by post to Suzanne O'Neill, RDFA Membership Secretary, c/o The Old Pound, Ballybrittas, Co Laois R32 E1C5.

Please clearly state the destination address in your enquiry. Payment for merchandise must be received by the RDFA via cash, cheque or bank transfer before merchandise is dispatched. For electronic bank transfers, the RDFA account details are as follows:

IBAN: IE57 BOFI 9013 5180 5058 76
BIC: BOFIE2D

Publications

The following books, journals and other materials are in stock and are available for purchase by both members and the general public:

- Come on the Dubs! – A Brief History of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers (2022) (52 pages) €10
- The 2nd Battalion RDF and the Tragedy of Mouse Trap Farm, April/May 1915 (2005) €10
- *The Blue Cap* (the Association's annual journal), 2024 Edition (128 pages) €15
- *The Blue Cap*, 2023 Edition (98 pages) €13
- *The Blue Cap*, 2022 Edition (75 pages) €12
- *The Blue Cap*, 2021 Edition (99 pages) €11
- *The Blue Cap*, 2020 Edition (64 pages) €10
- *The Blue Cap*, 2017 Edition (84 pages) €8
- *The Blue Cap*, 2015 Edition (36 pages) €6
- Greeting Cards (A5 size, pack of 12 with envelopes) €12

The listed prices above include the cost of standard postage. If registered post is required, add €7 to the listed price. Destinations outside the island of Ireland may have an additional postal charge.

Payment may be made for one or more of these items to the Association's bank account (details above). Please insert 'Book' and your surname (e.g., Book Murphy) as the reference when making the payment.

All requests for copies of these publications should be sent to rdfa1918@gmail.com indicating your name, postal address and the date of payment. Once receipt of your payment has been confirmed, we will arrange to dispatch your order to you, and we will notify you on email when this has been done.

Any other publication query should also be sent to rdfa1918@gmail.com.

All editions of *The Blue Cap* and some other materials published by the Association are available on our website, www.greatwar.ie, under the Periodicals and Essays tab.

Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association Annual Quiz

Brian Moroney

- 1) Name the vessel on which Lord Kitchener was travelling when it was sunk in 1916 resulting in his being drowned.
- 2) What type of ship was it?
 - a) a destroyer;
 - b) an armoured cruiser, or
 - c) a pocket battleship.
- 3) If you were handed 'maconochie' in the Great War, would you:
 - a) heat it and eat it;
 - b) wear it in case of gas attack, or
 - c) use it to prevent trench foot?
- 4) What were puttees made from?
 - a) a twill type of wool;
 - b) thin strips of softened leather, or
 - c) hemp.
- 5) Which rank is the higher amongst the three services of Navy, Army and Air Force?
 - a) Lieutenant Commander;
 - b) Lieutenant Colonel, or
 - c) Group Captain?
- 6) On which battlefield would you find Cape Helles?
- 7) Who commanded the German Fleet at the Battle of Jutland?
- 8) The Indian Army played its role on the Western Front, but did an Indian Elephant help deliver items around Sheffield during the war??
- 9) Finish this quote taken from a recruiting poster: 'It is far better to face the bullets.....'
- 10) An easy one to finish: where in Ireland was the Regimental HQ of The Royal Dublin Fusiliers?

Check how many you answered correctly. The answers are on the last page of *The Blue Cap*.

Chairman's Statement to the RDFA AGM, 6 December 2024

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to report that the year 2024 has been another outstanding year for the Association.

Our Standard Bearers' Team of John O'Brien, Seán Ryan, Seamus Greene, David Buckley and in the UK, Seán Chambers, were front and centre in representing the Association. We have paraded our Standard at numerous events, both abroad and at home – in London, on the Somme and at many other public and private ceremonies throughout Ireland.

Our Editorial Team of Paul Appleby, David Buckley, Philip Lecane, Thomas Murphy and John Sheehan maintained our two publications to exceptionally high standards. Our annual journal, *The Blue Cap*, and our regular newsletter, *The Old Tough*, were full of interesting articles and material on the 'Dubs' and on the Association. They ensure that all our work is recorded and preserved and provide a wonderful flow of information to you, our members.

For those on Facebook, John O'Brien and Jon Toohey have kept us in the picture too with up-to-the-minute information on Association activities, and this has been successful in encouraging new members to join us in the Association.

Our Secretary, Thomas Murphy, kept us all on track throughout the year with notifications, records of meetings, reminders of obligations, emails and being essentially a one-man office for the Association – work which is greatly appreciated.

Sally Keogh, our Treasurer for the last three years or so, has always kept our accounts accurate to the penny despite suffering the loss of her beloved husband, Tom, during the past year. Although Sally has now stepped down from the position of Treasurer, she hopes to remain an active member of the Committee. I want to take this opportunity to thank her on your behalf for her demanding work in recent years.

During that time, she has worked very closely with our Membership Team, Suzanne O'Neill and George Jones, and we were particularly pleased when George agreed to take on the Treasurer role at the start of our new financial year on an interim basis pending the decision of this AGM. The efforts of Suzanne and George have seen our membership grow again this year, and we now number 133 members. This is a tribute to the work being done by them.

Our Exhibits officer, David Buckley, has worked with Sally and George to provide members, old and new, with our well-regarded range of 'Dubs' memorabilia - items now much sought after! And Paul Taylor has provided support when required particularly in arranging the printing of *The Old Tough*.

As the Association is a registered charity, we must abide by the provisions of the Charities Acts and the requirements of the Charities Regulator. May I applaud in this context the work of Paul Appleby, ably assisted by Seamus Greene and Sally Keogh, for keeping us firmly in step with all our obligations. No easy task I can assure you.

As for our travels, talks and exhibitions, well suffice to say that this year the Association has probably had its busiest year ever. We visited the Army Museum at the Curragh (where we were guided on a wonderful tour by Commandant Des Healy), spent three fun and fact-filled days on a city tour of Liverpool, took a day trip to Cork visiting Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral and Collins Barracks (where we were guided by Gerry White, a well-known historian) and participated in the Dublin Festival of History courtesy of John Sheehan. Another Committee member, Philip Lecane, also gave a lecture during the Festival. And John O'Brien and Seán Ryan addressed a group of UN Veterans on the history of the Dubs!! For the trips to Kildare and Cork, David Buckley earned special kudos for securing and driving a minibus on both days.

Perhaps the highlight in a year of highlights was the Association's trip to the Somme Battlefields in September. We brought 28 persons out, and fortunately suffered no casualties, returning home with the same 28 persons plus a ton of fabulous memories. Thanks are due in particular to my colleagues, John Sheehan, John O'Brien, Seán Ryan, Paul Appleby, Seamus Greene and George Jones for their assistance and contributions to the success of the trip.

In association with the National Museum of Ireland, we held two Open Days in the Museum at Collins Barracks, Dublin, during the year. In March, John O'Brien, supported by Seán Ryan, gave a wonderful talk on Mount Jerome Cemetery and its relationship with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. This featured a heartfelt and moving film, while John's daughter, Ellen, spoke about her Dad's work and his commitment to this research project.

The success of this event led the Museum to invite us to hold a second Open Day last month. This time, Thomas Murphy gave an excellent talk on the association of the Dubs with Collins Barracks itself. On both Days, David Buckley curated a fascinating exhibition of Dubs' artefacts which enthralled all visitors to the Museum, while members like Thomas Murphy offered advice on tracing people's military ancestors. All of this public exposure has helped raise the profile of the Association and secure its immediate future.

In conclusion Ladies and Gentlemen, it has been my absolute pleasure to have been Chairman of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association for 2024. It has been another wonderful year for the Association, principally due to the efforts of your Committee.

I hope that it will be possible for this Meeting later on to give the members of your Committee another term in 2025. Spectamus Agendo.

Brian Moroney, Chairman

Secretary's Annual Report for the RDFA's 2024 AGM

Introduction

The Association held its 2023 AGM on Friday, 8 December, in the Freemason's Hall, Molesworth Street, Dublin, at 7 pm.

For much of 2024, the Committee comprised 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. When Ms Sally Keogh resigned as Treasurer on 30 September, the Committee appointed George Jones on an interim basis as Treasurer with effect from the start of the new financial year on 1 October. Sally remained an active Committee member for the rest of 2024.

This year, the Committee met 11 times, either in person or online. Its work was assisted by several sub-committees dealing with events, finance, governance, membership, merchandise, publications and social media. Many of these sub-committees met regularly to discuss their business.

Remembrance and Other Notable Events

The Association was represented at about 40 events in 2024 which included those listed below. Perhaps the most significant was our attendance at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission ceremonies in Belgium in July which rededicated six Dublin Fusilier graves, the occupants of which had recently been identified. An asterisk (*) beside a date below signifies that the RDFA Standard was present that day:

- 9 March*: RDFA Open Day in association with the National Museum at Collins Barracks, Dublin, which was attended by about 200 visitors. The Day featured a talk by Tom Burke MBE on the challenges faced by returning soldiers after WW1, a documentary premiere from John O'Brien and Seán Ryan on the former Dublin Fusiliers interred in Mount Jerome Cemetery, a display of regimental artefacts and a public advice desk on tracing WW1 soldiers' careers;
- 21 April*: ANZAC Forces Remembrance Event, Kilkenny City Peace Park;
- 25 April*, dawn: ANZAC Forces Remembrance Event, Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin;
- 25 April*, evening: Service of Remembrance, Saint Ann's Church, Dawson Street, Dublin;
- 8 May: meeting with the Maltese Ambassador about the Irish Regiments and their disbandment;
- 10 May: day trip to Kildare which included visits to The Curragh Military Museum and locations in Naas of relevance to the Dublin Fusiliers' former presence in the town;
- 9 June: D-Day Commemorative Service, McDonagh Railway Station, Kilkenny;

- 16 June*: Combined Irish Regiments' Annual Parade, Whitehall, London;
- 30 June*: Last Post Ceremony, Menin Gate, Ypres/Ieper, Belgium;
- 1 July*: Somme Commemoration, Ginchy Cross, Guillemont, France;
- 2 July*: Last Post Ceremony, Menin Gate, Ypres/Ieper, Belgium;
- 2-5 July: trip to Liverpool which included visits to the Museum of Liverpool, the Maritime Museum, the Western Approaches Museum, the Anglican Cathedral and the 'Bombed Out Church';
- 10 and 11 July*: ceremonies rededicating the newly identified resting places of six Dublin Fusiliers in three cemeteries (Dadizeele, Stasegem and Hooge) in Belgium;
- 12 July*: Last Post Ceremony, Menin Gate, Ypres/Ieper, Belgium;
- 12 July: meeting with the Turkish Ambassador about enhancing Irish/Turkish historical research;
- 13 July*: Somme Commemoration, War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge, Dublin;
- 14 July: National Day of Commemoration, Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, Dublin;
- 28 July: Somme Commemoration, Clare Peace Park, Ennis, Co Clare;
- 16 August: day trip to Cork which included visits to Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral and Collins Barracks;
- 9-14 September*: trip to the Somme Battlefields including Hoge Crater Cemetery, Bethune, Beaumont Hamel, Rancourt, the 'lost' village of Fay, the picturesque Belvedere de Frise, the Ulster Tower, Thiepval Wood and the Thiepval Memorial;
- 15 September: HARP Society Remembrance Service, Barberstown Castle, Co Kildare, for the 179 ex-Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) soldiers who died in WW1;
- 30 September: Dublin Festival of History talk by John F Sheehan in Pearse Street Library on the RIC's history;
- 3 October: Dublin Festival of History talk by Philip Lecane in Kevin Street Library on Cornelius Ryan, the Dublin-born author of *The Longest Day* and *A Bridge Too Far*;
- 4 October: talk by Seán Ryan and John O'Brien to UN Veterans in the Fisherman's Club, Bray, Co Wicklow, on the Dublin Fusiliers and Machine Gun Corps in WW1;
- 5 October: the Annual Dinner of the Irish Guards, Wynn's Hotel, Dublin;
- 10 October*: *RMS Leinster* Commemoration followed by a talk by Philip Lecane at the Lexicon Library, Dún Laoghaire, Co Dublin;
- 3 November: presentation by Brian Moroney of a commemorative print to The Curragh Military Museum on behalf of the Association of Disbanded Irish Regiments;
- 7 November*: Service rededicating the grave of Private Joseph Letty, RDF, Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin;
- 7 November: wreath laid by Seán Chambers on behalf of the RDFA at the Combined Irish Regiments' Service of Remembrance, Westminster Cathedral, London;
- 9 November: WW1 Remembrance Service, Oldtown, Co Dublin;
- 10 November: WW1 Remembrance Ceremony, Killester Garden Village, Dublin;
- 10 November*: Remembrance Service, Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin;
- 13 November*: WW1 Remembrance Ceremony, Freemasons' Hall, Dublin;

- 15 November*: RDFA Service of Remembrance, City Quay Church, Dublin;
- 16 November*: RDFA Open Day in association with the National Museum at Collins Barracks, Dublin, which was attended by about 60 visitors. The Day included a talk by Thomas Murphy on the links between the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Barracks as well as a display of regimental artefacts and a public advice desk on tracing WW1 soldiers' military service;
- 17 November: German Remembrance Day Event, Glencree, Co Wicklow;
- 23 November: Western Front Association talk by Thomas Murphy in Pearse Street Library, Dublin, on the Dubs interred in Grangegorman Military Cemetery;
- 30 November: talk by Stephanie Jones and Liam Kenny on the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902 (which involved the Royal Dublin Fusiliers), Saint David's Church, Naas, Co Kildare.

We were delighted to be accompanied at a number of the above events by our colleagues from the Association of Disbanded Irish Regiments.

Publications and Printed Materials

The Editorial Committee, comprising Paul Appleby, David Buckley, Philip Lecane, Thomas Murphy and John F Sheehan, prepares our annual journal (*The Blue Cap*), our newsletters (*The Old Tough*) and other Association publications and printed material, and it updates our website at www.greatwar.ie. The Committee met over ten times in 2024, but these meetings were merely the culmination of extensive research and writing by individual Committee members on the topics and articles which members receive in the publications.

The work of the Editorial Committee in 2024 included the following:

- the finalisation and issue in January last of the 2023 edition of *The Blue Cap*;
- the preparation and printing of a new eight page booklet on the Association in time for our Open Day in March, where it was distributed to our visitors;
- the preparation and issue in April of the Spring edition of *The Old Tough*;
- the preparation and issue in August of the Summer edition of *The Old Tough*;
- the finalisation (in conjunction with Brian Moroney) of the Somme Tour Souvenir Booklet and arranging its printing in August;
- the preparation in August of presentation hard back copies of our recent book, *'Come on the Dubs!' - A Brief History of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers*;
- the preparation and issue in October of the Autumn edition of *The Old Tough*, and
- the design and printing in November of new greeting cards for the Association which are now available for sale to members.

As the year closes, work continues on the 2024 edition of *The Blue Cap* which, it is hoped, will be ready early in 2025.

The Editorial Committee thanks those members who have contributed articles and research during the year, as these have been and are being used in our publications. We continue to encourage members to undertake research, prepare their family stories and present them to us for possible publication. Please contact rdfa1918@gmail.com with your article proposals.

The Committee also wishes to acknowledge the assistance of their colleague, Paul Taylor, in organising the printing of *The Old Tough*.

Website

Our website at www.greatwar.ie contains a host of material relating to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and World War 1 in particular. 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 if you experience any such problems.

Social Media

Our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/RoyalDublinFusiliersAssociation/>, and X/Twitter address, @RoyalDubsFus, have been popular with our members and the general public alike during the year. Our Social Media Committee, comprising John O'Brien and Jon Toohey, closely monitors the content of the messages included on the sites.

Membership

We started 2024 with 117 members, and this has risen to 133 currently, largely as a result of the increasing profile of the Association and the sterling work of Suzanne O'Neill, Membership Secretary, and George Jones. They maintain an up-to-date record of members' postal addresses, email addresses and contact phone numbers, so that we can keep in touch with our members.

We are also aware that seven of our members and former members (Nick Broughall, Ernie Crossen, William Good, Michael Hickey, Ken Kinsella, Pat McGrail (Senior) and Vincent Murtagh) passed away this year. Many had been active supporters of the Association in its early years. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha.

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. Paul Appleby is assisted by Seamus Greene and Sally Keogh in this area.

In reviewing the Code's provisions in early 2024, the Association's trustees updated the Schedule of Trustee Roles and Duties and agreed an Activity Plan for 2024/2025. 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 and approved.

In submitting the Association's annual return for 2024 to the Charities Regulator, the trustees notified their conclusion that we were fully compliant with the Code.

Mount Jerome Cemetery Remembrance

In 2024, John O'Brien and Seán Ryan continued identifying Dublin Fusiliers buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery, Dublin. To date, the graves of 97 men have been located in cooperation with the Cemetery's Authorities. This research work has recently been suspended, pending positive information on any new candidates. The documentary film on this research work was well received at our Open Day last March.

Merchandise

David Buckley, Suzanne O'Neill and George Jones worked together during the year to refine our merchandise offerings which include ties, scarves, blazer badges and metal pins. See the latest *Old Tough* for price and merchandise options. All purchase enquiries should be addressed to rdfamembershipsecretary@gmail.com or by post to Suzanne O'Neill, RDFA Membership Secretary, c/o The Old Pound, Ballybrittas, Co Laois R32 E1C5.

Correspondence

In 2024, most correspondence to our email account, rdfa1918@gmail.com, was from members and the general public. The latter were often interested in joining our Association or finding 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.

Thomas Murphy
Honorary Secretary

Answers to the RDFA Annual Quiz

Brian Moroney

- 1) HMS Hampshire.
- 2) An Armoured Cruiser.
- 3) Heat and eat – or just plain eat. Stew!!
- 4) A twill type of wool.
- 5) Group Captain.
- 6) Gallipoli.
- 7) Admiral Reinhardt Scheer.
- 8) Yes, she was called Lizzie.
- 9) ...than to be killed by a bomb at home.
- 10) Naas.

oOo



Spectamur Agendo
(We are known by our deeds)