



Distant Thunder

The Journal of the Irish Branches of The Western Front Association



Issue No.1

Summer 2019

'Fall In!'

Welcome to the first issue of 'Distant Thunder' the journal of the Irish branches of The Western Front Association. The title comes from the poem 'To the Fallen Irish Soldiers' by the Anglo-Irish writer and dramatist, Edward Plunkett, Lord Dunsany, which is shown below. The main purpose of this journal is to keep both members and non-members of the WFA informed about branch events and other association activities. However, it will also include articles written by members, letters, photographs of WFA events, a 'Remembrance' section and links to other association social media sites. I will also welcome any suggestions regarding future content. I hope you enjoy the read and - be sure to send a copy to your friends!

Gerry White

Island of Ireland Trustee. The Western Front Association

Edward Plunkett 18th Baron of Dunsany



Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett, the 18th Baron Dunsany was born in London on 24 July 1878 but he spent most of his life at Dunsany Castle in Co. Meath. He had a variety of interests and at one time was the chess and pistol shooting champion of Ireland. Like many young men from Anglo-Irish families at that time Plunkett spent time as an officer in the British Army. He served in the Coldstream Guards in the Second Boer War with the rank of 2nd lieutenant and during the Great War he served in the Inniskilling Fusiliers with the rank of captain. He was home on leave when the 1916 Easter Rising commenced and he decided to travel to Dublin to offer his assistance and was wounded in the head. He was later employed writing propaganda pieces for the army

Edward Plunkett was best known as a writer and dramatist. He published hundreds of short stories as well as plays, novels and essays under the name 'Lord Dunsany' He died in Dublin on 25 October 1957 after an attack of appendicitis.

To The Fallen Irish Soldiers

*Since they have grudged you space in Merrion Square,
And any monument of stone or brass,
And you yourselves are powerless, alas,
And your own countrymen seem not to care;
Let then these words of mine drift down the air,
Lest the world think that it has come to pass,
That all in Ireland treat as common grass,
The soil that wraps her heroes slumbering there.*

*Sleep on, forgot a few more years, and then
The ages, that I prophesy, shall see
Due honours paid to you by juster men,
You standing foremost in our history,
Your story filling all our land with wonder,
Your names, and regiment's names, like distant thunder.*

**Edward Plunkett
Lord Dunsany**

Lord Dunsany wrote this poem in response to the refusal of the government of the new Irish Free State to allow the Irish National War Memorial Trust to erect a memorail to Ireland's war dead at Merrion Square in Dublin, which is situated near Leinster House. In the poem he predicts that history would be kind to those who fell in the Great War and their names and those of their their regiments would fill the land like 'distant thunder'.

Gerry White

**Major Willie Redmond MP
6th Battalion Royal Irish Regiment
(13 April 1861 - 7 June 1917)**



**Dr Brendan O'Shea
European Officer, The Western Front Association**

William Hoey Kearney Redmond was born on 13 April 1861 to a Catholic father and a Protestant mother. After leaving school at Clongowes Wood College in Kildare he was commissioned as an officer in the Wexford Militia before becoming actively involved in politics. He campaigned for Charles Stewart Parnell in the 1880 General Election and two years later, as a result of intense agitation for land reform, both of them ended up sharing a cell in Kilmainham Gaol for three months.

Upon release Redmond travelled to Australia, New Zealand and the United States seeking international support for Irish Home Rule and when he returned to Ireland he too stood for election and became the Member of Parliament for Wexford in 1883. He would fight many more elections in the years that followed before eventually finding his political home in East Clare.

Willie Redmond was by any definition an extreme Irish nationalist. In 1885 he declared in Dublin that '...nationalists will be enemies of English power in Ireland so long as England refuses them their parliament'. In Newcastle-upon-Tyne he stated that ... "the bulk of the Irish people are in a state of rebellion which is merely tempered by the scarcity of firearms. And in Dundalk he advocated that, '...England's difficulty, under providence of God, is Ireland's opportunity.'

Thus began a career, and a life, dedicated to achieving Home Rule and Self Government for Ireland - and the pursuit of these objectives would ultimately cost him his life. When the Great War erupted in August 1914, and the Third Home Rule Bill had finally received Royal Assent on 18 September, Willie Redmond was clear where his duty required him to be. Addressing a crowd on St. Patrick Street, Cork, on 22 November he was crystal clear:

I speak as a man who with all the poor ability at his command has fought the battle for self-government for Ireland ... No man who is honest can doubt the single-minded

desire of myself and men like me to do what is right for Ireland. And when it comes to the question – as it may come – of asking young Irishmen to go abroad and fight this battle, when I am personally convinced that the battle for Ireland is to be fought where many Irishmen now are – In Flanders and France – old as I am, and grey as my are my hairs, I will say “Don’t go, but come with me”.

And true to his word, even though he was far too old to be a soldier, he applied for and received a commission in the Royal Irish Regiment taking up the appointment of Company Commander, B Company, 6th Battalion in the 47th Brigade of the 16th (Irish) Division.

Throughout 1915 and 1916 he suffered horribly in the trenches of the Western Front with those who went to war with him. Eventually his health failed and he was presented with the opportunity to leave the front lines and take a job in the safety of the rear areas. This he utterly rejected and was adamant that he would never ask his soldiers to do something he was not prepared to do himself.

On the 7 March 1917 he made what turned out to be his final visit to the House of Commons and wearing the uniform of the Royal Irish Regiment he delivered an impassioned speech concluding his remarks with these words:

In the name of God, we here who are about to die, perhaps, ask you to do that which largely induced us to leave our homes; to do that which our mothers and fathers taught us to long for; to do that which is all we desire; make our country happy and contented, and enable us, when we meet the Canadians and the Australians and the New Zealanders side by side in the common cause and on the common field, to say to them: 'our country, just as yours, has self-government within the Empire.

At ten minutes past three on the morning of the 7 June 1917 Major Willie Redmond was once again in command of B Company of the 6th Royal Irish as the Battle for Messines Ridge erupted around him. Moving forward as part of the 16th (Irish) Division, and with the 36th (Ulster) Division to his right, he was hit almost immediately in the wrist and then in the leg. Sometime later he was found by Private John Meeke from the 36th Division and evacuated to the 108th Field Ambulance Station where he was administered to by Reverend John Redmond (no relation) from the 9th Enniskillen Fusiliers. Unable to withstand the shock of his wounds, later that evening he passed away.

Today Willie Redmond lies in a single grave which stands in its own plot outside the Locre Hospice Cemetery in Flanders. In October 1919 his widow Eleanor visited the grave and was very pleased with how it had been kept by the local sisters. Later the Commonwealth War Graves Commission wrote to her asking for permission to move his remains a few yards into the cemetery. Eleanor requested that his body be left where it lay and in later years the local parish priest resisted attempts at his re-interment. Today Willie Redmond is the only soldier of the Great War to lie in a solitary grave devoid of the company of those who fought by his side. There is no doubt whatever that he would not have wished for this outcome.

On 7 June 2017, An Taoiseach Enda Kenny, and three Irish government ministers laid wreaths at Willie Redmond’s grave. The card from An Taoiseach read ‘He lived for Country, He fought

for Country, He died for Country. Let Unity and Peace be his Legacy for Ireland.’ On 6 May 2018, the Dublin Senior Football Team visited his grave and also laid a wreath. It has taken 100 years but finally this Irish patriot has begun to receive the recognition he deserves.

Willie Redmond was an Irish Volunteer, an elected Member of Parliament, an Irish Nationalist and a British Soldier. In the context of his time this complex identity contained no contradiction whatsoever. His vision for Ireland and her people was that she would be free to take her place amongst the nations of the world on exactly the same terms as Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. As a political visionary he was decades ahead of his time.

One hundred and two years ago, on the 7 June 1917, Ireland lost a true patriot and someone who could and would have made a significant contribution to the evolution of our country in the post war years. We are all the poorer that that opportunity was lost.

*Sé mo laoch, mo ghille mear.
Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dilis.*



**An official visit to Willie Redmond's grave in 1917.
Ref: IWM Q_3035**



The author at Willie Redmond's grave in 2017.



The wreath laid on Willie Redmond's grave by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny on 7 June 2017.



A colour party comprised of members of the Royal Irish Regiment and the Irish Defence Forces at the Island of Ireland Peace Park for the ceremony making the centenary of the Battle of Messines.

The Notice Board

Irish Branch Details

Antrim and Down Branch

Chairman

Ian Montgomery

Contact

Secretary: Dr Tom Thorpe antrimdownwfa@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.antrimanddownwfa.org/>

Twitter: [@WFA_AntrimDown](https://twitter.com/WFA_AntrimDown)

Meets at 6.30pm at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) on the second Thursday of each month. We do not meet however in January, July, August (this year) or December. A modest donation of £5.00 is requested at the door to help fund branch activities.

Forthcoming Events

12 September: 'It was an awful Sunday': the 2nd Inniskillings at the Battle of Festubert, May 1915 by Michael Nugent.

10 October: 'Willie Redmond and the Great War' by John Green.

14 November: Winter Conference – details to follow

Cork Branch

Chairman

Gerry White

Contact

Secretary: Gerry O'Meara gerryo@gerryomeara.com

Facebook: Cork Branch Western Front Association

Usually meets the last Wednesday of each month from September to June at 7:30pm in the College of Commerce, Cork. If the college is not available an alternative venue will be notified. A modest donation of €5.00 is requested to help fund branch activities.

Forthcoming Events

2 October: 'Aspects of Ireland's Post War Conflict: The Life and Death of Terence MacSwiney' by Gerry White.

30 October: 'Otto Dix and the Visual Memory of the Western Front of the Great War' By Dr Ann Murray.

Dublin Branch

Chairman

Ian Chambers

Contact

Ian Chambers: ian1914@eircom.net

Website: <https://wfadublin.webs.com/>

Meetings held at 2pm on the third Saturday of each month (except for March and August) at the Headquarters of the Irish United Nations Veterans Association, Arbour House, Mount Temple Road, Dublin 7. A modest donation of €3.00 is requested to help fund branch activities.

Forthcoming Events

21 September: 'The Men of Wicklow Parish in the Great War' by John Goodman.

19 October: Josephine Heffernan, A First World War Nurse' by Brian White

Podcasts Available!

A large (and growing) number of excellent podcasts on different aspects of the Great War have been recorded by Dr Tom Thorpe, the WFA Public Relations Officer and Secretary of the Antrim and Down Branch. The latest podcasts are free and can be heard via your smart phone's podcast app such as Acast, iTunes or Stitcher. Just search for the name 'Mentioned in Dispatches' to listen to the latest episodes. The back catalogue can be heard at: <https://www.kensingtons.org.uk/>

Looking for a New Video to Watch?

If you are looking for a new video on the Great War then why not visit the Western Front Association's You Tube channel? This contains recordings of a range of interesting and informative talks given by a number of historian and academics.

You can access the video library at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCb0Usv1mdl3UvUPNjUmpkg>

Visit the Western Front Association Website

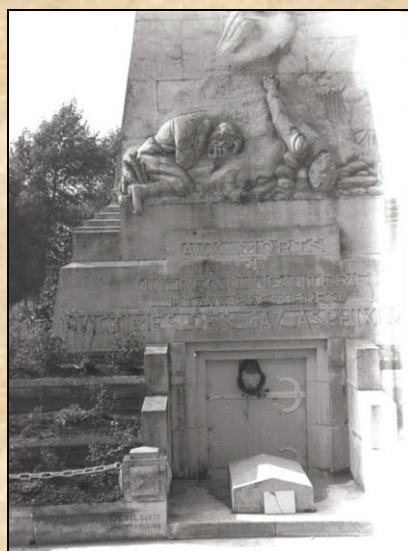
You can see access of the above and plenty more by visiting the association website which can be accessed at this link: <https://www.westernfrontassociation.com/>

Material Wanted!

If you would like to contribute an item to this newsletter (an article, notice, photograph, poem or letter) then please send same to the editor at: gerrywhitecork@yahoo.co.uk

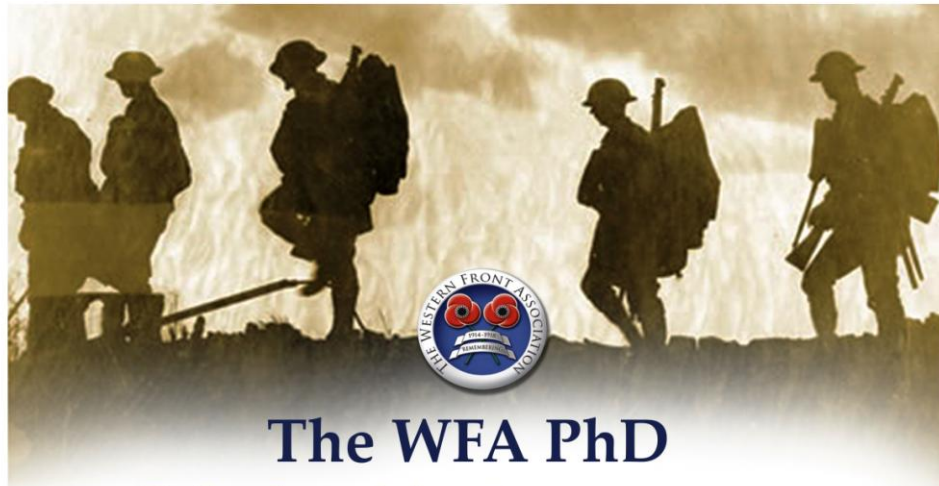
New material is welcome and all contributions will be considered for inclusion.

Forgotten History



The above photograph, which was submitted by Ian Chambers, Chairman of the Dublin Branch, was one of a series taken in 1938 by a professional photographer who was commissioned to take photos of the Western Front, as it was then. It shows a monument to the victims of the first gas attack at Steenstraat that was designed by Maxime Real del Sarto and was unveiled by the French 418e Régiment d'Infanterie on 28 April 1929 in the presence of King Albert I and the French Général Gourand. It depicts a French soldier clutching at his throat whilst beside him lay two others who had already succumbed to the chlorine cloud. Sadly, the monument had a short life. In 1942 the occupying Germans took exception to it and blew it up.

PhD Students Please Take Note!



The WFA PhD Scholarship Programme

Applications close Monday 30th September, 2019

The Western Front Association (WFA) was formed in 1980 to study the period 1914-1918 and to perpetuate the memory, courage and comradeship of those on all sides who served their countries during the Great War.

As part of its commitment to this end, The WFA seeks to financially support post-graduate research students who are undertaking an MPhil or PhD into the study of the conflict, at any university in Great Britain or the Republic of Ireland.

The WFA's PhD Scholarship Programme makes a series of awards from £400 to £1,000 each year.

Applications open
Monday Friday, 25th February
and close Monday 30th September, 2019.

Eligible applicants must be in the second year (or above) of a part or full time PhD/MPhil programme.

They can be studying in any discipline, (e.g. geography, archaeology).

The research subject must focus on a social, political, economic, medical or a military aspect of the Great War.

The PhD/MPhil must be methodologically sound, academically rigorous and achievable.

The PhD/MPhil must also make a new and definite contribution to the historiography of the Great War.

Applicants must be current members of The WFA.

If you are interested please contact:

In the Republic of Ireland: Gerry White 00353085 2171240 or gerrywhitecork@yahoo.co.uk

In Northern Ireland: Dr Tom Thorpe: 004477 79269182 or antrimdownwfa@gmail.com

Warning Order!

On Saturday, 5 October 2019, The Western Front Association will be holding an All Ireland conference focusing on the aftermath and legacy of the Great War in the Dublin Port Centre. Details will follow in the next issue.

Cork's First Months of War

Gerry White

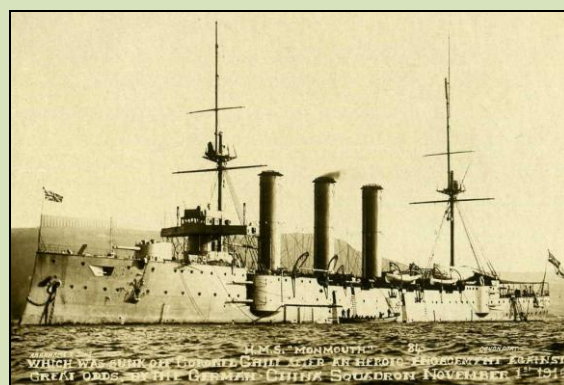
For the people of Cork, News Year's Eve 1914 was dramatically different from ones that had gone before. Although Christmas was rapidly becoming a memory and the newspapers were advertising the New Year's sales, there was little to celebrate. For the last five months Ireland had been at war. That day thousands of Corkmen were fighting with the British armed forces on the high seas or in the bloody fields of France and Flanders. So far over 250 had been killed and countless others had been wounded.

The first Corkmen to die in the war had been lost at sea. Able Seaman Jeremiah Minihane (Union Hall), Able Seaman Timothy Hourihane (Drimoleague), Cooper Maurice Jordan (Cobh), Petty Officer Joseph Lynch (Ringaskiddy) and Leading Stoker Andrew Collins (Leap) all died when their ship, *HMS Amphion* struck a German mine in the North Sea at 6.30am on 6 August 1914. Many crew members were killed or seriously injured in the explosion while others suffocated in the forward mess decks. The ship then drifted into another row of mines and the resulting explosions sent her to the bottom of the sea with the loss of 150 lives.

The *Amphion* would not be the last Royal Navy ship to be sunk during the war. Before the end of the year many other Corkmen would lose their lives at sea. On 15 October ten died when the cruiser *HMS Hawke* was sunk by a German submarine off the coast of Aberdeen with the loss of 524 lives. A further twenty lost their lives on 1 November when the cruiser *HMS Monmouth*, was sent to the bottom of the South Atlantic during the Battle of Coronel. Among those to die in this incident was 26 year old Able Seaman James Green, the son of Ellen Glasson (formerly Green), of 8 Lynham Quay, Queenstown and the late Michael Green. Having lost her first husband, one can only imagine how Ellen Glasson felt when she received the news of the death of her son. The only thing known for certain is that she was destined to receive a further blow when her older son, Private John Green of the Leinster Regiment was killed in action on the Western Front on 28 February 1915.



A contemporary print depicting the sinking of
HMS Amphion.



HMS Monmouth.

While the war at sea was taking place thousands of Cork born soldiers were engaged in a life and death struggle to halt the German onslaught on France and Belgium. The first Cork soldier to die in service during the war was Private Jeremiah Cronin of the 1st Battalion, Connaught Rangers. He died on 17 August while serving with his unit in India. However, the first to be killed in action was Sergeant Matthew Marmion of the 4th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. This unit was part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) and on 22 August it was tasked with defending the bridge at Nimy on the Mons-Conde Canal to prevent it being captured by German Army. The following day it was subjected to a heavy German attack. During the fighting Lieutenant Maurice Dease, from Coole, Co. Westmeath, was killed after he continued to man a machine gun despite being wounded four times. Dease was awarded the Victoria Cross for his action and was the first British soldier to receive that medal in the war.

Despite putting up a stout defence throughout the day the BEF sustained heavy losses and was forced to retreat in the face of overwhelming odds. The German Army continued its offensive on the morning of 24 August, the first day of the epic 'Retreat from Mons'. A total of 404 British soldiers were killed that day including Sergeant Matthew Marmion. His remains were never recovered and today he is commemorated on the La Ferte-sous-Jouarre Memorial in France.

Over the next three days the BEF continued its retreat. On the morning of 27 August, the 2nd Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers, were deployed north of the town of Étreux. They were under the command of Major Paul Charrier and tasked with providing the rearguard for the right wing of the BEF. Charrier's orders were to stand fast until ordered to withdraw or forced to do so.

The weather that morning was overcast with misty rain. The German Army commenced its attack on the Munsters at 1030am and it continued throughout the morning. In the afternoon the skies opened and the opposing forces had to fight on in torrential rain. By now both sides had taken heavy casualties and the German army had forced the Munsters to withdraw from some of their positions. Charrier now ordered his men to retreat southwards to Étreux, but when they reached the town they found it was occupied by six battalions of German infantry. The Munsters were now surrounded and the Germans were closing in.

Rather than surrender, Major Charrier decided to attack the German positions near Étreux in an effort to break through their lines. He personally led three attacks before being killed. A number of other officers were also killed or wounded and command of the unit fell to Lieutenant E. W. Gower. As the German continued to press home their attacks he led the Munsters to a peach orchard outside the town. Despite being outnumbered the Munsters continued to fight and only surrendered at 9.15pm after running out of ammunition. By holding off nine German battalions for twelve hours the Munsters enabled the right wing of the BEF to withdraw to a safe distance of twelve miles. Although they suffered some 2,000 casualties in the battle the Germans later congratulated them on their outstanding courage and tenacity.

Four officers and 256 soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers, were captured in the orchard. In all six officers and around 500 men of the battalion, many of whom were wounded, were taken prisoner. Ninety-seven Munsters were killed. Of this number twenty-six

were from Cork. Today, twenty-two of those casualties rest in a mass grave in Étreux British Military Cemetery. Among those buried there was 49 year old Private Daniel Murphy from Cork City. He was a veteran of the Boer War and one of the oldest members of the regiment to die in the war. One of the youngest members to be killed was also buried in the mass grave. He was Private Edward Keohane, the 17 year old son of Denis and Kate Keohane of 27 Kyrils Quay in Cork. Edward's brother Michael also fought in the war with the Royal Field Artillery. Having survived the conflict he died in Germany on 30 January 1919 and is buried in Cologne Southern Cemetery. It isn't known if Denis and Kate Keohane ever got an opportunity to visit their sons' graves before they themselves passed away but it unlikely as few Cork families had the money to make such a journey after the war ended.

Two other brothers who went to France that fateful summer of 1914 were twenty year old John Lucy and his nineteen year old brother Denis, sons of Denis and Kate Lucy from Montenotte. Both were members of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles, and had taken part in the epic Battle of the Marne which lasted from 5 to 10 September. Although this battle finally brought the German offensive to a halt fighting continued in the days that followed. On 15 September the Royal Irish Rifles were ordered to attack a German position. In his memoir entitled 'There's a Devil in the Drum' written after the war John Lucy recorded what happened:

My brother's platoon suddenly got the order, unheard by me, and up went the men on to the open grassland, led by their officer. Denis went ahead, too far in front of his section, I thought. He carried his rifle at the high port, and presented a good picture of the young leader going into battle. I only wished he had not gone so far forward...He was exposing himself unnecessarily and would be one of the first to be shot at. I raised myself high over the parapet of our ditch and shouted to him, 'Take care of yourself,' and I blushed at such a display of anxiety in the presence of my comrades. My brother paused a moment in his stride, then he looking back over his shoulder and winked reassuringly at me. The beggar would wink. Forward he went, and out of my sight for ever.

The remains of nineteen year old Lance-Corporal Denis Lucy were never recovered. Today he is commemorated on the La-Ferte-sous-Jouarre Memorial in France with Matthew Marmion and 26 other Corkmen.

News of the rearguard action at Étreux and the Battle of the Marne didn't reach the people of Cork until later in September when lists of casualties started to appear in the newspapers. While some families learned the fate of their loved one from the papers, the majority did so by way of a telegram sent from the War Office. As the war continued families with someone serving in the war would come to fear every knock at the door in case it was the postman delivering that dreaded piece of paper stating that their husband, father, brother or son had been killed, wounded or was missing in action.

While Cork families anxiously awaited news from the front, support for the war effort continued to grow. On 2 September hundreds of people attended a meeting convened at Cork city Hall by Nationalist MPs William O'Brien and Maurice Healy to discuss 'Taking immediate and practical action to save our country and the civilisation of Europe from the

horrors with which we are threatened by the progress of the German hordes'. After listening to the speakers the meeting passed the following resolution 'We regard it as our solemn duty to tender to his Majesty's ministers the assurance that the manhood of Ireland is at their command in this emergency'.

Of course not all Cork people supported the war. On 20 September John Redmond made a speech at Woodenbridge Co. Wicklow calling upon the Irish Volunteers to take part in the war. His action split the movement. Some 170,000 supported Redmond and became known as the National Volunteers. Approximately 12,000 more separatist minded members who refused to do so retained the title Irish Volunteers. Of the 6,000 members in Cork only some 600 remained with the Irish Volunteers. These men were led by officers such as Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney and over the coming months they would focus on rebuilding their unit.

Seven days after Redmond's historic speech, the people of Cork had an opportunity to hear first-hand accounts of the horrors of war when Lord Mayor Henry O'Shea welcomed a group of seventy Belgian refugees to the city. Further opportunities would occur when the Hospital Ship *SS Oxfordshire* arrived at Queenstown on 26 October with 697 wounded servicemen on board. These casualties were then distributed among military and civilian hospitals in Cork city and county.



Lord Mayor Henry O'Shea greeting the first group of Belgian refugees who arrived in Cork City on 27 September 1914.

Many of the wounded servicemen brought to Ireland were cared for by Cork born nurses. During the war other Cork women would serve as nurses in Britain and in Europe with the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service or the Voluntary Aid Detachment. More reported to Victoria Barracks and enlisted in the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps. Large numbers didn't join any organisation but they rowed in behind the war effort by raising funds to purchase items for the soldiers at the front by simply knitting socks, scarves and jumpers for them. Such items were taken for granted by people at home but were welcomed by the soldiers as the winter approached.

The nature of the war was also changing at this time. For the first eight weeks of the conflict it was a war of movement. However, after the Battle of the Marne and what became known as 'the Race to the Sea' a line of trenches was gradually formed that would ultimately extend some 400 miles from the Belgian coast to the border with France and Switzerland. The soldiers living in these trenches soon had to endure hazards such as extreme weather conditions, mud, rodents, lice, exhaustion, boredom and a condition known as 'trench foot'. But the greatest thing those men had to endure was fear. They frequently saw their friends and comrades killed or wounded by gunfire or blown to pieces by enemy artillery and every time they awoke they had no idea if that day would be their last.

As the soldiers in the trenches struggled to come to grips with their new existence, the war continued. By the middle of October 1914 the BEF occupied the strategically important town of Ypres in Belgium. Ypres provided access to the North Sea and the channel ports and whoever controlled it dominated the surrounding countryside. On 20 October 1914 the German Army launched a massive offensive on the BEF aimed at capturing the town. A bloodbath followed that lasted until 22 November when the onset of winter brought fighting to halt. Although what became known as the First Battle of Ypres is considered to be an Allied victory the BEF suffered 54,000 casualties. The pre-war highly trained British Army was almost completely destroyed and what was left had to hold the line until reinforced by reservists and by new units being recruited in Britain and Ireland.

Over 100 soldiers with Cork connections died in the First Battle of Ypres. By now people in Cork who had hoped the war would be over by Christmas knew they would be disappointed. Although a truce came into effect on Christmas Day on some parts of the front, fighting continued in others. One hundred and six British soldiers died that day. Included among the dead were Private John Kenneally of Rutland Street and Private William Lyons of Green Street, Cork, both of whom were members of the 2nd Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers, and Private John Cashman of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who came from Gerald Griffin Street.

Unfortunately, the Christmas Truce didn't last and the following day the fighting resumed. It would continue into the New Year with no end in sight and over the coming months hundreds more Corkmen would be killed. Back home, their loved ones would be left to mourn their loss and wonder when it would all end.



A British Army recruiting meeting on St. Patrick Street, Cork, in the early days of the war.

From the Archive



Three of the founding members of the Cork Branch pictured in 2011.

L to R: Ross Glennon, Francis O'Connor, Billy Good.



L to R: Gerry White, Cork Branch; Ian Chambers, Dublin Branch; Ross Glennon and Dave O'Connell, Cork Branch pictured at the War Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge, Dublin in July 2012.



Professor Gary Sheffield, President of the WFA, Dr. Phylomena Badsey, Professor Stephen Badsey and Gerry White, Chairmain of the Cork Branch pictured in October 2015 at the grave of Lieutenant General Sir Adrian Paul Ghislain Carton de Wiart VC, KBE, CB, CMG, DSO located on the grounds of his home, Aghinagh House at Kilinadrish, Co. Cork.

Roll of Honour

Private William McFadzean VC

An Ulster Hero of the Somme



William McFadzean was born in Lurgan, Co. Armagh on 9 October 1895. He was the eldest of five children born to William McFadzean, a linen yarn salesman from Dundalk Co. Louth and his wife Annie, a native of Co. Down. The family initially lived in Jocelyn Gardens in Ormeau but later moved to Belfast. McFadzean attended Mountpottinger School until 1908 after which he became an apprentice at Spence Bryson & Co. Ltd on Great Victoria Street in Belfast. He also had a love of sports and played junior rugby for Collegians RFC.

On 22 September 1914 McFadzean joined the 14th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles. In October 1915 the battalion deployed to the Western Front. On the morning of 1 July 1916 McFadzean and his comrades were arming grenades as part of their preparation before going 'over the top' when the Battle of the Somme commenced. While doing so a box fell and the pins on two grenades were dislodged. When McFadzean saw this he immediately threw himself on the grenades. He lost his life when they exploded but his action saved the lives of his comrades. His remains were not recovered at the end of the war and today he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme.

William McFadzean was awarded the Victoria Cross for his sacrifice. His citation, published in the London Gazette on 8 September 1918, read:

14/18278 Pte. William Frederick McFadzean, late R. Ir. Rif.

For most conspicuous bravery. While in a concentration trench and opening a box of bombs for distribution prior to an attack, the box slipped down into the trench, which was crowded with men, and two of the safety pins fell out. Private McFadzean, instantly realising the danger to his comrades, with heroic courage threw himself on the top of the Bombs. The bombs exploded blowing him to pieces, but only one other man was injured. He well knew his danger, being himself a bomber, but without a moment's hesitation he gave his life for his comrades.

New Recruits Wanted!



**HAVE YOU AN INTEREST
IN THE GREAT WAR?**

If so, then join
**The Western
Front Association!**

The Western Front Association (WFA)
was formed in 1980 to study
the period 1914-1918 and to
perpetuate the memory, courage
and comradeship of those on all sides
who served their countries
during the Great War.
It is strictly non-political and
does not seek to glorify war.





Membership
of the WFA costs
€35 (Republic of Ireland)/
£29 (Northern Ireland)
per annum.

Membership provides you
with the opportunity to
meet like-minded people,
to learn, share, explore
and exchange information
and knowledge in a friendly
and welcoming atmosphere.

You will also receive
our regular,
high-quality publications,
Stand To and *The Bulletin*
six times a year
and have access to the
members' area
of our website,
www.westernfrontassociation.com.

If you are interested in joining, or forming a new branch, please contact any of the following:

In the Republic of Ireland:

Gerry White (Cork) 00353085 2171240 or gerrywhitecork@yahoo.co.uk

Ian Chambers (Dublin) 003531 8958831 or ian1914@eircom.net

Dr Brendan O'Shea (Kildare) 0035387 6886755 or osheab@eircom.net

In Northern Ireland:

Dr Tom Thorpe: 004477 79269182 or antrimdownwfa@gmail.com