



# Distant Thunder

The Journal of the Irish Branches of  
**The Western Front Association**  
**Forty Years Exploring the Great War**  
**1980-2020**

Issue No. 5

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Christmas Card from the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division

## From the Editor

Unfortunately, since the last issue of *Distant Thunder*, Covid 19 is still part of our lives and many of us are now living with a range of restrictions. Monthly branch meetings have also been cancelled. However, the WFA has been doing its best to ensure that its members are provided with a variety of ways to pursue our interest in the Great War. These include weekly webinars, podcasts and the association's journals (*Stand-To* and the *Bulletin*). Hopefully, *Distant Thunder*, the journal of the Irish branches will add to that list by providing articles with an Irish flavour. This issue contains a number of interesting pieces with a focus on individuals who fought in the war. It also includes a book review section and a poem written by a member of the association in memory of her grand-uncle. I hope there is something there for everyone and that you all find the articles both informative and enjoyable to read. If you would like to contribute to the next issue, which I hope to get out early in the New Year then please feel free to contact me. In the meantime, I would ask everyone to continue supporting the WFA, it is thanks to the support shown by our members that the association continues to flourish. In closing let me take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to *Distant Thunder* and, despite all the challenges that face us, let me wish you and yours and enjoyable Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

**Gerry White**

**Island of Ireland Trustee**

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# WILLIE DOYLE REMEMBERED

Valerie Jacques & David Humberston



Fr Willie Doyle S.J., M.C.

On the morning of 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019, the “Pilgrims” of *Friends of Flanders Tours* gathered to pay tribute to the fallen of the Island of Ireland at the Battle for Passchendaele and, in particular, Father Willie Doyle, S.J., M.C. Even the horses of the adjacent Obi Training Centre and Stud Farm gathered to observe, albeit from a safe distance, and more out of curiosity than genuine interest.

Unveiled on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2017, the original Memorial, hewn from Welsh blue stone stands on the Divisional Boundary from whence men of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division and the Unionist 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division left their trenches to assault the Frezenberg Ridge. Nearly 1,200 would perish that day as the Battle for Langemark was fought in appalling weather. The following August, this Memorial received a blue-plaque commemorating Father Willie Doyle, S.J. MC, the much-lamented Army Chaplain of 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division who was killed on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1917.

Doyle’s heroism amongst the dying on the battlefield earned him the respect of all who knew him and his death was widely lamented. As one Ulsterman later wrote:

*“Father Doyle was amongst us a great deal. We couldn’t possibly agree with his religious opinions, but we simply worshipped him for other things. He didn’t know the meaning of fear and he didn’t know what bigotry was. He was as ready to risk his life to take a drop of water to a wounded Ulsterman as to assist men of his own faith and regiment. Father Doyle was a true Christian in every sense of the word and a credit to any religious faith”.*

En-route to the Memorial, a presentation on Doyle had been delivered by David Humberston, Chairman of the Leicestershire and Rutland Branch of the Western Front Association who, with his good lady, Valerie Jacques (Branch Secretary) runs *Friends of Flanders Tours*. Upon arrival, Father Doyle was then honoured by Angela Hall, a Branch Committee Member, who had recently professionally indexed a recent biography of the great man. Angela gave a moving oratory regarding her personal reasons for wishing to pay her respects at the Memorial, before laying her wreath. In another link to Doyle, a second wreath was then laid honouring all fallen Irishmen of the Great War on behalf of a late, and much lamented “Pilgrim”, Michael O’Rahilly, whose uncle, Professor Alfred O’Rahilly, was one of the first to write of the Chaplain’s life.



After a pause for photographs, the “Pilgrims” continued on their “progress” – a busy itinerary that would occupy the remainder off their day. The horses departed too; curiosity fulfilled, their attention returned to the green paddock over which, a century before, so many men from the Emerald Isle had fought and fallen.

# The Frizelle family of Ballycastle, County Mayo

Michael Nugent

In late 2019, I was contacted by a Johnny Frizelle who asked if I could carry out research into two of his relatives who he believed, had served in the Great War. To assist my research, Johnny forwarded items of family information and details of some research that he had already carried out

When I sat down to start researching, it quickly became apparent that throughout the family, there was unsurpassed service to the Crown extending over a century. What amazed me was that as I researched one family member, I uncovered links to other family members that I was unaware of. When I had completed the research, I realized that there was a story which needed to be brought to the attention of a wider audience. Johnny Frizelle has given me permission to compile this article, for which I am indebted.

In the course of carrying out research, various spellings of the family surname were encountered, including Frizzell, Frizzel, Frizzelle and Frizzle as well as the accepted Frizelle.

## **Sergeant William Frizelle 2738 Royal Irish Constabulary**

Although not the first family member that I researched, the patriarch of the family was William Frizelle. William was born at Limerick in 1823. He enlisted in the Royal Irish Constabulary in 1849, service number 2738, and in keeping with the Constabulary policy of posting recruits away from their home area, William was initially stationed in County Donegal. It was there in 1851 that he married Jane McNeely<sup>1</sup>, doing so at Ballyshannon. This necessitated a further transfer and William was posted to County Sligo where he was to remain for the rest of his service. From court records of the time, it appears that William was most diligent in carrying out his duties. William retired from the Police in the rank of Sergeant on 1 May 1875, most likely after completing 25 years' service. Records show that he was in receipt of a pension of £72 per annum, a not inconsiderable sum for the times. William died at Sligo in 1907 aged 84

William and Jane had nine children, six of whom survived to adulthood. Two sons followed William into the ranks of the Royal Irish Constabulary. William Robert was born at Ballymote, County Sligo on 24 April 1864. Prior to enlisting in the ranks of the Royal Irish Constabulary he had been employed as a Draper's Assistant. William junior enlisted at Sligo on 10 October 1881 aged 17 and a half. Issued with the service number 47840, he was posted to County Westmeath in February 1882 however, his Police career ended later that year on 21 September, when he was discharged as 'Unfit for duty.'

## **Sergeant John Henry Frizelle - 36702 Royal Irish Constabulary**

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<sup>1</sup> Also spelt McNeilly

William and Jane's eldest son John Henry Frizelle, was born at Sligo in 1852. The earliest available record for John relates to his appointment as a Constable in the Royal Irish Constabulary on 4 June 1870 with the service number 36702.

It is believed that John was first stationed in County Galway and it was there that he met his future wife. John married Caroline Matilda McNeice at St Joseph's Church of Ireland, Spiddal, Co. Galway on 10 October 1878. At the time of the marriage, Caroline was a Schoolmistress and was resident at Spiddal. John was transferred following the marriage to County Mayo on 1 February 1879.

Between 1879 and 1889, John and Caroline had five children:

William Robert, born 16 October 1879 at Knox's Street, Ballina, Co. Mayo

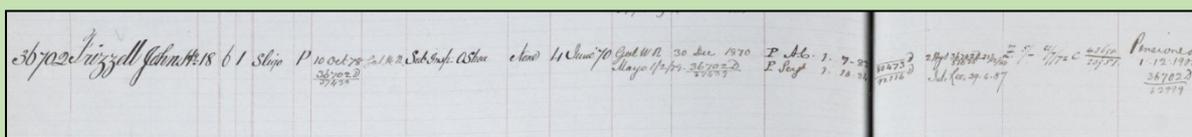
Frederick John, born 15 May 1881 at Ballina

Edith Jane, born 31 March 1883 at Castle Road, Ballina

George Henry Herbert, born 5 March 1886 at Newtown Cloghans, Co Mayo

Archibald, born 21 July 1889 at Swinford, Co. Mayo.

During this period, John was promoted to the rank of Sergeant on 1 October 1884. Records indicate that unfortunately Caroline died in 1895. Following Caroline's death, John continued to serve in the Royal Irish Constabulary until 1 December 1900 when he retired having completed 30 years' service. On retirement, records indicate that John was in receipt of a yearly pension of £53-14-08. The 1901 Census of Ireland shows John as resident with his son George and a Housekeeper at North Gate Street, Athlone. On Wednesday 27 May 1908, John was married for the second time. He married Belinda Laing, a Spinster and Lady Farmer from Killala, Co. Mayo, at Ballinglen Presbyterian Church, Killala. The 1911 Census of Ireland shows the couple as resident at Ballinglen, Ballycastle, Co. Mayo.



At that time, John is described as a Farmer. When originally contacted by Johnny, he mentioned a memorial path at the Parish Church at Ballycastle, a photo of which he kindly forwarded to me.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> The church is St John's, Dunfeeny in the Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry

When he initially contacted me, Johnny was unsure as to who the 'Frizelle boys' named on the path were and whether they were brothers or cousins. This started me off on the military side of the research, where I discovered that three of John and Caroline's sons had served in the Great War.

### **Second Lieutenant Archibald Frizelle - 75th Brigade Royal Field Artillery**

Archibald was the youngest of John and Caroline's children, being born on Sunday 21 July 1889 at Swinford, Co. Mayo. Following his mother's death in 1895, Archibald appears to have resided with his paternal grandparents. The 1901 Census of Ireland shows him as resident with them at Wolfe Tone Street, Sligo.



**Second Lieutenant Archibald Frizelle**

Archibald was educated at Ranelagh School Athlone and Mounjoy School, Dublin. Records indicate that he was also a member of Wanderers Rugby Football Club, Dublin. Although no emigration records survive, research shows that Archibald emigrated to Canada in 1910 and was employed by the Department of Railways and Canals, Dominion Government of Canada, as a Transitman and Leveller on the Hudson Bay Railway from 1910 to 1914.

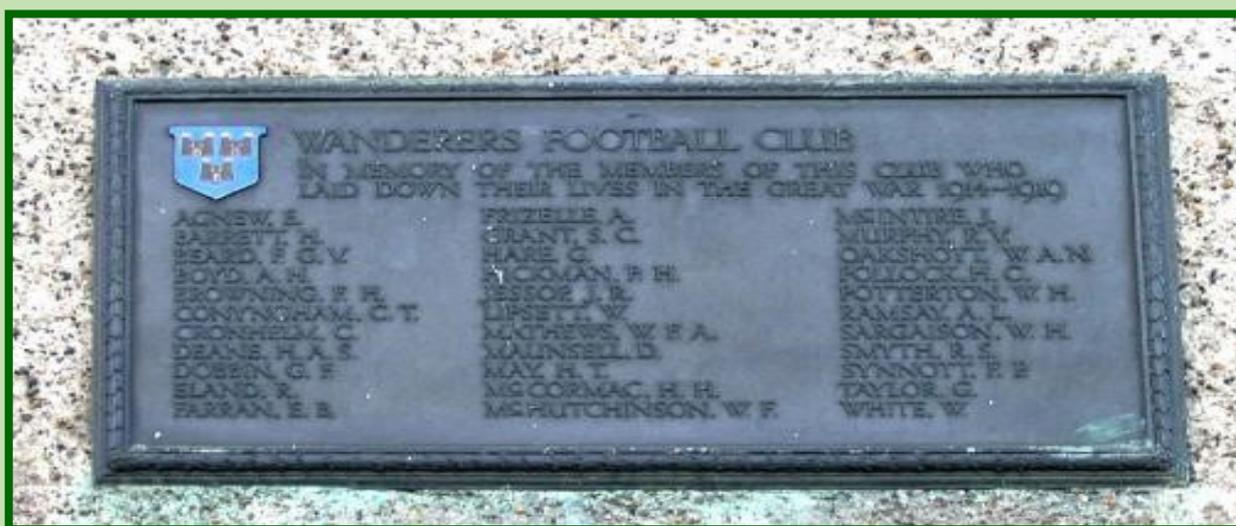
Following the outbreak of war, Archibald returned to the United Kingdom and enlisted in the Irish Guards, being posted for training to Warley Barracks, Essex. He was attached to the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion Irish Guards and issued with the service number 7956. By October 1915, Archibald had been promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal and at that time he applied and was recommended for a commission. In his application, Archibald requested a commission to a Howitzer Battery of the Royal Field Artillery. His application was successful with notice of his appointment to the rank of Second Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery being published in the London Gazette of 8 November 1915.

Following training, Archibald was posted to 75th Brigade Royal Field Artillery. This Brigade formed part of the Divisional Artillery for the Guards Division. 75th Brigade were equipped with Howitzers. These guns fired a high explosive shell in an arc, targeting enemy dugouts and defensive structures. Archibald arrived in Belgium on 24 March 1916 and was posted to B Battery. At the time, the Brigade were at Ypres, Belgium. From information available, it can be established that 75th Bde were in action near Vlamertinghe, a small village two miles west of Ypres at the end of April. The war diary for 1 May 1916 states:

*HQ returned to advanced wagon line at Rome Farm Vlamertinghe. Batteries remained in action.*

Archibald was killed in action on the first of May, having been with his unit for only five weeks. Research indicates that he was the only member of 75th Brigade killed that day. He is buried at grave I.A.20 at Vlamertinghe Military Cemetery. The family arranged for the inscription, 'Deeply mourned by father, sister and brothers' to be placed on his headstone.

Archibald's sacrifice is commemorated on War Memorials and Rolls of Honour at Mayo Peace Park, Castlebar, Ranelagh School Athlone, Wanderers Rugby Football Club, Dublin and at Holy Trinity Church, South Woodford, London, along with his brother Wm. Robert.<sup>3</sup>



The War Memorial in Wanderers Football Club, Ballsbridge, Dublin.

### Private William Robert Frizelle 9573 - 2nd Battalion Irish Guards

William Robert was John and Caroline Frizelle's eldest child, born on Saturday 16 October 1879 at Knox Street, Ballina, Co. Mayo. Little is known of William's early years and in fact, he does not appear on the 1901 Census of Ireland or on any census in the United Kingdom.

The 1911 Census shows William as resident with Daniel and Martha Dollard at 46 Dagnan Road, Balham, London. His occupation is given as Schoolmaster (Private) not currently in employment. The Dollards were originally from Dublin. Daniel Caulfield Dollard was an Artist and Martha had been born Martha Duigenan, her father being a Surgeon. They were married on 16 February 1904 at the Roman Catholic Pro Cathedral, Dublin and at the time of the marriage were resident at 57 Mountjoy Square, Dublin. This was an upmarket location and residence to Politicians, Literary, and Artistic figures.

William appears to have formed a relationship with Martha and the couple had a daughter, named Martha Frizelle-Dollard, born on 11 October 1915.<sup>4</sup> Although they never married, William and Martha resided as a couple from this time. The 1915 Street Directory shows William

<sup>3</sup> It is believed that Archibald's name was included at South Woodford by Robert's widow, Martha.

<sup>4</sup> Martha used the surname Frizelle until her marriage to Douglas Albert Jeffrey in January 1942. A Schoolteacher before her marriage, she died in 2009 aged 94

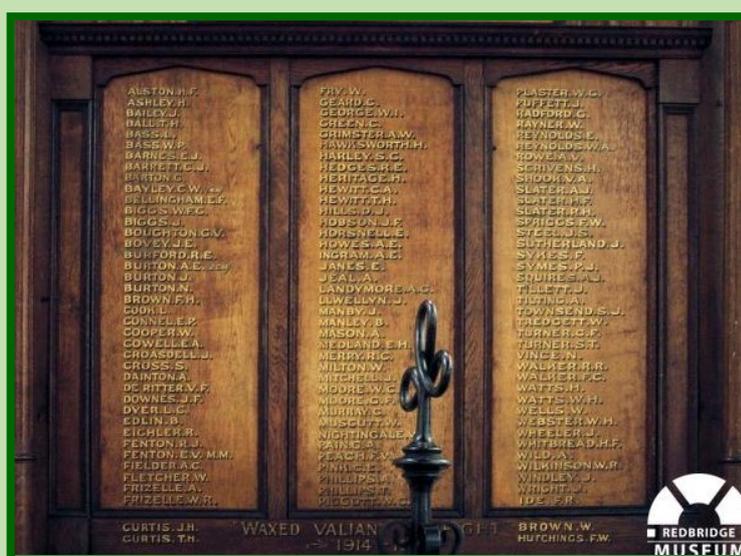
as resident at 28 Church Lane, Tooting, London, and on the 1918 Electoral Register, William and Martha are listed as resident at 46 Alexandra Road, Wanstead, London.<sup>5</sup>

It is believed that William enlisted in the Irish Guards sometime late in 1915. Issued with the service number 9573, he was posted to 2nd battalion in September 1916. He saw action with the battalion at the Third Battle of Ypres and the Battle of Cambrai in 1917. By April 1918, the battalion were in action near Hazebrouck, northern France countering the second phase of the German Spring Offensive. On 12 April, the battalion took up positions near Vieux-Berquin six miles south-east of Hazebrouck. Unfortunately, the battalion war diary has no record of the events of 12-15 April however, the official history of the battalion records the events:

*On the morning of 13th, a message was received that the enemy had broken through the Grenadier Guards positions between Vieux-Berquin and Le Cornet Perdu. No 3 Company dispatched at once with orders to counter attack and fill the gap. No more was heard of them. They went into the morning fog and were either surrounded and wiped out before they reached the Grenadiers or were totally destroyed with them.*

Unfortunately, William, a Lance Corporal in this Company, was one of those killed. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records that 38 men from the battalion were killed in action on 13 April.<sup>6</sup> Of these, only five have a known grave. William, along with the majority of his comrades is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial to the Missing.<sup>7</sup> In addition, William's sacrifice is commemorated on the Mayo Great War Memorial and, along with his brother Archibald on the Roll of Honour at Holy Trinity Church, South Woodford, Essex. This was Martha's local church.

From my research, I believe that these are the 'Frizelle boys' referred to on the memorial path at the parish church at Ballycastle. One other brother however, served in the Great War and survived.



Roll of Honour Holy Trinity Church, South Woodford, Essex

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Dollard enlisted in the Rifle Brigade in May 1916 and later transferred to the Cheshire Regiment, service number 53093. He was wounded with GSW to the right leg and discharged with the Silver War Badge in June 1919.

<sup>6</sup> [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

<sup>7</sup> The Commonwealth War Graves Commission states that William was 43 when killed, he was in fact 38.

## **Sergeant George Henry Herbert Frizelle 13739 - Royal Engineers**

George Henry Herbert Frizelle was born on Friday 5 March 1886 at Newtown Cloghans, Ballina, Co Mayo. He was John and Caroline's third son. Shortly after his 18th birthday on 21 April 1904, George enlisted in the Royal Engineers at Athlone. He initially enlisted for three years with a further nine years on the Army Reserve and was issued with the service number 13739. On enlistment, George gave his occupation as a Telegraphist and although there is no unit mentioned on his service record, it is likely that he was posted to one of the Engineer's Signal units. In May 1905, George extended his service to eight years with the colours and the following year was awarded a first Good Conduct Badge. In 1910, George was attached to 2nd Cable Telegraph Company and in January of that year was appointed as an unpaid Lance Corporal. After a month however, George reverted to the rank of Sapper at his own request. Two years later in February 1912, George again extended his period of service, this time to twelve years. The following month, he was promoted Lance Corporal, this time retaining the rank.

In January 1914, whilst attached to K Signal Company RE, George made a successful application to be transferred to the Army Reserve, most likely due to an offer of employment and he left the Regular Army on 17 January 1914. George's time as a civilian was however, short-lived and the day after the outbreak of war on 5 August 1914, George was mobilized for active service at Aldershot. As so many men were coming forward to enlist, anyone with previous military service was highly regarded and he was appointed to his previous rank of Lance Corporal on mobilization. Nine days later, George embarked for France with the British Expeditionary Force.

George remained in France for only three months, returning to the United Kingdom and being posted to the Royal Engineers Signals Depot at Fenny Stratford, Buckinghamshire in the rank of Corporal.<sup>8</sup> George remained at the Royal Engineers Signals Depot as an Instructor for the remainder of the war, an indication that he was highly skilled at his trade. He also became a Drill Instructor at the Depot when he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in July 1916.

As George had been mobilized for the duration of the war, following the Armistice, he was eligible for demobilization. George was transferred to Class Z Army reserve on demobilisation on 31 March 1919. Class Z meant that he could be recalled to duty if Germany failed to adhere to the peace treaty. He was finally discharged from his military obligations on 31 March 1920. Having completed just short of fifteen years military service, George's military character on demobilization as described as Exemplary. On demobilization, he gave his address as The Glen, Ballycastle, Co. Mayo.

In May 1920, George gained employment with the Post Office as a Skilled Workman and later that year married Maud Elizabeth Tomlinson at East Retford, Nottinghamshire, an area where he remained until his death in 1968 at the age of eighty-two.

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<sup>8</sup> Fenny Stratford now forms part of Milton Keynes

## **Sergeant Frederick John Frizelle 59994 - Royal Irish Constabulary**

John and Caroline's second son, Frederick John was born at Ballina, County Mayo on 15 May 1881. He was employed in the Drapery business before following his father into the ranks of the Royal Irish Constabulary, being appointed on 1 February 1901 with the service number 59994.

Records indicate that Frederick was initially stationed at Brown Square station which is just off what is now Millfield, close to Belfast City Centre. This was the Headquarters station of what was the RIC's Belfast C District. The other stations in the District being Antrim Road, Craven Street, Leopold Street, Ligoniel and Shankill Road. As a Headquarters station situated between the Shankill and Falls Roads, Brown Square would have been a very busy posting.

Frederick remained at Brown Square until August 1912 when he was posted to Magherafelt. This posting would have been influenced by his impending marriage, as RIC policy was again to post officers away from areas where close relatives resided. On Wednesday 6 November 1912, Frederick married Elizabeth McKee at St Andrews Church of Ireland, Belfast.<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth was from Burnaby Street, Belfast, her father Andrew was a Publican and her mother Jane was a Grocer.<sup>10</sup>

Following the marriage, the couple set up home at Garden Street in Magherafelt. Magherafelt was again a Headquarters Station supporting outstations at Ballyronan, Bellaghy, Castledawson, Draperstown, Gulladuff, Innisrush, Maghera and Moneymore. On 13 September 1913, the couple had a daughter, Caroline Winifred, born at the family home in Magherafelt. Unfortunately, the little girl died of burns received in an accident at her home on 8 June 1916 when she was aged two.<sup>11</sup>

Following the death, Frederick and Elizabeth remained resident at Garden Street, records indicating that Frederick was also a member of Masonic Lodge 532, based at Curran on the outskirts of the town. On 1 July 1921, Frederick was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. Records indicate that he was most likely posted to the RIC station at Ballyronan, on the shores of Lough Neagh.

During the Irish War of Independence, the IRA waged a savage war against any entity supporting the British Government. Chief among these, and frequent targets were the officers and men of the Royal Irish Constabulary, the visible manifestation of British rule in Ireland. Many barracks, mainly in isolated areas were attacked and officers targeted both on and off duty. This campaign had the intent of discouraging Irish men from joining the force and the more subtle consequence of increasing support for the IRA as murders of Police Officers were often followed by reprisals which frequently targeted the guilty and innocent alike.

On the evening of Wednesday 3 May 1922, Frederick was on patrol in Ballyronan at around 10.30 pm. He was accompanied by Special Constables Thomas Hunter aged 22 and Edward Hegarty, aged 20. Three men came up behind the Police officers who turned and commented

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<sup>9</sup> St Andrews Parish church was situated at Hope Street, Belfast, just to the rear of Great Victoria Street Railway Station. It was closed in 1971 and demolished with a new church bearing the same name being constructed at Glencairn.

<sup>10</sup> Burnaby Street ran from Distillery Street to Roden Street.

<sup>11</sup> Caroline died three days after the accident, on 11 June 1916.

on the weather as they stepped aside to let them past. As they drew level, the men fired a number of shots fatally wounding the two Special Constables, one of whom managed to return fire.

Frederick was seriously wounded by a gunshot wound to the abdomen and managed to run to the Police Station to raise the alarm. The attack appears to have been a concerted one as reinforcements summonsed from Antrim came under sustained gunfire in an ambush near Castledawson, and a further ambush took place between Castledawson and Toome in the early hours of the following morning.

Frederick was taken to the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, where he passed away on the evening of 4 May. His funeral left from his father-in-law's home at 229 Grosvenor Road, Belfast to Belfast City Cemetery. Following Frederick's murder, Elizabeth was awarded a widow's pension of £119-11-08 annually.

**SINN FEIN WAR ON ULSTER**

**THREE VILE MURDERS.**

**Cowardly Attack on Derry Police Patrol.**

**SERIES OF AMBUSHES.**

The fifth, sixth, and seventh murders of the present rebel campaign in Ulster were committed on Wednesday night in South Derry, when three police were shot under circumstances bearing the stamp of the Tipperary or Cork gunmen. The police casualties since Wednesday are five dead and seven wounded.

The cowardly and vile attack, which was of a type only too common in the South before the "truce," was made about 10.30 p.m. at Ballyronan, a South Derry village on the shores of Lough Neagh. Three men, outwardly peaceable country folk, passed a police patrol of three, and wished the constables "good night." Then suddenly they turned round, drew revolvers, and opened fire.

Constable Hunter was shot dead, Constable Hegarty fell mortally wounded, and Sergeant Frizell, who was shot in the abdomen and died in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, at 10.30 last night, struggled on to the barracks, where he collapsed. Verrey lights were sent up to bring reinforcements.

**FUNERAL OF SERGEANT FRIZELLE.**

There was a large and representative attendance yesterday at the funeral to the City Cemetery of Sergeant F. J. Frizelle, who was murdered at Ballyronan (County Derry), the cortege leaving the house of his father-in-law, Mr. Andrew M'Kee, 229, Grosvenor Road. The chief mourners were—John Frizelle (father), Ballycastle, County Mayo; Andrew M'Kee (father-in-law), J. J. M'Farland (uncle), Andrew M'Kee and Frank Toal (brothers-in-law), Cecil M'Farland (cousin), and Andrew M'Kee (nephew).

The funeral arrangements were in the hands of the firm of Messrs. Adam Turner.

*The Belfast News Letter of 5 May 1922 & The Northern Whig of 9 May 1922*

Thinking that I had finished with the military and police service of the Frizelle family and to complete research on the family, I turned my attention to John and Caroline's daughter Edith.

### **Edith Burton née Frizelle and Major Louis Burton - 70th Brigade Royal Field Artillery**

Edith was born on Saturday 31 March 1883 at Castle Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo, the only daughter of John and Caroline Frizelle. Following her mother's death in 1895, the 1901 Census of Ireland shows her as resident as a boarder at school in Celbridge, Co. Kildare. The school is not named however, it is titled, 'The incorporated Society for promoting Protestant Schools in Ireland.'

On Sunday 15 December 1907, Edith married Louis Burton at Athlone Parish Church of Ireland, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. At that time, Louis, who had been born at Heigham, Norwich, Norfolk, in 1874, was a Battery Sergeant Major in the Royal Artillery. Louis had enlisted as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery on 17 May 1900 at Ipswich. Aged 25 at that time, he had previously been employed as a Bank Clerk and was a part-time soldier in the 3rd Battalion, Norfolk Artillery.

In the years following the marriage, Louis was deployed to India with the 10th Ammunition Column and Edith accompanied him there. A daughter, Winifred Edith was born at Bangalore on 14 March 1909 and a son, William John, was also born at Bangalore on 31 October 1911. In June of 1911 with his period of enlistment drawing to a close, Louis had re-engaged with the Army to complete 21 years service. The family returned to England in 1912 and two further sons followed, Louis Archibald, born 1 August 1914 and Howard Frizelle born 21 June 1916.

By the outbreak of war in August 1914, Louis was an Instructor at the School of Gunnery in the rank of Sergeant Major. With the massive influx of recruits at the beginning of the war, experienced NCO's were required to make up a shortage of officers. On 26 September 1914, Louis was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery. As the war progressed, Louis moved up the ranks and by June of 1917, he was a Major in charge of D Battery, 70th Brigade Royal Field Artillery. This Brigade provided Artillery support to the 15th (Scottish) Division. As the officer in command of the Battery, Louis would have been in charge of 200 men.

At the beginning of June 1917 Louis' Brigade was at Conchy-sur-Canche, 30 miles west of Arras. On 8 June whilst near the village of Galametz, Louis observed a runaway wagon pulled by two heavy draught horses charge past him. He immediately mounted his horse and took off in pursuit, followed by an Orderly. After a pursuit of around 400 yards, Louis' horse skidded and fell, trapping him and pulling him along the ground. He received immediate medical attention however, later that evening complained of severe pain and was taken to No 6 Stationary Hospital at the nearby town of Frevent. A telegram was sent to Edith at Broadwater Avenue, Letchworth, Hertfordshire, to the effect that Louis was dangerously ill.

Despite medical attention, Louis died the next day of a ruptured intestine. A court of enquiry was held into his death and no blame was apportioned to him, in what was a tragic accident. Louis was buried at St Hilaire Cemetery, Frevent, Grave 3. Edith arranged for the inscription, 'Only goodnight beloved, not farewell. Your loving wife Edith' to be placed on his headstone.

Having completed research into all the members of the Frizelle family, I was fairly confident that I had captured all the details of their service however, I was premature in that assumption.

Whilst researching Major Louis Burton at the National Archives, Kew, I came across a letter in his file from the Air Ministry, dated September 1934 and enquiring into the circumstances of Louis' death, as his youngest son, Howard Frizelle Burton had applied for a King's Cadetship at the Royal Air Force College, Cranwell. This led to another fascinating story of service and bravery.

## **Wing Commander Howard Frizelle Burton DSO, DFC and Bar, Croix de Guerre (France)**

Howard was known throughout his RAF career as 'Billy' and was born on Wednesday 21 June 1916 at Letchworth, Hertfordshire, the youngest son of Louis and Edith Burton, nee Frizelle. He was educated at Bedford School, an independent boarding school in the county town of Bedford. Following this in 1934, Howard applied for a King's Cadetship to the Royal Air Force College, Cranwell. His application was successful, and Howard was admitted to RAF Cranwell as a Cadet in 1935.

Whilst there, on 7 October 1936, Howard was involved in a fatal flying accident. He and another pilot, Flight Lieutenant Roy Bartlett were flying Hawker Fury aircraft carrying out camera practice when their planes collided. Howard baled out and survived though injured. Flight Lieutenant Bartlett was killed in the accident.

Notwithstanding this incident, Howard was an excellent student and passed out of RAF Cranwell at the end of 1936 having been awarded the Sword of Honour for the most outstanding Cadet. On graduation, Howard was posted as Pilot Officer to No 46 Squadron at RAF Kenley, Surrey, on 18 January 1937. At that time, the Squadron flew Gloster Gauntlet aircraft. This was a single seat biplane fighter and the last RAF fighter to have an open cockpit. Howard was promoted to Flying Officer in June 1938 and in February the following year, the Squadron was re-equipped with the Mk 1 Hawker Hurricane.

On 26 June 1939, Howard was posted to RAF HQ 12 Group. This was a command organization which controlled a number of squadrons in an air defence role. Howard's stay there was not long. Four days after the outbreak of war, Howard was posted to No 66 Squadron as Commander of B Flight.

No 66 Squadron was initially based at Duxford and moved shortly after Howard's arrival to RAF Coltishall, Norfolk. Flying Spitfires, in early 1940 the squadron was involved in providing cover for bombers attacking targets in occupied Holland and were then involved in offensive patrols covering the evacuation from Dunkirk.



**Wing Commander Howard Frizelle Burton**

In June 1940, Howard married Jean Feredith Maxwell Robertson at Leatherhead, Surrey. A 21 years old Secretary, Jean was the daughter of Air Commodore Edmund Digby Maxwell and Evelyn Jane Robertson.<sup>12</sup> Jean's elder brother, Duncan Maxwell Robertson was a BBC employee before the war and enlisted as Flying Officer Air Gunner (Service No 70570). He was killed on 28 October 1940 when the aircraft he was in stalled whilst making a sharp turn as it climbed away from a target during a live firing exercise in Lincolnshire. He is buried at Manby (St Mary's) Churchyard, Lincolnshire.

On 3 September 1940, Howard was appointed Acting Squadron Leader and was posted to 616 Squadron, initially based at Kirton-in-Lindsay, Lincolnshire, before moving to RAF Tangmere, West Sussex, as the Battle of Britain intensified.

RAF Tangmere housed three Squadrons of Spitfires, 145, 610 and 616, all part of HQ No 11 Group commanded by Wing Commander Douglas Bader DSO, DFC. Bader and his superior, Air Vice Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory favoured what were called 'Big Wing' tactics. This involved the three squadrons working in unison against German formations. From records it appears that Wing Commander Bader favoured flying with Howard's 616 Squadron. He was a notoriously aggressive fighter pilot, pushing himself exceptionally hard and expecting everyone else to adhere to the same standards. He also had an abrasive personality and frequently clashed with those higher in rank and his own colleagues. Before he was shot down and captured in August 1941, it was reported that the Squadrons under his command were on the verge of mutiny over his leadership style.

Howard's rank of Acting Squadron Leader was made substantive on 1 September 1941. On 19 September 1941, Howard was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The citation read:

*This officer has led his squadron with commendable skill and coolness. He has participated in fifty-four sorties over enemy territory during which he has assisted in the destruction of two Messerschmitt 109's, probably destroyed a Heinkel and damaged a further two enemy aircraft. Squadron Leader Burton has on all occasions proved an inspiration to his unit.*

On 29 September 1941, Howard was posted to HQ No 11 Group as Squadron Leader-Tactics. Later that year he was posted to RAF Hawkinge, near Folkestone, Kent. This was the home to several Squadrons although there is no definitive role mentioned for him.

On 11 April 1942, Howard was posted to RAF HQ Middle East and in October of that year was appointed Squadron Leader HQ No 212 Group based at Benghazi, Libya. He only remained there a month before transferring to No 243 Group also at Benghazi, flying Hurricanes against the Afrika Corps troops of the then General Erwin Rommel. In December of that year, he transferred again to No 243 Group, flying Curtiss Kittyhawks. This was a fighter-bomber regarded as a 'tankbuster' and Howard achieved much success against Afrika Corps armoured columns,

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<sup>12</sup> Edmund Robertson had enlisted as a Naval Cadet in the Royal Navy in 1902. Originally a Gunnery Specialist, he qualified as an Admiralty Flying Officer in March 1914. He was permanently transferred to the RAF in 1920 retiring in the post of Air ADC to King George V in August 1935. He re-engaged at the outbreak of War and served until 1945

despite the fact that the RAF formations were outnumbered three to one by German and Italian squadrons.

On 13 February 1943, Howard was promoted Acting Wing Commander and ten days later was awarded a Bar to his DFC, the citation reading:

*Since he assumed command of the wing in December 1942, this officer has taken part in nearly all its sorties. On one occasion, the formation was attacked by a very large force of enemy fighters, one of which Wing Commander Burton shot down. He has displayed great keenness and devotion to duty.*

In April 1943, Howard was again decorated, this time with the Distinguished Service Order, the citation reading:

*Wing Commander Burton is the commanding officer of an exceptionally successful wing. Recently, he has taken part in several sorties involving low level attacks on heavy armoured fighting vehicles. His brilliant leadership has contributed in a large measure to the great success achieved.*

Around this time, Howard returned to the United Kingdom on leave. On 3 June 1943, he boarded an RAF Lockheed Hudson at RAF Portreath, Cornwall for the flight back to North Africa. In addition to Howard, the passengers comprised three Wing Commanders, a Group Captain and two Squadron Leaders. The aircraft was intercepted by a long-range German Junkers JU 88 fighter-bomber aircraft over the Bay of Biscay and shot down. There were no survivors. An officer surely destined for much higher rank, Howard was killed two weeks before his 27th birthday.

Howard's remains were never recovered. He is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, the Battle of Britain London Monument at Victoria Embankment, London, and the War Memorial at Ashted, Surrey, where he had resided with his wife, Jean.

Having initially started research to identify two family members who may have served in the Great War, I have been amazed by the depth and breadth of service within one family. I have been honoured to have had the opportunity to carry out this research and as I uncovered new links and facts, the thought struck me that if this is the service attributable to one family, what are the chances of similar stories waiting to be uncovered?

#### **A message from the author, Michael Nugent**

*'I am currently researching for a book on the experiences of the 16th (Irish) and 36th (Ulster) Divisions at the Battle of Langemarck, 16 August 1917. I would be very keen for any readers who have letters or personal accounts from soldiers in either Division for the period 31 July-18 August 1917 to get in touch. In my experience, it is the personal accounts that bring a book to life. I already have some accounts, but would like many more. I can be contacted by email at [emjayan@live.co.uk](mailto:emjayan@live.co.uk).'*

***Thanks in anticipation.***

***Michael Nugent***

# Kanturk Great War Pension Records

## Barry Linehan

Thanks to the efforts of the Western Front Association, the pension records of over six million surviving soldiers were saved from destruction. These are now gradually being made available for examination. During the war many men were discharged when it was determined that they were no longer physically fit to serve. Such men were paid a pension. As the war came to an end, when men were being demobilized, they were given the opportunity to put forward any disability for assessment by the Ministry of Pensions. Any disability that became apparent only after discharge could also be put forward. Those claims that were made were taken to an assessment board.

Kanturk town is situated in the northwest of County Cork, in the south of Ireland. In 1914 it was a market town with a population of 1,518. It had a wide variety of shops and services and was linked by rail to Cork and Dublin.

For the purposes of this brief study the records of forty-four Kanturk men have been examined and of these forty-three served in the army. The pension record cards contain a variety of information. In the case of two men the card merely records the name, number, rank and regiment of the soldier. The date of discharge is noted on thirty-seven cards. Ten were discharged prior to 11 November 1918. For seventeen of the men their year of birth is recorded. The nature of illness/disability suffered by the soldier is detailed in twenty-nine cases. The amount of the weekly pension is noted in the case of twenty-eight soldiers. In eleven cases the men had one or more dependants. All the Kanturk records fall into Category 5 of pension allocation where the maximum weekly payment was forty shillings. Men had to undergo a regular medical assessment, the results of which determined the amount of their pension. Hence in the case of three of the men their pension was increased, while in the case of one his pension was decreased.

	Name	Regiment/Service	Discharged	Age	Disability	Dependants	Amount
1	Bradley, Ewart	Royal Navy	17/11/20	25	Astigmatism		Eight shillings
2	Buckley, Cornelius	Irish Guards	15/02/17		Debility		
3	Daly, John	Royal Engineers	17/05/20				
4	Daly, Patrick	Leinster Regiment	09/09/19	33	Malaria and defective teeth		Nine shillings
5	Fitzgerald, Denis	Middlesex Regiment & Labour Corps	14/11/19	37	Gunshot wound to shoulder and chest		
6	Foley, James	Royal Munster Fusiliers	07/11/17	21	Gunshot wound to right leg		Twelve shillings
7	Galvin, Denis	Connaught Rangers	07/07/22				
8	Gorman, Joseph	Labour Corps					

9	Greaney, Jeremiah	Royal Army Veterinary Corps	12/03/19	49	Bronchitis Rheumatism		Twenty shillings
10	Greaney, Jeremiah	Leinster Regiment	10/02/21				
11	Hayes, Denis	Royal Irish Regiment					
12	Hassett, Michael	Labour Corps	21/02/20				
13	Hurley, Patrick	Royal Irish Regiment	18/04/18		Progressive muscular atrophy of both shoulders		Sixteen shillings
14	Jordan, Daniel	South Wales Borderers	08/04/17		Gunshot wound to left elbow		Sixteen shillings
15	Kelleher, John	Royal Garrison Artillery	13/12/18	34	Valvular disease of the heart	Wife and six children	Seventeen shillings
16	Keneally, Denis	Labour Corps	18/02/19	45	Valvular disease of the heart and rheumatism	Wife and five children	Twenty-four shillings
17	Linehan, Cornelius	Dragoons of the Line	06/07/22				
18	Linehan, Denis	Royal Army Medical Corps	20/12/18				
19	Linehan, Henry	Royal Engineers	19/03/19		Injury to wrist, defective hearing	Wife and two children	Eight shillings
20	McCarthy, Richard	Royal Field Artillery	09/09/19	21	Deafness and fracture of the ulna		Sixteen shillings increased to twenty-eight shillings
21	McCarthy, Thomas	Royal Munster Fusiliers	10/06/16	22	Gunshot wound to right eye		Twenty-eight shillings
22	McSweeney, Edward	Royal Irish Regiment			Gunshot wound to right arm		Twelve shillings
23	Mullins, Patrick	Royal Munster Fusiliers, Labour Corps	14/03/19	43	Bronchitis	Wife and one child	Thirteen shillings
24	Murphy, Edmund	Royal Munster Fusiliers	27/01/19				
25	Nagle, Maurice	Leinster Regiment	19/06/22				
26	O'Brien, William	Royal Garrison Artillery	19/03/21		Bronchitis		Eight shillings
27	O'Connell, David	Royal Engineers	30/11/19			Wife and one child	Seventeen shillings
28	O'Connor, William	Labour Corps					
29	O'Keeffe, James	Labour Corps	05/05/20		Rheumatism		Twelve shillings
30	O'Leary, Eugene	Royal Engineers	29/01/17		General debility	Wife and three children	13 shillings

31	O'Sullivan Daniel	Royal Munster Fusiliers	06/10/17	35	Deformity of right knee	Wife and one child	Seventeen shillings
32	O'Sullivan, James	Labour Corps	25/03/18		Rheumatism and sciatica		Twenty shillings
33	Quilligan, Patrick	Royal Engineers and Royal Munster Fusiliers	19/11/19	27			Twelve shillings
34	Roche, Frank	Royal Engineers			Rheumatism		Eight shillings
35	Sheahan, Patrick	Royal Engineers	20/03/19				Eight shillings, increased to twelve shillings
36	Sheehan, Cornelius	Royal Army Medical Corps	04/07/19	38	Neurasthenia	Wife	Twelve shillings
37	Sheehan, Francis	Royal Irish Regiment	02/05/17	46	Myalgia	Wife	Twenty-five shillings later reduced to twenty-one shillings
38	Sheehan, Jeremiah	Royal Engineers	05/05/20	24	Neurasthenia		Eight shillings
39	Sheehan, John	Irish Guards					
40	Sheehan, John	Labour Corps	16/03/20		Malaria		eight shillings
41	Smyth, David	Royal Munster Fusiliers	23/04/19		Malaria		
42	Sweeney, Patrick	Royal Fusiliers			Shellshock and disordered action of the heart		Eight shillings later increased to twelve shillings
43	Teehan, John	Royal Irish Regiment	30/09/18	44 (53)	General debility and old age	Widower, two children	Seventeen shillings
44	White, Michael	Royal Engineers	30/07/20	42	General disability	Wife and three children	Twenty-seven shillings

One of the advantages of these records being made available is that the information contained in the cards can be built upon by using a variety of other sources.

Ewart Bradley gave his address as the RIC Barracks, Kanturk.<sup>13</sup> Ewart was born in Hull on 5 December 1895. On his eighteenth birthday he enlisted with the Royal Navy for a period of 12 years. He remained with the navy until he was invalided out on 17 November 1920, because of a problem with his eyesight.<sup>14</sup> His initial payment of six shillings was granted for seventy-two weeks. Bradley answered the British government call for volunteers in 1920 to augment the Royal Irish Constabulary numbers. Their nickname, the Black and Tans, derived from the makeshift uniforms they were issued because of a shortage of RIC uniforms. Bradley was appointed on 6 December 1920 to the Cork East Riding Division and arrived in Kanturk on 17

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.fold3.com/image/644986919> [Accessed 23 June 2020]

<sup>14</sup> TNA/ ADM-188-672-12577

December. He received a gratuity of £7-16s on 16 December 1921.<sup>15</sup> By March of 1922 his pension file had been transferred to Yorkshire.

Cornelius Buckley died in the South Infirmary Hospital, Cork, of cardiac failure and arthritis on 9 July 1921. He was aged forty and a bachelor.<sup>16</sup> Denis Fitzgerald was awarded the Military Medal in October 1917.

James Foley enlisted with the 9th Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers, aged nineteen, on 12 January 1915. At the time he was nineteen and working as a labourer. He went to France on 19 December 1915. He was posted to the 1st Battalion on 30 May 1916. He was in trenches at Hulluch near Loos on 25 July 1916 when a rifle grenade exploded, shattering his right fibula and embedding several pieces of shrapnel in his leg. He was taken by hospital barge to St Omer on 27 July. From there he was transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Hospital in Manchester where he spent a total of 219 days. He underwent a series of operations. James was discharged from the army on 7 November 1917 as he was 'no longer physically fit for war service.' He was described as being 'a very good soldier and an honest level-headed man.'<sup>17</sup> James Foley died, aged thirty-four in Kanturk District Hospital on 22 March 1930. He was unmarried. His death certificate refers to the 'rheumatism and gunshot wounds received in the Great War.' In the final two weeks of his life he suffered from a 'cerebral embolism.'<sup>18</sup>

The Greaneys were father and son. In 1911 Richard McCarthy he listed his occupation as 'army tailor.'<sup>19</sup>

The wedding of Patrick Mullins and Mary McCarthy of Watergate Lane, took place in Kanturk on 9 January 1912. Mary was a widow with two children, Catherine and Madge. Patrick was a drummer with the Royal Munster Fusiliers and based at Tidworth Barracks, Salisbury.<sup>20</sup> By 1914 Patrick was back living in Kanturk and working as a 'town labourer.' He was also helping to drill the Kanturk Corps of the Irish Volunteers. Patrick re-enlisted aged thirty-nine, with the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers at Mitchelstown on 2 January 1915. The *Cork Examiner* of 7 January 1915 reported that a meeting of the Kanturk Volunteers was held in the Hibernian Hall, Kanturk, on the previous Sunday to pay tribute to their drill instructor Mr. P Mullins 'who had been called away to join the colours.' Mr. Jeremiah Fitzpatrick, Captain of the Kanturk Corps, stated that Mr. Mullins had brought the Kanturk Corps to:

*A very high state of efficiency, and it was the opinion of all that he had displayed intelligence of a high order as well as constant attention ... by his admirable and unassuming manner he had won the highest regard of all members. He thought it was their duty to place on record their*

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<sup>15</sup> <https://search.findmypast.ie/record?id=S2%2FIRE%2FRIC%2FHO184%2F102240615%2F00016> [Accessed 23 June 2020]

<sup>16</sup> [https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths\\_returns/deaths\\_1921/05087/4396357.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1921/05087/4396357.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> 1114/MIUK1914a119577-00189 [Accessed 9 May 2020]

<sup>18</sup> [https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths\\_returns/deaths\\_1930/04920/4335394.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1930/04920/4335394.pdf) [accessed 9 May 2020]

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Cork/Kanturk/Watergate\\_Lane/417127/](http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Cork/Kanturk/Watergate_Lane/417127/)

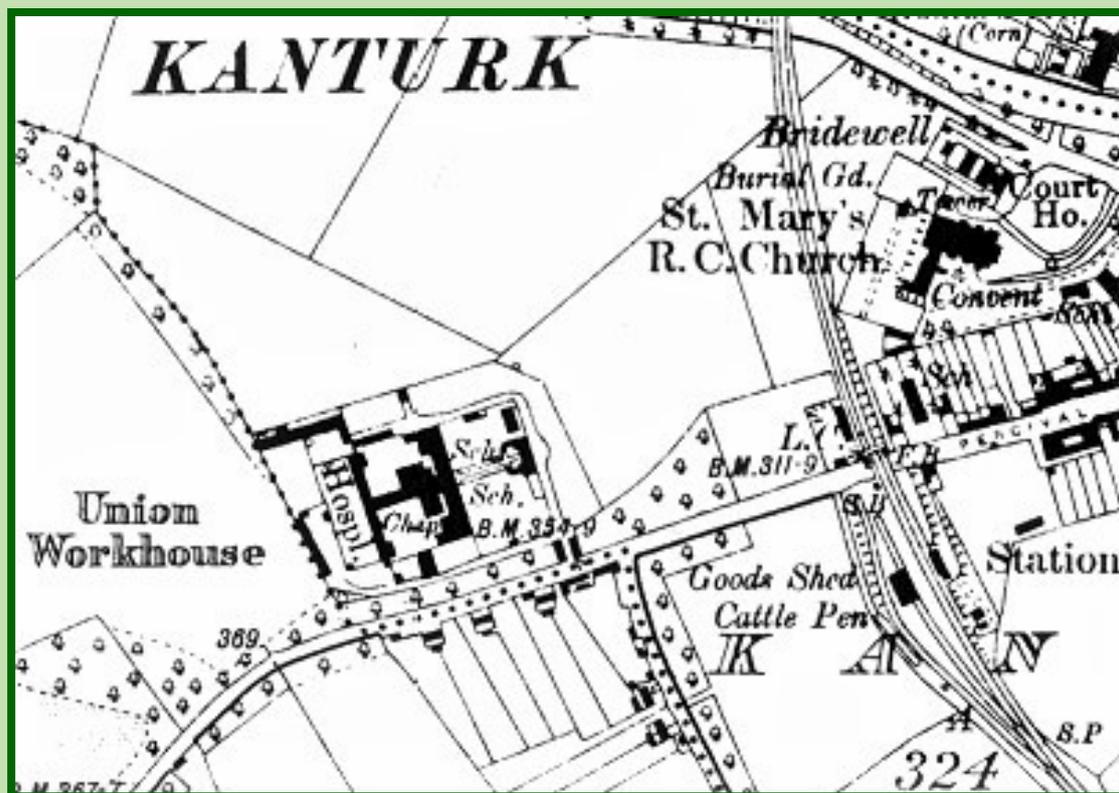
<sup>20</sup>

[https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage\\_returns/marriages\\_1912/09909/5601213.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1912/09909/5601213.pdf) [Accessed 14 May 2020]

*high appreciation of abilities and conduct, and hoped same would be appreciated by the authorities.*

Given his previous experience as a soldier and as a drill instructor Patrick was promoted to acting corporal in mid-January and to acting sergeant in March. His son Patrick Joseph was born on 27 May, 1915.<sup>21</sup> Patrick left for France on 17 December 1915 and remained on the Western Front until August 1916. He served in England until June 1917 and returned to the Western Front in June of 1917 having transferred to the 768<sup>th</sup> Company, Labour Corps. Following total service of four years and forty-three days, Corporal Mullins was discharged on 14 March 1919 due to ill health and returned to Strand Street, Kanturk.<sup>22</sup> Patrick Mullins, aged 46, died at his home in Strand Street, from a combination of cardiac failure and bronchitis on 4 April 1926.<sup>23</sup> He was described as ‘an ex-soldier.’

Many of the survivors of the Great War carried with them scars, both physical and mental. The forty-four Kanturk survivors were no different. For some their wounds and illnesses were contributing factors in their dying at a relatively young age. Due to the ongoing medical assessment carried out, the continuing payment of a pension would indicate that their injuries and illnesses were continuing to impact on their daily lives. The findings of the 1926 census, due to be released in 2027, should help provide a clearer picture on how the survivors were faring.



**Map showing the Kanturk Workhouse where many survivors mentioned in this article died.**

<sup>21</sup> [https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth\\_returns/births\\_1915/01364/1562330.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1915/01364/1562330.pdf)  
[Accessed 14 May 2020]

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/1114/miuk1914a\\_085831-01399](https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/1114/miuk1914a_085831-01399) [Accessed 6 April 2020]

<sup>23</sup> [https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths\\_returns/deaths\\_1926/04992/4361854.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1926/04992/4361854.pdf)  
[Accessed 14 May 2020]

# **The Great War Servicemen of Killorglin, County Kerry**

**Stephen Thompson**

*This article is an excerpt from the author's book "Killorglin's Great War Servicemen" published in 2018. A digital version of the book can be found on the Killorglin Archive Society's website "killorglinarchives.com".*

Killorglin, County Kerry, as with other communities throughout the length and breadth of the island of Ireland – both Nationalist and Unionist - made a very substantial contribution to the Allied Cause during the First World War.

While the main element was the voluntary enlistment of men in the armed services, farmers and farm workers provided food for the fighting forces and fodder for the horses - which were required for transport and gun hauling. Also, women were engaged in gathering sphagnum moss for the treatment of wounds.

This article focusses on the men from Killorglin Parish who served in the armed forces during the conflict.

It is structured in three parts:

- A brief statistical treatment

- Biographical and service notes on two soldiers

- Excerpts from a diary kept by an officer on the front line in Africa

## **Killorglin's Recruitment – a Global Parish**

While the majority of 'Killorglin' men enlisted in the British Armed Forces, a large number joined up in several other countries across the globe, reflecting the high level of emigration around the turn of the century.

At the time of writing, the author has identified 155 Killorglin men who served in the War, by using the following criteria: having been born in the parish, worked/lived in the parish, or lived in the parish after the War.

This figure includes the 46 men who lost their lives during the conflict.

Killorglin's men saw active service on the Western Front (France and Belgium), in Gallipoli, the Balkans, Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq), India, German East Africa (modern-day Tanzania) and at sea. Some served on the Home Fronts in Ireland, Britain, Canada and the United States.

**Table 1: Distribution of enlistment by country and/or service**

Location	Service / Force	Total	Fatalities
Great Britain and Ireland	British Army	77	26
	Royal Navy	16	4
	Royal Flying Corps	1	1
	Mercantile Marine	1	0
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>31</b>
British Empire	Australian Imperial Force	25	8
	New Zealand EF	7	3
	Canadian Expeditionary Force	5	2
	Indian Army	1	1
	South African Army	1	0
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>14</b>
United States of America	United States Army	24	2
	United States Navy	3	0
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>47</b>

**Table 2: Distribution of enlistment within the British Army Regiments**

Nationality of Regiments	Regiment	Total	Fatalities
Irish	Royal Munster Fusiliers	28	6
	Irish Guards	11	5
	Prince of Wales Leinster Regt.	4	3
	Royal Irish Regiment	4	3
	Royal Dublin Fusiliers	1	1
	Royal Irish Fusiliers	1	1
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>19</b>
British	11 British Regiments	28	7
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>26</b>

**Table 3: Theatre of Fatal Action and Nationality of Regiment / Service**

Theatre	Total	Nationality of Regiment / Service						USA
		Irish	British	Aust.	NZ	Can.	Indian	
Western Front	37	17	7	6	3	2		2
Gallipoli	5	2	1	2				
Naval	4		4					
Africa	1						1	
	<b>47</b>							

## **Bands of Brothers** **(Fatalities in red)**

### **Four Killorglin families each sent three sons to the War:**

Joseph Francis Dodd\*  
John O'Connell Dodd  
Walter de Courcy Dodd

Hugh Duffy  
Michael Duffy  
Patrick Duffy

Denis Doyle  
Martin Doyle  
Patrick Doyle

James Flynn  
John Flynn  
Patrick Flynn

### **Pairs of Brothers**

Butler, Maurice F  
Butler, William

O'Reilly, Michael  
O'Reilly, James Francis

Clifford, Daniel  
Clifford, Timothy

Reilly, Patrick  
Reilly, Peter

Dillon, Edward  
Dillon, Jeremiah

Sheather, Charles Thomas DSM  
Sheather, Walter Henry

Myles Johnston  
Phillip Johnston

Warner, Henry  
Warner, William Carter

### **The Dillon Brothers: A Special Note**

Edward and Jeremiah Dillon, from Ranguin in Killorglin, Privates in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), were killed side-by-side on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1916 at Pozieres during the Battle of the Somme.

The very sad circumstances of their deaths were described in an AIF witness statement:

“Edward was wounded by a shrapnel bullet immediately on climbing out of his trench and his brother Jeremiah went out to bring him in, when a shell exploded and killed both of them”.

### **Biographical and Service Notes on two Soldiers**

#### **Patrick Guihan**

Patrick, born 10<sup>th</sup> February 1880, was the eldest son of Bartholomew and Johanna Guihan, of Meanus, Killorglin. He emigrated to New Zealand in 1910, where he worked as a teamster on a sheep station at Lake Pukaki, near Canterbury, South Island.

In February 1917 he enlisted in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

Rank: Private. Service No: 51158.

Patrick embarked for the Front with 26th Reinforcements F Company on 09<sup>th</sup> June 1917 from Wellington, New Zealand on board the 'Willochra' bound for Devonport, England.

He was transferred to the Western Front in September 1917, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Canterbury Regiment, N.Z.E.F., and was attached to the No. 2 N.Z. Light Trench Mortar Battery.

He was killed in action on Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> July 1918, during the Allied advance in the Bapaume / Rossignol Wood area, near Arras on the Somme.

His headstone is located in Gommecourt Wood New Cemetery, Foncquevillers.

99 years later, in 2017, his grandniece Rita Thompson (O'Connor) placed a stone from the Guihan homestead on Patrick's headstone (*Note the New Zealand phonetic version of his surname*).



Patrick Guihan's CWGC headstone

**FIELD SERVICE.** Army Form B. 209

REPORT of Death of a Soldier to be forwarded to the War Office with the least possible delay after receipt of notification of death on Army Form B. 213 or Army Form A. 36, or from other official documentary sources.

REGIMENT 2nd Battalion CANTERBURY REGIMENT. Squadron, Troop, Attached No. 2 N.Z. LIGHT  
OR CORPS N.Z. Expeditionary Force. Battery or Company TRENCH MORTAR BATTERY.

Regimental No. 51158 Rank PRIVATE

Surname GEEHAN Christian Names PATRICK

Date 21st JULY 1918 Place In the Field, FRANCE

Died Cause of Death\* KILLED IN ACTION

Nature and Date of Report A.F.B.213- 27th JULY 1918

By whom made O.C., No. 2 N.Z. Light Trench Mortar Battery

\* Specially state if killed in action, or died from wounds received in action, or from illness due to field operations or to fatigue, privation or exposure while on military duty, or from injury while on military duty.

State whether he leaves (a) in Pay Book (Army Book) No Pay-book received (b) in Small Book (if at Base) Not issued  
a Will or not (c) as a separate document No Will received to date

All private documents and effects received from the front or hospital, as well as the Pay Book, should be examined, and if any will is found it should be at once forwarded to the War Office.

Any information received as to verbal expressions by a deceased soldier of his wishes as to the disposal of his estate should be reported to the War Office as soon as possible.

A duplicate of this Report is to be sent to the Fixed Centre Paymaster at Home, or to the D.F.A.G., Indian Expeditionary Force, or Field Disbursing Officer, as the case may require, together with the Deceased's Pay Book (after withdrawal of any will from the latter). If the deceased's Small Book is at the Base, it should be forwarded to the War Office with this Report.

Station and Date ROUEN FRANCE 8th AUGUST 1918 Signature of Officer in charge of Section J. L. Sandley  
Adjutant General's Office at the Base NEW ZEALAND SECTION

New Zealand Section  
G. H. J. 3rd Echelon B.E.F.

W209B.11765-200,000-H. & Sr.-517-(10485)-Form B.2090A/2.

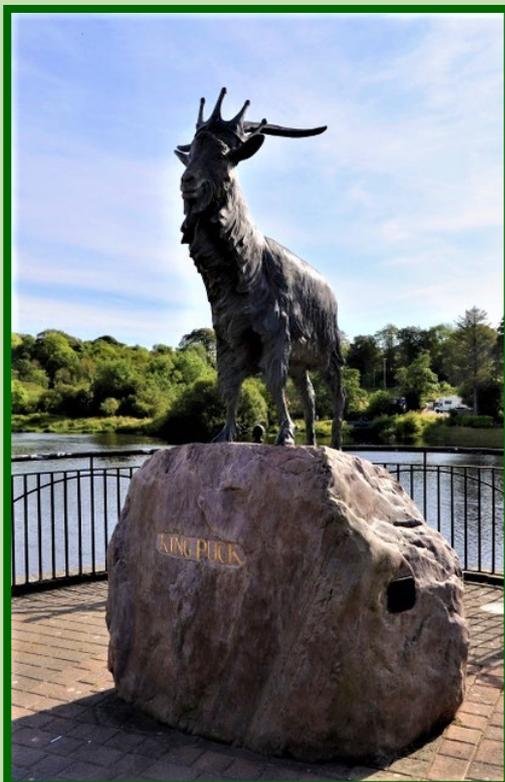
Extract from Field Service Report for Patrick Geehan 51158 NZEF.

Personnel File for Patrick Geehan, 1917 [AABK 18805 W5539/14 0043897]. Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga.

<https://www.archway.archives.govt.nz/ViewFullItem.do?code=16785370&digital=yes> Licensed under CC by 3.0.

Killorglin, in Co. Kerry, is famous for its traditional Puck Fair held on August 10-12 every year. A wild mountain goat (Puck) is crowned King of the Fair, and placed atop a high stand in the centre of town. A statue of a goat stands proudly at the entrance to the town.

By coincidence, a statue of a tahr (a goat-like mammal) has been erected at Lake Pukaki, close to where Patrick Geehan worked before enlisting.



**King Puck statue, Killorglin.**  
*Courtesy of MGK Photography, Killorglin.*



**Tahr statue, Lake Pukaki.**  
*Courtesy of Ms. Claire Lanyon.*

### **John O'Connell Dodd**

The author wishes to thank Billy Dodd (nephew) and Graham McKechnie (BBC Radio Northampton) for the following information:

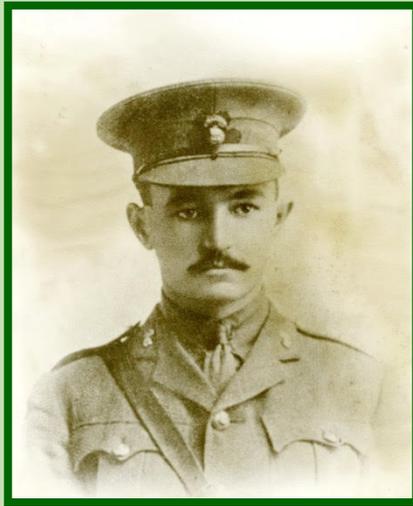
Dr William and Ellen Dodd lived in Ballymacprior House, Killorglin, where they raised a family of eighteen children.

Three of their sons, all officers, enlisted and lost their lives in the War.

2nd Lt. Francis Joseph Dodd, 7th Battn. Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Died in October 1918 as a result of gas poisoning.

Lt. John O'Connell Dodd, 2nd Battn. Royal Munster Fusiliers. Killed in Action November 1918.

Lt. Walter de Courcy Dodd, 11th Squadron, Royal Flying Corps. Killed in Action October 1917.



**Lieutenant John O'Connell Dodd  
Royal Munster Fusiliers**



**CWGC headstone of  
Lieutenant John O'Connell Dodd  
Royal Munster Fusiliers**

"Lieutenant J O'C Dodd...Late Capt. London Irish Football Club."

Of all the words that John Dodd's grieving mother could have selected to have on her son's headstone (see above), these are the ones she chose. This is how she wanted him to be remembered. It is unique and it is extraordinary. If you walk around the cemeteries of the Western Front you will see thousands of different phrases of grief and memorial to the men who fell. Some call upon God to look after the fallen soldier. Some choose to remind the world that he was a cherished father, son or brother. And some are achingly painful: simple yet heart-rending expressions of loss. But for the Dodd family, they wanted John to be remembered for captaining this special rugby club. His captaincy of the Exiles was, for his family then – and it remains today – the central feature of his all-too-brief life. It defined who he was.

John O'Connell Dodd was a member of London Irish for almost all of his adult life. He was born in Kerry in August 1883, the son of a Killorglin doctor and one of eighteen children. He moved to London as a young man, finding work as a clerk in a legal office. Like many other young Irishmen (and two of his brothers), the newly-formed London Irish RFC became the centre of his social and sporting life. Early club records are sketchy, but Dodd, who played as a forward, appears in a second team photo as early as 1904, as a 21-year-old. Four years later he was playing regularly for the 1st XV and by 1910 he was the club captain

For rugby players in 1914 it was an instinctive duty to join up and to fight and serve alongside their own. Dodd returned to Killorglin to join the 8th Battalion, the Royal Munster Fusiliers (largely drawn from Kerry men). He enlisted as a sergeant but was soon promoted, receiving his commission in June 1915. Six months later the battalion of young Irish volunteers headed to the Western Front.

John Dodd's first few months in France were spent on the monotonous yet dangerous routine of going in and out of the line around Loos. He wrote to his brother Maurice that, "during the time I was there we had no fighting whatsoever. Nothing on a large scale came off and we were not fortunate enough to be on the spot where any of the small fights took place". In May 1916, while burying a fellow officer, Dodd himself was hit – wounded in the left shoulder, as he says, by "a bit of shrapnel...which left rather a big hole". He was shipped back to England, to hospital

in Winchester, before going home to Ireland to recover (and to write letters to his commanding officer, begging to be allowed to return to his battalion).

Dodd was given his wish and rejoined the fray later in 1916, but it wasn't the Western Front for him. Instead he was posted to the 6th Battalion and headed out to Palestine to fight under Lord Allenby. He spent a year in the Middle East - at Christmas 1917 he wrote to Maurice once more, "We are having a good time here now hunting the Turks. We were indirectly concerned in the fall of Jerusalem yesterday as we were doing an attack on the flank of it". Dodd returned to the Western Front in early 1918, initially training American soldiers who had recently joined the War, before joining the 2nd Battalion, the Royal Munster Fusiliers.

The final weeks of the First World War were as bloody as any which had preceded it. The German Army was beginning to collapse, but warfare had become much more open as the Allies were in pursuit of their prey further and further east. There was talk of an armistice, but the fighting continued. On 7th November Dodd and his men came under shell-fire. In the stark words of the battalion war diary, "At 07.00 Lt. Dodd, commanding B Company, was killed whilst transferring his men to trenches from billets owing to the increased shelling". Four days later the War was over.

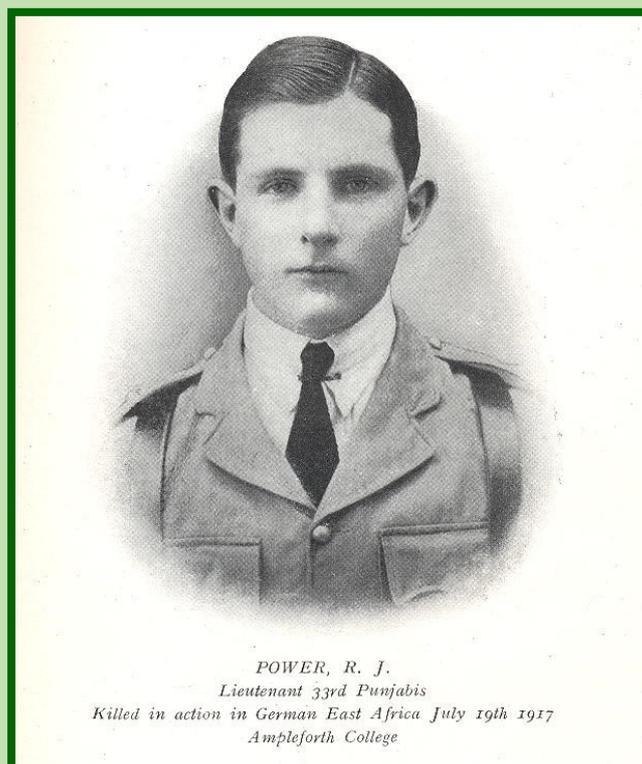
The men of the battalion were devastated to lose Dodd. He was loved by his soldiers. Letters home to the Dodd family tell of how the locals promised to tend to the grave of this "fervent Catholic and loyal Irishman" in peacetime.

Captain Livingston was with Dodd when he was killed and wrote back to his mother: "I have myself lost a brother and many good friends, but nothing has affected me so much as the death of your gallant son. He had come through so much that we never thought he would be killed. His honest, kind-hearted, unselfish character, you know better than I. On the night before his death, although himself worn out with four nights and three days of marching and fighting he insisted on doing my job because he thought I was more exhausted than he. Ireland can ill afford to lose such a man."



**London Irish RFC 1910.  
John O'Connell Dodd Captain (with ball)**

## The Frontline Diary of Lieutenant Raphael Joseph Power



*The author wishes to thank Raphael Power's family for permission to use excerpts from his diary.*

### **Lieutenant Raphael Joseph Power**

Raphael Joseph Power kept a diary during his command of a platoon in an Indian regiment in German East Africa. The diary was returned to his parents following his death in action.

Brief biographical notes and selected pages of the diary are shown below.

Raphael Joseph Power was educated at Ampleforth College, Yorkshire, from where he was commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the 46<sup>th</sup> and then the 33<sup>rd</sup> Punjabi Regiments in the Indian Army.

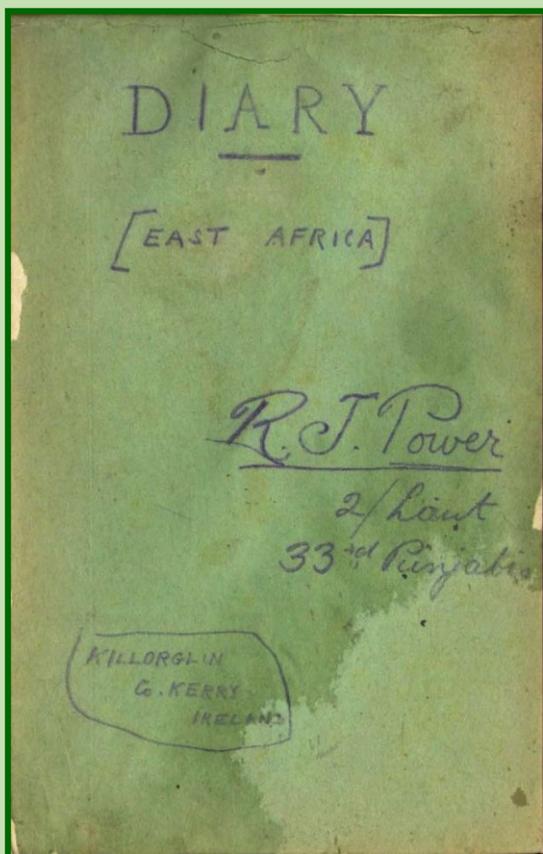
He left England in 1915, and was initially based in Quetta (modern day Pakistan).

Following a stint in Aden, his regiment was transferred to German East Africa in early May 1917 where it took part in the campaign against the German General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck.

While there, he kept a diary (*see below*) that graphically described the struggles of the military effort in a very unhealthy climate.

He was killed in action at Narangombe on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1917, aged 20 and was buried in Dar es Salaam War Cemetery in Tanzania.

Extracts from the diary of Lieutenant Raphael Joseph Power.



 1917  
May 8<sup>th</sup>. The regiment arrived at KILWA KISIWANI on the H.T. "PURNEA". Marched six miles to MPARA and camped for three days to complete transport viz: 1500 porters.  
May 12<sup>th</sup>. Marched eleven miles to KILWA, camped there for a day and marched on to SSINGINO. Major Graham took over command of outpost line. We procured a Ford car from the S+T.

 May 14<sup>th</sup> SSINGINO.  
Delightful camp in the trees at the top of the hill. Coconuts, bananas, oranges and pineapples grow here. We can get fowl & eggs from the natives for the mess.  
The rations are a disgrace. We have been in the country a week & have not had a full days ration yet. The men are getting no ghee. There is none in the country & none coming from India. The men resent this very much as in Aden they got their

# The Notice Board

**Note: All branch activities remain cancelled due to the Covid 19 restrictions. Information as to when they will resume will be posted in this journal and on the WFA social media platforms.**

## Irish Branch Details

### Antrim and Down Branch

**Chairman:** Ian Montgomery

**Contact**

**Secretary:** Dr Tom Thorpe [antrimdownwfa@gmail.com](mailto: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 or December. A modest donation of £5.00 is normally requested at the door to help fund branch activities.

### Cork Branch

**Chairman:** Gerry White

**Contact**

**Secretary:** Gerry O'Meara [gerryo@gerryomeara.com](mailto:gerryo@gerryomeara.com)

**Website:** <https://www.westernfrontassociationcork.com>

**Facebook:** Cork Branch Western Front Association

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

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.

### Dublin Branch

**Chairman:** Ian Chambers

**Contact**

**Chairman:** Ian Chambers: [ian1914@eircom.net](mailto: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 Pearse Street Library in Dublin. A modest donation of €3.00 is requested to help fund branch activities.

## **Visit the Western Front Association Website**

You can see the above and plenty of other interesting items by visiting the association website which can be accessed at this link: <https://www.westernfrontassociation.com/> Members can access additional material in the 'Members Login' area of the site.

## **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/user/WesternFrontAssoc>

## **New 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](mailto:gerrywhitecork@yahoo.co.uk)

New material is welcome and all contributions will be considered for inclusion. Material from Northern Ireland or of Irish interest from branches in the United Kingdom or the USA would be particularly welcome!

## **Facebook and Twitter**

There are many interesting articles and facts available on the association's Facebook and Twitter pages. Readers who use social media are encouraged to visit these sites, 'like' what they see and share or retweet. Doing so will spread the word about the association!

## **Podcasts Available!**

A large 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://tunein.com/podcasts/History-Podcasts/Mentioned-in-Dispatches-p1184631/>

## **New Digitalised publication 'The RND Journal'**

Between June 1997 and March 2003 Len Sellers produced and edited a three-monthly magazine on the history of the Royal Naval Division, which from July 1916 was known as the 63rd (RN) Division. This excellent magazine eventually extended to 24 issues with a separate index for each eight magazines. The complete set contained 2,443 pages with 581 photographs, 75 maps and 71 poems.

Len kindly offered these to The Western Front Association and his offer was accepted.

The results of this work is now available for all WFA members to access via the 'members area' on the association's web site

## **The 2021 WFA Calendars is now available**

Once again the calendar features images of the battlefield taken by a number of photographers who have kindly donated their work. The scenes depict points of interest in France and Belgium (and, incidentally, Italy) some of which are well known but others 'off the beaten track'. This year's calendar has a 'Somme' theme.

The calendar is available via the WFA e-shop or by phone on 0207 118 1914. The calendars will be dispatched usually within 48 hours of the order being received. Two of the images are shown below:



**The image for February 2021 - Fromelles.  
Photograph taken by Scott Brand.**



**The image for October 2021 - The Devonshire Cemetery at Mametz.  
Photograph taken by Martin Barry**

# Leading Seaman Michael Duhig and Germany's Worst Crime of the Great War

Paul Busted

On the night of 31 July 1917, the *SS Belgian Prince* was torpedoed by the German submarine, U-55, 175 miles North West of Tory Island. The incident occurred when the ship was travelling from Liverpool to Newport News, Virginia, in the United States, with a cargo of blue clay – which is rich in minerals. That night, thirty-nine men drowned. Harry Hassan, the Master of the ship was captured and taken below deck on the U-boat, never to be seen again. Among the crew was Leading Seaman Michael Duhig from Glanturkin, Whitegate, Co. Cork.

Michael Duhig was born on 5 December 1881, in the townland of Glanturkin near Whitegate, Co. Cork. His parents were Jeremiah and Mary Duhig (née Lynch). After he left school, Michael travelled to Davenport, England. He enlisted in the Royal Navy on 1 December 1898 for an engagement period of twelve years. According to his record he was eighteen years old, five feet – four and a half inches tall, had brown hair, green eyes and was of fair complexion. His first ship's posting was *HMS Black Prince* on 1 February 1898 with the rank of Boy 2<sup>nd</sup> Class. He subsequently served on *HMS Minotaur*, *HMS Agincourt* (a Minotaur class, training ship) and *HMS Thunderer* (A Devastation class). From 26 March 1900 until 22 June 1903 Michael Duhig, served on *HMS Goliath* and rose to the rank of Able Seaman, his naval profession being a seaman gunner.

During this same period, *HMS Goliath* was deployed to the China Station. The primary role of this station was the maintenance and repair of Royal Navy ships and the supply of naval stores and victuals. It also looked after communications with the Admiralty in London, the relief of crews at the end of a commission and the replacement and re-commissioning of ships at regular intervals. *HMS Goliath* was a pre-dreadnought battleship of the *Canopus* class, which was commissioned into the fleet on 27 March 1900. Michael's time on at the China Station earned him the China Medal 1900. This was a British campaign medal approved on 1 January 1902 for issue to British and Indian land and sea troops who served during the Boxer Rebellion, between 10 June and 31 December 1900. Michael received his award (medal, number 4700) on 2 December 1902.

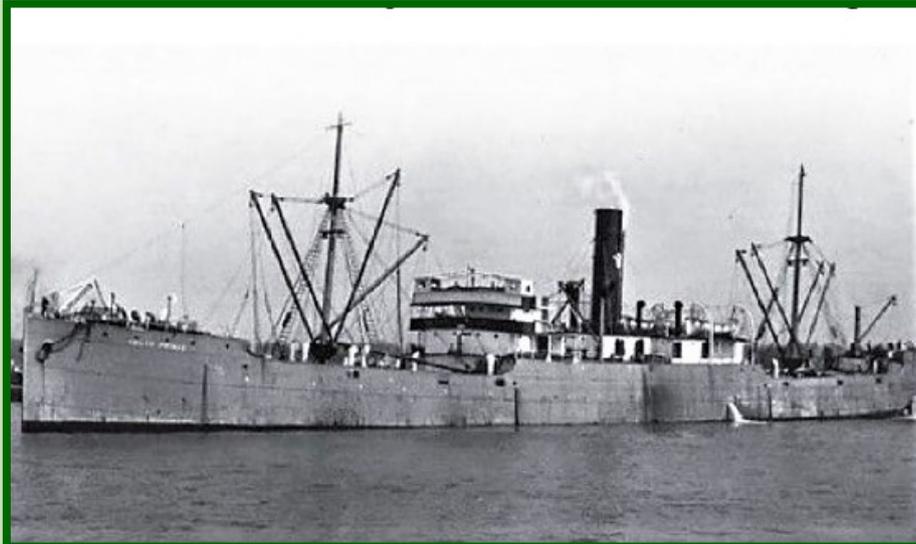
On 13 May 1915, during the Gallipoli campaign, *HMS Goliath* was torpedoed three times and sunk by the Turkish torpedo boat destroyer *Muâvenet-i Millîye* taking 570 of her 700 crew to the bottom of the sea. Seventy-three Irish men died during the sinking of the ship, sixteen of them from Cork. They included Leading Seaman Michael Coleman and Gunner Charles McCarthy, both men from Aghada.

Michael, however, had left *HMS Goliath* by that stage. In September 1909, he was posted to *HMS Flora*, an *Astraea*-class cruiser for two years. The 1911 Census/Sea Record has him back in the China Station. On 2 December 1911, he completed his twelve-year term in the Royal Navy and the following day he was enlisted into the Royal Fleet Reserve (R.F.R.) at Devonport.

On 11 October 1914, following the outbreak of the Great War, Michael Duhig was transferred back to the Royal Navy and sent to *HMS Vivid*, the Naval Depot at Devonport. A short time

later, on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1914, he was posted to *HMS London* which was part of the Channel Fleet. On 25 April 1915, that ship, with Michael on board, was off the Gallipoli Peninsula, supporting ANZAC forces as they landed at Gaba Tepe and Anzac Cove. It remained in the Mediterranean, supporting the Italian Royal Navy in the Adriatic Sea until October 1916.

On 27 October 1916, Michael returned to *HMS Vivid*. After a short spell he was on the move again, this time to *HMS President III*, an accounting base for the Royal Fleet Reserve, Royal Naval Reserve (R.N.R) and the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (R.N.V.R). It was also the headquarters for the personnel on Defensively Armed Merchant Ships (D.A.M.S). These men were paid extra pay and entitled to extra pensionable service. One of these ships was the *SS Belgian Prince* and among its crew was Michael Duhig.



**The SS Belgian Prince**

Built in 1901 by Sir James Laing & Sonhks Ltd, Sunderland (Yard No.578) as the *S.S Mohawk* a cargo ship for the Megnatic Steamship Company in Bristol, it would have a number of owners; the Megnatic Steamship Company, Bristol (1901-1902) and the North Atlantic Shipping Company, London (1902 – 1912) In February 1912, the ship was sold to the Prince Line Ltd, Newcastle and was renamed *Hungarian Prince*. In 1915, as the Great War entered its second year, it was renamed *Belgian Prince* since Hungary was then an enemy nation. In 1916, James Knott, the owner of Prince Line Ltd sold it to Furness Withy “primarily because James Knott had three sons, two were killed in action during the Great War and the third was posted missing but was later discovered to be a prisoner of war in Gallipoli”. The *SS Belgian Prince* was 391ft in length with a 51.2ft beam, single screw engine with a gross weight of 4,765 tons.

In Sir Archibald Hurd’s book, *The Merchant Navy, Volume 3*, he talks about Germany’s intensive submarine campaign during the period of July 1917 - November 1918:

The two months, July and August 1917, were marked by a welcome reduction in the amount of damage done to merchant shipping by the intensive submarine campaign. The number of British vessels sunk in July was 88 and in August, 84. These losses were still terribly high, but they compared favourably with the total of 116 for June and 155 for April. They represented a gross tonnage of 319,931 and 310,551 respectively, and they were accompanied by the loss of 401 lives (passengers and crews) in July and 415 in August.

On 26 July 1917, the *SS Belgian Prince* with its forty-three man crew which included Leading Seaman (Gunner) Michael Duhig, left Liverpool for the last time. Its destination port was Newport News with its cargo of blue clay. On 31 July 1917 at approximately 19:50 hours, approximately 175 miles North West of Tory Island, County Donegal, a torpedo fired by U-55, which was commanded Kapitänleutnant Wilhelm Werner, struck the ship without warning on its port side between the engine room and the number five hold, disabling the engines and causing the ship to list. All the crew survived the explosion and clambered into three lifeboats. At the same time, the submarine surfaced and commenced firing at the stricken vessel with the intention of disabling the wireless.

Werner then steered U-55 towards the crew in their lifeboats. When the three lifeboats were alongside, he ordered the men out onto U-55's sea deck. The Master, Harry Hassan, was taken prisoner and taken below deck. The men were interrogated and asked if they had any weapons and were then robbed of their possessions by the Germans. They were also stripped of their overcoats and were left standing on the sea deck. Werner then ordered his men to destroy the lifeboats with axes and once this was done, he ordered them below deck and shut the sea hatch. As Chief Engineer Thomas Bowman later stated:

*'The submarine moved ahead about two and a half miles, then stopped, and after a moment or two I heard a rushing sound, like water rushing into the sinking tanks of the submarine, and I shouted "Look out – she is sinking!" The submarine descended into the Atlantic, dragging the Belgian Prince's crew into the cold water. A few of the men had managed to keep their lifejackets from the Germans but the majority stood no chance.'*

Only three of the crew survived this heinous act: Chief Engineer Thomas Bowman, 2nd Cook William Snell of Jacksonville Florida, who survived by hiding his lifebelt under his clothes and Able Seaman George Silessi. Harry Hassan, the Master of the ship who was held prisoner on the U-55, was never seen or heard from him again.

The minutes from a meeting of the British War Cabinet, record that Prime Minister David Lloyd George described the incident as an 'outrage'. The British papers called what happened 'A crime unparalleled for fiendish cruelty' and 'A cold-blooded murder' that was caused by 'submarine savagery'. On 6 August 1917, the *Dundee Courier* reported that the Secretary of the Admiralty made the following announcement:

*As has already been reported unofficially in the press, the British SS. Belgian Prince was torpedoed by a German submarine on 31st July. The crew abandoned the ship in two boats, and were ordered on to the upper deck of the submarine by the German commander. Under his direction the boats were then smashed with axes, and the crew of the Belgian Prince deprived of their lifebelts. The master was taken below and the hatch closed. The submarine submerged without warning, with forty-three men standing on her deck. This was the entire crew of the Belgian Prince. With the exception of three all these were drowned. The three survivors had contrived to retain their lifebelts without the knowledge of the enemy. They were picked up after having been in the water for eleven hours. The details of this atrocious outrage are supported by the separate*

*affidavits of the three survivors. The cold-blooded murder of these men equals, if it does not transcend, the worst crimes which our enemies have committed against humanity.*

The Kriegstagebuch (Logbook) of U-55 mentions little of the event,

*July 31: Unterwasserangriff. Heckschuß, G-Torpedo. Scheneidewinkel 80°, 600 m, Treffer Mitte. Englischer bewaffneter Viermastendampfer, 4800ts, in Ballast auslaufend. Vor Bewacher getaucht.*

*(Attack submerged. stern tube, G-torpedo. Edge angle 80°, 600 m, hit at centre. Armed British four masted steamer, 4,800 tons, leaking out of ballast tanks. Dove in front of escort ship.)*

*Aug. 1: Dampfer mit Sprengpatrone versenkt; vor Foxglove bis 9 h vm getaucht.*

*(Steamer sunk with scuttling charges, dove at 9 a.m. in front of Foxglove)*

Kapitänleutnant Wilhelm Werner's entry into his log is evasive and he attempted to keep his crime a secret. He does not mention the name of the ship, the fate of the crew or the taking of a prisoner. This was not the first time Werner carried out this type of atrocity. On 8 April 1917, the U-55 torpedoed the *SS Torrington*, 150 miles south west of Scilly. Again, he took the crew onto the sea deck, destroyed their lifeboats and then submerged, leaving them to drown. On this occasion, only one crew member survived.

After the war, Kapitänleutnant Wilhelm Werner was charged with war crimes for submerging and sending to their death, ship survivors on the deck of U-55 and torpedoing two hospital ships. However, he never faced trial, having fled from Germany to Brazil under a false name. He later returned to Germany and joined the NSDAP (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei or NAZI party) reaching the rank of SS Brigadeführer. During the Second World War, he served on Reichsführer S.S. Heinrich Himmler's personal staff. Wilhelm Werner died on 14 May 1945.



**Captain Henry Hassan**  
Master of the SS Belgian Prince



**Wilhelm Werner**  
Pictured in his SS uniform

Only one body of the crew of the *SS Belgian Prince* who drowned, that of Chief Officer Neil McDougall Morton, was recovered after it washed ashore at Cuan Ferry, Scotland, on 23 September 1917. Thirty-seven of the crew are commemorated on the Tower Hill Mercantile Marine Memorial in London. This memorial commemorates men and women of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets who died in both World Wars and who have no known grave. Able Seaman David Linklater, Royal Naval Reserve, from Orkney in Scotland is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. Leading Seaman Michael Duhig of Glanturkin, Whitegate Co. Cork is commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial and he is also commemorated on the war memorial in Whitegate village, Co. Cork.



Two survivors from the *SS Belgian Prince*

*Rgn 13 - 2/4/24 27-3-24*  
**DEPENDANT'S PENSION.** *LONG 1093*  
*DEAD 28/3/24*  
*25.11.23/15/9477*

Name *Duhig Michael* Regimental No. *98055- (R.N.R. B4085)* Case No. *D.P. 0.6990*  
 Regiment or Ship *"Belgian Prince"* Rank *Able Seaman*

Documents received from Paymaster

Date and cause of death *31. 7. 17 Ship sunk.* *Pre war Dependence*  
*4/- a week S.F.C.*

Dependant *Mrs Mary Duhig*

Address *Glanturkin Whitegate Cork.*

Relationship *Mother*

Pension *4/-* a week from *10-8-17*

Date awarded *19-6-18* If refused {  
 Papers *P.A.* reason {

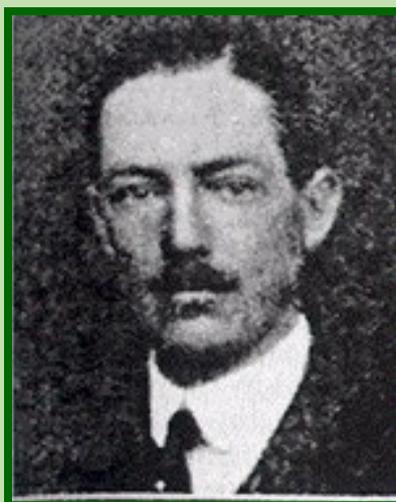
F 6496 Wt 18149/875 50 000(12) 2/18 J.P. Gp. 159

Michael Duhig's Pension Record  
 Courtesy of the Western Front Association

*'As long as we embrace them in our memory, their spirit will always be with us'*  
 (Quotation from the Maritime Quest Website)

# Lieutenant Colonel George Butler Stoney, DSO

Gerard O'Meara



George Butler Stoney was born in Knaresborough, Harrogate, North Yorkshire on 13 August, 1877. His parents were Major George Ormond Stoney and Mehliia Jessie Stoney (nee Sinclair Laing). He was a cousin of the Butler-Stoney family in Portland, Lorrha, Co. Tipperary, hence his use of 'Butler' as a Christian name.

Captain George Butler Stoney of the King's Own Scottish Borderers (K. O. S. B.) was a staff officer on board the *SS River Clyde* when it arrived on V Beach on the Gallipoli Peninsula, 25 April, 1915 and would go on to play a prominent part in the operation to establish a secure beachhead.

The plan for the *SS River Clyde* landing owed something to the legend of the Wooden Horse of Troy – the ruins of which are about ten miles from V Beach on the other side of the Dardanelles. Sides were cut out of the *River Clyde* and the intention was that the ship be beached so that the 2,000 men inside would run down wooden gangways onto pontoons that had been dragged alongside the ship. From the pontoons, the men would jump onto the beach and advance inland to fight the Turks. The landing party consisted of the following units 86<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division: the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers; the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers and half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Hampshire Regiment.

The landing place was defended by about 350 Turkish soldiers from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, of the 26<sup>th</sup> Regiment who were fighting from concealed and protected positions. They also occupied nearby ruined castle and the village of Sedd el Bahr which allowed them to pour enfilading fire on the beach. Lieutenant Guy Nightingale, one of the few surviving officers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Munster Fusiliers described V Beach as 'a regular death-trap'. Fewer than 400 men managed to reach the shore. Leaderless, they scrambled to take cover and were in no mood to take the fight to the Turkish defenders. Reinforcements who landed later from the *River Clyde* under cover of darkness were similarly shocked and dispirited.

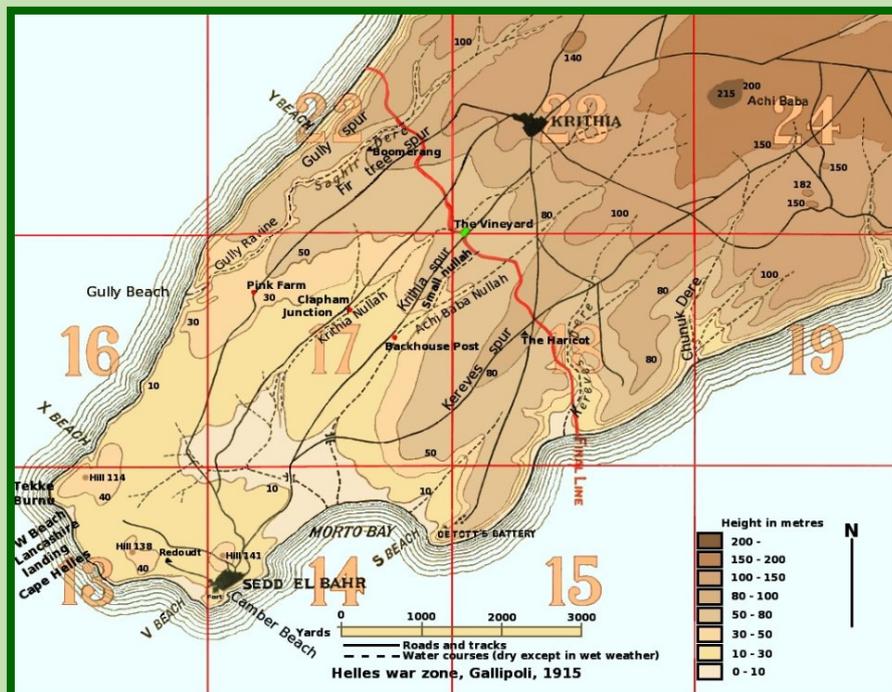
Major General Aylmer Hunter-Weston, Officer Commanding the 29<sup>th</sup> Division, knew the landing party had to get off V Beach if they were to establish a foothold so he issued orders to renew the assault. This took place the following morning in the form of a three-pronged attack. Only on the right was there some progress. Two companies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Hampshires were assigned to attack the ruined castle and Sedd el Bahr. They were led by Captain Garth Neville Walford and Captain Alfred Addison However, when both men were killed the attack stalled

Lieutenant Colonel Charles Hotham Montagu 'Dick' Doughty-Wylie, a staff officer with the 29<sup>th</sup> Division, observed the attack from the relative shelter of the *River Clyde*. As he looked on, he told another officer 'I can't stick this any longer; I'm going to see what I can do on shore'. Just after 09.00hrs he landed on V Beach with Captain George Stoney in the hope that they 'might find something to do'. He sent Stoney to the centre of the beach 'to whip up any effectives and advance up the front of the hill'. Doughty-Wylie made for the castle and Sedd el Bahr where the struggle was ongoing. By 13.30hrs, mostly thanks to Doughty-Wylie's inspiring leadership, the landing party had fought its way into the village. He then arranged a coordinated assault that would see the Munsters led by Captain Stoney push up the slopes from the center of the beach

There were only 40 to 50 Munsters and their path was blocked by thick strands of barbed wire. The wire was too thick for the pliers the soldiers had with them. It was then that 26-year-old Corporal William Cosgrove from Aghada, Co. Cork, ignoring the swarm of bullets, ran towards the stakes holding the wire and lifted them out of the ground. He succeeded in making a 30-yard gap through the wire. At 6'-6" tall, he subsequently became known as 'The Giant of Gallipoli'.

At the same time, the Hampshires had taken Sedd el Bahr which significantly reduced the opposition facing the Munsters. Four of the Munsters were wounded in this assault including William Cosgrove who was hit in the side and back. According to Stoney 'The place proved to have been held by very few men – certainly if there had been more, we could not have got up as easily as we did'.

Among those who were killed in the final moments of the assault was Lieutenant Colonel Doughty-Wylie. He was buried that night on a nearby hill running down to the sea that would soon become known as 'Fort Doughty-Wylie'. Today, he remains at rest in this outpost. His final resting place, known as the Sedd el Bahr Military Grave, is the only solitary British and Commonwealth grave in Gallipoli. After Cape Helles was evacuated in January 1916, the Turkish people continued to respect the last resting place of a man who had earned acclaim from their own Sultan.



Gallipoli showing the Landing Beaches of 25 April, 1915

Lieutenant Colonel Doughty-Wylie's place at the head of the charge was taken by Stoney. For his gallantry Doughty-Wylie was awarded the Victoria Cross. His citation reads:

*On 26<sup>th</sup> April 1915 subsequent to a landing having been effected on the beach at a point on the Gallipoli Peninsula, during which both Brigadier- General and Brigade Major had been killed, Lieutenant- Colonel Doughty-Wylie and Captain Walford organised and led an attack through and on both sides of the village of Sedd el Bahr on the Old Castle at the top of the hill inland. The enemy`s position was very strongly held and entrenched, and defended with concealed machine-guns and pom-poms. It was mainly due to the initiative, skill and great gallantry of these two officers that the attack was a complete success. Both were killed in the moment of victory.'*

Corporal William Cosgrove was also awarded the Victoria Cross. His citation reads

*'For most conspicuous bravery in the leading of his section with great dash during our attack from the beach to the east of Cape Helles, on the Turkish positions, on 26th April, 1915.*

*Corporal Cosgrove on this occasion pulled down the posts of the enemy`s high wire entanglements single-handed, notwithstanding a terrific fire from both front and flanks, thereby greatly contributing to the successful clearing of the heights'.*

William Cosgrove never fully recovered from his wounds. He died in London on 14 July 1936. His remains were brought home to Cork and he is buried in the family plot in his local cemetery at Aghada.



**The SS River Clyde at V Beach by Charles Dixon**

Captain George Butler Stoney is prominently featured in most accounts of the V Beach landings. However, there is no record that his gallantry on that occasion received official recognition although he was promoted to Major and later Lieutenant-Colonel. Later, in 1915, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

From the *K.O.S.B in the Great War*:

*The next day saw the grip on the western position tightened and the capture of the village and fort of Sedd-el-Bahr, thanks to the covering fire of the navy, including that of the Queen Elizabeth, and of the height, Hill 141, just N.W. of it. The attack on Sedd-el-Bahr - a very difficult feat, especially after the strain of the preceding day - owed much to the inspiring leadership of Col. Doughty-Wylie, V.C. Borderers can take pride in the fact that Major George Butler Stoney, loaned from the Egyptian Army, a Borderer and the son of a Borderer, did magnificent service both on 25th and 26th April, which my informants told me well merited the V.C. The battalion soon came under his able leadership, but his end came all too soon as the sequel will show.*

From *The Edinburgh Gazette* No. 1308, 27 August 1915:

War Office, August 25, 1915.

*His Majesty the KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the appointment of the undermentioned Officers to be Companions of the Distinguished Service Order, in recognition of their gallantry and distinguished service in the Field:*

*Captain (temporary) Major George Butler Stoney (Egyptian Army), 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The King's Own Scottish Borderers.*

*For conspicuous gallantry and ability during operations south-west of Krithia, Dardanelles, from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> June 1915. He showed great coolness and good leading, holding together in a most praiseworthy manner the Battalion, which had suffered greatly. He had been previously brought to notice for gallant conduct during the operations up to May 5<sup>th</sup>.*

Stoney was very much involved in the assault of 28 June, 1915 during which much of Gully Ravine was captured. Two weeks after the action he wrote home to his brother:

*It was quite the best 'stunt' we have had so far. I am sorry to say we have again suffered very heavily.... The Regiment have done most awfully well and those that are left are as keen as anything. By this last show we have fairly secured our left flank and have it well pushed forward and the sea beyond it. We have captured a large number of rifles and ammunition. They did not mean to be turned out of these 5 lines of trenches which we occupied. I should like to have seen them running away up the Gully.*

Lieutenant Colonel George Butler Stoney was killed in Gallipoli on 15 October 1915, less than six months after the V Beach landing and is believed to be interred in Pink Farm Cemetery, Helles.



**Memorial Stone to Lieutenant Colonel Stoney  
in Pink Farm Cemetery, Gallipoli.**

The following is taken from The War Diary of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion King's Own Scottish Borderers for 15 October 1915:

*Major G. B. Stoney DSO and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. J. D. Mill killed by a high explosive shell which fell into the dugout. These officers were buried in 52<sup>nd</sup> Division Cemetery at 1815. All the Battalion attended. Several other shells were fired by the enemy in the vicinity of the Battalion but they did no damage.*

*Capt. C. S. Stirling-Cookson took command of the Battalion from today and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. C. H. Distison became Temporary Adjutant.*

*Four men to hospital.*

Captain C. S. Stirling-Cookson survived the Great War. He later participated in compiling the regimental history, 'The K.O.S.B. in the Great War' and contributed the following in relation to Lieutenant Colonel Stoney:

*The old routine had hardly commenced when a dreadful calamity befell the K.O.S.B. Their CO. and the orderly officer for the day, 2nd Lieut. J. D. Mill, were killed on 15 October by the direct explosion of a shell from Asia. Capt. Shaw had been half-buried hard by one minute before and he describes the gruesome sight that met his eyes. The writer well remembers the stunning effect of the news. The following characterisation will show what a loss the battalion suffered.*

*'He lived for the regiment, which was his sole thought; a strict martinet and very severe at times. Yet all respected him and most feared him too. Stoney was so tremendously energetic and strong, though a small, delicate-featured, bronzed man, that we miss him exceedingly.'*

*It may be added that he was a professional soldier, and a master of his profession. It was not only the hero of the landing and the disciplinarian, the calm, dignified, spick and span British officer, it was the man who knew the army machine in and out, who would see justice done to his officers, and who had the gift of clear exposition that was most missed.*

*If the Egyptian Army could have spared him his war career was assured, had he lived. But Egypt kept a tight grip, as Capt. Worsley found when he had to return in September after two months' service with the battalion. Capt. Cookson as C.O. carried on until word came that Major Kelly was to be C.O.*

The following article was published in the *Limerick Chronicle* in November 1915:

*Lieutenant Colonel George Butler Stoney, D.S.O, King's Own Scottish Borderers, killed at the Dardanelles, was a member of an old Tipperary family, which settled in that county in 1688. He was the son of the late Major George O Stoney, King's Own Scottish Borderers, and grandson of the late Major General George Butler Stoney, Portland, County Tipperary, formerly of the 86th Royal County Down Regiment.'*

From: Pupils at Haileybury College prior to 1912:

*He was born 13 August 1877, son of Major G. O. Stoney - First commissioned 1897 King's Own Scottish Borderers; served on the North-West Frontier 1897-98. Tirah Expeditionary Force medal 2 clasps. Served as Captain in the Egyptian Army from 1904. Major DSO 1914 Lieutenant Colonel Mentioned in Despatches. Killed at Gallipoli with King's Own Scottish Borderers 15th October 1915, aged 38. Cemetery: PINK FARM CEMETERY, HELLES Turkey Grave or Reference Panel Number: Sp. Memorial 204.'*

An excerpt from *Gallipoli* by Nigel Steel:

*'Last night at Stoney's funeral the pipes played the Flowers of the Forest – a plaintive dirge in an impressive setting. The sun had set over the Aegean, the sky was overcast and grey, the moon in her second quarter casting a faint radiance on the land and seascapes. Against this background was silhouetted the figures of hundreds of the Battalion grouped around to pay a last tribute of respect to a fine commander. The only point of light was that of the chaplain's electric torch turned on the pages of his prayer-book (Captain C S Stirling Cookson)*

*At a time of many deaths, the attendance of such a large number of his men was an impressive tribute indeed.'*

**Lieutenant-Colonel Stoney, 1st K.O.S.B.**  
 Lieutenant-Colonel George Butler Stoney, D.S.O. (Egyptian Army), 1st King's Own Scottish Borderers, who was killed in Gallipoli on October 15, aged 38, was the eldest son of the late Major G. Ormonde Stoney, of the same regiment. He was educated at Haileybury and Sandhurst, and joined his regiment during the Tirah campaign, 1897-8 (medal with two clasps). In 1908 he was seconded for service with the Egyptian Army, but in April, 1915, was lent by them to act as a landing officer at the Dardanelles, where he went through the experience of the River Clyde landing. On May 17, though only a captain, he was sent up to take command of his regiment on the Peninsula, and for his "great coolness and good leading, holding together in a most praiseworthy manner the battalion, which had suffered greatly," he was awarded the D.S.O. He was promoted lieutenant-colonel in October, having had command of the battalion for five months. He was a keen polo player, and captained the regimental polo team in Cairo in 1907. When on leave he made his home with his brother, Mr T. R. Stoney, at Wootton Court, Wootton, Kent.

**Report of the death of  
 Lieutenant Colonel George Butler Stoney  
 that appeared in  
*The Evening Telegraph and Post* of 28<sup>th</sup> October 1915.**

TO THE GLORY OF GOD  
 AND IN PROUD AND LOVING MEMORY OF  
 MAJOR GEORGE ORMONDE STONEY.  
 K O S BORDERERS.  
 DIED AT TUBINGEN, GERMANY, 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 1890, AGED 44.  
 HAVING BEEN INVALIDED FROM THE CHIN-LUSHAI EXPEDITION.  
 AND OF HIS WIDOW,  
 MEYLIA JESSIE MARJORIE WILLIAMSON STONEY,  
 DIED AT SOUTHAMPTON, 15<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 1910, AGED 62.  
 BURIED IN THIS CHURCHYARD.  
 AND OF THEIR ELDEST SON,  
 LT COL GEORGE BUTLER STONEY, D-S-O.  
 K O S BORDERERS.  
 KILLED IN ACTION IN GALLIPOLI, 15<sup>TH</sup> OCT. 1915, AGED 38.  
 AND OF THEIR SECOND SON,  
 BOWES ORMONDE STONEY,  
 COLONIAL CIVIL SERVICE, (F.M.S)  
 DIED AT MILLTIMBER, ABERDEENSHIRE, 18<sup>TH</sup> OCT. 1910, AGED 31.  
 BURIED IN THIS CHURCHYARD.  
 AND OF THEIR FOURTH SON,  
 2<sup>ND</sup> LIEUT. THOMAS RAMSAY STONEY,  
 K O S BORDERERS.  
 KILLED IN ACTION NEAR KEMMEL, FLANDERS, 10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 1918, AGED 35.  
 BURIED AT LA CLYTT BRITISH CEMETERY.  
 AND OF THEIR ELDEST DAUGHTER,  
 DONA MARGARET STONEY,  
 DIED AT CALMORE, 3<sup>RD</sup> AUG. 1903, AGED 19.  
 BURIED IN THIS CHURCHYARD.  
 AND OF THEIR THIRD DAUGHTER,  
 JANE BUTLER STONEY,  
 DIED IN INDIA, IN 1889, AGED 6 MONTHS.  
 COL. H. HOWARD STONEY, N. STAFFS. REGT.  
 THEIR FIFTH SON, DIED 27<sup>TH</sup> FEB. 1955, AGED 68.

**White marble tablet to the Stoney family,  
 in St. Matthew's church,  
 Netley Marsh, Hampshire.**

Notwithstanding the many tributes that appeared after the death of Lieutenant Colonel George Butler Stoney, unfortunately, his name and the details of his service and sacrifice were soon forgotten by people. I first came across his name while researching my book *Lorrha People in the Great War*. When I discovered his family connection to my native parish of Lorrha in North Tipperary, I decided he was worthy of inclusion. In doing so, I hoped to bring his story to a new generation of readers.

# Timelines - A Poem for Myles

Rachel Abraham

While the names of British and Commonwealth servicemen awarded the Victoria Cross for acts of gallantry under fire during the Great War of 1914-18 are known throughout the world, those who received other awards for similar acts are known only to a few. This is particularly the case in Ireland where the part played by Irishmen in the war has until recently, been largely ignored or forgotten.

Over 210,000 Irishmen served with British and Commonwealth forces during the war. Countless numbers of these men performed significant acts of gallantry while serving on land, in the sea or in the skies. Thirty-seven received the Victoria Cross, while more were decorated with other medals in recognition of their courage displayed in the face of the enemy. One such man was my grand-uncle, Sergeant Myles Abraham DCM MM.



**Sergeant Myles Abraham DCM, MM**

I first heard of Myles while I was researching my father's family tree. Myles was born on 9 May 1887 in St Columba's College, Rathfarnham, Co Dublin. The college was a Protestant boarding school for boys and it was also where his parents lived and worked. He was the sixth of eight children, and the fourth son born to William John Abraham, a Protestant from Co Armagh, and Mary Clarke, a Catholic from Co Wicklow. The couple spent a great deal of their working lives at the college where William was employed as a coachman and Mary worked as a dairymaid.

St Columba's has a rich athletic tradition and Myles grew up surrounded by all types of sport. Myles developed a love of rugby at an early age and he went on to play with the Clontarf Football Club and Bective Rangers in Dublin. He also played with the Leinster provincial team and between 1912 and 1914 he was capped five times playing with the Irish international team. Myles was also a talented boxer and in 1913 he defeated W McDonald to become the Irish Amateur Heavyweight Boxing Champion.

Unfortunately, despite hours of research, I haven't yet been able to find out when Myles joined the British Army. However, I did discover that he served during the war as a member of D Battery, 174th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. This unit was part of the 39th Divisional Artillery. It was formed in the London municipality of Deptford in May 1915 and deployed to France early in March 1916. It spent the entire war on the Western Front and among the operations it took part in were: the battles of Beaumont-Hamel, Thiepval, and the Ancre during the 1916 Somme campaign; the battles of Messines and Passchendaele in 1917; and the German Spring offensives of 1918.



The Irish international rugby team pictured at Lansdown Road, Dublin, on 30 November 1912 prior to playing a match against South Africa. Myles Abraham is pictured in the second row, third player standing from the left.

Myles was wounded on 6 April 1918. During his time with the 174th Brigade RFA he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, the Military Medal and was also Mentioned in Despatches. The award of the Military Medal was listed in the London Gazette on 16 August 1917, his Mention was listed on 18 May 1917 and the Distinguished Conduct Medal on 26 November 1917. So far, I have been unable to locate the citation for his Military Medal but the following citation that accompanied the award of his Distinguished Conduct Medal later appeared in the London Gazette on 6 February 1918.

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. On two occasions when the battery was heavily shelled while in action, he rallied the men, and, in spite of casualties, got his gun into action again. On another occasion a fire was caused in a gun-pit by heavy enemy shelling. He was first on the scene and by his prompt action and disregard of danger extinguished the fire. His coolness and gallantry on critical occasions is worthy of the highest praise.

Sergeant Myles Abraham was demobilised after the war ended and he later returned home to Ireland where he resumed his sporting activities, got married and had a family. It is interesting to note that in 1920 he won another Irish amateur heavyweight boxing title with shrapnel still embedded in his right wrist. Fortunately, on this occasion he used his left hook to knock out his opponents!

After I found out about Myles' war service, I joined the Cork Branch of the Western Front Association. In 2012 we visited London and as part of the journey I left a small personal tribute for Myles at the Royal Artillery Memorial in Hyde Park. I have also given a presentation on the life of Myles to the Cork and Dublin branches, in the college where I work and to a number of historical societies. After I returned home, I spent some time thinking about Myles' life and how my search for his story had become such an important part of my life. It was these thoughts that led me to write the poem 'Timelines'.

## Timelines

### A Poem for Myles (1887-1966)

I haul you from the battlefield.  
The heavy clay holding you fast  
Now soft dust on a meadow breeze.  
Shrapnel melding within you  
Rusts peacefully today  
In an English grave.

From my library seat I watch  
As you severely punish your opponents,  
Your left hook uninjured in the war.  
The sweat glistening on your skin  
Dried up decades ago,  
Like the raucous voices  
Calling your name  
Round the boxing ring.

On the rugby field  
I admire your familiar face.  
You look back at me  
From an old photograph  
Curled and worn,  
Capturing in monochrome  
A moment,  
Over a hundred years ago.

I visit places you have been.  
In London,  
New, tactile paving  
For the vision-impaired  
Obscures from my eyes  
Any trace you left behind.  
I search for you  
In cold, metallic figures,  
Hunched round memorials.  
You are not there.  
I sigh in relief.

I pull these threads together  
In a moving, picture show of your  
life,  
The real story  
Lost in transitions  
Between each slide.

I am driven,  
Again and again  
To tell your tale;  
This is my only connection  
To a man who died  
Five years before I was born.

And yet,  
Kneeling at your graveside  
I know.  
It is enough.  
I remembered.



A replica set of medals belonging to the author showing those awarded to Sergeant Myles Abraham  
L to R: Distinguished Conduct Medal, Military Medal, 1915 Star, Victory Medal with Oak Leaves.

## Book Reviews

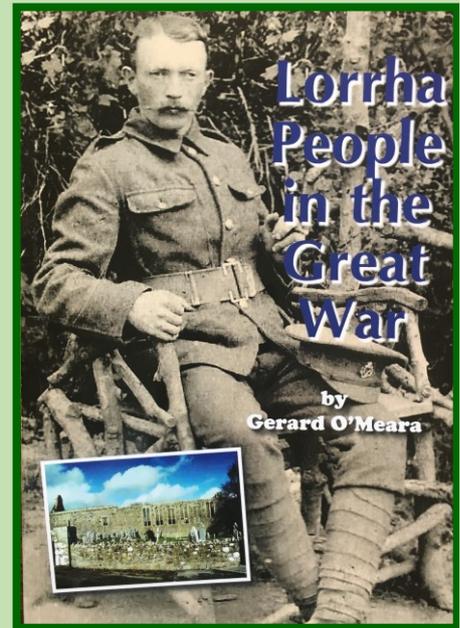
### *Lorrha People in the Great War*

By Gerard O'Meara

Softback, ISBN: 978-0-99-33557-0-7, €25.00

Reviewed by Dr. Ann Murray

It becomes quickly evident, on even a cursory browse through Gerard O'Meara's carefully researched book, that it is much more than a valuable resource on people connected to the author's native parish of Lorrha (North Tipperary) who were involved in the Great War. While the book indeed shines in this respect and for how, in considerable detail, it traces the parish's social history through these people's activities in relation to the War, the book is also valuable for exploring how individuals from various walks of life experienced the war and from various perspectives: those who volunteered, those left behind on the home front, the impact of the war on those individuals beyond 1918 and the socio-political factors that dogged Ireland at this time, when it was still part of the British Empire. Indeed, the lives of a number of the people featured here weave together the history of the Great War with the Irish Revolution, 1912-23. The book also includes those families who had left Lorrha but whose later generations enlisted in other countries, such as the United States and Australia.



The fact that the book focuses on a parish rather than a large town or city, and that it was close to Crinkle Barracks in Birr, means that the reader can examine the considerable impact that the Great War had on small communities, especially those that happened to be located near an army base. At a time when money and work were scarce, the proximity of the army base not only tempted those who believed in the war effort or the adventure the war seemed to represent but also the opportunity of regular income. The number of people examined here – over a hundred – is a figure that in itself expresses the extent to which the War could affect small communities.

A cross-section of the sixty-nine chapters indicates the wealth and variety of insight that the book provides. Across several chapters we learn about the wartime involvement of several members of the prominent Butler-Stoney landowning family of Portland, Park, Lorrha. Among its members counted Major Richard Brooke Butler-Stoney, recipient of the Military Cross and the Croix de Guerre, who was among the very first British soldiers to serve on the Western Front, while Captain Bowes Butler-Stoney helped in the organisation of and attended the Versailles Peace Conference. We also discover the talented artist Lieutenant Thomas Butler-Stoney of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and later the Irish Guards, who exhibited for several years at the Royal Academy and illustrated a number of books before the war; mentioned several times in Rudyard Kipling's *The Irish Guards in the Great War – The First Battalion*, Thomas Butler

Stoney died of wounds received in Boesinghe, Belgium in 1917. A cousin of the Portland Butler-Stoneys, Yorkshire-born Lieutenant Colonel George Butler Stoney played a prominent role in the Gallipoli landing, and is the subject of an article by Gerard O'Meara in this issue. The book also remembers the wealthy and well-liked estate owner Ella de Burgh Dwyer, who lost her life aboard the RMS Leinster when it was torpedoed and sunk on 10 October 1918. Lieutenant Cornelius 'Con' Deane, of a Lorrha family who had emigrated during the Great Irish Famine (1845-52) enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in May 1915 and was awarded the Military Cross. Surviving the war to have a family of his own, Con's son William became Governor-General of Australia in 1996 and visited his ancestral home in 1999. There is also the wartime romance of Lieutenant Cecil John Kenny, who was engaged to the glamorous Molly O'Connell Bianconi, a descendent of Daniel O'Connell and Charles Bianconi (the founder of Ireland's transport system). Some of the various Lorrha branches of the author's name of O'Meara are also represented here and includes the most famous of all those connected to the parish, Martin O'Meara. O'Meara had left Lorrha for Australia in 1911 and enlisted with the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force. He was awarded the highest military honour for valour, the Victoria Cross, in 1916. His remarkable courage and bravery, as well as contemporary articles documenting his actions and receipt of the Cross, is recounted here in particular detail.

In researching the book, the author has accessed a substantial range of archival and primary sources, taking him to various Irish repositories, Washington DC, Melbourne, and the United Kingdom, and which has led to a remarkably textured, detailed study of one community's connection to the War. One of the most valuable of these sources was closest to home: the author's father, from whom the author inherited his passion for military history. Ninety-nine years old at the time of publication, Michael O'Meara was born during the Great War and provided his son with some of his most illuminating material. In acknowledging his input, the author writes that 'several times I asked my father about the background of a Lorrha person who served in the Great War. Not only would I get details of that person but frequently he remembered the parents and previous generations of those soldiers'. The book also includes a section on the various awards given to those discussed.

The book is profusely and beautifully illustrated throughout with portraits, maps, newspaper articles, military material and the various locations related to the individuals discussed, among other things. This book is highly recommended for anyone interested in Ireland and its military and social history in relation to the Great War.

Winner of the 2016 *Tipperariana Book of the Year Award* for its contribution to the study of County Tipperary and its history.

Available from: Bandon Books Plus (Riverview Shopping Centre, Bandon), The Bookworm (Liberty Square, Thurles) or direct from the author at [gerryo@gerardomeara.com](mailto:gerryo@gerardomeara.com).

It may also be of interest to readers that Martin O'Meara's Victoria Cross is currently on loan to the National Museum of Ireland - Decorative Arts and History, Dublin, and will remain on display until April 2021.

## ***Major-General Oliver Nugent***

**By Nicholas Perry**

**Ulster Historical Foundation, Hardback, ISBN: 978-1-909556-82-9, £19.99**

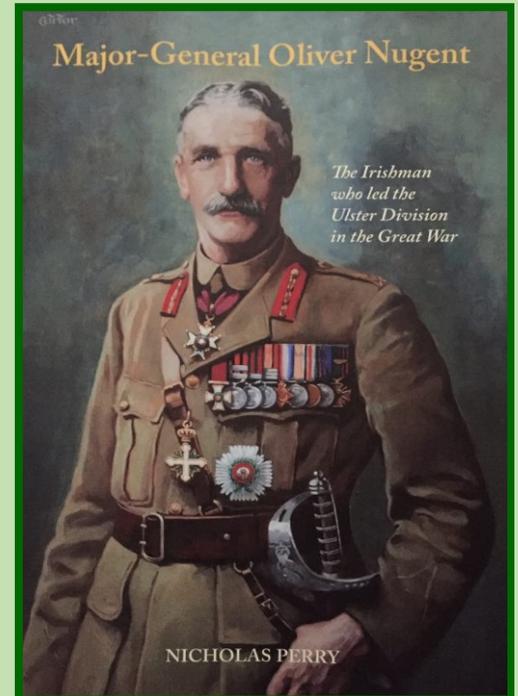
**Reviewed by Gerry White**

In Northern Ireland, the success and sacrifice of the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division on the first day of the Battle of the Somme is commemorated each year on 1 July, the Somme Museum in Newtownards has many artefacts associated with the division, and its members who died in the Great War are remembered in the War Memorial Gardens in Dublin and in the Ulster Tower in Thiepval.

While the story of the Ulster Division is well known to many on the island of Ireland, relatively few on the know the story of Major-General Oliver Nugent, the man who commanded the division for 945 days and during in its five largest battles: the Somme, Messines, Third Ypres, Cambrai and the 1918 German Spring Offensive. This has now been addressed with the publication of an outstanding biography written by Nicholas Perry, the former head of the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland. Perry is eminently suited to be Nugent's biographer as in 2007 he edited an edition of Nugent's wartime correspondence for the Army Records Society. This correspondence provides an insight to Nugent's thoughts and feeling and Perry uses it to great effect.

Oliver Nugent was born in Aldershot on 9 November 1860, the son of British army officer St. George Nugent and his wife Emily, the daughter of a senior judge and former MP for Coleraine. The Nugents were a wealthy unionist family from Mountnugent, Co. Cavan. It had strong links to the British Army so it was no surprise that Nugent decided to pursue a military career. In October 1879 he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Cavan Militia. He then followed a route into the regular army taken by some of his contemporaries such as John French and Henry Wilson whereby suitably qualified militia officers could obtain a regular commission. In July 1882 he was commissioned into the Royal Munster Fusiliers and joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion in Malta. Nugent was unhappy during his time with the Munsters and in April 1883, his father managed to secure a transfer to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps. It was as a member of this unit that Nugent saw service in India, took part in the Chitral Expedition (where he won a DSO), and fought in the Second Boer War, where he was wounded and taken prisoner.

Perry covers Nugent's early years in the British Army in some detail, including his time in the Staff College at Camberley. It was while in Camberley that Nugent met Catherine (Kitty) Lees. The daughter of a wealthy landowner from Cheshire, Kitty would become his wife on 7 February 1889 and the couple would go on to have two daughters, Theffania and Alison and one son, St. George, who would follow his father into the army.



Nugent's life and military career coincided with the Irish nationalist struggle for self-government in Ireland which culminated in the introduction of the Third Home Rule Bill in the House of Commons in April 1912. As a unionist, Nugent was opposed to any change to the system of governing Ireland and on 28 September 1912, he was one of around 500,000 unionists who signed the Solemn League and Covenant or the accompanying women's Declaration, pledging themselves to use 'all means which may be found necessary' to defeat Home Rule. The following year, he joined the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and was given command of a unit based in Cavan.

In the summer of 1914, civil conflict in Ireland appeared a real possibility. However, this was avoided by the outbreak of the Great War Ireland and thousands of members from both organisations answered the call to arms and joined the British armed forces.

Members of the Western Front Association will be particularly interested in Nugent's service in the war. Perry covers this admirably providing detailed analysis of Nugent's leadership of 41 Brigade and the 36th (Ulster) Division and an operational history of those units while under Nugent's command. He also provides an objective assessment of the criticism levelled at Nugent during the conflict and examines the difficulties he experienced commanding a 'political' division; his concern for those under his command, his strained relationship with Douglas Haig and his opinions of other officers he served with.

During the opening stage of the 1918 German Spring Offensive, the Ulster Division would be engaged by nine German divisions, lose 6,000 men, and retreat thirty miles. However, as the Official History noted, the division, 'had the satisfaction of knowing that it had done much to hold back the enemy on every day of the battle.' That it managed to do so was a credit to both its members and the leadership provided by Nugent.

In May 1918, Nugent was transferred to India to take command of the Meerut Division. When he arrived, he found a country simmering with rebellion. When he left India and the army in August 1920 and returned to Ireland, he found a country at war. Though many of his former comrades became involved in the conflict, as Perry notes, Nugent became, 'a passive if concerned observer of the War of Independence and Civil War' and a 'resigned recipient of their political outcome.' During these turbulent years, he devoted his time to his family, the welfare of his former comrades and to promoting reconciliation in Ireland.

Oliver Nugent passed away on 31 May 1926 but Nicholas Perry has successfully brought the story of his life and military service to a new generation of readers. He is to be commended for producing a book that is well researched, informative, enjoyable to read and a valuable addition to the literature of the period. It also contains twenty-nine illustrations, twelve of which are battlefield maps from official histories and an Annex showing the Order of Battle of the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division on 1 July 1916. It is beautifully produced by the Ulster Historical Foundation and highly recommended to anyone with an interest in the history of the Great War.

*Major-General Oliver Nugent* is available online from the Ulster Historical Foundation: [www.booksireland.org.uk](http://www.booksireland.org.uk)  
Also from Amazon: [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) and Waterstones: [www.waterstones.com](http://www.waterstones.com)

# Roll of Honour

## **Captain Eric Norman Frankland Bell** **9th Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers** **A VC Hero of the Somme**



Eric Norman Frankland Bell was born on 28 August 1895 in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh. He was one of four children born to Edward Bell, an officer in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and his wife Dora née Crowder. His father's unit was posted to Cheshire after Eric's birth and the family moved Warrington, where Eric attended school. They later moved to Liverpool where he studied architecture at Liverpool University under Sir Charles Reilly. In August 1914 Eric Bell followed his father into the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and the following month he was commissioned a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and posted to the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He was Later transferred to the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion and then the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

The 9th Battalion sent to France in October 1915 as part of the 109 Brigade of the 36th (Ulster) Division, which was sent to the Western Front in October 1915. On 1 July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme, Captain Eric Bell, who was in charge of a trench mortar battery eliminated a number of German positions that were holding up his unit's advance. He was rallying leaderless troops when he was killed. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his heroism. His citation was published in the Supplement to the *London Gazette* on 26 September 1916 and read as follows:

### **Captain Eric Norman Frankland Bell, Leinster Regiment**

*For most conspicuous bravery. He was in command of a Trench Mortar Battery, and advanced with the Infantry in the attack. When our front line was hung up by enfilading machine gun fire Captain Bell crept forward and shot the machine gunner. Later, on no less than three occasions, when our bombing parties, which were clearing the enemy's trenches, were unable to advance, he went forward alone and threw Trench Mortar bombs among the enemy. When he had no more bombs available, he stood on the parapet, under intense fire, and used a rifle with great coolness and effect on the enemy advancing to counter-attack. Finally, he was killed rallying and reorganising infantry parties which had lost their officers. All this was outside the scope of his normal duties with his battery. He gave his life in his supreme devotion to duty.*

The remains of Captain Eric Bell were never recovered and today he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme.

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In Northern Ireland: Dr Tom Thorpe: 004477 79269182 or [antrimdownwfa@gmail.com](mailto:antrimdownwfa@gmail.com)

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