



# Distant Thunder

The Journal of the Irish Branches of  
The Western Front Association



Issue No. 6

Spring 2021



**The Irish Round Tower in the Island of Ireland Peace Park  
Messines, Belgium**

## From the Editor

Hello everyone and welcome to Issue 6 of *Distant Thunder*. I hope everyone is doing well and coping with what we all hope will be the last days of lockdown. I'm sure that, like myself, you are all looking forward to resuming 'normal' life, attending branch meetings and in time, visiting the battlefields and cemeteries of the Great War. I hope that lockdown was made more bearable by the webinars put on by the Executive Committee. Personally, I found them both enjoyable and informative and on behalf of all those on the island of Ireland I would like to thank David Tattersfield and Simon Phillips for taking the time to organise and host the webinars over the last year and all the speakers who graced our screens during that period. Since thanks also to Dr. Tom Thorpe who has provided us with over 200 podcasts that cover a wide range of topics. I also hope you have been enjoying the many articles that have appeared here in *Distant Thunder*. In this issue you will find articles about a well-known Irish chaplain, brothers who served in the war, *Ireland's Memorial Records*, a 'journey' taken to find family members who fought in the war and a poignant account about the discovery of an unknown book written by the mother of a young officer who never came home. I want to thank all those who contributed these articles and remind readers that I am already looking for material for the next issue. Until then I wish everyone well and I hope you all have a nice return to normality!

**Gerry White**

Island of Ireland Trustee

[gerrywhitecork@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gerrywhitecork@yahoo.co.uk)

## Contents

### **Three Uncles – Never known but not Forgotten**

James A. Murphy

### **The Enigma that was Archdeacon Tom Duggan OBE MC, Chaplain to the Forces**

Michael Nugent

### **The Brennan Brothers from Tubbercurry**

John Brennan

### **The Notice Board**

Gerry White

### **'Brothers Killed in France'**

Barry Linehan

### **'This Old War' Remembering Major Edward C. R. Kilkelly MC**

Rachel Abraham

### **Ireland's Memorial Records 1914 -1918**

### **and the link between Ireland and the hospice of Saint-Anthony in Locre, Belgium**

Francis Devlamynck

### **Book Review**

Gerry White

### **Roll of Honour – Lieutenant Maurice James Dease VC**

Gerry White

# Three Cork Uncles - Never Known but Not Forgotten

James A. Murphy

This is the story of three men I never met, two of whom died years before I was born and the third who lived across the sea and who passed away when I was fourteen years old. They were brothers and my paternal uncles, John, Peter and Denis Murphy and they all served in the British Forces during the Great War. All were born in Cork; John in 1889, Denis in 1893 and Peter in 1897. John entered the Royal Navy in 1907 and both Denis and Peter joined the forces at the outbreak of war in 1914. Over the past thirty-two years I have intermittently attempted to uncover details about their military service and in the following paragraphs I will relate what I have learned. Although my narrative is devoid of any direct or indirect contact with its subjects, it is based on accurate surviving records of the Great War. Moreover, my journey to uncover the stories of my uncles led me to the battlefields and commemorative sites across Belgium and northern France as well as to the streets of Cork upon which they and my father trod during their formative years. In the following paragraphs, I have attempted to share my search for information about my uncles and offer a testament to their service and sacrifice.

I am the youngest son of an Irish immigrant who himself was the youngest son of a large Cork family. My father, James Francis Murphy, was born in Cork City on 5 August 1902. His birth certificate lists his family's address at 120 Shandon Street. In 1902, the building at that address was the Shandon Fire Station and, my grandfather, John Murphy, was a sanitary sub-inspector and an auxiliary fireman assigned to the Cork Fire Brigade's Shandon Station.<sup>1</sup> My grandfather died on 28 February 1913 when my father, the youngest of eleven children, was only ten years old. My grandmother, Catherine Lane Murphy, would die on 17 January 1922, but not before she would endure further family losses. My father's living siblings included three brothers and four sisters all born between 1885 and 1897. My father immigrated, without any other family members, to the United States in the summer of 1927 and settled in Brooklyn, New York. He married in 1931 and had three sons of his own, John, Peter and myself. He passed away in 1965 when I was a nineteen-year-old university student and long before I took an active interest in the Great War.



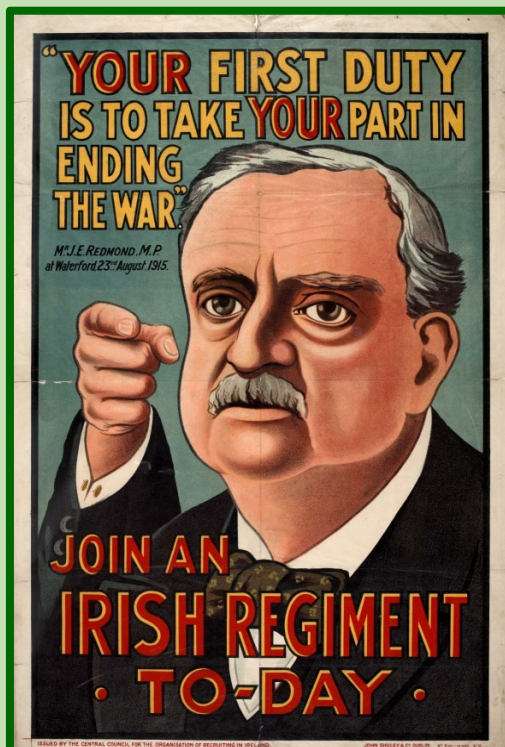
1. 120 Shandon Street Cork, September 2006.

At the outbreak of the war in 1914, Ireland had been a dependable source of manpower for the British Army and Royal Navy for over one-hundred years. Conscription was not instituted in Ireland and Irishmen continued the tradition of their recent ancestors; answering the island-

---

<sup>1</sup> Poland, P., *For Whom the Bells Told a History of Cork Fire Services 1622-1900* (Dublin 2010), p. 186 and personal communication, August 22, 2020.





2. Irish Recruiting poster featuring John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

wide recruitment campaign by signing up in the thousands. Terence Denman perhaps captures the spirit of many southern Irishmen at the time as follows: 'The coming of the war in the autumn of 1914 coincided with the passing of the Irish 'home rule' bill by the British parliament. It seemed for the first time, that the Irish soldier in British uniform would be no mercenary or mere adventurer, but a fighting representative of a free nation within the British Empire.'<sup>2</sup> So, like many thousands of others, two of my uncles answered the call to duty. The third had already been serving for several years. Why did they choose to go off to war? Was it to escape poverty, to seek adventure, to follow the example of friends or relatives, to defend the little Catholic nation of Belgium? I will never know the reasons, but they did so and two of them died and the third was wounded and returned to a drastically changed home in Cork.

During my childhood years, there were occasional dinnertime conversations about my dad's family history and his memories of growing up in Ireland; so from an early age I knew that I had two uncles who had died in World War One and another uncle who had served, was wounded and returned home to Cork. I also knew that by 1914, the family's address was at 25 Sullivan's Quay, Cork. This address, next door to the Sullivan's Quay fire station, accommodated some of the fire brigade members and their families.<sup>3</sup> In addition to family conversations concerning my uncles' military service, my father possessed some tangible Great War memorabilia pertaining to my Uncle Peter; specifically, his military medals (1914-1915 Star, Great War Medal and Victory Medal) that he had brought with him to America. Unfortunately, there was very limited correspondence between my father and his surviving brother over the years. Factors of time, distance and lack of easy communication, all contributed to my scant knowledge of my Irish uncles, aunts and cousins. After my surviving Uncle Denis' death in 1960 and my father's death five years later, there were no remaining family members known to me who might fill in some of the gaps in the Great War history of the Murphy family. After college, I was drafted into the U.S. Army and was eligible to attend Officer



3. Sullivan's Quay, Cork, 2006. The old fire station is the red brick building between the tan and bright blue buildings.

<sup>2</sup> Denman, T., *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers, The 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division in the Great War* (Dublin 2008), p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Poland, P., *For Whom the Bells Told a History of the Cork Fire Services 1622-1900* (Dublin 2010), p 227.

Candidate School (OCS). I did so and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in March 1969. Nineteen years later, in 1988, as a Lieutenant Colonel, I was posted to the international staff at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), the NATO military headquarters in Casteau, Belgium, about six kilometers northeast of the city of Mons. I soon learned that the first shots of the Great War were fired just a short distance outside the main gate of the SHAPE compound by a soldier of the 4<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Dragoon Guards of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). Cognizant of my uncles' military service, my interest in the Great War was quickly awakened. We had a very good book store at SHAPE with a distinctly British flavour and there I picked up Rose Coombs' excellent guide to the First World War battlefields, *Before Endeavors Fade*, along with a good Michelin map of the Picardy region in neighbouring northern France. From SHAPE, I was in an ideal location from which to explore the entirety of the Western Front, but I most wanted to discover specifically where my Uncle Peter was buried or memorialized. One of my SHAPE office mates was a Royal Air Force officer and I asked him how I might be able to obtain some information about my uncles who had perished in the Great War. He provided the address of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) and assured me that they would be able to provide some details pertaining to their service.



**5. Private Peter Murphy,  
Royal Munster Fusiliers.**

My letter to the CWGC in July 1988 inquired about Pte Peter Murphy, 7017, Royal Munster Fusiliers. I was able to provide the CWGC with these specific bits of information thanks to the engravings on the backside of Peter's 1914-1915 Star medal I was also able to provide CWGC with his parents' names, John and Catherine Murphy, and the family's Cork address on Sullivan's Quay. It wasn't long before I had my answer from the CWGC. I learned that Peter served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Munsters and that he had died on 22 March 1918, age 22. Naturally, I had hoped to be told that I would find his grave in one of the beautiful CWGC cemeteries similar to St. Symphorien, near Mons, that I had visited, but sadly I was informed that like so many thousands of others, he had no known grave, and that he was

commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial to the Missing located a short distance northeast of Albert, France. In September 1988, an overcast, chilly day, my wife Eileen and I set out to visit the great gothic cathedral of Notre Dame at Amiens with a stop directly along the route at Pozieres. I was keenly aware that I was quite likely the only family member who had ever visited the Pozieres cemetery and memorial and seen 'Murphy P. 7017' engraved on panel 78. This was a very sombre and moving experience for me personally. The sheer numbers of men gone missing were numbing: 14,000 commemorated at Pozieres and over 70,000 a short distant away at the Thiepval Memorial. Over the next two years I revisited Pozieres Memorial several times and each time I was struck by how little I actually knew about my Uncle Peter; only his name, his regiment, his service number and the date of his death. I was hopeful that someday I would be able to learn more about him, but many years were to pass before I undertook the effort to do so.



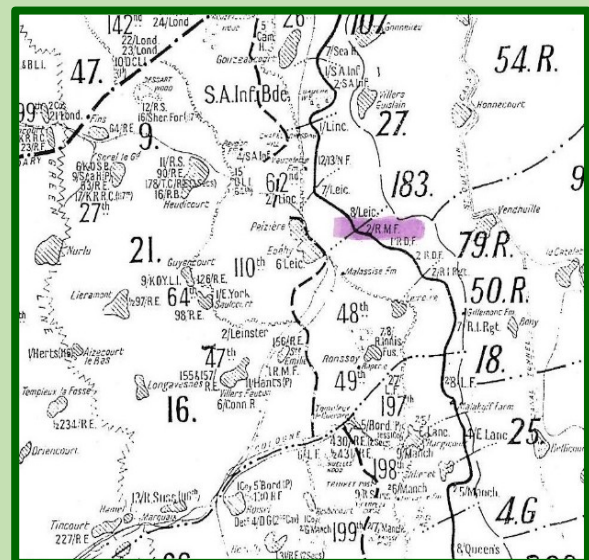
**6. Private P. Murphy  
1914-15 Star.**



Shortly after my initial visit to Pozieres, I read the official history of the Great War pertaining to the Royal Munster Fusiliers and the events of 21-22 March 1918. I learned that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Munsters held defensive positions south of Epehy during the German Spring offensive, *Kaiserschlacht* (Imperial Battle), in March 1918. I also read that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was part of the 48<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 16<sup>th</sup> Irish Division, part of VII Corps, itself a component of Fifth Army. By early 1918 all of the Fifth Army subordinate units were well below their normal strength level.



**7. James Murphy at the Pozieres Memorial, September 1988; Murphy P. 7017, center column above 'Dublin'.**



**8. Disposition of forces on 21 March 1918. The overall position of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers, is highlighted.**

Their dire situation is perhaps best summed up by Neil Richardson as follows: 'The normal turnaround period for sending a division into the line before relieving it for rest was fifteen days, but one of the Fifth Army's divisions had recently spent a mind-numbing fifty-eight days straight in the trenches. These men



**9. Malassise Farm just south-east of Epehy Village – 1989.**

– the men of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division – could barely stand, but they were about to come under attack from German artillery fire, followed by a tidal wave of elite enemy soldiers.<sup>4</sup> Multiple accounts of events leading up to the German attack on 21 March indicate that the 16<sup>th</sup> Division held too widely spaced and largely untenable defensive positions. With this information in mind, I walked the fields around Epehy and the Malassise Farm getting as close as I could to the likely area where Peter died. The bucolic surroundings that I encountered in 1989 were a far cry from the hell-on-earth that the Munsters and the entire 16<sup>th</sup> Division experienced on the morning of 21 March 1918. The following description of some of the fighting on that day presents the grim scene that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers faced during the attack.

*'On March 21<sup>st</sup> the long-expected attack began. A heavy white fog hung over our positions and obscured all movement for some time. The bombardment started at 4:30 a.m. with gas shells on the batteries and support positions, and ordinary shells on the*

<sup>4</sup> Richardson, N., *A Coward if I Return, A Hero if I Fall* (Dublin 2010), p. 115.

trenches, and this lasted about two-and-a-half hours. Heavy attacks by infantry and low-flying aeroplanes against the front continued, and, working up from the right rear, the enemy was able to envelop and capture Malassise Farm. '....By noon the Battalion was isolated.'<sup>5</sup>



**10 Grave of an Unknown Royal Munster Fusilier, Ste. Emilie Valley Cemetery**

From further readings I have done concerning the events of 21-22 March, I know that a small contingent of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion men held out against the German attack in a railway cut until the wee hours of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and so perhaps this is where Peter died; but this is mere conjecture on my part. I have not found a reference that includes Peter's assigned company within 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, so there is no way to know his specific position or movements during the battle. While posted in Belgium, in addition to walking the fields around Epehy, I also visited other places with connections to the Royal Munster Fusiliers, including the beautiful memorial to their heroic rear-guard action at Etreux and the CWGC cemeteries of Epehy Wood Farm and Ste. Emilie Valley both of which contain graves of unknown RMF soldiers who fell in March 1918 as well as the Celtic cross memorial to all the Province of Munster war dead alongside St. Marten's Cathedral in Ypres.



**11. John Francis Murphy, Ship's Cook, HMS Hawke.**

In October 1989, I turned my attention to my uncle John Francis Murphy and wrote a letter of inquiry to the Naval Historical Branch (NHB) of the Ministry of Defence. The only information I had about John was his name, his parents' names, the family address on Sullivan's Quay, and the fact that he had died early in the war while serving in the Royal Navy. I was not altogether sure about the ship that he had served on. From my childhood, I recalled my father relating the story of the sinking of three Royal Navy ships, HMS *Aboukir*, *Cressy* and *Hogue*, on the same day in September 1914. He had also told us the story of the collision between the liner RMS *Olympic* and HMS *Hawke*. Somehow, the stories of *Hawke* and *Hogue*

were conflated, so that when I wrote to the NHB, I told them that I was unsure which of the two ships he had served upon. I should note here that I had not inquired about John earlier because I knew he had been lost at sea and therefore there was no nearby cemetery or memorial honouring him that I could easily visit from Mons, Belgium. In response to my letter, the NHB wrote to inform me that Ship's Cook John Francis Murphy, age twenty-five, 347632, HMS *Hawke*, was killed in action with a submarine in the North Sea on 15 October 1914. I also learned that he left behind a widow, Mabel Murphy, residing at 77 St. Thomas's Road, West Hill, Hastings. The letter also stated that he is commemorated on the Chatham



**12. HMS Hawke - Edgar Class Cruiser, built Chatham Dockyard, Launched 1891, 7,770 tons.**

<sup>5</sup> Jervis, H. S., Lieutenant-Colonel, M.C., *The 2<sup>nd</sup> Munsters in France* (Aldershot 1922, Schull Books Edition 1998), p. 43.

Memorial to 'those who have no known grave but the sea.' Attached to the letter was his entry in the Book of Remembrance. One of the few survivors of the *Hawke's* sinking described the ship's final moments as follows:

'We were struck amidships between the two funnels quite close to one of the magazines. All hands were on deck, and it was a terrible explosion. The vessel immediately took a heavy list to starboard. The way the vessel heeled over made it almost impossible to get the boats out.'<sup>6</sup>

There were only seventy survivors out of an overall ship's compliment of five-hundred ninety-four. I recall my father making mention that as a boy he had visited his brother on or near his ship. 'In February 1913, *Hawke* joined the training squadron based at Queenstown (Cobh), Ireland where she served along with most of the rest of the *Edgar* class. Her crew were reservists and young cadets.'<sup>7</sup> Perhaps my father made the short trip by rail from Cork to Cobh along with his mother or one of his older sisters to visit his brother.

So, by late 1989, I knew at least when and where my Uncles Peter and John had died. Peter had most likely endured several years of the horrors of trench warfare on the Western Front and had ultimately died during the last year of the war, while John had died barely two months after its start in 1914 in one sudden, very violent instant. Between 1990 and 2006, I tried to commemorate my uncles in a few small ways. During that timeframe, I put together all of the information I had gathered into short biographical papers, one about Peter and the other about John and gave a copy to my two brothers, named after their uncles. I also created commemorative framed photographs using the background of the Chatham Memorial to the Missing for John and



**13. Chatham Naval Memorial.**

the Pozieres Cemetery and Memorial to the Missing for Peter with the commemorative words from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and a few additional details superimposed. These are prominently displayed in my home office. I continued to read nearly everything I could find about the Irish involvement in the Great War with particular emphasis concerning the Royal Munster Fusiliers and the Irish Guards. In addition to the works I have cited herein, I read several of Lyn Macdonald's acclaimed books on the Great War and Gerry White's and Brendan O'Shea's *A Great Sacrifice*. I also paid close attention to the construction and dedication of the Island of Ireland Peace Park at Messines Ridge in Belgium with the hope that I might someday have opportunity to pay it a visit.

---

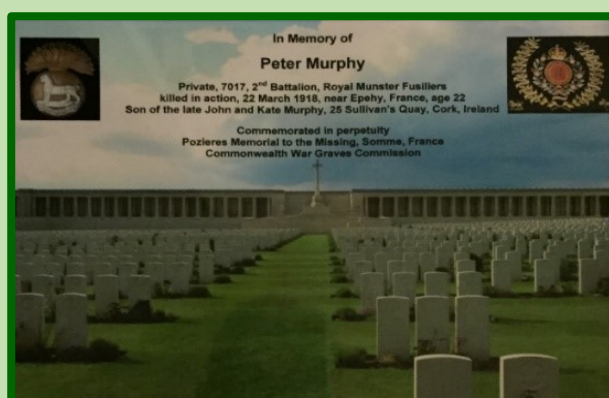
<sup>6</sup> Sparrow, E. J., *The Sinking of HMS Hawke*, (Colchester 2014), (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2015), p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.





14. In Memory of John Francis Murphy.



15. In Memory of Peter Murphy.

In September 2006, my wife and I decided it was time to visit Ireland after years of talking about doing so. I was sixty years old at the time and for me it was a pilgrimage of sorts. We spent five days in Cork walking in my father's footsteps to places like North Cathedral, Shandon Street and Sullivan's Quay and of course we climbed the tower of St. Ann's Shandon and rang the famous bells. We also took a taxi up to the former Gurranabraher home of my Uncle Denis who had survived the war and also made an inquiry at a funeral home near the base of Shandon Street in an attempt to ascertain Denis' final resting place. There we met with negative results. During the trip, we also stopped by the War Memorial on the South Mall. At that time the area around the memorial was undergoing some construction and was enclosed in fencing so that one could only make out the top of the memorial. We enjoyed our time in Cork immensely. Everyone we encountered was pleasant and helpful; the food was consistently excellent and of course the Murphy's stout was lovely. We were also blessed with fine weather. I must admit to being a little saddened at times as I walked about the city, knowing that I surely must have relatives close by, but having absolutely no information about them or how to reach them. That is the part of this story that will forever frustrate me.

I will now advance an additional fourteen years to the summer of 2020. As it seems the years go by faster as we advance in age, I decided it was time to make a final attempt to ascertain whatever more I could about my three uncles' military service during the Great War. To begin my search, I examined on-line images of the Cork War Memorial to get a close-up look at its base and I saw that although the names of many Cork men are inscribed there, neither of my uncles' names are included. So, after doing a little more roaming on the internet, I came across the website of the Cork Branch of the Western Front Association (WFA). I sent off an email to Branch Chairman, Gerry White, with my question about the missing names. The very next morning Gerry responded and informed me that next of kin paid to have the names of their loved ones inscribed on the memorial. He also provided several excerpts of military records pertaining to both my uncles, Peter and John. Gerry provided Peter's medal card, pictured below left, documenting the award of the three medals that my dad had brought from Ireland in 1927 and he sent me Peter's pension card record, a portion of which is displayed below right.<sup>8</sup> The surprising revelation contained on the pension card is the fact that it indicates that Peter was a widower. Once again, I had uncovered a poignant detail that will likely remain only that;

<sup>8</sup> White, G., personal communication, July 30, 2020.

Campaign: 1914-15.				(A) Where decoration was earned.	(B) Present situation.
Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)	
(A) MURPHY	R Munster Fus Regt	7017		MEDAL	OLL PAGE
(B) Peter				VICT	9/10/87 151
Action taken				BRITISH	4/1/1922
THEATRE OF WAR. (1) France				U STAR	4/1/1922
QUALIFYING DATE. 1.12.15					
(6 34 40) W284-HP500 500,000 4/19 HWV(P210) K005					[Over]

16. Medal Card of Peter Murphy, 7017, showing awards of the 1914-1915 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

S.B.36.-D. (41081) Wt. 11699 2562 450 Bks 7/19 H & J, Ltd	
Particulars of Man.	Particulars of Claimant.
Name <i>Peter Murphy</i>	Name <i>Mrs Murphy Kate</i>
Regiment <i>Munster Fus. Regt. No. 7017</i>	Address <i>25 Sulloway Quay Cork</i>
Rank <i>Plt</i> Marital Status <i>(M) (S) (W)</i>	New Address and date of
Date and cause of death <i>Kia O</i>	Relationship <i>Mother</i> Date of Birth <i>1855</i>
While serving <i>4.1</i> Case No. <i>284</i>	
Particulars of any Claimant who has preferred a previous claim	
Case No.	<i>Claimant Deceased</i>
Name	<i>17.1.22</i>
Address	
Relationship	

17. Portion of Peter Murphy's Pension Record, showing that the claimant, his mother, Kate Murphy, died on 17 January 1922. Also showing that he was a widower.

without any further information to be found. Not long after receiving these particulars, from Gerry, I paid an on-line visit to the Forces War Record site to see if there were any more particulars to be found about Peter. Here I found two very interesting entries. The first one, a report dated 26 September 1916, indicates that P. Murphy, Private, 7017, Royal Munster Fusiliers was listed as 'Wounded' on the Casualty List issued by the War Office. The date of this report would seem to indicate that Peter was wounded somewhere during the terrible fighting on the Somme as described by Steven Moore as follows:

'By mid-July the 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Munster Fusiliers ... were in action on the Somme with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division. The Munsters and 1<sup>st</sup> Gloucesters made a frontal attack on the German lines on 16 July west of Bazentin-le-Petit Wood. Two days later the Munsters, having named a captured trench in their honor, snatched a section of the old German support line south of Pozieres, holding it long enough to allow a line of strongpoints to be constructed on Pozieres Ridge.'<sup>9</sup>

The second entry is a report dated 29 December 1917, indicating that P. Murphy, Private, 7017 was listed as 'Wounded' in War Office Daily List No. 5452. This report coincides with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's engagements during November 1917 around Passchendaele, Belgium<sup>10</sup>. I do not know the date on which Peter was wounded, but the following excerpt from the account of events of 10 November 1917 give some indication of the fighting in the vicinity of Passchendaele. 'Once our men had got back to the vicinity of their own line, the enemy's artillery concentrated on the battalion with deadly results. Casualties were by this time enormous, and many of those who fell badly wounded were drowned where they lay'.<sup>11</sup> Neither report contains any further information describing the nature of Peter's wounds or where he was treated. There is a third report dated 12 June 1918, that indicates that Peter is listed as 'Missing'. Finally, the fourth report confirms Peter's ultimate fate, 'Killed in Action' on 22 March 1918, age twenty-two.

I should note here that at Gerry White's recommendation, I joined the Western Front Association and that has provided me with a valuable resource that has enabled me to obtain further details concerning my uncles' war records. Combining the information provided by

<sup>9</sup> Moore, S., *The Irish on the Somme*, (Newtownards 2016), p. 52

<sup>10</sup> Jervis, H. S., Lieutenant-Colonel, M.C., *The 2<sup>nd</sup> Munsters in France* (Aldershot 1922, Schull Books Edition 1998), p. 37-41.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 40.

Gerry and what I had discovered through my own research, I had a much more complete picture of my Uncle Peter's service history. But Gerry had also furnished new information about my Uncle John's Royal Navy career; specifically, an extract of his service history, pictured right.<sup>12</sup> Now I had his physical description and what he had done prior to joining the Royal Navy in 1907 as well the ships he had previously served on, including the aforementioned HMS *Cressy*. Perhaps my father remembered that his brother had served on *Cressy* which caused him to tell us about its sinking, along with its two sister ships, HMS *Aboukir* and HMS *Hogue*, in September 1914. It should be

347632 *Chatham* 347632

Name *John Francis Murphy* Date of Birth *28 February 1888*  
 Place of Birth *St. Ann's, Cork*  
 Occupation *Ship Ass (handy)*

Date and Period of C. & S. Engagements: *19 January 1907 - Dye 1916*

Age: *26* Height: *5' 6 3/4"* Weight: *160 lbs* Eyes: *Blue* Complexion: *Fair* Wounds, Scars, Marks, etc.: *Amputated 1st arm*

Ship, etc., served on	Rank	Rating	Period of Service	Remarks
<i>Pembroke 15 May 1907 to 1st Dec 1907</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>1st Class</i>	<i>15 May 1907 to 1st Dec 1907</i>	<i>1st Class</i>
<i>Cressy 1st Dec 1907 to 1st Dec 1908</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>1st Class</i>	<i>1st Dec 1907 to 1st Dec 1908</i>	<i>1st Class</i>
<i>Pembroke 1st Dec 1908 to 1st Dec 1909</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>1st Class</i>	<i>1st Dec 1908 to 1st Dec 1909</i>	<i>1st Class</i>
<i>Orion 1st Dec 1909 to 1st Dec 1910</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>1st Class</i>	<i>1st Dec 1909 to 1st Dec 1910</i>	<i>1st Class</i>
<i>Orion 1st Dec 1910 to 1st Dec 1911</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>1st Class</i>	<i>1st Dec 1910 to 1st Dec 1911</i>	<i>1st Class</i>
<i>Pembroke 1st Dec 1911 to 1st Dec 1912</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>1st Class</i>	<i>1st Dec 1911 to 1st Dec 1912</i>	<i>1st Class</i>
<i>Chatham 1st Dec 1912 to 1st Dec 1913</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>1st Class</i>	<i>1st Dec 1912 to 1st Dec 1913</i>	<i>1st Class</i>
<i>Chatham 1st Dec 1913 to 1st Dec 1914</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>1st Class</i>	<i>1st Dec 1913 to 1st Dec 1914</i>	<i>1st Class</i>

*PAID WAR GRATUITY*

18. John Francis Murphy's Naval History showing his date of birth as 28 February 1888, along with names of the ships on which he had served.

noted that John's service record states his year of birth as 1888 while the 1901 census records it as 1889. Perhaps he made himself a year older in order to join the Royal Navy! Finally, as I described earlier pertaining to Peter, I did one more search via the WFA link with Ancestry UK and discovered John's pension card, pictured below. It indicates that he and Mabel had two children: John born 8 May 1912 and a second child, whose name I cannot discern, born 13 May 1914. Yet another previously unknown bit of family history; two first cousins whose existence was heretofore unknown to me. Discovery of this type of information, coupled with the previously cited information that my Uncle Peter was a widower at age twenty-two, highlighted for me just how little I really knew about my father's family. So many questions I would have for him, but perhaps due to age differences among his siblings, he might not have the answers.

Name *Murphy John F.* *Region 11- 37. 9. 22* *NNM.602* *W/ 7066*

Ship *Hawke* Regimental No. *W.R. 1174*

Form 104-88 received \_\_\_\_\_ Date of notification of death \_\_\_\_\_ Form 104-76 received \_\_\_\_\_

Date and cause of death: *15-10-1914 Loss with Ship*

Widow *Mabel* Date of birth *22-6-1889*

Children: *P.O. Rainham Rd Chatham*

Name	Date of Birth	Date of Entry	Remarks
<i>John F. Rainham</i>	<i>8-5-1912</i>	<i>1928</i>	
<i>P.O. Rainham</i>	<i>13-5-1914</i>	<i>1930</i>	

*11/W/7066 inside 11/APW/10584*

Pension *1916* a week from *15-4-1915*

Date awarded \_\_\_\_\_ If released, \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

19. Pension Record of John F. Murphy listing his wife Mabel and two children.

<sup>12</sup> White, G. personal communication, July 30, 2020





**20. Private Denis Murphy,  
Irish Guards.**

The preceding paragraphs essentially sum up everything I came to know about my two uncles, John and Peter by August 2020. Ironically, of the three brothers who served, Denis Murphy, who survived the war, is the one about whose military service I knew the least. What I knew about Denis was that he was a member of the Cork Fire Brigade before the war, enlisted in the British Army in 1914, returned to the fire brigade in 1919 and served there until 1937. All of this information appeared in Denis' obituary (below) from a Cork newspaper that a relative had sent to my father and that I had kept. The obituary also mentions that Denis was known to his firemen comrades as 'Daithi', the Irish version of his name. As I noted earlier, he lived, with his wife Kitty and family in the Gurrabraher area of Cork, at 42 St. Enda's Road. My father

visited Ireland in June 1960 and accompanied by their sister, Julia, visited Denis who was terminally ill at the time. I seem to remember my dad telling me that some of the scars from his wounds, presumably from shrapnel, were still visible on Denis' arms. Denis passed away in August 1960 and his obituary, in addition to citing his time of service in the fire brigade and the Irish Guards, mentions his continuous duty for more than fifty hours during the burning of Cork City in December 1920. In recounting this part of Denis' Fire Brigade experience, I cannot imagine his emotions during those troubled times. Here he was a veteran of the trenches on the Western Front, fighting fires deliberately set by likely fellow veterans some of whom actively thwarted the firefighting efforts. One fireman later testified about the crown forces conduct 'They were cutting the hoses and they were firing all around...It was worse than if a fellow was out in Flanders, or any other battlefield.'<sup>13</sup> On a day-to-day basis, Denis was perhaps shunned or ridiculed by some who viewed his Irish Guards service as anathema to the cause of Irish nationalism. This view is described by Mandy Link as follows:

'Ex-servicemen were stuck in a purgatory between IRA and British suspicions of espionage and betrayal. British forces, particularly the Black and Tans, viewed veterans as Irishmen first and largely disrespected their war service, whereas the IRA saw an ex-soldier's service as evidence of a deep-seated and treasonous loyalty to Britain.'<sup>14</sup>

In such an environment, it is very likely that Denis kept his head down and did not speak at any lengths about his wartime experiences.



**21. Daithi Murphy's Obituary,  
August 1960.**

<sup>13</sup> White, G. and O'Shea, B., *The Burning of Cork* (Cork 2006), pp. 126-127.

<sup>14</sup> Link, M., *Remembrance of the Great War in the Irish Free State, 1914-1937* (Cham, 2019), p.66.



**22. Cork Fire Brigade 1913 - Denis Murphy aged nineteen or twenty, front row, 2nd from the right.**

In writing about my uncle Denis, I must express my gratitude to Pat Poland, author of several books on the history of the Cork Fire Brigade. In ordering his book, *The Old Brigade*, covering the period 1900-1950, I encountered a bit of a problem getting it posted to the States. I was obliged to contact the seller, not identified by name on the eBay site, in order to resolve this matter. In my email, I mentioned that my interest in

the book revolved around my uncle's career in the Fire Brigade. I soon learned that I was corresponding directly with the author. Pat responded that his father had served with my uncle in the fire brigade and had complimented Denis' professionalism. He also mentioned that he had spoken with Denis' son, Jimmy (my cousin), now deceased, when he was writing the first volume of his Cork Fire Brigade history. In *The Old Brigade*, Pat references his interview with Jimmy, the results of which enlightened me a little more on Denis' wartime service. Jimmy stated that his father was wounded in Belgium and underwent surgery at a field hospital, but the surgery was 'botched' and Denis 'never fully recovered'. Pat's book also points out a small error in Denis' obituary cited above; specifically, that Denis joined the Cork Fire Brigade as an auxiliary fireman in August 1912, not 1910.<sup>15</sup> Pat also provided me with a second obituary from the *Evening Echo* that mentioned the previously unknown fact to me of Denis' interment at Douglas cemetery.<sup>16</sup> Finally, readers will note that the attached obituary lists my uncle's name as David, not Denis. The same is the case on the second obituary provided by Pat Poland. It would seem that the newspapers merely assumed his given name to be David because he was known as 'Daithi'.



**23. Denis Murphy with his wife Kitty and his sister Julia (hand on his shoulder) circa 1955.**

The information that I was able to garner about Denis from Pat's excellent history of the Cork Fire Brigade, made me more determined to uncover further details of his war experience. Going forward, I was hindered in my research because I did not know Denis' regimental service number. After several searches of the Forces War Records UK, I was pretty confident that I had

Surname	Corps	Rank	Regt. No.
MURPHY	1/ Gas	Plt	5164
Denis			
Medal	Ind.	Phon.	Remarks
Victory	10/10683226		2. 23.2.19
15 Star	18/182	164	
Theatre of War: France			
Date of entry theatre: 14.2.15			

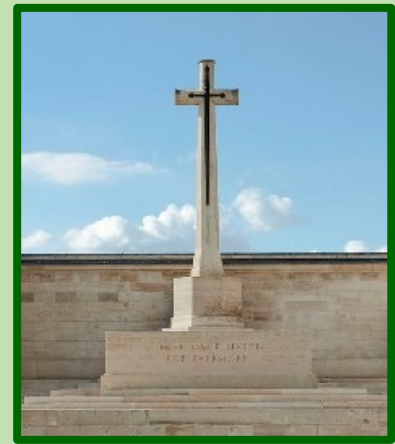
**24. Medal Index Card of Denis Murphy, 5164, showing awards of the 1915 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal.**

narrowed my search down to two possible men based on a combination of diverse factors such as age and that both men had been wounded. Using the invaluable WFA link to Ancestry UK and the WW1 service members' medal cards and pension records, I found several entries that included Denis' home of record in Cork and his service number, 5164. According to his medal index card, pictured left, he entered the theatre of war in France on 4 February 1915. Now, employing his service number, I searched Forces War Records UK again

<sup>15</sup> Poland, P., *The Old Brigade – The Rebel City's Firefighting Story 1900-1950* (Cork 2018), p. 54.

<sup>16</sup> Poland, P., personal communication, July 29, 2020.

and discovered a report dated 1 August 1915 indicating that D. Murphy, Private 5164, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Irish Guards was listed as 'Wounded' on the Casualty List issued by the War Office from April and May 1915. If I am interpreting this report correctly, it seems that Denis was wounded sometime in April or May 1915 and if that is so, he was most likely wounded not in Belgium, but in northern France, somewhere in the area just northeast of the town of Béthune. The basis of this assumption is the detailed description of the movements and activities of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Irish Guards as contained in Rudyard Kipling's *The Irish Guards in the Great War*, specifically in the section entitled '1915 La Bassée to Laventie'<sup>17</sup>. I cannot clarify the apparent discrepancy between my cousin, Jimmy's statement that Denis was wounded in Belgium, and the Forces War Records report that I have cited. Perhaps the report is not entirely accurate, or I have misinterpreted it. Certainly, Kipling's history of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's movements is to be trusted because it is based on unit diaries and extensive research by a literary scholar who had lost his own son while the latter was serving in the Irish Guards. Perhaps, Denis was evacuated and underwent surgery at a casualty clearing station in Belgium; the border is only twenty to thirty kilometres away from the general area where Kipling's history puts 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion during the spring 1915 timeframe. Interestingly, additional reports I found on Forces War Records UK indicate that Denis was evacuated from Calais back to England with a diagnosis of acute appendicitis on 21 September 1917. He was treated at Middlesex War Hospital, Napsbury, St. Albans and subsequently discharged back to duty on 9 November 1917 and was assigned to No. 1 Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Irish Guards. Upon his return to France, Denis would most likely have taken part in the fighting around Bourslon Wood just to the west of Cambrai.<sup>18</sup> Upon his discharge from the army in early 1919, Denis returned home to Cork and the Fire Brigade.



**25. Cross of Sacrifice and Stone of Remembrance, Pozieres Cemetery and Memorial to the Missing.**



**26. Imperial War Graves Commission Memorial Tablet in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Amiens.**

I believe I have documented all that I have been able to verify about the service records of my three uncles during the Great War. Absent any contact with their direct descendants and any by-name mention in military memoirs, I think I have exhausted all possible leads. In summation, my efforts to learn more about my uncles' service and sacrifices during the Great War have proven to be interesting, sometimes frustrating, and ultimately very rewarding. I have wandered around the battlefields of France and Belgium, visited small cemeteries and great memorials to the missing, viewed the memorial tablets in grand gothic cathedrals, strolled the streets and quays of Cork and read many fine books about the Irish in the Great War. In my readings, I have not come across any of my uncles' names referenced in dispatches, or singled out for particular actions taken or commendations received. They seem to have been, like thousands of others, simply ordinary men serving alongside their comrades in arms, under horrendous conditions; in other words, simply

<sup>17</sup> Kipling, R., *The Irish Guards in the Great War, Volume I, The First Battalion and Volume II, The Second Battalion*, The Naval and Military Press Edition (Uckfield, East Sussex, undated), p. 78-91.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p. 176-182.



doing their duty. As a retired army officer, I have a deep appreciation and understanding of the concept of military duty and its inherent responsibility to perform under very challenging circumstances. I believe my uncles upheld their duties, but unfolding events in Ireland during the war, and for many years afterward, prevented them and so many others from receiving the recognition they deserved. Fortunately, over the past twenty years or so many Irish writers far more eloquent than myself have seen fit to resurrect lost memories and honour men such as John, Peter and Denis Murphy. I have written this account of their service to do likewise. May their names truly live forever more!

### Acknowledgements

I want to acknowledge the assistance, encouragement and kindness of two noted Cork historians, Gerry White and Pat Poland. I hope that the preceding paragraphs have adequately documented the extent of their respective contributions, without which I could not have written this story. I extend sincere thanks to both gentlemen.

### Photographic Credits

# 2 Irish Recruitment Posters, # 4 Memorial commemorating first shots fired by BEF, # 12 HMS *Hawke*, # 13 Chatham Memorial, # 25 Cross of Sacrifice & Stone of Remembrance at Pozieres, # 26 Memorial Tablet at Amiens Cathedral - from open sources on the Internet.

# 1 120 Shandon St., # 3 Sullivan's Quay, # 6 P. Murphy 1914-1915 Star, # 7 Pozieres Memorial, # 9 Malassise Farm, # 10 Grave of an Unknown Royal Munster Fusilier, # 21 Daithi Murphy Newspaper Obituary, # 23 Denis, Kitty and Julia Murphy, # 14 In Memory of John Francis Murphy, # 15 In Memory of Peter Murphy - from personal collection.

# 5 Peter Murphy, # 11 John Francis Murphy, and # 20 Denis Murphy in military uniform – from *Cork Examiner* article of 6 January 1916 titled *Cork Fire Brigade and the War*, cited in Pat Poland's *The Old Brigade*, page 55. The photographs and the entire article were provided to me by Pat Poland.

#s 16, 17, 18, 19 and 24, Service Records, Medal Cards and Pension Records - from the Western Front Association link to the Ancestry UK WW1 site. (#s 16, 17 and 18 provided to me by Gerry White).

# 8 Disposition of Forces 21 March 1918 – British Official History of the Great War.

# 22 Cork Fire Brigade 1913 – from Pat Poland's book, *The Old Brigade*, p. 52.

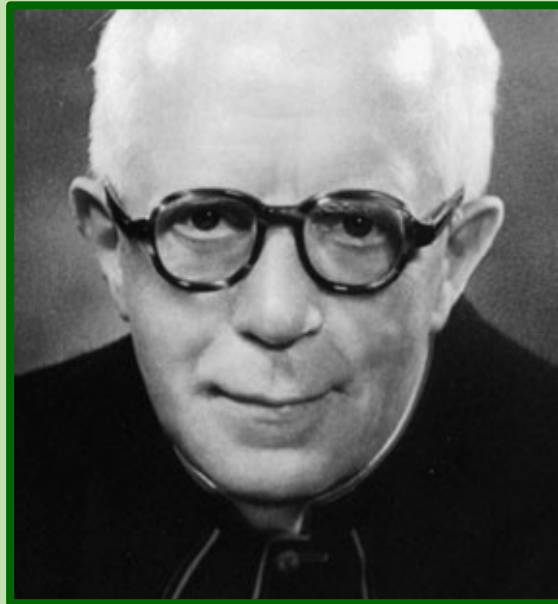
**James P. Murphy** was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Syracuse University and a MBA from Western New England University. He served as an officer in the United States Army from 1969 to 1991 with duty assignments in intelligence, personnel and operations in Vietnam, Belgium and the Pentagon, Washington, DC. Following his retirement from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel, Military Intelligence Branch, he worked as a defence contractor for eighteen years in crisis management training at the Pentagon. He and his wife, Eileen, a retired Registered Nurse, have been married for fifty-two years and have two adult sons and two grandchildren. They live in the northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, DC.



Email address: [cuse67@hotmail.com](mailto:cuse67@hotmail.com)

# **The Enigma that was Archdeacon Tom Duggan OBE MC, Chaplain to the Forces**

**Michael Nugent**



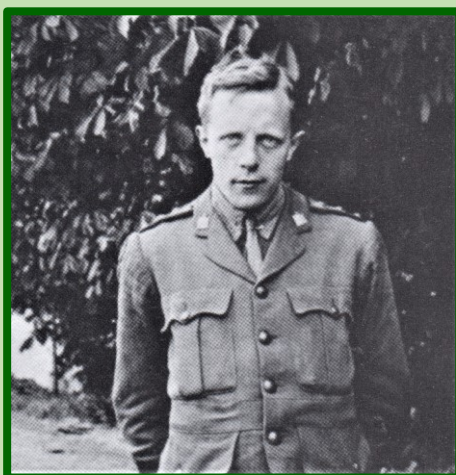
Thomas was born on 8 May 1890 at Ballyhoolan, Dunderrow, County Cork, the eldest son of Thomas and Hannah Duggan, nee O'Driscoll. Both Thomas' parents were schoolteachers. The 1901 Census of Ireland shows the family at Ballyhoolan. At this time Thomas had two younger brothers, Jeremiah and Edward and a younger sister, Lucy.

By 1911, Thomas then aged twenty, was a student at St Finbarr's College, Farranferris, County Cork which was a Seminary attached to the Diocese of Cork and Ross. Following this, Thomas attended Maynooth as a Post Graduate student from 1915 to 1917. An ardent Republican, Thomas had many close associates within the hierarchy of Sinn Fein and was well known to promote their ideals at Maynooth. When he had completed his studies at Maynooth in the summer of 1917, Thomas, who was not an academic at heart, saw the appeal by Cardinal Logue for Irish Priests to serve as Chaplains to the Forces as an opportunity to broaden his horizons and made application for appointment. In an account, he gave his rationale:

My generation at Maynooth embraced the ideals of Easter Week 1916, with a hundred percent fervour. This did not prevent us from becoming Chaplains in the British Army. In the First World War there were well over 100,000 Irish Catholics in the fighting ranks. (The casualties alone were 50,000.) Everyone admitted that these boys were spiritually intractable to anyone save an Irish priest. Hence when Cardinal Logue issued a special appeal for Irish Chaplains, I volunteered. And I went off to France with the blessing and encouragement of every friend I had in advanced Sinn Fein circles in Dublin.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> MacCarthy, Dr C (1994) Archdeacon Tom Duggan. In Peace and in War. Dublin. Blackwater Press p28



**Fr. Thomas Duggan pictured during the Great War.**

Thomas was initially posted to number 15 Casualty Clearing Station at that time based at Hazebrouck in northern France around 10 miles from the Belgian border. Accounts of the time give an indication of his adventurous spirit as he indicated that he was slightly disappointed to be far behind the front line. This was soon to change as by December 1917, Thomas had been firstly posted to 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers and then to a unit to which as a Corkman he closely identified with, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers, part of 47<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 16<sup>th</sup> Irish Division.

In March of 1918 the Division was in the front line at Ronssoy near St Quentin, France, and faced the full might of the German Spring Offensive. Over the next week the Division suffered some 5,500 casualties. This included 531 dead and thousands taken prisoner, one of which was Thomas. He was captured at St Emilie, fourteen miles north-west of St Quentin on 22 March and gave an account of his capture:

When the bombardment opened, I took up as Battle position (appointed for me by the Senior Div. Chaplain) the Regimental Aid Post. Worked all day on March 21st. On the morning of 22nd had warning Germans were coming. Might (chances against) have escaped but Aid Post was full of wounded – a large part of them delirious from lack of water. German advance party entered about 8.30 am. Ordered out of Regt. Aid Post by larger party about 12.30 pm. By all treated with extreme courtesy and consideration.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas was taken with other prisoners first to Le Cateau where he was kept for about a week. He was first taken to Rastatt Prisoner of War Camp in Baden, south-west Germany. After two weeks he was moved to another camp at Mainz in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate. This POW Camp was solely for Officers. He remained there until repatriated on 1 November 1918. On repatriation, he was taken to the Prince of Wales' Hospital, Marylebone Road, London, along with other repatriated officers for a medical examination.

Thomas remained a Military Chaplain until he was discharged in July 1919. On his return to the Cork Diocese, he was appointed as Secretary to Bishop Colohan. The relationship began well, but soon deteriorated due to what the Bishop perceived as Thomas' ardent republicanism. As a senior cleric in a position where he had to navigate a delicate path due to the impact of the

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid p43



War of Independence, the Bishop felt that he could not rely on Thomas' unwavering support and dispensed with his services.

In 1920, a number of republican prisoners began a hunger strike at Cork Jail in protest at their imprisonment without trial. This gave Thomas a chance to take a more active part in the struggle for independence and in October 1920, he took up a post as Assistant Chaplain at the Jail, a position which gave him unrestricted access to the prisoners. When Mick Fitzgerald died on 19 October 1920 after sixty-seven days on hunger strike, Thomas was at his bedside. As further men died, Thomas became unconvinced over the efficacy of this tactic and was instrumental in efforts to have the hunger strike stopped.

The experience of being in such close proximity to a highly emotive issue was possibly the reason why Thomas became more actively involved in the Republican struggle. A plan was hatched to blow the walls of the prison to free many of the prisoners. By his own admission, Thomas became involved in smuggling weapons and guncotton into the prison to facilitate the escape attempt. The plan, was however aborted and bizarrely, Thomas had to smuggle the guncotton out again.<sup>3</sup>

As a confidant of both Tom Barry and Michael Collins, Thomas played an important role in trying to mediate between the warring factions in the Irish Civil War, taking a neutral position between the Pro and Anti-Treaty forces. He saw himself as a peacemaker and go-between, facilitating contact between former comrades now on opposing sides.

At the end of the Civil War, Thomas took up a teaching post at his old school, St Finbarr's College at Farrenferris, Co. Cork. Although both his parents had been Teachers it was not a profession which Thomas enjoyed. He shared his teaching with duties as a Chaplain at Bon Secours Hospital in Cork and indeed would have preferred to have spent all his time there however, his application to become a full time Chaplain at the Hospital was bound to fail due to his fractious relationship with Bishop Colahan.

In 1939, with the outbreak of the Second World War, Thomas saw a way to escape the humdrum of teaching. He immediately applied for appointment as Chaplain to the Forces however, the age limit for appointment was forty and Thomas by this time was forty-nine. Thomas appealed the decision to the Roman Catholic Chaplain General, Bishop Dey and was delighted to be appointed, with the proviso that he served on Hospital Ships.

Thomas accepted this posting. However, he had no intention in remaining in what he saw as a backwater. He was appointed as Chaplain to the Forces for the second time on 6 December 1939 and attached to No 13 General Hospital, Southern Command. On arrival, Thomas set about putting his plans for attachment to an active service unit into motion.

At the end of the Great War and before his discharge, Thomas had been attached to the Durham Light Infantry, a posting he thoroughly enjoyed. By now a Territorial Force, The Durhams had been called up for active service and were based at Charlbury, Oxfordshire. By networking and displaying more than a little Irish charm, Thomas renewed his acquaintanceship

---

<sup>3</sup> The affair and Thomas' involvement in it is described in Tom Barry's, *Guerilla Days in Ireland*.

with the Durhams and by the end of December had been appointed as Chaplain to 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Durham Light Infantry.

The Durhams with Thomas attached, deployed to France for active service in January 1940 being initially based near Lille. As the German advance progressed and British forces were retreating, the Durhams found themselves in May 1940 on the outskirts of Dunkirk. Here Thomas' experience and infectious spirit came into its own. He was heavily involved with the battalion medics in establishing an aid post and remained there acting as a stretcher bearer as well as his undertaking his own duties under heavy German shell fire. For this gallantry, Thomas was awarded the Military Cross, the citation reading:

*For gallantry in the Regimental Aid Post during heavy bombardment. His coolness, energy, courage and example were outstanding and helped maintain morale when the Regimental Aid Post was heavily shelled and was full of wounded.*

Successfully evacuated to England, Thomas was to leave the Durhams prior to their next active service posting as he was posted to be Head Chaplain of British Forces in Northern Ireland. Thomas remained there until 1945, his experience and easy charm endearing him to both sides of the community.

In 1946, Thomas was appointed as President of St Finbarr's, Farrenferris and further recognition of his service as a Military Chaplain came when he was awarded the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in the New Year's Honours list in January 1946.

In addition to this decoration and his Military Cross, for his wartime service Thomas was eligible for the British War Medal and Allied Victory Medal, the 1939-45 Star, The Defence Medal and the War Medal.

After a period as Parish Priest at Ballyphehane, a suburb of Cork, Thomas' adventurous spirit again came to the fore and in 1961 he applied for a position as a Missionary in Lima, Peru. Aged 71, this was to be Thomas' final adventure and he died at Lima on 17 December 1961.

A true Irishman who saw no reason for politics to interfere in providing service to his fellow man.

#### **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***

# The Brennan Brothers from Tubbercurry

## John Brennan



Corporal James Brennan



John Joseph Brennan

When America entered World War 1 on 6 April 1917 many Irish immigrants to the US saw it as their duty to enlist. Among these were brothers, James Patrick Brennan and John Joseph Brennan who were from Rhue, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo.

James and John were born to smallholders, Patrick Brennan and his wife, Ellen Frizzell, in 1886 and 1888 respectively. They had three siblings; two sisters named Mary Anne and Margaret and a brother, Patrick. They were preceded to the USA by Mary Anne in 1905 and followed by their sister, Margaret in 1926.

John was the first of the brothers to emigrate to the USA arriving in Boston, MA, on 7 April 1910 on the SS *Ivernia* having left Queenstown on 30 March 1910. After his arrival, he stayed with his sister, Mary Anne and her husband, William DeVito at their home at 64 Glenway Street, Dorchester, Boston, long enough to be included in their 1910 Census return in which he gave his occupation as "Driver, paper team". William DeVito was the treasurer of his brother, John DeVito's paper company, Jannini & DeVito Paper Co., 288 Commercial Street, Boston and it appears that he secured a position for his brother-in-law there. In 1912 John moved to Chicago, Illinois and began work for the Central Illinois Railway at its Chicago Depot. He would work in the Transport Department of the Central Illinois Railroad for thirty-eight years until his retirement.

John's military service record and that of his brother, James, were lost in the fire that occurred at the National Personnel Record Centre, Missouri, Illinois in 1973. Fortunately for this writer, after the war, John applied on 4 February 1923 for a Veterans Bonus from the Soldiers' Compensation Fund of the State Treasury, a copy of which, is in the Illinois State Archive. In Illinois, the Bonus was paid to returned Veterans at a rate of 50 cents per day for service after 6 April 1917, 60 days of which, must have been served prior to the Armistice on 11 November 1918. Additionally, each applicant must have been an Illinois resident on entering military service and have been honourably discharged thereafter. Compensation was capped at a maximum of \$300. John received a payment of \$291.50 in cash rather than bonds for 583 days applicable service.



According to the details in his Bonus application, John was enlisted in the US Army at Camp Grant, Illinois on 3 October 1917. His Service No was 182976. He served with the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) at Camp Pullman, La Rochelle, France, from January 1918 to April 1919 in Company A, (later re-designated as Company 92), 35th Engineers Regiment. He was promoted from private to corporal during his service. John spent the war constructing several types of railway cars to facilitate the transfer of munitions and other supplies to American forces at the front via the US military rail network. John was listed in the Regimental Roster in the appendices of, 'But We Built the Cars', a memoir of the Regiments' time in France, written by former officer, Captain Don Clement, and published privately in New York in 1922. It is very likely that John would have been infected by the Spanish Flu during his service. It was first recorded in Camp Pullman on 24 July 1918 and between then and 17 August 1918, according to Captain Clements's book, "Sixty-Seven per cent of the Regiment (3,347 men) were stricken, with but five fatalities. For over two weeks there was an average of four hundred and forty-five men on daily sick report."

John became a naturalised US citizen on 1 May 1919 at a sitting of the New Jersey District Court at Camp Dix, New Jersey. He was honourably discharged from military service on 8 May 1919 at Camp Grant, Illinois. In November 1920, he obtained a US Passport. At the time he was resident at 1370, East 62<sup>nd</sup> Street, Chicago, Illinois and gave as his occupation, "Railway Locomotive Fireman". The passport was for a 4 month visit to Ireland to facilitate seeing his mother and attending the wedding of his brother, James, in March 1921.

Following his return to the USA, John Brennan married Marion Josephine Smith, a stenographer, in Chicago on 26 October 1922. Marion, also known as Mary Anne, was born in Galway to Thomas Smith and Bedelia Rabbitt according to her Social Security application form. John and Marion did not have children. John retired in May 1960 and had the bad luck to be stricken almost immediately after, by cancer of the brain from which he died at the Illinois Central Hospital on 8 December 1962. Following his death, he was interred in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Alsip, Chicago. Marion was interred with him after her death in 1975.

John's older brother, James followed him to the USA, arriving in Boston on the SS *Ivernia* on 13 April 1911 having left Queenstown on 5 April 1911. Initially, he too stayed for a time with his sister and brother-in-law, Mary Anne and William DeVito but by the autumn of that year he moved to a new address in Roxbury, Boston. He quickly secured employment as a tram car driver for the Boston Elevated Railway (BER). His BER service number was 1445. According to a Railway Employees Disability Policy which he took out with the Eastern Casualty Insurance Company, on his return to the USA from service overseas, he worked out of the Milk Street Tram Station in Boston.

The writer received a copy of James Brennan's military service record from the National Guard Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts. Despite signing the Military Draft as required by law, James had voluntarily enlisted at Fort Andrews, MA, in the 8th Company, Coast Artillery Corps, Massachusetts National Guard, which was manned by men from the 23<sup>rd</sup> Company from the Boston Coast Defenses. Later in life, he would tell his children that he attended a going away party for several of his younger BER colleagues who had been drafted and the morning after he woke up, to his immense surprise, in military camp!

His service number was 580176 and his military service lasted from 29 August 1917 to 18 February 1919. From 2 September 1918, he was transferred into Unit Number 2 of the September Automatic Replacement Draft and arrived in France on September 23, 1918. He was with the 54<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment, which was the Coast Artillery's Training Regiment in France, based at Angers near Nantes, until 4 December 1918 when he was transferred as a replacement man to Battery D of the 60<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment.

During his military service, James was promoted to Private First Class (PFC) on 7 June 1918 and promoted again to Corporal on 22 August 1918. James became a US citizen when his Certificate of Naturalisation, was granted on 22 July 1918 while he was on military service. On 26 January 1919, the 60<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment boarded the HMS *Cedric* at Brest, France to begin its trip across the Atlantic. On 4 February 1919 the *Cedric* reached New York Harbour and the 60<sup>th</sup> Regiment went on to Camp Merritt, New Jersey. On 24 February 1919 the regiment was demobilized at Ft. Washington, Maryland. James, however, was honourably discharged on 18 February 1919 and was demobilized at Camp Devens, MA. He later told his family that he was bullied and harassed during his service by a sergeant who had taken a dislike to him and that after his discharge he sought him out and 'bate the lard out of him'. He added that it was his most satisfying military memory. As with his brother John, it is quite likely that James was afflicted by the Spanish Flu during his military service. When he applied post war for his Railway Employees Disability Policy, in answer to the statement, 'I have not been disabled nor had any medical or surgical treatment during the last five years, except as follows:' he wrote, 'Grippe fully recovered',. In case of his death the beneficiary of his policy was to be his mother, Ellen Brennan. As his father had died in 1915, he was pressured by his mother post war to return to Ireland as evidenced by this letter, a copy of which, is in his US passport application file in the National Archive and Records Administration, (NARA), Washington, DC:

*Rue, Tubbercurry  
Oct 14<sup>th</sup>, 1919*

*Dear Son,*

*I earnestly request you to come home to take care of me as I am very feeble and alone and have no one to take care of the farm, everything is going to distraction as there is no one to care anything you know since your Dear Father died.*

*I have no one here and I knew that I could not send for you as you were over in France so now as you came safe out of France come to me as soon as possible as I need you in the worst way.*

*I remain Dear Son, your loving Mother,*

*Mrs Ellen Brennan*

However, he had another reason to return home as he had met and fallen in love with his wife to be, Mary Kate Cooke, who was also from Tubbercurry, at a dance while in Boston. James obtained a US Passport in November 1920, after which he and Mary Kate returned to Ireland where they were married on 27 March 1921 in St. Attracta's Church Tourlestrane, Co. Sligo. James Brennan was vested forty acres by the Irish Land Commission in 1923 from the estates of Major Bryan Cooper at Carrowreagh Cooper, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo. Though James and Mary Kate were not a wealthy couple, he did not apply for a military pension from the US Veterans

Administration until the early 1960s. James died during breakfast on the morning of his wife's funeral on 5 May 1968. They are interred in St. Attracta's Cemetery, Rhue and the grave is marked by a US military headstone. James is also commemorated in a fashion, by the inclusion of his US passport photo on page 148 of NARA's 2009 publication, Records of our National Life: American History at the National Archives.



**A group of employees of the Boston Elevated Railway  
John Joseph Brennan fourth from left in the back row.**



# The Notice Board

**Note: All branch physical 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 website.**

## 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. **In the coming months the branch will be hosting a number of online talks the details on which are on the next pages.**

### 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:** @Cork WFA Official

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: [dublinwfa@gmail.com](mailto:dublinwfa@gmail.com)

**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. **In the coming months the branch will be hosting a number of online talks the details on which are on the next pages.**

## **Antrim and Down Branch Online Presentations**

### **14 April: 'The Spine of the Army: NCOs in the British & Dominion armies the two world wars by Professor Gary Sheffield**

Gary is the President of the WFA, Chair of War Studies at the University of Wolverhampton, a member of the Advisory Board of the Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, Visiting Professor at the Humanities Research Institute of the University of Buckingham, member of the academic Advisory Panel of the National Army Museum, and a member of the Academic Advisory Board of the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust. This event will be taking place on Zoom. The link to register is <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/spine-of-the-army-ncos-in-the-british-dominion-armies-the-two-world-wars-tickets-145283192941?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

### **12 May: Ireland in Flanders: Men from the island of Ireland during the First World by Piet Chielens**

Piet is currently the director of the In Flanders Fields Museum in Ieper (Ypres), Belgium. After 25 years he will retire as museum director in June 2021 and return to the museum as a volunteer. He has been responsible for the museum's permanent and temporary up to the present upgrade. He aims for a constant renewal of the memory of the Great War in Flanders. The link to register can be found on the branch website: <https://www.antrimanddownwfa.org/2020-21-programme/>

## **Dublin Branch Online Presentations**

### **17 April: 'They Shoot Spies - the untold story of the first female agents' by Dr Viv Newman.**

Moving beyond the stereotypes of Edith Cavell and Mata Hari this talk explores the lives and actions of two Belgian and one French woman whose espionage, made a significant contribution to the Allied Cause. The talk is based on Viv's recently published Régina Diana: Seductress, Singer, Spy.

### **15 May: 'Beyond Vimy Ridge: Canadian Corps Operations, 1918' By Rob Thompson.**

Rob will take us away from Vimy Ridge and look at the Canadians during 1918. Emphasis on Amiens and the logistical setup required to move a 100,000-men-plus corps (and horses, artillery and equipment) in secret and have them in position within less than two weeks.

### **12 June: St Eloi, Village of the Craters! By Chris John.**

A look at the life of Sir John Norton Griffiths, - African paramilitary adventurer, gold and diamond miner, civil engineer and founder of the Tunnelling Companies of the Great War. A look at the first British concerted use of mines in the Action at St Eloi June 1916 and the Magnus Opus of the tunnelling war, the Battle of Messines June 1917 with 19 huge mines exploded on a 10-mile front.

### **17 July: 'Out of the Western Front Frying Pan and into the Fire of Fermoy' By Steve Warburton**

A captain in the Royal Berkshires at the outbreak of war in 1914, by November 1918, CHT Lucas had been promoted to be GOC 4th Division on France. In 1919 he was appointed Officer Commanding the Fermoy Brigade. While there, Lucas was captured by Cork No. 2 Brigade of the IRA led by Liam Lynch in June 1920. Making use of Lucas' personal diaries and letters Steve shares the life & times of this extraordinary officer and the extraordinary events of the summer of 1920.

### **21 August: 'The Conquest of German Togoland, August 1914' By James White.**

An account of Britain's first victorious, albeit short (three weeks), campaign of the Great War in West Africa. Led by a Captain Bryant and his men of the Gold Coast Regiment, they saw many firsts: among them, the first shots fired by a British soldier in the Great War as well as the first officer to be killed in action.

If you wish to register to 'attend' these talks, please contact Ian Chambers at: [dublinwfa@gmail.com](mailto:dublinwfa@gmail.com)



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

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

Members can access additional material such as pension records and meda index cards records 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 YouTube channel? This contains recordings of a range of interesting and informative talks given by a number of historian and academics. All of the recent webinars that have taken place can also be viewed on the Youtube channel.

You can access the WFA 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/>



# Competition Time!

## Teachers and students please take note



**The 2021-22 Malcolm Doolin Memorial Award  
for Local History Research**

**An opportunity for your pupils to find out about the  
First World War for themselves!**

*What was your town like in 1914-1918?  
Who went to war?  
Who stayed at home?  
Who was killed?  
Who came home?*

**Tell us about it!**

**To run from 1 September 2021-30 June 2022**

**Prizes: £500 each for the Primary  
and Secondary School (including Special  
Schools) submitting the most interesting projects**




*Original photograph  
by Peter Dargatz*

**For more details and to register your interest  
email: [education@westernfrontassociation.com](mailto:education@westernfrontassociation.com)**

**Calling All Young Historians Aged 16 – 19**

**THE COLIN HARDY MEMORIAL PRIZE**

**Supported by The Western Front Association**



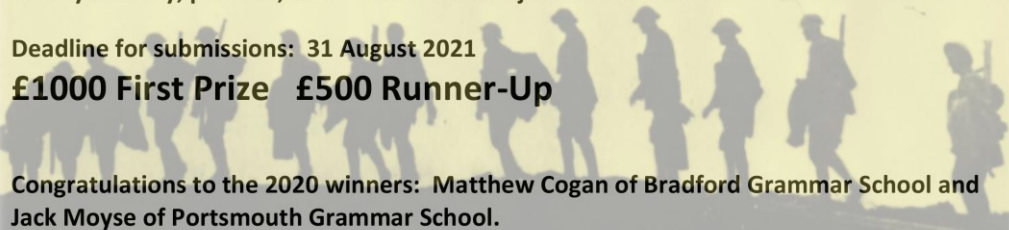
The annual competition to foster interest and scholarship in the **First World War** among young people is now open for 2021. Essays and project reports (between 3000 and 6000 words) or video presentations (up to 30 minutes max duration) are welcomed on any military, political, social or cultural subject associated with the Great War.

**Deadline for submissions: 31 August 2021**

**£1000 First Prize £500 Runner-Up**

**Congratulations to the 2020 winners: Matthew Cogan of Bradford Grammar School and Jack Moyse of Portsmouth Grammar School.**

**Further information from the admin co-ordinator, David Williams:  
[ColinHardyMemorialPrize@westernfrontassociation.com](mailto:ColinHardyMemorialPrize@westernfrontassociation.com)**



**Both competitions are open to schools and students in Northern Ireland  
and the Republic of Ireland.**

## **‘Brothers Killed in France’**

**Barry Linehan**



**Private John Desmond (standing) and Private Daniel Desmond.  
Pictured in *The Cork Examiner* on 12 September 1917.**

No records were kept in Ireland at the time of exactly how many brothers were killed in the Great War. However, in more recent years, extensive research has been undertaken. The exact numbers have not yet been fully determined. The district of Duhallow in north west Cork provides an indication of the possible numbers involved. Those Duhallow brothers were Cornelius and Daniel Corkery; Daniel and John Desmond; Denis and John Francis Hickey; John and William Hickey; Christopher and John Joseph Kelleher; Michael and Richard Lehane; Michael and Timothy McAuliffe; Michael and Thomas O’Callaghan; Denis and Thomas O’Callaghan; Daniel and John O’Sullivan. This is the story of Duhallow brothers Daniel and John Desmond.

Daniel Desmond married Mary Anne Mulcahy at Banteer on 25 August 1895. Both were resident in Lyre, Banteer, Co. Cork. Daniel was a labourer and the son of Patrick Desmond, also a labourer. Mary Anne was a servant and the daughter of John Mulcahy, a harness maker. The witnesses were David Barry and Hannah Murphy. The celebrant was Fr A. Morrissey PP<sup>1</sup> Their eldest son John was born at Lackloun, Banteer on 24 July 1896.<sup>2</sup> He was baptised on the following day by Father O’Donnell and the sponsors were Timothy Desmond and Hannah Mulcahy.<sup>3</sup> John’s younger brother Daniel was born at Spa Glen, Mallow in February 1899. He

---

<sup>1</sup>[https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage\\_returns/marriages\\_1895/10539/5838971.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1895/10539/5838971.pdf)  
[Accessed 21 February 2020]

<sup>2</sup> [https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth\\_returns/births\\_1896/02144/1814080.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1896/02144/1814080.pdf)  
[Accessed 21 February 2020]

<sup>3</sup> [http://ifhf.rootsireland.ie/view\\_detail.php?recordid=1203290&type=bch&recordCentre=cork northeast  
&page=1](http://ifhf.rootsireland.ie/view_detail.php?recordid=1203290&type=bch&recordCentre=cork+northeast&page=1) [Accessed 14 April 2020]

was baptised in St Mary's Church, Mallow on 5 February 1899 by Fr. John Burton. The sponsors were Timothy and Kate Desmond.<sup>4</sup>

By 1911 the family was residing in Lyre. There were now seven children in the family. John was described as a 'general labourer'.<sup>5</sup> Daniel was not listed with the family as he was working as a 'farm servant' at Glentaneantnagh, Nadd.<sup>6</sup> John and Daniel enlisted in Cork with the Royal Munster Fusiliers in 1915. The army generally did not post brothers to the same battalion, so John was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion and Daniel to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. Daniel must not have declared his true age as he was just sixteen. He landed in France on 19 December 1915, still aged sixteen.<sup>7</sup> Army regulations stated that soldiers under the age of nineteen should not be sent to the front. His battalion was stationed in the Spanbroek Sector at Heuvelland, Belgium, in February 1917. The war diary reveals that they were subjected to gas and artillery attacks from 19-22 February.<sup>8</sup> Private Daniel Desmond, 5522, aged eighteen, was one of the two men killed on 22 February. He was buried in Pond Farm Cemetery, Belgium.

John Desmond was stationed with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion in Champermont Camp, Coxyde, Belgium, in early July 1917. While the camp was behind the front lines it was within range of German artillery. The Battalion War Diary for 10 July states that at 9.10 am:

*'The enemy commenced shelling the camp with 4.2, 5.9 and 8 (inch) shells. Principally HE (high explosive) with small percentage of shrapnel and lachrymatory gas. Telephone communication with brigade was cut constantly ... heavy shelling started again at 10.00 am and continued with brief intervals until 1.30 pm when the situation became quieter. Enemy observation balloons and aeroplanes directed the fire. Most of the huts were damaged, 4 or 5 by direct hits.' Unusually so, the seven casualties among the other ranks are listed in the diary. The final entry is '5731 Desmond J., died of wounds.'*<sup>9</sup>

Private John Desmond, 5731, was aged twenty when he died. He was buried in Coxyde Military Cemetery, Belgium. A picture of Daniel and John appeared on the *Cork Examiner* on 12 September 1917 under the heading 'Brothers Killed in France.' The text stated: 'Privates Daniel (aged 19) and John Desmond (20 years), killed in action. They were both sons of Mr. Daniel Desmond, Lyre, Banteer.' Daniel Desmond received his son Daniel's gratuity of £7 in October 1919<sup>10</sup> and John's gratuity of £9 in November 1919.<sup>11</sup> The death of her two sons entitled their mother Mary Anne to a weekly pension of eighteen shillings.<sup>12</sup> The only consolation for the Desmond family was that Daniel and John were buried in known graves. They lie some fifty kilometres apart in Belgium.

---

<sup>4</sup>[http://ifhf.rootsireland.ie/view\\_detail.php?recordid=1203290&type=bch&recordCentre=corknortheast&page=1](http://ifhf.rootsireland.ie/view_detail.php?recordid=1203290&type=bch&recordCentre=corknortheast&page=1)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Cork/Tincoora/Lyre/417491/> [Accessed 21 February 2020]

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Cork/Nad/Glentaneantnagh\\_North/417241/](http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Cork/Nad/Glentaneantnagh_North/417241/) [Accessed 21 February 2020]

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/1262/30850\\_A000440-02200](https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/1262/30850_A000440-02200). [Accessed 21 February 2020]

<sup>8</sup> TNA WO/1279/3

<sup>9</sup> TNA WO/1971/1

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.ancestry.co.uk/interactive/60506/42511\\_6129999\\_0060-00184](https://www.ancestry.co.uk/interactive/60506/42511_6129999_0060-00184). [Accessed 21 February 2020]

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.ancestry.co.uk/interactive/60506/42511\\_6129999\\_0080-00104](https://www.ancestry.co.uk/interactive/60506/42511_6129999_0080-00104). [Accessed 21 February 2020]

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.fold3.com/image/645811819?xid=1022&\\_ga=2.199584366.1324622415.1582273528-1785708842.1570728743](https://www.fold3.com/image/645811819?xid=1022&_ga=2.199584366.1324622415.1582273528-1785708842.1570728743) [Accessed 21 February 2020]





Private Daniel Desmond's grave,  
Pond Farm Cemetery, Belgium.



Private John Desmond's grave,  
Pond Farm Cemetery, Belgium.

Transferred to— S.B.36.—D. (41081) Wt. 11699/2502 450 Bks 7/19 H & J, Ltd. 22/11/21. Regional No. 13/D/6898

Particulars of Man (2) Particulars of Claimant (1)

Name *Desmond, Daniel John* Name *Mrs Mary Desmond*  
 Regiment *R.M.F.* Regtl. *5522* Address *Lacken, B. Cork.*  
 Rank *Private* Marital Status *Single* Date and cause of death *1875*  
 Date and cause of death *27.2.17* Relationship *Widow*  
 While serving After discharge) Case No. *1875*

OTHER ACTION. *Passed to P.M.D. Dept. 123 for re-investigation under M.P.D. 271 Book No. 170*

Particulars of any Claimant who has preferred a previous claim in respect of the man.

Case No. *File received from M.P.D. 30/11/21*  
 Name *20/3/14 433*  
 Address *20/3/14 433*  
 Relationship *Widow*

Special features of case, e.g., reference to S.G.C. Accidents coming under Rules, etc.

Other Files bearing on the case. M.P.D., C.I., etc.

*10/6. 21.11/17. 21.10. 1916. Continued pension from 14.1.20 to 13.4.20 (H.C. Award) 1916. 21.11/17. 21.10. 1916. Continued pension from 25.10.21 to 19.6.22. Increase 6/5. Awarded 6/1/22. 18.1.21 (6/5) Interm. RA/1919.20 for 20.6.22 for 26 weeks. (P.M.D. Award) Awarded 13/2. 18.1.21 (6/5) 19.12.22 - 13 weeks. (P.M.D. Award) Awarded 15/2. Cont. pension in respect of 17.2.22 R.10*

*See during*

*O.K. 13 APR 1926*

Pension record card listing the deaths of Daniel and John Desmond and their mother Mary as their next-of-kin.

This article is taken from the author's book *Duhallow District and the Great War 1914-1918* (Mallow, 2020) which will be reviewed in the next issue of *Distant Thunder*.

## **‘This Old War’**

### **Remembering Major Edward C. R. Kilkelly MC**

**Rachel Abraham**

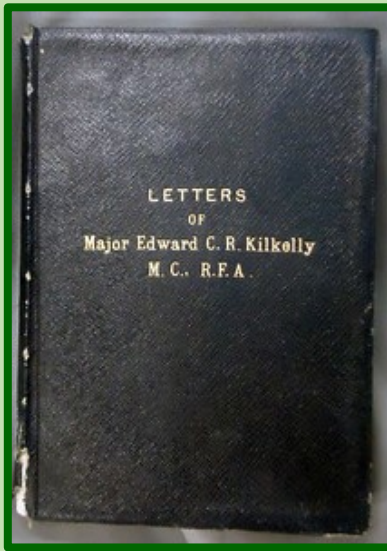


**Major Edward C. R. Kilkelly MC**

The town of Poperinge (Poperinghe) is located around 12.5 kilometers west of the city of (Ypres) in Belgium. During the Great War, ‘Pops’ as it was called by British soldiers, served mainly as a gateway to the northern part of the Ypres Salient. Located on a railway line, the town also contained a casualty clearing station and was used to distribute supplies. Though occasionally targeted by German artillery and aircraft, the town was also a location where troops could find some rest and recreation away from the horrors of the frontline.

Today, Poperinge is the final resting place of hundreds of British, Commonwealth and Allied soldiers who lost their lives in the war. The majority of these men rest in peace in one of the graves and cemeteries maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission situated within the town. Poperinge New Military Cemetery is located at the south of the town. First used in June 1915 and rectangular in shape, the cemetery contains 677 Commonwealth, 271 French and two Belgian graves. One of those graves is that of Major Edward Charles Randolph Kilkelly MC, a twenty-one-year-old member of A Battery, 186<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Royal Field Artillery.

I first heard of Major Edward C. R. Kilkelly MC in the Spring of 2013. I was undertaking research into my grand-uncle, Sergeant Myles Abraham of the 39th Divisional Artillery, and discovered that a book of letters from Kilkelly to his family was in the National Library, Dublin. I wondered, because of Kilkelly's Irish connections, and because the book was in Dublin (where Myles was from), that Myles might be mentioned. I was also interested in him because Kilkelly had served in the same unit as my grand-uncle.



**The Letters of  
Major Edward C. R. Kilkelly MC RFA**

And so, I was initially drawn to Edward Kilkelly, not for who he was, nor for his specific story, but for the insights I thought I might glean regarding my relative. I rang the National Library and booked a viewing for 20 July, when I was due to be in Dublin to give a presentation on Myles to the Dublin Branch of The Western Front Association. The librarian told me that the book had never been taken out before and I began to wonder what I might find.

That Saturday, I collected the small, frayed, leather-bound book and made my way to the Reading Room in the library. As time was limited, I intended to read a few pages then photocopy the remainder to study later. However, when I read the opening lines of the preface (by Edward's cousin, Lord Killanin), I learned that it had been 'some consolation to the mother of the writer of these letters to put them

together.' I then took another look at the gold-embossed letters on the cover, the carefully selected pictures of Edward growing up and, as a mother myself, my heart went out to this grieving woman I had never known.

Lord Killanin continued, *'It may even be that in future years this little account of experiences in the World-war will be read with interest and pride.'*

And so it was. As I read Edward's letters to his family, I was quickly drawn into the world of a young man experiencing adult life and the horrors of war for the first time; a young man looking forward to a long military career like his father and grandfather before him; a young man whose life was tragically cut short at the age of twenty-one years when he was killed in action on the Western Front.

Edward Charles Randolph Kilkelly was born on 19 November 1895, the eldest son of Surgeon-Colonel C. R. Kilkelly, C.M.G. M.V.O., of Drimcong, Moycullen, Co. Galway and Florence Petre of the Manor House, Writtle, Essex (daughter of the Hon. Henry William Petre). Edward's boyhood was passed partly in England where his father held a series of military appointments, and partly in Ireland where his family usually went on holidays. According to Lord Killanin, Edward had 'marked characteristics of both nationalities.'<sup>1</sup>



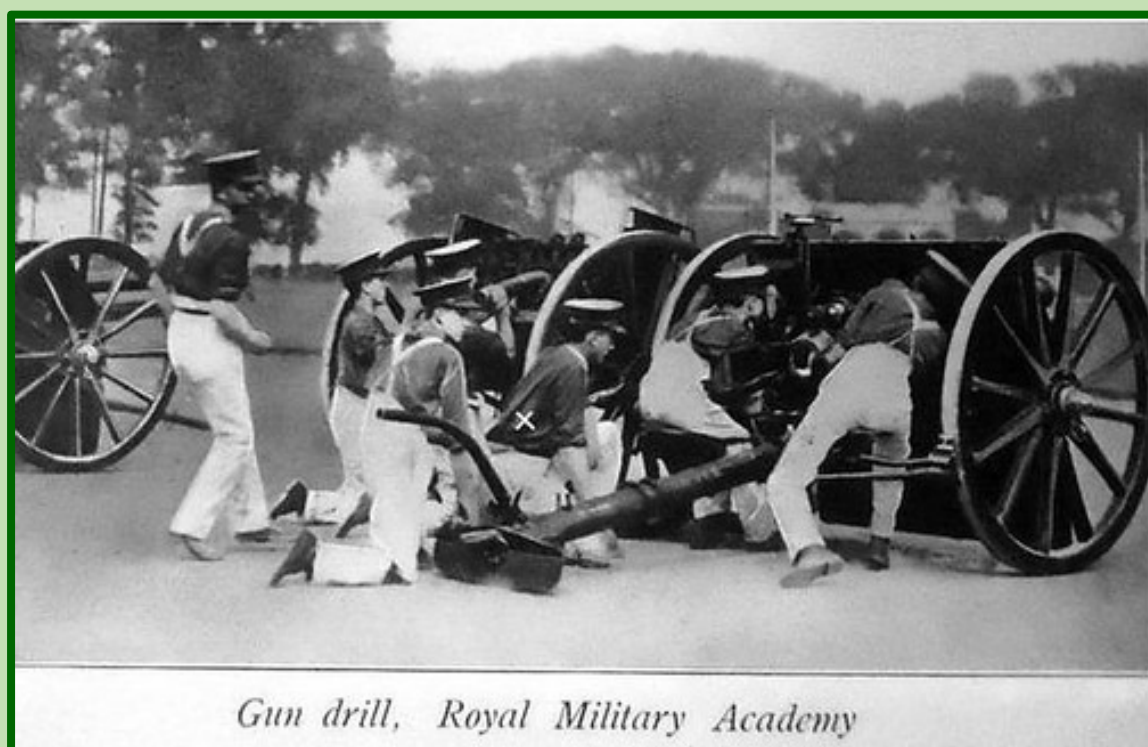
**Florence Kilkelly (née Petre)**

In January 1914 Edward was accepted into the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, on his first attempt. He initially hoped to become an engineer officer but just fell short of obtaining the necessary marks and was assigned to the Royal Artillery. He was still in Woolwich when the war broke out and like so many others, felt it would be a short and successful battle for Britain.

<sup>1</sup> Letters of Major Edward C R Kilkelly MC RFA (1918). Edited by his Mother. Printed for private circulation. Preface p. 1.



Writing home, he said, 'If one can believe the newspapers it seems as if the War is going very successfully for us, but I am afraid we will not get a show.'<sup>2</sup>



**Edward (marked with a white 'x' taking part in gun drill at the Royal Military Academy**

After receiving his commission, he was sent to Athlone Barracks in Ireland for further training then, in February 1915 he departed for France. As he later recorded, it was a difficult journey: *'I had rather a wretched crossing from Southampton, at one time would gladly have been torpedoed.'*<sup>3</sup>

By March he was on the Western Front, serving in 31<sup>st</sup> Brigade, V Corps. Descriptions of what he saw and experienced soon made their way home:

*'I daresay you have read about the latest German effort, asphyxiating gases. We had a little experience of them and we were at least a mile away. It is some beastly stuff like chlorine or bromine, makes tears run out of your eyes, I think it is a pretty feeble way of fighting.'*<sup>4</sup>

While few references were made to his exact locations, some place names did make it into his letters:

*'At present we are near a town (Ypres) about which I think you must have read a good deal. The principal Churches and public buildings have been very badly mauled about.'*<sup>5</sup>

A few months later, on again passing through Ypres (or 'Wipers' as it was known to the British troops), he wrote:

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 20. Letter dated 9 August 1914, written by Kilkelly from the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, to his mother.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 29. Letter dated 21 February 1915, written by Kilkelly from the 3rd General Base Depot in Le Havre, France.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 32. Letter dated 30 April 1915, written by Kilkelly to his father.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 29. Letter, no date, written by Kilkelly to his father.

*'I came thro' the town of 'Ypres' today, it is most extraordinary and really very interesting to a person of an inquisitive turn of mind, because every house that is not down has great holes in the walls and you see how the different people have arranged their rooms, what sort of wall-paper, what kind of furniture they have.'*<sup>6</sup>

While obviously following developments on the Western Front, news of what occurred on other fronts also got through to Edward:

*'So Italy is going to join in, this is quite the most extraordinary cosmopolitan war, when you think of all the various nationalities and tribes involved, it is really a world-war. Of course, the original cause has long been forgotten.'*<sup>7</sup>

On 25 May 1915, Edward was badly wounded by shrapnel in the shoulder and forearm. While his wounds were being attended to, the field-dressing station was shelled. He managed to make his way back to Headquarters where he fell down unconscious. An initial misunderstanding saw him transferred to a hospital for 'Tommies'. However, once it was explained that he was an officer, he was moved first to Boulogne and later to England, to convalesce.

Owing to the severity of his wounds he was unable to return to France until March 1916, this time serving with B Battery, 179<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 39<sup>th</sup> Division.<sup>8</sup> It seems that conditions on this part of the front were very good for Edward:

*'We are now billeted in a fine big farmhouse, each Officer has a room to himself, I sleep in a bed with sheets... I daresay you heard that we were up in the line for 10 days, a very cushy part... quite different to the place where I was before, much healthier... we have forgotten there is a war so perhaps you may know something about it!'*<sup>9</sup>

While Edward considered Ireland to be the only 'sensible' country in the world, he was not at all impressed when news of the Easter Rising reached him about this time: 'That was a wretched show over in Ireland.'<sup>10</sup> He was also unimpressed with what he perceived as sensationalism from the English Home Front:

*'What rot people at home talk about hearing the guns, it's too pathetic! Why on many occasions there is not a sound for hours except an occasional 'ping' from a rifle – well if I cannot hear them I am d..... if people in England hear them.'*<sup>11</sup>

However, there was plenty going on around Kilkelly to keep him focussed and it seems, highly amused. Sadly, as this extract suggests, after months on the front shooting at other humans became the 'norm':

*'Rather a funny thing happened yesterday. I saw a Boche get out of a support trench, about a mile behind his front line, and stroll along in front of his wire, with his hands in his pockets. I got the gun layed on to him with shrapnel, when he had got about 150 yards I fired, missed him, the shell went just a little over, when he heard the shriek of the*

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 37. Letter dated 23 May 1915, written by Kilkelly to his mother.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 37. Letter dated 23 May 1915, written by Kilkelly to his mother.

<sup>8</sup> In the book, Kilkelly's unit is mistakenly listed at the '29th Division'.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 50. Letter dated 2 April 1916, written by Kilkelly to his brother Gerald.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 57. Letter dated 11 May 1916, written by Kilkelly to his mother.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.63. Letter, no date, written by Kilkelly to his mother in the summer of 1916, possibly July or August.

*shell he lay down, as soon as it had burst he got up, tried to get thro' his own wire – could not, and then ran back to his own trench along the wire for 150 yards at a terrific speed, I and my telephoning orderly were so convulsed with laughter that we could not get the second round off in time... It is great fun sniping with a gun.'*<sup>12</sup>

In September 1916 Edward was promoted to captain. In January 1917 (after spending Christmas at home on leave) he was awarded the Military Cross [we have not been able to discover the background to this award - Ed.]. There were additional changes as he was now transferred into A Battery, 186<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 39<sup>th</sup> Division, and was also made acting-major. However, he was quick to play down any of his successes:

*'Nobody was more surprised than myself and the Decoration was awarded to the Battery rather than me personally, for our efforts on the Aisne.'*<sup>13</sup> *'No, I have not seen anything of my promotion in the Gazette yet, of course it is only acting rank.'*<sup>14</sup>

In February 1917 Edward was injured again, this time in the leg. While keen to play it down in his letters, *'I have got a slight wound in the leg to-day... don't worry as I am as fit as a fiddle'*<sup>15</sup>, a fellow soldier (W. C. Stanisby, 39<sup>th</sup> Division's Church of Ireland Chaplain) noted:

*'Major Kilkelly was limping from a slight wound in the leg, of which he made light, though obviously in some pain.'*<sup>16</sup>

He once again played down further injuries received in February, in one letter claiming he had *'managed to stop a shrapnel bullet by my arm.'*<sup>17</sup> However, on this occasion, he was admitted to hospital in Wimereux, France, and wrote the following observation on army life to his brother:

*'As you and I have both to make our living, I think that the most pleasant way of doing it is in the Service, altho' there are some rummy coves in it now. Here in this Hospital, one fellow is the son of a Dublin Fishmonger, another is a cinema actor!! However, I daresay things will square up at the end of the War.'*<sup>18</sup>

Once back in the line, Edward continued to think of his career ahead:

*'Old Nicholson is not taking over from me after all, so I remain in command of the show, which of course is much better from a professional point of view, and I think a Regular soldier should get all he can, and more out of this old War.'*<sup>19</sup>

Still, there needed to be balance, and Kilkelly's letters are rich with references to what men did for entertainment away from the action:

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 59. Letter dated 14 July 1916, written by Kilkelly to his sister Patricia.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.75. Letter dated 18 January 1917, written by Kilkelly to his mother.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 73. Letter dated 18 January 1917, written by Kilkelly to his father.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 81. Letter dated 11 February 1917, written by Kilkelly to his father.

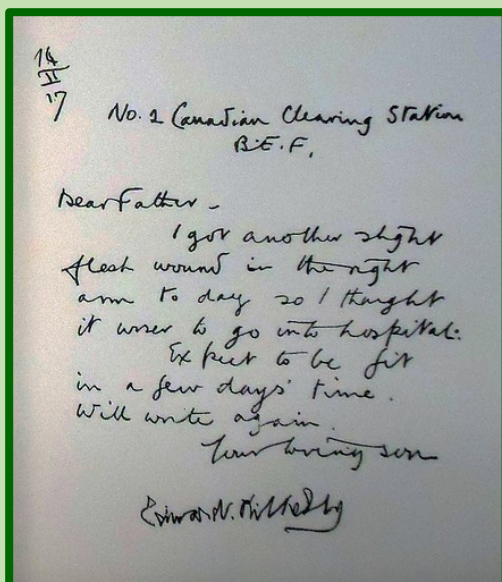
<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 114. Letter of condolence dated 28 June 1917 from W. C. Stanisby, Church of England Chaplain, 39<sup>th</sup> Division, Artillery.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 87. Letter dated 1 March 1917, written by Kilkelly to his sister.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 86. Letter dated 1 March 1917, written by Kilkelly from No. 5 British Red Cross Hospital, Wimereux, France, to his brother.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 107. Letter written one Saturday in June, 1917, written by Kilkelly to his father.





Letter Edward wrote to his father in February 1917 after he was wounded in the right arm.

*'Yesterday...we thought we would have some mounted-sports...We borrowed a field from a Frenchman and fixed up the jumps... I ordered the Gramophone to be played to represent a Band – when to our astonishment... 36 Bandsmen marched into the field and set up their instruments, apparently the General had heard that they were in the village and got them to play... One of the best events was the V. C. race. A fellow rides down the course bare-back over a couple of jumps, picks up another fellow and then they come back over the jumps, which is quite good effort considering that none of the men had ridden a horse eighteen months ago!'*<sup>20</sup>

As the June days slipped by, Edward continued to comment on all that was going on around him, unaware of the fate awaiting him in a few short weeks. Referring to the Battle of Messines he wrote:

*'My Dear Mother... What do you think of the news? I believe it was a wonderful show, the poor old earth shook when the mines went up.'*<sup>21</sup>

He also found time to comment on the unit mascot:

*'I had the Battery dog wounded the other day. 'Jack'... is always up at the gun line, went thro' the Somme without a scratch. However, he is not very bad, and remains at duty like all good soldiers...'*<sup>22</sup>

Major Edward Charles Randolph Kilkelly MC was killed in action at Ypres on 26 June 1917 when he was twenty-one years and seven months old. His death was apparently instantaneous; it appears he was waiting for his captain to bring him a report when a single shell killed him. His remains were found at nightfall near the guns, being discovered because of an electric torch shining beside them.

Upon his death, letters of condolence were received from a number of officers including Lieutenant Colonel C. H. Kilner, Commanding Officer of 186<sup>th</sup> Brigade and Brigadier General Godfrey Wilson, who wrote:

*'His success as a Battery Commander at his age has been a constant source of wonder to me. I can only attribute it to his personality and character and that gift of command that one meets once or twice in a lifetime... His whole life and bearing out here has been*

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 105. Letter dated 22 May 1917, written by Kilkelly to his mother.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 108. Letter dated 9 June 1917, written by Kilkelly to his mother.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 109. Letter 21 June 1917, written by Kilkelly to his father. This was the last letter he ever wrote.

*a high example to every one of us, which I can honestly confess we have none of us been able to live up to.'*<sup>23</sup>

The Church of Ireland Chaplain for the 39th Division, W C Stanisby, was compelled to write of his Catholic friend, as it was 'right that you should hear of his standing among us all.'<sup>24</sup> According to Stanisby, Kilkenny had:

*'... [a] natural gallantry and infectious gaiety of bearing ... and its effect on the morale of both Officers and men was invaluable.'*

Stanisby was also:

*'...struck by the unmistakeable and unforced attitude of respect adopted towards him by Officers ... of [men] nearly twice his own age, and his quickness and decision of character were clear to the most casual acquaintance.'*<sup>25</sup>

To his family, Ned was an 'upright and strong character' with a 'gentle and sympathetic disposition.'<sup>26</sup> In many ways they felt it was:

*'...his call, and seemingly in the order of things his fate, like that of so many others in these days, to be plunged, ere he had reached manhood, into life as a veritable battlefield, not only replete with all the old dangers and trials that everyone has to face, but also demanding an extraordinary degree of physical courage and endurance, of moral steadfastness, and of mental maturity,- as there fell on his boyish shoulders heavy responsibilities and burdens and hardships, and death and destruction were showered around his young head and heart. Ned Kilkelly answered this tremendous call without falter, and, assuredly, has been a glorious victor in the Battle of Life.'*<sup>27</sup>

Edward Kilkelly was buried in what is now known as the New Military Cemetery at Poperinghe, Belgium, on Tuesday, 26 June 1917. I do not know if his friends or family ever made it to his graveside, but I would like to think that they did. However, I am certain that his life story, his achievements and, ultimately, his sacrifice, became forgotten down through the years - at least until I found his letters in the National Library of Ireland.

A short time after I discovered the book in the National Library of Ireland, I made contact with Ben Allen, Edward's grandnephew. Ben brought me up to date regarding Edward's family: His brother, Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Patrick Kilkelly of the 8<sup>th</sup> King's Royal Irish Hussars was killed by an allied bomb on 24 August 1944 while he was being held in a POW camp in Germany. He is buried in Hanover War Cemetery in Germany. Edward's sister Florence married Hugh Barclay and they had three children, Elizabeth, Patricia (known as Barbie) and Petre. Patricia was Ben's mother.

During a visit to the UK National Archives at Kew, I found and photographed a page from the War Diary of the 39<sup>th</sup> Divisional Artillery that recorded Edward's death and the fact that Myles

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 112. Letter of condolence dated 26 June 1917 from Brigadier General Gillson.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 116. Letter of condolence dated 28 June 1917 from W. C. Stanisby, Church of England Chaplain, 39th Divisional, Artillery.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 114 and p. 115. Letter of condolence dated 28 June 1917 from W. C. Stanisby, Church of England Chaplain, 39th Divisional, Artillery.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, Preface p. (v).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, Preface p. (v) and p. (vi).

And so, having compiled some of Edward's letters, I hope they will once again be read 'with interest and pride' by a new audience. I also hope that, for his mother, and for Edward himself, I have managed in some small way, in the words of Chaplain W. C. Stanisby:

Today the town of Poperinge continues to attract many people who have an interest in the Great War or who lost an ancestor in that conflict. Edward's final resting place in the New Military Cemetery is in a lovely part of the town and it is well maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. After a life cut short by war, it is good to know that he is resting at peace surrounded by his former comrades. It has been my good fortune to pay my own personal tribute to his heroism and sacrifice.

SHEET III  
 Army Form C. 2118

**WAR DIARY**  
 OR  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY**  
 (Erase heading not required.)

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title Pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices	
			<b>KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST - continued</b> Serjeant M. TROTH D.C.M. Bdr. A. JONES " Cpl. G.A. WALKER " B.S.M. P.G.C. BRYANT " B.S.M. W. HART mention Cpl. H. BRYAN " Serjeant J. HIRD " Bdr. W. TYNK " Serjeant M. ABRAHAM " <b>HONOURS &amp; AWARDS</b> Serjeant C. WALTON M.M. " J. JELLYMAN " Bdr. W. ROONEY " Major W.S. NICHOLSON Order of Crown of ITALY - CAVALIER Bdr. W.G. SNOW M.M. Cpl. F. CONNOLLY " Sgt. H. MURRAY " Bdr. H.W. FLETCHER " Serjeant J.W. KING " Cpl. R. MITCHELL " Cpl. A.H. HOLDEN " Bdr. F.A. ARNETT "	Serjeant B.W. SKIPPER M.M. Bdr. J.L. CARSTAIRS " Bdr. F. JEEVES " Bdr. R.P. HUSTON M.C. Bdr. D.S. CHAPMAN M.M. Serjeant T.B. THOMAS " M. ABRAHAM " Bdr. F. LONKILL "	
			<b>CASUALTIES</b> <b>KILLED</b> LT (Major) E.C.R. KILKELLY M.C. 26-6-17 2/Lt. W.H.G. COMPTON 17-6-17 20 OTHER RANKS <b>WOUNDED</b> Capt. (Major) G.C. KEMP M.C. 8-6-17 Bdr. M. WALKER (slightly) 26-6-17 2/Lt. R.T. SLATTER 28-6-17 72 OTHER RANKS 28 OTHER RANKS (slightly, at duty)		
			J.F. Spencer Adj. / Brigade Major, R.A. 20th Divisional Artillery.		

FORM 2118 ADSS (Form) C. 2118

<sup>28</sup> Ibid p. 116. Letter written 28 June 1917.





The original wooden cross that marked Major Edward Kilkelly's grave.



Major Edward Kilkelly's CWGC headstone in Poperinghe New Military Cemetery.



Poperinghe New Military Cemetery  
The final resting place of Major Edward C. R. Kilkelly MC,  
A Battery, 186<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

# **Ireland's Memorial Records 1914 -1918 and the link between Ireland and the hospice of Saint- Anthony in Locre, Belgium**

**Francis Devlamynck**



**Ireland's Memorial Records and frontpage volume 1<sup>1</sup>**

**Ireland's Memorial Records 1914-1918<sup>1</sup>** is a set of eight books containing the names of over 49.000 Irishmen, who lost their lives fighting in the Great War.

After the First World War, on July 17, 1919, the 'National War Memorial Fund' was erected in Ireland to raise an appropriate Irish Memorial 'to commemorate all those Irish men and women killed in the First World War'. This fund soon became the 'Irish National War Memorial committee.

The books were compiled by the committee under the chairmanship of the 'Earl of Ypres<sup>1</sup>' John French. French called on the Irish people to recognize the sacrifice delivered by the Irish soldiers. The objective of the Committee was twofold. Right from the beginning the Committee stated that the memorial should contain all the names of the Irish soldiers from army, navy and air force that were killed. Secondly, a permanent monument should be erected for the war victims. Due to the conditions in Ireland since 1919, the Committee was unable to establish the monument. It would take years before they began this task. However, a subcommittee was established that began with the registration of the names. The final result was a set of eight books with 3177 pages containing the names of over 49600 Irishmen, alphabetically listed, who died in the war. 100 copies of Ireland's Memorial Records (IMR) were printed in 1923 for distribution among libraries, churches and organizations in Ireland and throughout the world.

The name, rank, regiment, regimental number, and in most cases, county/place of birth, and place and date of death were recorded. The printing, decorating and binding of the volumes was carried out by famous Irish artists. They had been printed on hand-made paper by Maunsel and Roberts, Ltd., Dublin. The volumes were

---

<sup>1</sup> This title in the Peerage of the United Kingdom was created in 1922 for Field Marshal John French (1852-1925), chief of the Imperial General Staff from 1912 till 1914. French was First Commander of the British Expeditionary Force from 1914 till 1915 but was put aside by Haig in 1915. In May 1918 he was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland and Supreme Commander of the British army in Ireland. Since 1916 he wore the title 'Viscount French of Ypres'.

cased in grey paper boards with linen spine with a printed paper label and ticket of 'Galway & Co. binders' from Dublin. This way of binding was not used for all copies. Some had a more finished, hard coloured cover. Note the differences in the pictures in the appendix. The reason for these differences is not known.



Harry Clarke

The illustrations were drawn by the Irish artist Harry Clarke (1889-1931). He was the illustrator of several books, including work from Hans Christian Andersen, Edgar Allan Poe and Goethe. Typical for Clarke's work is his painting in black and white with ink. Clarke also designed stained glass windows for churches throughout Britain, Europe, Australia and Africa. The illustrations in the borders of the IMR are a combination of Celtic and Art Deco motifs, silhouettes of war scenes, medals and badges, religious and mythological scenes. The different scenes are repeated in the various books and sometimes reversed. The engraving of the illustrations was done by 'The Irish Photo Engraving Company' and 'The Dublin Illustrating Company'.

In December 1922, the Irish press published an article from Sergeant Hanna, member of the subcommittee responsible for the lists of names, which explains the importance of the work. At that time, the so-called 'golden records' were being printed and bound. A special copy would be made for the library of the British Museum (see Appendix). This copy would act as 'State Record'. The other copies would be distributed among the several leading libraries of the country and the colonies. These copies would be identical to the State Record, but be of a lower quality in terms of paper and binding. It was expected to end the work in March 1923.

**Almost from the start there was a controversy about the (lack of) completeness and accuracy.**

The composition of the lists raised - and still raises – many questions. Who was Irish and who was not? Are all those serving in Irish or Ulster divisions Irish? Were the Irishmen who had immigrated to Australia, New Zealand, Canada or the United States and had come back to fight, still Irish or were they not? And what about the Irish who served in English, Scottish or Welsh regiments? ...

Regarding the Army, the Memorial Committee claimed completeness but made the error to accept that all soldiers in Irish Regiments were Irishmen. The committee however failed to draw up a complete list of Irishmen who served in the Navy, Air Force or the colonial regiments. The names of those who served in these forces are based on information from private sources or the media.

Today, the alleged completeness of the list of names of the Army is also obsolete. Several individuals and organizations conduct or have conducted research and claim there are shortages, errors or double names. In the War Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge, Dublin, additions were suspended in November 2006. The preliminary research of the In Flanders Fields Museum, in Ypres, in 2012 revealed that more than 10,000 Irish casualties fell on Belgian soil, while the IMR locates the deaths of most of them in France. In Ireland, Thomas Burnell wrote a series of books, under a similar title (The ... War Dead: A History of the Casualties of the Great War) in which each time a different Irish county is described. The author pretends to find differences up to hundreds in the figures in all counties. For Tipperary for example, Burnell recorded 1400 war dead while the IMR only mentions some 960

In addition to the symbolic value of the books, it remains, despite the criticism, an important reference-work. Occasionally there is given additional information which can't be found in other



sources or databases (e.g. died of the effects of gas in the St. Stephens Hospital ... ). Also, the fact that the IMR exists digitally is of great value.

**This controversy also reflects the difficult situation in Ireland before, during and after the First World War.**

**A bit of Irish history in a nutshell ...**



**Irish recruiting poster with burning Belgium in the background.**

The Act of Union of 1800 united Great Britain and Ireland, which was the beginning of the disputes between nationalists and unionists. Home Rule (Irish autonomous government within the union of the United Kingdom) became the aim of the Nationalist Party, subsequently known as Home Rule League and Irish Parliamentary Party. In 1900, John Redmond became leader of the party. On two occasions (1886 and 1893) Home Rule was introduced in the British Parliament and rejected. In April 1912, a proposal for Home Rule was submitted for the third time. It passed the House of Commons, but was rejected in the House of Lords. However, since 1911, the House of Lord's veto was removed, so the King could ratify the law.

The resistance to Irish self-government was increasing in Northern Ireland and in 1913 the paramilitary 'Ulster Volunteer Force' (UVF) was formed, led by Edward Carson. The establishment of the UVF led to the formation of a rival nationalist militia, the 'Irish Volunteers'.

In the new plan, the four unionist and Protestant counties in Ulster, were left out of the self-government. On the eve of the First World War, the Home Rule Act passed into law. The War, however, prevented it from coming into force. Also, the opposition of the UVF, that threatened with civil war, made Prime Minister Asquith<sup>2</sup> suspend the implementation of the law 'for the duration of the war.'

At the outbreak of the war, the small British army, had to be expanded rapidly. Lord Kitchener's call for volunteers was answered massively across the UK, and in Ireland as well. When poor little (Catholic) Belgium was overrun by the 'German barbarians', many Irish nationalists recognized themselves in the situation. The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division was one of the first six New Army Divisions of K1<sup>3</sup>. The division was first deployed in August 1915 at Suvla Bay in Gallipoli .

At the British declaration of war against Germany, John Redmond and Edward Carson had both promised their support to the British war effort. However, the sacrifice of the troops would be limited to the protection of Ireland. Kitchener was initially not pleased with the idea of Irish army

---

<sup>2</sup> Herbert Henry Asquith (1852 –1928) served as the Liberal Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1908 to 1916.

<sup>3</sup> Army Order No. 324, of 21 August, 1914, arranged the recruitment of 100,000 volunteers and the establishment of six new divisions, called K1 or Kitchener's Army 1. K1 consisted of the 9<sup>th</sup> (Scottish), 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish), 11<sup>th</sup> (Northern), 12<sup>th</sup> (Eastern), 13<sup>th</sup> (Western) and 14<sup>th</sup> (Light) Division

units, but eventually agreed on the condition that the troops could be deployed in the front line as well.

At the end of September 1914, Carson was commissioned by Kitchener to recruit a new division, which would become the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division. Redmond was asked to assist in the recruitment of a second Irish division, the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division. The latter believed that the Irish loyalty to the Crown would be rewarded with Home Rule after the war. Redmond hoped that the shared cruelty of war with the 36<sup>th</sup> Division would lead to reconciliation and a united Ireland<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, there was also opposition to this idea in Irish nationalist circles, which divided the Volunteers.

William Redmond felt compelled to support his brother. The fifty-three-year-old William therefore repeated the call in November 1914 in his famous speech in Cork: *'I do not say to you go, but gray haired and old as I am, I say come, come with me to the war'*. William Redmond was commissioned into the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment which was part of the 16<sup>th</sup> Division. The Irish National Volunteers mainly populated the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division (part of K2) which was initially led by the 66-year-old Lt.-Gen. Sir Lawrence Parsons. He was succeeded in December 1915 by the younger, Catholic Major-General William Hickie (1865-1950).

The Ulster Volunteer Force was transformed into the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division (part of the Fifth New Army), which was led by Major-General Oliver Nugent from 1915 to 1918. The 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) and 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) were active in France and Flanders. The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division never fought in Flanders.

In 1916, the 16<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Division fought at the Somme in good understanding with each other. On 7 June 1917, they were deployed side by side in the conquest of Wytschaete and later in the Third Battle of Ypres (Battle of Langemarck – 16 August 1917). In 1918, both divisions were fighting together at Saint-Quentin.

The aftermath of the Easter Rising in 1916 and in particular the British reaction to it, helped to sway a large part of Irish nationalist opinion away from hostility towards an independent Ireland. Sinn Féin became more and more popular at the expense of the Irish Party of the Redmond's. The recruitment for the 16<sup>th</sup> Division decreased heavily. The Catholic Irish soldiers in British uniforms were increasingly regarded as traitors instead as heroes. The decrease in the number of new Irish volunteers was so dramatic that it was necessary to add non-Irish units to the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division. That way the Irish character of the division disappeared. Since other Irish units remained in other divisions instead of adding them to the 16<sup>th</sup> division, it is believed that this was a deliberate policy of the British government. An Irish-based formation was no longer desired.

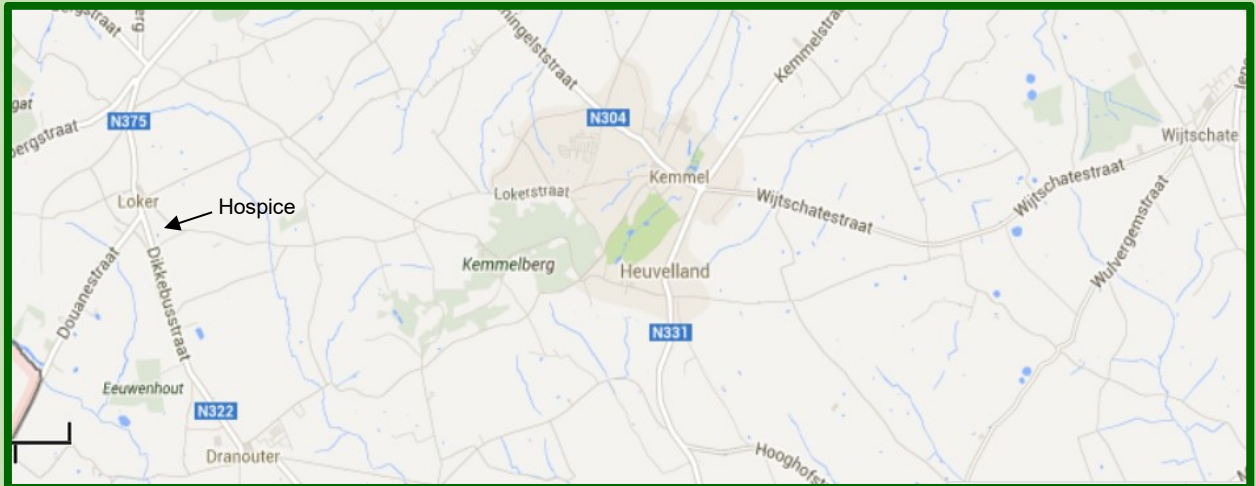
At the election in November 1918, Sinn Féin became the largest political party. The Irish Party was virtually wiped out. For the nationalists 'Home Rule' was an outdated and too limited idea. They would only settle for complete independence. The elected members of Sinn Féin refused to take their seat in the Parliament in London and formed their own Irish parliament in Dublin (Dáil Éireann). The conflict between the British government and the Dáil (which was declared illegal in September 1919) escalated into an armed resistance, known as the War of Independence (1919-1921). During peace-talks at the end of 1921 it was finally decided that twenty-six of the Irish counties would

---

<sup>4</sup> Based on Ireland's Unknown Soldiers, Terence Denman, 1992, Irish Academic Press.

become known as the Irish Free State, while the remaining six counties in the north would remain part of the United Kingdom. This treaty triggered the Irish Civil War (1922-1923) between its supporters and opponents. It was during these turbulent times that the IMR were made.

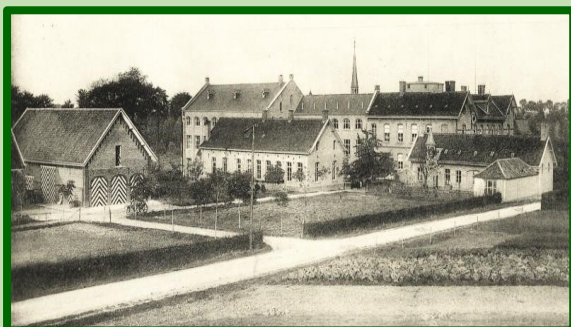
**The 100 volumes of Ireland's Memorial Records were eventually published in 1923. Because of the historical relation between the former Hospice of St. Anthony in Locre (Loker) and Ireland, in 1926, a copy was donated to the reconstructed hospice.**



**Map showing the position of Loker (Locre), Kemmel and Wijtschate (Wytschaete).**

In 1872, the Hospice of Saint-Anthony was built in Locre by the social welfare department of the city of Ypres, to care for 'the elderly sick'. The project was not a success and by 1887 the buildings lay empty.

In 1896, the social welfare department decided to establish a housekeeping school for girls in the empty buildings of the nursing hospice. On 6 July, six orphan girls arrived. They were under the supervision of two nuns sent from the community of 'Saint-Vincentius à Paulo' from Gits. The orphanage, still known as 'The Hospice of Saint-Anthony' succeeded far better than the nursing home.



**The hospice of Saint-Anthony in Locre in 1914.**



**The hall of the hospice.**

On the eve of the First World War, the hospice, considered very modern for that time, occupied more than five hectares. It provided room to 200 children. After the German invasion in Belgium and the First Battle of Ypres, the hospice still lay far enough behind the frontline for the children and nuns to remain there. They were joined by other children, from the hospices of Ypres and Wytschaete. Locre was in allied hands during most of the war (till April 1918) and was located in the hinterland where numerous camps and facilities were established. Parts of the spacious hospice were taken over by military services. The buildings were used as a residence for officers, who also kept their offices, mess, and dining room there. The bathing installations and laundry were used



non-stop by (paying) soldiers coming back from the front line. By the end of the war the convent was known by the British under the name 'Locre Hospice', by the French as 'l'Hospice de Locre' and by the Germans who called it 'das Loker Hospiz'.

In and around the buildings, a main dressing station was established by British Field Ambulances. The CWGC's 'Loker Churchyard Cemetery' and 'Locre Hospice Cemetery' are permanent reminders of this period. During the Battle of the Lys in April 1918 and the fighting for Mount Kemmel, the hospice changed hands several times and was eventually destroyed to the ground.



**The ruins of the hospice after the war.**

In 1927 a new building was completed, closer to the village center and a lot smaller. Now 'Huize Godtschalck' is an institution for residential youth care.

Many soldiers found 'a home from home' in the hospice. This is reflected in the many quotes that can be found in the war diaries or regimental histories concerning the hospice.

In June 1917, Frank Laird, an officer of the 8th Dublin Fusiliers (16th Division) described the hall:

*'The Hall, with its glass roof, long tables, its pious aphorisms hung on the wall. To work is to pray and so forth, its piano at one end, and, most important of all, its iron stove standing in the middle, was a home from home'<sup>5</sup>.*

Rowland Feilding<sup>6</sup> also associated the hospice with positive memories:

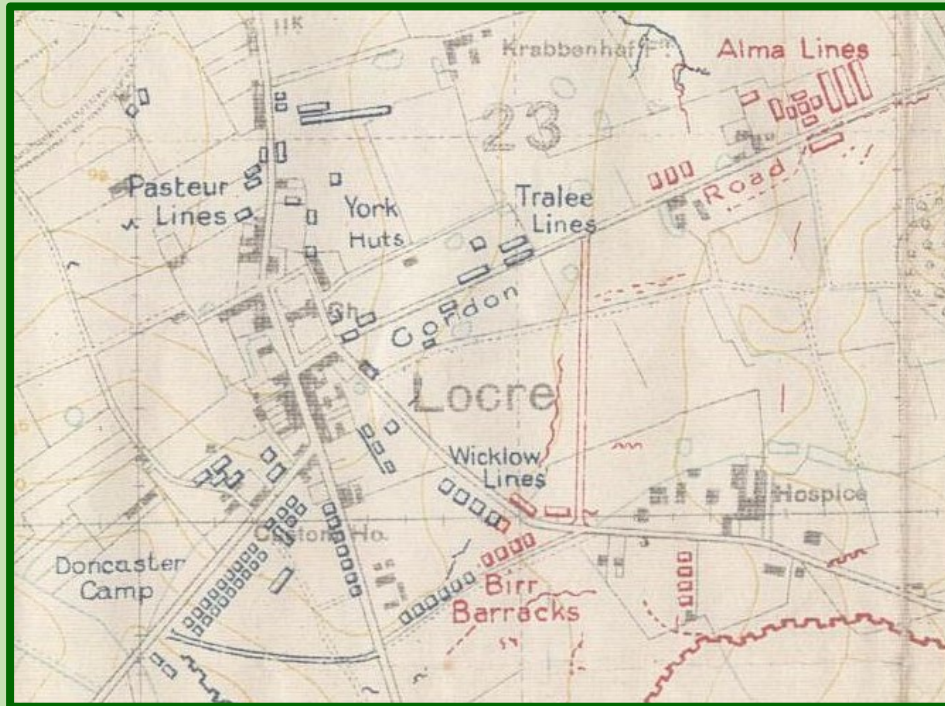
---

<sup>5</sup> Tom Burke, The 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) and 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Divisions at The Battle of Wijtschate – Messines Ridge, 7 June 1917, A battlefield tour guide, The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, Dublin, 2007 p.201

<sup>6</sup> Rowland Feilding was an officer with the 6th Connaught Rangers of the 16<sup>th</sup> Division from July 1916 until the end of the war. Feilding is known for his book 'War Letters to a wife' which is based on the letters he wrote to his wife which give a detailed picture of his experiences during the war.

*'Though so close to the firing line (about 7,000 yards), the atmosphere was the same as that, for example, of the Convent in Kensington Square;- the same well-swept, polished floors; the same clean-looking, sweet-faced nuns, moving quietly and quickly about their business'<sup>7</sup>*

From September 1916 till the end of June 1917 the 16<sup>th</sup> Irish Division was stationed in Locre and the hospice. During this period the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division was billeted in the nearby village of Dranouter (see map).



**Detail of trench map of Locre in 1917.**

The soldiers and officers of the 16<sup>th</sup> Division were welcome guests in the hospice because of their Catholic faith. It's during this period that the hospice got to know Major William Redmond and Father William Doyle<sup>8</sup>. Redmond was buried in the former garden of the monastery nearby the Lourdes grotto. His grave is still in the same place. During the Battle of Messines Ridge, the 113<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance of the 16<sup>th</sup> Division installed a Main Dressing Station in the gardens of the hospice. They also set up an operating room there. The nuns offered a helping hand where needed.

Some military camps in the neighborhood of the hospice were named after places in Ireland: 'Birr barracks' opposite the hospice<sup>9</sup>, 'Tralee Lines'<sup>10</sup> along the way Locre-Brulooze Street and 'Wicklow Lines' along the street to the church.

In the hospice several meetings were held in which Irish soldiers from the North and South fraternally dined together, for example on January 17, 1917. Feilding writes to his wife:

---

<sup>7</sup> Rowland Feilding, *War letters to a wife, France and Flanders, 1915-1919*, ed. Jonathan Walker, Spellmount Classics, Spellmount Publishers Limited, Staplehurst, 2001, p.76

<sup>8</sup> Father William Doyle (1873 - 1917) was an Irish Chaplain to the forces with different battalions in the 16<sup>th</sup> Division. During his period in Locre, he had a room in the hospice.

<sup>9</sup> Birr is a name of a town in County Offaly.

<sup>10</sup> Tralee is the name of a town in County Kerry

*'I dined with Stephen Gwynn<sup>11</sup> in a private room at the Locre Convent. He had a party comprising, amongst others, Major Willie Redmond<sup>12</sup>, Bishop Cleary<sup>13</sup>, of Auckland, New Zealand, General Powell<sup>14</sup>, CRA in the Ulster Division (in peace-time a master of fox-hounds in Co. Cork), Smiley<sup>15</sup> (MP for Antrim)- also of the Ulster Division, and Father Browne<sup>16</sup>, who used to be Chaplain to the 1<sup>st</sup> Irish Guards, and was wounded on September 15 last year, on the Somme'.<sup>17</sup>*

On 22 August 1926, the Celtic Cross in honour of the 16<sup>th</sup> Division was inaugurated in Wytschaete. This happened in the presence of representatives of the British, Irish and Belgian civil and military authorities and several veterans of the division. The memorial is located along the current 'Wijtschatestraat', next to 'Wytschaete Military Cemetery'. During the war this road was called 'Suicide Road'.



**Inauguration of the Irish Cross in Wytschaete, Belgium.<sup>18</sup>**

At the end of the ceremony the IMR was handed over by general Sir William Hickie (Commander of the 16<sup>th</sup> Irish Division during the war) to Mother Claudia<sup>19</sup>, prioress of the new hospice, on behalf of the Irish National War Memorial Committee.

---

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Gwynn (1864-1950) was, despite the fact he was protestant, an MP for the Irish Party of John Redmond from 1906 till 1918. He served in different battalions of the 16<sup>th</sup> Division, became captain in July 1915 and received the Légion d'honneur.

<sup>12</sup> William Hoey Kearny Redmond (1861-1917) was an Irish nationalist politician. He was an MP for thirty-four years for the Irish Party and a fierce advocate for Home Rule. He died on 7 June 1917 as Major with the 6th Royal Irish Regiment in Wytschaete.

<sup>13</sup> Cleary (1859-1929), born in Oulart, County Wexford, was Bishop of Auckland (New Zealand) from 1910 to 1929. In this position he supported the Irish nationalism of the Redmonds. Despite his poor health, he chose to work as a chaplain in Flanders in the winter of 1916 – 1917 for several months.

<sup>14</sup> Commander Royal Artillery (CRA) in the 36th Division

<sup>15</sup> Major Peter Kerr-Smiley (1879-1943) was a Northern Irish and Unionist MP for North-Antrim from 1910 to 1922. In this sense, he was a political opponent of Redmond. He was a veteran of the Boer War (1900-1902) and served with the 14<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Rifles.

<sup>16</sup> During the war Father Francis (Frank) Mary Hegarty Browne (1880-1960) was Chaplain with the 1<sup>st</sup> Irish Guards and the Royal Dublin Fusiliers (2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Bns.). He became world famous for his pictures of the Titanic, which were the last ones taken before the ship sunk.

<sup>17</sup> Rowland Feilding, War letters to a wife, France and Flanders, 1915-1919, edt. Jonathan Walker, Spellmount Classics, Spellmount Publishers Limited, Staplehurst, 2001, p.94

<sup>18</sup> Cover picture Heuvelland Magazine 28, winter 2011, VVV Heuvelland, 2011, Kimmel.

<sup>19</sup> Mother Superior Marie-Claudia (Clemence Terreyn 1868-1954) led the hospice of Saint Anthony from 1896 to 1927.





**Mother Claudia (left) and another nun, along with three stylishly dressed and selected orphan girls from the hospice, after the books were handed over. In the background the other nuns and girls are curiously watching the ceremony.**

The books were kept in the new hospice until 1959 in a specially crafted cabinet. In 1959, the Social Welfare Department of Ypres ended the exploitation of the hospice in Locre and moved the books to Ypres. Until 2012 the cabinet stood in the council room of the Social Welfare. At the opening of the new 'In Flanders Fields Museum' in the 'Cloth Hall' in Ypres, in June 2012, the cabinet and its content moved to the museum, where it is permanently exhibited.



**The bookcase holding Ireland's Memorial Records.**



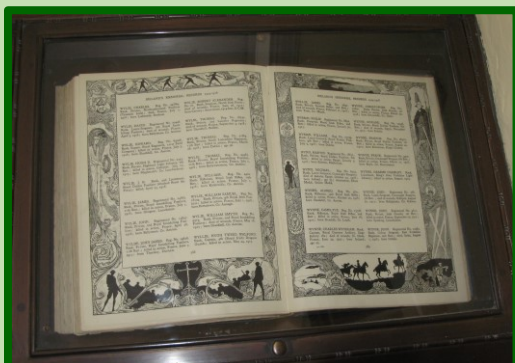
**The Cloth Hall in Ieper which houses the In Flanders Fields museum.**

In 1995, the books were made available on CD-Rom by Eneclann Ltd. in Dublin. This company conducted research in the books and recorded some statistics on the CD. In 2003, a paper version was reissued by the Naval and Military Press in the UK. On the base of the Irish Peace Tower in the Island of Ireland Peace Park in Messines (inaugurated in 1998), there are four bronze niches that contain paper copies of the originals. Recently in January 2014 an online archive of IMR was launched( <http://imr.inflandersfields.be> ) in a collaboration between Google, the In Flanders Fields Museum and the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



**The Irish National War Memorial Gardens.**

The fulfillment of the second part of the task of the 'Irish National War Memorial Committee', i.e. the erection of an appropriate memorial, was delayed for a long time. This was finally realized with "The Irish National War Memorial Gardens" in Islandbridge, Dublin in December 1931, the current site along the River Liffey, was accepted. The garden was designed by Edwin Lutyens<sup>20</sup>. The construction was carried out by the Office of Public Works (OPW) of Ireland. The construction was slowed down by numerous problems and discussions. Eventually the outbreak of World War II postponed the official opening, which was planned for 1939, indefinitely. From 1948 small



**A copy of IMR in one of the four Book Rooms in Ireland's War Memorial Gardens.**

commemoration ceremonies took place in the garden, but the situation in Ireland did not allow for an official opening. The site fell into disrepair. From the mid- 80's maintenance work was carried out by the OPW with the support of the 'National War Memorial Committee'. On 10 September 1988, the garden was finally officially inaugurated. In the garden there are four granite book rooms, representing the four provinces of Ireland, which each hold a pair of the books.

A full list of recipients of the books is not known, not preserved or was not made. Tracing all 100 copies is probably impossible after all these years.

<sup>20</sup> Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) was appointed one of three principal architects for the Imperial War Graves Commission (now Commonwealth War Graves Commission) and was involved with the creation of many monuments to commemorate the dead. Lutyens also designed the Stone of Remembrance.

The appendix which follows, contains a list of thirty-four libraries, churches, museums and organizations which confirmed they have an original set of IMR (The Stephen's Green Hibernian Club in Dublin has two sets). From all I received or found a picture. Together with the set in the 'In Flanders Fields Museum' and the books in the Irish National War Memorial Gardens thirty-seven sets are located till now.

Of course, my search goes on and everyone is invited to pass any additional information on this. If you should know other instances, than those named in the appendix, it would please me if you would let me know.

Several libraries, museums and organizations have also let me know they do not have a IMR, like the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, The (international and Irish) Red Cross, the British Museum or the National Archives in Kew. Not all the colonies or allied forces received an IMR. According to the National Library and Archives of Canada and the Canadian Association of Irish Studies there is no IMR in Canada. Also the Archives of New Zealand and the National Library in Wellington confirmed they do not hold a set of the IMR. The same is true for the National Museum in Bloemfontein, South-Africa. An intensive search, done for me by the 'Musée de l'Armée' in the databases of the French military libraries and the 'Bibliothèque Nationale de France' showed no results.






## Appendix



### Locations that hold a copy of Ireland's Memorial Records

<p><b>Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City</b></p> <p>The Vatican Apostolic Library is located in Vatican City and is one of the oldest libraries in the world and contains one of the most significant collections of historical books. Formally established in 1475, though in fact much older, it has 75,000 codices from throughout history.</p>	
<p><b>Imperial War Museum, London</b></p> <p>A recipient of the books was King George V (1865-1936) for the library of Windsor Castle. They were kept there until 1989 when they were given on permanent loan to the Imperial War Museum in London. Founded in 1917 to record the civil and military war effort and sacrifice of Britain and its Empire during the First World War, The Imperial War Museum has branches in five locations in England.</p>	
<p><b>Saint-Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin</b></p> <p>Saint-Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin displays the IMR permanently in the cathedral itself. Founded in 1191, and also known as The National Cathedral and Collegiate Church of Saint Patrick, it is the larger of Dublin's two Church of Ireland cathedrals, and the largest church in Ireland. with a 43-metre (140 feet) spire.</p>	
<p><b>Trinity College Library, Dublin</b></p> <p>Trinity College in Dublin is the oldest university of Ireland. The library, with its collection of over 4.5 million publications, is the largest of Ireland. The IMR is preserved and exhibited in the impressive "Long Room". The Memorial Records of Trinity College have been used by Eneclann to make the CD version of the books.</p>	
<p><b>Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Dublin</b></p> <p>The RCSI is a Dublin-based medical institution, situated on St. Stephen's Green that dates back to 1784. The institution incorporates schools of medicine, pharmacy, physiotherapy and nursing. In 2013 the First two volumes of the IMR were restored.</p>	




<p><b>Archbishop Marsh's Library, Dublin</b></p> <p>This is the first and oldest public library in Ireland. The library adjacent to Saint-Patrick's Cathedral, was built to the order of Archbishop Narcissus Marsh in 1701 and has a collection of over 25.000 books and 300 manuscripts. The library received the books in 1923. Because of the sensitivities of that period, they were placed out of sight in a specially made sealed box.</p>	
<p><b>Dublin City Library and Archive, Dublin</b></p> <p>The archives contain documents of the Board of Dublin since 1171 until the 20th century. The archives also contain private collections that are about the history of the city. The library has a large collection of resources and books about Dublin and Ireland.</p>	
<p><b>Royal Irish Academy, Dublin</b></p> <p>The Royal Irish Academy is an independent academy of sciences and social sciences for the whole of Ireland. The Academy promotes excellence in science and recognizes outstanding achievements in various fields of Irish. It is one of the most important scientific societies and cultural institutions of Ireland. The academy was founded in 1785.</p>	
<p><b>Stephen's Green Hibernian Club, Dublin</b></p> <p>The club is Ireland's Premier Private Member's Clubs and was founded in 1840. The club is situated in the heart of Dublin City Centre on Stephen's Green. In 2004, the Hibernian United Services Club merged with the Stephen's Green Club into the current club. Both clubs had a copy of IMR, so the club has two sets now.</p>	
<p><b>National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Dublin</b></p> <p>The National Museum has three locations in Dublin and one in County Mayo. In 1997 the former army barracks in the Arbour Hill area of Dublin were reopened as the National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts &amp; History. Originally called simply 'The Barracks', and later Royal Barracks, the name was changed to Collins Barracks after it was handed over to the Irish Free State in 1922. A set of IMR was purchased by the Museum at an auction of Mealy's in December 2010.</p>	

<p><b>Royal Dublin Society, Dublin</b></p> <p>The Royal Dublin Society (RDS) is the name given in 1820 to an organization which was commonly known as the 'Dublin Society' and which was founded in 1731. The Royal Dublin Society is a philanthropic society supported by membership subscriptions and commercial activities which continues to fulfill its commitment to furthering the broad economic and cultural development of Ireland.</p>	
<p><b>Linen Hall Library, Belfast</b></p> <p>The Linen Hall Library was founded in 1788 and is the oldest library in Belfast and the last subscribing library in Ireland. The library is renowned for its Irish and Local Studies Collection, ranging from comprehensive holdings of Early Belfast and Ulster printed books to the 250,000 items in the Northern Ireland Political Collection, the definitive archive of the recent troubles.</p>	
<p><b>Belfast Central Library, Belfast</b></p> <p>This public library opened in 1888 and was one of the first major public libraries in Ireland. The department 'Belfast, Ulster and Irish Studies' has a full set of IMR.</p>	
<p><b>St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast</b></p> <p>This cathedral, also known as Belfast Cathedral is a cathedral of the Church of Ireland. Erected in 1899, the cathedral does no longer house the seat of a bishop, so it is therefore not a cathedral in the truest sense of the word. In 1924 the west front of the cathedral was built as a memorial to the Ulstermen and women who had served and died in the Great War. In 1935 Edward Carson was buried in the south aisle of the cathedral.</p>	
<p><b>Queen's University, Belfast</b></p> <p>Queens University is a public research university and was founded as Queen's College in 1845. It became a university in its own right in 1908. The university offers academic degrees at various levels and across a broad subject range. The new McClay library was opened in 2009.</p>	



<p><b>Ulster Historical Foundation, Belfast</b></p> <p>This foundation is an educational, non-profit organization. Its aim is to encourage an interest in the history of the province of Ulster; promote a positive image of Northern Ireland overseas; strengthen the links between Ireland and those of Ulster descent. It also wants to broaden access to historical documents and records for Irish and Scots-Irish genealogy and to inspire pride in Irish and Ulster heritage and culture.</p>	
<p><b>Saint Columb's Cathedral, Londonderry</b></p> <p>St Columb's Cathedral in the walled city of Derry, is the mother church of the Church of Ireland Diocese of Derry and Raphoe and the parish church of Templemore. It is dedicated to Saint Columba, the Irish monk who established a Christian settlement in the area before being exiled from Ireland. The present structure, located close to the original, was completed in 1633.</p>	
<p><b>Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum, Armagh</b></p> <p>The Museum is housed in Sovereign's House. The displays in the Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum offer a fresh approach to the interpretation of Irish military history. The collection contains the uniforms, medals, regalia and the two Victoria Crosses won by the Regiment. The Regimental archive and library can be consulted.</p>	
<p><b>Downpatrick Library, Downpatrick</b></p> <p>The County Down Heritage Collection in Downpatrick library has a large collection of reference works on all aspects of life in County Down including Ireland's Memorial Records.</p>	
<p><b>St. Peter's Church, Portlaoise</b></p> <p>This small Protestant parish church, built in 1804, has a set of IMR. For the parish, however, it is still a mystery to which or to whom they owe this honour.</p>	

<p><b>Saint Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny</b></p> <p>Kilkenny Cathedral is a cathedral of the Church of Ireland. The present building dates from the 13th century and is the second longest cathedral in Ireland. Next to the cathedral stands a 100 ft 9th-century round tower. In Kilkenny there are two cathedrals. The other is the Roman Catholic St. Mary's Cathedral, but they do not have a set of the books.</p>	
<p><b>James Hardiman Library - National University of Ireland, Galway</b></p> <p>This Library is the main library of the National University of Ireland, Galway. It is located on the main campus. It is named after James Hardiman who was the first Librarian in the university. The library spans four floors and houses more than 400.000 books.</p>	
<p><b>British Library, St. Pancras, London</b></p> <p>This is the national library of the United Kingdom and a major research library. It holds over 150 million items from many countries, in many languages and in many formats, including 14 million books and historical manuscripts dating back as far as 2,000 BC. The British Library is one of the two largest libraries in the world, the other being the Library of Congress in the US.</p>	
<p><b>Australian War Memorial Research Centre, Canberra</b></p> <p>The Australian War Memorial in Canberra, which opened in 1941, is Australia's national memorial to the members of all its armed forces and supporting organisations who have died or participated in the wars of the Commonwealth of Australia. Besides the research center, the War Memorial contains the Memorial's galleries (museum) and a Commemorative Area including the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier.</p>	
<p><b>National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth</b></p> <p>The library and museum were established by Royal Charter on 19 March 1907. The building houses over 4 million printed volumes, including many rare books. As a copyright depository, it is entitled to receive a copy of every published work from the United Kingdom and Ireland.</p>	

<p><b>National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh</b></p> <p>The National Library of Scotland was established by an Act of Parliament in 1925. It is the Legal deposit library of Scotland and holds 7 million books, 14 million printed items and over 2 million maps. The collection includes copies of the Gutenberg Bible, the letter which Darwin submitted with the 'Origin of Species' and the First Folio of Shakespeare.</p>	
<p><b>Library of Congress, Washington</b></p> <p>This is the national library of the United States of America and one of the largest libraries of the world. Founded in 1815, it has about 144 million documents. There are 29 million books and other printed materials, 2.7 million sound recordings, 12 million photographs, 4.8 million maps and 58 million manuscripts preserved.</p>	
<p><b>The Somme Heritage Centre, France</b></p> <p>This tourist, scientific and educational center, which opened in 1994, received the eight books from Thiepval Army Barracks in Lisburn (Northern Ireland). The center researches and promotes Ireland's role in the First and Second World Wars, without making a distinction between Protestants and Catholics or nationalists and unionists.</p>	

## Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks to: In Flanders Fields Museum, Ieper; Seán Connolly, Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association; Philippe Mingels; Fiona Fitzsimons, Eneclann, Dublin; Gerry Donoghue, Office of Public Works, Dublin; Thomas Burnell; Carine Decuyper; Ambrogio M. Piazonni, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; Anthony Richards and Mary Wilkinson, IWM, London; the clergy and administration of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin; Ruth Potterton, Trinity College Library, Dublin; the Governors and Guardians of Marsh's Library, Dublin; Adrian Edwards, the British Library, London; Catherine Morrow, Libraries NI, Belfast; Revd. Stanley Monkhouse, St. Peter's Church, Portlaoise; Eric Clarke; Meadhbh Murphy, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland; John Killen, Linen Hall Library, Belfast; Elizabeth Keyes, St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny; Campbell Dixon, St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast; Hugh Comerford, Dublin City Library and Archive; Dave McKeon, Royal Irish Academy; Lee-Anne Gwynne, Australian War Memorial; Marie Boran, James Hardiman Library; Claire McWhirter, Somme Heritage Centre; Will Elsbury, Library of Congress; Marc Di Sotto, National Library of Scotland; Marc Di Sotto, National Library of Scotland; Fintan Mullan, Ulster Historical Foundation; Ian Bartlett, Saint Columb's Cathedral, Londonderry; Caroline Corvan, Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum, Armagh; Ray Mooney, Hibernian Club, Dublin; Luc Vandeweyer, State Archives, Brussels; Gerard Whelan, Royal Dublin Society; Susan Kirkpatrick, Queen's University, Belfast.



## Sources

- CD Rom Version of Ireland's Memorial Records: World War 1 1914-1918, Eneclann, 1995, ISBN: 1-905118-01-5
- Tom Burke, The 16th (Irish) and 36th (Ulster) Divisions at The Battle of Wijtschate – Messines Ridge, 7 June 1917, A battlefield tour guide, The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, Dublin, 2007.
- Rowland Feilding, War letters to a wife, France and Flanders, 1915-1919, ed. Jonathan Walker, Spellmount Classics, Spellmount Publishers Limited, Staplehurst, 2001.
- Heuvelland Magazine 28, winter 2011, VVV Heuvelland, Kemmel, 2011.
- Irish National War Memorial Gardens, visitors Guide, Islandbridge, Dublin.
- Foreword en Introduction van Ireland's Memorial Records 1914-1918
- Collection Doolaeghe –Clynckemaillie
- Ireland's Unknown Soldiers, Terence Denman, 1992, Irish Academic Press
- Aantekeningen van moeder Claudia over Franse en Britse soldaten gelegerd in het Sint-Antonius gesticht
- Shrapnel, WFA-Belgium, several articles on the hospice of Locre by Francis Devlamynck
- <http://www.wikipedia.org/>
- <http://www.google.beafbeeldingen>
- <http://www.1914-1918.net>
- <http://www.dublincity.ie/>
- <http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/>
- <http://greatwar.ie/>
- <http://www.inflandersfields.be/>
- <http://freespace.virgin.net/sh.k/xvidiv.html>
- <http://www.rare-posters.com/5057.html>
- <http://www.harryclarke.net>

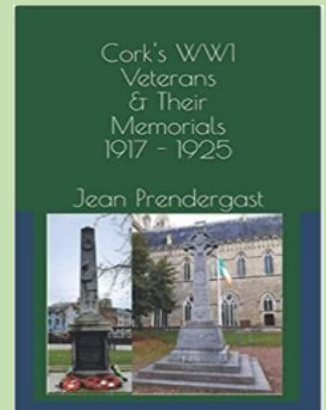
**No part of this article can be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission of the author. This article is an English version of a Dutch article written for WFA Belgium. This is an informative article and not a publication. Its sole purpose is to inform readers about the original copies of Ireland's Memorial Records.**

## **Book Review**

### **Cork's WW1 Veterans and their Memorials by Jean Prendergast**

**Reviewed by Gerry White**

Over 4,000 Allied servicemen with connections to the city and county of Cork lost their lives in the Great War. While many details about these fatalities have been published and are available online, little has been known about the activities of the veterans who came home to Cork after the war and the memorials that were erected to their fallen comrades. However, in the sixth book she has published about Cork servicemen and the war, local historian Jean Prendergast has brought that story to a new generation. Due to the scarcity of books on the subject, Jean said that it was a story that had to be 'excavated' from the local and national newspapers. Considering the amount of information, she gathered and put on paper, it proved to be a very successful excavation.



The book begins in Cork in the final years of the war and tells how veterans formed a branch of the Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers, the organisation that had been formed in 1917 by the Liberal MP, James Hogge. This branch provided ex-servicemen with an organisation and platform they could use to lobby for better conditions, something which Jean covers exceptionally well. She also details the part played by Cork's ex-servicemen in the historic 1918 general election. The Ireland these men came home to was changing rapidly and the division in Irish society was reflected in the ranks of the ex-servicemen. Some supported constitutional nationalists with their platform of Home Rule, others backed the radical and separatist Republican movement while the unionists among them believed that Ireland should remain an integral part of the United Kingdom.

Another strongpoint of this book is the portraits Jean provides of individual ex-servicemen – including Tom Barry who went on to lead the Flying Column of Cork No. 3 Brigade of the IRA during the War of Independence.

The war memorial to those who lost their lives in the war stands on the South Mall in Cork, Hundreds pass this memorial each day, but few know its story. That story, together with the story of the Munster Cross in Ieper is also covered in some detail in this book.

Jean Prendergast is to be commended for her efforts to tell the story of Cork's ex-servicemen. Her book is full of detail and is a much welcome addition to the literature of the period.

***Cork's WW1 Veterans and their Memorials* can be purchased on Amazon.UK for 12.99.  
Jean's other books on aspects of Cork and the Great War are also available on Amazon.**

# *Roll of Honour*

## **Lieutenant Maurice James Dease 4th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers The First VC Recipient of the Great War**



Born at Ballynagall, near Coole, Co. Westmeath, on 28 September 1889, Maurice James Dease was the son of Edmund FitzLaurence Dease, the Vice-Lieutenant of Cavan and Katherine Mary Dease (née Murray). He attended Stonyhurst College in Lancashire from 1903 to 1907 and the Army Department of Wimbledon College from 1907 to 1908. Then he entered the Royal Military College at Sandhurst and 20 April 1910 he was commissioned into the Royal Fusiliers. On 24 April 1912 he was promoted to lieutenant.

Dease deployed to France as a machinegun officer with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Fusiliers on 13 August 1914. Ten days later, on Sunday, 23 August, during the Battle of Mons, Dease was tasked with defending the railway rail bridge that spanned the Mons–Condé Canal. Though severely wounded, he managed to keep his guns in action until, after he was hit for the fifth time, he was taken to safety.

Maurice Dease later died of his wounds. He was twenty-four years old when lost his life and is buried in St Symphorien Military Cemetery, Belgium. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his action at Nimy. His medals are displayed in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum in the Tower of London. His VC citation was published in the *London Gazette* on 16 November 1914:

**Lieut Maurice James Dease,  
4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Royal Fusiliers**

*Though two or three times badly wounded, he continued to control the fire of his machine guns at Mons on 23rd Aug., until all his men were shot. He died of his wounds.*



# New Members Wanted!



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

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

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



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

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

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



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

**In the Republic of Ireland:**

Gerry White (Cork) 0035385 2171240 or [gerrywhitecork@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gerrywhitecork@yahoo.co.uk)

Ian Chambers (Dublin) 003531 8958831 or [dublinwfa@gmail.com](mailto:dublinwfa@gmail.com)

**In Northern Ireland:**

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

Alternatively, you can join on the association's website:

<https://www.westernfrontassociation.com>