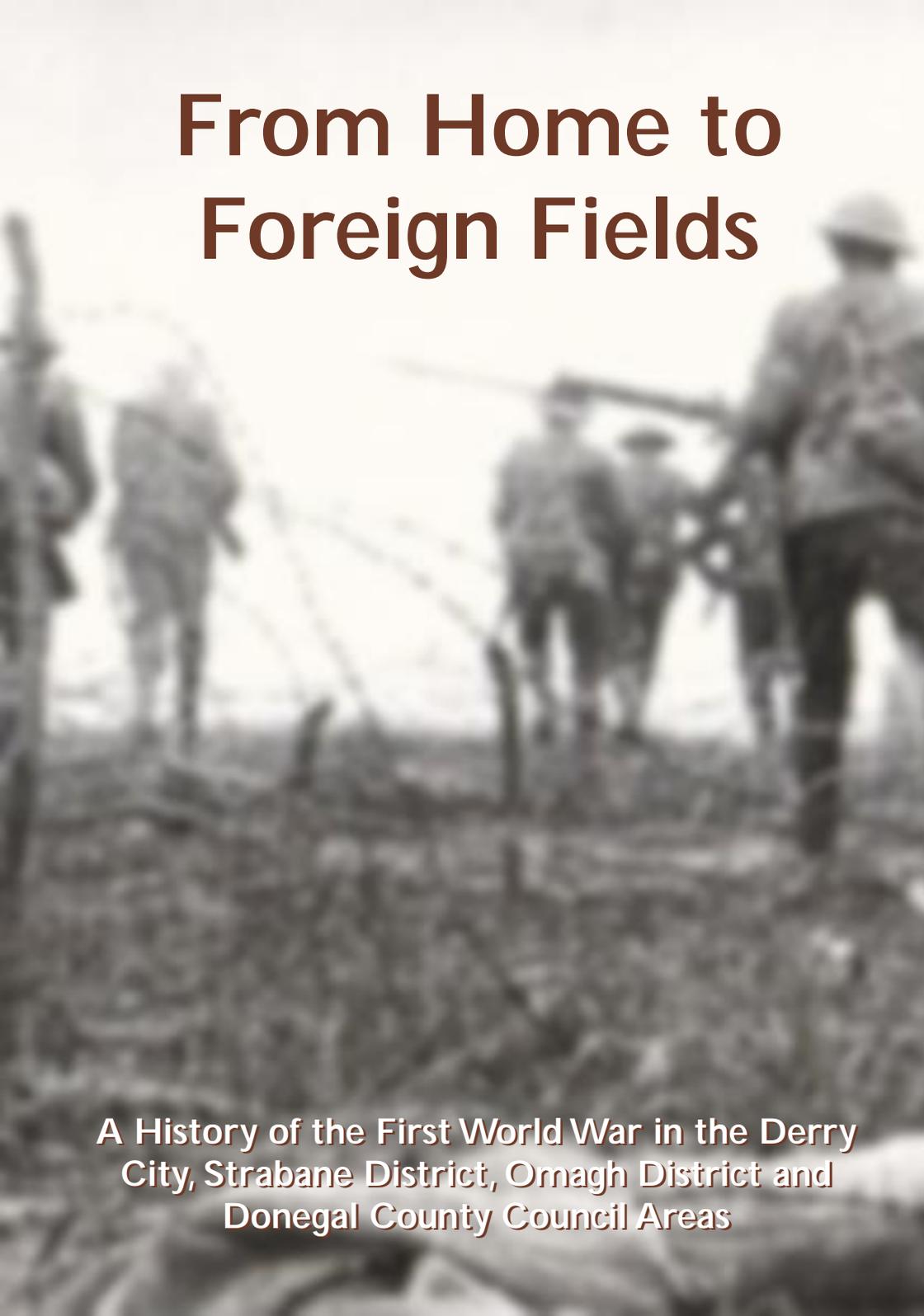


From Home to Foreign Fields

A black and white photograph of World War I soldiers in a trench. The image is slightly blurred, showing several soldiers in uniform and helmets. One soldier in the foreground is looking towards the camera, while others are positioned further back in the trench. The ground is uneven and appears to be a battlefield.

A History of the First World War in the Derry City, Strabane District, Omagh District and Donegal County Council Areas

A History of
The First World War . . .

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Richard Doherty, James Emery, Dr H. Mitchell, Johnston Mulligan, Gardiner Mitchell and Frank Robinson.

Foreword

PEACE III Culture Connects Communities Plantation to Partition Programme

The Peace III Phase II Partner Delivery Programme aims to work towards establishing the North West Cluster area as a truly shared space for all citizens whereby every citizen's contribution is viewed as worthwhile and necessary. The Derry City Council Culture Connects Communities Programme is funded by the European Union's PEACE III Programme and delivered by the North West PEACE III Partnership. It aims to develop the cultural capacity in the North West by building understanding and trust within and between communities. It aims to transform contested space and promote safe shared spaces using an integrated programme of culture, arts, sports and heritage.

The North West Councils' collaborative heritage strand of this programme is led by Derry City Council's Heritage & Museum Service working in partnership with Strabane District, Omagh District and Donegal County Councils.

The collaborative strand deals with the historical period from Plantation to Partition and the lead up to a number of other upcoming anniversaries.

The Decade of Anniversaries 2012 – 2022 marks a number of important events which have shaped our sense of British and Irish identity in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This booklet on the history of the First World War in each of the partner council areas aims to provide a resource that will enable the reader to look at this part of our past within the principles of ethical remembering.

List of Contributors

Richard Doherty

Historian, writer and broadcaster Richard Doherty has twenty-six books to his credit, two of which were nominated for the prestigious Templer Medal. He has researched, written and presented several historical series for BBC Radio Ulster, presented two major historical programmes for BBC TV and has contributed to, or advised on, many programmes for BBC Radio Ulster, BBC Radio Four, RTE (Irish radio and TV) and several independent producers.

James Emery

James A. Emery, local historian, Boys' Brigade Officer 1963-2013, member of Strabane District Council 1989-2011[chairman 2003/04]: Publications, 1st Castledearg Boys' Brigade Company 1947-1997, Castledearg High School 1958 - 2008, Castledearg War Memories, Tyrone Reflections on the Ulster Covenant, Castledearg and its Red River Valley Volumes 1-2-3 [co -editor]

Donegal County Museum

Donegal County Museum is based in an old stone building which was once part of the Letterkenny Workhouse. It opened in 1987 and contains a fascinating range of artefacts covering all aspects of life in Donegal from prehistoric times to the 20th century. Its primary function is to collect, preserve, record and display the material history of County Donegal. The curatorial staff have been responsible for numerous exhibitions, events, educational projects and publications on a wide variety of subject matters.

Donegal County Museum is part of the Cultural Services Division of the Community, Culture and Planning Directorate of Donegal County Council.

Introduction

War Begins

In June 1914 Austria declared war on Serbia following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne in Sarajevo, Bosnia.

Alliances between the European powers drew them quickly into the crisis.

Germany, France & Russia mobilised their armies.

Britain declared it would protect Belgium.

German troops invaded Belgium. Britain declared war on Germany and Austria on 4th August 1914.

The war soon spread to Egypt, the Balkans and Germany's African colonies and to the North Sea and the Mediterranean.

The war that men were already calling the Great War became a World War with its boundaries being set wider with every month that passed. Few people expected that this war would continue for four years or that the death toll would be over 10 million.



*Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand
Courtesy Great War Primary Document
Archive: Photos of the Great War*

Ireland before the War

The general election of 1910 made the Liberal government in Britain dependent on the support of the Irish Parliamentary Party led by John Redmond. The price of their support was Home Rule.

By 1912 a third Home Rule Bill was introduced. Edward Carson led the Unionist opposition to Home Rule. In September 1912 the Ulster Unionist Council drew up the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant, in which over 400,000 signatories pledged their refusal to recognise any Home Rule Parliament's authority.

In 1913 the Ulster Unionists established their own army, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) under Edward Carson. John Redmond formed the Irish National Volunteers to counteract the UVF. However Redmond supported the war effort and this led to a split in the Volunteers. The more extreme nationalists set up the Irish Volunteers while Redmond's followers changed their name to the National Volunteers. Many of the early recruits to the British Army after 1914 were members of the National Volunteers.



Souvenir copy of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant. Donegal County Museum Collection



Divisions

Ireland provided three New Armies for the War: the 10th (Irish), 16th (Irish) and the 36th (Ulster).

10th Division

The 10th Division was the first definitely Irish Division that had ever existed in the British Army. Almost every company had an unofficial green flag. The division first saw action in the Gallipoli campaign.

Most of its battalions lost 75% of their men. After Gallipoli, the 10th Division spent most of the remainder of the war fighting the German's allies in Salonika and Palestine.

16th Division

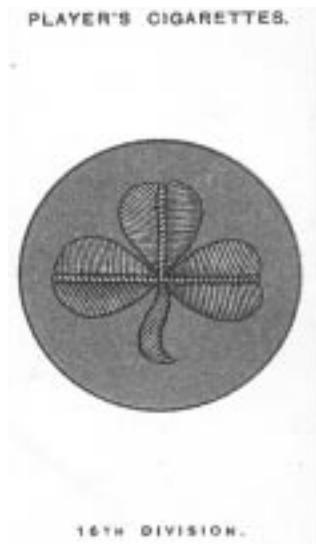
When the 16th Division was formed Redmond called for one of its three brigades to be designated as an 'Irish' brigade. However, as with 10th Division, 16th was formed within the Army's Irish Command and thus was given the territorial title 'Irish' automatically. It began recruitment in September 1914 and was the formation with which Irish Nationalists identified most strongly. Their first major action was at the Battle of the Somme where over 4,000 men from the division were either killed or wounded.

36th (Ulster) Division

This division was authorised by the War Office on the 28 October 1914. The subtitle 'Ulster' was granted to the division at the request of Edward Carson.



Poster issued by the Central Council for the Organisation of Recruiting in Ireland
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland



Cigarette Card with the symbol for 16th Division



36th Division, Royal Irish Rifles, Courtesy of RUR Museum, Belfast

Many of the division's infantry battalions were made up of members of the Ulster Volunteer Force.

The 11th Battalion (commonly called the Donegal Regiment) was raised in September 1914 from Donegal and Fermanagh Volunteers. They trained at Finner Camp, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal as part of 109 Brigade of the Ulster Division and finished their training in England. The division had its first major action in July 1916 at the Battle of the Somme. In its three years of service the 36th (Ulster) Division had over 30,000 dead, wounded or missing men.

The Easter Rising

On Easter Monday 1916, Patrick Pearse declared the formation of 'the provisional government of the Irish Republic'. Battle raged for over a week. Many of the British soldiers who fought against the Irish Volunteers were special reserve battalions of the Irish regiments who were in France and Gallipoli.

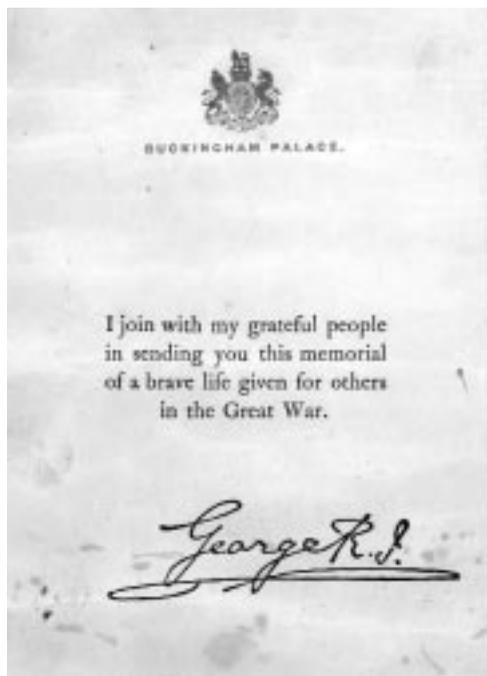
Many people saw the Easter Rising as a stab in the back to those who were fighting in the war. Following the executions of the leaders, public opinion swung round to support the rising. Disillusionment with the growing Irish losses in the war and political unrest led to open displays of hostility to Irish soldiers returning home to Ireland.



*Irish volunteers outside St Edna's, Easter Sunday morning, 1916.
Courtesy of the Pearse Museum Dublin*

War Ends – The Armistice

At the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918, the First World War ended. At 5am Germany signed an armistice agreement with the Allies. The Great War left 8.5 million soldiers dead and 21 million wounded. Over 27,000 Irish men died. At least five million civilians died from disease, starvation or exposure.



Copy of King George V's letter sent to the relatives of men and women that died during the Great War
Donegal County Museum Collection

Derry and the First World War

Richard Doherty

Recruitment

When the United Kingdom declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914 there was an outburst of enthusiasm for recruiting across all the UK nations, including Ireland. Germany's attack on Belgium, and stories of atrocities, many of which were true, inspired anger against the Kaiser's regime and spurred large numbers to sign on.

Locally, enlistment was encouraged from many quarters, including the churches and the newspapers, with the *Derry Journal* urging local people to play their part. The war, it was said, was being fought for the 'Freedom of Small Nations'. While those in the unionist community felt the desire to fight to prove their loyalty to the UK, many in the nationalist community felt likewise, believing that such loyalty would help bring Home Rule, which had been enacted but suspended for the duration of the war. The Irish Party leader, John Redmond, supported Britain's war aims while his brother Willie, also an MP and a former Militia officer, stated that he preferred to tell people 'to come rather than go' and joined the Army himself; he was commissioned in the Royal Irish Regiment.



10th Inniskillings group of recruits with very young boy. Courtesy of Gardiner Mitchell



10th Inniskillings Band. Courtesy of Gardiner Mitchell

Contemporary accounts indicate that there was a common belief that the war had to be fought and an enthusiasm for enlisting. Younger men also saw it was an adventure and rushed to enlist in case the war was over by Christmas, which was a widespread belief in the contemporary media, although it was not shared by military men who warned the government of a prolonged and costly war with high casualties

In the months before the outbreak of war two private armies had been training in and around the city. These were the Ulster Volunteer Force who opposed the Home Rule Bill and the National Volunteers who supported Home Rule. Both provided ready-made sources of recruits for the greatly-expanded army that was needed to fight a prolonged war in Europe. It has been argued that the outbreak of war prevented civil war in Ireland as many of those who had prepared to fight each other went off to fight in France and Belgium, or elsewhere.

The city and its hinterland provided significant numbers for the new units that were formed in the early days of war. Over 200 members of John Redmond's National Volunteers enlisted in the first months of conflict and formed B Company of the 6th Battalion Royal Irish Regiment. The 6th Battalion was to form part of 16th (Irish) Division, a formation that included both nationalists and unionists, contrary to an enduring myth. B Company was commanded by Major Willie Redmond MP.



Sergeant Thomas Robinson
Courtesy of Frank Robinson

Individuals

Among those helping to train B Company was Sergeant Thomas Robinson, who had enlisted in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in 1881 and fought in the Boer War. This veteran soldier, living with his family in King Street, was over 50 years old and yet he went to France with the Royal Irish. Gassed on the Western Front he returned to serve with the Worcestershire Regiment. He died of the effects of gas poisoning in 1920. Although he is buried in a CWGC grave in Londonderry City Cemetery he is not listed on the War Memorial.

Many of those who went off to war were regular soldiers, including Rifleman Francis Sherry from the Waterside who had joined the Army as a 16-year-old and served in India. On 14 March 1915 he died of wounds sustained in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. (Later that year Rifleman Sherry's sister, Miriam, married Michael O'Hare of Creggan Street. Two of Michael O'Hare's sons were to become well-known pharmacists in the city.)

Patrick McCarron, from Rosemount, was serving in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers when war broke out and was later wounded in action. On returning to front-line service he was transferred to 6th Royal Irish in 16th (Irish) Division and may have fought at Messines in June 1917. On 12 August 1917 he was killed in the Third Battle of Ypres, also known as Passchendaele. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Menin Gate in Ypres.

Also a regular soldier of the Inniskillings, 22-year-old Corporal Robert Dooley, of Wells Street Terrace, was wounded in action with the British Expeditionary Force during the early battles of August 1914. He was evacuated to Britain for treatment but died of his wounds in Glasgow on 23 September and was buried at home in the City Cemetery. A younger brother was killed later in the war: Charles was 19 and a lance corporal in the 7th/8th Battalion of the Inniskillings when he was killed in action during the German offensive of March 1918, the Kaiserschlacht. He is buried in Sainte Emilie Valley Cemetery.

The first local man to die in the Great War was another member of 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, Charles O'Donnell. Private O'Donnell was killed in action at le Cateau in France on 26 August 1914, less than three weeks after war was

declared. His battalion was engaged with German troops as the French and British armies fought to slow the German advance.

The largest single group of recruits locally was composed of the men who joined the 10th Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Over 500 men from the city joined the battalion, along with a similar number from the county; the city men formed A and B Companies while C and D were formed of men from the county. (Officially 10th (Derry Service) Battalion, the unit was known popularly as 'the Derrys'.) Most had been members of the UVF and the battalion formed part of 36th (Ulster) Division, the most junior of the three divisions raised in Ireland in 1914.



Basic training 10th Inniskillings. Courtesy of Gardiner Mitchell

Volunteers for 10th Inniskillings came from the broadest cross section of the unionist community.

They included Lieutenant (later Captain) James M. Wilton, who was to earn the Military Cross (and would later be mayor of the city), Lieutenant Glover Austin, of the family who owned Austin's department store in the Diamond, Lieutenant Ernest McClure, of Beechwood Avenue, Alfie Bogle of Princes Street, later to earn the Military Medal and be commissioned (he was killed at Passchendaele in August 1917 and is commemorated on the Menin Gate),

Tommy Diver, who also earned the Military Medal and was killed in action, David Donaghy, another recipient of the Military Medal, and his kinsman Jim Donaghy.



Capt Wilton 10th Inniskillings



Lance Corporal Tommy Diver MM

All images courtesy of Gardiner Mitchell



Private David Donaghey MM

Ulster Division

Arriving in France in late 1915 the Ulster Division was in action in the major Allied offensive on the Somme which began on 1 July 1916. In that action the division suffered heavily and the 10th Inniskillings, which made one of the deepest penetrations of the German line, lost many dead and wounded with almost fifty men confirmed killed before the first day was over. One veteran, Harry Bennett, recounted the roll call on 2 July when the simple response to many of the names that were read out was 'He's gone'.

Of its original strength of a thousand men, the 10th Inniskillings lost 400 dead or wounded. From the 10th Inniskillings and other battalions involved in the attack on 1 July 1916 the city lost 115 dead on the bloodiest day in its history. Among the dead was 32-year-old Ernest McClure who was killed at the feature known as the Crucifix, a French wayside Calvary, and was considered by survivors to have shown gallantry that should have been rewarded with the Victoria Cross. However, there were no surviving officer witnesses and no award could be made. Ernest McClure was Mentioned in Despatches. Lieutenant McClure's brother also enlisted, serving in the Royal Field Artillery in which he reached the rank of sergeant.

From Home to Foreign Fields



Afternoon Roll Call Battle of the Somme July 1st 1916
Courtesy of Courtesy Great War Primary Document Archive: Photos of the Great War



War torn landscape France 1915
Courtesy Great War Primary Document Archive: Photos of the Great War

He survived the war. Also among the Derrys' dead was Sergeant Jimmy Porter, generally known as 'Fadeaway' from his habit of dismissing parades with the words 'Fade away, boys, fade away'. A popular NCO, he had been living and working in Canada when war broke out but returned to his native city to enlist in the Inniskillings. Harry Bennett recalled him as 'a great bloke, very popular'. Bennett's older brother, Jack, a civil servant in India, also came home to enlist and was later commissioned in 10th Inniskillings. James McGahey, one of six brothers to have enlisted at the beginning of the war, was among the Derrys wounded on 1 July. He was also taken prisoner and died in a German hospital on 16 July.

Although the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers was the local regiment, many local men joined other Irish regiments or enlisted in English, Scottish or Welsh units. Others, who had left home in search of work, enlisted in Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

A small number joined the Royal Navy but, in spite of the city's maritime tradition, the navy did not hold the same appeal as the Army. As the war progressed some local men volunteered for, or transferred to, the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). These included Joseph Corder, a Galway native, who owned a bicycle shop in John Street and had built and flown his own aeroplane at Fahan some years before the war. Also in the RFC was Captain George Edward Harvey, who is commemorated in St Columb's Cathedral. Commissioned in the Wiltshire Regiment, Harvey transferred to the RFC.



Gas casualties France. Courtesy of Gardiner Mitchell

He was killed on 16 June 1915 and has no known grave but is named on the Menin Gate.

Impact of the War

It is difficult to quantify the total of local men who joined up as some did so elsewhere while many who were not natives of the city enlisted here. However, the 756 names on the city's war memorial suggest that a very large proportion of the city's male population volunteered. Since the overall numbers of war dead across the UK represented 2.19 per cent of the population it may be seen that the population of Londonderry suffered on much the same scale, the city having had a population of 40,780 in 1911. Those Derry men – and one woman – who perished are buried in cemeteries at home, in France and Belgium, in northern Italy, the Middle East and Gallipoli while many who have no known graves are listed on memorials to the missing, such as the Menin Gate in Ypres and the Thiepval Memorial. One family, the Sinclairs of Hawthorne Terrace, lost four sons, Andrew, Hugh, John and Thomas, of five who volunteered to fight; only Richard survived the



German Prisoners of War with 16th Irish Division

war. The sole female casualty, Laura Marion Gailey, a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurse, died of pneumonia in Fazakerley, Merseyside, on 24 March 1917. She was buried with full military honours.

Those who died in the UK, whether from wounds received in action or from accident or illness, were usually brought home for burial and there are almost a hundred Great War dead buried in the City Cemetery, most of them local men. Other cemeteries in the City Council area also hold the remains of men who died in the course of the Great War.

Commemoration

That figure of 2.19 per cent of the population losing their lives in the war meant that the impact of the conflict would not be forgotten. Furthermore, it led to a widespread desire to commemorate the dead and, as early as February 1919, a committee was set up to establish a war memorial in the city. That war memorial was not completed and unveiled until June 1927 due to the outbreak of the Anglo-

Irish war in 1919 and the civil strife that ensued in the city and surrounding area; work on the project was suspended until 1923. Contact was made with individuals, churches, and other organisations to establish as accurate a list as possible of those from the city who had died. As a result, the tablets on the faces of the War Memorial record the names of 756 local men, and one woman, who died. It also recognises the fact that 4,000 men and women volunteered for service during the war. The dead, and those who served, came from both political traditions and from all religious persuasions in the city. Speaking at the unveiling of the Londonderry War Memorial, Lady Anderson said: "The record for the city of over 4,000 volunteers is something of which we, and posterity, may ever be justly proud, and the 756 names of our honoured dead inscribed on this our memorial will show that these brave and noble ones came from all creeds and classes, so that every citizen can join today when we proudly commemorate their glorious deeds".



Derry War Memorial
Derry City Council Heritage & Museum Service

Omagh and the First World War

James Emery

Recruitment

By mid August 1915 some stirring scenes were witnessed in Omagh town as drafts of the Army Reserve and Special Reserve of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers left the town under mobilisation orders. All classes, creeds and political beliefs joined in the enthusiastic send off. A company of Ulster Volunteers assembled at the railway station at very short notice under the command of Mr R. Rodgers, banners and handkerchiefs were waved and large crowds on the platform cheered for the King and the military.



Ulster Volunteer Force at Beragh County Tyrone
Courtesy of Dr H Mitchell, Omagh

Brothers in Arms

However, the following night a demonstration of an unparalleled nature took place. The soldiers were timed to leave the barracks at 8-45 p.m. At 7 o'clock, 300 of the local Irish Volunteers assembled in their drill grounds and at 8 o'clock marched by way of Brook Street and the Derry Road to the military barracks. Outside at the gates were St Eugene's Brass and Reed Band and Tir Eoghain Pipe Band. Shortly afterwards a corps of the Ulster Volunteer Force with a large number of torch bearers, arrived and took up their position at the head of the National Volunteers.

When the barrack gates were thrown open, the Volunteers were immediately

formed in column of route as the bands struck up. Through the streets lined with cheering thousands the strange scene passed along to the station, the Unionist torch bearers encircling the Nationalist bands to show light to the players. On the platform at the station another corps of Ulster Volunteers, with the pipe band of Loyal Orange Lodge No. 937, had formed a guard of honour. Loud cheers were given for the Inniskillings and one Inniskilling soldier turned to bid good-bye to his sweetheart who embraced him. Being encumbered by his rifle he passed it for a short time to a friend in the Irish Volunteers. Also walking arm in arm in the procession were the Right Revd Monsignor O'Doherty and Dr E. C. Thompson and the bands played popular airs until the train passed out of the station.



The 4th & 5th Battalion Inniskilling Fusiliers at Omagh Railway Station
Courtesy of Dr H Mitchell, Omagh

For a great many the journey to England and France was the first time they had ever travelled in their lives.

There was a shortage of army rifles and this led to the use of smuggled Ulster Volunteer Force rifles to which many of the officers turned a blind eye. Before the

departure of the Royal Inniskillings Mr S. Steele, cycle agent in Omagh, received an urgent order from the commanding officer of the regiment for fifty bicycles fitted and equipped with rifle slips suitable for military operations.

Meanwhile the campaign for more recruits gathered pace and many volunteered out of duty, honour, peer pressure, adventure and a growing sense of nationalism and the lack of wars in Europe since the 1870s. By September 1914 the 9th Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers was formed in Omagh from the UVF and on 2 November 1914 they moved to Finner Camp, Bundoran, Co. Donegal. In January 1915 they moved to Randalstown and later in July of that year they were at Ballycastle. They finally moved to England and landed in France in October 1915.

They became part of the 36th Ulster Division attached to 109 Brigade and at the Battle of the Somme on 1 July 1916 despite heavy casualties displayed tremendous courage.

Volunteers

At the start of the war you could join a regiment of your choice but as the war progressed and casualties mounted you would often be drafted to a unit in need of replacements.

Women too played their part in the munitions factories where girls worked twelve hour shifts, seven days a week for a wage of around £2.

Once soldiers became involved in the theatre of war, letters back home were slow to arrive and relatives had to make do with very limited information.

News that a relative had been killed in action reached the next of kin by various means. Official notification might take months to arrive and relatives lived in dread of telegrams or letters in buff envelopes that began '*Deeply regret to inform you*' or '*It is my painful duty to inform you.*'

Before this, such information might have already reached relatives in a letter from one of the soldier's comrades or from an army chaplain who had taken down his last words or attended his burial. It was usual for commanding officers to write personal letters to the wives and mothers of the soldiers who had fallen in battle.

Individuals

Private Hugh Mellon

Private Hugh Mellon, 4445, 2nd Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, son of Mr Hugh Mellon, Kevlin Road Omagh was killed in action on 11 July 1916 aged 26. He has no known grave but is commemorated among 73,412 others on Thiepval Memorial in Picardy, France. Lieutenant George Hawkes wrote to Private Mellon's father informing him of his death and expressing sympathy with him and the members of the family.

'Private Mellon was very popular with everyone in his platoon and was killed as he would have wished to be in the German trenches and suffered no pain. You have every right to be proud of your son for he was a good and true soldier who fought nobly for his country. I wish I could tell you where he is buried, but later on you will hear. It is a fit resting place for such a true soldier.'

Lance Bombardier Andrew Duncan, 362346 Royal Garrison Artillery, son of Andrew and Margaret Duncan, Drumquin died in Ypres in Belgium on 5

December 1917 aged 20. Two months before his death he replied to a letter from his mother. *'My Dear Mother, You were asking about sugar. We can't get it here but it doesn't matter. I can do without it. XXXXXX'*. He sent her six kisses. In a short time her motherly concern for his sweet tooth was cruelly overwhelmed with tragedy and grief and the kisses turned to crosses. He is buried in Bedford House Cemetery in Belgium.

Victory

On the 11 November 1918, after four years and three months of war, news reached Omagh that Germany had agreed to the terms for an Armistice as laid down by Marshal Foch. Cheering and flag waving was taken up with zeal. At first people were inclined to believe that it was too good to be true, although it was felt that there was no other sane course open to the enemy. It was not long until army transport cars from Strathroy displaying large Union flags, made their appearance in the streets. This was taken as confirmation of the earlier news and the people rejoiced in the liberation. Union flags first appeared in the County Club and the Recruiting Office, to be followed all over the town by a huge display, which in the space of half an hour gave the town a very celebratory appearance. The church bells were rung, and aeroplanes from the aerodrome at Strathroy swept over the town at low altitudes, gaudily decked with bunting, firing rockets and discharging large quantities of coloured paper on the cheering crowd below.

The climax was reached when the military from the Omagh Depot paraded the town. At the head of the procession was a motor car bearing a huge Union flag, and containing Major G.W. Kenny, OC, and some of the other officers. Then came the pipe band and bugles of the Ayrshire Yeomanry and the colours of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. The soldiers were overjoyed at the successful termination of the long drawn out war and shouldering their officers, sang patriotic songs and cheered as only 'Tommy' can. Business was practically suspended in the town and large crowds of spectators lining the route of the procession heartily cheered the soldiers who afterwards returned to barracks. An interested spectator of the soldiers' demonstration was Mr Richard M'Ghee, a Protestant who was MP for Mid-Tyrone and a supporter of the Irish Home Rule policy.

Soldiers and girls danced on the footpath and military and civilians vied with each other. Kisses were showered all around and a fine spirit of enjoyment prevailed. In the afternoon after the military band had returned to the barracks, Omagh Harmonised Flute Band (L.O.L. 850) paraded in the town. In ordinary times it



*A victory demonstration where Colonel E.W. Crawford made an appeal for recruits to fill the ranks of the 2nd battalion which had been wiped out
Courtesy of Dr H Mitchell, Omagh*

would have been regarded as a hostile demonstration for this band to have paraded through the Nationalist quarter of the town, but on this occasion so much good will prevailed that no one regarded it as out of place for them to march up Castle Street, followed by a large crowd of all creeds and classes. Preceded by two flag bearers, the route of the band was via Church Street, James Street, John Street and through the main thoroughfares of the town.

Loyal tunes were rendered and on returning to the Orange Hall the National Anthem was played.

The streets presented a scene of great animation till a late hour, and crowds of soldiers and civilians sang patriotic songs and by nine o'clock the Harmonised Flute Band paraded the town again playing appropriate music, and concluded with 'Rule Britannia.'

Impact of War

No one can measure the heartbreak or depth of grief of mothers and widows or the paternal affection never to be experienced by hosts of fatherless children. For each of those that did not return home, the so called 'lost generation', there would be a grave or a name on a memorial but for the survivors of the trenches there would be painful memories and the struggle to settle once again to civilian life. Soldiers who returned home received the award of the War Medal and the Victory Medal and for the families of those that died, a bronze memorial plaque 'dead man's penny' bearing the inscription 'died for freedom and honour' and the soldier's name.

In human terms the allied forces were recorded as 5,520,000 dead 12,831,000 wounded and 4,121,000 missing before the armistice was signed at 11am on 11 November 1918.

Commemoration

Omagh

In September 1927 a monument, erected at Omagh as a memorial to the gallant men of County Tyrone who made the supreme sacrifice in the Great War, was unveiled by His Grace the Duke of Abercorn. There was a large attendance and parade of ex-servicemen. The memorial which stands at the junction of the Mountjoy and Derry roads opposite Sedan Avenue takes the form of a massive obelisk. On the front of the obelisk is the following inscription 'To Our Glorious Dead 1914 - 1918. Their Name Liveth For Evermore.' The site was kindly granted free of charge by Mr R.H.Ellis of Rash.





War Memorial - Fintona

Fintona

In November 1995 a War Memorial was erected to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Fintona Branch of the Royal British Legion.

The poet A.E. Housman wrote:

*'Here dead we lie because we did not choose
To live and shame the land from which
we sprung, Life to be sure, is nothing much to lose;
But young men think it is, and we
were young.'*

Donegal and the First World War Donegal County Museum

At the outbreak of war 58,000 Irish were already serving in the British Army. By 1915 over 80,000 Irishmen had enlisted as recruits.

The reasons for enlisting were as varied as the individuals. For many it was a combination of unemployment, idealism and adventure. The pay was good compared to other employment. An allowance was paid to a soldier's wife whilst he was away on duty.



Connaught Rangers Recruiting Band in Carndonagh, Co Donegal
Courtesy of Trustees of National Museums of Northern Ireland

Patrick MacGill, Donegal, said of the men of the London Irish Rifles,

'... they feel as I do - and that is why I joined - that we have a good and great cause and that every fit man is needed.'

Donegal men joined established regiments in Ireland such as the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the Royal Irish Fusiliers, the Royal Irish Rifles, the Royal Irish Regiment, the Connaught Rangers, the Leinster Regiment, the Royal Munster Fusiliers, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

An advertisement in the *Derry Standard* of 3 August 1914 sought recruits for

the North Irish Horse and attracted men such as John William and Arthur McMahon from Milford. Donegal men enlisted in English, Scottish and Welsh regiments. Patrick MacGill from Glenties joined the London Irish Rifles in 1914. He wrote harrowing accounts of the War based on his own experiences of life and death in the trenches - *The Amateur Army, 1915*, *The Red Horizon, 1916* and the *Great Push, 1916*. The scenes of battle, which he witnessed, had a profound effect on him.



Patrick MacGill

‘Men and pieces of men were lying all over the place. A leg, an arm, then again a leg cut off at the hip... The harrowing sight was repellent, antagonistic to my mind’.

Men from Donegal also enlisted in countries throughout the world. Edward Lucas was living in Australia, and joined the Australian Light Horse. He fought in the Middle Eastern campaigns from 1917 to 1918. He was one of four sons of William and Susan Lucas, of Cavan House, Killygordon who fought in the War.

The Economic Impact of the War

In 1914 the impact of the War caused a sudden economic crisis in industry and agriculture in Donegal and a gradual decline from the improved living conditions, enjoyed pre 1914. In the Congested Districts area increases in agricultural income were offset by the sharp fall in migration to Scotland, as young men became increasingly fearful of conscription in Britain which was introduced in 1916. There was also a sharp cutback in Relief Schemes as the Treasury in London tried to curb excessive expenditure by the Congested Districts Board.

The War severely damaged the commercial fishing industry. Prior to the War the first motorboats had been purchased to enable the fishermen to compete with English and Scottish boats. The Admiralty commandeered these boats for minesweeping and virtually prohibited commercial fishing during the war.

The deteriorating economic conditions of West Donegal were not helped by a bad harvest in 1916.

The War at Sea

The seas off Donegal were an important area of operations in the First World War and a large number of ships were sunk off the coast. The many war graves to be found around Donegal are testimony to those that died in ships such as HMS *Racoon* and HMS *Magic*.

Between 22 October and 1 November 1914, the entire Grand Fleet of the Royal Navy sheltered in Lough Swilly, whilst the main base at Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands was having its defences improved. Anti-submarine booms were laid at the mouth of the Lough to protect the Fleet from U-boats. Admiral Lord Jellicoe wrote 'for the first time since the declaration of war, the fleet occupied a secure base'.



*British Grand Fleet moored in Lough Swilly County Donegal 1914
Donegal County Museum Collection*

On the 27 October 1914, the battleship *Audacious* sank off Tory Island when it struck a mine. All the crew were saved and the battleship was scuttled at sea. The loss of this new dreadnought was kept secret to prevent the Germans from discovering their success and ensure no loss of morale.

The SS *Laurentic* was built in 1908 by Harland & Wolff and owned by the White Star Line. At the outbreak of war she was commissioned as a troop transport for the Canadian Expeditionary Force and was converted for armed merchant cruiser service in 1915. On 23 January 1917 she struck two mines off Lough Swilly and sank within an hour. Of the 470 crew and passengers aboard only about 100 survived. Of those lost eighteen passengers were members of the Newfoundland Regiment who had survived the battle at Beaumont Hamel in which over 300 of their comrades had been killed. Some of those who died are buried at St Mura's graveyard in Fahan.

German naval activities also interfered with merchant traffic around the seas of Donegal. At least seven merchant ships were torpedoed or mined mainly around Tory or Inistrahull Island.

The United States entered the war in 1917 and established a naval air station at Ture, Lough Foyle, with officers attached to Bunrana. It was not operational until September 1918. A kite balloon section was set up at Rathmullan and US patrols were routine along the north coast.



A kite balloon at Bunrana County Donegal
Courtesy Library of Congress (George Grantham Bain Collection)

Individuals

Men and women from all communities and from all corners of Donegal served in the First World War. They enlisted in divisions such as the 36th (Ulster) and 10th and 16th (Irish) and fought and died in battlefields from the Somme to Mesopotamia.

These are some of their stories.



*Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers training camp at Finner Co Donegal
Donegal County Museum Collection*

James Duffy VC

James Duffy was born in Gweedore. He joined the 6th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers as a stretcher-bearer in the 10th Division. On the 27 December 1917, at Kereina Peak in Palestine, he and another stretcher-bearer went out to bring in a wounded soldier. When the other stretcher-bearer was wounded, James returned to get another man. This relief stretcher-bearer was killed. James then went forward under heavy fire and succeeded in getting both wounded men under cover.



James Duffy VC
Donegal County Museum
Collection

James was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces.

Michael Duffy

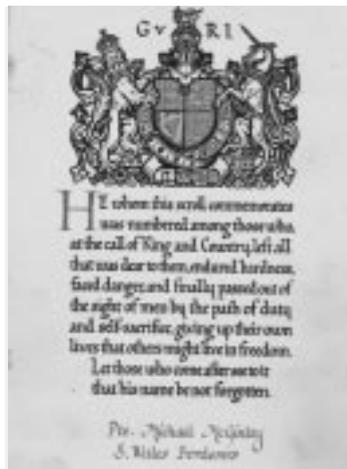
Michael Duffy, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, was reported dead following a battle at Ames in Belgium. In the absence of a body his family erected a simple metal cross in Stranorlar cemetery, which said, 'Michael Duffy's Burying Place'.

Meanwhile Michael was actually a German prisoner of war. No word of his survival reached home until one day he appeared at the back door of his home in Cappry.

'I came in and she (his mother) looked at me and collapsed on the floor.'

Michael McGinley

Private Michael McGinley, son of Bernard McGinley, Creeslough, joined the 4th Battalion South Wales Borderers and was stationed in Mesopotamia in 1917. In Mesopotamia extremes of temperature such as 120° F was common. Arid desert, regular flooding, flies, mosquitoes and other vermin all led to appalling levels of sickness and death through disease. Private McGinley was killed in action on the 30 April at the Battle of 'The Boot' at Band-i-Adhaim. He is remembered on the Basra Memorial, which commemorates more than 40,500 members of the Commonwealth forces who died in Mesopotamia and whose graves are not known.



Memorial Scroll for Private Michael McGinley, Creeslough
Donegal County Museum Collection

Robert Chestnutt

Robert Chestnutt was the youngest son of Hugh and Margaret Chestnutt of Derrylaghan, Kilcar, Co. Donegal. He was a Lance Corporal in B Company, 11th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and was killed in action on 7 June 1917 on the opening day of the Battle of Messines. He is buried in Wytschaete Military Cemetery, Belgium.



*Allied soldiers studying a large relief model of Messines Ridge
Courtesy Illustrated War News, Illustrated London News & Sketch, London, 1918*

The Battle of Messines began with the detonation of nineteen mines beneath German lines on the Messines-Wytschaete ridge. The explosion was heard as far away as London. The Messines mines' detonation killed more people than any other non-nuclear man-made explosion in history.

Henry Gallagher

Henry Gallagher was from Balleighan, Manorcunningham, Co. Donegal. He joined the 11th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers on 1 September 1914. He was awarded the DSO for his bravery during the Battle of the Somme, in July 1916. He was killed by shell fire on 7 June 1917 at the Battle of Messines and is buried in Lone Tree Cemetery in Belgium.

Private William Devenny

Private William Devenny, son of Hugh and Katherine Devenny, was born at Rye near Manorcunningham. He was a private in the 11th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and was killed in action on 16 August 1917. His death is recorded on Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium, and on the Memorial Tablet in Taughboyne Parish Church.

The Tyne Cot Memorial commemorates nearly 35,000 servicemen from the United Kingdom and New Zealand who died in the Ypres Salient after 16 August 1917 and whose graves are not known.

Women in the War

Women played a vital role in the war effort. They participated in recruiting and were also essential in the various charitable organisations, which assisted with the war effort. Women also helped to organise and staff volunteer hospitals. Catherine Black was born in Ramelton. She trained as a nurse in England and was on the private nursing staff of the London Hospital when war broke out. She served at St Omer General Hospital in France and at a number of Casualty Clearing Stations near the front.

'You could not go through the horrors we went through, see the things we saw and remain the same. You went into it young and light-hearted, you came out older than any span of years could make you.'

After the Armistice on 11 November 1918, Catherine remained for many months looking after the wounded.



Nurse Catherine Black's Army Hospital tents. Donegal County Museum Collection

Irish Chaplains

Irish chaplains from all denominations ministered in the War. They visited the front line troops, looked after the sick, attended the dying and were present at courts martial. Many were decorated for bravery including the Reverend J. Jackson Wright, a Presbyterian Minister from Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal. The Revd Wright served with the



Army Chaplains
Donegal County Museum Collection

36th (Ulster) Division and was awarded the Military Cross after the Battle of the Somme. Canon Kerr from Fanad wrote from France in 1917, 'Only those who have been subjected to the withering breath of war... can catch a glimpse of the true extent of ruin and misery brought about by the 'Great War'...'

Commemoration

The War dead included Catholics and Protestants, Orangemen and Hibernians, Gaelic players and cricketers and those who joined the war because their political and church leaders told them it was the right thing to do.



The remembrance poppy has been used since 1920 to commemorate soldiers who have died in war.
Donegal County Museum Collection

However, the Ireland that the soldiers returned to had changed dramatically since the War began. The Easter Rising and the success of Sinn Fein in the 1918 general election meant that many soldiers were not welcomed home as heroes. Although memorials were erected to honour those who had been killed, in Donegal the majority of these can be

found only in Protestant Churches. Over the years in the Irish consciousness the poppy and Remembrance Day became associated less with respect for those who died in war and more with a statement of political allegiance. This however is changing. Recognition is finally being given to the thousands of Irish people of all political persuasions who died during the First World War.

In Fort Dunree, the Inishowen Friends of Messines have created a memorial wall with the names of the men and women from the Inishowen peninsula who died in the First World War.

The *County Donegal Book of Honour - The Great War 1914 – 1918* which was compiled by the County Donegal Book of Honour Committee, lists the names of Donegal men and women who died in the War.



Memorial Wall with the names of 249 men and women from the Inishowen peninsula who died in the First World War
Courtesy Fort Dunree Military Museum

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

Lawrence Binyon

Strabane and the First World War

James Emery

Recruitment

As in many other towns across the country, it was a 'red letter' day in the history of Strabane when Orange and Green happily blended together on that August day in 1914. The occasion was the departure from Strabane of army reservists belonging to the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and members of the Volunteer Corps, and also some instructors to the corps.

Shortly after 11 am the Irish National Volunteers fell in outside the Barrack Street Hall, under the command of Captain Eddie Gallagher and John D. Reid. A few minutes later they were joined by the Ulster Corps under the command of Captain W. R. Smyth and Captain John W. Buchanan. Headed by the Catholic Brass and Reed Band, under their conductor Mr Dan Connolly, the procession marched through all the principal streets of the town followed by an enormous crowd of people who occasionally gave vent to their feelings of joy at seeing the union of Orange and Green by cheering the two parties at intervals.



Military recruiting parade for the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers on Upper Main St, Strabane
Courtesy Cooper Collection Public Record Office Northern Ireland

Along the route there were hundreds of spectators who waved flags and handkerchiefs and wished the reservists all sorts of good luck. Outside the railway station a halt was made and cheers were expressed for the reservists. Captain Eddie Gallagher then called for cheers for the Ulster Volunteers and these were given in an enthusiastic manner by the National Corps. Captain W. B. Smyth asked for cheers for the National Volunteers, and these were given in a similar fashion by the Ulster battalion. Both Volunteer Corps marched into the railway station and cheered the reservists as they passed by them in the train. Upwards of a thousand people saw them depart.

Notices appeared in the local papers for recruits –

'You are wanted, can you really persuade yourself that you can't be spared at home? If not what's keeping you back? Why not enlist to-day? -- Join to-day and keep the ranks of the Tyrone Volunteers 19th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers full up.'

By May 1915 a large crowd assembled at the railway station to witness the arrival of a contingent from the 7th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers accompanied by a band for the purpose of recruiting in order to bring the battalion up to its full strength. The party was accompanied by Lieutenants Morton and Taggart. Some of the recruiting party were residents of the locality and they were heartily welcomed by their friends at the station. The *Strabane Chronicle* reported as follows: 'Scarcely has any town in Ulster with a population of little over 5000 done better than Strabane in response to the call of the country. There are upwards of 100 men in the firing line and more than 250 from the town and district are in training in the New Army. In addition the town has also contributed to the Navy.'

Individuals

Captain Ambrose Ricardo

Captain Ambrose Ricardo, a native of Sion Mills who later attained the rank of brigadier general, gives a poignant account of some of the volunteers going into action on the Somme 1 July 1916,

'I shall never forget for one minute the extraordinary sight. The Derrys, on our left, were so eager that they started a few minutes before the ordered time and the Tyrones were not going to be



Ambrose Ricardo
Courtesy of the
Inniskillings Museum

left behind. They not going without delay - no fuss, no shouting, no running, everything orderly, solid and thorough, just like the men themselves. Here and there a boy would wave his hand to me as I shouted "Good Luck" to them



North Irish Horse on parade outside the Temperance Hotel, Abercorn Square, Strabane c.1912
Courtesy Cooper Collection Public Record Office Northern Ireland

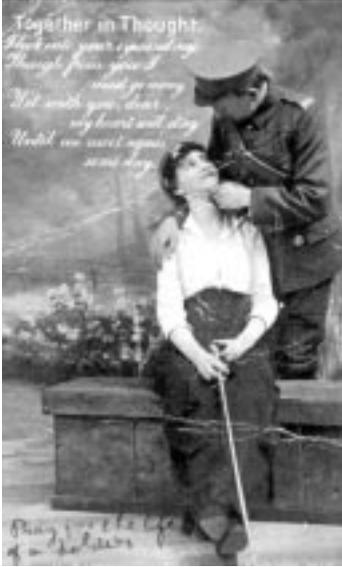
through my megaphone and all had a happy face. Many advanced through the heavy fire, carrying rolls of barbed wire on their shoulders'.

At home a Weekly Casualty List, published by the War Office appeared in the local newspapers. These informed families that their relative was 'missing' but they continued to live in hope, yet too often had to finally accept the inevitable. A letter to Mrs Devine in Strabane confirming the death of her son from his Commanding Officer goes as follows:

Dear Mrs Devine, "I am very sorry to say that your son Pte W. Devine, No. 10607 2nd Battalion Irish Guards was killed in action on 27th September, 1916. Please accept my very deepest sympathy to you in your terrible loss. It was his first day in the trenches and I feel it very sad that he should be so quickly cut down without having a chance of distinguishing himself out here as a soldier. His brother is now a Corporal and doing very well. I do pray that God may help and strengthen you to bear this sad blow.' Yours truly, Frank Watts [Captain] 5th October, 1916.

Pte Devine is buried in the Guards Cemetery, Lesbouefs, France.

Private James Rouse, No. 21094, of Dock Street, serving in the Royal Irish



Postcard 'Pray for the life of a soldier'
Donegal County Museum Collection

Fusiliers, was Mentioned in Despatches for his gallant conduct and devotion to duty on the battlefield from 4 to 8 September 1916. Major General W. B. Hickie, Commander of the 16th (Irish) Division presented Private Rouse with his certificate and ordered his name to be entered in the records of the Irish Division. Private Rouse in a letter home to his wife wrote:

'I am sure that you will share with me in pride that the service that I have rendered my country has not been in vain and that I have been able to do a little to achieve that which we are fighting for -- liberty and civilisation. I sincerely hope that I may be given health and strength to serve my country until victory -- a victory for humanity and all that is good -- is achieved.'

Private Rouse survived the war and returned home.

In Rouskey, Donemana during July 1916, news had reached home of Private Jacob Laughlin, No. 13593, who had died of wounds on 3 July 1916. He was aged 28 and served with 2nd Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. He is buried in Forceville Communal Cemetery in France. He was the son of Agnes Laughlin. Prior to his enlistment he was a member of Donemana LOL 503 and the local UVF.

Robert Pollock

Robert, known as Bobby, was born around 1895 at Artigarvan, Co. Tyrone to Minnie the postmistress and Andrew John Pollock. Along with his friends he had signed the Ulster Covenant at Artigarvan Church hall and later enlisted in the Ulster Volunteer Force. Bobby worked at Buchanan's Garage in Strabane.

On the outbreak of war in August 1914 Bobby, like many from his district, joined the 36th (Ulster)



Lance Corporal Pollock

Division.

Bobby wrote a series of letters to his sister and mother between 1914 and 1918 which allows us to follow his progress. Between 1914 and 1915, he trained at Finner, Ballykinlar, Ballycastle and Randalstown before embarking for France in 1915 as part of the 9th (Tyrone Service) Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers

Bobby commanded a machine gun crew, rising in rank to lance sergeant. He was injured at the Battle of the Somme, and took part in the Battle of Messines Ridge. Bobby was captured by the Germans after sustaining a bayonet wound to the leg. Septicaemia set in and Bobby died aged 23 in April 1918. He is buried in Hautmont Communal Cemetery in France. Robert 'Bobby' Pollock was awarded the Military Medal.

Popular Songs

The war of course had its lighter moments and the soldiers composed and often sang songs and even hymns while on the march and in barrack rooms. Popular songs of the era were : "Pack Up Your Troubles" -- "Keep The Home Fires Burning" -- "It's A Long Way To Tipperary" -- "If You Were The Only Girl In The World" -- "Take Me Back To Dear Old Blighty" -- "Yankee Doodle Dandy" -- "Mademoiselle From Armentieres" -- "The White Cliffs Of Dover" and "Over There."



Commemorative tea cloth
Derry City Council
Heritage & Museum Service

Commemoration

Sion Mills

In November 1957 this War Memorial was unveiled and dedicated prior to the annual Remembrance Service in Sion Mills Presbyterian Church. The memorial takes the form of a granite block with semi-circular surrounds and there is a small plot of remembrance with ornamental flower beds. It is situated on the main Strabane-Omagh road.

From Home to Foreign Fields



War Memorial - Newtown Stewart



War Memorial - Ston Mills

Castleberg

The memorial was erected in 1935 but it was 1950 before a bronze plaque containing the names of the 'fallen' from the First and Second World Wars. It was unveiled by the Marquis of Hamilton, DL. Revd W. Devine, MC, the local Parish Priest, and Revd Colin Corkey BA, minister of First Castleberg Presbyterian Church took part in the ceremony. A further thirty-three names were added to the memorial in the year 2001.



War Memorial - Castleberg

Newtownstewart

In March 2008 the Newtownstewart Branch of the Royal British Legion unveiled and dedicated their new War Memorial and peace garden situated on the Moyle Road. The unveiling ceremony was performed by His Grace the Duke of Abercorn KG and the dedication was carried out by Revd Harry Hall BA, the local rector, and Revd Trevor Williamson BA BD, minister of Urney and Sion Mills Presbyterian Churches. The memorial was designed by local architect Mr Joe McCormick.

Strabane

In November 1966, at the annual meeting of Strabane British Legion, it was announced that plans had been drawn up for the new war memorial on the Derry Road.

It was reported that work was now ready for tender and it is anticipated that there are sufficient funds to cover the cost. Mr. A. R. McKinley, MBE, was appointed chairman and Mr. J. J. Ormsby secretary of the 'memorial' committee. It was unveiled on 9 May 1969 by His Grace the Duke of Abercorn, HML, President of Strabane Branch British Legion and dedicated by Archdeacon L.W. Crooks. The band of the 1st Battalion Royal Irish Rangers was in attendance and led the large parade of ex-servicemen through the town afterwards. Inscription on memorial 'TO THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES'.

Final Words

The PEACE III Plantation to Partition programme marks a number of particularly important anniversaries which have shaped our cultural identities. This includes events such as the Plantation of Ulster 400 years ago through to events 100 years ago which are of more recent memory. Important changes such as Partition and the foundation of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland occurred in the 1911-1921 decade.

This decade also witnessed the start and finish of the Great War or the First World War as it has come to be known. This war started before the Easter Rising had taken place and the subsequent events which led to Partition. Men and women from the whole island played their part in this war and many lives were lost as we have outlined in this booklet.

The challenge we now face is how we can as individuals and groups consider the complexities of this legacy.

Brian Cowan's speech, as Taoiseach, in May 2009 at the Institute for British and Irish Studies at University College Dublin called for us as people of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to commemorate these historical events 'in a spirit of generosity and good will'.

He noted that the challenge is to remember these forthcoming anniversaries such as the Battle of the Somme, Easter Rising, War of Independence, Government of Ireland Act and Treaty in a way that might allow us to understand and define, not what keeps us apart and different but more what we have in common that can be recognised, discussed, shared and celebrated. He hopes that we can come together to jointly remember our turbulent past and provide our younger citizens with opportunities to be involved in this process.

The Northern Ireland Executive have also given their support to organising events to mark the coming decade of commemorations which they hope 'will offer a real opportunity for our society to continue its transformation into a vibrant, diverse and enriched place to live in and visit'.

There are a number of bodies working to help ensure we mark these events in a way that acknowledges the legacy of the decade and supports engagement with the complexity of the past. This includes the Community Relations Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund programme 'Remembering the Future – a Decade of Anniversaries'. This is based on four principles which should be seen in the context of an "inclusive and accepting society":

- Start from historical facts
- Recognise the implications and consequences of what happened
- Understand that different perceptions and interpretations exist
- Show how events and activities can deepen understanding of the period

Another model designed to help us look at how we remember the past has been developed by The Junction in Derry~Londonderry. Ethical and Shared Remembering outlines an approach to help us meet the challenges of the decade of centenaries, 1912-2022, of which the Great War is one and is built around five key strands:

- Remembering In Context
- Remembering the Whole
- Remembering the Future
- Remembering Ethically
- Remembering Together

In the context of this book it seems appropriate to finish with a quote from Major General Sir Oliver Nugent who commanded the 36th (Ulster) Division at the Battle of the Somme from the speech he gave at Virginia, County Cavan, in 1923.

'The day is not, I hope, far distant when the memory of all those of our country who gave up their lives for Civilization as we interpret it and in obedience to what they believed to be their duty will be honoured and perpetuated in every town and village in Ireland'

From Home to Foreign Fields

This booklet presents a short introduction to the history of the First World War in each of the four council areas. It looks at how local people were recruited, gives examples of individual stories from each area as well as looking at the impact of the war and how it has been remembered.

As we mark a series of anniversaries connected to the First World War we hope that this resource will be of interest to a wide readership and help us gain a better understanding of the past.



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