



The 40-10



LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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From the Chairman



I sincerely hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year.

An Association such as ours is dependent on individuals offering up their services. None more so than Ian Lowe who is our Treasurer, Quartermaster and has been the long-standing Editor of this biannual publication. In August last year, his life was irrevocably changed by the sudden death of his wife - Judith. Judith was an invaluable support to Ian in his Leinster responsibilities. Again, on behalf of the whole Association, I extend our most sincere condolences to Ian and their whole family. Unsurprisingly, in the light of this unexpected and tragic event, Ian rightly felt he was not in a position to edit the current issue. Against that background, I am delighted that Stephen Callaghan has 'stepped up to the plate' and is our Editor for this edition.

Stephen Callaghan, based in Dublin, is a Legal Review Analyst. In his spare time, he is an independent historian. His research is primarily concerned with Birr Barracks, the Leinster Regiment and social histories of Offaly families who served in the British Army.

Front Cover

Leinster Regiment Christmas Card of the 1st Battalion in Canada in 1898 (Editors collection).

Back Cover

Some of the newly erected military trail signs in Crinkill (Images courtesy of Brendan Cooke).



Stephen was the project historian for the excavation of WW1 mock trenches at Birr Barracks in 2018 and was involved with the conservation of Captain Lancelot Studholme's Cross in 2019. He is the author of Birr Military Cemetery - A History of the Cemetery and those interred there. He was also a driving force for the most impressive sound and light show of Birr Barracks in 2022. He is admirably qualified to take on the editorship and, of course, he is Ireland based.

It is interesting that Damien Delaney has, totally independently, touched on the same theme of 'volunteering', in his article on 'Events in Birr Vintage Week'. We are in need of volunteers to join our committees, so please make yourselves known.

*You don't have to be good to get started
But you do have to start to be good.*

The other area where help is always welcome is in recruiting new members, especially the next generation. Anyone can do this. If every member found just one new member, we would, and could, double our membership. Why not invite a prospective new member to one of our events, to see if he/she likes what they see and enjoys our company - see Forthcoming Events on Page 21.

I do hope you enjoy this 'Irish' edition. Finally, may I wish everyone a peaceful and healthy 2025.

Ich Dien

Mark

Quartermaster's Stores

The following are available to purchase by mail order. Please email or post your order to Ian Lowe at: marfordms@icloud.com or at 42 Woodridge Avenue, Marford, Wrexham, LL12 8SS. Prices include 2nd class postage to UK & Irish addresses. Payment can be made by cheque drawn on a UK or Irish bank and made payable to 'The Leinster Regiment Association' and sent to the address shown above or by bank transfer. Please contact the Treasurer for details. The annual membership subscription was due on the 1st January, sterling £20 or €25. With thanks to those who have already paid.

All items are subject to availability. Please note that orders from the Republic of Ireland may be charged VAT/Import duties by the Irish authorities, payable on delivery.

| | £ | € |
|--|----|----|
| Cap Badge. (Reproduction) | 5 | 6 |
| Lapel Pin Badge. (Suitable as a tie pin or Ladies brooch) | 10 | 12 |
| Ladies Scarf in Regimental colours. (Square 30" x 30", Polyester) | 12 | 15 |
| Regimental Tie. (Silk) | 15 | 18 |
| Poppy Lapel Badge with Regimental Crest. (Poppy is approx 1.5" high) | 15 | 18 |



| | £ | € |
|---|----|----|
| Feather Hackle in Leinster Regiment colours. (Hackle is approx 5" high) | 10 | 12 |
| Lapel Badge with Colours and the dates 1881-1922 . | 10 | 12 |

This badge has been specially produced to commemorate the centenary of the laying up of the Colours in 1922. The size is 1.5" x 0.5" (approx).

Visit to the Curragh Camp

In early November, the Association of Disbanded Irish Regiments arranged for a private visit to the Museum in the Curragh Camp in Co. Kildare.

Members from the Associations of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the Connaught Rangers, the Royal Munster Fusiliers, the Royal Irish Regiment and South Irish Horse and the Leinster Regiment, were given an excellent and very informative tour by the Museum Curator, Ray Steward.

The Curragh Plain has long featured in Irish mythology and history, with legends going back as far as St. Brigid who died in 525. Henry II is said to have camped there on his way to Dublin in 1171 and the Jacobite army trained there in 1686-7.

The British Army set up a permanent post there in 1855, during the Crimean War, with accommodation for 10,000 men and there has been a continuous military presence since then.

In March 1914, prior to the commencement of WWI, an incident occurred in the Curragh, better known as

The Curragh Mutiny. It is widely thought of as a mutiny, though no orders actually given were disobeyed.

With Irish Home Rule due to become law in 1914, the British Cabinet contemplated some kind of military action against the unionist Ulster Volunteers who threatened to rebel against it. Many officers, especially those with Irish Protestant connections, threatened to resign or accept dismissal rather than obey orders to conduct military operations against the Unionists.

Although the Cabinet issued a document claiming that the issue had been a misunderstanding, the Secretary of State for War and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir John French, were forced to resign after amending it to promise that the British Army would not be used against the Ulster loyalists

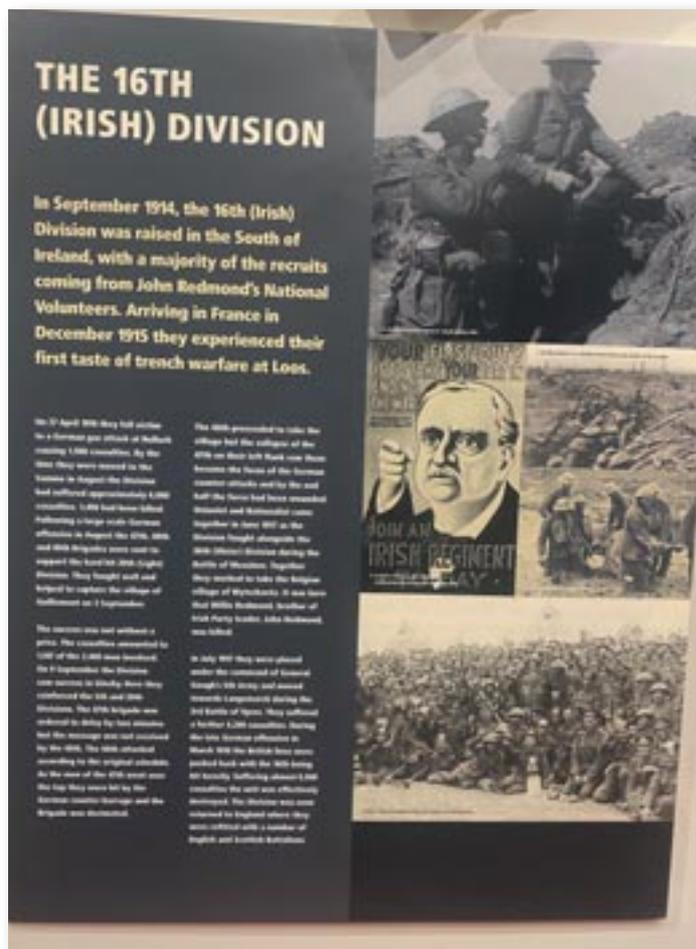
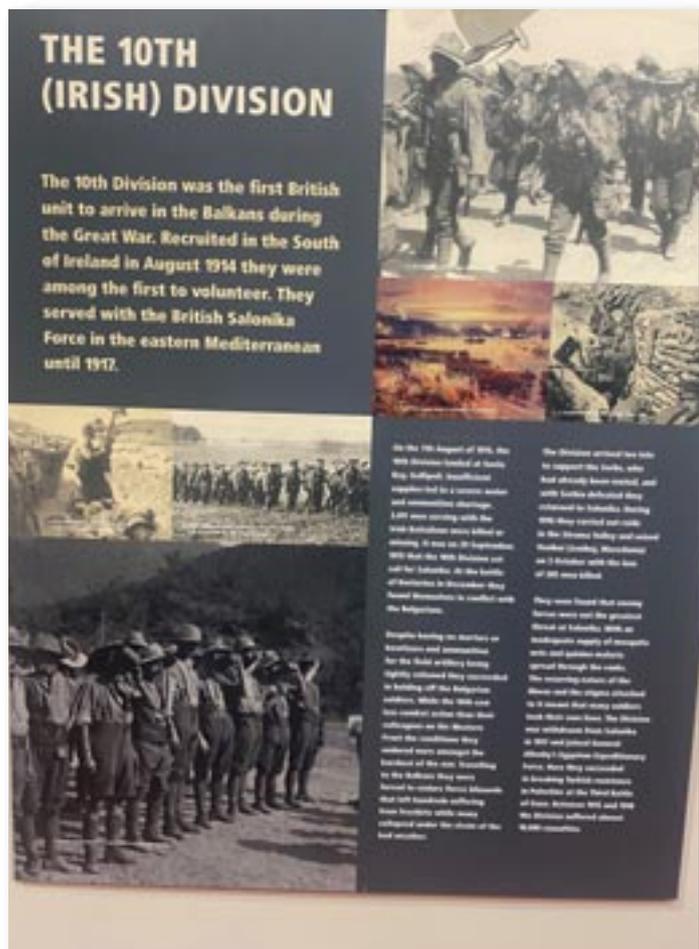
Since 1922 the Curragh Camp has been the Irish Army's main training base. During World War II it contained an internment camp for both German and Allied servicemen unfortunate enough to be captured in Ireland. Since then it also served on occasions as an internment camp for republican dissidents.



Churchill Mark IV Tank in Irish Colours

King Edward VII, while Prince of Wales, also stayed in the Camp, but whether it was military duties or the closeness of the famous Curragh Race Course which attracted him, who can tell.

devoted to The 10th Irish Division, The 16th Irish Division and The 36th Ulster Division, as well as details of the number of Irishmen who served in the British Forces during WWI.



The 2nd Battalion of the Leinster Regiment spent the Summer of 1882 in the Curragh before moving on to Birr. In the years that followed it was mainly the 4th, 5th and 6th Battalions which rotated in and out of the Curragh. The 6th Battalion was there from September 1914 to early 1915 and the 4th Battalion was there from September 1915 to Spring 1916. The 5th Battalion was in the Curragh from Spring 1916 to early 1917 and was drafted to Dublin to help in suppressing the Easter 1916 Rising.

The museum also contains the restored armoured car, 'Sliabh mBán' which was part of the convoy escorting General Michael Collins when he was killed in an ambush in Co. Cork in August 1922.

Surrounding the museum building there is a display of tanks, armoured cars, transporters and artillery, which were used by the Irish Army down through the years.



Inside the main museum building there is an extensive display setting out the history of the camp from the time of its establishment by the British Army right up to the present time and illustrating the involvement of the Irish Army with the United Nations from the 1960s up to its current involvement in Lebanon and Kosovo.

From a Leinster Regiment perspective, there are panels



Following the visit, each of the regimental associations gave a memento of their regiment to the Curator of the museum. In the case of the Leinster Regiment Association, I presented a framed photograph of Birr Barracks, Crinkill, provided by Stephen Callaghan.

Denis Kirby

Birr Vintage Week Events: 2-10 August 2024



Attendees outside the Leinster Regiment memorial in Crinkill.

The Leinster Regiment Association in Birr had a busy year in 2024, with events starting in January with the planning of our Irish Annual General Meeting (AGM) and our annual display of World War 1 memorabilia. We had decided to broaden our display by bringing on board local medal collector, Billy Finnane, who has an extensive collection originating from various countries.

The Association is always on the lookout for people to donate or loan artifacts for the display. This year, we

were fortunate that the following individuals and organisations contributed: John Molloy and family from Dublin, who donated the 4th Battalion Officers' Mess Log Book; Ralph Parsons, James Hogan, Julian Joyce, Billy Finnane, Brendan Fogarty and Birr Social Club, all of whom kindly loaned items.

The official opening of our display took place at Birr Library on 31 July, with Councillor Peter Ormond, Chairperson of the Birr Municipal Council, performing the honours. Also in attendance, were the Vice

Chairman of the Council, Councillor John Clendennen, and Councillor Sean Maher, alongside 30 guests. We would like to extend our gratitude to Megan Cronly and the staff of Birr Library for their invaluable help, guidance and advice in organising the display.

The Regional Committee (Ireland) AGM was held in the Birr Civic offices on 10 August 2024, with Junior O'Callaghan, Irish Chairman, presiding. Other Committee members attending included Chris Brummell, Tony Hayden, Brendan Fogarty, Derek Coulter, Michael Fitzsimons, Simon McAuliffe, Ken Geary and myself.

The Irish Committee is now as follows:

Chairman: Junior O'Callaghan.

Members: Tony Hayden, Ken Geary, Derek Coulter, Chris Brummell, Simon McAuliffe, Michael Fitzsimons, Brendan Fogarty.

Secretary: Damien Delaney.

During the meeting, it was reported that whenever possible during the year, members of the Association attended all parades and wreath-laying ceremonies. We were also called upon to provide speakers on various topics, including one focused on Birr Barracks, Crinkle.

The lecture that accompanied the AGM was given by Aidan Doyle on the Connaught Mutiny and its connection to Birr. It was a fascinating account and particularly well received.

After the AGM, we headed to Crinkle for our annual wreath-laying ceremony, where Standards were paraded, and the Last Post was played.

Our year of events will continue through to the end of the year. Like all committees, we are always seeking new members, especially younger people. Please feel free to contact any committee member if you are interested in getting involved.

*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.*

Postscript: The Association's AGM had been held at the Civil Service Club in London on Saturday 15 June, with Ireland's Regional Committee represented by Ken Geary from Dublin. Denis Kirby from Cork, our previous Irish Chairman, was also present.

Damien Delaney



L-R: Sean Maher, John Clendennen, Junior O'Callaghan, Tony Hayden, Peter Ormond and Chris Brummell at the Leinster Exhibition in Birr Library.

Field Marshal Sir John Greer Dill GCB CMG DSO



Mrs Priscilla Hindmarsh (in hat) next to Carla Lockhart MP, Mr Jim Dill (2nd Rt) and Alan James Dill (Rt).

Friday 9th November 2024. Members of the RBL Lurgan and Brownlow Branch were joined by dignitaries and family members as a Memorial Plaque to Field Marshal Sir John Greer Dill GCB CMG DSO, in the grounds of the War Memorial was unveiled.

I'm Alan James Dill and I am the Great Nephew of Sir John. Unfortunately, I never got to meet my Great Uncle but learnt of him through family members. A little about myself; I was born in Luton (England) 11th November (Armistice Day) 1978. I attended local schools in the Market Town of Leighton Buzzard (Bedfordshire), these were Heathwood, Gilbert Inglefield School and Vandyke School. On leaving school I joined the company Associated Tyre Specialists (ATS), for whom I worked for 17 years. In 2017, I joined local company George Brown Ltd. Ten years earlier (2007), I had become a member of The Royal British Legion and two days prior to my visit to Lurgan, I became Vice President of my local RBL Branch. In 2023 I became an Associate Member of The Prince

of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians) Association.

My Great Uncle; Field Marshal Sir John Greer Dill GCB CMG DSO, was born in Lurgan on Christmas Day 1881. Sir John was the only son of John and Jane Dill. John Snr was then the manager of the local branch of the Ulster Bank. Sir John's mother was formerly a Greer. Both the Dills and Greers were families of Ulster-Scots ancestry. Unfortunately, both Sir John's parents passed when he was only 12, he was bought up by the local Reverend; The Rev Joseph Grundy Burton. After being educated at Belfast Methodist College, Sir John moved to Cheltenham College. It was here that Sir John's future career in the Army was decided. On leaving the Royal Military College, Sir John had hoped to join the Northern Irish Regiment, but these plans were scuppered by events taking place in The Boer War. He was fortunately able to join a South Irish Regiment; The Leinster Regiment. Sir John worked tirelessly throughout his career and rapidly climbed

**IN PROUD MEMORY OF
FIELD MARSHAL
SIR JOHN GREER DILL GCB CMG DSO**

Born: Lurgan 25th December 1881 – Died: Washington DC 4th November 1944

Chief of the Imperial General Staff – May 40 – Dec 41

**Head, British Joint Staff Mission, Washington DC, and,
Senior British Member, Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee – Jan 42 – Nov 44**

'Dill was the most important figure in the remarkable accord which has been developed in the combined operations of our two countries.'

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Inscription on the Memorial Plaque.

through the ranks. By the time WWII came along, Sir John held the position of Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Although Sir John had a strained relationship with Winston Churchill, he was held in high regard and Churchill was persuaded to take Sir John to the USA on one of his visits. When Sir John and Churchill went to Newfoundland in August 1941, he established good links with General George C Marshall, the US Chief of Staff. So, when Churchill returned to visit Roosevelt in December 1941, with a little persuasion Churchill once again took Sir John with him. At this point Sir John remained in the USA and became head of The British Joint Chiefs of Staff Mission to Washington. Sir John remained in Washington until he died on November 4th, 1944. He was held in such high esteem by Roosevelt, who said of Sir John: "he had been the most important person in the remarkable accord between both the UK and USA for combined operations". Already highly decorated, Sir John was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Medal (DSO). Field Marshal Sir John Greer Dill GCB CMG DSO was buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honours. One of only two people to have a statue of an Officer upon a horse over his grave. This itself represented just how highly regarded Sir John was by the American people.

It is rather apt that last year - the 80th year since D-Day and 80 years since the death of my Great Uncle, Sir John, that the town of Lurgan has chosen to unveil a memorial plaque in commemoration of one of their former "sons". It was a privilege to stand with Sir John's family members: his granddaughter, Mrs Priscilla Hindmarsh, and nephew, Mr Jim Dill, along with town dignitaries from the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (ABC) Council and fellow RBL members.



Prior to the Unveiling.



Panel outside the military cemetery.

As many are aware, Birr Barracks in Crinkill, County Offaly, was the depot of the Leinster Regiment from its creation in 1881 until the last of the depot staff left for Colchester in February 1922. The links with the Regiment have since remained strong with the unveiling of a stained glass window in St Brendan's Catholic Church in 1964, and a stone monument outside the walls of the barracks in 2013 by the Leinster Regiment Association.

More recently, during the past year, a new signposted (see photos) military walking trail has been unveiled. The trail focuses on the history of the barracks as well as other aspects of the history of the surviving features

of the barracks, from the military cemetery to what was once the adjoining training grounds, known as the Fourteen Acres to the Soldier's Gardens. There is, of course, a dedicated panel to the Leinster Regiment.

The panels were the initiative of Crinkill Tidy Villages and supported by Offaly County Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. Research, including the writing and design of the panels, was done by Stephen Callaghan.

Associated images of the panels, courtesy of Brendan Cooke.

Stephen Callaghan



Panel outside the former location of the barracks training ground, The Fourteen Acres.



Panel outside the main entrance of the former military barracks.



Panel opposite the Leinster Regiment memorial explaining the history of the regiment.



Panel outside the soldier's gardens explaining their history.

The Leinster Regiment and the Fourth Anglo Ashanti War 1896



Ashanti Star and Queen's South Africa medal awarded to Private McLoughlin.

Introduction

A series of wars have been fought over the Gold Coast. Of these conflicts the fourth war, better known as the fourth Anglo-Ashanti War is of note for being a short and bloodless campaign. The campaign consisted of a force of around 2500 British and local troops who marched into and seized the capital Kumassi to enforce the terms of a treaty signed in 1874.

The total British force consisted of 420 officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the 2nd Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment and a composite battalion made from various detachments from line infantry regiments of the 2nd Battalion, Coldstream Guards; 1st Battalion, Scots Guards; 1st Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers; 2nd Battalion, Devonshire Regiment; 1st Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry; 2nd Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry; 2nd Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers; 2nd Battalion, Rifle Brigade and 1st Battalion, Leinster Regiment. Each detachment consisting of one officer and 25 other ranks.

The Leinster Regiment's Involvement in the War

The detachment of the 1st Battalion, Leinster Regiment destined for the Gold Coast, left Tipperary

Barracks for Aldershot, under the command of Major Northcott on 26 November 1895. Once at Aldershot the men prepared for the campaign.

The men were paraded under their Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Honourable F. W. Stopford, who also provided some useful information about the country they were going to. This would have been useful as all nearly all of the men in the Leinster contingent had not seen any active service. After another parade on the same day, the men gathered their arms from the ordnance store. This consisted of a Martini-Henry carbine; Elcho pattern sword bayonet; two pouches; a pocket filter; a water bottle and a tin pannikin.

The next morning, the men went to the rifles ranges and practiced musketry with 15 rounds. The following day the men practiced volley fire.

On 2 November they were inspected by the H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught on the Queen's parade ground. On the 7 November the men paraded and were addressed by the Duke of Connaught. After the address they were marched to the train station, where they were joined by H. R. H. Prince Henry of Battenburg. After arriving at Albert Docks. The men boarded the *Coromandel* to the tune of "Tommy Atkins" played by the Royal Artillery band.

The voyage consisted of splendid weather and time was spent having physical drill and running. A band was set up and there were sing-songs. The men were wearing khaki. On 13 November the Canary Islands were sighted. The ship anchored off Los Pamos and was later joined by the *Manilla* which was carrying the men of the West Yorkshire Regiment. Both ships took on fresh water here.

The *Coromandel* embarked from Los Pamos on the evening of the 14 November and a concert was held. Quinine was being served daily and lots of porpoises were seen, along with flying fish. Cape de Verde Islands were passed on the 17 November. The next days consisted of sports. The weather was very hot as the ship reached Sierra Leone on the 19 November. The ship anchored off the capital, Freetown, so it could be refilled with coal.

On the 20 November all hands disembarked and went marching. The Governor of Freetown came on board to inspect the ship in the afternoon. A concert was also had.

On the 21 November, the ship sailed for Cape Coast Castle. The ship arrived at its destination on Christmas Day 1895. The men disembarked and marched to the Castle and were provided with 70 rounds of Martini-Henry ammunition and an emergency ration.

The Leinsters, now with the rest of the column, marched through the countryside to the Ashanti capital, Kumassi. The column encountered no resistance, with the capital being conquered without a shot being fired. The British force left Kumassi on 22 January 1896 and arrived at the coast two weeks later. The Leinsters suffered their only casualty on this return march, Private Sullivan who died on 29 January 1896.

By March 1896 the Leinster Regiment contingent had returned to Tipperary Barracks. The men noted as looking a bit bronzed and cut up by the climate.

The King's County Chronicle of 27 August 1896 notes that the Queen, on the advice of the War Department would be issuing a star for the campaign which would take the form of a bronze star with the inscription bearing 'Ashanti 1896' on the obverse, with the reverse bearing 'From the Queen'. The ribbon being described as narrower than ordinary medals, and the colours being identical to the South Africa medal.

The Ashanti Stars were presented at Tipperary Barracks on 20 August 1896. The ceremony was performed by Lord Roberts on the occasion of his inspection of the barracks. Only 14 men of the 26 were present. The absent men either having been discharged, on reserve, or on command.

The men present were Sergeant D. Hayes, Lance Sergeant M Kennedy, Lance Sergeant J Grace, Corporals W Green, J Colgan, J Jackson, Privates J McDonnell, J McCabe, J Carney, M Courtney, J Reilly, W Walsh, D Dunne, J McLoughlin, P Delaney, M Brown, P Ryan, P Kelly, J Neill, M Hutchinson, W Smith and W Swift.

The battalion advanced in review order and were marched to the saluting base. As each man's name was called out, Lord Roberts asked him his birth place and length of service while pinning the star on the tunic. At the conclusion of the ceremony, he congratulated the men on being recipients of such a handsome award and said, despite the campaign being bloodless, the climate had been unhealthy and had to be fought against.

At the time of the presentation of the medal, several recipients of the Star were members of the band of the 1st Battalion: Corporal Norman, Lance Corporal Green, and Private McLoughlin.

Conclusion

The fourth Anglo-Ashanti war, although brief, is an interesting campaign for numerous reasons. For the Leinster Regiment, it was their first proper commitment of men to active service. Despite the relatively tame nature of the campaign, the regiment's next visit to the African continent would not be so.

Stephen Callaghan



The Leinster Regiment detachment in Aldershot.

The 1922 Disbandment of the Southern Irish Regiments

Part 1 – The March to Windsor

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff in 1922 was an Irishman, Field Marshal the Earl of Cavan. Some years later, he wrote in his private autobiography:

“A terrible blow to our little army was the decision that the Irish regiments from Dublin, Leinster, Munster and Connaught were to be disbanded.”

A well-known moment in the process of disbandment of the five Irish infantry regiments and one cavalry regiment referred to by Cavan was a poignant ceremony on 12th June 1922 in Windsor Castle. It was there that each regiment handed over their Colours to King George V for safe keeping. Those Colours of the Disbanded Regiments still hold pride of place on the Grand Staircase in the Castle.

Most readers of 40-10 will be familiar with details of the actual 1922 parade. But what were the ceremony's origins? This wasn't just a moving military parade of farewell.

There was so much more going on in the background. Inevitably there were many factors at play in years 1921-22 and, inevitably, politics had their part. In fact, there were two parallel strands which were to influence the fate of those Southern Irish regiments.

Firstly, there were the highly political and potentially divisive negotiations between Britain and the representatives of a nationalist Ireland to agree the Anglo-Irish Treaty which would eventually establish the Irish Free State.

At the same, there was a Commission to investigate how to save the British Government money. Wars are very expensive occupations and the First World War was no exception. Government finances had to be got under control. Doesn't this sound all too familiar and contemporary?

Some form of austerity was required. The British government called upon the very able Sir Eric Geddes. Pre-1914 Geddes had enjoyed a successful business career in railways but come hostilities he helped the war effort in diverse ways. He rationalised munitions supplies, was gazetted as a Major-General to be Head of Military Transportation on the Western Front, and, in 1917 when the Royal Navy was in need of a firm hand on the tiller, he was shoe-horned in as First Lord

of the Admiralty. David Lloyd George deemed him to be a man of “push and go”.

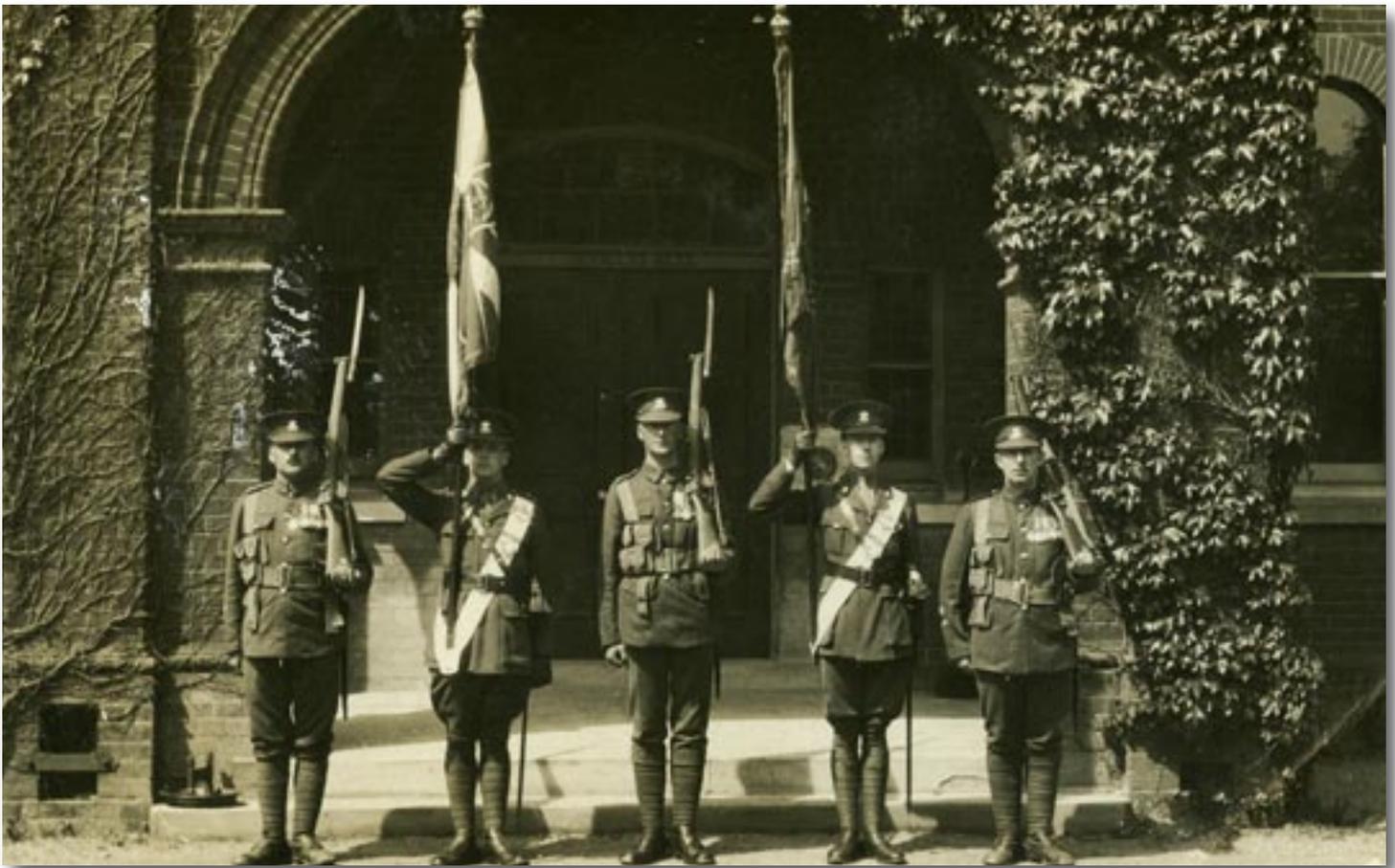
Geddes's brief, in August 1921, was to reduce the army by over 50,000 men and cut the army's budget from £75 million to £55 million. As a result, he looked carefully at all the regiments in the British Army. One way or the other, he was going to wield his budgetary axe.

By 1921 the main function of the British army was that of garrison duty policing the Empire, and so it was returning to a volunteer force. Long term strategic thinking did not envisage a major conflict for at least ten years. Under these premises, the Geddes's Commission of 1921-1922 concluded they could meet the specific targets of cutting manpower and reducing the budgets.

Army Order 78 dated 11th March was titled “*Reduction of Establishment*”. But it wasn't just the Irish regiments who were vulnerable although they were an obvious and easy target - there was a general cutback across the whole British Army. Overall, Geddes's axe was aimed at:

- Losing 8 cavalry regiments. (The result being the amalgamations that created the so-called “vulgar fractions”).





2nd Battalion, Leinster Regiment Colour Party at Colchester.

• Disbanding 28 infantry battalions of which it was planned 12 would be from the Irish regiments. (It should be noted that eventually no British infantry regiment was entirely disbanded, although there were reductions of 3rd, 4th and other supplementary battalions).

Running parallel to the Geddes Commission were, of course, the complex negotiations of the Anglo-Irish Treaty between Great Britain and the protagonists for an independent Ireland.

As part of those talks, it was not a given that the Irish regiments would be disbanded. Lloyd George thought that the Irish regiments would be retained and, what's more, he hoped that the new Irish administration would pay for them. But there were complications to this. Effectively Ireland already had an army of sorts - those fighting for independence. Would they welcome another, and originally imperial, military force imposed or integrated with them? And if they had, there would almost certainly have been friction. In Irish nationalist eyes, some of these British forces were epitomised by the Black & Tans who were manned mostly by former soldiers.

According to one British proposal dated July 1920 *"Britain hopes that Ireland in due course and of her own free will contribute in proportion to her wealth to the regular naval*

military and air forces of the Empire. And that voluntary recruitment for these forces will be permitted throughout Ireland particularly for those famous five regiments which have so long as her gallantly served His Majesty in all parts of the world". [sic]

Not surprisingly republican leaders like Erskine Childers saw this as continuing Irish subjection by Britain. That was the very last intent of a newly emergent independent Irish nation and so it was firmly rejected in Ireland.

In the subsequent Treaty, which was signed in December 1921, Article 8 stated *"with a view to securing the observance of principle of international limitation of armaments, if the government of the Irish Free State establishes and maintains a military defence force, establishments thereof shall not exceed in size such proportion of the military establishments maintained in Great Britain as that with the population of Ireland bears to the population of Great Britain."*

i.e. Ireland couldn't establish too large an army (or certainly one that might threaten Britain). It was Lloyd George who suggested that, perhaps, an independent Irish army should be limited to 40,000 men.

To put Lloyd George's figure into perspective, in 1922, the number of serving British soldiers, who were registered as born in Ireland, was 11,116. (During in the 19th Century - in 1830 42.2% of the British Army were



2nd Battalion, Leinster Regiment Colours marched off parade for the last time.

registered as Irish (40,979 soldiers) and by 1868 that had risen to 55,583 (but a smaller percentage 30.8% of an obviously larger army). Just pre-WWI, the figure was 20,780.

There were negotiations about recruitment on the island of Ireland. Was it to be continued during - or even after - the Treaty negotiations? These were complicated issues. When other nations had been granted Dominion status then Britain no longer recruited in those territories. This sounded another death knell for the Irish regiments.

Also, with candidates for an Independent Ireland dominating the polls in the General Election of 1918, Ireland had already become an unlikely, if not inhospitable, recruiting territory for the British Army. Despite this, the number of men who enlisted into the five Irish infantry regiments between 1918 and 1922 was a remarkable 8,482. Even during the turbulent and interrupted years of 1921-22, 1,305 men signed up to Irish regiments.

Given the two strains - the Geddes Axe and the Signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty - it became inevitable that the southern Irish regiments had to be disbanded and so all active recruitment then officially ceased.

The future of the regiments and the fate of the soldiers

was much debated in and out of Parliament. Feelings ran high - both sides of the Irish Sea.

As well as the politics, the savings to the Treasury were too good to miss. So, at one point, plans were posited to disband ALL the Irish regiments, including those whose traditional home territory was Ulster. (Quite a few of those regiments' recruiting areas overlapped into counties that were to become part of the Irish Free State - for example Donegal and Louth.)

This draconian plan for mass disbandment prompted a lot of further military politics and energetic lobbying campaigns by amongst others the Ulster Unionist leader Sir James Craig - enlisting the help of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Winston Churchill. The outcome was that all the regiments predominantly associated with Ulster were retained. This was after quite a lot of "horse-trading" and some generous gestures from sister regiments (such as the 2nd Inniskilling Fusiliers falling (reluctantly but honourably) on their swords to ensure the Royal Irish Fusiliers could survive).

Eventually, at the Cabinet meeting in Downing Street on the 27th of January 1922, the Secretary of State for War Sir Laming Worthington Evans inquired if he might "announce the disbandment of the southern Irish infantry regiments and the South Irish Horse". The cabinet agreed. The King too gave his permission but "with great regret".



Sir Eric Geddes.

The following regiments were to be disbanded – The Royal Irish Regiment, The Connaught Rangers, The Prince of Wales’s Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians), The Royal Munster Fusiliers, The Royal Dublin Fusiliers *and* The South Irish Horse. As units, their regimental lives under those names were relatively short. The five Irish infantry regiments came into being in 1881 as a result of the Childers Army Reforms. (The South Irish Horse were formed as Imperial Yeomanry a little later in 1902.) At the time of handing over their Colours to King George V, these infantry regiments had been in existence for only 41 years. But what a remarkable 41 years they had been!

The words of Rudyard Kipling’s poem, written about another Irish regiment, rang so true:

*We’re not so old in the Army List,
But we’re not so young at our trade*

They were all massively steeped in their “trade” of soldiering and had been for many years, if not centuries. They had come into existence by mergers with various much older regiments – the earliest being a Royal Munster Fusiliers’ antecedent in 1652, which had been an East India Company regiment. However, on the British Army list, the Royal Irish Regiment’s antecedent

– the 18th Regiment of Foot – was formed in 1684. As such, it was the senior Irish infantry regiment for nearly 240 years.

They all had served and fought with distinction in almost all the overseas postings and imperial theatres of war.

Over such a short period, all those Irish regiments had earned great respect and their places of honour on the Army List.

The final act for the Southern Irish Regiments was about to be played out with the handing over of their Colours to their Sovereign King George V. (The South Irish Horse had already laid up their guidon in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, but were very definitely part of this parade. In lieu of their Colours, they handed the King a print.)

Thus, the scene was set for the subsequent very saddest of days – 12th June 1922.

Sir Anthony Weldon

A Leinster's Bed Plate



Bed plates are small pieces of brass metal with the name, number and regiment of the soldier to which they belong. They would be hung at the end of the soldier's bed. The plate would be reversed if the soldier was on duty, hence explaining a soldier's absence.

The example pictured was used by Richard Gray of the Leinster Regiment. Richard was born on 3 December 1865 in the Parish of Ahern, Fermoy, County Cork. He was the son of Constable William Gray and Ellen Gray (née Walsh).

Richard attested for service with the Leinster Regiment at Dublin on 23 August 1884. He joined the Regiment at Birr on 27 August. He listed his profession as a teacher. His service papers describe him as 5 foot 10 inches tall, having light grey eyes and brown hair.

Private Gray was initially posted to the Depot, Leinster Regiment, but was soon posted to the 2nd Battalion, and then to the 1st Battalion. He was with the Battalion in India in the early 1890s where he had his photograph (pictured) taken. In 1895, he was posted to the 5th (Militia) Battalion in Navan, County Meath, where he re-engaged in order to complete 21 years with the Colours. Whilst based in Navan, he married Alice Edith Slade at St Mary's Church on 16 September 1896.

While stationed at the Depot in 1899, he was tried by District Court Martial for being drunk on duty and was reduced in rank to Private, forfeiting his good conduct pay. This incident would have barred Gray from receiving the Long Service & Good Conduct Medal, upon his completion of 18 years of service.

Private Gray served in South Africa during the Second Anglo Boer War with the 1st Battalion, and for this service received the Queen's and King's South Africa medals. He returned home in September 1902 and remained on Home Service until he was discharged at

Shorncliffe, Kent on 22 August 1905. His place of residence was Military Avenue, Cheriton, Kent.

On 11 August 1914, Richard attested for Home Service in the 8th Battalion, Royal West Kent Regiment. His attestation papers record he had five children. On 4 February 1915 he cancelled his 'Home Service only' condition for 'General Service', and was subsequently sent to France in August 1915.

In September 1917, Sergeant Gray transferred to the Labour Corps where he was promoted to Company Quartermaster Sergeant. He was discharged in December 1918 having been found no longer fit for service, after sustaining a sprained ankle. His service in the Great War entitled him to a 1915 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal and Silver War Badge.

Upon Richard's final discharge from the army, his character was described as 'good', and his place of residence was given as Ivy Dene, Greenstreet Green, Kent, England. The 1939 Register lists Richard as a retired Civil Servant and Army Pensioner. Richard died on 23 January 1940 at Orpington Hospital, Kent, aged 74 years.



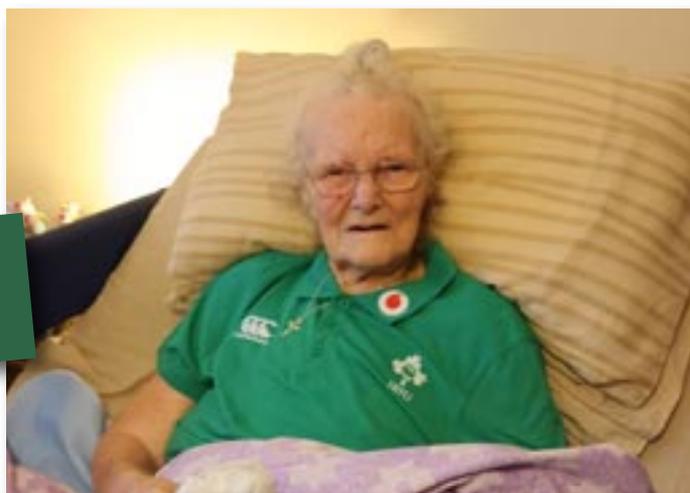
Special Birthday Wishes

The 12th of February was a special occasion for David Ball's mother June, who celebrated her 90th Birthday. To honour this remarkable personal milestone, she was presented with a card and a set of engraved tumblers on behalf of the Association. Congratulations and Happy Birthday June Ball!

Happy Birthday!



L-R: Cousin Christine, The Duchess, David Ball.



F O R T H C O M I N G E V E N T S 2 0 2 5

25 April ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) Day. For information only.

4 May 80th Anniversary of the WW2 German forces in north-west Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands surrendering to the Allies at the Headquarters of Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery at Lüneburg Heath, east of Hamburg. For information only.

8 May 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) commemorating the formal acceptance by the Allies of World War II of Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces. For information only.

7 June 5.30pm for 6pm Leinster Annual Dinner. Civil Service Club, 13-15 Great Scotland Yard, London SW1A 2HJ.

8 June 09.45 Combined Irish Regiments' Old Comrades Association Cenotaph Parade. King Charles Street, Whitehall, London.

12 July 12.00 - 3pm Royal British Legion (Republic of Ireland) wreath laying ceremony. Irish National War Memorial, Islandbridge, Dublin.

13 July Irish National Day of Commemoration, Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin. Also at Fitzgerald's Park in Cork, Portlaoise, Crinkill (Birr), and other locations in the Republic of Ireland.

9 August Leinster Regiment Association Annual General Meeting (AGM), including the Regional Committee (Ireland) AGM at Birr Civic Offices, Wilmer Rd, Townparks, Birr, Co. Offaly. Plus the Leinster Lecture, followed by Lunch (The Thatch, Military Road, Crinkill) and PM activities.

2 November Royal Irish Regiment's Service of Remembrance. St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast.

6 November The Field of Remembrance. Westminster Abbey, London. By invitation and ticket only.

8 November Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance - ticket only. Royal Albert Hall, London. By invitation and ticket only.

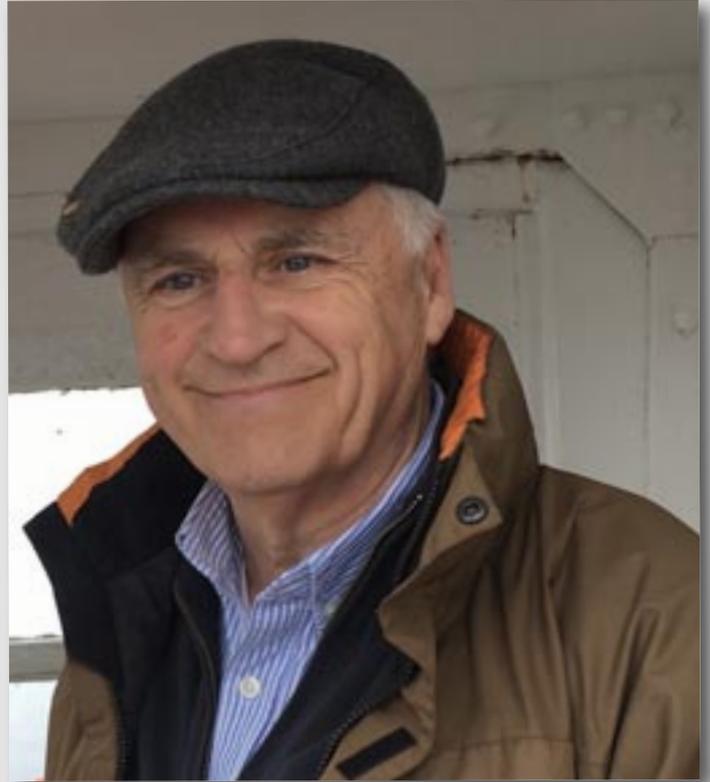
9 November United Kingdom's Remembrance (Armistice) Sunday.

Members are advised to double check dates, times, and venues before making travel plans to attend any events.

Last Post

It is with great sorrow that we received news of the passing of Stephen Keeley of Ashford, County Wicklow. Stephen was one of the early members of the Association in Ireland and he played a role in its development for some time.

We extend our sympathies to his family and friends.



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Judith Lowe on Wednesday, 21 August, following a sudden and unexpected collapse earlier in the week. Judith fell into a coma on Monday, 19 August, and tragically passed away peacefully in hospital two days later.

Judith was the beloved wife of Ian Lowe, who is a cornerstone of our Association, serving as Treasurer and Editor of the 40-10. In his many voluntary roles, Judith was a steadfast and invaluable supporter, contributing greatly to the work of our community. Her presence was warmly felt by many of us, as she frequently accompanied Ian on his travels and engagements.

Judith's warmth, kindness, and quiet dedication will be deeply missed by all who knew her. On behalf of the Association, we extend our heartfelt condolences to Ian, their son, daughter, and the wider family during this difficult time. Our thoughts are with them as they navigate this profound loss.

THE LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Committee and Post Holders January 2025

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| President | Sir Anthony Weldon Bt |
| Vice-Presidents | Mr David Ball Commandant Michael McGoona |

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| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
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| | | |
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** Also members of the General Committee

We'd like to remind all members that membership subscriptions became due on the 1st January. If you have already renewed yours, thank you for doing so. If you have not completed your renewal, please do so without delay. The subscription remains at £20 for UK residents and €25 for Irish residents. It would be much appreciated if you would pay by Standing Order as it greatly simplifies the administration for the Membership Secretary and the Treasurer. However, cheques in either currency may be sent to the Treasurer: Ian Lowe, 42 Woodridge Avenue, Marford, Wrexham, LL12 8SS. If you would like to switch your payment method to a standing order, please contact the Treasurer.

Help Required

The running of the Association falls on a very small number of people, some of whom are doing more than one job. We would be hugely grateful if more volunteers offered their services. Many hands make light work! The tasks are not onerous, yet the potential satisfaction is great. A number of long-standing committee members have indicated that they would like to stand down from their current responsibilities. We urgently need more members to volunteer to help run your Association and continue to provide the high standards of remembrance already achieved. If you are interested in becoming more involved with the running of the Association, please contact Mark Weldon, Junior O'Callaghan or David Ball.

Thanks

The Editorial Team would like to thank all those who have contributed towards producing this journal: without your assistance it would not happen. A special thanks to Laetitia Barnes of Afterhours Artwork, for the layout and style of the journal.

Opinions expressed by contributors to this journal are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Association.

Design & artwork by Laetitia Barnes 01580 714015 art@afterhours.myzen.co.uk

