



The 40/10

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The Association's standard is paraded by David Ball alongside the drums of the London Irish at the new Ginchy Télégraph memorial, France, September 2006



PRINCE OF WALES'S LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

The Journal of the Prince of Wales's
Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians)
Regimental Association

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The production of *The 40/10* is definitely a momentous occasion for the Association and one more step in the commemoration of the history of the Regiment. The editors deliberated long and hard in search for a suitable name for the Journal but then the choice became obvious. Wherever the Leinsters went in the world, the mark 40/10 was left behind by some 'wit' from the regiment, so what better title for this Journal that we hope will also travel and spread the memory of those soldiers long past.

The 40/10 is a means of sharing information amongst the members of the Association and is also to serve as an advocate to the memory of all those who proudly chose to be a Leinster Regiment soldier, even though sometimes there may not have been much choice!

We have also tried to make sure that this edition contains a cross section of articles that cover various periods of the Regimental existence and subjects of allied interest; as editor I am particularly indebted to Ian

Low for his support and authorship of material. What is important though is that to make the Journal the success it deserves to be requires your contributions. So please put your thinking caps on and send me something that you know, or would like to know, about the Leinsters. We are open to receive contributions of all types, letters, short articles etc., but keep in mind that the editors pen will be applied to content of a 'political' nature.

The 40/10 is aimed at being a twice a year publication and the next edition is scheduled for the end of October. Planning is already under way to make the content as interesting and seasonal as we can, so please send in your articles, detail of how to submit material is on the back page.

Enjoy the edition!

Don Dickson, April 2007

Editor

"Opinions expressed by contributors to this Journal are not necessarily those of the Editors or the Association"

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librarian, to build the list of relevant documents for the library to acquire

Work has also commenced upon building a library of digital photographs and images that will form part of the heritage display in the Library.

This sub project started with an offer from Mick McGoona to permit the Association to scan



Artist's impression of the Crinkle Barracks Wall showing a Regimental commemoration

News from Birr

Many of our members already know that the depot of the regiment was Crinkle Barracks in the township of Birr in County Offaly in Ireland. Today all that remains of this once grand establishment are parts of the perimeter wall and a gateway which the Association aspires to have commemorated to the memory of the regiment.

In 2005 the Chairman, Secretary together with Mr. Sean Cooke and Mr Noel Cullen began exploratory discussions with Mr Pat Milne the owner of the land that the wall stands upon with a view to using the gateway as a memorial. The concept was well received locally and further exploratory discussions were then held with the local authorities and other interested parties to develop a plan to move the concept forward.

The outcome of the preliminary deliberations was to seek a grant to renovate the gate and create the Crinkle Barracks memorial to the regiment and in addition to develop a small heritage archive section, within the library in Birr, dedicated to the Leinster Regiment.

In 2006 an application for a grant was made to Offaly Council and the outcome is now awaited. The Heritage Archive is to be located in the new library, a converted convent in Birr. The intention is that this project will house by mid 2007 copies of relevant documents currently held at The National Archives (TNA) in Kew, London, in addition to a selection of books and CD ROMs. Association members are liaising with the Offaly County Librarian, Anne Coughlan and Pat Dillon, the Birr

the photographs in his own collection. Now photographs in the collections of Dave Ball and Don Dickson have been added and the heritage collection is growing. Many of the original photographs were in poor condition however restoration work using digital techniques is underway. If you have a photograph or collection of photographs that relate to the regiment or its soldiers do please consider donating copies to the heritage collection. *If you have a photograph scanner you could provide your own digital copy but if you do not have a scanner would you please consider loaning the Association your photograph so that we may make a digital copy. Your photographs will be carefully handled and returned to you within a matter of days. Please contact the Secretary if you are able to contribute a photograph.*

Events Calendar

2007

Apr	28 AGM Leinster Association, London
June	7-10 Mesines & Wytshaete Commemoration*
	16 Combined Irish Regiments Lunch, London**
	17 Annual Parade at the Cenotaph, London**
July	7 Leinster Association Mtg in Dublin
	14-15 Zonnebeke Battlefield Tours*
Aug	25-26 Zonnebeke Paschendaele*
Sep	29 Leinster Association Mtg, London
Oct	5-7 Paschendaele 11 (Anzacs)* & Mesines **
Nov	9-11 Paschendaele 111 (Canadians)*
Dec	TBA Christmas Lunch

* Public event organised by others. See website for details.

** Meeting organised by Combined Irish Regiments Association

Secretary's Report

Welcome to the first issue of the Regimental Journal/Newsletter.

It is four years since the Regimental Association was reformed and for those of you that were there from day one, I am sure, like myself, you would never have envisaged that the association would do so much in such a short time. The various steps and plans to move the association forward were made and set out some time ago, but shortly after the reformation a message was received from Hoylake ATC about the condition of the

grave of Sgt John O'Neill VC MM. It was agreed to push our weight behind the restoration and commemoration of the grave and to support what was soon termed 'The O'Neill Project'.

Bearing in mind we only had a membership of 40 to 50 members at the time it was a fantastic achievement. The Chairman, Vincent McGough soon organised a team, and with his support and guidance the project began to move forward. Our new Association was soon shown how the 'esprit de corps' of our fellow Irish regiments would work, and it is with the help of organisations such as the Combined Irish Regiments Association, that the 'Project' became such a great success. It was because of this success we were soon on the map, and membership grew.

I would also like to thank the President of the Association, The O'Morchoe, The Chairman and Committee for all the support and effort shown to me, and the Association throughout this time. I must also thank you, the members, for the fantastic way you have supported the memory of the regiment whether it be by way of a donation or just by attending the many memorial services, dinners or parades that the Association has attended.

The Association continues to make progress re-establishing links with our old depot town of Birr, in County Offaly, thanks to the efforts of Sean Cooke who has over many years developed contacts with local property owners and interest groups. Discussions are now under way with the local Heritage and library authorities in Birr with a view to restoring a gateway to the old barracks as a memorial and having material relevant to the Leinster Regiment made available in the town library.

More recently we have seen the development of the Regimental Association web site, which is full of

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THE
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information about the history of the regiment as well as news and dates of forthcoming events and meetings. The web site that is also a photo library of recent and more historical events has been set up and is regularly updated by Don Dickson.

I hope you enjoy this first issue, and I would like to thank the editorial team for all their support to the Association; their hard work together with your devotion will keep the memory of our great regiment alive.

Quis Separabit!
David Ball,

Your letters

Dear Editor

My grandfather was Lance Corporal James Robert Nolan, number 9293 serving with "C" company 2nd battalion Leinster Regiment. He fought in Flanders and the Somme and was one of two soldiers killed on the 24 August 1916 in Arrow Head Copse near Guillemont when they were shelled whilst entering into the trenches. He was 23 years old when he died and he is buried in Guillemont Road Cemetery beside the other soldier that died at the same time. I visited his grave in November 2006 and I am proud to say that the cemetery is kept in pristine condition. My thanks to all who maintain it.

Finbar Nolan, 24 November 2006.

Your Numbers Up!

Recently the Association was approached by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to see if we could help them. Because their enquiry is one which we have been asked before by members, we are reproducing the original enquiry together with a possible explanation.

I am writing to enquire about two casualties: 5780 Pte Patrick Murphy, 2nd Bn who died 9 August 1918. and 5780 Pte George Murphy, 2nd Bn who died 26 March 1918.

One of these men appears in our records and one of them does not. We are wondering whether these might be the same man, or whether some of their details have been confused. Both have an entry in Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1918 and these entries show different places of enlistment. Would you be able to comment on the likelihood of two men in the same battalion having the same service number? Your help would be much appreciated.

Nan Wisdon, Records Administrator, CWGC

Continued on page 14

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2/Leinsters at Premesques, Northern France.

4 18th – 20th October 1914.

IAN LOWE

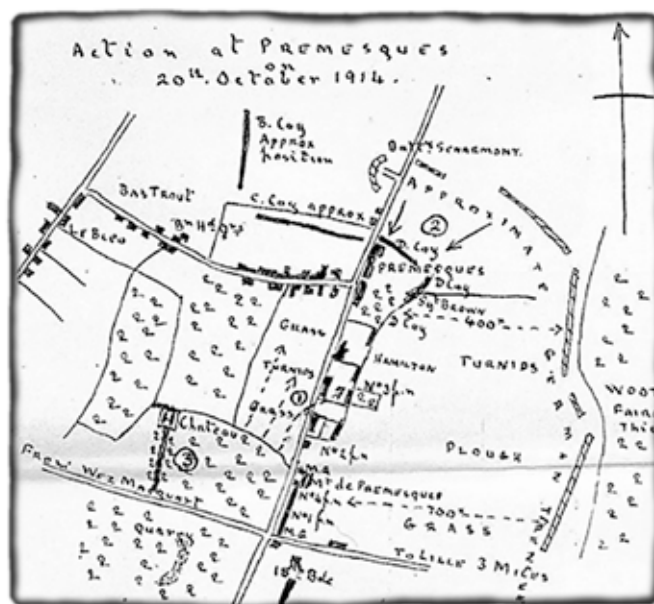
The action of 2/Leinsters at Premesques is an episode in the Battle of Armentieres which officially ran from 13th October to 2nd November 1914. It represents one of the last phases of the strategic movements that began at Mons and ended at Ypres in November 1914. This is one of a series of actions that tend to get overlooked in favour of the larger and more dramatic first Battle of Ypres, indeed the regiment carried "Aisne 1914" on the colours but not Armentieres. Premesques was the first occasion that the Leinster Regiment was heavily involved in the fighting of the Great War and the first time that it suffered a large number of casualties. Up to this time operations still bore some resemblance to the experience of the field days and manoeuvres of peacetime but this was beginning to change as the pattern of war evolved towards the stalemate of the trenches.

The 2/Leinsters arrived in France on the 9th September 1914, as part of 17th Brigade, 6th Division, too late for the battle



of Mons and the subsequent retreat to the Marne. The 2/Leinsters were present at the Battle of the Aisne although not heavily engaged and seem to have suffered few casualties. The earliest fatal casualties were Privates Fitzgibbon and Mills both of whom died of wounds on the 26th September.¹

During the following few days the battalion moved with the rest of III Corps via St. Omer to the vicinity of Meteren, south-west of Ypres and just inside the French border. Here, the battalion was in reserve during the brisk action that occurred on the 13th October. During the following days the battalion moved in a south-easterly direction around the outskirts of Armentieres, generally towards Lille, arriving at La Chapelle D'Armentieres on the evening of the 17th October having had spasmodic contact with retiring German cavalry. It became evident that this cavalry was retiring onto its supporting infantry which was advancing from the direction of Lille and that a confrontation would not be long delayed.



Sketch map. Drawn by Lieut-Col Mather and included with his description of events of the 18th to 20th October 1914. WO 95/1612. The National Archives.

Early on the morning of Sunday 18th October orders were received for 17 Brigade to attack the line Premesques – Pérenchies, with 2/Leinsters being responsible for taking the small village of Premesques. (There was a belief that dramatic events in the regiments' history always occurred on a Sunday) The overall objective of the operation was to seize the ridge that represented the line described above; this higher ground roughly conformed to the line

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of the road between the two villages, a distance of about 2km's. To be described as a ridge is perhaps to flatter it being no more than 38 meters above sea level at any point. However possession of this position would give an advantage in a future attempt to re-capture Lille which had earlier fallen to the Germans on the 11th October. The battalion war diary records the rest of the day as follows:-

11 am. Premesques D. Company entered and occupied Premesques.

4.45 pm. Orders received to entrench in positions, which we had gained. Casualties. Capt Montgomery and Lieut's Gaitskell & Lechy wounded. [All three subsequently died] Other ranks, killed 16, wounded 81. Missing 5.²

This brief account gives only a hint of what was a significant action by the battalion. The initial attack was made at 7.30 am, without reconnaissance or bombardment,³ by all four companies. The order from left to right was, B Coy linking with 3/Rifle Brigade on its left, followed by C and D Coy's and with A Coy linking up with 18th Brigade on the right. German resistance was immediate and effective particularly in front of 3/Rifle Brigade whose advance was held up. The regimental history records the nuisance that snipers made of themselves, particularly targeting officers³ who at this stage of the war were still likely to be leading their men from the front with drawn swords. By 10 am D. Coy had entered the village of Premesques. On the left, on account of the opposition and despite being reinforced by a battalion of the Royal Fusiliers the RB's did not attain their objective. This left the Leinsters in an exposed position with the Battery de Senarmont, an outwork of the defences of Lille still in German hands on their left flank. As the day drew to a close the battalion dug in on the positions reached. A and D Coy's were just east of the Premesques/Perenchies road with C and B Coy's in the fields west of the same road covering the Battery de Senarmont and the exposed left flank. Battalion HQ was established in buildings at Bas Trou a few hundred yards northwest of the village.

The following day the battalion remained in its entrenched positions (little more than rifle pits at this stage of the war) under occasional shell fire and suffering a further 12 casualties.² This pause in the fighting gave the battalion the opportunity to strengthen its defences in anticipation of a German counter attack. It seems that at this point there was at least a German division (24th Division, of XIX Corps)⁴ facing a weakened and exposed Leinster battalion who still lacked artillery support.

Once again the low-key tone of the War Diary is worth quoting in full to set the scene

for the events of the 20th October. The day began early for the Leinsters

2 am. Enemy make an infantry attack but were driven back.

8 am. Enemy make a strong attack in force, commencing with heavy artillery fire. Portions of our line had to fall back before superior numbers. After heavy fighting all day the brigade fell back on the line Porteegal Farm – Rue de Bois. Casualties during the day: - Killed, Capt Maffett. Wounded, Capt's Whitton, Orpen-Palmer, Lieut's Cormac-Walshe [Later died] & Budgen. Missing Lieut's Hamilton, O'Connor, Barton. [All captured] Other ranks. Killed 30. Wounded 70. Missing 214²

Behind these bare facts and statistics we should remember not only the human tragedy they represent, for example several members of the association had relatives killed or wounded during these actions, but also that similar losses were occurring throughout the BEF, literally bleeding the old professional army of its junior and middle ranking officers, NCOs' and experienced men. These irreplaceable losses would cost the country dear in the coming years.

Despite the brevity of the war diary entry we are fortunate that the file also contains two accounts of the action. Both are hand written and describe events from the 18th to 20th October only. One, written on War Office headed paper, is unsigned and undated. The other is written by Lieut-Col J D Mather, who, as Maj. Mather, at the time commanded A Coy. In a covering letter written from the Junior Constitutional Club, Piccadilly in January 1924 in response to an advertised request for information which had appeared in the "Morning Post" he says that the account and accompanying sketch map are copies of those that he prepared "the second day after the fight". Both accounts tally in all important respects.

The action at 2am appears to have been fairly brief involving some rifle fire followed by the Germans occupying two orchards on

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the south-east corner of the village while an enemy patrol was seen off by the battalion's two machine guns.⁵ The attack was renewed at 7.30am when heavy artillery fire was directed at the village and the neighbouring woods. There was no British artillery able to respond. The attack was mounted by the 179th Saxon Infantry Regiment.³ It is worth remembering that the size of a German infantry regiment was roughly the same as a British brigade. This was followed, at about 8.15am, by an infantry attack against C and D Coy's in the north-east corner of the village. Maj. Mather, OC A. Coy, "*was just sitting down to breakfast in Mt. de Premesques farm*", when he heard the commotion and sent one of his platoon commanders, Lieut. Young, to investigate⁶ (presumably while he finished his breakfast!) Lieut Young returned with the news that the Germans were in the village and that the company's positions were in danger of being out-flanked. Maj. Mather moved his No. 3 platoon to cover this situation and fearing that battalion HQ was cut off or overrun sent runners to 18 Brigade HQ on his right asking for assistance in mounting a counterattack.

Shortly after 9am an attack was made with the assistance of a party of North Stafford's of 17 Brigade which succeeded in the temporary recovery of about 300 yards of trenches and the capture of some prisoners, this was immediately followed by a further German assault that regained the ground they had just lost. At around the same time a fresh attempt to retake the village was made by a company of the East Yorkshire Regiment, part of 18 Brigade, which was described by Maj. Mather as "*a very gallant attack*"⁶. Towards the middle of the day some of the initial German impetus began to be lost, although they had pushed C and D Coy's backwards out of their positions, A and B Coy's, on either flanks, remained a potent threat despite heavy punishment. In effect the Germans found themselves in a bag, the bottom being formed of the remnants of C and D Coy's, the sides being formed by A and B Coy's. Mather records that the battalion machine guns located at the southern end of the village caught the Germans in the flank

and effectively stopped that part of the attack.

A further plan to recapture the village with a battalion of the East Lancashire Regiment was abandoned on the instructions of III Corps HQ as it was realised that the numerical and material superiority of the Germans made it a futile exercise and that it would not be practical to hold the line originally planned much less continue the advance towards Lille.⁴ It was to be four years before British troops passed this way again. Fighting continued without any material change in the situation until dusk when orders were received to dig in at the present locations. At around midnight the brigade was withdrawn to a position "*about one mile south-east of Chapelle d' Armentiere.*"⁶ The regimental history records that when A. Coy were shelled out of Mt de Premesques farm the Germans ceased firing while the wounded of both sides were evacuated, a further echo of an older style of warfare.³

Thus ended an eventful few days for the battalion during which it was engaged in its first major action on the European continent. If it was in any mood for introspection it could take satisfaction from giving a good account of itself against a numerically and materially stronger force albeit at a heavy cost. Between the 18th and 20th October 2/Leinsters were reported to have suffered



Photograph of Premesques village taken in 2004 looking roughly north towards Perenchies. Some of D Coy's positions were behind the houses on the right.

434 casualties of whom 5 officers and 150 other ranks were killed, three other officers were taken prisoner⁷ Many of the Leinster dead are remembered on the Ploegsteert Memorial to the Missing. We know nothing for certain of the German casualties beyond the final sentence of the anonymous account; 'The German losses were very heavy'⁵

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There are two episodes that occurred during the 20th October which despite being relatively well known are worth repeating here. The first concerns the death of Capt. H T Maffett, OC A Coy. A German officer who returned Maffett's personal effects to his family after the war included a partially written appeal for artillery support found on Maffett's body. Capt. Maffett is remembered in Houplines Communal Cemetery Extension⁷.

The other concerns the escape of Capt's Whitton and Orpen-Palmer from the Germans which has a certain "Boys Own" quality about it. Both had earlier been wounded and captured by the Germans; at dusk and in the confusion of battle they managed to escape. Capt. Orpen-Palmer though mobile was temporally blinded and Whitton was unable to walk. Orpen-Palmer carried Whitton who guided their progress! Both men made it back to the British lines and survived the war, Orpen-Palmer going on to be the last OC 2/Leinsters and Whitton eventually writing the regimental history⁷.

2/Leinsters remained on the western front throughout the war and had many more days of intense activity in the course of which they lost many fine men but even at the distance of over ninety years you sense that this was a defining episode in the history of the regiment.

Sources

1. Soldiers Died in the Great War. Part 71.
2. War Diary, 2/Leinsters WO95/1612. The National Archives.
3. The History of The Prince of Wales Leinster Regiment. Vol.2 Lieut-Col F E Whitton C M G.
4. Military Operations, France & Belgium 1914, Vol. 2
5. Anonymous account included in WO 95/1612.
6. Account by Lieut -Col. Mather included in WO 95/1612
7. Orange Green & Khaki, The Story of the Irish Regiments in the Great War. Tom Johnstone.

Planning to visit Flanders this year?

This year is the 90th anniversary of Passchendaele so expect accommodation around Ypres to be at a premium from spring onward. If you have not yet made reservations, one quick way to check vacancies is to use the Internet but remember that Ypres is actually called Ieper. If all else fails you can telephone the Ieper Tourist Office where English is spoken.

The number is 00 32 57 20 07 24

Remembrance

Battle of Messines-Wytschaete
Battle of Paschendale
1917-1918



The Battle
of Messines-
Wytschaete
and that of

Passchendaele are inseparably linked because the first was the prologue to the latter. Both battles were fought by the same troops the British, Anzacs and Irish. On the 17 June 1917 both Irish divisions captured the ruins of Wytschaete following the simultaneous dawn detonation of nineteen mines, in what was the most powerful man-made explosion known until then. Today the villages of Zonnebeke, (Passchendaele) Heuvelland (Wytschaete) and Messines have much in common with the fairly well preserved battlefields. To mark the 90th anniversary the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917 is coordinating the re-opening of an old railway line and a new visitor centre near Tyne Cot Cemetery in Zonnebeke. There will be a special commemoration ceremony held at the Irish Peace Tower on the 7th June. There are other special commemoration ceremonies throughout June to November and full details are available on the Association website. The majority of the ceremonies are attended by military and civic dignitaries but there are many instances when the general public are invited to participate in events, such as battlefield walks; 9-10 June Wytschaete mines walk, 26 August Zonnebeke Passchendaele, and 6-7 October a Living History re-enactment with Anzac troops at Passchendaele. These are only a representative sample of events and of course the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917 is open throughout the period.

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A year in Gozo

DON DICKSON

8 In the Regimental History Lt.Col Whitton writes, as a subaltern, a not very complementary view of the arrival, in 1894, of the 2nd Battalion at the small island of Gozo four miles from the north-east coast of Malta. *"An uninviting station at first glance ... not a single tree and without a single blade of grass ... all the inhabitants were peasants, priests, fisher folk or grog-shop keepers ... English¹ was neither spoken nor understood by a single soul except for a charming (local) priest Father Magri ... compared to Malta, Gozo was practically a penal settlement"* We cannot know why Whitton gave such a poor opinion and it would not be fair to conjecture; however my subsequent research into other contemporary accounts do not lend support to Whitton's view.

The 2nd Battalion were to occupy a local fortress called Fort Chambray that had been originally built in 1761 back in the days of Knight's Templar occupation. The original concept for the fortress was to be a fortified town built overlooking the landing stage in Mgarr the principle harbour at Gozo; but although the defences were built the project of building the town was never completed. Fort Chambray held a commanding view of the approach to Gozo from Malta being situated high

in 1800 the fort was occupied by British forces but was not formally transferred to the British Government as a barracks until the 1st January 1829. With its high position exposed to a cooling sea breeze the fort quickly became established as a place for soldiers requiring convalescence. Good use was made of the fort following the cholera outbreaks of 1837, 1850 and 1865 and by many of the British forces who suffered from 'Malta Fever' that also claimed many lives². Listed as requiring a garrison strength of five hundred men (five companies) a succession of regiments had occupied Fort Chambray and in November 1894 it was the turn of the 2nd Leinsters under the command of Lieut. Col Adrian Woods who relieved the Connaught Rangers. Strength upon arrival was 562 officers and men, and by January 1895 this had increased to 1,008.

Accommodation in the fort was restricted, with a two storey barrack block having four rooms, 20 x 100 feet (6 x 30 metres) on each floor designated to accommodate 250 men, initially about half the single men of the battalion. Along side each barrack room was accommodation for six NCOs and three staff sergeants. A long two-storey building had recently been built to serve as married quarters for accompanied soldiers. A small area of the building had been set aside as quarters for the senior officers but the remainder of the battalion, including its junior officers, were under canvas on the hard rocky ground around the fort. The officers were able to relax in their Officers

Fort Chambray high on Ras et Tafal viewed approaching from Malta (Photo 2003)



on a hill known as Ras et Tafal, the major features of the defences however were to protect the fort in the event of an attack and subsequent siege from the landward side. Following the arrival of the British

Mess in what Whitton described as a *"passable native house with a fair garden"*. Within the walls of the Fort was a compact hospital of four wards capable of accommodating 20 men. Other features of the

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Main entrance to Fort Chambray

Photo 2003

fort included a bomb-proof powder magazine on the seaward side of the grounds. Regiments stationed at the fort were very popular in Gozo because they generated trade for the local market and with not much to do on the quiet island the soldiers were often employed in assisting the local population with their construction endeavours; a ready source of labour. Regimental bands were particularly popular especially as they gave public performances on the local fete days, and there were many of those! One reported example³ was the parish feast of 'Our Lady of Loreto' held in Ghajnsielem, a village referred to by the troops as "*Chain Selem*", when on September 15, 1895 the bandsmen were hosted with 'wine, beer biscuits and cigars' by the 'grateful parishioners⁴'. The battalion spent some twelve uneventful months in Fort Chambray, departing for their next 'posting' to Bermuda in November 1895.

So why was the period of the "Gozo posting" interesting? Much depends upon your point of view of course, for me my initial interest started because my grandfather and grandmother were part of the contingent who occupied the married quarters. That was sufficient to make me want to go and take a look, especially as one of my father's elder sisters, Mary E Dickson was born and baptised⁵ in 1895 within Fort Chambray⁶ However the thrust of this article and the driver for my current interest now follows.

Fort Chambray was handed back, by the British, to the Gozo authorities in 1934 when the barrack block was turned into a hospital for Mental Diseases and remained in use under the name of "Sacred Heart Hospital" until 1983. Also in 1937 another part of the fort was developed as a leprosy unit called "St Bartholomew Hospital" and remained in use until 1956. In 1979 work commenced to convert the former married quarters into a tourist development of self contained apartments whilst other facilities, such as restaurant and bar together with a new access road, were developed. In 1983 the remaining patients in "Sacred Heart Hospital" were transferred to

'other more appropriate facilities' and the whole area remained open to the public as "a holiday park" regularly frequented by the people in the area. In 1992 the Fort together with its property was sold by the authorities to a private Monaco based developer and access to the Fort for the public was stopped. In 2004 a local Gozo businessman lawyer⁷ bought out the then developer by acquiring fifty-one percent of the shares leaving the Maltese Authorities forty-nine percent of Fort Chambray Ltd.

Permission to develop the Fort and surrounding area into an exclusive holiday complex was given in the early 1990's, and on 1st July 1991, as part of the preparations for the development, the cemetery inside the Fort was cleared of graves and human remains. Without going into the detail of the (locally resisted) development, its progress is important from a Leinster Regiment historical aspect in that buried within Fort Chambray were the remains of a number of Leinster soldiers and their families, all who appeared to succumb to 'Malta Fever', though one infant died shortly after birth.

There were originally three cemeteries associated with Fort Chambray, all commencing from around 1800. The three included a Protestant burial ground within the Fort itself close by the old military hospital and doctor's quarters, and two in the dry moat ditches outside the wall. There had also been a Cholera burial ground but that had long since 'disappeared'. Of the two burial grounds outside the wall one was a dedicated burial place for Roman Catholics on the left of the main entrance to the Fort and one for 'others' on the right of the main entrance. My interest then is what happened to these departed soldiers and perhaps more importantly for the Leinster Regimental archives what happened to the remains of the Leinster Soldiers?

My initial research identified that a newspaper, *The Times of Malta*, on the 18th January 1993, printed a letter from the Managing Director of Fort Chambray Ltd., regarding the cemetery. An extract is reproduced below. "*In so far as the removal of the remains of members of the British Forces (and others) is concerned, the whole exercise was carried out as follows: Each single grave was first of all opened and the remains carefully put away, each in a separate container*"

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and later re-interred in the cemetery of Santa Maria, near Xewkija in the presence of the Reverend Canon Philip Cousins, Dean of St. Paul's Anglican Pro-Cathedral in Valletta in representation of the Church of England and Father Zerafa, the parish priest of Ghajnsielem". Further research identified that a Roger de Giorgio supervised the transfer and that the contents of each grave was placed in a wooden box lined with plastic and the reinterred in the cemetery of St Mary. At that time the different tomb stones were set aside for permanent retention in a secluded part of the Fort within a yard adjacent to the old barrack block, for future identification awaiting a more permanent location. The final part of the plan was that one of the former cemeteries' was to be re-established and that the remains were to be returned to Fort Chambray, reunited with their headstones⁸ and reburied within the landward fortifications. Amongst the identified remains were the following from the Leinsters.

- Walter GOLL, aged 24 years, Private, 2nd Battalion, Leinster Regiment Died 30th June 1896,
- E.C. LAWN, aged 21 years 3 months, Private, H Company, 2nd Battalion, Leinster Regiment Died 30th July 1895
- Emma Mary SHORT, aged 25 years, the wife of Corporal Michael J. Short, 2nd Battalion, Leinster Regiment Died 7th May 1895.
- Gwendolyn Grace DAVIDSON, daughter of Captain T.S.C. Davidson, Leinster Regiment. Born 4 May 1895 Died 19 May 1895. (Age 15 days)
- P. MURPHY, aged 27 years, Sergeant, F Company,



The old Roman Catholic burial ground at Fort Chambray now being used as an area to grow tomatoes

2nd Battalion, Leinster Regiment, died 23rd September 1895

Whilst on business in Malta in 2002, I made a visit to Fort Chambray to see where the 2nd battalion had been stationed and discovered that the project development had been 'on hold' for a number of years and the site had to all intents been 'mothballed' Walking around the outside of the walls of the fort, which were part overgrown and part being used as 'allotments' I chanced upon the Catholic burial ground, which had been turned into a plot for growing tomatoes. I took the details of some of those interred from a number of headstones that were positioned against the wall but unfortunately, the headstones of the Leinster burials were no longer intact and only markers were found for four persons.



The burial marker for Pte. James Nelson, the original tomb stone having been 'lost'.



Headstone for Pte Lyons of the Connaught Rangers

- Pte Nicolas LOUTH, "G Company" 2 Bn Leinster Regiment, who died in Gozo on August 7th 1895, aged 24 years.

- Pte James NELSON. "G Company" 2 Bn Leinster Regiment,

who died in Gozo on September 25th 1895, aged 25 years.

- Pte Thomas CLANCY, 4034, "A Company" 2 Bn Leinster Regiment, who died in Gozo on June 3rd 1895, aged 20 years.

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

- Sarah SHEIL, beloved wife of Sergeant Patrick SHEIL, 2 Bn Leinster Regiment, who died in Gozo on April 6th 1895, aged 21 years.

Although I had spoken with the security guard when I first arrived my presence on the premises was unauthorised, so I was not able to do much more than note the names for future reference. However I committed myself to a return visit under more favourable circumstances. These occurred the following year when, by then, I had been successful in contacting the developers of the fort with the assistance of a mutual business acquaintance who resided on Gozo. I had also been successful in contacting the archivist for Gozo, Father Joseph Bezzina, so believed that I was in good shape to discover more about what had happened. I set myself a number of goals to achieve.

1. Had the remains been re-interred and if so where?
2. If the remains had been re-interred did they have individual resting places or was there a common grave?
3. What had happened to the burials in the Roman Catholic cemetery?
4. Why were the names I found on headstones different to those originally reported?

My next action was to visit the church of Santa Maria, near Xewkija a village close to the fort, to discover that it had no attached cemetery. Fortunately times had changed since 1895 and I already knew that English was spoken and understood by all the inhabitants so after a little driving around I found the cemetery of St Mary. After a discussion with the groundsman in charge of the cemetery I was directed to grave number 3 (*Parti-ta-li-Ingglizi, remains*) to discover an uninspiring set of slabs in an enclosed area with no description. So back to the head groundsman who gave me access to the burial register that enabled me to identify that the remains of fifty-three persons had been interred, eleven of whom were unknown..

My first two goals had been achieved in that I had located the remains and they had not been interred in individual burial places. Furthermore, ten years after the approval of the original plan, the project to move the remains back to Fort Chambray had not taken place. This tale now takes an unexpected twist because whilst I had located four of the Leinster names originally reported as being re-interred, the names identified on the burial register did not include any of the Leinster names I had previously identified on the markers in the Roman Catholic Cemetery, or that of Sergeant Murphy. Further investigations revealed that all the identified records of the reinterment refer only to the transfer of the

remains from the Protestant cemetery and I could find no reference to any transfer from the Roman Catholic cemetery. This was important enough to seek further help and make an appointment with the Gozo archivist Father Bezzina in Victoria, the main town of Gozo. My discovery came as somewhat of a surprise to Father Bezzina and what happened next and what happened to the graves of Sergeant Murphy, Privates Louth, Nelson and Clancy and the wife of Sergeant Sheil will be another story.

(Endnotes)

1 *Use of English*: Although Maltese was the first language and Italian the second language, English was in use and understood by the civil authorities in Malta. When Whitton refers to the use of English he may have been focused on his personal experience with the local inhabitants. However, an alternative to be considered is that after fifty years of successive British Army regiments trading with the local inhabitants in the nearby markets, some of the Gozitans understood English and used it when they wished to. My own research at the Malta Public Record Office clearly identified English to be in use by many, but by only a few of the indigenous farmers. Another point that supports a knowledge of English by the local Gozitans was that non-catholic members of the Regiment were known to 'skip' church-parade on Sundays and play a local game 'bocci' in Apparition Square in the nearby village of Ghajnsielem. (Eng. Bocce a ball game played on dirt courts approximately 20 to 30 metres in length and unlike lawn bowls, bocce balls are spherical and have no inbuilt bias)

2 *Malta Fever*: The cause of "Malta Fever", a mysterious complaint which sometimes resembled typhoid fever and at other times malaria, was not discovered until an investigation by the Malta Fever Commission during 1904-1906 and led by Lieut Colonel Sir David Bruce (RAMC) traced the infection to Maltese goat's milk. The cause was identified as *Micrococcus melitensis* and the illness reclassified as "brucellosis". Bruce was rewarded with a knighthood in 1908.

3 *Ghajnsielem*: Grace and Glory: Malta, People, Places & Events, A.E. Abela, Public Record Office Gozo.

4 Op cit

5 *Mary E Dickson*: In the register of baptisms the entry is Mary E Dickson 109th Regiment, one of six baptisms in the regiment that year.

6 *Mary E Dickson*: Being born in Gozo was later to prove to be a difficulty for my aunt when much later she immigrated to the USA. Despite my grandfather being British/Irish and a retired officer of the British Army, the USA authorities classified my aunt as being of Maltese birth and origin. Of course being of good Irish stock, she easily got around that by travelling first to Canada where entry was not a problem, then crossing over from Canada into the USA.

7 *Source*: Malta Today, July 18 2004

8 *Source* Brigadier Samut- Tagliaferro, President of the National Museum Association of Malta.

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Commemorating the 16th (Irish) Division on the Somme.

On the 8th, 9th and 10th September 2006 the Leinster Regiment Association was well represented at the commemoration ceremonies that took place at Somme villages of Guillemont and Ginchy in France. The purpose of the occasion was the 90th commemoration of the relief of these adjoining villages by troops of 16th (Irish) Div., on the 3rd and 9th September 1916 and to pay tribute to the lives lost and shattered in the course of those two bloody actions.

Two battalions of the Leinster Regiment played a prominent part in these events of the Battle of the Somme, particularly the assault on Guillemont on the 3rd September when Lt J V Holland of the 7th Battalion led his party of bombers through the British artillery barrage catching the defenders by surprise in their bunkers thereby helping to break the German resistance. For his gallantry on this occasion Lt Holland (nicknamed "Tin Belly" on account of previous service with the Household Cavalry) was awarded the Victoria Cross; one of two won by the division that day. In addition, members of his party won two DCM's and six MM's. 7/Leinsters suffered 231 casualties during the attack. 2/Leinsters were also engaged in the area as part of 24th Division during a previous attempt to capture Guillemont and took part in the bitter fighting at Delville Wood.

Much of the organisation for the commemoration was the work of Major Jim MacLeod MBE and the Combined Irish Regiments Association. Two coach loads of Combined Irish Regiments members, a large party from the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association and members of the Connaught Rangers Association were joined by other members who had made their own way to France. The band of the London Irish Rifles provided music for the occasion. Friday the 8th a celebratory celidh with several hundred persons

attending was held in the farm adjacent to the two remaining bunkers in Guillemont. An ample supply of wine and food were provided by the villagers.

Saturday commenced under brilliant sunshine with an open-air service at the church in Guillemont where, after prayers and readings, a statue of St Patrick was blessed by the parish priest prior to being placed in Guillemont church.



Wreaths were also laid at the war memorial and at the 16th (Irish) Div. memorial in the village. Proceedings then transferred a short distance to Ginchy where a similar ceremony took place. In addition to the large number who had travelled from the UK and Ireland there was representation from the Irish Embassy in Paris, many local officials and elected representatives together with members of French veterans organisations who paraded their standards. Our President Maj-Gen The O'Morchoe laid wreaths and gave an address. David Ball carried the association's standard.

The final part of Saturday's formal ceremonies took place at Ginchy Telegraph, which marked the limit of the advance of 16th (Irish) Division on the 9th September. This took the form of a drumhead service in front of a large mound covered by a replica of the division's shamrock sign. Local children had also sown the margin of the road with over 1000 poppy crosses, one for each of the fallen on that occasion. The formal part of the day ended with a final lament played by a lone piper.

Sunday saw the group move to the Guards memorial at Lesboeufs and then to the Pipers memorial in Longueval. While the weekend was undoubtedly a formal, solemn and at times a very emotional one we were provided with lavish hospitality by our French hosts on Friday evening in Guillemont and again on Saturday after the ceremonies at Ginchy for which we were all very grateful. It was amazing how quickly our language skills improved after a little refreshment!

Members who have access to the Internet may view a wide selection of photographs from this event that have been published on the Association's website.

Poppies bloom in St. Stephen's Green

IAN LOWE

On a recent visit to St Stephen's Green in Dublin it was good to see a poppy wreath placed at the bust of Tom Kettle by the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association in remembrance of the Great War and the 90th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.

Tom Kettle, a prominent Irish nationalist, academic, poet and sometime MP for East Tyrone, was in Belgium buying arms for the Nationalist Volunteers when the Great War started. He remained in Belgium as a newspaper correspondent during the German invasion and was so incensed by the atrocities he witnessed that he returned to Ireland and joined the army being commissioned into the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.



Tom Kettle 1880 - 1916

He is remembered on the Thiepval memorial to the missing.

His memorial bust in Dublin records his name, year and place of birth and that he was killed at Ginchy on the 9th September 1916 but there is no reference to the circumstance of his death or even where Ginchy is. The final inscription on the base of the monument is a quotation from his poem written to his infant daughter a few days before his death;

*"Died not for Flag, nor King, nor Emperor,
But for a dream, born in a herdsman's shed
And for the secret Scripture of the poor."*

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Ypres March 2007

Hell Fire Corner, Hooze Chateau and Crater, Birr Cross Roads. Hill 60 are all evocative names from the area around Ypres during The



Association members at Hooze Museum

Great War and these places were amongst the destinations for the Leinster Association members who visited the Salient in Belgium during the long weekend of 16-18 March 2007.

Departing London on the Friday the party, organised by Dave Ball and Harry Hogan, made their way across the channel to Ieper to take part in the St. Patrick celebrations of the following day. The foundation for the trip was the St. Patrick's Day parade during the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate; however equally important was the opportunity to pay respects and to remember the fallen Irish Soldiers who died in the Salient during the Great War of 1914-18.

Arriving late afternoon and after watching as spectators the Friday evening Last Post Ceremony, dinner was partaken at Vivaldi's in Grot Markt..

Saturday was a busy day with remembrance visits to Hill 60, that was blasted as part of the 1917 Messines offensive and is now maintained by the CWGC, and the CWG cemeteries at Birr Cross Roads, Hooze Crater and Ypres Town Cemetery & Extension. A visit to the Hooze Crater Museum provided the opportunity to view the well maintained artefacts recovered from the battlefields and to take a coffee.

Saturday lunch, (for purely medicinal purposes you understand), the destination was "Ter Posterie" one of Ieper's best hostleries! After lunch a reflective visit to St. George's

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Memorial Church where in the Sanctuary, dominated by the Window to the Guards Division, brass plaques are dedicated to the Regiments who fought in the Salient. What was left of the remainder of the Saturday afternoon was 'free time' before the main event of the trip, the parade at the Menin Gate, (see other featured article on page 16).

Following the Parade and Last Post Ceremony a St. Patrick's dinner was hosted by the Association at the Ariane Hotel with special guests David Beatty, President of Ieper branch of the Royal British Legion and Bart D'Hulster, the Association's representative in Ieper. The Royal Toast to the King and Queen of the Belgians was made by Vincent McGough and the reply given by Bart D'Hulster with a toast to our Queen. David Ball gave the toast to The Regiment. The dinner was a resplendent affair with of course a rousing version of Killaloe sang by all present.

Interest in the Association amongst the hotel's guests was high and one french speaking Belgian gentleman, accompanied by his daughter, wanted to meet the Irish veterans because his grandfather had served with the Leinsters during The Great War! The communication challenge was accepted by Don Dickson and it soon became apparent that the gentleman a CWG gardener, was indeed a descendent of a Leinster Soldier who survived the war, married a local girl and brought his family up on the border between Belgian and France!

Sunday morning before the return trip to London, one last visit was to be made at the Island of Ireland Peace Park. Against the tower built to commemorate the memory of all soldiers of Ireland who fought and died in the Great War, wreaths were laid for the Leinster Regiment by Mr Pearce, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers by Mr John Fay, the Combined Irish Regiments Association by Mr Len Rees and Royal Irish Regiment by Mr Read on behalf of the family of Pte William Lillis late Leinsters and Royal Irish Regiment.

After the wreath ceremony came the "dash for the coast" and journey back to Blighty! A magnificent weekend thus came to a close and names are already submitted for next years St. Patrick's in Ypres!

Your letters

Continued from page 3

Note: This is a not an unusual occurrence brought about because the process of assigning a unique service number to a soldier was not introduced until 1921. A soldier joining a regiment before that time was assigned a specific number by the regiment that he enlisted with. Thought to be foolproof there was a loophole because if the soldier moved to another regiment he took his assigned number with him. Thus if either of these soldiers had transferred then it is very possible that they could have identical service numbers. One way to validate this is to seek out the soldiers attestation documents at TNA because these will identify which regiment the soldier enlisted into and when.
[Editor, a future article is planned to expand on this topic]

Dear Editor

Pte. Christopher O'Brien was my uncle. He was born in Williamstown, Youghal and served in "C" Company the 1st battalion Leinster Regiment. His father was Martin O'Brien and mother was Bridget McCarthy. I suppose like many families my father never spoke of his brother who died in Flanders in WW1 and it was not until 2005 that at the age of 73 I became aware of my Irish uncle's sacrifice.

Martin O'Brien

Dear Editor

C.Q.M.S. Christopher Murphy was born in Co. Kildare and stationed at Crinkle Barracks in 1914. My mother's birth certificate shows the above barracks as her place of birth. He was also stationed at Colchester Barracks. He died in Longford Hospital Ireland on September 15th 1948. His obituary notice in the local newspaper states that as "an NCO in the British Army he travelled extensively in the British Dominions. He served in the Great War and took part in many engagements and was noted for bravery in the field of battle. My mother remembered him returning from India and telling the family that he had learned how to cook curry. When he retired from army life he settled down in Lenamore Co. Longford. My grandfather did not say much to the family about his wartime experiences but they felt he never got over the deaths of many of his comrades. He seemed to have overcome some initial hostility in the neighbourhood due to his having served in the British Army. He was said to have been highly respected in Lenamore.

Jo Stevens (by email)



Photograph of Christopher Murphy with his wife Teresa and daughter Mary in the frame behind him

Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition at The National Museum of Ireland.

A review by Ian Lowe

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

The National Museum of Ireland has recently opened a new permanent exhibition at its Collins Barracks site entitled *"Soldiers and Chiefs: The Irish at War at Home and Abroad, 1550 – 2001"*. The reference to "Soldiers and Chiefs" is a quotation from a ballad by Thomas Davis (1814 - 1845) and it has an oddly contemporary echo when read in full: *"For in far foreign fields from Dunkirk to Belgrade, lie the soldiers and chiefs of the Irish Brigade"*.

The exhibition sets out to tell the story of the Irish fighting man over a period of 450 years including domestic and foreign wars. A good deal of space is given to the service of the Irish in various foreign services including that of France, Austria and Russia. The role of Irish men in the South American wars of liberation and the American Civil War is also explored. All sections are



This exhibition is well worth going to see!

supported by original artefacts, letters, replicas and where possible audio accounts of individuals experiences. The exhibition concludes with a section devoted to the modern Irish Defence Forces and their role in UN peacekeeping missions. There are two aircraft, an 18 lb field gun and some AFV's included in this part of the exhibition.

The Irish in the British service is well represented; the role of the Volunteer and Militia regiments, the prominent part played by both the Anglo-Irish gentry and the ordinary recruit to the ranks and their impact on the wider society. The displays move from the Elizabethan, Williamite and Revolutionary wars through the Victorian era to the wars of the 20th Century. The Great War is covered in some detail with emphasis on part played by the 16th (Irish) and 36th (Ulster) divisions but with only passing reference to the 10th (Irish) or the part played by the regular Irish battalions. Some exhibits relating to the Second World War follow this section. There is no reference to Korea or that a number of Irish citizens continue to serve in armed forces of countries other than their own.

The exhibition does reflect many of the positive aspects of the recent re-evaluation of Irish history however even though it is acknowledged that great strides have taken place to enable discussion of these matters, the narrative still relies on the traditional stereotype, portraying the British Army in Ireland as largely one of occupation with all the negative connotations that the term implies. Parts

of the exhibition fail to place events in Ireland into a wider historical context. For example the creators have found it necessary to continue to talk about "The Emergency" as if it was somehow unrelated to the Second World War and there seems to be a reluctance to place some of the Irish revolutionary movements into a wider ideological framework.

A number of references to The Leinsters, are present tracing the regiment's antecedents, the relationship with the Militia battalions and its recruiting areas. The VC's won by members of the regiment are listed together with a brief summary of the deed done. The most significant Leinster artefact is a drum which is dated to about 1904 and incorporates the regimental badge with the honours, Niagara, Central India and South Africa 1900-02.

Soldiers and Chiefs is well worth going to see and needs a couple of hours to do it justice. There is a shop as well as a military book shop (closed at the time of my visit) together with a cafe on site.

Collins Barracks, formerly known as The Royal Barracks dates from 1702. The museum entrance is approached across the main colonnaded barrack



square where if you pause you seem to still hear the echo of bands, boots and barked commands; it is an atmospheric place.

You can reach the museum by bus or by taking the Luas from Abbey Street to Museum or by walking along the north side of the Liffey (allow about 30mins) Admission is free and the museum is closed on Mondays.

PLANNING A TRIP TO DUBLIN?

There is an amazing amount of information for tourists on the Internet. Not got a computer? No problem, visit your local library because they probably have Internet access that you can use.

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Ypres Last Post ceremony

Leinster Regiment Association at the Menin Gate



In what is understood to have been the first Lever St. Patrick's Day parade at the Menin Gate in Ieper, (Ypres) the Leinster Association was there to remember and honour the 50,000 Irish soldiers that died during The Great War.

On Saturday 17 March 2007 at 7pm representatives of the Association all resplendent in their caubeens, were privileged to be the only veterans who formed up on parade in Grot Markt in front of the historic Cloth Hall. From Grot Markt, and led by St. Joseph's Brass Band, from Strabane, Co. Tyrone, the parade marched around the Cloth Hall to St. Martin's Cathedral where a wreath was placed at the Munster Memorial.

OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

President: Major.General The O'Morchoe CB CBE

Chairman: Vincent McGough BA. MA

Vice Chairman: Comdt Mick McGoona

Secretary: David Ball Esq.

Treasurer: Harry Hogan Esq.

Quartermaster: Eddie Bryant Esq.

The Leinster Association veterans then marched through the town, along Meensestraat to the world famous Menin Gate; a memorial that has inscribed on its walls 54,896 names of the 300,000 or more servicemen who died without named or marked graves. The Menin Gate is probably the most solemn place in Ieper.

Association members Harry Hogan and Dave Ball presented the ceremony's buglers with Shamrock on behalf of the Leinster Regiment Association and at 8pm prompt the ceremony of the Last Post commenced. During the ceremony the following wreaths were laid, Leinster Regiment Mr George Ralph, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (London Branch) Mr John Reynolds, Royal Irish Regiment (18th Regt) Mr Edward Read and for the Combined Irish Regiments Association Mr Reginald Pearce.

Following the ceremony the parade marched back to Grot Markt where the Association members were fell out. Vincent McGough thanked the bandmaster, on behalf of the Leinster Association, for their choice of marching music and their excellent performance.

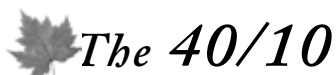
There were several poignant moments surrounding the event that will be forever remembered by those involved. It was the first parade at the Menin Gate that fell on St Patrick's Day and that the honour of being the veterans 'on parade' belonged to our Association; Ieper residents and visitors, many with small children, lined the route of the parade and applauded the veterans of the Association as they marched by; and the members of Irish families who whilst making their own pilgrimage to the Salient approached individual Association members to express their personal gratitude for the presence of the Leinster Regiment Association during the Last Post ceremony.

Where to find out more?

Visit the Associations website at
www.leinster-regiment-association.org.uk

SEND CORRESPONDENCE AND ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION TO

Don Dickson, MBA, FIHEEM, MCIM
Fir Trees, 12 Fryer Close, Chesham, Bucks, HP5
1RD, UK
Email: donATthe-dicksons.org



Journal of the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians) Regimental Association