



VOLUME 3 JULY 2009



The Royal British Legion (Ypres) has a new meeting place that many of our members will be familiar with. This is the bar t'Klein Rijsel next to the Ramparts Museum close to Lille Gate, Ieper.

Editorial

Welcome to the summer edition of 40/10, slightly late but I believe the content is worth the wait. Along with our usual updates this edition continues with our goals of delivering both the 19th and 20th century historical events that involved the men of the Regiment.

Two interesting and contrasting articles, Sergeant Arthur Franks and Lt. Barnett, recall the impact of WW1 on two soldiers, one an NCO and the other a junior officer, their writings bring to us their emotions and how they coped with what we now recognise as the trauma of battle injury,

On the home front in 1916 collective memory tends to think of the British Isles as a mixture of recruiting, training, supply lines and base hospitals treating injured soldiers sent back from the front, yet in one part of the British Isles the Leinsters were called upon to take on a peace keeping role in Dublin; the article about Private Moore tells some of that story.

Today there cannot be many of our readers who are not familiar with the tragedy of the conflict between Palestine and Israel that once were part of the Otterman Empire; the "Leinsters in Palestine" introduces us to the area with a review of the Regiment's involvement during the Great War.

Whilst the Association continues in our efforts to bring about the development of a memorial to the Regiment in Birr, we take time to tell the story of the renovation of Crinkle Military Cemetery and the Leinster Boer War Monument. We should not forget that were it not for the volunteers of Crinkle, what could be regarded as

PRINCE OF WALES'S

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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

In this issue

News from Birr	Page 2
Secretary's report	Page 3
Sgt. Arthur Franks	Page 4
Lt. Barnett, 2/Leinsters	Page 6
Pte Christopher Moore	Page 11
Leinsters in Palestine	Page 12
Your letters	Page 14 & 18
Crinkle Military Cemetery	Page 15
Leinster Regiment Memorial Fund (1954)	Page 16
Frederick Whirlpool V.C.	Pages 17
Researching Ancestors	Page 19
Q. M. Store	Page 20

the "Leinster's cemetery" may have disappeared altogether!

The story of Frederick Whirlpool VC, one the Regiment 's first recipients of the Victoria Cross and the recent challenge from a reader to provide some information about his father, Captain McCormick 3/Leinsters provide us with two more articles, that along with your letters etc. make up what I hope you find is another great issue.

Lastly, do send in your photographs and your own stories for publication, my address is on the back page.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

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

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

News from Birr

The year got off to a good start with the news that our friends in Birr library had won the prestigious Heritage Category in the annual LAMA (Local Authority Members Association) awards. The Association was pleased to provide a testimonial in support of the nomination and we send our congratulations to the library team at local and county level. There was stiff competition for this award and the success of Birr is a measure of the vision and hard work that has been put into creating the new library including the Leinster Collection.

We have recently learnt that Ms Mary Stuart has been appointed County Librarian in succession to Anne Coughlan. We offer our congratulations and good wishes to Mary on her appointment and the Association looks forward to continuing to develop the good relationship that we have with the Co Offaly Library service.

In the course of a visit to Birr during December your correspondent spent a busy day with Association President Maj-General The O'Morchoe during which contact was made with owners of the ground where we want to site the Regimental Memorial. We are pleased to report that our ideas received a positive response all round. We also took the opportunity to meet the outgoing County Librarian, Anne Coughlan, and to wish her well in her retirement. It is hoped that we will see Anne at future Association events in Ireland.

As ever Sean and Concepta Cooke made us very welcome and their knowledge of the area and people proved invaluable. As a side mission for the day the General had undertaken to locate the grave of an Indian Mutiny veteran, Lt-Col T B Hackett VC, late of the 23rd Foot (The Royal Welch Fusiliers) near Riverstown, Co Tipperary. Despite trusting an ex-gunner with matters of distance and direction we eventually found the remote country

churchyard!

Once again it was good to be able to attend the Royal British Legion, Dublin Central Branch, Christmas Social and catch up with friends and members of the association who turned out despite atrocious weather. A great time was had by all helped along with some virtuoso solo singing performances and plenty of pre Christmas cheer.

We continue to try and build on the goodwill that was created between Birr and Ledegem during the celebrations of last October. The most important element of this is the proposal to "twin" the two towns. The idea has been well received in Ledegem and is under discussion in Birr, where

it is fair to say the connection between the two towns is not as well understood as it is in Belgium. As part of this process the Association is arranging to invite civic and cultural representatives from Birr and Ledegem to London in June for the Combined Irish Regiments

Association parade and to Dublin in July for the Islandbridge Memorial event and The National Day of Commemoration. It is hoped that our friends from Belgium will be able to visit Birr as part of this trip.

Date for your diary. The Association is organising a lecture to be held in Birr Library in the afternoon of Saturday 26th September 2009. Full details will be published when they have been finalised.

Ian Lowe



*General The O'Morchoe and Sean Cooke
at the grave of Lt. Col. Hackett VC*

Events Calendar

2009

- July 11 Dublin Meeting
- Sep 19 London Meeting
- Sep 26 Birr Meeting
- Oct 10 IMOS Sphinx leper, Belgium
- Oct 11 Ledegem, Belgium
- Oct 12 Battlefield Tour
- Nov 5 Garden of Remembrance Westminster
- Nov 8 Remembrance Day Parade *
- Dec 12 Christmas Lunch**

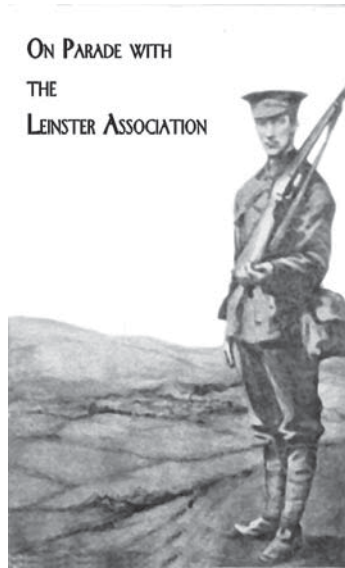
* Public event organised by others. See website for details.

** Meeting organised by Combined Irish Regiments Association

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Secretary's Report

Welcome to the latest edition of 40/10 and I hope it finds everyone well. I must begin my report by thanking all the members who attended the recent AGM, for the show of support not just to me, but to my colleagues on the management committee by returning us to our present committee status, and thank you for your kind comments and best wishes. The day was a great success and we were particularly pleased that our President, General David, was able to join us together with other members from near and far. Ian Lowe has "volunteered" to be Treasurer and will continue as co-editor of this journal and to carry out regimental research, as well as helping point members in the right direction with regard to their own research and questions.



I mentioned at the AGM that I have been very busy at work and had not been as quick off the mark recently with regard to answering emails and letters, for this, I can only apologise, so if I have not returned a call or replied to a letter, then please bear with me, or perhaps, just give me the 'heads up' again and I shall get to it.

I again attended the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (Merseyside) annual dinner held in Liverpool in February, and it was good to meet up with representatives of other Irish regimental associations as well as meeting members from this association who had travelled from other parts of the UK and Ireland, a good night was had by all.

The Association paraded with the Combined Irish regiments for the annual parade and wreath laying ceremony in Whitehall, as well as the annual parade and wreath laying ceremony at Ironbridge in Dublin. If any other member would like to attend the ceremonies held in Dublin over a weekend in mid July next year, would they please contact me, though I must add, you will have to make your own ticketing, travel and accommodation arrangements.

Planning the trip to Ieper and the IMOS lunch is under way and we will also pay a visit to our friends in Ledegem. Forms for provisional bookings have been sent to all members, just to give an idea of numbers wishing to attend, so if you have not completed this form, and you would like to go on the list, then please get cracking.

A quick word that some members have not renewed their annual subs. The annual subs help to pay for the 40/10 so if you know someone who is still to pay, please give them a nudge! Subscriptions should be sent to the Membership Secretary, Mrs. Sheila Dickson at the address shown on the back page. Finally I must thank those of you who have given donations to the Association over the last year, it is very much appreciated. These gestures of generosity help the Association immensely and help keep the subscription to a minimum. March on the Leinsters!

*Ah Dien
David*

Winter in Ypres

Walking on water!



Admittedly it is the frozen type of water and this photograph from Belgian member Bart D'Hulster reminds us how cold it can get in Ypres in January. Here we see Bart, who is the Leinster Ypres representative, standing on the frozen moat to the south of Ypres. (Ed. we also have a photo of him on a sledge but we spare his dignity!) Fun though this photo is, it is a reminder of how the the Flanders trenches froze in the winter.

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Arthur Franks & Jack Hayward

I am indebted to Dinah Cruse-Hunter from across the Atlantic for steering me in the direction of her grandfather's WW1 experience.

Canadian Jack Hayward was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hayward, of Toronto and Jack, a Leinster Regiment Boer War veteran, served in South Africa using the name Arthur Franks and was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal. When the Leinsters returned to England Jack took his discharge and returned to Canada, setting up home in Toronto where he married his wife Sadie. Of course we don't know why Jack joined the Leinsters though perhaps it is not unreasonable to conclude that the full title of the regiment, Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians) had some influence. One can only speculate how Jack came to terms with the fact that he had joined a regiment mostly recruited from the counties in Southern Ireland.

In Canada the call for volunteers, preferably ex-regulars or S African War veterans, went out on 11th August and the response was such that by 19th the battalion had mobilized, 1098 strong out of some 3,000 who had come forward from all over Canada. Some statistics of the so-called 'originals' are of interest: ninety percent were British born; 1049 had served with the colours and between them possessed 771 decorations/medals; 456 had seen war service. Jack Hayward duly and volunteered for service, joining the PPCLI as Regimental number 155 Private Arthur Franks. What makes Jack's WW1 experience so interesting is how his description of events, through his letters written home, can be compared with those of Lieutenant Barnett (see article on page 6). Jack does not pull any punches as he comes to terms

with the realities of trench warfare that is so different from his previous experience of war with the Leinsters in South Africa. Not for Jack the ideologies of fair play!

Using the War Diary of the 80th Infantry Brigade of the 27th Division of 2 Corps it is possible to piece together a few facts of Jack's preparation for War. The men of PPCLI joined 80th Infantry on the 20th November 1914 at Magdalen Hill, Winchester, Hampshire and together with the rest of the Brigade went into training prior to leaving for France. On the 16 December the 27 Division including the PPCLI was inspected by H.M. The King and on the 20th December the 80th Infantry marched from Winchester the 15 miles to Southampton via Otterbourne, Chandlers Ford and through Southampton to No.2 Dock Gate, completing the march in five hours thirty minutes. Departing Southampton on *The Cardiganshire* from berth 46 the PPCLI arrived in La Havre on the 21st December and moved into billets in the area around Lynde - Sercus - Balringhem. On the 4th January 1915 orders were given for the 2nd Corps to relieve the French 16th Corps and that the 27th Division was to take over from 32nd French Division. On the 5th January the PPCLI, as the advance guard of the 80th Infantry Brigade, marched to Meteren on the France/Flanders border. On the 6th January each man carrying 220 rounds of small arms ammunition, the PPCLI marched to a position half a mile S.E. of East of Dickebusch in Belgium and over the night of 6th/7th January moved into the trenches along the road Wytschaete to St. Elois where they would remain for 3 days.

The following is an extract from the "The Toronto Star", Tuesday Feb 2 1915.

Blown out of Trench

To be blown right out of a trench and survive was the unique experience of Sergeant Arthur Franks of the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry, who are now in the firing line in France.

Franks is an assumed name, his correct name being John (aka Jack) Frederick Hayward of 208 Clinton Street, where his wife and two children now reside. Sergeant Hayward was born in Toronto on Foxley Street. He assumed the name of Franks at the time of the South African War (Ed. 1900-1902 Boer War). When only a lad of about 17

years he went to England and enlisted under this name in "E" Company of the Leinster Regiment. He went through the South African War and received his discharge from the British Army. Then when the present war broke out he enlisted with the Princess Pats and went to England with that regiment, where he was made a sergeant prior to their



Sgt. Arthur Franks (aka Jack Hayward)
A photo post card. Jack is seated right

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

departure in December for France. He has since been in the trenches under heavy fire, and as he states in a letter to Mrs Hayward was blown out of a trench by the explosion of a German bomb. He was taken to a base hospital in France, and later to St. Mark's College Hospital, Chelsea, London where he is now recuperating. The letter dated France, January 11th follows:

"At last we have arrived at the place we were assigned to, and I am pleased to say had a crack at our foe. You can believe me when I say it is far from being a picnic. I had the pleasure, if you can call it so, of being blown right out of the trench by the explosion of a German bomb, and was very lucky that I did not get any more than a bad shaking up. We lost a few of the boys, but otherwise the regiment is doing well. Believe me it is not like any other place that I have been in, and until the present time we have had a little hell to contend with, as the enemy do not for a second consider the Red Cross, white flag or even our wounded. But I can assure you that they will get all that is coming to them. I may, if I am lucky, be sent to England for a week or two. They are treating us like gentlemen here. All our little wants are gratified".

Later on, at his arrival at St Mark's College Hospital, he writes in another letter *"It sure feels nice to be in between good clean sheets once more. If I were only strong enough to walk around, what a happy fellow I would be. I am getting everything one could wish for and also those things which go to make a man strong and well again".*

No doubt, like many soldiers writing home, Jack manages to hide much of the reality of trauma from his kin, though we can conclude that Jack would have received severe concussion and more than a little trauma. His sentence *"I am getting also those things which go to make a man strong and well again"* may or may not carry hidden meaning given that much electro-therapy was routinely applied to such victims when they returned for treatment in hospitals *"back in Blighty"*. That Jack worked to convince his wife Sadie that he was once more well can be seen in his message written on a photo-postcard of himself with two other soldiers, one his cousin Thomas Bridgeford, that he sent home. *"April 1915, Well, Sadie dearest, what do you think of me now. Not so bad for an old fellow eh? The very best of love to you dearest, Jack"*

Jack was apparently declared fit for duty and returned to his unit in Belgium as part of 27 Division, 80 Infantry Brigade. On the 1st May Jack's unit took up position in the area close to Hooge on the Ypres to Menin road, Jack's

unit being north of the Menin Road and in an area just to the east of what is now the Belleward Park and to the west of Westhoek. To the left of PPCLI were KOYLI and to their right the 4th KRR. Early on the 4th May 1915 the PPCLI moved into an advanced position some 600 yards further east, reaching their objective at 10am without incident and began to dig in; almost immediately the half dug trenches came under heavy shell fire and at 10.10am the O.C. of PPCLI sent a message to the

Brigade H.Q. advising his situation as very serious. In the shelling that ensued, a total of 250 soldiers of the 4/ KRR and PPCLI died in the half completed trenches. Later the 80 Infantry Brigade War Diary listed that for the PPCLI 3 officers and 93 other ranks were killed

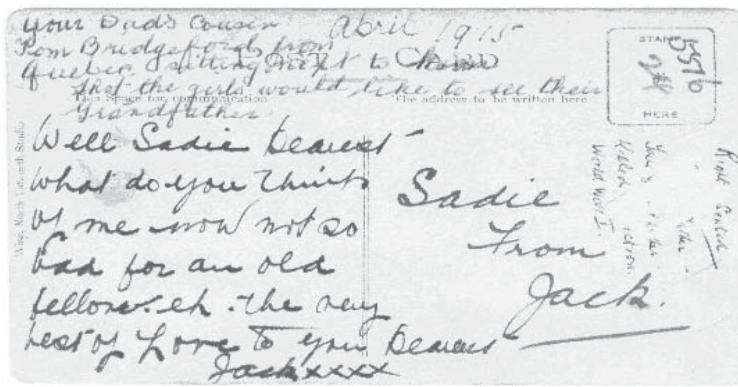
in action, 203 wounded and 79 men were missing in action. This time Jack did not make it and he was listed as killed in action on the 4 May 1915, he was 33 years old. With no known grave Jack is commemorated on Panel 10-58 of the Menin Gate in Ypres. **DD**

Sources:

- (i) Canada Archives RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 3271 - 32
- (ii) War Diary 80 Infantry Brigade, November 1914 Jan 1915
- (iii) The Toronto Star, Tuesday Feb 2 1915
- (iv) Personal correspondence sent by Jack to his wife Sadie
- (v) War Diary 80 Infantry Brigade, May 1915

Note:

The PPCLI was in the 27 Division as were the Leinsters, so the narrative of Jack Hayward would also be a fair representation of the experiences of Leinster soldiers



The message on the reverse of the photograph card sent by Jack to his wife Sadie (used with permission of Dinah Cruse-Hunter)

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

The letters of Lt. Barnett; 2/Leinsters

Thanks to a series of chance events and meetings your correspondent recently became aware of the letters of Lt D O Barnett of the 2nd Leinsters. We knew of Lt Barnett and that he was killed serving with the battalion at Hooze in August 1915, a fact recorded in both the regimental history and "Stand To" but otherwise you would be forgiven for passing on thinking that he was just another junior officer casualty of the Great War. However a little further work with a search engine revealed that after his death his family had privately published a collection of his letters and some other writings. These are now available as a download from the University of Toronto. The letters cover the period from September 1914 until mid August 1915 during which time he wrote almost daily to his parents and sometimes friends and run to over 230 pages. In many ways Denis Barnett epitomises a generation of bright idealistic young men that went off to war in 1914. To describe him as "young" is no exaggeration; he was 20 when he died. The letters do not add much to our knowledge of events at the time, locations are generally mentioned in the most vague terms and there are relatively few names. However, they do give us an insight into the mind of a young upper middleclass Englishman from the Home Counties who left what was assuredly a golden future and went to war with an Irish regiment.

The Debt of Honour Register tells us that Lt. Denis Oliver Barnett, "A" Coy. 2nd Leinsters was the son of Arthur and Annie Barnett of 42, Hammersmith Road, London, he died on the 16th August 1915, he was 20 and had gone "out" with the Artists Rifles in October 1914. The introduction to the published letters evidently

written by a family friend reveals a much more detailed story.

Denis Oliver Barnett, or "Dobbin" to friends and family, was born on the 30th April 1895. Apart from a brief period at Bedales School his early education took place at home in Isleworth and at Burnt Hill in Berkshire. In 1907 he entered St Paul's School where he enjoyed a glittering career. He became a Junior Scholar in 1908, a Senior Scholar in 1910; he played for the 1st XV for three years and captained the school for two. He won an Exhibition to Balliol College, Oxford at 17 1/2 and a Scholarship to the same college a year later. He was an accomplished classicist who wrote verse in Latin and Greek as well

as humorous verse in English (perhaps to fill in spare time!) He is described as being well built standing, over 6ft tall, and loving books without being "bookish". He enjoyed the country and was an accomplished rider, swimmer and shot. In short, a youth blessed with such talent that most of us can only dream of. He was due to go up to Balliol College in the autumn of 1914 but instead volunteered for the Artist's Rifles otherwise known as 28th Battalion, The London Regiment. The Artist's Rifles were an elite territorial unit that dated from 1859, taking their name from the fact that they originally drew many of their members from various branches of the performing and graphic arts. The battalion later became popular with ex-public school and university volunteers and quickly became a training unit for officers to fill the ranks of the rapidly expanding army. Reading these letters you are struck by the wonder and innocence

that they project and you are also left to speculate what his parents, particularly his mother, thought of them. The published letters start on October 26th 1914 with his battalion leaving Southampton for France. The following are themed extracts from the complete letters.

On leaving England for France.

26th October 6.35pm

Writing from Southampton platform. Off in about half an hour. We got our emergency ration – bully beef and dog biscuit. Had a triumphal journey here, and no end of fun. People gave us chocolates and tobacco. Everything is top-hole here, so please don't be fed up. I hope they won't make you pay postage! It takes about twelve hours to Harve, and we are probably going to garrison there for a bit. Any message for the



Belgian Government?

First impressions of life in billets in France.

A Barn, France Oct. 31st. ...

Here we've got lots of straw and are living like kings. We've seen – no, I must cut it out!

... I'm getting on awfully well with the language. There's a dear old she-farmer here who does lots for us. ... Do send me a letter some time and if you can some [there follows a list practical items including a torch, candles, matches etc] ... I wish I could tell you about the glorious things here! There are rats in the straw anyway, I stalked one with a bayonet in the night and I only just missed him.

... Please realise I'm as well and happy as I have ever been.

An ex-public school boy begins to mix with men from different backgrounds.

11th Nov.

... Life is all very nice, and not so cold. I've found lots of people I know a bit, and have got to know all sorts of strange beings, especially those in the Drain, [?] who are mostly bus-drivers, and nearly all very nice fellows.

14th Nov.

We've done some stout cooking in a mess tin, though we can't compare with these regulars, who pick up odd bits of wood at odd times, and have a fire going as soon as they halt, and things cooked in a few minutes. They are wonderful chaps, and really do command respect...

15th Nov.

... A regular said to me, 'Suppose a lot of them in there (our quarters) are gentlemen's sons?' I said I thought so. 'Expect they're all wishing they hadn't joined!' They (Regulars) can't see the eternal fun of the thing, though they'll put up with anything with perfect patience. ...

A sporting metaphor.

22nd Nov.

... You might send out my 12-bore, as there are lots of hoodies here that want killing! There is also a German species of dove among the local vermin, but is generally too high for a shotgun. We saw one dropped to-day. Please sent chocolate before anything else. Then peppermints. I shall want some more lined leather gloves soon.

On aeroplanes, spies and artillery.

27th Nov.

... We saw a magnificent fight between one of our airmen and a Taube, almost over our heads. The Englishman mounted to be the other machine's level, and opened fire with a machine-gun. He circled round and round him, firing while the Taube tried to mount and get away. After a bit the Taube did a volplane, and then pitched forward and went down like a plummet. We heard that the machine was hit in the engine, and the pilot was hit too. ... We've been having some real fun, but I suppose I mustn't tell

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

you about it. It's most exhilarating. ... The German aeroplanes all have their wings set back a bit and they have the black cross and eagle on them. Ours are straight and have union jacks. I don't know if any of this will be censored. I should like to tell you more. This is doing me no end of good, and I'm very happy.
28th Nov.

They caught two spies here, signalling to the Germans with a windmill!

At last I'm allowed to say a bit. We've had a little shell fire, but I found that it did not worry me. We were digging away, when there was a huge screech, and bang-bang-bang, three shrapnel shells burst about 150 yards away. ... The next day was clear, and the other half battalion was there. They caught it in very truth, but not seriously. The shells, shrapnel and coal boxes, were coming in by the dozen. One officer nearly got sniped. In fact the other half battalion had all the fun, and only lost two.

... P.S. Am taking commish. in regulars! WHAT?

At the OTU, a limerick and some front line experience.

2nd Dec.

... The jolly old King came to see us today. There was some pretty good cheering when he came through the square; and we were glad to see him. We're quite used to having the P-Wagger about. Sir J. F. came and spoke to us orficer-boys [sic] for a few minutes, so that's the second time that he has chose me to confer special honour on.

*There was once a Scotch colonel at Wipers
Who was worried by numbers of snipers.
But they curled up and died
When the Scotchmen replied
With 'Five bars rapid fire' from the pipers.*

20th Dec.

... If that sniper isn't careful he'll hurt someone. He has shots at the top of the parapet, and knocks earth into the bully beef.

We've had orders to get kits on and stand by. This was what I came out for: it's glorious.

3rd Jan.

... We've been warned that we may be detailed to Irish regiments. ... I shall want an officer's cap, haversack, prismatic compass in case, strong glasses in case, and Burberry. ... The last town we were in was a

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

howling wilderness, very properly known to the Tommies as 'Bally'ole' ...

Joining the Leinsters and first impressions.

Telegram St. Omer 9th Jan.

Commission second Leinsters arrive London Monday afternoon five days leave writing. Dobbin.

18th Jan.

... Thence we went to the companies- I've bought A.Coy. No 4 Platoon. ... Got an awfully good dug-out, where I met my Captain, who rejoices in the sterling name of Murphy, and a fellow sub., a Canadian and a perfect sportsman. Very much impressed with good organisation and discipline throughout.

19th Jan.

... These chaps write very touching letters of varying quality, but all gems of their kind. Some are extraordinarily funny. Apparently about half the regiment is called Paddy, and the other half Micky and they all write to Bridget! They are real performing Irishmen from Tipperary, Cork and so on. About 95% are from the Emerald Isle somewhere. They are very good men, and keep their rifles very well, and get themselves and their billets decent very quickly. ...

Life in and out of the trenches.

23rd Jan.

... This morning I took possession of a loophole and turned those wonderful glasses on to their parapet. With great difficulty I managed to make out a loophole, and then the background of it changed and I could see the field beyond, so I knew a head had been there. After a bit I went back, and the background was as originally. I fired at 450, and the background changed abruptly. The loophole has not been used since all day. ...

27th Jan.

I've been learning to throw hand-grenades, which are made of old jam tins, scrap iron and gun cotton, with a time fuse attached. The R.E. make them in their spare time. One of this type killed eight Germans and wounded twenty-two, so they are not bad things. ...

Dans les tranchées 3rd Feb

... Bullets are very much in evidence here, as they have a way of turning a machine gun on to the road after dark. Last time they did that the first bullet grazed the collar of my Burberry, and I was in the ditch pretty well before the next one arrived. I should think that some people would

have been rather winded, but a saving sense of humour prevents anything more than a moment of tense funk, after which the balance seems to right itself.

19th March.

... We spent St Pathrick's Day [sic] (I'm writing on the 19th) singing 'A Nation Once Again', firing volleys, shouting rude remarks, and having a cheery time. All this in the advanced trenches. We were shelled promptly, and cheered every shell. ...

28th March.

Enclosed is rayther [sic] a comic souvenir. When the Post Corporal was giving me a parcel, a half spent bullet hit plop in the middle of it. The said bullet proved on examination to have splintered the bull-eyes, gone through the chocolates and finally stuck in a bit of Turkish Delight which I send you exactly as I took it out of the packet. It's one of the funniest freak bullets I've ever seen or heard of.

P.S. The Post Corporal has just discovered that the bullet hit him in the breast pocket, tore across his pay-book and the front of his tunic and his sleeve, before it plopped into my parcel, so it is what you would call some bullet!

Dressing Station, 5th May.

I'm all right! I got a bit of a shell on the head yesterday evening. It would have hurt an ordinary wooden head but I was too good for it, and it only gave me a little cut. Got it tied up at once, had dinner, and then walked down here and saw the doctor. I'm going to the Field Ambulance to-day, probably for about two days, and then I shall return to duty.

Telegram from War Office. Received 8th May.

Regret to inform you that 2nd Lieut. D.O.Barnett Leinster Regt. Reported wounded 5th May nature and degree not stated Secretary War Office.

6th May.

Back to the army again! ...

The reality of war.

7th May.

Murphy died last night. (Capt. E H Murphy) he was the living force at the heart of everything here, and I owe everything to him from the beginning. Sorry, but I can't write a letter. My head is quite all right.

12th May.

I've just heard Kenneth is dead. Kenneth was a good boy and I'm sure he died just as he lived, and no one could better that. I've written to his people. This is the first time the war has hit me hard. Cheer up, my very dears, Kenneth's all right. He'll carry on. It would take more than that to stop him.

Of course I've got a bit gone, but I'm healed, and can carry on, and do better work. It is only the selfish part of us that goes on mourning. The soul in us says 'sursum corda'. [Lift up your hearts]

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

I've looked at death pretty closely and I know what it is. A man is called away in a moment and goes before God. Kenneth went as we know him, the boy we are proud of. Think of him as he is, and the grief slips off you.

Letter to a friend. 4th June.

I want to ask a great favour of you. We've moved away from our old place two days' march to this part of the world – the gas area. And I don't want my people to know I've moved away from the comparatively peaceful quarter of the globe, because they'd be horribly anxious all the time, and there would be nothing gained. So I want to write to you about things that happen 'ita ut' [In order that] you don't give the show away, or let them suspect I'm anywhere but down in the old Kentucky home. I'm afraid I'm asking you to practice deceit, but I do hope you won't mind doing this. Of course if anything happens to me my people would like to see the letters, and there would be no reason why they shouldn't. I hope they won't be awfully fed-up at the dirty trick I'm playing on them – anyway I'm going to try and save them a lot of unnecessary and useless pain. ...

8th June.

... if you don't know them, find an opportunity of looking up some South Irish tunes, things like 'A Nation once again' and any of the light stuff like 'Come back to Erin', and The Mountains of Morne'. You'll be surprised how good they all are.

You wis askin [sic] about my Iron Cross—all I know is that I was recommended for something, don't know which of them. It was for carrying some wounded machine-gunners out of a farm that was being shelled. I think they all died so it was a wash-out.

... I'm most amazing fit and happy.

Letter to a friend. Support Trenches 10th June.

Last night I had a digging party out in the heaviest fire I've ever worked under at night. It was simply inexplicable that I had no one hit, as the bullets came along all the time two or three a second over the ground we were working on. One went through the baggy part of my Burberry and hit a man's spade just behind me. ... When I was coming back, I got into an awful hornets nest of bullets. They were smacking into the barbed wire posts all around me, and one whizzed under my nose and went plop into a man twenty yards beyond me ...

They are shelling the front trenches a bit now, and it will probably be our turn next. Can't say that I mind it very much now. When other people get hit, it doesn't seem to apply to you at all after you've been through it a bit. You begin to think they'll never get you.

17th June.

The programme is this: digging from 10 till breakfast at 2 (because we are not allowed fires in the day so as not to give the trench away to the Allymans, who know perfectly well, and have registered their guns on it) 2.30 to 6 work on the trench. Then we sleep till about mid-day and have lunch. Then boredom till dark ...

Letter to a friend. Supports. 24th June.

... I'm not alone in my dislike of these long-range bullets, after three solid weeks of this futile life in support trenches, with no interest to take your mind off as you have in the front line. ...

There's some chance of leave for me in a month or two, I hope I get it, as I think it would do me good. I'm getting rather apathetic about things just now, as they are so dull. Sorry to grouch.

Billets 26th June.

Thank you most awfully for the army corps of Woodbines. I've never in my life seen so many at one time; and the men will exchange their boots (and someone else's) for a packet of ten of these delicacies. You can't imagine what pleasure you've vouchsafed the B.E.F. There was an issue of the French commodity this morning; but to judge by the noises that followed the first instants of combustion it seems that the tobacco stores had amalgamated with a stink-bomb depot ...

Letter to a friend. Billets. 14th July.

... A very great friend of mine, Young was hit the day before yesterday, and has gone home. Since then two more of our officers have been slightly wounded. There's now one officer in the companies who was here when I came. Thirty odd have gone West in one way or another.

14th July.

... I've heard about Young's effort. He got a shrapnel bullet nicely through the shoulder, and insisted on walking round the line to say good-bye to everyone before starting for the dressing station. There was no despondency there. He'll get a good holiday which he's earned if anyone did. (Lt. G N G Young died of these wounds on the 25th July 1915)

19th July.

I've got two bits of news. One of which you'll be pleased to hear and the other perhaps not. I've been made Battalion Bomb Officer with a command of some 140 dangerous criminals besides my own platoon. I'm awfully glad to get this job, as I love training men for the game. The second bit of news is not so exciting. I shall arrive in London on the morning of the 26th inst., but that won't interest you!

Bivouac. 8th August.

They've made me a buck lieutenant, as you may have seen ...

10th August.

... The Allymans smothered the road and communications with shrapnel all night, and I tell you there have been times when I've been less afraid. I think it is the hottest time I've

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

10

ever had. To start with: we were waiting in the trench for instructions, and I was between two sappers who were both killed by shrapnel. That was a good beginning; and it was all like that, for three hours. ... I got buried by a six-inch crump at one stage of the proceedings, and those big fellows combined with shrapnel aren't much fun. However we won easily. I only lost three men, and we got home all right 'tho they shelled us most of the way. My party were working for a long time in the crater, which is a good sized Chaos by itself, and not too salubrious.

We were incredibly lucky in not getting wiped, but even as it was it might have been more amusing. I'm glad to say everyone was behaving very well, and the stretcher-bearers were splendid.

13th August.

Herewith shoulder-strap from Hooge crater. Don't tell the policeman. All OK. Best love!

Telegram from War Office. 18th August.

Regret to inform you that Lieut. D O Barnett, Leinster Regt. Reported wounded 15th August further particulars will be telegraphed when received. Secretary War Office.

Telegram from War Office. 20th August.

Deeply regret to inform you that Lieut. D O Barnett, Leinster Regt. Died of wounds 16th August. Lord Kitchener expresses his sympathy. Secretary War Office.

Thanks to Capt. Frank Hitchcock's diary "Stand To" we can fill in a little of the missing detail quoting entries for the 15th and 16th August.

15th August.

... Barnett got a bullet through the stomach when he was guiding a working party of 1st North Staffords along the Menin Road. ...

16th August.

Barnett died of his wounds. The Doctor told us that he stuck his wound splendidly, and that men who were only hit in the arms and legs were groaning all round him in the dressing station. Barnett had a presentiment that he would get killed, and told us so when we got orders for Hooge. ...

Reading these remarkable letters you are struck by the fact that this young man had packed more experience into 20 years than most of us would in several lifetimes and that his achievements were entirely in keeping with the motto of his old school.

"Fide et Literis"

IL

Sources.

Our thanks to David Ball for finding these letters on the internet at <http://www.archive.org/details/denisoliverbarne00barnuoft>

The full title of the book is :- "Denis Oliver Barnett: In happy memory: his letters from France and Flanders, October 1914 – August 1915"



Hooge Crater today

RBL in Ieper (Ypres)

The Ypres branch of the Royal British Legion has moved its centre of operation from the Church Hall of St George's Chapel to the Cafe t'Klein Rijsel in Lille Street. This is the bar that contains the Ramparts Museum immediately to the rear of Ramparts CWGC. Both are situated next to the famous Lille Gate entrance to the town..

Members of the Branch can usually be found in the bar every Friday evening. Please contact the Secretary John Sutherland before you arrive to ensure we are aware of your visit. Tel 0032(0)57365152

The bar is closed on Wednesdays and Thursdays

Remembering 2496 Pte. Christopher Moore



“Easter Uprising.” Image. Getty Images.
History Study Centre.

or the other theatres normally associated with that war. The Easter Rising of 1916 brought Dublin a taste of the death and destruction experienced by some European towns and cities during the same era, indeed I have seen photographs of Sackville/O’Connell Street after the fighting of 1916 that resemble those of Ypres of the same period.

It is often overlooked that most of the troops available in the city at the outbreak of the rising were drawn from the militia and home service battalions of the Irish regiments, although they were later reinforced by troops brought in from England who had to fight their way into the city sustaining heavy casualties. Whatever you might think of the rights and wrongs of the situation it is significant that these Irish troops stayed loyal to their oath even though in some cases they would have been fighting on the streets of their native city and even possibly against people known to them. One such would have been 2496 Pte. Christopher Moore serving with 5/Leinsters, at the time stationed at the Curragh.

By the evening of the first day of the rebellion the 262 men of 5/Leinsters were on their way to Dublin, first being sent to Dublin Castle before being deployed down Dame Street to clear the Tara Street to Westmoreland Street area. During these operations the battalion suffered its only fatal casualty, Private Christopher Moore who was buried in the Provost’s Garden of near by Trinity College. Private Moore was 28, a native of Dublin and was at home recovering from wounds sustained while serving with the 2nd Battalion at Hooge in 1915. He was buried alongside Private Arthur Smith of 4th (Queen’s Own) Hussars and a headstone erected by the OTC of Trinity College marked each grave.

Both graves were later moved to Grangegorman Military Cemetery and the original markers lay forgotten

Two worn and long forgotten memorial stones have recently come to light in Dublin which remind us that not all battle casualties of the Great War period occurred on the Western Front

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Sackville Street 1916, looking more like Ypres than Dublin



in the garden until their recent rediscovery. The stone relating to Pte Smith has been replaced by a new one commissioned

by the present day Queen’s Royal Hussars which incorporates the former Queen’s (Royal Irish) Hussars.

The Leinsters remained in Dublin throughout the rebellion being deployed on the north side of the Liffey during the latter stages of the fighting and were in the Caple Street area at the time of the final surrender of the rebels on the 1st May 1916.

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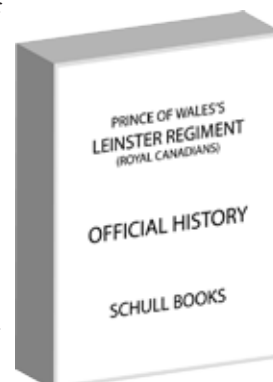
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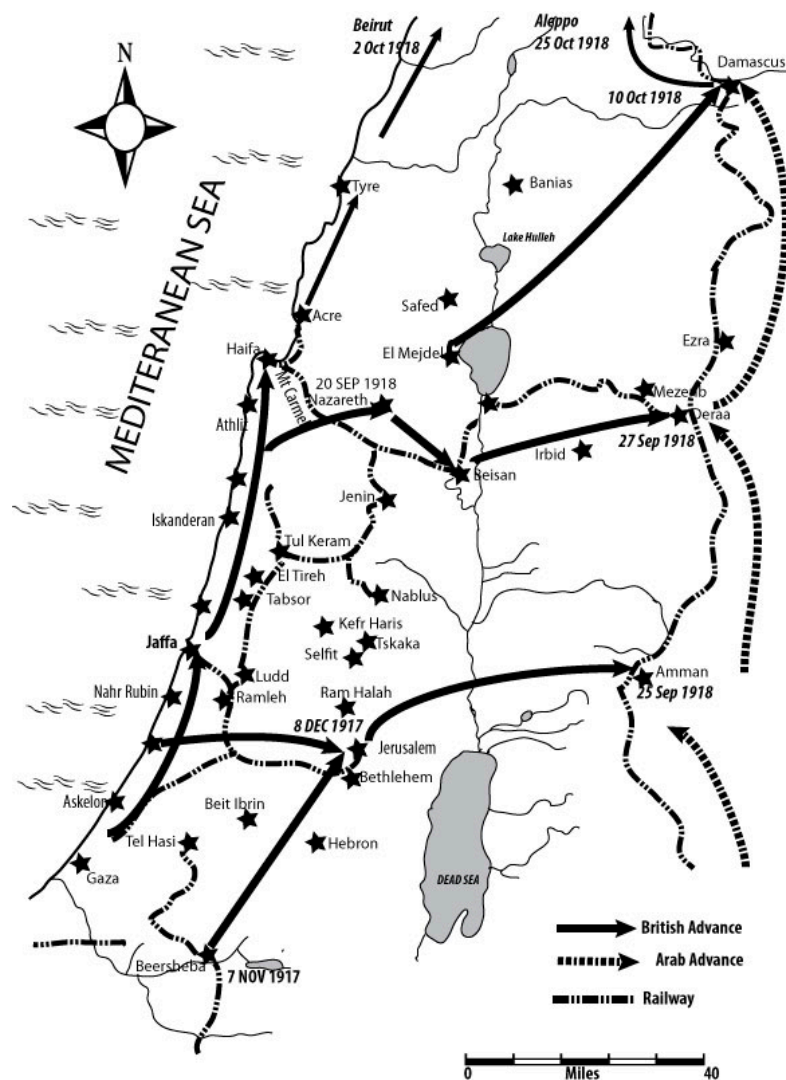
LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Leinsters in Palestine

Such is the focus on the Western Front theatre of operations during the Great War that it is sometimes easy to forget the so-called sideshows that needed large numbers of troops deployed at the end of long lines of communications requiring a disproportionate amount of logistical effort to support them. One of these theatres was Palestine and is now better remembered for the exploits of Lawrence of Arabia than for the grinding campaign conducted by more conventional forces over a period of more than three years. There was a strand of opinion held by many armchair strategists and some politicians like Lloyd George and Churchill that the war could be won by first picking off Germany's allies, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey. Defeating these belligerents would stretch Germany's resources and weaken her resolve thus reducing the need for costly assaults on the Western Front. Operations against these countries would also help to support an ailing Russia by reducing pressure on the Eastern Front and enable supplies to be delivered through warm water ports as well as securing access to the Caspian and Middle Eastern oil fields. It is interesting to reflect that similar strategic thinking by Churchill at times caused the despair of his generals during the 2nd World War and led to the Italian campaign and other adventures that tended to dissipate Allied resources from the fundamental task of attacking the German homeland.

The 1st and 6th Leinsters arrived in the Palestine sideshow from another, Macedonia, in September 1917 as part of the 10th (Irish) Division. 6/Leinsters were an original component of the Division and were joined by the 1st Battalion in the 29th Brigade in Macedonia during November 1916. 1/Leinsters had first arrived in theatre with 27th Division in November 1915

having previously served on the Western Front. The 10th (Irish) Div was in a poor state of health when it arrived in Palestine having been badly affected by malaria while serving in the Struma Valley area of Macedonia. The newly appointed C in C, Egyptian Expeditionary Force, General Sir Edmund Allenby was recommended to let the division have three months out of the line to recuperate. Allenby, an experienced commander of Irish troops, being ex Inniskilling Dragoons and 'Shiny Fifth', decided that the best interests of all would be served if they were put straight into training. As if to prove the point the ANZAC military police had problems controlling the boisterous Irishmen during their short time in Ismailia which included two of their



Overview of British Operations

number ending up in the Suez Canal. So it was probably to the relief of all concerned that the division including 1st and 6th Leinsters marched off to play their part in the 3rd Battle of Gaza initially as part of Army Reserve at Rafa on the left of the line, only a few miles from the coast and later as part of XX Corps on the right of the

line.

The 3rd Battle of Gaza was to be launched along a 30-mile front between Gaza on the coast and Beersheba. The plan was that once the wells near Beersheba were captured a cross-country advance would be made on Jerusalem. The politicians were anxious to occupy Jerusalem before the end of 1917 to help assuage domestic public opinion that was in sore need of some good war news after a year that had included the disappointments of Arras, 3rd Ypres and Cambrai. To the many devout soldiers of 10th (Irish) it may have seemed that they were serving some higher purpose by liberating the bible lands as they contemplated the capture of places intimately associated with their faith. Before the attack 1st and 6th Leinsters had been detailed to operate the water supply arrangements for XX Corps. This involved the use of a large number of camels each carrying two 15 gallon tanks know as 'fanatis'; a total of 34,000 of these tanks were handled by the battalions¹. The attack was launched on the 26th October with a feint along the coast followed by a flanking movement launched by mounted Yeomanry and Australian Light Horse units to take the Turks by surprise and deny them the opportunity of destroying the wells north of Beersheba. The 10th (Irish) Div. remained in Corps reserve during the initial stages of the battle with the two Leinster battalions continuing the unglamorous but vital task of keeping the water supply going as the battle moved northwards. The regimental history comments;

'For twenty-four consecutive hours there was a constant stream of camels past our camp on the second day, with dust, smell of camels and shouts of "gyppy" drivers. Thousands of horses came back to water, most of them mad with thirst'.²

On the 6th November the battalions were relieved and re-joined their brigade as it took part in the march towards Jerusalem some 40 miles northeast of Beersheba. The sort of warfare that followed was quite unlike anything experienced at that time on the Western Front with daily movement and at night time bivouacking along the line of march. The 'old sweats' of 1/Leinsters would have been accustomed to doing so from Indian days but it would have been a new experience to the new boys of the 6th battalion. During subsequent operations, notably the capture of the Herrera Redoubt by 2nd Faughs of 31 Brigade, 29 Brigade with its two Leinster battalions were in support. The capture of 'Hairy' Redoubt marked the end of 3rd Gaza and the start of the Turkish retreat towards Jerusalem. It is worth remembering that throughout this campaign the Turkish Army was supported to a considerable degree by German units,

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

particularly artillery.

The remainder of November was spent marching forward or at rest in the role of XX Corps reserve. On the 5th December the Leinster battalions moved into the line west of Jerusalem to hold the attention of the Turks while other units went about the capture of the holy city. In deference to the special status of



Beersheba 1917 before its capture.

the city General Allenby had decided to manoeuvre the Turks out of Jerusalem rather than make a direct assault and it surrendered to the Allies without a shot being fired on the 10th December. The following day Allenby and his entourage entered the city humbly on foot as pilgrims rather than conquerors in studied contrast to the Kaisers flamboyant entry on a white charger in 1898. Thus ended over seven centuries of Muslim rule of Jerusalem and the politicians back home had their 'feel good' Christmas present for the public.

The following days were spent consolidating the positions, improving roads and bringing up supplies in preparation for the next phase of operations which would take the Leinsters off the plains and into the Judean hills which consisted of ranges of steep sided hills cut by deep valleys. Christmas Day 1917 was a miserable one for all concerned with torrential rain and low temperatures. The experiences of 6/Leinsters are described as follows;

'The rain, commencing at early dawn, continued in torrents all day until the late evening, and the flimsy bivouac was poor protection. By superhuman efforts on the part of the supply columns a mail was delivered at about 11 am, the parcels in which helped

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

to fill any aching voids caused by the washing of dinners into the wadi³.

No doubt family at home in bleak and cold December Ireland or Britain imagined their loved ones sunning themselves under palm trees!

The next phase of the advance was delayed by the appalling weather and was due to start on the 27th December with the 10th (Irish) Div striking northeast towards the Nablus Road. The task of 29 Brigade including the two Leinster battalions was to seize a 'commanding ridge' running westward from the village of Deir Ibzia, about 25 mile north-west of Jerusalem, to a feature known as 'the Hump'. This involved attacking up a steep rocky slope in the face of machine gun fire from well dug in positions. B Company worked its Lewis guns forward to give covering fire so that D Company could attack with the bayonet. Meanwhile the remainder of B Company was advancing up the slope to an intermediate crest that was secured by 8.15am. The assault on the final objective revealed another machine gun position which was silenced by Capt Murray and his batman who killed the gunners and took 15 prisoners. According to the Regimental history they had 'grown tired of liaison work'; Capt Murray was supposed to be with the R A Forward Observation Officer. By 9am 1/Leinsters were on top of the 'Hump' and went on to assist the neighbouring units, 6/Leinsters and 5/Connaught Rangers, who had been held up, to attain their objectives. The Leinsters incurred about 30 casualties in this action while inflicting about 100 on the enemy and capturing a quantity of equipment. Among the booty were two Maxim machine guns, which were taken into service by the Battalion and used for the rest of the war. This action known to history as 'The Defence of Jerusalem' actually pre-empted a Turkish counter attack and marked the end of any realistic hope the enemy had of regaining the city.

The politicians in London sensed an opportunity to exploit success and knock Turkey out of the war, counting on a domino effect to occur with Bulgaria and Austria and demanded a swift follow up. Everyone's favourite trouble-shooter General Jan Smuts was dispatched from London to access and report on the situation. He broadly endorsed

Allenby's plan which was to consolidate his position, improve his communication and supply situation before resuming the offensive. When this process was completed Allenby planned to attack on the costal plain with XXI Corps, through the Judean hills with XX Corps and with the Desert Mounted Corps operating between the two. On the eastern flank of the operations Lawrence's Arab irregular force would harris the Turkish communications along the Hejaz Railway. However, before this scheme could be put into operation the Germans launched their March offensive on the Western Front bringing to a head the simmering manpower crisis in that theatre. As a result, two of Allenby's British divisions returned to Europe and 10th (Irish) was turned into an Indian division retaining only three Irish battalions, 1/Royal Irish, 1/Leinsters and 2/Faughs. The remaining battalions were shipped back to the Western Front to help replace the losses of March and April. 6/Leinsters left the division in May 1918 and were eventually disbanded in France during September 1918.

So ended the story of the 10th (Irish) Division, following its history you are left with the feeling that it never got over the debacle of Sulva Bay and being pitched headlong and ill prepared into Macedonia. It was one of the first new army divisions and through bitter experience learnt lessons that helped later formations avoid some of their misfortunes. Inevitably all these changes took time to settle down and Allenby was not ready to resume the general offensive until the middle of September.

Your letters

Dear Sir,

I have just been sent a photograph of 7 soldiers with the title 'C Coy. 2nd Leinsters. Winners. Brigade Shooting Competition (Date is unclear). Would the Association have a copy of this photo?

Brian Fitzsimons



This is not one of the photographs that we have in our collection. After examination we think the photograph was taken in Colchester in 1920 when the 2/Leinsters produced an outstanding rifle team that achieved considerable success in the Army competition at Bisley.

Crinkle Military Cemetery

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Crinkle Barracks, as every Association member will know, was the Depot of the Leinster Regiment following the creation of the regiment as part of the Caldwell reforms of 1868; however the barracks were built before then in 1855 and were subsequently considered to be a classic example of a well constructed Victorian barracks. The population of the barracks, with its transient soldiers, dwarfed that of the village and as a community the barracks had its own church and cemetery. Whilst little of the barracks remain, the cemetery has outlived them all and visitors to Crinkle, a small village just outside Birr, Co. Offaly, have the opportunity to visit the military cemetery; a place of calm and tranquillity, and perhaps to take a moment to pay respects to those soldiers of long ago. But it was not always so and when the barracks was dismantled the cemetery over time started to succumb to the relentless march of nature and for some considerable time, neglect. *(Ed. So much so that when I first visited Crinkle in 1990 I drove right past it thinking it was waste ground!)*

It seems to have taken the intervention of a Yorkshire-man, Fred Hollywood, who after living and working in Limerick for thirty years, moved in 1997 to Crinkle to his new home opposite the cemetery. If you have ever known a Yorkshire-man then you will know only too well that "bluntness" is a county trait and soon Fred was invoking his natural "Yorkshireness" by proclaiming the condition of the cemetery was a blight upon the community and that renovation was called for. In Fred's own words *"I was so shocked that I decided to attempt to clean the cemetery up. It was dreadful to see it in such a lamentable condition"*

In August of 1997 after obtaining permission from the owners and a number of Government Departments Fred started on what turned out to be a huge undertaking for one person. Often it looked as if this was a mountain that was too high and difficult to climb, but Fred persevered

and approached the Crinkle Tidy Villages who provided much needed help in the form of clearing paths, felling dead trees and burning the resulting pile of branches and shrubbery. Part of the clean up involved the cutting down quite a number of trees (apparently some were specimen trees) earning Fred the sobriquet "Chainsaw Fred".

Funding was needed for the more costly aspects of the project and after making enquiries with the Royal British Legion (Ireland) discovered that the Southern Area Chairman (at that time) Ian Lyon was a trustee of the Leinster Regimental Trust Fund, a charity established by the original

Association. Mr Lyon provided advice and encouragement for this project as also did Major Grogan, Administrator RBL, Southern Area and with their help further donations were made by various Regimental Associations.

Now the local community also moved into gear when a substantial donation was made by the Birr Lions Club, and others provided material support to renovate the monuments in the cemetery. The impressive monument now just inside the gate of the cemetery was erected originally in front of the old Crinkle Barracks Chapel and subsequently moved to its present location. This monument was erected to the memory of the officers

and men of the Leinster Regiment who died during the South African Campaign 1900-02 (The Boer War). By 1997 the memorial was in a very bad state so cleaning and re-lettering was undertaken by Carrols Sculptors of Birr. The Gates were also taken down, refurbished and re-erected by "Gleasons of Birr" who also repaired some of the broken cast iron crosses.

Fred estimates there are about 250 – 300 graves in the cemetery dating from 1855 to 1922, although sadly only 50 headstones now remain. Buried in the military cemetery are soldiers, their wives and children from a number of Regiments. Many of the headstones carry no Regiment identification though, on balance, it is thought that the Leinsters will be in the majority. Fred believes that some of the people buried here still have



Crinkle Military Cemetery

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION



The Leinster Regiment Boer War Memorial

relatives living locally but he is not really sure about this. The records that are currently available relate to only 128 persons.

In 2003/2004 the sixth form of Crinkle National School surveyed the cemetery and transcribed all the remaining headstones and recorded their position. This information is now publicly available on a specially erected information board adjacent to the former entrance to the barracks. The first recorded headstone dated from 1855, the daughter of a Sgt. Major Biggins and the last, the young daughter of John Kerrigan, was in 1921. Of the 128 known graves, thirty-two are for females, eighty-one for males and fifteen cannot be determined. Sixty-nine graves contain adults; the remainder are of children, the youngest being just 1 day old and the oldest just nine years of age. Clearly within the barrack community child mortality, as a percentage of the total, was extremely high at 46% over the sixty-six year period, however, high though the number seems by today's standards it was on a par with the rates revealed in contemporary academic research¹. Today the cemetery is still maintained by Crinkle Tidy Villages and amongst those stalwart volunteers who still cut the grass paths

is our own Sean Cooke who has been involved in the renovation and upkeep of the cemetery since 1998. The maintenance continues to be time consuming and mostly involves the trimming of the grass and maintaining the pathways around and the cemetery. **DD**

Sources

¹*Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750 -1950, Ed. F.M.L. Thompson, Volume 2, p27 Cambridge University Press*
Midland Tribune 11 Sep 1999
Personal correspondence with Ian Lyon

The 1954 Leinster Regiment Memorial Fund

Ed: Whilst researching the preceding article about Crinkle Cemetery the question of the original Regimental Memorial Fund arose and at my request Leinster Association member Mr Lyon very kindly provided the following information.

Provided by Mr. Ian Lyon

Some brief background to the Leinster Regiment Memorial Fund established by the original Leinster Regiment Old Comrades Association. In a Charity Commission Scheme dated 19th November 1954 it states re Trustees 'Two by the Committee of The Leinster Regiment Old Comrades' Association and one by the body corporate called the British Legion.

On the 19th August 1965 a further Scheme was issued stating 'shall be administered by two Trustees appointed by the British Legion. (I suspect this was due to a shortage of Old Comrades). I was appointed a Trustee mid 1996 together with a Miss Beverley Green (now Mrs. Davies).

As there had been no call on the Memorial Fund for some long period, and it was believed highly unlikely that any further calls for assistance would be received, the Charity Commission agreed that the Fund should be 'disbanded' in 2000. The balance of the Fund (Sterling £4996.37) was transferred to the Irish National War Memorial Management Committee and 'ring fenced permanently for the upkeep of the Regimental Cemetery of The Leinster Regiment'.

Frederick Whirlpool VC

Frederick Whirlpool was awarded his VC during the Indian Mutiny while serving with the 3rd Bombay Fusiliers for bravery at the storming of the central Indian city of Jhansi on the 3rd April and for further valour at the battle of Lohari on the 2nd May 1858. The 3rd Bombay Fusiliers became the 109th Regiment of Foot when the East India Company Army was absorbed into the British Army and subsequently became 2nd Battalion The Leinster Regiment.



Fortress city of Jhansi

There is a fair amount of mystery attached to Whirlpool's background. It seems that he was born Frederick Conker, the son of a Major Conker who was postmaster at Dundalk although Frederick was born in Liverpool in 1829. Following a disagreement with his father he enlisted in The East India's Companies Army at Glasgow in 1854 using the name of 'Frederick Whirlpool'. He arrived in Bombay in March 1855 and became 2200 Pte Whirlpool in the 3rd Bombay Fusiliers.¹

In late 1857 the regiment became part of the Central India Field Force under the command of Sir Hugh Rose, one of the columns mobilised to restore order after the outbreak of the mutiny at Meerut in May 1857. The mutiny had started among Indian troops believing that their religious



Battlements of Fort Jhadi as they are today

sensibilities were being ignored. In truth, the real reasons were much more complex and the superficial causes

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

tapped into a deep well of resentment against British attitudes towards local religions, customs and institutions. The result was an uprising that initially caught the authorities unprepared and was



*Rhani of Jhansi
to some a Jezebel and to
others a "Joan of Arc"*

characterised by episodes of barbarity towards Europeans including women and children that were forever to influence relationships between India and Britain. It should be remembered that many of the native Indian units and states stayed loyal and did not join in the mutiny; indeed some took an active

part in its suppression. The authorities gradually regained control by sending a number of field forces through the countryside seeking out and defeating the rebel forces and capturing their strongholds. This process was carried out with great rigour and bloody revenge was exacted for the mutineer's earlier atrocities. By our standards numerous 'war crimes' were committed by both sides. Those committed by the British are perhaps more difficult to understand as they claimed the moral high ground in terms of 'civilisation' and a Christian mission. There was wide spread revulsion at the treatment of women and children by the rebels and in consequence there was a visceral call for revenge. It was against this background that Frederick Whirlpool and his comrades found themselves laying siege to the citadel of the Rani of Jhansi popularly known as 'the Jezebel of India'² The fortress city built upon a rocky outcrop was the scene of atrocities against British civilians at the start of the mutiny.

The Central India Force laid siege to the fortress held by some 11,000 well-equipped rebels using methods that would have been recognised by medieval soldiers. First the city was surrounded, and then artillery was brought up to bombard chosen parts of the wall while trenches were dug forward to give protection to the attacking infantry. To add to Rose's difficulties a relief force of rebels was threatening his rear and he had

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

18



Whirlpool's VC is housed in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra

to detach part of his force to deal with them. Finally on the 2nd April 1858 it was judged that it was practical to storm the city. Men of the 86th Regiment (later the Royal Irish Rifles) and 3rd Bombay Fusiliers led the way up the scaling ladders, into the fortress and captured the palace. Heavy street fighting continued until the next day with no quarter being given 'even to women and children'³. Dr Lowe, a witness to these events, tells us that 'those of the rebels who could not escape threw their women and babes down wells and then jumped down themselves'⁴. In addition to the slaughter, general looting took place on a grand scale. In the midst of the chaos the Rani made her death defying escape on horseback and lived to fight another day. It is interesting to note that with the exception of an oblique reference to looting the regimental history omits to mention any excesses although it refers to rebels fighting to the death. It was against this background that Frederick Whirlpool was awarded his Victoria Cross for rescuing wounded men at Jhansi and again a month later at the battle of Lohari during which he received a reported 17 wounds. Not surprisingly a long stay in hospital was followed by his discharge from the army and he then immigrated to Australia, where he was when his award was gazetted in October 1859. His was the first VC to be awarded on Australian soil when Lady Barkly, wife of the Governor of

Victoria, presented him with the medal in October 1861.

As is often the case the remainder of Frederick Whirlpool's career was something of an anticlimax. He seems to have changed his name again to Frederick James and to have joined the Victoria Police before becoming a schoolmaster, a career that appears to have petered out. He became a recluse and died in Windsor, New South Wales in June 1899. His Victoria Cross has survived and is displayed in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Sources.

1. *Liverpool Heroes* Don Allerston.

2, 3 & 4. *Battles of the Indian Mutiny*, Michael Edwards.

Your letters

Dear Editor. My grandfather was Colour Sergeant William Bill and I was lucky to find his army records at the Kew National Archives in London. not just the Attestation Papers but 36 pages in all. Fourteen pages relating to Leinsters service and 22 to WWII service in the TA (Hampshires and later Gloucesters). In addition I have two pages relating to his service in the RIC, he enrolled 30 Nov 1920 after completing his 21 years in the Leinsters and served until the disbandment of the RIC in 1922. Among the WWII papers is a record of a medical examination in 1942 (age 63) where the Medical officer says "I have examined this ancient warrior...." !!

I also have a photo of Crinkle Barracks size 240mm x 175mm.

My great-grandfather James Bill, was also a regular soldier and was stationed at Crinkle from about 1878 to 1882. He was invalided out with a stroke/heart problems and died, aged 42 in 1892. There is no record of his burial in Clonagher Cemetery, Birr and I suspect that he might be buried in the Crinkle Barracks cemetery.

Dennis Bill

Hello Dennis, this is a great example of what can be found at TNA. There is an article about Crinkle Military Cemetery on page 15. I have checked the list of headstones but unfortunately there is no surviving headstone for C/Sgt William Bill

Researching Ancestors

As part of our series focused on tracing former soldiers of the Regiment we are publishing as a case study the outcome of an enquiry received via the Association web site. This example shows how difficult it can sometimes be.

Dear Sirs,

Could you please advise me as to how to find out details of my father's time with the regiment. He served in the first world war, was wounded at I think Gallipoli, for we have photos of captured Turks. Name: Capt J E McCormick. Born Blackrock, Co Dublin

Yours in hope. Mike McCormick.

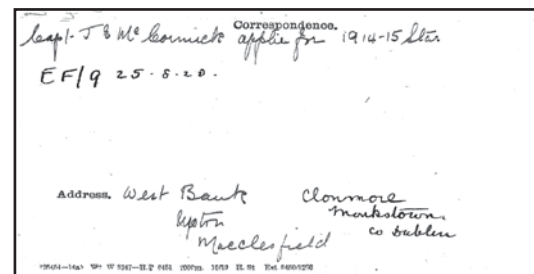
Hello Mike

We have a J E McCormick commissioned as a 2/Lt into the Machine Gun Corps attached to the 1st Bn Leinsters. He served in Flanders on the Western Front and was in charge of a Machine Gun detail during the 1st Battle of Ypres in 1915.

The Regimental History records that early in April 1915 the 27 Division, to which the 1/Leinsters belonged, were involved in the attack on Hill 60, a very famous landmark in Belgium just east of Ieper (Ypres) on the route to Menin. It was a notoriously dangerous part of

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There is an interesting challenge in this description over the date. The Official record for Lt McCormick indicates that he arrived in Flanders on the 14 May 1915 and it was in early May 1915 that the Germans did capture Hill 60. After that the 1/Leinsters were involved in more action around Hill 55 and Sanctuary Wood. The First Battle of Ypres was classified as finishing on the 25 May, so given that the official war diary information is scarce, and it probably took a while for the official updating of records, it is likely that Lt McCormick was in Flanders before his officially "recorded" time on his Medal Record Index card!



Reverse side of Medal Card

Name	Corps	Rank	Regt. No.
McCORMICK	Leinsters	2/Lt	
J E	3rd Leinsters Regt	Capt	

Name	Rank	Page	Remarks
John McCormick	2/Lt	25	
VICTORY 1914-15	2/Lt	25	
BRITISH	2/Lt	25	
15 STAR	2/Lt	25	

Theatre of War first served in	Date of entry therein	Remarks
France	14.5.15	

Medal Record Index Card for Capt McCormick

the front at that time. The German forces had recently lost Hill 60 and the 1/Leinsters had to defend it.

The Regimental History records that "Attack and counter attack followed in quick succession, and from the right of the battalion sector the swaying fortunes of the contest could be followed. Lt McCormick and his machine gun gave every assistance to the defenders and on one occasion noticing that the German trenches were unusually full of men, he took his guns and placed them in a position to enfilade (shoot along and across) these trenches at a range of 800 yards with the result that no attack developed from them. On another occasion he acted with the same initiative and caught a German company supporting an attack on Hill 60, with marked results".

John McCormick was subsequently promoted to Captain in the 3rd Battalion of the Leinsters but I do not have a date for that. You may be able to locate the date in the online archive copies of the London Gazette but be prepared for a long search though! The 3rd Battalion were essentially "home based" and supplied the other battalions with men and officers. This leaves us with the question of the photographs of captured Turks which could have been from Palestine (see page 12) or Gallipoli. My view is that this was probably with the 1st Bn Leinsters in Palestine but not recorded on his Medal Card. The 6/Leinsters served in Gallipoli, and Capt McCormick's official medal card record indicates that he only served in Flanders. Officers documents are not yet available on line, so it will require a trip to the UK National Archives in Kew, London to seek out further information. I did a quick catalogue search and established that records for several McCormicks survive but as only initials are given I could not establish if your John McCormick is one of them.

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

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Write to:

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Need to contact someone?

To contact the Membership Secretary

Use the contact form on the website or
write to
Membership Secretary
Leinster Regiment Association
Fir Trees, 12 Fryer Close
Chesham
Bucks HP5 1RD
UK

20

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Visiting Ypres in 2009?

No visit to Belgium is complete without experiencing the sensation of Belgian chocolate and no visit to Ypres is complete without stopping off and saying hello to Carl Vandaele, master chocolate maker whose family have run their shop since 1891 and were one of the first to rebuild in 1921. You can find Carl and his delicious assortment of chocolates in his shop in the Market Square. Just look for the old TEA ROOM sign that dates back to his family's original 1921 shop.



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 **The 40/10**

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