

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

To Contact the Association

Write to:

The Secretary
Leinster Regiment Association
7 Nethercombe House
Ruthin Road
Blackheath
London
SE3 7SL

20

The Quartermasters Store

Item	Price
Blazer badge	£10
Caubeen (Cap) Badge	£ 5
Association Tie	£8
Key Fob	£5
Leinster Hackle	£5
Wall Plaque	£29.95
Lapel Pin/Brooch	£10

To purchase any of these items send your order together with a sterling cheque for the correct amount made out to the Leinster Regiment Association, to
Eddie Bryant (Leinster QM)
24 Maxwell Road
Fulham
London SW6 2HR

OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

President: Major.General The O'Morchoe CB CBE
Chairman: Don Dickson, MBA, FIHEEM, MCIM
Vice Chairmen: Colonel (Retd) Peter Walton
Comdt (Retd) Mick McGoona
Secretary: David Ball Esq.
Membership Secretary: Sheila Dickson
Treasurer: Ian Lowe.
Quartermaster: Edward Bryant Esq.
Editorial Committee: Ian Lowe Esq.



The 40/10

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

The next edition of 40/10 is due for publication and distribution in early December. If you would like to contribute an article or just write us a letter the closing date for submission is November 15 2010

40/10 is distributed to all members of the Association who have paid their annual subscription fee.

Did you know that you can join the Association "online" via our web site?

If you are not a member why not join now!

Advertisement

Visiting Ypres in 2010?

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.

**PÂTISSERIE CHOCOLATE
VANDAELE**

**GROTE MARKT9
8900 IEPER**

*Leinster Regiment Association
members are especially welcome*

SEND CORRESPONDENCE AND ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION IN 40/10 TO

Don Dickson, MBA, FIHEEM, MCIM
Fir Trees, 12 Fryer Close, Chesham, Bucks, HP5
1RD, UK

Email: don@the-dicksons.org

Where to find out more?

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



VOLUME 4 AUGUST 2010



The evocative Cloth Hall in Ieper (Ypres) now the permanent home of the Flanders Fields Museum

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
Your Letters	Page 3
A young man prepared to command	Page 4
Something to think about	Page 7
A VC from the short grass county	Page 8
Recollections of the Annual Parade	Page 12
Researching the Regiment	Page 14
Ledegem Freedom Scroll Update	Page 15
The Official History of the Great War	Page 16
A memorial to the 10 th (Irish) Division	Pages 19
Q. M. Store	Page 20

Excuses are irrelevant and we are late with this edition of The 40/10, so our apologies to all members!

This has been one of the busiest periods in the Association's activities with our Secretary making several trips to France & Flanders to represent the Regiment's Association at both formal and informal events. A magnificent turn out of members at the Dublin meeting of the Association, the Islandbridge Parade and many fine Leinster Regiment badges and ties were visible at the Ireland National Day of Remembrance ceremony held at the former Kilmainham Hospital for veterans and attended by the President Mary McAleese and Taoiseach of Ireland Brian Cowen, the event being televised nationwide across Ireland.

In July the Association held an extra-ordinary General Meeting at which a new "Constitution" was adopted, members have paraded at the Whitehall Cenotaph in London and now, as we release this edition of 40/10, the final arrangements for the Association's annual visit to

France & Flanders are under way. Incorporating a battle field tour with our own expert guides, and with a base in comfortable hotels in Ieper across the square from the famous Cloth Hall, you still just have time to book and join the group.

This edition is bursting at the seams with good reading with articles that apply personal background to wartime soldiers. We also have some wise comment on which books to spend your money on and reminiscences from "an old sweat" about the annual parade.

Pour yourself a modicum of libation, sit back and Enjoy!

DD

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

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

News from Birr

2 We are pleased to report events have been moving forward in Ireland in response to a call for more “hands on” opportunities from Association members resident in Ireland. Association President, Maj. Gen. David The O’Morchoe has taken a welcome lead role in this ably assisted by Mary Sanders who has volunteered to help out with administration, particularly the recruiting of new members in Ireland and already we are seeing the fruits of that initiative.

There have been positive outcomes with a well attended meeting of Association members in Dublin during July and good coverage in the Midlands Tribune of the visit to Birr and presentation of the Ledegem Freedom Document to the Leinster Regiment Library Collection by Association Hon Sec David Ball.

In August we had a successful two-page spread in the Midland Tribune, Birr’s local newspaper, about the Regiment and its connections with Birr. The 42nd Annual Birr Vintage Week & Arts Festival that took place in August included, at Birr Library, a lecture by Ian Lowe; prepared by John Goodman a display of names of Leinster soldiers who died during WW1 and who had been born in Offaly or had enlisted in Birr; and an exhibition of Military memorabilia from World War I, all under the auspices of Friends of the Leinster Regiment Association.

There will be a fuller report of the Association’s events during Birr Vintage Week festival in the next edition; this represents a good opportunity to introduce our Association to more local people in Birr, many of whom have solid family connections with the Regiment.

Many of our members from Ireland also attended the annual parade, held in June, at the London Cenotaph, and of course enjoyed the social event, hosted by the Association at the Leinster Arms, Bayswater, the preceding Saturday. Arrangements are also underway for our Ireland based members, departing direct from Dublin, to meet up with and join the Association’s battle field tour in Flanders in October.

On the previously reported efforts to develop a “Twinning” between Birr and Ledegem in Belgium, we are pleased to report that there are signs that this is now under active discussion within the respective town councils so, as this is a civic matter, we await further news.

O.M.



A new wall plaque is available

In response to multiple enquiries from members we are pleased to announce the availability of a splendid wall plaque bearing the insignia and colours of the Regiment & Association.

Mounted on a solid wood background this plaque can be yours for £29.95 plus P&P.

You can see the plaque in full colour on the Association web site.

To place an order or for more information please contact David Ball

Events Calendar

2010

Sep 25 London Meeting

Oct 8-11 Battlefield Tour & IMOS Sphinx leper, Belgium

Nov 11 Garden of Remembrance*, Westminster Abbey followed by service at Westminster Cathedral

Nov 14th RBL Remembrance Day Parade *

Dec 11 or 18th (TBC) Christmas Lunch

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

A MEMORIAL TO THE 10TH IRISH DIVISION IN GALLIPOLI

Gallipoli was the first operation of the 10th Irish Division formed at the start of the 1st World War. Up to recently, although between 3,500 and 4,000 Irish died in the campaign, no memorial dedicated to the Irish had been erected on the peninsular.

On the initiative of the Somme Association a small plinth with a memorial plaque was erected with suitable ceremony on 24th March 2010. The Association had hoped that the event could have been attended jointly by the President and the Honorary President of the Somme Association, HRH The Duke of Gloucester but although they both met in Ankara on the previous day a joint event in Gallipoli proved impossible to arrange.

With splendid Irish compromise the Duke unveiled the plinth on 23rd and the President dedicated the plaque on 24th. The event on the 23rd was a Somme Association event with some 36 members present including a small uniformed representation from The Royal Irish Regiment including a piper and bugler.

The 24th began with a visit by the President to V Beach where the 1st Battalions of Royal Dublin Fusiliers and Munster Fusiliers had landed (as part of 29th Division) on 25th April 1915. After visiting V beach she laid a wreath at the Helles Memorial and the Turkish Memorial in the southern part of the peninsular and attended a lunch reception hosted by the Turkish Governor of Gallipoli and the Irish Ambassador to Turkey, near Anzac Cove, the landing place of the Anzac force.

The Reception was attended by all who had come from Ireland for the event including the Somme Association party numbering 36, 26 members of the Dublin Fusiliers Association who had made their own arrangements to travel and an independent party of



The inscription on the Plinth reads "Unveiled on 23rd March 2010 by the Duke of Gloucester KG, GCVO, Honorary President of the Somme Association".

On the bronze Plaque are inscribed the cap badges of all the Irish Regiments serving in the 10th Irish Division and the words, repeated in Irish and Turkish;

"In honoured memory of the officers and men of the 10th Irish Division and their comrades-in-arms from Ireland who served in the other units on land and sea during the Gallipoli Campaign of 1915-1916.

And in honoured memory of the Turkish soldiers who fought in defence of the homeland."

Dedicated by Her Excellency Mary McAleese President of Ireland on 24th March 2010.

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

24 who had answered an advertisement by a Tour Agent, arranged at very late notice.

Following the reception the Dedication took place of the Plaque on the Memorial which had been erected at Green Hill Cemetery, one of the notable objectives of the 10th Irish Division inshore of Suvla Bay. This took the form of a simple ceremony introduced by the Chairman of the Somme Association, Dr Ian Anderson, prayers by a Chaplain, The Rev Geoffrey Evans and followed by the Dedication of the Plaque and short speech by The President. Then the Act of Remembrance with the Exhortation, the Last Post, sounded by a uniformed bugler from the Royal Irish Regiment, a silence, and Reveille sounded by a uniformed member of the Irish Defence Forces, after which a piper of the Royal Irish Regiment played a lament. A reading of a poem, The Irish in Gallipoli by Francis Ledwidge was followed by the laying of Wreaths by The President, civic dignitaries from Northern Ireland and representatives of the Regiments that made up the 10th Irish Division; The 18th Royal Irish Regiment, The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, The Royal Irish Rifles, The Royal Irish Fusiliers, The Connaught Rangers, The Leinster Regiment, The Royal Munster Fusiliers,

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the only English Regiment in the Division, The Royal Hampshire Regiment..

There followed a reading of selected letters written home by individuals who had fought there after which the service ended.

O.M.

***Reading this and not a member,
then why not become a member
and help us to perpetuate the
name of the Prince of Wales's
Leinster Regiment (Royal
Canadians)?***



LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Your letters



cont from p3

We have also checked the SOLDIER'S DIED IN THE GREAT WAR database but unfortunately Edward is not listed, neither does Edward appear in the original printed version of "Soldiers Died" either. (There are occasional errors and omissions between the two) however he is identified in the CWGC database, again as Pte who died and was buried in France 2 April 1916.

However we can tell you that from the dates recorded it is likely that Edward was injured whilst serving in the then front line in Belgium close to Messines. Burial at Bailleul is consistent with where the 2Bⁿ were at the time. In fact, at the end of March, they had gone into the line near Messines having been at Bailleul so it sounds as if he may have been left behind in hospital.

Lastly we checked the IRELAND CASUALTIES FOR WW1 database, and again Edward is listed as a Private.

It is highly likely that all these databases are driven by a single "list", possibly the MEDAL RECORD INDEX formerly a War Dept item, and will be the one that the others rely upon for Edward's rank at the time of his death.

Regarding the printed scroll that you kindly sent this has been examined by our historians who comment that it is not impossible for Edward Ryan to have been acting Corporal temporary Sergeant, both appointments to fill gaps caused by casualties, until a decent break in the hostilities gave the battalion time to restructure more substantively. Unfortunately without access to the unit's Part 2 Orders or Pay Records, both unlikely to have survived this can but be conjecture. Even if he was a temporary Sergeant it would have been normal for that rank to be used on the report of his death and it would have been very bad form indeed to "demote" him to his true substantive rank of Private in order to deal with his sacrifice.

One other possibility is if he was on some sort of detached duty (e.g. Machine Guns, Mortars etc) that may have given him the rank and taken him off the Battalion 'books'. Another

possibility is that he joined the Battalion in France/Belgium in August '15 having been a war time recruit who was posted to a regular battalion. At 29 he was older than the normal recruit of the time and could have been a returning reservist.

Lastly our historians had a look for the family in the 1911 census when there were 2,800 people living in Silver St. Nenagh, including 39 Ryans, but no Nora or Edward could be located.

On balance therefore we are of the opinion that the most likely explanation is that bureaucracy had not caught up with his promotion at the time of his death.

We would suggest that your next step is to contact the Ministry of Defence because any surviving records are still retained by them, and ask if they hold the Pay Records for the 2Bⁿ for February - April 1916. Contact the MOD by visiting their web site www.mod.uk and use the Service Records Enquiry link to make an online application.

You could also contact CWGC direct by writing to them in Maidenhead, Berkshire, citing the explanations as given, and ask them to consider changing their records. Our experience is that CWGC will make corrections if there is reasonable documentation to support the claim.

John Holland V.C. - Continued from page 15

War Cemetery. The CWGC entry tells us that his father was Maj. J V Holland VC formerly of the Indian Army and now living in Highbury, London. In the final move of a restless life John Holland moved to Hobart, TASMANIA in 1956 where he died in 1975 at the age of 86. He was accorded a hero's send off by his adopted land with a public funeral, his coffin being carried by 6 Majors and the cortège was accompanied to the Cathedral by a military band and 200 troops forming a guard of honour. One of the "Wild Geese" had finally come to rest.

Sources and Notes.

- (1) The Kildare Observer/Athy Heritage Centre.
- (2) War Diary of 7/Leinsters 2/09/16. WO/95/1970.
- (3) Official History of the War, 1916, Vol.II.
- (4) War Diary of 7/Leinsters 3/09/16. WO/95/1970.
- (5) War Diary of 7/Leinsters 27/10/16. WO/95/1970.
- (6) London Gazette, 29/10/16.

(7) The Chairman is getting a little carried away here. The urban population of Athy in 1911 was about 4,500, the 1,500 recruits that he refers to were drawn from the town plus the surrounding districts giving a population of around 25,000: still an impressive figure.

Secretary's Report

Hello, welcome to the latest edition of the journal and I hope this finds you all well. It looks like we are having another busy summer period.

In June the association attended the annual parade of the disbanded regiments organised by the Combined Irish Regiments Association. I am pleased to report that we were very well represented, our group seems to be growing larger every year. The Association organised an enjoyable social event after the Queen's Birthday Parade, and it was good to welcome members of the Association from Dublin, together with some of our friends from the London Irish Rifles Association. A great afternoon was had by all. This event now seems to be established in the Leinster's calendar and hopefully it will continue to grow in popularity.

We held our annual meeting in Dublin during the weekend of the National Day of Commemoration. I'm sure a report of the Dublin weekend will appear in the next issue of 40/10. We are also planning the annual visit to Belgium for the second weekend in October, an eventful weekend including a Leinster Regiment themed battlefield visit, an informal visit to our friends in Ledegem and not forgetting the 'IMOS' lunch. If you would like to join us for this trip please contact myself or Ian Lowe for booking or further details.

In August the Association took part, for the first time, in Birr Heritage Week, Birr being the spiritual home base of the Regiment. This was held between the 15th and 21st August and included a lecture on the 18th given by Ian Lowe and a display of artefacts kindly provided by Commandant Mick McGoona.

I am pleased to report that the Association is growing steadily with membership now hitting the 200 mark and including many relatives of the lads who served in the Leinsters coming on board. Personally I feel it is a very poignant way of commemorating our fine, famous regiment and I'm sure that the lads, wherever they are, would approve. March on the Leinsters!

Ich Dien

David

ON PARADE WITH
THE
LEINSTER ASSOCIATION



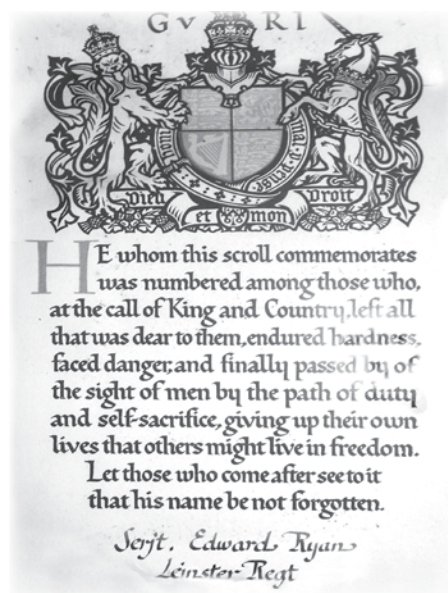
LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Your letters

Dear Leinster Regiment Association

Edward Ryan Service No. 7377

We would like to draw your attention to the information list on the Commonwealth War Memorial/National Archives Kew for the above mentioned serviceman has been listed as a Private. Our family have the original Commemorative Scroll stating Edward Ryan had the rank of Sergeant. We also have in our possession two items that Edward Ryan's family received from the army, one being a large bronze coloured medallion with his name inscribed on it and a letter from Buckingham Place signed by King George in memory of his brave life. Could you please look into this and possibly rectify this error. Thanking you Robert Cawley



Hello Robert and thank you for your message posted on the Leinster Regiment Association web site in connection with Pte Edward Ryan # 7377

Unfortunately the Army Service Records (Attestation Papers and service record) for Edward did not survive the fire in WW2 that destroyed many ex-serviceman's records.

We have checked Edward Ryan's Medal Card that indicated he was a Private in 1915 when he qualified for the 1915 Star following his active service in the Balkans (Gallipoli). His Medal record card also shows that Edward subsequently died from wounds but does not indicate where and when.

Continued on page 18

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

A young man prepared for command

4 This narrative is the story of Captain J.L.L. Johnston, "A" Company 2/Leinsters, and is included in this edition of The 40/10 not as a record of heroic deeds, though I am sure that in the midst of war many such were displayed, but to introduce and remember an "ordinary" soldier and officer of the Regiment who lost his life in 1916. Through this story we are introduced to a personalised family background of this young man, and perhaps, learn a little of an eventful, though short life. This story was brought to the editors by Association member Mrs. Rose Orr and we thank her for the time taken to prepare and submit the draft used as a basis for this narrative; we hope you enjoy reading about her great-uncle.

John Lyonel Lukin Johnston, the 3rd son of Rev. Robert Edwin Johnston and Ellen Johnston (nee Lukin) was born in Manor House, Camden Terrace (Vicarage for All Souls Church), Cheriton, FOLKESTONE on June 23rd 1895. Lyonel (as he became known) had two elder brothers Robert (Roy) and Edwin who were his senior by 10 & 12 years respectively. Two and a half years after Lyonel was born his younger sister, Nelly Winsome Joyce, arrived in 1897. Nelly Winsome Joyce (aka Joyce) was the grand mother of Association member Rose Orr. In 1900 the family moved to St. Peters in BROADSTAIRS, Thanet, where sadly a sister for Nelly survived just a few weeks after birth and was buried in the church cemetery. Those early years may well have made an impression upon the infant Lyonel who would see many people entering the grounds of the vicarage on route to the many meetings and events held in his parent's home. This period was the early days



John Lyonel Lukin Johnston sent his photograph to his sister and wrote on it "Drunk & Dazed at the time" and who would blame him for celebrating his promotion from the rank of Private!

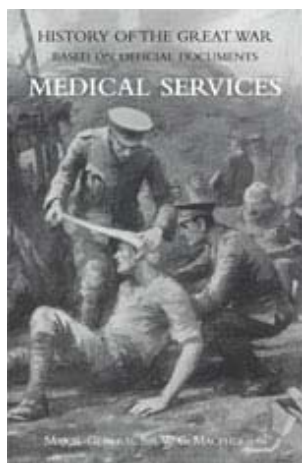
of recently introduced free education for all children when in 1901/02 the responsibility for education in England & Wales was taken over by the newly created local education authorities; however the Rev Johnston continued with the social tradition of upper middle class by employing a governess to provide private tuition for his youngest children. By 1901 the eldest son Edwin was at college, and Roy, Lyonel and Nelly lived in the vicarage along with their uncle and a live-in cook & domestic. To help out with the finances, Robert & Ellen also took in student boarders and Lyonel's father, Robert, prepared them for the Cambridge University entrance examination. Despite the loss of their youngest child, Lyonel's parents hoped for more children but time was against them and Ellen died in childbirth in 1903 age forty-two, giving birth to a boy, Peter Windham Lukin. Lyonel was but ten years old and his sister just eight years old.

With a large parish church to administer, and after a suitable interval, Rev. Johnston married Florence "Florrie" Bessie in 1905, apparently much to the dismay of Lyonel and Nelly who were of the opinion that their father was committing a dreadful sin! However matters settled down and in 1907 the family moved to the Vicarage in MARDEN in Kent when Robert took a new position as Vicar of St. Michael's Church. There a daughter, Mary Eugenie was born, and the family settled down in a rather large and grand vicarage with a live-in governess and two domestic servants. The vicarage was very much the centre of social life in Marden with the local tennis club making use of the two tennis courts in the grounds and the local amateur dramatic society making full use of the gardens and its facilities. Lyonel, along with the rest of the family were living a comfortable lifestyle in a quiet corner of the "Garden of England"

By 1911, Roy and Edwin had emigrated to BRITISH COLUMBIA in Canada and Lyonel who had been attending Doone House, Westgate-on-Sea, was sent off to BERKHAMSTED SCHOOL (founded 1541) as a boarder; whilst Nelly, Peter and Mary remained at Marden. At the age of 18, after leaving Berkhamsted, it was agreed that Lyonel would join his two brothers in Canada and in the February of 1913, accompanied by his father Lyonel travelled to Liverpool on route to Canada where he secured employment as an articled Surveyor's Assistant to the ex- Surveyor General of British Columbia. It was whilst working "up country" that news filtered through via the local Indian tribe that war had broken out and Lyonel made his way back to Victoria and there, on 7th December 1914, age 19 years 6 months, he enlisted as a Private into "C" Company of the 30th Bn Canadian Light Infantry. Three months later in March 1915

level.

The authors are even handed with both their praise and their criticism and it is interesting to read their views on some of the Great War questions that continue to be debated today. In general their views are remarkably in accord with contemporary interpretations. The history is critical of Sir John French's conduct of parts of the retreat from Mons, his conduct of the battle of Loos and his part in the "shell scandal" of 1915. It is critical of aspects of Haig's strategy on the Somme, his failure to follow up the victory at Messines and the failure to follow through at Cambrai, but not of his persistence at 3rd Ypres. It backs Haig against Lloyd-George and the other political critics of his command and blames them for the manpower shortages that almost proved disastrous in 1918. In that context it explains the difficulties of 16th (Irish) Div. and other units of Gough's Fifth Army in March and April 1918 as being the consequence of political rather than military decisions. Our French allies do not get a good press, frequently being blamed for not pulling their weight. The sometimes fractious relationship between Foch and Haig is examined although the former is given due recognition as the grand strategist of the ultimate victory and the latter, despite the criticism mentioned above, emerges as the most able operational commander of his day responsible for leading the British and Imperial forces in the defeat of the German field army while loyally supporting flagging allies often at the expense of British and Imperial lives.



There are three ways that today's reader can get access to these volumes. The easiest is to try a good reference library. Even if they are not on the public shelves they may be available in the reserve collection or through the inter library lending service. The second way is to buy one of the modern reprints published by The Imperial War Museum in association with the Battery Press. These hardcover reprints are available from The Naval & Military Press at around £35 per volume. They include the original sketch maps reproduced in monochrome only. In consequence some of the detail can be difficult to follow. Some of the volumes have loose sketch maps inside the back covers; these are also reproduced in monochrome with varying degrees of success. For reasons of economy re-prints of the map cases have never been produced. However you can now buy the whole set of maps on CD-ROM from the Naval & Military Press for around £65. The final option

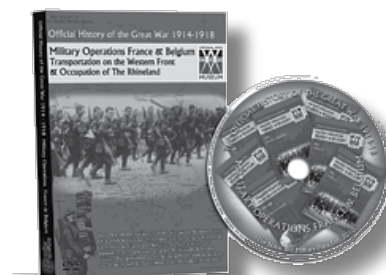
LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

is to try to track individual volumes down through the antiquarian and second-hand book trade including specialist dealers. Prices seem to vary enormously depending on rarity and condition; I have seen volumes priced from as little as £40

to around £200. The IWM reprints are now beginning to appear on the second-hand market at around £25. I have never seen second hand editions complete with their map case and even when you do find them in libraries the chances are that some of the loose maps will be missing. A sometimes irritating feature of the arrangement of the volumes is the choice of cut off dates. For example, Volume I of 1916 ends at midnight on 1st July thus covering the first day of the Battle of the Somme only, to read about the remaining 140 days you need to go to Volume II.

If you are interested in campaigns other than the Western Front the Official History sometimes remains one of the few and best sources of information. This is particularly true for the campaigns in Macedonia, the Near East and Africa. In reading the original history you will also realise how later authors have derived some of their work from these volumes. Occasionally you will come across someone named in a junior capacity that went on to later fame, Dill, Gort, Alanbrooke and Alexander are examples.

If you are researching a specific action, period or some of the lesser-known campaigns I can recommend dipping selectively into these histories. Equally if you are interested in immersing yourself in the detailed history of The Great War, these are also for you, I promise that you will not be disappointed and that you will solve the age old problem of "what would you like for your birthday/Christmas present" for years to come!



The Official History is also available on DVD Rom from Naval & Military Press

I.L.

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

The Official History of the Great War

This is not a book review in the conventional sense but rather an explanation and reminder of a valuable but often overlooked resource for all levels of researcher of The Great War.

THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE GREAT WAR is an immense work. There are 14 volumes of text covering operations on the Western Front alone, with further volumes covering Macedonia (2 volumes), Gallipoli (2 volumes), Italy (1 volume) plus Palestine, Mesopotamia, East Africa etc. In addition to sketch maps bound into the text, a case of loose-leaf maps accompanied

each volume. This series was produced by the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence and published by HMSO between 1922 and 1949. Brigadier-General Sir J E Edmonds wrote most although other authors include Captain Cyril Falls well known as the chronicler of the 36th (Ulster) Division and the Royal Irish Rifles. The volumes are arranged by year, ranging from two volumes for 1914 up to five volumes for 1918 and cover, from a British and Imperial perspective, land operations only; except where naval and air operations are incidental to the main narrative. There are separate histories covering the naval and air wars in equal detail. The individual volumes are rarely less than 500 pages long and often have extensive appendices reproducing key operational orders, orders of battle, sometimes to battalion or equivalent level including the French and German armies, together with frequent sketch maps. The impact of political considerations on

military strategy is dealt with and there are good descriptions of the key meetings of the allied political leaders and the senior field commanders. There are detailed tables of casualties, ammunition usage and a myriad of other statistical detail down to the number of rubber stamps produced for the BEF (over 57,000 in the course of the war) It is by far the most comprehensive description of the activities of the British and Imperial forces in the Great War available and was compiled from records like war diaries, personal recollections and the corresponding histories compiled by the French and German authorities.

In no way can these volumes be considered an easy read and I do not suggest that many people will want to read them from end to end. However used selectively they can often provide the background detail as to what happened to a relative who was involved in even minor operations. Individual actions are usually considered from an army, through corps, division, brigade to battalion and frequently company level. So the researcher with some basic knowledge of events can quickly pinpoint what is likely to have happened at any given time often helped by accompanying sketch maps showing unit locations down to company level. Each chapter ends with a summary of German accounts of the events described and also related French operations. Individuals are routinely named down to brigade commander level and quite frequently to battalion commander. Men who were awarded the Victoria Cross are mentioned by name irrespective of rank with a brief description of their deed given as a footnote. There are two indexes for each volume, a general one and one by unit to battalion or equivalent



Section of an Advanced Dressing Station of the Front
Artist Henry Tonks 1917

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

he was back in Kent at Napier Barracks in SHORNECLIFFE, Folkestone with the 7th Canadian Infantry Battalion and visiting his sister Nelly who was attending the St Nicholas Finishing School for Young Ladies. These reunions were however short lived and in May 1915 Lyonel went with the 30B^N CLI to France where he fought in the actions at FESTUBERT and GIVENCHY.

At this point it is worth taking a moment to consider Lyonel's extended family. Lyonel's mother was originally a member of the LUKIN family and his grandfather Robert Lukin, a retired Barrister, lived with the family in Thanet.



The original Vicarage for St. Michael's Church, Marden, Kent

Robert Lukin had just the one son, but a very important uncle for Lyonel, because his uncle was then Brigadier-General Henry Timson Lukin, CMG, D.S.O., General Officer Commanding, the 1st South African Infantry Brigade (later to become Major General Sir Henry Timson Lukin KCB, CMG, DSO).

On 24th September 1915 Private J. L. L. Johnston, from the 7th Canadian Infantry Battalion was gazetted as a Temporary Lieutenant in the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians) effective 20th August 1915. He joined the 2/Leinsters on the 24th September and took charge of a platoon in "A" Company that were in the thick of the action at BELLEWAARDE WOOD, HOOGE just outside Ieper (Ypres). Lyonel kept his family connections close to his chest, with Hitchcock in his narrative "Stand To" simply referring to him as "*J L L Johnston [a new subaltern] arrived from the ranks of one of our affiliated regiments of Canada ...*"

The war activities of the 2/Leinsters during the period August 1915 to November 1915 are well documented by Hitchcock in "Stand To" so it is possible for readers to get an impression of the daily challenges Lyonel experienced. Daily shelling, trenches full of water, mud and foul language welcomed the young man brought up in a vicarage! HOOGE, HELLFIRE CORNER, BIRR CROSS ROADS, CRUMP FARM, RAILWAY WOODS, YPRES TOWN SQUARE, are names that today are evocative but for Lyonel they were places of deadly danger. In November 2/Lt. Johnston was with his platoon at the ST. ELOI sector and

this period is described in detail by Hitchcock over twelve pages of "Stand To", with the 2/Leinsters acquitting themselves well. Unfortunately there is then a gap in the Regimental records with a break in Hitchcock's narrative until July 1916.

Fortunately Whitton's Regimental History picks up the narrative and describes the events in and around ST. ELOI, the freezing weather in the water-logged trenches.

In December 1915 2/Lt. Johnston returned to Marden for eight days leave to learn that his father, in addition to his pastoral work had taken on "Home Front" duties; his step mother then became seriously ill so his father and step mother departed for a hospital in London. It is possible therefore to deduce that Lyonel had little time with his father and this must have been especially difficult for both of them. Those few days were spent with his sister and young brother then all too soon it was time



The original Vicarage as it is today

to return to the western front, stopping off briefly in London to say goodbye to his father and then back across the Channel to join the 2/Leinsters who were at Hooge once again. Casualties still ran high in the Battalion and whilst at HELLFIRE CORNER Lyonel found himself the senior officer in "A" Company and 2/Lt Johnston became T/Capt Johnston on the 4th February 1916. By April and throughout May Captain Johnston along with his "A" Company were in the MESSINES sector where the Regiment experienced gas attacks and perhaps, curiously for the officers, a visit from Lt.Col. Winston S Churchill, who was then in command of a Scottish battalion at PLOEGTEERT. It was during this period that the Commander in Chief nominated Lyonel for a permanent commission, so evidently Lyonel was displaying all the qualities

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION



The commemoration wall plaque at St. Michael's Church, Marden

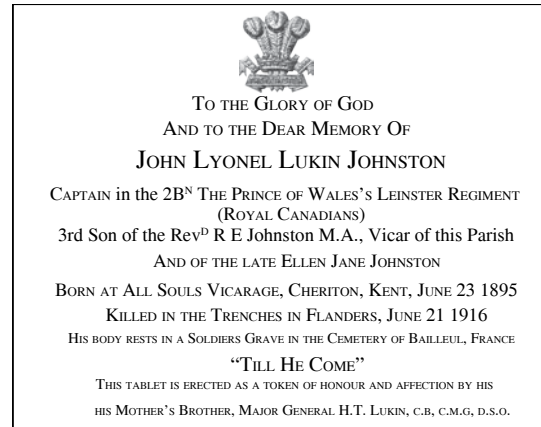
of leadership fitting of a Captain in the Leinster Regiment. Of the month of June and the activities of the 2/Leinsters little is known so it is all the more perplexing that back in Marden a telegram arrived to say that Captain Johnston has been injured, followed within two days by a further telegram reporting that Lyonel had died on June 21st, just two days before his twenty-first birthday.

Lyonel Johnston received his fatal wounds on the 21 June whilst making his rounds in the forward trench system and was on-route to an exposed post to see his men when he was fatally wounded. It is not known the manner of the fatality but it is feasible that he became a either a casualty of shelling or sniper activity; as an officer in an exposed position the latter is more likely. Whitton's Regimental History records no activity undertaken by the 2/Leinsters for June 1916. What is known is that of the officers of "A" Coy recorded by Hitchcock in November 1915, only one survived through to July 1916. Another notable fact is that the officer who replaced Captain Johnston in "A" Coy was Captain K. G. O'MORCHOE, the ancestor of our own President, Major General David O'Morchoe.

The source for much of this narrative are the life memoirs of Lyonel's sister, Nelly (Joyce) who died in 1999, having attained the grand age of 101 years, but of Lyonel's death Nelly (Joyce) made no comment. Captain Johnston is buried in BAILLEUL COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION (NORD) in France near to the Belgian border. This cemetery was in an area that was an important railhead, air depot and hospital centre during the war. Back in Marden the family organised a commemorative plaque that to this day adorns one corner of a wall

in the Parish Church.

Thus the story and short life of the young man known as Lyonel Johnston drew to a close. Perhaps not too dissimilar to many of the young men of his



time, a young man with strong views, clearly not afraid of a challenge and who, for the era, could have chosen to lead a relatively privileged life; a young man who left the safety of Kent to work "up country" in far off British Colombia. A young man who then left the relative safety of his newly adopted home in Canada to return in defence of his homeland in order to fight in the war torn fields of Flanders, eventually paying with his life just two days short of his twenty-first birthday. This was a man worthy of being remembered in honour by this Association.

In closing this narrative I am indebted to Nelly's (Joyce) grand daughter and great-niece of Captain Johnston, Rose Orr, who first contacted me with the information that the plaque existed, and it has been my pleasure to assist Rose with some of the background material. The vicarage in Marden still stands, though it is now "the former vicarage" and I am indebted to `MR ROBIN JUDD, Churchwarden of ST MICHAELS IN MARDEN, for arranging my access to the Vicarage with the current owners.

Other sources used for this narrative include

- 1 - The life of Joyce Cosgrove (nee Johnston) her life and memoirs (autobiography)
- 2 - Private letters written by Captain Johnston to his sister
- 3 - Oral reminiscences told by Mary Johnston to Rose Orr
- 4 - London Gazette September 1915, January 1916, March 1916,
- 5 - "Stand To", Hitchcock, NMP
- 6 - "History of the Leinster Regiment", Whitton, Schull Books.
- 7 - The National Archives for Medal Rolls, National Census Enumerator Rolls for 1881, 1891, and census for 1901 and 1911.
- 8 - Canadian Archives for Attestation Papers,
- 9 - Clergy List

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

book by the author, the remainder of the content covers useful ground for the reader, dealing with enlistment, training, uniforms, weapons used, combat and tactics and time spent away from the front either on relaxation or as a casualty.

Included are the recollections of the experiences of "Tommies" that add authenticity to the narrative, for example one description deals with a time when a soldier Jim Marshall, was returning from the front line to the comparative safety of his billet during a "routine" shelling. *"We didn't take any notice; they were always doing it, when there was an almighty roar and flash. Next thing I was lying in the road yards away. I had my tunic ripped off ... I was completely deaf but not hurt much ... two of my chums were never found"*.

All the photographs included in this book support the narrative, some depicting the harsh reality of war cause one to ponder. The colour drawings of uniforms and weapons by Mike Chappell are excellent; change the cap badge of the infantryman facing page 32 and you get an excellent impression of a Leinster Regiment corporal.

Apart from my comments relating to the contents and index, it is difficult to be critical of this book. The author sets out to "convey some idea of what life at "the front" was like for the ordinary infantryman" and the narrative within the book goes some way to achieve this.

DD

Book details:

The British Army 1914-18, DSV Fosten & RJ Marrion, illustrated by G A Embleton, 1978 Osprey Publishing, ISBN 978-0-85045-287-7, Publisher Price £9.99 Best Internet Price £4.50

British Tommy 1914-18, Martin Pegler, illustrated by Mike Chappell, 1996, 11th impression 2008, Osprey Publishing, ISBN 978-1-85532-541-8, Publisher Price £11.99 Best Internet Price £6.98



Update

The Scroll awarding the Freedom of the Town of Ledegem to the Leinster Regiment Association has now been deposited with the Regimental Collection in Birr Library. Members are welcome to view the scroll whenever they visit Birr.

Holland V.C. Continued from page 11

militarism is hurled to the dust never to be a threat to small and peaceful nations again".



1914 Leinster Regiment Corporal,
With apologies to Mike Chappell

After further concluding speeches and votes of thanks proceedings came to an end. Reading the detailed account of the event over 90 years later you get a sense of the excitement and civic pride that was generated by the occasion. One can almost smell the mothballs, slightly damp serge suits, the press of bodies and the whiff of tobacco that would have provided "atmosphere" in the hall. Athy, an old town standing off the edge of the Pale and with a tradition of military service, was proud to be seen to "do her bit".

After the excitement of his triumphant return home John Holland was posted as an instructor to an Office Training Unit at Kimmel Bay near RHYL in North Wales where he remained for the rest of the war.

His post war career seems to have been varied but without returning to Ireland on a permanent basis. He settled with his family for a time on Merseyside and worked as a civil servant before moving to KENYA with the Colonial Service. He made a brief appearance in a 1934 documentary film called "Forgotten Men". The purpose of this film, written by Sir John Hammerton, one of the pre-eminent military historians of the time, was to convince the emerging generation that the horrors of war were to be avoided, ironic when you remember that Germany was setting out to re-arm at the same time. With the outbreak of the 2nd World War he joined the Indian Army rising to the rank of Major. His two sons Niall and Norman also joined up, the former like his father served in the Indian Army and the latter with the Royal Artillery. His eldest son, Major Niall Vincent Holland MC, 4/5th Mahratta Light Infantry, died of wounds on the 15th June 1944 and is buried in the Imphal

Continued on page 18

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Researching the Regiment

14 Readers already familiar with the involvement of the Regiment know that at the outbreak of the Great War, the 2/Leinsters, being part of the BEF III Corps, 6th Division, were retained in the UK as part of the initial defence strategy against invasion. They were based in Cambridgeshire throughout August 1914 but in early September received their embarkation orders that took them to France.

Throughout the two classic books about the Regiment; *"Stand To!"* and the *"Regimental History"* there are many passing references to infantry practices, uniforms, armaments and machines that also applied to The Leinsters and with this in mind readers may be interested in two books "THE BRITISH ARMY 1914-1918" and "BRITISH TOMMY 1914-1918" published by Osprey. Each deals with the types of uniform worn by soldiers and officers throughout the period, and, given that most of us may have "sepia" tint photographs in our collections, each book includes a useful collection of colour drawings showing men, uniforms and armaments.

I singled out these two books from my own collection because they can be considered as "light reading", yet they provide a wealth of material that can add background and colour when considering the exploits of the Regiment throughout the Great War.

Both books were originally published some time ago, the oldest "The British Army 1914-1918" was first published in 1978 whilst "British Tommy 1914-1918" although first published in 1996 is on its 11th impression (2008); both however are readily available from most book shops, museum shops and of course via the Internet.



"The British Army 1914-1918" is divided into three sections, though one would not know this as no contents list is provided! Part one includes a summary of the command structure of the army, down to platoon level, that is useful to put your

ancestor's role into context.

Part two attempts to provide an overview of the "Orders of Battle" of the Great War from the time of the original British Expeditionary Force (BEF) by identifying an overview of each Corps, Division and Brigade, but this it does not do well. The 2/Leinsters are correctly identified in BEF 6th Division of III Corps but not in 24th Division (1915), the 16th (Irish) Division (1918) and 29th Division. The 1/Leinsters that started out in 27th Division in December 1914 are not identified until they joined the 10th (Irish) Division in November 1916. The 6th Battalion who fought so gallantly at Gallipoli as part of the attachment to the "Anzac", Australian & New Zealand, Corps (1915) are identified in the 10th (Irish) Division of XXI Corps, but of an incorrectly termed "Eastern Force" instead of "Mediterranean Expeditionary Force". Another anomaly is the non-inclusion of the 31st Brigade within 10th (Irish), missing at a stroke the 5th & 6th Royal Inniskilling and the 5th & 6th Royal Irish Fusiliers!

Part three addresses the uniforms worn by men and officers and is a good read to "follow on" from the article on identifying uniforms in photographs by Peter Walton in the recent edition on The 40/10.

"The British Army 1914-1918", despite the lack of a Contents and one of the worst indexes I have ever come across, remains a useful book in my collection because it is easy to "skim" through when looking for something in particular. Again, although the "Orders of Battle" leave a lot to be desired, the authors do acknowledge its limitations so for the information this book contains in its part one and part three it carries a recommended read award.

Like the previous book, "British Tommy 1914-1918" does not provide the reader with a contents list, and whilst I find this extraordinary for a book of this type, it does have a better, though not brilliant, index. This book has more going for it which is presumably why it is in its 11th impression. Divided into sections, the book's coverage of the historical background to and during the war does not achieve its objective given that there is no reference to the socio-political conditions that existed. The description is more an opinion by the author of the perceived readiness for war of the individual armies. Despite this introduction to the



Something to think about

When doing some background reading in connection with one of the narratives in this edition, I came across the following transcript of an oral history item. My view is that this little gem throws some light on why some young men in 1915/1916 found themselves in a position of some considerable authority.

CAPTAIN GRAHAM GREENWELL

4th Battalion, Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry

I was made a company commander just before the Somme battle. I was twenty. I remember my commanding officer saying he had to wait eight years before he was a captain. It was a great responsibility but that, of course, never worried me. After all, boys at this time were leaving Osborne and instead of being sent to Dartmouth, being sent straight through and posted to battleships and finding themselves, instead of dogsbodies, having to land burly troops under fire on the beaches of Gallipoli.

I think it was Mrs Sidney Webb said, 'There are people in England who are born to give orders and there are people who are born to take them.' It's true, isn't it? A boy of eighteen, public school, he's had two years as a fag and another two years going up. Then he either was or wasn't selected to be first a house prefect then a school prefect. He rightly or wrongly was given responsibility at a very early age.

For the first time, you were really in command of a couple of hundred men - four platoons - perhaps four or five officers under you, in my case sometimes they were older. You ran your own show. You were in command not merely of the fighting side, but the domestic side of it, the economic side, the human side and everything else. To have that responsibility at twenty is a tremendous spur and achievement.

I find this oral history transcript quite revealing in many ways. The confidence of the young man, a confidence gained through the manner of his upbringing. It is sobering to think that this confidence was perhaps the root cause of many an untimely death in action. The reference to older officers makes some of the transcription quite personal and again is an indication of how the "military command" mind can work. My grandfather after 23 years service with the Leinsters retired as an RSM prior to WW1. Recalled in 1915 he was commissioned into the Green Howards and served on the Western Front. From papers now in my possession I can see that he was often frustrated with the situation that he continually reported to much younger men whilst on the front and that it took him much longer, as an old sweat, to make Captain. Perhaps it was all those years of military experience though that counted, he had learned how to survive and grandfather came home from the war.

DD

Forgotten Voices p148, Max Arthur, Imperial War Museum, 2002

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Music for all!



No one would deny that music forms an important part of social and military life for an Irish soldier

At the July social gathering before the Annual Parade members of the Association were entertained by Piper Terry Goodman and popular singer Annie Love

Annie is a popular artist with the "Leinsters" and has appeared at several events, even travelling across the channel to entertain the "boys" during the battlefield trip to Flanders in 2009



Whilst during the Annual Cenotaph Parade at Whitehall, the presence of the Band of the Royal Yeomanry (Inns of Court and City Yeomanry) along with the Pipes & Drums of the London Irish Rifles completes the set!



LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

A V.C. from the Short Grass county

In this article we will explore how John Holland won his Victoria Cross during the capture of Guillemont on the 3rd September 1916 and learn a little of his background and how the news of his award was received in his home town.

John Vincent Holland was born in ATHY, Co Kildare – the short grass country - on the 19th July 1889. He was the eldest of the 8 children of John Holland, a veterinary surgeon, and his wife Katherine. The young John was educated at the Jesuit run CLONGOWES WOOD COLLEGE and later at Liverpool University. The family lived on the outskirts of the town at the Model Farm that had once been part of the Athy Model School complex. The Census of 1911 tells us that at that time John Jnr. and his younger brother Michael were veterinary students. However at some point John evidently decided that the life of a country vet was not for him and seeking adventure he went to South America to work on British owned CENTRAL ARGENTINA RAILWAY and also to spend time ranching and hunting. On the outbreak of war, by his own account, he considered returning to Europe to join the French Foreign Legion ⁽¹⁾ but with the entry of Britain into the war he joined the 2nd Life Guards as a trooper thereby acquiring his later nickname “Tinbelly”. *Unfortunately as his file is not available in Kew his early service history is sketchy, possibly because he went on to serve in the Indian Army during the 2nd World War and the India Office retains his records.* He seems to have been commissioned into the 3/Leinsters in early 1915 and to have served with 2/RDF at 2nd Ypres later that year when he was wounded. On his recovery he was posted to 7/Leinsters part of 47 Brigade, 16th (Irish) Division as the battalion bombing officer.

16th (Irish) Division was part of Kitchener's second wave of New Army divisions and to a significant degree was drawn from John Redmond's National Volunteers. The outbreak of the European war in 1914 quite possibly averted a civil war in Ireland between Carson's Unionist Ulster Volunteers and Redmond's Nationalist Irish Volunteers over the question of home rule. Each side could call on over 100,000 men and weapons supplied to both



*A photograph of John Holland V.C.
One of the few known
photographs of John in uniform*

sides from mainly German sources. After considerable negotiations with the authorities in London the two leaders, who were at heart constitutional politicians, agreed to commit their followers to the forming of the 16th (Irish) Division and the 36th (Ulster) Division. In doing so both leaders took significant political risks; in Redmond's case leading to a split in the volunteer movement that in

turn helped ignite the events of Easter 1916 and ultimately doomed the constitutional home rule party. While it is true to say that the two leaders had different agendas for committing their followers to the allied cause they also saw opportunities for both sides to reconcile their differences in the crucible of war. Both the 47 Infantry Brigade and the 7/Leinsters were very much part of this process along with the 6/Royal Irish Regiment, 6/Connaught Rangers and 7/ Royal Irish Rifles. The 7/Leinsters were raised in Fermoy from the surplus men left over from the formation of 6/Leinsters [part of 10th (Irish) Division] and topped up with subsequent volunteers from the depot at Birr and some from Belfast. With commendable foresight the first C/O of 7/Leinsters, Lt-Col H Wood, realised the need to train considerable numbers of officers and created an officers cadet company attached to the battalion that later evolved into No 7 Officer Cadet Training Unit based at Moore Park, Fermoy.

After training 7/Leinsters left for the Western Front in December 1915 with the rest of 16th (Irish) Div. On embarkation the battalion consisted of 977 officers and men, 64 horses, 22 wagons and 9 bicycles all under the command of Lt-Col G A Buckley, a New Zealander and a veteran of Shackleton's (also born in Athy) 1908 expedition to the Antarctic.

The early months of 7/Leinsters service on the Western Front were spent in the LOOS sector, at that time a fairly quiet part of the line. The idea was to progressively introduce new battalions to the realities of trench warfare while serving alongside more experienced units. This was in

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

there alongside, fluttering in the summer breeze, are the representative standards for each regiment – what a sight and spectacle for the spectators. How grand looks our Association Standard that represents the Regiments Colours; how proud we are to be there for our ancestors, our grand-fathers, great-uncles, or a remembered



cousin of long ago; or maybe we are there because we think it is the right thing to do, to make sure that the name Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment is never forgotten. That remembrance is cemented with the drumhead service that now starts and wreaths are laid against the Cenotaph, one for each Irish Regiment past and present. We remember too our present day soldiers and the sacrifices they make as they take their tour of duty overseas, and we remember those who went and like some of our forefathers did not come back alive.

Suddenly the service is over and it is time to celebrate the privilege accorded to the Irish Regiments; that of being able annually to march down Whitehall in a parade that is second only in size to the annual British Legion Day of Remembrance Parade in November.

It's "Right Turn" and "Quick March" as the pipes of the London Irish start up and lead the way back down Whitehall, everyone on parade is waiting for the moment in the piper music of Killaloe when you give a "hail" greeting that makes the spectators jump. Then the tune is played again and the "hail" once more shouted because you just know the spectators lining Whitehall want to hear it again!

Now you are back in the side street off Whitehall and the parade is brought to a "Halt"; it is a "Left Turn!" and you are ready to "be inspected" by the invited dignitaries, usually a high ranking military officer and civic personage of high honour.

Actually this can take some time so there is chance to "Stand at Ease!" and take a bit of breather whilst you wait for the inspecting office to reach your "Company". Now come the stories from the "old wags" and you have to work hard not to laugh too much because there are still many spectators watching – then it's your turn as your rank (line) is brought to attention ("Frun ran shun!")

and you nearly miss the words of command. Here comes the inspecting officer and when he reaches you have a quick chat; they don't really inspect you but they always seem to comment on the Leinster Cap Badge; then they are gone and soon you get the "Stan at Eese, stan easy!"

You take a breather then listen to a fine speech that is more often than not a pleasure to listen to; before you know it the whole thing is over with a "Parade 'shun!, Parade fall out!" and it is off to the reception for an appropriate glass of beverage and the odd sandwich or two – or three – or four!

So there you have it, complete with words of command, the Annual Parade of the Combined Irish Regiments in which the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians) Association is proud to take a representative role. However we do need more volunteers from our Association to turn up and support the parade; if you can maintain a steady pace to a drum beat then you are most welcome to join us "on parade" and even if you don't feel that you could march then do come along and support the Association by assembling with our veterans and "excused boots" who assemble with us in



The Leinsters on parade have the opportunity to "briefly chat" with the Lord Lieutenant of Antrim, Mrs Joan Christie, OBE.

Whitehall prior to the parade marching on. I leave you with one thought ... now that you know the words of command and how easy it is, what will be your excuse for not being there in June 2011?

Anon

Ed. Readers can see more photos of the parade by visiting our website

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

Recollections of the Annual Parade



From the left, George Ralph, David Ball, Eddy Bryant, Gerry Byrne, Ralph Gould, Don Dickson, Nick Weekes & Peter Walton

There is something grand about a parade and then there is something that can give a parade that extra sparkle. That something is when the men and women on parade are proud to be there and there are none as proud as those who represent the Irish Regiments, past and present.

That privilege of being on parade at the Whitehall Cenotaph in June to represent all those who served in the Leinster Regiment falls upon the members of this Association and for the past few years the number of Association members sporting the Association tie and badge has slowly risen.

The day of the parade, always the Sunday following the Saturday Queen's Birthday Parade and Trooping of the Colour, starts early as members assemble just off Whitehall between 10am and 10.30am. There is time for a quick chat and photographs for the album then around 10.30 those who have volunteered to march "fall in" according to the instructions provided by the Officer in charge of the parade.

This is not as daunting as it sounds, even though the words of command are given by an Irish Guards Sergeant

Major who I am sure is the regulation 6 feet tall, but in his bearskin headdress looks every inch of eight feet! The good news is that scattered amongst those who "form up" are regular soldiers who lend a helping hand by getting everyone into place and offering reassuring words of wisdom to the first-timers.

The newly adopted process is for the parade to fall in by Regimental precedence, those old pre-Cardwell numbers are still remembered, and as any good Association would do, we take the lower of our two numbers, that of the 1st Battalion, the original 100th Regiment of Foot.

With the ranks now "formed up", the parade commander is quick to remind everyone that after the parade, and no doubt as an incentive, there will be a reception for us all, including our guests, so all we need to do now is to "listen out" for those words of command and follow the chap we are standing next to!

Those persons who are not sure about marching or who are not able to, and yes there are those who turn up infirm, are then escorted into Whitehall so that they can be in position when the parade "marches on". Amongst the "old sweats" these hardy volunteers are referred to as "the excused boots squad", clearly an in-joke offered in a kindly and affectionate way.

Now the band starts up, Whitehall is closed to traffic, there are police on horseback keeping the public in order and it is away we go with a "Quick March!" out of our assembly area, just off Whitehall, and into the main road heading for the Cenotaph as the spectators lining the pavement several people deep, applaud and cheer.

The music is nothing short of stirring and with heads held high, chests out, we are a fine body of people as we march along, in perfect step; except for perhaps

the chap two paces in front who seems to think his right leg is his left! But it doesn't matter because we soon get the hang of it and it seems that every one of our Association members "keeps in step" and one wonders who it is "up there" from the old Regiment who is keeping their guardian eye on us.

In no time at all we have arrived at the Cenotaph and we halt and turn to face the splendid monument of remembrance; and



*Dennis Hope (CIROCA member)
and George Ralph, the Leinster
& RBL Standard Bearer*

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

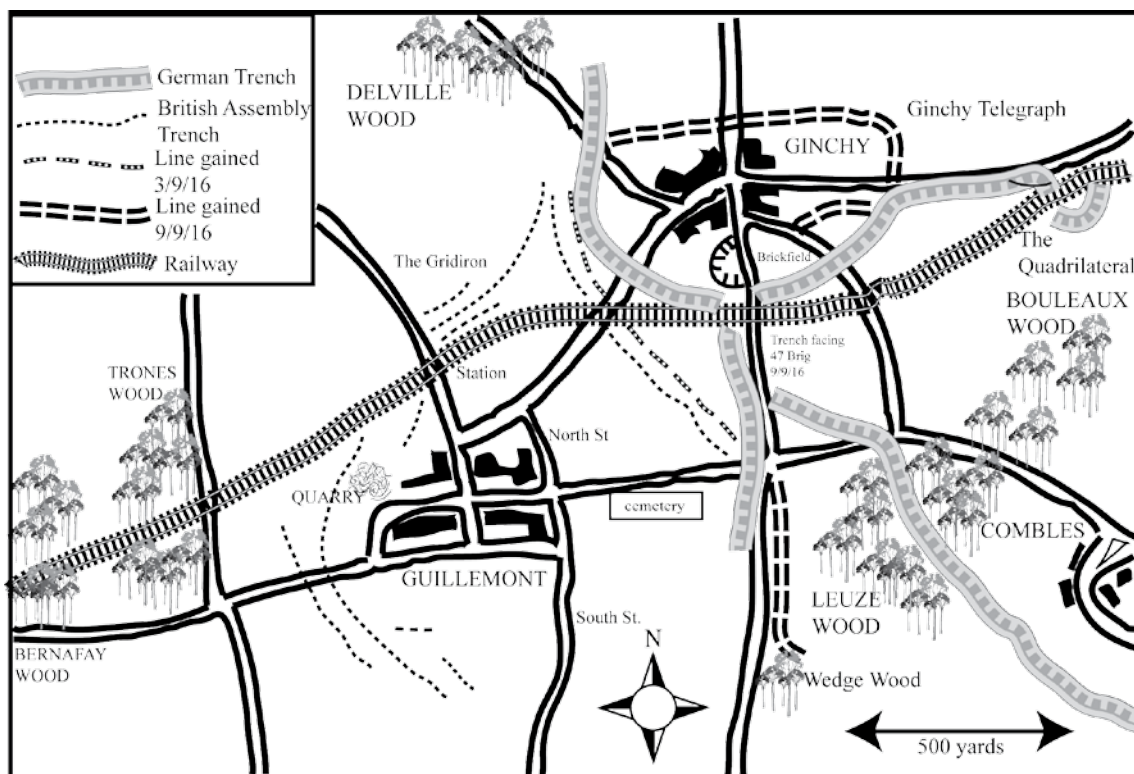
marked contrast to the experience of 6/Leinsters and the rest of 10th (Irish) Division whose first taste of war was an amphibious assault on the Gallipoli peninsula after barely 9 months training and shows how the hard lessons were being learnt and the experience gained was being applied. It was not until the end of August that the division received orders to move to the Somme sector and into the battle zone of the Fourth Army as corps reserve to XIV Corps who were tasked with the capture of the villages GUILLEMONT and GINCHY and the adjoining high ground.

The Somme offensive was now almost 2 months old and the optimism of the early days had given way to the hard slog to capture the uplands above the river valley. Guillemont and Ginchy, originally at the extremity of the first day's objectives, had previously been attacked on five occasions during July and August resulting in several occupations of the pulverised remains of the village only for it to be re-captured by German counter attacks. General Sir Douglas HAIG wanted to secure the ridge, that included the villages, to have an advantageous position from which to launch the next phase of the main offensive in mid September. This was to include the first use of the top secret "land ships" or to use their code name "tanks" and he was applying considerable pressure on Gen. Rawlinson commanding Fourth Army to secure the best possible ground on which to unleash this new wonder weapon. Each attack had been preceded by an extensive artillery bombardment that had progressively

reduced the villages to rubble. However appearances could be deceptive as many of the former houses were built over deep cellars hewn out of the underlying chalk. These had been turned into shelters and strong points by the Germans who retired to them during the bombardments and then emerged with their machine guns to confront the British infantry advancing up the slopes towards the village. Among the divisions that had tried to capture Guillemont during August was the 24th that included 2/Leinsters. Capt. Frank Hitchcock, in his book "*Stand To*", has left us a vivid description of the fighting during this period together with a sketch of the approaches to the village that is possible to line up with the view today. In the last days of August it was the turn of the 20th (Light) Division to attempt to finally clear the two villages. In doing so the division and the others attacking alongside it had suffered heavy casualties and the decision was made to take 20th Div's, 60 Brigade out of the line and replace it with 47 Brigade from Corps reserve for an attack scheduled for 3rd September.

On the 1st September 7/Leinsters went into the trenches south east of WATERLOT FARM near the road between LONGUEVAL and GUILLEMONT and on the 2nd they received orders to attack Guillemont on

Map of the combat area surrounding Guillemont and Ginchy



LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

10

the following day. The orders were accompanied by the following message from Maj-Gen William Hickey commanding 16th (Irish) Division ⁽²⁾

"The Divisional Commander sends his best wishes to the officers and men of the 47th Brigade and knows that their action tomorrow will go down to history".

At 4am on the 3rd September the battalion took up positions in a system of shallow trenches known as the "GRIDIRON", on account of their rectangular layout, that lay to the north west of the village. These trenches were so shallow that the men had to sit or crouch in them to take cover and they remained in these circumstances under constant German fire until 12 noon when the attack took place with what the Official History describes as a "*dashing assault*"⁽³⁾ as the British artillery bombardment lifted onto its next target. The battalion war diary describes what happened next:

"At 12 noon the attack commenced and the Battalion reached its first objective Brompton Road with comparative ease the enemy been taken by surprise.

At 12.40pm it moved forward against its 2nd objective Green Street which it also made good.

The bombers did particularly good work by pushing forward through our own barrage and clearing the village. They got as far as the cross roads east of Guillemont and then fell back on the battalion.

Captain H F Downing was killed at about 1pm on this day by rifle fire.

The Battalion held on to its position with comparative ease but great difficulty was experienced in the evacuation of wounded owing to the scarcity of stretchers." ⁽⁴⁾

Behind this rather bland statement of fact lies a more dramatic story. Lieut. Holland led a party of 26 "bombers" divided between men carrying Mills bombs used to clear cellars, trenches, the remains of buildings and any other fortified obstructions that they encountered, and bayonet men whose job it was to mob up any enemy that survived the effects of the Mills bombs being tossed into confined cellars. What Holland and his party did was to pass through the British artillery barrage and catch the defenders by surprise while they were still sheltering and thus break the pattern of the previous attacks on the village. They did so at huge risk to themselves and one can but admire

the leadership qualities shown by Holland and his NCOs that carried the party through these dangers. Five of the party were killed and 16 were wounded. On the left of the Leinsters, 6/Connaught Rangers also pressed home their attack resulting in the award of the Victoria Cross to Private Tom Hughes. Once 7/Leinsters and 6/Connaughts had secured their objectives the remaining battalions of 47 brigade passed through them to continue the advance towards Ginchy. The capture of Ginchy and the open country beyond however had to wait for another day with a full scale 16th (Irish Division) and other divisions attack on the 9th September. During this attack 7/Leinsters and the other battalions of 47 Brigade suffered heavy casualties. The REGIMENTAL HISTORY tells us that when the Battalion marched out of the line and was piped into billets in HAPPY VALLEY its strength was reduced to 15 officers and 289 OR's. Thereafter the battalion and the rest of the division, having refitted, made their way via ABBEVILLE to the VIERSTRAAT sector between YPRES and KEMMEL where they remained for the remainder of 1916 before going on to further distinguish themselves during the Battle of MESSINES the following year.

During the early days of October news of gallantry awards for the actions between the 3rd and 9th September trickled in. In addition to the official army awards a number of "PARCHMENT CERTIFICATES" were awarded. Maj-Gen. Hickey had introduced this award, bearing his signature and peculiar to the 16th Division, as a means of rewarding good service or gallantry that might fall outside the criteria for the usual awards. Although these existed outside the official honours system they were valued within the community of the division and they continue to occasionally appear on the militaria market today. In all two DCM's and six MM's were awarded to members of the bombing party. In addition 2854 Pte. John Ford was recommended for a commission. Finally in the war diary for the 27th/28th October occurs the following entry:

"Nothing of importance occurred tactically. News received that Lt. J V Holland had been awarded the Victoria Cross"⁽⁵⁾

The recommendation had been originally made by 47 Brigade Commander, Brig-Gen. Pereira, and would have wound its way up the Army chain of command to the C in C, Gen Sir Douglas Haig before it was finally approved by the King. The citation read:

"During a heavy engagement, Lt. Holland, not content with bombing hostile dug-outs within the objective, fearlessly led his bombers through our own artillery barrage

LEINSTER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION

and cleared a great part of the village in front. He started out with 26 bombers and finished with only five after capturing some 50 prisoners. By this gallant action he undoubtedly broke the spirit of the enemy and saved many casualties. He was far from well at the time and later had to go to hospital" (6)

In addition he was later promoted to the rank of captain and received several foreign awards.

Holland's connection with 7/ Leinsters appears to have ended at this point and there is no further reference to him in the battalion records. He seems to have returned to the 3rd Battalion at QUEENSTOWN, Co Cork where he married FRANCES GROGAN, a local girl, in January 1917. The following month he made a triumphant return to his native town of ATHY and the Kildare Observer comprehensively described in fulsome terms the reception he and his new wife received. It is interesting to consider the tone of the report which even allowing for a little journalistic licence and hyperbole was clearly recounting events that involved considerable local pride, patriotism and popular support for the war less than a year after the Easter Rebellion and its consequences. The Athy Urban District Council, representatives of Kildare County Council and a galaxy of clergy and all manner of local dignitaries received Capt. Holland and his bride in the town hall. Among the apologies received was one from Sir Anthony Weldon Bart. DSO, HML for Co. Kildare and C/O of 4th Leinsters. The Weldons were an old established Athy family with strong Leinster Regiment connections. We are told that a planned procession through the town accompanied by bands was abandoned owing to a Holland family bereavement. However this did not stop enthusiastic town's people carrying their hero shoulder high into the Town Hall. We are told that the hall was "tastefully decorated" including, on the wall, the representation of a horseshoe on which were painted the words: "For Lieut. Holland, Valour and Good Luck." After introductions, Mr Martin Doyle JP, Chairman of Athy Urban District Council, began his speech by pointing out that Athy, with a population of around 4,500, had about 1,500 men serving in the forces (7) (182 were to die in the course of the war including Sir Anthony Weldon as above) He went on to invoke the spirit of the Wild Geese of yesteryear and how they had also served France. He concluded by congratulating John Holland, a true son of Athy, on his bravery and the award and bidding his bride "Cead Mile Failte" while making



After the Armistice the first commemoration ceremony held at Guillemont erected this wooden Celtic Cross in honour of the Division's fallen. This was eventually replaced by the granite and stone Celtic Cross now in front of Guillemont Church

him a presentation described as "a spontaneous offering of a number of friends and an admiring public". Mr Doyle was followed by Mr M. Minch JP, Chairman of Kildare County Council who read a formal address from the Council to John Holland that included many ringing phrases but pointing out that not only was it God's work but also Ireland's battle no less than England's "to crush for ever the hideous and hellish spirit and ambitions of Prussian militarism". At this point an inscribed piece of plate and a "solid silver tea service" was presented. There followed a series of speeches in similar vein from church men and civic leaders with the Rev. David Meeke, the Presbyterian Minister introducing a bit of old testament humour by comparing Lieut. Holland to Saul, son of Kish as being taller than

other people, a play on both his achievement and the fact that he was unusually tall. (One hopes the joke worked better live than it does in print!) Reading the speeches today, cutting through the rhetorical flourishes, and recognising that there was a strong element of constitutional Home Rule sentiment present you notice the repeated assertion that the war and its associated sacrifices was regarded as Ireland's burden as much as England's and that Irishmen could play their part without compromising their national identity. It is remarkable to contemplate how the public mood changed in less than two years between these events and the elections of December 1918.

After the conclusion of the speeches of welcome and congratulation John Holland replied by thanking all for the reception, honour and presentations that had been bestowed on him. He went on to describe the actions of his bombing party praising their gallantry and devotion to duty. He too invoked the spirit of English and Irish cooperation in the defence of small nations and urged that "Prussian

Continued on page 15