
Summary Information Document
Detailing the Irish Regiments of the
British Army up to 31st July 1922.

(Part of the detail is taken from “A Great Sacrifice: Cork Servicemen Who Died in the Great War”, © Gerry White and Brendan O’Shea, Editors.

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INTRODUCTION

This information document has been produced for two reasons:

Firstly, to let researchers know that **the Irish Military Archives does not hold records relating to Irish soldiers who were members of the Irish Regiments of the British Army**. This material was repatriated to England in 1922 by the British Administration and is held by such Institutions as the National Archives in Kew, London, with ancillary material held at the Imperial War Museum, among others.

The National Library of Ireland does, however, have one or two useful sources for looking up Officers and Men of the British Army based in Ireland before the formation of the Irish Free State:

1. **“The Irish Military Guide”**, which is a set of volumes that read like a directory for Officers serving in Ireland in the late 19th Century into the 20th century, up to about 1919. It also lists the regiments based in the various Irish barracks split up into six month intervals.
2. **British Army Lists**, i.e. lists of members of various Regiments of the British Army based in Ireland.

See the website of the National Library, www.nli.ie for more information.

Secondly, subsequent to the above, this summary document is to give researchers a general idea of the number and type of Irish Regiments in the British Army that were active during the Great War and in prior wars and engagements.

Further detail on the battalions within these regiments and the engagements they were involved in, is to be found elsewhere, either on the Web, or else in the many books on the subject. I have included either Regimental Association contact details or else potentially useful Web links at the end of each regiment note. **The Military Archives is not responsible for the content of any of these websites.** A very short bibliography is also included at the end of this document to help get the researcher started.

While it was not an issue at the time of the Great War (with the whole island of Ireland still part of Great Britain), the counties of Northern Ireland and the Republic have been separated out, to a degree, in the organisation of this document. This is purely for clarity and ease of use of the modern researcher.

The layout is split into Sections dependent on the regiment’s depot location and recruitment area during the Great War (used as an arbitrary focus for the purposes of this document). Section 1 being for those regiments that could, at the time of the Great War,

be considered to be undertaking most of their recruitment in Ireland, while Section 2 covers those regiments that mostly recruited, or were based, in Northern Ireland or Great Britain. The sections are then subdivided by whether they were infantry or cavalry regiments. Section 3 is a short note on the “Irish Divisions” which were newly set up at the start of the Great War.

Almost all of these regiments contained a significant majority of Irish soldiers, regardless of where they lived. However, some of these regiments, particularly one or two of the cavalry regiments in Section 2, were only Irish in name. This is mentioned as a point of information for when researchers are considering which regiment a particular person or ancestor might have been part of.

Hopefully this summary document will prove to be an effective starting-point for researchers to undertake general and genealogical research into the Irish Regiments of the British Army up to 1922.

For information on the material held by, and the services available from, the English National Archives in Kew, London, please visit: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

9th November 2010

SECTION 1A

Regiments that recruited during the Great War from Counties now in the Republic, or had their Regimental Depots on the island of Ireland.

INFANTRY

The Royal Munster Fusiliers

“This regiment was formed in 1881 by the amalgamation of two regiments which had their origins in the former East India Company; the 101st Regiment of Foot (Royal Bengal Fusiliers) and the 104th Regiment of Foot (Bengal Fusiliers)..... In September 1918 West Clare M.P. Arthur Lynch attempted to raise a 10th service battalion but this unit never saw active service and was disbanded on 14 March 1919. On 12th June 1922 the colours of the Royal Munster Fusiliers were laid up at a ceremony at St. George’s Hall, Windsor Castle and the regiment was formally disbanded on 31 July 1922.”

Regimental Depot:

Tralee, Co. Kerry

Counties Recruited from:

Cork, Limerick, Kerry and Clare

Military Service before 1914:

India, Burma and South Africa.

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front, Gallipoli, the Middle East and Salonika.

Casualties: over 3,000.

Association:

The Royal Munster Fusiliers Association

Website:

www.rmfa92.org

Telephone Number:

00353 61 303147

Honorary Secretary:

Mr. Tadhg Moloney, M.A.

Postal Address:

86 High Meadows
Gouldavoher
Limerick
Ireland

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers

“This regiment was formed in 1881 by the amalgamation of two regiments which had their origins in the former East India Company; the 102nd Regiment of Foot (The Royal Madras Fusiliers) and the 103rd Regiment of Foot (The Royal Bombay Fusiliers)..... On 12th June 1922 the colours of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers were laid up at a ceremony at St. George’s Hall, Windsor Castle and the regiment was formally disbanded on 31 July 1922.”

Regimental Depot:

Dublin

Counties Recruited from:

Dublin, Kildare, Carlow and Wicklow

Military Service before 1914:

Ceylon, Gibraltar, South Africa, Crete, Malta and Egypt

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front, Gallipoli, the Middle East and Salonika

Casualties: over 4,700.

Association:

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Website:

www.greatwar.ie

Email:

rdfa@eircom.net

*Papers for this Association held in the **Dublin City Library and Archive** 138-144 Pearse Street, Dublin 2.*

The Royal Irish Regiment

“This Regiment was raised in 1684 by the Earl of Granard from a number of independent Companies based in Ireland and in 1695 it became known as the Royal Regiment of Ireland. The regiment served in Europe during the Wars of the Spanish Succession, in America during the American Revolution, in the Crimean War and in Egypt and Afghanistan..... Under the Childers Reforms in 1881 it was renamed the Royal Irish Regiment..... On 12th June 1922 the colours of the Royal Irish Regiment were laid up at a ceremony at St. George’s Hall, Windsor Castle and the regiment was formally disbanded on 31 July 1922.”

Note: This regiment appears to have been re-formed in 1992, which can cause confusion if looking for information online.

Regimental Depot:

Clonmel, Co. Tipperary

Counties recruited from:

Tipperary, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford

Military Service before 1914:

South Africa and India

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front and Gallipoli.

Useful Web links:

http://gallipoli-association.org/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=473&OB=DESC

The Connaught Rangers

“This regiment was raised in 1793 by John Thomas de Burgh, the 13th Earl of Clanricard from men recruited in Connaught and later became the 88th Regiment of Foot. Under the Childers Reforms it was amalgamated with the 94th Regiment of Foot and the new formation retained the title Connaught Rangers..... On 12th June 1922 the colours of the Connaught Rangers were laid up at a ceremony at St. George’s Hall, Windsor Castle and the regiment was formally disbanded on 31 July 1922.”

Regimental Depot:

Renmore, Co. Galway

Counties recruited from:

Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo.

Military Service before 1914:

India and South Africa.

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front, Gallipoli, the Middle East and Salonika.

Association:

The Connaught Rangers Association

Websites: www.connaughtangersassoc.com

www.kinghouse.ie/connaughtangers.html

Postal Address:

Boyle House
Boyle,
Co. Roscommon

The Leinster Regiment

“This regiment was formed in 1881 by the amalgamation of then 100th (Prince of Wales Royal Canadian) Regiment of Foot and the 109th Regiment of Foot (Bombay Infantry) and it became known as the Prince of Wales’s Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians). On 12th June 1922 the colours of the Leinster Regiment were laid up at a ceremony at St. George’s Hall, Windsor Castle and the regiment was formally disbanded on 31 July 1922.”

Regimental Depot:

Birr, Co. Offaly

Counties recruited from:

Longford, Meath, Westmeath, King’s County (Offaly) and Queen’s County (Laois).

Military Service before 1914:

England, Malta, Bermuda, Jamaica, Barbados, Canada, South Africa and Ireland.

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front, Gallipoli, the Middle East and Salonika.

Association:

The Prince of Wales’s Leinster Regiment Association

Website:

<http://www.leinster-regiment-association.org.uk/>

The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers

“This regiment was formed in 1881 by the amalgamation of the 27th (Inniskilling) Regiment of Foot and the 108th Regiment of Foot (Madras Infantry). The 27th (Inniskilling) Regiment was originally raised in 1689 and fought for King William III at the Battle of the Boyne while the 108th Regiment was an Irish regiment in the service of the East India Company.”

Regimental Depot:

Omagh, Co. Tyrone

Counties recruited from:

Derry, Donegal, Fermanagh, Tyrone.

Military Service before 1914:

India and South Africa

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front, Gallipoli, the Middle East and Salonika.

Useful Web Links:

<http://www.inniskillingsmuseum.com/>

The Royal Irish Rifles

“This regiment was formed in 1881 by the amalgamation of the 83rd (County of Dublin) Regiment of Foot and the 86th (Royal County Down) Regiment of Foot, both of which were originally raised in 1793 when the British Army was enlarged to meet the threat posed by France.....When the Irish Free State was proclaimed in 1921 the title of the regiment was changed to the Royal Ulster Rifles.”

Regimental Depot:

Belfast

Counties recruited from:

Antrim and Down

Military Service before 1914:

South Africa and the Middle East

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front, Gallipoli, the Middle East, Salonika and India

Useful Web Links:

<http://www.1914-1918.net/ririfles.htm>

<http://northirish.net/rirhistory.html>

The Royal Irish Fusiliers

“This regiment was originally formed in 1793 as the 87th (Prince of Wales’s Irish) Regiment of Foot and was given the title the Royal Irish Fusiliers in 1827. In 1881 this regiment was amalgamated with the 89th (Princess Victoria’s) Regiment of Foot, which was also formed in 1793, and the new formation retained the title Royal Irish Fusiliers.”

Regimental Depot:

Armagh

Counties recruited from:

Armagh, Cavan, Monaghan, and Louth

Military Service before 1914:

South Africa and India

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front, Salonika, India and Burma.

Useful Web Links:

<http://www.1914-1918.net/rifus.htm>

http://www.trav.freeuk.com/rish_fusiliers.htm

SECTION 1B

CAVALRY

The South Irish Horse

“This unit was formed in January 1902 and was originally known as the South of Ireland Imperial Yeomanry. In the 1908 reforms initiated by the Secretary of State for War, Richard Haldane, yeomanry and militia regiments were reorganised into a new Territorial Force. However, this legislation did not apply to Ireland and the South of Ireland Imperial Yeomanry, which was designated as a special reserve cavalry regiment and renamed the South Irish Horse.”

The regiment was split into two during the Great War and...

“In September 1917 the dismounted officers and men of both regiments were retrained as infantry and combined to form 7th (South Irish Horse) Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment.”

Regimental Depot:

Clonmel

Area recruited from:

The south of Ireland

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front

Useful Web Links:

<http://southirishhorse.com/>

The North Irish Horse

“This unit was formed in January 1902 and was originally known as the North of Ireland Imperial Yeomanry. In July 1908 the unit was redesignated as a special reserve cavalry regiment as part of the Haldane Reforms and was renamed the North Irish Horse..... In June 1916 the 2nd North Irish Horse Regiment was formed. This unit was subsequently broken up in August 1917 and many of its members formed the 9th (Service) Battalion of the Royal Irish Fusiliers. The North Irish Horse were demobilised in August 1919 and were re-established in 1921 as a cavalry militia regiment.”

Regimental Depot:

Belfast

Counties recruited from:

Antrim, Armagh, Cavan, Derry, Donegal, Down, Monaghan and Tyrone.

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front

Association Website:

<http://northirishhorse.com/>

SECTION 2A

Regiments which were either originally raised in Ireland, but later transferred to Northern Ireland or other parts of Britain, or were raised in Britain and recruited mostly Irishmen who had emigrated outside the counties of the Republic.

INFANTRY

The Irish Guards

“This unit was formed by order of Queen Victoria on 01 April 1900 in response to the many courageous actions performed by soldiers of Irish regiments in the Second Boer War.”

Still active.

Regimental Depot:

Caterham Barracks, Surrey

Recruited from:

Great Britain and Ireland

Military Service prior to 1914:

The later stages of the Second Boer War, and ceremonial duties in Britain.

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front

Casualties: over 2,300

Regimental Website:

<http://www.army.mod.uk/infantry/regiments/3482.aspx>

The Tyneside Irish

“The Tyneside Irish Battalions were originally raised in September 1914 as ‘Pals’ battalions from Irishmen living in Newcastle-upon-Tyne with the War Office stipulation that they form part of the county regiment – the Northumberland Fusiliers.” By January 1915, four battalions had been raised.

“In June 1915 these battalions were grouped together to form the 103rd Brigade (Tyneside Irish).....By May 1918 they had been reduced to cadre strength and tasked with training newly arrived British and American troops. After the war the cadre returned to Tyneside where the colours were laid up and the unit disbanded.”

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front, with heavy casualties.

Useful Web Links:

<http://www.tyneside-scottish.co.uk/>

http://www.stmaryscathedral.org.uk/history_architecture/tyneside_irish/history.html

The London Irish Rifles

“This unit was formed in 1860 as the 28th Middlesex (London Irish) Rifle Volunteer Corps. In 1908 it was transferred to the Territorial Force and renamed the 18th (County of London) Battalion, the London Regiment (London Irish Rifles)..... A third (reserve) battalion was raised in London in 1915 and served in England throughout the war..... After the war the unit was reduced to cadre strength but it was later reconstituted as part of the London Regiment.”

Regimental Depot:

Duke of York Barracks

Area recruited from:

London

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front, Salonika and the Middle East.

Casualties: over 1,000.

Association:

<http://www.londonirishrifles.com/>

Liverpool Irish

“This unit was raised as an infantry corps in 1860 from Liverpool’s large Irish community and was originally named the 64th Lancashire Rifle Volunteer Corps. Under the 1881 Childers reforms it became the 5th (Irish) Volunteer Battalion of the King’s (Liverpool Regiment). The unit wasn’t mobilised during the Second South African War but sent drafts to other regiments. In 1908 it became part of the Territorial Force and became the 8th (Irish) Battalion, the King’s Regiment (Liverpool)..... After the war the Liverpool Irish returned to England and were disbanded on 31 March 1922.”

Regimental Depot:

Seaforth Barracks

Area recruited from:

Liverpool

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front and recruit training

Web Link:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Liverpool_Irish

SECTION 2B

CAVALRY

4TH Royal Irish Dragoon Guards

“This unit was formed in 1685 as the Earl of Arran’s Regiment of Curassiers and was ranked as the 6th Regiment of Horse. In 1691 it was re-ranked as the 5th Regiment of Horse and in 1746 it was transferred to the Irish Establishment where it was ranked as the 1st Horse. The unit returned to the British Establishment in 1788 and became the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards..... The regiment holds the distinction of having fired the first shot (by the British Expeditionary Force), and conducted the last British cavalry charge of the war. On 22nd October 1922 it amalgamated with the 7th Dragoon Guards to become the 4/7th Dragoon Guards.”

Regimental Depot:

Newport, Wales

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front

Association Web Site:

<http://www.rdgmuseum.org.uk/history.htm>

5th Royal Irish Lancers

“This unit was raised in 1689 as Owen Wynne’s Regiment of Dragoons. In 1704 it became the Royal Dragoons of Ireland and in 1756 it was renamed the 5th (Royal Irish) Regiment of Dragoons. After being disbanded in 1799 it was reformed as a lancer regiment in 1858 and in 1861 it became the 5th (Royal Irish) Lancers..... After the war it returned to England and in April 1922 it amalgamated with the 16th (The Queen’s) Lancers, to form [the] 16/5th Lancers.”

Regimental Depot:

Woolwich

Military Service prior to 1914:

India, Egypt and South Africa

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front

Association Web Site:

<http://www.royalirishlancers.co.uk/>

6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons

“This unit was raised by Sir Albert Cunningham as a regiment of dragoons in 1689 from a number of independent troops and was ranked as the 6th Dragoons. In 1751 its title was changed to the 6th (Inniskilling) Regiment of Dragoons but this was later simplified to the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons..... A service squadron was raised at Enniskillen in 1914 for the 36th (Ulster) Division and this served on the Western Front until the summer of 1917 when it was broken up and its troops were dismounted and posted to the 9th Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers. After the war the regiment went to England and in 1922 it amalgamated with the 5th Dragoon Guards to become the 5/6th Dragoons.”

Military Service prior to 1914:

India, and it took part in the battles of the Boyne, Waterloo and Balaklava.

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front.

Useful Web Link:

[http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/6th_\(Inniskilling\)_Dragoons](http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/6th_(Inniskilling)_Dragoons)

8th (The King's Royal Irish) Hussars

“This unit was raised in Ireland [in] 1693 as Henry Conyngham’s Regiment of Dragoons. In 1775 it was reclassified and the title was changed to the 8th Regiment of Light Dragoons. Three years later the title was again changed to the 8th (The King’s Royal Irish) Regiment of (Light) Dragoons. In 1822 the unit was reclassified as hussars and the title was [changed] to the 8th (The King’s Royal Irish) Regiment of (Light) Dragoons (Hussars) but in 1861 this was simplified to the 8th (The King’s Royal Irish) Hussars..... After the war the regiment [returned] to England and in 1921 its name was changed to the 8th King’s Royal Irish Hussars.”

Military Service prior to 1914:

Egypt, the Crimea, India, Afghanistan and South Africa.

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front

Useful Web Link:

http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/8th_King%27s_Royal_Irish_Hussars

SECTION 3

The Irish Divisions

“Following the outbreak of the war in August 1914 Earl Kitchener of Khartoum was appointed British Secretary of State for War. Kitchener correctly predicted a long conflict that would require the formation of a ‘new’ large, well-trained army to defeat the Central Powers and on 07 August 1914 the press published his call for 100,000 volunteers for the British Army..... These new recruits were formed into new infantry battalions, artillery batteries and cavalry squadrons.

These units in turn were formed into a number of new divisions, which formed the basis of the two ‘New Armies’..... Two of the new divisions, the 10th and 16th, were known as ‘Irish’ Divisions and one, the 36th, was known as the ‘Ulster’ Division. These three divisions fought with great distinction in battlefields throughout Europe and the Middle East and collectively suffered more than 69,000 casualties during the war.”

Useful Web links:

10th Division

<http://www.1914-1918.net/10div.htm>

[http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/British_10th_\(Irish\)_Division](http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/British_10th_(Irish)_Division)

16th Division

<http://freespace.virgin.net/sh.k/xvidiv.html>

36th (Ulster) Division

[http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/British_36th_\(Ulster\)_Division](http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/British_36th_(Ulster)_Division)

| <u>Short Bibliography of Titles for Researching the Irish Regiments in the British Army</u> | | | | |
|--|--|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Title | Author | ISBN | Publication Date | Notes |
| Irishmen in War: From the Crusades to 1798. Essays from the Irish Sword Volume 1 | The Military History Society | 0716528169 | 2006 | |
| Irishmen in War: 1800 - 2000. Essays from the Irish Sword Volume 2 | The Military History Society | 0716528177 | 2006 | |
| A Military History of Ireland | Editors: Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery | 0521415993 | 1996 | |
| The Barracks: A History of Victoria/Collins Barracks, Cork | Dan Harvey and Gerry White | 1856351947 | 1997 | |
| A Great Sacrifice: Cork Servicemen Who Died in the Great War | Editors: Gerry White and Brendan O'Shea | 0956244314 | 2010 | |
| Irish Winners of the Victoria Cross | Richard Doherty and David Truesdale | 1851824421 | 2000 | |
| Orange Green and Khaki: The Story of the Irish Regiments in the Great War, 1914-1918 | Tom Johnstone | 0717119947 | 1992 | |
| The Micks: The Story of the Irish Guards | Peter Verney | 432186506 | 1970 | Publisher: Peter Davies |
| A History of the Irish Soldier | Brigadier A.E.C. Bredin | 0903152185 | 1987 | |
| A Coward if I Return, A Hero if I Fall: Stories of Irishmen in World War I | Neil Richardson | 1847171311 | 2010 | |