

An Chartlann Mhíleata
Dún Chathail Brugha
Ráth Maonais
Baile Átha Cliath 6



Military Archives
Cathal Brugha Barracks
Rathmines
Dublin 6

**Information Document on the Irish
Regiments of the British Army up to 31st
July 1922.**

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INTRODUCTION

This information document has been produced for two reasons:

1. 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 is held by such Institutions as the National Archives in Kew, London, with ancillary material held at the National Army Museum and the Imperial War Museum, among others.

The National Library of Ireland (NLI) and the Library in Trinity College, Dublin (TCD) 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:

- **NLI: “The Irish Military Guide”**, which is a set of volumes that read like a directory for Officers and some of the staff serving in Ireland from 1892 to 1919. It also lists the regiments based in the various Irish barracks. It was published on a six-monthly basis and broken down internally by month.

Note: The Military Archives hold some editions of this guide, namely: 1903; July-December 1908; July-December 1909; January-June 1912; 1913; July-December 1915

- **TCD: “Army Lists”**, i.e. lists of members of various Regiments of the British Army based in Ireland from 1759, which includes lists from the 1st World War and a new Honour Roll for those who lost their lives during the 2nd World War. They are held in the Department of Early Printed Books.

(See the websites of the National Library, www.nli.ie or Trinity College www.tcd.ie for more information.)

2. 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 their operational activities is to be found elsewhere, either on the Web, or else in the many books on the subject. Regimental Association contact details or else potentially useful Web links are included 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.

Irish Regiments in British Army/INTRODUCTION

While it was not an issue at the time of the Great War (with the whole island of Ireland still being 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 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 have undertaken 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 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, which should be considered when researching your military ancestor.

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

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 Connaught Rangers

This regiment was first raised in 1793 by John Thomas de Burgh, the 13th Earl of Clanrickard, from men recruited in Connaught and were later renamed the 88th Regiment of Foot. Under the Childers Reforms it was amalgamated with the 94th Regiment of Foot and it retained the title Connaught Rangers. On 12th June 1922 the colours of the Connaught Rangers were laid up at a ceremony in St. George's Hall, Windsor Castle and the regiment was disbanded on 31st 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.connaughtrangersassoc.com

www.kinghouse.ie/connaughtrangers.html

Postal Address:

Boyle House
Boyle,
Co. Roscommon

The Leinster Regiment

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

This regiment was created in 1881 by the amalgamation of two regiments which had origins in the former East India Company, i.e. 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 in St. George's Hall, Windsor Castle and the regiment was then formally disbanded on 31st 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 Inniskilling Fusiliers

This regiment was created 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.

Regimental Museum:

The Inniskillings Museum

Website:

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

Postal Address:

The Inniskillings Museum
The Castle, Enniskillen
Co. Fermanagh BT74 7HL

The Royal Irish Fusiliers

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

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 Revolution, in the Crimean War and in Egypt and Afghanistan. Under the 1881 Childers Reforms it was renamed the Royal Irish Regiment. On 12th June 1922 the colours of the Royal Irish Regiment were laid up at a ceremony in St. George's Hall, Windsor Castle and the regiment was formally disbanded on 31 July 1922.

Note: The Royal Irish Regiment was reformed on 1st July 1992 when the Ulster Defence Regiment and the Royal Irish Rangers were amalgamated.

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.

Regimental Association website:

www.firstandlast.ie

Useful web links:

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

The Royal Irish Rifles

This regiment was created 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 counter the threat posed by France. When the Irish Free State came into being 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 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 Arthur Lynch, the M.P. for West Clare, attempted to raise a 10th service battalion but it was disbanded on 14 March 1919 before it ever saw active service. On 12th June 1922 the colours of the Royal Munster Fusiliers were laid up at a ceremony in St. George's Hall, Windsor Castle and the regiment was formally disbanded on 31st 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.

Regimental 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

SECTION 1B

CAVALRY

The North Irish Horse

This unit was created in January 1902 and it was originally known as the North of Ireland Imperial Yeomanry. In July 1908 the unit was redesignated to become a special reserve cavalry regiment as part of the Haldane Reforms and it was renamed the North Irish Horse. In June 1916 the 2nd North Irish Horse Regiment was formed, but it 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 Regiment was demobilised in August 1919 and was 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:

The North Irish Horse Regimental Association

Website:

<http://northirishhorse.com>

Useful Web Links:

<http://northirishhorse.net>

The South Irish Horse

This unit was created in January 1902 and was first known as the South of Ireland Imperial Yeomanry. In the 1908 reforms under the Secretary of State for War, Richard Haldane, yeomanry and militia regiments were reorganised into a new Territorial Force. This legislation did not apply to Ireland and the South of Ireland Imperial Yeomanry, which was designated as a special reserve cavalry regiment and subsequently 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 amalgamated to form the 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

Regimental Association website:

www.firstandlast.ie

Useful Web links:

<http://southirishhorse.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 Regiment was formed by order of Queen Victoria on 01 April 1900 as a response to the numerous courageous actions carried out by soldiers of the Irish regiments in the Second Boer War. This unit is still active today.

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 Liverpool Irish

This Regiment was raised as an infantry corps in 1860 from Liverpool's large Irish community and was first named the 64th Lancashire Rifle Volunteer Corps. It became the 5th (Irish) Volunteer Battalion of the King's (Liverpool Regiment) under the 1881 Childers reforms. The unit was not mobilised during the Second Boer War but sent drafts to other regiments at the time. In 1908 it became part of the Territorial Force and was renamed the 8th (Irish) Battalion, the King's Regiment (Liverpool). After the war the Liverpool Irish returned to England and were subsequently disbanded on 31st March 1922.

Regimental Depot:

Seaforth Barracks, Liverpool

Area recruited from:

Liverpool's northern suburbs

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front and recruit training

Useful Web Link:

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

The London Irish Rifles

This unit was created in 1860 and named the 28th Middlesex (London Irish) Rifle Volunteer Corps. In 1908 it was transferred to the Territorial Force and became 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 for the rest of the war. After the war the unit was reduced to cadre strength but it was then later reconstituted as part of the London Regiment.

Regimental Depot:

Duke of York Barracks, London

Area recruited from:

London

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front, Salonika and the Middle East.

Casualties: over 1,000.

Association:

The London Irish Rifles Association

Website:

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

The Tyneside Irish

The Tyneside Irish Battalions were raised in September 1914 as so-called 'Pals' battalions from Irishmen living in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. There was a War Office stipulation that they must form part of the county regiment – the Northumberland Fusiliers and by January 1915, four battalions had been raised.

In June 1915 these battalions were grouped together to form the 103rd Brigade (Tyneside Irish), but by May 1918 they had been reduced to cadre strength and tasked with training freshly 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, including approximately 2,100 in the Battle of the Somme alone.

Useful Web Links:

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

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

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 at the time. By 1691 it was ranked as the 5th Regiment of Horse and in 1746 it was transferred to the Irish Establishment where it ranked as the 1st Horse Regiment. 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, while also conducting the last British cavalry charge of the war. On the 22nd October 1922 it was 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

Regimental Museum:

The Regimental Museum of the Royal Dragoon Guards

Web Site:

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

Postal Address:

The Curator – Captain (Retired) W A Henshall
The Regimental Museum of the Royal Dragoon Guards
3a Tower Street
York YO1 9SB
England

Please Note: The Museum has a very small staff, so it does not have the facilities to entertain detailed queries. They suggest visiting the following website for information if trying to track relatives in the regiment: www.armymuseums.org.uk

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. Following this, in 1861, it became the 5th (Royal Irish) Lancers. After the war it returned to England and in April 1922 it was amalgamated with the 16th (The Queen's) Lancers, to form the 16/5th Lancers.

Regimental Depot:

Woolwich, London

Military Service prior to 1914:

Battle of the Boyne, India, Egypt and South Africa

Military Service during the Great War:

The Western Front

Useful Web Link:

<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 shortened to the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons. A service squadron was raised at Enniskillen in 1914 for the 36th (Ulster) Division. This squadron served on the Western Front up until the summer of 1917 when it was broken up and its troops were dismounted and transferred to the 9th Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers. After the war the regiment went to England and in 1922 it merged with the 5th Dragoon Guards to become the 5/6th Dragoons.

Military Service prior to 1914:

Battles of the Boyne, Waterloo and Balaklava, and service in India.

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 name was changed to the 8th Regiment of Light Dragoons. Three years later it was again renamed as the 8th (The King's Royal Irish) Regiment of (Light) Dragoons. In 1822 a further reclassification occurred and the title became the 8th (The King's Royal Irish) Regiment of (Light) Dragoons (Hussars). Later, 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 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 creation of a new large, well-trained army to defeat the Central Powers. On 7th August 1914 the press published his call for 100,000 volunteers for the British Army. These new recruits were formed up into various 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' (as they were termed at the time). 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 valour and distinction on 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 of Ireland	0716528169	2006	
Irishmen in War: 1800 - 2000. Essays from the Irish Sword Volume 2	The Military History Society of Ireland	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	
Images of Sarsfield Barracks	Denis Carroll, Michael Deegan, Stephen Kelly, William Sheehan	9781845889395	2008	

Irish Regiments in British Army/ BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Coward if I Return, A Hero if I Fall: Stories of Irishmen in World War I	Neil Richardson	1847171311	2010	
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For listings and details of how to order old and rare books regarding Irish Regiments of the British Army, please consult the following websites:

www.schullbooks.net

www.deburcararebooks.com

For details of a guide to Regimental and Military Museums:

<http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/militarymuseums/index.html>