

Centenary – Armistice Day - World War 1

# IN MEMORIAM

On the 100th Anniversary of Armistice Day  
in November 2018 Churchtown & Liscarroll  
remember those from our Parish who died in  
the Great War 1914 - 1918



*The Thiepval Memorial remembers 'the Missing of the Somme' where more than 72,000 soldiers were killed in the years between 1915 and 1918 but have no known grave. The monument is located near the village of Thiepval in the historical territory of Picardy in France. Two parishioners are remembered at this monument – Private Stephen O'Dea from Liscarroll and Lieutenant Charles Purcell from Churchtown.*



# IN MEMORIAM

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.*

from 'For The Fallen' by Laurence Binyon





*The Royal Munster Fusiliers drumming up recruits in Limerick in 1914. Five of our parishioners who died in WW1 enlisted in the Munster Fusiliers – Private John Ryan (Liscarroll), Private William O'Grady (Liscarroll), Private Michael Regan (Churchtown), Lance Corporal Michael Stack (Churchtown) and Private Michael McCarthy (Churchtown).  
(Photo: H M Stewart, O'Connell Street)*



# CONTENTS



We Remember	4
World War 1	6
In Memoriam	10
Portraits of the Fallen	11
The WW1 Medals of Michael McCarthy	17
The Green Fields of France	18
A Soldier's Grave	20
Men of the Cloth in World War 1	21
The Last Absolution of the Munsters	24
Irish War Artist	25
Christmas 1916	26
First World War and Churchtown	27
Liscarroll WW1 Volunteers	29
In Flanders Fields	30
Irish National War Memorial Gardens	31
A Test to Search Men's Souls	32
Sons of Churchtown and Liscarroll	35
Contributors	38
About Churchtown Heritage Society	39

# WE REMEMBER

Heritage and history must be inclusive and cannot be confined because of one's own feelings about events or one's political affiliations. That is why it is appropriate that we remember the 49,435 Irish men – 2,244 from Cork and ten from our Parish – who fought and died in World War 1.

Why did so many young Irish men volunteer for service in WW1? In some cases they volunteered for economic reasons, in others for adventure, in others for the defence of small nations, in others for King and Country and in most cases for a combination of all of the aforementioned reasons. For whatever reason those young lives were lost Churchtown Heritage Society remembers them and the heartbroken families they left behind such as Kate McCarthy the Sacristan at St Nicholas' Church whose young – and only – son Michael died a few days before the War ended on 19th October 1918 following the Battle of the River Selle.

Also, of course, in Ireland we are going through a decade of multiple centenary commemorations from the Easter Rising to the War of Independence. It is only right and proper that as a country we do this in an inclusive way. Thankfully the recent history between Britain and Ireland has facilitated this. As President of Ireland Michael D Higgins\* explained so eloquently in his historic address to the Houses of Parliament in London on 8th April 2014:

“I stand here at a time when the relationship between our two islands has, as I have said, achieved a closeness and warmth that once seemed unachievable. The people of Ireland greatly cherish the political independence that was secured in 1922 – an independence which was fought for by my father and many of his generation. We acknowledge that past but, even more, we wholeheartedly welcome the considerable achievement of today's reality – the mutual respect, friendship and cooperation which exists between our two countries.”



*The Irish Peace Tower in Messines, near Ypres in Flanders, Belgium, is a war memorial to the soldiers of the island of Ireland who died, were wounded or are missing in World War I. The tower was unveiled after an 11.00am Service on 11 November 1998 by President Mary McAleese of Ireland, Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom and King Albert II of Belgium. (Picture credit: Wikipedia)*

Many of those who died now have no family connections to our parish which is another reason why Churchtown Heritage Society is pleased to stand in remembrance of these men, and indeed all victims of a terrible war, and to remind ourselves how fortunate we are to have lasting peace in Europe and for Ireland to be a long standing and proud member of the European Union as a focus of co-operation and peaceful harmony throughout our Continent.

Many families have conflicting views on what happened and this is understandable. In my own case three grandnephews of William Boss Murphy fought in WW1 and two did not return. They were the grandchildren of my great aunt, Mary Murphy, who married James Hartstonge from Sunfort in Liscarroll and emigrated to New Zealand. While his cousin John J Hartstonge had died in October 1917 on the Front with other ANZAC troops, my grandfather, John Murphy, was the first person to sign the Anti-Conscription Pledge at First Mass in Churchtown on Sunday 21st April 1918. A few months later in October 1918 John J's brother Jerry Hartstonge was also killed in action. Such was the contradictions in families about WW1. I leave it to my cousin John Murphy to tell this story of the Hartstonge brothers on page 35 of this commemorative booklet.



Finally, I wish to recall an ex-serviceman – Joe Manning – and friends who stood outside St Nicholas' Church in Churchtown every November when I was a very young boy. These men were offering Poppies and collecting money in a 'billy can' that I assume Joe brought home from the war. The collection was for the Royal British Legion; an organisation that supports veterans. How brave those men were to do this in such a public way in an often intolerant Ireland of the 1950/60s. Better still how good was it to see so many Mass-goers taking a poppy and making a donation. At the time, of course, I did not really understand the significance of what was happening but now almost 60 years later this abiding memory motivates me to recognise our WW1 fallen parishioners and a previous generation who remembered them every November.

I would like to thank Colette Collins, Denis Hickey, Noel Linehan, Gerry White and my cousin John Murphy for their support in the production of this Commemorative booklet.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha.

Gerry Murphy  
Churchtown Heritage Society



# WORLD WAR 1

by Colette Collins

## Background to the War

On the 28th June 1914 the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne was assassinated in Sarajevo by a Serb nationalist. The Austrian governments demands in response to the assassination were rejected by the Serbs who had the backing of Russia which saw itself as the protector of the Slavic people. Germany which had only become an Empire 44 years previously sided with Austria and encouraged the Austrians to move against the Serbs which led to a partial mobilisation of Russia's army on parts of Germany's border.

Germany, which had plans to become the leading power in Europe, had in 1906 drawn up a plan that would lead to a quick victory in France before turning on Russia as France and Russia had a mutual pact one would come to the aid of the other. Germany began mobilising their troops for an attack on France as drawn up in the Schlieffen Plan but this attack meant marching through Belgium, a neutral country. The King of Belgium refused the German demand to march through his country with the answer "Belgium is a country not a road". Nevertheless, the Germans declared war on Belgium on 4 August 1914, troops crossed the border and so began the Battle of Liege.

An Irishman *Edward Thomas* from Tipperary, serving with the 4th Dragoon Guards on 22nd August 1914 fired the first shots of WW1. The first VC was won the following day by a young man from Westmeath, Lieutenant Maurice Dease, Fourth Battalion, Royal Fusiliers who was killed while holding a German advance on the canal at Mons and his VC was awarded posthumously.

German military operations in Belgium were intended to bring the 1st, 2nd and 3rd armies into positions in Belgium from which they could invade France, which after the fall of Liège on 7 August, led to sieges of Belgian fortresses along the Meuse river at Namur and the surrender of the last forts (16–17 August). The government abandoned the capital, Brussels, on 17 August and after fighting on the Gete river, the Belgian

field army withdrew westwards to the National Redoubt at Antwerp on 19 August. Brussels was occupied the following day and the Siege of Namur began on 21 August.

After the Battle of Mons and the Battle of Charleroi, the bulk of the German armies marched south into France, leaving small forces to garrison Brussels and the Belgian railways. The III Reserve Corps advanced to the fortified zone around Antwerp and a division of the IV Reserve Corps took over in Brussels.

The Belgian field army made several sorties from Antwerp in late August and September to harass German communications and to assist the French and the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), by keeping German troops in Belgium. German





Map source: [www.theirishrevolution.ie](http://www.theirishrevolution.ie)

troop withdrawals to reinforce the main armies in France were postponed to repulse a Belgian sortie from 9 to 13 September and a German corps in transit was retained in Belgium for several days. Belgian resistance and German fear of French irregular units, led the Germans to implement a policy of terror (*schrecklichkeit*) against Belgian civilians soon after the invasion, in which massacres, executions, hostage taking and the burning of towns and villages took place and became known as the Rape of Belgium.

Germany had hoped that Britain, dealing with internal affairs such as the Home Rule Bill, would stay out of a European war. However, Britain along with the other European powers was a guarantor of Belgian neutrality and as such demanded that Germany withdraw its troops from Belgian soil. German refusal to comply resulted in Britain declaring war and so on the 4th August 1914 WW1 began.

- ◆ WW1 was fought on 3 continents – Europe, Asia and Africa;
- ◆ WW1 was fought on all the oceans of the world;
- ◆ Troops mobilised world-wide – 65 million;
- ◆ Troops killed – 11 million;
- ◆ Troops wounded – 23 million.

## Irish Regiments

On the outbreak of war there were a number of Irish regiments in the British regular army. These included the Dublin Fusiliers whose recruitment base was Dublin. The Leinsters who recruited in Wicklow, Wexford and Midland counties and The Royal Irish Regiment whose recruitment ground was Tipperary, Waterford and Kilkenny, The Connaught Rangers recruited west of the Shannon and the Royal Munster Fusiliers recruited in Cork, Kerry, Limerick and Clare.

The British Expeditionary Force (BEF) went to France in August 1914 to support the French. The Germans had met with much more resistance from the Belgians than they had expected and as a result their lightning strike against Paris wasn't going to plan. An Irishman Edward Thomas from Tipperary serving with the 4th Dragoon Guards on 22nd August 1914 fired the first shots of WW1. The first VC was won the following day by a young man from Westmeath Maurice Dease. He was killed while holding a German advance on the canal at Mons and his VC was awarded posthumously.

From then until the end of the war 200,000 Irishmen served and almost 50,000 lost their lives. The 16th Irish Division formed from the Irish Volunteers and 36th Ulster Division formed from the Ulster Volunteers both formed part of 'Kitchener's new army' and were involved in the fighting once they arrived in France. All of the Irish units fought in all of the bloody battles, most notably the Somme in 1916, where the 36th lost 2,200 on the first day of that offensive. The Munster and Dublin Fusiliers fought at Guillemont and Ginchy later that year and in 1917 both the 16th and 36th fought together in the successful battle for Messines. The battle of Passchendale saw the end of those two Divisions where at Frezenberg Ridge in the face of overwhelming odds and in shelling from their own side both Divisions lost huge numbers of men.

*Left, Irish Regimental insignia, from top: Royal Munster Fusiliers, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, Royal Irish Regiment, Irish Guards, Connaught Rangers.*





*The 7th Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers receive rations before leaving the Royal Barracks, now Collins' Barracks, in April 1915 to go to Basingstoke, England where they trained before setting sail for Gallipoli. (Credit: National Museum of Ireland)*

The Irish troops throughout WW1 fought in all major battles on the Western Front, in Gallipoli as well as in the Australian, New Zealand and American armies and in the Navy and Air Force. See John Murphy's article on page 35 in this regard. Irishmen won 23 VCs as well as other military honours but they, like all other combatants, paid a high price including those who survived who had spent four long years in trenches and fox holes. In these positions, which were often filled with water, they suffered from constant shelling and artillery barrages, poison gas and sniper fire. Many lost limbs or were blinded and suffered shell shock and lung diseases as the result of gassing. Many of the dead have no known grave. The Menin Gate in Ypres has the names of 54,000 soldiers with no known grave and the Thiepval memorial has 72,000 names of those with no known grave. Cork City and County lost over 4,400 by the time the "war to end all wars" finished at 11.00 on 11th November 1918.

### **Tribute to Irish Soldiers**

France's Marshal Foch said in his tribute to the Irish soldiers who fought in WW1: "The heroic dead of Ireland have every right to the homage of the living for they proved in some of the heaviest fighting of the world war that the unconquerable spirit of the Irish race that has placed them among the world's greatest soldiers still lives and is stronger than ever it was. Never once did the Irish fail me in those terrible days. Again and again when the bravest were needed to delay the enemy's advance it was the Irish who were ready and at all times the soldiers of Ireland fought with the rare courage and determination that has always characterised the race on the battlefield."

# IN MEMORIAM

*We remember those from the  
Parish of Churchtown and  
Liscarroll who died between  
1914 and 1918 in World War 1*

Private John Ryan  
Liscarroll  
#5793 - Royal Munster Fusiliers  
#8981 - Royal Irish Regiment  
Fell in Flanders on 27 August 1914  
La Ferté-sous-Jouarre Memorial

Lance Corporal Peter Killackey  
Liscarroll  
#10519 - 2nd Battalion  
Connaught Rangers  
Fell in the Battle of Aisne on  
15 September 1914  
La Ferté-sous-Jouarre Memorial

Private William O'Grady  
Liscarroll  
#8910 - 1st Battalion  
Royal Munster Fusiliers  
Fell in Gallipoli on 25 April 1915  
V Beach Cemetery, Turkey

Private Michael Regan  
Churchtown  
#9395 - 1st Battalion  
Royal Munster Fusiliers  
Fell in Gallipoli on 9 May 1915  
Lancashire Landing Cemetery  
Turkey

Private Timothy Brosnahan  
Churchtown  
#5963 - 1st Battalion Irish Guards  
Fell on the Western Front  
on 1 January 1916  
Merville Communal Cemetery

Private Timothy Supple  
Liscarroll  
#25780 - 8th Battalion  
Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers  
Fell in Flanders on 15 July 1916  
Mazingarbe Communal Cemetery

Lance Corporal Michael Stack  
Churchtown  
#1211 - 8th Battalion  
Royal Munster Fusiliers  
Fell in Flanders on 20 July 1916  
Mazingarbe Communal Cemetery

Private Stephen O'Dea  
Liscarroll  
#4984 - 1st and 7th Battalion  
Kings Liverpool Regiment  
Fell in Flanders on 9th August 1916  
Thiepval Memorial

Lieutenant Charles Francis Purcell  
Churchtown  
2nd Battalion Irish Guards  
Fell in Flanders on  
15 September 1916  
Thiepval Memorial

Private Michael McCarthy  
Churchtown  
#7057 - 2nd Battalion  
Royal Munster Fusiliers  
#40126 - 2nd Battalion  
Royal Dublin Fusiliers  
Fell on 19 October 1918 following  
Battle of the River Selle  
Roisel Communal Cemetery

*Remembered by Churchtown Heritage Society on the  
Centenary of Armistice Day, 11th November 2018*





# PORTRAITS OF THE FALLEN

**Private Timothy Brosnahan,** Churchtown. #5963 – 1st Battalion Irish Guards. Fell on the Western Front on 1 January 1916. Son of Michael and Ellen Brosnahan from Mountcorbitt, Churchtown. Interred at Merville Communal Cemetery. The year 1916 witnessed two of the bloodiest battles of World War 1 at the Somme and Verdun.

*Timothy Brosnahan is interred at Merville Communal Cemetery (right).*



**Lance Corporal Peter Killackey (22),** Liscarroll. #10519 – 2nd Battalion Connaught Rangers. Fell in the Battle of Aisne on 15 September 1914. No known grave but commemorated in perpetuity at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre Memorial. Fourth son of Bridget and John Killackey, who was an RIC officer in Liscarroll. Later, Bridget as a widow, lived at 28 Shandon Street, Cork.

Peter's death was first reported over a year later in the Cork Examiner

on 4 November 1915. According to this report Peter lived at Mahony's Place, Dominic Street in Cork. Peter's death was again reported in the Cork Examiner the following day. On 13 November 1915 the following death notice appeared in the *Cork Weekly Examiner* accompanied by his picture:

*KILLACKEY – On September 15th, 1914, killed in action at the Battle of Aisne, Peter, fourth son of ex-Sergeant J Killackey, R.I.C., 2nd Battalion, Connaught Rangers (late of Mahony's Place, Dominic Street, Cork), to the inexpressible grief of his sorrowing father, mother, brothers, sisters, and a large circle of friends, who was reported missing since the above date. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on his soul. American papers please copy.*



*Lance Corporal Peter Killackey.*

**Private Michael McCarthy (25),** Churchtown. #7057, 2nd Battalion – Royal Munster Fusiliers and later #40126 - 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Fell on 19 October 1918 following Battle of the River Selle and the recapture of Le Cateau, Nord Dept on 10th October. Michael is buried





*Private Michael McCarthy.*

in Roisel Communal Cemetery with grave reference IC25.

Roisel is a small town 11 kilometres east of Peronne. It was occupied by British troops in April 1917, recaptured by the Germans in March 1918 and finally retaken by the British the following September. Roisel Communal Cemetery Extension, which was first used by German troops, was developed in October and November 1918, by the 41st, 48th, 53rd and 58th Casualty Clearing Stations, and it was completed after the Armistice by the concentration of British and German graves from the country North, East and South of Roisel. There are now over 850 WW1 casualties commemorated at this site. Michael's mother was Kate McCarthy who was Church sacristan in St Nicholas' Church in Churchtown.

In her later years Kate lived in the Booney House with Denny, Susie and Hannie O'Sullivan. Some time after Kate died some of Michael's medals came into the possession of Jack Murphy, Leap who in turn gave them to his son Gerry, the editor of this publication, and now resident in the Booney House. The medals that Denny did not give to Jack Murphy were given to Denis J Hickey and he in turn gifted them to Gerry for display in the Booney House. Michael's gravestone reads: "We have loved him in life let us not forget him in death. St Ambrose". See Michael's Medals on Page 17.



*Michael's mother Kate c. 1948.*

**Private Stephen O'Dea**, Liscarroll. #4984 – 1st and 7th Battalion - King's Liverpool Regiment. Fell in Flanders on 9th August 1916. Remembered at Thiepval Memorial on Pier 1D8B and 8C. Stephen was recorded as living in Bootle, Lancashire when he enlisted.

**Private William O'Grady**, Liscarroll. #8910 - 1st Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers. Fell in Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. Remembered with honour at V Beach Cemetery, Turkey. William was recorded as living in Kanturk when he enlisted.



A colourised scene from a dramatic and poignant film – *They Shall Not Grow Old* – released in October 2018 and directed by Oscar-winning director Peter Jackson.

Credit: <https://www.theyshallnotgrowold.film/videos/>

According to Sir Ian Hamilton's dispatch on 20th May 1915:

*The transports conveying the covering force arrived off Tenedos on the morning of the 24th (April) and during the afternoon the troops were transferred to the warships and fleet-sweepers in which they were to approach the shore, About midnight these ships, each towing a number of cutters and other small boats, silently slipped their cables and, escorted by the 3rd Squadron of the Fleet, steamed slowly towards their final rendezvous at Cape Helles. The rendezvous was reached just before dawn on the 25th.*

*Twenty-four hours after the disembarkation began there were ashore on V beach the survivors of the Dublin and Munster*

*Fusiliers and of two companies of the Hampshire Regiment. The Brigadier and his Brigade-Major had been killed; Lieutenant-Colonel Carrington Smith, commanding the Hampshire Regiment, had been killed and the adjutant had been wounded. The Adjutant of the Munster Fusiliers was wounded, and the great majority of the senior officers were either wounded or killed. Source: [www.longlongtrail.co.uk](http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk)*

It was here too that Private William O'Grady from Liscarroll died on 25th April 1915.



Above: President Michael D Higgins pays his respects at V Beach Cemetery, Turkey in 2015 where William O'Grady is remembered (Picture: Irish Times).



Left: the SS River Clyde at V Beach; the Munster Fusiliers suffered heavy casualties here while attempting to get ashore.



*Charles Purcell, portrait at Burton Park.*

**Lieutenant Charles Francis Purcell** (24), Churchtown, 2nd Battalion Irish Guards (Machine Guns Corp, Infantry) fell in Flanders on 15 September 1916. He is remembered at the Thiepval Memorial on Pier / Face 7D. The Thiepval Memorial is located in Picardy in France and commemorates over 70,000 soldiers killed during World War 1 with no known grave.

Charles died during a large scale attack at Ginchy on the Somme. As part of this attack the Second Battalion Irish Guards was tasked with capturing the village of Les Boeufs. A preliminary British artillery bombardment failed to cut German barbed wire or destroy well dug-in machine guns. Fighting alongside the Grenadier Guards, Scots Guards, and Coldstream Guards, the 2nd Battalion Irish Guards gained about 800 yards but failed to take Les Boeufs. This gain cost the battalion 300 casualties, including three officers killed and five wounded. Les Boeufs

was finally captured by the Guards Division on 25th September.

Charles was the son of Matthew John and Anna Purcell of Burton Park, Churchtown. When war broke out in 1914 Charles went to France as a Red Cross driver and subsequently was commissioned in the Irish Guards.



*Charles Purcell, plaque in the Chapel at Burton Park.*

Charles' brother Raymond (60th Rifles) – see opposite – also fought in the Great War. Raymond was injured and, while he returned to Ireland, he never recovered and died of wounds 18 July 1928.



*The memorial plaque to Major Raymond John Mayo Purcell in the Chapel at Burton Park in Churchtown.*



Michael Regan (Credit: Cork Examiner).

**Private Michael Regan** (25), Churchtown #9395 - 1st Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers. Fell in Gallipoli on 9 May 1915. Son of Michael and Mary Regan (nee Riordan), Mount Brigid, Churchtown. Interred at Lancashire Landing Cemetery, Turkey with grave reference E54.



## Major Raymond Purcell and Burton Park

As Denis J Hickey pointed out in *The Annals of Churchtown*, "in 1915 following the call by John Redmond for support for the British War effort, a meeting of the Irish Volunteers was held in Churchtown. As was the case nationally, the majority answer Redmond's call and a branch of the 'National Volunteers' is formed under Major Raymond Purcell of Burton Park. Those who did not join withdrew from the meeting and retained the title 'Irish Volunteers'. On 12th February 1921 following the shooting of RIC Constable Patrick Joseph Walsh in Churchtown village a 'Black & Tan' reprisal was imminent. However, on the following day the village was saved from reprisal through the intervention of Major Raymond Purcell of Burton Park."

Raymond Purcell (portrait above) who inherited Burton Park from his mother, carried out large-scale improvements to the estate, including the installation of a generator and electric light in 1912.

\* Raymond and Charles' father Matthew J married Ann Daly, Daly's Grove, County Galway on the 25th August 1882. They had nine children including Raymond, later Major Raymond John Mayo Purcell, who died on 4th July 1928 and Charles Francis, who was killed in action on 15th September 1916. Mathew J's mother Anna Dempsey, a Catholic, married John Purcell in 1850. John died in 1853 and Anna brought up Mathew J and his sister Eliza as Catholics.

\* Updated May 2019.



**Private John Ryan, Liscarroll.** #8981  
- 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Regiment.  
#5793 - Royal Munster Fusiliers. Fell  
in Flanders on 27 August 1914. No  
known grave but commemorated in  
perpetuity at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre  
Memorial.



*Michael Stack, at left.*

**Lance Corporal Michael Stack** (20)  
Churchtown #1211 - 8th Battalion  
Royal Munster Fusiliers. Fell in  
Flanders on 20 July 1916. Interred at  
Mazingarbe Communal Cemetery  
with grave reference IC9. Michael  
was the son of William and Margaret



*John Ryan and Peter Killackey are both  
remembered at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre Memorial.*

Stack of Egmont, Churchtown. His  
gravestone inscription reads: "A loving  
son good and kind loved by those left  
behind".

**Private Timothy Supple, Liscarroll.**  
#25780 - 8th Battalion, Royal  
Inniskilling Fusiliers. Fell in Flanders  
in 15 July 1916. Interred at Mazingarbe  
Communal Cemetery. According  
to research conducted by Canon G  
Casey of Doneraile: "Timothy enlisted  
at Buttevant Barracks". He is buried  
at the Philosophe British Cemetery  
at Mazingarbe in France. The Irish

Division held this area  
at the time. Successive  
Divisions used the  
cemetery until 1918  
with men from the same  
Division and Battalion  
buried side by side. His  
grave reference is IV5".



*Michael Stack and Timothy Supple are interred  
at Mazingarbe Communal Cemetery. Inset: the  
Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers cap badge that Timothy  
Supple would have worn.*



# THE WAR MEDALS OF MICHAEL MCCARTHY



The Victory Medal also called the Inter-Allied Victory Medal was awarded by 15 countries involved in WW1.  
(Actual size 36mm)



Right: The Memorial Plaque ("Dead Man's Penny") was issued after WW1 to the next-of-kin of all service personnel who were killed as a result of the war. (Actual size 120mm)  
Above: the 'Death Penny' letter that would have accompanied the medal which Kate McCarthy received from King George.



The British War Medal was awarded to all officers who had served for a prescribed period during any stage of WW1 or who had died on active service.  
(Actual size 36mm)



# THE GREEN FIELDS OF FRANCE



Songs like *It's a long way to Tipperary* and *Pack up your Troubles* were hugely popular at the time of the Great War but it took until the 1970s before Eric Bogle wrote a trilogy of iconic songs paying tribute to the tragedy of the Great War.

According to *The Irish Times*\* singer-songwriter Eric Bogle revealed he chose the name 'Willie McBride' for the 19-year-old who features in the song because of its 'Irish connotations'. *The Green Fields of France* is part of a trilogy of enduring classic World War 1 songs written by Bogle – the other two being *The Band Played Waltzing Matilda* and *All the Fine Young Men*. All three songs have been covered dozens of times.

Probably the best-known version of *The Green Fields of France* was recorded by *The Furey Brothers and Davey Arthur* in 1979. It remained in the Irish charts for 28 weeks. While the song is about Australian involvement in the disastrous Gallipoli campaign it resonates in Ireland too as so many Irish died in Gallipoli including Private William O'Grady from Liscarroll on 25th April 1915 and Private Michael Regan from Churchtown two weeks later on 9th May 1915.

Oh how do you do, young Willy McBride  
Do you mind if I sit here down by your graveside  
And rest for a while in the warm summer sun  
I've been walking all day, and I'm nearly done  
And I see by your gravestone you were only nineteen  
When you joined the great fallen in 1916  
Well I hope you died quick  
And I hope you died clean  
Or Willy McBride, was it slow and obscene

(Chorus)

Did they beat the drums slowly  
Did they play the fife lowly  
Did they sound the death march as they lowered you down  
Did the band play the last post and chorus  
Did the pipes play the flowers of the forest

And did you leave a wife or a sweetheart behind  
In some loyal heart is your memory enshrined  
And though you died back in 1916  
To that loyal heart you're forever nineteen  
Or are you a stranger without even a name  
Forever enshrined behind some old glass pane  
In an old photograph torn, tattered, and stained  
And faded to yellow in a brown leather frame

(Chorus)

The sun shining down on these green fields of France  
The warm wind blows gently and the red poppies dance  
The trenches have vanished long under the plough  
No gas, no barbed wire, no guns firing now  
But here in this graveyard that's still no man's land  
The countless white crosses in mute witness stand  
To man's blind indifference to his fellow man  
And a whole generation who were butchered and damned

(Chorus)

And I can't help but wonder oh Willy McBride  
Do all those who lie here know why they died  
Did you really believe them when they told you the cause  
Did you really believe that this war would end wars  
Well the suffering, the sorrow, the glory, the shame  
The killing and dying it was all done in vain  
Oh Willy McBride it all happened again  
And again, and again, and again, and again

(Final Chorus)

\* *Ronan McGreevy, Irish Times, 18 February 2015*

# A SOLDIER'S GRAVE

by Francis E Ledwidge

Then in the lull of midnight, gentle arms  
Lifted him slowly down the slopes of death  
Lest he should hear again the mad alarms  
Of battle, dying moans, and painful breath.

And where the earth was soft for flowers we made  
a grave for him that he might better rest.  
So, Spring shall come and leave it seed arrayed,  
And there the lark shall turn her dewy nest



Francis Edward Ledwidge (19 August 1887 - 31 July 1917) was an Irish war poet from County Meath. Sometimes known as the “poet of the blackbirds”, he was killed in action at the Battle of Passchendaele during World War I. His first volume of fifty poems, *Songs of the Fields*, was published while he was still a serving soldier in WW1 in 1915. Three months after his death in 1917 his second volume of poems appeared, *Songs of Peace*, and thirty three more poems under the title, *Last Songs*, came out in 1918. Another famous poem by Francis Ledwidge was his *Lament for Thomas McDonogh* the 1916 leader.

In July 1917 having survived the Battle of Arras, Ledwidge's unit was ordered north to Belgium in preparation for the third Battle of Ypres. On 31 July the 1st Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, of which Frank was a member, were repairing the road to Pilkem near the village of Boezinghe northwest of Ieper (Ypres). In the afternoon of that day a shell exploded beside them, killing one officer and five enlisted men, among them Ledwidge. Chaplain Father Devas was among the first to arrive on the scene. That night he wrote in his diary:

“Ledwidge killed, blown to bits...”

The men were buried where they fell at Carrefour de Rose (Rose Crossroads) and reinterred later in nearby Artillery Wood Military Cemetery.

Source: Francis Ledwidge Museum / [www.francisledwidge.com](http://www.francisledwidge.com)



Memorial Plaque at the Francis Ledwidge Museum, Slane, Co Meath.

# MEN OF THE CLOTH IN WW1

by Denis J Hickey



*1916 – Battle of the Somme – a chaplain conducts a burial service near trenches close to Guillemont.*

The Army Chaplains' Department was formed in Britain in 1796. It was originally intended that Chaplains would receive Honorary Commissions, however, there were very few applicants. Later, Chaplains were attached to both the Royal Navy and the RFC (later the RAF). Roman Catholic clergy joined their Church of England brethren in 1836 and saw action in the Crimea.

Initially Chaplains conducted burials, or blessed and spoke to troops as they moved to the Front, but due to the bond that was forged they insisted on accompanying their charges to the battlefield. Here, inducted into the brutal realities of war, they not only administered the last rites and comforted the wounded, but frequently aided medical staff and stretcher-bearers. On many occasions too, they were charged by the dying with the forwarding of a letter or keepsake to a loved one. Although in some instances a considerable time may have elapsed before reaching graves of the fallen, it comforted and raised general morale that comrades had at least received a Christian burial. Somehow, Chaplains – these men of peace – managed to retain their sensitivity despite the horrors of war and continued to perform the Corporal Works of Mercy as bullets whizzed by and shells exploded about them.



Following the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, over 5,000 clergymen of whom almost 25% were Roman Catholic were in the field. The Jesuit Community provided thirty-two volunteers, six of whom lost their lives. One of their number, Fr. William Doyle, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was awarded the Military Cross.

The Munster Fusiliers paid heavily for the disastrous leadership leading to the carnage at Gallipoli. They were charged with establishing a beachhead under withering Turkish fire and suffered devastating losses. Fr. Jeremiah Pigott, a Columban Father and native of our sister village Liscarroll, displayed conspicuous gallantry on those bloodied sands. With a selfless disregard for his own life, he comforted and administered to the wounded as the battle raged about him. Fr. Pigott too, was awarded the Military Cross for his actions.



*1st Royal Munster Fusiliers in Coventry on 11th January 1915 before leaving for Gallipoli as part of the 29th Division and landing on V Beach Cape Helles on 25th April 1915.*



A thirty-year-old Church of England Chaplain, Revd. David Railton (left), with his unit in France noticed in a back-garden in a French village, a grave with a rough cross bearing the pencilled legend 'An Unknown British Soldier'. This inspired him on return from the Front to press for a national monument to the numerous anonymous graves dotted throughout the war zone.

Thanks to his efforts many thousands whose sons lay abroad in unidentified graves could now find solace when kneeling at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey. Reverend Railton, too, was one of those extraordinary servants of God – one of 'The Men of the Cloth' in WW1.



# War Chaplain – Rev. Jeremiah Pigott

Rev. Jeremiah Pigott, who has died, was one of the longest serving priests of the Columban Fathers having spent 53 years on the missions in the Far East.

The Liscarroll, Co. Cork, born priest who died at the age of 84 at Dealgan Park, Navan, was educated at St Colman's, Fermoy, before entering St. Patrick's, Maynooth, in 1910.

Ordained six years later he volunteered to serve as a chaplain of troops and was on active service in Gallipoli, where many Munster Fusiliers gave their lives trying to hold a beachhead. Father Pigott won the Military Cross for bravery in that sector.

Demobilised in 1919, he joined the staff of St. Colman's, and while there became interested in the newly formed Maynooth mission to China, which he joined in 1922.

He was posted to the Hanyang Vicariat in China where he served until 1931 when he returned home as a delegate for the chapter of the Society. He went back to China in the same

year and was Vicar delegate to the Vicarist.

## **TWO—WARS CHAPLAIN**

He was on leave in Ireland in 1939 when World War Two was declared and he was unable to return to China. A year later he joined the British Air Force as a chaplain and spent the war years in England.

In 1946 he was sent to China heading a group of priests to form a mission in Huchow but the mission was relatively short lived when he and other foreign priests were forced to leave by the Communist authorities.

After a spell in Ireland he went to Japan where he spent six years as a chaplain after which he went to the Philippines where he worked until last year in the parish of Malate, in Manila, capital of the Philipines.

He was back in Ireland last year but his health failed, and he spent his declining days in Dealgan Park.

Very Rev John Pigott, parish priest of Dun Laoghaire, is a brother of Father Pigott.

*Credit: Obituary re. Fr Jeremiah Pigott 1892 - 1976, in Cork Examiner 14 May 1976*

## **The Irish Poppy Badge**

The Shamrock Poppy which recognises Irish soldiers who fought in World War I was commissioned to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Great War by the Irish branch of the Royal British Legion. The Shamrock Poppy works much the same as the poppy in the UK in that all of the money raised from the sale of Shamrock Poppies will go to Irish veterans and their families. (Source: [www.metro.co.uk](http://www.metro.co.uk)).



# THE LAST ABSOLUTION OF THE MUNSTERS



*'The Last Absolution of the Munsters' by Fortunina Matania*

On Saturday evening the 8th May 1915, prior to the battle in the Aubers Ridge area, the 2nd Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers marched through Rue du Bois, about one mile out from the town of Neuve Chapelle in Belgium. The Battalion halted near a wayside shrine. Moving off the road they formed up in their respective companies, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D'. In front of each Company was a green flag with the Irish Harp and word "Munster" embroidered on it. Father Francis Gleeson on horseback wearing his stole, administered a 'General Absolution' to the men.



Most if not all the men depicted in the picture are from Munster. Father Gleeson, one of 13 children, was from Templemore in County Tipperary. On the extreme right is Regimental Sergeant Major John Ring born in Bandon. The second mounted figure is 40-year old Colonel Victor Rickard, husband of writer Louise Moore from Mitchelstown, County Cork, whose father founded the Cork Historical & Archaeological Society and was a 'Home Ruler'. At dawn on 9th May, just hours after the general

*Father Gleeson's diary entry on 10 May 1915 as inscribed at the Messines Irish Peace Park in Belgium.*

absolution, these Irish men came out of their trenches. Within hours, 19 Officers including Commanding Officer Rickard, and 370 men were lost. Only 8 of these were taken prisoner.

The painting of the Last General Absolution was the work of Italian WW1 artist Fortunino Matania (1881-1963). He was noted for his extraordinary finish and detail and to achieve this he visited the Western Front on many occasions. However, Fortunino Matania may not have actually witnessed the General Absolution ceremony. According to one source, Monsignor John Moran, former Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain (Army) 'the scene was well captured on canvas by Fortunino Matania' from a description obtained by Mrs. Rickard, wife of Colonel Victor Rickard.



Sources credit: Royal Munster Fusiliers Association and The Silver Voice on the following web sites:

(1) [www.rmfa92.org/rue-du-bois-on-8-may-1915/painting](http://www.rmfa92.org/rue-du-bois-on-8-may-1915/painting)

(2) [www.thesilvervoice.wordpress.com/tag/royal-british-legion-limerick](http://www.thesilvervoice.wordpress.com/tag/royal-british-legion-limerick)

(3) Source: Fr Francis Gleeson (above) from Irish Examiner online 28 August 2014.

## An Irish War Artist – Sir William Orpen

*The Daily Mail* announced on 30 January 1917 that Irish artist William Orpen had been appointed an official war artist and was to be sent to the battle lines on the Western Front. Orpen's first assignment in 1917 was at the Somme, where the battle had been ongoing since July 1916. In his memoir, *An Onlooker in France 1917 – 1919*, Sir William Orpen recalled the powerful impression the Somme made on him as follows:

'I shall never forget my first sight of the Somme battlefields. It was snowing fast, but the ground was not covered, and there was this endless waste of mud, holes and water. Nothing but mud water, crosses and broken tanks; miles and miles of it, horrible and terrible, but with a noble dignity of its own, and running through it, the great artery, the Albert-Bapaume road, with its endless stream of men, guns, food lorries, mules and cars, all pressing along with apparently unceasing energy towards the front.'



*Self-portrait of William Orpen*



# CHRISTMAS 1916

A Christmas postcard\* from 1916 postmarked at 2.15 on 18th December 1916 at Blackburn, Lancashire, from Joe Manning at Queen Mary's Military Hospital, Whalley, Lancashire, where we assume he was recuperating, to Hannah O'Sullivan in Churchtown. The 'Tom' that Joe refers to in the postcard was Hannah's brother who also served in WW1 and was seriously injured. Tom's war medal is shown on Page 29. Hannah lived with her brother Denny and her sister Susie in what is now known as the Booney House at 5 Kerry Lane, Churchtown; the house now named in their honour.



The postcard reads: "Dear Hannah, Just a few lines hoping you are all well in Churchtown. I suppose Tom did not get to France yet or Owen Tierney. I suppose they will be in Churchtown for Xmas. Tell all the boys I was asking for them and give them my best wishes. I suppose Jack Mahony is working with his Father by now. Tell him I was asking for him. I wish you all a Happy Xmas and Merry New Year in Churchtown. From J.M"



\* A Christmas postcard from 1916 from Private Joe Manning to Hannah O'Sullivan in Churchtown. With thanks to Kathleen (Manning) Murphy for permission to reproduce this postcard.

Photos: Mary Cunningham



# FIRST WORLD WAR & CHURCHTOWN

by Denis J Hickey

Known contemporaneously as ‘The Great War’ the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary by Gabriel Princip, a Bosnian Serb, on 28th June 1914 is recognised as the spark that ignited the flames of the First World War. Britain declared war on Germany on 4th August and on 12th August Britain and France declared war on Austria and Hungary. On 1st April 1917, following the reintroduction of unrestricted submarine warfare by Germany, the USA (which had suffered the loss of 198 of its citizens when the British liner Lusitania was torpedoed on 7th May 1915) declared war against Germany.

Britain was involved in some of the bloodiest fighting in the early stages of the conflict, particularly at Lorraine in France and Ypres in Belgium. German forces first used poison gas at the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915. Britain extended her involvement in the war, but suffered heavy casualties against the Turks at Gallipoli (April 1915). In France in 1916 the struggle for Verdun began. British forces surrendered at Kut-el-Amara in Mesopotamia on 29th April.

A great naval engagement was fought at Jutland on 31st May when the Germans, who had inflicted the heavier losses against the British, withdrew. The carnage of the Somme commenced on 1st July and the bloody and inconclusive Flanders campaign began on 31 July. Turkey surrendered to Britain on 30th October 1918. The Austro-Hungarian High Command signed an armistice with Italy, signalling the break-up of the Austrian empire. Following the abdication of William II, a German republic was proclaimed and German delegates concluded an armistice with Marshall Foch that came into force at 11am on 11th November 1918.

The Royal Munster Fusiliers raised a total of 11 battalions and the regiment was awarded 51 battle honours, including three Victoria Crosses – but at a cost of 3,070 lives including those of Privates **William O’Grady** (Liscarroll), killed at V Beach, 25 April 1915 during the abortive Gallipoli campaign and **Michael Regan** aged 25 from Churchtown Village who died on 9 May also at Gallipoli. In addition to the above-mentioned, other casualties from Churchtown and Liscarroll include:

Private **Timothy Brosnahan** (32); 1st Battalion Irish Guards, Churchtown, Killed in Action, Flanders, 1 January 1916, Son of Michael and Ellen, Mount Corbett. Private **Michael McCarthy** (25) Churchtown Village; 2nd Battalion Munster Fusiliers and later 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who died on 19th October 1918 of wounds received during the Battle of the River Selle and the recapture of Le Cateau, Nord Dept., 10th October. Michael McCarthy was the son of Kate McCarthy who

# YOUNG CORKMAN VOLUNTEERS



The above photo represents Mr. John Hickey, of Churchtown, Buttivant, who has volunteered for active service as artificer in the Royal Navy, and is a member of one of the most respected families in the district. He was a staunch supporter of the Irish National Volunteers.

*A press clipping about John Hickey from Churchtown joining the Royal Navy.*

was a long serving Sacristan in St Nicholas' Churchtown. Lieutenant **Charles Francis Purcell**, (24), Burton House, Churchtown; Irish Guards, Killed in Action in Flanders, 15 September 1916. Charles' brother Raymond also fought in the Great War and died before his time some years after his return as a result of the trauma he suffered during his army service. Private **Michael Regan** (25), Mountbridget, Churchtown; 1st Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers, Killed in Action in Gallipoli on 9th May 1915. Lance-Corporal **Michael Stack** (20), Egmont, Churchtown; 8th Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers. Killed in Action in Flanders on 20th July 1916.

Surviving Churchtown combatants included: Private **Tom Birney** (later of Aghaburren, Churchtown); demobbed with shell-shock; Artificer **John ('Jack') Hickey** HMS Eclipse, who suffered permanent hearing damage from exploding shells. Private **Michael Hickey**, Churchtown Village, served in the

Canadian Army, French campaign. Sergeant **Thomas Hickey**, Churchtown Village, suffered permanent lung damage when gassed during the French Campaign in the Second Battle of Ypres, April-May 1915. Private **William Hickey**, Churchtown Village served throughout French campaign. The three Hickey brothers met in France during Tom's hospitalisation. Private **Con Howard**, Annagh; Private **Joe Manning**, Egmont (lost toes through frostbite on French Front); Private **Maurice O'Sullivan**, Buffer's Cross, (gassed during second Battle of Ypres April-May 1915); Private **Thomas O'Sullivan**, Churchtown Village, 11045 Irish Guards, returned shell-shocked from French campaign and died in his early thirties (see Tom's service medal opposite). **Owen Tierney** also volunteered.

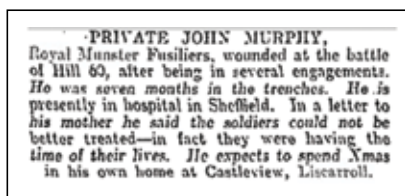
*Reprinted with some amendments from The Annals of Churchtown published in 2005 and compiled by Denis J Hickey with support from Gerry Murphy and Noel Linehan. ISBN 978-0-9524931-3-6.*



# LISCARROLL WW1 VOLUNTEERS

Apart from the five men from Liscarroll who died in WW1 many more volunteered and returned to Ireland safely. These include:

<b>Sergeant David Barry</b>	Army Services Corp
<b>Private Eugene O'Neill</b>	Royal Munster Fusiliers
<b>Private William Healy</b>	Royal Munster Fusiliers
<b>Private J McCarthy</b>	Royal Munster Fusiliers
<b>Private Thomas McCarthy</b>	Royal Munster Fusiliers
<b>Private John Murphy</b>	Royal Munster Fusiliers
<b>Private David O'Brien</b>	Leinster Regiment
<b>Gunner John O'Connell</b>	Royal Garrison Artillery
<b>Private Benjamin O'Dea</b>	Royal Dublin Fusiliers
<b>Private Daniel O'Dea</b>	Royal Dublin Fusiliers
<b>Private Daniel O'Dea</b>	Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
<b>Sergeant James Purdon</b>	Royal Munster Fusiliers
<b>Rev Jeremiah Pigott</b>	Army Chaplain



Cork Examiner 16 December 1915 Report on wounded John Murphy from Liscarroll.

*The service medal granted to Thomas O'Sullivan, Irish Guards which was given to Gerry Murphy by Eddie Galligan and is now proudly displayed in the Booney House where Thomas lived with his brother Denny and sisters Hannie and Susie. Thomas who returned from WW1 shell-shocked never recovered from the experience and died in his early 30s.*



# IN FLANDERS FIELDS

It is thought that Dr John McCrae (30 November 1872 - 28 January 1918) began the draft of his famous poem 'In Flanders Fields' on the evening of the 2 May, 1915 in the second week of fighting during the Second Battle of Ypres. It is believed that the death of his friend, Alexis Helmer, was the inspiration for McCrae's poem. The exact details of when the first draft was written may never be known because there are various accounts by those who were with Dr McCrae at that time.  
(source: [www.greatwar.co.uk/poems](http://www.greatwar.co.uk/poems))



## In Flanders Fields

*by John McCrae, May 1915*

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

*In Flanders Fields* was first published in *Punch* on 8th December 1915  
having been returned to the author by *The Spectator* magazine.

# IRISH NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL GARDENS

The Irish National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge, Dublin, were designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944), and commemorate the Irish men and women who died in the First World War. The initial impetus for the scheme was decided in 1919, and a Memorial Committee was appointed to raise funds. Various locations for the memorial were discussed, until the present site was



*Memorial Rose Pond (Credit: Office of Public Works).*

granted to the project in 1929. The public park and interior memorial lawn that exist today were put in place during the 1930s, using a construction team of ex-servicemen drawn in equal proportion from both the British Army and the Irish National Army. The Gardens have figured strongly in peacekeeping ceremonies (the first ceremony

to commemorate the Irish war dead, that was attended by a Taoiseach, took place there in 2006), and remain the focus of commemorative events today (the Gardens were a key location on the itinerary of Queen Elizabeth II in 2011).

*Text Source: [www.opwdublincommemorative.ie/war-memorial](http://www.opwdublincommemorative.ie/war-memorial)*



Graphic and stained glass Artist Harry Clarke (1889-1931) was commissioned in 1919 to illustrate the eight-volume *Ireland's Memorial Records* to commemorate the 49,435 Irishmen (2,244 of whom were Cork men) who had lost their lives while serving in WW1. The badges of seventeen Irish Regiments are included in his illustrated borders as are also a kangaroo and a maple leaf to honour Irishmen who fell while serving with the ANZAC and Canadian forces.



# A TEST TO SEARCH MEN'S SOULS

by Gerry White

Ireland was not included in Britain's Conscription Bill of January 1916, but by then 90,000 Irishmen had volunteered, as many more would before 1918.

On New Year's Day, 1916, Ireland was involved in what John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, had described as a "test to search men's souls". That test was the war being waged to decide the future of Europe.

As the year began, Irishmen serving in the ranks of the British and imperial armed forces were fighting on the battlefields of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. They were also fighting in the skies above those battlefields and on the high seas.

Since Britain had declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914, 158,900 British servicemen had died and countless others had been horrendously injured. Thousands of Irish servicemen were among those casualties and every town and parish in the country had lost someone in the war. As 1916 dawned, families were struggling to come to grips with their losses.

In his message to the armed forces on Christmas Day, 1915, King George V said: "Another year is drawing to a close as it began, in toil, bloodshed and suffering and I rejoice to know that the goal to which you are striving draws nearer into sight." Sadly, he was wrong.

As 1916 dawned, the stalemate continued on the Western Front, with no end in sight. At sea, the Royal Navy was maintaining its economic blockade of Germany. Although the German high seas fleet remained at its bases at Kiel and Wilhelmshaven, German U-Boats were waging an effective campaign against British merchant shipping.

Fighting continued, even as people in Ireland were marking New Year's Day: 158 British servicemen died that day. Among them was Private Timothy Brosnahan, of the 1st Battalion, Irish Guards. He was the son of Michael and Ellen Brosnahan, of Churchtown, Buttevant, Co Cork. Private Patrick Donegan, a native of Dublin and member of the 1st Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers, also died. Donegan was one of 252,000 Allied servicemen – including 4,000 Irishmen – who died in the disastrous Gallipoli campaign, which was drawing to a close that January with victory for the Ottoman Empire.

Having suffered such high casualties and with the number of volunteers diminishing, the British government was forced to ensure that the army would be kept at the required strength. A military service bill was introduced in parliament that January. This legislation provided for the conscription of single men aged 18 to 41. The



*A British army World War 1 recruiting meeting at St Patrick's Street, Cork, on October 1, 1915  
(Credit: Irish Examiner archive).*

inclusion of Ireland in the provisions of the bill was considered, but, after much heated debate, the government decided against it.

When their decision became public on January 4, John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party welcomed it, but Edward Carson and the Ulster Unionists were outraged. They said they considered the exclusion of Ireland to be “an insult and humiliation to the loyal and patriotic population of the country and an abandonment of the principle of equality of sacrifice in time of war on the part of His Majesty’s subjects in the United Kingdom”. Redmond, however, was happy that Ireland was already playing its part in the war. In January, 1916, he said that 90,000 men had already volunteered and he was confident that more would do so.

The motives of Irishmen who enlisted in the British armed forces varied. Some did so out of patriotism, more for economic reasons. Others responded to the appeals made by politicians, or were influenced by the call to fight for the “freedom of small nations”.

Some joined out of a sense of adventure. Among those was an 18-year-old native of Killorglin, Co Kerry, by the name of Thomas Bernadine Barry. After the war, Barry would join the IRA and win fame as the leader of the West Cork Flying Column. In his autobiography, he stated “I was not influenced by the lurid appeal to fight to save Belgium or small nations. I knew nothing about nations, large or small. I went to the war for no other reason than that I wanted to see what war was like, to get a gun, to see new countries and to feel a grown man.”

In the weeks following the outbreak of the war, the thousands of Irishmen who enlisted were put in one of three divisions raised in Ireland for the “New Armies” being formed by Lord Kitchener, the British secretary of state for war.

The 10th (Irish) Division was formed in August 1914, and placed under the command of Lt Gen Bryan Mahon, a native of Co Galway.

Comprised of Irish nationalists, it took part in the landing at Suvla Bay, on the Gallipoli Peninsula, on the night of August 6, 1915. This was the final attempt by British forces to break the deadlock on the peninsula, but it, too, failed.

In September 1915, the division was moved to Salonika. On December 6 to 12, it took part in the battle of Kosturino, where the Bulgarian Army defeated it and it would spend the next few months refitting and preparing for its next battle.

After the Irish Volunteer movement split in September 1914, over the issue of taking part in war, thousands of John Redmond’s National Volunteers flocked into the ranks of the British Army. These men joined the regiments that formed the 16th (Irish) Division, which had been established in September 1914.

In December 1915, the division moved to France, under the command of Major-General William Hacky, and was deployed in the vicinity of Bethune. As the New Year dawned, it still hadn’t received its baptism of fire.

In Ulster, 13 battalions of Edward Carson’s Ulster Volunteer Force moved straight into the 36th (Ulster) Division, when that unit was formed in September 1914. It deployed to France in October 1915, under the command of Major-General Oliver Nugent, and in January 1916 it was undergoing intensive training in Abbeville.

For Irishmen serving in the ranks of the British or Imperial armed forces in January 1916, the war would continue to be a ‘test to search men’s souls’.

Before the year was out, the men whose soul-searching led them to enlist in the British Army would take part in one of the bloodiest campaigns of the war. Hundreds of Irish sailors serving in the Royal Navy would also find themselves tested in the largest naval battle of the conflict. However, back home in Ireland, there were those whose soul-searching didn’t lead them to enlist in the British armed forces. Instead, they took part in an armed rebellion to establish an independent Irish republic.

Whether in the trenches of France, on the North Sea or on the streets of Dublin, the actions taken by these individuals, all Irishmen, all volunteers, would ensure that 100 years later the events of 1916 are still inscribed on the hearts and minds of the people of Ireland.

*\* Reproduced with permission of the author Gerry White. Originally published in the Examiner on 26th January 2016.*

# SONS OF CHURCHTOWN & LISCARROLL

by John J F Murphy

ANZAC was the collective name given to the troops from Australia and New Zealand who fought in WW1. The ANZAC troops suffered huge casualties at Gallipoli which is why ANZAC is commemorated annually on 25th April not just in Australia and New Zealand but also throughout the many countries who supported Britain in WW1.

Brothers **Jerry, John, James** and **Bill Hartstonge** were four sons of Sunfort, Liscarroll born James Hartstonge Jnr., who immigrated with his parents James Flynn Hartstonge and Mary Murphy (Egmont, Churchtown) to the South Island of New Zealand in 1874. Mary Murphy was the sister of William Boss Murphy after which the pub in Churchtown village is named.

John Joseph, a land tax department clerk volunteered for active duty in June 1916 when he turned 20. Joining

the 2nd Otago regiment, after basic training in New Zealand and England he was shipped off to France where he arrived in February 1917. John Joseph was reported wounded October 12, 1917 then subsequently declared missing, killed in action.



**HARTSTONGE.**—Reported killed in action on October 12, 1917, John Joseph, dearly beloved son of James and Margaret Hartstonge, Royal Terrace, Dunedin, in his 22nd year.—May his soul rest in peace.



**PTE. J. J. HARTSTONGE**  
of Dunedin,  
Killed in action.

Jerry who was John Joseph's older brother, a farm worker, followed him into the New Zealand expedition force (Wellington Infantry Regiment) in May 1917. Jerry landed in France on March 18th.

## PRIVATE JEREMIAH HARTSTONGE.

Private Jeremiah Hartstonge, whose death in action was recently announced, was a son of Mr. James Hartstonge, of York Place, Dunedin, and who for some years was a highly respected resident of the Tuapeka West district. Four sons from this family went to France, and this, unfortunately, is the second bereavement it has suffered through the war, while a third son is dangerously wounded. In their sad bereavement the family will have the sincere sympathy of a wide circle of friends throughout Otago.—R.I.P.



*Flesquieres Hill British Cemetery, France where Jerry Hartstonge is buried.*

Jerry was wounded on 24 August 1918 and, rejoining the front on August 28th, Jerry was killed in action October 1st and is buried in the Flesquieres Hill British Cemetery, France.

James Philip enlisted with the Auckland Regiment at age 25 in March 1917, arriving October 1917. James was seriously wounded in August 1918 and declared unfit for future service. James Philip was demobbed in 1919, returning to New Zealand where he married, had a large family and lived a long life.

## Further Hartstonge Memories

Judy Hartstonge is a niece of the two Harstonge men who died in WW1 and she recalls: “my Uncle John Joseph Hartstonge’s death on 12 October 1917 was significant in that he was one of those killed in the Battle of Passchendaele which is recorded as New Zealand’s worst military disaster. The back cover of *Massacre at Passchendaele* by Glyn Harper, published in 2000 says that “in just a few short hours on a miserable Belgian morning over 1,000 New Zealand soldiers were killed and a further 2,000 wounded in an attack on the German front line”. Judy’s uncle Jack has no known grave, having been buried in the mud, and is remembered in a memorial to the missing at Tyne Cot cemetery. Third brother, James Philip (Jim) (1892 – 1962) was gassed in the war. Jim returned to New Zealand and was an accountant for a local Dunedin company.

Judy’s sister Denise recalled on 1st October 2018 – the centenary of her uncle Jerry’s death – that her father Bill told her that he met up with Jerry just a few weeks before the war ended; they were full of hope for getting home together in a few weeks. As it turned out, Jerry was killed and Bill came home alone. On Bill’s way home he helped to carve the Giant Kiwi at Sling Camp near Salisbury in England before going to Ireland. “In Ireland some connection of the family gave Bill some clothes so that he wouldn’t be picked off by an anti-British local,” Denise remembered hearing from her father. Bill served in the 34th Reinforcements Divisional Signallers NZEF (NZ Expeditionary Force). After his return to New Zealand, Bill graduated in law, set up





*The Giant Kiwi at Sling Camp that Bill Hartstonge helped to carve. Source: [teara.govt.nz](http://teara.govt.nz)*

his own legal practice and served as Mayor of Mosgiel for 21 years from 1938 to 1959 and was extensively involved in a range of community organisations.



**Timothy Murphy**, left, born in Egmont, Churchtown and a cousin of the Hartstonge brothers emigrated to Chicago at the age of 14. He enlisted with the Illinois National Guard and was sent to France in 1917. Timothy fought with the American Expeditionary Force in the Second Battle of the Marne and at the Battle of Château-Thierry. Tim returned to Chicago after the war.

### General Tom Barry

Another son of Liscarroll was Tom Barry (1897 -1980) whose mother was Margaret Donovan of Liscarroll and grandmother was Margaret O'Brien of Knockbardbane, Liscarroll. Tom Barry was a very prominent leader during the Irish War of Independence, when he was commander of the 3rd West Cork Flying Column. This was after Tom, looking for adventure first joined the British Army's Royal Field Artillery and fought in Mesopotamia (Iraq). Tom returned to Cork after the war with a very different view of the Empire and the rest is history as they say. See also Gerry White's article on page 32 where he also deals with Tom Barry and WW1.



# CONTRIBUTORS

**Colette Collins**, originally from Tralee, started her teaching career in Churchtown National School and taught there until 1998 when she transferred to Liscarroll from where she retired in 2003. Colette married the late Joe Collins from Liscarroll in 1972. Colette has a lifelong interest in researching those who fought in WW1 and is Honorary Secretary of the Royal Munster Fusiliers Association, an organisation she joined in 2002.

**Denis J Hickey**, was raised in Churchtown and now lives in Limerick. He is a historian and founding member of Churchtown Heritage Society. Denis is co-author with James Doherty, of *A Dictionary of Irish History since 1800* (1980), *A Chronology of Irish History since 1500* (1989) and *A New Dictionary of Irish History from 1800* (2003). In 2005 he compiled *The Annals of Churchtown* which was published by Churchtown Village Renewal Trust (now Churchtown Heritage Society) and in 2010 his biography of Churchtown's Fr. Michael Tierney MSC was published.

**Gerry Murphy** was raised in Churchtown and is a member of Churchtown Heritage Society which he founded as Churchtown Village Renewal Trust in 1997. In 2003 the Trust published *The Boss Murphy Musical Legacy*, edited by Colette Moloney and in 2005 *The Annals of Churchtown*. He was the executive producer of *Bloom*, a feature film in 2004 and in 2014, his business book *The Accidental Entrepreneur* was published by Orpen Press. In 2016 he edited *Anthology* – a collection of the writings of his brother John Murphy (1951-2014). He was awarded Cork Person of the Year in 2001 for his work on rural renewal in Churchtown.

**John J F Murphy**, originally from Dublin, lives in Boston with his wife and three children. John takes a great interest in genealogy and the history of Churchtown where his father Eddie was born and raised in Egmont. John was co-editor in 2016 of *William Murphy 1819 - 1902; The Weight Thrower* and is joint webmaster on the Boss Murphy family tree web site at [www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com)

**Gerry White** is retired from the Irish Army. He is a military historian, and co-editor, with Brendan O'Shea, of *A Great Sacrifice: Cork Servicemen Who Died In The Great War* (Echo Publications, 2010), and co-author, with Brendan O'Shea of *Baptised in Blood: The Formation of the Cork Brigade Of Irish Volunteers 1913-1916* (Mercier Press, 2005) and *The Burning of Cork* (Mercier Press, 2006). Gerry is Chairman, Cork Branch, Western Front Association.



**Churchtown Heritage Society** is a voluntary organisation set up to promote events and publications of local historical interest. The group succeeded Churchtown Village Renewal Trust which was founded in 1997.

### **Sample Events**

Hedge School Re-enactment  
Wild Life Pond Visit  
Moanroe Bog visit  
Flax industry in Churchtown  
International Year of the Co-operative conference  
Kilgrogan Graveyard visit  
Flannery's Quarry and Whiteboy Commemoration  
Market House in Churchtown  
Mountcorbitt House visit and plaque presentation  
Images of Churchtown at Community Centre  
Ina Bowe OBE Commemoration / Plaque unveiling  
Jack Moylan Commemoration / Plaque unveiling  
Tierney Family Commemoration / Plaque unveiling  
William Murphy Commemoration at Liscarroll Castle  
1929 O'Keeffe Medal Presentation to GAA  
Annual Seán Clárach Commemoration  
2019 - Boss Murphy Musical Legacy CD with Shandrum Ceili Band

### **Main Publications**

Boss Murphy Musical Legacy  
The Annals of Churchtown  
William Murphy, The Weight Thrower  
The Heritage of Churches in Churchtown  
In Memoriam – WW1 Armistice Commemoration

### **Other Media**

Bruhenny TV channel  
on *YouTube*





*Bruhenny Village Green  
obelisk in Churchtown  
erected to commemorate the  
Millennium in 2000. Officially  
unveiled by Pat Cox, President  
of the European Parliament  
2002 – 2004.*







*Liscarroll Community Council remembers the ten men from our Parish who died in World War 1*

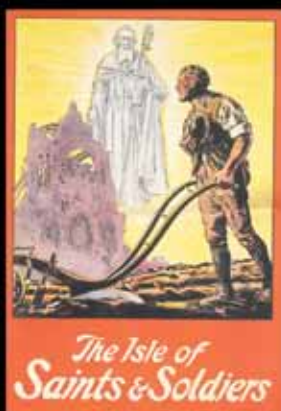


*Liscarroll Castle was built in the 13th century by the Norman De Barry family. The castle is a large rectangular structure about 240 feet by 120 feet with large rounded towers at each corner. The surrounding walls were about 30 feet tall, with the main entrance in the south wall guarded by a large square tower.*



This commemorative booklet was compiled and edited by Gerry Murphy ([gmurphy@bruhenny.com](mailto:gmurphy@bruhenny.com)) for Churchtown Heritage Society. The Society gratefully acknowledges the following contributors: Colette Collins, Gerry White, Denis J Hickey and John J F Murphy; the research support of Jean Prendergast, Francis O'Connor and Noel Linehan; careful proof reading by Dorothy Murphy and Mark Jakeman and original research on the Michael McCarthy's war medals by Tom Martin. Every effort has been made to acknowledge images and sources. If any reader is in a position to correct, add or improve what is in this publication please do so by emailing [heritage@bruhenny.com](mailto:heritage@bruhenny.com). Graphic design by Martin Keaney.





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