

Irish Soldiers in the First World War (Somme)

Annual Somme Commemoration

A commemoration ceremony organised by the Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland is held every year at the Irish National War Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge, Dublin. The ceremony takes place on the Saturday before the Annual National Day of Commemoration event, which takes place on the Sunday closest to the 11th July every year.

Battle of the Somme Centenary Commemoration Ceremony

Since its inception in 2012, the Decade of Centenaries programme has sought to be measured and reflective and to commemorate significant events that shaped the history of the island of Ireland during this decade one hundred years ago – not only those that marked Ireland's path to independence but also those which enhance our understanding of the wider international landscape during this period.

In 2016 a State ceremony to commemorate the centenary of the Battle of the Somme, in which approximately 3,500 soldiers from the island of Ireland (the 36th Ulster and the 16th Irish Divisions) lost their lives, was held in conjunction with the Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland and took place on **Saturday 9th July 2016 at 12 noon**.

During the ceremony wreaths were laid by the President of Ireland, the Secretary of State Northern Ireland, Deputy First Minister Northern Ireland, Minister for the Economy Northern Ireland, Ambassadors of the countries that fought at the Somme, and the Presidents of the Royal British Legion (Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland).

Irish Soldiers in the Battle of the Somme

The Battle of the Somme started on 1 July 1916 after an eight-day artillery bombardment of the German front lines. Despite 60,000 casualties in one day, no progress was made in the British sector and the battle continued until the following November when the weather intervened. The total number of casualties in the Battle exceeded one million. This included the deaths of some 3,500 Irishmen from all parts of this island. However, to fully understand and do justice to the significance what happened at the Somme, we must look at the overall context of WW1 and its impact on Ireland and on the Irish participants

Irish Soldiers in the First World War

When the Bosnian Serb Gavrilo Princip fired the shots that killed the heir to the Austrian crown Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife during their state visit to Sarajevo in June 1914, he started a chain of events that would directly affect Irish people in every part of Ireland and some of those living in Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. The course of Irish history was greatly altered, leading to the emergence of forces that still influence the politics of today. The increased awareness of the Irish aspects of the War have helped to put those forces to positive use by allowing people from the two major traditions to meet on common ground.

Ireland at the Outbreak of the War

By 1914, the political efforts to restore some form of self-government to Ireland appeared to be achieving tangible results with the passing of the Home Rule Bill at Westminster. The prospects of a Dublin parliament had prompted the Unionist opposition to organise the Ulster Volunteer Force and to import 24,600 rifles and three million rounds of ammunition from Germany on 24-25 April, 1914. In response, the Nationalists formed the Irish Volunteers who also imported arms from Germany at Howth albeit only 900 rifles and 25,000 rounds. These unofficial armies openly exercised in military formations bearing arms and with many volunteers wearing their own uniforms.

Ireland has a strong military tradition. Even before the departure of the "Wild Geese" after the Treaty of Limerick, Irish soldiers had practised their profession abroad. An exhibition of prints by Albrecht Durer contained a watercolour of "Irish soldiers" from 1521. Throughout the 19th century, the British Army in Ireland provided a convenient outlet for young men interested in soldiering. The country was divided into catchment areas for local regiments which offered regular income, attractive uniforms and the opportunity to travel abroad. Others joined the British navy. Irish emigrants to the United States had won distinction on both sides in the Civil War.

The new volunteer organisations and the Irish Citizen Army drew heavily on army veterans for organisational expertise and training.

Ireland goes to war

When Great Britain declared war on August 4th, 1914, there were some 20,000 Irishmen already serving in the regular British Army with another 30,000 in the first line reserve. The total army strength was 247,000 with 145,000 ex-regular reservists. In contrast to the other major European powers, the British Army relied on volunteer soldiers rather than on National Service. Lord Kitchener, a serving officer who was made Secretary for War on August 5th, informed the Cabinet that it would be a three-year war requiring at least one million men. Thirty new divisions were formed into what became known as the New Armies or Kitchener's Army. The volunteers were assigned to new battalions of existing regiments of infantry which were given numbers following consecutively on the existing ones. [The word "Service" was added to the battalion number.] Typically, an infantry battalion consisted of 1,000 men. Following huge losses and a decline in volunteers, conscription was eventually introduced in January 1916. It was not applied to Ireland.

The Home Rule Bill was given the Royal Assent on the 18th September 1914 but its operation was suspended for one year or for the duration of the war when it would be reviewed with a view to securing the general consent of Ireland and the United Kingdom. On the Nationalist Party, John Redmond, who was widely expected to be the first Prime Minister of the new Irish Parliament, called on the Irish Volunteers to enlist. Irish soldiers in the British Expeditionary Force had already been in action in Flanders. The German advance through Belgium, the rumours of atrocities and refugees and the near capture of Paris had created an emotional atmosphere. The organisation split with those who followed Redmond being called the National Volunteers. About 12,000 of the 180,000 retained the Irish Volunteers title and set themselves the objective of gaining full independence for Ireland, by force if necessary. The peaceful achievement of Home Rule was again in doubt due to the failure of the Government to deal with the build-up of arms in Northern Ireland and the public refusal of a cavalry brigade in the Curragh to enforce Home Rule Act if so requested.

About 80,000 enlisted in Ireland in the first 12 months of the war, some half of whom came from Ulster. The First New Army of 100,000 soldiers, K1, contained the 10th (Irish) Division which was formed in late August, 1914. It had three brigades. One had regiments with bases in all four provinces. The second was based in Ulster and the third was based in the other three provinces. The 16th (Irish) Division of the Second New Army was formed in September, 1914. One brigade was from the province of Ulster. The 36th (Ulster) Division was authorised on the 28th October 1914. It was based on the formation and membership of the Ulster Volunteer Force to which a London based artillery unit was added. It contained men from all nine counties of Ulster. Redmond had sought have all Irish regiments organised into a single fighting unit.

Irishmen also joined Irish regiments such as the Irish Guards, the London (Irish), the Tyneside battalions of the Northumberland Fusiliers and the 1st/8th (Irish) Kings Liverpool Regiment. Many also joined other English, Scottish and Welsh regiments, the Royal Artillery, the Royal Flying Corps, the Medical Corps, the Army Service Corps, and the Royal Navy. Women served as nurses in the Voluntary Aid Detachment in the front line. Emigrants enlisted in the armies of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa and United States.

Those who went to fight could not have envisaged the changed world that would exist at the end of the War. The reasons for enlisting were as varied as the individuals. Some joined out of economic necessity. Others had the hope that the experience of serving side by side against a common enemy would forge friendships that would transcend the historic differences. Thomas Kettle, the former Nationalist MP for East Tyrone who served and was killed as a Lieutenant in the 9th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, believed that:

“Used with the wisdom which is sown in tears and blood, this tragedy of Europe may be and must be the prologue to the two reconciliations of which all statesmen have dreamed, the reconciliation of Protestant Ulster with Ireland, and the reconciliation of Ireland with Great Britain.”

Important Irish Episodes in the First World War

The virtual disappearance of the First World War from the version of Irish history taught to the first few generations of the new independent Irish state had the result that few are aware of the extent of the Irish participation in the actual fighting. The concentration on the experience of the 36th (Ulster) Division at the Battle of the Somme in Northern Ireland overshadowed the sacrifice of the Nationalist community.

The following are some episodes that have particular significance for Ireland and form the background discussions about the relevance of the First World War to modern politics.

1914 The First Battles

The British Expeditionary Force entered France in August 1914 and advanced to stop the German advance through Belgium and Northern France. The Irish regiments in the BEF were:

Infantry:

1st Irish Guards

2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers

2nd Royal Munster Fusiliers

2nd Royal Irish Rifles

2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
1st Royal Irish Fusiliers
2nd Connaught Rangers
2nd Royal Irish Regiment
2nd Leinster Regiment

Cavalry:

4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards
South Irish Horse
8th King's Royal Irish Hussars
5th Royal Irish Lancers
North Irish Horse

Many Irish men were serving in British regiments and there were some English, Scots and Welsh in the Irish regiments who had been so assigned because of their Catholic faith.

The first shot fired by the British Army in the War was discharged by Corporal E. Thomas of the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards just north of Mons on August 22nd. On the following day, Lt Maurice Dease from Mullingar, who was serving with the Royal Fusiliers, attempted to stop the German advance into the city with his machine gun unit. He died fighting and was awarded the first posthumous Victoria Cross of the War.

The well-trained regular soldiers fought a number of battles but had to retreat in the face of the German thrust. The 2nd Dublins had their first casualties near Le Cateau and the 2nd Munsters delayed the German advance for a day with a costly rearguard action at Etreux.

The Irish prisoners of war were eventually taken to a camp at Limburg where they were visited by Sir Roger Casement in his attempts to raise an "Irish Brigade" which would not be part of the German forces. Less than 60 of the 2000 Irish prisoners in the camp took up the offer.

The German advance on Paris was halted in the Battle of the Marne. The Allied Armies pursued the Germans until both sides took up positions in opposing trenches which eventually stretched for 350 miles from the English Channel to Switzerland.

The Irish regiments were distributed throughout the British sector and began a routine of alternating periods of days in the front line, days in reserve and days in the rear resting. The routine was broken by the major set piece battles in many of which large numbers of Irish soldiers died.

Some Irish soldiers took part in the Christmas Truce of 1914 when there was a spontaneous cessation in the killing for a short period.

1915

GALLIPOLI

The stalemate on the Western Front prompted an alternative approach to defeating Germany. The capture of Constantinople, now Istanbul, would give a direct link to the Russian ally and a successful eastern front campaign could be undertaken. A British Navy

attempt to sail up the Dardanelles on March 18 failed with the loss of several ships. Despite the advanced warning that this gave the Turks, the British and French attempted a land invasion on the 25th April. They went ashore at six locations but the Turkish defence held them close to the beaches. A second attempt was made on the 6th August at Suvla Bay but this also ground to a halt. The campaign was abandoned and last of the troops were withdrawn in January 1916. Churchill, who had proposed the campaign, had to resign from the Cabinet. He subsequently lost his seat in the House of Commons and had to wait until outbreak of the Second World War to return to a position of power.

The 1st Battalions of the Royal Dublin, Munster and Inniskilling Fusiliers took part in the landing on April 25th at Cape Helles which was a perfect defensive location with gun emplacements housed on steep slopes. The naval bombardment failed to neutralize the Turkish defences. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Royal Munster Fusiliers were the first to disembark from the *S.S. River Clyde* and of the first 200 men to leave the ship, 149 were killed and 30 wounded immediately. The Dublins had 25 officers and 987 other ranks but only, one officer and 374 other ranks made it ashore. There were 637 casualties in the first 36 hours.

The Allies decided to launch a fresh attack against the Turks and chose Suvla Bay, 25 miles north of Cape Helles. The first Irish volunteer unit to go into battle was the 10th (Irish) Division which contained the new service battalions of the Irish regiments. As a result of administrative incompetence, the Division's artillery had been sent to France and the men arrived without either maps or orders. The Division did not fight as a unit. There was a chronic water shortage and the soldiers ran out of ammunition and had to resort to throwing stones at the enemy. At least 3,411 serving with Irish battalions were killed or missing, 569 from the 1st Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers alone.

ST JULIAN, Flanders, May 1915

Near St. Julien, during the second battle of Ypres, the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers suffered near annihilation just one month after the Helles Landings. On May 24th, 1915, around 2.45am, the Germans launched a poison gas attack. The Battalion strength was 666 men. By 9.30 pm, only one officer and 20 other ranks remained.

SALONIKA, October, 1915

On September 29, 1915, the 2,454 strong 10th (Irish) Division set sail from Gallipoli for Salonika to fight on the Bulgarian front. On the 3rd October, the Royal Dublin and Munster Fusiliers were at the front line and were ordered to take the village of Jenikoj which is now in Macedonia. In the attack, they lost 385 men killed, wounded or missing. There is a granite Celtic cross to commemorate the 10th (Irish) Division near the village of Robrovo in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This complements the ones at Wijtschate in Flanders and Guillemont in France.

1916

HULLUCH, April, 1916

The 16th (Irish) Division arrived in France in December 1915 and was assigned to the Loos sector. The soldiers experienced trench warfare and suffered casualties during each 8-day period in the front line. They were in the trenches at Hulluch when the Germans launched a gas attack on April 27th, 1916. Of the 1980 casualties, 570 were killed and many of the wounded died later from respiratory diseases. The Germans had put up placards opposite

the Irish trenches to bring news of the Easter Rising which had begun in Dublin. The Division remained at Loos until August when it moved to the Somme area. The Division had suffered 6,000 casualties (1,496 killed).

THE RISING IN DUBLIN, April, 1916

As the number of casualties continued to rise with little prospect of early victory, the Irish Volunteers continued to train and prepare to resist any attempt to disarm them. The reality of war was brought home in the long lists of dead and wounded which also increased the likelihood of conscription.

When the Rising began on the 24th April, there were about 5,000 soldiers deployed in the Dublin area. An additional 1000 were immediately sent from Belfast and further thousands were dispatched from England. The 4th, 5th and 10th Royal Dublin Fusiliers took part in the fighting as did a number of officers and soldiers who were on leave in Dublin at the time.

It was generally accepted that the Irish Volunteers fought bravely and honourably. Prime Minister Asquith told the House of Commons that "they fought bravely and did not resort to outrage." The series of executions helped to swing Nationalist support away from the Parliamentary Party and behind Sinn Fein.

THE SOMME, July –November 1916

In an attempt to break the deadlock of trench warfare and to relieve the pressure on Verdun, the British and French launched a major offensive on July 1. The German positions opposite the 14 miles of the British sector had been bombarded with 1.7 million shells since June 24. No resistance was expected when over 100,000 soldiers left their trenches and went forward into no man's land at 7.30 am. In clear daylight, they advanced at a walking pace in straight lines with 100 yards between each assault wave. They were met with a hail of gunfire which caused 60,000 casualties on that day, of whom almost 20,000 were killed.

The 36th (Ulster) Division's was assigned a target that included a huge concrete bunker where German troops sheltered, the Schwaben Redoubt. The Division was one of the few that succeeded in gaining its objectives but the soldiers could not hold them due the failures of the other divisions. The losses amounted to 5,500 of whom almost 2,000 were killed. Almost every community in Ulster was affected. Four Victoria Crosses were awarded to the Division.

Irish battalions serving in other divisions took part in the attack on July 1. The 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers, veterans of Gallipoli, went into action in a sector neighbouring the 36th. They had 147 casualties (22 killed) and 64 missing. The 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers were in the second wave of the attack, going into battle with 23 officers and 480 other ranks: 14 officers and 311 other ranks were casualties. The 1st Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, 1st and 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 2nd Royal Irish Regiment and the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Tyneside Irish Battalions of the Northumberland Fusiliers fought on that day.

The Battle of the Somme continued throughout the Summer with little progress. The 16th (Irish) Division captured Guillemont on September 2nd and Ginchy on September 9th. Lt Tom Kettle, MP, was killed while leading a company of the 9th Royal Dublin Fusiliers and Lt John Holland of the Leinsters won a Victoria Cross. The Division had 4,314 casualties (1167 killed).

The Battle petered out in November when 10th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, attached to the 63rd Naval Division, helped to capture Beaumont Hamel, one of the objectives for the first day. It had 50% casualties.

1917

MESSINES RIDGE, June 1917

The 16th (Irish) and 36th (Ulster) Divisions went into battle together to take the Belgian village of Wijtschate in the well-planned attack on the Messines Ridge. General Plumer had a scaled model of the Ridge made so troops could see what lay ahead. He had mines dug for explosives beneath German defences. About 3 million shells bombarded Messines for over a week. The barrage eased just before Plumer detonated 9,500 tons of explosives under the Germans in 19 mines. Willie Redmond, M.P. and brother of John, leader of the Irish Party, died of wounds received in the attack.

PASSCHENDAELE, THE 3RD BATTLE OF YPRES, July 1917

The 16th (Irish) and 36th (Ulster) Divisions were transferred to General Gough's 5th Army in July 1917. On 31 July, the 36th (Ulster) Division took part in the opening attack on the strong German positions to the east of Ypres. The heavy rain, which continued for a month, made conditions for an attack impossible. Never-the less, both Irish divisions moved forward at Langemarck on August 16th. 65% of the leading units were lost before the attack due to heavy German shelling. The 36th (Ulster) had 3,585 casualties and the 16th (Irish) 4,231. Fr Willie Doyle, MC, chaplain to the 8th Dublins, was killed.

The 16th (Irish) Division was in action near Arras and the 36th (Ulster) Division near Cambrai in November. The 10th (Irish) Division went to Egypt in September.

1918

THE SOMME 1918 - THE LAST 100 DAYS

The long-expected German offensive began on March 21st and succeeded in driving the British lines back almost to Amiens. The 16th and 36th Divisions received the full weight of the attack and were effectively destroyed as fighting units. The 16th had 6,435 casualties and the 36th had 6,109. A third were killed.

The battalions of 10th and 16th Divisions were amalgamated and distributed to other divisions on the Western Front. For example, the 1st Dublins went to the 29th Division and the 2nd and 7th joined the 31st Division. The 36th Division remained Ulster in name only as replacements were English conscripts. The Irish battalions took part in the advances which drove the Germans back over all of the territory gained during the four years of war. The 2nd Dublins went into battle near Le Cateau on October 16th, suffering 44% casualties within two days. This was where they had first gone into action in August 1914. The First World War ended within a month.

AFTERMATH

When the soldiers returned to Ireland, they found a changed political climate. The election in December 1918 was a clear endorsement of Sinn Fein outside of the traditional Unionist areas. The sacrifices made in the war were sidelined in the southern provinces whereas the losses at the Somme became part of the heritage of the new Northern Ireland.

Some ex-soldiers joined the IRA, notably Emmet Dalton who had served with Tom Kettle. He is on record as having no difficulty in fighting for Ireland with the British and fighting for Ireland against the British. Others joined the new Irish army.

On June 12th, 1922, the regiments which had been recruited in the new independent Ireland were disbanded. They were:

The Royal Irish Regiment

The Connaught Rangers

The Prince of Wales Leinster Regiment

The Royal Munster Fusiliers

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

The Colours were received by the King and were laid up in Windsor Castle where they remain

STATISTICS

There is no agreement on the total number of Irish soldiers who served in the British Army and Navy in the First World War. Professor Keith Jeffery gives a figure of 210,000. There appears to be a consensus that at least 35,000 died though the figure on the National War Memorial is 49,400.

About 140,000 enlisted in Ireland during the war. The increase in 1918 is worth noting.

Period	Recruits
Aug 1914 –Feb 1915	50,107
Feb 1915- Aug 1915	25,235
Aug 1915 –Feb 1916	19,801
Feb 1916- Aug 1916	9,323
Aug 1916 –Feb 1917	8,178
Feb 1917- Aug 1917	5,607
Aug 1917 –Feb 1918	6,550
Feb 1918- Aug 1918	5,812
Aug 1918 –Nov 1918 [3 Months]	9,843

The first year total of Irish recruits exceeded the total of the remaining three years of the War. As the War progressed, Irish losses were replaced by UK conscripts. For example, the percentage of non-Irish soldiers in the 1st Royal Irish Rifles, which was based in Antrim and Down, was 23% in 1916. One year later it was 52%.

As mentioned earlier, Irish soldiers served in other forces.

Recruiting areas for the Irish Infantry and Cavalry Regiments 1914

Regiment Name:	Recruiting area:	Depot:
The (18th Foot) Royal Irish Regiment	Tipperary, Wexford Waterford, Kilkenny	Clonmel
The Royal Munster Fusiliers	Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare	Tralee
The Connaught Rangers	Galway, Sligo, Mayo, Roscommon, Leitrim	Renmore
The Inniskilling Fusiliers	Omagh, Fermanagh, Donegal, Derry	
The Royal Irish Rifles	Belfast, Down, Antrim, Tyrone	Belfast
The Royal Irish Fusiliers	Monaghan, Armagh, Cavan	Armagh
The Leinster Regiment	Offaly, Meath, Louth, Laois	Birr
The Royal Dublin Fusiliers	Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Carlow	Naas
The Irish Guards	All over Ireland	Chelsea Barracks London.
The Tyneside Irish 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th Battalions of Northumberland Fusiliers	Newcastle	Alnwick Camp
The London Irish Rifles	London, Chelsea	Duke of York Barracks
The Kings Liverpool Regiment	Liverpool	Seaforth Barracks
Mainly only Irish in name The 4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards The 5th (Royal Irish) Lancers The 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons The 8th (King's Royal Irish) Hussars		
The South Irish Horse	Southern Ireland	Clonmel
The North Irish Horse	Belfast, Down, Antrim, Tyrone, Cavan, Derry, Donegal, Armagh, Monaghan	Belfast

[Chinese language version of Irish Soldiers in the First World War \(PDF File approx 208Kb\)](#)

[Polish language version of Irish Soldiers in the First World War \(PDF File approx 192Kb\)](#)

Saighdiúirí Éireannacha sa Chéad Chogadh Domhanda

Comóradh Bliantúil ar an Somme

Reáchtálann Léigiún Ríoga Briotanach na hÉireann searmanas comórtha gach bliain i nGairdíní Náisiúnta Cuimhneacháin Cogaidh na hÉireann i nDroichead na hInse, Baile Átha Cliath. An Satharn roimh an Lá Náisiúnta Cuimhneacháin, a bhíonn ar siúl an Domhnach is gaire don 11ú Iúil gach bliain, a reáchtáiltear an searmanas.

Searmanas Comórtha Chath an Somme

Ó tionscnaíodh é in 2012, féachann clár Deich mBliana na gCuimhneachán a bheith measúil agus machnamhach sa chomóradh a dhéantar ar imeachtaí suntasacha a raibh tionchar acu ar stair oileán na hÉireann sna deich mbliana seo céad bliain ó shin – ní hamháin na himeachtaí sin a bhain le neamhspleáchas na hÉireann ach freisin na cinn a chuireann lenár dtuiscint ar mar a bhí cúrsaí go hidirnáisiúnta ag an am. **In 2016 reáchtáladh searmanas Stáit chun comóradh a dhéanamh ar Chath an Somme**, inar maraíodh suas le 3,500 saighdiúir ó oileán na hÉireann (an 36ú Rannán Uladh agus 16ú Rannán na hÉireann). Reáchtáladh sin i gcomhar le Léigiún Ríoga Briotanach na hÉireann an **Satharn an 9ú Iúil 2016 ag 12 meán lae**. Le linn an tsearmanais leag Uachtarán na hÉireann, Stáit-Rúnaí Thuaisceart Éireann, Leas-Chéad Aire Thuaisceart Éireann, Aire Eacnamaíochta Thuaisceart Éireann, Ambasadóirí ó thíortha a throid sa Somme agus Uachtaráin an Léigiúin Ríoga Briotanach (Poblacht na hÉireann agus Thuaisceart Éireann) bláthfhleascanna.

Saighdiúirí na hÉireann i gCath an Somme

Thosaigh Cath an Somme, a bhfuilimid ag comóradh a chothrom lae nócha bliain ó shin, an 1 Iúil 1916 tar éis tuairgneáil airtléire ocht lá ar línte tosaigh na Gearmáine. In ainneoin go raibh 60,000 taismeach ann in aon lá amháin, ní dhearnadh aon dul chun cinn in aghaidh na Breataine agus mhair an cogadh go dtí an Samhain dar gcionn tráth ar athraigh an aimsir cúrsaí. Bhí os cionn milliún taismeach ar an iomlán sa Chath. Bhí 3,500 Éireannach ó gach ceann den oileán i measc na marbh. Chun tuiscint iomlán a fháil ar ar tharla ag an Somme, agus chun a cheart féin a thabhairt don tábhacht a bhí leis, caithfimid breathnú ar chomhthéacs iomlán an Chéad Chogadh Domhanda agus an tionchar a bhí aige ar Éirinn agus ar na daoine as Éirinn a ghlac páirt ann.

Saighdiúirí Éireannacha sa Chéad Chogadh Domhanda

Nuair a scaoil an Seirbiach Boisniach Gavrilo Princip na hurchair a mharaigh an oidhre ar Choróin na hOstaire, an tArd-Diúc Franz Ferdinand, agus a bhanchéile le linn a gcuarite ar Sarajevo i Meitheamh 1914, chuir sé tús le cúrsaí a mbeadh tionchar díreach acu ar Éireannaigh i ngach cearn d'Éirinn agus ar Éireannaigh a bhí ina gcónaí sa Bhreatain, san Astráil, sa Nua-Shéalainn, i gCeanada agus sna Stáit Aontaithe. Athraíodh stair na hÉireann go mór, as ar tháinig fórsaí a bhfuil tionchar fós acu ar pholaitíocht an lae inniu. Mar gheall ar níos mó eolais ar ghnéithe Éireannacha den Chogadh is féidir linn úsáid thairbheach a bhaint as na fórsaí sin chun go bhféadfadh daoine ón dá mhórthraidisiún nithe a bheith i gcoiteann acu.

Éire ag Tús an Chogaidh

Faoi 1914, ba dhealraitheach go raibh na hiarrachtaí polaitiúla chun féinrialtas de chineál éigin a thabhairt go hÉirinn ag baint torthaí cinnte amach le rith Bhille an Rialtais Dúchais ag Westminster. Thug an baol go mbeadh parlaimint i mBaile Átha Cliath ar an bhfreasúra Aontachtach Óglaigh Uladh a eagrú agus 24,600 raidhfil mar aon le 3 mhiliún piléar a allmhairiú ón nGearmáin an 24-25 Aibreán, 1914. Mar fhreagra air sin, chruthaigh na Náisiúnaithe Óglaigh na hÉireann agus thug siadsan airm ón nGearmáin isteach ag Binn Éadair, cé nach raibh ann ach 900 raidhfil agus 25,000 piléar. Bhíodh na hairm neamhoifigiúla sin ag freachnamh go hoscailte in eagar míleata ag iompar airm agus bhíodh a gcuid éide féin á chaitheamh ag go leor de na hóglaigh.

Tá traidisiún láidir míleata ag Éirinn. Fiú amháin roimh imeacht na ‘nGéanna Fiáine’ tar éis Chonradh Luimnigh, bhíodh saighdiúirí Éireannacha ag cleachtadh a gceirde thar lear. Bhí uiscédhath a léirigh “Saighdiúirí Éireannacha” ón mbliain 1521 i dtaispeántas le gairid de phriontaí de chuid Albrecht Durer. I rith an 19^ú aois, bhí Arm na Breataine in Éirinn mar bhealach amach áisiúil d’fhir óga a raibh spéis acu sa saighdiúireacht. Bhí an tír roinnte ina n-abhantracha do reisimintí áitiúla a chuir ioncam rialta, éide tarraingeach agus an deis taisteal thar lear ar fáil. Chuaigh daoine eile i gcabhlach na Breataine. Bhain eisimircigh Éireannacha chun na Stát Aontaithe cáil amach ar an dá thaobh sa Chogadh Cathartha.

Tharraing na heagraíochtaí óglach nua agus Arm Cathartha na hÉireann go mór ar athlaochra airm le haghaidh saineolas eagraíochtúil agus traenáil.

Téann Éire chun cogaidh

Nuair a d’fhógair an Bhreatain Mhór cogadh an 4^ú Lúnasa, 1914, bhí isteach agus amach le 20,000 Éireannach ag fónamh cheana féin i mBuan-Arm na Breataine agus bhí 30,000 eile i gcéadlíne an chúltaca. Ba 247,000 a bhí i líon iomlán an airm agus bhí 145,000 cúltaicire ann a bhí sa bhuanarm tráth. I gcodarsnacht le mórchumhachtaí Eorpacha eile, bhí Arm na Breataine ag brath ar shaighdiúirí saorálacha seachas ar Sheirbhís Náisiúnta. Chuir an Tiarna Kitchener, oifigeach a bhí ag fónamh agus a ndearnadh Rúnaí Cogaidh de an 5^ú Lúnasa, in iúl don Chomh-Aireacht gur cogadh trí bliana a bheadh ann agus go mbeadh milliún fear ar a laghad de dhíth. Cruthaíodh tríocha rannán nua ar ar tugadh na hAirm Nua nó Arm Kitchener. Sannadh na hóglaigh chuig cathláin nua de na reisimintí coisithe a bhí cheana ann agus tugadh uimhreacha dóibh a bhí ag leanúint na n-uimhreacha a bhí cheana ann. [Cuireadh an focal “Seirbhís” leis an uimhir chathláin.] Is 1,000 fear a bhíodh sa chathlán coisithe de ghnáth. Tar éis cailteanais mhóra agus meath ar an líon óglach, tugadh coinscríobh isteach faoi dheireadh in Eanáir 1916. Níor cuireadh i bhfeidhm in Éirinn é.

Tugadh Cead Ríoga do Bhille an Rialtais Dúchais an 18^ú Meán Fómhair 1914, ach cuireadh a fheidhmiú ar fionraí go ceann bliana amháin nó an t-achar a mhairfeadh an cogadh, tráth a ndéanfaí athbhreithniú air le súil agus toiliú ginearálta na hÉireann agus na Ríochta Aontaithe a fháil. An 20^ú Meán Fómhair, d’iarr ceannaire an Pháirtí Náisiúnaigh, Seán Mac Réamainn, an té a cheap go leor a bheadh ar an gcéad Phríomh-Aire i bParlaimint nua na hÉireann, ar Óglaigh na hÉireann liostáil. Bhí saighdiúirí Éireannacha i bhFórsa Sluaíochta na Breataine i mbun comhraic cheana i bhFlóndras. Bhí atmaisféar mothaitheach cruthaithe ag dul ar aghaidh na Gearmáine tríd an mBeilg, na luaidreáin faoi ghníomhartha uafáis agus dídeanaithe agus ó tharla gur beag nár tógadh Páras. Scoilt an eagraíocht, agus ghairm an dream a lean Mac Réamainn na hÓglaigh Náisiúnta orthu féin. Choinnigh thart ar 12,000 den 180,000 an teideal Óglaigh na hÉireann agus leag siad amach mar chuspóir dóibh féin neamhspleáchas iomlán a bhaint amach d’Éirinn, le forneart dá mba ghá. Caitheadh amhras

arís ar bhaint amach an Rialtais Dúchais go síochánta mar gheall gur theip ar an Rialtas déileáil leis an gcarnadh arm i dTuaisceart Éireann agus mar gheall gur dhiúltaigh briogáid marcra sa Churrach go poiblí Acht an Rialtais Dúchais a chur i bhfeidhm dá n-iarrfaí sin orthu.

Liostáil thart ar 80,000 in Éirinn sa chéad 12 mhí den chogadh, ar tháinig os cionn a leath ó Chúige Uladh. Bhí an 10^ú Rannán (Éireannach), a cruthaíodh i ndeireadh Lúnasa, 1914, sa Chéad Arm Nua de 100,000 saighdiúr, K1. Bhí trí bhriogáid ann. Bhí reisimintí le bunáiteanna i ngach ceann den cheithre chúige ag ceann díobh sin. Bhí an dara ceann lonnaithe i gCúige Uladh agus bhí an tríú ceann lonnaithe sna trí chúige eile. Bunaíodh an 16^ú Rannán (Éireannach) den Dara Arm Nua i Meán Fómhair, 1914. B'as Cúige Uladh briogáid amháin. Údaraíodh an 36^ú Rannán (Ulaidh) an 28^ú Deireadh Fómhair 1914. Bhí sé bunaithe ar eagar agus ar chomhaltas Óglaigh Uladh, a raibh aonad airtléire a raibh a bhunáit i Londain curtha leis. Bhí fir ann ó gach ceann de naoi gcontae Uladh. Bhí Mac Réamainn ag iarraidh go mbeadh na reisimintí Éireannacha go léir eagraithe in aon aonad troda amháin.

Chuaigh Éireannaigh freisin le reisimintí Éireannacha ar nós Gardaí na hÉireann, an Londain (Éireannach), Cathláin Cois Tyne d'Fhíúsailéirí Northumberland agus an 1^ú/8^ú Reisimint Learphoill an Rí (Éireannach). Chuaigh go leor eile isteach i reisimintí Sasanacha, Albanacha agus Breatnacha, an Ríoga, Airtléire, an Cór Eitilte Ríoga, an Cór Liachta, Cór Seirbhíse an Airm agus an Cabhlach Ríoga. D'fhóin mná mar bhanaltraí sa Díorma Cabhrach Saorálach sa líne tosaigh. Liostáil eisimircigh in airm san Astráil, sa Nua-Shéalainn, i gCeanada agus san Afraic Theas agus sna Stáit Aontaithe.

Ní raibh bealach ar bith go bhféadfadh na daoine a chuaigh chun troda an saol athraithe a bheadh ann ag deireadh an Chogaidh a shamhlú. Bhí na cúiseanna a liostáil daoine chomh héagsúil leis na daoine féin. Chuaigh daoine ann mar gheall ar riachtanas eacnamaíoch. Bhí tuilleadh ag súil go gcothófaí cairdeas a thrasnódh difríochtaí stairiúla trína bheith ag fónamh taobh le taobh in aghaidh an namhad céanna. Chreid Thomas Kettle, Iar-MP Náisiúnach do Thír Eoghain Thoir a d'fhóin in 8^ú Fíúsailéirí Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath, agus a maraíodh tráth a raibh sé ina Leifteanant:

“Ag breathnú ar an tragóid seo san Eoraip leis an ngaois a thagann le deora agus fuil, is maith a d'fhéadfadh sí, go deimhin caithfidh sí, a bheith ina tús le dhá athmhuintearas atá ina aisling ag gach aon státaire, athmhuintearas Ulaidh Protastúnach le hÉirinn agus athmhuintearas na hÉireann leis an mBreatain Mhór.”

Eachtraí Tábhachtacha Éireannacha sa Chéad Chogadh Domhanda

Ó tharla go raibh an Chéad Chogadh Domhanda fágtha amach nach mór as an leagan de stair na hÉireann a múineadh don chéad chúpla glúin den stát nua neamhspleách Éireannach is beag ar eol dóibh a mhéid a bhí Éireannaigh páirteach sa troid féin. Rinneadh beag d'íobairt an phobail Náisiúnaigh trí dhíriú isteach i dTuaisceart Éireann ar ar tharla don 36^ú Rannán (Uladh) ag Cath an Somme.

Seo a leanas cuid de na heachtraí a bhfuil tábhacht ar leith ag baint leo d'Éirinn agus atá mar bhunús don phlé ar an mbaint atá ag an gCéad Chogadh Domhanda le polaitíocht an lae inniu.

1914 Na Chéad Chathanna

Chuaigh Fórsa Sluaíochta na Breataine (BEF) go dtí an Fhrainc i Lúnasa 1914 agus rinne siad a mbealach chun dul ar aghaidh na Gearmáine tríd an mBeilg agus Tuaisceart na Fraince a stopadh. Ba iad na reisimintí Éireannacha sa BEF ná:

Coisithe:

1ú Gardaí na hÉireann 2ú Fiúsailéirí Ríoga Bhaile Átha Clath 2ú Fiúsailéirí Ríoga na Mumhan 1ú Fiúsailéirí Ríoga na hÉireann 2ú Fiúsailéirí Ríoga Inis Ceithleann 2ú Reisimint Ríoga na hÉireann 2ú Fiannóglaigh Chonnacht 2ú Raidhfílí Ríoga na hÉireann 2ú Reisimint Laighean

Marcra:

4ú Gardaí Dragúin Ríoga na hÉireann Capaill Éireann an Deiscirt 8^ú Husáir Éireannacha Ríoga an Rí 5ú Lansaithe Ríoga na hÉireann Capaill Éireann an Tuaiscirt

Bhí go leor fear Éireannach ag fónamh i reisimintí na Breataine agus bhí roinnt Sasanach, Albanach agus Breatnach i reisimintí na hÉireann ar cuireadh ann mar gheall go mba Chaitlicigh iad.

Ba é an Ceannaire E. Thomas de 4^ú Gardaí Dragúin Ríoga na hÉireann a chaith an chéad urchar de chuid Arm na Breataine sa Chogadh díreach ó thuaidh de Mons an 22^ú Lúnasa. An lá dar gcionn, d'fhéach an Lt Maurice Dease as an Muileann gCearr, a bhí ag fónamh leis na Fiúsailéirí Ríoga le dul chun cinn na Gearmáine isteach sa chathair a stopadh lena aonad meaisínghunnaí. Bhásaigh sé sa troid agus bronnadh an chéad Cros Victoria iarbháis den Chogadh air.

Throid na buansaighdiúirí dea-oilte roinnt cathanna ach b'éigean dóibh cúlú ó ionsaí na Gearmáine. Bhí a gcéad tasmigh ag an 2^ú Baile Átha Cliath in aice le Le Cateau agus chuir an 2^ú Mumhain moill ar dhul chun cinn na Gearmáine ar feadh lae trí chomhrac costasach cúlgharda ag Etreaux.

Tugadh príosúnaigh choghaidh na hÉireann faoi dheireadh go dtí campa ag Limburg áit ar thug Sior Ruairí Mac Easmainn cuairt orthu ina chuid iarrachtaí "Briogáid Éireannach" a chur le chéile nach mbeadh mar chuid d'fhórsaí na Gearmáine. Ghlac níos lú ná 60 den 2000 príosúnach Éireannach sa champa lena thairiscint.

Cuireadh stop le dul chun cinn na Gearmáine ar Pháras i gCath Marne. Lean Airm na gComhghuaillithe na Gearmánaigh go dtí go raibh an dá thaobh suite i dtrinsí ar aghaidh a chéile a bhí ag síneadh faoi dheireadh ar feadh 350 míle ó Mhuir nloch go dtí an Eilvéis.

Bhí reisimintí na hÉireann scaipthe ar fud theascóg na Breataine agus chuir siad tús le tréimhsí malartacha laethanta sa líne tosaigh, laethanta sa chúltaca agus laethanta ar chúl ag ligean scíthe. Bhristí an gnáthamh sin leis na mórchathanna píosaí socraithe inar bhásaigh líon mór saighdiúirí Éireannacha.

Ghlac roinnt saighdiúirí Éireannacha páirt i Sos Cogaidh na Nollag sa bhliain 1914 nuair a cuireadh stop go tobann leis an marú ar feadh tréimhse ghearr.

1915

GALLIPOLI

Leis an leamhsháinn a bhí ar an bhFronta Thiar lorgaíodh bealach eile chun an Ghearmáin a chloí. Chruthódh tógáil Constantinople, Istanbul sa lá atá inniu ann, nasc díreach leis an gcomhghuaillí Rúiseach agus d'fhéadfaí tabhairt faoi fheachtas rathúil ar an bhfronta thoir. Theip ar iarracht de chuid Chabhlaigh na Breataine seoladh suas an Dardanelles an 18 Márta agus cailleadh roinnt long. In ainneoin an fholáirimh roimh ré a thug sé sin do na Turcaigh, thug na Briotanaigh agus na Francaigh faoi ionradh talún an 25^ú Aibreán. Chuaigh siad i dtír ag sé shuíomh ach choinnigh cosaint na dTurcach gar do na tránna iad. Rinneadh iarracht eile an 6^ú Lúnasa ag Bá Suvla ach tháinig sin ina stad chomh maith. Caitheadh an feachtas i dtraipéisí agus tarraingíodh an chuid deiridh de na trúpaí siar in Eanáir 1916. B'éigean do Churchill, a mhol an feachtas, éirí as an gComh-Aireacht. Chaill sé a shuíochán ina dhiaidh sin i dTeach na dTeachtaí agus bhí air fanacht go dtí gur thosaigh an Dara Cogadh Domhanda le go mbeadh cumhacht arís aige.

Bhí na 1ú Cathláin d'Fhíúsailéirí Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath, na Mumhan agus Inis Ceithleann páirteach sa teacht i dtír an 25^ú Aibreán ag Rinn Helles, arbh áit cosanta iontach a bhí ann le Fosláir Gunna curtha ar fhánaí géara. Níor éirigh leis an tuairgneáil chabhlaigh cosaintí na dTurcach a chur ó mhaith. Bhí Fíúsailéirí Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath agus Fíúsailéirí Ríoga na Mumhan ar an gcéad dream le teacht i dtír ón *S.S. River Clyde* agus den chéad 200 fear a d'fhág an long, maraíodh 149 agus goineadh 30 láithreach. Bhí 25 oifigeach agus 987 ó chéimeanna eile i mBaile Átha Claith, níor bhain ach oifigeach amháin agus 374 ó chéimeanna eile an cósta amach. Bhí 637 taismeach ann sa chéad 36 uair an chloig.

Shocraigh na Comhghuaillithe ionsaí eile ar fad a dhéanamh in aghaidh na dTurcach agus roghnaigh siad Bá Suvla, 25 míle ó thuaidh de Rinn Helles. Ba é an chéad aonad saorálach Éireannach a chuaigh chun catha ná an 10ú Rannán (Éireannach) ina raibh cathláin seirbhíse nua na reisimintí Éireannacha. Mar thoradh ar neamhéifeacht riaracháin, cuireadh airtléire an Rannáin chuig an bhFrainc rud a d'fhág na fir ag an láthair gan léarscáileanna ná orduithe. Níor throid an Rannán mar aonad. Bhí ganntan mór uisce ann agus ídíodh an lón cogaidh ar na saighdiúirí agus ní raibh fágtha le déanamh acu ach clocha a chaitheamh leis an namhaid. Maraíodh 3,411 ar a laghad a bhí ag fónamh le cathláin Éireannacha, nó chuaigh siad ar iarraidh. Bhí 569 díobh sin ó 1ú Fíúsailéirí Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath.

ST JULIAN, Flóndras, Bealtaine, 1915

Gar do St. Julien, i rith an dara cath ag Ypres, beagnach ndearnadh díothú iomlán ar 2ú Fíúsailéirí Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath díreach mí amháin tar éis Teacht i dtír Helles. An 24ú Bealtaine, 1915, thart ar 2.45am, chuir na Gearmánaigh tús le hionsaí gás nimhe. Bhí 666 fear sa Chathlán. Faoi 9.30 pm, ní raibh ach oifigeach amháin agus 20 de chéimeanna eile fágtha.

SALONIKA, Deireadh Fómhair, 1915

An 29 Meán Fómhair, 1915, sheol an 10ú Rannán (Éireannach), a raibh 2,454 duine ann, ó Gallipoli ag tabhairt a n-aghaidh ar Salonika chun troid ar ffronta na Bulgáire. An 3^ú Deireadh Fómhair, bhí Fíúsailéirí Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath agus na Mumhan ag an líne tosaigh agus ordaíodh dóibh an sráidbhaile Jenikoj, atá sa Mhacadóin sa lá atá inniu ann, a

thógáil. San ionsaí sin, chaill siad 385 fear, idir dhaoine a maraíodh, a goineadh nó a chuaigh ar iarraidh. Tá cros Cheilteach eibhir ansin anois chun comóradh a dhéanamh ar an 10^ú Rannán (Éireannach). Tá crosa den chineál céanna ag Wytyscaete i bhFlóndras agus i Guillemont sa Fhrainc.

1916

HULLUCH, Aibreán, 1916

Tháinig an 16^ú Rannán (Éireannach) chun na Fraince i Mí na Nollag 1915 agus sannadh chuig teascóg Loos iad. Bhí na saighdiúirí i gcogaíocht trinse agus maraíodh cuid acu le linn na tréimhse 9 lá a chaith siad ag an líne tosaigh. Bhí siad sna trinsí ag Hulluch nuair a rinne na Gearmánaigh ionsaí gáis an 27^ú Aibreán, 1916. Den 1980 taismeach, maraíodh 570 agus bhásaigh go leor de na daoine a goineadh níos deireanaí ó ghalair riospráide. Bhí fógraí curtha suas ag an Gearmánaigh trasna ó thrinsí na nÉireannach ag tabhairt scéala dóibh faoi Éirí Amach na Cásca a bheith tosaithe i mBaile Átha Cliath. D'fhan an Rannán ag Loos go dtí an Lúnasa nuair a d'aistrigh sé go dtí ceantar an Somme. Bhí 6,000 taismeach sa Rannán (maraíodh 1,496).

AN T-ÉIRÍ AMACH I MBAILE ÁTHA CLIATH, Aibreán, 1916

De réir mar a bhí líon na dtaismeach ag méadú agus gan mórán dóchais de bhua luath, lean Óglaigh na hÉireann orthu ag traenáil agus ag ullmhú chun seasamh in aghaidh aon iarrachta ar iad a dhí-armáil. B'oscailt súl ar fhóiríarmhairtí an chogaidh a bhí sna liostaí fada de dhaoine a bhí maraithe nó gonta chomh maith leis an méadú ar an dóchúlacht go dtabharfaí coinscríobh isteach.

Nuair a thosaigh an tÉirí Amach an 24^ú Aibreán, bhí thart ar 5,000 saighdiúir imlonnaithe i limistéar Bhaile Átha Cliath. Seoladh 1000 breise láithreach ó Bhéal Feirste agus cuireadh na mílte eile anall ó Shasana. Ghlac 4^ú, 5^ú agus 10^ú Fiúsailéirí Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath páirt sa troid faoi mar a rinne roinnt oifigeach agus saighdiúirí a bhí ar saoire i mBaile Átha Cliath ag an am.

Glactar leis go coitianta gur throid Óglaigh na hÉireann go calma agus go fiúntach. Dúirt an Príomh-Aire Asquith i dTeach na dTeachtaí gur throid siad go calma agus nach ndeachaigh siad i muinín an fheillbhirt. Leis an méid daoine a cuireadh chun báis ina dhiaidh baineadh an tacaíocht Náisiúnach ón bPáirtí Parlaiminteach ach tugadh do Shinn Féin í.

AN SOMME, Iúil –Samhain, 1916

In iarracht an tsáinn a bhain leis an gcogaíocht trinse a bhriseadh agus chun an brú a bhaint de Verdun, chuir na Briotanaigh agus na Francaigh tús le mór-ionsaí an 1 Iúil. Bhí suímh na nGearmánach trasna ón 14 míle de theascóg na Breataine á dtuairgneáil le 1.7 milliún sliogán ón 24 Meitheamh. Ní rabhthas ag súil le haon fhrithghníomh nuair a d'fhág 100,000 saighdiúir a dtrinsí agus nuair a chuaigh siad isteach i latrach an áir ag 7.30 am. Faoi sholas an lae, chuaigh siad chun cinn ag siúl go réidh i línte díreacha le 100 slat idir gach tonn lingthe. Scaoileadh roiseadh gunnalámhaigh leo agus bhí 60,000 taismeach ann an lá sin, agus maraíodh beagnach 20,000 díobh.

Sannadh sprioc ar an 36^ú Rannán (Ulaidh) ina raibh buncar ollmhór coincréite a raibh trúpaí Gearmánacha ar dídean ann, Dúinchla Schwaben. Bhí an Rannán sin ar cheann de bheagán ar éirigh leo a sprioc a bhaint amach, ach ní raibh na saighdiúirí in ann an sprioc sin a choinneáil ó tharla nár éirigh leis na rannáin eile. Bhí 5,500 duine de chaillteanas orthu

agus maraíodh beagnach 2,000 díobh sin. Ghoill sé ar beagnach gach pobal i gCúige Uladh. Bronnadh ceithre Chros Victoria ar an Rannán.

Bhí cathláin Éireannacha eile a bhí ag fónamh i rannáin eile páirteach san ionsaí an 1ú Iúil. Chuaigh 1ú Fiúsailéirí Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath, athlaochra Gallipoli, i mbun gnímh i dteascóg a bhí in aice leis an 36ú. Bhain 147 taismeach díobh (maraíodh 22) agus chuaigh 64 ar iarraidh. Bhí 2ú Fiúsailéirí Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath sa dara tonn den ionsaí, ag dul chun cogaidh le 23 oifigeach agus 480 de chéimeanna eile: rinneadh taismeach de 14 oifigeach agus 311 de chéimeanna eile. Throid 1ú Raidhfilí Ríoga na hÉireann agus an 1^ú, 2^ú, 3^ú agus 4^ú Cathláin Éireannacha Cois Tyne d'Fhíúsailéirí Northumberland an lá sin.

Mhair Cath an Somme ar feadh an tSamhraidh agus is beag dul chun cinn a rinneadh. Thóg an 16ú Rannán (Éireannach) Guillemont an 2ú Meán Fómhair agus Ginchy an 9ú Meán Fómhair. Maraíodh an Lt Tom Kettle agus bhuaigh an Lt John Holland de na Laigheanaigh Cros Victoria. Tharla 4,314 taismeach sa Rannán (maraíodh 1167).

Tháinig deireadh leis an gCath i mí na Samhna nuair a chabhraigh 10ú Fiúsailéirí Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath, a bhí ar ceangal leis an 63^ú Rannán Cabhlaigh, le Beaumont Hamel a thógáil, ceann de na spriocanna don chéad lá. Bhí 50% ina dtaismigh

1917

IOMAIRE MESSINES, Meitheamh, 1917

Chuaigh an 16ú Rannán (Éireannach) agus an 36ú Rannán (Ulaidh) chun cogaidh le chéile chun an sráidbhaile Beilgech Wytschaete a thógáil in ionsaí dea-phleanáilte ar Iomaire Messines. Fuair an Ginearál Plumer samhail de réir scála den iomaire déanta ionas go mbeadh a raibh rompu le feiceáil ag na trúpaí. Chuir sé mianaigh á dtochailt le haghaidh pléascán faoi chosaint na Gearmáine. Thuairgneáil thart ar 3 mhiliún sliogán Messines ar feadh os cionn seachtaine. Mhaolaigh an baráiste nuair a mhaidhmigh Plumer 9,500 tonna pléascáin faoi na Gearmánagih i 19 mianach. Bhásaigh Liam Mac Réamainn, M.P., deartháir le Seán, ceannaire an Pháirtí Éireannaigh, de bharr na gcréachtaí a fuair sé san ionsaí sin.

PASSCHENDAELE, AN TRÍÚ CATH IN YPRES, Iúil, 1917

Aistríodh an 16ú Rannán (Éireannach) agus an 36ú Rannán (Ulaidh) go dtí 5ú Arm an Ghinearáil Gough i mí Iúil 1917. An 31 Iúil, ghlac an 36^ú Rannán (Ulaidh) páirt san ionsaí tosaigh ar shuímh dhaingne Gearmánacha soir ó Ypres. Is ar éigean Dé má d'fhéadfaí ionsaí ar bith a dhéanamh mar gheall ar an mbáisteach throm, a mhair ar feadh míosa. Mar sin féin, ghluais an dá rannán Éireannacha chun cinn ag Langemarck an 16ú Lúnasa. Cailleadh 65% de na haonaid tosaigh roimh an ionsaí mar gheall ar thuairgneáil throm ó na Gearmánaigh. Bhí 3,585 taismeach sa 36ú (Ulaidh) agus 4,231 taismeach sa 16ú (Éireannach). Maraíodh an tAthair Willie Doyle, MC, séiplíneach don 8ú Baile Átha Cliath.

Bhí an 16ú Rannán (Éireannach) i gcomhrac in aice le Arras agus an 36ú Rannán (Ulaidh) in aice le Cambrai i mí na Samhna. Chuaigh an 10^ú Rannán (Éireannach) chun na hÉigipte i Meán Fómhair.

1918

AN SOMME 1918 – NA 100 LÁ DEIRIDH

Thosaigh ionsaí na Gearmáine a raibh súil le fada leis an 21^ú Márta agus d'éirigh leis línte na Breataine a chur siar beagnach chomh fada le Amiens. Bhí an 16ú agus 36ú Rannán faoi

lán-bhuille an ionsaí sin agus scriosadh iad mar aonaid troda. Bhí 6,435 taismeach sa 16^ú agus 6,109 taismeach sa 36^ú. Maraíodh an trian.

Cuireadh cathláin an 10ú Rannán agus an 16ú Rannán le chéile agus scaipeadh chuig rannáin eile ar an bhFronda Thiar iad. Mar shampla, chuaigh an 1ú Baile Átha Cliath go dtí an 19ú Rannán agus cuireadh an 2ú agus an 7ú leis an 31ú Rannán. Is san ainm amháin a d'fhan Ulaidh ar an 36ú Rannán mar gur daoine a coinscríobhadh as Sasana na daoine nua a cuireadh ann. Bhí na cathláin Éireannacha páirteach sa dul chun cinn a ruaig na Gearmánaigh siar thar an bhfearann go léir a bhí gnóthaithe acu sna ceithre bliana den chogadh. Bhí an 2ú Baile Átha Cliath i gcath in aice le Le Cateau an 16ú Deireadh Fómhair, agus rinneadh taismigh de 44% in imeacht dhá lá. Ba é seo an áit a ndeachaigh siad chun comhraic den chéad uair i Lúnasa 1914. Chríochnaigh an Chéad Chogadh Domhanda laistigh de mhí.

TAR ÉIS AN CHOGAIDH

Nuair a d'fhill na saighdiúirí ar Éirinn, bhí an saol polaitiúil athraithe. Sa toghchán i mí na Nollag 1918 tacaíodh go láidir le Sinn Féin, seachas sna limistéir thraidisiúnta Aontachtacha. Cuireadh na hÍobairtí a rinneadh sa chogadh de leataobh i gcúigí an deiscirt agus bhí an cailleanas a tharla ag an Somme mar chuid den oidhreacht sa limistéar nua Tuaisceart Éireann.

Chuaigh roinnt daoine a bhí ina saighdiúirí leis an IRA, ar dhuine díobh sin bhí Eiméid Daltún a bhí ag fónamh le Tom Kettle. Dúirt sé nach raibh deacracht ar bith aige troid d'Éirinn leis an mBreatain agus nach raibh aon deacracht aige ach oiread troid d'Éirinn in aghaidh na Breataine. Chuaigh iarshaighdiúirí eile le harm nua na hÉireann.

An 12ú Meitheamh, 1922, díscáileadh na reisimintí a bhí earcaithe in Éirinn a bhí anois neamhspleách. Ba iad sin:

Reisimint Ríoga na hÉireann

Fiannóglai Chonnacht

Reisimint Laighean Phrionsa na Breataine Bige

Fiúsailéirí Ríoga na Mumhan

Fiúsailéirí Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath

Ghlac an Rí na Bratacha agus cuireadh i dtaisce i gCaisleán Windsor iad, áit a bhfuil siad fós.

STAITISTICÍ

Níle ar aon intinn faoin líon iomlán saighdiúirí Éireannacha a d'fhóin in Arm agus i gCabhlach na Breataine sa Chéad Chogadh Domhanda. Deir an tOllamh Keith Jeffery gur 210,000 é. Is cosúil go n-aontaítear gur maraíodh 35,000 ar a laghad, cé gur 49,400 an figiúr atá tugtha sa Chuimhneachán Náisiúnta Cogaidh.

Liostáil thar ar 140,000 in Éirinn i rith an chogaidh. Is cuid suntais an méadú a tharlaigh i 1918.

Tréimhse	Earcaigh
Lún 1914 –Feabh 1915	50,107
Feabh 1915- Lún 1915	25,235
Lún 1915 –Feabh 1916	19,801
Feabh 1916- Lún 1916	9,323
Lún 1916 –Feabh 1917	8,178
Feabh 1917- Lún 1917	5,607
Lún 1917 –Feabh 1918	6,550
Feabh 1918- Lún 1918	5,812
Lún 1918 –Samh 1918 [3 Mhí]	9,843

Bhí an líon earcach Éireannach sa chéad bhliain níos mó ná an líon iomlán don chuid eile de thrí bhliana an Chogaidh. De réir mar a chuaigh an Cogaidh chun cinn, ba daoine a coinscríobhadh sa Ríocht Aontaithe a cuireadh in áit chaillteanais na hÉireann. Mar shampla, ba 23% a bhí sa chéatadán de shaighdiúirí nárbh Éireannaigh iad a bhí i 1ú Raidhfíli Ríoga na hÉireann, a bhí lonnaithe in Aontraim agus an Dún, sa bhliain 1916. Bliain ina dhiaidh sin ba 52% a bhí ann.

Mar a luadh níos túsce, d'fhóin saighdiúirí Éireannacha i bhfórsaí eile.

Limistéir earcaíochta do na Reisimintí Éireannacha Coisithe agus Marcra 1914

Ainm na Reisiminte:	Limistéar Earcaíochta:	Iosta:
Reisimint Ríoga na hÉireann (18ú Coisithe)	Tiobraid Árann, Loch Garman, Port Láirge, Cill Chainnigh	Cluain Meala
Fiúsailéirí Ríoga na Mumhan	Corcaigh, Ciarraí, Luimneach, An Clár	Trá Lí
Fiannóglaigh Chonnacht	Gaillimh, Sligeach, Maigh Eo, Ros Comáin, Liatroim	An Rinn Mhór
Fiúsailéirí Inis Ceithleann	An Ómaigh, Fear Manach, Dún na nGall, Doire	
Raidhfíli Ríoga na hÉireann	Béal Feirste, An Dún, Aontroim, Tír Eoghain	Béal Feirste
Fiúsailéirí Ríoga na hÉireann	Muineachán, Ard Mhacha, An Cabhán	Ard Mhacha
Reisimint Laighean	Uíbh Failí, An Mhí, Lú, Laois	Biorra
Fiúsailéirí Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath	Baile Átha Cliath, Cill Dara, Cill Mhantáin, Ceatharlach	Nás

Gardaí na hÉireann	Ar fud na hÉireann	Beairic Chelsea London
24ú, 25ú, 26ú, 27ú Cathlán Éireannach Cois Tyne d'Fhiúsailéirí Northumberland	Newcastle	Campa Alnwick
Raidhfilí Éireannacha Londan	Londain, Chelsea	Beairic Dhiúc York
Reisimint Learphoill an Rí	Learpholl	Beairic Seaforth
Éireannach in ainm den chuid is mó The 4ú Gardaí Dragúin (Ríoga na hÉireann) 5ú Lansaithe (Ríoga na hÉireann) 6ú Dragúin (Inis Ceithleann) 8ú Husáir (Éireannach Ríoga an Rí)		
Capaill Éireann an Deiscirt	Deisceart na hÉireann	Cluain Meala
Capaill Éireann an Tuaiscirt	Béal Feirste, An Dún, Aontroim, Tír Eoghain, An Cabhán, Doire, Dún na nGall, Ard Mhacha, Muineachán	Béal Feirste