

The Military History Society of Ireland

Newman House 86 St Stephen's Green Dublin 2 Ireland

NEWSLETTER

1/2005

1. *The Irish Sword*

On the last page of Irish Sword No. 96, the editor modestly noted that “for the first time in many years an issue of the Irish Sword is set to appear in the season represented by its nominal date”. The Winter 2004 issue did indeed appear in the Winter of 2004 and so marked the achievement of the objective that the editor, Dr. Ken Ferguson set himself at the Annual General Meeting a few years ago. It would be difficult to overstate the magnitude of his labour. Three issues in the Autumn of 2003, followed by two more in December 2004 and a further two in January this year – a total of seven issues, each of 120 pages, in less than eighteen months while maintaining and enhancing the high level of scholarship for which our journal is noted – is a truly remarkable achievement. The Society is deeply indebted to him.

If any member (especially overseas) has not received their copy of issues 93 – 96 please contact the Honorary Membership Secretary, Col. Patrick Kirby at the Society's address, Newman House, or by e-mail at patandpatkirby@eircom.net

2. *New Members of Council*

At the recent General Meeting of the Society, Comdt. Paul Mullally was

elected as Honorary Records Secretary. Paul had been co-opted to the post following the resignation of Comdt. Canice Mansfield some months previously. At a subsequent meeting, council co-opted three new members to fill vacancies.

Ms. Jane Leonard is Outreach and Education Officer at the Ulster Museum and is well known for her pioneering work on former British Army personnel in the I.R.A., in the Free State Army and many other aspects of Irishmen in the British Army during World War I.

Dr. David Murphy is a lecturer in history and has recently published a book on Ireland and the Crimean War. Mr. Lar Joye is principal curator of the new military galleries at the National Museum in Collins Barracks.

We welcome all to Council and there is no doubt that the society will benefit from their active participation.

3. *Irish War Memorials Project*

A new website – www.irishwarmemorials.ie - has been launched with the intention of including data on war memorials of all kinds in the Republic of Ireland. This website presents an inventory of war memorials in the Republic of Ireland.

The survey began in 2003 in the south County Dublin area, and now includes a full inventory of memorials in the county of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, carried out in conjunction with the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Heritage Project. The inventory is progressing to cover other areas, and further memorials are being added as they are recorded. The inventory includes photographs of each memorial, the text of all inscriptions, and details of the site of the memorial. A database of all of those named allows a search for individual persons, with links to the photographs of the memorials. Many of those named on memorials are named in published lists in books, sometimes with photographs. Where this is known to be the case, the book is named and information about it is provided.

The long-term aim is to record all war memorials in the Republic, with full details of the names of those recorded on them. Further information is available on the website or from

Michael Pegum,
Belville House,
Stillorgan Road,
Donnybrook,
Dublin 4.

4. Association of Friends of the Waterloo Committee

A similar but more focussed project is underway by the above committee. They are compiling a 'Register of Memorials' to soldiers who fought in the Peninsula and at Waterloo. Given the large number of Irishmen who served in Wellington's army, there must be many such memorials in Ireland, such as that to Colonel Henry Standish of the 27th (buried at Mount Jerome) and to those who died while resident in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham. Any member who would

like to help in this project can contact the organisers:

Janet and David Bromley,
Sunnyside,
Papcastle,
Cockermouth,
Cumbria CA13 OLA,
U.K.

Or at djbromley@derventio.fsnet.co.uk

5. Mr. John W. Stone, R.I.P.

'Bill' (as he was known to all) Stone attended the November meeting of the Council of the Society in his capacity as Hon. Auditor to present the draft accounts before the Annual General Meeting. A few days later his friends were shocked to hear of his sudden death. Bill was more than auditor to the Society – he was an active member and a notable participant in the Society's activities. We will miss his wise counsel as auditor but our loss is nothing to that of his family to whom we extend our sincerest sympathy. The President of the Society, Col. Donal O'Carroll represented the Society at the obsequies.

6. Field Trip – June 2005

The 1798 Rising in Antrim and Down was described in A.T.Q. Stewart's book 'The Summer Soldiers'. In memorable prose he described the events of seven warm, hazy days of June 1798 when an uneasy alliance of United Irishmen and Defenders rose in a dramatic but doomed rebellion. This year the Society will visit the sites of the rebellion under the expert guidance of Mr. Bill Wilsdon who has published a guide to the rebellion in Down. Hopefully we will enjoy similar weather. Full details are being sent to members as usual.

7. The Australian War Memorial's Research Centre

Issue No. 83 of the Irish Sword (Summer 1998) contained an article by John Connor on 'Some examples of Irish enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force, 1914'. Remarkably, given the huge input by Irishmen into all aspects of Australian life, that is the only article on Irish-Australian military history in the pages of the journal. There are, of course, also some occasional notes such as those by Frank Forde on the New South Wales Irish Rifle Regiment and by John Garland on the Queensland Irish Volunteer Corps. There is surely a huge field for further research in this area.

Researchers will be greatly aided by the development of the online research centre at www.awm.gov.au. The documents now available include selected war diaries for the Second World War and a database on all personnel who served, with specific files on casualties and prisoners of war. While the immediate focus is on the Second World War, the centre hopes to have online this year key documents relating to the First World War including

- First World War Embarkation Roll
- War Diaries for the First World War
- The diaries and notebooks of C.E.W. Bean, Official Historian.

For researching Australia's military history, including Irish-Australian links it should prove to be an immense resource.

8. Military Museum – Collins Barracks, Cork

One of the hidden treasures of Cork is the military museum in Collins Barracks. The museum which is located in a former guardhouse just outside the old main gate of the barracks contains a substantial and significant collection. One room has been dedicated to Michael Collins and features his desk from No. 5 Mespil Road, and the notebook he carried on that fateful day at Beal na Blath. Another room chronicles the history of the barracks. Its official opening by the Minister for Defence on 22 February last was the realisation of a dream by the museum curator, Comdt. Dan Harvey, co-author of a history of Collins Barracks. Heretofore it could only be visited by appointment – now it will be open to the public on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and is well worth a visit. Admission is free.

9. Book News

In his introduction to the IUP (1969) reprint of O'Callaghan's monumental History of the Irish Brigades in the Service of France, Col. P.J. Hally noted that 100 years after it was first published it was still the standard work on the subject. Drawing on his experience and study of Fontenoy he commended O'Callaghan for accuracy, good faith and thoroughness. Both the original edition and the IUP reprint have for long been unobtainable. However, the Naval and Military Press has added a reprint of this book to their catalogue so making available again an essential text for those interested in Irish Military History. The price is £28 or €41.

One book, indeed a set of books, that was never intended for circulation was 'Ireland's Memorial Records 1914-1918'. In the early 1920s, £5,000 of the National War Memorial funds was spent collecting the records of all the fallen with Irish connections. The records were published in eight volumes with decoration throughout by the renowned artist Harry Clarke. Only one hundred copies of the eight-volume set were printed in 1923 "for distribution through the principal libraries of the country". The volumes contain details of 49,400 men who lost their lives in the First World War. While it is generally accepted that not all those listed were Irish and that some had very tenuous links with Ireland, records are an invaluable source of data on Ireland's contribution to the First World War

By a remarkable coincidence they have now been made available to the general public in two different formats by two different companies.

Eneclann Ltd., Unit 1b, Trinity College Enterprise Centre, Pearse Street, Dublin 2 has made these volumes available on a CD-ROM, a format that should lend itself to statistical analysis. The CD-ROM costs €4.90. For those who prefer a more traditional format, Naval and Military Press have reprinted the volumes at a cost of £285 per set.

10. WWW.MHSL.IE

The Society has registered the above domain name and is examining ways and means of updating the Society's website. Members will be kept informed on the progress of this important initiative.

The Rules of the Military History Society of Ireland

The Society's rules are at present being examined by the Council with a view to revision or addition, as necessary. Should there be amendments, these will be put before the next (i.e., November) AGM for adoption, after which the rules will be published in booklet form and sent to all members. If any member wishes to put forward amendments they may do so by writing to the Honorary Records Secretary at the Society's address: Newman House, 86 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.

In the meantime, members should note that if they intend to move a resolution at the next AGM, notice in writing thereof must be given to the Honorary Records Secretary by 31 August so that it can be circulated with the notice of the meeting (Rule 11).