

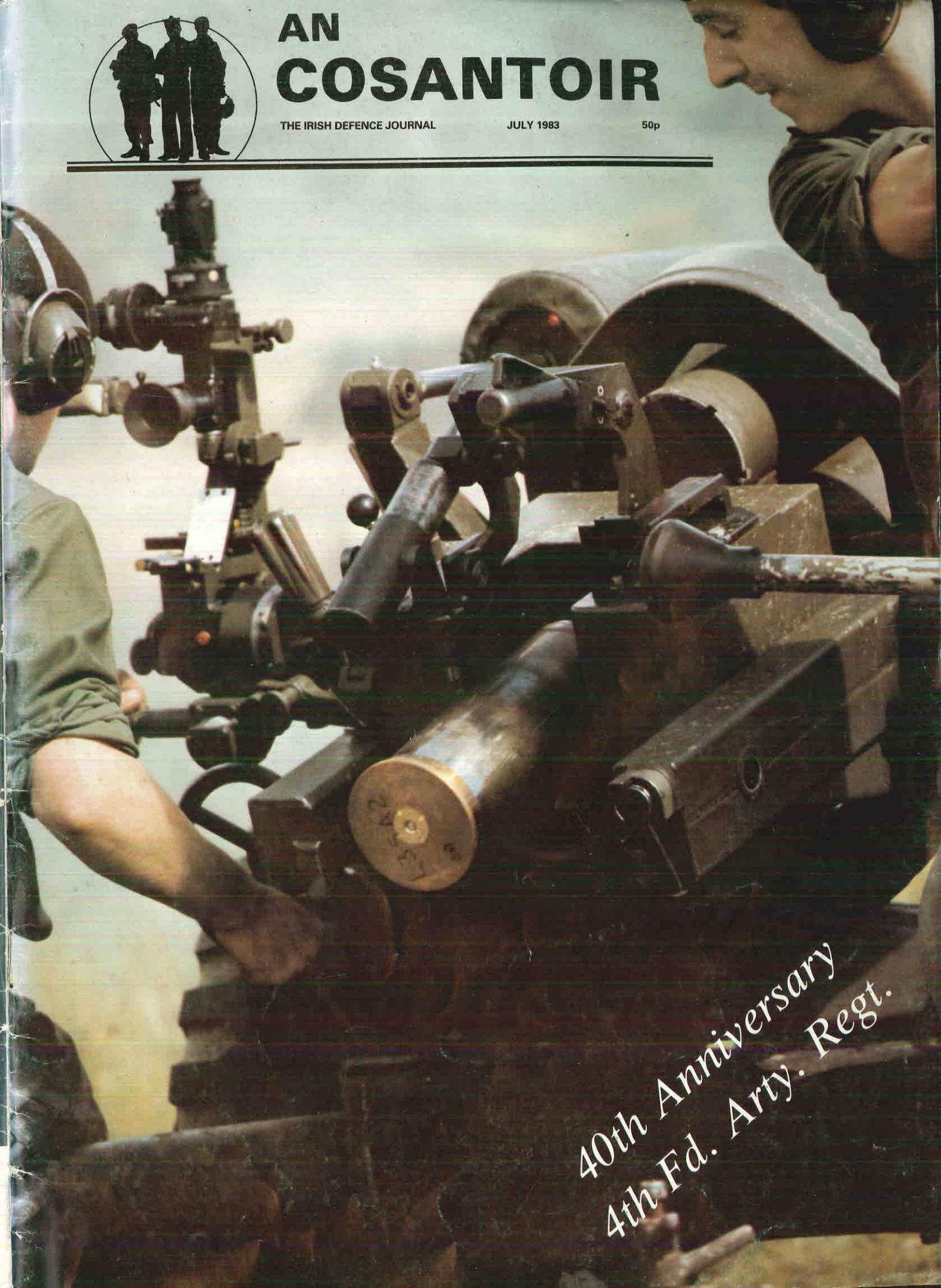


AN COSANTOIR

THE IRISH DEFENCE JOURNAL

JULY 1983

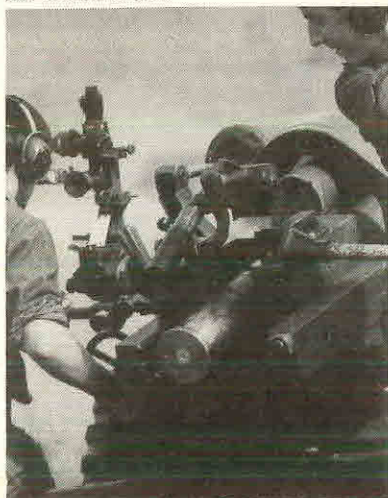
50p



*40th Anniversary
4th Fd. Arty. Regt.*

AN COSANTOIR

Vol. XLIII No. 7.



Cover:
A 105 MM Gun in action. The No. 2 has struck the lever breech mechanism and the shell casing is being ejected.

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Jay Dees Bakery
Lynn Ind., Estate,
Mullingar.

Congrats the 4th Regt.

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40th Anniversary, 4 Fd. Arty. Regt.

This issue of An Cosantóir celebrates the Fortieth anniversary of the Mullingar based 4th Fd. Arty. Regt. Rather than a history of the unit the issue contains personal accounts of service with the 4th and through these something may be gleaned of the 'esprit' of that unit.

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Col. C. J. McGuinn, Director of Artillery.

Congratulations



Lt. Col. P. J. O'Farrell, OC 4 Fd. Arty. Regt.

Message from the Director of Artillery

THE fortieth anniversary of the formation of the 4th Field Artillery Regiment fell in February of this year. So this is a suitable time to pay tribute to all who now serve in the Unit and also to those who having served, are in retirement or gone to their reward. Each officer, NCO and gunner who has served in the Regiment has made his particular contribution to the traditions and standing of the Unit.

It is a proper time also to be mindful of the part played by the relatives and friends of those who served in the unit during the past forty years. Their interest and support is much appreciated.

One is conscious at this time of the close and happy association that has existed between the personnel of the Regiment and the personnel of the other two units located in Columb Barracks. The 9 Field Artillery Regiment (FCA) was for many years an intergral part of the Regiment, while the 4th Field S & T Company also shared residence with them.

It is also a suitable occasion to record the good relationship that has existed between the military from Columb Barracks, and the civilian population of Mullingar and surrounding areas. Tribute is due to all who help and have helped in this area, both civilian and military.

Anniversaries may tend to induce reflection on past events, they should also bring to mind some thoughts for the future. In this regard all in the 4 Field Artillery Regiment should look forward with confidence to whatever challenges the future may hold.

Finally I wish to thank the Editor and all who are involved in this publication for their interest and support.

C. J. McGuinn, Col.

Message from the Commanding Officer

FORTY years do not constitute an awesome period of time. Even the most elderly - at - heart like to defer middle-age until the approach of the half century. Why then should four decades in the life of a unit call for a celebration?

Perhaps the very urge to sound a *feu-de-joie* provides a clue to the answer. It signifies recognition of an identity, an indigenous pride in the past, and eagerness to preserve tradition and an optimism for the future.

I feel privileged to be commanding the Fourth Field Artillery Regiment as it passes this milestone. Humble too, for I realise that far more than the people serving today comprise 'The Regiment'. Incidents, memories, events, cherished professionalism, achievements, mishaps, lore lies and levity - these, along with gunners serving, retired or departed, their families and friends, form the amalgam which is worth remembering, which is deserving of an anniversary tribute.

I thank *An Cosantóir* for affording us the opportunity of recording the events; contributors, advertisers and others who assisted the publication too.

I thank Officers, N.C.O.s and men present and past for their loyal service and for their enthusiasm and wholehearted application to marking this occasion with a joyous salvo.

Some of our celebratory events have taken place, others are at an advanced planning stage. Let us hope that in enjoying them we are not just toasting a significant past but heralding a fruitful future in the proud service of our Army and our country.

P. J. O'Farrell, Lt. Col.

Letter from the First Commanding Officer

I have been asked to write a few words as the First Commanding Officer IV FA Regt. I do so with great pleasure. I look back on my stint with pride and fond remembrance. I join in satisfaction with those fine Officers, NCO's and Gunners who founded the Unit and established its morale, discipline and efficiency. We are reassured to see that standard maintained.

*I salute my old comrades of the Regt. and wish our successors every blessing.
Absent members - Ar Dheis Dé Go Raibh a n- Anamacha.*

J. S. Nolan Col (retd).

EARLY DAYS

(Sgt. 'Pal' Byrne Remembers)

Ex-Sergeant John Byrne passed on these recollections to his son, Comdt. Donal Byrne, 9 Regt. F.C.A. during the last weeks of April 1983. A few days later, on 6 May, he departed this life, at the age of 77. The Officers, NCOs and men of the regiment, to which he gave such magnificent service, salute his memory and are proud to include his memories in their anniversary issue of An Cosantóir.



John ("Pal") Byrne in the uniform of the Blue Hussars c. 1937.

WHEN I left Rathvilly County Carlow for Dublin in May 1922, to enlist in the army, I had no intention of making it my career. Times were troubled and with civil strife imminent every youth felt he had to play a part on one side or the other. Rathvilly was strongly Nationalist, whether this was due to associations with Michael Dwyer and the 1798 Rebellion or the celebrations of its centenary, I do not know, but the execution of Kevin Barry, a schoolmate of mine, certainly fanned the flames of national awakening.

I joined up in Portobello Barracks and in June when civil war was inevitable, a comrade and I left barracks and attempted to join the Four Courts garrison. Our offer to help the Republican cause was rejected as the Four Courts garrison was overmanned and two 'would be' rebels returned, crestfallen, to barracks to bed down with their Free State comrades. The fates had decided that I should be a Free State soldier rather than a Republican irregular. The following day I was more than just an interested spectator as I watched 18 Pdr. shells bombard the Four Courts.

I spent the first months of the civil war escorting supplies from depots to barracks and it was not unusual to be fired on by unseen marksmen as we travelled along country roads. As the tide of war turned against the Republicans, I was sent to the Curragh to guard the Republican prisoners interned in "Tin Town", a barbed wire enclosure containing galvanised iron huts. There I met neighbours, friends and relations on the other side of the barbed wire fence. Such are the fortunes of war.

Train loads of prisoners from the South were detrained at the railway siding at the Curragh Race Course and marched from there to "Tin Town". On one occasion as a train having brought its prisoners to the Curragh was returning to Cork, it was fired on, south of Kildare town. Following a round up of Republican activists in the Kildare area six of them were executed in the Curragh.

Having completed my two years engagement, I was demobbed and returned without regrets to civilian life.

Nevertheless I got a taste for army life, and in 1927 I re-enlisted and in 1928 I was posted to the Artillery Corps in Kildare Bks., then a hutted camp. I discovered great changes had taken place during my time out of the army. Discipline had become strict, very strict, and strictest of all in the artillery. Only the highest standards of training, drill and dress were tolerated and woe-betide he who was lax or sloppy. But we soon became accustomed to this new army style as we felt that it made us better soldiers and a better unit and in our knee britches, long leggings and leather bandoliers we felt that we were the pride of the army.

There was never a dull moment in the Artillery Corps, the horses saw to that. I don't wish to do an injustice to anyone but I feel that the horses were at least as important as the artillery. With over a hundred horses on our establishment, much time was spent on their care and welfare and also on the care and maintenance of their harness and accoutrements. Many an hour was spent shaking up and down sand bags filled with the metal parts of harness to rid them of the rust which appeared overnight.

The Corps was much in demand for ceremonial and festive occasions, St. Patrick's Day parades, Easter Parades, Bodenstown and the Corp Sports where a musical ride, which took six months to perfect, was performed. And then of course there was our annual visit to Glen of Imaal for firing practices. How the iron shod hooves and iron shod wheels of the 18 pdrs. rang out as the limbers went rolling along.

The highlight of my time in Kildare was the formation of the Blue Hussars and such a body of men has never been seen before or since in the Irish Army, with their light blue breeches and tunic with gold facings and dark bushies with orange plumes. The Hussars were established as an escort for the Papal Nuncio coming to the Congress in 1932. We rehearsed by day and by night and were given the stamp of approval by President de Valera when he inspected us in McKee Barracks. After our first public appearance as escort for Papal Nuncio, Cardinal Lauri we provided escorts for many distinguished dignitaries.

In July 1938 it was goodbye to Kildare as I set out with trepidation for Spike Island. Spike Island heretofore had been unknown to me and I visualised it as a barren rock somewhere in the Atlantic. Not an appealing picture for one who knew nothing of the sea. But it was a proud day for me, when I saw the tricolour being hoisted over Fort Westmoreland for the first time and the Union Jack being lowered for the last. Then it was on to Bere Island for the handing over of the Ports there in September 1938.

I was now in Coast Defence Artillery and what I had learned of artillery in Kildare was now of little use. We had to start from scratch to master the intricacies of the 6 inch guns at Fort Lonehurt Battery and how well we succeeded can be judged by the fact that we were on a war time footing when World War II broke out. Duty on the Island was interesting and varied. Apart from the day to day training on the guns, boarding parties were

DURING a Civil War action on 27 April 1922 Company Adjutant Patrick Columb, of Colmcille, Co. Longford, was killed in Mary Street, Mullingar. He was a mere twenty years of age.

He was one of a party being led by Captain Casey of the Midland Division in an attempt to free nine men being held by Anti-Treaty personnel. Capt. Casey bore an ultimatum from Comdt. General Tony Lawlor, of Western Command headquarters, but his party was fired upon as they approached the building and Patrick Columb was hit.

He was shot at close range, the bullet passing diagonally from the right shoulder to the left chest, making an exit mark close to the spinal column.

The inquest was held in the military barracks, which afterwards adopted his name. Mr. J. H. Dixon, solicitor for the Army authorities, said that the function of the army was to protect the country's citizens and that functioning under the Government, it was the only force that could be recognised.

On behalf of Major General Sean MacEoin and his troops, Mr. Dixon expressed sympathy with the Columb family and made an appeal for support of the Army in carrying out its duties.

On 29 April 1922 Patrick Columb was given a military funeral to Colmcille graveyard.

COLUMB BARRACKS - THE NAME



Company Adjutant Patrick Columb.

provided for ships seeking temporary shelter in Berehaven and search parties were sent to locate the wrecks of strayed war planes which had crashed in the West Cork mountains. All our training activities were geared towards winning the Dunboy Trophy which was competed for by the various forts along the coast. Great was our pride when Bere Island won the trophy due to a particularly successful night shoot. The people of the Island were the friendliest and most genuine I ever met and friendships I made then continue to this day.

In Sept. 1946 I was posted to the 4th F.A.R. at Columb Bks. Mullingar and soon after the forts at Bere Island were closed down and the guns put in care and preservation. It was with sadness that the Islanders saw the departure of the troops from their Island, the same troops they had welcomed so gladly only eight years before. With the troops went the Island's greatest industry. The Island's economy was heavily dependent on the military presence which provided employment where it was scarce and generated business where none would have existed. Also to suffer was the Island's social life and entertainment which revolved round the films, dances, dramas, concerts and whist drives which were all organised by the army.

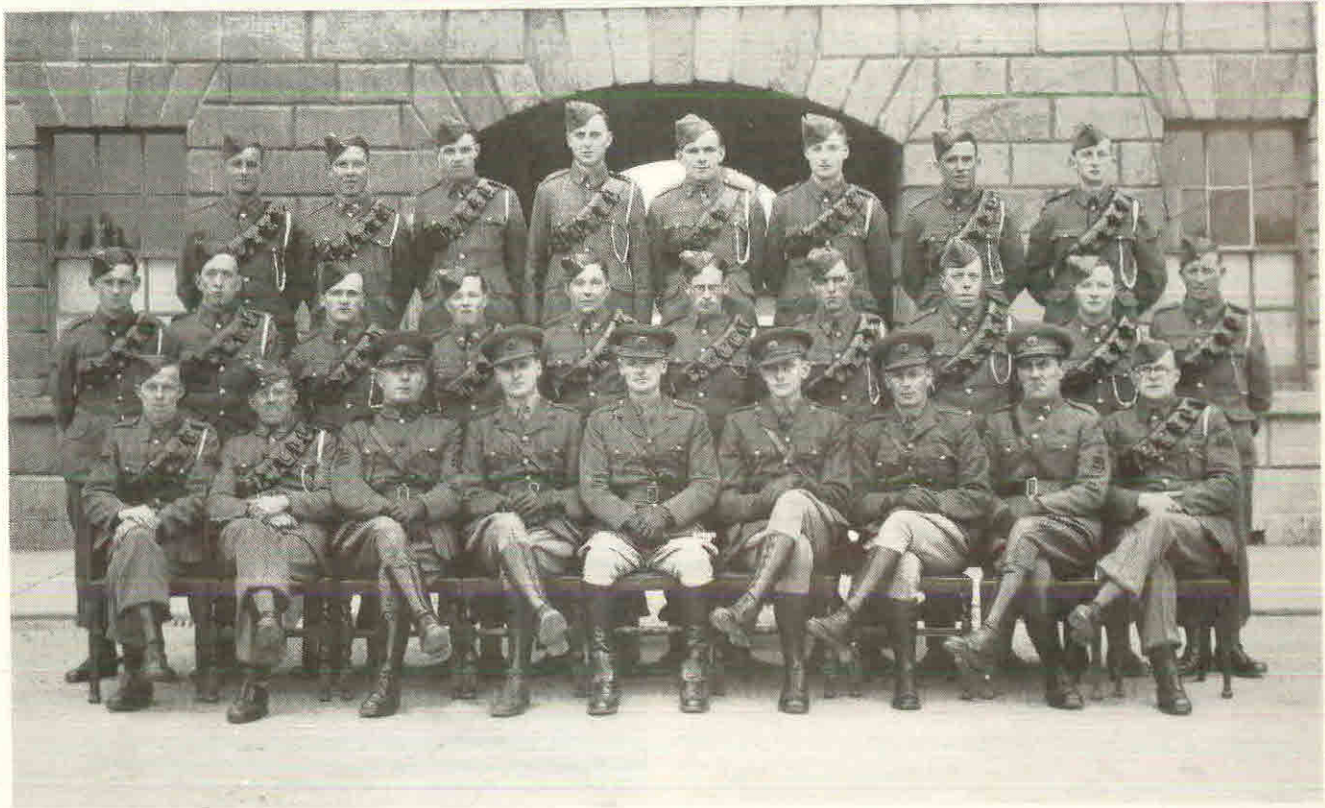
In Mullingar I was back again in the Field Artillery but the intervening years had changed its nature. Gone were the horses which had taken a day to travel from Kildare to the Glen of Imaal. Now it was possible to travel from Mullingar to the Glen, fire and return the same day. But my visits to the Glen became less frequent as I more or less settled in as Mess Caterer in both the Officer's and NCO's messes.

To this day I don't know what motivated me to volunteer for service in the Congo with the Heavy Mortar Troop in 1962. Maybe it was because I thought

that garrison life had become too "cushie" and I wanted something more exciting or maybe it was because it presented the opportunity of seeing my eldest son Sean, who was an Inspector in the Northern Rhodesian Police Force. With the 38 Inf. Bn. both wishes were fulfilled. The re-union with Sean almost took place at Christmas for while he was stationed at Ndola just over the border from the Congo, I was less than a mile away on the other side having seen action with the UN troops who captured Simba Hill and taken Kipushi. However the meeting did not take place. The gunners were ordered back to Elizabethville and then eastwards to Jadotville and further east to Kolwezi. All seemed lost but the story was to have a happy ending. Soon I was back in Elizabethville and Sean arrived there for a happy re-union on St. Patrick's Day 1963.

On returning from the Congo it was time to look towards retirement and when I finally retired in 1965 it was not without fond memories tinged with sadness. I did not completely sever connections with Columb Bks as I always felt sure of a warm welcome whenever I returned to the NCO's mess and I have a great affection for the garrison church which I visit each Sunday. An army connection is maintained through my sons C/S Lorcan Byrne 4th Fd. Coy. A.O.C. and Comdt. Donal Byrne (F.C.A.) O/C 20th Bty., now a battery of the 9th F.A.R. but until 1946 a battery of the 4th F.A.R.

The army has been good to me and to my family. Through it I met officers, NCO's and men the likes of whom it would have been my privilege to meet anywhere else. It gave me the opportunity of leading a full and active life and it provided the means of rearing and educating my family. So now like all old soldiers I will just fade away to await the immortal trumpeter to sound his final reveille.



Headquarters Staff IV FA. Regt., Columb Barracks, Mullingar, May 1945. Front Row, L to R: R.S.M. P. Egan, Lt. T. C. Maher (Adjt.), Capt. J. D. Nolan (O/C), Lt. B. Barry (CPO), Lt. J. O'Grady (Q.M.), R.Q.M.S. Bowler, Sgt. C. Brophy. Any information on centre and back rows would be gratefully received at HQ, Regiment.

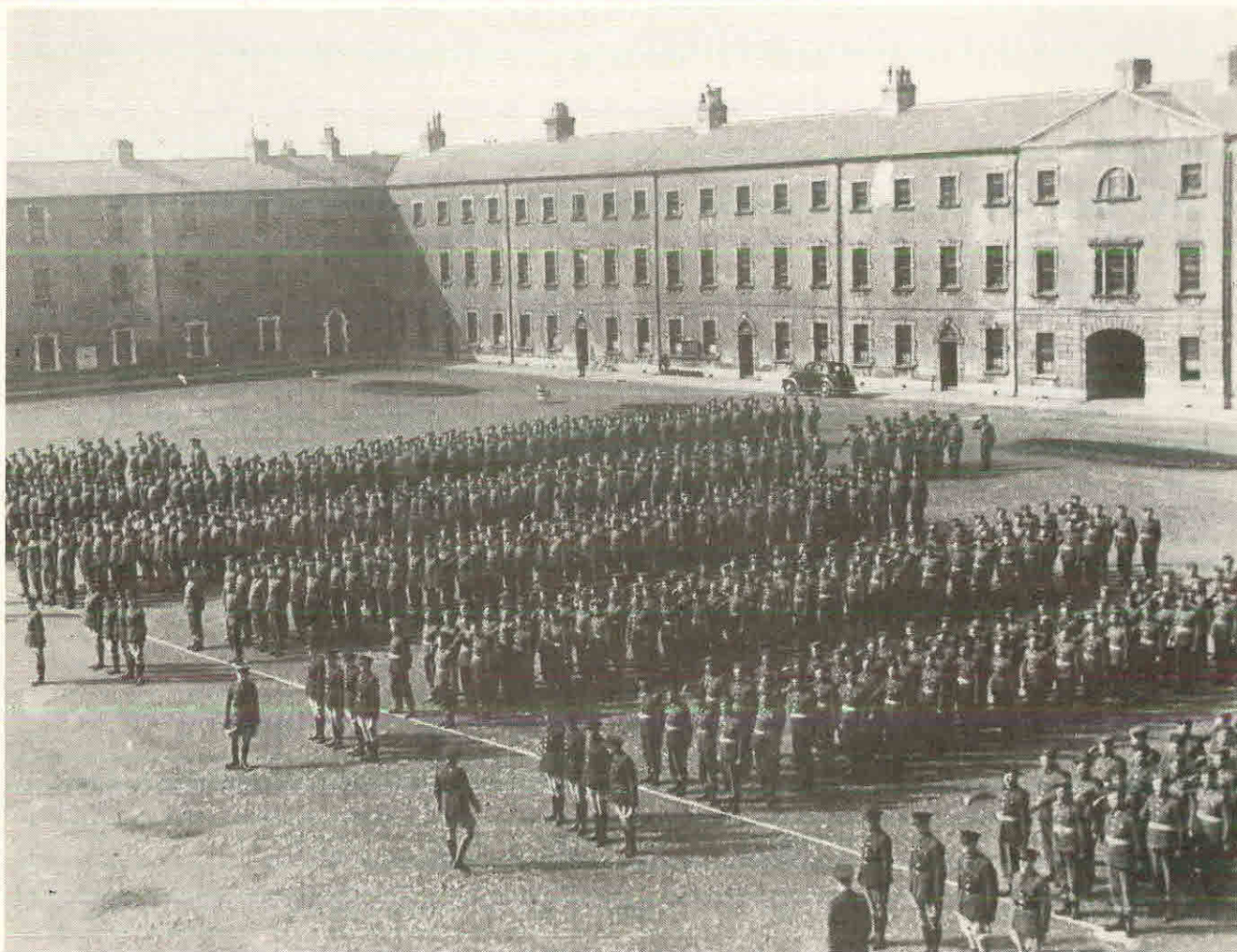
The Fourth Field Artillery Regiment - A Short History

Lt. Col. Padraic O'Farrell
OC 4 Fd. Regt.

"TRE AR IS ANACHAN" That's the motto of the Fourth Field Artillery Regiment. Perhaps a rather bloodthirsty motto for a unit which has passed most of its days quietly operating amid the lush, rolling grasslands of County Westmeath from its county town, Mullingar. Mullingar is a town delightfully situated in the heart of Ireland's lakeland and the lakes surrounding the town - Ennel, Owel and Derravaragh, are renowned for their beauty, their legend, and their splendid fishing (at least before pollution took a hand!) The area boasts a top

class caravan park, a fine swimming pool, a magnificent cathedral, waterways, castles and a variety of places of historical interest.

Perhaps it is the soothing effect of this environment that produces the quality which one associates with the Fourth Regiment - its quiet, confident efficiency which is ever apparent. Not quite so apparent is its inherent capacity to live up to its motto as was done when the occasion warranted it in the Congo during the winter of 1962 and 1963 when an officer and two N.C.O.s of the



The 20th Bn. on the Barrack Square. 1945.



The Regiment at Seskin, C. 1954.

(Photo: Lt. Col. M. Moriarty)

unit received the Distinguished Service Medal. A significant feature of the accompanying citation was the inclusion of the words "...On all occasions the troops, as a whole, performed in a most efficient and praiseworthy manner"; the unit, therefore, received commendation as well as the recipients.

EARLY YEARS

In a skeleton history of the Artillery Corps compiled by Lt. J. Whitty R.O. the 'Four Courts Connection' is ignored and the first entry, 23 March, 1923 reads:

Artillery Corps first organised in Island Bridge (now Clancy) Bks. Dublin.

Among intriguing references to arrival of equipments, musical rides at the RDS and the formation of the Blue Hussars, is the January 1930 course at Larkhill attended by Capt Cody and Lt Farrell. Denis Cody was later to become OC of the 4th Artillery Battalion and 4th Field Regiment.

In June 1935, a 4 Fd Battery (under Capt P. P. O'Farrell) took part in the Wolfe Tone Commemoration Ceremony at Bodenstown. The formation of 4 Fd Battalion is not recorded but on 31 May, 1941 there appears:

New Establishment introduced. WE 1940 (4 FA Bns and 13.7 HOW Bty) superseded by WE 1941 (3 FA Bns - HQ and 3 Btys; HQ and 5 Btys: HQ and 5 Btys). IV FA Bn amalgamated with 11 FA Bn under latter title, comprising 5th, 6th, 8th, 10th and 11th Fd Btys. . .

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The significant date 17 February, 1943 eluded the compiler, however. Amendment No. 12 to War Establishment 1941, became effective on that date. It altered 4 Arty Bn to 4 Field Artillery Regiment.

And that is the date which the Fourth Regiment recognise as their birthday.

The unit's first commander, Acting Captain J. S. Nolan quickly got the outfit into shape. During the "emergency" and for some time after it, batteries of the regiment were affiliated to units of the Fourth Brigade.

In 1946, the Fifth Regiment, then stationed in Kildare, was amalgamated with the Fourth. The 20th Battery, under Capt Michael Duggan was disbanded and the regiment then comprised HQ and 4th Anti Tank Battery, 8th Battery and 15th Battery.

This organisation remained until 1959 when the Anti-Tank Battery was disbanded and the 15th Battery became an F.C.A. Battery and was formed mainly from the 46th Battery, an F.C.A. unit in the then Midland Area affiliated to the Fourth Regiment. That unit made a film of their activities which was called Going-a-Gunning. Amalgamations, take overs and coalitions were comparatively rare in those days after the war when Comdt Cyril Mattimoe gave over the Fifth Regiment to the Fourth and became its second in command. A future RSM of the Unit, Paddy Brennan, arrived from Kildare on that occasion.

It is interesting to note that a very significant role was played by the Fourth in the re-birth of the Fifth in 1959 when they supplied officer and N.C.O. staff, together with expertise, encouragement and advice. Thus did they repay the debt incurred back in 1946.

The late O.C. Southern Command, Col. W. Rea, served for a short time as OC 4 Regiment during 1946 and 1947 when he was succeeded by the late Lt. Col. Denis Cody whom we have mentioned. An inscribed picture presented by Lt. Col. Cody to the Garrison Church of St. Colman still hangs in the sanctuary there.

Lt. Col. Maurice McCarthy assumed command in 1953. It was around this time that the many heraldic drawings which still decorate the walls of the Officers' Mess were painted by the late Pat Kavanagh, a recognised expert in this field, who left behind such a wealth of artillery history. A ham radio station was set up in the old hospital block during this period too and the Fourth spoke to the world.

120mm MORTARS

A rather ugly little french lady arrived in the regiment from Paris in 1954 and she was slightly frowned upon by the gunners more used to the sleek lines of conventional field pieces. But, as French ladies are wont to do, she soon proved her worth on the practice ranges in Glen Imaal. The 120mm mortar arrived with little but a set of range tables in its list of accessories but a small, dedicated band set about producing the wherewithal to fire the weapons using conventional Artillery methods of fire control. Comdt. (now sadly deceased) Michael Sugrue, Lt. Liam Donnelly (Now Comdt., retired) Lts. P. O'Farrell and M. Moriarty, Cpls. W. Early and E.

Columb experimented over a long period and eventually made a trip to Oughterard to fire the first round from this new equipment using an improvised artillery board and plywood arcs and arms. The makeshift instruments were the subject of an amusing patent dispute between two senior officers, now deceased. The mortars were fired as a three troop battery in Glen Imaal in 1956 and were praised for their performance which reached its zenith when Capt. T. Boyle, Sgt. J. Quirke and Cpl. W. Allen were awarded DS Medals for its handling, as referred to in the opening paragraph. Lt. Bill Dwyer, who was later adjutant in the regiment was part of that Congo troop also.

In the early fifties, the regiment had an all-army rifle champion in Cpl. Jack Keating. During those years the development of more sophistication in the procedures for firing the 120mm mortars was pursued. The unit took part in the Western Command "Exercise Fuschia" and Army Exercise "Youghal". Inter battery rivalries in sport, in tactics and in drill were intense and the end of the fifties brought the Army's major reshuffle, involving integration of the P.D.F. with the F.C.A. in 1959. This quashed the appointment of 2I/C which had been filled with distinction by Comdts. J. H. Byrne, C. Mattimoe, M. McCarthy, M. Sugrue, J. P. Kane and M. O'Donnell. Lt. Col. Jimmy Dolan commanded the Fourth from 1955 to 1958. Lt. Col. J. P. Kelly, still a regular visitor to the Mess, was O.C. during 1958 and 1959 and he was followed by Lt. Col. Mark Harrington who arrived to the Midlands from Spike Island. It was during these years that the gradual improvements to the appearance of Columb Barracks commenced. The pleasant rose beds and pitch and putt green emerged and the buildings themselves received a facelift.



Presentations to mark 21 years service during the Silver Jubilee celebrations in 1964: l to r. Capt. P. O'Farrell (Adjutant), Lt. Col. J.P. Kane (O.C.), Col. H. Byrne (O.C.W. Command), BQMSJ. Gibbons, BQMS P. Callaghan, Gnr. M. Clinton and Cpl. T. Grimes.

FOREIGN SERVICE AND HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Cpts. M. O'Donnell and J. Croke served in the Lebanon in 1958 and in 1960 a group from the regiment, bitterly complaining about the heat in the camp at Coolmoney found themselves bound for the tropical clime of the Congo twenty-four hours later. 120mm mortar units soon became a feature of all battalions and groups serving abroad and Mortar Troops from the Fourth Regiment were commanded by Cpts. Boyle, O'Farrell, O'Coinne, Dunne, Capt. Molloy, the present adjutant, commanded a troop before he joined the Fourth. Comdt. O'Donnell served with UNIPOM on the Indian Pakistan border, from Jammu to Rajastman. Comdt. J. P. Kane participated in the heavy Katangan fighting when Capt. Tom Boyle and his troop fired the 120mm mortars in anger for the first time.

The longest service in the appointment of OC 4 Regiment was given by Lt. Col. J. P. Kane. This was from 1963 to 1972. The 1916 Commemoration Archway and the Fenian Fountain were erected in Columb Barracks during that period and a sauna bath was built on a genuine steam system! In the filing cabinet marked 'Barrack Lore', the manilla folder for that era really bulges!

Words written about the Fourth Regiment and Columb Barracks must take into account that the Regiment and the Fourth Field Company S & T serve alongside each other. A blanket acknowledgement must be registered here of the appreciation to the Company for their co-operation and friendliness down the years and for their enthusiastic support of all barrack ventures.

The Regiment's coming of age was celebrated in 1964 with an Open Day and festivities in all canteens and messes, Mullingar's denizens came in their hundreds and mingled and perused armaments, the recently established museum, Sean MacEoin's cell and the old jail. Pigeons were released, balloons too, and the event was acclaimed in the national and local press and merited a leading article in the "Westmeath Examiner", part of which read:

"The regiment, so typical of our modern army, has much to be proud of. It started off as part of than spontaneous, national mustering of the years of the last war when the country was balanced on a razor edge of neutrality. It has remained with us since to become part of our way of life and has, so to speak, grown up with us. It has played a prominent and honourable part in the sporting, social and cultural life of the district and its extra-curricular activities have always won praise and admiration".

Celebrations were repeated in 1968 for the unit's Silver Jubilee. Lt. Col. Tom Furlong assumed command in 1972 and continued with the addition of amenities including men's club and discotheque and reading rooms. The sauna was modernised and a new cookhouse and dining hall began to take shape. A start was made to install central heating and the ghosts that lurked in the rubble masonry of what was once Mullingar Infantry Barracks were disturbed by drill and hammer. New stairways began to go in to the blocks when Lt. Col. Michael O'Donnell, came to office in 1975.

In that year the Regiment won the All-Army Gustaf Competition, came second in the Falling Plates and fourth in the Rifle Team Competition. Capt. Des Johnson was runner up in the All-Army and Command Pistol Competition too. No mean achievement for a unit who has its Artillery readiness as a priority.

A bright new dining complex was mushrooming on the barrack pitch and putt green. The opening of the

complex on 18 October, 1976, was attended by widespread press coverage! (One cutting in the barrack museum is from a newspaper in Portland Oregon.)

During the seventies, Capt. Jim Prendergast established Columb Barracks Building Group which established housing for a small army community at Hawthorn Crescent, Mullingar.

An innovation, invented and produced by an officer of the unit, was installed in the miniature range. The 'Slideshow' proved most attractive to recruits who, amid simulated noises of battle could fire on 'soldiers' adopting assorted camouflaged positions.

THE F.C.A.

From 1959 until 1979 the Batteries of the present 9th Regiment (F.C.A.) were integrated with the Fourth Regiment. F.C.A. Batteries are disposed with the 15th Battery occupying an area roughly south of Mullingar town and the 20th Battery having claim to the northern area. These units still hold a soft spot and a prayer for old friends now passed on who were revered by all with whom they came in contact in the earlier years of the force. Lt. Kevin Whelehan, Comdt. Michael O'Boyle and Comdt. Fred Loane are names that come to mind.

To-day, the 15th is commanded by Comdt. Danny O'Riordan and its centres are in Milltown, Ballinagore, Tyrrellspass (Ireland's most famous Tidy Town and recipient of Architectural Heritage honours) Kilbeggan and Milltownpass. Comdt. Donal Byrne leads the 20th Battery which has its rural centres in Crookedwood, Killucan, Rathowen and Delvin. Both batteries share Mullingar town and there is great rivalry in seeking to enlist promising young soldiers. Comdt. Seamus Brennan is area officer.

The area covered by these batteries is picturesque, historic and full of recreational amenities. An island in Lough Ennel is called after King Malachy who may have lived there. He is said to have drowned the Danish tyrant, Turgesius, in Lough Owel on whose shores he caught him feasting - on the best of looted Mullingar heifer, no doubt.

Fore Abbey (and Fore's seven wonders), Multyfarnham Abbey, Tullynally Castle, Rathconnel and Wilson's Hospital all have their tales and histories of pillage and battle. Since Confederate troops occupied a fort at Lough Ennel in 1641, Mullingar has had continued associations with militarism, Robert Dwyer Joyce wrote of the battle of Tyrrellspass (1597).

"Now up the wooded
mountainside the
battle rolls along:
Now down into the valley's womb the tugging
warriors throng"

...each parish of the Fourth Regiment's area of operations would have a rightful claim to a full feature in order to do justice to its illustrious past.

RECENT TIMES

New fangled sports were adopted - sub-aqua and hang-gliding. Cpl. Devaney began to emerge as a shot to be reckoned with when the Regiment won the Western Command Gustaf Competition in 1976. They won the pistol and GPMG too.

A son of the local heath took command of the Fourth Regiment in 1978. Lt. Col. Al Donnelly from Kinnegad continued to cement the fine relationship which existed between garrison and townsfolk. During his period in office, Orienteering Competitions were won and, spearheaded by Cpl. Hatchett, barrack chefs became a **four-de-force** in All Army Competitions. The unit swept the boards in Command Shooting Competitions. Sgt. Devaney won the All Army Individual Rifle competition



An Taoiseach, W. T. Cosgrave, inspecting 8 Bty., 4 Regt., Heavy mortar positions in Glen of Imaal, September, 1976. L to R: Lt. Col. M. Duggan, Lt. Col. J. White, O.C. 2 Regt., Comdt., P. O'Farrell, O.C. 8 Bty., Col., J. S. Notan, Director of Artillery, An Taoiseach and Lt. J. Hamill, G.P.O.
(Photo: Lt. C. Milner)



Sgt. M. Devaney, 4th Regt. 1974: 2nd place sniper, individual; 1975: winning team, SMG; 1977: 3rd rifle, individual; 1978: team and individual winner, rifle; 1979: rifle winner, individual; 1980: 3rd rifle, individual; 1981: 3rd rifle, individual; 1982: winning team, 3rd individual; 1983: Command rifle, individual.

in 1979, a year after the Regiment had its first All Army Rifle Team win. In 1979 too the 4th Regiment gave birth to the 9th (The baby thrives alongside still!).

Lt. Col. Tom Ryan succeeded for a short period (1980-81) during which time the Regiment again won distinction at the All Army Shooting Competitions. The designation "22 Battery" returned from the past as part of a new organisation.

Comdt. Des Johnston's pistol prowess brought him to Fort Benning, Georgia, USA to compete as a member of our army's pistol team.

From 1981 to 1982 Lt. Col. Mick McMahon was in command. The All Army Fish Cookery Competition was won by the Regiment which also came first in the Artillery Corps Gustaf competition. And another triumph on the ranges - First in the All Army Team Rifle Competition once again.

A new innovation, a video room, was added for the men's recreation but outdoor events continued and Gnr Ayres, formerly a long distance walker of distinction, ran to Dublin for charity.

The author of this short history became OC of the Regiment in time to organise a re-union of ex members living in Mullingar. This took place on St. Barbara's Day 1982.

A morning in barracks snuggled into a most pleasant day and night of swapping stories of events in the past. The Fortieth (Ruby) Anniversary of the unit this year will, no doubt, provide more scope for such happy indulgences.



Reading of the Proclamation on the Barrack Square during the 1916 commemoration ceremonies in 1966.



1916-22 veterans on parade in Columb Bks. during the 1966 commemorations. The 1916 commemoration arch is in the background.

Mullingar's Military Museum

(Reprinted by kind permission of *The Irish Times*)

"Outings in Ireland", a recent publication by Hugh Oram, lists only one military museum in the Republic of Ireland. So it was too, in the I.C.O.M. Directory of Local Museums and Local Societies last time I scrutinised it. It is at Columb Barracks, Mullingar - a large building of rubble masonry built in 1814 as a poor relief scheme. In actual fact there are a number of others but it is to the museum at Mullingar that I will refer.

Early in 1922, Lt. Colonel T. Headlan and his first Battalion, East York Regiment, handed Mullingar Barracks over to Capt. Andrews as the British vacated. Later in the year, the Royal Irish Constabulary was disbanded on the square there. In March of that year, company Adjutant, Commandant Patrick Columb was killed in an action in the town. His inquest was held in the barracks which now takes his name.

Entering Columb Barracks to-day, a signpost pointing to Sean MacEoin's cell is seen. This is where the 'Blacksmith of Ballinalee' was detained after his arrest at Mullingar railway station in 1921. Nearby is the garrison church of St. Colman with its bullet-marked clock-dial. British officers lolling on the lawn took potshots at its face. The church is called after the saint whose miraculous intercession caused a corn quern to turn in the opposite direction, an alleged incident which gave Muileann Cearr its name. (The **Lefthandwise turning mill** is incorporated in the town's arms.)

BILLETS

The museum itself is housed in two billets, still lined with iron pegs upon which soldiers' equipment was hung. One room is mainly taken up by two war canoes found in Lough Ennel. These were raised from the lake



A section of the display in the military museum.

in 1968. Weighing almost a ton, the larger craft is twenty-three feet long and is about 1,000 years old. It has an unusual recess for a steering paddle.

The main display is tastefully laid out. All is bright and spotless. It is interesting to follow the evidence in the case of Private Daniel Molloy, charged with stealing a quantity of gingham, the property of Private Thomas Kidd. This is recorded in the Courtmartial Book of the Westmeath Regiment of Militia for 1815. '... Prisoner Molloy came into the guardroom and said that a heifer gave it to him ...'

The 'Mullingar heifer' appears to have been a colloquialism corresponding to the contemporary 'chick'. How faithfully have we adhered to the haggard in choosing terms of endearment for our women!

Ensign Guernsey emerges as something of an unpleasant martinet who was Quartermaster in Mullingar and whose two sons attended a private school. They were taught by the Tyrone author, William Carleton. Wellington Guernsey, one of the pupils, is credited with having got the inspiration from a Mullingar alehouse when he penned the song, **There is a Tavern in the Town**.

The book reveals that for being drunk on guard, Corporal Earles received '... 100 lashes in the usual way when and where the Commanding Officer...' saw fit. Ponder on the word **where!**

A lady wrote from Mullingar in 1882, describing herself as **Une Fille du Regiment**. She described how twenty 'fully accoutred soldiers' stood beside seven jaunting-cars, ready to escort an eviction party to join with the R.I.C. and conduct their business.

At the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers Officers' Ball, a lady's dance-card revealed that her **valse**, **quadrille** - indeed almost all her dances - were promised to Captain Farrell!

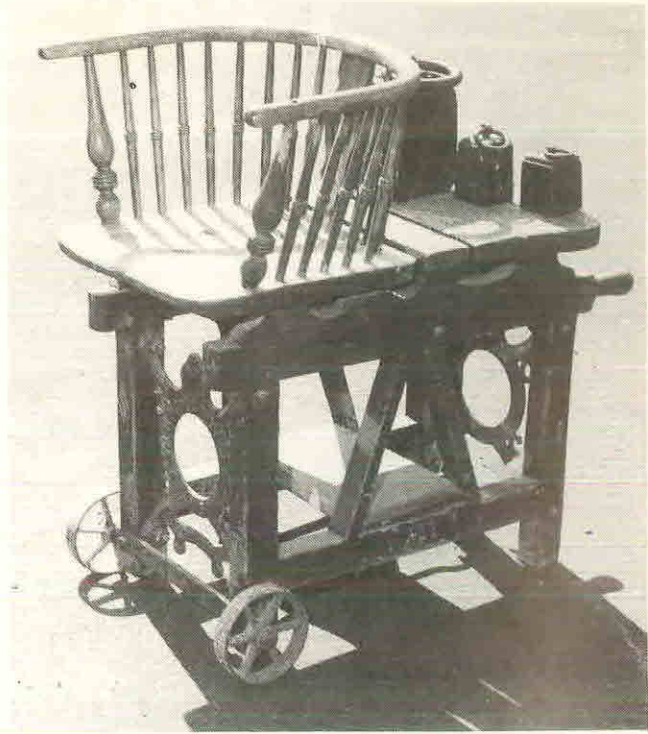
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A War Department Scales, for weighing in recruits, on display in the museum.

NURTURING TRADITION

The traditions of our comparatively young army are gradually being built up and the museum displays flags and pennants from units that served at home and abroad. Fine old uniforms, bandoliers and other memorabilia abound. Weapons, manuals, newspapers, documents - and the first barrack routine order of native origin. A solid wooden weighing-chair has a shiny seat polished by naked flesh of potential recruits enthroned to have their cubature noted.

Activities of the Mullingar garrison in community affairs are apparent from programmes, photographs and booklets. A 'Step-Together Week' recalls the 'Emergency' and its brochure illustrates how civilian committees were closely involved. Mullingar's 'Army and L.D.F. Comforts Association' administered to the needs of lonely servicemen.

A fine United Nations section has widespread appeal and the list of Service Medals earned by local soldiers is highlighted. A collection presented by the present Chief-of-Staff, Lieutenant General Louis Hogan included arrows shot at Irish troops in the Niamba ambush.

Michael Collins' pistol, flags from the Katanga actions, dies for stamping prisoners' clothing, a swastika from a Junkers JU 87 - this is a cosmopolitan collection with enormous appeal.

Stepping out from this museum 'H' Block faces the departing guest. And this block also housed prisoners. That was in 1922 when author, Annie M. P. Smithson and other nurses were arrested as their Switzer van sped westward to provide succour for Anti-Treaty forces. She related the incident in **Myself and Others**

On leaving Columb Barracks, if a left turn is negotiated a unique right-of-way is discovered. Under a lease dated 1868 between F.S.G. Nugent M.P. and Colonel Fulke Southwell, Secretary of State, the path to and site of the barracks sewage-farm will last until A.D. 10,001,868!

Mullingar's Military Museum is in a barracks with a short enough past - but because of a ten million year lease, it has a long long future!

4th Regiment and the Dunree Connection

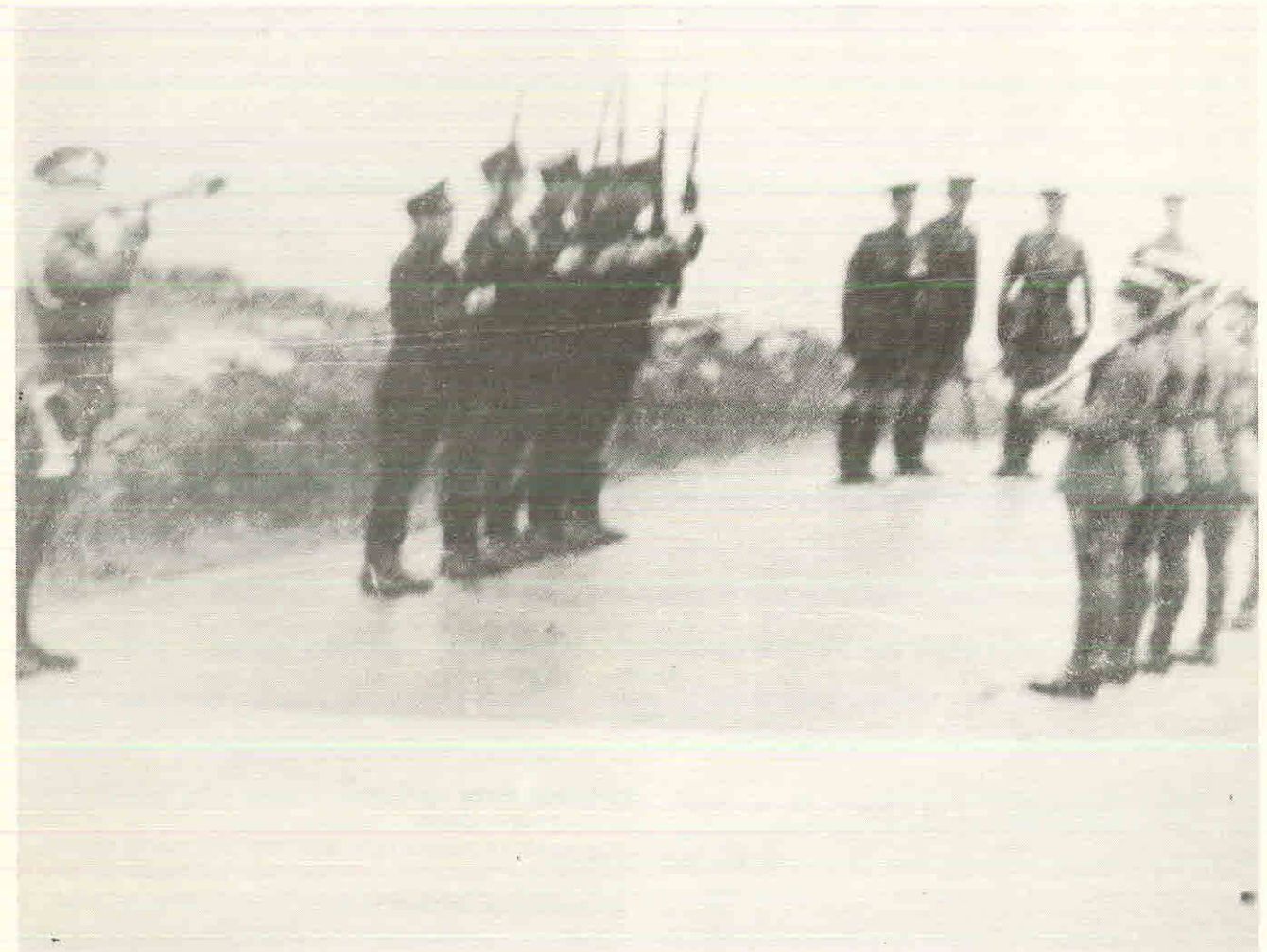
- Comdt. J. Prendergast, CDO. No 5 Region

OCTOBER, 13th. 1952 was the day when a Field Arty. Regt. took control of a coastal defence post, a first in this army and I am sure in most other armies. It was the day that the NCO's and men of Fort Dunree became part of the 4 Regt. and a new page was opened on the Unit 141 titled "Fort Dunree".

Pursuant to a decision to close Coast Defence Arty. Western Command in Dunree and retain a maintenance and security staff, the three remaining officers were posted out as follows: Capt. M. Fitzsimons attached to Western Comd. Training Depot, Lt. Condon Q.M. attached to Western Comd. Training Depot and Capt. J. Higgins posted to OC. 8 Fd. Bty. 4 Fd. Arty. Regt. Among the NCO's left to 'hold the Fort' were BQMS H. Quirke, Master Gunner 9.2" Guns, BQMS M. Kenny,

Bk. Accountant, BQMS T. Hodgers, Master Gunner 6" Guns. These were ably assisted by six gunners and, on attachment, one artificer, Sgt. Cooney, one medical orderly, three engineer Privates and Cpl. P. Redmond i/c search-lights.

The artillery element of this detachment became an integral part of the 4th Regiment, in spite of the one hundred and ninety-four miles between the two locations and the fact that one NCO's parent unit was the coastal defence Spike Island and the other was Depot Arty. Kildare. When one thinks of the divided loyalties forced upon these men by the different corps and different parent units, it was a credit to their training and loyalty to the army that they ran such a smooth post. It would be safe to say that their record over the past



A sadly blurred, but nonetheless important photograph, of the taking over of Dunree by Irish Forces. Guards of honour, both British and Irish, render honours as one set of colours is lowered and another raised. Included are Lt. W. Donagh (Irish Officer I/C), Sgt. J. Haughey (I/C Irish guard), Maj. G.E. Laing MM (British Officer I/C) Capt. Dyles and Lt. West (both British).



FCA members on summer camp at Dunree 1974. Note 6 inch gun in foreground.

thirty-one years would stand up to any other unit in the army. The extra tasks imposed upon the 4 Regt. administering this outpost were a pleasure rather than a chore, because of the excellence and devotion to duty of the NCO's and men in the Fort.

To the junior officer who was dispatched to Dunree to supervise range practices and issue kit, the trip was a very pleasant detail. The first thing he noticed on arrival was the cleanliness of the post and the welcome extended by all present. A walk around, visiting the gun positions and the underground magazines could not but spur the imagination into visualising the post fully manned preparing to meet a threat from the sea. A visit to the local pub, which only served bottles of stout or beer, whiskey or port, was an education in itself.

Listening to the old men describing how, during the great war, one could walk from one side of Lough Swilly to the other, jumping from one damaged ship to the next, sheltering behind the protection of the 9.2" Guns of Fort Lenan and the 6" Guns of Dunree, gave the quiet outpost a new importance.

A browse through the ledgers provided the most interesting entries. One which stands out in the old Hospital Ledger: "Pots rubber, Officers lunatic for the use of" is worthy of note. One could go on in this historical note but it is the subject for another time. Back with the Dunree and 4 Regt. connections, payment of the Garrison was another responsibility which though complicated, never caused a problem. It was the first detachment to be paid with individual cheques. When cheque payments to NCO's and men was introduced recently it offered no difficulty to the 4 Regt. because of Dunree.

U.N. Service did not leave the men of Dunree out. In fact most of the Mortar Troops from the Regt. which served overseas included an NCO or man from Dunree. Sgt. Jack Quirke of the Mortar Troop 38 Inf. Bn. was awarded the D.S.M., bringing honour to the Regt. and Dunree.

Over the past ten to fifteen years, Dunree has been a most popular place for Summer Camps for members of the P.D.F., F.C.A. and Civil Defence. During the Autumn of 1969, B. Coy. 14 Inf. Group occupied the Post. The last time the guns fired in Dunree was in 1964 when the Southern Command F.C.A. Coastal Defence fired their Annual Shoot. The missile has condemned the guns to eternal silence but the Fort has much to offer in accommodation and a base for adventure training. The foresight in maintaining a detachment in Dunree has been justified down through the years as an asset to the army and an important wing of the 4 Fd. Artillery Regt.

40th Anniversary 4th Field Artillery Regiment

List of Events:

8th July 1983 . . .

Launching of Anniversary issue *An Cosantóir*.

13th July 1983 . . .

1400 hours: Open day at Columb Bks to include; Finals of Superstars Competition. Hot Air Balloon ascent. Aerobatics. Helicopter Mortar Lift. Pigeon Race - Greetings to other Regiments. Band Recital. Ceremonial starting of clock in church of St. Colman after a forty year silence. Civil Defence Rescue demonstration. Weapons display. Gun Salute. Long service presentations. Old jail and Sean MacEoin cell on show. Museum - Anniversary display.

Autumn

Regimental Dinner - All ranks. NCO's Dinner - Serving and past members. Officers Dinner - Serving and past members. Mens Social Evening - Serving and past members. "Past and repast" - an evening of nostalgia. Old films and light refreshments. Associate member's evening.

4th Dec 1983 . . .

St. Barbara's Day: Mass for deceased members of the Regiment - meeting of former 4th Regiment personnel.

16th Dec. 1983 . . .

First issue of Regimental newsheet: "The Fourth"

A highlight of the Regiment's Open Day events will be the re-starting of the clock in the Church of St. Colman after a forty years' silence.

Numerous attempts have been made to repair the clock - notably by Capt. Ciaran Milner, who will make his final hair-spring adjustment before the countdown on 13 July.

Brief Memories of the Fifties

Lt. Col. M. Moriarty, OC Depot Artillery

ON 13 July 1953, 2/Lieut P. J. O'Farrell and myself arrived by saloon in Columb Barracks, Mullingar, he to be Section Officer Fort Dunree attached 8 Field Battery and I to be Left Section Officer, 4th Anti-Tank Battery, HQ Battery. (In the organisation of those days each HQ Battery contained an Anti-Tank Battery. The Roman numerals were used in the unit title up to 1959). We came to a halt in front of the archway, long since pulled down, and surveyed the rather-forbidding looking buildings surrounding a small square (small after Kildare, that is). There were windows everywhere - a sort of "Square of the Squinting Windows".

Such first impressions were very misleading, however, as we received a most sincere welcome from all ranks from Lt. Col. D. J. Cody down. Comdt. Mick Sugrue



Men's Christmas dinner, 1953.



The Regiment at Seskin, C. 1954. (Coming out of action).

(Photo: Lt. Col. M. Moriarty)



C.P. at Seskin in the 1950's.

(Photo: Lt. Col. M. Moriarty)

was 2 I/C and Captains P. D. Kavanagh, Higgins and Brick were the Battery Commanders of HQ and 4th Anti Tank, 8th and 15th Batteries respectively. Capt. Tom Maher was Adjutant, Capt. Con Creedon the QM, while the Senior NCO's were RSM Scott and RQMS Fitzpatrick. Lieuts. Charlie McGuinn, Jim Croke, Tom Ryan and Liam Donnelly were particularly happy to see us as the Adjutant now had two more to add to the orderly officers list.

In HQ Battery, I was quickly initiated into the routine by B/S 'Slippy' Hughes (so called because of his habit of wearing Gym shoes on every possible occasion), and Cpl. Collins and Gnr. Bobby Gander, the Battery Clerks. HQ Battery had a strength then of approximately 120 All Ranks, with 8th and 15th Batteries at about half that number. IV Regt. proved to be a very happy and closely-knit unit which had a particularly satisfactory relationship with the town at all levels of activity, especially sport and cultural.

Unit life revolved around Artillery training, (up to six continuous weeks when preparing for practices in Glen Imaal), shooting competitions and sport. The Gym was in constant use for boxing, basketball and badminton as well as dances and films. That year - 1953 - saw 8th Battery firing field guns (18 Pdrs) for the last time prior to the change over to Heavy Mortars.

Comdt. Sugrue who had previously been in Coast Defence as OC Fort Shannon, took to these new weapons with such gusto that he had everyone working on the developments of drills, techniques and instruments. Lieuts were often seen standing still and holding mortar sights while the 2 I/C with Lieut. Tom Ryan, Sgt. Brennan and Gnrs. Craig and Columb clustered around a director. With the brand-new landrovers many very happy and relaxed deployment exercises were held in the local area.



Border Patrol 1956.

Memories come flooding back of sunny afternoons at Lough Owel teaching swimming and life-saving to Gunners with the help of Cpl. "Gus" Jones, although Gnr. Conroy needed no training as he had a respectable record of saving people from watery graves. He was also famous for daring to bring a "goose" to Captain Joe. The late Sgt. "Pal" Byrne ran the NCO's Mess and seemed to know everything about Mess Administration as did Sgt "Micky" Reid in the Officers Mess. Pte. Christy Carr was the long-suffering cook in the Officers Mess (some say the officers also suffered), while Sgt. Mick O'Donnell ran the Transport Section. The Gunners Dunne blew trumpets beautifully, doubling on the bagpipes for social events.

Other memories include early-morning departures for the rifle ranges at Carna, always a major expedition, a hair-raising ride from Athlone to Mullingar in a "Bugchaser" driven by Gnr. Delaney, touching 90 at times. The day the brand-new electric siren refused to function for an expectant audience which included the Command OC. It was jammed by frozen snow. The interminable rehearsals which were dubbed "Rock and



First heavy-mortar shoot in Glen of Imaal. "A" sub-section of "George" Tp.

Roll" in preparation for a Command Inspection to be taken by Col. Sean Collins-Powell. Lt/Col. Jimmy Dolan's Irish was very poor but we got used to the sounds he made and did what had to be done anyway in the best Gunner tradition. We all got soaked on that parade, and the Command OC and Staff completed their inspection in civvies borrowed from the living-in officers. Security was not what it is today, only the Orderly Officer and the Gate Policeman were armed up to Guard Mounting time. The Orderly Officer had to wear riding britches and leggings until after Flag-down, effectively limiting his circulation and his reaction time to possible emergencies. The Guard was mounted only just before Flag-down and a "Stickman" was always selected, the cleanest and best-turned out Gunner who was then relieved from the duty.

Exercise YOUGHAL was a major event for what was then a smaller army, each command provided a Battalion Group to march approximately seventy-five miles to concentrate in YOUGHAL. Some of the members of the IV Regiment clocked up as many as ninety-miles in practice beforehand, some of the marches were by night. The weather was excellent as was the exercise, but that could not be said of Exercise FUSCHIA, a Command Exercise involving a move from Athlone to Galway. The culmination came in the Bk. Field in Galway when many tents were blown down and others flooded out.

The Regiment contributed to Border duties in 1956 when Rockhill House was re-established as a Military



Christmas dinner in the Regt. in the early 1950's. 1 to r clockwise, Miss Fahy, Lt. L. Donnelly, Mrs. Donnelly, Capt. C. Creedon, Capt. T. Maher, Lt. T. Counihan and partner, Lt. N. Clancy, Lt. P. O'Farrell. **Background:** Lt. Col. M. McCarthy, Comdt. D. O'Callaghan, Mrs. O'Callaghan, Mrs O'Donnell, and Mrs. M. Browne.

**Mick Bagnall,
Patrick Street,
*Bar & Lounge***

Congrats to 4th Regt.

post under Captain Dermot Byrne (now GOC S Comd) with troops from Galway and Mullingar combining to support Garda patrols during that IRA campaign. Many friendships were made in that area and closer contacts were established with our detached Gunners in Fort Dunree. Poor Cpl. Johnny Farrell died as a result of a shooting accident during guard dismounting at Rockhill House, the only casualty of that period. Personnel were rotated between Rockhill House and the home stations in what was a popular break from barrack routine. It proved to be but a foretaste of service overseas with the UN later on.

Not to be forgotten were the members of 4 Fd. Coy. S & T, under Comdt. Dinny O'Callaghan and the excellent co-operation at all levels between the two units. The centre of their activities centred around their fitter, the famous "Fla", while the brothers Moody never flagged in their support of Westmeath football aspirations despite their many disappointments.

They say first impressions are lasting ones, and I fully support that. They were great days in a great unit, heartiest congratulations on your Fortieth Birthday.

Four and Five are Nine

(The Western Command Artillery Family)

5th Regiment by Col. P. J. Kane (Retired)

THERE was Artillery life in Ireland prior to the formation of 4th Field Artillery Regiment and I, and we of the 8th Fd. Arty. Bty. were very much part of it. We were in a fine organisation called 2nd Fd. Arty. Bn. with HQ at Collins Bks., Dublin but we seemed free to roam in counties Longford, Cavan, Leitrim, Donegal and Westmeath with the odd incursion into Dublin. In a loose fashion we were attached to the odd Infantry Bn. for all of whom we, at that time, had less than full respect or admiration. But these Battalions had their uses; they formed a useful source from which our very many deficiencies were "made up". At one time one such unit

was generous enough (tho' unaware of such arrangement) to provide us with our 2½ year lost bell tent. A great relief to a long suffering Bty. QMS and storeman.

But then in early 1943 came the 4th Regt. It was captained by Acting-Captain (weren't we all) John S. Nolan and he set about bringing the 15th Bty. and 20th Bty. together with a HQ on to the seasoned hard travelling wiley 8th Bty. The latter, led by this scribe resented this arrangement not a little. However we were overcome, beaten into a Regiment of first class calibre and in a matter of months we were shooting guns as a



11 Aug. 1963 Finner Camp Co. Donegal. Commissioning Ceremony.

Included: Comdt. C. Crowley (FCA), 2/Lt. P. Ryan (FCA), 2/Lt. C. Neary (FCA), Col. Bradford Butler (USA Mil. Attache) 2/Lt. P. Farren (FCA), 2/Lt. N. Ryan (FCA), Lt. Col. J. P. Kane (OC Finner Camp), 2/Lt. S. Brennan, Comdt. D. McCormack (FCA), Comdt. M. J. O'Donnell (OC 8 Battery).



Blessing of the Colours in 1957, l to r: Capt. T. Maher, Comdt. K. Hanley, Capt. C. O'Donnell, Capt. D. Byrne, Capt. T. Brick and Capt. S. Donnegan.

unit from all sites and angles that historic Glen of Imaal could provide. This indeed was the unit that went on to create two other Regts. 5th in Galway and 9th in Westmeath. My main task is to talk about the founding of the 5th Fd. Arty. Regt.

Intergration was a word bandied about early in 1959. I could be forgiven for thinking that it could not happen to me. It did. It was like this; I was happy enough even with the stern living of the fifties i.e. economically speaking. There was little happening in the military firmament. Suez was over and Premier Sir Anthony Eden of England was struggling with his disgrace bravely, being shored up by the die-hard true blue Tories. There was a so called and easily forgettable Border "campaign" intermittently going on just to the north of where we were then stationed, Mullingar's 4th Fd. Artillery Regiment. I rejoiced in the rank of Commandant and the title of Second in Command to that stern and sterling Officer Commanding, Col. Mark Harrington. There was internment in the Curragh but it did not impinge on such as me at all.

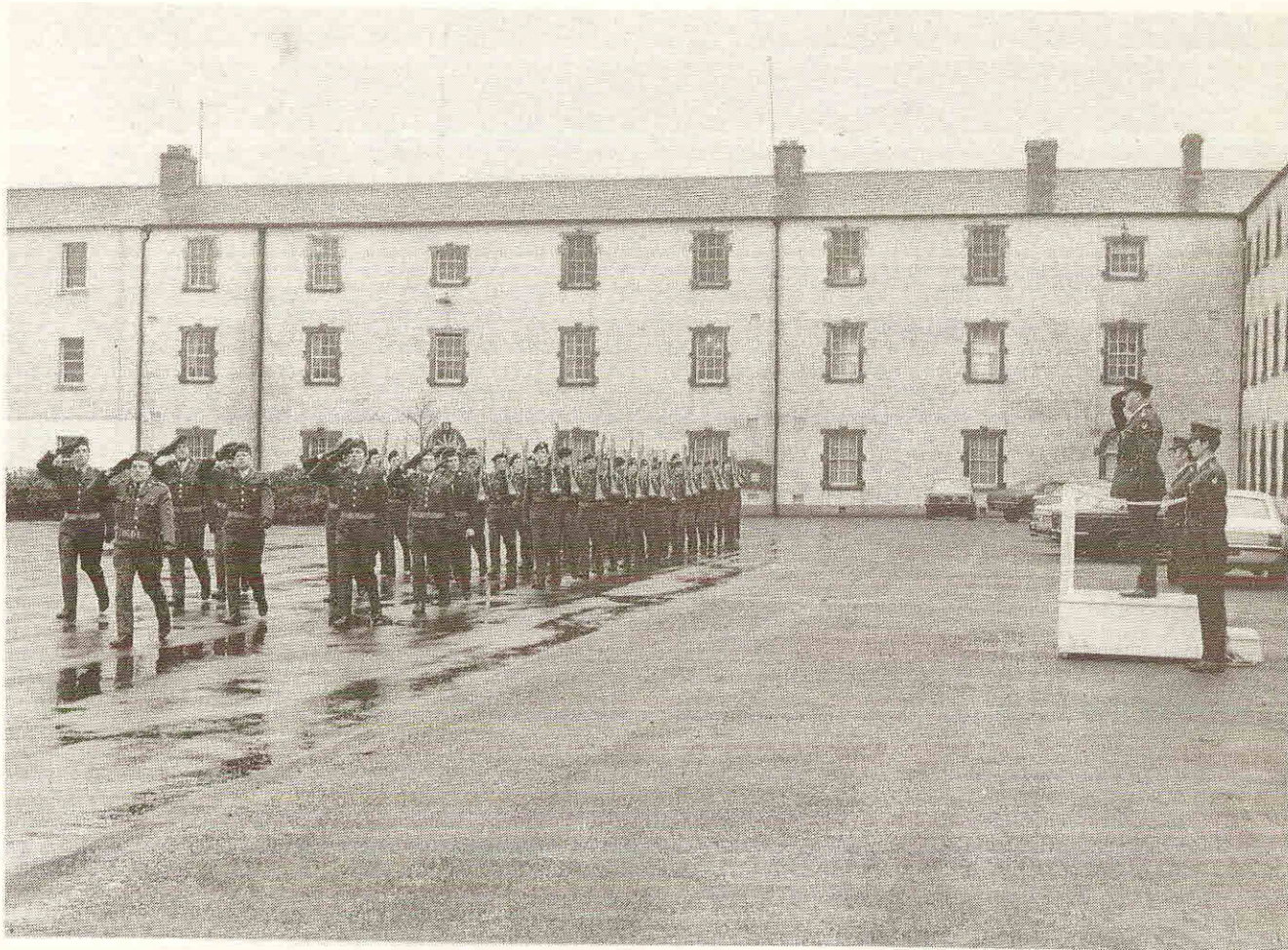
General Patrick Mulcahy was our Chief of Staff (he was to retire before Integration took place) and he presided at a Conference at Military College, Curragh Camp where he outlined proposals for bringing FCA Batteries, Squadrons and Battalions into the Old Brigades and indeed new Brigades. That's what Integration was about basically. We all thought that this was going to be a great boon not alone organisation wise (and it was to an extent) but we also persuaded ourselves that in rank opportunity it would bring promotions

galore for Offrs. and NCO's. The latter was not to be so, as the clever civil servants in the Dept. of Defence had foreseen our innocent hopes and had, as usual, arranged otherwise.

There must have been something wrong with me then (I felt that there was always something wrong with me militarily) as I was 'promoted' to command the new 5th Fd. Arty. Regt. with HQ in Dun Ui Mhaoiliosa, Galway, still with the rank of Commandant. One had to move a growing family, find a house, schools, etc., with no disturbance allowance. Changed a bit since.

Those were the hardship days. Soldiering - that was the name it went by. It was likewise with that fine band of men who ventured west of the Shannon with me on the fateful Der Tag Thursday, 30th October, 1959. It was "I" Day and by that evening by 23.59 hrs. we were Integrated or on the way to it. Or were we?

Before I left the Midlands for the Western Seas (it was Sept 1959) I remember spending one Sunday afternoon on the shore of trout filled Lough Ennel sitting in a car writing to every officer and NCO of the old FCA Units of East Galway (Tuam Bn) and West Galway (Gort Bn) and 50th Bn. (Galway City and District). I told them of the transformation that was about to take place, the wonders and mysteries of artillery, what a fine Corps it was and a new and better FCA life with the Gunners. Things like more equipment, more instructors and a new esprit de corps were to be the order of the day. I had a couple of hundred copies of this manifesto published and duly distributed. Great stirring gather-round-the-



An FCA march-past for Lt. Col. T. Furlong's stand down, 1973.

new-flag-stuff. It did not turn out that way tho' on paper it was super. My pen had flowed freely but there was a flaw, of course, of which I was not even then so naive as to under-rate. How could I wean these Infantry bods of differing Infantry Battalions, and worse still, separate FCA areas with totally differing loyalties and even linguistic backgrounds to a new organisation and a new arm of the Service? Difficult? You can say that again!

After 4 years hard slogging I felt that North Galway (Tuam HQ) 13 Bty. and South Galway (Gort HQ) 7 Bty. were induced to accept fairly freely, the new concept. It was different with 4 Bty., HQ Galway City. Their tradition, they felt, was unbreakable and could but grudgingly be seduced. They wanted to wear their old badges, flashes etc.

We had many snags when we came to set up the new 5 Brigade stretching from North Donegal to North Clare. Col. Paddy Kearns was our new Bde. O/C and he had his hands full with a new Artillery Regt., Cavalry Sqn. Supply and Transport Coy, Engineer Coy, etc. The 1st Bn. (An Cead Cathlan) was the only regular unit and we were dubbed "na cuartaire" (the visitors) and perhaps worse when we piled in to disturb them as they hadn't been since 1940. We finally wrestled as best we could with problems aplenty with each other in our Regt., with the other new units and with the Cead Cath.

Armies are wonderful organisations. The people in them make things work, make things fit into place despite the best endeavours of the begrudgers, thwarters and obstacle builders in strange places. That's how it appears to the soldier who at times says "get out of my way and let me get on with the real job".

The 5th Regt. was 21 years old in 1980 and celebrated suitably. I am most proud that I was sent to Co. Galway to do a worthwhile job way back in October 1959. I want to thank and I just cannot thank them too much, the Offrs. NCO's and men of the PDF who travelled with me and who guided the guns that trundled their noisy way over the Shannon and on through Aughrim's slopes to the Western sea so long ago. Thank you Comdt. Martin Greaney, Comdt. Liam Donnelly, Major J. J. McGlinchey, Comdt. Liam O'Coinne. Without the fine body of NCO's too we just could not have managed. Very good they were. None better. Some of them were (and in no special order): Pat Shanahan, Ed Columb, Fred Smith, Robert Gander, Frank Cassidy, Barney McGuire, Tom Durnin, Jos. Connaughton, Tom Muldoon, John Gavin, W. Early, M. Minogue, J. Connors and J. Reilly.

In conclusion I seek permission as an old Gunner to salute 5th Fd. Arty. Regt. the eldest child of the 4th Fd. Arty. Regt. May I also say to the 4th Fd. Regt. on its 40th birthday, Fad saol cugaibh agus go mairfidh sibh an cead! Bhi sar saol againn san da aonad, an 4ú agus an 5ú.

9 Fd Arty Regt

by Comdt. M. Dunne 4 MPC Coy.

THE 15 and 20 Bty FCA, formed at integration in 1959 were a vital part of the 4 Regt organization for the following twenty years. There was probably no better integrated unit in the Army during this period as the Officers, NCOs and Men of the FCA played a major role

in the administration and security tasks of their hard pressed PDF comrades.

Early in 1979 as a plan for reorganization of the FCA was being discussed at a high level, there was some doubt as to the particular future of the 15th and 20th Batteries. Were they to revert to an infantry role? Was the twenty year link with the 4 FA Regt to be broken. The fears of the FCA gunners disappeared when it was announced that a new Regiment, the 9 Fd Arty Regt was to be set up in Columb Bks with a HQ and two batteries.

To quote from the initial routine order 1/79 dated 5/10/79:

“9 Fd Arty Regt (FCA) which was established in accordance with the provisions of PRI is raised with effect from 3/9/79 (Auth Adj. Gen). Headquarters is located at Columb Bks Mullingar”.

With Comdt M. Dunne as OC and Capt P. Keogh as S/O the new unit then had the PDF personnel who had been with the 15 and 20 Bty as part of the 4 FAR posted. These were: Bty QMS Crone, D., Sgt. Molloy, C., Gnr. Cunningham, T., Sgt. Robinson, E. (as Bty QMS), Sgt. Prendergast K., and Gnr. Russell, R.

Of course, because of the new Regt HQ there was a lot of extra work to be done, without, for the time being, any extra staff. All of the PDF personnel worked extremely hard at this time but I'm sure I could be forgiven for giving special mention to BQMS. Dave Croné who has since retired, for the part he played in the unit formation in those early days.

The two Battery Commanders, Comdt Dan O'Riordan (15 Bty) and Comdt Donal Byrne (20 Bty) then had the task of making their men aware of their new unit identity. The visit of Pope John Paul to Knock, where the 9 FA Regt had a big involvement, months of hard work at Regt HQ, a big involvement in Command


and All Army Competitions as well as a local Westmeath involvement in St. Patrick's Day Parade, Guards of Honour and other community events helped to fix clearly the name of the 9 Fd Arty Regt in the minds of military and civilian alike.

The transfer from 4 FAR status to 9 FAR status was not as smooth or as simple as it looked in the initial Routine Order. One cannot forget the amount of assistance given by the OC and staff of the 4 Fd Arty Regt. May the spirit and co-operation that has been evident over the years between the PDF personnel and the FCA in Mullingar ever remain.

M. H. H. Hughes

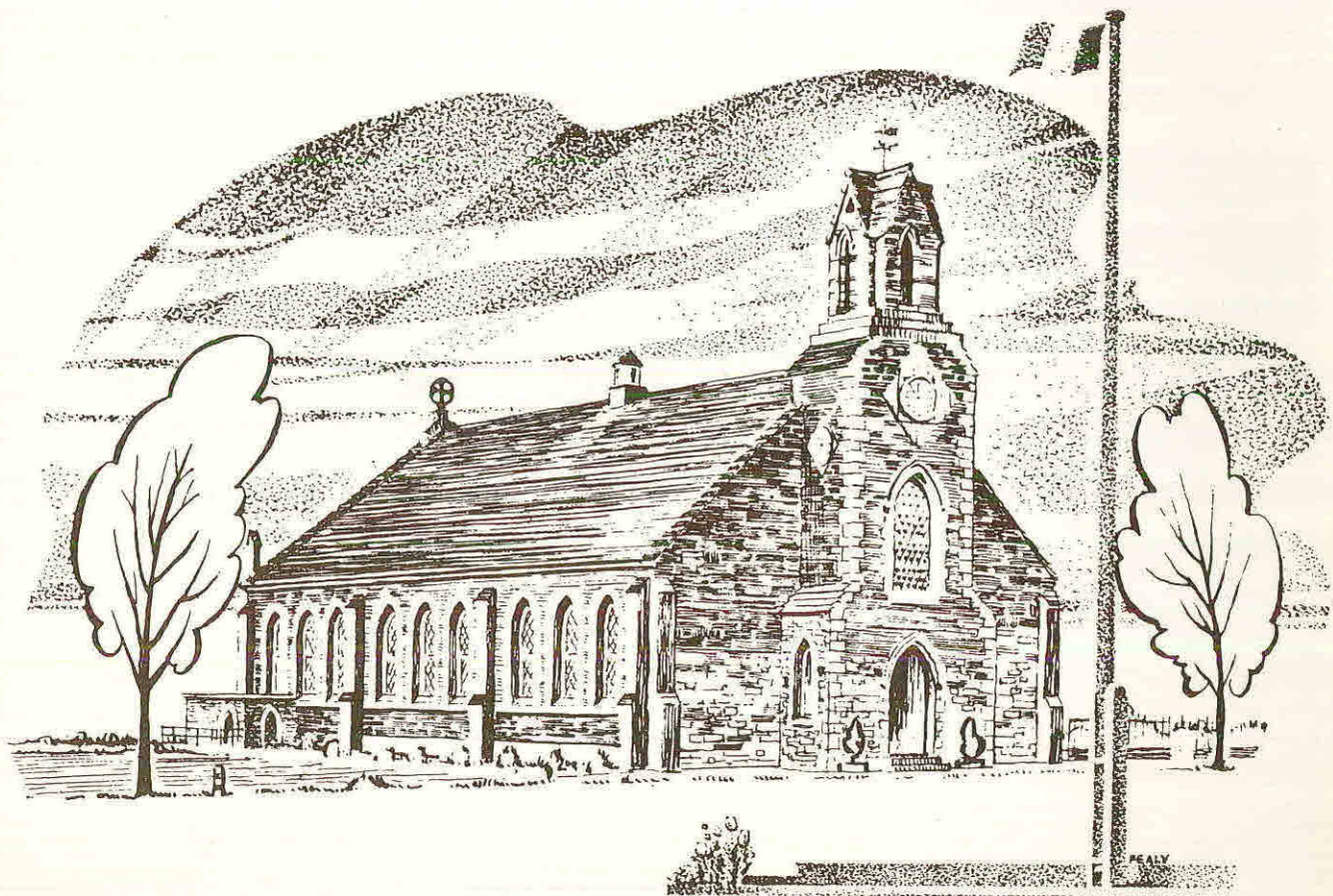
18 Pearse St., Mullingar.

*The pint
is still better
at*



Hughes Corner House

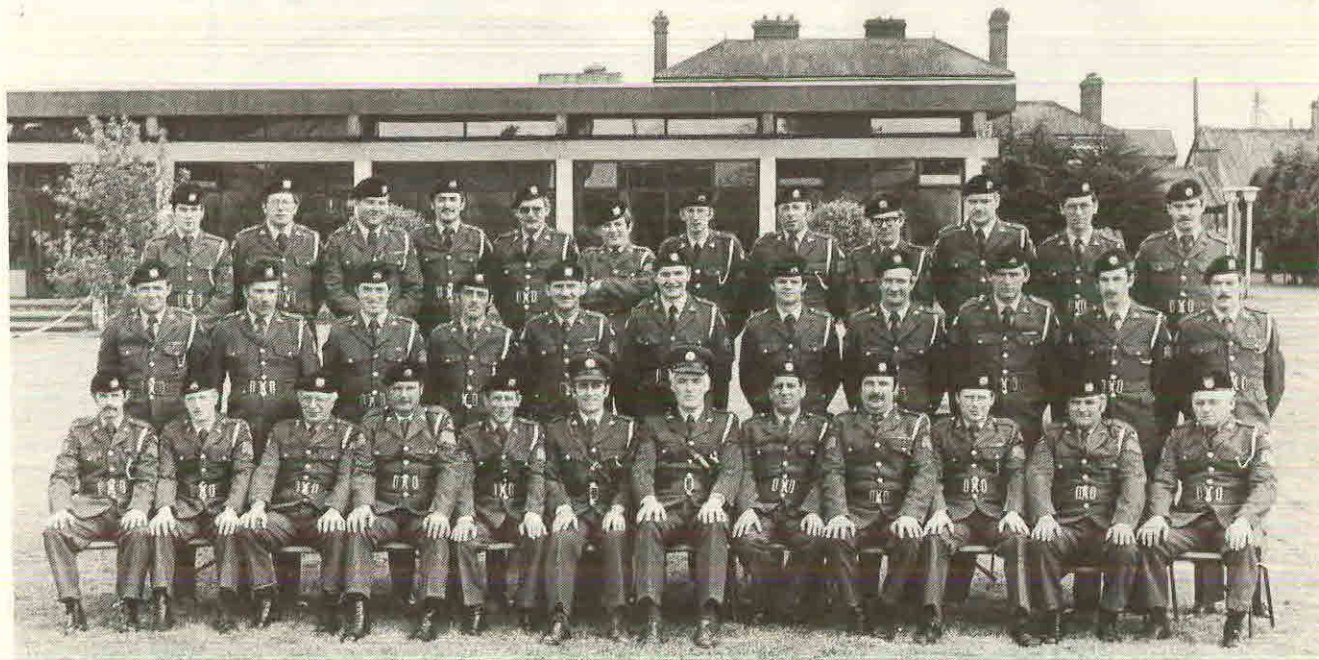
Congrats to 4th Regt.



ST. COLMAN'S CHURCH, COLUMB BARRACKS, MULLINGAR



Officers of the 4th Regt. Christmas 1982. Front l to r: Capt. P. McDunphy, Capt. L. Murphy, Comdt. R. Twoomey, Lt. Col. P. O'Farrell (O/C), Comdt. L. Gavin (2 I/C), Comdt. E. Breslin. Middle l to r: Lt. P. Duggan, Lt. A. Armstrong, Capt. M. Molloy, Capt. R. O'Leary, 2/Lt. P. McNamara. Back l to r: 2/Lt. N. Murphy, 2/Lt. M. Doyle, Lt. J. O'Dea, Lt. D. Molloy, Lt. M. Dolan, 2/Lt. K. Dinneen.



40th Anniversary Photo-4th Regt. NCO's, May' 1983. Back: Cpl. T. Owens, Cpl. M. Coplon, Cpl. C. Heffernan, Sgt. P. Doyle, Cpl. D. Crone, Sgt. J. Rogers, Cpl. M. McConville, Sgt. C. Molloy, Cpl. W. Dunne, Sgt. J. Quinn, Cpl. Joe Jessop, Cpl. A. Dunne. Centre: Cpl. M. Sweeney, Sgt. P. Cleary, Sgt. P. McKenna, Sgt. J. Muldarry, Sgt. B. O'Leary, Cpl. N. Gibney, Sgt. F. McCormack, Cpl. E. Reilly, Sgt. P. Cole, Sgt. P. McConville, Cpl. D. Stafford. Front: Sgt. J. Harney, Sgt. M. Murray, Sgt. W. Heffernan, Sgt. M. Devaney, B/Sgt. A. Craig, RQMS W. Dunne, RSM M. Maher, BQMS J. Daly, BQMS C. Lynch, BQMS O. McGurran, Sgt. J. Boyce, Sgt. K. Lynam.

The Holy Water Bottle

By Comdt. T. C. Maher (retd) formerly of 4 Regiment.

THE Civil War was over. A good town in which a youngster could begin to grow up, was Kilkenny. From where I lived there were places to go like the Lacken Walk which was the narrow margin between the asylum wall and the crystal waters of the River Nore. Families in Maudlin Street, Nore Terrace, Dublin Road and The Lake, produced gangs of little contemporaries who were great for fighting, pushing and hurling in all weathers. The Dublin Road was a great hurling pitch because there was no traffic, and tarmacadam had yet to come.

Not too far away was that centre of bustle and excitement, the railway station with its newly placed Roll of Honour of railwaymen who died in the Great World War 1914 - 1918 and the military barracks with its wall stone commemorating "Lion" a British Army Regimental mascot, and its newly installed garrison of Free State soldiers.

The soldiers came daily to fire shots at little targets in the Shank Yard at the end of Maher's Boreen in order to amuse small boys perched on the Shank Yard Wall. The boreen linked the Dublin Road with the Hebron Road. Ours was the only house in the boreen which to-day flanks Nowlan Park. The house was near the railway bridge over which trains sped and shunted day and night. The busiest traffic on the boreen was Comerford's cows and farmers' carts calling at the salt and lime works behind where we lived'.

Daily on the ten-to-eleven my father, who was the guard, leaned out of his van and threw down the paper. Dependant on weather it could land anywhere. General Cronje, a Kerry Blue, usually asleep before the kitchen range, would rise at some mysterious signal, stretch, amble out the door and arrive under the bridge at the right moment and bring back the paper. He also knew the days of the week. On Friday mornings he went to the railway station and returned with my father's pay packet on which was written £2-7s-6d. He was my "Lion".

I can't remember when it started but I was trained for two jobs. One was to waken Mr. E. M. Healy, the owner of the salt and lime works each morning. He lived in his seven foot square office, dark and damp from salt vapours. He was learned, a bearded Parnellite, a bachelor, had a superb command of the King's English and always emerged into daylight resplendent in black frock coat and hard hat. My job was to screw on his gloved, wooden hand, often found under a heap of bottles if old political friends had gathered there the

night before. He gave me twopence a week for my money box and an occasional skelp of the wooden fist if I hurt him.

My Killarney-born mother prayed constantly and successfully for his return to the Church. He was a gentleman and he liked soldiers in uniform to wear their caps straight and walk smartly in public. "We must now be as good as the British" he would say. Often he marched me up and down the full length of his bed, arms swinging, head up.

Another of my mother's many little acts of kindness towards humanity was a service she rendered to asylum funerals which used a small graveyard in the boreen near the Shank Yard where the soldiers often shot out the bones of famine victims from the bank behind the targets.

Daughter of an Irish speaking cabinet maker she used odd words which spread into common usage in the locality. My other job had to do with asylum funerals.

It was a hot summer's day and General Cronje was asleep in the middle of the road. Down on my hunkers stroking his back gently I spotted a familiar sight turning into the boreen. The Keeper had his peaked cap off and coat across his arm. I ran into the house.

"Mother" I called. In those post-Victorian days mother was Mother and father was Father.

"There's a funeral coming".

"And is it a poor ainguisseoir, Tommy"?

"It is".

"Well go and get the holy water bottle then".

I ran upstairs to where "The Room" was, fetched the dark, roundy brandy bottle from the cabinet my grandfather made. There was always holy water in the bottle.

She rushed around the house pulling down the blinds, then out to the yard, caught a white hen and pulled a feather. She whipped my gansey over my head and pulled on a clean one.

"Lord in Heaven", she said, "but your caip is mothalach, where's the comb"? She wiped my face with her apron and pushed me out the door to be ready to meet the funeral. Standing outside the door was Mr. E. M. Healy. An impressive figure, he was peering towards the bridge "I think", he said "I see some soldiers down there with their tunics off. Now, that's not right".

Soldiers! About to run in that direction with the holy

water bottle and feather, my mother called "ah-ah-ah!" so I stopped and waited for the approaching funeral procession.

Walking out front was the Keeper. Behind came the horse and cart, the driver an oldish man dressed in thick grey clothes with his cap on the Kildare side, hunched but sitting high on a corner with his feet on the shaft.

The back board was down, the better to accommodate the coffin-shaped wooden box. Strands of brown stained straw hung from it here and there but most of the manure had been swept out. Behind walked another man in thick grey clothes carrying two shovels.

The old work horse plodded slowly, head down, as if it too were caught up in the fascination of death. The wheels turned wobbledly on the uneven ground because of the worn axle.

We blessed ourselves except Mr. Healy who had'n't come around to that stage yet. The procession stopped as the Keeper wanted to chat awhile. Another and livelier horse carrying the priest in top hat and riding breeches cantered by. He held up his whip in acknowledgement of Mr. Healy's gentlemanly doff.

"You'd better hurry up Garret" said my mother, "you can't leave the priest waiting. Who are ye burying today?"

"Ah, Joe Keenan. They say he was an ould Fenian in his time".

"Hello Mrs. Maher". No-one had noticed a soldier on the road.

"Do you know me"?

"Of course I do, Ned. Isn't it great now that ye have stopped shooting each other at last. What are ye doing down there at the bridge"?

"Oh, we're starting a pipers band and I'm the pipe sergeant. The lads have to get used to the route marches you see."

"Route marches mar'eadh", chided Mother. Then she thought for a while, "well, look there's a grand old Fenian in that box there. Since ye're doing nothing else you might as well give him a bit of goltraí music as far as the graveyard.

"You mean play"?

"Why not?" said mother. Pipe Sergeant Ned scratched his cheek and looked down towards the bridge.

"Hey lads, come down here and get fell in". They strolled down, the whole seven of them. It was a hot kind of day anyway. When they saw the coffin a few blessed themselves, others put on their caps and saluted, but they all fell in, in front of the cart.

Mr. E. M. Healy wasn't satisfied. "Now men", he said sternly, "put on your caps straight". They did that and they also took out cloths and handkerchiefs and wiped dust off leggings and boots, revealing nice shines. They wore green "balanced" web belts.

"We'll play" said Ned, "the Croppy Boy in slow time". They all looked around at the big drum drummer and he nodded. The pipers blew into their bags. Garret put on his jacket and peak cap.

"Buidhean, Aire. Go mall marsail". The order was given in a low voice.

The drums rolled softly. The band moved forward in the measured slow way of solemn occasions. "Good men and true in this house who dwell", the pipes seemed to say. A pauper's funeral was transformed into a State occasion. A lonely and unknown old man was going to his grave in honour and dignity. No longer a funeral, it was a cortege - like General Michael Collins' or Sergeant Furlong's. I had seen pictures of one and was at the other.

Because my place with the holy water bottle was in front with the Keeper I claimed, by right of custom, a place beside Pipe-Sergeant Ned. The music sent quivers

of joy and pride through mind and body. General Cronje too played his part. Like a bullet he shot ahead to scatter three stray bullocks blocking the road. On the bridge, a railwayman mending the train's water pump, stopped and looked over the parapet.

When the cortege reached the graveyard gate the priest was waiting, his fine horse grazing inside by the wall. The pipes and drums fell silent. The birds of summer, silent awhile, burst forth and filled the air with song while prayers were said and the coffin was blessed with feather dipped in the holy water bottle. The priest, Garret and his two men lowered the coffin into the grave with ropes. God in His own way had, that day, elevated the humble.

When all was over I ran to the road where the soldiers were gathered. There was again great good luck that day because an open army truck had arrived. The wheels were studded with little metal discs like sixpenny pieces. On it were more soldiers, sitting back-to-back with rifles between their knees. An officer stepped down, followed by a tall man with stripes on his arm. The officer looked fierce.

"What was the meaning of that carry-on Ned ah-hm-Sergeant"?

"We just played for the asylum funeral Lar" said Ned, "That was all"

"Sir" said the officer.

"We just played for the asylum funeral, sir, that was all"

"This is a serious matter, Sergeant. On whose authority?"

"Me mother" said I, standing between them and looking up.

"Who the hell are you" said the Captain.

"Thomas Christopher O'Sullivan Maher" I said as I was taught to say for my mother's friends.

The captain looked up to heaven. "Someone get that kid out of here for God's sake". I didn't move.

"Give him a fung-in-the-bum" said the man with the stripes to no-one in particular.

The captain caught me by the gansey and General Cronje shot forward, snarled and bit his legging. The captain said a word I never before heard. I pulled Cronje over the bank by his collar and sat down. Peace returned.

"Look here Ned", said the captain, we're a Proper Army now. Regulations are regulations and its against regulations definitely against regulations, for an army band to play at a civilian function. Return to barracks at once and expect trouble.

The priest had mounted his horse and disappeared. What was left of the civilian function began the plod to the asylum. I ran ahead home in a hurry to tell my mother.

She was sitting in the sun in the front garden. Behind the low wall was Mr. E. M. Healy checking a pile of salt filled sacks. She listened with sympathy.

"Ah! That would be Quinn. Sure he's a proper gligeen anyway.

"No, no, no" said Mr. E. M. Healy, from behind the pile of sacks, raising his wooden hand like Parnell addressing the multitude, "he's a damned oinseach, I say woman!" The King's English had lost.

Five years after, General Cronje died on Orangeman's Day and was buried in a hole in a strawberry bed under the railway wall. As "Lion" had once been honoured I painted on the wall "Here lieth Cronje".

Today, the holy water bottle is still in its place in that same sideboard made by a Killarney craftsman at the beginning of the century.

Artillery in the Midlands

by Lt. Col. M. J. O'Donnell (retd)

THE first sound of cannon in Ireland was heard, appropriately enough for our purposes, in Co. Westmeath. It was in 1488 when the Great Earl of Kildare attacked Balrath Castle at Ballinagore, near Kilbeggan. This was one of the many MacGeoghegan castles dotting the landscape in their barony of Moycashel. Over the following two centuries, guns were to become a more and more decisive factor in waging war. As the English commanded more and bigger guns than the Irish, the Tudors used their new firepower extensively in their efforts to complete the final conquest of Ireland.

In Offaly, the O'Connor Castle of Edenderry was flattened in one day as a preliminary to plantation by Philip and Mary. The Fitzgerald Castle at Maynooth held out for five days before its walls were breached in 1535. The garrison were given the famous "Maynooth pardon". The lesson was becoming clear to the Irish and the writing was on the castle walls. They were no longer impregnable and but for the poor roads and lack of trained gunners, the guns would have wrought even more havoc on them. To keep a balanced perspective, however, it must be noted that Lady Offaly held out successfully in her castle at Geashill in 1641, despite the best efforts of the gunners to dislodge her. Another Midland fortress, Leap Castle, resisted the pounding of the Earl of Kildare's guns a century earlier.

O'Neill and O'Donnell having little or no artillery, were unable to take enemy castles or to hold them if they did take them. The balance of firepower henceforth lay on the side of the state, the only side that could afford artillery. Guns were used extensively in the Cromwellian wars, notably in the storming of Drogheda and Wexford.

The Williamite Wars were the last in which castles and city walls were the main features of attack and defence. There would be no more long sieges like Derry, Limerick and Athlone. Before advancing on the latter,

Ginkle assembled his troops and artillery at Mullingar, whence he planned to move via Ballymore to the Shannon. The noted historian, MacAuley, commenting on the scene at Mullingar wrote 'the artillery team was such as had never before been seen in Ireland'. At Ballymore, the Fort on Lough Suedy was defended by the Governor, Burke, and the disparity in artillery between the two sides is evident here again. Inside the Fort, Bourke had only "two small pieces mounted on old cart wheels" while Ginkle had fourteen guns and four mortars at his disposal. The Fort soon fell and the Williamites were on their way to Athlone to pound the Castle to rubble. An eyewitness report by an engineer in William's army reads: "June 25. Yesterday the Enemy were very hard at work, in raising three new Batteries above the Castle; the one of 4 Guns on a rising ground, at a small distance from the Castle, and the other of 3-6 Pounders each, near the river . . . About four this morning, our own Battery, below the Bridge was finished, and 6-24 Pdrs. planted thereon, which began to play about six on the enemies Breast-Work and levelled it with the ground; as also most of the houses that stood in the Irish town; and with the help of Six Mortars, we battered down the greatest part of the Castle and laid the enemy so open that a great part of them retired to Sarsfield's Camp, others got behind the Castle, and other of their ruined works." (The Irish Sword, Vol. IV. No 15)

By 1798, Ireland had its own Royal Irish Regiment of Artillery. With its creation in 1760 the Earl of Kildare turns up again, this time as Master of Ordnance and Colonel-in-Chief. They were organised in time to take part in the wars with the French and also at Castlebar, Wexford and Enniscorthy. They lost six of their guns at Castlebar and these accompanied Humbert's Anglo-French force across the Shannon at Ballintra and down through Cloone to the final battle at Ballinamuck, Co. Longford. At Cloone, the chains

which the troops used to drag the guns were stolen during a break and as a result one of the guns ran down the hill out of control and into Keldra Lake.

The famous McGee's gun may have been one of the six captured from the British. They were recaptured by Gen. Lake's victorious army at Ballinamuck. McGee's gun had a wheel shot off during the action on 8 Sept. 1798. He raised the axle-tree on his shoulder in an effort to level the gun, but when fired, McGee was killed and the gun as well as the battle were lost. As a deserter from the Longford Militia he could have expected little mercy from the vindictive victors.

His heroism and memory have been preserved by the Artillery Corps in a very fitting way. A magnificent replica of the gun, designed by Capt. Kevin Danaher and skillfully executed by the great craftsman, C/S 'Tiffy' Scanlan, is on display in the foyer of the Officers' Mess in the Barracks named after him in Kildare. Known as the Regimental Trophy it was competed for by the Seven Field Regiments of the Emergency years and was won in 1944 and 1945 by the Third Regt., Ballincollig, commanded by Comdt. Kevin O'Brien. Inscribed on the barrel are the words: Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite.

In the 1916 Rising, the insurgents occupied several blocks of buildings which proved ideal targets for artillery. As well as fire from the Helga, the 4-18 Pdr. guns from Athlone were used from a position in front of Trinity College to shell the G.P.O. and rebel-held buildings in O'Connell St. and elsewhere.

The War of Independence, being mainly of a guerrilla nature gave little scope for the use of artillery, but in the Civil War, guns were fired at the Four Courts (Dublin),

at Millmount (Drogheda) and at Passage West (Cork). A gun accompanied the troops to Sligo but happily it was not necessary to bring it into action.

The first guns to be located at Mullingar came from McKee Barracks on 4 Sept. 1939, just as the lights were going out again all over Europe. They were commanded by Comdt. R. J. Callinan and were designated the 2nd Artillery Brigade. There was also a Mortar Battery located at Knockdrin Castle under command of Lt. W. G. Donnelly.

In June 1940, the 4th Artillery Bn. replaced this Unit in Establishments. It was Commanded by Comdt. D. J. Cody and had 5 Battery (Lieut. Pete Smith) in Athlone, 7 Bty. (Lt. Jack Griffin) in Longford and 8 Bty. (2/Lt. J. P. Kane) in Mullingar. A section of the 5 Bty. was detached to Dunsandles House, Loughrea; a lone 18 pdr-guarded the North-West defences from Hazelwood House, Sligo, with the aid of a similar weapon at Belek House, Ballina!

The Fourth Field Artillery Regiment, whose fortieth anniversary we are celebrating, was founded in 1943. It was commanded by Comdt. J. S. Nolan and has been based at Columb Barracks ever since. It included 8 Bty (4.5" Hows), 15 Bty. (75mm guns), 20 Bty. (4.5" Hows) and 4 Anti-Tank Bty. (2 pdr).

There have been many changes in guns and gunnery since the heady days of the Emergency. No doubt, advancing technology will continue to automate many of the functions of the gunner but when it comes to getting the shell on to the target, the gunners will always be needed. And foremost among them will be the gunners of the Fourth Field Artillery Regiment. Tré ar is anachan!



21st birthday celebrations, 1964. Comdt. D. Callaghan (OC 4 Fd. S & T Coy.) presents the key of the square to Lt. Col. J.P. Kane. Also included are Col. P. Curran (D/Arty) and Col. H. Byrne (OC W' Comd.)



4th Regt. Tug O War W' Comdt. Champions 1969. 1 to r: Sgt. M. Maher. BQMS Gus Jones, Gnr. N. Clyne, Sgt. L. Poynton, Gnr. T. Gunn, Sgt. A. Gavin, Sgt. A. Hoey.



Command athletic champions, 1972. 1 to r: Cpl. J. Boyce, Cpl. D. Gibney, Cpl. C. Matthews, Sgt. M. Maher, Comdt. A.N. Donnelly, Sgt. L. Poynton.



Mullingar personnel of the Heavy mortar troop, 5 Inf. Group, Cyprus.

'Boys oh Boys'

By Lt. Col. J. P. Duggan (retd.) (former B.C. 8th Field Battery)

WITH tones of velvet authority that spring from cameraderie and brotherhood bonds as well as from the magic of being the C.O. of the Regiment, the present Officer Commanding the 4 Field Artillery Regiment and Columb Barracks Mullingar suggested that I write something for the commemorative issue. 'You were there when all the characters were about' he said. The task, on analysis, was to be of an anecdotal nature rather than archival. Which is all very well up to a point. But one man's bon mot can be another man's 'Hows your father', or whatever. And to coin a phrase; that auld kind of ting could get us into trouble yet. Anyway undocumented memory is notoriously capricious and selective; a lot of it is the way you tell 'em. 'Beef to the heels' means different things to different people. The least said soonest mended.

Still a task is a task is a task; and to start we'll inch along chronological strands and stress that all that is offered is a random worm's eye view. What must be emphasised first and last is that behind all the pranks and peccadillos there burned a fierce professional pride in all ranks. To be a good soldier was all that mattered. A manifestation of this trait was the 'religion' that no matter what the excesses of the 'night before, in your own time, you had to be on parade next morning and punch in your day's work. There could be variations on the theme of what constitutes a day's work.

A citizen of Mullingar once asked Colonel Kane; 'what do ye do all day up in the Barracks? Drillin' is it? . . . But it was a mortal sin to miss parade. On the odd occasion only the breeches and leggings managed to keep the sleepy occupant (sleepy but shaved) in the standing position.

In the early days of the Army it was said that there was a rivalry between those who had four years in the trenches in France and those whose only combat experience had been on the hillsides against the Black-and-Tans and in the Civil War. The boast of the Flanders veterans was that they never got drunk no matter how much whiskey they drank. (Stout was only for washing glasses, they maintained.) A passed out slump was permitted providing arrangements had been made to pour the contestant discreetly into his bed. But it took four years in France to produce that sort of expertise and we'll resist the temptation to advert to a few homegrown 'no mean exponents'. Somewhere in the subconscious there lurked a sort of respect for those glass smashing, hard drinking legendary Cossacks of the Czar's army

who played hard and soldiered hard. The mess bill, that monthly headache, was the blessed 'cut off' barrier, though that monstrous chit book system was a great pitfall. Fags were cheaper in the Army and floggable outside so the tobacco - road currency shoved up many a last minute mess bill. It was payment deferred; more a drop two, purl one, than the reverse. It was neck and neck and in this circular robbing Peter to pay Paul the posse had to gallop on, frustrated, to the next month's cliff-hanging instalment.

But we're running ahead of ourselves; this vignette will telescope time. My image of the West had been positive. Prior to 1939 I had spent a couple of idyllic years boating, fishing and shooting in Castlebar; climbing the reek once a year, dancing to Stephen Garvey's band in the Ballroom of Romance and camping out on the island in Lough Lanagh undisturbed by the spirits from the vault of the O'Donnel Browns. The rats were the enemy there. It is no reflection on the mid-West to say that it was different from the way-out West. Nor is it to say that the Midlands was a wet blanket or that it was always raining in Mullingar.

In 1942 the 11th Battery (Cyril Mattimoe's 'greyhounds') were destined for Mullingar but went to Longford instead. They regrouped with the 8th and 5th and ding-donged to the Cork area for the Blackwater manoeuvres. The 11th marched every step of the way, there and back. But sure the '42 manoeuvres is a story all to itself. Joe Higgins could fill a book of anecdotes. We must persuade him to record them one fine day. A sad part was a crop of young officers getting their tickets through inexperience. Before we left for Cork I think six in Mullingar got their tickets in the one day.

A notice appeared in Routine Orders inviting Temporary Officers to do Cadetships. I did and went back to the Cadet School and out of circulation from December 1942 to March 1944 when, having gone in as a First Lieut., I re-emerged as a Second Lieut. That process became riddled with anomalies and disenchanting bureaucracy decreed in a *reductio ad absurdum* that redress would be made by compensating Temporary Officers on the basis of the length of their T.O. service rather than on money lost for the period spent at 4/- per day in the Cadet School. This is to lead to the point that after the Cadet School, as a member of the Artillery School, incorporated into the GHQ inspecting staff, I was now on the opposite side of the table to the IV FA.

I was a very lowly member of the inspecting staff. But who wants to hear about socks, the seven different sizes of foresight or Terry O'Sullivan using his T.O.E.T. aim corrector back to front. In the competitions in the Glen, blood was sweated in striving for proficiency and points. Mickey Duggan's 20th, with GPO Patsy McGonigal, won the Shield in 1944 I think. The veteran 8th Battery kept a stiff upper lip and didn't begrudge them. No punches were pulled in those competitions; Theme song - You'll never be a 'Gapping' Sir.

But Battery Commander is a great appointment and I felt honoured when in 1947 I took over the 8th Battery from Johnny Kane. It was a great outfit. There were sorties to gentle Multyfarnham and Lough Derg where Father Ward ruled with a rod of iron. And always back home again to the Fourth F.A. Civilians said that we were all married to the Army. In a way they were right.

The claustrophobia of the Emergency had been stifling. There was a sigh of release when the war ended; it signalled a rush to get abroad. Voyagers might not thank me for chronicling their adventures and itineraries. As said at the beginning, this article presumes only to give a personal worm's eye glance; a glimpse perhaps. Through the good offices of the late Lieut. Col. Jack McCarthy, Douglas Gageby and a Mr. Hugh Fernie of the British Foreign Office I graduated from digging drains with a work party in Bilstun to being an accredited (Temporary) Correspondent covering the Berlin Airlift where I had the privilege of making contact with General Lucius D. Clay, an outstanding U.S. Commander. Fellow regimental officers traversed Europe and North Africa travelling light. Expenses were pooled in the Officers Mess ante-room in Mullingar.

There was no storage of inventiveness. Fashion Shows

for the ABF introduced a new date in the calendar; Mannequin Sunday. Tom Maher did trojan pioneer work in producing musicals for the town. An Irish Press photographer, dropped in and stayed the night. The Fancy Dress Ball in Mullingar made the front page photo in the next morning's 'Irish Press! The CO regarded the Adjutant (rightly) as a tower of strength, a model of rectitude, not given to any wildness. He was nonplussed however after one letting-hair-down session to find him perched as a cross between a gladiator and Britannia on the bonnet of a car which was circling the square in mock ceremony. And a French au pair caused sex starved heart to flutter. There were other flutters too; mostly on slow horses like 'Colonel School Boy' and 'Esprit de France'. But it is time to hark back to the fierce professional pride bit. It was not all fun and games; not all beer and skittles. Firing practices were approached in deadly seriousness. Imagine the chargin then when the fitful Quads with their temperamental autovacs make nonsense of meticulous movement tables as they huffed and puffed around the square trying to work up a start.

The journey was never trouble free and later Maurice immortalised the policing of it as he waited patiently for the rest of the convoy to close up querying rather plaintively every so often; "Ere an auld rumble back there", it was hard on the nerves.

'Mind you I've said nothing'. There's nothing much to say really; only auld yarns and folklore. We could have danced all night. Or the broken soldier kindly bade to stay, shouldered his crutch and talked the night away. Take your pick. Which reminds me. . . .

But as Myles Na gCopaleen used to end; "Here's me bus".

Good Luck whatever.

PHOTO CAPTION COMPETITION



This month's competition is based on a photograph with 4th Fd. Regt. associations. Entries must include names of those involved and the occasion involved £15 is the prize for the first correct entry pulled from a cap on July 29th.

What the Papers Notice . . .

'GO back as far as you can'. That was the Editor's instruction as I crowded over his cluttered desk, (not wearing after-shave) and he asked me was a limber a type of exercise done by gunners before taking post. Back I went, and came up with this bit by James Stephens. He was reporting on a certain warrior's passage throughout Westmeath:

'Fionn got his first training among women. There is no wonder in that, for it is the pup's mother teaches it to fight and women know that fighting is a necessary art . . .'

(My mother, God rest her, always told me to stand up for myself. Perhaps that's why the Ed. keeps calling me a pup?).

CANNON

A local tablet reported the shooting of Godfrey O'Donnell by an O'Rourke in 1487 and the Multyfarnham Gazette noticed that cannon were used at Gerald Fitzgerald's taking of Balrath Castle for Henry VII in 1488.

SIEGE GUNS

The *Kinnegad Clarion* saw a field piece belting up the road towards Maynooth in March 1535. Gerald Fitzmaurice's castle was being used by Silken Thomas as a stronghold and William Skeffington was riding the limber as it took Donnelly's corner on one wheel.

BOMBARDMENT

The *Westmeath Incorporated* reported 50 cannon, 8 Mortars and assorted launchers used to fire 50 tons of powder, 600 bombs, 12,000 cannonballs and tons of stones in June 1651 when Jodert de Ginkell sped from Lough Ennel to attack Athlone.

VOLUNTEERS AND VALETAS

In 1782, the Province of Leinster Volunteers were reported as having the following equipment:

9 pounders - 2
6 pounders - 16
3 pounders - 14
Howitzers - 6

The Boyne Volunteer Corps was commanded by Col. John Bagwell, Major John Bass and Lt. Charles Willcocks. (Overheard at the grouse-shoot: Colonel: Who's firing from behind the copse, Willcocks? Lieut: Ah! That's Bass).

In that year, Colonel Percival commanded the Connaught Rangers; Major William Pollard and Captain Nugent led the Fore Infantry Loyalists (and wondered why they had so few, I suppose). The Fore Cavalry and Finea Rangers had Colonel William Gore in command.

The uniform of the Edgeworthstown Battalion was blue, faced with scarlet ("Mostrim them with crimson", said their Captain).



W/Comd. Winners Broderick Trophy 1965. (Athletics). Front 1 to r: Gnr. J. Nugent, Sgt. M. Maher, Lt. M. Dunne, Lt. Col. J.P. Kane, Lt. J. Prendergast, BQMS Gus Jones, Pte. P. Sheehan, Back: Gnr. Tom Gunn, CQMS McNamee, G. Gnr. McDonnell, Cpl. O'Keefe, Pte. Keogh, Gnr. N. Clyne, Sgt. A. Hoey, Sgt. L. Poynton, Cpl. J. Bardon.



Lieut Arthur Armstrong accompanying Mr. Paddy Cooney T.D., Minister for Defence who inspected a guard of honour on his visit to Columb Barracks, Mullingar, on 15th April 1983.

A Report presented to the Houses of Parliament in 1863 concerned improvements to sanitary conditions of various barracks and hospitals. Some of its remarks were about Mullingar:

'All the rooms are lighted by candles. If gas can be obtained from Mullingar it should be laid on to the barracks, as the distance is not great, and a gas burner ought to be placed in each room and ventilated into the outlet shaft.

All the serjeants' rooms require silk flap ventilators into the chimnies . . .

. . . The privies are without drainage, and are connected with cesspits immediately outside the walls, and are in a most offensive and unwholesome condition . . .

. . . There is a provost establishment, with 19 cells, 14 of which have only 384 cubic feet of space per man . . . The air is warmed by an open fireplace, which might be advantageously replaced by a small Cundy's stove . . .

(From the Cundy stove in the corner - here we go again!)

. . . There is a large manure pit belonging to the officers' stables close to the hospital. This nuisance should be removed forthwith . . .

'Longford Artillery Barracks' (My what a comedown over the years!) was crying out for one bath. It was suggested that the contents of the latrine 'might be removed daily in a water cart, as is done in Glasgow'. Also:

'Privies to be reconstructed as water latrines on Macfarlane's principle, with divisions of seats, half doors, light and ventilation . . .'

(So now we know the reason for Longfordman Padraic Colum's pre-occupation with ' . . . the peering of things across the half-door.')

TIME ON OUR SIDE

On 3 December 1868 FSG Nugent leased a site for a sewage tank to the Ministry for Defence. This was a peppercorn (ten million year) lease . . . And it still holds water - the lease, I mean!

COL MOORE

The Army Press Office noted that Colonel Maurice Moore of Moore Hall, Co. Mayo commanded 1 Bn. the Connaught Rangers on their return from the Boer War

to Mullingar. He was brother of author George Moore. Later, he resigned his commission and became a founder member of the Irish Volunteers (1913)

HOSPITALITY

The Gunner, in November 1938 recorded the departure of the Royal Artillery from Fort Dunree.

'At Dunree, there was not a field sufficiently level to mark a football ground. Except for wireless, the only communication with the outside world was a lorry which brought rations and mail from Londonderry, some thirty miles distant. Dunree was twenty seven miles by road from Lenan, and what a road. Far worse than any country lane in England. One bright spot was the unfailing and generous hospitality of the residents around Buncrana . . .'

And they never lost it as Gay Byrne or Neil Blaney will tell you. They would still warm your heart up around Ballyliffin. Incidentally, a former OC of 4 Fd. Arty. Regiment testified that on the departure from Templebreedy, thirty pillow slips were thought to be deficient. They were made good by the DBO, after a hard fight, he said. Some days later the thirty pillow cases were discovered in a locker in a billet - so we owe the British Army a small amount of linen.

PUB TALK

There is a public house in Kilbeggan called 'The Volunteer'. It is said to have derived its name from the eighteenth century force because of a death on the premises. The dead man was a volunteer from the camp outside the town - a training camp of its day where the Irish Volunteers collected to drill and march. Superstition of the day forbade the carrying of a corpse down the stairs so the dead soldier was lowered from an attic window. The incident was once incorporated in the inn's sign. (Not a Kerry naval officer!)

The same pub has a more amusing anecdote immortalised in a more recent sign. It seems that when the dastardly Lord Townsend, an infamous viceroy, rested overnight at the inn he insisted on knighting Thomas Cuffe, the owner of the hostelry. It was all done in a drunken moment so when he came to pay for his bed and breakfast next morning, he adopted a generous streak and offered Cuffe twenty golden guineas in return for ignoring the incident.

But like many an Irishman before and since, Cuffe feared the missus, who had become rather partial to her suddenly acquired title status. So he told the Lord that he himself wouldn't mind relinquishing' but her Ladyship wouldn't hear of it. And so a Westmeath vintner may have been a landlord in the strictest sense, having given the viceroy the land of his life.



4th Regt. All Army Tug O War Champions 1970 & 71. Back l to r: Gnr. W. Clyne, COMS G. McNamee, Sgt. P. Nea, Sgt. M. Maher. Front L to R: Gnr. G. Conroy, Cpl. J. Boyce, COMS N. Dunnel, Gnr. Jim Nugent, Cpl. J. Bardon.



4th Regt. All Army Rifle Team Champions, 1978. Back l to r: Sgt. K. Prendergast, Gnr. M. Lee, Gnr. P. Gallagher, Cpl. Andy Gavin. Front: Cpl. M. Devaney, Capt. P. Keogh, Sgt. L. Byrne.

FIRST "BLUES"

Mullingar soldiers were reported as taking part in the Mounted Escort, the colourful 'Blue Hussars' at the Eucharistic Congress in 1932.

1943

As well as noting the formation of 4 Regiment, the papers of 1943 noted a May succession as Northern Ireland Prime Minister by Sir Basil Brooke. J. M. Andrews was outgoing. A June general election for 133 seats resulted in Fianna Fail gaining 67 seats, Fine Gael, 32; Labour, 17; Clann na Talmhun, 14; Independents, 8. 1,816,142 were entitled to vote, 74.2% did so.

Artistic people like Robert Ballagh, Brian Ballard and Charles Harper were born while Sarah Purser and Jerome Connor died. Jack B. Yeats painted 'This Grand Conversation Was Under The Rose'. Flann O'Brien's *Faustus Kelly* was first performed, Joseph Tomelty's comedy *Right Again Barnum* and *Poor Errand* had their premieres. Havelock Nelson wrote his Sonata for Cello and Piano.

On the war front, Allied forces turned the tide of battle on all fronts. In January the Red Army continued to reduce the pocket in which the German Sixth Army was trapped around Stalingrad. But German U-Boat operational strength reached its peak. China's puppet government in Nanking declared war on the U.S. and Britain. The Casablanca strategy conference took place. The Guadalcanal campaign ended. Rommel commanded the German Army Group in Africa. Two attempts to kill Hitler failed.

Captain Fred Smith of the U.S. Air Force sank a Japanese destroyer-mine sweeper. His report read: Saw steamer, strafed same, sank same, some sight, signed Smith.

Kursk, sometimes called the greatest land battle in history ended in an August defeat for the Germans. The only U.S. mainland city bombing of the war took place when Boise, Oklahoma was hit - by a single U.S. Air Force plane on a training mission.

(Boise, oh Boise - an own goal)

Minister for Co-ordination of Defensive Measures, Mr Frank Aiken said: 'Though this old and war-battered country is still very far from being a Utopia, it is worth fighting for. Its survival through this world crisis is well worth a few years hard soldiering by every young man who intends to live in it'. Some of the young men who did

soldier are still with us. But they are thin on the ground and on the head.

The Air Corps began receiving some Miles Master training aircraft and Hawker Hurricanes followed. The Kildare Turf Scheme went into full production with the turf camps full of 'Westerners' and under the command of ex-Colonel Bill Stapleton (also ex-member of Michael Collins' squad).

On St Patrick's Day, Eamon de Valera said: 'As a vehicle of three thousand years of our history, the language is for us precious beyond measure'.

Wilfrid Brambell (Of *Steptoe and Son* fame) worked on the *Irish Field*. Perhaps that's how he acquired that old carthorse. A popular song went something like this: 'She's the girl that makes the thing that drills the hole that holds the spring, that drives the rod that turns the knob that works the thingumebob that's going to win the war'

There was a boom in illegitimate births (and let no one say that's how the Fourth Regiment came about!)

On 24 February, the papers reported that the *Kyleclare* had been sunk in the North Atlantic with a loss of 18 lives. No lives were lost when the *Irish Oak* went down on 15 May. On 23 October the gallant little *Kerlogue* was attacked by aircraft in the western approaches. Four were reported wounded.

THE CAROLANS

In 1968, the *Sunday Independent* noticed that the Carolan family of Ballysax Co. Kildare soldiered in four armies, including the Australian forces. A record 150 years service was given by four brothers in our army: RSM Len, RQMS Tom, Sgt Jimmy, Bandsman Bill and Christie. Tom and Jimmy served in the Fourth Regiment.

1983

The *Sunday Tribune* said that in the destruction rate of ancient monuments over the last 150 years, Westmeath scored 23%. Wonder did they include the old ruin offered by a farmer to a former OC 4 Regiment for a demolition exercise. When the OC offered to enquire immediately of the Engineers, the farmer requested him to slow down.

'First of all' he said 'I want to go down to the County Council to see will I get a demolition grant for the job. Then you can blow it up for me'.

The *Westmeath Examiner* and the *Midland Topic* gave the Regiment's anniversary fine coverage - particularly the opening celebration in Mullingar's County Hall when local artists joined with the Band of the Western Command for a Gala Concert.

The closing text is from *The History and Topography of Ireland* by Giraldus Cambrensis republished by Dolmen Press, in 1983.

'The advantages of the west are to be preferred to those of the east.

What riches has the East then to offer in comparison with these? It has, of course, many-coloured silken cloth produced by the silk-worm; it had precious metals of certain types, sparkling gems and aromatic spices. But what are these in comparison with the loss of life and health? They are obtained only by enduring constantly the enmity of an enemy that one cannot get away from - the air that is within, and that surrounds one'.

(The scene ends as the Ed. casts aside the tube of Kilbeggan bog-water he was sniffing, screams that he's getting out of the rat-race for once and for all and heads for a cave he purchased recently on the Hill of Uisneach, some say for thirty thousand, others say for occasional meditations.)

APPENDIX 1

Infantry Regiments/Battalions Stationed at Mullingar.

78th Highlanders	Jan-Aug. 1819
63rd Foot	Feb-Aug. 1820.
41st Foot	Aug-Oct 1820.
3rd Foot	Nov 1820 - Oct 1821.
19th Foot	Nov 1824 - Jul 1822.
29th Foot	Jul 1822 - Jun 1823.
93rd Highlanders	Jun-Oct 1823.
	See Footnote 1
65th Foot	Jun-Nov 1825.
	See Footnote 1
17th Foot	Oct 1826 - Apr 1827.
36th Foot	Apr-Aug 1827.
69th Foot	Sep 1827-Apr 1828.
75th Highlanders	May-Jul 1828.
37th Foot	Oct 1828-May 1829.
21st Foot	Jun 1829-May 1830.
67th Foot	May-Nov 1830.
	See Footnote 1
59th Foot	Dec 1831-Jul 1832.
91st Highlanders	Jul 1832-Jun 1833.
64th Foot	Jun-Aug 1833.
47th Foot	Aug 1833-Apr 1834.
60th Rifles	May-Sep 1834.
14th Foot	Oct 1834-Apr 1835.
82nd Foot	Apr 1835-Mar 1836.
77th Foot	Mar-Jul 1836.
	See Footnote 1
69th Foot	May-Oct 1843.
65th Foot	Oct 1843-Oct 1844.
54th Foot	Oct 1844-Sep 1845.
6th Foot	Sep 1845-Mar 1846.
41st Foot	Mar 1846-Oct 1847.
68th Foot	Oct 1847-Sep 1848.
35th Foot	Sep 1848-Apr 1850.
48th Foot	May-Jun 1850
62nd Foot	Jun 1850-Apr 1851
71st Foot	Apr-Jul 1851.
	See Footnote 1
10th Foot	Jan 1858-Apr 1859.
	See Footnote 1
14th Foot	Oct 1859-Apr 1860.
	See Footnote 1
49th Foot	Apr-Aug 1865.
	See Footnote 1
28th Foot	Dec 1866-Aug 1867.
2nd Foot (2 Companies only)	Sep-Nov 1867.
89th Foot (2 Companies only)	Dec 1867-Jun 1868.
4th Foot (2 Companies only)	Jul-Nov 1868.
17th Foot	Dec 1868-Apr 1869.
	See Footnote 2
54th Foot	Oct-Dec 1869.
40th Foot	Dec 1869-Feb 1871.
97th Foot	Feb 1871-May 1872.
	See Footnote 2
23rd Foot	Sep 1872-Jun 1873.
94th Foot	Jul 1873-May 1874.
	See Footnote 2
100th Foot	Sep 1874-Jul 1875.
3rd Foot	Aug 1875-Oct 1876.
1st Foot	Oct 1876-May 1877.
	See Footnote 2

103rd Foot
15th Foot

Aug 1877-Sep 1878.
Oct 1878-Feb 1879.

See Footnote 2

20th Foot

Oct 1879-May 1880.

See Footnote 2

2nd Bn KOYLI
1st Bn R Northumberland
Fusiliers
2nd Bn Welsh Regt.
1st Bn R Dublin Fusiliers
1st Bn R Irish Rifles

Aug 1880-Jan 1882.
Jan 1882-May 1884.
May 1884-Dec 1885.
Mar 1886-Dec 1887.
Dec 1881-Jul 1890.

See Footnote 2

2nd Bn E Lancashire Regt.
2nd Bn The Loyal Regt.
1st Bn KOYLI
1st Bn Ox & Bucks LI
1st Bn R Inniskilling Fusiliers
3rd Bn R Inniskilling Fusiliers
3rd Bn Cameron Highlanders
13th Provisional Battalion
1st Bn Connaught Rangers
4th Bn Royal Fusiliers
2nd Bn Manchester Regt.
2nd Bn Highland LI
1st Bn Bedfordshire Regt.
10th & 11th (Service) Bns
Hampshire Regt.
5th (Reserve) Bn R Leicester
Regt.
4th (Reserve) Bn R Dublin
Fusiliers
3rd (Reserve) Bn R Scots
3rd (Reserve) Bn E Yorks Regt.
1st Bn E Yorks Regt.

Sep 1890-Jan 1893.
Feb 1893-Nov 1895.
Nov 1895-Jul 1898.
Aug 1898-Sep 1899.
Sep-Nov 1899.
Dec 1899-Mar 1900.
Apr 1900-Dec 1900.
Nov 1901-Jan 1903.
Feb 1903-Mar 1907.
Mar 1907-Sep 1909.
Sep 1909-Sep 1911.
Oct 1911-Sep 1913.
Sep 1913-Aug 1914.
Sep 1914-Mar 1915.
Jun 1915-Apr 1916.
Apr 1916-Oct 1917.
Nov 1917-Feb 1919.
Mar 1919-Sep 1919.
Sep 1919-Jan 1922.

NEW REGIME

Following the reorganisation after the publication of G.R.O. 16/23 dated 24/1/23, Mullingar became the HQ of the 45 Infantry Battalion, Dublin Command, with effect from 1 February, 1923. The first C.O. was Comdt. Lionel Booth who was appointed on 24 Feb., 1923. By the 1st June, there were 298 all ranks stationed in the Barracks. The Battalion also had 103 personnel in Edenderry and 54 in Oldcastle.

45 Inf. Bn. was disbanded following the reorganisation in 1924 and Mullingar was taken over by 5 Inf. Bn. (which had been based in Athlone) which was now in No. 6 Brigade, Eastern Command. 5 Bn. took over on 29 March, 1924. Comdt. James O'Reilly was the C.O.

On 26 Aug., 1924, the 17 Inf. Bn. took over the Barracks from 5 Inf. Bn. which was transferred to the Curragh. Comdt. F. Friel became branch commander until 1927.

On 11 March, 1927, the Barracks was transferred to 2 Brigade, Western Command; the 17 Bn. was evacuated and A company, 4 Inf. Bn. from Athlone took up garrison duties on the same date. Comdt. Liam Gaffney was O.C. from March to August of that year.

On 12 August, 1927, 12 Inf. Bn. (with HQ at Athlone) took over garrison duties from 4 Inf. Bn. which was transferred to Dublin.

The Barracks was evacuated finally on 1 Dec., 1928 when the unit from the 12 Bn. was withdrawn to Athlone. It's C.O. up to July, 1928 was Capt. E. Goggin, who apparently was transferred from that appointment then but is not listed for any other appointment up to his retirement on 9 March, 1929, so he may have stayed there until the withdrawal to Athlone. (Capt. Goggin remained on the Reserve and served again during the 'Emergency').

After it's re-opening in 1939, the barracks was commanded by:-

Col. J.D. McGrath, 2 Bn. 1939-40.

Capt. D.J. Cody, 4 Arty Bn. 1940.

Comdt. F.A. Ahern, 20 Rifle Bn. 1940-41.

Comdt. S. O'Connor, 20 Rifle Bn. 1941.

Comdt. T. Marrinan, 20 Inf Bn. 1941-42.

Major T. Cullen, 6 (Dublin) Bn. 1942-46.

After 1946 the Officers Commanding 4 Regiment, as detailed elsewhere in this issue, also commanded Columb Bks.

Footnote 1

During the periods noted, the Barracks at Mullingar were occupied by the Depot Companies of infantry regiments serving overseas. Prior to 1873, regiments of Foot had no fixed regimental depots; they moved from place to place in the United Kingdom recruiting and training drafts to replace time-expired, sick or deceased soldiers for their regiments abroad.

Footnote 2

The short breaks in occupancy noted are during the summer months when regiments were gathered for the annual Training Season at The Curragh. Sometimes the regiments returned to Mullingar, sometimes they were posted to new stations.

APPENDIX 2

Various Office Holders of the 4th F.A. Regt.

Officers Commanding 4 FD Arty. Regt.

1943-1946	Comdt. J. S. Nolan.	1958-1959	Lt. Col. J. P. Kelly.	1978-1980	Lt. Col. A. N. Donnelly.
1946-1947	Comdt. W. Rea.	1959-1963	Lt. Col. M. Harrington.	1980-1981	Lt. Col. T. Ryan.
1947-1953	Lt. Col. D. J. Cody.	1963-1972	Lt. Col. J. P. Kane.	1981-1982	Lt. Col. M. McMahon.
1953-1955	Lt. Col. M. P. McCarthy.	1972-1975	Lt. Col. T. V. Furlong.	1982-	Lt. Col. P. J. O'Farrell.
1955-1958	Lt. Col. J. Dolan.	1975-1978	Lt. Col. M. O'Donnell.		

2 I/Cs.

Comdt. J. H. Byrne.	Comdt. J. P. Kane.
Comdt. C. Mattimoe.	Comdt. M. O'Donnell.
Comdt. M. McCarthy.	Comdt. P. J. O'Farrell.
Comdt. M. Sugrue.	Comdt. D. G. Johnston.
	Comdt. E. Breslin.

Adjutants.

Capt. T. Bannahan.	Capt. P. J. O'Farrell.
Capt. T. Maher.	Capt. W. Dwyer.
Capt. J. Cambell.	Capt. J. Brady.
Capt. M. Greaney.	Capt. P. Pakenham.
Capt. M. O'Donnell.	Capt. J. Hamill.
	Capt. M. Molloy.

Quartermasters.

Lt. M. Jones.	Capt. A. N. Donnelly.
Lt. J. O'Grady.	Capt. K. Duffy.
Capt. P. Brannigan.	Capt. T. Boyle.
Capt. P. J. Keavanagh.	Capt. J. G. Prendergast.
Capt. C. Creedon.	Capt. L. O'Coinne.
Capt. J. J. O'Carroll.	Capt. D. G. Johnston.
	Capt. P. Pakenham.
	Capt. L. Murphy.

Bty. Comdrs. 8 Fd. Bty.

Capt. R. Carew.	Comdt. T. Banahan.
Capt. J. P. Kane.	Comdt. M. O'Donnell.
Capt. J. P. Duggan.	Comdt. A. N. Donnelly.
Capt. J. Campbell.	Comdt. M. P. Dunne.
Capt. J. Higgins	Comdt. D. G. Johnston.
	Comdt. P. Keogh.
	Comdt. E. Breslin.

22 Fd. Bty.

(1943-1945 Capt. J. Griffin) 1st. 4 Regt:

1979 Comdt. R. Twomey.

15 Fd. Bty.

Capt. J. E. McDonnell.	Comdt. M. J. O'Boyle.
Lt. T. C. Maher.	Comdt. C. Crowley.
Capt. C. O'Sullivan.	Capt. J. Boylan.
Capt. T. C. Brick.	Capt. S. Flynn.
Capt. M. J. O'Donnell.	Comdt. D. O'Riordan.
Capt. T. O'Boyle.	

20 Fd. Bty.

Capt. M. Duggan.	Comdt. F. Loane.
Disbanded 1946	Comdt. D. McCormack.
Re-Established 1959	Comdt. D. Byrne.

4 A/TK Bty.

Lt. J. Malone.	Capt. M. O'Donnell.
Capt. T. Banahan.	Capt. P. Kavanagh.
Capt. T. Maher.	Capt. M. Fitzsimons.

Regt. Sgts. Major.

RSM J. Downey.	RSM J. Sinnott.
RSM P. Egan.	RSM P. Brennan.
RSM D. Scott.	RSM M. Maher.

Regt. QM/Sgts.

RQMS J. Dower.	RQMS T. Carolan.
RQMS J. Fitzpatrick.	RQMS W. Dunne.
RQMS P. O'Callaghan.	

Bty. Sgts.

Bty. Sgt. J. McCann.	Bty. Sgt. M. Goode.
Bty. Sgt. T. Fogarty.	Bty. Sgt. M. Goley.
Bty. Sgt. J. Hughes.	Bty. Sgt. W. O'Brien.
Bty. Sgt. J. Sinnott.	Bty. Sgt. A. Craig.
Bty. Sgt. J. Carroll.	Bty. Sgt. L. Poynton.
Bty. Sgt. A. Byrne.	Bty. Sgt. M. Maher.
Bty. Sgt. M. Reilly.	

Bty./QM Sgts.

Bty. QMS J. O'Flanagan.	Bty. QMS M. Minogue.
Bty. QMS P. Donohue.	Bty. QMS F. A. Jones.
Bty. QMS F. Murray.	Bty. QMS D. Crone.
Bty. QMS M. O'Malley.	Bty. QMS P. O'Callaghan.
Bty. QMS J. Martin.	Bty. QMS P. Brennan.
Bty. QMS J. Gibbons.	Bty. QMS O. McGurran.
Bty. QMS J. Quirke.	Bty. QMS M. Lacey.
Bty. QMS J. O'Grady.	Bty. QMS C. Lynch.
Bty. QMS J. Lacey.	Bty. QMS P. Lynch.
Bty. QMS M. Kelly.	Bty. QMS J. Daly.
Bty. QMS J. Fitzpatrick.	

Ord. Room Sgts.

Sgt. Charles Brophy.	Sgt. (Lt.) Cyril McCarthy.
Sgt. Kevin Watters.	Sgt. Robert McConville.
Sgt. Thomas Duffy.	Sgt. James Harney.

Personnel of Columb Bks. who Died in Service.

Pte. J. Rehill.	4FA Regt.	2/54.
Cpl. L. O'Sullivan.	4FA S & T.	6/54.
Cpl. J. Farrell.	4 FD Regt.	2/57.
Gnr. P. Rowe.	4 FD Regt.	3/63.
Pte. G. Mackey.	4 FD Regt.	6/63.
Pte. A. Foran.	4 FD S&T.	1/65.
Pte. M. O'Brien.	4 FD S & T.	12/66.
Cpl. J. McAnaney.	4 FD S & T.	3/67.
Lt. M. Curry.	4 FD S & T.	12/68.
Sgt. J. Banville.	4 Garr M.P.C.	12/68.
Sgt. J. Reid.	4 FA Regt.	8/+/+√
Gnr. M. Clinton.	4 FA Regt.	2/73.
RQMS P. O'Callaghan.	4 FA Regt.	3/74.
Gnr. M. O'Brien.	4 FA Regt.	3/74.
Sgt. O. Scally.	4 FA Regt.	8/74.
Gnr. M. Doyle.	4 FA Regt.	8/74.
Gnr. T. Ryan.	4 FA Regt.	12/74.
Gnr. J. Bardon.	4 FA Regt.	3/80.
Cpl. J. Flanagan.	4 FA Regt.	7/80.
Gnr. J. F. Crichton.	4 FA Regt.	12/80.

SNIPPETS**EMPTY GUNS***Air: tannenbaum*

Every artillery unit has its own version of the song. All of them have the requirement to pronounce the word 'Captain' like a nasal ndeadh singer, something like 'Gapteinge'. Here's how it goes when sung by minstrels of the Fourth Regiment:

You mixed up Coen with the White Stone.
You'll never be a Captain, Sir!
You swore so when 'twas the Sheep Pen.
You'll never be a Captain, Sir!
Your opening round, hit Knapahoun
Your second shot was not so hot.
So 'Empty Guns, Prepare to move'.
You'll never be a Captain, Sir.

And every time, you were off for line.
You'll never be a Captain, Sir!
Your time of flight, was quite a sight (Variable!)
You'll never be a Captain, Sir!
Your opening round was on the ground,
Before the time, the School laid down.
So 'Empty Guns, Prepare to move'.
You'll never be a Captain, Sir.

'Your range was short' - I.G's retort -
You'll never be a Captain, Sir!
You made a (optional) of Fire for Effect.
You'll never be a Captain, Sir
You should have fired on Stony Ridge.
And not be blasting Seskin Bridge.
So 'Empty Guns, Prepare to move'.
You'll never be a Captain, Sir.

'Th' Octagonal Field, will never yield.
You'll never be a Captain, Sir!
You killed a fawn, on Crissadaun.
You'll never be a Captain, Sir:
So take your battery from the Glen
And do not come back here again -
Just 'Empty Guns, Prepare to Move'
You'll never be a Captain, Sir.

MacEoin's Cell

When Sean MacEoin, the legendary 'Blacksmith of Ballinalee', was arrested by Crown Forces in the town of Mullingar in March 1921, he was brought to the military barracks in a critical condition.

The train upon which he had been travelling was to have been halted at Hill-o'-Down by the local IRA battalion in order to allow his return to Longford. When this did not materialise, MacEoin was arrested as the train reached Mullingar railway station.

He made an escape bid as he reached the Green Bridge, under heavy escort. And he almost made it too - only a chance meeting with a routine RIC patrol foiled his attempt. Shot down and badly wounded, he was lodged first in the RIC barracks and later in the military barracks. Some prisoners of the time have said he was detained in 'S' Block but most commentators, including the General himself, point to the cell in the guardroom as his place of detention. This cell is suitably marked to indicate its place in the nation's history.

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