

Connaught Rangers Association



Editorial: by Francis Higgins, Northern Representative, C.R.A.

Hello and welcome to the second edition of the Connaught Ranger's news-sheet. As you can see the content has grown so the newsheet has expanded and we also have a special section on the Somme trip this summer. Details of next year's trip are included as are details of the Annual General Meeting, Joe Loughnane's event in Loughrea and Oliver Fallon's part in the Joe Duffy edition of the incredible television series Who Do You Think You Are? On RTE. That said there is still a **dearth of news from around the country** so please, please send me anything you think is newsworthy for the Christmas..

..edition. **Remember we depend on our membership to keep us informed of upcoming events so we can ensure the Connaught's are represented** so please inform either our chairman Brendan White of any events you think we should be attending or contact me at the address on the end page and I will forward your information to Brendan.

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Contents

Editorial/ Galway News	1
Somme Trip (1)	2
Somme Trip (1)	3
Who Do You Think You Are?	4
Battlefield Tour 2009	5
Website News and Reviews	6



Capt. Lt. Col. John Thomas de Burgh.
Founder, Connaught Rangers

Connaught Rangers remembered at Tuam Seminar

On the 24th of March 2008 a very successful event organised by the Connaught Rangers Association along with Galway County Heritage Forum and Galway County Council was held in Tuam.

The event was officially opened by Cllr Sean Canny mayor of County Galway who spoke of his personal experience of a visit to Belgium's war cemeteries and Galway's long association with the Connaught Rangers Regiment and John Thomas de Burge the 13th Earl of Clanricard. The speakers were Joe Loughnane and Oliver Fallon from the

Connaught Rangers Association, Willie Henry from Galway, PJ Clarke from Ballina and Damien Dowd a history student from NUIG Galway. The seminar ended with an extremely interesting tour of the militarily linked areas of historical interest in Tuam by Dr Tony Claffey of the Old Tuam Society. The successful purpose of the seminar was twofold; to promote the Connaught Rangers Association within Co Galway and to also broaden out the military history of the Galway area.



Joe Loughnane

GALWAY NEWS!

Memorial Service Loughrea Co Galway

On Saturday the 8th of November 2008 there will be a remembrance ceremony in St Brendan's Cathedral in Loughrea Co Galway to commemorate the men from the Loughrea area who lost their lives in past wars or on service with the United Nations and to those who returned. The ceremony will take place at 12.00 noon when a commemorative plaque will be revealed. Light refreshments will be served in a local hostelry.

CRA Joe Loughnane

CONNAUGHT'S AND UDR HOME COUNTIES ASSOCIATION JOINT TRIP TO THE SOMME 2008

The Connaught Rangers Association was delighted to participate in a joint trip with the Ulster Defence Regiment CGC Home Counties Association to the Somme area culminating in a presentation of a unique sign to the Ulster Tower on the 92nd anniversary of the battle. The two associations planned a number of commemorations to mark not only this legendary battle but also the numerous battles that pock mark France and Flanders that define the special relationships of the former Irish Regiments of the line.

This is a diary of that that trip:

Day one

Friday the 27th June 2008

3pm The Connaught's and the UDR meet up at Gatwick airport on route to the Channel Tunnel.

3.05 pm We run out of Diesel and once we get a helping hand from the RAC we find the top speed of 'Nessie' our Landrover is 60mph (either downhill or with a tailwind!)



Help!

Day 2

Saturday 28th June 2008

After a very, very early start we toured the Loos Battlefield and museum with Payen Gilles from the Sur Les Traces De La Grande Guerre." It became quickly obvious that our Piper Ben Buckland was a rallying point for our group as the public and fellow associations and ex-service personnel looked on at our group's activities.



Dud Corner

The afternoon seen an emotional visit to Dud Corner Cemetery and the grave of our chairman's grandfather Connaught Ranger John White. In what became a standard for the trip we marked the grave with the laying of a wreath and a piper's lament to the fallen.

The final event was a visit to Bethune cemetery to find John McDonald's great uncle Connaught Ranger Charles Mc Nally's grave. The group paid tribute to Charles and to all those at Bethune with a wreath laying ceremony and pipers lament to Binyon's adapted verse;

*"With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
Erin mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free."*

Day 3

Sunday 29th June 2008

Sunday was one of the groups busiest with the group taking part in a groundbreaking service at the Cross of Remembrance for the 16th Irish Division at Wijtschate. We joined representatives from the combined European military forces and Dame Patricia Windsor-Hawkins along with the former First Minister of Northern Ireland Dr Ian Paisley commemorate the 16th Irish's sacrifice along with the 36th Ulster Division at this crucial battle. Dame Windsor-Hawkins said *"The work your organizations are doing is a credit to all the ple of Ireland"*



Dr Paisley with CRA's Gary Egan and William Beirne



CRA/UDR John McDonald with Col Eden at Langemark

Sunday afternoon seen the most emotional of the events planned take place with a ceremony of remembrance at Langemark German Cemetery. We were joined at the cemetery by Lieutenant Colonel Volker Eden German Military Attaché to Belgium. Dame Patricia Windsor-Hawkins also joined us along with her husband Peter and son John for what turned out to be an unique occasion. Again we played a lament and laid a wreath to the German fallen of the First World War but the ceremony held a special feeling with the intense silence of the location broken only by the sad lament by our piper. John McDonald Chairman of the UDR group presented Colonel Eden with a memorial pennant to mark the occasion. An emotional Colonel Eden said *“On behalf of the German Government and people I want to thank both organisations for marking and remembering the dead of Germany in such a unique way.”* He went onto say *“We would hope this ceremony can be repeated next year and I will contact our embassy in Dublin and London to begin this process.”*

We finished the night by parading at the Menin Gate along with a number of associations in the tradition ceremony at Leper (Ypres) at 8 O'clock. It's a measure of the reputation of our association that the Last Post Buglers requested their photograph to be taken with us with an invitation to return at any time and join then again to remember the Irish dead.

Day 4

Monday 30th June 2008

After a very, very, very long trip back from Leper the night before the group decided to have a more relaxing day (or as some of the group said *“we are not budging from here till' after 11am wither you like it or not ! And, we are going in 'civvies'!”*) We unanimously decided to tour the 16th Memorial at Ginghy before going onto Albert museum. As a relaxing day came to an end we also unanimously decided to try out Tommy's Bar at the Somme. So ended a fantastic day and we were able to let our hair down (if you has hair that is!)

Day 5

Tuesday 1st July 2008

The last day on our trip was the 'jewel in the crown' as we joined in the official service at Thiepval. We met up with the Colonel Farrelly of the Irish Defence Force who had laid a wreath to all the dead of the Somme along with representatives of all major European forces.

The group visited cemetery for our last wreath laying at a war cemetery at Willie Bernie's great uncle Connaught Ranger Joseph Higgins memorial tablet at Poziers. The lament by our piper Ben was a eerie sound in a silent ceremony and the Connaught's many, many names on the vast memorial stood out in relief once again.

The purpose of our trip marked the final official event of the day with our participation in the commemoration ceremony at



History Being Made in 2008

the Ulster Tower. Our group literally 'turned heads' as the invited guests including Dr Paisley, Dr Adamson and Carol Walker from the Somme Association joined us to be presented with a new sign for the tower from the UDR/Connaught Associations. Our group's presence in Belgium and France had caused such a stir by this time that we were joined by representatives from the Royal Irish Regiment, Rangers, Fusiliers, Garda Síochána na hÉireann and Royal Ulster Constabulary. This was a moment in time ninety years in the making and our associations work was...



Piper Ben Buckland Kilt and Bayonet!

praised by the Ulster Tower, the First Minister, the Somme Association and Combined Irish Regiments.

The day was completed and a successful tour concluded with a meal and presentation ceremony at the Three Pigeon's Bar in Albert where the Irish reputation for celebration was dutifully upheld resulting in our piper Ben joining a 'gaggle' of piper's for a battle of the pipes at Albert Cathedral.



The Pipers Unite at Albert



John McDonald Being Presented With an Appreciation Plaque By Chairman Brendan White

As the day came to a close the Connaught Ranger's Museum was presented with five Connaught's badges dating from the First World War from John McDonald. John was congratulated on the success of the trip and the success of our Landrover (Maisy) making it to the end! John was formally presented with a special plaque on behalf of the association to mark the event.

CRA Francis Higgins

SOMME TOUR NEWS!

The Somme tour will take place next year and five places have been reserved for the Connaught Rangers Association Membership. Reservation on the tour will be on a first come first served basis (please see page five for more details and prices.)

Who Do You Think You Are?

Broadcast on Tuesday the 23rd September on RTE, the story of Broadcaster Joe Duffy was an intriguing history of the hidden history of Ireland especially in relation to the tenements and poverty of Edwardian Dublin and the military history of the Dublin Fusiliers and the Connaught Rangers. (All pictures courtesy of RTE)

Joe, a Dubliner was born in Dublin in 1956 and joined RTE in 1989. Joe's fame springs from his work since 1999 on RTE 1's Liveline and he is renowned for searching out 'ordinary' people's stories. How fitting then that Joe became the subject of Who Do You Think You Are a popular television programme tracing the roots of famous people's families and discovering the hidden past. Joe's family tale was one of two grandmothers who illustrate the complicated history of Ireland's colonial and social past. One grandmother, whose family poverty, along with other factors, lead her brother to join the Dub's. This story ended up in an emotional scene at the grave of Joe's 'granduncle' Christopher 'Kit' Carol in Bienvillers cemetery in Northern France through the research of Tom Burke.



**CRA Oliver Fallon
and Joe Duffy at King House (Courtesy Mint
productions)**



The Story Unfolds (Courtesy Mint productions)

The other story of a grandmother, whose history lead to the colonial glory days of the Raj and of the massive British Army base at Ahmadnagar lead Joe to contact our secretary and specialised researcher Oliver Fallon. Oliver's research lead to Joe standing before the grave's of the Connaught's at a churchyard close to Ahmadnagar in his attempt to find the grave of



Looking Down The Barrel of History Thanks To Oliver, Joe Duffy and RTE (Courtesy Mint productions)

his other 'granduncle' Joseph Edward Arnold Ganley who died aged four and a half years in India either by natural causes or by snake bite. Oliver's research skills were key to the whole episode and his mission to helping people researching their forefathers was a vision of how hidden history can be revealed by the dedication of a few honourable people. The sight of Joe burying a Connaught's cap badge in the graveyard can only be matched for pathos by the haunting last recorded words of his grandmother's recollection of her father's regiment "The Connaught Ranger's." Oliver again has shone a light on our organisation and more importantly those forgotten soldiers of the Connaught's in foreign fields through his professionalism.

Itinerary of events UDR/Royal Irish/Connaught Rangers Association(s) Battlefield Tour 2009

Once again John McDonald is organising a battlefield tour in France and Belgium next year. There are five places open to members of the Connaught's on a first come first served basis. Approximate costs for the five day tour are £250 for accommodation and travel to and from the venues. (Members must find their own flights to and from London Stansted.) Anyone wishing to take part must submit a deposit (contact John McDonald for further details at londonudr@googlemail.com

Monday 29th June 2008 AM

Loos Battlefield

Loos Museum and Battle Field Tour

Visit to family Graves Cross Laying

1300-1400 Lunch approx...

Visit to Canadian Memorial at Vimy Ridge

Next Years Tour Itinerary

Sunday 28th June 2008

Ypres Battlefield

Wijtschate - Messines Comemoration Service at 16th Irish Division Memorial

Cross Laying at 36th/16th Div(s) line of departure

Langemark German Cemetary Service with German Veterans/Military Attache and Local Civic Representatives

Lunch 1300hrs - 1400hrs approx...

Passchendaele Museum/Tyne Cot

Menen Gate @2000hrs

Tuesday 30th June 2008 (One of three options)

Verdun Battlefield

Verdun Museum Fleury/Trench of Bayonets

1300hrs - 1400hrs Lunch approx

Underground Citadel/Fort Douaumont

Option 2

Normandy D-Day Battlefield

Pegasus Bridge/ Merville Battery & Museum

1300-1400 Lunch approx...

Visit to invasion beaches Utah/Omaha/Juno/Gold/Sword

Option 3

The Somme

Historial DeLa Grande Guerre (Museum of the Great War Peronne Somme)

1200 -1300 Lunch

Ulster Tower Guided tour of Thiepval Wood (1400hrs approx)

Delville Wood Museum

CRA Michael Leavy

The committee wishes a speedy recovery to our esteemed member Mike Leavy after his illness. We hope Mike is fighting fit soon!

NEW LOOK WEBSITE!

Dermot our long suffering webmaster has burnt the midnight oil to produce a new look website including interactive slideshows. Please take the time to go online and support the website and send a link to your friends, family or anyone who would be interested in our association.



Anyone wishing to contact the officers and committee of the Connaught Rangers Association please see our website for details or contact me for additional information:

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Tuesday 1st July 2008

Somme Battlefield

0728hrs Loughnagar Crater (optional)

Thiepval Memorial 1000hrs

Lunch 1230hrs - 1330hrs

Newfoundland Memorial

Ulster Tower Commemoration Service
93rd anniversary of Battle

evening at Tommies Bar)



Gary Egan and 'Le Tommy' at this years tour

NEW REVIEW FEATURE!

CRA John McDonald reviews the Somme trip and its new appearance on the new look CRA Website.

Please have a look at the slide show now available on the association website, showing the recent battlefield tour conducted by the Connaught Rangers Association and The London and Home Counties Group of The Regimental Association of the Ulster Defence Regiment CGC.

Take time to look at the pictures on the Somme and in particular those of the various groups who we met on our journey of discovery. We made friends easily and readily and drew praise for the professionalism, tact and decorum displayed by all members' of our group and we turned heads as the photographs show.

This tour was a journey of discovery for both groups', and one which has resulted in lasting friendships' and a new understanding of the work we all have to do to keep the memories alive of our forefathers and the sacrifice they paid for freedom from tyranny.

As a member of both associations', I was particularly proud of the achievements made by our small group. But perhaps this is down to one simple fact, the Harp and Crown we all so proudly wear demands the highest standards of professionalism from those who wear it, and the same emblem does not distinguish between those who wear it. This makes us distinct from those who cannot and will never be able to meet our high standards.

We lead, we set an example and maintain the standards but most of all we remember them.

John McDonald
Quis Separabit

The London and Home Counties Group of

The Regimental Association of the Ulster Defence Regiment CGC



Connaught Rangers Association

Commemoration at King House 2008

The annual ceremony of commemoration will be held at:

2pm sharp at the Connaught Ranger's plaque (at the Military Road entrance.)

The ceremony will include a short address by the Secretary of the Connaught Rangers and the Chairman, followed by the ceremony of wreath laying by the young people of Boyle on behalf of the association and also host visiting guest association's tributes to the fallen.

The Connaught Rangers Association will also host:

- A special photographic display on WW1 by Hughie Farrell in the Long Gallery
- A presentation by local artist Jim Chapman of a Connaught Rangers cap badge to the Association's museum.
- Complimentary tea and coffee will be available in the Long Gallery of King House before and after the ceremony and hot food will also be available in the King House cafe (purchased separately.)



Guests of all ages at last year's commemoration



Connaught Rangers Association

Annual general Meeting 2008

The annual general meeting of the Connaught Rangers Association (Boyle) will be held at 12 noon on Sunday the 9th of November 2008 at:

King House Co Roscommon

Members are invited to attend and following agenda will be discussed:

- Minutes of previous meeting/s
- Election of Officers for 2008 – 2009
- Any other Business

Members wishing any additional information please contact me (Francis Higgins) during business hours for redirection to the appropriate committee officer.

Annual Memorial Lecture 2008

The annual memorial lecture for this year will take place in the lecture theatre of King House at:

2.30pm on Sunday the 9th of November 2008 (directly after the commemoration.)

The title of the lecture is:

'Victors or Villains' The Politicisation of Irish Regimental History

The lecture will end at 3.30pm sharp and will be given by:

Francis Higgins CAE MIMI EngTech Icorr

(Please note non members are welcome to attend the lecture!)