

Information Booklet for Adults

Battle and Aftermath



Ultimately, a soldier's purpose is to fight. But battle is a very chaotic affair, so the average soldier usually knows very little about what is happening beyond his immediate surroundings. Civilians caught up in battle usually understand even less of the overall picture. And for both groups, the outcome is unpredictable – survival (perhaps with an incapacitating wound), imprisonment, death.

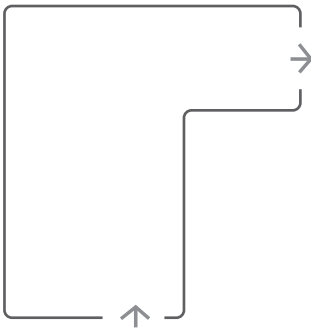
This booklet points you to the battle experiences of about a dozen Irishmen from among the many examples in the *Soldiers and Chiefs* exhibition. For each, a briefing note offers some background information about the individual. You might want to try and guess what happened to each person before you check the relevant objects and read the nearby label. Their individual fates are described at the back of this information booklet.

Soldiers and Chiefs Galleries

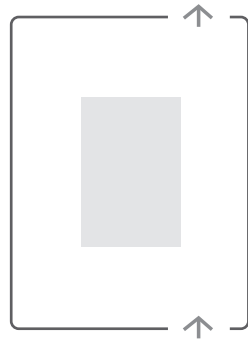
Follow the numbers shown on these plans of all the galleries. The numbers on the plans match the numbers of the 'Briefings' for each person. The title with each plan is the name of that gallery.

First floor

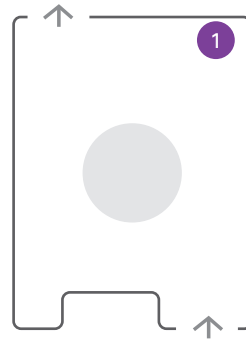
Introduction



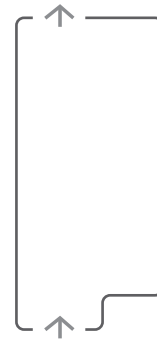
The British Garrison in Ireland



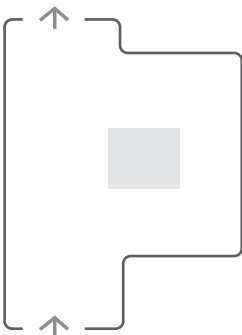
Warfare in Ireland



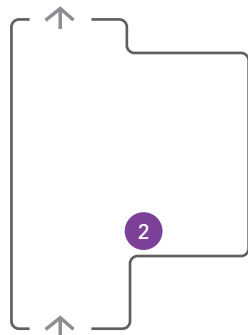
Irish Soldiers in Foreign Armies



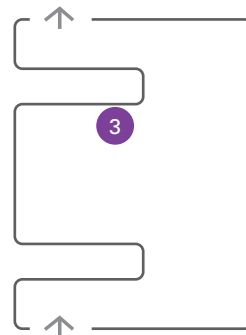
The Wild Geese



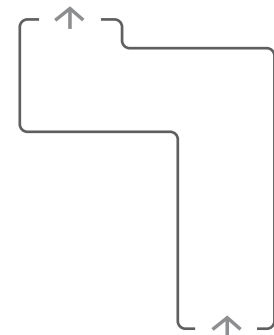
Irish in the American Civil War



Irish in the British Service

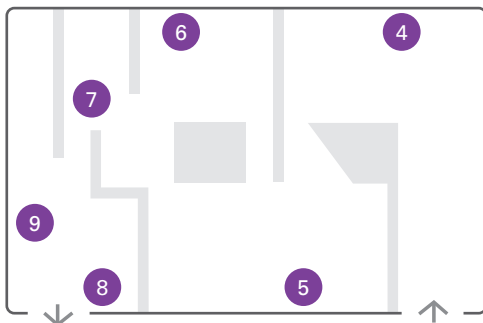


Balcony
Taking Flight



The Irish Wars

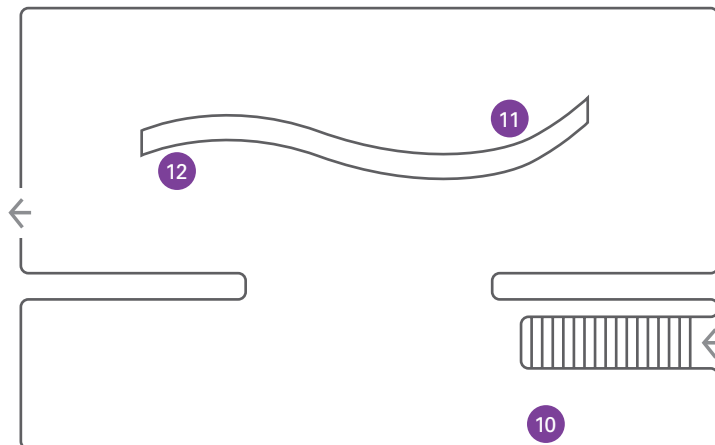
The First World War



1916 – The Easter Rising

Ground floor

Claiming the Future
The Emergency: The Second World War
Defending the Peace



You can find explanations of military terms in the booklet, 'Military Speak', a glossary to accompany these Information Booklets, which is available at the start of the exhibition or at Museum reception.

You can find out what happened to each person by reading 'Their Fate', starting on page 9.

Briefing 1 - Hope

In '**Warfare in Ireland**' listen to the second speaker at the audio station in the 1798 Rebellion.

James Hope was an Ulster textile worker long active in the patriot cause, who was involved in organising the 1798 Rebellion. He had no experience of warfare (despite having been a Volunteer soldier in the army), but at the age of 34, he and some friends took up arms to fight the British troops in the town of Antrim.



Hope

Briefing 2 - Cleburne

In '**Irish in the American Civil War**' look for a small panel '**Major General Patrick Cleburne**' toward the bottom of the display case about the Confederate Army, and note his cane and utensils on display.

Patrick Cleburne was born in Co. Cork and joined the British Army as a boy. After five years as a soldier, he left the Army and moved to America, where he made a living as a pharmacist in Arkansas. When the American Civil War broke out, he joined the Confederate forces, gaining a reputation as a bold and successful soldier and rapidly reaching the rank of major-general. In 1864, at the age of 36, he led his men in an attack at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee.



Cleburne

Briefing 3 – Reynolds

In **'Irish in the British Service'** find a painting of the battle at Rorke's Drift on a panel toward the top right of the display case **'Redcoats and Breech-loaders'**.

James Reynolds, of Dublin had made a career as a doctor in the British Army. On January 22nd and 23rd 1879, he found himself trapped with 135 other soldiers and several civilians at a small trading post called Rorke's Drift in what is now South Africa. The hastily fortified post was attacked by several thousand fierce and disciplined Zulu warriors, seeking to expel the British from their land; Reynolds' job was to tend the wounded.



Briefing 4 – Williams

As you enter **'The First World War'** gallery, look at the long wall for displays about the **'War of the Professionals'**. Williams' spurs are at the top left of the case.

Charles Williams was in a cavalry regiment called the South Irish Horse at the beginning of the First World War. He participated with his regiment in mounted actions, using the spurs on display. Later the cavalymen of the South Irish Horse were converted to infantry, fighting the last year of the war in the trenches.

Briefing 5 – Ó Buachalla

In the section '1916 – The Easter Rising', at the display 'War in the Streets', look for the audio label and press the button. Listen to the second person speaking.

Domhnall Ó Buachalla, born in County Kildare, was a member of the Irish Volunteers defending a building near the GPO during the Easter Rising. He had been trained in the use of the Mauser rifle and was considered a skilled marksman. However he and the other Volunteers were greatly outgunned by the British soldiers shipped into Dublin to quell the rebellion, who had 18-pounder field guns in addition to rifles and machine-guns. He was fifty years old at the time of the Rising.



Briefing 6 – Smith

In 'The First World War', beneath the dates 1917-1918, look at the display about 'War in the Mud'.

Philip Smith, from County Cavan, was a British Army officer in the First World War, serving in the same unit (the South Irish Horse) as Lieutenant Williams (Briefing 4). Like thousands of other Irish soldiers, he was caught up in the great German offensive of March 1918, when many British Army units were overrun by the speed of the enemy advance.

Smith
Ó Buachalla

Briefing 7 – Treacy

In **'The Irish Wars'**, in the displays about the 'War of Independence', activate the film footage to 'You Are a Witness'.

Sean Treacy was an IRA guerrilla during the War of Independence. A native of Tipperary, he had joined the nationalist cause at an early age and been one of the main participants in the Soloheadbeg ambush of Royal Irish Constabulary men. This event on January 21st, 1919 triggered the War of Independence. Treacy was very active in Tipperary and then Dublin until October 14th 1920, when he was recognised on a Dublin street by a plain-clothes intelligence officer. Both men pulled out guns, and a shoot-out ensued, which happened to be captured by a nearby newsreel cameraman.



Briefing 8 – Clancy

In **'The Irish Wars'**, in the displays about the 'War of Independence', look for the 'Bloody Sunday' display, which includes part of Clancy's waistcoat.

Peadar Clancy was a senior IRA guerrilla during the War of Independence, operating as the deputy commander of the Dublin Brigade. After several daring raids against the British, and a spell in Mountjoy Prison, Clancy participated with Michael Collins and other senior commanders in planning the Bloody Sunday assassinations. The night before the operation, Clancy and several others barely escaped capture in Vaughan's hotel where they were meeting. They had just returned to their lodgings when Auxiliary RIC men burst in looking for them.

Briefing 9 – Childers

Look for a pistol and a panel 'Bitter Divisions' in the section on 'The Irish Wars'.

Erskine Childers had been a British Army officer and imperial propagandist before becoming an Irish nationalist. With strong links to this country through his Irish mother, he gained fame as the author of a 1903 novel (*The Riddle of the Sands*) warning Britain of the danger posed by Germany. Becoming convinced of the justice of the Irish national cause, in June 1914 he offered his yacht *Asgard* to smuggle guns into Howth for the Volunteers. At the end of the First World War he threw his lot in with the IRA, becoming the best propagandist for its cause. Strongly opposed to the Treaty with Britain, Childers joined de Valera and the anti-Treaty forces during the Irish Civil War, and was soon the target of Free State searches.



Briefing 10 – Conway

In 'Claiming the Future', listen to Prendergast's thoughts, at the audio station at the display case for 'The Fight in Spain'. You can also see Conway's name on the large banner 'Eire-Spain' to the left of the glass door.

Kit Conway, an Irish soldier, fought for the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. Born in Tipperary, he had fought in the War of Independence. He joined and then deserted the Free State Army during the Irish Civil War. A committed socialist, he volunteered to go to Spain when right-wing army units under General Franco attacked the Spanish Republican government. At Jarama near Madrid, Conway led a number of other Irish volunteers as part of a Republican effort to prevent the Nationalists from encircling the besieged capital. The fighting was fierce and the casualties heavy.

Briefing 11 – Finucane

Listen to Finucane's words at the audio station at the display 'Irish Men and Women at War' (in the section about **'The Emergency: Second World War'**) and look at the pilot's logbook in the display case.

Brendan Finucane, a native of Dublin, gave up a planned career in accountancy and instead joined the Royal Air Force in 1938 when he was seventeen. After a lengthy period of training (during which he was rated 'average' as a pilot) he joined an operational unit in June 1940. Over the next two years he rose rapidly to the rank of Wing Commander, leading thirty or more Spitfires on patrols over France, shooting down at least 31 enemy aircraft. He recorded a radio interview for the BBC in October 1941.



Finucane

Briefing 12 – Gaynor

In **'Defending the Peace'**, in the display behind the Ford armoured car, look for Sergeant Gaynor's letter from the Congo.

Hugh Gaynor, a long-serving Irish Army soldier from Leixlip, Co. Kildare was sent to the Congo with the Irish United Nations peacekeeping contingent in 1960. A Sergeant in the Cavalry Corps, he was involved in conducting patrols from their base at Niamba along the local roads. The Baluba tribespeople in the area distrusted the UN soldiers and constructed roadblocks to prevent them from moving along the roads. On November 8th, 1960 Sergeant Gaynor was second in command of a routine eleven-man patrol.

Gaynor

Their Fate

Battles are chaotic and arbitrary and the fate of individual participants is unpredictable. Some die and others live, but even the survivors are changed by this intense and often traumatic event. It may mark them, physically or mentally, for the rest of their lives.

What happened to these individuals in the aftermath of battle?

James Hope

survived the battle unscathed, but refused to accept the surrender conditions offered by the British and **went on the run**. Continuing to support the United Irish cause, he was involved in Robert Emmet's uprising in Dublin in 1803. After this Rising failed, he and his family remained undercover until political changes in Ireland made it possible for him to resume a normal life. Returning to Belfast, he became a clerk, and lived a long and relatively quiet life compared to the excitement of battle and rebellion.

Patrick Cleburne

was **killed in action** on November 30th 1864. He had argued against attacking the strong Northern defences at Franklin, but was overruled by his superiors. Last seen advancing on foot after his horse had been killed, he was shot down in front of the enemy lines. A few months earlier Cleburne had become engaged to Susan Tarleton of Mobile, Alabama but had not yet married his fiancé.

James Reynolds

survived the battle unscathed, and stayed at Rorke's Drift for several weeks to take care of the wounded and sick soldiers. He wrote a brief report about the battle describing the room-to-room fighting, as the British retreated through the building being used as a hospital. For his actions during the battle, Reynolds was awarded the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest military award. Later in his career, Reynolds returned to Ireland, where during the Land Wars he was the medical officer for the combined army and police force sent to aid Captain Boycott (whose name became a synonym for ostracization). Reynolds retired in 1896, and lived to the ripe old age of 88, fifty-three years after the battle that brought him fame.

Cleburne

Reynolds



James Hope (centre), detail of *Who fears to speak of '98?* By J.D. Reigh 1891, © National Library of Ireland



Major General Patrick Ronayne Cleburne, © Museum of the Confederacy, USA



Surgeon James Reynolds (wearing a hat), detail of *The Defence of Rorke's Drift*, © Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia

William

Charles Williams

was **wounded in the leg**, leaving him permanently disabled. He was obliged to wear a wood and metal leg brace, like the one you can see in the section on the aftermath to the First World War on the lower level. He returned to Ireland and lived the remainder of his life in North Dublin, in an area with army housing.

Domhnall Ó Buachalla

was **captured and imprisoned** by the British, being released in 1917 with other rebels. He was elected as Member of Parliament for Kildare in the election of 1918. With his fellow *Sinn Féin* MPs he served in the first Irish legislature, the *Dáil Éireann*. Opposed to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, he continued in politics, losing his seat as a *Fianna Fáil* TD in 1932. Ó Buachalla was then unexpectedly appointed to the post of Governor-General, a holdover from the British era, by the newly-elected Eamon de Valera. When de Valera abolished the post in 1936 as part of the process of cutting the remaining links to the British crown, Ó Buachalla quarrelled with him over the expenses he had incurred. The ex-Governor-General returned to running his hardware store in Maynooth, dying in 1963 at the age of 97.

Philip Smith

was **captured and imprisoned**, ending up at a POW camp in central Germany, called Holzminden. Joining a group that had been working on a tunnel since the previous October, Smith was part of the 'Great Escape' of the First World War. With 28 other officers, he successfully broke out of the camp and was on the run for two weeks before being recaptured within three miles of the border with neutral Holland. At the end of the War five months later, Philip Smith was repatriated, and began his career as a lawyer in Cavan. During the Emergency (1939-1945), he was a District Leader of the Local Defence Force.

Sean Treacy

was **killed in the exchange of fire** (as was his opponent and three other people). His funeral two days later in Kilfeacle, Co. Tipperary was the occasion of a major outpouring of support for the IRA.

Peadar Clancy

was **captured by the British** along with two comrades and taken to Dublin Castle. He did not emerge alive, being **killed** with comrade Richard McKee on the morning of Bloody Sunday. The British claimed the prisoners were shot trying to escape: all the evidence points to Clancy having been beaten and then shot by his captors. Michael Collins was upset by the deaths, and risked capture to attend the funerals.

Erskine Childers

was **captured** at Glendalough (where he had spent his childhood) on November 10th, 1922 and put on trial by a military court, ostensibly for possessing a pistol given to him by Michael Collins. He denied the legitimacy of the court, and defended his political choices as true to the spirit of Irish nationalism. **Convicted and sentenced to death**, he shook hands with the members of his firing squad, and urged them to step closer to make their job easier. He was 52 when he died. His son Erskine Hamilton Childers became the fourth President of Ireland in June 1973.

Kit Conway

was **killed in action** on February 12th, 1937, when he was 39 or 40 years old. James Prendergast, another Irish volunteer, observed his death and survived to mourn the loss of a good friend. His colleagues commemorated his sacrifice by adding his name to the banner.

Brendan Finucane

led a group of Spitfire aircraft to attack German Army positions in France on July 15th 1942. Crossing the French coast, the radiator of his Spitfire was **hit by machine-gun fire** from the ground. Knowing he had just a few minutes before the engine stopped, Finucane headed out into the Channel to avoid capture. Other pilots watched him ditch the Spitfire in the sea but could not help him when he failed to leave the sinking plane.

Hugh Gaynor

was **killed in action** when Baluba tribesmen ambushed the patrol at a bridge over the Luweyeye River. Eight of his comrades also died; two men who were badly injured survived the attack. Sergeant Gaynor and his colleagues received one of the biggest funerals Dublin has ever witnessed.



Sean Treacy, detail of photograph,
© National Museum of Ireland



Erskine Childers,
© National Museum of Ireland



Finucane, in the cockpit of
his Supermarine Spitfire,
© Imperial War Museum,
United Kingdom

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Want to know more?

For more information on exhibitions and education programmes, contact the Education and Outreach Department of the National Museum of Ireland.

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email: bookings@museum.ie

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Cover image: Surgeon James Reynolds, detail of The Defence of Rorke's Drift, Art Gallery of New South Wales

