

Kilkenny Military Heritage Survey

Recording & Publication Project 2012

John Tierney

The Councils of the
City and County of Kilkenny



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Written By
John Tierney

Historicgraves 

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Introduction

This report details the results to date of a project training a local community heritage group in documenting military heritage graves and their associated stories in Co. Kilkenny. The focus of the project was the provision of training for a team from **Stephens Barracks Museum** (SBM), to enable them to record their military heritage grave related sites using community developed recording techniques. Training in Kilkenny was conducted in workshops and eight days of field surveys, where the emphasis was on 'learning by doing'. This meant that the training days produced publishable outcomes, the results of which are available at the Historic Graves website (<http://historicgraves.com/project/kilkenny-military-heritage-and-graves-project>) where it has received almost 9000 unique page views in the last 6 months.

Commissioned and directed by the Heritage Office of Kilkenny County Council, the project aimed to remember our forebears, help others to find and visit their graves and to consider the meaning of events through which people lived and sometimes died. The project forms part of a long engagement between Kilkenny County Council, local communities and their historic graveyards.

Grave memorials relating to a range of military heritage events were encountered

1. 1798 Rising
2. American Civil War
3. Napoleonic Era
4. Papal Army in 1860s
5. Boer War
6. United Irishmen
7. World War I
8. War of Independence
9. Civil War
10. World War II
11. Peacetime military personnel

After the initial training period, links were developed with a previously trained community group in the Ennisnag area. This group identified a series of military heritage memorials in their area and this data was added to the project dataset.

The Stephens Barracks Museum (SBM) team have an important role in Kilkenny's heritage. With an Irish Army background & base they have strong public support which allows them to address questions of nationalism and affiliations to the British Empire which other groups might find difficult to pursue. They represent a heritage which is older than the state and with the proper support can enrich the state's engagement with military heritage throughout this forthcoming decade of commemoration.

geographic location. As such projects do not take place in a political vacuum we aimed to learn from the different responses we encountered with the broader public throughout the project.

Methods

The project started on the 25th of June 2012 and ran for two weeks with a subsequent online data sessions and a Heritage Week event in Castlecomer, Church of the Immaculate Conception.

The team from Stephens Barracks Museum has previously visited and recorded military heritage related graves throughout the county and the plan was to resurvey those graves using the Historic Graves methodology, as follows;

1. Register the historic graveyards with known military heritage graves
2. Visit the graveyards and geolocate the grave memorials using a GPS enable camera and record the memorial inscription.
3. Upload the digital data about the graveyard and grave memorials to the website
4. Add any audio or video stories recorded about the person, place or related events.
5. Explore learning opportunities which emerge from the interaction between the Historic Graves team and the Museum team.

The onsite training comprised a morning session where training in the identification of memorial types, photography and survey techniques was provided. The identification of memorial types used the Guidelines for the Care, Conservation and Recording of Historic Graveyards, published by the Heritage Council. Forms provided in the Guidelines were used to record the memorials and graves. Rubbing techniques such as sponge-on-carbon paper were taught, for use on figurative gravestone carvings. Camera set-up, specifically designed for recording

graveyard memorials, was taught during the photography sessions. This included information about geo-tagging photographs so that the results were compatible with a Global Navigation Satellite System such as GPS. Survey techniques covered how to produce a basic graveyard plan. Digital training sessions focused on approaches to archiving and publishing the survey results using the Historic Graves website.

After this initial field survey and digital publication training the the Stephens Barracks Museum team and the Ennisnag tema continued to record military related grave memorials in Kilkenny.

Results

Twenty nine historic graveyards were visited as part of this project with over 100 grave memorials being recorded throughout the county and ten stories collected, with a military heritage association. Military heritage related grave memorials are evenly distributed throughout the county, running from the northern border to the southern county bounds with Waterford. A number of themes emerged as the project developed.

Tactics and landscape

As we travelled the highways and byways of Kilkenny together it was fascinating to learn how the military researchers view the landscape. Their knowledge of military tactics informed so many of the War of Independence stories told around the county and reflected a pragmatic view of how to travel through the countryside. This has knock on effects for our own (HGs) understanding of human use of the landscape.

The movement of the Old IRA force from around the county for the Coolbawn ambush (18 June 1921) outside Castlecomer has been tracked by researchers. Various safe routes were

known and followed from north and south and from adjoining counties before and after the ambush. This understanding of the value of local knowledge in military operations emerged as we visited the ambush location and the graves of the men who died that day (Nicholas Mullins in Thomastown and Sean Jack Hartley in Glenmore).

Kilkenny City & Military Heritage

The graveyards of the city and its immediate hinterland contain grave memorials of the landlord and industrial owner classes for whom military service was a core element of their identity. As a result the upper classes appear to be proportionately over-represented in the data record in this area. The recording project aims were to record all grave memorials which means all social classes and individuals are recorded equally. However, while we might be all equal in death it is undeniable that one purpose of grave memorials is to serve as social status indicators. Simple Commonwealth War Graves memorials are contrasted with high quality memorials, especially those found in St Canices's Cathedral. Already famous for its collection of late medieval grave memorials it has one of the richest collections of military related memorials in Ireland and Britain.

The SBM team had already been studying these memorials and this project allowed that work to continue with the internet publication of all such memorials within the cathedral.

South Kilkenny Graveyards

Previous HGs work in the county had not extended into south Kilkenny. This project brought us into this area and a number of remarkable elements were identified;

1. Rathpatrick graveyard has a very unusual assemblage of early 18th century headstones, carved on atypical stones in an

atypical manner. It also has coastal and urban trade associations due to its proximity to Waterford city.

2. Glenmore graveyard has an excellent preservation of headstones and symmetrical sidestones. Due to this preservation this site changed our understanding of some grave memorials throughout the country. What had previously been interpreted as relocated footstones can now be identified as in situ sidestones. Nineteenth century grave memorial components of headstone and sidestone can be investigated by further work here.
3. This area appears to have experienced keen competition between monumental sculptors from Kilkenny city and Waterford city. As a result a fascinating mix of grave memorials is encountered.

Stories

The Stephens Barracks Museum team had a long established track record of successful research and publication. The historic graves project provided a new publication platform for their work, allowing the team to refine their work, identify connections between individuals and places, build this research into their planned guided tours and publish to the Project webpage where it has received almost 9000 unique page views in the last 6 months.

The stories take three forms. Firstly, in experimenting with making community heritage research accessible for all, some of the grave memorial inscriptions were dictated by Larry Scallan and published to the website as audio recordings in the expectation that this could be especially useful for people with restricted vision. We need some means of investigating this accessibility issue.

Secondly, audio recordings were also made of stories of military events reflected in graveyard burials. These can be complex and sensitive, taking place within the landscape of the events, thus allowing a deeper understanding of the events themselves.

Thirdly, the local history research of the training participants were also published as written stories.

Conclusion

- Training was provided in three graveyards and extended out to 29 graveyards in a two week period
- The military heritage related graveyards are equally distributed around the county
- The training involved a two-way information exchange between the participants.
- HGs brought systematic pragmatic survey and publication tools
- SBM brought military heritage engagement relating to biographies, social history and landscape perceptions.
- Multimodal publication of heritage data has potential which requires further research in terms of digital storytelling and accessibility.
- St Canices Cathedral Kilkenny is an exceptional resource for memorials of military heritage personnel and has strong potential for strengthening heritage tourism links with the UK.
- From a military heritage perspective St John's graveyard, John Street Kilkenny, is a fascinating 19th century resource.
- South Kilkenny historic graveyards had unusually good preservation of historic grave memorial features which are nationally and even internationally significant.
- There is strong potential for an innovative county-wide Military Heritage Tour including graveyards, ambush sites, places of birth, death, burial and events. A considerable amount of local knowledge has been gathered by local historians which could and should be published in web, multi-modal ebook, book, brochure and communicated through guided tours.
- This training course introduced us to the historic graveyards of south Kilkenny which have some unique elements significant on a national scale.
- Personal reactions to the training course were varied but as the course did not set out to assess these attitudes our impressions are more anecdotal in form;
- A tension does exist within society about military heritage especially regarding events associated with WWI, the War of Independence, the Civil War and WWII. Divisions between Irish nationalist and

British Empire allegiances were encountered in interactions with the public (passersby, local historians) and in researching attitudes to the stories being uncovered by the SBM team.

- The majority of people encountered were receptive to the 'democratic' aims of the training project.
- The County Council and SBM collaboration is uniquely positioned to tackle very sensitive and important historical events and their relevance to national identity and social 'growth'. Who better to reconcile the normal polarities of Nation Vs Empire than a research team with cast-iron national foundations? As both the local authority and the Army have roots before the foundation of the state they provide a long term perspective on the historical events associated with the grave memorials recorded during this project.

Appendix 1 Graveyards visited and recorded during this project



St. Maul's

Street: Green St. Newpark Lower
Town / Location name: Kilkenny
Townland: Newpark Lower
County/Province: Kilkenny

St. John's

Street: Dublin Road
Town / Location name: Kilkenny
County/Province: Kilkenny



St. Mary's

Street: Ardra
Town / Location name: Castlecomer
Townland: Ardra
County/Province: Kilkenny

St. Mary's

Street: High St.
Town / Location name: Kilkenny
Townland: St. Mary's Parish
County/Province: Kilkenny



Railyard, Colliery Church

Street:

Town / Location name: Moaneenroe

Townland: Gorteen

County/Province: Kilkenny



Holy Trinity

Street:

Town / Location name: Dunmore

Townland: Loughmerans

County/Province: Kilkenny



Coon RC

Street:

Town / Location name:

Townland: Coan West

County/Province: Kilkenny



Cloghabrody

Street: Chapel Lane

Town / Location name: Thomastown

Townland: Cloghabrody

County/Province: Kilkenny



Columbkille's

Street:

Town / Location name:

Townland: Columbkille

County/Province: Kilkenny



St. James

Street:

Town / Location name: Glenmore

County/Province: Kilkenny



St. Mary's

Street: Church Street

Town / Location name: Inistioge

Townland: Inistioge

County/Province: Kilkenny



Kilbride

Street:

Town / Location name:

Townland: Kilbride

County/Province: Kilkenny



Rathpatrick

Street:

Town / Location name:

Townland: Rathpatrick

County/Province: Kilkenny

St. Canice's

Street: Church Lane

Town / Location name: Kilkenny

County/Province: Kilkenny



New Clara

Street:

Town / Location name: Rathgarvan

Townland: Rathgarvan or Cliften

County/Province: Kilkenny



Church of the Immaculate Conception

Street: Kilkenny St.

Town / Location name: Castlecomer

Townland: Castlecomer

County/Province: Kilkenny



Bennettsbridge

Street:

Town / Location name:

Townland: Bennettsbridge

County/Province: Kilkenny



St. Peters

Street:

Town / Location name: Ennisnag

Townland: Ennisnag

County/Province: Kilkenny



Ballyouskill

Street:

Town / Location name: Ballyouskill

Townland: Earls garden

County/Province: Kilkenny



Knockmoylan RC

Street:

Town / Location name:

Townland: Knockmoylan

County/Province: Kilkenny



Dunamaggan COI

Street:

Town / Location name:

Townland: Dunamaggan

County/Province: Kilkenny



Kilmacow Upper RC

Street:

Town / Location name: Kilmacow

Townland: Narrabaun South

County/Province: Kilkenny



Ardclone RC

Street:

Town / Location name:

Townland: Ardclone

County/Province: Kilkenny



Kilmanagh Church of Ireland Churchyard

Street:

Town / Location name:

Townland: Kilmanagh

County/Province: Kilkenny



Regina Caeli Cemetery Mooncoin

Street:

Town / Location name:

Townland: Pollrone

County/Province: Kilkenny



Knocktopher Church

Street:

Town / Location name: Knocktopher

Townland: Knocktopher Manor

County/Province: Kilkenny



Owing Catholic Churchyard

Street:

Town / Location name:

Townland: Owing

County/Province: Kilkenny



Slieveroe RC

Street:

Town / Location name:

Townland: Kilmurry

County/Province: Kilkenny



St. John's

Street: John's St. Lower

Town / Location name: Kilkenny

Townland: Gardens

County/Province:



St Leachtain's Col

Street:

Town / Location name: Freshford

Townland: Freshford Lots

County/Province:

Appendix 2 Stories

- ❖ [J Lynch](#) Larry Scallan reads the inscription on Private J. Lynch's headstone.

- ❖ [Lieut. Michael Francis \(Frank\) Fogarty](#) Engineer Officer 3rd Battalion North Kilkenny Brigade I.R.A.

- ❖ [Lieut Col G.E.B.Dobbs](#) Chevalier of the Legion of Honour

- ❖ [The Victoria Cross Kilkenny connections](#)
- ❖ [Michael Fogarty - The war of Independence](#)
Martin Barrett recalls the ingenuity of Michael Fogarty who acted as the Chief Engineering...

- ❖ [J. Deeley](#)

- ❖ [Seamus McEvoy - memorial Inscription](#)

- ❖ [J. Tobin - Memorial Inscription](#)

The Victoria Cross Kilkenny Connections

The Victoria Cross instituted by Queen Victoria on the 29th Jan 1856 to recognise servicemen's brave acts regardless of rank. The football-size cascabels [knobs] from Canons captured in the Crimea were sawn off at the neck and melted down for VC production. When this actually happened is still open to debate. The priceless lump of metal, of which there remains enough for a further 85 crosses, is kept in a vault at the Royal Logistic Corps in Donnington, Shropshire. It can be removed only under guard. The design, chosen by Queen Victoria, consists of a cross patee ensigned with the Royal Crest resting upon a scroll bearing the words "For Valour." The reverse of the suspender bar is engraved with the recipients' name, rank and unit while the reverse of the cross is engraved with the date of the deed for which the recipient was honoured. The London jewellers Hancocks, based in the Burlington Arcade in London, make the medals. The bronze has always been unstable to work with as it has already been worked on when the cannon was

made. Hancock's have seven medals in storage but without the name and rank of the recipient and date on the back, they have no intrinsic value except their novelty. In World War Two, Hancock's charged the armed forces the equivalent of £1.50 for a medal that today can fetch £200,000 at auction. It still remains the most coveted and probably the best known military medal in the world. Of the 1356 that have been awarded, 168 have been awarded to Irish born soldiers; coming from 31 of the 32 counties. Six of the 168 hail from County Kilkenny.



C/Sgt John Byrne's Memorial Plaque Market Square Castlecomer

Private John Byrne VC DCM Born Castlecomer.68TH REGIMENT.

Dates of Acts of Bravery: 5th November, 1854; 11th May, 1855.(Crimea.)

At the Battle of Inkerman, when the regiment was ordered to retire, Private John Byrne went back towards the enemy, and, at the risk of his own life, brought in a wounded soldier under

fire. On the 11th May, 1855, he bravely engaged in a hand-to-hand contest with one of the enemy on the parapet of the work he was defending ; prevented the entrance of the enemy, killed his antagonist, and captured his arms. London Gazette, 24th February, 1857.<http://www.lightinfantry.me.uk/vcjohnbyrne.htm>



John Barry VC

Private John Barry VC Born Kilkenny.1st Battalion Royal Irish Regiment.

Dates of Acts of Bravery: 7th and 8th January, 1901. (South Africa.)

During the night attack on the 7th-8th January, 1901, on Monument Hill, Private Barry, although surrounded and threatened by the Boers at the time,smashed the breach of the Maxim gun, thus rendering it useless to its captors, and it was in doing this splendid act for his country that he met his death. London Gazette, 8th August, 1902.<http://firstandlast.ie/#>

Private John Ryan VC Born Kilkenny Date of act of bravery 26th sept 1857:A party, on the 26th of September, 1857, was shut up and besieged in

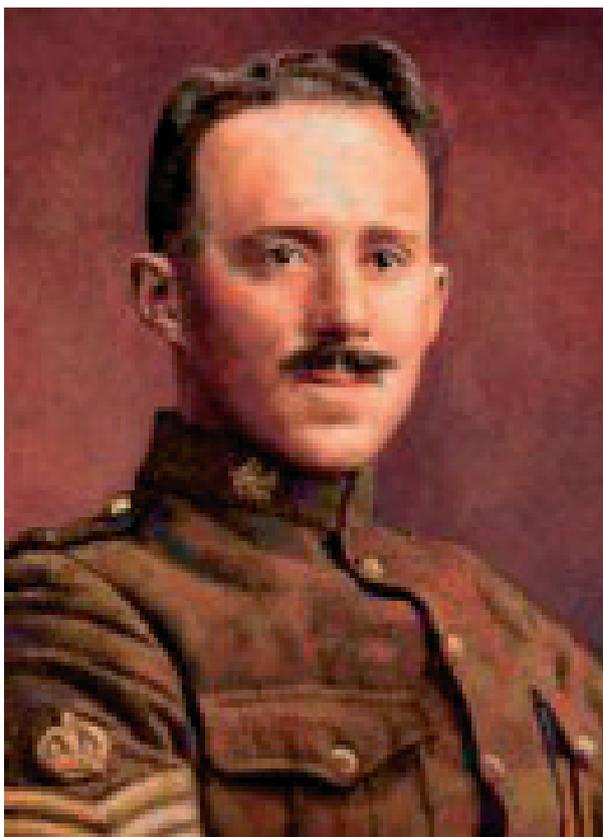
a house in the city of Lucknow, by the rebel sepoys...Private McManus in conjunction with Private John Ryan, rushed into the street, and took Captain Arnold, of the 1st Madras Fusiliers, out of a dooly, and brought him into the house in spite of a heavy fire, in which Captain Arnold was again wounded.In addition to the above act, Private Ryan distinguished himself throughout the day by his intrepidity, and especially devoted himself to rescuing the wounded in the neighbourhood from being massacred.



Lieut. Walther Pollock Hamilton VC

Lieut. Walther Pollock Hamilton VC Born Inistioge For conspicuous gallantry during the action at Futtehabad on the 2nd April, 1879, in leading on the Guide Cavalry in a charge against very superior numbers of the enemy, and particularly at a critical moment when his, Commanding Officer (Major Wigram Battye) fell, Lieutenant Hamilton, then the only Officer. left with the Regiment, assumed command and cheered

on his men to avenge Major Battye's death. In this charge Lieutenant Hamilton, seeing Sowar Dowlut Ram down, and attacked by three of the enemy, whilst entangled with his horse (which had been killed) rushed to the rescue, and followed by a few of his men cut down all three and saved the life of Sowar Dowlut Ram.



Frederick William Hall VC

CSM William Frederick Hall VC Born Kilkenny No. 1539, COLOUR-SERGEANT FREDERICK WILLIAM. 5TH CANADIAN BATTALION.

Date of Act of Bravery: 24th April, 1915. On the 24th April 1915, in the neighbourhood of Ypres, when a wounded man who was lying some 15 yards from the trench called for help, Company Sergeant-Major Hall endeavoured to reach him in the face of a very heavy enfilade fire which was being poured in by the enemy. The first attempt failed, and a non-commissioned officer

and private soldier who were attempting to give assistance were both wounded. Company Sergeant-Major Hall then made a second most gallant attempt, and was in the act of lifting up the wounded man to bring him in when he fell mortally wounded in the head.

London Gazette, 23rd June, 1915.

William Dowling VC (1825 – 17 February 1887), Born in Thomastown, Dowling was approximately 32 years old and a private in the 32nd Regiment of Foot (later the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry), British Army during the Indian Mutiny when he was awarded the VC for the following deeds: For distinguished gallantry on the 4th of July, 1857, in going out with two other men, since dead, and spiking two of the Enemy's guns. He killed a Soubadar of the Enemy by one of the guns. Also, for distinguished gallantry on the 9th of the same month, in going out again with three men, since dead, to spike one of the Enemy's guns. He had to retire, the spike being too small, but was exposed to the same danger. Also, for distinguished bravery, on the 27th of September, 1857, in spiking an 18-pounder gun during a Sortie, he being at the same time under a most heavy fire from the Enemy. He was later promoted to sergeant and died at Liverpool, 17 February 1887. His Victoria Cross is displayed at the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry Museum in Bodmin, Cornwall. <http://www.dowlingfamily.info/zOLD/i1857in1.htm>

Lieut. Michael Francis (Frank) Fogarty Engineer Officer 3rd Battalion North Kilkenny Brigade I.R.A.

Lieut Michael Francis Fogarty

Appointed Engineer officer 3rd Battalion North Kilkenny Brigade in September 1920

Lieut Michael Francis Fogarty elected as Battalion engineer known locally as Frank he was a blacksmith and a motor mechanic by trade.

“He was aged about eighteen and was the only support to his widowed mother and a family of six younger than himself he was a great lad”. Garrett Brennan.

In Fogarty’s forge they started experimenting on hand grenades made from barrel steel of 3” diameter which Fogarty screwed and capped at both ends, a quarter inch bolt held in position by a spring and passed through a hole in one cap acted as a firing pin. The barrel then was ground to splinter. After several “tryouts” as they called them they made one which worked. The job was slow as the battalion engineer had to work on them after hours. He had a couple of employee’s who were not trusted to that extent.

They also experimented with a mine made with Concrete and gelignite in a half cwt paint drum. The gelignite and the detonator were contained in a seven pound paint tin in the centre. The concrete and shrapnel iron were poured in three stages leaving each lot about two days before the next lot was poured in. The mine was exploded by fuse. They tried it out in a wood and when it exploded, it brought down a tree and made a five foot crater in the ground. There was only one drawback it could not be used with any accuracy against a moving target. To improve the trigger device they sat about trying to use an

electrical trigger like the “shot firer” used in the mines.

Fogarty and Brennan asked a returned American who had knowledge of medical devices to make an induction coil for them he said that “he could not”, so they then asked him if he could order a hundred yards of bell wire he said that “he would not dare order such an amount”. He suggested using a ford motor coil. They obtained one, but it was defective. They reckoned they had been given a cast off.

They knew that the “shot firer” was available in the mine when they made the suggestion of a raid to the Brigade commander they were told that they were forbidden from attacking the mines, or the military on explosive escort and that order came directly from GHQ in Dublin. After the attack on Solaheadbeg, GHQ had given the order because the owners had threatened to close down the mines. The only commercial mine being supplied with gelignite in the whole of the country was Castlecomer and Capt. Wandesforde had threatened to close it down if there was any interference. This would have put 500 people out of work, including 300 miners and 200 carriers and cut the fuel supply off to the local people around a fifteen mile radius.

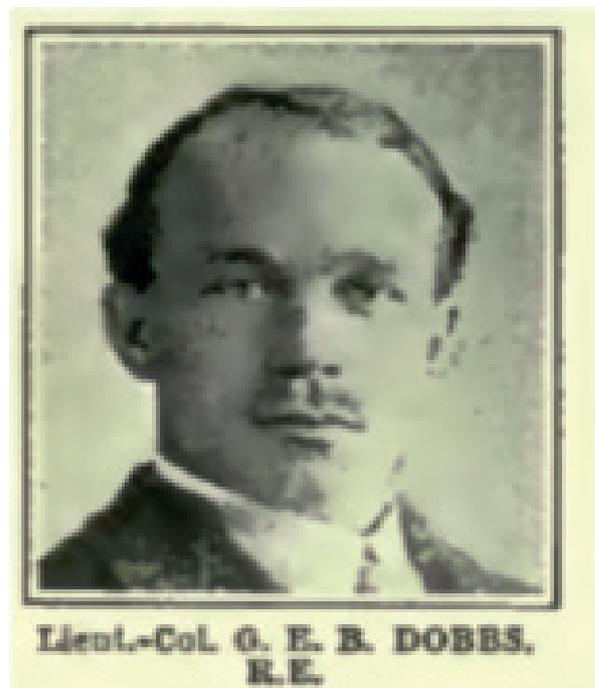
Another idea they came up with was a wire hawser strewn across the road between two tree trunks to knock troops off their trucks. Frank Fogarty had measured the height of the cab with a lathe laid carelessly beside a military truck when it called for petrol one day at his uncle’s garage. Their next project involved a device to disable trucks by puncturing tyres. It was a British military design, anti cavalry caltrop/cheval-trap. This was an arrangement of iron spikes in a tetrahedral pattern, generally about 3 to 4” high, these would be strewn in the path of infantry or cavalry to spike their feet and disable them. The tetrahedral pattern ensures that the cal trap stands on a tripod of spikes, with one spike pointing vertically,

and this is so whichever way up they are thrown. It was copied from a British military design supplied by GHQ in Dublin, and after several attempts they came up with a copy. They supplied the finished pattern to the rest of the Battalion. It was to be used against the “Crossley tenders” being used by the British at the time to puncture the tyres.

“Another innovation at the time was a gadget for puncturing the tyres of trucks and it was a four pronged piece of iron so designed or shaped that no matter what way it was thrown on the road one spike or prong was always pointing upwards. To be effective of course, the wheel of the lorry would have to driven straight on to it” Patrick Dunphy.

Martin Barrett Castlecomer

Lieut Col G.E.B.Dobbs Chevalier of the Legion of Honour



GEORGE ERIC DOBBSIn

Memory of Lieutenant Colonel GEORGE ERIC DOBBS Signal Corps (A.D. Sigs.), Royal Engineers who died age 32 on 17 June 1917 Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. Son of Joseph and Mary Dobbs, of The Chalet, Temple Rd., Dublin. Native of Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny. Remembered with honour LIJSSENTHOEK MILITARY CEMETERY

Commemorated in perpetuity by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Lieutenant Colonel George Eric Burroughs DOBBS. Royal Engineers. Known as Eric, he attended schools at Shrewsbury and Woolwich. Commissioned as a 2nd lieut 23 of April 1904 and was initially posted to Singapore, he was in Limerick in 1906 where he rode with the Limerick hounds. While he played on the Army Rugby team he opted to play international

rugby for England. Mentioned in Dispatches three times, Feb 1915 Jan 1916 and May 1917 and was awarded the French Legion of Honour (Croix de Chevalier); Nov 1915. He was the 2nd son of Joseph (former proprietor of Jarrow Mine, and joint proprietor of Monteen Mine, Castlecomer. His parents JP and Mary Dobbs were still living in Coolbawn house in 1915 but were not at the time of George's death in 1917. He is buried in Lijssenthoek military Cemetery in Belgium. and also commemorated on the Dobbs Family grave in St. Marys Castlecomer.