



ON THE BRINK: ACROSS THE HAWTHORN HEDGE



SERVING YOUR COUNTRY



Across the hawthorn hedge the noise of bugles. Flares across the night. Somewhere on the lough was a prison ship for Germans. A cage across their sight.



FROM CORRESPONDENT BY LEON BRADSHAW
Photos supplied by permission of the Irish Red Cross Society, Dublin

At the outbreak of war in 1914, every European country but one had a large standing army, of conscripted troops. The exception was Britain, which had a small army.

20,000 Irishmen serving as soldiers and 20,000 more as part of the British Expeditionary Force, senting Belgium in August 1914.

Right: Recruitment poster for the British Expeditionary Force, senting Belgium in August 1914.

Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, led the campaign to recruit the 'New Army' of volunteers. The 10th (Irish) Division was made up of some of the first 100,000 to sign up. It had brigades with bases in all four provinces.

Below: Kitchener is widely held to have led the charge of Lord Kitchener into a recruiting queue. This was not the case of Lord Kitchener in Ireland in 1914. A second recruitment poster is shown.



IRELAND AT THE FRONT LOOKS TO IRELAND AT HOME TO ANSWER THE CALL



DOUBTS

In Ireland, there were doubts on both sides. Why should the Ulster Volunteers fight against Kaiser Wilhelm II, the strongest defender of Protestantism in Europe? Why should the Irish Volunteers fight for Britain given their efforts to secure more Rule? Indeed, both sides agreed to meet only in a home defence format.

Carded men meeting with Kitchener regarding the role the UVF could play in the War. Ulster Volunteers marched together into battalions of UVF corps, forming the 3rd Ulster Division.

Below: Kitchener's Corps National Volunteers against the National Home Defence Force.

DOBRY JOURNAL
12th August 1914

Ballycastle Company Irish National Volunteers...

"We hereby agree... to volunteer for home defence and are also willing to co-operate with the Ulster Volunteers in defence of the shores of Ireland."



Below: The poor and needy Irish women were recruited and funded on pensions and other forms of home defence.



Below: Call for volunteers (below) published in the Irish press and the 'British' 'Magazine' on the same day. 10th October 1914.

Below: The landing in Lough Bay. Early morning, 7th August 1915. (Image by permission of the Imperial War Museum)

RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS

In early 1915, the Central Council for the Organisation of Recruitment in Ireland was established and began producing posters appealing directly to the Irish.

Across Ireland, soldiers marched, bands played, officers and local dignitaries gave speeches at recruitment events organised by both of the Irish regiments. These also occurred across the counties of Londonderry and Antrim. The Royal Irish Rifles formed two new service battalions, with the 11th and 12th recruited in South and North Antrim. In Coleraine and Linnahilly men joined the 10th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles battalions.

Right: Local Ulster men were encouraged to join up in the name of local attempts to meet the needs of the War.



Below: Call for UVF men to join up. (Image by permission of the Imperial War Museum)



Below: 10th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles in Coleraine, County Derry, 1915. (Image by permission of the Imperial War Museum)

Below: One of the first large groups of Irishmen recruited for the British Expeditionary Force.

