

Private James Henry

(1893 - 1918)



Georgina Henry
Coleraine Museum Collection



James Henry lived in Castleroe before moving to Taylor's Row, Coleraine. In January 1915, he enlisted at Finner Camp and from there travelled to the Front. What we know of James' time at war is recorded in letters that he sent home to Coleraine.

By 1918 Henry had been at the Front for over two years. In a letter to his father, sent on 28th March 1918, he writes from the base hospital, having been wounded in the leg by machine gun fire:
"after 4 days of the worst days fighting ever have been in France and I am very sorry to say that our casualties are very heavy and I doubt there is a fine lot of our boys went under so I am lucky to be here today alive and kicking."

On the 19th July 1918 James writes to his sister, Georgie from the Convalescent Hospital in Bray, Co. Wicklow.
"I got the (flu) I took it on wensday night But I am a bit better now there is about fifty of us has got it here and nearly all the nurses are Bad to."

His very last letter home was to Georgie, sent on the 24th October 1918, when he was back at the Front in France.
"Been getting it pretty hard these last few weeks But I am glad to Say we are still going forward think there should Be Big Changes in a few months now let us Hope so anyway."

James was killed in action on 8th November 1918, 3 days before the Armistice was signed. He is buried in Doulers Village in France.

Georgina, James' sister, kept all his correspondence and passed it down to her children, George Leighton and Isobel Trussler (nee Leighton), who very generously donated them to Coleraine Museum. There are 121 letters in the collection and 94 postcards dating from 2nd October 1915 to 24th October 1918.



Death Penny
Coleraine Museum Collection

Dr McIlroy

(1874 - 1968)



Dr McIlroy inspecting tents at Troyes.
Courtesy of Glasgow City Archives

A nne Louise McIlroy was born in Loughguile in 1874. Her father Dr J. McIlroy (later of Ballycastle), a medical practitioner and Justice of the Peace, educated his four daughters to a very high standard for the time. A. Louise graduated in 1898 - the first woman in Glasgow to earn a Doctorate in Medicine and then the first female gynaecological surgeon at the Royal Infirmary Glasgow.

Dr McIlroy and other female medical graduates offered their services to the government. After rejection by the War Office, Dr Elsie Inglis, founder of the Scottish Womens Suffragette Federation was inspired to start a hospital of 'our own', with influential supporters. The Scottish Women's Hospital Foreign Service, set up with the aim of using all female staff to care for the Allied wounded, became known for its surgical brilliance and administrative efficiency. Dr McIlroy went to France, then Serbia and Greece, with their Girton and Newnham Unit.

Working under canvas and maintaining high hygiene standards in the time before antibiotics were available, she wrote home: **'we are hoping to (teach) the French the enormous advantages of the open air and sunlight for septic wounds. Our results have been simply extraordinary, no antiseptics at all.'**

Dr A. Louise McIlroy with The Grand Mufti (Turkish) and his adjutant in Salonika
Courtesy of Glasgow City Archives

In June 1918, Dr McIlroy's new orthopaedic department (for 'helping our wounded Serbian allies') is described as: **'A canvas shed has been erected where carpenters are ... making hospital ward furniture,... Some of [the patients] are making beautiful stonework designs ... the thistle and Serbian eagle feature largely ... most of the wards are making gardens outside the barracks'.**

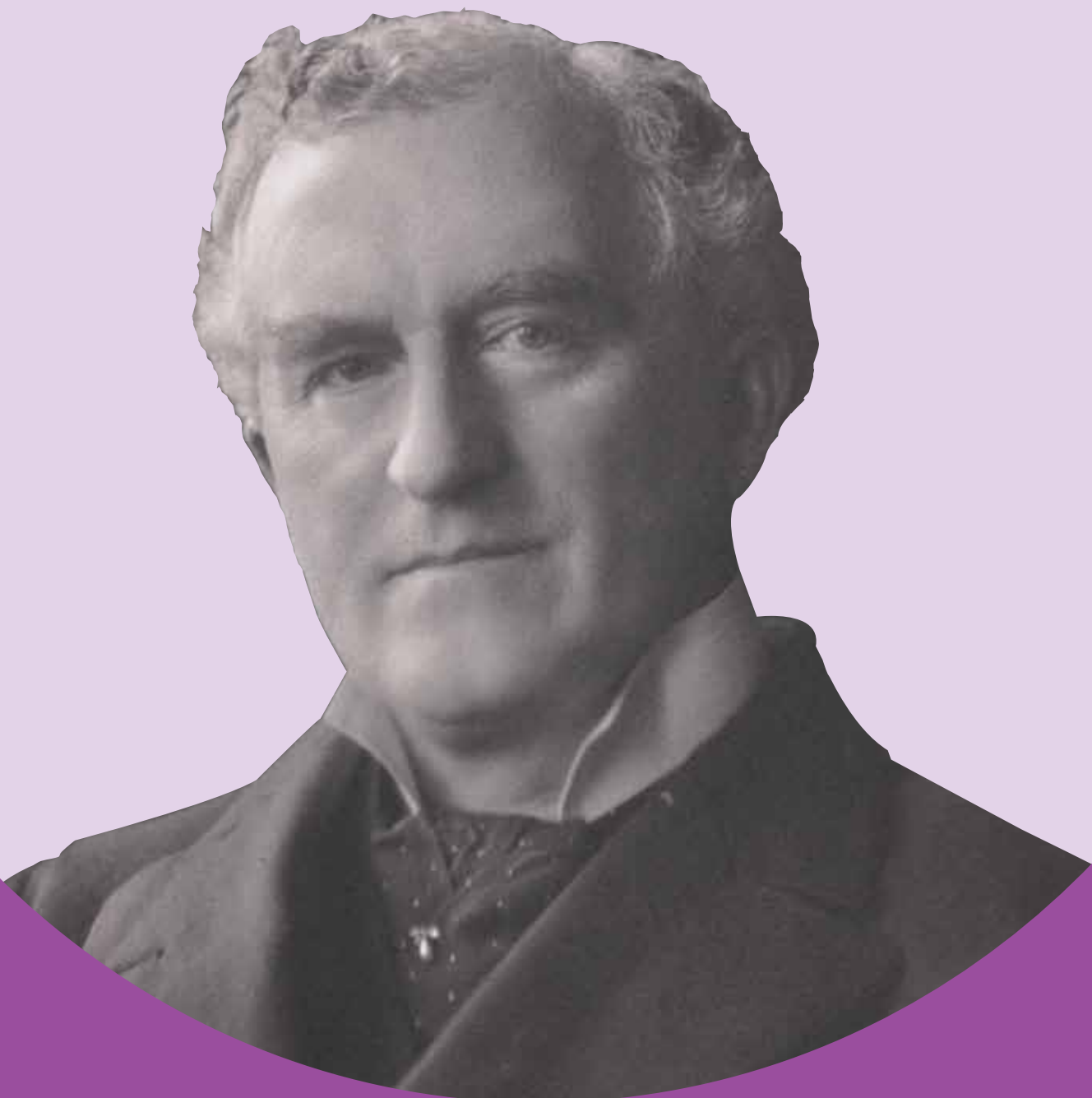
In recognition of her services she was awarded the French Croix de Guerre avec palme, French Medaille des Epidemies, Serbian Order of St Sava and the Serbian Red Cross. In 1920 she was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE).

In 1921 she became the first female full professor at a University - Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the London School of Medicine for Women and was made a Dame in 1929 for her services to midwifery.



Sir Denis Henry

(1864-1925)



© National Portrait Gallery, London

Born in Cahore, Draperstown, Denis Stanislaus Henry worked as a solicitor in Coleraine before winning the parliamentary seat of South Derry in the elections of May 1916. Standing as a Unionist, Denis was the first Roman Catholic elected to represent a Unionist constituency in Ulster.

Henry pursued a successful legal and political career through the challenging period which polarised Irish communities following the events of 1916.

“He felt very strongly that religion and politics were totally different ... if a Protestant, there was no obligation on one to be a Unionist ... and in reverse, he could not see why a Catholic could not be a Unionist.”

Sir James Henry on his father's career.

- In November 1918, Henry was appointed Solicitor-General
- for Ireland and, the following month, successfully retained
- his parliamentary seat against the Sinn Féin candidate
- Louis Walsh, to serve a second term as MP for South Derry.
- The 1918 elections represent the last occasion in which a
- Catholic Unionist would win a seat in Ulster.

- As a Unionist, he did not take a seat in the revolutionary first
- Dáil Éireann which was formed following the 1918 elections.
- In the following years, Henry would go on to be appointed
- the Attorney General of Ireland, and later the first Lord
- Chief Justice of Northern Ireland. In 1923, he was awarded a
- baronetage to become Baronet Cahore.

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Lieutenant Henry Blayney Owen Mitchell

(1864-1925)



Sara Marguerite (Rita) Baxter. It is thought that Blayney Mitchell carried this photograph of his fiancée Rita with him while at war.
Coleraine Museum Collection

The eldest son of Mr and Mrs Henry Mitchell, St. Winifred's Coleraine, Mitchell received his commission in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers on 25th September 1914 as a Second Lieutenant.

He was one of the first local men to be awarded a Military Cross in 1916,
"for conspicuous gallantry whilst in charge of a machine gun during a fearful gas attack on 27th - 29th April."

Coleraine Chronicle 17th June 1916

Mitchell moved to the Royal Flying Corps and, while acting as an observer for the pilot Second-Lieutenant P. F. Heppell, was shot down behind the German Lines.

"The most striking point of all is the great consideration I have received at the hands of the Germans, who have done all in their power to add to my comfort. I could not have been treated better in England, and shall, under any circumstances, always appreciate their kindness."

Heppell's account of their capture, Coleraine Chronicle, 1916

A letter from Mitchell to his mother dated 10th April 1918 describes his journey from Clausthal to Clingendaal, The Hague. At Cologne train station they were taken down to cellars and locked in until 5am. Mitchell describes them as **"filthy and we were crowded in, the one I was in had over 20 men and eleven officers."** On arriving at Clingendaal, he writes, **"I cannot realise that I'm not dreaming wandering about in a mansion all full of oak panelling, tapestry, pictures, curtains, beautiful old furniture, not to mention nurses, English nurses to look after us. Phil and I have two rooms one opening off the other and are in luxury."**

Mitchell's fiancée, Sara Marguerite (Rita) Baxter, daughter of Sir William Baxter of Coleraine, received the large silver medal in her history degree finals at Trinity College Dublin in 1918. She was suffering from the flu while sitting her exams.

After the war, Blayney Mitchell and Rita Baxter married in 1921. Blayney became one of the His Majesty's Inspectors of Factories.

NAME *H. B. O. Mitchell*
REGIMENT *R. I. Fus. att. R. F. C.*
RANK *2nd Lieut.*
BILLETED AT *Hotel Royal, Scheveningen*

Prisoner of War Identification Card for H.B.O. Mitchell. It records his first billet at Hotel Royal, Scheveningen.
Coleraine Museum Collection



Hugh Thomson

(1860 - 1920)



“At any rate, the cheerful news from the Front helps one along ... If one could keep out of one’s mind the mutilation and wiping out of the splendid young lives one could be happy about things this winter”.

Spielmann, M. H. and Jerrold, W. C., *Hugh Thomson: his art, his letters, his humour and his charm*, London: A. & C. Black, 1931

Born in Coleraine in 1860, Thomson, is regarded as one of the top three book illustrators of his time. After working for Marcus Ward & Co. in Belfast, he left for London in 1883 where he began working for Macmillan & Co. publishers.

In 1917, Sir Isidore Spielmann asked Thomson to create cartoons to accompany his “Another Open Letter to Herr Maximilian Harden” pamphlet. After seeing the illustrations some people questioned why Thomson hadn’t been employed to produce war propaganda. Thomson had very

few other commissions during the First World War. Due to this, in 1918, he found work in a department at the Board of Trade - the ‘Commission Internationale de Ravitaillement’.

During his time at the Commission, Thomson suffered from recurrent spells of illness. His health had been troubling him for a number of years and alongside this was his anxieties regarding his son, John, who was on active service in France. Thomson’s friends, who knew he was struggling, petitioned Lloyd George to grant the artist a pension. In May 1918 he was granted a Civil List pension of £75.

As Armistice approached in 1918, Thomson is pleased to see works of art being restored to galleries and museums. He wrote, **“How delightful it is to see the glowing old favourites coming out again at the National Gallery.”**

Spielmann, M. H. and Jerrold, W. C., *Hugh Thomson: his art, his letters, his humour and his charm*, London: A. & C. Black, 1931



Germany’s War Aims, 1917 and Germany’s Impending Doom, 1918.

Coleraine Museum Collection

These illustrations were purchased by Coleraine Museum through funding from the Arts Fund and Northern Ireland Museums Council.

Drawn for Sir Isidore Spielmann by Hugh Thomson June 1918

Louis Walsh

(1880-1942)

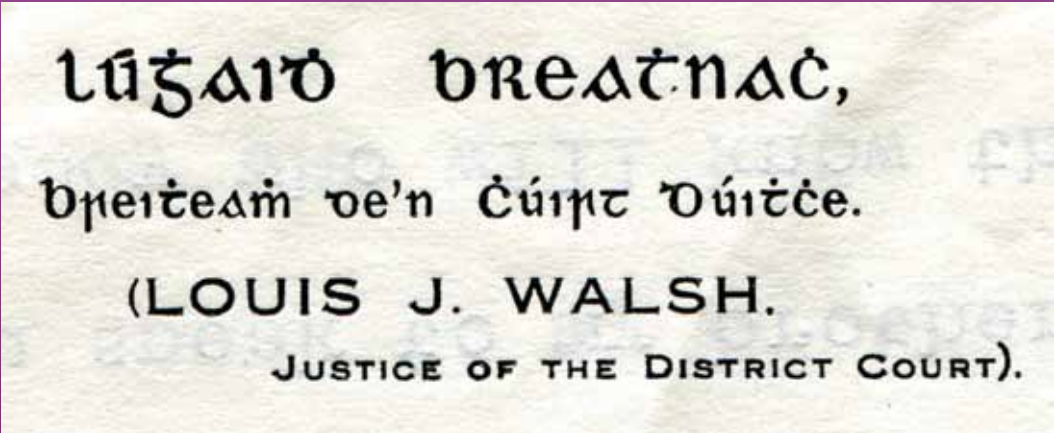


Courtesy of The Derry and Antrim Yearbook 1927

Louis Joseph Walsh was born in Maghera. He was a solicitor and author, writing political memoirs as well as works of fiction such as *The Yarns of a Country Attorney: Being Stories and Sketches of Life in Rural Ulster* and plays including *The Pope in Killybuck* and *The Guileless Saxon*.

Walsh was a member of the Gaelic League and a supporter of John Redmond's efforts to secure Irish Home Rule. His moderation was praised by his contemporary Sam Henry, who wrote in an obituary for Walsh: **"He, more than any man in his generation, knit in a bond of amity the gael [native Irishman] and the gall [foreigner]."**

- Walsh was living in Ballycastle in 1916 and, while not participating in the Easter Rising, he did join Sinn Féin in its aftermath. In the 1918 general elections, he unsuccessfully stood against Denis Henry as the Sinn Féin candidate for South Derry. In 1920 his office was raided by the British authorities and he went on the run before being interred at Ballykinler. After his release, he moved to Letterkenny where he became the first district judge to be appointed by Dáil Éireann.



Mr. J. J. Walsh is a very nice
telling me about his Attorney - I believe
he is a great character.
T. J. W.

May Traill

(Born 1894)



From Peggy Hamilton's memoirs, *Three Years or the Duration*, 1978.
Courtesy Patrick Brennan

The war gave women opportunities that would not otherwise have been open to them at that time. At the outbreak of war, May Traill of Ballylough was studying at Studley Agricultural College in Warwickshire. She took up the duties of her college's chauffeur and electrician when both men joined the army. After graduating, she was appointed a chauffeuress to the Ministry of Munitions.

By the start of 1918, she was working as the 'electric driver' at the power-house of the government rolling mills near Southampton, **"a post never before undertaken by any woman of these countries."** When being shown the

- voluminous cotton overalls she was supposed to wear in
- the power-house, May is said to have responded **"I'll find my own clothes, thank you"** and wore sensible dungarees
- and a man's cap instead. Later in the year, she trained to
- qualify as an expert electrical fitter.

- In January 1918, May was the captain and star player
- in a "patriotic football match" between the ladies of
- Southampton and Portsmouth. The *Northern Constitution*
- reported that her **"skill and energy were greatly admired by a big holiday crowd ... May Traill, who is only 22, seems thorough whether at work or at play."**
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1917-1918 Government Rolling Mills (Woolston, Southampton) Ladies football team. May Traill sits in the centre of the photo holding the ball.
Courtesy Patrick Brennan

Private John Meeke M.M.

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers

(1894-1923)



As the war came to an end in October 1918, John was severely wounded in the leg by an explosive bullet and had to endure eight painful operations.
Courtesy of S. Phillips

Courtesy of S. Phillips

Private John Meeke was a stretcher bearer with the 36th Ulster Division, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, whose outstanding courage on the battlefield had been forgotten by almost everyone as he lay in an unmarked grave for 80 years. In 2004 a headstone was installed in Derrykeighan Old Church Graveyard to mark Private Meeke's grave and tell the story of this remarkable soldier.

On 7th June 1917 at Messines, Belgium, the 16th (Irish) Division and the 36th (Ulster) Division advanced together into the fierce battle. Major Redmond led his men into the no-man's-land and was seriously wounded by enemy fire. Private Meeke saw Major Redmond fall and braved the

- heavy machine gun fire and artillery to tend to his wounds.
- Under continued fire Private Meeke was wounded twice
- by shrapnel. Despite his injuries he continued to care for
- the major until they were rescued and taken back to the
- safety of the British lines. Unfortunately Major Redmond
- died from his injuries. Private John Meeke recovered and
- was awarded the Military Medal for his remarkable act of
- bravery.

- Meeke survived the war and returned home to Benvariden
- where he took work as a gardener on the estate. On 17th
- May 1922 he married Kathleen Craig but shortly after he
- developed tuberculosis and died on 7th December 1923.



Private Samuel Meeke Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (1897-1919)

His brother, Private Samuel Meeke who had also enlisted in the Royal Inniskilling fusiliers was captured in March 1918 and sent to a German prison camp in Langansalza where he was forced to work the sulphur mines. He was released after the Armistice but on his return to Benvariden in January 1919 he was extremely ill and within two weeks had died. He was buried with full military honours at Derrykeighan Old Church Graveyard. Thirteen men formed a firing party and officers arrived from Belfast to accompany the funeral.

In 2004, funds were raised by public subscription and, with the support of Ballymoney Borough Council, a commemorative headstone was erected on Private John Meeke's resting place, beside his brother Samuel Meeke.
Ballymoney Museum Collection



Mrs Catherine A. S. Trench

Limavady
(1877-1951)



Greystone Hall Limavady, the Family Home of Sir Thomas Lecky and of Catherine A.S Trench (nee Lecky).
Limavady Museum Collection

Born in 1877, Catherine was the daughter of Sir Thomas Lecky, Greystone Hall Limavady.

In 1905 she married Frederick Charles Bloomfield Trench. During the Home Rule Crisis, Captain Trench with J.C.B. Proctor formed the Limavady Ulster Volunteer Force.

At the outbreak of World War One, Trench was commissioned as Captain into the 10th Service Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (Derry Volunteers).

From the beginning of the War, Mrs Trench was raising funds for comforts for soldiers, especially the 'Derrys'.

In 1915 Captain Trench was court martialled, but awaiting the outcome, he disappeared. He went to London and enlisted as a Private in the 14th (City of London) Battalion (London Scottish) under the name of Bloomfield. Private F.C. Bloomfield was reported missing, believed killed in action, on 1st July 1916. His body was never recovered.

Mrs Trench continued to support the 10th Battalion. She also started a fund for the dependents of soldiers and another for prisoners of war. During this time she sought information as to whether her husband was dead or taken prisoner. After the War she was involved with the Soldiers Pensions Committee.



Trench Memorial Flute Band with Mrs MacManaway at Greystone Hall. Mrs Trench remarried Reverend James Godfrey MacManaway in 1926.
Courtesy of Private collection

In 1919 The Trench Memorial Band was formed in honour of the local men who had fallen in the War and to honour Mrs Trench for her fundraising to support local soldiers through the local Prisoners of War Fund. In 1920, she was invested as a Member, Order of the British Empire (M.B.E.) for her services. Mrs Trench remarried Reverend James Godfrey MacManaway in 1926.

*...Mid many cares and sorrow great,
When mourning sore a loving mate
Who fell a victim to the hate
Of German pride,
Your efforts never did abate
For Britain's side ...*

by 'the Dungiven Poet on occasion of Mrs Trench being awarded the honour (MBE) for her great services to our soldiers.'



Panel of the Christ Church Limavady in memory of Captain Trench and Captain Proctor. Catherine MacManaway died 27th January 1951 and is buried at Christ Church Limavady, where her father and Rev MacManaway are also buried.
Limavady Museum Collection

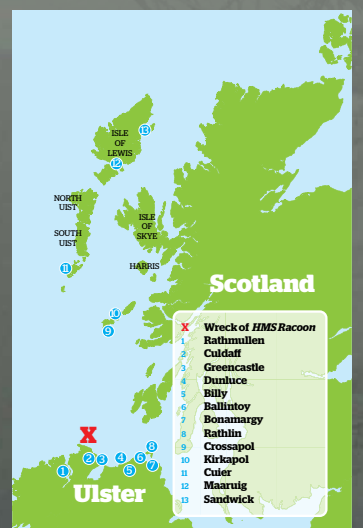


Mrs Trench with returning Prisoners of War at Alexander Hall Limavady
Courtesy of private collection

The loss of HMS Racoon



Location of the wreck of the *HMS Racoon* and the burial sites of the 21 crew whose bodies were washed ashore.



HMS Racoon.
© IWM (Q 75065)

Early in the War, the Beagle class destroyer *HMS Racoon* took part in the Gallipoli campaign, and then served as an escort ship for convoys in the Mediterranean where she was credited with destroying a U-boat in March 1917. By November, she had been redeployed to Lough Swilly, Co. Donegal where she was tasked with protecting convoys in the North Channel.

During a heavy snow storm on the 9th of January 1918, *Racoon* struck the Garvan Isles, off Malin Point, just before 2am. She transmitted the following wireless messages:

01:58 *Ship aground request immediate assistance in Lough Point Island.*
02:18 *(To HMS Mosquito) Switch your search light on us.*
02:23 *(To HMS Mosquito) Switch your search light on us.*

After that, there was silence. At 03:55, *Racoon* failed to respond to calls transmitted to her; she had sunk. Of her total compliment of 104 officers and crew, only the nine crew who were on shore leave at the time survived. All hands on board were lost. Seventeen bodies were recovered from the sea by rescue boats; 21 bodies washed ashore - they are buried in cemeteries near where they washed ashore; the remaining 57 were never found.



War grave of Stocker 1st Class Holder, HMS *Racoon*, at St Thomas' Church, Rathlin.
Courtesy of D. Quinney-Mee



War grave of Stocker 1st Class McKay, HMS *Racoon*, at Bonamargy Friary, Ballycastle.
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Museum Services

HIS MEMORY LONG WILL LIVE
ALONE IN ALL OUR HEARTS
TENNYSON

Sergeant Robert Quigg

(1885 - 1955)



Robert Quigg from Ardihannon, near the Giant's Causeway, worked as a labourer on the Macnaghten estate. At this time, Harry Macnaghten was heir to Dundarave estate, Bushmills. When war broke out, both men joined up and were attached to the 12th Royal Irish Rifles. Sir Harry was Platoon Commander and Quigg was appointed his 'batman', or servant. A local story states that Lady Macnaghten, Harry's mother, told Quigg not to come back from the war without her son.

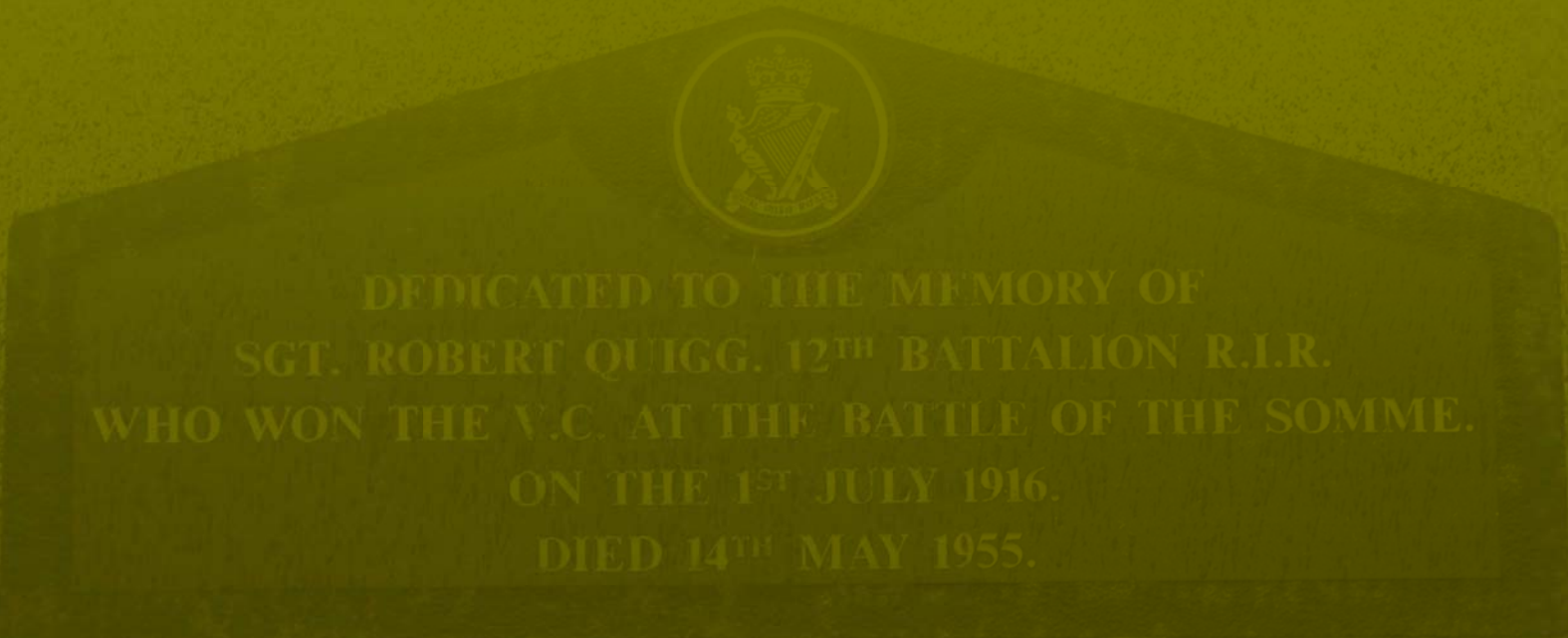
In January 1917 Robert Quigg received the Victoria Cross for bravery shown at the outbreak of the Battle of the Somme in July 1916. Quigg went out seven times to look for Sir Harry Mcnaghten who he heard was alive but seriously wounded. Although he didn't find Sir Harry, he brought back seven wounded men and only gave up his search due to exhaustion.

In June 1918, Robert is invalided to the Red Cross hospital in Dublin from France. Following this he was involved in a recruiting campaign in Bushmills.

"On Wednesday morning Sergeant Robert Quigg, R.I.R., our gallant V.C., arrived in Bushmills on furlough. He stated that he came from Dublin in company with a comrade of the R.I.R. - a Sergeant from Armoy. They had a fine reception in Belfast on the evening of the 17th inst. Needless to say, Sergeant Quigg had a warm welcome in the district which is so deservedly proud of him, and he had a splendid reception at the recruiting "rally" on the Diamond on Wednesday evening."

The Coleraine Chronicle reported extracts from Quigg's speech at the recruitment campaign in Bushmills, - ***"There are still a good many young fellows around here who could enlist as I and my comrades did in the early days of the war. I want them to come and fill up the gaps in the Ulster Division". (cheers)***

By the 26th October 2018 it is reported that Quigg has left his parents home to join a unit of his regiment in Tipperary. Quigg retired from the Army in 1926.



Rev. Walter Montagu

(1886-1918)



Courtesy www.flintshirewarmemorials.com

Walter Philip Montagu was born in Portstewart. The son of Lt Com Robert Acheson Crombie Montagu of Cromore House, Walter entered the Jesuit Order in 1903. In 1915, he went to St Bueno's College, Tremeirchion, Wales, to study theology.

Three of Walter's brothers served in the armed forces during the war. Captain Cuthbert Montagu, Royal Engineers, was mentioned in Despatches twice for meritorious action in the face of the enemy. Captain George Weld-Blundell RN was decorated with the Russian Order of St Anne for services rendered to the Russian Imperial family. Walter's youngest brother, Lieutenant Alexander Montagu RN was lost at sea when his ship, the HMS Bulwark mysteriously exploded off Sheerness in 1914.

- In March 1918, Walter was ordained early to allow him to
- follow his brothers to war. He served as a chaplain 4th class
- and temporary captain attached to 22nd Brigade, Royal
- Garrison Artillery, fighting in France. On 28th October,
- Walter was wounded in the thighs. He was taken to the 45th
- Casualty Clearing Station in Awoingt where he died three
- days later, just 11 days before Armistice. Walter is buried at
- Awoingt British Cemetery in northern France.



Ireland under fire



Portballintrae (see map)
from Portballintrae into
Portballintrae
Portballintrae

Portion of shell fired by German Submarine
off Portballintrae, N. Atlantic Coast (near Rockmill)
at the liner of Spill and Packer, from Millers
Cardiff. Sunday 5th May 1916. Many fragments of
shell found on Portballintrae when these were 18
shells holed. The Cardiff steamer put out a
smoke screen, which was seen by the submarine, and the action
was seen by the steamer and the ship. The ship was on the way to the
Port of Cork, and the ship was on the way to the Port of Cork.
Donal MacG. Breen (where name) The Portballintrae Steamer

A tobacco tin containing shrapnel
from one of the shells fired by UB 119 during
the engagement off Portballintrae.

A tobacco tin containing shrapnel from one of the shells fired by UB 119 during the engagement off Portballintrae.
Coleraine Museum collection

S *Wheatear* was passing en route from Coleraine to Cardiff with a cargo of potatoes. UB 119 opened fire with its 88mm deck gun. The *Wheatear* turned away and sought shelter in Portballintrae Bay.

The U-boat followed her in and local residents described the bay “studded with remarkable upsprouts of water” as the two vessels exchanged fire. During the bombardment, at least 13 of UB 119’s shells hit the land, the nearest falling within 110 metres of the village houses.

- After an exchange of up to 250 shots, the U-boat withdrew.
- Although the *Wheatear* survived unscathed, Portballintrae became the only place on the island of Ireland to suffer enemy attack during the course of the war. Two tramway men had their uniforms torn by shrapnel at Portballintrae Halt but sustained no serious injuries.
- UB 119 travelled east from Portballintrae where she was spotted by the crew of the trawler *SS Smilax* near Garron Point. The skipper of the *Smilax* managed to ram UB 119 at full speed and the U-boat sank with the loss of all hands.

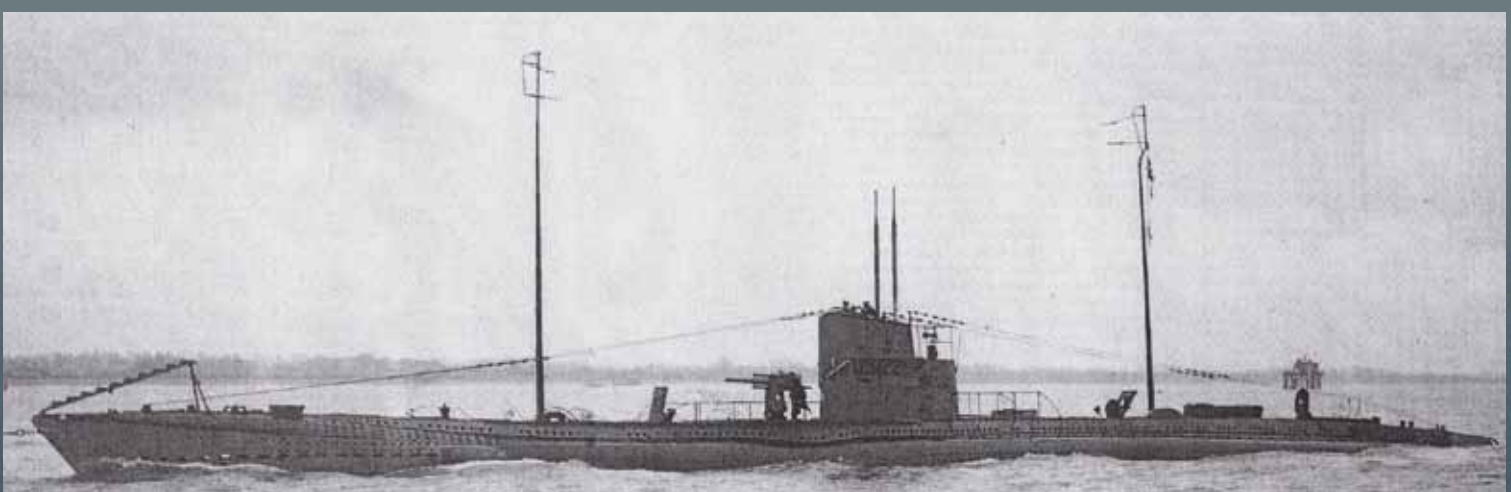


Courtesy Robert Anderson

Sunday afternoon's stillness in an Irish seaside resort was rudely disturbed by sudden cannon-firing which commenced a short distance from the shore, and in a few minutes many vantage-points were covered by eager listeners ... The predominant impression left upon the minds of those who witnessed the thrilling duel was that it brought the present stupendous war nearer home than ever before. Along with that there was undoubtedly a feeling of unbounded appreciation for the dauntless heroism of the men of the Mercantile Marine in the performance of their hazardous work in order to maintain the nation's food supply in these critical times.

Extract from the *Coleraine Chronicle*, 9th March, 1918.

TUB 122, a sister ship of the same class as UB-119. No photos of UB 119 can be traced.
Courtesy Robert Anderson



Matron Emily Hezlet

(c.1879-1958)



Emily Hezlet of Bovagh, Aghadowey, was Matron at Morden Hall, London for a period during 1918. Morden Hall was provided on loan to the London Hospital during 1914-1918 as a home for recovering military patients injured during the war.

The following are extracts from Emily Hezlet's Book Register notebook whilst she worked at Morden Hall. It contains messages of appreciation from the patients

“Kindest regards to Nurse Hazlet and many thanks for the kindness shown to me while at Morden Hall 28.1.18 - 6.5.18. Pte E. V. Francis.”

“I offer you my kindest regards (Nurse Hazlet) for your kindness and treatment to me, while my stay at Morden Hall. Thankyou! W. Wilson.”

Emily Hezlet received a letter from Morden Hall on 2nd October 1918, asking her to return to fill a nursing vacancy

“...in a place like this one does need someone with a little nice dignity! just to keep the rowdy patients from getting beyond themselves and I know you understand that as well as the professional side of nursing.”

Members of Emily Hezlet's family were also involved in the First World War. Emily's youngest brother, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Owen Hezlet (1891-1965), received a D.S.O for 'conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during an enemy attack'. Major General Robert Knox Hezlet (1879 - 1963), Emily's older brother, also served during the First World War. He was mentioned in Despatches twice and also received a D.S.O.

From a golfing family, during 1920-1921 Emily Hezlet was Captain at Portrush Ladies' Branch and remained on the committee until her death in 1958.

During the Second World, War Emily Hezlet was a committee member of the Portrush branch of the Women's Voluntary services, helped form a local Girl Guide company and was actively involved with St. John's Ambulance Brigade.



Newspaper entry reporting
Charles Owen Hezlet D.S.O. July 1918
Coleraine Museum Collection

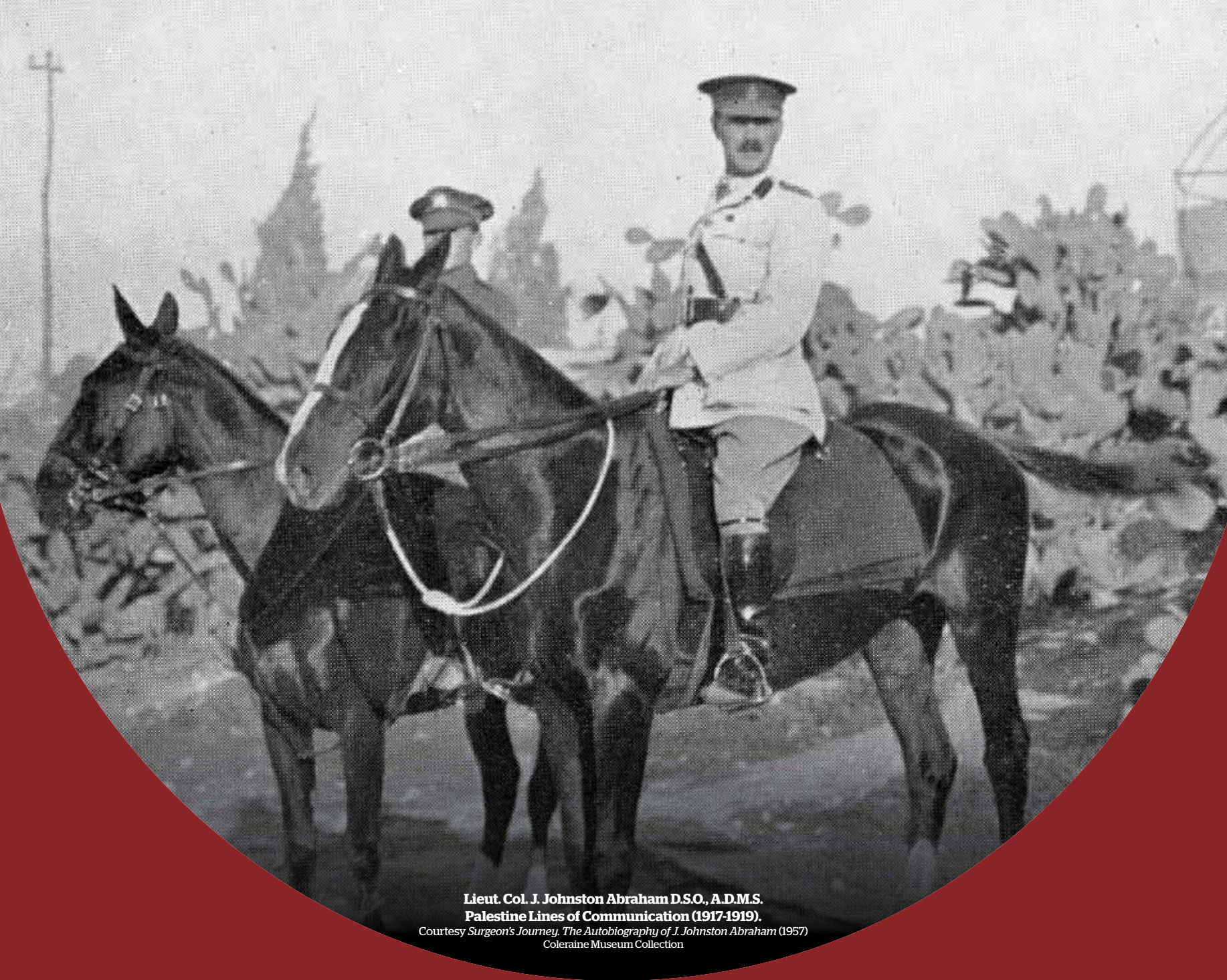
DECORATIONS FOR GALLANTRY.

Thrilling Stories of the Battlefield.

Last night's "London Gazette" contains the following statements of service in connection with which his Majesty the King had made awards for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in the field:—

Dr James Johnston Abraham

(1876 - 1963)



Lieut. Col. J. Johnston Abraham D.S.O., A.D.M.S.
Palestine Lines of Communication (1917-1919).
Courtesy *Surgeon's Journey, The Autobiography of J. Johnston Abraham* (1957)
Coleraine Museum Collection

James Johnston Abraham grew up on New Row, Coleraine and was son to Elizabeth Ann Morrison of Tobermore and William Abraham JP of Co. Fermanagh. J.J. Abraham was educated at Coleraine Academical Institution, obtained his doctor's qualification from Trinity College, Dublin in 1900 and went on to take up employment in London.

During 1918, Dr Abraham was Assistant Director of Medical Services (A.D.M.S.), Palestine Line of Communication. His duties included the operation of a number of hospitals, medical stores, casualty clearing stations, hospital trains and steamboats and a fleet of ambulances. Casualties of the Royal Flying Corps serving in Egypt were also under Dr Abraham's care.

- On 1st January 1918 J.J. Abraham was awarded a D.S.O. (Distinguished Service Order) on recommendation from the D.M.S. (Director of Medical Services) for his involvement in the capture of Jerusalem in 1917. J.J. Abraham wrote in his autobiography 'Surgeon's Journey' (1957),

"I was very pleased. I hadn't thought of any award when doing the job, but it was nice to write home about."

- J.J. Abraham was released from his post as A.D.M.S in May 1919, six months after the Armistice and returned to London. He went on to receive a C.B.E. (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) at Buckingham Palace on 15th November 1919.



Mary Agnes McGinnis

(Molly)

(1880-1967)



Military Medal awarded to Sister Molly Maginnis for bravery. One of the first to be awarded to non - military personnel.
Courtesy of Rosemary Henderson

Molly was born in Legahoire, Carrichue, near Ballykelly. As a St John's Ambulance Nurse, Molly enlisted on 18th March 1915 and served in the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) Hospitals. In February 1916, with the rank of Sister, she was posted to St John's Ambulance Brigade Hospital at Etaples, France.

On the night of 31st May 1918, a deafening avalanche of bombs were dropped on St John's. **"Staff ran to their stations as splinters of glass and falling timber huts trapped, maimed and killed."** While tending patients Molly Maginnis **"actually threw herself on to the bed of a helpless patient, acting as a human shield against the bombardment."**

Extract from Page 200- 201, *Sisters of The Somme* by Penny Starns 2016 Sister McGinnis was awarded the Military Medal, the highest civilian honour available:

"For gallantry and devotion to duty during an enemy air raid. She showed great courage, took charge of a ward, and sustained her patients."The *London Gazette* July 1918 and *Edinburgh Gazette* August 1918.

During WW1 of the 114,000 Military Medals awarded, only 147 were awarded to women and only nine to Irish women. Molly, when asked why she got her medal, replied they gave her a medal **"because she did not run away."**

From July 1918 until 28th January 1919 Molly worked in a Kent hospital, nursing soldiers suffering the effects of gas, mental injury and trauma. As Penny Starn's recorded in her bookbook, on page 17, **"...some nurses, faced with the appalling carnage and shocking wounds, simply gave up during the first six months of deployment. Those who remained fought their own quiet war against suffering and sickness with dignified compassion."**

In 1919 she returned to Ireland to train as a midwife. Mollys' brother Patrick became ill and she would nurse him till his death in 1933. She would do the same for her brother John until his death in 1949, despite a difference of opinion in the 1920s. Molly retired in 1962 and died at Roe Valley Hospital in September 1967 after a short illness.



A ward showing the devastation following the air raid 31st May 1918. For her actions in risking her own life to protect patients, Sister Molly Maginnis was awarded the Military Medal
Courtesy of I. Apsley, Inver Museum.