

Name of memorial: Kildare World War I Memorial

Inventory No. 1234

Place: Áras Chill Dara

Address and map reference: Kildare County Council Office,
Devoy Park, Naas, Co. Kildare
Map reference: N 887 190 (Sheet 55).
Co-ordinates: N 53.2149°; W 6.6722°.

Access: during office hours. **Parking:** adjacent. **Disabled access:** yes.

Position: at the front of Árus Chill Dara (behind the Council offices).

Description and dimensions: paper document in glazed frame.
Height: appx. 100cms. Width: appx. 100cms.

Recorded by: Michael Pegum 6 February, 2020.

Text: see next page.

REMEMBRANCE

THE ELEVENTH HOUR: COUNTY KILDARE 1918 – 2018



The Great War (1914-1918), as it was known at the time, is regarded as a catastrophic conflict which resulted in a terrible waste of human life on a colossal scale. Every new generation is haunted by the horror of the trenches and No-Man's Land, and by the conditions that men and women endured and witnessed on the battlefields, and also in the hospitals and convalescent homes.

One hundred years later, we remember those on all sides, from all walks of life, who, for a variety of reasons, found themselves struggling to survive the slaughter and return home to their loved ones. The 1916 Easter Rising and subsequent events in Ireland changed public opinion and the narrative of Irish involvement in the war. Those who returned did not receive a hero's welcome in a country that had become indifferent to their sacrifice. Their story faded from memory.

And when it comes to the question—as it may come — of asking young Irishmen to go abroad and fight this battle, when I personally am convinced that the battle of Ireland is to be fought where many Irishmen now are — in Flanders and in France — old as I am, and grey as are my hairs, I will say "Don't go, but come with me".

Major Willie Redmond, November 1914

To mark the centenary of the end of the Great War, this memorial has been erected in remembrance of those from Co. Kildare who died and as a reminder of the futility of war.

Suaimeas agus síocháin dóibh

May they rest in peace

Youngest Fatalities

Private Alfred Walter James, Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, 6th Battalion. Killed in action, Loos, France, 3 October 1915. Age 17. Born 16 September 1898, St. Wolstan's, Celbridge, Co. Kildare. Son of John James, servant, and Catherine Cahill, later of 5 Victoria Square, North Place, Gulliford.

Boy soldier Michael Thorogood, Royal Field Artillery, 4th Depot. Died Brook War Hospital, Woolwich, England, 2 January 1917. Age 15. Born Military Barracks, Naas, Co. Kildare, 23 March 1902. Son of Private John Thorogood, Royal Dublin Fusiliers and Bridget Ivers, later of Glenville, Naas. Michael joined the army from the Hibernian Military School, Dublin.

Oldest Fatalities

Private Christopher Power, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 8th Battalion. Died of wounds, France, 28 April 1916. Age 46. Born Shruleen, Athy, Co. Kildare, 19 December 1869. Son of Andrew Power, labourer, and Mary Spittle; husband of Esther Dwyer, Blackparks, Athy. Residence, 8 Plewman's Row, Athy; enlisted in Naas. He left a wife and three children.

Brigadier-General Charles FitzClarence, commanding 1st Guards Brigade, when he was killed in action, Polygon Wood, Zonnebeke, Belgium, 12 November 1914. Age 49. Born Bishopscourt, Kill, Co. Kildare, 8 May 1865. Son of the Hon. George FitzClarence, Capt. Royal Navy, and Lady Maria Henriette Scott; husband of Violet Churchill, 12 Lowndes Street, Belgrave Square, London. He was awarded the Victoria Cross in the South African War (1900) for three acts of bravery.

Cattleman Patrick Corcoran, Merchant Marine, SS *Adela*. Drowned at sea, 28 December 1917. Age 49. Born Castledermot, Co. Kildare, 25 July 1868. Son of John Corcoran, farmer, and Anne Redmond, Barn Hill, Castledermot; husband of Catherine Tobin, 77 Townsend Street, Dublin.

First Fatality

Private Patrick Joseph Heydon, Irish Guards, 1st Battalion. Killed in action, Villers Cotterets Forest, France, 4 September 1914. Age 30. Born Athy, Co. Kildare, 2 January 1883. Son of Patrick Heydon, farmer, and Margaret M. Doyle, Churchtown House, Churchtown, Athy, Co. Kildare. His brother, Private Aloysius Heydon, was killed in action in France on 27 November 1917.

Last Fatality

Able Seaman Robert Williamson, Royal Fleet Reserve, died on 10 November 1918. Age 34. Born Killadoon, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, 23 July 1884. Son of Francis Williamson, coachman, and Maryann Martin. He was the last Kildare man to die in the war when the minesweeper, H.M.S. *Ascot*, was sunk by a German U-boat off the Farnes Islands, Northumberland coast. Robert's half-brother, Francis Williamson, was killed in action on 15 November 1916.



It is estimated that 35,000 Irishmen died in World War I. Current research has ascertained that two women and 748 men from Co. Kildare lost their lives in the conflict. This figure takes account of those who were born or lived in Co. Kildare for an extended period of time. It also includes a number of men born in Co. Kildare to English, Scottish and Welsh parents who resided in the county while their fathers were serving in the military.



The vast majority died while in the service of the armies of Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, India and the United States, as well as the British Mercantile Marine and the Voluntary Aid Detachment. The Kildare dead lie in Flanders (Belgium), France, Gallipoli (Turkey), Africa, India, Mesopotamia, Britain and Ireland.

"I hope to come back. If not, I believe that to sleep here in the France that I have loved is no harsh fate, and that so passing out into silence, I shall help towards the Irish settlement. Give my love to my colleagues — the Irish people have no need of it."

Tom Kettle, Extract from a letter to Joseph Devlin, 1916

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission recorded the majority of those that died. Many of the fallen have no individual graves and are commemorated on war memorials by name only; the names of others are recorded on private family graves in Co. Kildare. Some did not die in combat, but passed away at home in Ireland or Britain, as a result of illness, accident, or suicide, and were buried locally.

From towns and villages, rural cottages and the big country houses, Kildare men marched away to the great battles of the Western Front and beyond. Some were regular soldiers with a family tradition of service in the British armed forces; a sizeable number were volunteers who were fighting for the freedom of small nations and Home Rule for Ireland; many were economic recruits and some joined for the chance of adventure.



Through this archway, thousands of soldiers from the Regimental Depot of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers at Naas marched to their fate. Other military garrisons at the Curragh, Newbridge and Kildare supplied men to the front. It is claimed that Athy and the surrounding district suffered the greatest loss of life per capita in Ireland while Clongowes Wood College, Clane, proportionately lost more alumni than England's Eton College. The single greatest loss of life of men from Co. Kildare occurred on the first day of the German Spring Offensive, 21 March 1918 when twenty-one were killed.

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from falling hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

In Flanders Fields,
John McCrae, 1915

CIVIC MEMORIAL UNVEILED BY THE MAYOR OF CO. KILDARE, CLLR. SEÁN POWER, 11.00 a.m. 11 NOVEMBER, 2018.

