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Hidden from Memory: Remembrance and Commemoration of the Sherwood Foresters’ Involvement in Easter, 1916

Amanda S. Kinchen

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Hidden from Memory: Remembrance and Commemoration of the Sherwood Foresters’ Involvement in Easter, 1916.

by

Amanda Kinchen

(Under the Direction of Brian K. Feltman)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the level at which the Sherwood Foresters are commemorated for their service during the Easter Rising of 1916. The Sherwood Foresters, known officially as the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment, were created in 1881 in England after combining the 45th (Nottinghamshire) and 95th (Derbyshire) Regiments of Foot and had previously served as part of the guard to the royal family. Four battalions were sent to Dublin to quell the rebellion, yet their efforts go largely unnoticed in the annals of the history of World War I. These men are not considered war heroes, as their deaths occurred on the colonial front rather than the Western front in 1916. These ordinary men were sent, largely unprepared, into combat against a small number of Irish rebels in the Battle for Mount Street Bridge. The Foresters suffered heavy losses in Dublin, and they remained in Ireland for the executions of rebel leaders in the weeks following the insurrection. After research was conducted in various archives and state facilities in both Ireland and England, eyewitness testimonies, newspaper articles, published books, photographs and other sources were compiled to create not only a first-hand narrative of the Foresters’ time in Ireland, but also to demonstrate how the Foresters were remembered by their contemporaries, both in during the battle and the days after, and how they are commemorated in the present day. In the end, the local hometowns of Nottingham and Derby commemorate their heroes in a variety of ways, while in Ireland the Foresters are largely forgotten. However, the level of recognition for the Sherwood Foresters and their efforts in Dublin in 1916 is growing, particularly through publications and multimedia, such as historical
documentaries. As the hundredth anniversary of the Easter Rising approaches, recognition for all those involved is a critical issue, and the level to which the Foresters will be remembered is still in question.

INDEX WORDS: Sherwood Foresters, Easter Rising 1916, Dublin, Nottingham, World War I, Mount Street Bridge, commemoration, remembrance
Hidden from Memory: Remembrance and Commemoration of the Sherwood Foresters’
Involvement in Easter, 1916.

by

Amanda Kinchen

B.A., Georgia Southern University, 2012

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Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF THE ARTS

STATESBORO, GEORGIA
Hidden from Memory: Remembrance and Commemoration of the Sherwood Foresters’ Involvement in Easter, 1916.

by

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Electronic Version Approved:
May 2014
DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this thesis project to my father, Tom Kinchen, and my grandparents, Thomas and Evelyn Kinchen, whose faith in my abilities as a historian and whose love, teachings and guidance have made all of my successes possible. I would also like to dedicate this project to the memory of the 2/5th, 2/6th, 2/7th, and 2/8th battalions of the Sherwood Foresters, in recognition of their service and efforts in Dublin, Ireland, during Easter Week, 1916. May this project enlighten scholars to some of the unsung heroes of World War I.

In memory of my mother, Pamela Kinchen. Miss and love you, Mommy.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis project would not be possible without many individuals. I would not have succeeded in completing this project without the guidance, teachings, and support of the Georgia Southern History Department. I would also like to thank the Georgia Southern University Center for Irish Studies for their support and aid in conducting research for this thesis. My 2013 research trip to Ireland and England was funded in part by contributions made to the Eddie Ivie Scholarship for Study in Ireland by the Sun City-Hilton Head Irish Heritage Society of Bluffton, South Carolina. I wish to thank that Society’s Board and members for their generosity. I also wish to thank the Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies at Georgia Southern University for its award of summer travel monies in support of my Europe-based research. In Ireland, two individuals were essential to understanding the story of the Sherwood Foresters and their sacrifices in 1916. Paul O’Brien and John McGuiggan’s guidance towards the project and their intellectual contributions to the legacy of the Foresters are vital to this project and to the commemoration of Easter 1916. Thanks to Keith Farrell, whose historical docudrama was part of the inspiration for making the Foresters the topic of my thesis project. In England, I would like to acknowledge the aid of Cliff Housley and Eddie Edwards, whose tours of historical sites, museums, and research contributions were instrumental in the completion of this thesis. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the guidance and advice of my thesis committee, Howard Keeley, Emerson McMullen, and especially my advisor, Brian K. Feltman, without whom this entire process would not be possible.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Understanding the power of memory is an essential quality of any historian’s job. Any event ever recorded has come from an individual’s perspective, giving us insight into what made that event so important that it was worth remembering. Memory plays an especially significant role in war. As Paul Fussell reminds us in *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975), “Every war is ironic because every war is worse than expected. Every war constitutes an irony of situation because its means are so melodramatically disproportionate to its presumed ends.”

Military leaders can plan for war and predict an outcome, but the end results are often dramatically worse than anticipated. World War I was a war unlike any previous war in scale, technological advancements and devastation, and it would set the precedent for later conflicts of the twentieth century.

When discussing the volunteers from all parts of the world in 1914, George L. Mosse stated: “The rush to the colors of this generation has been ascribed to the fact that they no longer knew the reality of war; the Franco-Prussian War was fought long before and had been a short war in any case, an easy triumph for Germany over France.” The previous trend of warfare changed with this rush of young men signing up to fight during the First World War, and the mass mobilization of soldiers played an important role in how memory of war was shaped. With the declaration of a global war, society and culture also changed. Fussell remarks: “The Great War was more ironic than any before or since...It reversed the Idea of Progress.”

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The cultural mood which had preceded the declarations of war was of vital importance, for here, as earlier, it was an educated elite of soldiers who articulated the ideas and hopes of the generation of 1914, reflecting the intellectual currents of the time. The newly found self-consciousness of youth at the turn of the century was important, and so was the confrontation with a rapidly changing society.\(^4\)

These soldiers may have been educated, but the coming war was something no one was prepared for. The war was expected to be short, ending by Christmas, but instead it became a long, four-year war of attrition that saw the destruction of much of Europe, the death of nearly an entire generation of men, and the map of the world change drastically.

Memories associated with war can be a difficult topic to address. Countless memoirs and autobiographies have been written, detailing all aspects of warfare. During the fighting, newspapers reported on the action on a daily basis. Soldiers on the front lines would write letters home to their loved ones, but as Fussell points out, “Even if those at home had wanted to know the realities of the war, they couldn’t have without experiencing them: its conditions were too novel, its industrialized ghastliness too unprecedented.”\(^5\) The truth was shielded from the public: “Few soldiers wrote the truth in letters home for fear of causing needless uneasiness. If they did ever write the truth, it was excised by company officers, who censored all outgoing mail.”\(^6\) The public were unaware of just how ghastly life on the front lines was since military officials censored all materials coming from the front to avoid panic. And how reliable are the memories of the men who served on the front lines? They were under extreme duress, vacillating from boring lives in the trenches to storming across No Man’s Land in the field. The trauma of seeing their childhood friends die before them, of entire units being massacred could cause soldiers to remember things incorrectly or completely fabricate memories of events that never happened as

\(^4\) Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 54.
\(^6\) Ibid.
a way of coping. Many soldiers did not write one hundred percent truth in their letters home, making eyewitness testimonies a precarious source for material. Historians must be careful to recognize any bias, fabrications, or misinformation when examining these kinds of primary sources.

History remembers the great battles, the heroes, and the devastation that destroyed nations and changed the lives of those involved. Stefan Goebel describes the atmosphere after World War I:

The Great War of 1914-18 and its attendant emotional shocks and socio-political upheavals rocked the foundations of all belligerent European societies. Some survivors, though, set out to heal the fractures of war by asserting historical continuity through memorials and acts of remembrance.7

Over the past century, so much of World War I has been commemorated that it is hard to think that anything or anyone could have been left out. But sometimes, particularly in large-scale events such as World War I, events and people are overlooked, misinterpreted or forgotten. The Easter Rising, one of the most significant events in Irish history and one that led to the formation of the Republic of Ireland, was largely overshadowed by World War I. Though the Rising is a widely researched topic in Irish history, some aspects of the rebellion have been left behind, untouched for nearly a hundred years.

Within the story of the Easter Rising, there are names and events that are largely overlooked. One particular group of British soldiers, the Sherwood Foresters, has been almost completely forgotten in the memory of Easter 1916. Their work and service during the Easter Rising is buried by the large personalities of and the conflict that would come about because of the Easter Rising. Nonetheless, their story is an important one; they were just as much war heroes as the men who died in battles such as the Somme, where many men, including hundreds of

Irishmen, were killed on July 1st and 2nd. These men were just common men from ordinary backgrounds that took up arms to defend their country, just the same as their brothers in arms on the Western Front. Yet the British government does not formally recognize them as being killed in action in World War I.

Men who are casualties of war have the distinction of fighting in defense of a cause, for the protection of their nation’s freedom from a diametrically opposed worldview. These men are sent to the front lines for a cause and are seen as heroes, awarded for their bravery and sacrifice. Soldiers who are sent to quell rebellions seem to receive less recognition. When a colony rebels, it shows that the imperial nation has lost control over its colony and that their subjects have found ways to subvert colonial power and fight for their independence. Rebellions, therefore, show weakness within the imperial power, forcing it to send soldiers to put its subjects back in their proper place as a subjugated people. These soldiers are not protecting their homeland from invaders, but rather maintaining the empire. Ireland was considered part of the home front by Britain, so their service was not seemingly as significant as others who fought on the continent.

The story of the Easter Rising is an intriguing one. Some of the Irish were fed up with British imperial authority which had existed in Ireland for nearly a thousand years, which came to a head with the Act of Union in 1801 whereby Ireland officially became part of the United Kingdom. They decided that 1916, while the British were occupied with World War I, was the perfect time to strike. On Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, a week-long rebellion resulted in a British victory and the tightening of imperial rule in Ireland. Historians remember rebel leaders such as Patrick Pearse, Joseph Mary Plunkett, and Eamon de Valera; they remember places such as Boland’s Bakery and the General Post Office; but rarely is the British perspective observed in the discussion of Easter 1916.
Many Britons want to forget Easter 1916 for a number of reasons. First, the rebellion showed the weakness of British control over Ireland, who had been its colony for centuries. It also was a near-catastrophe for the British military forces involved. Especially for the Foresters, the small number of rebels proved to be a formidable foe, one that was willing to do whatever it took to gain its freedom. Memories of the Anglo-Boer Wars, where the British were confronted by African colonials known as Boers, considered by them as “inferior,” could have influenced their feelings towards the Irish, another group of “inferior” colonials. Lastly, it came at a most inopportune time in which the last thing Britain needed was one of the colonies rebelling; it also could have potentially set off a chain reaction amongst their other colonies. 1916 became part of a larger process of Britain’s colonies causing them problems and the beginning of the end of the British Empire.

A historiographical gap exists in the historical works concerning the Easter Rising. There are hundreds of books written about all aspects of the Rising, from the origins to the cultural impact to the rebels themselves. One of the most comprehensive and important works concerning Easter 1916 is Max Caulfield’s *The Easter Rebellion*. First published in 1964, Caulfield uses interviews from survivors of the rebellion as well as primary and secondary source material to construct a detailed account of the events of Easter Week. He weaves the narrative of the Sherwood Foresters into the larger story of the Rising, telling the complete story of the events of Easter Week. He points out just how unprepared the Foresters were as they arrived in Ireland: “They consisted, for the most part, of a bewildered and seasick bunch of English Midlanders. Half of them still had the impression that they had landed in France, and even the next morning a soldier greeted a girl, ‘Bonjour, ma’moiselle.’” 8 Although it provides little in the way of new

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information on the Foresters, it does put them within the action of the rebellion, and Caulfield is one of the first books to include the Foresters within the narrative of the Rising.

Another significant work on the Rising is Charles Townshend’s *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion*, published in 2005. Again it is a comprehensive look at the Rising, delving into the political figures and rebel leaders involved in the rebellion. Unlike Caulfield’s work, however, Townshend barely mentions the Foresters’ involvement in Easter 1916. They only merit a couple of mentions in a three-page section of the 400-plus page text. His work goes beyond just the events of Easter Week in that it details the aftermath of the rebellion, both immediate and lasting, and also the political debates that led to the rebellion. It is an essential text on the Easter Rising, though it lacks the specific details on the particular events during the chaotic week that Caulfield’s book provides. Tim Pat Coogan’s *1916: The Easter Rising*, published in 2001, is a short, concise history of the Easter Rising that gives a more general overview of the events of the week rather than delving into specific themes or topics within the rebellion. Nevertheless, it is an important addition to the historiography of the Easter Rising in that his one big contribution is the connection of the rebellion to the more contemporary events occurring in Ireland today and the foresight to see that this could happen again.

It is also important to look at books dealing with Anglo-Irish relations during the early twentieth century. George Dangerfield’s *The Damnable Question: A Study in Anglo-Irish Relations* (1976) is an extensive work that details how the Easter Rising was a turning point for British-Irish relations. Dangerfield claims that Easter Week “is in fact central to the whole study of political Anglo-Ireland in modern history. It is much more than a point of no return; it is a great watershed.”

atmosphere between Ireland and England today, and without it relations would be very different. His book also deals with how the rebellion affected the people of Ireland; he says that the Rising made it “difficult, though not impossible, for the Irish people to return to the state of mind they were in before it occurred.” England and Ireland were forever changed after the rebellion, and the events that would occur post-rebellion, particularly the Anglo-Irish War and the Irish Civil War, would change the face of Irish history in ways no one could have predicted.

The British considered Ireland their first overseas colony. First invaded in the twelfth century, substantial British presence in Ireland began in the sixteenth century with the introduction of the plantation system by Queen Elizabeth I. British aristocrats travelled to Ireland, were given sections of land, and subjugated the local Irish population into tenancy. In some ways, they also tried to “civilize” the Irish by forcing them to put their history, culture, and way of life aside in favor of British ideals and aims. The Irish, however, were not so willing to relinquish their heritage. The bloody and widespread United Irish republican rebellion of 1798 was one of the first big steps towards independence. Even though the rebellion failed, it demonstrated to the British that the Irish were not going tolerate imperial rule forever. It also caused the British to dissolve the Irish parliament and the creation of the Act of Union in 1801.

By the nineteenth century, after the Great Famine of the mid 1800s, a revival of Gaelic culture had swept across Ireland, taking form in all aspects of life, from literature to sport to politics. Some of the most important results of Gaelic Revival were the opening of the Abbey Theatre, the creation of the Gaelic Athletic Association, and the revival of the native Irish language, the last of which largely failed. But many among the Irish wanted more: they desired to be an independent nation, free from the authority of the British Empire. Others would have been happy with an independent Irish parliament along with continued participation in the

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10 Ibid.
United Kingdom. They tried, and failed, twice to get a Home Rule Bill passed through Parliament. Finally, on May 25, 1914, the Home Rule Bill passed the House of Commons and the veto against it was overridden by the House of Lords. However, with the outbreak of World War I, the enactment of the Home Rule Bill was suspended until the conclusion of the war.

Though it was 1914, not all of Europe was preoccupied by preparing for World War I. In Britain, the concern was not only on the tensions between Austria-Hungary, Serbia and their allies, but also on the nation next door. Many viewed the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand as a “high society scandal,” and British eyes turned toward Dublin in preparation for the outbreak of war.\(^\text{11}\) Everyone believed the war would be over by Christmas, and with a Home Rule Bill passed but suspended, the British decided the Irish could wait a bit longer for independence. But with the passage of the Home Rule Bill came dissention amongst the Irish. The northern counties, primarily in the Ulster province, wanted to remain part of the United Kingdom. The Ulster Volunteers (UVF) stood ready to fight for union, while other rebel groups such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) stood ready to fight for independence.\(^\text{12}\) The British were more concerned with keeping the peace within their own empire rather than the chaos that was soon to erupt on the continent. In regards to the war, the British were concerned only in whether the Irish within the British army would be obedient and loyal to the crown. But they were sure that this issue would remain “England’s problem” and not become a European one, unlike World War I.\(^\text{13}\)

Britain asked Ireland for volunteers to join the ranks of the British military. Many men did in fact join. However, not all men in Ireland felt it was their duty to fight for England. During this time, several secret groups had formed, plotting to use the distraction of World War I to

\(^{12}\text{Ibid, 29-30.}\)
\(^{13}\text{Ibid, 30.}\)
rebel against British authority and seize independence once and for all, including the UVF and the Irish Volunteer Force (IVF). Led by Patrick Pearse, Eamon de Valera, Michael Malone and others, the rebels decided on Easter Sunday as the day to strike due to its symbolic associations with Christ. However, their plan had to be revised after the events of April 22nd, 1916.

Prior to the start of the rebellion, the Irish looked to the Germans for aid in their cause. Roger Casement, who had been working closely with the Germans, had tried to smuggle a shipment of German guns into Ireland via Tralee Bay. However, the plan was foiled. Under the command of Captain Karl Spindler, the Aud, a German ship disguised as a Norwegian freighter, helped Casement and his cohorts escape via a submarine before sailing the Aud into Ireland. The ship passed two checkpoints but failed at a third. Spindler and his crew were ordered to follow the HMS Bluebell, a British naval vessel that had intercepted the Aud, into Queenstown Harbor. Rather than risk being caught with a ship loaded with illegal guns, on Saturday, April 22, 1916, Spindler set off dynamite in the hold of the ship, sinking the vessel and its cargo to the bottom of Queenstown Harbor. Casement had been taken to Ballyheigue Bay after failing to meet up with the Aud. On Good Friday, Casement was found by members of the Ardfort Barracks police force, arrested, and eventually sent to London to stand trial for his actions.\(^{14}\)

After the arrest of Casement and the loss of the German guns, the issue of whether to continue with the rebellion arose. The original start date for the rebellion had been set for Easter Sunday, April 23rd, 1916. However, it was decided that rather than cancel it completely, the start date would be pushed back by one day. On Easter Monday, April 24th, 1916, the rebels were sent orders to mobilize; Pearse famously stood on the steps of the General Post Office and read the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, declaring Ireland independent of British authority. The British were caught completely off guard by the uprising and were forced to respond quickly.

The Foresters, known officially as the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment, was a regiment created in 1881 in England after combining the 45th (Nottinghamshire) and 95th (Derbyshire) Regiments of Foot. Although the British soldiers already stationed in Dublin outnumbered the Irish rebels significantly, the Irish had the advantage of knowing the structure of the city and had very secure points where they garrisoned themselves for the oncoming assaults. Eventually, the British were forced to call for reinforcements from the mainland. On April 25th, 1916, “two infantry brigades were sent, the 176th and the 178th…Each brigade was made up of two battalions of the Sherwood Foresters, and as [Captain Arthur] Lee noted, ‘most of our ‘men’ were merely boys, Derby Recruits, who had been in uniform about 6 or 8 weeks.’”

The Derbyshire battalions were ordered to take Dublin Castle while the Nottinghamshire soldiers were ordered to march directly through Dublin in a show of force. Two battalions, the 2/7 and 2/8, were dispatched to help their British comrades in the Battle for Mount Street Bridge. This bridge crosses the Grand Canal, located about 1.86 miles south of the General Post Office.

In this battle, the Foresters faced approximately seventeen rebels and their forces were nearly wiped out. The Irish had set up posts at Clanwilliam House, 25 Northumberland Road, Boland’s Bakery, and the Parochial Hall along Mount Street and the adjacent canal. These were very secure positions and the rebels had a clear line of sight of the both Mount Street and the street leading from Beggar’s Bush Barracks from which the first British troops to engage the rebels would emerge. The Foresters, trapped out in the open and unfamiliar with their surroundings, were picked off in large numbers while they tried to determine the positions of the Irish. In the end, though, the British troops were able to defeat the rebels, though not without

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significant casualties. Other fighting also took place around the Royal Hospital and the Four Courts in Dublin, and the Foresters played a role in those skirmishes as well.\textsuperscript{16}

The next week, on Tuesday, May 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 1916, the first of the rebel leaders was executed at Kilmainham Gaol. Some of the Foresters who had been involved in quelling the rebellion were asked to be members of the execution parties as retribution for the slaying of their comrades, which some of them accepted. Many of the Foresters who died are “buried in forgotten graveyards throughout Dublin city,”\textsuperscript{17} such as Grangegorman Military Cemetery; others lie in mass graves with Irish rebels and civilians also killed in 1916.\textsuperscript{18} Little else has been done in the way of commemorating the Foresters; a stone memorial was erected on Mount Street in Dublin, which was largely forgotten for years, and the Regimental Memorial Site at Crich in Derby was opened in 1923 to honor all Foresters who died in the Great War, including those who fell at Mount Street and other areas around Dublin. A series of books, including \textit{Blood on the Streets} and \textit{Uncommon Valour}, and a documentary film also depict the Foresters’ role in the events of Easter week, but little else exists commemorating the Sherwood Foresters’ sacrifice.

Focusing on contemporary sources such as personal narratives, eyewitness testimonies, and newspaper clippings, I examine how the Foresters were remembered in the time during and immediately after the rebellion. I also look at how they are commemorated in the present, from books written about them and documentary films portraying their sacrifice to memorials and gravesites dedicated to the Foresters. Through this investigation, I will demonstrate why these men deserve to be remembered and respected as dedicated soldiers of the British Empire who

\textsuperscript{17}O’Brien, \textit{Blood on the Streets}, 114.
fought and died for their nation, explaining in the process the hesitation of the British government to honor these soldiers as war heroes.

The aim of this thesis is to tell the story of these men through the eyes of memory, determining the extent to which their sacrifice was recognized in both contemporary and modern memory. The broader outline for this thesis is to include an introduction that explains Anglo-Irish relations up to 1916 and the rebellion in general. I divide the sections into two larger categories: memory then and memory now. The second chapter looks at the 1916 perspective of the Foresters, through eyewitness testimonies gathered by the Bureau of Military History, diaries and personal papers of people involved, such as the regimental histories of each of the four regiments sent to Ireland, the pocket book of Annan Dickson, and Eamon de Valera’s personal manuscript collection. Chapter three looks at local newspapers of the time, comparing the British and Irish reporting of the events of 1916. I include five newspapers in my research: the *Freeman’s Journal* and the *Irish Times*, both of Dublin, for the Irish perspective, and the *Nottingham Evening News*, the *Nottingham Evening Post*, and the *Nottingham Daily Express* for the British (who had a morning and evening edition of their newspapers).

Chapter four looks at how modern memory views the Foresters and their actions in Ireland. For this chapter I rely more on secondary sources dealing with commemoration of the rebellion in general and books specifically regarding the Foresters. The primary text on the Sherwood Foresters in Dublin is entitled *Blood on the Streets: 1916 and The Battle for Mount Street Bridge* (2008), by Paul O’Brien, who is one of the first historians to tell this incredible story. I will also rely on the documentary film, *A Terrible Beauty* (2013), by Keith Farrell, along with broader histories of the rebellion and other secondary sources on the Foresters. An important primary source I use in this chapter is personal photographs from the memorial sites.
and gravesites of the Foresters to demonstrate the degree to which they have been remembered and the lack of commemoration in both Ireland and England. I conclude with a chapter on the need for more recognition for the Foresters and their sacrifice in Ireland, bringing all of my evidence together to show how memory had forgotten these men and what they accomplished in Ireland. Hopefully, my thesis will bring awareness to the story of the Sherwood Foresters and encourage other historians to look at them with more enthusiasm and perhaps one day the Foresters will receive the credit that is due to them for their service to king and country in 1916.
Timeline of Events: Easter Week, 1916

Monday, April 24th, 1916
32.00 pm
Proclamation of the Irish Republic read; beginning of the Easter Rising; rebels take up positions along Northumberland Road, Clonwilliam House, and other positions around the city

Monday Afternoon
Attack on the Gorgeous Rex by Malone and his men

Monday Evening
Sherwood Foresters receive orders for departure to "unknown location"

Tuesday/Early Wednesday, April 25-26th, 1916
Sherwood Foresters arrive in Kingstown, mobilize, and move towards Dublin

Wednesday Afternoon
2/5th and 2/6th arrive at Kilmainham, Hospital and engage nearby rebels

Wednesday Evening
2/7th and 2/8th battalion engage in the Battle of Mount Street Bridge, taking of No. 25, the Parochial Hall and the Schoolhouse

Thursday, April 27th, 1916
2/5th and 2/6th take over railway station at Island Bridge, barracks and Dublin Castle, respectfully, then take Parnell and Capel Streets and move on to the Four Courts

Friday, April 28th, 1916
2/7th and 2/8th engage in small skirmishes on the way to Kilmainham Hospital

Saturday, April 29th, 1916
Occasional shots across city from rebels as rebellion begins to falter

May 8th, 12th, 1916
Surrender of the rebels and the end of the Easter Rising; Foresters begin rounding up prisoners and escorting them to jail

Executions of rebel leaders; Foresters participated in the execution parties

Figure 1.1: Timeline of Events: Easter Week, 1916
CHAPTER 2

IN THE THICK OF IT: PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES FROM EASTER WEEK, 1916

When examining the events of the Easter Rising, an important source of information for what occurred during those fateful days is eyewitness testimonies.¹ There are numerous types of testimonies that emerged during and after the Rising. One perspective of the events of Easter Week can be gained from the regimental histories of each of the four Sherwood Forester regiments involved in the rebellion. Compiled by each of the battalions shortly after the rebellion, they provide a clear and concise account of how the Sherwood Foresters planned, engaged and eventually succeeded in the assault on Mount Street Bridge.

Another contemporary source that reveals much about the events of Easter 1916 is the Bureau of Military History’s collection of eyewitness testimonies. These interviews were conducted approximately forty years after the events they detail, so they must be viewed with a critical eye due to the time that had passed. Nevertheless, they provide a first-hand look at the chaotic and traumatic battles of 1916. Similarly, diaries and pocket journals composed by soldiers engaged in the various skirmishes around Dublin give an on-the-ground perspective of the events of Easter Week. Written in the middle of combat, these sources also must be viewed with a critical eye, yet they do provide an up close and personal account of what it was like to be involved in quelling the rebellion.

Finally, documents included in the personal collections of the rebel leaders not only give insight into the planning and organization of the rebellion, but also demonstrate how the execution of the rebellion changed with the growing presence of British soldiers in Dublin.

When combined, these varied primary sources reconstruct what happened that fateful week in

¹ The newspapers used in this chapter do not contain page numbers because the archived PDF files do not list page numbers; others, such as the Mansfield Advertiser, were transcribed into a Word document and do not contain page numbers.
April 1916 from the perspective of those who fought to defend their country, whether that be Ireland or England. They also demonstrate the ferocity, the bravery, and the unwillingness to surrender displayed by both the Sherwood Foresters and the rebels and how the Battle of Mount Street Bridge impacted the inexperienced British soldiers that walked the bloody streets of Dublin in 1916.

The Easter Rising began on April 24th, 1916, after months of planning and organizing. Patrick Pearse, a former schoolteacher who now commanded the Irish Volunteers, stood on the steps of the General Post Office and proclaimed Ireland a republic, free from the stranglehold of English authority. He stated that “the Irish republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irish woman,” but many citizens were not sympathetic to the rebellion.2 Once Pearse concluded his speech, rebel groups took up their positions across Dublin. Eamon de Valera was commander of one such group, stationed in Boland’s Bakery in Ballsbridge. Under his command was a smart, capable leader named Michael Malone. De Valera ordered Malone and his men to take up their positions along Northumberland Road near Mount Street Bridge; their only order was to keep any British reinforcements from making their way into the city.3 The rebels spread out along the street, with Malone and Seamus Grace taking up positions in 25 Northumberland Road, a house on the corner of Northumberland and Haddington Roads. Other key positions along Northumberland Road included the Parochial Hall and Clanwilliam House.

The first British soldiers to come into contact with the rebels along Northumberland Road were not Sherwood Foresters, but British soldiers already stationed in Dublin, particularly one

group, the “Gorgeous Rex,” which was stationed at Beggar’s Bush Barracks just down the road. Captain E. Gerrard, a member of the A.D.C. 5th Division of the British Forces in Ireland, recalled the scene in Dublin upon his return from his Easter holiday:

I was in civilian attire. I was in Harcourt Street when I heard a shout: “Stop the man with the pipe.” I hastily removed my pipe and managed to escape. I did not know what was going on. I saw the insurrection troops assembling at the top of Grafton Street and going into Stephen’s Green…. I realized there was something serious on, and I went home and got my uniform in a bag. When going home I met Sir Frederick Shaw, Bushy Park, and he told me to go into Beggars Bush Barracks.4

Soldiers already stationed in Dublin rushed back to the barracks, intending to quell the oncoming rebellion. However, as Gerrard pointed out, “There were no arms in Beggars Bush Barracks. Thinking it over, the G.Rs. were there- but their rifles were not service type- and they had no ammunition.” Only himself, Shaw, and approximately sixteen other men were the defense of Beggars Bush until the arrival of reinforcements.5 Meanwhile, the Gorgeous Rex was marching toward the rebellion, even though the soldiers were nearly defenseless against the Irish.

As their enemy marched on Northumberland, the rebels, from their secured and obscured hiding points, picked the British off one by one. These British had been out practicing maneuvers, and the rebels did not hesitate to strike. The Gorgeous Rex were helpless against the rebels: there was little to no cover along Northumberland Road and their rifles were empty from their training. The few who survived had made it back to the barracks while “bodies littered the streets. Locals ran from their houses to assist the wounded British soldiers.”6 The locals were largely unaware of what was happening around them, and some were loyal to their colonial ruler, not wanting to engage in more bloodshed over independence. They had mercy for the Gorgeous

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5 Ibid.
6 The Western Front Association, “The Battle of Mount Street Bridge.”
Rex and helped those who were wounded or dead. The Irish rebels knew the British would call for reinforcements, so Malone and his men simply waited for them to arrive and walk into their trap.

After hearing of the outbreak of rebellion in Ireland, the British decided to send troops to Dublin to put the rebellion down and help keep the peace in their colony. On Monday night, the 178th Brigade of the Sherwood Foresters, which included the 2/5th, 2/6th, 2/7th, and 2/8th battalions, received orders that they were moving to an “unknown destination” and were to depart early the next morning.7 During the Great War, many new battalions were created as the scope of the war grew larger and larger. The 2/6th battalion was one such group; it was created in 1914 to support the 6th Battalion and act as replacements for casualties on the front line.8 These men were essentially replacements in waiting, only to be used when men on the front lines were killed or wounded in battle.

The British 2/7 Battalion, also known as the “Robin Hoods,” were created for a similar purpose. After being decommissioned after the Anglo-Boer Wars in South Africa in 1908, the 2/7th Battalion was reorganized for support of the First Battalion. Their work, however, was not as grand as they had hoped; their duties included digging trenches as their level of training for combat declined.9 The 2/8th Battalion had been prepping for their first training in musketry, which was to take place on May 1st; however, these inexperienced men would instead get their first, and for some their last, time firing a weapon in Dublin.10

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10 Oates, The Sherwood Foresters, 34.
Many of the men in the four battalions were on leave for Easter and had to be recalled. Believing they were being called back for a drill, the Foresters slowly returned to camp where they were loaded onto trains and sent to the docks at Liverpool. During training, many of the Foresters believed they would be deployed in France or other areas in the continent, fighting alongside their comrades in the Great War. When they received the orders to ship out, the soldiers did not know where the ships were being sent and it was not until they heard that Roger Casement, who had concocted a plan to smuggle illegal guns into Ireland via a German ship called the *Aud*, had been captured and arrested that they realized they were being sent to Ireland.

Upon arrival at Liverpool, the Foresters and their sparse gear were loaded onto two cargo ships: the 2/5th and 2/6th battalions aboard the *Munster*, and the 2/7th and 2/8th on the S.S. *Patriotic*. The 2/8th Battalion of the Foresters had been assigned four Lewis guns, which were light machine guns used during World War I. Two of them had been loaded on the trains with them as they travelled to Liverpool. However, when they arrived three companies were to be sent immediately to Ireland, while D Company and the guns were left behind for the next transport.

Lieutenant-Colonel W.C. Oates noted this fatal mistake:

> The value of the presence of even two of these guns, in Dublin next day would have been incalculable, and the British Army seems fated to have its work blocked or rendered as difficult as possible by officials dressed with a little brief authority, whose orders may not be questioned and who rarely have to answer for after results.

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15 Ibid.
The problem with the Foresters and their entire endeavor in Dublin was that the commanding officers who sent the men to Ireland, many to their deaths, were not held responsible for the disaster that occurred. With their machine guns left behind on the docks of Liverpool, the first battalions were ill-equipped and ill-trained to take on the handful of rebels that had overwhelmed the capital.

The two cargo ships reached their destination, the port of Kingstown (now Dún Laoghaire), under the cover of darkness. There, the Foresters disembarked, and according to Oates, “It seemed incredible that not six miles away murder and bloodshed, in their worst and most treacherous form held sway. It was a glorious morning and Ireland looked her best.” The day seemed as normal as any other, but there were signs that something was amiss. Frederick Beazley, one of the 2/7th battalion, wrote in a letter to his parents: “We arrived at Kingstown at 8 o’clock on Wednesday morning and found everything upside down. The rebels had been there the Monday before and had burnt down the pavilion.” The march to Dublin was not easy, as each of the men carried full packs, guns and 130 rounds of munitions. The locals were not afraid of the British, though. In fact, they seemed welcoming towards the Foresters during their walk, bringing them water along their hot trek. The 2/7th and 2/8th battalions were to approach Dublin through the Blackrock suburb along the coast through the districts of Ballsbridge and Booterstown, while the 2/5th and 2/6th were to enter the city via the Stillorgan-Donnybrook road where their destination was to be the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham. This plan would

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17 The Robin Hoods, 281.
18 Oates, The Sherwood Foresters in the Great War, 36.
22 The Robin Hoods, 282.
24 The Robin Hoods, 282.
allow the Foresters to enter the city parallel to one another so they could surround the largest portion of the rebels and cut them off.

Along their march through the suburbs, the Foresters learned valuable pieces of information about the rebels’ positions and strength. One cyclist with the 178th Brigade, Lance Corporal B.C. Webster, said, “We heard startling accounts of the rising of the rebels, half Dublin was on fire we were told…Our orders were to take no prisoners, ‘Shoot them all’ was the order…Some said there were 15,000 Sinn Feiners in Dublin, while others were lower estimates.”25 They were told to be on the lookout for the green uniforms of the rebels, particularly along Northumberland Road, which was to be the site of the Foresters’ biggest losses.26 They also learned that many of the most important buildings in Dublin, including the General Post office and Sackville Street, were all under the control of the rebels. Most importantly, they found that many “unarmed Officers and men had been brutally done to death, some of them wounded and utterly unable to protect themselves.”27 The rebels had already shown their aggression against the British forces stationed in Dublin, and this would be a foreshadowing of the brutality that awaited the Foresters.

The commander of the 2/5th and 2/6th battalions, Lieutenant-Colonel Hodgkin, decided to send out a group of cyclists ahead of the troops to scope out the area and check for any rebel traps, with the soldiers slowly following behind.28 As they made their way into the city, “the people in the Dublin suburbs turned out en masse to greet the Brigade. From all sides offerings of oranges, bananas, sandwiches and chocolate, were pressed on the men. Women walked beside

26 The Robin Hoods, 283.
27 Oates, The Sherwood Foresters in the Great War, 36.
the battalions…whilst our overwhelmed Tommies hastily gulped down cups of tea.”

The Irish were happy to see the Foresters marching towards Dublin to quell the rebellion, as many of them were not in favor of the uprising and many Dubliners were shocked by the rebels’ actions. They showed kindness towards the British, something it seems the Foresters were not expecting. The 2/5th and 2/6th battalions continued mostly unhindered as they reached the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham, where they rested soundly for the night.

Meanwhile the 2/7th and 2/8th continued on their route to Ballsbridge, where the first shots against the Foresters were fired. Gerald James Edmunds commented that “this was a time when the Lewis guns left on the quay at Liverpool would have been of invaluable service.”

The Foresters, as they got closer to the center of the city, realized that the situation was much more dire than they had originally thought. Unlike the 2/5th and 2/6th, the 2/7th and 2/8th did not have such an easy time entering the city. Their encounter with the rebels would become known as the Battle for Mount Street Bridge.

The 2/8th, many of whom had only had three months of training, continued on their course through Ballsbridge into Dublin just behind the 2/7th battalion. Commanded by Colonel Fane, the 2/7th arrived at the junction of Pembroke and Northumberland Roads, where firing began upon the Foresters. Private James Woods of the 2/7th battalion recalled:

“We arrived in Dublin about 1 o’clock, as near as I can remember, and immediately came into action. Really, we are lucky to be able to tell the tale, as no sooner had we halted and got down ready we were fired on from all quarters. We retired for a few yards amidst a veritable hail of bullets. The worst part of the job was, we did not know who our enemy were, with the result that we had to be careful when we fired.”

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29 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
33 *The Robin Hoods*, 283-84.
34 Woods, “Small Town, Great War.”
The Foresters had walked into a trap. They had nowhere to hide in the open streets. The rebels were concealed in buildings along the street, picking the Foresters off from their vantage points in the houses along Northumberland Road, aided by cover fire from the rebel headquarters at Boland’s Bakery. The 2/7th was ordered to take control of the schoolhouse near Mount Street Bridge, which crossed the Grand Canal. It was believed that the schoolhouse was a key stronghold for the Irish rebels along the canal.  

The 2/8th, meanwhile, were ordered to pass the 2/7th and attempt to reach Trinity College, one of Dublin’s most important landmarks.

As the 2/7th made their way up Northumberland Road, they came upon House No. 25. Malone and his men were waiting inside. The commander of the 2/7th, Captain F.C. Dietrichsen, had a special connection to Ireland: his wife was Irish, and he had sent her and their children back to Ireland when World War I broke out. As he and his troops were walking towards Northumberland from Kingstown, his family met him beside the road. He embraced his family and marched on with his men. This would, however, be the last time he would ever see his family; he was one of the first casualties as the Foresters came under fire from Malone and his men. The rebels sought out the officers as they marched down the street, picking them off first. Dietrichsen and 2nd Lieutenant W.V. Hawken were killed as the Foresters scrambled for any cover they could find. Unfortunately, there was no cover to be had, and the Foresters’ only choice was to lie down in the street as they tried to storm No. 25 house.

Meanwhile, the few men who were defending Beggars Bush Barracks launched sniping barrages against the rebels inside No. 25 and others houses along Northumberland Road.

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35 Oates, The Sherwood Foresters in the Great War, 38.
36 The Robin Hoods, 284.
37 The Western Front Association, “The Battle of Mount Street Bridge.”
38 The Robin Hoods, 284.
2/7th lost many men while trying to take the house and were forced to wait until reinforcements could provide explosives to open the barricaded door.\textsuperscript{40} This house had to be cleared before the Foresters could advance down to Mount Street Bridge, where they were under heavy fire from rebels stationed in Clanwilliam House. Having left the most important piece of weaponry on the Liverpool docks, the Lewis machine guns, the Foresters were forced to await help, with, apart from their rifles, a few hand grenades to defend themselves. Soon, help from the Bombing Section of the battalion arrived—Corporal H. Hutchinson and Private J.F. Booth laid the explosives,\textsuperscript{41} blew the door and the Foresters entered the house, only to find their way once again barricaded, this time by the house’s furniture.\textsuperscript{42} Meanwhile, another group of British soldiers had forced its way into the back door of No. 25, and Malone and Grace were running out of options.

When the Foresters entered the house, it was difficult to distinguish the rebels from civilians that they may have been holding hostage in the home, as the rebels, despite reports to the contrary, were not wearing any uniforms. This lack of distinction, the 2/7th believed, could have led to rebels sneaking past their ranks, pretending to be civilians and allowing for their escape.\textsuperscript{43} Grace warned Malone to run while he fled to the basement of the house, but his gun jammed and thus became useless. Malone took to the stairs, but was shot and killed by the soldiers who had entered through the back door. Grace hid behind a metal stove as the British threw hand grenades into the basement and escaped once the battle had ceased.\textsuperscript{44} Meanwhile, the 2/8th battalion was suffering from constantly changing orders. First, they were ordered to send a company of soldiers down Serpentine Avenue to seize the Electric Power Station; once that was completed they were to move forward to Landsdowne Road Station. However, new orders were

\textsuperscript{40} The Robin Hoods, 284.
\textsuperscript{41} The Robin Hoods, 285.
\textsuperscript{42} The Western Front Association, “The Battle of Mount Street Bridge.”
\textsuperscript{43} The Robin Hoods, 285.
\textsuperscript{44} The Western Front Association, “The Battle of Mount Street Bridge.”
received from Brigadier General Lowe that said no companies were to be sent, and that all troops were to press towards the Grand Canal.\textsuperscript{45}

\textbf{Figure 2.1. Map of Mount Street and rebel positions along Northumberland Road}

Once the 2/7\textsuperscript{th} had cleared No. 25 Northumberland Road, its members turned their attention to their main objective: clearing the schoolhouse near Mount Street Bridge. Unfortunately, the rebels in Clanwilliam House had a clear line of sight on the Foresters, and, combined with the rebel fire coming from the Parochial Hall, advancing down to Mount Street

\textsuperscript{45} Oates, \textit{The Sherwood Foresters in the Great War}, 39.
Bridge proved difficult. The commanding officer therefore sent B Company to reinforce C Company at Baggot Street Bridge to draw enemy fire from the main assault down Northumberland.\textsuperscript{46} The 2/8th, hearing of the losses the 2/7\textsuperscript{th} had incurred in taking No. 25, were ordered to take the schoolhouse and houses at the end of the street “at all costs.”\textsuperscript{47} As they made their way towards the schoolhouse, the Foresters came under fire from rebels within the Parochial Hall along Northumberland Road. The Foresters were not aware that the hall was occupied, and as they attempted to return fire, twenty Foresters were shot dead at nearly point blank range. The rebels expended the rest of their ammunition then attempted to flee; however, British forces caught them attempting to escape down Percy Lane and the rebels were arrested.\textsuperscript{48}

Around 6 p.m., the 2/7\textsuperscript{th} and 2/8\textsuperscript{th} moved along Northumberland Road towards Clanwilliam House and the schoolhouse. Captain Annan Dickson recalled the progress up Northumberland Road:

> The rebels gradually gave back from house to house as we advanced by rushes with some cover from trees along the kerbs, with bullets of all sorts chipping pavements and gate-posts; one chipped the bark one side of a tree as I left it. Another must have ricocheted off the pavement and struck end-on into my Field Service Pocket Book in a side pocket, but I never noticed it till afterwards.\textsuperscript{49}

The 2/8\textsuperscript{th} sent A Company to attack the school while B Company broke off to attack Clanwilliam House; A Company charged the school and climbed over the wall dividing the school from the road. The 2/8\textsuperscript{th} claim they ousted the enemy from the house,\textsuperscript{50} but the 2/7\textsuperscript{th} and other reports suggest that the schoolhouse, thought to be one of the most important rebel strongholds, was in fact empty.\textsuperscript{51} As A Company swept through the school, B Company charged across Mount Street

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{46} The Robin Hoods, 286.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Oates, The Foresters in the Great War, 39-40.
\item \textsuperscript{48} The Western Front Association, “The Battle of Mount Street Bridge.”
\item \textsuperscript{49} Annan Dickson, 1916 Field Pocket Book of Captain A.A. Dickson, Transcription by Cliff Housley. Original owned by the Imperial War Museum, London, England.
\item \textsuperscript{50} Oates, The Foresters in the Great War, 40.
\item \textsuperscript{51} The Robin Hoods, 287.
\end{itemize}
Bridge. However, they were extremely exposed along the canal bank, as the walls were low and there were few trees for cover. Multiple attempts were made to cross the bridge and many men lost their lives because of the lack of cover.\textsuperscript{52} Simon Donnelly, O/C. of C. Company of the Irish Volunteers at Mount Street, recollected the attempts to cross the canal:

> Time after time the enemy’s attempts to cross the bridge were foiled by the magnificent heroism and gallantry of the small garrison of men in Clanwilliam House, supported by the three men in the Parochial Hall….The bridge presented a terrible spectacle, as did also the greater portion of Northumberland Road as it was actually a wriggling mass of khaki. The men whom I despatched to Roberts yard frustrated an attempted enemy advance on the canal bank made through a place known as Pembroke Cottages, and had they been able to get on the canal bank, they would have been able to direct an oblique and very effective fire on Clanwilliam House. Luckily, however, this was averted…on several occasions.\textsuperscript{53}

Eventually the Foresters found a stone wall near the canal and were able to return fire upon their enemies, assisting their comrades in crossing the bridge.\textsuperscript{54}

Captain Quibell was chosen to lead the 2/8\textsuperscript{th} across Mount Street Bridge and, along with a number of the 2/7\textsuperscript{th}, the Foresters charged Clanwilliam House, attempting to enter via the front door. However, finding it barricaded, the men were forced to enter the house through the lower level windows. One of the Foresters, Lieutenant Hewitt, realized that the raid needed bombing equipment and ran back across the bridge, retrieved the necessary supplies, and returned. The Foresters bombed out the bottom floor of the house with grenades, climbed the stairs to the upper floor, and killed the rebels within while bombing the rest of the house. The house caught fire and quickly set ablaze the house next door, forcing the Foresters to evacuate.\textsuperscript{55} Four rebels managed to escape Clanwilliam House during the battle, evading capture.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{52} The Western From Association, “The Battle for Mount Street Bridge.”
\textsuperscript{53} UCDA P150/504: “Thou Shalt Not Pass-Ireland’s Challenge to the British Forces at Mount Street Bridge, Easter Week, 1916” by Simon Donnelly, University College, Dublin Archives.
\textsuperscript{54} The Robin Hoods, 287.
\textsuperscript{55} Oates, The Sherwood Foresters in the Great War, 42.
\textsuperscript{56} The Western Front Association, “The Battle for Mount Street Bridge.”
As they left Clanwilliam House, the Foresters saw four nurses from the Red Cross walking down the street. The nurses asked that the Foresters show mercy upon the wounded and allow them to help. The Foresters relented and those in need of medical attention were taken into neighboring houses to receive treatment.\(^57\) The Foresters seemed to have admired these women, who “came out during the worst of the fighting and, regardless of personal danger, assisted to carry the wounded into their hospitals which were situated near to where the hostilities were taking place.”\(^58\) Thus, the Sherwood Foresters had effectively taken over Northumberland Road and successfully seized Mount Street Bridge from the rebels, but these successes came at a high cost. Colonel Padraig Conchubhair, a member of the Irish Volunteers, saw the aftermath of the Battle of Mount Street Bridge: “The place was literally swimming with blood. Mount Street was on fire and the British military were all over the place…there was no one on the bridge; they were on the canal.”\(^59\) In this one day of battle, four officers were killed and fourteen were wounded. Among the other ranks, 216 men were killed or wounded, bringing the total of casualties for Wednesday, April 26\(^{th}\), 1916 to 234 Sherwood Foresters.\(^60\)

The 2/8\(^{th}\) experienced a couple of smaller skirmishes the next day as they and the 2/7\(^{th}\) made their way to Kilmainham Hospital.\(^61\) Snipers had excellent vantage points in the Distillery and Dolphin’s Barn along the route to the hospital and the Foresters were “met by a very destructive fire from the Distillery which immediately halted them. Quite a number of casualties occurred here by the officers trying to force the passage to the east side of Circular Road.”\(^62\) It took until nightfall for the Foresters to get across South Circular Road, where they took over a

\(^{57}\) Oates, *The Sherwood Foresters in the Great War*, 42.
\(^{58}\) The Robin Hoods, 288.
couple of buildings and returned fire on the rebels, eventually making a successful march to Kilmainham Hospital.  

Wednesday also saw an attack on Beggar’s Bush Barracks. At 4 p.m., a group of twenty-five Foresters came to the barracks to assist those trapped inside. Captain Gerrard remembered them as “untrained, undersized products of the English slums.” Gerrard was ordered by Shaw to take down the snipers outside the barracks, and Gerrard proceeded with the Foresters through the barracks and the houses along Shelbourne Road only to see eight rebels coming toward them. He called the rebels “brave,” as they took on the British forces full on, leaving their trenches behind and standing in full view of their enemy. The Foresters were of little use to Gerrard, as many “had never fired a service rifle before. They were not even able to load them. We had to show them how to load them.” He also disapproved of the Foresters’ old-fashioned ammunition, the Mark VI, and seemed impressed with the rebels’ fondness for talking of how many they had killed on certain occasions. After the encounter with the eight rebels, Gerrard was taken to Portobello Hospital, and his account mentions that at least one Forester was wounded during this brief encounter with the enemy.  

While the 2/7th and 2/8th battalions were clearing Northumberland Road and suffering massive losses, the 2/5th and 2/6th were under fire from another group of rebels. Upon arriving at Kilmainham Hospital, a field gun blasted a hole through the wall of a nearby house, followed by rapid gunfire. The rebels were also firing upon a group of North Wales lancers who were bringing ammunition to the Phoenix Park, near Kilmainham; four of these men were killed and

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65 Ibid.  
66 Ibid, 6-7.  
several horses were also slain, where they lay in the street for a week before being cleared.\textsuperscript{68} By the next morning, the two battalions were ordered to leave the hospital and march towards Island Bridge barracks, where the 2/5\textsuperscript{th} took control of the railway station there. They found that refreshment room at the station was completely stocked, and the Foresters were relieved to have a safe and well-stocked place to set up command.\textsuperscript{69} On the whole, the 2/5\textsuperscript{th} experienced little activity while at the station, although they were able to see the destruction of Sackville Street as the blazes spread across the city.\textsuperscript{70}

While the 2/5\textsuperscript{th} took control of the Kingsbridge Station, the main rail terminal that connected Dublin to the southern and western parts of Ireland, the 2/6\textsuperscript{th} marched onward to Dublin Castle, where they discovered “a strong body of troops…keeping sustained fire on the Four Courts and snipers on the roof tops….All the time the ping of ammunition on the walls of the Castle continued. The enemy was certainly not short of ammunition.”\textsuperscript{71} The rebels had not taken control of the Castle, which had been the seat of British government in Ireland since the early twelfth century. The rebels believed the Castle to be heavily defended, but in reality only about ten British soldiers had remained behind to guard the Castle; when the rebellion had erupted on Easter Monday, many of the soldiers at Dublin Castle had been attending the races, leaving only a select few to stand guard. The rebels believed the Castle to be strongly fortified, and therefore they decided against trying to overrun it.\textsuperscript{72} After resting within the castle walls, the 2/6\textsuperscript{th} was then ordered to take Capel and Parnell Streets, which were also believed to be rebel strongpoints. It was here that a new method was devised for getting the British troops down these heavily armed streets.

\textsuperscript{68} Edmunds, \textit{The Irish Rebellion}, 10.  
\textsuperscript{69} Hall, \textit{The Green Triangle}, 22.  
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid, 22-23.  
\textsuperscript{71} Edmunds, \textit{The Irish Rebellion}, 10-12.  
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid, 12.
The Foresters found an old boiler from the Guinness Brewery and put it onto a lorry, making a rudimentary armored vehicle. Nineteen men climbed inside and the lorry was pushed to a house where half the men entered the house and began firing from the upstairs windows. The rest of the men were taken to the opposite corner and rushed into the nearby house, took control over the top floor and together these men began picking off rebel snipers from both directions up and down the street. The rest of the battalion was now able to enter the streets and barricade off any exits down side streets to ensure no rebels would escape. The rebels in the Four Courts made this a difficult task, firing off shots into the darkness as the Foresters moved slowly towards them. The Foresters, however, remained undeterred, which was remarkable since many of them had never even fired off a shot before arriving in Dublin. 2\textsuperscript{nd} Lieutenant Harry Douglas of the 2/6\textsuperscript{th} battalion recalled his first encounter with the 2/7\textsuperscript{th} battalion during the battle:

Outside Merrion, came across 7\textsuperscript{th} who had been in action and were removing first causalities. I retired to find another route and, in doing so, came across guns of the 5\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} together with ammn limbers (containing about 70,000 rounds) making for the same sector in which 7\textsuperscript{th} were engaged. Pointed out to them that this was fatal and finally acted as guard to them, moving into city via Leeson St. Found house at bridge-head occupied by enemy preventing our passage, and sniping going on everywhere.\textsuperscript{74}

That night the troops filled empty sacks from a nearby factory with earth and created near-bulletproof barricades where the Foresters could safely fire upon the enemy. General Lowe was very impressed when he visited the Foresters at the Four Courts the next day.\textsuperscript{75} There was little activity after the sacking of Clanwilliam House; on Thursday night, a group of rebels from the General Post Office attempted to attack a Forester barricade but were swiftly driven back to the post office by a barrage from the Foresters.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, 12-13.
\textsuperscript{74} Harry Douglas, “The 1916 Diary of 2\textsuperscript{nd} Lieutenant Harry Douglas (Sherwood Foresters),” \textit{The Irish Sword: The Journal of the Military History Society of Ireland} no.25, vol. 99 (2006): 85-86. Note: these are his unedited notes from his pocket diary.
\textsuperscript{75} Edmunds, \textit{The Irish Rebellion}, 12-13.
By Friday, April 28th, 1916, the rebellion was coming to an end, and the Foresters experienced occasional shots from snipers still holding positions around the city. On Saturday, an attack was devised to retaliate on some rebels who were sniping at the Foresters near the Post Office. However, this plan never occurred. As Edmunds recalled, “A little fair-haired Irish nurse came in to the Colonel’s headquarters, with a flag of truce…and asked for terms for the Sinn Feiners…the nurse returned to give the reply ‘unconditional surrender.” By that afternoon, the rebels had accepted the terms, as “much blood-shed in taking the Post Office was thus saved.” The British received the order to cease fire around 4 p.m. on the 29th, and nearly 400 Sinn Feiners formally laid down their arms. Peadar O’Mara, a member of the 3rd Battalion Dublin Brigade of the Irish Volunteers, remembered the reaction to de Valera reading out the formal order to surrender: “The excitement in Bolands [Bakery] was terrible. What did we want to surrender for? This was the main topic. Volunteers were shouting themselves hoarse, denouncing everyone who had surrendered; others were singing songs and some were openly crying.”

The rebels did not want to surrender, but it was too late; the British had successfully quelled the rebellion. Feelings were a mixture of sadness, anger and regret. De Valera and his men exited Boland’s Bakery and marched to Mount Street, where they were searched and relieved of their arms; later they would be taken to Ballsbridge Show Grounds and kept in horse stalls until their transfer to jail. Their march to Ballsbridge “was practically deserted save for small knots of citizens here and there, who watched with certain curiosity the very dishevelled

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76 Hall, The Green Triangle, 23.
77 Edmunds, The Irish Rebellion, 16.
78 Ibid, 17.
79 “Statement by Peadar O’Mara, 16 Donore Road, South Circular Road, Dublin,” W.S. 377, File No. S.578, Bureau of Military History, National Archives of Ireland, 19.
80 Ibid.
and begrimed column of prisoners.”

The rebels had failed in their mission, and those around them looked on in stunned silence at the devastation, chaos, and death that was left in the wake of the rebellion.

The 2/5th and 2/6th’s main objective now was the capture and escorting of prisoners to prison. They rounded up hundreds of rebels, including one of the most prominent and the only female leader of the rebellion: Countess Constance Markievicz, glorious “in green breeches, tunic and enormous broad-brimmed hat complete with ostrich feather.”

Other battalions saw the surrender of rebel leaders such as Patrick Pearse, Joseph Plunkett and James Connolly. The surrendered yielded a varied, sizeable collection of rebel weapons, including German Mausers, British rifles, pistols, and 12-bore guns whose cartridges were filled with nails and metal, meant to cause even more damage than normal buckshot. The prisoners were to be brought from Richmond Barracks to Kilmainham Gaol, where fifteen of the rebel leaders would be executed.

Patrick Ward, a rebel fighting under the command of Eamon de Valera, remembered the surrender and loss of weapons to the Foresters on Sunday:

We were formed into fours and marched out the front gate along Grand Canal St., up Grattan St. at the top of which there was a barricade manned by troops of the Sherwood Foresters, and the Notts and Derbys. We piled out arms at the barricade; we were searched and marched up to the Royal Dublin Society Show Grounds where the British at the time had a Remount Depot. We were held in the show grounds until the following day.

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82 Hall, The Green Triangle, 23.
83 Edmunds, The Irish Rebellion, 17.
84 “Statement by Mr. Patrick Ward, 41 Stella Gardens, Irishtown, Dublin,” W.S. 1140, File No. S.155, Bureau of Military History, National Archives of Ireland, 10.
Ward and his fellow prisoners were taken to Richmond Barracks in Inchicore, then transferred from various prisons. They were released at various points throughout the year, Ward being one of the last in August.85

The 2/6th division was also sent to Summerhill to assist in getting food to the people. Looting and destruction had caused many people to go without food, and the Foresters reopened Kennedy’s Bakery to accommodate those with ration papers. In total, over 500 people came to the bakery asking for food, and about 7,000 loaves of bread were distributed to the hungry.86

General Maxwell, the commander in chief of the British forces in Ireland, took command in Dublin after his arrival on Friday, April 28th, 1916. He remarked on the situation in Ireland and expressed his gratitude towards those who had fought in Dublin during Easter Week:

I wish to draw attention to the fact that, when it became known that the leaders of the rebellion wished to surrender, the officers used every endeavour to prevent further bloodshed; emissaries were sent in to the various isolated bands, and time was given them to consider their position. I cannot imagine a more difficult situation than that in which the troops were placed; most of those employed were draft-finding battalions, or young Territorials from England, who had no knowledge of Dublin. The surrenders, which began on April 30th, were continued until late on May 1st, during which time there was a considerable amount of isolated sniping.87

He also “desire[d] to thank the troops who have been engaged in the City of Dublin for their splendid behaviour under the trying conditions of street fighting which I found it necessary to order them to undertake.”88 As the capture of prisoners continued and the fate of the rebel leaders was being decided, the Foresters continued to enforce martial law across the city and stand guard at cordoned off areas of Dublin.

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85 Ibid.
86 Edmunds, The Irish Rebellion, 19.
88 Edmunds, The Irish Rebellion, 19.
As April turned into May, courts martial were being held to determine the fates of the prisoners of the Easter Rising, particularly the leaders. These courts martial, held at Richmond Barracks, sentenced fifteen rebels leaders to death, which General Maxwell confirmed. The Sherwood Foresters, first tasked with rounding up the rebels, were now ordered to participate in the firing squads that would end these rebel lives. A.A. Dickson remembered the day he was to send his company to fulfill their orders:

I was to march my firing-squad of a Sergeant and twelve men to a space cut off from the execution-point by a projecting wall; halt them to ground arms there; march them forward twelve paces to halt with their backs to their rifles each of which I was then to load and replace on the ground. Thus no man knew whether his rifle had been loaded with black or with ball; each was therefore left not knowing whether he personally had shot the man or not. The men were then marched back to pick up their rifles and hold them, at attention under my eye, until word came that the prisoner was to be led out; they must then be marched round and halted facing the execution wall.89

A priest would be present each prisoner was led out to the execution spot; the Foresters were given the order to fire and were immediately ordered to march back behind the dividing wall, where their guns would be emptied, the cartridges taken away, again to prevent the soldiers from knowing who fired the fatal bullets, and cleaned. This procedure was to be followed for every execution party, and Dickson made sure to follow the instructions to the letter.90

Some of the Foresters, however, were not so pleased with the method whereby the rebels would meet their end. It seems they believed the rebels deserved a different type of execution. Dickson recalled hearing some of the men saying, “Pity to dirty all these rifles; why can’t we do him in with a bit of bayonet practice?” The Foresters were not afraid to fulfill their orders; some even saw it as retaliation for the lives of their brothers in arms killed

89 Annan Dickson, *1916 Field Pocket Book of Captain A.A. Dickson.*
90 Ibid.
in the rebellion.\textsuperscript{91} Between May 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 12\textsuperscript{th}, fifteen men were executed, including all those who had signed the Proclamation of the Irish Republic. Some of the men executed included Joseph Plunkett, Patrick Pearse, James Connolly, and Eamon Ceannt. Public outrage in both Ireland and England caused the rest of the death sentences to be commuted down, and Eamon de Valera was the only influential male commander to escape execution. Many believe this was because de Valera was born in New York, therefore making him an American citizen; with Britain and its allies in the midst of a world war, the British government did not want to harm its international relationship with a potential ally. Countess Markievicz was also spared because of her gender. Executing a female could have potentially further damaged Britain’s reputation, both in Ireland and around the world. In total, over three thousand people were taken prisoner for their participation in the Easter Rising.

Many of the Foresters interacted with the prisoners following their imprisonment. The treatment of the rebels by the British is hard to determine, since many of the witness statements from the time offer conflicting reports. Michael Spillane, a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood during the rebellion, was arrested on May 7\textsuperscript{th} and taken to Victoria Military Barracks Prison in Cork. While there he encountered a Sherwood Forester and described his treatment while imprisoned:

\begin{quote}
An Officer of the Sherwood Foresters called to all rooms asking if there were any complaints. Spillane made several complaint[s] and the Officer said, “I never called here but you had complaints.” Spillane replied, “Is not that what you came for, it is terrible if a man with diarrhoea is not allowed to go to the lavatory. One of the men asked several times last night and was refused. In the end he soiled his blanket and used the mug he had for tea.” Spillane and the Officer parted in bad friends.\textsuperscript{92}
\end{quote}

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
John Kenny, a quartermaster and cyclist for the Dublin Brigade, also spoke very disparagingly of the Foresters. After spending a few weeks as a prisoner in Dublin, Kenny was to be sent to England to spend out the remainder of his sentence. He was taken to Kingsbridge Railway Station where the Foresters proceeded to treat them like cattle; however, Kenny did say that they “took great care to apply gently a little salt to their recent wounds and rub it in.”\(^{93}\) These reports paint the Foresters as vengeful, angry captors, but other eyewitness testimonies show another side to the story.

After the rebellion had cooled down, Henry Asquith, Prime Minister of England, came to Dublin on May 12\(^{th}\), and made some significant changes to the regulation of the prisoners in Dublin. Sergeant Major Byrne became head of food distribution to the prisoners, and one such prisoner, Eamon O’Duibhir, stated that they “were fed like kings or princes” after this change. O’Duibhir also stated that the Foresters were not “unfriendly, and some of their officers were quite helpful to our relatives when they came to see us.”\(^{94}\) A similar report stated that as a group of prisoners were being transferred from Mountjoy Jail to the coast, bound for a prison in England, the Foresters, and “although they had their baptism by fire at Mount St. Bridge… were kind to [them].”\(^{95}\) Not all of the Foresters were as vengeful as some rebels viewed them to be. They were just following orders, and some of the rebels recognized and accepted that fact. Others, still reeling from their defeat, may have skewed their perceptions and painted the British as cruel and inhumane. On the other hand, some of the Foresters may have indeed treated the rebels unfairly; of this we can never be sure.


\(^{94}\) “Statement by Eamon O’Duibhir, Ba;;agh, Gooldscross, Co. Tipperary,” W.S. 1403, File No. S.51, Bureau of Military History, National Archives of Ireland, 56.

\(^{95}\) “2\(^{nd}\) Statement by Mr. Seamus Doyle, 21, Parnell Avenue, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, formerly of Tombrack Wood, Ferns, Co. Wexford,” W.S. 1342, File No. S.386, Bureau of Military History, National Archives of Ireland, 1.
The four battalions of the Sherwood Foresters who participated in the Easter Rising went their separate ways after their victory. The 2/5th and 2/6th battalions were sent to the Curragh, an army base in County Kildare, on May 24th, where they trained and enjoyed race meetings, before being sent to Fovant in France in January to fight in World War I. The 2/7th and 2/8th were sent to Onamore in Galway on May 30th to receive more training and relaxation; they too were sent to Fovant in January 1917. The total British military casualties during the fighting in Dublin were 300 killed, 997 wounded, and 9 missing, bringing the total to 1,306 soldiers. Many question how so few rebels could take on entire battalions of men and cause such carnage. Some blame the sparse or invalid information received by the officers commanding the regiment. Yet had they not acted as they did, “the rebellion would have been more protracted and the ultimate casualties more numerous.” They did the best they could with the information they were given. Very few people know of this battle and the lives that were lost in the game that was imperialism. But these eyewitness testimonies, from the regimental records to men who were taken prisoner to soldiers who watched their friends being slaughtered, show the reality of the rebellion: it was brutal, harsh, and bloody. These stories paint a sad picture of the events of Easter Week, and no one can deny that anyone involved in the Easter Rising was not changed forever. For the Foresters who survived, though, their experiences in Dublin were just the beginning of their combat experience.

97 *The Robin Hoods*, 297.
98 Ibid, 306.
100 *The Robin Hoods*, 284.
Casualty Total for the Battle for Mount Street Bridge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Number of Foresters Killed</th>
<th>Number of Foresters Wounded</th>
<th>Total Casualties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ranks</td>
<td>216 (killed and wounded; distinction not made)</td>
<td>216</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Casualties</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>334</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.1. Total Casualties of the Sherwood Foresters for the Battle of Mount Street Bridge

Total Casualties of the British Military in the Easter Rising, 1916

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Killed</th>
<th>Wounded</th>
<th>Missing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Military Officers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military: Other Ranks</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Irish Constabulary:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Irish Constabulary:</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ranks</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Metropolitan Police</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilians and Rebels</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>300</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1,306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.2 Total Casualties Sustained by the British Military in the Easter Rising, 1916
CHAPTER 3
FRONT PAGE NEWS? THE FORESTERS REMEMBERED IN NEWSPAPER REPORTING OF 1916

During the past nine decades, the methods by which people obtain information about the world around them have changed drastically. Today, most people use the internet for checking local, national, and international news outlets. There are still many prominent newspapers that have thousands of subscribers, such as The New York Times, The Irish Independent, and The Daily Mail. But during World War I, the newspaper was the primary method of learning about what was happening along the front lines. Although the government controlled much of the war-related news, newspapers included stories from all fronts and each day would include a casualty list for the nation’s troops. When looking at the Sherwood Foresters’ involvement in the Easter Rising, one must look at a variety of newspapers to encapsulate the entire story.

For the purposes of this thesis, both Irish and British newspapers from April-May 1916 were examined, to demonstrate how each side did, or did not, remember the Sherwood Foresters and their participation in the events of Easter Week. For the Irish perspective, two papers were the primary focus. The Irish Times was one of the most prominent papers of the early nineteenth century, while The Freeman’s Journal was a smaller, less widespread publication. These two papers provided insight into the city of Dublin, the perspectives and biases of those whose homes had been destroyed by the fighting, and demonstrated the Irish view of the British in the capital. In Britain, the Nottingham newspapers were divided into morning and evening editions; therefore three separate papers were examined: The Nottingham Daily Express, The Nottingham Evening News, and The Nottingham Evening Post, hereafter referred to as the Daily Express, the
Evening News, and the Post.¹ All local papers of the Foresters’ hometowns, not only did they provide the stories filtering out of Dublin, but also gave local anecdotes, obituaries, and memorials to Foresters’ who fought and died in Dublin. The daily barrage of information flowing from Dublin demonstrated the level to which the Foresters were remembered at the time of their deaths, which would influence their level of recognition in the decades to follow.

The Irish Times was founded in 1859 by Lawrence Knox. Unlike many Irish newspapers of the time, The Irish Times was founded as a “new conservative” daily paper, reflecting the conservative ideals of Irish Protestants in the nineteenth century.² Ireland, a predominantly Catholic nation, had come under the influence of Protestantism after the numerous invasions by and successful colonization of the British. The Times was aimed primarily at Irish-Anglicans of a Unionist leaning from the middle-to-upper classes. Protestants, although they only measured about 10% of the population in the 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland, were some of the most powerful people in the land: “In 1911, close to 20 percent of the managerial classes were Protestants. They accounted for nearly half the lawyers, over 20 percent of doctors and well over 50 percent of bankers…Over a quarter of larger farms were still in Protestant hands.”³ The English had a huge presence in Ireland, and with the multiple suppressions of Catholic rights in Ireland, Protestants, though small in number, were able to make a significant impact. In 1859, Knox sent out the first edition of the Irish Times, a paper that would reflect Protestant ideals, concerns, and interests, which included taxation, education, public service, and business, all areas in which the Protestants had become deeply engrained.⁴ However, when Knox died in

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¹ Some of the newspaper articles used in this chapter do not include page numbers because the archived PDF files do not contain page numbers.
1873, the fundamental beliefs of the paper shifted. The Arnott family, owners of one of Dublin’s largest department stores, purchased the newspaper and incorporated their own Unionist beliefs into the paper. It would continue its Unionist political leaning, more intensely and overtly under the Arnott ownership, through the Rising until the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922.  

Under this new Unionist direction, *The Irish Times* reported on the events of Easter 1916 in an interesting light. With this new political affiliation, one would assume that reporting on the events of the British troops in Dublin would have been a top priority. However, in regards to the Sherwood Foresters, the *Irish Times* did little to make its audience aware of these soldiers. As all newspapers tended to do during the Great War, the *Irish Times* printed a casualty list in each edition of its paper, and after the rebellion was quelled and Dublin newspapers were able to get new editions of their papers out, the full extent of the damage was seen. Beginning on April 29th, 1916, the *Irish Times* began printing lists of casualties from the Easter Rising, demonstrating the destructive force of the small number of rebels against four regiments of trained soldiers. This first post-rebellion headline read, “Military and Police Casualties Over Five Hundred,” and it went on to list the numerous men who were killed and wounded in the Battle for Mount Street Bridge, alongside the names of police officers, Gorgeous Rex, and civilians also killed or wounded in the week’s fighting. This form of reporting would continue over the next few days as more and more bodies were recovered from the destruction of Easter Week and others died from their wounds in hospitals across Dublin.

Being a Dublin paper, the *Irish Times* was obligated to report on any and all events of the Easter Rising. In the days following the rebellion, the editors of the *Irish Times* had to quickly compile all of the incoming reports from around the city and compose the narrative of the week’s events.

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5 The Irish Times Trust, “History of the Irish Times.”
events. Much of the reporting focused on the rebels, the planning of the rebellion, and the sequence of events that led to the execution of the Irish leaders. But in regards to the Foresters’ involvement in the rebellion, there was little mention of their efforts.

On April 29th, the editors gave a full account of the Easter Rising, and amongst the larger article is a subsection entitled “Heavy Casualties at Mount Street Bridge.” The Foresters are only mentioned twice within the article, as “the first instalment of the military reinforcements,” and as bombing Clanwilliam House. Other large articles detailing the rebellion leave the Foresters out completely, such as “The Sinn Fein Rising- Scenes and Incidents in Dublin Streets,” from May 2nd, 1916. The fact that the Irish Times was a Unionist paper yet there is little mention of the Foresters is interesting. It would seem a paper with Unionist ties would be more likely to publish stories concerning British interests in Ireland. Certainly by May 2nd their story would have been known and the Irish Times, one would assume, would want to bring these stories of British heroism to the forefront. Yet, it is also important to remember that this was an Irish newspaper, so its main concern would have been telling Irish stories. Nonetheless, its Unionist ties should have warranted a larger depiction of the Foresters’ service in Dublin.

One issue with the Foresters’ involvement in Easter 1916 was the kind of commendations those who were wounded in Dublin would receive. This was an issue as late as November 1916, as evidenced by an Irish Times’ article from November 1st. In Parliament, Mr. Ellis Hume-Williams, MP for the Nottinghamshire constituency between 1910 and 1929, addressed the Secretary of War about the Foresters’ actions in Dublin during Easter Week, pointing out that some of the men had been endorsed by their superiors for a promotion. He asked if these men “were to be allowed to wear stripes similar to those given to men wounded in France; and

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7 “Heavy Casualties at Mount Street Bridge,” The Irish Times, April 29, 1916.
8 “Sherwood Foresters and Dublin Rising,” The Irish Times, November 1, 1916.
whether the latter were to receive the honours for which they had been recommended, and when.\(^9\) Hume-Williams was only asking that the Foresters receive the same military stripes that their fellow soldiers were awarded for their efforts on the Western Front. The fact that he was representing the area from which many of the Foresters lived also demonstrated the level of respect these men garnered not only from the locals, but from their representatives in the national government.

The response, from a Mr. Forester, shows the regard with which the British government held the Foresters who fought in Ireland: “The names of those considered worthy of reward will not be overlooked, but the hon. member will be aware that the majority of the honours given so far have been given in connection with services rendered in France and in other theatres of war.”\(^10\) Essentially, Parliament was not completely dismissing the notion of promoting and honoring those who had been sent to Dublin, but their service was not seen as important as those who served in areas on the continent, which to them seems to be the more important theatre of war. It also demonstrates that Ireland was not considered another theater of war. Seen as part of the home front, the fighting in Dublin did not merit recognition as a separate front of World War I. This discussion in Parliament and the issue of who received specific commendations is a key issue concerning commemoration of the Foresters. It supports the argument that the British government was not very eager to celebrate its near failure in Ireland and was a key reason behind the lack of commemoration for the Foresters. Even though these soldiers had made huge sacrifices for their country, they nearly cost Britain its first colony.

Though many Irish papers stopped production during the rebellion, the *Irish Times* remained on sale throughout the rebellion, even though communication lines had been shut

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\(^9\) Ibid.  
\(^10\) Ibid.
down. The city was in chaos, with looting, barricading, and rifle-firing swirling all around.\textsuperscript{11} Amidst this flurry were the Foresters, whose brave efforts were recounted by witnesses at Sir Patrick Dun’s Hospital, located on Grand Canal Street near Mount Street Bridge. The opening words of the article confirm the lack of recognition for some of the events of Easter Week: “In the confusion and disorders of the street fighting of the past week many gallant deeds have not yet received the recognition that they merited.”\textsuperscript{12} The article goes on to detail how some of the hospital’s nurses went out and attended to wounded Foresters as they fought along Mount Street. These nurses carried the men from the streets under a hail of gunfire back to the hospital for treatment.\textsuperscript{13} The fact some of the participants of Easter Week were largely forgotten and that it was not certain whether that they would receive recognition for their efforts is very telling. If the Irish people could not recognize their own heroes, it is almost certain that they would not put effort into recognizing the Foresters, even though the\textit{Times} had Unionist ties. This trend of glossing over the Foresters’ involvement in Easter Week would continue in other Irish newspapers, including the\textit{Freeman’s Journal}.

\textit{The Freeman’s Journal}, one of Ireland’s oldest publications, was founded in 1763. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the paper came into league with British authority when Francis Higgins, who had ties to Dublin Castle, took ownership. However, the paper would eventually be passed to a Catholic owner named Patrick Lavelle, an advocate for Repeal of the Act of Union, before it was sold to the Gray family, who owned the paper for three generations. In the 1870s, the paper became the unofficial mouthpiece for the Irish Parliamentary members in England. After the turn into the twentieth century, the\textit{Freeman’s Journal} was losing its standing as one of Ireland’s preeminent newspapers. The rise in competitors and the failure of editors like

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11}“Article 2- No Title,” \textit{The Irish Times}, May 2, 1916.
\item \textsuperscript{12}“St. Patrick Dun’s Hospital,” \textit{The Irish Times}, May 5, 1916.
\item \textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Thomas Sexton eventually forced the *Journal* to be sold to the *Irish Independent*. During the rebellion, the paper was run by “party stalwarts,” those devoted to the ideals of the nationalists in Ireland and Parliament. Unlike the *Irish Times*, this paper was more focused on Irish issues.¹⁴

*The Freeman’s Journal* suspended publication during Easter Week, presumably due to the fighting in and around Dublin. Its first post-rebellion edition encompassed the dates April 26th-29th and May 1st-5th, 1916. This issue contained multiple stories describing the events of the Easter Rising. It specifically talked about the fighting around areas such as the Four Courts, St. Stephen’s Green, and the General Post Office. However, there was no mention of the fighting on Mount Street or of the Sherwood Foresters in the long article. The article, entitled “Complete Story of the Sinn Fein Rising,” speaks more about how the rebels took over their strategic hideouts and the surrender and execution of rebel leaders; neglected to mention the British presence in Dublin until it printed General Maxwell’s notice on the efforts of the troops in Dublin.¹⁵ This article depicted the nationalist tones of the paper and shows that the British perspective was not going to be addressed in any great detail.

One interesting story the *Journal* published concerned the burial of the dead. Although it did not mention the Foresters specifically, it provided insight into how British rule had taken over in Dublin and also how the deceased Foresters may have been treated. In “Burrying the Dead: Arrangements in the City,” the editors were unsure as to how many people had perished in the insurrection, as more and more bodies were being discovered. Obtaining coffins was difficult with the chaos and destruction of the city and also the sheer amount of people who had died. Once a coffin was secured, the challenge of burying the deceased began. Permits were required in order to lay the dead to rest, and the bodies had to pass military inspection before proceeding.

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to the burial grounds. Each coffin was limited to only one mourner past the military guard at Glasnevin Cemetery, and each set of remains was examined by police and military officials.

The editors pointed out that, “It is stated that this course was made necessary by the fact that authorities had reason to suspect that arms and ammunition was being conveyed to bands of insurgents in outlying districts in coffins.” Some of the Foresters were buried at Glasnevin, so it is assumed they were also checked to make sure there were no arms being smuggled out to rebels. The paper also mentioned the discovery of bodies in the rubble, and one particular body caught the interest of the Journal. On May 9\(^{th}\), the Journal printed an article entitled, “Search for Dead: Several Disinterments.” Amidst the rubble of Clanwilliam House, a charred corpse was discovered. The body was disfigured to the point that the only way it could be identified was through a check found in the victim’s pocket. Until the bank could identify the signature, it would be impossible to name the victim. Similar discoveries continued throughout the days of recovery in Dublin.

It is remarkable that the paper chose to focus specifically on this victim, one from the Mount Street battle. It is also intriguing that next to this article appeared another, entitled “‘Irish Times’ and the Sinn Feiners: How It Supported the Extremists.” The nationalist paper of the time was pointing fingers at one of its competitors, accusing it of aiding the rebels in committing their crimes. This article contained excerpts from the Unionist paper in 1914, responding to John Redmond’s claim to representation over the rebels in Dublin. A few days later the paper created a list of civilian casualties, but it did not contain a list of the military casualties. The British, including the Foresters, were completely unacknowledged. It was not until May 12\(^{th}\),

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1916 that any Foresters were mentioned in the deceased lists. Some of the officers killed in Dublin were buried in Dean’s Grange Cemetery, including Private Daniel Byrne and Second-Lieutenant M.B. Brown. But beyond this, there was no mention of the Foresters’ losses.\(^{20}\) Both of these instances may be tied back to the paper’s nationalist affiliations. It made sense that the *Journal* would accuse their main competitor of allying with the rebels and trying to turn the Irish population against the publication. It also would not be very eager to print news stories involving the British military and their successes in Ireland. Neither the *Irish Times* nor the *Freeman’s Journal* was particularly interested in reporting on British involvement in Easter Week, and their respective political affiliations depict the degree to which they remembered the Foresters. In the case of the British newspapers, the reporting on the actions of the Foresters was more significant, but not in the capacity one would perhaps anticipate.

The local papers of Nottingham were more eager to report on their heroes from Easter Week. The first, *The Nottingham Daily Express*, was founded in 1860. Run by J.W. Jevons, it was a radical, nonconformist newspaper that was the first daily paper in Nottingham City.\(^{21}\) The reporting on the rebellion began almost immediately, with the first stories appearing on April 26th. The Chief Secretary of Ireland released a statement saying that a rebellion had broken out in the heart of Dublin and that soldiers had arrived from England to quell the rebels. At that time, three officers and four to five soldiers had been killed and four or five officers and seven to eight soldiers had been wounded.\(^{22}\) The first direct mention of the Foresters, like in the *Irish Times*, came in a casualty list. Only this time, the list was accompanied by brief biographies of some of the Foresters who fought in Dublin. These short insights into the men’s lives reveal that these


soldiers were just regular men: Captain Dietrichsen was a barrister while Lieutenant P. Perry had married only six weeks previous.  

This is the first time a newspaper has given any indication of who the Foresters were before they were sent across the Irish Sea. It is not surprising, however, that a local newspaper would choose to recognize its heroes in such a manner. These biographies signified that the editors of the paper cared about the men who fought for their city and were not afraid to eulogize their heroes in a manner befitting their sacrifice. On May 8th, 1916, the Daily Express printed a complete casualty list of all the killed and wounded Foresters from Dublin.  

On May 3rd, the paper made an even bigger show of support for the Foresters and their families. The Nottingham Commercial Association, at its local meeting on May 2nd, expressed its condolences when it “read with pride the high words of praise of the work done by the Sherwood Foresters.” The Chamber of Commerce also lauded the efforts of the Foresters, where the death of Lieutenant Percy Perry was deeply felt. His death “must touch Nottingham people very nearly” and the chairman “regretted very deeply the losses they [the Foresters] sustained in the disgraceful outburst in Ireland.” The fact that the Chamber of Commerce took time out to recognize Perry’s widow and praised the Foresters’ work during their weekly meeting showed how revered the soldiers were and also demonstrated the city officials’ respect for the dead. These men were heroes to the city, and their deaths were not going to go unrecognized.

In the days following the rebellion, the full story of the Foresters was discovered, and the people of Nottingham were able to see just how brave their men had been on the streets of

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26 Ibid.
Dublin. An article entitled “The Glory of the Sherwoods” gave the full account of the events of Easter Week, and it had a telling opening:

Surely has this been a red week for many homes in Nottingham and Notts.; a week in which many a wife has been robbed of her husband, many a child left with only a memory of father, and many a mother and sweetheart made to mourn their boy. And to others the week has been one of nerve-racking anxiety, of looking into the face of fear and black despair; and all because a “ hospitable country” closed its eyes to the presence of traitors in its very midst; closed them until tragedy came. Yet side by side with this sadness and anxiety there has been felt the pride that comes of the knowledge of valiant deeds.  

This story encompassed many of the feelings of the British during and after the rebellion. Some families were sad for the loss of loved ones, others angry, but all were upset because a country they believed to be their ally, their first overseas colony, had betrayed them. It may have been naïve, though, for England to consider Ireland its ally, particularly since Britain had had a colonial presence in Ireland for centuries and the Irish were demanding their independence. Nevertheless, they saw these deaths and the greater rebellion as unnecessary.

Naturally, this view contradicted the Irish perspective. The rebels felt that what they were doing was for their own good and for the chance of independence. The article went on to praise the Foresters as regular men, pointing out that they were walking the streets of the city just a short time earlier. The editor also compared the Foresters of 1916 to their predecessors, who were at one time a part of the king’s royal guard. The point was to show how proud and honored the city was to have such men defending the crown while also chastising the Irish for their actions. At the same time, the editors were clever in their criticism of the rebels; rather than outright stating their anger in a blasting editorial, they couch their feelings in grief and praise for the Foresters’ deeds. It shows a modicum of respect not only for the Foresters but also their families, who are obviously going through a very tough time as more and more reports filtered

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28 Ibid.
into England about the devastation in Dublin. Similar articles appeared in later issues of the *Daily Express*, each commending the Foresters in a solemn and respectful light, making sure that national and city pride was felt throughout each story. These articles were not simply exploiting the dead, who in many cases could be seen as “cannon fodder” for following orders. Men like the Foresters had little choice in the matter but to follow orders, and the local newspapers did not make light of this fact, but rather acknowledged that these men were more than just a number within the British army.

The most poignant and important of the news stories concerning the memory of the Foresters were the tributes of the deceased soldiers after their tragic deaths. It seems that to the paper, Lieutenant Perry and Captain Dietrichsen were the most valiant and most revered of the Foresters who fought in Dublin, since their deaths were given special attention in various editions of the newspaper. On May 10th, Lieutenant Perry was buried in Nottingham with full military honors, his coffin borne on the shoulders of his fellow Foresters. The presiding minister spoke of his bravery, noting that he was “one of the first to respond to his country’s call and to give a lead to the men of Nottingham, many of whom had since left home and comforts to live amidst the horrors of warfare.”29 This story was first printed in the *Nottingham Evening News*30.

Similarly, Dietrichsen was memorialized by the Nottingham Bar as a significant loss to the world of law. The recorder of the Nottingham Quarter Sessions remarked on the Foresters’ work in Dublin and particularly on Dietrichsen’s part in the battles. He then proceeded to comment on Dietrichsen’s character as a barrister, stating that he “had maintained the best traditions of the legal professions, and by his care, skill, and courtesy had endeared himself to all who knew him….His death caused a pang such as was felt when a real, true friend was with

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30 Ibid, 3.
them no more.” 31 These two articles not only showed that Nottingham was more than willing to remember its heroes, but also that the city had lost some of its most important, revered, and respected citizens. Their loss left a huge hole in the community, and like Ireland, Nottingham wanted to honor its heroes. However, the executed leaders in Ireland, and many of the rebels who survived, did not receive immediate recognition as heroes because of their marginality in society. Unlike some of the Foresters, who held important positions in their hometowns, the rebels were students and tradesmen, men who would not be particularly influential in society. In their recognition of the Foresters, the *Evening News* memorialized the deceased in an understated, reserved manner. It wanted to portray their pride for their fallen heroes but also wanted to respect the families of those who had lost their sons, fathers and husbands in the terrible events of Easter Week. This trend continued in other Nottingham newspapers from 1916.

To gain a different perspective on British newspaper printing, it is also valuable to examine the nightly publications. One such paper was the *Nottingham Evening Post*. Its first issue was published on May 1, 1878, and it went on to become one of Nottingham’s most prosperous newspapers. 32 It was later absorbed by another of Britain’s nightly newspapers, the *Nottingham Evening News*, and today is referred to as the *Nottingham Post*. 33 Both of these papers reported on the Irish rebellion and the soldiers who fought for the Empire, who it presented as courageous. On April 26th, 1916, both of the papers ran news of the Irish rebellion on their front pages. Both the *Post* 34 and the *Evening News* 35 printed stories that nearly replicated those of the *Daily Express*. This was due to the fact that both papers relied upon the statements

dispatched from the Chief Secretary of Ireland, which at this early stage was the only source of information coming out of Dublin. Likewise, in the days following the outbreak of violence, the papers reported very similar stories, such as General Maxwell’s command of the troops in Ireland following the rebellion and the trial and subsequent execution of Roger Casement.36 By the beginning of May, however, the role of the Foresters was coming to light, and the evening papers sought to show the general public the extent of their service in Dublin.

On May 1st, both the Post and the Evening News published stories recounting the Sherwood Foresters in Dublin; unlike the Daily Express, though, these stories were front-page news. In the Post, the deaths of Dietrichsen and Perry were front and center. Small stories depicting their importance and dedication to both their native city and to their regiments demonstrated just how significant their deaths were. As respected members of their community, their deaths took precedence on the front page over stories from the Western Front. Also included were brief biographies of other wounded officers from the four Forester regiments.37 In the Evening News, there were no biographies describing the deceased and wounded men; there was simply a casualty list.

However, this article included something that the reporting in its sister paper did not: an excerpt from a story written by the editor of the Irish Times that was sent to the London Times. In it, the efforts of the Foresters were described first-hand: “I got home for a few hours on Tuesday, and was in time to see the first bit (and one of the most desperate bits) of street fighting in the insurrection.”38 The fighting took place right outside his home, and the Foresters left an indelible impression on him, as he notes:

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36 Casement’s story is interesting. After his execution, many within the British press worked to strip Casement of his hero status that he had achieved as a human-rights campaigner in Britain.
I know little of the English Territorials, but if they are as cool and brave as the men of the Notts. and Derby Regiment they are a splendid body of men. These young soldiers fought magnificently. They were absolutely without cover. They were under a close and well-directed fire from the house. Two officers and a dozen men fell. The house was not taken until the evening, and when it was captured the bodies of 19 Sinn Feiners were found within.  

The fact that an Irishman, particularly the editor of the *Times*, would write about the Foresters in such a manner is telling. Even though the Foresters were representative of the colonizer, there were some in Ireland who recognized them as men who were only doing their duty, and many Irishmen also did not regard the rebels as heroes. The *Irish Times*’ Unionist ties also explain the printing of such a story. It is interesting that the *Evening News* would choose to make this story part of its front page. Not only did it inform the readers of the casualties in Dublin, but it also showed that even the Irish revered their men for the gallantry. It seems this article serves two purposes: one, as a method of promoting national pride in the people of Nottingham; but also as a way of memorializing those who died in the Mount Street battle and honoring their service to king and country, much like the *Post*’s publication of the lives of the soldiers. Nevertheless, the fact that both papers chose to put the Foresters as the center of their respective front page stories shows just how important their actions were to Nottingham and how vital their story was to the narrative of the events of Easter Week.

As the days progressed, more stories of the Foresters activities trickled in through the reconnecting information lines. The usual publications of the casualties were reported, and on May 8th, the *Evening News*’ list was accompanied by official praise from General Maxwell. Of the 2/7th battalion, the editor stated, “General Maxwell said the work they had had to do was the most distasteful that a soldier was ever required to perform, but the men of this young Territorial

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39 Ibid.
regiment carried out their duties like true soldiers.” The Foresters were a Territorial regiment, men from the same areas of England who were placed in the same battalions so as to keep the men together. The general went on to praise the gallantry of the Robin Hoods and said that their losses were “deplored not only by him but by the whole British Army,” promising to make their sacrifices known to the king himself. Articles like these showed just how revered the four battalions of the Foresters were in the British Army. Their actions did not go unnoticed by the commander of forces in Ireland, and it must have made the families of the Foresters proud that their participation was going to get the recognition it deserved. Yet this recognition was not to be; the Foresters received a few gallantry awards, but their actions became all but eclipsed by the epic scale of World War I.

On May 3rd, the Post printed an inspiring story of true bravery in Dublin. During the Battle for Mount Street Bridge, soldiers were falling left and right. In the midst of sniping, a young woman ran into the street to help and injured soldier. Behind her came a very young girl, who by raising her hands almost instantaneously stopped the gunfire. Then she and the young woman picked up the soldier and carried him to the hospital. She and the woman repeated this act of heroism multiple times, carrying many soldiers to the safety of the nearby hospital. The witness said that “it was a throbbing incident that brought tears to the eyes, and the crowd cheered the little heroine.” The last of these men was shot in the lower back and the thigh, and the little girl removed her apron to stop the bleeding. It was discovered later that this soldier was a Sherwood Forester. This was yet another display of Irish courtesy towards the Foresters. The Irish did not have to help these fallen soldiers; they could have left them in the streets to die. But

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41 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
there were those who did not believe in the rebellion and refused to watch innocent soldiers die in a merciless battle. The Rising came as a surprise to most people in Dublin, who had no affiliation with the main rebel organizations. The Post printed this story on the second page of the edition, seemingly to show that not all of the Irish were disloyal to the crown and to show that their Foresters were treated with dignity and respect by those who helped them. They wanted to not only display the bravery of the men at arms, but that of the unsung heroes, the “little girls” of the rebellion as well. It is these heartwarming, inspiring stories that could bring some relief to the families of the injured soldiers. They could read this article and know that there were some that did care for their men and risked their own lives to help bring them to safety.

By May 12th, the name Sherwood Forester had taken on a whole new meaning. The Nottingham Evening News printed a story entitled “Sherwoods Eulogised: Have Won a New Respect for the Territorials.” Before the rebellion, the Foresters were not regarded as one of the best regiments in the British Army. The four battalions who fought in Dublin were especially looked down upon because of their inexperience in combat and relative “greenness” to the service. They were not lifelong military men; rather, they were men who lived regular lives who answered the call of war from their king. But now, after the events of Easter Week, the Foresters were seen in a completely different light. The Archdeacon of Mansfield, addressing a gathering in the deanery, stated, “The name Sherwood Foresters amongst the regimental names of the country and the word Territorial have a new respect and regard which have been earned for them by brave and soldierly men”45 He went on to praise the men of the deanery, which is a group of Church of England parishes, who had been killed or wounded in Dublin during the fighting. He claimed their sacrifice was the worst “because it was secured in quelling the wild folly and

disloyalty of fellow-countrymen."\(^{46}\) This article is a very interesting eulogy to the Foresters. It now involved the opinion of religious figures in England. In this case, church and state concurred on the condition of the rebels. It was unfortunate that they do not see eye to eye on the Foresters themselves and their due recognition. The church believed the Foresters had given the most for their nation, yet Parliament had decided that the Foresters were not worthy of the same gallantry recognition as those who died on the Western Front.

An intriguing addition to the articles on the Foresters came on May 13\(^{th}\), when the Post printed a letter written by John R. Harsall to Cecil Hayward. In it, Harsall expressed anger towards those who believed the rebels should receive light punishment, stating that “the people who write such would, no doubt, be surprised to learn that if the revolt had been successful, not a single Englishman would have escaped being murdered.”\(^{47}\) He then went on to describe the chaotic scene in Dublin, pointing out that mercy would only cause “a repetition of the trouble as soon as they can reorganize.”\(^{48}\) He concluded by mentioning all of the unsung heroes and the unnoticed deeds of the brave Englishmen in Ireland. He pointed specifically to the Foresters and their heavy losses, praising them for the “greatest work.”\(^{49}\) This letter revealed a great deal about not only the Foresters, but of the rebellion in general as well. His assumption that all Englishmen would have been killed had the rebellion succeeded is overestimated, but nevertheless shows the way non-supporters viewed the insurrection. His other assumption that the rebellion would quickly reorganize if the rebels were not harshly punished was also a bit overstated; the rebels were basically surrounded in the last days of Easter Week and had little chance of escape. With the city under the control of the British, their leaders captured, and many others imprisoned there

\(^{46}\) Ibid.  
\(^{48}\) Ibid.  
\(^{49}\) Ibid.
was hardly any chance the rebels could have attempted another rebellion. But the fact that this is an Irishman writing to another Irishman praising the British and condemning the rebellion is an interesting addition to the memory of the Sherwood Foresters.

Newspapers create an informed society but always a limited “imagined community”. When the world is in turmoil and chaos, this line of information is never more important. While the five papers examined here did report on the Sherwood Foresters’ involvement in the Easter Rising, nothing could take the attention completely away from World War I. In the case of the Irish papers, little reporting was published on the British involvement in Dublin that fateful week. This is understandable in some respects, but not in others; papers with political ties to the British crown did not memorialize the heroes of Easter Week as they did the rebels who began the terrible insurrection. The local papers of Nottingham were much more eager to eulogize their deceased heroes, but it was not entirely in reports of the events of the rebellion. It was also in obituaries, eyewitness testimonies, and opinion pieces from influential papers from both Dublin and Nottingham. The fact that the rebel names took so much more precedence over the heroes of Easter Week shows where the real focus lay: not with those who dedicated their lives to a cause, but those who had initiated the rebellion. Stories like the executions of the rebel leaders would certainly sell more stories, but the smaller British battalions who defeated the Irish rebels should have warranted more recognition and credit for their sacrifice. As we will see, the level of recognition and commemoration for the Foresters and their deeds will continue to be sub-par at best.

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CHAPTER 4

COMMEMORATION TODAY: REMEMBRANCE OF THE SHERWOOD FORESTERS IN THE POST-WAR YEARS

In the years following the conclusion of the First World War, the issue of how to commemorate the participants of the war arose in many of the nations that had participated in the conflict. The idea of commemoration has changed over the centuries, “enter[ing] into the realm of those slippery terms so prevalent in political and historical discourse.”¹ Some of the varied uses of commemoration include remembering “the ritual of anniversaries, the power-politics of states keen to use key historical moments to present political advantage, the reconciliatory potential of the old adage ‘forgive and forget’.”² But for the Sherwood Foresters, the commemoration of their actions in Easter Week has been slim in the ninety-eight years since the rebellion. There are various ways in which war heroes are remembered but, as Rebecca Graff-McRae noted, “commemoration is not merely an event, a parade, a statue, a graveside oration: parades can be disrupted or re-routed; statues defaced or bombed; speeches repressed or re-written. It is not an act or a word, nor is it inaction or silence. Commemoration is itself constantly under negotiation.”³

In the case of the Foresters, however, the forms of commemoration do not include speeches or parades; the number of memorials and statues dedicated to their work in Ireland can be counted on one hand. In Britain, the level of monuments dedicated to World War I soldiers is surprisingly slim⁴, and for the Foresters only a handful of monuments exist commemorating their

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² Graffe-McRae, Remembering and Forgetting 1916, 1.
³ Ibid, 2.
sacrifice. As the hundredth anniversary of the Easter Rising approaches, the idea of commemoration is more prevalent than ever, according to Graffe-McRae:

Commemoration, therefore, was never merely an event. Commemoration is a discourse in time and space—here and there, then and now, past, present and future. It is the (re)inscription of the event as such, achieved through the (partial and temporary) resolutions of these oppositions—between us/them, peace/conflict, inside/outside, morality/injustice, democracy/tyranny…reconciliation/revenge—which are so thoroughly incorporated into our understandings of remembering (and, of course, forgetting) as to make themselves invisible….Above all, it is a political question.\(^5\)

The issue is indeed a political one; tensions still linger between the British and the Irish, and between Unionist and Republican Irish. Beginning with the fiftieth anniversary of the rebellion, commemoration of the Easter Rising has always tended, unsurprisingly, to focus on the rebels, not the soldiers who fought and died in service to their king.

In the years following the rebellion, citizens of Ireland and England sought to find stability after the chaotic events of World War I, the Anglo-Irish War, and the Irish Civil War, which had split the nation of Ireland. According to Roisin Higgins, by the time fifty years had passed, 1916 had for many “come to signify not just a battle against the English but a battle among the Irish…[it meant] everything from a simple respect for the leaders of Easter Week to a complex sense of what it means to be Irish.”\(^6\) With the division of the nation, Northern and Southern Irishmen struggled to find common ground after the events of the first two decades of the twentieth century, a problem that still lingers today.

Commemoration also means something different to each subsequent Irish and British generation.\(^7\) But the lack of recognition of the Foresters since the events of Easter Week, particularly during the mid-century celebrations, is explained by Roisin Higgins: “The speed and

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\(^5\) Graffe-McRae, 5-6.
\(^7\) Ibid, 5.
perceived brutality of the British response to the Rising, the introduction of martial law and the re-evaluation of the calibre of the executed leaders themselves changed opposition in Ireland into widespread support for the rebels, despite the fact that many had relatives fighting on the British side in the First World War. “8 The Irish had many men fighting on the side of the British in World War I, and many of these men were killed in the Battle of the Somme. This aspect of the war tied the Irish and British together at a fundamental level: that of the family. Both nations had sons, brothers, and fathers fighting against the Germans in the global conflict, and it was on this level that the British and Irish could find some commonality.

After the rebellion was quelled, the British tried and executed the rebel leaders so swiftly that the public came to believe the leaders were not treated appropriately after their arrests. The Irish public, many of whom had been against the rebellion, thus turned on the British and came to support the rebels in their cause. This is one explanation for the lack of commemoration for the Foresters in Ireland. Even British civilians turned against the military due to their actions against the Irish rebels. As Higgins states, “Societies, like individuals, remember in order to forget. Remembering the Easter Rising was a way of forgetting both the First World War and the Irish Civil War.”9 Ireland and England both wanted to forget this troubling time for very different reasons: Ireland, because the rebellion failed to grant them the freedom they had so long desired; for the English, it was about forgetting the near failure to quell the rebellion and the realization that their first overseas colony was quickly slipping from their grasp. Nevertheless, the Easter Rising provided a new Irish “myth,” one of resistance and rebellion that would perpetuate future violence against British authority.

8 Ibid, 6.
9 Ibid 19.
In April 1966, the Republic of Ireland celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising. The capital city was the center of the celebrations, and citizens across Ireland huddled around their television sets to enjoy the festivities.\(^\text{10}\) The events began on Easter Sunday, April 10, 1966 with masses, a huge parade past the General Post Office, and the opening of a new museum: Kilmainham Gaol, the sight of the imprisonment and execution of the rebel leaders. Events continued throughout the week, with both Catholics and Protestants holding their own services to honor the Rising, dedications of statues and monuments throughout the city, and a reception for the veterans of the rebellion concluding the festivities at Dublin Castle on the 17th.

This week capped off a year of public celebrations and commemorations, pageants and publications.\(^\text{11}\)

But all of these celebrations were to honor the Irish heroes, the executed leaders, and the dawn of Irish independence. The principal problem with the commemorations in Ireland was that they presented two different realities for the Irish people: “The achievement of independence and the failures of freedom….Fifty years after the event, the Rising straddled the generations of those for whom it was a lived experience and those for whom it was part of the normative culture.”\(^\text{12}\) Working out how to bring the two generations together in celebration and memorialization in a cohesive manner that would do justice to those being honored proved to be a challenge, especially considering the political climate in post-Civil War Ireland, where political tensions continue to divide the nation. Nevertheless, the weeklong celebrations came together in

\(^{10}\) Ibid, 17.


\(^{12}\) Roisin Higgins, “Sites of Memory and Memorial,” in 1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising, ed. Mary E. Daly and Margaret O’Callaghan (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2007), 298.
a unified fashion and the people of Ireland championed their heroes with pride, respect and solemnity.

These celebrations, however, did little to include the recognition of the actions by the British during their tenure in Ireland. As previously stated, many citizens of Ireland were not supporters of the rebellion and aided the British in their attempts to quell the rebellion. But by 1966, the Republic of Ireland had been established and was free from the authority of Britain. The Foresters, along with the other British regiments in Ireland, were all but forgotten. However, one powerful entity in Ireland did talk about the actions of the Foresters during their battle on Mount Street. *The Irish Times* printed two stories concerning the events of Easter Week and the Foresters. On April 7th, 1966, a summary of events was published, including a map of the key events of the Rising. The Foresters were mentioned only twice, in recognition for their efforts at Mount Street and in breaking through the barricade at Kingsbridge to break up the forces around Trinity College.13

There was nothing new mentioned in the article about the Foresters. The story was more to remind readers of the general timeline of events from the Rising, but it contributes nothing new to the discussion of the Foresters and does not remember them as dutiful soldiers. Here, they were just another cog in the wheel that was the rebellion, the face of British colonialism, the enemy of Irish independence, even though the rebels had much in common with their “enemy”. Both the rebels and the Foresters were ordinary men serving a cause that they believed greater than any other. They were simply doing as they were told, leaving their jobs and lives behind to protect the safety of their nation, although the rebels had more freedom to decide to participate in Easter Week, whereas the Foresters did not. Yet this aspect of the story seems to be as forgotten as the Foresters.

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The Times, however, did publish another article around the time of the golden anniversary. Eric Maguire composed a piece detailing the events of the Mount Street battle. His opening line said it all: “Of all the battles fought in the streets of Dublin during Easter Week, 1916, the action at Mount Street Bridge is far and away the most interesting from the tactical viewpoint.” The article proceeded to praise the bravery of the seventeen rebels that held off the battalions of British soldiers. It also brought into question the British tactics used in this bloody battle and provided alternative routes they could have used to attack the rebels. He posits that “in the end, the British could feel that their tactics had been justified. After all, the bridge had been taken, but not by unsupported infantry,” and that “imaginative handling of the troops in the early stages of the battle could have achieved the same result without the unnecessary slaughter.” Not only was Maguire not recognizing the efforts put forth by the Foresters, but he criticized their methods of conducting battle with the rebels.

These two articles depict the level at which the Foresters were respected as combatants in the Rising. There were no special stories about the British forces in Dublin that week, no recognition of their sacrifices. They were all but forgotten in the golden anniversary of Easter 1916. It was not their choice to be sent to Ireland. The Foresters, like their brothers-in-arms on the Western Front, were simply following orders in Dublin, just as the rebels were following the orders of their commanding officers. Even when mentioned by the prestigious paper, the Foresters received nothing but criticism. Amongst the pomp and circumstance for the anniversary of the rebellion, the British forces were, for the most part, ignored in any sort of commemoration in 1966. However, the Foresters would not be entirely forgotten, particularly by the people of their native land.

15 Ibid, 10.
Commemoration can occur in a variety of ways, and as time passes new methods of remembering those who died for their country change and evolve. For the Foresters, these include monuments, books, and even documentaries. One of the most telling ways of judging the honor given to fallen soldiers is to look at their burial sites. Many of the Sherwood Foresters who died in the Easter Rising are buried in cemeteries across Dublin City. At Grangegorman Military Cemetery beside the Phoenix Park in Dublin, eleven Foresters are buried in plots across the grounds. In this large, expansive graveyard, their plots are nothing special; their headstones bear their name, rank, regiment, and date of death, accompanied by their regiment’s crest. Many are surrounded or nearly covered by dead or dying shrubbery or plants, and all of the deceased Foresters were not grouped together in one specific section. Four more Foresters are buried at the cemetery at Royal Hospital Kilmainham or on its grounds, and another four are buried in Dean’s Grange Cemetery in Dún Laoghaire. Eleven of the Foresters were sent home to their native Nottingham or Derby for burial, while one was buried in Hanwell Cemetery in London. There are plaques along the walls of the Grangegorman Cemetery honoring those who fell in both World Wars. They are buried next to Irishmen and other Britons of various ranks and who died in the Great War, World War II and the Easter Rising. This understated, quiet cemetery is located just outside the main center of Dublin, and, even on a quiet Sunday, there seem to be few visitors to the sprawling grounds.

Compared to the men buried in Grangegorman, the rebel leaders’ final resting place is a monument in and of itself. Situated in the Church of the Sacred Heart at Arbour Hill, located behind the Collins Barracks branch of the National Museum of Ireland, the rebel leaders’ final resting place is a sight to behold. Fourteen leaders executed in the weeks after the suppression of the rebellion are buried in a rectangular formation around a square of neatly cut grass, with a pair

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16 See photographs in Appendix A.
of headstones representing each leader (one in English, the other in Gaelic). Behind the plot is a stunning, sprawling wall with the Proclamation of the Irish Republic carved into the stone in the two official languages, separated by a golden cross, and the tricolor flag of the Irish republic flies high on the nearby flagpole. The grounds of the cemetery are well-kept and beautifully set with statues, and the Roman Catholic church situated within the grounds is spectacularly simple. The Irish, in this beautiful display of commemoration, take pride in their rebel leaders’ sacrifice for the republic and set these men apart with this stunning memorialization. People visit this site on a daily basis, and its location in the center of the city grants easy access and makes it an ideal tourist spot and historical landmark. It is a remarkable memorial site, and it puts into perspective which men involved in the Rising take precedent in the minds of the Irish, especially compared to the graves of the Foresters. However, in their native country, the Foresters are honored with a memorial that surpasses that of the Irish rebels.

The biggest and most impressive monument to the Sherwood Foresters is their Regimental Memorial, located at Crich in Derbyshire, England. The site of an eighteenth century tower, Crich was chosen for the war memorial that would be dedicated to the 11,409 men of the Forester regiments who were killed in action during World War I, including those who died on the streets of Dublin during the Easter Rising. At first, the design of the memorial was a bronze statue of a soldier, but the Executive Committee of the Old Comrades Association felt that this would not suit the people of Nottingham and that a larger monument would be more appropriate. After another smaller debate, it was decided that one large memorial would be erected in an area that was between the two counties represented by the Foresters: Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

17 See photographs in Appendix A.
The site of Crich was decided on in 1922, and fund raising began for the construction of the tower. The regiment sold smaller versions of their regimental flags to the people of Nottingham and Derby, and between this and other fundraising activities they raised the four thousand pounds needed to build the 64-foot structure. The memorial opened on August 6th, 1923 and thousands upon thousands of people made their way up the steep hill to pay their respects and honor their fallen heroes. On August 11th, 1934, a revolving, 750,000 candle powered beacon was placed at the top of the memorial that could be seen for 38 miles. From the top of the memorial, seven counties can be viewed in 360-degree panoramic beauty.

Other additions have been made to the memorial over the years, including the Smith-Dorrien Memorial, dedicated to the general of the same name who opened the war memorial at Crich, and the memorial to the fallen Foresters in World War II. Plaques have also been added to the memorial to commemorate the fallen Foresters in the years 1945-1970 and 1970 to present. A new beacon was built and dedicated in June 2002 to honor the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.\(^{18}\) Though none of the Crich memorial sites invoke the Easter Rising specifically, they do recognize the Foresters who died in Dublin in equal measure to those who died on the Western Front.

Every year, on the first Sunday of July, former and current Foresters, family members, and friends make the trek up the hill to pay their respects to and honor those who have fallen in combat in the last hundred years. According to Cliff Housley, the Foresters, “both old and new, appear as if by magic in order to be there on this day. Many wear medals from the Second World War and later conflicts,” while those who perished in earlier conflicts are also remembered by

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descendants of those long deceased heroes.\textsuperscript{19} There is also an Association Dinner held the Saturday evening before the pilgrimage.\textsuperscript{20} On October 24\textsuperscript{th}, 2009, after appeals for a memorial equal to those of other regiments at Flanders, a second war memorial for the Sherwood Forester was dedicated. This memorial commemorates the Foresters who perished on the front lines of World War I, and it is located in Tyne Cot Cemetery on the Passchendaele Ridge in Belgium.

The unveiling and dedication ceremony was attended by hundreds of people from Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.\textsuperscript{21} These two war memorials and the annual pilgrimage are the most significant form of commemoration of the Sherwood Foresters. It shows just how important the Foresters and their work as soldiers means to the people of Nottingham and Derby. The community cared enough about their heroes that they raised the funds themselves to construct the memorial. The Foresters, as regular, everyday men, were central figures in the community, and their loss was felt throughout the cities of Nottingham and Derby. Honoring their service for king and country with this magnificent memorial shows the dedication of the community to their heroes and to remembering those who helped secure their freedom during the wars of the twentieth century. These are cities and communities that care about their heroes, and the amounts of time, effort and care that went into the building, maintaining, and visiting of the memorial demonstrates this superbly.

In Ireland, there are no specific memorials to the Foresters. However, there is one dedicated to the Battle for Mount Street Bridge. But unlike other monuments and memorials to the rebellions of Ireland, such as the preservation of the General Post Office, the War Memorials for World War I, and statues dedicated to the leaders of the rebellion, this memorial is largely

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 25.
\textsuperscript{20} Cliff Housley, “History of the Memorial,” Mercian Regimental War Memorial-Crich, accessed March 2, 2014, \url{http://www.crich-memorial.org.uk/history.html}
unknown to the general public. Until recently, the memorial was nearly hidden from view. Paul O’Brien, an Irish historian and author of a series of books on the Easter Rising, discovered the memorial, forgotten behind the overgrowth of a nearby tree after years of neglect. Pulling back the tangled limbs, he discovered this memorial, but its condition was not reflective of the honor it was bestowing. The monument was almost completely black, covered in dirt and soot, the inscriptions barely legible. O’Brien informed the appropriate public authority and had the monument cleaned up and restored.²²

The memorial stands on the corner of Northumberland Road at the Mount Street Canal. It stands approximately six feet tall with a bilingual inscription: Irish on the front and English on the back. The inscription, in English, reads: “In commemoration of the Battle of Mount Street Bridge and in honor of the Irish Volunteers who gallantly gave their lives in this area of defence of the Irish Republic, Easter Week 1916. Remember their sacrifice and be true to their ideals. God rest the brave.”²³ The front of the monument has this same dedication in Gaelic.²⁴ The monument has traces of age and neglect, but nevertheless is a beautiful memorial to the Irish who died along Northumberland Road. But unlike the memorial at Crich, this monument to the fallen was not visited by thousands every year to pay respects; it was forgotten, much like the Battle of Mount Street Bridge was partially forgotten in the annals of the Easter Rising. It seems that some of the Irish want to forget this loss during the rebellion and all those who fought in the battle; Irish republicans, however, are not so eager to forget the events of Easter Week. Not only would this include the Irish Volunteers but also all of the British forces who came to Ireland to quell the rebellion. They want to forget that these forces eventually overwhelmed the rebels and

²³ See photograph in Appendix A.
²⁴ See photograph in Appendix A.
took away their opportunity to seize independence and finally expel the colonial element in their nation.

As O’Brien states at the end of his book *Blood on the Streets*, “The story of the battle of Mount Street Bridge is tragic yet heroic. What is more tragic, however, is the failure to remember this episode in Irish and British history.” This is evident in the state of Mount Street today. Along Northumberland Road, there is little evidence that a battle ever took place nearly a hundred years ago. A plaque has been placed on No. 25 to honor Michael Malone’s death in the battle. Other plaques exist, signifying Percy Lane and Northumberland Road itself as areas of action during the battle, but other than that, Mount Street is a quiet, suburban street packed with houses that would cost over a million dollars in today’s money. The Parochial Hall and the Schoolhouse still stand, with the latter now converted into a restaurant. Clanwilliam House, however, was torn down; in its place stands Clanwilliam Court, a large complex of offices that overlook the canal and the bridge. Life has moved on in the ninety-eight years since the rebellion, and relations between Ireland and England, particularly on the issues of the rebellion and World War I, are slowly becoming less contentious.

There are those in Ireland though who are trying to rectify this situation. As mentioned, Paul O’Brien is historian who specializes in British military and police involvement in Easter 1916 and the subsequent War for Independence. One of the events he specializes in is the Foresters’ successful attempts to quell the Easter Rising. He has written a series of four books,

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26 See photograph in Appendix A.
27 See photographs in Appendix A.

*Blood on the Streets* deals with the battle on Northumberland Road and is one of the few significant texts concerning the Foresters. It details the battle on a day-by-day basis, tracing the Foresters from their departure from England to the executions of the rebel leaders. The idea came about during his research into Bully’s Acre near the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, where he discovered two Forester gravestones. He discovered these two men were involved in the Battle for Mount Street Bridge and decided to tell the story of this little known skirmish during Easter Week. He says his aim is not to tell the whole story of the Easter Rising; rather, “to recount one particular episode that unfolded in a suburb of Dublin…I hope that this book will…act as a token of remembrance to those extraordinary men on both sides who fought and died for what they believed was freedom.”

He points out that there are commemorations for the Irish rebels and Volunteers all across Dublin, but the commemoration of the British is nearly non-existent. There is a reason for this:

The British army sought to forget this unpleasant chapter in its history. The real heroes were on the Western Front and it was felt that it was best to bury the men of the Sherwood Foresters in Ireland and hopefully forget about the disaster that befell the regiment during the battle of Mount Street Bridge. The British soldiers who were killed in action in Dublin in 1916 are not remembered or commemorated separately.

Neither the British nor the Irish are particularly eager to remember this battle. For the Irish, it was another link in the chain that was broken, forcing the Volunteers into surrender; for the British, their near defeat by such an insignificant number of rebels does not warrant the Foresters any special commendation. The hostile feelings between the Irish and British also do not warrant the Foresters any special memorials in Ireland, despite their heroic efforts. The Irish, however,

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31 Ibid, 115.
have made enormous strides to commemorate the Irish soldiers who served in the British army during World War I. One such memorial is the 2006 rehabilitation of Dublin’s Islandbridge war Memorial Garden; another is the Island of Ireland Peace Part at Messines in Belgium, which was unveiled in 1998. Nevertheless, O’Brien’s book is the first to really examine the role of the Foresters in Easter Week in detail and demonstrate the lack of commemoration for their service for England.

Similarly, *Uncommon Valour* tells the story of the defense of South Dublin Union and the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham. The question he posits in this volume is whether South Dublin Union could have been taken from the rebels sooner than it was. He states, “The failure to consolidate early gains meant that later in the week traumatised and inexperienced troops of the Nottingham and Derbyshire regiments…found themselves once again in action against a determined foe, resulting in further casualties on both sides.”32 Had the British planned their attack more carefully, perhaps the Foresters would not have suffered even more devastating losses. He also points out that the new, guerilla style urban warfare initiated by the Irish rebels would be adopted into later twentieth-century military tactics.33 Like with *Blood on the Streets*, O’Brien uses *Uncommon Valour* to demonstrate the British involvement in yet another skirmish and show just how forgotten these soldiers are. Of their losses, O’Brien states,

> The British soldiers who were killed in action are remembered in the Great War memorials that may be found hidden in churches and public holdings throughout Dublin city. Their names once forgotten, they are only now being recognised by a new generation as attitudes and opinions change and our involvement in the Great War is at last being acknowledged.34

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33 Ibid, 133.
34 Ibid, 145.
As more and more scholarship about the Great War and the Easter Rising is produced, these smaller, lesser-known stories are slowly being uncovered and investigated at length. With time, as O’Brien posits, hopefully others like the Foresters will receive their due recognition and they will become more of a central piece of the conversation about the 1916 Rising.

Today, O’Brien conducts walking tours of the Battle for Mount Street Bridge, focusing specifically on the story of the Foresters and their march up Northumberland Road. He takes tourists to all of the important sites of the battle, such as No. 25 Northumberland Road, the Schoolhouse and the bridge crossing the Grand Canal, explaining along the way the tactical advantages and positions of rebels and British forces along the route. The fact that a tour like this even exists shows there is some level of interest in the Foresters beyond academia. This method of commemoration not only gives those interested the chance to walk in the footsteps of the Foresters, but it also gives the Foresters’ story a life and allows people to feel what it was like to walk the streets. It is a unique way to somewhat see what the British faced as they marched unaware into the bloody battle that would ensue.

Utilizing another, and more modern, technique of commemoration is Irish documentarian Keith Farrell. On April 26th, 2014, he will be releasing one of his newest docudramas, A Terrible Beauty, whose name is derived from William Butler Yeats’ poem “Easter, 1916.” Produced by Farrell and his Irish production company, TileFilms, the completed film was first screened for the public in April 2013. It tells the story of Sherwood Foresters arrival and involvement in the Easter Rising, with “the firsthand account of the British soldier, Irish Volunteer and civilian” all tied together, “giving a fresh perspective on these key events and challenging some traditional views of what took place.”  

Dublin that fateful week, “with the voices of the protagonists on both sides and the tragic civilians caught in the middle being heard for the first time.”\textsuperscript{36} The writers used many eyewitness testimonies from the Bureau of Military History and other archives and diaries and journals written during and after the rebellion, and the key actors portray some of the most important characters in the Rising, such as Captain Dietrichsen and A.A. Dickson on the British side and Ned Daly and Michael Malone on the Irish side, who speak in Irish language in many of their scenes.\textsuperscript{37}

The film is shot in an interesting style, with the action scenes intercut with scenes of the actors speaking into the camera as if being interviewed, so that Farrell could make the film seem more like a documentary rather than a completely dramatic piece. The actors speak the words of people who were there in 1916, whether they were the highest of military officer or the simple girl living in Dublin trying to survive the chaos.\textsuperscript{38} The film puts the viewer right into the middle of the action, letting him experience the events of that dreadful week with all of their senses. It’s a visceral, beautiful, moving contribution to not only documentary filmmaking, but to the memorialization of the Sherwood Foresters. By allowing viewers in on the action, people can fully see and appreciate what the Foresters went through to secure England’s first overseas colony. It attracts a more modern audience because it is a film; younger generations are embracing technology, and film is an excellent way to captivate these new minds and get them interested in the story of the Foresters. It is also the first film to feature the Foresters as a central force of the action. With its basis in the eyewitness testimonies, its realism is excellent and really draws the viewer into the plight of the Irish, the naivety of the untrained Foresters, and the fear of the civilians caught in the crossfire.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
This film comes nearly two years before the centennial anniversary of the Easter Rising. Decisions are still being made over just exactly how to celebrate the hundredth anniversary, as politics still divides Ireland today. Some of these tensions were abated with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. This agreement sought to end the tensions between the Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, tensions that had led to a sustained, thirty-year period of violence known as the “Troubles.” In 1998, the agreement was signed and it “outlined structures for peace negotiations, allowed for the possibility of a united Ireland, and unequivocally accepted the legitimacy of self-determination within the province.”39 Even though the British officially had no authority in the Republic of Ireland well before this agreement, this peace treaty could lead to discussions that may begin to reunite the fractured nation of Ireland. However, it remains a divided island, and negotiations are still being conducted over the lingering issues of the early twentieth century.

Just as Ireland still debates over the nature of Ireland as a whole, the differing political factions in Ireland are also debating over the appropriate way to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of Easter Week. There have been smaller commemorations every year at Easter for decades, but the centennial anniversary is the most important of all. Some parts of Ireland, however, are not as eager to commemorate the Rising. In Northern Ireland, the decision was made to commemorate the Easter Rising, but it will fall into a sort-of lumping of anniversaries that have and will occur during this decade. In April 2012, officials commemorated the sinking of the Titanic, which was built in Belfast one hundred years ago. The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee was also celebrated, and both of these events were commemorated throughout the wider communities of Northern Ireland. The Northern Irish government has yet to decide whether to

have such widespread celebrations for the Rising in addition to the celebrations in the Parliament Buildings of the North. The same is also being determined for the celebration for Battle of the Somme. Assembly speaker William Hay remarked that the idea of not celebrating any of these events publicly had once been an option, but was eventually overturned. He said, “‘The commission has agreed that the range of official assembly events will mark the more significant anniversaries and developments from a century ago, but that the assembly’s existing policy that allows MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] to sponsor other events and functions on a cross community basis will still apply.’”40 Whether the Easter Rising will receive a widespread commemoration in the North has yet to be determined. Northern Ireland’s allegiance to the United Kingdom could contribute to their reluctance to remember an event that led to the division of Ireland and the tensions that still exist between the two parts of a single island.

Questions about who to include, how to commemorate the dead, how to deal with the Unionist ties that still remain in Northern Ireland, and how exactly this event will all take place perplex the government in Ireland. One would think that, like the fiftieth anniversary, the British would be largely ignored again. However, this does not seem to be the case. The Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eamon Gilmore, announced in September 2013 that not only would British politicians and Unionist leaders be invited to celebrate the centenary, but the British royal family would also be among the invited guests.41 He stated that he “wants all sides to respectfully remember those who gave their lives at the battle of the Somme, as well as Irish men who died fighting in a British uniform.”42 The nations share a “dual history” and “‘unless we are attentive

42 Ibid.
and respectful to both traditions, nationalist and unionist, we will remain a divided society.” He believes that all involved have a duty to hold these events in a way that “gives no offence and is mindful of the sensitivities of all citizens.” But concerns still remain over the tensions that still remain between the North and the Republic. Many citizens are afraid that these commemorations will bring back the violence of the Troubles, something that many Irish people are not eager to see return. There is also a rising voice in Ireland demanding a permanent break from all ties with Britain, something the Foreign Minister believes would do more damage than good. He points out that Northern Ireland has “benefitted immeasurably” from its relationship with the United Kingdom, and the Republic would suffer because if the North, its “most important economic partner,” decided to break away from Britain. The economy and political relationship between the North and South would crumble. The officials in the Republic want to include the British in this time of remembrance, but the situation is a delicate one because of the anti-Unionist sentiments in the Republic. It has yet to be announced if the royal family has accepted an invitation to attend the Easter Rising commemoration.

In Northern Ireland, the feelings about commemorating Easter Week yet again are much different than those in the South. Pierce Martin of the Belfast Telegraph wrote a powerful piece condemning the need for yet another remembrance ceremony for the rebellion. He says, “The time is long overdue to cut our ties with the 1916 insurrection and the cinder path of blood, misery and death it created.” He says the Rising was “a conspiracy designed to awaken interest in the discredited programme of the Fenian Brotherhood through the sacrifice of innocent

43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
civilians, whose only ‘crime’ was to defend democracy against terrorism.\textsuperscript{47} He calls for the Irish people to leave the Rising behind, challenging them to muster the courage to do so and to move on with their lives, leaving the past in the past.\textsuperscript{48} Martin feels that the Rising and all it stood for should not be brought into the lives of present-day Irishmen because it was not a “noble and sacred event;” rather, it was a bloody, chaotic, destructive time in Irish history that does not merit any honor or memorialization.\textsuperscript{49} Paul O’Brien and another amateur historian of the Foresters, John McGuiggan, plan to commemorate the Foresters in some fashion during the centennial, but because of the political atmosphere surrounding the rebellion, they are unsure as to the level of commemoration they will be able to accomplish.\textsuperscript{50} Even in the capital, the center of the action in 1916, the debate rages. The level of commemoration due to the Easter Rising, or whether there should be any at all, will be a conversation that will continue for the next couple of years. Regardless, the Easter Rising is an event that will not be forgotten in the annals of Irish history.

Commemoration of fallen war heroes takes place in all parts of the world, remembering soldiers from the American Revolution to the Iraqi War. The methods of commemoration can include memorials, parades, holidays, or something as simple as a newspaper clipping. For the Sherwood Foresters, the local communities that supported them in 1916 still show the same respect and dignity that their actions deem them. They are local heroes, just as important as the men who fell on the Western Front during the Great War and the Foresters who would give their lives in later wars. The consciousness of their heroic deeds is slowly growing beyond the borders of Nottingham and Derby, as evidenced by scholars like Paul O’Brien. With newer methods of

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} Paul O’Brien, interview by Amanda Kinchen, Dublin, Ireland, July 13, 2013.
commemoration, like *A Terrible Beauty*, coming into the popular consciousness, more and more people will soon be aware of the Foresters and the Battle of Mount Street. As the years pass, hopefully the level of memorialization for the service conducted by the British in the insurrection in 1916 can reach a new level in Ireland and globally, one that befits them as war heroes, whether or not they are recognized as such.
CONCLUSION

Memory is a compelling concept, particularly when associated with the study of history. When analyzing history through the memory of others, scholars can understand how certain events affect a certain individual or group of individuals while also comprehending the effects on society at large. For soldiers, especially those who were involved in war, how both their comrades and their countrymen remember them is a crucial component to the memory of their actions. Commemoration is an essential part of the construction of war, its heroes, and its memory within the public consciousness. With newer technology and a growing attention to memory and war, memorialization remains a constantly changing medium. Memorialization is not for the benefit of those who have died, but for those who are left behind and those who will come afterwards, who will remember the men as dutiful soldiers who dedicated themselves to a cause greater than themselves. In the case of the Easter Rising and the Sherwood Foresters, it is a matter of reconciling British and Irish tensions that have existed for centuries. The events of 1916 caused an irrevocable rift between Britain and its first overseas colony, foreshadowing the contentious relations that still exist between the two nations.

People strive to set aside differences to honor those who sacrificed themselves for the safety of their nation and of the globe. But issues, particularly politics, play a huge role in how wars and its combatants are remembered in the public consciousness. The commemoration surrounding World War I and the Easter Rising is definitely a political issue for both Ireland and England. Even after almost one hundred years, tensions related to Easter 1916 still exist between the British and the Irish. Seen as the colonial oppressor, the Foresters’ involvement in the suppression of the rebellion and the execution of the rebel leaders has led to their efforts being nearly forgotten in the annals of World War I history. They were viewed as dying defending the
home front, not as soldiers fighting on the Western Front against Germany and its allies. But it was not the Foresters’ choice to be sent to Dublin; in fact, they believed they were being sent to the front in Flanders. Yet they followed their orders, under-trained and ill-prepared for what they were to encounter. Their story is not included when the epics of the Great War are recounted in books, museums and classrooms across the world. It may not be as significant an event as the battles at the Somme, Verdun, or Passchendaele, but the Foresters’ engagement in the Battle for Mount Street Bridge was an important step in both British and Irish history, culture, and society. Without it, the relationship that exists between the two nations today may have developed very differently.

Britain and Ireland view World War I in very different ways, which contribute in part to how each nation views the soldiers who fought and died in it. Britain, more concerned with the developments in Ireland rather than the outbreak of war on the continent, had a very changed view of the world post-World War I. Like many of the nations that were involved in the conflict, the “response of the people of Europe was not enthusiasm or joy but sadness and resignation.”¹ Like the Easter Rising, the Great War had “quickly created its own hatreds and desires for vengeance, on both the individual and societal levels.”² The British, like the majority of Europe, were reeling from the devastation of the largest war to date, and they were unprepared for how to cope with life after such a chaotic period. For Ireland, though, World War I had a different meaning. For them it “did not represent a cataclysmic rupture in the historical flow as it did for other European countries… it was subsumed into the longer narrative of the struggle for independence…. It is the Easter Rising and not the First World War that was used to make sense

¹ Neiberg, *Dance of the Furies*, 235.
² Ibid.
of the Irish nation.” The Irish were not so concerned with the effects of the Great War on Europe or the island nation itself. Ireland saw very little action during the war, and they saw World War I as an opportunity to seize the independence they had desperately been trying to achieve for centuries, despite having over 200,000 Irishmen enlisted within British ranks. For the Irish, World War I was a catalyst to seizing control of their future while the British were preoccupied on the war front.

With the memory of the Great War and the Easter Rising comes the memory of those involved. In the case of the Rising, the Battle for Mount Street Bridge is largely forgotten, and the Foresters along with it. The eyewitness testimonies and personal journals of those on the streets of Dublin that fateful day depict the bloody, chaotic scene that the Foresters were forced into. Following the orders of their superiors, whose intelligence of the situation proved to be vastly underestimated, the Foresters walked into a trap. Billeted from the front and the sides, the Battle for Mount Street Bridge was a massacre. Yet the Foresters never lost sight of their mission and proved capable of suppressing the violence along Northumberland Road. Foresters who survived the battle remember the bravery and courage of their comrades, and their efforts also won them the respect of the Irish people, whose loyalty was not necessarily tied to the rebellion.

The first-hand accounts of both the battle and the execution of the rebel leaders demonstrate the pivotal role the Foresters played in quelling the insurrection. There are some issues to consider with these accounts. Many of them were taken years after the events of Easter Week, so how reliable are their statements? Also, historians can never be sure if eyewitness testimonies are completely accurate. Memory, particularly during a traumatic time, can be very unstable, so the validity of accounts given by both the Foresters and the Irish witnesses must be called into question. An area to consider in further research would be looking at other types of

first-hand accounts, such as memoirs or interviews with descendants of the men who fought in Dublin in 1916.

The story of the Foresters was broadcast across Ireland, Great Britain, and the world through newspaper reporting. Looking at local papers and their methods of remembering and reporting the events of Easter Week demonstrate the degree of importance that the Battle for Mount Street took in the broader spectrum of war reporting. For the Irish papers, such as the *Irish Times* and the *Freeman’s Journal*, the Foresters’ story did not take priority, being pushed to the side by stories of the rebel leaders and their forthcoming punishments. This is understandable to a point; the British influence in Ireland had made its way into some of the largest newspapers in the nation, so one would assume that their loyalties to Britain would warrant the Foresters more media coverage. However, the audience for these papers was Irish, and even though many disagreed with the rebellion and were loyal to Great Britain, they still had to print papers that would sell to an Irish audience. Also, the papers may have felt an obligation to honor their heroes of the rebellion, the Irish who fought in the chaos of the Rising, because they were regular, everyday men who took up arms against their colonial oppressor. Despite this, the fact that the Foresters merited any mention in popular Irish publications shows the impact they made upon the populace.

In England, the newspapers produced in Nottingham, home to many of the Foresters, celebrated their combatants with front-page editorials and testimonials from citizens on their popularity and importance to the community. These men were ordinary men with lives and families, and many were very important members of various societies and clubs in Nottingham. Their loss was grave, and it was felt throughout the city. The local papers felt that it was their duty to the Foresters, their families and the community at large to honor these heroes, both from
Dublin and from other theaters of the war, making them the center of focus in their wartime reporting. Like the Irish papers, they wanted to make the focus the hometown heroes rather than the rebels. However, for the British, the rebellion itself did not take precedent but the lives and service of the Foresters. Even though the papers were of various political affiliations, each found a touching, reverent way of focusing attention on the impact of the war, which to them included the Easter Rising, at home rather than in a widespread manner.

Examining the local papers gives a more narrow focus for the impact of the Foresters’ losses to the British forces. But what of the larger impact? Did their actions in Dublin cause any larger, long-term effects in the British government? The implications of the Easter Rising and its impact on the home front could be demonstrated in larger publications such as the *London Times*. It would also be interesting to examine whether these larger newspapers mentioned the Foresters in the broader scope of World War I. Since the British government does not recognize the Foresters dispatched to Dublin as dying in battle on the war front, would such popular publications have taken notice of their efforts in Dublin, placing them alongside stories from the Western Front? Was their story covered nationally, or even internationally? Did any of them receive any special mention, like in the local papers, or would their names only have appeared in the long-running casualty lists as they did in Ireland? There was controversy within Parliament over whether certain Foresters would receive war honors. Was this discussed in detail in the papers, particularly the larger publications whose general readership would span across all social and political spheres? In both Ireland and England, the local papers reported on events differently, depending upon the political and social associations of the editors and owners of the paper. Was there discrepancy in Britain between social classes or political factions on the Easter Rising and those who were involved? By broadening the scope of publications, it would be easier
to see how the nation as a whole viewed the events of 1916 and determine to what level the Foresters were recognized in their contributions to the war effort.

Another aspect to consider is the Irish-American perspective of the Easter Rising and whether major papers in the United States took notice of the Foresters during the Rising. After the famine of the 1840s, hundreds of thousands of Irish immigrants came to America looking for a new life. There were factions of Irish political parties within these Irish communities, which included loyalist and nationalist viewpoints. Many newspapers, particularly in the North, had pro-Irish stances in the early twentieth century. One such paper magnate was William Randolph Hearst, who was the owner of the *New York Journal* (morning and evening editions). He was very pro-Irish in his reporting of the Easter Rising, as W.A. Swanberg noted: “He was always benevolently inclined toward peoples fighting for freedom, and his sympathies were with Ireland in her struggle with England.”

Alongside the *New York Journal*, there are other papers to consider. *The Boston Pilot*, of the Boston Archdiocese, is a Catholic publication that was founded in September 1829 reported on the Rising. Thomas Rowland points out the paper’s stance on the execution of Roger Casement: “The *Boston Pilot* proclaimed that ‘another martyr has been added to the long roll of the Irish patriotic dead.’…the paper offered that ‘once again has England answered the question and answered it in the only way she knows—by the sword.’”

This American Catholic paper demonstrates the animosity of some of the American Irish against the British; is this view the same for all American Catholic publications?

*The New York Times*, today the third largest newspaper in the United States behind the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*, surely would have had some opinion on the rebellion and

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perhaps on the Foresters as well.\(^7\) Examining the issue at a cross-cultural level may provide another opinion surrounding the events of 1916: that of the Irish diaspora, whose loyalty to either the Emerald Isle or the United Kingdom could provide opinions on the issue as diverse as the people providing them.

In the hundred years following World War I, various types of memorialization have occurred across the globe for the heroes of World War I. In the Britain and Ireland, numerous state memorials have been erected to honor the men who fell in the Great War. The Scots, the Irish, and the Welsh all have national war memorials commemorating World War I, but in England there is not a specific national memorial for the British soldiers who perished on the war front.\(^8\) Jenny Macleod states, “The period in which these memorials were erected was a moment that in some respects was the zenith of an imperial Britishness, even whilst its constituent elements were beginning to peel away.”\(^9\) But with the collapse of the British Empire came the question of Britain’s new national identity. After the devastation of World War I, Britain strove to determine their place in the new world order. In London, there were several forms of memorialization for particular aspects of World War I, such as statues, the Imperial War Museum, and even a cenotaph, but none of these represented Britain as it stood post-war. Instead, they represented what England used to be, not what it had become. The British still associated themselves with imperial ideals rather than with being “English.”\(^10\) In the hundred years since the beginning of World War I, there has yet to be a national memorial dedicated to those who gave their lives for king and country.

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\(^7\) Keith Farrell, interview by Amanda Kinchen, Dublin, Ireland, July 29th, 2013.
\(^9\) Ibid, 649.
\(^10\) Ibid, 649-51.
In Ireland, there is a national memorial to the soldiers who fought in British regiments on the Western Front. When the memorial was unveiled in 1937, it was believed that anti-British sentiments would bring about violence, potentially causing the destruction of the memorial. The dedication ceremony was “indefinitely postponed,” and the memorial would only be used as a symbol in other state holidays, such as Armistice Day. It would not be officially unveiled until 1995; but, as Macleod points out, “If the British Legion had had its way [in the original opening ceremony], it is clear that the Irish National War Memorial would have been unveiled in such a manner that the British context of pre-partition Irish service in the war would have been strongly apparent.” Even some among the Irish were apprehensive about erecting and dedicating a monument to the men who fought for Britain in World War I, yet they still proceeded with construction. Though they had achieved independence from Great Britain, they felt that those men who gave their lives in combat still deserved a memorial to their service. The vastly different opinions of war memorialization in Ireland and England demonstrate not only the tenuous relationship that still exists between the two nations, but also the degree to which they regard those who served the military. In Ireland, there are hundreds of memorials and dedications to the soldiers who died in World War I, in churches, railway stations, schools, and other areas. Can the same be said for England?

In regards to the Foresters dispatched to Dublin in response to the 1916 Rising, the British government does not recognize them as war heroes, despite their sacrifices to protect the Empire. Since there is no national war memorial, the Foresters are not remembered nationally for their efforts. However, the local populations of their hometowns have not forgotten the Battle for Mount Street Bridge and the Foresters’ dedication to their cause. Monuments have been built and

11 Ibid, 662.
12 Ibid, 663.
13 Ibid, 663.
memorial ceremonies still continue for the Foresters because the people of Nottingham and Derby refuse to let their memory be pushed to the wayside in the story of World War I, even though these monuments are not specifically dedicated to the men who died in Dublin in 1916. Ireland also has monuments, dedicated to the rebels, battle sites and burial places of the Irish leaders who sought to free Ireland from England’s colonial grasp. There is no specific memorial to the Foresters in Ireland, but hopefully as the years pass and tensions slowly loosen between Ireland and England, perhaps the Irish will come to realize that the British sent to quell the rebellion were only following the orders of their superiors. The Foresters, like the rebels, were regular men with lives and families outside the military and their common bond came in defending their nation, giving up their lives if necessary to secure peace and prosperity.

As the world evolves so do methods of commemoration. Technology allows more and more people to be touched by important historical events and the commemoration that comes with it. The internet will allow the world to watch as the commemorations for World War I begin later this year, followed by the hundredth anniversary of the Easter Rising in 2016. The Irish government has sponsored a “Decade of Centenaries,” a ten-year commemoration of the events in Irish history from 1912 to 1922. Beginning in 2012, these remembrances include World War I, the Easter Rising, the Anglo-Irish War, and the Irish Civil War. Multimedia projects such as Keith Farrell’s docudrama and interactive methods such as Paul O’Brien’s walking tours of Mount Street allow people to become actively involved in history, whether through walking in the footsteps of soldiers or acting out their lives on camera. Books published on the Battle for Mount Street and South Dublin Union give people across the world access to the story of these lesser-known battles of the Uprising without the encroachment of the larger issues of World War I. Their specificity on these particular events is a refreshing new perspective within the narrative.

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of Easter Week and gives the Foresters their due credit for their participation in the battle. The story of the Foresters is largely left out of longer works on the rebellion, a deficiency that should be corrected so as to give readers the whole, complete story. As technology and historiography change, hopefully the interest in the Foresters will continue to grow, bringing these brave men to the public consciousness.

The story of the Sherwood Foresters is complex, conflicted, and interesting and is slowly gaining recognition in the academic world. Looking at it through three different methods, personal narratives, newspapers and commemoration, their story is told through a very small, focused lens. But their story is much larger than the events of 1916; their actions are almost entirely written off in the annals of World War I history. But why? They were following orders, just as much as the men on the front lines were. The men who died in Dublin should receive the same recognition as those who died at Verdun or Flanders. They all died fighting for the same cause: the preservation of peace and safety within the British Empire. But because they were fighting on the home front, on a colony that they believed that had under control in a rebellion and not on the Western Front, the Foresters receive less honor and respect for their service. Will the British government ever change its stance on memorializing the Sherwood Foresters? Will their story become a link within the narrative of the Easter Rising? Will the hundredth anniversary bring about new ideas, opinions, and memorials to those who fought and died in Ireland, both British and Irish, and bring the British and Irish closer through their commemoration? Will the Irish and the British ever resolve their centuries-long feud now that Ireland has finally found comparative peace within its borders? These are questions only time can answer and only through more research and scholarship can the full story of the Foresters be brought to light and receive the recognition it deserves.
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APPENDIX A: PHOTOTAPEGS PERTAINING TO MODERN COMMEMORATION


Burial Site of the Rebel Leaders at Arbour Hill. Photo take July 14, 2013. Photo taken by Amanda Kinchen.
Inscription above the entrance to the memorial at Crich. Photo taken July 17, 2013. Photo taken by Amanda Kinchen.

Inscription reads:
To the memory of the 11,409 men of all ranks of the Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment) who gave their lives for their king and their country in the Great War 1914-1919 and in honour of 140,000 of their comrades who served during the war in thirty-two battalions of the regiment this monument is gratefully erected by the people of the counties of Nottingham and Derby. To remind us of their sacrifice and our duty.
Beacon at the top of the memorial at Crich. Photo taken July 17, 2013. Photo taken by Amanda Kinchen.

The Parochial Hall, Northumberland Road, Dublin, Ireland. Photo taken July 13, 2013. Photo taken by Amanda Kinchen.
The Schoolhouse, Northumberland Road, Dublin, Ireland. Photo taken July 13, 2013. Photo taken by Amanda Kinchen.

Clanwilliam Court (Former Site of Clanwilliam House), Northumberland Road, Dublin, Ireland. Photo taken July 13, 2013. Photo taken by Amanda Kinchen.

Mount Street Bridge overlooking the Grand Canal. Photo taken July 13, 2013. Photo taken by Amanda Kinchen.