35th Annual International Nursing and Midwifery Research and Education Conference

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

‘A very great strain’: Nursing in Ireland in a time of conflict, 1914–1919

Gerard Fealy
The Easter Rising

450 deaths have been attributed to Easter Rising of 1916, as follows:

- 116 members of the military
- 16 policemen
- 64 rebels
- 254 civilians

A further 2,614 were wounded, including children

(Foy and Barton 1999)
The Easter Rising: Casualties

A further 2,614 were wounded, including children (Foy and Barton 1999)
Easter Rising 1916: Casualties

The 10th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 3rd Royal Irish Regiment, and 3rd Royal Irish Rifles all sent columns of men towards Dublin Castle as soon as the alarm was raised.

Irishmen were among the first British Army soldiers to die during the Rising. Irishmen made up 35 per cent of the British military fatalities incurred during the Rising (41 out of the 117 military deaths) and 29 per cent of the wounded (106 out of the 357 military wounded).
The Easter Rising

Immediately on entering Stephen’s Green West, fire was opened on us, I think, from the top of Grafton St., and one of our volunteers was wounded turning into York Street. We succeeded in getting him back to Jacob’s factory where he received treatment and was removed subsequently to the Adelaide Hospital where I understand he was operated on, but he died. I think this man’s name was McGrath. I went back to my post and remained there until Sunday morning. When we brought the wounded McGrath into the building there was considerable distress evident among the small party of girls present from Cumann na mBan who were in charge of cooking and attached to the First Aid

(Bureau of Military History Document WS 204, National Archives)
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The Easter Rising

‘Day by day [the ambulances] ran the gauntlet of bullet-swept streets, frequently struck by shots whilst on their journeys … we cannot recall a single journey on which we did not get a bullet through somewhere’ (cited in Foy, M. and B. Barton 1999).
THE SHOOTING OF NURSE KEOGH

Replying to Mr. Ginnell, regarding the shooting of Nurse Keogh, Mr. Tennant said the circumstances connected with this case had been very carefully and exhaustively inquired into, the evidence of military and also civilian witnesses having been taken. It had been definitely ascertained that this most regrettable incident was a pure accident.
REPORTED FROM DUBLIN.

KILLED.
R. IRISH R.—Capt. 9852 M.; Cavanagh, 273 J.; Tracy, 11162 T.
S. STAFFS R.—Fox, 5073 E.; Wright, 4985 P.
SHERWOOD FORESTERS.—Barratt, 4628 G. W.
IRISH RIFLES.—Hanna, 6774 J.; Mulhern, 5797 J.
PREVIOUSLY REP'D. WOUNDED, NOW REP'D. KILLED.
SHERWOOD FORESTERS.—Rodgers, 3814 H.

DIED OF WOUNDS.
R. IRISH R.—Gamble, 7 Co. Qrmr.—Sgt. R.
SHERWOOD FORESTERS.—Wood, 4051 A. E.
IRISH RIFLES.—McCullough, 3728 J.
D. DUBLIN FUS.—Ellis, 21735 A.
PREVIOUSLY REP'D. WOUNDED, NOW REP'D. DIED OF WOUNDS.
S. STAFFS R.—Saunders, 4953 C.

WOUNDED.
Hussars.—Hall, 6689 L.-Cpl. C. J.
E. R.—Moore, 2603 Spr. L.; Westwood, 1226 Spr. T. C.; Wooley, 1223 Spr. F.
E. IRISH REGT.—Cullen, 9844 E.; Goodchild, 6428 E.; Humphries, 764 A.; Keating, 9854 J.; McGrath, 10243 Act. Cpl. M.; Moulton, 9966 J.; Murphy, 260 L.-Sgt. F.; Norman, 9917 J.; Walsh, 9960 P.
S. STAFFS R.—Harvey, 9594 Sgt. J.; Hope, 4299 T. S.; Jones, 1859 Sth. H.
SHERWOOD FORESTERS.—Dixon, 3973 J.; Shaw, 4877 W.; Carlin, 3039 Cpl. M.; Mapletoft, 3818 J. N.; Moorby, 4775 G. N.
N. STAFFS R.—Cornwall, 3828 Sgt. J.
R. IRISH RIFLES.—Wilson, 489 B.
CONNAUGHT HANGERS.—McCahan, 6175 Cpl. A.
LEINSTER R.—Fitzgerald, 4302 L.-Cpl. R.
D. DUBLIN FUS.—O'Riordan, 26072 W.

DR. STEEVENS' HOSPITAL.

MILITARY ADMISSIONS—DEAD.
Private Oscar Bentley, Lancers; Private, unknown, Royal Irish Regiment; Private J. Duffy, Royal Irish Regiment; Private—Trecy, Royal Irish Regiment; Private G. W. Barnet, Notts and Derby.

WOUNDED.
Captain R. Charlton, Sherwood Foresters; Lieutenant George Malone, Royal Irish Regiment; Private T. W. Barnes, Royal Dublin Fusiliers; Private P. Walsh, Royal Irish Rifles; Private—Dickson, Sherwood Foresters; Private W. Walsh, Royal Irish Rifles; Bandmaster H. M. Cooper, Sherwood Foresters; Sapper C. F. Woolley, Royal Engineers; Private H. L. Buckoke, South Staffords; Drummer W. Wyer, Sherwood Foresters; Sergeant R. Joliffe, Cavalry Reserve; Private A. Debanke, Lancers; Lance-Corporal Foley, Lancers; Private G. Davies, South Staffords; Corporal Neenham, Connaught Rangers; Private G. Harrison, South Staffords; Private J. Motten, Royal Irish Regiment; Constable Cassidy, Royal Irish Constabulary.

OTHER THAN MILITARY—DEAD.
—Owens, in Sinn Fein uniform;—Ryan, Newcastle; J. Cooke, Birr; (Mrs.) Rose A. Heffernan, 176 James's street; J. Brady, 3 Bow street; two unknown.
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The Great War: some facts
- Approximately 210,000 Irishmen (estimated 300,000) served in the British forces during World War One. (Since there was no conscription, about 140,000 of these joined during the war as volunteers).
- Ulster and Southern Irish regiments fought side by side and high regard for the courage demonstrated was mutual.

**Period** | **Recruits**
--- | ---
Aug 1914 –Feb 1915 | 50,107
Feb 1915- Aug 1915 | 25,235
Aug 1915 –Feb 1916 | 19,801
Feb 1916- Aug 1916 | 9,323
Aug 1916 –Feb 1917 | 8,178
Feb 1917- Aug 1917 | 5,607
Aug 1917 –Feb 1918 | 6,550
Feb 1918- Aug 1918 | 5,812
Aug 1918 –Nov 1918 [3 Months] | 9,843
The Great War: some facts

- Some 35,000 (estimated 49,000) Irish died.

- The total number of casualties in the Battle of the Somme exceeded one million. This included some 3,500 Irishmen from all parts of this island

- The principal military hospitals were at Cork (88 beds), the Curragh in County Kildare (302 beds), the King George V Military Hospital at Arbour Hill in Dublin (462 beds), and the Ulster Volunteer Force Hospital at Craigavon in County Armagh

- Civilian hospitals commissioned including Adelaide Hospital and the Royal City of Dublin Hospital
The Great War: Nursing contribution

From 1914 until early 1917, up to 12,000 wounded soldiers were removed to Ireland on hospital ships and distributed to the various military and civilian hospitals around the country.

Women’s Branch of the Irish Army Corps, City of Dublin Recruiting Committee was established, a sub-committee of which looked after the Royal Dublin Fusiliers (patronesses included Lady Arnott and the Hon. Mrs. E. Guinness) to assist in the recruiting campaign and run comfort-fund raising events for new recruits, and for the hundreds of Dubliners who were prisoners of war at Limburg.

Many Irish women serve as VADs in field hospitals in France.
The Great War: Nursing contribution

- Ten nurses from the Royal City of Dublin Hospital served under Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS), and one of its nurses worked with the Red Cross.

- In 1915, a further four nurses from the Royal City of Dublin Hospital travelled to Egypt, and towards the end of the War, three nurses from the Hospital, Nurses Robinette, Gordon and Johnson, were awarded the Royal Red Cross.

- Margaret Huxley, coordinates the nursing services of the Dublin University College Hospital for Wounded Soldiers.

- Along with the contribution of individual hospitals, Irish nurses went to the front as members of the Nursing Corps, formed by the Irish Nurses Association, under the St. John Ambulance Brigade. (Fealy 2006)
The Great War: Irish military nurses

- Irish trained nurses enthusiastically volunteered for military nursing during the War, even after the 1916 Rebellion.

- Postings could be to ‘home’ or ‘active’ service at the front.

- Foreign service postings to: France, with the British Expeditionary Force (working in hospitals in Boulogne, le Havre, Abbeville, Camiers, Etretat, Etaples, Marseilles), Macedonia, East Africa, Malta, Italy, Mesopotamia and Egypt, Rawal Pindi Hospital, Wimereux, (under the control of Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Nursing Service for India).

- Irish military nurses worked in base hospitals, stationary hospitals, casualty clearing stations and in hospital trains. Irish nurses staffed various casualty clearing stations including No. 44 with the Army of the Rhine at Cologne in early 1919.
The Great War: injuries

Amputations due to bullet wounds, bayonet injuries, shrapnel, mines, gangrene and other infection
Nursing service in the Great War: Adelaide Hospital

Annie McIntosh (Co Dublin), Annie Mills (Co Armagh), Ethel O’Neill (Co Wexford), Florence Forde (Co Down), Isobel Tyndall (Co Dublin), Isabella Gawley (Co Sligo), Rita Arnold (Co Down), Margaret Boland (Co Mayo), Beatrice Bryan (Dublin). Others to go on active service after 1915 included Jessie Allan Jones (Co Carlow), Alice MacDonald (Dublin City), Grace E Stewart (Limerick), Ethel Elizabeth Haskins (Co Tipperary), Daisy Elizabeth Pratt (Co Cavan), Martha Lundy (Co Armagh), Georgina Hester Salter (Co Cork), Frances Adele Hayward (Co Dublin), Minnie Moody (Co Derry), Gladys Johnson (Co Wicklow), Dora Harvey (Dublin City), Muriel Treanor (Co Dublin), and Helen Fitzgerald (Co Laois) (Adelaide Hospital Foundation archives/MC/11270/63 Nurses’ Biography 1877–1919)
Peace Day, 19 July 1919

The parade began at Dublin Castle .... The sequence of the parade consisted of a leading troop of mounted police, followed by the Irish Guards Piper’s Band, transported from Windsor for the event. Demobilized Irish soldiers and sailors followed, marshalled according to regiment and led by their own officers. As many as possible were clothed in khaki. Following the troops came the Commanding Officer and his staff. Different units of artillery and cavalry were next in line and were followed by representatives of the RAF, WRAF, WAAC, Red Cross and VADs. Bringing up the rear of the parade was a huge display of tanks and armoured cars. The procession comprised about 20 000 people, of which 5000 were demobilized soldiers and sailors.
Nursing reform:

From ‘nurses of poor station’ to ‘a better class of nurse ...’

Daughters of lower-middle class, better-off artisans and farmers, and the well-placed families of the middle and upper-middle classes (Fealy 2005)

An Anglican social reform movement that was part of the wider social reforms of the nineteenth and early twentieth century (Fealy 2005)
Lady superintendents …

Educated gentlewomen of Anglo-Irish, English or Scottish parentage, many were the daughters of professionals, including doctors and military officers, or daughters of clergymen and country gentlemen.

Most undertook nurse training in the reformed Anglican voluntary hospitals in London, Manchester, and Liverpool

‘Genial and accomplished ladies, with the cordiality and happy manner of Irish country gentlewomen.’
The case for state registration …

[The] want of uniformity causes great injustice to these young women, and that would be a very great reason to my mind for having some central authority composed of experts to define what professional education should be.

The public would be assured that they (nurses) know their work ... and that they must be reputable women at least because their hospitals must have vouched for them and kept them for three year’s work.

If you do not educate your nurse, in the end the public must suffer

(House of Commons Select Committee on the Registration of Nurses, evidence of Margaret Huxley 1905)
The battle lines drawn …

House of Commons Select Committee on the Registration of Nurses 1904–5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voluntary registration</th>
<th>State registration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>1904</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elite London hospitals</td>
<td>Irish Matrons’ Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Irish Nurses’ Association</td>
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<td>The College of Nursing (London)</td>
<td>1909</td>
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<td>Huxley, Reeves and matrons of voluntary hospitals and RCSI members</td>
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Battle lines are drawn ... 

**Irish Board of the College of Nursing**

A standardised training and some form of voluntary registration

Membership included senior nurses from Dublin, Belfast, Limerick and Waterford, including Miss Egan, President of the Irish Matron’s Association, Miss Eddison (Royal City of Dublin Hospital), Miss Hill (Adelaide Hospital), Miss McGivney (Mater Misericordiae Hospital), and Miss Phelan (South Dublin Union), Miss Bostock (Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast), Miss Curtin (the Mater Hospital, Belfast), Miss Coffey (Barrington’s Hospital, Limerick), Miss McDowell (Waterford County Infirmary).

**The Irish Nursing Board**

A state register of all trained nurses and the improvement of the training of nurses

Miss Huxley, Miss Bradburne (Meath Hospital), Miss Hezlett (Richmond Hospital), Miss Jordan (Mercer’s Hospital), Miss Reeves (Dr Steevens’ Hospital), Miss Sutton (St Vincent’s Hospital), Miss Thornton (Sir Patrick Dun’s Hospital), Miss Carson Rae (Cork Street Fever Hospital), Miss Ramsden (Rotunda Hospital), Miss Keating (National Maternity Hospital), Miss O’Flynn (the Children’s Hospital Temple Street), and Miss West (North Dublin Union).
Battle lines are drawn …

**Irish Nursing Board**

The certificate of registration will be a valuable diploma. It will be a guarantee to the public that the holder has satisfied the [Irish Nursing] Board as to her qualifications and training as a nurse. The … fixing of a proper standard of training as a nurse … [will ensure] that those whose training does not come up to this standard shall not be permitted to enter for the examination which admits to the register.


Nurses will ‘manage their own affairs’

Legal rights and privileges, such as the right to practice nursing, could be conferred only by the State and not by voluntary bodies, such as the College of Nursing (Kirkpatrick 1917).
The battle lines drawn …

House of Commons Select Committee on the Registration of Nurses 1904–5

Voluntary registration

1904
Elite London hospitals

1916
The College of Nursing (London)

1917
Irish Board of the College of Nursing (Matrons of voluntary and union hospitals)

State registration

1904
Irish Matrons’ Association
Irish Nurses’ Association

1909
The Central Committee for State Registration of Nurses

1917
Irish Nursing Board
Huxley, Reeves and matrons of voluntary hospitals and RCSI members

1919
General Nursing Council for Ireland
The dinner of seven courses made one feel that the past five years were as a dream, and that the Lamp of Aladdin must have been used to conjure back days of plenty and delight when pleasant faces and pretty frocks were an ordinary sight. Miss Huxley occupied the chair, on her right hand Miss Michie, President of the Irish Matrons’ Association, on her left Miss Reeves, President of the Irish Nurses’ Association.

The health of His Majesty the King having been proposed and duly honoured, Miss Huxley welcomed her guests.
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