

# Irish Rugby and the First World War

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*This article explores the relationship between Irish rugby and the First World War. When the war initially broke out, the response of the IRFU was much in keeping with that of their English counterpart: fixtures were cancelled and clubs were encouraged to urge enlistment among players and members. The IRFU set up a Volunteer Corps from which a ‘pals’ regiment fought at Gallipoli. Yet for all this ostensibly selfless support, the game of rugby in Ireland, collectively, had a complex relationship with the War. Though rugby players in significant numbers signed up, the motivations for enlistment were complex and contingent upon multiple factors, many of which may not have been rugby-related. Nevertheless, the rugby establishment in Ireland attempted to carve out a special claim for the game of rugby union and its contribution to war effort. This was done mainly through sympathetic newspaper editorials highlighting the sacrifice of individual clubs and players, and making favourable comparisons between the war record of rugby union and other less ‘loyal’ sports. It is argued, ultimately, that the sport may have made exaggerated claims for itself and that these, in turn, were inspired by a hostile political context which threatened the position of southern Irish protestants, the group from which the rugby establishment was largely drawn.*

**Keywords:** Irish rugby; First World War; rugby union; war

## Introduction

Men who were prominent in the football field, and whose prowess was admired every Saturday at Lansdowne Road and other football centres, have thrown aside their interest in sport and devoted themselves purely to the affairs of war, in order that Ireland and other parts of the Empire may be kept free from the horrors of war.<sup>1</sup>

The collective sacrifice made by rugby union was one of the most popular contemporary rhetorical links made in Britain between sport and the First World War. Tony Collins has pointed out that in an English context, and of all sports, rugby union was the most enthusiastic supporter of the war effort. Its openly ideological stance, often framed in contradistinction to other sports, saw the game cultivate for itself an identity based upon ideas of manliness, patriotism and selflessness. The game of rugby union, and the qualities its supporters claimed that it inculcated, became directly analogous to the virtues needed in the effective soldier. Much of this stemmed from the game’s links with elite education institutions. As Collins has concluded: ‘Rugby Union saw itself as the very embodiment of the late Victorian and Edwardian ideal as practised in the Public Schools – vigorous, masculine, militaristic, and patriotic.’<sup>2</sup> It was a game that shunned individualism, the prioritisation of winning, and professionalism. These were phenomena that undermined the intrinsic values of sport. In Ireland these links between rugby football and the war were also in evidence. Giving a speech at the annual prize-giving at St Andrew’s College, Dublin, in 1915, Mr Justice Barton asserted that ‘It was a marvellous thing to see what a narrow space divided the football field from the battle field. Many glorious deeds would have been done

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before this campaign was over by those who had learned the lessons of courage and how to obey and command upon the football field at St Andrew's College.<sup>3</sup> Similar rhetoric was used by the Primate of All Ireland speaking at the Portora School prize-giving ceremony the same year. Asserting that working in 'union and cooperation with other people' was one of the 'great objects of education', the Primate claimed that this 'was what had made the men they were of the soldiers and sailors who had been educated at public schools. They had learned to cooperate with others. And what had taught them that? More than anything else, he ventured to day as an old Rugby captain, it was Rugby football.'<sup>4</sup> Much of this phraseology would have been familiar to contemporary British middle-class observers and elite protestant schools such as Portora and St Andrews eagerly promoted ideological links between sport, civilisation and empire common in the British public school system.<sup>5</sup>

A cursory examination of the wartime efforts of the Irish Rugby Football Union and coverage of this in the Union's principal press advocate, the *Irish Times*, could have one believe that Irish rugby's war experience faithfully mirrored that of England, where rugby was a self-appointed agency of recruitment and where players displayed their unyielding 'spirit of sacrifice, their willingness to die for their country.'<sup>6</sup> While such a conclusion would not be without merit, the rhetoric obfuscates, to some extent, the complexities of the relationship between sport and the First World War in Ireland.

In the first instance the war took place against a back drop of political instability in Ireland. By the time the conflict broke out, a degree of self-government for most of the island looked certain as the finer details of the third Home Rule Bill were being torturously teased out. The country also hosted two private armies, the Irish Volunteers and the Ulster Volunteer Force, divided bitterly along political and sectarian lines.<sup>7</sup> By the time the war had ended, Ireland was in chaos politically. The 1916 Easter Rising was followed by the radicalisation of Irish politics and outright separation had replaced devolution as the key demand of popular Irish nationalism. Meanwhile, political alignments in the House of Commons not to mention Ulster unionist bellicosity and military strength, made it likely that any devolved state would not include some counties in the northeast.<sup>8</sup>

All of this had clear implications for the Irish rugby establishment.<sup>9</sup> As a body predominantly made up of middle-class protestants (most of whom, in turn, would have been, unionists), its members were of a community whose disproportionate access to power and networks of patronage, particularly outside of Ulster, was already under threat before the real possibility of 'native' rule had arisen.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, in purely sporting terms, it had an ideological counterpoint in the form of the Gaelic Athletic Association, an institution whose war record would be subject to considerable criticism from unionist commentators. These are the circumstances in which we must seek to understand the wartime experience of Irish rugby, and the posture adopted by the game's administrators and promoters. This article, then, examines rugby in Ireland during the First World War and sets it against the context of the country's broader experience of the war, the key social and political changes that were occurring in Ireland at the time, and the broader links between rugby union and the war in the British Isles. The principal source for this paper is editorial commentaries and letters published in the main unionist newspaper, the *Irish Times*.<sup>11</sup> This was the only newspaper

that commented with any regularity on the links between sport and war and can be taken as giving voice to the 'establishment' rugby position.

### **Irish Rugby and the outbreak of War**

When the war initially broke out, few envisaged the conflict lasting as long as it did and sporting organisations, in general, adopted a 'wait and see' attitude to the potential cancellation of events. Already by September, however, the rugby authorities across the British Isles decided to cancel fixtures for the remainder of the season and from then until the end of the war, only schools and regimental teams played with any regularity.<sup>12</sup> In Ireland, in late September, the Leinster Branch 'bearing in mind the decision of the other three countries' recommended the cessation of rugby with the exception of charity and schools matches.<sup>13</sup> Club fixtures continued for a period, however, and as late as December, matches in Dublin, Cork and Limerick were still being played.

The IRFU, in keeping with its English counterpart, was quick to signal its moral and practical support for the war effort. The *Irish Times* took a predictable stance, campaigning for the discontinuation of sports and for the enlistment of athletes in the forces. The efforts, or predicted efforts, of rugby players were held up as an example to the followers of other sports and leisure pursuits: Our sturdy young "forwards" and clever young "backs" are just the right men for that supreme game – in which is at stake our national existence – that we are now playing against Germany. We are quite sure that a very large number of Rugby footballers will answer the call. In doing so they will furnish a salutary precedent for many young devotees of less robust pastimes, such as golf and lawn tennis.<sup>14</sup> They also endorsed the RFU's position that any footballer up to the age of thirty-five was fit enough to enlist.

On the ground, clubs were quick to adopt the IRFU's September recommendation. In early October, Wanderers and Old Wesley cancelled all fixtures for the season and Palmerstown, with 'over half the club's playing members...at present serving in His Majesty's forces' did likewise.<sup>15</sup> Some rugby clubs appear to have been impressive agents of recruitment. An extensive study of press reports for the season 1913-14 was conducted in order to compile lists of men who played for selected Dublin rugby clubs that season. Of the sixty players who lined out for Wanderers FC in 1913-14, thirty-five (fifty-eight percent) served in the War. Of thirty-nine players who played for Dublin University, thirty (seventy-seven percent) served. Of forty-six men who played for Clontarf in the final pre-war season, twenty-four (fifty-two percent) joined up.<sup>16</sup>

The IRFU were responsible for more direct initiatives. As early as the first week of August, FH Browning, under the auspices of the IRFU, had a letter published in the *Irish Times* seeking details from club secretaries as to how many of their members would be willing to join a (yet to be properly constituted) rugby volunteer movement.<sup>17</sup> Palmerstown RFC immediately responded by placing their own advert in same paper directing members wishing to join an 'Irish Rugby Football Volunteer Corps' to contact Browning.<sup>18</sup> A meeting of clubs was subsequently called and the Irish Rugby Football Union Volunteer Corps officially came into being.<sup>19</sup> Similar circulars to that issued by Palmerstown quickly followed from the Old Wesley and Monkstown clubs.<sup>20</sup> On 25 August, it was reported that

over one hundred members turned out for the Corps' 'opening muster,' with the Union eager to advertise the fact that 'members of other athletic clubs are eligible to join.'<sup>21</sup> By the beginning of September, membership had increased to 250 and the corps was inspected by General Sir Bryan Mahon,<sup>22</sup> later the commander of the 10<sup>th</sup> Irish Division at Gallipoli. The corps quickly evolved from a purely defensive, home-based outfit to one which would provide recruits for active service and by mid-September the first contingent of army enlistments left for the Curragh to join the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers (RDF).<sup>23</sup> This came after Lieutenant Colonel Downing, commander of the battalion and himself a former rugby player, addressed the corps at Lansdowne Road and immediately convinced eighty-nine of its number to enlist.<sup>24</sup>

The departure of the Rugby Union Volunteers (hereunder the rugby 'pals') for the Curragh was an event accorded considerable pomp. After gathering in the parade ground at Trinity College Dublin, they marched through Dublin to Kingsbridge Station headed by the RIC band and before boarding carriages bearing the Union Jack, sang the national anthem. The *Irish Times* noted that the contingent included five Dublin barristers,<sup>25</sup> and they were 'well set up and hardy fellows, well-educated and athletic and include in their ranks a majority of professional men.'<sup>26</sup> The rugby volunteer corps eventually, then, separated into two outfits: D Company of the 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who served in Gallipoli with the 10<sup>th</sup> Irish Division; and a group of older men who stayed behind in Dublin as a home defence corps. D Company departed Ireland in the summer of 1915. The rugby pals, 239 men in strength, arrived at Suvla Bay in the first week of August and took enormous losses before departing again in September with their numbers reduced to seventy-nine.<sup>27</sup> The conflation of rugby with military endeavour was evident in the recollection of the Company's efforts. An officer from the 7<sup>th</sup> RDF summarised the early contribution of the rugby pals to the attack on Chocolate Hill as follows: 'In a few minutes 'D' Company came into our ditch with a dash for all the world like a wild forward rush at Lansdowne Road.'<sup>28</sup>

In one particularly disastrous manoeuvre on 16 August, the company lost three commanding officers in succession and fifty-four men killed after attempting to dislodge a group of Turkish bombers with a bayonet charge on a well-entrenched position in broad daylight at Kireçtepe. Two of the dead commanders were the high profile rugby players, Poole Hickman and Richard Tobin.<sup>29</sup> Some stories of extraordinary courage emerged. Private Albert Wilkin, a protestant shop manager and Clontarf FC rugby player, was blown up when his tactic of catching enemy bombs and throwing them back at the Turkish position went fatally wrong.<sup>30</sup> This was the end of the rugby pals as a coherent military unit. Many of those who survived were redeployed to the Balkans with the rest of the 10<sup>th</sup> Irish Division, while many also took up commissions in different regiments and were scattered across different theatres of conflict.

Elsewhere, we have evidence of significant enlistments of rugby players in different regiments around the country. In Ulster, rugby had become militarised ever before the threat of European War appeared on the horizon. In late 1913, the North of Ireland Football Club declared its loyalty to the Ulster Volunteer Force and abandoned rugby in preference to drilling. A similar move quickly followed from Queens University Belfast.<sup>31</sup> In December

1913, Edward Carson, leader of the Ulster Unionists paid a fulsome tribute to NIFC: ‘I need hardly tell you how gratified I am at the action taken by the North of Ireland Football Club in cancelling their engagements for football matches, and making the sacrifices involved... should it become necessary to the Home Rule conspiracy.’<sup>32</sup> Many Ulster rugby players, through UVF membership or otherwise, joined the 36<sup>th</sup> Ulster Division in France.

It is difficult to estimate the numbers of rugby players from other parts of the island who enlisted. The explicit links between rugby and recruitment efforts seen in Ulster and Dublin do not seem to have been replicated elsewhere. That is not to say that rugby players did not join in significant numbers. In March 1915, Sir Frederick Moore, the Trinity College botanist and future president of the IRFU claimed that ‘over 1,000 Rugby footballers were now doing their duty in the Dublin Fusiliers, the Munster Fusiliers and the Connaught Rangers,’ and that at his club (Dublin University) ‘it would not, at the present moment, be possible to put a team of fifteen men on the field.’<sup>33</sup> This was replicated elsewhere. University College Cork rugby club saw seventy-three members join up. While nine of the twenty-two men who won Munster Senior Cup medals with the College in 1912 and 1913 also enlisted.<sup>34</sup> Catholic rugby-playing schools also saw considerable numbers of ex-pupils join the colours. Christian Brothers College in Cork had 295 ex-pupils enlist while the equivalent figures for Clongowes Wood College in Kildare was 604. Blackrock College in Dublin lost fifty-one former pupils in the war. The number of enlistments from the College is not known.<sup>35</sup> By the law of averages, it is certain that a proportion of these men were rugby players.

On the home front, the IRFU supported the War through various initiatives. In 1915, Justice Henry Hanna gave a lecture in which he claimed that the ‘Irish Rugby Football Union had given a great number of its best members to His Majesty’s forces.’ Of the remaining members of the IRFU Volunteer Corps, he said ‘There were...a number of people full of enthusiasm who were, unfortunately, past the age at which active service would be required.’<sup>36</sup> This enthusiasm ensured that the Corps remained very active on the home front. In the summer of 1915, the IRFU Corps affiliated with the Irish Association of Volunteer Corps and regularly trained and drilled with similar organisations. By late 1915, the IRFU contingent stood at 170 members. It was the fifth largest corps in the Association, accounting for roughly seven percent of its total strength. Although, if the Belfast Defence Corps’ large share of 917 members is temporarily removed from the total, the contribution of the rugby group looks even more impressive.<sup>37</sup> The IRFU also attempted to recruit a detachment of stretcher-bearers to work with the Red Cross at the front.<sup>38</sup>

Rugby clubs enthusiastically supported wounded soldiers’ clubs. In one series of events in June 1916, Wanderers, Bective Rangers, Lansdowne, Old Wesley and Clontarf catered for an aggregate of 400 soldiers.<sup>39</sup> Several benefit matches were held throughout the course of the war to aid organisations treating injured and disabled soldiers. The charity effort was also supported by ex-internationals who arranged a series of ‘crocks’ (retired rugby players) matches to raise funds for different war-related causes, usually concerned with wounded soldiers. The build-up to one such match drew the following tribute in the press: ‘Those gallant “crocks” will be “doing their bit” today in a way that should shame a good

many men of half their years into action. Now, as ever, they stand for the best spirit of Rugby football.<sup>40</sup> As well as initial recruitment efforts, the IRFU quickly set about coordinating a financial contribution on behalf of the sport in Ireland. In a letter to the *Irish Times*, the Union's secretary, Cecil Ruxton, called for the 'hearty cooperation of all Rugby football clubs and players to make their contributions' to a 'collection for the Prince of Wales's Relief Fund worthy of the noble game and distinguished patron.'<sup>41</sup> Within a week, the Union had raised more than £200.<sup>42</sup>

Charity matches, while honourable, needed to be kept in check lest the wrong impression was created. A correspondent to the *Irish Times*, having complained about the apparent failure of soccer to contribute to the war effort asserted that it was 'pleasing to see, on the other hand, that players and followers of the Rugby code have responded splendidly to the call of their King and country...Here in Dublin we are deservedly proud of the large number of Rugby men who have volunteered for service.' The writer went on to warn, however, the continued staging of fixtures for charity was being overdone and that 'accounts of these engagements...look singularly out of place...side by side with a Roll of Honour of the brave men who are playing a sterner game on the Continent and elsewhere.'<sup>43</sup>

Participation in the 'sterner game', of course, came at a considerable human cost. Twenty-four members of Clontarf Football Club died in the war. The equivalent figure for Wanderers was twenty-nine, while Trinity College Dublin FC lost forty-six members.<sup>44</sup> Yet death allowed commentators, to reaffirm, with pride, the sacrifice made by rugby union. In 1915, the *Irish Times*, with regret, reported the death of Irish international player RA Lloyd. Though his reported death subsequently proved to be a mistake on the part of the War Office, the *Times* took the opportunity to pay tribute to the broader sacrifice made by rugby as a sport, and its international players in particular: These men had earned a certain responsibility as a result of their celebrity; they were, more than others, charged with the duty of maintaining the high traditions of the game, both on the playing field and off it. They did not fail when the moment of trial came. They showed to the very utmost of their ability that Rugby football trains men to discharge their obligations in the sterner business of life ... If ever a sport justified its existence when the country required manliness and courage, it is Rugby football.<sup>45</sup> When Lt Gerald Bradstreet, a former captain of the Trinity rugby team was killed in Gallipoli, he was hailed as having 'played the sterner game of war as well as his numerous football admirers would expect, and died...a soldier and an Irish gentleman.'<sup>46</sup> Similar rhetoric greeted the death of international Robert Burgess who was killed in France and described as 'Fearless, high-hearted, gay, yet with a strong sense of duty...an Irish soldier and gentleman of the best type.'<sup>47</sup>

In all, nine Irish internationals died as a result of the war. Seven died on active service. The ninth casualty revealed something of the deep human tragedy caused by war that the pomposity about rugby tended to conceal. Jasper Brett of the rugby pals, an international with Ireland in the season before war broke out, was deeply traumatised by his war experience and committed suicide in Dublin in 1917. Brett's father, giving evidence at the subsequent inquest, said that his son has 'lost nearly all his friends in action' at Suvla Bay.<sup>48</sup>

### **Cultural Conflict: Rugby, the Gaelic Athletic Association and the War**

The rhetoric extolling rugby union's sacrifice was often accompanied by a rueful indictment of other sports and their apparent failure to rally behind the war effort. If rugby was the sporting embodiment of selfless duty, soccer and Gaelic games were guilty of institutionalised slacking. In England, soccer and rugby league bore the brunt of the rhetorical attacks from the rugby union establishment. As professional sports with working class constituencies, soccer and league were targeted by rugby union as much for their class profile and accompanying values as for any objective shirking of their wartime responsibilities.<sup>49</sup> In Ireland, wartime conflict between sporting organisations also occurred, but on the grounds of culture as well as class. Much of this bombast emanated from the editorial and letter pages of the *Irish Times*, the readership of whom would largely have been hostile to Gaelic games.

The GAA, in turn, was never likely to be an enthusiastic supporter of the British war effort. As the sporting expression of cultural nationalism, the Association was, by definition, anti-British. Not that loyalty to Britain was a psychological prerequisite for enlistment, especially given the stance of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Yet with its disdain for the British state institutionalised in the form of bans on members of the police and army from joining the Association, there was little prospect of the GAA being a fruitful agency of recruitment for Kitchener's Army. In that context, efforts to recruit GAA players by appealing to that fact amounted to wishful thinking. The Lord Lieutenant, addressing a recruitment conference in Limerick in 1915, put forward the idea that the captains of hurling and football teams should be approached with a view to raising 'pals regiments among GAA players.'<sup>50</sup> At a recruitment meeting at Ballinasloe, a Lieutenant Patterson appealed to young Irishmen to forgo 'their football and hurley when the interests of Ireland demand the united efforts of every one of its sons to crush the brutality of the profane Prussian anti-Christ.'<sup>51</sup>

In reality, the determined continuation of Gaelic games for the duration of the war was the GAA's priority, one which provided ample ammunition for the Dublin rugby establishment through its principle mouthpiece, the *Irish Times*, to attack the Association for withholding men from war duty. The staging of the All Ireland football final in November 1914, two months after the IRFU had decided to cancel all fixtures of any import, gave rise to the initial criticism of the GAA:

Was not an All-Ireland final football match being played at Croke Park under GAA rules? Fifteen lithe, athletic young men from County Wexford were to meet a similar number of stalwarts from County Kerry, and it was apparently a matter of momentous importance that these sturdy young athletes should receive the support and encouragement of a crowd of upwards of 20,000 football enthusiasts...As I watched the game, noted the keen zest of the players, their fine stamina and their capable, manly bearing...I could not help wondering what it was kept these young men from joining their brothers in maintaining and enhancing the honour of Ireland in the trenches in Northern France and Belgium.<sup>52</sup>

Critiques of the GAA were frequently embedded in general broadsides against other groups that the *Irish Times* felt were shirking such as farmer's sons, shop assistants and the National Volunteers.<sup>53</sup> These attacks became more pronounced as the war dragged on and as recruitment from Ireland slowed. At a recruitment rally in Rush, county Dublin in 1915, the parish priest of Donabate, Father Magill, complained that 'Irishmen were at the front for over a year, and they were calling for relief, but that relief could not be given as long as people

went to football and hurling matches.<sup>54</sup> Commenting on a football match between Wexford and Mayo in 1916, an *Irish Times* writer observed sarcastically of the crowd:

Were most of these youths vindicating the honour of Ireland on the icy plains of Flanders or Macedonia, or helping to fill the gaps in the ranks of their countrymen, and playing a noble game. Ireland could hold her head high. In a lull in the game one could hear the cries of the vendors of popular sheets, and see placards bearing such inscriptions as “The Volunteers and Conscription.” As far as one could see, however, they had not a very large sale. The game was the thing. Wexford was hailed the winner amid a scene of enthusiasm. The crowd poured out through the gates discussing the merits of the teams. The “honour” of Mayo and Wexford was vindicated and young Ireland went home via special train to shop and farm.<sup>55</sup>

Continued participation in Gaelic games, then, it was assumed, was the proclivity of the farmer’s son and the shop assistant and became conflated with shirking and idling. Another *Irish Times* correspondent, reflecting on a visit to the National Library, was surprised that the reading room had been filled with ‘lusty young fellows’ whose general appearance ‘indicated many hours on the football or hurley field’<sup>56</sup> The writer went on to suggest that the National Library authorities should not issue readers’ tickets to men of military age. This was carefully contrasted with the sacrifice made by rugby union. A satirical column in 1916 made reference to the GAA, hinting at its dishonourable record compared to rugby: ‘The cry from the front seems to fall on deaf ears, or the joyful clamour in the Saturday and Sunday football fields is so great that it drowns the cry of the gallant lads in the trenches, who are scrummagin’ with the Germans and, in the intervals of the goals shoutin’ back to Ireland that shout that gets no answer – “Come over and help us.”’<sup>57</sup> Moreover, with the GAA now implicated in the 1916 Easter rebellion, any existing suspicion of the organisation among unionists was heightened.

It was bad enough that the GAA should shirk the war by continuing its programme of fixtures, and, supposedly, prevent farmers’ sons from enlisting but it compounded its offensiveness in several other ways. When the government introduced its Entertainment Tax in 1916, for instance, the GAA campaigned to be exempted from it and refused to cooperate with its levying. The *Irish Times* took grave offence and Rugby football, again, was favourably compared: ‘Rugby football has sent far more Irishmen to the war than Gaelic football. It is played in the open air. Is a healthy sport, and has given generous help to charitable objects; but it has not sought, and – would not seek, exemption from the new tax...The Gaelic Athletic Association need not sacrifice to the State a single halfpenny of the next big “gate” which it devotes to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Bureau or the Red Cross funds.’<sup>58</sup>

A similarly angry and sarcastic letter to the same newspaper, responding to calls in parliament by nationalist MP John O’Connor for the GAA’s exemption from the tax, again attempted to draw a clear distinction between rugby and GAA:

He [O’Connor] should have demanded on behalf of the Gaelic Athletic Association in Ireland complete exemption from all taxes, both present and future. Further, the Government should provide premiums or bounties for Gaelic football, so many of its fellows having magnificently manifested their attachment to the green sod of Erin by their unwillingness to quit the same at any price. It is monstrous that a Government whose professed ambition is to prove its paternal care and love for our country, and which has already granted as a measure of...justice total exemption from the burdens and hardships of war to

our faithful and hardy tillers of the soil, should now seek to penalise their well-earned recreations by the imposition of a novel and unmerited tax...Rugby footballers, whose mistaken ideas of patriotism led them far from their native shores, where they were worthily upholding their peculiar form of sport, to perish in unmarked and unknown hands of brutal Turks and Huns. Rather should he have “passed” and stuck to his own “corner”.<sup>59</sup>

The GAA’s attempts to secure excursion trains for major fixtures, and their supposed attendances of up to 40,000 also gave drew a shrieking response in the *Irish Times*: ‘Is there any other belligerent, Allied or enemy, against which this scandalous charge – an army corps of men watching football in wartime – could be laid?...Today Ireland, playing her football, leaving her own soldiers to their fate...is a disgrace to herself and her allies.’<sup>60</sup> All of this occurred as the military authorities grappled with a lack of manpower as the bloodbath at the Somme took its toll on the British Army. The *Irish Times* favoured conscription and saw the apparently large reserves of manpower that had hitherto avoided their duty as a potential target. According to an editorial in late 1916, ‘The views of prominent Unionists in Dublin upon this mater are quite unanimous. National service in Ireland is regarded by them as a national necessity from the Irish standpoint...They hope that the thousands of farmers’ sons and shop assistants will be made to realise their duty to the State and that instead of being provided with special trains to witness football matches they will be placed under Government control to do national work.’<sup>61</sup>

The political disloyalty displayed by the GAA was compounded by cultural differences. Of the GAA’s staging of fixtures on Sundays, one correspondent to the *Irish Times* sarcastically implored the Catholic Truth Society to put a stop to the ‘Sunday desecration’ of the ‘able young men off to a football, or some other, match at Jones’ road [sic.]. A rougher lot I do not think you could find in the city of Dublin.’<sup>62</sup> The rugby authorities, by contrast, had long attempted to prevent their sport from being played in Sundays, much to the dissatisfaction of the game’s followers in Limerick and Connacht.

To some degree, this was all just prejudice and hyperbole. As William Murphy has pointed out, it is likely that GAA members in not insignificant numbers volunteered for the front with Laurence Roche, a senior GAA official who served with distinction in France, providing one such example.<sup>63</sup> Yet, despite targeted recruitment efforts, the enlistment of GAA members was likely to have varied depending on locality, and was possibly curtailed to some extent by both the anti-Britishness of the Association and the fact that Gaelic games was popular among the agricultural classes – the sector of society among whom enlistment numbers were least impressive.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, as they served no rhetorical purpose for their favoured sporting organisation (quite the opposite, perhaps), GAA members who joined the war effort were not feted in the manner of their rugby counterparts, and their historical footprints, therefore, are obscure.

### **Irish Rugby and the First World War in context**

If such a notion was measured on perceived sacrifice and loyalty, Irish rugby, on the face of it, had a ‘good war.’ This, in turn, was even more apparent when the sport’s wartime record was subject to comparison with other codes. As one writer surmised, ‘everyone knew

that Rugby football was preeminent among all games and sports for the manly qualities which it engendered – above all for that spirit of fair play for which our soldiers, in contrast with those of the enemy, had gained a reputation throughout the civilised world.’<sup>65</sup> Yet establishing causal links between rugby playing or membership of a rugby club, and war service is difficult. The rhetorical weight afforded rugby’s wartime record by elements of unionist opinion conceals a relationship between sport, Irish society, and the war that is a good deal more complex.

In the first instance, the IRFU was not representative of the entire Irish rugby community. The Union, at administrative level, was almost uniformly protestant and largely composed of men from Dublin and Belfast. While we cannot be certain, it is safe to assume that a solid share of committee members and officers were unionists. NIFC of Belfast, when announcing its discontinuation of rugby in favour of drilling and the cause of unionism, gave some indication as to the essence of the rugby establishment: ‘The North of Ireland Football Club is the leading Rugby football club in Ulster and shares with Dublin University the front position in Ireland, and its members are all of the public school and university class, some of the leading Belfast merchants and professional men.’<sup>66</sup> Dublin University, in turn, was a bastion of Protestantism and unionism, ‘a little piece of Britain that happened to be in Ireland.’<sup>67</sup>

Something of the social and cultural profile of the Irish rugby ‘establishment’ can be gleaned from examining the backgrounds of contemporary elected officers. The president of the IRFU in 1909-10, Connel Alexander, was an unrepentant unionist and war supporter. An engineering professor at University College Cork, Alexander made energetic efforts to persuade students at the college to enlist. He also threatened to fail students who openly sympathised with the 1916 rebels.<sup>68</sup> Alexander’s successor was the Trinity educated doctor and future president of the Royal College of Physicians, Francis Purser. In 1912, Major Robert Stevenson was elected president of the IRFU. Stevenson, an Ulsterman, served in the First World War and commanded the South Tyrone Brigade of the Ulster Volunteer Force during the Home Rule crisis.<sup>69</sup> The officers and committee elected at the IRFU’s last general meeting before the war broke out included just two Catholics from sixteen men elected to office of some description.<sup>70</sup> Of the Catholics, Mossie Landers was a Corkman from a fairly modest background,<sup>71</sup> while Andrew Clinch, as a Trinity-educated medic, certainly was not out of place.<sup>72</sup> The point here is that the IRFU, and the unionist press by extension, only spoke for one element of the broader Irish rugby community. When exalting the heroic sacrifice of Irish rugby players, it was largely the sacrifice of protestant unionists that they spoke for. The rugby constituencies of Munster, Connacht and provincial towns did not figure in much of this commentary.

The Irish rugby war experience was not the unambiguous story of sacrifice and heroism that the rugby establishment would have had one believe. In the midst of the Entertainment Tax controversy, all of the sanctimony emanating from the *Irish Times* was too much for one correspondent to the *Limerick Leader* whose letter was summed up as follows: ‘He refers to the silly protest of the *Irish Times* against the government’s decision [to exempt the GAA] and dealing with the outcry raised by that journal that the rugby players

have responded to the call for army recruits in larger numbers than Gaelic players, he asks, “how many Limerick Ruggerites, whom the *Irish Times* and the class for which it caters always patted on the back, have joined the colours?”<sup>73</sup> Indeed, there is evidence that in Limerick, rugby players satisfied their need to participate in sport by taking up hurling and Gaelic football.<sup>74</sup> There is more evidence of stay-at-home rugby players. At a meeting of the GAA’s Central Council on 1918, a discussion took place regarding letters received from individuals who had played soccer and rugby but who were now ‘asking to be admitted as members [of the GAA] and promising whole-hearted support to the Association in future.’<sup>75</sup> In 1917, the secretary of the Dublin County Board claimed (rather curiously) that the number of affiliated clubs would rise significantly if rugby and soccer players were allowed to join.<sup>76</sup>

The rugby men who stayed at home also struggled to maintain their war enthusiasm. Within two months of the IRFU Volunteer Corps’ foundation, concern was already expressed that the initial flurry of enthusiasm has subsided and attendance at parades had fallen. Concern was also frequently expressed at the lack of actual ‘home defence’ duties assigned to the corps by the War Office and by 1915, fifty-five (around a third) of its members had fallen behind on their subscriptions with many of these assumed to have left their membership lapse.<sup>77</sup>

Recent scholarship on Irish soldiers at the front has pointed to a myriad of potential motivations for enlistment including economic considerations, idealism, political inclination (whether of the Redmondite<sup>78</sup> or Unionist vintage), camaraderie, adventure and so on.<sup>79</sup> Rugby playing or club membership could be associated with any of these factors but it is difficult to make the case that it was a key motivational factor for enlistment in and of itself.

If we look at those who did serve, the demographic characteristics of Dublin rugby players who enlisted suggest that factors beyond mere association with rugby football may have influenced recruitment. We have demographic data from three different organisations: the rugby pals regiment, Clontarf Football Club and Wanderers Football Club.<sup>80</sup> What we can conclude from these sources is that enlisting rugby men in Dublin were generally young, protestant and (mainly lower) middle-class. In terms of occupation, clerks and civil servants predominated. Fifty-five percent of the rugby pals, for instance, fitted into either of these categories. Although it should be noted that ‘clerk’ was a broad category that could range in status and prestige from those working in banks and insurance agencies to those standing at shop counters. Likewise, around a third of the Clontarf men were clerks. The Wanderers sample encompassed men of a higher status with almost forty percent being professionals of some description. The equivalent figures for Clontarf and the pals were seventeen and sixteen percent respectively. Though it is tempting to conclude that war service was dominated by comparative under-achievers, the occupational profile of these samples was largely a product of the average enlistment age. The approximate<sup>81</sup> average age of the men in the pals, Clontarf and Wanderers samples were twenty-four, twenty-three, and twenty-five and a half respectively. In the 1911 census abstracts, few men of any religion were established as fully practising doctors, lawyers or engineers under the age of twenty-five, although protestants did occupy a disproportionate number of these positions.

What is clear here is that older men, perhaps established in careers and married did not enlist in large numbers, whatever the inclination their experiences on the rugby field may have given them. At the outset of the IRFU recruitment efforts, Browning made it clear that service was not to 'interfere with home or business relations.'<sup>82</sup> At a stroke, it seemed, moral pressure to sign up was less for men who were either married or had a good job. If the average age of the enlisted rugby player is anything to go by, these were get-out clauses availed of with some alacrity by rugby men above the age of thirty.

It is difficult to assess the success of the IRFU's aim to run a volunteer corps 'of non-political and non-sectarian status.'<sup>83</sup> Men of differing political backgrounds were clearly accommodated. In any grouping largely made up of protestants (in this case around eighty percent) there was likely to have been unionists. Yet there was diversity. Michael Fitzgibbon, a Catholic killed in the bayonet charge at Kireçtepe, was the son of the nationalist MP and former political prisoner John Fitzgibbon.<sup>84</sup> Where these samples seem to be unrepresentative is in the religious patterns. Only one fifth of the 'rugby pals' sample were Catholic while there was just one Catholic in the combined Clontarf and Wanderers samples. Though these are likely to be a slight underestimate,<sup>85</sup> Catholics are most likely under-represented in these samples.<sup>86</sup> We cannot accurately determine the precise proportional breakdown of each religious group in contemporary Dublin rugby but Catholics most certainly occupied a more prominent position than these figures suggest. Rugby at schools level, since the 1880s, was dominated by Catholic institutions. The Leinster Schools Senior Cup (inaugurated 1887) had, by 1914, only been won four times by protestant schools. Schools, in turn, were key rugby nurseries in Dublin. There were plenty of young Catholic men playing rugby in Dublin and many of these, we can presume, joined the colours. Yet they clearly preferred other regiments besides the 'rugby pals' for reasons that can only be conjectured upon.

There is little or no evidence that a soldier's association with rugby was the essential motivational element in his joining the war effort. If this were to have been the case, one would expect to observe patterns of enlistment in certain regiments, especially a preference, perhaps, for the IRFU pals outfit. Yet the thirty Trinity rugby players of the season 1913-14 scattered to fifteen different military outfits. There were some discernible patterns. Student medics (eight) tended to join the Royal Army Medical Corps and student engineers (two) joined the Royal Engineers. Birthplace and locality may have been a factor. Norman Bor, who played for Trinity in 1913 but was born in county Galway, joined the Connaught Rangers.<sup>87</sup> Likewise, James Ogilvie, another to turn out for the Trinity rugby team in 1913, was born in Cork and joined the Royal Munster Fusiliers.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, only two of their number joined the rugby pals regiment. Of the 129 Clontarf RFC men who fought in the war only eleven (nine percent) joined the IRFU regiment while the equivalent figure for Wanderers FC was fourteen out of 219 (six percent). The forty Clontarf men for whom biographical data was gathered ended up in twenty-one different regiments. The twenty-four Clontarf men who played for the club in 1913-14 and subsequently enlisted were found spread across fourteen different regiments. Just two joined the rugby pals. Indeed, it seems likely that a significant proportion of the rugby pals never played rugby at all. The company was, after all, open to athletes from all codes.

These low rates of enlistment in the pals company from specific clubs are suggestive. By dint of social background and ambition, some level of career- or class-based calculation must have entered the thoughts of at least some enlisting rugby men. Within one company, there were a finite number of available commissions. Something of the class-based calculation that could influence enlistment was evident in a speech made by Mr Justice Barton at a meeting of the IRFU training corps. Asserting that it was ‘one of the consolations of this was that men of different ages, creeds and views were drawn together by a national danger,’ he credited the rugby football corps with sending ‘hundreds of men into the Army since the war began as officers, as non-commissioned officers, and – still more to their credit – as privates.’<sup>89</sup> Clearly, for a rugby football man, taking up the rank of private was a sacrifice in and of itself. Another officer, reflecting on the rugby pals, asserted that ‘The preservation of rigid military discipline among men who were the equals of their officers in social position was not easy, but the breeding and education of the "Pals" justified the high hopes that had been formed of them when their Regiment was bitterly tested at Suvla.’<sup>90</sup>

## Conclusion

Ultimately, it seems that rugby may have had exaggerated claims made on its behalf. The sport was just one component of these men’s identities and just one of many agents of social interaction that formed these identities. Something of this is captured in a letter published in the *Irish Times* in 1915 written by Lt Stephen Feary, then serving in Gallipoli. Writing in his capacity as a former pupil of the Mountjoy School and a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, Feary included the following pithy description in his letter: ‘A few days later...I went down to see how the football boys had fared. I found that Hugh Anderson had been wounded and sent back, that Kee, for this remarkable good work, had been recommended for a commission from the ranks...George Harte and RV Murphy were both very fit and had done remarkably good service all through as well as Forbes. I could not get any information about other Mountjoy [School] boys. I am afraid that, unfortunately, all the best men in Trinity have been wiped out...The Engineering School has, I am afraid to say, had a number of casualties among its members; quite a number have been killed.’<sup>91</sup> Here we have key social configurations such as school, university and faculty being recognised as components in identity formation. More evidence of this was provided posthumously by war commemorations. In many cases, rugby clubs shared the memory of fallen members with other institutions such as schools, churches and work places. Of the many examples, two are illustrative. Poole Hickman, one of the officers in the pals company killed at Kıracıtepe, was included on the rolls of honour at Wanderers FC, The High School in Dublin, Avaron School in Bray and at the Four Courts barristers’ memorial; while FD Downling’s memory was preserved at Clontarf FC, Wesley College and Clontarf Methodist Church.<sup>92</sup>

This is where the role of rugby must be subject to critical scrutiny. For it cannot be too wide of the mark to speculate that many of these men, by occupational and cultural predisposition, would have served in the First World War with or without the lessons learned on the football field. That the *Irish Times* should offer an unsatisfactory rendering of the wartime record of rugby and the GAA was not significant. What was important was the creation of a loyalty/disloyalty binary and the foisting of this upon activities that were

ideologically malleable. In a period where King and Country needed reminding of Ireland's loyalty, rugby possessed the ideal blend of popular appeal and perceived manly virtues to show that Irishmen were steadfast in their commitment to the Empire. The sport, on the basis of assumptions about its social, cultural and political constituency, became a useful rhetorical device for the *Irish Times* and speech-makers in private schools.

Of the rugby pals who survived Suvla Bay Henry Hanna wrote, with a hint of melodrama: 'As these survivors looked back from the transport at the scene of so much unavailing bloodshed, they were only human if they hoped that there might be some little recognition or word of praise for them. But it was not to be...' <sup>93</sup> His words, written in 1916, were prophetic. David Fitzpatrick has written that in Free State Ireland, the rhetorical legacy of revolution meant that Irishmen who served in the Great War were 'damned by the flag under which they had served.'<sup>94</sup> The efforts of the IRFU, in this context, suffered a rather pitiable demise. If the rugby pals were on the wrong side of history, then the Rugby Football Volunteer Corps who stayed at home were on the wrong side of history in the making. On returning to Dublin from a training exercise at Ticknock on Easter week 1916, the corps came under attack from the rebels, ironically enough, in the vicinity of the Lansdowne Road football ground. Browning, who led a detachment onto Haddington Road, came under attack from rebel snipers and sustained fatal wounds.<sup>95</sup> CA Owen of the Dublin Veteran Corps would later write: 'Heedless of his own danger, though under hot fire and unable to move, his concern was for the safety of others; grievously wounded and hurriedly carried by unskilled men, he bore his pain like a hero once in comparative safety, his first thought was for those near and dear to him.'<sup>96</sup> Another member of the Corps, a young Catholic and Belvedere College boy named Reginald Clery, was also killed in the attack. The final acts of the IRFU Volunteer Corps, before it disbanded in October 1916, was to pay for the headstones of Clery and Browning and to pass on the proceeds of a collection among the surviving 'pals' in the Balkans to Browning's widow.<sup>97</sup> The War and the new political dispensation in Ireland that followed did not signal a dramatic demise in the fortunes of the perceptibly Anglophile sport of rugby union. The game was already well-established among elements of the new social and political elite and would re-emerge strongly after the Anglo-Irish War.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Hanna, *The Pals at Suvla Bay*, 29

<sup>2</sup> Collins, 'English Rugby Union and the First World War,' 797. For another detailed account, see T Collins, *A Social History of English Rugby Union*, 47-71.

<sup>3</sup> *Irish Times*, 1 December 1915, 5

<sup>4</sup> *Irish Times*, 23 December 1915, 3

<sup>5</sup> For the classical account see JA Mangan, *Athleticism in the Edwardian Public School*. See also, A Seldon and D Walsh, *Public Schools and the Great War*.

<sup>6</sup> Collins, 'English Rugby Union,' 810

<sup>7</sup> The Third Home Rule Bill offered Ireland a devolved parliament in Dublin. This was resisted bitterly by northern protestants who did not wish to be ruled by a Catholic-dominated parliament in Dublin and who wished to remain within the union. This resistance was given military expression in the formation of the UVF. The subsequent founding of the Irish Volunteers was the Irish nationalist response to unionist militarism.

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- <sup>8</sup> For a fascinating up-to-date account, see Fanning, *Fatal Path*.
- <sup>9</sup> This is a subjective term that includes the IRFU's key administrators, influential clubs in Dublin and Belfast, and sympathetic elements of the sporting press, particularly the *Irish Times*.
- <sup>10</sup> Campbell, *The Irish Establishment 1879-1914*, 5-7
- <sup>11</sup> For the political and cultural position of the *Irish Times*, see I d'Alton, 'A protestant paper for a protestant people: The *Irish Times* and the southern Irish minority,' 66.
- <sup>12</sup> O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, 45-8
- <sup>13</sup> *Irish Times*, 24 September 1914, 7
- <sup>14</sup> *Irish Times*, 5 September 1914, 5
- <sup>15</sup> *Irish Times*, 15 August 1914, 24 August 1914
- <sup>16</sup> A small database was created recording names taken from team lists published in the *Irish Times* on the following dates and page numbers: 29 September 1913, 7; 3 October 1913, 2; 13 October 1913, 9; 18 October 1913, 4; 30 October 1913, 4; 3 November 1913, 3; 10 November 1913, 5; 13 November 1913, 4; 17 November 1913, 8; 2 December 1913, 4; 4 December 1913, 8; 8 December 1913, 8; 19 December 1913, 8; 16 January 1914, 8; 22 January 1914, 8; 19 February 1914, 5; 23 February 1914, 8; 4 March, 1914, 4; 5 March 1914, 8; 12 March 1914, 5; 18 March 1914, 5; 28 March 1914, 2; 4 April 1914, 4; 13 April 1914, 2; 14 April 1914, 9. The names compiled were cross referenced with the following sources and the statistics thus derived: Clontarf Football and Cricket Club Roll of Honour, available at <http://www.irishwarmemorials.ie/Place-Detail?siteId=68> (accessed: 20 June 2014); Wanderers Football Club Roll of Honour, available at <http://www.irishwarmemorials.ie/Place-Detail?siteId=173>; *University of Dublin War List February 1922*, (Dublin: Hodges and Figgis, 1922)
- <sup>17</sup> *Irish Times*, 6 August 1914, 5
- <sup>18</sup> *Irish Times*, 8 August 1914, 4
- <sup>19</sup> *Irish Times*, 10 August 1914, 8
- <sup>20</sup> *Irish Times*, 15 August 1914, 7; 24 August 1914, 4
- <sup>21</sup> *Irish Times*, 25 August 1914, 5
- <sup>22</sup> *Irish Times*, 1 September 1914, 3
- <sup>23</sup> *Irish Times*, 12 September 1914, 7; Hanna, *The Pals at Suvla Bay*, 14
- <sup>24</sup> *Irish Times*, 14 September 1914, 4
- <sup>25</sup> *Irish Times*, 17 September 1914, 2
- <sup>26</sup> *Irish Times*, 19 September 1914, 5
- <sup>27</sup> Hanna, *The Pals at Suvla Bay*
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 76
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 108
- <sup>30</sup> Cooper, *The Tenth (Irish) Division in Gallipoli*, 176
- <sup>31</sup> Bowman, *Carson's Army*, 116-117
- <sup>32</sup> *Irish Times*, 23 December 1913, 5
- <sup>33</sup> *Irish Times*, 26 March 1915, 6
- <sup>34</sup> O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, 48
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid*; Seldon and Walsh, *Public Schools and the Great War*, 67, 68, 296
- <sup>36</sup> *Irish Times*, 23 November 1915, 6
- <sup>37</sup> *Irish Times*, 6 November 1915, 7
- <sup>38</sup> Irish Rugby Football Union Volunteer Corps minutes, 15<sup>th</sup> May 1915 (Hereunder 'IRFU M065 VC minutes')
- <sup>39</sup> *Irish Times*, 3 June 1916, 6
- <sup>40</sup> *Irish Times*, 22 April 1916, 4
- <sup>41</sup> *Irish Times*, 10 August 1914, 3
- <sup>42</sup> *Irish Times*, 18 August 1914, 5
- <sup>43</sup> *Irish Times*, 28 November 1914, 3
- <sup>44</sup> West, *150 Years of Trinity Rugby*, 28
- <sup>45</sup> *Irish Times*, 11 May 1915, 4
- <sup>46</sup> *Irish Times*, 15 December 1915, 5
- <sup>47</sup> *Irish Times*, 14 December 1915, 5
- <sup>48</sup> *Irish Times*, 4 April 1917, 5
- <sup>49</sup> Collins, *English Rugby Union*, 112-115
- <sup>50</sup> *Irish Times*, 29 November 1915, 5
- <sup>51</sup> *Irish Times*, 11 October 1915, 6

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- <sup>52</sup> *Irish Times*, 30 November 1914, 5
- <sup>53</sup> This was the majority group that favoured war enlistment when the Irish Volunteers split in 1914 on the issue.
- <sup>54</sup> *Irish Times*, 27 September 1915, 4
- <sup>55</sup> *Irish Times*, 18 December 1916, 5.
- <sup>56</sup> *Irish Times*, 24 February 1916, 4
- <sup>57</sup> *Irish Times*, 11 November 1916, 8.
- <sup>58</sup> *Irish Times*, 13 April 1916, 7
- <sup>59</sup> *Irish Times*, 17 April 1916, 5
- <sup>60</sup> *Irish Times*, 30 November 1916, 4
- <sup>61</sup> *Irish Times*, 21 December 1916, 5
- <sup>62</sup> *Irish Times*, 23 October 1915, 5
- <sup>63</sup> Murphy, 'The GAA during the Irish Revolution, 1913-23', 66-67.
- <sup>64</sup> For a local case study, see McElligott, *Forging a Kingdom*, 235-240.
- <sup>65</sup> *Irish Times*, 15 May 1915, 7
- <sup>66</sup> *Irish Times*, 23 December 1913, 4
- <sup>67</sup> Cronin, 'Trinity Mysteries', 2756
- <sup>68</sup> O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*, 80
- <sup>69</sup> *Irish Times*, 27 August 1960, 7
- <sup>70</sup> Names of officers taken from *Irish Times*, 15 November 1913, cross referenced with Census returns 1911 (online). Some biographical detail already recorded in O'Callaghan, 'Rugby football and identity politics in Free State Ireland.'
- <sup>71</sup> O'Callaghan, *Rugby in Munster*
- <sup>72</sup> There were two further Trinity medics elected.
- <sup>73</sup> *Limerick Leader*, 21 April 1916, 5
- <sup>74</sup> *Limerick Leader*, 13 October 1915, 3
- <sup>75</sup> *Irish Independent*, 22 July 1918, 5
- <sup>76</sup> *Irish Independent*, 4 April 1917, 2
- <sup>77</sup> IRFU M/065 VC minutes 18 July 1915, 21 December 1915, 5 April 1916
- <sup>78</sup> That section of Irish nationalism that supported the War.
- <sup>79</sup> For a recent and fascinating local case study, see Dennehy, *In a Time of War: Tipperary 1914-1918*, 112-131; See also Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, 6-13
- <sup>80</sup> Incomplete data in call cases on 216 out of 297 men from the pals regiment, forty-one out of 129 members of Clontarf FC and forty out of 219 in the case of Wanderers FC. All of these data were derived from the 1911 census returns (online).
- <sup>81</sup> We cannot determine the average age of the soldiers with complete accuracy as the 1911 census (taken in April) only allows us to calculate the average age of recruits in April 1914, and not in August when the war broke out.
- <sup>82</sup> *Irish Independent*, 11 August 1914, 3
- <sup>83</sup> IRFU M/065, VC minutes, DL McCarrison to Corps members, November 1914
- <sup>84</sup> J Bligh, 'Fitzgibbon, John,' *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (online), (Cambridge University Press, 2013)
- <sup>85</sup> One of the pitfalls of using census data in an Irish setting, especially an urban one, is that surname replication of common Irish names will always see numbers of Catholics underestimated in samples.
- <sup>86</sup> The majority of southern Irish enlistments were drawn from the Catholic working classes.
- <sup>87</sup> 1911 Census (online); *University of Dublin War List*, (Dublin: Hodges and Figgis, 1922)
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>89</sup> *Irish Times*, 13 May 1915, 7
- <sup>90</sup> Cooper, *10<sup>th</sup> Irish Division*, 15
- <sup>91</sup> *Irish Times*, 13 October 1915
- <sup>92</sup> On [www.irishwarmemorial.ie](http://www.irishwarmemorial.ie) a database searchable by name allows such data to be compiled.
- <sup>93</sup> Hanna, *The Pals at Suvla Bay*, 129
- <sup>94</sup> Fitzpatrick, 'Commemoration in the Irish Free State', 191
- <sup>95</sup> *Irish Times*, 3 May 1916
- <sup>96</sup> IRFU M065 VC minutes, Owen to Stuart Kenny, 23 June 1916
- <sup>97</sup> IRFU M065 VC minutes, 11 October 1917

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