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Author(s): James MacCarte

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Notes on County Louth Regiments of the Irish Volunteers of 1782.

ARDEE RANGERS.

M'NEVIN, in his *History of the Volunteers*, simply records the name of this corps—gives no particulars of the officers names, colour of uniform, motto or device adopted by the regiment.

BALLYMASCANLON RANGERS.

THE only officer's name I can trace connected with this corps is R. M'Neale, who was Captain. He was possibly a member of the same family as the distinguished Civil Engineer, Sir John M'Neill.

Mr. Robert Day, F.S.A., of Cork, whose valuable collection of Irish antiquities and historical objects embrace many Irish Volunteer relics, has described, and illustrated, the obverse and reverse of a rare silver medal bearing the name of this regiment, now in his collection.

"It is of engraved silver work, oval in form, and is two inches in length by one and a half inches wide. *Obverse*—Upon a garter, divided in the centre at each side by a star "Ballymascanlon Rangers," and within the garter, the harp crowned with smaller garter above and below the arms, having the motto 'Liberty or Death,' and the figures '222.' *Reverse*—Upon the corresponding garters, 'We struggle for Liberty,' and 'The Volunteers of Ireland.' In the centre of the field are nine of the Volunteers, grouped as three Light Infantry, three men of the Line, and three Grenadiers: beneath their feet, the owner's name 'Jno. Thompson,' and above the points of the bayonets, with which the men are armed, three masonic groupings. In the centre, the square and compass enclosing the letter G. At its left, the hour-glass resting on a book; and on the right, the level, rule, and mallet. It is more than probable that the '222' is the number of Thompson's Masonic Lodge.

The medal has its original scarlet ribbon, clasp, and suspender, and is of peculiar interest, illustrating the character of the uniform worn by this Co. Louth Regiment.

Dr. F. E. Crossle, of Newry, has identified many of the masonic lodges in Ireland with the Volunteers of '82, and this medal of Thompson's, while primarily a decoration of the Rangers, is also an enduring record that either a lodge of Freemasons was in the Regiment, or else that the Rangers, themselves, constituted a Masonic Lodge and a Masonic company of Volunteers. M'Nevin laments the difficulty that he experienced in ascertaining the colours of the various volunteer uniforms, and is unable to describe that worn by the Ballymascanlon Rangers—the commanding officer of which was Captain R. M'Neale." (*Journal Royal Soc. of Antiq., Ireland*; page 335, vol. iii. (Fifth Series), 1893. An illustration of the medal is given. (*See under Dundalk Light Dragoons.*)

In a paper, "On some Medals and Mottoes of the Irish Volunteers," contributed to the *Journal* of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society (vol. iv., second series), Mr. Robert Day describes and illustrates nearly twenty rare medals of the Irish Volunteers, amongst them a second Ballymascanlon Rangers medal in his

collection. This medal he describes as of massive hall-marked silver, two inches in diameter, and has on the Obverse—"This token of esteem presented to Sergt. A. Cavan for zealous services and skill in firing." Reverse—Two swords crossed, with the points up, and a shamrock between the blades. Legend—"Ballymascannon Rangers, Loyal Louth Defiance to foreign and other foes." Upon the edge of the medal, "17 March, 1780," and upon the suspender, which is also hall-marked, the name of the commanding officer, Captain R. M'Neale. The date upon the edge is confirmed by the Irish hall-mark of 1779, in which year the medal was made, but it was held over and not presented until St. Patrick's Day, "March 17th, 1780."

DROGHEDA ASSOCIATION.

1777. The uniform, according to M'Nevin, was scarlet with pomona green facings and gold laced hats. William Meade Ogle* was Colonel, Hugh Montgomery Lyons,† Lieut.-Colonel; ‡ William Cheshire, Major; Oliver Fairtlough, § Captain; William Holmes and John Ackland, Lieutenants.

Mr. ROBERT DAY, of Cork, has in his collection a badge of the Drogheda Association, which he describes as follows:—

"A triangular, copper, gold-plated, engraved decoration, having on the Obverse within a leaf border, three shamrocks on one stem, joined by a ribbon of three folds in a double bow-knot, and upon a ribbon of three folds "Drogheda." Upon the Reverse, on a trophy of arms, the badge of St. Patrick—"Quis Separabit, 1783." This is pierced for suspension, and is an interesting volunteer badge, made and worn after the institution of the Order of St. Patrick.

LOYAL DROGHEDA CAVALRY.

In the year 1797 a body of horse bearing this title was formed in Drogheda, of which the name of Ralph Smith, Esq., is given as Captain (A Ralph Smyth was Mayor of Drogheda in 1793-4). At a meeting of their Committee, held on the 11th of March of that year, William Dardis, Esq., Chairman; one regulation (from the published resolutions) was: "That any member absent from three Field days, without leave, and within twenty miles of Drogheda, on any of said Field days, shall forfeit One Guinea. Also: that a Court of Inquiry, appointed by the Commanding Officer, is fully competent to pass judgement on any individual of this corps, against whom charges of misconduct may be exhibited."

* *William Meade Ogle* represented Drogheda in the Irish Parliament from 1773 to 1796; and on the passing of the Act of Union attended the English House of Commons from 1812 to 1820; was Mayor of Drogheda in 1804. The name is to be found in the Lists of Mayors and Sheriffs of Drogheda all through the 16th and 17th centuries.

† Lieut. Col. Lyons was Sheriff in 1775, and Mayor of Drogheda in 1778.

‡ The Cheshire family originally came from Shrewsbury. There is a monument in St. Peter's Churchyard, Drogheda, containing particulars of their genealogy from 1694 to 1820. A notable member of this family was Lieut. John Cheshire of the English Navy, one of the first to land on the shores of Portugal early in the outbreak of the Peninsular War. In recognition of this, he was presented on his return home from the war by the Corporation of Drogheda with a handsome sword and gilt scabbard. In the month of June, 1893, an apparently useless sword, enclosed in a dirty rusty scabbard, was fished out of the Boyne, and offered for sale in a marine store for 1/6. It afterwards fell into the hands of a local antiquary, who purchased it for 2/6. A careful examination and burnishing of sword and scabbard revealed it to be the identical 'sword of honour' presented to Lieut. Cheshire by the Corporation of Drogheda. It is now in the possession of a near relative of the Lieutenant.

§ William Oliver Fairtlough was Town Clerk of Drogheda in 1830, according to MacCabe's *Directory of Drogheda* for that year, and resided at 27, Lawrence street. There was Henry B. Fairtlough, Mayor of Drogheda in that year, and four or five of the same surname Aldermen in the Council. A Dr. Fairtlough also resided and practised in Lawrence street in the same year. Several of the name filled the positions of Mayors and Sheriffs of Drogheda in the 16th and 17th centuries, and were extensive owners of property in the town of Drogheda and vicinity.

|| The names of the Holmes' and Ackland's are also to be found in the lists of Sheriffs of Drogheda.

THE LOYAL DROGHEDA INFANTRY.

THIS corps was also established about this time. Charles Evans, Esq., Captain.* Lieutenants: William Oliver Fairtlough and Lancelot Fisher—who was Sheriff of Drogheda in 1794.

DROGHEDA ASSOCIATION.

IN 1779, D'Alton, in his *History of Drogheda*, states: "By a vote of the Assembly, it was directed that 100 firelocks, without accoutrements, should be provided by the Corporation for the Protestant inhabitants, if they could not be obtained from government gratis."

At a full meeting of the Drogheda Association (convened by public notice), at the Tholsel of Drogheda, the 1st March, 1782; Colonel Hugh Montgomery Lyons in the chair.

Resolved unanimously—That we do approve of, and highly applaud the spirited resolutions and address of the delegates from the several corps of volunteers, assembled at Dungannon, the 5th day of February last.

Resolved unanimously—That we will co-operate with our fellow-volunteers in every constitutional mode of obtaining a redress of the grievances justly complained of in the said resolutions.

Resolved unanimously—That Colonel Ogle, Colonel Lyons, Major Chesshire, Captain Fairtlough, and Lieutenant Holmes, or any three of them, be appointed a Committee, on behalf of this corps, to communicate with the Committee of nine appointed on behalf of the Ulster corps to meet in Dublin.

Resolved unanimously—That the thanks of this meeting be given to Colonel Lyons for his polite conduct in the chair.

Resolved—That these resolutions be signed by Captain Fairtlough, Secretary to this meeting, and published in the *Dublin and General Evening Posts* and *Drogheda Journal*.

OLIVER FAIRTLOUGH, Sec.

DUNDALK ARTILLERY.

WHAT its strength was, the names of the officers, or uniform worn, I cannot say; but Mr. Robert Day gives the following particulars:—

"Prominent among these (the Irish Volunteers of 1782) were the men of Louth, who are represented by the following medals in my collection:—The Dundalk Light Dragoons, 1780; Drogheda Association, Ballymascanlon Rangers, another Masonic Medal of the same, and the Dundalk Artillery corps.

The first, second, and third of these have already been published in the *Journal* of the Cork Archæological Society, and the fourth will be found in vol. xxiii., consec. series of the *Journal Royal Soc. of Antiq., Ireland*, p. 335 (1893). The last named is of fine gold, engraved, with a raised chased border, and triangular suspender, and measures $2\frac{3}{8}$ ins. by $2\frac{1}{2}$ ins. Obverse: A siege gun, with a pile of round shot; above, a royal crown that partly covers a monogram of King George III., surrounding it, "Dundalk Light Artillery;" in exergue, "The Reward of Merit." Reverse: "Won a trial of firing at Target by Gunner A. Black, 1781;" and on two scrolls "The gift of J. W. Foster, Esq."

During the following year three corps were merged into the County Louth Regiment: "At a meeting of Delegates from the Dundalk Independent Troop of Light Dragoons, the Ballymascanlon Rangers, the Dundalk Train of Artillery, and the Ardee Rangers, held at Ardee, March 18th, 1782, it was unanimously re-

* Charles Evans was Mayor of Drogheda in 1804; proprietor and printer of the *Drogheda Journal* at 2, Lawrence street.

solved, "That the above-mentioned corps do now unite, and take the name of the County of Louth Regiment, and that the Earl of Charlemont is hereby appointed Colonel thereof—(Wilson's *Resolutions of the Volunteers*, Dublin, 1782).

In M'Nevin's List of the Volunteers he simply mentions "The Dundalk Artillery," but does not give either the names of its officers or their uniforms. Here the medal comes in, and records the name of J. W. Foster, Esq., who was Commander of the Dundalk Horse, and probably was also associated with the Artillery Regiment; as among the Volunteers there are frequent instances of the same officers holding dual commands, *e.g.*, the Newry Rangers and Newry Volunteers, 1st Company, Captain Benson. (On three gold medals of the Irish Volunteers, by Robert Day, F.S.A.; *Journal Roy. Soc. of Antiq., Ireland*, pp. 325-6; vol. x., 5th series).

DUNDALK INDEPENDENT LIGHT DRAGOONS.

Thomas Read* was Captain. Mr. Robert Day describes and illustrates in the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, p. 36; vol. vi., a silver cross of the Dundalk Light Dragoons, now in his collection. It is a Maltese cross of silver, engraved, two inches in length, with a ring for suspension. On the centre of the obverse is the Irish harp in a circle beneath a crown, and on the limbs of the cross "Dundalk Light Dragoons," sprays of shamrocks, and a skull with cross-bones. The reverse has "Chas. O'Mara, Reward of Merit, 1780." Mr. Day adds: "This is a very rare form of volunteer decoration, and the only one I have met with. The emblems of the skull and cross-bones are also uncommon, and may have been the badge of the regiment, as they are of the 17th Lancers; or, with greater probability, O'Mara, the recipient, was a member of the masonic order, as the emblems and the cross would alike have been suggestive to him as symbolical of the order.

We have ample proof that many of the Irish masonic lodges enrolled themselves into companies of volunteers; for instance, the Ballymascanlon Rangers, whose lodge, No. 222, met in Dundalk from 1762 to 1821. They were altogether a masonic volunteer corps." (See under Ballymascanlon Rangers).

Extract from a letter, from Dundalk, 2nd August, 1780—*Hibernian Magazine*.

"Yesterday the volunteer company of this town met in the Market-square, where they fired twenty-four vollies in an honour of the day [King's Birthday] with a degree of alertness and regularity not to be excelled by the best disciplined troops in Europe, after which they marched to the King's Arms Hotel, where an elegant entertainment was prepared, and after dinner many loyal and patriotic toasts were drunk, and the evening concluded with the greatest mirth and happiness. It is with singular pleasure observed that this company is partly composed of Roman Catholics, and there is not a volunteer corps in the Kingdom assembles on all occasions with more cheerfulness, unanimity, and harmony."

One of the Resolutions passed at the Dungannon Convention, 1782, was: Resolved unanimously—"That the Dundalk Independent Troops of Light Dragoons, Commanded by Captain Thomas Read, having joined a regiment of this Province (The first Newry Regiment—or Newry Legion), and petitioning to be received as part of this body, and under its protection, is, accordingly, hereby received."—(Wilson's *Resolutions of the Volunteers*.)

* *Thomas Read*, son of Isaac Read, who was Agent to the 2nd Earl of Clanbrassil. Both father and son figure in the lists of Bailiff and Deputy Bailiffs of Dundalk from 1760-81. For some interesting particulars of the Read's, see pp. 199-202 *History of Dundalk*. Thomas Read occupied the house, now the front of St. Mary's College, Dundalk. Wright, when publishing his *Louthiana*, 'Dedicated' the plate of King John's Castle, Carlingford, "To my worthy friend, William Read, Esq., Bailiff of Dundalk. This plate is inscribed by his humble servt, Thomas Wright." (See *Louthiana*, book II., plate VIII.)

The Rev. Elliot Hudson, who is mentioned as being appointed Chaplain to the County Louth

DUNDALK HORSE.

Uniform : Scarlet, faced with green. This was evidently maintained as a distinct troop under the command of J. W. Foster.

The ever memorable Volunteer Convention was held in Dungannon Presbyterian Church, on Friday, 15th February, 1782, at which Delegates representing 143 corps attended, and we find the following officers as representing local regiments were authorised to attend as Delegates :—

County of Louth :

Lieut.-Col. THOMAS LEE		Lieut. J. W. FOSTER.
Major WM. SHEIL.		Captain ZACH. MAXWELL.*
Captain THOMAS READ.		

County of the Town of Drogheda :

Colonel WM. MEADE OGLE. | Colonel H. M. LYONS.

KILLEVY VOLUNTEERS.

For a sketch and description of this Flag, see page 155, "*Ulster Journal of Archæology*," article, *The Volunteers of '82*.

It is impossible to give the numerical strength of each of the various local corps referred to here, as such details are as yet inaccessible. The regimental muster rolls—if in existence—would throw great light on many obscure points in the history of the Volunteer Movement. The *History of the Volunteers of 1782*, by Dr. M'Nevin, is imperfect—though that is not to be wondered at—inaccurate and confused owing to the want of proper classification and arrangement. Dr. M'Nevin laboured under the disadvantages incidental to a first attempt to deal with a subject requiring a great deal of patient research and inquiry; and he complains of the difficulties he experienced, when he wrote, (over fifty years ago) in getting information on many points he wished elucidated, owing to churlishness of some, and the indifference of others—difficulties not altogether unknown to the present-day student of history—though we are supposed to be more enlightened.

There is a work entitled: "Resolutions of the Volunteers, Grand Juries, &c., of Ireland. Compiled by C. H. Wilson, Dublin, 1782; vol. I." Apparently, a second volume was never published. M'Nevin speaks disparagingly of this work, but it contains much matter useful to the historian. The details, in contemporary sources, are not as full as one would wish, but it is possible the Drogheda newspapers for that period may have some interesting notes.

What Davis said of the Irish Brigade we may say of the Irish Volunteers: "When valour becomes a reproach, when patriotism is thought a prejudice, and when a soldier's sword is a sign of shame, the *Irish Volunteers* will be forgotten or dispised."

JAMES MACCARTE.

Regiment of Volunteers, was a brother of William Elliot Hudson, an authority on old Irish music, and a great friend of Thomas Davis and other '48 men. The Rev. E. Hudson was Rector of Forkhill, and afterwards Dean of Armagh.

* Captain Zach. Maxwell was a sugar refiner in Dundalk, his premises being afterwards converted into a corn store by James Knowles—west side of Clanbrassil street.