THROUGH
War
AND
Rebellion:
Cork 1912-1918
TRÍ CHOOGADH AGUS ÉIRÍ AMACH:
Corcaigh 1912-1918

www.corkarchives.ie/exhibitionsandresources/schoolsresourcepacks

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(see ‘News and Events’ for upcoming 1916 centenary commemoration activities)
(fachar ‘Naisiúchtas agus Treachtaí le haghaidh gnóimhthóchtuithe a bhieldh ar bun i gcomhair Chomhóradh Chéad Bláin 1916)

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Le tacairocht faoil Chlár Deontas 2015 na Comhairle Oidhreachta

SP1912-18, 1915 World War 1 Bennett ©Cork City and County Archives 2015
Background

By December 1914, four months into the First World War, the British and German generals in the west realised that they could not break down the defences on the other side. As a result a series of trenches for protection were dug by soldiers on both sides across northern France and they settled down to wait while the leaders came up with an idea to get behind enemy lines. Again and again the generals on both sides probed for a weak-point in the system of trenches but nobody could defeat the industrial killing machines of the machine gun and the artillery bombardment.

In the east Turkey was allied to the Germans and the United Kingdom believed that they could knock Turkey (who they thought was very weak) out of the war by attacking its capital Constantinople. If Turkey fell then Russia could then attack Germany from the east. Always inventive, Winston Churchill who was then 1st Lord of the Admiralty (Navy Minister) decided to open up this new front. The place chosen was a narrow peninsula called Gallipoli at the entrance to the passage between the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea, called the Dardanelles. On 25 April 1915 Australian and New Zealand troops came ashore. By this time the Turks, having worked out what was being planned, were ready...

By late summer 1915 it was clear that the Gallipoli campaign was a stalemate every bit as bad as the Western Front, where it was now decided to attack a German strongpoint. The reason was simple:
"After washing his hands, Lord Kitchener came into my writing-room upstairs, saying he was anxious to have a few minutes talk with me. The Russians, he said, had been severely handled and it was doubtful how much longer their Army could withstand the German blows. Up to the present, he had favoured a policy of active defence in France until such time as all our forces were ready to strike. The situation which had arisen in Russia caused him to modify these views. He now felt the Allies must act vigorously in order to take some of the pressure off Russia, if possible."

Sir Douglas Haig papers, 19 August 1915

On September 25th 1915 at a crucial part of the front the British Army released chlorine gas and attacked the Germans at Loos just to the south-west of Lille in northern France. This was also the site of the much better known battle of Vimy ridge which took place in 1917. On the first day of the battle the British suffered 8,000 casualties out of 10,000 men in four hours and while they broke through the German defensive lines they could not advance due to exhaustion and a lack of artillery shells needed to take out the machine guns which pinned down the troops. Sir John French was fired as head of the army as a result of this failure and British Prime Minister Asquith was replaced by David Lloyd George at the head of a War Cabinet. Loos and Gallipoli are marked on the map above.

The Document

These pages come from a journal kept by John H Bennett of Ballinacurra which he kept throughout the war. The war became personal for the Bennett family when their son J. W. Bennett was killed at Loos on 13 October 1915 in the final attempt to break through the German defences. The journal and other papers open a window on how the British Government dealt with the families of the dead and the reactions of others.

Ballinacurra was a major barley malting location from the late 18th century, using the fine local barley of the East Cork area. Ships took the finished malt mainly to Guinness in Dublin, from whom John H Bennett held a contract. Bennett and Company maltings ceased trading in 2006, and the company’s very extensive, and interesting, business archives were donated to the Cork City and County Archives with the help of Trevor West. Professor West’s book ‘Malting the Barley: John H. Bennett, The Man and His Firm’ was published in 2006.

Instructions

1. Read through the document
2. Highlight the names of people, sentences, or words you do not understand.
3. Highlight any words you cannot read.
4. Fill in the recording sheet supplied and attach it to the document
5. Optional: The Grenfell Letter was written by Jack Bennett’s headmaster expressing his sympathies. Read through it and decide which of the two documents you find the more interesting. Pick out four quotes from either or both documents to tell the story of what happened to Jack. Who was Lord Haldene? How did public opinion change over the war?
6. Store the completed work as directed by your teacher.
7. Outline how you would go about seeing the original record by visiting Cork Archives.
1915  
Aug 15

T.W. Bennett received his orders for France and left his home never to return. What memories of yacht racing this day recalls and how it will always be associated with the last hours my dear son spent with me and his mother.

Before the call came on that Sunday evening we both showed her down to East Ferry with Denis pulling a pair of oars each, a thing we had never done before. My thoughts were as I put up the boat that we might never row together again.

A couple of weeks previously on a Sunday afternoon we had our last sail together in the Water Wag.

Landing at Scarba Bay of large British force well carried out and Turks surprised but advance not successfully pushed in the instant and the force washed up when a great victory seemed almost within our grasp.
1915

Sept 10

Russians driven back from the Kornabul. A Russian Counter attack in Galleria effective, Czar assumed Supreme Command of Army. Grand Duke Nicholas went to the Caucasian front.

Situation in Gallipoli stationary with the approach of winter our Army must succeed at once or not at all and in the event of non success evacuation with terrible losses the only alternative.

Submarine losses heavy - Zeppelin raids on E. Counties and London

Oct 13 - On this day Dr. Bennett was killed by a German shell in the bade near Haas held by the Munster's who lost nearly 200 men at the time owing to an exploding bombardment sent by Enemy.

Sept 24-25 - The great push to called being the first big offensive of the British Army in France also called the battle of Laos, the savior accomplished very big costly and the breaking of German Lines which
From B609Add/3/15: Telegram from the War Office informing John H Bennett of his son Jack’s death

Deeply regret to inform you that your son J W Bennett, in action 13 October 1915, was killed in action.
Further research and sources

CORK CITY AND COUNTY ARCHIVES CATALOGUE

The documents come from the collections B609 Bennetts of Ballinacurra and B609/Add:
http://catalogue.corkarchives.ie/Details/archive/110000160

Parts of PR46 Hackett Diaries relate to B Hackett, who served in France, and later witnessed the Easter Rising: http://catalogue.corkarchives.ie/Details/archive/110005533

CORK CITY AND COUNTY ARCHIVES WEBSITE

Descriptive list for B609: http://www.corkarchives.ie/media/B609web.pdf

Hackett Diaries, including short war diary of Barth Hackett, also active at Loos, who received the Military Cross for rescuing a fallen comrade: http://www.corkarchives.ie/media/PR46web.pdf

You can visit the archive at any time to view B609 and read through John H Bennett’s diaries and letters relating to his son Jack W Bennett and the war. Book an Appointment for Research, Get a Readers Tickets and Make an Advance Order will all help you with this process. Alternatively, your class can visit the archives by appointment free of charge, where an archivist will be able to explain the work carried on here. Book a Group Visit

The Grenfell letter may be viewed on the website:
http://www.corkarchives.ie/media/1915%20World%20War%201%20Grenfell%20letter.pdf

ELSEWHERE AND ONLINE

General

APOCALYPSE WWI
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52cTbwU8NI

A short Youtube trailer for a joint French/Canadian television series that examines World War 1 with links to the series. Original footage has been colourised and sound added. 3 episodes running up to the end of 1915 The episodes are one hour long and tight editing moves the story quickly. Particularly suitable for transition year but good for Junior Cycle also.

RUDTHESPUD
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3Ujj5kxiLI&feature=youtu.be

A six minute Youtube animation which ‘explains’ the First World War in an engaging and quick fire way. It is particularly suitable for junior cycle students, but is useful for quick revision for all ages.

Firstworldwar.com Non-academic site regarding the war, including a ‘Who’s who’ section with entry on Lord Haldene: http://www.firstworldwar.com/bio/haldane.htm
Loos and Gallipoli

**THE LONG LONG TRAIL: THE BATTLE OF LOOS**


A very long and detailed description of the battle of Loos with good maps and excellent analysis of the strategic position which will suit Senior Cycle students and those doing a project on the western front.

**OUR HEROES ÁR LAOCHRA**

[http://ourheroes.southdublinlibraries.ie/node/16376](http://ourheroes.southdublinlibraries.ie/node/16376)

South Dublin Libraries and Irish Government funded site commemorating the dead of the First World War which list J W Bennett.

**THE WAR GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT**


COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

[http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/79500/LOOS%20MEMORIAL](http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/79500/LOOS%20MEMORIAL)

Dud corner cemetery Loos and cemetery plan

Photograph of the grave

**RTE GALLIPOLI EXPLORE, UNDERSTAND AND FOLLOW THIS IRISH STORY**

**RTE Century**

[http://gallipoli.rte.ie/](http://gallipoli.rte.ie/)

A comprehensive archive of radio, film and text about Gallipoli from an Irish perspective with special focus on the Irish regiments who took part.

**BBC News Gallipoli: BBC drone flight over WWI battlefield**


An excellent resource showing the ground over which the battle was fought and why it was so easy for the Turks to defend against 45,000 allied troops.

**DR. Alan Brown Gallipoli 1915 Youtube Video**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Kqhr84IrSY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Kqhr84IrSY)

Good overview of the battle which would be essential for project work at Senior Cycle/Transition year.
The British Council: The main events of the First World War: Student worksheet

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/The_main_events_of_the_First_World_War_worksheet_student_A.pdf

A good quiz for revising the topic of the First World War aimed at Junior Cycle students

History on the net: World War One Timeline

http://www.historyonthenet.com/ww1/ww1_timeline.htm

Useful overview of the war which covers the main events and is helpful for students at Junior and Senior Cycle.

Westernfrontassociation.com Association and website committed to World War I remembrance and research, with many branches including an active Cork Branch:

http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cork-Branch-Western-Front-Association/250345381646156

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