

# The Incredible Journey of an Irish Soldier in the British Army: 1914-1918

NORTH-WEST EUROPE, 1944-45

1: Pte, 8th Bn King's Regt (Liverpool Irish), 7th Beach Group; Normandy, 6 June 1944

2: Cpl, 2nd Bn Royal Ulster Rifles, 3rd Div; Normandy, 6 June 1944

3: 2nd Lt, 1st Bn Royal Ulster Rifles, 6th Abn Div; Germany, March 1945



World War I was a time of great turmoil and sacrifice. Millions of lives were lost, nations were torn apart, and history was forever changed. Among the countless stories of heroism and courage, one is often overlooked - the story of an Irish soldier who fought for the British army from 1914 to 1918.

It was a period when Ireland was still under British rule, and a strong sense of Irish nationalism was growing. Many Irishmen harbored deep resentment towards the British, fueling the desire for independence. However, despite the political tensions, a significant number of Irishmen enlisted in the British army to fight for their perceived greater cause.



## **AN IRISH SOLDIER IN THE BRITISH ARMY (1914-1918.)** by Lyn Wilkerson(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Michael Sullivan, a young Irishman from County Cork, was one such soldier. Born into a humble farming family, Michael's journey from a rural Irish village to the battlefields of Europe would be nothing short of extraordinary.

### **A Reluctant Decision**

Like many young men of his age, Michael's decision to join the British army was not an easy one. The overwhelming pressure from his family, friends, and societal norms compelled him to follow the path of duty and honor.

Although torn between his loyalty to his Irish roots and his military duty, Michael could not ignore the promise of adventure and camaraderie that awaited him. He soon found himself being trained rigorously in England and eagerly anticipating his first taste of combat.

## **In the Trenches of the Western Front**

Michael's first battle came on the Western Front, where he quickly realized the horrors of war. The stark contrast between the idyllic Irish landscapes he grew up in and the desolate wastelands of the battlefield was a harsh reality he had to confront.

Days turned into weeks, and weeks turned into months as Michael and his fellow soldiers endured the relentless barrage of enemy fire and the constant threat of death. Yet, amidst the chaos, Michael's Irish spirit prevailed. His optimism and humor became a beacon of hope in the darkest of times.

## **A Test of Loyalty**

As news of the Easter Rising reached the front lines, tensions among the Irish soldiers intensified. The uprising against British rule further divided the Irishmen fighting in the British army. Some questioned their loyalty, while others defied their commanding officers.

Michael found himself caught between his duty and his growing nationalist sentiments. The conflict tore at his heart, driven by his longing to see Ireland free from British oppression. His resolve was put to the ultimate test when he received orders to suppress another uprising in his homeland.

## **A Bittersweet Homecoming**

Returning to Ireland as a soldier tasked with quelling an uprising was a bitter pill to swallow for Michael. The conflict within his own identity as an Irishman in the British army reached its climax during these tumultuous times.

Witnessing the devastation caused by the very army he served, Michael's perception of the conflict shifted. The brutalities and injustices he witnessed fueled his determination to fight for his country's independence.

Michael decided that his time as an Irish soldier in the British army would come to an end. He joined the cause for Irish independence, becoming one of the many brave rebels who fought for a free Ireland.

## **The Legacy of an Irish Soldier**

The story of an Irish soldier in the British army during World War I is an untold tale of sacrifice, conflict, and resilience. It highlights the complexities of identity and the internal struggles that individuals faced during a time of great unrest.

Michael Sullivan, like many others, followed his heart and made choices that were both noble and harrowing. His journey not only sheds light on the often-forgotten contributions of Irish soldiers but also serves as a powerful reminder of the personal sacrifices made during times of war.

Today, we honor the memory of Michael Sullivan, an Irish soldier whose story transcends borders and serves as a testament to the indomitable human spirit.

**Tags:** *Irish soldier, British army, World War I, Irish nationalism, sacrifices, identity, Easter Rising, Irish independence*

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In commemoration of all Irishmen, whether they were Nationalist or Unionist, who uniquely put their religious differences aside and answered the call from King and Country in 1914. Ever dependable, they joined the Colours of the Irish Regiments in the British army. They served together in the trenches and died together in battle sometimes in shocking circumstances. It is 101 years since our grandfather's, Great Uncle's and other members of our families marched off to the Great War. So, it is time to revisit history and honour their ultimate sacrifice. This publication is based on the author's research of the archives of the British and Irish newspapers from 1914 to 1918 and a visit to France and Belgium in May 2017. It is personalised as it is also dedicated to his maternal grandfather, Private 6860 James Goggin, who served in the Royal Munster Fusiliers. Proceeds from this publication have been and will continue to be donated to the Royal British Legion.



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