

Activity Book for Schools 2

Far From Home



Have you ever travelled overseas to a foreign country?

If you have, you may have found yourself in a world where the climate, language, food and lifestyle were different. Many Irish men and women in military service went to distant places and some stayed abroad for the rest of their lives. Others visited Ireland from time to time or came back home when they retired.

My Name:

What were the challenges of serving overseas for the Irish soldiers in the *Soldiers and Chiefs* exhibition? Explore the displays, look at the objects and images and read the text to find out about the lives of those Irish who lived abroad.

Imagine you are one of these soldiers, or a member of a soldier's family, sent to live for months or years far from home. Each soldier's details are described in this book as if he were applying for a visa to enter a foreign country. Using your imagination, fill in parts of his 'visa application' and answer some questions about him.

For most of these questions there is no right or wrong answer – your task is to picture yourself as these people from the past and to **think about** how they felt and behaved.



Enter the first room and keep walking through the next two rooms and then past the row of helmets. Enter the room called 'The Wild Geese'.

'The Wild Geese' – Foreign Countries in Europe

1 A Soldier for Hire: 1641 – Stop at the soldier in the middle of the wall to your left.

This is an Irish soldier in the Spanish Army. Here is his basic information, written as if he was applying for a visa to enter France.

Can you fill in the last three entries on his 'visa application'?

Visa Application

Where born: Waterford, Ireland, 1616

Parents: Father and mother born in Waterford

Occupation: Soldier

Unit: O'Neill's Regiment

Where serving: Siege of Aire sur-les Lys in northern France

Reason for being in France: sent there by the Spanish to fight the Dutch

Language(s) spoken: _____

Country of citizenship: _____

Planning to return to Ireland? _____



Do you think that being Irish was important to this soldier?

How would he keep his Irishness if he spent many years in a foreign land?

Tick as many as you agree with.

- By many trips back to Ireland
- By spending a lot of time with other Irishmen in his unit
- By letters and news from home in Ireland
- By special cultural classes offered by the Spanish Army for Irish soldiers

2

Part French, Part Irish: 1781

– Stop at the soldier standing beside the model of a battlefield.

Inspect the figure of the Irish soldier of Walsh's Regiment at Trinidad in 1781. Here is his basic information. **Can you fill in the last three entries on his 'visa application'?**



Visa Application

Where born: Boulogne, France 1757

Parents: Father born in Limerick, served in France since 1743; mother a respectable French woman

Occupation: Soldier

Unit: Regiment of Walsh

Where serving: Invasion of British colony of Trinidad, 1781

Reason for being in Trinidad: Sent there by French Army

Language(s) spoken: _____

Country of citizenship: _____

Planning to return to Ireland? _____

Find the panel on 'Military Migrants', and read about the letter that mentions a game of 'hurley' (hurling). **Why do you think Irish officers might have encouraged their men to play this traditional game in France?**

Tick as many as you agree with.

- They missed the games they had played as boys in Ireland.
- The French weren't interested in the game, so there was less competition.
- The game helped Irish soldiers to uphold their Gaelic identity and to reinforce their Irish connections.

3

A Professional in the Russian Army: 1814 – Stop at the framed pictures.

Find the picture of Joseph Kornilovich O'Rourke. Can you fill in the last three entries on his 'visa application'?

Visa Application

Where born: Russia, 1762

Parents: Father born in Ireland, moved to Russia in the 1740s

Occupation: Professional military officer

Unit: Cavalry Corps

Where serving: North-east France, 1814

Reason for being in France: Lieutenant-general commanding Russian cavalry in invasion of France

Language(s) spoken: _____

Country of citizenship: _____

Planning to return to Ireland? _____



His middle name is a Russian form meaning 'son of Cornelius'. What language do you think he spoke most of the time?

Irish

Russian



Enter the next room.

'Irish in the American Civil War' – The United States of America

4 Irish-American or American-Irishman? 1864

Look for the figure of a seated Irish-American soldier from the American Civil War, and fill in the last three entries on his 'visa application'.

Visa Application

Where born: Co. Kerry, 1840; emigrated to the United States with his parents in 1846

Parents: Both parents are natives of Kerry

Occupation: Clerk before joining the Army, now a soldier

Unit: 69th New York Volunteers

Where serving: Petersburg, Virginia

Reason for being in Virginia: His unit is part of the Union Army fighting the Confederate Army of the southern states.

Language(s) spoken: _____

Country of citizenship: _____

Planning to return to Ireland? _____



Why do you think the soldier and his family left Ireland?

Hint: Look at the year they left Ireland.

When he spoke to his friends of going home, do you think he meant to his residence in the United States or back to Ireland?

- America
- Ireland



Enter the next room.

'Irish in the British Service' – India and Africa

5 An Irishman in India: 1845 – Stop at the three displays to your right.

Look at 'Serving Among the Sassonach' (where Sergeant Broderick is mentioned), 'Army Families Overseas' and 'Garrison Duty Overseas'. **Can you fill in the last three entries on this 'visa application' for Sergeant Patrick Broderick?**

Visa Application

Where born: Ireland, about 1810

Parents: Tenant farmers

Occupation: Soldier

Unit: 2nd Bombay European Light Infantry

Where serving: Gwalior in north-central India

Reason for being in India: Enlisted for 21 years in the Army of the East India Company

Language(s) spoken: _____

Country of citizenship: _____

Planning to return to Ireland? _____



Do you think Patrick liked India? **Which of the following things do you think might have appealed to him about the country?**

Tick as many as you agree with.

- The heat in summer
- The food
- The different traditions and way of life
- The Indian people
- The opportunities for hunting

6

An Irish Boy in South Africa: 1900 – Follow the arrow on the floor to the row of displays on the left, near the end of this room. Stop at the drum.

During the Boer War, a young drummer boy named Luttrell carried this drum (his first name is not known). Complete his 'visa application'.

Visa Application

Where born: Ireland, probably about 1885

Parents: Irish-born farmers

Occupation: Drummer boy

Unit: 1st Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers

Where serving: Natal, South Africa

Reason for being in South Africa: Unit was sent there when the Boer War began

Language(s) spoken: _____

Country of citizenship: _____

Planning to return to Ireland? _____



Do you think Drummer Luttrell enjoyed his time in South Africa? Which of the following do you think he might have disliked about the country?

Tick as many as you agree with.

- Being shot at
- The bareness of the landscape
- The dust
- The dangerous animals
- Being away from his parents



Leave this room, cross the bridge, walk past the aeroplane, and enter the next room.

'The First World War' – France in Wartime

7 Northern France: not so far from home? 1918 – Walk past the big gun on wheels. Stop at the display on the wall to your right.

Find the panel called 'War in the Mud' and look at the displays to the left for the story of Lieutenant Eric Hall. He was captured by the German Army in 1918. Read the panels and look at the objects about 'Life in the Trenches' to find out what Hall might have experienced. **Fill in the last three entries on his 'visa application'.**

Visa Application

Where born: Limerick

Parents: Father: salesman Mother: housewife

Occupation: Schoolboy before enlisting

Unit: 6th Battalion, Connaught Rangers

Where serving: Northern France

Reason for being in France: Sent to the front to reinforce the unit

Language(s) spoken: _____

Country of citizenship: _____

Planning to return to Ireland? _____



During the First World War, soldiers on the Western Front were occasionally given two-weeks leave to return home. **Do you think this made it easier or more difficult to accept the conditions in the trenches?**

Do you think Eric would have been able to discuss his experiences with his parents when he was home on leave?

Yes

No

Do you think it would have been hard to come back to life in the trenches after being at home?



Leave this room and go down the stairs.

'Training for Peace' – Lebanon

- 8 **Early Bird in Lebanon: 1992** – Turn right at the bottom of the stairs, enter the big space and turn left. Stop at the soldier standing in front of the white vehicle.

This Irish soldier is searching for mines (hidden explosives). He could be a member of your family or someone you have met. Complete his 'visa application'.

Visa Application

Where born: **Dublin, Ireland**

Parents: **Father: in fire brigade Mother: housewife**

Occupation: **Soldier**

Unit: **82nd Battalion**

Where serving: **Southern Lebanon**

Reason for being in Lebanon: **Unit sent as Irish contribution to UN peacekeeping force**

Language(s) spoken: _____

Country of citizenship: _____

Planning to return to Ireland? _____



These Irish Army soldiers were sent on peacekeeping missions for a six-month period. Do you think knowing the exact length of your stay helps you to cope with life in the army overseas?

Yes No

Would the availability of quick communication (airmail letters and telephone) to get news to and from home also help you to cope?

Yes No

Mark the following list of aspects of being in Lebanon with a plus (+) or minus (-), depending on whether you think each would make you enjoy or dislike your posting in that country.

- The weather
- The food
- The local people
- The Lebanese traditions and way of life
- Working where different communities are at war with each other
- The languages (Arabic and French)
- Being far from friends and family
- The long history of the area
- Working with peacekeepers from other countries

Closer to Home?

During the past 300 years, Irish soldiers and their families have lived all over the world, in many countries. Today, distant places seem much closer – soldiers can travel back and forth far more quickly, and modern technology, such as the internet, makes it much easier to keep in touch with Ireland. However differences in culture and in climate can still make a foreign posting feel like a world away from home.

If you were a soldier, in which country would you have liked to serve? Why?

Now that you have finished your travels, check your answers here.

- 1 A Soldier for Hire: 1641**
Gaelic, a little Spanish
Ireland
Eventually
Yes, and he probably also wanted to keep some of his Irish connections.
Mostly by spending time with other Irishmen; because he had little money and probably could not read or write, the other choices are very unlikely.
- 2 Part French, Part Irish: 1781**
French, English
France
Not really
Hurling: reasons 1 and 4 are far more likely than the others
- 3 A Professional in the Russian Army: 1814**
Russian, French (French was widely spoken among the Russian upper classes)
Russia
No
He probably spoke Russian most of the time, speaking French when in 'polite society'.
His use of his father's first name as part of his middle name (as was widespread in Russia) suggests he had adopted Russian ways.
- 4 Irish-American or American-Irishman? 1864**
English, perhaps Irish
United States
No
The Great Famine in Ireland took place around this time, from 1845-48.
America – if he grew up in the United States, he probably felt home was the American town where he had grown up. He would have spoken of Ireland as 'the old country'.
- 5 An Irishman in India: 1845**
English
Great Britain
Yes
Many Irish soldiers enjoyed living in India when there was no war on.
Almost all Europeans disliked the summer heat, and most enlisted men were not interested in the local traditions, but Patrick may have enjoyed the food, the people, and the hunting.
- 6 An Irish Boy in South Africa: 1900**
English
Great Britain
Definitely!
Conditions in South Africa during the Boer War were sometimes dangerous and often uncomfortable; not many soldiers enjoyed their time in this beautiful country.
A boy soldier would have disliked all these aspects, although he probably didn't see many dangerous animals.
- 7 Northern France: not so far from home? 1918**
English, perhaps some schoolboy
French
Great Britain
Yes
Soldiers welcomed leave and looked forward to it. Few soldiers complained of having to go back to the trenches, since they didn't want to let their comrades down. On balance, leave probably made it easier to deal with the hardships of the trenches.
- 8 Early Bird in Lebanon: 1992**
English, some Irish
Republic of Ireland
Yes
For many soldiers the standard six-month rotation means that they can be intensely focused on their job, knowing that they will be out in a set time. However it also means they have less time to get to know the local people and to understand their way of life.
Different people will make different choices about the pros and cons of a posting in Lebanon.

ANSWERS

Want to know more?

For more information on exhibitions and education programmes, contact the Education and Outreach Department of the National Museum of Ireland.

Tel: 01 648 6453 Fax: 01 679 1025 email: bookings@museum.ie

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Cover image: Detail of textile, showing the British Army in India, mid-19th century, National Museum of Ireland

