

OVER BY
CHRISTMAS?

THART ROIMH
AN NOLLAIG?

CHRISTMAS / AN NOLLAIG



With the rush to war, many politicians and soldiers believed the war would be over by Christmas. However as the Central Powers failed to defeat the Allies, the armies on the Western Front quickly became bogged down, with all sides taking to the trenches.

By the end of the year, the British Army had lost over 20,000 killed and another 70,000 wounded and missing, about 15% of its prewar strength. Many regiments had already been practically wiped out by the end of 1914, leaving the Army desperate for trained soldiers.

A German soldier opens the spontaneous truce by approaching the British Lines with a small Christmas tree, from the Illustrated London News

Chuathas i mbun cogaidh chomh díograiseach sin gur chreid mórchuid polaiteoir agus saighdiúir go mbeadh an cogadh thart roimh an Nollaig. Ach de réir mar a theip ar na Cumhachtaí Lárnacha an bua a fháil ar na Comhghuallaithe b'éigean do na hairm ar an bhFronta Thiar tochailt isteach sna trinsí.

Faoi dheireadh 1914, bhí os cionn 20,000 saighdiúir d'Arm na Breataine marbh, agus 70,000 eile gortaithe nó ar iarraidh. B'ionann sin agus 15% nó mar sin den líon a bhí ann roimh an chogadh. Bhí reisimintí áirithe ann a bhí díothaithe, nach mór, faoi dheireadh 1914, a d'fhág an tArm ar an ngannchuid ó thaobh saighdiúirí oilte.

Saighdiúir Gearmánach ag oscailt an tsosa cogaidh deonaigh trí ghabháil suas chuig línte na Breataine le crann beag Nollag, ón Illustrated London News

Christmas Day Truce

On Christmas day, unofficial truces were held on some sections of the front. Despite orders given by high command, German and Allied soldiers got together, primarily to bury the dead who were lying between the trench lines. They took this opportunity to meet the men they had been fighting, exchange gifts and enjoy a few hours of peace.

Sos Cogaidh Lá Nollag

Lá Nollag, bhí sé ina shos cogaidh neamhoifigiúil i gcodanna áirithe den fhronta. D'ainneoin orduithe an Ard-Cheannais, bhailigh saighdiúirí Gearmánacha agus Briotanacha le chéile, go príomha chun na mairbh, a bhí ina luí idir na línte trinse, a adhlacadh. Thug sin deis dóibh chun casadh ar fhir an taoibh eile, bronntanais a mhalartú agus sult a bhaint as cúpla uair an chloig síochána.



British soldiers using the Christmas truce to improve their trench defences

Saighdiúirí Briotanacha ag cur feabhais ar chóir cosanta na dtrinsí le linn shos cogaidh na Nollag



Christmas Boxes

In December 1914, every soldier on the Western Front received a Christmas box as a token of Britain's gratitude for his service. Each box contained tobacco, a Christmas card and a photograph of Princess Mary, in whose name the gift was sent.

Instead of the tobacco, non-smokers and boys got a pencil in the shape of a bullet, and some sweets.

17-year-old Princess Mary created the 'Sailors & Soldiers Christmas Fund', sending gift boxes to the front.

Boscaí Nollag

Mí na Nollag 1914 fuair gach saighdiúir ar an bhFronta Thiar bosca Nollag mar chomhartha buíochais ón mBanphrionsa Máire. I ngach bosca bhí tobac, cárta Nollag agus grianghraf den Bhanphrionsa Máire, a raibh a hainm ar an mbosca.

Buachaillí, agus fir nár chaith, fuair siad peann luaidhe i bhfoirm urchair, agus roinnt milseán.

An Banphrionsa Máire a bhí 17 mbliana d'aois: bhunaigh sí an Ciste Nollag do Mhairnéalaigh agus do Shaighdiúirí, chun boscaí féiríní a chur chuig an fronta.



John Grumley

gone before Christmas

In December 1914, Private John Grumley, along with the other soldiers of the 2nd Connaught Rangers, was sent this gift box.

However, John had been dead over a month, killed at Ypres on the 6th of November.

His parents in Ireland did not learn of his death until just before Christmas, becoming one of the thousands of families for whom the holiday was a time of mourning.

1. Princess Mary Christmas Box, still with cigarettes, tobacco, greeting card and photograph. Issued to Private John Grumley in December 1914, one month after his death. HA:2005.85

John Grumley

imithe roimh an Nollaig

I Nollaig 1914, fuair an Saighdiúir John Grumley, in éineacht le saighdiúirí eile den dara buíon de na Connaught Rangers, an bosca féiríní seo.

Ach ba é an trua é go raibh John marbh um an dtaca seo le breis agus mí; maraíodh é ag Ypres, an 6 Samhain.

Ní bhfuair a thuismitheoirí in Éirinn scéala a bháis go dtí díreach roimh an Nollaig, a d'fhág go raibh siad i measc na mílte teaghlach a bhí ag caoineadh an Nollaig sin.

1. Bosca Nollaig an Bhanphrionsa Máire, agus na taitéir, an tobac, an cárta beannachtaí agus an grianghraf ann fós. Eisiúid é don Saighdiúir John Grumley i Nollaig 1914, mí tar éis bháis dó. HA:2005.85



Richard Francis Robert Nugent

lost aristocrat

Lieutenant Nugent, grandson of the Earl of Westmeath, had lived a life of wealth and privilege. An officer in the Scots Guards, he went missing in action in December 1914.

During the Christmas truce his fellow officers questioned their German counterparts, who reported taking prisoner a soldier matching Richard's description. But they were mistaken —later investigation revealed he was killed in an assault on the trenches that took place the day he disappeared. Richard Nugent has no known grave.

2. Belongings of Lieutenant Richard Nugent, including photographs and callings cards. He was issued medals after his death; his family made the commemorative case. HA:2003.34, 35, 36

Richard Francis Robert Nugent

uasal caillte

Bhí saol rachmais agus pribhléide ag an Leifteanant Nugent, garmhac Iarla Iar-Mhí. Oifigeach sna Gardaí Albanacha ab ea é, agus cailleadh é i mbun gníomhaíochta i Nollaig 1914.

Le linn shos cogaidh na Nollag cheistigh a chomhoifigigh oifigigh Ghearmánacha, a dúirt gur ghabh siad saighdiúir a bhí de réir thuairisc Richard. Ach bhí dul amú orthu – léirigh imscrúdú a rinneadh ina dhiaidh sin gur maraíodh é in ionsaí a rinneadh ar na trinsí an lá a d'imigh sé. Ní fios an bhfuil uaigh ag Richard Nugent.

2. Maise de chuid an Leifteanaint Richard Nugent, lena n-áirítear griangbraí agus cuairichártaí. Eisiúid boinn dó i ndiaidh a bháis; a theaghlach a rinne an cás cuimhneacháin. HA:2003.34, 35, 36