

The Battle of Mount Street Bridge

By Johnny Moran



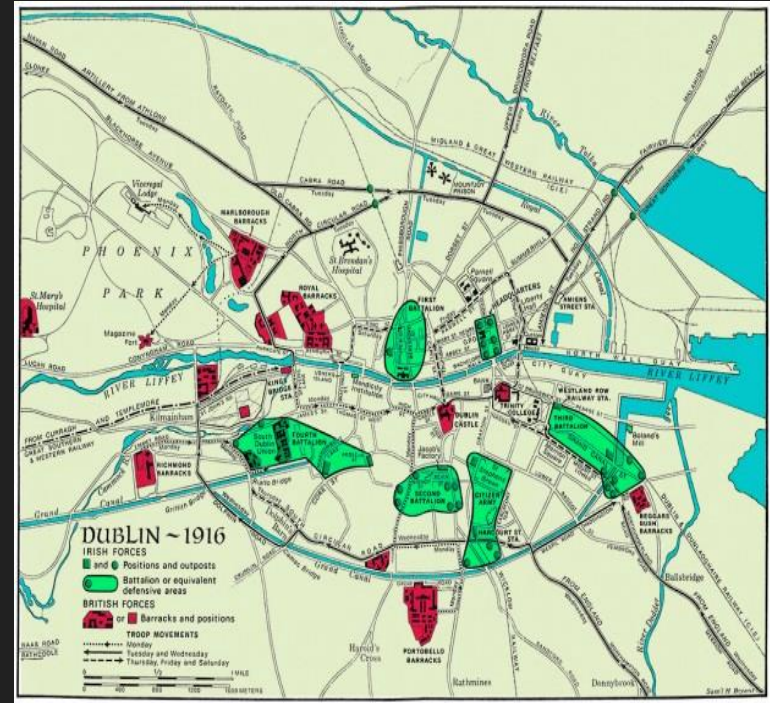
Easter Rising, 24th-28th April 1916

The Easter Rising was an armed uprising in Ireland in April 1916. It was launched by Irish Republicans led by James Connolly and Padraig Pearse against British rule in Ireland with the aim of establishing an independent Irish Republic while the United Kingdom was fighting against Germany on the Western Front.



The lead up to battle

On the Morning of April 24th, the Rebels mobilised and began occupying key sites in Dublin including the GPO, Boland's Mills and Jacob's Biscuit Factory. The Rebels also attempted to cut transport and communication links, taking control of bridges and cutting telephone wires. The railway line was cut at Fairview, and the line was damaged by bombs at Amiens Street, Broadstone, Kingsbridge and Lansdowne Road to prevent British Army reinforcements reaching Dublin from Belfast, Kildare and from Kingstown. Key to this ringed defence of Dublin was the canal crossing at Mount Street Bridge.



British Forces

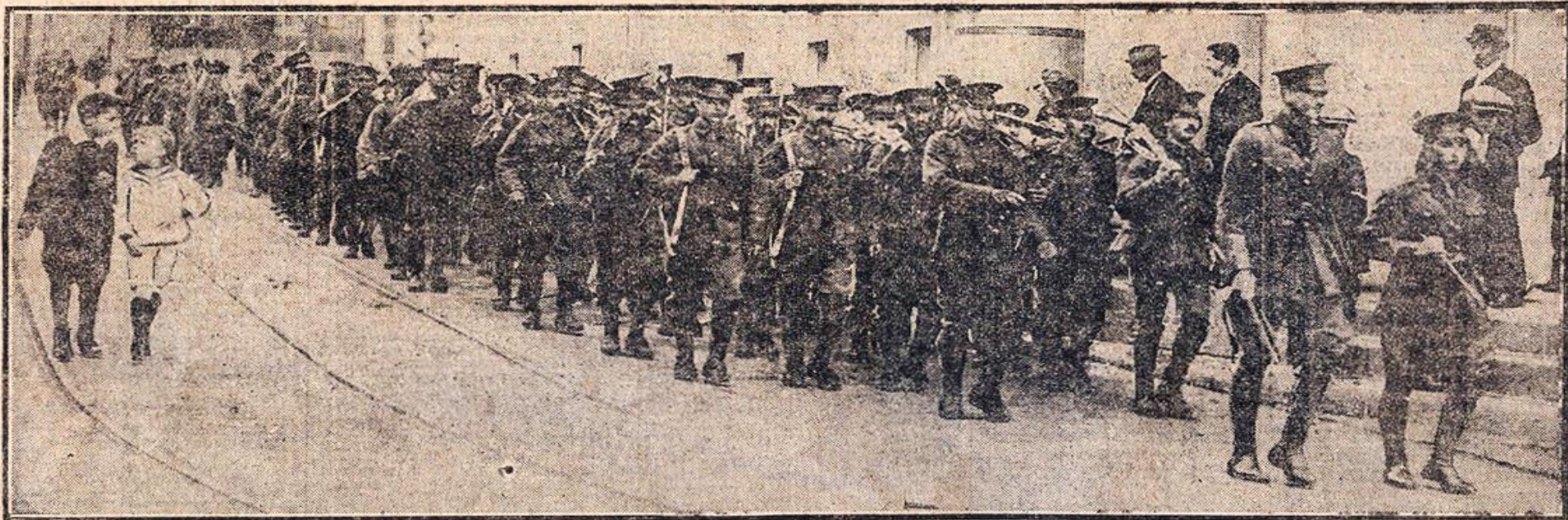
After the rising began on Easter Monday, British authorities had to move troops into Dublin quickly in response to the threat from the Irish Rebels. Most of the available troops were reserves, as the bulk of the army were fighting on the Western Front. The first troops to be sent out were those stationed in Dublin including elements of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers from occupation barracks throughout the city.

Once the seriousness of the situation in Dublin became clear to the British, they moved quickly to send forces over from Britain. The troops were moved from their training bases and travelled overnight from Holyhead, arriving in Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire) on the 26th.

On arrival, the officers were briefed in the library of the Royal St. George Yacht Club. They thought they were going to France. Many were so rushed that they left their heavy weapons and supplies behind them.

British Soldiers en route to the city centre

THE SHERWOODS WHO WERE AMBUSHED NEAR DUBLIN.



The Sherwood Foresters, who are shown on the march, suffered heavily in the Irish rebellion, being ambushed as they advanced along the road towards Dublin from Kingstown last Tuesday. The men were marching four abreast through Ballsbridge when a body of rebels opened fire upon them from the grounds of an institution. Officers and a number of men fell at the first onslaught. The troops closed up their ranks and bringing their own machine gun into play took summary vengeance for their losses.

25 Northumberland Road

The rebels, Lieutenant Michael Malone and James Grace occupied the house because it held a strategic position on the crossroad of Haddington Road and Northumberland Road. From this vantage point, they had direct line of sight to the front gates of Beggars Bush Barracks and the road ahead. From there, they successfully held up the British for several hours. It was eventually stormed by a company of men from the Sherwood Foresters and Michael Malone was killed. James Grace managed to escape through the basement, but was later arrested.



Clanwilliam House

It was from this strategic position that just seven men of the Irish Volunteers barricaded themselves inside the house and waited for the British reinforcements to come marching down towards the city centre. On Wednesday the 26th, the soldiers of the Notts and Derbyshire Regiment (Sherwood Foresters) under General Lowe marched within range of the volunteers in the area, and were forced into the bloodiest battle of the rising that they were not prepared for. There was very little cover as the British soldiers tried to cross Mount Street Bridge, and fell wave after wave. General Lowe insisted they advanced as they were trained for trench warfare.



Original Newspaper coverage on the London Times - Easter week 1916

In what the London Times described as a 'Stormy Week'.

THE TIMES, SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 1916.

9

and foretold that they would do. They have provided American readers with flaming accounts of the Irish "insurrection" and of its fatal significance to the British Empire, while our sagacious rulers, in their anxiety not to alarm our American friends, allowed nothing but the most meagre and tantalizing scraps of information to filter over the cable. The Irish, irreconcilable, whom Mr. Bismarck has just denounced as the worst enemies of their country, have naturally drawn the moral. They are pointing out to Americans that the silence of the authorities proves the revolt to be too serious for London to be frank. Our friends lament this fatuous policy of suppression, and our well-informed Correspondent asserts that if persisted in it will incline the public to "draw sinister conclusions."

Whatever the immediate situation in Ireland may be, it is clearly idle to place too much reliance upon the numerical weakness of the Sinn Feiners. We believe, as we said yesterday, that they are a mere fraction of the population, as such were always, and are, they, and that they are disliked and feared by the immense majority of the Nationalist population of the South and West.

But there has, always been in Ireland a large number of very ignorant and women who cherish a sentimental sympathy with all anti-English movements. They form a kind of fringe about every agitation and conspiracy against the Government, and they are easily misled and they are easily intimidated. It is in this floating and indeterminate body that the real danger lies. The rebels will spare no pains to cajole them or to terrorize them, and if they were once convinced that insurrection could be indulged in with impunity, and still more if they were deluded into the belief that it would succeed, the rising might rapidly assume a formidable aspect.

It must be amongst the first tasks of those responsible for the suppression of the revolt to teach this class that rebellion in time of war is a crime bringing prompt and heavy punishment upon the guilty. It is a duty of humanity as well as of policy to bring that lesson home to them before they commit themselves. Nothing can be more cruel or more unwise in insurrections than half-hearted measures of suppression. They encourage fresh dupes to join the rebels, and so increase the ultimate number of victims. For the sake of these men hovering on the brink of treason, as

THE KING IN LONDON.

MR. ASQUITH RECEIVED IN AUDIENCE.

CABINET COUNCILS.

It is announced in the "Court Circular" that the King came to London yesterday afternoon. Mr. Asquith and Lord Kitchener had audiences of his Majesty at Buckingham Palace.

The King returned to Windsor Castle in the evening.

The War Council of the Cabinet sat for nearly two hours yesterday morning, and sat again in the afternoon from 3.30 until nearly 5.30. Before the meeting Mr. Asquith was visited by Viscount Middleton. A meeting of the Cabinet will be held to-day.

The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee met under the chairmanship of Lord Derby at 12, Downing-street yesterday. It is understood that the Committee adjourned until Tuesday.

THE NEW ORDER IN COUNCIL.

LORD GREY'S INDIGNATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I regret I cannot be in the House of Lords on Tuesday next, when Lord Peel will call attention to the astounding Regulation 27A, made under the Defence of the Realm Consolidated Act, and proclaimed by Order in Council on Saturday last.

I therefore trust that you will permit me to express, through your columns, my earnest hope that the House of Lords may not lose a single moment in taking such action as may be within its power to secure the immediate cancellation of a regulation which points a dagger at the very heart of our liberties. Incredible and almost incomprehensible as it must appear to every man of British blood, it is nevertheless true that his Majesty's Government have made use of the powers conferred upon them by a confiding Parliament for the purpose of enacting a regulation which makes it illegal for any person to refer, without lawful authority, in any newspaper, or in any public speech, to any confidential information obtained from any person in the service of his Majesty. We may well rub our eyes and wonder whether we are living on the false soil of England or in Germany! If this essentially German and

LATEST FROM DUBLIN.

OPERATIONS IN PROGRESS.

SNIPING AND FIRES.

MILITARY REPORT.

The following report from Lord French on the work of suppressing the rising in Dublin was not issued by the Press Bureau until 1.15 this morning. It was the first news available from the time of Mr. Asquith's statement in the House on Thursday:—

The following communiqué was issued by the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief Home Forces, at 12 midnight, April 28-29:—

The military operations for the suppression of the rebellion in Dublin are proceeding satisfactorily.

What may be described as the organized forces of the rebels are confined to a few localities, the principal one being the Sackville-street district, in which the rebel headquarters appear to be the General Post Office.

The cordon of troops round this district has been drawn closer, and the rebels in this locality appear now to be confined behind the line of their barricades.

Sniping from houses, in which small parties of the rebels have established themselves in various parts of the city, still continues. The district where this is most prevalent is that to the north-west of Four Courts, which is still in possession of the rebels.

The clearance of these snipers is a matter of time.

Considerable damage was caused by fire from the 27th instant, and a large fire is still burning in Sackville-street.

In other parts of Ireland the principal centres of disturbance are in County Galway and in Ennisceorthy.

Disturbances have also been reported at Kil-

FIRST ACCOUNTS OF THE FIGHTING.

BARRICADED STREETS.

The following account of the Sinn Fein rising in Dublin has been furnished to us by an English eyewitness.

Shortly after 10 o'clock on Easter Monday morning I had occasion to ring up, from Dublin, a personal friend in Dundalk. This friend first of all asked me what the weather was like in Dublin, and then said, with a significance which I afterwards understood, "How are things in the City?" My reply was, "Things seem to be quieter to-day than I have ever seen them. The only bit of excitement is the people going to the races."

Shortly before noon I was walking down O'Connell-street, with the intention of going to Stephen's Green, when I noticed a body of Sinn Feiners, about a hundred strong, but there was nothing particular about them to attract attention. Dublin is used to such sights. They were, however, marching with fixed bayonets. A minute or two later I heard one or two shots, and when I got to the top of Grafton-street I found that the gates of the Green were closed and barricaded, and Sinn Feiners, with loaded rifles, were standing beside them.

Not only were the conspirators in possession of Stephen's Green, but the General Post Office, many houses in the locality, and a number of gun-shops, simultaneously raided, were in their hands. The mails at the Post Office were used as barricades, while counters and other fittings were used to barricade the windows of the building. In the streets there was an idle crowd of people looking on in some amazement at the proceedings. Under the Post Office portico were three or four Sinn Feiners with sticks, keeping the crowd back. They were assisted by their comrades in the building, who occasionally fired blank cartridge from the windows.

REBELS SNIPING AT SOLDIERS.

When, a little later, I walked down Dame-street I saw blood on the pavements, and I was told that here a soldier, or soldiers, were shot by Sinn Feiners from the roofs of adjoining buildings. They took every opportunity of firing at soldiers or sailors in uniform who passed along the street or within range. A number of buildings were in complete possession of the rebels, who, for the most part, posted on the tops of buildings. When two cyclists came along blank cartridge was fired at them, but the moment they got off their machines the shots were stopped.

A VISITOR'S STORY.

REBELS' MOTOR-CAR DEFENCES.

MEN FROM THE TRENCHES SHOT.

(BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

APRIL 26.

Holiday-makers and visitors to the spring Cattle Show of the Royal Dublin Society, which was one of the big events of the Easter week, have had an experience that they will not wish to have repeated.

It first became apparent that something was amiss early on Monday afternoon, when those making their way to the city for the Show on the following day were held up on the various lines leading into the capital. An hour or two earlier Dublin itself had vivid intimation of what was about to happen, in the descent of the Sinn Feiners upon Sackville-street and several of the principal buildings in that neighbourhood, including the Post Office.

Having spent the week-end in the northern part of County Dublin, I intended to travel by train arriving at Aniens-street, about 4 o'clock, but had only got one station from my starting point when I was informed that I should probably be unable to reach Dublin that evening. Acting as I was advised, I returned and made a second and successful attempt to reach Dublin on Tuesday morning, the train steaming into Aniens-street at about 9 o'clock.

A DISQUIETING RECEPTION.

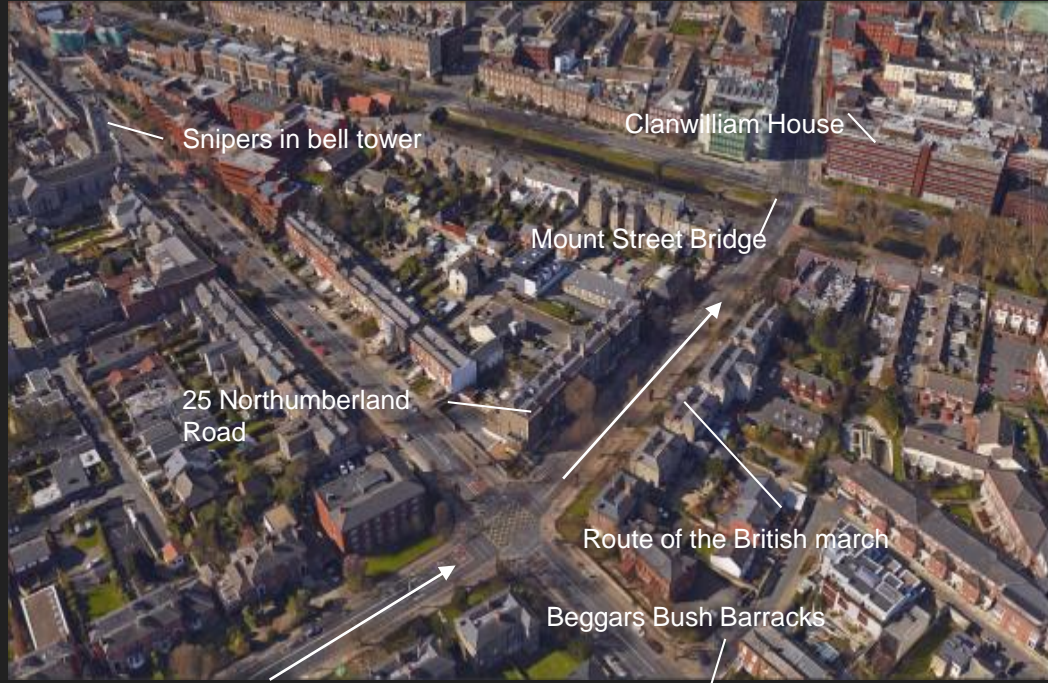
The station by that time being in possession of the military, the passengers had to quit the premises and make their journey to their several destinations as best they could. No cabs or destinations were available, and all tramway traffic was suspended. After waiting the best part of an hour, I was fortunate enough to get into conversation with a gentleman who had, he informed me, cycled from Kingstown. When I told him that I wished to cross to the southern side of Dublin, he expressed the belief that there would be no difficulty in crossing by the Butt Bridge, close to the Customs House.

Shortly afterwards an Irish car happened to pass, and when I hailed it the "jerry" cheerfully undertook to convey me to the neighbourhood of Balls Bridge. In the meantime shooting was proceeding irregularly both in the direction of Sackville-street and the Liffey. It was not until the evening that the shooting

The landscape of the battle

From this aerial view you can see why the rebels chose this strategic position to support their military cordon of Dublin City.

Advancing troops approaching the city had to come along Northumberland Road to reach the city centre.



The Aftermath of the Battle

The battle resulted in the biggest losses on both the British side, and the Rebels during the rising. At least 30 British soldiers were killed while about 134 were wounded.

Four volunteers fell - Patrick Doyle, George Reynolds, Dick Murphy and Michael Malone. Clanwilliam house was the last Rebel post to be captured in the battle, after it was rushed by British Troops during which the house caught on fire.



The burnt shell of Clanwilliam House

Victims on both sides

As with all conflict, there are victims on both sides. It is important to remember those people who died no matter what side they were fighting for.

In Deans Grange cemetery and other cemeteries around Dublin, members of the Sherwood Foresters are buried and are cared for to this day.

Civilians too suffered during the battle and they should also be remembered.

