
RDFA/018:
The Gunning Brothers' Collection:
Gallipoli and the Somme

Rachel Richardson (11 March 2014)

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Reference Number: IE DCLA/RDFA/018

Title: The Gunning brothers' collection: Gallipoli and the Somme

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning.

Dates: 1914 - 2000

Extent: 2 series, comprising of 6 files, 6 items and 4 artefacts.

Level: Fonds

Administration history: The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, Ayrfield, Dublin 13, was established in 1996 to commemorate all Irish men and women who volunteered, served and died in the First World War 1914-1918. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association archive is managed by the Dublin City Library and Archive.

Biographical history: George Cecil and Frank Douglas 'Wolly' Gunning were brothers born in Enniskillen. George Cecil was born in 1890, while Frank was born in 1894. Their father Sinclair and mother Kathleen married in 1889 and had five children, four boys and one girl. Frank attended Portora Royal School in Enniskillen. After finishing school in 1912, Frank began work as a clerk for Bank of Ireland. His older brother, George Cecil, worked as a clerk for Belfast Savings Bank. After the outbreak of the First World War, George Cecil enlisted into the 'D' Company, 7th Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Frank, despite not being permitted to leave by the Bank of Ireland, followed his brother and enlisted into the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The two men trained at the Curragh and in 1915 they fought in the Gallipoli campaign. When at Suvla Bay, Frank contracted dysentery and was hospitalised for a number of weeks. Frank transferred into the 6th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers where he was second lieutenant. In June 1916, Frank went to France where he fought at the battle of the Somme where he died. His body was never recovered.

George Cecil, like his brother Frank, also contracted dysentery in 1915. George Cecil was brought to hospital in Alexandria in Egypt where he remained until 1917. In 1918, he was transferred to the Royal Air Force; however, by the time he training was completed, the Armistice was signed. In 1919, George Cecil returned home and continued his work at the Belfast Saving Bank. In 1930, he married Muriel McKinney and had two children, one of which died at ten days old. George Cecil died on 17 March 1974. His daughter Wendy was given the belonging of her father and uncle after his death, which she donated to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

Archival history: The collection was donated to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association archive by Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil. The Royal Dublin Association archive is managed by the Dublin City Library and Archive, which is where the collection is kept.

Arrangement: The collection was broken into two series. The first series, relates to records belonging to the Gunning brother which were created during the First World War. The second series contains records which created after the First World War and relate mostly with George Cecil's daughter recalling the memory of her father and Uncles experiences during the war. This series also includes a photograph if George Cecile at the 50th Anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign. The collection was arranged chronologically as this reflects mostly accurately the original order in which the records were created, and provides a comprehensive context for the records.

Date of Description: The description list was created by Rachel Richardson on the 11 March 2014.

Rules or Conventions: ISAD(G), second edition (2000).

Reference Number: RDFA/018/1

Arranged Chronologically

Title: The Gunning brothers during the First World War.

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning

Dates: 1914 - 1919

Extent: 4 items and 4 files and 4 artefacts, comprising of 551 pages

Level: Series

Scope and Content: Includes records which relates to the Gunning brothers during the First World War. Among these is a diary they both wrote, a photo album depicted George Cecil's time in hospital, a Princess Mary Box with the identification tags and cap badge of George Cecil, coloured maps, the certificate transferring George Cecil into the Royal Air Force and a telegraph announcing the death of Frank Douglas.

Reference Number: RDFA/018/1/1

Title: Letter from Belfast Bank outlining arrangement of leave with employees.

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning

Dates: 14 September 1914

Extent: 1 page

Level: Item

Scope and Content: Letter from Belfast Bank, Belfast, to George Cecil Gunning, Pettigo, county Donegal. The letter outlines an arrangement made between the bank and employees who have volunteered for military service. This agreement states that soldiers will receive half of their pay while away and their position at the bank will remain available until they return.

Reference Number: RDFA/018/1/2

Title: Princess Mary Gift Box with various belongings of George Cecil Gunning

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning

Dates: [December 1914 – 2 May 1919]

Extent: 469 pages and 4 artefacts.

Level: File

Scope and Content: An embossed brass box with contents belonging to George Cecil Gunning. In the box is George Cecil's two ID tags with his service number, a Royal Dublin Fusilier cap badge, a copy of the new testament with a handwritten message by Lord Robert to the Ulster Volunteer Force found inside the Bible's cover [22 September 1914]; Includes also a greeting card from Princess Mary [31 December 1914], a instructions notice from Field Marshall Kitchener, and a certificate of discharge from the Royal Air Force (2 May 1919).

Reference Number: RDFA/018/1/3

Title: Diary entitled 'Gallipoli Memories'.

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning

Dates: 10 July 1915 – 3 July 1916

Extent: 91 pages

Level: File

Scope and Content: Diary of George Cecil and Frank Douglas on their experiences during the Gallipoli campaign. Included is a detailed account of their voyage from Plymouth to the Dardanelles, the Gallipoli battle with copies of photographs of the battle included. George Cecil goes on to give an account of the battle of the Somme, where his brother Frank Douglas 'Golly' was killed. George Cecil describes his brother's last letter as well as detailing the battle itself. Included also is a photograph of George Cecil with fellow soldiers at the fifty year anniversary of the battle of Gallipoli.

Reference Number: RDFA/018/1/4

Title: Photograph Album relating to Number 15 General Hospital.

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning

Dates: 17 September 1916 – [1 April 1917].

Extent: 42 pages

Level: File

Scope and Content: Photograph album relating to George Cecil's time at the number 15 hospital, Alexandria, Egypt. Photographs include images of the local people, views from the hospital, visits to the Pyramids and Cairo, the hospital's hockey team, football team dramatic society as well as photographs of various friends of George Cecil. George Cecil includes a brief description under each photograph.

Reference Number: RDFA/018/1/5

Title: Book entitled *The Pals at Suvla Bay*.

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning

Dates: [1 October 1916].

Extent: 243 pages

Level: File

Scope and Content: *The Pals at Suvla Bay*, written by Henry Hanna, gives an account of the 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers during the first world war, with an emphasis on the Gallipoli campaign. Included in the book is a list of officers and men in the 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, a complete roll of the 'D' Company in the 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, photographs of the 13, 14, 15 and 16 platoon of the 'D' Company; Included also is a head and shoulder photograph of the three hundred men in the D Company with a short biographical note on each.

Reference Number: RDFA/018/1/6

Title: Coloured maps of Europe.

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning

Dates: [9 January 1916].

Extent: 2 pages.

Level: Item

Scope and Content: Two coloured maps of central and southern Europe. The first map is of the Mediterranean, which has the outward and homeward journey to Gallipoli marked with blue ink. The second map is a physical map of Germany, Holland and Belgium.

Reference Number: RDFA/018/1/7

Title: Telegraph informing the death of Frank Douglas Gunning.

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning

Dates: 13 September 1916

Extent: 1 page

Level: Item.

Scope and Content: Telegraph from Buckingham Palace to Mrs Gunning and the Reverent Hughes, Wallingford, England, confirming that Frank Douglas was killed at the Somme. The telegraph sends the condolences of King George V and Queen Mary to Mrs Gunning.

Reference Number: RDFA/018/1/8

Title: Letter from Royal Air Force to George Cecil Gunning

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning

Dates: 9 July 1919

Extent: 1 page

Level: Item

Scope and Content: Letter from the Royal Air Force, Blandford camp, Dorset to George Cecil Gunning, Antrim road, Belfast. The letter explains that George Cecil will be transferred from the Royal Dublin Fusiliers to the Royal Air Force as a cadet.

Reference Number: RDFA/018/2

Arranged Chronologically

Title: The Gunning brothers after the First World War.

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning.

Dates: [1965] - 2000

Extent: 2 items and 2 files, comprising of 29 pages

Level: Series

Scope and Content: Includes items which were created after the First World War relating to the Gunning brothers. These include a photograph of George Cecil at a 50th anniversary of the battle of Gallipoli; included also are of George Cecil's daughter Wendy, donating her father and uncle's records to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association as well as providing the chairman of the association, Tom Burke, with additional information surrounding her father.

Reference Number: RDFA/018/2/1

Title: Photograph of George Cecil at the 50th anniversary of Gallipoli

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning

Dates: [25 April 1965].

Extent: 2 pages

Level: Item

Scope and Content: Two copies of a photograph of George Cecil and other surviving members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers at the 50th anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign. The names of all the men pictured are noted in pencil.

Reference Number: RDFA/018/2/2

Title: Correspondence between Wendy Gunning and Seamus Greene.

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning

Dates: 9 December 1997 – 11 December 1997

Extent: 4 pages

Level: File

Scope and Content: Correspondence between Wendy Gunning, 5 Cabin Hill Mews, Belfast, daughter of George Cecil, and Seamus Greene of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, Ballinteer, Dublin 16. Wendy Gunning writes that she has only recently become aware of the Royal Dublin Fusilier Association and that she wishes to donate the records of her father George Cecil and uncle, Frank Douglas Gunning, to the association (9 December 1997). Included also is a letter from Jack McAllister, editor of the *Belfast Telegraph*, to Seamus Greene who forwarded him on the details of Wendy Gunning (11 December 1997); Included is a newspaper cutting from the *Belfast Telegraph* which relates to the First World War.

Reference Number: RDFA/018/2/3

Title: Article written about the lives of George Cecil and Frank Douglas Gunning

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning

Dates: 26 May 2000

Extent: 9 pages

Level: Item

Scope and Content: Article written by Tom Burke, Chairman of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, detailing the lives of George Cecil and Frank Douglas Gunning. Burke provides a biographical history of the two men as well as providing an account of their experiences in Gallipoli, based on their accounts which they wrote in their diary 'Gallipoli Memories'.

Reference Number: RDFA/018/2/4

Title: Correspondence between Wendy Gunning and Tom Burke.

Creator: Wendy Gunning, daughter of George Cecil Gunning

Extent: 10 pages

Dates: 11 October 1999 – 31 July 2000

Level: File

Scope and Content: Correspondence between Wendy Gunning, 5 Cabin Hill Mews, Belfast, and Tom Burke, Chairman of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association. Wendy outlines corrections she wishes to be made to Tom Burke's article about her father and uncle (14 July 2000); Included also is a questionnaire Wendy filled out in relation to the her father George Cecil, along with a copy of a portrait of her uncle Frank Douglas. Tom Burke writes to inform Wendy as to where her father and uncle's records are being kept. (31 July 2000).