

DUBLIN CITY ARCHIVES

RDFA/099

Private Edward Brierley MM

8th Royal Dublin Fusiliers

Royal Dublin Fusiliers Collection at Dublin City
Archives

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FONDS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

IDENTITY STATEMENT

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099

Title: Private Edward Brierley MM, 8th Royal Dublin Fusiliers

Date: 1 February 1896 - 24 June 2005

Level: Fonds

Extent and Medium: 29 items and 2 files.

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association.

ADMINISTRATIVE / BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

The majority of the papers, artefacts and memorabilia in this collection were donated to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association (RDFA) by Noel Brierley, son of Edward Brierley, and assembled in their current exhibition form with some supplementation by the RDFA. For this reason the RDFA have been credited in the “creator” field of the fonds level description. The items relate to Edward Brierley’s life; primarily his service with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and Royal Engineers during the First World War, as well as his soccer career, having played with both Shelbourne and Saint Mary’s football clubs. The collection also contains a small amount of material relating to his son, Edward Brierley Junior.

Edward Brierley

Edward (Ned) Arthur Brierley was born at Turner’s Cottages, Ballsbridge, Dublin, in 1896. Turner’s Cottages have long since gone, and were located on the site where the University College Dublin (UCD) Veterinary School is now situated. Edward came from a family of seven children; five boys and two girls. Before the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914, Edward was employed by the Pembroke Urban District Council, which later became part of Dublin Corporation.

Military Career

At the outbreak of war, aged 18, Edward volunteered to join the Army. He joined the 8th Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the *Shinning Eight*, as they were known. This battalion was one of the six service battalions of the Dublin Fusiliers. His regimental number was 20041. The 8th Battalion was part of the 48th Brigade, attached to the 16th (Irish)

Division. It was also the battalion in which the well known Jesuit priest Father Willie Doyle SJ was serving in when he was killed in August 1917.

Private Brierley was no ordinary soldier. He received no less than three awards for bravery while serving with the 16th (Irish) Division. His first award was obtained on the 9th of September 1916 during the Battle of Ginchy, which was at the later stages of the Battle of the Somme. Ned received his second award for demonstrating bravery at Frezenberg Ridge, east of the Belgian town of Ypres, between 1 and 16 August 1917. This particular battle was the beginning of the 3rd Battle of Ypres, later known as Passchendaele. In October 1917, the 8th Battalion of Dublin Fusiliers was disbanded. Some of the men were split amongst the regular 1st and 2nd Battalions of the “Dublins,” while others were sent to an entrenching battalion.

On Thursday 21 March 1918 Ned wrote in his diary: “Offensive started, hold Brown Line until 11:00 pm from 5:30am” (RDFA/099/2). The *offensive* Ned refers to was the famous German offensive in March 1918 which effectively caused the annihilation of the 16th (Irish) Division. The *Brown Line* referred to was part of a defensive line established by the British. As part of this defence the Brown Line ran forward of the French village of Saint Emilie. Tragically, during this massive and final German assault, 1,062 men of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers were either killed, wounded by gas and high explosive shells, or, if they were lucky, taken prisoner.

Following the decimation of the 16th (Irish) Division during this “Spring Offensive,” Ned was transferred to the Royal Engineers serving with the 16th (Irish) Division. On 28 May 1918, his diary states “Leave Brigade for Division for to be remustered as Sapper.” He was now addressed as Sapper Brierley, MM¹ RE² His regimental number with the engineers was 313085. A sapper in the engineers was equivalent in rank to a private in the infantry. During the final Allied assault on the Germans in the Autumn of 1918, Ned obtained his third bravery award for gallant conduct in the field at Douvrin, between 6 and 9 October 1918.

After the War

Ned Brierley survived the killing fields of France and Flanders and returned to Ireland, where he resumed his job with the Pembroke Town District Council. He played football with Shelbourne Association Football Club (AFC) during the years 1925-1926. He also played football with Saint Mary’s United AFC, a Ballsbridge team attached to the Leinster Football

¹ Use of the post-nominal letter “MM” denotes recipient of the Military Medal, awarded by the British Army from 1916 until 1993 for acts of gallantry and devotion to duty under fire.

² Use of the post-nominal letter “RE” denotes Royal Engineers.

League. During that football season Edward won a runners-up medal playing for Saint Mary's in the Edmund Johnson Cup. In the years 1926-1927, again while playing for Saint Mary's, he won yet another runners-up medal in the Metropolitan Cup. (DCLA/RDFA/099/19-20).

On 17 September 1924 Edward married Mary Hayden, from Glasthule, Dublin, in the Church of Saint Joseph's, Glasthule. His diary records the birth of his daughter Margaret Theresa, born 22 June 1925. Edward went on to rear another six children. His son Noel said of him: "My father was a very quite, hard working man who never spoke about his experience in the war." Perhaps the horrors of the Somme, and what Edward had seen during those terrible years, made him a contemplative man, content to be alive and to rear a family. Something denied to many of his fallen and forgotten comrades.

Private Edward Arthur Brierley, of the "Shinning Eighth" Battalion, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, died from a heart attack while at work on 23 November 1955, at the age of 59. He is buried in Deansgrange Cemetery, County Dublin. May he and his forgotten comrades, who lie in those lonely graves in France and Flanders, rest in peace.

Researched and written by Tom Burke MBE, Chairman, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, 15 October 2000.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection consists of material assembled by the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association to form an exhibition about the life of Edward Brierley. It contains personal artefacts and memorabilia, photographs, documents, programmes and articles relating to both Brierley's military and soccer careers. It also contains a small amount of material relating to his son, Edward Brierley Junior. The last file sequentially in the collection contains laminated biographical research notes and other material to accompany the exhibition of the collection, including laminated caption cards.

SYSTEM OF ARRANGEMENT

The collection is arranged as a listing at file or item level, without recourse to series. This is because the collection is already a single, cohesive exhibition in its own right as accessioned.

To include additional layers of descriptive hierarchy would be an unnecessary complication, particularly to such a relatively small collection.

ARCHIVAL HISTORY

Papers and artefacts in this collection were donated to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association (RDFA) by Noel Brierley, son of Edward Brierley. It was transferred to the RDFA collection at the Dublin City Archives by Tom Burke MBE, Chairman of the RDFA, on 20 November 2015. An acknowledgment note was sent by Ellen Murphy, Senior Archivist, on 12 December 2015. Items stored at G1/02/28.

ACCESS AND DESCRIPTIVE CONTROL

Access Conditions: Available to view by public who apply for research card in Dublin City Library and Archive Reading Room, 138-144 Pearse Street, Dublin.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Access: The terms of the Copyright and Related Acts (2000) allows DCLA to provide photocopies of material for research purposes only. Researchers wishing to publish will be obliged to write to Antoine Giacometti for permission to do so.

Language: English

Related material: The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association archive (IE DCLA/RDFA) is located at the Dublin City Archives

Finding aid: Descriptive catalogue.

Archivist's note: Catalogue compiled by Daniel Ayiotis, Dublin City Archives intern.

Conventions: ISAD(G), IGAD.

Date of description: 21 January 2016.

INDEX TERMS

Brierley, Edward, 1896-1955

Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 1881-1922

World War, 1914-1918

Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Shelbourne Football Club

St. Mary's Football Club

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/1

Title: Photocopy from Donnybrook District Birth Register

Date(s): c2015

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 1pp

Creator: Dublin City Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Photocopy taken from the Birth Register for the District of Donnybrook, recording the birth of Edward Brierley. Born 1 February 1896 at 18 Turner's Cottages [Ballsbridge, Dublin]

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/2

Title: Diary

Date(s): 1917-22 June 1925

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 108pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Leather-bound calendar diary for 1918 belonging to Edward Brierley. 95mm x 140mm. Contains references to military engagement, as well as entries dated after the war. Includes entry recording the birth of his daughter dated 22 June 1925.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Some pages loose, some missing, some out of sequence and some torn. Leather badly worn. Book cover almost completely detached from leather covering.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/3

Title: Photocopy of army medical card index

Date(s): c2015

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 2pp

Creator: Dublin City Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Copy of Medal Card Index for Edward Brierley, Royal Dublin Fusiliers (20041) and Royal Engineers (313085)

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/4

Title: Military medals in wooden box.

Date(s): 1916-1921

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: Wooden box containing four mounted medals

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: A set of four First World War Medals belonging to Edward Brierley. Mounted in single row. Consists, from left to right, of: the Military Medal, the 1914-1915 Star; the British War Medal; the Victory Medal; The Military Medal. All medal contained in a wooden box, 155 mm by 80 mm by 30 mm. Date (late) derived from postcard at DCLA/RDFA/099/18.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

Handle and right hand clasp missing from box, left hand clasp broken. Medals mounted on a single bar, ribbons in poor condition.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/5

Title: Hand-written prayer

Date(s): c1915

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 2pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Hand-written in pencil on feint ruled note paper. One page contains the text of the prayer, beginning "Oh adorable Lord + Saviour Jesus Christ." Other page contains information concerning the origin of the prayer and directions for its invocation. Carried throughout the First World War in Edward Brierley's diary.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Paper exhibits wear, tear and staining. Stored in mylar pouch. Recommend digitisation to prevent unnecessary handling of original.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/6

Title: Bravery certificate

Date(s): c1916

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 1pp mounted in frame.

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: First of three to be issued to Private Edward Brierley, for bravery at the Battle of Ginchy on 9 September 1916, while serving with 8th Battalion of the Royal Dublin

Fusiliers, the Irish Brigade, 16th (Irish) Division. Signed by Commander of the 16th (Irish) Division, Major-General William Hickie.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Some damage to frame and staining to certificate. Recommend digitisation if removed from frame to prevent unnecessary handling of original.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/7

Title: Bravery certificate

Date(s): c1917

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 1pp mounted in frame.

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Second of three to be issued to Private Edward Brierley, for bravery at the 3rd Battle of Ypres, between 1 to 16 August 1917, while serving with 8th Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the Irish Brigade, 16th (Irish) Division. Signed by Commander of the 16th (Irish) Division, Major-General William Hickie.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Some damage and peeling to frame.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/8

Title: Bravery certificate

Date(s): c1918

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 1pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Third of three to be issued to Private Edward Brierley, for "gallant conduct in the field at Douvrin from 6th to 9th October 1918," while serving as an engineer (Sapper) of the 16th Divisional Signal Company. Signed by Divisional Commander, Major General AB Ritchie.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Only one of the three bravery certificates that is unframed. Exhibits staining and some wear from age and folding. Stored in mylar pouch. Recommend digitisation to prevent unnecessary handling of original.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/9

Title: Metal match box cover, engraved "Ginchy Sept. 9th"

Date(s): c1916

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: Metal box, 44mm x 28mm x 14 mm.

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: An ornamental metal match box cover given to members of the 16th (Irish) Division in remembrance of their victory at Ginchy (Somme) on 9 September 1916. Contains empty balsa wood matchbox, partially covered in blue paper.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/10

Title: Metal match box cover, engraved "Wyttschaete Ridge June 7th 9th 1917."

Date(s): c1917

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: Metal box, 44mm x 28mm x 14 mm.

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: An ornamental metal match box cover given to members of the 16th (Irish) Division in remembrance of their victory at Wyttschaete (Messines) 7 - 9 June 1917. Contains empty balsa wood matchbox, partially covered in blue paper and bearing notice label.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/11

Title: Metal snuff box

Date(s): c1915

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: Metal box 55mm x 30mm x 15mm.

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: A metal snuff box belonging to Edward Brierley with the crest of the City of Belfast on the front. No details of origin; may have been given by soldier from Belfast. "M.I. Austria" engraved on side of lid.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/12

Title: 1896 silver crown coin

Date(s): 1896

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: Metal coin

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: One silver crown dated 1896. Believed to have been given to Edward to mark his birth in that same year.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Enclosed within pouch described at DCLA/RDFA/99/13 for safety due to small size.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/13

Title: Brown leather pouch

Date(s): [1896]

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: Leather, 60mm x 75mm

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Brown leather pouch with popper type fastener, used by Edward to store silver crown described at DCLA/RDFA/099/12

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/14

Title: Broken glass water bottle

Date(s): c1915

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: Metal, glass and leather 90mm x 60mm x 40mm

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: A broken glass water bottle, contained in engraved metal case. Edward used bottle for holding holy water while in the trenches. Metal case is covered in leather bind which has split into two halves.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Broken glass, handle with care.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/15

Title: Metal box, engraved "Rossignol"

Date(s): c1917

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: Metal, 55mm x 38mm x 8mm

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Metal box with the word "Rossignol" engraved on the front side. Rossignol Wood is near the Somme battlefield of Gommecourt.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/16

Title: Metal cigarette box

Date(s): c1915

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: Metal 140mm x 75mm x 28mm

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: "The Three Castles Cigarettes" box, made by "W.D.&H.O Wills Bristol and London." Colour green and black on brass colour base. Used by Edward Brierley to store his smoking paraphernalia during the war.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/17

Title: Photocopied map

Date(s): c2015

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 1pp

Creator: Dublin City Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Contemporary A4 photocopy of location map of 16th (Irish) Division on 21 March 1918. Taken from Denman, Terrance. *Ireland's Unknown Soldiers*. Kildare: Irish Academic Press. 2014.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/18

Title: Army Form W.5132

Date(s): 18 November 1921

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: |Postcard, 2pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Notice of awarded of medals to Edward Brierley of 14 Dodder View, Ballsbridge, Dublin.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/19

Title: Football medal

Date(s): 1926

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: Single metal medal, engraved, 22mm x 30mm

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Association Football Medal. This medal was Edward Brierley's 1925/1926 Leinster Football League runner's up medal. He received it while playing with St Mary's AFC (Ballsbridge) in the Edward Johnson Cup. Engraved "Leinster Football League Edmond Johnston Cup Runners-up St. Mary's United A.F.C."

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/20

Title: Football medal

Date(s): 1927

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: Single metal medal, engraved, 22mm x 30mm

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Association Football Medal. This medal was Edward Brierley's 1926/1927 Leinster Football League runner's up medal. He received it while playing with St Mary's AFC (Ballsbridge) in the Metropolitan Cup. Engraved "Leinster Football League Runners-up St. Mary's United A.F.C."

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/21

Title: Black and white photograph.

Date(s): c2015

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium:

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Landscape, 224mm x140 mm. Depicts Shelbourne Association Football Club players of 1922 including Ned Brierley. Individuals are named on back of image.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Modern reproduction

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/22

Title: Black and white laminated photograph.

Date(s): c2015

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 1pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Landscape, 295mm x 190mm version of RDFFA/099/21. Does not feature names on back

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Modern reproduction

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/23

Title: Black and white photograph.

Date(s): c2015

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 1 pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Portrait, 100 mm x125 mm. Depicts 5 ex-servicemen in civilian clothes with military medals. Edward Brierley is the tall man at the back, second from left end

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Modern reproduction

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/24

Title: Black and white laminated photograph.

Date(s): c2015

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 1pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Portrait, 280mm x 170mm. Depicts Edward Brierley with cap on left hand side and his son Ned Brierley Junior standing beside him. Original was taken outside the family home in Ringsend, 1953

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Modern reproduction

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/25

Title: Black and white photograph.

Date(s): 1953

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 2pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Portrait, 87mm x 137mm. Depicts Edward Brierley with cap on left hand side and his son Ned Brierley Junior standing beside him. Taken outside the family home in Ringsend. Some hand-written equations on back.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/26

Title: Black and white photograph.

Date(s): c2015

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 1pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Landscape, 250 mm by 150 mm. Group photograph of British soldiers from several different regiments, some wearing bandoliers. Edward Brierley is seen standing third in from left in the back row

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Modern reproduction

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/27

Title: Sepia photograph postcard

Date(s): c1915

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 1pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Portrait, 145mm x 100mm. Depicts Edward Brierley seated, in uniform

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/28

Title: Letter of reference

Date(s): 18 June 1920

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 1pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Reference letter from John H Middleton of the Engineer's Office, Pembroke Urban District Council, Town Hall, Pembroke, Co. Dublin. Dated 18 June 1920. Headed paper, type-written in blue ink. Letter records that Edward Brierley had been an employee of Pembroke Urban District Council since 1913, had joined the army at the outbreak of the First World War and returned to the employment of the council afterwards. It records his "excellent character" and that the author was "sorry to lose such a reliable man."

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: Paper in very poor condition. Tearing, severe creasing and staining evident. Recommend digitisation and if possible attention of conservator.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/29

Title: Football programmes and newspaper clippings featuring article referencing Edward Brierley

Date(s): 8 September 2006 – October 2006

Level of Description: File

Extent and Medium: 68pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Two copies of Shelbourne Football Club versus Longford Town match programme, dated Friday 8th September 2006. Contains article by Christopher Sands on Shelbourne history in which Edward Brierley is mentioned. Copy of the same article appeared in "NewsFour", a free Dublin 4 based newspaper, in their October 2006 issue, also enclosed.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/30

Title: Clipping from UCD newsletter in relation to Edward Brierley Junior.

Date(s): November 2000

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 4pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Front cover and article clipped from the University College Dublin newsletter "Heads Up!" Article notes the occasion of the retirement of Edward Brierley Junior from the Physics Department after 48 years.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/31

Title: Death Notice and Acknowledgement in relation to Edward Brierley Junior

Date(s): 1 June 2005 - 24 June 2005

Level of Description: Item

Extent and Medium: 4pp

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Two newspaper clippings from the Irish Times; one the death notice for Edward Brierley Junior (son of Edward Brierley), the other an acknowledgement from the Brierley family expressing thanks for those who sympathised and attended his funeral.

Reference Code: IE DCLA/RDFA/099/32

Title: Supplementary material

Date(s): c2015

Level of Description: File

Extent and Medium: 12pp, 23 caption cards

Creator: Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association

Scope and Content: Biographical research notes and material to accompany exhibition of the collection. File also contains the accompanying laminated caption cards.