

his missionary work. This event, which started in 1981, has become a key social event in Clonakilty's Christmas calendar. In recent years, the funds raised have helped John enormously with his projects in Mozambique. Fr John is always aware of how fortunate he is. His story is far from over.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Most of this article is based on interviews with Fr John Kingston from August 2017. I am currently developing a feature-length documentary film to tell John's story.
- 2 MPLA: *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola).
- 3 UNITA: *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).
- 4 Vines, A. 2016. 'Continuity and change in Angola: Insights from modern history'. *International Affairs* vol. 92, issue 5, pp. 1229-37, at p. 1232.
- 5 Kuvalela, J. 1985. *A Little Journal of Kiwaba Nzoji Mission*. Malanje, Angola.
- 6 Stated by Jean-Étienne Wozniak to Fr John Kingston, April 1985.
- 7 Kingston, J. 1992. 'Missionaries as victims of violence'. *Agents of Evangelisation*.
- 8 *Cork Examiner* 28 May 1985, 29 May 1985 and 11 June 1985; *Sunday Tribune*, 21 Nov. 1985.
- 9 In *Dáil Éireann*, TD Proinsias De Rossa raised his concern for the priest's well-being with then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Peter Barry. De Rossa suggested that the government contact South African authorities given their involvement in funding and arming UNITA forces but the minister did not embrace this suggestion, see 'Private notice question: Disappearance of Irish priest', *Dáil Debates*, 29 May 1985, available to view at <http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie> [accessed 12 Sep. 2017]. For international coverage of John's release see, *Los Angeles Times*, 9 June 1985.
- 10 This picture of what the Kingston family experienced during the days after receiving the news regarding the ambush was constructed from interviews with the following members of the Kingston family in July 2015: Vincent Kingston, Anne Keane (née Kingston), Iris Walsh (née Kingston) and Bridie Kingston.
- 11 Flynn, J. 1985. *The Diary of Fr. James Flynn C.S.Sp.* Unpublished.
- 12 *Associated Press*, 29 May 1985.
- 13 Vines, 'Continuity and change in Angola', p. 1232.
- 14 PERI. 'Modern conflicts: Conflict profile: Angola (1975 - 2002)', pp. 1-2, at p. 1, <http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/Angola.pdf> [accessed 20 Oct. 2017].
- 15 FRELIMO: *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Mozambique Liberation Front).
- 16 RENAMO: *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Mozambican National Resistance).

THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND AND THE LOSSES FROM WEST CORK

Tony McCarthy



So here, while the mad guns curse overhead,
And tired men sigh with mud for couch and floor,
Know that we fools, now with the foolish dead,
Died not for flag, nor King, nor Emperor,
But for a dream, born in a herdsman's shed,
And for the secret Scripture of the poor.¹

Introduction

The verse above is from a poem called 'To My Daughter Betty, the Gift of God' written by Irish poet and nationalist politician Tom Kettle, a couple of days before he died on a French battlefield, just three months after the Battle of Jutland. The poem was dedicated to his three-year-old daughter Elizabeth. While it was written from a soldier's perspective fighting in the trenches during the First World War, it also accurately describes the circumstances that sailors found themselves in during the Battle of Jutland. The 'mad guns'

certainly cursed at Jutland and would have been felt by the many Irishmen who worked as stokers in the bowels of the great battleships.

I previously wrote about this battle in *Rosscarbery Past and Present* in 2013;² this paper is a follow-up to that article and includes further research. The Battle of Jutland, which took place on 31 May 1916, is universally regarded as one of the greatest naval battles ever fought with more than 100,000 sailors engaged in the battle. Some 8,648 of them died, most within a four-hour period.³ Over 120 of these sailors were from Cork.⁴ The battle was fought between the British Royal Navy's Grand Fleet and the Imperial German Navy's High Seas Fleet. Both fleets had the most modern and most powerful battleships then in existence. A number of the British ships sunk that day had West Cork casualties, with the highest number of local fatalities on board HMS *Indefatigable* and HMS *Defence*. This paper will firstly examine the background to the Battle of Jutland, then look in some detail at the battle itself and finally investigate the local losses.

Naval Arms Race

The declaration of the First World War was on 4 August 1914. The origins of the war are complex and multifaceted. Contributory factors included the increasingly fragile nature of imperialism and the formation of new political alliances in Europe which subsequently encouraged and invigorated nationalist movements. Colonial expansion and consequent rivalry among the major powers of Europe at the end of the nineteenth century caused ongoing political and diplomatic tensions.⁵ It was against this background that the development and expansion of the British and German navies became an integral part of political and military strategy in the late nineteenth century.

Historically the Royal Navy and its sailors had a very special place in the functioning of the British Empire. At the beginning of the First World War, its ships controlled all key maritime trade routes and it was unchallenged as a sea power. This had been the *status quo* for the previous two or three centuries. A strong navy was crucial for a conquering empire, particularly for one that was controlled from a small island on the western fringes of the European land mass. After the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, there was a century of relative peace for the British known as the '*Pax Britannica*'.⁶ However, by

the 1880s the British establishment was concerned that its navy's status as the primary global sea power was being challenged by other naval powers such as France, Russia, America and Japan. In 1888, a House of Commons select committee was established and it formulated what became known as 'the two-power standard'; this gave a commitment from the British government that the Royal Navy would be maintained at such strength that it would be larger than the next two biggest navies in the world combined.⁷ This prompted an unprecedented naval arms race that would continue up to and during the First World War. Despite this competition, there was high expectation on the British side that the Royal Navy would bring some early success in the war at sea.

The Royal Navy was at the cutting edge of technology at this time.⁸ Many jobs were created by the two-power standard strategy. Shipbuilding benefited, as did armaments and munition industries. The coal industry also thrived as each new warship devoured coal at a rate of about twenty-three tons per hour at full steam.⁹ Coal had to be transported from the mines to naval bases around the empire for refuelling distant navy ships. This military and political policy created a great number of jobs and steady employment for labourers and was thus welcomed by impoverished communities along the south coast of Ireland. At this time, the Irish population was only one crop failure away from famine. In 1890, the *Freeman's Journal* printed an article which gives us a detailed contemporary view of the conditions in Barryroe parish. It illustrates that the area was under threat of another famine due to a partial failure of the potato crop. It also describes the poor housing conditions and abject poverty in this district.¹⁰ The following excerpt describes the reporter's meeting with a local woman near the village of Butlerstown:

On the road I visited a labouring man's cottage. He was away at work, but his wife, an intelligent woman, gave me some valuable particulars about the condition of a few of her class in the barony. There is a "half acre" attached to the house, but the potatoes in it are utterly unfit even for animal food. Only a few of them were larger than marbles, and these were black and rotting. The woman informed me that her husband earned 4s. a week, but now that the potatoes had failed him, this would be insufficient to maintain the family. They had no firing except "broma" or dried furze sticks and that would not supply

them through the winter. In the best years they could scarcely keep themselves decently clothed. For the past few days they have had to buy Indian meal for their food and the poor woman remarked that soon they would not even have sufficient of that.¹¹

Naval Tactics during the War

As early as 1909, the British War Committee had prepared detailed plans for their navy in the event of a war with Germany.¹² These plans included the traditional tactic of enforcing a distant naval blockade on Germany. When war came in 1914, this tactic was immediately deployed by basing the British Grand Fleet in Scottish ports sealing the northern entrance to the North Sea and basing a second fleet, the Channel Fleet, in the south controlling the channel between England and France.¹³ The purpose of these fleets was to stop and search all shipping entering the North Sea. If they were bound for, or coming from, Germany the goods or ships were seized by the British. The idea was to stop material aid getting to Germany via this seaway. The German Navy was well aware that the British had numerical superiority in terms of warships so they were reluctant to engage in a large naval battle early in the war. They, therefore, decided on a type of naval guerrilla warfare by which they attacked and bombarded seaside towns along the eastern English coastline. This was in the hope of coaxing out British battleships and reducing their numbers by ambushing them using mines or submarines. One of the first raids was on Scarborough, Hartlepool and Whitby on 16 December 1914; there were 137 casualties and almost 600 injured.¹⁴ Five weeks before the Battle of Jutland, there was a similar attack on Yarmouth and Lowestoft in which twenty-five people were killed.¹⁵

The Battle of Jutland

By May 1916, the British were able to intercept German coded radio messages. They learnt on 30 May that a large German fleet had left the port of Jade, in northern Germany; the British assumed that the Germans were on another English coastal town bombardment mission. The decision was made to confront them. At 9pm on 30 May the British fleet departed from their three bases in

Scotland. The advanced fleet which left from Rosyth was led by Vice-Admiral David Beatty in HMS *Lion*. The overall commander of the British fleet was Admiral John Jellicoe who sailed from Scapa Flow, in the Orkney Islands, on HMS *Iron Duke*. A third fleet, under the command of Admiral Martyn Jerram, left from Cromarty. The plan was that all three fleets would rendezvous about 350 miles away, off the Skagerrak, near the Danish coast.¹⁶

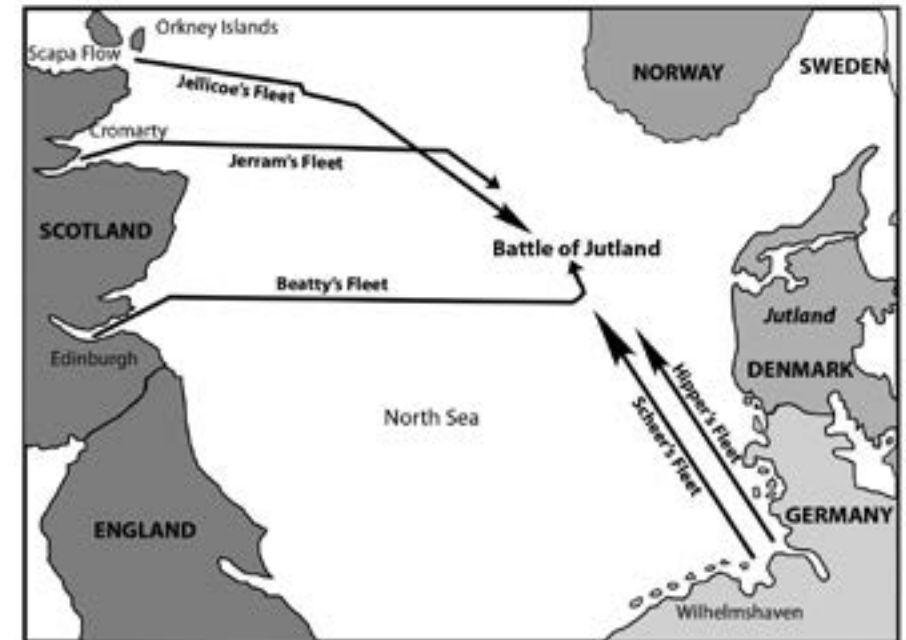


Fig. 1: Map showing the approach of the British Grand Fleet and the German High Seas Fleet to the Battle of Jutland (Map: author).

At 2pm on 31 May, a Danish merchant tramp steamer called the SS *N. F. Fjord* was steaming across the Jutland bank in the North Sea. This relatively shallow bank lies approximately 50 miles off the Danish coastline. *N. F. Fjord* was destined to play an involuntary role in the beginning of one of the greatest sea battles ever fought.¹⁷ She was sighted by the German Navy's light cruiser SMS *Elbing* which approached her and stopped her in order to carry out a

search. This was normal procedure for all merchant ships at the time. When stopped, the steam and funnel smoke created a static cloud overhead in the calm conditions. This smoke could be seen for miles and was spotted by one of Beatty's advanced ships, HMS *Galatea*. *Galatea* headed towards *N.7. Fjord* and when realisation struck that a German ship was there, the Grand Fleet was alerted.¹⁸ The first Royal Navy ship called into action was HMS *Engadine* which was a cross-channel steamer converted to carry seaplanes.¹⁹ A Short Admiralty Type 184 seaplane was launched from the ship. The pilot was Lieutenant Frederick Rutland who afterwards became known as 'Rutland of Jutland'. The seaplane was in the air for fifty-three minutes before it developed a fuel leak. While in the air, it gathered important intelligence on the advancing German fleet which it relayed to the British fleet.²⁰

Beatty's ships and the Germans led by Admiral Hipper and Vice-Admiral Scheer were approximately 10½ miles apart when both sides opened fire simultaneously at 3.48pm.²¹ Eyewitnesses reported geysers shot high in the air where shells had missed their speeding targets. Dead fish floated everywhere, killed instantly by detonating shells. The battle area was enveloped in smoke from the ships' furnaces working at full capacity and gun smoke from the large guns which were firing as fast as the shells could be fed into them. The smoke reduced the effectiveness and accuracy of the British fleet for a while as the light wind caused poor visibility in their direction. Each direct hit resulted in massive structural damage, instant deaths, loss of limbs and horrific steam burnings.²² Years later, a surgeon wrote about his experiences at Jutland and in particular about the many flash burns caused by exploding powder:

Very rapidly, almost as one looks, the face swells up, the looser parts of the skin become enormously swollen, the eyes are invisible through the great swelling of the lids, the lips enormous jelly-like masses, in the centre of which a button-like mouth appears ... The great cry is water ... They die and die very rapidly.²³

The first British ship to be damaged was HMS *Lion* which took a direct hit on her Q-turret at 4pm, killing ninety sailors instantly.²⁴ At the same time, HMS *Indefatigable* came under a sustained attack from the German ship SMS *Von der Tann*. The decks of *Indefatigable* were penetrated, setting off a

massive internal explosion when her magazines blew up. All her crew of 1,017 sailors were killed instantly. Of the fifty Cork sailors who died on board, eight were from Skibbereen.²⁵ Fifteen minutes later, the British sustained a second catastrophic loss when the 725 foot long HMS *Queen Mary* was hit and there was an explosion followed by a fire and instantly another fatal explosion. While there were twenty survivors, 1,266 sailors were killed instantly. Four Cork sailors died including Arthur Kidney from Courtmacsherry (discussed further below). An eyewitness described seeing *Queen Mary* after she had been hit speeding along at 20 knots listing first to port, then to starboard and ploughing deeper into the sea with her guns raised, still red hot from firing and hissing as they met with the cold water of the North Sea.²⁶

At 6.20pm the British cruisers, HMS *Defence* and HMS *Warrior*, as well as the battleship HMS *Warspite*, became involved in an intense fight with the German battlecruisers, SMS *Wiesbaden*, SMS *Pillau* and SMS *Frankfurt*. *Wiesbaden* had sustained catastrophic damage and the British ships led by *Defence* moved in for the kill but *Wiesbaden* gallantly kept fighting. Suddenly, out of the mist, at a distance of 9,000 yards appeared the massive outline of several German dreadnoughts who rained a sustained salvo of shells down on *Defence* which suddenly exploded in an inferno and was gone in minutes. Forty of the sailors lost on HMS *Defence* were from Cork, including nine from Clonakilty and the surrounding area (some of whom will be discussed further below).²⁷ Captain Poland (Royal Marines) of *Warspite* provides us with an eyewitness account of the fate of the West Cork sailors and their 900 shipmates on board *Defence*.

I saw *Defence* coming down our starboard bow heading straight at the enemy. She was banging away and going at full speed, mast-head colours and all the rest of it and made a very gallant show. I saw three salvos fall across her in quick succession, beauties.

A flicker of flame ran aft along her fore-castle head and up her fore turret, which seemed to melt. Then – whoof, up she went, a single huge sheet of flame, 500 feet high, mixed up with smoke and fragments. As it died down I saw her crumpled bow, red hot, sticking up about 30 or 40 feet of it, at an angle of sixty degrees, and then that sank. I nearly vomited. God it was an awful sight. I couldn't get to sleep that

night for thinking of it. The whole thing, from the moment I saw her, couldn't have taken 20 seconds.²⁸



Fig. 2: Photograph of HMS *Defence* minutes before she exploded and sank with the loss of 903 lives. Note the masthead colours flying as described in Captain Poland's account. The smoke off her bow is from the German battlecruiser *Wiesbaden* which sank a short time later with the loss of 589 lives with one survivor rescued the following day (Photo: Rear Admiral D.J. Hoare in Liddle, *Sailor's War*, p. 113).

We also have a chilling account of the destruction of HMS *Defence* from Commander Georg von Hase who was the first gunnery officer on SMS *Derfflinger* which was very close by when *Defence* sank:

I examined the ship through the periscope. In the misty grey light the colours of the German and English were difficult to distinguish. The cruiser was not very far away from us. She had four funnels and two masts ... "She is certainly English," Lieutenant-Commander Hausser shouted. "May I fire?" "Yes, fire away." I was now certain she was a

big English ship ... Lieutenant-Commander Hausser gave the order: "6,000!" Then, just as he was about to give the order: "Fire!" something terrific happened: the English ship, which I had meanwhile identified as an old English armoured cruiser, broke in half with a tremendous explosion. Black smoke and debris shot into the air, a flame enveloped the whole ship, and then she sank before our eyes. There was nothing but a gigantic smoke cloud to mark the place where just before a proud ship had been fighting. I think she was destroyed by the fire of our next ahead, Admiral Hipper's flagship the *Lützow*.

... The whole thing was over in a few seconds ... The destroyed ship was the *Defence*, an old armoured cruiser ... Not one of the whole ship's company was saved. She was blown to atoms and all the men were killed by the explosion. As we saw the ship at a comparatively short distance in good visibility, magnified fifteen times by the periscopes, we could see exactly what happened. The whole horror of this event is indelibly fixed on my mind.²⁹

Most of the heavy fighting at Jutland ceased at about 7pm on 31 May and the German fleet headed back to their bases at Wilhelmshaven. However, there were skirmishes between the fleets during the night. One of the largest British casualties was HMS *Black Prince* which sank with the loss of 857 sailors including Patrick Leary, chief stoker, from Rosscarbery.³⁰ HMS *Nessus* was also hit during the night with the loss of nine sailors including twenty-six-year-old Daniel Donovan from Union Hall.³¹

The West Cork Connection

This section will examine some of the reasons why West Cork men chose to join the Royal Navy, the work they undertook and the conditions on board, and will then briefly provide some details on the individuals killed during the Battle of Jutland. There was a tradition of Irishmen joining the Royal Navy for many years before the establishment of the two-power standard. However, the numbers dramatically increased from the early 1890s up to the First World War.³² One of the attractions for young men would have been the guarantee of steady work and wages, which were much more generous than those paid

to farm labourers.³³ While some men joined the Royal Navy for economic reasons, others probably entered because of family tradition.³⁴ For some sailors, religion may have played a role with many Protestant Anglo-Irishmen offering their service in defence of the Crown. We also have to remember that the sense of adventure and quest to travel, which is always prevalent in young people, probably influenced many in their decision to sign up. Likewise, peer pressure played its part in recruitment into the navy.³⁵

Over 50% of the Cork sailors who were lost in Jutland worked as stokers in the ships.³⁶ Stokers shovelled coal continuously into the boilers of mammoth ships in order to 'keep up steam'. They worked six or seven stories down in the ship in an unhealthy and dusty working atmosphere where the temperature at the furnace was over 52° C. They spent two hours down there followed by two hours up on deck. When working at the furnace, they were stripped to the waist but on completing their two hours they rushed up on deck to get some fresh air and cool down. In the North Atlantic and North Sea, the air temperature on deck could be in minus figures so the stoker's body was continuously subjected to massive temperature fluctuations. Understandably there were occupational health hazards associated with this type of work: heat stroke, pneumonia, pleurisy, rheumatism, muscle cramp, catarrh and black lung disease.³⁷

Thirty-five men from the Barryroe/Courtmacsherry area fought at Jutland and six of them died there. Of the nine West Cork sailors who perished on HMS *Defence*, four were from Barryroe parish. They included the Brickley brothers David (b. *circa* 1892)³⁸ and James (b. 1894),³⁹ and their neighbour John Falvey (b. 1891),⁴⁰ all from the townland of Lehenagh (Lehinagh). All three were seamen in the Royal Navy Reserve. The Brickleys were sons of William Brickley and Ellen (née Driscoll) who were married c. 1883, and there were ten children in the family.⁴¹ At least four generations of Brickleys had lived in Lehenagh. In Griffiths Valuation of 1852 a John Brickley lived in the townland where he had a house and two acres rented from the Ladies Boyle.⁴² James was twenty-two years old when he was killed, David was twenty-four, while their neighbour John Falvey was also twenty-four.⁴³ John was the son of William Falvey and Catherine (née Madden) who wed in 1883;⁴⁴ they had ten children.⁴⁵ John had two brothers, Laurence (b. 1888)⁴⁶ and Denis (b. *circa* 1893),⁴⁷ who

fought at Jutland but survived the battle. Local lore has it that at least one of the brothers was on a battleship nearby and witnessed the sinking of HMS *Defence* with the loss of his brother and two neighbours. Laurence emigrated to Liverpool and then to Australia after the First World War.⁴⁸ Denis returned home after the war but died of tuberculosis in 1922 aged twenty-eight or twenty-nine.⁴⁹



Fig. 3: The ruins of the home of David and James Brickley, in the townland of Lehenagh, Co. Cork, who died on board HMS *Defence* in the Battle of Jutland. The house became ruinous after a house fire in the 1950s (Photo: author 2013).

Thomas Henry Reynolds was a warrant writer on board HMS *Defence*.⁵⁰ His duties included administration of pay and the ship's correspondence. Thomas was born in Co. Down in 1881 and his parents were William C. Reynolds, a coastguard officer, and Anne (née Martin).⁵¹ William later married Katie and, at the time of the 1901 census, he was stationed with his family at Myross in Union Hall.⁵² By the time of the 1911 census, William and Katie had moved to

Courtmacsherry,⁵³ but he was deceased by the time of his son's death. Thomas had sixteen years' service in the navy, he was thirty-four years old and left behind a wife, Beatrice (née Roberts) with an address at Keyham, Devonport.⁵⁴

Also on board *Defence* was Patrick Whelton, a boatswain, who formed part of the officer crew.⁵⁵ The son of John Whelton and Mary (née Daly), he was born in 1888 and hailed from Killacoosane, Glandore.⁵⁶ He had at least thirteen siblings,⁵⁷ and his mother, Mary, had died of typhus fever, aged forty-one, in 1898.⁵⁸ Patrick was a labourer in fish curing before joining the navy on 12 May 1905.⁵⁹ His naval records describe him as 5' 8" in height, with red hair, grey eyes and freckled, with a fresh complexion. He was twenty-eight years old when he died.⁶⁰

James John Hayes (b. 1891) from Reenascreena, Rosscarbery, was also lost on HMS *Defence*.⁶¹ His parents were Patrick Hayes and Bridget (née O'Brien). Census records show that James had at least ten siblings.⁶² He was a farm labourer before joining the navy in 1908.⁶³ James was a leading seaman at the time of his death aged twenty-four.

Like James, John Donovan, with an address at Lamb St, Clonakilty, was a leading seaman on HMS *Defence*.⁶⁴ He was born in 1886 in Inchinattin, Castleventry, and his parents were Hannah (née Connolly) and John Donovan, a farmer and publican.⁶⁵ John's naval records show that he was a labourer before joining the navy in 1904.⁶⁶

Jeremiah Crowley with an address at Barrack St (now McCurtain Hill), Clonakilty, was a corporal first class when he died on *Defence*.⁶⁷ He was born in 1880, the son of Jeremiah Crowley and Margaret (née Flynn) of Mill Lane, Clonakilty.⁶⁸ On his birth record his father's occupation is listed as carrier. Before joining the navy in 1901, Jeremiah worked as a railway porter.⁶⁹ He was thirty-five years old when he died.⁷⁰

Petty Officer Patrick Lawrence Daly, born in Timoleague in 1885, was also lost on board *Defence*; his parents were John Daly and Mary (née Shea).⁷¹ His father was a baker,⁷² and Patrick was a labourer before joining the navy in 1903.⁷³ His naval records show that he was disciplined twice: in 1910 he was sentenced to seven days in the cells and in 1913 he was sentenced to five days.⁷⁴ His address at the time of his death was 29 Nicholas St, Cork;⁷⁵ he was thirty years old.⁷⁶ His brother David, a stoker, was killed during an accident on another battleship during the war.⁷⁷

David Courtney from Siberia, in the townland of Cullenagh, Courtmacsherry, died on HMS *Warrior* at Jutland, employed as a stoker first class.⁷⁸ The son of John Courtney and Julia (née Long), he was born in 1892.⁷⁹ John was a fisherman, as was David before joining the navy in 1913.⁸⁰ Julia died when David was only eight years old⁸¹ and he was killed at twenty-four years of age. *Warrior* was badly damaged in the battle at 6.15pm and 71 of her crew of 704 were killed. She was taken in tow back towards Scotland by *Engadine* but was abandoned just after dawn the following morning and all her remaining crew were rescued.⁸²

Arthur Kidney was an ordinary signalman on board HMS *Queen Mary* when she exploded and sank. His naval records give his address as 'Inglenook', Cullenagh, Courtmacsherry.⁸³ His parents were Norah and William, a chief petty officer in the Coast Guard.⁸⁴ Born in Beckley, Sussex, in 1897,⁸⁵ Arthur had at least six siblings, went to school in England and upon leaving school, joined the navy.⁸⁶ He is recorded as only 4' 11½" tall with black hair, brown eyes and a fair complexion.⁸⁷ He was just eighteen years old when he died.⁸⁸

The Aftermath

The British fleet headed back to their Scottish bases early the following morning after carrying out a search for survivors. The waters were filled with flotsam of all kinds, thousands of dead floating fish and the bodies of sailors of both sides, many of whom had died, not of drowning or wounds, but of exposure.⁸⁹ All dead British sailors on board were given the traditional Royal Navy burial at sea. Each corpse was placed in a sailcloth shroud which was weighted with a shell and then slipped overboard. The ninety dead sailors on board HMS *Lion* were buried at sea at 12pm on 1 June while twenty casualties on another ship that had taken part in the battle, HMS *Tiger*, were buried at 3pm.⁹⁰ The Germans brought their dead sailors back on their ships and they were buried ashore on 4 June.⁹¹ In the weeks that followed, the battle received coverage in West Cork newspapers: the *Skibbereen Eagle* and the *Southern Star*.⁹² However, throughout the war, all media was subject to strict censorship under the Defence of the Realm Act.

The final casualty count was 6,097 British sailors killed and 510 injured; there were 2,551 German sailors lost and 507 were injured. The British had

lost a total of fourteen ships including some of their finest battlecruisers and armoured cruisers. The Germans lost eleven ships.⁹³ Both sides immediately claimed themselves as victors. The German fleet was badly damaged and it took over six months before repairs were carried out. The Kaiser ordered the fleet to be kept in port and they only made occasional voyages for the remainder of the war. Instead, they reverted to unrestricted submarine warfare where German U-boats sank unarmed merchant ships without warning. Many thousands of merchant sailors lost their lives between June 1916 and the end of the war, a significant number of whom were Irish. The waters off the West Cork coastline are littered with these shipwrecks as it was on the direct route from America to the English ports.⁹⁴ In April 1917, U-boats sank 25% of ships bound for British ports. The British fleet was ready to go back out to sea within three days of the Battle of Jutland. In 1917, they introduced the convoy system where Royal Navy and American ships protected merchant ships crossing the Atlantic.⁹⁵



Fig. 4: A large group of ex-servicemen from the Skibbereen area at the Armistice Day Commemorations in the Square, Skibbereen, in the 1920s (Photo: De La Salle, *And Time Stood Still*, p. 132. Permission to reproduce photo kindly provided by De La Salle Past Pupils Union, St Fachtna's Branch, Skibbereen).



Fig. 5: Ex-servicemen at the Remembrance Sunday Commemorations at the Square, Skibbereen, c. 1950. Note the decline in numbers and that the name 'Armistice Day' was changed to 'Remembrance Sunday' after the Second World War (Photo: De La Salle, *And Time Stood Still*, p. 132. Permission to reproduce photo kindly provided by De La Salle Past Pupils Union, St Fachtna's Branch, Skibbereen).

After the war many of the sailors were demobilised. It is estimated that half the Irish servicemen did not return to Ireland after the war.⁹⁶ Because of high unemployment in Ireland, a significant number sought work abroad.⁹⁷ In the charged atmosphere of republican revolt, there was little affection for former servants of the British Empire, such as ex-servicemen; for this reason, many sailors were afraid or ashamed to return home.⁹⁸ In towns such as Skibbereen and Bandon, comrades of men who died in the First World War held low-key Armistice Day commemorations throughout the 1920s and 1930s.⁹⁹ However, by the 1950s the numbers attending had dwindled.¹⁰⁰

In comparison to soldiers who died in the First World War, most sailors' bodies were not recovered given that the majority went down with their ships, carrying with them their belongings. As a result, relatives had no mementos

of their loved ones and no graves to visit. This must have made grieving very difficult. The families of the West Cork sailors lost in the battle had to grieve even more silently and privately because of the intensity of the War of Independence in this area. In the minds of the public, the Irish ex-British servicemen became associated with the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries and the atrocities carried out on the civilian population. There is evidence that, in the years after the war, the Free State discriminated against many of the parents of the lost Jutland sailors by denying them old-age pensions. This issue was raised in Dáil Éireann in November 1928 by Thomas Lincoln Mullins TD for West Cork.¹⁰¹

Conclusion

The Battle of Jutland was the largest naval engagement of the First World War and brought tragedy to over 120 Cork coastal families. However, the battle has never been acknowledged or remembered in the same way as territorial battles such as Somme or Gallipoli. In my opinion, this can be explained by the absence of graves for the sailors and the dearth of photographs and mementos left behind. Once their parents, siblings and wives had died, they were forgotten very quickly, especially in the aftermath of the War of Independence and Civil War.¹⁰²

This study has revealed that Irish sailors joined the war efforts for very different reasons to their territorial colleagues. Some soldiers had joined the British Army when the war started on the urgings of John Redmond, the Irish nationalist politician, or the insistence of some Catholic priests who told their congregations that they had a duty to fight the Germans in defence of little Catholic Belgium. Others joined for adventure and yet more enlisted because of family tradition or in defence of the realm. In contrast, many of the West Cork sailors who died at Jutland had ten or more years' naval service before the war even began.¹⁰³ Therefore, the urgings of politicians and clergymen could not be considered a contributory factor in their decision to enrol. Neither was there much glamour or adventure in shovelling coal in intense heat six or seven stories deep in the bowels of a warship. Given the economic conditions prevalent in the country in the early part of the twentieth century, it can be concluded that most were financially motivated in their decision to

join the navy and, as Tom Kettle's words eloquently put it, they 'Died not for flag, nor King, nor Emperor'. Over one-hundred years later, it is time that their story is told and that they are remembered locally.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Kettle, T. M. 1916. 'To My Daughter Betty, the Gift of God'. *Poems & Parodies*. London, pp. 15-16.
- 2 McCarthy, T. 2013. 'The Battle of Jutland'. *Rosscarbery Past and Present* 15, pp. 104-14.
- 3 Halpern, P. G. 1994. *A Naval History of World War 1*. London, p. 326.
- 4 This statement is based on research carried out by the Cork branch of the Western Front Association.
- 5 Van der Vat, D. 2000. *Standard of Power: The Royal Navy in the Twentieth Century*. London, p. 4. One illustrative example of tensions at the time of the Boer War occurred when a Royal Navy boarding party stopped and searched a German mail steamer on her way to South Africa. The navy acted on a report that the ship was carrying volunteers and contraband to support the Boers. Nothing was found on board and the incident served to infuriate the Germans.
- 6 Halpern, *Naval History*, p. 1.
- 7 Van der Vat, *Standard of Power*, p. 1.
- 8 These warships had electricity and running water. The sailors' families would not experience these comforts in their own homes for another thirty or forty years.
- 9 Jane, F. T. 1919 (republished 1990). *Jane's Fighting Ships of World War 1*. London.
- 10 *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Aug. 1890. The reporter travelled first to Lislevane where he was told that a local small merchant had been sued for debts owed in the Bankruptcy Court by a large merchant in Cork as he was unable to pay because of the amount of money that was owed to him by country people who had no money. The reporter then went to the small village of Shanagh (in the townland of Shanaghobarravane) near Butlerstown where he interviewed several locals. There were over 100 people living in eight houses and almost everyone was indebted to the bank having borrowed money to pay rent for the previous few years. The reporter described the fisheries along this part of the coast as a failure, the barley as almost unsaleable and the potatoes as worthless, noting that one woman in the parish had recently died having eaten a diseased potato. The summer had been very foggy and damp – ideal conditions for potato blight. In order to feed themselves, many of the farmers were going to have to sell their small cattle stocks for the winter. One farmer told the reporter that on the previous Friday he had no dinner and had to wait until his wife brought some Indian meal from Clonakilty. The Brickley and Falvey families lived in a little hamlet in the townland of

- Lehenagh, very similar to Shanagh and about 3 miles to the west. This hamlet was called Turkeyland. David and James Brickley and John Falvey were lost in Jutland, and will be discussed further in this paper. The circumstances that these young men were born into were very similar to those described in this newspaper article.
- 11 *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Aug. 1890.
 - 12 Andriessen, J. H. J. 2002. *World War I in Photographs*. Lisse, p. 384.
 - 13 Massie, R. K. 2007. *Castles of Steel: Britain, Germany and the Winning of the Great War at Sea*. London, p. 73.
 - 14 Massie, *Castles of Steel*, p. 320.
 - 15 Massie, *Castles of Steel*, pp. 309-18.
 - 16 Sanford Terry, C. (ed.) 1916. *The Battle of Jutland Bank, May 31-June 1, 1916: The Dispatches of Admiral Sir John Jellicoe and Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty*. London, p. 13.
 - 17 *N.7. Fjord* was scuttled by the German U-boat UC-31 approximately 40 miles off the Scottish coast on 5 April 1917; all crew survived, see Wreck Site, <https://www.wrecksite.eu> [accessed 10 Oct. 2017].
 - 18 Baldwin, H. W. 1919. *Seafights and Shipwrecks*. London, p. 150.
 - 19 HMS *Engadine* had an indirect Irish connection: in the first year of the war Englishman Robert Erskine Childers, later an Irish revolutionary, served as an officer on board. He specialised in teaching pilots how to navigate the coastal area off Germany. He had extensive experience cruising the German coastline in various yachts in the two decades before the war. He had also written the bestseller *The Riddle of the Sands* based around the Frisian Islands, an archipelago off the Dutch, German and Danish coasts. In June 1914, he landed over 900 rifles in Howth for the Irish Volunteers in his yacht *Asgard* and was executed by Free State forces in November 1922 during the Irish Civil War. He was also the father of the future President of Ireland, Erskine Hamilton Childers.
 - 20 Corbett, J. S. 1921. *History of the Great War Naval Operations*, vol. 3. London, p. 20.
 - 21 Sanford Terry, *The Battle of Jutland Bank*, p. 13.
 - 22 Baldwin, *Seafights*, p. 154.
 - 23 Massie, *Castles of Steel*, p. 657, quote taken from Gordon, A. 1996. *The Rules of the Game: Jutland and the British Naval Command*. Annapolis, pp. 477-8.
 - 24 The Q-turret on a battleship was a gun turret located midway between the bow and the stern. Battleships normally had two gun turrets amidships: one on the port (left) side (Q-turret) and one on the starboard (right) side (P-turret). Each turret was manned by up to 100 marines.
 - 25 Keegan, J. 1990. *The Price of Admiralty: The Evolution of Naval Warfare*. London, p. 144. The men from the Skibbereen area who died on HMS *Indefatigable* were: John Cahalane, David Casey, Timothy Collins, Michael Holland, Patrick Foley, Peter Foley, William T. Donovan and Jeremiah Driscoll.
 - 26 Liddle, P. H. 1985. *The Sailor's War 1914-18*. Dorset, p. 107.
 - 27 This statement is based on research carried out by the Cork branch of the Western Front Association. The sailors who died from the Clonakilty area on HMS *Defence* were: David Brickley, James Brickley, Jeremiah Crowley, Patrick Laurence Daly, John Donovan, John Falvey, James John Hayes, Thomas Henry Reynolds and Patrick Whelton.
 - 28 *Jutland 100th Anniversary Men of Steel*, 1 May 2016, www.navynews.co.uk; Liddle, *Sailor's War*, pp. 113-14. This quote is taken from a letter sent by Captain Poland of HMS *Warspite* to his brother on 5 June 1916.
 - 29 Von Hase, G. 2011 (1st printed 1922). *Kiel & Jutland: The Famous Naval Battle of the First World War from the German Perspective*. A. Chambers and F. A. Holt (trans.) London, p. 100.
 - 30 'Officers and men killed in action H.M.S. *Black Prince* Jutland, 31st May 1916'. North East Medals, see http://www.northeastmedals.co.uk/britishguide/jutland/hms_black_prince_casualty_list_1916.htm [accessed 13 Nov. 2017]. I was unable to trace Patrick O Leary's naval record and information regarding his naval status and connection with the locality remains obscure. It seems that a newspaper reference to 'Patrick Hayes, Reenascrena ... on board the *Indefatigable*' is actually a reference to Patrick O'Leary, see *Southern Star*, 10 June 1916. The following week, a reference to 'James O Leary ... on the *Black Prince*', is likely Patrick Leary, see *Southern Star*, 17 June 1916.
 - 31 *Southern Star*, 10 June 1916; naval service no. 311259, see Grave Registration Reports (hereafter GRRs), index no. MR2 Plymouth Naval Memorial 1916 A-K, p. 165. For all GRRs referenced below see <http://www.cwgc.org>.
 - 32 This can be confirmed by perusing the online Royal Navy records from the National Archive, Kew, UK, at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-navy-ratings-service-records-1853-1928/> [accessed 3 Nov. 2011]. The sailor's birthplace can be used as a search tool. The large numbers of men from West Cork coastal areas joining between 1890 and 1914 is clearly evident.
 - 33 At the outbreak of the First World War, a farm labourer in West Cork would have earned about fourteen shillings a week. A sailor in the Royal Navy started on a weekly rate of nineteen shillings and that would have increased as his career progressed.
 - 34 William C. Reynolds – father of Thomas Henry Reynolds, lost on HMS *Defence* (discussed further in this paper) – had been a divisional officer of the Royal Navy, see *Southern Star*, 10 June 1916. Later he was a chief officer in the Coast Guard, see no. 7 Ballincolla, Myross, Co. Cork, *Census of Ireland*, 1901; no. 54 Courtmacsherry Town, Co. Cork, *Census of Ireland*, 1911. All census records available to view at <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie>. Retired naval sailors were often employed

- as coastguard officers. No doubt family tradition played a role in Thomas' career choice with him deciding to follow in his father's footsteps.
- 35 Local lore in Courtmacsherry has it that during the First World War, a group of three young men were drinking in the village one Sunday. Having consumed much drink, they decided to join the army and immediately signed up in the local recruitment office. One of them had doubts the next morning and went back to withdraw his application but was refused. He was killed during the war. Evidently, peer pressure was the main reason he was present on the battlefield.
- 36 White, G. and O'Shea, B. (eds) 2010. *A Great Sacrifice: Cork Servicemen who Died in the Great War*. Cork. This publication provides service and genealogical details on 3,774 Cork servicemen who died during the First World War, many of whom were sailors with approximately 50% employed as stokers in the Royal Navy.
- 37 Massie, *Castles of Steel*, p. 406.
- 38 Conflicting birth dates are provided in different sources. GRRs state that David Brickley was twenty-four at the time of his death in 1916, giving him a birth year of c. 1892, see index no. MR2 Plymouth Naval Memorial 1916 A–K, p. 147. According to his service record card, he was born Apr. 1890, see naval service no. A 4213, Registry of Shipping and Seamen: Royal Naval Reserve Ratings' Records of Service (hereafter RSS), BT 377/7/4228, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 39 Born 12 Mar. 1894, civil birth record registered 20 May 1894, in Timoleague, in the Union of Clonakilty. All civil records from the Civil Registration Office of Ireland available to view at <https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie>. James Brickley's service record card provides a birth date of Aug. 1893, see naval service no. A 5125, RSS, BT 377/7/5138, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 40 Born 1 Oct. 1891, civil birth record registered 2 Nov. 1891, in Timoleague. John Falvey's service record card provides a birth date of 5 Aug. 1891, see naval service no. A 4944, RSS, BT 377/7/4958, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 41 See no. 20 Lehenagh, Abbeymahon, Co. Cork, *Census of Ireland*, 1901.
- 42 No. 39b Lehenagh, parish of Abbeymahon, p. 9, Griffith's Valuation (1848–64), <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation>.
- 43 GRRs, index no. MR2 Plymouth Naval Memorial 1916 A–K, pp. 147, 170.
- 44 Married 16 Jan. 1883, Barryroe R.C. church, civil marriage record registered 29 Jan. 1883, in Timoleague.
- 45 See no. 19 Lehenagh, Abbeymahon, Co. Cork, *Census of Ireland*, 1911.
- 46 Born 10 Nov. 1888, civil birth record registered 19 Nov. 1888, in Timoleague. Laurence Falvey's service record card provides a birth date of 28 Nov. 1889, see naval service no. A 4215, RSS, BT 377/7/4230, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 47 Born 20 Oct. 1893 according to his service record card, see naval service no. A 5668, RSS, BT 377/7/5681, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 48 Laurence Falvey's naval records show that after the war he moved to 125 Duke St, Liverpool.
- 49 Died 22 Jan. 1922, civil death record registered 6 Feb. 1922, in Timoleague.
- 50 Naval service no. 343419, Royal Navy Registers of Seamen's Services (hereafter RNR), ADM 188/519/343419, National Archive, Kew, UK. It would appear that Thomas was a freemason and was attached to the Ebrington Lodge (no. 1847) in Devonshire, see <http://www.masonicgreatwarproject.org.uk/legend.php?id=2564> [accessed 2 Nov. 2017].
- 51 Born 19 June 1881, civil birth record registered 7 July 1881, in Strangford, in the Union of Downpatrick, Co. Down.
- 52 No. 7 Ballincolla, Myross, Co. Cork, *Census of Ireland*, 1901.
- 53 No. 54 Courtmacsherry Town, Co. Cork, *Census of Ireland*, 1911.
- 54 GRRs, index no. MR2 Plymouth Naval Memorial 1916 L–Z, p. 238. Apparently, Thomas and Beatrice were married only days before the sinking of *Defence*, see 'Devon casualties at the Battle of Jutland 31 May 1916 P – R' 2015 (last updated). <http://www.devonheritage.org/Places/DevonCounty/JutlandPtoR.htm> [accessed 18 Aug. 2017].
- 55 Date of appointment of acting boatswain: 17 Apr. 1915, see Warrant Officers Registers, vol. 3, ADM 196/157/87, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 56 Born 1 Apr. 1888, civil birth record registered 17 May 1888, in Union Hall, in the Union of Skibbereen. His naval records give his birth date as 12 May 1887.
- 57 See no. 2 Killacoosane, Kilfaughnabeg, Co. Cork, *Census of Ireland*, 1911.
- 58 Died 2 Apr. 1898, civil death record registered 26 Sep. 1898, in Union Hall.
- 59 Naval service no. 233072, RNR, ADM 188/413/233072, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 60 GRRs, index no. MR2 Plymouth Naval Memorial 1916 L–Z, p. 262.
- 61 Born 2 Aug. 1891, civil birth record registered 2 Sep. 1891, in Rosscarbery, in the Union of Clonakilty. His naval records give his birth date as 15 July 1890, see naval service no. J 1014, RNR, vol. J1-1, ADM 188/649/1014, National Archive, Kew, UK; GRRs, index no. MR2 Plymouth Naval Memorial 1916 A–K, p. 184.
- 62 See no. 7 Reenascreena North, Cahermore, Co. Cork, *Census of Ireland*, 1911.
- 63 Naval service no. J1014, RNR, ADM 188/649/1014, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 64 GRRs, index no. MR2 Plymouth Naval Memorial 1916 A–K, p. 165.
- 65 Born 1 Aug. 1886, civil birth record registered 25 Aug. 1886, in Rosscarbery. His naval records give his birth date as 4 Dec. 1886, see naval service no. 231175, RNR, vol. 231-1, ADM 188/409/231175, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 66 Naval service no. 231175, RNR, ADM 188/409/231175, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 67 GRRs, index no. MR2 Plymouth Naval Memorial 1916 A–K, p. 161; *Southern Star*, 10 June 1916.
- 68 Born 8 Nov. 1880, civil birth record registered 17 Nov. 1880, in Clonakilty. His naval records give his birth date as 15 Nov. 1881, see naval service no. 297253, RNR, vol. 297-1, ADM 188/481/297253, National Archive, Kew, UK.

- 69 See naval service no. 297253; no. 22 Barrack Hill, Clonakilty, *Census of Ireland*, 1901.
- 70 GRRs incorrectly state that Jeremiah Crowley was thirty-three years old when he died, see index no. MR2 Plymouth Naval Memorial 1916 A–K, p. 161.
- 71 Born 22 Aug. 1885, civil birth record registered 28 Aug. 1885, in Timoleague. His naval records give his birth date as 25 Aug. 1885, see naval service no. 215601, RNR, vol. 215-2, ADM 188/378/215601, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 72 Listed on Patrick Daly's birth record (see above).
- 73 Naval service no. 215601, RNR, ADM 188/378/215601, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 74 This record does not state for what offences Patrick was disciplined.
- 75 White and O'Shea, *A Great Sacrifice*, p. 231.
- 76 GRRs, index no. MR2 Plymouth Naval Memorial 1916 A–K, p. 162.
- 77 White and O'Shea, *A Great Sacrifice*, pp. 230–31.
- 78 GRRs, index no. MR2 Plymouth Naval Memorial 1916 A–K, p. 159.
- 79 Born 17 Feb. 1892, civil birth record registered 13 Apr. 1892, in Timoleague. His naval records give his birth date as 18 Feb. 1892, see naval service no. K 17817, RNR, vol. K17-2, ADM 188/902/17817, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 80 See no. 56 Courtmacsherry Town, Courtmacsherry, *Census of Ireland*, 1911.
- 81 Died of heart disease 2 Feb. 1900, death certificate registered 30 Mar. 1900, in Timoleague.
- 82 HMS *Warrior* crewmember Royal Marine J. C. Jones later noted that 'wreckage and human bodies were continually floating past us ... We went down below to bring up our dead and wounded ... We carried on bringing our mates up from down below and laid them out on the deck to be buried overboard', see Liddle, *Sailor's War*, p. 114.
- 83 GRRs, index no. MR2 Plymouth Naval Memorial 1916 A–K, p. 196.
- 84 See no. 3 Glanavirane, Coolmain, Co. Cork, *Census of Ireland*, 1911.
- 85 Arthur Kidney's naval records give his birth date as 8 Dec. 1897, see naval service no. J 24695, RNR, vol. J24-2, ADM 188/696/24695, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 86 In the census of 1911, Arthur appears as a student in school in Greenwich, London, see *England and Wales Census*, 1911, PRO RG 14, National Archive, Kew, UK, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1921547> [accessed 3 Nov. 2017].
- 87 Naval service no. J 24695, RNR, vol. J24-2, ADM 188/696/24695, National Archive, Kew, UK.
- 88 Assuming the date of birth stated in his naval records is correct, then Arthur Kidney was eighteen when he died but GRRs incorrectly state he was nineteen, see index no. MR2 Plymouth Naval Memorial 1916 A–K, p. 196.
- 89 Massie, *Castles of Steel*, p. 654.
- 90 Massie, *Castles of Steel*, p. 657.

- 91 Massie, *Castles of Steel*, p. 657.
- 92 On 10 June 1916, the *Southern Star* gave comprehensive coverage of the West Cork casualties and survivors of the battle, with the Skibbereen notes in the paper beginning with: 'The battle of Jutland has brought mourning to many a home in this district ...'.
- 93 Halpern, *Naval History*, p. 326.
- 94 Feen, T. 2015. 'SS *Peggy*: From Rangoon to Ringlea'. *Clonakilty Historical and Archaeological Journal* 1, p. 191; Wreck Site, <http://www.wrecksite.eu>.
- 95 Cable, J. 1980. *The Political Influence of Naval Force in History*. Eastbourne, p. 110.
- 96 Dungan, M. 2014. 'Irish casualties in the Great War'. Paper delivered at *Cork Studies in the Irish Revolution – Ireland and the First World War: In Defence of Right of Freedom and of Religion*. Symposium, UCC, 24–25 Jan. 2014.
- 97 For example, as noted above, Laurence Falvey, from Lehenagh, moved first to Liverpool and then to Australia. It is believed that he only returned once to Ireland for a holiday (Liam Falvey pers. comm.).
- 98 Dungan, M. 1997. *They Shall Grow Not Old: Irish Soldiers and the Great War*. Dublin, p. 41.
- 99 De La Salle Past Pupils Union. 2008 (2nd ed.). *And Time Stood Still: A Pictorial History of Skibbereen and District*, vol. 1. Skibbereen, p. 132.
- 100 De La Salle, *And Time Stood Still*, p. 133.
- 101 *Southern Star*, 17 Nov. 1928, quotes Mullins, Fianna Fáil, TD for West Cork, in a Dáil debate where he outlined the hardship caused to many of his constituents because they did not receive the old-age pensions as they were in receipt of British war pensions since they had lost sons in the Battle of Jutland.
- 102 However, all those individuals from West Cork lost at Jutland discussed above are commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, in Devon, see panel refs 11, 13, 14, 15, 17 and 18, Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), <http://www.cwgc.org>.
- 103 Many sailors joined at sixteen years of age but could not sign a twelve-year contract until they reached the age of eighteen. However, recent research has shown that up to one in three sailors were underage with many as young as fourteen years. Very few people were in possession of their birth certificates in the early 1900s and so lies about one's age were commonplace, see 'Royal Navy heroes of World War One were underage, records reveal'. *The Telegraph*, 6 Mar. 2015. In relation to the West Cork sailors discussed above, the many discrepancies between birth dates provided in their naval records and their actual dates of birth listed in the civil records illustrate that these men were often supplying earlier dates of birth.